

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

23 October 2024

Mitigating the impact on health and social care needs and provision for those in temporary accommodation

Report contributions from RBK and AfC and NHS services compiled by Laura MacLehose, Acting Director of Public Health

Purpose of Report

To inform the panel on how the impact on health and social care needs and provision are being mitigated for those in temporary accommodation.

Key Line of Enquiry:

1. How is the impact on health and social care needs and provision being mitigated for those in temporary accommodation,
 - a. looking more closely at the rise in numbers/context;
 - b. what are we doing about it - strategic planning, partnership arrangements; and
 - c. what more can we do - future ways of working, collaboration, recommendations.

How is the impact on health and social care needs and provision being mitigated for Kingston residents in temporary accommodation?

Report for the Kingston Health Overview Panel

23 October 2024

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Summary:

The numbers of Kingston residents in 'Temporary Accommodation' (TA) have been increasing over the last decade, with over 1,000 Kingston families currently housed in TA (2,583 people in August 2024). Unlike in previous years, around 10% (just over 100) of these families are in hotel type accommodation due to the shortages of other types of accommodation being available to the council. Overall, just over 900 Kingston children were living in a form of TA in August 2024, of which 91 were in hotel accommodation.

It is recognised that having stable, secure and suitable accommodation is a fundamental part of people's health and wellbeing. The council is working hard with partners to make sure that people are housed when in need and eligible. However, by virtue of the emergency housing being 'Temporary Accommodation', those housed in this way have continued uncertainty and a lack of stability in their lives. For those in some of the hotel type accommodation, these challenges are magnified through the lack of kitchen facilities and adequate play space for children.

The council, NHS and voluntary sector partners have a range of offers to support the health and wellbeing of people housed in TA, and highlights of these are covered in this report. The Kingston Partnership Board has also made 'Home' a key focus for coordinated action across the key large organisations of the borough. The council, with partners, will continue to provide and enhance, where possible, the local offers to residents housed in TA, to support their health and wellbeing.

Introduction:

The Kingston Health Overview Panel requested that a report be prepared looking at 'How is the impact on health and social care needs and provision being mitigated for those in temporary accommodation?'. Three Key Lines of Enquiry were suggested for review. In this report, these are considered. Data has been brought together from teams across the council, many of which are working with the voluntary sector partners, and the NHS. The three Key Lines of Enquiry considered are:

1. Looking more closely at the rise in numbers/context;
2. What are we doing about it - strategic planning, partnership arrangements;
3. What more can we do - future ways of working, collaboration, recommendations.

The number of people in Temporary Accommodation (TA) in Kingston has risen over the last eight years, a pattern also seen across London. This rise is due to a number of key factors, which are outlined in the report. Housing is a key factor in good health and wellbeing. It is recognised that not having stable or appropriate accommodation can lead to or magnify poor health and wellbeing. The council is working hard to ensure that those who are eligible for Temporary Accommodation are housed. There are many pressures on what types of accommodation are available for use as TA. The council recognises that some Temporary Accommodation types offered do not provide all the space and facilities that many households would want. To support residents in TA, services of the council, NHS and voluntary sector offer a range of help and guidance to residents in TA. To continue to further develop and communicate this support, the council is working with partners in ongoing efforts to communicate support offers, refine local offers and ensure data systems support this work.

1. Looking more closely at what Temporary Accommodation is and the rise in numbers/context:

What does 'Temporary Accommodation'(TA) mean?

Temporary Accommodation (TA) refers to short-term housing provided to individuals or families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. When someone approaches the council because they have nowhere to live, the council has a legal duty (under the Housing Act 1996) to offer them a place to stay while their longer-term housing needs are assessed. This housing can come in various forms, including hostels, hotel placements, council or private rented accommodation. The aim is to provide a safe place to stay while the council works on finding a more permanent housing solution. TA is usually offered in situations of crisis or high urgency when individuals or families are at immediate risk of homelessness.

Table: current temporary accommodation stock use (snapshot at 11 Sept 2024) is:

Type of Temporary Accommodation	Households
Nightly Paid Self Contained "Annexes" (eg flats)	353
Bed & Breakfast/Hotels/shared facilities	108
Council Owned Hostels	60
Social housing stock used as Temporary Accommodation	123
Leased Accommodation from Private Landlords	359
YMCA	12
TOTAL	1015

Hotel placements:

These are provided on an emergency basis at point of crisis to households approaching our service in the absence of our ability to procure self-contained homes on the immediate approach to the Council of households in a housing crisis. The charge the Council pays for this accommodation is a market rate and fluctuates significantly given demands of the hotel market. The charge levied to occupiers is significantly below that the Council has to pay the provider and falls within housing benefit regulations specific to provision of homes to homeless households by Councils. These rates are not current Local Housing Allowance rates but determined by Department of Work and Pensions at January 2011 rates.

- As of 16 September 2024, 108 households were accommodated in this type of hotel placement
- Of these 108 households, 49 include a child under 18 and in total 91 children were accommodated within this type of property.
- The longest stay for a placement with children as of 16 September 2024 is for 666 days
- The average stay currently of existing placements is 150 days.

Annex placements:

'Annex placements' are provided on both an emergency basis at point of crisis to households approaching as homeless but also as move-on from hotel placement. The supply of these

properties offered by specialist housing providers in London has reduced over the past year and a half, resulting in our need to access hotel accommodation. Our service continues to use these providers as a source of homes but there is a limited number of new family sized homes becoming available with the significant majority of these properties being out of borough. The majority of these Annex placements provide self contained accommodation although it is recognised a number of households are subject to overcrowding where the availability of alternative accommodation to help growing families move on to larger homes is limited by supply of properties generally and specifically that which falls within the budget available for our service to procure.

The charge made to occupiers for the accommodation provided is determined by benefit subsidy regulation for homeless households explained above which remains significantly below what the council pays for these homes. However, they offer a lower cost option than a hotel placement. This type of property, in common with other homes in the private rental market, has become increasingly difficult to secure as the supply in the wider rental market has reduced. To reduce cost pressures, London Councils have tried to agree a maximum payment rate for these homes but providers of these homes challenge these Pan London rates withdrawing homes and advising these do not reflect the market and inflationary pressures.

- As of 13 September 2024, 353 households were accommodated in this type of Annex placement (including 12 placed locally in YMCA).
- Of these households, 211 were families with children including 437 children, 123 households did not include a child.
- The longest stay for a placement with children is 2213 days as at 11 May 2024
- The average stay currently of existing placements is 335 days.

Nightly Paid Accommodation

Both Annex and hotel accommodation, including that provided via YMCA, are referred to as 'Nightly Paid' Accommodation. This references the payment by the Council to these providers on a nightly rate.

Private Lease Scheme

'Private Lease Scheme' homes are provided on a long term basis where households move from Annex and hotel accommodation where their application to the council for accommodation has been provided a positive decision and a full duty to secure settled accommodation. The scheme procures homes in the main from individual non-portfolio holding owners offering leases of one to five years with the significant majority of all homes within Kingston borough.

- As of 13 September 2024, 359 households were accommodated in this type of 'Private Lease' placement
- Of these households, 342 were families with children, 32 households did not include a child.
- The longest stay for a placement is 10 years 1 month (data at 13 September 2024)
- The average stay currently of existing placements is 5 years and 5 months

Other Placements

The figures above relate to accommodation secured in the private sector within all forms of temporary accommodation. These figures do not include those placements within the Council's own stock of accommodation given there is no payment to external housing providers in such placement. RBK Housing services also make placements within homes on the **Cambridge Road Estate** where vacancies pending the estate regeneration have been used as Temporary Accommodation. At the end of August 2024, 124 households were placed on the estate as Temporary Accommodation. A current program to reopen 50 vacancies on the estate for use as

temporary accommodation pending their regeneration is being undertaken. This will move, in the main, single adults from Annex accommodation back to Kingston.

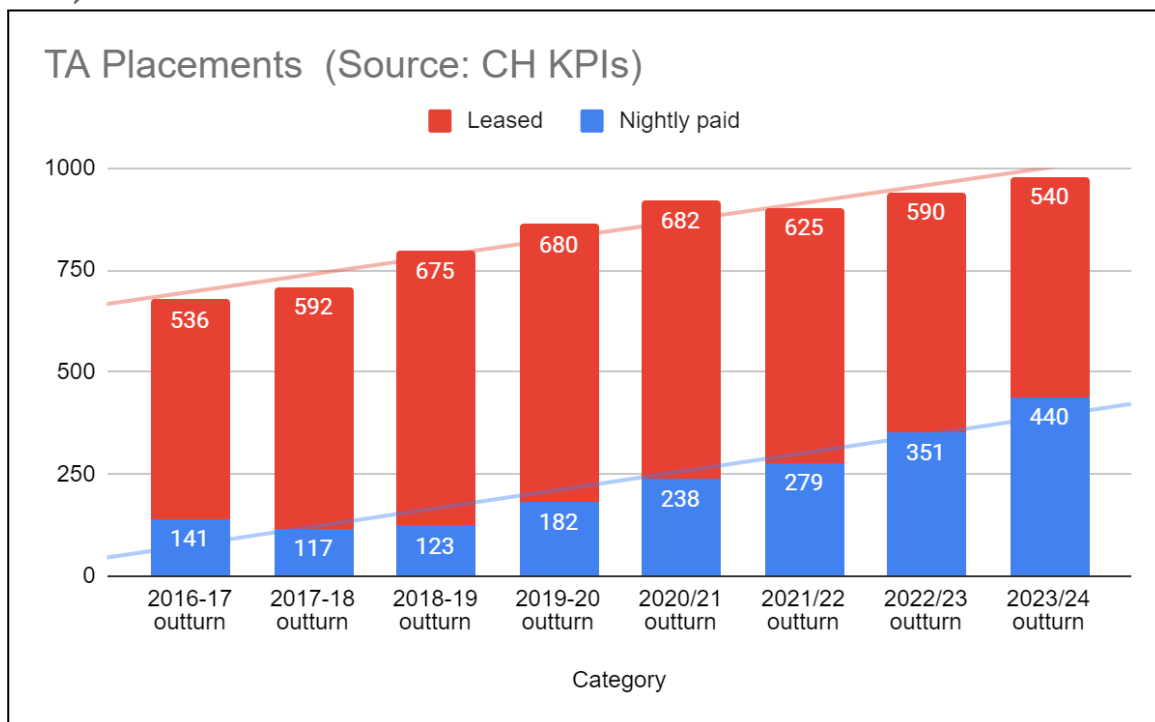
In addition, as part of the Council housing stock, there are **four homeless family hostels** in the borough comprising 60 rooms affording a mix of shared facility and self-contained homes.

In this report, people in other types of accommodation that are not permanent or are run by national organisations (eg the Home Office) are not considered. Thus, people in Home Office run asylum accommodation are not included. People arriving in Kingston under the Homes for Ukraine programme and are being hosted by a Kingston household are also not covered in this report. Data on both of those resident groups is regularly reported to and discussed at the Kingston Resettlement Board.

How many people in Kingston are staying in Temporary Accommodation and what is the pattern in terms of trends in the use of Temporary Accommodation?

The data for Kingston shows that the numbers of residents being accommodated in Temporary Accommodation has been generally increasing since 2016. This is a similar trend to the London wide picture. The London Assembly Housing Committee advised the number of households living in temporary accommodation has doubled in the last ten years, with an estimated 175,000 people in the capital residing in temporary accommodation, including 85,000 children in early 2024^{1 2 3}.

Figure: Kingston TA placements - trend from 2016/17 to 2023/2024 ('Leased' and 'Nightly Paid')



¹ [London's Temporary Accommodation Emergency](#)

² [Boroughs share short-term let concerns | London Councils - Localgov Drupal](#)

³ [Statutory homelessness in England: July to September 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

Figure: Types of TA accommodation being used in Kingston (Nightly-paid, non-nightly paid, 2016/17 - 2023/24)

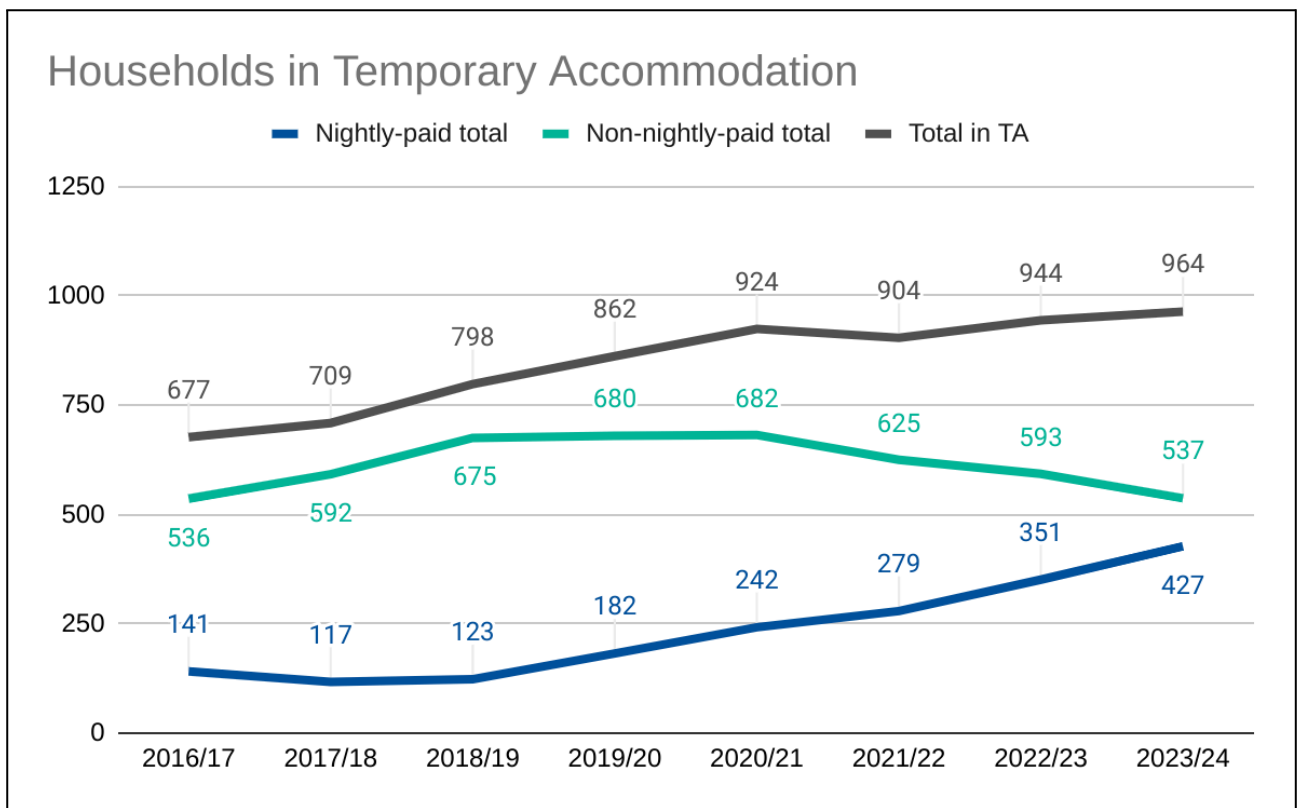
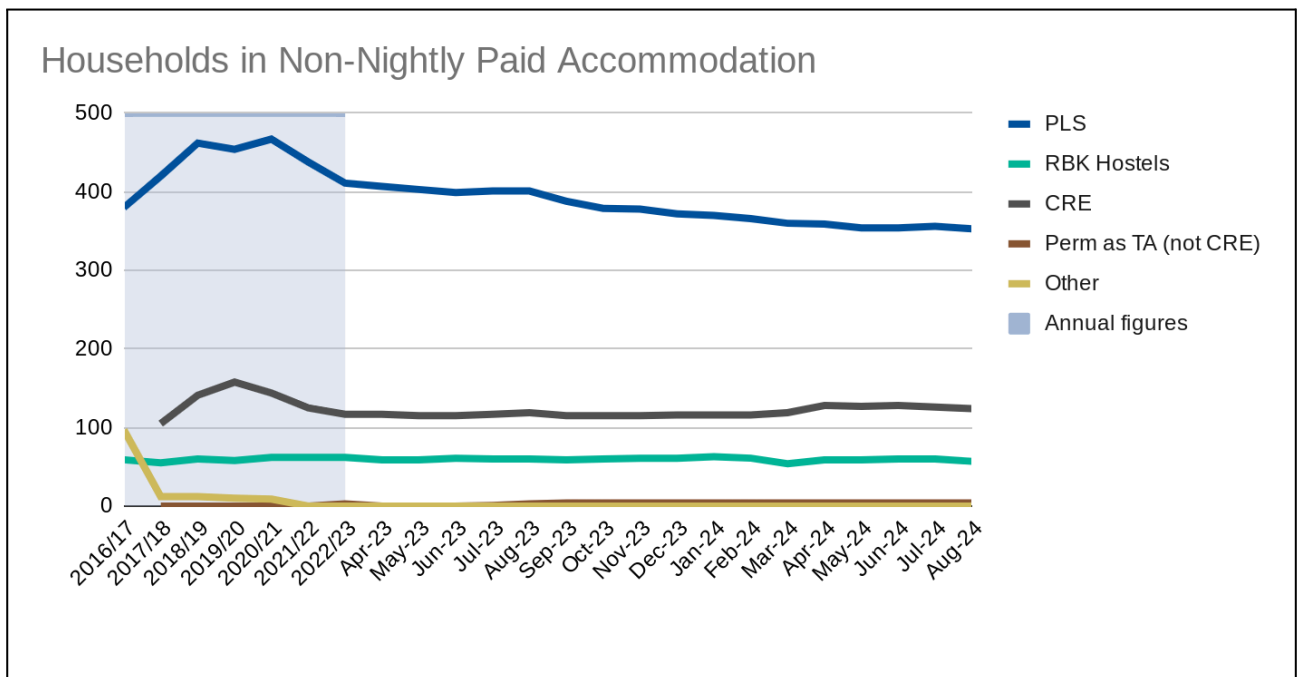


Figure: Households in Non-nightly paid accommodation (types), 2016/17- Aug 2024

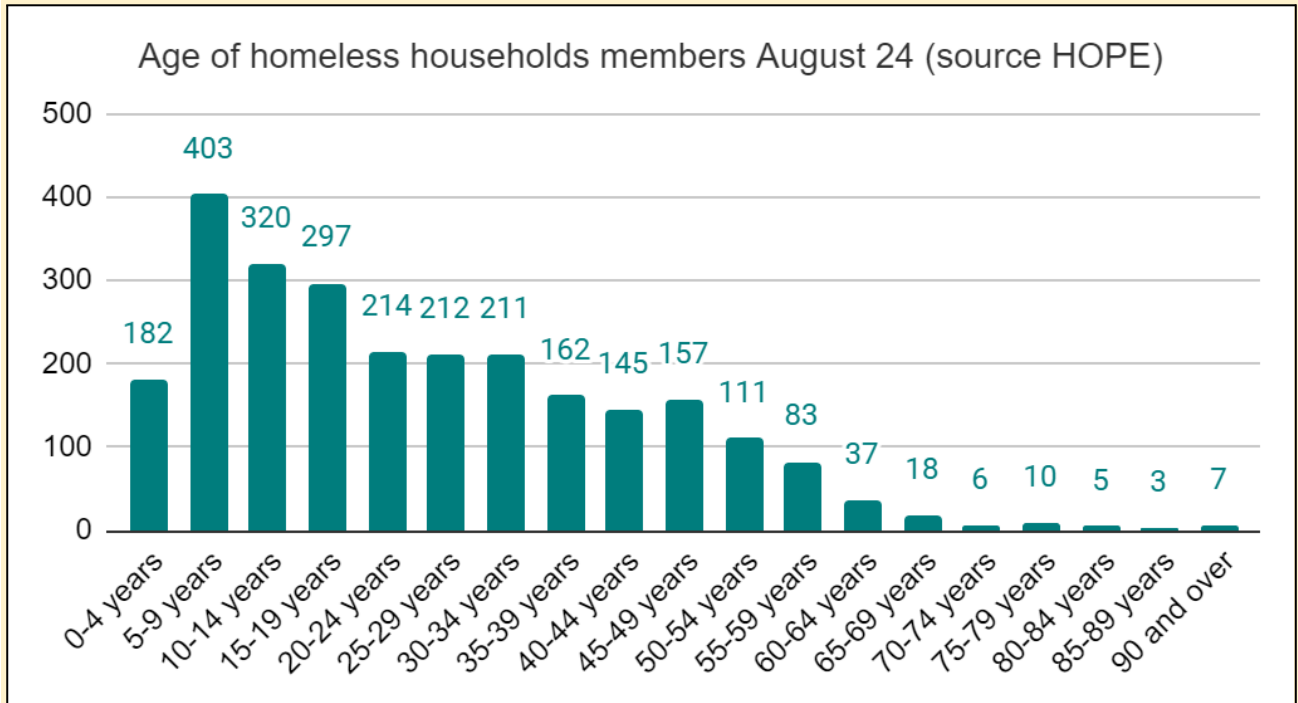


Age of Families in Temporary Accommodation August 2024

There are currently 2583 children, young people and adults living in Temporary Accommodation. In Kingston, there are over 905 children in our temporary accommodation as of 31 August 2024.

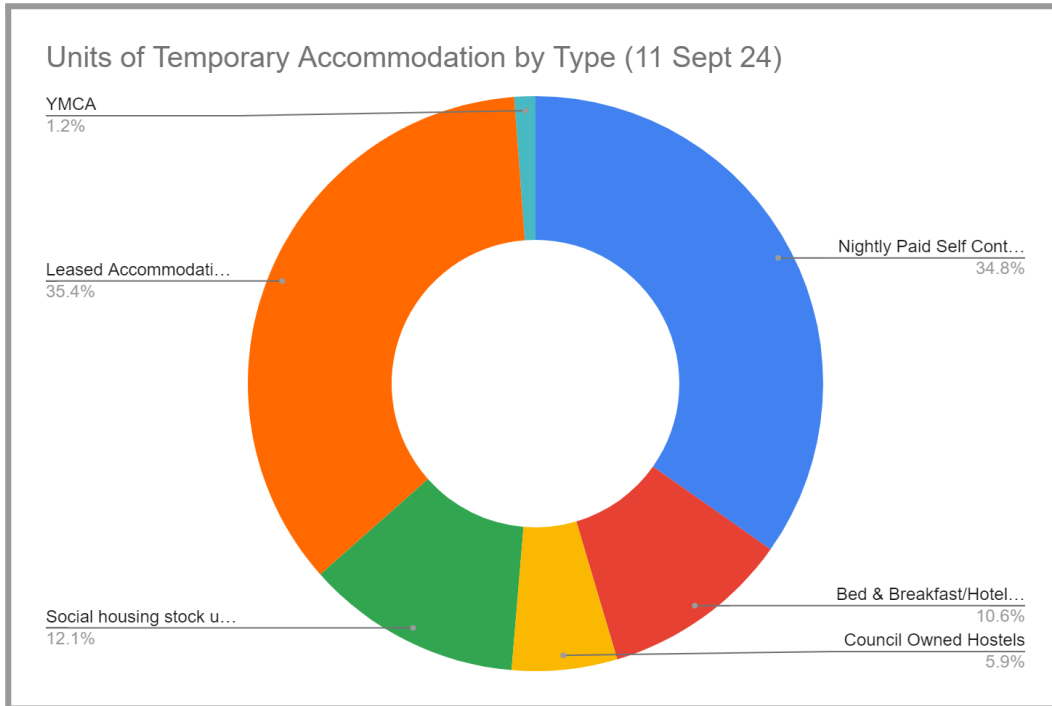
The age breakdown is shown below:

Figure: ages of homeless household members, Kingston (August 2024)



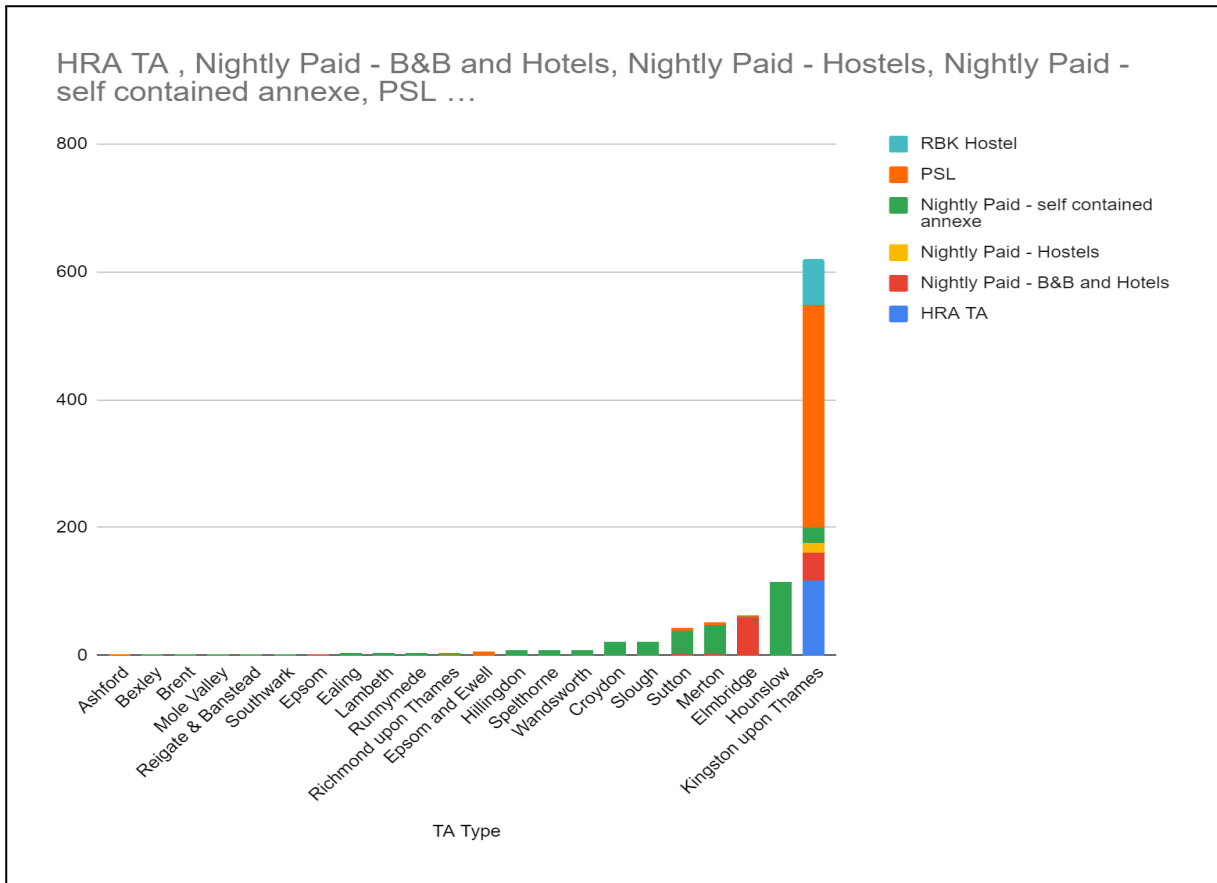
- Nearly half of current Temporary Accommodation Residents are children and young people under 19. There are very few older people over 70.
- 71% of main applicants in TA are female
- There were 905 children living in TA at the end of August 2024
- 66% (669) of all households in TA have children.
- There are currently 91 children living in Hotels and Shared Facility accommodation

Figure: Units of Temporary Accommodation at 11 September 2024



33% of all Temporary Accommodation provided by Housing Services (as at year end 23/24) was located outside of the borough, mainly within annexe nightly paid accommodation, Hounslow being the largest area.

Figure: Location of TA provided (23/24)

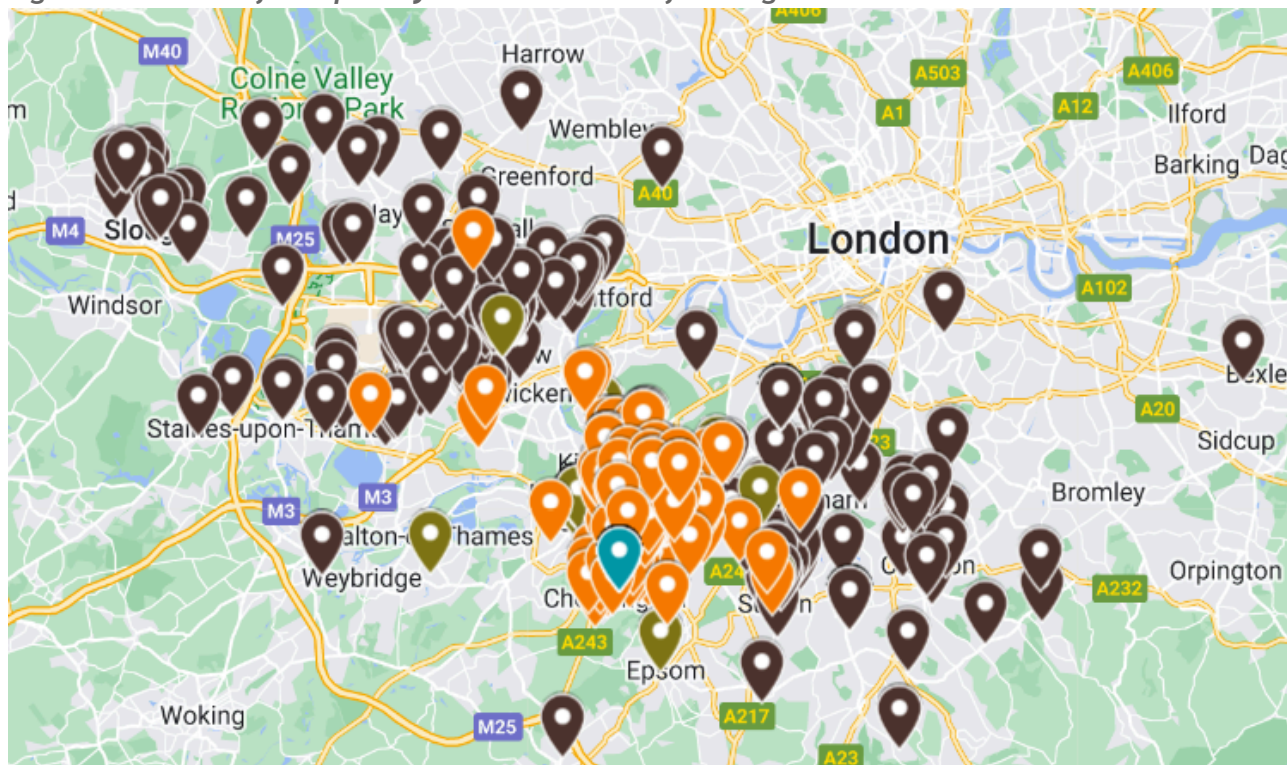


Location of Temporary Accommodation:

The following map shows where Temporary Accommodation provided by RBK Housing Services is located (snapshot 31 March 2024). 67% of all placements into Temporary Accommodation are made within the borough. The key for the map is as follows:

- Orange: represents Leased homes,
- Green: Hotel accommodation,
- Black: spot purchased Annex property.

Figure: Location of Temporary Accommodation for Kingston residents 31 March 2024



Commentary on housing and TA supply:

Access to Hotel accommodation has resulted in higher numbers of placements on an emergency basis in Elmbridge. The provision of spot purchased Annex accommodation has been focused on Hounslow with approximately 50% of those types of lettings secured in that borough whilst leased properties have mainly been sourced within Kingston borough.

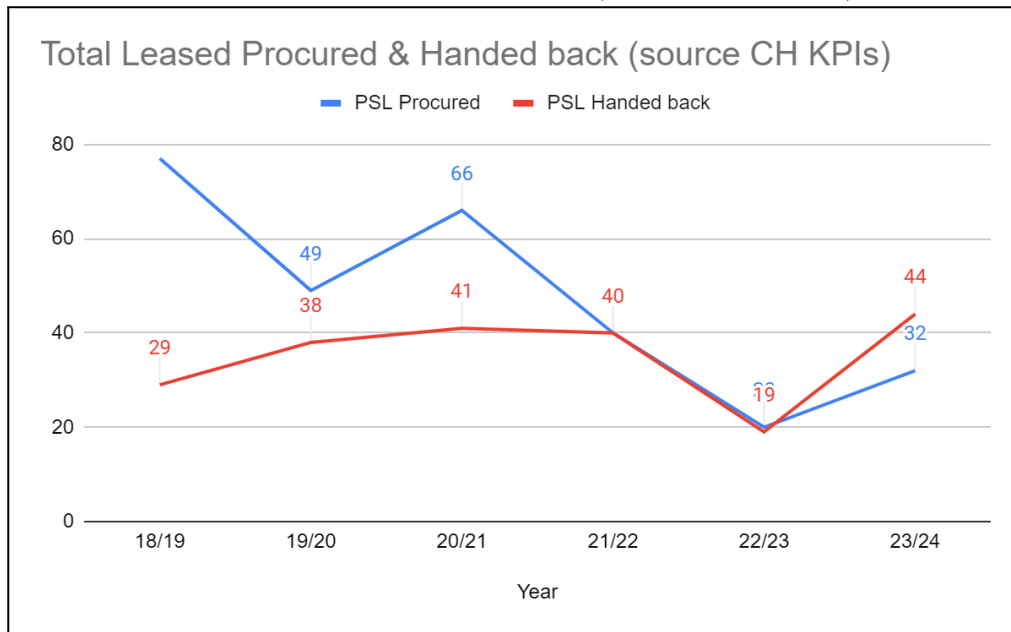
Most, but not all households, who approach Housing Services as Homeless with nowhere to stay will be placed into Temporary Accommodation. This excludes cases where Housing Services negotiate extra time to stay, or prevent homelessness.

Demand has resulted in an overall growth in Temporary Accommodation over time. With this, there has been a significant growth in Annex and Hotel placements that are predominantly out of the borough over the availability of longer term Private Lease homes that have mainly been within the borough.

Due to market conditions, Landlords are leaving our Private Lease schemes in higher numbers than the properties we are able to procure. Expiring buy-to-let mortgage deals now present a real challenge to families renting in the private rental market and to households living within homes within the Private Lease Scheme (where interest rates significantly increase prompting owners to make decisions regarding their ability to continue letting at existing yields).

It is also more profitable for many landlords to enter the Annex ‘Nightly Paid’ market. This is due to Housing Services competing daily for housing units in a highly competitive environment, alongside other boroughs Housing & Social Services Departments, agencies to the Home Office and private renters.

Figure: Total Leased Procured & Handed back TA (2018/19-2023/24)



Exits of households to social housing and access to affordable private rented homes are unlikely to meet current and growing demand of households in Temporary Accommodation.

On average, in recent times, around 12 households move out of TA into social housing a month. In 2023/24 139 households comprising 81 families with dependent children moved from Temporary Accommodation to social housing provided by the Council or a local Housing Association.

Even with the changes to the Allocations Policy in April 2024, the reality is that most residents entering into Temporary Accommodation now will not secure social housing, particularly those needing scarcer larger family homes.

The Council’s Transformation Team mobilised a tactical project focused on Temporary Accommodation in August 2023. The Project has oversight and engagement from the Assistant Director of Housing and Executive Director of Place and is governed by the Transforming Places to Live (TPL) Programme. The programme aims to work with the service to tackle demand, supply and cost pressures through piloting new and innovative approaches and interventions. This includes utilising Right to Buy receipts and grants funding to acquire more affordable properties, review rates paid on leased homes within the Council’s stock of Temporary Accommodation property to reduce the use of spot purchased annexe accommodation and use of hotel placements, review the needs of those in Temporary Accommodation to review alternative options and reset approaches to placements and discharges. The Transformation Team’s support has helped provide structure to the Temporary Accommodation project and has helped secure additional Business as Usual resources to support the demand for housing.

2. What are we doing about it - strategic planning, partnership arrangements

Strategic Planning and Coordination:

- Is there an RBK Strategic Planning Group or other to coordinate support and offers for people in Temporary Accommodation? Please give details

In September 2023, the Kingston Partnership Board (including the Kingston Health and Wellbeing Board) joined together with the Place Partnership for a Place Leaders workshop on Housing and Homelessness. This action focused session considered data on housing and homelessness in Kingston and the drivers pushing more people into temporary accommodation, before considering short, medium and long term actions to be taken by Kingston to tackle this issue going forward. The Kingston Partnership Board has three 'goals' for residents, one of which is "a home". These goals, established in June 2024, will enhance the focus on this area going forward.

The Kingston 'Cost of Living Group' agreed to take forward a number of actions to help ensure that residents in Temporary Accommodation receive available support in a coordinated way. Data on numbers of residents in temporary accommodation is now regularly shared so that teams across the council are aware of trends and size of needs. Over the summer of 2024, details on local offers for children were put into an attractive leaflet and webpages and shared with residents. In progress is a new brochure on available support for residents that will be shared with residents entering Temporary Accommodation, which will bring together information on local offers of support.

A number of grant programmes are used to give support to the cohort of residents in Temporary Accommodation. These include the Household Support Fund (HSF). Work on the HSF is done in partnership with the Kingston Foodbank, who with Grace Advocacy, work with residents to improve and stabilise their financial situations and make applications with/on their behalf, to the Household Support Fund. This fund has been used to support people in Temporary Accommodation.

Health Services, Social Social Care and Partnership Actions to support those staying in Temporary Accommodation:

GP access:

- If someone moves to Temporary Accommodation within the borough, can they still keep their existing GP?
- If someone is offered temporary accommodation outside the borough, can they keep their Kingston GP or should they register with a new GP in the temporary accommodation area?

When a person moves to Temporary Accommodation, whether within the Borough, or outside the Borough, it is at the discretion of their registered GP Practice whether they can remain registered at that Practice, or are asked to register with a Practice closer to their temporary accommodation. GP Practices have catchment boundaries. These set a reasonable boundary to contain the number of potential patients who could register at the Practice so that the workload remains manageable for the Practice, ensure that travel times to home visits (and to appointments for patients) are reasonable and also ensure that patients registered at that Practice are able to have access to services provided by other local Providers, such as Community Healthcare Services, Health Visiting services, Social Care etc. Many of these other services operate within geographical boundaries and are not able to visit or provide services to people living outside of those boundaries. GP Practices, unless their Practice boundary straddles two Boroughs, will also often not have links to the services available in other Boroughs and will not be able to link their patients into these services. In addition, Practices cannot offer home visiting services to Patients living outside their Practice Boundaries. (Provided by Dr Annette Pautz, May 2024)

Children's Services and Education:

- Do Children's Services visit people in Temporary Accommodation including hotels?
- (What if the Temporary Accommodation is located outside of Kingston?)

Children living in temporary accommodation are not routinely referred to Children's Services for support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, unless they present as homeless on the day or their family has No Recourse to Public Funds due to their immigration status. In 2023/24, Children's Services provided financial support to 22 families with children in need of emergency or temporary accommodation, as well as a range of other family support. The type of support provided is based on an assessment of the family's needs. It may include practical support with food, sleeping cots, toys, baby essentials and other 'comforter' items for children misplaced or lost during the move to temporary accommodation, as well as laptops, wifi access to enable children to complete their school work and advice on quiet study spaces close to their temporary accommodation (eg. public libraries). Support with emotional health and wellbeing is also provided, especially where the move into temporary accommodation is the result of a traumatic event, such as domestic violence or abuse.

A number of children living in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council's Housing service are already supported by Children's Services. The early help practitioner or social worker will continue to support the family in their temporary accommodation to deliver the agreed Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, even where this is outside the borough. Coordination of the plan may become more complex when the family requires support from partner organisations in their new home borough. In these circumstances, Kingston's Children's Services will implement joint working with Children's Services in the home local authority. If the temporary accommodation outside Kingston lasts for some time (6+ months), it will be necessary to consider transferring the plan and support package to Children's Services in the home local authority. These transfer decisions are made on a case-by-case basis based on the best interests of the child or children.

All families with children living in temporary accommodation who are referred to Children's Services will also be signposted to the local universal offer of support. This will include access to children's centres, family hubs, youth services and after-school and holiday activity programmes. The FUEL programme, which runs in the school holidays, is a valuable offer of support as it offers a hot meal as well as activities. Families living outside Kingston will also be signposted to the local offer in the borough where they are living.

Where children are housed in temporary accommodation outside the borough, Section 17 funding may also be used to fund travel costs to and from school for a fixed period or until permanent accommodation is found for the family. In 2024/24, Children's Services funded eight such transport arrangements for families living in temporary accommodation. These arrangements are expensive and are not ideal for children who often have early starts and long travelling times to school, which can mean they arrive at school tired and hungry. This can affect children's behaviour, concentration and motivation to learn. Changing schools may seem the obvious solution; however, the temporary nature of accommodation and a lack of certainty about how long they will live there means that families are often reluctant to make this choice. Families may experience multiple moves between temporary accommodations and many hold onto the hope that they will be offered settled housing back in Kingston. Long-term gradual transition to another school may be appropriate in some situations, but it is not realistic or beneficial to the child to move schools with each short-term, temporary accommodation move. Maintaining a stable school placement is important in creating consistency for children as schools are best placed to coordinate the additional educational support that children living in temporary accommodation may need. Having a safe and familiar place to go, where the child and family are known to the school, becomes increasingly important when everything else in a child's life is changing. In this sense, school is often a protective factor in mitigating the impact of homelessness.

Adult Social Care:

- Does Adult Social Care provide services to people staying in hotels and other Temporary Accommodation if needed?

If people are eligible under the Care Act for social care then they will be provided services to meet their needs. As of September 2024, there are about 25 people in temporary accommodation receiving services from Kingston Adult Social Care (ASC). The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to make provision for assessment and the aim of the assessment is to identify what needs the person may have and what outcomes they are looking to achieve to maintain or improve their wellbeing.

The outcome of the assessment is to provide a full picture of the individual's needs so that the local authority can provide an appropriate response at the right time to meet the level of the person's needs. This might range from offering guidance and information to arranging for services to meet those needs. This includes adults that may be staying in temporary accommodation. If this is the case, ASC would explore these circumstances to check whether they are a Kingston resident or are ordinary residents in another area in which case, we would liaise with that area to ensure smooth transition between ASC departments.

- What if the Temporary Accommodation is located outside of Kingston?

If the person is classed as ordinary residence in Kingston they will receive Adult Social Care (ASC) services funded by Kingston Council. If the temporary accommodation is located outside of Kingston, we would continue to assess the adult and provide services to meet assessed needs. We would do this by working with our Brokerage team to find a provision that covers the area where the adult is residing temporarily. We would review these arrangements and make any necessary changes to ensure continuity of provision as the person's circumstances change.

An exception to the usual social care services is safeguarding. Any safeguarding concerns under [Section 42](#) (of the Care Act) must be handled by the local authority responsible for the area where the person currently lives. This relates to where people are at risk of, or are experiencing abuse or neglect and have care and support needs.

Health Visiting:

Kingston Health Visitors (provided by Your Healthcare) will generally deliver all levels of service to wherever families are living (including hotels, YMCA and caravans, as examples). The only time the service would not visit at home is due to parental choice or if the service felt there was a risk to employees (e.g domestic violence) or a dangerous pet. In some circumstances, Health Visitors will attend in pairs, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns raised. The service will meet families at Children's Centres to attend groups with parents and also refer families into Kingston Growbaby for support with baby clothes and equipment, if needed.

Domestic Violence assistance Services:

How do these services support people if they are staying in Temporary Accommodation? (including whole families in one room in a hotel)

The Kingston Women's Hub is open to any woman in our community; offering spaces and services to empower and benefit their wellbeing physically, mentally and socially. The Women's Hub offer is available via a sign-up form online which has been shared with Housing Officers, Refuge Charity,

Achieving for Children and other local partners. Women are also able to access this through the walk-in service. The offer includes:

- **Our weekly wellbeing sessions**, such as Sisterhood Sanctuary, provide a safe space for women to build community and friendships while relaxing as they try a creative activity or pamper sessions, as well as share a healthy delicious handmade meal and refreshments. Childcare is offered to ensure mothers and carers are able to take part in these wellbeing sessions.
- **Our cooking sessions** both offer different opportunities which are open to women in temporary housing:
 - **Community cooking sessions are aimed at women and their families in temporary housing with no/limited cooking facilities.** This space offers access to full cooking facilities as well as the basic food ingredients, which the ladies (and their families) can prepare a meal of their own choosing for themselves - with helpful facilitators available to help them meal plan, budget and demonstrate new culinary skills as needed. Additional fresh fruit/veg etc are also made available for the women to take away. These sessions are about women being empowered to provide for themselves and their families in a way which is of their choosing offering healthier food options, community building opportunities and the dignity of having autonomy over one's own life. The sessions are free and available weekly during term time.
 - **Cook & Dine** sessions are open to any women, including those living in temporary housing, and offer a communal cooking and dining experience. The group cooks one meal together as a group, learning new recipes and culinary skills, and then dines together as a group on the delicious meal they've co-produced. This session aims to improve emotional and mental wellbeing through community, while also sharing tips and ideas for new, healthy and economical ways to eat/cook. These sessions are free and available weekly during term time.
- **Exercise sessions** are open for any woman - our pilates class runs while childcare is on to make it accessible for mothers and carers.

Education:

- What provision is made for Wifi access for children staying in hotels and other TA to support their homework and other learning?

Wifi is not provided to people accommodated in some hotels as part of the accommodation offer. This may have implications for children needing to complete homework that requires internet access and for adults for their work or trying to gain employment.

AfC reports that some children (small number) are supported with Wifi (see Section above). However, it appears that some children staying in hotel Temporary Accommodation would not have access to WiFi unless a purchase of this was made by their families (preliminary discussions with one hotel indicated that a daily charge for WiFi would be around £5 per room - a much higher rate than WiFi access through a regular broadband package in one's own home). Wifi is currently provided in two of the three main hotels used.

While we do not have detailed specific information on educational outcomes of children living in Temporary Accommodation, the Kingston data for children who are eligible for Free School Meals (which would likely include many of the children who are in Temporary Accommodation) shows that this group already has much lower levels of attainment in the early years of school than children who are not eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), compared to other London boroughs (21/22 data). This is detailed in the Kingston JSNA 2023: [Educational Outcomes for Children eligible for](#)

Free School Meals (FSM) in Kingston It would seem that not having access to Wifi in 2024 would now be a factor in hindering progress with some aspects of school work - and thus, the children in Temporary Accommodation may be further disadvantaged on the schooling front in terms of internet access for school work (unless their school has made some sort of direct provision or other support is received).

Nutrition and health for people staying in hotels:

Up to mid 2024 there had been no provision for hot food or access to meal preparation space within hotels provided as Temporary Accommodation secured by Housing Services. This extended to any access to facilities to sterilise bottles or otherwise provide microwave or fridges within hotel rooms. Residents were signposted to Community Kitchen resources. However, Housing Services procured, in mid 2024, hotel accommodation to help address these issues in placement within the borough that provides access to communal kitchen and dining space for residents placed, access to own fridges within rooms and communal on-site laundry facilities. This accommodation is assisting 60 households but it is recognised other placements don't offer this level of facility for residents.

This lack of provision for meal preparation or anywhere at other locations to sterilise bottles or prepare baby formula may pose severe risks to babies that are bottle fed (need for sterilisation of equipment). Lack of kitchen space in hotels not offering these facilities will make daily provision of basic food for children (and adults) difficult and expensive on a daily basis.

It is unclear how people with diabetes and other conditions that need a fridge for medication are managing to maintain their health in some hotels.

- What support outside of hotels is available for people staying in hotels to prepare food?
- What information do people receive if they are placed in a hotel about how to access cooked food?

Hot food offers: A variety of community support options are accessible to hotel residents in need of cooked meals. Ten community cafes and lunch initiatives, managed by voluntary and community organisations, offer complimentary or low-cost hot meals throughout the week in diverse locations across the Borough, including Kingston, New Malden, and Chessington. The Migrant Advocacy Service (MAS) caters to vulnerable migrants and individuals without access to public funds, hosting weekly community lunches at Kingsnympton Park Community Centre every Wednesday, alongside a Welcome Cafe and activities at Kingston library. Furthermore, they ensure daily food provisions through the Community Fridge offer which has recently relocated from Surbiton to Kingston Recreation Ground and offer a community cooking class, emphasising nutritious meals using ingredients sourced from the community fridge. In December 2023, as a one off, £4,560.04 of the Household Support Fund was used to provide transportation and a Christmas meal to residents staying in temporary accommodation at the Crowne Plaza London Kingston for around 150 residents.

Provision of basic food items: Beyond the cafes, residents can secure essential groceries from community pantries and fridges, as well as emergency relief from food banks. With over five community pantries and six food banks scattered across the Borough, individuals have access to these resources every day of the week. Comprehensive information on all these services is readily available in a community food and advocacy leaflet, accessible online and distributed through social care and community support partners when possible.

Community Kitchens:

Through joint work with the voluntary sector, the borough has put in place some community kitchen offers for residents in temporary accommodation. These offer a place to cook homemade meals - and to also eat it at the location, if desired. However, they do not offer a 7 day a week food preparation opportunity for everyone in Temporary Accommodation. The current offers include: Save the World Club, located at 18 Southsea Rd, launched a community kitchen initiative in 2023 as a way to facilitate community cooking and food access. The kitchen serves as a hub for hosting community events and is available for rent, particularly supporting refugees and migrants who need access to cooking facilities. Further details and bookings can be found on the Save the World Club [website](#). Additionally, Voices of Hope open their kitchen at KingsGate church on Monday afternoons for families living in temporary accommodation with no/limited access to cooking facilities to come together to cook a meal and share ideas. More information can be found on the Voices of Hope [website](#). Community Brain has opened a new community space at Tolworth station which is equipped with a community kitchen that is open to the public. Bookings can be made [here](#). RBK, in collaboration with Kingston Voluntary Action, are currently exploring other local opportunities for community kitchen provision in the borough.

In addition to the community kitchen offers, several local community groups offer cooking programs designed to bring residents together, enhance culinary skills, and create meals that participants can take home. Details of the community cooking classes can be found in the [community food and advocacy leaflet](#).

How do people in Temporary Accommodation know about the local food support offers?

Residents staying in temporary accommodation are regularly signposted to community food services by the Kingston Stronger Together Health Improvement team when attending the Food Banks and other household support services in the Borough. Housing officers also send out leaflets providing details on cooking slots at Community Kitchens. There is also comprehensive information on all the local food support services in a [community food and advocacy leaflet](#), which is accessible online and distributed through social care and community support partners when possible.

Physical activity and wellbeing and holiday periods:

- Are children staying in Temporary Accommodation, including hotels, prioritised for access to RBK Holiday programmes eg 'FUEL'? If yes, how is the FUEL offer made to the families?
- Are any RBK grant funded physical and social activity grant funded programmes required to make available places for children staying in Temporary Accommodation hotels and other such accommodation?
- What information is provided to families staying in hotels about local offers nearby? Eg playgrounds/ within hotel play space/ Children's Centres/ libraries etc

Summer Activities 2024: Kingston Council worked with the Kingston VCSE to create a short list of activities for children and families available over the holidays in their local area. We produced both a [paper leaflet](#), which listed group activities by area of the borough, and the wider programme of activities on our digital platform, 'Connected Kingston'. 4,430 leaflets and 370 posters were distributed to partners, including primary schools, libraries, Children's Centres, food banks and other food security provisions, leisure centres, temporary accommodation families and housing notice boards, community notice boards, youth clubs, refugee services, churches, Household Support Fund sites, and Health Visiting service. During the summer of 2024, we received 1,390 page visits to our Summer 2024 Summer collection on Connected Kingston. This was the most popular Connected Kingston page over the summer (second ranking page had 864 visits). Our paid advertising to this collection was also successful, with the advert being clicked on 520 times,

and seen 23,315 times by 6,665 residents (7.8% engagement rate = high engagement - usually around 3%).

In addition, through the RBK Communications team, information was shared with residents, including residents in Temporary Accommodation, on wider Cost of Living support, RBK supported activities including events at the Albany Outdoors centre, July 20th Sports Day (Weir Archer stadium) and Tolworth Park Play (launched 18th August 2024).

Mental Wellbeing:

- What support is available to people staying in Temporary Accommodation about maintaining mental wellbeing or help in a crisis?

Information has recently been added to the 'What to do if you find yourself homeless' leaflet about where to find help if someone is in mental distress. There are also plans, as part of the 2024/25 action plan of Kingston's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029⁴, to train staff housing people in temporary accommodation in Suicide prevention, and to provide staff with a flyer with details of how they can support anyone in distress.

3. What more can we do - future ways of working, collaboration, recommendations.

While there is a wide range of support available to residents being housed in Kingston Temporary Accommodation, the council is working with statutory and voluntary sectors to continue to make these offers known to residents, to review in an ongoing way our support to ensure that it meets needs where possible, and carrying out ongoing work to ensure that there is data available and is used to monitor progress.

Information and guidance (communications):

Partners and the council have worked hard to make offers of support known to residents. For those in TA, the council will continue work on a new brochure (paper and online) to bring these offers together in an easily accessible format. This will also signpost residents to advice on actions that they can take themselves to help them keep themselves and household members as well as possible. This can also be shared with services seeing people in TA and will be a useful resource in signposting people to other local support.

Continued development of support:

Within existing resources, the council will look to work with partners and those housed in Temporary Accommodation to continue to develop offers to meet needs as best as possible. This may include working with partners to help residents access free or low cost SIM cards where available, where TA has no free Wifi. The council will also look at ways of engaging residents in TA to get further understanding of needs and any opportunities for partners to work together to support those housed in TA.

Data:

⁴ <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/neighbourhood-community-safety/suicide-prevention-kingston>

The council will continue its ongoing development and use of data systems to target resources effectively, including for those in Temporary Accommodation. As part of this, the council will ensure ongoing monitoring of the effective delivery of the revised Temporary Accommodation (TA) Placement Policy (Place Committee September 2024). This will involve regularly reviewing placements to confirm that vulnerable residents are being housed in suitable accommodation that meet their specific needs, such as proximity to support services, access to medical care, and availability of necessary facilities.

Conclusion:

Residents in Temporary Accommodation (TA) face challenges to their health and wellbeing through both the fundamental lack of certainty about their accommodation and related issues, such as whether children can continue to attend their regular school or whether the accommodation is located near to the resident's employment. In addition, the actual TA accommodation may pose challenges to wellbeing where a household does not have access to a kitchen or laundry facilities or enough space for children to play.

RBK Housing Services are aware of issues presented by long-term use of TA and especially that in provision of accommodation without access to kitchen facilities or located outside of the borough in relation to the need for vulnerable households and families to maintain existing support networks and access to services. In this issue, RBK Housing Services are committed to reduce use of all forms of TA and are actively delivering a programme of change to reduce use of TA focused on the elimination of current use of Hotel accommodation but covering all forms of TA.

While the actual accommodation provision currently remains very challenging and the council is working as hard as possible to provide TA in a very difficult housing environment, residents in TA do have access to a range of health and care and wellbeing offers. The council, with partners, will continue to work on these offers to try and make them accessible and suitable to the needs of residents in TA.