

# Review of homelessness in Southwark

March 2017 update

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## Introduction

This review of homelessness in Southwark provides an assessment of the support, assistance and advice available to homeless and potentially homeless people in the borough. It is an update on the homelessness statistical review carried out in 2014. The scope of the review encompasses those services directly provided by or commissioned through Southwark Council and captures:

- The level of homelessness in the borough
- Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people, and provide support to people who are or may become homeless
- The resources available to carry out these activities.

The review was undertaken in late 2016 during a period of rapid change at a national and local level, including substantial welfare and housing policy reform. The majority of the data contained in this report summarises the financial year 2015/16, however more recent evidence is used where this provides a more accurate portrayal of current homelessness services or performance.

Extensive desktop research was carried out, profiling data and evidence across a range of council services, commissioned partners and government resources. More qualitative evidence was gathered through engagement with relevant managers and the council's homelessness forum in order to gain further insight into services and performance.

Every effort has been made to ensure the quality of the data used in this review is robust, with data sources quoted under tables and charts where applicable. Queries regarding the evidence used in this review can be directed towards the housing strategy and performance improvement team by email at [HousingStrategy2@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:HousingStrategy2@southwark.gov.uk).

Words that appear in *italics* are defined in a glossary at the end of the main report. The appendix of this paper provides further background data about Southwark as well as some more detailed evidence relating to the contents of the report.

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## 1.0 Resources for tackling homelessness in Southwark

The term 'homelessness' can describe a variety of circumstances that an individual or family may find themselves in, not always relating to whether they actually have a roof over their head. This report uses the terminology set out below as a means of describing these circumstances and the statutory obligations that local authorities have in relation to them:

- **Statutory homelessness** refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local authority and have met the necessary criteria set out in legislation to be accepted as eligible for assistance (according to immigration status), homeless and in priority need. This group may include families, pregnant women and vulnerable single people. A household may be accepted as statutorily homeless if they are going to be evicted or are living in accommodation so unsuitable that it is not reasonable for them to remain there.
- **Non-statutory / non-priority homeless** people tend to be single people or childless couples who are not assessed as being in priority need and are only entitled to 'advice and assistance' from their local authority. People who fall within this group will be offered housing advice which could involve looking for private rented accommodation, or applying for discretionary funding (such as rent in advance payments through a local welfare provision scheme), subject to availability. Many single homeless people can be described as 'hidden homeless', which is to say that they could be 'sofa surfing'; staying with friends or family and not accessing mainstream homelessness services. Estimating the levels of hidden homelessness locally or nationally is extremely challenging.
- **Rough sleepers** are people who are literally roofless, bedded down on the street or in other locations where they may or may not be seen by the public. This group are a minority of the much larger population of 'non-priority' homeless people. Housing legislation does not set out specific statutory duties to people who are sleeping rough.

### 1.1 Southwark Council's homeless services

In Southwark, statutory homelessness assessments are carried out by the council's housing solutions service which is based in Bournemouth Road in Peckham. This team also leads on offering housing advice, housing options and homelessness prevention support to Southwark residents. A new location, from which to base these services is currently being sought.

A specialist housing service team is also based in the same Peckham office and is responsible for the procurement and management of temporary accommodation for the borough. The reablement and resettlement service (RARs) form part of this team, and coordinate access to and move-on of clients from supported housing. An overview of the structure of services for homeless people is available in [appendix 7.1.1](#) of this report.

### 1.2 Resources for homeless and homelessness prevention services

#### 1.2.1 Overview of Resources for Homelessness

In 2015/16, Southwark's net spend on homelessness services was approximately £3m. This funding has come from both the General Fund (GF) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In 2015/16 it paid for temporary accommodation, staff, running costs and homelessness prevention measures like the Finders Fee scheme. The overall breakdown is explained in Tables 1a, 1b, 1c and summarised in 1d.

**GF Temporary Accommodation (TA) Costs-** TA costs from the General Fund led to a net loss in nightly paid accommodation of around £3.1m for the year. Private sector leased accommodation brought a small overall return of around £67,000.

**Table 1a- General Fund TA Account**

2015/16 actual Spend	
Nightly paid - expenditure	-£9,623,715
Nightly paid - income	£6,514,276
<b>Net</b>	<b>-£3,109,440</b>
PSLs - expenditure	-£2,381,956
PSLs - income	£2,448,881
<b>Net</b>	<b>£66,925</b>
<b>Net spend</b>	<b>£3,042,515</b>

Source: Internal records

**GF Homelessness Measures-** This account provides funding for the running costs of council services (like Reablement) and services provided by partners like Manna and St Giles. Funding for staffing came to £3.7m, running costs were £548,000 and the Finders Fee scheme was £424,000. Whilst the total spent on homelessness from this account was around £4,651,000, the council received around £370,000 in Government grant.

**Table 1b- Homelessness GF Account**

2015/16 Actual Spend	
Finders Fee scheme	-£424,070
Govt. grant	£370,480
Running costs	-£547,991
Staffing	-£3,679,076
<b>Net spend</b>	<b>£4,280,658</b>

Source: Internal records

**HRA Homelessness TA-** through the use of the council's own hostels and void properties, Southwark was able to achieve a net return of £4,390,000 for the year after running costs and staff expenses were deducted.

**Table 1c- HRA Homelessness TA**

2015/16 Actual Spend	
Rent	£8,446,814
Running costs	-£2,952,739
Staffing	-£1,104,143
<b>Net return</b>	<b>£4,389,932</b>

Source: Internal records

When these costs are considered with the income generated from the council's TA, the total spent can be calculated as £2,933,241 (see Table 1d).

**Table 1d- Overall Spend on Homelessness**

2015/16 Actual Spend	
Temporary Accommodation - GF	-£3,042,515
Homelessness - GF	-£4,280,658
TA- HRA	£4,389,932
<b>Total loss</b>	<b>-£2,933,241</b>

Source: Internal records

### 1.2.2 Homeless Prevention Grant

Each year local authorities receive a separately identified non-ring-fenced sum from the *Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)* in respect of homeless prevention activities. Part of this funding is identified within the council's revenue support grant and the other part is within the council's baseline funding level.

Southwark Council's settlement for 2015/16 was **£1,534,561**. Over the past 2 years Southwark has received similar amounts (**£1,541,255** in 2013/14 and **£1,518,329** in 2014/15). Details of how this was allocated across a range of projects and initiatives are set out in [appendix 7.1.4](#) of this report.

### 1.2.3 Discretionary housing payments (DHP)

Local authorities receive an annual grant settlement from the *Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)* with the aim of helping housing benefit recipients whose benefit award does not cover their full rent costs. In recent years, both the allocation and expenditure of discretionary housing payments (DHP) has become more targeted around mitigating the impacts of the Government's welfare reform policies, although awards are not strictly limited for this purpose.

**Table 2 - Discretionary housing payment (DHP) funding- last three years**

(2014/15)	(2015/16)	(2016/17)
Total Fund	Total Fund	Total Fund
£1,493,174	£1,023,157	£1,104,300

Source: Internal records

In 2017/18, the council will receive £1,236,085 in DHP funding. Southwark has a good track record at using this funding to help prevent homelessness. Further information about the historical allocation of Southwark's DHP can be found in [appendix 7.1.5](#) of this report, and details about how the 2015/16 DHP fund was spent are in [section 2.3.3](#).

### 1.2.4 Trailblazer funding for a new approach to reducing homelessness

The London Borough of Southwark is proud to have been chosen by DCLG to be an 'early adopter' trailblazer for new homelessness legislation focused on new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. Around £1m has been awarded to Southwark to take this work forward. For more details about how this approach will work see [section 2.3.2](#).

Through the Trailblazer, the Council will provide early learning and dissemination of information to support other local authorities in their preparations for implementing new prevention focused homelessness legislation. The Trailblazer project will mirror the duties that will eventually be placed on other local authorities in the Homelessness Reduction Act.

### 1.2.5 Prevention of Rough Sleeping Trailblazer

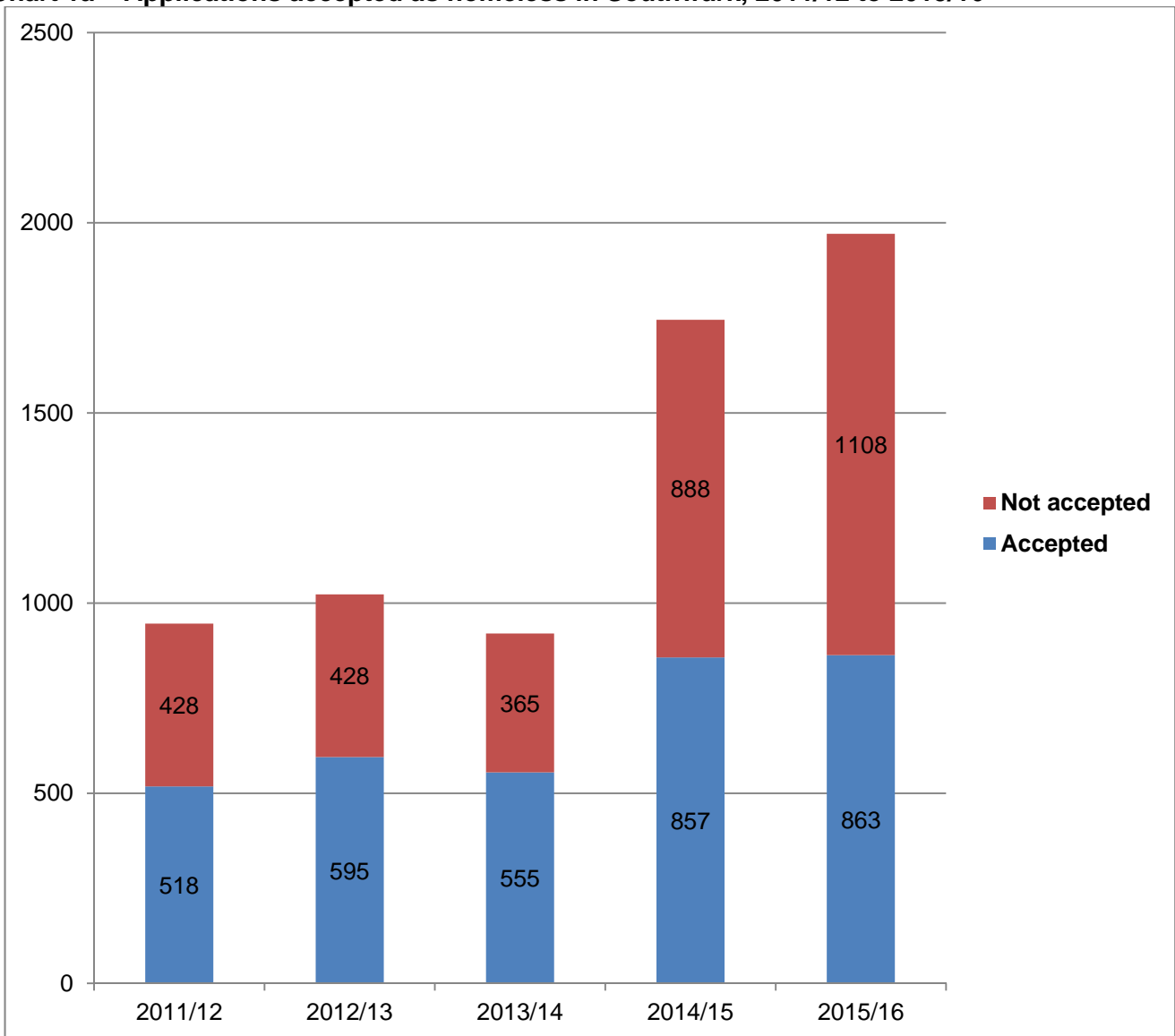
As part of a £20m package to improve services for rough sleepers in London, Southwark was awarded £393,000 in December 2016. The funding will be put towards developing new initiatives that will reduce numbers sleeping on the streets. For more information about these initiatives, please see [section 2.3.2](#).

### 1.3 Statutory homelessness in Southwark data

The following charts show that the number of homelessness applications Southwark has received has increased considerably in the last two years. This has resulted in a considerable rise in the number of applications accepted as homeless, and also a fall in the acceptance rate (Chart 2).

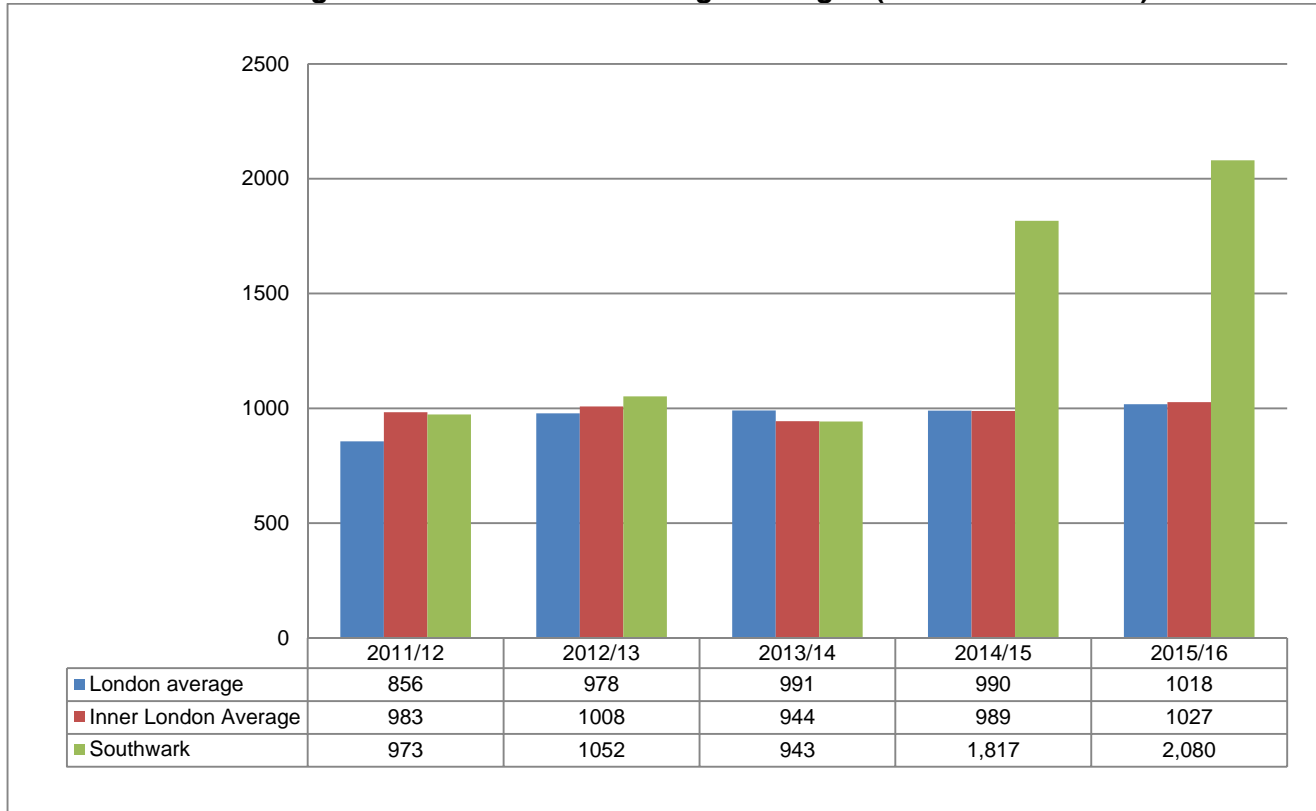
54% more households were accepted as homeless by Southwark in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. The increase in applications is due to two important factors: the restructure of homelessness services in 2013/14 that enabled the council to help more residents; and a reduction in the number of homes that residents can afford. Affordability issues are complex but welfare reform and increasing costs of the private rented sector in the borough have been factors. These issues are explained later in the report.

**Chart 1a – Applications accepted as homeless in Southwark, 2011/12 to 2015/16**



Source: Internal records

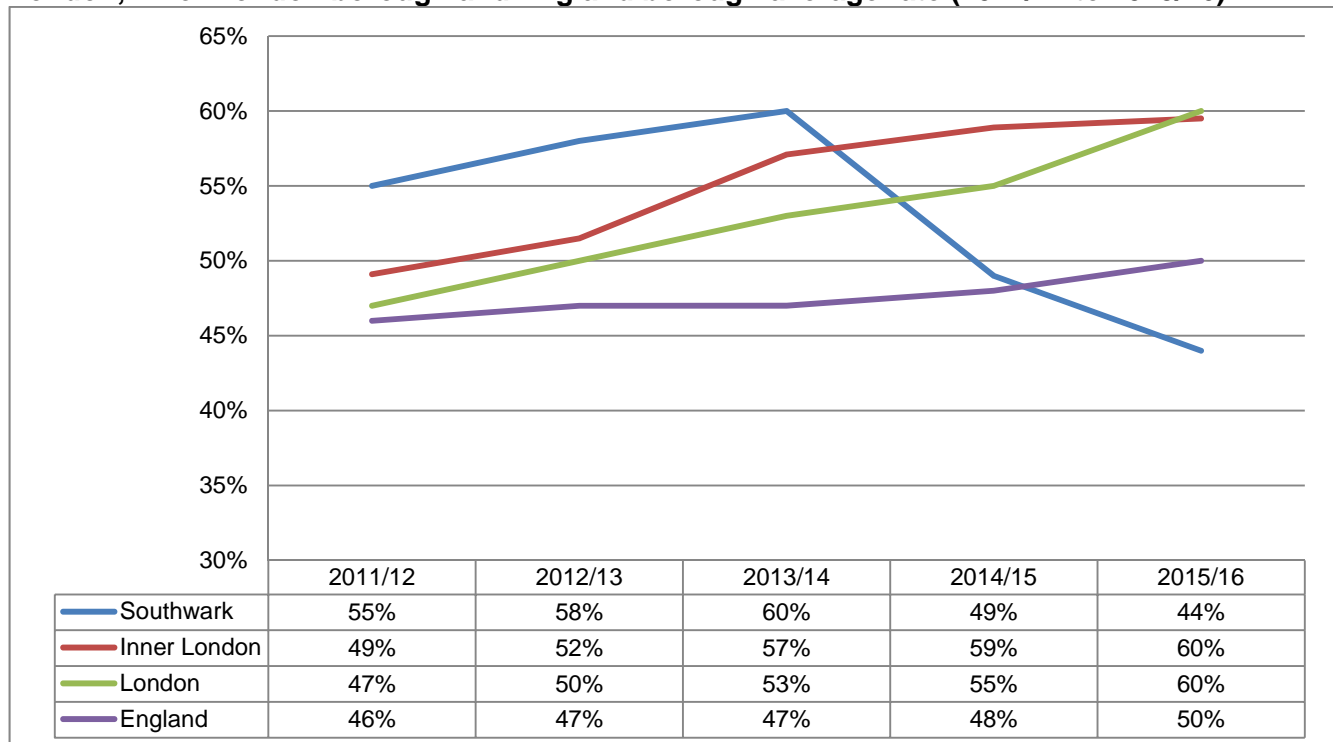
**Chart 1b – Comparison between the number of homelessness applications made in Southwark with the London borough and Inner-London borough averages (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: DCLG Live Table 770 and Internal records

\*Inner-London boroughs include Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster

**Chart 2 – Comparison between Southwark’s homelessness acceptance rate and the average London, Inner-London borough and England borough average rate (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: DCLG Live Table 784

\*Inner-London boroughs include Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster



The table on the following page (Table 3) shows the number of statutory homeless applications and acceptances in England, London and Southwark between 2011/12 to 2015/16. The table also shows the percentile change in applications, acceptances and *acceptance rate* between financial years. In summary:

- Between 2011/12 and 2015/16 there was a 6% increase in the number of homeless applications made to local authorities in England and a 15% increase in the number of those that were accepted.
- Southwark saw a 108% increase in the number of applications made and a 67% increase in the number of households accepted as homeless over this time.
- The homeless *acceptance rate* rose slightly across England over the five years. However in London the rate has risen by 15% and in Southwark it has fallen by 9%.

Since 2002, local authorities have been required to have strategies to prevent homelessness before it occurs. Southwark has prevented or relieved homelessness in over 11,000 cases in the last five years (see [section 2.0](#) of this paper for further information on homeless preventions).

**Table 3 – Comparison of homeless applications, acceptances and acceptance rates across England, London and Southwark (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

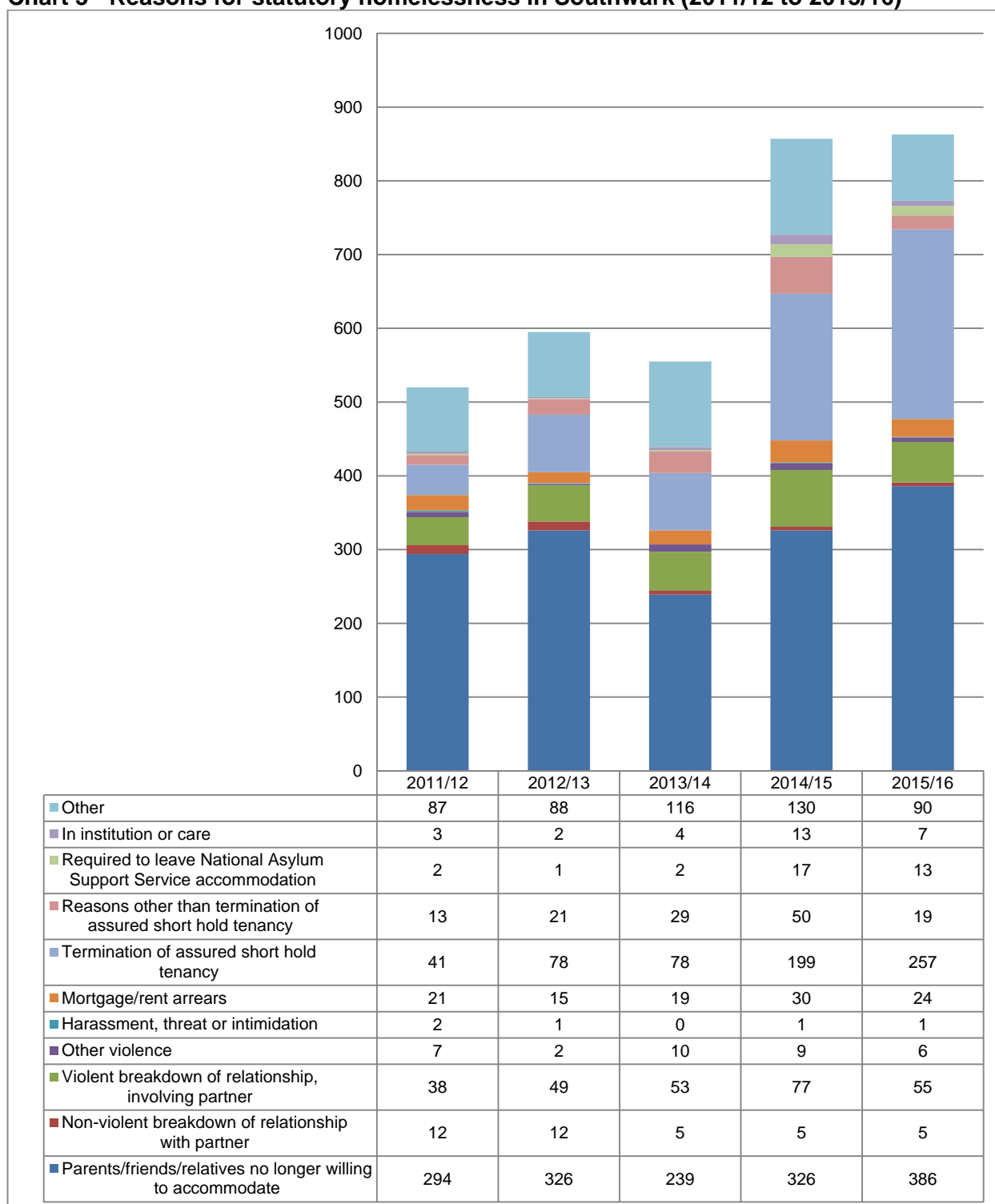
Financial year	England			London			Southwark		
	Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance rate	Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance rate	Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance rate
<b>2011/12</b>	108,720	50,290	46%	26,830	12,720	47%	946	518	55%
<b>2012/13</b>	113,520	53,770	47%	29,939	15,010	50%	1,023	595	58%
<i>11/12 to 12/13 % change</i>	4%	6%	1%	8%	10%	3%	8%	15%	3%
<b>2013/14</b>	111,610	52,250	47%	32,280	17,030	53%	920	555	60%
<i>12/13 to 13/14 % change</i>	-1%	-3%	0%	10%	15%	2%	-10%	-7%	2%
<b>2014/15</b>	112,340	54,430	48%	32,010	17,530	55%	1,745	857	49%
<i>13/14 to 14/15 % change</i>	1%	4%	1%	-1%	3%	2%	90%	54%	-11%
<b>2015/16</b>	114,760	57,730	50%	31,980	19,170	60%	1971	863	44%
<i>14/15 to 15/16 % change</i>	2%	6%	2%	0%	9%	5%	13%	1%	-5%
<b>11/12 to 15/16 % change</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>108%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>-11%</b>

Source: DCLG Live Table 784

### 1.3.1 Main reasons for statutory homelessness

The chart below sets out the main causes of statutory homelessness in Southwark over the last five years. The most common cause of statutory homelessness over this time has been that parents, friends or relatives are no longer willing to accommodate the individual or household in question. There has been a significant growth over this time in the termination of *assured tenancies*; which accounted for 8% of homelessness in 2011/12 and increased to 30% in 2015/16. This data only records “the main reason for homelessness”. In cases where there are more than one reason, officers may record only one.

**Chart 3 - Reasons for statutory homelessness in Southwark (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

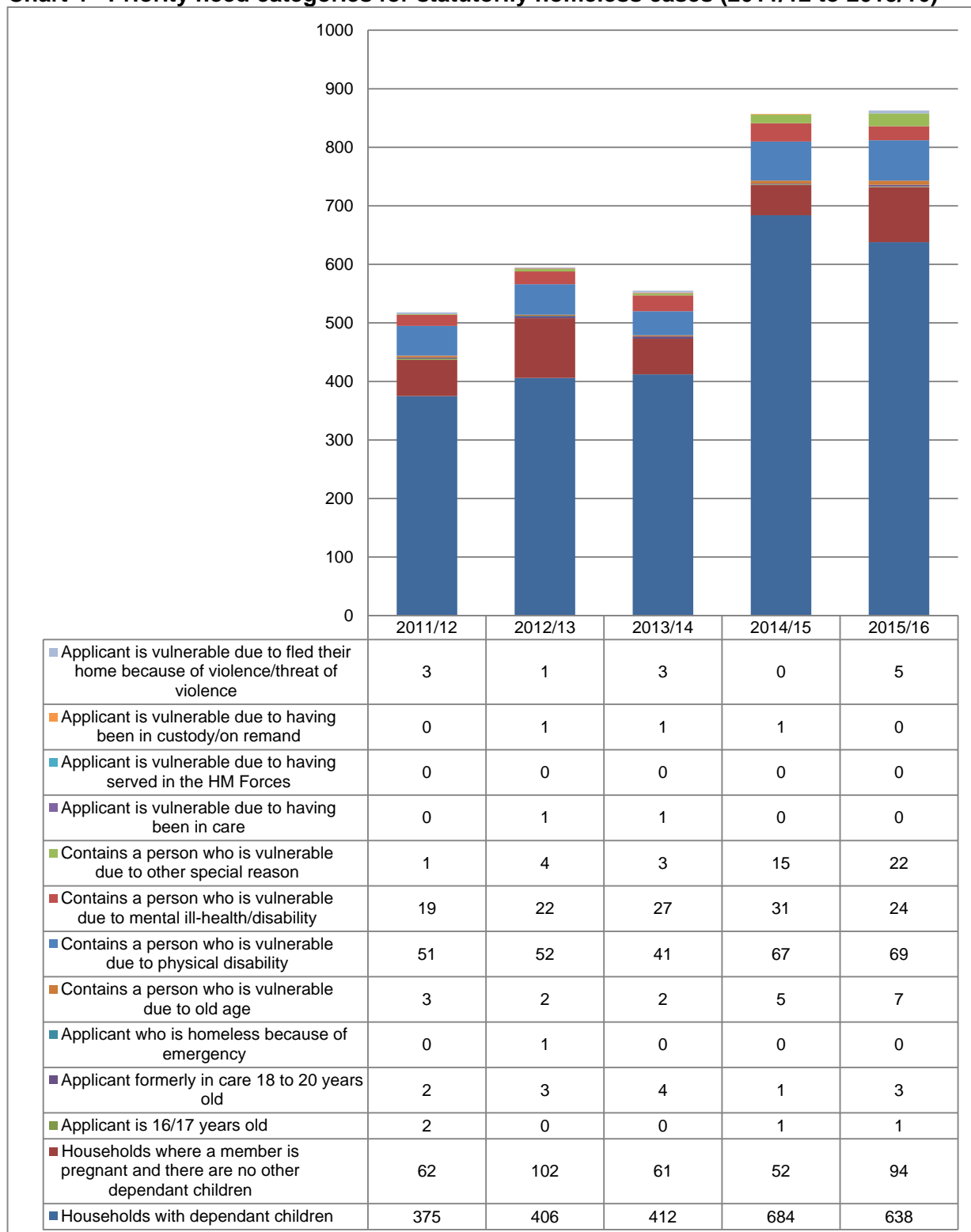


Source: P1E data

### 1.3.2 Priority need categories of statutory homelessness

In order to be able to be accepted as statutorily homeless and receive assistance from a local authority, a homeless person must have a 'priority need'. The chart below sets out the *priority need* categories for those accepted as statutorily homeless in Southwark over the last five years, the most common of which has consistently been because the household includes dependant children. Like "the main reason for homelessness", officers may only record one priority need category per application.

**Chart 4 - Priority need categories for statutorily homeless cases (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

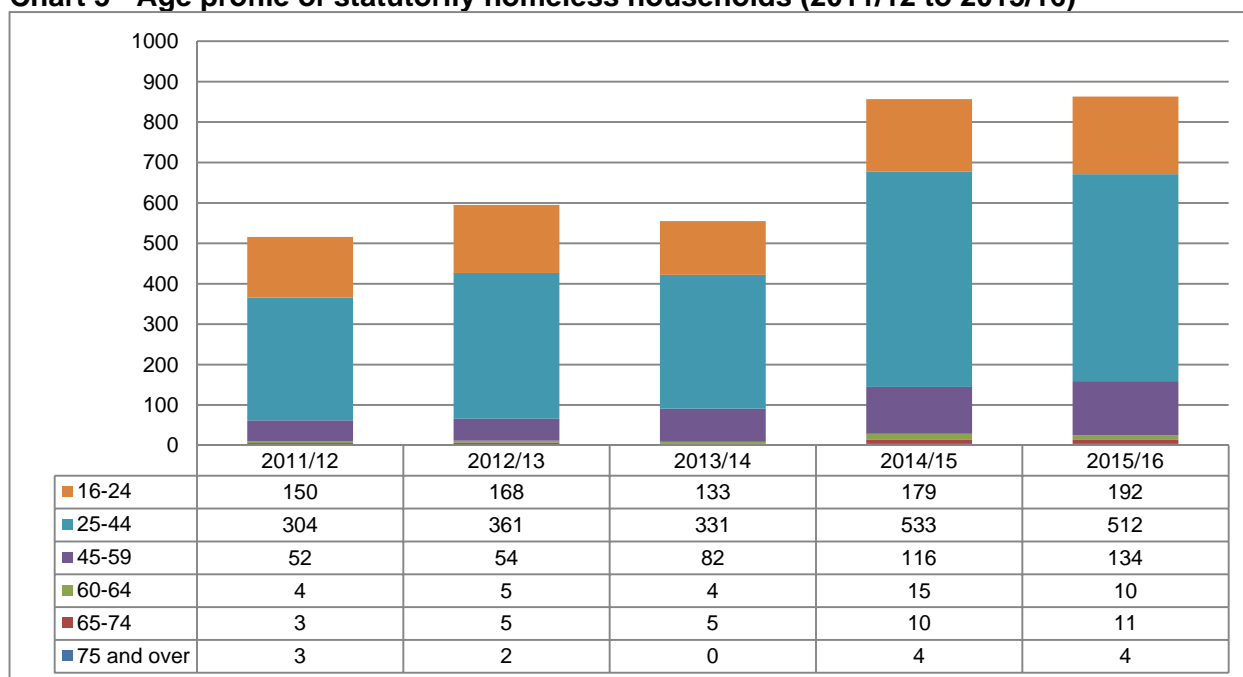


Source: P1E data

### 1.3.3 Age profile of statutorily homeless households

The majority of main applicants accepted as statutorily homeless are under 45 years of age.

**Chart 5 - Age profile of statutorily homeless households (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

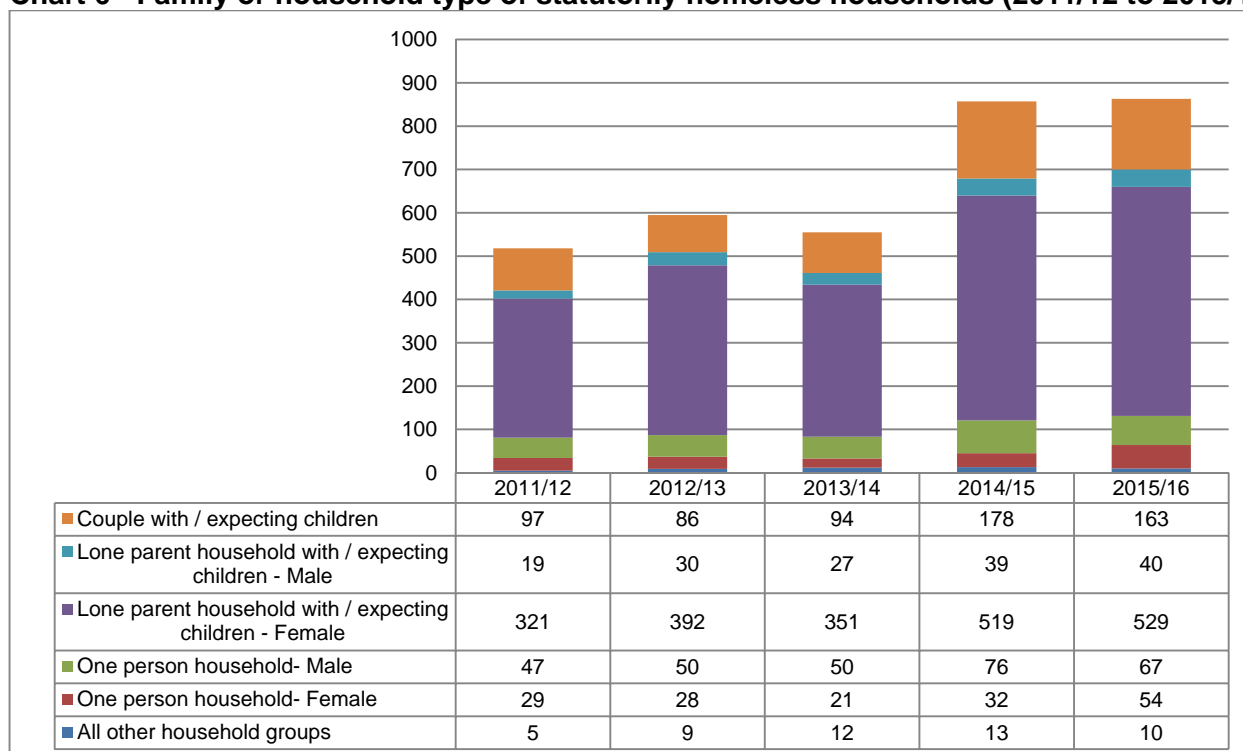


Source: P1E data

### 1.3.4 Family or household type of statutorily homeless households

The chart below sets out the range of household types accepted as statutorily homeless over the last five years. Lone parent households headed by a female account for the majority of homelessness acceptances in Southwark.

**Chart 6 - Family or household type of statutorily homeless households (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

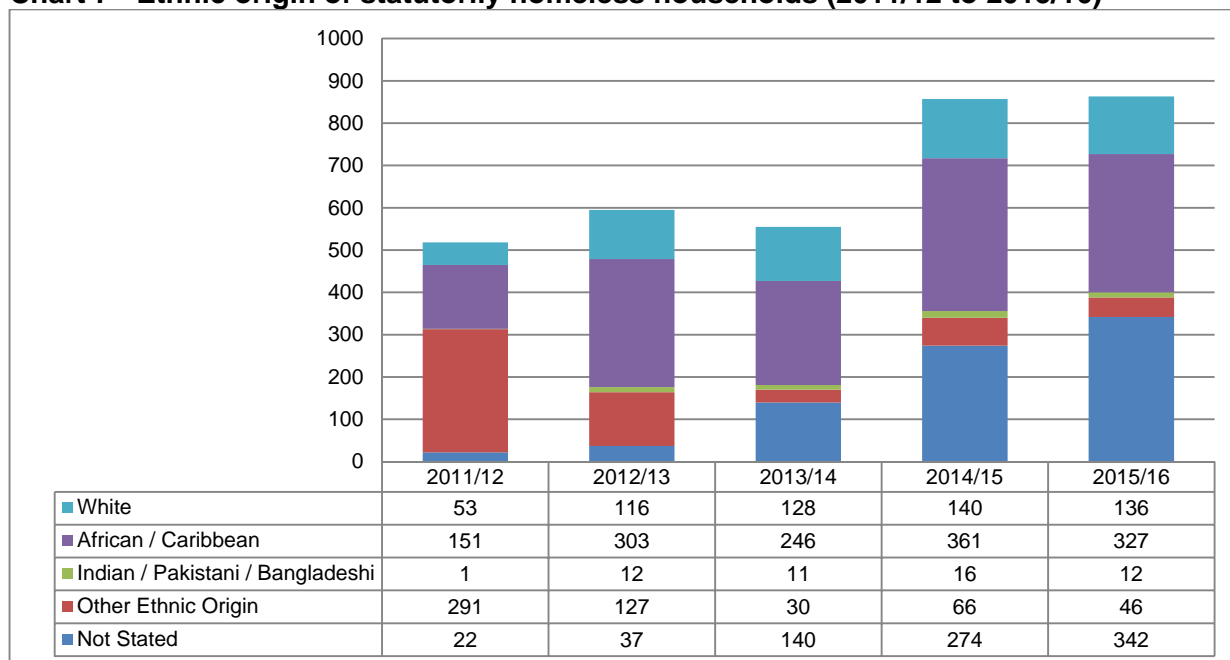


Source: P1E data

### 1.3.5 Ethnic origin of statutorily homeless households

This chart (Chart 7) looks at the ethnic origin of accepted households. There has been an increase in the number of households that have chosen not to state their ethnic origin in their initial application. All applicants are required to produce documents to confirm they are eligible for homelessness assistance.

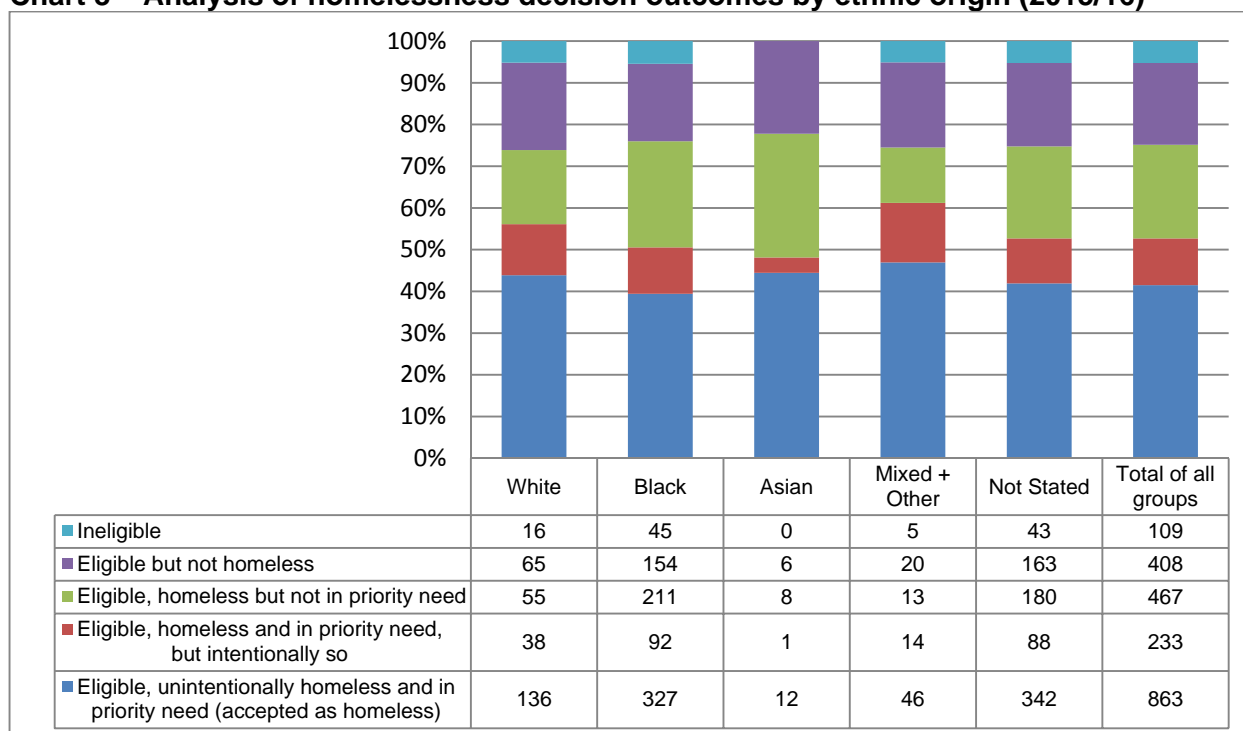
**Chart 7 - Ethnic origin of statutorily homeless households (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: P1E data

The chart below provides a more detailed analysis of all homelessness decisions made in 2015/16, including those where a statutory duty was not accepted by the council.

**Chart 8 – Analysis of homelessness decision outcomes by ethnic origin (2015/16)**



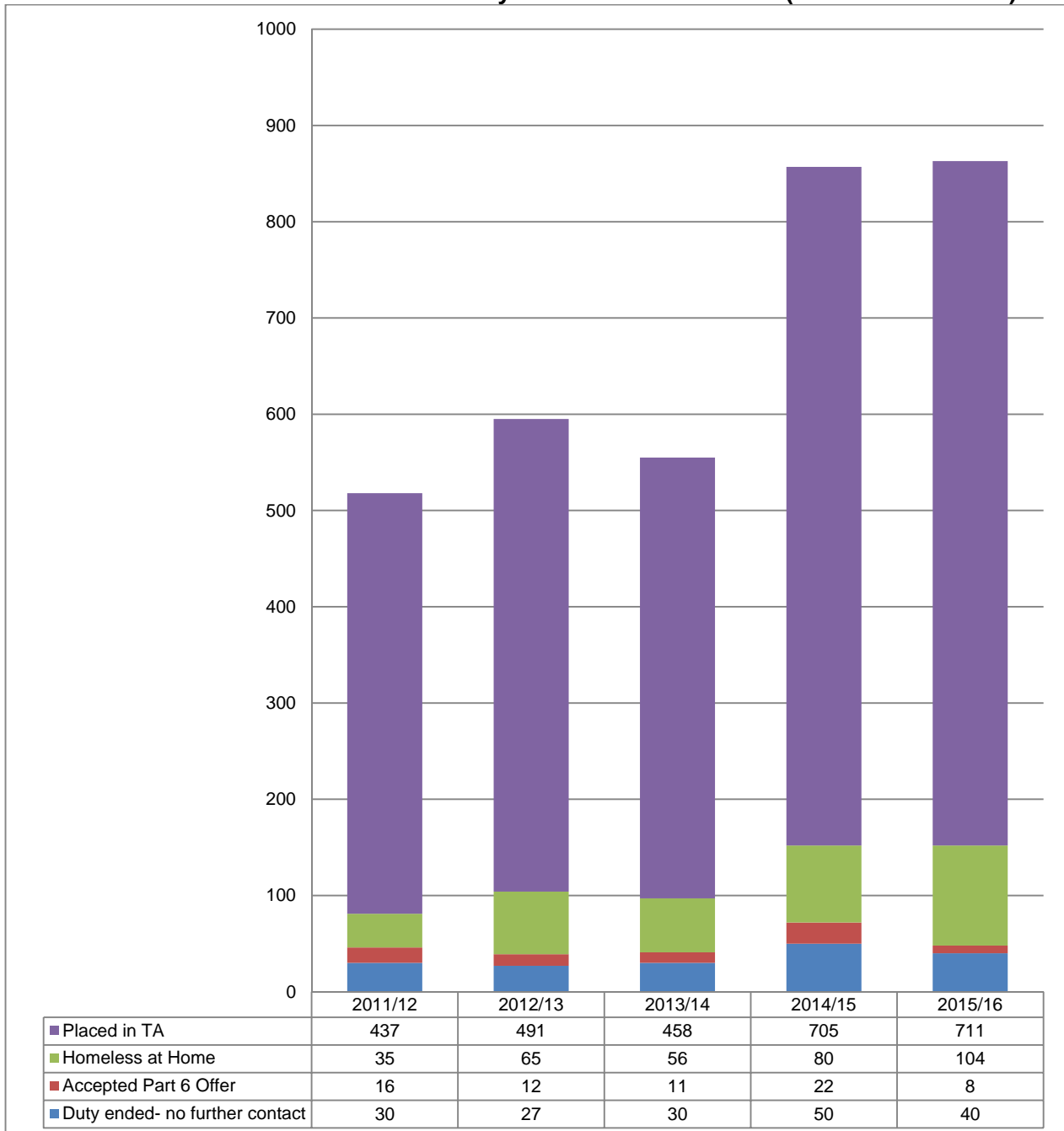
Source: P1E data

### 1.3.6 Immediate outcome for statutorily homeless households

The following chart shows the immediate outcome for households in Southwark over the last five years, once they were accepted as statutorily homeless. The majority of households over this time were placed in some form of temporary accommodation (TA).

The chart shows a big increase in the number of households that have been provided with TA in the last few years. This has put a strain on the Council's already stretched financial resources. In previous years Southwark would have been able to help many of these households to avoid homelessness by using the borough's private rented sector. But the sector can no longer be seen as providing a sustainable, affordable housing option for homeless households on low incomes. The main reason for this is that average rents in the borough have grown considerably whilst Local Housing Allowance has been frozen (see [section 7.2.2](#)). Finding affordable nightly paid temporary accommodation for homeless households in the borough has become difficult for the council.

**Chart 9 - Immediate outcome for statutorily homeless households (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: P1E data

- **‘Duty ended – no further contact’** refers to applicants who made their own arrangements, refused an offer of suitable accommodation or made no further contact with the local authority
- **‘Accepted Part 6 offer’** refers to Part 6 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended), which acts as the legal framework by which local authorities allocate their housing stock. Nominations by local authorities to stock owned by housing associations (also known as private registered providers of social housing) are allocated within the same legal framework. This group of cases include those where a “Part 6” offer, or an offer of any *assured tenancy* other than a “Part 6” offer, is made at the time the household is accepted as homeless, and the applicant is able to move into the property either immediately or within a few days once it has been made ready for occupation.
- **‘Homeless at home’** households are those that have been accepted as statutorily homeless by a local authority, but arrangements have been made with the consent of the applicant for them to remain in their own accommodation
- **‘Placed in TA’** refers to applicants accepted as eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and for whom some form of temporary accommodation was being secured by the local authority

## 2.0 Homelessness prevention and relief

### 2.1 Overview of homelessness prevention and relief in Southwark

The obligation for local authorities to prevent as well as respond to homelessness is longstanding in law and in good practice. Since the implementation of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, authorities have been legally required to assist people under imminent threat of homelessness (and classed as ‘in *priority need*’) by taking reasonable steps to prevent them from losing existing accommodation.

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed an obligation on all local authorities to devise prevention-focused homelessness strategies, aimed at minimising the number of households forced to access the statutory homelessness route and instead sustain their own home or find suitable alternative accommodation.

**Homeless prevention** falls into two categories:

- Households that have had their risk of homelessness prevented and remain in their existing home
- Households that have had their risk of homelessness prevented through assistance in obtaining alternative accommodation

**Homelessness relief** is where households have become homeless but have their homelessness relieved through assistance in securing accommodation available for at least six months. This cohort would generally be non-priority or intentionally homeless households, found to be homeless but not accepted as being owed a statutory homeless duty

Southwark first introduced a housing options approach in 2003 and since then various operational changes have been implemented which looked to improve the customer experience and maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness. Under the current service offer, applicants are offered the chance to make a homeless application in an appointment with the housing solutions service, and at the same time offered a broader range of housing options, including support to prevent their homelessness, and with accessing private rented sector accommodation.



The Homelessness Reduction Act, which was enacted in 2017 and likely to come in to force for other local authorities in 2018, will oblige local authorities to assess households that are at likely to become homeless in the next 56 days, rather than the current 28 days. Local authorities will then have another 56 days to attempt to relieve the household’s homelessness. The Act will require public bodies to work together and be able to demonstrate that they have considered every option to prevent each case of homelessness. Southwark has been successful in receiving Trailblazer funding that will enable the preventions approach to be expanded creating innovative new ways to help residents. For more information on the Trailblazer see [section 2.3.3](#).

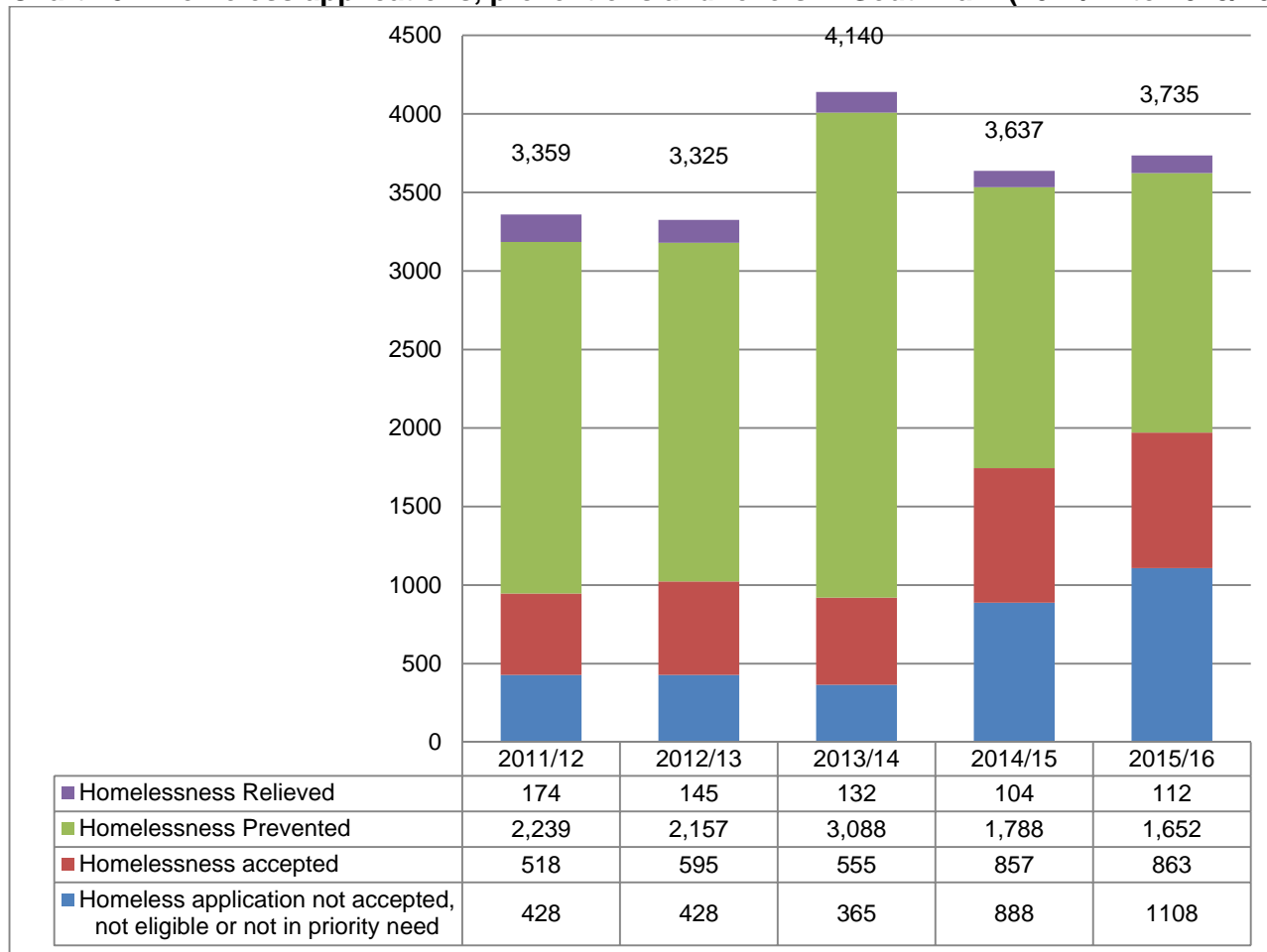
Further details about on-going service improvements and initiatives can be found in [appendix 7.1.2](#) of this report.

## 2.2 Homeless prevention and relief data

The following chart shows the increasing level of demand being placed on the borough’s homeless services across homeless assessment, prevention and relief. The reduction in preventions after 2013/14 followed a reduction in the amount of funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) the Council received after 2013/14.

The number of cases where Southwark was able to prevent or relieve homelessness was 27% fewer in 2015/16 than in 2011/12.

**Chart 10 – Homeless applications, preventions and reliefs in Southwark (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: P1E data

The following table sets out the local authorities with the highest level of homeless preventions and reliefs in 2015/16. Southwark had the fourth highest number in London and ranked twenty-eighth nationally. Southwark was the highest placed inner-London local authority\*.

**Table 4 – Highest level of homeless preventions and reliefs in England (2015/16)**

National Rank	Local Authority (IMD rank 2015)	Total Preventions + Reliefs	Rate per 1,000 households
1	Leeds (100)	8,368	25.29
2	Birmingham (11)	7,843	18.38
3	Kingston upon Hull, City of (9)	5,378	46.90
4	Bristol, City of (77)	4,348	22.90
5	Sunderland (38)	4,066	33.45
6	Wigan (107)	3,954	28.13
7	Newcastle upon Tyne (92)	3,775	31.42
8	<b>Barking and Dagenham (3)</b>	3,574	47.47
9	Gateshead (80)	3,411	37.66
10	Nottingham (10)	3,326	25.68
11	Bradford (30)	3,302	16.06
12	Dudley (118)	2,836	21.47
13	Warrington (176)	2,639	29.67
14	Leicester (14)	2,589	20.37
15	<b>Ealing (87)</b>	2,441	18.56
16	Hastings (20)	2,385	56.34
17	Sheffield (94)	2,312	9.76
18	Brighton and Hove (109)	2,213	17.56
19	Windsor and Maidenhead (306)	2,055	33.78
20	Walsall (41)	2,046	18.44
21	Kirklees (101)	2,020	11.29
22	<b>Redbridge (119)</b>	1,982	18.42
23	Oldham (51)	1,966	21.28
24	Rochdale (25)	1,961	21.99
25	Stockport (178)	1,858	14.86
26	Wolverhampton (19)	1,848	17.70
27	Liverpool (7)	1,825	8.59
28	<b>Southwark (23)</b>	1,764	13.58

Source: DCLG Live Table 792

\*Inner-London boroughs include Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster

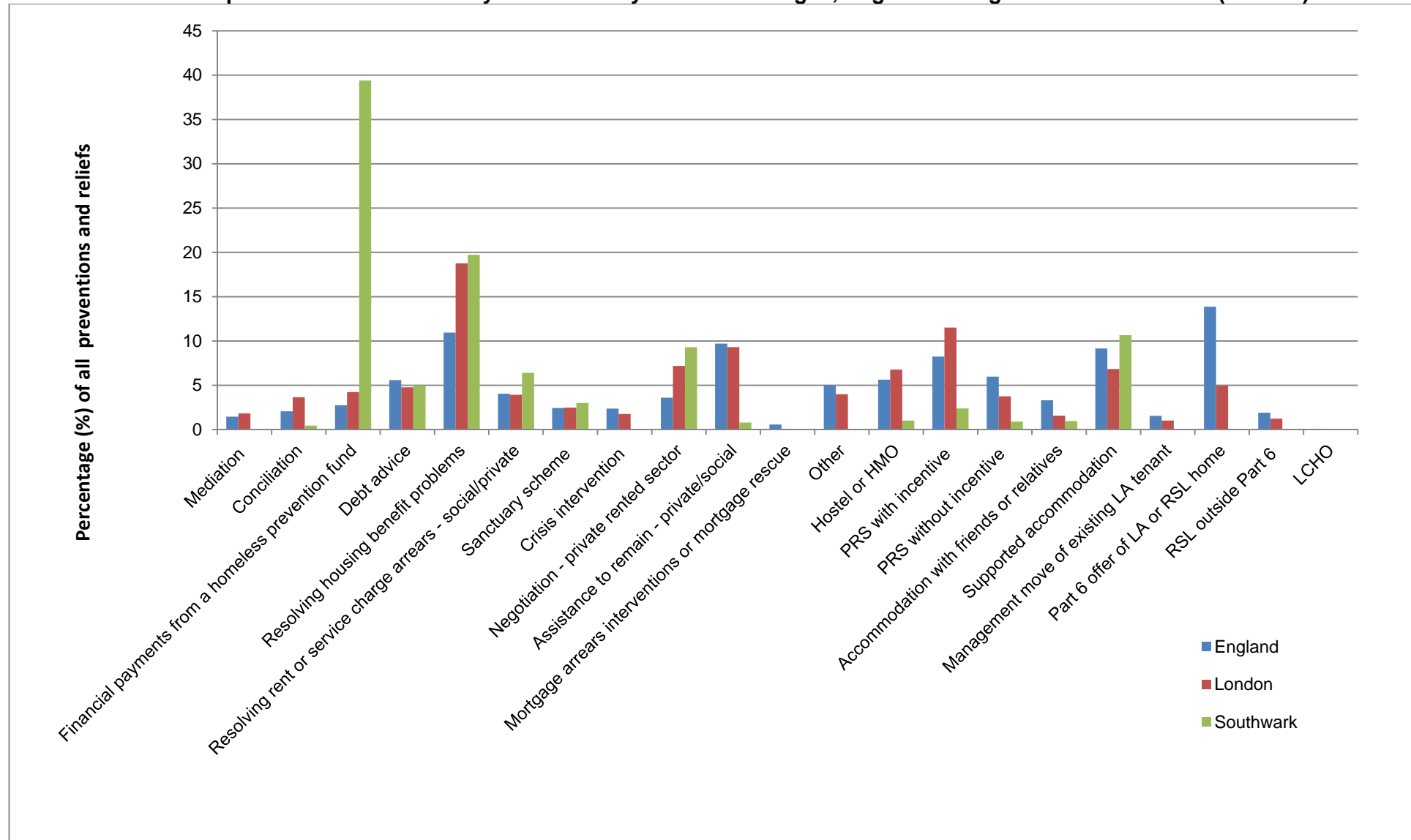
In summary, in 2015/16 Southwark Council prevented or relieved homelessness through:

- Financial payments from a homeless prevention fund: **39%**
- Resolving housing benefit problems: **20%**
- Supported accommodation (including supported lodging schemes, successful referrals to supported housing projects): **11%**
- Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure that someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector: **9%**
- Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector: **6%**
- Debt advice: **5%**
- Other: **10%**

Chart 11 demonstrates how important DHPs are to Southwark as that funding constitutes “financial payments from a homeless prevention fund. Unlike some boroughs that returned some of their funding, Southwark developed a robust approach to using DHPs to help residents. The chart also shows that Southwark is unable to use the private rented sector (PRS) as a prevention to the extent that some other boroughs in London and England can.

Improving the pathways through supported housing has enabled the council to use this type of accommodation more effectively.

**Chart 11 – Homeless prevention & relief activity carried out by London boroughs, English boroughs and in Southwark (2015/16)**



Source: P1E data, Internal records and DCLG Live Tables

## 2.3 Work with partners to prevent and relieve homelessness in Southwark

This section provides an overview of the protocols, services, activities and resources that contribute to homelessness prevention in Southwark. All of the following activity contributes to Southwark's overall homeless prevention performance that is reported to *The Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG)* on a quarterly basis.

### 2.3.1 Southwark Homelessness Forum

Southwark's homelessness forum represents a partnership between the council and the wider local voluntary sector. It allows discussions about issues that affect homeless people and how services are responding to these. The forum meets on a quarterly basis with the aim of ensuring that current and future services for homeless and potentially homeless people in Southwark:

- Meet national and local homelessness standards;
- Are high quality and maximise opportunities for homelessness prevention;
- Meet the needs of a range of homeless people, including those of rough sleepers, families, people with disabilities or ill health and victims of domestic violence;
- Provide value for money;
- Learn from and share models of good practice locally and further afield;
- Offer choice where possible;
- Contribute to the delivery of other local and national strategies, plans and objectives across housing, regeneration, health and wellbeing, and social care.

The forum is co-chaired by the voluntary sector and the Council, and plays an important role in helping to develop Southwark's Homelessness Strategy. From 2017, a sub-group from the forum will be monitoring the delivery of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer.

### 2.3.2 Joint working to prevent homelessness

Several protocols have been established between the council and key partners to minimise homelessness and improve coordination across services, a summary of which is provided below:

Protocol	Description
<b>Homelessness prevention and eviction procedure:</b>	This protocol sets out how the council and partner housing associations will take every possible measure to prevent evictions as a result of the impact of welfare reform policies. The 27 housing associations that have signed up to the protocol agree to only pursue the eviction of a tenant as a final resort if the tenant refuses to engage with the housing association or Southwark Council. Tenants accepting the offer of support receive protection from eviction as the council and housing associations will not authorise an eviction warrant if the tenant is seeking help from an appropriate advice specialist such as the citizens advice bureau, Southwark Law Centre or the council's SUSTAIN team. The support package on offer includes helping people to access benefits, find suitable accommodation, to seek assistance from specialist teams if they have drug or alcohol addiction and to get straightforward debt advice. Tenants are also offered support to help them into employment.

<p><b>Hospital discharge protocol:</b></p>	<p>This procedure established a referral system with local health and social care agencies to minimise homelessness and improve the quality of life for homeless patients when discharged from hospital. The referral systems minimises the number of patients being discharged from hospital and advised to approach the housing solutions service as homeless or social care agencies for assistance and support.</p> <p>The protocol is currently in place across Guy's and St Thomas' hospital, King's College hospital and the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM). Referrals can be made by hospital discharge teams at any time of day prior to the patient leaving hospital. The referral is addressed by the housing solutions service within 3 working days, and a housing assessment is conducted to identify how best to support the patient once they are discharged.</p>
<p><b>Housing and Southwark advocacy &amp; support service (SASS) protocol:</b></p>	<p>This procedure outlines how the Southwark Advocacy and Support Service (SASS) and Southwark's housing department cooperate to ensure that tenants who experience domestic abuse are dealt with swiftly and professionally in order to reduce any further distress:</p> <p>Once a tenant's resident services officer (RSO) is aware that the tenant is experiencing domestic abuse they will conduct a risk assessment. A SASS worker will provide their own risk assessment and a letter detailing the service user's situation / history of abuse. When all of the evidence has been collated the RSO will consider the risks and the options available to the tenant, which may include a referral to the sanctuary scheme, or if it is deemed that the resident should be moved for safety reasons the RSO will refer to the council's social welfare panel (SWP). If the case is accepted by the SWP but the tenant needs to move out of their current property before they have successfully bid for a new property, SASS will try to secure a refuge, which will not affect the status of their application. Council tenants will always be advised not to give up their tenancy.</p> <p>Non-council tenants that require housing assistance will be referred to the housing solutions service, and if the client no longer has a roof over their head a homeless application will be made. However if they still have accommodation they will receive advice and assistance, and a homeless application will be made at a later time. SASS liaise with the housing solutions team on the day that the tenant attends an appointment to help minimise the risk of any further distress.</p>
<p><b>No Second Night Out:</b></p>	<p>No Second Night Out is a project focussed on helping those who find themselves rough sleeping on the streets of London for the first time. The project ensures there is a rapid response to new rough sleepers, and provides an offer, following a full assessment indoors that means they do not have to sleep out for a second night.</p> <p>Having presented themselves at Housing Options, medium to high support clients will be referred directly to the Reablement Team where they will be allocated a caseworker who will be responsible for making referrals to appropriate supported accommodation. The team will place the client in TA while referrals to supported accommodation are pending.</p> <p>There are no specific accommodation options for people with low support needs. They would be expected to access the private rented sector (through a Finders Fee scheme) with floating support if necessary. Referrals can be made by the Housing Options Team to the Single Homeless Project (SHP) to provide floating support.</p>

<p><b>No First Night Out:*</b></p>	<p>No First Night Out pilots in London have looked to identify pre-rough sleepers (those about to be on the streets) and what the tipping points are that see them end up there. They found that the issues affecting single homeless people included mental health, drugs and alcohol and domestic violence. From 2017, two dedicated No First Night Out housing options officers will work with partners to develop a prevention approach, specifically tailored to help prevent pre-rough sleepers from spending their first night on the street.</p>
<p><b>Housing First:*</b></p>	<p>Housing First is a relatively new programme that replaces the traditional system of transitional accommodation for vulnerable homeless people. It allows those with complex needs to be housed straight away, without the insecurity of temporary accommodation. Housing First works on the concept that other issues can be more easily addressed once stable housing is secured. Southwark will employ two Housing First officers to work with these vulnerable people when the approach is officially adopted in 2017.</p>

\*- Housing First and No First Night Out are to be introduced by Southwark in 2017

### 2.3.3 Trailblazer funding to transform services

#### Homelessness Reduction Bill Trailblazer

To prepare for the new legislation, which became law in 2017, Southwark’s corporate commitment will ensure that all council departments work with Housing Solutions to prevent homelessness. A cross departmental working group will ensure this change in culture occurs. Partners will be asked to sign up to a Homeless Prevention Charter that will help advisors give residents the best assistance at the earliest stage. With partners all providing consistent advice, the council will be responsible for overseeing the prevention options.

Working with partners, Southwark will develop Personal Housing Plans which will be used to monitor how affective each prevention measure has been. Pathway plans will include the additional care and support provisions some vulnerable homeless people will need.

The new approach will enable officers to work with many more people in danger of losing their homes, including single homeless people and those that are not vulnerable. Officers will be able to help people help themselves through a range of accommodation initiatives, like lodging and sharing schemes.

Every local authority in England will be required to introduce this approach once the Act has been brought into force. As a trailblazer, Southwark will be sharing its findings to help them develop their own approach.

#### Prevention of Rough Sleeping Trailblazer

Building on the services already in place in Southwark, like No Second Night Out, the Council will use this extra funding to develop additional measures that will prevent people from needing to sleep on the streets. As well as developing *Housing First* and *No First Night Out* models, a multi agency assessment process will be adopted for individuals that have nowhere safe to stay.

In order to help rough sleepers find employment, the Council will recruit two ex rough sleepers each year to identify appropriate employment opportunities for them and provide mentoring. Employment training and support will be provided by the St Mungo/Broadway employment academy.

### 2.3.4 Financial inclusion team

The financial inclusion team are part of the housing solutions service and provide assistance to all tenants who are at risk of losing their home or who may simply be worried about their current housing situation. The team work in partnership with other agencies including jobcentre plus and *Southwark Works* to help tenants find employment. They also work closely with other council departments including [SUSTAIN](#) and the [Local Support team](#) to ensure that a joined up approach is provided to help vulnerable Southwark residents. The team provide the following support:

Rent arrears fund:	Providing a maximum payment of £500 to assist private tenants with a shortfall in their rent on the understanding that the landlord will not seek to evict the tenant for at least six months
Welfare reform advice:	Advice and assistance for residents affected by welfare reform changes, including advice on how to downsize through <i>Homesearch</i> or mutual exchange
Personalised support:	Help with budgeting and finding alternative solutions to housing needs, such as rent deposit or finders fee schemes
Outreach sessions:	Attending community venues to help residents that might be struggling to keep up their housing payments
Home visits:	Providing advocacy and assistance to those unable to leave their homes
Negotiation with landlords:	Sustaining tenancies and working with landlords to help avoid homelessness

One of the most significant elements of the prevention approach adopted by the financial inclusion team is their delivery of Southwark’s discretionary housing payments (DHP) scheme. The team administer DHP applications from housing benefit recipients who are struggling with their housing costs. Demand for these payments has increased significantly since the rollout of welfare reform policies; specifically the [welfare benefit cap](#) and [social rented sector size-criteria](#). Details of Southwark’s DHP allocation can be found in [section 1.2.2](#) of this report. In 2015/16, funding was provided to residents experiencing a shortfall in income, for the following reasons:

**Table 5a - Successful Southwark DHP applications (2015/16)**

Primary reason for application	Number of successful applications	Total of DHP allocated	Average DHP award per case
Social sector size criteria	962	£531,164.71	£552.15
Exceptional circumstances	142	£85,765.48	£603.98
LHA reforms	76	£48,147.14	633.52
Welfare benefit cap	261	£357,329.60	£1,369.08
Combination of reasons			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>£1,022,406.93</b>	

Source: Internal Records

In 2013/14, Southwark Council had £2,232,844<sup>1</sup> in DHP and was able to assist 2,555 households. In 2015/16, Southwark had less than half of that funding but was able to assist 1,441 households.

<sup>1</sup> This figure consisted of £1,877,849 from the DWP topped up with £351,782 from the council's Housing Revenue Account.

Households affected by the [Social Rented Sector Size Criteria](#) have received the majority of awards. Applicants demonstrating more than one primary reason received a higher DHP award on average per case.

The table below shows how DHP awards were used by Southwark residents:

**Table 5b - Outcome of successful Southwark DHP awards (2015/16)**

Expected Outcome	Number of cases	Total amount
Short-term help before move	387	£191,013.55
Exceptional circumstances	651	£468,848.24
Short-term help seeking employment	246	£273,436.46
Short-term until change of circumstances	144	£79,796.16
Combination of uses		
Adapted accommodation	11	£7,739.92
Foster carer	1	£890.76
Rent deposit	1	£654.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>1441</b>	<b>£1,022,379.93</b>

Source: Internal Records

Additional information about Southwark’s DHP scheme can be found in [appendix 7.1.5](#) of this report.

### 2.3.4 Youth homelessness team

The youth homelessness team, which forms part of the housing solutions service mainly work with young people at risk of homelessness. Their responsibilities relate to Sections 17 and 20 of the Children’s Act, which stipulate the support that local authorities are required to provide for children and families. Some activities that this team carry out in order to prevent homelessness include:

- Mediation with families and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness,
- Facilitating access to the private rented sector,
- Utilising a specialist project that places young people with host families for up to 28 days whilst the above activities take place.

### 2.3.5 Domestic abuse

[Chart 3 on page 11](#) of this report indicates that the number of homelessness acceptances attributed to “violent breakdown of a relationship, involving a partner” (55) accounted for 6% of all accepted cases in 2015/16.

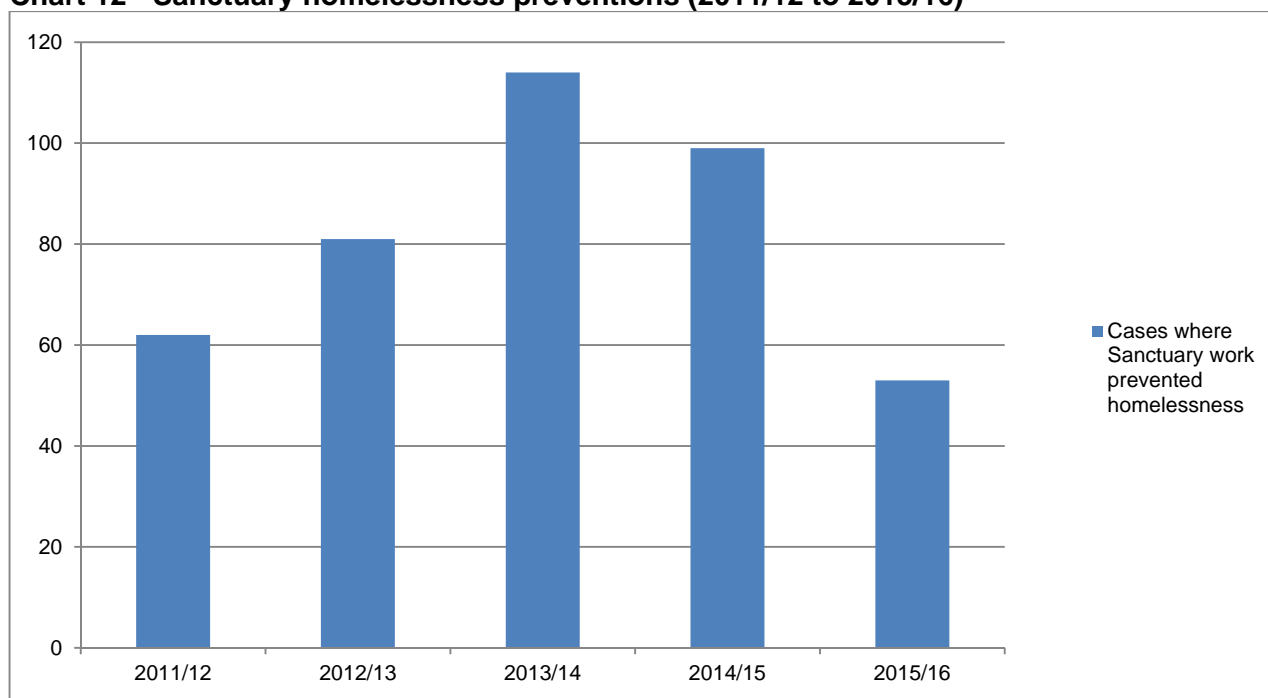
Survivors of domestic abuse who are accommodated in temporary refuges are legally classed as homeless, and are awarded band three priority in Southwark’s housing *allocations policy*.

The housing options for survivors of domestic violence will vary depending on their personal preferences and circumstances, such as whether they are the tenant at their home and their eligibility to receive benefits. One homeless prevention option may be for the survivor to access Southwark Council’s sanctuary scheme, which is aimed at those who wish to remain in their own home. The sanctuary scheme provides increased security for the survivor in their home and may include strengthened doors, locks, window frames and fire resistance measures. Access to the sanctuary scheme is subject to a risk assessment of the survivor’s circumstances and managed by Southwark advocacy and support services (SASS).

The chart below sets out the number of homeless preventions that have been achieved through Southwark’s sanctuary scheme over the last five years:



**Chart 12 - Sanctuary homelessness preventions (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: P1E data

Alternatively, the council may seek to evict the perpetrator or exclude them from the property through an injunction.

### 2.3.6 Private tenancies team

This team works with **private tenants** to sustain tenancies and address situations where a tenant may feel that their landlord is acting unfairly. Examples of these scenarios may include:

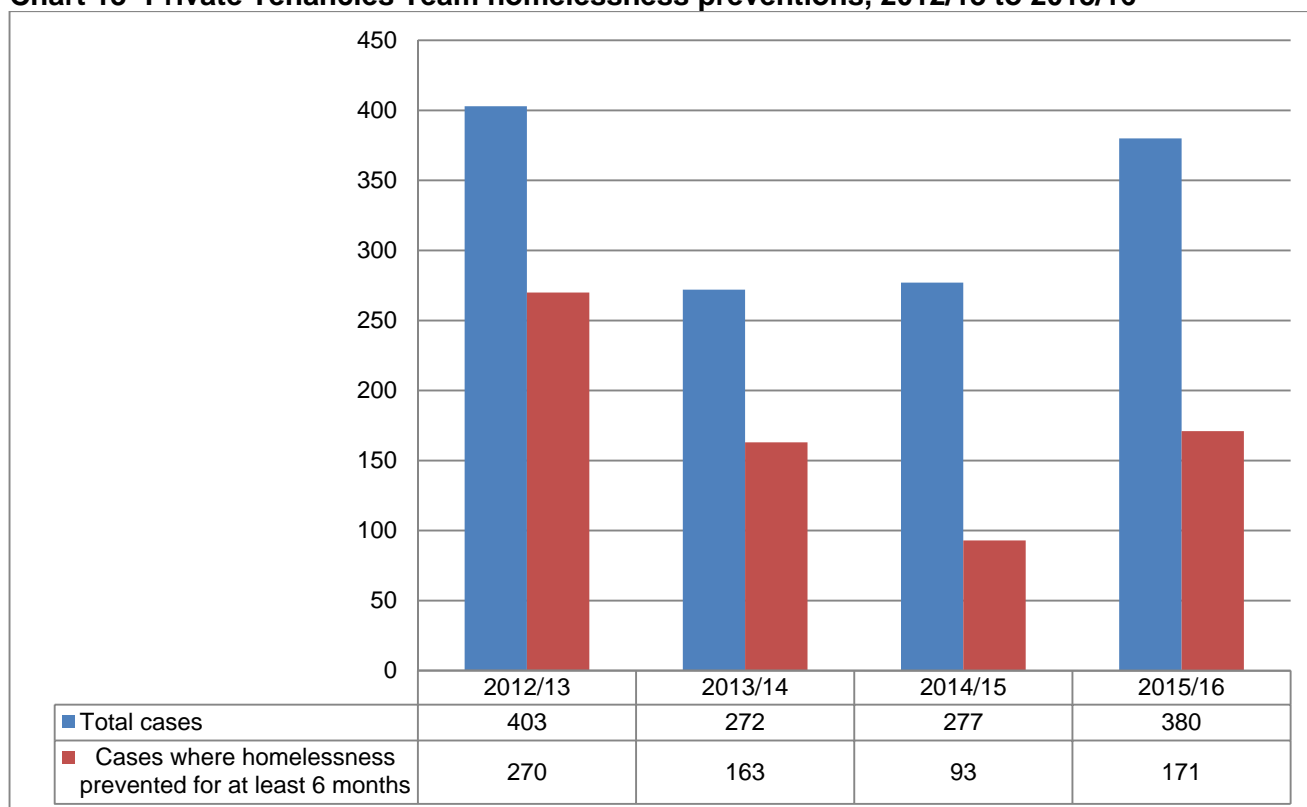
- Where a landlord is asking a tenant to leave, or has given them notice;
- Where a tenant is having problems getting their deposit back or in getting repairs carried out;
- Where a landlord is trying to increase the rent charge.

The team will be expanded in 2017 to ensure it is resourced to negotiate with landlords to help prevent eviction proceedings where a valid notice to quit has been served. They work closely with the Financial Inclusion Team to help broker agreements to help tenants remain in their homes (through incentive payments for landlords, for example) and provide more in-depth casework support for clients who approach at risk of homelessness (soon to be 56 days as opposed to the current 28 days.) The team will also help private tenants defend possession proceedings wherever possible, i.e. invalid Notices, breaches of deposit protection legislation or more recently, breaches of the Deregulation Act 2015. The Deregulation Act brought in legislation that simplified the law concerning tenancy deposits and clarified when a s21 notice may be served.

The following table shows the number of cases, per year, where the Private Tenancies team has been successful at preventing homelessness for at least six months. Preventions are also merited to cases where there has been a ceasing of eviction proceedings completely through intervention and advice and/or the provision of support to enable a client the time to make their own alternative accommodation arrangements.

Preventing homelessness in the private rented sector has become harder over the last few years. Rising rents and welfare reform have contributed to making the sector less secure for renters.

**Chart 13- Private Tenancies Team homelessness preventions, 2012/13 to 2015/16**



Source: Internal records

### 2.3.7 SUSTAIN

Sustain is a service which helps vulnerable **social housing tenants** to maintain their tenancy when at risk of losing their home, due to:

- Rent arrears;
- Breach of a court order;
- Breach of tenancy clauses (e.g. antisocial behaviour);
- Need of support to manage day to day tenancy issues.

All vulnerable social housing tenants at risk of losing their tenancy are able to self refer to the SUSTAIN service. SUSTAIN can help vulnerable tenants, including those with mental or physical health problems; tenants with physical or learning difficulties, older or younger people, or those for whom English is not their first language.

### 2.3.8 Commissioned partners

A wide range of housing services have been commissioned by the council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to help residents that are homeless and have support needs. For a complete list of commissioned supported housing services please see [section 4.1](#).

Southwark commissions a day centre homelessness advice service through the Manna Society, a local charity. This offers a drop-in homeless prevention advice service run from an open access day centre situated near London Bridge train station. The service works with clients who are homeless (either rough sleeping or hidden homeless, such as sofa surfing) or those threatened with homelessness. It also provides advice on benefit entitlement, employment and training as well as

housing options. A small amount of accommodation from charitable and private landlords is procured for clients, thereby preventing homelessness where possible. The homelessness advice service is designed to complement wider homeless prevention activities carried out by or on behalf of the council, including the commissioned outreach service for rough sleepers provided by St Mungo's Broadway.

Additionally, Southwark commissions community services to provide independent advice, advocacy and casework for residents. Many of the issues they assist residents with are related to housing. They include:

- Changes to benefit entitlement and welfare reform.
- Homelessness and the risk of homelessness.
- Language barriers.
- Difficulties paying for basic services.
- Irregular immigration status (and No Recourse to Public Funds).

Amongst the services they provide to help residents avoid homelessness are:

- Rent arrears: support to arrange affordable repayments and avoid homelessness.
- Advice for interrelated employment, debt, benefits and housing problems.
- Multiple debt: independent advice that rent and council tax must be paid first.

Table 6 shows a breakdown of some of the major recipients of community services' advice funding, up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018:

**Table 6- Community Services' advice funding, up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018**

Service Area	Provider	Annual Contract Value: Aug 2016-July 2017	Total Contract Value: Aug 2016 - March 2018
Generalist advice- West of the borough	<b>1. Advising London</b>	£313,380	£522,300
Advice in Community Languages- Borough wide	<b>1. Advising London</b>	£72,000	£120,000
Generalist advice- East of the borough and Leaseholder advice	<b>2. Citizens Advice Southwark</b>	£346,200	£577,000
Specialist level legal advice services- borough wide	<b>3. Southwark Law Centre</b>	£369,600	£616,000

Source: Internal records

Representatives from Advising London, Citizens Advice and the Southwark Law Centre attend the Southwark Homelessness Forum. In recent years the forum has provided a platform that brings partners together to share information about welfare reform and the main causes of homelessness in the borough (see [section 2.3.1](#)). It also allows partners to give straight forward feedback about how well council services are operating.

### 2.3.9 Southwark repossession prevention fund

In partnership with the Southwark Credit Union, Southwark's housing solutions service offers both homeowners and tenants a small one-off loan up to a maximum of £5,000 to help prevent repossession or eviction in the short term. The fund is aimed at people who have had a temporary setback but whose circumstances are likely to recover.

### 2.3.10 Southwark emergency support scheme (SESS)

Southwark's emergency support scheme (SESS) was implemented in April 2013 and offers assistance to customers in crisis by providing support in kind including the provision of white goods, furniture, food bank parcels, rent advances for those leaving care or prison and in exceptional circumstances cash payments through London Mutual Credit Union.

Between April 2015 and March 2016, SESS received a total of 1,576 applications and made 903 awards, which equates to a 57% approval rate. The table below shows a breakdown of SESS awards according to the type of award made and the amount awarded over this period:

**Table 7a - Allocation of SESS awards in Southwark 2015/16**

Award type	Total amount awarded	Proportional breakdown of SESS awards made
Cash	£4,106	1%
Food	£30,921	6%
Furniture / White goods / Other	£485,493	92%
Rent in advance / Deposit	£5,989	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£526,509</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Internal records

The following table shows that lone parents and single person households made up 84% of all applications received for SESS.

**Table 7b- SESS applications by household type 2015/16**

Applications received by Household type	% of all applications
Couple	2%
Family	4%
Lone Parent	29%
Pensioner	10%
Single Person	55%

Source: Internal records

### 2.3.11 Local support team

The local support team is a benefits maximisation service that offers advice about extra income and services that may be available to Southwark's residents. Support is offered in making new benefit claims, checking that entitlement to welfare benefits is correct and helping residents challenge inaccurate decisions. Home visits are available for residents over 60 years of age, people that are housebound, and those that are vulnerable.

## 3.0 Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation (TA) may be used by local authorities as an interim solution for statutorily homeless households until suitable permanent accommodation becomes available. The TA offered to a homeless household must be suitable for them and the local authority will take a number of things into account when considering this, including:

- how much rent the homeless household can afford to pay;
- the condition of the accommodation;

- whether the accommodation is the right size for the household;
- the location of the accommodation;
- any health needs in the household and other social factors (such as whether the household needs to be close to support services, family or special needs schools).

Households placed in TA are liable to pay rent and may have to pay other charges for items including meals or cleaning services. Households in receipt of benefits or on a low income may be eligible for housing benefit, but this may not cover the rent in full.

Local authorities must continue to provide TA until a homeless household either:

- Can move into settled accommodation arranged by the local authority;
- Is no longer eligible for assistance;
- Moves out under their own volition;
- Is evicted because of something they have done (e.g. rent arrears or antisocial behaviour); or
- Refuses a final offer of settled accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

Like most inner London local authorities, Southwark is unable to secure enough affordable temporary accommodation to be able to keep all homeless residents housed in the borough. The following table shows that 74% of TA secured for homeless households is in the borough and that no households have had to leave London.

**Table 8- Current location of Southwark's TA**

Location of Southwark's temporary accommodation		
Location	Number of homes	%
Southwark	1408	74%
Surrounding London boroughs (Lewisham, Lambeth, Bromley)	360	19%
Other London boroughs	133	7%
Outside of London	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Internal records

As of March 2016, Southwark had the 18<sup>th</sup> highest number of statutorily homeless households placed in TA in England <sup>2</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> highest level in London.

**Table 9 - English local authorities with the highest levels of statutorily homeless households in temporary accommodation (March 2016)**

Local Authority (Non-London in <i>italics</i> )	National rank	Total households in TA	IMD rank 2015
Newham	1st	3,956	8
Haringey	2nd	3,164	21
Enfield	3rd	2,987	53
Brent	4th	2,945	39
Barnet	5th	2,941	157
Croydon	6th	2,918	91
Hackney	7th	2,495	2

<sup>2</sup> Of 296 boroughs that had submitted data

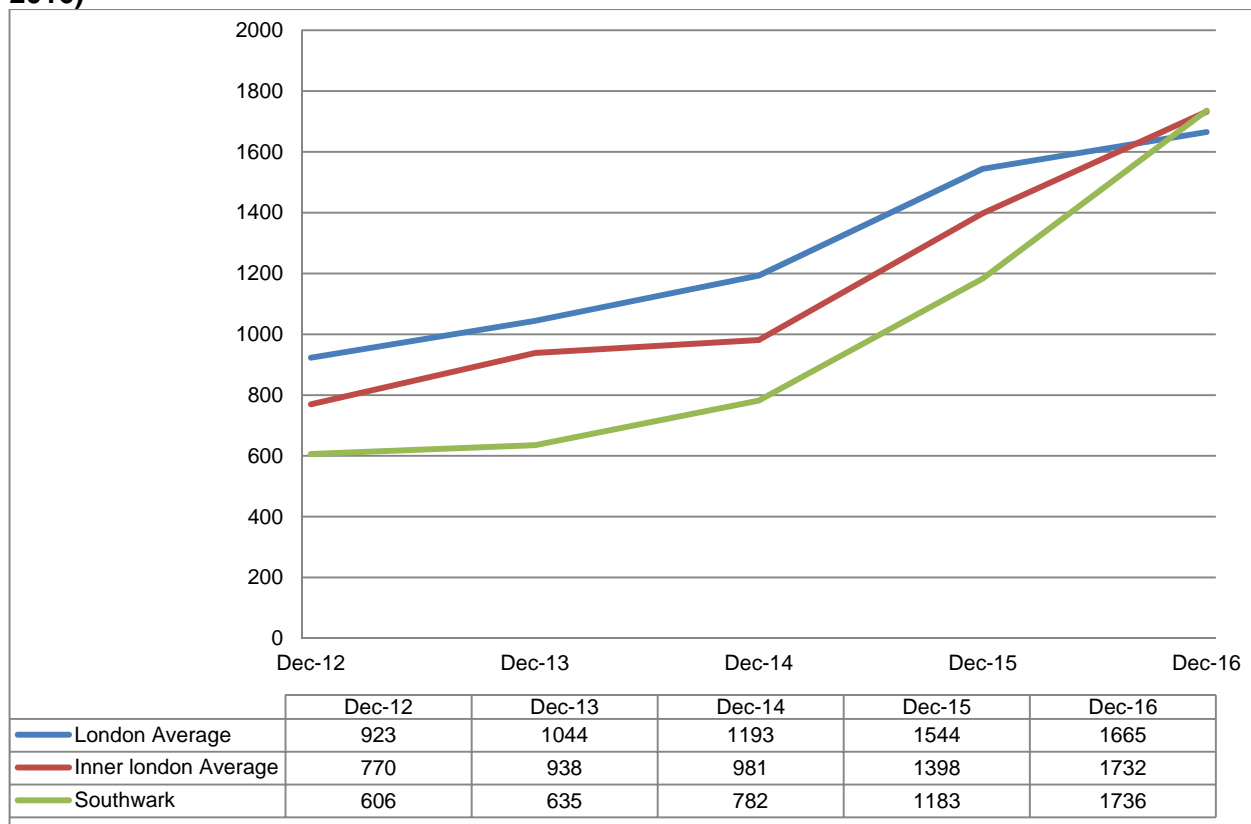
Westminster	8th	2,423	43
Ealing	9th	2,301	87
Redbridge	10th	2,205	119
Waltham Forest	11th	2,181	15
Tower Hamlets	12th	1,972	6
Lambeth	13th	1,867	22
Kensington and Chelsea	14th	1,836	99
Lewisham	15th	1,747	26
Barking and Dagenham	16th	1,735	3
<i>Brighton and Hove</i>	<i>17th</i>	<i>1,636</i>	<i>109</i>
<b>Southwark</b>	<b>18th</b>	<b>1,341</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: DCLG Live Tables

The following chart shows that the number of statutorily homeless households in TA has increased across London over the last five years. Until December 2016, the number of homeless households in TA in Southwark had remained below the London and Inner-London averages.

The chart excludes households for whom a main homeless duty has ended and who remained in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter (e.g. pending expiry of a notice to quit or pending possible possessions proceedings). It also excludes those households with pending enquiries, or found to be intentionally homeless or awaiting review, appeal or referral.

**Chart 14 – Number of statutorily homeless households in temporary accommodation in Southwark, compared to London and Inner-London borough averages (quarter 4, 2012 to 2016)**



Source: P1E data, Internal records

\*Inner-London boroughs include Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster

^Data for Dec 16 incomplete as not all local authorities had submitted data

### 3.1 Supply of temporary accommodation in Southwark

The types of temporary accommodation (TA) being used by Southwark as of November 2016, either to accommodate statutorily homeless households, or those households who are awaiting an outcome from their homeless application can be described as follows:

Type of TA	Occupied units	Description
<b>Nightly-paid accommodation, also referred to as Bed &amp; Breakfast (B&amp;B)</b>	625	This comprises both self-contained and non self-contained accommodation purchased on a nightly basis. The council uses this accommodation as a last resort; either in emergencies or when there is nowhere else to place homeless households. This is a very expensive form of TA and impacts on the council's General Fund. It is estimated that each placement on average costs the council £6,400 pa.
<b>Hostels</b>	350	Southwark has a stock of council owned and managed hostels, which are mainly non self-contained units. Hostels are accounted through the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the rent collected covers any costs.
<b>In-house private sector leasing scheme</b>	108	Self-contained private sector accommodation leased by the council from private landlords at guaranteed rent levels.
<b>Housing association leasing scheme (HALS)</b>	63	Self-contained accommodation leased by the council from registered providers. This accommodation is cost neutral to the council's <i>General Fund</i> .
<b>Voluntary organisation accommodation</b>	11	Voluntary sector placements for homeless households.
<b>Regeneration estate void property</b>	603	Properties on estates pending demolition / regeneration. This accommodation is accounted through the <i>HRA</i> and all costs are covered by rent collected.

Source: Internal records

A detailed comparison of the different types of TA used across Inner London boroughs is provided in [appendix 7.2.6](#) of this report.

The percentage of households in TA that have been on “passported benefits” (i.e. in receipt of non working benefits such as JSA or ESA where Housing Benefit would be paid automatically) has dropped significantly. Previously, around 90% of households would have had TA paid through Housing Benefit. A survey of TA tenants carried out in 2015 showed that this figure has dropped to around 50%. This is likely to be because of the increase in the number of people in part time employment (declaring themselves as self-employed).

The Government chose Southwark to be one of the first boroughs to introduce Universal Credit. This new benefits system requires claimants to pay their bills and housing costs themselves, with some exceptions. The transition has been difficult and has led to an increase in the number of tenants in arrears, particularly in nightly paid temporary accommodation. Part of the problem has been the time taken to process claims (6-7 weeks on average).

### 3.2 Average length of stay in temporary accommodation

Until recently, households facing homelessness may have been able to avoid spending time in TA by taking up an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector through a rent deposit scheme. This is no longer a realistic option for those on low incomes as the capped rate of *Local Housing Allowance (LHA)* does not meet the average rent at the lower end of the market (see [Table 17 in appendix 7.2.2](#) of this report).

The following table shows the average length of time spent in TA for different client groups awaiting suitable housing, as of January 2017. Waiting times have risen recently and are expected to rise in the next few years, with more households expected to become homeless and fewer lettings available each year for the council to house homeless households.

**Table 10 - Average length of time spent in temporary accommodation for different client groups awaiting suitable housing (Jan 2017)**

Client group	Average stay in temporary accommodation
People awaiting supported housing (Reablement clients)	226 days
Statutory homelessness households	270 days
Households with <a href="#">no recourse to public funds</a> (placed by Children's and Adults Services)	405 days

Source: Internal records

The table below shows the average length of time spent in TA by households making statutory homelessness applications (including those with negative decisions), according to the type of TA in use:

**Table 11 – Homeless households average time spent in different types of temporary accommodation, by type (Jan 2017)**

Type of Temporary accommodation	Average stay in temporary accommodation
Nightly paid	193 days
Southwark hostels	264 days
In-house leased TA	426 days
Estate property	358 days
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>284 days</b>

Source: Internal records

### 3.3 Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation in 2016/17

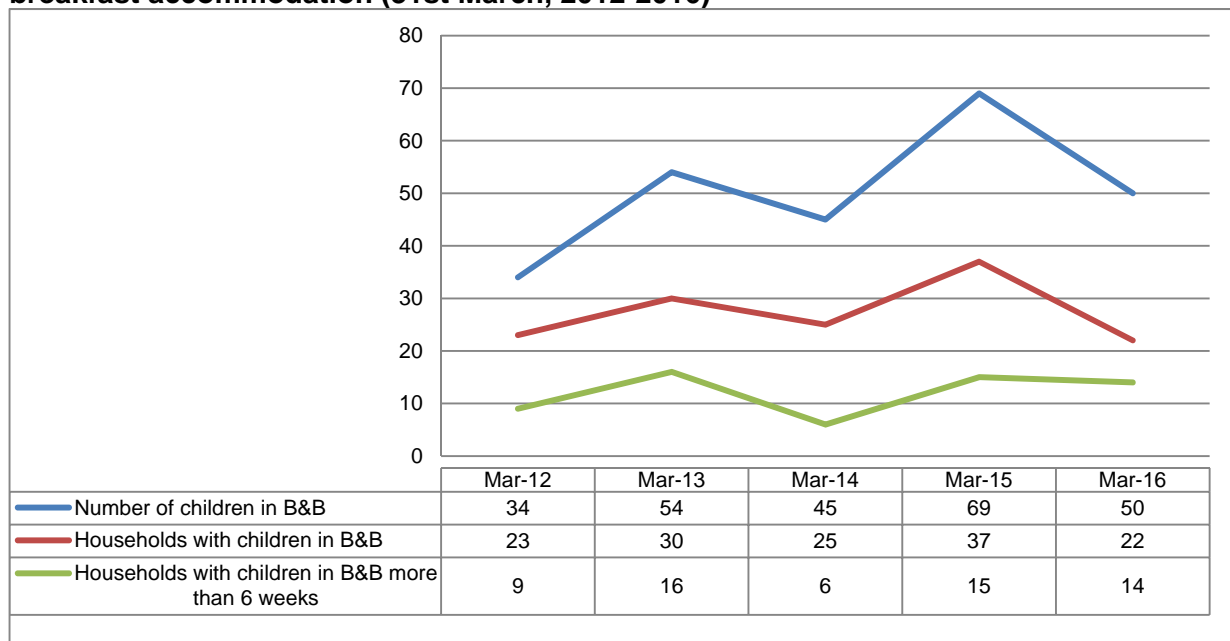
The majority of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation used by Southwark is located outside the borough, predominantly in Lambeth and Lewisham. The council adheres to the *London Councils'* inter-borough accommodation agreement, which sets out minimum standards for boroughs who acquire TA for homeless households. The costs associated with B&B accommodation impact on the council's *General Fund* budget as opposed to other housing solutions, which are generally associated with the *HRA*.

B&B accommodation is recognised as an undesirable form of TA for homeless people in Southwark and generally only used as a last resort. The law enables local authorities to accommodate families in B&B accommodation on the stipulation that it must be for a maximum of six weeks. Statutory



guidance also states that B&B accommodation is never suitable for any 16 and 17 year olds, even in emergencies.

**Chart 15 – London boroughs average of the number of households with children in bed & breakfast accommodation (31st March, 2012-2016)**



Source: Internal records

The above chart shows the average number of households with children living in B&B accommodation in London on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, between 2012 and 2016. In March 2012, London boroughs were on average accommodating 23 households with children, with an average of 34 children, in B&B accommodation. By March 2015 this had grown to an average of 37 households with 69 children in B&B.

In March 2012, London boroughs had on average 9 households with children in B&B for longer than the six week limit. In March 2016 this had risen to 14 households.

In the five years leading up to June 2016 Southwark reported that no more than one household with children was being accommodated in a B&B, each quarter. Following a review of homelessness data in May 2016, it was decided that the type of accommodation previously described as a nightly paid hostel actually better fitted the description of a B&B. It was for this reason that in June 2016 Southwark reported that it now had 218 households in B&B. 149 of these households had children. The total number of children in B&Bs was 244. 83 of the 218 households had been in a B&B for longer than 6 weeks.

Despite the pressures on temporary accommodation being felt by local authorities across the country, Southwark is working to reduce these numbers by actively sourcing new types of temporary accommodation.

## 4.0 Support for vulnerable people

### 4.1 Overview of supported housing

Supported housing schemes operate on the basis that the best place for people in need to overcome challenges is in a home environment. Whether it is learning new skills, recovering from stays in hospital or a residential care setting, or in finding a new job and/or home, supported housing schemes aim to support people to live independently and, when they are ready, to then move onto permanent accommodation.

Supported housing schemes are designed to meet the needs of particular client groups, such as people with mental ill health, learning or physical disabilities, addiction issues, those at risk of domestic violence, teenage parents, care leavers and ex-offenders.

Some supported housing schemes are commissioned by Southwark Council and some by NHS Southwark CCG. The table below shows the provision of supported housing and associated bed spaces that were available in Southwark in January 2017:

**Table 12- Supported Housing Services and capacity (bed spaces), January 2017**

Provider	Services	Age range of clients	Number of bed spaces
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>			
Aurora Options	Learning Disabilities	16+	6
Bede Housing	Learning Disabilities	16+	13
Brandon Trust	Learning Disabilities	16+	13
Camden Society	Learning Disabilities	16+	30
Choice Support	Learning Disabilities	16+	71
Family Mosaic	Learning Disabilities	16+	8
PLUS Services	Learning Disabilities	16+	10
Regard Partnership	Learning Disabilities	16+	9
<b>Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Young People at risk of Homelessness</b>			
Artemis Team	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	7
Finefair	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	9
Future Foundations	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	12
Holmdene	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	19
LookAhead Care & Support	Care Leavers and Young People	18-21	83
Look Ahead Care & Support	Mother and Baby	18-21	10
Look Ahead Care & Support	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	9
Oasis Trust	Care Leavers and Young People (Female Only)	16-21	14
Purple Pebbles	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	9
Salvation Army	Care Leavers and Young People	16-21	40
Step Ahead	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	15
Young Futures	Looked After Children/Care Leavers	16-25	5
<b>Mental Health and Mental Health Homelessness</b>			
Certitude	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	43

Provider	Services	Age range of clients	Number of bed spaces
Certitude	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (High need)	18+	17
Equinox	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (High need)	18+	14
Hexagon	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (High need)	18+	14
Look Ahead Care & Support	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	97
Look Ahead Care & Support	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Homeless Mental Health)	18+	121
Metropolitan Support Trust	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Forensic)	18+	12
Riverside Group Ltd.	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Older People)	50+	42
St Mungo's	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	71
Southwark Council	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	55
Thames Reach	Adult Mental Health and Homeless Mental Health (Medium need)	18+	20
<b>Women and children – survivors of domestic abuse</b>			
Refuge	Women and children - survivors of domestic abuse	18+	26
Source: Internal records		Total	924

Throughout 2016/17, the Council has been working with NHS Southwark CCG and other key stakeholders to review the current approach to supported housing in Southwark, and to develop a future model for these services. A number of reports on future support and housing services for (a) care leavers and young people, (b) people with learning disabilities and (c) people with mental ill health and homeless mental ill health will be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet in summer 2017.

## 4.2 Access to supported housing

In Southwark, homeless people with support needs are identified at an initial interview with the housing solutions service. Clients with support needs are not required to make a homeless application and are referred directly to the housing reablement team. The reablement team will carry out an assessment of the homeless person and make a decision as to whether supported housing would best meet their needs or if they are more suited to mainstream housing.

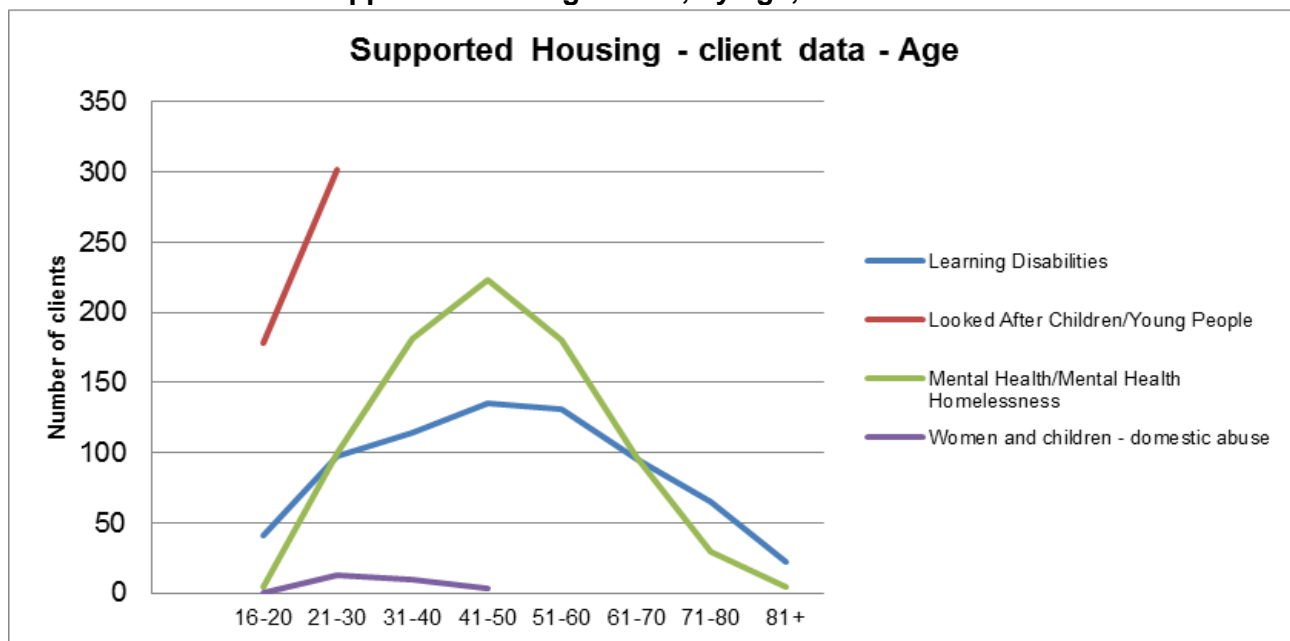
Where a client's support needs do not meet the thresholds for supported housing, the reablement team will refer the client back to the housing solutions service for further advice and assistance to secure independent accommodation along with a referral to *floating support* if necessary.

For people with mental ill health, learning disabilities and care leavers, homeless services accept referrals from children’s social care, adult social care and the South London and Maudsley (SLAM) NHS Foundation Trust.

### 4.3 Demographics

Demographic data regarding the clients in supported housing in Southwark in 2016/17 is set out below. The data shows the need to provide services for resident of all ages. Residents that are homeless and require mental health support are most likely to be aged 41-50. Women and children escaping domestic abuse are most likely to be aged 21-30.

**Chart 16a- Southwark supported housing clients, by age, 2016/17**

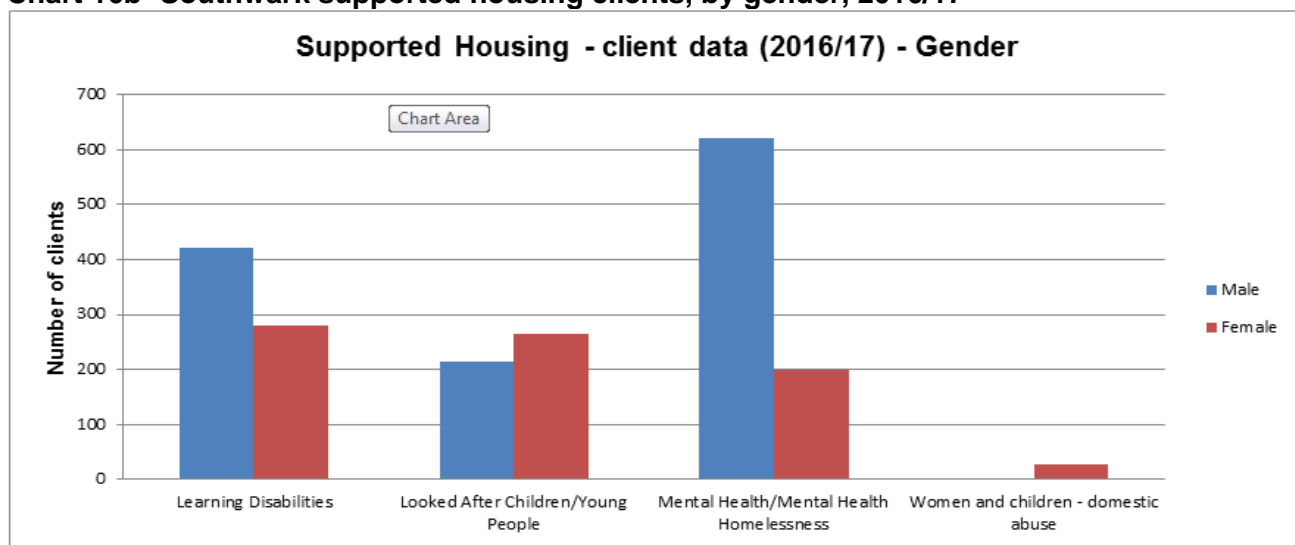


Age	Learning Disabilities	Looked After Children/Young People	Mental Health/Mental Health Homelessness	Women and Children – domestic abuse
16-20	41 (6%)	178 (37%)	4 (0.5%)	
21-30	98 (14%)	302 (63%)	100 (12%)	13 (50%)
31-40	114 (16%)		181 (22%)	10 (38%)
41-50	135 (19%)		223 (27%)	3 (12%)
51-60	131 (19%)		180 (22%)	
61-70	95 (14%)		97 (12%)	
71-80	65 (9%)		30 (4%)	
81+	22 (3%)		4 (0.5%)	

Source: Internal records

Looking at the data for the gender of supported housing residents, 60% of those with learning disabilities are male. 76% of those receiving support for mental health and homelessness are male. 55% of the young people cared for are female.

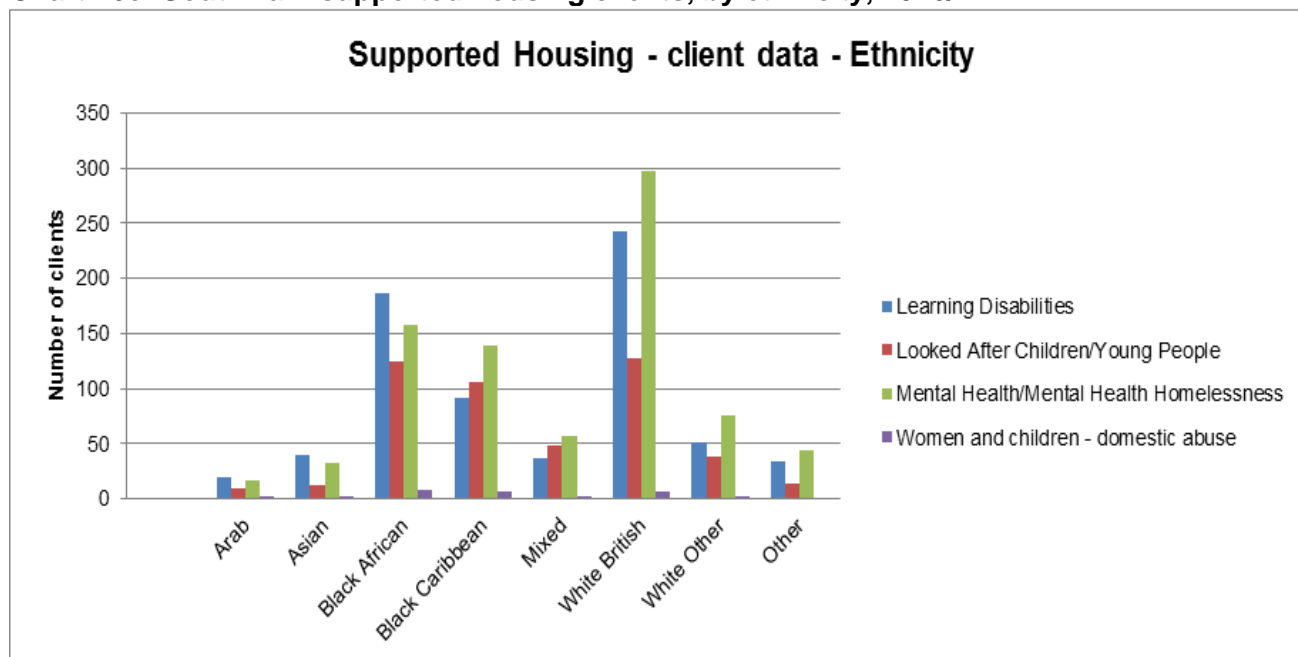
**Chart 16b- Southwark supported housing clients, by gender, 2016/17**



Gender	Learning Disabilities	Looked After Children/Young People	Mental Health/Mental Health Homelessness	Women and Children – domestic abuse
<b>Male</b>	421 (60%)	215 (45%)	620 (76%)	0 (0%)
<b>Female</b>	480 (40%)	265 (55%)	199 (24%)	26 (100%)

Source: Internal records

**Chart 16c- Southwark supported housing clients, by ethnicity, 2016/17**



Ethnicity	Learning Disabilities	Looked After Children/Young People	Mental Health/Mental Health Homelessness	Women and Children – domestic abuse
<b>Arab</b>	19 (3%)	10 (2%)	17 (2%)	1 (4%)
<b>Asian</b>	40 (6%)	12 (3%)	32 (4%)	2 (8%)
<b>Black African</b>	187 (27%)	124 (26%)	157 (19%)	8 (31%)
<b>Black Caribbean</b>	91 (13%)	106 (22%)	139 (17%)	6 (31%)

<b>Mixed</b>	37 (5%)	49 (10%)	57 (7%)	1 (23%)
<b>White British</b>	242 (35%)	127 (26%)	297 (36%)	7 (23%)
<b>White Other</b>	51 (7%)	38 (8%)	76 (9%)	1 (4%)
<b>Other</b>	34 (5%)	14 (3%)	44 (5%)	0 (0%)

Source: Internal records

## 4.4 Complex needs

There can be a strong overlap between homelessness and other support needs. For people with what may be deemed 'complex needs', visible forms of homelessness, such as the use of services like hostels or applying to the council as homeless, can often happen after initial contact with non-housing agencies, such as mental health services, drug agencies, the criminal justice system and social services. Contact can be more likely after multiple periods of hidden homelessness, such as sofa-surfing.

There is a far greater chance that this group of people will have had exposure to forms of institutional care, substance misuse, and street activities (such as begging), in addition to homelessness. People with complex needs can be at serious risk of falling through the gaps between services, therefore an integrated response across health, housing and social care is vital.

### 4.4.1 Complex Needs Advisory Panel (CNAP)

Southwark Council established a *Complex Needs Advisory Panel (CNAP)* in January 2014, superseding the previous arrangements that were in place. The aim of the panel which meets twice every month is to minimise homelessness and repeat homelessness amongst people with mental health and / or complex multiple needs, through effective joint working and facilitating access to appropriate housing, support, social and health care services.

The panel aims to ensure that:

- Resources are used effectively and innovatively, ensuring there is consistency across the borough in decision making and resource allocation;
- Mental health service users and people with complex needs are placed in the most appropriate housing as quickly as possible;
- Relevant advice, information and signposting is available to staff;
- Needs and activity levels are monitored effectively and any gaps in service provision are identified and fed into the strategic planning process of agencies represented;

Referrals for residential care placements are screened before going to the mental health funding panel.

### 4.4.2 South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM)

Part of King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre, South London and Maudsley (SLAM) NHS Foundation Trust provides the widest range of NHS mental health services in the UK. SLAM provides substance misuse services for people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. Other services include the Maudsley Hospital and Bethlem Royal Hospital. SLAM work closely with the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London.

The table below provides an overview of community mental health services available in Southwark:

**Table 13- Overview of Community Mental Health services, January 2017**

Team name	Description
Approved mental health professional (AMHP) duty	Located on Windsor Walk, this service arranges to assess people under the mental health act regarding admission and / or detention in hospital without a need for referral to A&E
High support rehab team	Located on Norwood High Street, the team work with people in medium supported housing, residential care or nursing homes.
High support forensic team	Located on Norwood High Street, the team work with people in forensic placements
Home treatment team	Located on Windsor Walk, the team provide community support for people at home who would otherwise need hospital admission.
Mood, anxiety and personality disorder (MAP) assessment teams	Located on Camberwell Road and Lordship Lane, the teams assess all new referrals and are the first point of contact for all other enquiries. They conduct initial assessments for up to 12 weeks and will verify details, redirecting as necessary to one of the other teams
Mood, anxiety and personality disorder (MAP) treatment teams	Located on Camberwell Road and Lordship Lane, the teams provide longer term treatment for people who have a mood, anxiety or personality disorder
Reablement Team	Located on Camberwell Road, the team provides short term reablement interventions
START team	Located on St Giles Road, START are a small multi-disciplinary assessment team for street homeless people, which operates across the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. START engage with and assess homeless people with severe mental health problems and refer them on to local mainstream services. Examples of the types of severe mental illnesses that START will offer support with include schizophrenia, affective disorders and personality disorders. The majority of START referrals come from outreach teams and day centres but they do accept referrals from any source if they meet the criteria for the service
Staying well team	Located on Ann Moss Way, the team work with people to help with their recovery process and transferring their care back to GPs.
STEP team	Located on Windsor Walk, the team work with younger people up to the age of 35 who are presenting for the first time with psychotic symptoms. STEP is a community based multi-disciplinary team which provides a holistic and comprehensive early intervention service to individuals aged 14 to 35 who are experiencing their first episode of psychosis. The team work intensively with service users and carers to promote engagement with the team and with treatment and to facilitate social inclusion and recovery.
Support and recovery teams (psychosis)	Located on St Giles Road and Ann Moss Way, the teams provide support to people with a psychotic illness
Supported living team	Located on St Giles Road, the team work with people in a range of homelessness hostels, low and medium supported housing projects in Southwark

#### 4.4.3 The King's Health Partners Pathway homeless team

The King's Health Partners Pathway homeless team works with homeless patients attending or admitted to Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trusts. The team includes GPs, nurses, occupational therapists, a social worker, housing workers and peer advocates.

The team aims to maximise the clinical benefit of admissions, and improve discharge outcomes (including reconnecting patients with their families, and home area where this is relevant). They also befriend and support clients when they are in hospital, and work hard with frequent attenders to resolve their issues. Referrals are accepted from the community as well as from within the hospital.

#### 4.4.4 Fulfilling lives programme

The Fulfilling Lives project forms part of an eight year Resolving Chaos programme, funded through the Big Lottery, focussed on those people with multiple complex needs in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham who currently incur high costs with very poor outcomes. The project works with commissioners and providers to help identify people with multiple needs and to make an economic case for commissioning the right support services to help them. Its premise is that chaotic lives result in high costs to public services such as accident & emergency, the criminal justice system and mental health care, and that user-led choice is cost-effective and delivers better outcomes.

The project has identified 45 people whose collective service use (excluding benefits and rent) cost £4.5 million over two years. Despite this level of spending, they continue to experience poor outcomes, such as homelessness, addiction and unemployment. Emerging data indicates that significant cost savings can be achieved by developing user-led and centred bespoke packages of support at the same time as breaking entrenched patterns of need and negative outcomes for individuals.

As well as delivering an intervention service, the programme aims to demonstrate how a personalised approach through the use of individual budgets is cheaper and more effective than the current system of spending in silos and setting eligibility criteria that exclude this group of people from mainstream services, thereby funnelling them towards expensive crisis care.

The anticipated benefits from the programme include:

- Demonstrating that identifying people who are high-cost but have poor outcomes is an effective way of pinpointing need;
- The personalised, user-led approach will empower people to improve their housing, employment and relationships; and
- A reduction in the use of crisis services, particularly the police, accident & emergency and emergency mental health services.

#### 4.4.5 Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)

The Referral Assessment and Resettlement team (RARS) provide and coordinate services to homeless clients monitored under multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) who require independent accommodation. MAPPAs are put in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders, and set out the responsibilities of the police, probation trusts, the prison service and other agencies like the Youth Justice Board.

The council has a duty to cooperate with other agencies in managing the risk of these clients and if necessary temporary accommodation is provided via the RARS team up to the point that the clients are housed. Social housing will be available for those people that qualify under the council's *lettings policy*. MAPPA clients may spend a longer period of time in temporary accommodation than average because the suitability of any permanent accommodation must be checked by Southwark Police's Jigsaw team, whose officers undertake the police functions as a responsible authority for MAPPA.

## 5.0 No recourse to public funds (NRPF)

### 5.1 Overview

Non-UK or EU citizens require permission to live, work or study in the UK. Permission may be granted on the condition that a person cannot access certain 'public funds' during their time in the UK, a status called 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF).



Restricted public funds include social housing and most welfare benefits – including jobseekers’ allowance and housing benefit. If a person with NRPF needs care services or is at risk of destitution, or their children are experiencing or at risk of destitution, then local authorities have a legal duty to provide support.

NRPF status can cover current asylum seekers (with social care needs which aren’t being met by support from the National Asylum Support Service), failed asylum seekers, migrants with leave to remain, migrants with no leave to remain, nationals of European Economic Area countries and non-UK nationals who are parents of British children.

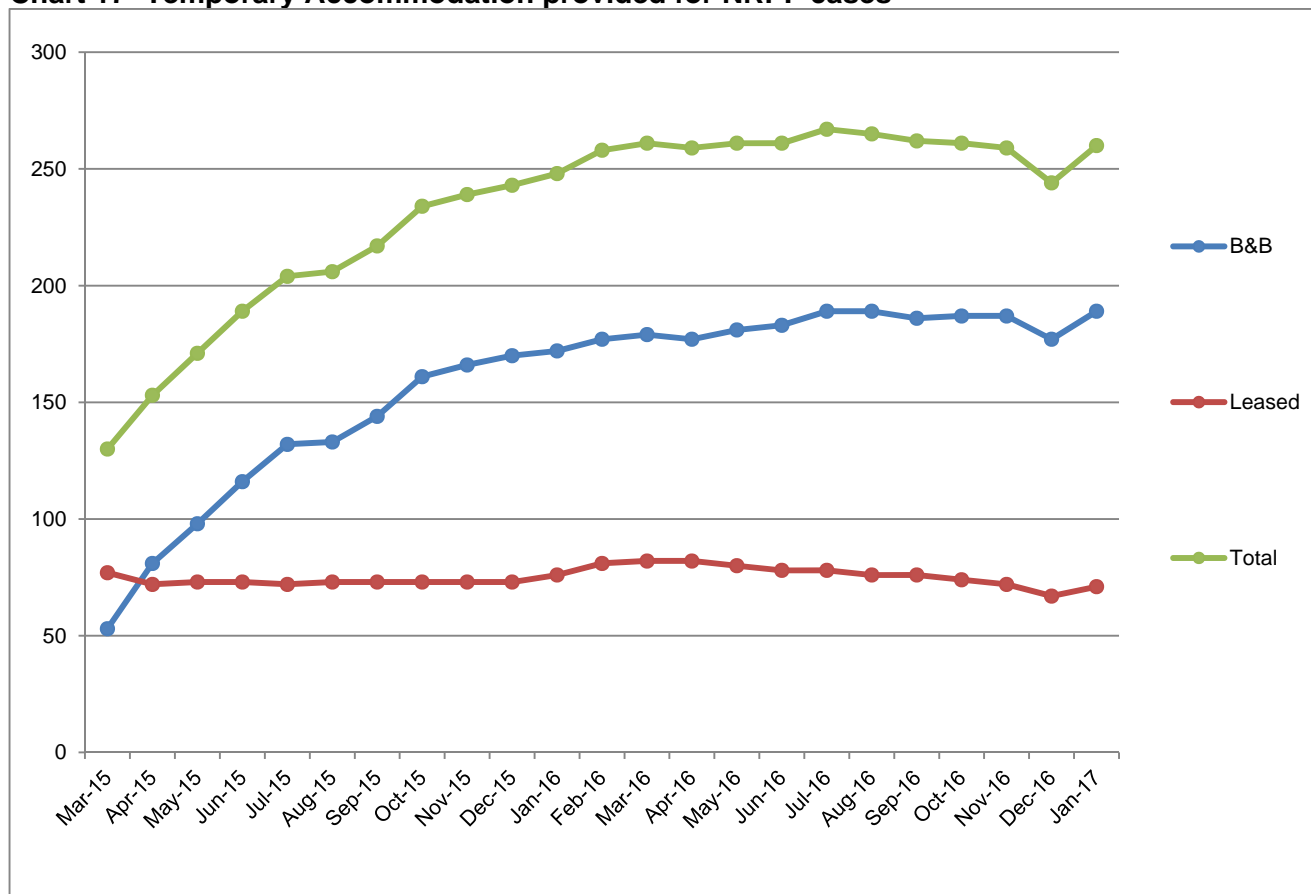
Support to those that are eligible is provided under social care legislation, or pending an assessment under social care legislation, and typically consists of temporary accommodation and subsistence but can include homecare and residential care.

The council does not receive any support from central government for this expenditure. Demand for services for NRPF families has been growing placing increased cost pressures on local authorities particularly those in urban centres such as London.

### 5.2 No recourse to public funds (NRPF) in Southwark

In January 2017 Southwark was supporting approximately 470 NRPF households in total, with those claimants receiving either subsistence or accommodation or both. Approximately half of those cases have been provided with temporary accommodation.

**Chart 17- Temporary Accommodation provided for NRPF cases**



Source: Internal records

Due to an increase in demand for these services, Southwark Council has a specialist team working with destitute people from abroad who have NRPF status and are ordinarily resident in Southwark. The NRPF team is based within the Housing and Modernisation Department and works in

partnership with the council's Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care division. The team ensure that those who are genuinely in need get the support they require to resolve their situation.

The team provide information to all destitute people from abroad with NRPF, including:

- explaining their situation and possible options;
- referral and signposting to agencies that assist with voluntary return to country of origin;
- help and advice on health care;
- assistance in accessing other services, such as local schools and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes;
- provision of information about local community organisations.

The NRPF team coordinate needs assessments and where necessary refer clients on to other care services, by:

- conducting immigration checks;
- referring individuals to the relevant teams for initial community care and mental health assessments. (If care needs are identified the relevant children's or adults social care team will retain responsibility for the client(s) care packages and future care assessments);
- carrying out welfare benefit checks;
- providing accommodation and financial or subsistence support where there is a genuine need demonstrated;
- regularly reviewing all cases to identify changes in immigration status or financial position.

The Council's NRPF related costs have been growing steadily over the last five years. In 2012/13 the council spent £2.7m on NRPF support, this rose to £4m in 2013/14, £5m in 2014/15, £6.2m in 2015/16 and is forecast to be around £7.5m in 2016/17.

A range of factors have contributed to this increasing demand, including rising immigration from outside the EU over proceeding years, backlogs in central government processing of immigration and asylum applications, and changes to immigration law which increased visa fees and imposed NRPF restrictions on spouses of migrants.

## 6.0 Rough sleeping

### 6.1 Overview of rough sleeping

Rough sleepers are defined as people seen either sleeping, about to bed down or actually bedded down in the open air (such as streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes") are also included in this definition.

Sleeping rough is a dangerous and traumatising experience. The longer someone sleeps rough, the greater the risk is that they will become trapped on the streets and vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime, developing drug or alcohol problems, or experiencing problems with their health. Many people who sleep rough will suffer from multiple health conditions, such as mental health problems and they are also in greater danger of violence than the general population. Other health impacts associated with rough sleeping include higher rates of communicable diseases such as TB, HIV, and hepatitis. Research indicates that the average age of death of a homeless person is 47 years old and even lower for homeless women at just 43, compared to 77 for the general public.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/Homelessness%20-%20a%20silent%20killer.pdf>

Whilst there may at times be an overlap between rough sleeping and other forms of street activity such as drinking or begging, those individuals engaged in wider street activities often have access to accommodation and do not sleep rough. A number of local services are in place to tackle antisocial street related activities, ensuring that appropriate help and support is in place for vulnerable individuals and that meaningful enforcement action is taken in a coordinated way when necessary. Further information regarding this can be found in [section 6.4](#) of this report.

Some rough sleepers may fall within statutory thresholds for local authorities, either in terms of homelessness and / or social care thresholds, such as mental health. However even if they are entitled to assistance, without the right support, some rough sleepers, due to their complex needs, will not get the service to which they are entitled.

It is impossible to reach an absolute figure for the number of people sleeping rough because many rough sleepers hide in order to protect themselves or choose not to engage with services until a crisis occurs (this is particularly true of female rough sleepers). For statistical purposes, local authorities in London have two separate methodologies for counting the level of rough sleeping in their borough:

**Street Count:** Local authorities, in partnership with relevant local agencies, evaluate the extent of rough sleeping in their area annually by carrying out a count of people sleeping rough or by estimating the number of rough sleepers on a typical night in their locality. The *DCLG* collate this information twice annually.

**CHAIN reports:** CHAIN is a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers and the wider street population across London in real time. The system, commissioned and funded by the Mayor of London, is managed by St Mungo's Broadway and represents the UK's most detailed and comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping.

For the purposes of this review, CHAIN data has been used, however information from the *DCLG* street count is available on the Greater London Authority's (GLA) website.<sup>4</sup>

Further information regarding this can be found in [section 6.4](#) of this report.

### 6.1.1 Categories of rough sleeping

The GLA's CHAIN reports enable us to assess a person's experience of rough sleeping, using three categories:

<b>New rough sleepers:</b>	Also referred to as 'flow clients', these are people who have not had any previous contact with outreach teams
<b>Intermittent rough sleepers:</b>	Also referred to as 'returner clients', these are people with some history of rough sleeping and engagement with outreach services, but not regularly enough to be considered to be 'living on the streets'
<b>Living on the streets:</b>	Also referred to as 'stock clients', these are people who have had a high level of contact with outreach services over three weeks or more, which suggests they are living on the streets

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#rough-sleeping>

As this report has already noted, many rough sleepers will hide from public view for their own safety and security. Because of this there is likely to be a large overlap between 'intermittent' clients and those thought to be 'living on the street'.

### **6.1.2 Mayor's No Nights Sleeping Rough Taskforce**

In November 2008 the Labour Government announced a new goal to end rough sleeping by 2012. In London, the area of the country with the highest number of rough sleepers, the London Delivery Board (LDB) was charged with meeting the 2012 target, which was endorsed by the Mayor Boris Johnson.

The LDB was a partnership body established in 2008 and chaired by the Mayor's housing advisor, which brought together central London boroughs, government departments, the voluntary sector and key stakeholders. In 2013, the LDB was superseded by the Mayor's rough sleeping group (MRSG) made up of *DCLG* and seven local authorities.

In 2016, the new Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, created the No Nights Sleeping Rough Taskforce, bringing together government officials, homelessness charities and representatives from the five councils with the highest number of rough sleepers - Westminster, Camden, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and the City of London. The Metropolitan Police, NHS bodies and Transport for London are also involved and the group will lobby Government for any additional powers they require. They intend to take a more preventative approach than the previous Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group. Their priorities are to:

- identify interventions that will contribute to tackling rough sleeping in the capital, building on and supporting existing work to do so
- where possible, implement the interventions identified, or
- where necessary, lobby for the interventions identified, and
- monitor the effectiveness of interventions in tackling rough sleeping

## **6.2 Identifying rough sleepers**

Historically, many of the people who slept rough in Southwark had a local connection to the borough, and were therefore generally eligible for local supported housing services. This enabled considerable progress to be made in reducing the overall number of people sleeping rough. In recent years changes have occurred in the profile of rough sleepers across Inner London boroughs, with an increasing proportion of people from eastern Europe, and other groups (in smaller numbers) with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The overall size of the rough sleeper population across London grew as a result of these clients being ineligible for housing assistance. At the same time, there has also been an influx of economic migrants for whom rough sleeping can be a means of saving money, or because they have been unable to find work and they are forced to sleep rough.

This change has necessitated a new approach for these clients in Southwark, to one which consists of partnership working with a view to reconnecting such clients to their home countries, where they are willing to return, and some limited enforcement action by community safety services, police and the UK Borders Agency where clients are not willing to engage. This has meant that while there has been an overall growth in numbers, these have broadly stabilised. Fewer people are graduating into the 'living on the streets' population which is of the greatest concern.

### **6.2.1 Street population outreach team (SPOT)**

The council currently commissions a specialist street population outreach team (SPOT) through St Mungo's Broadway. SPOT provides support to those individuals rough sleeping in the borough, both those new to the streets and those who require a sustained casework approach to try and break the cycle of long term life on the streets. SPOT survey the borough's streets on a nightly basis; focusing particularly on the borough's known hotspots for rough sleeping and street activity. Outreach workers carry out robust needs assessments of individuals and seek to find housing solutions by

accessing supported accommodation in the borough for those clients with a local connection or facilitating reconnection to home towns or countries where the individual is not entitled to assistance from the council. The service also includes a 24 hour helpline as well as assertive outreach on the streets of the borough six days per week.

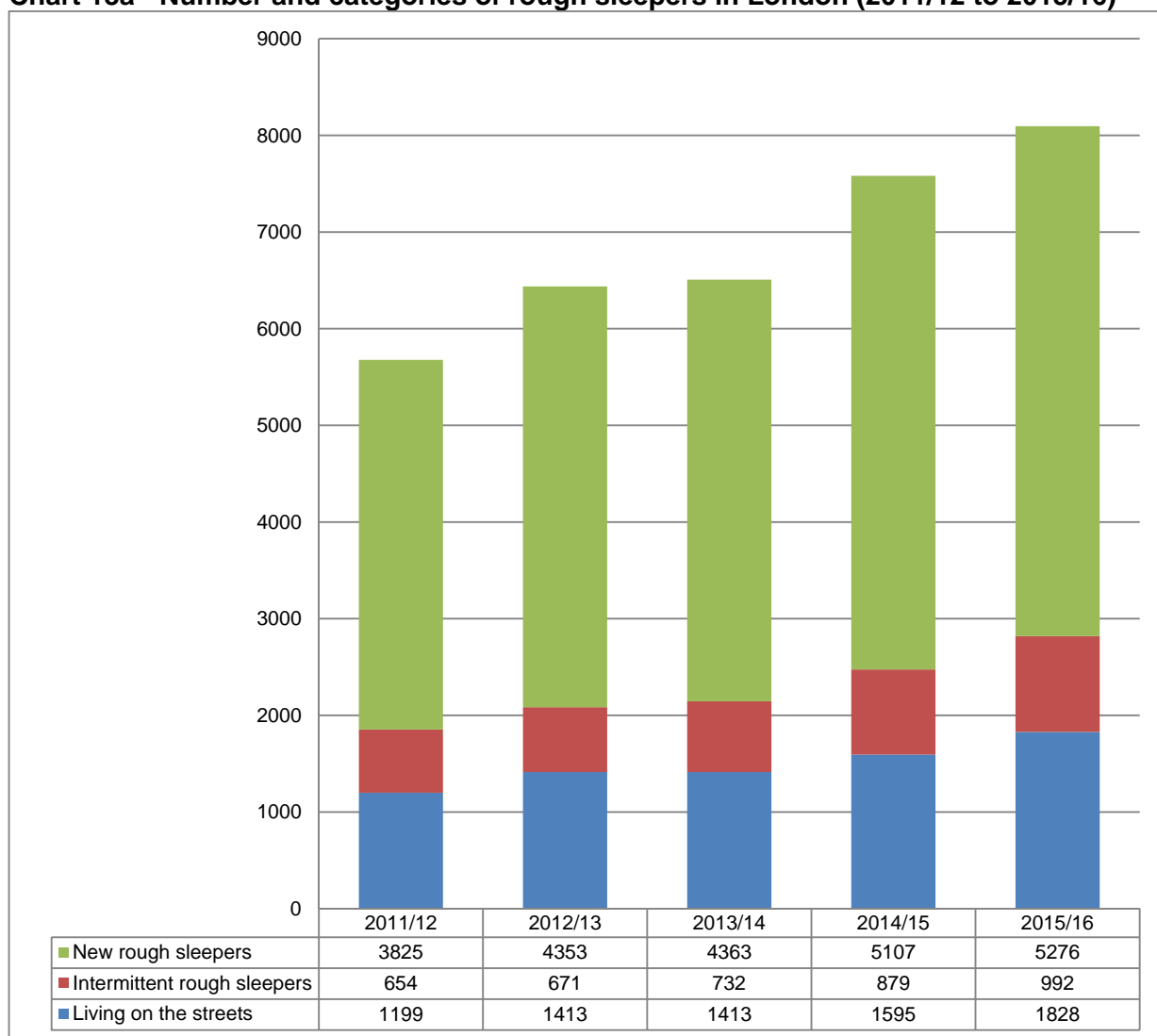
Wherever possible, rough sleepers who are new to the street are offered a place at one of the GLA’s *No Second Night Out (NSNO)* hub where they will receive a single service offer dependent on their circumstances. Clients who are ineligible for the hub will receive personalised support that suits their needs, which could include a permanent tenancy, a hostel placement, an offer of supported housing or reconnection to a home country or town.

### 6.3 Rough sleeping in Southwark data

#### 6.3.1 Levels of rough sleeping in Southwark

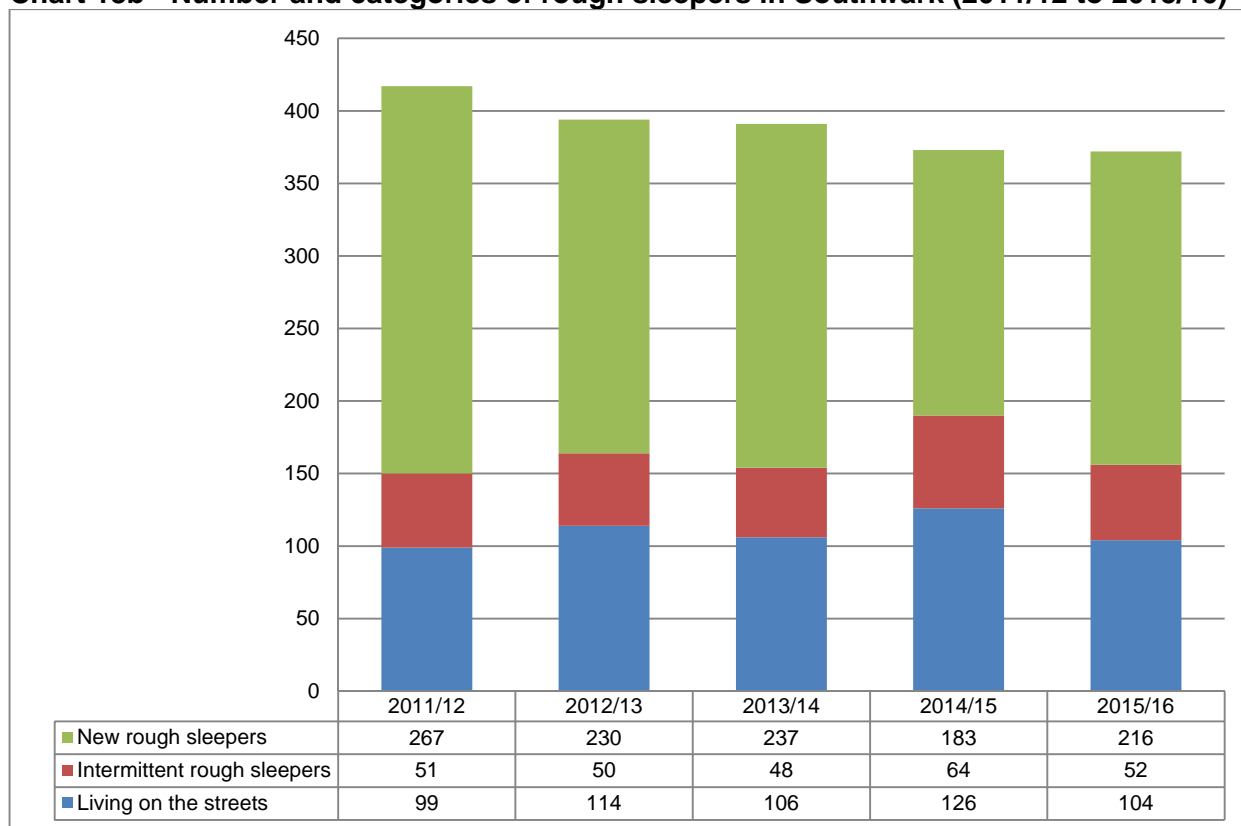
Chart 18a shows that the number of rough sleepers in London has increased over the last five years. 43% more rough sleepers were seen in 2015/16 compared with 2011/12. In Southwark however (Chart 18b), overall numbers have reduced slightly (around 11%). This is mainly due to a reduction in new rough sleepers (down from 267 in 2011/12 to 216 in 2015/16). Overall, in 2015/16 Southwark had the sixth highest number of rough sleepers in London.

**Chart 18a - Number and categories of rough sleepers in London (2011/12 to 2015/16)**



Source: CHAIN reports

**Chart 18b - Number and categories of rough sleepers in Southwark (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

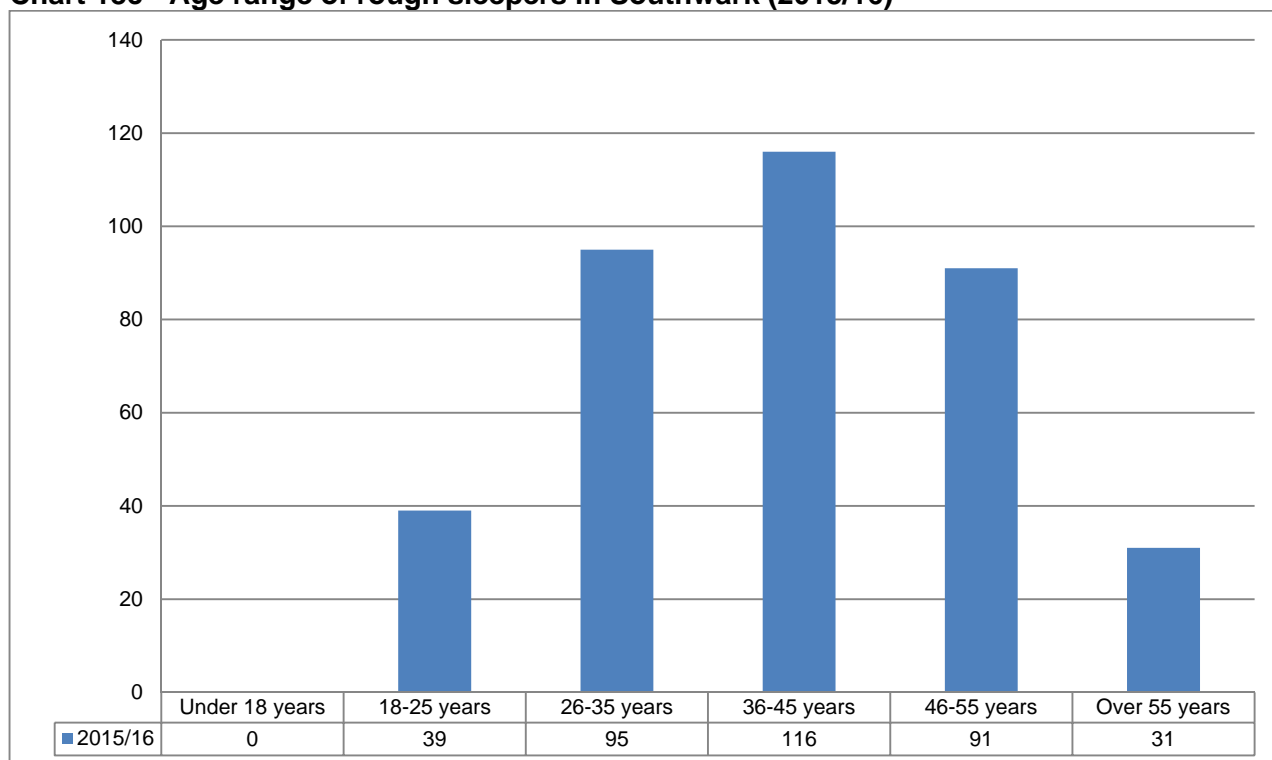


Source: CHAIN reports

### 6.3.2 Age range of rough sleepers in Southwark

The chart below shows the age range of people identified as rough sleepers in Southwark in 2015/16; 36 to 45 years of age was the largest age range:

**Chart 18c - Age range of rough sleepers in Southwark (2015/16)**

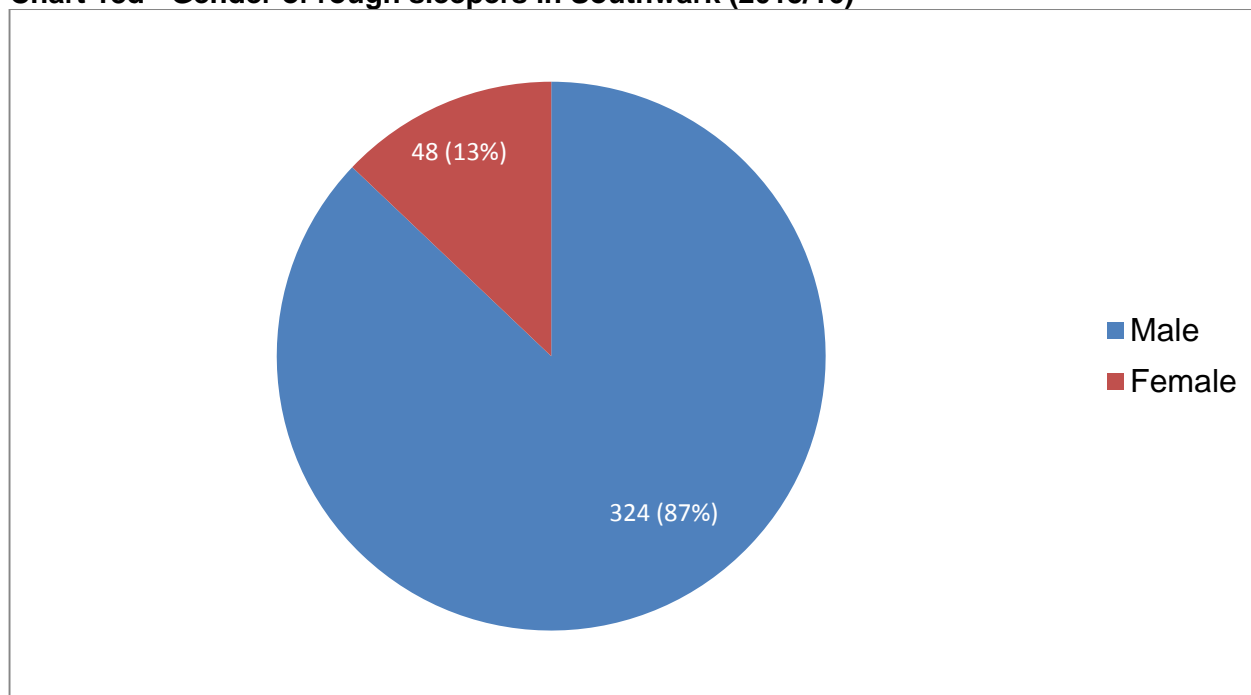


Source: CHAIN reports

### 6.3.3 Gender of rough sleepers in Southwark

The chart below shows that **87%** of the people seen rough sleeping in Southwark in 2015/16 were male. This is slightly higher than the London average over the same period which was **85%**:

**Chart 18d - Gender of rough sleepers in Southwark (2015/16)**



Source: CHAIN reports

### 6.3.4 Nationality of rough sleepers in Southwark

The table below provides a comparison between the nationality and category of people seen rough sleeping in Southwark in 2015/16 (see [section 6.1](#) of this report for further details on categories of rough sleepers).

The data shows that nearly half of the people seen rough sleeping in Southwark in 2015/16 were from Europe. About 8% were from Africa.

**Table 14 – Nationality of rough sleepers in Southwark (2015/16)**

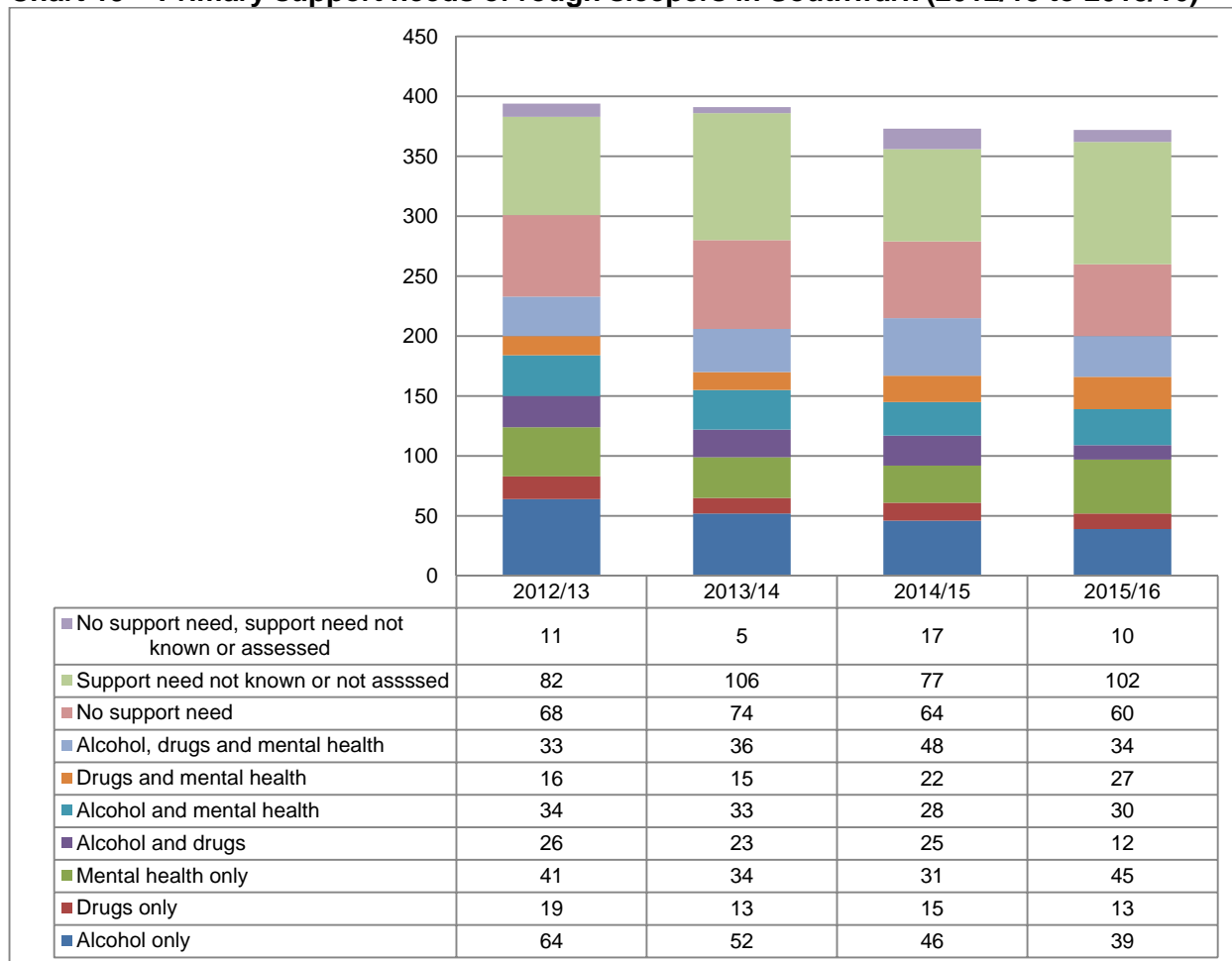
Nationality	Flow	Stock	Returner	Total	Total %
UK	75	45	21	<b>141</b>	38.11%
Europe (CEE)	83	42	16	<b>141</b>	38.11%
Europe (EEA)	25	5	9	<b>39</b>	10.54%
Europe (Non-EEA)	1	0	0	<b>1</b>	0.27%
Europe (Unknown)	2	1	0	<b>3</b>	0.81%
Africa	20	6	2	<b>28</b>	7.57%
Asia	6	2	0	<b>8</b>	2.16%
Americas	3	3	3	<b>9</b>	2.43%
Not known / missing	1	0	1	<b>2</b>	-
<b>Total (excl.) Not known</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>370</b>	100%
<b>Total (incl. Not known)</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>372</b>	

Source: CHAIN reports

### 6.3.5 Support needs of rough sleepers in Southwark

The chart below shows the profile of support needs of rough sleepers in Southwark over the last four years, and shows an increasing number of clients either not being assessed or not demonstrating an identifiable support. This trend may be linked to an increased number of economic migrants who are seeking work and do not wish to engage with a rough sleeping outreach team:

**Chart 19 – Primary support needs of rough sleepers in Southwark (2012/13 to 2015/16)**



Source: CHAIN reports  
No data available for 2011/12

### 6.4 Street related activity and enforcement

Whilst there may at times be an overlap between rough sleeping and other forms of street activity such as drinking or begging, those individuals engaged in wider street activities often have access to accommodation. A number of local services are in place to tackle antisocial street related activities, ensuring that appropriate help and support is in place for vulnerable individuals and that meaningful enforcement action is taken in a coordinated way when necessary.

#### 6.4.1 Community Safety and Enforcement

The community safety and enforcement division encompasses services which manage the operational delivery of the council's community safety strategy as well as a range of regulatory enforcement functions which tackle street related activities such as drinking and begging. A safer Southwark partnership was established across the community safety and enforcement team, the fire brigade, the probation service and the police to work together with other agencies to tackle crime and disorder issues in Southwark.

The community safety and enforcement division contains the following services:



## Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU)

SASBU is a multi agency team, including officers from housing, the police and the youth offending team, who are responsible for dealing with alleged perpetrators and taking legal action, arranging victim support, and organising systems for collecting evidence and information.

Some of the work carried out by the partnership to address antisocial behaviour includes:

- Action days in areas where issues of antisocial behaviour are more frequent
- Deploying street based teams in areas where youth crime and antisocial behaviour is of particular concern
- Community mediators address issues of antisocial behaviour before taking enforcement action
- Providing feedback on enforcement actions that have taken place
- Working closely with tenants and resident groups and other bodies to both support and empower them to take a stand against antisocial behaviour

A night time economy team consisting of police and council officers operates in the north of the borough with the aim of reducing alcohol related violence in the borough. The team:

- Carry out partnership patrols identifying street drinkers / beggars, offering support and advice;
- Provides a rapid response to tackle anti social and violent behaviour;
- Aim to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

## Community safety and partnership services

Teams within this service include:

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Drugs and alcohol action team (DAAT):	Working in partnership with safer neighbourhood teams to promote recovery, and protect individuals, families and communities from the harm caused by drugs and alcohol misuse in Southwark. DAAT commission treatment services including Blackfriars community drug and alcohol team (CDAT) and Foundation 66.
Reducing reoffending:	Southwark's reducing and deterring adult reoffending (RADAR) service supports residents sentenced to less than 12 months in prison. RADAR can help with a range of issues including drug and alcohol problems; housing issues; help with relationships; benefits and debt advice; mental, physical and sexual health; education, training and employment; and help to avoid offending in the future.
Community wardens:	A team of uniformed staff based across Southwark, with teams located in three town centres; Elephant and Castle, Camberwell Green and Peckham. The service includes a team who work with other services in specific areas for a dedicated period of time tackling key issues around crime and antisocial behaviour. The Better Bankside team, funded jointly by the council and the local Business Improvement District, has a focus in the north of the borough close to the river. There are also parks liaison officers focusing on safety within Burgess Park, Southwark Park, Peckham Rye and Dulwich Park

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### 6.4.2 Gang related activity

The Southwark anti-violence unit (SAVU) supports individuals aged 16 to 25 at risk from gang related activity or serious violence. SAVU offers a range of interventions and clients are offered support in areas including education and training, substance misuse, finance and health. The team enable clients to move away from gang activity and make positive lifestyle choices for the future. This in turn reduces the risk of harm not only to themselves but to their local communities.

## Glossary

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST):	The default legal category of residential tenancy in England. It is a form of assured tenancy with limited security of tenure, which was introduced by the Housing Act 1988.
Complex Needs Advisory Panel (CNAP):	The panel which meets twice every month aims to minimise homelessness and repeat homelessness amongst people with mental health and / or complex multiple needs, through effective joint working and facilitating access to appropriate housing, support, social and health care services.
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG):	The UK Government department for communities and local government in England. The department's responsibilities for UK Government policy includes building regulations, community resilience, housing, local government, planning and race equality.
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP):	The UK Government department responsible for welfare and pension policy. The department consists of four operational organisations; Jobcentre Plus; The Pension Service; The Disability and Carers Service; and The Child Maintenance Group.
Floating support:	A service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults, enabling them to maintain independence in their own home.
General fund:	A summary account for all local authority services with the exception of the <i>HRA</i> .
Homeless acceptance rate:	The proportion of all homeless applications received by a local authority which go on to be accepted as statutorily homeless and eligible for support.
Homesearch:	The choice based letting site for Southwark Council, allowing people on the council housing register to bid for properties and review other options for being housed.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA):	The specific account for spending and income relating to the management and maintenance of local authority-owned housing stock and must be kept separate from other local authority accounts.
iform:	The <i>DCLG</i> website used by local authorities to submit their <i>P1E</i> form. Unofficial regional data can be extracted from the website at a later time.
Lettings or Allocations policy:	Southwark's policy for assessing the priority of applicants to the council's housing register.
Local Housing Allowance (LHA):	<p>Introduced in 2008 to improve transparency for housing benefit recipients in the private rented sector, LHA rates provide a flat allowance that are used to decide the eligible rent for recipients with similar sized households living in a particular (broad rental market) area. The 2010 emergency budget introduced a number of reforms to LHA, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting LHA rates at the 30th percentile of local rents rather than the 50<sup>th</sup>, meaning that the cheapest 30% of rental properties in an area would be available to tenants in receipt of housing benefit.</li> <li>• Removal of the 5 bedroom LHA rate and introducing maximum levels of housing benefit for each household size.</li> <li>• Shared room rate increased from 25 years of age to 35, meaning that</li> </ul>

single adults under 35 only qualify for a payment equal to the cost of a room in a shared house.

LHA rates were frozen in April 2016. [See 7.2.2](#) for a breakdown of maximum LHA rates in Inner South East London and how they compare with average advertised rents in Southwark.

**Localism Act (2011):** Introduced in November 2011, the aim of the act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and local authorities.

**London Councils:** The local government association for Greater London, which acts as a think tank and lobbying organisation as well as providing some services directly through legislation that allows multiple local authorities to pool responsibility and funding.

**No Second Night Out (NSNO):** Part of the Mayor of London's commitment to end rough sleeping in London, No Second Night Out (NSNO) was launched on 1 April 2011 as a pilot project aimed at ensuring those who find themselves sleeping rough in central London for the first time need not spend a second night on the streets. Since October 2013, three London NSNO assessment hubs are open round the clock, seven days a week offering people help so that they do not need to return to the streets.

**Priority need:** A household must be considered to be in priority need in order to be found 'statutorily homeless' by their local authority. Originally defined in UK through the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, the 1996 Housing Act refined and expanded the definition of a household in 'priority need' in England so as to include pregnant women; households with dependent children; someone vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason; someone homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster. The term was expanded further still by the 2002 Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order to include those; aged 16 and 17 years old; aged under 21 years old who were in local authority care between the ages of 16 and 18; aged 21 and over who are vulnerable as a result of leaving local authority care; vulnerable as a result of leaving the armed forces; vulnerable as a result of leaving prisoner; vulnerable as a result of fleeing domestic violence or the threat of domestic violence.

**P1E:** A statistical return form completed by Local Authorities and submitted to *DCLG*. The purpose of this return is to collect information on English local housing authorities' discharge of duties under the homelessness legislation, along with some additional information on other homelessness prevention and relief.

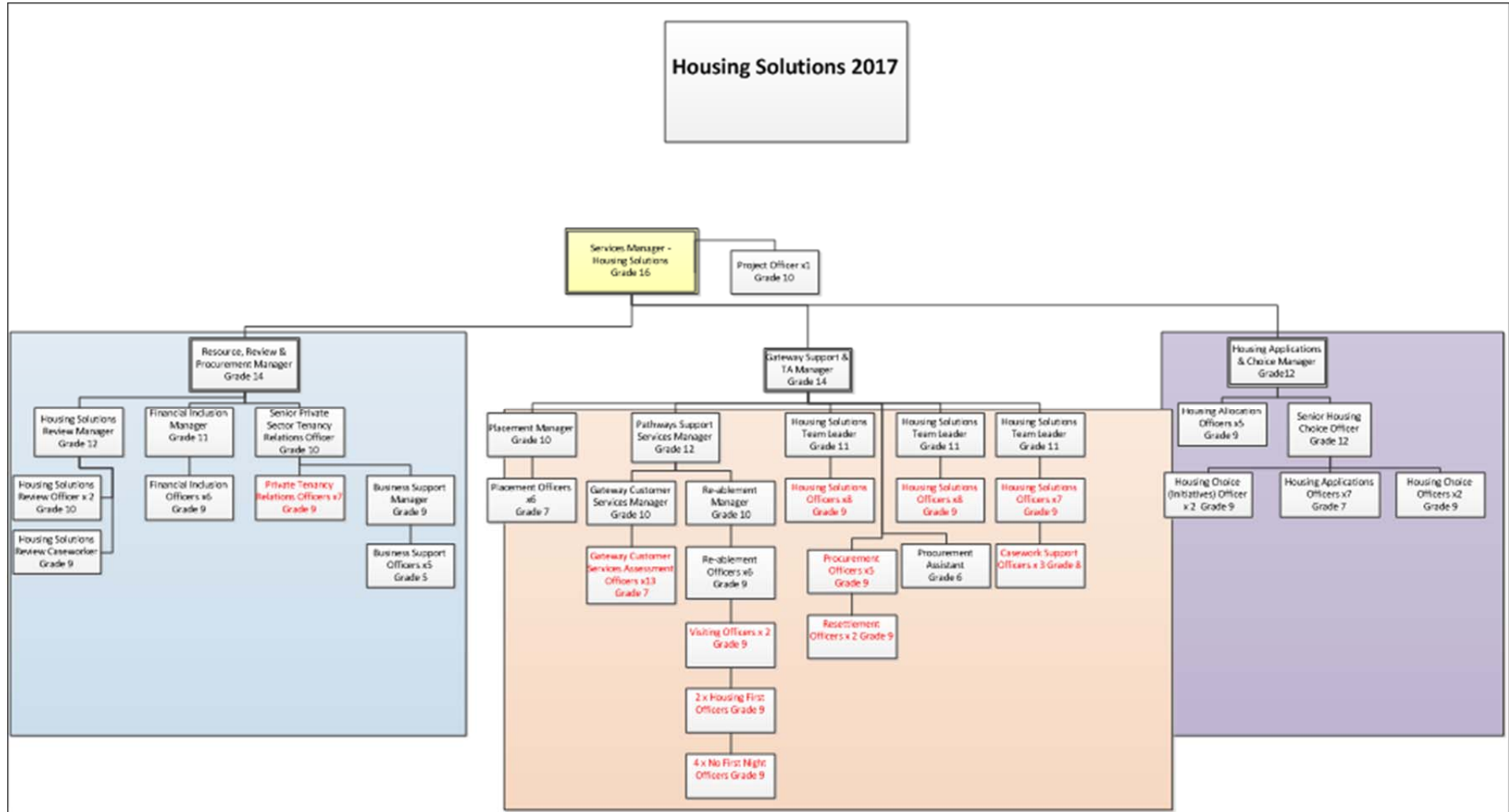
**Southwark Works:** An employment advisory service supporting Southwark residents, helping them to access jobs, training, apprenticeships, placements and other work-related opportunities.

**Tenant management organisations (TMO):** Organisations set up under UK law which allow residents of local authority housing or housing association homes to take over responsibility for the running of their homes.

## 7.0 Appendix

### 7.1 Additional information about homelessness and homelessness prevention

#### 7.1.1 Overview of Southwark's main homeless services - Organisational structure



Source: Internal records

### **7.1.2 Housing solutions service improvement initiatives**

Between February and April 2014 mystery shoppers from CRISIS visited the housing solutions service as part of their research into the experience of single homeless people who approach their local authority with a housing need. In their subsequent report 'Turned Away'<sup>5</sup>, several key suggestions were made for improvement, including:

- Ensure that the housing solutions services offer a thorough assessment of the needs of single clients;
- Offer assistance with the completion of the housing options 'wizard' assessment tool;
- Give meaningful advice and assistance to all clients;
- Provide everyone with an opportunity to make a homeless application;
- Provide a summary of the outcome of the visit to the client.

The housing solutions service adopted these recommendations and as a result, a special appointment service for single clients is available so that they can make a homeless application. Additionally, housing solutions no longer require clients to complete the housing options wizard assessment before they are booked an appointment. All clients receive a thorough assessment of their needs and meaningful advice and assistance is provided at the interview. An outcome summary letter of the interview is issued to all clients after their full diagnostic interview.

Shelter have also been carrying out mystery shopping assessments of homelessness services on an annual basis since 2013. The last review was in March 2017. The findings form an improvement plan which is shared with partners at the homelessness forum.

The housing solutions service is also working in partnership with Shelter in developing a package of continuous improvement. As part of a strategic and organisational review, the service identified a number of desired areas for improvement to achieve efficient, effective and customer focussed services. Shelter's improvement package builds on the work already completed and in progress to enable the Housing Solutions Service to meet the new strategic vision and values. Their recommendations which Housing Solutions enacted were:

- A review of housing register assessment and allocations;
- Cost and demand baseline for the housing solutions service;
- Service improvement and action planning;
- Work shadowing and mentor support;
- Referral pilot programme with key partner agencies aiming to provide better advice and information, as well as design a process for effective and fast referrals for clients with complex needs and advice support.

In 2016 the Housing Solutions Service worked with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to discover how services for domestic abuse survivors could be improved. The action plan will be implemented in 2017.

### **7.1.3 Housing solutions review team**

Local authorities are statutorily obliged to offer homeless applicants an internal review of any homelessness application that is refused. The review must be undertaken by an officer that is senior in grade to the initial decision maker and should not have had any involvement in the refused decision. A review decision is subject to the scrutiny of court and an applicant can lodge an appeal if there has been a mistake in law, if they feel that have been not treated procedurally fair, or where the decision made by the review team was unreasonable.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/MysteryShopping\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_web.pdf](http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/MysteryShopping_Report_FINAL_web.pdf)

In 2015/16, 427 reviews were received by Southwark Council compared to 337 in 2014/15, equivalent to a 21% increase on the previous year and a 37% increase on 2013/14. Generally between 75 to 80% of review decisions uphold the original decision made.

#### 7.1.4 Homeless prevention grant allocation (2015/16)

The table below sets out how Southwark’s homelessness prevention grant was allocated across projects and activities in 2015/16. The largest allocations were funding for the Finders Fee rent deposit scheme (£149,308), the Street Population Outreach Team (SPOT) (£239,600) and detecting fraud in the private rented sector (£248,672).

**Table 15 – Allocation of Southwark’s homelessness prevention grant (2015/16)**

Details	Priority area	Base budget 2015/16 (£)
Priority finders fee programme	Reduce TA numbers	149,308
Procurement Officer	Reduce TA numbers	38,296
Placement & Procurement Officer	Reduce TA numbers	35,207
Reablement Officer	Reduce TA numbers / effective move on	38,945
Reablement Officer	Reduce TA numbers / effective move on	41,110
Reablement Officer	Reduce TA numbers / effective move on	38,945
Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator	Eliminate rough sleeping	50,900
Victim Support	Eliminate rough sleeping	80,000
Brief Intervention Service	Eliminate rough sleeping	47,700
Street Population Outreach Team (SPOT)	Eliminate rough sleeping	239,600
Homelessness and Housing Options Officer	Prevent homelessness	44,358
Homelessness and Housing Options Officer	Prevent homelessness	44,358
Homelessness fraud - Private rented sector	Fraud & error	248,672
Fraud officer	Prevent homelessness	40,341
Financial inclusion Officer	Prevent homelessness	41,110
Financial inclusion Officer	Prevent homelessness	42,106
Homeless advice and litigation	Prevent homelessness	81,533
Finders fee administrator - BSO	Prevent homelessness	16,044
External agencies - RDS/ finder fee	Prevent homelessness	19,383
Financial inclusion Officer	Prevent homelessness	36,345
Private Tenancy Relations Officer	Prevent homelessness	43,195
Private Tenancy Relations Officer	Prevent homelessness	42,106
Under Occupation programme	Prevent homelessness	75,000
<b>Total homelessness prevention funding</b>		<b>£1,534,561*</b>

Source: Internal Records

\*Sum is £1,534,561 due to rounding

#### 7.1.5 Discretionary housing payments (DHP)

The table below sets out Southwark’s historic DHP allocation, and the significant growth in funding and applications received in 2013/14 as a result of welfare reform policies. In the next few years the Government will continue to reform the benefits system, including further cuts to Housing Benefits for some people, but the council will have fewer resources with which to mitigate the effects.

**Table 16a –Allocation of Southwark’s DHP fund (2012/13 to 2016/17)**

Financial Year	Total number of DHP awards made	Allocation from DWP (£)	Council ‘top-up’ from HRA (£)	Total DHP funding available (£)
2012/13	628	331,962	-	331,962
2013/14	2555	1,877,849	351,782	2,229,631
2014/15	2124	1,462,621		1,462,621
2015/16	1441	1,022,380		1,022,380
2016/17	1074	682,241		682,241

Source: Internal Records

The table below provides additional information regarding the use and allocation of Southwark’s discretionary housing payment (DHP) in 2015/16. It also shows the tenure of those people who were successful in applying for a DHP in 2015/16:

**Table 16b - Breakdown of Southwark DHP awards by tenure (2015/16)**

Tenancy Type	Number of cases	Total amount of DHP awarded
Southwark council tenancy	748	£446,781.01
Housing associations	472	£333,283.68
Private rented sector	171	£162,789.21
Southwark council temporary accommodation	50	£79,553.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>£1,022,406.93</b>

Source: Internal Records

The table below sets out the primary reason that requests for a DHP were refused:

**Table 16c – Reason for refused DHP applications in Southwark (2015/16)**

Refusal Reason	Number of cases
Claim not for a reason covered by DHP	133
Rent covered in full by housing benefit	98
Housing Benefit assessment outstanding or suspended	0
No housing benefit in payment	124
Household has disposable income	26
DHP given for a limited time only	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>434</b>

Source: Internal Records

## 7.2 Increasing demand for affordable homes in Southwark

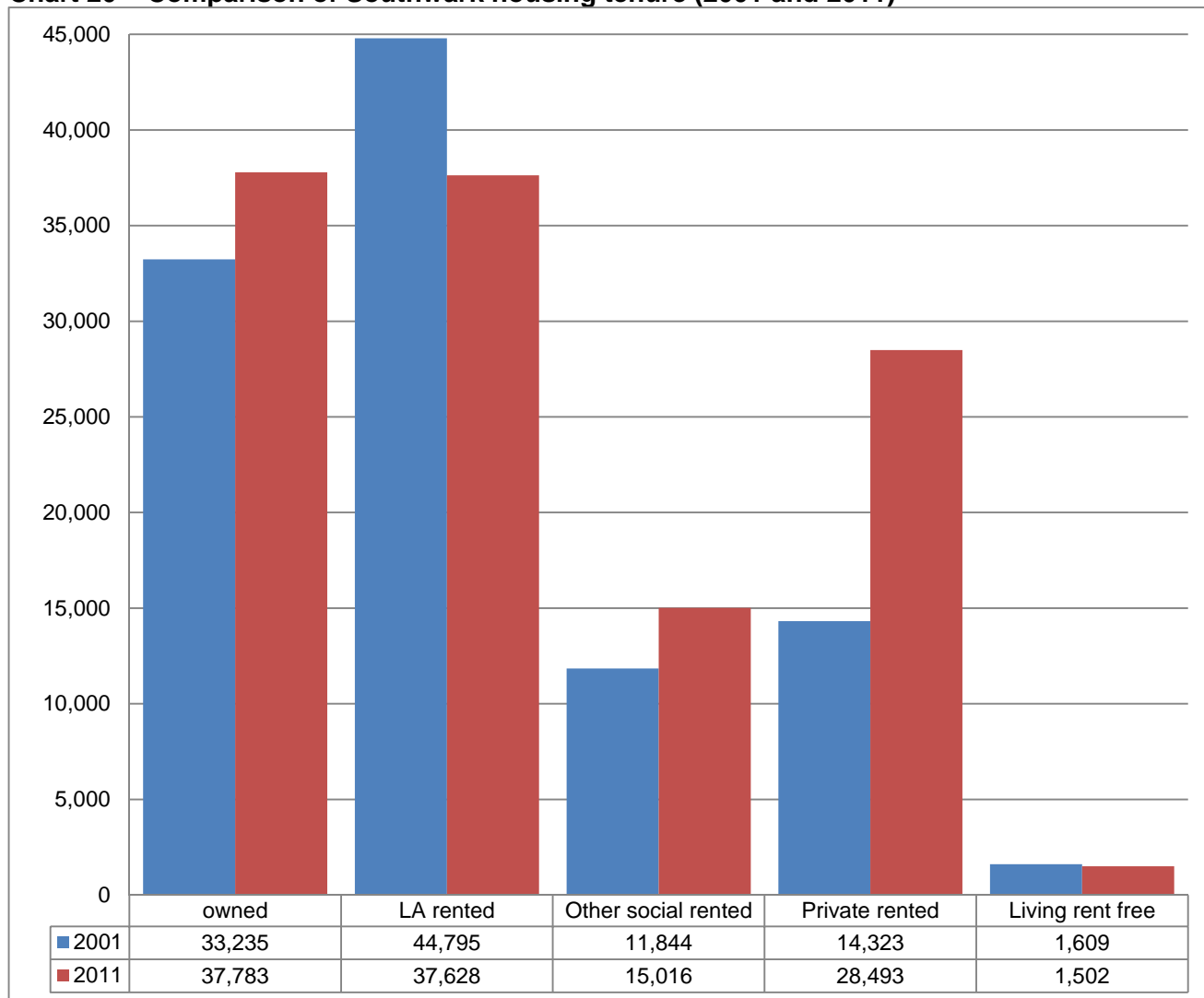
This section provides some data in relation to housing in Southwark. Further information can be found in the housing strategy and statistics pages on the council’s website:

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy>

## 7.2.1 Housing tenure

Nationally (England and Wales), Southwark has the largest proportion of council tenants although this has been changing. 31.2% of households in the borough currently rent a home from the local authority; down from 42.3% in 2001. The 2011 Census showed that the local authority rented tenure is no longer the largest, having been overtaken by the owner occupier tenure. Proportionally, the private rented sector is the fastest growing sector as illustrated in the following chart:

**Chart 20 – Comparison of Southwark housing tenure (2001 and 2011)**



Source: Census data

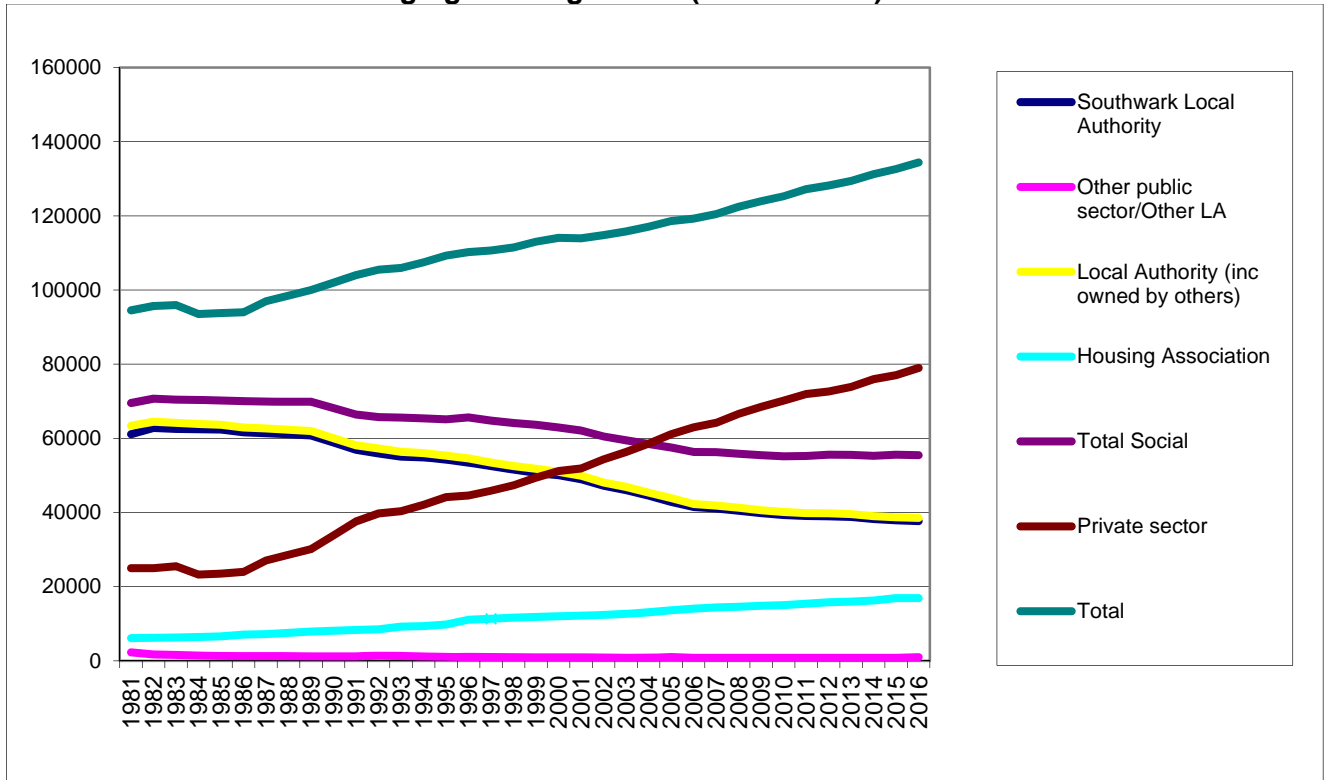
Chart 21 shows that the number of council properties Southwark owns has reduced from over 60,000 in 1981 to fewer than 40,000 in 2016. The loss of stock is largely due to the Right to Buy and because of the need to regenerate some estates that were in poor condition.

In contrast, the number of private sector homes has increased from 25,000 to nearly 80,000. Despite an increase in Housing Association homes, the Council has been receiving fewer nominations from them in recent years ([see 7.2.5](#)).

Data on the delivery of affordable homes in recent years (Chart 22) shows that numbers peaked in 2014/15. This was because developers were required to meet a Government deadline for funding. However, neither shared ownership nor affordable rent (at high proportions of market rent), are likely to be affordable to homeless households on low incomes in Southwark.



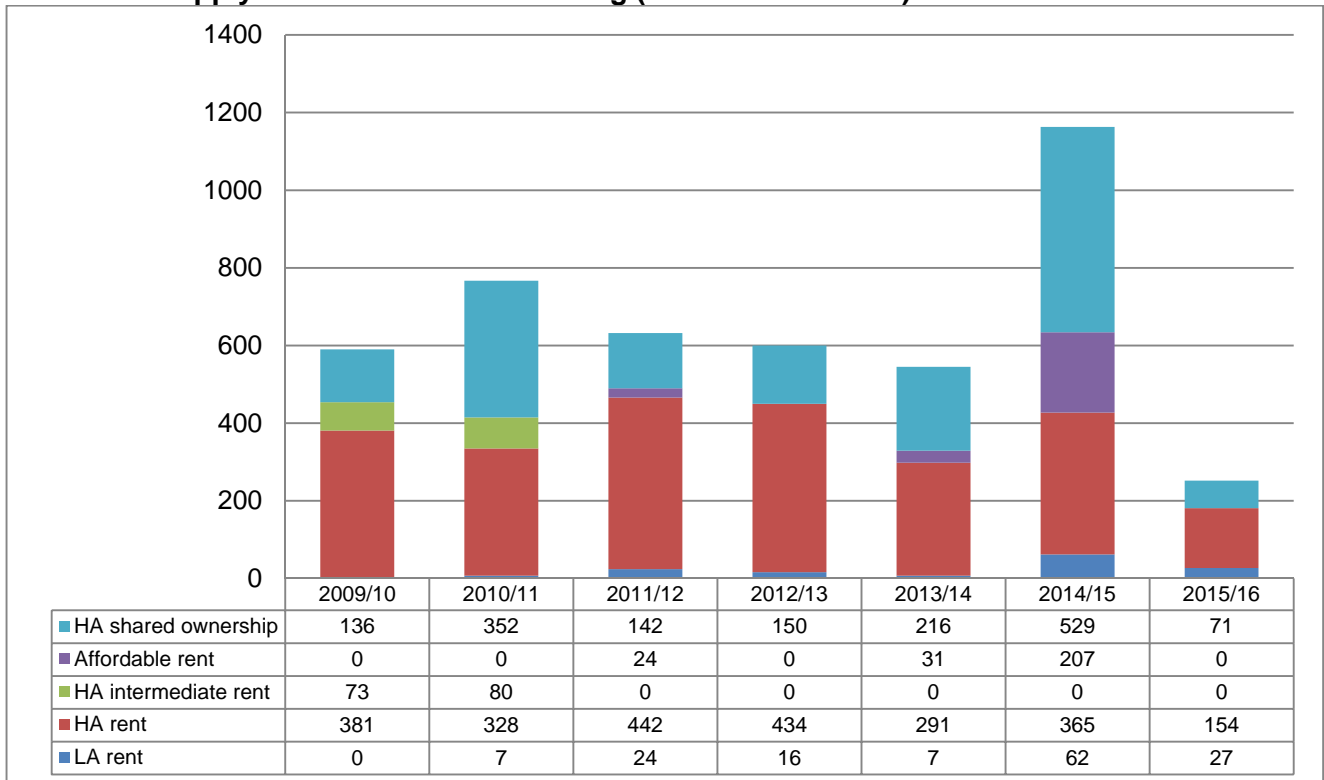
**Chart 21 –Southwark’s changing housing tenure (1981 to 2016)**



Source: LAHS and internal records

The peak in supply of affordable housing in 2014/15 in Chart 22 can be explained by the requirement for developers to meet a deadline for funding. Southwark has an ambitious target to build 11,000 council homes by 2043. Exchange of contracts will have taken place on 1,600 of these new homes by the end of 2018.

**Chart 22 – Supply of new affordable housing (2009/10 to 2015/16)**



Source: LAHS

## 7.2.2 Housing costs of the private rented sector

The following chart shows the average rent costs, by number of bedrooms, of private rented properties in Southwark between 2013 and 2017.

**Chart 23 - Average monthly private sector rents in Southwark (2013 to 2017)**



Source: Southwark Market Trends Bulletins (based on advertised rents in Southwark)

The increase in average house prices has led to Southwark becoming one of the more expensive London boroughs to rent privately. Because of that, for many, home ownership will be unachievable. Saving enough for a deposit to buy a first home is often impossible as rents take up too much of a renter's income.

Higher rents in the private rented sector also cause other problems for Southwark. As well as an increase in homeless applications to the council for those that cannot afford rising rents, the sector has become unaffordable for the council to use to prevent homelessness. This is because of the disconnect between average rents and the amount of housing benefit available for tenants in the private rented sector (Local Housing Allowance, LHA).

The following table (Table 17) shows the maximum LHA that can be claimed compared to average rents in Southwark. Tenants would be expected to make up the shortfall.

LHA Rates are frozen for 4 years from April 2016 but they may decrease if rents go down locally.

**Table 17 - Comparison between capped LHA rates (Inner SE London, rounded) and average advertised rents in Southwark (January 2017)**

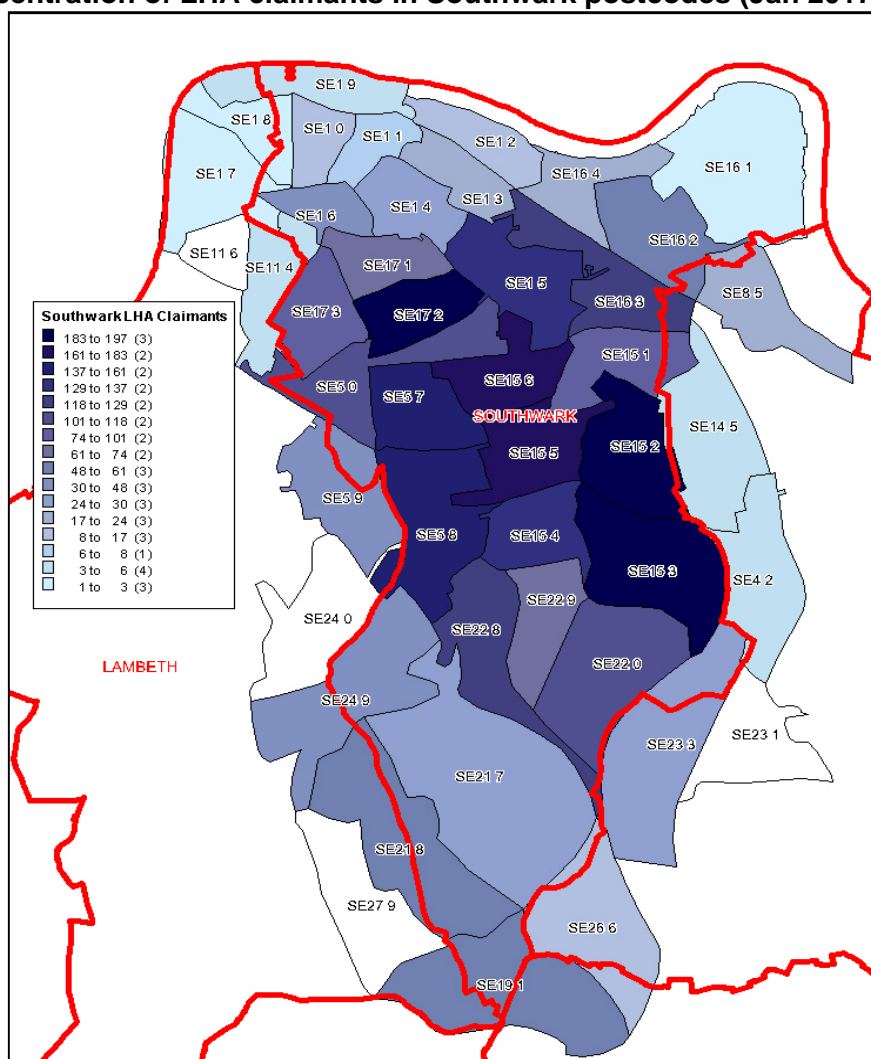
Size of accommodation	LHA cap - April 2016 (pcm)	Average lower quartile rent (pcm)	Average median rent (pcm)
Room (in shared accom)	£412	£646	£719
1 bed	£884	£1,340	£1,538
2 bed	£1,150	£1,675	£1,950
3 bed	£1,433	£1,998	£2,449
4 bed	£1,807	£2,600	£2,925

Source: Southwark Market Trends Bulletins (based on advertised rents for self-contained properties in Southwark, unless stated)

The Government plans to limit the amount of benefits that supported and sheltered housing residents can claim to LHA levels from 2019. There will be a top up fund to help supported housing providers but it may make providing that type of accommodation untenable for some providers in Southwark. It is also likely that these plans may have already deterred some providers from increasing the amount of supported housing in the borough.

The map below shows the concentration of private tenants receiving housing benefit at *LHA* rates in Southwark in January 2017. It shows a concentration of claimants in the centre of the borough:

**Chart 24 - Concentration of LHA claimants in Southwark postcodes (Jan 2017)**



Source: Internal records

### 7.2.3 Repossessions and evictions

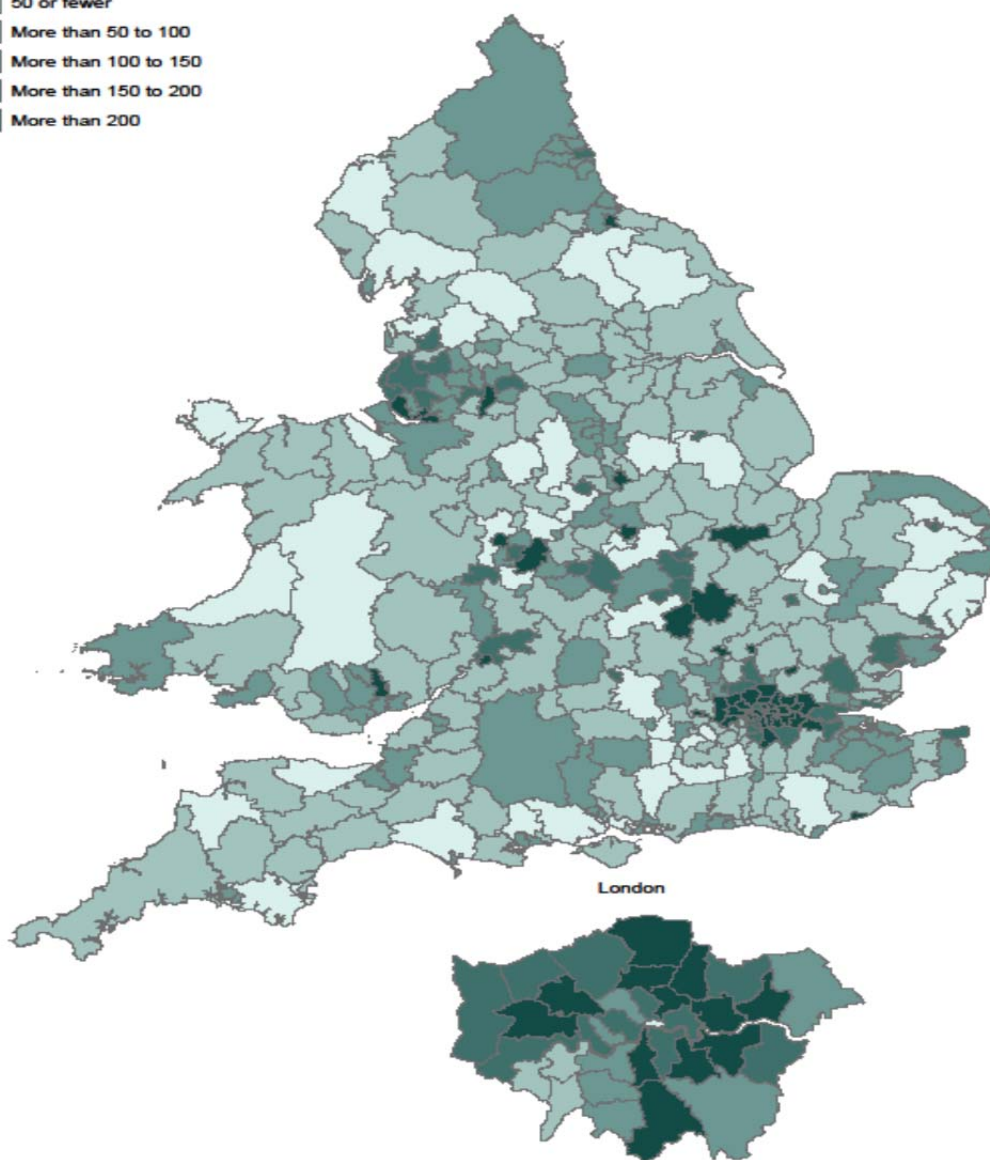
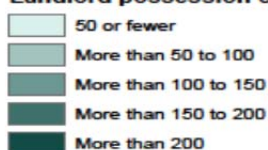
A possession claim is the first stage of the legal process which can result in a person or household being evicted. Not all possession claims will lead to a possession order, and not all possession orders will lead to the loss of the home and eviction. However receiving a possession claim means that a household is subject to a legal process where their home may be at risk.

In the mortgage and social landlord sectors, pre-action protocols and other rules are in place to try to avoid reaching the stage of a possession claim being issued. In the private rented sector, landlords may try to negotiate with tenants and reach agreements that do not require court proceedings where possible.

The following map shows that in 2016, London local authorities, including Southwark, saw some of the highest possession rates by landlords in the country.

**Chart 25 - Landlord Possession Claims in England & Wales by Local Authority, 2016, Q3**

Landlord possession claims per 100,000 households



Source: MoJ, Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics in England and Wales, Nov 16

The following table shows the number of possession claims made by landlords in Southwark over the last five years. The number has fluctuated over this time with 2013 seeing the highest total level of claims being made. Over this time, claims against mortgage holders have reduced considerably.

**Table 18 - Possession claims in Southwark (2010 to 2015)**

Year	Private landlord	Social landlord	Mortgage	Total
2010	239 -10%	1,873 -76%	348 -14%	<b>2,460</b> -100%
2011	204 -10%	1,514 -76%	278 -14%	<b>1,996</b> -100%
2012	241 -10%	1,857 -79%	256 -11%	<b>2,354</b> -100%
2013	299 -11%	2,133 -81%	198 -8%	<b>2,630</b> -100%
2014	244 -11%	1,802 -82%	155 -7%	<b>2,201</b> -100%
2015	199 -10%	1,678 -86%	75 -4%	<b>1,952</b> -100%

Source: Ministry of Justice data

The following table shows the number of possession claims that went on to become possession orders in Southwark over the last five years. Possession orders for private landlords rose by over 105% between 2011 and 2015, whilst orders for social landlords rose by 17%.

**Table 19 - Possession orders in Southwark (2010 to 2015)**

Year	Private landlord	Social landlord	Mortgage	Total
2010	68 -11%	475 -75%	90 -14%	<b>633</b> -100%
2011	63 -12%	372 -72%	85 -16%	<b>520</b> -100%
2012	63 -13%	348 -74%	59 -13%	<b>470</b> -100%
2013	88 -19%	335 -71%	51 -11%	<b>474</b> -100%
2014	86 -19%	352 -76%	26 -5%	<b>464</b> -100%
2015	129 -22%	435 -73%	34 -6%	<b>598</b> -100%

Source: Ministry of Justice data

Landlords may seek to evict tenants using what's referred to as 'accelerated possession'. This is quicker than a normal eviction and doesn't usually need a court hearing. A landlord can only do this where there is a written *assured shorthold* (AST) or statutory periodic tenancy, the tenant has been given the required written notice in the right form and the landlord hasn't asked the tenant to leave before the end of a fixed-term tenancy.

In the past only private sector landlords used ASTs but since 2012 Housing Associations have been able to use them. Data from 2015/16<sup>6</sup> shows that a quarter of all Housing Association lettings nationally were made using ASTs in that year.

A tenant can only stop accelerated possession if they are able to prove that their landlord hasn't followed these rules. If a landlord applies to the court for accelerated possession, the court will send the tenant a copy of the application which must be challenged within 14 days.

If a judge makes a possession order, a tenant will normally have between 14 or 28 days to leave the property, although in cases of exceptional hardship, the judge may extend this to 42 days. If the tenant does not leave after this time, a landlord can use bailiffs to evict them.

The following table shows the number of accelerated landlord possessions that have been granted to private rented sector and Housing Association landlords in Southwark over the last five years:

**Table 20 - Accelerated landlord possessions in Southwark (2011 to 2015)**

Year	Accelerated landlord possessions claims made	Number of outright orders issued	Proportion of successful possession claims
2011	293	213	73%
<i>Change between 2011-12</i>	<i>44% increase</i>	<i>61% increase</i>	<i>8% increase</i>
2012	423	342	81%
<i>Change between 2012-13</i>	<i>9% increase</i>	<i>5% increase</i>	<i>3% decrease</i>
2013	459	360	78%
<i>Change between 2013-14</i>	<i>11% increase</i>	<i>13% increase</i>	<i>2% increase</i>
2014	508	406	80%
<i>Change between 2014-15</i>	<i>no change</i>	<i>7% increase</i>	<i>6% increase</i>
2015	507	436	86%

Source: Ministry of Justice data

This table below shows the number of households that have been evicted from Southwark's council properties over the last five years:

**Table 21 - Evictions from council properties (2011/12 to 2015/16)**

Financial year	Number of households evicted
2011/12	212
<i>Change between 2011/12-12/13</i>	<i>5% increase</i>
2012/13	223
<i>Change between 2012/13-13/14</i>	<i>2% increase</i>
2013/14	227
<i>Change between 2013/14-14/15</i>	<i>4% decrease</i>
2014/15	218
<i>Change between 2014/15-15/16</i>	<i>11% decrease</i>
2015/16	195

Source: Internal records

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/575440/Social\\_housing\\_lettings\\_in\\_England\\_2015-16\\_revised\\_071216.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575440/Social_housing_lettings_in_England_2015-16_revised_071216.pdf)

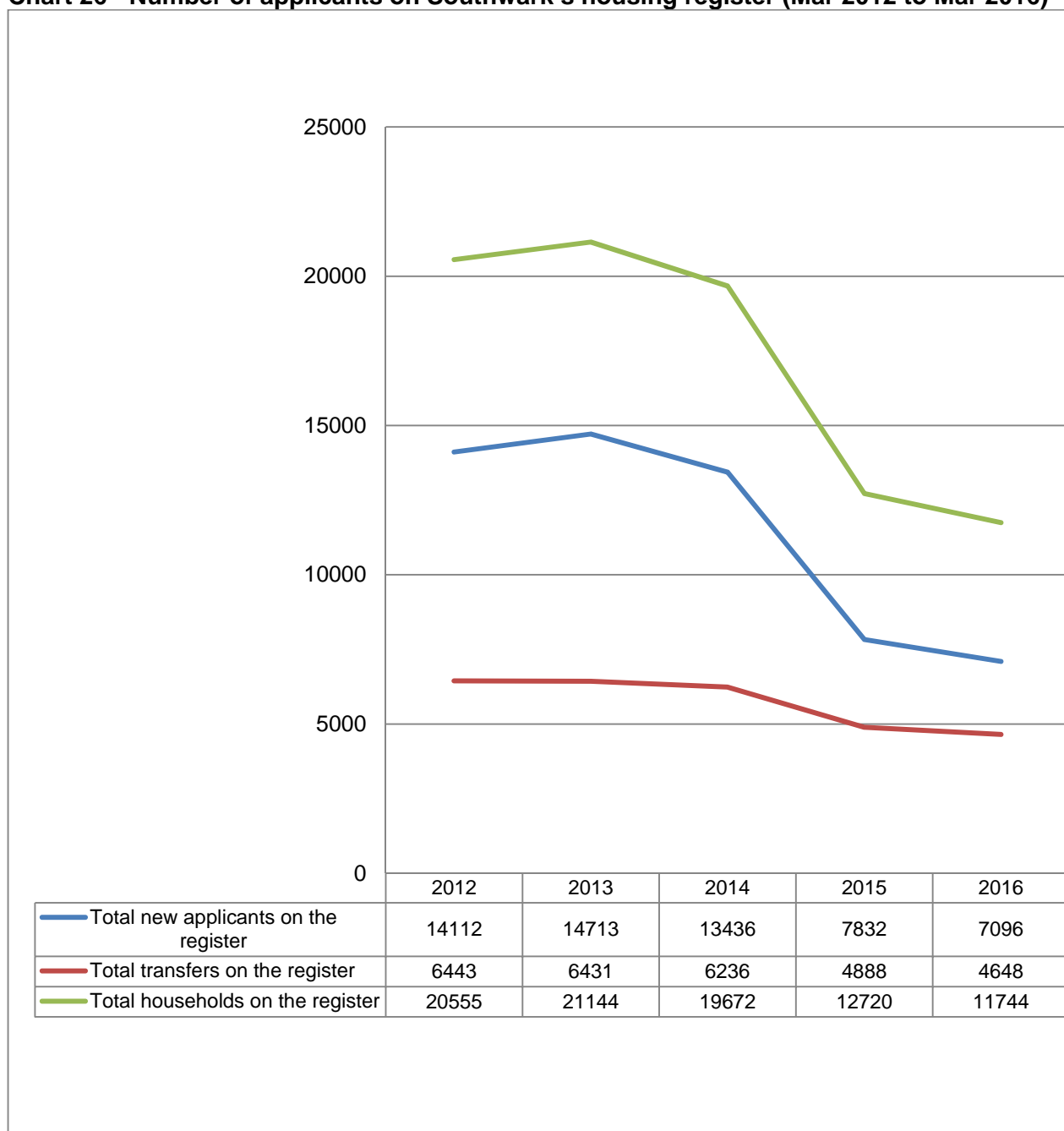
## 7.2.4 Southwark’s housing register

### Overview of Housing Register

Previous legislation required local authorities to add applicants to the housing register at their request even if they were found to have no housing need. Since the implementation of the Localism Act in 2014, local authorities are only required to abide by the terms of their *lettings policy*, enabling them to prioritise those they have a duty to support with the greatest housing needs.

The following chart shows how numbers on the housing register have fallen in the last three years, from 21,144 households in 2013 to 11,744 in 2016. Following a review in 2014, the council decided to include in its revised lettings policy a requirement that applicants should have a five year local connection to the borough.

**Chart 26 - Number of applicants on Southwark’s housing register (Mar 2012 to Mar 2016)**

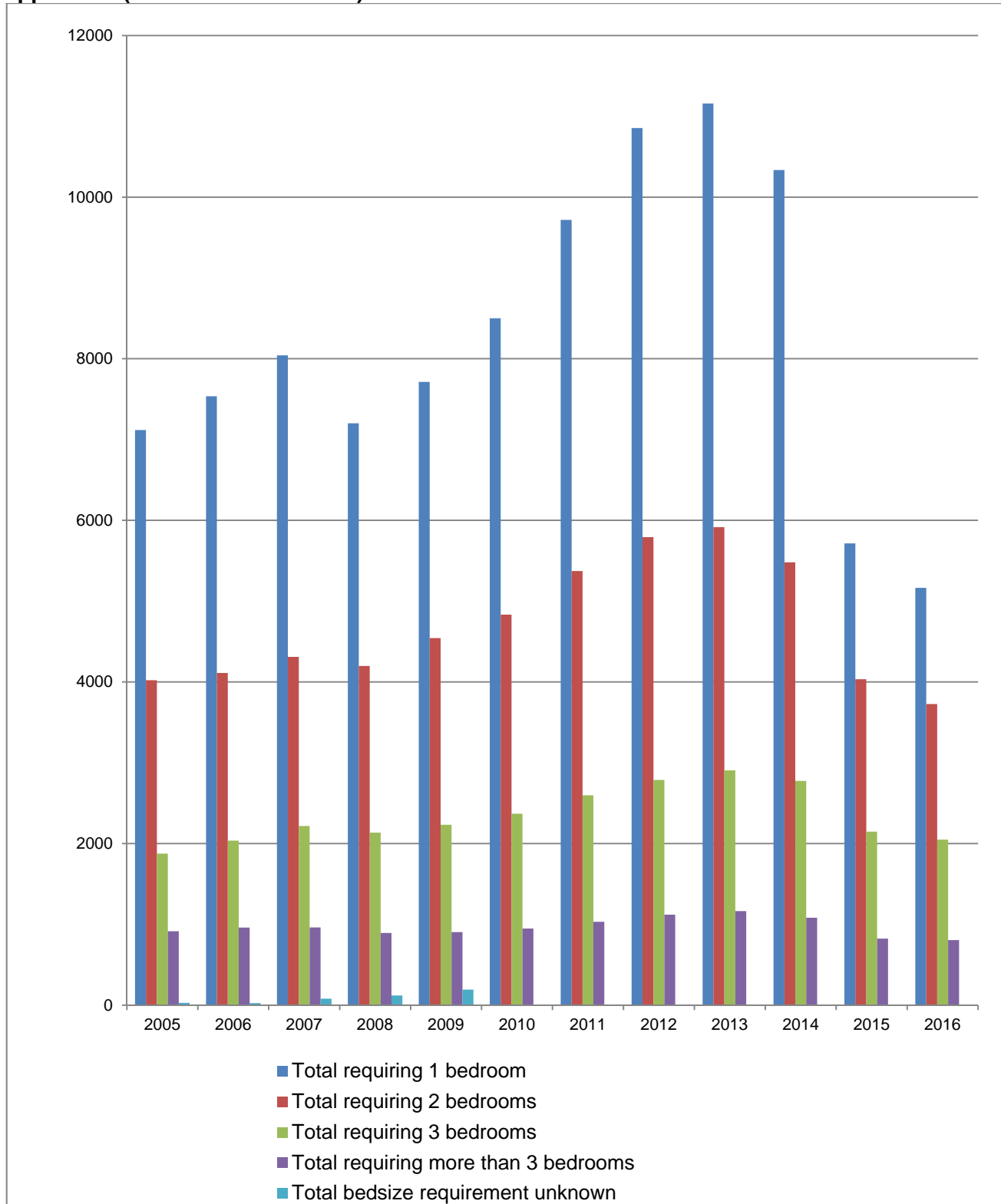


Source: LAHS/HSSA + Internal records

## Analysis of housing register by the number of bedrooms required

The graph below shows the size of property required by households on Southwark’s housing register, including those requiring transfers. The greatest need relates to one bedroom properties though waiting times are longer for larger properties as they are less likely to become void.

**Chart 27 – Analysis of Southwark’s housing register by the number of bedrooms required by applicants (Mar 2005 to Mar 2016)**



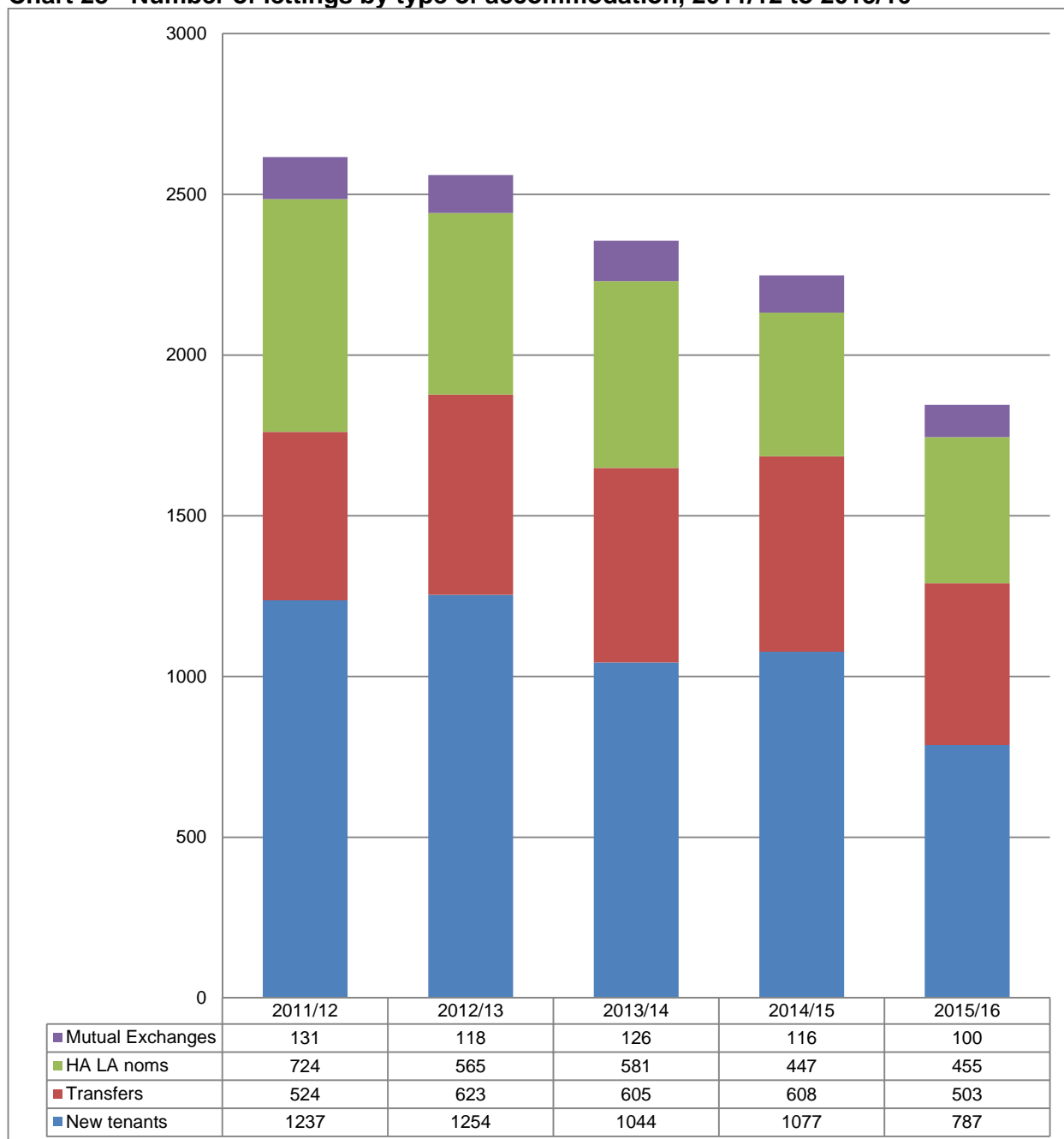
Source: LAHS/HSSA + Internal records



## 7.2.5 Lettings in Southwark

Once registered on the housing register, applicants use Southwark’s choice based lettings service (*Homesearch*) to bid for a new home, although some homeless households are made direct offers. The graph below shows the number of lettings made by the Council to: new tenants; existing tenants (transfers); through a nomination to a Housing Association and through mutual exchanges. The total number of lettings the Council has been able to make each year has been falling since 2009/10 (3,030). Last year (2015/16) saw the fewest number of lettings on record (1,845 including nominations to housing associations and mutual exchanges).

**Chart 28 - Number of lettings by type of accommodation, 2011/12 to 2015/16**



Source: LAHS/HSSA + Internal records

The following table shows the number of lettings made to Southwark council homes in 2015/16 via *Homesearch*. Over half of the properties let were one bedroom properties:

**Table 22 - Lettings to council stock via Homesearch (2015/16)**

Band	BEDSIT	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED+	TOTAL
Band 1	0	103	70	51	19	243
Band 2	23	88	44	36	4	195
Band 3	56	165	32	24	7	284
Band 4	2	4	1	4	0	11
Adapted Homes	0	17	9	7	1	34
Sheltered Homes	3	56	0	0	0	59
Other	0	2	1	1	1	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>831</b>

Source: Internal records

\*Band 4 lettings are likely to have been urgent management decision offers

A total of **384** lettings were made through direct offers in 2015/16, the majority of which were made to homeless households.

The following table show the number of successful nominations made to Southwark's *Tenant Management Organisations* in 2015/16:

**Table 23 - Lettings to tenant management organisations (TMOs) (2015/16)**

Band	BEDSIT	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED +	TOTAL
Band 1	0	1	7	5	4	17
Band 2	1	3	5	2	0	11
Band 3	2	5	11	5	1	24
Band 4	1	1	0	0	0	2
Other	1	0	1	0	0	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>56</b>

Source: Internal records

The table below shows successful nominations made to registered providers in 2015/16:

**Table 24 - Lettings to registered providers (2015/16)**

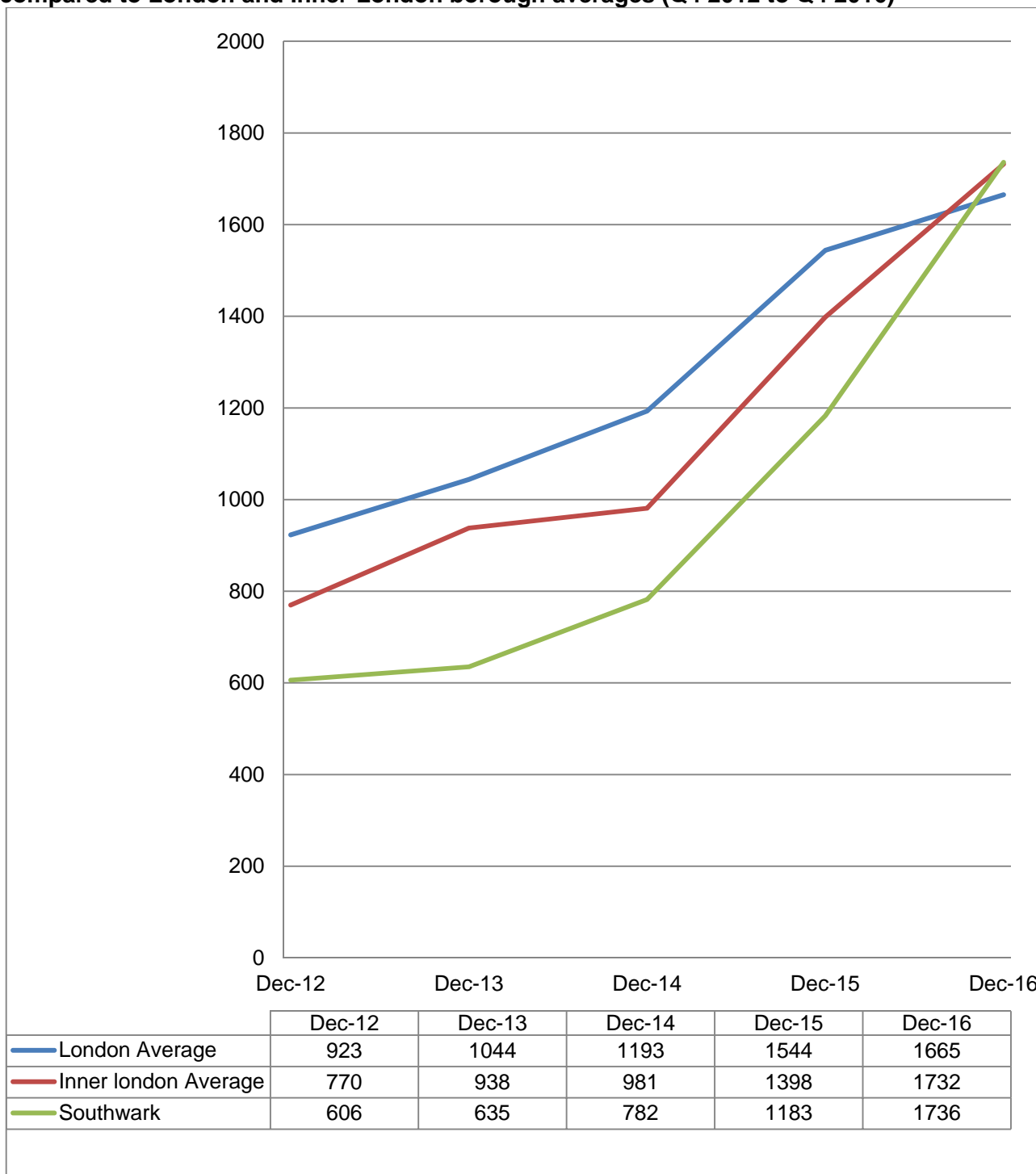
Band	BEDSIT	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED+	TOTAL
Band 1	0	16	28	30	17	91
Band 2	2	18	26	13	6	65
Band 3	3	80	109	30	5	227
Band 4	0	1	1	0	0	2
Adapted Homes	0	6	16	14	1	37
Sheltered Homes	1	17	0	0	0	18
Other	0	3	15	1	0	19
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>462</b>

Source: Annual Lettings Report 2015/16

## 7.2.6 Temporary accommodation (TA)

The chart below provides an analysis of all homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA). This includes statutorily homeless households and those with pending enquiries, or found to be intentionally homeless or awaiting review, appeal or referral. An increase in the number of households accepted as homeless in Southwark was noted in [section 1.3](#). The total number of households in TA in Southwark has almost doubled in the past two years.

**Chart 29 – Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Southwark, compared to London and Inner-London borough averages (Q4 2012 to Q4 2016)**



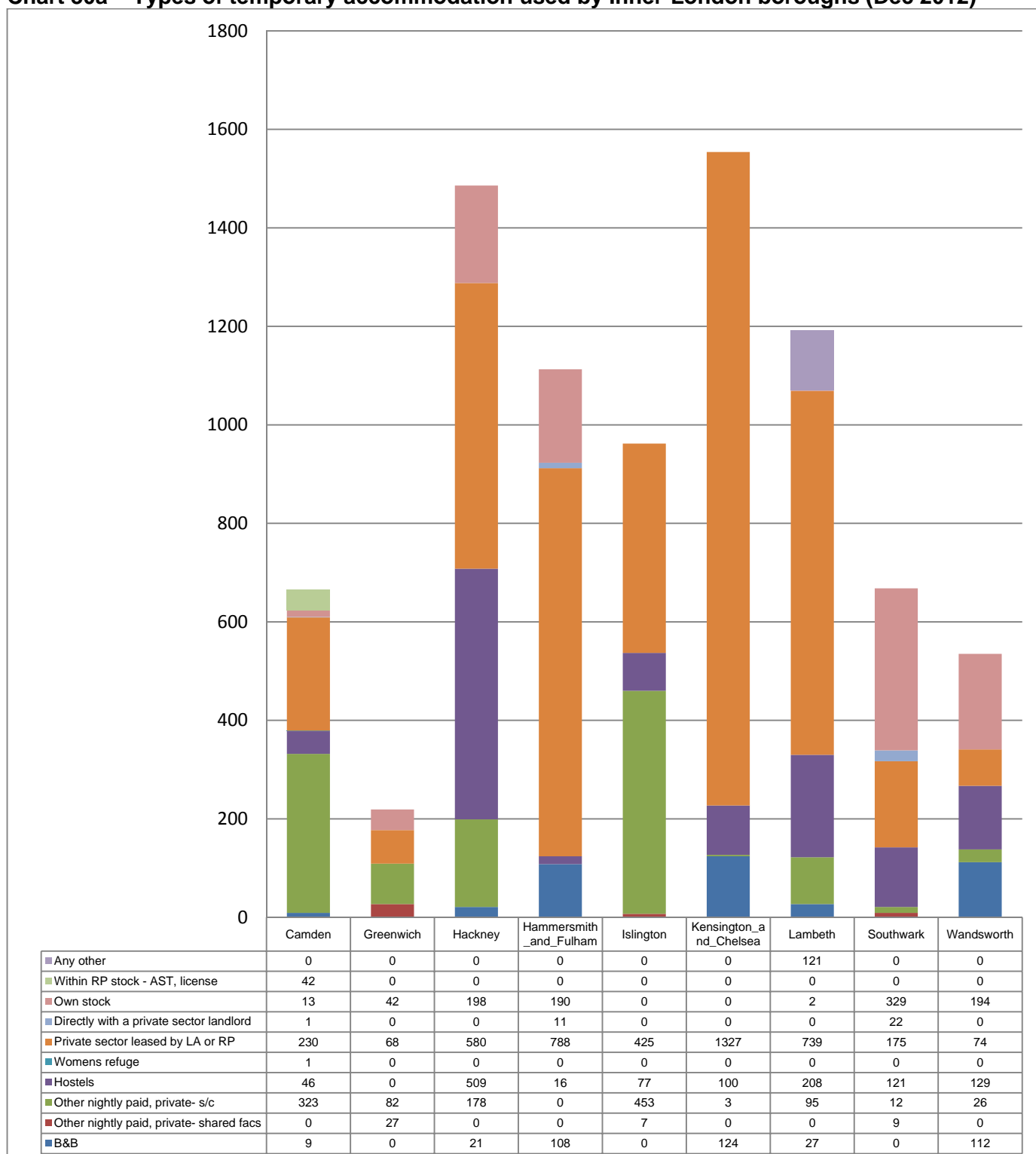
Source: P1E data, Internal records

\*Inner-London boroughs include Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster

The following charts provide a comparison between the different types of temporary accommodation (TA) being used by inner-London boroughs in December 2012 and December 2016.

Chart 30a shows that in 2012, inner London local authorities were most likely to use private sector leased accommodation as TA. Southwark however mostly used their own stock to house homeless households.

**Chart 30a – Types of temporary accommodation used by Inner-London boroughs (Dec 2012)**



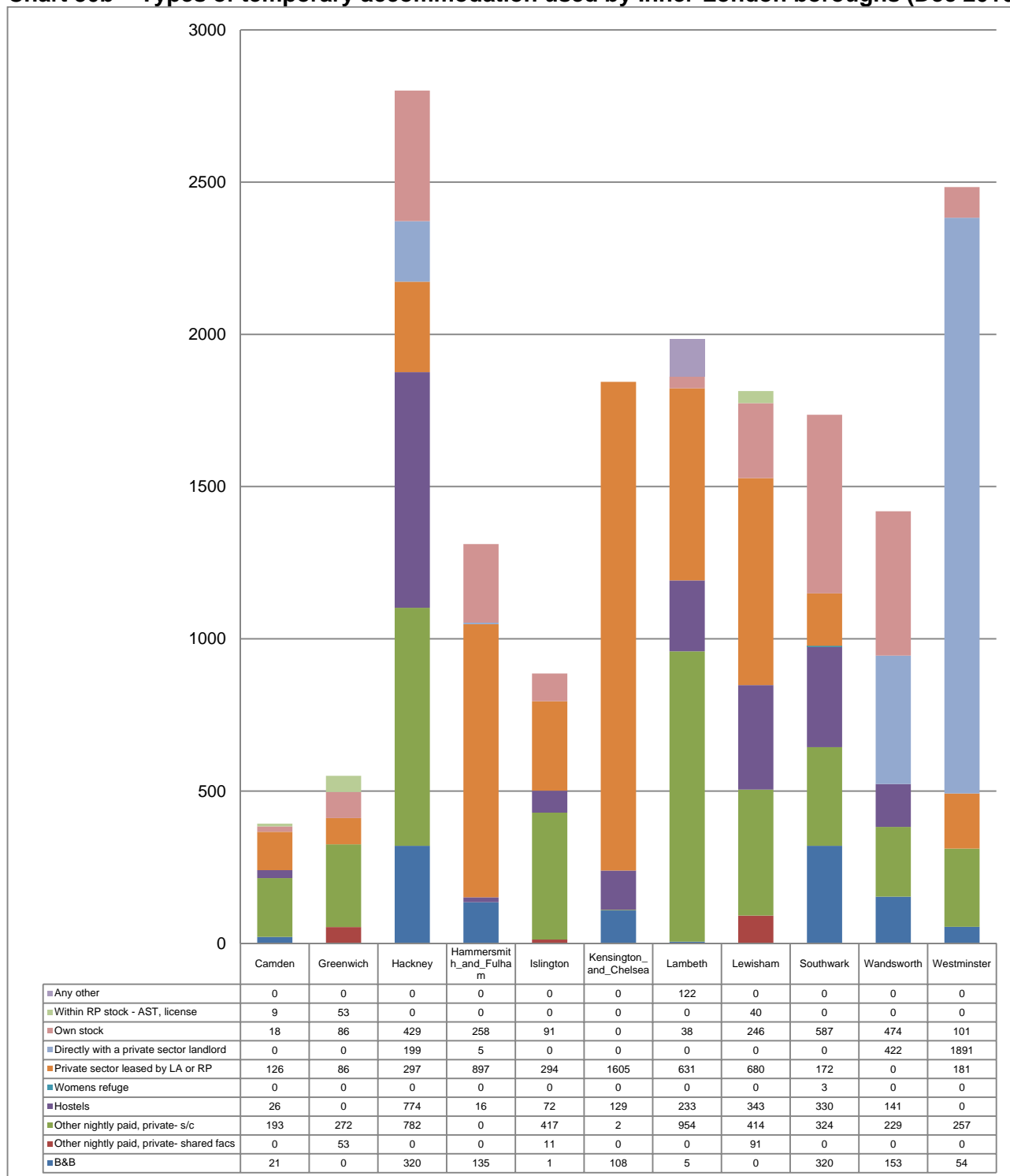
Source: P1E data, Internal records

\*- Westminster and Lewisham did not submit complete P1E data for TA for December 2012.

Chart 30b shows that in December 2016 inner London local authorities were supporting many more homeless households, compared to 2012. Because of the increase in demand for TA, local authorities needed to acquire TA from alternative sources. Data from Westminster was not available for December 2012 but the 2016 data shows that unlike other authorities, most of their homeless households were placed with a private sector landlord.

Having reported zero households in B&B accommodation in previous years, Southwark had 320 households in B&B in December 2016.

**Chart 30b – Types of temporary accommodation used by Inner-London boroughs (Dec 2016)**



Source: P1E data, Internal records

## 7.2.7 Housing standards in the private rented sector

Mandatory licensing for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) already applies across England and Wales. Landlords of HMOs must be licensed if their property is:

- Three or more storeys high (a storey includes a basement, loft conversion and any storey comprising business premises);
- Contains five or more people in two or more households; and
- Contains shared facilities such as a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

The private rented sector in Southwark has seen a rapid growth and an estimated 70,000 people now live in private rented homes, which equates to approximately a quarter of all residents. Whilst the majority of the sector provides decent well managed accommodation, there are problems associated with parts of the sector arising from poor management, poor property conditions and issues of anti-social behaviour.

In Southwark, two additional licensing schemes were implemented in January 2016:

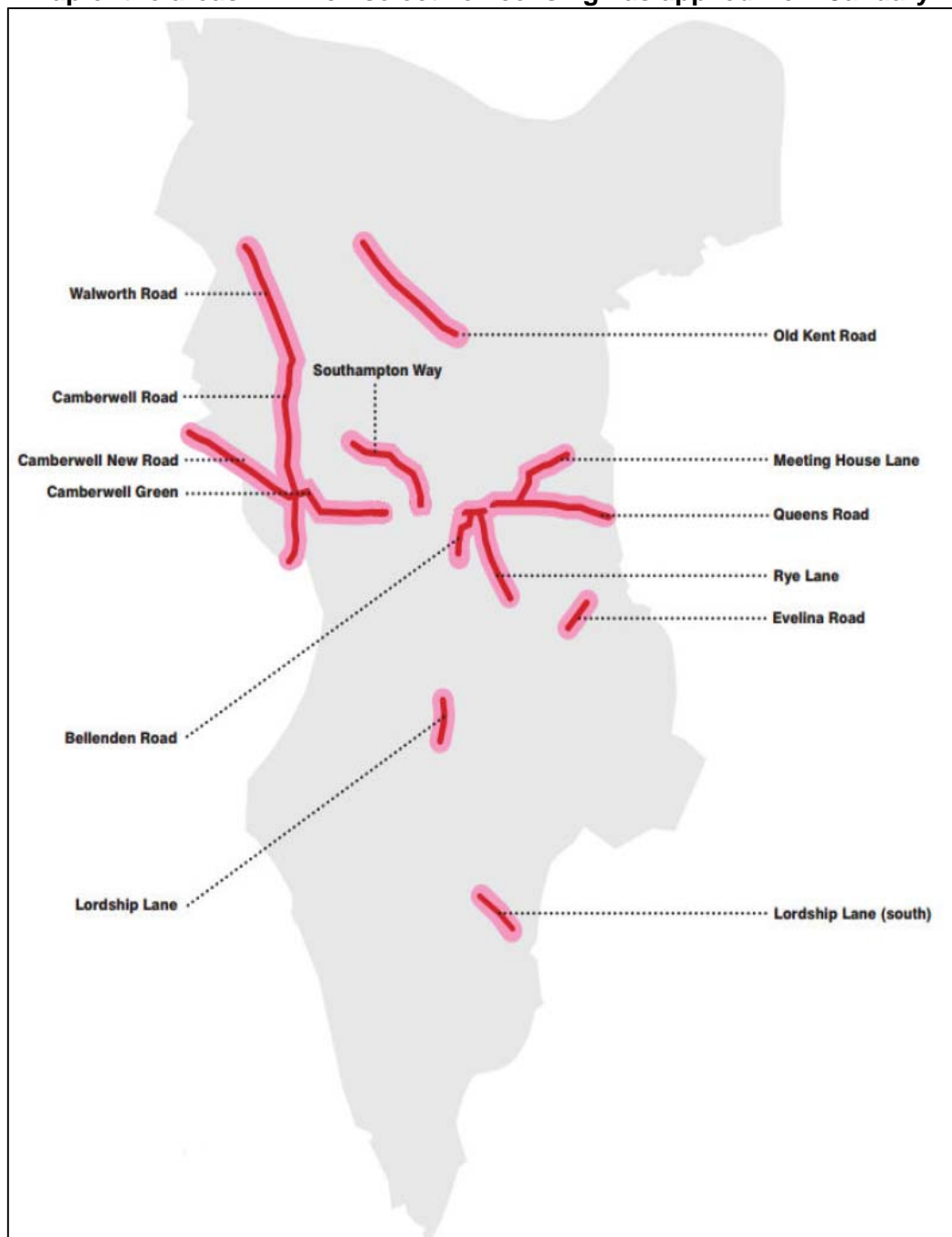
- An **additional licensing** scheme has extended HMO licensing to all HMOs in the borough. Every private rented property shared by three or more people who are not all related now needs to be licensed; an estimated 10,000 properties. The cost of a license is set at £250 per bedroom, although landlords that applied within the first six months of the scheme received a 20% discount, with a further 20% discount offered to accredited landlords.
- A **selective licensing** scheme now applies to certain parts of the borough, and extends property licensing to all private rented homes rented by an individual or single household. The cost of a license is £500 per property, although landlords that applied within the first six months of the scheme received a 20% discount, with a further 20% discount offered to accredited landlords.

The introduction of these schemes will help improve the quality and management of private rented properties in Southwark by:

- Providing greater confidence in the operation of Southwark's private rental market for both tenants and landlords;
- Working closely with both landlords and tenants to address anti-social behaviour in specific areas where the behaviour links to the private rented sector;
- Identifying and taking action in relation to small HMOs where overcrowding, poor quality conversions and subdivision are increasing;
- Driving up standards of tenancy management;
- Ensuring that there is a consistent level of responsible property management among private landlords and taking action against those landlords who persist in providing a poor standard of accommodation or whose tenants are causing persistent anti-social behaviour;
- Creating a level playing field and promoting an understanding among tenants about what they can reasonably expect from their landlord so they can make an informed choice.

The map below demonstrates the areas of the borough in which selective licensing has operated from January 2016:

**Chart 31 – Map of the areas in which selective licensing has applied from January 2016**



Source: Internal records

As of January 2017, licensing applications have now been received from around 2,000 of the borough's landlords. Of those properties that have been inspected so far, officers found that:

- 40% have some sort of hazard (HHSRS- Category 1 are serious or Category 2 all other)
- 23% of hazards are Category 1
- The most common hazard was fire safety

For the properties inspected for additional licensing (HMOs), the other commonly found hazards have been overcrowding, damp, electrical hazards and excess cold.

Under the selective scheme, for single households, the most common hazards were damp, excess cold, food safety and trip hazards.

## 7.3 Southwark's demographics

### 7.3.1 Population

Southwark is a densely populated, geographically small and narrow inner London borough that stretches from the banks of the river Thames to the beginning of suburban London south of Dulwich. The population is relatively young, ethnically diverse, with significant contrasts of poverty and wealth. There is wide distribution in educational achievement, access to employment and housing quality. Major regeneration programmes have been underway for some time leading to significant changes in landscape and population structure and this continues to be the case. Major health indicators such as mortality and life expectancy have improved, but there are significant inequalities in these indicators for people living in different parts of the borough.

The Census 2011 recorded Southwark's resident population at 288,200, which is an increase of 18% since 2001. The latest mid-year estimate (2015) estimated the population at 308,901. By 2039, it is estimated that Southwark's resident population will have grown by approximately 26% to 390,000 individuals. The adult population aged 18-64 is expected to see the largest growth followed by the <18 and 65+ population.

The population is highly mobile. 13% of residents move out of the borough and 13% move in each year. Those moving out are most likely to move to Lambeth and Lewisham. Movement within the borough has been high but is reducing.

Many people in their 20s and 30s come to work and live in the borough. Southwark's population is predominantly young: 42% are aged 20 to 39 years old compared with 35% in London and 27% in England; 58% of Southwark's population is aged 35 or under. Southwark has the 9th highest population density for boroughs in England and Wales.

Southwark is ethnically diverse with the highest proportion of residents born in Africa in the country (12.9 per cent), as well as significant populations from Latin America, the Middle East, South East Asia and China. 75% of reception-age children are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups with over 120 languages spoken in Southwark. In 11% of households nobody speaks English as a first language.

### 7.3.2 Deprivation and poverty

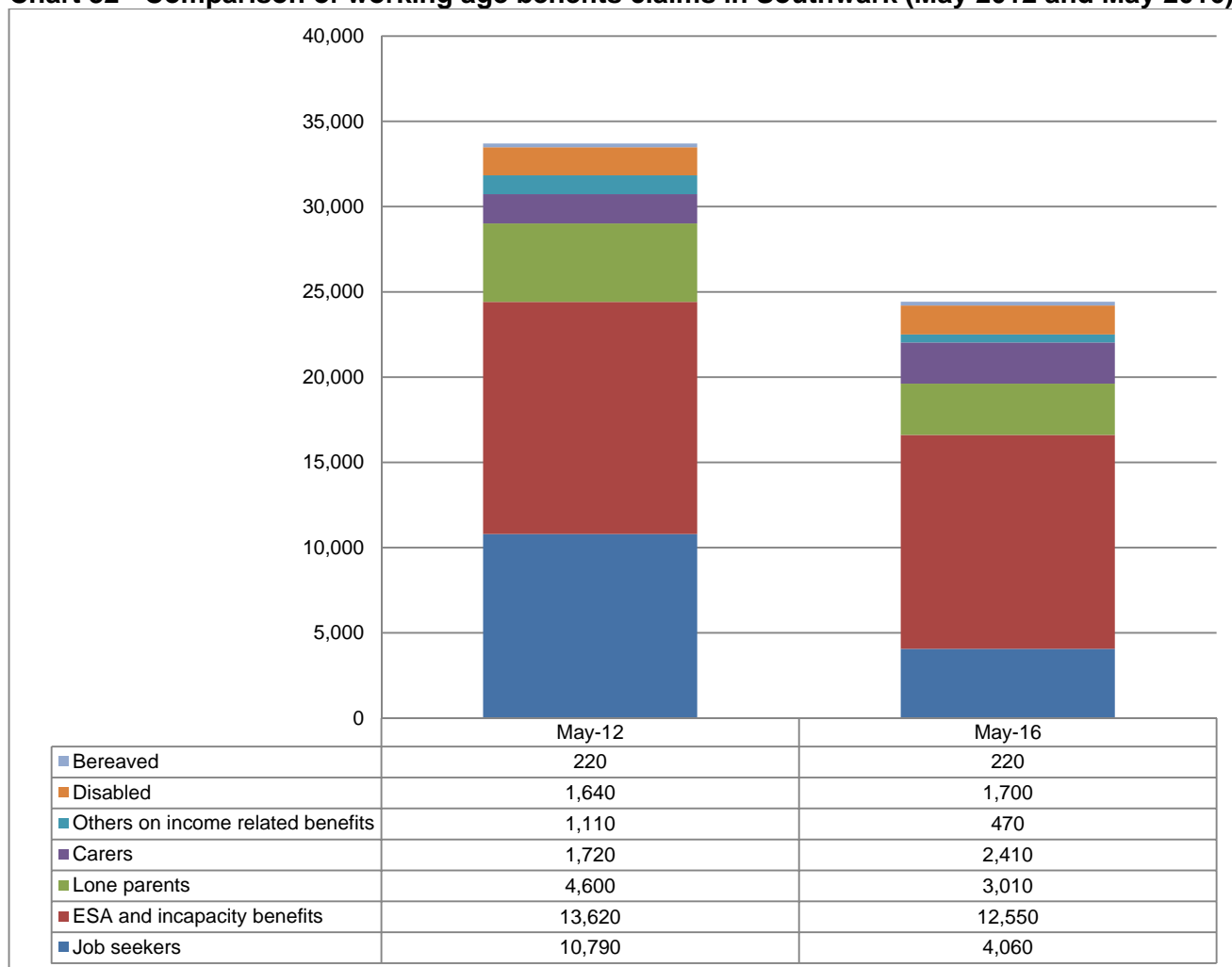
In 2015, Southwark was ranked the 23<sup>rd</sup> most deprived local authority in England (out of 326) and the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough in London (out of 33) according to The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

In September 2016 Southwark's unemployment rate was 6.9% compared to a London average of 6.0% and a national rate of 4.9% with 24,420 of working age residents (10.8%) claiming a key out of work benefit (these include JSA, ESA / Incapacity Benefit and other income related benefits).

Between May 2012 and May 2016 the number of working age benefit claimants in Southwark reduced by 28%. The data below shows that the main reduction has been in Job Seekers Allowance claimants with fewer than half the claimants in 2016, than in 2012.



**Chart 32 - Comparison of working age benefits claims in Southwark (May 2012 and May 2016)**



Source: NOMIS

## Carers

According to the 2011 Census, 7.1% (20,725) of Southwark’s residents were providing unpaid care for a family member or friend. Nearly a quarter of the unpaid carers (4,748) were providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week. A further 3,446 were providing 20 to 49 hours per week.

### 7.3.3 Health and wellbeing

Male life expectancy is 78.2 years compared to 78.5 years in England. Female life expectancy is 83.4 years compared to 82.5 years in England.

There is higher incidence of emergency hospital admissions due to alcohol related conditions, high rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV, high rate of premature deaths from cancer and cardio-vascular diseases and high prevalence of mental illness in the local population. Coronary heart disease, cancers and respiratory diseases remain the top three causes of death in the population. Disease prevalence models have shown that there are high numbers of undetected cases of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease in Southwark population. Socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poor housing result in high rate of child poverty and social exclusion which subsequently contribute to poor physical and mental health manifesting health inequalities.

Groups most at risk of suffering from poor wellbeing include older women, older teenagers (particularly girls), people with a disability, people with a chronic illness, people in significant financial hardship and people who are unemployed (particularly men).

## 7.4 Welfare reform

The coalition Government introduced the Welfare Reform Act in 2013, in an attempt to “improve work incentives, simplify the benefits system and tackle administrative complexity”.

Measures in the Act included:

- a restriction of Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need
- caps on the total amount of benefit that can be claimed.
- the introduction of Universal Credit, which would replace a number of means-tested benefits and tax credits
- the introduction of Personal Independence Payments to replace the current Disability Living Allowance
- a new system to increase Local Housing Allowance rates by the Consumer Price Index
- limits on the payment of contributory Employment and Support Allowance to a 12-month period

Additionally, prior to April 2013, local authorities administered a national council tax benefit scheme alongside claims for housing benefit on behalf of the DWP. From April 2013, council tax support was localised and local authorities were required to devise and administer their own systems of support for residents who required help with council tax costs. At the same time as localising support, the Government reduced the funding available to local authorities by 10%.

In 2016 the Welfare Reform and Work Act was enacted. This froze many working age benefits for four years from April 2016 including the local housing allowance. It also reduced the benefit cap in London down to £23k for couples and lone parents, and £15,410 for singles. This was rolled out from November 2016.

The measures above have now been put in place. This section of the review seeks to identify the number of residents affected by these changes. Officers have been working with the voluntary sector and residents to mitigate for the drop in income that has led to hardship for some residents. For an explanation about how these measures affect individuals' claims please see the [Citizens Advice website](#)<sup>7</sup>.

The DWP has worked with officers at Southwark providing regular updates and giving feedback on the issues that residents are experiencing. They found that the number of Housing Benefit claimants living in social sector tenancies reduced by 3,047 between April 2016 and January 2017. This represents a 9.8% reduction in this section of the caseload. This is partly due to claimants entering work and no longer claiming Housing Benefit or not being entitled to claim because their income is too high. Also, the roll-out of Universal Credit has affected the Housing Benefit caseload as new claims for support with housing costs are being made through Universal Credit.

The number of Housing Benefit claimants living in private sector tenancies reduced by 673 between April 2016 and January 2017. This represents a 17% reduction in this section of the caseload. Unaffordable rents and increasing numbers of landlord possession orders are likely to have reduced the private sector HB caseload.

### 7.4.1 Social rented sector size criteria

In April 2013 the government introduced new housing benefit rules that affect working age social tenants. The rules restrict the size of property that housing benefit will cover by allowing one bedroom for each person or couple living in a household.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/changes-to-welfare-benefits/welfare-benefits-reform-what-do-the-changes-mean/>

If according to these rules there are more bedrooms than is necessary for the benefit household, the amount of housing benefit in payment will be reduced as follows:

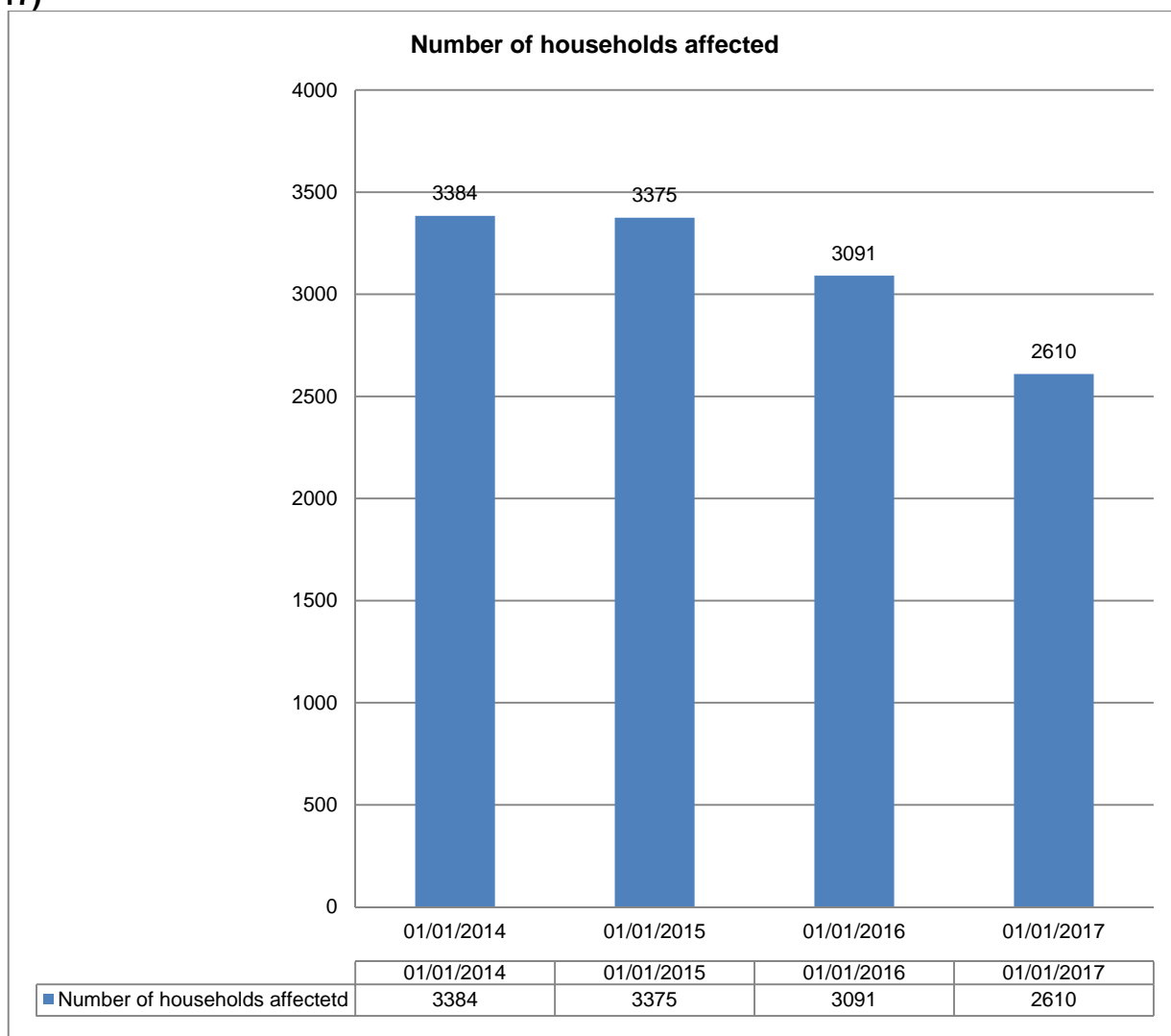
- If there is one spare bedroom a **14 per cent** reduction will be applied
- If there are two or more spare bedrooms a **25 per cent** reduction will be applied

Due to the way in which housing benefit is calculated, those in receipt of partial housing benefit (where only part of the rent costs are covered by an award of housing benefit) will see a reduction that is slightly higher than those stated above.

Some exemptions from this rule apply for those in exempt accommodation, foster families, households with disabled children, those who are recently bereaved, the armed forces and those with student children.

As of January 2017, the number of households affected by the “bedroom tax” (Social Sector Size Criteria) was 2,610. This figure has reduced by 2,105 since April 2013 and is illustrated in the following chart:

**Chart 33 – Social tenants affected by social rented size criteria in Southwark (Jan 2014- Jan 2017)**



Source: Internal records

The impact of this policy on Southwark’s residents in terms of weekly loss of income is as follows:

**Table 25a – Social tenants affected by social rented size criteria in Southwark- Tenancy type (Jan 2017)**

Tenancy type	Number of households affected	Average weekly loss of Housing benefit (£)
Council	1,819	19.49
Housing Association	791	23.74
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>20.78</b>

Source: Internal records

Of those social tenants affected, **1,819** were council tenants and **791** were tenants of a housing association or other social sector tenants. The average weekly deduction taken from tenant's housing benefit award was **£20.78**. The smallest weekly deduction was **£7.66** and the largest was **£57.94**. Most of those affected had their housing benefit reduced for having one additional bedroom.

**Table 25b – Social tenants affected by social rented size criteria in Southwark- Deduction type (Jan 2017)**

Deduction type	Number of social tenants affected
<b>14% for 1 extra bedroom</b>	1,998
<b>25% for 2 or more extra bedrooms</b>	612
<b>Total number affected</b>	<b>2,610</b>

Source: Internal records

#### 7.4.2 Welfare benefit cap

If households receive more than the capped amounts in total benefits income, their housing benefit award is reduced to bring their overall benefit income down to the benefit cap level. A range of benefits contribute to the benefit cap and exemptions apply for households in full time employment or with a disability status.

In autumn 2013, the Government rolled out the welfare benefit cap to Southwark's residents. The benefit cap introduced a limit on the overall amount of benefit that working age households can receive. Initially the cap was as follows:

- Couples, families and single parents can claim a maximum of **£500 per week** in benefits.
- Single people can claim a maximum of **£350 per week** in benefits.

From November 2016 the benefit cap was reduced. For claimants in London:

- Couples, families and single parents can now only claim a maximum of **£442.31 per week** in benefits.
- Single people can now only claim a maximum of **£296.35 per week** in benefits.

The number of residents that were affected by the cap in January 2017 was **347**. The average weekly deduction taken from tenant's housing benefit award was **£53.19**.

**Table 26 – Southwark residents affected by the welfare benefit cap (Jan 2017)**

Tenancy type	Number of households affected	Average weekly loss of Housing benefit (£)
Council	99	49.84
Council - Temporary	28	83.67
Housing association	101	52.15
Private - LHA	104	50.69
Private - Other	15	42.79
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>53.19</b>

Source: Internal records

### 7.4.3 Universal credit

Universal Credit (UC) full service was introduced in Southwark in November 2015 with expansion to cover most Southwark postcodes by November 2016. UC replaces working age means tested benefits and tax credits, including housing benefit, for ‘new claims’. It is a single monthly payment of benefit, including any help towards housing costs, directly to the claimant. It is assessed on a monthly basis and it is the circumstances at the point of assessment that determine the award.

In January 2017, the following numbers of households were in receipt of Universal Credit:

**Table 27- Households in receipt of Universal Credit**

Employment Type	Dec-16			Jan-17		
	Not in employment	In employment	Total	Not in employment	In employment	Total
<b>Southwark Total</b>	3,789	1,837	5,624	4,525	1,955	6,477
<b>National Total</b>	253,274	180,579	433,848	273,536	173,304	446,838

Source: DWP stat-xplore

The introduction of UC has presented a challenge for rent collection both in temporary accommodation and general needs housing. Ongoing analysis suggests that rent arrears levels of those moving to UC have increased. Issues include delays in the inclusion of housing costs in a UC award and duplicate requests to verify rent costs for social tenants. For nightly paid temporary accommodation, housing costs are often not being included as the claimant has left the property before the first payment is calculated. The council has commissioned independent research into the effects of UC on rent collection with a final report due in the summer of 2017.

The Government are considering whether some forms of temporary accommodation, provided by local authorities under their statutory homelessness duties should be met outside UC in the medium term and potentially outside the benefit system over the longer term.

Private landlords will understandably have similar concerns over their tenants’ ability to pay their rent and there is some evidence that landlords are choosing not to let to those on benefits for this reason.

### 7.4.4 Localisation of council tax support

When council tax support was localised in 2013 pensioners were protected from any reduction in the support that they received whilst working age recipients in Southwark received less support as a result of the reduction in funding from central Government.

36,184 households that were in receipt of Council Tax Benefit up until April 2013 were required to pay some Council Tax from April. Data from January 2017 shows that 27,772 households now benefit from the Council's Council Tax reduction scheme.

#### 7.4.5 Personal independent payments (PIP)

From April 2013, working-age recipients of disability living allowance (DLA) have been being reassessed for personal independence payments (PIP). Those under 16 years of age and over 65 years of age are unaffected by this change.

The transition from DLA to PIP has not been easy for many disabled people as many of those transferring have not been made PIP awards. Data from April 2016 showed that of the 1,530,300 new claims made for PIP since April 2013, only 47% of those applying under the normal rules had been made awards. Claimants that wish to appeal against a decision must first ask the DWP for a mandatory reconsideration before lodging an appeal with the courts.

The process has been frustrating for claimants as there have clearly been issues with assessing people. 63% of appeals have been successful but the temporary shortfall of income can cause real hardship for these already vulnerable residents. Additionally, many customers are often unaware of the changes in the descriptors for PIP and are of the belief that as their condition has not changed they will just transfer over.

In Southwark, 49% of decided applications have been awarded a PIP payment. As of March 2017 the current PIP caseload for Southwark is as follows:

**Table 28 – PIP caseload in Southwark (Mar 2017)**

PIP case type	Number of cases in payment
Normal rules	2,871
SRTI (Special rules for terminally ill)	62

Source: DWP

It is not only the loss of the income from the DLA that can affect household income of disabled residents, but the impact it can potentially have on other benefits: for instance the loss of the Severe Disability Premium (£61.85 per week) or the loss of a carer's income if someone had been eligible for Carers Allowance. Furthermore, unsuccessful claimants may see a reduction in their entitlement to means tested benefits. This will also affect the customer's automatic entitlement to access disabled travel schemes.

#### 7.4.6 Benefit changes subject to take effect from April 2017

The following list summarises the changes to the benefits system taking place after April 2017 that are likely to affect residents' incomes:

- a two child limit for new Child Tax credits claims
- a two child limit for Universal credit claimants
- a two child limit for Housing Benefit claimants
- the removal of automatic entitlement for the housing element of Universal Credit for unemployed 18-21 year olds.

Southwark has been engaging with other housing providers and the voluntary sector in the borough to understand how many families and young people will be affected, what the impacts will be and what support the council and its partners can offer.

The Government has planned to cap social sector housing benefit (or the housing element of Universal Credit) to the Local Housing Allowance rate from April 2019. This includes applying the shared accommodation rate for under 35s. Some social landlords in Southwark have already indicated that they will offer these residents assured shorthold tenancies, rather than secure tenancies, as there is a higher risk they will have problems paying their rent than those in receipt of full housing benefit.

The Government plans to restrict all housing benefit payments to the maximum local LHA amount will make providing supported and sheltered housing in the borough very difficult. There will be a local authority administered top up fund but there is concern whether funding will be sufficient going forward.

Details about other policies have yet to be made clear. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 required councils to introduce fixed term tenancies for its tenants. Government guidance on how this should be carried out is yet to be published.

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