

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

24 July 2024

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period April to July 2024

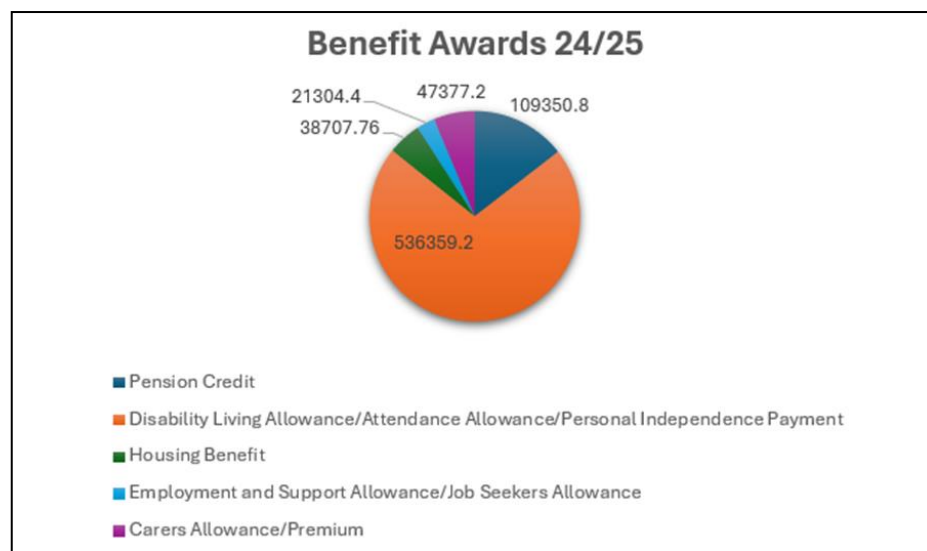
1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Financial Inclusion

The team have received 177 referrals during Q1. They currently have 75 open cases.

We are continuing to reach out to our communities and support the most vulnerable through income maximisation. During Q1 we have identified over £753k per annum of missed benefits and income for residents. This is represented below.



Award	Weekly income 24/25	Annual income 24/25
Pension Credit	2102.90	109350.80
Disability Living Allowance/ Attendance Allowance/ Personal Independence Payment	10314.60	536359.20
Housing Benefit	744.38	38707.76
Employment and Support Allowance/Job Seekers Allowance	409.70	21304.40
Carers Allowance/Premium	911.10	47377.20

In addition to this we have identified over £66k of missed Council Tax Support entitlement for 2024/25 and missed Council Tax discounts. We will shortly be conducting a Council Tax Support campaign where we have identified a further 200 households who are potentially eligible to Council Tax Support but not in receipt of this.

As proven here, proactive outreach is an essential part of our response to support households in crisis. In continuing to grow our work in this area we will be renewing the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) Dashboard, which provides a view of households at risk of financial crisis, homelessness, evictions, debts, food and fuel poverty, and benefit eligibility.

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support

In Q1 we received 464 new claims for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support, and 19,255 changes in circumstances. We currently have 1252 cases outstanding.

Our speed of processing times for Housing Benefit for Q1 are:

New claims = 7 days

Change in circumstances = 13.8 days.

We have identified an error in our performance data across May and June for changes in circumstances which has falsely increased our speed of processing times. This is currently being corrected and the revised figures will be reported in due course.

Discretionary Housing Payments

We continue to administer Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people to stay within the community. Cases are worked on as a panel which includes officers from the Benefits Team and Housing Options.

For 2024/25, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037.00, and up to 30th June 2024 we have spent 31% of our allocation across 38 households. A further total of 61 applications (across 61 households) have been refused as the circumstances of the household are outside the scope of the scheme. Where we have not been able to provide support through the DHP scheme, the team will consider other funding options and signpost the customer accordingly.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 38 households can be seen below.

Single Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	23
Rent Arrears	£1,453.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£400.00

Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£12,606.84
Sub Total Expenditure	£14,459.84
Single Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	2
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£2,985.18
Sub Total Expenditure	£2,985.18
Couple Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	1
Rent Arrears	£2,034.73
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£2,034.73
Couple Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	1
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£1,495.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£1,495.00
Family Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	9
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£10,749.60
Sub Total Expenditure	£10,749.60
Family Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	0
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£0.00
Total Expenditure	£31,724.35

Social Prescribing

Referrals

We have been supporting the Protect NoW project in conjunction with the ICB (Integrated Care Board) across NN2 (one of the 4 Primary Care Networks in North Place) which has seen an increase in referrals for May & June.

Protect NoW is a dementia support analysis project with outcome results due in August 2024.

Both Team Leader's from South Norfolk and Broadland Social Prescribing Team and NNDC Social Prescribing Team have worked in collaboration in collecting data and providing support packs for carers and patients with a dementia diagnosis.

General SP referrals have seen an increase in self-referrals for residents requiring support with legal matters, tribunal support and Power of Attorney advice.

Referrals received into SP = 81

Total number of issues/concerns supported by SP = 113

Community HUB

Our first meeting was very well received, with over 35 community groups represented.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 18th July, this will be a face-to-face meeting at Cromer NNDC and has been slightly delayed due to the announcement of the general election.

Our next meeting will have presentations from Setec, Help Alert and a Scam and Fraud Prevention Theme for breakout sessions.

There will also be opportunities to network and share events running over the summer period for all attendees and the opportunity to provide any flyers and posters to be added to the first quarterly Newsletter.

The Community Connectors and Social Prescribers will be on hand for any advice needed to our local community partners throughout the meeting. The final part of the meeting will be discussions on the next meeting to be held on Thursday 12th September and what theme the partners would like.

Help HUB

Total Referrals discussed throughout June – 25

Number of concerns raised through referrals by professionals attending – 38

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 30 June 2024 there were 2367 households on the housing list with 474 (20%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs.

	Housing List by Bedroom Need				Homes Let by Property size (Bedrooms)			
	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total
1 Bed	191	941	190	1322	21	1	2	24
2 Bed	102	352	102	556	31	5	2	38
3 Bed	87	115	43	245	5	0	2	7
4 Bed	86	93	35	214	1	0	0	1
5 Bed +	8	13	9	30	0	0	0	0
Total	474	1514	379	2367	58	6	6	70

Households Assessed and Duty Owed

Our Housing Options Service offers advice to anyone who has a housing problem, and offers support and assistance if someone is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, within the next 56 days.

Approaches to the service remain high and between 01 April 2024 to 30 Jun 2024 we have opened 290 new cases. Each case represents a household who has contacted us as they have some sort of housing need, and we are still seeing an increase in homeless households (relief cases).

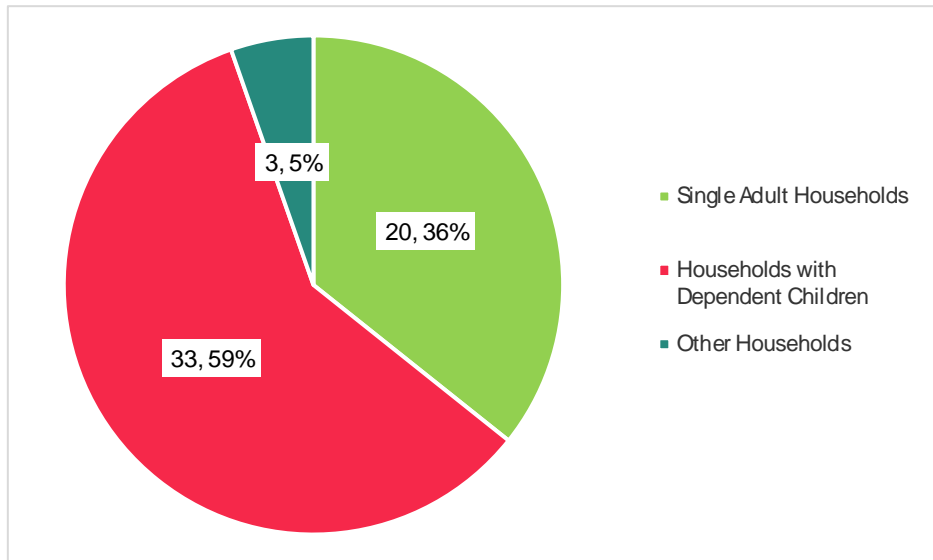
As at the 30 June 2024 there were 202 open homeless cases. Of which 129 households were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness (prevention Duty) or were homeless (Relief Duty), of these 64 households included dependent children.

The three most common triggers of homelessness were:

- The loss of a private tenancy (47%)
- Households no longer being able to stay with families and friends (15%)
- Domestic abuse (14%)

Temporary Accommodation

As at the 30 June 2024 there were 56 households in Temporary Accommodation. This is an overall decrease of 25% from the same date last year (June 2023).



Rough Sleeping

During the month of June (at various points in time) 13 people were reported/verified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk, this includes 1 person with entrenched experience of rough sleeping, 1 person who has previously slept rough in the district and 11 people who were new rough sleeping.

At the end of the month, 9 people remain rough sleeping, which includes 2 people who have refused off street accommodation, and 1 person who owns their own accommodation outside of the District.

Housing Allocations Scheme Consultation

North Norfolk District Council is reviewing its Housing Allocations Scheme and is seeking views on the proposed changes. The revised scheme proposes to make changes to the way in which applications for social housing are assessed and prioritised to determine who can join the housing register and how we award priority for housing.

When any significant changes are proposed, the Council is legally required to consult with Housing Providers operating within the district, but we also think it is also important to seek views and feedback from current housing register applicants, residents, stakeholders, and partner agencies.

The consultation which launched on the 8th July is open for six weeks and closes at midnight on Monday 19th August 2024.

Full details of the consultation can be viewed here <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/consultations/housing-allocations-scheme-consultation/>

Housing Strategy

Local Authority Housing Fund

In the first round of funding the Council accepted £1,245,210 to provide eleven additional affordable homes– initially to house Ukrainian and Afghan refugee households. We have worked with Flagship Housing to deliver the homes. The Council now owns one and Flagship Housing own the remaining ten.

The Council accepted a further £560,000 of funding to provide four further homes (three to initially house Afghan refugee households and one for homeless households). These homes have now been purchased and all four are being used as Temporary Accommodation.

A further allocation for £280,000 has also accepted to help fund a further two purchases.

New Affordable Homes

We have a healthy affordable housing scheme pipeline, many of which are 'rural exception' housing sites at various points in the development process. There are over twenty developments which will, subject to approvals, yield more than 350 new affordable homes in the next few years. In common with most of Norfolk, 'Nutrient neutrality' is a delaying factor for many sites within the district.

In 2024/25 we expect Housing Associations to provide 59 new affordable homes in the district. So far in 2024/25 13 new homes have been provided.

Recently Planning has been approved for a site of 47 affordable homes in Bacton.

The exception scheme in Northrepps has recently completed and will be officially opened 9th July 2024.

An exception scheme in Hindringham is also nearing completion.

Development of affordable homes in Sheringham (Westwood), Warham, Salthouse and West Beckham are also on site.

IHAT

The team are promoting access to Disabled Facilities Grants including the discretionary grant throughout 2024-25. Some examples include:

- Information on website / social media / outlook magazine.
- Attending PositiviTea events to promote take up.

The teams' key objectives are to:

- Continue to reduce end to end timescales – the team have made good progress on this, and they are actively evaluating the customer journey

and wait times.

- Increase spend / amount of adaptations completed – NNDC has increased the capital DFG budget by £400k from the DFG reserve (built up during COVID) for 2024-25 which will help to ensure NNDC are able to meet increased demand on the service.
- Review the environmental impact – consider a range of recycling options for adaptations and move towards more environmentally friendly options for some existing adaptations.
- Consider options around prevention, working with Financial Inclusion and the Community Connectors work streams, to help keep people in their homes for longer.

The table below shows the number of referrals received during Q1 and current expenditure.

Figures 2024-25 – Disabled Facilities Grant

Q1 total new contacts	126
Brought forward approval value from 23-24 (not yet completed)	£720,840.12
Brought forward approved cases 2023-24 (not yet completed)	68
Total Completed cases Q1	21* (*June cases not all invoiced for yet)
Total approval value Q1	£304,833.35
Total spend Value Q1	£303,803.53

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

- 3/6 Paston College and EcDev team
- 5/6 Productivity Plan Workshop
- 5/6 Solo Housing Association Meeting
- 11/6 Hillside Chalet Planning Meeting
- 8/7 Cabinet
- 8/7 Business Planning
- 9/7 Broadland Site Visit West Beckham, Broadland Site Visit Northrepps
- 10/7 RSN / BT digital switch over
- 11/7 MPC Catchup Meeting
- 15/7 PH Catchup Peoples' Services
- 17/7 Inspired Solutions Housing Investment Meeting

17/7 PH Catchup Housing Strategy
17/7 Fighting Stigma on Housing Webinar
18/7 Coastal Forum
19/7 Overview and Scrutiny TFG Meeting
25/7 Transport East Webinar
29/7 Business Planning