CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

June 2026

COUNCILLOR JILL BOYLE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 30th June 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support

Caseload (Q1/2026)

At the end of Q1/2026, 6,950 households were receiving Housing Benefit (HB) and/or Council Tax Support (CTS), of which 53.3% were working age.

In 2025/26 the service had seen a reduction in the number of Housing Benefit claimants following the completion of the migration of working age households to Universal Credit. The migration process has now ended and claimants transferred to Universal Credit.

The number of households receiving Council Tax Support can fluctuate due to natural changes to household circumstances and local workstreams such as targeted take-up campaigns which are periodically run by the team to encourage eligible residents to claim missed entitlement. These campaigns help maximise household income and ensure that residents receive the financial support available to them.

Performance – Speed of Processing (SOP) times (Q1/2026)

The local target is **16 days** for processing new claims and **10 days** for processing changes in circumstances. The council was within both targets for Q1/2026 as illustrated below.

	Number received in April to June	NNDC number of days to process April to June
New claims HB	441	5.3
New claims CTS		5.6
Changes in circumstances HB	29,793	8.8
Changes in circumstances CTS		8.6

Pension Credit take-up campaign

Using the LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) Dashboard, 73 households were identified that may be eligible to claim Pension Credit. Letters have been sent explaining how to check eligibility and make a claim. Residents are encouraged to contact the Benefits Team if they require support or assistance with the application process.

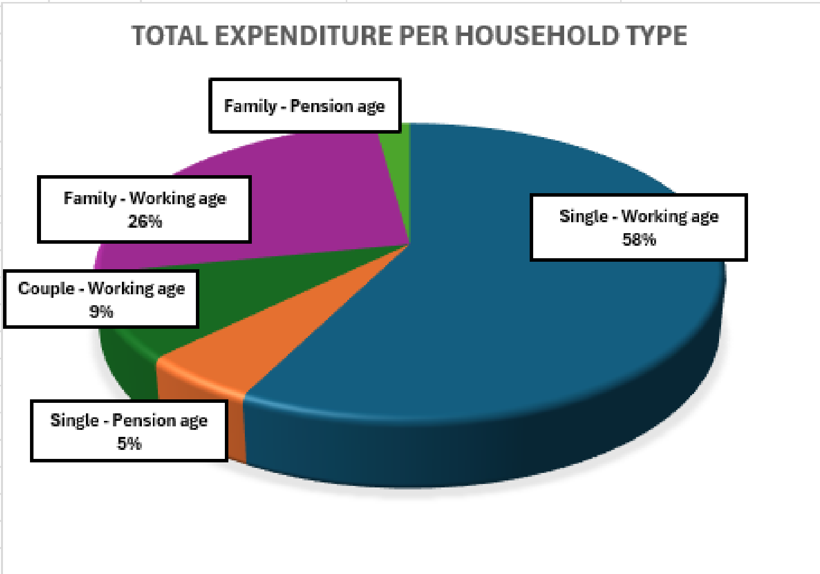
DWP Crisis and Resilience Fund – Housing Payments

We have continued to administer the DWP Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payments (formerly known as Discretionary Housing Payments) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people staying within the community.

For 2025/26, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037.00. Since 1st April 2026, we have seen an increase in the number of eligible applications being processed compared to the same position in 2025, with 62% of the fund being spent across 61 households in Q1/2026 so far. The team are currently analysing what is attributing to the rise in eligible applications.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 61 households can be seen below.

Household Type	Number of Households paid	Expenditure across households
Single - Working age	31	£ 36,690.30
Single - Pension age	4	£ 3,342.40
Couple - Working age	7	£ 5,865.59
Couple - Pension age	0	£ -
Family - Working age	18	£ 16,572.13
Family - Pension age	1	£ 1,348.74
Totals	**61**	**£ 63,819.16**



Housing Benefit overpayment recovery

The Council continues to maintain strong Housing Benefit debt recovery performance whilst managing a significant legacy debt portfolio following the transition to Universal Credit. During 2025/26:

- Outstanding debt across all systems totalled £880,312.
- £324,809 Housing Benefit debt was recovered.
- Recovery performance of Housing Benefit debt remained above 31%.
- Write-offs for Housing Benefit debt totalled £36,941 and remain fully covered by the Council's bad debt provision.
- Benchmarking indicates that North Norfolk remains one of the stronger performing authorities in Norfolk for Housing Benefit overpayment recovery.

Regulation changes to support vulnerable residents into work

Residents living in supported housing and temporary accommodation have historically experienced a disproportionate loss of income when increasing their working hours. As a result, the financial benefits of working more hours have often been limited, reducing incentives to enter or progress in employment.

To address this, the Housing Benefit (Earned Income Disregard) Regulations 2026 have been amended to introduce 5 new additional earned income disregards. This was laid before Parliament on 6 July 2026 and will come into force on 5 October 2026.

These amendments apply to working age customers only and no changes are made to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006.

The changes are designed to strengthen work incentives and ensure that taking on more hours or increasing earnings leaves claimants better off overall.

Changes to customers' Housing Benefit claims will be implemented automatically prior to 5 October 2026 and will not require any action from the customer.

Housing Options and Homeless Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

The Housing Allocation Scheme applies a priority banding system to ensure eligible households who qualify for the housing register are prioritised according to assessed housing need. The scheme complies with the reasonable preference categories set out in section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996, as inserted by section 147(4) of Localism Act 2011.

The table below sets out the number of eligible applicants who qualify for the housing register, by priority band and bedroom need. Bands range from A to E, with Band A representing the highest priority. Band E includes applicants with limited housing need who are seeking specific housing options, such as local lettings or age-restricted properties.

The allocations process is working well with Band A (mainly homeless) securing housing. The revised scheme is being reviewed which may potentially create some additional categories under the bandings.

	PC	A	B	C	D	E	Total
1 Bed	1	41	84	62	82	469	739
2 Bed	1	18	30	67	1	218	335
3 Bed	0	11	23	91	1	95	221
4 Bed	0	10	11	19	0	23	60
5 Bed +	0	0	3	0	0	3	6
Total	**2**	**80**	**151**	**239**	**84**	**805**	**1361**

Housing Register Applicants as of 30 June 2026

Homes Let

Between 01 April and 30 June 2026, 61 properties were let:

	PC	A	B	C	D	E	Total
1 Bed	1	16	2			1	20
2 Bed		18	14	2		3	37
3 Bed		3					3
4 Bed			1				1
Total	**1**	**37**	**17**	**2**		**4**	**61**

Homes let between 01 April and 30 June 2026

Age Restricted Properties

Some properties have a minimum age requirement; for example, some are only available to applicants aged 55 and over. This applied to 11 properties let between 01 April and 30 June 2026, representing 18% of all lets during this period.

Local Letting Agreements

Local letting agreements supplement the general housing allocations scheme and apply to properties developed to meet identified local housing needs within a parish. Where local lettings criteria apply, preference is given to the applicant with the strongest local connection to that parish and adjoining parishes. This applied to 3 properties let between 01 April and 30 June 2026, representing 5% of all lets and 75% of properties let to applicants in Band E, which reflects low housing need.

Households Assessed and Duties Owed

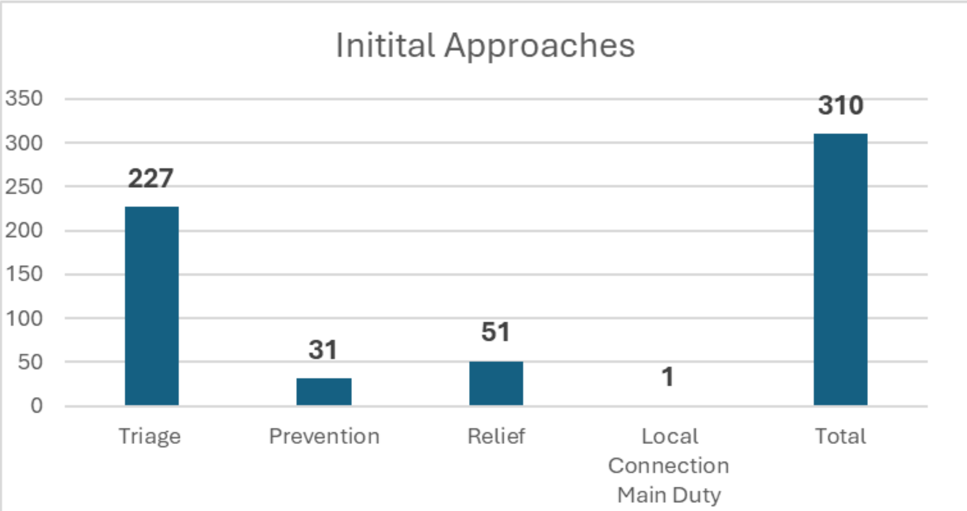
When a household becomes homeless, or is at risk of homelessness, the local authority may owe them a statutory duty. There are three main types of homelessness duty:

1. Prevention duty: local authorities owe this duty to help households at risk of homelessness to retain their existing accommodation or secure alternative accommodation before they become homeless.

2. Relief duty: where a household is already homeless, the local authority owes this duty to take reasonable steps to help them secure suitable accommodation.

3. Main housing duty: if the relief duty ends and the applicant is eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless, the council owes a main duty to secure suitable accommodation.

Demand for the service remained high during the quarter, with 310 new cases opened between 01 April and 30 June 2026.



Initial approaches between 01 April and 30 June 2026.

Statutory Homelessness

Of the 310 approaches received between 01 April and 30 June 2026, 83 households (27%) were initially assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Of the households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, 52% were female applicants and 48% were male applicants.

Families with children accounted for 25% of households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, with 30 children included in homelessness applications received during the period.

Prevention Duty

Thirty-one households were assessed as being threatened with homelessness and were therefore owed a prevention duty.

Relief Duty

Fifty-one households were assessed as homeless and were therefore owed a relief duty.

Primary Causes of Homelessness

The most common causes of homelessness or threatened homelessness during quarter one were:

- **End of private rented tenancy: 31%**
  Phase one of the Renters' Rights Act came into force on 01 May 2026. It abolished Section 21 "no-fault" evictions, converted all private assured shorthold tenancies into periodic rolling contracts, and banned rental bidding. Landlords must now have a valid legal ground for possession and can no longer restrict renters with children or those receiving benefits. The majority of these cases pre-date 01 May 2026.

- **Family or friends no longer able to accommodate: 28%**

- **Domestic abuse: 17%**

<u>Outcomes of homelessness duties: 01 to 30 June 2026</u>

Outcomes of prevention duties

Of the 36 households whose prevention duty ended during the period, 17 secured existing or alternative accommodation for six months or more, while homelessness could not be prevented for 15 households. The remaining case closures were due to applicants either withdrawing their application or losing contact with the service.

Outcomes of relief duties

Of the 64 households whose relief duty ended during the period, 9 secured accommodation and 43 remained homeless. The remaining case closures were due to applicants withdrawing their application, losing contact with the service, refusing suitable offer of accommodation or becoming intentionally homeless from accommodation provided.

Outcomes of main housing duty assessments

Where homelessness has not been resolved through the prevention or relief stages, the council is required to make a final decision on the application. This is known as issuing a statutory homelessness, or main housing duty, decision.

The support available will depend on the outcome of that decision.

- **Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (main housing duty)**
  The council will have a duty to secure suitable settled accommodation.

Where temporary accommodation has already been provided, it will remain in place until a suitable home is found. If temporary accommodation has not already been provided, it will be arranged where required. The main housing duty will not be owed where an applicant has refused a suitable offer made during the relief duty, or where the relief duty ended because the applicant refused to co-operate with the council.

- **Eligible, in priority need but intentionally homeless**
  The council will not have a duty to secure settled accommodation. Advice and assistance will be provided to help the household find alternative accommodation.

- **Eligible, homeless but not in priority need**
  The council will not have a duty to secure settled accommodation. Advice and assistance will be provided to help the household find alternative accommodation.

- **Eligible but not homeless**
  If the council determines that an applicant is not homeless, no further homelessness assistance will be owed.

The following decisions were made between 01 April and 30 June 2026:

Homeless + priority need + unintentional (s193(2) duty)	32
Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless	1
Homeless + no priority need	11
Total	**45**

Ending a main housing duty

Where a local authority has accepted a main housing duty, the section 193 accommodation duty applies. This requires the authority to ensure the applicant has access to suitable temporary accommodation until they are rehoused and the section 193 duty is discharged.

The duty may be ended in the following circumstances:

- An offer of suitable accommodation is accepted, including an offer of private rented or social housing
- An offer of suitable accommodation is refused
- Suitable temporary accommodation is refused
- The customer ceases to be eligible for housing assistance
- The customer becomes intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation provided
- The customer ceases to occupy the temporary accommodation provided

Between 01 April and 30 June 2026, 34 main duty cases were closed. Of those, 32 applicants secured social housing and 1 applicant secured private rented accommodation. The remaining case was closed because the applicant withdrew their application.

Temporary Accommodation

During the quarter, 53 new temporary accommodation placements were made for 44 households. Deman for new placements arose from newly presenting or accepted homeless households, as well as households requiring a move between temporary accommodation placements.

The following tables provide a breakdown of temporary accommodation placements as of 30 June 2026.

Placements by Accommodation Type:	
Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation (Shared Facilities)	17
Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation (Self-contained)	21
Accommodation within NNDC stock	24
Accommodation within registered provider stock	3
Total	65

Placements by Household Type:	
Single Adult	32
Couple	1
Family - Dependent Children	31
Family – Non-Dependent Children	1
Total	65

The table below shows temporary accommodation household numbers as a month-end snapshot and provides a comparison with the previous year.

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2026-27	54	58	65									
2025-26	64	62	59	54	54	60	63	64	60	58	58	63

Rough Sleeping

During June, 11 people were recorded as sleeping rough in North Norfolk at various points during the month. At the end, 8 people remained sleeping rough.

These figures reflect a seasonal increase that is not uncommon during the summer months. Warmer weather can reduce some of the immediate barriers to sleeping outdoors, and the district may also experience an increase in transient stays. Extreme weather can create additional risks for people already experiencing difficult circumstances, and community outreach officers continue to provide practical support, advice and guidance to help people stay safe.

Renters Rights Act 2026

The Housing Options team have not seen any real impact due to Renters' Rights Act so far, there has been a recent increase in presentations due to Domestic Abuse, a rise in numbers in TA (63, including 5x ex-rough sleepers in our move on units).

Housing Strategy

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

Officers are working on a draft strategy based on the outcomes of the review completed last year and against the Government's National Strategy to end homelessness.

The draft strategy will be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny committee in September.

Supported Housing Strategy

A procurement exercise is currently underway to appoint a consultant on behalf of the seven Norfolk district and borough councils. The consultant will work closely with stakeholders, providers, and residents to assess the current and future supply and demand for supported accommodation across the county. The resulting needs assessment will inform the development of a draft Supported Accommodation Strategy, ensuring Norfolk is well positioned to respond to the new regulatory requirements due to come into effect from April 2027.

Temporary Accommodation (TA) & the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)

A project group has been established to deliver a corporate review of the authorities Temporary Accommodation portfolio evaluating its policies, processes, and best practice to ensure that services are efficient, resident focused, and capable of meeting increasing demand, while improving outcomes for households experiencing homelessness and reducing organisational risk.

Using funding secured through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), the Council has submitted offers on four properties and expects a further property to complete in July. The Council has also identified a further five properties for consideration once the current acquisitions have been completed.

Second Homes Council Tax

A report has been drafted for consideration at the July Cabinet meeting, setting out proposals for the use of the 2026/27 Council Tax premium revenue generated from second homes (£914k to support TA purchase,

£580k for grant for new affordable homes).

Planning

No new major applications in, a couple of small schemes that might work as rural exceptions sites.

Reviewing the viability of a 30 home Broadland Housing scheme in Roughton – not s106 affordable but hoping for grant to convert some to affordable.

Meeting with Planning, BHA and Homes For Wells to understand if scheme at Two Furlong Hill is likely to go ahead

Other / AOB

Shared ownership scheme homes at Bacton – as agreed staircasing cap now removed and principle residence requirement put in place, 10 buyers now secured.

Affordable Housing Pipeline

On site:

- Beresford Road Holt – Lovells s106 homes plus some additional grant funding being bought by Flagship – 44 properties.
- Swanton Novers CLT 7 properties with Broadland Housing Association (complete).
- Bacton exception & allocated site 47 Flagship Housing properties.
- Norfolk Homes Cley Road Holt 12 s106 homes plus 3 to Holt Housing.
- Stalham extra care 61 flats Medcentres/H21.
- Stalham Yarmouth Road 34 Flagship Housing Properties.
- Little Snoring exception site 10 properties through Broadland Housing Association.
- Norwich Road North Walsham – Hopkins s106 53 homes.

With planning start on site expected:

- North Walsham Station Road 54 homes through Flagship Housing Association.
- Corpusty - 8 Broadland Housing Association properties (plus possibility of more grant funding)
- Overstand Road Cromer s106 53 homes.

- Mill Road Weeks Holkham – 21 Broadland Housing Association & H4W

- Fakenham Trinity Site – 100+ awaiting buyer.

In planning:

- Ludham exception scheme – 26

- Roughton Broadland Housing Association - 30 (no viability for affordable but grant will be sought)

- Pine Tree Farm, Cromer up to 35% AH

- Mundesley Road, North Walsham 15% AH

- Langham Road Blakeney 35% AH

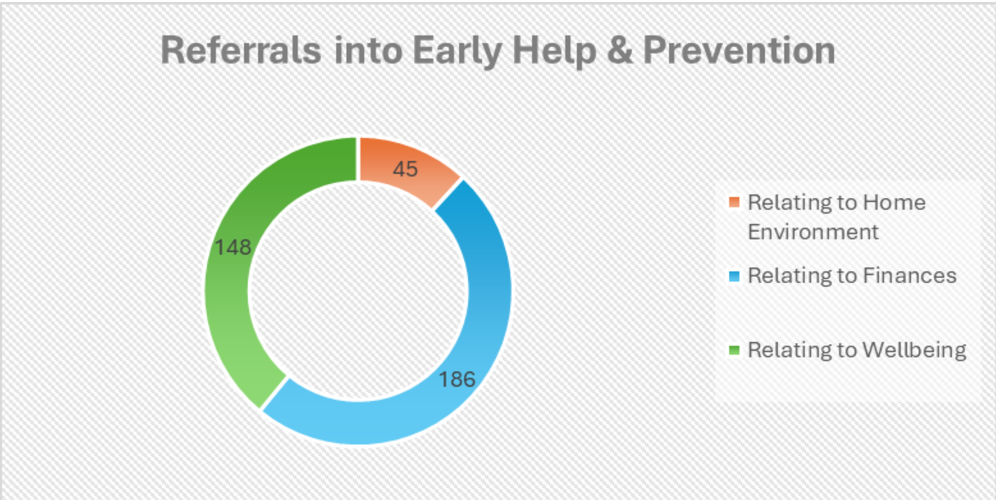
- Valley Lane Holt 35% AH

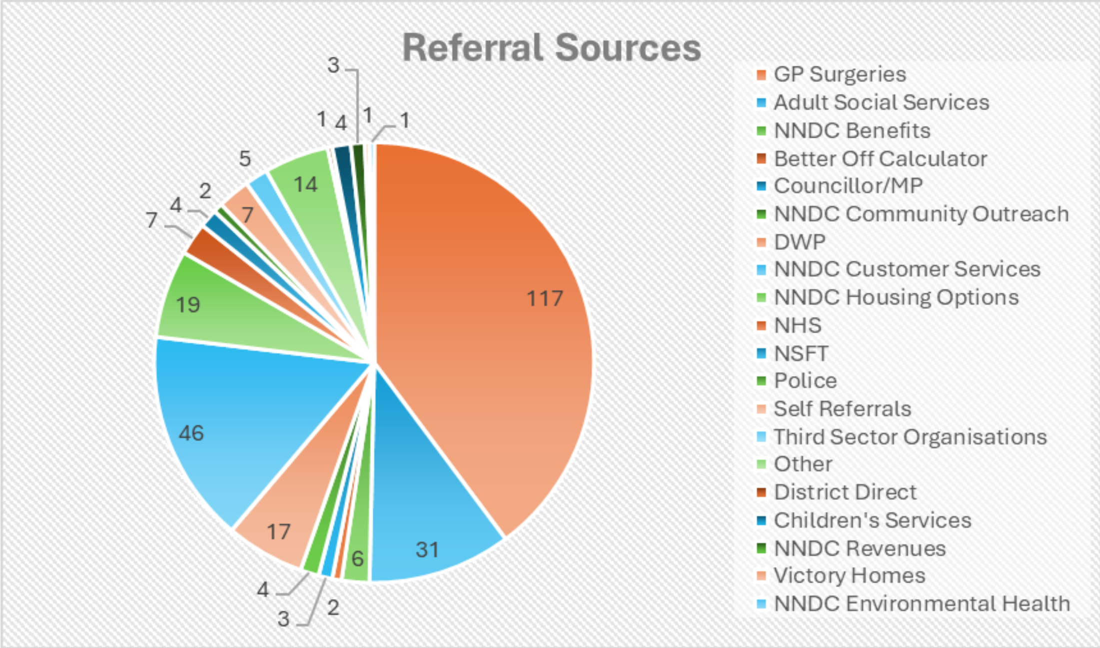
- NW WE 437 15% AH

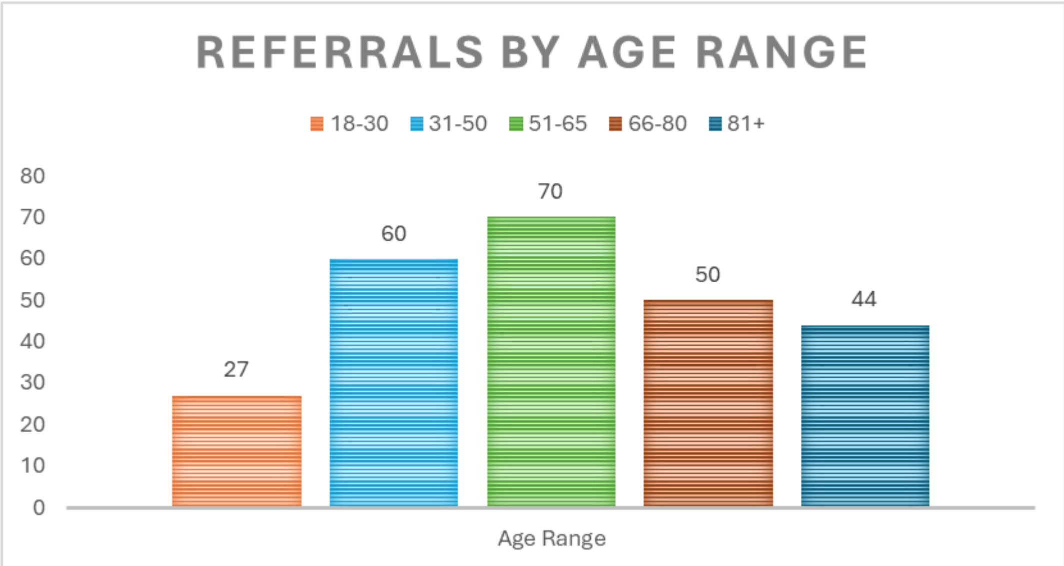
Early Help & Prevention

From April 1st to June 30th, 2026 (Q1)/2026

TOTAL INDIVIDUAL REFERRALS RECEIVED: 304







<u>Early Help & Prevention Case Study</u>

Mrs H was referred to the Early Help and Prevention Service by the Job Centre (DWP) for assistance with her severe debt.

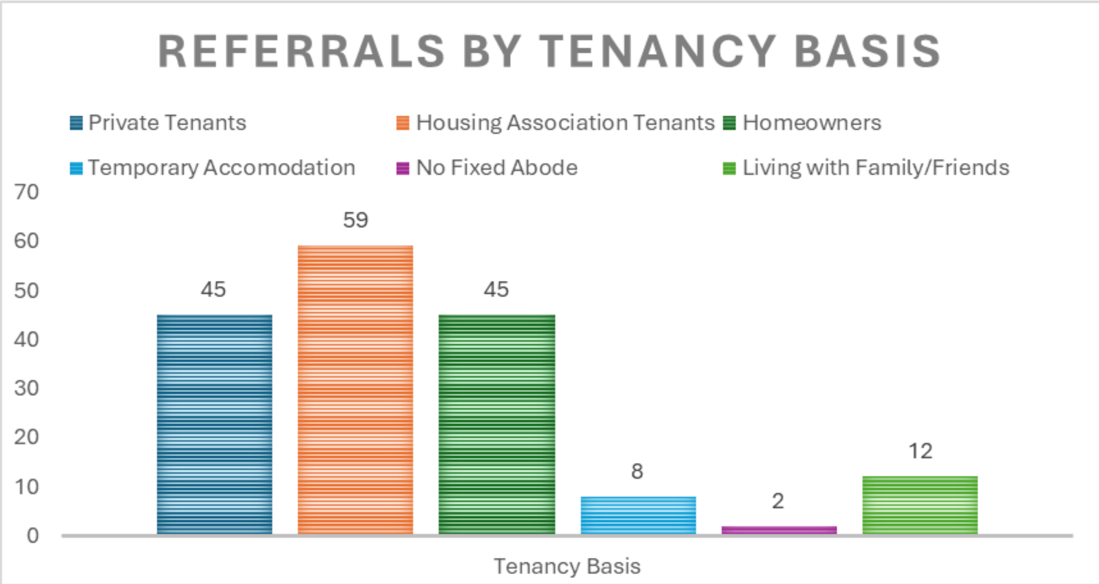
A Financial Inclusion Officer visited Ms H at home to establish the severity of her debts and completed a referral to our partner debt specialist from Citizen's Advice. Ms H continues to work with this specialist to reduce and manage her debt.

In addition to this referral, the Financial Inclusion Officer completed an application for Council Tax Support and requested a PIP review for Ms H, alongside Disability Living Allowance claims for both of her children.

As a result, a Council Tax Support award was set up at £24.95 per week alongside an agreed offer to pay for arrears in Council Tax.
Disability Living Allowance was awarded for both children at the middle rate for care (£76.70) per week and low-rate mobility (£30.30). Ms H's PIP review is currently pending.

The Financial Inclusion Officer then advised Ms H to update her Universal Credit claim with the details of her children's Disability Living Allowance awards. This further resulted in Ms H being awarded the Carer Element and Disabled Child Elements of Universal Credit for both children, which totals £538.92 per month.

As a result of the support completed to date, Ms H's income has increased by £1,574.38 per month.



Number of Referrals where children live in the home:
21

Food Support:
Foodbank Vouchers Issued: 96
Supermarket Vouchers Issued: 21

Energy Bank:
Referrals Made/Support Provided: 17

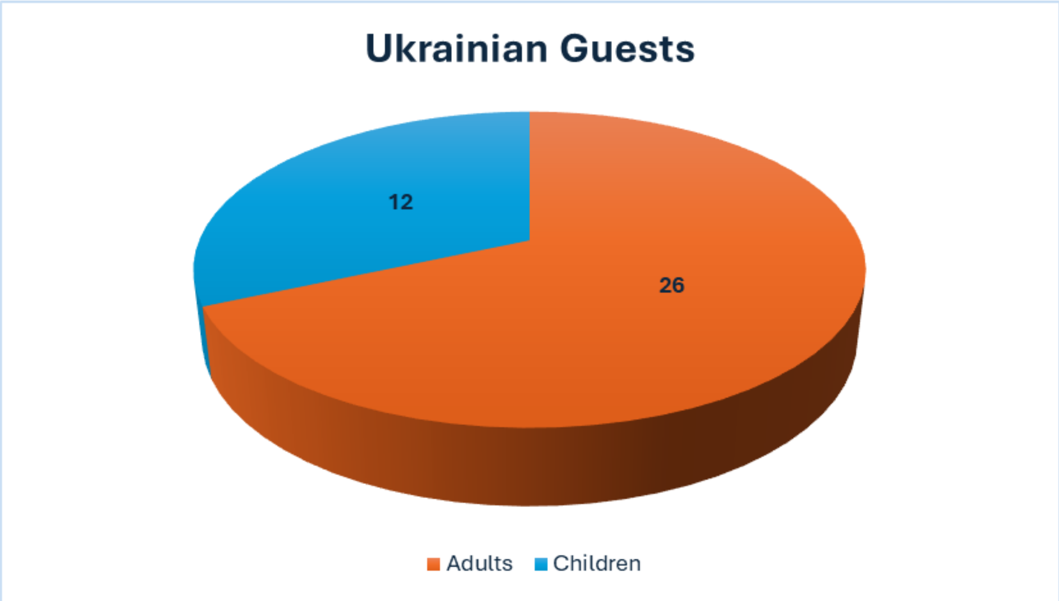
Alongside managing their caseload, during June 2026 members of the team have attended several events.

Members of the team attended an Adult Social Care conference at Heritage House Day Centre in Wells-Next-The-Sea. This was a very interesting and informative event to attend, with representatives from healthcare, NSFT, Adult Social Care and research company giving talks. An opportunity was given to learn more about the day care services provided at Heritage House, alongside the opportunity to meet representatives from the voluntary sector who provide much needed services to our older population.

The team also attended the PositiviTea events in North Walsham and Fakenham.

Homes for Ukraine

There are currently 38 Ukrainian guests being supported in North Norfolk, of which 26 are adults and 12 are under the age of eighteen.

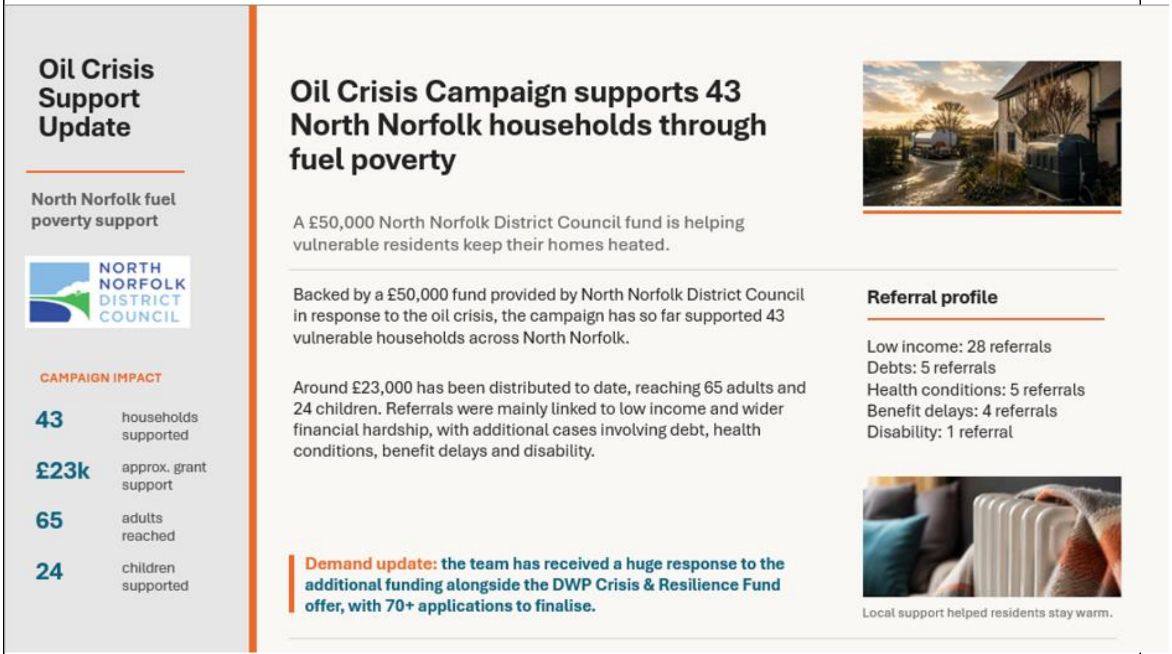


Our Ukrainian Support Officer continues providing unscheduled welfare visits to talk to the guests and their hosts about upcoming changes with the ‘Thank you payment’ coming to an end.

Support continues with helping to apply for visa extensions, housing applications, council tax support, tenancy support and general enquiries on behalf of our Ukrainian guests. The Ukrainian Support Officer continues to work closely with our Housing Department supporting families who may have been given notice to leave their hosts or need help looking for private rented accommodation.

Cooperation with Norfolk County Council in identifying and checking fraudulent visa cases continues.

Oil crisis campaign update



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 2026/27 is **£1,828,729.30**.

Due to the nature of the DFG and cases continually progressing throughout the year, some cases may have grants approved during one financial year period, however these will not complete and be paid within the same financial year. We therefore record “brought forward” approvals as these grant awards remain within the system until completion. These figures are continually changing as cases get completed and new cases are approved.

Brough forward grant approved values to date at the end of Q1:

- 2023/24 – 1x outstanding case with a total outstanding approved value of £6,822.15
- 2024/25 – 4x outstanding cases with a total outstanding approved value of £67,007.27
- 2025/26 – 29x outstanding cases with a total outstanding approved value of £322,103.44
- 2026/27 Q1 approved cases value - £446,805.76, 46 cases

Total outstanding approved value is £842,738.62 for 80 cases.

The actual spend for 2026/27 quarter 1, including partially completed adaptations against the budget is **£140,808.28** in mandatory DFG's and **£34,612.37** for Discretionary Grants provided.

Assessments and recommendations for Q1 (DFG only)

Total Assessments completed	22
Total recommendations received	44

Current assessment waiting times based on category for Q1 (DFG only, data used from assessments completed by IHAT during Q1 period)

Case categorization	**Average wait time**	**Amount of cases used in calculation**	**Government target**
Complex and Urgent (OT)	16 working days	1	20 working days
Complex and non-urgent (OT)	0 working days	0	35 Working days
Simple and urgent (non OT)	49 days	2	5 Working days
Simple and non-urgent (non OT)	35 days	15	20 working days

Incomplete DFG applications – Case closure data – Q1

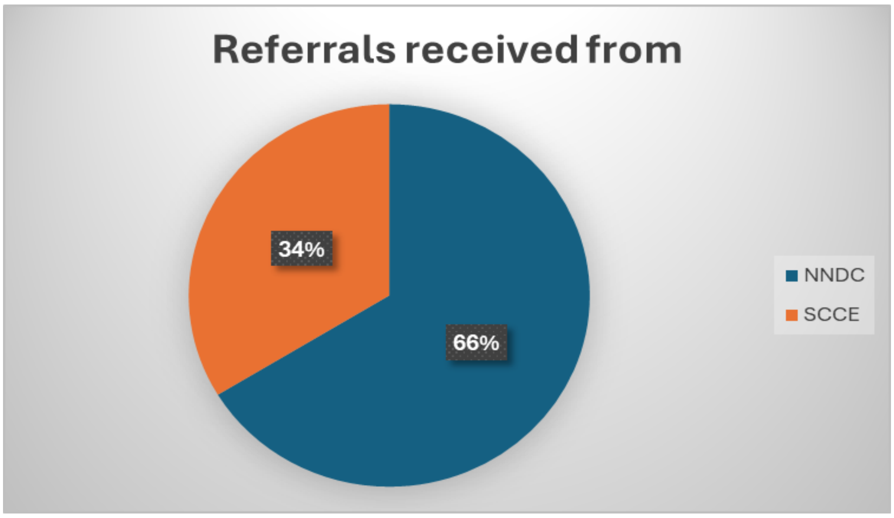
Closed reason	Total	%
Contribution	5	9.6%
Refused to provide finance info	10	19.2%
works impact/disruption	0	0.0%
work privately	2	3.8%
no response	16	30.8%
equipment	0	0.0%
not adaptable	3	5.8%
referred on	0	0.0%
end of life	3	5.8%
deceased	4	7.7%
LL refused	0	0.0%
other	5	9.6%
Moved	4	7.7%
total	**52**	**100.0%**
Other Q1		
1. Adivce only		
2. not DFG Eligible		
3. Advice only - SF		
4. own request to cancel		
5. Request not DFG Eligble		

Stage cases were closed at during Q1:

Stage case closed at	Total	%
Triage	29	55.8%
Assessment	8	15.4%
Recommendation	5	9.6%
Schedule of works	6	11.5%
Approval	4	7.7%
Total	52	

Referrals for Q1

Total referrals received for Q1



Amount of applicants on income related benefit and immediately eligible for DFG – 49
Amount of applicants not on income related benefit requiring financial assessment - 44

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

NNDC Full Council meeting
Carers Voice, Norfolk & Waveney meeting
Leadership Academy LGA Graduation, Warwick University
Cabinet Pre Agenda meeting
Cabinet Business Planning
LGA Planning Webinar
Local Council Network Planning & Places Webinar: Old buildings, new futures – Renewing heritage buildings
Accommodation Forum, East of England HM Prison & Probation Service
Cabinet Meeting
LGA Conference, Bournemouth