

Homelessness data 2018

The purpose of this data and analysis is to support the development of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It is intended to determine the extent to which people in West Suffolk are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, assess the likely extent in the future, identify what is currently being done and by whom, and identify what resources are available, to prevent and tackle homelessness.

Data is provided under the following sections:

1. Identifying current and future levels of homelessness
2. Suffolk-wide support
3. Formulating a strategy to prevent homelessness
4. Reviewing accommodation needs and resources

1. Identifying current and future levels of homelessness

Homelessness statistics: Data relating to the period since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Following implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on 3 April 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has changed the way of collecting data from local authorities on statutory homelessness. From April 2018, statutory homelessness statistics include prevention and relief duties carried out under the Act.

This report contains data for the period April to December 2018. The statistics will be updated to include data for January to March 2019, therefore completing this data set, once the data has been released by the MHCLG.

Section 3 of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the changes implemented through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The legislation introduces the creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. A new relief duty was also introduced for those who are homeless, have a local connection and are eligible regardless of whether they have a priority need.

The emphasis is, therefore, on working to prevent and relieve homelessness so that households can maintain and secure a settled home. The following charts show that West Suffolk has had significant success in this area.

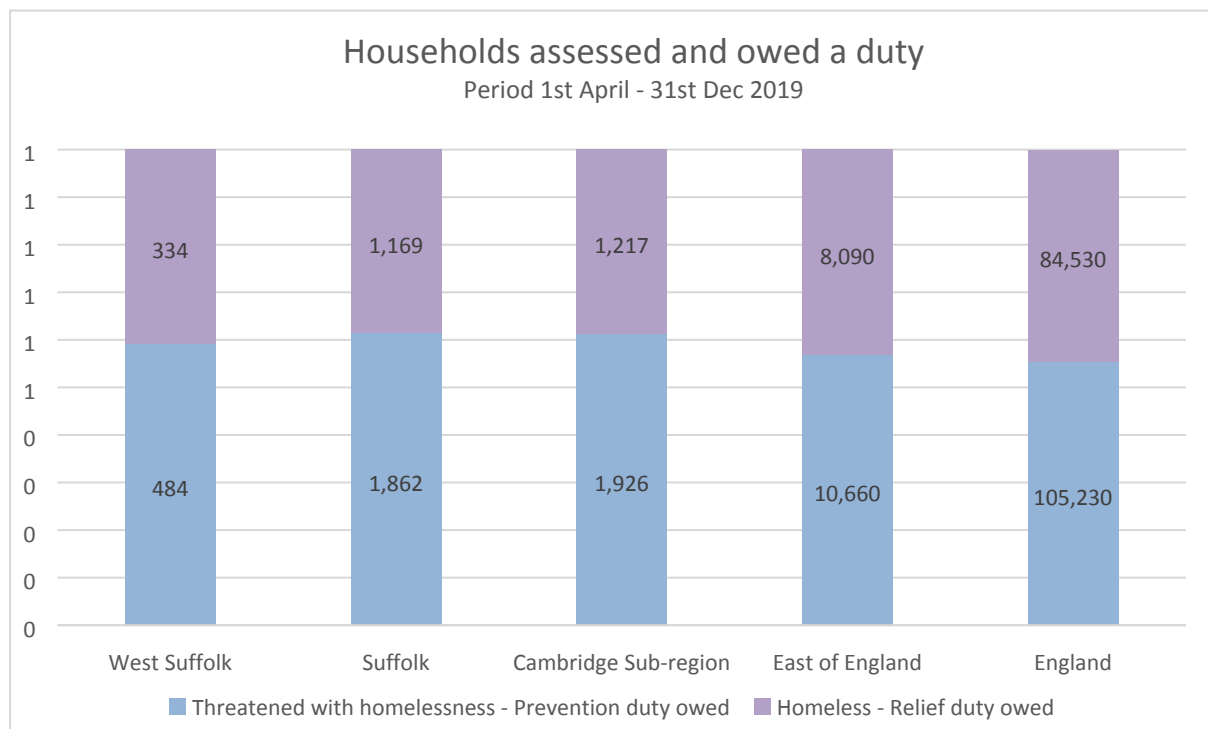
Data relating to homelessness statistics up to 2017/18 are provided on pages 13 to 19 in this appendix.

Households assessed and owed a duty

Between April and December 2018, the number of homelessness cases (or the number of households presenting as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless) across West Suffolk was **2,351**.

Figure 1 (below) shows that the number of households assessed as being owed a duty was 818. Out of all of those assessed as being owed a duty, 484 were owed a prevention duty and 334 a relief duty.

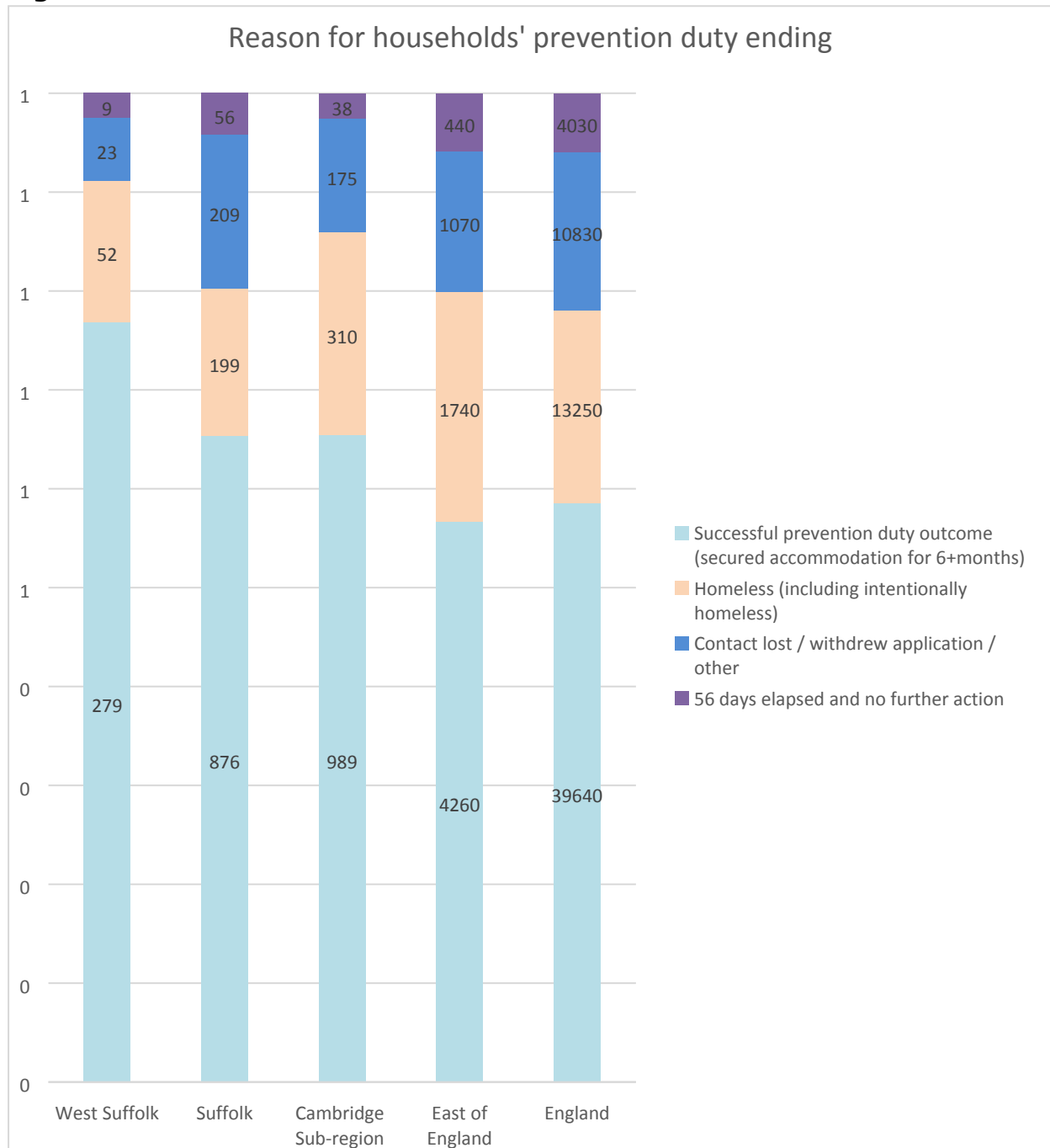
Figure 1



Prevention duty owed

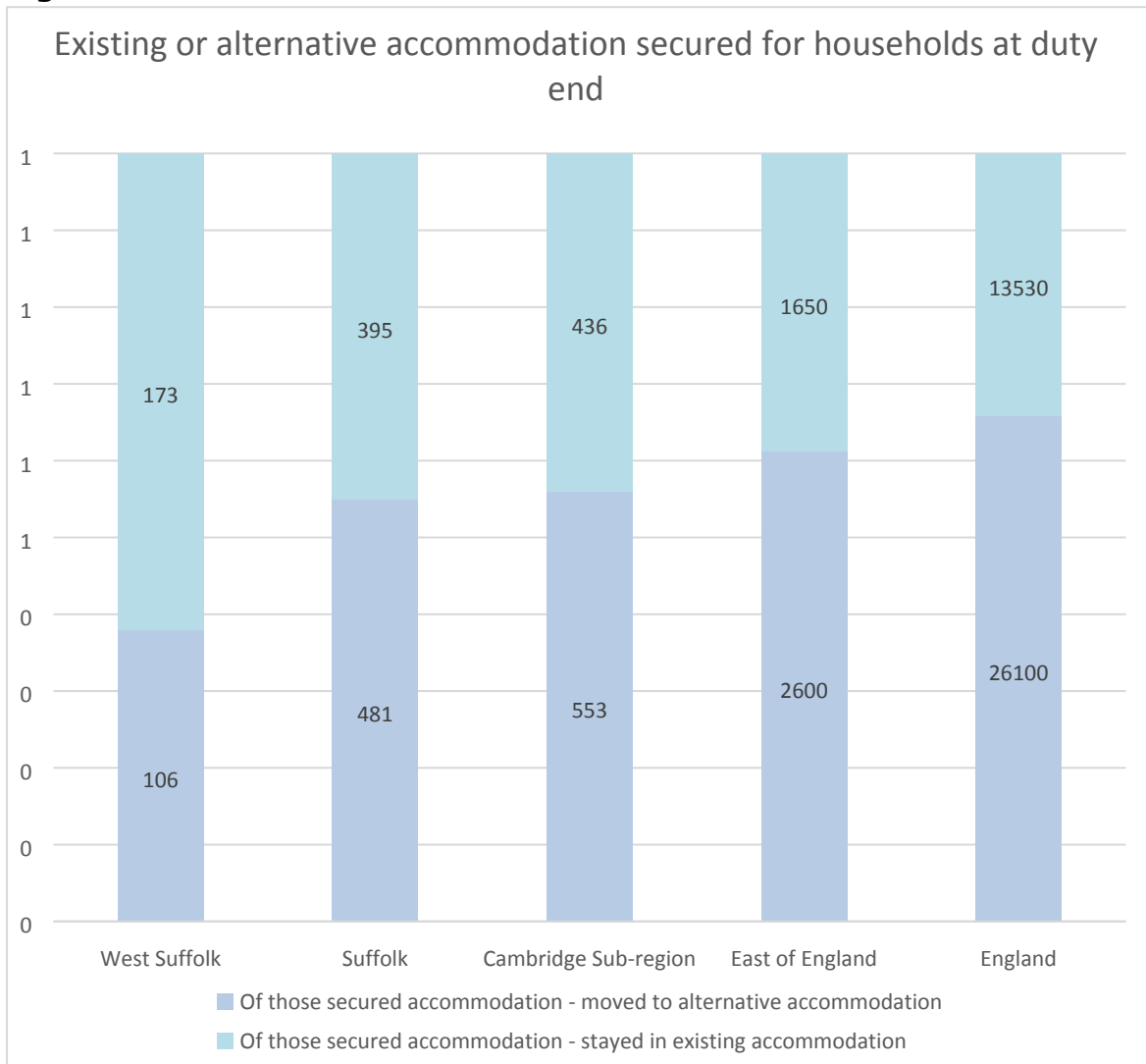
Where a prevention duty was owed, figure 2 (below) sets out the reasons for the prevention duty ending. 77% of West Suffolk households with a prevention duty ending resulted in a successful prevention duty outcome, which is secured accommodation for 6+ months. This is higher than Suffolk, the Cambridge Sub-region, East of England and England. The actual numbers are also given.

Figure 2



The households that were owed a prevention duty and had existing or alternative accommodation secured for them is set out below in figure 3. In West Suffolk, 62% of the successful prevention duty outcomes resulted in households staying in their existing accommodation. This is higher than for Suffolk, the Cambridge Sub-region, East of England and England.

Figure 3



Those households that were secured accommodation (whether existing or alternative accommodation), figure 4 below sets out the type of accommodation provided. In West Suffolk there is a particularly high percentage of households being placed in social rented accommodation.

Figure 4

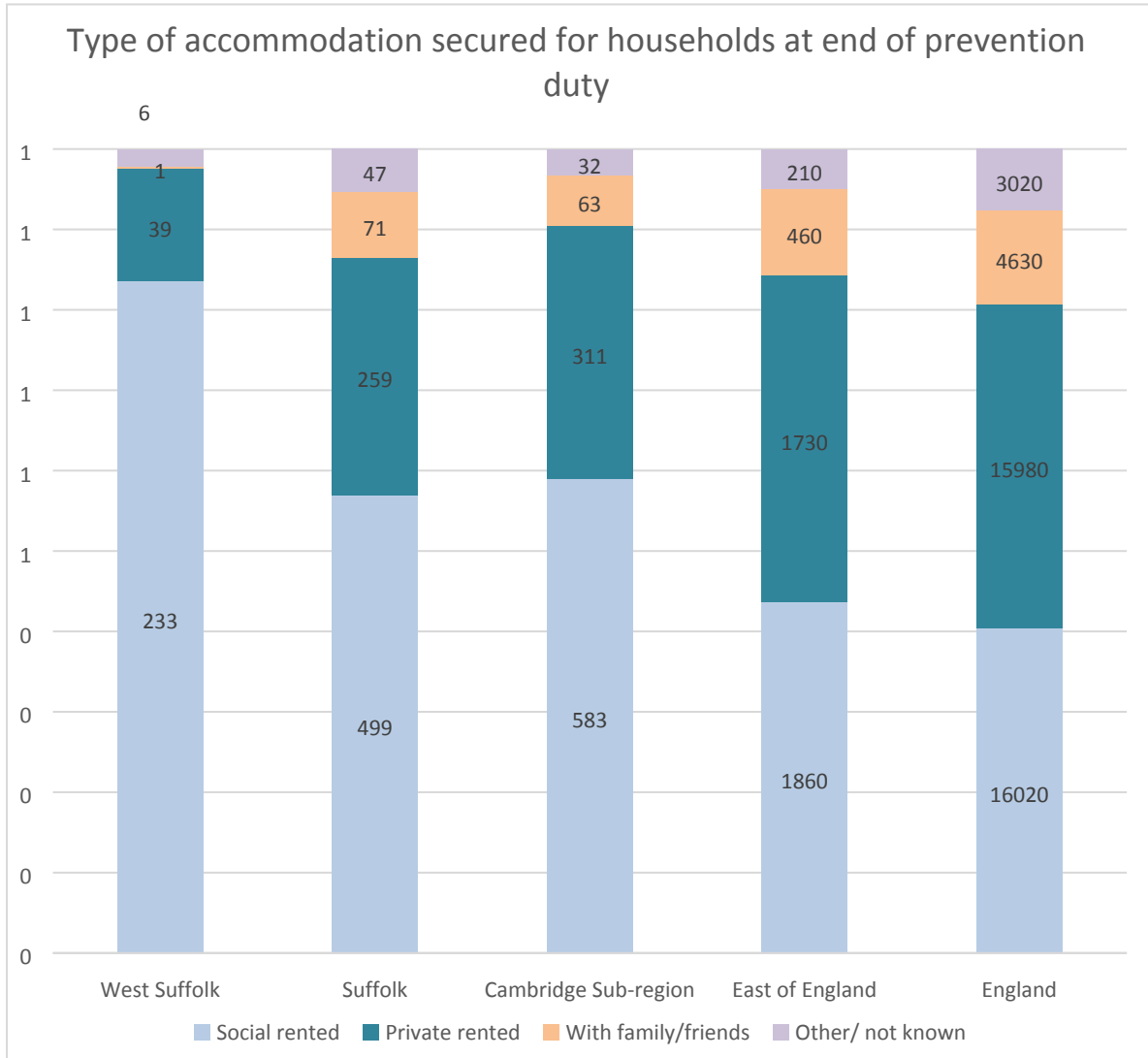
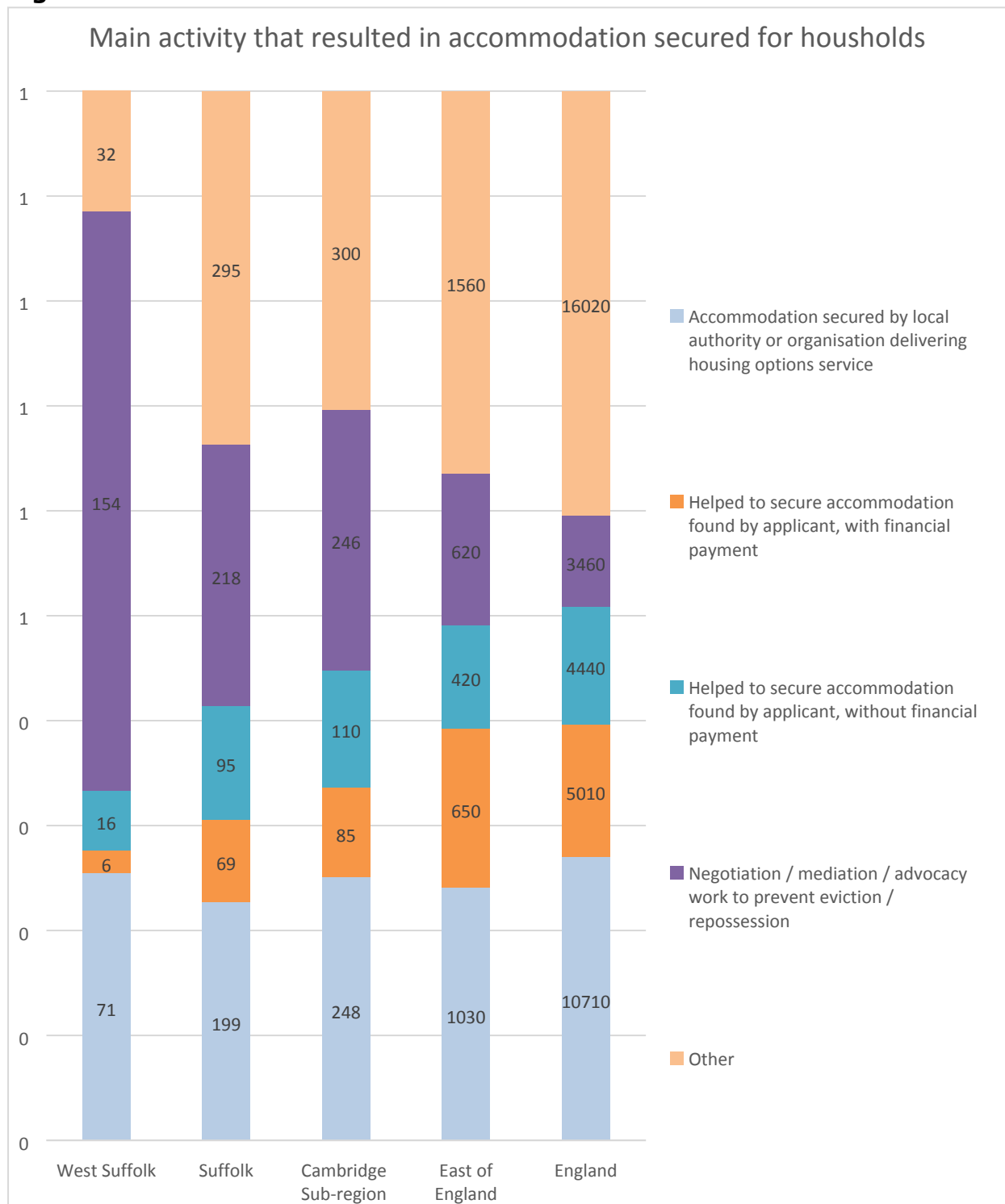


Figure 5 below shows the main activity carried out by West Suffolk Council that resulted in accommodation being secure for households.

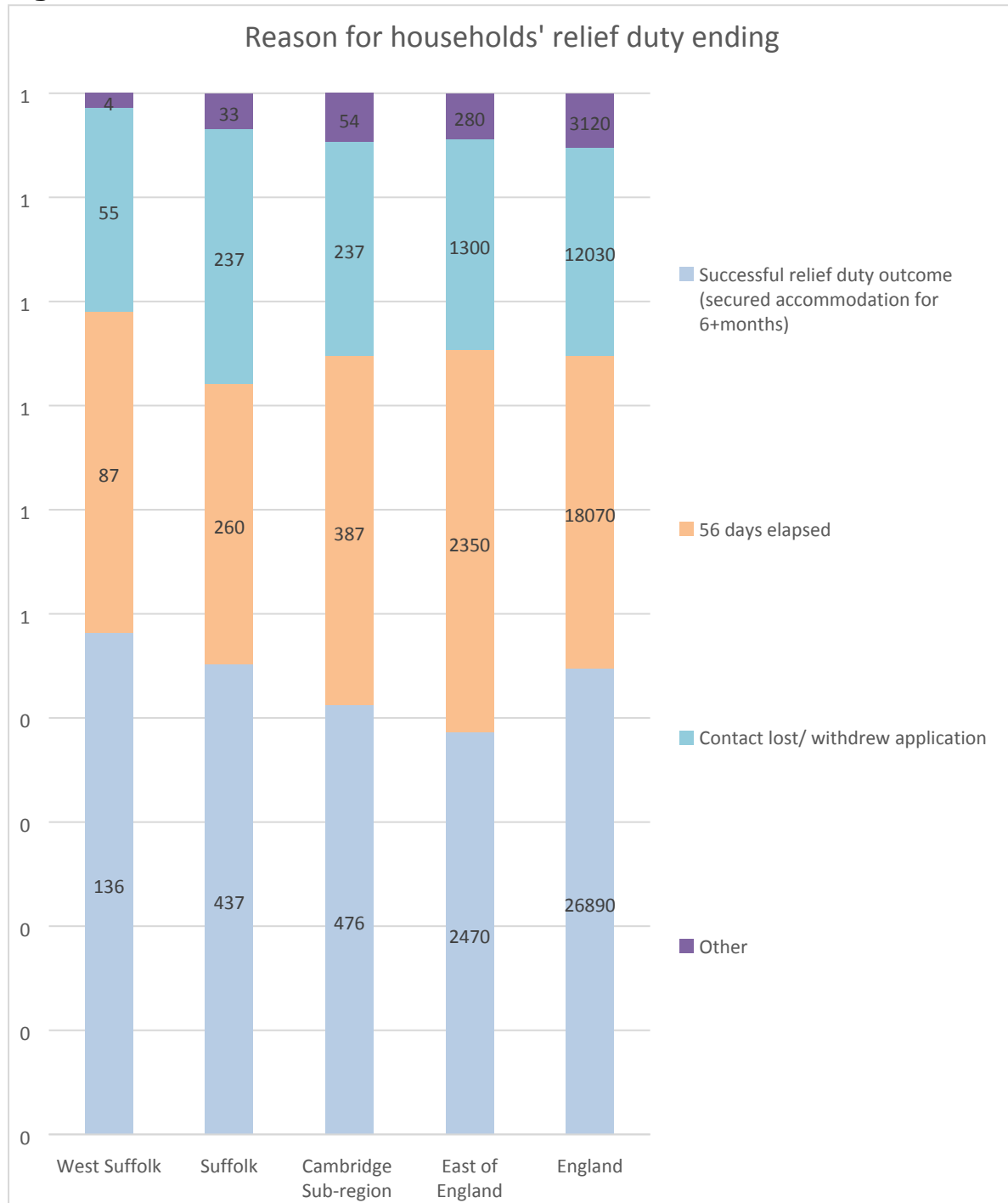
Figure 5



Relief duty owed

Where a relief duty was owed, figure 6 below presents the reasons for the relief duty ending. West Suffolk has the highest percentage of households with a relief duty ending due to a successful relief duty outcome (48%)

Figure 6



The households that were owed a relief duty and had accommodation secured for them, are set out below in figure 7.

Figure 7

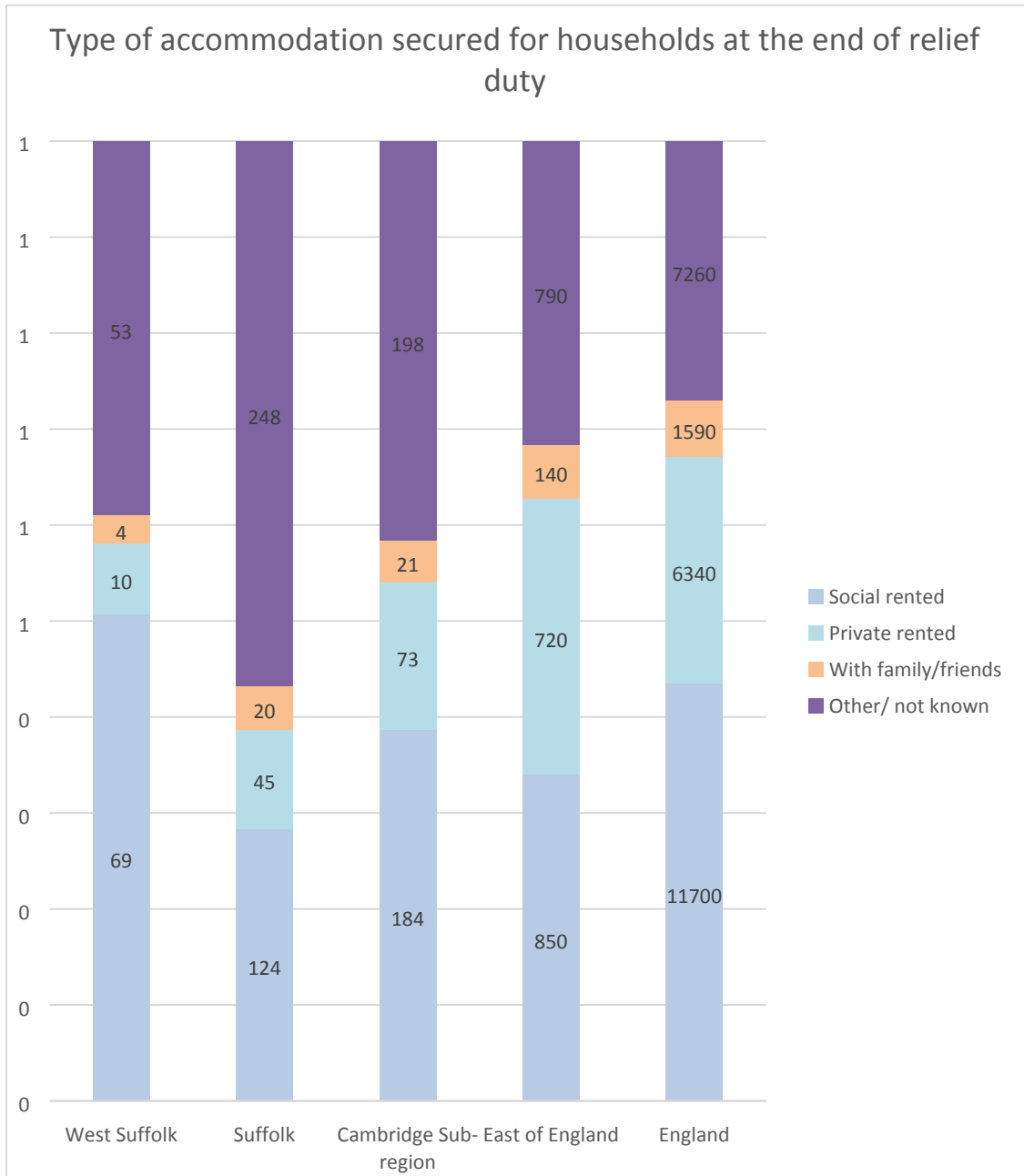
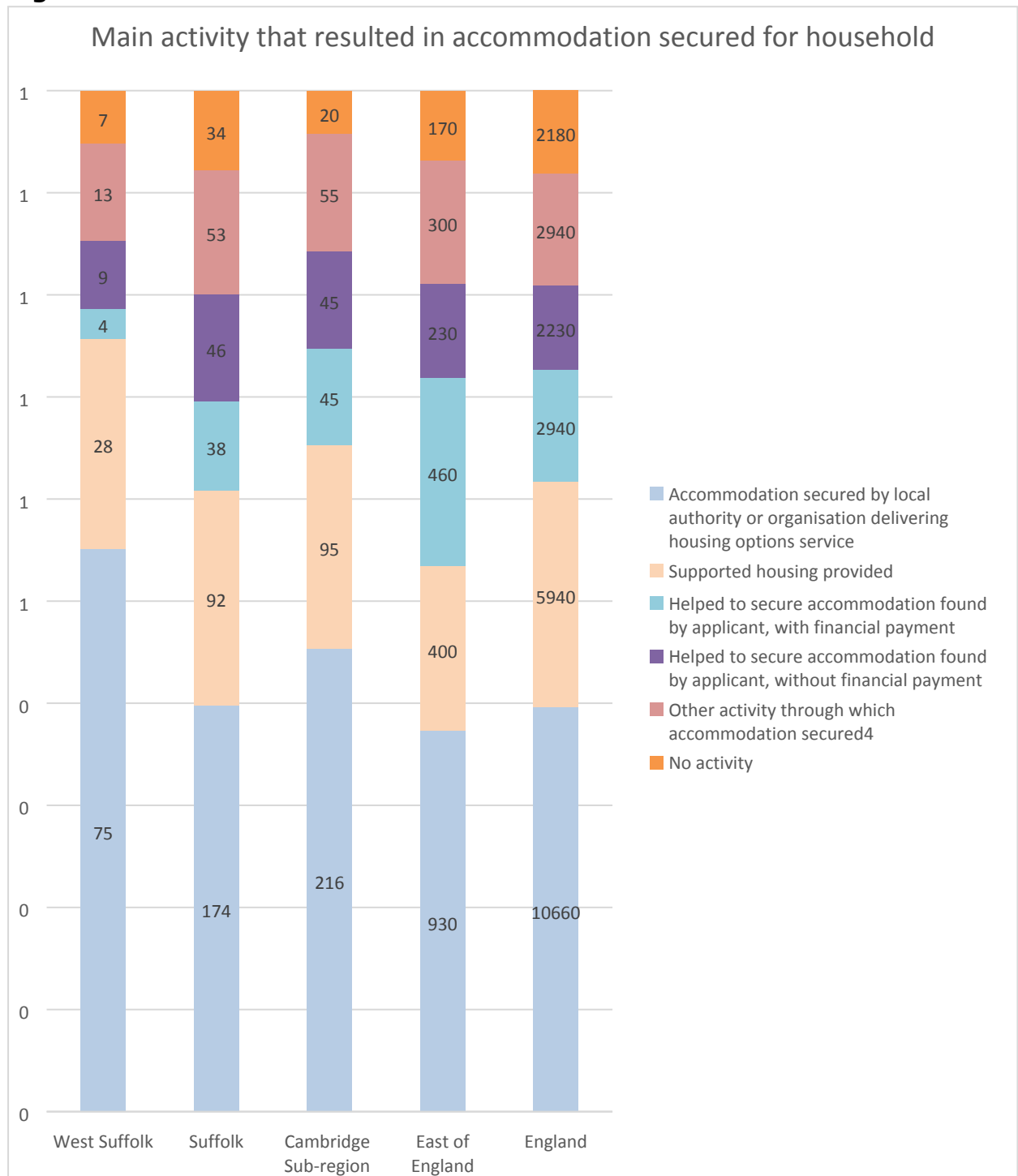


Figure 8 below shows the main activity carried out by West Suffolk Council that resulted in accommodation being secure for households. In West Suffolk, 55% of these secured accommodation outcomes are due to the accommodation being secured by the local authority or organisations delivering a housing options service.

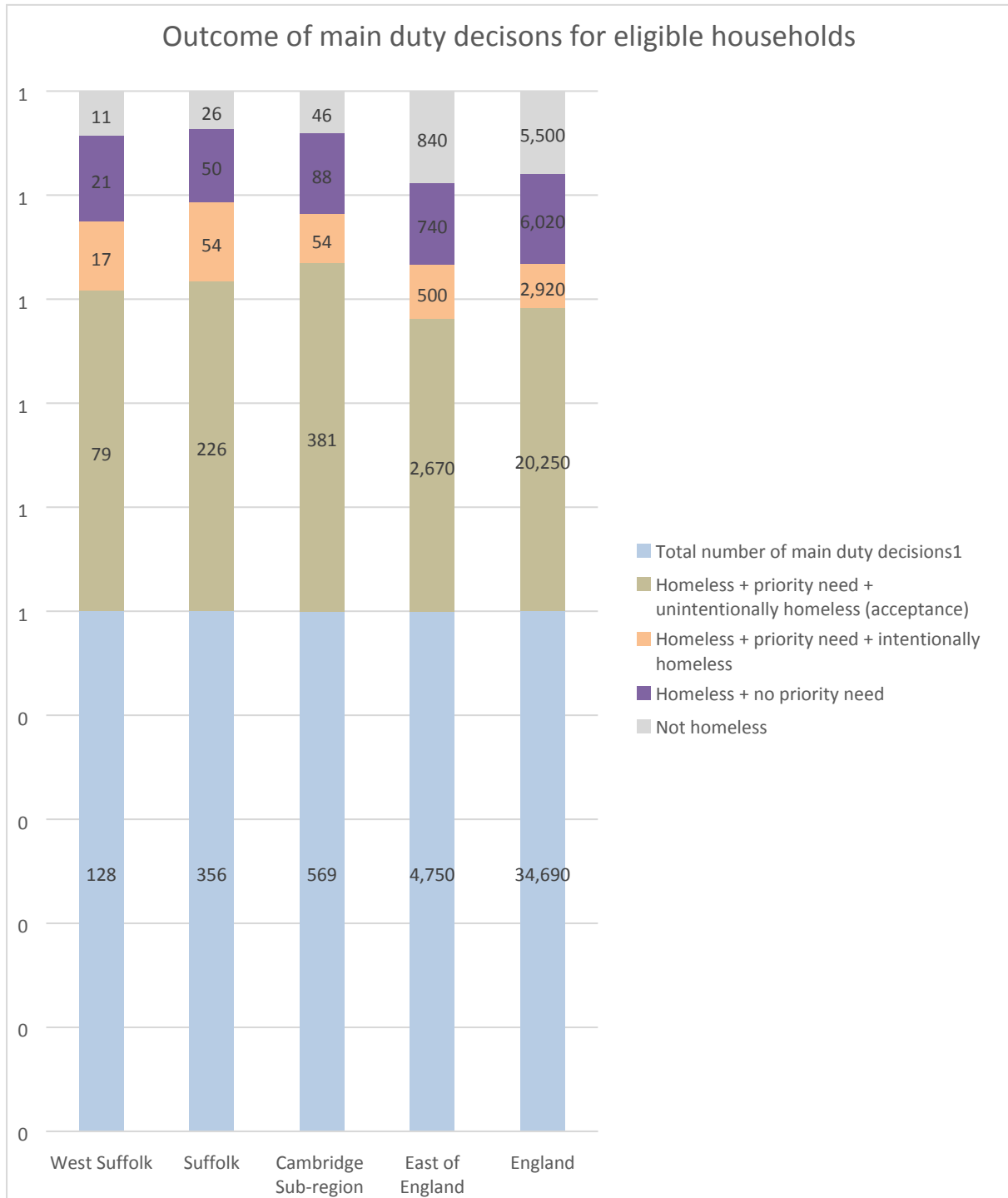
Figure 8



Main duty accept

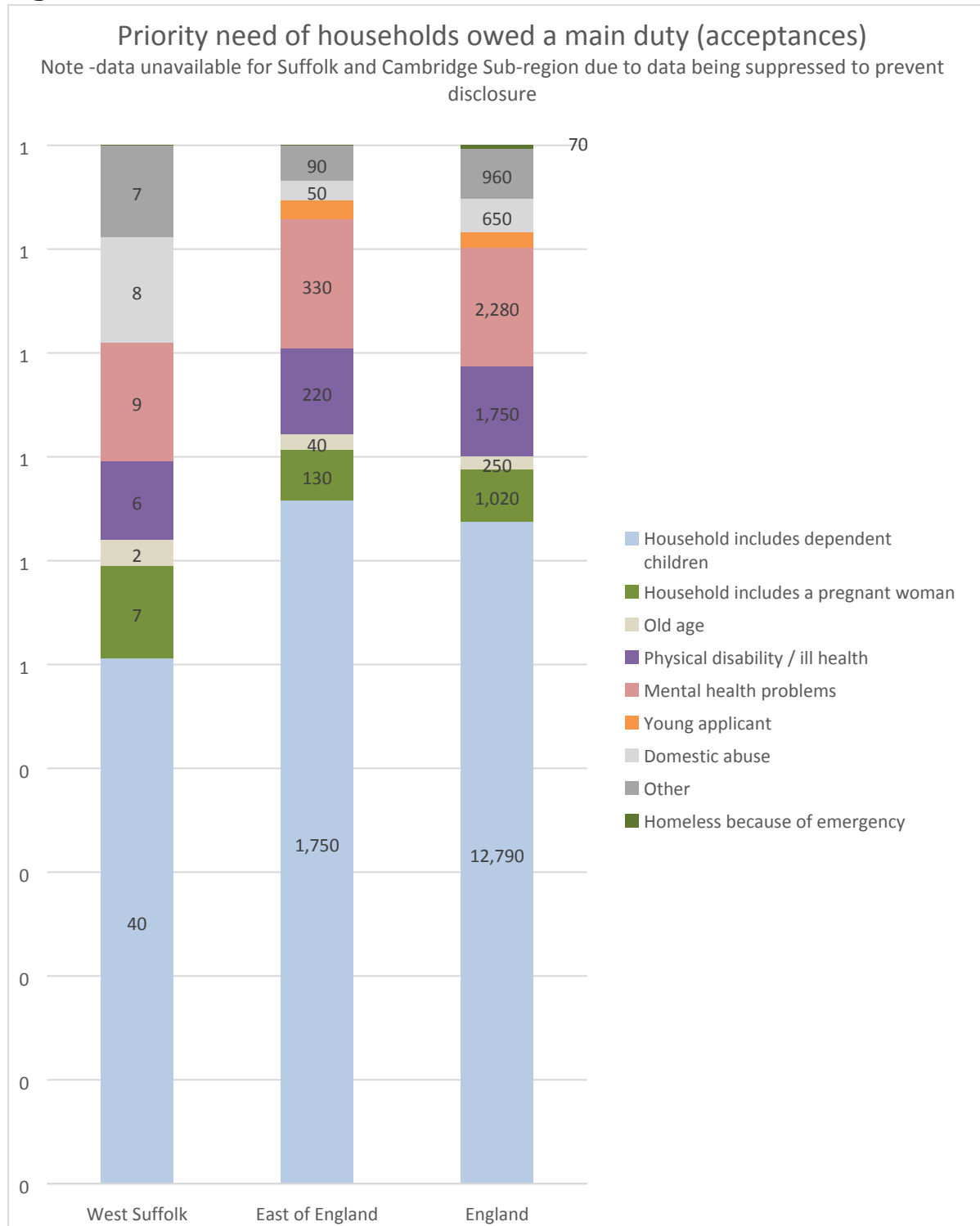
The main duty decision outcomes are set out in figure 9 below. Main duty decision acceptances (homeless, priority need and unintentionally homeless) are at similar levels across all areas.

Figure 9



The priority need of households owed a main duty are set out in figure 10 below.

Figure 10

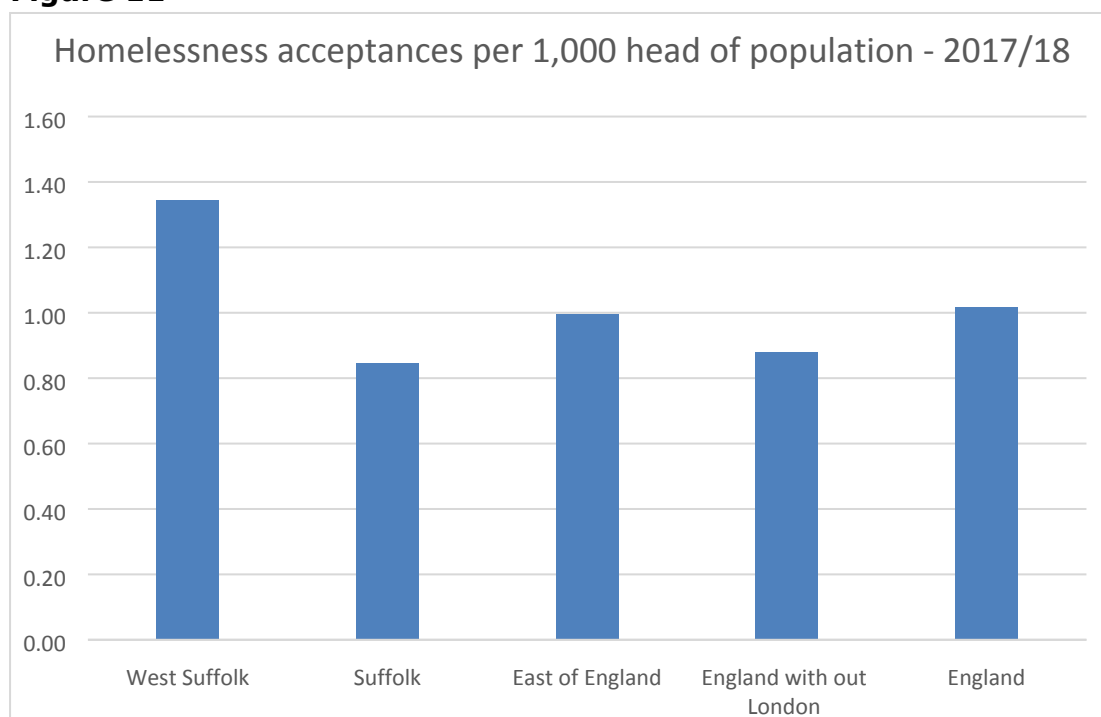


Homelessness applications and acceptances: Data relating to homelessness statistics up to 2017/18 (before the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)

Detailed information on people who have made a homelessness application to West Suffolk councils was recorded on the P1E returns that are sent to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government quarterly (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) up until the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The P1E provides data on households who have presented themselves as homeless to the Local Authority, and those who have been accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need. From April 2018, information is being provided to government through the new H-CLIC system.

Figure 11



Source: DCLG P1E return

Figure 11 shows the number of people accepted as homeless per 1000 head of population. The chart shows that there is a higher number of people being accepted as homeless in West Suffolk than across the rest of England.

Figure 12

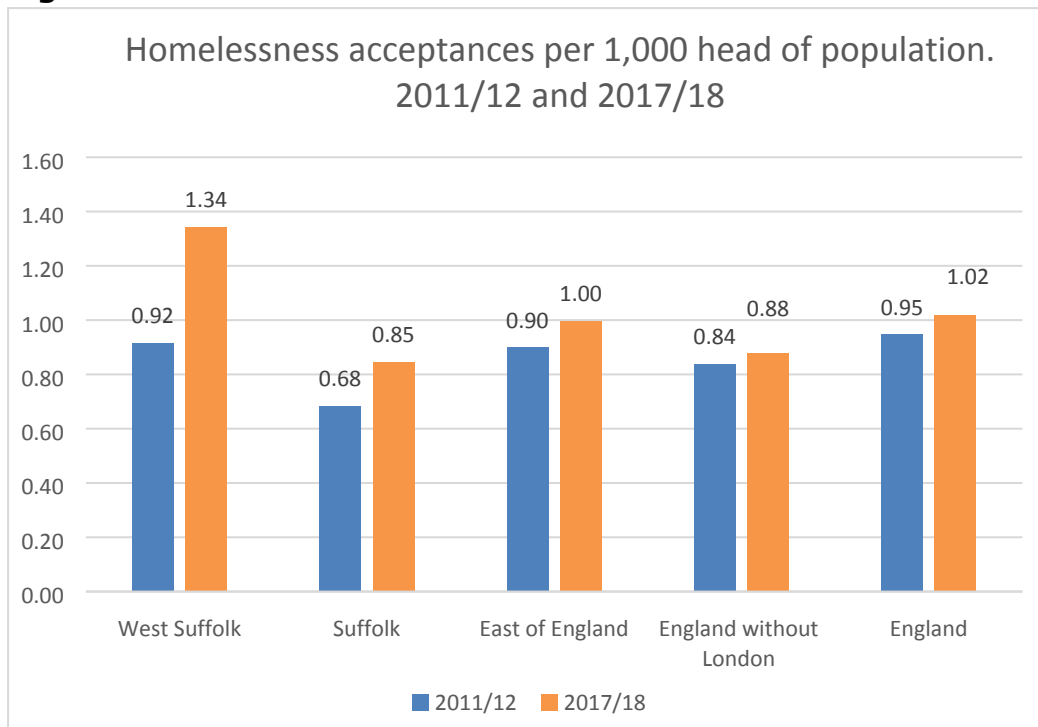
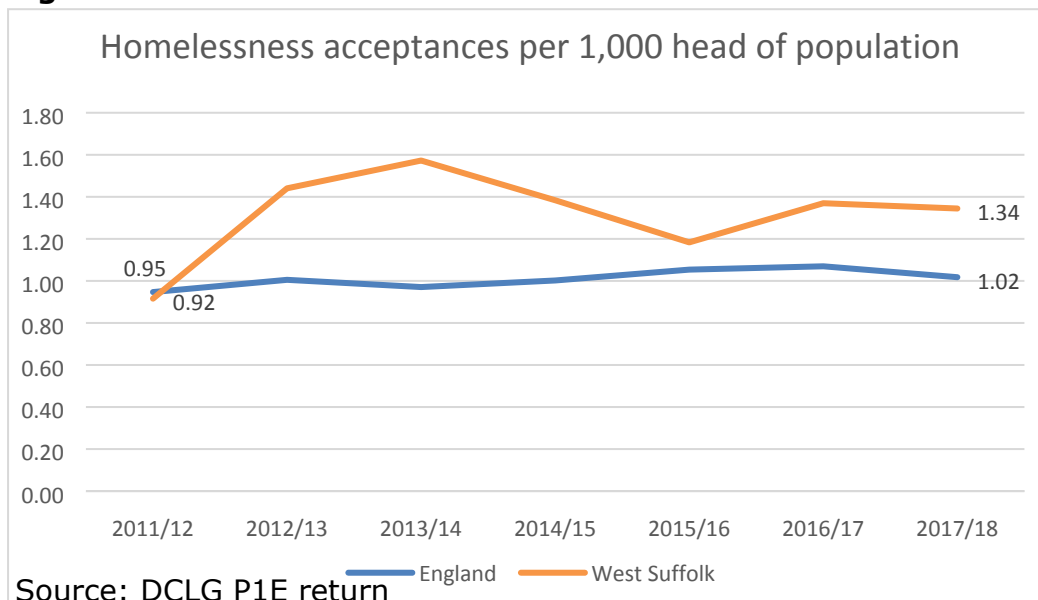


Figure 12 sets out the comparison between homelessness acceptances per 1000 head of population between 2011/12 and 2017/18. Homelessness acceptances have increased in West Suffolk at a faster rate than the rest of England.

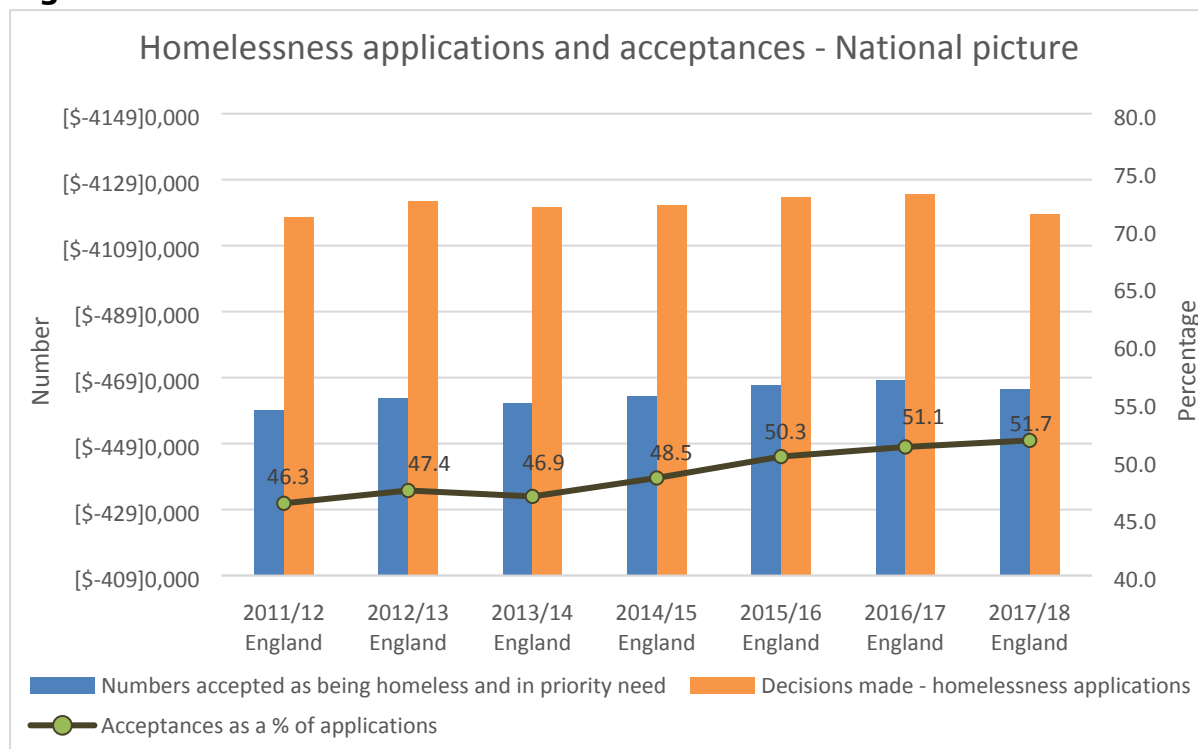
Figure 13



Source: DCLG P1E return

The number of homeless acceptances across England has shown a slight decrease in 2017/18. As shown in figure 13, the percentage of accepted homelessness applications in West Suffolk remains higher than the national trend.

Figure 14

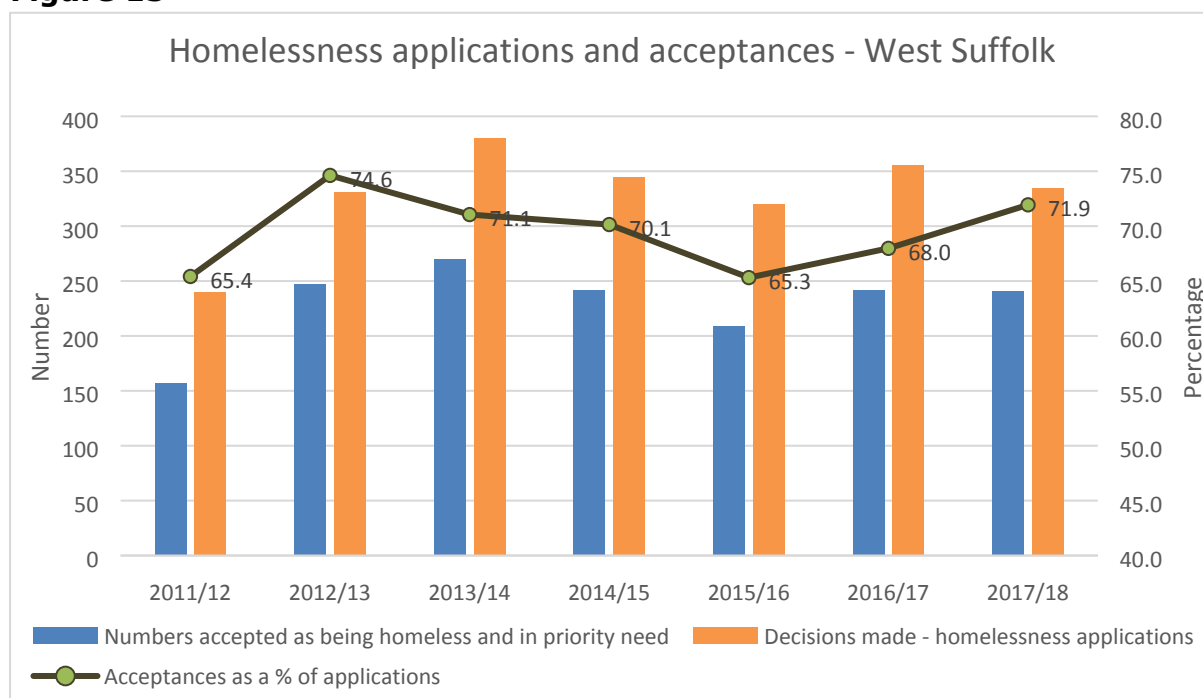


Source: DCLG P1E return

During the 2017/18 financial year, 109,470 decisions were made by local authorities nationally. This is a decrease of 5.29 per cent from 115,590 in 2016/17, as shown in figure 14.

During the 2017/18 financial year, 56,600 households were accepted by local authorities as being owed the main homelessness duty. This is a decrease of 4.25 per cent from 59,110 in 2016/17.

Figure 15



Source: DCLG P1E return

During the 2017/18 financial year, 335 decisions were made by West Suffolk councils compared to 356 in 2016/17, this was an overall decrease in decisions of 5.9 per cent, as shown in figure 15.

During the 2017/18 financial year, there were 241 households accepted by West Suffolk councils as being owed the homeless duty compared with 242 accepted in 2016/17, this was an overall increase in acceptances of 0.4 per cent.

Figure 16

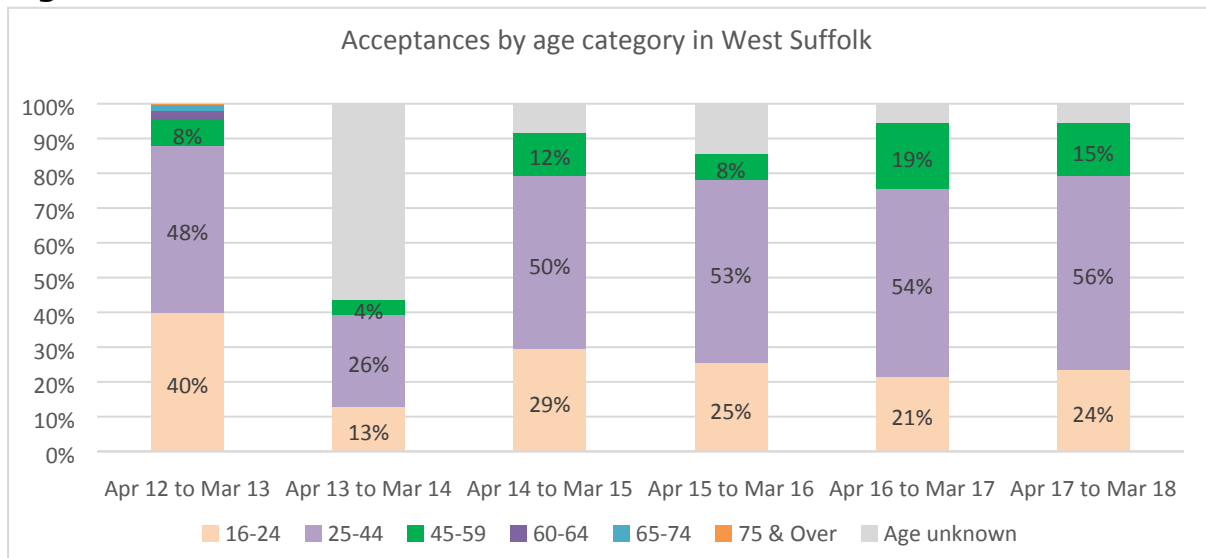
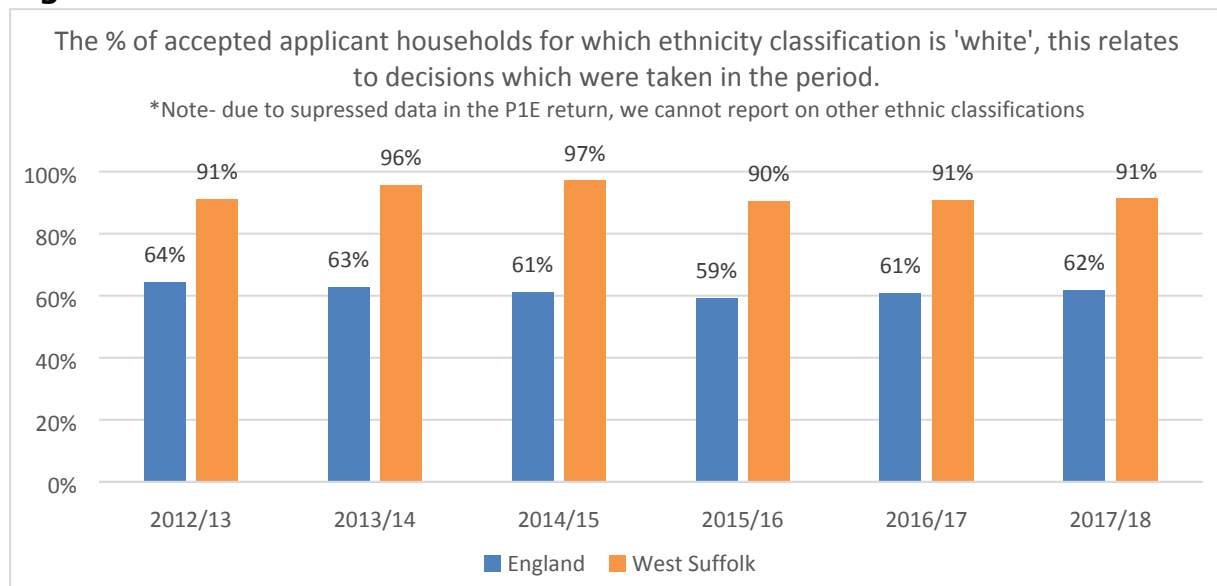


Figure 16 above shows that the highest proportion of homelessness acceptances in 2017/18 is predominantly made up of the 25-44 age category.

Figure 17



Source: DCLG P1E return

In comparison to the rest of England, a significantly higher proportion of households applying for housing is white. However this should be taken in the context that St Edmundsbury is 91.6% white (English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland) and Forest Heath is 77.2%. It should be noted that there are difficulties in using the figure for Forest Heath due to the large United States Visiting Forces (USVF) population which is more ethnically diverse but not eligible for housing support from the housing authority.

Reasons for loss of last settled home

The three main reasons why households have been accepted as homeless due to loss of their last settled home over the last five years are detailed in figure 8 below.

Consistently both nationally and locally the three main reasons why people have lost their last settled accommodation are due to loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured short hold tenancy, parent no longer willing to accommodate and violent relationship breakdown involving a partner or associated person.

Figure 18

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Parent, family or friend eviction	85 / 34%	27 / 10%	40 / 17%	26 / 12%	48 / 20%	47 / 20%
Relationship breakdown (violent and non violent)	41 / 17%	58 / 21%	33 / 14%	25 / 12%	76 / 31%	69 / 29%
Violence (not involving a partner) and/or harassment	8 / 3%	-	-	-	5 / 2%	16 / 7%
Loss of Private rented or Tied accommodation or mortgage arrears	97 / 39%	87 / 32%	89 / 37%	75 / 36%	84 / 35%	72 / 30%
Other	16 / 6%	-	-	-	7 / 3%	10 / 4%
Not stated	-	98 / 36%	80 / 33%	83 / 40%	22 / 9%	28 / 12%
Total households	247	270	242	209	242	241

Source: DCLG P1E return

In response to the high number of 'not stated' information, the Council will ensure that procedures are in put in place to collate all appropriate data so that we can better understand the reasons for homelessness and in so doing, reduce the level recorded under this particular heading.

Figure 19

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Applicant homeless in emergency						6
Households with dependent children	155 (63%)	163 (60%)	153 (63%)	130 (62%)	132 (55%)	130 (54%)
Households with pregnant member & no other dependent children	42	9	6	6	23	24
Aged 16/17 years old	3					
In care and aged 18 to 20						
Old age	4	5				
Physical disability	15	0			29	20
Mental illness or handicap	14	15	24	7	23	23
Drug dependency		0				
Alcohol dependency	1	0				
Former asylum seeker						
Other	1					
Been in care	3					
Served in HM forces						
Been in custody/on remand						
Violence/threat of violence	9	16	7	6	26	28
of which Domestic violence	4	5	5	5	21	18
Priority need not given		62	52	60	9	10
Total households	247	270	242	209	242	241

Source: DCLG P1E return

As shown in figure 19, the main priority need category for people accepted as homeless continues to be those households with dependent children. The Housing Options team continues to try to prevent homelessness for families with children by helping to keep them in their homes or helping them to access accommodation in the private rented sector.

Personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless

Personal factors that could contribute towards people becoming homeless include **individual** factors such as a lack of qualifications, a lack of social support, debt, poor physical and mental health, and becoming involved with crime at an early age. Factors relating to **family background** such as family breakdown, abuse in childhood and previous experience of family homelessness may also contribute to homelessness. An **institutional background** such as having been in care, in the armed forces or in prison, can also play a part in the variety of reasons that lead to people becoming homeless.

Structural causes of homelessness are often social and economic and outside of the control of the family or individual concerned. These might include unemployment, poverty and lack of affordable housing.

In West Suffolk we have a very good understanding of the factors that are contributing to people becoming homeless. From figure 8 above we know that, after households with dependent children, the groups most affected by homelessness are households with a pregnant member, people with a physical disability, people with a mental illness or handicap and people experiencing violence or being threatened with violence.

Identifying those most likely to become homeless or threatened with homelessness

We recognise how important it is to understand which groups of people are more likely to be threatened with homelessness. This helps us to focus appropriate resources and advice to the right groups and at the right time. We know, from figure 9 above, that households with dependent children represent the largest proportion of priority need for people accepted as homeless but we are working with colleagues from across Suffolk to look at trends so we can understand which groups may be more likely to become homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness

There are a range of factors that may affect the future levels of homelessness. Undoubtedly the overall availability of affordable and suitable homes to buy and rent has an impact. The provision of prevention and support services to provide advice and help to those who are more vulnerable is key as it impacts on people's ability to secure and retain accommodation. Some of these factors are addressed in the Homelessness Reduction Strategy and the Housing Strategy. All of these factors require a collective response from a number of different organisations.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The gap between benefit received (where capped) and local market rents continues to increase. [Discretionary Housing Payments](#) is a limited fund that we can access on a short term basis in exceptional circumstances. In 2018/19 £263,750 worth of DHP was awarded across West Suffolk. In 2019/20 £234,870 is available for DHP although it should be noted that this is not all allocated to those in temporary accommodation; it is used to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Figure 20: Number of placements in temporary accommodation by location (as at 1 April 2019)

Temporary Accommodation		
Location	Number of Units Available	Number of Units Used
Bury St Edmunds	40	33
Brandon	8	6
Newmarket	19	16
Haverhill	5	3
Mildenhall	5	1
Total	77	59

Figure 21: Number of households in temporary accommodation awaiting a move (as at 1 April 2019)

Temporary Accommodation	
Name of Accommodation	Households waiting to move
Britannia House	1
The Elms	1
Dick Perryman	4
Newmarket Road	1
Lake Avenue	1
Wamil Way	1
Total	9

2. Suffolk-wide support

Housing Related Support

Housing Related Support is available across Suffolk and it is used to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to help resolve the problems that are contributing to their housing issues. This could include managing their physical or mental health, problems with drugs or alcohol, difficulties with debt, managing finance or problems with staying in work or education.

Single homeless and rough sleepers

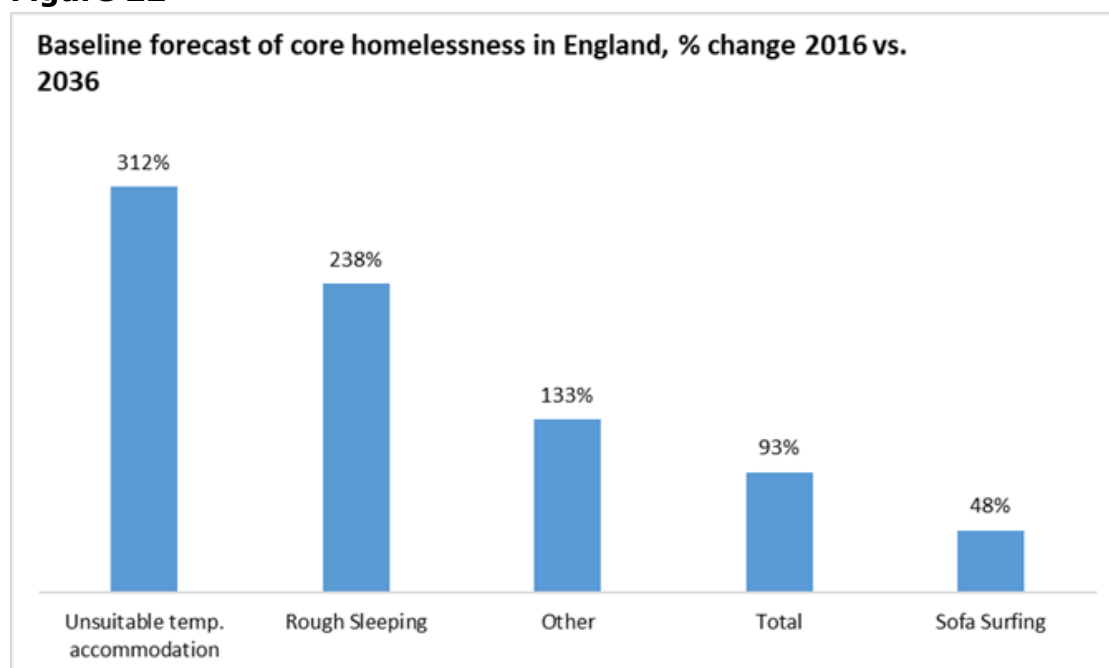
There are a significant number of single homeless people in West Suffolk that the councils did not owe a duty to house because they were not priority need as set out by Homelessness legislation. This however has changed with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into effect in April 2018.

- **Predicted levels of homelessness**

Data is not currently available at the West Suffolk level. However, the forecast for England is that homelessness will almost double (+93%) across England over the next 20 years. This forecast is based on current assumptions about the labour market and economy alongside current policy settings. It is predicted that this will lead to a 312% increase in people in unsuitable accommodation and a 238% increase in rough sleeping between 2016 and 2036.

Figure 22 below sets out how homelessness is expected to increase by 2036 as compared with 2016.

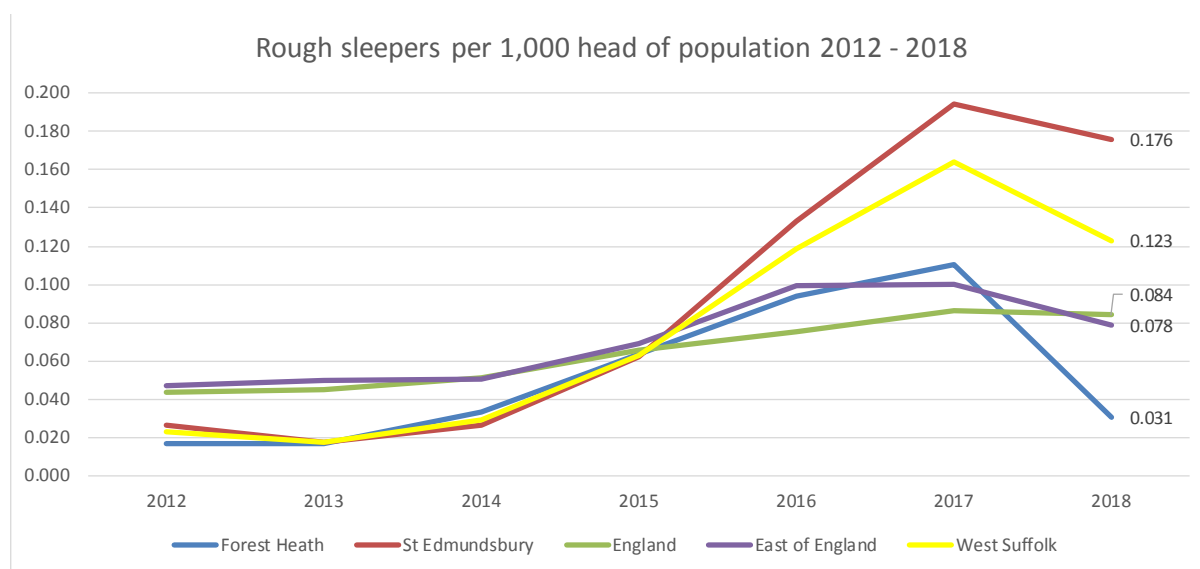
Figure 22



Source: Crisis report on Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain (summary report).

Figure 23 below shows that up to 2017, rough sleepers per 1,000 head of population have steadily increased for West Suffolk and were nearly double that of the England figure. By implementing actions through Rough Sleeper Initiative funding, the figure for West Suffolk has reduced from 29 in 2017 to 22 in 2018.

Figure 23



Source: ONS data: Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2018

Support available for young single homeless and rough sleepers through Housing Related Support.

Figure 24 below sets out the current level of Housing Related Support (HRS) housing provision for particular groups of young people:

Figure 24

Age Group	Provider	Locality	Units
Under 21	YMCA	St Edmundsbury	16
Under 21	Riverside – Cangle, Haverhill	St Edmundsbury	25
Under 21	Newmarket Open Door	Forest Heath	15
			56 Units

Age Group	Provider	Locality	Units
Over 18	Tayfen House and move on, Bury St Edmunds	St Edmundsbury	50
Over 18	Genesis Bury	St Edmundsbury	28

Over 18	Genesis Haverhill	St Edmundsbury	23
			101 Units

Levels of demand and the use of commissioned services

As of January 2018 there were 661 applications (509 in St Edmundsbury and 152 in Forest Heath) on the HRS database applying for accommodation-based support within West Suffolk. 390 (59%) of these were for accommodation-based support, with the balance being for an outreach worker or floating support.

The waiting list includes a number of people for whom offers of support have been considered and rejected because the person's needs are higher than can be met by HRS services. Equally there are applications for people who have subsequently moved on but whose data has not been updated to reflect this. As a result, the figure of 661 is likely to be an overestimate.

Of the 661 applicants, 233 have been considered and declined, with 31 of these being declined three or more times.

In the six months to October 2017, 188 tenants moved-on from HRS services within West Suffolk, creating space for new services to be offered to those on the waiting list. HRS services are expected to consider those in the highest need first.

A number of voluntary sector organisation in West Suffolk provide valuable advice, support and accommodation for the growing number of single homeless people.

Figure 25 below shows the number of applicants whose nearest town is in St Edmundsbury or Forest Heath who are accessing support from other agencies for example Turning Point, Alcoholics Anonymous, health outreach and/or probation with regards to their mental health or substance misuse.

Figure 25

St Edmundsbury	Forest Heath
118 Mental Health (mainly through GP)	28 Mental Health (mainly through GP)
99 Drug and Alcohol services	13 Drug and Alcohol services
183 in total have accessed a service	38 in total have accessed a service

HRS also takes referrals for young people. Between 1 April 2017 and 31 December 2017 referrals were received from the following agencies (in figure 15 below), split between St Edmundsbury and Forest heath. Self-referrals are also accepted.

Figure 26

St Edmundsbury	Referrals	Forest Heath	Referrals
Housing Options	9	Housing Options	2
SCC CYPS	19	SCC CYPS	3

Probation	1	Probation	1
Housing Assoc	2	Housing Assoc	3
Lighthouse WA	1	NSFT	2
NSFT	1	Supported Housing	9
Homegroup	2		
Supported Housing	1		
TOTAL	36	Total	20

Assistance from Social Services

With Social Services, across Suffolk we are developing ways of understanding and helping vulnerable adults and children in the area. We do, however, know some of the problems we are facing, as highlighted in the following statistics:

- In 2016/17 a total of **1,972 adults** were in treatment for **substance misuse**.
- In 2015/16, **9%** of the support provided by the **Drug Alcohol Outreach Service was housing related** and this increased to 15% in 2016/17.
- Approximately **30%** of people in the Housing Related support system have a **criminal conviction**.
- It is estimated that 1 in 4 people, which equates to **186,000 people in Suffolk**, are estimated to have **ongoing mental health issues**. It is estimate that 1 in 8 people, which equates to **93,000 people in Suffolk**, are **receiving treatment** in Suffolk.
- In children's services (at the end of 2017) **1,783 early help cases were open**.
- In 2016/17, **292 care leavers were seeking accommodation**.
- As at November 2017, there were 12 care leavers under children's services.

We will continue to work with Suffolk County Council to monitor the effectiveness of its existing Housing Related Support contracts, and to plan for the new contracts which will be in place from 2020. These new contracts will be commissioned on the basis of a new government funding model which has yet to be confirmed.

3. Formulating a strategy to prevent homelessness

Homelessness prevention

From April 2018, new legislation will fundamentally change the work of housing teams and prevention and relief duties will be very different.

Figure 27

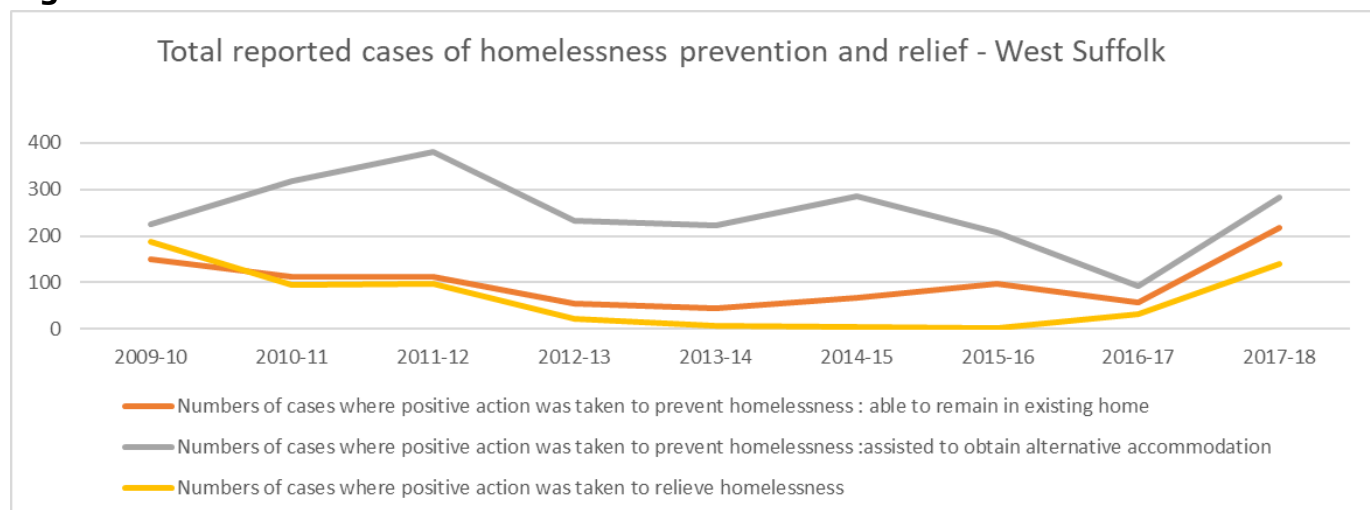


Figure 27 above shows the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved in West Suffolk.

Possession actions in the private and public sector

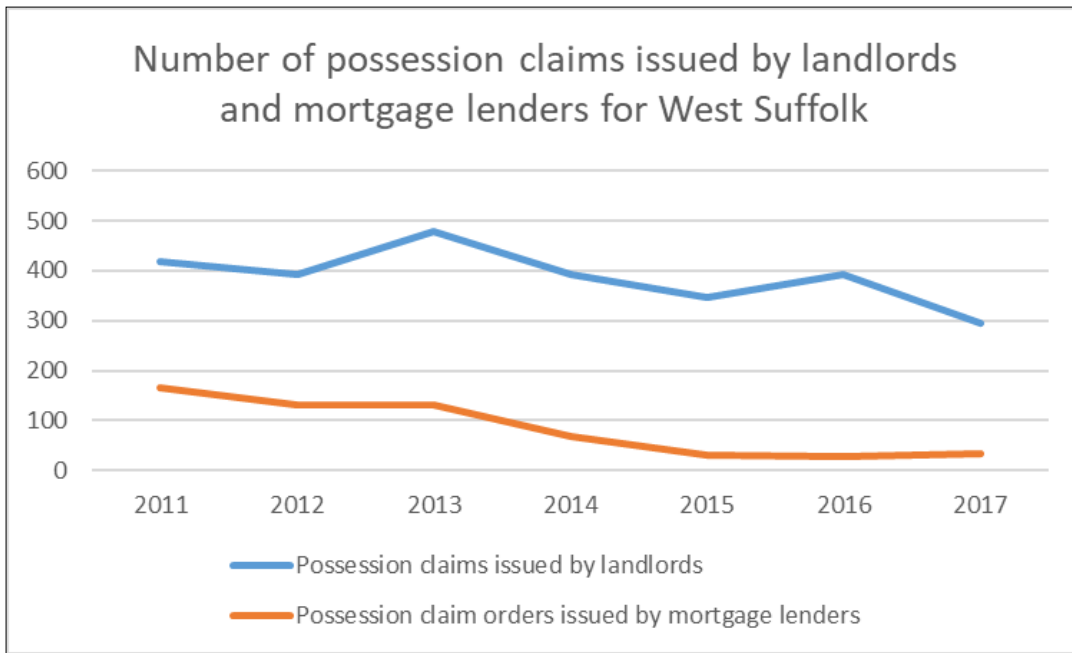
Landlord possession actions

As shown in figure 28 below the number of landlord (social and private) possession claims (or actions) have been decreasing since a peak in 2013.

Mortgage possession actions

Figure 28 further shows that since 2011 the number of mortgage possession claims have fallen. The fall in the number of mortgage possession actions coincides with lower interest rates, a proactive approach from lenders in managing consumers in financial difficulties and other interventions from the Government, such as the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. This fall in the number of mortgage possession claims could also be due to the introduction of the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol and a decrease in the number of owner-occupiers.

Figure 28



4. Reviewing accommodation needs and resources

In this section we will look at a review of the existing supply of accommodation available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and identify where there are gaps, or where existing resources do not match the most pressing need.

Social and affordable housing held by the housing authority and private registered providers

Figure 29 below shows the total number of social and affordable housing lets for West Suffolk (the first date relates to when the lettings database Abrisas was first implemented):

Figure 29

Date	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury	West Suffolk
June 2016 – June 2017	231	343	574
June 2017 – March 2018	344	248	592
Total	575	591	1,166

Source: Abrisas

A further analysis of the data shows that for affordable rent and social rent, two bedroom houses are most frequently bid for across West Suffolk, followed by one bedroom houses. The average affordable rent for a two bedroom house is £131 per week and for social rent the average is £97 per week.

Households in temporary accommodation

Figure 30 below shows the number of households that have been housed in temporary accommodation between 2013 and 2019.

Figure 30

Number of households annually		
Year	Bed and Breakfast	Other temporary accommodation
2013-2014	266	136
2014-2015	203	144
2015-2016	200	163
2016-2017	155	146
2017-2018	255	61 (to be updated)

2018-2019	164	95
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Source: DCLG P1E return

Affordable housing units delivered by Registered Social Landlord partners

Figure 31 below shows the number of affordable housing units delivered by registered provider schemes, where 100% is usually affordable housing, section 106 schemes, and open market schemes where we usually achieve our target of 30% affordable housing that is then managed by a registered provider.

Figure 31

	Registered provider lead schemes (units delivered)	Section 106 schemes (units delivered)
2014/15	101	44
2015/16	87	110
2016/17	101	41
2017/18	92	190
2018/19	17	190

Support accommodation available for particular groups of people in need of accommodation with support

The data given in the table below is for the whole of Suffolk.

Figure 32

Waiting list	1523	74%	Waiting for accommodation
Waiting list – offer made	3	0%	Waiting for support
Accepted – service pending	12	1%	In accommodation
Accepted – service being provided	315	15%	In accommodation
Manual waiting list	2	0%	On hold
Service finished	152	7%	Accommodation or support ended
Accepted – service finished	62	3%	Accommodation or support ended
Total	2069	100%	

Figure 33 below sets out the services that are available for people with a **mental health diagnosis** who are in the care of the secondary mental health team.

Figure 33

Accommodation	Units Available
Bury St Edmunds	<p><u>12 self-contained flats</u> 2 of these flats are used for an alternative use; 1 Short Stay Respite Accommodation and 1 Short Stay Emergency Supported Accommodation Admission Prevention bed (APS)</p> <p><u>Assured Short Hold Tenancy</u> There are also 6 flats which although form part of the service at Hospital Road.</p> <p><u>18 individual flats on one site</u></p>
Newmarket	3 flats
Haverhill	5 flats
Total	44

Supply and demand for low cost home ownership schemes

Supply

The number of shared ownership schemes or shared equity housing completed in West Suffolk was 17 in 2015/16, 23 in 2016/17 and 60 in 2017/18 (anticipated).

Demand

The number of people in West Suffolk applying for low cost ownership schemes was 191 in 2015, 199 in 2016 and 270 in 2017. As this data shows, the demand has significantly increased since 2015.

We are also working with registered providers to put mechanisms in place so that we know how many low cost home ownership schemes will be forthcoming.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act introduced the most fundamental reforms to the social security system for 60 years. People who need help and support in relation to housing have mainly seen impacts from four policy areas:

- The Benefit Cap
- The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector (under occupation)
- Introduction of Local Council Tax Support
- Universal Credit

Benefit Cap – from April 2013

The maximum level of benefits, including household benefit, has been capped at £500 weekly for families and couples and £350 for single people.

In November 2017, 111 Households across **West Suffolk** were affected by the Benefit Cap. All of these were households with dependent children, with the vast majority (90) being lone parents. 16 of the 111 households had 2 dependent children, 62 had 3 dependent children with the remainder having 4 or more dependent children.

In terms of tenure, the majority of the 111 households that had their benefits capped were in social rented accommodation (90).

The average weekly amount capped amount per household was £50.81 in November 2017, however this average masks a wide range, as there were:

- 19 households that were capped between £50 to £75 per week
- 12 households that were capped £75 to £100 per week
- 18 households were capped between £100 to £200 per week

Lone parents with dependent children in West Suffolk were capped by an average of £51.67 per week.

The removal of the spare room subsidy – from April 2013

Social sector tenants of working age renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord receive housing support based on household size. A version of this already applies to private tenants.

The allowance is for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household. Two children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share a room, as are two children under 10 regardless of gender.

Household size criteria will also allow one bedroom for a non-resident carer if a tenant or their partner is a disabled person who needs overnight care.

Households with a disabled child may retain housing benefit for an additional room, if the nature and severity of the child's disability disturbs the sleep of the other child that they would normally be expected to share with.

Where a property is deemed 'under occupied' the eligible rent under Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14 per cent for one room and 25 percent if under occupied by two rooms or more.

In **West Suffolk**, of the 8,933 households on housing benefit in August 2017, 7.4% (665) had a reduction of £16.21 per week to their benefits and allowances due to the spare room subsidy being applied.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) – from 1 April 2018

- **St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Residents who have reached State Pension Credit Age have their Council Tax Reduction calculated in the same way as they did under Council Tax Benefit rules (pre April 2013).

The following criteria applies to those residents of working age who make an application for Council Tax Reduction:

- Applicable amounts have increased to match the Housing Benefit rates.
- Non-dependant deductions for working age have been increased to match those for pension age.
- New and existing claims for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) will no longer be awarded the work related component in their applicable amount if the ESA claim does not include it.
- All new claims from 1 April 2018 - applicable amounts will be restricted to two child premiums except in some limited prescribed circumstances. For existing claims, from 1 April 2018 onwards, child premiums for new additions to the household will no longer be awarded if the two child limit is exceeded except in some limited prescribed circumstances.
- All new claims from 1 April 2018 for working age residents will no longer have the family premium applied to the applicable amount. This was already removed from pension age residents.

- Currently around 4965 residents are in receipt of LCTRS
- 3052 of working age
- 1913 of state pension credit age

- **Forest Heath District Council – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Residents who have reached State Pension Credit Age have their Council Tax Reduction calculated in the same way as they did under Council Tax Benefit rules (pre April 2013).

The following criteria applies to those residents of Working Age who make an application for Council Tax Reduction:

- Applicable amounts have increased to match the Housing Benefit rates.
- Non-dependant deductions have been increased to match those for pension age.

- New and existing claims for LCTRS will no longer be awarded the work related component in their applicable amount if the ESA claim does not include it.
 - All new claims from 1 April 2018 - applicable amounts will be restricted to two child premiums except in some limited prescribed circumstances. For existing claims, from 1 April 2018 onwards, child premiums for new additions to the household will no longer be awarded if the two child limit is exceeded except in some limited prescribed circumstances.
 - All new claims from 1 April 2018 for working age residents will no longer have the family premium applied to the applicable amount. This was already removed from pension age residents.
- Currently around 3563 residents are in receipt of LCTRS
 - 1816 of working age
 - 1747 of state pension credit age

Universal Credit – from April 2013

Universal Credit aims to make the welfare system simpler by replacing six benefits and credits with a single monthly payment for those residents on a low income or out of work. It includes support for the costs of housing, children and childcare, as well as support for disabled people and carers.

Between April 2013 and the end of 2017, Universal Credit replaced:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

In St Edmundsbury, full service rollout of Universal Credit began in October 2017 and in Forest Heath it will commence in autumn 2018. 55 per cent of those receiving Universal Credit in St Edmundsbury in December 2017 were not in employment. Over one in four of those receiving Universal Credit in St Edmundsbury were between the age of 16 and 24 and 54 per cent were below 35 years of age. There are approximately 1000 people in St Edmundsbury in receipt of Universal Credit.