

Stratford-on-Avon District Housing Strategy

Evidence Log

including consultation and
a review of homelessness

Updated 2018

Contents

1. Consultation **Page 1**

Introduction ♦ Consultation with older people ♦ Consultation with young people ♦ Consultation with people who are socially disadvantaged or isolated ♦ Consultation with support services.

2. Population **Page 37**

Resident population and past growth ♦ Current population by age ♦ Population change – past growth in Stratford-on-Avon District ♦ Resident population - future growth ♦ Ethnicity.

3. Households **Page 46**

Number of households ♦ People claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit ♦ Employment.

4. Tenure **Page 49**

Recent estimates of tenure ♦ 2011 census and tenure

5. Cost of buying or renting a home **Page 51**

Employee income ♦ Household income ♦ House prices ♦ Cost of District 'entry level' housing – the cheapest housing ♦ Shared ownership ♦ The cost of a privately rented home ♦ Older people and private rented accommodation ♦ Housing association rents.

6. Welfare reform **Page 70**

Introduction ♦ Spare room subsidy ♦ Benefit cap ♦ Universal Credit ♦ Local Housing Allowance ♦ Discretionary Housing Payments ♦ Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

7. Requirement for new housing **Page 75**

Local plan ♦ Affordable housing ♦ Gypsies and Travellers ♦ Specialised housing.

8. Affordable housing **Page 79**

Number of affordable homes by tenure ♦ Type and size of existing housing association rented homes ♦ Type and size of shared ownership homes ♦ Loss of affordable homes ♦ Building affordable homes ♦ Funding of new affordable home.

9. Condition of the existing housing stock

Page 87

Housing stock ♦ Overcrowding ♦ Stock condition ♦ Fuel Poverty ♦ Energy efficiency ♦ Houses in multiple-occupation ♦ regulation of the Private Rented Sector ♦ Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary grants ♦ Empty homes.

10. The Council's Housing Waiting List (Home Choice Plus)

Page 96

Introduction ♦ Number and type of households on the Housing Waiting List ♦ Age of households on the Housing Waiting List ♦ Tenure of households on the Housing Waiting List ♦ Households in work ♦ Housing Waiting List satisfaction surveys.

11. Homelessness

Page 103

What is homelessness? ♦ Preventing homelessness ♦ Role of the Council and homelessness legislation ♦ Who is entitled to longer term housing ♦ Levels of homelessness and preventions ♦ Why households lose their accommodation and become homeless ♦ Temporary accommodation for homeless households ♦ People sleeping rough ♦ The Stratford Link Project ♦ Housing First ♦ Severe Weather Emergency protocol (SWEP) ♦ P.H.I.L – Preventing homelessness improving lives ♦ Crash pad for young people – Toms Place.

12. Other information and services

Page 120

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ♦ Citizens Advice Court desk worker / dedicated housing and money advice worker ♦ Citizens Advice statistics April 2017 to March 2018 ♦ Citizens Advice Reach out and help (ROAH) ♦ Stratford-on-Avon District Housing Forum ♦ Local food banks ♦ Other poverty, social and financial inclusion work ♦ Housing Early Lifeline Payment (HELP) ♦ Support for existing housing association tenants ♦ Housing related support ♦ Priority Families programme ♦ Dementia Cafes – supporting people with dementia and their carers ♦ Domestic violence services ♦ Counselling service ♦ Drug and alcohol services ♦ Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme (VPRS).

13. Hyperlinks to other strategies, research and information

Page 129

1. Consultation

Introduction

The Housing Strategy 2015-2020 was drafted following extensive consultation with partners and the public. Details of the consultation undertaken in 2014 can be seen in the [original Evidence Log](#).

Consultation undertaken by the Council and its partners in 2018 for this updated Evidence Log

- Consultation with older people;
- Consultation with young people;
- Consultation with those who are socially isolated or excluded;
- Consultation with support services.

The details and results of the consultations are set out overleaf.

In putting together this updated Evidence Log, the Council has also had regard to feedback from other consultations and work:

- Consultation carried out for other District Council strategies that crossover with the Housing Strategy.
- Council's housing services' customer satisfaction surveys and diversity audits.
- Ongoing multi-agency work about preventing homelessness, housing needs, supported housing and developing new homes.

Consultation with older people

Summary of key points for older people

Assuming continued provision of existing services

1. Older people need to be consulted about future homes for older people.
2. More bungalows are needed, as well as smaller houses with manageable gardens to enable people to downsize and remain independent.
3. Extra-care is not for everyone. An option before the need for extra-care is desirable.
4. More affordable housing is required for both older people and for younger people. Families living far away cannot support older people.
5. More information in all formats (not just on the internet) must be provided to older people regarding different housing options.
6. Homes need to be built in the right place, with good access to amenities and have good links to public transport.
7. Homes should be future proofed in order to cope with people's changing needs as they get older.
8. Maintaining the home and garden is a worry for older people.

Introduction

Senior Citizens Action Network (SCAN) groups meet bi monthly and offer a chance for older people to meet socially and hear information on various support services. There are six SCAN groups across the District.

Attendees of three SCAN groups and a meeting of SCAN chair persons were consulted to find out what housing issues are important to older people and what most needs improving as regards housing, support and care to make life easier. They were told that *the Council and its partners are preparing a new District wide Housing Strategy. The Strategy is a*

plan for the future setting out how people will get the housing and support they need and choose. It covers owner occupation, private rented and affordable housing.

A paper survey was also sent to members of SCAN groups, asking the following questions:

- What do we need to get right in housing designed specifically for older people?
- What problems do you have in maintaining your home and garden?
- We are living longer. What can be done to promote independence and health?
- Where would you go for housing advice?

A summary of the discussion and themes that emerged from the SCAN meetings and the paper survey is listed below.

Location

- Homes need to be built near facilities and infrastructure like schools, community halls, shops and medical centres. Transport links are important. Homes need to be near bus routes for ease of getting to doctors, opticians and for shopping.
- The location of new houses is sometimes questionable, for example in areas that have previously flooded.

Type, design and size

- More bungalows are needed but developers do not build them. We should learn from countries like Canada where bungalows are grouped together around facilities for later life care and socialising.

- New developments do not cater for older people; they are built for younger people. Properties should if possible be on one level with manageable gardens.
- There are too many large 4 and 5-bed houses being built and a lack of smaller properties. Smaller properties need to be built for people wanting to downsize. There is no suitable accommodation for older people in larger properties to downsize to i.e. only expensive retirement homes or extra-care – no suitable options in between, such as smaller houses. Not everyone is ready to move into extra-care.
- Older people stuck in larger homes create a blockage for families looking for larger properties.
- Older people don't want little boxes with no separate gardens (like in retirement homes).
- Homes should be future proofed and desirable for people aged over 60 years. New builds should be built in a way that enables people to stay in their homes if their needs change. Homes should be future proofed for ground floor living if required, and have a downstairs toilet and shower/ wet room. There should also be room for a carer or relative to stay.
 - Wide automatic doors with not too many stairs.
 - Stairs should be straight to allow stair lifts to be easily fit.
 - There should be built in hearing loop systems.
 - Improvements such as grab rails and lifelines should be offered to enable people to stay in their home.
- There is a wide range of accommodation specifically for older people in Stratford town, which is ideal as all the services are easy to get to.

Home and garden maintenance

- Older people face a number of issues when trying to maintain their home and garden including:
 - Inability to bend or kneel to do gardening or cleaning;
 - A lack of tradesmen wanting to do the small every day gardening or handyman jobs.
- There should be a trusted tradesman list - people are wary of scams and contacting tradesmen who have put leaflets through doors.
- It is difficult sorting things out when you are living on your own, and can be dangerous if no one is checking up on them. Not being able to do something which you used to enjoy i.e. maintaining your home and garden is upsetting. Dealing with disrepair issues and getting housing associations to agree the repairs can be stressful.
- Living in a conservation area is problematic; windows that are in poor condition and draughty cannot be replaced with double glazing. Conservation Officers need to be more sympathetic.
- There needs to be more support for older people when their home is in poor condition, especially as it can impact on people's health. Many older people are living in private rented accommodation that is in poor condition.

Health

- As people live longer, we should recognise that they want to stay in their own homes but require help to do this. People should *only* stay in their own homes if it is safe to do so.

- Social Care is in crisis and we need to recognise the important role families can play in supporting older family members, to enable them to stay in their own homes. Families need to be able to stay in the same village / town or be able to move back if they have moved away; however, they are often unable to do so as there is no suitable housing.
- Public Health/ NHS and County Council Social Care Services should work better in partnership with the Council to promote independence and better health. The different agencies don't have a joined-up way of working.
- Hospital discharge is an issue. There is a lack of social care staff to make sure the person leaving hospital is going to manage at home.
- There are insufficient occupational therapists – now they only seem to be in hospitals.
- People want to live independently in their own home and not in a care home. The mental health of people aged 50 or 60 can suffer if they have to go into a home.
- Promotion is needed to raise awareness of all the services that are available to older people.
- Fitness activities should be easily available for pensioners, including ensuring that older people can access the activities using their bus pass. Sometimes bus companies alter their time tables and those in rural villages aren't able to get to the activity on time. Opportunities for 'safe' walking should be encouraged, such as the Stratford Monday morning group which sticks mainly to paths.
- Meeting places such as halls should be provided at an affordable rent to allow local meeting up opportunities.

- More interaction between older people and schools should be encouraged.

Affordable housing and development

- More affordable housing is required.
- Planning constraints and developers impede how the Council can deliver affordable homes. Planning laws need changing. Developers win on appeal, and build large 4 and 5-bed houses instead of affordable housing.
- In Henley-in-Arden, housing association stock in need of repairs has been sold to a private developer, who is building large expensive homes; taking away flats from young people.
- 'Affordable housing' is often not affordable. An example of the rent for new properties being advertised in Wootton Wawen was given, which are set at an 'affordable rent' level. However, it was felt older people would not be able to afford the bungalows.
- The sale of Council houses has not helped the current housing situation.
- The Council needs to help older people *and* young people. Housing association properties are always oversubscribed. Young people are often priced out of the market; home ownership is out of their reach. Even private rented accommodation is too expensive for them.
- The Council should specifically designate land for older people in the local plan. How do the planning committee know what older people want?

- The German housing model is sound. Development is controlled and many people rent and have long term secure tenancies. There is less emphasis on home ownership.
- More extra care schemes like Ettington Court in Wellesbourne are needed. An extra-care scheme in Henley-in-Arden recently granted planning approval has no provision for affordable housing.
- Development is harder to achieve in the greenbelt.

Advice and housing options

- For advice about housing people would go to:
 - The Council
 - CAB in Southam library
 - Don't know
 - Local District Councillor
 - H.E.A.R.T
- Not everyone is confident using the internet; others like it.
- There is not enough information about different housing options and the difference between for example sheltered and extra-care.

Other issues

- There should be more consultation with older people and feedback from consultations. People want to know how what they said has been taken into account.
- Departments within the Council need to be more joined-up.
- Older people in villages should receive the same help as those in towns.

- SCAN meetings are always helpful with very good speakers.
- Living alone can be very lonely; it would be useful if there were organisations or volunteers who would be willing to visit for a few hours per week.
- Many people over 60 are sitting in large houses they don't want to stay in but are having to because there are no suitable alternatives. There is no financial incentive to swap a large 4-bed house for a 'pokey' 1-bed flat, and the extra 3% stamp duty on purchasing a new home to move into before selling your existing one is a disincentive.

Summary of key priorities for young people

Assuming continued provision of existing services

1. More general needs housing association accommodation *for young people* including one-beds and help to find independent accommodation.
2. More supported housing for young people, particularly smaller scale non-shared type accommodation.
3. Need for there to be more provision for young people (youth clubs etc.).
4. More affordable homes in rural areas or near employment opportunities.
5. Increase understanding of all forms of abuse.
6. Need for more face-to-face contact with the Council and for interviews to feel less intimidating.
7. Simplify letters from housing benefit and council tax.
8. Improve the quality of bed and breakfast accommodation provided via the Council, including more contact.

Introduction

Two consultation exercises were undertaken to find out what was important to young people:

- 1) Five face to face in depth interviews with young people, and comments from a St Basils support worker.
- 2) Two people receiving support from St Basils or Doorway completed questionnaires.

Case histories of young people

Some information has been omitted to avoid identifying people. All the young people were local people from Stratford-on-Avon District.

20 year old single female living in a housing association tenancy

White British.

She left home at 16 and moved into supported accommodation with the help of children's services. She was first in shared accommodation and then after three years was moved into a single occupancy unit where she was taught independent living skills and budgeting. She was awarded move-on priority on the Housing Waiting List and was offered a one-bed flat in Stratford within three months. She felt lucky to get her flat, as there weren't many available when she was looking.

She had to sign an acceptable behaviour contract with the housing association when she accepted the flat. There have been issues with anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the block of flats but the housing association is keen to address issues promptly. She sometimes feels she is picked on/ gets the blame as she is a young person.

She is receiving support from St Basils who help her with correspondence. She has learning disabilities but doesn't receive any extra support.

She feels much more settled. She is currently looking for a 2-bed property now that she is pregnant, and would like to stay in Stratford if she can; however there aren't many properties available.

What could be improved?

- i) There isn't much for young people in terms of housing; there aren't enough one-beds. Too many of the one-beds on the Housing Waiting List are for older people.

- ii) Small scale supported accommodation is needed. She was shown around a large hostel in Leamington which she didn't like, the rooms were very small. She had issues with the other resident in the shared supported accommodation she was in, to the extent that she didn't feel safe. She felt her concerns weren't addressed by the provider.
- iii) There was nothing in the flat when she moved in. Her family helped her with carpets etc.
- iv) There isn't much going on for young people; no youth clubs in Stratford for her age group.

25 year old woman with a young child in a housing association tenancy

White British.

She was renting privately with her partner but they were struggling to pay the rent which kept increasing, and there were issues with repairs. She fell pregnant and having to work part-time hours further exacerbated their financial issues so they moved in to live with family, hoping that they could try to save for a deposit.

As they were classed as overcrowded they were awarded a high band on the Housing Waiting List and were housed fairly quickly in a village. However, her relationship with her partner broke down and he moved out.

She was the victim of emotional abuse which has continued and she feels very isolated where she is. Her housing officer has been very supportive of the situation and she is receiving support from a domestic abuse organisation. She would like to move to another rural village.

What could be improved?

- i) She would like the Council to build more affordable housing in rural areas; however, not necessarily for people with a local connection to a village. She would like to move to a different rural village where she doesn't know anyone and will feel safe. However, if she doesn't have a local connection it's unlikely she will be successful. She doesn't have a connection to certain places she would like to move to; however her local connection is somewhere she would like to move away from. As such she feels the bidding system discriminates against people in her situation.
- ii) There isn't a good understanding of emotional abuse. Services such as the Police don't understand it and say they can't do anything as there are no physical marks.
- iii) She would like to move but there aren't enough affordable homes; she wouldn't be able to afford private rented accommodation and certain areas in the District, particularly Stratford are too expensive. People also can't afford to save for a deposit while they are private renting.
- iv) Social housing is cheaper and you can treat it like your own home by decorating, unlike private rented. However, there are not enough properties.
- v) She would like to speak to someone from the Council about her situation to explain why she wants to move as she thinks they would understand more; everything is done on forms and then nothing happens.

18 year old man in temporary accommodation

White British.

He was in foster care and then moved in with a family member at the age of 18. The relationship broke down and he was asked to leave. He was still receiving support from the leaving care team, who brought him down to the Council to declare himself as homeless.

He was placed in a bed and breakfast by the Housing Advice Team and was then moved to a supported temporary accommodation shared house.

He has been in priority band on the Housing Waiting List for 2 months and is bidding but hasn't yet been successful. He would like to live in Wellesbourne but there do not seem to be that many one-beds there. There are shared houses available but he doesn't want to live in a shared house after living in one currently. He sometimes hasn't been able to bid for a whole month as there haven't been any suitable properties. He has been told by the Housing Advice Team to widen his area choice but he does not want to live in Stratford.

He doesn't feel he has any support needs and is capable of independent living. He is in contact with St Basils who help sometimes; they tell him if there is an issue with his rent. He's currently in receipt of Universal Credit which he hasn't had any problems with. He gets just about enough to survive.

What could be improved?

- i) He was a lot happier in the bed and breakfast and doesn't understand why he was moved to the shared house (supported temporary accommodation); he feels it's exactly the same as the bed and breakfast. He does have access to a washing machine in the shared house which is useful, however there are too many things going on in the house and he wants to leave as soon as possible.
- ii) There are not enough one-beds in the areas he would like to live in.

- iii) Overall he was happy with the service the Housing Advice Team provided when he was homeless; he only had to wait a few hours before he was placed in a bed and breakfast.

18 year old male in supported accommodation for young people

White British.

Before moving into supported accommodation he was sofa surfing and staying between properties including his partner's family, who support him a lot. Previously he lived with his parent, who had substance abuse problems, and who asked him to leave.

He receives great support from Doorway as part of the supported accommodation. His support worker helps him with bills, paperwork etc. which can be confusing. He is happy with his life skills such as housework.

He doesn't mind where he moves to but a location to enable him to work is important. He is learning to drive and has recently done work experience. He wants to work. He doesn't mind whether it is social housing or private rented, and he is currently waiting to go on the Housing Waiting List to go into the move-on band.

He is in now in receipt of Universal Credit (and housing benefit for his rent); however he has had issues since he moved on to Universal Credit.

What could be improved?

- i) Council meetings can be overwhelming when you are homeless. There is a lot of information to take in and it would be difficult to understand this without a support worker's help.

- ii) Letters from housing benefit and council tax are very complicated and confusing. His support worker helps him with these.
- iii) When he moved to Universal Credit all his benefits were stopped. He had to borrow money from people and pay them back. The system is very slow to update circumstances and 'cash in hand' jobs can be difficult when on universal credit. One member of staff at the Job Centre told him that his CV was rubbish; however, his work coach said that it was good.
- iv) He feels very lucky that he was able to move into supported accommodation; he was on the waiting list for nine months. There needs to be more supported accommodation for young people.

21 year old female living in a housing association tenancy

She was asked to leave her mother's house in 2016 as she couldn't cope with her mental health issues and was accommodated in bed and breakfast by the Council. She moved to four different bed and breakfasts and then finally a shared house which was supported temporary accommodation. She found the whole experience very difficult and often felt unsafe. She was placed outside the District in one bed and breakfast. She didn't have any washing or cooking facilities and had to eat out a lot which was expensive, and the bed and breakfast wasn't near a supermarket. It took a while for her benefits to be sorted out so she had to borrow money from her family.

In the shared house she did have access to a washing machine but felt uncomfortable using it along with the other residents. She felt unsafe due to drinking and drug taking there.

She is receiving support from St Basils whom she relies upon to help her with her bills, respond to letters and keep appointments e.g. with the mental health team. Her ability to manage and keep on top of things is linked to her mental health.

She was accepted as priority homeless and is now in a 5 year tenancy with a housing association. It took a while to get the offer, partly because she has an emotional support dog so she could only bid on pet permissible properties. Also a lot of advertised properties gave priority to people who were working.

She is in receipt of Employment Support Allowance and has applied for Personal Independence Payments. She is just about managing but it can be very stressful; she has had to reduce her water bill, won't always put the heating on when it's cold and has had to use foodbank vouchers in the past.

What could be improved?

- i) When she was homeless she didn't feel that the Council cared. There were no check-ups to see how she was coping and she wasn't aware of referrals to agencies such as St Basils and the Mental Health Team until they turned up. She had to leave the bed and breakfast to move into the shared temporary accommodation with very little notice, which caused some logistical issues with getting her belongings over from Leamington, having to rely on family for help.
- ii) It didn't take long to be accepted as priority homeless but it took a long time to be made an offer of a property.
- iii) She did look for private rented accommodation; however, it was very expensive and she didn't understand then how housing benefit worked.

Comments from St Basils support worker

- i) Housing Associations seem to skip young people because of their age. They tend to prefer young people with children or over 25 year olds (compared to those under 25). Under 25's struggle to

pass affordability tests. They seem to prefer those who are in work with no support needs.

- ii) Stratford-on-Avon District Council seems better at seeing young people who are homeless, compared to some councils. Forms also seem to be processed quickly.

Survey of young people

How can housing services be improved for young people?

- i) There needs to be less waiting time if possible. It would be better to be updated a bit more, sometimes left in the dark.
- ii) The Housing Team need to listen to points of view a little more; have more understanding and compassion about situation.

What are the main issues finding accommodation?

- i) Too expensive.
- ii) Not appropriate or anything in Stratford.
- iii) Young people go to Citizens Advice, Doorway or other agencies in the area if they need advice about housing.

Any support needs?

- i) One young person said they were getting help from Doorway; no mental health support from the Council.
- ii) One young person was receiving support from Doorway and Creative Support.

Consultation with people who are socially disadvantaged or isolated

Summary of key priorities for people who are socially disadvantaged or socially isolated

Assuming continued provision of existing services

1. People are able to get support and advice from The Link Project.
2. There is a lack of direct access emergency accommodation in the District.
3. There is a lack of affordable one-beds in the District.
4. There is a lack of support for those with high needs. People had been told they were above the threshold for support.
5. Often a number of contributing factors lead to homelessness.

Introduction

Two consultation exercises with 'The Link Project' customers were undertaken in May 2018 to find out what was important to those who are socially disadvantaged or socially isolated. The Link Project is a free drop-in centre where people can get advice and support, including people who are sleeping rough. The two consultations carried out were:

- 1) Three face to face in depth interviews with The Link Project customers, and comments from a volunteer.
- 2) Ten people receiving support from The Link Project completed questionnaires.

Case histories

Some information has been omitted to avoid identifying people.

53 year old male in temporary accommodation

White British.

He had been placed in a bed and breakfast by the Council after getting evicted from a housing association property due to rent arrears. He had lived in his flat for 20 years. Before he was evicted he had started staying in a tent as there were anti-social behaviour issues with the neighbours and he wanted to get away from the issues. He felt the housing association didn't take his complaints seriously.

What could be improved?

- i) He appreciates the support that The Link Project and the Rough Sleeper Engagement Officer provides. With this support he doesn't feel like he needs any further support.
- ii) He would ideally like to live in a caravan but he is finding it difficult to find a site that allows occupation 12 months of the year. He does not want another property as it is too much hassle with the neighbours and landlord.

50 year old male sleeping rough

White British.

He has been sleeping rough for a number of years after a family bereavement sent him in a downward spiral. He came to Stratford in August 2017 and has a number of places where he sleeps. He did have a tent but it was stolen. He has travelled all over the country and goes wherever there is work as he prefers not to sign on. He wants to work but says it is hard to find work classed as homeless.

He doesn't class himself as homeless as he chooses to live his life this way. At some time in the future he would like to live in a flat; he feels he is getting too old to live on the streets.

He doesn't feel he has any support needs and he doesn't beg. The church is very good and provides him with sandwiches.

What could be improved?

- i) He was offered a flat through The Link Project; however, they didn't ask him about it first so he didn't take it up.
- ii) Support services such as The Link Project need to have the right provisions for people who are homeless. For example socks and hot food.

52 year old male living in supported accommodation

White British.

He lost his job a few years ago and he got into £2,000 rent arrears which led to him being evicted from a property in another Warwickshire authority. He ended up filing for bankruptcy and lived on the streets for about a year before securing supported accommodation in the District.

He is now on the Housing Waiting List and is hoping to secure more permanent accommodation. It took a while to be able to register as he didn't have a local connection initially.

He used to have alcohol and substance misuse issues but the supported accommodation provider has helped him to address these issues. He finds that The Link Project and the Rough Sleeper Engagement Officer are a great support and can help him and others with most things.

What could be improved?

- i) The information the Council provides needs to be clearer. He received a letter from the Council stating that he was not eligible to join the Housing Waiting List but he had met with a housing advisor who had told him he would be eligible. This sort of confusion can tip people over the edge when they are in crisis.
- ii) In other Warwickshire Local Authorities they have a shelter system for people sleeping rough. People are able to go to a different church or The Salvation Army each night from December to February. It offers a warm bed and provides breakfast. When he came to the District there didn't seem to be much support or shelter here in the evenings.
- iii) He has heard of a project where a double decker bus is converted to provide shelter for people sleeping rough.
- iv) When he arrived in the District The Link Project was only open two days a week but it is open more frequently now. Other Councils seem to give more support to people.
- v) Sometimes the unintended consequence of giving vulnerable people things like food and clothes at The Link Project actually supports their drug or alcohol habits as they have more money to spend on drugs and alcohol.
- vi) The Recovery Partnership does not currently have an office in the District which is not ideal. They used to come to The Link.

Comments from a volunteer

- i) The District needs a hostel to help those living on the streets.

- ii) The Link Project needs bigger premises and more privacy for those wanting to talk in a confidential setting. There are issues with the lease conditions meaning it can only be open a few hours Monday to Friday but it needs to be open on weekends as well.
- iii) It is very difficult to get a job when someone is homeless; a lot of clients are also illiterate and are not able to complete forms.
- iv) Local supermarkets have been very supportive and provide food and equipment. The Church soup kitchen is now open Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes.
- v) Many had difficult childhoods and no family support. Many turn to drink and drug use as a coping mechanism; others have mental health issues caused from being homeless.
- vi) The District needs more affordable homes. There is a hidden homeless (those sofa surfing etc.), but also those who are only just managing. Private rented accommodation is very expensive. Some people are lucky to have family who can help and support them but some do not have this luxury.

Detailed information from people using The Link Project

Sex, age and ethnicity

- Nine men and one woman.
- The ages ranged from; 35, 37, 38, 44, 45, 47 and 60. Two people did not disclose their age.
- Eight people White British, one person Lithuanian national and one person Israeli national.

People who are sleeping rough

- Four people said that they are sleeping rough.

Two people are living in a tent; one person is sleeping in a shop door and one person at the rear of shops.

Reasons for getting into housing difficulties

- The most common reasons for getting into difficulty are rent arrears, Universal Credit issues and mental health issues. Family breakdown, loss of employment, and not being able to afford to pay for household bills and food are also factors.
- A combination of issues often led to housing difficulty.
- Universal Credit problems included: delay with payments; not coping with the online journal due to learning disabilities; being declared fit for work when suffering from medical issues and housing costs not being paid while in hospital.

Support needs

The most common support needs were

- Tenancy maintenance (including budgeting and help with benefits);
- Mental health support;
- Drugs and alcohol support;
- Help to find work;
- Support for those that are deemed too high need for generic tenancy support.

What are the main barriers to securing housing?

The most common barriers to securing housing were

- Universal Credit;
- Lack of I.D and no reference;
- No computer or phone;
- Lack of one-bed properties; not considered a priority;
- Lack of support for high needs including non-shared accommodation where sharing is problematic due to specific needs;
- Prejudice about housing people from hostels.

What could be improved?

- 1) Provide more support (and accommodation) for those with high level needs.
 - Five people felt that there was a lack of suitable support for those with high level support needs. Some people were assessed as having too high support needs for the generic tenancy support provider.
 - Three people suggested there was a need for suitable self-contained properties with support.

- 2) Provide more one-bed general needs housing association homes.
 - Three people mentioned there was a shortage of one-bedroom properties.
 - One person mentioned that because of a deduction in their benefits (due to the 'Spare Room Subsidy') they needed to downsize. However, there are very few one-beds available.

- 3) Improve the operation of the Housing Waiting List when someone in a hostel is ready to 'move-on'.
 - Two people mentioned that they encountered difficulties and that the system needed to be made easier.

Consultation with support services

Summary of key points for support services

Assuming continued provision of existing services

1. Moving-on from supported accommodation is taking longer because of difficulties in securing more permanent housing – both privately rented and social housing.
2. It is important that short term emergency accommodation such as a refuge is recognised as such; it is not a long term housing solution.
3. Rent arrears can be an issue when people are trying to secure permanent housing via the Housing Waiting List, despite sometimes the arrears being a result of financial abuse.
4. Agencies referring to specialised support services need to be clear about people's needs and risks.
5. More support needs to be offered to people to prevent homelessness; there is not enough early intervention.
6. The demand for extra-care housing for people with learning disabilities outweighs the supply.
7. Specialised housing needs to be in a central location and close to amenities.
8. Recruitment of staff throughout the sector is an issue.
9. Opening hours for services have been reduced due to funding cuts.
10. Organisations who operate online as default do not consider those who are not able to go online due to their health issues, or those who do not have access to the internet.

Introduction

To understand the issues specialised support services and their clients face in securing and maintaining housing a number of face-to-face interviews were carried out with various agencies. A consultation event was also carried out with Springfield Mind service users.

The consultations were carried out in June 2018.

Stratford Refuge – supporting women and children escaping domestic violence

1. The refuge offers a purpose built safe haven for women and children feeling domestic violence. It is run by REFUGE, who also provides outreach services. 'Refuge Domestic Violence Service Warwickshire' is a county-wide service.
2. Refuge accommodation should only ever be emergency short term accommodation. Refuge is concerned that refuges may be understood as fulfilling the relief stage (duty) of the Homeless Reduction Act, where Councils are required to find accommodation for a minimum of six months. Refuges cannot be considered as suitable accommodation to fulfil this requirement.
3. Housing is a crucial element in ensuring the safety of women and children. More women would die if refuges weren't able to offer them accommodation. Many refuges have closed over the last few years.
4. The refuge supports women at high risk of domestic abuse but not women with additional complex needs as the support is not 24 hour; funding does not allow this or the training and provision of specialist staff. The number of referrals for women with high complex needs is increasing but they are turned away.

5. The average length of stay is increasing from 3 months to in some cases a year owing to the difficulty of securing more permanent private rented and social housing.
6. Women trying to secure private rented accommodation find that many landlords won't consider them if they are in receipt of benefits. Even when they have found a private rent tenancy they usually cannot take it up due to the high rents. The rents are often over the maximum amount of support they are entitled to (Local Housing Allowance). Women under 35 particularly struggle due to the maximum level of housing assistance they can get (from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit).
7. On the Housing Waiting List, there can be a delay from the time of being offered a property to the point of moving in. When clients are matched to properties which are in need of repair or still have tenants in, they are unable to bid on alternative properties so often have to wait months to move.
8. Rent arrears are a massive issue for women fleeing violence. Housing associations don't recognise that arrears can result from financial abuse. Some women have had problems claiming dual housing benefit which leads to housing associations considering them to be in arrears. As a result, women miss out on permanent housing.
9. The government is considering changes to the definition of financial abuse to include all economic abuse, for example the impact the abuse has on housing/ rent arrears. Refuge welcomes this.
10. Refuge also welcomes the opportunities the Homeless Reduction Act should provide for single women fleeing violence, with the new prevention and relief duties. However, there is a concern that Councils *may* seek to prevent homelessness when it is inappropriate to do so.
11. It can be hard for both staff and residents to contact other professional agencies. This can be frustrating and leads to more feelings of anxiety for residents in relation to what will happen to them.

12. Social Housing is unfurnished. The refuge encourages residents to start saving when they arrive, where they can, so they have funds for furniture when they secure housing. They also assist them to apply for grants from the Town Trust when the property is in a CV37 postcode, and they also apply to 'Turn to Us' for a grant.
13. The refuge feels it is supported by the Council.

Refuge case study - resident 1

The client was offered a housing association property two months ago but can't move into the property as it is still occupied. There is a delay with a chain of moves. The client is uncertain of timescales and is unsure why she was allocated a property that is not empty. The property is now vacant but requires repairs before she can move in which is another delay.

Refuge case study - resident 2

The client is trying to quickly get into private rented. However, she is finding it difficult to get a guarantor and provide three month's pay slips.

Refuge case study - resident 3

The client has had an issue with dual housing benefit and Universal Credit payments. The Council where she has fled from has not been paying housing benefit on the property she left. She has been advised to liaise with Universal Credit. She has an issue with her homeless application and the length of time it is taking to get priority status which means she is being overlooked for properties.

She has received a large Council tax bill and has not got the rebate she is entitled to. This will put her into arrears and will affect her housing application. She is finding that a lot of the available properties are only for people with a local connection. Clients escaping violence move to safe areas they do not know and should not be expected to have a local

connection. The client feels she is not being fairly treated and supported by the Council. She has gone through the trauma of fleeing, leaving her job and her family is scattered. She sees other clients arriving after her and being allocated housing before her and this has caused her a lot of stress.

Refuge case study - resident 4

Housing associations are arguing the client has rent arrears because the Council from the area she fled from is taking months to resolve her dual housing benefit application. As such, associations consider her to be in arrears and are bypassing her for properties. She is also being penalised for her lack of a local connection. She bid on a property where she was first but it was allocated to someone who was eighteenth. Local connection should not affect victims of domestic abuse who are in a refuge because they have had to move to a safe area away from their friends and family.

Supported accommodation hostel for single people

Charnwood House is a supported accommodation hostel for up to 11 single people who require housing and who have low to medium support needs. It is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) with a shared kitchen, lounge and dining room. Residents are supported to move-on to other accommodation.

A number of issues affect single people who become homeless.

1. The Housing Waiting List criteria make it very difficult for people. People can only join the List if they lived in the District for 2 years or have been in full time work for 6 months.
2. People struggle to move-on if they have arrears and are in the reduced banding on the Housing Waiting List.

3. Residents stay in the hostel for a long time; one had been there four years.
4. Prevention is better than cure – there is not enough early intervention to stop people becoming homeless. People aren't getting the right support at the right time in their lives. There is often a pattern of struggling with mental health issues, getting into arrears and then loss of accommodation. People need support agencies or housing officers to visit, knock on doors etc. Letters about arrears are no good.
5. There is no intervention in-between the time someone is in hospital to someone sleeping on the streets. The hostel has had people turning up in their pyjamas, sent from the hospital without warning. Better discharge arrangements need to be in place to ensure people don't end up sleeping on the streets.
6. The drugs and alcohol service used to be over the road which was useful, and residents knew where to go for their appointments. The new drugs and alcohol misuse service does not have a Stratford office and instead operate out of various agencies' offices which is confusing. A resident has been waiting over two months for an appointment.
7. New Hope Counselling accepts referrals and is a useful service. Three people have successfully moved on after having counselling and there is not a big waiting list like NHS/IAPT (Improving Access To Psychological Therapy).
8. Referral agencies don't provide enough information on the referrals and, consequently, Charnwood sometimes accommodates people who turn out to have higher support needs than it is capable of supporting. Some residents have acute mental health issues e.g. psychosis. Charnwood works with the Community Mental Health Team.
9. The hostel gets frustrated with organisations who won't divulge information due to human rights and/or data protection, despite the resident signing a form of authority. Communication between agencies

needs to be better. Signed form of authority isn't always accepted by other agencies.

10. Residents have had issues with Universal Credit and, in particular, the six weeks wait for the first payment. One resident had been told he has to have a habitual residence test for Universal Credit and is unable to apply for a short term advance, despite passing the test when he applied for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).
11. Residents are usually male, and in their late 30's or early 40's.
12. The average stay is around two years and most people are housed via the Housing Waiting List but it takes time. Some residents don't want to leave as they don't have any bills to pay (just the service charge).
13. Another frustration is the issuing of foodbank vouchers. The hostel support worker only issues vouchers if a resident has no money or food. However, when a voucher has been refused, the resident may ask another agency for a food voucher and may get it. Agencies cannot confirm to whom they issue vouchers because of data protection. Some people want food bank vouchers so that they can then spend money on other things. This issue is being fed back to the foodbank.

Supported accommodation hostel for single people case study

One elderly resident was evicted from his home of 25 years. He had mental ill health and stopped paying his rent and other bills. There was nothing in place for him to reach out to, and no one that reached out to help him, and he lost his home.

Heart of England Mencap – learning disabilities

1. Heart of England Mencap supports people with learning disabilities by offering a range of services, including supporting people within the community in their own home or one of Mencap's own specialised

housing projects (extra-care). It also provides day activities and respite.

2. Extra-care accommodation is advertised on the Housing Waiting List (Home Choice Plus). Usually a family member or social worker helps the client to complete the application. The process works well.
3. The demand for extra-care housing far outweighs the supply. The purpose built extra-care scheme for people with learning disabilities in Shipston could have been filled over and over again.
4. Mencap is able to provide support to those living in their own home. It advises clients and their families that the quickest housing option is private rented accommodation. There is a lack of suitable social housing properties, and people with learning disabilities are not considered a priority on the Housing Waiting List. As such the time to secure a suitable allocation can be lengthy.
5. Mencap works with a number of letting agents and landlords who will accept their clients and housing benefit. Landlords know that the tenant will be receiving a lot of support from the care package which in some ways reduces the risk level. However, it is increasingly difficult to find landlords that accept housing benefit. There are less 'new' landlords and a large pool of customers to choose from. People aged under 35 years also struggle due to the maximum level of housing benefit (shared room rate).
6. The majority of clients are not able to drive so housing needs to be in a central location, close to amenities with access to public transport.
7. Many people in receipt of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for a long time have now been told that they no longer qualify for PIP and must find work. Other benefits have also stopped at the same time.
8. There are no purpose built transitional properties. For a client and family considering making the step towards living in the community, there are no facilities which could offer respite to enable the client to

learn independent living skills. If this was in place, this could reduce the need for a high care package at the start of a tenancy.

9. Agencies, including the Council and hospitals, don't seem to know how to deal with people with learning difficulties.
10. Many clients who fall 'in-between' services (for example mental health or learning disabilities) slip through the net.
11. Care organisations now have to tender to be the support provider for clients.
12. Recruitment for staff is an issue throughout the sector. Wages are minimum wage, for a lot of responsibility. Stratford is a wealthy area and people can't afford to have a low paid job if they are living in Stratford. There is also a certain stigma to the job, particularly for young people.

Heart of England Mencap – autism case study

Mencap sees an increasing number of people with autism. Autism is no longer defined as a learning disability. A client with autism was evicted from a residential placement as he no longer qualified to live there. He was placed in a bed and breakfast by the Council. He had to move to a number of different bed and breakfasts during his stay, one of which was out of the area. He found the experience very upsetting, particularly as he was given no indication of how long he would be in the accommodation, and there was no set routine. Bed and breakfast can be particularly distressing for people with autism and can cause high anxiety; there is no alternative emergency accommodation.

Springfield Mind – mental ill health

1. Springfield Mind's 'Wellbeing Hubs' offer early/ low level support to people experiencing mental health issues, and support for people with on-going mental health issues. Springfield Mind in Stratford has been

running for over 30 years but opening hours have been reduced in recent years due to funding issues.

2. Springfield Mind offers one-to-one support sessions, peer led drop-ins, walk-ins and workshops. The peer led drop-in group in Stratford is one of the best attended. The drop-ins are a chance for people to chat and seek advice.
3. Most of those attending the Stratford hub are social housing tenants.
4. Two people commented that complaints about their social housing tenancies and repairs weren't being taken seriously by their landlord. Housing associations are becoming more like businesses; tenants are now called 'customers' rather than tenants. It's no longer possible to go in to see their housing association; contact has to be by phone or internet. This can be difficult for older people or less capable people if they are not confident online.
5. One older person was considering moving due to issues with the neighbour. However, she didn't know where to go for advice.
6. What older people want should be taken into account when new housing is designed. For example: easy access to shops; adaptable kitchens; good internet access.
7. The well-being charge (which residents voted for) for sheltered accommodation means the well-being staff are only there eight hours per week. Many other services have been cut as well.
8. A practitioner commented that it can be difficult for people registered or applying to join the Housing Waiting list, where they have no formal diagnosis, and therefore won't be awarded much priority (without evidence of a diagnosis). This can be particularly difficult for younger people where they may be being tested for various conditions. Cases such as these are at risk of slipping through the net. Getting a diagnosis is not always easy, but can help with housing and benefits.

9. Lots of application forms and agencies are now operating online as default; some people with mental health issues are not able to go online, or do not have access to the internet.
10. A volunteer who also works at a foodbank commented that people who are struggling are becoming more reliant on foodbanks; this includes working families. Springfield Mind also help a lot of people placed in bed and breakfast. Springfield Mind is able to issue foodbank vouchers.

Springfield Mind – mental ill health case study

One person had recently been housed after becoming homeless due to a relationship breakdown. When she became homeless she went to the CAB who referred her to the Housing Team who placed her in temporary accommodation. She had never had to apply for social housing before, and was overwhelmed. She had a very good experience with the Council, and felt they were helpful and friendly. She is now very happy in a bungalow.

2. Population

Resident population and past growth

The resident mid-year population of the District in 2017 was 125,200 people. The population of Warwickshire in 2017 was 564,600 people. In the ten years between 2007 and 2017, the population of the District increased by 5.7%.

Population Stratford-on-Avon District and Warwickshire 2007 and 2017

	Estimated mid-year 2007	Estimated mid-year 2017	% change 2007 to 2017
Stratford-on-Avon District	118,478	125,202	5.7%
Warwickshire County	534,381	564,562	5.7%

Source: [Population estimates mid-2017 - ONS \(July 2018\)](#)

In 2017 of the 125,220 people in Stratford-on-Avon District, 61,038 (49%) were males and 64,164 (51%) females.

Current population by age

Mid 2017 resident population by broad age bands in Stratford-on-Avon District, Warwickshire and England

	Stratford-on-Avon District	Warwickshire	England
Children 0 to 17 years	19% 23,523	20% 114,422	21% 11,866,957
Approx. working age 18 to 64 years	56% 69,929	60% 333,490	61% 33,721,962
Older people 65+ years	25% 31,750	21% 116,650	18% 10,030,511
Total resident population	125,202	564,562	55,619,430

Source: [Population estimates mid-2017 - ONS \(July 2018\)](#)

*Mid 2017 Stratford-on-Avon District resident
population by 5-year age bands*

	Number of residents (to nearest 100)	% of residents
0-4 years	6,093	4.9%
5-9 years	6,631	5.3%
10-14 years	6,725	5.4%
15-19 years	6,347*	5.1%
20-24 years	5,271	4.2%
25-29 years	6,247	5.0%
30-34 years	5,874	4.7%
35-39 years	6,455	5.2%
40-44 years	7,302	5.8%
45-49 years	9,250	7.4%
50-54 years	9,977	8%
55-59 years	9,233	7.4%
60-64 years	8,047	6.4%
65-69 years	8,548	6.8%
70-74 years	8,697	7%
75-79 years	5,701	4.6%
80-84 years	4,367	3.5%
Age band	2,747	2.2%
90+ years	1,690	1.4%
All ages	125,202	-

*2,756 are 16 and 17 year olds. Homeless 16 and 17 year olds are an issue.

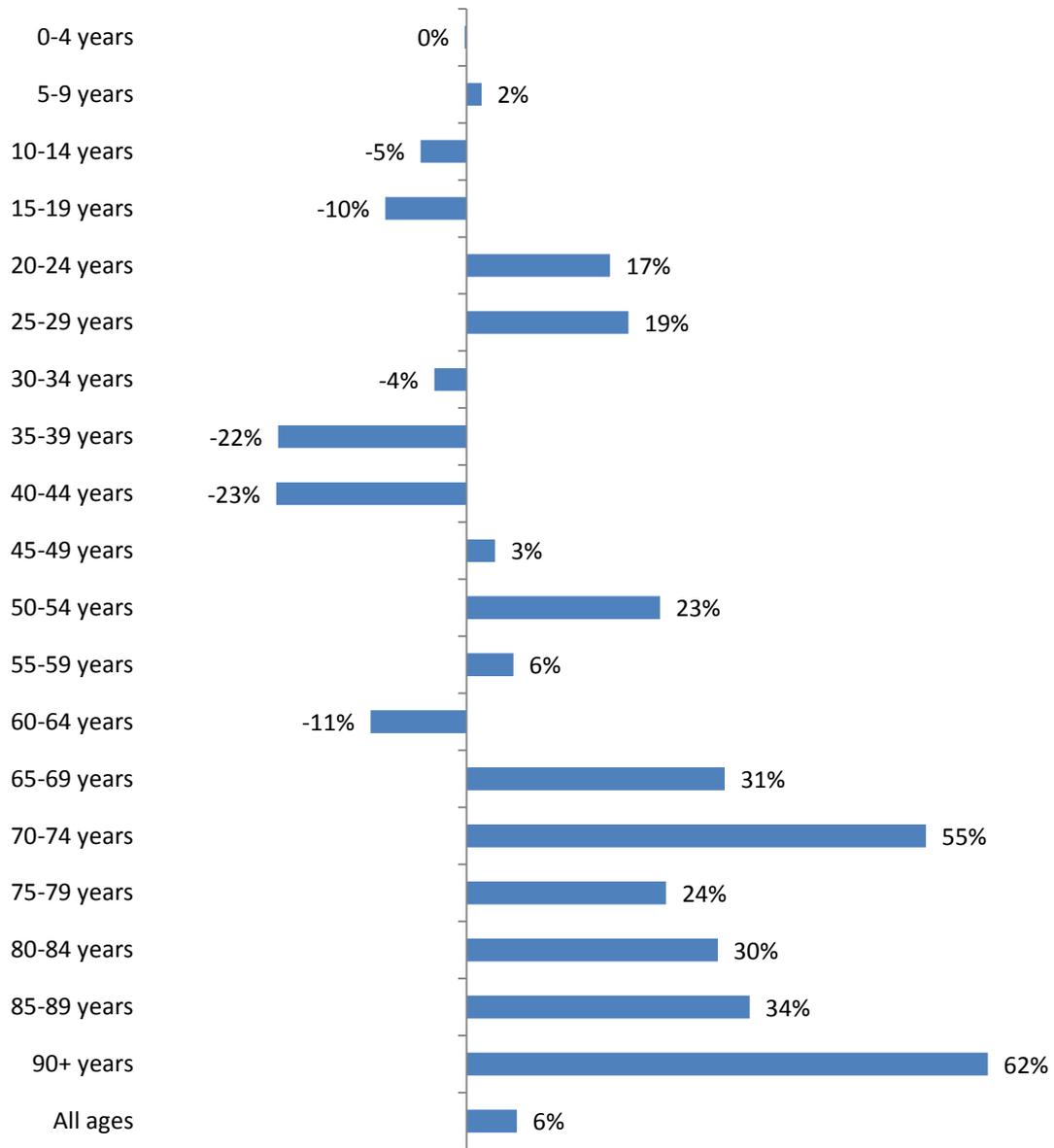
Source: [Population estimates mid-2017 - ONS \(July 2018\)](#)

Proportionately the District has fewer children and working age households, and more people aged 65+ years, than Warwickshire and England.

A quarter of the population of the District is aged 65 or over (31,750 people). This compares to 21% in Warwickshire and 18% in England.

The chart below shows how the population of the District has changed in the last ten years.

*Percentage changes to the population of Stratford-on-Avon
District by age bands between 2007 and 2017*

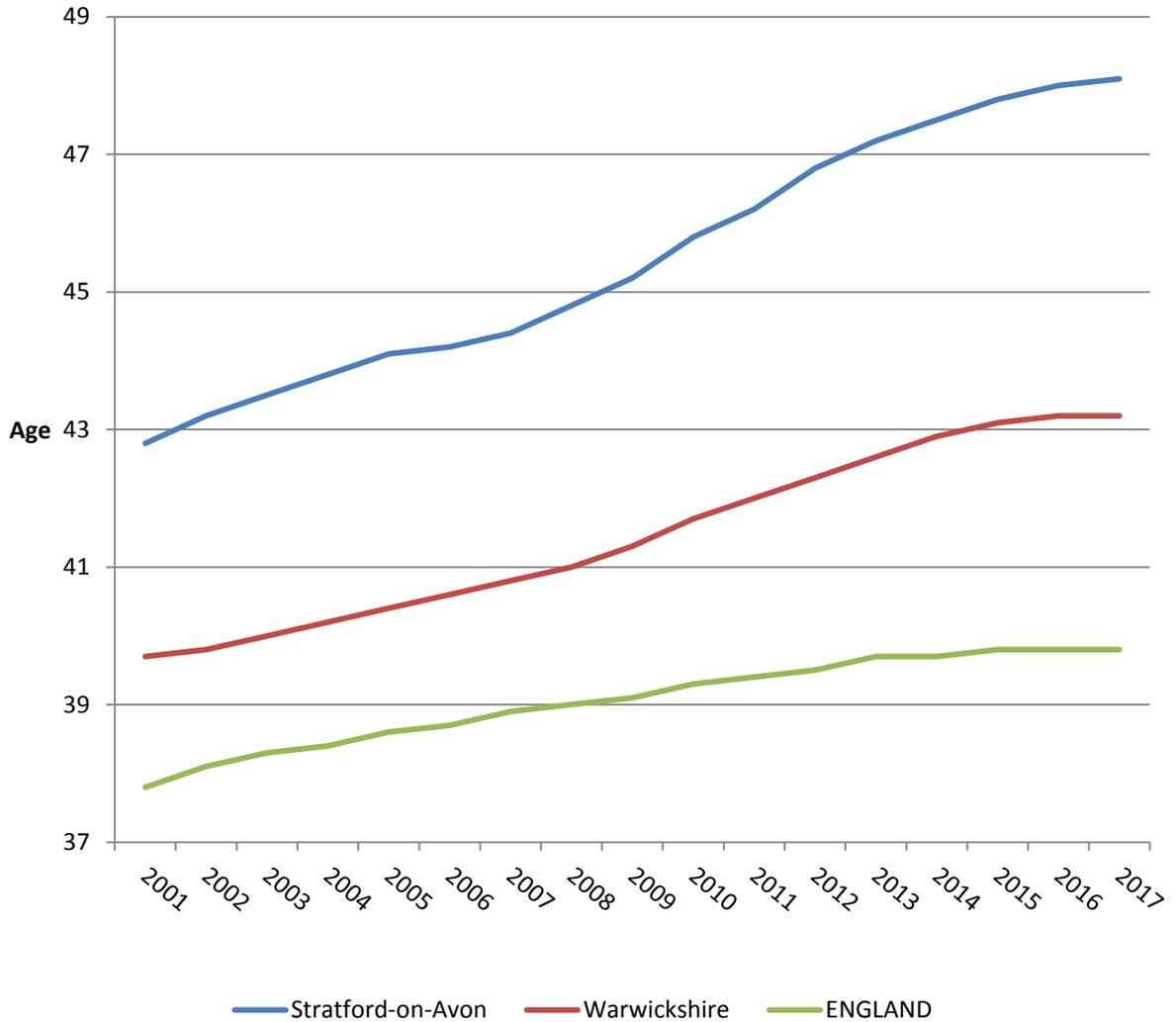


Source: data from [Mid-2001 to mid-2017 time series – ONS \(June 2018\)](#)

The fastest growing sector of the population in the District over the last ten years is older people. The number of people aged 10 to 19 years, 30 to 45 years and 60 to 64 years has decreased.

The median age of people in Stratford-on-Avon District is 48 years. This compares to a median age of 43 years in Warwickshire and 40 years in England.

*Median age of population in Stratford-on-Avon District,
Warwickshire and England mid-2001 to mid-2017*



Source: [Population estimates mid-2017 - table MYE6, ONS \(June 2018\)](#)

Population change – past growth in Stratford-on-Avon District

Population change happens because of natural change – the difference between births and deaths, and net internal and international migration.

<i>Population increase mid-2016 to mid-2017</i>	<i>1.5%</i>
• Natural change (births minus deaths)	- 0.2%
• Net internal migration	1.4%
• Net international migration	0.3%

Source: [Population estimates mid-2017 statistical fig 3 ONS \(June 2018\)](#)

Deaths exceed births in the District. Population growth is due to the growth in internal migration and to a much lesser extent international migration.

Summary components of population change in Stratford-on-Avon District

	mid-2011	mid-2012	mid-2013	mid-2014	mid-2015	mid-2016	mid-2017
Population	120,824	120,794	121,253	121,779	122,438	123,345	125,202
Births	1,102	1,149	1,019	1,075	1,105	1,149	
Deaths	1,128	1,228	1,242	1,421	1,314	1,390	
Natural Change	-26	-79	-223	-346	-209	-241	
<i>Internal In</i>	5,873	5,878	6,276	6,399	6,470	8,355	
<i>Internal Out</i>	6,117	5,562	5,889	5,755	5,797	6,630	
Internal Net	-244	316	387	644	673	1,725	
<i>International In</i>	714	583	713	755	775	687	
<i>International Out</i>	500	392	376	381	370	307	
International Net	214	191	337	374	405	380	
Special	24	27	26	-13	32	-6	
Other	2	4	-1	0	6	-1	

Source: [Analysis of population estimates tool 2017 – ONS \(June 2018\)](#)

Resident population – future growth

By 2041, there will be 131,600 people in the District – a 7% increase. In comparison, the population of Warwickshire is projected to grow by 10% and that of England by 12% by 2041.

Change in population mid-2016 to mid-2041

	2016	2041	Change	% change
North Warwickshire	63,200	67,800	4,600	7%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	127,700	140,800	13,100	10%
Rugby	105,300	120,300	15,000	14%
Stratford-on-Avon	123,300	131,600	8,300	7%
Warwick	139,500	151,700	12,200	9%
Warwickshire	559,000	612,000	53,000	10%
West Midlands	5,810,800	6,494,000	683,200	12%
England	55,268,100	61,952,100	6,684,000	12%

Source: [Population projections local authorities Table 2 ONS \(Oct 2017\)](#)

Percentage change in population 2016 to 2041 by broad age bands

2041	Stratford-on-Avon District	Warwickshire	England
Children 0 to 17 years	-1%	4%	4%
Approx. working age 18 to 64 years	-7%	0%	3%
Older people 65+ years	42%	43%	52%
Total resident population	7%	10%	12%

Source: [Subnational population projections 2016 ONS \(May 2018\)](#)

*Percentage change in population in 25 years between 2016 and 2041
by five year age bands*

Age band	Stratford-on-Avon District	Warwickshire	England
0-4 years	-5%	0%	-1%
5-9 years	-5%	-2%	-2%
10-14 years	2%	10%	11%
15-19 years	-2%	4%	11%
20-24 years	-12%	2%	4%
25-29 years	-2%	5%	3%
30-34 years	9%	11%	4%
35-39 years	0%	2%	-2%
40-44 years	-9%	-2%	0%
45-49 years	-14%	-6%	-3%
50-54 years	-15%	-8%	-1%
55-59 years	-8%	-1%	9%
60-64 years	1%	5%	17%
65-69 years	-6%	-1%	9%
70-74 years	19%	24%	44%
75-79 years	61%	64%	75%
80-84 years	74%	73%	75%
85-89 years	93%	84%	83%
90+ years	194%	168%	150%
All ages	7%	10%	12%

Source: [Subnational population projections 2016 ONS \(May 2018\)](#)

The population of the District aged 90 years or over will increase by almost 200% in the next 25 years.

Of equal significance is the fall in the number of people in the District under pensionable age.

Ethnicity

The 2011 Census is still the best source of information about ethnicity. Of the District population:

- 97.4% of the resident population is White and 2.6% is non-White.
- 94% of the resident population is White: British.

	Population	%
White	117,307	97.4%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	112,780	93.6%
Irish	890	0.7%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	173	0.1%
Other White	3,464	2.9%
Mixed multiple ethnic group	1,258	1.0%
White and Black Caribbean	417	0.3%
White and Black African	106	0.1%
White and Asian	448	0.4%
Other Mixed	287	0.2%
Asian/Asian British	1,466	1.2%
Indian	564	0.5%
Pakistani	74	0.1%
Bangladeshi	13	0%
Chinese	391	0.3%
Other Asian	424	0.4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	264	0.2%
African	112	0.1%
Caribbean	115	0.1%
Other Black	37	0%
Other ethnic group	190	0.2%
Arab	51	0%
Any other ethnic group	139	0.1%
Total population	120,485	100%

Source: [2011 Census: Key Statistics for Local Authorities ONS KS201EW](#)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published 2017 population data about people's [Country of birth and nationality including underlying datasets \(May 2018\)](#)

The 2017 data is limited at district level but ONS estimates that of the 121,000 residents in the District, 115,000 are British nationals and 6,000 are non-British nationals.

Of these 6,000 non-British nationals, approximately

- 3,000 people are from the European Union

Two-thirds (2,000 people) are from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Detailed ONS datasets suggest that these 2,000 people are mainly from Poland.

- 2,000 are from other European countries
- 1,000 are from Asia.
- There are many other nationalities but the numbers are small.

3. Households and economic activity

Number of households

The [ONS estimates that in 2016](#) there were 47,100 households in Stratford-on-Avon District. The ONS has confirmed that this figure is correct even though it is lower than the 2011 Census estimate of 51,900 households and the ONS estimate of 51,600 households in 2015.

People claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit

The number of people aged 16 to 64 years claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (UC) can be used as a proxy measure for unemployment. Job Seeker's Allowance is payable to people under pensionable age who are actively seeking full time work; it will be phased out over the next few years as Universal Credit continues to be rolled out. While this happens, the number of people recorded as unemployed ('claimant counts') is likely to increase as more people are required to look for work under Universal Credit.

Job Seekers Allowance claimants and some Universal Credit claimants in Stratford-on-Avon District June 2018

	Men	Women	Total	% of population
Stratford-on-Avon District	410	375	785	1.1%
Warwickshire	3,332	2,395	5,715	1.7%
England	444,935	291,585	736,520	2.1%

Source: Claimant Count - Jobcentre Plus administrative system/ONS

Employment

The 'employment profile' of the District can be illustrated by the number of jobs in each sector.

The figures in the following tables are 'employee jobs' and therefore underestimate the number of jobs because they exclude self-employment; government supported trainees; HM Forces and farm-based agriculture.

Employee jobs in Stratford-on-Avon District and Great Britain 2016

Total employee jobs	Stratford-on-Avon District Number of jobs	Stratford-on-Avon District % of all jobs	Great Britain % of all jobs
Full-time	44,000	66.7%	67.8%
Part-time	21,000	31.8%	32.2%
Total number	66,000	100%	100%
Services	50,770	77.00%	86.9%
Manufacturing	12,000	18.2%	8.10%
Construction	3,000	4.5%	4.6%
Energy and water	230	0.3%	0.11%
Mining & Quarrying	0	0%	0.2%

Source: [ONS National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey](#) or [Nomis - official labour market statistics](#)

Breakdown of District employee jobs in the services' sector 2016

Employee jobs	% of jobs
Wholesale and retail including motor trades	21%
Transport storage	2%
Accommodation and food services	13%
Information and communication	4%
Finance, insurance real estate professional, scientific, technical, admin. & support services	27%
Public administration, education, health and social work	25%
Other services (including arts and recreation)	8%
Total services	100%

Source: [ONS National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey](#) or [Nomis - official labour market statistics](#)

Compared with the national jobs profile, the District has proportionately more jobs in manufacturing.

Within the District services sector, the majority of jobs are in the “finance, insurance real estate professional, scientific, technical, admin. & support services”. Other services’ sector jobs which employ many people are “public administration, education, health and social work” and “wholesale and retail trade including motor trades”.

Tourism related jobs are an important part of the District services sector. According to the 2016 Tourism Economic Impact Assessment, there are 7,382 tourism related jobs in the District, which equates to nearly 13% of all employment.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is a non-constituent member of the [West Midlands Combined Authority](#), which is made up of 18 local authorities and 4 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP’s). The aim of the partnership is to deliver on a range of projects to achieve its vision (through devolved powers); a more prosperous West Midlands. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out the Combined Authority’s 30 year investment programme.

The [Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership](#) (CWLEP) is made up of both private and public sector organisations with the aim of growing the local economy, attracting new jobs and investment, and increasing prosperity. Projects include: A46 corridor improvement; CSW broadband and Venture House (Stratford town). CWLEP has identified the need for 75,000 new homes and 714 hectares of employment land by 2030.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is in the process of producing an Industrial and Economic Strategy.

See section 5 for information on employee and household income.

4. Tenure

Recent estimates of tenure

The Government estimates that in April 2017 of the 58,620 dwellings in the District, 13% were affordable housing and 87% were private sector housing. The percentage of affordable housing in the District is lower than in Warwickshire (14%) and the West Midlands (23%).

The table below shows the number of dwellings in the District, Warwickshire and West Midlands.

Number of dwellings by tenure April 2017

Authority	Owned by local authority	Housing association	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
Stratford-on-Avon	0	7,320	120	51,180	58,620
Warwickshire	17,820	16,720	120	216,810	251,470
West Midlands	146,200	119,790	1,220	890,300	1,157,500

Source: [MHCLG Table 100 - Dwelling stock](#)

It is difficult to get a breakdown of owner occupied and private rented dwellings. Change between the two tenures can happen relatively quickly as individual owners respond to changing economic factors. The Office of National Statistics ([unofficial tenure statistics December 2017](#)) estimates that in 2015, 73% of dwellings in the District were owner occupied and 14% were private rented i.e. a total of 87% private sector housing. Data held by the District Council shows that rented affordable homes accounted for the remaining 13% of dwellings.

2011 Census and tenure

The 2011 Census still provides the best detailed information about tenure.

Percentage of households by tenure ([Census 2011](#))

	District	Warwickshire	England
Social rented (housing association or Council)	12.9%	13.8%	17.7%
Privately owned	87.1%	86.2%	82.2%
Owner occupied	72.9%	70.9%	64.1%
owned outright	(39.1%)	(34.5%)	(30.6%)
owned with a mortgage or loan	(32.7%)	(35.5%)	(32.8%)
shared ownership	(1.1%)	(0.8%)	(0.8%)
Privately rented	12.7%	14.1%	16.8%
from private landlord or letting agency	(11.3%)	(12.8%)	(15.4%)
from household member, employer, relative or friend	(1.4%)	(1.3%)	(1.4%)
Living rent free	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%

Of particular note is the high percentage of homes in the District that are owned outright with no mortgage which is linked to the older population. The proportion of shared ownership homes in the District is higher than in Warwickshire and England.

5. Cost of buying or renting a home

People's incomes determine the type and size of housing that they can afford. The poor affordability of housing for people on middle and low incomes in Stratford-on-Avon District is a continuing cause for concern. High house prices and high private rents make it difficult for many households to access market housing.

Employee income

ASHE i.e. the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings is the most comprehensive source of information about incomes. In 2017, the District median gross annual income per employee was £25,350.

- Of all employees in the District, 20% earned less than £11,700; this is lower than the bottom 20% of people in England who earned £12,180.
- The median gender pay gap in the District is 25.5% i.e. how much more men earn than women.

*Annual summary of earnings: gross annual pay April 2017
by place of residence (full time and part time employees)*

	Stratford-on-Avon District	England
20th percentile	£11,697	£12,180
25th percentile	£14,806	£14,533
30th percentile	£16,879	£16,355
40th percentile	£21,780	£19,954
60th percentile	£29,911	£28,028
70th percentile	£35,911	£33,243
Mean	£32,519	£29,578
Median	£25,347	£23,743
Percentiles mark the values below which a proportion of jobs fall.		

Sources: [ASHE -Annual survey of hours and earnings table 8 or Annual summary of earnings, place of residence by Local Authority - ONS \(Oct 2017\)](#)

Household income

Accurate up to date information about District household incomes is difficult to obtain.

The Office for National Statistics has divided the District into fifteen areas by population and has published the mean household income for these areas (which are broader than just the names suggest). Mean household range from £36,700 in *Alcester Town* to £48,600 in *Tanworth in Arden*.

Total mean annual household income by middle layer super output areas (MSOA) in Stratford-on-Avon District for financial year ending 2016

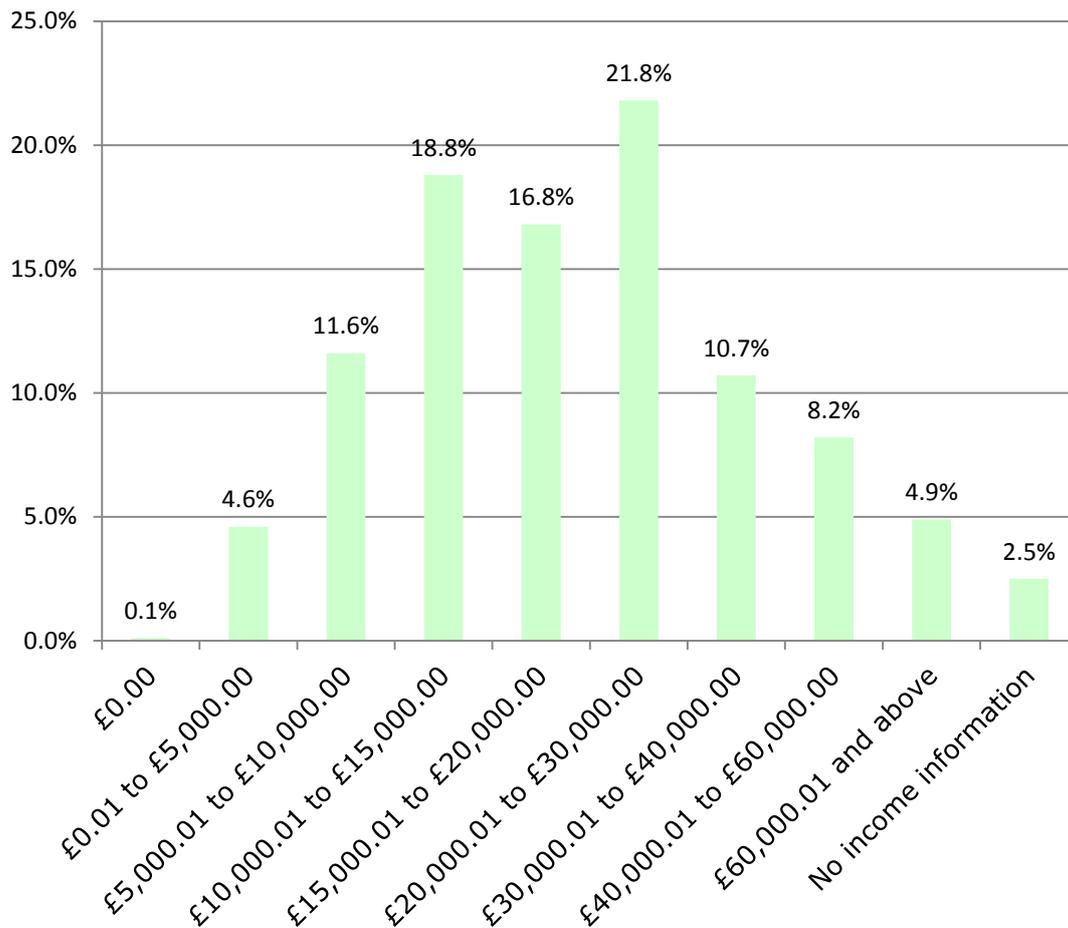
MSOA	Mean household income
Tanworth-in-Arden	£48,600
Henley-in-Arden	£42,700
Studley with Sambourne	£38,700
Alcester Town	£36,700
Kinwarton	£42,900
Bidford East	£44,300
Southam North	£44,000
Harbury	£43,900
Kineton	£44,400
Wellesbourne East	£46,000
Avenue	£41,100
Tiddington	£43,100
Shottery	£40,400
Quinton	£45,900
Shipston South	£38,900

Source: [Small area income estimates for middle layer super output areas, England and Wales – ONS \(April 2018\)](#)

Mean households incomes are not necessarily representative of the majority of households as the incomes can be skewed by a few high earners or, possibly, low earners.

Information about the percentage of households in each income band is available from [The Income Research Outputs](#): Administrative data based research on PAYE and benefits equivalised household income distributions for local authorities in tax year ending 2016. These Research Outputs on income are not official statistics.

Percentage of households in the District by income band in 2016



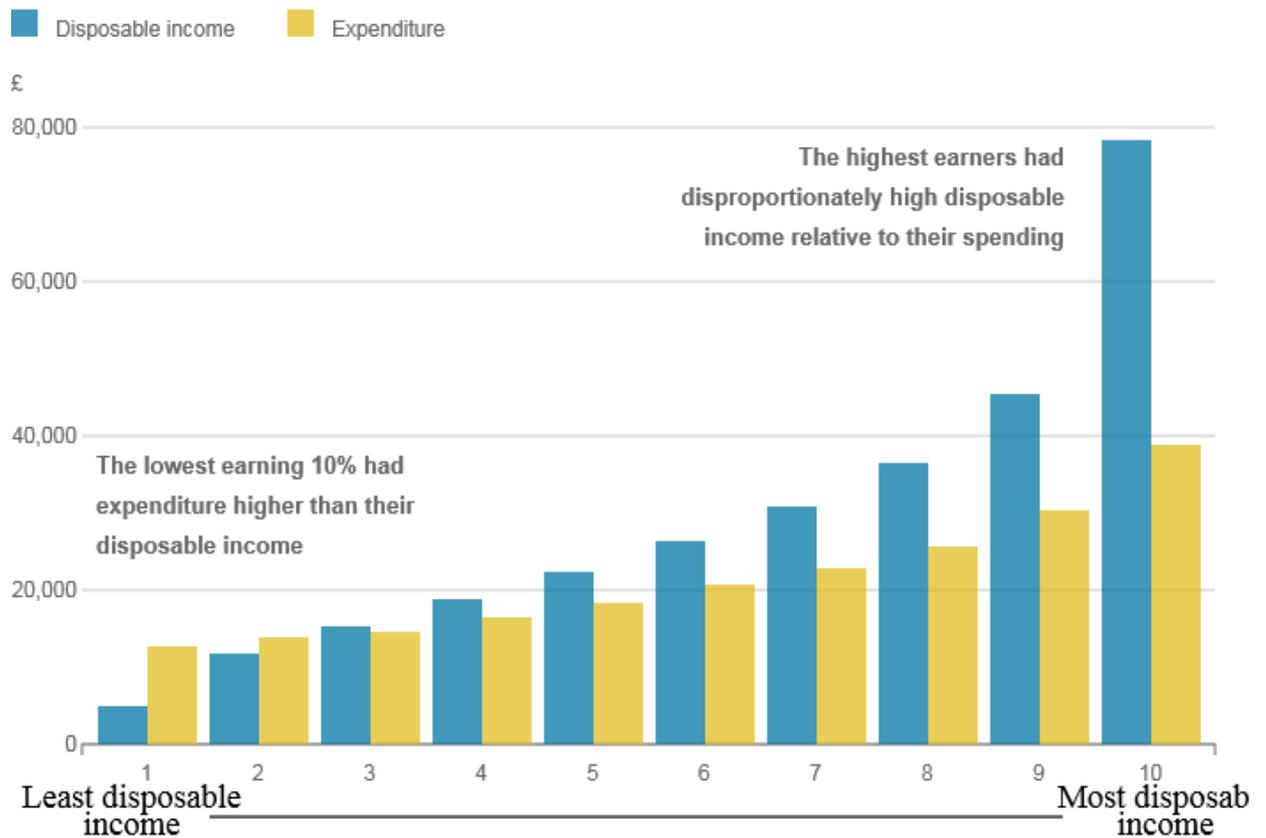
Over half of households (52%) in Stratford-on-Avon District had an annual income of £20,000 or less in the tax year ending 2016.

The Office for National Statistics' report [Making ends meet: are households living beyond their means? \(July 2018\)](#) states that UK households are net borrowers for the first time since 1988. Householders are borrowing money or using their savings to make ends meet.

In the year ending April 2017

- The poorest 10% of households spent two-and-a-half times their disposable income, on average.
- The richest 10% of households spent less than half of their available income during the same period.

*Income and expenditure per household in the UK,
financial year ending 2017*



Source: Office for National Statistics

House Prices

Research conducted for the Stratford-on-Avon Economic Assessment 2017 found that Stratford District is one of the most unaffordable places to live outside of London. The report states that higher house prices also lead to fewer 18-34 year old residents.

*Average house prices in different settlements in the
12 months up to July 2018*

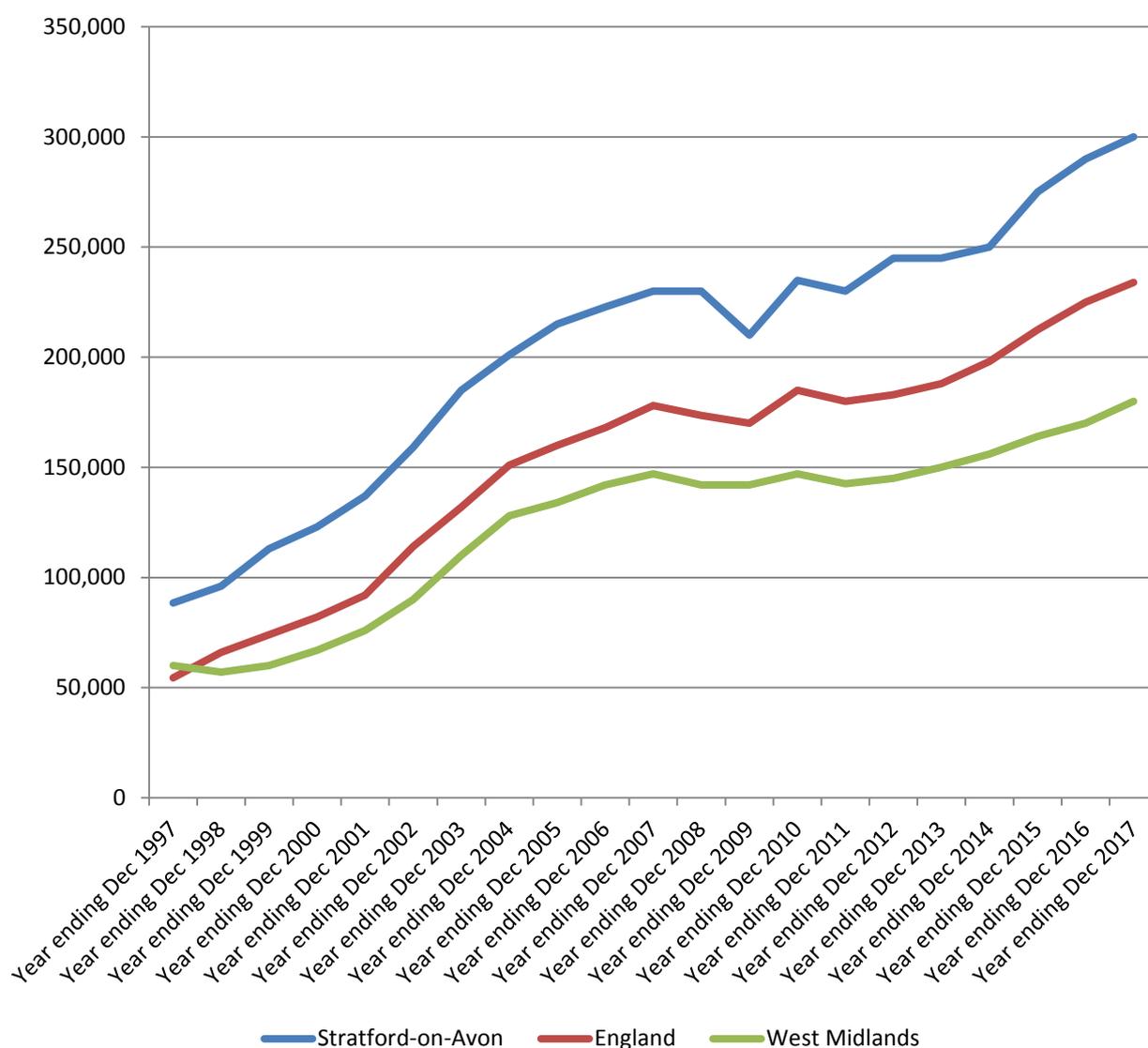
Settlement	Average price paid in year ending July 2018
Alcester	£294,781
Henley-in-Arden	£439,540
Shipston-on-Stour	£384,524
Southam	£306,494
Stratford town	£378,867
Studley	£280,808

Source: [Zoopla August 2018](#)

In broad-brush terms, house prices are lower in Studley and Alcester than in the central area around Stratford town, Henley and Shipston. Prices in the east, for example around Southam, are in between those in the west and central areas.

[Stratford-on-Avon District has the highest median house price in the West Midlands](#). In the year ending December 2017, the median house price in the District was £300,000. This compares to £240,000 in Warwickshire, £180,000 in the West Midlands and £234,000 in England.

Median house prices 1998 to 2017



Source: [Median house prices for administrative geographies: HPSSA dataset 9 – ONS \(June 2018\)](#)

The District lower quartile house price of £260,000 in the year ending December 2017 is also the highest in the West Midlands as is the mean house price of £357,800. The cheapest 10% of homes in the District cost £171,500.

The District ratio of median house prices to incomes was 9.4 in September 2017 (most recent figure available). In the same period, the District ratio of lower quartile house prices to income was 9.6.

The affordability of housing in the District, Warwickshire, West Midlands and England is compared in the table below.

Affordability of housing in Stratford-on-Avon District, Warwickshire, West Midlands and England

	District	Warwickshire	West Midlands	England	% difference between District & England
Year ending December 2017					
Median house price	£300,000	£240,000	£180,000	£234,000	28%
Lower quartile house price	£260,000	£249,950	£179,950	£199,995	30%
Tenth percentile house price	£171,500	£128,000	£100,000	£105,000	63%
Mean house prices	£357,804	£281,961	£216,589	£299,037	20%
Year ending September 2017					
Ratio of median house prices to residence based earnings	9.35	7.73	6.59	7.91	18%
Ratio of lower quartile house prices to residence based earnings	9.59	7.62	6.65	7.26	32%

Sources: All ONS: [HPSSA dataset 10](#) [HPPSA dataset 15](#) [HPSSA dataset 18](#) [HPSSA dataset 12](#) [House price to residence-based earnings ratio](#)

The [National Housing Federation](#) has calculated that in 2017 households in the District required an income of £75,541 to obtain an 80% mortgage at 3.5 times their annual salary.

It is useful to compare residence base to workplace earnings. Residence based earnings are what people who live in the District earn. Workplace earnings are the earnings of people who work in the District but who may live elsewhere.

*Ratio of District house prices to residence and
workplace earnings in September 2017*

	Median	Lower quartile
Ratio of house prices to residence based earnings	9.35	9.59
Ratio of house prices to workplace based earnings	9.26	9.99

Sources: ONS [House price to residence-based earnings ratio](#)
[House price to workplace-based earnings ratio](#)

Both people who live in the District and people who work in the District struggle to afford home ownership. For people living in the District in 2017, the lower quartile ratio house prices to earnings was 9.6; the ratio for people working in the District was 10.0.

Cost of District 'entry level' housing – the cheapest housing

Government guidance recommends that lower quartile house prices should be taken as a proxy for indicating entry-level property prices. This is the housing many first-time buyers typically aspire to own.

Entry-level homes at £260,000 remain generally out of reach of aspiring first time buyers. [The lower quartile ratio of house prices to incomes is 9.6.](#) The 2017 District lower quartile price of £260,000 means that households putting down a 10% deposit of £26,000 require a mortgage for 90% of the value of the property i.e. £234,000.

Government schemes such as *Help to Buy* make owner occupation more affordable. People can buy homes worth up to £600,000 with a minimum 5% deposit and a 75% mortgage. The remaining 20% is a Government equity loan that is interest free for the first five years. However, the homes are still expensive and many households fail the stringent affordability checks lenders apply to households requesting mortgages.

Shared ownership

Shared ownership is a type of affordable housing where buyers' part-buy and part rent properties. The rent on the unsold equity is paid to a housing association. Buyers can buy a greater share of the property over time. Like other owners, shared owners are responsible for the upkeep of their properties.

Shared ownership is a way of getting on the property ladder but it is not a cheap option in this District because house prices are high. Therefore, it is important that associations offer the homes for sale at a minimum share of 25% to 40% or the rents are capped. Shared ownership gives households some savings in the form of equity in their properties – even if they will never be able afford to buy the properties outright. Deposits and mortgages for shared ownership homes are obviously smaller than for open market properties. [Locally, the cost of shared ownership compares favourably with the cost of renting privately.](#) Unlike private renting, shared ownership also offers security of tenure.

The cost of shared ownership, like that of outright market housing, varies considerably across the District according to location, property type and size, and on how the building of the homes is funded. The minimum share of the property for sale and the rent charged on the unsold equity also vary. Owing to high property prices, minimum shares commonly range from 25% to 40%.

The affordability of shared ownership is best illustrated by looking at some properties built in 2014. This is old data but still useful. Local Independent Financial Advisors with expertise in shared ownership mortgages supplied figures for three year fixed interest rates for 25-year repayment mortgages. The interest rates quoted (March 2014) were not the lowest but were widely available. One and two year fixed rate mortgages are much cheaper and varied rate mortgages are much lower. Costs go down markedly with larger deposits. Information about rents, which include any service charges etc., came from housing associations.

Total cost to households of 3 year fixed rate mortgage and rent per calendar month for new build shared ownership properties in 2014

	Total cost per calendar month		
	5% mortgage interest + rent (5% deposit)	4.6% mortgage interest + rent (10% deposit)	3.2% mortgage interest + rent (20% deposit)
Alcester 2 bed house Full market value £179,500 Sale of 45% = £80,775 Rent = £265 pcm	£714 (£4,039 deposit)	£674 (£8,078 deposit)	£579 (£16,155 deposit)
Bidford 2 bed house Full market value £180,000 Sale of 40% = £72,000 Rent = £290 pcm	£690 (£3,600 deposit)	£654 (£7,200 deposit)	£569 (£14,400 deposit)
Ettington 3 bed house Full market value £270,000 Sale of 40% = £108,000 Rent = £407 pcm	£1,007 (£5,400 deposit)	£953 (£10,800 deposit)	£826 (£21,600 deposit)
Ilmington 2 bed house Full market value £185,000 Sale of 50% = £92,500 Rent = £173 pcm	£687 (£4,625 deposit)	£640 (£9,250 deposit)	£532 (£18,500 deposit)
Ilmington 3 bed house Full market value £225,000 Sale of 50% = £112,500 Rent = £173 pcm	£798 (£5,625 deposit)	£740 (£11,250 deposit)	£609 (£22,500 deposit)
Meon Vale 2 bed flat Full market value £158,750 Sale of 40% = £63,500 Rent = £234 pcm	£587 (£3,175 deposit)	£555 (£6,350 deposit)	£480 (£12,700 deposit)
Meon Vale 2 bed maisonette Full market value £143,000 Sale of 40% = £57,200 Rent = £241 pcm	£559 (£2,860 deposit)	£530 (£5,720 deposit)	£463 (£11,400 deposit)
Meon Vale 3 bed house Full market value £255,000 Sale of 40% = £102,000 Rent = £369 pcm	£935 (£5,100 deposit)	£884 (£10,200 deposit)	£765 (£20,400 deposit)

	Total cost per calendar month		
	5% mortgage interest + rent (5% deposit)	4.6% mortgage interest + rent (10% deposit)	3.2% mortgage interest + rent (20% deposit)
Shipston 2 bed house Full market value £228,000 Sale of 25% = £57,000 Rent = £435 pcm	£752 (£2,850 deposit)	£724 (£5,700 deposit)	£657 (£11,400 deposit)
Snitterfield 2 bed house Full market value £185,000 Sale of 50% = £92,500 Rent = £46 pcm	£560 (£4,625 deposit)	£514 (£9,250 deposit)	£405 (£18,500 deposit)
Stratford 3 bed house Full market value £275,000 Sale of 40% = £110,000 Rent = £386 pcm	£997 (£5,500 deposit)	£942 (£11,000 deposit)	£813 (£22,000 deposit)
Stratford 3 bed house Full market value £240,000 Sale of 25% = £70,000 Rent = £519 pcm	£908 (£3,500 deposit)	£873 (£7,000 deposit)	£790 (£14,000 deposit)
Stratford 3 bed house Full market value £195,000 Sale of 45% = £87,750 Rent = £285 pcm	£774 (£4,388 deposit)	£711 (£8,775 deposit)	£629 (£17,550 deposit)

Demand for shared ownership varies considerably across the District. Anecdotally, housing associations say that many people refused Help to Buy 20% equity loans on affordability grounds go on to purchase shared ownership properties.

Shared ownership houses are far more popular than flats with buyers. In addition, it is far easier to obtain a mortgage for a house than a flat.

The cost of a privately rented home

As well as having the highest house prices in the West Midlands, [the District also has the highest lower quartile private rents in the West Midlands.](#)

In the year up to 31 March 2018, the lower quartile District rent was £675 per calendar month or £8,100 per year ([Valuation Office Agency's analysis of 1,130 properties](#)).

The Valuation Office Agency's statistics are useful but there are some concerns about them. For example, the Agency states that fewer than ten rooms in the District are let each year, which is clearly not the case.

Therefore, the District Council undertakes regular research to provide detailed information about the local private rented market. The most recent research is a [District wide snapshot survey](#) of private rented properties in January 2018.

The survey recorded the advertised rents of 350 properties in Stratford-on-Avon District over a two-week period in January 2018. About 5% of the properties, i.e. 18 properties that had rents over £2,000 per calendar month, were excluded from the final analysis, which focused on the remaining 332 properties.

The [headline survey results](#) are summarised in the green box below.

Headline 2018 private rented survey results

1 Private rented accommodation in Stratford-on-Avon District is expensive.

- The District median private sector rent in January 2018 for a 2-bed property is £750 per calendar month (£9,000 per annum).
- The District lower quartile private sector rent in January 2018 for a 2-bed property is £718 per calendar month (£8,616 per annum).
- 6% of properties are affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (compared to 11% in 2013).

2 Median rents for most property types have increased since 2013.

- The district median rent for a 1-bed property is £625 per calendar month (£7,500 per annum). This compares to £585 per calendar month in 2013.

3 Shared rooms and one-bed properties are particularly expensive, and demand is increasing due to welfare changes.

- 5% of shared rooms and 1-bed properties in the District are affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

4 Rents are higher in Stratford town than in most of the District.

- The median rent for a 2-bed property in Stratford town in January 2018 is £775 per calendar month (£9,300 per annum).
- 5% of properties are affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

5 The West of the District is the least affordable area of District for households in receipt of housing benefit or Universal Credit.

- The median rent for a 2-bed property in Alcester and Studley is £695 per calendar month. The rent considered affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is £511 per calendar month.

Three tables provide more detailed information.

Table 1 shows the median, lower quartile and average (mean) private rents of different sized properties. The data is split into district figures that include Stratford town and separate figures for Stratford town only. Separate figures are set out for Stratford town owing to the large number of private rented properties in the town and because the rents charged are generally higher than in many areas of the District.

Table 1: Median, lower quartile and mean private rents by property size in Stratford-on-Avon District

Notes								
1) The District figures (i.e. 332 properties) include Stratford town.								
2) The Stratford town figures (i.e. 153 properties) refer just to the town.								
3) One beds include self-contained bedsits i.e. bedsits with their own bathroom, toilet and proper cooking facilities.								
4) * Sample size ten properties or fewer.								
	Area	Room in shared property	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5+ bed	All properties
Number of properties	District	56	56	111	71	35	3	332
	Stratford town	27	27	60	26	13	0	153
Median rent per calendar month	District	£463	£625	£750	£975	£1,400	*	775
	Stratford town	£498	£650	£775	£1,048	£1,250	*	750
Lowest quartile rent (cheapest 25%) per calendar month	District	£400	£575	£718	£875	£1,173	*	600
	Stratford town	£410	£623	£750	£956	£1,150	*	628
Average (Mean) rent per calendar month	District	£459	£632	£791	£1,008	£1,397	*	825
	Stratford town	£481	£659	£799	£1,075	£1,356	*	813

Table 2 summarises the number of properties in the District that are affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. People are entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit when they are considered to be on a low income – this includes working households. One of the factors in deciding the maximum amount of assistance people can get is the area where a property is located. **Only 6% of properties are affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.**

Table 2: Number of properties affordable to households in receipt of Housing benefit or Universal Credit (January 2018)

<i>Notes</i>								
1) Local Housing Allowance rates dictate how much assistance people get from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for help to pay their rent.								
2) The maximum amount of help people get depends on what area of the district they live in.								
3) The District figures include Stratford town. The Stratford town figures refer just to the town.								
4) About 6% of properties in the district are affordable to people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (compared to 11% in 2013).								
	Area	Room in shared property	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5+ bed	All properties
Number of properties affordable to people on Housing Benefit or Universal Credit	District	3	3	7	3	5	0	21
	Stratford town	0	2	3	0	2	0	7

Table 3 documents the Valuation Office’s Private Rental Market analysis from 1st October 2016 to 30th September 2017. It provides a useful comparison with the Council data, and includes lower quartile, median and average rents.

Table 3: Comparing Valuation Office Agency's [Private Rental Market Stats.](#)
for the year ending March 2018 to the January 2018 survey

<i>Notes</i>				
1) The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) publishes private rental market statistics for each local authority on a rolling basis for the previous 12 months.				
2) The VOA sample did not include rooms to rent, whereas the analysis by Stratford-on-Avon District Council included 56 rooms. This may explain the higher VOA 'lower quartile' figure, in particular, compared to the District Council analysis.				
Stratford-on-Avon District	Count of rents	Lower quartile	Median	Average (mean)
Valuation Office Agency	1,130	£675	£765	£855
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	332	£600	£775	£825

In terms of measuring the affordability of private rented housing, a household is considered to be able to afford market renting where the rent payable is no more than 25% of their gross household income.

In this District, median rents are a more useful measure than lower quartile rents to work out how much income a household needs to rent privately. This is because lower quartile rents are concentrated in only a few areas of the District and largely exclude Stratford town with its big but expensive private rented market.

Households require an annual income of £30,000 or more to afford to privately rent a one-bed property and £36,000 to rent a two-bed property in the District. Higher household incomes are required to rent in Stratford town.

About 60% of the people who work and live in this District earn less than £30,000 per annum. About half of all households earn £20,000 or less per annum.

*Gross annual household income required to rent privately in the District
January 2018*

	District including Stratford town			Stratford town only		
	Median rent pcm	Median annual rent	Annual income required	Median rent pcm	Median annual rent	Annual income required
Room	£463	£5,556	£22,224	£498	£5,976	£23,904
1 bed/bedsit	£625	£7,500	£30,000	£650	£7,800	£31,200
2 bed	£750	£9,000	£36,000	£775	£9,300	£37,200
3 bed	£975	£11,700	£46,800	£1,048	£12,576	£50,304
4 bed	£1,400	£16,800	£67,200	£1,250	£15,000	£60,000

Private renting is expensive but it is more affordable than owner occupation (of an equivalent home). However, many households in work and households in receipt of housing benefit cannot afford to rent privately because their incomes are too low to afford the high rents.

It is estimated that a third of people born after 1980 will never own their own home. The [Resolution Foundation's home improvements report](#) states that on current trends up to half of all households could be renting into their 40s and a third by the time they are pensionable age.

Older people and private rented accommodation

[Independent Age](#) is one of many organisations that have highlighted the issue of the increasing and growing number of older people in private rented accommodation. Difficulties older people face in private rented accommodation include affordability, poor housing (and related health issues) and landlords unwilling to allow adaptations. Unlike owner-occupiers, private renters cannot use equity in their homes to fund care costs

There were 234 older people households living in private rented accommodation on the Council's Housing Waiting List in May 2018.

Housing association rents

Social rents

Social rents are significantly lower than private sector rents. They are typically 50% to 60% of market rents. [As at 31st March 2017, housing association social rents in Stratford-on-Avon District were on average £458 per calendar month or £5,496 a year \(MHCLG table 704: figures are for general needs housing and for housing associations managing or owning at least 1,000 homes\).](#)

Affordable rents

[The affordability of affordable rents set at up to 80% of local private sector rents is a concern because the rents are unaffordable for many people.](#) Some working households who do not qualify for help with their rent are turning down offers of tenancies at affordable rents on affordability grounds.

Since 2011, and until very recently, affordable rents have been mandatory on all schemes built with the help of Government grant funding. This has particularly affected specialised housing and small scale local needs/ local choice rural housing schemes that require grant funding to be viable. However, housing associations operating in this District often cap affordable rents at approximately 65% to 70% of open market rents to make them more affordable and to keep rents within Local Housing Allowance Caps. These Caps have now been abolished for social housing but the Council still expects associations to set rents at or below the caps.

In addition, housing associations can also convert some existing properties when they are relet from social rents to Affordable Rents. These changes are known as "conversions".

As at March 2017, housing association affordable rents in Stratford-on-Avon District were on average £572 per calendar month or £6,864 a year (HCA Statistical Data Return 2016-2017: figures are for general needs housing and for housing associations managing or owning at least 1,000 homes).

On the above figures, affordable rents are approximately 25% more expensive than social rents in the District. The table below compares the household incomes required to afford properties with social rents and affordable rents (assuming rents account for no more than 25% of gross household income).

Gross annual household income required for social rented and Affordable rented properties in Stratford-on-Avon District 2017

	Mean annual rent	Gross household income required
Social rented	£5,496	£21,984
Affordable rented	£6,864	£27,456

Households need an annual income of £22,000 to rent a social rent property and £27,500 to rent an affordable rent property.

6. Welfare reform

Introduction

The [Welfare Reform Act 2012](#) and the [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016](#) made significant changes to the benefits system, and introduced Universal Credit, the Spare Room Subsidy and the benefit cap amongst other changes. It is important to understand the changes and the impact they have had.

Spare room subsidy

The spare room subsidy (the 'bedroom tax') relates to working age housing association and council tenants who claim housing benefit or Universal Credit who are under-occupying their accommodation.

A deduction is made to the housing benefit or Universal Credit award depending on how many bedrooms are regarded as spare: 14% if the claimant has one spare room, 25% if the claimant has two or more spare rooms.

Anyone with a deduction is expected to make up the shortfall themselves. If the claimant cannot afford to pay the shortfall, options include: renting out a room, downsizing, finding a job or increasing hours, or applying to the Council for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

One particular issue with the spare room subsidy is the lack of smaller properties in the right location for people who want to downsize.

*Number of District households affected by the spare room
subsidy, February 2018*

- 500 households had their housing benefit reduced by 14% because they were under-occupying their properties by one bedroom.
- 45 households had their housing benefit reduced by 25% because they were under-occupying their properties by two or more bedrooms.
- There are no available figures for households in receipt of Universal Credit.

Source: Council records.

Benefit cap

The benefit cap seeks to encourage people into work by limiting the amount of welfare benefits a working age person receives. Households over the benefit cap in receipt of housing benefit will have their housing benefit award reduced. For households in receipt of Universal Credit the cap can be used to reduce all of their income, not just the Housing Costs element.

The current benefit cap limits (February 2018) are £20,000 per year (£384.62 per week) for a couple or a single parent, and £13,400 per year (£257.69 per week) for a single person without children or not living with their children.

The benefit cap does not apply to people if they are in receipt of working tax credits. According to latest figures from the [Department of Work and Pensions](#), the households most likely to be affected by the benefit cap are single parents and households with several children.

Number of District households affected by the benefit cap

February 2018

- 62 households in receipt of housing benefit.
- There are no available figures for households in receipt of Universal Credit.

Source: Council records.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit was introduced to simplify the benefits system and to try to ensure that being in work was more financially beneficial to being out of work. The introduction of Universal Credit in the District has been phased since February 2015. Universal Credit replaces six means-tested benefits for people who are on a low income, and of working age.

Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears. The Job Centre can arrange budgeting support for those that need it. In limited circumstances, if a claimant is vulnerable or has a history of failed tenancies, Universal Credit can be paid direct to the landlord. Universal Credit is an online system and claimants can update their claim with live information via their online journal.

Some accommodation is exempt from Universal Credit. Housing benefit covers temporary accommodation arranged by the Council for people who are homeless and the housing element for people in supported housing.

Local Housing Allowances

Local Housing Allowances (LHA) dictate how much housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit someone can claim when they are in a private rented tenancy. The maximum amount someone will receive depends on where they want to live, their income and household size.

Every property in the district is included within a specific Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA). There are seven Broad Rental Market Areas in Stratford-on-Avon District, and Local Housing Allowance rates are calculated based on local rents. Therefore, where someone lives will have an impact on the level of benefit they are entitled to in the first instance.

Since 2016 the government has frozen Local Housing Allowance, even though private rents are generally increasing. For 2018/19 some rates have marginally increased in 'high demand areas', including some rates in one of the Broad Rental Market Areas in the District.

Percentage of private rented properties affordable to people in receipt of benefits, January 2018

- Only 6% of advertised properties are affordable to people in receipt of housing benefit or Universal Credit.

Source: [Private rented survey](#) or see section 5 of this Log.

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are additional payments or "top ups" that can be made when someone's housing costs are not being met by housing benefit or Universal Credit. In order to be eligible for a Discretionary Housing Payments a person has to be in receipt of housing benefit or Universal Credit. The Council administers the payments.

An example of when a Discretionary Housing Payment application may be appropriate is when a person's rent is more than the maximum amount of housing benefit or Universal Credit that person is entitled to, and the person is struggling to pay the shortfall themselves. It can also cover rent in advance or help with moving costs.

Discretionary Housing Payments are from a limited budget set by Government and are only meant to be a temporary measure to enable a

person to increase their income or move to a more affordable property. Demand for payments is high in the District. They are used extensively to help households in the private rented sector owing to most rents being over the maximum amount those on benefits are entitled to, and to assist housing association households affected by the spare room subsidy.

In terms of budget, housing association tenants accounted for the highest proportion of payments, particularly to help with on-going rental costs for disabled persons in adapted accommodation (roughly 25 per cent of all awards).

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

This scheme helps people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax. Since April 2017, the maximum amount that someone can get is 80% of the full charge, which means that they have to pay the remaining 20%.

There is an *exceptional hardship fund* for people experiencing financial hardship paying Council Tax. However, the fund has a very limited budget and an award is unlikely to pay the full "top-up"/ shortfall. Statistics from the local Citizens Advice service show that Council Tax arrears amongst their clients in 2017/18 had increased by 38% in comparison with the previous year.

7. Requirement for new housing

Local Plan

The Local Plan is the plan for future development of the District. It includes the District Council's adopted [Core Strategy](#) 2011-2031, which determines the overall level, location and nature of new market and affordable housing, employment and other land uses in the District.

The Core Strategy identifies a need for at least 14,600 additional homes between 2011 and 2031 and includes a requirement for 35% of homes on eligible sites to be affordable homes.

The Council has a [6.26 years' housing land supply](#) as of 31 March 2018. The calculation takes account of relevant changes in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published 24 July 2018.

A number of other planning documents accompany the Core Strategy e.g. Supplementary Planning documents (SPDs) that provide more detailed advice and planning guidance. These documents are based on evidence, and are prepared and adopted in accordance with specific legal requirements.

Neighbourhood Plans have been 'made' or are in various stages of preparation covering approximately one-quarter of the District by population.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is required in the District because many households cannot afford to buy homes on the open market or rent privately.

The July 2018 [National Planning Policy Framework](#) widens the range of affordable tenure products to now also include Starter Homes; discounted market sales housing and Affordable Private Rent (Build to Rent). As at 20

August 2018, the relevant provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to enable starter homes had not been brought into force.

However, Stratford-on-Avon District has the most expensive market housing and private rented housing in the West Midlands (see section 5). The District has a large housing waiting list and homelessness is an issue. The Core Strategy reflects these housing affordability issues. It states that on larger sites 35% of the homes should be affordable and that the *overall* affordable housing tenure split should be a minimum of 80% rented and a maximum of 20% intermediate housing:

- Minimum 60% social rented
- Maximum 20% Affordable Rent
- Maximum 20% intermediate.

Shared ownership is the Council's preferred tenure for intermediate housing. To improve the affordability of shared ownership properties, it is essential that buyers can purchase as little as 25% to 40% of the equity of the properties.

On small sites that generate a requirement for a handful of affordable homes, the Council will as a matter of last resort allow fixed equity units for sale at no more than 60% of open market value in perpetuity. Discounts of less than 40% are not considered affordable.

Gypsies and Travellers

The Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan will outline how the District will meet the needs of this community. A review of the housing needs of this community was undertaken in 2016.

Specialised housing

The Core Strategy encourages specialised housing that meets the needs of vulnerable people of whatever age. It covers a range of accommodation including schemes that promote independent living for older people and various types of supported housing. Such housing is purpose designed and designated for a specific client group.

Currently there is an identified need for the forms of specialised housing set out below.

Extra care housing for older people

'Extra care' homes are fully self-contained specially designed homes with support and 24-hour care available to enable people to care for themselves and live independently. Each household has its own front door. Such housing is a good solution for people whose disabilities, frailty or health needs make ordinary housing unsuitable but who do not need or want to move to long term care (residential or nursing homes).

Warwickshire County Council's *Extra Care Housing Position Statement April 2014* is still in use and states that there are approximately 6,600 people in Stratford-on Avon District aged 75+ years who live alone and who have a limiting long-term illness. The number of such people is predicted to rise to 8,700 by 2020. These people are likely to need extra care housing.

In 2014 the estimated demand for extra care homes in the District was just over 1,800 units by 2020; 365 social or affordable units and 1,095 private units. Estimated numbers and specific tenure requirements are subject to change. The majority of Extra Care need is concentrated around Stratford Town and a number of main rural centres: Alcester; Wellesbourne; Bidford-on-Avon and Henley-in-Arden.

Housing for people with disabilities

Additional specialised housing is required for people with physical disabilities, sensory impairment, learning disabilities and mental health difficulties. A number of specialised housing schemes have been developed over the past few years.

Housing for people who sleep rough

There is a need for emergency access / supported accommodation for single homeless people who sleep rough.

8. Affordable housing

Source: Council records.

Number of affordable homes by tenure

As at November 2017 there were 8,263 affordable homes in the District. Of these homes, 7,520 were rented homes and 743 were shared ownership homes (excluding shared ownership where the owners have bought 100% of the properties).

Demand for affordable housing in the District is high. The Council does not own any affordable homes. Nearly all affordable homes are provided by housing associations. Changes in stock occur when new homes are built and existing homes are sold.

Audits of the affordable housing stock in the District were undertaken in October 2004, spring 2008, April 2012, April 2013, August 2015 and November 2017.

Number of affordable homes by year and tenure

	Social rented and affordable rented	Shared ownership	Total affordable homes
October 2004	6,352	227	6,579
Spring 2008	6,730	417	7,147
April 2012	6,895	506	7,401
April 2013	6,935	530	7,465
August 2015	7,133	525	7,658
November 2017	7,520	743	8,263
Increase 2004 → 2017	18%	227%	26%

Since 2016/17 a few Fixed Equity Sale properties have been built. Buyers own these properties outright but the homes are sold at a 60% discount in perpetuity.

Social and affordable housing association rented homes are found in the majority of the parishes in the District. There are sheltered housing schemes for older people in Alcester, Bidford, Henley, Lower Quinton, Shipston, Southam, Stratford, Studley and Wellesbourne. There are extra care schemes for older people in Southam and Stratford with Wellesbourne coming shortly.

Type and size of existing housing association rented homes

Number of rented homes by type and size November 2017

Property type	Number of homes	% of stock	Property type
Flats <i>general needs</i>	1 bed	526	7%
	2 bed	1030	14%
	3 bed	45	1%
Houses <i>general needs</i>	1 bed	110	1%
	2 bed	1,335	18%
	3 bed	2,314	31%
	4 bed or more	271	4%
Bungalows <i>general needs</i>	1 bed	235	3%
	2 bed	838	11%
	3 or 4 bed	7	0%
Extra Care	Mostly 1 and 2 beds	91	10%
Sheltered		655	
Disability independent living projects	1 & 2 bed properties	40	0%
Other supported	Flats and houses	23	0%
Total		7,520	100%

About a quarter of all rented homes are reserved exclusively for older people and, if required, disabled people. These include 1,826 sheltered homes, extra care homes and general needs bungalows. However, older people also live in many properties that are not designated solely for older people.

About 8% of the stock is general needs 1-bed flats and houses. The lack of smaller properties means that single people and couples without children under pensionable age lose out compared to other household types. Household who are affected by the spare room subsidy also face difficulties owing to the lack of 1-beds to downsize to.

Type and size of shared ownership homes

Number of shared ownership homes by type and size November 2017

Property type	Number of homes	% of stock	Property type
Flats <i>general needs</i>	1 bed	13	2%
	2 bed	72	10%
Houses <i>general needs</i>	1 bed	7	1%
	2 bed	352	47%
	3 bed	234	31%
	4 bed or more	15	2%
Bungalows <i>general needs</i>	2 bed	2	0%
Extra care	1 and 2 beds	48	6%
Total			

Shared ownership homes that have been bought outright i.e. are now 100% owned are excluded from this table.

Nearly half of shared ownership homes in 2017 are 2-bed houses and nearly a third are 3-bed houses.

Compared to 2013, there has been a decrease of 10% in the number of 1 and 2-bed shared ownership flats. General need shared ownership flats are no longer being developed as they are unpopular with buyers, expensive because of service charges and it is difficult to get mortgages for such properties.

Loss of affordable homes

Affordable homes are lost from stock when they are sold.

To help fund the building of affordable homes housing associations sell existing vacant properties on the open market. These sales are known as *disposals*. In high house price areas such as this District, disposals generate more income than in areas with lower house prices.

Some former Council tenants have a Preserved Right to Buy. The Government's introduction of more generous Right to Buy discounts has resulted in more tenants buying their homes. A *Voluntary Right to Buy* pilot in the West Midlands, extending the 'Right to Buy' to housing association tenants, is to take place shortly.

Building affordable homes

In 2017/18 a total of 377 affordable homes were built in the District. This is the highest ever recorded number of affordable homes delivered in a single year.

Over the last ten years, the Council has enabled 167 affordable homes a year.

Nearly all additional affordable homes are new build. Two tables below provide detailed information about tenure and numbers of new homes.

Table 1: Tenure of affordable homes built since 2011 – the start of the current Core Strategy

Tenure	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Social rent	79	67	74	174	192	180	182
Affordable rent	5	0	15	9	11	0	90
Shared ownership	17	24	31	23	88	64	90
Fixed equity sale						19	14
Other	4	5	2	9	0	0	1
Total	105	96	122	215	291	263	377

The proportion of all new homes that are affordable shows large year-on-year variations that do not relate clearly to the overall scale of house building in the District. The proportion should not be confused with the Core Strategy 35% affordable housing policy requirement on sites that are over a threshold size / capacity.

Table 2: Additional affordable homes by year and as a proportion of all new build housing

Year	Number of affordable homes	Number of all new build housing	Affordable housing new build as a % of all new build housing
2003-2004	57	602	9%
2004-2005	201	806	24%
2005-2006	200	649	27%
2006-2007	54	454	10%
2007-2008	139	401	34%
2008-2009	51	172	26%
2009-2010	75	244	26%
2010-2011	76	102	75%
2011-2012	105	133	76%
2012-2013	96	294	31%
2013-2014	122	343	35%
2014-2015	215	631	34%
2015-2016	291	1,048	28%
2016-2017	263	1,113	24%
2017-2018	377	1,295	29%
Total since 2003/04 (15 years)	2,322	8,287	-
2018-19 2019 -20 2020-21	Approx. 750		

The Council maintains continuous monitoring records in respect of all completions of affordable housing. Data is held on:

- Which housing association is involved in the development.

- The affordable tenure and whether the dwelling is newly built or an 'existing' dwelling.
- Whether the development was on 'brownfield' or 'greenfield' land.
- Which planning policy was invoked to approve the development.
- The location of the site.
- The number of bedrooms.
- The split between houses, flats and bungalows.
- Which stream(s) of public funding was used (if any).
- How many of the homes meet the various sustainability standards.

The monitoring of affordable housing schemes from site identification through to post-completion assessment allows the Council to estimate the future number, distribution and characteristics of affordable homes in the short to mid-term. Feedback from tenants and shared ownership buyers also informs future development.

Funding of new affordable homes

All affordable homes are partly funded by housing associations that borrow monies and or use their reserves. Some schemes are also partly funded by cross-subsidy from developers building market homes. Although some affordable homes require grant funding from the Government and or the Council, most homes are now built without any grant.

The Council has helped fund 117 affordable homes during the last 10 years through its own Rural Housing Programme; without this grant these homes would not have been built.

Funding of affordable homes last 10 years

	Number of affordable homes	Percentage of affordable homes
Government grant	374	22%
Government and Council grants	117	7%
Other (incl. fixed equity sale)	33	2%
Total homes with grant	524	31%
Total homes without grant	1,147	69%
Total number of homes	1,671	

9. Condition of existing housing stock

Housing stock

As at 1st April 2017, there were 58,620 dwellings in the District. Of these dwellings, 7,320 were housing association properties and 51,180 private sector properties (private rented and owner occupiers). 120 were other public sector properties. See section 4 of this Log or [MHCLG Table 100 - Dwelling stock](#)

Overcrowding

The [2011 Census occupancy rating](#) provides a measure of overcrowding. By this measure 3.4% of households in the District are overcrowded (1,786 households). This compares to 4.8% of households in Warwickshire and 8.7% of households nationally.

Stock condition

Source: Private Sector House Condition Survey (Stratford-on-Avon District) November 2009.

Housing association homes

Although now considered an old standard, few (if any) housing association properties in the District do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. A decent home is defined as one that is free of serious hazards, warm, in a reasonable state of repair, and having reasonably modern facilities.

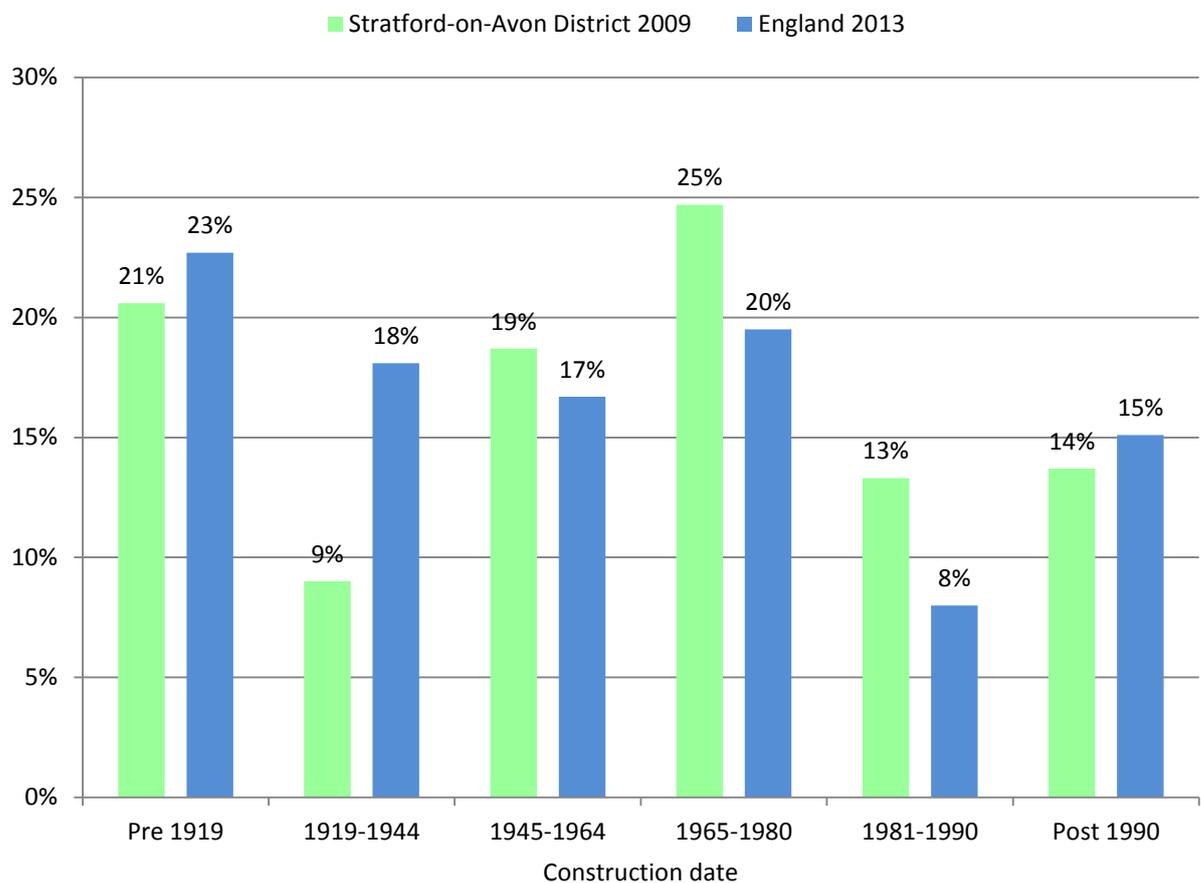
Owner occupied and private rented housing

The Council is legally required to assess housing conditions. At District level, the Private Sector Housing Condition Survey (PSHCS) 2009 is the most recent available. The work of the Council's Private Sector Housing

Team, demonstrates that the big issues identified in the survey are the same today.

The age profile of owner occupied and privately rented dwellings in the District differs from the English Housing Survey 2013-2014 national average with lower levels of dwellings before 1945 (30% compared with 41%) and higher proportions after that (71% compared with 60%).

Age of owner occupied and private rented dwellings in Stratford-on-Avon District and England



The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a tool to assess hazards in people's homes. Local authorities are required to take action when they identify a category 1 hazard. In 2017/2018 a total of 75 properties were freed from all category 1 hazards. Other key features of the stock are:

- Higher proportions of detached houses and bungalows compared with the national average.
- A higher proportion of older residents who are 60 years and over compared to the national average.
- The least energy efficient dwellings are older dwellings (pre-1919); converted flats and private rented dwellings.
- Category 1 hazards include excess cold, unsafe electrical wiring or unsafe floor surface on stairs.
- The level of excess cold hazards is an issue given the growing number of older residents, and a growing number specifically in private rented accommodation.
- Category 1 hazards are strongly associated with older dwellings and dwellings occupied by heads of household aged over 65, where there are one or more residents with a disability, those on low incomes and those in receipt of a benefit.
- Proportionately, Category 1 hazards are more strongly associated with the private rented sector.
- There are no high rise buildings (defined as 10 storeys, or 18 metres, and above) with external cladding in the District.

Fuel Poverty

Sources: [Home Energy Conservation Act - Stratford on Avon 2017](#); The Stratford-on-Avon Economic Assessment 2017; sub-regional fuel poverty data 2017.

Fuel poverty in the UK is defined as households that have above average fuel costs (the national median level) and if they were to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official

poverty line. Cold homes that are poorly insulated and ineffectively heated have a detrimental effect on people's health, leading to excess winter deaths.

According to 2015 sub-regional fuel poverty data, 7,203 households in Stratford-on-Avon District were estimated to be fuel poor which equates to 13.6% of all households. This compares to 12.2% fuel poor households across Warwickshire. The District also has a higher proportion of fuel poor households than any other district/borough in Warwickshire.

Fuel poverty is particularly prevalent in the District's rural communities. Nearly a third of the District (31%) is not connected to the main gas network, which can have an adverse effect on heating costs. According to The Stratford-on-Avon Economic Assessment 2017, the south east of the District has particularly high levels of fuel poverty (22%).

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 requires local authorities to publish a twice yearly report on their plans to improve energy efficiency. The '*Home Energy Conservation Act – Report of Stratford on Avon District Council 2017*' outlines the partnerships in Warwickshire working towards the elimination of fuel poverty and increasing energy efficiency, the overall objective of South Warwickshire's Affordable Warmth Strategy. Partnerships include:

- South Warwickshire Affordable Warmth Group;
- Warm and Well in Warwickshire;
- Local authority consortium groups;
- Housing associations;
- Actonenergy.

Energy efficiency

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) measures the energy efficiency of homes, 100 being highly efficient and 1 being highly inefficient. SAP ratings are set out within an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which

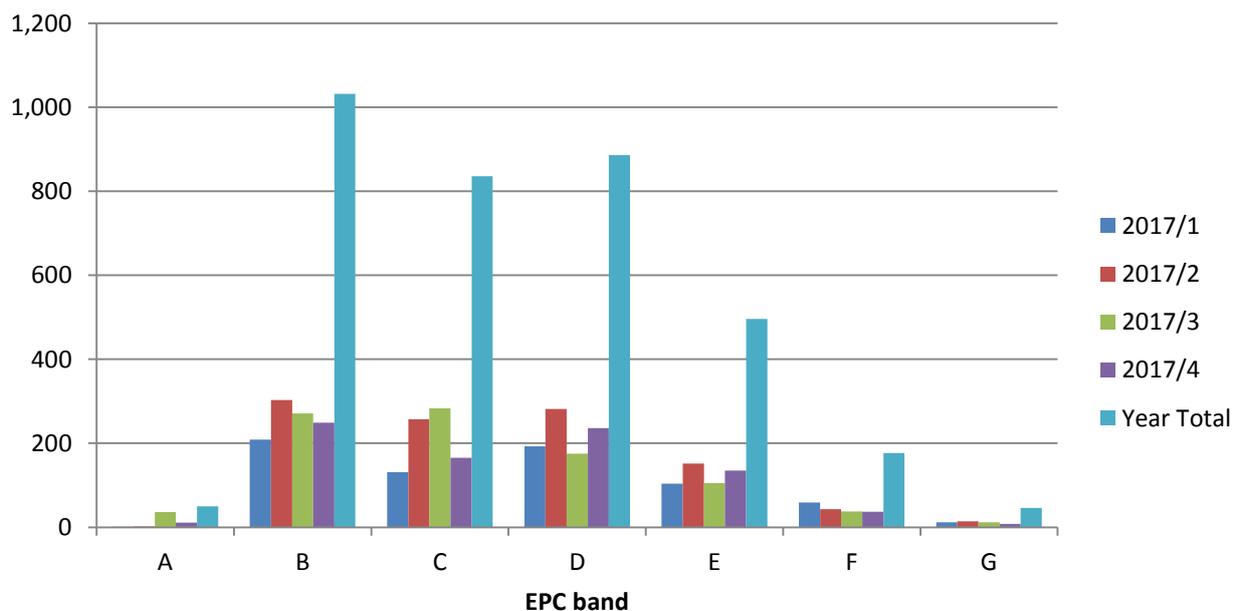
rates properties from 'A' i.e. the most energy efficient to 'G' i.e. the least energy efficient.

As from April 2018 private landlords cannot grant new or renewal tenancies that have an EPC rating below E. From April 2020 this will apply to *all* private rented tenancies. Landlords can be fined if they fail to comply with the legislation.

The Home Energy Conservation Act: Report of Stratford-on-Avon District 2017 states that in 2015-17 the largest proportion of District properties were band D (33%). The growing number of properties in band B (21%) can be explained by the number of new builds in the District. 11% of properties were in bands F and G. Properties in band E to G will be the focus for the work of the partnership groups over the next few years.

In 2017 a total of 3,523 Energy Performance Certificates were lodged in Stratford-on-Avon. The table below shows the proportion of properties in each band.

Number of Energy Performance Certificates lodged in the District 2017 by band



Source: [Government live tables - energy performance of buildings](#)

The first Passivhaus homes in Warwickshire have been built in Wootton Wawen. The 14 affordable homes have been built to the Passivhaus standard for low-energy buildings.

Houses in Multiple-Occupation

A house in multiple-occupation (HMO) is a property where people who are not related are renting out a property and sharing facilities. Depending on the size of the property and how many people are living in it, the property may require a license. Local Authorities are responsible for issuing licences and ensuring that properties meet safety standards.

In March 2018 there were 14 licenced houses in multiple-occupation in Stratford-on-Avon District. In October 2018 the number of properties requiring a [license](#) will increase because the Council will be required to license all properties occupied by five or more unrelated people sharing facilities. Previously a licence was only required if a property was three stories or more. The legislation also introduces minimum room sizes in houses of multiple-occupation as from October 2018.

Unlicensed houses in multiple-occupation where three or more people share but fewer than five people) require certain safety measures in place.

Regulation of the private rented sector

The private rented sector plays an important role in the current housing market but standards within the sector are sometimes a concern. The government is increasing regulation in the sector including banning orders; a database of rogue landlords; and fixed penalty notices issued by local authorities up to £30,000, for landlords who commit certain offences.

Legislation going through parliament proposes banning tenant fees (Tenant Fees Bill).

Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary grants

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) enable people with disabilities to make adaptations to their homes. The grant is means tested and the maximum grant is £30,000. A medical assessment is carried out to decide what works are required. The grants can be awarded for items such as level access showers, stair lifts and ramps.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has a Disabled Facilities capital grant of £785,263 for the year 2018/19.

Until June 2017 the provision of disabled facilities grants was carried out by a joint team from Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

Since June 2017, Disabled Facilities Grants have been assessed by [HEART](#) (Home Environment Assessment and Response Team) which is a countywide partnership. HEART helps people to live independently by providing advice, holistic assessments, home aids, adaptations, repairs, Home Safety Checks and measures, and grants or loans for essential building works.

Home owners can also apply to the Council for Discretionary Grants for essential repairs and improvement works if they meet the criteria. The grant is means tested and the maximum amount that can be applied for is £5,000. Sixteen discretionary grants were completed in 2017/2018.

Number of completed household surveys and Disabled Facilities Grant works in the last three years

	Number of completed surveys	Number of Disabled Facilities Grant works completed
2015/16	221	84
2016/17	200	126
2017/18	287 ¹	37 ²
<p>Notes</p> <p>1) Includes holistic assessments as part of the new HEART service including advice only, equipment or other forms of assistance.</p> <p>2) Of the 37 grants, 7 were for owner occupiers, 27 were for housing association tenants and 3 were for private rented tenants.</p> <p>3) The lower level of DFG grant work completions in 2017/18 is attributed to the start-up up of the new countywide service, including new systems and technologies.</p>		

Empty homes

There were [612 private properties in the District](#) that had been empty for more than six months in October 2017. The number of empty properties in the District has risen over the last few years, in part due to the increase in the number of new developments and the length of time it takes to sell some properties (over six months). Improved systems to record empty properties are now also in place.

The Council gives grants to empty property owners to bring properties that have been empty for six months or more back into use. The Council

is able to nominate tenants to the improved properties for a limited time (currently five years) and during this time the rents must be set at affordable levels. Eighteen properties have been brought back into use via grants since 2010.

The Council has the power to take over the management of an empty property that is a blight on the landscape and to the community, and where the owner is not engaging with the assistance the Council can provide. Once in the management of the Council, the property is renovated and brought back into use for housing for local people at an affordable rent level for seven years. In 2018 the Council took over the management of one property under an Empty Dwelling Management Order; this was the first use of such an Order in Warwickshire.

10. The Council's Housing Waiting List (Home Choice Plus)

Sources: District Council records; housing association records.

Introduction

The Council's Housing Advice Team runs a Housing Waiting List ('Home Choice Plus') for all rented housing association properties in the District and for some affordable homes outside the District. The Team is also responsible for advice on housing options and for dealing with homelessness.

Home Choice Plus is a choice based lettings scheme for affordable homes that operates across Stratford-on-Avon District and most of Worcestershire. The scheme helps people to make informed choices about their housing options by allowing them to check the number and types of properties that become available for letting, and compare their priority for housing with that of other people.

People, including existing housing association tenants, 'bid' for affordable homes via the internet, and by telephone, text or in person at any of the Council's offices. The Council provides assistance to make it easier for vulnerable and older people to bid.

The Housing Waiting List prioritises households' urgency for housing by bands. "Priority" is the highest band and "bronze" the lowest band. Households from all bands take up tenancies. This partly occurs because new build affordable homes in settlements are ring fenced in the first instance for households with a local connection to that particular parish.

Demand for affordable homes in the District is high. The number of vacancies depends on how many new affordable homes are built and on

how many existing housing association tenants choose and are able to move to alternative housing association accommodation. Few existing housing association tenants move to the private sector because it is unaffordable.

The Home Choice Plus policy on who is able to go on the List was amended in 2015 in light of the [Localism Act 2011](#) . The Act gave councils greater flexibility concerning who goes on any list and what priority they are given for housing.

Not everyone is allowed to join the Council's Housing Waiting List. In particular, following the 2015 amendments to the List, households in private rented accommodation are excluded from the List unless they have an identified housing need and/or explicitly state that they cannot afford the accommodation.

With the April 2018 introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, it is anticipated that there will be fewer people in a priority band because their homelessness will be prevented or relieved.

Housing association's that have stock in Stratford-on-Avon District offer both fixed term and lifetime tenancies. The [Council's Tenancy Strategy 2017](#) also allows for both fixed term and lifetime tenancies.

Number and type of households on the Housing Waiting List

There were 3,748 households on the List in May 2018:

- Total adults 5,346
- Total children 2,280
- Total individuals 7,626

The number of households on the Housing Waiting List fluctuates e.g. a policy review may require households to re-register on the List; the number will initially fall but then increase. The most important point is

that there are large numbers of households on the List because they cannot find suitable affordable accommodation.

Families with children account for more than a third of all households on the List. Single people under pensionable age account for about a quarter of households on the List; older people account for another quarter.

Couples without children are the smallest group of households on the List. This is probably because of all the household types they find it easiest to find alternative accommodation that is suitable and affordable.

Types of household on the Housing Waiting List May 2018

	Number of households	Percentage of households
Single people under pensionable age	1,009	27%
of which 16 /17 year olds	(3)	
Couples without children	288	8%
Families with children	1291	34%
0 children but pregnant 25+ weeks	(60)	(2%)
1 child	(582)	(16%)
2 children	(441)	(12%)
3 children	(126)	(3%)
4+ children	(82)	(2%)
Pensioners / people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance	1,050	28%
Of which aged 60+	969	(26%)
Other	110	3%
Total	3,748	100%

Age of households on the Housing Waiting List

Whilst all ages are represented on the List, nearly 40% of households are working age but over 35 years. The lack of affordable and suitable accommodation is an issue for households of all ages.

Age of all heads of households on the Housing Waiting List May 2018

	Number of households	Percentage of households
16-17 years	5	-
18-24 years	352	9%
25-34 years	890	24%
35-59 years	1,459	39%
60-84 years	864	23%
85+ years	178	5%
Total	3,748	100%

It is worth looking at single people of working age separately because of the large numbers of such households on the List. Some are working and some are not but they particularly struggle to afford accommodation. Single people aged under 35 years who are not working only qualify for housing benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs for privately rented shared accommodation i.e. a room. Such shared accommodation is in very short supply – as is 1-bed privately rented accommodation.

Age of single people households including older people on the Housing Waiting List May 2018

	Number of households	Percentage of households
16-17 years	3	-
18-24 years	158	9%
25-34 years	283	17%
35-59 years	570	34%
60-84 years	528	31%
85+ years	148	9%
Total	1,690	100%

Single people of all ages are on the List. Of the 1,690 single people on the Housing Waiting List, 681 are older people and 1,009 are single people under pensionable age. It is noteworthy that 83% of all households on the List aged 85+ years are single people (148 out of 178 households).

Tenure of households on the Housing Waiting List

The most common tenure of households on the Housing Waiting List is private rented accommodation (including sharing or lodging) and Housing Association or Council tenancy.

Tenure of households on the Housing Waiting List May 2018

Current tenure	Single people under pensionable age	Couples without children	Families with children	Pensioners/ people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance	Other	Total	%
Private landlord	170	84	430	252	37	973	26%
Sharing or lodging	80	16	30	33	2	161	4%
Housing association or Council	182	56	500	316	39	1,093	29%
Parents/ relatives	368	114	155	41	12	690	18%
Leaving hospital, prison etc.	6	1	0	12	0	19	0.5%
Other: owner occupiers, tied, no fixed abode etc.	203	17	176	396	20	812	22%
Total	1,009	288	1,291	1,050	110	3,748	100%

According to the Department of Work and Pensions [Family Resources Survey 2016/17](#) the proportion of households privately renting in the United Kingdom increased for almost all age groups in the ten years to 2016/17. The percentage of 35 – 44 year olds who are living in private rented accommodation has doubled since 2006/07 from 13% to 26%. The percentage of the 16-24 age group increased from 55% to 73%, while the percentage of those aged 25-34 who were private renting went from 28% to 46%.

Similar trends can be seen in this District.

Age of private renters on the Housing Waiting List

Broad age band	Number of households	Percentage
35 and under	301	30.9%
36 - 64	489	50.3%
65 or over	183	18.8%
Total	973	100.0%
Notes Figures are for heads of households renting from private landlords. Households sharing or lodging are excluded from the above figures.		

Housing Waiting List satisfaction surveys

Source: Annual Home Choice Plus satisfaction surveys

Surveys are sent out to households on the Housing Waiting List to analyse how people find out about it, how they want to contact the Housing Advice Team and how satisfied they are with the service receive. Results are recorded annually from April to March. The 2017/2018 survey results show the following:

- Most people prefer to contact the Housing Advice Team by phone and email.
- Most people find out about the List through word of mouth (58% - an increase of 8% from 2016/2017).
- 91% of people are able to easily contact the Housing Advice Team (a slight decrease of 5% from 2016/2017).
- 75% of people are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied at the speed with which the Council's Housing Advice Team dealt with their application. 17% were fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and 8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 83% of people rated the overall service offered by the Council's Housing Advice Team to be very or fairly good.

11. Homelessness

The information in this section has been put together mainly from publicly available information.

What is homelessness?

Homelessness occurs if a household has no accommodation that it can lawfully occupy or if it has accommodation but it would be unreasonable for the household to continue to occupy it.

Homelessness can happen to anyone. While rough sleeping is the most public face of homelessness, people can lose their accommodation for many reasons, including

- Change of economic circumstances e.g. loss of job or reduced hours
- Relationship breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Ending of tenancy
- Discharge from hospital or the armed forces
- Being asked to leave by family or friends
- Eviction by landlord
- Mortgage repossession

Economic hardship inevitably affects a household's ability to maintain its accommodation. There are other associated impacts – for example, the stress of money worries can contribute to the breakdown of relationships which then in turn result in households becoming homeless.

Preventing homelessness

It is essential that all people in housing difficulties and those at risk of losing their homes get good quality advice at an early stage about their housing options.

Effective homelessness prevention depends on good partnership working and on organisations sharing information about their local housing market and economy and maintaining their knowledge of each other's services. The multi-agency District Housing Forum co-ordinates much of this cross agency work.

Benefits of focussing resources on homeless prevention for homeless households and the Council

- 1) Households can remain in their current properties, which enables improved stability by maintaining existing support and social networks.
- 2) Households can continue to contribute to their local community.
- 3) Households do not face disruption to any paid or voluntary work they do.
- 4) Households do not have to deal with the disruption and cost of removals and storage of possessions.
- 5) There is no disruption to children's education due to having to change schools because of losing their home.
- 6) Households will not have to move into unsuitable temporary accommodation or bed and breakfast.
- 7) Preventing homelessness is cost-effective for local authorities and this has been borne out locally. The Council has been able to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

Role of the Council and homelessness legislation

In April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force which significantly changes Local Authorities' legal duties towards people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The Act aims to reduce homelessness by introducing statutory duties on Councils to carry out homeless prevention at an early stage and relief work including helping to secure alternative accommodation. The Act also requires Councils to help more homeless people than before.

Under the Act, Councils have more flexibility to use the Private Rented Sector to resolve homelessness; however, due to an expensive private rented market in the District this option may be challenging. The success of the Act will be measured in the number of people whose homelessness is prevented and relieved.

- **A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days (previously this was 28 days).**

In determining what duty is owed to a homeless person, the Council is required in each case to investigate and make a 'decision'. This involves taking a homeless application if the person is threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and now includes a thorough assessment of someone's support needs and housing needs in the form of a Personal Housing Plan.

The following gives a brief overview of the assessments that the Council is required to carry out:

- **Is the person eligible**

This refers to where a person usually lives and to their immigration status.

➤ **Is the person homeless**

This is whether the person has any 'suitable' accommodation, and is homeless now or threatened with homelessness in the *next 56 days*.

➤ **Can the homelessness be prevented**

The onus is on the Council to become involved at a much earlier date than before to take 'reasonable steps' to help the person to prevent their homelessness, where appropriate. The duty applies to both those deemed by the Council as *priority need* (see *Main housing duty* below) and those deemed as *no priority need*.

➤ **Can the homelessness be relieved**

If the person is already homeless and it is too late to prevent their homelessness, the onus is on the Council to take 'reasonable steps' to help the person secure alternative accommodation, which has a reasonable chance of lasting at least six months. If a person has been under the prevention duty, but steps to prevent their homelessness fail, the relief duty then kicks-in. Both duties apply to those deemed by the Council as *priority need* (see *main housing duty* below) and those deemed as *no priority need*.

➤ **Main housing duty**

This is owed to people who are eligible, unintentionally homeless and considered to be in priority need, where intervention has not successfully prevented or relieved homelessness:

- A pregnant woman.
- Part of a household with dependent children.
- Vulnerable as a result of old age, ill health or disability, having been looked after, fostered or accommodated, having been in the services, having been in custody, leaving accommodation because of violence or threat of violence.

- Homeless in an emergency because of fire, flood or other disaster.
- A 16 or 17 year old not entitled to housing from Children Services.
- A former care leaver aged 18 – 21 years.

People who do *not* fall into one of the above categories will not be in priority need, and will not be owed a full housing duty.

➤ **Local Connection**

That is whether the person lives or works locally, has family locally or whether the person needs to be near special medical or support services. Local Connection is not assessed when a person is under the prevention duty. If at the point of the relief duty the person does not have a local connection to the local authority to which they have presented, a referral can be made to the local authority to whom they have a connection.

➤ **Requirement on public authorities to refer**

In October 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act will introduce a duty on named public authorities (e.g. police, hospitals, GPs,) to refer people who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness to a Housing Authority. The homeless person must consent to a referral being made and can choose to which Authority the referral is made. Housing Authorities must respond to all referrals.

➤ **Assessment of Housing Needs and Personalised Housing Plans**

A Housing Authority must assess and provide a written assessment of a person's support needs. The Housing Authority and the person must also agree a written Personalised Housing Plan setting out what steps are reasonable for the Council to take and what steps the applicant must take.

➤ **Non co-operation**

A person must co-operate with the steps outlined in the Personalised Housing Plan. Failure to co-operate, or refusing an offer of

accommodation, allows the Housing Authority to end a duty in certain circumstances. The repercussions of not co-operating depend on whether the person is deemed as priority need and whether the person is considered intentionally homeless.

➤ **Ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy**

The Homelessness Reduction Act states that a homeless application is required when a landlord serves a valid Section 21 notice to end an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. This is by far the most common way of ending such a tenancy. Provided it has been served correctly the notice cannot be defended.

Who is entitled to longer term housing?

Only someone who is eligible, homeless or threatened with homelessness, not homeless intentionally and in priority need is owed the *full homeless duty*. People owed this duty are commonly referred to as *homelessness acceptances* or *statutory homeless*. People owed the full homeless duty are entitled to longer term settled accommodation arranged by the Council i.e. a housing association tenancy or a private rented tenancy. People who have had their homelessness relieved are not owed the main housing duty.

Most single people and couples under pensionable age without children will not have a priority need. However, they are still owed a prevention and/ or relief duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act.

People can request reviews of homelessness decisions. A person unhappy with a decision following a review can appeal to the county court.

Levels of homelessness and preventions

Homeless applications and acceptances fluctuate from year to year. It should be noted that only a small proportion of people who are homeless actually approach the Council and make an application.

Number of households making homeless applications, accepted as homeless, and whose homelessness was prevented last five years

	Homeless applications by number of households		Homeless preventions ¹ by type and number of households		
	Homeless applications	Accepted as homeless ²	New Rent Express tenancies ³	Other	Total
2013/14	197	86	29	280	309
2014/15	179	85	15	202	217
2015/16	199	105	4	118	122
2016/17	263	142	10	168	178
2017/18	360	169	7	232	239

Notes

¹ Numbers relate to preventions within Government definition.

² Figures taken from quarterly P1E returns to Government.

³ The Rent Express scheme assists people to rent privately by providing a cash payment for rent in advance, a deposit guarantee and a rent guarantee which will cover up to one month's arrears at the end of the tenancy.

The number of homeless applications and homeless preventions has increased over the last few years. However, the continuing decrease over the past few years in the number of households assisted to obtain private rented tenancies via the Rent Express Scheme can be attributed to high private rents which are unaffordable for many people in and out of work, and a competitive market. The Rent Express Scheme is being reviewed to meet the demands of this competitive and challenging market.

The number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need as a proportion of 1,000 households has increased from 1.63 in 2013/14 to 3.12 in 2017/18. ([Government. live table 784](#))

Owing to the Homelessness Reduction Act, it is expected that in future fewer households will be accepted as homeless, as their homelessness will be prevented or relieved.

Why households lose their accommodation and become homeless

For the past five years, the end of private tenancies is the main reason for people losing their accommodation and becoming homeless (approximately a third of all homeless acceptances). This is a national trend.

Violent relationship breakdown was the next most common reason over the past five years.

Parental evictions and evictions by relatives and friends are also some of the main causes for the loss of accommodation.

Main reasons for loss of settled accommodation

homeless acceptances only – percentage of claims each year

2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
End of private tenancy (26%)	End of private tenancy (32%)	End of private tenancy (30%)	End of private tenancy (37%)	End of private tenancy (38%)
Violent relationship breakdown (20%)	Violent relationship breakdown (22%)	Violent relationship breakdown (26%)	Violent relationship breakdown (22%)	Violent relationship breakdown (21%)
Parental eviction (16%)	Relatives / friends' eviction (14%)	Parental eviction (19%)	Parental eviction (13%)	Parental eviction (15%)
Relatives / friends' eviction (10%)	Parental eviction (11%)	Relatives / friends' eviction (10%)	Non-violent relationship breakdown (8%)	Non-violent relationship breakdown (7%)
Other reasons (28%)	Other reasons (19%)	Other reasons (14%)	Other reasons (20%)	Other reasons (19%)

Notes

1. *End of private tenancy* includes the termination of assured shorthold tenancies, the end of private tenancies for other reasons and private sector rent arrears.
2. The table above refers to people to whom the Authority owes the full homeless duty i.e. these are only some of the many people who are homeless each year.

See overleaf for a detailed breakdown of reasons for homeless acceptances.

Detailed reasons for loss of settled accommodation by the number of households accepted as homeless

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
End of private tenancy termination of assured shorthold tenancy	12	20	20	42	53
End of private tenancy for reason other than termination of assured shorthold tenancy	10	7	8	8	10
Violent relationship breakdown	17	19	27	31	33
Non-violent relationship breakdown	5	3	1	11	11
Violent relationship breakdown involving associated persons	3	5	2	4	3
Parental eviction	14	11	20	19	26
Relatives / friends' eviction	9	12	11	9	7
Racially motivated violence	0	0	0	0	1
Other violence	0	0	0	2	3
Racially motivated harassment	0	0	0	0	3
Other harassment	3	5	4	3	3
Mortgage arrears	0	1	2	0	3
Local authority / other public sector rent arrears	0	0	0	1	0
Housing association rent arrears	1	1	0	0	1
Private sector rent arrears	0	0	4	2	2
Required to leave Home Office asylum accommodation	0	0	0	0	0
Left prison / on remand	0	0	0	0	0
Left hospital	1	0	0	3	1
Left other institution or care	2	0	0	0	1
Left HM forces	2	1	0	0	2
Other reason e.g. homeless in emergency, sleeping rough, in hostel, returned from abroad	7	0	6	7	9
Total	86	85	105	142	169

Temporary accommodation for homeless households

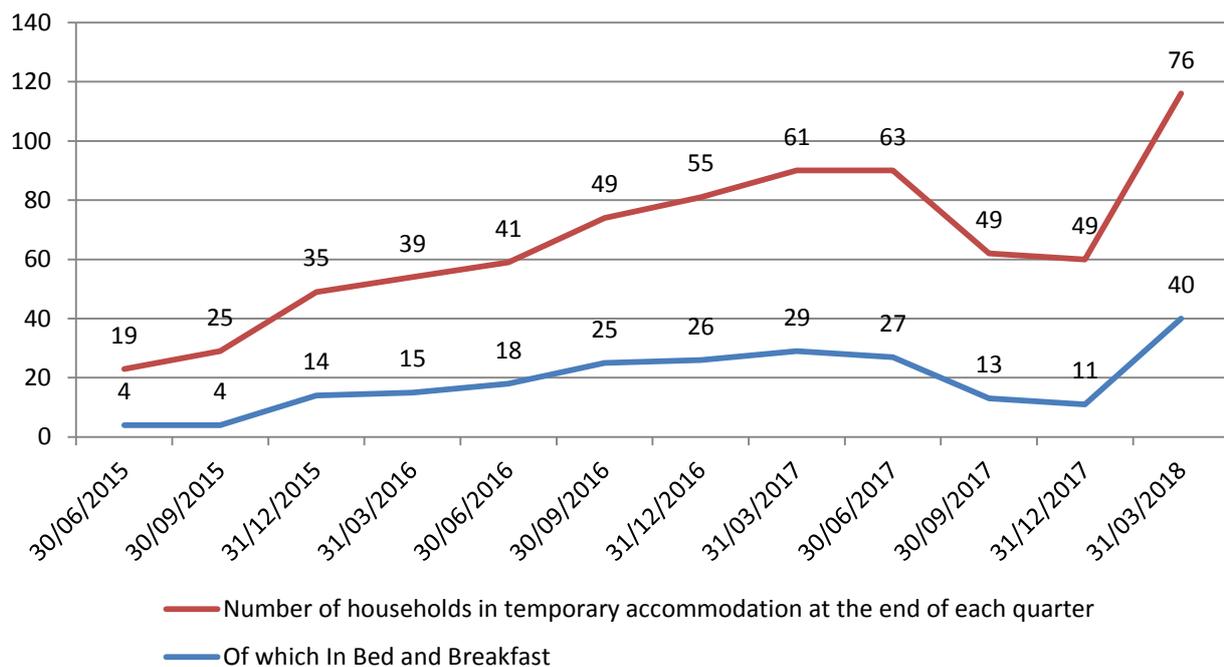
The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide temporary accommodation for *some* homeless people. The cost of providing temporary accommodation has significantly increased since 2015/16. This can be partly attributed to a rise in the number of homeless approaches the Council encounters, as well as welfare reform e.g. Universal Credit which has made it more difficult for the Council to recover costs.

Currently, the Council leases 24 housing association properties as temporary accommodation for homeless households; this will increase to 32 properties by the end of 2018.

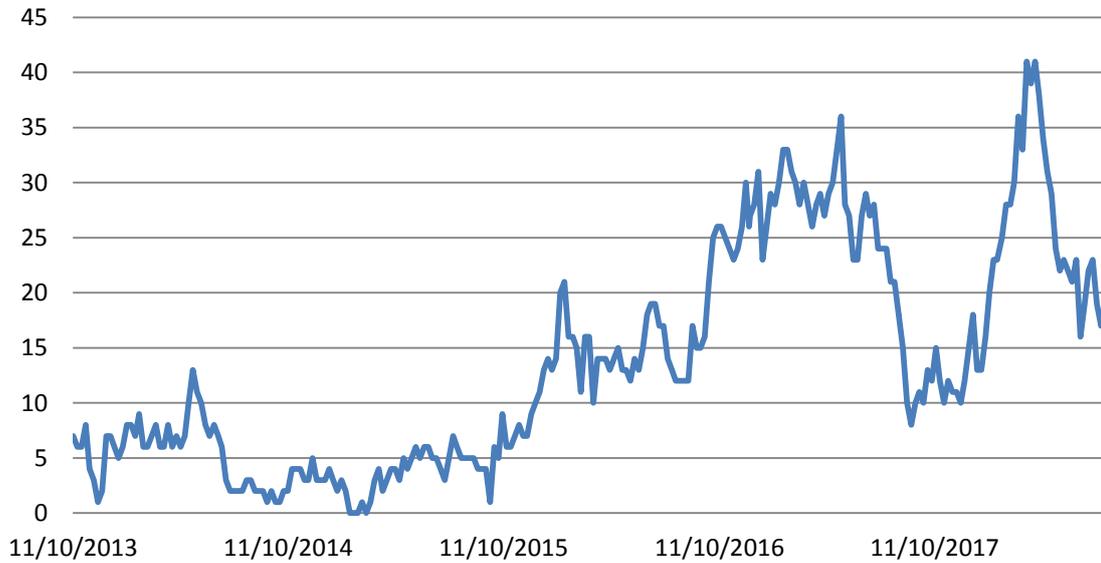
The Council also has use of 2 houses in multiple-occupation for single people providing 15 bed spaces. These shared houses offer temporary supported accommodation.

The Council also uses bed and breakfast, and since 2017 has block booked rooms.

Number of households in temporary accommodation – not all households qualify for temporary accommodation



*Fluctuation in the number of households in bed and breakfast
on a weekly basis*



Source: internal bed and breakfast weekly log

Number of households in bed and breakfast July 2018

	Single people	Couples	Families with children	Pregnant (no other children)	Total
6 July	13	2	7	1	23
13 July	12	2	4	1	19
20 July	10	2	4	1	17
27 July	11	2	5	1	19

Due to the increased demand for temporary accommodation, the Council is exploring other options for temporary accommodation to increase capacity and reduce reliance on bed and breakfast. This includes purchasing market properties.

The introduction of Universal Credit made it difficult for the Council (and all other councils) to recover costs for bed and breakfast. As from April 2018, the Government has allowed households going into temporary

accommodation to claim housing benefit (where eligible) instead of Universal Credit.

*Temporary accommodation and bed & breakfast costs
2014/15 to 2017/18*

Year	Temporary accommodation*	Bed and breakfast**	Total
2014/15	£14,030	£4,851	£18,881
2015/16	£13,985	£37,249	£51,234
2016/17	£17,738	£199,522	£217,260
2017/18	£28,000	£425,000	£453,000
<p>Notes</p> <p>*Includes Coventry Cyrenians' temporary accommodation since June 2016.</p> <p>**Actual bed and breakfast costs to the Council after recovery of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.</p>			

People sleeping rough

The Council and agencies estimated that 17 people were sleeping rough in the District on 13th November 2017; this information was submitted to Government. An analysis by the Housing Advice Team in May 2018 looked at what happened to these 17 people:

- 8 were still sleeping rough;
- 3 had left the area;
- 2 had private rented tenancies in the area;
- 1 had been assisted through Housing First (see below);
- 1 had returned to their housing association property;
- 2 were deceased.

According to Crisis (2011) the average life expectancy for someone who sleeps rough is 47 years for men and 43 years for women.

Since 2013 the number of people rough sleeping in the District has increased, a trend that can be seen nationwide.

*Annual estimate of the number of people sleeping rough
in the District in the last five years*

Year	People Sleeping Rough
2013	8
2014	9
2015	9
2016	13
2017	17
Notes	
Estimate carried out on one night of the year set by Government	
Source: Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2017	

The Council is committed to the Government's No Second Night Out programme. However, there is no emergency access accommodation in the District (other than that provided by the Council under homelessness legislation). Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) and Doorway provide some supported accommodation for single young people, and Stonham provide supported accommodation for single people over 25 years but it is not emergency access.

Both the Council's Rough Sleeper Engagement Officer and P3 (a support provider) are involved in outreach work on the streets. The Stratford Link Project (see below) also supports people who sleep rough as well as people who are socially disadvantaged.

The Stratford Link Project

The Stratford Link Project is a drop-in centre in the centre of Stratford town for people who are socially disadvantaged or socially isolated, and people who sleep rough. People can access an array of services including hot drinks and snacks, washing facilities and clothes, bedding, links to support services, music lessons and podiatry.

The Link Project is open four mornings a week and is run by the Council's Rough Sleeper Engagement Officer, P3 (a support provider) and volunteers. The Project works with the police and community agencies to help vulnerable people with targeted support.

One of the aims of the Link Project is to reduce street begging which has become more prevalent in Stratford town in recent years. Anti-Social Behaviour, with an emphasis on substance misuse and street begging, is one of [South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership's](#) main priorities in its Partnership Plan. Begging is a complex issue, and not all people that are begging will be sleeping rough (and vice versa). In May 2018 a partner event was hosted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to determine what else could be done to combat substance misuse and begging in Stratford Town.

Housing First

[Housing First](#) gives homeless people a home. It then also provides wrap around intensive support to enable people with multiple and complex needs and histories of entrenched or repeat homelessness to secure and sustain accommodation. The housing is provided "first" and the support then follows; the housing and the support are separated. Individuals have choice and control and the service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations and a harm reduction approach.

Housing First is internationally recognised and evidence shows that it works. It supports people who disproportionately cost services more in terms of A&E callouts/ admissions/ police callouts etc. The Housing First service is costly because of the high levels of intensive support required but there are long term savings to society.

Housing First has been operating in the District since April 2015. P3 provides 50 hours of support a week to the project and can support up to ten Housing First tenants. Two housing associations have set aside accommodation for Housing First. As at May 2018 there were five people in Housing First accommodation.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

The Council has a 'humanitarian obligation' to provide emergency accommodation to people who are rough sleeping when there are severe weather conditions, in order to prevent deaths on the streets. [SWEP](#) is currently triggered when there is a forecast of zero degrees for 3 consecutive nights. This arrangement is under review.

Over a three month period during the 2017/18 winter, 18 single people and couples without children were accommodated through SWEP for a total of 193 nights.

P.H.I.L – Preventing homelessness improving lives

P.H.I.L is a countywide project that aims to prevent homelessness by identifying households at risk of homelessness early on (two to three months before crisis point). P.H.I.L can help households who are in private rented accommodation or living with parents or carers, with issues such as mental health, employment, welfare benefits and grants, and housing options.

The project was launched in January 2018 and is funded by Government until 31st December 2019.

As of 10th August 2018, P.H.I.L had received 33 referrals for people living in the District. Of the referrals: 4 have disengaged; 1 is not eligible; 7 have been passed to the Housing Advice Team; 4 have resolved their own issues and 15 are open cases. Two households have had their homelessness prevented. Of the 33 referrals, 10 households were living with family, 1 household was in social housing and 22 households were in private rented accommodation.

Crash pads for young people - Tom's Place

Since 2015, *Tom's Place*, which is an emergency access 'crash-pad' type facility, has been operated by Doorway It provides short-term accommodation for young people aged 16-25 years who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and who haven't got independent living skills. Intensive support is provided to enable the young people to move on to independent accommodation with the necessary skills to sustain a tenancy. As of July 2018, there were three self-contained units in operation.

12. Other information and services

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The [Warwickshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) describes the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local population and informs the local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The JSNA focuses on understanding need on a geographical basis and allows organisations to search themes and geographies they are interested in via a profile tool.

The [Warwickshire Director of Public Health Annual Report 2017](#) states that 7% of people aged 65 and over are estimated to be lonely all of the time or often, and 31% lonely 'some of the time'

Citizens Advice court desk worker/ dedicated housing and money advice worker

Source: Court desk report April 2017 to March 2018

The court desk is run by Citizens Advice (CAB) and stops housing association properties, private rented properties and owner occupied properties with a mortgage or secured loans being repossessed. CAB negotiates more affordable repayment plans with landlords and lenders and represents people in court.

In 2017/18 there were 41 Possession Sessions at Leamington Justice Centre (a 64% increase), and the Court desk worker represented Stratford residents in 221 individual hearings (a 100% increase). On the 35 occasions where CAB supported a tenant with advocacy to suspend or adjourn the execution of a Warrant of Eviction, the defendant was successful.

Citizens Advice (CAB) statistics April 2017 to March 2018

1. CAB saw 3,732 clients in the Stratford office and dealt with 17,163 issues – an average of nearly five issues per client.
2. Benefits and Tax Credits, debt, housing, financial services and capability and Universal Credit were the most common issues.
3. The primary benefits issue was personal independence payment, followed by Housing Benefit and Employment Support Allowance. Since the introduction of Universal Credit in December 2016, the number of Housing Benefit and Employment Support Allowance issues has decreased.
4. The primary debt issues were rent arrears - housing associations, Council Tax arrears and credit and store cards. Citizens Advice states that there has been a 38% increase in Council Tax arrears since 2016/17.
5. The top three housing issues were:
 - Housing Association property.
 - Threatened with homelessness.
 - Private Sector rented property.
6. The majority of threatened with homelessness cases were related to housing associations seeking possession action, which has seen an increase of 26% since 2016/17.
7. In April 2017 Stratford CAB joined the national Citizens advice 'Advice line'. Volunteers now spend 7% of their time answering queries over the phone for clients throughout the region. When needed, clients are invited in to their local office for further advice.
8. CAB sees an increasing number of people with complex problems. As a result their appointment system has changed to offer a more holistic service. They see fewer people in a day; however they are able to spend longer with each client.
9. 40% of Stratford clients reported having a disability or long term health condition; of those 28% reported having a mental health condition.
10. £942,450 income was gained with CAB assistance.

Source: Key Stats Stratford CA April 2017 to March 2018

Citizens Advice (CAB) Reach Out and Help programme (ROAH)

The CAB's 'Reach Out and Help' Programme seeks to alleviate poverty and hardship via knocking on people's doors to make contact and one to one drop in sessions around the District, leaflets and talks to groups, and financial capability training sessions. The programme covers a number of settlements in the District.

The *Reach Out to Older People* project for people over 65 years was launched in 2018.

Stratford-on-Avon District Housing Forum

Stratford-on-Avon District Housing Forum is a multi-agency independent strategic partnership chaired by Citizens Advice. It aims to improve the housing and support options of people experiencing housing difficulties, or who are at risk of experiencing housing difficulties. Its objectives are:

1. To inform the development of the District Housing Strategy (includes the Homelessness Review & Strategy and Private Sector Housing Strategy) and other relevant strategies and to implement, monitor, evaluate and review relevant actions.
2. To undertake research to establish the extent, nature and location of housing and support needs in the District.
3. To identify gaps in services and to devise ways of meeting unmet needs.
4. To develop policies and initiatives to assist people experiencing housing difficulties, and to help people live independently and keep their accommodation.
5. To raise awareness of the housing and support needs of people who are experiencing housing difficulties, or who risk doing so, in appropriate planning and policy forums, and to ensure needs are met.

6. To facilitate effective multi-agency working in the provision of advice, housing and support services.
7. To ensure that the views of organisations and people who have experienced housing difficulties impact on policies and initiatives.

The work of the Forum is wide and varied. Topics covered by the Forum in the last year include the roll out of Universal Credit, modern slavery, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the services available in the District to assist people.

Local food banks

Both people in work and out of work are using foodbanks. There are four foodbanks in the District:

- Arden: Alcester and Studley;
- Fosse: Bishops Itchington, Southam, Kineton, Wellesbourne;
- Shipston;
- Stratford town.

There are also three foodbanks just outside the District i.e. in Evesham, Kenilworth and Leamington and Warwick.

People using the foodbanks are signposted to other agencies for other assistance. Citizens Advice (CAB) P3, the Council's Housing Service and other organisations are able to make referrals to the foodbanks. Much of the information about foodbanks is co-ordinated via Stratford District Housing Forum.

The use of foodbanks both nationally and locally has increased over the last few years. In 2017, Stratford food bank fed 2,163 people compared with 1,375 people in 2016; an increase of 57%.

Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, The [Trussell Trust's](#) food bank network saw an increase of 13% on the previous year of emergency food supplies it distributed.

Other poverty, social and financial inclusion work

This work assists households both in and out of work who are struggling financially. It involves a number of different agencies including the Council's Housing Advice Team, the housing benefit team, Citizens Advice (CAB) and support providers. The work includes debt advice, money management and financial capability training.

Statistically, people at risk of homelessness and affordable housing tenants are more likely than other people to experience one or more aspects of social and financial exclusion.

A number of agencies in Shipston have launched an initiative to tackle social isolation and loneliness in Shipston and the surrounding villages.

More detailed information about [social and financial inclusion](#) work can be found in the soon to be adopted Social Inclusion Statement 2018-2023. The statement lists priorities for the Social Inclusion Partnership which includes the Council, County Council and local voluntary sector organisations. Projects to date have included refurbishment of the Ken Kennett community centre in Stratford and Lighthorne Heath village hall, and funding for village halls to be digitally enabled.

Housing Early Lifeline Payment (HELP)

Housing Early Lifeline Payments (HELP) will assist the Council to meet the rising demand for its services resulting from the Homelessness Reduction Act and the increasing cost of temporary accommodation. The HELP policy will provide financial support for six months to residents to assist them to stay in their current home or secure new accommodation. The Housing Advice Team will administer the scheme.

Support for existing housing association tenants

Housing associations have extensive programmes to stop tenants losing their homes e.g. coaching to sustain tenancies, money management advice, and career and employment support. Orbit's 'Better Days' and Bromford's 'Bromford Way' are examples of such programmes.

Housing related support

Some people require housing related support to enable them to live independently in the community. People are eligible for support if they are eligible for care funding or are "on the edge of care". [Countywide services](#) were recommissioned in 2016 to promote independent living, either in people's own homes i.e. floating support or in short-term accommodation based services (normally maximum of 2 years).

Housing Related Support enables people to:

- Maintain independence;
- Have good health and wellbeing;
- Keep safe within their home and community;
- Budget effectively,
- Understand their tenancies;
- Participate in training/ education and
- Obtain paid work.

People can self-refer or agencies can refer on someone's behalf; one referral form can be used for all services.

Floating Support

- *P3 (People, Potential, Possibilities)* provides floating and outreach support for people aged 25 years and over.

- *St Basils*, in partnership with *Doorway*, provide floating support for young people aged 16 to 24 years.
- *Together* provide floating support for people aged 16+ years with disabilities including mental ill health, physical disabilities, sensory impairments and learning disabilities.

Accommodation based support

- *Home Group* provides accommodation based support for single people aged 25 years and over with a history of homelessness or offending behaviour.
- *Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA)* provides accommodation based support for young people and young parents aged 16 to 24 years.

Priority Families programme

Source: Priority Families Year 3 Summary

The Priority Families Programme has been running since 2009. It helps families with multiple problems such as worklessness, truancy /exclusions, crime/anti-social behaviour, education and housing children in need. It is overseen by a multi-agency partnership led by Warwickshire County Council. Each district has a locality panel that meets monthly to discuss cases.

As of the end of March 2018, support was being provided to 360 families in the District. Since 2015 a total of 335 families in the District had successfully made and sustained improvements.

Dementia cafes - supporting people with dementia and their carers

Stratford on Avon District Council pledged to become a dementia friendly organisation in 2014. It has produced a leaflet which details all the

dementia cafes, day care and other activity groups which are available for people living with dementia and their carers. There are eight Dementia Cafes in the District.

Domestic violence services

Warwickshire Domestic Violence services are run by [Refuge](#). Refuge offers specialist support to women, girls and men. Advice and support is offered to those affected by domestic violence, including a specialist accommodation facility in the District that offers a safe haven for victims. The refuge consists of five self-contained flats. There are also outreach services and a Sanctuary Scheme that fits safety enhancements in people's homes.

Counselling service

[New hope counselling](#) offers a counselling service in Stratford-upon-Avon town. There is no charge for the service but donations are requested from clients dependent on what they can afford. The service is open to adults and teenagers and provides counselling on a range of different problems including depression, anxiety and stress, relationship problems, addictions, homelessness, bereavement and loss and low self-esteem.

Drug and alcohol services

Since 1st May 2018 [Change Grow Live](#) is the commissioned organisation in Warwickshire to provide support to adults affected by substance abuse. In Stratford-on-Avon District it operates an outreach service by appointment only, whereby appointments are booked with workers at various venues within the District. Referrals are made through the Leamington Spa office.

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme (VPRS)

Working in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, the Council has pledged to facilitate the resettlement of twelve Syrian families by 2020 as part of the national Syrian Vulnerable Resettlement Programme. As of July 2018, five families had been resettled in the District. The families will receive support to integrate into the community. Housing is being provided through the privately rented sector. Seven more properties will be required by the end of 2019.

13. Hyperlinks to other strategies, research and information

Legislation and government policy

This is not an exhaustive list.

- A new deal for social housing (MHCLG) (2018 green paper)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733605/A_new_deal_for_social_housing_web_accessible.pdf
- Care Act 2014
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>
- Department of Work and Pensions – Benefit Cap May 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731289/benefit-cap-statistics-may-2018.pdf
- Equality Act 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- Homelessness Act 2002
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/7/contents>
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted>
- Housing Act 1996
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/contents>
- Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/10/contents>
- Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) guidance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15810/142631.pdf
- Localism Act 2011
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>
- National Planning Policy Framework 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf
- Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018 (MHCLG)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf
- The domestic private rented property minimum standard - Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713159/Domestic_Private_Rented_Landlord_Guidance_-_June_18.pdf

- The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation 9(Mandatory Conditions of Licences) Regulations 2018
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/616/pdfs/uksi_20180616_en.pdf
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/1860/contents/made>
- Universal Credit
<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/65/pdfs/uksiem_20180065_en.pdf?utm_campaign=588328_Universal%20Credit%20update%20February%202018&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dotmailer&dm_i=3R33,CLYG,11XHHX,1BFYO,1
- Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide (DCLG)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6261/1939099.pdf
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/welfarereform.html>
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7/contents/enacted>

District strategies and research

Unless otherwise stated all the documents cover Stratford on Avon District Council area.

- Affordable housing property list 2015 and 2017 (Stratford-on-Avon District Council) 
- Citizens Advice South Warwickshire Annual Statistics 
- Housing Financial Assistance Policy V1.00 30.06.2017 Document ID HEART MB 
- Housing Waiting List and homelessness records 
(Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
- Home Energy Conservation Act – Report of Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2017
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/173348/name/HECA%20Report%202017%20.pdf>
- Local Authority live tables on homelessness (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

- Local Authority live tables on rents, lettings and tenancies (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies>
- Local Development Plan that includes the Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 and associated documents and evidence.
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-regeneration/planning-policy.cfm>
 - Stratford-on-Avon District Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment – 2016 update
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/templates/server/document-relay.cfm?doc=173548&name=Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment%20Update%202016.pdf>
 - Neighbourhood plans
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-regeneration/neighbourhood-plans.cfm>
 - Parish plans
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-regeneration/parish-plans.cfm>
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-regeneration/supplementary-planning-documents-spds.cfm>
- Priority Families Year 3 Summary 
- Private Sector Housing Condition Survey November 2009 
- Rough sleeping in England Autumn 2017 (official count that is reported to government annually)
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2017?utm_source=LGiU+Subscribers&utm_campaign=b460e69413-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_02_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4e47157211-b460e69413-199239901
- Social Inclusion Statement
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/people-communities/community-priorities.cfm>
- South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/207155/name/CSP%20Priorities%202018%2019.pdf>

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/207154/name/South%20Warwickshire%20CSP%20Partnership%20Plan%202016%2017.pdf>
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council Corporate Strategy 2015-19
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/council-democracy/corporate-strategy-2015--2019.cfm>
- Stratford on Avon Economic Assessment 2017 
- Statistical Data Return 2016-17
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-october-2016-to-september-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-april-2017-to-march-2018>

- Sub-regional fuel poverty data
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2017>
- Survey of Advertised Private Rents in Stratford-on-Avon District January 2018
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/175423/name/Private%20sector%20rents%20in%20Stratford%20on%20Avon%20District%202018%20analysis%20phase%201%20final.pdf>
- Tenancy Strategy
<https://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/documents/s41708/TenancyStrategyReview.pdf>
- Tourism Economic Impact Assessment - The Research Solution 
- Valuation Office Agency – Private rental market summary statistics
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-october-2016-to-september-2017>

Other local strategies and research

- Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP)
<https://www.cwlep.com/>
- Extra Care Housing Position Statement April 2014 
(Warwickshire County Council)
- Warwickshire Director of Public Health Annual Report
<https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-630-1310>
- Warwickshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
<http://hwb.warwickshire.gov.uk/2018/05/08/jsna-profiler-tool-place-based-approach/>

Other information

- Census 2011
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>
- Centre for Ageing better - Strategies for older people's housing must focus on general needs
<https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/older-people-housing>
- Claimant count by unitary and local authority (experimental)
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/datasets/claimantcountbyunitaryandlocalauthorityexperimental/current>
- Department of Work and Pensions - Family Resources Survey 2016/17

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692771/family-resources-survey-2016-17.pdf

- English Housing Survey 2015-16
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>
- English Housing Survey 2016-17
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705821/2016-17_EHS_Headline_Report.pdf
- Homeless Link – Housing First in England/ The Principles
<https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Housing%20First%20in%20England%20The%20Principles.pdf>
- Homeless Link SWEP
<https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/SWEP%20and%20Winter%20Provision%20guidance%202017.pdf>
- Housing LIN (promotes housing choices for older people)
<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/>
- Independent Age – Unsuitable, insecure and substandard homes; The barriers faced by older private renters
<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Unsuitable-insecure-and-substandard-homes-The-barriers-faced-by-older-private-renters.pdf>
- Local authority housing data
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>
- Office for National Statistics
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>
- Preparing for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (Andy Gale) 
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council's housing service
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/homes-properties/housing-advice-2.cfm>