



Housing Service Report

Hart District Council

2009

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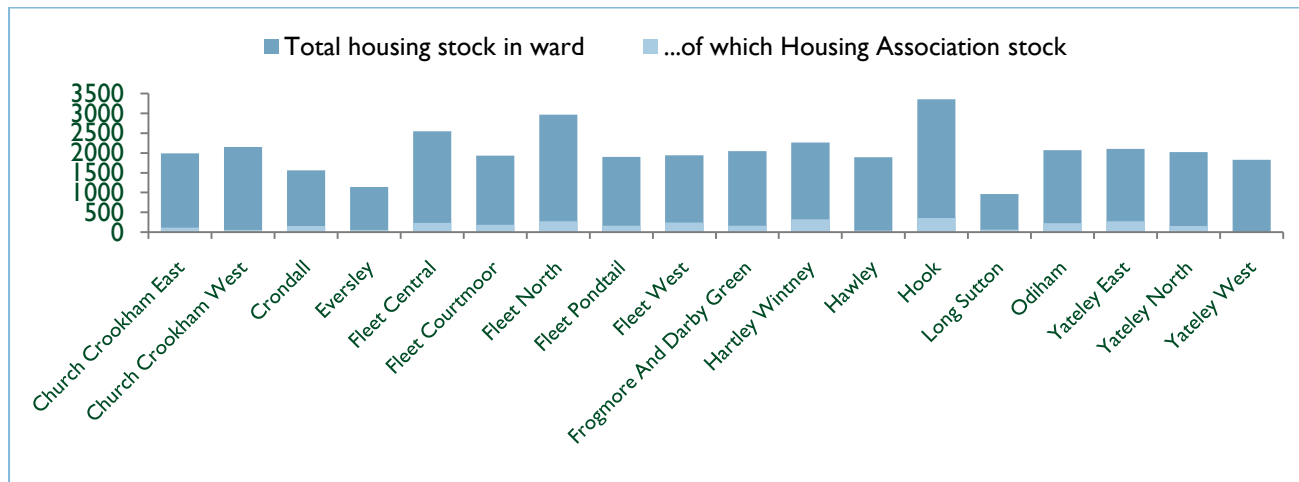
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Introduction

This is the 2009 version of the Hart district’s housing services report, covering the financial year April 2008 to March 2009. It is the first attempt to give the public an insight into the housing service provided over the year and details some key statistics about the service. It will hopefully be a useful resource to those who are interested in aspects of housing in Hart as well as to those who would like a better understanding of the service provided.

About affordable housing in Hart

Hart district currently has one of the lowest percentages of social housing stock in England, at around 9% it is significantly lower than both the national average (17.7%) and the average for the South East (13%) (CLG, 2009).

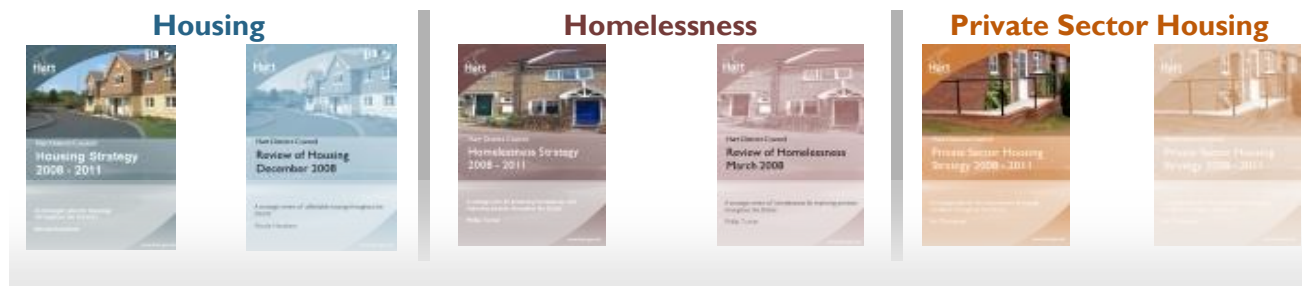


Due to a number of reasons including the economic situation and issues regarding the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA)¹ there has been a sharp decline in new build developments within the district which in turn impacts on the delivery of affordable housing. Affordable housing delivery in the recent past has been predominately through Section 106 agreements which require eligible developments to provide a proportion (currently 40%) of the housing to be affordable (social rent, low cost home ownership or other intermediate products).

The housing service has responded to this decline by focusing on its enabling function, to deliver housing solutions which are affordable to clients in housing need. For information on the progress in this area see the Enabling Affordable Housing Report 2009.

What are the key achievements made this year?

The key achievements at the Housing Service are set out in the delivery plans for each of the three key areas of the service: homelessness, private sector housing and the overarching housing strategy. For more information or to download copies please visit: www.hart.gov.uk/housing_strategy



¹ For more information on Special Protection Areas in Hart and its impact on housing development see the link: http://www.hart.gov.uk/index/environment-and-planning/planning/development-control/planning_guidance/planning-guidance-spa.htm

Housing register

What demand has there been for the housing register service this year?

Trends on housing register

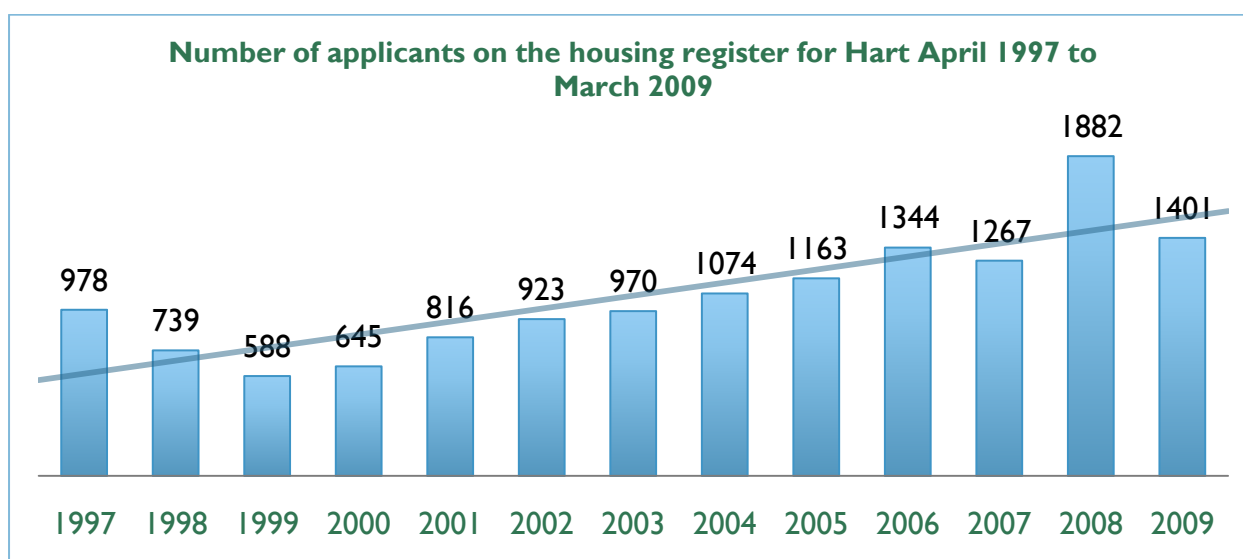
As at the 31st of March 2009 there were

- 1401 applicants on the register
- 125 of which were transfer applicants
- 64 were for sheltered accommodation

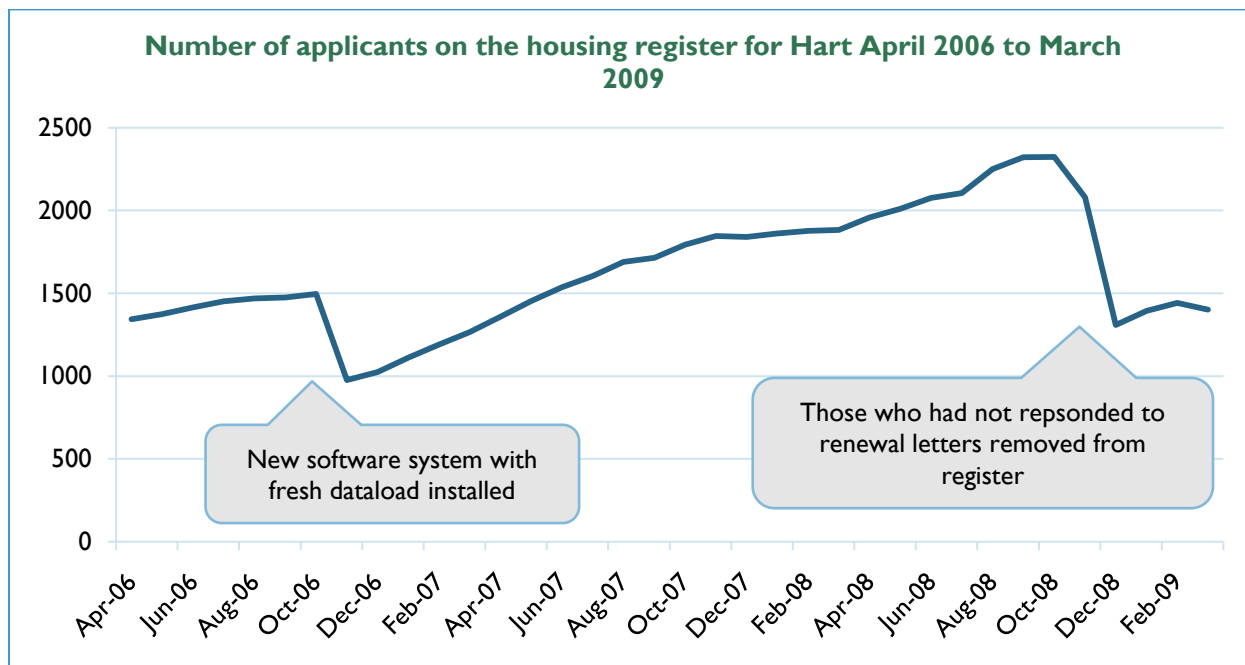
The housing register, which is an indicator of housing need, by its nature fluctuates on a daily basis, as peoples situations change. The degree to which this is true can be seen in the ‘turnover’ on the register. The net decrease seen over the year can be attributed to the implementation of a renewals process and requirements for identification for applicants. This renewal process will ensure that the register reflects, as accurately as possible, the number of households in housing need at a given time.

Number of applicants on the register - April 2008	1958
Number of applicants on the register - March 2009	1401
Number of applicants joining over the year	715
Number of applicants leaving over the year	1473
Net difference in joiners/leavers	-758
Number of applicants reapplying within the year	201
Net increase/decrease on the register	-557

Whilst the number on the register has fluctuated, when compared against figures across the long term the current numbers on the register show an increase of more than 100% over the last decade.



It is hoped that the rolling renewal process, which will occur annually on the effective date of applications, will reduce the levels of fluctuation on the register due to out of date information not being removed. The following shows the fluctuations over the last three years, the period over which the new housing register software, and the renewals process has been introduced:

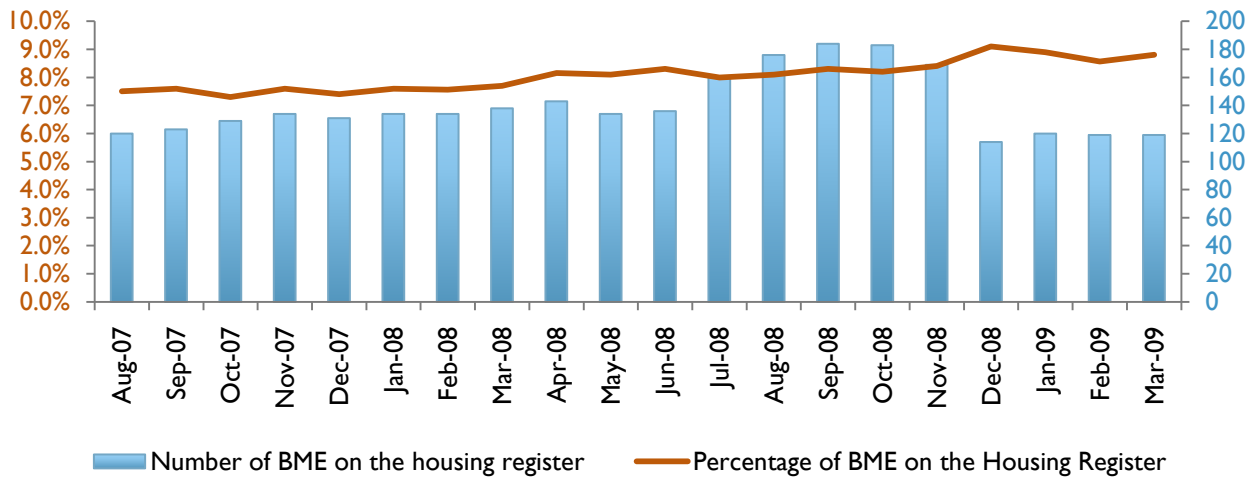


The average number of applicants on the register over the three year period shown above was 1631.

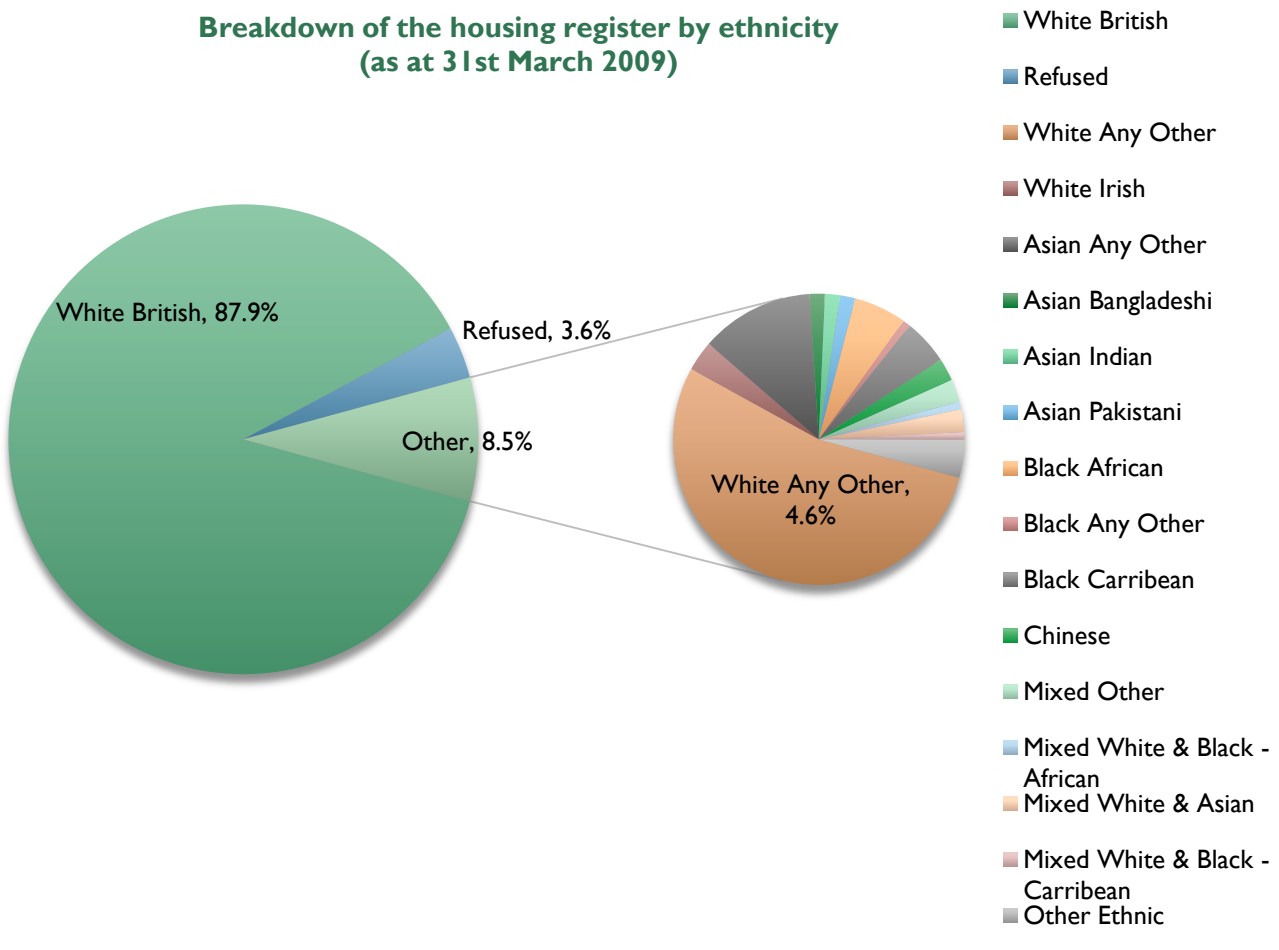
Black and minority ethnic groups on the housing register

As a result of the housing service’s Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) report which was commenced in May 2007 (last updated December 2008) the service has been recording levels of BME groups on the housing register on a monthly basis to help inform its strategic actions. As can be seen below, the level of BME households as a proportion of the register has increased slightly over the year from 8.2% in April 2008 to 8.8% in March 2008, although the actual number of households has reduced from 143 to 119 in this period (in line with the overall reduction in housing register applicants over the period). The other chart shows the breakdown by ethnic grouping.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households on the housing register August 2007 to March 2009

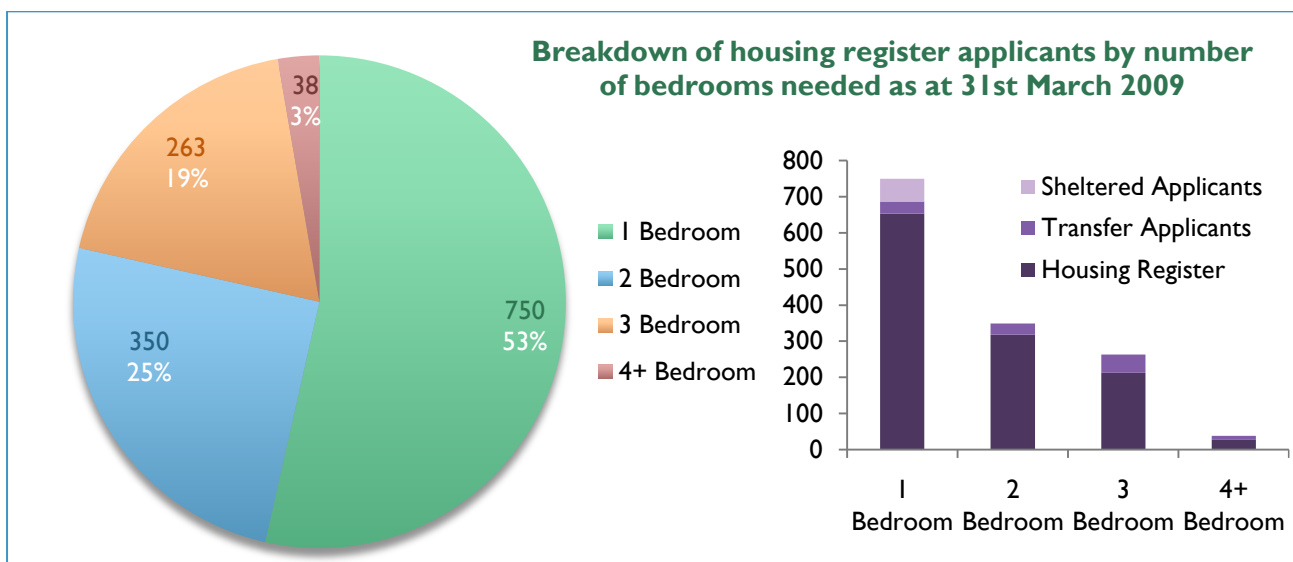


Breakdown of the housing register by ethnicity (as at 31st March 2009)

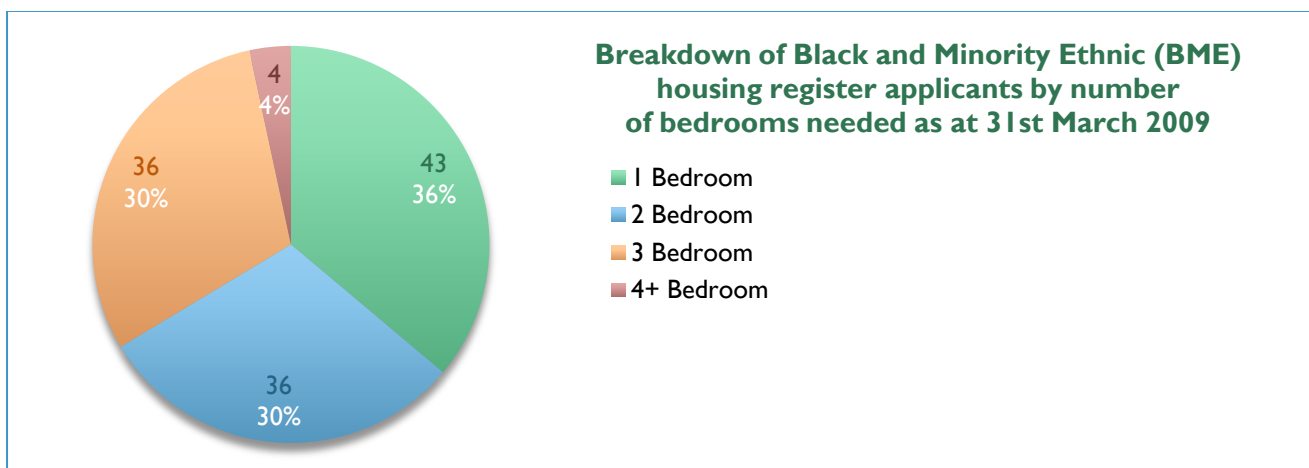


Demographics of the housing register

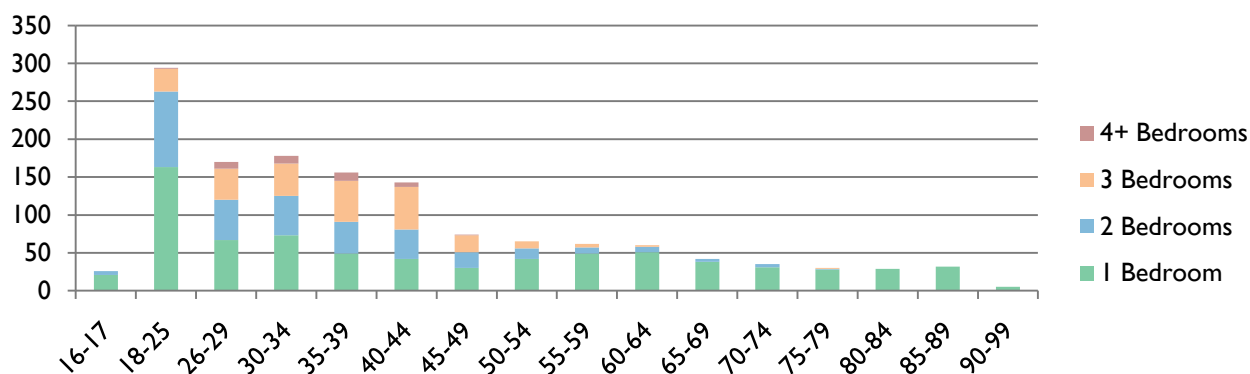
As has been the case historically, a large proportion of the housing register is in need of one bedroom accommodation. Of the 1401 households register on the 31st of March 2009 53% were in need of one bedroom accommodation, 25% for two bedrooms, 19% for three bedrooms and 3% for four or more bedrooms.



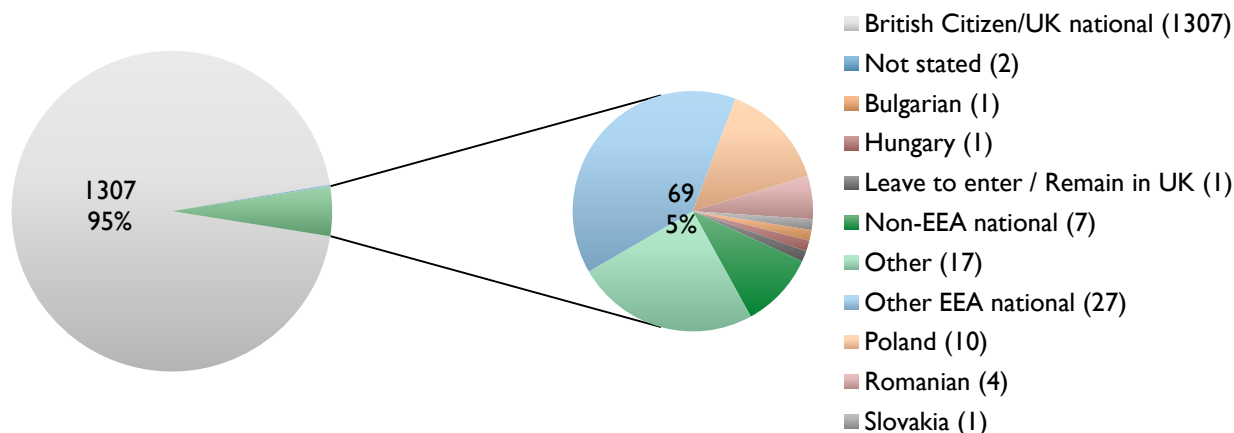
The housing need by number of bedrooms need by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups differs from the housing register as a whole in that the need is more evenly distributed between one, two and three bed properties. Of the 119 BME households register on the 31st of March 2009 36% were in need of one bedroom accommodation, 30% for two bedrooms, 30% for three bedrooms and 4% for four or more bedrooms.



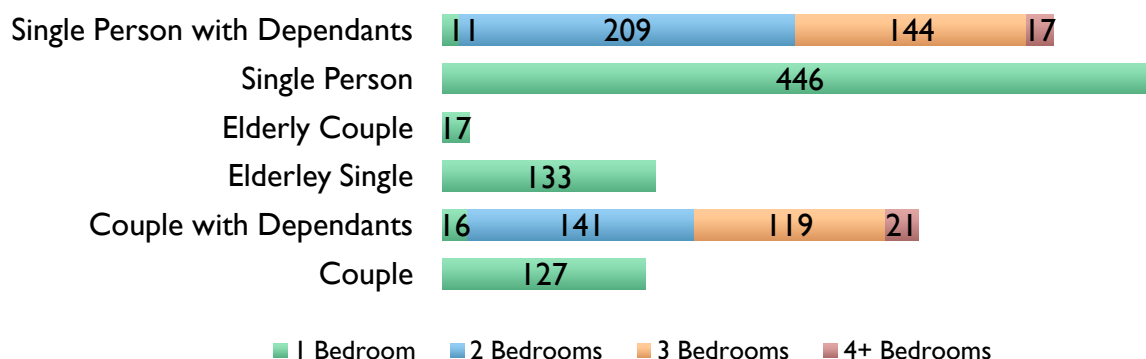
Age profile of the main applicants on the housing register as at 31st March 2009: By number of bedrooms required



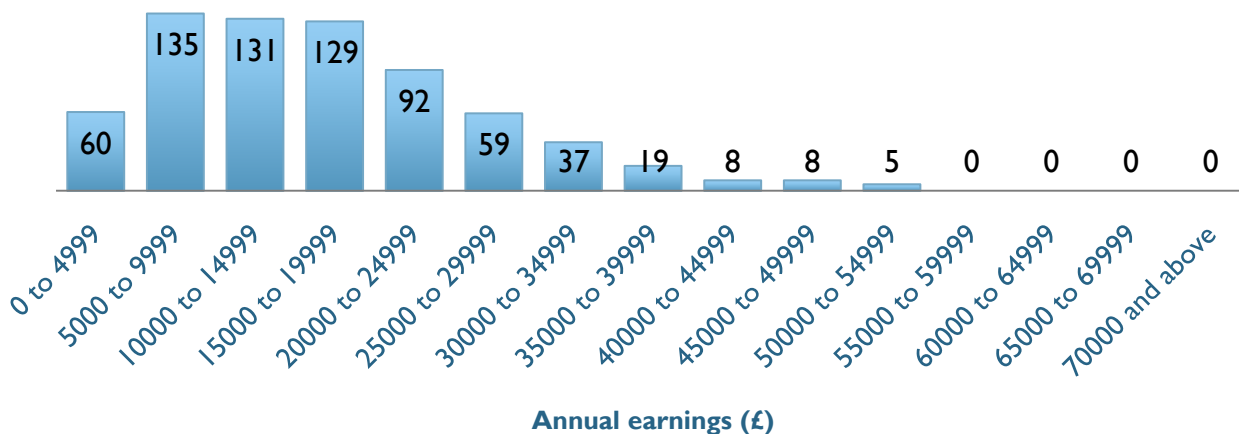
Breakdown of housing register applicants by nationality as at 31st March 2009



Breakdown of housing register applicants by household type and number of bedrooms needed as at 31st March 2009



Breakdown of annual earnings for applicants on the housing register as at 31st March 2009 (based on their reported primary employment data, excluding null values, annual income under £1,000 and benefit based income.)

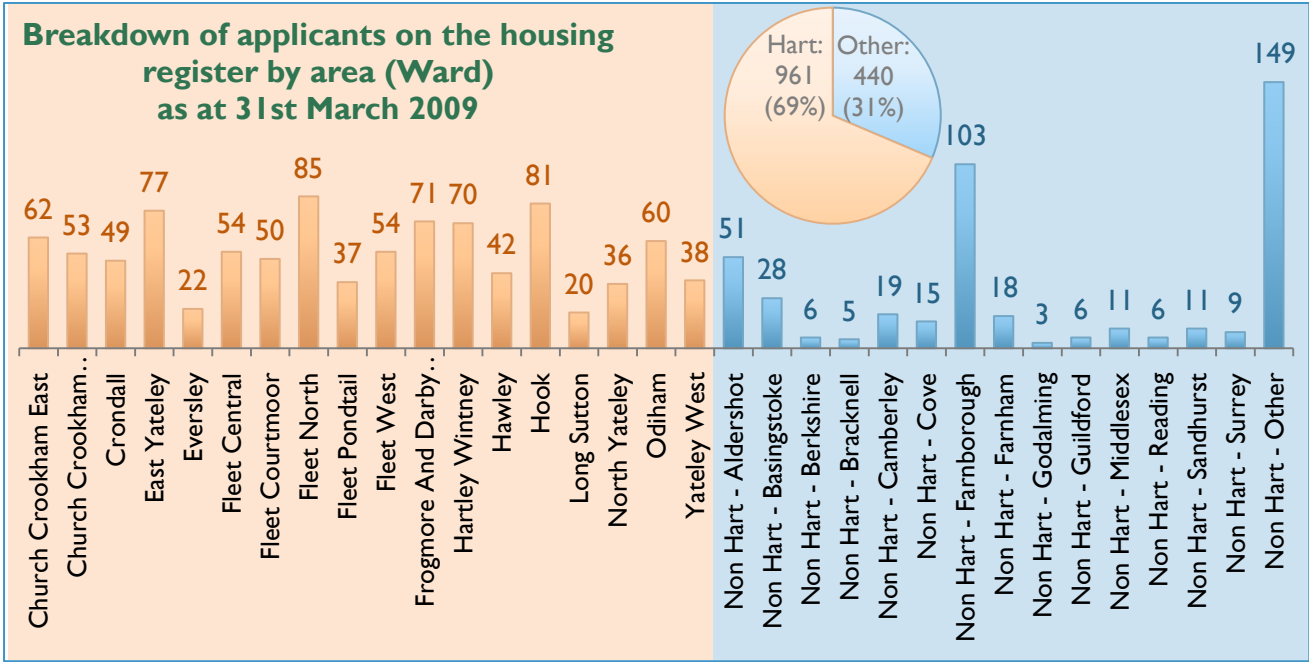


Out of the 1401 applicants on the register 683 (49%) have given employment details. The remaining 718 (51%) are excluded from the above analysis on income. It is likely that this group are in receipt of housing benefit or are living with family/relatives.

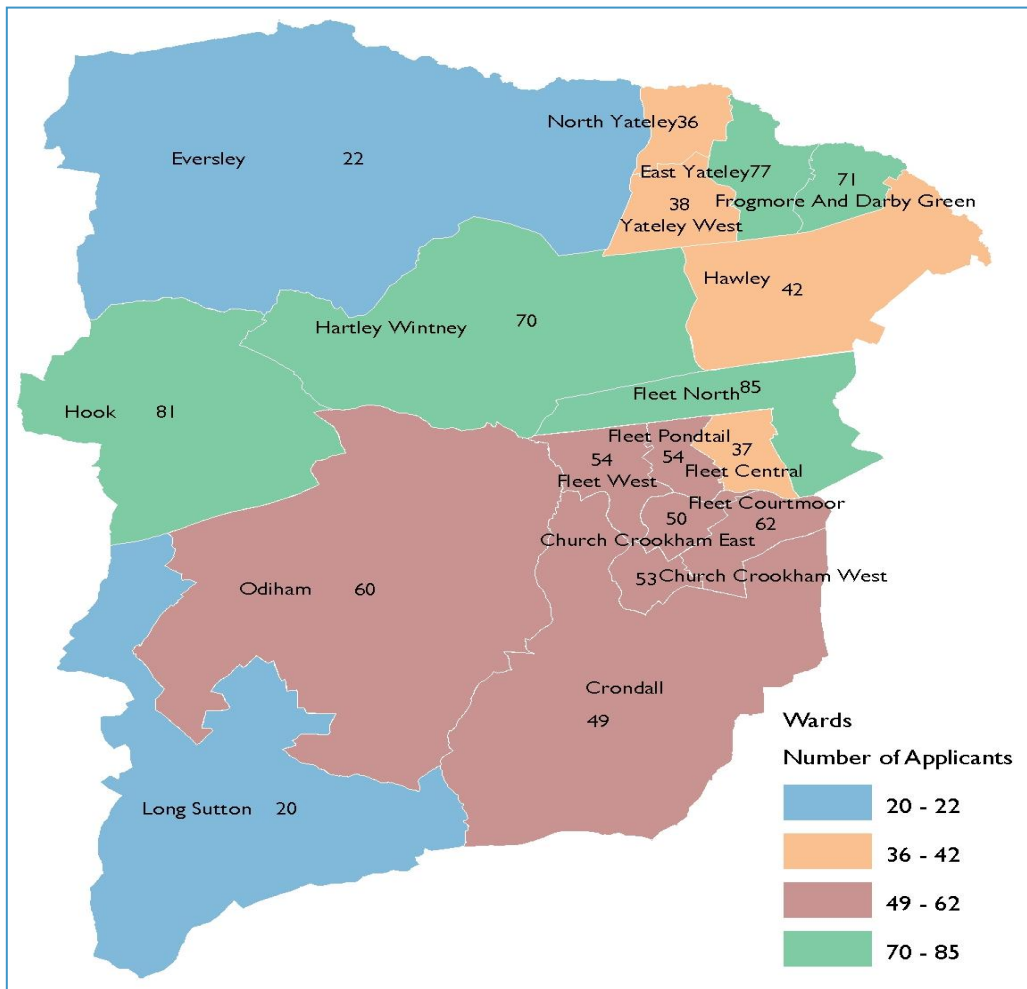
Income Distribution	
Average (Mean)	£16,874
Lower Quartile	£9,390
Median	£15,294
Upper Quartile	£22,313

Current location of households applying for affordable housing

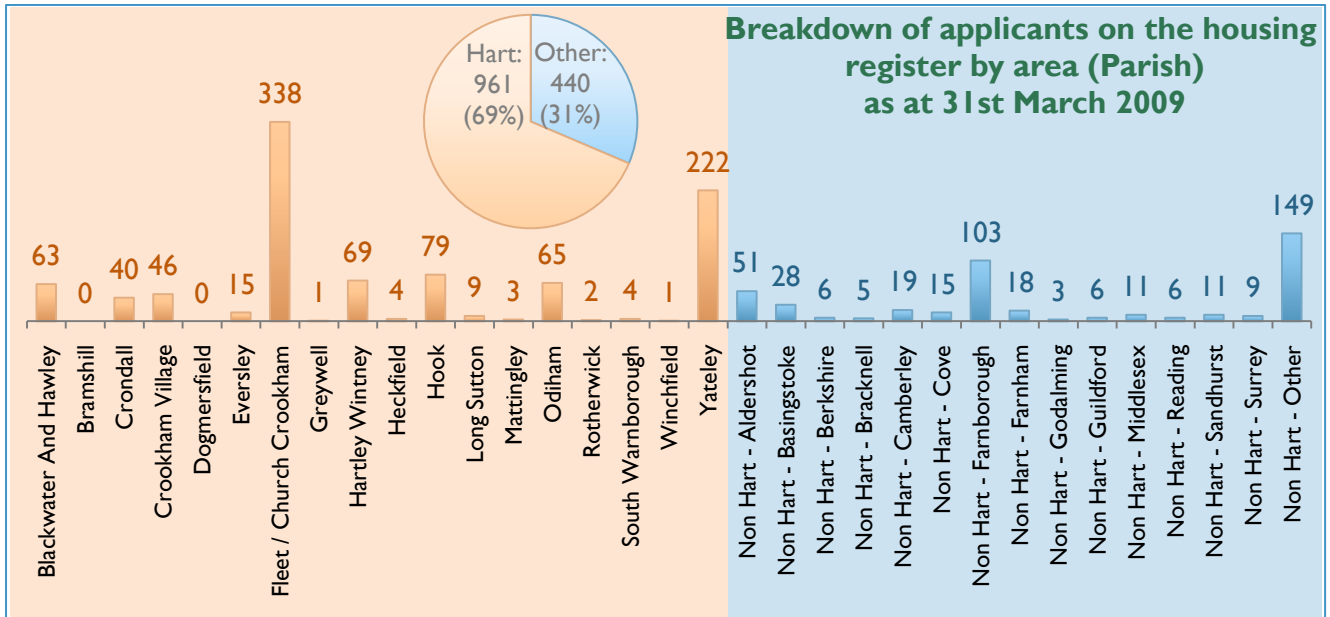
The following gives a breakdown of the housing register by the location in which households who have applied are currently living. The analysis is based on the address data given by applicants which is compared to Hart’s Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address list , areas defined as ‘Non-Hart’ on the chart are assigned areas based on the addresses they have given and are approximated to the more common areas found.



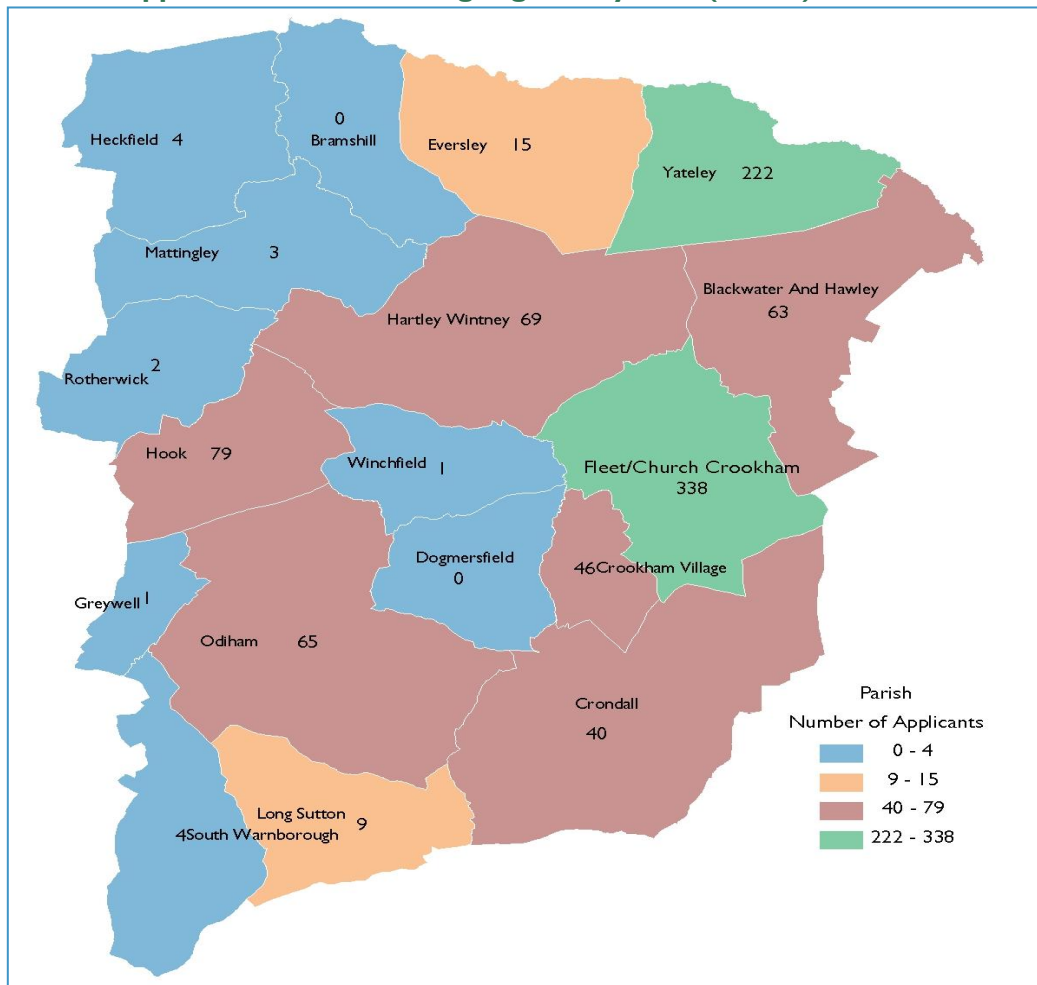
Breakdown of applicants on the housing register by area (Ward) as at 31st March 2009:



The above shows the location of Hart residents on the housing register by ward based on their current address.



Breakdown of applicants on the housing register by area (Parish) as at 31st March 2009:



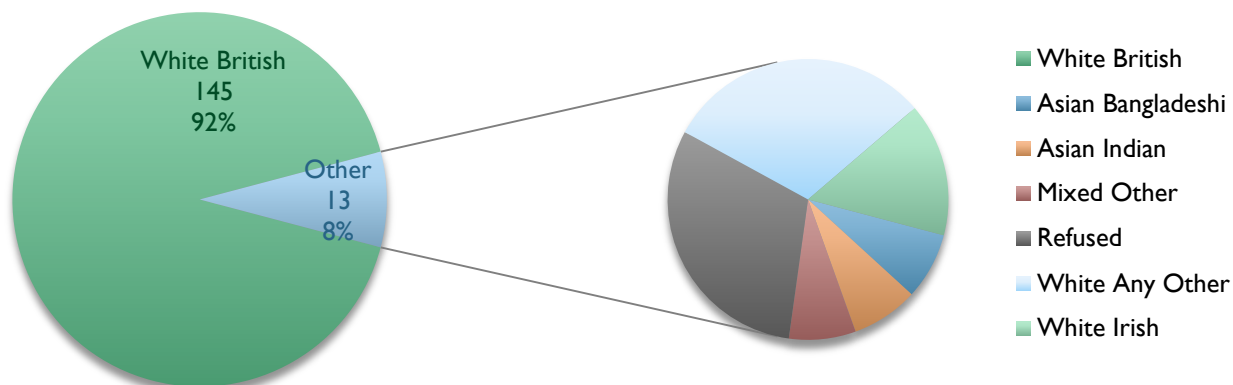
The above shows the location of Hart residents on the housing register by parish based on their current address. **This information will understate the number of households with a local connection to a parish as it will exclude those who are unable to reside in the parish currently but may have a local connection.**

How has the housing register service performed?

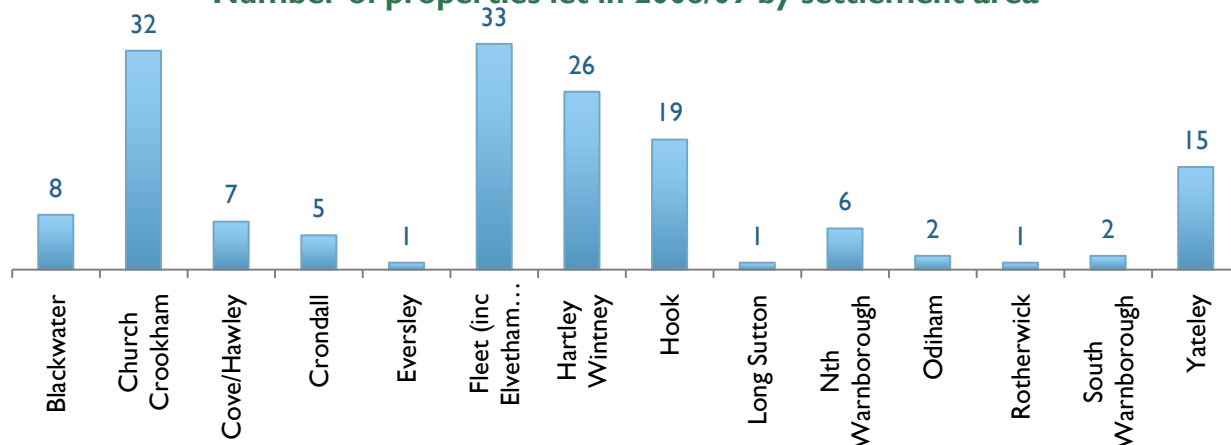
Lettings

158 properties were let in 2008/09. Of these 135 were let via the Hart choice based lettings system, 17 were let via choice based lettings on the Homeselecta scheme and 6 were management transfers.

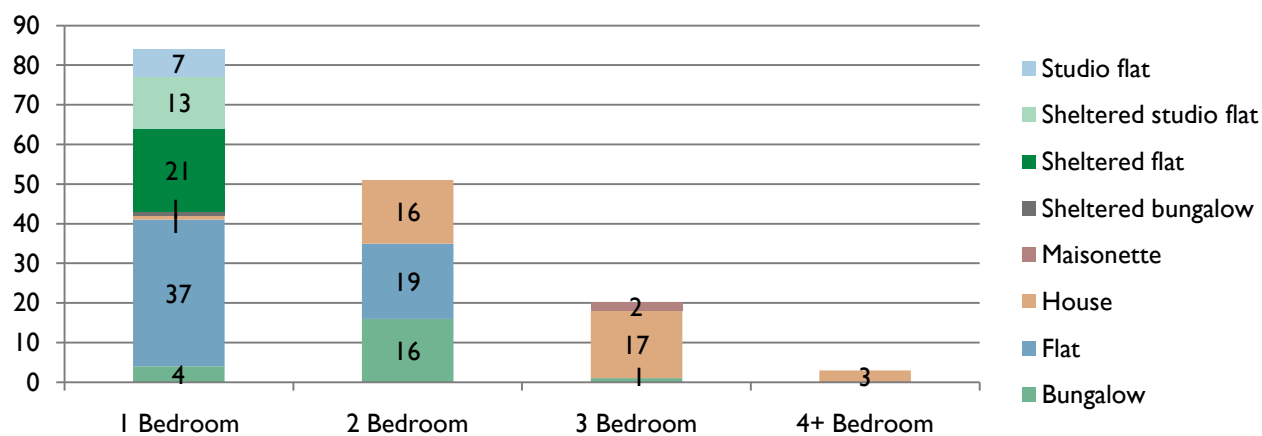
Ethnicity of applicants let a property in 2008/09



Number of properties let in 2008/09 by settlement area

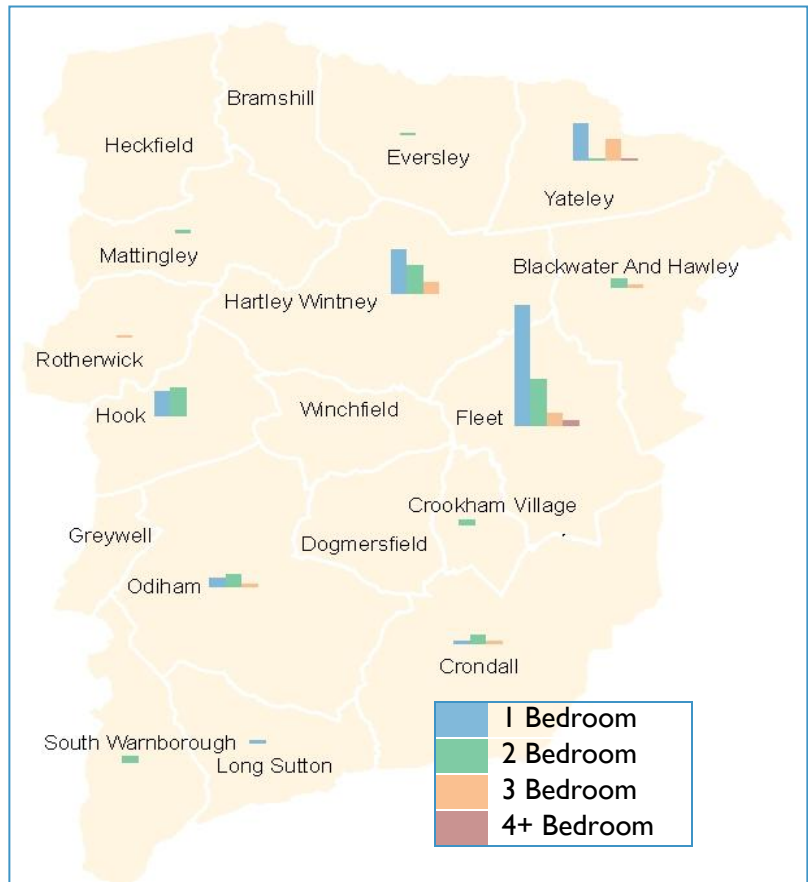


Properties let in 2008/09 by number of bedrooms and property type



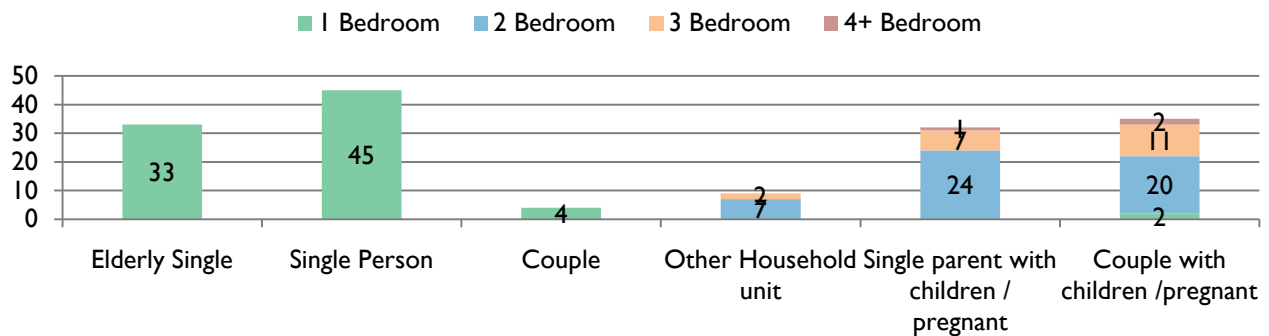
The map below displays the properties let in 2008/09 by parish and number of bedrooms.

Parish	1	2	3	4+	Total
Blackwater And Hawley	0	3	1	0	4
Crandall	1	3	1	0	5
Crookham Village	0	2	0	0	2
Eversley	0	1	0	0	1
Fleet	38	15	4	2	59
Hartley Wintney	14	9	4	0	27
Hook	8	9	0	0	17
Long Sutton	1	0	0	0	1
Mattingley	0	1	0	0	1
Odiham	3	4	1	0	8
Rotherwick	0	0	1	0	1
South Warnborough	0	2	0	0	2
Yateley	12	1	7	1	21
Cove*	6	2	0	1	9
Total	83	52	19	4	158

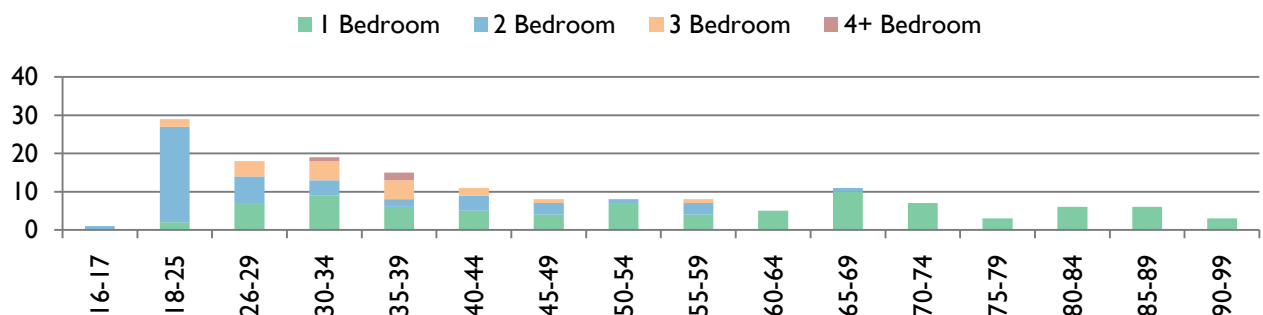


* Hart has nomination rights for some properties in Cove which are outside of the district boundaries. These are not shown on the map

Properties let in 2008/09 by household type



Properties let in 2008/09 by household age



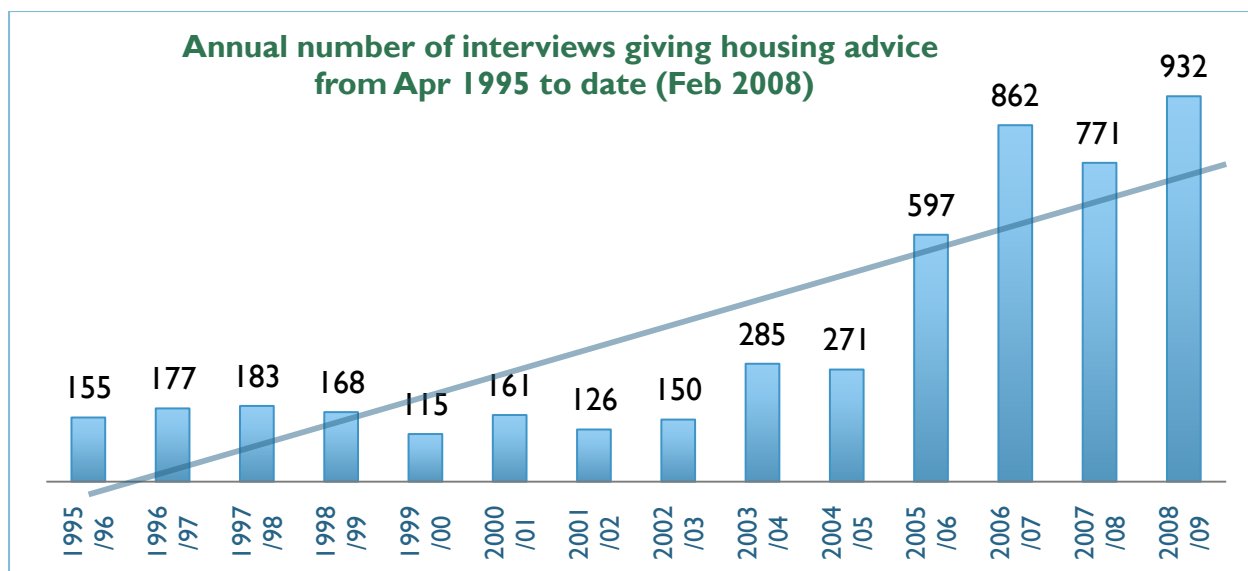
What improvements have been made to the housing register service?

The service has spent significant effort in better understanding its service users in order to help inform the services it provides. These include the detailed reviews of homelessness, private sector housing, and housing which have informed the subsequent strategies. There has also been investment in the understanding of applicants bidding on the choice based lettings system, both locally (bidding analysis report) and across the sub-region with a review of Homeselecta scheme across the partnership (Homeselecta report). This review also provided a benchmarking comparison tool to understand differences in the registers and bidding patterns of the partner authorities as well as a data analysis of the Homeselecta scheme. In addition the BME report has concentrated efforts in understanding more about whether there are significant differences between the BME groups in Hart and the Hart population in general, with regards to access and equality in the housing services provided. These improvements in the services' understanding of its service users will give the opportunity to make informed decisions on the allocation of its limited resources and provide a service which is responsive to its service user's needs.

Housing advice and prevention of homelessness

What demand has there been for the advice service this year?

There were 932 interviews held at the council office in the year 2008/09. This will have included repeat appointments for cases that require more than just one face to face discussion in order to resolve a person's housing situation. Indeed the increase seen in more complex cases such as mortgage arrears as well as the proactive service provided to prevent households from the crises of homelessness.

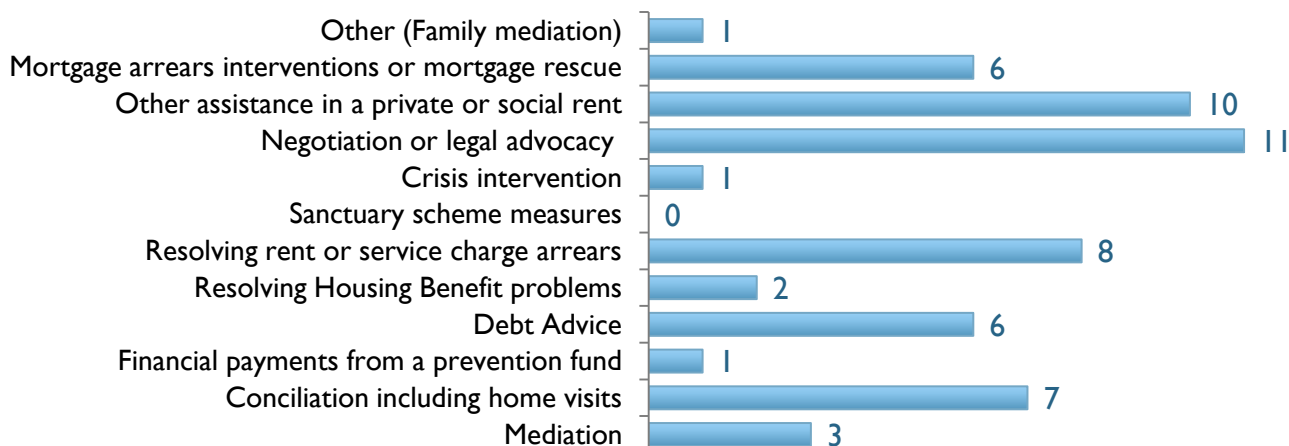


How has the housing advice service performed?

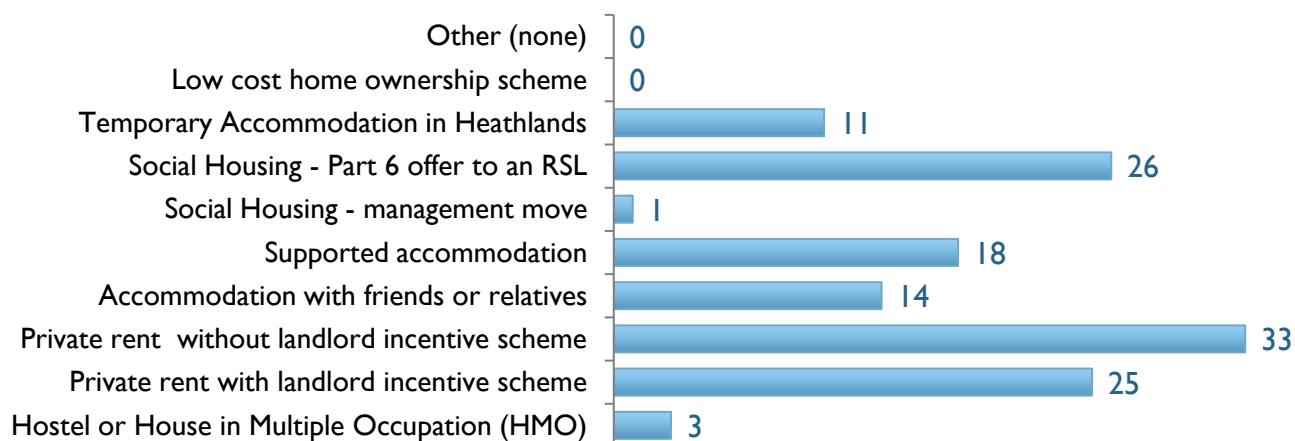
Preventions

187 cases were actively prevented from becoming homeless by direct officer assistance (source PIE returns Qtr 1-Qtr 4 2008/09) of these 56 households were able to remain in their current accommodation and 131 households were found alternative suitable accommodation to relieve their threat of homelessness.

Enabled household to remain in their home (56)



Household assisted to obtain alternative accommodation (131)



Conclusion

We hope that this report is useful in providing a picture of the housing service provided by Hart and that the key statistics help to inform those interested in the issues faced in ensuring an adequate supply and choice of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.

For further information please contact:

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