Ayr Housing Aid Centre SCIO

ANNUAL REPORT

1st JULY 2024 – 30th JUNE 2025



SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC049609

SCOTTISH NATIONAL STANDARDS
ACCREDITED INFORMATION AND ADVICE PROVIDERS

Scottish Social Services Council

care inspectorate

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator
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SC049609

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1. GOVERNANCE

Objectives & Activities

Ayr Housing Aid Centre SCIO is a rights-based charity providing services to South Ayrshire and surrounding localities. Our clear objectives set out in our constitution are for the:

1. Relief of those in need by reason of age, ill health, disability, financial hardship, homelessness or threat of homelessness or other disadvantages
2. Relief of poverty
3. Advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation
4. Advancement of education

Our office is based at 7 York Street, Ayr with Prison Housing Advice staff based within HMP Kilmarnock Link Centre with attendance at HMP Barlinnie and HMP Greenock as required.

The Board

- Margaret Greenan, Chairperson
- Pat Lappin, Treasurer, resigned 6.9.24
- Craig McArthur, Treasurer from 7.9.24
- Alan Berry, Vice Chair
- Julie Williams
- Sam Keith, resigned 27.1.25

The Team

- Suzanne Slavin, Chief Executive Officer
- Emma Gaughan, Operations Manager
- Gerry Tierney, Advice Team Leader & I'M IN! Advocacy and Tribunal Officer
- Allison Cairns, Housing Adviser
- David Anderson, I'M IN! Advocacy and Tribunal Officer
- Jennifer Cochrane, VASA & I'M IN! Housing Caseworker
- Shirleyann Reid, Senior Prison Housing Adviser
- Janet MacAlister, Prison Housing Adviser
- Elspeth Lloyd, Tenure Sustainment Officer (Job-share)
- Cristine Kerr, Tenure Sustainment Officer (Job-share)
- Sue Cooksley, Reception/Referral Officer
- Michael O'Donnell, Office & Finance Manager from 17.7.24
- Iain Jamie, Database & Statistical Support
- Ewen Hill, Office Support Assistant resigned 14.1.25
- Joseph Sproat, Evolve Admin 6 Month Placement from 24.3.25

2. PRINCIPLE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Each of our Services contribute to AHAC meeting its aims and objectives, contractual obligations and our Service User's and community's needs. All Services produce Internal Annual Reports and statistics which feed into our Annual Report cycle including the Annual Service User Feedback Report. We opened 1417 cases + 251 additional enquiries throughout this financial year compared to 1351 + 190 enquiries in the previous year. When each case is opened a standard person profile is created on AdvicePRO, either an enquiry or if necessary, a full case. Relevant data protection and GDPR is explained and this data is used to monitor and analyse statistics to produce a range of reports. As well as working on the case AHAC encourages external and internal referrals to ensure access to specialist, accredited advice is available on request. During the closing process we actively encourage engagement with support services where necessary.

a. Funded Services

South Ayrshire Council Funded Services:

1. Type I, II and III Accredited Housing Information, Advice and Advocacy
2. Tenure Sustainment (Crisis Homeless Prevention Housing Support Service)

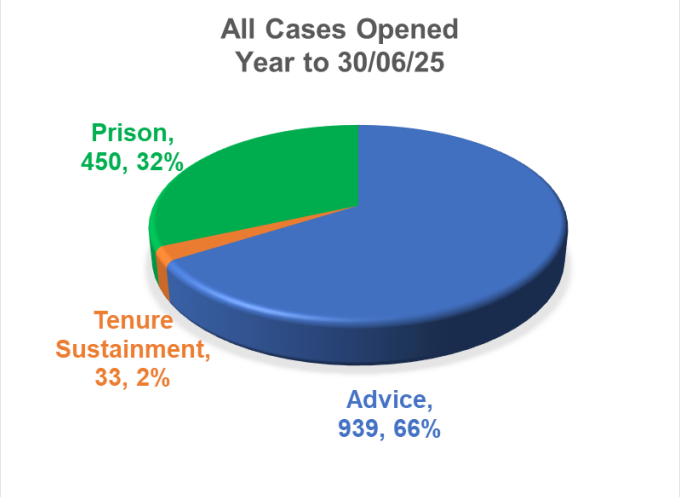
South & East Ayrshire Council Funded Services:

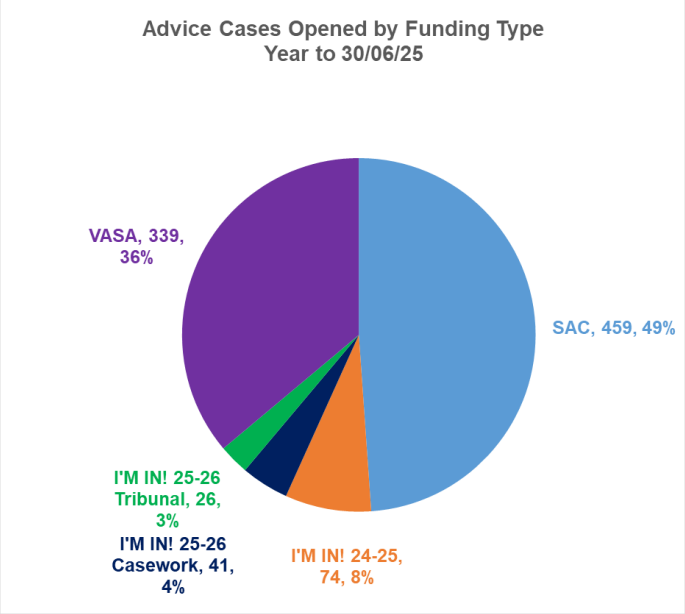
3. Prison Housing Advice (Prison Link Centres, main base HMP Kilmarnock)
4. I'M IN! (Scottish Government funded SeAscape collaboration - Private Rented Eviction Tribunal Representation Service) funded 1.4.24 to 31.3.26 (year on year funding)

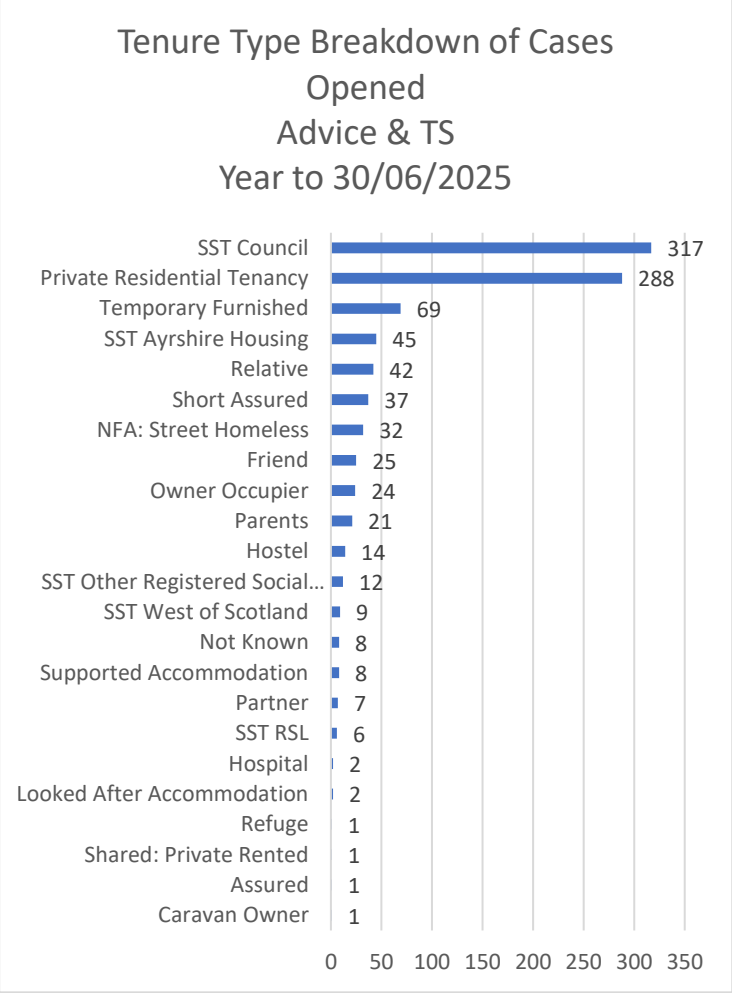
Additional Funded Services:

5. VASA Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund Caseworker funded 1.4.23 to 31.3.26 (year on year funding)

b. Case Type Analysis





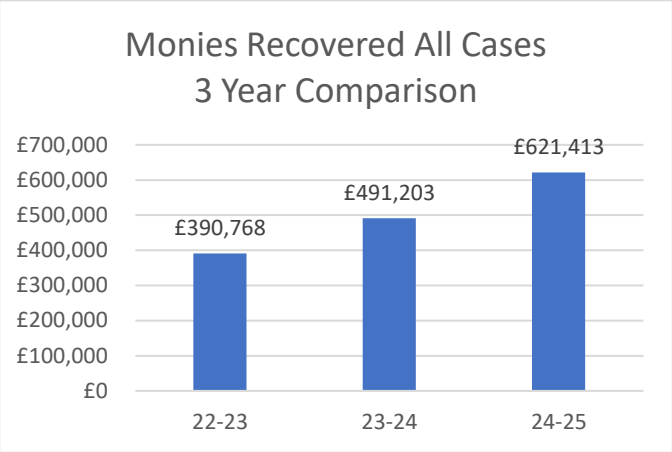


c. Key Outcomes

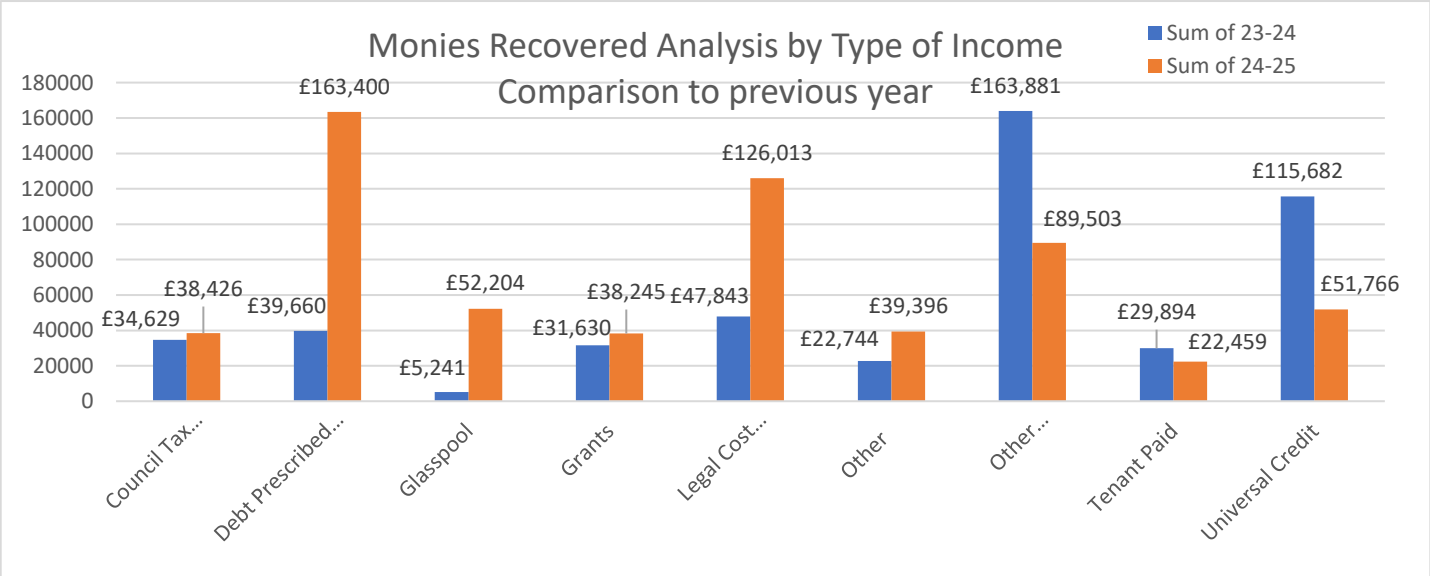
- 1,423 new cases opened in this year including prison with an additional 245 enquiries
- 1,267 cases were closed in this reporting period including prison with an additional 248 enquiries closed
- 4,009 outcomes were generated from closed cases
- Monies recovered including arrears reduced and income maximised across all sectors increased from £491,203 last year to **£621,413** (including Prison cases)
- 373 households were prevented from becoming homelessness (including Prison cases)
- 89 households had their homelessness delayed (including Prison cases)
- 168 households were permanently re-housed (Prison cases not included)
- 183 households acted on advice provided by AHAC (Prison cases not included)
- 1,150 (90%) of the closed cases resulted in a positive outcome being achieved, likely or achieved in part (including prison cases)
- 467 signposting/referrals made to external agencies and organisations (Prison cases not included)

d. Tenant and Third-Party Beneficiaries – (including Prisons)

Over the years we have been monitoring monies recovered to Rent, Council Tax accounts, income increased and returned back to tenants and owner occupiers. AHAC records grants monies received on behalf of service users as well as other income/funding. Most of the grants we apply to go direct to Service Users and their rent accounts to reduce arrears, prevent homelessness or begin/sustain tenancies. These charts highlight monies recovered by tenancy type to alleviate poverty and, in many cases, prevent homelessness and eviction across all sectors.

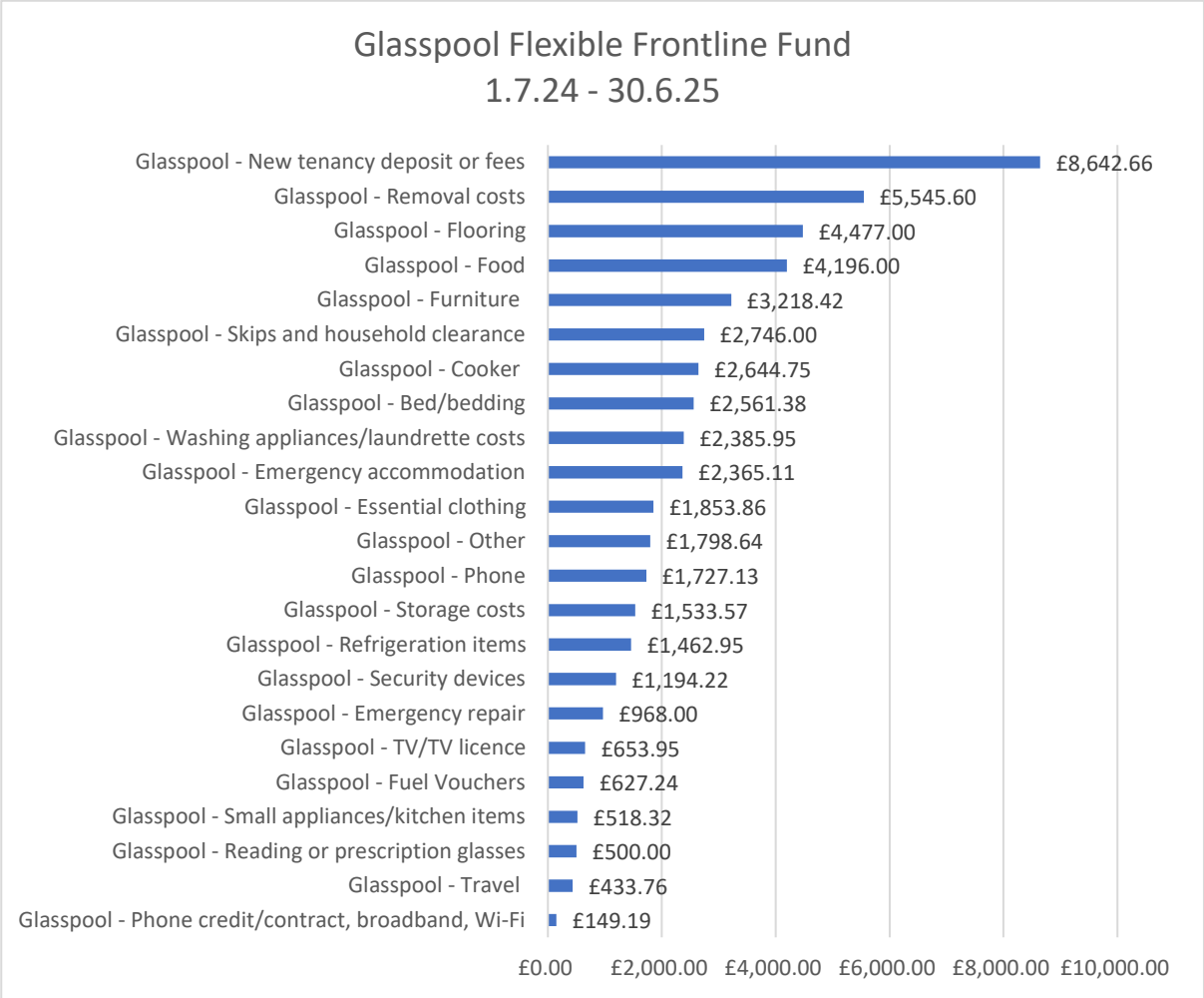


Monies Recovered Analysis –

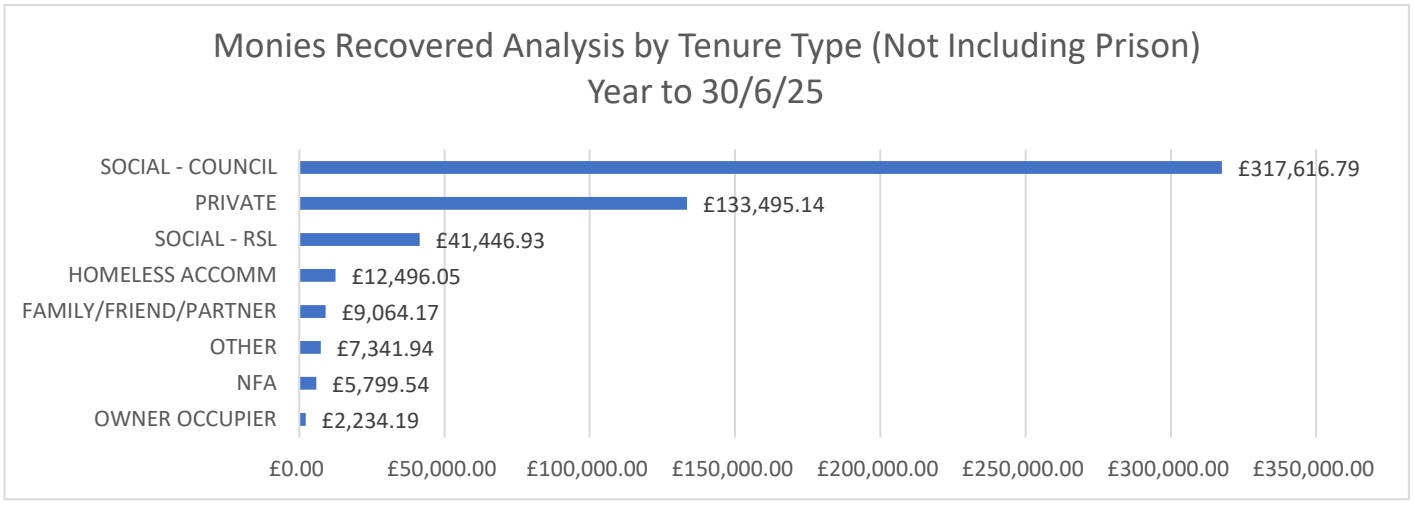


Many people have advised that a lot of their debt was accumulated during covid and they are only now able to mentally deal with it head on. We saw an increase in Debt Prescribed or Written off mainly due to people choosing bankruptcy as a debt solution to start a fresh. The decrease in UC and other benefits was expected as in the previous year we helped many service users with the migration to Universal Credit.

This is the first full year of us working in partnership with Glasspool as a Frontline Partner. This fund allows us to act immediately to those in need instead of waiting weeks or months applying to numerous different grant providers, which do not always yield a positive outcome.

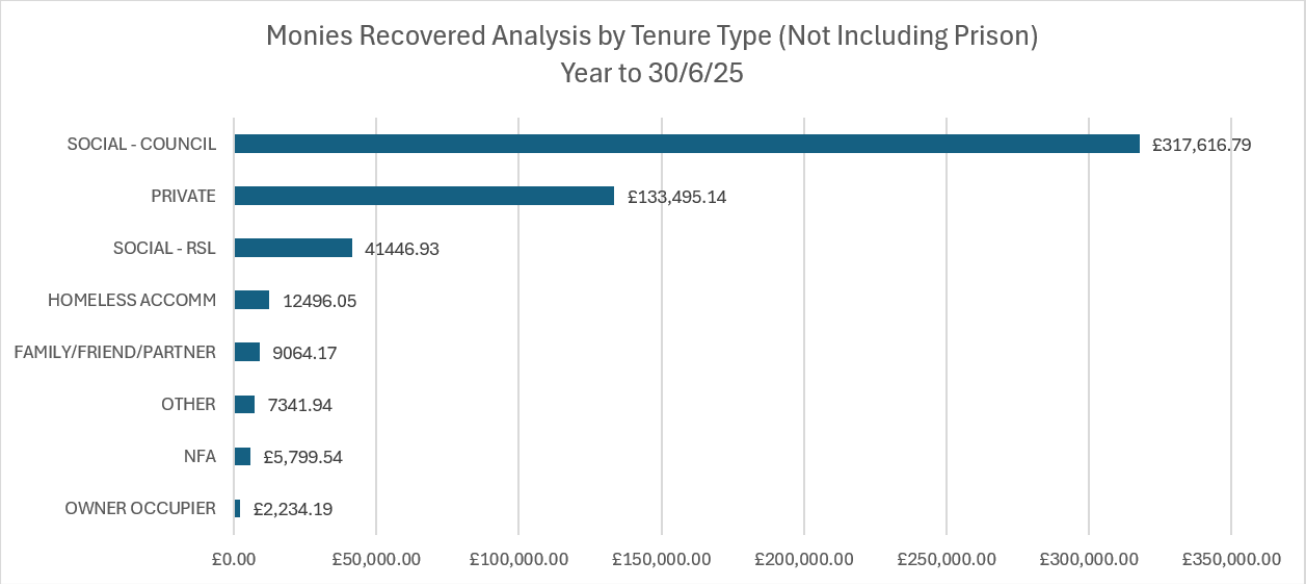


e. Monies Recovered Analysis by Tenure Type (Not Including Prisons)



f. Rent Arrears Recovery/Income Maximisation/Future Rent Projection (includes Prison cases)

Homelessness prevention delaying ejections in all sectors reduces demand on Public Sector resources, in particular, the provision of homeless temporary accommodation. Many of those we work with have benefited from our Advice and Tenure Sustainment Services which often includes budgeting skills and benefit or grant maximisation for unclaimed income to prevent future homelessness. The monies we recovered, summarised in the section above, highlights increased co-operation in terms of rent arrear cases and income maximisation. This year monies recovered increased across all services to £621,413 for 540 households (including Prison) compared to £491,203 for 304 households (including prison) last year.



g. Homeless Prevention & Delaying Achievements In Detail

AHAC passionately believes early intervention and access to free, independent, accredited advice prevents homelessness. The continued development of Early Intervention and Prevention Services is key to assisting the Council to meet their strategic objectives and is a best value approach. It is important that everyone who is identified as threatened with homelessness within 6 months is able to access help as soon as possible which will in turn avoid crisis. Housing Options and other services are able to identify people to refer them to us as soon as possible but it is important that we have the capacity and trained staff to enable us to help early upstream prevention referrals as well as those at crisis.

AHAC directly prevented homelessness in 373 cases this year, with an additional 89 where their homelessness was delayed. There are 2 separate savings to be made when calculating homeless prevention. The overall social cost per household ranges between £25,000 to £95,000 plus the additional savings to Housing Benefit budgets which pay for temporary accommodation, (£8,000 - £25,000). By preventing homelessness this saves case administration, 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. For the purposes of our calculations, we have used a lower estimate of £30,000 per case. In a period of 20 years AHAC has directly prevented homelessness in over 5,000 cases which has had considerable economic benefit to South Ayrshire Council, Central Government, and social benefit to the potentially homeless household and the wider community. There is clear evidence of how Social Return on Investment (SROI) illustrates best value approaches in funding homeless prevention Services and Councils are aware of the spend to save approaches to reduce demand.

Temporary Accommodation Savings

The estimated saving to the public purse for negating the need for temporary accommodation is estimated at £10,000 per household (under-estimated at average of 6 months although many remain in temp 6 to 24 months). For this calculation we can also add in the 89 where homelessness was delayed, often moving straight from one home to their permanent home.

89 homeless delayed + 373 homeless prevented = **462 cases not requiring temporary accommodation**

Temporary Accommodation Savings based on 462 cases x £10,000 **= £4,620,000**
Homelessness Prevention Savings based on 373 cases x £30,000 **= £11,190,000**
Total Homelessness Prevention & Temporary Accommodation Savings - £15,810,000

h. Social Return on Investment

From the £499,641 total income during 2024/25 AHAC received £437,082 in funding from the public purse (2 local authorities and Scottish Government via I'M IN! & VASA). This funding is for one tendered contract and 2 specific projects and does not include any additional external funding, income, grants, fundraising, etc. We estimate our Services directly and indirectly benefit the Council, Health and Social Care, NHS, Central Government, Landlords and people to be approx**. £16,431,413.**

ECONOMIC VALUE SUMMARY	£
Reduced demand on services	11,190,000
Savings on temporary accommodation costs	4,620,000
Monies recovered overall including prisons	621,413
TOTAL SAVINGS	**£16,431,413**

Economic value is an important indicator; for every **£1** from the public purse AHAC generates an approximate value of **£37.59**; (calculated by dividing total economic value by total public purses monies received). Following our change to AdvicePro system, our social return on investment calculations are more precise than ever. We maintain a conservative approach by using lower estimates to ensure the figures are both realistic and not inflated.

i. Best Value Services

For many years, AHAC has strived to develop and evolve our services to meet the changing needs and aspirations of our communities. There are considerable savings to be made by investing in early intervention and crisis prevention and this is measured through social return on investment, (SROI). It is important to note the SROI only measures the homeless part of the work we do and does not take into account the various other benefits our service users gain from becoming more independent, resilient and empowered.

AHAC has a long-term ethos of encouraging and supporting staff in their constant learning and skills development along with ensuring they receive training and support. 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 and the positive outcomes we have been able to help people achieve to move forward with their lives with a brighter future.

This year was a particularly busy year for both Advice & Support teams with an unannounced Care Inspectorate Inspection in November 2024 resulting in Care Inspectorate Report grading our Tenure Sustainment service as "sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people" across Wellbeing Support and Leadership and "significant strengths…supporting positive outcomes" in our Staff Team and Care Planning. AHAC are extremely proud to be one of very few services able to achieve grade 6, particularly with the changes in scorings and expectations. AHAC continue to strive to lead by example across the Housing Advice and Support providers, never compromising on quality.

15 Nov 2024 (I) Care Inspectorate Inspection Report View details → Hide

Wellbeing support	Leadership	Staff team	Setting	Care planning
Excellent (6)	Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Not Assessed	Very Good (5)

AHAC's Advice team, in particular management spent around 10 months updating and gathering evidence to work towards our Type III National Standards Housing Advice re-accreditation across all housing topics which was awarded in May 2025. We were invited to the Scottish Parliament in May 2026 where we were formally presented with our National Standards Certificates by Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary of Housing & Siobhian Brown MSP, Minister for Victims and Community Safety.



Our Services provide a range of value back to the people we help including health, wellbeing, educational and economic. Some positive impact measures are medium to longer term such as HEY (Housing Education 4 Youths), unfortunately this was only funded to 31.8.23 due to Council budget restraints when this part of the contract was paused and we hope they will resume this part of the contract in the future. We cannot underestimate the considerable value early housing conversations about future expectations and aspirations has to school pupils and young people to equip them with the information and skills for the future. Indeed many other local authorities are aiming to take a more pro-active approach rather than a crisis and we hope South Ayrshire will return to this model.

3. CHAIRPERSON OVERVIEW

Introduction

Since becoming Chair in November 2022 I have had the pleasure of seeing first hand AHAC's growth and expansion to meet the changing needs of those we help. This year we had some changes to the Board group with Alan continuing as Vice Chair, Craig was appointed as Treasurer in September 2024 when long standing Board member, Pat along with short term Board member Sam resigned. Despite Board changes we remain committed to AHAC ethos ensuring strong strategic governance and supporting management to ensure sufficient staff with the necessary specialist skills and expertise to help the ever-increasing number of people requiring help. We continued to work with a range of stakeholders to mitigate the economic, health and social impact on the most vulnerable during this particularly challenging period due to the Cost-of-Living and Housing Crisis.

Our main aim and objectives continue to be the prevention and delaying of homelessness, helping those in housing need and the alleviation of poverty through delivering high-quality services and meeting funder's expectations. In 2023 the Council asked us to prioritise crisis intervention over longer term early intervention and upstream proactive work such as the Housing Education for Youths in schools and Community Outreach services which were paused due to budget cuts but we hope they will revisit this going forward. AHAC's long term view is that by ensuring young people have the information to make informed choices and know where seek help we are empowering young people to actively consider their housing aspirations and realities prior to leaving school and encourage realistic conversations and expectations with parents.

We continue to respond to various consultations and campaigns to influence local and national policy relating to homeless, housing and poverty. This year AHAC have been actively involved in responding to The Housing Bill, Ask & Act Duties and signed open letters for numerous campaigns relating to social justice, human rights and poverty. We campaigned for Third Sector Fair Funding as a long-term, flexible, sustainable, and accessible approach needs to be adopted. We call for an end to year-to-year funding replaced with a 3 year model which includes flexible unrestricted core funding and a cash first approach for frontline services helping those in crisis.

Future Development

Over the coming 12 months we will continue delivering and monitoring our secured contracts and seek additional funds to extend the work we do to meet demand. We will continue to review our living 5 Year Plan 2021-26 considering increased pressure on securing non-public sector funding streams to maintain adequate service delivery to meet the true needs and expectations. We hope to be able to re-establish our fundraising and training activities to secure additional funding although may not be possible in the coming year with unknown contract changes.

Acknowledgements

I would like to give thanks to Pat Lappin, a long-standing Board member and Treasurer who gave his expertise and time freely. The Board are particularly grateful to Staff and Management for their resilience and robust responses to people's needs. Despite numerous changes to the economic environment we have been innovative in securing additional funding to directly help those in greatest need. Our CEO has continued to inspire and lead the team while continuing to drive and benchmark quality across Advice and Support services clearly evidenced in our Audit and Care Inspections. Our management team have successfully ensured adequate funding and staffing to ensure contract compliance, quality and positive impact for those accessing services. Not only have we been able to secure funding for services but being selected as only one of 2 Glasspool Frontline Grant partners in Scotland has ensured those in crisis can access immediate assistance to alleviate poverty and allow them to work on their wider other issues. This 3-year partnership will continue to have a positive direct impact and ease staff frustrations around otherwise dwindling grant availability for those in immediate need. I extend my appreciation and looking forward to continuing to collaborate our Board and partner agencies.

Margaret Greenan, Chairperson

4. TREASURER FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2024/25

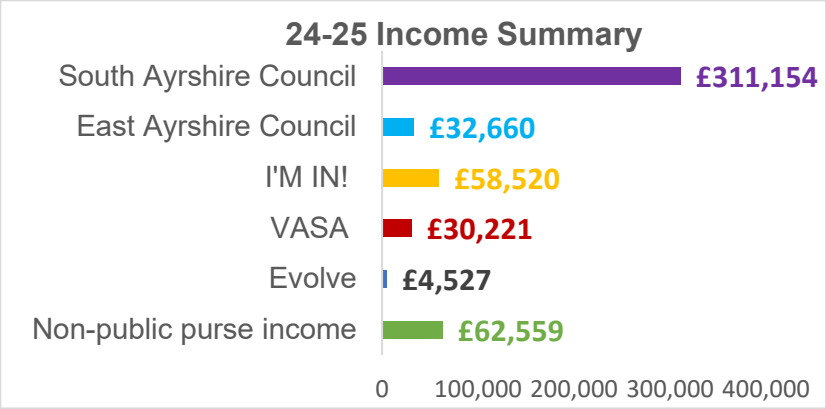
Within this Report I have enclosed the Statement of Financial Activities from our Financial Statements which were independently reviewed and submitted to Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR). The charity is in an acceptable financial position with total reserves of £402,642. A small surplus of £3,474 was due to various staffing changes and renegotiation of running costs contracts as well as underspending in various categories. It should be noted that without the additional income generated and staffing changes AHAC would have been in a deficit, which is mainly linked to the last period of the Council Contract which are budgeted in advance and it is normal for the first 2 years to carry a surplus to use in years 3 and 4. Thanks to our CEO who lead on successfully increasing income to mitigate against any predicted deficit which has successfully resulted in a small surplus this year. Since 2021 we have significantly increased our external grant funding to ensure services are fit for purpose and meet the needs of those we serve. Without these services and staffing levels would be unable to cope with growing community need.

We have cash funds of £440,497 to provide for identified redundancy liabilities of £36,275, £255,072 for salaries and costs and to protect against contractual liabilities in the event of current levels of funding ceasing. With a future designated reserve for a potential office relocation of £25,000. In line with our policy we maintain the equivalent of 4-6 months reserves in the event of significant reduction in funding.

Restricted funds comprise of funds that are subject to specific conditions imposed by the donor on how these funds can be spent. As at 30.6.25 we had restricted reserves of £739 relating to grants received for specific purposes. Unrestricted reserves of £85,556 are available for any purpose. We continue to improve our banking position in accordance with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and have started preparing to move to a streamlined portal model for investments in the coming year.

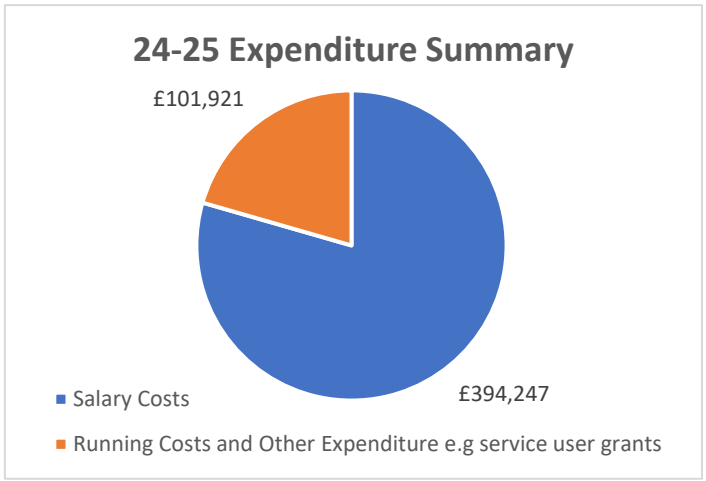
Income Breakdown

Total income received was **£499,642** detailed follows:



- 62% South Ayrshire Council
- 7% East Ayrshire Council
- 12% I'M IN! SeAscape Collaboration
- 6% VASA Mental Health Fund
- 10% Glasspool (directly passed to service users)
- 1% Evolve Work Placement Contribution
- 3% Non-public purse Income

Total expenditure was £496,168 of which salary costs were £394,247.



AYR HOUSING AID CENTRE SCIO

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	1,178	-	1,178	543	-	543
Charitable activities		343,815	140,768	484,583	349,091	99,569	448,660
Investments	4	11,057	-	11,057	9,070	-	9,070
Other income		2,824	-	2,824	1,930	-	1,930
Total income		358,874	140,768	499,642	360,634	99,569	460,203
Expenditure on:	6						
Charitable activities	7	341,697	154,471	496,168	301,446	99,203	400,649
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		17,177	(13,703)	3,474	59,188	366	59,554
Fund balances at 1 July 2024		384,726	14,442	399,168	325,538	14,076	339,614
Fund balances at 30 June 2025		401,903	739	402,642	384,726	14,442	399,168

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

2025/26 Projections

Our predicted budget for the year ending 30.6.26 has been difficult to forecast mainly due to the South Ayrshire Council Housing Advice & Engagement Contract, currently our main funder having indicated there may be significant changes to the tender expectations and reduction in value. We have been involved in consultations and currently we are assuming this will start either 1.4.26 or 1.7.26. AHAC will have significant changes and challenges whether we are successful or unsuccessful in this tender process and no matter the outcome will have TUPE, re-structure, redundancies and/or staff hours reductions. AHAC are hopeful that with our considerably experienced team, in particular the executive management who have decades of knowledge and are considered experts in their field that we will be in a strong position to successfully tender for the contract but we will not be complacent and will ensure our best bid is submitted. We are aware that there will be cost saving parts of the new contract which may be harder to achieve given the increased demand, in particular from those areas where poverty is heightened.

In order to achieve an estimated balanced budget for 2025/26 with an estimated income of £500,000 and deferred new unrestricted income from The Robertson Trust to be used from 1.7.25 to support service delivery. Our prepared budget forecasts indicate continued growth and development to enable our core objectives of prevention of homelessness and alleviation of poverty while our underlying passion for social justice and the right to receive quality, accredited advice services remains at our core. We forecast pressure in the coming years due to increased demand linked to the cost-of-living and housing crisis and it is likely we will need to secure additional income and external grants to strengthen our ability to cope with the demand and meet the growing expectations of the community we serve.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Azets for providing financial accounting oversight support and Stewart Gilmour & Co for conducting our independent examination this year. We look forward to working with them in the next financial year in providing payroll and accounting services. Thanks to the management team for their dedication, robust financial projections and sound financial practices and support throughout the year.

Craig McArthur, Treasurer

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Introduction

AHAC's core ethos continues to be to ensure everyone can access free, accredited, independent, information, advice, advocacy, representation and engagement services. While we mainly work with those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness and/or are in housing need we see the continued need to alleviate poverty and to empower people to enforce their human rights and equality. This year, yet again our work removing barriers and alleviating poverty increased yet again, reducing pressure of those in crisis to allow headspace to make positive, informed housing choices. Despite increased demands our teams have continued to deliver high-quality services, priding ourselves going above and beyond with kindness, compassion and empathy at the core of everything we do.

This year was a particularly busy year for both Advice & Support teams with an unannounced Care Inspectorate Inspection in November 2024 resulting in Care Inspectorate Report grading our Tenure Sustainment service as "sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people" across Wellbeing Support and Leadership and "significant strengths…supporting positive outcomes" in our Staff Team and Care Planning. AHAC are extremely proud to be one of very few services able to achieve grade 6, particularly with the changes in scorings and expectations.

During this year AHAC's Advice team, in particular management spent reviewed, updated and gathered evidence to work towards our Type III National Standards Housing Advice re-accreditation across all housing topics which was awarded in May 2025. We were delighted to be invited to the Scottish Parliament in May 2026 where we were formally presented with our National Standards Certificates by the Housing Cabinet Secretary & Minister for Victims and Community Safety.

Since 2021 we have continued to seek additional income to meet increased demand. We have been very fortunate in being selective over the funding we have applied for and successfully again secured Scottish Government funding again through I'M IN! and the VASA Mental Health Fund. These funds assist to "plug the gap" mainly caused by the Council funding decreases to ensure service provision is not adversely affected. As a rights and needs based organisation we have been able to meet new needs of those who come to us for help due to increased poverty due to the Cost-of-Living and Housing Crisis. AHAC continue to nurturing staff through training, development and peer knowledge sharing to encourage internal progression.

This year we had a change to our financial systems with the introduction of an external accountancy firm to support our financial paper free accounting processes. Despite a predicted deficit the year ended with a small surplus due to staffing changes, contractor renegotiations and robust financial budget restraints. It should be noted that without the additional income generated and staffing changes we would have seen a deficit as predicted. AHAC continues to fulfil our contract with South and East Ayrshire Councils but we are at the time of writing unsure whether this will continue until March or June 2026 and what the new contract expectations and value will look like going forward. We will continue to seek funding streams enabling us to continue to promote access to social justice and representation. Our 5-year plan and budget forecasts continue to be regularly reviewed along with continually evolving and adapting to meet the changing needs and expectations of those we serve.

Service Development

Next year AHAC will celebrate our 40th birthday. When we were established in May 1986 the aims were to help anyone in housing need, by taking a rights and needs based approach to prevent and/or delay homelessness while alleviating poverty in a compassionate, collaborative and empathetic way. Despite changes to the economic environment we have been innovative in securing additional funding to directly help those in poverty most by taking direct, immediate action. We were delighted to have been chosen as one of 49 Glasspool Frontline Partner organisations across the UK, with us being one of only 2 at the time in Scotland. This partnership has proven invaluable since April 2024 positively directly reducing poverty and crisis for those in most need and allowing us to show true compassion to the most vulnerable while also positively reducing staff time searching for grants and reducing delays in decisions.

This year we secured funding again for the VASA Caseworker post for another year and adapted our approach with the Scottish Government I'M IN! Project in collaboration with SeAscape. From April 2025 we employed 2 part-time Advocacy and Tribunal Officers and a part-time Caseworker covering East and South Ayrshire areas. Our partnership with SeAscape who co-ordinate and provide the housing support element has enabled us to adapt to meet frontline need. This much needed service has been able to delay and prevent numerous private tenant evictions to allow for a planned approach and reduce demand on scarce temporary accommodation. I look forward to seeing where this project evolves to across South and East Ayrshire in the coming years.

By providing a truly inclusive and holistic approach to housing and poverty issues we ensure that trauma and stress is reduced and mental wellbeing is improved. When necessary we adopt a crisis intervention approach enabling the person to look holistically at their issues, together. We recognised many years ago that many of the people we work with struggle with multiple issues which have often culminated into an urgent housing issue which if left unaddressed will lead to their homelessness. Many other issues have hampered their ability to prioritise their housing such as reduced income, debt and deterioration in mental health. We recognise that by tackling poverty we can promote headspace enabling them to finally deal with the housing issues which have contributed to their health decline.

We take a similar approach to the wellbeing of our staff and will continue to support the team through our wellbeing days and ongoing focus on mental health first aid training for the full team over the coming year.

Looking Ahead

The next 12 months will focus on continuing to deliver high-quality services and work to increase income to bridge gaps to meet demand. It is essential we have sufficient staff to meet our every changing service user expectations which are compounded by the financial climate. Every year we reflect and review our 5-year plan targets to ensure we have adequate staff with the skills required to meet demand. A SWOT analysis will be carried out in the run up to the new tender being released along with strategic review and we will see the need for a re-structure to meet the changing funder vision and frontline demands.

We will continue to influence local and national policy through responding to homeless, housing and poverty related consultations and legislation which directly affect our service users. We continued to work with other agencies such as AdviceUK, Child Poverty Action Group, Human Rights Consortium, Oxfam, Poverty Alliance and Centrepoint Collective to work together making real change happen. We will continue to strengthen communication with potential funders and Partner Agencies in the year ahead. AHAC is committed to working with Councils and partners to alleviate poverty and promote a compassionate workforce where need is seen as a trigger for action without judgement or assessment.

Acknowledgements

AHAC's primary strength is our team of committed staff who deliver efficient, quality person centred services in a trauma informed way. Our ethos of delivering services with kindness, compassion and by empowering people to recognise their own barriers we work together to find a path forward. Without the team's commitment and dedication to continuous progression and development to always try harder and do better we would be unable to ensure the high engagement levels of those we work with every day. Our case studies explore people's real stories and the issues they have faced which we have been able to help them with so they can see a way out and a brighter future ahead. I would like to thank our funders in putting their faith in us to be able to deliver **£37.59 for every £1 Social Return on Investment**. I give thanks to our Board for their continued support and strong governance in what has been a busy yet rewarding year. Together we continue to make a real difference to many.

Suzanne Slavin, Chief Executive Officer

6. SERVICES

a. Type I, II and III Accredited Housing Information, Advice and Advocacy Service

In this reporting year 939 advice and advocacy cases were opened, (compared to 856 in 2023-24). This does not include our Prison Advice Service which is shown separately below. 3,964 Internal Action Plans were created, averaging 4 per case. Homelessness (67%) and Housing Options (54%) continue to be the main reasons people come to us for advice. 35% of those we helped were looking for help with food, poverty, grants and fuel costs. Some were actively looking for alternative accommodation (355 people/38% compared with 217/25% last year) or were seeking a transfer (8%) where they were living in accommodation which did not meet their needs or was unsuitable.

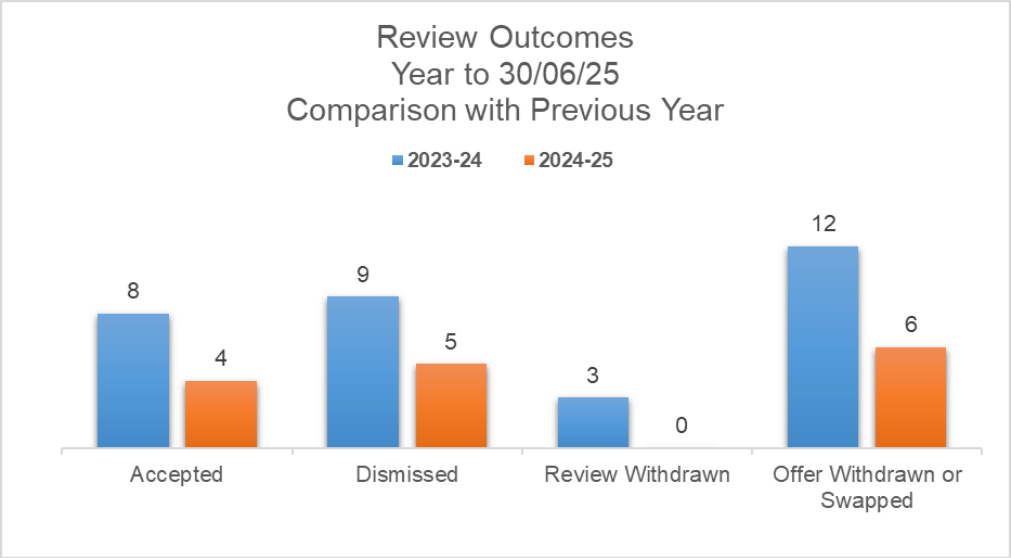
Advice and Advocacy Stats:

- 939 advice and advocacy cases opened
- 907 cases were closed generating 2,841 outcomes (including long running cases from previous years)
- The 907 cases closed helped 1,805 people (1,110 adults and 695 children)
- 77% of cases had a positive outcome achieved, likely or information given to enable them to act themselves
- 417 separate referrals were made to other organisations this year
- Affordability improved in 262 cases including 218 successful grants
- 168 service users were permanently housed
- 24 families had outstanding repairs completed by landlords, allowing them to remain at home
- From 591 cases involving homelessness we generated 2,026 outcomes for 1,204 people: 727 adults & 477 children
- Out of a possible 320 cases not already in the homeless system, 113 resulted in Homelessness Prevented (35%)
- 205 cases were still live at the year end and continued to be worked on

Homeless Reviews

We saw a reduction in the number of reviews required in this year. We submitted 15 Homeless Reviews during this reporting year. A total of 4 offers were withdrawn and 2 unsuitable offers were swapped to more appropriate accommodation. There was one successful review of a Not Homeless decision, 3 successful reviews of Scottish Welfare Fund applications and 5 reviews were dismissed.

Private Rented Sector (not including Prisons)



Again this year we have seen a decline in available, affordable private rented accommodation with many landlords wanting to exit and sell, citing the lack of profit and affordability as the reason by they no longer wish to be landlords. Landlords continue to be frustrated with rent account balances increasing from tenants still recovering the covid crisis due to reduced income and spending priorities changing for those affected by furlough, job losses and hours reduced is now coming to the surface along with financial pressures linked to the cost of living and housing crisis.

We continue to see pressure within the sector with Agents advising us for every vacancy they are receiving around 800 enquiries for each let. Due to lack of availability and demand rent levels have increased to amounts out with many of those we work with reach. Some Landlords have chosen to only choose to rent to full time employed tenants with full time employed guarantors. Many of the people we work with are discriminated against as they are unable to work full time due to child or caring responsibilities. For many the choice of accessing the Private rented is no longer available. In this year, despite us having access to Grants to access new accommodation for rent in advance and deposits we are often still unable to persuade Landlords to take people on benefits or low incomes and without Guarantors. We have urged the Scottish Government to look at social quotas or tax incentives to keep the much-needed supply available to those who choose this sector. While our I'M IN! Tribunal Representation Project successfully defend and delay actions there is often no other choice but to apply as homeless. Many are reluctant to do this as they have desires to remain in a specific area to be near family or schools and so it is important that while there is insufficient social housing we ensure this choice is available to those who wish to control where they live and are happy to pay a small top-up for this choice.

Private Rented Sector Statistics

- 323 cases opened generating 1,327 Internal Action Plans
- 253 cases were threatened with homelessness (78%)
- 182 cases wanted Housing Options advice (56%)
- 45 cases needed help to claim grants (14%)
- 36 cases involved disrepair issues (14%)
- Out of 323 cases opened there were 154 families with children (736 people in total – 434 adults and 302 children)
- 313 cases closed generated 1,058 outcomes (82% with a positive outcome achieved or likely)
- 164 households remained in their current accommodation
- 68 cases had a Homelessness Prevented outcome, with an additional 59 homelessness being delayed
- 79 were already permanently housed at closure

b. Prison Housing Advice Service

Our Prison Housing Advice Service, funded by South and East Ayrshire Councils has been provided by AHAC since 2017. The key aim is to reduce and prevent homelessness by early intervention when a person enters Prison, throughout their sentence and prior to liberation. In this reporting year we opened 451 cases generating a total of 4,700 types of assistance, as well as an additional 127 enquiries which did not progress to a full case due to a lack of engagement. During this year our staff adapted to the ongoing changes in HMP Kilmarnock from Serco to the Scottish Prison Service.

Prison Stats:

- 451 new cases opened
- 1056 appointments were carried out for 497 service users
- 42 service users required 5 or more appointments each
- Total monies recovered was £91,643.66
- 429 cases were closed in the year
- Homelessness was prevented in 214 cases mainly by ensuring rent entitlement was in place and/or providing housing information and advice on rights, tenancy sustainment, affordability
- 24% of service users were provided with temporary homeless accommodation on release
- 2 service users were permanently housed
- 99.5% of cases had either a positive outcome achieved, a positive outcome likely or information given
- 61 service users agreed to a referral to SeAscape for ongoing intensive support on liberation
- 18 service users referred to New Routes Throughcare Mentoring Service

c. Tenure Sustainment Service

This is a crisis intervention Service where there is an imminent risk of homelessness due mainly to rent arrears. There is often an intensive response required at the point of referral. This service is predominantly Council tenants who agree to be referred by their Housing Officer. During this reporting year 33 Tenure Sustainment cases were opened, creating 245 Internal Action Plans mainly involving homelessness, rent arrears and poverty. A total of 20 cases were brought forward from the previous year.

Tenure Sustainment Stats:

- 33 cases opened generated 245 Internal Action Plans (average 7 per case)
- 33 cases closed during the year (some from previous years) generating 183 outcomes
- 70% of cases had a positive outcome achieved, likely or partially
- We maximised income through disability benefits and recovery of overpayments to facilitate arrears to be paid. In addition to this we encouraged payments to be made to rent accounts by tenants to reduce arrears.
- £236,969 monies recovered were recorded for cases closed in the year including reduction of rent arrears by various means such as successful grant applications, discretionary housing payments, correction of benefit claims, council tax reductions and discounts, DWP claims, etc
- 50 external referrals were made to various agencies
- All tenants who engaged had their rent arrears cleared off in full or significantly reduced

d. Community Engagement/Benefits

Staff continue to engage with the community and dedicate some of their time at various events, regular sessions and training events mentioned below -

- Attended regular drop-ins providing free, accredited Housing Information and Advice at locations across South Ayrshire including Foodbanks, Care & Share, Working for Wallacetown, CONNECT South Ayrshire and COMPASS
- Supported volunteers, school work placements and Evolve placement
- Invited external services to provide overviews at our team meetings
- Provided service overviews to external agencies and organisations including SAC and EAC Housing Teams
- Attended various community events and festivals
- Assisted families in poverty at Christmas with gifts
- Our Community Defibrillator became active on 25.11.24
- Hosted a community First Aid Training Event with staff
- Staff attended Kiltwalk raising funds for AHAC
- Attended HMP Kilmarnock Wellbeing event













e. Accreditations and Awards

- **September 2024** - To strengthen our commitment to Fair Work and our longstanding commitment to the Real Living Wage Accreditation we completed Our Living Hours Accreditation

- **November 2024** – Unannounced Care Inspectorate visit resulted in our Tenure Sustainment service graded as "sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people" across Wellbeing Support and Leadership and "significant strengths…supporting positive outcomes" for our Staff Team and Care Planning. AHAC are extremely proud to be one of very few services able to achieve grade 6, particularly with higher expectations

15 Nov 2024 (I) **Care Inspectorate Inspection Report** View details → Hide

Wellbeing support	Leadership	Staff team	Setting	Care planning
Excellent (6)	Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Not Assessed	Very Good (5)

- **February 2025** - Received the Bronze Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Award







- **March 2025** - Proudly became the first Social Care Communication Friendly Accredited Service in South Ayrshire – this involved Makaton training, creation of symbols and signs to ensure everyone, no matter what their communication needs are can be understood and we have a two-way clear communication pathway

- **May 2025 -** South Ayrshire Access Panel were commissioned to prepare an Access Audit. We had previously been audited by a member of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Sensory Team in 2022. This involved various meetings with the CEO, training we had completed with Disability Equality Scotland and how we could work towards any reasonable adjustments or suggestions. The Panel also met several staff, visited multiple times, viewing the full building, taking measurements, photos, discussing ideas before preparing a full survey.

- **May 2025** - Type III National Standards Housing Advice re-accreditation across all housing topics which was awarded (invited to Scottish Parliament in May 2026 for formal presentation of National Standards Certificates by Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary of Housing & Siobhian Brown MSP, Minister for Victims and Community Safety).



7. STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS & DEVELOPMENT

The organisation employed 14 members of staff (12 FTE) as at 30.6.25 with one vacancy at the year end.

Our management team ensure we are up to date with regulatory requirements: human resources, personnel, finance, projections, statistics, reporting, health and safety and quality control, etc. Training included a comprehensive Induction programme for all new staff, including relevant mandatory training for specific job roles plus all-staff team internal training sessions on new systems and portals, updated legislation and/or procedures.

AHAC continues to encourage and support staff to develop and continue their professional development via internal and external training, with staff achieving qualifications and certificates on specific job-related subjects via external organisations for example Shelter Scotland, Families Outside, VASA, NHS Prevention and Service Support And TURAS.

We have continued to encourage and mentor staff throughout the year with numerous internal and external training sessions on key topics. We had increased this to include peer support discussions and inviting external partner agencies to our Team meetings including agencies such as Andy's Man Club.

During this year staff undertook various internal and external training sessions including:-

- Adult and Child Support & Protection
- Health & Safety, HR
- National Standards for Information & Advice
- CPR Awareness
- Communication Friendly & Makaton
- Housing & Property Chamber Tribunal
- Gambling Harm
- Sexual Harassment
- Trauma Informed Practice













This year's Staff Wellbeing day was held on 13.9.24. Staff chose a Spa style Day at Samadhi Wellness which included green tea, smoothies and fresh juices, relaxation techniques, massages, fire and ice challenge, guided meditation, shakti mat taster with drums, tapping for anxiety, breath work and affirmation card pulling.



Planning is underway for next year's Staff Wellbeing Day for 2025-26 in October. Our wellbeing events provide staff with taster sessions of various activities to improve mental health and wellbeing focusing on relaxation and stress. AHAC has continued to promote group meditation and mindfulness sessions in the office along with energetic workouts and walks. All staff who participated have commented on the positive benefits from these sessions in what can be a stressful environment, particularly during busy times with increasing demands.

8. SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

Every year we produce a separate Service User Feedback Report. Each service has different feedback forms tailored to Service User needs, expectations and regulatory requirements, see analysis below:

SERVICE PROVIDED	Cases Closed	Feedback completed	% RETURNED
Advice (including VASA & I'M IN!)	907	89	10%
Tenure Sustainment	33	14	42%
TOTAL	**940**	**103**	**11%**

From the 940 Advice and Sustainment cases closed in the period, 103 households chose to complete feedback, 11% overall. The majority of feedback was positive and happy with service received.

Some Service User Comments –

"I don't think I would be sitting in my new home without this service. It was great."

"I'm a lot better and feel much more settled than I did."

"Gerry has been fantastic. Can't thank him enough."

"Jennifer gave me the security that I could now afford to live. I have peace of mind and was able to get rid of any stress factors."

"Allison was extremely supportive, very knowledgeable and referred me to the right people for support!"

"The Centre has helped out a lot with the problems with my ex-landlord."

"1 million out of 1 million, if it wasn't for Jennifer I would have had a mental health breakdown she took the pressure off me 100% and I would have struggled without her."

"Allison helped empower me by advising me on my rights in regards to homelessness and housing options."

"Patricia stated that she thought that the service's team work made it a very efficient service."

"The words that I would describe Allison is that she works miracles, she is phenomenal, and a star, She is on the ball, has lots of patience and definitely took the stress and worry away from me."

"Jennifer was really friendly and and helpful and assisted me with completing forms and took the stress away by dealing with the phone calls."

"I have used the service since 2005 and I have always felt supported and found them very helpful."

"I suffer from Bipolar disorder and I get into a panic very easily so with Jennifer's support, she was able to remove the stress temporarily away from me. I am very grateful for her support, she did a stellar job for me."

"Definitely improved my mental health."

"David and Gerry were both amazing, they gave me all the advice, signposting and support with the fuel bank, I can't fault them in anyway whatsoever!"

"Cristine was very helpful as I nearly lost my house as I was taken to court. Christine stood up for me and would write things down as I have anxiety and guided me through the process. I would not be here today in my home without Christine."

"Cristine was extremely helpful and I would tell her if I did not understand anything and she was really good in explaining things to me."

"Totally turned my life around. It was just before Christmas and this happened at the right time. Elspeth was brilliant."

"David was our lifeline as we faced homelessness as a family and I was pregnant. He gave us encouragement and confidence to pursue the tribunal route and stand up to our landlord for treating us so badly."

"Jennifer was very supportive when I was homeless and explained my legal rights and I was able to secure temporary accommodation extremely quickly."

"Allison was very concise and extremely reliable, if she said that she would phone me she would". Allison gave me clarity when I was confused with my housing situation."

"Jenn improved my mental health dramatically we are so happy now in our forever home".

"Jennifer is absolutely the number 1 to help me out, she knows what she is doing and I feel confident with working with her. She helps me out by phoning on my behalf and has supported me with a Morrisons voucher when I was struggling, she is wonderful. A big yes that I would recommend her to a friend."

"Definitely from a legal point of view that we were reassured and had peace of mind that SAC were giving us the best advice". We were desperate when we turned up at Ayr Housing Aid Centre and left with a more positive mindset."

"Throughout my experience with working with Jennifer there was excellent communication as she would always tell me the exact steps with what she was going to do and inform me of any further updates". I was in rent arrears but had been paying it back but the council had no record of the payments but Jennifer successfully managed to resolve it but without Jennifer's assistance I could still be in the same position and this affected my live application but this was quickly reinstated with Jennifer's support."

"Allison was very dedicated, very easy to talk to and always followed through with any actions very quickly. If she did not know an answer to a query she did her utmost to find a solution."

"Everything was great, I hope you continue your great work in South Ayrshire."

"The service was brilliant and it helped me get a house within a week and they were respectful of my situation. the staff were kind, helpful and knowledgeable".

"Allison made me feel very relaxed about my situation, she explained very clearly about my options and she was really good at her job. Allison was very reliable, very caring but straight to the point".

"When I first contacted AHAC I was at the end of my tether and stressed out my box. My son's ceiling came down and Allison was the first person that really listened and helped me out, it just made such a humungous difference for someone to advocate for me" "Allison has such a down to earth manner and she made me feel at ease straight away".

"Jennifer was amazing, straight from the off! You need more Jennifer's, she needs to be cloned". "Your service is 2nd to none, I can't thank you enough for all the help that we received". "Without you guys pursuing everything on our behalf, it would be a far slower process, I was impressed with Jennifer's knowledge, support and quick response and you were not left hanging unlike SAC. "We had a permanent offer in about 3 weeks, very speedy response."

"It was a very positive and good experience liaising with your service". Jennifer was very helpful, very understanding and had great communication."

9. CASE STUDIES

TENURE SUSTAINMENT, MAINSTREAM ADVICE, VASA, I'M IN! Early Intervention, I'M IN! Tribunal and PRISON

a. Single man living in Council house, high rent arrears and other debt.

Situation

- Prison Housing Advice internal referral to Tenure Sustainment Service
- Social Tenancy with high rent arrears and other high debt
- SAC going for eviction
- Arrears Direct in place, DHP in place
- Ex Offender, was in custody, mental and physical issues, complex PTSD and nerve damage
- awaiting a payment from Kerelaw compensation award



Actions

- Service User informed of Rights under Homelessness Legislation
- Lodged MOR
- Collected debt figures
- Referred to CAP for Bankruptcy
- SU accompanied to court by AHAC staff
- Applied for ADP
- Applied for LCWRA
- Applied for Council Tax Reduction

Outcomes

- Tenure stabilised
- Applied and awarded for clothes voucher
- Applied to Fuel Bank and awarded payment
- Applied for and awarded new phone
- Awarded voucher for Food Bank
- Applied for and awarded Xmas presents for son
- Debt cleared by bankruptcy
- Awarded ADP
- Awarded LCW
- Awarded Council Tax Reduction
- SU attending college

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £18,343.45

b. Single woman living in SAC property, various debts, possible court action for eviction

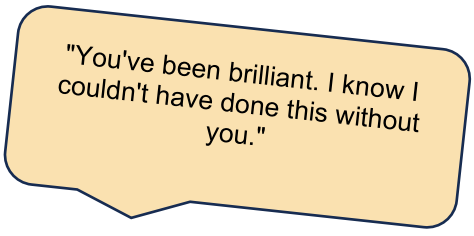
Situation

- Possible court action for eviction due to rent arrears
- Various other debts, including council tax and pay loans
- Works part time in a care home



Actions

- Completed relevant paperwork
- Liaised with landlord
- Referred to Christians Against Poverty for independent financial advice
- Alleviated food and fuel poverty
- Glasspool funding for new bed, bedding and vacuum cleaner
- Council tax discounts applied for
- Working tax credits applied for
- Grant funding from Royal Society for the Support of Women
- Glasspool funding for new glasses and food



Outcomes

- Prevented eviction
- Tenure stabilised
- Service user debt free via sequestration
- Improvement in mental health
- Debt written off via sequestration - £24,091.00
- Royal Society for the Support of Women - £1440.00
- Tax credit refund - £1248.00
- Council Tax discounts - £1249.54
- Foodbank - £25
- Fuel bank - £257
- Glasspool funding - £600.00
- SIM card - £370.00

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £29,390.54

c. Single man living in SAC property, army veteran, possible court action for rent arrears

Situation

- Army veteran facing possible court action for eviction due to rent arrears
- Various other debts, including council tax and pay loans
- Previously supported by AHAC in October 2022
- Works full time for Scottish Ambulance Service

Actions

- Completed outcomes star/support plan and relevant paperwork
- Liaised with landlord
- Referred to Christians Against Poverty for independent financial advice
- Alleviated food poverty
- Glasspool funding for new bed, bedding and vacuum cleaner

Outcomes

- Prevented eviction
- Tenure stabilised
- Debt free for first time in 10 years
- Improvement in mental health
- Debt written off via sequestration - £17,500
- Foodbank - £60
- Glasspool funding - £267.95
- Cash for Kids - £60
- SIM card - £120

"Just a wee message to say I now have all the items AHA ordered for me. I'm currently ironing my work clothing on an ironing board for the first time in a very long time and looking forward to jumping into my new mattress for an early night and good sleep. Thank you so much to you, the team, and everyone who donated to AHA to enable the supply of something that most people would deem a simple necessity, but for me, seemed a million miles away from owning. It truly means a lot, and I know I will pay in kind at some point in the near future."

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £18,313.93

d. Woman with non-dependant teenage daughter, pending eviction due to rent arrears

Situation

- Pending eviction due to rent arrears
- Various other debts, including council tax
- Works part time in a hotel

Actions

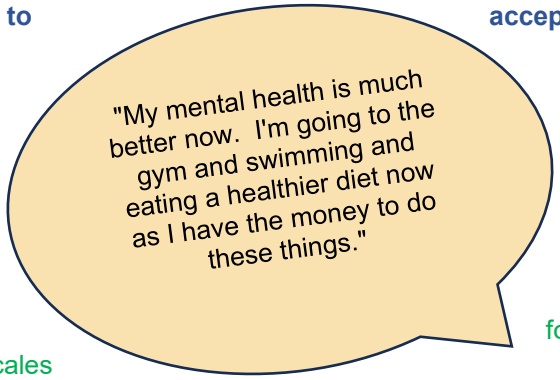
- Completed relevant paperwork
- Liaised with landlord
- Referred to Christians Against Poverty for independent financial advice
- Alleviated food and fuel poverty
- Glasspool funding for mobile phone
- Referred to Seascape for further support
- Submitted a Minute of Recall
- Supported to Sheriff Court and advocated on her behalf

Outcomes

- Prevented eviction
- Tenure stabilised
- Service user debt free
- Improvement in mental health
- Debt written off via sequestration - £26,266
- Foodbank - £30
- Glasspool funding - £55
- Fuel bank - £168 & SIM card - £240

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £26,759

e. Single man approached Housing Options but refused to accept a homeless application



Situation

- Was homeless due to abandoning last property and moved to England
- SAC refused to allow a homeless application to be made saying there has not been a material change in circumstances
- SAC position was they had already discharged their duty for previous homeless application and out with appeal timescales

Actions

- Informed of rights under Homeless legislation and discussed grounds for refusal and the legal test to re-apply
- Ongoing communication and advocacy with Housing Options
- SAC overturned their decision not to accept application as they did agree the application was not exactly the same as the last one
- They offered Temp furnished accommodation and later was offered permanent accommodation
- Co-ordinated applying for Community Care Grant and referred to Pass It On scheme whilst awaiting award
- Accessed internal Glasspool funding for moving costs and items that Community Care Grant did not award
- Assisted in applying for a DHP

Outcomes

- Permanently housed
- Settled accommodation after being in and out of care for a few years
- Mental health improved, he felt safe and started enjoying tenancy again
- £384 – Glasspool grant for removal costs
- £1369 – Community Care Grant
- £463 – Discretionary Housing Payment
- £120 Sim card

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £2,302

f. Single man wanted to refuse a homeless offer

Situation

- Service User has been accepted as homeless and had full duty
- Made an offer he didn't want to take because of historical threats of violence

Actions

- Informed of rights under Homeless legislation and discussed grounds for refusal or review
- Contacted Housing options for his offer letter and advised him to view the property
- Discussed with him his grounds and advised we were unable to lodge a review as there were no legal grounds and consequences of refusing it; explained discharge their duty process and he would need to find his own accommodation, advised to view the property before making his informed decision
- Service User struggled to find private rented accommodation so decided to accept offer and give it a ago
- Co-ordinated applying for grant for Community Care Grant and referred to SeAscape Pass it On
- Used internal grants for a cooker and carpets which were not awarded from Community Care Grant
- Assisted in applying for a Council Tax Reduction

Outcomes

- Permanently housed in settled accommodation after being in and out of the homeless accommodation many years
- Mental health improved with being able to turn house into a home and felt safe and started enjoying tenancy again
- £1,252 – Community Care Grant
- £1,128 – Council Tax Reduction
- £384 – Glasspool grant for carpets

- £257 – Youth and Philanthropy Initiative for a cooker

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £3,294

g. Single parent private tenant with mental health issues was threatened with eviction for rent arrears due to a change in circumstances creating an unaffordable rent top-up

Situation

- Single parent mother unable to work due to severe mental health issues
- Rent arrears caused by being unable to meet difference between Local Housing Allowance and rent
- Income significantly reduced after child moved out created severe poverty
- Eviction action started – Notice to Leave received due to 3 months accumulative rent arrears

Actions

- Immediate crisis intervention - £70 food voucher
- Advised of tenancy rights, legal process and homeless rights
- Assisted to apply for Discretionary Housing Payment - awarded £150 per month for 7 months so no shortfall
- Requested Discretionary Housing Payment backdated which reduced arrears to level below 3 months arrears threshold
- Arranged an affordable re-payment plan for the small balance left

"Jennifer was very helpful and wonderful to work with."

Outcomes

- Homelessness prevented
- Affordability improved
- Income maximised
- Mental health improved through poverty alleviation and tenancy sustained

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £970

h. Single woman private tenant with mental health issues received unlawful landlord rent increase notice

Situation

- Single woman unable to work due to mental health issues
- Received unlawful Rent Increase Notice with proposed £125 per month increase (27%)
- Panicked as unable to afford the proposed new rent and was already struggling
- Mental health rapidly declined due to worry, stress and anxiety and fear of becoming homeless

Actions

- Advised of tenancy rights, legislation in place regarding rent increases, legal process and homeless rights
- Assisted with application to Rent Officer to determine a fair rent (legal maximum 12%)
- Assisted with application to arrange a Rent Officer inspection

"Jennifer gave me the security that I could now afford to live. I have peace of mind and was able to get rid of any stress factors."

Outcomes

- Rent increase successfully challenged saving £90 per month so now more affordable (increase of 7.6% to £460)
- Short and longer term affordability improved and poverty reduced
- Homelessness prevented
- Mental health improved through poverty alleviation and tenancy sustained

"Jennifer has been really great, she has been so helpful with everything and there has been a lot of things she has supported me with."

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £1,156 &

PUBLIC PURSE SAVED £40,000

i. Single father with mental health issues in private let facing homelessness due to relationship breakdown

Situation

- Single dad of 2 in private let
- Relationship broke down
- Service User declined sole tenancy due to affordability
- Issued Notice to Leave by Landlord
- Struggling with food and fuel poverty due to reduced income

Actions

- Immediate crisis intervention – £49 fuel voucher & £70 food voucher
- Advised of eviction rights – entitled to case being heard at First-Tier Tribunal
- Advised of rights under homeless legislation –entitled to present as homeless and provided with temporarily and permanent accommodation
- Advised of housing options – private rented sector and Local Housing Allowance amount
- Glasspool grant application made - £500 awarded for deposit
- VRF grant application made - £500 awarded for first month's rent in advance
- Community Care Grant application made – £916.16 worth of items awarded to ensure family has essentials in new, affordable private rented home

"Jennifer eased the stress and worry from myself. She was in a class of her own. Thank you to everyone in the organisation who has helped me."

Outcomes

- Immediate and longer-term poverty reduced through food/fuel voucher and affordable private let
- Aware of tenancy rights and empowered to use them
- Mental health improved through poverty alleviation
- Mental health improved through securing longer term suitable tenancy
- Homelessness prevented – avoided use of temporary accommodation and any need for permanent offer

SERVICE USER BETTER OFF BY - £2,035.96 & PUBLIC PURSE SAVED £40,000

j. Single parent with 2 children with mental health conditions worsened after receiving Notice for Removal

Situation

- Single parent, 2 children living in Short Assured Tenancy
- Property had been repossessed due to mortgage arrears
- Tenant received Notice for Removal advising eviction to be carried out and locks to be changed within a week
- Very distraught and mental health worsened due to anxiety
- Service User fearing having nowhere to go should Sheriff Officers attend to remove them and their children

"Jennifer was very kind, informative and went out of her way to help me. She explained things to me in a way I understood."

Action

- Advised of rights and are entitled to appropriate Notices from the new owner of the property
- Contacted Solicitors managing the repossession to advise of tenancy
- Contacted Sheriff Officer instructed by Solicitors to advise them of tenancy
- Advised Service User of expectations re Notices and FTT
- Advised of long term and short term housing options

Outcome

- Eviction stopped - Service User and their children were not removed from property
- Sheriff Officers attended to change locks and provided Service User with own set
- Service User avoided need for temporary accommodation
- Service User sourced alternative private rented tenancy
- Poverty reduced through grant funding: £375 deposit, £375 first months' rent, £52 Glasspool towards essential items for new tenancy
- Homelessness prevented & mental health improved through providing clear advice, guidance and reassurance

SERVICE USER BETTER OF BY - £802 & PUBLIC PURSE SAVED £40,000

k. Pension age couple with multiple disabilities facing illegal eviction

Situation

- Elderly couple with multiple physical and mental health conditions
- Living in Private Rented Tenancy unsuitable for their needs and too expensive
- Received handwritten note from Landlord asking them to leave
- Several thousands of pounds of withheld rent due to confusion after a change of Landlord

Actions

- Advised of their legal rights and that any attempts to remove without due process may be considered illegal eviction
- Contacted Landlord to reiterate legal position, tenants' rights and advised not to attend on proposed eviction date
- Supported to present as homeless as the property was no longer suitable for their needs
- Supported to pay withheld rent to reduce arrears

Outcomes

- Permanently housed in affordable, suitable and secure accommodation
- Arrears reduced - illegal eviction prevented - Street homelessness prevented
- Mental health improved – relieved pressure through clear advice and guidance
- Physical health improved through accessing accommodation suitable for their mobility needs
- Poverty reduced through facilitating access to affordable accommodation

I. Couple with 2 children – youngest child with autism, facing eviction via FTT

Situation

- Family with 2 children aged 13 and 19 - Teenage child with autism – limited social skills, no awareness of danger requires constant one-on-one supervision
- Service User newly qualified nurse
- Served Notice to Leave in February 2024 – Tribunal Case Management Discussion in August 2024
- Landlord selling property - Family unable to secure private accommodation due to rising rental costs
- No offers received from local authorities – Service User's area choices limited due to child's autism (a move out of the current area would be traumatic and cause significant harm)
- Service User contacted AHAC for advice on rights and Tribunal representation



Actions

- Advised on tenancy rights, legislation and Tribunal process
- I'M IN! Tribunal Officer drafted and lodged submissions regarding reasonableness of granting an eviction order and presented submissions at Case Management Discussion in August 2024
- Landlord's Solicitor submitted the property had to be sold to finance aids and adaptations to own property
- Due to evidence led by both parties full evidential hearing was arranged for November 2024
- Requested them to provide additional information as evidence from GPs, specialist consultants, school, including information on medication and routine
- Landlord's Solicitor led evidence of quotes for work to be carried out and the costs of adaptations and aids

Outcomes

- I'M IN! Tribunal Officer argued the Landlord's Solicitor had failed to demonstrate an urgent need and had failed to supply supporting information of husband's health
- I'M IN! Tribunal Officer also persuaded the Tribunal that, as the Service User had recently taken up employment as a NHS nurse, their financial situation had improved and had been approved for a 'mortgage in principle' and time should be afforded to allow them to secure accommodation without having to access temporary accommodation
- Tribunal accepted in oral evidence that Landlord's husband was ill but that nevertheless it would be unreasonable to grant the order with immediate effect having regard to the evidence led by the I'M IN! Tribunal Officer
- Tribunal granted the Landlord the eviction order but stayed the effectiveness of order until 31.3.25
- Homelessness delayed for 7 months
- Mental health improved – relieved pressure through clear advice, guidance, advocacy and representation

m. Single man with osteoarthritis and poor mental health facing eviction via Tribunal

Situation

- Single man resident in tenancy since 2019 with part-time responsibilities for teenage son
- Unable to work due to osteoarthritis and poor mental health following a head-injury
- Served Notice to Leave – expired January 2024
- Case Management Discussion scheduled for September 2024
- Landlord selling property - No offers received from local authority
- Property suitable for Service User - affordability and location
- Service User referred by local authority to AHAC for advice on rights and Tribunal Representation

Actions

- Advised on tenancy rights, legislation and Tribunal process
- I'M IN! Tribunal Officer drafted and lodged submissions re reasonableness of granting eviction order and presented these submissions at Case Management Discussion in September 2024
- Landlord's agent submitted the property was to be sold
- Provided additional information and evidence from medical reports and led submissions demonstrating the Landlord owned several other properties which were not being sold
- Landlord's agent conceded that property was being sold as "*it did not fit with the rest of their portfolio*" and there was no financial pressure to sell faced by the Landlord as there was no mortgage on property
- Due to evidence led by both parties full evidential hearing was arranged and Tribunal scheduled for January 2025 to decide on reasonableness

Outcomes

- Evidential Hearing took place in January 2025
- Neither the Landlord nor the agent attended
- I'M IN! Tribunal Officer argued that the Landlord's Solicitor had failed to demonstrate a necessity to sell, they were continuing to be a Landlord and as they had not appeared it was clear they no longer insisted upon the application following the facts explored at the Case Management Discussion
- The Tribunal Legal Member stated that he was inclined to allow the Landlord's Agent or the landlord an opportunity to attend
- Hearing was adjourned for period to allow the Tribunal clerk to contact the Agent
- Hearing reconvened, again without Landlord's Agent or Landlord
- I'M IN! Tribunal Officer again submitted application be refused due to a lack of insistence – Tribunal concurred
- Application for eviction refused
- No appeal received within 30 day time limit
- Service User remained in tenancy but has now moved into a permanent offer made by the local authority
- Homelessness Delayed and time allowed for suitable offer
- Had the Service User not had representation at the Case Management Discussion it would have been likely that the order would have been granted in September

n. Vulnerable male in Separation and Reintegration Unit, 3 days prior to scheduled release date transferred from another prison with no liberation plan

Situation

- 37-year-old vulnerable male came into prison custody in December 2023
- Prior to custody he had been street homeless
- Three days prior to the scheduled release date, he was transferred from another establishment to HMP Kilmarnock for local liberation
- Was going to be homeless on liberation
- No phone or sim card
- Mental health issues highlighted
- Placed in Separation and Reintegration Unit so unable to attend Link Centre appointment – was seen in cell with Prison Custody Officers present

Actions

- Informed of rights under housing legislation including homelessness rights and duty to accommodate
- Contacted Council Homeless team to make them aware of release to ensure accommodation could be identified
- Passed on information from DWP staff regarding appointment at Job Centre to open UC claim
- Provided a phone and sim and ensured it was charged and input contact numbers for Homeless Team; left this for pick up at Departure Lounge to collect on liberation
- Followed up with telephone call to service user later that day to check in and ensure he was aware and comfortable with the numerous actions he had to take to secure accommodation and open his UC claim that day
- He welcomed the follow-up telephone call and said he was grateful for phone and the assistance given to him at short notice

Outcomes

- Service user felt better prepared for release with a plan of actions and priorities to ensure income and accommodation
- Felt that someone cared enough to help him given the urgency and wasn't just left on his own
- Felt able to follow through actions as was provided with a charged phone and sim and the contact numbers for Homeless Team and UC
- Service User felt appreciative that we had cared enough to followed up with a telephone call to him later that in day to ensure he was aware and comfortable with what he had to do to secure accommodation and open UC claim
- Mental health improved, overall stress reduced. Due to the move into HMP Kilmarnock he had not been provided with our usual lead in service which would have been a planned approach and pre-liberation meeting. He had not been provided with any help at his previous prison and therefore was very anxious, stressed and confused about his liberation as there was no plan

o. Council tenant – multiple issues including Risk of Eviction and Deportation

Situation

- Single male from Council tenancy
- Had 3 Dogs with Dog Control Orders in property when taken into custody
- Termination paperwork received from Housing Officer on entry to custody
- Notice of Proceedings issued
- On remand longer than 6 months; non-entitlement to Housing Element resulted in increased rent arrears
- Unable to source Solicitor to defend action for arrears proceedings
- Possible deportation due to repeat offences

Actions

- Liaised with Housing Officer to ensure dogs were temporarily rehomed with nominated individuals and removed
- Informed on rights and entitlement periods at various points during time in custody including changes of circumstances
- Lock change requested to allow friend access to collect clothing and deliver to prison
- Repayment plan arranged towards rent arrears and assistance with sending cheques from prison to local authority
- Assisted to complete housing applications for social housing
- Minute of Recall assistance and Type III advice and advocacy provided
- Referrals to Solicitors to try and defend eviction action for arrears at Court
- Laison with Immigration Officer, Home Office and Immigration Solicitor to provide information on housing circumstances and help maintain tenancy to strengthen case
- Referral made to Tenure Sustainment service ready for liberation

Prison Outcomes

- Pets safely collected and fostered until release and were not taken by dog warden
- Tenancy maintained and homelessness prevented
- Ongoing advice and support when released from central AHAC advice services continuing established rapport with Tenure Sustainment for intensive support
- Supported to engage with AHAC support and specialist services
- No requirement for temp accommodation to be provided
- Whilst on remand encouraged to pay towards rent arrears - reduced by £100 = 20 wks @ £5/week which was 25% of prison wages
- Released from remand; Found not guilty at Court; Eviction not granted and not deported

Tenure Sustainment Outcomes

- Awarded single persons discount for C/Tax
- Awarded Council Tax Reduction
- Awarded Limited Capability Work Related Activity with backdate
- Awarded voucher for Fuel Bank
- Awarded Cash for Kids for daughter
- £416 better off per month

Our internal pathway from in custody Advice to Tenure Sustainment support within the community provides continuity, person-centred and trauma informed and responsive approaches

p. Change of Circumstances 24 Hours Prior To Release

Situation

- Single female due to be liberated from HMP Greenock
- Initially planned to relocate to an area of Glasgow, we helped arrange homeless accommodation for this area
- 24 hours prior to liberation, advised of a change in circumstances and intended to return to South Ayrshire
- The late change required immediate assistance and action
- Support required to ensure continuity of housing, benefits and access to services on release

Actions

- Conducted telephone appointment via Link Centre at HMP Greenock to reassess needs and update liberation plan
- Provided reassurance and explained next steps following the change
- Telephone contacted South Ayrshire Housing Options to pass on details and notify so accommodation could be identified
- Communicated with prison-based DWP staff to ensure benefits and appointment planning could be changed
- Referral made to Compass and AHAC Advice services for advice, phone, sim and assisting with forms
- Promoted digital inclusion by ensuring had phone; sim given to DWP to give at appointment

Outcomes

- Liberation plan completed clearly outlining actions required including accommodation, benefit appointments and support services
- Revised liberation plan prepared prior to release
- Effective partnership working demonstrated between prison staff, DWP, housing options and other agencies
- Temporary accommodation arranged

q. Single male with a 6 week sentence, memory issues due to head injury

Situation

- Single male admitted to prison for a 6-week sentence
- Vulnerable and in recovery from a longstanding drug addiction
- Memory issues due to a head injury

"Shirleyann made sure I was sorted and knew what I was doing for getting released and got me a phone which I needed. She even phoned me to check I was alright after release."

Actions

- Met with Service User on several occasions to relay concerns about support in community and restarting benefits
- Communication with Housing Officer to ensure that repairs to front door of tenancy were noted
- Communication with Prison based DWP
- Referral made to support agency for gate pickup and assistance with appointments
- Supplied with mobile phone and sim card
- Met with Service User on day prior to liberation to ensure he had necessary information for collecting mobile phone and sim to give Service User a chance to ask any questions regarding day of liberation

Outcomes

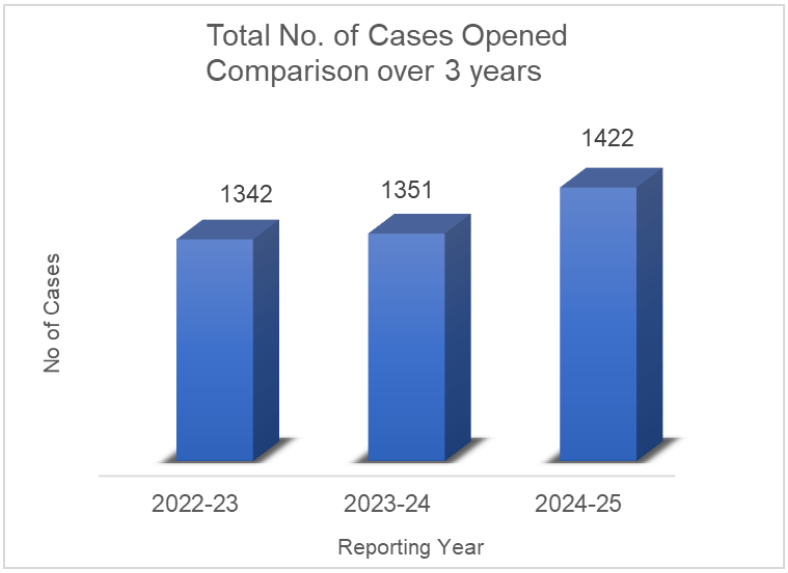
- Service User had stress eliminated from liberation day by communication and forward planning
- Digital inclusion for Service User ensuring connectivity
- Collaborative approach between prison staff, DWP and support agency

10. DETAILED STATISTICAL REPORT

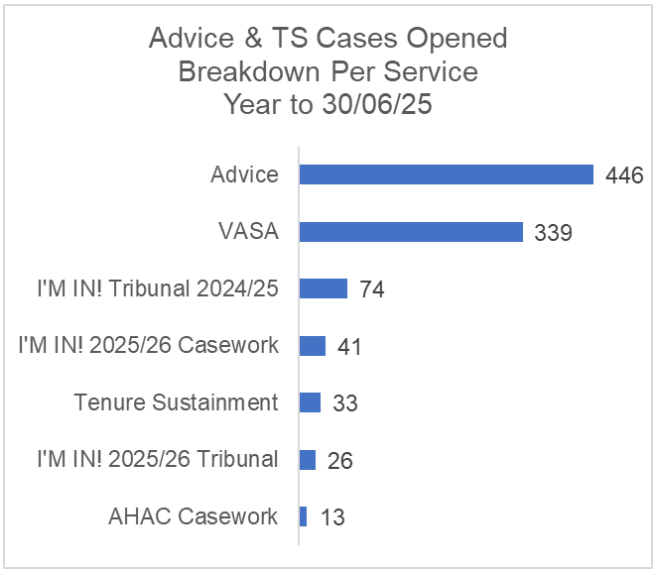
AdvicePRO replaced our word case recording and multiple Excel Databases as our case management system in July 2023. This system allows statistical analysis, reports, essential to AHAC's reporting and evaluation cycle to be pulled live easily and effortlessly. We continue to produce accurate reports for each service to monitor trends and respond to specific requests from funders on selected areas and contribute to maintaining high-quality control compliant systems including a separately adapted AdvicePRO system for the Prison Housing Advice Service which covers both East and South Ayrshire areas. We have included this Service in the relevant statistical analysis wherever possible.

a. Cases Opened Statistics

Comparison of Cases opened over last 3 years

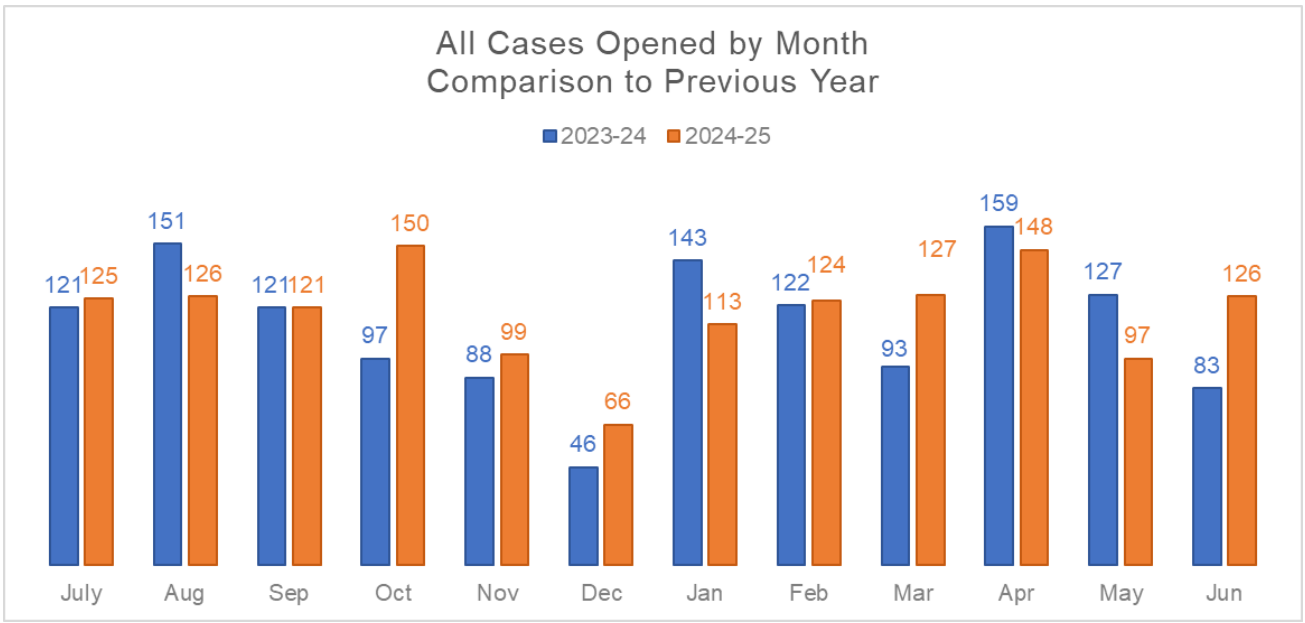


Types of Services

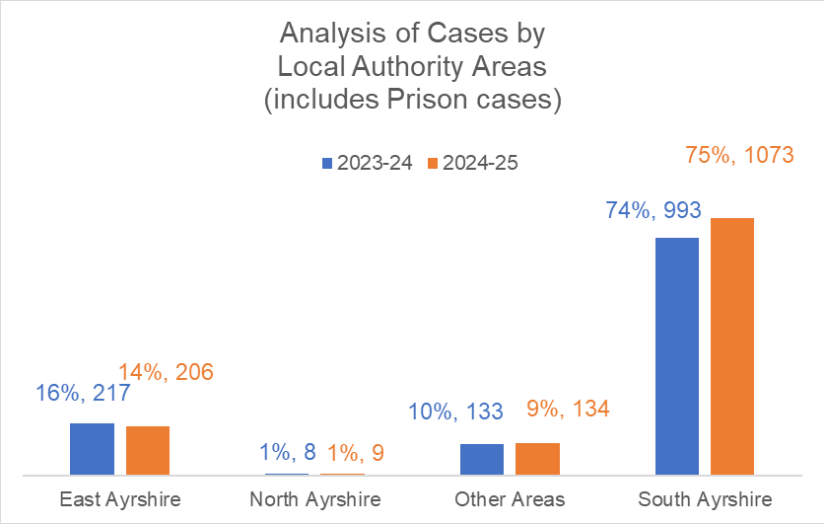


b. Monthly Cases Opened

We can see an overall increase in cases opened this year, with higher demand from October to December, and in March and June.



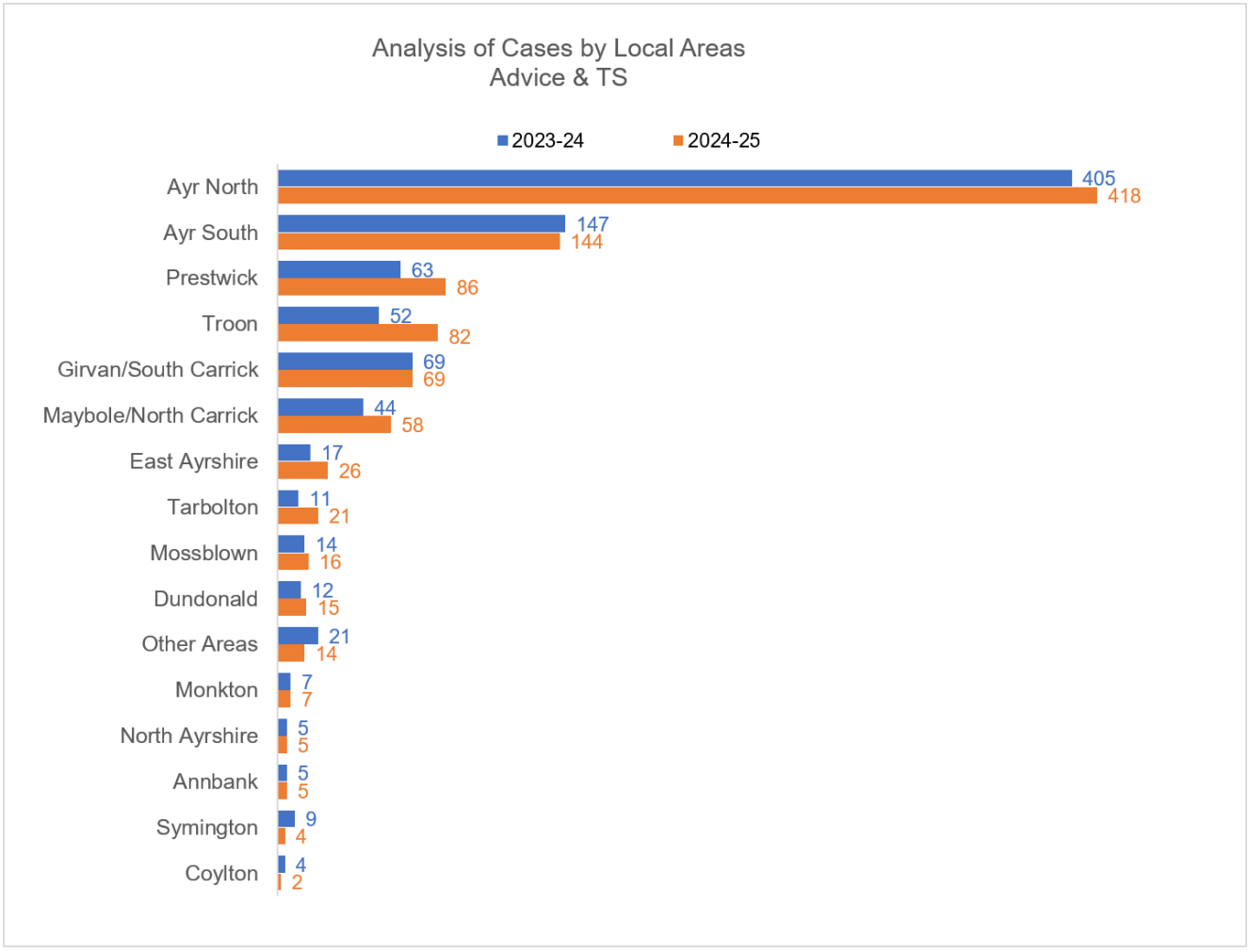
c. Local Authority Areas



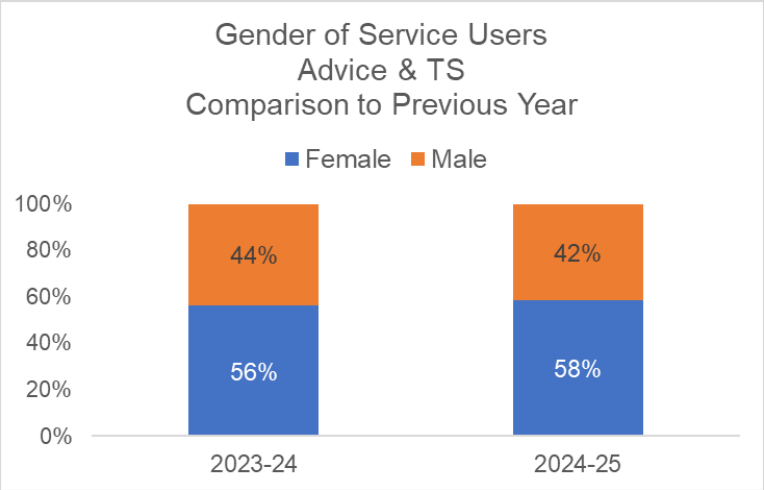
Most of the 206 East Ayrshire and 134 cases from other areas are linked to the Prison Housing Advice Project.

d. Local Areas (Prison Service not included)

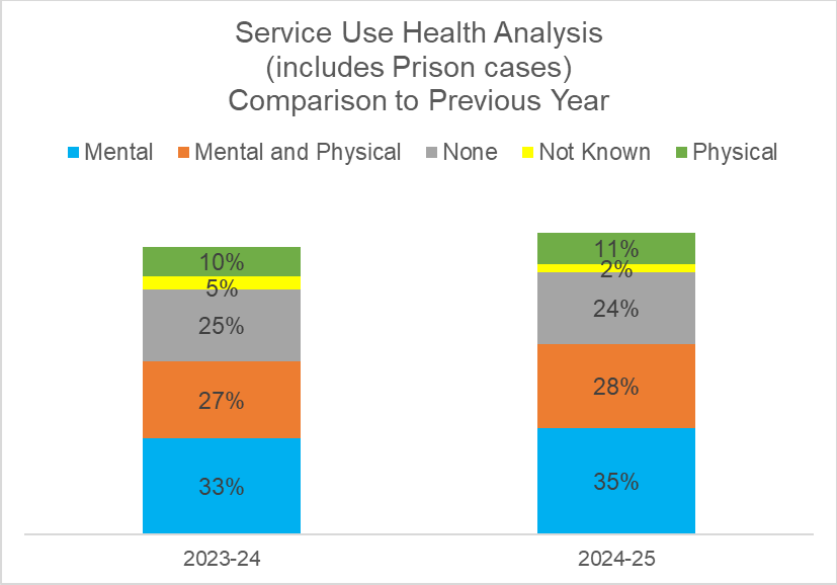
This data relates to the local area the Service User resided at the time when they contacted us. There has been an increase in numbers of cases opened for many areas including Ayr North which continues to be our largest group. We are conscious of those within village and rural areas and are currently seeking funding to address this inequality to improve access and links within these areas.



e. Gender of Service Users (Prison Service not included)



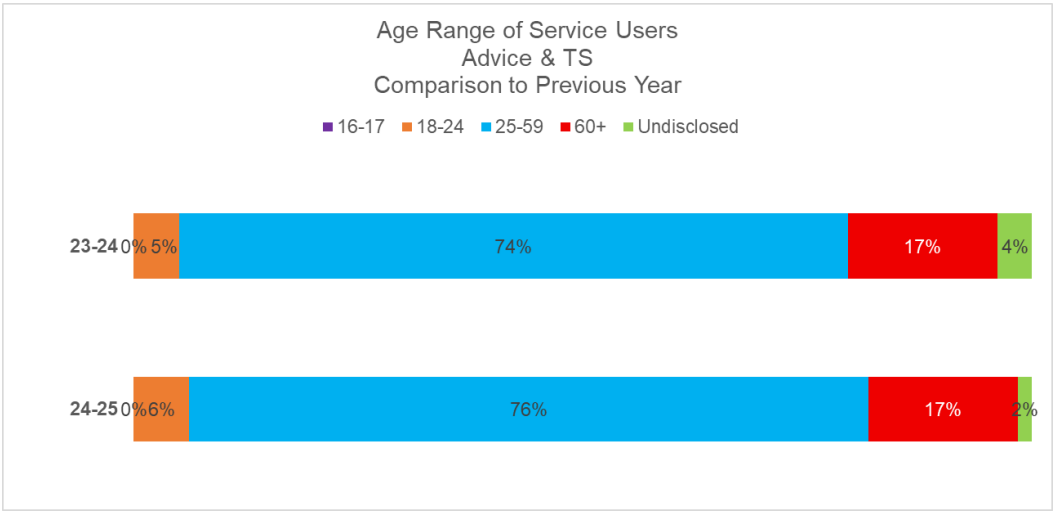
f. Health Analysis



We continue to see a year on year increase with those with Mental health issues, this is only based on what the service user tells us and is not linked to them claiming any health related benefits. A total of 74% of cases had indicated some level of disability; a 4% increase.

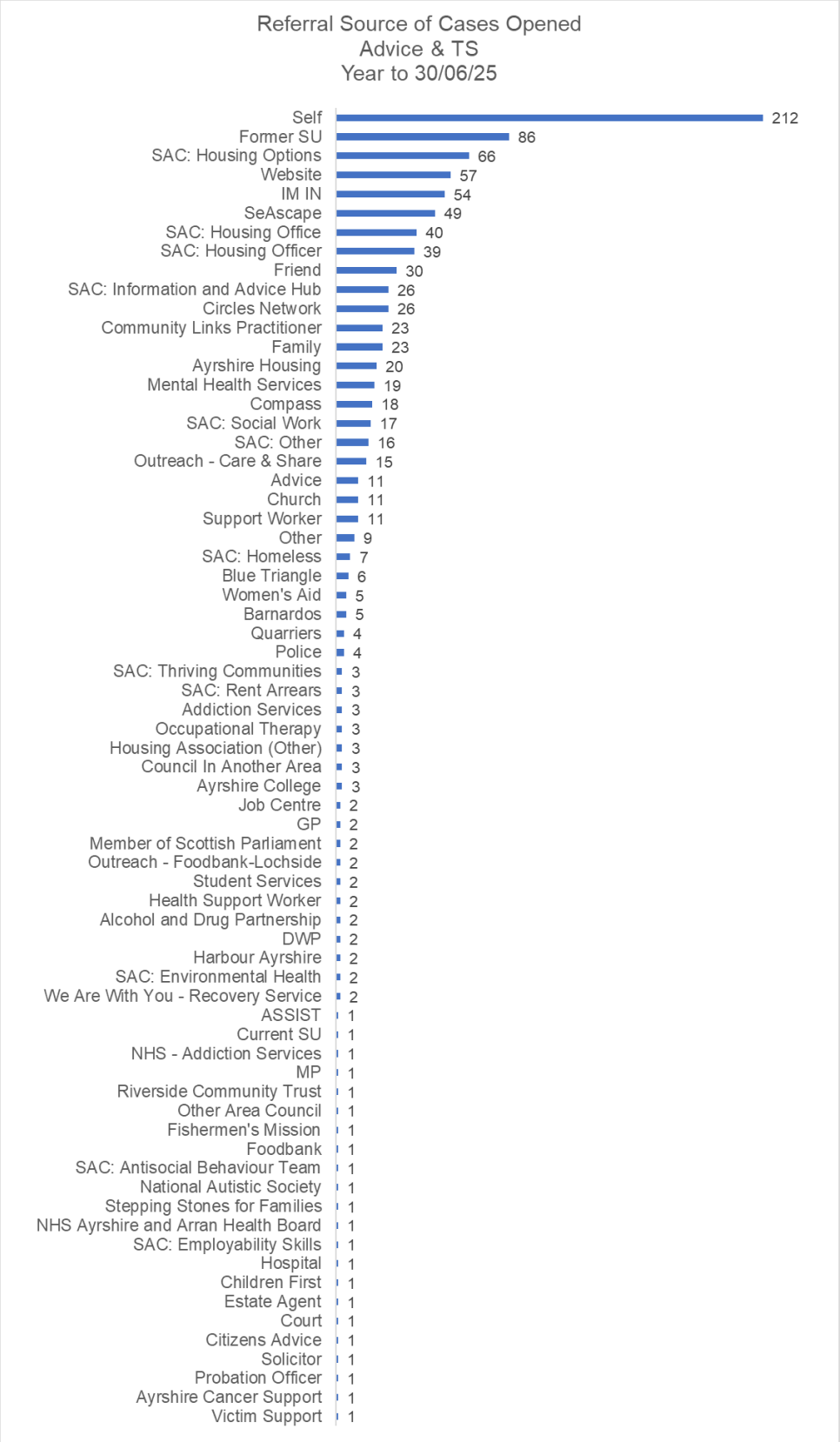
g. Age Range (Prison Service not included)

The age range of service users has remained similar with the majority of those who get in touch being within the 25-59 age group.

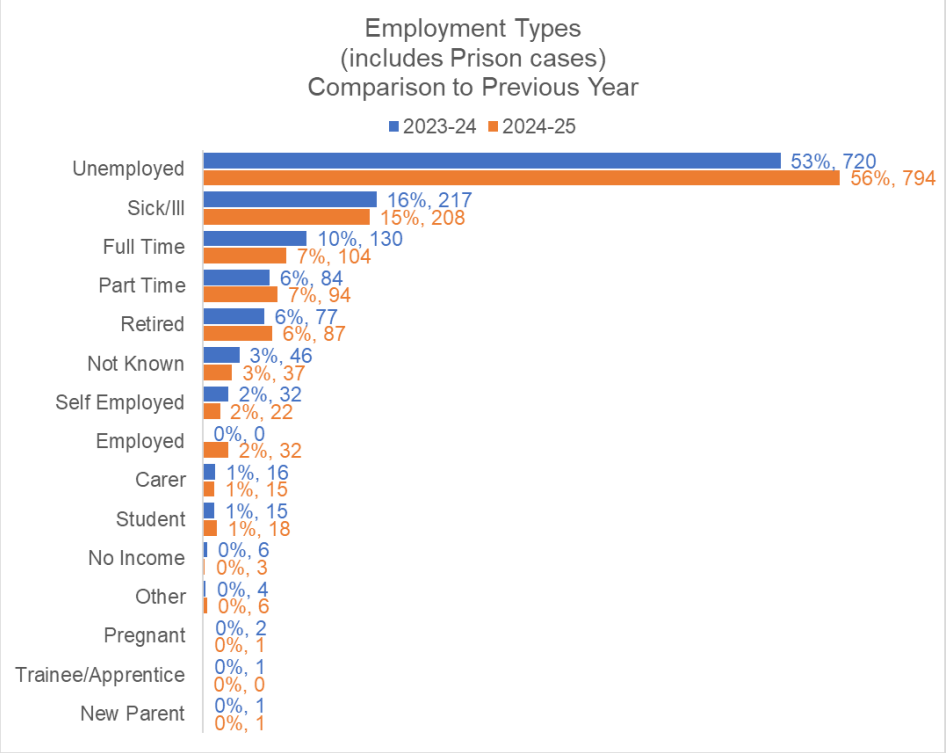


h. Referral Source (Prison Service not included)

The chart below illustrates how the service user found us or who referred them to us. As you can see our referrals come from a variety of sources. The self-referral category continues to be the primary method of referral with many telling us it is due to word of mouth and our reputation: 22% of cases. Referrals from Housing Officers increased to 39 this year (30 last year). We welcome the increase again this year in referrals from Housing Options 66 this year compared to 26 last year). Community Links Practitioner referrals continue to reduce year on year falling from 61, 2 years ago to only 23 this year). We think this is mainly due to staff turnover and will link with Senior CLP to ensure the new staff team have out information and understand our remit.



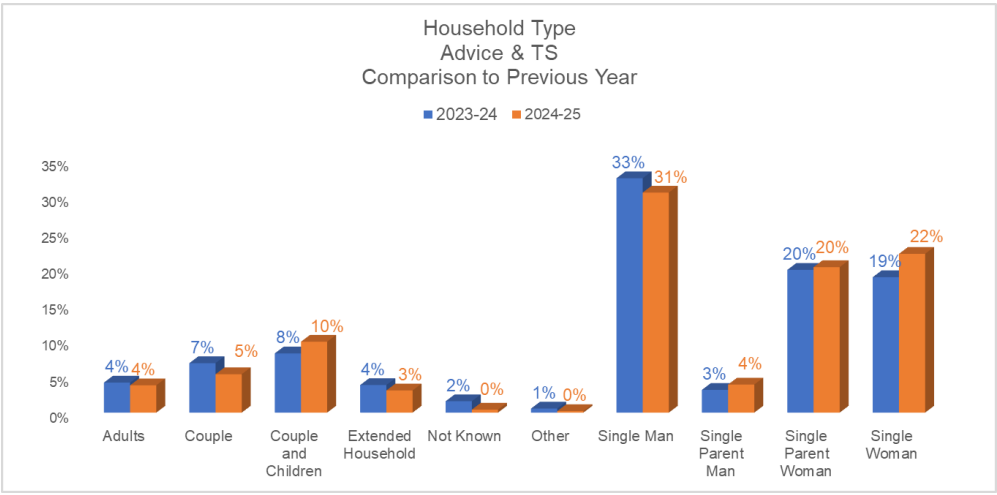
i. Employment Types



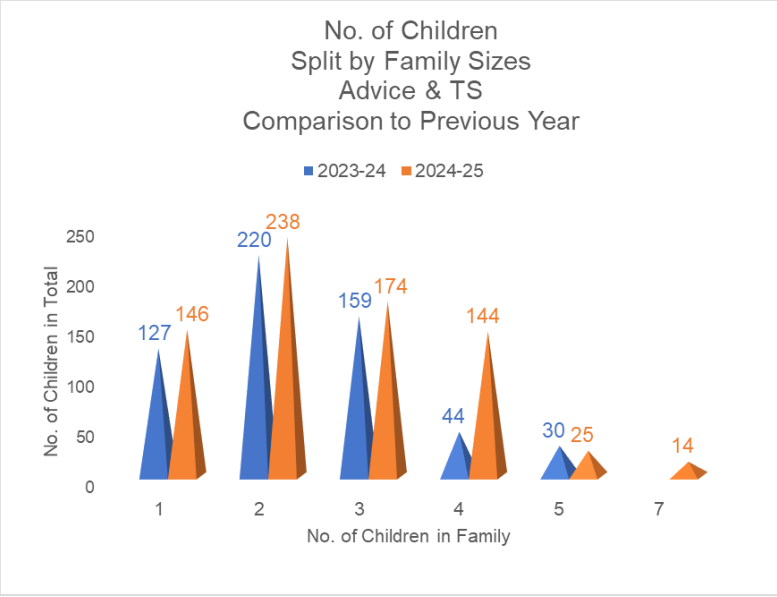
This year we saw an increase of those describing themselves as unemployed and a decrease of those in full time work and sick/ill. We saw an increase in those needing help who were employed part time which is linked to the cost-of-living crisis. Even those who are working have felt increased poverty and housing related issues.

j. Household Types (Prison Service not included)

Similar to last year single men and women make up most of our cases. Many of this group are involved in homelessness, the under 35's affected by the Single Room Rent Restrictions and the large gap between actual rent and the Local Housing Allowance received to help pay rent. We continue to campaign on this issue and the LHA rate generally.

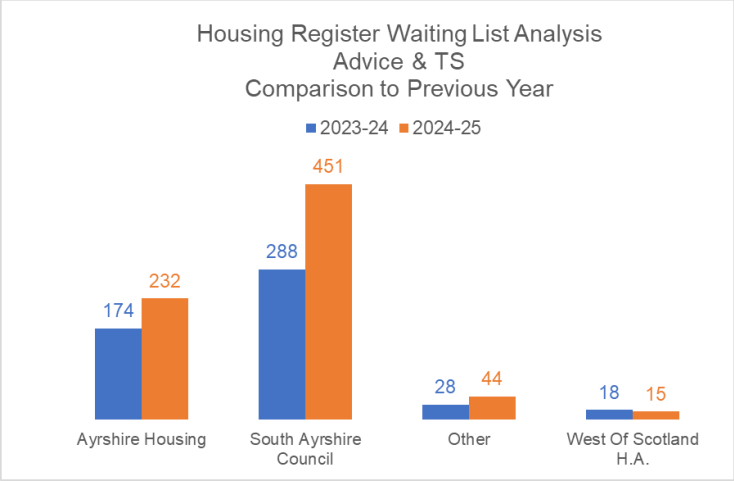


k. Number of Children in Family (Prison Service not included)



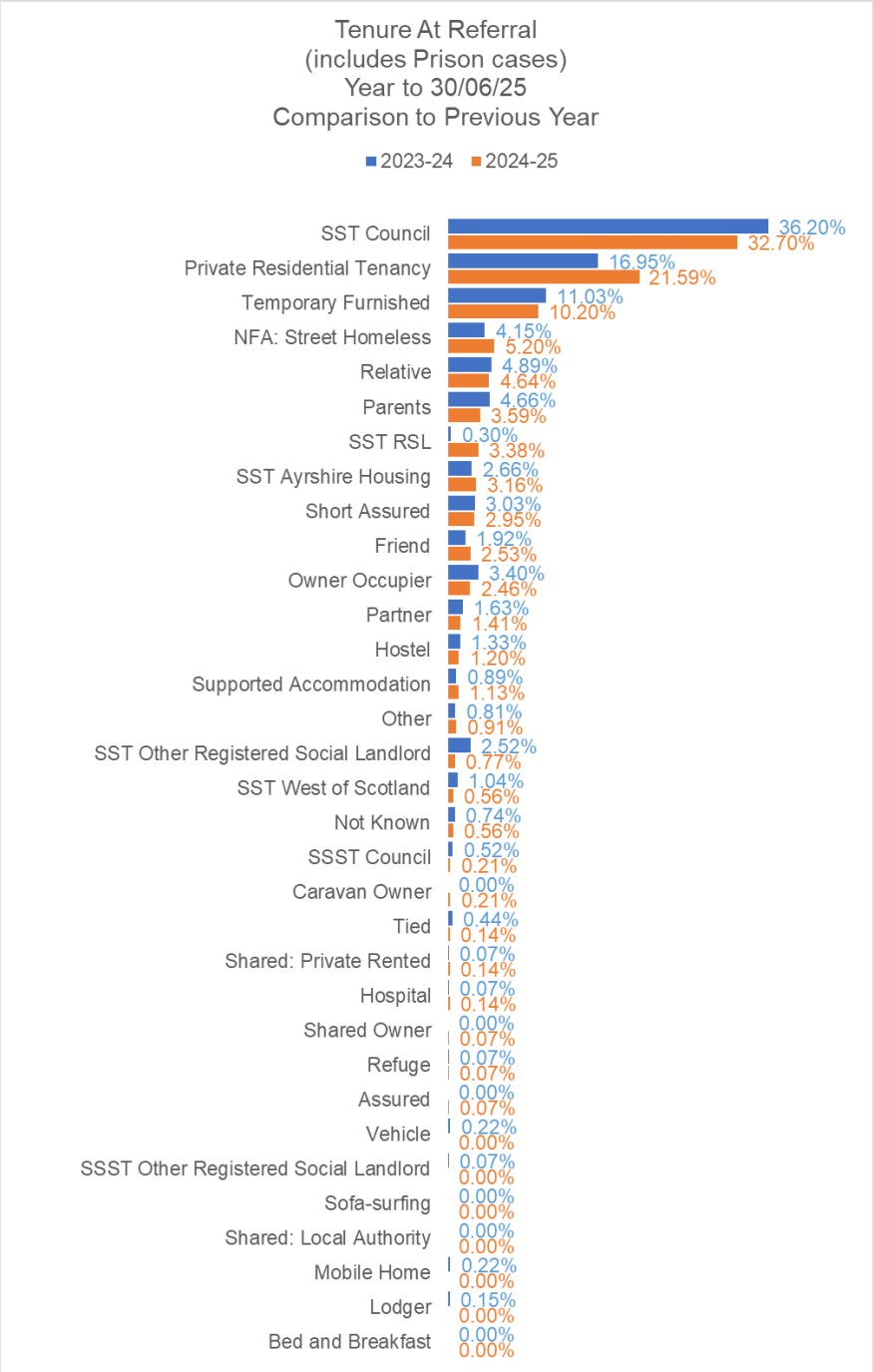
It is useful to consider how many children face housing related problems which can impact on their development, health, education, and many other aspects of their lives. There is a wide spread of family sizes with us helping 366 families with a total of 741 children.

l. Housing Waiting Lists (Prison Service not included)



Most cases opened are patiently waiting on South Ayrshire Council waiting lists with many now turning to social housing as their preferred choice due to lack of affordable availability in the private sector. We saw an increase in those already being on waiting lists when they saw us.

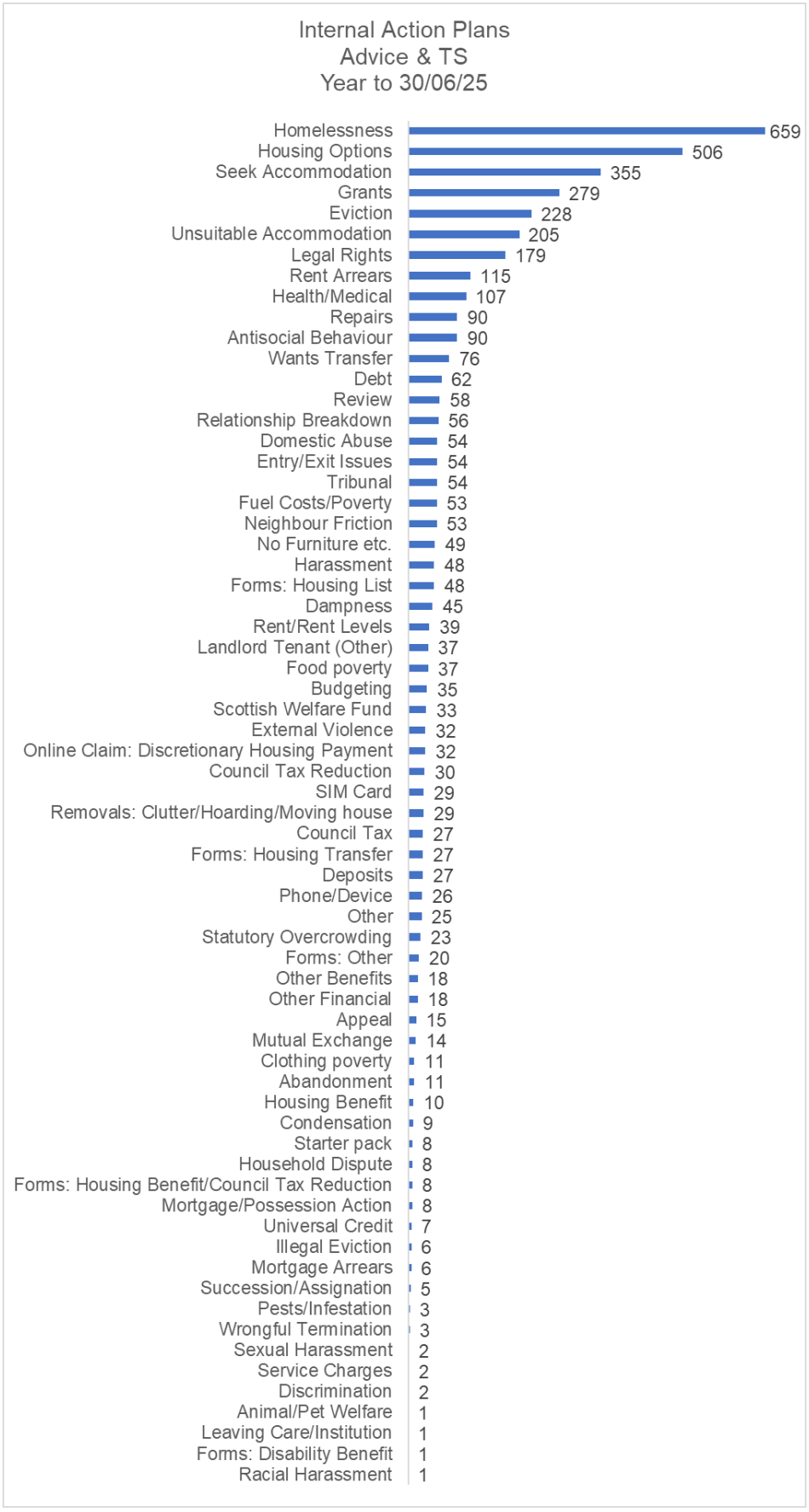
m. Tenure – (Including Prison Cases)



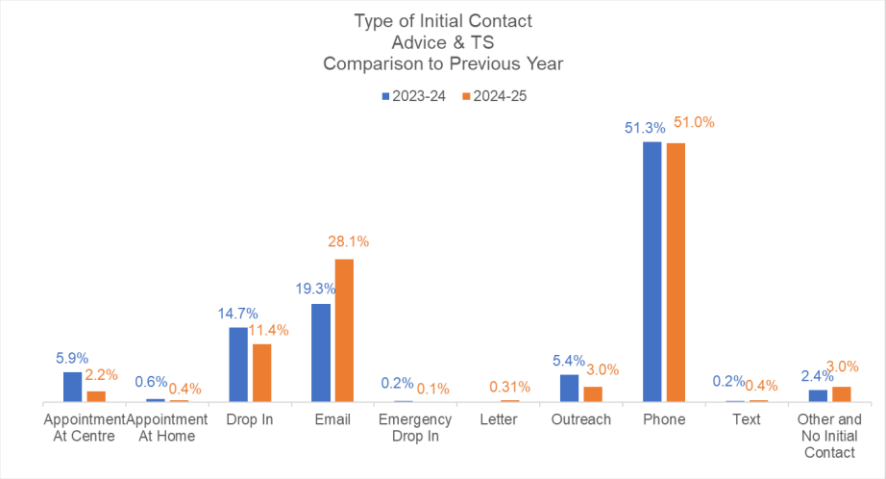
- The majority of people coming to see us for help has always been Council tenants with a slight decreased this year by 3.5%
- The above may be due to the increase of 4.6% from those in Private Residential tenancies mainly linked to our I'M IN! Project

n. Internal Action Plans (Prison Service not included)

Out of the 972 cases opened during this reporting year a total of 4,209 action plans were created averaging around 4 per case. Homelessness issues continue to be the main reason people come to us for help (68%), followed by Housing Options, seeking accommodation, grants, eviction, unsuitable accommodation and legal rights. Our eviction cases increased from 96 last year to 228 this year.



o. Type of Initial Contact (Prison Service not included)



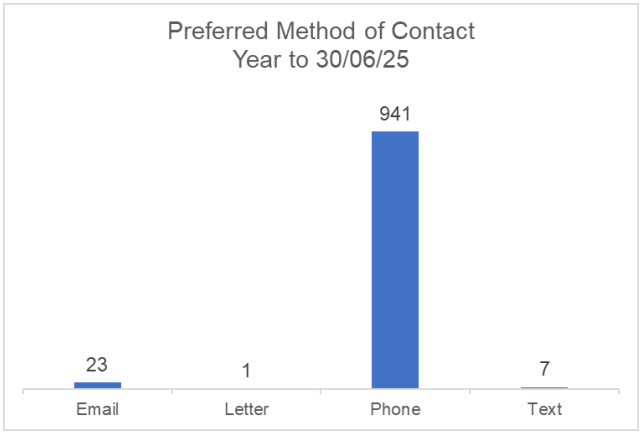
This chart records how people first contact us. It is important to note that some will go on to come into see us later with paperwork or have a mix of contacts throughout the life of their case.

As expected, the majority of people like to contact us by phone or e-mail first and then appointments can be arranged from there. We encourage people to come into the office although there was still some reluctance with many still preferring indirect means following covid. There is great value in seeing someone face to face and being able to discuss issues and options in a calm, friendly environment.

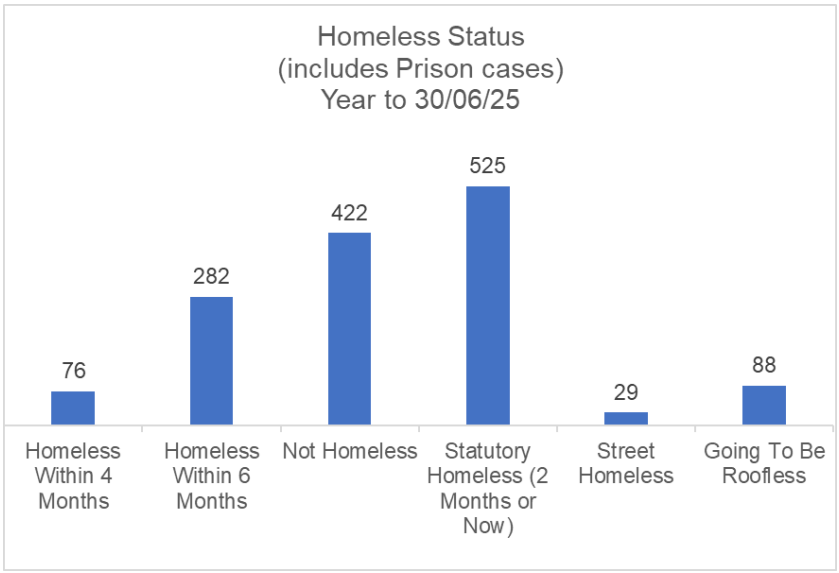
p. Preferred Method of Contact (Not including Prison Cases)

We actively ask service users how they would like to be contacted and communicate with us after their first contact. This allows us to plan service delivery.

Face to face appointments are offered when a case is opened which can assist to ensure all information is gathered and advice understood. Following this 97% of service users confirmed phone as their preferred method of contact to arrange future appointments and provide updates. We continue to send information via email following appointments and calls to ensure advice is understood and for service users to refer back to.



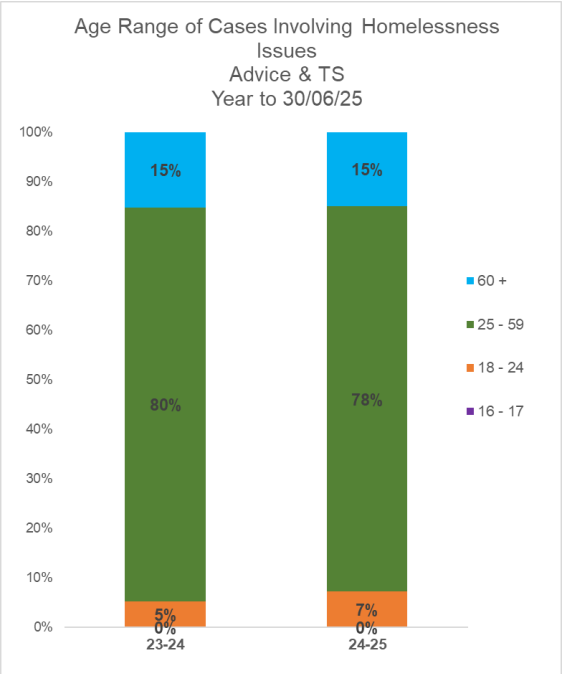
q. Number of Cases involving Homelessness Issues (Including Prison cases)



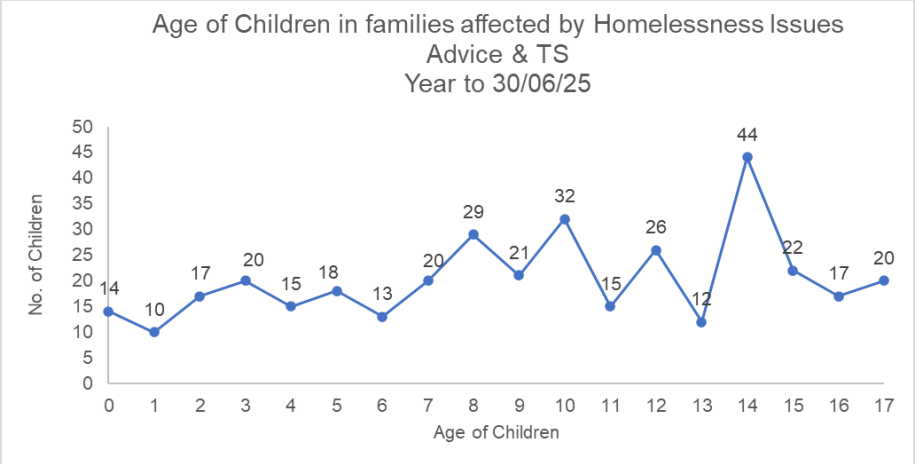
A total of 1,000 out of the 1,422 cases opened this year had a threat of homelessness. Homeless status cases included those who were roofless, statutory homeless and threatened with homelessness within 4 – 6 months.

r. Homeless Age Ranges (Prison Service not included)

- 78% of those facing homelessness are in 25-59: a 2% decrease
- 7% were in the 18-24 age group, a 2% increase this year



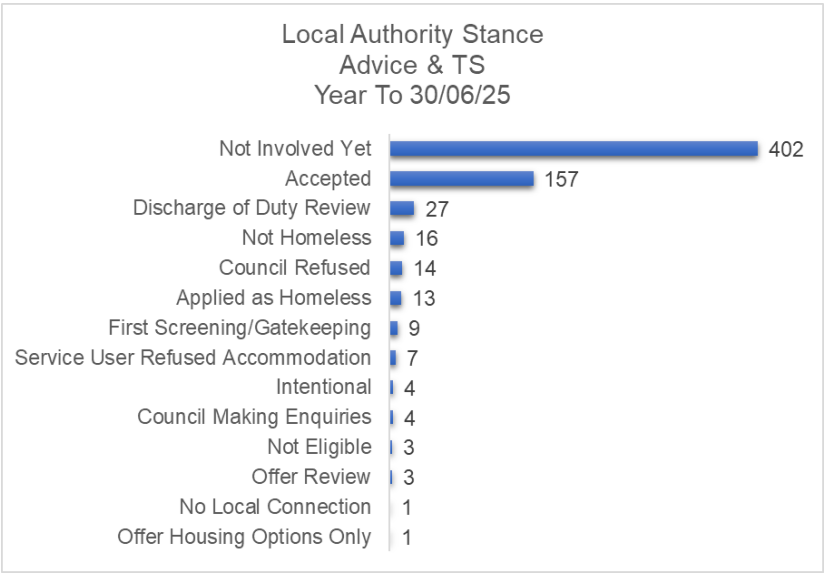
s. Children Age ranges affected by homelessness (Prison Service not included)



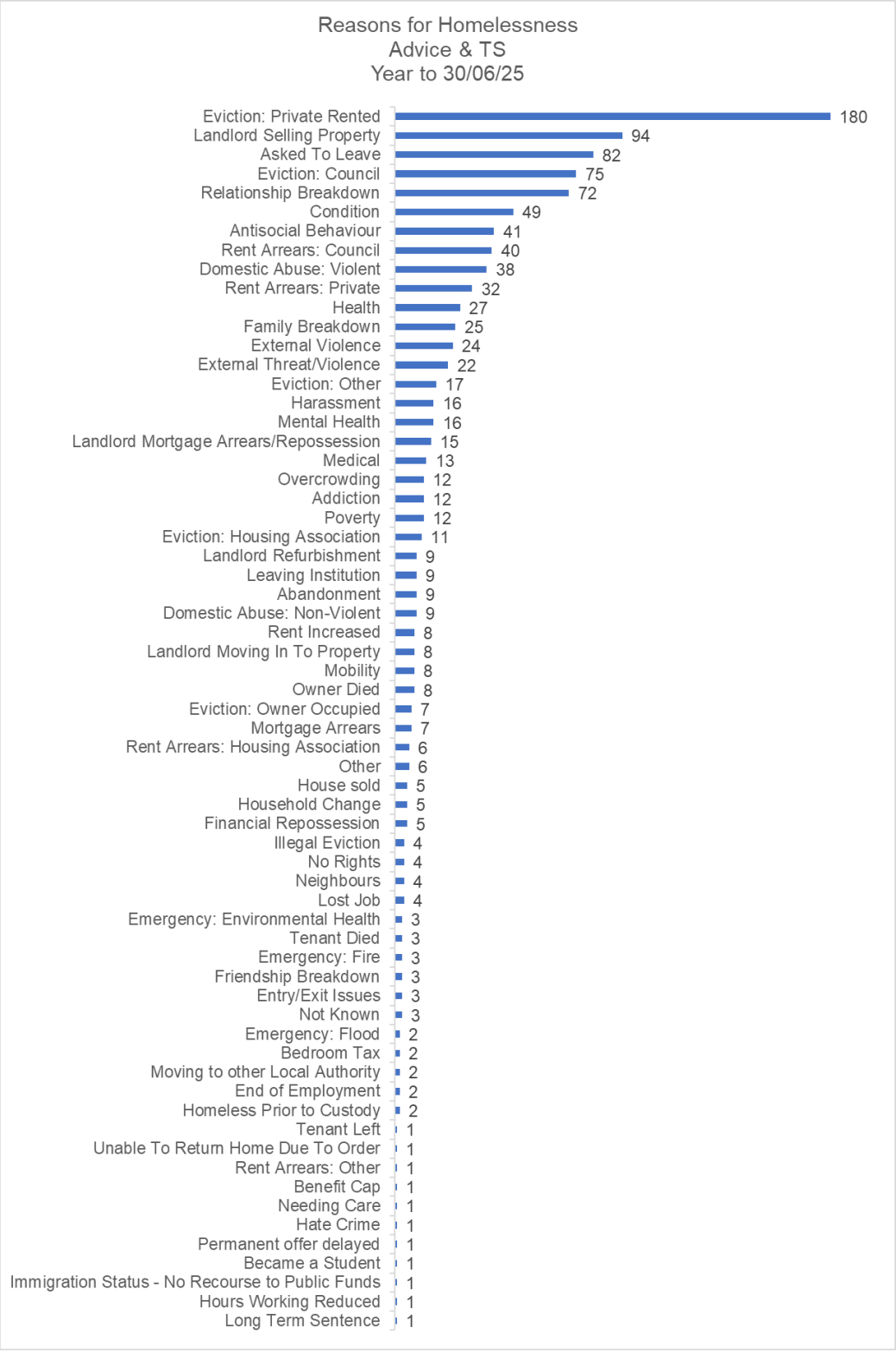
From cases with a homeless status recorded, 520 children were either homeless or threatened with homelessness. Date of birth or ages were provided for 360 children. Age ranges were varied although more than half the children involved were 10 years old or younger (58%), 21% were 0 - 4 years old and could be linked to those with increased poverty due to childcare costs with young children.

t. Local Authority Stance (Prison Service not included)

This chart represents the Council's decision on their homeless status at the time the Service User came us. It is encouraging that the majority (61%) of Service Users are coming to seek advice on their rights prior to contacting the Council which is positive for homeless prevention if they come and see us early enough.



u. Reason for Threat of Homelessness (Prison Service not included)

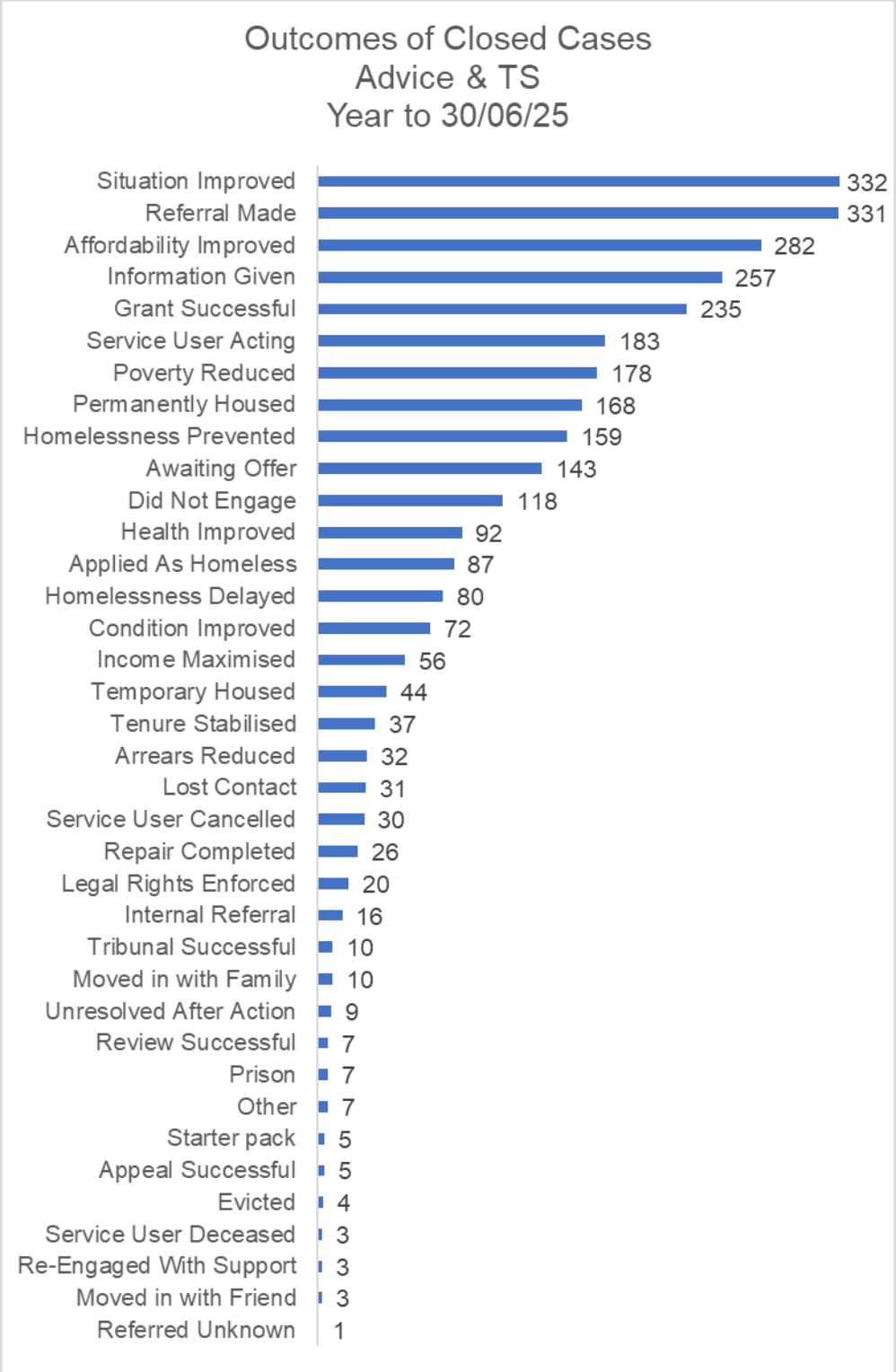


- 180 cases were threatened with eviction from private landlords (59 last year); interestingly only 18% were due to rent arrears
- Domestic abuse, antisocial behaviour and external violence were prevalent in 112 homeless cases compared to 93 last year
- 94 landlords were selling properties, 8 were moving in, 5 houses were already sold and 9 were requiring vacant possession for major refurbishment
- Rent arrears cases both in the public and private sectors accounted for 79 cases, (66 last year)
- 72 were due to relationship breakdown
- 27 cases were due to Health
- 16 were caused by mental health issues
- 13 due to medical reasons
- 8 were due to mobility

11. Closed Cases Statistics

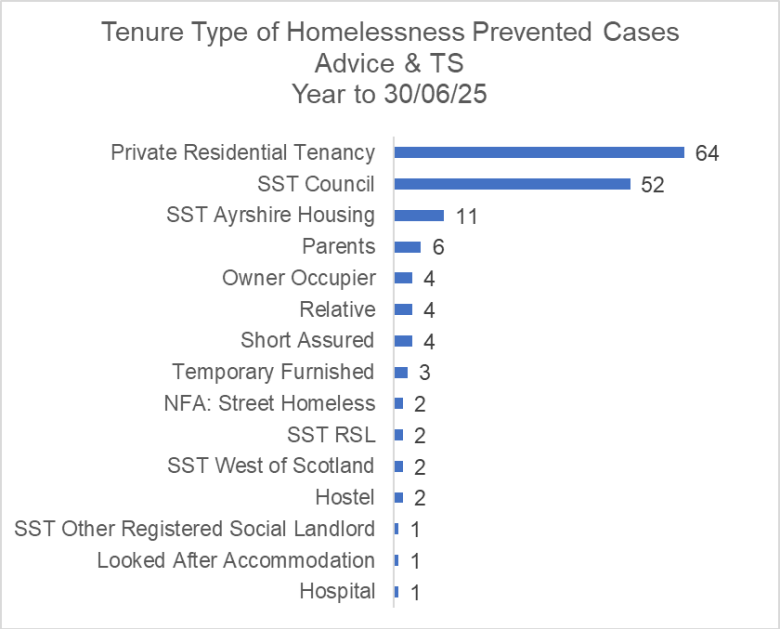
a. Outcomes of Closed Cases (Prison Service not included)

From the 940 cases closed they generated 3,083 outcomes (average 3 per case). The graph below similar to the previous year, shows that the main outcomes include Situation Improved, Referral Made, Affordability Improved, Information Given and Grant Successful.



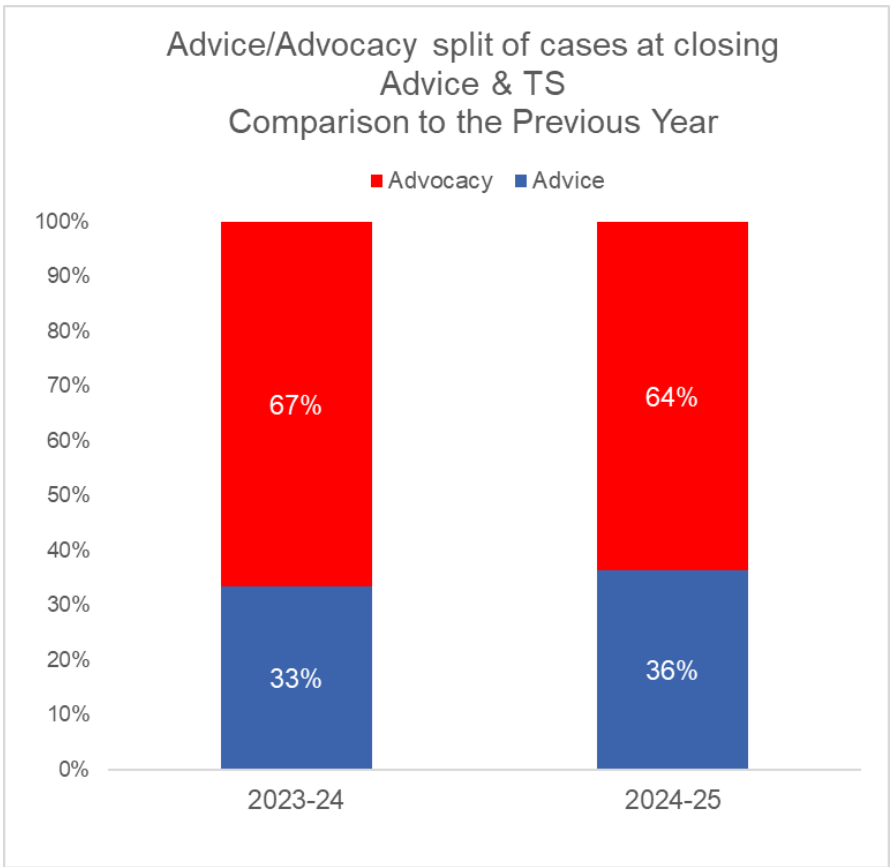
b. Breakdown of Homeless Prevented cases by Tenure Type (Excluding Prison Cases)

Here we show the tenure the person was in prior to us helping to prevent their homelessness. Private lets were the most common type of tenure this year, 43%. The percentage of those in council tenancies decreased by 6.5% and there was a slight increase of 1.5% in RSL tenancies. There were twice as many people this year who were staying with friends and family; 6% compared to 3% last year. Where they did not have a tenancy, we often assisted people into other accommodation or helped maximise waiting list applications to avoid having to apply as homeless.

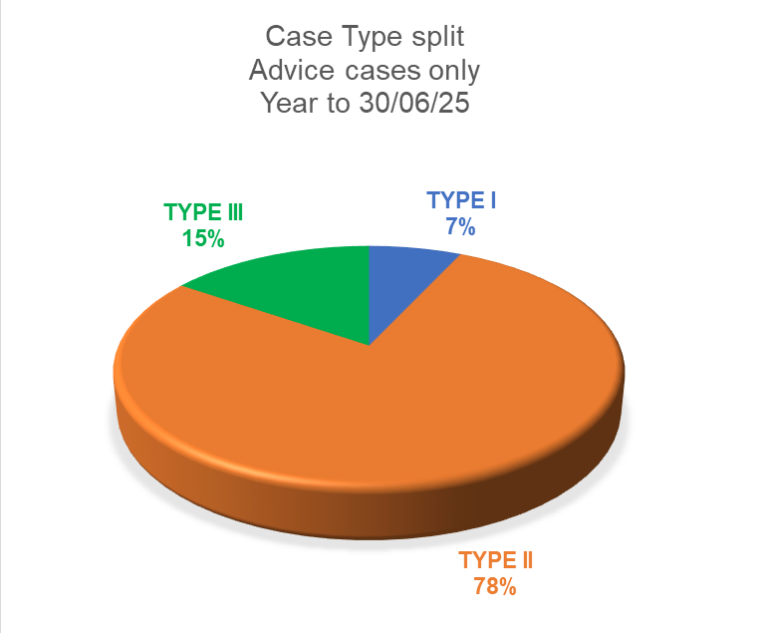


c. Advice/Advocacy Analysis (Prison Service not included)

Advice can cover several topics and have many internal action plans which involves giving information, advice, discussing options, etc. Service users can take on board the information given and consider options to make informed choices. In advice cases there is no need to interact with a third party. Advocacy cases often involve numerous regular contact and advocacy work with 3rd parties such as Local and Central Government Departments, Landlords, Lenders, partner agencies and individuals. Positively advocating is often crucial for early intervention homeless prevention especially if the person does not feel able to speak to third parties themselves.



d. Advice Case Type I, II and III Breakdown – (Prison Service and Tenure Sustainment not included)

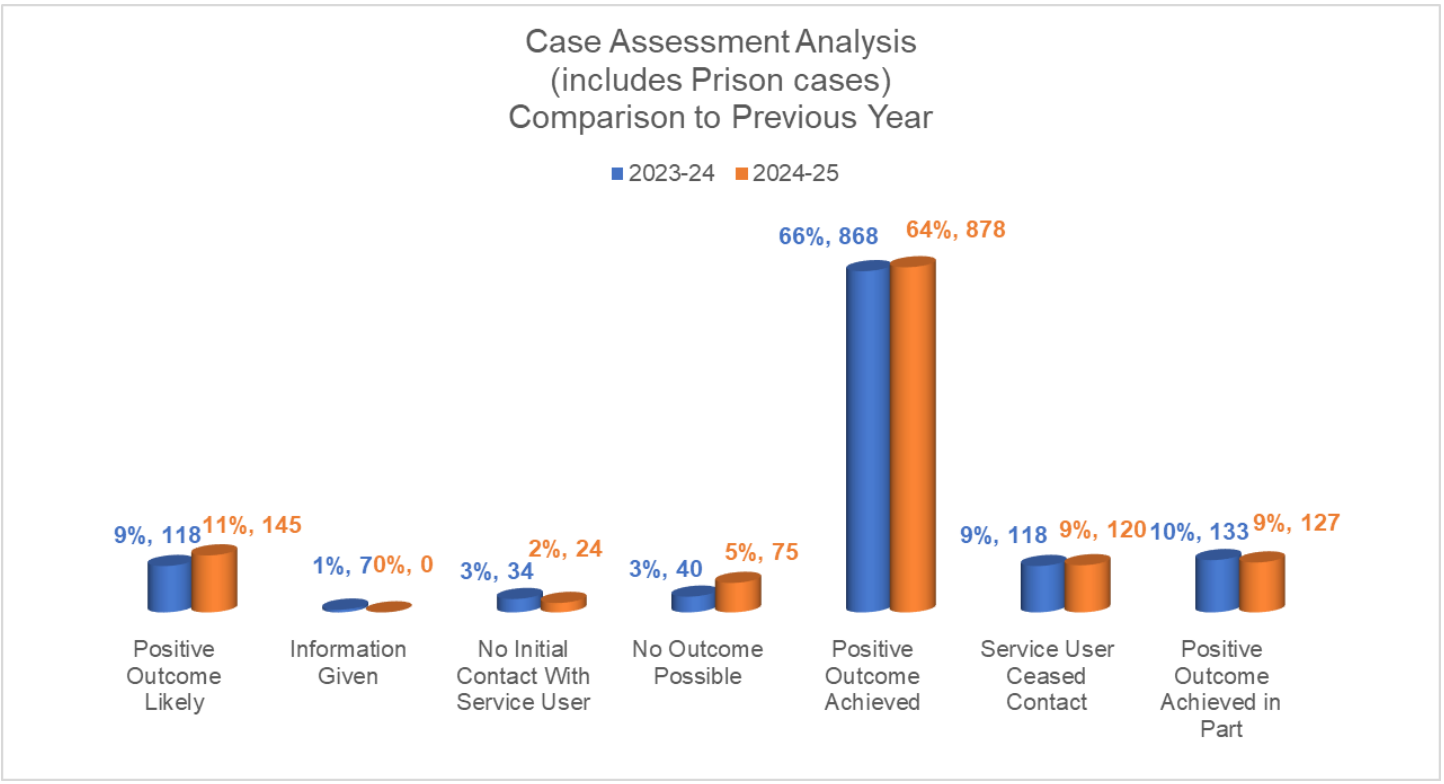


Type I – active signposting and information
Type II – advice and casework
Type III – advocacy, representation and mediation including tribunal

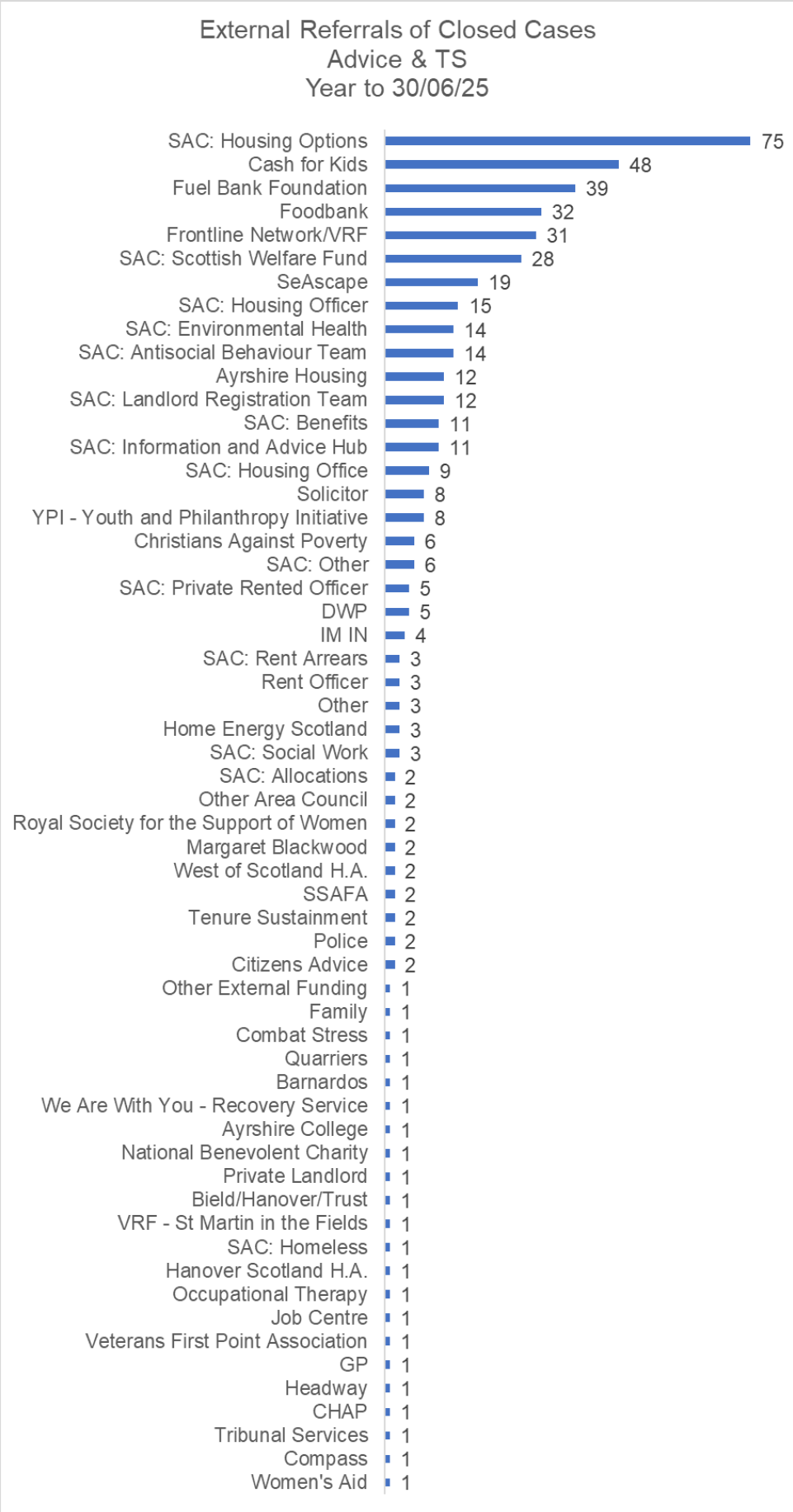
It should be noted that many cases can start off as a type I but quickly progress to type II or III. It should be noted than many of the type II Casework cases which required various levels of Advocacy.

e. Case Assessments

Most closed cases had positive outcomes achieved in full, partly or likely: 84% or 1150 service users



f. External Referrals (excluding prison)



This chart shows the wide range of organisations and other bodies we refer service users to during the life of the case. Altogether there were 467 referrals in this reporting year. Many referrals to Housing Options are those who have statutory homeless rights. As part of our Tribunal Representation service, it is important those with rights have made applications as offers are made based on date of application and this process can take many months.

- 75 to Housing Options
- 48 to Cash for Kids
- 39 to Fuel Bank Foundation
- 32 Foodbank referrals
- 32 to St Martin in the Fields grants
- 28 to the Scottish Welfare Fund
- 28 referrals to SAC Antisocial Behaviour Team and Environmental Health
- 19 to SeAscape
- 15 referrals to engage with their SAC Housing Officer
- 11 referrals to SAC Info & Advice Hub
- Additionally, there were 242 Glasspool internal grant referrals made for the year from 1.7.24 to 30.6.25

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank and recognise our funders and partner agencies for all their support during this year, including:

Funders:

South Ayrshire Council – Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Deas

East Ayrshire Council – Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

Scottish Government – Riaghaltas na h-Alba – gov.scot

THE FLEXIBLE FRONTLINE FUND

Seascape / Ayr Housing Aid Centre – Interactive Multi-agency Involvement Network – I'M IN!

VASA – We make help happen – Scottish Charity Number: SC028234

Glasspool Charity Trust

Some of our Partner Agencies and Accreditations:

Scottish National Standards – Accredited Information and Advice Providers

care inspectorate

Scottish Social Services Council

Armed Forces Covenant – Employer Recognition Scheme – Bronze Award – Proudly supporting those who serve.

disability confident – Committed

The Equality Register – Member

OSCR – Scottish Charity Regulator – www.oscr.org.uk – Registered SCIO SC049609

Living Wage Employer

Living Hours Employer

Cyber Essentials – Certified

SPS Scottish Prison Service

St Martin in the Fields Frontline Network

fuel bank Foundation

the trussell trust – Stop UK Hunger

Thanks to our frontline staff and management for their input and dedication through another extremely busy year. Thanks to the Board and their sub-groups for ensuring strong governance, strategic vision and support. Thanks to our Service Users for continuing to engage with us to work together even when things seemed impossible you trusted us to help you through it. Finally, thanks to all our funders for supporting us, believing in is and assisting us ensure people in housing need across South and East Ayrshire can.

Suzanne Slavin, Chief Executive Officer 14.10.25