

Torbay Strategic Housing Board

Housing requirements based on service need



An aerial photograph of a coastal town and harbor. The town is densely packed with houses and buildings, extending from the foreground towards the water. The harbor is a large body of water, and the sky is clear and blue. The text 'Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)' is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)

Key findings

Purpose of HENA

- Part of evidence base for Local Plan Update: replaces SHMA
- Determines the housing requirement
- Sets a housing, demographic and socio-economic baseline
- Calculates the need for affordable housing
- Informs the need for specialised housing

Torbay housing market

- Owner occupation 68%; PRS 24%; Social rent 8%
- Reliance on PRS for lower income households- nearly 60% of PRS in receipt of housing benefit.
- Vacancy rate (empty homes) higher than comparative areas
- Relatively low level of HMOs (licensable and non-licensable)
- Higher level of low value house to studio/ 1 bed flat conversions – 1960s/1970s.

Demographics

- Growing and ageing population- accelerated growth in older cohorts.
- Key component of population – internal migration.
- Highest outflow of population – age cohorts 20-25 & 25-30.
- Highest inflow of population – age cohorts 55-59 & 60-64.
- Household growth will outstrip population growth
- Household growth skewed significantly toward older cohorts

Cost of housing

- House price increase of 32% over the last 10 years
- Flats have lagged at 21%
- PRS potentially more affordable, although recent changes in the market have altered this
- Household income required to buy on the open market at LQ level - £36,000
- Household income required to rent on the open market at LQ level - £18,562

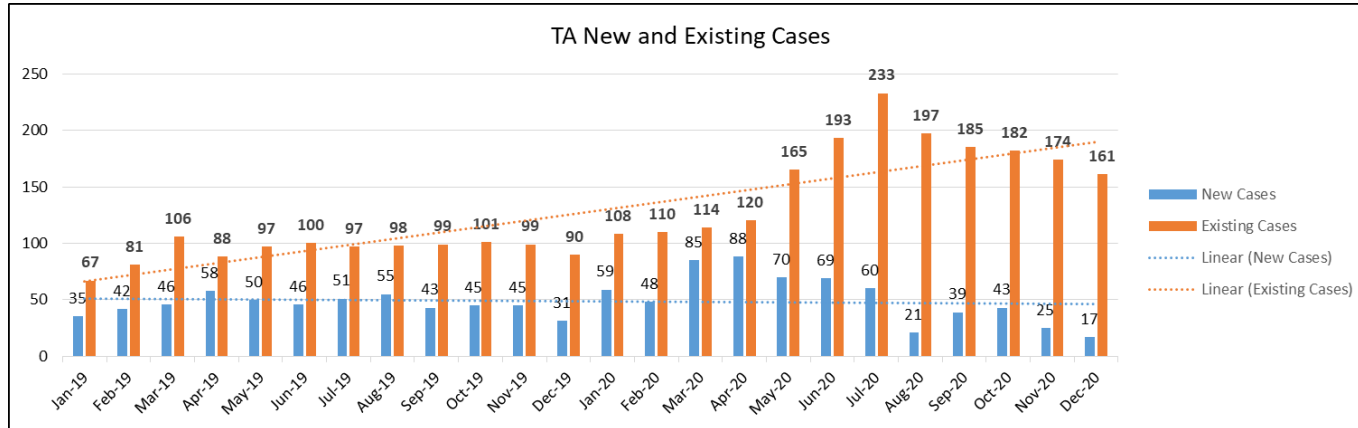
Housing needs

- Housing requirement (Standard Method) prov. 587 dwellings per annum over 10 years
- Affordable housing for Rent requirement (net shortfall) prov. 237 dwellings per annum
- Affordable housing for Sale requirement (net shortfall) prov. 72 dwellings per annum
- Specialised housing- significant demographic pressure

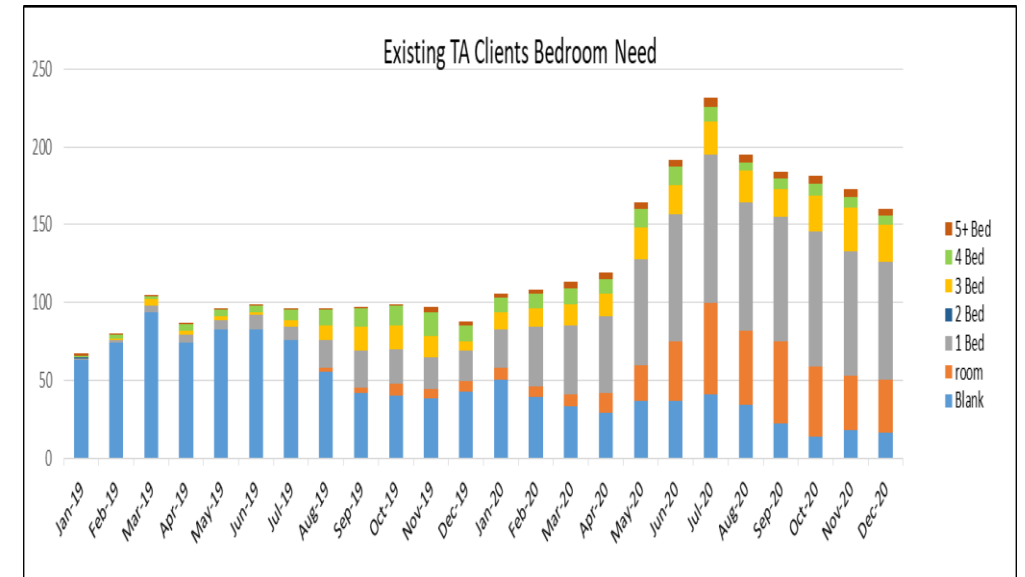
Housing Challenges for those that find themselves homeless

Affordability, accessibility and complexity

Demand for TA and why



- The main reasons for losing settled accommodation- loss of rented accommodation and asked to leave by friends and family, accounting for over 50% on TA cases consistently over the last 3 years. The next reason is due to DA and then lower level relationship breakdown.
- Prior to the pandemic there had been a 20% increase in the number of families requiring assistance. Now its 33% of TA.



Affordability and accessibility

Property Size	Local average rent *** pcm	Torbay LHA Feb 2021++ pcm	Differential pcm
1 Bed	£450 - £550	£414.24 (£103.56 pw)	- £36 - £136
2 Bed	£550 - £675	£552 (£138.08 pw)	- £0 - £123
3 Bed	£800 - £1000	£672 (£168.00 pw)	- £128 - £328
4 Bed	£900 - £1500	£ £828.48 (£207.12 pw)	- £72 - £672

Table: Average cost of rental accommodation in Torbay against the local level of LHA and hence the shortfall

- Affordability, with changing housing market and LHA rates
- DHC waiting list 1450, though put on average 200 household p.a
- Lack of family properties either PRS or DHC
- Increasing complexity and inability to access accommodation

Need for TA

Bed Need	2019	%	Average length of stay	2020	%	Average length of stay
1 Bed	316	58%	94 days	483	77%	103 days
2 Bed	151	28%	105 days	110	18%	115 days
3 Bed	17	3%	150 days	3	0%	152 days
4 Bed	60	11%	119 days	24	4%	144 days
5 Bed	3	1%	*191 days	4	1%	**136 days
Grand Total	547			624		

Table : Average length of stay in TA for each client based on bed need

	Description	Volume / Number of Units
Lot 1	Single	40
Lot 2	Self-Contained Family Accommodation -2,3,4 & 5 Bed).	2 bed – 22 3 bed – 4 4 bed - 10 5 bed - 1
Lot 3	Young People – to be implemented through provider network TBC	
Lot 4	Spot Purchase Framework (to include out of hours and emergency event response)	

Table: Procurement Lots - Anticipated total number of units of TA required by bed size

Recommendations

- Access to self contained TA that meets the needs to all clients
- Parenthood prevention strategy
- Increased access to affordable accommodation
- Assess under occupancy and can this assist in freeing up family houses
- Affordability LHA lobbying

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Torbay, showing a large bay, residential areas, and a bridge. The text is overlaid on the image.

Adult Social Care / Mental Health: Housing Requirements

Andrew Moorhouse (Community Service Manager, Adult Social Care Bay Wide including U65MH and the Emergency Duty Service).

Presenting issues

- Temporary accommodation provided is often inadequate.
- Temporary accommodation locally is heavily reliant on B&B and hotel provision.
- B&B and Hotel providers are not in the business of supporting vulnerable clients and are not commissioned to meet care needs.
- There have been incidents of challenge where carers have been unable to undertake visits due to accommodation providers considering them to be 'guests' and against the rules.
- School holiday periods and other times of high tourism place higher strain on housing availability during times where resilience in the ASC system is lower due to less staffing.
- B&B and Hotel accommodation can feel isolating for people and can result in increased levels of anxiety and low mood.
- The inadequate provision of temporary accommodation makes assessing clients under the Care Act challenging.
- There is concern that people may have been found ineligible for housing based on the housing they have been provided on a temporary basis whilst the housing needs assessment is undertaken. That this accommodation is often suboptimal and this results in the temporary arrangements breaking down (behaviour, distress, breaking rules) and clients being found intentionally homeless or too high need.
- At times specialist accommodation provided by ASC is suggested when more suitable accommodation (specifically with peoples own kitchen facilities) would have been appropriate with support provided via a support plan.

The challenges assessing under the Care Act with current housing provision.

- Assessing eligibility under the Care Act when someone is placed in sub-optimal temporary accommodation is problematic.
- A number of the eligibility outcomes under the Care Act 2014 are difficult to meet within a B&B/Hotel setting. These include:
 - Managing and maintaining nutrition.
 - Being able to make use of the adults home safely.
 - Maintaining a habitable home environment.
- Where a clients needs arise from a physical or mental impairment or illness. Having been placed in B&B accommodation is likely to prevent ASC from being able to meet their needs effectively and promote independence.
- The majority of ASC clients can be supported in their own homes via support plans so long as the accommodation can meet basic requirements.

Recommendations:

- Housing investment / commissioning of temporary accommodation that includes kitchen facilities / self contained properties.
- Those that have been referred to ASC for eligibility assessment have priority over other people who have made housing applications (other over than families with children).
- Temporary accommodation for clients with eligible needs to also be considered. This needs to be accommodation where care and support staff can access clients and provide this support.
- ASC, Housing, Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI), mental health services and local community voluntary sector to collate data on the number of people where this type of accommodation is needed.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Torbay, showing a dense residential area on the left, a large body of water on the right, and a bridge crossing a river or inlet in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

Housing Challenges and Opportunities for Adult Social Care Operations and Transformation

Challenges:

- Housing partners need to fully absorb the shift towards tenure and home-ownership for non-traditional people with social care needs. This remains the main barrier to housing.
- The social housing system needs to be navigable for people requiring health and care services to support independent living. This includes application processes, tenancy agreements, agreeing specific housing requirements and ongoing housing management.
- We need to develop better, more creative partnerships to identify need, jointly fund & build appropriate housing, enable good quality care & support and co-manage the ongoing needs of tenants and home-owners using health and care services.
- We need to ensure that there is a common ongoing strategic approach across all partners to support the shift from socially-excluded models of care to housing-based citizen-focused models of support.

Opportunities:

- We have robust data to evidence need for rented and owned sheltered / very sheltered housing across Torbay to support transformation of health & care services for older people. This is a key issue because of Torbay's aging demographic.
- We are producing data / cost benefit analysis to support development of bespoke local housing to improve outcomes and reduce long-term revenue costs for people with very complex needs and high cost package of care. This is a key issue because of Transforming Care and the pressure of complex young people entering adulthood.
- The Torbay Supported Living Framework allows us to work with partners to identify and plan pathways for people with LD and MH to move from intensively supported housing to general needs housing in a way that supports timely acquisition and development.
- Improved joint commissioning is creating better services and partnerships to support people with complex needs successfully in general needs housing.

Housing Challenges and Opportunities for Children Services



Youth Homelessness

Although significant progress has been made in this area, there is insufficient capacity to meet demands. Short term emergency accommodation provided by Young Devon, Live West and Westward shortly to be joined by the Night Stop Service provided by the YMCA is effectively blocked by the absence of sufficient 'move on' permanent provision.

In their recent review of services in Torbay by the MHCLG offered the following recommendations for further exploration as potential solutions:

- **Consider commissioning an Emergency Supported Lodgings** scheme to build upon your Night Stop provision for those needing longer term family support. (Bath and Northeast Somerset and Swindon Borough Council commission these schemes).
- Via Torbay's Provider Forum **design a single consent-based assessment and referral form** for use by all providers, to reduce duplication and streamline documentation across your pathway.
- **Ask providers to review all current placements, to identify those young people who are able to go home**, with support, those who are 'tenancy ready' and able to move on with or without support, to maximise all move on opportunities. They further suggested we should
 - aim to identify young people who qualify for the shared accommodation rate exemption to help with affordability and income maximisation.
 - look to build upon improved relationships with family, and ensure providers keep this an ongoing focus, both formally and informally, whilst supporting young people.
- **Consider house share opportunities** for young people who are able to live together, particularly where there is a shortage of 1 bedroom provision, and Peer or Lead Tenant schemes.

Care Experienced

Torbay is currently supporting 189 care experienced young people. With an expected rise in numbers over the forthcoming years. At any one time we expect 28% of this young people to be sourcing independent living arrangements.

- Introduce an early referral process for care experienced young people, who are assessed as ready for independence at eighteen, to allow for intensive transition planning pre-eighteen. Currently, we are only able to complete housing applications once a young person reaches the age of eighteen which causes significant delay in progressing plans for young people, and means they are often stuck in a period of drift and delay pending the outcome of applications post-eighteen.
- Create a stock of move-on accommodation which is easily accessible to care experienced young people.
- Provide internally run and resourced training flats (accommodation) which are accessible to care experienced young people, with support accessible in line with their transition planning.
- In parallel, develop a social housing scheme with a small stock of social housing properties available to respond to joint assessments by Children's Services and Housing Options of young people's readiness for independence and tenancy management.
- To provide incentives for private landlords including a guarantor scheme to provide greater confidence to landlords who consider renting to care experienced young people. This would be consistent with a policy decision to prevent care experienced young people from being classified as being intentionally homeless.
- Give preference given to care experienced young people in terms of social and private housing applications.

Families with children who have a social worker and deemed “intentionally homeless”

By virtue of the need to be involved with statutory CSC these children by the very nature of having a social worker are some of our most vulnerable. The added pressure of being made homeless will only exacerbate the complexities of these family situations. The majority live in poverty and as a result have limited availability to search the market for private provision once made intentionally homeless resulting in the families being directed to support via children's services

Children's Services invariably are faced with a considerable financial cost of between £2,500 and £15,000 per family and a significant time commitment in identifying and working with private landlords, hotels, and (particularly in the low season) proprietors of holiday chalets and caravans to secure temporary accommodation that is often disruptive for children. Their vulnerability is often compounded by frequent moves which impacts on children's social, emotional, educational and life chances.

It is therefore recommended that urgent work is undertaken to investigate schemes targeting this cohort of families in other parts of the country (for example in Bristol) and develop proposals to be presented to an early meeting of this Board.



Housing Challenges and Concerns

Trends from the Torbay Community Helpline, Age UK,
What's Your Problem? and Citizen's Advice Torbay

Challenges/Concerns

- Housing – intensive housing support needed for under 50's with complex needs
- Inconsistency in action required – this may be due to processes changing and a lack of communication to agencies. However, the approach varies between Housing Officers
- Temporary accommodation – an increase recently in those advising us that they have no way to prepare food, sometimes no access to a kettle to allow for support from a local foodbank
- Access to updates – currently unable to update clients being supported, as calls and emails do not always receive a response, there is no access to the housing system on a read only basis which would alleviate the numbers of calls and emails made to chase progress

Partner Intelligence 1

Devon Home Choice:

- Registration, updating of information and checking of registration is protracted
- Call back times are long and often clients are on the wrong banding for some considerable time
- Agencies such as Age UK are not recognised to give supporting evidence, but the waiting time for evidence from a G.P. or Adult Social Care is increasing

Temporary Accommodation:

- Not appropriate for physically disabled people, no places offered for our clients with a physical care need
- Lack of appropriate accommodation for individuals in recovery and have been some time. Often the accommodation is hectic, noisy and not a place to recover
- Clients report they do not receive calls back and feel pressured to accept unsuitable accommodation
- Lack of places for people who do not meet ASC criteria, but need support either low-level mental health, vulnerable due to age or more. Often these individuals are placed in Care Homes at a higher cost and lack of independence
- Clients have advised that they cannot maintain existing support networks whilst in temporary accommodation as friends/family that would normally provide support are excluded from entering the accommodation. This often results in an escalation of crisis.

Partner Intelligence 2

Private Housing

- Flats that come to market, are taken within hours, making it very difficult to be 'right place right time'
- Clients are often refused due to low income
- Ground floor or accessible properties are almost nonexistent
- Rent costs in the last 3 months have gone up over the LHA rate, so there is no help with upfront rent and deposit, as the property is deemed unaffordable
- Sadly, many are moving out of Torbay now, as there is nothing coming up here. However, this only works for people with no existing support network
- Many landlords don't know what their responsibilities are, in particular around legally asking a tenant to leave and how to rent to and support vulnerable people

A joint solution

We can do more but need....

- Communication and connectivity –
 - Read only access to the housing system, this would allow our clients to be kept updated and reduce calls to the housing team
 - A regular and fit for purpose operational forum, involving the voluntary sector to escalate, discuss and potentially solve breakdowns in the system and or specific complex cases
 - Clear communicated process that supports appropriate housing of our most vulnerable. The voluntary sector can support wider promotion of this.
- Support -
 - Development of a community led Landlord support package, led by the voluntary sector, aimed at landlords wishing to support vulnerable tenants
 - Secondhand furniture distribution warehouse to help with starting tenancy's and maintaining them.
 - CIC – to assist with move on especially with underoccupancy to help free up housing stock.