

Housing Facts and Figures

January 2021



WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

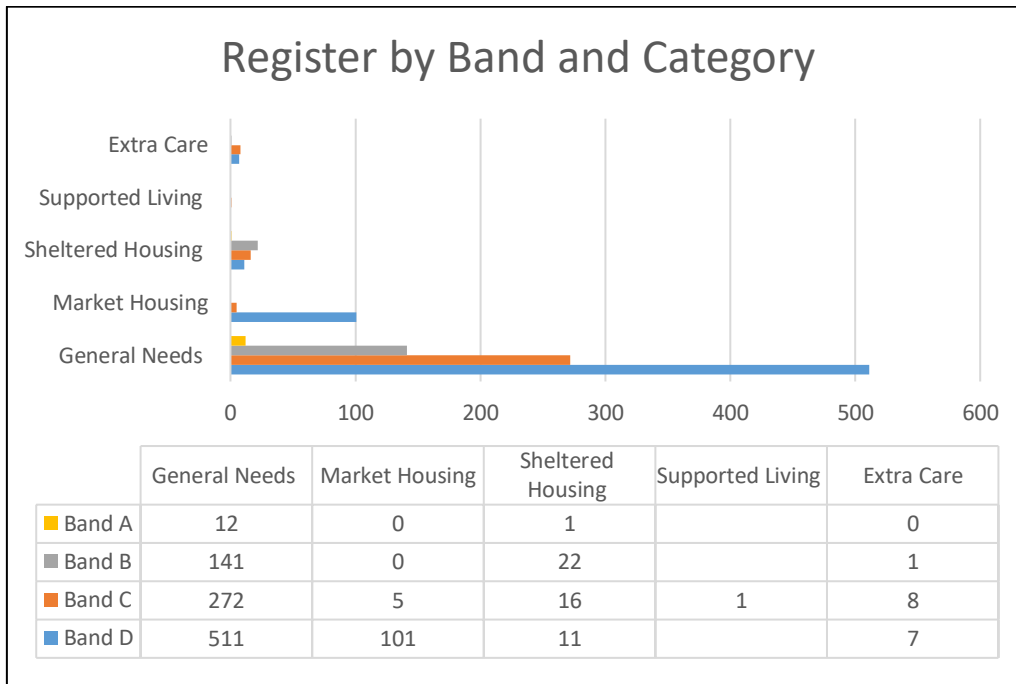
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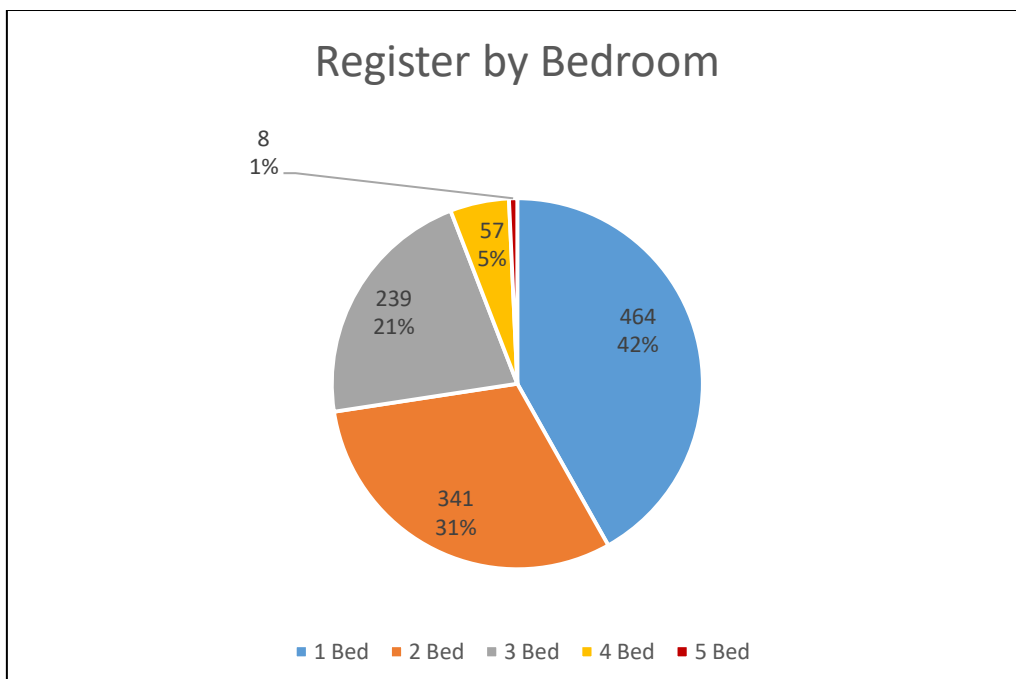
1. Housing Need

1.1 Housing register

As of the 3 November 2020, there were a total of 1,109 applicants on the Housing Register, including 106 applications that were registered for Thamesway Housing Limited properties only and 50 for sheltered accommodation (see Chart 1 below). Of the 1,109 applicants, 57% are currently placed in Band D, with 27% in Band C, 15% in Band B and 1% in Band A.

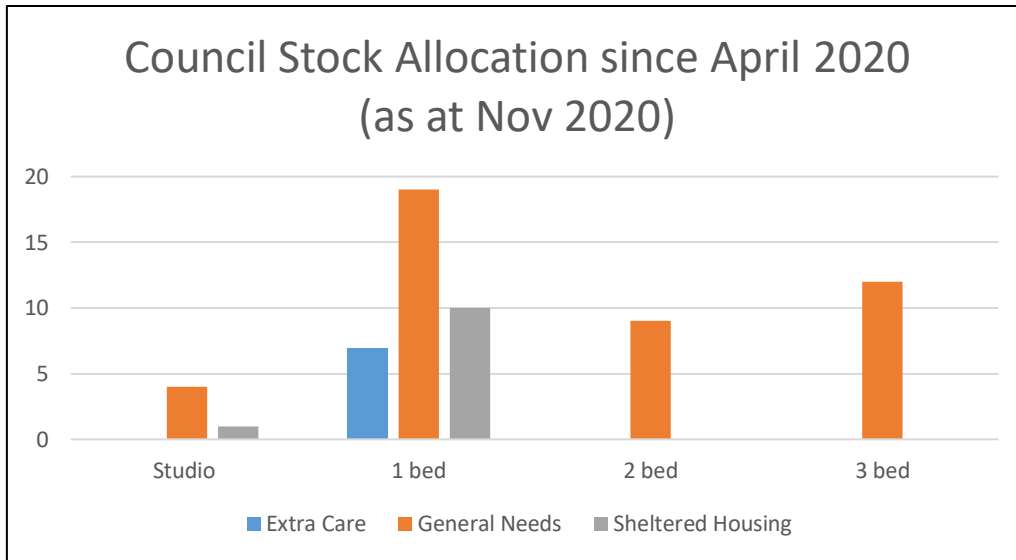


The Housing Register evidences a need of 42% for 1 bed dwellings; 31% for 2 bed; 21% for 3 bed; and 6% for 4+ bed (see chart 2 below).



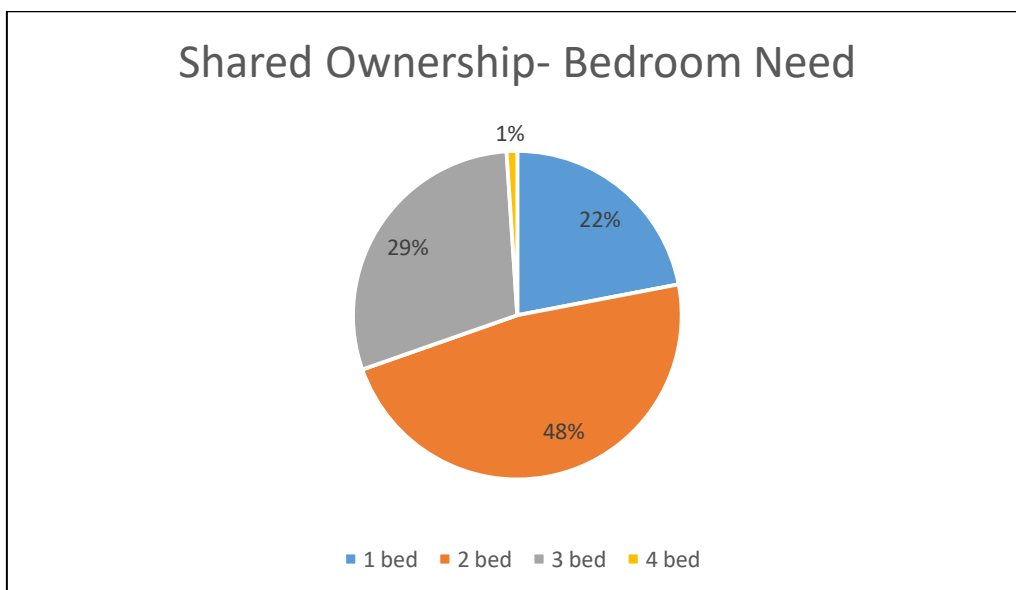
1.2 Allocations

The Council operates a Choice Based Lettings systems which allows applicants to see what homes are available, giving them the opportunity to express choice and preference in the process of selecting a suitable home. As at November 2020, 62 Council-owned properties have been allocated since April 2020. 11 properties have also been allocated through Registered Providers (housing associations).



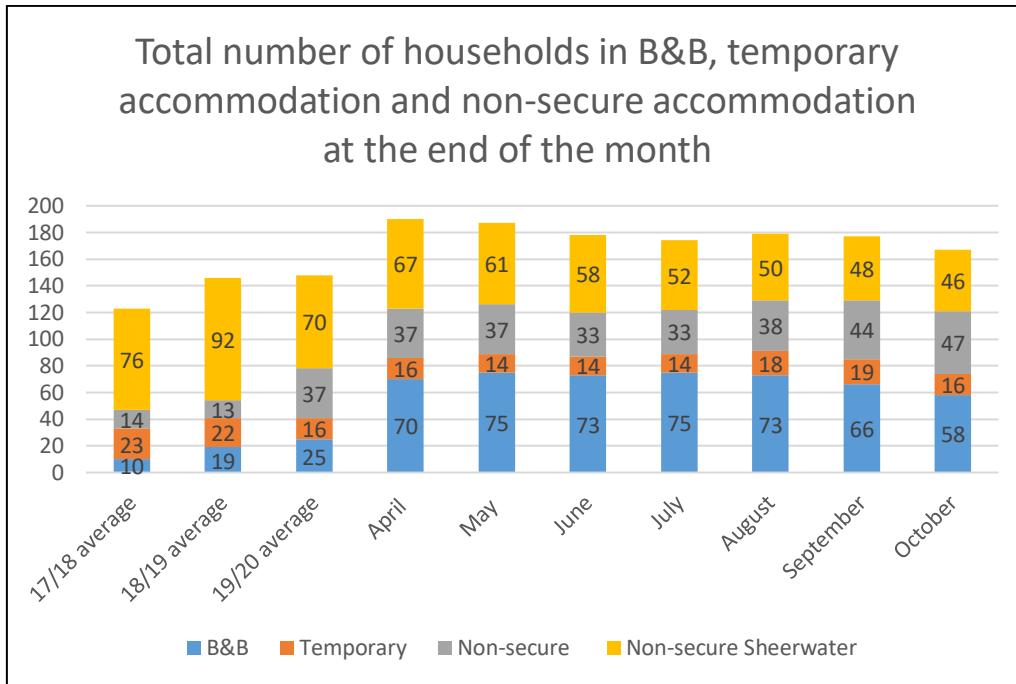
1.3 Shared ownership

The waiting list for low cost home ownership products, such as shared ownership, is held by the regional Help to Buy Agent (Radian Housing Association). They have 191 applicants seeking shared ownership homes in Woking as of November 2020. Of these, 22% are seeking one bedroom dwellings; 48% two-bedroom dwellings; and 29% three bedroom dwellings.

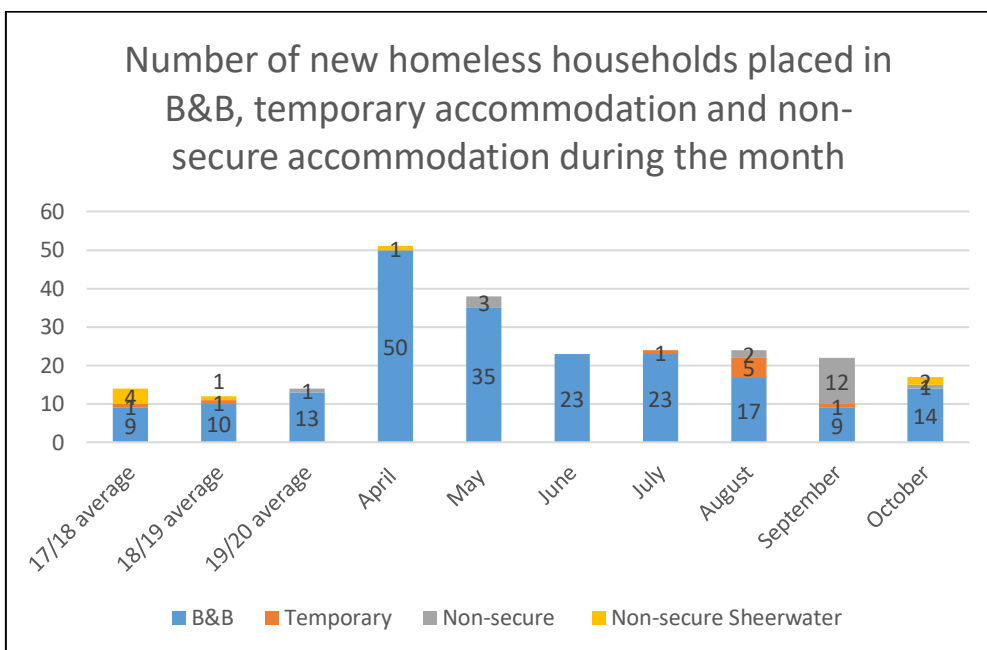


1.4 Homelessness presentations and applications

At the end of October 2020, the Council was accommodating 167 homeless households in some form of emergency accommodation. Typically, over the last 2 years, this number has been around 130 - 150, with the increase reflecting the additional numbers accommodated in hotels through the Covid-19 pandemic (see graph below).

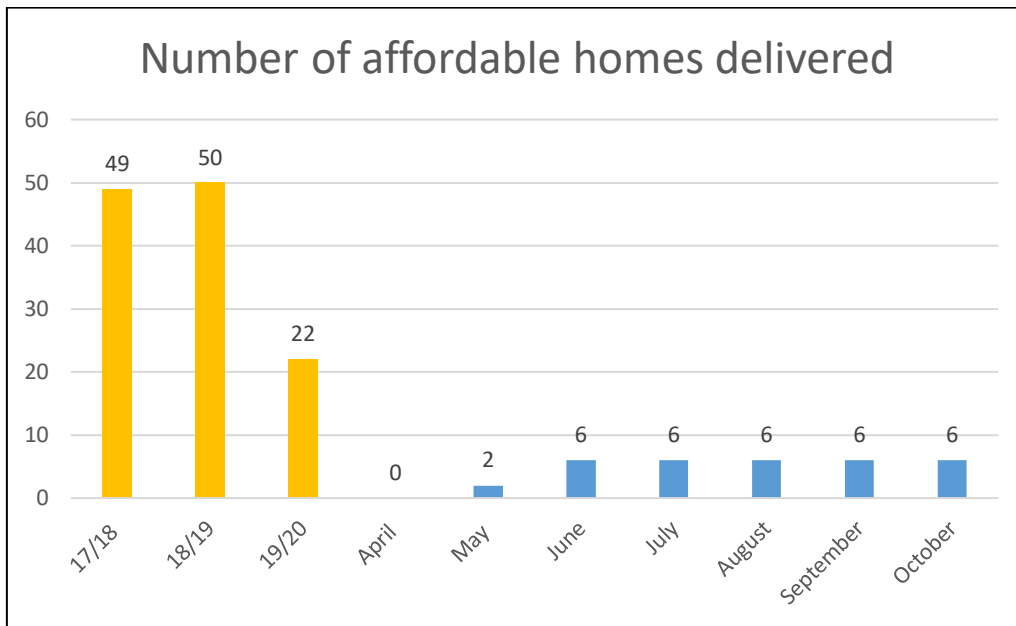


The graph below further highlights the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on homelessness. In October 2020, 17 households were accommodated, primarily in B&B accommodation. This shows a return to more typical monthly levels compared with at the start of the pandemic.



1.5 Affordable housing supply

The Woking Core Strategy (2012) Policy CS12 sets out the parameters for the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough, including the overall delivery target over the Plan (to 2026) of 1,737 new affordable homes. This equates to an annual target of 102 dwellings per annum. A total of 6 affordable homes have been delivered in this financial year to date. As depicted in the graph below, 22 affordable homes were delivered in 2019/20.



2. Housing Market

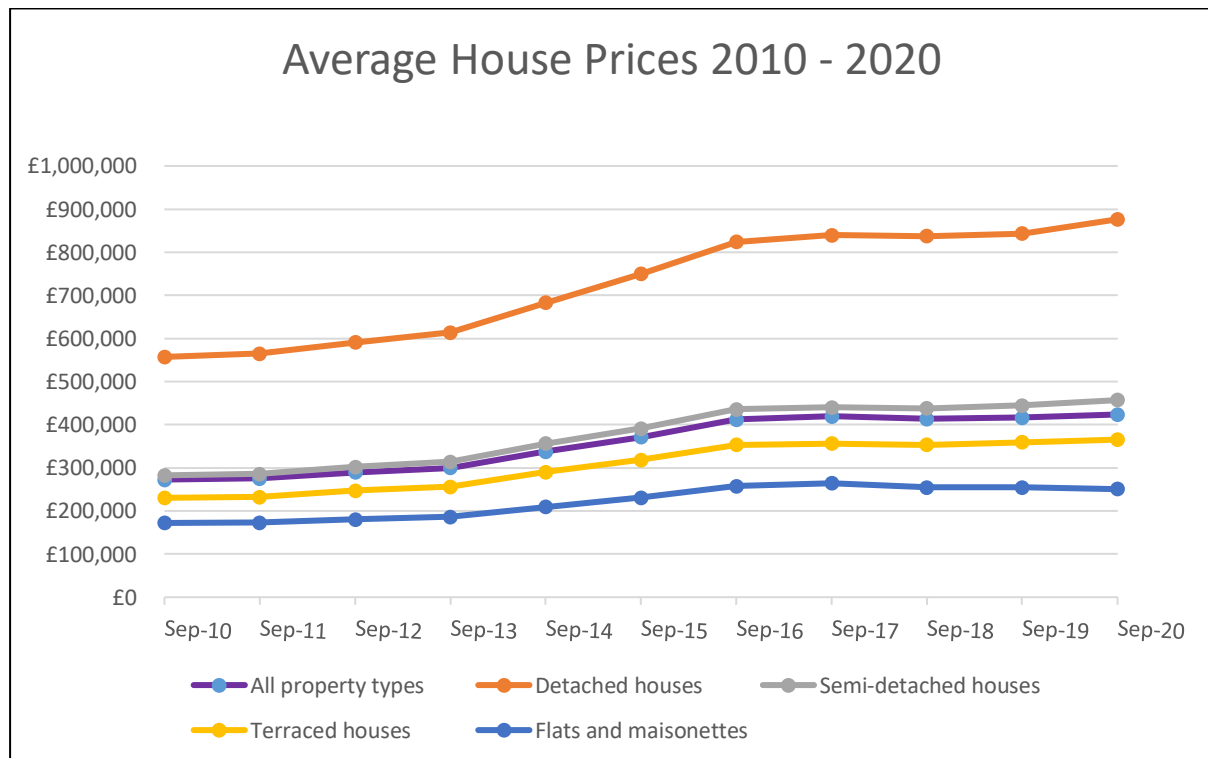
2.1 National

As of September 2020 the average house price in the UK was £244,513. Property prices have risen by 1.7% compared to the previous month, and risen by 4.7% compared to the previous year.¹ The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) September 2020 [UK Residential Market Survey](#) results reveal that the sales market continues to show increase in activity across the market and indicate house price growth is accelerating right across the UK.

2.2 Local

House prices in the borough have remained steady over the last 12 months. Latest Land Registry data shows that the average house price of all property types in Woking borough was £423,741 in September 2020. This is a 4.01% (+£16,649) annual percentage change since September 2019. The average house prices in Woking remain significantly higher than the national average house price. The chart below shows the house price trend in Woking between 2010 and 2020.

The chart shows that sales prices for houses (particularly detached properties) have increased steadily following the first lockdown, while sales prices for apartments have continued to fall.



¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-house-price-index-summary-september-2020/uk-house-price-index-summary-september-2020>

2.3 Affordability

In Woking, the affordability ratio of median house price to workplace-based earnings was 10.52 as of March 2020, this is a steady decrease since 2018 when the ratio was 12.12². Although housing affordability has improved in Woking, it is still significantly less affordable than the national average. Data published by the Office for National Statistics on 19 March 2020, shows that in England in 2019, full-time employees could typically expect to spend around 7.8 times their workplace-based annual earnings on purchasing a home; this is a slight improvement from the previous year, when the ratio was 8.0.

Purchaser affordability table by property type in Woking Borough September 2020.

Property type	Average selling price in the Borough (as of Sept 2020)	Deposit required (assuming 80% mortgage)	Minimal annual income required (assuming 3.5 times annual salary)
All	£423,741	£84,748	£96,855
Detached	£876,523	£175,305	£200,348
Semi-detached	£457,104	£91,421	£104,481
Terraced	£365,492	£73,098	£83,541
Flat/Maisonette	£251,145	£50,229	£57,405

2.4 Renting a home privately³

The latest HomeLet Rental Index⁴ shows that average rental values in the South East have increased by 2.8%, when compared to September last year. The table below gives a breakdown of asking rents for privately rented homes as of September 2020, together with the applicable Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the potential shortfall between these figures.

	LHA (pcm)	Average Asking Rent in September 2020 (pcm)	Potential Shortfall (pcm)
1 Bed flat	£847.68	£927.00	£79.32
2 Bed flat	£1,096.98	£1,234.00	£137.02
2 Bed house	£1,096.98	£1,232.00	£135.02
3 Bed house	£1,371.24	£1,516.00	£144.76
4 Bed house	£1,795.08	£2,230.00	£434.92

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

³ <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/market/woking/?q=Woking%2C%20Surrey>

⁴ <https://homelet.co.uk/homelet-rental-index/south-east>

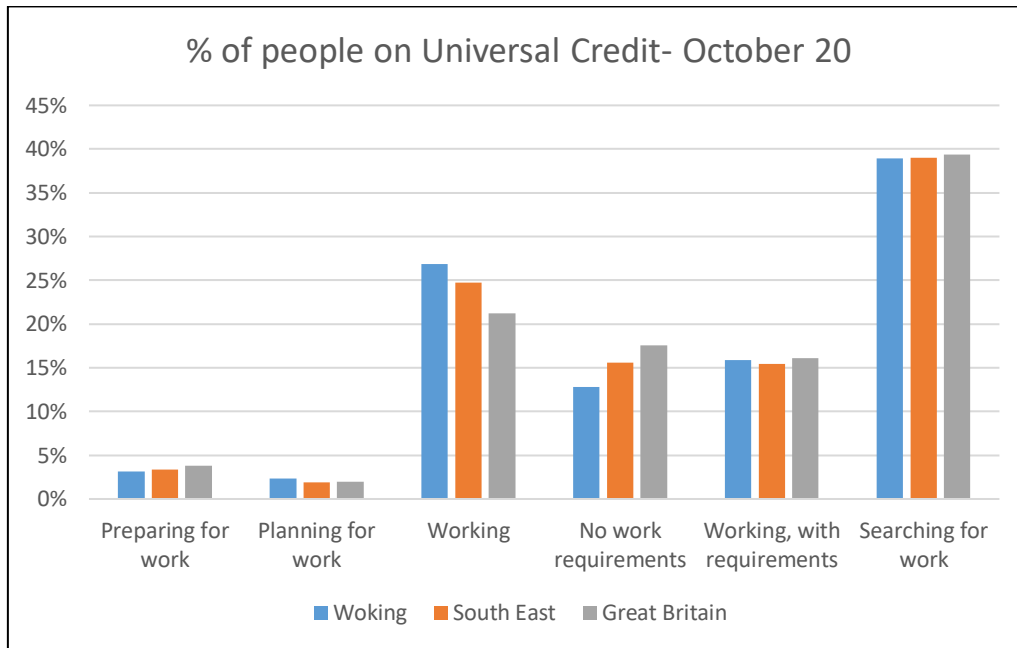
2.5 Earn Your Own Deposit

Earn Your Deposit is a new scheme that helps Thamesway assured shorthold tenants buy their own home by giving them money towards a deposit. The Earn Your Deposit scheme offers them a substantial financial contribution towards the deposit needed to buy a place of their own. Available to all 'good tenants' who pay their rent on time, look after their homes and respect their neighbours, the scheme enables tenants to 'earn' a monetary value each year - for example £2,400 for a two-bed property - towards a deposit for their first privately-owned home after a two year qualifying period. The maximum deposit is capped at £80,000, which is a significant sum towards a property purchase. The scheme is not available to investors or existing home owners. As at October 2020, 4 tenants have made use of the Earn Your Deposit scheme.

3. Welfare system

3.1 Universal Credit

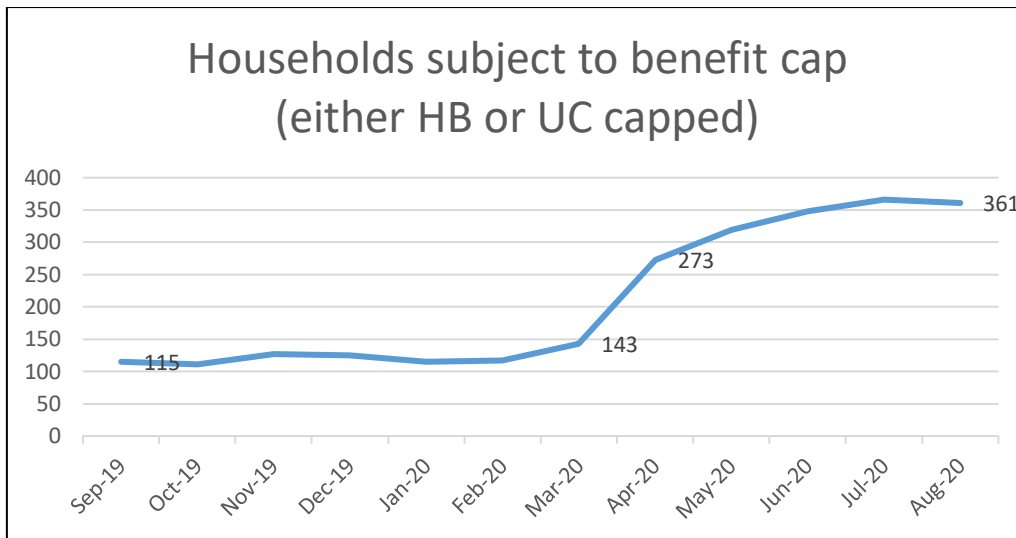
In Woking, the number of people on Universal Credit was 6,267 as at 8 October 2020. Claimants are required to do certain work-related activities to receive Universal Credit. These activities are determined by which of the 6 conditionality regimes the claimant is placed in. As circumstances change claimants will also transition between different levels of conditionality. The graph below compares the six conditionality regimes for Woking, the South East and Great Britain as at September 2020.



3.2 Benefit Cap

The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of benefit that most working age people can get. The amount of benefit a household receives is reduced to ensure claimants do not receive more than the cap limit. The benefit cap can be applied through either Universal Credit (UC) or Housing Benefit (HB). Nationally, 170,000 households had their benefits capped at August 2020, an increase of 8% on the previous quarter. As depicted in the graph below, the number of households that had their benefits capped in Woking borough has increased rapidly from 115 households in September 2019 to 361 households in August 2020⁵.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-august-2020>



3.3 Discretionary Housing Payment Awards

A Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is a short-term payment from the Council to help meet some housing costs, a DHP is made on top of any Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction entitlements. The Government has given councils funding to give DHPs to people who have been affected by welfare reforms including; the benefit cap, removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector and changes to Local Housing Allowance rates, including the 4 year freeze. The tables below show our 2020/21 current position as at 14 December 2020.

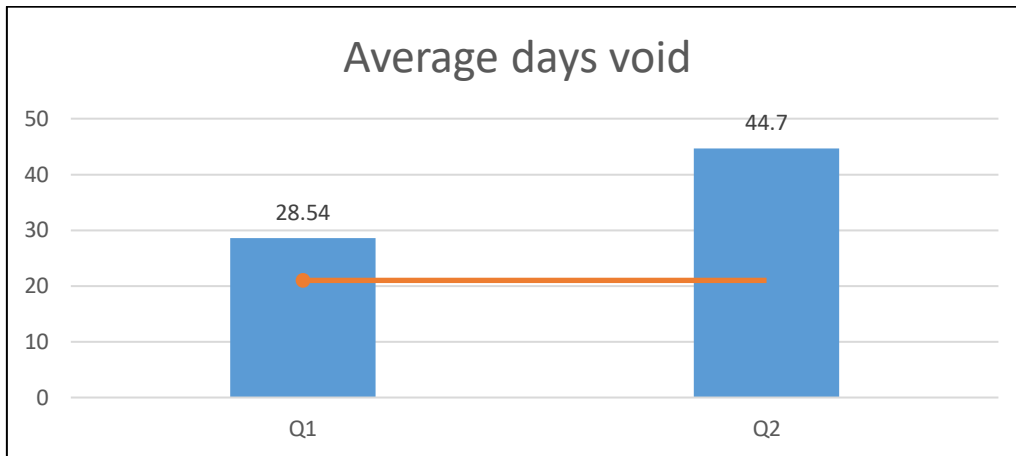
Impact of welfare Reforms	Number of Awards	£
Benefit Cap	30	46732.04
Removal of spare room subsidy	16	8848.26
LHA Restriction	5	3395.91
Combination of reforms	13	15749.22
No impact	37	45650.89
Total	101	£120376.32

Purpose of DHP	Number of Awards
To help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g rent deposit)	41
To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant secures and moves to alternative accommodation	4
To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment	27
To help with ongoing rental costs for disabled person in adapted accommodation	3
To help with ongoing rental costs for foster carer	0
To help with on-going rental costs for any other reasons	26
Total	101

4. Housing Management and Repairs

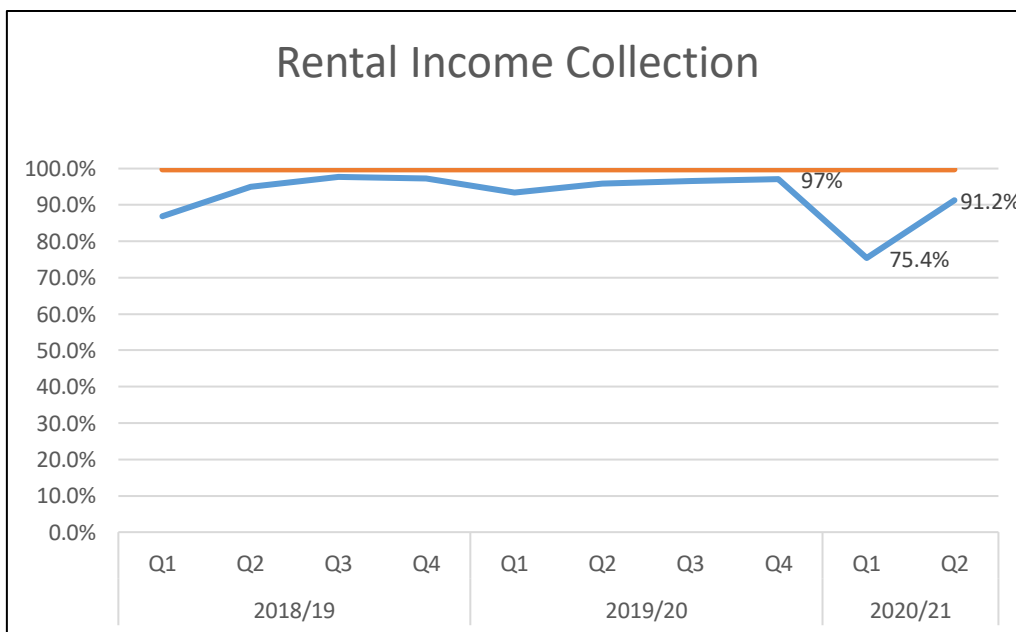
4.1 Voids

The average re-let time for a void property between July to September 2020 was 44.7 days, which is currently over double the quarterly target of 21 days. This has increased from Q1 when the average re-let time was 28.54 days. The Covid 19 pandemic has made it increasingly difficult to conduct repairs and maintenance on void properties due to supply chain delays.

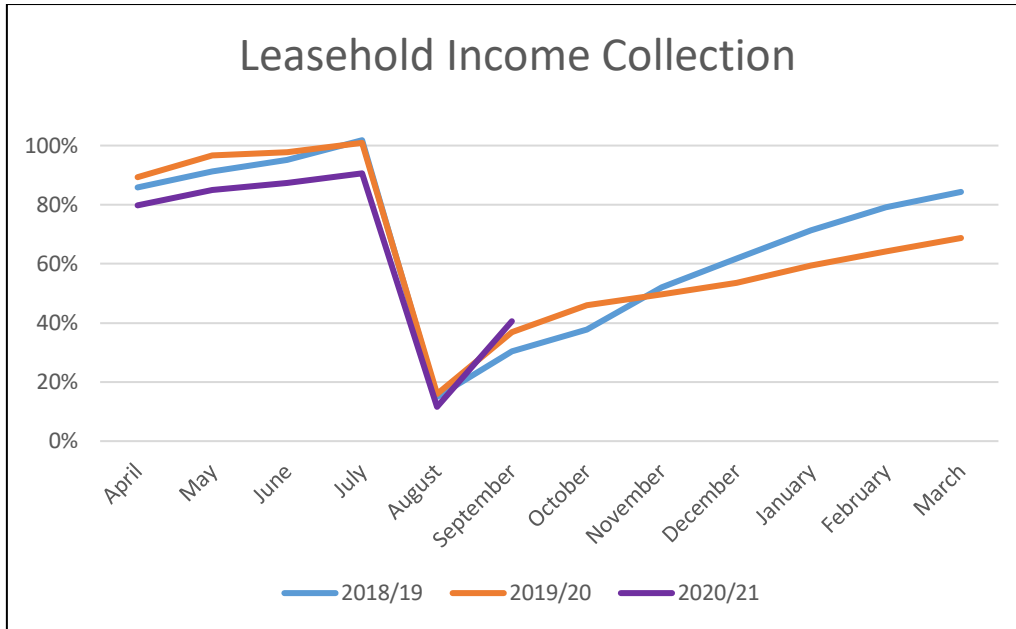


4.2 Income collection

The yearly target for rental income collection is 99.77%. The level of rental income collection has remained predominantly stable since the middle of 2018/19 to the end 2019/20. The chart below shows that in Q1 of 2020/21 there was a sharp decrease in rental income collection due to the Covid 19 pandemic but it appears to have partially recovered in Q2.



The yearly target for leasehold income collection is 100%. Invoices are produced annually and issued in August. In order to help tenants budget, service charges can be paid by monthly instalments. The percentage of leasehold income collection is slightly higher at 40.5% in September 2020 in comparison to 36.8% in September 2019 and 30.4% in September 2018.

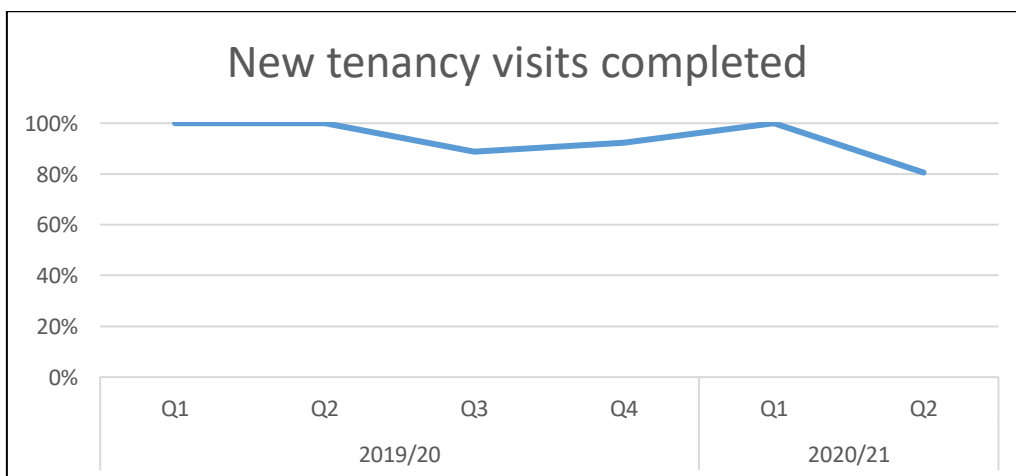


4.3 Number of arrears evictions

In order to protect renters during the Covid 19 pandemic, the government suspended all ongoing housing possession action from 29 March 2020 to prevent renters from being evicted.

4.4 Customer experience

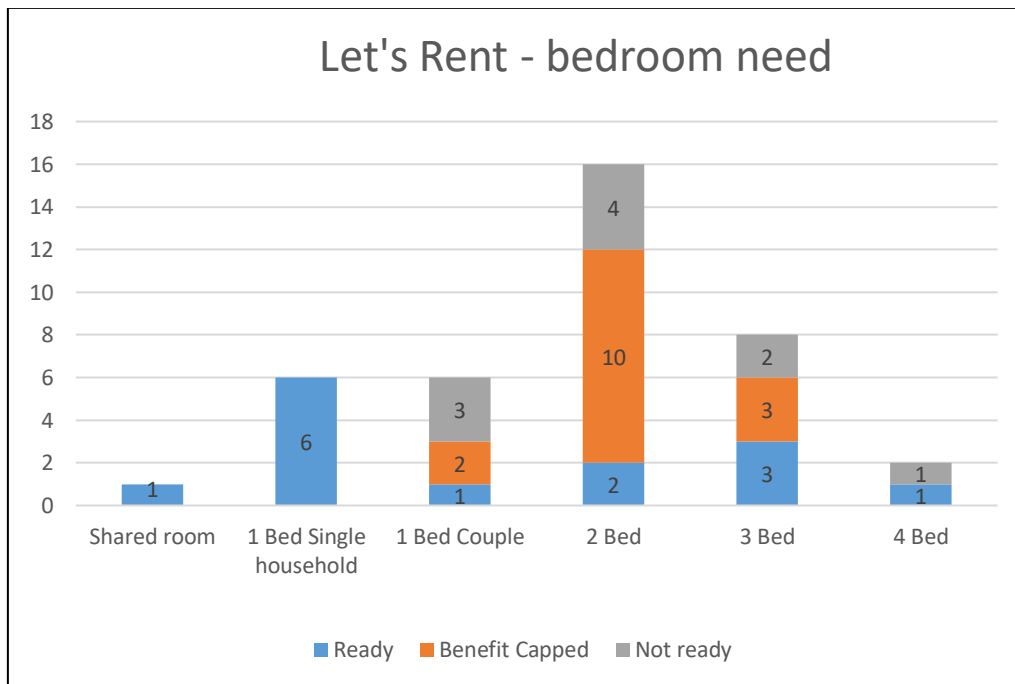
In Q1, 100% of new tenancy visits were completed. The chart below shows that the percentage of new tenancy visits has largely remained above 88% but there was a slight decrease in Q2 to 80.6% due to the Covid 19 pandemic.



5. Private Sector Housing

5.1 Let's Rent

The Let's Rent service procures and supports tenancy sustainment for households that are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This remit has recently expanded to assist Rough Sleepers or those at risk of Rough Sleeping. Let's Rent ensures that Woking Borough Council can discharge its homeless duties by procuring long term suitable accommodation. The service provides landlord incentives and advice and support to tenants and landlords. As at 23 October 2020, there were 39 households referred to the Let's Rent scheme. The chart below shows the bedroom need of those referred to Let's Rent.



The tables below show the number of tenancies that have been secured through Let's Rent between 1 April 2020 and 28 October 2020.

New and current tenancies by service:

	YTD	Total current
Connect	14	61
Core	29	114
Complete	27	73
Historical schemes	0	117
Total	70	365

Tenancies by landlord type:

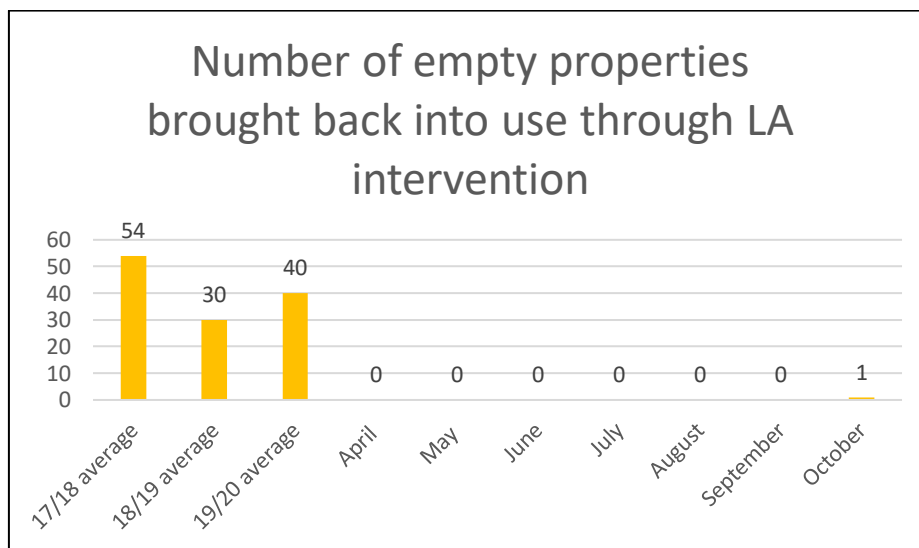
	Private	Letting Agent	THL	HA	Total
Connect	42	13	5	0	60
Core	22	57	29	6	114
Complete	44	0	29	0	73
Total	108	70	63	6	247

Tenancies by rent level:

	LHA	Above LHA	Below LHA	Total
Connect	60	0	0	60
Core	8	61	45	114
Complete	71	0	2	73
Total	139	61	47	247

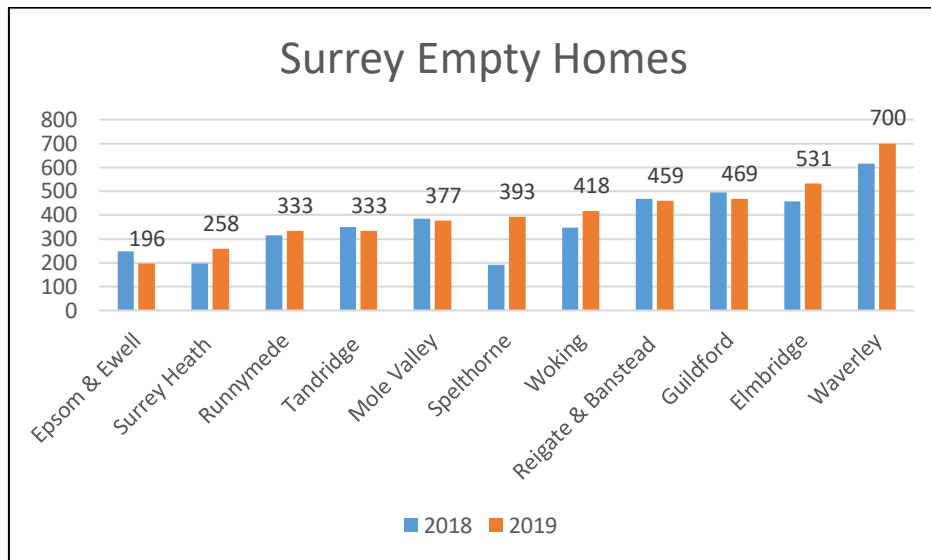
5.2 Empty homes

The annual target for the number of properties to be brought back into use through local authority intervention is 40. In October 2020, an empty homes questionnaire was sent to 240 long term empty (empty between 6 – 24 months) home owners to obtain accurate figures for 2020/21.



Since April 2019, long term premium empty properties (empty for more than two years) attract a 100% Council Tax premium. As at 25 August 2020, there were 103 long term empty premium properties, this has increased by 7 properties since January 2020. As at 6 October 2020, there were 399 long term empty properties (6-24 months) and this has reduced by 27 properties since August 2020. 35 of the long term empty premium and 16 of the long term empty properties were in Sheerwater which are deliberately empty and will be brought back in to use through the regeneration project.

In 2019⁶, Woking had 418 empty homes which was a 17% increase from 2018.



5.3 Housing Standards

Under the Housing Act 2004, the Council has the delegated powers to implement a selective licensing scheme, which aims to improve the standard of privately rented properties and the health and wellbeing of private tenants in the Canalside Ward. Following a decision by Full Council on 19 October 2017, private landlords or their managing agents renting properties in this area are required to have a license for each privately rented property. As at October 2020, there were 820 homes licensed in Canalside under the selective licensing scheme. In addition, there are currently 91 houses in multiple occupation (HMO) that are licensed. Between April and September 2020, there have only been two improvement notices served and six properties have improved.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants#history>

6. Glossary

Affordable housing	Affordable housing, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework, is housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market.
Benefit cap	The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can get.
Extra care	Extra care housing is a type of specialist housing for people with care and support needs, including older or disabled people and those with long term conditions.
General needs housing	General Needs Housing applies to general family housing and dwellings for singles and couples.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 'household' (for example a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.
Housing benefit	Housing Benefit is a national welfare benefit administered by local councils. It is designed to help people on low incomes in rented accommodation.
Let's Rent Scheme	The Let's Rent Scheme offers private landlords long-term tenancies via a range of professional letting services with no fees or commission. There are no hidden charges and net income will be comparable with many letting agents' offers. We offer 3 letting management services – Core, Connect and Complete. The differences between these services can be found on our website .
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	Local housing allowance (LHA) rates are used to work out how much universal credit or housing benefit you get if you rent from a private landlord.

<p>Affordable housing</p>	<p>Affordable housing, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework, is housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market.</p>
<p>Shared ownership</p>	<p>Shared Ownership is a type of affordable home ownership that offers the chance to buy a share of your home (between 25% and 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share. Later on, it is possible to buy bigger shares.</p>
<p>Universal credit</p>	<p>Universal Credit is a new, single monthly payment merging six benefits into one. It is for working age claimants.</p>