

Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 3/2015

Date: 14 September 2015

To: All Members of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: This briefing note was as a result of discussion at the meeting of this Committee on 13 August 2015

Heading: Households in Temporary Accommodation

When a household makes an application to a local authority for assistance with homelessness the authority is under a duty to carry out inquiries in order to satisfy itself as to what level of duty is owed to a homeless applicant. If an authority has reason to believe that a homeless applicant has nowhere to stay and is in priority need, then there is an immediate duty to make suitable temporary accommodation available pending further inquiries.

After the completion of inquiries local authorities must inform applicants of their decision. The type of help that an authority might be under a duty to offer to a homeless household under the 1996 Act ranges from a main duty to secure suitable permanent accommodation (which may be a private rented tenancy), to providing advice and assistance, for example through housing advice or referrals to other housing providers.

Authorities only have an absolute duty to secure accommodation for households who are deemed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Where an absolute duty to secure accommodation exists, a household may have to spend a period of time in temporary accommodation before a final offer of accommodation is made. At the end of March 2015 there were 260 households in temporary accommodation provided by the Council's Strategic Housing Service. Of these households:-

- 92 were having their homeless application investigated.
- A further 8 have had their application completed and it was found that the Council has no on-going duty to provide accommodation and they had dates to leave the accommodation provided
- 5 households have made a legal challenge to our decision and we have a duty to accommodate whilst this progresses and
- 150 households the Council has accepted a duty to provide permanent accommodation and they are awaiting permanent housing to be available.

Of all households accommodated 125 were households including children or pregnant women. As of the 14 September 2015 there were 246 households in temporary accommodation down from the 260 as at 31 March 2015.

For the period of Q4 from 1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015 there were 315 homeless applications made, and of these 84 households were found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and so the Council has a duty to provide accommodation.

Of those to whom the Council has a duty to accommodate 38 had been asked to leave by friends and family, 8 were at risk of violence or abuse, 6 had rent arrears, 24 had their tenancy ended, 5 were being released from care, hospital or an institution and 3 were for other reasons. Of those accepted as homeless over the period 4 households had most recently held a social tenancy.

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