Oldham Homelessness Review

2021-2025

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1. Introduction

Oldham's current homelessness strategy – Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy – was introduced in 2021. Local authorities in England have a duty to undertake a review of homelessness in their borough at least every five years and produce a homelessness strategy based on the finding of that review.

This Oldham Homelessness Review covers the period 2021-2025, and the duties owed under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017. The HRA not only changed the way local authorities administer homelessness applications, but introduced much more comprehensive data gathering which, based on this review, will support the development of an insightful and responsive new homelessness strategy for Oldham.

The Review considers not only local homelessness data, but also Oldham's economical and housing market data which may influence people seeking housing advice from the local authority. It also takes into account developments across Greater Manchester and the wider country, and the impact these have had in relation to homelessness in Oldham. The review aims to ensure that Oldham's next Homelessness Strategy is evidence led, responsive and aligned with both local priorities and the evolving landscape of homelessness nationally.

In accordance with the National Plan to End Homelessness published in December 2025, this review and the subsequent strategy would be working towards the 4 pillars below to transition homelessness response from reactive crisis management to an integrated, prevention-first systems approach:

- Earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness
- Ensuring that when homelessness occurs it is rare, brief and non-recurring
- Improving access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation
- Strengthening partnership working to end homelessness and rough sleeping

2. Legislative and strategic context

The HRA was arguably the biggest change in homelessness legislation since the introduction of the 2002 Homelessness Act. It introduced new duties on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness, as well as reinforcing duties to provide universal and targeted advice. Between 2021 and 2026, the legislative landscape surrounding homelessness and housing has undergone significant transformation.

The following timeline gives an overview of developments in relevant legislation, case law and related statutory guidance and provisions since 2021.

Table 1: Timeline of legal developments

Year	Development	Implications
2021	Domestic Abuse Act 2021	The Domestic Abuse Act significantly strengthened the rights of people experiencing homelessness due to domestic abuse. Key updates include an automatic "priority need" for housing, a broadened definition of abuse, and new

		duties for local authorities to provide safe accommodation.
2022	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	The Act significantly reformed the asylum system: Focusing on three core objectives: making the system fairer, deterring illegal entry, and removing those with no right to be in the UK.
2023	Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023	The Act enables local councils to establish licensing schemes, enforces minimum care/support standards, and links housing benefit eligibility to these licenses. Consultation ended May 2025. Regulations pending
2023	Social Housing (Regulation) Act	The Act formed a new era of regulation for the social housing sector, aiming to give residents greater powers and improve access to quick and fair solutions to problems.
2023	Levelling Up and Regeneration Act	While the primary focus of this legislation is on planning and regeneration, it contains provisions that could indirectly affect homelessness. The Act gave local authorities powers to charge a 100% council tax premium on empty homes after one year, instead of two, to incentivize owners to bring them back into use.
Dec 2024	New Regulations (Allocations)	Exempts Veterans of the Regular Armed Forces from Local Connection rules or residency tests for social housing applied by Local Authorities in England, regardless of when they served.
2025	Awaab's Law 2025	Considered a major step forward in mission to transform housing safety and quality by requiring social landlords to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould within set time periods, as well as repair all emergency hazards within 24 hours.
July 2025	New Regulations (Allocations)	Exempts care leavers under 25 and victims of domestic abuse from any local connection or residency tests for social housing applied by Local Authorities in England.

April 2026	Children, Schools and Wellbeing Act	Includes a key provision to address intentional homelessness for care leavers, stipulating that no care leaver up to age 25 should be deemed intentionally homeless during a homelessness assessment.
May 2026	Renters Right Bill	Expected to abolish Section 21 'no-fault' evictions and end fixed-term tenancies for all new and existing contracts, converting them into rolling, periodic tenancies. The bill also proposes a new Decent Homes Standard for private rentals, a ban on rental bidding wars, and new rules for rent increases.
June 2026	Repeal of the Vagrancy Act 1824	Effectively decriminalising rough sleeping in England and Wales. The repeal is part of a broader effort to address homelessness and ensure that individuals are not penalized for simply trying to survive on the streets.

Alongside developments in legislation there have been several local, regional and national strategies and frameworks introduced and updated which have wide ranging impacts on homelessness in the borough.

Table 2: Timeline of Local, Regional and National Strategies

2021	National Affordable Homes Programmes	The Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 provides grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing in England. Affordable housing is defined as housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market in the National Planning Policy Framework.
2021	Greater Manchester GM Strategies	Housing standards will be improved, with the Good Landlord Charter exposing poor landlords. By 2030 there will be at least 10,000 new, energy efficient homes for social rent across all 10 local authority areas.
2021	Sheltered Housing Oldham- ASC Sheltered Housing	Oldham Council's approach to sheltered housing and adult social care is outlined within its overarching Housing Strategy and the Adult Social Care Commissioning Delivery Plan.
2022	Housing Benefit Administration Grant	The Council receives a Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) from Government which comprises Business Rate Top Up Grant,

		together with the Government's assessment of the level of Business Rates income to be retained by the Council.
2022	Places for Everyone Joint Development	Places for Everyone (PfE) is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts. It sets out strategic planning for homes, jobs, and sustainable growth, aiming to maximize brownfield land while protecting Green Belt areas through 2037.
2022	Oldham Domestic Abuse Strategy	Oldham's Domestic Abuse Strategy focuses on preventing abuse, protecting victims, and supporting recovery through a coordinated, multi-agency approach. It prioritises early intervention, improved victim support services, and holding perpetrators accountable to reduce harm across the borough.
2022	Ending Rough Sleeping for Good	Ending Rough Sleeping for Good is the UK government's cross-departmental strategy to end rough sleeping in England during this Parliament. Supported by over £2 billion in funding through 2025, it aims to ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurrent by focusing on prevention, intervention, and tailored support.
2023	Housing Delivery Action Plan	The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) has been introduced by the Government as a monitoring tool to demonstrate whether local areas are building enough homes to meet their housing need. The HDT measures net additional homes provided over the past three years against the homes required over the same period. In response to Central Government's Housing Delivery Test Measurement published in December 2024, Oldham prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan.
2024	GM Capital strategies and programmes	The overarching Capital Strategy for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is to ensure that all resources are directed towards achieving the outcomes contained within the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) by maximising the use of external funding to deliver the highest impact affordable programme.

2024	GM Live Well	GM Live Well is a partnership between NHS GM, 10GM and GMCA, the 10 local authorities, health, business, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and social enterprise sector and people and communities. Working together we will create conditions for people to thrive, not just survive, removing barriers to opportunity and tackling health, social and economic inequalities.
2024	Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment	The Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) provides the latest available evidence to help to shape the future planning and housing policies of the area. The LHNA provides local evidence which builds upon the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
2024	Oldham Plan & Corporate Plan	Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 describes how the Council will maximise the impact of our efforts and resource to improve the lives of residents in the borough over the next three years. The plan sets out three key missions: Happier, Healthier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing.
2024	Oldham Local Plan Review	The Draft Local Plan contains a vision for Oldham based on a set of plan objectives and draft planning policies covering a wide range of topic areas. It has been informed by comments collected from two consultations previously run by the Council, ongoing studies and pieces of evidence work.
2025	Oldham Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2025	The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a public statement setting out the council's project plan for preparing the Local Plan and its supporting documents. This LDS shall have effect from 4 March 2025.
2025	Oldham Works: Our Employment and Skills Plan 2025–2030	Oldham Works: Our Employment and Skills Plan 2025–2030 is a strategic framework aiming to create a fairer, more prosperous economy by connecting residents to high-quality jobs, enhancing skills, and supporting local business growth. It emphasizes partnership-driven, sector-focused initiatives—particularly in green technology and digital innovation—to build a future-ready workforce.

2025	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy: A National Plan to end Homelessness	The National Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in December 2025, aims to make homelessness "rare, brief, and non-recurring". Backed by £3.5 billion in funding, the strategy focuses on prevention, increasing social housing supply, and ending the unlawful use of B&Bs for families by the end of this parliament
2025	Oldham Council Housing Delivery Action Plan	The plan addresses a 91% Housing Delivery Test (HDT) score, requiring action to improve supply. The plan addresses a declared housing crisis, targeting 500 new social homes by 2029, brownfield development, and town centre residential growth.
Expected 2026	Greater Manchester Tripartite Agreement (housing, health and integrated care)	A strategic framework linking housing providers, GMCA and NHS Greater Manchester across supported housing, inclusion health, Live Well at home and wider prevention ambitions. That gives Oldham a practical regional vehicle for strengthening health-housing integration in the new strategy.
Expected 2026	GMCA Homelessness and Migration Budget 2026–2029	GMCA approved funding across a number of relevant programmes, including TA New Supply, TA Homelessness Prevention, Young Persons Homelessness Prevention, Refugee Welcome, Housing First / RSAP, A Bed Every Night, Inclusion Health, Rough Sleeping Test and Learn Pilots and RESS.
Expected 2027	Local Supported Housing Strategies	Local councils now have statutory guidance and new burdens funding to assess supported housing supply, unmet need, future demand and move-on pathways. For Oldham, this is a significant opportunity to map supported housing properly, identify gaps, improve commissioning, and connect homelessness, mental health, adult social care and move-on planning more effectively.

3. Oldham's Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-2025: Highlights

The 2021 Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy was reviewed annually with an action plan created each year based on its priorities and the trends emerging within each year. The following table provides some highlights of developments which have taken place over the past 5 years.

Table 3: Highlights from previous Strategy

Date	Key Initiative	Strategic Impact
Oct 2021	**CAS3 – Community Accommodation Service (Tier 3)**	National pilot launched supporting prison leavers with short-term accommodation and resettlement, strengthening homelessness prevention on release and reducing reoffending.
Dec 2021	**Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)**	10 self-contained homes delivered, increasing access to stable accommodation with tenancy sustainment support for people rough sleeping or at risk.
Dec 2021	**Rough Sleepers Information Booklet**	Borough-wide booklet introduced, improving access to practical information and strengthening engagement with support services.
Apr 2022	**Early Break – Youth Pathfinder**	Early-intervention programme preventing homelessness for 80% of participating young people.
Apr 2022	**GMMOP – Acute Ward Step-Down Accommodation Pilot**	Hospital discharge pathway created, preventing homelessness on discharge and achieving a 93% positive move-on rate.
Sept 2023	**Women's Rough Sleeping Census**	First census outside London informed trauma-informed, gender-responsive service delivery, with ongoing commitment to participation.
Sept 2023	**Hospital Discharge Protocol**	Protocol embedded specialist homelessness prevention support within hospital settings to strengthen early intervention.
Mar 2024	**Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Worker**	Specialist role introduced to support people with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse needs at risk of rough sleeping.
Apr 2024	**Test and Learn – Personalisation Fund**	Flexible funding enabled bespoke interventions supporting housing stability, employment and wellbeing.
May 2024	**Families in Temporary Accommodation Improvements**	Joined-up notification system and Family TA Booklet improved clarity, access to services and support for families.

Date	Key Initiative	Strategic Impact
Oct 2024	**CAS3 Uplift**	Capacity increased from 11 to 15 bedspaces, including women's provision, with funding secured to December 2027.
Mar 2025	**ABEN Uplift & Eviction Protocol**	Capacity expanded to 33 spaces and eviction protocol reduced evictions, contributing to 447 positive move-on outcomes.
Apr 2025	**Test and Learn – Rough Sleeping Outreach Nurse**	Nurse-led outreach improved access to health assessments and treatment; Oldham became the only Northern authority delivering this model.
Jun 2025	**Housing Options Service Redesign**	Service redesign approved, strengthening prevention, relief and partnership capacity.
Jul 2025	**Trauma-Informed Practice Training**	Workforce-wide trauma-informed training improved safeguarding and responsiveness to complex need.
Oct 2025	**Safe Sleep Training**	Safe Sleep guidance embedded across temporary accommodation, strengthening safeguarding for infants.
Dec 2025	**CAS3 Uplift**	CAS3 capacity further increased from 15 to 19 bedspaces, strengthening outcomes for people leaving custody.

4. Homelessness: analysis and trends

4.1 Applications and assessments

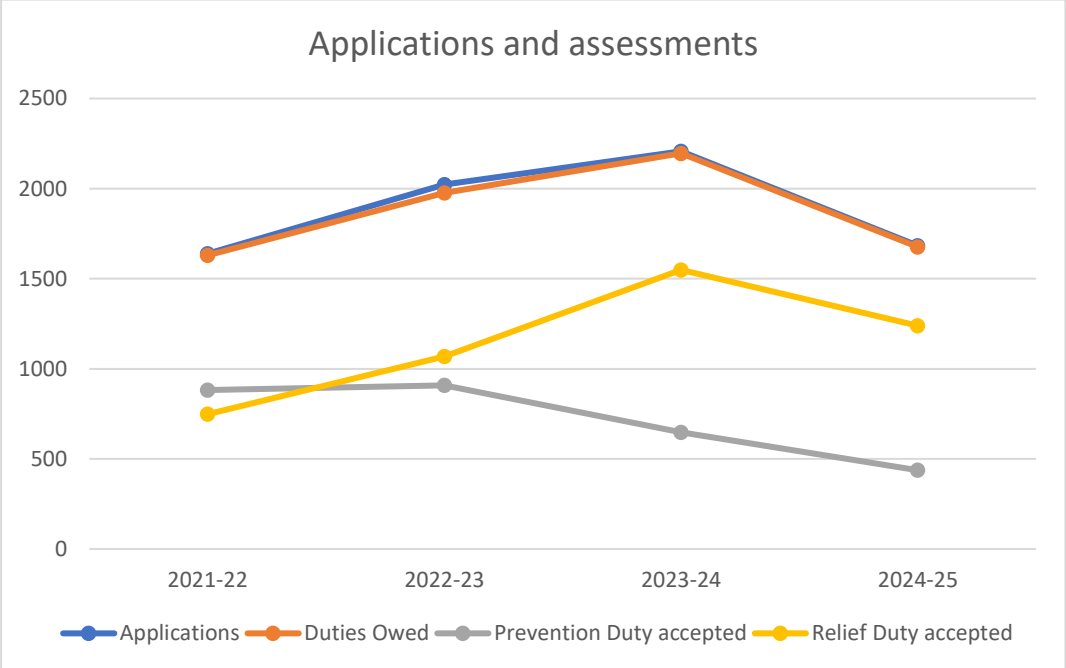
Since the last Homelessness Strategy applications for homelessness support steadily increased peaking in 2023/24. However, during 2024/2025, there has been a reduction in the number of applications made. This trend is not exclusive to Oldham, in the first quarter (January to March) of 2025, households owed a duty to prevent or relieve homelessness fell by 6.3% compared to the same period in 2024. This trend continued into April to June 2025, with assessments down 6.7% compared to the same quarter in 2024.

The chart below shows the total number of homeless applications made and, of those:

- The number that was owed a subsequent duty – where they were not, this was due to the household either being found not homeless or not eligible for assistance
- The number of those owed a duty where this was a 'Prevention Duty' – to take steps to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless
- The number of those owed a duty where this was a 'Relief Duty' – to take steps to relieve the applicant's homelessness where this had already occurred.

All data reviewed in this section is retrieved from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Tables on homelessness* (Statutory homelessness live tables).

Figure 1: Applications and Assessments



There has been a significant reduction in the number of prevention duties accepted between 2021/22 and 2024/25 when compared with the National average. Whilst this could be indicative of households presenting as homeless at crisis, it clearly demonstrates the need for earlier intervention. As the Government now intends to introduce targets for Local Authorities and focus investment on prevention. Oldham will need to drive change locally improve outcomes for our residents.

Table 4: Applications and Assessments: National comparison

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Oldham	National	Oldham	National	Oldham	National	Oldham	National
Applications taken	1639	291,620	2022	324,630	2207	358,370	1683	360,050
Duties owed	99%	95%	98%	92%	99%	91%	99%	91%
Prevention duties accepted	54%	48%	46%	47%	29%	45%	26%	45%
Relief duties accepted	46%	52%	54%	53%	71%	55%	74%	55%

4.2 Homelessness prevention

Homelessness prevention is often the most positive course of action for applicants and is also the most cost effective for the Council. Prevention activity to involve helping a household to remain in their existing home or securing new accommodation for them to move to. However, prevention activity is also resource intensive in terms of staff time and available housing options.

There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of successful prevention since Q2 2022/23. Despite a significant reduction in the number of prevention duties accepted between 2021/22 and 2024/25 compared with the National average, Oldham still has lower rates of successful prevention compared with regional and national average. This indicates increasing difficulty in preventing households presenting at crisis. The trend also coincides with resource constraints and workforce restructure and instability since 2023.

Table 5: Prevention Duties

	Closed prevention duties	% Successfully prevented
Q1 2021-22	197	37%
Q2 2021-22	225	32%
Q3 2021-22	184	30%
Q4 2021-22	263	63%
Q1 2022-23	186	55%
Q2 2022-23	128	57%
Q3 2022/23	134	52%
Q4 2022/23	194	32%
Q1 2023/24	215	35%
Q2 2023/24	185	40%
Q3 2023/24	180	33%
Q4 2023/24	222	30%
Q1 2024/25	129	33%
Q2 2024/25	117	43%
Q3 2024/25	123	23%
Q4 2024/25	100	35%

Table 6: Homelessness Prevention: Regional and National Comparison

	% of successful prevention			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
England	51%	49%	47%	50%
North West	51%	49%	48%	51%
Oldham	41%	49%	42%	34%

The evidence in this section highlights the need to distinguish clearly between homelessness prevention and the allocation of scarce housing. Allocation systems are designed to prioritise limited supply, but prevention should operate much earlier and on a broader basis. The next strategy should therefore adopt a universal prevention model in which all households at risk of homelessness can access timely advice, mediation, financial support and practical help to sustain accommodation. Alongside this, a smaller group of households with more complex circumstances will require additional specialist intervention. Without this balance, there is a risk that service become focused on those already at crisis point, rather than reducing demand by intervening earlier across the wider at-risk population.

Learning Point:

- The decline in prevention performance coincides with the significant increase in relief duty accepted in this period. The Council will need to focus on interventions to prevention homelessness arising.

Strategic Focus:

- Strategic investment and ambition on delivering homelessness prevention and pre-prevention will be key to the service going forward.
- There is a need to focus prevention on the biggest homelessness drivers (family& friends' exclusion and tenancy loss), increase pre-prevention ("early help") referrals from partners, and strengthen practical prevention tools (mediation, landlord negotiation, and targeted financial support).

4.3 Homelessness relief

When households due become homeless Oldham Council acts appropriately and has historically had good performance in securing alternative accommodation for these households. However, with the number of relief duty significantly increasing between 2023-2025, the percentage of successfully relieved cases dropped significantly.

This trend is not exclusive to Oldham, the effectiveness of relief actions in resolving homelessness has declined, with an 'accommodation secured' outcome falling from 47% in 2021 to 39% in 2024 nationally.[1]

[1] Crisis, The Homelessness Monitor: England 2025, available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/tn1i1hjf/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2025.pdf (accessed 5 June 2026).

Table 7: Relief Duties

	Closed relief duties	% Successfully relieved
Q1 2021-22	243	45%
Q2 2021-22	273	47%
Q3 2021-22	261	34%
Q4 2021-22	177	49%
Q1 2022-23	200	54%
Q2 2022-23	199	55%
Q3 2022-23	206	54%
Q4 2022-23	232	47%
Q1 2023-24	304	48%
Q2 2023-24	484	33%
Q3 2023-24	530	29%
Q4 2023-24	533	25%
Q1 2024-25	687	19%
Q2 2024-25	542	16%
Q3 2024-25	327	20%
Q4 2024-25	178	31%

Learning Point:

- Relief demand rose sharply and successful outcomes fell. This points to a system under strain - higher caseloads, fewer move-on options, and more people presenting with complex needs.

Strategic Focus:

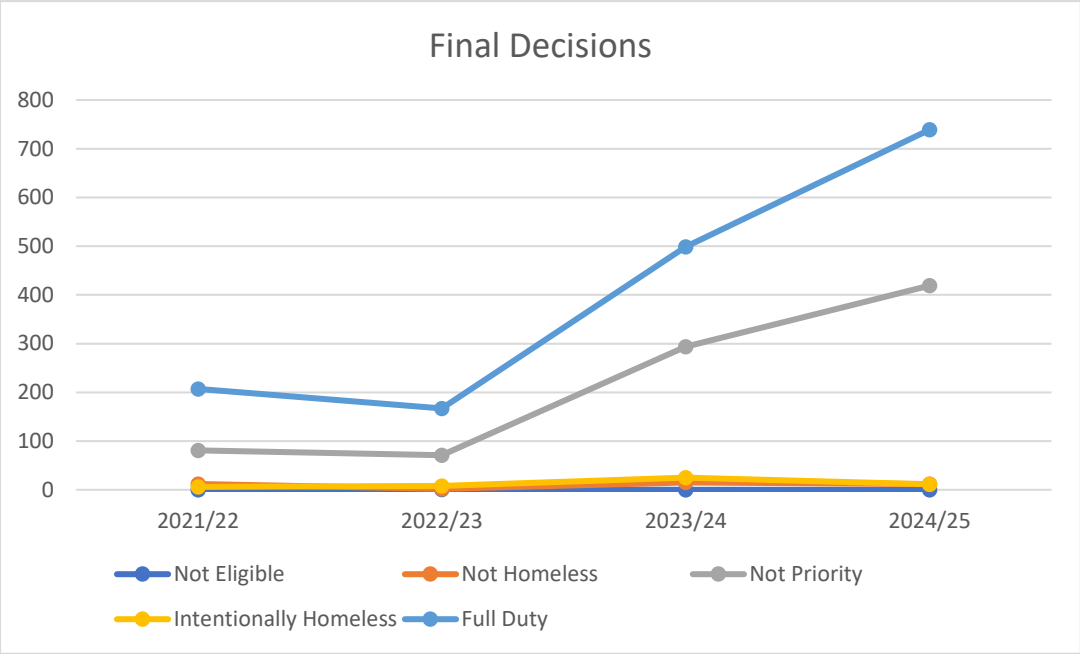
- This again points to the need to reduce demand by effective pre-prevention and prevention. Targeted activities based on data and evidence – such as community-based prevention services and automated multi-agency triggers on profiles of high-risk residents.
- To improve efficiency in relief, prioritise faster move-on from temporary and supported accommodation and target extra help at people most likely to cycle back into homelessness.

4.4 Final decisions

Prior to the HRA a decision would have been reached on a homeless application almost immediately; now it is usually reached – or at least only enacted – if the Relief Duty has been ongoing for 56 days and the local authority has not been able to help the applicant successfully resolve their homelessness.

The number of applicants progressing to full duty has seen a sharp increase between 2021 and 2025. The decline in effectiveness of prevention and relief actions in resolving homelessness – as outlined by the 2 sections above.

Figure 2: Final Decisions



As discussed, unfortunately not all Relief Duties end with a positive outcome:

- Some households withdraw their application or lose contact with the Council during this period
- The Relief Duty only lasts for 56 days, after which the Council does not have an ongoing duty to keep taking reasonable steps for some households, e.g. those not in priority need or intentionally homeless.

After this 56-day period some of these households will still be owed an ongoing accommodation duty by the Council – the 'full' housing duty. The Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced in part to try and reduce the number of households moving into this duty, by focusing on earlier prevention and relief.

Table 8: Full Housing Duties Owed

	Closed relief duties	Full Duty owed	% Owed a full duty
Q1 2021-22	243	30	12%
Q2 2021-22	273	54	20%
Q3 2021-22	263	90	34%
Q4 2021-22	178	33	19%
Q1 2022-23	202	34	17%
Q2 2022-23	204	29	14%
Q3 2022-23	208	46	22%
Q4 2022-23	234	57	24%
Q1 2023-24	302	42	14%
Q2 2023-24	484	145	30%
Q3 2023-24	530	119	22%
Q4 2023-24	519	201	39%
Q1 2024-25	687	279	41%

Q2 2024-25	543	293	54%
Q3 2024-25	327	105	32%
Q4 2024-25	178	61	51%

This therefore leaves the following proportion of households for whom no accommodation was secured within 56 days, and no ongoing duty owed; these are the households outlined in the bullet points above. This is a significant proportion of Oldham's homelessness cohort, suggesting where resources may need to be directed by the 2026 Homelessness Strategy.

Table 9: Households not successfully relieved or owed a full housing duty

	% Not successfully relieved or owed a full housing duty
Q1 2021-22	42%
Q2 2021-22	34%
Q3 2021-22	32%
Q4 2021-22	33%
Q1 2022-23	30%
Q2 2022-23	32%
Q3 2022-23	24%
Q4 2022-23	28%
Q1 2023-24	47%
Q2 2023-24	42%
Q3 2023-24	53%
Q4 2023-24	44%
Q1 2024-25	43%
Q2 2024-25	32%
Q3 2024-25	51%
Q4 2024-25	51%

4.5 Reasons for homelessness

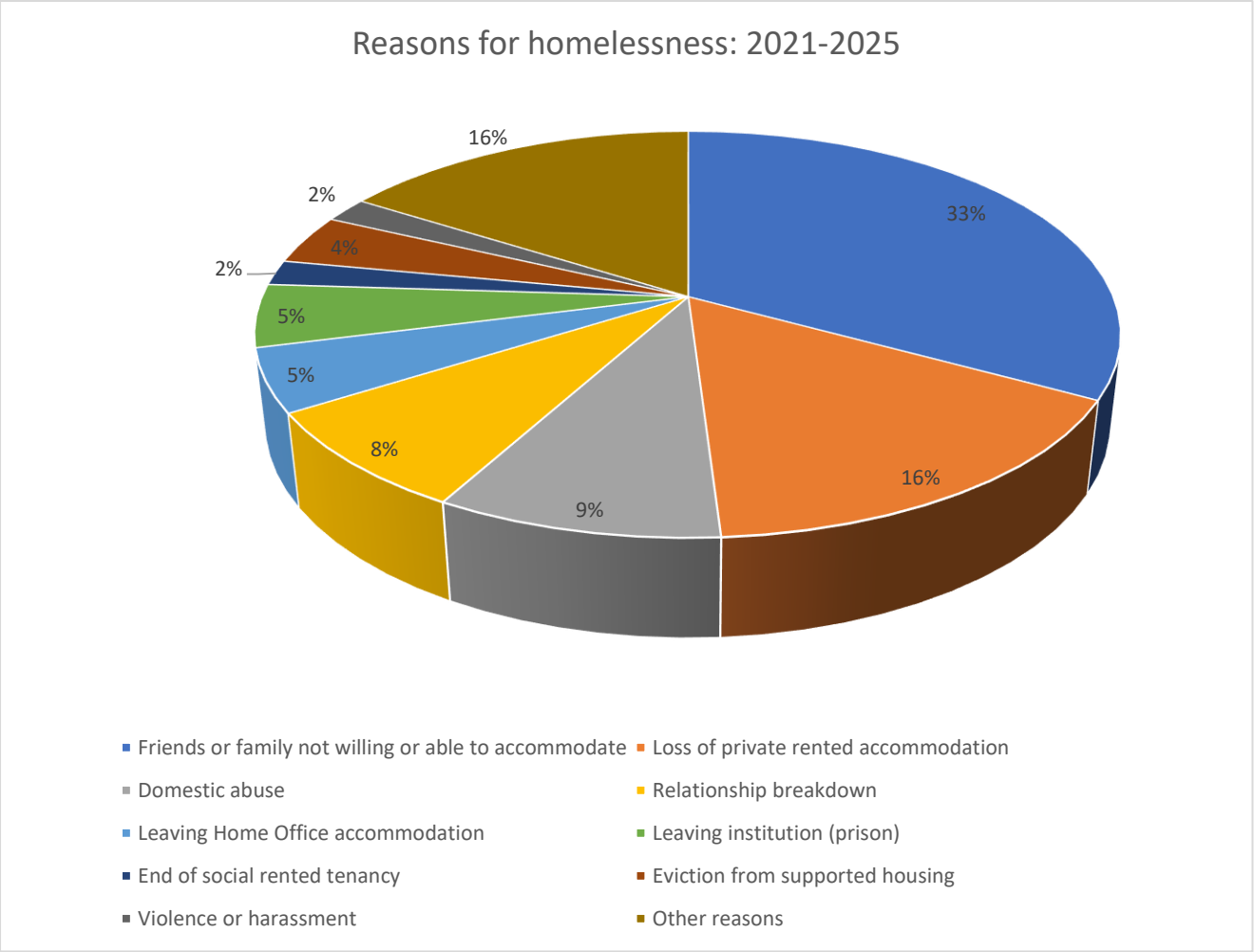
Understanding the main reasons why people present as homeless or threatened with homelessness gives the Council a better idea of how to target its resources in the 2026 Homelessness Strategy. For example, the main reason for homelessness – which continues to rise – is applicants being asked to leave by friends or family. This is an area where the Council needs to strengthen and target its prevention activity; however, it is also indicative of the issues faced across the borough in terms of affordable housing supply and demand.

Table 10: Main reasons for homelessness

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Asked to leave by friends or family	34%	34%	32%	33%
Loss of private sector accommodation	16%	18%	15%	14%
Domestic abuse	8.5%	9%	8%	9%
Relationship breakdown	8.5%	9%	9%	7%
Required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support	2%	3%	7%	6%
Left an institution - prison	3%	4%	5%	8%
Eviction from social rented accommodation	3%	2%	3%	1%

Eviction from supported accommodation	3%	3.5%	4%	4%
Mortgage repossession	1%	0.5%	2%	3%
Home no longer suitable due to disability/ill-health	1.5%	2%	2%	2%
Other forms of violence or harassment	2.5%	2%	1%	2%
All other reasons	17%	13%	12%	11%

Figure 3: Main reasons for homelessness



Learning Points:

- Exclusions by friends and family remain the highest presenting reason for homelessness. Need committed resources to preventing this, for example mediation and targeted early intervention, incentives.
- Numbers facing homelessness because of domestic abuse continues to rise following the implementation of Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Multi Agency training identified to promote better interagency interventions
- Loss of private rented sector accommodation remains a leading cause of homelessness nationally but also remains a much-needed source of prevention and relief. There is a

need to grow and retain good landlords and improve relationships. The Renters Right Act will give LA increased duties with regard private sector standards and enforcement

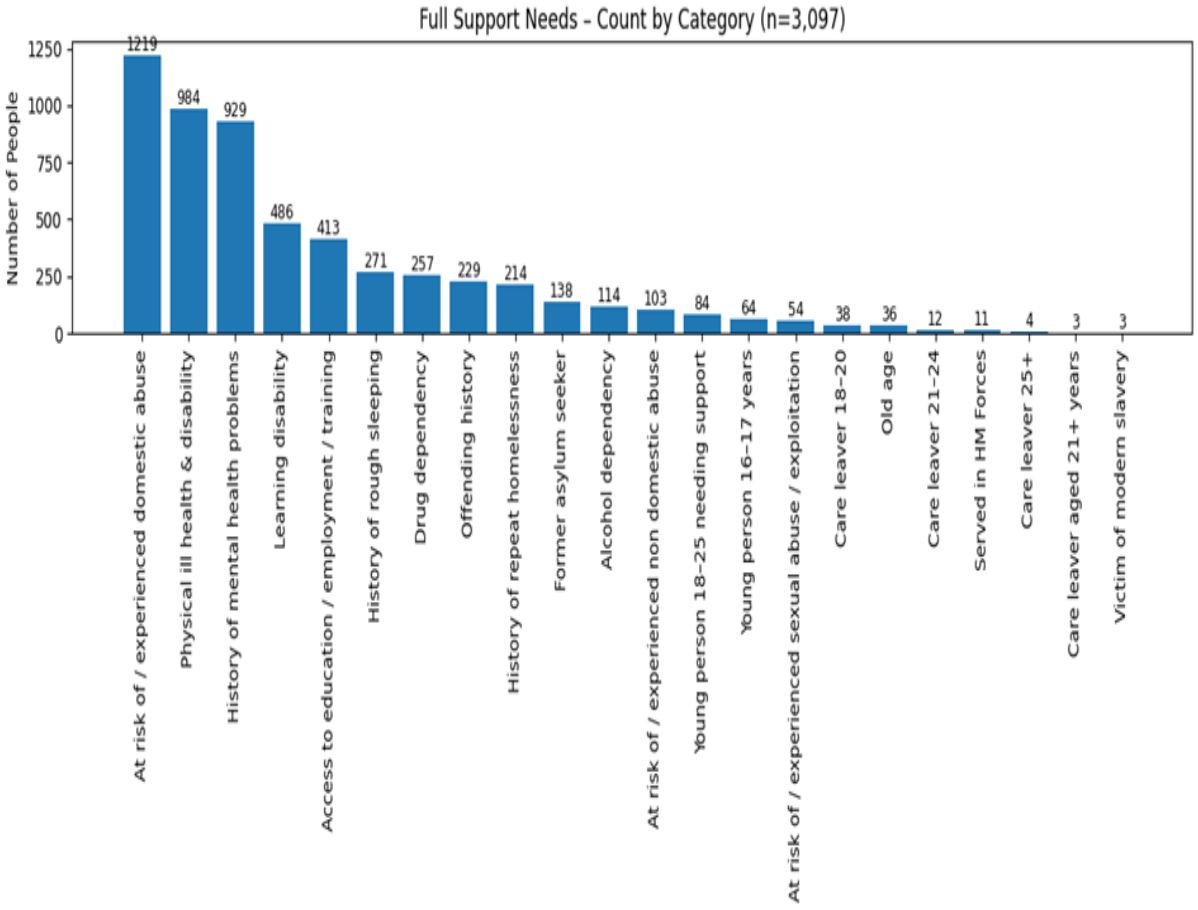
- Relationship breakdowns are increasing as a cause of homelessness; how can we improve the advice and options available to departing partners prior to homelessness occurring, including education and support.
- Number of asylum seekers presenting as homeless continues to rise. The proportion of presentation for this group in Oldham more than two times higher than England's average.
- Number of individuals leaving institution (prison) also continues to rise. The proportion of presentation for this group is double that of England's average.

4.6 Support needs

As well as understanding why applicants present as homeless, it is also important to understand what needs they have other than housing to plan responses accordingly.

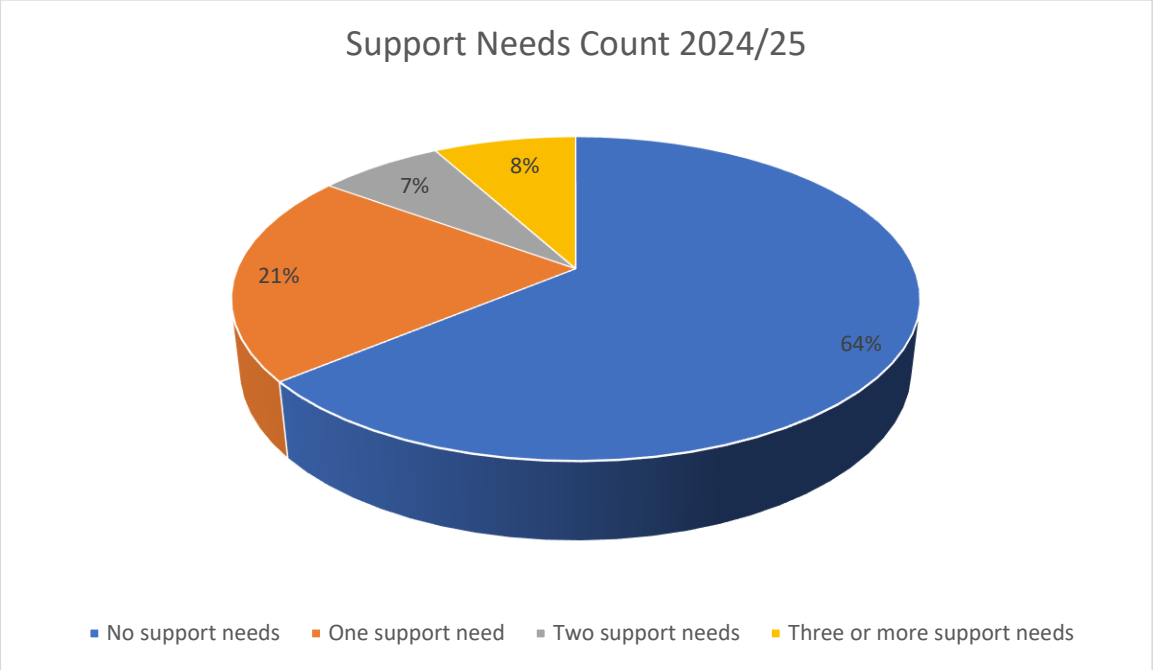
Over the past four years applicants who were homeless or threatened with homelessness were identified as having the following support needs.

Figure 4: Support Needs



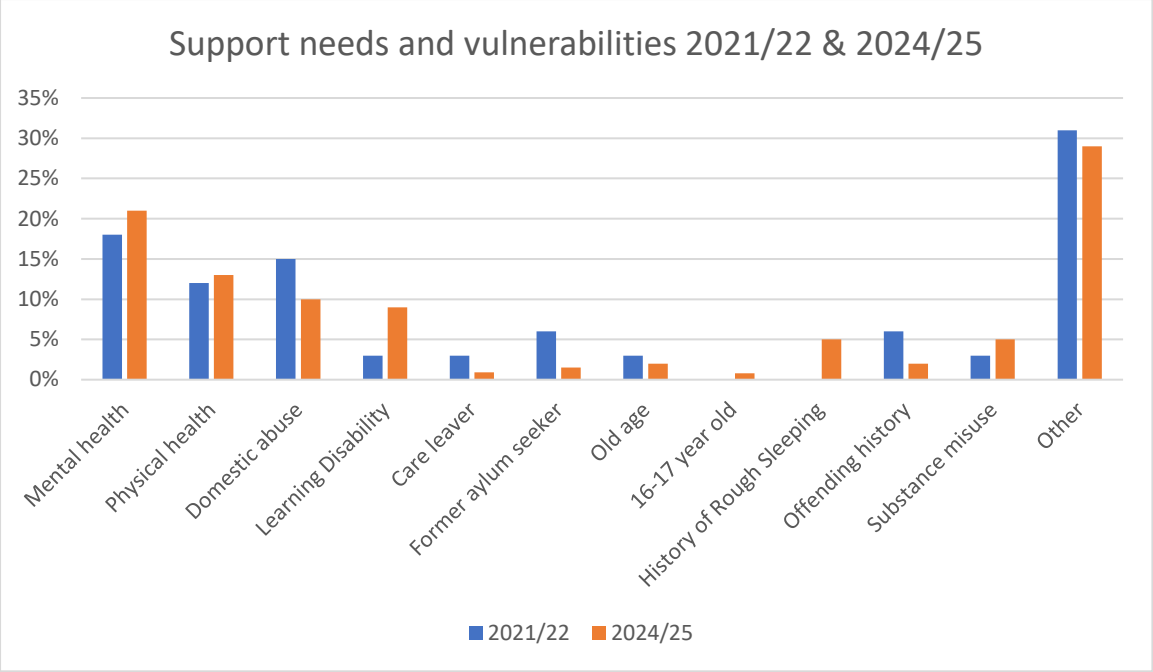
Across the review period, majority of applicants report no support need. Less than a quarter of homeless applicants stated to have two or more support needs at all in their household. However, this is likely to understate the true level of complexity, as support needs are often not fully captured at the point of application and may only become clearer later through casework or engagement with partner agencies.

Figure 5: Count of support needs



The following chart compares the percentage of applicants who declared to have the following support needs between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

Figure 6: Support needs and vulnerabilities comparison 2021-2025



The most commonly recorded support need is mental health, rising from 18% in 2021/22 to 21% in 2024/25, making it the clearest and most consistent vulnerability in the homelessness cohort. This is in keeping with evidence found in JSNA that levels of people living with depression were above the national average – 13.72% to 12.29% - so to find high levels of applicants self-declaring mental ill-health is in line with this data. Oldham also rank as the 3rd lowest local authority for physically active adults and lower than national average health outcomes – this is evident in the high-levels of applicants claiming physical health as a support need. [2]

The support needs profile reinforces the importance of a balanced service model. Most applicants are recorded as having no support need or only one identified need, while a smaller but significant cohort presents with multiple or overlapping needs that are likely to be under-recorded in the data. This means the strategy should avoid framing homelessness only through the lens of the most complex cases. Specialist, trauma-informed and multi-agency responses will remain essential for applicants with higher levels of vulnerability, repeat homelessness or multiple disadvantage, but these should be complemented by a universal prevention approach that does not neglect the largest customer group. Many households may not meet thresholds for specialist intervention but could still avoid homelessness if they receive early advice, mediation, tenancy sustainment or financial support at the right time.

Learning points:

- The strategy should **balance universal prevention with specialist pathways**. Most applicants are not recorded as having multiple support needs, so early intervention, advice, mediation, affordability support and tenancy sustainment remain just as important as specialist responses for high-complexity households

[2] Oldham Council, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/ (accessed 5 June 2026).

- **Mental health** should be treated as a core homelessness issue. It is the most common recorded support need and should shape service design, staff training, partnership working and commissioned provision.

- **Physical health and disability** need a stronger place in homelessness responses. Stable levels of physical health need, combined with rising long-term illness/disability elsewhere in the review, suggest the need for more joined-up pathways between housing, adult social care and health services.

- **Domestic abuse** remains strategically significant even if its share within support needs has fallen. The strategy should focus not only on crisis response and safe accommodation, but also on repeat homelessness prevention, move-on and tenancy sustainment for survivors.

- The increase in **learning disability** as a recorded need is significant and should inform future service design. Housing advice, communications, assessments and supported housing pathways need to be more accessible and tailored for this group.

- A smaller but high-risk cohort with **multiple disadvantage needs** a targeted response. People with combinations of mental ill health, substance misuse, offending history and rough sleeping are more likely to experience repeat homelessness and require coordinated multi-agency support rather than single-service interventions.

- **Care leavers** remain a priority group despite falling numbers. The strategy should continue to strengthen transition planning, joint protocols and accommodation pathways, while also improving recording so that need is not masked by poor data.

- **Former asylum seekers/refugees** remain a significant group within the wider review, and although their recorded support need rate has reduced over the period, the data elsewhere in the review shows continuing housing pressure associated with move-on from Home Office accommodation. This indicates the need for the strategy to plan for integration, advice and prevention activity for newly recognised refugees and other newly eligible groups.

- **Support needs data** is likely to under-record complexity. The strategy should include action to improve assessment quality, recording consistency and data sharing across housing, health and support services so that future planning is based on a fuller understanding of need.

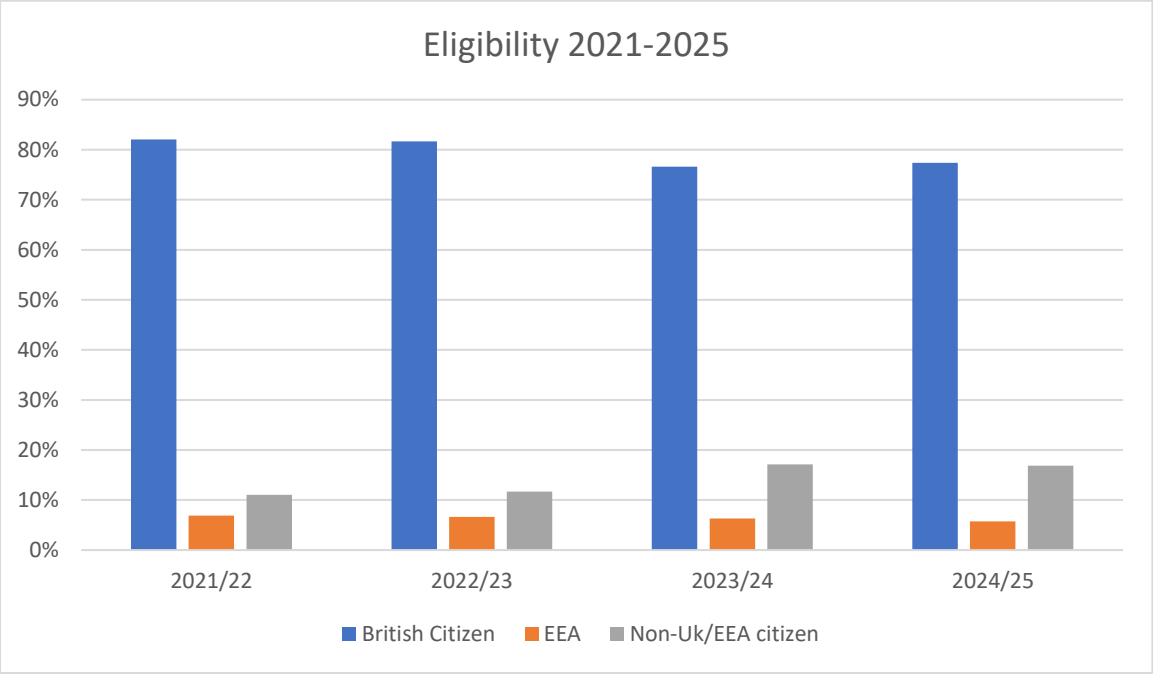
4.7 Eligibility

Local authorities must make housing advice available free of charge to anyone in the district but can only provide homelessness assistance – such as accepting prevention and relief duties – to eligible groups. These are set out in homelessness legislation and exclude households such as those who have no recourse to public funds conditions applied to their visas.

Habitually resident British or Irish citizens are the main eligible group who apply for homelessness assistance in Oldham, but there has been an increase in applications from other groups in recent years. The increase is biggest amongst Non-UK/EEA nationals and people granted refugee status –

correlating with an increase in applications from people becoming homeless after being asked to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support.

Figure 7: Eligibility 2021-25

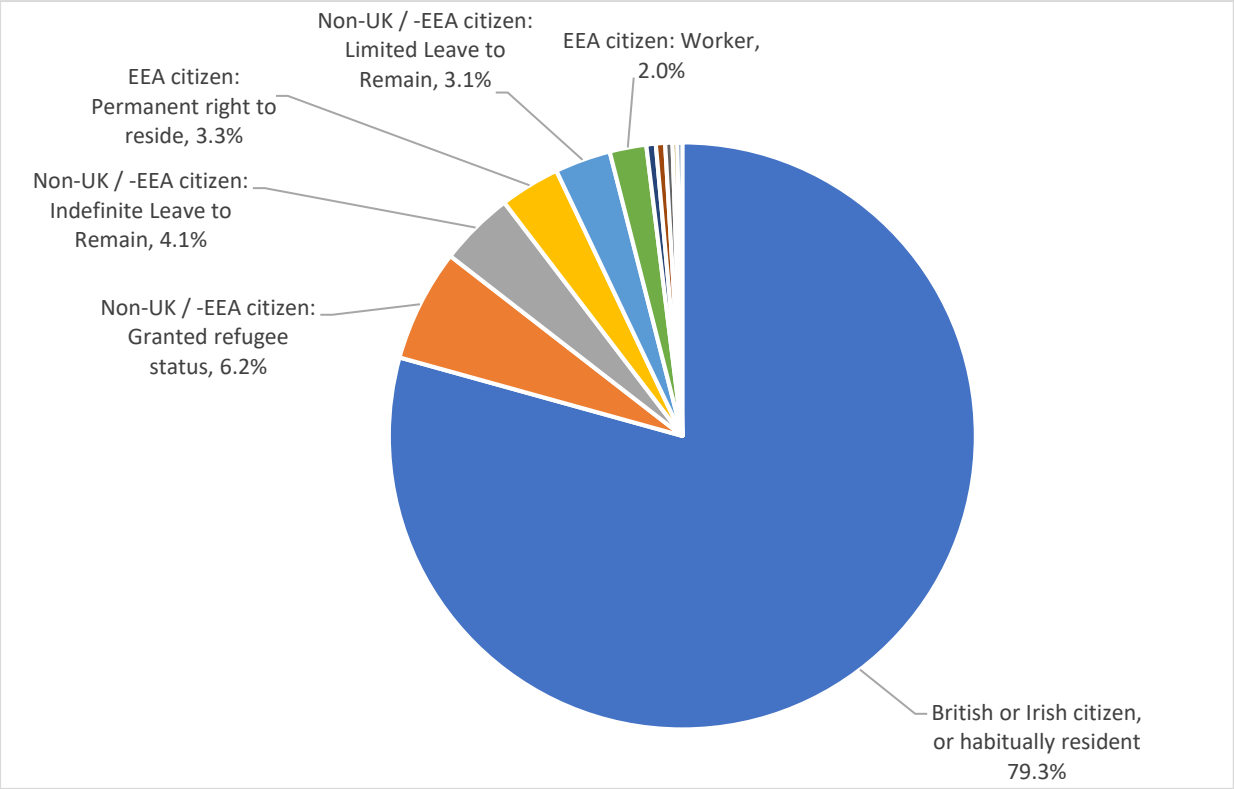


The following charts show the change over the course of 2021-2025 in the groups presenting as homeless – with a 7.4% increase in applications from those granted refugee status.

Table 11: Eligibility breakdown 2021-25

	2021/22	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2021-2025 average**
British or Irish citizen, or habitually resident	82.0%	81.7%	85.3%	77.4%	79.3%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Granted refugee status	1.8%	4.1%	10.0%	9.2%	6.2%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Indefinite Leave to Remain	4.0%	3.2%	5.1%	4.7%	4.1%
EEA citizen: Permanent right to reside	3.5%	3.0%	4.0%	3.1%	3.3%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Limited Leave to Remain	4.2%	3.0%	3.2%	2.2%	3.1%
EEA citizen: Worker	2.3%	2.5%	1.8%	1.7%	2.0%
EEA citizen: Other	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Exceptional Leave to Remain	0.5%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Other protection (e.g. humanitarian, discretionary)	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%
EEA citizen: Eligible family member	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
EEA citizen: Self-employed	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%

Figure 8: Eligibility Breakdown 2021-2025 Average



Learning Points:

- The strategy should combine universal early homelessness prevention for all eligible households with targeted support for groups facing additional barriers, including newly recognised refugees and other households with more complex resettlement need
- Most applicants remain British or Irish citizens, or otherwise habitually resident, but the eligibility profile is becoming more diverse. It is important that we focus prevention activity within this group.
- The proportion of presentations from people granted refugee status has increased significantly. A clear trend within the eligibility data that reinforces the need for the strategy to respond to homelessness risk linked to move-on from Home Office accommodation.
- Eligibility complexity is likely to place continuing pressure on frontline services. As the profile of applicants diversifies, the homelessness service will need strong staff knowledge, clear legal pathways and effective partnership working to ensure that households receive accurate advice as early as possible and do not reach crisis because of delays, confusion or poor signposting.

4.8 Demographics

4.8.1 Ethnicity

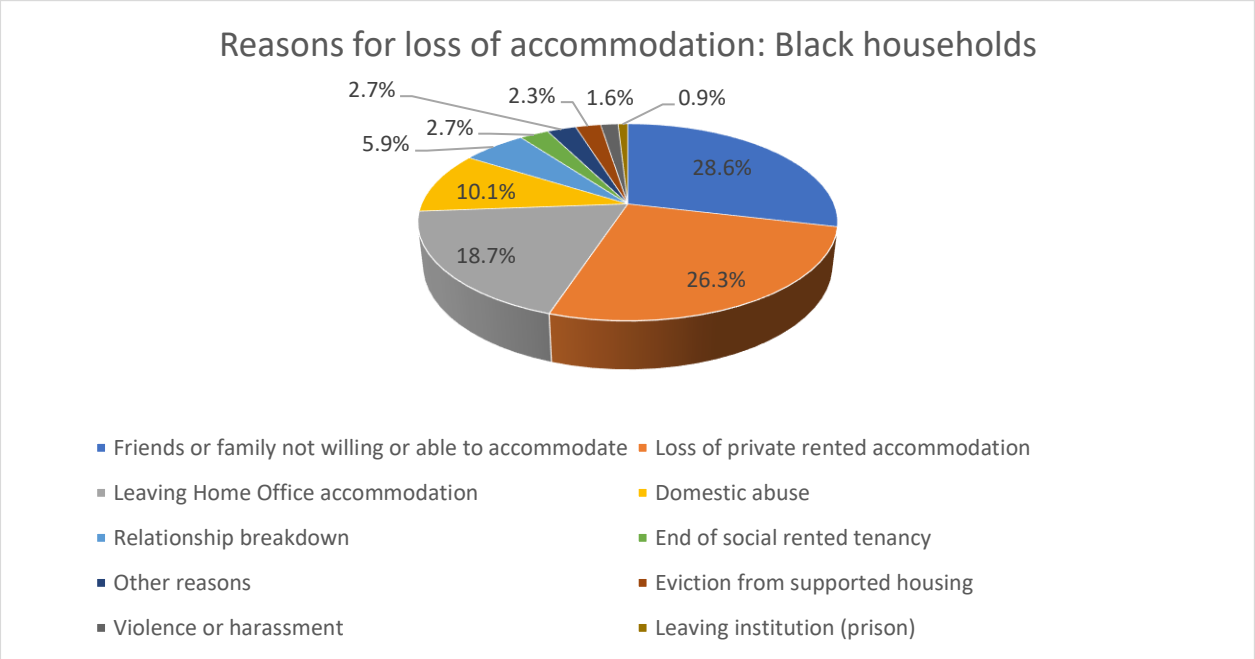
Homeless applicants are asked to provide information on their ethnicity on a voluntary basis, which can be used to establish whether any groups are disproportionately affected or not being reached by services despite being represented in Oldham. The followed sets out the ethnic makeup of residents owed a prevention or relief duty compared with UK Census Data 2021.

Table 12: Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Census 2021 [3]	Owed Prevention or Relief Duty 2021-2025
White	68.1%	58.3%
Pakistani	13.5%	9.3%
Bangladeshi	9.0%	6.3%
Black	3.4%	7.3%
Indian	0.7%	0.2%
Chinese	0.3%	0.1%
Mixed and Other	4.9%	8%
Not known	0%	7.8%

The biggest disparity between prevention or relief duty owed and Census information is Black households. This is in part due to representation amongst those granted refugee status and a higher-than-average rate in losing private rented accommodation – majority from assured shorthold tenancy. Other reasons for loss of accommodation were in line with overall trends for all applicants, such as loss of private rented sector accommodation and exclusions by friends and family.

Figure 9: Reason for loss of accommodation: Black households



[3] Oldham Council, Oldham in Profile, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/cms-data/depot/profile-depot/Oldham-in-Profile.pdf (accessed 5 June 2026).

4.8.2 Age

The age profile of households owed a prevention, or relief duty has remained stable across the review period. People aged 25–34 continue to make up the largest share of presentations, accounting for around one third of cases each year even though they account for only 13.1% of the borough's population. There has been a small increase in presentations from people aged 35–44 and 45–54, while the proportion of 18–24-year-olds has fallen.

Table 13: Age

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%
16-17	15	1%	6	0%	4	0%	1	0%
18-24	325	20%	326	16%	428	19%	266	16%
25-34	547	34%	673	34%	749	34%	547	33%
35-44	404	25%	556	28%	540	25%	472	28%
45-54	211	13%	277	14%	278	13%	246	15%
55-64	83	5%	95	5%	142	6%	103	6%
65-74	32	2%	30	2%	46	2%	31	2%
75+	13	1%	13	1%	13	1%	10	1%

Homelessness in Oldham is concentrated among working-age adults. People aged 16–24 are also over-represented, while residents aged 65+ are much less likely to appear in homelessness data than in the wider population.

Oldham's JSNA findings suggests that Oldham's unemployment rate was 6.4% in February 2026, the highest in Greater Manchester and above England's 4.0%, while youth unemployment stood at 9.3%, again the highest in Greater Manchester and above the national rate of 5.7%.

Oldham's JSNA also found that healthy life expectancy has improved significantly compared to previous review period. However, Oldham's average remains 6.5 years lower for males, and 5.7 lower for females than the national average – showing inequalities in the borough which may unfortunately be further impacted by housing issues. [4]

This suggests the strongest prevention focus should be on younger and mid-life adults at risk of because of insecure work, low income, facing family exclusion, insecure housing and affordability pressures, while still recognising that older people who do become homeless may have more complex health or support needs.

[4] Oldham Council, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/ (accessed 5 June 2026).

4.8.3 Household type

Most homelessness demand in Oldham comes from single adults, and especially single men. The past five years have seen trends in presentations, particularly:

- Single men remain the largest group in both years shown, while their share of prevention cases fell from 32% to 26%.
- Single women show a similar, though less pronounced, shift: their share of relief cases stayed at 19%, while their share of prevention cases fell from 23% to 16%.
- Families remain important in both duties, especially single female households with dependants, who make up around one fifth of both prevention and relief cases.

This fits the wider pattern seen earlier in the review: the number of prevention duties has fallen, while relief duties have increased, meaning more households are approaching at crisis. The following also demonstrates demand from household type on the Housing Options service and suggests how it could be tailored in the future to meet the needs of applicants in Oldham.

Table 14: Households Types

	Relief Duty				Prevention Duty			
	2021/22		2024/25		2021/22		2024/25	
Single male plus dependents	9	*1%*	25	*2%*	16	*2%*	13	*3%*
Single female plus dependents	162	*22%*	244	*20%*	200	*23%*	97	*22%*
Single male	337	*45%*	556	*45%*	282	*32%*	115	*26%*
Single female	142	*19%*	230	*19%*	201	*23%*	70	*16%*
Single – other	0	*0%*	7	*1%*	1	*0%*	2	*0%*
Couple plus dependents	61	*8%*	114	*9%*	115	*13%*	67	*15%*
Couple	29	*4%*	42	*3%*	40	*5%*	41	*9%*
3+ adults plus dependents	8	*1%*	16	*1%*	17	*2%*	21	*5%*
All adult household	0	*0%*	5	*0%*	10	*1%*	11	*3%*
Not known	0	*0%*	0	*0%*	0	*0%*	0	*0%*

Overall, the clearest pressure is among single adults, especially single men, whose growing concentration in relief points to rising risk of crisis presentation, repeat homelessness and rough sleeping. See also Section 9: Temporary accommodation, where single men and lone-parent families are also prominent in TA use, showing the direct correlation between ineffective prevention and pressures in TA.

Learning points:

- Strengthen earlier prevention for single adults and lone-parent families, especially single men and single female with dependent, before they reach crisis point.
- Expand practical options for single people, including PRS access, shared housing, mediation and tenancy sustainment.
- Use household type trends to target groups most likely to present at relief stage for prevention activities.

4.8.4 Economic status

Oldham has a significant proportion of wards within the most deprived 10% or 20% in England on almost all of the measures within Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – with Oldham's Overall IMD ranking falling from 19th to 11th most deprived out of 296 local authorities.

The following table shows the economic status of HRA applicants over the past 4 years. As can be seen, the number of applicants in in both full-time and part-time employment had declined over the past four years and those actively job-seeking increased in line with changes to Universal Credit.

Across the review period, the largest group was consistently those who were registered unemployed and steadily rising in proportion. This cohort saw 14.5% increase from pre-pandemic level.

The data also shows growing pressure among people with health-related barriers to work presenting as homeless. The proportion not working due to long-term illness or disability increased by 4.9% between 21/22 and 24/25.

The cohort 'Registered employed off work' and 'Working irregular hours' was introduced in 2022 after a technical update to the H-CLIC Data Specification by DLUHC (currently MHCLG). Oldham only has data for 23/24 and 24/25. This shows rising groups of people who are employed but off work and those working irregular, further point to the pressures created by insecure incomes and poor health outcomes.

Table 15: Economic Status

	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025	
Total owed a prevention or relief duty[1]	1,630		1,976		2,200		1,676	
Full-time work	241	14.79 %	268	13.6 %	312	14.2 %	175	10.4 %
Part-time work	154	9.45 %	161	8.1%	149	6.8%	108	6.4%
Student / training	44	2.70 %	38	1.9%	34	1.5%	21	1.3%
Registered unemployed	633	38.83 %	678	34.3 %	772	35.1 %	712	42.5 %
Not registered but seeking work	52	3.19 %	55	2.8%	95	4.3%	71	4.2%

Not seeking work / at home			179	10.98 %	122	6.2%	153	7.0%	100	6.0%
Not working due to long-term illness / disability			175	10.74 %	268	13.6 %	336	15.3 %	265	15.8 %
Retired			30	1.84 %	33	1.7%	36	1.6%	26	1.6%
Registered employed off work	**Total Registered employed off work**				0	0.0%	44	2.0%	44	2.6%
	Of which:	due to ill health / disability [3]			0	0.0%	25	1.1%	26	1.6%
		on maternity/paternity / adoption leave [4]			0	0.0%	19	0.9%	18	1.1%
Working irregular hours [5]					0	0.0%	80	3.6%	67	4.0%
	Other		102	6.26 %	285	14.4 %	107	4.9%	50	3.0%
	Not known[2]		20	1.23 %	68	3.4%	82	3.7%	37	2.2%

Overall, the picture is one of homelessness demand being driven less by temporary income shocks alone and more by a mix of unemployment, poor health and weak financial resilience.

According to the Oldham JSNA in 2026, Unemployment stands at 6.4% and Youth Unemployment currently stands at 9.3%. Oldham has the highest claimant rate in GM and a rate higher than England in both categories.[5] These cohorts present challenges in terms of securing accommodation that is compounded by the lack of accommodation available within the boundaries of the shared room rate.

Learning Points:

- Prevention work should be more closely linked to employment, welfare advice and income maximisation, especially for households who are unemployed or in insecure work.
- The rise in households not working due to long-term illness or disability shows the need for stronger links between housing, health and support services.
- More households are reaching the service without the income needed to access or sustain housing, so the strategy should strengthen debt advice, affordability checks, discretionary support and tenancy sustainment.

[5] Oldham Council, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/ (accessed 5 June 2026).

4.9 Geographical trends

Analysing geographical trends helps to identify where homelessness is most concentrated across the borough, so that prevention activity, outreach, partnership working and wider housing support can be targeted more effectively. It also helps to test whether homelessness demand is linked to wider structural inequalities such as deprivation, poor health, insecure housing and poverty, and therefore informs a more place-based and evidence-led homelessness strategy.

The 2021–25 review shows that homelessness presentations are concentrated in a number of areas, particularly in and around central Oldham. At ward level, the highest presenting areas were Coldhurst (1,572), Alexandra (1,423), St Mary's (1,286), Waterhead (1,237) and Werneth (1,235).

At neighbourhood/postcode sector level, the highest presenting areas included Hathershaw (509), Coldhurst North East (466), North East Werneth (438), West Werneth (421) and Clarksfield/Greenacres (412).

Figure 10: Areas of Highest Presentation by Neighbourhood

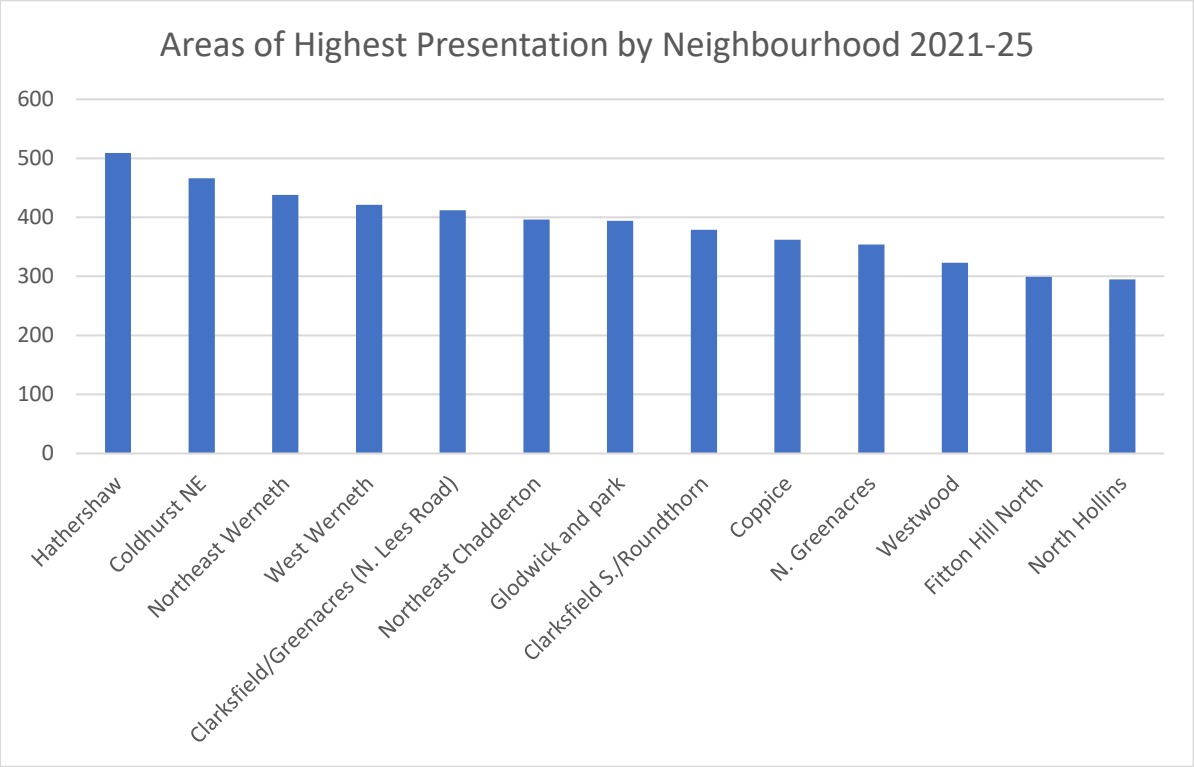


Figure 11: Areas of Highest Presentations by Ward

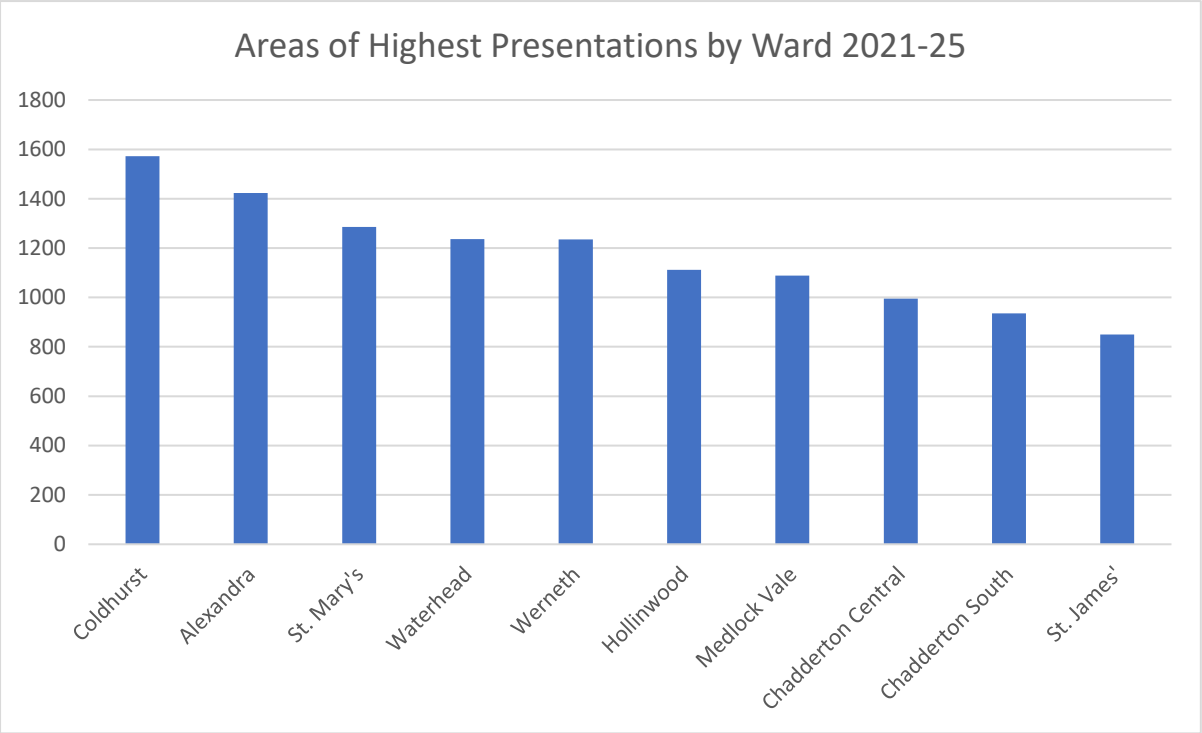


Table 16: List of Highest Presenting Postcodes 2021-25

Postcode	Number of Presentations	Neighbourhood 2019 Name	Ward name	LSOA2021	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025 Decile
OL9	127	S. Chadderton (Morrison's/M.E.N.)	Chadderton South	E01005346	6
OL9	87	West Werneth	Werneth	E01034232	1
OL8	66	North Hollins	Hollinwood	E01005381	1
OL4	41	Clarksfield S./Roundthorn	St. Mary's	E01005430	1
OL4	41	N. Greenacres	Waterhead	E01005448	1
OL9	38	Upper Westwood	Coldhurst	E01005353	1
OL4	38	N. Greenacres	Waterhead	E01005448	1
OL8	35	North Hollins	Hollinwood	E01005378	2
OL4	33	Clarksfield S./Roundthorn	St. Mary's	E01005431	1
OL8	32	Northeast Werneth	Werneth	E01034233	1

These patterns are closely aligned with deprivation. The highest presenting wards and neighbourhoods are concentrated in areas that fall within the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, while the lowest levels of presentation are found in less deprived areas such as Saddleworth North and South, and other outer parts of the borough.

Compared with the previous 2016–21 review, the broad pattern remains consistent, but the concentration of presentations in central parts of the borough appears to have intensified.

Learning Points

- Homelessness presentations are concentrated in a small number of high-deprivation neighbourhoods, particularly in and around central Oldham, and this pattern has remained consistent across both review periods. The 2026 Strategy should therefore target prevention and early intervention resources most strongly in these areas.

- The highest presenting postcode (OL9) is where the Victoria Hotel Oldham asylum hotel is located, which helps explain the exceptionally high level of presentation in that location and reinforces the need for targeted planning around asylum move-on, refugee integration and homelessness prevention in the town centre.

- Excluded from the graphs and tables above is the postcode OL1 accounting for 471 presentations and represent the Civic Centre / Union Street area. This is likely to reflect a portion of rough sleeping activity, the concentration of homelessness services, and applicants presenting only once they have reached the point of crisis.

- The persistence of high demand in the borough's most deprived neighbourhoods suggests that homelessness prevention should not be viewed in isolation from wider inequalities. Housing, health, social care, welfare support and employment services need to be better aligned in these areas.

- The evidence in this review supports the development of place-based integration in Oldham, such as the Live Well model piloted in areas like Salford and Tameside & Glossop, exemplifies this by:

    - Supporting people who fall between primary and secondary mental health services.
    - Offering multi-disciplinary, person-centred support.
    - Enabling self-referral, flexible access, and recovery-focused care.
    - Connecting individuals to housing, employment, benefits, and social networks.
    - Reducing system "bouncing" and crisis escalation.

- This review would suggest for a deeper dive on the mapping of services and presentation data to align services with demands and outcomes. This will lead to better service planning and utilisation and contribute to further development of the place-based approach in the 2026 strategy.

4.10 Customer groups

As part of the Housing Authorities duty to provide or secure the provision of advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, section 179(2) of the 1996 Housing Act states that housing authorities must design advice and information services to meet the needs of people within their district including, in particular, the needs of the following groups:

(a) people released from prison or youth detention accommodation;

(b) care leavers;

(c) former members of the regular armed forces;

(d) victims of domestic abuse;

(e) people leaving hospital;

(f) people suffering from a mental illness or impairment; and,

(g) any other group that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district.

While legislation requires housing authorities to consider groups who are at particular risk of homelessness, the wider prevention approach must not become limited to specialist cohorts alone. The evidence in this review suggests that Oldham needs a two-level approach: first, a universal prevention offer that helps the broad range of households facing homelessness because of poverty, family exclusion, insecure housing and affordability pressures; and second, tailored pathways for groups with higher levels of vulnerability or statutory priority. This approach will help ensure that the strategy remains responsive both to the largest customer groups and to those whose needs are more complex and require specialist intervention.

The data on support needs already outlined in this Review has highlighted that several of these groups are at particular risk of homelessness, and this section explores this – and the services currently available to them – further.

4.10.1 People released from prison or youth detention accommodation

<table>
<tr><td>Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25</td><td><table>
<tr><th>Referral Agency</th><th>Count of Duty to Refer</th></tr>
<tr><td>Probation Service</td><td>263</td></tr>
<tr><td>Adult Secure Estate (Prison)</td><td>111</td></tr>
<tr><td>Youth Secure Estate</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>375</td></tr>
<tr><td>Count of Support Needs</td><td>229</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Developments under 2021-25 Strategy</td><td>Launch of CAS3 – Community Accommodation Service (Tier 3) in Oct 2021 to support prison leavers with short-term accommodation and resettlement, strengthening homelessness prevention on release and reducing reoffending.

The Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AfEO) is a UK government-funded initiative in Oldham designed to help prison leavers at risk of homelessness secure private rented housing. It covers rental deposits, landlord incentives, and dedicated tenancy support officers to help with the transition. It enables move-on into private rented sector for ex-offenders.

Workforce development - creation of key roles to respond to rising demand from this customer group:
Dedicated Homelessness Prevention Officer (HPO) for prison releases
Move-On Support Officer (MOSO) to drive housing outcomes
Bond Scheme Officer (AfEO)</td></tr>
</table>

	Implementation of partnership approach with probation services to identify accommodation pathways for individuals leaving prison or approved premises. Meetings occur every fortnight with strategic oversight.
Current services	CAS3 service had 2 capacity uplifts between 2021-25, bedspaces increased from 11 to 19, including women's provision, with funding secured to December 2027. CAS3 integration into a formalised move-on pathway led to increase move-on from CAS3 to A Bed Every Night (ABEN). Continued delivery of AfEO in 2024-25 with commitment to maintain the same provision level.
Gaps identified	Specialist supported accommodation for ex-offenders excluded from supported accommodation. Despite increased specialised support, national early release schemes since 2024 have significantly increased demand. Some prison leavers still leave prison without any accommodation in place. Limited move-on options for ex-sex offenders and ex-arson offenders. Long-term housing pathways and preventive system for ex-offenders that tackles persistent issues - recalls to prison, non-engagement / behaviour issues and refusal of housing offers Incomplete data collection on support needs data as agency data far exceeds support needs identified.

4.10.2 Care leavers

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	Count of Duty to Refer 197[6] Count of support needs 57[7]
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	Complementary secondary regulations came into effect in July 2025, completely exempting care leavers under 25 from local connection and residency tests when applying for social housing across England. £200m has been made available through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) in 2023. Support is given to a) Those with the longest histories of rough sleeping and most complex needs b) Young people (18-25) at risk of homelessness to help prevent them from rough sleeping.

[6] Figure extracted from Children Social Care Duty to Refer figures. This figure is likely to be overestimating the number of care leavers within this cohort.

[7] Based on presentations recorded with 'Care Leaver' as a support need.

	Oldham Council is a part of the Greater Manchester Care Leavers Guarantee since 2024. Homeless Young People Protocol is updated in July 2025. The Leaving Care Pledge signed between First Choice Homes Oldham and Oldham Council in November 2025. This pledge focuses on supporting young people transitioning out of the care system into independent tenancies.
Current services	As a part of the GM Care Leavers Guarantee, Oldham Council has agreed to provide the following support: • practical help including managing a tenancy, paying bills and budgeting can be provided; • All care leavers will be exempt from paying council tax; • All care leavers aged 18-21 are entitled to a £3000 housing allowance when they move into their own home. Under the Homeless Young People Protocol, care leavers who are aged 18-21 are automatically in priority need, as are those who have dependent children in their household. Fortnightly partnership meetings between aftercare and housing to monitor active caseloads and plan for young people moving on Joint assessments in place for young people leaving care and those presenting as homeless. Tailored information is available on Oldham Council's website
Gaps identified	Joint commissioning of accommodation services to be explored. Presentation data for care leavers is incomplete due to inconsistent recording of support needs and referral agencies.

4.10.3 Former members of the regular armed forces

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	Count of Duty to Refer 0 Count of support needs 11
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	In 2022, Armed Forces Covenant became legal duty. Allocation of Housing Regulations was amended in 2024 to exempt all former members of the regular armed forces from local connection and residency rules when applying for social housing. Oldham Council, as part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, renewed our commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant in February 2025. The First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) Armed Forces Covenant pledge (2018) is upheld.
Current services	Under the Armed Forces Community Covenant, Oldham Armed Forces Partnership meets regularly to provide targeted support and casework, specifically handling welfare and housing cases for veterans. In June 2025, Oldham joined the "VALOUR" network, a pilot scheme across the North of England aimed at helping veterans access tailored support. Tailored information is available on Oldham Council's website.
Gaps identified	Due to low numbers of presentations and responses via consultation this group have not been identified as a priority for further service development, but this will be kept under review as part of the Strategy's updates.

4.10.4 Victims of domestic abuse

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	Count of support needs 1219 Reason for Homelessness 2582
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	Under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), victims of domestic abuse receive an automatic "priority need" for housing, a broadened definition of abuse, and new duties for local authorities to provide safe accommodation. Greater Manchester Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2022-2032) and the 2024-26 Delivery

	Plan priorities Housing integration into homelessness systems. Oldham's Domestic Abuse Strategy (2022–2024) brought increase in safe accommodation and housing options, better support pathways and stronger multi-agency coordination.
Current services	Under the GM strategy and delivery plan, now operate a housing reciprocal scheme. Survivors can be rehoused outside their borough for safety since 2024. Ongoing joint working between Independent Domestic Violence Association (IDVA) service, Housing Options and housing providers to support applicants experiencing domestic abuse. Joint training was completed in 2026. Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards includes representation from Housing Authority and housing providers. Specialist support for NRPF survivors, ethnically minoritised groups (e.g. Lotus Hub), LGBTQ+ and disabled survivors.
Gaps identified	Specialist refuge accommodation for male domestic violence victims. Older male children of a female domestic abuse victim are not currently allowed into female-only specialist refuge accommodation.

4.10.5 People leaving hospital

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	**Referral Agency** / **Count of Referrals** Hospital A&E or in-patient 115 Mental Health Service - Acute in-patient 8 Total 123
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	ICB funded step-down accommodation GMMOP provides specialist support accommodation for residents moving on from acute metal health wards.
Current services	Specialist Homeless Prevention Officer role established supporting patients at risk of homelessness on hospital discharge. 5 spaces for move-on from acute mental health wards provided through GMMOP.

	People leaving hospital and at risk of homelessness are not in priority need. 93% successful move-on rate for this customer group.
Gaps identified	GMMOP step-down accommodation currently not available to patients from non-mental health wards. Data likely underrepresent the number of patients stepping down from Mental Health Service.

4.10.6 People suffering from a mental illness or impairment

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-2025	**Count of support needs** 929
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	ICB funded step-down accommodation GMMOP provides specialist support accommodation for residents moving on from acute metal health wards.
Current services	Customer handled through GMMOP are high in complexity. 60% of customers accommodated from service inception have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse. A weekly GMMOP meeting to take a case conference approach to applicants at risk of safeguarding issues Workforce specialisation including: • Dual Diagnosis worker (joint funded with Public Health) based at Turning Point • Drop-ins at ABEN Night Shelter, supported accommodation, Street Angels
Gaps identified	Services continue to struggle to meet the volume of need from applicants with mental health issues. Aside from specialist provision within the Housing Options team, appropriate psychologically informed training could be an option to pursue through the 2026 Strategy. No specialist support for lower-level mental health support needs.

4.10.7 Any other group that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district.

This review has identified that the following support needs and groups of individuals have a particularly significant representation in Oldham which requires an appropriate response in the 2026 Strategy:

- Refugees and other persons from abroad
- Persons with multiple disadvantages – e.g. mental health problems and substance misuse issues (drug or alcohol dependencies)
- Jobseekers

A review by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Team jointly commissioned by Oldham and Rochdale Councils also identified a need for support for single people who were 'sofa surfing' and at risk of rough sleeping. The RSI Team found that only 31% of people referred to its service were found to be actively rough sleeping; the rest were either could not be located or were in these unstable lodging arrangements.

Learning Points

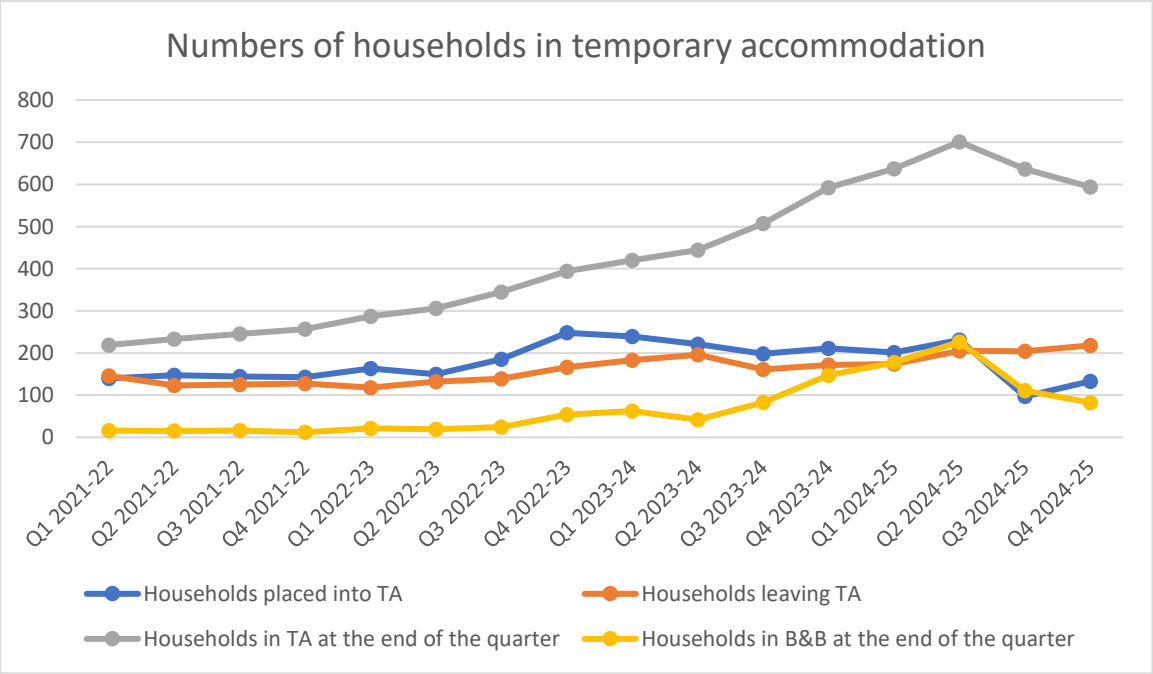
- How can services better prevent single applicants who are currently 'sofa surfing' or leaving Home Office accommodation from becoming future rough sleepers.

5. Temporary accommodation

5.1 Numbers in temporary accommodation

As homelessness applications have increased, so have temporary accommodation placements. A combination of increase demand and restricted workforce capacity saw the rise of households in temporary accommodation between 2021-2025 – with numbers peaking at the end of Q2 2024-25. Positively however the Council has proactively been reducing its use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast placements, with no families with children living in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks as of April 2026.

Figure 12: Numbers of households in temporary accommodation



Temporary accommodation (TA) usage has decreased significantly over the review period, with overall numbers falling by 17.4% from 603 (31 December 2024) to 498 (31 December 2025), contrasting with a 5% national increase. The number of families in TA reduced by 16.2% (327 to 274), while single households fell by 18.7% (276 to 224); both trends run counter to national rises of 5.9% and 3.5% respectively. These reductions indicate strong local performance in reducing reliance on TA across all household types.

An updated Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy is expected to be published by Autumn 2026 to address and improve the supply, procurement, quality, specification, suitability, location and sufficiency of TA's.

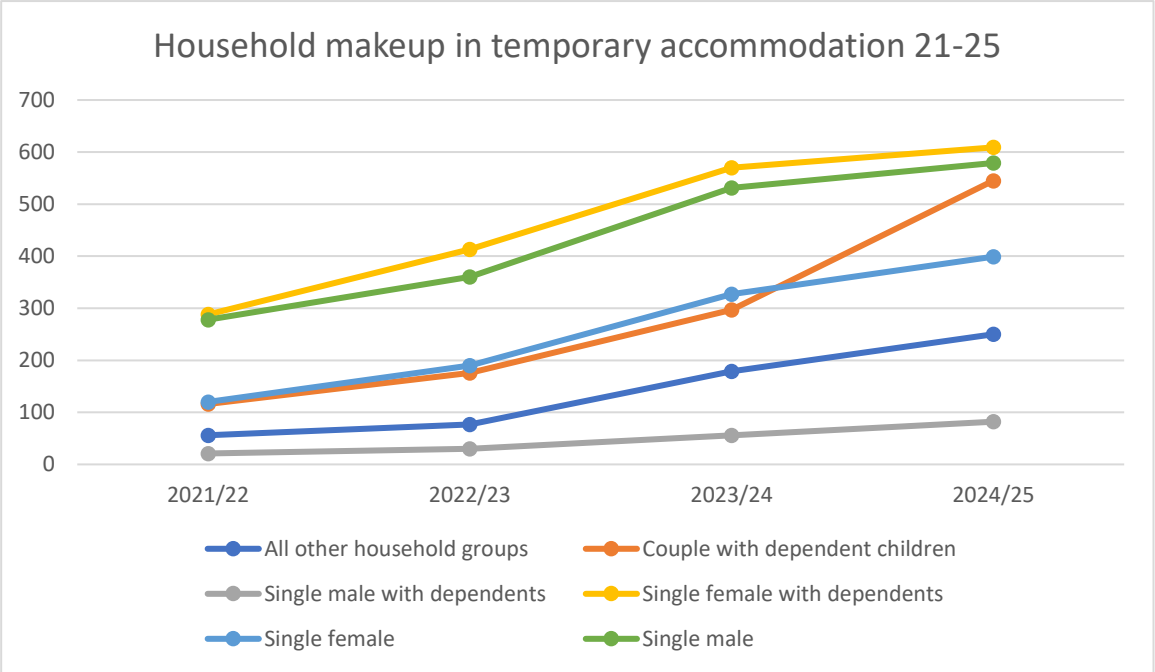
5.2 Household makeup in temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation use also points to where prevention interventions are inadequate. The review notes that single men, lone female parents and couples with dependent children have significantly increased in temporary accommodation, broadly matching the pattern seen in the relief data. The main reasons households enter temporary accommodation are domestic abuse and family or friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate. Households leaving the private rented sector appear less likely to need temporary accommodation, which suggests there is often more time to intervene successfully before homelessness occurs. – further emphasising the importance of early intervention and prevention.

Table 17: Household makeup in temporary accommodation

		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Total number of households in TA[1,2]		880	**1,247**	1964	2469	6560
Couple with dependent children		116	**176**	297	545	1134
		13.2%	14.1%	15.1%	22.1%	17.3%
Single parent with dependent children	**Male**	21	**30**	56	82	189
		2.4%	2.4%	2.9%	3.3%	2.9%
	Female	288	**413**	570	609	1880
		32.7%	33.1%	29.0%	24.7%	28.7%
	Other / gender not known	0	**0**	0	0	0
		0	**0**	0	0	0
Single adult	**Male**	278	**360**	531	579	1748
		31.6%	28.9%	27.0%	23.5%	26.6%
	Female	120	**190**	327	399	1036
		13.6%	15.2%	16.6%	16.2%	15.8%
	Other / gender not known	1	**1**	4	5	11
		0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
All other household types		56	**77**	179	250	562
		6.4%	6.2%	9.1%	10.1%	8.6%

Figure 13: Household makeup in temporary accommodation



Learning Points

- Reduce TA demand by intervening earlier in cases of family exclusion and domestic abuse.
- Strengthen prevention pathways for single adults and lone-parent families, who are most likely to end up in TA.
- Improve move-on options from TA so households do not stay there longer than necessary.

6. Duty to Refer

The Homelessness Reduction Act introduced a new Duty to Refer which applies to specified public bodies – although other non-specified organisations can choose to refer on a voluntary basis. Under this duty these bodies must refer, with consent, any applicant who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to the local housing authority. These public bodies are as follows, including the number of referrals received between 1st April 2021- 31st March 2025:

Table 18: Referral received under the Duty to Refer

Duty to Refer	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	% Total
Adult Secure Estate (Prison)	24	37	28	22	12.3%
Youth Secure Estate	0	1	0	0	0.1%
Probation Service	41	65	93	64	29.2%
Hospital A&E, Urgent Treatment Centres or in-patient care	27	42	37	9	12.7%
Mental Health in-patient care	1	0	5	10	1.8%

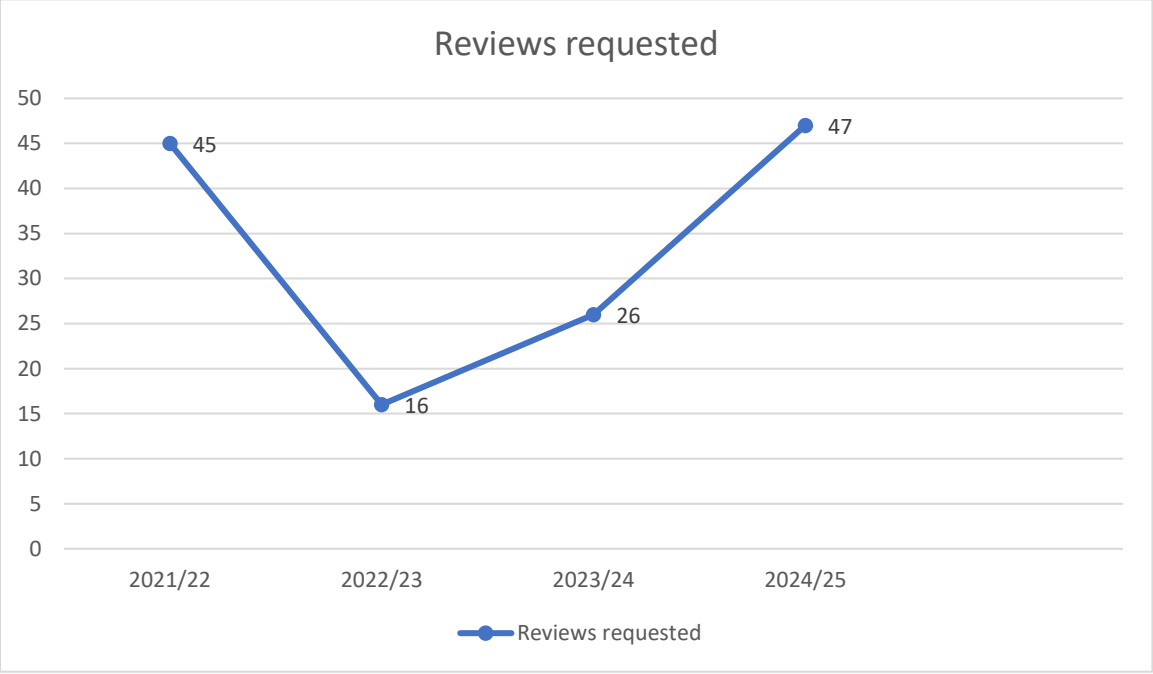
Jobcentre Plus	22	40	18	27	11.9%
Adult Social Services	22	19	20	20	9.0%
Children's Social Services	52	45	58	42	21.8%
Children's Early Help Services/Children's centres	1	0	6	4	1.2%
Nil Recourse Team	0	0	0	0	0%
Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces	0	0	0	0	0%

The lack of referrals from youth offending agencies could be because referrals for such young people are typically made by Social Workers from the Aftercare Team under existing protocols in Oldham and would therefore be captured under Social Services Authorities figures.

7. Reviews

The HRA introduced several new points of legislation where applicants could ask for a review; as a result, the number of reviews undertaken by senior officers in Oldham has increased over the Review period.

Figure 14: Reviews requested



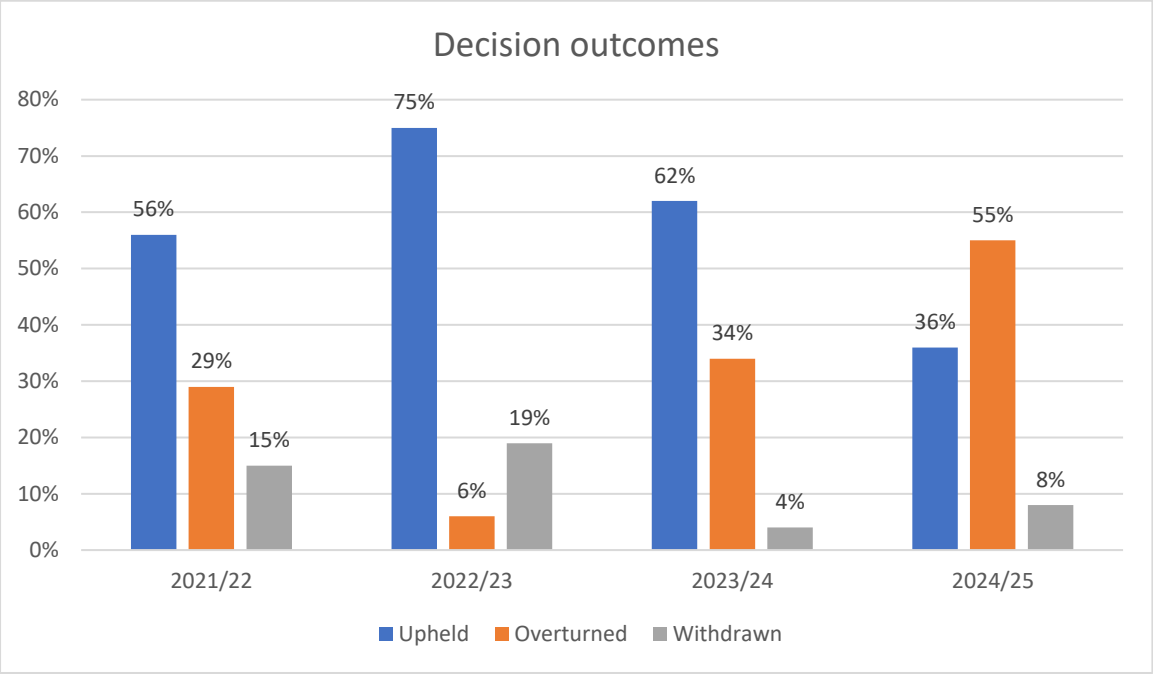
Reviews requested have increased between 22/23 and 24/25, likely due to the increase in homelessness applications. Review outcomes show increase in overturned outcomes, showing need for more robust decision making to ensure resources and applicant expectations are well managed.

Review requests are projected to fall – B&B in households for more than 6 weeks drove the number of reviews requested in 2024/25.

During this review period, there was one court appeal, which highlighted issues in the application of the EU Withdrawal Agreement to homelessness eligibility on a national level; while Oldham's review

decision was made within statutory guidance in force at the time, national guidance has since been amended following subsequent case law and related concerns in this area.

Figure 15: Review outcomes



8. Economic factors and housing market data

8.1 Welfare Reform

Between 2021 and 2025, welfare policy continued to shape homelessness risk through a combination of reduced income protection, rising housing costs and growing administrative pressure on claimants. In practice, the period saw households facing a weaker safety net at the same time as access to affordable housing became more difficult. Policy changes include:

- removal of the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift in autumn 2021.
- Reduced Universal Credit taper rate from 63% to 55% and increased work allowances.
- reliance on temporary cost-of-living measures, including the Household Support Fund, which helped households with essentials such as food and energy but did not address longer-term affordability pressures.
- Increase in Administrative Earnings Threshold for Universal Credit in 2024

Across the period as a whole, welfare policy placed a stronger emphasis on work progression, conditionality and administrative compliance, while housing support did not consistently keep pace with rent inflation.

For homelessness services, the cumulative effect was to increase the risk of rent shortfalls, arrears, affordability pressures and financial instability, particularly for households already affected by unemployment, ill-health or insecure work.

8.2 Local Housing Allowance

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the rate of housing benefit – although usually paid via Universal Credit – that can be claimed against a private rented sector property, depending on household size.

During this review period, rates were frozen at their 2020 level from 2021/22 to 2023/24, before being reset to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April 2024. However, this improvement was short-lived: the rates applied from April 2025 were held at the same cash level as 2024/25, despite further rent increases.

For Oldham, the practical effect is that LHA continues to leave many low-income households unable to meet their rent in full, contribute to arrears, tenancy breakdown and an inability to secure a new tenancy to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Overall, the evidence from 2021–2025 suggests that LHA remains an important but incomplete homelessness prevention tool. The temporary increase in 2024 eased some pressure, but the continued gap between benefit support and market rents means that homelessness prevention in the 2026 strategy needs to focus on including income maximisation, debt and affordability advice, targeted use of discretionary support, landlord engagement, and development of lower-cost but sustainable private rented options.

Table 19: Local Housing Allowance Rates, Oldham

Oldham and Rochdale LHA rates	
Number of rooms	Rate
Share room or bedsit	£79.36
1 bedroom	£109.32
2 bedrooms	£132.91
3 bedrooms	£159.95
4 bedrooms	£218.63

Note: the rate that applies depends on the claimant's postcode/BRMA. Parts of Oldham such as Failsworth fall within the Manchester LHA area, where rates are generally higher.

8.3 Housing market data

A comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment for Oldham was carried out in 2024 and used to inform the Housing Strategy. Key findings were that whilst house prices were below the national average, there was – as with many areas – a significant shortfall in the supply of larger homes (3+ bedrooms). The assessment also evidence that the private rented sector now plays a much larger role in the borough but remains difficult for many households to access because of rent levels, quality concerns and low incomes.

The Housing Needs Assessment also incorporated a household survey which found that approximately 53% of households stated to have a repair problem and around 52% report to have damp or mould problems in their property. Problems with affordability – a theme running throughout this review – were cited as one of the main reasons for not addressing the repair problem or not being able to move to a different property.

8.4 Social and affordable housing

Social and affordable housing remains central to meeting housing need in Oldham, particularly for households who cannot access the housing market.

The Housing Needs Assessment shows that social housing in Oldham is under sustained pressure from high levels of need, affordability constraints in the wider market, and limited supply of suitable homes. Social housing continues to play a vital role both in homelessness prevention and as a route into settled accommodation. However, unless supply increases and the mix of homes better reflect identified need, pressure on the homelessness system is likely to remain significant.

The table below shows a key performance metrics of affordable housing pipelines available in the borough according to the Housing Needs Assessment 2024.

Table 20: Affordable Housing Pipelines in Oldham[8]

Measure	**Amount**
Total affordable housing units	20,367
General needs units	17,774
Supported housing units	374
Housing for older people	2,219
Low-cost home ownership units	351
Net annual affordable housing needs	669 homes
Average annual affordable completions over the last five years	146.6 homes
Recommended affordable tenure spl*it*	65% social/affordable rent; 35% affordable home ownership

Allocation Policy has been revised in 2026 and marks a shift to a more tightly targeted, needs-led approach, restricting the Housing Needs Register to applicants with a recognised housing need and prioritising scarce social housing for those in the most urgent need.

The following provides an overview of Allocations activity between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2025.

What the data tells us is that only 808 properties were advertised between 2021-2025, but there were 5,678 households registered for rehousing as of 31/03/2025. Larger, family size homes were particularly scarce, with demand far outstripping supply and overcrowding a particular issue in Oldham.

[8] Oldham Council (2024) Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment 2024. Final report. Oldham: Oldham Council. Available at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5590/local_housing_needs_assessment_2024.pdf (Accessed: 5 June 2026).

Table 21: Social Housing Properties Advertised via Choice Based Lettings 2021-2025

Bed size	Number received
1 bed	459
2 bed	256
3 bed	78
4 bed or more	5
Total	808

Table 22: Live Housing Register applications as at 31/03/2025

Count of Bedroom Need		**Band**			
Bedroom Need	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Total**
studio	663	638	627	90	2021
1 bedroom	28	123	61	13	225
2 bedrooms	272	790	412	68	1542
3 bedrooms	214	813	260	40	1330
4 bedrooms	53	297	62	12	424
5 bedrooms	13	77	13	2	105
6 bedrooms	7	17	1	2	27
7 bedrooms	1	1			2
8 bedrooms		1			1
9 or more bedrooms	1				1
Grand Total	**1252**	**2757**	**1436**	**227**	**5678**

8.5 Supported Housing

Supported housing provides accommodation alongside tailored support for individuals with complex or additional needs, helping them to develop the skills required to live independently. Within the homelessness system, it plays a critical role in both preventing homelessness and supporting recovery by offering stable, supported environments that reduce the risk of repeat homelessness. It also supports system flow by enabling move-on from temporary accommodation and reducing pressure on crisis services.

Under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, local authorities in England are required to develop Local Supported Housing Strategies, with the first strategies due to be published

by 31 March 2027. This will be a key factor in developing a supported accommodation offer within the borough.

8.6 Specialist housing

Specialist housing includes tailored accommodation such as shelters for people sleeping rough and refuge provision for survivors of domestic abuse, designed to respond to acute and immediate risk. Within the homelessness system, it provides safe, crisis-focused environments alongside targeted support, enabling individuals to stabilise, address trauma, and begin pathways toward longer-term housing. It also plays a vital role in protecting high-risk groups while relieving pressure on emergency and temporary accommodation services.

Our current supply of specialist housing include:

Table 23: Oldham's specialist housing

Accommodation Type	Capacity	Primary Customer Group
A Bed A Night (ABEN)	33	Individuals sleeping rough or at immediate risk of rough sleeping, particularly in winter
Specialist Housing for Domestic Abuse	50	Survivors of domestic abuse requiring safe, secure accommodation and specialist support
CAS-3	19	Prison leavers at risk of homelessness, requiring short-term accommodation on release
GMMOP	5	Individuals being discharged from acute mental health wards who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness

8.7 Private Sector Housing

The private rented sector has become an increasingly important part of Oldham's housing market and now plays a significant role in accommodating households who are unable to access owner occupation or social housing. Private renting accounts for 18.0% of households in the borough, compared with 8.7% in 2001. This reflects a substantial long-term increase in the importance of the sector and confirms that it is now a key element of the wider housing system.

However, the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) shows that the private rented sector is also associated with growing affordability pressures and poorer housing outcomes for some households – placing even entry-level private rented housing beyond the reach of many low-income households.

Table 24: Private Rented Sector Affordability and Quality Pressures - Comparison

Measure	LHNA 2019	LHNA 2024
Private renting as share of households	13.6%	18.0%
Lower quartile private rent (per month)	£451	£594

Median private rent (per month)	£472	£724
Income needed for lower quartile private rent (per year)	£21,648	£28,512
Income needed for median private rent (per year)	£23,904	£34,752
Private renters reporting repair problems	53.4%	52.6%
Private renter repair cases involving damp or mould	62.1%	51.8%
Private renting households with income below £18,200	59.5%	61.4%

These pressures are particularly significant when considered alongside Local Housing Allowance levels. The assessment found a gap between benefit support and lower quartile private rents for most household types. In practice, this means that many households reliant on benefits face a shortfall even when seeking the cheapest available accommodation in the sector. This has important implications for homelessness prevention and relief, as it limits the ability of the private rented sector to function as an affordable and sustainable route out of homelessness for many residents.

The quality of private sector accommodation within the sector is also a concern. More than half of private renters reported repair problems in their home, and damp or mould was one of the most frequently reported issues. The sector also has relatively high levels of dissatisfaction with property condition compared with owner occupation. This suggests that while the private rented sector is essential in meeting housing need, it also presents risks in relation to poor standards, tenancy sustainment, and the suitability of accommodation.

The profile of private renters in Oldham reinforces the importance of the sector to households experiencing housing insecurity. They are characterised by the following:

- Around 61.4% of private renting households have incomes below £18,200 per year
- A wide range of household types, including single people, couples with children, lone parents, and some older households.
- Tenancy lengths are often short, with more than a third of private renters having lived in their home for less than three years.

This points to a degree of instability within the sector and increases the risk of repeat homelessness where tenancies are not sustained.

The evidence suggests that the private rented sector will continue to be an essential part of Oldham's housing offer, but it cannot be relied upon as a consistently affordable or stable solution for households at risk of homelessness without further support. Its contribution to homelessness prevention and relief depends on the availability of lower-cost homes, stronger landlord engagement, improved property standards, and financial measures that address the gap between rents and incomes. Consideration should also continue to be given to measures that improve regulation, management standards, and accessibility within the sector.

8.8 Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation provides short-term housing for households who are homeless and have an immediate need for a place to stay while longer-term solutions are secured. It is a critical component of the homelessness system, ensuring that individuals and families are not left without

shelter during crisis, while also enabling local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties. Effective use of temporary accommodation supports system stability but requires careful management to minimise length of stay and avoid reliance on unsuitable placements.

Temporary accommodation in Oldham is procured based on demand. The 2026 Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy will explore in more detail the supply, procurement, quality, specification, suitability, location and sufficiency of TA's.

9. Service mapping

9.1 Service provision

Service Mapping is key to understanding existing partnership within the borough to integrate place-based prevention and pre-prevention work.

Oldham benefits from a strong voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector backed by registered charity Action Together who provide free training, funding advice and other support. The Council, other statutory services and housing providers also provide a range of services within local communities. For a full list of services see Appendix A.

These are the services available to Oldham Residents as of June 2026.

Table 25: Oldham homelessness-related services grouped by needs category

Needs	Main services / routes in	What the category includes	Key strengths & gaps
1. Immediate crisis support and essentials	Oldham Council Crisis and Resilience Fund Oldham Foodbank UKEFF Action Together / Household Support Fund partners Welcome Project/Oldham Unity / local clothing and essentials support. Salvation Army provision The Welcome Centre Bread and Butter Thing	Emergency food energy support basic household items community meals emergency essentials	Oldham appears to have a relatively broad immediate hardship response, with a mixture of council, community and voluntary sector provision that can reduce immediate risk and stabilise households. Provision is mainly short-term crisis relief rather than a housing solution. Access may depend on vouchers, referrals or knowledge of local community providers.
2. Homelessness access, emergency accommodation and rough sleeping	Oldham Council homelessness route Out-of-hours homelessness route Rough sleeping / outreach	Statutory homelessness access Emergency response	There is a visible core homelessness and rough sleeping route, including emergency response and accommodation pathways. The mapping also identify specialist

	A Bed Every Night / Depaul UK drop-ins and day provision domestic abuse refuge routed separately under SafeNet RESS for single people with restricted eligibility.	rough sleeping support day-centre style support specialist restricted eligibility support for some groups	pathways such as Depaul / ABEN and RESS. The evidence suggests that restricted eligibility provision appears more developed for single people than for families and move-on / lower-threshold support for people with complex needs is less visible than crisis access.
3. Prevention, tenancy sustainment and housing-related support	Tenancy Relations Service private rented sector support generic floating support KeyRing Oldham Positive Steps Family Help Early Break Pathfinder Floating Support for young people Mediation routes where housing breakdown is linked to wider family or tenancy conflict	Support to prevent eviction sustain tenancies, resolve landlord-tenant issues improve independent living skills, reduce family conflict and intervene before crisis.	This category offers the strongest opportunity for upstream prevention and shows that Oldham has elements of this infrastructure in place, including youth floating support, independent living support and some tenancy- and relationship-based mediation. The clearest weakness is the potential lack of early, lower-threshold crisis mediation and floating support, particularly for low-level disputes, repeated churn and people who do not yet meet formal thresholds.
4. Income, debt, welfare and cost-of-living support	National Debtline StepChange Citizens Advice CAP MoneyPlus Money Wellness Debt Advice Foundation UKEFF Oldham Welfare Rights Service Energy hardship funds	Debt advice, benefits advice budgeting support hardship funding energy grants welfare rights income-maximisation support.	Debt and welfare support available suggests a reasonably broad advice ecosystem, combining local welfare support with regional and national debt advice routes. This is important for homelessness prevention where arrears, unaffordable housing costs or reduced income are drivers. The main issue may be navigation and fragmentation, as the offer spans national charities, local advice and community support rather than a single joined-up front door.

	Local food and welfare support		
5. Mental health, wellbeing and counselling	NHS 111 option 2 emergency routes Pennine Care services Oldham Talking Therapies Healthy Young Minds TOG / TOGS Mind Oldham community counselling social prescribing	Crisis mental health support therapeutic intervention emotional wellbeing counselling peer support talking therapies community-based wellbeing	There are a range of crisis and ongoing mental health support, spanning NHS, VCFSE and community-based provision. This is important because poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness. The mapping notes suggest that gaps may exist for people with complex overlapping needs, especially where they do not meet thresholds, are in repeated crisis, or need stronger coordination between housing and treatment services.
6. Substance misuse and dual diagnosis	Turning Point / ROAR Early Break Dual diagnosis nurse Red Rose Recovery Probation-linked treatment access.	Drug and alcohol treatment Recovery planning, detox / rehab pathways Harm reduction counselling youth substance misuse support peer recovery	The service mapping notes indicate that Oldham has a recognisable treatment and recovery route for adults and young people, including attention to dual diagnosis and peer support. A likely gap remains for people who are not ready for treatment, fall below thresholds, or present repeatedly with homelessness, mental ill health and substance misuse combined.
7. Domestic abuse, family breakdown, mediation and family support	Oldham Domestic Abuse Helpline IDVA support SafeNet refuge move-on and resettlement Early Help / MASH TLC Talk, Listen, Change, Relate	Domestic abuse crisis support, refuge, advocacy, family mediation, counselling, relationship support, parenting / family support and early intervention where family	This is one of the clearer specialist pathways in the local system: the documents identify a well-defined domestic abuse route and a wider but more mixed offer around counselling and mediation. The weakest area appears to be generic conflict resolution and prevention for parents of teenagers and young adults,

	Pennine Care couples therapy Positive Steps Family Help Early Break Pathfinder	conflict may lead to homelessness.	particularly where there is risk of exclusion from the family home rather than formal domestic abuse.
8. Specialist pathways for specific client groups	Families with children young people refugees / asylum seekers people with restricted eligibility veterans offenders / probation older people people with disabilities, learning disabilities or autism culturally specific women's support such as SAWN	Targeted support for groups whose needs may not be met through generic homelessness provision.	The local landscape includes a range of targeted specialist offers, which is a strength because homelessness risk is not evenly distributed and some groups need tailored support. Coverage appears uneven across cohorts, with the clearest concern being support for families with restricted eligibility, and potentially less visible support for some forms of multiple disadvantage outside the most urgent crisis routes.
9. Community connection, social support and wraparound support	Oldham Social Prescribing SPARK Oldham CIC peer support volunteering and community-based groups Age UK social support Other culturally specific community organisations	Non-clinical, community-based support that helps reduce isolation, improve confidence, build routines, and connect people to local services and groups.	These services strengthen the wider protective infrastructure around homelessness prevention and recovery, particularly for people whose needs are social, relational or confidence-based rather than purely housing-led. These routes can be less visible and less consistently embedded into formal homelessness practice, and availability may depend on local capacity or short-term funding.

The strongest areas of provision appear to be immediate hardship support, domestic abuse support, and access to mental health and substance misuse services. There is also evidence of preventative support through debt advice, welfare support, counselling, family mediation and some tenancy-related or floating support offers.

However, the mapping also suggests several structural gaps. These include lower-threshold support for people with multiple and complex needs who do not meet service thresholds, earlier tenancy crisis mediation to prevent avoidable homelessness, and potentially limited specialist housing

support for families with restricted eligibility. Support for parents of teenagers and young adults at risk of family breakdown also appears less visible than provision for younger children. Overall, the local offer appears broader at the point of crisis than at the move-on and long-term sustainment stages.

Below is a service map across the homelessness journey (see Appendix B) , which is the clearest way to show where services intervene, where Oldham appears strongest, and where there may be structural gaps.

Table 26: Homelessness response and intervention journey in Oldham

Stage of journey	Main interventions / services	What appears to work relatively well	Key risks / gaps
1. Upstream risk / early vulnerability	Debt advice, welfare rights, cost-of-living support, counselling, social prescribing, family support, community support, youth support, early mediation.	The evidence suggests good breadth in advice, welfare and emotional support, with multiple routes before crisis point.	Support may be fragmented and not always joined into one visible prevention pathway. Families with older children and young adults may be less well covered than younger-family support.
2. Prevention / risk of homelessness	Housing advice, Tenancy Relations, family mediation, floating support, Early Break Pathfinder, KeyRing, domestic abuse support where relevant, income maximisation support.	There is a promising prevention and tenancy sustainment offer in parts of the system, particularly where issues are identified early and the person is willing or able to engage.	The main gap appears to be at this stage: earlier crisis mediation and flexible floating support are less visible, especially for lower-level tenancy disputes or people not meeting higher thresholds.
3. Crisis / homelessness presentation	Homelessness route, out-of-hours response, rough sleeping services, A Bed Every Night / Depaul, refuge and SafeNet for domestic abuse, NHS 111 option 2 / 999 in mental health emergency, food and emergency essentials.	Crisis responses are among the most visible and developed parts of the local system, especially emergency support, domestic abuse routes and basic-needs provision.	People with restricted eligibility, no recourse-type issues, or multiple disadvantage may face less clear routes, especially where they do not fit the main statutory pathways.
4. Relief / stabilisation	Foodbanks and community provision, Crisis and Resilience Fund, welfare support, Talking Therapies, TOG Mind, Turning Point, Early Break, dual diagnosis route, social	The local system appears to have a relatively strong stabilisation offer, particularly around food, essentials, emotional support, mental health and treatment pathways.	Relief support may not always translate into sustained housing outcomes if tenancy support, move-on planning and continued engagement are weaker.

	prescribing, specialist community support.		
5. Move-on / recovery	Council in-house move-on team, SafeNet move-on and resettlement, KeyRing, peer recovery, community support, social prescribing, Age UK support, disability and advocacy routes, practical household support.	Oldham's in-house move-on capacity is an important strength because it gives the system a more defined mechanism for supporting residents from homelessness services into settled accommodation.	The main challenge is ensuring that move-on support is not treated as a single transition point but as part of a wider recovery and sustainment pathway. People with complex needs may still require longer-term support around tenancy sustainment, mental health, substance misuse, finances and social isolation after the move-on stage itself.
6. Tenancy sustainment / long-term stability	KeyRing, Adult Social Care, Age UK, social prescribing, ongoing welfare advice, community and peer support, practical support for the home, ongoing family support.	Oldham has some important independent living and social support infrastructure that can help residents remain settled.	The likely weakness is around repeat crisis prevention for people with multiple disadvantage, repeated failed engagements, or needs that sit between housing, mental health and substance misuse services.

9.2 Tools to prevent and relieve homelessness

The Housing Options Team utilises several tools to prevent and relieve homelessness, as well as referring to partners mapped out above to provide help to applicants. The Council also has wider tools at its disposal, such as Discretionary Housing Payments assistance provided through Children's and Social Care Acts, which all form part of a preventative toolkit.

The following provides an overview of specific schemes commissioned or delivered by the Housing Options Team and their cost effectiveness for consideration of expansion or redevelopment under the new Homelessness Strategy.

Table 27: Tools to prevent and relieve homelessness

Scheme	**Focus**	**Positive outcomes per annum**	**Average cost per applicant**
Household Support Fund	Prevention / Relief	118	£3,389
AfEO Bonds	Prevention/Relief	35	£3,500
A Bed Every Night	Relief	70	£3,500
CAS3	Relief	60	£4207
GMMOP	Relief	17	£2437
Rough Sleeping Initiative	Prevention / Relief	223	£812

9.3 Gap analysis

Given some of the issues identified throughout the review, some of the gaps emerging could include:

- Debt advice and money management
- Employment, training and skills
- Provision of accommodation and day centres
- Provision of specialist accommodation services for households with complex needs
- Navigation across services — the local offer is broad, but spread across council, NHS, voluntary and community services, which may make the system difficult to navigate without a clear single front door or triage route.
- Lower-threshold support for people with multiple and complex needs — for people experiencing homelessness alongside mental ill health and/or substance misuse who do not meet service thresholds or are not ready to engage with formal treatment.
- Early tenancy crisis mediation — resolve low-level landlord-tenant disputes, rent arrears communication issues, neighbour problems or housing instability before they escalate into homelessness.
- Support for parents of teenagers and young adults — provision appears stronger for younger children and early family support than for families experiencing conflict with older teenagers or young adults at risk of exclusion from the home.
- Longer-term tenancy sustainment for repeat presentations — while crisis and move-on support are visible, there may still be gaps in longer-term wraparound support to prevent repeat homelessness for people with ongoing or fluctuating needs.

10. Consultation

10.1 Overview

To support the development of the 2026 Homeless Strategy Oldham Council undertook three simultaneously running consultations between 12 September 2025 - 03 November 2025. The surveys were promoted via a web survey link to members, partners, and residents and distributed via e-mail, government websites, search engines, Oldham Homelessness Forum, social media and other referrals.

A total of 338 responses were received:

- Residents: 302
- Partners: 33
- Elected Members: 3

NB: Number of survey responses from residents and partners have significantly improved from the previous review – with resident responses increased 10-fold. However, member responses have fallen significantly from 15 to 3.

10.2 Elected Members

Members were asked what were the main reasons that their constituents approached them for housing advice and responded accordingly. Given the limited number of responses below are the key themes and issues identified by all respondents:

- Eviction Proceeding via s21/s8 notices and subsequent Court action
- Unlawful Eviction
- Rent Arrears and
- Family Breakdown
- Other reasons for homelessness cited include domestic abuse and rough sleeping

Next, Members were asked which if any of the following groups of homeless or threatened with homelessness people have you seen any increase in enquiries?

All respondents concurred that they had seen an increase in homelessness due to domestic abuse. Other reasons for an increase in enquiries included BAME households and rough sleeping

Members were asked more broadly what they thought needed to be done to address the main reasons for homelessness within Oldham. Consistent answers included:

- The need for more Affordable/Social Housing
- The need for more control in relation to the ending of private sector tenancies
- The need for increased support from Government in relation to Asylum dispersal
- The need for increased staffing to provide better support and advice in relation to the main reasons for homelessness

Members strongly agreed that a multi-agency approach is required to find appropriate housing and support solutions for residents.

Which services in any would help to improve the offer provided to those homeless or at risk of homelessness?

Members indicated the following services were required:

- Supported accommodation services including longer term options for households with specific and complex needs
- Debt Advice service
- Drug and Alcohol services
- Medication services
- Counselling support services

What 3 things should the new Homelessness strategy prioritise to address homelessness over the next 3-5 years?

Members confirmed the Homelessness Strategy should prioritise:

- Family breakdown,
- Relationship breakdown and
- Domestic Abuse

Learning Points:

- Members commented on the main causes of homelessness, particularly the end of private rented sector tenancies and family breakdown
- Members cited the need to embed services within our Communities, providing integrated support and intervene earlier to prevent homelessness occurring
- Poverty is a thread running throughout the Review and the consultation, along with the need to help people 'cushion' themselves from loss of income

10.3 Partners

Responses were received from a wide range of partner organisations working with Oldham Council, recognising the depth and diversity of provision available across all sectors in Oldham.

Figure 16: What groups does your agency currently work with?

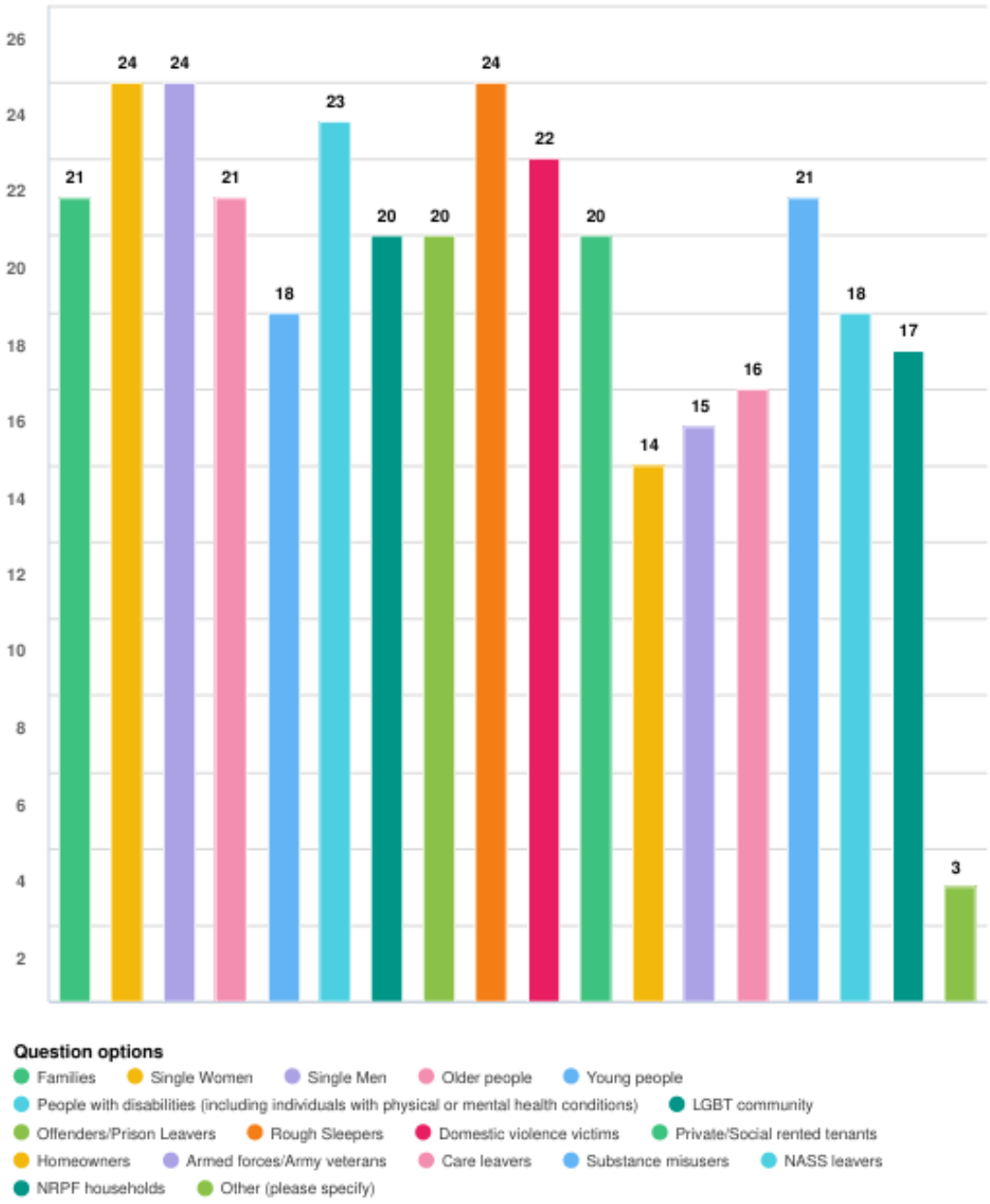
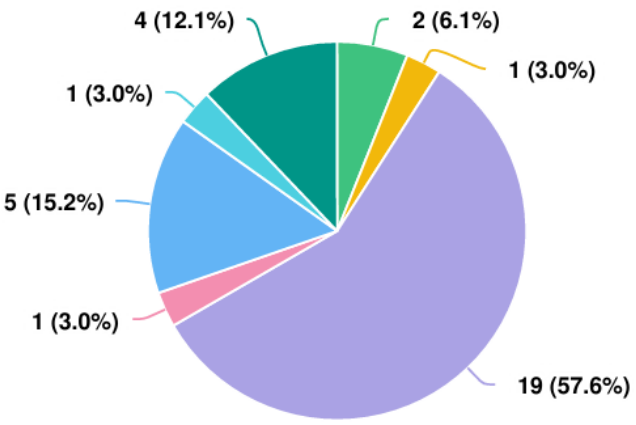


Figure 17: *What sector does our organisation work in?*



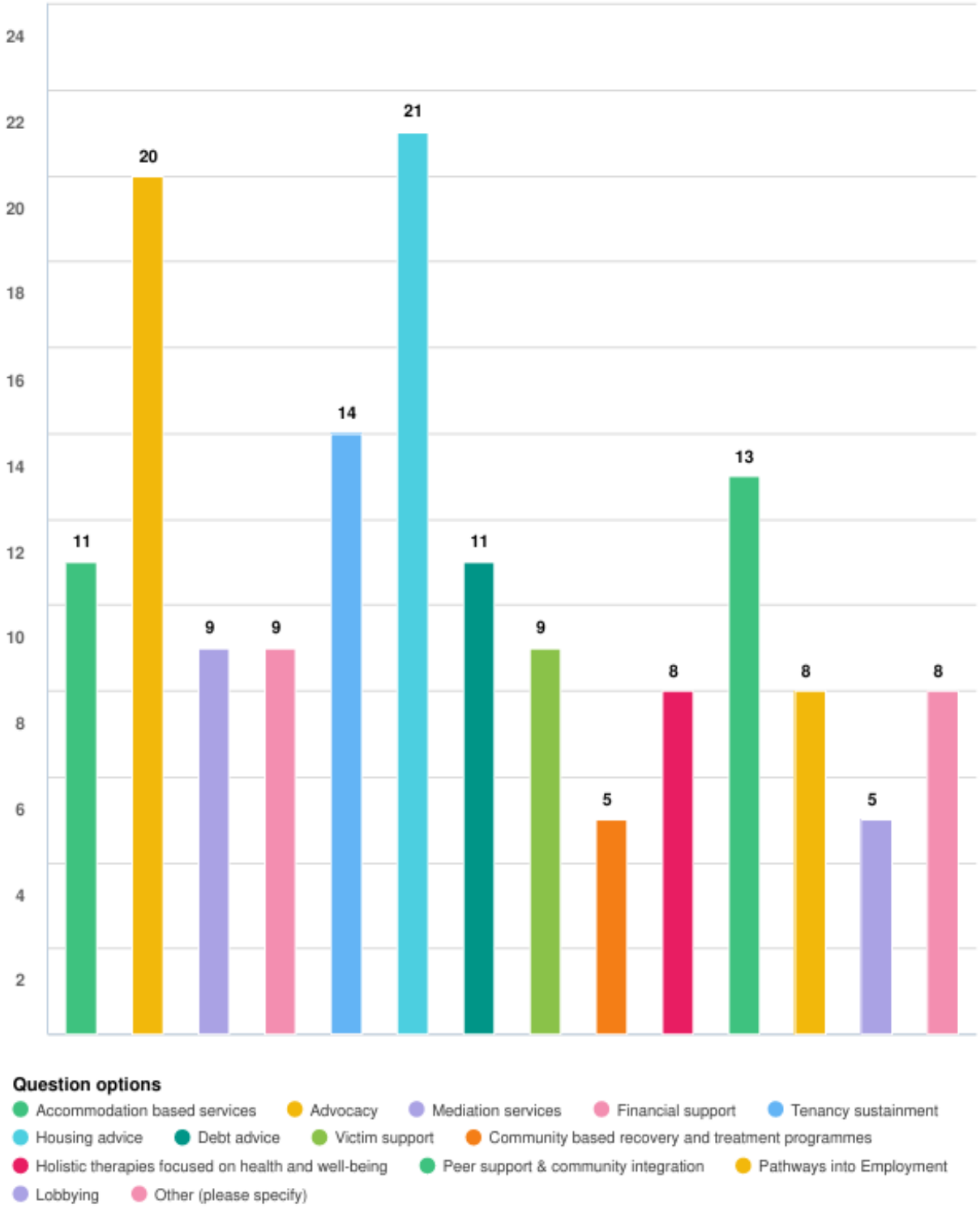
Question options

Statutory service
Voluntary sector
Charitable sector
Business sector
Health services
Faith sector
Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

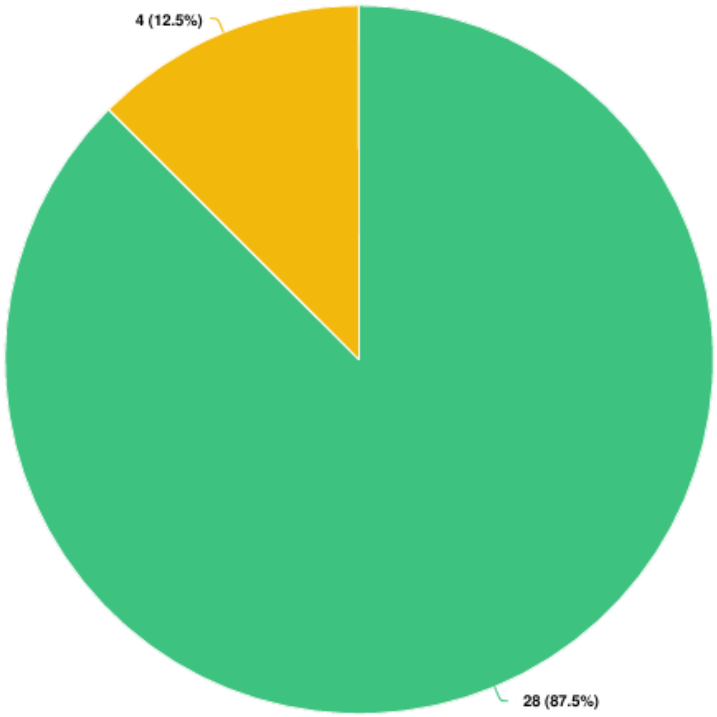
Stakeholders were asked how their organisation works to prevent and relieve homelessness and responded accordingly:

Figure 18: Partner Survey



When asked if their organisation have experienced rising or sustained demand for your services from specific groups who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, most partners said they had seen increased demand on their services:

Figure 19: Partner survey rising demand



When asked about which groups are under-supported in Oldham, partners responded with clear and consistent answers. The most frequently raised under-supported groups were:

- **People with mental health needs**, especially where those needs are complex, severe, dual diagnosis, or classed as "high risk". Waiting lists, unclear pathways, and insufficient support were recurring concerns.
- **Single men, especially those over 25**, rough sleepers, and men without "priority need", who were repeatedly described as falling through gaps.
- **People with NRPF, NASS leavers, refugees, and other non-UK nationals**, often due to restricted eligibility, lack of move-on support, language barriers, low housing banding, and weak access to advice or accommodation options.
- **Young people and care leavers**, especially where previous support capacity has reduced.
- **People leaving prison or hospital**, with several comments about weak discharge planning and inadequate resettlement arrangements.
- **People with learning disabilities, autism, sensory needs, low literacy or poor digital access,** who struggle to navigate the housing system and evidence requirements.

- **Older adults**, raised particularly in relation to unsuitable housing, mobility needs and lack of downsizing options.
- **Families in temporary accommodation**, especially those with babies or school-age children, where B&B or nightly paid accommodation was described as unsuitable.

The shared message from this question is that the system works least well for people whose needs are complex, excluded, or hard to "fit" into standard eligibility or allocation frameworks. The current model seems particularly difficult for people who need flexible, relational and assertive support.

Partners were asked to identify the main reasons people seek help from your service with regards to homelessness. The most common reasons cited were:

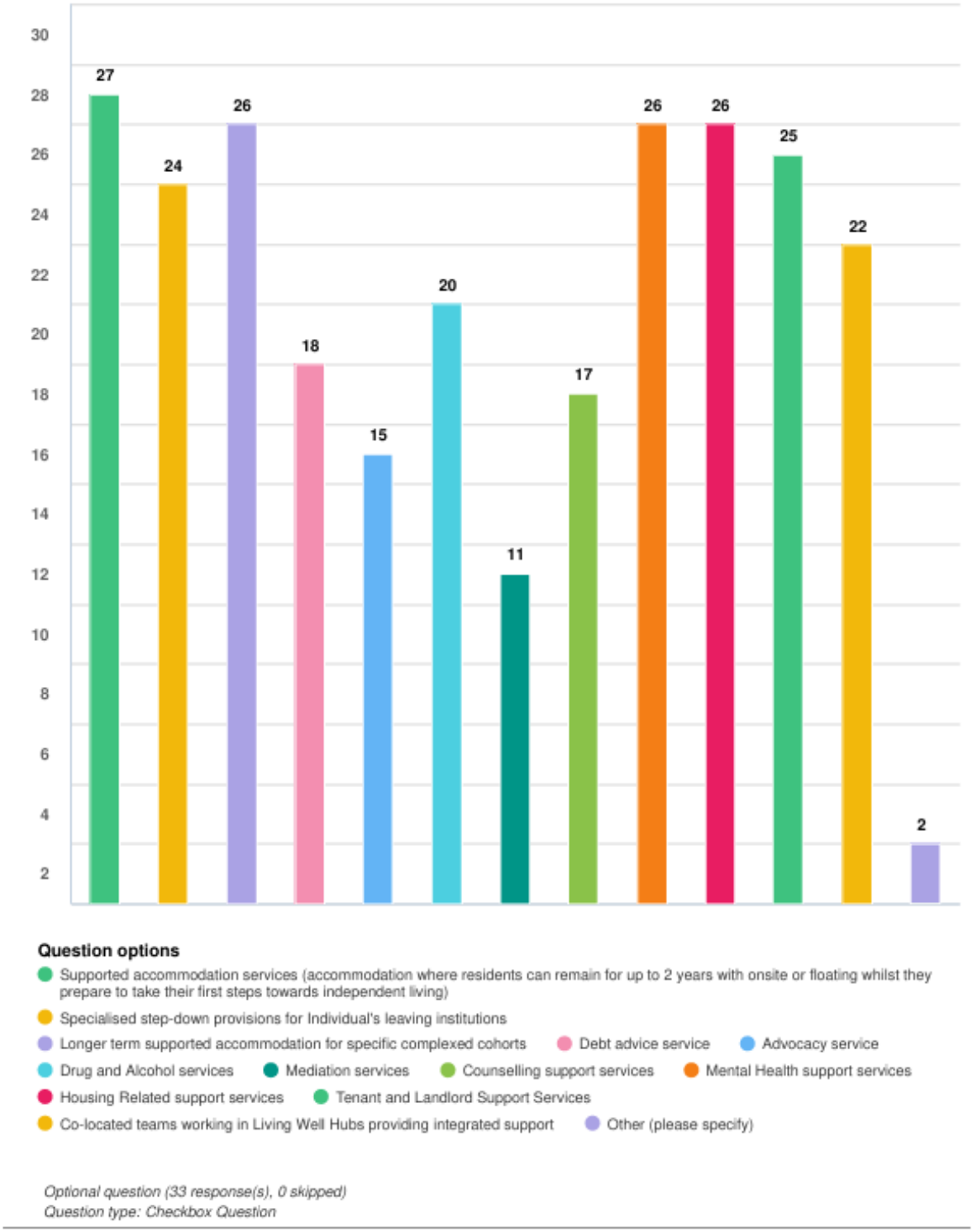
- Eviction and rent arrears
- Debt and affordability pressures
- Relationship breakdown and family breakdown, including being asked to leave by parents or partners
- Domestic abuse
- Rough sleeping or loss of informal accommodation
- Leaving prison, hospital or Home Office accommodation
- Mental health challenges, trauma and substance misuse, often as contributing factors to housing crisis
- Overcrowding, unsuitable or unsafe accommodation, disrepair, hoarding and fire risk in some cases.

When asked about their thoughts on what needs to be done to address the main reasons for homelessness within Oldham. Partners have responded with strong agreement on practical strategic actions. The main themes were:

- **Increase the supply of affordable and social housing**, especially one-bed/studio options, age-friendly homes, and suitable move-on accommodation.
- **Address private rented sector barriers**, including high rents, shortfalls against benefits, landlord reluctance to let to low-income households, lack of guarantors, poor standards, and weak communication from landlords. Some proposed landlord licensing, vetted/fair landlord lists, or stronger landlord engagement.
- **Strengthen early intervention**, including mediation, advice, debt help, tenancy sustainment and practical one-to-one advocacy before crisis occurs.
- **Improve institutional move-on**, especially for prison leavers, hospital discharge, and those leaving Home Office accommodation.
- **Expand supported/shared housing and longer-term supported accommodation**, particularly for people with complex needs, trauma, repeat homelessness or substance misuse.
- **Use rightsizing/downsizing better**, to free up family-sized homes and create more appropriate pathways for older adults and under-occupying households.
- **Bring empty homes back into use** and make better use of existing stock

Since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act on 3rd April 2018, we now record the support needs of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Partners stated people sought help from their organisations for with the following support needs:

Figure 20: Addressing Homelessness in Oldham



Key comments from partner on support needs reveals that 'most or all of these are needed." The services most selected or described as especially important were:

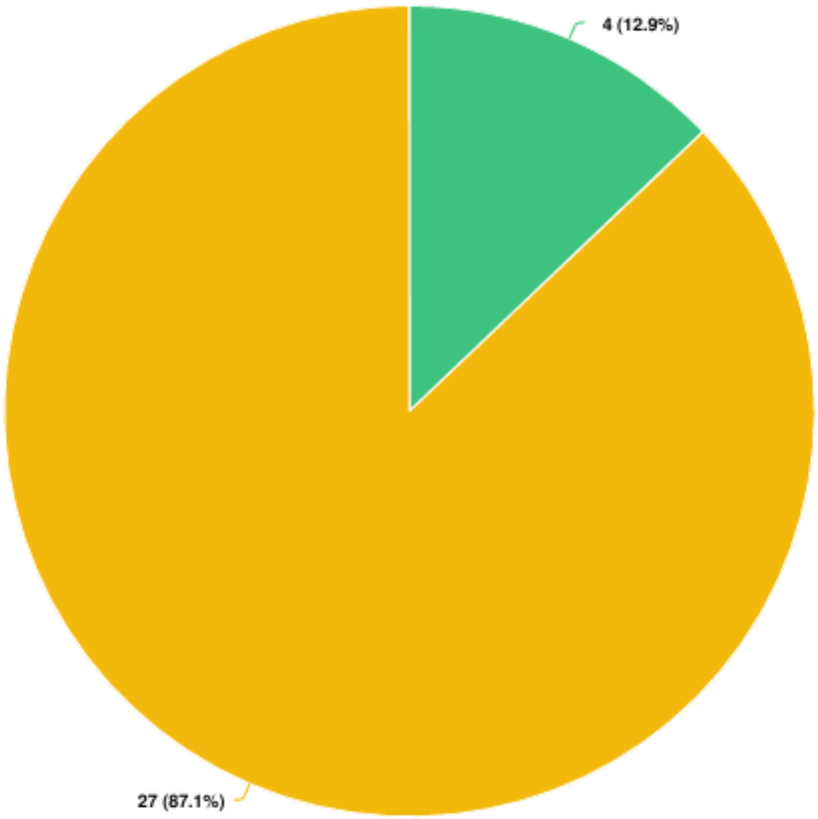
- Supported accommodation services

- Longer-term supported accommodation for complex cohorts
- Step-down provision for people leaving institutions
- Mental health support services
- Housing-related support
- Tenant and landlord support services
- Debt advice, counselling, drug and alcohol services, advocacy, mediation, and co-located multi-agency teams in Living Well Hubs

Several respondents added that although some services exist, they are underfunded, overstretched, fragmented or hard to access quickly. Specific gaps noted included the loss of floating support services (such as KeyRing/Ancora), waiting times for mental health support, the need for more intensive wraparound hubs, and administrative barriers linked to supported accommodation or benefits processes.

Partners are asked if they think there are any key themes/ /issues/priorities they think have been missed. Most think that there isn't:

Figure 21: Partner Survey missed themes



The following issues were raised as being potential gaps in issues dealt with in the strategy:

Older people's housing needs, especially accessible accommodation, downsizing options and moves closer to family networks.
BAME communities, language/cultural support, refugees and people with limited English, including navigation and communication needs.
Learning disability, autism and sensory needs, including accessible communication and more appropriate placements.
Children and family impacts of homelessness, especially in temporary accommodation.
Common housing list / allocations rules, especially concerns that people are deterred from entering the PRS because they may lose their position on the housing list.

When asked what the top 3 issues the new strategy must address, the priorities repeated most often were:

- Affordable/social housing supply, including more suitable one-bed, family-sized, shared and age-friendly homes.
- Mental health, trauma and addiction support, especially where people have complex or dual diagnosis needs.
- Prevention and early intervention, including tenancy sustainment, floating support, budgeting/debt help, and family mediation.
- Longer-term supported accommodation and move-on pathways, especially for those with repeat homelessness or failed placements.
- Allocations/banding/right-sizing reform, to remove bottlenecks and make the system more flexible and realistic.
- Joined-up partnership working, better communication, and less siloed working between housing, health, social care, education and VCS partners.
- Inclusion of under-served groups, especially single men, NRPF/refugee groups, prison leavers, and children/families in TA.

When asked what partners are willing to contribute, there was a clear willingness from partners to support the strategy through:

- Multi-agency working and operational collaboration;
- Referral pathways and direct frontline support;
- Hospital discharge and 24/7 health liaison;
- Policy and best-practice input;
- Safeguarding and risk reduction;
- Right-sizing and housing development discussions;
- Support for refugees, NRPF households, families and rough sleepers;
- Quarterly meetings / more regular partner forums.

Learning Points:

For the 2026 Strategy, Partners have consistent highlighted the following priorities in the consultation:

- **Increase access to affordable**, suitable housing: Partners consistently identified the shortage of affordable and appropriate housing as the biggest structural issue, including

the need for more social housing, one-bed homes, age-friendly housing, shared housing options, and better use of empty properties.

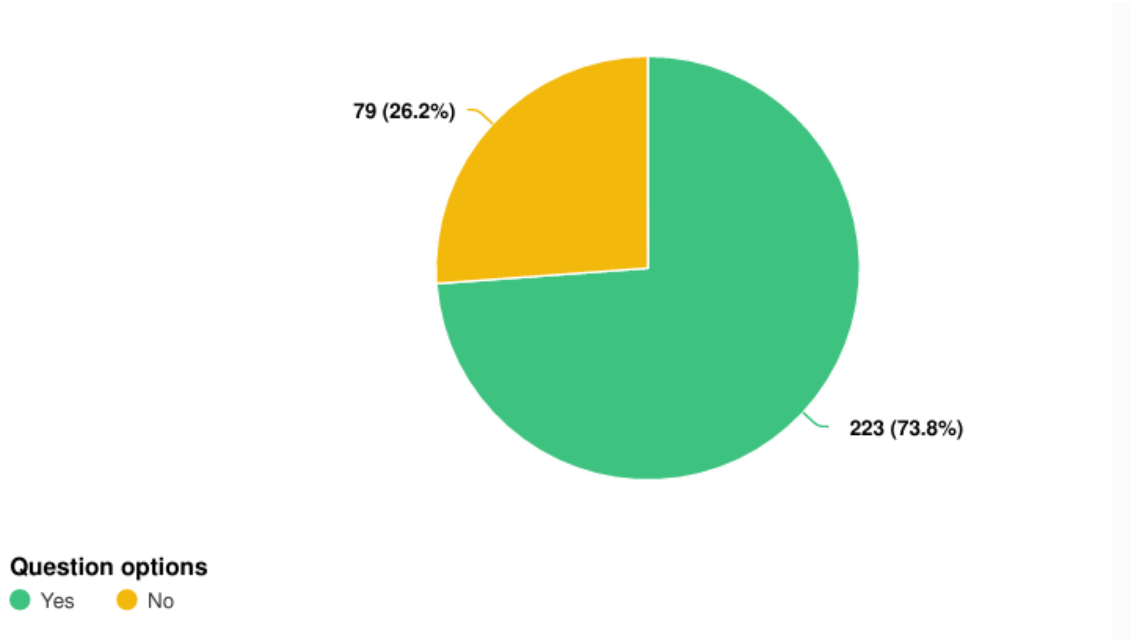
- **Strengthen prevention and tenancy sustainment**: A major learning point was the need to intervene earlier—before people reach crisis point—through debt advice, mediation, budgeting support, floating support, tenancy sustainment, and practical one-to-one help to stop avoidable homelessness.
- **Improve support for people with complex needs**: Partners highlighted significant gaps for people with mental ill health, substance misuse, trauma, dual diagnosis, domestic abuse experiences, offending histories and repeat homelessness, pointing to the need for more integrated, trauma-informed and longer-term support.
- **Make the homelessness system easier to navigate and more inclusive**: Consultation responses showed that current processes can be difficult to access, especially for single men, NRPF households, refugees, people leaving institutions, and those facing literacy, language, digital or cognitive barriers. Partners want clearer, more flexible and more inclusive pathways.
- **Build a more joined-up multi-agency response**: A strong theme from the consultation was the importance of better coordination between housing, health, social care, education, safeguarding and voluntary sector partners, with more shared working, co-located support, and clearer joint pathways for prevention and relief.

10.4 Residents

The survey was sent out via email, advertised on social media and particularly promoted in staffed temporary accommodation schemes. The resident survey has reached a notable number of residents (302), increased from 36 in the last review period.

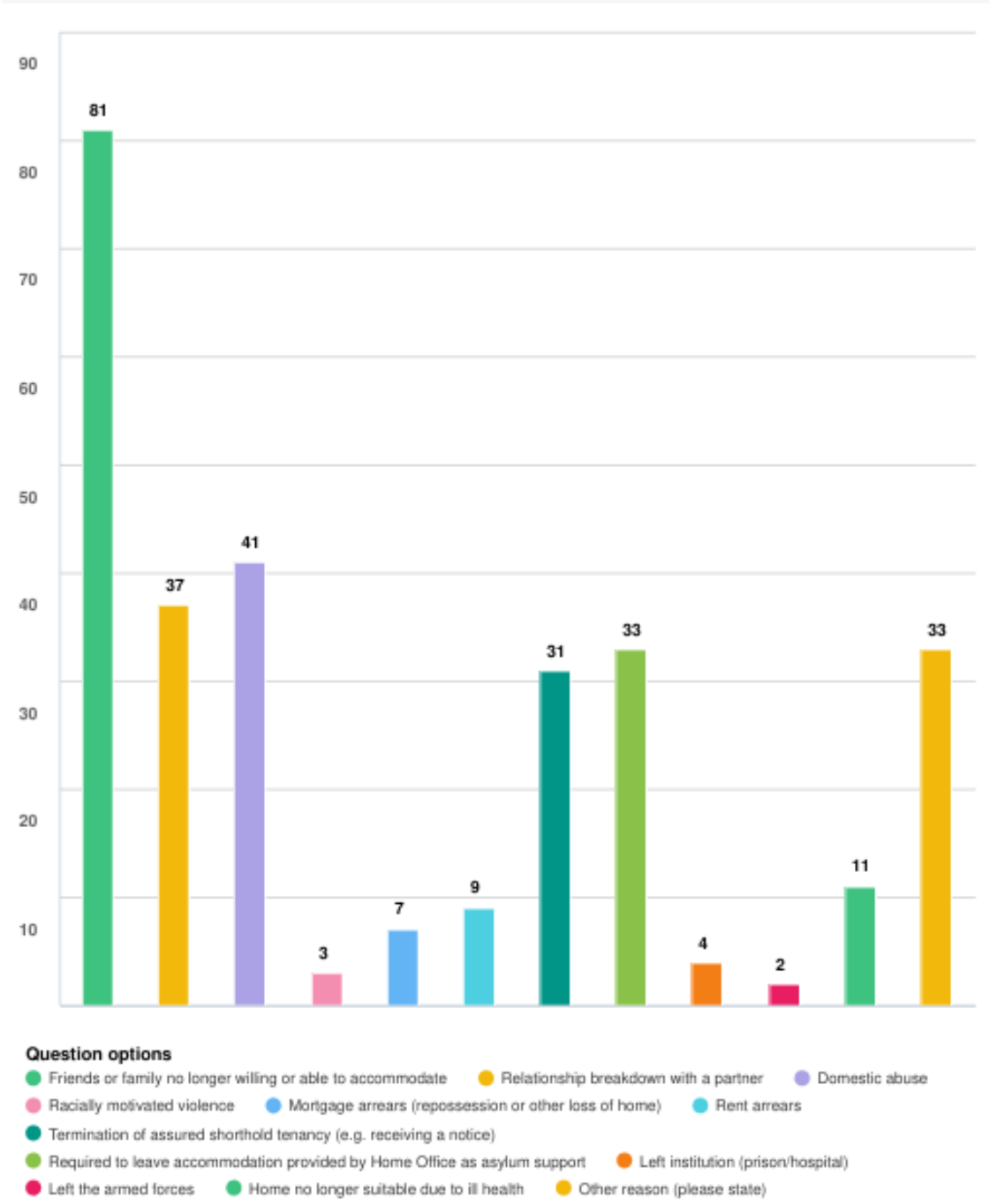
Majority of respondents experienced homelessness in the last 5 years:

Figure 22: Have you experienced homelessness in the last 5 years?



Respondents were asked why they became homeless or threatened with homelessness:

Figure 23: Residents reasons for homelessness

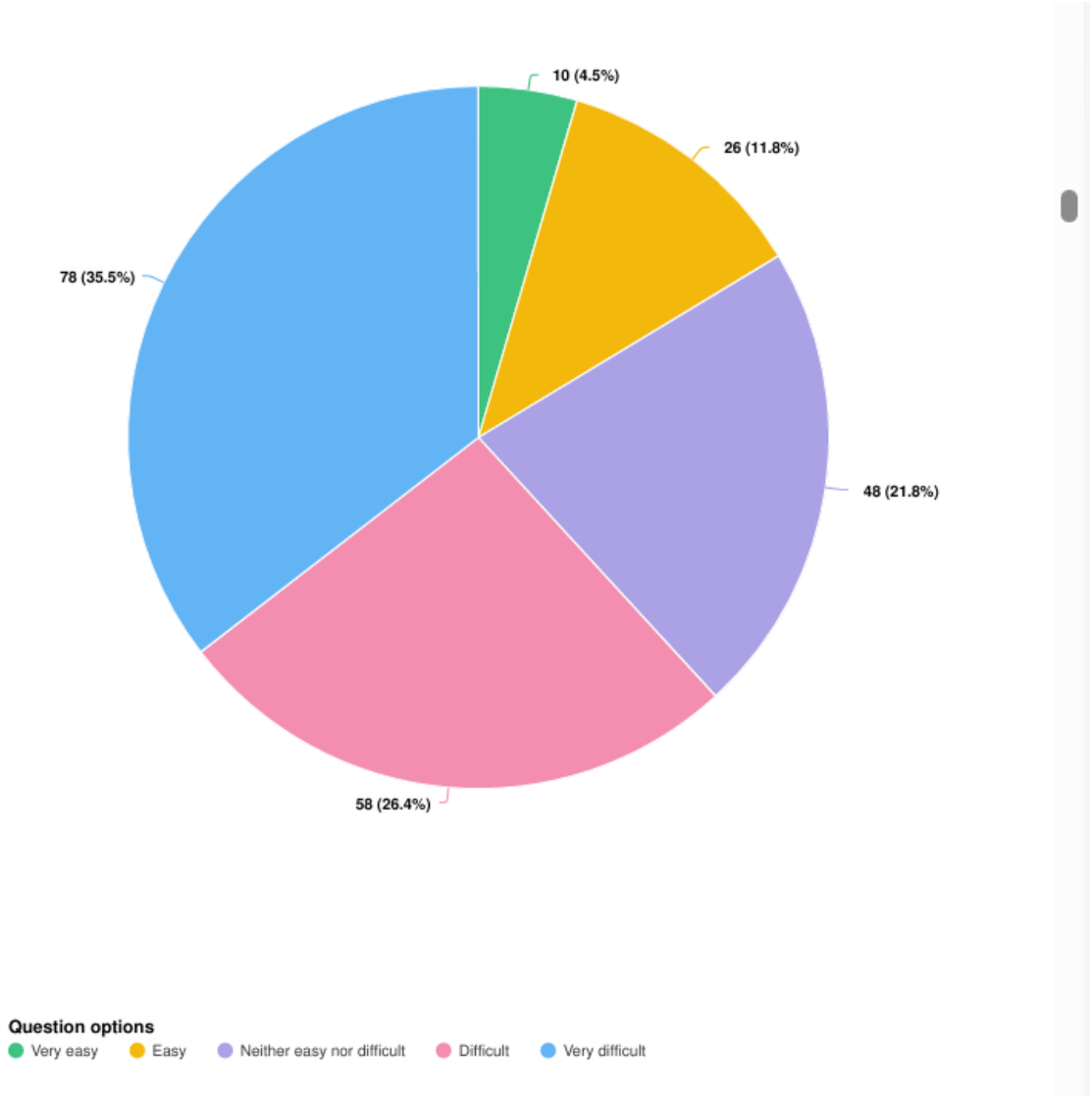


NB: Within the 33 “Other reason” entries, and the biggest sub-themes within them were:

- Landlord selling / property sold / ownership change / Section 21-type loss – about 8 mentions.
- Police / social services / safeguarding-related move for safety – about 3 mentions.
- Home Office / hotel / refugee move-on situations – about 2 mentions.
- Care leaver / transition into independence – about 2 mentions.
- Family overcrowding, family issues or bereavement – about 2 mentions.

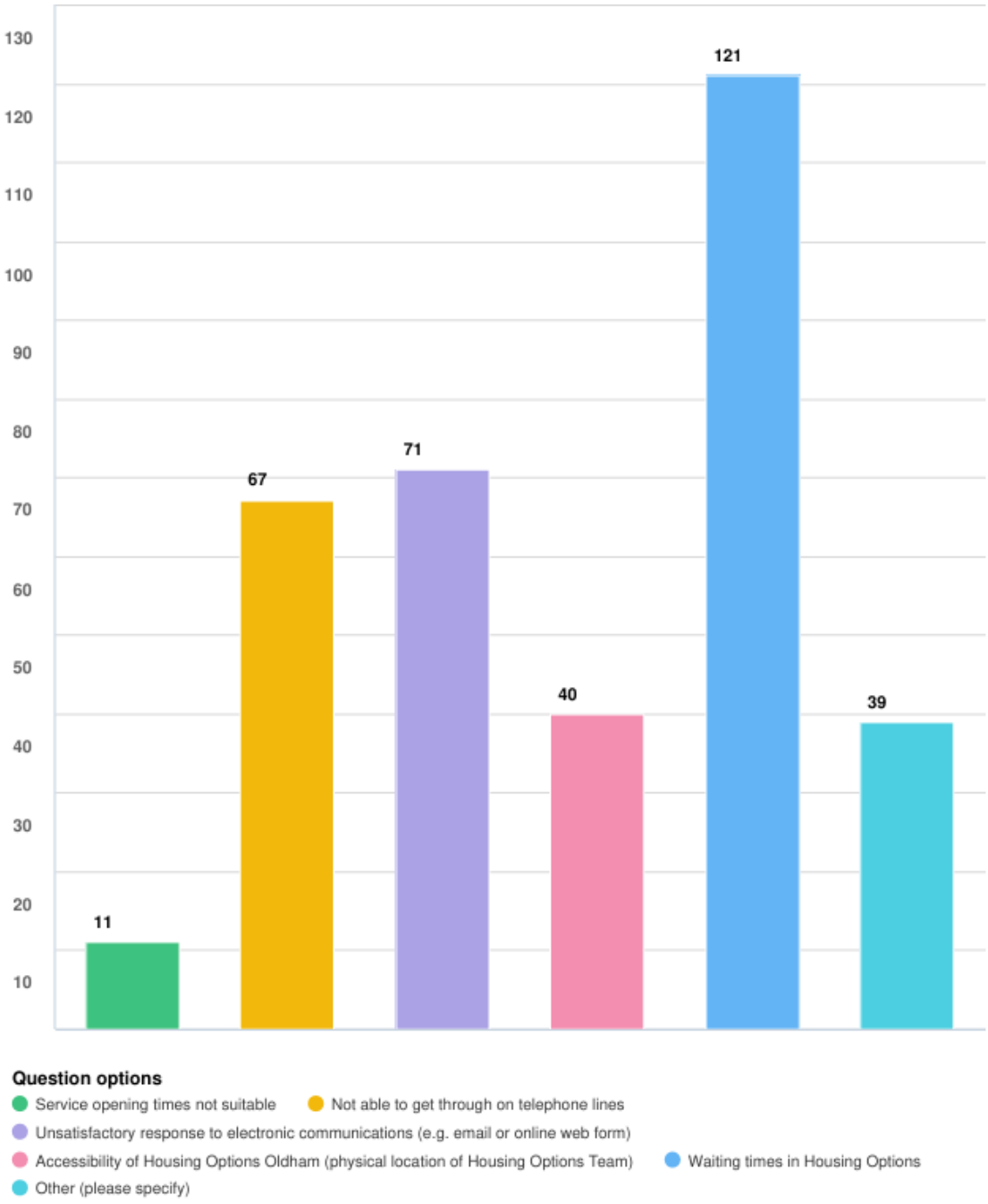
There were also isolated responses mentioning job loss, non-standard housing situations such as living in a shed/summerhouse and being pushed between systems because needs did not fit standard categories.

Figure 24: Service user ease of accessing information and advice



When asked why they had found it difficult to access advice and assistance, the following reasons emerged:

Figure 25: Service user feedback on barriers to service

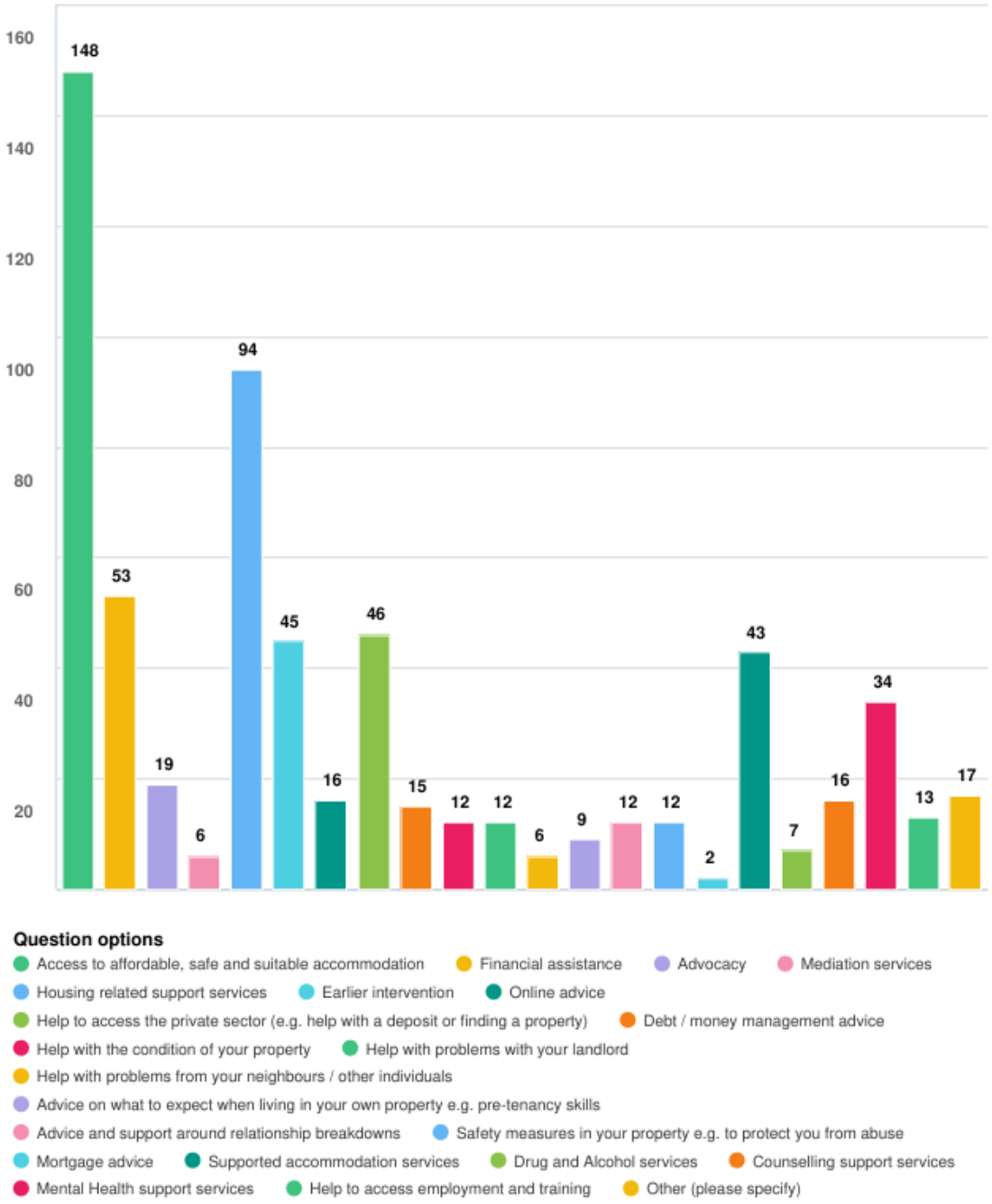


Within the 39 “Other” comments, the main issues were:

- Poor staff attitude / rude, dismissive or uncaring interactions – about 10 comments.
- No named caseworker, passed around, or no response from worker – about 3 comments.
- Needs not understood / did not fit criteria / autism, ADHD or vulnerability not accommodated – about 3 comments.
- Process confusion / disorganisation about what would happen next – at least 1 clear comment, though this theme appears more widely across other responses too.

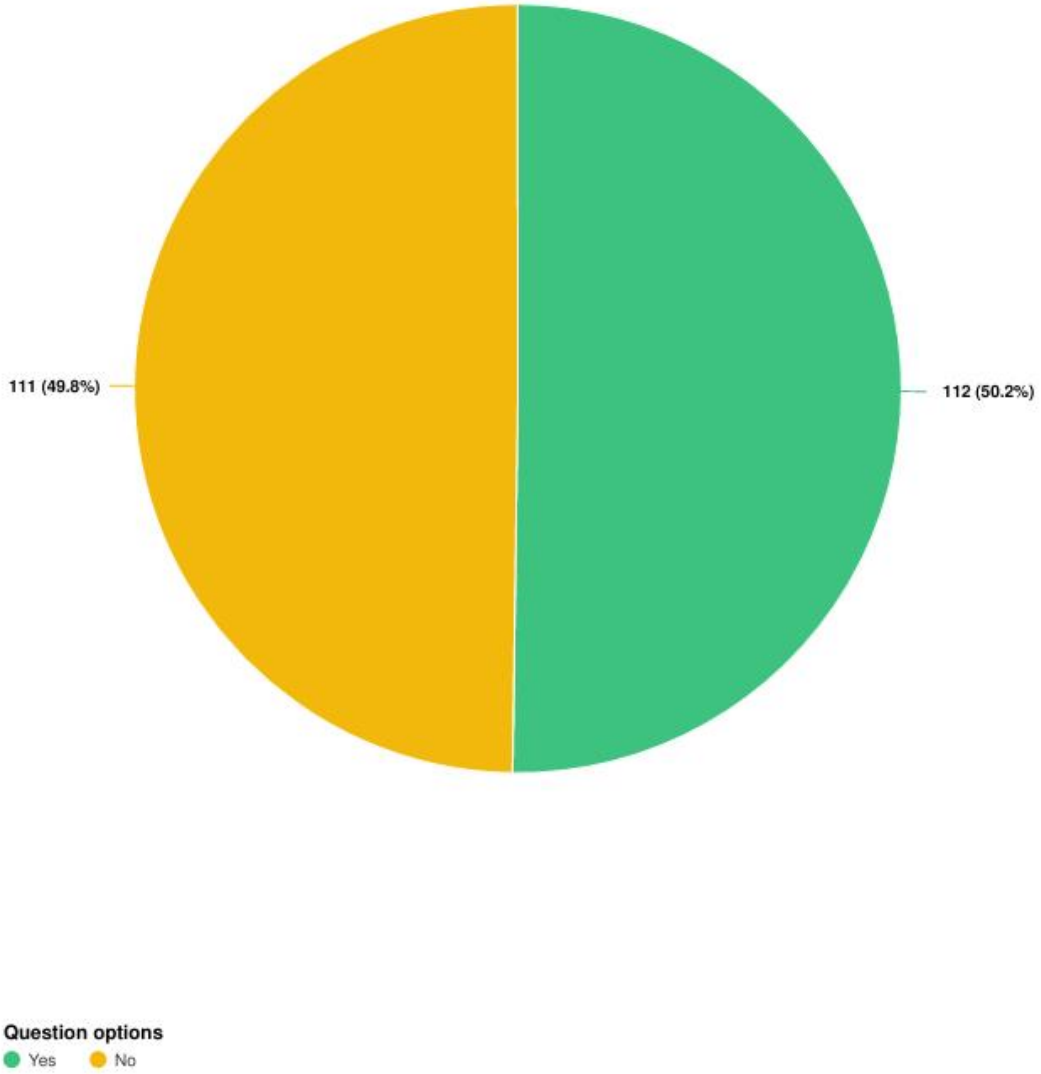
Residents were then aske what things would have helped prevent them from becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness:

Figure 26: What things would have helped prevent you from becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness?



When asked if they were provided with temporary accommodation, a little over half of the respondents said yes:

Figure 27: Were you provided with temporary accommodation?



Finally, residents were asked how the council could have supported them to move on from temporary accommodation sooner.

There were 162 substantive free-text answers to this question. Because many responses contained multiple issues, the counts below are overlapping theme counts rather than mutually exclusive categories.

Table 28: Support to move on from temporary housing

	Count	Notes

Need family-/health-/disability-sensitive housing	40	People repeatedly described unsuitable placements for children, newborns, autistic children, people with disabilities, mental health needs, or trauma histories.
Bidding / banding / allocation problems	23	Residents often said they kept bidding without success, were not prioritised, or did not understand why others were housed before them.
Need faster access to permanent council/social housing	20	Many answers were very direct: “provide a home”, “social housing”, or “council house”.
Unsuitable or poor-quality temporary accommodation	13	This included overcrowding, dirt, mould, bugs, lack of privacy, poor facilities, and unsafe or distressing shared arrangements.
Need financial/practical support	12	Residents mentioned food, essentials, storage, moving costs, deposits and living costs while in temporary accommodation
Still waiting / long stays / delay	11	Residents described still being in temporary accommodation or waiting many months/years.
Poor communication / lack of updates / no support from officers	10	lack of contact, lack of updates or no one helping them move on.

Learning Points:

- Resident satisfaction has declined since the last review. Long waiting time at housing options, unsatisfactory responses to electronic communications (e.g. email or websites) and not getting through on telephone have been quoted more significantly as barriers to accessing service compared to last consultation.

Across the whole survey, five recurring themes stand out:

- Housing shortage and lack of suitable permanent homes underpins almost every question. Residents consistently linked homelessness to lack of affordable, safe and suitable housing and to prolonged waits for social housing.
- The service journey is too hard to navigate, with high levels of dissatisfaction around waiting times, phone access, online responses and officer follow-up.
- Temporary accommodation is often unsuitable, especially for families, disabled residents, trauma survivors and people with mental health needs.
- Prevention needs to happen earlier, before tenancy loss, family breakdown or safeguarding/abuse situations escalate into homelessness.
- Residents want more personalised, practical support, not just information: help with housing options, deposits, bidding, financial problems, mental health, and move-on planning

10.5 Themes from consultation

Table 29: Comparative table: key themes, services needed and priorities

Theme / issue	Residents said	Partners said	Members said	Commonality / shared message
1. Affordable, suitable housing supply is the biggest need	The strongest prevention measure chosen was **access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation (148 mentions)**. Residents repeatedly asked for **council housing / social housing**, more suitable homes, faster rehousing and better options for families, disabled people and larger households.	Partners repeatedly described **lack of affordable housing** as the core structural issue, including need for **more social housing, 1-bed homes, age-friendly homes, shared housing and bringing empty homes back into use**. They also linked shortage to repeat homelessness and blocked move-on.	Members explicitly called for **"more homes"** and highlighted accommodation pressures caused by family breakdown, PRS exits and mortgage repossession.	**Strongest shared theme across all cohorts:** Oldham needs more **affordable, suitable housing**, not just more process.
2. Prevention and early intervention need to happen sooner	Residents selected **earlier intervention (45 mentions)** and often said support came **too late**—for example, after eviction had already happened, after long waits, or only at crisis point.	Partners repeatedly called for **pre-crisis work**, earlier intervention, mediation, budgeting support, tenancy sustainment, and support "upstream" before homelessness happens.	Members explicitly said **"more early interventions"** and criticised services not being embedded enough in communities, meaning people reach emergency need before support is offered.	Very strong commonality: all cohorts want a strategy that shifts from **reactive crisis response** to **earlier prevention.**
3. Housing-related support / tenancy sustainment is essential	The second most-selected prevention measure was **housing-related support services**	Partners strongly supported **housing-related support (26 selections)**, **tenant and landlord support (25)**, and	Members said services should work more directly with public and private landlords, increase property	Shared message: preventing homelessness is not just about housing supply; people also need

	(94 mentions). Residents also wanted support with the housing process, applications, private renting, pre-tenancy skills and practical help to avoid homelessness.	repeatedly raised the loss/gap in floating support and wraparound tenancy sustainment.	numbers, and improve early support in communities.	**practical, ongoing support to get in and**

11. Emerging themes

The following brings together emerging themes that have come from the data, desktop analysis and consultation throughout this review – which will be used to develop the priorities and action plan for the new Homelessness Strategy.

Emerging theme	**Proposed response**
Prevention activity is not intervening early enough, with fewer prevention duties accepted and lower prevention success rates, while more households are presenting at crisis point and entering relief.	Reposition the strategy around a prevention-first model that starts earlier than statutory crisis thresholds. Strengthen pre-prevention routes through earlier referrals, outreach, advice, mediation, tenancy sustainment, landlord negotiation and targeted financial support, with clear pathways for households at risk before homelessness occurs.
Family and friends exclusion remains the single biggest reason for homelessness, with relationship breakdown also a persistent driver.	Increase the use of family mediation, conflict resolution and targeted early-help support, particularly for younger adults and single people who are sofa surfing or at risk of exclusion. Develop clearer pathways with Children's Services, Early Help and community partners to intervene before households lose accommodation.
Affordability pressures and shortages of suitable housing are limiting both prevention and relief outcomes.	Align the homelessness strategy with wider housing delivery and affordability work. Prioritise access to social and affordable rented homes, improve move-on pathways, develop lower-cost private rented options, make fuller use of discretionary financial support, and strengthen links with the Housing Delivery Action Plan and allocations approach.
The private rented sector is both essential and fragile.	Strengthen the Council's private rented sector offer through landlord engagement, tenancy relations work, affordability checks, deposit/bond support, targeted incentives, and action to improve standards and sustain tenancies. The PRS should remain part of the solution, but

	with better safeguards and stronger partnership with landlords.
Mental health is the most common recorded support need, and the data likely under-records the true extent of multiple disadvantage.	Treat mental health and multiple disadvantage as core homelessness issues, not add-ons. Expand trauma-informed practice, improve psychologically informed responses, strengthen dual diagnosis and multi-agency working, and ensure specialist support pathways are available for those at greatest risk of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping. Improve assessment quality so complexity is identified earlier and recorded more consistently.
Domestic abuse continues to be a significant cause of homelessness and requires both crisis and longer-term housing responses.	Build on current partnership arrangements by strengthening safe accommodation pathways, reciprocal housing options, prevention work, and tenancy sustainment for survivors. Review gaps in provision, including access for under-served groups, and ensure domestic abuse responses are embedded across housing pathways rather than treated solely as crisis intervention.
Single adults — especially single men — and lone-parent families are disproportionately represented in relief and temporary accommodation.	Tailor prevention and rehousing responses to the household types driving demand. Expand practical options for single adults such as shared accommodation, PRS access, bond/deposit support and tenancy sustainment, while also strengthening prevention for lone-parent families who are at high risk of entering temporary accommodation.
Temporary accommodation pressures reflect wider system strain.	Continue to reduce reliance on TA by combining earlier prevention with a stronger move-on strategy. Implement the updated TA policy, improve procurement and suitability, reduce use of unsuitable placements, and ensure households in TA receive timely housing planning and support to prevent long stays and repeat homelessness.
Institutional and service move-on points remain high-risk, particularly for	Strengthen transition and discharge planning across prison, probation, hospitals, social care and asylum move-on pathways. Maintain and refine specialist pathways such as CAS3 and hospital discharge support, improve joint protocols, and focus on earlier planning so people do not reach homelessness at the point of release or discharge.
Presentations from refugees and other newly eligible groups have increased, adding complexity to frontline advice and prevention work.	Ensure the new strategy includes a clear response to refugee integration and move-on from asylum accommodation, with early advice, better legal and housing navigation, and joined-up support with migration, welfare and community services. Frontline teams will also

	need continued training and clear guidance on eligibility and entitlements.
Economic insecurity is a major structural driver of homelessness.	Make homelessness prevention more closely linked to employment support, income maximisation, debt advice, welfare support and health pathways. The next strategy should recognise that homelessness in Oldham is being driven not only by housing loss, but also by poverty, poor health and weak financial resilience.
Homelessness demand is concentrated in a small number of deprived neighbourhoods, especially in and around central Oldham.	Take a more place-based approach by targeting prevention resources, partnership working and local service alignment in the wards and neighbourhoods with the highest levels of presentation – e.g. Live Well Oldham. This should link homelessness work more closely with wider responses to deprivation, health inequality and community support.
The homelessness system needs stronger integration, better data and clearer service pathways.	Improve data quality, assessment consistency, service mapping and multi-agency coordination so that Oldham can better understand demand, target interventions and measure outcomes. The strategy should support a more integrated system with clearer routes in, stronger referral pathways and shared ownership of prevention across partners.
A one-size-fits-all model will not be sufficient.	Adopt a two-tier service model: a broad universal prevention offers available to all households at risk, alongside specialist pathways for those with higher complexity, statutory priority or repeat homelessness. This will help the strategy respond both to the largest customer groups and to those with the most acute needs.

12. Local Outcomes Framework and Oldham's Performance and Targets

This section reviews data and sets target using the latest Local Outcomes Framework developed by MHCLG in December 2025 to support the development of Oldham's next Homelessness Strategy. [9]

The Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) provides a clear structure for how Oldham will measure progress in reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for residents. It translates national priorities into locally relevant targets, enabling performance benchmarking, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The framework focuses on a small number of high-impact indicators that reflect system-wide effectiveness—particularly prevention, use of temporary accommodation, and rough sleeping—aligned to the national ambition to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

[9] Local Outcomes Framework - GOV.UK

Figure 28: Local Outcomes Framework – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Metrics

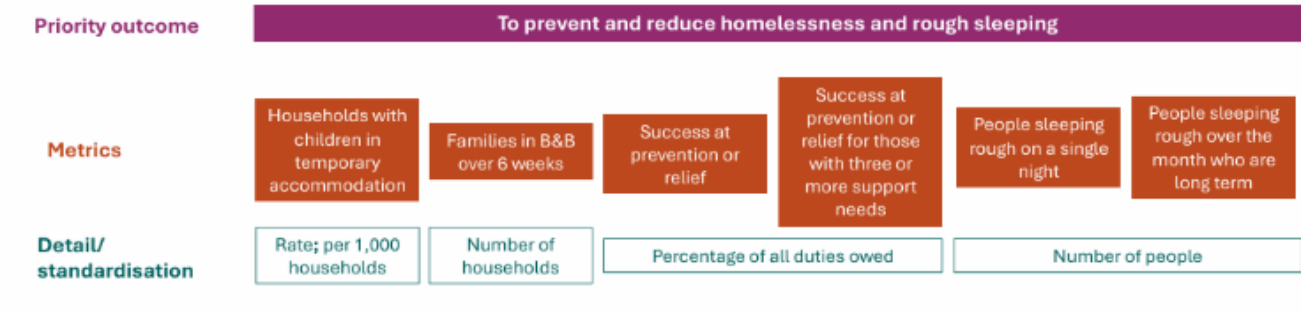


Figure 29: Oldham's Performance under Local Outcomes Framework metrics

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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Local Accountability

Local Outcomes Framework – Oldham Performance on Latest Published Data

	October to December 2025				*December 2025*	*Between 1 October and 30 November 2025*
	Households with children in TA per 1000 household	**Families in B&B over 6 weeks**	**% duties owed where homelessness prevented or relieved**	**% duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved for h/holds experiencing multiple disadvantage.**	**People sleeping rough over the month long term**	**People sleeping rough on a single night**
England	3.5	1,190	49.1%	39.7%	3175	4793
London	14.2	380	42.1%	43.5%	881	1277
Rest of England	1.7	810	51%	39.4%	2294	3516
North West	1.7	230	49.7%	41.6%	337	441
Oldham	2.9	8	26.6%	20%	5	6

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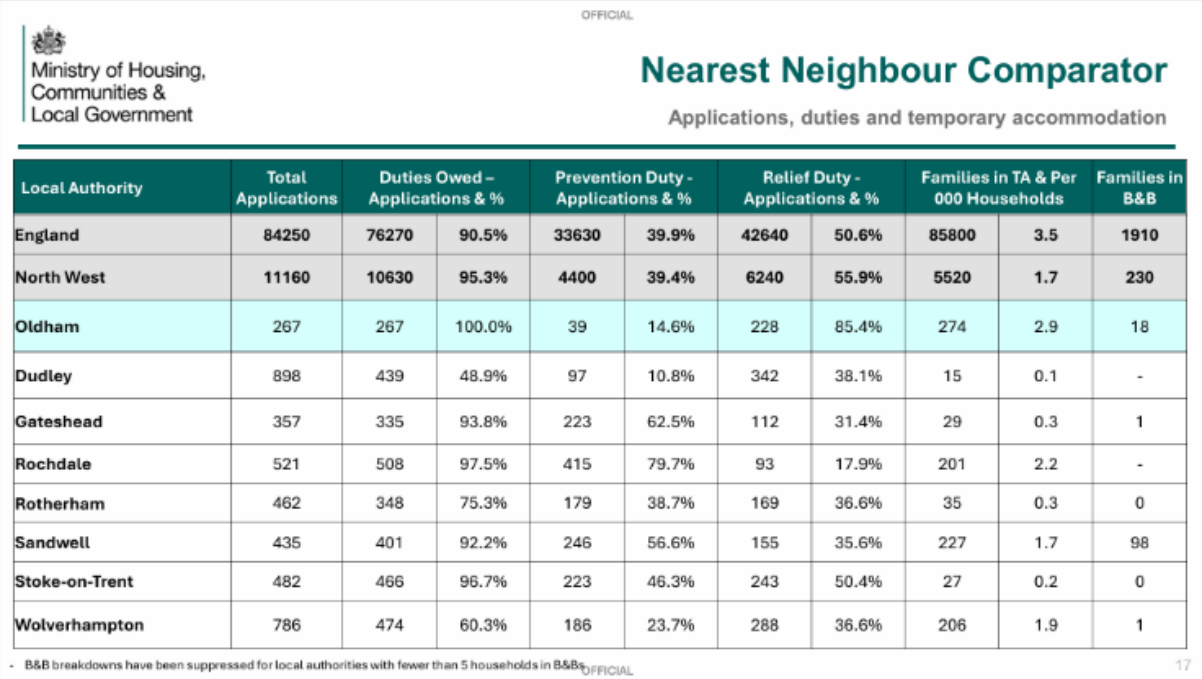
This table clearly shows the need for Oldham to improve its performance on homelessness prevention and relief – for all households and households experiencing multiple disadvantages.

To support benchmarking and provide a more meaningful assessment of local performance, this review compares Oldham's metric with its nearest neighbour comparator. This approach identifies the local authorities most similar to Oldham based on a set of homelessness-relevant characteristics. This provides a more locally relevant comparison for understanding performance, interpreting outcomes and identifying realistic areas for improvement.

Figure 30: Oldham & Nearest Neighbour Comparator Performance Comparison



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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Nearest Neighbour Comparator

Applications, duties and temporary accommodation

Local Authority	Total Applications	Duties Owed – Applications & %		Prevention Duty - Applications & %		Relief Duty - Applications & %		Families in TA & Per 000 Households		Families in B&B
England	84250	76270	90.5%	33630	39.9%	42640	50.6%	85800	3.5	1910
North West	11160	10630	95.3%	4400	39.4%	6240	55.9%	5520	1.7	230
Oldham	267	267	100.0%	39	14.6%	228	85.4%	274	2.9	18
Dudley	898	439	48.9%	97	10.8%	342	38.1%	15	0.1	-
Gateshead	357	335	93.8%	223	62.5%	112	31.4%	29	0.3	1
Rochdale	521	508	97.5%	415	79.7%	93	17.9%	201	2.2	-
Rotherham	462	348	75.3%	179	38.7%	169	36.6%	35	0.3	0
Sandwell	435	401	92.2%	246	56.6%	155	35.6%	227	1.7	98
Stoke-on-Trent	482	466	96.7%	223	46.3%	243	50.4%	27	0.2	0
Wolverhampton	786	474	60.3%	186	23.7%	288	36.6%	206	1.9	1

- B&B breakdowns have been suppressed for local authorities with fewer than 5 households in B&Bs

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This table highlights that Oldham's prevention success rate remains among the lowest when compared with its nearest neighbour comparator, while performance in successful relief outcomes is comparatively strong. Despite recent improvements, the number of families in temporary accommodation (TA) and Bed and Breakfast (B&B) remains relatively high, indicating continued pressure within the system.

Part of this pattern may reflect operational practice, particularly a higher proportion of cases progressing directly into the relief duty rather than being resolved at the prevention stage. This would contribute to lower recorded prevention success rates and comparatively stronger relief performance. However, this does not fully account for the overall position, and the data continues to signal a need to strengthen early intervention.

In response, Oldham has established a set of targets for the next three years, aligned with MHCLG guidance, to drive improvement across prevention, temporary accommodation use, and overall system outcomes.[10]

Table 30: Local Outcomes Framework Metrics and Targets

Metric	**Baseline**	**Target Sept 2026**	**Target Sept 2027**	**Target Sept 2028**
Households with children in temporary accommodation	274 - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	230	200	170
Households with children in temporary accommodation per 000 households	2.9% - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	2.4%	1.9%	1.5%

[10] See Annex B: Target Baselines, Trajectories and Final Target Dates in A_Toolkit_for_Developing_Homelessness_Strategies_and_Action_Plans.pdf

Households with children in B&B over 6 weeks	8 - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	0	0	0
Success at preventing or relieving homelessness	19.9% -Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	25%	35%	45%
Success at preventing and relieving homelessness for those experiencing multiple disadvantage	20% Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	25%	35%	45%
People sleeping rough who are long term	3 - Nov 2025 (Rough Sleeping Data Framework)	2	1	0
People sleeping rough on a single night	6 - the snapshot count in Autumn 2025 (Snapshot)	5	4	3

13. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The following section undertakes a wider SWOT analysis of the findings of this Review, and its emerging themes. As with the previous section this will be used to develop the priorities and action plan for the new Homelessness Strategy – particularly by identifying any considerations and limitations which need to be considered.

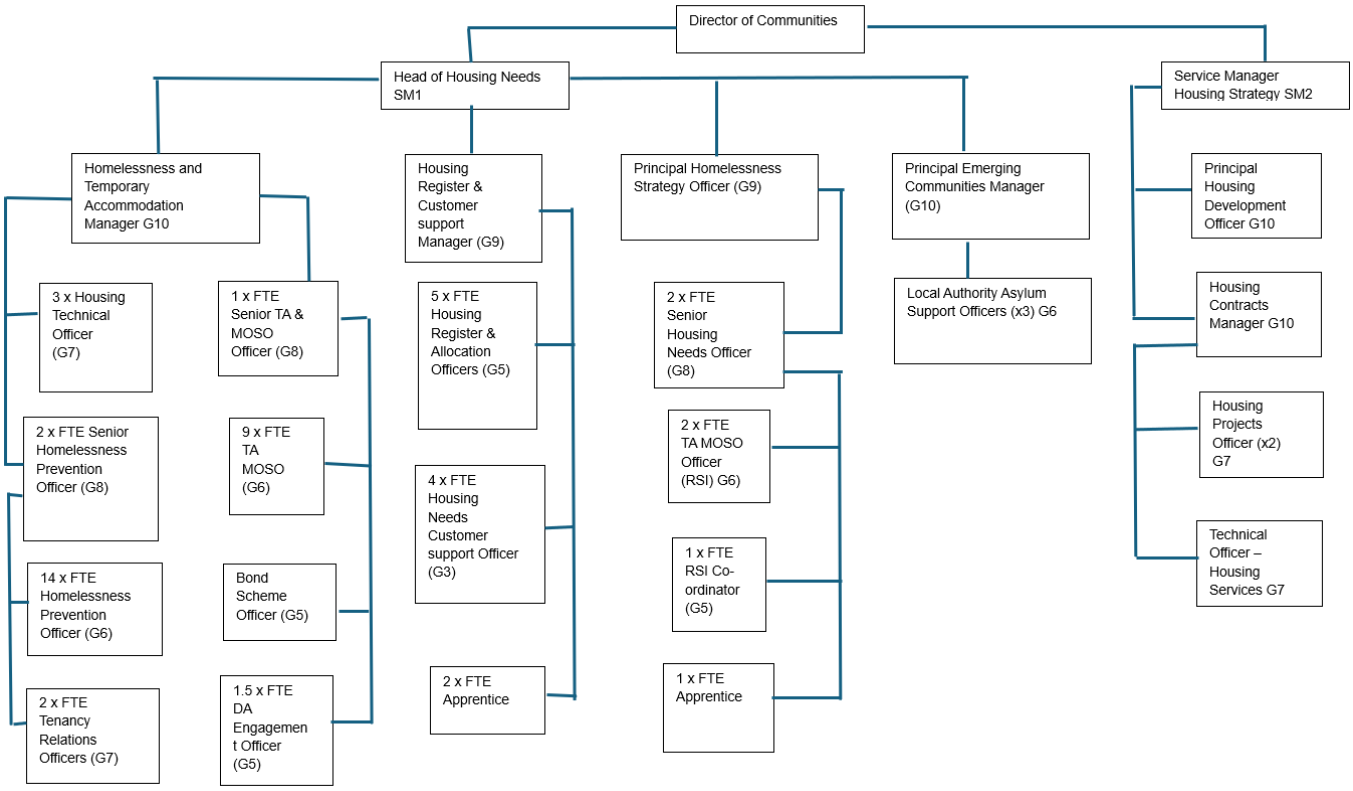
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strong VCSE sector • Housing Needs restructure increased workforce capacity with more targeted support officers such as MOSOs and TA technical officer. • Established specialist pathways for key groups, including prison leavers, care leavers and hospital discharge. • Recent progress in reducing temporary accommodation use provides a platform for further improvement. • Strong Senior Leadership buy-in for a prevention-first strategy with stronger early intervention and pre-prevention.	• Prevention performance has weakened, with too many households presenting at crisis point. • The system remains too reactive, with rising relief demand and repeat homelessness risk. • Data and pathways are inconsistent, with under-recorded support needs and some fragmented access routes. • Relatively low volume of self-service / online advice available leading to increased frontline demand on Housing Options service • Lack of affordable housing options, limiting prevention, relief and move-on options. • Increased need for shared accommodation options • Low Local Housing Allowance rates meaning lack of options / choice available in the private rented sector

Opportunities	Threats
• A National Plan to End Homelessness (England, published December 2025) • Renters' Rights Act (first phase from 1 May 2026) • Homelessness Prevention Grant reforms from 2026/27 onwards • Local Supported Housing Strategies (first strategies due by 31 March 2027) • Supported Housing regulatory reforms (licensing expected from mid-2027) • GMCA Homelessness and Migration Budget 2026–2029 • Greater Manchester £11.7m Empty Homes and TA pressures programme (2025) • GM Live Well • AI and data predictive analysis for early prevention identification • Build a more integrated, place-based model linking housing with health, welfare, employment and community support – Live Well Oldham	• Growing demand due to volume of applications received • Ongoing housing shortages and affordability pressures may continue to outpace service response. • Continued late presentation risks higher relief demand, repeat homelessness and TA pressure. • Cost-of-living pressures, unemployment and insecure incomes will continue to drive homelessness risk. • Growing applicant complexity, including mental health, refugee move-on and multiple disadvantage, may increase frontline pressure. • Without stronger transition planning, people leaving prison, hospital, care or asylum accommodation may continue to face avoidable homelessness.

14. Resources

As with all local authorities, Oldham Council is faced with the challenge of managing increasing demand with limited resources. The council had undergone a restructure and workforce capacity improvement initiative in June 2025. Below is the updated core staffing structure within its Housing Options Service committed to the support of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness:

Figure31: Staffing Structure 2026



Role	Number of staff	Caseload
Homelessness		
Homelessness Prevention Officer	11	40-50
Tenancy Relations Officer	2	20-30
Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Move-on Support (MOS)		
Housing Technical Officer	2	500
TA MOS Officer	7	65-70
Bond Scheme Officer	1	30-40
Domestic Abuse Engagement Officer	1	50-70
Housing Register & Allocations		
Housing Register and Allocations Officers	5	100
Customer Support		
Housing Needs & Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)		
TA MOS Officer (RSI)	2	20-30
RSI Coordinator	1	15-35

Since the 2025 restructure, caseloads have improved significantly, reducing to around 40–50 per officer. This is in line with the national average of around 30 to 80 cases per officer and the national benchmark of around 40–60 cases per officer.[11]

New specialist roles—such as Domestic Abuse Engagement Officers, a Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Worker, Bond Scheme Officer, and Rough Sleeping Initiative staff—have strengthened targeted

[11] Local authority homelessness workforce report 2025 Local authority homelessness workforce report - GOV.UK

support and improved pathways through the system. While workforce capacity and caseload ratios now compare more favourably with similar authorities, performance outcomes still lag behind national averages, particularly in prevention success rates. Further review of staffing structures is anticipated

15. Next steps

The information in this Review will be used to formulate the new Homelessness Strategy for 2026-2031, with a focus on:

- Earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness
- Ensuring that when homelessness occurs it is rare, brief and non-recurring
- Improving access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation
- Strengthening partnership working to end homelessness and rough sleeping

Appendix A: Key Service Mapping according to Needs

Needs	Main services / routes in
1. Immediate crisis support and essentials	• Oldham Council — Crisis and Resilience Fund; Council helpline; directory of drop-ins, shelters, food providers and homelessness support • Oldham Foodbank — emergency food parcel route for residents referred by partner agencies • Action Together / Household Support Fund community partners — community-based access to food, warm clothing, school uniform, bedding, toiletries, furniture, white goods and other emergency items • UKEFF — food aid, hot meals, food parcels, advice and signposting for people in hardship, including homeless people, families and some people with restricted eligibility • The Welcome Centre / local drop-ins / faith and community groups — food, clothing and basic essentials through community venues • Oldham Unity / Welcome Project / Oldham Baptist Church — clothing, toiletries, blankets, food and practical support, particularly for asylum seekers, refugees and destitute residents
2. Homelessness access, emergency accommodation and rough sleeping	• Oldham Council Housing / Homelessness Service — homelessness presentations, housing advice and out-of-hours homelessness access • Depaul UK / A Bed Every Night (ABEN) — rough sleeping accommodation and support route • Oldham Council / outreach and emergency routes — rough sleeping referrals, emergency homelessness contacts and local support information • RESS (Restricted Eligibility Support Service) — specialist route for single homeless people with restricted eligibility • Booth Centre — wider Greater Manchester homelessness drop-in / support route where relevant to local connections or wider pathway work • SafeNet — refuge and emergency accommodation route for people experiencing domestic abuse
3. Prevention, tenancy sustainment and housing-related support	• Oldham Council Tenancy Relations Service — private rented sector advice, landlord-tenant issues, unlawful eviction, harassment and mediation

	• KeyRing Oldham — floating support and independent living support for adults who need help to maintain a tenancy and live independently • Early Break — Pathfinder Floating Support Service for young people at risk of homelessness, sofa surfing or housing breakdown • Positive Steps Family Help — focused family support where housing instability is linked to wider family stress, parenting, money or wellbeing issues • TLC: Talk, Listen, Change — family mediation route where separation, conflict or family breakdown may place housing stability at risk • Oldham Council Housing / homelessness prevention routes — homelessness prevention and housing advice where tenancies are at risk
4. Income, debt, welfare and cost-of-living support	• Oldham Welfare Rights Service — benefits advice, appeals and tribunal support • Citizens Advice — debt and money advice • National Debtline — national free debt advice service • StepChange Debt Charity — national debt advice and repayment planning support • CAP UK (Christians Against Poverty) — debt support accessed locally through South Chadderton Methodist Church • MoneyPlus Advice / Money Wellness / Debt Advice Foundation — regional and national debt support, budgeting and money advice • UKEFF — support with benefits, bills and wellbeing alongside food provision • Energy provider hardship funds — British Gas Energy Trust, EDF Customer Support Fund, E.ON Next Energy Fund and ScottishPower Hardship Fund • Oldham Council — Crisis and Resilience Fund and cost-of-living helpline
5. Mental health, wellbeing and counselling	• NHS 111 / emergency services — urgent mental health support via 111 option 2, with 999 / A&E for immediate risk • Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust — Oldham Talking Therapies; wider adult, children's, young people's, older people's and specialist mental health services • Healthy Young Minds — children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health support • TOG / Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind — counselling, listening space, wellbeing and mental health navigation for adults • Relate — relationship counselling and therapeutic support where relationship breakdown contributes to housing instability • Oldham Social Prescribing — non-medical support linking people to local wellbeing, advice and community services

6. Substance misuse and dual diagnosis	• Turning Point / ROAR — adult drug and alcohol treatment, recovery and harm reduction services • Early Break — young people's drug and alcohol support, counselling and treatment • Dual Diagnosis Nurse — coordinated support where mental health and substance misuse overlap • Red Rose Recovery — peer mentoring, lived experience recovery support and recovery groups • Probation / criminal justice-linked treatment routes — referral into treatment and support where offending, recovery and housing issues overlap
7. Domestic abuse, family breakdown, mediation and family support	• Oldham Council Domestic Abuse Service — domestic abuse helpline, outreach, safety planning and IDVA support • SafeNet — refuge, children and young people's support, move-on accommodation and resettlement support • Early Help / MASH — family support route where homelessness risk is linked to wider family needs, safeguarding, parenting or vulnerability • TLC: Talk, Listen, Change — family mediation for separated partners and disputes involving children or finances • Relate — counselling and relationship support • Pennine Care Oldham Talking Therapies — therapeutic support, including couples therapy • Positive Steps Family Help — family support where conflict, parenting and wider household stress affect housing stability • Early Break Pathfinder — support for younger adults unable to remain at home or sofa surfing
8. Specialist pathways for specific client groups	• Oldham Unity — practical support, food, toiletries, clothing and service navigation for refugees and asylum seekers • British Red Cross Oldham Hub — face-to-face casework and drop-in support for refugees and asylum seekers • RESS — single homeless people with restricted eligibility • SAWN (Support and Action for Women's Network) — culturally appropriate support, advocacy, crisis support and furniture support for Black African women and families • Oldham Council Armed Forces support / SSAFA / Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club — support for veterans and armed forces households • Oldham Probation Office — probation supervision and links to rehabilitation services • Age UK Oldham — older people's advice, advocacy, falls prevention, dementia support and practical help at home • Oldham Adult Social Care — support for older people and adults with care, disability or safeguarding needs

	• OPAL Advocacy — advocacy and day support for adults with learning disabilities and autistic people • Oldham SENDIASS — SEND advice, support and mediation for children, young people and parents/carers • Autism Family Support — support for autistic people, their families and carers
9. Community connection, social support and wraparound support	• Oldham Social Prescribing — link-worker support into groups, activities, volunteering, community services and wellbeing support • SPARK Oldham CIC — community-based support including youth, family, older people's support and crisis help with food and clothing • Age UK Oldham — befriending, day care, practical support and social connection for older people • Red Rose Recovery — peer support and recovery community connections • Local VCFSE and faith/community organisations — social connection, volunteering, practical help and confidence-building support

Appendix B: Service Mapping Visual Pathway Chart

Upstream risk

(debt, welfare issues, family conflict, poor wellbeing, arrears)

↓

Early prevention

(debt advice, welfare rights, counselling, mediation, social prescribing, family support)

↓

Housing risk / prevention

(tenancy relations, floating support, youth support, domestic abuse support, income maximisation)

↓

Crisis / homelessness presentation

(housing options, out-of-hours, rough sleeping routes, refuge, emergency mental health support, food / essentials)

↓

Relief / stabilisation

(emergency accommodation, welfare support, food, mental health, substance misuse, advocacy)

↓

Move-on / recovery

(resettlement, practical support, peer support, community connection, independent living support)

↓

Tenancy sustainment / long-term stability

(financial resilience, community support, social care, health support, repeat-homelessness prevention)

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