

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

July 2025

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 31st July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Caseload (July)

By the end of July 2025, we saw an increase in our caseload of 11 cases compared to the previous month. We currently have 2,475 households claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, and 4,548 households claiming Council Tax Support only.

Workloads and Speed of Processing Times – (July)

The table below shows our processing times for July. Our targets are:

16 days for processing new claims

10 days for processing changes in circumstances

We prioritise processing changes that affect Housing Benefit to minimise overpayments. This approach reduces the financial impact on customers and helps the council avoid potential losses in Housing Benefit subsidy, as well as the need for recovery action.

In July, our Housing Benefit processing times increased slightly due to delays in obtaining information for temporary accommodation cases. We will be reviewing the handling process for these claims to identify opportunities for improvement.

	Number received in July	NNDC number of days to process (July)
New claims HB	148	8.60
New claims CTS		20.10
Changes in circumstances HB	7,032	7
Changes in circumstances CTS		12.80

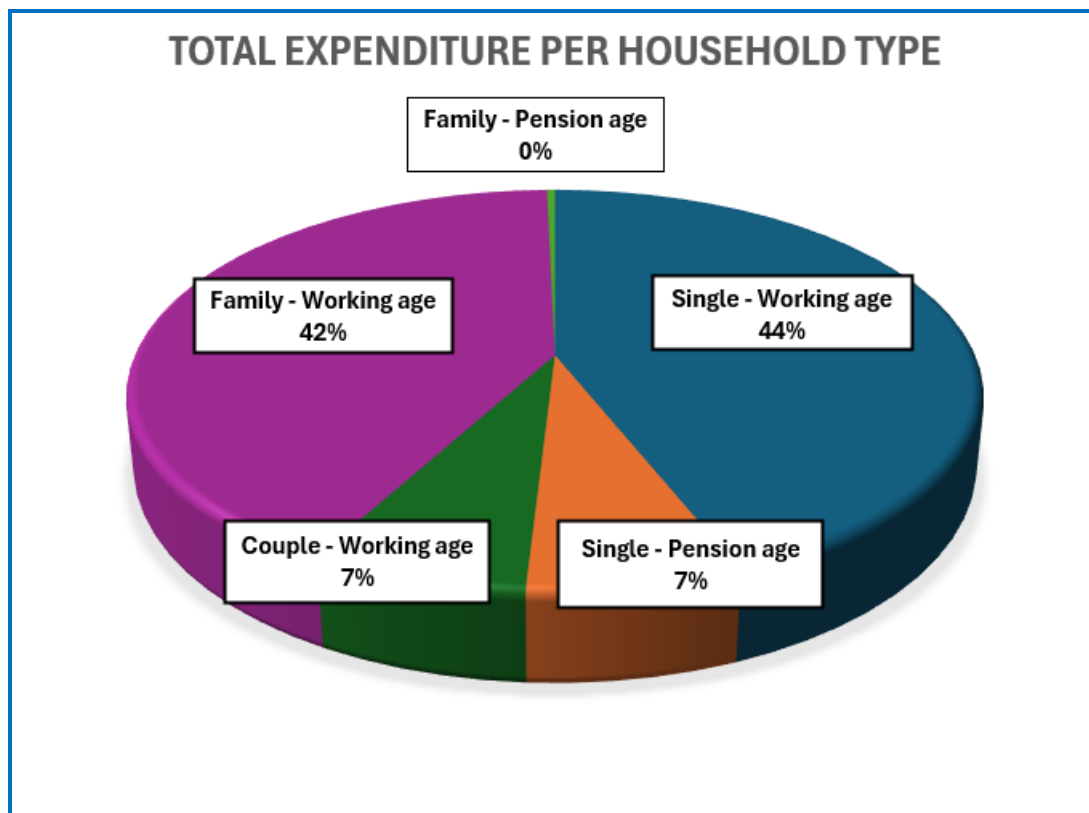
Discretionary Housing Payments (Cumulative)

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

For 2025/26, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037.00, and up to 31st July 2025 we have spent 37% of our allocation across 42 households.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 42 households can be seen below.

Household Type	Number of Households paid	Expenditure across households
Single - Working age	21	£ 16,674.01
Single - Pension age	2	£ 2,648.62
Couple - Working age	2	£ 2,673.11
Couple - Pension age	0	£ -
Family - Working age	16	£ 15,813.00
Family - Pension age	1	£ 136.05
Totals	42	£ 37,944.79



Financial Inclusion (Pro-active workstreams)

During July as part of our Financial Inclusion (pro-active) Delivery Plan, we have contacted over 90 households who have been identified using the LIFT Dashboard as in crisis. Our work involved contacting residents by phone and in person, to understand their household circumstances, offer support through benefit and welfare checks, and to identify missed income.

Our Business Support Officers are looking at Council Tax Support take up and are phoning customers to complete a benefit entitlement check and to offer support in claiming missed benefits.

Our results from these campaigns are currently being analysed and will be presented shortly.

Housing Options and Homeless Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

The demand for social and affordable housing options remains high within the district and far exceeds the availability and supply. As at the 31 July 2025 there were 2,140 households on the housing list with (23%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs, including homeless households and households living in Temporary Accommodation.

The tables below highlight the makeup of housing needs and the size property that is 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 bed+ properties being 232

	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	210	830	153	1193		19			19
2 Bed	104	298	90	492		21			21
3 Bed	69	81	41	191		13			13
4 Bed	90	103	39	232		3			3
5 Bed +	13	12	7	32					
Total	486	1324	330	2140		56			56

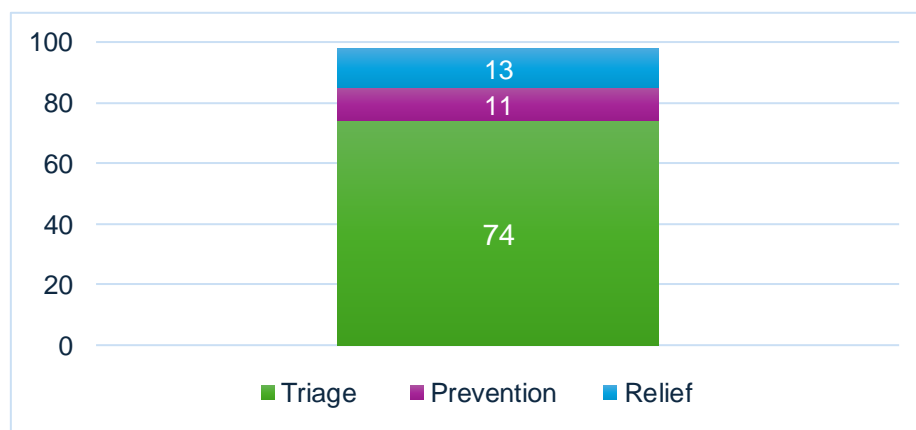
Some properties have a minimum age requirement, for example, in some cases only people over 55 years of age can apply, this applied to 10% of the properties let between 01 April to 31 July 2025.

Households Assessed and Duty Owed

When a household becomes homeless, or is at risk of homelessness, their local authority owes them a duty. There are three main types of homelessness duties:

1. Prevention duty: Local authorities owe prevention duties to help stop households at risk of homelessness losing their accommodation
2. Relief duty: If a household is homeless, the local authority owes them a relief duty to provide some sort of accommodation.

Approaches to the service remain high and during the month of July 2025 we have opened 98 new cases with 24 households being assessed as owed a statutory duty to prevent or relieve homelessness



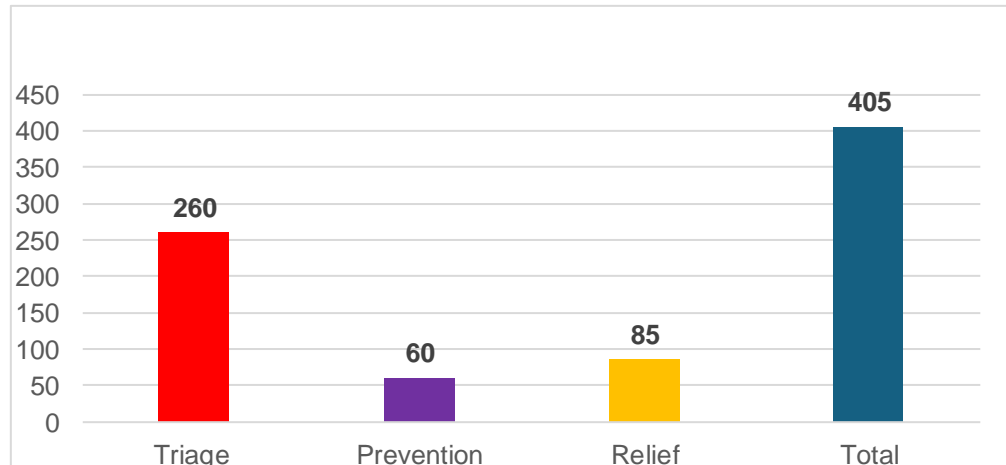
Assessment of approaches July 2025

Causes of Homelessness

The three most common triggers of homelessness/loss of the last settled home during the month were:

- The loss of a private tenancy
- Domestic Abuse
- Households no longer being able to stay with families and friends

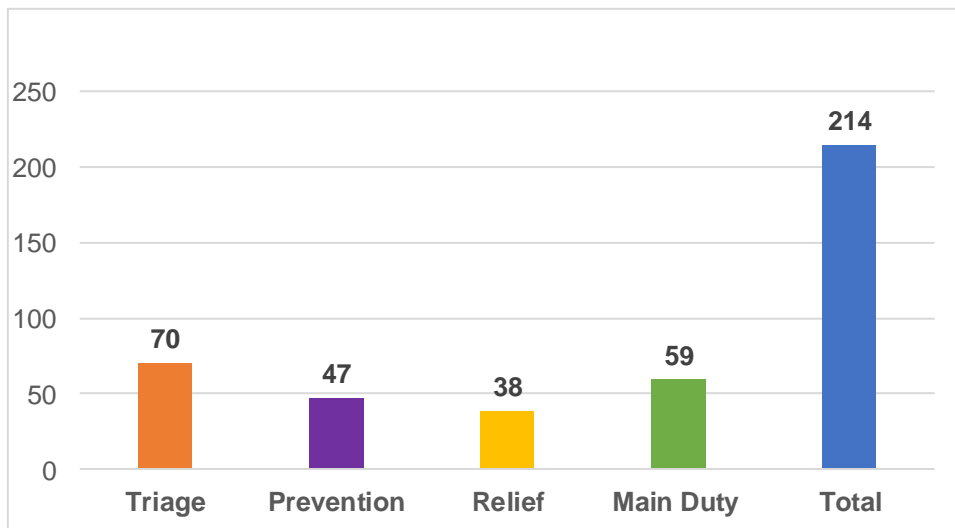
Year to date we have opened 405 cases with 145 being assessed as owed a statutory duty, of which over 58% of households owed a duty; presenting when they are already homeless.



Assessment of cases between April and July 2025.

Open Cases

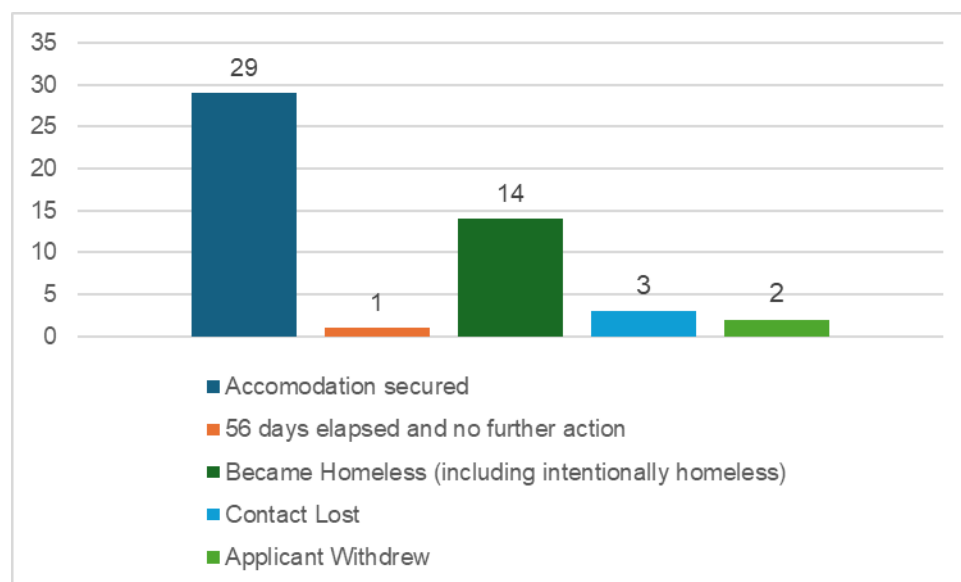
On the 31 July 2025 there were 214 open cases.



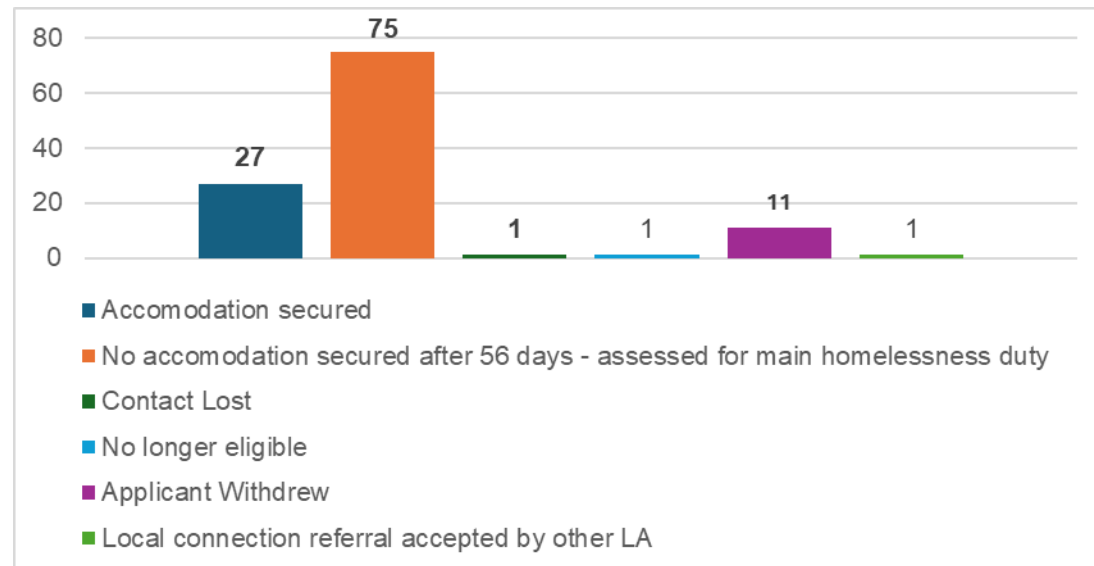
Outcomes of homelessness duties April to July 2025:

Where homelessness cannot be prevented or relieved a decision is taken to whether the applicants is owed the Main Homeless duty. This 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.

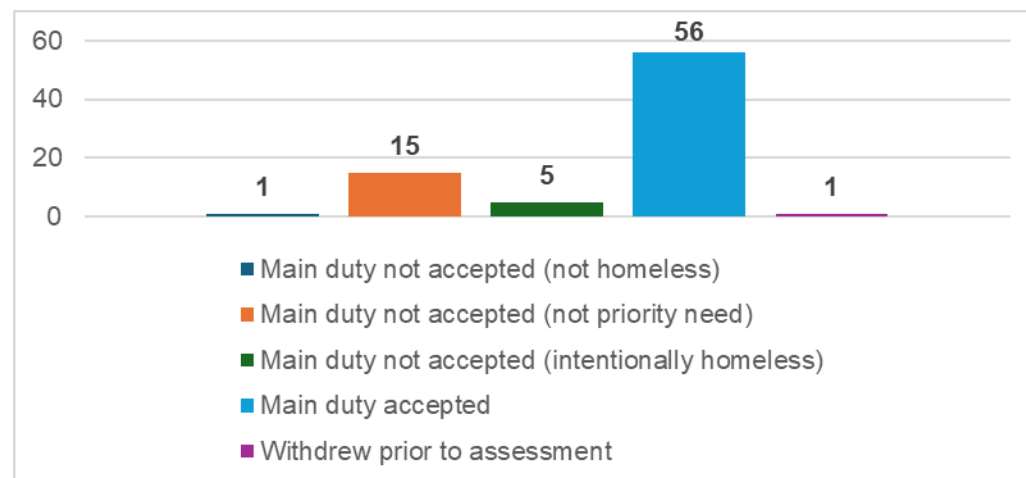
Outcomes of homelessness prevention duties:



Outcomes of homelessness relief duties:



Outcomes of homelessness main duty assessments:

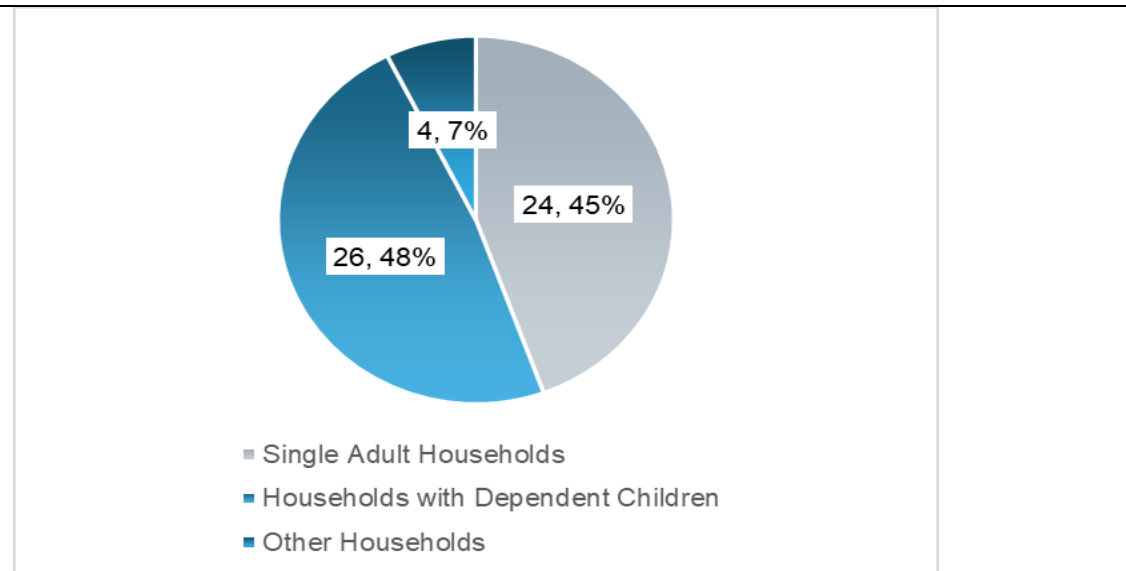


Where a local authority has accepted a main housing duty to an applicant, Section 193 accommodation duty arises. This requires the local authority to ensure that the applicant has access to suitable temporary accommodation until the applicant is rehoused and the Section 193 duty is discharged.

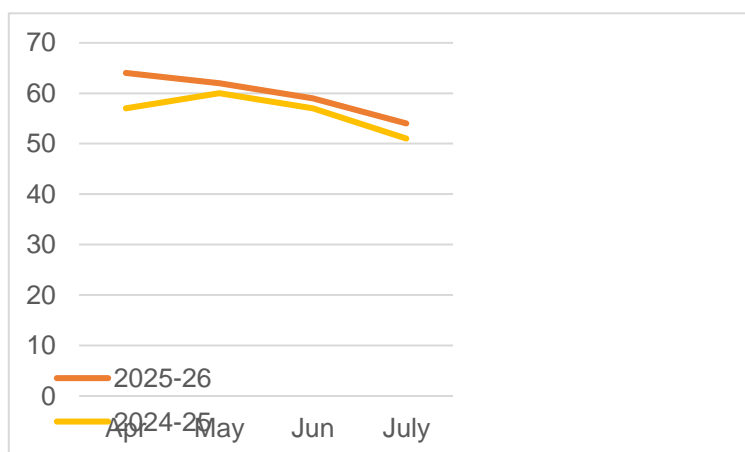
99% of main duties have been discharged with 91% households accepting an offer of social housing, 2% moving into private rented 3% returning home to family and contact being lost with 4% of applicants.

Temporary Accommodation

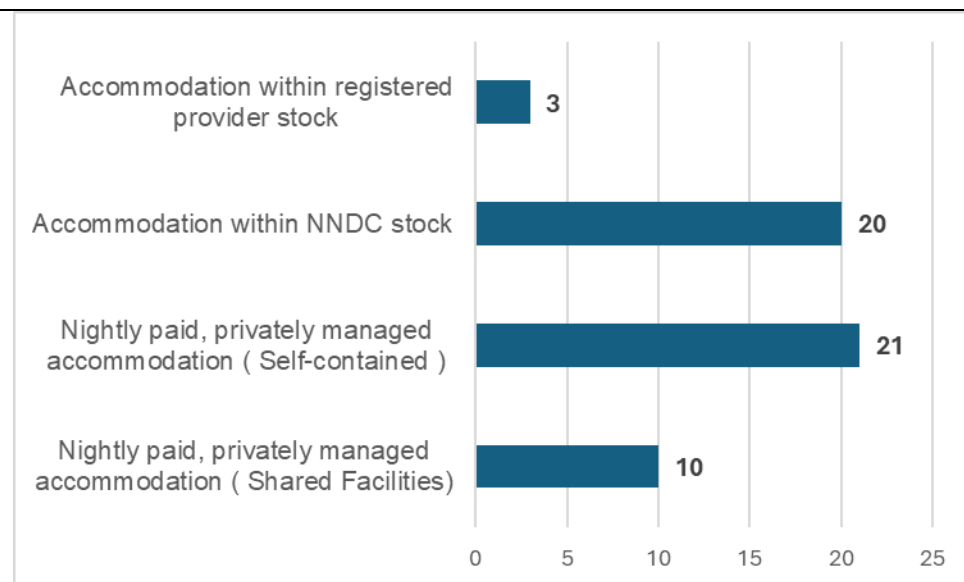
As at the 31 July 2025 there were 54 households in Temporary Accommodation. Included in the 32 Family Households there were 67 dependent children.



The table below looks at temporary accommodation numbers taken as a snapshot at the end of each month and provides a comparison with the previous year.



37% of households were in Temporary Accommodation owned by North Norfolk District Council, and there are currently no families with children in accommodation with shared facilities.



Rough Sleeping

During the month of July (at various points in time) seven people were reported/verified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk at the end of the month, five people remain sleeping rough in the district.

Housing Strategy

Temporary Accommodation

The Council now holds 28 units of Temporary or other homeless accommodation (including five units of move on accommodation for ex-rough sleepers). Value for money analysis of our in-house TA has concluded the homes do provide VFM, especially compared to expensive (and inferior) nightly paid accommodation. A refresh of this analysis is currently being undertaken for 2025/26

The demand for TA continues and we have recently been successful in our bid for government funding through Local Authority Housing Fund grant (£588k) which is helping us to purchase a further six units of homeless accommodation. Three of these homes have already been purchased (included in the 28 above) and are now in use. A further two homes (a 1-bed, and a 3-bed) should complete shortly. We aim to secure the remaining home in the next 2 months.

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 Sheringham (Westwood) the remaining 5 affordable homes have been completed. This brings the final total of 24 new affordable homes to the

development.

Flagship Housing Association have a current planning application for 9 affordable homes in Pudding Norton at Green Lane.

Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society continue to work in partnership with Broadland Housing Association to deliver 8 affordable homes, the planning application has now been submitted.

A rural exception housing site has been completed in Salthouse providing 5 affordable homes – the formal opening took place in late July.

In West Beckham, 10 affordable rented homes, built by Broadland Housing Association have been completed.

In Little Snoring, start on site is expected in September with the completion of 10 new affordable homes expected between autumn 2026 and spring 2027.

In Corpusty, planning permission has been granted where 8 new affordable homes will be delivered as part of the overall development.

In Holt, Lovells have delivered 9 of the first affordable homes on the Beresford Road site, with 13 homes to follow in the autumn. The remaining 16 affordable homes will be delivered in 2026.

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 ten early-stage sites.

Other

A training session for all Town & Parish councils, explaining how affordable housing is delivered, took place on 1st July 2025.

A briefing for all councillors on all aspects of housing, and the Council's roles and responsibilities, took place on 16th July 2025.

Social Prescribing

Early Help & Prevention

Work continues to progress to fully align the existing Financial Inclusion and Social Prescribing Services into one Early Help & Prevention Service.

Service mapping has taken place to identify duplication and opportunities for streamlining.

A new combined referral form is in development, providing a single referral document into a single referral point.

For the purpose of this report, the referrals into each service are being counted separately.

Social Prescribing

Referrals received into Social Prescribing = **78**

Number of issues identified = **186**

Referral sources have included GP surgeries, Children's Services, DWP, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, Housing Options Team, Community Outreach

YTD received into Social Prescribing = **222**

YTD number of issues identified – **475**

Key issues in respect of reason for referral included benefits/finance, housing conditions, mental health support and social isolation.

Complex referrals are presented to and discussed at the multi-agency Help Hub to get a more holistic view of the person being referred.

Other service news

Over the last few weeks, Financial Inclusion and Living Well Officers have visited Cromer, North Walsham and Fakenham Jobcentres to promote the Early Help and Prevention service and to raise awareness about the support that the service can provide to North Norfolk residents. This has helped us to build on our relationship with our local Jobcentres so that we can work together to support our shared customers.

We have seen an increase in referrals from the Jobcentres following these visits.

Social Prescribing Case Study

Mr A is a gentleman in his 80s, bereaved and living alone with 4 dogs. The property was hoarded with an overgrown garden, and there was evidence of self-neglect.

A referral into Financial Inclusion resulted in Council Tax relief being applied, and a review of finances revealed payments to unused services, which were cancelled, decreasing outgoings and improving Mr A's wellbeing as a result of the improved finances.

An Attendance Allowance application was also supported, which was successful. This further increased Mr A's Pension Credit entitlement, resulting in an increase of income by £157.58, thus assisting Mr A with funding some of the support needed to take care of his home.

Support was arranged to have the dogs groomed and checked over by a veterinarian.

Support was arranged to clear the garden improving access to the outside for both Mr A and his dogs.

Funding was sourced and obtained to support with decluttering the property. Work has commenced on this. Initial engagement was good, by Mr A has show some trepidation regarding the decluttering.

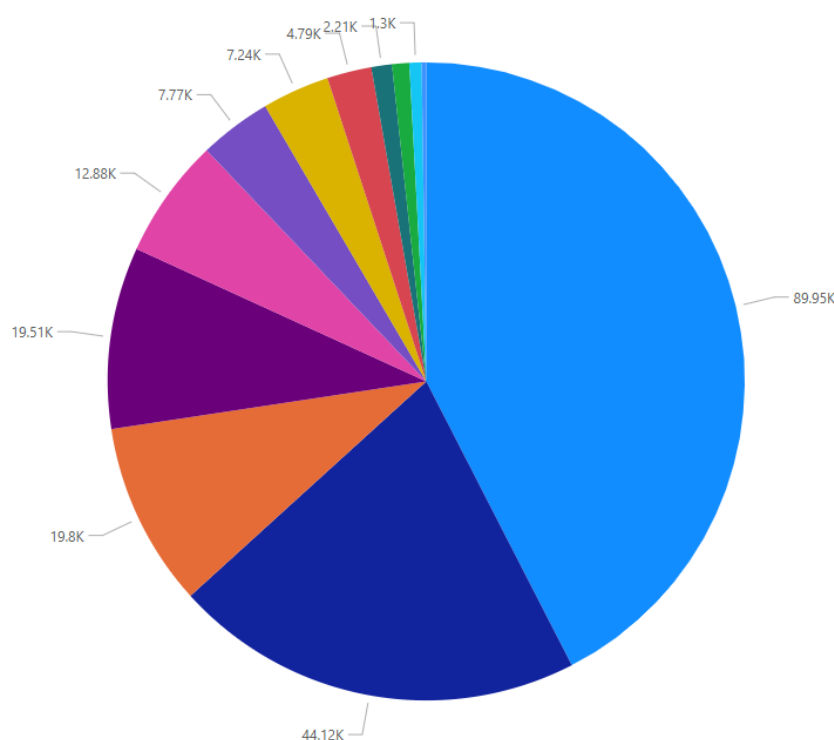
Next steps are for the Social Prescribing Officer to continue encouraging Mr A to engage with the decluttering process, and to assist in the sourcing of a personal assistant who would be able to offer ongoing support with admin and household management, as well as support for exercising the dogs.

Financial Inclusion

Referrals into Financial Inclusion = **83**

YTD referrals into Financial Inclusion = **308**

Annual income or lump sums obtained through Financial Inclusion support
YTD 2025/26



Support type

- Attendance Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Housing Benefit
- Pension Credit
- Council Tax Support/ Discount
- Universal Credit
- Carer's Allowance /Premium
- Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance
- Household Support Fund/ Discretionary Household Support Grant
- Edenred/Argos Voucher
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Energy Bank Voucher

The figures shown are annual increases in income. It includes ongoing weekly benefit awards as well as one-off payments through vouchers and grants

Support type	Annual income or lump sum award
Attendance Allowance	89,954.80
Carer's Allowance /Premium	7,238.40
Council Tax Support/ Discount	12,880.11
Discretionary Housing Payment	1,304.99
Edenred/Argos Voucher	1,850.00
Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance	4,786.60
Energy Bank Voucher	495.00
Household Support Fund/ Discretionary Household Support Grant	2,206.72
Housing Benefit	19,797.96
Pension Credit	19,506.24
Personal Independence Payment	44,122.00
Universal Credit	7,772.64
Total	211,915.46

Financial Inclusion Case Study

Miss B is a single woman in her early 20's who was referred to the service with over £25k of debt, no food and no energy. She has ongoing substance and alcohol misuse, and long-term medical issues. After a period in temporary accommodation and having fled Domestic Abuse, Miss B is living in a social housing starter tenancy. Maintaining this tenancy and preventing homelessness is a top priority for this case.

Working collaboratively with other services and agencies, the Financial Inclusion officer supported Miss B to make applications for Universal Credit, Council Tax Support and Personal Independence Payment. Miss B was also provided with supermarket vouchers to ensure access to food. A referral was also made to Citizen's Advice for support with arranging a debt relief order. The Financial Inclusion officer has supported Miss B to work with Citizen's Advice and has attended the Job Centre with her when dealing with her Universal Credit claim.

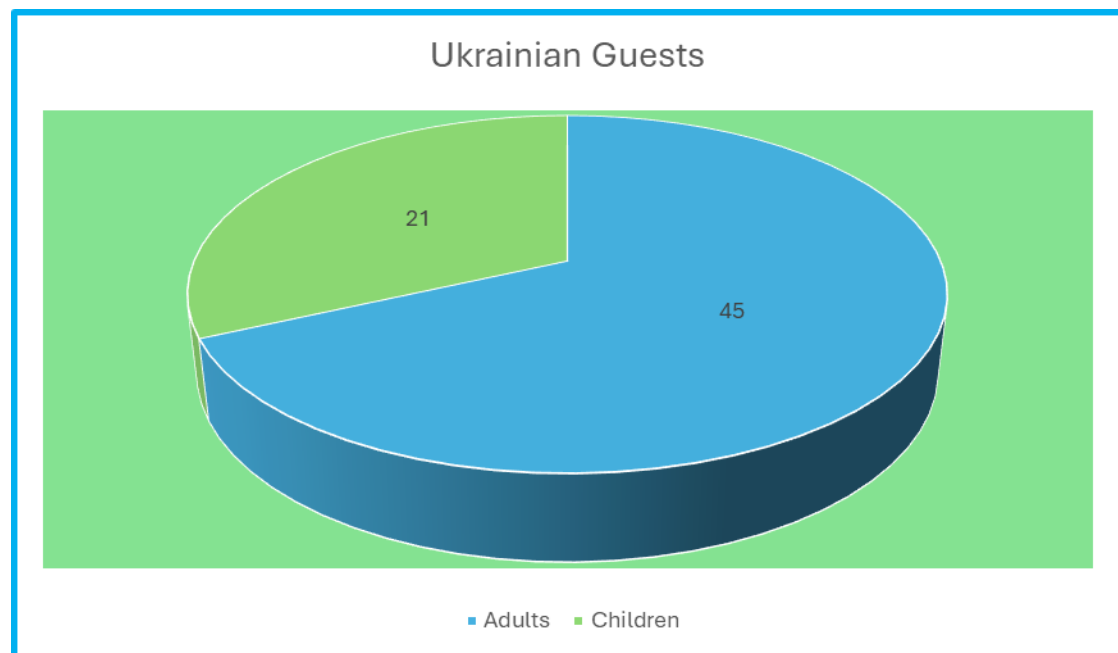
During the period of support, Miss B has experienced several hospital admissions, including one initiated by the Financial Inclusion officer contacting emergency medical support. This, along with her alcohol related behaviours, have caused barriers to support, however the Financial Inclusion officer has persisted with appropriate safeguards in place.

Grant funding has been obtained to clear outstanding rent arrears, and a managed payment arrangement has been set up, to ensure that the landlord is paid directly from her Universal Credit, thus safeguarding the tenancy and reducing the risk of homelessness.

To date, Miss B's weekly income has been increased by £304, and work continues to maximise income, and to complete the debt relief order.

Homes For Ukraine

There are currently 66 Ukrainian guests being supported in North Norfolk, of which 45 are adults and 21 are children.



During July, our Ukrainian Support Officer has been supporting guests and families with making applications for housing, setting up utility bills, supporting with finding employment and assisting with contacting several organisations required to bridge the language barrier.

In addition, she has supported hosts who have required assistance with obtaining DBS checks.

IHAT

The council has a statutory duty to provide financial assistance to those who qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to contribute towards adaptations to safely access their home and the facilities within it.

The funding is provided as a capital grant from government via the Better

Care Fund. The government allocation for DFGs for 2025/26 minus 15% staffing top slice and the addition of £400,000 Covid underspend is **£1,797,681**. Actual spend as of 31st July 2025 against the budget is **£312,880.15** in mandatory DFGs and **£23,281.02** in Discretionary Grants.

DFG assessment and recommendation snapshot year on year comparison is shown below.

Assessment Completed	2024	2025
April	5	12
May	7	10
June	6	13
July	15	15

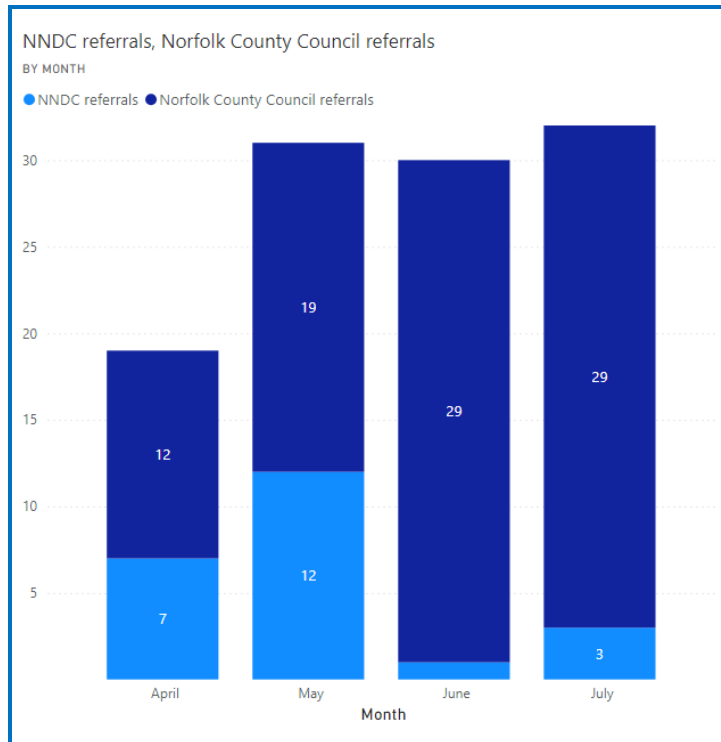
Recommendation Completed	2024	2025
April	12	16
May	7	16
June	5	13
July	26	14

A breakdown of the DFG outcomes and demands is shown below.

The number of completed Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) can vary month to month due to the complex and multi-stage nature of the process, which depends on factors such as contractor availability, supply chain delays, resident circumstances, and the time lag between approval and completion; a low number in any given month often reflects earlier delays or seasonal factors, rather than a lack of activity or progress. Additionally, a grant cannot be formally recorded as completed until the final invoice is received and processed, which can further delay reporting even when works have finished.

Graph 1: Number of referrals received

This illustrates most referrals for DFGs come via Norfolk County Council Social Services. In July we saw the highest total number of referrals since April.



Graph 2: Outcomes of applications

We are continuing to see a number of applications being withdrawn or cancelled. We will be analysing the reasons for this and to consider any preventative support.

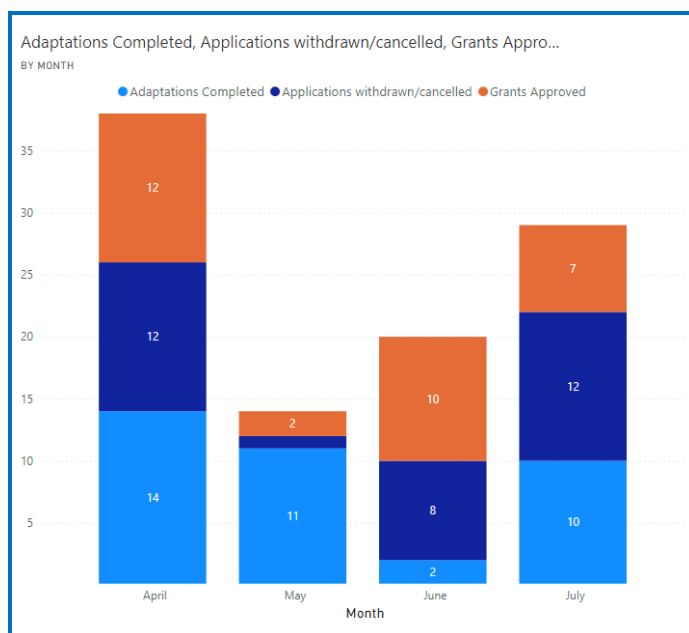


Table 1: Breakdown of DFG spend by amount

July saw our second highest amount of monthly expenditure since April. Most adaptations completed were valued between £5k - £15k.

Sum of Up to £5k, Sum of £5k to £15k, Sum of £15k to £30k, Sum of To...

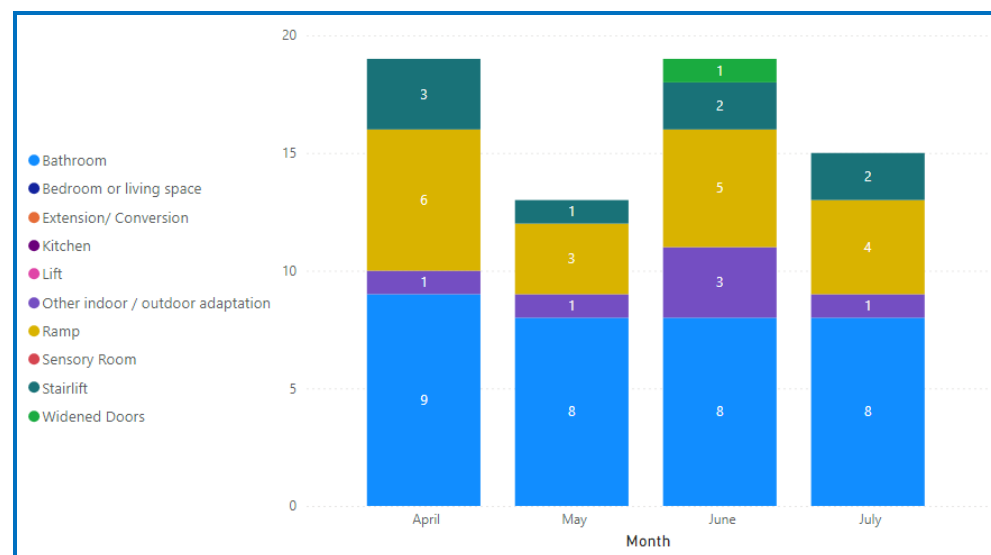
BY YEAR, MONTH

Year	Month	Sum of Up to £5k	Sum of £5k to £15k	Sum of £15k to £30k	Sum of Total expenditure
2025	April	9,740.00	87,368.84	51,243.36	148,352.20
2025	May	12,552.89	50,409.49	23,263.24	86,226.00
2025	June	9,834.00	20,525.00	0.00	30,359.00
2025	July	0.00	68,895.22	20,080.00	88,975.22
Total		32,126.89	227,198.55	94,586.60	353,912.42

A summary of how the funding has been used is shown below along with the demographics of clients.

Graph 3: Types of adaptations completed

Most works completed during July were for bathroom adaptations followed by ramps to improve access into and out of properties.

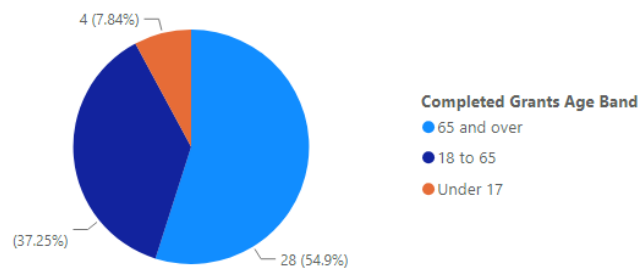


Graph 4: Accumulative demographics of households receiving grants in 2025/26

Most households who received an adaptation this year are 65 or over.

Accumulative Figure for Demographics

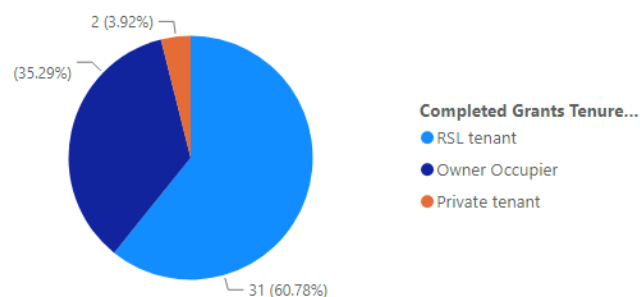
BY COMPLETED GRANTS AGE BAND



Most households who have received an adaptation this year live in a property rented from a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

Accumulative Figure for Demographics

BY COMPLETED GRANTS TENURE TYPE



Key service updates:

Disabled Facilities Grant – Government Consultation Update

The Government has launched a consultation on reforming the way DFG funding is allocated to local authorities in England. The current formula hasn't been updated since 2011 and no longer reflects present-day demand or costs.

The proposals aim to:

- Use up-to-date population and disability data.
- Recognise different needs and costs for adults and children.
- Factor in regional construction costs.
- Better align funding with local demand so more adaptations reach those who need them most.

The DFG supports eligible disabled people to adapt their homes – from stairlifts and ramps to level-access showers and extensions – helping them live independently and avoid unnecessary hospital stays or moves into care.

The consultation closes **16 September 2025**. Local authorities, health and social care partners, and other stakeholders are encouraged to respond.

Process review

The process mapping project is nearing the end and has been reviewed with the team, including discussion around best practice and better ways of working to improve the service provided by IHAT. Pinch points have been identified, those that can be executed in the current resource of staffing have been put into action or are in the process of being rolled out.

Collaborative working with Flagship

Registered Social Landlords have made up 61% of completed DFGs this year so far. Therefore, joined up working and a smoother transition between services is essential going forward. The first meeting with Flagship Housing Association in July proved successful with positive outcomes including fresh ideas for how we can provide a more joined up service. The meeting also included individual case discussion and problem solving. Importantly, case reflection to learn from previous cases and how to improve going forward.

Meetings

Ongoing monthly meetings have been accepted from both parties to support North Norfolk's Flagship tenants.

Ongoing IHAT weekly meetings to review and discuss DFG applications using the whole IHAT service expertise.

Six-weekly local delivery group meeting with partners of Norfolk County Council.

Ongoing meetings with architect, technical officers and OT for high-cost DFG projects and review of outstanding cases.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**3 Meetings attended**

Zedpods
RSN Affordable Housing Webinar
NN Apprenticeships and training
Emmaus
Homelessness Prevention Partnership
National Housing Federation Conference – Speaker
Reagit Training Visit
Overview and Scrutiny

Member Briefing on Housing
Group Briefing
Mundesley Parish Council Full Council
PH Catch ups
EEERG Steering Group
Norfolk County Council Funding Meeting