

# AYR HOUSING AID CENTRE

## ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

**JULY 2016 - JUNE 2017**

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## **CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

1. Alex Anderson, Chairperson
2. Alan Berry
3. John Mulholland, Secretary
4. Ethel Riach, Treasurer
5. 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

Elspeth Lloyd, Tenure Sustainment Officer

Jill McNaught, Housing Advice and Information Team Leader

Jacqui Monaghan, 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 (Employment ended on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017)

Gavin Kennedy, First Home Officer

**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 2016/17

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 1,148 cases, 276 in our rural areas
- Centre opened 659 cases for services users with disabilities
- Centre opened 215 cases for service users between the ages of 16-24
- Centre opened 122 cases for service users over pension age
- Tenure Sustainment in 105 cases
- A total of 660 children were part of service users households
- 547 of our cases concerned homelessness
- 322 cases concerned the private rented sector
- 38 cases concerned the owner occupied sector

### Service User Outcomes

- Centre prevented homelessness in 268 cases
- 220 services users permanently re-housed
- 437 service users acted on advice of the Centre
- 870 cases had a positive or likely positive outcome
- Arrears reduced and income maximised across all sectors £346,036.61
- 16 Home owners tenures were stabilised and homelessness prevented

### Tenant and Third Party Beneficiaries

- Council rent accounts and tenants £269,832
- Housing Association rent accounts and tenants £21,130
- Private sector rent accounts and tenants £50,369
- Council Tax Reduction £26,996
- Future rental income to all sectors £1,916,200
- Value of homeless prevention £2,412,000 (relates to accommodation costs)
- Estimated Value to secured lenders £84,000
- Less demand on social, family, education, health and housing services estimated value £4,020,000

**Economic value is an important indicator in service provision and for every £1 put in by the Council the Centre generates a value of £22.97 (£25.74 last year) Estimated total economic value £8,778,236 for £382,023 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**

We continue to live in times of pressure on families, but not only on families but on the services on which they depend in the public sector.

The Housing Aid Centre has during the last year continued to assist individuals and families to deal with their housing and other issues to sustain and make success of tenancies, and ultimately prevent homelessness.

We have reviewed this work during the year with staff in preparation for the procurement process to enable us to submit a successful bid to deliver services for a further period.

The procurement process did not commence in autumn 2016 as expected and was delayed until summer 2017. I am grateful to staff who continued in their commitment to provide service during this uncertain period.

Although we submitted a successful bid to South Ayrshire Council, that process and its outcomes lies out with the scope of this report.

## **Progress with Service Development**

The effectiveness of the Housing Aid Centre has been enhanced through the teamwork of staff and the sound leadership of the management group. The comprehensive package of approaches from short term crisis intervention; longer term support where circumstances require it; educational outreach to at risk groups; and longer term educational and preventative with first time tenants and within South Ayrshire schools has created a coherent strategic framework from which to contribute to the prevention of homelessness in partnership with other agencies.

## **Addressing future needs**

The Housing Aid Centre has consistently learned from experience, kept an eye on emerging trends and planned for the impact of changing legislation and policies. Our staff have responded to this by reviewing practice and participating in training and amending approaches and developing services accordingly.

We are looking forward to working with South Ayrshire Council and a range of support agencies to ensure that we minimise, where we can, the potential for Families and Individuals having to go through the destructive experience of homelessness.

## **Our Thanks**

The Management Committee would wish to express our thanks to South Ayrshire Council and the different organisations and individuals that have contributed to the work we have embraced in the last year.

We are particularly grateful for the commitment of the staff of Housing Aid Centre and their strength during the period leading to the fresh procurement process.

## **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 £439,729. South Ayrshire Council Grant and Contract was £422,023. Yet again the Centre held a Race Night in October 2016. This was very successful and a big thanks to Suzie Moffat and the fundraising team. The Centre received various Grants such as Scotwest Credit Union and other donations in this period.

### **Expenditure**

Expenditure for the year was £431,179. The primary expenditure heading was salaries including pensions which accounted for £381,192. Running costs of our premises, upgrading systems are included in the overall expenditure.

### **Outcome**

This year the financials show a surplus of receipts of £8,550.

### **Projection 2017/2018**

I estimate that our expenditure for next year will be £453,223 of which £389,613 will be salaries including pensions. With a projected income of £457,363. I have allocated £25,000 from reserves which is part of accumulated funds for expenditure within 17/18.

It is expected that the Centre will show a surplus of £4,140 for the year 2017/18.

### **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 2017**

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	2017			2016		
	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Total	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Total
<b>Incoming Resources</b>						
Funding - public authorities	-	422,023	422,023	-	387,017	387,017
Fund raising/donations	1,600	1,690	3,290	2,000	2,228	4,228
Other income	-	13,737	13,737	-	12,513	12,513
Interest received	679	-	679	15	-	15
	<u>2,279</u>	<u>437,450</u>	<u>439,729</u>	<u>2,015</u>	<u>401,758</u>	<u>403,773</u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>						
<b>Charitable activities</b>						
Salaries inc pension costs	-	381,192	381,192	-	374,272	374,272
Members and staff expenses	-	7,035	7,035	-	5,820	5,820
Rent and rates	-	13,488	13,488	-	7,592	7,592
Heat light and telephone	500	5,340	5,840	400	2,546	2,946
Insurance	-	1,920	1,920	-	1,806	1,806
Repairs and maintenance	1,000	5,308	6,308	100	519	619
Stationery/computer consumables	500	7,723	8,223	380	6,507	6,887
Conferences and training	250	711	961	750	2,269	3,019
Library/subscriptions	100	985	1,085	500	637	1,137
	<u>2,350</u>	<u>423,702</u>	<u>426,052</u>	<u>2,130</u>	<u>401,968</u>	<u>404,098</u>
<b>Cost of generating funds</b>						
Miscellaneous expenses	300	2,661	2,961	50	570	620
<b>Governance costs</b>						
Accountancy	-	690	690	-	690	690
Regulatory costs	-	1,476	1,476	-	1,476	1,476
Total resources expended	<u>2,650</u>	<u>428,529</u>	<u>431,179</u>	<u>2,180</u>	<u>404,704</u>	<u>406,884</u>
Net movement in funds	-371	8,921	8,550	-165	-2,946	-3,111
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward	34,031	144,753	178,784	34,196	147,699	181,895
Total funds carried forward	33,660	153,674	187,334	34,031	144,753	178,784



### **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. Due to delays in the procurement process our current contract has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017.

The Management Committee and staff have engaged in constructive and critical reviews across all the services we provide as we prepare for the procurement of our services. This process has continued and our bid was submitted on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The Centre was advised on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 that our bid has been successful and subsequently we were advised the new contract will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.

We have continued to invest in our property and have a strong relationship with our landlords Associated British Ports. We have utilised our additional floor space and have started negotiations on our leases with ABP.

I have had the pleasure of working with many people over my 24 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 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 21,750 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.

Over the past number of years I have referred to Welfare Reform and in particular Universal Credit in my reports. Clearly there is a need for partnership working as we move towards the full roll out of UC in South Ayrshire (7<sup>th</sup> February 2018). The Centre will play a full part in meeting the challenges of this and look forward to engage with the Council and other partners on this vital matter.

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 succeeded 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
- 1<sup>st</sup> 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 87 (44 last year) vouchers to Service Users, which is an significant rise in demand. 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. As the Council continues to develop their response to the Universal Credit roll out the Centre remains committed to

actively participate with the Council to support residents of South Ayrshire to claim and maintain their Universal Credit accounts with the DWP.

A key factor relates to digital inclusion and the accessing of resources to make claims and update the same and if required assistance in making claims. In February 2015 we altered our statistical system to gather information regarding Internet access and Bank Accounts. In terms of cases across Services 1,148 cases responded to the question with 378 stating they had no access (33%). There was 295 (26%) stating the only access was by phone with 475 (41%) stating they had access through broadband facility. The Centre has been advised that the DWP after full roll out expects around 700 claims per month, taking into account our statistics we would expect high demand for assistance with claims and updating processes. The current mapping process of resources across South Ayrshire highlights significant shortage in assisted resources.

Out of the responses 1,074 stated they have Bank/Building Society/Post Office (94%) with 7 stating they have no account. 67 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 they have mental health or physical health problems some state that they have both. It underpins the impact that preventing homelessness can have on health.

In general terms 659 (57%) Service Users stated they have disability issues. 159 stated physical disability, 280 stated mental disability with 220 stating both. This percentage has continued to grow over the past six years from 32% in 2010/11 to 57% 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 1,148 cases (1,239 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 Monaghan (Housing Advice and Information Officer), Leica Malkin (Tenant Advice and Information Officer) and Joseph Sproat (Administrative Assistant) supported by the Chief Executive Officer. Demand for this Service is very high and over the reporting year cases opened were 953 (1,024 last 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 443 (46%) - (508, (50%) last year)
- Housing Benefit 317 (33%) - (289, (28%) last year)
- Dampness/disrepair 77 (8%) - (163, (15.9%) last year)
- Rent arrears 132 (14%) - (129, (13.5%) last year)

#### **Homeless Cases Detail**

From the 431 Homeless cases opened, 417 of them were closed and 14 were current. From the 417, we were unable to prevent homelessness for the 30 who were already street homeless (41 last year) and 122 who were already living in temporary accommodation (Hostel, Bed and Breakfast or Temp Furnished) giving a total of 152 (162 last year). This meant we had the opportunity to prevent homelessness in 265 cases. From these 265, 37 were living with friends, parents or relatives meaning they had no rights to stay. Despite this, we still were able to prevent homelessness in 24 of these cases. From the remaining 228 cases where prevention of homeless was possible we were successful in 169 cases (193 in total). From these 228 cases 14 were permanently housed (6%) and 7 were booked into temporary accommodation (3%).

In terms of homeless reviews there were 49 (45 last year). We requested review in 2 intentionally homeless cases and 32 offers both down from last year. We challenged Discharge of Duty in 8 cases compared with only 1 in the previous year.

## Private Sector

This is an expanding sector in South Ayrshire and across Scotland. Advice opened 318 cases from this sector. There were 233 children living in the Private rented sector. Out of the 318 cases there was a number of internal action plans. The main actions were;

- Housing Benefit - 149
- Homelessness - 108
- Dampness/disrepair - 40
- Rent arrears 48

Within the private sector we prevented homelessness in 16% of the private sector cases (19 last year). Affordability was improved in 25% of cases (20% last year) and 10% were permanently housed, the same as last year. 28% of cases showed service users acting (31% last year). This means they can go on and act on the information or advice we have given them.

## User Feedback

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

- “Put my mind at rest and took a lot of my worries away”
- “It provided all the information I need quickly. Impartial and informal. Great”
- “It saved my family, a disabled family from homelessness (that would be unsafe and detrimental to our health”
- “Brilliant, concise and follow-up action 100%”

## 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 105 cases with 28 cases overlapping at the start of the year.

## Care Inspectorate

Our last inspection was March 2017, the overall report was excellent with high Grades for different elements of our Service. Our Grades are:-

- 6 – Excellent for Quality of Care and Support
- 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.

## Casework

There are internal action plans for each case, most cases have more than one action plan out of the 105 new cases there were 466 different actions.

In the report year 89 cases were closed with the following main outcomes (some cases have more than one outcome);

- 75 homelessness prevented
- 70 advising tenancy has stabilised
- 27 arrears have reduced
- 43 affordability improved

In the 89 cases closed arrears were reduced by different levels. A key issue relates to affordability increase which was noted in 43 cases and tenancies was stabilised in 70 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:-

- “It was caring and made me feel at ease”
- “Warm, friendly, reassuring and very helpful”
- “I thought it was valuable. I was in a dark place and a bit lost and I was supported with care and respect, understanding with no judgement..... With help I got through it and I am more in control and my home is safe again ”

## **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) 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 7 out of the 8 Secondary Schools in South Ayrshire providing this Service to 786 pupils via their Personal Social Education (PSE) lessons. This would not have been possible without the support of the Head and Guidance Teachers within Schools.

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

**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.**

### Overall Feedback Education and Engagement

#### Pupils

- |                                                          |                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • “Very eye opening Lesson                               | Belmont Academy Pupil |
| • “Didn’t know it was that dear”                         | Ayr Academy Pupil     |
| • “Nice friendly presentations”                          | Marr College Pupil    |
| • “It was good I’m more aware of buying my own home now” | Kyle Academy Pupil    |

#### Teachers

- |                                                                                                          |                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • “Excellent information in preparing for leaving home/going to Uni”                                     | Marr College Teacher      |
| • “Very informative and presented in a clever way”                                                       | Prestwick Academy Teacher |
| • “Lots of interesting points given ”                                                                    | Girvan Academy Teacher    |
| • “Eye opening information with regard to how difficult young people will find it to live on their own ” | Ayr Academy Teacher       |
| • “Learnt things I didn’t know and remembered things I had forgotten”                                    | Kyle Academy Teacher      |

### **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) 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. This Service was awarded a COSLA Bronze award in 2016 in Achieving Better Outcome Category.

#### **Casework**

In the Report Year the Service received 90 referrals (131 last year) in addition there was 96 cases carried over from 2015/16. At the time of writing this report 107 cases have been closed and 82 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 107 cases closed there has been 412 separate actions as the service has been delivered.

Outlined below is some of the outcomes;

- 57 (12) Service Users permanently housed
- 76 (21) Affordability improved
- 13 (6) Applications suspended
- 16 (5) Cancelled applications
- 4 (2) Service User's acting

In terms of the closed cases 97% 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, completion of cases tracking and parental feedback. Comments are outlined below:

##### **Interim**

29 interim evaluation was sent out with 28 returned, analysis of the feedback included;

- 100% found it useful to have a First Home Officer to explain the application process
- 100% felt having a First Home Officer helped them reach a decision regarding their application
- 96% found it useful to discuss income and expected outgoings for when they move into their own tenancy

##### **Completed First Home Cases**

55 evaluations were sent out with 28 being returned.



## Tracking

For the 57 closed cases who were permanently housed for this reporting year, we have 27 young people who have completed all stages and would be highlighted for tracking purposes within this reporting year.

Out of the 27 young people, 23 have completed the survey and 4, we were unable to reach.

The results of the surveys are as below;

- From the 23 completed, 2 had moved on from initial tenancy at completion of case. 1 had moved from SAC tenancy back to parents due to a relationship breakdown. 1 person had moved onto Private Rented accommodation due to increase in family size.
- The remaining 21 are still in their tenancies at completion of case and are settling in well, with 22 stating they settled well in their tenancy.

## **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 continually being 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 considered the type of initial contact Services User's have with the Centre. Service Users visiting the Centre for appointments accounted for 356 of our cases opened, (306 last year). There was 90 cases opened by home appointment (113 last year). We opened 536 cases over the telephone this year, (632 last year). A number of Service Users had to call into the Centre for an appointment following the telephone call if there was a complex problem. Drop in to the Centre accounted for 80 cases (123 last year). The Centre opened 10 cases via a letter, 62 cases via e-mail, 6 by text and 8 by Emergency Drop in.

### Development

All admin staff during the report year has undertaken training relevant to their roles at the Centre and we continue training staff to keep their qualifications are up-to-date and relevant.

Admin over the next year will consider merger of some of our data needs, review audio typing capacity, review of standard case sheets, review Service User Feedback Forms 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 1,148 cases there were 2,836 (3,080 last year) actions. The largest primary problem raised with the Centre continues to be homelessness or threatened with homelessness, 547 cases (618 last year). This accounts for around 48% (50% last year) of our caseload from these Services.

Our overall caseload involving 16-24 year olds accounts for 215 cases, (294 last year). From this age group 85 were involved in the homeless system (135 last year). There were 660 (670 last year) children involved in all our cases, of this 202 (228 last year) were involved in homelessness.

**Within our caseload there are around 321 cases, (416 last year) where there is a possibility of homeless prevention work and the Centre prevented homelessness in 268, 86%.**

### **Employability**

In the Reporting Period the majority of our caseload is Service Users who are Sick/ill, 349, 30% (337, 27% last year) followed by unemployed 296, 26% (last year 328, 26.5%). Those who were employed were 328, 28.5% (352, 28.4% 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 85 cases from retired and 36 from students with 31 cases from carers.

It is interesting to note from our First Home Stats over the past 3 years the number of young people in employment/apprenticeships has increased from 18% to 42% with unemployment within the group reducing from 73% to 37% over the same period. Within our HEY project we noted 2016/17, 18% of 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils stated they wanted to move into employment/apprenticeships after leaving school.

### **Rent Arrears Recovery/ Income Maximisation/Future Rent Projection**

Over the past 15 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	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total to date
SAC	£191,717.33	£149,832.92	£267,839.29	£269,832.68	£1,458,351.60
RSL	£3,128.19	£6,468.05	£15,149.89	£21,130.91	£181,635.08
Private	£32,028.68	£34,325.93	£53,092.80	£50,369.57	£481,562.86
Owner Occupied	£5,594	£204.23	£613.61	£720.45	£57,562.85
Family	£9,371.56	£5,305.50	£33,551.22	£3,983.00	£52,211.28
Total	£241,839.76*	£196,136.63	£370,246.81	£346,036.61	£2,231,323.70

\*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 15<sup>th</sup> 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;

<b>Public Sector 257 tenancies x £80 (average rent) x 52 weeks =</b>	<b>£ 1,069,120</b>
<b>RSL 25 tenancies x £95 (average rent) x 52 weeks =</b>	<b>£ 123,500</b>
<b>Private Sector 121 tenancies x £115 (average rent) x 52 weeks =</b>	<b>£ 723,580</b>
	<b><u>£ 1,916,200</u></b>

**In terms of projected future mortgage payments I have an estimated value of:-**

**Owner Occupiers 14 x £500 (average monthly mortgage payment) x 12 months = £84,000**

### **3.12 Homeless Prevention**

The Centre firmly believes 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 547 Homeless cases opened, 510 of them were closed and 37 were current. From the 510, we were unable to prevent homelessness for the 32 who were already street homeless and 133 who were already living in temporary accommodation (Hostel or temp furnished) - total of 164. This meant we had the opportunity to prevent homelessness in only 345 cases. From these 345 where prevention was possible, 15 permanently housed and 9 booked into temp accommodation. From the 321 cases where prevention of homelessness was possible we were successful in 268 (83%) cases.

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 268 cases this year, estimated saving to the public purse of £2,412,000 (£2,583,000 last year). The formula used is  $A \times B \times C$**

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

B :- Number of cases (268)

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 13 years the Centre has directly prevented homelessness in over 2,664 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 £4,020,000 (£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 £382,023 (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 £8,778,236.**

**Economic value is an important indicator in Service provision and for every £1 put in by the Council the Centre generates a value of £22.97 (last year was £25.24)**

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 have prepared a Service User Feedback Annual Report. Once again we have included feedback from group work undertaken by Education and Engagement.

We sent out 247 questionnaires for our Housing Information and Advice Service, 57 of these questionnaires were returned, 23%, (27% last year). 44 questionnaires were sent out to our Tenure Sustainment Service Users, 18 of these were returned 41% (47% last year). 55 questionnaires were sent out to our First Home Service Users, 43 of these were returned, 78% (92% last year).

Please note the above 3 Services will show accumulated Statistics throughout the Report. Our First Home Service has a different Questionnaire from our other Services and is excluded from some questions as they do not apply. Questions the First Home Service are excluded from are Questions 1, 3, 3.1, 3.2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 and 19.1. Please note Questions 5, 6, 7 and 17.1 relates to the First Home Service.

Over and above the Service User Feedback the First Home Service received 3 Parent Feedback Forms (4 last year), 28 Interim Feedback Forms (23 last year) and 23 (7 last year) completed tracking feedback from 27 sent out,(these are First Home follow up cases which have been closed for 6 months).

In addition the Centre has accumulative 409 likes within our Facebook page and out of them 403 follows the Centre.

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.

The Centre has engaged in an overall service review as we prepare for the procurement of our services. This has included discussions with South Ayrshire Council on their priorities as we move forward. The Centre was successful in our bid with the new contract being on a year to year basis up to a total contract period of 3 years. There has been a significant cut in value within the new contract which will have a knock on impact on services in year 2017/18 and beyond. The new contract commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017. We welcome the Prisons Advice Service which became part of our operations from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.

There are many significant changes and challenges within the next year and beyond across all tenures. The full roll out of Universal Credit will have a significant impact on service users within South Ayrshire. The Centre is committed to working with South Ayrshire Council and partners to minimise the impact of Universal Credit and to provide assistance to claimants.

The overall profile of our services will change under the new contract and sadly we will lose valuable staff at a time there will be increasing demands. It is vital that additional resources are accessed to help meet the growing need within South Ayrshire, particularly with regards to digital exclusion and Universal Credit.

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 busy year for the staff and the Management Committee. The service reviews, staff consultation and preparation for procurement has always been prominent during the report year. I am very proud all our services has performed to the highest standards providing quality services to the people of South Ayrshire.

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

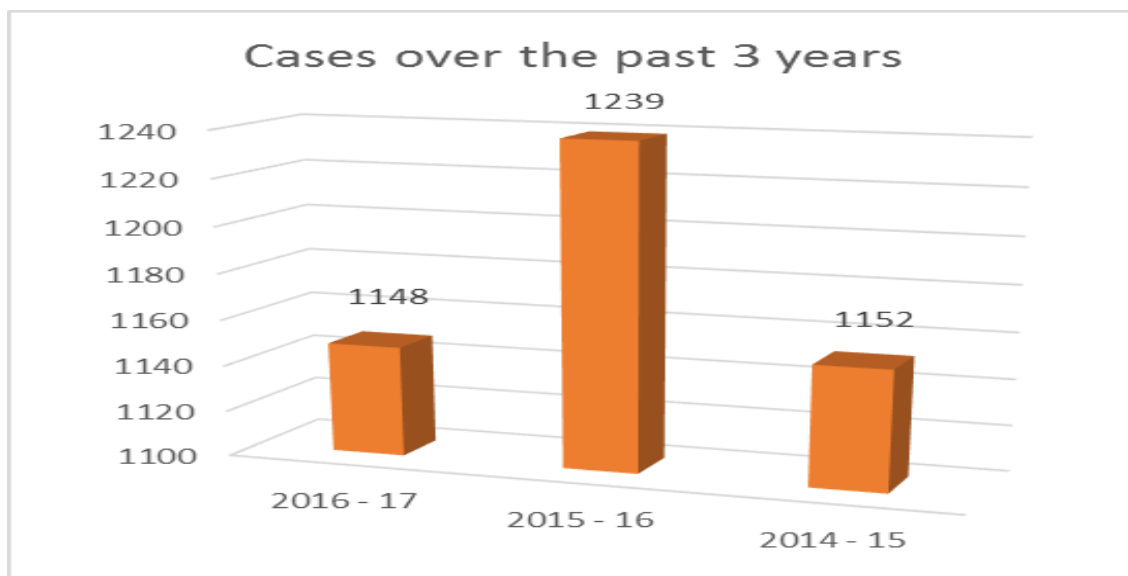
I firmly believe one of the main strengths of the Centre is our teamwork and commitment to the aims and objectives of the Organisation. I would finally thank the members of the Management Committee for their continued commitment and support.

## 4. STATISTICAL REPORT 2016-17

The source for these statistics is taken from our Microsoft Excel Database from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. 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.

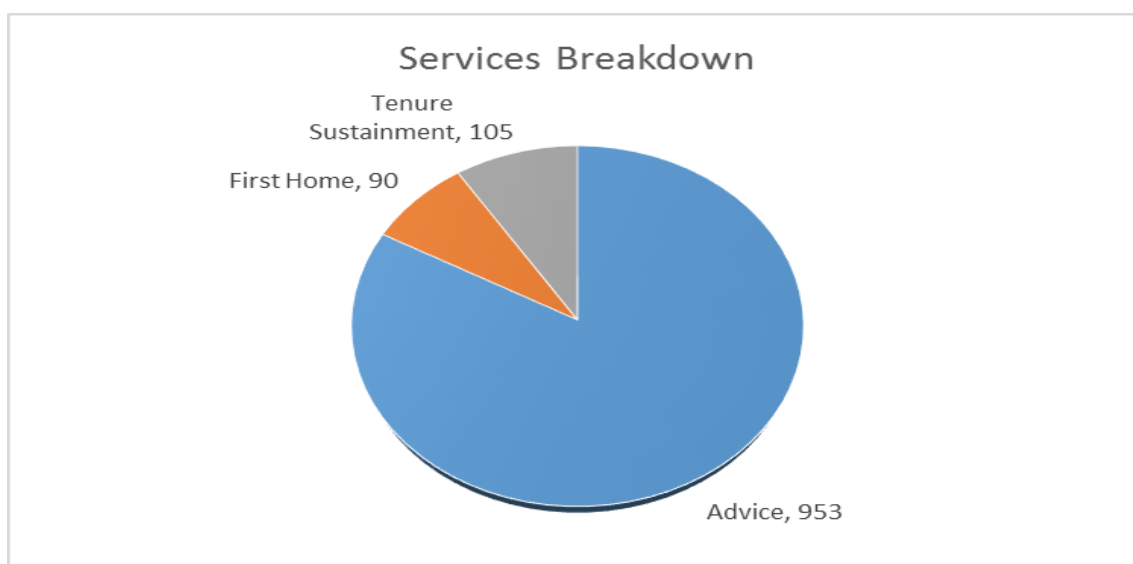
### 1. CASES OPENED OVER PAST 3 YEARS

The Centre opened 1,148 cases between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (1,239 last year). This includes 276 rural cases opened, (182 last year).



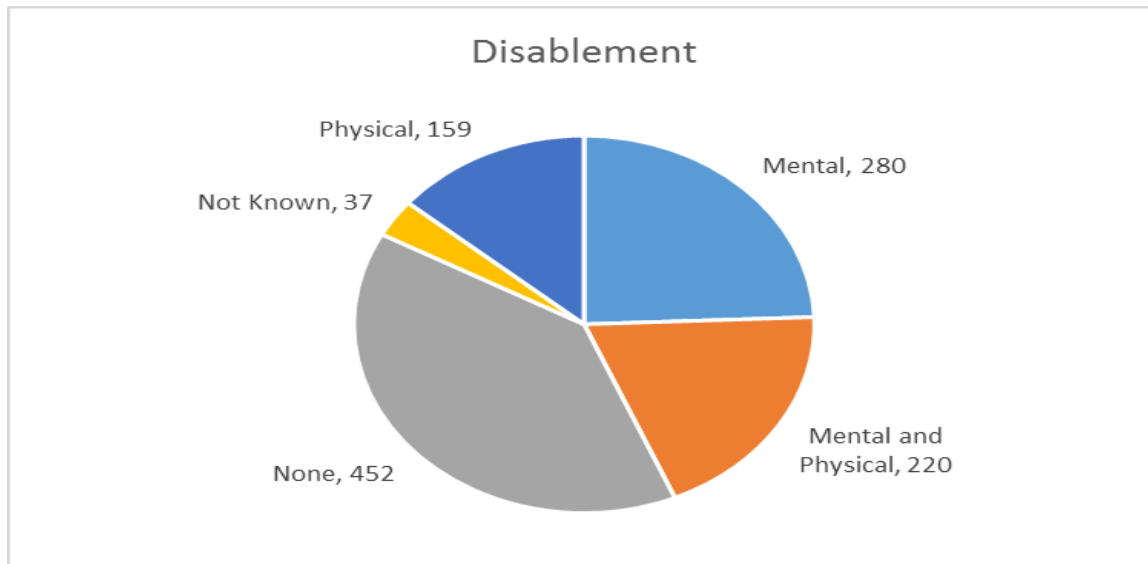
### 2. SERVICES (Chart 3 of Annual Report)

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, 953 (1,024 cases). The First Home Service opened 90 (131 cases). Tenure Sustainment opened 105 (84 cases).



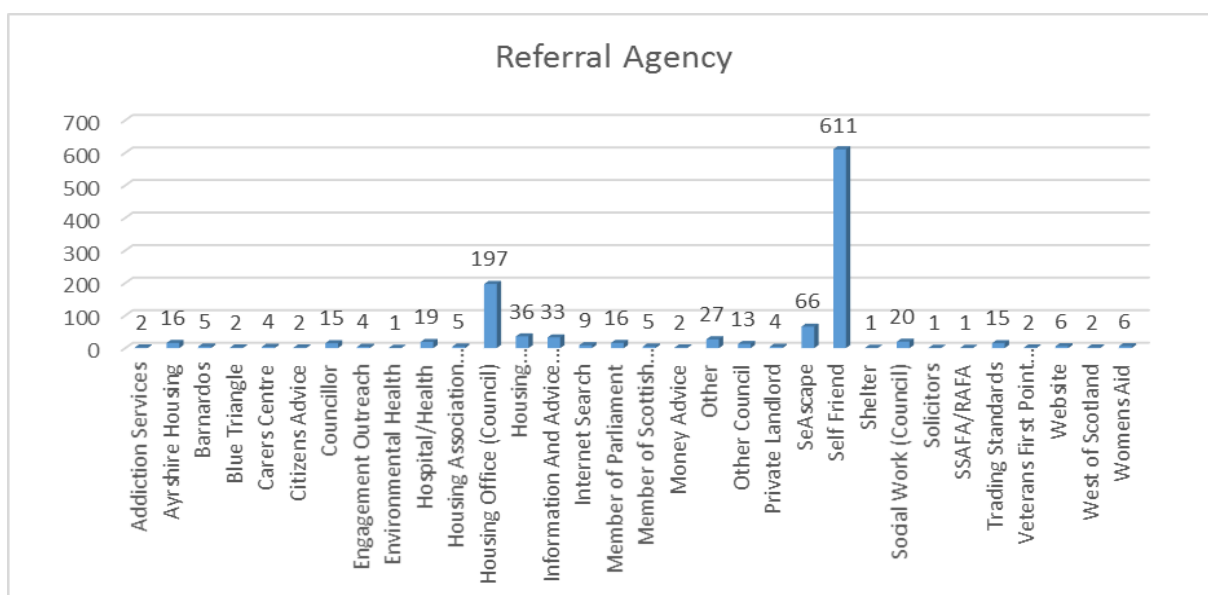
### 3. DISABLEMENT (Chart 7 of Annual Report)

159 Service Users had a physical disability (171), 280 had a mental disability (257) and there were 220 cases where Service Users have both physical and mental disabilities (214). A total of 659 had some level of disability compared to 642 last year. As a percentage 57.4% compared to 51.8% last year advised 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, 611 (659). Service Users who are aware of our Service often recommend it to others. Referrals from the Local Authority Housing Department were 197, (227 last year). The total number of cases referred by South Ayrshire Council including the Housing Department were 253, (296 last year), 20 of these were from Social Work, (15 last year). There were 15 Referrals from Councillors (3 last year), 16 from Members of Parliament (2 last year) and from 5 Members of Scottish Parliament (4 last year). Please note we had 2 Referrals from Money Advice, 66 Referrals from SeAscape and 1 from Solicitors. I would also note 23 cases were Referrals from Housing Associations, (14 last year). There was 33 referrals from the Information and Advice HUB and 19 Referrals from Hospital/Health.

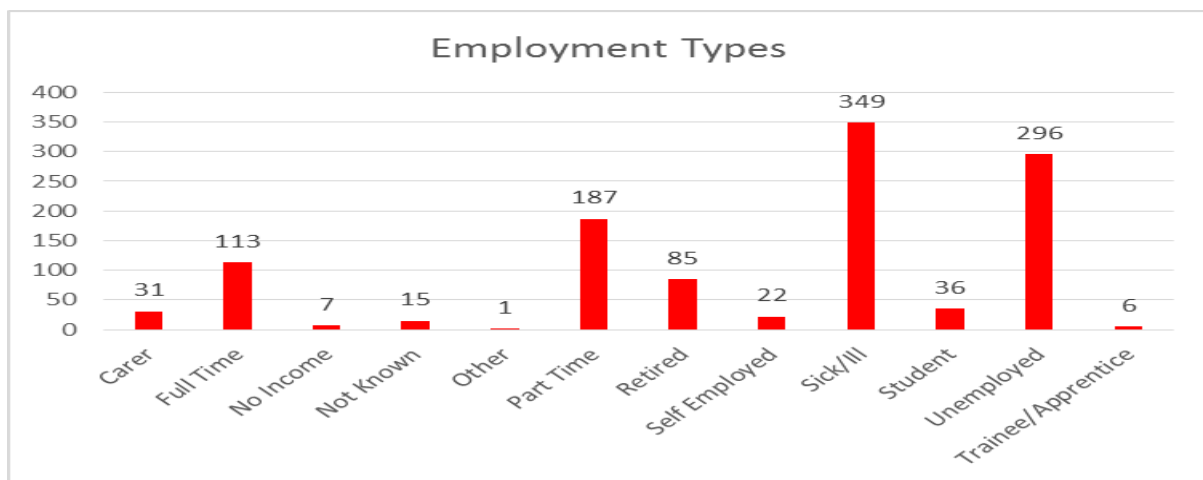




The Centre has been actively participating in the development of South Ayrshire Council’s signpost system. The aim of the system is to ensure Service Users are linked to the relevant service at the time of need.

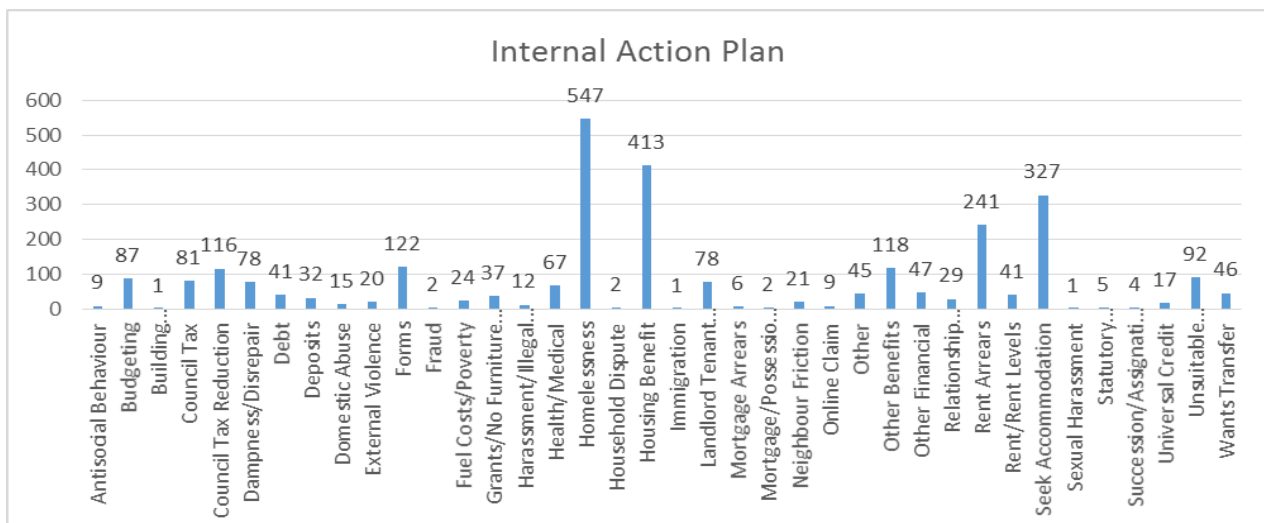
## **5. EMPLOYMENT TYPES (Chart 11 of Annual Report)**

In the Reporting Period the majority of our caseload is Service Users who are Sick/ill, 349, 30% (337, 27% last year) followed by unemployed 296, 26% (last year 328, 26.5%). Those who were employed were 328, 28.5% (352, 28.4% 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 was 85 cases from retired and 36 from students with 31 cases from carers.



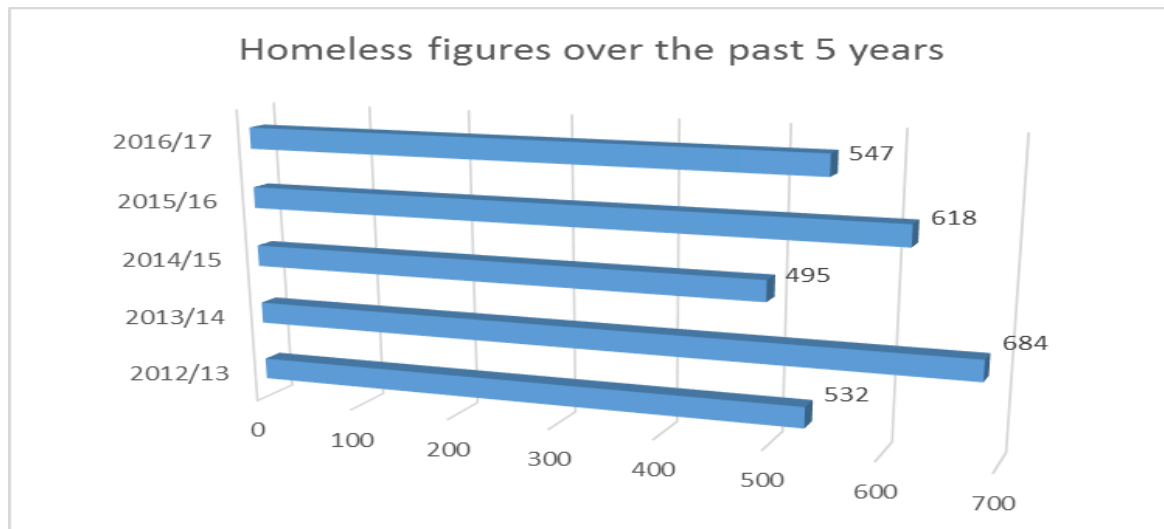
## **6. INTERNAL ACTION PLAN (Chart 17 of Annual Report)**

Homelessness continues to be our largest primary problem in our cases. There were 547 homeless cases opened, (618 last year). There were 46 cases wanting a transfer and 327 cases seeking accommodation. As can be seen from the chart below there were 531 internal action plan problems relating to Benefit cases, 413 (391 last year) of them were Housing Benefit. There were 78 cases relating to landlord tenant problems with 78 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 2,836 different actions associated to 1,148 cases opened.



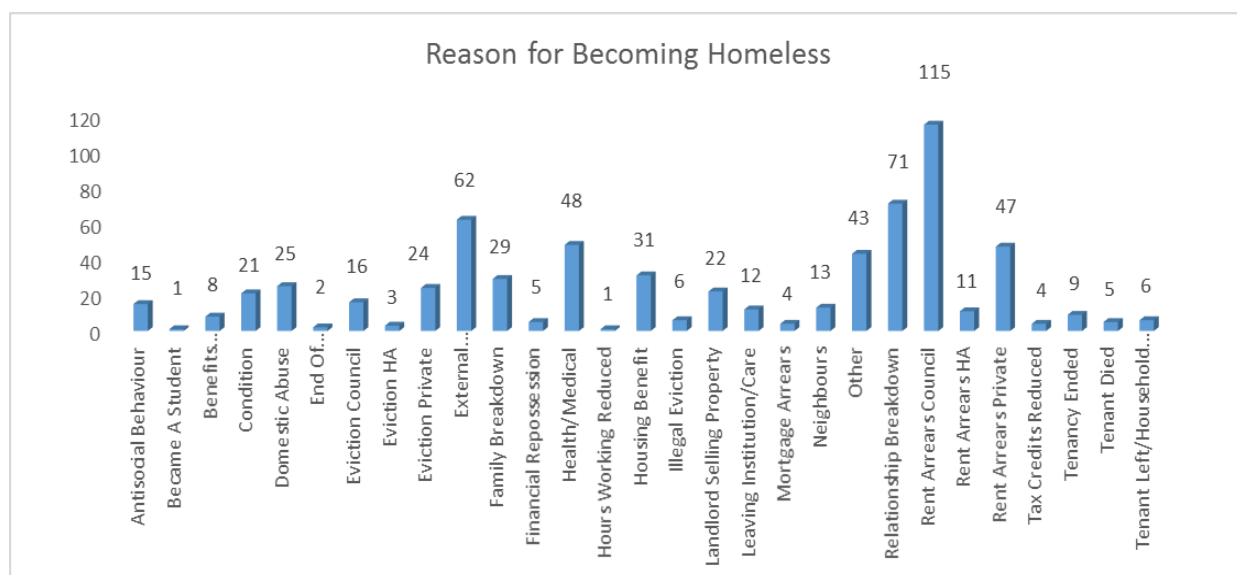
## 7. HOMELESS FIGURES OVER PAST 5 YEARS (Chart 19 of Annual Report)

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 547 this year (618 last year). In percentage terms this is 48% of all cases opened, (50% last year).



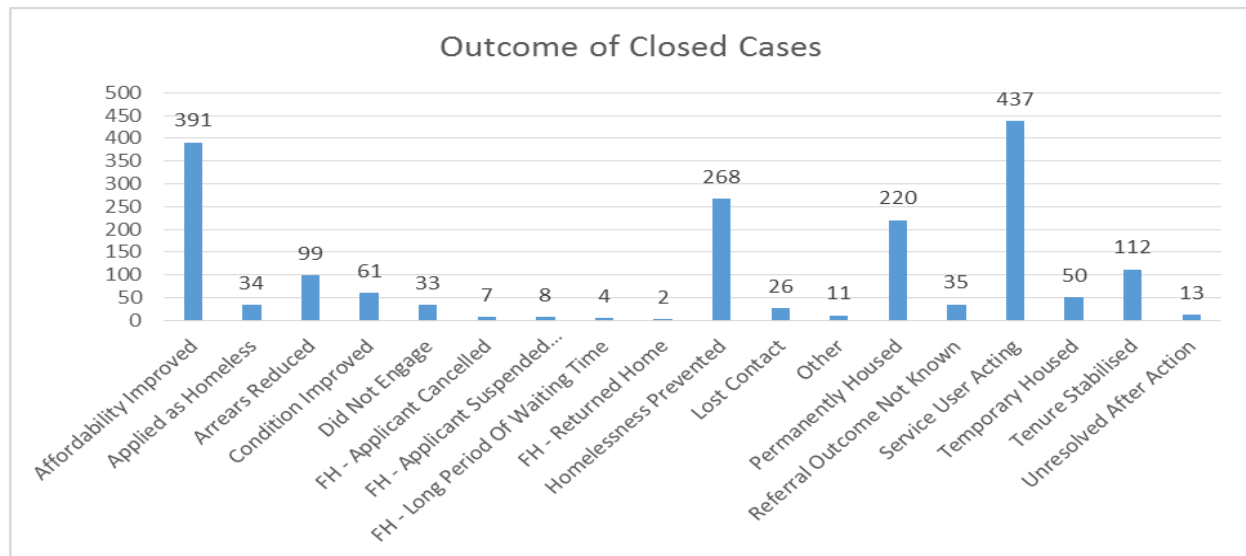
## 8. REASON FOR BECOMING HOMELESS (Chart 22 of Annual Report)

There were 115 cases involving rent arrears in the Public Sector, (107 last year). It is important to note that many of these will be in the threatened with homeless group. 47 of our cases were arrears from the Private Sector, (45 last year). Domestic violence and relationship breakdown continues to be a major cause of homelessness, 96 cases (75 last year). Numbers of Service Users whose primary cause of homelessness was Housing Benefit problems was 31 (30 last year.) Service Users made homeless due to their tenancy coming to an end were 9 (9 last year). 29 of our Service Users became homeless due to family or friends unwilling to let them stay any longer. Repossession across Sectors accounted for 43, this includes Service Users threatened with repossession where an order has been granted.



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

In year 2016/17 the Centre closed 92% of cases opened, (88% last year). With an increased emphasis being placed on prevention of homelessness we hope to work closely with landlords and Housing Options to increase prevention. In this period the Centre prevented homelessness in 268 cases, (287 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 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, 33. 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.

