

West Suffolk Council Housing and Homelessness Data Pack

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	The housing context	2
3.	What the data are telling us	2
	Strategic housing – housing supply and demand	3
	The housing need in West Suffolk.....	3
	House prices.....	5
	Rental costs.....	5
	Number of homes.....	8
	Gypsy and traveller accommodation	12
	Private sector housing – improving existing housing through regulation	13
	Empty homes	13
	Housing standards.....	14
	Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)	16
	Supporting households to live independently in their homes	16
	The wider health context	17
	Ageing population - the impact on health, social care need and housing need.	18
	Housing options and homelessness – support for vulnerable households	20
	Number of households on the housing register	20
	Homelessness statistics –	23
	Household composition.....	25
	Energy efficiency.....	26
	Support with energy efficiency measures.....	26
	Fuel poverty	27
	Safe, warm homes.....	27
	Understanding the impact of fuel poverty	27
	Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings	28

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The data contained in this pack support the development of the new Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. They help to provide a picture of the current housing provision in West Suffolk, the challenges we face around housing supply and affordability and where we focus our efforts when supporting households in need and using regulation to increase housing standards in existing homes and bring empty homes back into use.
- 1.2 Please note that some of the tables and graphs in this document are not fully accessible. If you need help with understanding them please contact: policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk

2. The housing context

- 2.1 It is understood that there is insufficient housing, and particularly affordable housing, in West Suffolk to meet local need. We also know that there are some key issues emerging around housing delivery (with a focus on the right mix of housing type and volume), affordability and the environment (such as cost and availability of land, build costs and supply issues in the construction industry) with all being interlinked.
- 2.2 Average house prices and rents have continued to rise in West Suffolk and this is partly driven by the unique situation around demand from overseas armed forces personnel from RAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall in the rental market. The cost-of-living crisis is making the affordability of housing more challenging for many families. We know this has a detrimental impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing with long-term negative impacts on the population as well as placing additional demand on the wider Suffolk system. The lack of affordable housing places additional demand on the housing register with people finding it difficult to maintain a tenancy in the private rented sector, which is further exacerbated by the fact there are few properties available to rent within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. Good quality housing also has a role here with safe places to live and thermal comfort having a positive impact on people's lives.

3. What the data are telling us

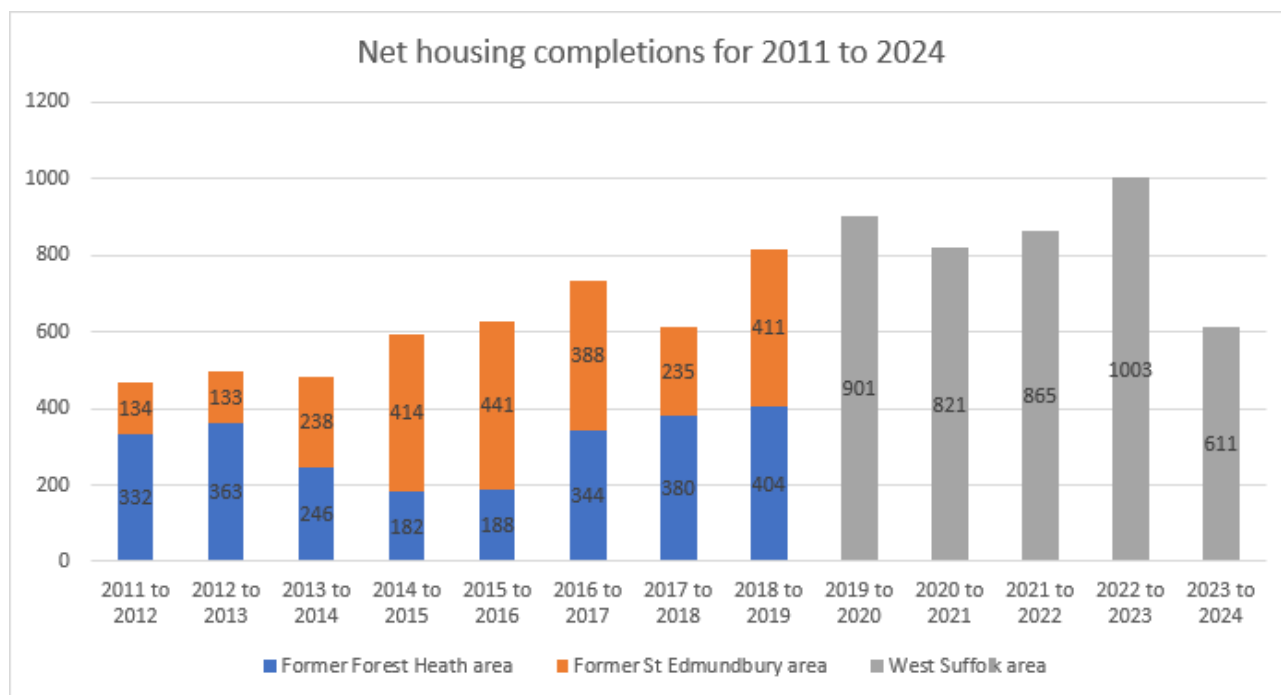
- 3.1 The data in this pack aim to provide an overview of the issues we are facing around supply and demand for housing, affordability of housing, the number of individuals and households we are supporting to remain in, or to find, suitable accommodation and what we are doing to improve housing through regulation.
- 3.2 The report is split into the following sections:
 - strategic housing – housing supply and demand
 - private sector housing – improving existing housing through regulation
 - housing options and homelessness – support for vulnerable households
 - energy efficiency.
- 3.3 In 2023, the National Housing Federation published a report: [National Housing Federation – The housing crisis: what will happen if we don't act?](#) that discusses the need for a long-term plan for housing and looks at the impact that a lack of action could have. It contains a range of data around good quality housing, health, energy efficiency and local growth.

Strategic housing – housing supply and demand

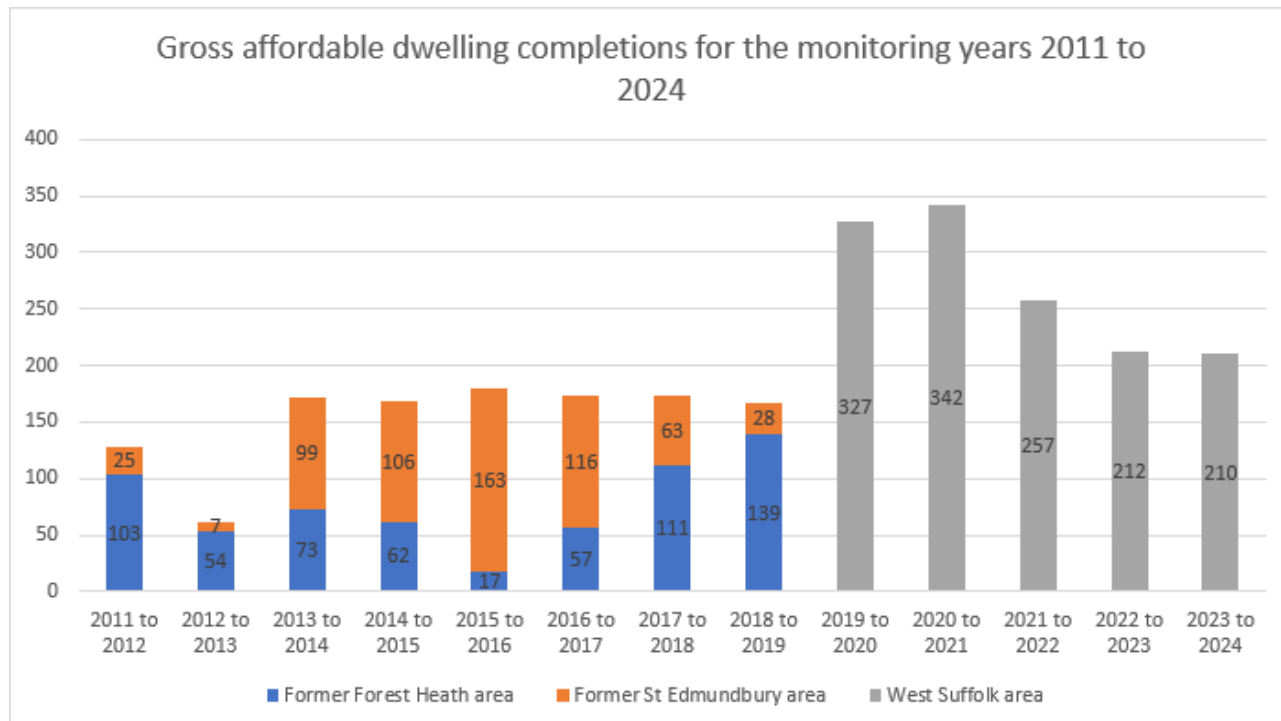
The housing need in West Suffolk

- 1.1 The Cambridge and West Suffolk Housing Needs Assessment: [Cambridgeshire Insight – Housing needs of specific groups](#) was conducted in 2021, the purpose being to set out the amount and type of housing that is required in West Suffolk (and the wider sub-region) between 2020 and 2040. West Suffolk Council updated the housing evidence in 2023 to assess the overall need for affordable housing in West Suffolk.
- 1.2 The updated evidence from the [2023 report](#), published in December 2023, highlighted the need for **806 additional dwellings per annum** in West Suffolk with **61 per cent being affordable housing**. West Suffolk is meeting the delivery target of **30 per cent affordable housing** on new developments, however there continues to be unmet demand for this type of housing. We are seeing continued demand for one-bed accommodation and dwellings for larger families. The council is exploring options for delivering affordable housing in a number of ways through the local plan process such as rural exception sites, community land trusts and a refresh of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.
- 1.3 The report also highlighted the need for increasing levels of **specialist housing** over this period. Projections show an increase in the population aged 65 and over and that there will be a **20 per cent increase** in demand for **specialist housing for older people** and a **16 per cent increase in demand for housing** for those with a **long-term health condition or disability**.
- 1.4 As a council, we want to do more to understand the barriers to for **young people** accessing housing across West Suffolk. We need to look at how average salaries for this group compare to the UK average against house prices and look to identify and address any trends. Data relating to affordability are set out in this section of the pack.

Net dwelling completions for the monitoring years 2011 to 2024 are shown in the graph below:



Gross affordable dwelling completions for the monitoring years 2011 to 2024 are shown in the graph below:

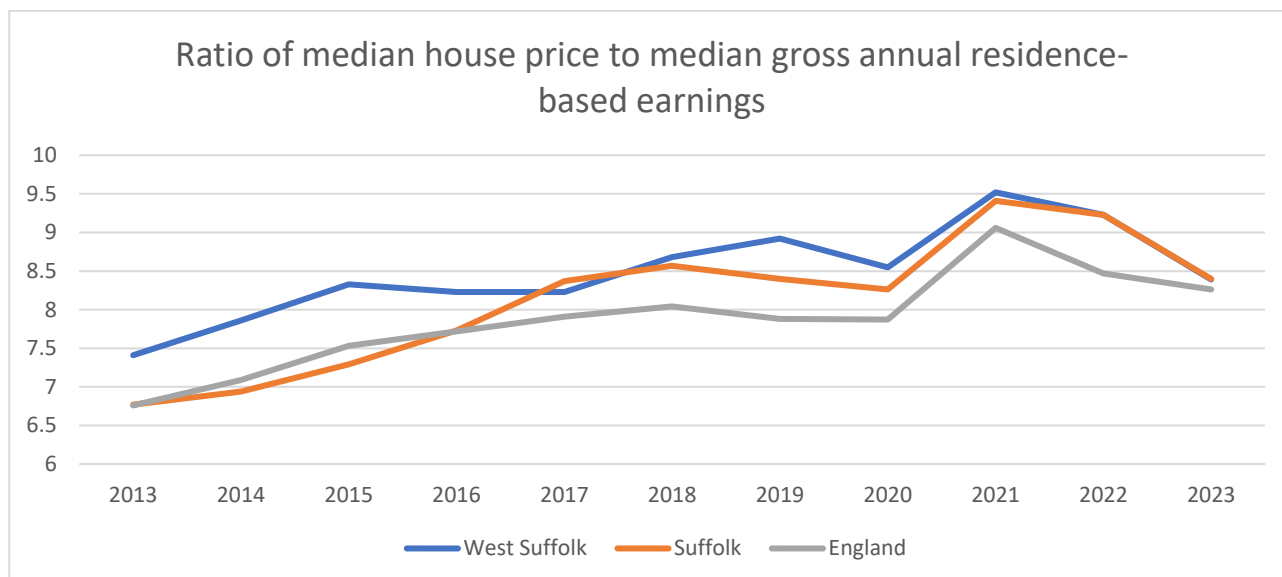


Please note that we do not assess overall housing completions and affordable housing completions on a like for like basis. Therefore the gross number of affordable units is used but a net figure of total completions.

House prices

This chart below shows the **ratio** of median house prices to median earnings between 2013 and 2023. For example, in September 2023, in West Suffolk, an individual would need to earn 8.4 times their salary to buy a property outright whereas, in England, that ratio is 8.26 times. This highlights that we have a challenge with the affordability of housing in West Suffolk although the difference is diminishing.

Note that Lower Quartile data is not being published at present

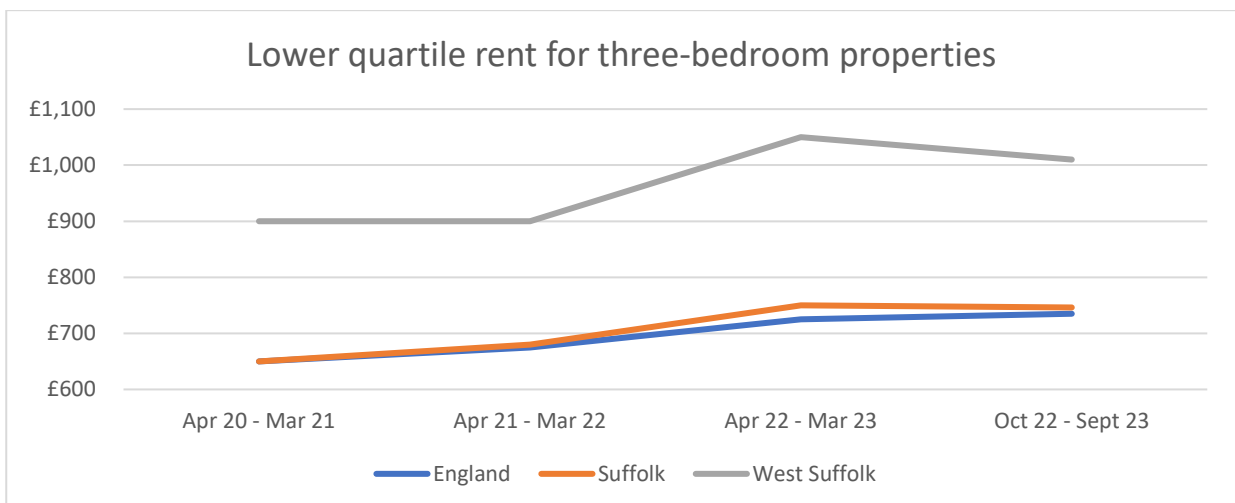
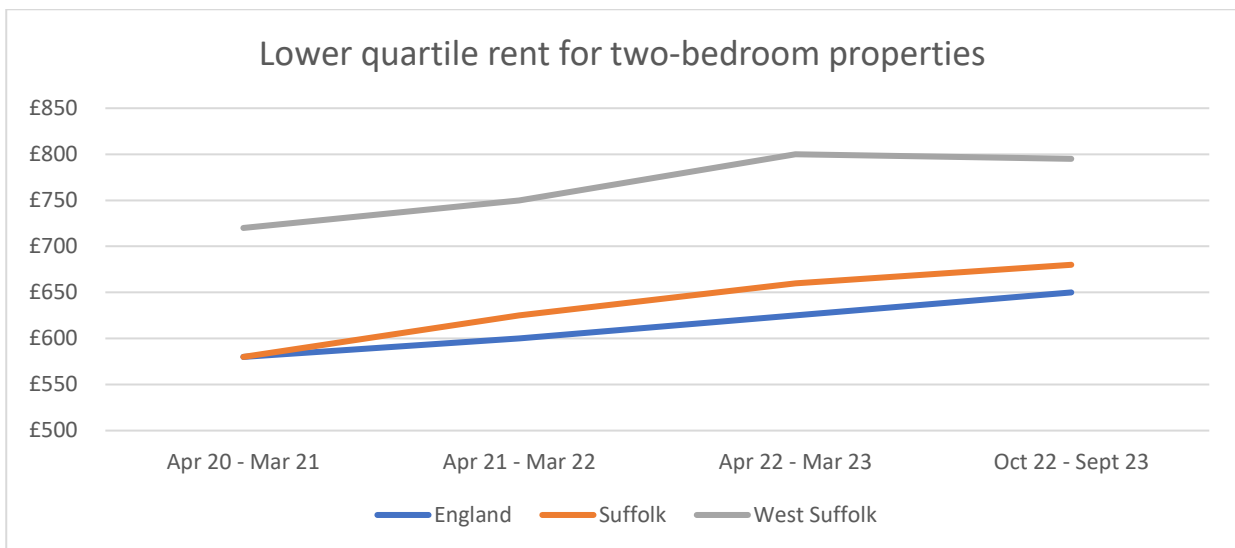
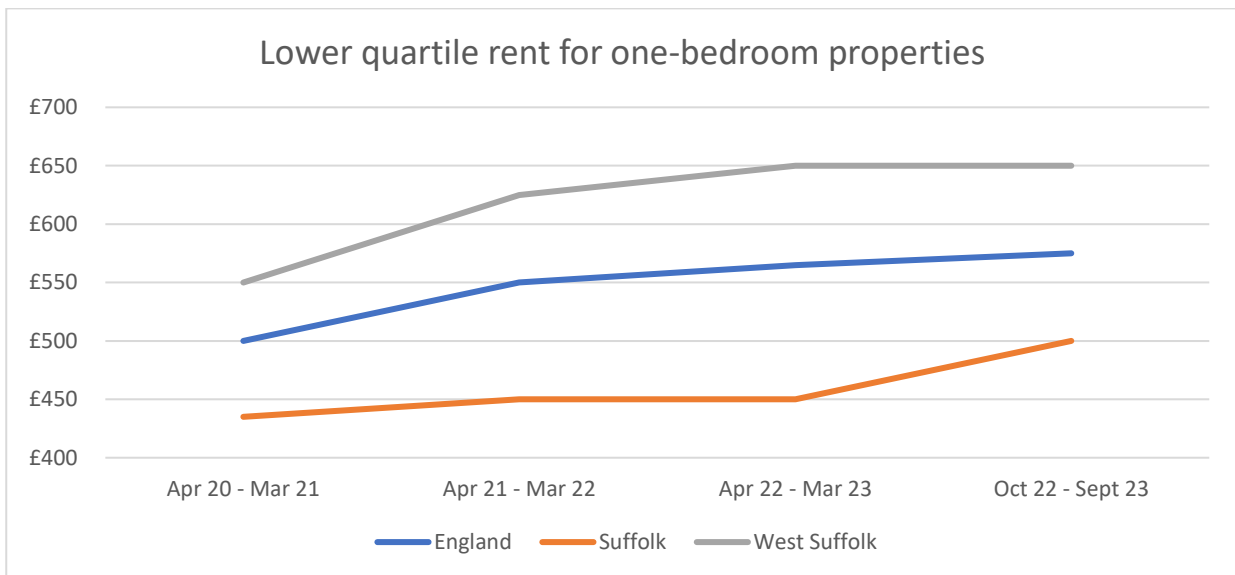


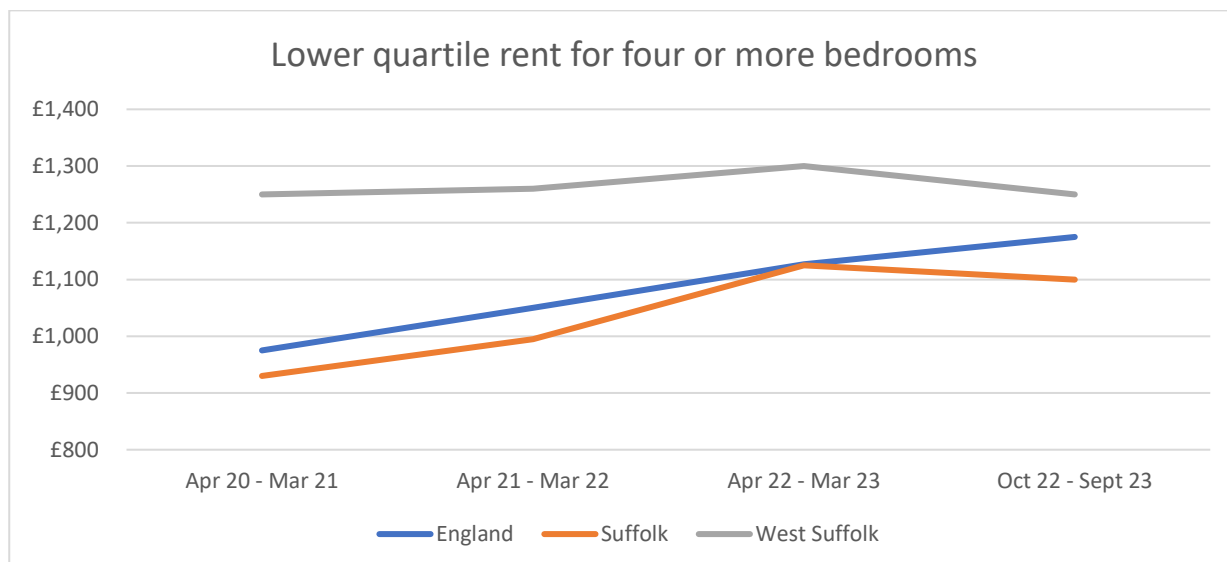
Data source: ons.gov.uk. Housing affordability in England and Wales

Rental costs

The four charts below show the lower quartile rent for different size properties over a four-year period, comparing West Suffolk with Suffolk and England. The charts consistently show that it is more expensive to rent a property in West Suffolk than the rest of England. Note that this data set was discontinued from September 2023 and the latest year quoted does cover part of the previous year (April 2022 to March 2023, followed by October 2022 to September 2023).

The data set is being replaced with the Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) with effect from March 2024 to produce a single monthly publication. Once we have familiarised ourselves with the PIPR data and its format, we will move to reporting this data in relation to UK rental costs.





Data source: ons.gov.uk. Private rental market statistics (PRMS)

Officer for National Statistics report: Who is most exposed to rising housing costs in England and Wales?

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has explored which areas of England and Wales have been most and least exposed to rising mortgage and rent costs during 2023. The report was published in May 2024. Below is a summary for West Suffolk.

Exposure scores - rents

	West Suffolk
Renter exposure score	6 - high exposure
Mortgage holder exposure score	4 - medium exposure
For rents:	A higher proportion of households are estimated to have seen monthly payments rise in 2023. Affected households saw a slightly higher cost increase.
Per cent (%) households owned with a mortgage	26.70%
% households privately rented	22.40%
Exposure to rising housing costs	Renters in West Suffolk are at high exposure to rising housing costs

	West Suffolk
Estimated % of all households experiencing rising rents from private landlords in 2023.	13.7%. This is one of the highest of all areas in England and Wales.
Those who experienced rising private rents saw an average increase of	£91 a month, from £978 in 2022 to £1,069 in 2023.
This rise equivalent to % of disposable income for an average household	3.0%. This rise is higher than the average in England and Wales,

After this rise, new housing costs for affected renters as a % of the average disposable income	35.6% of the average disposable income in West Suffolk. This is higher than the average in England and Wales.
Were households more likely to be affected by rising rent costs than in other local authorities, with a higher rise in costs.	Households in West Suffolk were more likely to be affected by rising rent costs than in other local authorities, with a higher rise in costs.

Number of homes

The number of homes in West Suffolk, by tenure, is set out below and compared to England. In 2021, the number of homes in West Suffolk was 78,744. Data are provided for 2011 and 2021 to show the change in number of homes available.

Housing stock: Number of homes by tenure

Tenure	Bedrooms	West Suffolk 2011	West Suffolk 2021	West Suffolk per cent (%)	England 2011	England 2021	England per cent (%)
Owner occupied	1	1,377	1,383	0.4%	542,182	525,552	-3.1%
	2	10,750	10,710	-0.4%	3,248,463	3,093,022	-4.8%
	3	21,102	21,790	3.3%	6,751,846	6,732,343	-0.3%
	4+	12,301	14,447	17.4%	3,606,293	4,254,099	18.0%
	Total	45,530	48,330	6.1%	14,148,784	14,605,016	3.2%
Social rented	1	3,089	3,585	16.1%	1,202,642	1,177,540	-2.1%
	2	3,987	4,828	21.1%	1,343,644	1,428,384	6.3%
	3	3,564	3,824	7.3%	1,201,388	1,222,033	1.7%
	4+	420	497	18.3%	155,876	177,706	14.0%
	Total	11,060	12,734	15.1%	3,903,550	4,005,663	2.6%
Private rented	1	1,716	1,982	15.5%	904,007	1,020,081	12.8%
	2	5,378	6,508	21.0%	1,552,976	1,873,317	20.6%
	3	5,262	6,523	24.0%	1,134,979	1,419,094	25.0%
	4+	2,232	2,667	19.5%	419,072	512,916	22.4%
	Total	14,588	17,680	21.2%	4,011,034	4,825,408	20.3%

Data source: Census 2011 and 2021

Housing owned by West Suffolk Council

The council is a non-stock holding authority and does not have a Housing Revenue Account. However, the council does own the following: 119 properties (social housing) that comprise of 43 units of temporary accommodation, 61 long-lease properties, four assured tenancies, three on service tenancies and eight above commercial units.

Households: Housing tenure and registered providers (RPs)

The table below sets out the number of households in West Suffolk and splits this into different types of tenure (owner-occupied, shared ownership, social rented, private rented and lives rent free) also compared with Suffolk and England.

		West Suffolk number	West Suffolk per cent (%)	Suffolk number	Suffolk per cent (%)	England number	England per cent (%)
All households (2021)		78,747	100.0%	333,543	100.0%	23,436,085	100.0%
Owned		47,389	60.2%	217,975	65.4%	14,369,065	61.3%
	Owns outright	26,398	33.5%	128,831	38.6%	7,624,693	32.5%
	Owns with a mortgage or loan	20,991	26.7%	89,144	26.7%	6,744,372	28.8%
Shared ownership		942	1.2%	2,473	0.7%	235,951	1.0%
	Shared ownership	942	1.2%	2,473	0.7%	235,951	1.0%
Social rented		12,735	16.2%	49,924	15.0%	4,005,663	17.1%
	Rents from council or local authority	3,962	5.0%	23,180	6.9%	1,945,152	8.3%
	Other social rented	8,773	11.1%	26,744	8.0%	2,060,511	8.8%
Private rented		17,629	22.4%	62,816	18.8%	4,794,889	20.5%
	Private landlord or letting agency	15,003	19.1%	54,323	16.3%	4,273,689	18.2%
	Other private rented	2,626	3.3%	8,493	2.5%	521,200	2.2%
Lives rent free		52	0.1%	355	0.1%	30,517	0.1%

Data source: Census 2021.

The number of social rents from council or local authority is higher than the true number because some households incorrectly identify their type of landlord as either the council or housing association. This issue has been recognised by the Office for National Statistics that there is [evidence of people incorrectly identifying their type of landlord as 'Council or local authority' or 'housing association'](#)

A registered provider (RP) delivers and manages affordable housing. 2022 data from the Regulator of Social Housing show that there are **36** RPs operating in West Suffolk with a combined total of 13,629 housing units. Sapphire Homes (which is part of the

Flagship Group) and Havebury Housing have the highest levels of stock in West Suffolk at 4,713 and 6,281 units respectively. This is to be expected as both RPs acquired the local authority housing stock from the former St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils.

The table below shows the Local housing allowance (LHA), median rent and **allowance that personnel from the United States Visiting Forces (USVF) receive**. The military housing allowances range from £1,250 to £2,500 each month; an average of £1,738, although there will be far fewer staff at the higher range of the allowances.

	LHA (2024 to 2025)	Median rent (May 2024)	Rent remaining	What proportion of the rent does the LHA cover? per cent (%)	USVF allowance (with dependants) (June 2024)			What proportion of the rent does the USVF allowance cover?		
					Average allowance	Lowest allowance	Highest allowance	Average allowance per cent (%)	Lowest allowance per cent (%)	Highest allowance per cent (%)
1 bedroom	£628.29	£719	£91	87%	£1,738	£1,250	£2,500	242%	174%	348%
2 bedrooms	£772.89	£939	£166	82%	£1,738	£1,250	£2,500	185%	133%	266%
3 bedrooms	£952.38	£1,173	£221	81%	£1,738	£1,250	£2,500	148%	107%	213%
4 bedrooms	£1,296.45	£1,688	£392	77%	£1,738	£1,250	£2,500	103%	74%	148%

The median monthly income in West Suffolk is £2,831 (GOV.UK Median gross annual residence-based earnings 2023)

The USVF allowances differ depending on rank, but even the lowest allowance of £1,250 per month accounts for 74 per cent of the average rent on a four-bedroomed property and 174 per cent of the rent on one-bedroomed property.

Typically, USVF rentals are – and historically have been - between £200 and £350 per month higher than what the local market would pay for a given property. Between 2005 and the 2010, there was a significant jump in the USVF rental allowance, which saw it grow faster than the average rent increase in the East of England rental market.

This has a direct impact on rental prices in West Suffolk and particularly Bury St Edmunds. Landlords know they can achieve higher rental income due to the allowances received by USVF which therefore inflates rental prices.

Gypsy and traveller accommodation

The current provision for gypsy and traveller sites is as follows:

- 12 private authorised with 65 pitches (58 occupied by 53 households, 7 vacant)
- 2 new private authorised sites being developed (30 pitches)
- 2 private tolerated sites with 3 pitches (2 occupied, 1 vacant)
- 4 unauthorised sites with 7 pitches (3 occupied by 2 households, 4 vacant)
- 1 travelling showpeople yard.

Feedback has been received on evidence and policy recommendations around future provision:

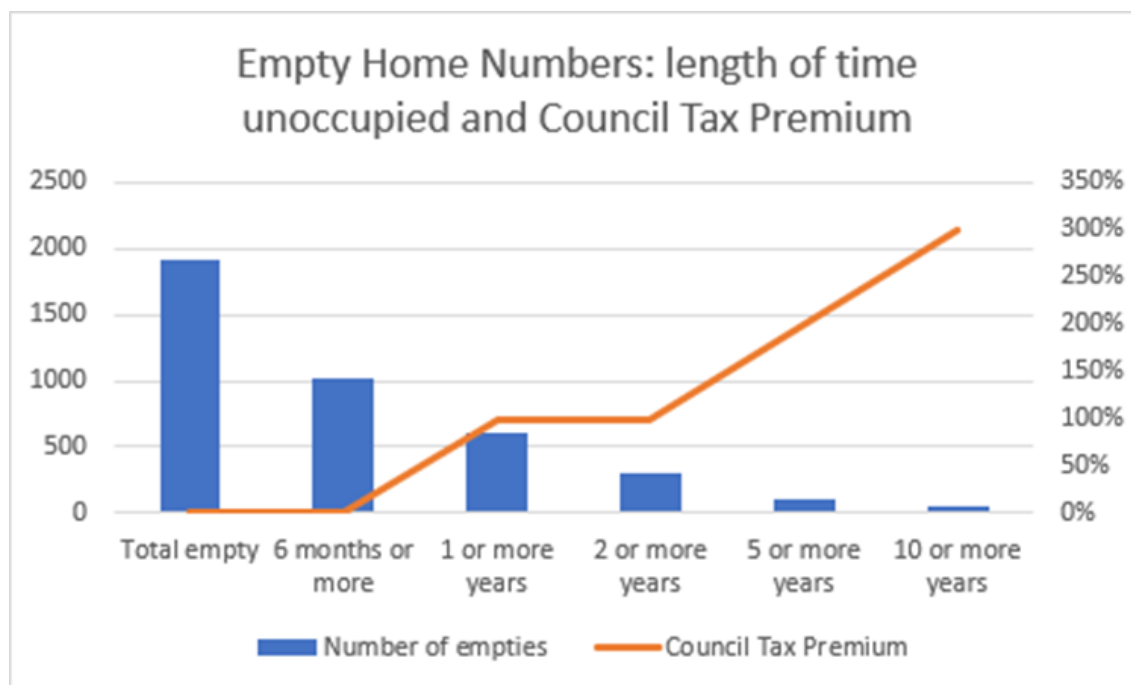
- Overall cultural need 39 (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2012, in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework or PPTS (revised) need 32).
- Short term need is for six pitches (cultural need; PPTS (2012), NPPF).
- Potential supply 24-27 through regularisation (10), additional pitches on existing sites (14-17).
- In the short-term 2023-2024 to 2027-2028, all cultural need has potential to be met.
- Initial, PPTS (2012), NPPF) need would be largely met and to meet need over whole plan period 10 additional pitches would be needed.

Private sector housing – improving existing housing through regulation

Empty homes

Empty homes are seen as a wasted resource where potential homes are left unoccupied and can be the focus of numerous complaints with the potential to impact neighbouring properties and communities. The narrative has changed over the past 10 to 20 years with empty homes no longer seen as acceptable but socially irresponsible.

Across West Suffolk, while the numbers of long-term empty properties are increasing the proportion of empty properties in West Suffolk is low therefore out of the total housing stock, West Suffolk has the lowest percentage of properties empty in Suffolk. We also note that there is a 70 per cent reduction in empty homes at 2 years empty, notably (up until April 2024 when it was changed to 12 months) when the Council Tax Premium was applicable, as set out in the following chart:



Measures to encourage landlords to bring empty properties back into use have been introduced such as the introduction of new enforcement powers, government policy on housing supply and changes to Council Tax. In 2019, West Suffolk introduced the Council Tax premium for empty homes to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use. This means owners pay a premium for homes that remain empty as follows: more than one year: a 100 per cent premium (this was set at two years prior to April 2024); five years: a 200 per cent premium; and 10 years a 300 per cent premium).

As discussed, there is a significant housing need across West Suffolk and returning empty homes back into use increases the provision of appropriate housing.

As at June 2024, West Suffolk had the following number of empty homes:

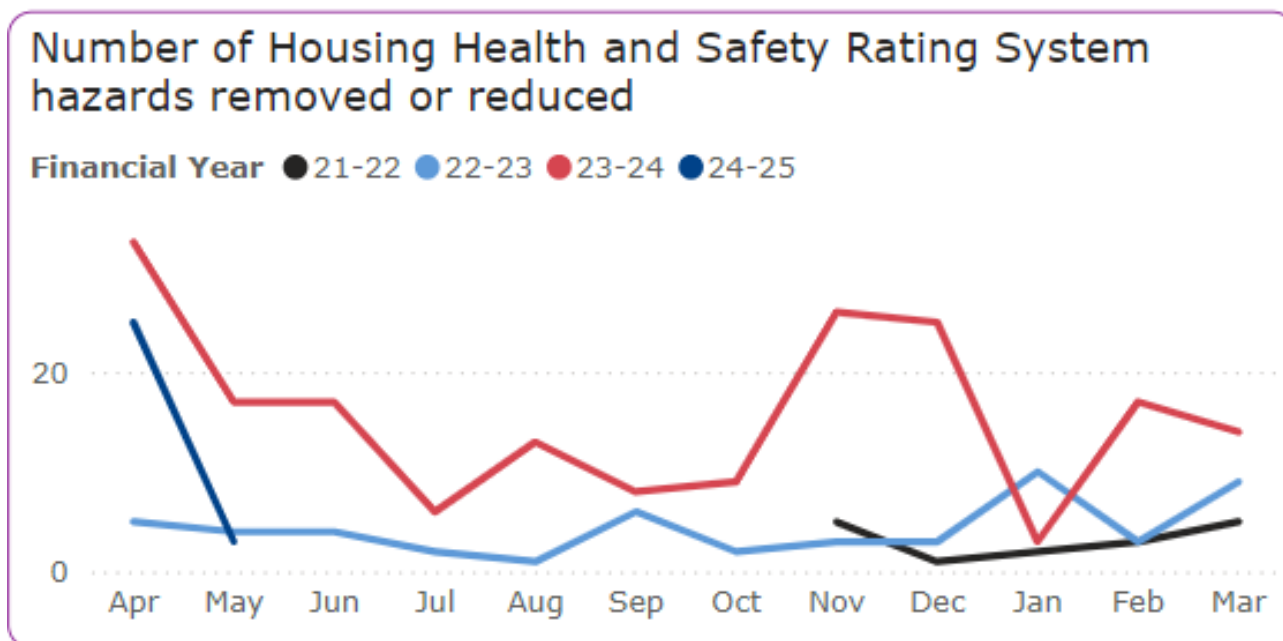
Length of time property empty	Number of properties
Greater than 10 years empty (300 per cent premium)	45
Greater than 5 years empty (200 per cent premium)	109
Greater than 2 years empty (100 per cent premium)	313
Greater than 1 year empty (100 per cent premium)	604
Greater than 6 months empty	1,010
Total number of empty properties	1,937

(These figures are not cumulative.)

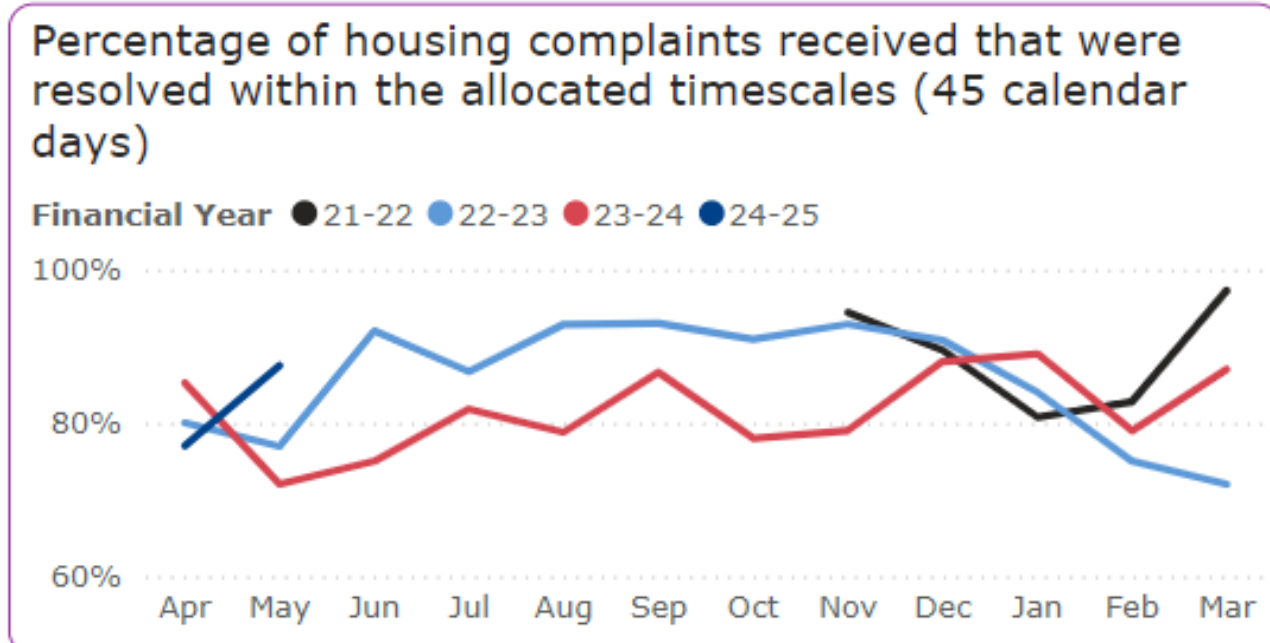
Housing standards

We work to bring homes up to the decent homes standard: [GOV.UK – A decent home: definition and guidance](#), which means they are free of category 1 hazards, defined in the [GOV.UK - Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\) guidance](#) and have a degree of thermal comfort.

The tables below present data relating to the number of HHSRS hazards removed or reduced and the percentage of housing complaints resolved within allocated timescales:



Data source: West Suffolk Council performance indicators



Data source: West Suffolk Council performance indicators

In the year 2023 to 2024 (to date), the council has:

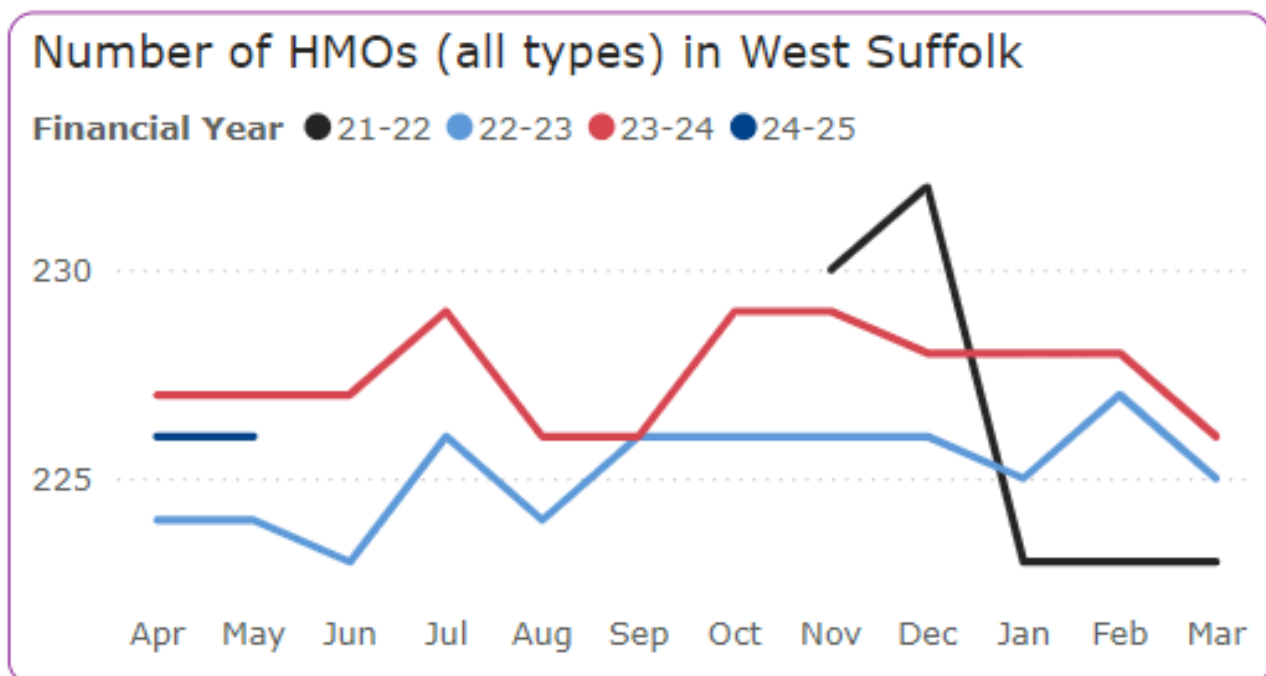
- received **172** housing enquiries or complaints
- carried out **92** Inspections that found **18** category 1 hazards and **180** category 2 hazards
- removed **six** category 1 hazards
- reduced **142** category 2 hazards
- provided advice for **26** category 2 hazards, where no works were required
- served **1** Prohibition Order.

Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

HMOs are a valuable housing resource, providing affordable accommodation for residents on a low income and young professionals.

The council is responsible for regulating standards of HMOs. Since April 2019, it has been a requirement for HMOs with five or more tenants (not from the same household) to be licensed with the council. This was introduced to ensure properties are fire safe and to protect occupants from living in poor quality housing. All other HMOs do not need to be licensed but should be registered with the council. The council inspects licensed properties every three to five years although for those where we have previously identified concerns and assess there is a greater risk, we will inspect more often, in some cases as regularly as every six months. As at October 2023, in West Suffolk there are:

- **111** licensed HMOs
- **116** non-licensable HMOs.



Data source: West Suffolk Council performance indicators

In the year 2023 to 2024 (to date), the council has:

- received **15** enquiries or complaints relating to HMOs
- inspected **41** HMOs.

Supporting households to live independently in their homes

[Suffolk County Council – Independent Living Suffolk](#) (ILS) has received £1.5 million for its work in West Suffolk from the Government’s Better Care Fund. This funding is available as grants to help pay for adaptations to help people remain living in their home. Adaptations can vary from a simple rail to more extensive works to provide access to facilities.

The ILS service was set up in December 2020, with partner councils, after a previous contract came to an end. Enquiries are assessed by Suffolk County Council. West Suffolk Council then helps people with the application process to support residents to carry out the work required. The work of the ILS service can make a real difference to people's lives.

The wider health context

Assisting people to live well at home, with adaptations that support their needs, enables them to remain safe and retain their independence for longer. Providing the right equipment and adaptations that match an individual's needs means we can take steps to reduce falls and other accidents taking place in the home, and therefore prevent hospital admissions and other health complications that may result. It can help couples to remain together and, help people stay in their community close to their family, friends and support networks.

While we are unable to quantify the results of the above, we are currently working with our partnering councils to develop indicators to identify the impact of preventing residents from going in hospital as well as supporting hospital discharge.

During 2023 to 2024, West Suffolk received **280** referrals for adaptations. These referrals were received from various health care professionals as well as from Suffolk Independent Living Suffolk (ILS). A total of 211 applications were approved and 214 applications were completed and paid with a total expenditure of just under **£1.67 million**.

These grants are broken down by type as set out in the table below:

Annual summary 2023 to 2024			
Grant type	Number approved	Number paid	End to end time from date of referral to completion of works (median average)
Disabled facilities grant	7	13	41 weeks
Fast track	200	195	13 weeks
Homes assistance	4	4	10 weeks
Top-up	0	0	not applicable
Financial assistance	0	2	not applicable
Relocation grant	0	0	not applicable
Totals	211	214	

The table below shows the number of grants approved and paid:

Year	Grants approved	Grants paid
2023 to 2024	211	214
2022 to 2023	230	206
2021 to 2022	194	189
2020 to 2021	72	108

Year	Grants approved	Grants paid
2019 to 2020	81	93
2018 to 2019	102	71
2017 to 2018	110	98
2016 to 2017	73	74
2015 to 2016	84	91

2015 to 2020 Orbit contract

Ageing population - the impact on health, social care need and housing need

This is linked to the section on page 2 that discusses housing need. Given that the number of older people is expected to increase in the future and that the number of single-person households is also expected to increase this would suggest (if occupancy patterns remain the same) that there will be a notable increase in demand for affordable housing from the ageing population. Although more restrictive access to social rented accommodation makes meeting this demand unlikely.

That said, the proportion of older person households who are outright owners (with significant equity) may mean that a market solution will also be required to meet their needs.

We know that the ageing population will inevitably be living with an increased number of long-term conditions and will need more support through the NHS and social care.

As a council, we have a role in ensuring appropriate housing is provided to meet all needs and across the wider Suffolk system we need to plan to meet those needs.

The table below shows the current and projected ageing population, comparing West Suffolk with Suffolk and England
Source: ONS. SNPP 2018 based.

Age	England				Suffolk				West Suffolk			
	2023	2043	Change	% change	2023	2043	Change	% change	2023	2043	Change	% change
Under 65	46,516,022	47,017,130	501,108	1.1%	583,851	572,900	-10,951	-1.9%	142,184	140,753	-1,431	-1.0%
65-74	5,578,539	6,574,161	995,622	17.8%	93,347	106,444	13,097	14.0%	18,908	21,097	2,189	11.6%
75-84	3,951,872	5,595,357	1,643,485	41.6%	71,050	97,518	26,468	37.3%	15,104	19,481	4,377	29.0%
85+	1,511,08	2,557,450	1,046,362	69.2%	27,900	49,619	21,719	77.8%	6,268	10,944	4,676	74.6%
Total	57,557,521	61,744,098	4,186,577	7.3%	776,148	826,480	50,332	6.5%	182,464	192,274	9,811	5.4%
65+	11,041,499	14,726,968	3,685,469	33.4%	192,297	253,580	61,283	31.9%	40,280	51,521	11,242	27.9%

Housing options and homelessness – support for vulnerable households

Number of households on the housing register

The housing register is operated by HomeLink across the Cambridge and West Suffolk housing sub-region. Individuals and households can apply to be included on the HomeLink register and they are assessed into a band depending on the level of need - Band A is urgent need to Band D which is low need. The table below sets out the recent level of demand through the housing register. It shows that the number of households in all bands has increased over this time period.

HomeLink statistics

Date	1 Jun 2023	1 Jul 2023	1 Aug 2023	1 Sep 2023	1 Oct 2023	1 Nov 2023	1 Dec 2023	1 Jan 2024	1 Feb 2024	1 Mar 2024	1 Apr 2024	1 May 2024
Band A	373	383	397	412	421	430	401	400	412	395	403	396
Band B	631	642	648	664	680	691	669	657	623	618	651	656
Band C	757	749	771	796	840	828	824	821	817	817	846	883
Band D	700	691	689	693	719	711	707	695	696	679	694	696
Total	2,461	2,465	2,505	2,565	2,660	2,660	2,601	2,573	2,548	2,509	2,594	2,631
Home seeker	1,549	1,549	1,568	1,614	1,674	1,665	1,618	1,615	1,590	1,552	1,607	1,630
Transfer	945	953	973	988	1,025	1,036	1,024	1,000	999	996	1,027	1,046
1-bedroom	1,244	1,240	1,258	1,286	1,344	1,331	1,299	1,296	1,283	1,254	1,299	1,327
2-bedroom	687	684	699	721	744	763	742	721	711	699	725	731
3-bedroom	421	434	441	451	461	459	458	455	453	450	457	466
4-bedroom	115	117	115	117	122	116	111	111	110	112	119	118
5-bedroom	24	24	25	23	24	26	26	26	426	27	29	28
Statutory homeless	77	87	94	103	110	105	103	103	117	107	103	90
Homeless prevention	68	71	65	67	69	79	75	65	48	49	62	60

Date	1 Jun 2023	1 Jul 2023	1 Aug 2023	1 Sep 2023	1 Oct 2023	1 Nov 2023	1 Dec 2023	1 Jan 2024	1 Feb 2024	1 Mar 2024	1 Apr 2024	1 May 2024
Homeless other	78	83	86	89	89	87	88	86	88	90	97	101
Over 65s	320	320	317	318	329	314	305	309	302	299	302	302
Over 65 Band A	63	59	57	60	58	53	47	50	50	49	47	43
Over 65 Band B	80	85	82	77	79	83	84	83	77	80	80	85
Removed applications	241	165	190	147	116	138	215	198	199	119	168	99
Applicants submitted	338	316	328	310	305	359	281	228	367	337	297	313

Data source: HomeLink

Reason for applying for inclusion on HomeLink (as at 1 September 2022)	
I am experiencing antisocial behaviour or harassment	162
I am experiencing domestic abuse	87
I am homeless or about to become homeless	395
I have a home with disabled adaptations which are no longer required	5
I have a medical need or have a disability and my existing home is not appropriate for my needs	311
I have found employment in the area and need to move closer to work or will otherwise lose that employment	47
I have staying contact with a child or children and I live in accommodation where the child or children are not allowed to stay overnight	47
I need to move to give or receive support and proven level of support is required and can be given	121
I want housing for older people	58
My existing house is too large for my needs	85
My existing home is overcrowded	364
My home is going to be demolished or needs major repairs	17
Other	589

Data source: HomeLink

Notes

The 'other' box includes reasons such as affordability issues, relationship breakdowns where there is no domestic abuse, expecting a child, family or friends can no longer accommodate, tied accommodation with work and worried if they lose their job or are losing their job, negative impact on mental health.

Applicants can state more than one reasons for applying for housing so one application could highlight two or three of the above reasons.

Homelessness statistics

Homelessness statistics provide information about those who local authorities have a duty to accommodate and support. The council provides support with a focus on preventing and relieving homelessness to ensure that more people are able to maintain and secure a settled home. This is demonstrated through the statistics set out for West Suffolk, East of England and England over the last four years.

	2019 to 2020			2020 to 2021			2021 to 2022			2022 to 2023		
	West Suffolk	East of England	England	West Suffolk	East of England	England	West Suffolk	East of England	England	West Suffolk	East of England	England
Those owed a duty and had a successful duty outcome – secured accommodation for 6 months or more	61.80	55.60	58.30	64.20	54.20	59.50	54.70	53.60	56.30	46.6	51.0	52.7
Those owed a duty and had a successful relief duty outcome – secured accommodation for 6 months or more	41.10	33.30	39.90	43.80	34.80	39.90	36.10	35.00	39.10	30.7	32.6	36.2
Successful prevention duty outcome resulted in households staying in their existing accommodation (prev data)	46.50	37.90	36.80	34.20	31.80	35.80	31.60	29.80	33.00	43.1	31.4	33.8

	2019 to 2020			2020 to 2021			2021 to 2022			2022 to 2023		
	West Suffolk	East of England	England	West Suffolk	East of England	England	West Suffolk	East of England	England	West Suffolk	East of England	England
The main activity that resulted in accommodation for secured for households was: negotiation, mediation, advocacy work to prevent eviction, repossession	25.30	14.10	11.00	10.80	10.20	8.00	6.00	8.60	7.70	2.8	9.6	8.6

Data source: GOV.UK - Homelessness statistics

Household composition

This data provides estimates that classify households by the relationship between household members.

All households	West Suffolk		Suffolk		England	
	number	per cent	number	per cent	number	per cent
All households	78,746	100.0%	333,542	100.0%	23,436,086	100.0%
One-person household	25,490	32.4%	103,942	31.2%	7,052,229	30.1%
Aged 66 years and over	10,485	13.3%	49,382	14.8%	3,001,789	12.8%
Other	15,005	19.1%	54,560	16.4%	4,050,440	17.3%
Single family household	49,592	63.0%	214,729	64.4%	14,762,923	63.0%
All aged 66 years and over	8,592	10.9%	41,700	12.5%	2,145,278	9.2%
Married or civil partnership couple - total	24,660	31.3%	102,172	30.6%	7,129,794	30.4%
Married or civil partnership couple - no children	9,605	12.2%	40,830	12.2%	2,440,210	10.4%
Married or civil partnership couple - dependent children	11,206	14.2%	43,325	13.0%	3,375,402	14.4%
Married or civil partnership couple - Children non-dependent	3,849	4.9%	18,017	5.4%	1,314,182	5.6%
Cohabiting couple family - total	9,153	11.6%	39,148	11.7%	2,708,979	11.6%
Cohabiting couple family - no children	5,115	6.5%	20,792	6.2%	1,486,961	6.3%
Cohabiting couple family - with dependent children	3,504	4.4%	15,907	4.8%	1,053,001	4.5%
Cohabiting couple family - all children non-dependent	534	0.7%	2,449	0.7%	169,017	0.7%
Single family household: Lone parent family	6,810	8.6%	30,256	9.1%	2,594,901	11.1%
Single family household: Lone parent family with dependent children	4,356	5.5%	18,880	5.7%	1,617,076	6.9%
Single family household: Lone parent family with all children non-dependent	2,454	3.1%	11,376	3.4%	977,825	4.2%
Other single family household	377	0.5%	1,453	0.4%	183,971	0.8%
Other single family households - other family composition	377	0.5%	1,453	0.4%	183,971	0.8%
Other household types	3,664	4.7%	14,871	4.5%	1,620,934	6.9%
With dependent children	1,308	1.7%	5,797	1.7%	630,340	2.7%
Other, including all full-time students and all aged 66 years and over	2,356	3.0%	9,074	2.7%	990,594	4.2%

Data source: Census 2021

Energy efficiency

Support with energy efficiency measures

The information below sets out the number of energy efficiency measures installed in residents' homes under funded government schemes from 2020 to date. This support is targeted to support lower income households. Measures might include loft insulation, external wall insulation, solar panels and air sourced heat pumps. One household will usually benefit from more than one measure.

Scheme	Grant spend	Number of properties upgraded	Number of measures
Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD – see note below) 1a	£485,700	50	50
LAD1b	£1,493,028	141	141
LAD2	£328,924	47	47
LAD3	£945,315	108	108
Home Upgrade Grant (HUG – see note below) 1	£705,317	46	46
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)	£355,700	37	46
Total	£4,313,986	429	438

LAD applies to households that are on and off mains gas grid.

HUG applies to households that are off the mains gas grid.

Fuel poverty

Safe, warm homes

12 per cent, or 9855 properties, in West Suffolk are in fuel poverty with the highest proportion of those being in the private rented sector, specifically 22 per cent or 3966 properties. This is based on the newer 'low income high costs' definition of fuel poverty. Energy efficiency improvements help to prevent excess winter deaths each year by ensuring homes are adequately and affordably heated by reducing heat loss and improving heating systems.

Owner occupied properties are twice as likely to have an Excess Cold hazard and have the lowest Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score on average across all housing tenures as in they are the least energy efficient. 5948 owner occupied properties and 1082 rented properties are estimated to have a housing health and safety rating system category 1 hazard for Excess Cold and present a significant risk to the health of occupants.

20 per cent or 13,255 of all private sector dwellings are solid wall properties and 14 per cent or 9,775 dwellings have uninsulated cavity walls. 14 per cent or 9352 of dwellings have less than 100 millimetre loft insulation, the current building regulations require 280 millimetre.

12 per cent of the private rented sector or 2164 properties in West Suffolk are estimated to have a housing health and safety rating system category 1 hazard with 6 per cent of the private rented sector or 1082 properties estimated to have a category 1 hazard for Excess Cold. This is above the English average based on the English Housing Survey ([English Housing Survey 2022 to 2023: rented sectors - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2022-to-2023-rented-sectors))

Further information is available: [Local Energy Asset Representation \(LEAR\) for Suffolk – Green Suffolk](#)

Understanding the impact of fuel poverty

A home in fuel poverty is determined by understanding changes in income, the impact of rising fuel prices and heating needs. The situation can often be more difficult in rural areas due to households being off the mains gas grid and there being a high number of solid wall properties which are more difficult and expensive to insulate. It can cost 90 per cent more expensive to resolve energy inefficiency in a rural home and can leave households living in cold conditions.

We know that fuel poor households are:

- more likely to be using expensive heating fuels
- least likely to be on the cheapest tariffs – direct debit versus pre-payment metres
- experience social isolation amongst adults in cold homes
- see a link between low temperatures and poor mental wellbeing – more likely to be stressed and subject to common mental disorders
- making hard choices – 'heat or eat'.

Source: John Hills. Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, October 2011.

In terms of the impact of fuel poverty on the health service, the annual cost to the NHS of treating winter-related disease due to cold private housing is over £850 million. Evidence shows that for every £1 invested in keeping homes warm could save the NHS up to 42 pence health costs every year. (Source: 'Cold Weather Plan for England - Protecting health and reducing harm from severe cold'. Department of Health and Health Protection Agency, November 2011).

Further information on sustainable homes is available on the [Suffolk Observatory - Suffolk Climate Emergency Dashboard](#)

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings

An EPC gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). In West Suffolk, 0.36 per cent of properties are rated A, 11.98 per cent are B, 42.9 per cent are C, 32.71 per cent are D, 9.95 per cent are E, 1.56 per cent are F and 0.54 per cent are G.

It should be noted that those in a worse situation do not tend to have an EPC and are therefore not represented in these figures. It can therefore be difficult to have an accurate picture of need.

As at October 2023, there are 392 households that have got an EPC rating of D or below and are off the mains gas grid. They are currently being sent letters because they are eligible for funding through HUG 2.