

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

March 2025

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 28th February 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

Caseload

In February the team received over 170 new claims and 8600 reported changes in circumstances.

As at 1st March, we have 7,215 households claiming Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support of which 53% are working age. The caseload has increased compared to the previous month, due to an increase in the number of working age households claiming Council Tax Support.

The number of working age households claiming Housing Benefit continues to reduce due to the managed migration to Universal Credit. To date 461 households have migrated with a further 530 households expected to migrate by the end of the year.

Speed of processing for February

The table represents our speed of processing data for February 2025. The service is continuing to perform highly compared to the national standard.

	NNDC number of days to process (February 2025)	NNDC Benchmarked number of days to process (Q2)	National Benchmarked number of days to process (Q2)
New claims HB	9.00	6	22
New claims CTS	7.00		
Changes in circumstances HB	2.30	9	9
Changes in circumstances CTS	4.50		

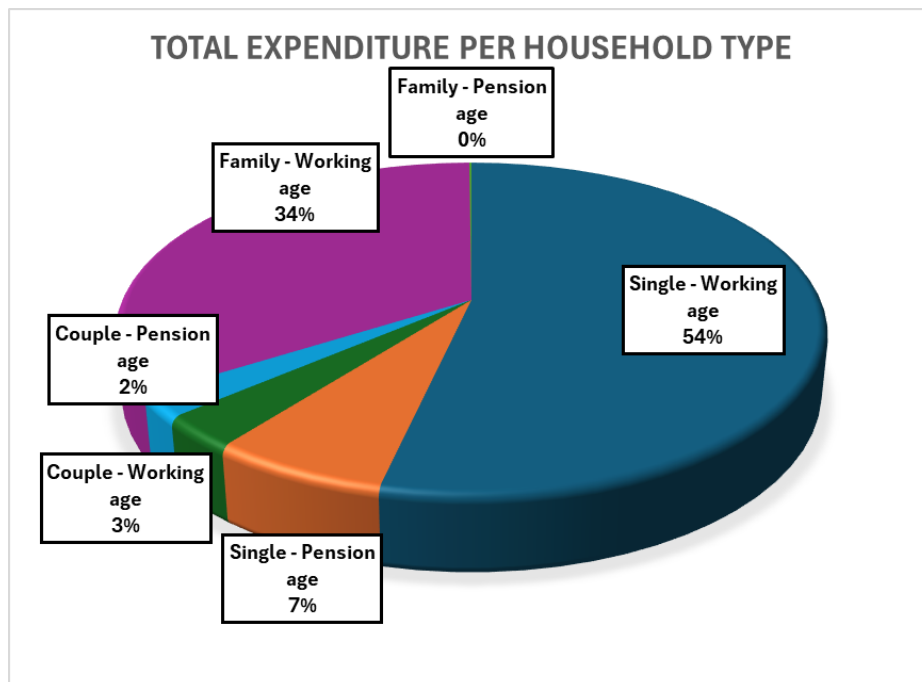
Discretionary Housing Payments

We continue to administer Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people to stay within the community.

For 2024/25, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037.00, and up to 28th February 2025 we have spent 92% of our allocation across 112 households. A further total of 220 applications (across 201 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 considers other funding options and support available and signposts the customer accordingly.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 112 households can be seen below.

Household Type	Number of Households paid	Expenditure across households
Single - Working age	69	£ 50,394.38
Single - Pension age	6	£ 6,599.67
Couple - Working age	5	£ 3,012.98
Couple - Pension age	1	£ 2,154.00
Family - Working age	30	£ 31,827.02
Family - Pension age	1	£ 106.92
Totals	112	£ 94,094.97



Financial Inclusion

The Financial Inclusion team is continuing to support low-income households become financially resilient by maximising their income through unclaimed benefits, premiums, and grants. We have also run Pension Credit campaigns using data from the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to target individual households and have used DWP data shared through Norfolk County Council to increase take up of Council Tax Support. In total the Benefits team and Financial Inclusion team have generated over £2 million in missed benefits and/or funding for households across North Norfolk, with the highest amount of income being claimed for disabled households. This is illustrated below.

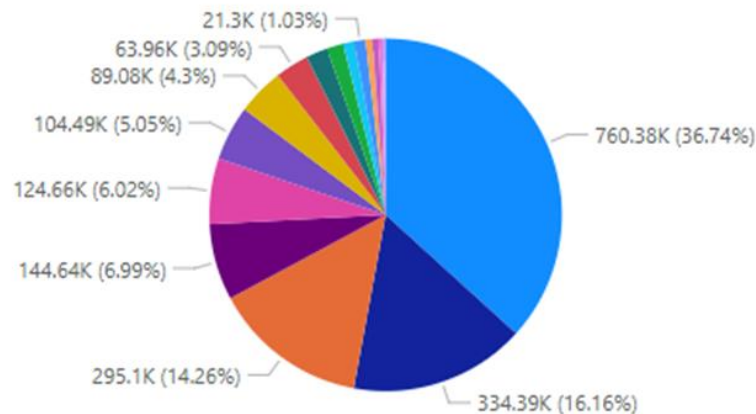
**Where benefits have been claimed, the amounts shown are an annual award.*

Financial Inclusion

Income Tracker 24/25

Support type	Sum of Annual income or lump sum award
Universal Credit	21,380.52
Take-up Campaign Pension Credit Financial Inclusion Assisted	104,489.84
Take-up Campaign Pension Credit	144,639.04
Take-up Campaign Council Tax Support	31,595.01
Personal Independence Payment	295,097.40
Pension Credit	334,394.84
Housing Benefit	63,961.04
Household Support Fund/ Discretionary Household Support Grant	12,976.95
Energy Bank Voucher	5,851.86
Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance	21,304.40
Edenred/Argos Voucher	12,155.00
Discretionary Housing Payment	6,724.49
Disability Living Allowance	40,791.40
Council Tax Support/ Discount	89,080.77
Carer's Allowance /Premium	124,659.60
Attendance Allowance	760,375.20
Total	2,069,477.36

Sum of Annual income or lump sum award by Support type



- Support type**
- Attendance Allowance
 - Pension Credit
 - Personal Independence Payment
 - Take-up Campaign Pension Credit
 - Carer's Allowance /Premium
 - Take-up Campaign Pension Credit ...
 - Council Tax Support/ Discount
 - Housing Benefit

- Support type** ▲
- Disability Living Allowance
 - Take-up Campaign Council Tax Sup...
 - Universal Credit
 - Employment and Support Allowan...
 - Household Support Fund/ Discreti...
 - Edenred/Argos Voucher
 - Discretionary Housing Payment
 - Energy Bank Voucher

Household Support Fund (HSF)

In February we have delivered a further £103k of support through the HSF to low income pension age households not in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment and who are not entitled to Pension Credit. We have been able to target this funding using the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT). Each eligible household has been sent a voucher for £120. This payment has been distributed through the Post Office PayOut scheme.

[Housing Options and Homeless Prevention](#)

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 28 February 2025 there were 2,210 households on the housing list with 476 (21%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs, including households to whom the council owns a statutory housing duty.

The tables below highlight the makeup of housing need and the size property required by applicants on the housing list. Although the greatest demand for housing is those with a 1-bedroom need, there are significantly fewer larger properties allocated with a current demand for 4 beds+ properties being 237 with only 1 four-bedroom house being let between 01 April 2024 to 28 February 2025.

Some properties have a minimum age requirement, for example, in some cases only people over 55 years of age can apply, this applied to 57 properties let during 01 April 2024 to 28 February 2025.

	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	203	876	154	1233	97	2	8	107
2 Bed	102	327	87	516	101	10	9	120
3 Bed	68	85	38	191	29	1	6	36
4 Bed	92	107	38	237	1	0	0	1
5 Bed +	11	12	10	33	0	0	0	0
Total	476	1407	327	2210	228	13	23	264

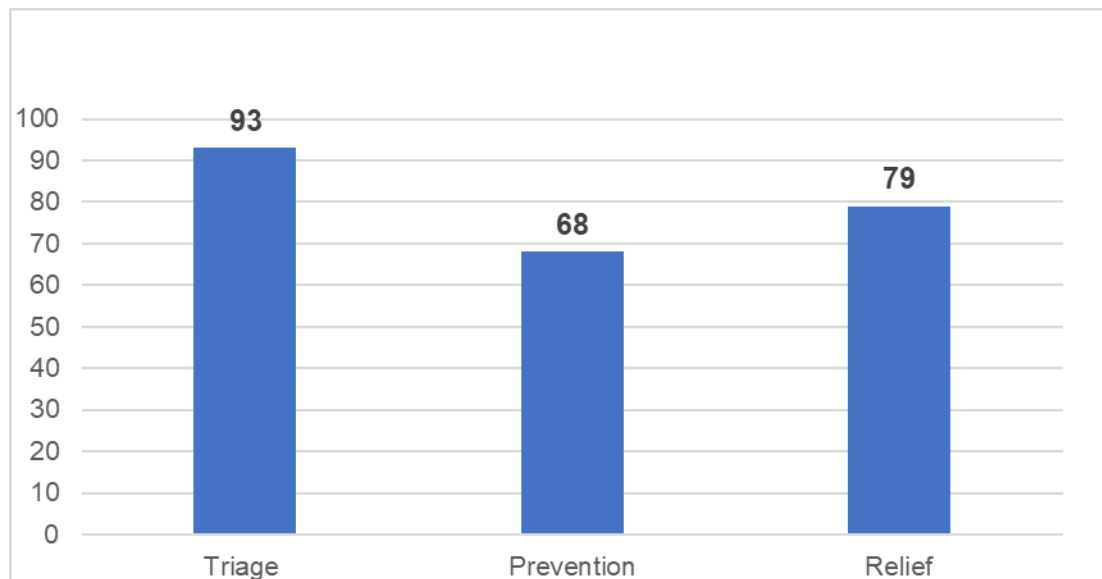
Homes let 01 April 2024 to 28 February 2025.

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 28 February 2025 we have opened 1,104 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 households being owed a Relief Duty (200 cases) Vs the Prevention Duty (132 cases).

As at the 28 February 2025 there were 243 open homeless cases. The table below shows the levels of Homelessness, where a household is owed either the prevention or relief duty following initial assessment.



The three most common triggers of homelessness for households owed a homeless duty by reasons for loss, or threat of loss, of last settled home were:

- End of Private Tenancy

- Family/Friends no longer/willing to accommodate
- Domestic Abuse

Outcome of main duty decisions for eligible households

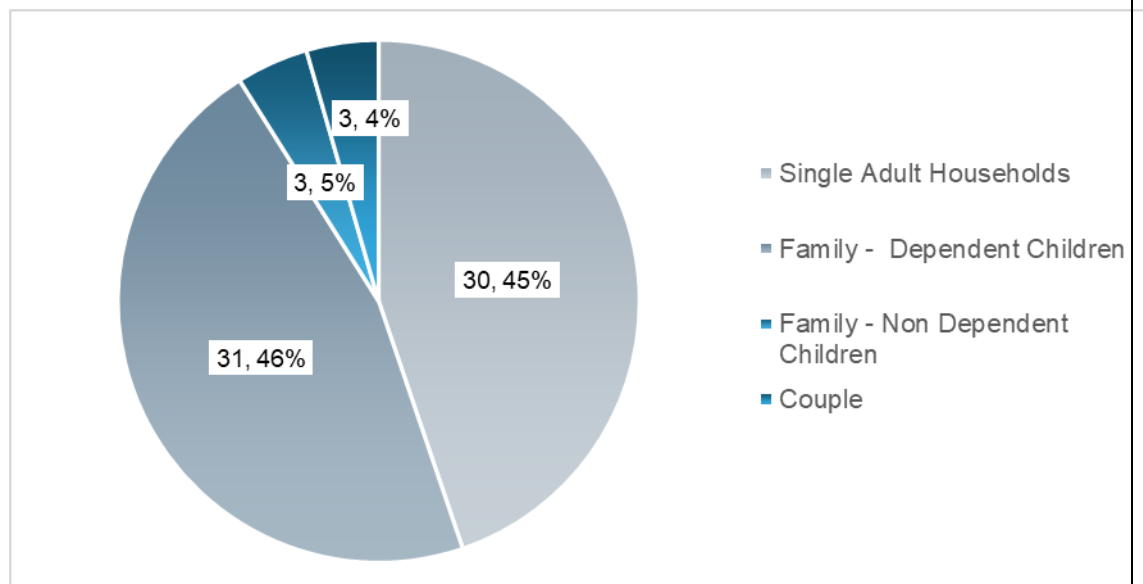
Main homelessness duty describes the duty a local authority has towards an applicant who is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has priority need. Households are only owed a main duty if their homelessness has not been successfully prevented or relieved.

Between 01 April 2024 to 28 February 2025, 154 main duty decisions have been taken with 111 households (72%) being found to be Homeless, priority need, and unintentionally homeless.

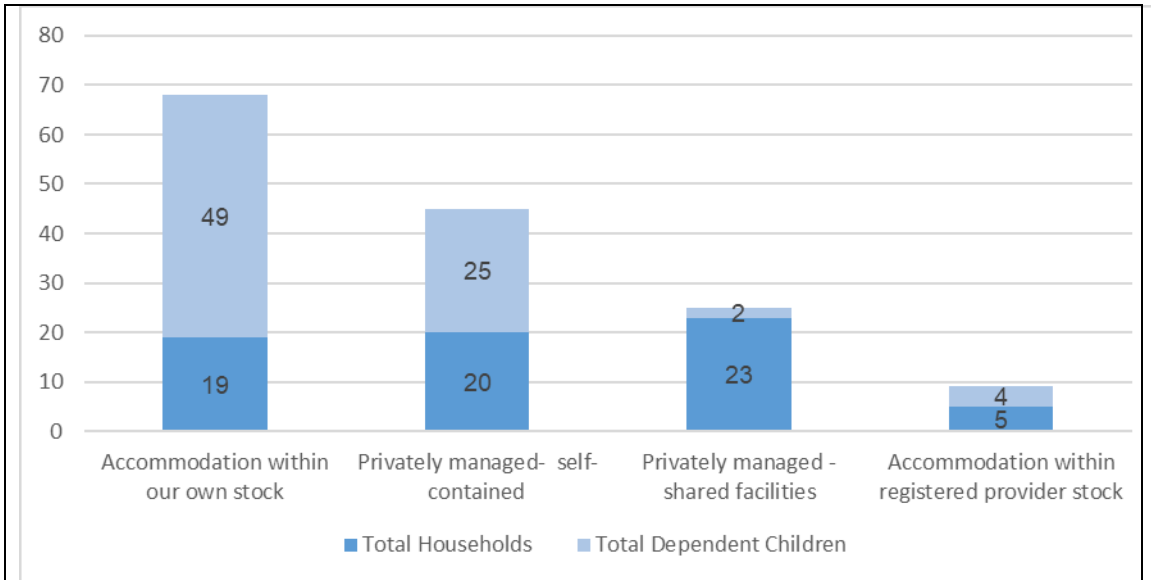
Where a local authority has accepted a main housing duty to an applicant, Section 193 accommodation duty arises. This requires the local authority to ensure that the applicant has access to suitable temporary accommodation until the applicant is rehoused and the Section 193 duty is discharged.

Temporary Accommodation

On the 28 February 2025 there were 67 Households in Temporary Accommodation. Included in the 31 Family Households there were 80 dependent children.



Households in Temporary Accommodation



Households by Accommodation Type

Rough Sleeping

During the month of February (at various points in time) 4 people were reported/verified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk, this includes 2 people with entrenched experience of rough sleeping, 1 person who has previously slept rough in the district and 1 person who was new rough sleeping in the district.

At the end of the month, 2 people remain sleeping rough in the district.

[Housing Strategy](#)

Temporary Accommodation

The Council currently holds 25 units of Temporary or other homeless accommodation (including five units on move on accommodation for ex-rough sleepers).

The demand for TA continues and we have recently been successful in our bid for government funding through Local Authority Housing Fund grant which will help us to purchase a further four units of homelessness accommodation and two further units using Second Homes Council Tax premium funding. These homes will be acquired in 2025/26 to bring the Council's portfolio up to 31 homes.

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, deliver more than 550 new affordable homes in the next few years.

In 2024/25 we expect Housing Associations to provide 41 new affordable homes in the district – this is a lower figure than previously reported as one scheme will only partially handover their new development this year with the remaining in a phased process which takes some home now into early 2025/06.

So far in 2024/25, 35 new homes have been completed, which include, in January, a rural exception site in Warham with 12 affordable rented homes specifically for Homes for Wells. The development of 24 affordable homes in Sheringham (Westwood), is due for completion over the next few months.

Flagship have commenced building in Bacton where they will deliver 47 new affordable homes with a mixture of affordable rents and shared ownership properties. They have also commenced building in Walcott where 23 affordable rent homes will be delivered.

Planning applications continue – in Stalham planning permission has been issued for a fully affordable development which will deliver 61 extra care homes, along with 40 affordable homes.

Swanton Novers Community Land Trust, in partnership with Broadland Housing Association, has received planning consent for 7 new affordable rented homes in the village. Broadland Housing Association has received planning consent for a rural exception housing site in Little Snoring, where we will have 10 affordable homes delivered. Flagship have a current planning application for 9 affordable homes in Pudding Norton. Following a successful public consultation, Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society continue to work in partnership with Broadland Housing Association to deliver 8 affordable homes, with a planning application submission expected in the coming months.

Work continues to seek further land in the district which is suitable for affordable housing with some local landowners making contact following recent publicity. Strategic Housing are currently working on the suitability of six early stages sites with the potential to increase the affordable housing pipeline.

[Social Prescribing](#)

February 2025:

Referrals received into SP = **58**

Key issues in respect of reasons for referral included finances, benefits and mental health.

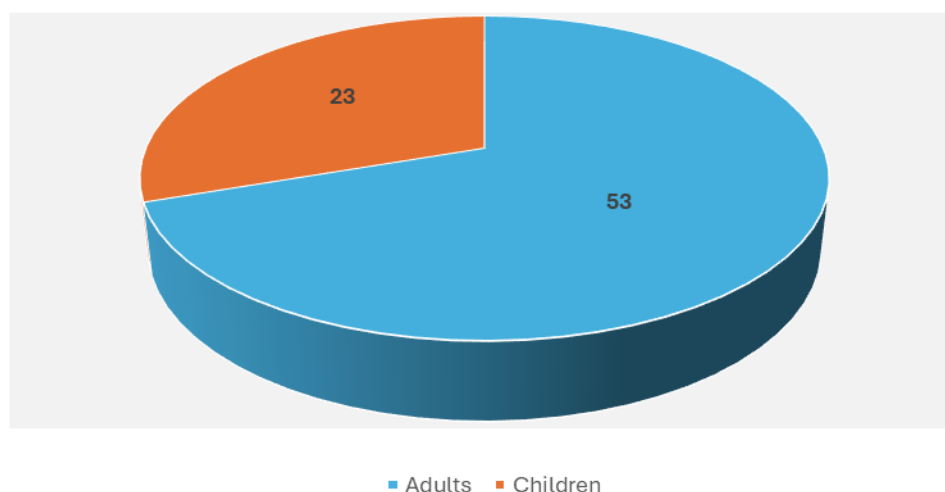
Complex referrals are presented to and discussed at the multi-agency Help Hub to get a more holistic view of the person being referred. Agreement is reached at the Hub on how to deal with the referral and the concerns raised. Referrals are also allocated to Social Prescribers, Community Connectors for Social Isolation or Financial Inclusion for benefits, debt,

budgeting and financial issues.

Homes for Ukraine

Currently we have 31 hosts, 76 guests in a hosting arrangement (53 adults and 23 children) including 1 person in Temporary Accommodation.

Ukrainian Guests



IHAT

- On 03/01 the government announced an immediate in-year uplift to the Disabled Facilities Grant for the 2024-2025 financial year. The increase for North Norfolk was a total £203,310. The expectation is that these funds are spent this financial year or at least committed. The uplift has been committed by way of DFG approvals (these works are likely to not be completed until the next financial year).
- IHAT has been down an assessing officer through Norfolk County Council's Assistant Practitioner role since 18th December. The role has now been filled and the new Assistant Practitioner will begin 10th March. The number of assessments completed over December, January and February has therefore dipped due to the reduced resource.
- The Discretionary grant policy is currently under review with a view to extending this for a further year.
- We are in the process of extending the contract with Flagship housing association to deliver adaptations for Flagship Housing Group tenants via their contractor. The new contract is expected to start from 1st April 2025.
- The team has published a DFG leaflet, see attached. This will better promote the service across the council and to reach a wider audience

in addition to the website information. The leaflet can be used for professional and public use to better understand eligibility for DFG and the referral process.

The DFG expenditure is shown below.

Figures 2024-25 – Disabled Facilities Grant

Total referrals for February 2025 (New data)	19
Cases awaiting assessment for adaptation (as of 28 th Feb)	53
YTD completed grants	125
YTD average monthly completed grants up to end of February 2025	11.36
Total spend YTD (as of 28 th February)	£1,357,163.07
February total spend	£149,317.96
February total approval value	£125,913.05 (13 cases)

Discretionary Grants

YTD as of 28 th Feb grants awarded (completed)	70
YTD as of 28 th Feb total value	£92,567.86

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

Cabinet
Pre Cabinet Agenda
Business Planning
EELGA Assembly Meeting
Anglian Water Workshop

EELGA Forum on Housing
All Members Briefing on LGR and Devo
Topping out with Broadland Housing Association Salthouse
Meeting with Inspector of NNPolice
Town and Parish Briefing
Portfolio Catchups People Services and Housing
Mundesley Parish Council Full Council
NNDC Full Council
EELGA Conference