

Ian Swift Group Services Manager Housing Solutions

Southwark Council
Homelessness is everyone's responsibility

Context

- ▶ Southwark historically had the 3rd highest number of homeless applications in England (2,357 in 2016/17)
- ▶ 28th best homeless preventions in England 2016/2017
- ▶ Central London location. Local Housing Allowance £95.18 for a 1 bedroom flat per week. Average market rent for a 1 Bedroom flat is £480.00 per week
- ▶ Universal Credit been in operation for over 18 months locally (its been difficult for the service)
- ▶ The Homelessness Reduction Act has been live since October 2016 for 100% of homeless cases

Context

- ▶ The council has eliminated the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families
- ▶ The last official homeless rough sleeping count November 2017 found 42 people sleeping rough
- ▶ We have trained 326 council's and over 300 voluntary agencies. In total 1,500 officers in England during September to the end of March 2018 on how we provide our homelessness services have been trained
- ▶ We are being visited by 7 council's every week to learn how our trailblazer work is operating.
- ▶ Customer satisfaction for the homeless service is 88% for this financial year.

Context

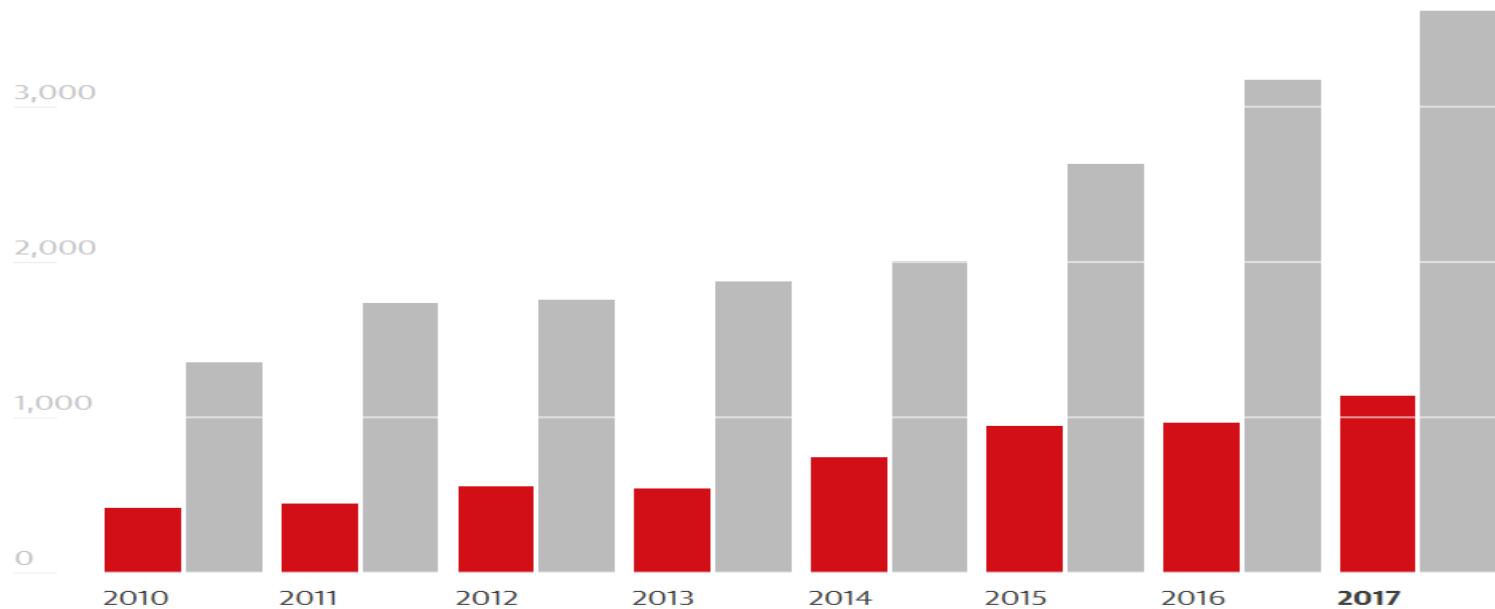
- ▶ The three main reasons for homelessness in Southwark are as follows:
 - ❖ 30% due to parental and family/friend evictions
 - ❖ 29% due to loss of private rented accommodation
 - ❖ 12% due to Domestic Abuse
 - ❖ Homelessness is not inevitable. It can and should be prevented

Rough Sleepers

There were **4,751 rough sleepers** in England in 2017, a 15% increase on the previous year

The number of rough sleepers has increased to 1,137 in London and 3,614 in the rest of England

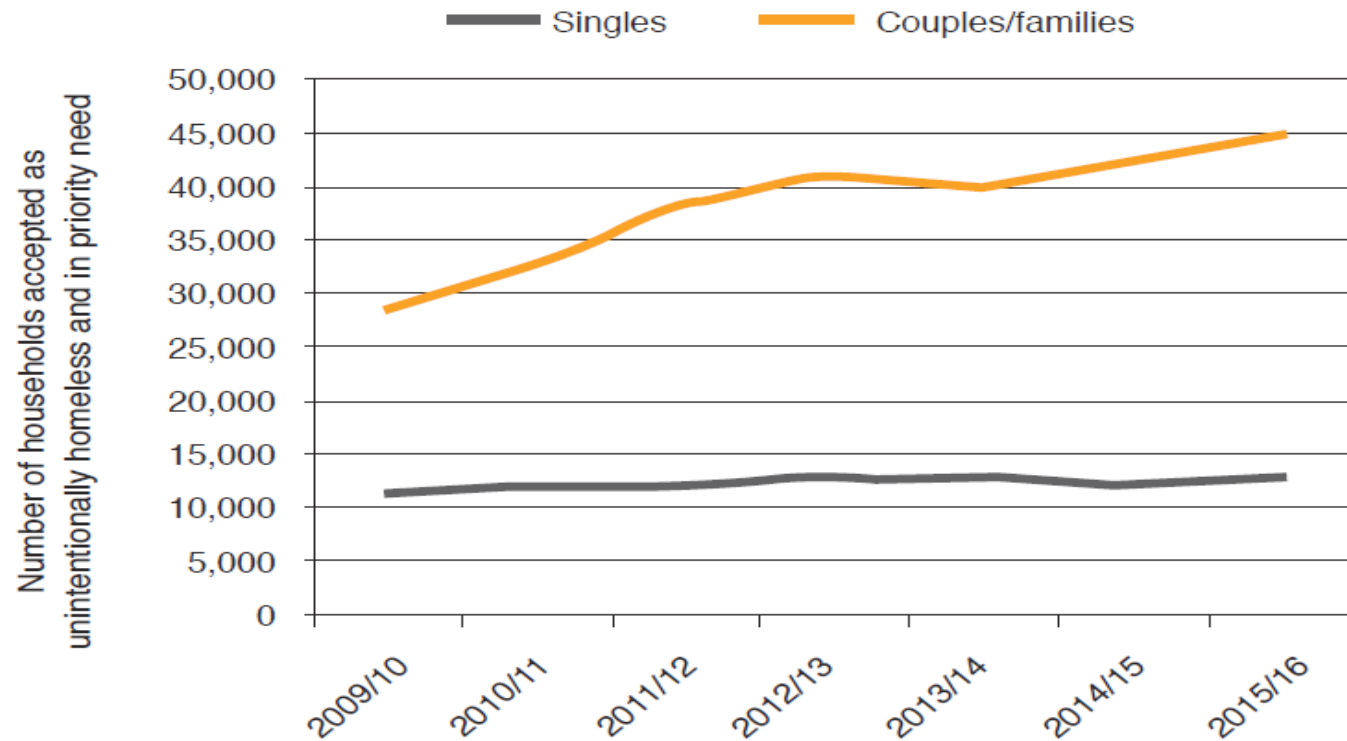
■ London ■ Rest of England



Guardian graphic | Source: Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2017, England

Help for single homeless applicants

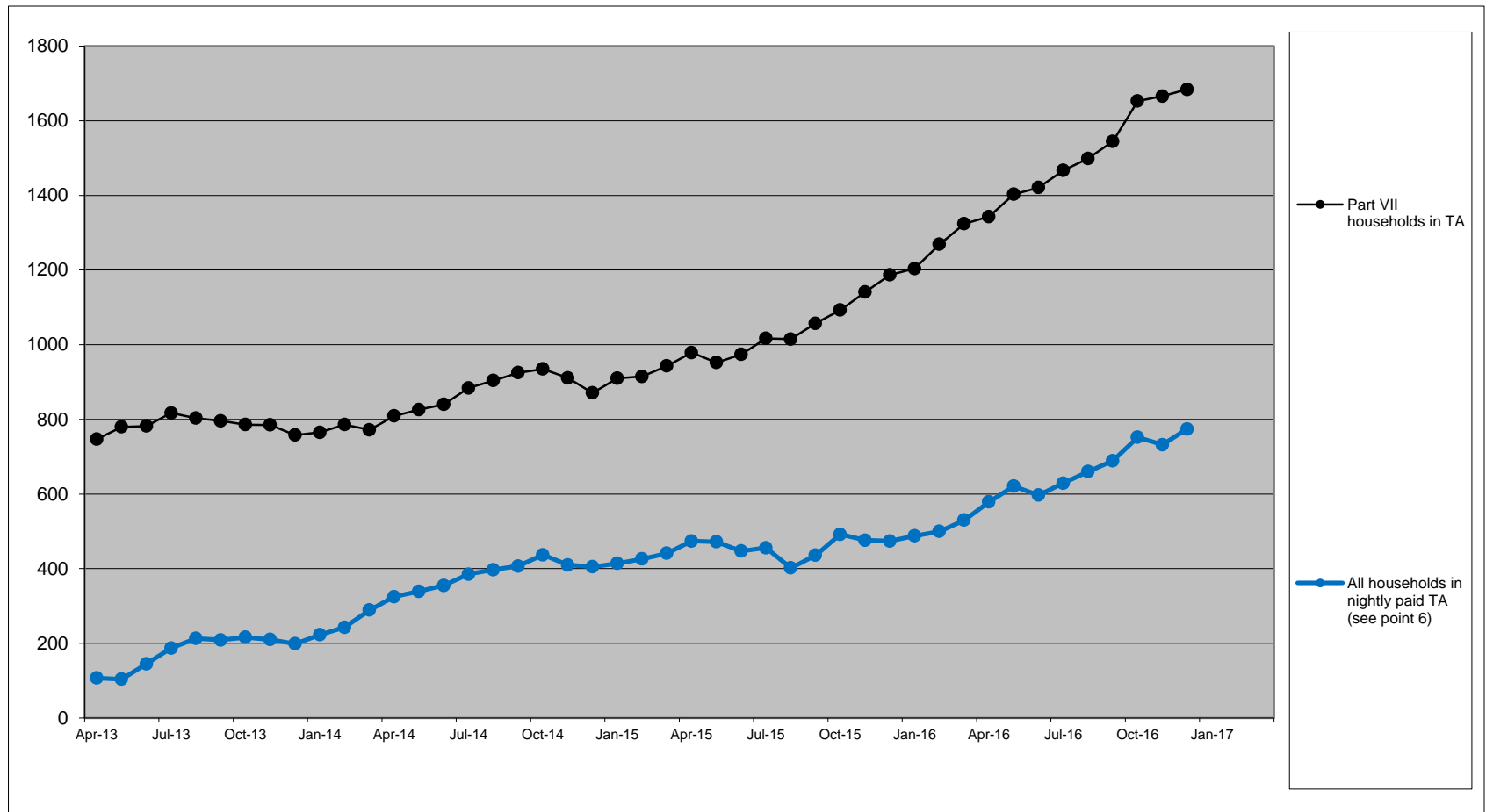
Figure 4.4 Trend in single person households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, 2009/10-2015/16



Source: DCLG statutory homelessness statistics

Increased demand for Temporary Accommodation (Homeless Households)

TA has increased nationally by approximately 60% between 2011 and 2017 – this trend is reflected in Southwark

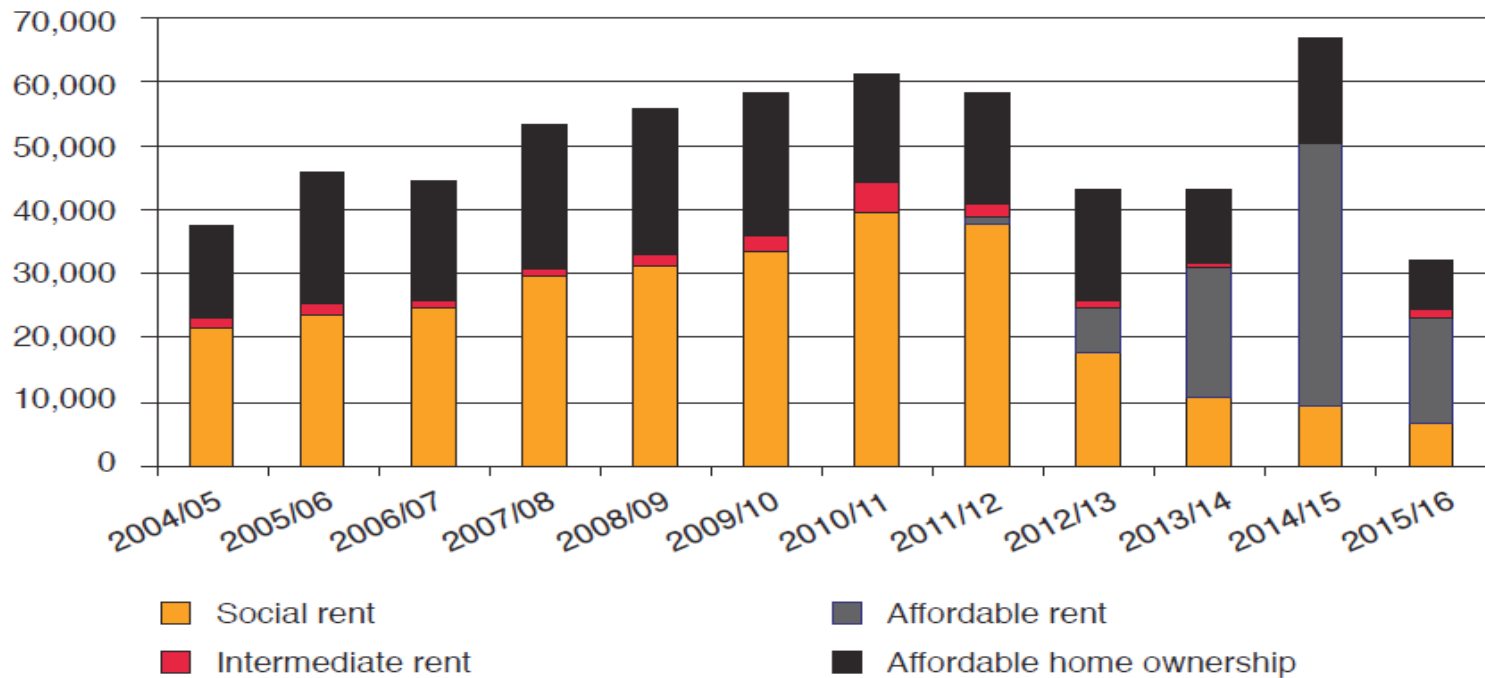


Homeless households in temporary accommodation

- ▶ **79,190 households** were living in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2017.
- ▶ There has been a 60% increase in the numbers of households in temporary accommodation between March 2011 and March 2017.
- ▶ The 79,190 households include **121,360 children**, representing a 73% increase since 2010.
- ▶ Of these households, 54,660 (69%) were placed in temporary accommodation in London.
- ▶ There was a 248% increase in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation outside of their local authority between March 2011 and March 2017
- ▶ According to the National Audit Report (2017) – of the **£1.1bn spent** by English local authorities in 2015–16, **£845 million** was spent on temporary accommodation

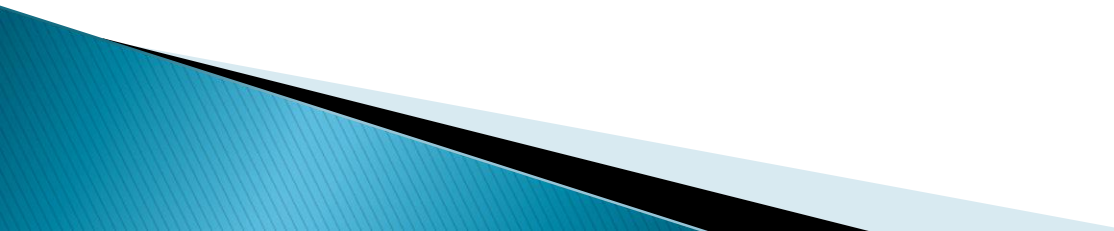
Supply is decreasing

Figure 2.6 Supply of 'affordable' housing falls back




Source: Affordable Housing Supply: April 2015 to March 2016 England, Housing Statistical Release, Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

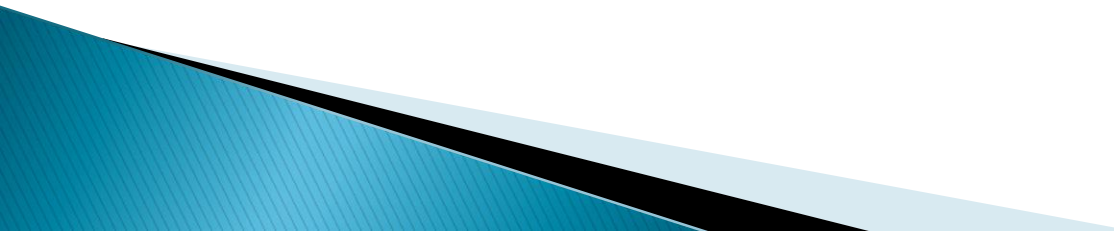
- ▶ Private Member's Bill introduced by Conservative MP Bob Blackman.
 - ▶ Received Royal Assent in April 2017
 - ▶ Government committed to funding the new duties – £72.7 million given to councils
 - ▶ Act will be implemented across England from the 3rd of April 2018
 - ▶ New Code of Guidance was issued on the 22nd of February 2018
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The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Key elements:

- ▶ The definition of being threatened with homelessness has been extended from 28 days to 56 days
 - ▶ Local authorities must accept a valid S.21 notice as evidence that the tenant is threatened with homelessness
 - ▶ The creation of a stronger advice and information duty
 - ▶ The creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance
 - ▶ The introduction of a new relief duty for all eligible applicants who are homeless and have a local connection
 - ▶ Local authorities must take reasonable steps to secure accommodation regardless of priority need status
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The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- ▶ Encourages applicants to engage in prevention and relief work by allowing local authorities to discharge their prevent and relief duties if an applicant unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the course of action proposed
 - ▶ Introduces a right to judicial review at the prevention, relief and main duty stages to ensure local authorities are held to account
 - ▶ Collect customer journey data in order to monitor the overall effectiveness of the new legislation
 - ▶ Explore options for further enforcement such as through the creation of a regulator of housing and homelessness services
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Data comparison

- ▶ Homeless acceptances = 405
 - ▶ 34% cases accepted
 - ▶ Homeless reviews open = 52
 - ▶ 85 days in the prevention stage, 51 days in the Relief stage and 14 days in 14 duty (150 days)
 - ▶ 70 cases per officer
 - ▶ 0 families living in Bed and Breakfast
- ▶ Homeless acceptances = 788
 - ▶ 40% cases accepted
 - ▶ Homeless reviews open = 106
 - ▶ Average time to make a homeless decision 24 days
 - ▶ 15 cases per officer
 - ▶ 326 families living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation

2017/2018 01/04/17 to
31/01/17

2016/2017 01/04/16 to
31/01/2016

Early lessons from implementing the Act

- ▶ The culture change has taken four year's of partnership work with Shelter and other key partners
- ▶ 29% increase in customers accessing the service
- ▶ 40% of customers are single homeless
- ▶ The Local Housing Allowance framework is a barrier to preventing homelessness
- ▶ The Government funding provided is inadequate to meet the requirements of the Act

Early lessons from implementing the Act

- ▶ Make sure your IT systems follows your processes and IT does not dictate your way of working
- ▶ New Job Descriptions for all officers
- ▶ 100% different way of working
- ▶ 14 individual Personal Housing Plans
- ▶ Shelter providing independent advice and advocacy from the service 5 days a week
- ▶ Solace Women's Aid providing independent advice and advocacy from the service 5 days a week

Early lessons from implementing the Act

- ▶ Corporate commitment for the Homelessness Reduction Act work is important
- ▶ Public Referral duty is open to any agency to refer into the service public, voluntary sectors and Housing Associations
- ▶ Partnership working is really important
- ▶ Delivering a new Homeless Strategy is fundamental to drive the culture change
- ▶ Any agency can complete or support a customer with the Personal Housing Plans

Early lessons from implementing the Act

- ▶ Training and re-training is the most important requirement to change the culture
- ▶ We recruited 16 apprentice officers all local to Southwark with a lived experience of homelessness to help change our culture
- ▶ For all new recruitments we will not be appointing people with a previous 1996 Housing Act experience due to the culture of this Act
- ▶ Trained 100% of Elected Members and MP's

Early lessons from implementing the Act

- ▶ Vulnerability Pathway Plans for all vulnerable customers highlighted in the Act will help to deliver a consistent service to single people
- ▶ Customer empowerment and choice will help to drive service improvements – Homeless Link independently facilitating customer focus groups to help to constantly redesign the service
- ▶ Assisting the customer at the earliest possible moment (up stream work)
- ▶ Prevention, Prevention Prevention

Early lessons from implementing the Act

- ▶ Self help packs for customers linked to empowerment
- ▶ Accommodation finding service
- ▶ Changed the language of letters, leaflets, the web site to be customer focussed
- ▶ Trained all partners on three separate occasions in the last 12 months
- ▶ Excellent partnership working with all agencies with the following agencies being based in the service or the service co-located in these organisations

Partnership Working



Key outcomes

- ▶ 50% of all referrals into the service comes from health agencies
- ▶ No referral's from GP's
- ▶ 5% referral's from Police
- ▶ No surgeries in any Health Agency but drop in surgeries at the Job Centre Plus, Probation Saturday surgeries across Southwark etc.
- ▶ Trained Health Agencies, but further training needs to be provided.
- ▶ 91% customer satisfaction of 12,000 opinions

Key Challenges

- ▶ Change the culture immediately
- ▶ Amalgamate the Homelessness Prevention Grant, Flexible Homeless Support Grant, New Burdens funding to deliver the best possible service. The funding is not enough
- ▶ Recruit people through a Grow your Own approach, not with previous 1996 Act experience
- ▶ Train and re-train staff constantly
- ▶ Partnership work

Please feel free to contact us



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