HOMELESSNESS

What's the issue?

There is a statutory duty to find accommodation for households deemed to be unintentionally homeless, eligible and in ‘priority need’ (1996 Housing Act and Homeless (Priority Need) Order 2002 criteria) with priority need including pregnant women, families and other specific vulnerable groups. There is no statutory requirement to house single people (who may be in a relationship and/or have children who are not currently living with them) or other ‘non statutory’ homeless people or households. The physical health problems and mental health needs as well as the prevalence of behavioural and lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, poor diet, use of drugs and alcohol of people who are homeless is much worse and higher than the general population [33-35], and they attend A&E much more frequently [34-36] and use four times as many acute hospital services [34] than the general population, with a high cost to the NHS and public services [34, 35, 37].

What’s our situation?

There were 399 statutory homeless households in priority need in 2015/16 (3.48 per 1,000 households). This has fallen over the last decade from between 600-1000 households to around 500 households between 2009/10 and 2012/13, and has been around 400 such households in the last three years [38]. The current rate for Hull at 3.48 homeless households per 1,000 households is higher than England (2.52).

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13, the rate of statutory homeless households not in priority need was twice as high in Hull as England (4.4-4.7 for Hull compared to 2.0-2.4 for England per 1,000 households), but decreased for 2013/14 (3.1), 2014/15 (3.6) and 2015/16 (1.4). In Hull, there are 164 statutory homeless households not in priority need out of 114,672 households. Despite the recent fall in Hull, the latest rate is still considerably higher than England at 0.9 per 1,000 households [26, 27].

There are only 31 households in Hull in temporary accommodation. The rate in Hull is much lower than England (0.27 versus 3.12 per 1,000 total households for 2015/16) and this has consistently been the case since at least 2010/11 [26, 27].

It was estimated that there were 15 rough sleepers in Hull in Autumn 2016 [39] representing a rate of 0.13 per 1,000 households (between 7 and 15 since 2010 although 23 in 2015). However, this does not include ‘hidden homeless’ groups, such as those who are squatting or staying in places which are inaccessible to outreach workers, or people in hostels or shelters. Based on local information, there are 40-60 people with severe and multiple disadvantages who are at risk of being homeless but who are reluctant to engage with services and are not eligible for re-housing. In 2017, there were nine establishments offering accommodation to the homeless providing 499 places in total [40]. During 2016/17, the local Centre for Assessment and Emergency Accommodation had 249 different users of which 202 completed an assessment, and 76% were male, 23% female and 1% transgender. 19% were under 25, 44% aged 25-39, 27% aged 40-49, 8% aged 50-59 years and 2% aged 60-69 years. More than half (55%) were verified rough sleepers, 46% had no, 30% had limited and 21% had regular contact with services (3% unknown), 95% were White British, 64% had mental health needs (only 44$ with a formal diagnosis) and 45% had physical health needs.

For more detailed information, see the JSNA Toolkit: Housing, Environment and Social Care report.

What are the strategic needs?

Hull had a much higher rate of homelessness cases (52.5 per 1,000 households) that were prevented and relieved compared to England (10.1) for 2013/14 [41]. So this good work on early intervention and the prevention of homelessness, and not placing statutory homeless households in temporary accommodation should continue.
Hull City Council runs quarterly homelessness strategy focus group meetings which provide opportunities for discussions on how the local authority can work to prevent homelessness and develop appropriate services and support for people who are homeless. Organisations working with people who are homeless are invited to attend these quarterly meetings.

References