

**Angus Council**  
**Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24**  
**Year 5 Update Report 2023/24**

## **1. Background**

Angus Council's [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20-2023/24](#) (RRTP) details how we will achieve our goal that people who experience homelessness reach a settled housing outcome as quickly as possible by:

- Increasing the focus on prevention to stop homelessness happening in the first place.
- Ensuring households get through the homeless system faster.
- Ensuring homeless households can access existing housing.
- Ensuring homeless households can access the right type of support at the right time.
- Increasing affordable housing supply to meet needs of homeless households.

The RRTP was approved by the Scottish Government in May 2019 and update reports for previous years have been submitted detailing progress and challenges experienced, along with a revised RRTP and activity and spend monitors. We have received confirmation from the Scottish Government that we have been allocated a further £122,000 to support RRTP provision for a further year into 2024/25. This is in addition to £233,000 carried forward from previous years reserves.

Governance for the RRTP now sits within the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) Strategic Delivery Group. The Prevention and Homelessness Delivery Group within Housing has responsibility for the ongoing development and delivery of the plan. This ensures participation and accountability of all partners and stakeholders in the transition to rapid rehousing in Angus.

## **2. Implementation of RRTP – Year Five**

Work has progressed against several actions identified within the RRTP – a revised RRTP action plan (Appendix A) details all actions. This has been another challenging year for housing and across the UK the housing system is now in a position commonly recognised as being in a state of emergency, with a consistent reduction in supply and a steady increase in demand. This has been evident in Angus for several years because of the pandemic and cost of living crisis, and the impact of Storm Babet in October 2023 has exacerbated the situation. We are continuing with the recovery phase following Storm Babet and this will have far reaching implications for our ability to meet housing need for now and some time to come. We've reviewed our Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) to reflect the impact on our housing stock. Work is ongoing with an options appraisal for the affected area.

Our homeless application numbers are going against trends seen elsewhere and 2023/24 saw a 15% reduction in homeless applications compared to 2022/23. As at March 2024, we had 2839 live applications on our housing register with 13% (382) of those being homeless applicants. This is an increase of 49.8% from August 2023 and a significant increase from 77 live cases as at September 2022. Work is ongoing as part of the Prevention and Homelessness Delivery Group to reduce the backlog of cases.

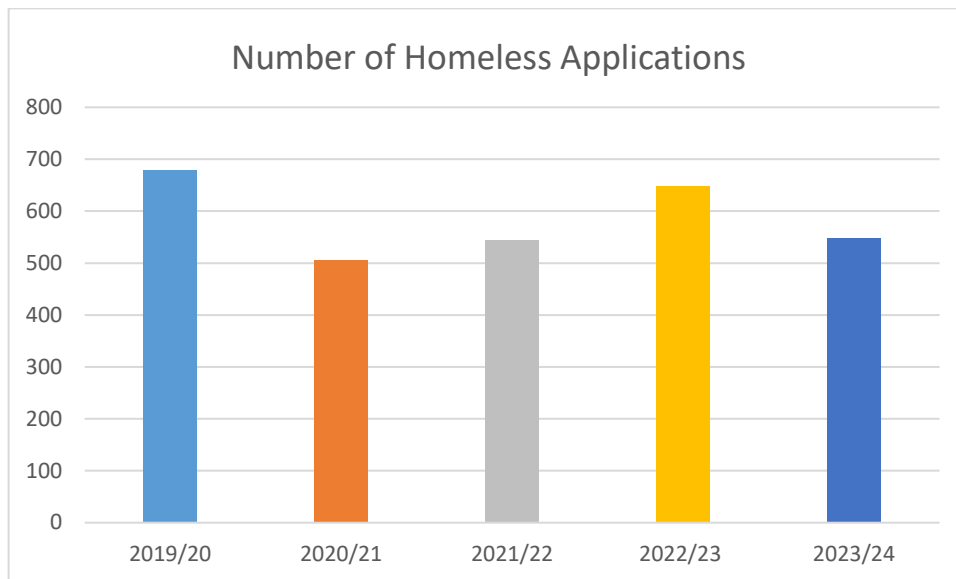
The number of households accessing temporary accommodation (both with and without children) has remained steady. The average length of time in temporary homeless accommodation has reduced from 155 days in 2022/23 to 139.5 days in 2023/24.

18 individuals are currently being supported by Housing First with good engagement and positive outcomes. An annual check-up was completed, supported by Homeless Network Scotland, which identified several areas of positive practice and some areas for development. Both support workers posts have now been made permanent however there is still a need to consider longer term funding and upscaling of the service. The future delivery of Housing First depends on the availability of funding to continue and the review of supported homeless accommodation where the aim is to redirect resources away from short term accommodation to longer term specialist supported housing and Housing First. Funding has been committed from RRTP budget to fund the Housing First service for a further year up to March 2025. Work is ongoing to seek funding from other sources to allow the continuation of the service past March 2025. A bid is being considered to the Angus Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

The service review to transfer the homelessness functions from within the three Community Housing Teams to a new team alongside the Homelessness Support Service within the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership completed in October 2023 and the Homelessness Prevention and Solutions Team (HPST) is now fully implemented within the AHSCP.

There have been several challenges in progressing the delivery of the RRTP over the last couple of years. We are experiencing major strategic challenges which are being faced by all local authorities, specifically dealing with the significant number of people in temporary accommodation, maintaining supply and meeting demand and improving access to permanent homes.

### 3. Key Homeless Indicators – Trends and Analysis 2023/24

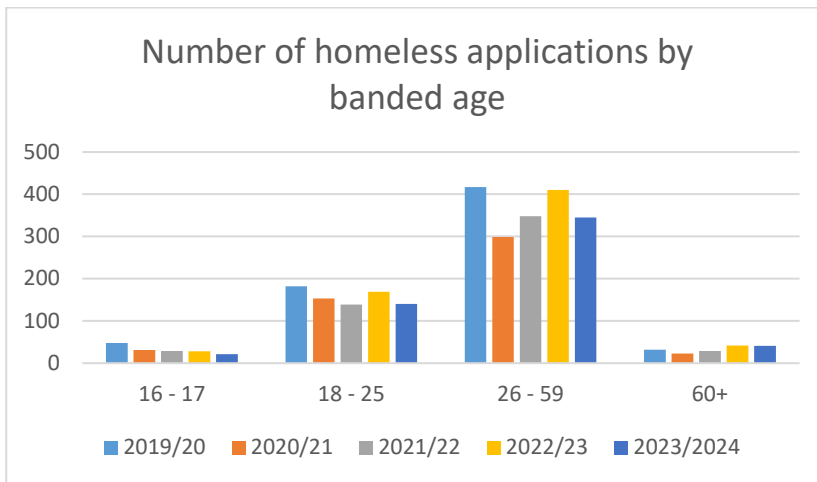


Source: HL1, Scottish Government

Homeless applications in 2022/23 increased by 25%, following a reduction in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. However, 2023/24 saw a reduction of 15% bringing numbers

below pre pandemic levels. However, we are still facing challenges in terms of increasing numbers on our housing register awaiting permanent rehousing due to a reduction in housing options available.

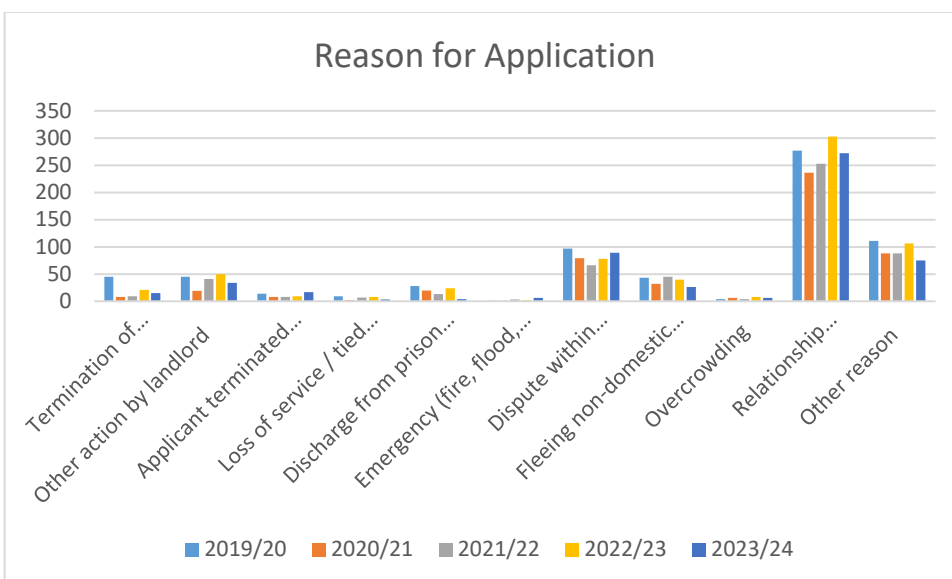
The profile of applicants is largely consistent with previous years. Single person households continue to make up the greatest proportion of homeless applicants, 80% of applications were from single person households and 4% of applications included children in the household, this is a reduction on the number of applications from families with children from the previous years.



Source: HL1, Scottish Government

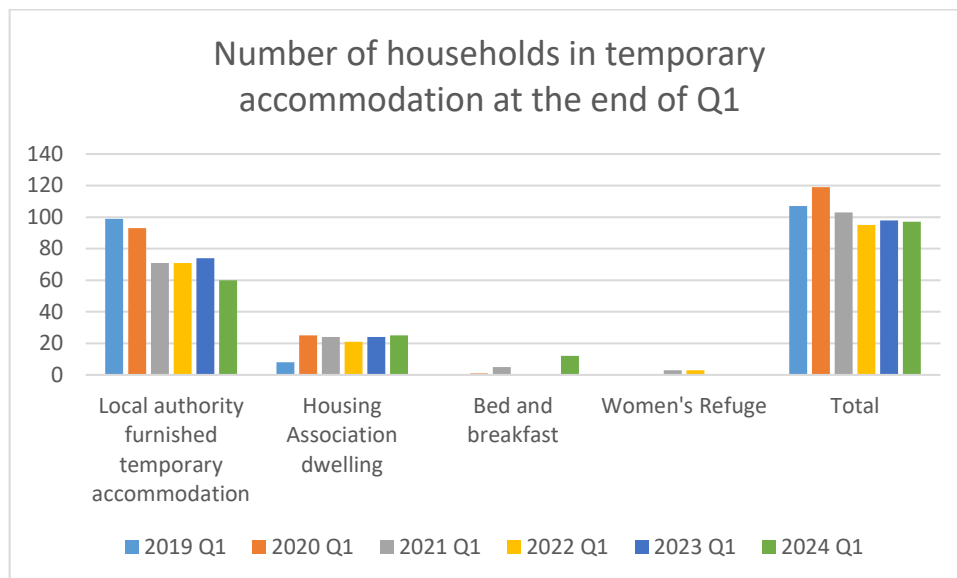
Applications from 26-59 year olds continue to make up the majority of homeless applications and the number of applications made by younger people under 25 has reduced on previous years in line with overall applications. The dominance of young single households applying as homeless needs to be considered as we develop approaches to both prevent and respond to homelessness in Angus.

Applications from households with White Scottish and Other British ethnic origin continue to represent the majority of homeless applications (90% of applications).



Source: HL1, Scottish Government

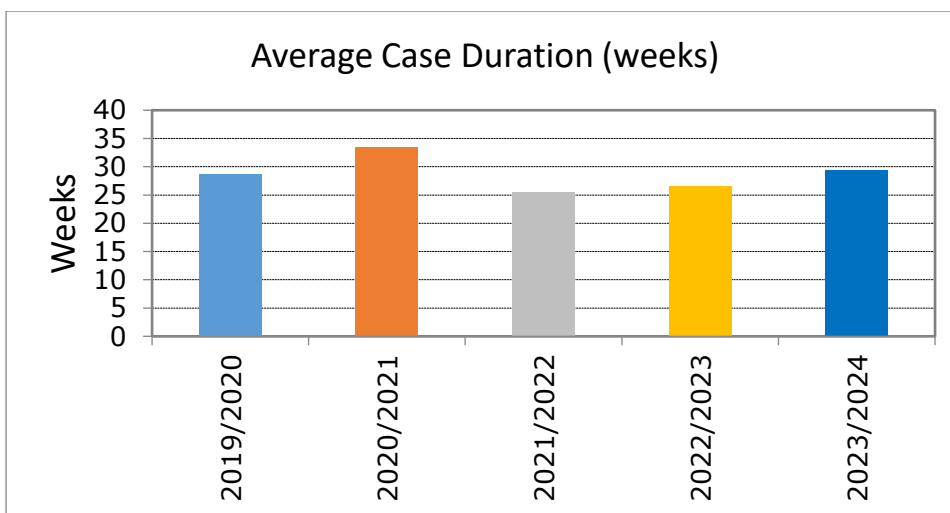
Relationship breakdown/ being asked to leave continues to be the most common reason for homeless applications in Angus with the number of applications arising from a dispute within the household involving violence/abuse increasing by 14%. Numbers of applications as a result of discharge from prison, hospital, care or other institution has significantly reduced by 83% showing the effectiveness of our prevention protocols around care leavers and prison and hospital discharge. A reduction in applications as a result of action by landlord or termination of tenancy is in line with the eviction ban, we expect to see these figures rise as a result of the ban being lifted on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.



Source: HL1, Scottish Government

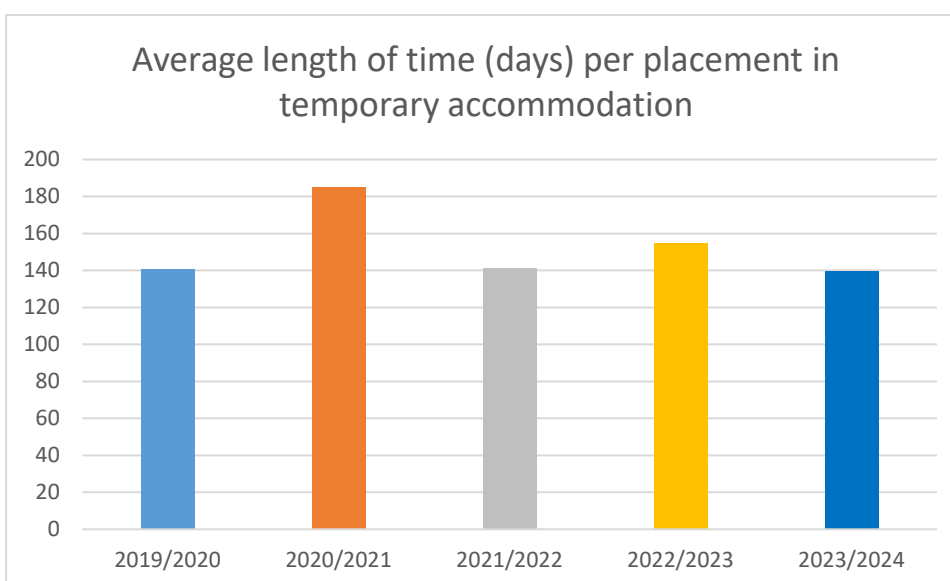
The number of households in temporary accommodation has remained steady this year, having peaked in 2020/21 following the first lockdown because of a temporary suspension of allocations during this period. The number of households with children in temporary accommodation reduced by 50% based on the same quarter in 2022/23 and there have been no households with children placed into B&B in recent years.

We are continuing to monitor the use of unsuitable accommodation and breaches of the order monthly alongside reporting on the impact of the recent changes to local connection. As a result of the suspension of allocations in October 2023, we have reported higher than usual levels of breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order in 2023/24 (12) and this remains at amber level. Work is ongoing to review households who are in temporary accommodation and reduce the use of bed and breakfasts.



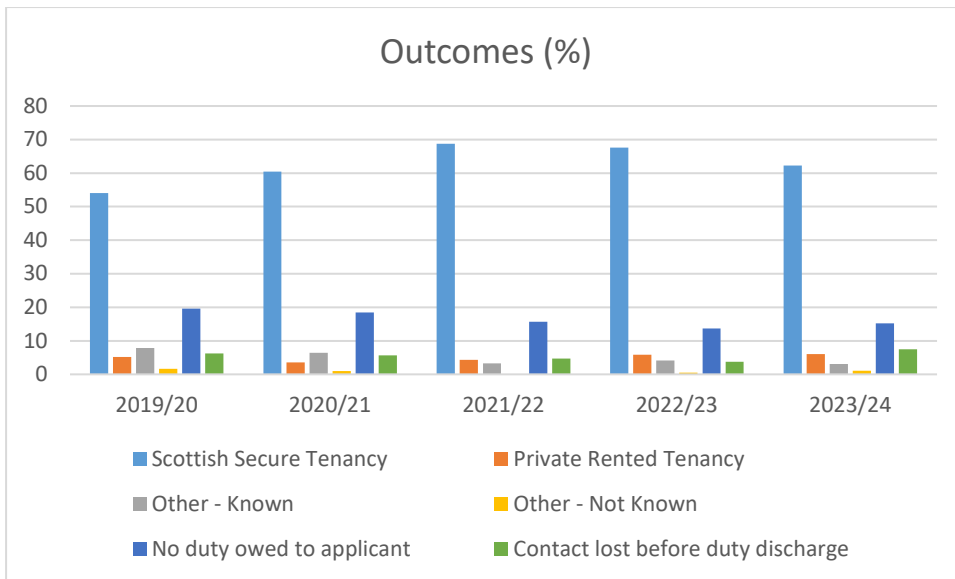
Source HL1, Scottish Government

Case duration has reduced on previous years having peaked during the pandemic as a result of restrictions on repairs activity and a temporary suspension of allocations during the first lockdown. However, we are seeing this increase in recent years due to the increase in homelessness demand and reduction in housing options available.



Source HL3, Scottish Government

The average number of days spent in temporary accommodation has reduced. The aim of the RRTP is to minimise the use of and time spent in any form of temporary accommodation, we will continue to aim to avoid the use of temporary accommodation and support people experiencing homelessness to secure suitable settled accommodation as quickly as possible. If a household is appropriately housed in temporary accommodation, content living there and there are no tenancy issues, consideration will be given to 'flipping' the accommodation to a Scottish Secure tenancy (SST). Where 'flipping' is agreed, a formal offer will be made to the tenant and the tenant will be able to keep the furniture if they wish.



Source: HL1, Scottish Government

The majority of homeless applications (62% in 2023/24) continue to be discharged into a Scottish Secure Tenancy however despite the good response from private sector landlords during the pandemic only 6% of households applying as homeless secured a private tenancy in 2023/24, falling in line with the reduction in availability in the private sector.

#### 4. Supply and Demand

The Scottish Government provided local authorities with a tool to calculate the gap between supply and demand to establish the percentage (%) of lets required to meet homeless demand and clear the backlog of existing homeless applications over the course of the RRTP. To be in a position of rapid rehousing we needed to effectively clear the backlog of homeless applications by the end of the 5 year plan (2023/24). This has not been achieved.

It was estimated for 2021/22, that 52% of lets needed to be made to homeless households in order to meet homelessness demand. This target was not met and work is ongoing to understand the barriers to this which has informed the review of our common allocations policy. A refresh of the demand tool in August 2023 estimated that we require 87% lets to homeless to meet demand.

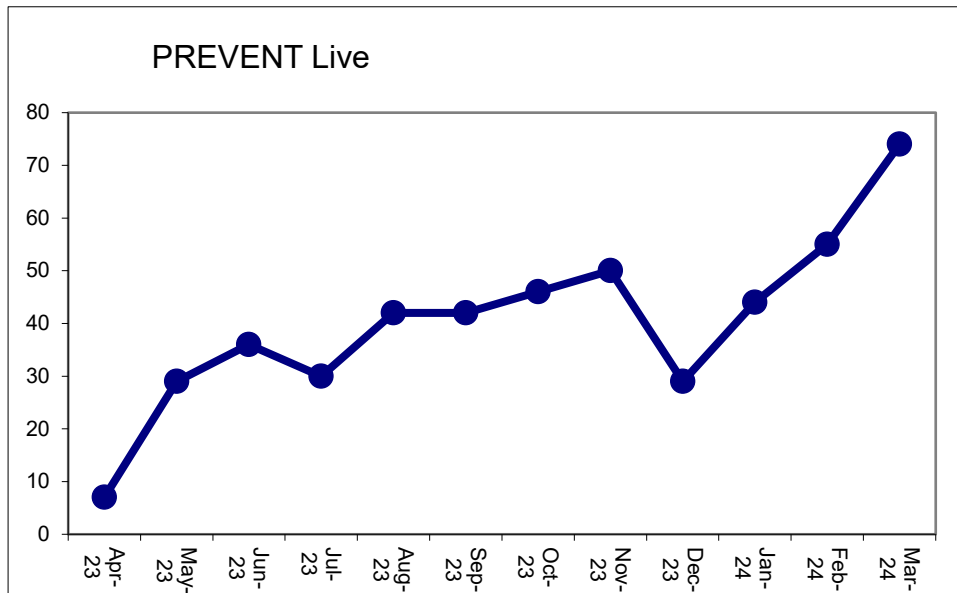
We recognised that applying an Angus wide target to all areas is not sufficient to meet demand due to differences in demand and turnover across the four Housing Market Areas (HMAs). The tool has therefore been based on locality data to establish the required % of lets for each HMA with the highest percentage of lets required in the East HMA.

The gap between demand and supply is increasing and we must continue to focus on and consider alternative initiatives to prevent homelessness and increase access to alternative housing options.

## 5. RRTP Actions – Progress to Date

### Homelessness Service Review

The new HPST is now established with a full team compliment which includes a Team Leader, 5 Case Managers and admin support and full transfer completed in October 2023. Monthly Service Level Agreement meetings take place to allow for monitoring of performance and management of any risks.

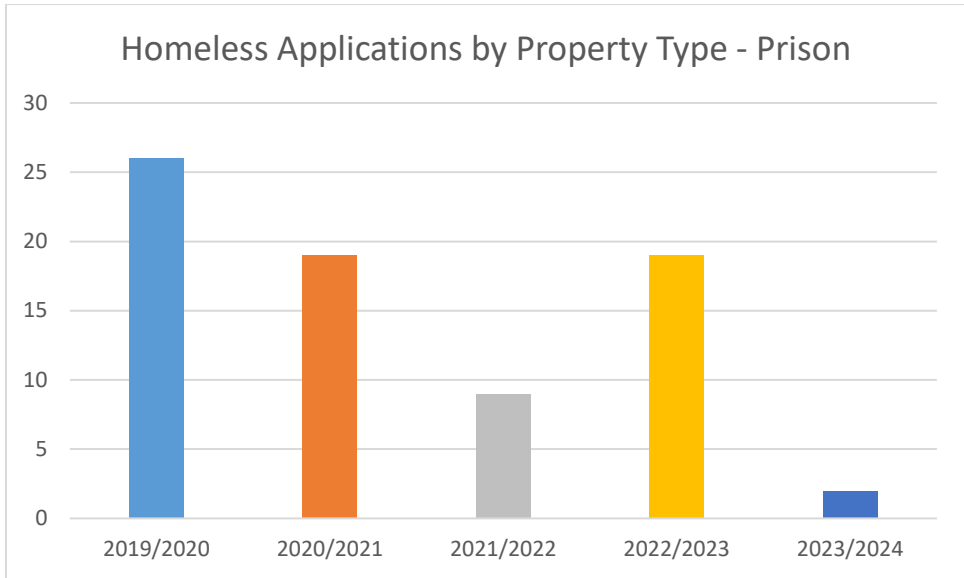


Source: SLA Performance Framework, Angus Council

It is important to note, that notwithstanding the issues and challenges, a significant amount of progress is already being made with regards to work being done to prevent homelessness. There has been a significant increase in PREVENT cases since full transfer of the service.

### Prison Protocol

Angus Council's Prison Protocol was revised and strengthened in line with SHORE standards and rapid rehousing guidelines in 2020. The focus is on partnership working to prevent homelessness on entry to prison, and to prevent homelessness on release.



Source: HL1, Scottish Government

The HPST aim to assess prisoners' housing needs early, avoiding a homelessness application and the need for temporary accommodation, by securing a home in time for release. Prisoners are supported with furniture, utilities and benefits claims, where needed, through housing support and justice services. There has been a substantial reduction in homelessness applications from people previously in prison since introducing protocol. Since implementing the prison protocol in 2020, there has been an 89% reduction in people applying as homeless directly from prison highlighting the success of the protocol and work to prevent homelessness on release. The protocol will be reviewed early 2025 in line with the Scottish Government review of the SHORE standard.

We are also working in partnership with Families Outside to develop an information leaflet for those members of a household who have had someone in their household go to prison. The leaflet will provide contact details for support if they have a housing issue or any housing related queries.

**Review of Common Allocations Policy**

A revised allocations policy and Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system has now been in place since November 2020. The allocations policy is now under review and consultation carried out. The responses suggest that we need to consider changes to how we advertise our properties, how we support access to the system and how we prioritise applications. The new policy, once agreed, is due to be implemented in 2025.

**Domestic Abuse Policy**

Angus Council's housing service made a commitment as part of the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) Make a Stand campaign to implement a domestic abuse policy. The policy was drafted based on the recommendations from the research, the CIH Domestic Abuse Guidance for Social Landlords and following discussions with key stakeholders.



The policy supports the aims set out in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan by focusing on preventing homelessness wherever possible and maximising other opportunities for women experiencing domestic abuse to access settled accommodation. It sets out how the housing service will provide a proactive housing response to preventing and addressing domestic violence by:

- Providing a confidential, sensitive, and supportive response to victims/survivors, whether that be women, children, or men
- Working collaboratively across the organisation and with partners to provide a coordinated response to enable victims/survivors to access a range of housing options, advice, information and support;
- Holding perpetrators to account – domestic abuse is the responsibility of the perpetrator and action will be taken, where possible, to support victims/survivors to remain in the family home.

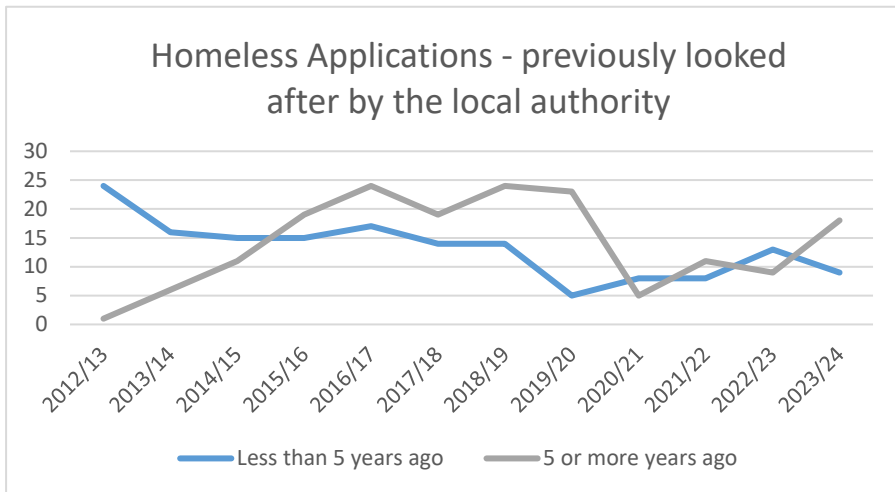
The policy was approved in September 2020 and has been implemented alongside guidance and training for staff. We have recently commenced a review of the policy and guidance, incorporating the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) SafeLives' Dash Risk Checklist and are working to ensure the policy has involvement from women and girls who have lived experience and have been supported by housing and other stakeholders.

### **Care Leavers Housing Options Protocol**

The Housing Options for Care Leavers protocol was agreed and implemented in 2013 and reviewed in September 2020.

Supported accommodation continues to be provided for young people leaving care, with a number of scatter flats created nearby to provide accommodation close by with intensive outreach support. Multi-agency panel meetings continue to be held on a bi-monthly basis where young peoples' housing and support needs are discussed, and actions agreed. The meetings also provide an opportunity to highlight other issues that will impact on practice and are attended by staff from the Horizon service, Team Leader (Sustainable Communities) a Team Leader from each of the Community Housing teams, a representative from the Community Investigations & Resolutions team and the Team Manager of the Homelessness Support Service. Other service representatives are invited to attend as required.

Since the protocol was implemented in 2013, the number of young people applying as homeless who had been looked after as a child by the local authority less than 5 years ago has reduced by 62%.

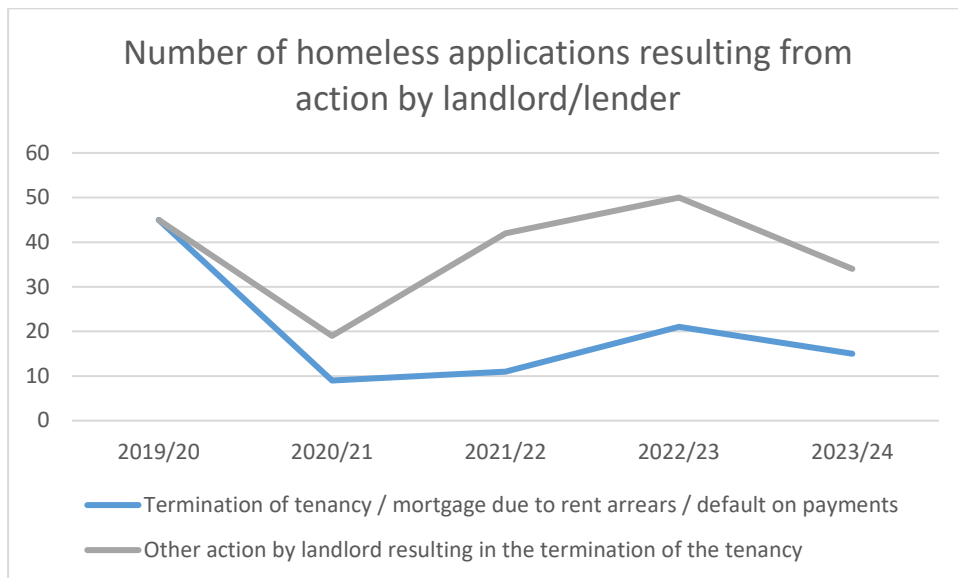


Source: HL1, Scottish Government.

There has been a significant increase in the number of people applying as homeless who had been looked after as a child by the local authority more than 5 years ago since 2022/23 and this will inform a review of the Care Leavers Protocol. However, figures are still significantly lower than those experienced pre-covid.

### Section 11 Panel

The number of homeless applications resulting from action by landlord or lender has seen a downward trend since 2019 and has fluctuated since the protection against eviction measures were introduced. Numbers have reduced in the past year and was to be expected due to the ban on evictions.



Source: HL1, Scottish Government

One of the five strategic priorities agreed for Angus' RRTP is to increase the focus on prevention to stop homelessness happening in the first place. The data highlighted that the most common drivers of homelessness in Angus continue to be relationship breakdown, followed by action by landlord/lender.

We recognise the importance of earlier intervention to prevent homelessness. Tenants are more likely to engage with support earlier in the process, when the size of debt is more manageable, the legal threats less daunting and the solutions potentially more achievable. Housing Association landlords in Angus contact the Homelessness Service when they serve the Notice Seeking Possession (NOSP). The email will include the tenant(s) and any other household members' names, date of births and current address. The Homelessness Support Service will complete system checks and notify the housing association if the tenant or members of their household have any ongoing service involvement or previous involvement that highlight any additional support needs or vulnerabilities.

A multi-agency Section 11 Panel was set up to provide oversight, consider different approaches and monitor section 11 cases, linking in with other pathways (e.g. Adult Support & Protection, Angus Complex & Coexisting Conditions Panel etc. as appropriate). Regular multi-agency discussions focused on homelessness prevention are an effective way of developing essential personal working relationships and agreeing common strategies. The panel has been on hold for the past year because of the ban on evictions, however panel meetings are scheduled to begin again from April 2024.

### **Support in the Private Rented Sector**

Several actions were identified in the RRTP to increase access to the private rented sector (PRS) including introducing flat share initiatives; implementing a rent deposit scheme and establishing a grant for empty homeowners to bring back empty homes for letting to homeless households.

These activities were led by our Private Sector Officer, however, due to recruitment challenges and uncertainties relating to future funding, it was agreed to merge the role of the private sector officer with the new Homelessness Case Manager role as part of the new HPST.

The Rent Deposit scheme continued thorough 2022/23 and will be replaced by a new Housing Access Fund early 2024/25. This fund will act as a replacement to the existing Rent Deposit Scheme and will be used to cover a variety of expenses incurred at the outset of a tenancy such as deposit and advance payments. Unlike the previous scheme, there will be no requirement to repay any money received. The fund will be available to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and do not have access to assistance from any other source. The fund will primarily be used to increase access to the private rented sector.

### **Delayed Discharge Hospital Prevention Fund**

To support people from all tenures to be discharged in a timely manner, annual funding of £10,000 of funding has been committed from the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership in to create a 'prevention fund' to support hospital discharges for the following housing related issues:

- Cleaning costs of the property
- To clear utility bill debt
- Interim accommodation costs (rent, service charges, council tax)
- Essential furnishings

- Removal/packing costs
- Any other housing costs may be considered.

The applications for the fund and actions arising are coordinated by a central team in housing and involves close partnership working with the community housing teams, registered social landlords and services within Health & Social Care. Last year saw an increase in referrals as the funding became more embedded into working practices across community care and housing teams. Thirty Five individuals have been supported to return home from hospital by using the fund. The funding requests mostly related to house clearances and cleaning, interim accommodation costs, utility credits and the provision of furniture and white goods.

### **Tenant Hardship and Homelessness Prevention Fund**

Angus was awarded £164k from the Scottish Government to support private and social rented tenants who have accrued rent arrears as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. An online application was developed and can be completed by tenants, their landlord or other services supporting the tenant. A panel involving members of the Sustainable Communities team in Housing Strategy was established to review and determine the applications, representatives from Welfare Rights, Community Housing Teams and Homeless Support Service were added to the panel this year which has helped with the decision making process and signposting applicants to other sources of advice and assistance.

The Tenant Hardship fund is now closed and was fully committed, helping 102 households, and prevented eviction action in all cases.

£50,000 was also allocated from the RRTP to extend the fund and create the Prevention Fund to allow us to support more households who are in financial difficulty to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness. The fund was launched in October 2022 as part of Angus Council's Cost of Living Roadshows. The fund is still in operation and the same panel is in place to determine awards as was in place for the Tenant Hardship Fund. The Homelessness Prevention Fund has supported 17 applicants to date and prevented eviction.

### **Housing Policy Officer (RRTP)**

We recruited a temporary dedicated officer to help progress the RRTP actions in April 2023 initially for 1 year. This post has now been extended to March 2025 and will continue to support the RRTP and work of the Prevention and Homelessness Delivery Group.

### **Youth Homelessness Strategy**

Addressing youth homelessness falls within Local Authorities statutory responsibility for homelessness and prevention. Due to increases in numbers, youth homelessness has become the focus for many Local Authorities. A focus on prevention is one of the five strategic priorities agreed for the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RTTP) in Angus, alongside the new Scottish Bill that introduces the 'Prevent' duty. Creating a Youth Homeless Strategy that encompasses both action and prevention aligns itself with the legislation and overall approach by Scotland to reduce youth homelessness.

What is relevant to consider are the reasons why a young person may become homeless. RRTP data analysis highlights that the most common drivers of homelessness in Angus continue to be relationship breakdown, followed by action by landlord / lender. The main reason for being homeless given by young people is being asked to leave, followed by relationship breakdown. This is representative of the whole of Scotland and for Angus it reflects the same.

Currently young people in Angus will present as homeless and be supported through their application like every other individual presenting as homeless. We want to create a strategy that supports young people through their homeless journey and works to prevent young people facing homelessness, taking a holistic, whole family approach. Most importantly, a strategy that is designed and reviewed by the people that it affects.

Work is ongoing to develop the strategy in conjunction with young people and with the aim of creating a pathway through housing for young people that will set them up to succeed.

### **Whole Family Wellbeing**

The Housing Service are working in partnership with Justice, Welfare Rights and the Third Sector on a new whole family wellbeing project with a focus on trauma informed practice. A new post has been created as a housing resource within a new whole family wellbeing project team working with pregnant women and women with children under 3. The post will be advertised in coming months to support this new team and work on the development of trauma informed practice within the housing service. This post is part funded from whole family wellbeing funding and RRTP funding.

## **6. Planned RRTP Activities 2024/25**

In addition to activities outlined above, several actions are planned as we progress into 2024/25 in line with the RRTP and the Housing Improvement Plan:

- Continue to refresh the RRTP demand tool at a locality level to establish the required percentage of lets to homeless households for each Housing Market Area.
- Continue to review households occupying temporary homeless accommodation and flip to Scottish Secure Tenancy where appropriate.
- Development of a youth homelessness strategy.
- Continue to evaluate, explore, and develop initiatives to help increase access to the private rented sector.
- Review of temporary accommodation.
- Relaunch of Section 11 panel.
- Implementation of Housing Access Fund.
- Review Housing Options for Care Leavers Protocol.

- One year evaluation of HPST.
- Implementation of Whole Family Wellbeing Project.
- Review Domestic Abuse Policy and operational guidance.
- Implement Harassment Policy.
- Review Prison Protocol in line with review of SHORE standards.