

AYR HOUSING AID CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

JULY 2015 - JUNE 2016

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SCO18186

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CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Alex Anderson, Chairperson
2. Alan Berry
3. John Mulholland, Secretary
4. Ethel Riach, Treasurer
5. Cllr Phillip Saxton
6. Allan Shaw

CENTRE STAFF

John Mulholland, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary
Suzanne Slavin, Services Manager
Neil Gray, Senior Tenure Sustainment Officer
Claire Lewis, Tenure Sustainment Officer
Elsbeth Lloyd, Tenure Sustainment Officer
Jill McNaught, Housing Advice and Information Team Leader
Jacqui Gregory, Housing Advice and Information Officer
Leica Malkin, Tenant Advice and Information Officer
Karen Taylor, Administrative Officer
Joseph Sproat, Administrative Assistant
Suzanne Moffat, Senior First Home Officer
Joanna Wilson, Receptionist
Fallon Heggie, First Home Officer
Lyndsay Lewis, Education and Engagement Team Leader
Gavin Kennedy, First Home Officer (Employment began on 22nd February 2016)

This is a summary of the Annual Report which focuses on main issues from the full comprehensive Report. If you wish a copy of the full Report please contact the Centre on 01292 288111 or email the Centre, ayr_hac@hotmail.com

Synopsis of Annual Report 2015/16

This summary should be read in conjunction with the Annual Report; it seeks to highlight a number of important issues from the Report. The Centre's primary concern is the impact on our Service Users and benefits to other parties are secondary to this clear objective.

Service Users

- Centre opened a total 1,239 cases, 182 in our rural areas
- Centre opened 642 cases for services users with disabilities
- Centre opened 294 cases for service users between the ages of 16-24
- Centre opened 136 cases for service users over pension age
- Tenure Sustainment in 84 cases
- A total of 670 children were part of service users households
- 618 of our cases concerned homelessness
- 393 cases concerned the private rented sector
- 45 cases concerned the owner occupied sector

Service User Outcomes

- Centre prevented homelessness in 287 cases
- 217 services users permanently re-housed
- 452 service users acted on advice of the Centre
- 894 cases had a positive or likely positive outcome
- Arrears reduced across all sectors by £370,246
- 11 Home owners tenures were stabilised and homelessness prevented

Tenant and Third Party Beneficiaries

- Council rent accounts and tenants £267,839
- Housing Association rent accounts and tenants £15,149
- Private sector rent accounts and tenants £53,092
- Council Tax Reduction £22,500
- Future rental income to all sectors £1,500,980
- Value of homeless prevention £2,583,000 (relates to accommodation costs)
- Estimated Value to secured lenders £66,000
- Less demand on social, family, education, health and housing services estimated value £4,305,000

Economic value is an important indicator in service provision and for every £1 put in by the Council the Centre generates a value of £25.24 (£21.72 last year) Estimated total economic value £8,759,226 for £347,017 relevant contribution from the Council.

Value of Housing Aid Centre Services

The Centre over many years has strived to develop services to meet the challenges and demands relevant to the time and our community profile. There are considerable returns in terms of investing in the Services provided by the Centre. The value to Service Users and other parties are underpinned by ensuring that our staff are properly trained and supported. We consider the development of our Services and staff to be of utmost importance to ensure high quality Services and professional standards. This is clearly evidenced by our Service User feedback systems. **It is a fair estimate that 5,000 individuals/organisations have directly or indirectly benefited from the Services the Centre provides.**

1. CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Introduction

As expected it has been an eventful year. As we approach the final year of our contract with South Ayrshire Council, and contemplate preparation for procurement, it is worth reflecting on where we have come from over the past four years.

Through the initial procurement process we became more focussed about what we wanted to achieve and deliver; about how we were going to deliver; about how we were going to measure progress and need; about developing a plan to get there, involving staff and the management committee in the process.

The context of our work has been changing, with the economy under strain and with changes to welfare benefits and changes to our demographic profile. The scope of our work has also been changing, with a focus on potentially vulnerable sections of the community.

Development of services

From an organisation with core work in information and advice; and supporting families under threat of homelessness, we have become an organisation providing a broad range of inputs to and services for; young people and students; older people; and ex services personnel. A broad range from prevention, to support, to crisis intervention.

Development of staff

The learning and planning process for us has been continuous throughout. Staff have been key to our capacity to meet changing demands. Staff have been instrumental in the development and implementation of services and have improved skills and competences through training and review processes.

New Location

The expansion of approaches and increase in staff has required us to move to premises more suited to service delivery. The centre provides an accessible flexible resource for service development.

External recognition Inspections and audits

Through the period we have consistently provided services of a very high standard reflected in reports from inspections by the Care Inspectorate and external audits and by Local Authority Awards. The staff and Management Committee are and have been committed to continuous improvement.

Service Structure

The increase in approaches, numbers of staff, and the need to have a coherent planning and management structure gave us scope to introduce a service structure which recognised and clarified differentiated roles and responsibilities, and lines of communication internally without losing an overall team approach.

Procurement

The continuous planning process has enabled us to keep a watching brief on how external changes and issues impact on families and individuals, evaluating emerging issues and needs through statistical analysis. We look forward to the procurement process informed by firm visions.

Planning Ahead

I would like to express my appreciation to both staff and the management committee for their hard work in feeding this process of examination, analysis and contemplation about the best ways to address complex human situations. Many challenges lie ahead, not least the issues of an ageing population with attendant health considerations.

Finally the last year has been a year in which these structures have been tested mainly in my view positively. But we will refine and adjust as required as we meet the new challenge of a new contract.

2. FINANCIAL REPORT

Within this Report I have used the Statement of Financial Activities from our overall Financial Report which is submitted to Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator.

Income

The Centre's income for this financial year was £403,773. South Ayrshire Council Grant and Contract was £387,017. The Centre held Race Night in October 2015 and Rock Night in March 2016. These were very successful and a big thanks to Suzie Moffat and the fundraising team.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year was £406,884. The primary expenditure heading was salaries including pensions which accounted for £374,272. Running costs of our premises, upgrading systems are included in the overall expenditure.

Outcome

This year the financials show a deficit of receipts of £3,111.

Projection 2016/2017

I estimate that our expenditure for next year will be £449,648 of which £391,586 will be salaries including pensions. With a projected income of £449,436. We have a £10,762 deferred funding payment which is included in this income. I have allocated £25,000 from reserves which is part of accumulated funds for expenditure within 16/17.

It is expected that the Centre will show a deficit of £212 for the year 2016/17.

Thanks

I very much appreciate the staff's efficient record keeping which makes my job very easy. Special thanks to Suzanne and Karen for work on the day to day accounts and to John and Karen for work on projections and long term planning. Finally, a big thank you to Andrew Howatt, our Accountant.

**AYR HOUSING AID CENTRE
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

	2016			2015		
	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Total	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Total
Incoming Resources						
Funding - public authorities	-	387,017	387,017	1,413	381,253	382,666
Fund raising/donations	2,000	2,228	4,228	-	-	-
Other income	-	12,513	12,513	606	-	606
Interest received	15	-	15	8	-	8
	<u>2,015</u>	<u>401,758</u>	<u>403,773</u>	<u>2,027</u>	<u>381,253</u>	<u>383,280</u>
Resources Expended						
Charitable activities						
Salaries inc pension costs	-	374,272	374,272	-	313,630	313,630
Members and staff expenses	-	5,820	5,820	-	5,810	5,810
Rent and rates	-	7,592	7,592	-	8,603	8,603
Heat light and telephone	400	2,546	2,946	450	4,466	4,916
Insurance	-	1,806	1,806	-	1,700	1,700
Repairs and maintenance	100	519	619	250	737	987
Stationery/computer consumables	380	6,507	6,887	1,064	18,462	19,526
Conferences and training	750	2,269	3,019	1,000	1,955	2,955
Library/subscriptions	500	637	1,137	500	585	1,085
	<u>2,130</u>	<u>401,968</u>	<u>404,098</u>	<u>3,264</u>	<u>355,948</u>	<u>359,212</u>
Cost of generating funds						
Miscellaneous expenses	50	570	620	50	455	505
Governance costs						
Accountancy	-	690	690	-	690	690
Regulatory costs	-	1,476	1,476	-	1,476	1,476
Total resources expended	<u>2,180</u>	<u>404,704</u>	<u>406,884</u>	<u>3,314</u>	<u>358,569</u>	<u>361,883</u>
Net movement in funds	-165	-2,946	-3,111	-1,287	22,684	21,397
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	34,196	147,699	181,895	35,483	125,015	160,498
Total funds carried forward	34,031	144,753	178,784	34,196	147,699	181,895

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

3.1 Opening

Once again it has been a busy year for the Centre across all our services. Throughout the period we have continued to meet all the requirements of our current contract with South Ayrshire Council and indeed have adapted the delivery of services to meet changing demands. The quarterly contract review meetings are an important element relating to compliance with contract, quality of services being delivered, partner and service user input. This also provides an opportunity to discuss potential further development of current Services and potential new Services to meet changing demands. As the current contract draws to an end I would thank all who have been involved in the quarterly review meetings.

The Management Committee and staff have engaged to constructive reviews across all the services over the past year as we prepare for the procurement of services we currently provide. This process will continue and further consultation will be held with staff in early 2017. Senior management and the procurement sub-committee continue to prepare for the next stage of the process and thereafter the submission of our bid.

In the past year our landlord changed, Associated British Ports are now our landlord. We have continued to invest in the property and develop our infrastructure. We have taken on further floor space and are planning further development of the Centre through 2017 and beyond.

I have had the pleasure of working with many people over my 23 years at the Centre and I would thank all past and present members of the Management Committee for their support over the years. We have directly developed Services to meet the needs of the people in South Ayrshire and influenced other Services beyond. I am very proud of this and could not have achieved this without partnership with other Agencies and the commitment of Staff and the Management Committee.

We have developed a first class statistical system and I can with confidence state that we have provided Housing Advice/Information Services in excess of 20,600 cases across South Ayrshire. This system has been further developed to accommodate contract reporting and enhanced quality control for the Centre. These systems could not operate without having a strong Admin Team, who I extend my thanks to.

3.2 Links and Partnership

Our relationship with the Council has changed over the years but it remains very strong. We continue to value our links with both the Statutory and Voluntary Agencies. These partnerships are in the interests of all concerned in particular the users of our Services. I would take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to South Ayrshire Council for their continued financial support, engagement and encouragement. This support ranges from Elected Members, Senior Officials and Staff and is very much appreciated. We have daily contact with our colleagues in various sections of South Ayrshire Council, in particular Housing, Housing Benefit, Housing Options and Education.

The Centre deals with many Departments within South Ayrshire Council and would extend our thanks to them, in particular the front line staff. The Council engages with the Centre regarding relevant Policy and Strategy matters. This type of partnership/engagement is clearly beneficial to all concerned and serves the residents of South Ayrshire in a very positive manner.

In the past year we have engaged with Housing Options in South Ayrshire and developed a Homelessness Training manual which also included joint training between options staff and our own staff. We continue to work on areas of joint interest including resource relating to EEA and Non-EEA nationals.

In last year's report I refer to joint work with the Council relating to Universal Credit and potential risk factors in terms of Council tenants. The importance and impact of Welfare Reform cannot be understated and this will impact the Centre across all our Services directly and indirectly. Part of our preparation has and continues to include joint work with South Ayrshire Council,

We have a common aim to provide quality Services to those in housing need and in doing so seek to safeguard Service Users tenure and prevent homelessness. The Centre enjoys a good professional relationship with Registered Social Landlords, in particular our colleagues at Ayrshire Housing.

Our work within Education and Engagement has expanded our engagement with a range of new Partners, these are most welcome. Our Capacity Building Programme within the First Home Service could not have succeed without the active participation of the many Partners, once again a big thanks is due. Our Partners include;

- Community Learning and Development
- South Ayrshire Community Safety
- South Ayrshire Women's Aid
- Domino's Pizza
- Foodbank
- Housing and Facilities
- Ayrshire College
- Stepping Stones for Families
- Access to Employment Ayr
- 1st Alliance
- Energy Agency
- Skills Development Scotland
- Fire and Rescue Service Scotland
- Police Scotland
- Step (Skills towards employment project)

Over the period the Centre has built links with South Ayrshire Food Bank and issued 44 (43 last year) vouchers to Service Users. The Centre has maintained links with Shelter, in particular relating to training opportunities and Shelter Legal Information Resource. We continue to have good links with Seascope.

3.3 Welfare Reform/Digital Inclusion

Welfare reform continues to impact on our service users across all services. We have undertaken a number of activities to gauge the impact of reform in particular relating to digital inclusion.

In terms of universal credit we have been working in partnership with the Council to identify tenants who may be vulnerable on a number of levels as they migrate onto universal credit. The Council identified batches of potentially at risk tenants and the Centre made contact with them and arranged visits to complete a questionnaire. There has been 4 batches and we have visited or arranged visits to 214 tenants, there has been an overall return rate of 33%. It appears from our visits that many tenants consider that it will only become an issue when they are due to migrate to universal credit and who do they go to when it does affect them. The impact of this will continue to grow over the next few years.

During the report year we undertook a project relating to digital literacy which has a direct link to online claims. This highlighted issues around accessibility and identified many within the 25 to pension age group would require some level of IT support, without this they will be digitally excluded. In terms of welfare benefits there are economic outcomes and potential sanction consequences for those who have issues relating to electronic claims.

In February 2015 we altered our statistical system to gather information regarding Internet access and Bank Accounts. In terms of cases across Services 1,239 cases responded to the question with 495 stating they had no access (39%). There was 229 (18%) stating the only access was by phone with 515 (42%) stating they had access through broadband facility.

Out of the responses 1,238 stated that they have Bank/Credit Union Accounts/Post Office (89%) with 31 stating they have no account. 1 stated they have a credit union account. 57 cases did not disclose this information. We continue to work closely with SAC to identify those at highest risk which will require additional assistance as they start to claim or migrate to Universal Credit.

3.4 Health

Across all our services we have seen a year on year growth in service users stating that they have mental health or physical health problems some state that they have both. The Centre produced a Homelessness Prevention and Health across Age groups report in May 2016, this report was shared with South Ayrshire and recommend 8 actions. This report highlighted there are significant issues linking homeless and health issues. It underpins the impact that preventing homelessness can have on health.

In general terms 642 (51.8%) Service Users stated that they have disability issues. 171 stated physical disability, 257 stated mental disability with 214 stating both. This percentage has continued to grow over the past six years from 32% in 2010/11 to just under 52% this year.

3.5 Our Services

The Services we provide are **innovative, preventative, proactive, participatory and inclusive**. These directly link to the overall ethos of the Centre to provide high quality Services within South Ayrshire.

Each of these Services contribute to the Centre meeting its aims/objectives, our contractual obligations and the needs of our communities and Service Users. **All Services produce Internal Annual Reports and statistics which feed into Annual Report cycle.** Our services are;

1. Advice, Advocacy and Information
2. Tenure Sustainment
3. First Home, part of Education and Engagement
4. Education and Engagement
5. HEY (Housing Education 4 Youths) part of Education and Engagement
6. Administration Service

The first 3 of the above relates to direct provision to individual service users/families. The 4th concerns the provision of Education and Engagement in Housing and Homeless mainly in group settings with some outreach to Colleges, University and Ailsa Hospital. The fifth is our Service provision within Primary and Secondary Schools. The sixth provides overall Admin across the Centre.

Services relating to individual Services Users/families was 1,239 cases (1,152 last year). These Services use our standard case sheet which in turn populates our database with a wide range of fields, which then allows statistics to be collated and analysed to produce our Reports.

The structure of our Services encourage External and Internal Referrals, for example a Sustainment Officer can refer to the Advice Service if necessary and a number of individual Internal Referrals have come through to Advice from our Education and Engagement Service. The effectiveness and quality of our Services would not exist without the vital contribution from Admin staff which underpins all our Services.

3.6 Advice, Advocacy and Information Service

The Team comprises of Suzanne Slavin (Advice and Tenure Sustainment Manager), Jill McNaught (Housing Advice and Information Officer), Jacqui Gregory (Housing Advice and Information Officer), Leica Malkin (Tenant Advice and Information Officer, April 2014) and Joseph Sproat (Administrative Assistant) supported by the Chief Executive Officer. Demand for this Service is very high and over the reporting year increased from 986 to 1,024 this year.

Reasons for Cases

There are a wide range of reasons why we open cases and indeed often there are multiple reasons for cases opening including:-

- Homelessness or threatened with Homelessness 508 (50%) (406 (41%) last year)
- Housing Benefit 289 (28%) (306 (31%) last year)
- Dampness/disrepair 163 (15.9 %) (129 (13%) last year)

- Rent arrears 129 (13.5%)

Homeless Cases Detail

From the 508 Homeless cases opened, 485 of them were closed and 23 were current. From the 485, we were unable to prevent homelessness for the 41 who were already street homeless (13 last year) and 112 who were already living in temporary accommodation (Hostel or temp furnished) (total of 153, (127 last year). This meant we had the opportunity to prevent homelessness in only 332 cases. From these 332, 45 were living with friends, parents or relatives meaning they had no rights to stay. From the 287 cases where prevention of homelessness was possible we were successful in 231 (81%) cases. In addition to this 29 were permanently housed (8%) and 9 were booked into temp (3%).

In terms of homeless reviews there were 45 (40 last year) with the majority 35 relating to offers. 27 was withdrawn normally following additional information being provided by the Centre or swapped. 7 reviews were dismissed by the Council or withdrawn by the Centre.

Private Sector

This is an expanding sector in South Ayrshire and across Scotland. Advice opened 384 cases from this sector. There were 240 children living in the Private rented sector. Out of the 384 cases there was a number of internal action plans. The main actions were;

- Housing Benefit 119
- Homelessness 168
- Dampness/disrepair 100
- Rent arrears 55

Within the private sector we prevented homelessness in 118 cases, 17 went into temporary accommodation. Positive outcome or positive outcome likely was recorded in 86% of the closed cases. Service user ceased contact in 2% of the closed cases.

User Feedback

As part of quality control we generate a Service User Feedback Report. Some comments from Service Users relating to this service included:-

- “Helpful and non-discriminatory, felt comfortable with staff who were very helpful ”
- “First class very friendly, very efficient and helpful”
- “Supportive, patient and genuinely interested in helping others in difficulty ”

Development

There are major challenges within Advice over the next year which require proactive and preventative responses. These particularly relate to changes to Housing Law both in public and private sector and Welfare Reform.

3.7 Tenure Sustainment Service

The Team has 3 members of staff Neil Gray (Senior Tenure Sustainment Officer), Clare Lewis (Tenure Sustainment Office, 20hr post) and Elspeth Lloyd (Tenure Sustainment Officer). This Service is designed to intervene at points of crisis where there is a risk of Service Users becoming homeless. There is often an intensive response required at the point of referral. There remains in many cases a short period at the start of the Service to allow positive engagement. In the Report period Tenure Sustainment was provided to 84 cases with 17 cases overlapping at the start of the year.

Care Inspectorate

Our last inspection was January 2015, the overall report was excellent with high Grades for different elements of our Service. Our Grades are:-

- 6 – Excellent for quality of support
- 6 – Excellent for Quality of Staff and
- 6 – Excellent for Quality of Management and Leadership

I am very proud of the achievements within this Service and the fact this is recognised as part of the Inspection and Service User Feedback. Please note that we are due a further inspection and we are at an advanced stage of preparation.

Casework

There are internal action plans for each case, most cases have more than one action plan out of the 84 new cases there were 279 different actions.

In the report year 67 cases were closed with the following main outcomes (some cases have more than one outcome);

- 56 homelessness prevented
- 52 advising tenancy has stabilised
- 40 arrears have reduced
- 50 affordability improved

In the 67 cases closed arrears was reduced in 46 cases.

Service User Feedback

As part of quality control we issue a Service User Feedback Report, some comments from Service Users relating to this service included:-

- “Very friendly and provided grateful assistance”
- “It was a very good service and is very helpful”
- “It was easy and really informative”

Development

As Welfare Reform continues in particular the roll out of Universal Credit the focus of sustainment will change with the Service working with vulnerable Service Users at an earlier stage and through this preventing if possible the accrual of arrears on rent accounts. This means active involvement with Service Users in relation to claims, change of circumstances and sanctions.

Our Sustainment Service in partnership with SAC are gathering intelligence about the potential impact of Universal Credit on South Ayrshire Council Tenants seeking to identify the most vulnerable tenants who may require additional assistance.

3.8 Education and Engagement Service

This Service incorporates HEY and First Home. The Team comprises of Lyndsay Lewis (Team Leader Education and Engagement Officer), Suzanne Moffat (Senior First Home Officer), Fallon Heggie (First Home Officer), Gavin Kennedy (First Home Officer, February 2016) supported by the Chief Executive Officer.

In overall terms Education and Engagement covers:-

- Links with Ayr College and West of Scotland University
- Links to Ailsa Hospital
- Support to Veterans First Point Ayrshire
- Developing Services to Older Service Users
- HEY (Housing Education for Youths)
- Building Positive Futures
- First Home

Our attendance at a wide range of awareness raising events has had a positive impact and has generated demand in terms of casework. It has raised the profile of the Centre and our Services with students, patients, staff within Education and Health and older Service Users.

HEY (Housing Education for Youths)

We engaged with 5 out of the 8 Secondary Schools in South Ayrshire providing this Service 610 pupils via their Personal Social Education (PSE) lessons. 7 out of the 8 secondary schools have engaged for sessions in 2016/17. This would not have been possible without the support of the Head and Guidance Teachers within Schools. Following a review of feedback there were some adjustments made to the programme.

The feedback from Pupils and Teachers has been very positive and the lessons will be updated and re-run each academic year.

I am very proud that the HEY project was identified as an example of good practice in the recent children's service inspection report for South Ayrshire.

Within the year we produce Individual Reports for each of the Secondary Schools who engaged with HEY and produced an overall analysis of these Reports, which was circulated to Senior Officers within the Council.

Building Positive Futures Programme

HEY once again has been a partner in the Building Positive Futures Programme, this is an early intervention partnership. This year the programme has been expanded to include more Schools and pupils. This year the Programme was provided to 24 pupils and 6 schools;

- Forehill Primary School 2 Boys and 3 Girls
- Ayr Grammar School 1 Boys and 2 Girls
- Dalmling Primary School 2 Boys and 2 Girls
- Kincaidston Primary School 2 Boys and 2 Girls
- Newton Primary School 4 Girls
- Breahead Primary School 2 Boys and 2 Girls

There are many aims for the Programme, the collective objective of the Partners is to provide the children with new experiences and skills which in turn will be beneficial to the children in the future. Once again the Programme has been very well received with very positive feedback.

Primary 7 Programme

This is the fourth year of this Programme. The aim was to provide a Session which was fun and interactive. This was age appropriate and was very much enjoyed by the pupils and the teacher. This was delivered between January and June 2015, this year 17 Primary Schools took part. 546 pupils received the Sessions. Once again there has been very positive feedback from pupils and teachers.

Overall Feedback Education and Engagement

Pupils

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| • “Thanks’ I really enjoyed the sessions” | Secondary School Pupil |
| • “The drawing of the homeless was good” | Secondary School Pupil |
| • “Very informative and helpful” | Secondary School Pupil |
| • “I enjoyed it very much because I learned a lot” | Primary School Pupil |

Teachers

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • “Engaged pupils well with delivery style” | Secondary Teacher |
| • “Very relevant topics” | Secondary Teacher |
| • “The variety of interactive sessions engaged pupils well” | Secondary Teacher |
| • “Excellent presentation with lots of engaging activities. Very informative” | Primary Teacher |
| • “Lyndsay was fab great handle of the class and spoke to the children Encouragingly ” | Primary Teacher |

Older Service Users

Over the past year we have been engaging with older communities within South Ayrshire. The method of contact has varied and we have been building links with Health and Social Care Partnership. We have also been part of the multi-agency community shop in the Kyle Centre. All of these links have been designed to increase awareness of the Centre with our older communities. Our services have noted an increase in case numbers from older age groups with 16% of cases from 55 and over. (198 cases). Cases involving 65 and over has increased from 60 to 88 this year.

3.9 First Home Service

This Service is a Proactive Service for young people in relation to housing.

The Service is provided by Suzanne Moffat (Senior First Home Officer), Fallon Heggie (First Home Officer, April 2015) Gavin Kennedy (First Home Officer, February 2016) Lyndsay Lewis (Education and Engagement Team Leader) and John Mulholland (Chief Executive Officer). The key aim of the Service is to ensure that 16 -21 years old applying for housing from South Ayrshire Council are given accurate information of the Application process and responsibilities of becoming a tenant and to assess their readiness for becoming a tenant.

Casework

In the Report Year the Service received 131 referrals (77 last year) in addition there was 48 cases carried over from 2014/15. At the time of writing this report 83 cases have been closed and 96 carried over.

During the First Home journey for young people there are a number of actions that are triggered as part of the Service. For example we discussed Individual Learning Accounts with all service users and 30 have been triggered or are pending. In the 131 cases opened there has been 502 separate actions as the service has been delivered.

Outlined below is some of the outcomes;

- 37 Service Users permanently housed
- 42 Affordability improved
- 9 tenancies stabilised
- 17 applications suspended
- 7 cancelled applications
- 1 service user acting

In terms of the closed cases 85% had a positive outcome or positive outcome likely.

Feedback from Service Users

First Home has developed a range of methods relating to feedback, interim feedback, feedback a completion of cases tracking and parental feedback. Comments are outlined below

Interim

23 interim evaluation was sent out with 23 returned, analysis of the feedback included;

- 100% was aware of their responsibilities of having their own home
- 100% found it useful to discuss income and expected outgoings for when they move into their own tenancy
- 86% found the discussions on Further Education, Training and Employment useful to them

Closed Cases

- “It was very helpful and got me to where I am today”
- “Good honest and it prepared me”
- “It was really good, not just with Housing but helping me with money and College”

Tracking

First Home has introduced a tracking system which involved contact with former service user 6 months after the case has been closed. This is discussed with service user during the provision of the service and requires their consent. Out of the 83 cases closed, 10 had passed the 6 month period. 10 surveys was sent out with 7 being returned. 6 are still in tenancies 1 of which moved from South Ayrshire Council tenancy to private rented. Participants in the tracking made the following positive comments concerning the service they had received;

- “Service provided was really good”
- “Having the items and information helped”
- “Doing own decorating after Capacity Building Programme”

It is important to monitor whether the positive input of the First Home Service is having long term benefits relating sustainability of tenancies and beyond. In next year report there will be increased numbers within this system.

3.10 Administration Service

Our current Admin Team is Karen Taylor (Administration Officer), Joseph Sproat (Administration Assistant) and Joanna Wilson (Receptionist).

Our admin service has continued to develop throughout the report year with regular internal meetings.

Databases

The databases being used in the Centre are constantly reviewed with the aim of further developing these to meet the needs of the Centre. This review process will continue as we move towards the new contract.

The Centre’s financial control and statistical systems are supported by a range of databases which are a significant part of Admin Services within the Centre. This in turn feeds into our regulatory

requirements and importantly quality control. These continue to be reviewed and developed with input from all our Services.

Demand

In this year's internal report we have consider the type of initial contact services users have with the Centre, there was 1,230 appointments in the reporting year at Centre. This does not take into account appointments out with the Centre.

Demand on admin remains high from all services within the Centre.

Development

All admin staff during the report has undertaking training relevant to their roles at the Centre.

Admin over the next year will consider merger of some of our data needs, review audio typing capacity, review of standard case sheets and the training and development plans for staff within Admin.

3.11 Impact of Services

Due to our different Services the measured impact can be short, medium or long term. Services which are geared to individuals/families are measured in terms of social and economic benefit. Our group work, in particular, in the Schools is more long term. The information given may be retained and allow informed choice for young people later. This of course, may be carried over into our First Home Service in the future.

Internal action plans relate to why a case is opened, some cases have a number of action plans. Out of the 1,239 cases there were 3,080 (2,448 last year) actions. The largest primary problem raised with the Centre continues to be homelessness or threatened with homelessness, 618 cases (495 last year). This accounts for around 50% (43% last year) of our caseload from these Services.

Our overall caseload involving 16-24 year olds accounts for 294 cases, (231 last year). From this age group 135 were involved in the homeless system (64 last year). There were 670 (701 last year) children involved in all our cases, Of this 228 (174 last year) were involved in homelessness,

Within our caseload there are around 335 cases, (322 last year) where there is a possibility of homeless prevention work and the Centre prevented homelessness in 287, 86%.

Cases from those who were employed including part time accounted for 28.4% of cases (26.1% last year) this was 352 (301 last year) cases of these 181 (138 last year) were in part time employment. Cases for unemployed accounted for 26.5% of cases (32.7% last year) this was 328 (377 last year) cases. Cases from sick/ill group accounted for 27% of cases (24.4% last year) this was 337 (282 last year) cases. In addition 8.2% were retired (6.3% last year) this was 101 (86 last year) cases. Cases from students was 5.2% (2.8% last year) this was 65 students (38 last year) cases. Carers accounted for 2.4% (last year 3.3%) this was 30 (45 last year) cases.

Rent Arrears Recovery/Income Maximisation/Future Rent Projection

Over the past 14 years we have been monitoring arrears recovered to Rent, Council Tax Accounts, income increased to tenants/owner occupiers. The table below highlights overall monies recovered which in many cases prevented eviction and homelessness across all Sectors. Homeless prevention in all Sectors reduces demands on resources in the Public Sector, in particular homeless temporary accommodation. Many Service Users have in addition benefited from our Tenure Sustainment Service.

Landlord/Lender	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total to date
SAC	£75,756.39	£191,717.33	£149,832.92	£267,839.29	£1,188,519
RSL	£20,503.55	£3,128.19	£6,468.05	£15,149.89	£160,504.17
Private	£49,824.89	£32,028.68	£34,325.93	£53,092.80	£431,193.29
Owner Occupied	£45,337.80	£5,594	£204.23	£613.61	£56,842.40
Family		£9,371.56	£5,305.50	£33,551.22	£48,228.28
Total	£191,422.63	£241,839.76*	£196,136.63	£370,246.81	£1,885,287.10

*Please note that this was a 15 month period

The table above, in particular South Ayrshire Council highlights increased co-operation in terms of rent arrear cases and income maximisation for tenants. This has become more relevant as backdating periods have reduced. Our Service Profile since July 2012 has continued to facilitate positive recovery and homeless prevention outcomes. Recovery amounts and income maximisation remain high. It is clear throughout the Report period that an increased number of Service Users are having real and sustained financial problems and this is partly reflected in the increase of arrears in the rented sector. This is the 14th year we have monitored the above which started in 2002/03, the end totals are cumulative.

In terms of projected future rent on tenancies I have estimated a value of;

Public Sector 212 tenancies x £80 (average rent) x 52 weeks = £ 881,920
RSL 20 tenancies x £95 (average rent) x 52 weeks = £ 98,800
Private Sector 87 tenancies x £115 (average rent) x 52 weeks = £ 520,260
£ 1,500,980

3.12 Homeless Prevention

The Centre firmly believes that early intervention prevents homelessness. The continued development of a Homeless Intervention and Prevention Service within South Ayrshire is a major contributor to meeting strategic objectives and this has been incorporated into the Services we provide. This is clearly part of the overall housing options agenda, obviously in many cases the best option would be to prevent homelessness and sustain current accommodation where it is safe to do so.

From the 618 Homeless cases opened, 562 of them were closed and 56 were current. From the 562, we were unable to prevent homelessness for the 43 who were already street homeless and 139 who were already living in temporary accommodation (Hostel or temp furnished) - total of 182. This meant we had the opportunity to prevent homelessness in only 380 cases. From these 380, 45 were living

with friends, parents or relatives meaning they had no rights to stay. From the 335 cases where prevention of homelessness was possible we were successful in 287 (86%) cases. In addition to this 30 were permanently housed and 9 were booked into temp.

There are considerable cost savings in prevention work including temporary accommodation, administration of case, investigation and other ancillary costs. Another important factor is the personal and social benefit relating to health and education for those who are prevented from becoming homeless through positive intervention. **The Centre directly prevented homelessness, in 287 cases this year, estimated saving to the public purse of £2,583,000 (£2,277,000 last year). The formula used is A x B x C**

A :- Average weekly rent for temporary accommodation (£300)

B :- Number of cases (287)

C :- Average time in temporary accommodation (30 weeks)

As illustrated above there are considerable cost savings in preventative measures including temporary accommodation, administration of case, investigation and other ancillary costs. Another important factor is the personal, health, education, criminal justice and social benefit to those who are prevented from coming into the homeless system through positive intervention. Research has highlighted the costs of homeless per household could range between £15,000 and £83,000. In a period of 12 years the Centre has directly prevented homelessness in over 2,396 cases that has had considerable economic benefit to South Ayrshire Council, Central Government and social benefit to potentially homeless households. There is clear evidence of Social Return on Investment (SROI) in terms of funding homeless prevention Services, **spend to save**. On the minimum amount, **I would estimate a further saving in terms of homelessness prevention of £4,305,000.**

3.13 Value of Services

Our Services provide a range of values including health and wellbeing, educational and economic. The measure for some of these services are more medium to long term such as the HEY and First Home Projects. Therefore they do not form part of our economic measures. Nevertheless they are vital elements within the Services we provide and are of considerable value to school pupils and young adults provided with these Services.

The Council contributed £347,017 (this does not include Education and Engagement costs). We would estimate the value of our Service directly and indirectly to the Council, Central Government, Landlords and Service Users to be £8,759,226.

Economic value is an important indicator in Service provision and for every £1 put in by the Council the Centre generates a value of £25.24 (last year was £21.72)

In terms of our overall Services many people benefit directly and indirectly. For example Teachers knowledge of housing and homelessness is expanded by the provision of the HEY Project and other activities within Education and Engagement. **It is a fair estimate that 5,000**

Individuals/Organisations have directly or indirectly benefited from the Services the Centre provides.

3.14 Service User Feedback (see separate Annual Feedback Report)

The Centre has developed Service User Feedback systems across the Services we provide. We prepare Service User Feedback Annual Report's. This year we have included feedback from group work undertaken by Education and Engagement.

In terms of individual case work within Housing Advice/Information, Tenure Sustainment and First Home Services we issued 308 (25%) (275 last year which accounted for around 24% of cases opened.) Of the 308 issued 119 was return which was a return rate of over 38%.

The different Services numbers are, 217 forms to Advice and Advocacy cases, 59 were returned; Tenure Sustainment Service we sent out 53 Questionnaires and 25 of these were returned. First Home Service 38 Questionnaires were sent out and 35 were returned in addition there was 23 interim feedback forms, 4 parent feedback forms and 7 complete tracking feedback.(These are First Home follow up cases which have been closed for 6 months)

In terms of our work in the Schools 1,156 pupils provided feedback with 41 teachers also feeding back in terms of HEY project within Primary and Secondary Schools.

In addition the Centre has accumulative 332 likes within our Facebook page.

In overall terms there was 1,682 sources of feedback relating to our Services during 2015/16.

It should be noted that the Council's Survey of Housing Aid Centre Services Users was once again very positive.

I would take this opportunity to thank and congratulate staff in terms of the positive feedback across all Services and reiterate the Centre's commitment to listening and taking into account feedback from service users and partners.

3.15 Centre Development

Services interlink within the Centre and beyond and have the flexibility to meet changing demands. This requires robust internal systems and strong lines of communications with the Council and our many Partner Agencies. Advice, Information, Advocacy, Tenure Sustainment, Education and Engagement and First Home Services are directly and positively impacting on the lives of Service Users and Third Parties. They continue to meet the many challenges and objectives being set by Local and Central Government.

Advice, Information and Advocacy remains a central part of the Centre's Services. The many changes coming through in terms of public and private housing will increase workload for this Service over the next few years, which will probably include private sector tribunal work.

We are actively engaged with South Ayrshire Council gathering information from tenants which is relevant to Universal Credit. Within this work and other intelligence we have gather from projects and

stats we firmly believe that there will be an ongoing need to support vulnerable people in making claims and complying with conditionality imposed under benefit regulations. This is particularly acute for people who are digitally excluded. The introduction of the new Scottish Welfare system will also pose challenges for the Centre and our services.

The profile of our Tenure Sustainment work will clearly be impacted by Universal Credit and we continue preparation in terms of staff development and linking with Partners.

Education and Engagement has continued to provide high quality Sessions within Schools. Over the next period in partnership we hope to develop our engagement with Older Service User groups.

First Home merger and expansion has been successful and its reach has been extended.

Admin systems have continued to develop to meet changing demands within the Centre.

One of our primary strengths is our staff. Their commitment and dedication underpins the Services we provide. The Committee has a long proud history of supporting staff training and development. This is clearly essential on a wide range of grounds from regulatory to quality assurance.

3.16 Conclusion

This has been a very busy time for the Centre. Our Services continue to meet our objectives both in terms of our Contracts and aspirations.

We continue to review the needs of the Organisation and the Service Users to ensure that we are providing the highest possible quality Services. The feedback from Service Users, Contractual and Other Partners, Inspectors and Auditors all confirm that we are achieving high standards and I am very proud of the achievements of the Staff and Management Committee.

I would extend my thanks to all my colleagues who are central to the Services we provide.

I firmly believe one of the main strengths of the Centre is our teamwork and commitment to the aims and objectives of the Organisation. I would finally thank the members of the Management Committee for their continued commitment and support.

4. STATISTICAL REPORT 2015-16

The source for these statistics is taken from our Microsoft Excel Database from 1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016. This involves the completion of a form at initial interview and thereafter transferring the relevant details onto the computer system. Please note these statistics are subject to change as cases close and are accurate as at the time of writing this Report.

1. CASES OPENED OVER PAST 3 YEARS

The Centre opened 1,239 cases between 1st July 2015 and 30th June 2016 (1,152). This includes 182 rural cases opened, (183 last year).

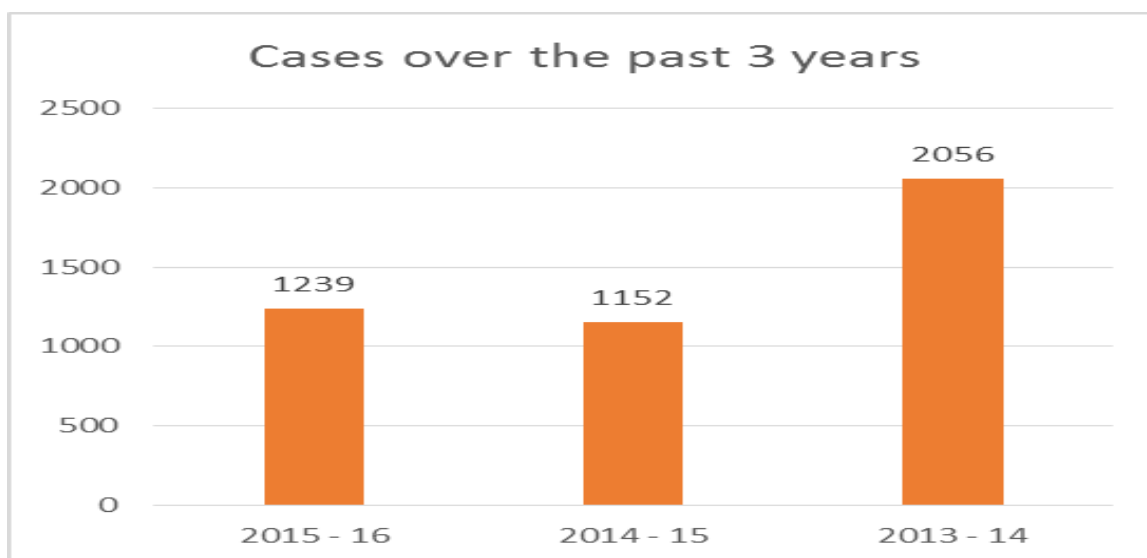
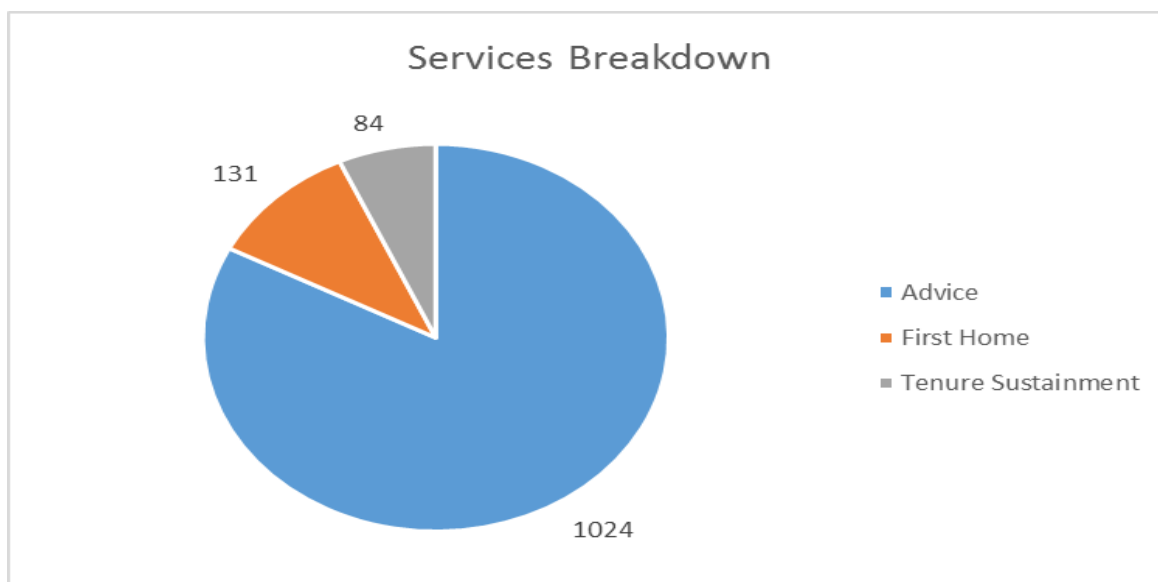


Chart 1

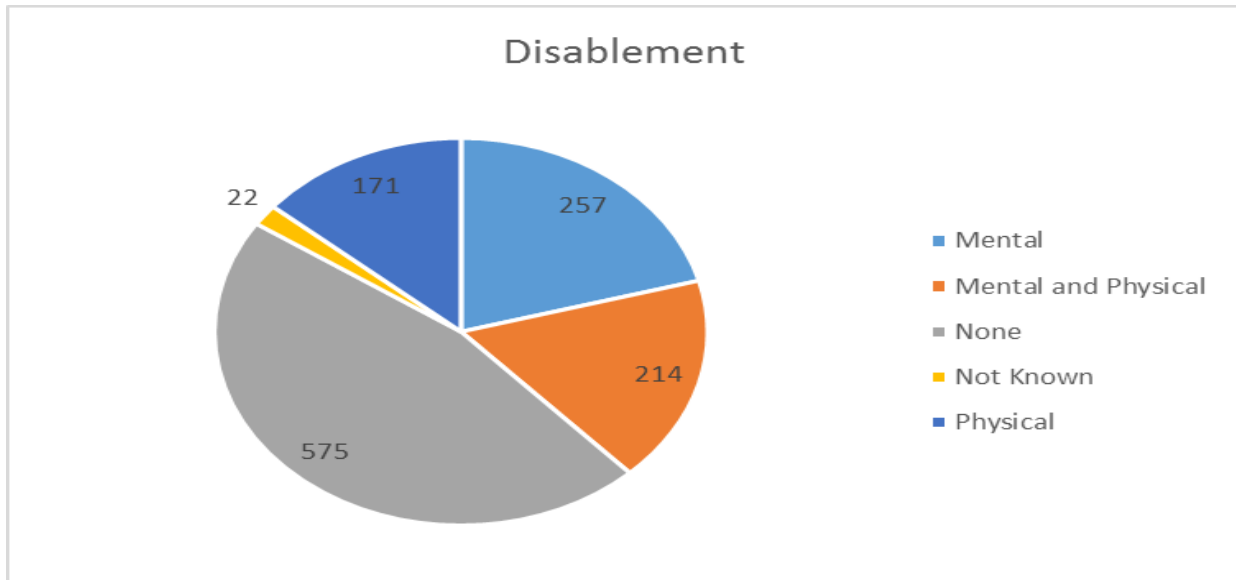
2. SERVICES (Chart 3 of Annual Report)

We provide a range of Services to individuals and families. As can be seen from the graph below the majority of cases are opened through Advice Work, 1,024 (986 cases). The First Home Service opened 131 (77 cases). Tenure Sustainment opened 84 (87 cases).



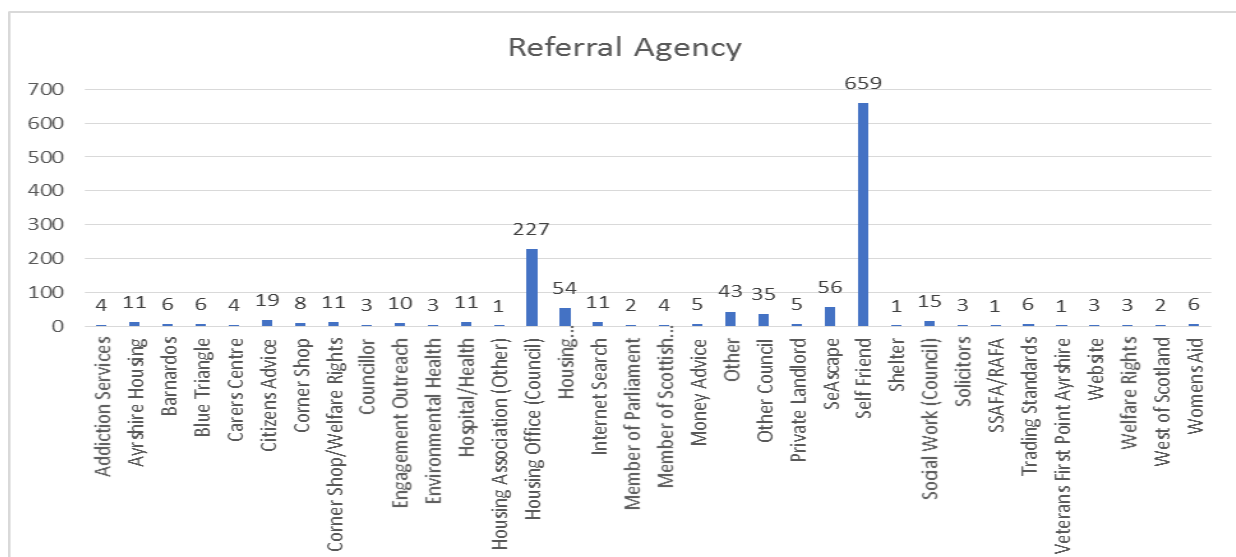
3. DISABLEMENT (Chart 7 of Annual Report)

171 Service Users had a physical disability (143), 257 had a mental disability (195) and there were 214 cases where Service Users have both physical and mental disabilities (159). A total of 642 had some sort of disability compared to 497 last year. As a percentage 51.8% compared to 43.1% last year advised that they have some form of disability.



4. REFERRAL AGENCY (Chart 10 of Annual Report)

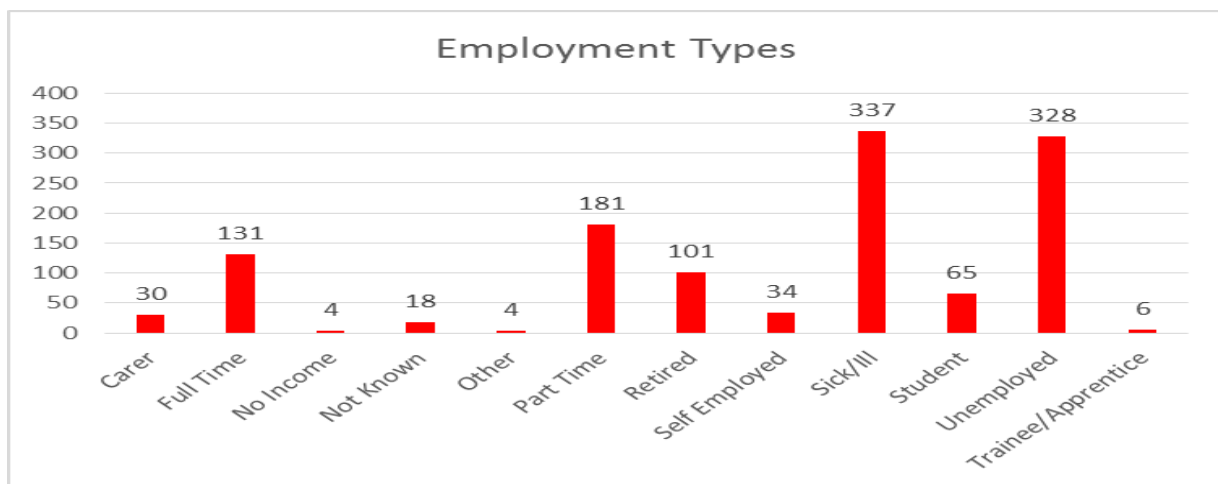
The self/friend category continues to be the primary method of referral, 659 (663). Service Users who are aware of our Service often recommend it to others. Referrals from the Local Authority Housing Department were 227, (206 last year). The total number of cases referred by South Ayrshire Council including the Housing Department were 296, (274 last year), 15 of these were from Social Work, (10 last year). There were 3 Referrals from Councillors (4 last year) and 2 from Members of Parliament, (2 last year) and from 4 Members of Scottish Parliament (5 last year). Please note we had 5 Referrals from Money Advice, 56 Referrals from SeAscape and 3 from Solicitors. I would also note 14 cases were Referrals from Housing Associations, (14 last year). There was 19 referrals from the Corner Shop (North Ayr Resource Centre) and 1 from Veterans Organisations.



The Centre has been actively participating in the development of South Ayrshire Council’s signpost system. The aim of the system is to ensure that service users are linked to the relevant service and the time of need.

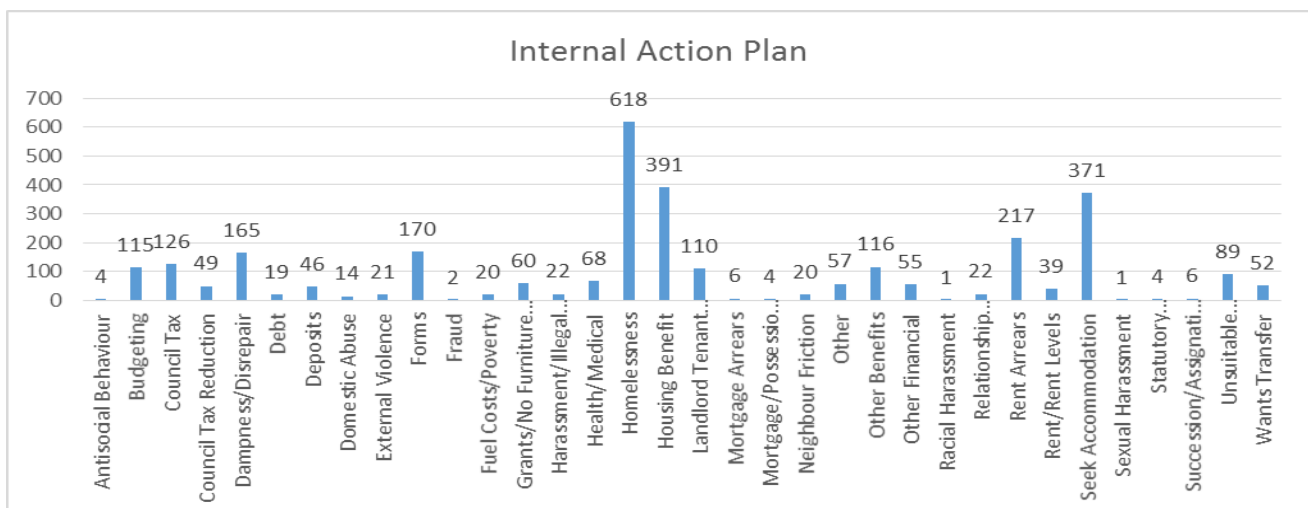
5. EMPLOYMENT TYPES (Chart 11 of the Annual Report)

In the Reporting Period the majority of our caseload is Service Users who are Sick/ill, 337, 27% (282, 24.4% last year) followed by unemployed 328, 26.5% (last year 377, 32.7%). Those who were employed were 352, 28.4% (301, 26.1% last year). We have noted a continued high caseload from the employed and many of the problems relate to multi-debt issues which often encompass housing matters. There is 101 cases from retired and 65 from students with 30 cases from carers.



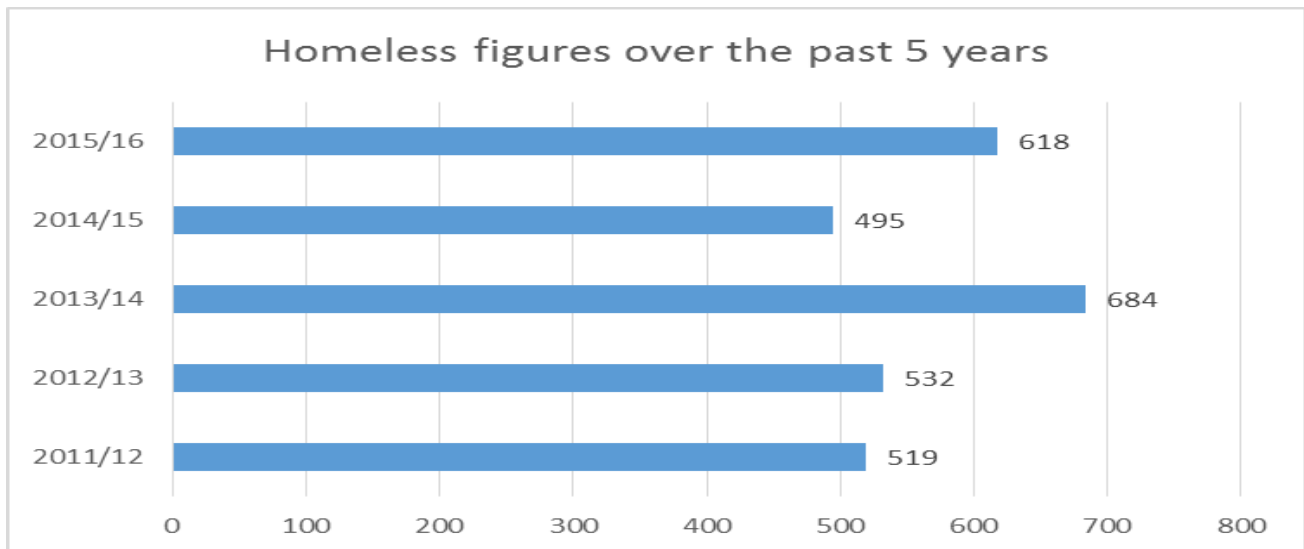
6. INTERNAL ACTION PLAN (Chart 17 of the Annual Report)

Homelessness continues to be our largest primary problem in our cases. There were 618 homeless cases opened, (495 last year). There were 52 cases wanting a transfer and 371 cases seeking accommodation. As can be seen from the chart below there were 507 internal action plan problems relating to Benefit cases, 391 (389 last year) of them were Housing Benefit. There were 110 cases relating to landlord tenant problems with 165 cases relating to repair, most of which were in the Private Sector. Please note there can be numerous problems in each case. Taking these into account there was 3,080 different actions associated to 1,239 cases opened.



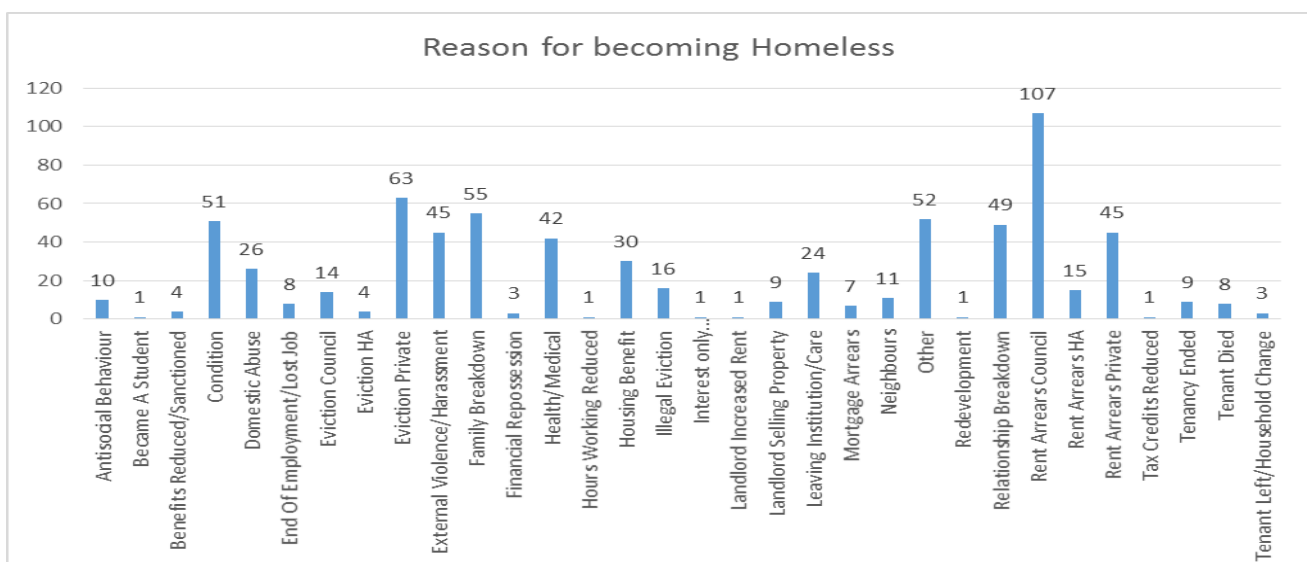
7. HOMELESS FIGURES OVER PAST 5 YEARS (Chart 19 of the Annual Report)

This chart shows homeless cases dealt with by the Centre over the past 5 years. It should be noted these figures include actual roofless Service Users, statutory homeless Service Users and those threatened with homelessness. Cases concerning homelessness have increased from 224 in 1998/99 to 618 this year (495 last year). In percentage terms this is 50% of all cases opened, (43% last year).



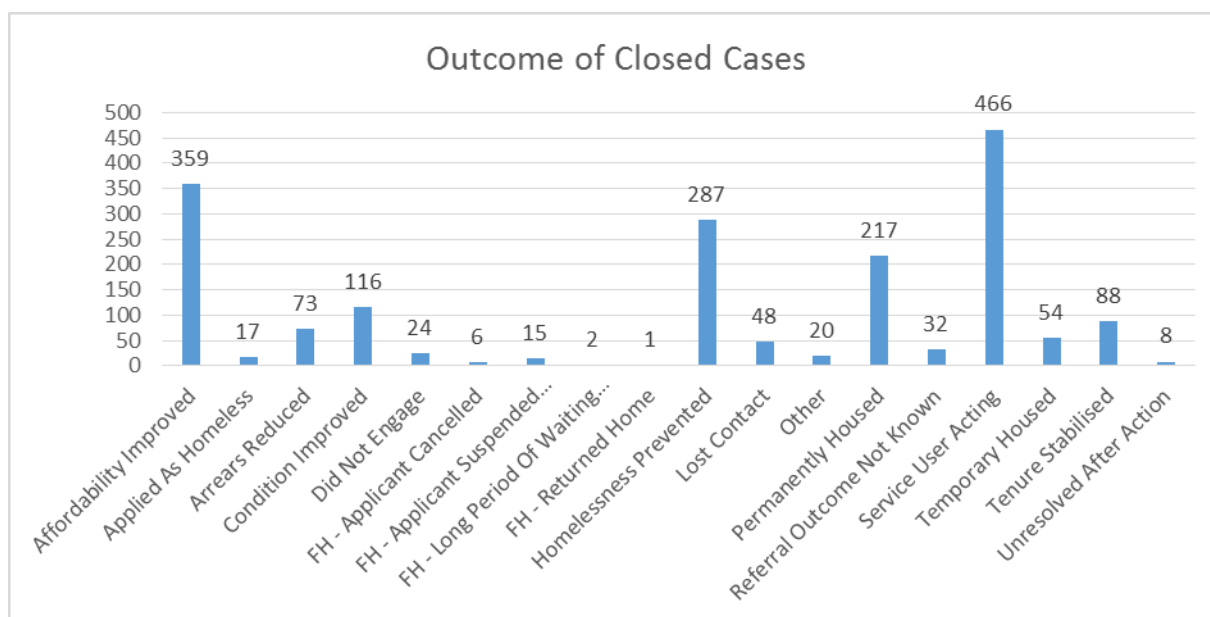
8. REASON FOR BECOMING HOMELESS (Chart 22 of the Annual Report)

There were 107 cases involving rent arrears in the Public Sector, (102 last year). It is important to note that many of these will be in the threatened with homeless group. 45 of our cases were arrears from the Private Sector, (39 last year). Domestic violence and relationship breakdown continues to be a major cause of homelessness, 75 cases (57 last year). Numbers of Service Users whose primary cause of homelessness was Housing Benefit problems was 30 (71 last year.) Service Users made homeless due to their tenancy coming to an end were 9 (3 last year). 55 of our Service Users became homeless due to family or friends unwilling to let them stay any longer. Repossession across Sectors accounted for 81, this includes Service Users threatened with repossession where an order has been granted.



9. OUTCOME OF CLOSED CASES (Chart 24 of the Annual Report)

In year 2015/16 the Centre closed 88% of cases opened, (91% last year). With an increased emphasis being placed on prevention of homelessness we hope to work closely with landlords and the Homeless Section to increase prevention. In this period the Centre prevented homelessness in 287 cases, (253 last year). This has been made more achievable by improved Referrals and the impact of our Tenure Sustainment Service. Please note there can be more than one outcome per case.



10. CASE ASSESSMENT (Chart 26 of the Annual Report)

This graph relates to an assessment of the outcomes. In the vast majority of cases closed there was a positive outcome or a likelihood of a positive outcome. It is interesting to note the level of lost contact cases. The Centre has systems in place to minimise possibility of lost contact and to follow up contacts, this is often vital in terms of prevention of homeless.

