

What are housing associations doing to help prevent homelessness?

NHF homelessness survey report 2023

February 2024

Summary

Five years after beginning our focus on homelessness, we wanted to carry out a member survey on homelessness to support and inform the aims of our 2022-25 Business Strategy. We wanted to understand where we are now as a sector on tackling homelessness and what has changed in recent years, as well as highlight good practice and the issues the sector needs more support to tackle. We collected key measures as of 31 March 2023.

The survey asked NHF members what they were already doing to prevent and relieve homelessness, including how they work with local authorities on homelessness. It also asked respondents to outline the biggest barriers they faced when preventing homelessness, asking respondents to outline how they experience the current policy landscape on homelessness.

Among the main findings in the survey were:

- Homelessness prevention is a priority for specialist homelessness accommodation providers and general needs providers.
- Respondents feel their Membership of Homes for Cathy helps embed homelessness prevention.
- Resident and customer engagement is important for organisations.
- The most common types of homelessness prevention support provided are: tenancy sustainment, mitigating eviction risk and welfare advice or support.
- Working with local authorities on homelessness is important for housing associations.
- Relationship building is a priority and appears to be easier when a housing provider has homes in a local authority area.
- There is increasing demand for homelessness prevention services when compared to the same period last year (April 2022 to March 2023).

- Homeless households were mostly housed in supported accommodation.
- The most prominent barriers faced by respondents in rehousing homeless households are lack of homes, funding for support and affordability for households.
- Two thirds of respondents had developed new approaches to homelessness prevention that attempt to tackle the above barriers.

Introduction

Homelessness and the housing association sector

We are living through a crisis of housing supply and affordability, which is increasing housing insecurity. Despite modest recent decreases in rough sleeping numbers, rough sleeping is rising again and homelessness is still a major issue. In 2023, there are historically high numbers of children living in temporary accommodation.

Housing homeless and vulnerable people has always been a key part of what the housing association sector does. The history of housing associations show that many formed in direct response to issues of housing, such as poor quality, discrimination, or the needs of refugees. In the case of homelessness, housing associations were also formed in direct response to the problems raised by the 1966 BBC television play 'Cathy Come Home'.

Today, housing associations play an important role in ending homelessness, whether they are specialist organisations or general needs providers.

Our work on homelessness at the NHF

At the NHF, we have been working with our members to increase our focus on homelessness. In October 2017, we began a project to build the evidence base and strengthen the social housing sector's position as a key part of the solution to homelessness. It is our aim to work with the sector to look to the future of housing associations' work on homelessness.

This piece of work began in 2018 with a survey open to all NHF members, to start to answer these questions and develop an ambitious, impactful workstream that actively contributes to preventing homelessness. The survey demonstrated the breadth of work on homelessness within the sector and highlighted important issues to address alongside our members.

Five years on, we are in a different world, and much has changed, but the sector remains committed to ending homelessness.

The NHF's 2022-25 Business Strategy explicitly includes homelessness. Under "Supporting our members to deliver their social purpose", we commit to driving and leading change to ensure housing associations provide homes that are affordable to people in housing need. Under this commitment, we aim to secure the policy and funding our members need to continue to build affordable housing and increase the number of social rent homes they build, including for homeless households and people with support needs.

Methodology

For this research exercise, we set up and fielded an online survey, which we shared with 454 individuals belonging to our member housing associations. From this, we received 49 responses in total – representing a response rate of 11%. The 49 respondents' stock represents 29% of all our members' housing stock (which totals 2,721,878 units). These figures are based on the data we hold in our members' records, which derive from their annual Statistical Data Return (SDR). Therefore, data held is only as current as the last update of the SDR. The above total figures are the latest available for the sector, for the year 2021/22.

The survey questions largely remained the same as the 2018 iteration of the survey, providing some opportunities for benchmarking. However, we have also added questions around membership of Homes for Cathy, provided more space for respondents to talk about changes in organisational priorities, and added further options to choose from when ranking barriers to homelessness prevention in this year's survey.

Findings: A summary

What are housing associations already doing to prevent and relieve homelessness?

- Homelessness prevention is a priority for specialist homelessness accommodation providers as well as the general needs providers that responded to the survey.
- Service user engagement is important for organisations providing homelessness prevention services.

- Membership of Homes for Cathy helps embed homelessness prevention. The commitments around meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups, operating flexible allocations and eligibility policies, working in partnership, and preventing evictions were especially well embedded. This suggests that these are core parts of what housing associations do around homelessness, but also that they may be more achievable than the other Homes for Cathy commitments.
- The most common types of staff training offered are around person-centred support, trauma-informed care and psychologically informed environments.
- The most common types of homelessness prevention support provided are: tenancy sustainment; mitigating eviction risk and welfare advice or support.
- Need for homelessness prevention support is mostly identified prior to letting a tenancy.
- To measure the success of homelessness prevention services, metrics and KPIs are used but also measures of progress towards independence for individuals. The most common KPIs focus on prevention and tenancy sustainment, developing new accommodation and new lettings. These also reflect the issues raised by the barriers found to rehousing homeless households, so it is understandable that housing associations want to measure these outcomes to help measure success against the challenges.
- Homeless households were mostly housed in supported accommodation. This could reflect national trends that show high levels of support needs among households accepted as homeless but also the higher availability of stock for single households compared to family-sized accommodation.
- Respondents have a variety of specialist services for homeless households experiencing multiple disadvantages. Respondents housed more single homeless households than households with children. This likely reflects the much higher prevalence of people placed in supported housing rather than general needs housing.
- 79% had rehoused people in long-term accommodation following “Everyone In” and almost half had rehoused people in long-term accommodation following refugee resettlement schemes. This could demonstrate the value of stable accommodation with support in finding long-term housing solutions for single households but also the challenges in sourcing accommodation for families or that is appropriate for refugee households.
- Two thirds of respondents have developed new approaches to preventing homelessness – these are around increasing accommodation, commitments to prevention, new services and tackling the cost-of-living crisis.

Working with local authorities on homelessness

- Respondents felt working with local authorities on homelessness was important. The following were 'very important' to respondents: referring tenants at risk of homelessness to the local authority, in accordance with the Commitment to Refer; working with a local authority on their local homelessness strategy; working closely with a local authority on allocations and lettings; discussing with the local authority how to work together to prevent homelessness.
- Relationship building is a priority and might be easier when a provider has stock in a local authority area.
- To support the Homelessness Reduction Act, respondents have developed commitments to reducing evictions, increased tenancy sustainment support and new partnerships with local authorities.

The barriers that housing associations experience in preventing and relieving homelessness

- The most prominent barriers faced by respondents in rehousing homeless households are a lack of homes, funding for support provision and affordability.
- Two-thirds of respondents had developed new approaches to homelessness prevention that attempt to tackle these barriers.
- Most respondents provided furnished tenancies and were confident that they could do so, but lack of furniture was also a barrier to applicants accepting an offer of a property and elicited some low confidence scores among how achievable the Homes for Cathy commitments were. This could therefore be an area that respondents would need more support to achieve across the board.

Housing associations' experience of the current policy landscape as regards homelessness

- There is increasing demand for homelessness prevention services. The increase in demand and barriers faced to rehousing homeless households demonstrates that we need a long-term plan for housing that will address the lack of social housing, affordability challenges and lack of funding for support services.

Organisational priorities

Organisational focus

Of the 49 respondents, 17 classed homelessness as the main focus of their organisation – making up a third of all respondents (35%). For most, however, homelessness was not the main focus (65%). This nevertheless shows that homelessness prevention can be a priority for organisations that are not specialist homelessness accommodation providers.

This is shown in that when respondents were asked if homelessness was named as a strategic priority within their organisation’s corporate plan (or equivalent), of the 49 respondents to this question, 32 or two-thirds of respondents (65%) said they had named homelessness as a strategic priority within their respective corporate plans.

Chart 1: Is homelessness your organisation's ordinary/main focus?

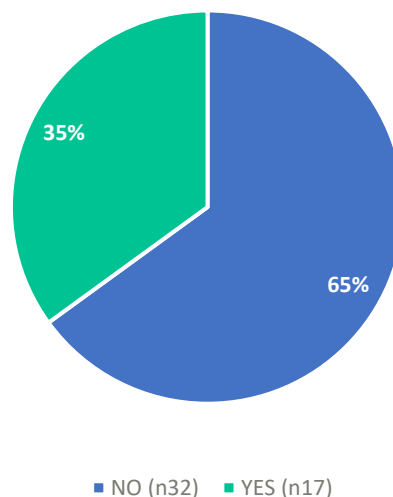


Chart 2: Is homelessness named as a strategic priority within your organisation’s corporate plan (or equivalent)?



KPIs

We asked respondents if they had any KPIs to drive forward homelessness prevention. Of the 48 respondents to this question, more than half (59%) state that they do not have any KPIs to drive forward their homelessness prevention. Of those that do have such KPIs (19 respondents) – they were asked to provide further details. These generally touched on the following areas:

- Prevention and tenancy sustainment/tenancies ending in homelessness (4 comments)
- Developing new accommodation – these included developing more social housing units (3 comments), more supported housing units (4 respondents); move-on units (2 comments); positive move on (3 respondents) and Housing First (2 comments)
- New lettings - Moving in/Number/Proportion of lets to homeless households (4 comments)

Homes for Cathy membership

The NHF supports the work of [Homes for Cathy](#) to share good practice on how housing associations can prevent homelessness. We asked respondents whether their organisation was a Homes for Cathy member, and if so whether they found membership helped them embed homelessness prevention in their organisation, and their level of confidence in how well embedded the following Homes for Cathy commitments were in their organisation.

There was almost an even split among the respondents between those who are members (n25) and those who aren't (n23).

Of those who were members of Homes for Cathy, they were asked to comment whether membership helped them to embed homelessness prevention in their organisation – we received responses from most of the members (21 comments)

Overall, these comments reflect high levels of confidence in how well embedded all the Homes for Cathy commitments were among respondents. In particular, the following four commitments drew the highest levels of confidence (extremely confident/high) when measured against the others:

- To commit to meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups – 19 responses
- To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants' unique set of circumstances and housing history to be considered – 18 responses
- To work in partnership to provide a range of affordable housing options which meet the needs of all homeless people in their local communities – 18 responses
- To not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless (as defined by the Crisis plan definition) – 17 responses

This suggests that meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups, operating flexible allocations and eligibility policies, working in partnership and preventing evictions are core parts of what housing associations do around homelessness, but also that they may be more achievable than the other [Homes for Cathy commitments](#).

Most respondents had high confidence in their ability to ensure that properties offered to homeless people are ready to move into, but this question also elicited the highest number of “low confidence” responses. This could therefore be an area that respondents would need more support to achieve.

The commitments drawing moderate to the lowest levels of confidence were:

- To contribute to ending migrant homelessness in the areas Housing Associations operate (11 respondents)
- To lobby, challenge and inspire others to support ending homelessness (9 respondents)
- To offer constructive solutions to applicants who aren't deemed eligible for an offer of a home (8 respondent)

This suggests a challenging working environment around these areas but also potentially a lesser focus on these areas.

Table 1: Please rate your level of confidence in how well embedded the following Homes for Cathy commitments are in your organisation:

Where respondents picked “none”, this should be interpreted as “N/A”, “don’t know” or no answer, and not an indicator of confidence, as those who felt they didn’t have confidence would likely have picked “low”.

Commitments	Extremely Confident	High	Moderate	Low	None
To contribute to the development and execution of local authority homelessness strategies.	4	11	6	0	2
To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants' unique set of circumstances and housing history to be considered.	6	12	1	1	3

To offer constructive solutions to applicants who aren't deemed eligible for an offer of a home.	0	11	7	1	3
To not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless (as defined by the Crisis plan definition).	5	12	1	1	3
To commit to meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups.	7	12	1	0	2
To work in partnership to provide a range of affordable housing options which meet the needs of all homeless people in their local communities.	3	15	2	0	2
To ensure that properties offered to homeless people should be ready to move into.	2	13	1	4	2
To contribute to ending migrant homelessness in the areas Housing Associations operate.	2	7	8	3	2
To lobby, challenge and inspire others to support ending homelessness.	4	7	9	0	2

Service User involvement

Respondents were asked to comment on how their organisation supported customer engagement within their homelessness provisions. The question elicited 44 responses/comments – showing a lot of willingness to involve service users in service design, evaluation and review.

The most prominent themes emerging from a review of the comments were around the following:

- Formal/informal feedback / Tenant satisfaction surveys / interviews / coffee mornings / other means for consultation / written tenant feedback e.g. text messages (15 comments)
- Tenant forums/meetings/networks/advisory panels (15 comments)
- Tenant representatives on committees/review/scrutiny/recruitment panels/mystery shopping/audits – lived experience (11 comments)
- One to one support / support planning (8 comments)
- Designing services, strategies and support plans with tenants (coproduction) (5 comments)
- Supporting the local authority to meet its homelessness duties / identify new build opportunities (5 comments)

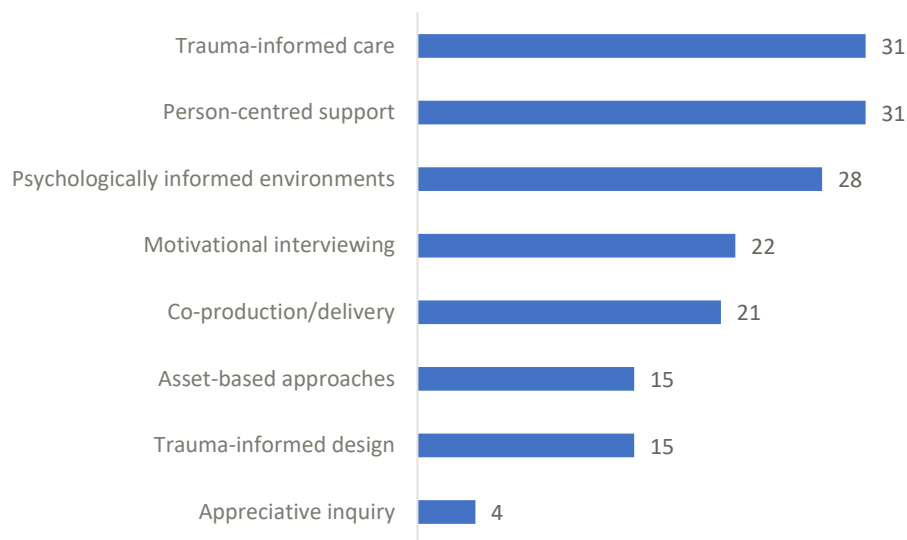
Staff training

Registered office: Lion Court, 25 Procter St, Holborn, London WC1V 6NY
020 7067 1010 | housing.org.uk | National Housing Federation Limited,
trading as National Housing Federation. A company with limited liability.
Registered in England No. 302132

**NATIONAL
HOUSING
FEDERATION**

We asked respondents if they provided staff training in areas relating to homelessness prevention. The most common training offered by respondents is around person-centred support (31 responses) and trauma-informed care (31 responses) and psychologically informed environments (28 responses). Respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

Chart 3: Areas of staff training provision

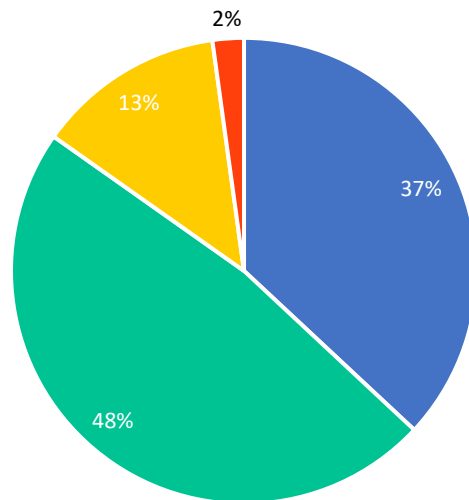


Local authority relationships

We asked respondents to rate their relationship with the local authority(ies) where their stock is located, and gave space for further comments. We also asked how important is it for respondents to work with their local authority(ies) on a number of areas and how often they work with their local authority(ies) on certain issues.

The majority of respondents have a positive relationship with the local authorities in which their stock is located. Of the 46 respondents to this question, 85% have a good or excellent relationship. This suggests that relationship building is a priority and might be easier when a provider has stock in a local authority area.

Chart 3: How would you rate your relationship with the local authority(ies) where your stock is located?

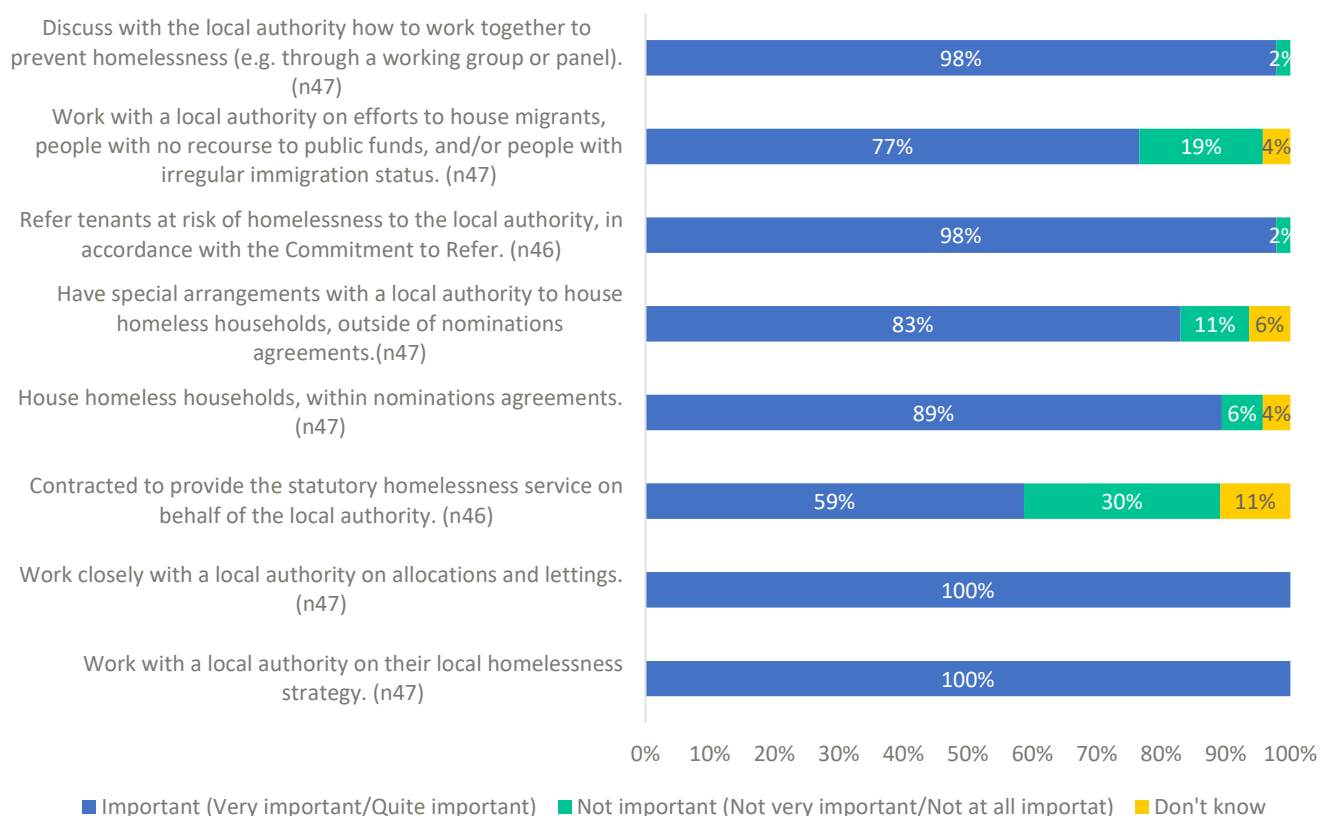


■ Excellent (n17) ■ Good (n22) ■ Mixed - depends on the local authority (n6) ■ Ok (n1)

Respondents were asked to provide further feedback on their experience/relationship with 29 respondents providing comments. The most prominent themes / issues cited by respondents were around the following:

- Depends on how much stock in an area – usually better where larger amount of stock (8 comments)
- Relationships vary when working with large number of authorities (mainly positive) (6 comments)
- Attend strategic meetings with LA (6 comments)
- Set up by an LA, mostly good relationship (3 comments)

Chart 2: How important is it for you to work with the local authority(ies) on any of the following? Please rate the importance of each one, including if you do not currently do this but would like to do this in the future.



Respondents were asked to consider the importance of working with the local authority in thirteen areas. Chart 2 displays the areas which received more than 5 responses. Overall, most areas identified in the question were important. In particular, the following were ‘very important’ to respondents –

- Refer tenants at risk of homelessness to the local authority, in accordance with the Commitment to Refer (39 respondents)
- Work with a local authority on their local homelessness strategy (37 respondents)
- Work closely with a local authority on allocations and lettings (35 respondents)
- Discuss with the local authority how to work together to prevent homelessness (e.g. through a working group or panel). (35 respondents)

When asked how frequently they interacted with the local authority in their respective areas of operation on different areas, the three most frequent areas of interactions/work with local authorities as identified by respondents (always/often) were the following:

- Work closely with a local authority on allocations and lettings (37 responses).

- Refer tenants at risk of homelessness to the local authority, in accordance with the Commitment to Refer (37 responses).
- House homeless households, within nominations agreements (35 responses).

Table 2: Thinking of the local authority(ies) in the area(s) you operate in, how often do you do the following? Please select one from each row.

	Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Don't know
Work with a local authority on their local homelessness strategy (n47)	10	19	12	4	2	0
Work closely with a local authority on allocations and lettings (n47)	20	17	6	2	2	0
Contracted to provide the statutory homelessness service on behalf of the local authority (n46).	6	10	8	6	14	2
House homeless households, within nominations agreements (n47).	15	20	3	3	5	1
Have special arrangements with a local authority to house homeless households, outside of nominations agreements (n47).	7	17	7	6	7	3
Refer tenants at risk of homelessness to the local authority, in accordance with the Commitment to Refer (n47)	25	12	4	1	5	0
Discuss with the local authority how to work together to prevent homelessness (e.g. through a working group or panel). (n46)	13	18	9	4	1	1
Contribute to local housing needs assessments (n1)	0	0	0	1	0	0
Specific projects like Housing First and Next Steps (n1)	1	0	0	0	0	0
work with multi-agency approach on providing homes for people with complex needs (n1)	1	0	0	0	0	0

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Respondents were asked to select the measures they had deployed in order to support the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) (2017). The top three measures respondents have selected were around establishing a clear commitment to reducing evictions (40 responses), increased tenancy sustainment support to tenants (39

responses) and development of new partnerships with local authorities (32 responses).

Table 3: How have you supported the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017? Please tick all that apply.

Measures	Responses
Committed to reducing evictions.	40
Increased tenancy sustainment support to tenants.	39
Developed new partnerships with local authorities.	32
Developed new partnerships with charities.	29
Increased supply in accommodation, i.e. through Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme or emergency beds.	28
Negotiated funded support.	26
Other	4

Homelessness prevention services

Respondents were asked to identify the homelessness prevention services they offered. The top three types of support provided by respondents were:

- Tenancy sustainment advice and support (47 responses)
- Identifying and mitigating eviction risk (44 responses)
- Welfare advice or support (43 responses)

The least common schemes/measures for addressing homelessness were:

- Immigration advice, signposting or support (16 responses).
- Advice or support for ex-offenders (16 responses).
- Support for veterans (12 responses).
- Special policies or procedures for identifying hidden homelessness (5 responses).

Five respondents provided comments on other approaches deployed. These are outlined in the table below:

Comments
Built more social rented homes than other RP's
Committed to consent to refer
Key Step - Supported accommodation - for over 18s - temporary to support a move to permanent

Our provision was already high quality so the Act has not made a significant difference. We continue to sustain tenancies through our tenancy sustainment team and are focused on keeping people in their homes (especially if they are vulnerable) and would only take possession actions where all other options have been exhausted. We also meet our responsibilities under the act by providing affordable homes more generally.

Respondents could choose more than one option, so likely offer several different homelessness prevention services.

Most respondents identify tenants who need access to these homelessness prevention schemes and support prior to letting a tenancy (39 responses). This could be through pre-tenancy assessments. Many respondents also used internal processes, for example through metrics such as rent arrears (36), or referrals from other staff (36), and partnerships with other local services (36) to identify households. Respondents could choose more than one option, so clearly use a variety of methods to identify households in need of homelessness prevention support.

Table 4: Which of the following homelessness prevention schemes do you provide, if any? By this, we mean direct support that you offer your current tenants to help them stay in their tenancy. Please tick all that apply.

Specialism	Responses
Tenancy sustainment advice and support.	47
Identifying and mitigating eviction risk.	44
Welfare advice or support.	43
General advice service for tenants.	42
Housing advice or support.	42
Help with applying for hardship grant or vouchers.	40
Domestic abuse advice or support.	39
Person-centred approaches to income collection	38
Financial capability advice.	38
Help with fuel poverty.	37
Employment and training advice and support.	33
Partnerships with homelessness organisations.	32
Intensive move-in support service for vulnerable new tenants.	32
Internal hardship fund.	32
Mental health advice or support.	29
Trauma-informed approaches to minimising anti-social behaviour.	27
Furnished tenancies.	27

Person-centred cuckooing policies and procedures.	18
Substance misuse advice or support.	22
Pledging/Committing not to evict.	21
Social Care interventions (e.g. Social Worker/Student Social Worker to support tenants).	19
Immigration advice, signposting or support.	16
Advice or support for ex-offenders.	16
Support for veterans.	12
Special policies or procedures for identifying hidden homelessness.	5
Other.	5
None of the above.	1

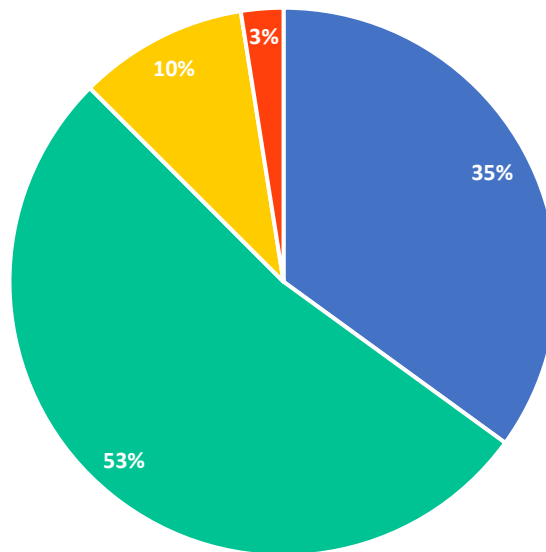
Table 5: How do you identify tenants who need the above homelessness prevention support? Please tick all that apply.

Specialism	Response
Support need identified pre-letting.	39
Rent arrears.	36
Referrals from internal staff.	36
Referral from other local services.	36
Support need identified at point of letting.	32
Self-reporting.	32
Mobilising support when the tenancy is at risk.	32
Other	1

Demand for homelessness services

Demand for homelessness services was reported by 33 respondents, who provided figures/comments for how many households were helped by their homelessness prevention services in the last year (April 2022 to March 2023). Of these, 27 responded with figures. The total number of households helped by specific homelessness prevention services is 6,944.

Chart 4: Do you think demand for your homelessness prevention services has changed when compared to the same period last year (April 2022 to March 2023)?



■ Greatly increased (n14) ■ Increased (n21) ■ No change (n4) ■ Decreased (n1)

For the majority of respondents, demand for their homelessness provision has increased markedly – with 35 out of 44 respondents citing that demand has increased (Greatly increased/Increased).

Measuring the impact of homelessness prevention activities

33 respondents commented on how they were tracking the impact of their homelessness prevention activities.

The top three themes drawn from these responses are:

- KPIs/Metrics (14 comments) e.g. eviction rates, arrears, benefits levels; numbers of households referred to/accessing money advice/tenancy sustainment service, occupancy rates, speed of turn-around of vacant properties, positive moves and moving into independent living; allocations to homeless households (GN and SH) and tenancy sustainment; calls to wellbeing services; tenancy length.
- Accreditation, homelessness strategy or commissioned service KPIs (6 comments)
- Measuring distance travelled/growth in independence/progress for individual tenants, using various tools for this e.g. WEMWBS and outcomes STAR (4 comments)

Accommodation and lettings

We asked how many lettings to all new households (not just homeless households) respondents made between April 2022 and March 2023 for the following categories - general needs housing, supported housing, retirement living and temporary accommodation. We also asked what type of housing respondents provided specifically for people who have been accepted as homeless. Overall, respondents accommodated 24,962 households between April 2022 and March 2023.

Table 6: Overall, how many lettings to all new households (not just homeless households) were made between April 2022 and March 2023 for the following categories?

Overall, how many lettings to all new households (not just homeless households) were made between April 2022-March 2023 for the following categories.	Response
General needs (n22)	15404
Temporary accommodation (n9)	416
Supported housing (n24)	7558
Retirement living (n13)	1584
Total	24962

Table 7: What type of housing do you provide for people who have been accepted as homeless?

What type of housing do you provide for people who have been accepted as homeless? Please select all that apply.	Response
Self-contained, dispersed (supported housing)	33
General needs housing	33
Hostel accommodation (supported housing)	27
Housing First	21
Retirement housing	21
Refuge accommodation (supported housing)	15
NSAP/RSAP accommodation	15
Other support housing - please specify	10
Other - Write In:	1
SHAP accommodation	0

Respondents offered a variety of housing options to people accepted as homeless. Respondents could select all that applied so many offered more than one type of accommodation. The most prominent forms of housing offered to those accepted as

homeless are: self-contained, dispersed supported housing (33 responses); general needs housing (33 responses) and hostel accommodation (supported housing) (27 responses).

Table 8: Did you place households into supported housing or general needs accommodation between April 2022 and March 2023?

Roughly half of homeless households were placed in supported housing and half were placed in general needs accommodation.

Did you place households into supported housing or general needs accommodation between April 2022 and March 2023? Please select all that apply.	Response
Households placed into supported accommodation:	33
Households placed into general needs accommodation:	31
N/A don't have supported accommodation	1
Don't know	3

Table 9: Please tell us how many homeless households you have placed into supported housing / general needs between April 2022 to March 2023:

Please tell us how many homeless households you have placed into supported housing / general needs between April 2022 to March 2023:	Response
Households placed into supported accommodation:	5837
Households placed into general needs accommodation:	2895

More than twice as many homeless households were placed in supported accommodation (5837) than in general needs accommodation (2895).

This may represent a higher survey response rate from supported accommodation providers, as DLUHC figures on relief case outcomes show a more even split of homeless households placed in supported accommodation (27.50%) or a local authority / registered provider general needs tenancy (25.60%)¹.

Table 10: Between April 2022 and March 2023, how many of the following new households who were homeless (whether owed a duty or not) immediately prior to letting did you house?

¹ [Statutory homelessness in England: financial year 2022-23 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2022-23), Table 4.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, how many of the following new households who were homeless (whether owed a duty or not) immediately prior to letting did you house?	Response
Single men at risk of homelessness	1297
Single people at risk of homelessness	1160
Care Leavers	704
Young people aged 25 years and under (excluding Care Leavers)	649
People who have slept rough	408
Single women at risk of homelessness	298
Households with children	239
Don't know	76
Refugees	58
Veterans	22
People with No Recourse to Public Funds	1

Respondents housed more single homeless households than households with children. This probably reflects the much higher prevalence of people placed in supported housing rather than general needs housing. There were more single men-only services than single women-only services but there could be men and women in mixed services for single households at risk of homelessness, which is the second largest type of household accommodated. Significant numbers of care leavers and young homeless people who are not care leavers were accommodated. Some respondents had specialist services for specific needs, such as accommodation for refugees or accommodation for veterans. Only one respondent was able to accommodate people with no recourse to public funds who are homeless.

Table 11: Do you have a specific housing offer for homeless households facing multiple disadvantages?

Respondents were asked if they had a specific housing offer for homeless people facing multiple disadvantages – the most prominent of these were for young people (20 responses), people with learning disabilities (18 responses), women fleeing domestic abuse (17 responses) and those around mental health (17 responses). Respondents could select more than one answer so may have had a variety of different services. This was a multiple choice-based question.

Do you have a specific housing offer for homeless households facing multiple disadvantages? Please select all that apply.	Response
Young people	20

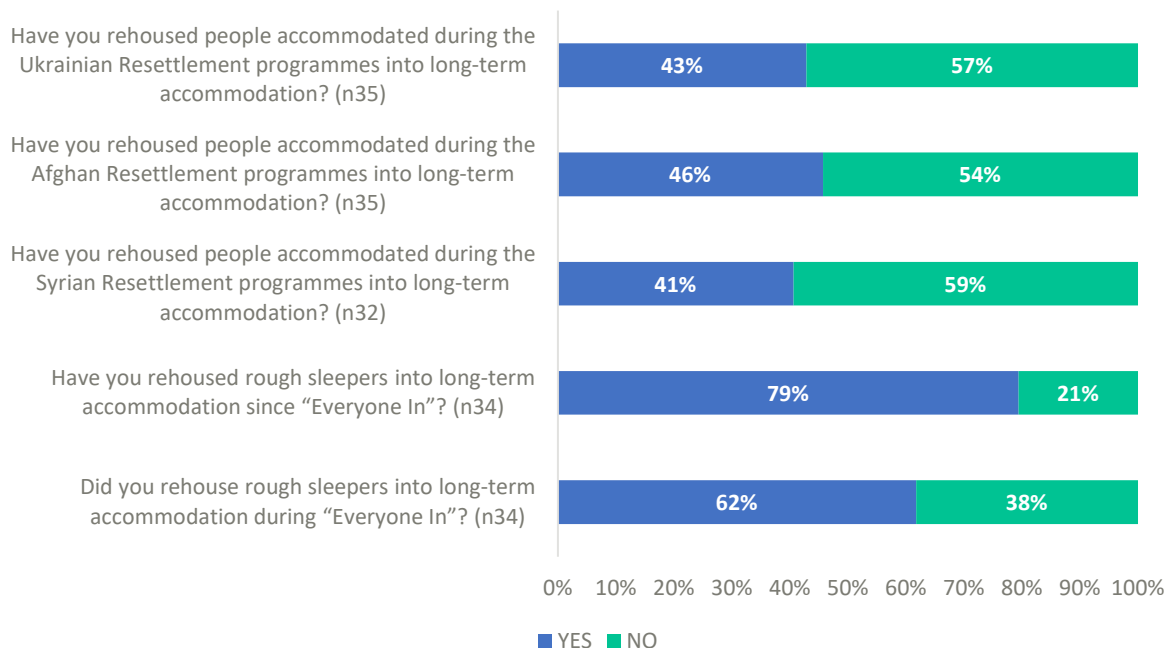
People with Learning Disabilities	18
Women fleeing domestic abuse	17
Mental health	17
Drug misuse	10
Co-occurring Mental health and drug misuse (combined service)	10
Prison leavers	9
Men fleeing domestic abuse	8
LGBTQ+ households	7
People facing racial inequality	5
Perpetrators of domestic abuse	4
Veterans	4

Resettlement

Respondents were asked about their offer of long-term accommodation to people during and after “Everyone In”, and for people accommodated during the Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian resettlement programmes.

Almost 80% of people accommodated during Everyone In were moved into permanent accommodation after it, and over 60% of people accommodated during Everyone In were placed into long-term accommodation as part of the scheme. This ties in with the figures on how single homeless households are the most likely homeless households to be accommodated by respondents, and how homeless households are most likely to be rehoused in supported accommodation. This could demonstrate the value of stable accommodation with support in finding long-term housing solutions for single households. Although respondents had rehoused almost half of people accommodated during the Syrian (41%), Afghan (46%) and Ukrainian (43%) resettlement schemes, these lower numbers could suggest the challenges in sourcing accommodation for families or that is appropriate for refugee households. The barriers to accommodating households who are homeless were also explored in the survey, and are explored below.

Chart 5: Did you rehouse rough sleepers into long-term accommodation during “Everyone In”? Have you rehoused rough sleepers into long-term accommodation since “Everyone In”? Have you rehoused people accommodated during the Syrian Resettlement programmes into long-term accommodation? Have you rehoused people accommodated during the Afghan Resettlement programmes into long-term accommodation? Have you rehoused people accommodated during the Ukrainian Resettlement programmes into long-term accommodation?



Barriers to rehousing homeless households

Respondents were asked to rank the list of barriers in accommodating homeless households. They could choose more than one barrier. The most prominent barriers faced by respondents/their respective organisations is around 'Lack of stock' (ranked first), Uncertain funding arrangement for short-term supported housing services (ranked second) and the 'Cost of providing service or support (ranked third). Lack of suitably sized properties came fourth, and lack of accessible properties came sixth, which links to a lack of stock. Affordability (5th) and welfare reform (benefit caps) (7th) also ranked highly. **This ranking demonstrates a need for a greater supply of affordable, social and supported housing with security of funding to help deliver it. All the areas identified are potential areas for further work to improve homelessness prevention.**

Table 12: What barriers, if any, do you or your organisation face in accommodating homeless households?

What barriers, if any, do you or your organisation face in accommodating homeless households? Please select all that apply.	Ranking
Lack of stock	1
Uncertain funding arrangement for supported housing (short-term services)	2
Cost of providing service or support	3

Lack of suitably sized properties	4
Housing not affordable	5
Lack of accessible properties	6
Welfare reform - benefit caps	7
Restrictive nominations agreements	8
Perceived heightened risk of anti-social behaviour	9
Lack of integration with health	10
Welfare reform - introduction of universal credit	11
Perceived heightened risk of rent arrears	12
Perceived risk of accommodating people who have experienced homelessness	13
Lack of information from local authority on nomination	14
No access to furniture	15
Lack of partnership with local authorities or other homeless support services	16
Welfare reform – other	17
Lack of expertise amongst lettings, housing or other teams	18
Do not face barriers	19
Other	20
Not organisational priority	21

We also asked respondents for further comments on the barriers to housing homeless people. There were 12 comments in total. These covered a range of barriers/issues, for example:

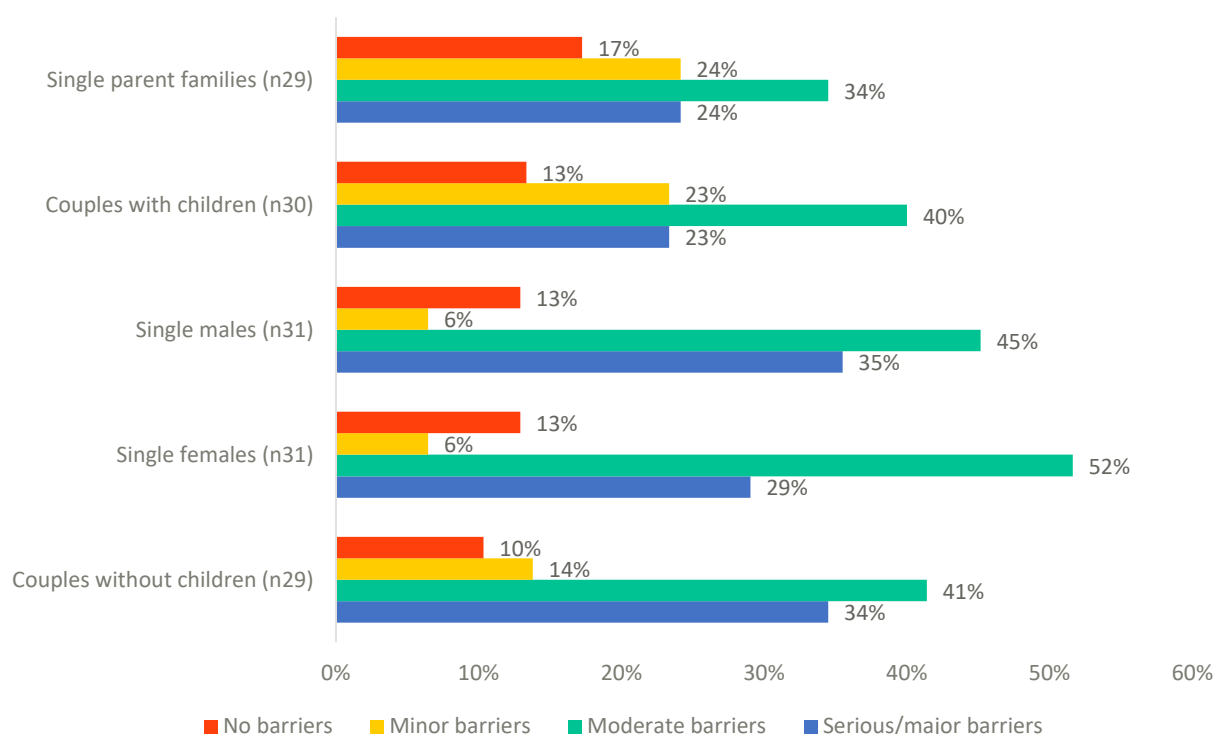
- Lack of appropriate, affordable housing in areas people want to live (6 responses)
- Cost of supported housing for young people who work (HB taper rate) (2 responses)
- Type of tenancy required by referrer not available (1 comment)
- Growing population (1 comment)
- Lack of political will (1 comment)
- Stigma within the sector (1 comment)
- Internal processes make it difficult for homeless people to secure accommodation e.g. Requiring identification. Need to avoid silo working between housing providers, local authorities and charities (1 comment)
- Reluctance of the individual to engage with services/opportunities for change (1 comment)
- Lack of funding for tenancy sustainment support and for those with multiple and complex needs (1 comment)

Some of these relate to the highest-ranking barriers identified, i.e. lack of stock, funding, affordability and availability of appropriate support.

Barriers by demographic

Respondents were asked to report which demographic groups faced the highest barriers to suitable accommodation. The most significant barriers were experienced by couples without children (10 responses), single males (11 responses) and single females (9 responses).

Chart 6: Please rank each demographic by the level of barriers they face to suitable accommodation:



Furnished accommodation

Respondents were asked if they offered furnished accommodation in new lettings and if this was in all lets or only specialist lets. Of the 35 respondents to this question, the majority stated that they provided furniture/carpets/ curtains/white goods in new lettings (27 respondents). Respondents who provided furnishings were then asked how they were able to offer this. Most cited that they offered furnished tenancies through service charges (20 respondents), or helping tenants access grants (14). These respondents were also asked if this was in all lets or specialist lets. 17 respondents out of 27 cited that it was in specialist lets.

This level of furniture provision is higher than other sources suggest, and may represent a higher response rate from solely supported (specialist) accommodation providers, where furnished accommodation is more likely to be provided. Of the 10 providers who stated they provide furnishings in all lets, 5 exclusively provide supported accommodation to homeless households.

Chart 7: Do you provide furniture/carpets/curtains/white goods in new lettings as standard or in specialist lets e.g. Housing First?

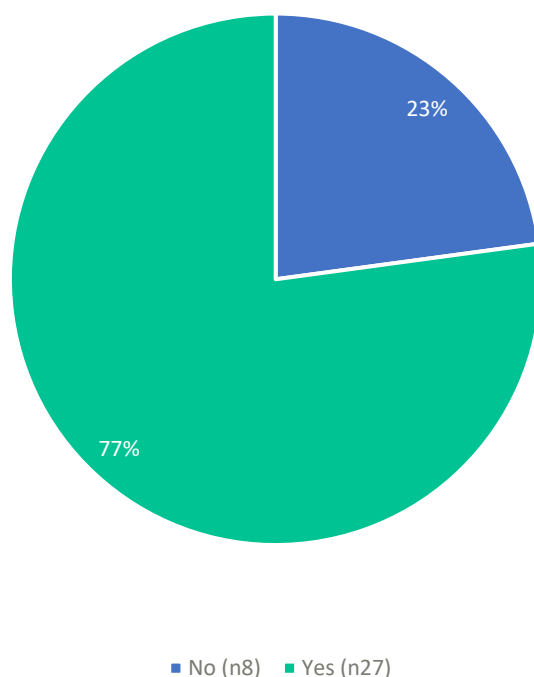


Table 13: How do you do this?

How do you do this?	Responses
Furnished tenancies through service charges	20
Helping tenants access or make applications for grants	14
Schemes, grants or social enterprises that provide furniture packages	11
Enhanced void standard	9
Decorating grants and recycled furniture schemes	8
Other	4

Table 14: Is this in all lets or specialist lets?

Is this in all lets or specialist lets?	Response
Yes, in all lets	10
Specialist (write in)	17

Refusals

We asked what proportion of lettings were refused by the housing association and what proportion were refused by the applicant between April 2022 and March 2023. The proportions were almost equal, so it is difficult to assess which is the biggest barrier to lettings just based on numbers. We also asked what the most common reasons were for refusals by housing associations and by applicants.

There was no single reason why housing associations refused lettings and the reasons with the highest number of answers still only indicated that 25% of lettings were refused for these reasons. These reasons mostly relate to: unmet support needs (applicant did not attend the viewing (5), contact lost with applicant (5), applicant support needs unmet (4)); affordability (housing not affordable (5), rent arrears (4)) and a lack of suitable stock (housing not accessible/not suitable on medical grounds (4)) that were identified in the barriers to rehousing homeless households.

There was no single reason why applicants refused lettings and the reasons with the highest number of answers still only indicated that 25% of lettings were refused for these reasons. The most common reason cited was the location of the property (6), followed by no furniture/fittings (4), housing not affordable (3) and standard of property (3). These reasons also relate to a lack of stock (in areas that people want to live in, potentially how new the property is) and affordability (including lack of furniture).

Table 15: From April 2022 to March 2023, what do you think were the proportion (%) of refusals of lettings offered by the housing association and by the applicant? Please estimate the percentages below.

Specialism	<25%	<50%	<75%	<100%
Applicant (no. of responses):	8	3	2	0
Housing association (no. of responses)	8	2	1	1

Table 16: Where the HOUSING ASSOCIATION made the refusal, what would you say were the reasons for the refusal? Please estimate the proportion (%) for any of the following options:

Reason	<25%	<50%	<75%	<100%
Applicant did not attend the viewing	5	1	1	0
Contact lost with applicant	5	0	1	0
Applicant had access to another home	4	0	0	0
Applicant income too high	2	0	0	0
Housing not affordable	5	0	1	0
Rent arrears	4	0	1	0
History of ASB/perpetrating domestic abuse	2	1	0	0
Housing not accessible/not suitable on medical grounds	4	0	0	0
Applicant support needs unmet	4	2	0	0
Need did not match information from local authority	2	1	0	0
Property comprises shared accommodation	2	0	0	0
Alternative arrangements made, i.e. moved in with family and friends instead	3	0	0	0
Other	3	1	0	1
Don't know	2	0	0	1

Table 17: Where the APPLICANT made the refusal, what would you say were the reasons for the refusal? Please estimate the proportion (%) for any of the following options:

Reasons for refusal	<25%	<50%	<75%	<100%
Location of property	6	0	0	1
Size of property	2	1	0	0
Housing not affordable	3	0	0	0
Housing not accessible/suitable on medical grounds	2	0	0	0
Standard of property	3	0	0	1
No furniture/fittings	4	0	0	0
Other	1	0	1	2
Don't know	3	0	0	2

New approaches to homelessness

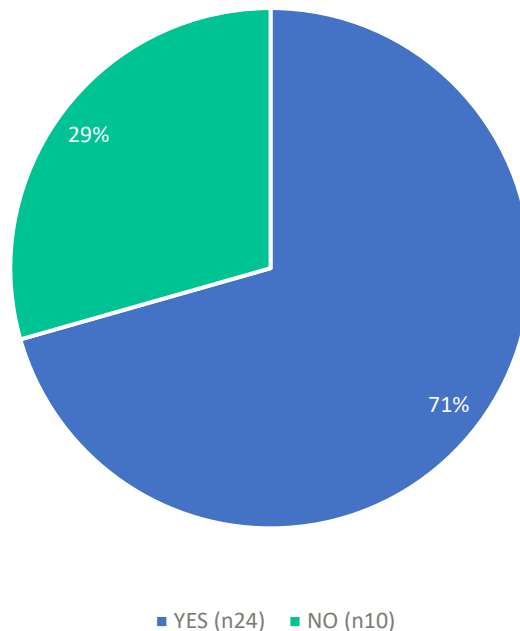
We asked respondents whether they had developed any new approaches to homelessness in the last five years. 34 respondents answered this question. Well over two-thirds i.e. 24 respondents (71%) said they had developed new approaches. Respondents were then asked to specify what their new approaches looked like – all 24 made comments.

Some of the most prominent approaches found in comments from respondents were around the following:

- Around accommodation
 - More stock for long-term supported housing (4 comments)
 - Housing First / housing-led (8 comments)
 - RSAP / NSAP / RSI accommodation (6 comments)
- Membership of Homes for Cathy/commitments (3 comments)
- Services - Advantaged Thinking / Restorative Justice (3 comments)
- Cost of living - Hardship/Tenant sustainability fund (3 comments)

These new approaches to homelessness prevention could be an attempt to tackle the above barriers to rehousing homeless households.

Chart 8: Have you or your organisation developed any new approaches to homelessness in the last five years?



Conclusion and next steps

The survey results show that homelessness prevention can be a key part of housing associations' work, even when it is not the main focus of the organisation. Housing associations face a challenging context in which to try to prevent and end homelessness but are building partnerships and innovating with new products and services to attempt to meet need.

Next, we aim to publish a comparison with the 2018 survey results where this is appropriate/possible, bearing in mind relatively small sample size drawn by this survey study and gather good practice stories from the data. We will also use the results around the challenges faced to make the case for change. We need a long-term plan for housing that will address the lack of social housing, affordability challenges and lack of funding for support services. All these areas are potential areas for further work to improve homelessness prevention.