

Funding arrangements for the Homelessness Prevention Grant from 2026/27 onwards

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposal to use 'total Housing Benefit (HB) + Universal Credit (UC) claimants' as a measure of homelessness demand?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach

No.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils do not agree with the proposed new formula to measure homelessness demand.

Despite having a strong economy and areas of relative wealth, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse have pockets of deprivation, an acute shortage of affordable housing, and an expensive housing market that is often out of reach for low to medium income households. The result is high demand for homelessness services, as reflected in the HCLIC Delta returns.

The proposed new measure for homelessness demand is a poor measure of homelessness in the districts. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have relatively low numbers of HB and UC claimants compared to London and areas of the north of England, we are however experiencing significant numbers of homelessness approaches from our residents due to the unaffordability of housing that impacts medium and low-income households. Many of these households are not claiming UC or HB but when impacted by events like an unexpected fall in income or a relationship breakdown cannot sustain or find a tenancy due to the high rental costs.

Our key drivers of homelessness; eviction by family or friends, domestic abuse or the end of an assured shorthold tenancy, are not directly related to the number of UC/ housing benefit claims. Family and friend evictions in particular are driven by households being unable to afford their own accommodation and, in some cases, present as homeless. This factor is not taken into account by the new formula.

The current formula is a more accurate reflection of homelessness demand which recognizes the actual number of homeless approaches. We believe the new formula should be revised and, at least to some extent, factor in the number of homelessness duties accepted by local authorities.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal to use 'TA Numbers' as a measure of TA demand?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent

- **If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach**

No.

We do not agree with TA numbers replacing the current formula of TA expenditure being used to calculate the HPG formula. The TA numbers do not take into account the higher expense of securing TA that is incurred by local authorities located in more expensive housing areas.

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposal to use 'mean rents in the PRS' as a measure of homelessness costs?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Indifferent**
- **If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach**

No.

We agree there is little difference between using mean rents or lower quartile rents for the purpose of the calculation, however we disagree with the removal of "prevention and relief into the PRS" from the formula. The current measure acknowledges the difficulty in high demand housing areas, with limited access to private and social housing due to the expensive private rental market and limited social housing stock. We undertake significant work to access the PRS and this measure acknowledges the additional pressure we experience with the cost of homelessness. We therefore request "prevention and relief into the PRS" is included in the new formula.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposal to use the 'labour cost adjustment' as a measure of homelessness costs?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Indifferent**
- **If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach**

No.

We would want to retain the broader ACA calculation rather than replace it with only the LCA calculation in the formula. We accept labour costs should remain in the formula, however we prefer ACA remains to factor in property prices and travel times which provide a fuller picture of the extra costs homelessness costs incurred.

Question 5: If your local authority is located within London, do you agree with the proposal to apply 'average costs for London'?

- **Our local authority is not located within London**
- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Indifferent**
- **If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach**

Our local authority is not located within London.

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposal to use 'mean rents in the PRS' as a measure of TA costs?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach

Yes.

Question 7: If your local authority is located within London, do you agree with the proposal to apply 'average costs for London'?

- Our local authority is not located within London
- Yes
- No
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach

Our local authority is not located within London.

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposal to use RO4 (Revenue Outturn tables on TA spend) to approximate TA numbers where there is no TA data available for the given year?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach

Yes.

Question 9) What do you think is an appropriate split of HPG funding between temporary accommodation and prevention and relief?

- 45% TA and 55% prevention and relief
- More than 45% on TA and less than 55% on prevention and relief
- Less than 45% on TA and more than 55% on prevention and relief
- Other
- Indifferent
- You are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or alternative approach

45% TA and 55% prevention and relief.

We are experiencing rising pressures on TA and therefore support acknowledgment of this cost. However, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have a strong track record in preventing homelessness and want to build upon this success through the retention of funding for prevention and relief activities.

The 45/55 percentage split between TA and prevention and relief costs is currently a reasonable balance.

Question 10) Should there be a phased approach to implementing a change in weighting? For example, implement a partial change in weighting in year 1 and the full change in year 2.

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach

Yes.

We would not however agree with the example provided.

Question 11) If prevention and relief spend represented 55% of overall HPG funding, what do you think is an appropriate split between labour and rent costs?

- 30% labour 25% rents
- More than 30% on labour
- More than 25% on rents
- Other
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'other' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or alternative approach

Other.

This would be a decision for the local authority based upon the needs and circumstances at the time.

Question 12: Do you agree with the proposal to use transitional arrangements to mitigate changes in funding allocations?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent
- If you have answered 'no' or 'indifferent', you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or an alternative approach

Yes.

Question 13: Do you agree with the proposal to use transitional arrangements in line with the caps used in the previous formula (2% in the first year and 5% in the second)?

- Yes - agree with 2% and 5%
- No - the % caps should be lower
- No - the % caps should be higher
- No - I do not agree with transitional arrangements
- Indifferent

No - the % caps should be lower.

Question 14: If you answered Q13 with “the % caps should be lower – what % range would you prefer?

- Up to 1%
- Up to 2%
- Up to 3%
- Up to 4%
- Up to 5%
- None of the above
- Indifferent

Up to 2%.

Question 15: If you answered Q13 with “the % caps should be higher – what % range would you prefer?

- 5-10%
- 10-15%
- 15-20%
- Higher than 20%
- None of the above
- Indifferent

N/A

Question 16: Do you agree with the proposal for transitional arrangements to be tapered between financial years?

- Yes - I agree the cap should be increased in later years
- No - the % caps should be the same in all years
- No - I do not agree with using transitional arrangements
- Indifferent
- If you have answered ‘no’ or ‘indifferent’, you are welcome to provide further comment on your reasoning and/or alternative approach

No - the % caps should be the same in all years

We do not agree with the proposed formula changes and therefore we would want the most protection for the longest period possible.