



Housing Options

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Housing Options Manager

Who are the Housing Options team?

- 10 Options officers, led by 2 team leaders
 - 7 officers focussing on families and vulnerable people
 - 2 officers focussing on single homeless people
 - 1 officer focussing on single homeless people and ex-offenders
 - Housing Options Admin Officer
- Temporary Accommodation (TA) team, led by TA Manager
 - 2 Temporary accommodation Officers
 - 2 Temporary Accommodation Support officers

Responsibilities

- Primary Focus – Prevention of Homelessness
 - Negotiating with excluders (relatives, landlords, letting agents) in order to maintain accommodation
 - Securing alternative accommodation (social housing, private sector housing, supported accommodation)
- When Prevention is not possible
 - Advice to assist people find accommodation
 - Referrals to other partners
 - In some cases, Council provides accommodation

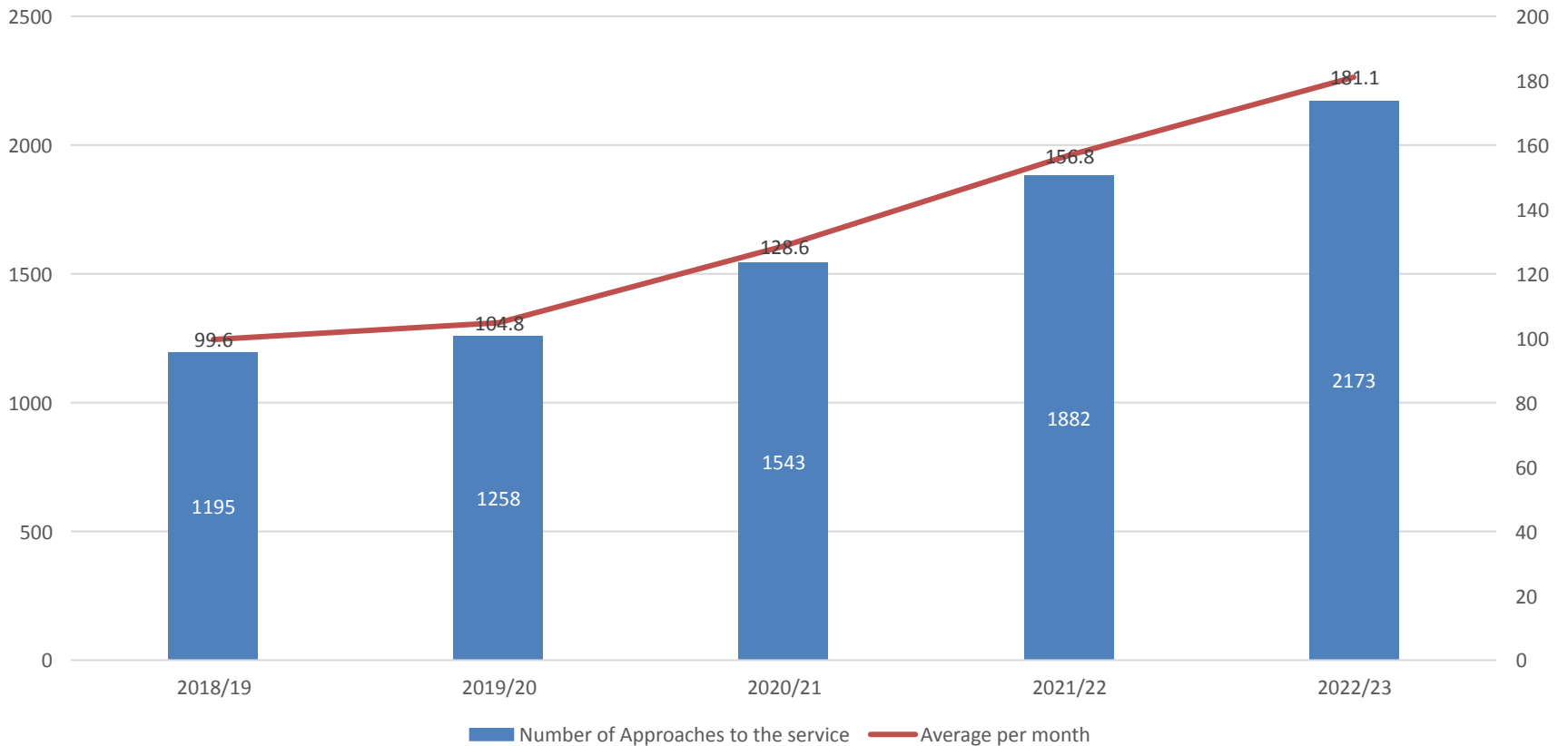
When do we accommodate?

- Not everyone is placed into temporary accommodation
- Only those that meet legal criteria are entitled to accommodation
 - Families with dependent children
 - Those that meet specific definition of vulnerability
 - Victims of domestic violence
 - Several other categories

Last resort

- All efforts are made to avoid the need for our Temporary Accommodation
- High demand; Limited availability
- Redevelopment plan in place for new Temporary Accommodation, increasing the number of units available

Rising Demand



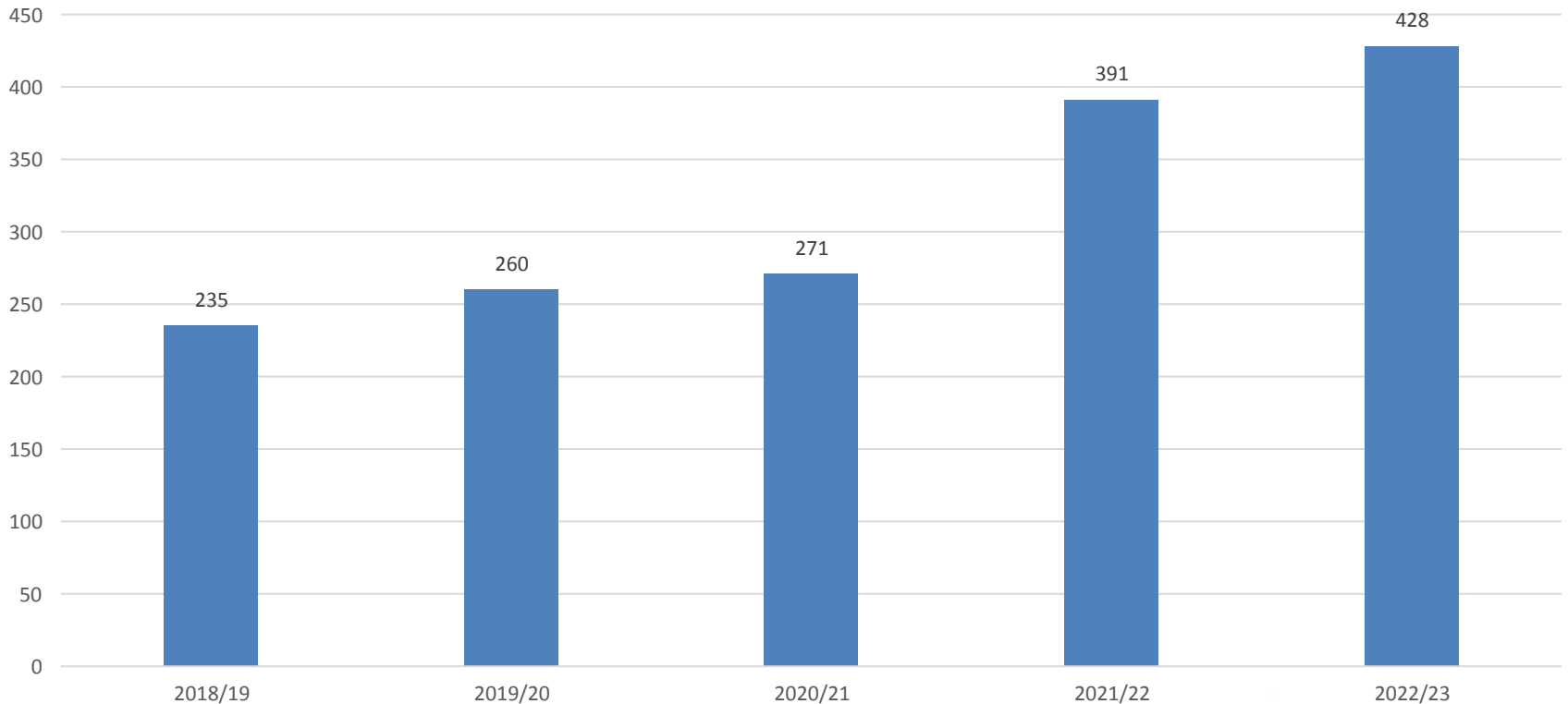
Options available

The Housing Options team provide advice about solutions to applicants, including:

- Assistance in obtaining accommodation in the private sector
- Financial assistance to retain existing accommodation (payment of arrears, shortfalls in rent, etc)
- Financial assistance to secure alternative accommodation (deposit payments, rent in advance, other expenses)
- Referrals to partners, assisting with support needs
- Close working with the Housing Allocations team, using the Allocations policy as a prevention tool where appropriate

Increase in Prevented Homelessness

Number of Preventions



Working in Partnership

- Partnerships to expand our toolkit in assisting applicants to prevent homelessness or find accommodation

The logo for 'beam' features the word in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font. A yellow horizontal line is positioned directly beneath the letters 'e' and 'a'.The logo for 'druglink' features the word 'druglink' in a bold, sans-serif font. 'drug' is purple and 'link' is green. Below it, the tagline 'changing futures' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.The logo for 'YMCA' features the letters 'YMCA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below it, the text 'Herts • Beds • Bucks' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the website 'OneYMCA.org' is written in a black, sans-serif font. A horizontal bar with a rainbow gradient is positioned between 'Herts • Beds • Bucks' and 'OneYMCA.org'.



- Social Enterprise organisation
- Based on crowdfunding model, to assist people into employment and housing
- Work with employers and landlords
- WHBC Pilot scheme; 40 households over 12 months
- Welwyn Hatfield launched in March 2023; highest number of launch referrals
- Over 130 households referred
- 2 successful outcomes so far

A blue speech bubble containing the text "citizens advice" in white lowercase letters.

citizens advice

- Provide financial/budgeting/benefits advice
- Supports the Council's Homelessness Prevention work
- Increase in affordability for rising cost of living and rents
- Expertise in maximising benefit income
- Assist with debt reduction and negotiation



- Pilot scheme to target mental health and substance/alcohol dependency
- Dual diagnosis has been obstacle in the past
- Joint working allows better focus on positive outcomes
- Leads to increased suitability for accommodation and better chances of sustaining accommodation



- Provider of accommodation across several schemes
- Peartree hostel in WGC
- Supported accommodation and Move On Schemes around the district
- Redevelopment of Peartree site soon to commence
- Currently discussing potential expansion of supported housing for rough sleepers

druglink

changing futures

- Provider of supported accommodation
- Housing First model, providing accommodation for entrenched and repeat rough sleepers
- Two properties in Hatfield, Nine bedspaces in shared accommodation
- Assists people to develop skills to manage their own tenancy
- Once ready for move on, assisted into accommodation



- Operates ReStart Project
- Outreach, Accommodation and Move on Support
- Responds to reports of rough sleepers from members of public
- Offers assistance away from the streets
- Provides accommodation whilst causes of homelessness are addressed
- Assistance with move on into accommodation

Welwyn Hatfield Temporary Accommodation

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has 4 main sites of Temporary Accommodation in the district, and several other properties that it uses for housing homeless applicants.

Welwyn Garden City:

- Inspira House
- Howlands House

Hatfield

- Burfield Close
- Hazel Grove House

Welwyn Garden City

Inspira House, Martinfield

- Former office block converted into residential accommodation.
- 54 units in total, across two levels.
- 18 one bed flats
- 36 studio flats.

Howlands House, Howlands

- 20 units of 3 bed accommodation.
- Prior to COVID pandemic was shared accommodation, with households sharing with other households.
- Since the pandemic the accommodation is single occupancy and is used for larger families.
- Planning application to redevelop the site is pending, awaiting approval.

Hatfield

Burfield Close

- Former sheltered accommodation site, repurposed for TA
- Due for redevelopment after Howlands House is completed and in use.
- Currently 25 units across two levels and two buildings.
- 24 one bed flats
- 1 two bed flat.

Hazel Grove House, Bishops Rise

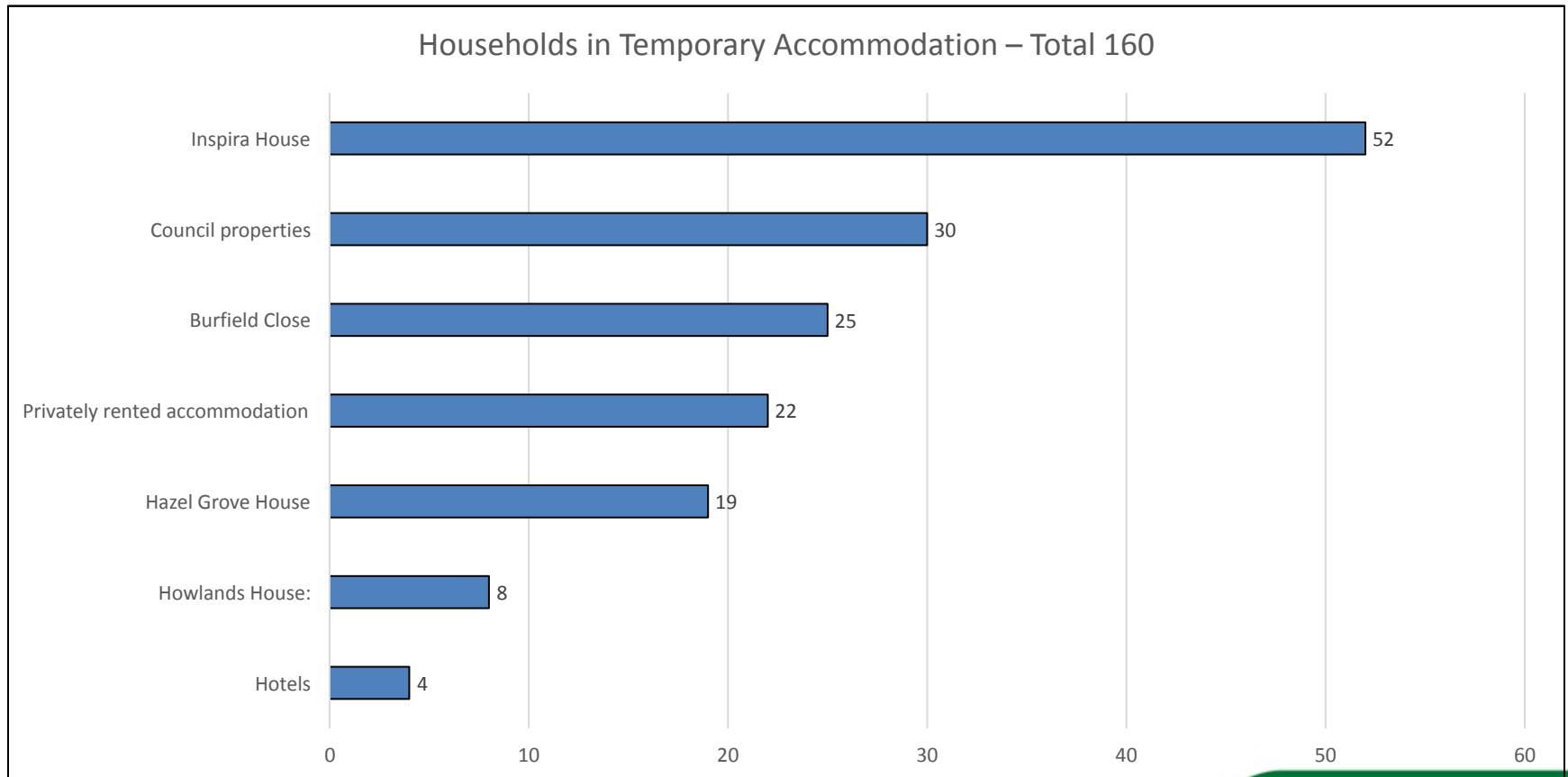
- 20 units in total
- 9 one bed flats
- 10 studio flats
- 1 two bed flat

Other accommodation

The Council also uses a variety of other types of accommodation, to meet the demand which currently exceeds the capacity of our permanent sites.

- Council Housing
- Properties rented in the private sector
- Hotel accommodation

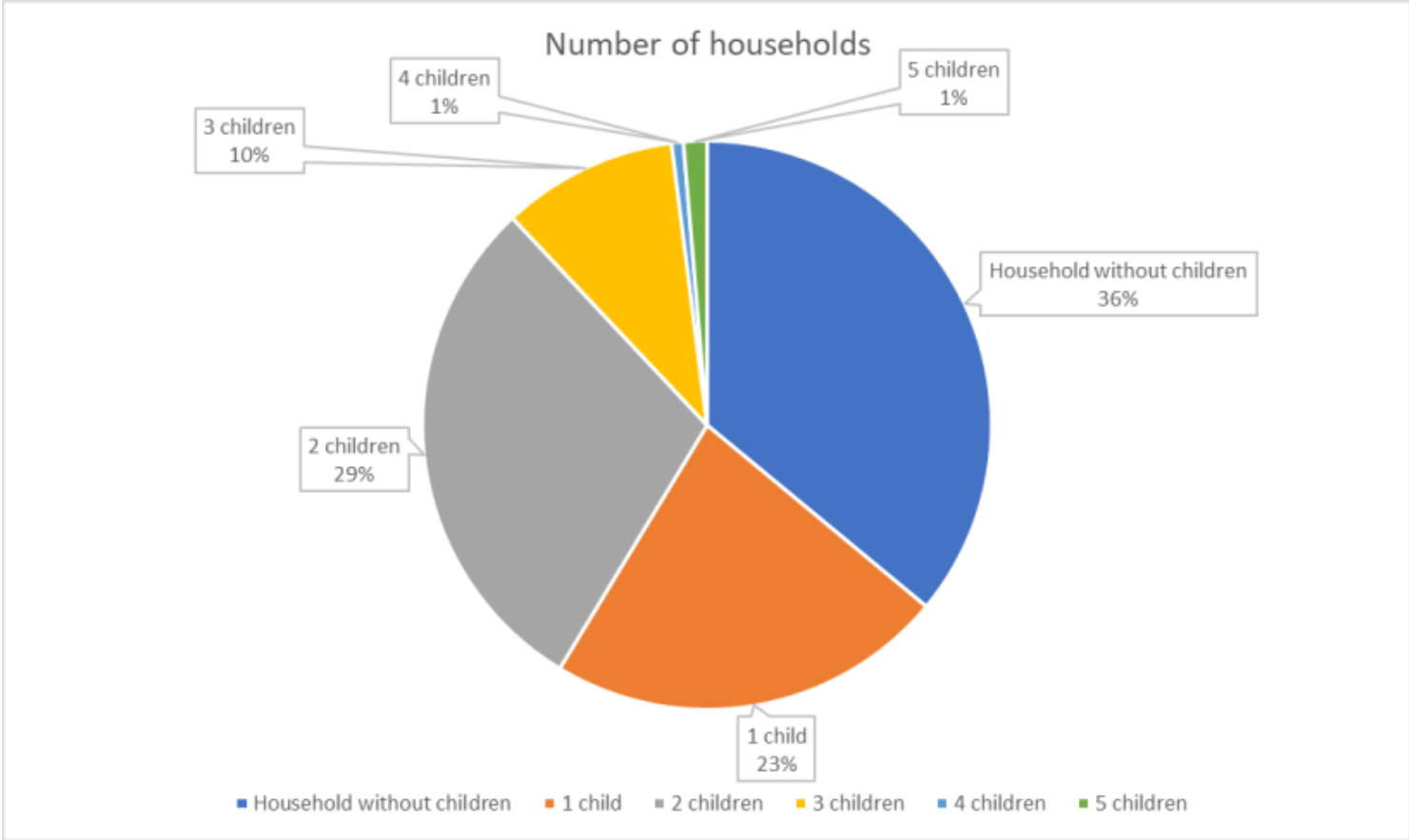
Current Occupancy



Average Household Size

Number of children in the household	Number of households	Total children
Household without children	54	0
1 child	34	34
2 children	44	88
3 children	15	45
4 children	11	44
5 children	2	10
	Total	221
	Average	2.30

Household Size in TA



Length of stay in TA

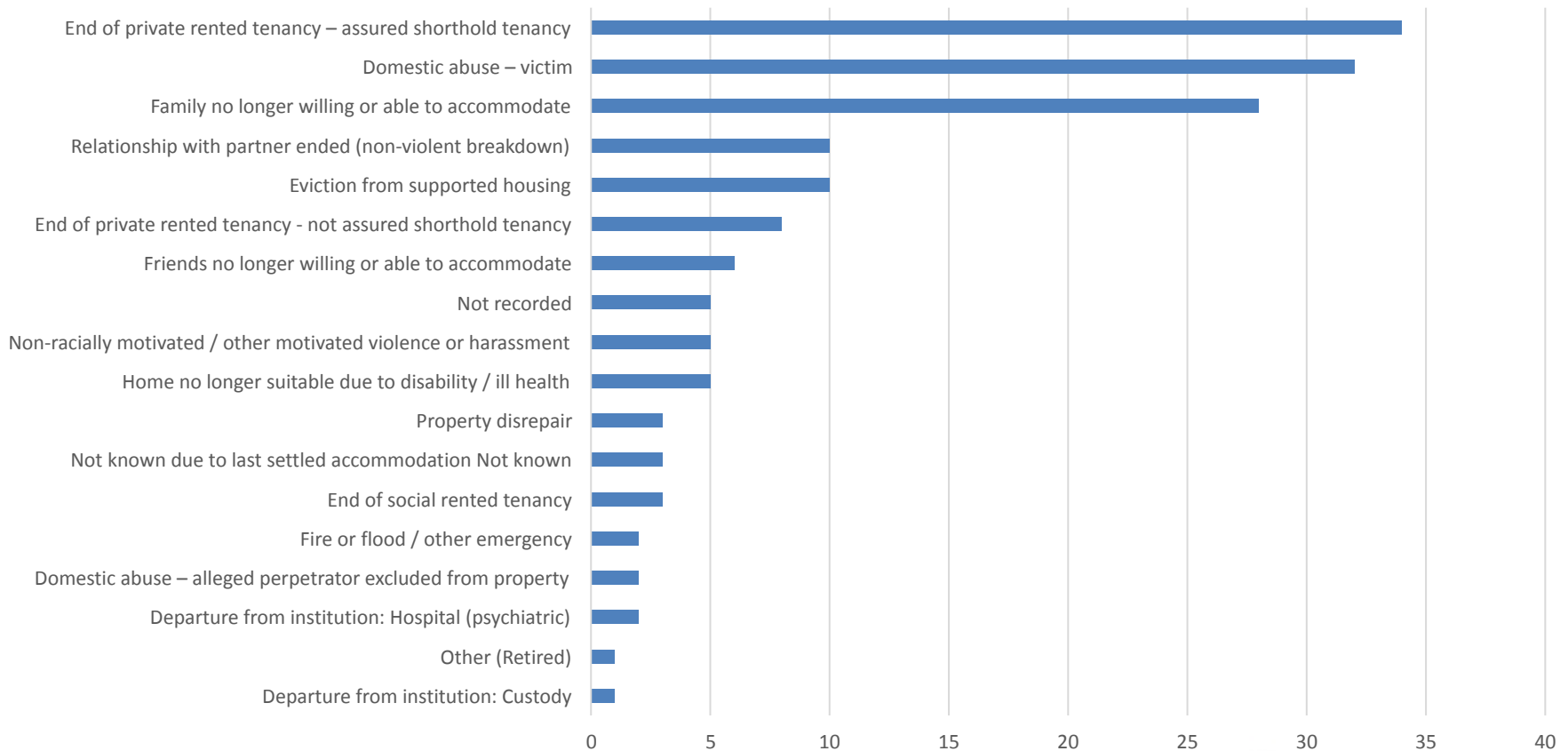
Averages across different groups are not very helpful, as there are varying reasons for longer and shorter stays.

The length of time in TA for those who meet the full housing criteria is provided below, against the values for those who do not meet the criteria.

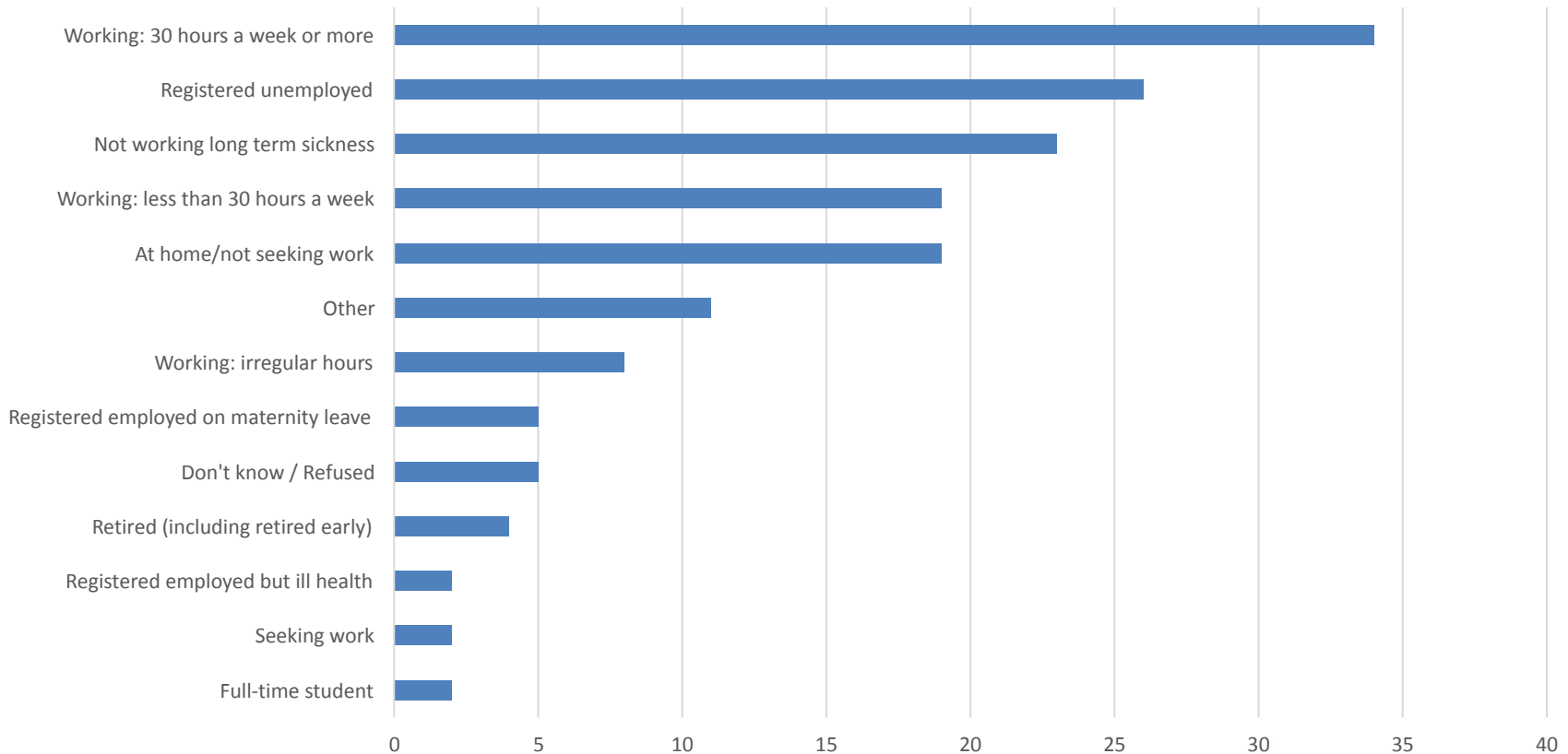
Length of stay	Singles	Families	Overall
Main duty owed	88 days	118 days	102 days
Main duty not owed	28 days	35 days	30 days

Causes of Homelessness

Reasons for Loss of Last Accommodation



Employment Status for Households in TA



Thank you

