

Wandsworth Housing and Regeneration Department
2020/21 Equalities Information
Housing Advice / Homelessness / Provision of Temporary Accommodation

Introduction

Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the duties owed by local housing authorities to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Local Authorities have a duty to provide housing advice and assistance to everyone in their local area but the type of advice and assistance depends on whether the person is eligible for assistance (i.e. not subject to immigration control), whether they are actually homeless, whether they are intentionally homeless (they did or did not do something which caused their homelessness i.e. not pay their rent), whether they have a priority need for accommodation and local connection.

In April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) came into force. Prior to the HRA much of the assistance provided to homeless applicants was predicated on whether after assessment a priority need was identified. A priority need included having dependent children, a disability and/or other instances of vulnerability. Those assessed as not having a priority need were less likely to be assisted. Within the HRA the emphasis on priority need has now been removed and all local authorities are expected to provide assistance in the form of prevention or relief of homelessness irrespective of the applicant's priority needs, if they are facing homelessness within 56 days of approach. Prevention is where an applicant is prevented from becoming homeless, such as the Council mediating with the landlord or host so that the applicant can remain in their accommodation. Relief is where reasonable steps are taken to relieve the applicant of their homelessness such as by helping them secure suitable accommodation of at least 6 months.

In order to monitor homelessness approaches and also local authority performance, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have introduced a set of data requirements known as H-Clic which supersedes the previous P1E data returns. Whereas previously the data submitted to MHCLG was a snapshot of a local authority's homelessness cases at the end of each quarter, H-Clic covers all cases that the Council has dealt with and includes case-level details such as client name, gender, national insurance number etc. Such data is treated as mandatory within MHCLG's H-Clic Data Specification document.

Housing Advice Homeless Cases by Ethnic Group (2020-2021)

		White	Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	Asian / Asian British	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Other	Unknown	Total
Homeless applications received	No.	667	160	242	719	135	538	2471
	%	27.40%	6.48%	9.79%	29.10%	5.46%	21.77%	100%
Cases admitted into temporary accommodation	No.	224	45	89	233	38	180	809
	%	27.69%	5.56%	11.00%	28.80%	4.70%	22.25%	100%
Prevention duty: cases closed	No.	17	3	5	14	5	6	50
	%	34.00%	6.00%	10.00%	28.00%	10.00%	12.00%	100%
Homeless cases prevented *	No.	61	9	19	40	7	21	157
	%	38.85%	5.73%	12.10%	25.48%	4.46%	13.38%	100%
Relief duty: cases closed	No.	23	7	6	19	7	27	89
	%	25.84%	7.87%	6.74%	21.35%	7.87%	30.34%	100%
Homeless cases relieved *	No.	56	5	24	45	12	22	164
	%	34.15%	3.05%	14.63%	27.44%	7.32%	13.41%	100%
Cases accepted: duty to house	No.	171	39	91	175	46	109	631
	%	27.10%	6.18%	14.42%	27.73%	7.29%	17.27%	100%

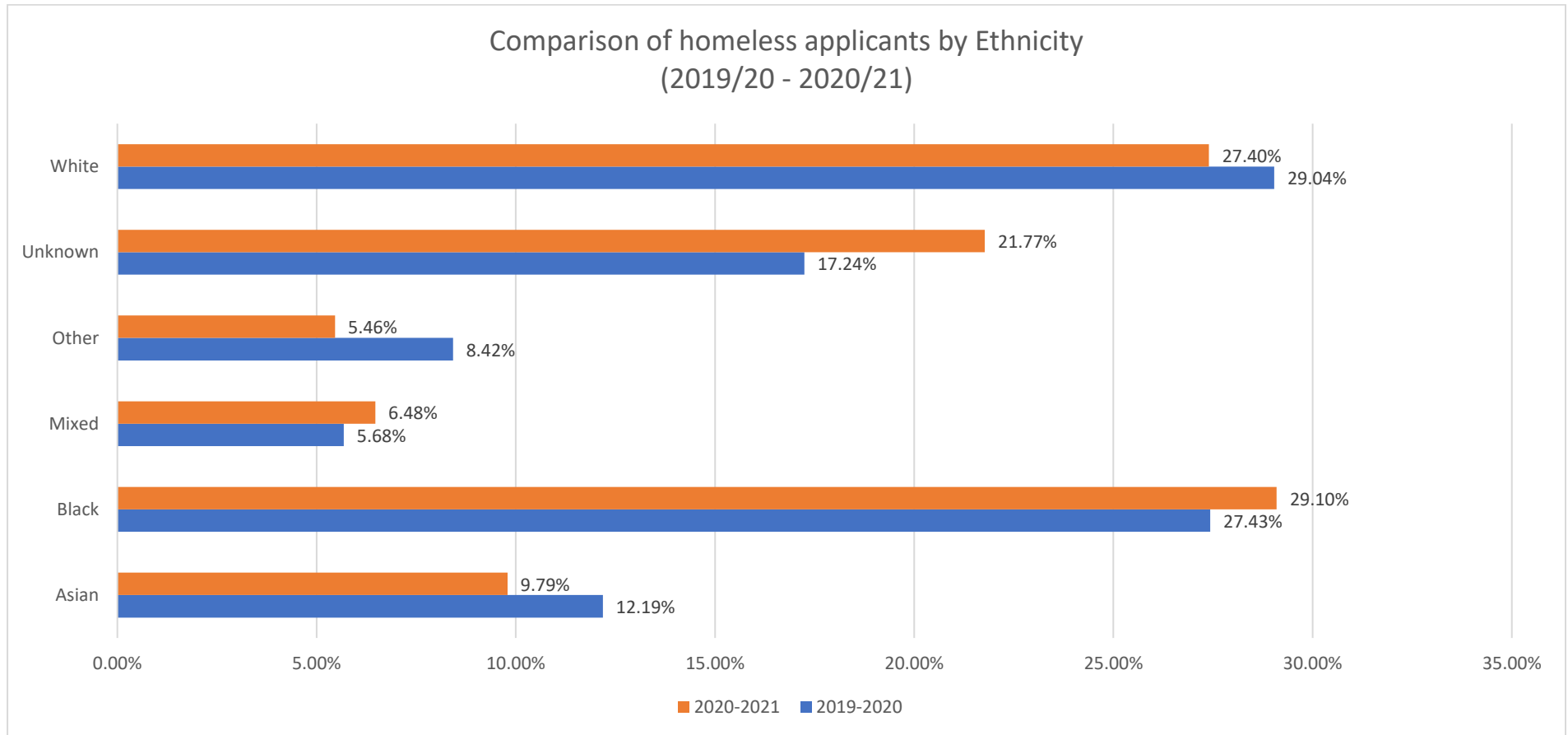
* these are cases where the Council has either prevented or relieved an applicant's homelessness by securing suitable accommodation of more than 6 months. These do not include all of the council's prevention schemes due to the availability of ethnicity data

In 2020/21, there was a 3% decrease in the number of applications recorded by the Housing Options team, and this is likely due to the national restrictions put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a reduction of homeless approaches. The number of recorded applications was therefore lower for most ethnic groups, though the mixed ethnic group saw a 10% increase in recorded applications from 145 in 2019/20 to 160 in 2020/21.

In 2020/21, the number of households who were accepted as homeless was – in most instances - proportionate to the number of households presenting as homeless for each ethnic group. However, those from a black ethnic group received a smaller proportion

of acceptances (27.73%) when compared to the number of homeless applications received (29.10%). The Asian ethnic group had the greatest difference, representing 9.79% of applicants while contributing 14.42% of all accepted cases.

The white ethnic group made up 38.85% of homeless cases prevented, making it the largest group in this category while representing 27.40% of all homeless approaches. In contrast, the black ethnic group made up 25.48% of homeless cases prevented while representing 29.10% of all homeless approaches.



The percentage breakdown of homeless applications across all ethnic groups has remained largely the same in 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20. The group with the largest difference is the other ethnic group, which represented 8.42% of all applications in 2019/20 and now represents 5.46% of all applications, which is a similar decrease when compared to 2018/19 to 2019/20.

Housing Advice and Homelessness Cases by Gender *

		Female with Children	Female without Children	Male with Children	Male without Children	Total
Homeless applications received	No.	495	766	125	1085	2471
	%	20.03%	31.00%	5.06%	43.91%	100%
Cases admitted into temporary accommodation	No.	228	247	55	279	809
	%	28.18%	30.53%	6.80%	34.49%	100%
Prevention duty: cases closed	No.	14	20	5	11	50
	%	28.00%	40.00%	10.00%	22.22%	100%
Homeless cases prevented *	No.	61	43	12	41	157
	%	38.85%	27.39%	7.64%	26.11%	100%
Relief duty: cases closed	No.	18	23	1	47	58
	%	20.22%	25.84%	1.12%	52.81%	100%
Homeless cases relieved *	No.	48	36	12	68	164
	%	29.27%	21.95%	7.32%	41.46%	100%
Cases accepted: duty to house	No.	254	102	90	185	631
	%	40.25%	16.16%	14.26%	29.32%	100%

* each gender category represents the lead applicant (male or female), and each category may include joint applicants or spouses / partners

The largest gender group was male without children, representing 43.91% of all applicants, while representing 34.49% of all admissions into temporary accommodation. In contrast, females without children represented 31% of all homeless applications and 30.53% of all admissions into temporary accommodation, meaning that females without children are more likely to be admitted into temporary accommodation compared to males without children. A similar pattern can be observed in the number of homeless cases prevented, with males without children representing 26.11% of all homeless cases prevented, while females without children represent 27.39% of all homeless cases prevented.

Similar to previous years, female with children represented the largest group of accepted homeless cases (40.25%), and male with children also received a higher proportion of positive decisions (14.26%) when compared to the number of applications received (5.06%). This will almost certainly be due to their having a priority need due to dependent children.

Households in Temporary Accommodation by Ethnic Group

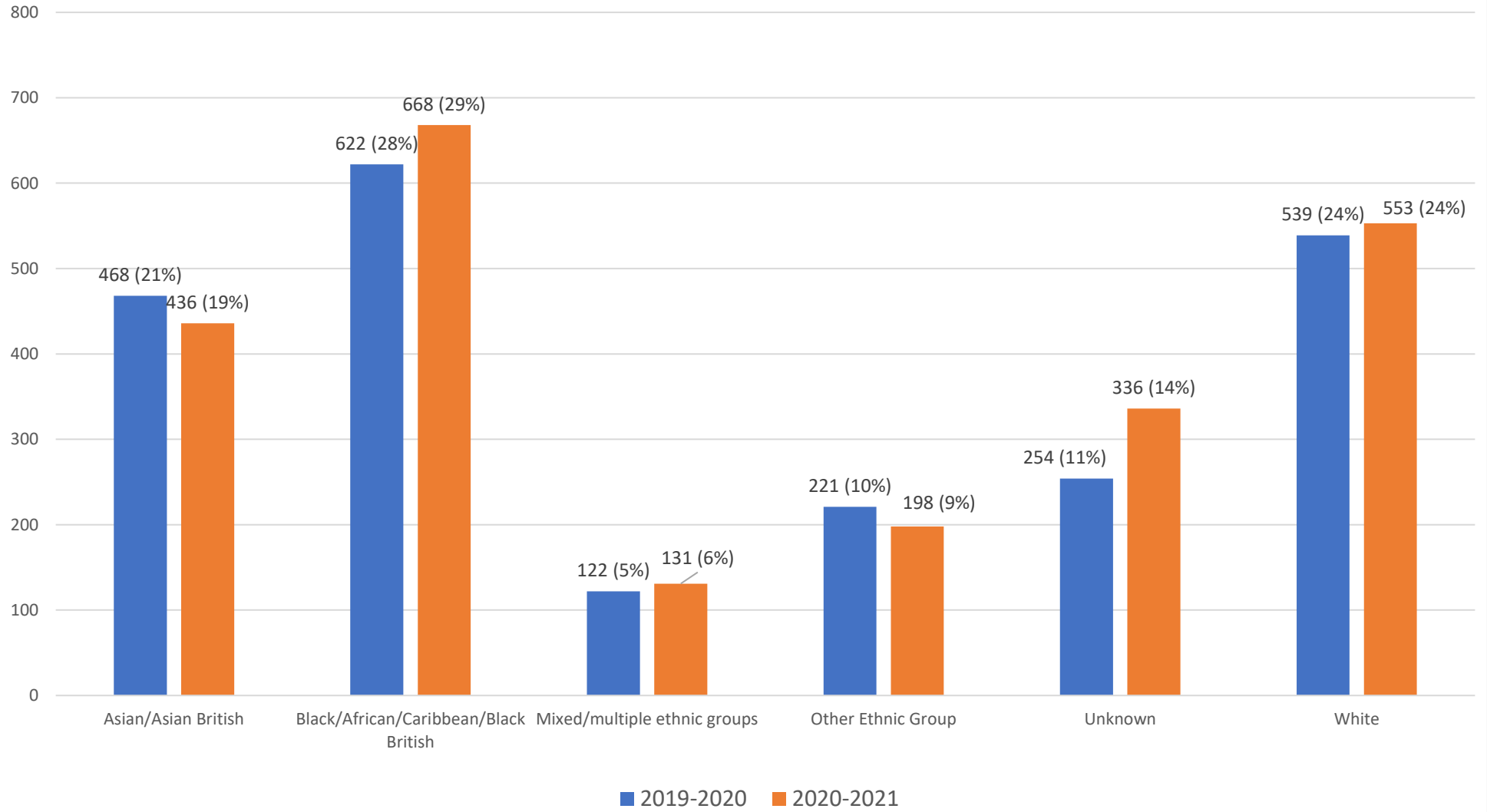
There has been a 4.3% increase in the number of households being placed into temporary accommodation when compared to the previous year (2,226 in 2019/20 to 2,322 in 2020/21). Similar to 2019/20, the black ethnic group remains the largest group accommodated (29%). This figure is much higher than the borough demographic as members of the black ethnic group constitute approximately 10% of the population (Census, 2011). The white ethnic group is the second largest group accommodated, representing 24% of households in temporary accommodation.

Households in Temporary Accommodation *		White	Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	Asian / Asian British	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Other	Unknown	Total
2019/20	No.	539	122	468	622	221	254	2226
	%	24%	5%	21%	28%	10%	11%	100%
2020/21	No.	553	131	436	668	198	336	2322
	%	24%	6%	19%	29%	9%	14%	100%

* this does not include households who have arranged temporary accommodation themselves (homeless from home cases)

As can be seen from the graph below, the distribution of ethnic groups that were placed in temporary accommodation is similar for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. In keeping with the increase in placements being made all groups have increased in numbers with the exception of the other ethnic group, and the Asian ethnic group, which had a slight decrease in temporary accommodation placements.

Comparison of Households in Temporary Accommodation by Ethnicity (2019/20 - 2020/21)



Households in Bed and Breakfast (not self-contained) Accommodation by Ethnic Group

The number of B&B placements being made has decreased by 28% since 2019/20, which is largely due to fewer households being placed into B&B to minimise social contact with other households due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Households placed into B&B (not self-contained) by ethnic group		White	Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	Asian / Asian British	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Other	Unknown	Total
2019/20	No.	34	5	22	30	17	22	130
	%	26%	4%	17%	23%	13%	17%	100%
2020/21	No.	35	3	10	23	4	18	93
	%	38%	3%	11%	25%	4%	19%	100%

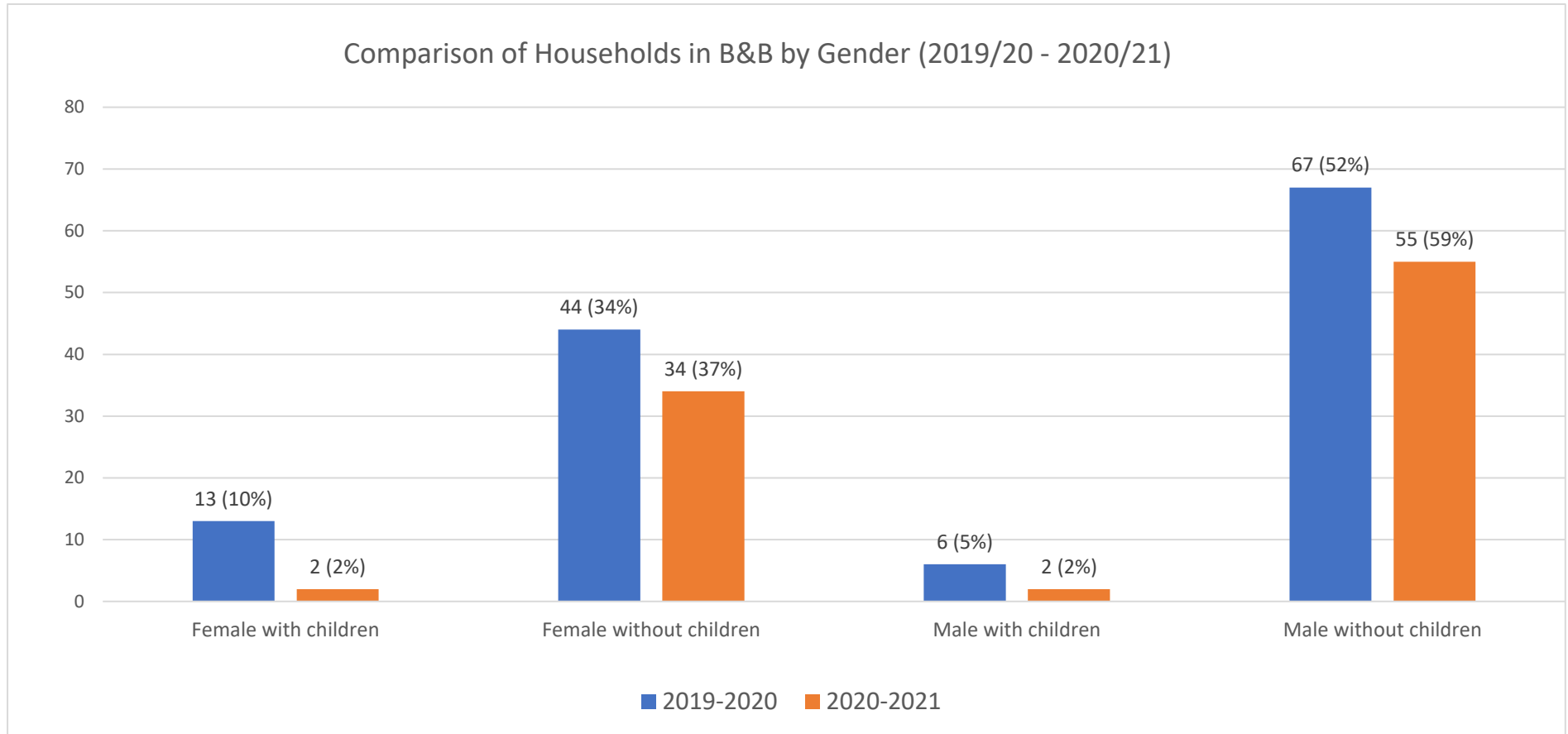
Where applicants are placed in B&B accommodation that is not self-contained, the largest proportion are in the white ethnic group at 38%, which is an increase from 26% in the preceding year. The number of B&B placements for the white ethnic group (38%) is disproportionate to the number of overall temporary accommodation placements (24%). The next largest ethnic group placed into B&B accommodation is the black ethnic group at 25%, which is slightly under proportion when compared to the overall percentage of temporary accommodation placements (29%) for this group. For the Asian and other ethnic groups, the proportion of B&B placements (11%/4%) is significantly lower when compared to the cases admitted into temporary accommodation (19%/9%).

Households in Temporary Accommodation by Gender

Households in Temporary Accommodation		Female with children	Female without children	Male with children	Male without children	Total
2019/20	B&B (not self-contained)	13 (10%)	44 (34%)	6 (5%)	67 (52%)	130 (100%)
	Total	1159 (51%)	216 (10%)	456 (20%)	395 (17%)	2226 (100%)
2020/21	B&B (not self-contained)	2 (2%)	34 (37%)	2 (2%)	55 (59%)	93 (100%)
	Total	1092 (47%)	335 (14%)	433 (19%)	462 (20%)	2322 (100%)

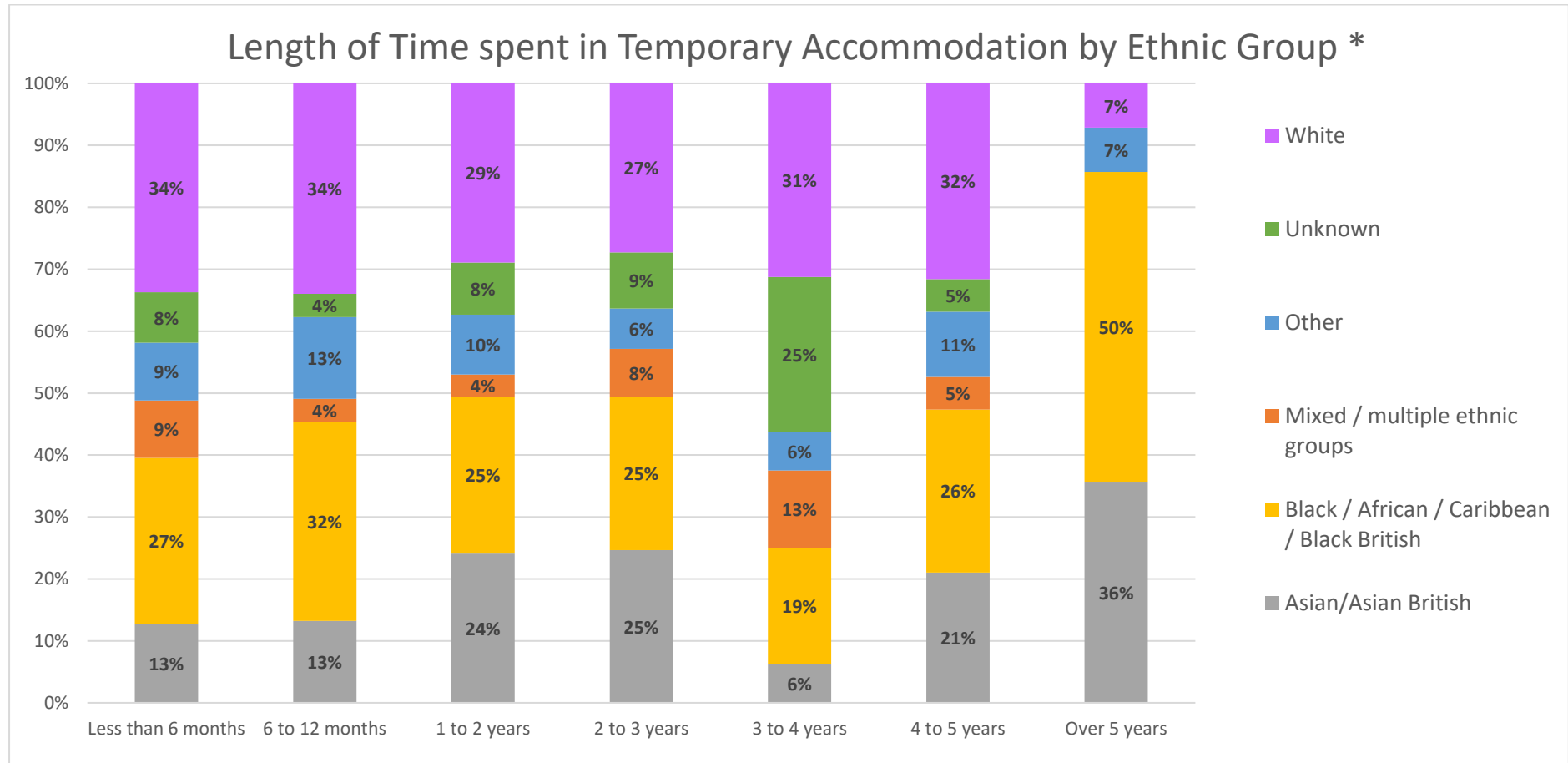
The largest proportion of applicants in any type of temporary accommodation are households with children. The combined total of these groups is 1,525 households which equates to 66% of all households placed into temporary accommodation, which is a slight decrease when compared to 2019/20's figure of 71%.

The graph below demonstrates the percentage of households in bed and breakfast accommodation across all gender groups.



The largest proportion of applicants accommodated in B&B that is not self-contained is households without children. A total of 89 out of 93 households make up this group which equates to 96% of the B&B placements. This is to be expected since B&B placements are only offered to households with children on a short-term basis if no other accommodation is available, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an overall reduction in B&B placements.

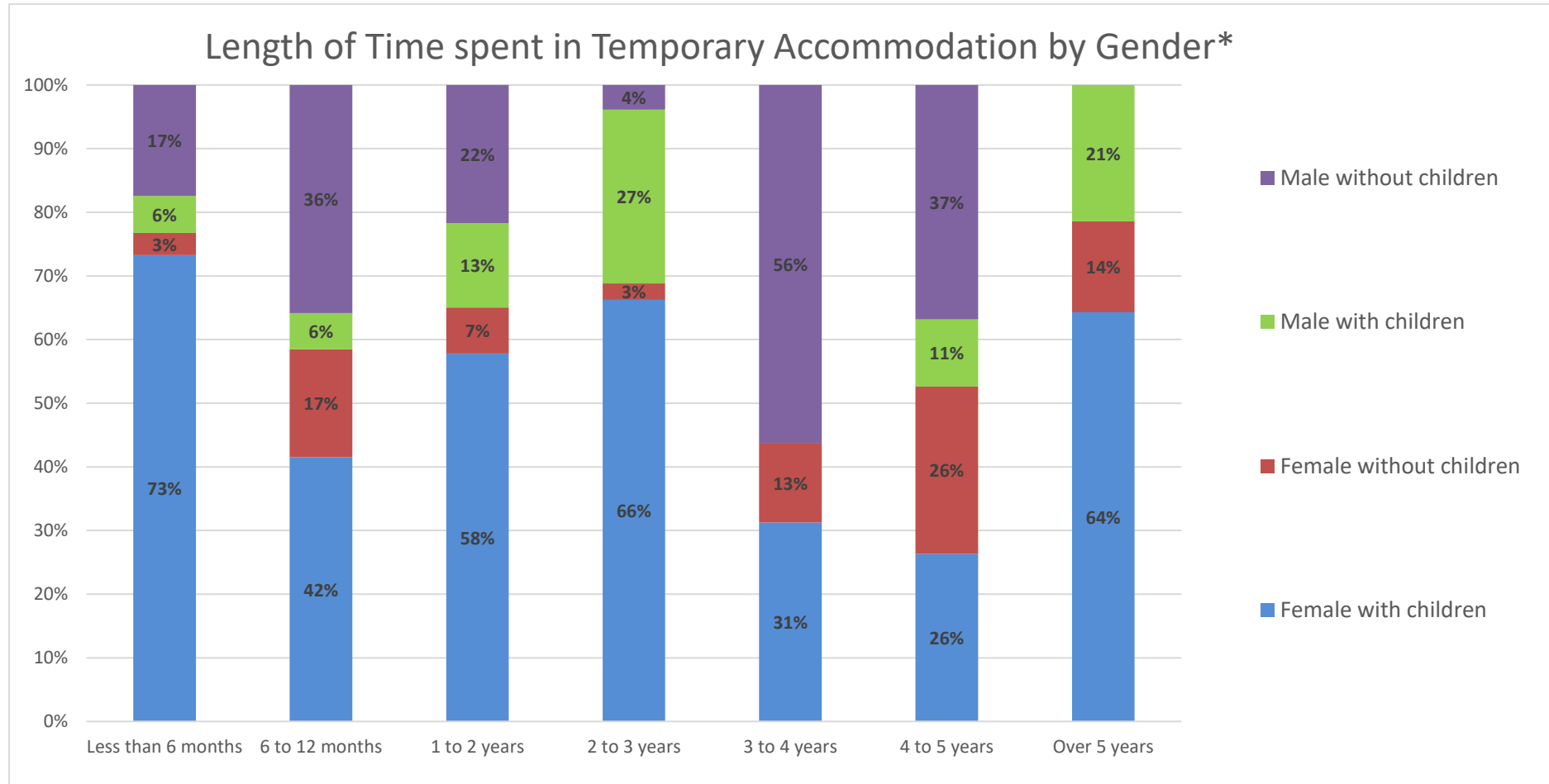
Length of Time Spent in Temporary Accommodation by Ethnic Group



* length of time spent in temporary accommodation is measured from the date a household was admitted into temporary accommodation to the date they left temporary accommodation as a result of being made a final offer of permanent accommodation

The white ethnic group represent the largest group for the least amount of time spent in temporary accommodation, representing 34% of those accommodated for less than 6 months, compared to 27% of those accommodated for less than 6 months for the black ethnic group. The black and Asian ethnic group represented 50% and 36% of households accommodated for over 5 years, compared to 7% households in the white ethnic group. However, households who have been in temporary accommodation for a substantial amount of time tend to require larger properties, which are in shorter supply and are in high demand, therefore leading to longer waiting times.

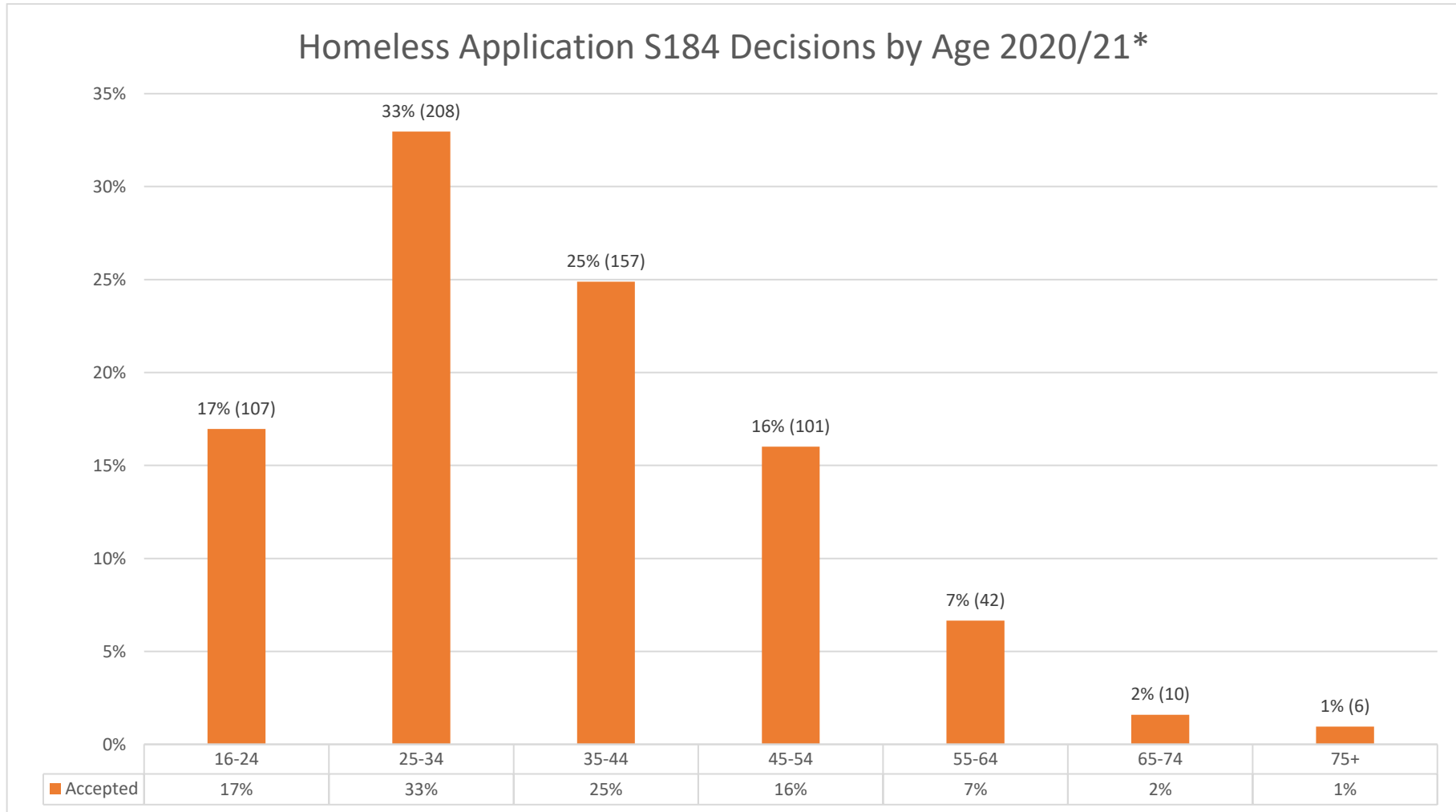
Length of Time Spent in Temporary Accommodation by Gender



* length of time spent in temporary accommodation is measured from the date a household was admitted into temporary accommodation to the date they left temporary accommodation as a result of being made a final offer of permanent accommodation

The group that spent the least amount of time in temporary accommodation were those groups without children, representing 53% of those applicants accommodated for 6 to 12 months. This is due to these households having more flexibility over permanent placements. Overall, females with children spend the most time in temporary accommodation, which is to be expected considering this is the largest group admitted into temporary accommodation and will often require larger accommodation.

Homeless Decisions by age



*Age of applicant at date of decision notice

In 2020/21 the largest percentage of decisions issued were to the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups which equated to 58% of all section 184s served, which is similar to last year's figure of 54%. This is in proportion to the percentage of homeless approaches in these age groups, which account for 56% of all homeless approaches. No data is available for applicants who received negative section 184 decisions due to the very low number of these decisions being made during 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

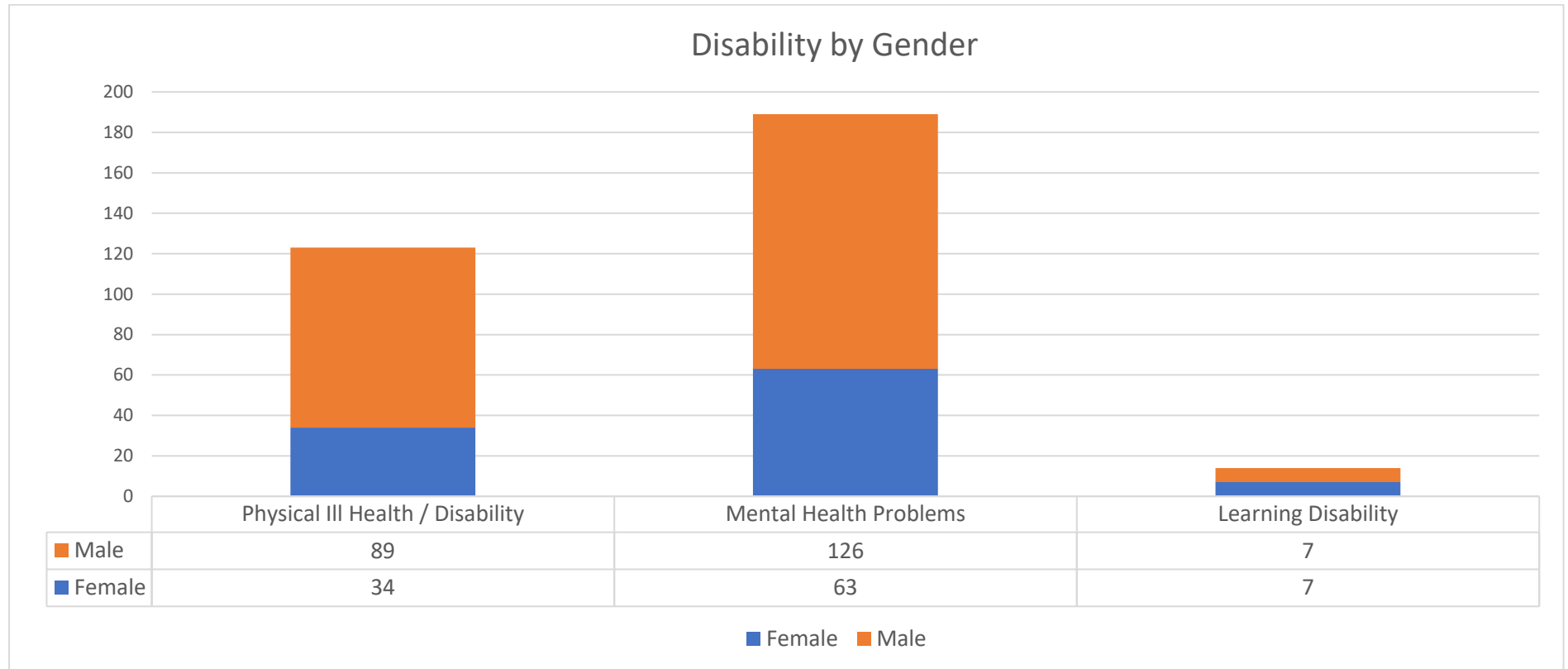
Accepted Housing Duty by Age

Age	Accepted Housing Duty (2019/20)	Percentage of Accepted Cases	Accepted Housing Duty (2020/21)	Percentage of Accepted Cases	Direction of travel
16-24	97	22%	107	17%	↓
25-34	130	29%	208	33%	↑
35-44	115	26%	157	25%	↓
45-54	70	16%	101	16%	—
55-64	25	6%	42	7%	↓
65-74	10	2%	10	2%	—
75+	1	<1%	6	1%	↑
Total	448	100%	631	100%	

The total number of accepted section 184 decisions issued across all age groups in 2020/21 has increased by approximately 41% when compared to the previous year. This significant increase is due to negative section 184 decisions being reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with only 7 negative decisions made during 2020/21 compared to 67 in 2019/20. The distribution of positive decisions by age group is similar for both years with the exception of a noticeable change in the 16-24 age group, who represented 22% of all accepted cases in 2019/20, and now represent 17% of all accepted cases.

Disability

Since the advent of the HRA in April 2018, there has been emphasis on local authorities to identify support needs of applicants' and/or household members. It should be noted that an applicant that has not had a disability identified during the initial HRA assessment may subsequently have a disability identified during the main duty assessment. These have been factored into the tables below.



The most common disability identified is for applicants who are experiencing mental health issues which account for nearly 58% of all disabilities. Learning disability is the lowest identified disability, with 7 males and 7 females identified as having a learning disability.

Disability identified at HRA Assessment and Disability Confirmed at Main Duty

Disability Identified at HRA Assessment		Female	Male	Total
Physical III Health / Disability	No.	17	52	69
	%	24.64%	75.36%	100.00%
Mental Health Problems	No.	45	76	121
	%	37.19%	62.81%	100.00%
Learning Disability	No.	2	3	5
	%	40.00%	60.00%	100.00%
Disability Confirmed at Main Duty *				
Physical III Health / Disability	No.	17	37	54
	%	31.48%	68.52%	100.00%
Mental Health Problems	No.	18	50	68
	%	26.47%	73.53%	100.00%
Learning Disability	No.	5	4	9
	%	55.56%	44.44%	100.00%
* not assessed as such at HRA Assessment				

The chart above shows the percentage breakdown of identified disabilities at HRA assessment and confirmed at main duty assessment. The majority of identified disabilities are found within male applicants who represent on average 68% of all identified disabilities. The majority of applicants have their disability identified during the HRA assessment.