

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 2026

COUNCILLOR JILL BOYLE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 28th February 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Caseload (February)

During February, there were no significant changes to the caseload compared to the previous month. The reduction in Housing Benefit (HB) claims has eased following the migration of working age households to Universal Credit coming to an end.

The number of households receiving Council Tax Support (CTS) can fluctuate over time. The Council undertakes targeted take-up campaigns to encourage eligible households to apply, helping to maximise income and ensure that residents receive the financial support to which they are entitled.

Alongside this, targeted reviews are conducted to identify and correct instances of fraud and error within the system, which can result in the removal of ineligible claims. Additionally, natural changes in household circumstances can lead to some residents no longer qualifying for support.

Caseload data for the period is presented in the table below.

	January	February	Difference
Housing Benefit only	236	221	-15
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	1,954	1,959	+5
Council Tax Support	4,791	4,798	+7
Total number of cases	6,981	6,978	-3

Workloads and Speed of Processing (SOP) Times (February)

The table below illustrates the Council's processing times for February. The local target is **16 days** for processing new claims and **10 days** for processing changes in circumstances.

The service continues to prioritise changes that affect Housing Benefit to minimise overpayments. This approach helps to reduce the financial impact on customers, prevent potential losses in Housing Benefit subsidy, and avoid the need for costly recovery action.

In February, the team experienced a 30% decrease in the number of new claims received compared to the previous month and a 10% decrease in the number of changes in circumstances. Historic trends see reductions in the volume of work at this time of year, but workloads will then start to increase again as customers start to report changes to their income from 1st April 2026.

Change in circumstances speed of processing improved during February, whilst there were no significant changes in the speed of processing performance for new claims. Where performance is lower this has been primarily attributable to increased workloads and lower staffing levels.

	Number received in February	NNDC number of days to process (February)
New claims HB	133	5.70
New claims CTS		6.20
Changes in circumstances HB	8,453	3.00
Changes in circumstances CTS		19.80

Discretionary Housing Payments

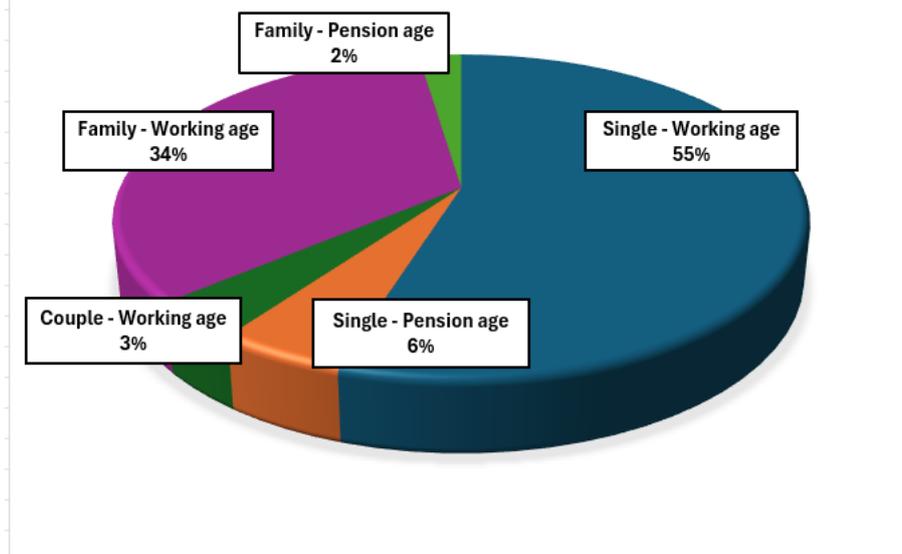
We continue to administer Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people to stay within the community.

For 2025/26, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037.00, and up to 28th February 2026 we have spent 95% of our allocation across 105 households. It is anticipated the full grant will be spent by the end of the financial year.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 105 households can be seen below.

Household Type	Number of Households paid	Expenditure across households
Single - Working age	55	£ 53,634.57
Single - Pension age	6	£ 4,963.93
Couple - Working age	5	£ 3,774.70
Couple - Pension age	0	£ -
Family - Working age	36	£ 33,057.41
Family - Pension age	3	£ 2,301.58
Totals	105	£ 97,732.19

TOTAL EXPENDITURE PER HOUSEHOLD TYPE



Payment Plan

The Benefits team have teamed up with PaymentPlan to provide residents with a more flexible way to pay Housing Benefit debt. PaymentPlan allows the customer to set their own payment plan through the PaymentPlan website or through an App. <https://www.paymentplan.co.uk/>

Housing Options and Homeless Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

The scheme contains a priority banding system to ensure that households who are eligible and qualify to join are placed on the housing register according to their housing need and complies with the reasonable preference categories outlined in s166A (3) Housing Act 1996, as inserted by s147(4) Localism Act 2011.

The band range from A-E with A being the highest priority, and band E reflects applicants who have limited need but are seeking specific housing, such as local lettings or age restricted properties.

The tables below reflect applicants who are eligible and qualify to join the register under the rules and details their priority (banding) and bedroom need (table 1). Table 2 details the homes that have been let during the month by property size and banding.

Table 1						
Housing List by Bedroom Need						
	PC	A	B	C	D	E
1 Bed	3	34	61	65	70	468
2 Bed	1	21	22	58	4	223
3 Bed		9	20	84	1	92
4 Bed		6	11	14		23
5 Bed +			1			2
Total	4	70	115	221	75	808

Housing Register Applicants as of 28 February 2026

Table 2					
Homes Let by Property size (Bedrooms)					
PC	A	B	C	D	E
	2	1			2
1	7	5	1		
	2	1			
1	11	7	1	0	2

Homes let 01 to 28 February 2026

Homes Let Year to Date

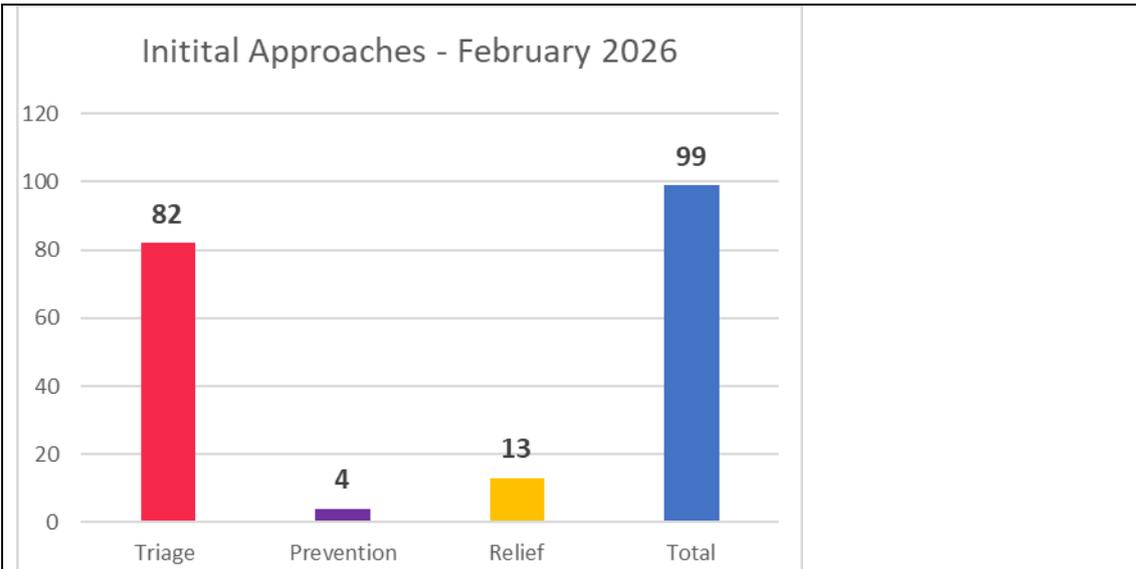
Between 1 April 2025 and 28 February 2026, 288 properties have been let (286 general needs, 2 shared ownership). Of which 36% were 1 bed, 45% were 2 beds, 17% were 3 beds, and 2% were 4 beds. 18% of properties had an age restriction, 8% had a local connection requirement and 20% of homes let were to households that were homeless or about to become homeless.

Households Assessed and Duty Owed

When a household become 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: 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.
3. Main duty

During the month of February 2026, we have opened 99 new cases with 19 households being assessed as owed a statutory duty to prevent (3) or relieve homelessness (16).



Assessment of approaches during February 2026

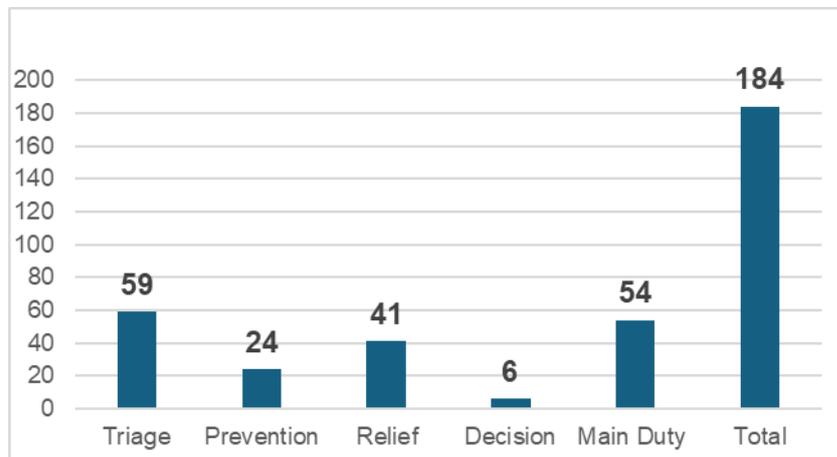
Causes of Homelessness

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

- End of private tenancy (AST) 29%
- Relationship breakdown 24%
- Domestic abuse 12%
- Family/friends now longer able to accommodate 12%

Open Cases

On the 28 February 2026 there were 184 open cases.



Open case status as of 28 February 2026

Outcomes of homelessness duties 01 April 2025 to 28 February 2026

Outcomes of homelessness prevention duties:

Of the 150 households whose prevention duty ended in the period (April 2025 to February 2026) 54% (81 households) secured (existing or alternative) accommodation for 6+ months and 31% (47 households) could not have their homelessness prevented. Other reasons why cases are closed included contact being lost and applicant withdrawing their application.

Outcomes of homelessness relief duties:

Of the 310 households whose relief duty ended in the period (April 2025 to February 2026) 20% (63 households) found secure accommodation and 65% (202 households) were still homeless. Other reasons why cases are closed included contact being lost, applicant withdrawing their application or becoming intentionally homeless from the temporary accommodation provided to them.

Outcomes of homelessness main duty assessments

If we have tried to help a household through the homeless prevention and relief stages but they are still homeless, we must make a final decision on their case. This is called issuing a statutory homeless or main duty decisions.

The help offered will depend on the decision that is made.

- **Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (main housing duty).** We will have a duty to find the household a permanent home. If we have already provided temporary accommodation, this will remain in place until we find a suitable home. If we have not already provided temporary accommodation, we will provide it if needed. We will not owe the main housing duty if someone has refused a suitable offer of accommodation that was made at relief duty, or we ended the relief duty because of someone's refusal to cooperate with us.
- **Eligible, in priority need but intentionally homeless.** We will not have a duty to find a permanent home. We will offer advice and assistance regarding finding accommodation.
- **Eligible, homeless but not in priority need.** We will not have a duty to find a permanent home. We will offer advice and assistance regarding finding accommodation.
- **Eligible but not homeless.** If we find that you are not homeless, no further assistance will be offered.

Where a relief duty ended between 01 April 2025 and 28 February 2026 the following decisions were made:

Homeless + priority need + unintentional	147
Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless	10
Homeless + no priority need	43
Not Homeless	2
Total	202

Ending a Main Housing Duty

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.

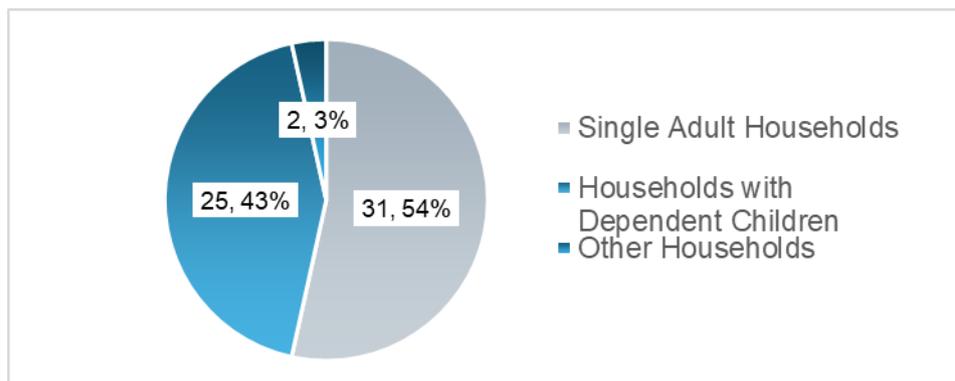
This duty can be brought to an end in the following ways:

- An offer of suitable accommodation is accepted (this could be an offer of private rented or social housing)
- A refusal of suitable accommodation
- A refusal of temporary accommodation
- The customer ceases to be eligible for housing assistance
- The customer becomes intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation provided to them
- The customer ceases to occupy any temporary accommodation that has been provided to them

Between 01 April 2025 and 28 February 2026, 139 main duty cases have been closed with 114 (82%) of applicants securing social housing, 8 (5%) securing private rented accommodation. Other reasons why applications are closed include applicant withdrawing their application, becoming intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation or refusing a suitable offer of social housing.

Temporary Accommodation

On the 28 February 2026 there were 58 households in Temporary Accommodation. Households with dependent children made up 43% of placements and included 59 dependent children.



Snapshot of Households in Temporary Accommodation 28 February 2026

The table below looks at households by temporary accommodation placement type. 38% of households were in temporary accommodation owned by North Norfolk District Council.

Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation (Shared facilities)	15
Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation (Self-contained)	17
Accommodation within NNDC stock	22
Accommodation within registered provider stock	4
Total	58

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.

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
2025-26	64	62	59	54	54	60	63	64	60	58	58
2024-25	57	60	57	51	52	53	61	60	60	65	67

Rough Sleeping

During the month of February (at various points in time) 8 people were reported/verified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk. At the end of the month, 6 people remain sleeping rough in the district.

[Housing Strategy](#)

Temporary Accommodation

The Council now holds 30 units of Temporary or other homeless accommodation (including five units of move on accommodation for ex-rough sleepers). The demand for TA continues and, with funding from Government's Local Authority Housing Fund grant (£588k) and Second Homes Council Tax Premium, we will purchase seven units of homeless accommodation in 2025/26. The LAHF was originally intended to deliver four homes, but we have increased this to seven through use of additional funding from Second Homes Council Tax. Five of these homes have already been purchased (included in the 30 above) and are now in use. Two further homes have been identified and purchases should complete shortly.

We await confirmation from MHCLG of the level of LAHF grant we will receive for 2026/27. The grant will enable us to purchase at least 4, but hopefully if we receive the higher grant award, 6 further homes for TA.

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 twenty developments which are on site, have planning approval or are at an advanced planning application stage. These sites will deliver more than 650 new affordable homes. There are a further 12 earlier stage projects where we are expecting planning applications or have available land which is being explored for development – and project the delivery of over 200 new affordable homes on these sites.

Current schemes include the following:

- An innovative development is in early stages in Mundesley, with collaboration between NNDC, Flagship Housing Association and Mundesley Bowls Club, to create an all-affordable housing development in the centre of the village with approximately 11 new homes.
- Flagship housing Association have submitted a planning application for 9 affordable homes in Pudding Norton at Green Lane.
- Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society continues to work in partnership with Broadland Housing Association to deliver 8 affordable homes. The planning application has now been submitted and is expected to be determined soon.
- In Walcott, 23 new affordable homes are in the last stages of building work, with properties currently being advertised and allocated to successful new tenants. The site will be fully complete in early March.
- In Bacton, 47 new affordable homes are in an advanced build stage, 19 of which are for sale as Shared Ownership. These are currently being marketed with overall site completion expected in May 2026.
- In North Walsham, planning permission has been fully approved to build 54 affordable homes on the former sports ground on Station Road, also known as Paston Field. It is hoped that building will commence in the summer.
- Building of the 61 extra care apartments in Stalham is progressing well and we expect a start on site soon for the 34 affordable homes on the adjoining land.
- Swanton Novers – Community Land Trust project is progressing well with expected completion of 7 new rented homes in late Spring.
- In Wiveton, local residents and Parish Councillors met with Broadland Housing Association, to view a proposed site in the village and discuss the possible option of an exception housing site for local people.

71 new affordable homes have completed so far this year, and we expect a total of 94 new affordable homes to complete in 2025/26.

Other Issues

Option agreements with Flagship or Broadland Housing Association are being drafted by Eastlaw for Highfield Road in Fakenham, land behind

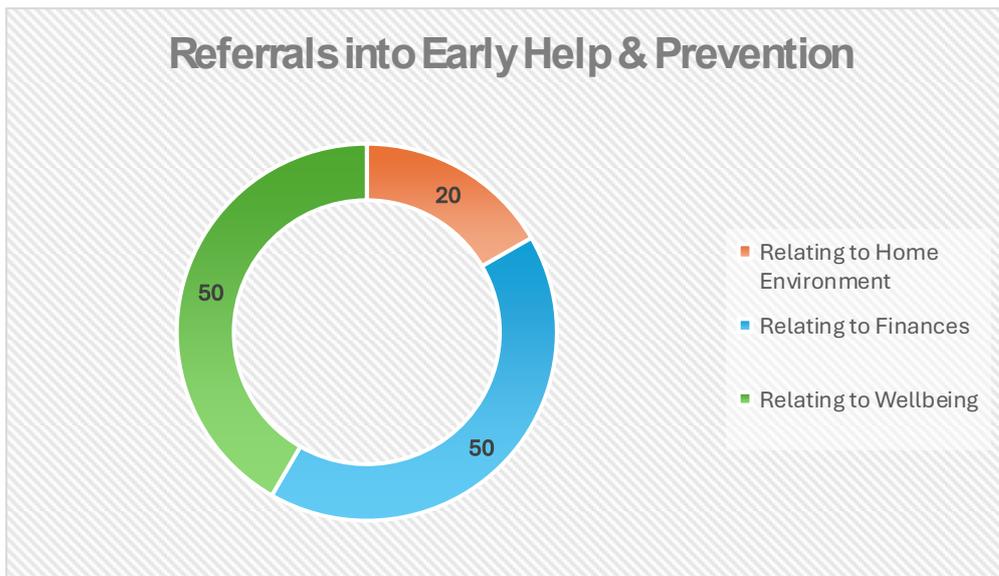
Mundesley Bowls Club and adjacent to the existing exception housing scheme in Edgefield.

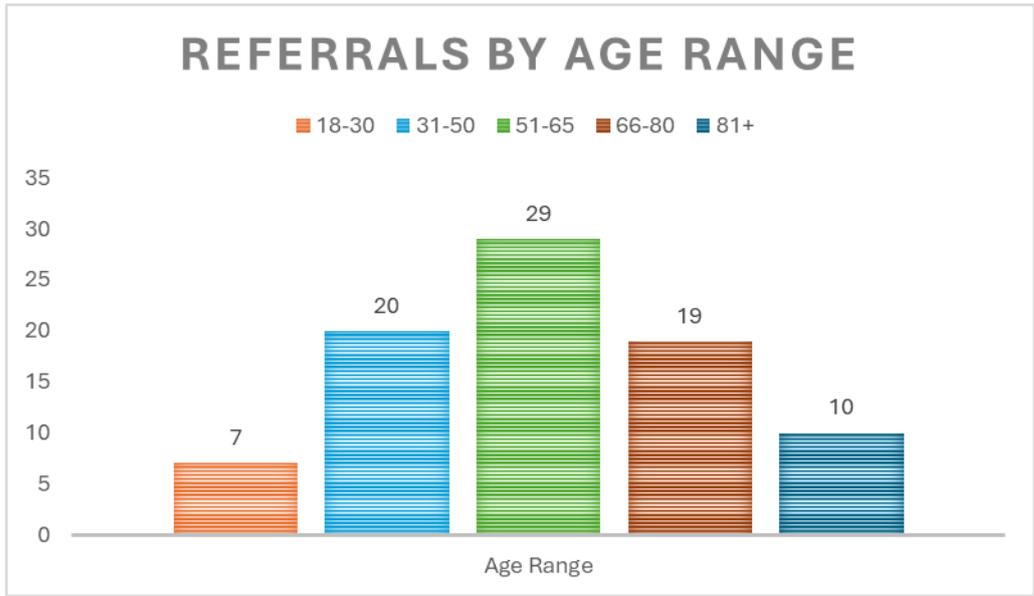
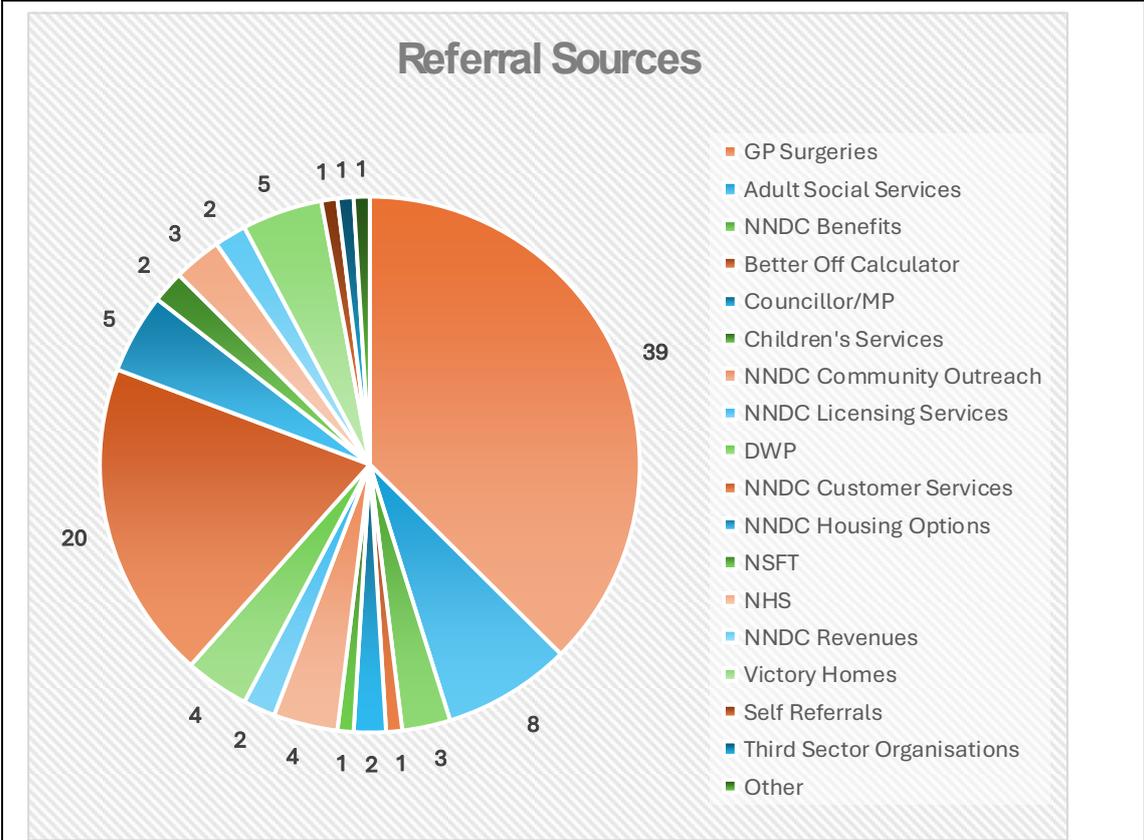
We have received a response from Flagship Housing Association after raising concerns about the number of homes they are disposing of – there are now 48 homes where disposal has taken place or has been agreed this financial year already. A meeting is now being arranged.

Social Prescribing

Early Help and Prevention

TOTAL REFERRALS RECEIVED: 104





Social Prescribing Case Study

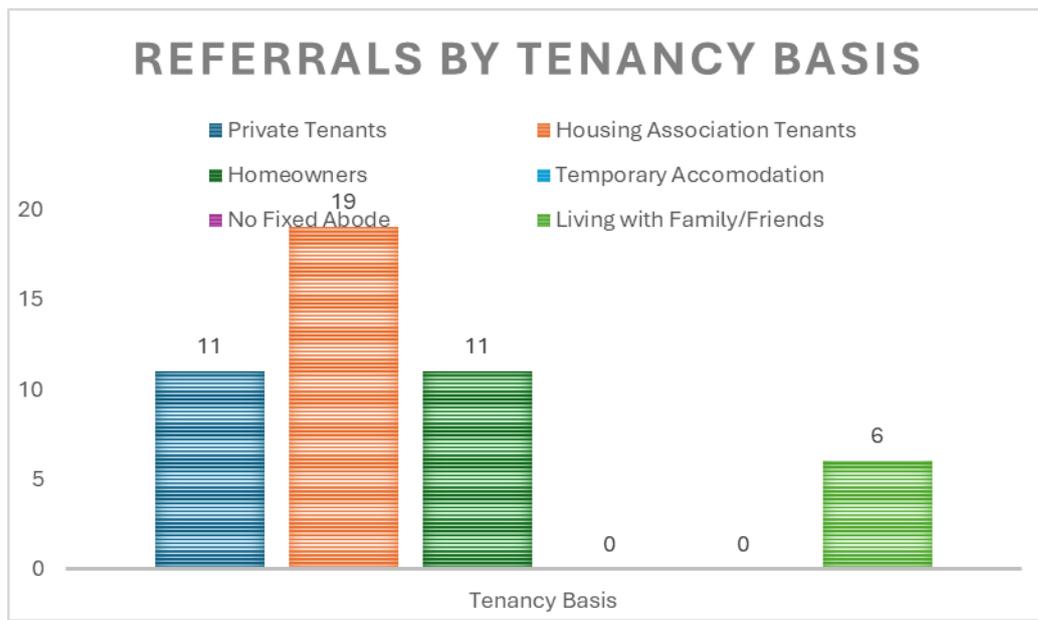
Mrs F is retirement age and has become very isolated. She was rarely leaving her property in recent months due to losing her confidence with new road layouts into town for her to negotiate with her mobility scooter. Mrs F is living in a 1-bedroom property. Her daughter has been sofa sleeping on her sofa, this has impacted Mrs F's mental health as she felt that she never had space for herself. Mrs F is unable to walk without a

frame and is having carers in each day to assist with personal care.

Mrs F loves being in her garden, but sadly this has become overgrown and inaccessible, which has also had an impact on her low mood.

The Social Prescriber has worked with Mrs F on building her confidence. She has connected her with a local good neighbour scheme who will be assisting her with accessing town and social opportunities. The good neighbours will also assist with getting the garden back to a manageable state so that Mrs F can access it safely and enjoy her space again.

A Social Prescriber continues to work with Mrs F's daughter to assist with finding her own accommodation, which will benefit not only Mrs F's daughter, but Mrs F herself, by returning her private space.



Number of Referrals
where children live in the
home:

12

Food Support:

Foodbank Vouchers

Issued: 21

Supermarket Vouchers

Issued: 11

Energy Bank:

Referrals Made/Support

Provided: 6

During the last 3 months, members of the team have been attending events in the community. The events attended have been Toasty Toes at North

Walsham and Cromer Library, North Norfolk Foodbank Core in Mundesley, PositiviTea at Fakenham Market and Healthier Aldborough.

At these events the team have been able to meet members of the public, provide them with advice and raise awareness of our team and the support that we can offer. The team have also been able to network with other services attending the events, finding out more about what they do and what is available to our customers and promoting our service to them.

Homes For Ukraine

There are currently forty-eight Ukrainian guests being supported in North Norfolk, of which thirty-two are adults and sixteen are under the age of eighteen. These guests are accommodated by over 21 host arrangements.



During February, our Ukrainian Support Officer has been supporting guests and families with making application for visa extension, council tax support and tenancy support.

Our Ukrainian Support Officer continues to complete initial and review welfare visits, helping with applying for visa extension permission scheme, housing applications, council tax support application, tenancy support, etc. In addition, the officer also investigates potential visa fraud cases as provided by NCC.

In cases of breakdown in relationship between hosts and guests, the officer liaises with both sides to make sure that the process of relocating guests is done in a timely and coordinated manner.

The Government announced that Ukrainian Permission Extension Scheme will be extended by a further 24 months. This means eligible Ukrainians and their family members will be able to remain in the UK for up to a maximum of three and a half years under the Ukrainian Permission Extension Scheme, in addition to time already granted under earlier Ukraine visa routes.

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 which help them to safely access their home and the facilities within it.

The funding is provided as a capital grant from the government via the Better Care Fund. Total budget made available for DFG Adaptations & Discretionary grants for 2025/26 is **£1,828,729**. An additional £118,000 has also been made available for the 2025/26 financial year.

The actual spend to date, including partially completed adaptations against the budget is **£1,075,860.99** in mandatory DFG's and **£104,516.34** in Discretionary Grants. A total of **£787,298.38** is outstanding in approved grants and committed funding to date for an additional 62 mandatory DFG approved grant applications (Not inc. Discretionary grants)

Discretionary grants breakdown to date:

Grant Type	Total
Minor Adaptations	34
Architects fees	24
Forget me not	2
Top up	3
Fast track	2
Contribution	1
Home repairs	6
TOTAL	72

A breakdown of the DFG outcomes.

103 Adaptations have been completed to date for 2025-2026. A breakdown of the distribution of characteristics is shown below.

Age distribution

Age	Total	% of cases
>17 YEARS	5	4.9%
18-65 YEARS	37	35.9%
66+ YEARS	61	59.2%
Total	103	100.0%

Tenure

Tenure	Completed cases	Total spend
RSL	64	£547,624.71
OO	33	£279,940.19
PR	6	£60,630.81
OTHER	0	0.00

Types of adaptations completed

ADAPTATION TYPE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Bathroom	67	47.5%
Sensory room	0	0.0%
Ramp	35	24.8%
Stairlift	18	12.8%
Bedroom or living room	1	0.7%
Indoor/outdoor adaptation	16	11.3%
extension/conversion	0	0.0%
Lift	0	0.0%
Widened doors	1	0.7%
Kitchen	3	2.1%
TOTAL	141	100.0%

Referral route – completed adaptations

Organisation	Total
Social services	60
NNDC	40
Community health	2
OTHER	1

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

Cllr Boyle attended the following meetings:

Accommodation Forum HM Prison & Probation service
Cabinet
Full Council
Habiteg Housing: Homes for everyone
LGE: A National Plan to end homelessness
Portfolio Holder Meetings
Licensing Training
Vodafone/Three Mobile Connectivity
Bromford/Flagship disposal discussion
Cromer Neighbourhood Police Meeting
Town of Culture bid meeting with Sheringham
Building Cohesive Communities, Elected Members
Carer's Voice Norfolk & Waveney Partnership