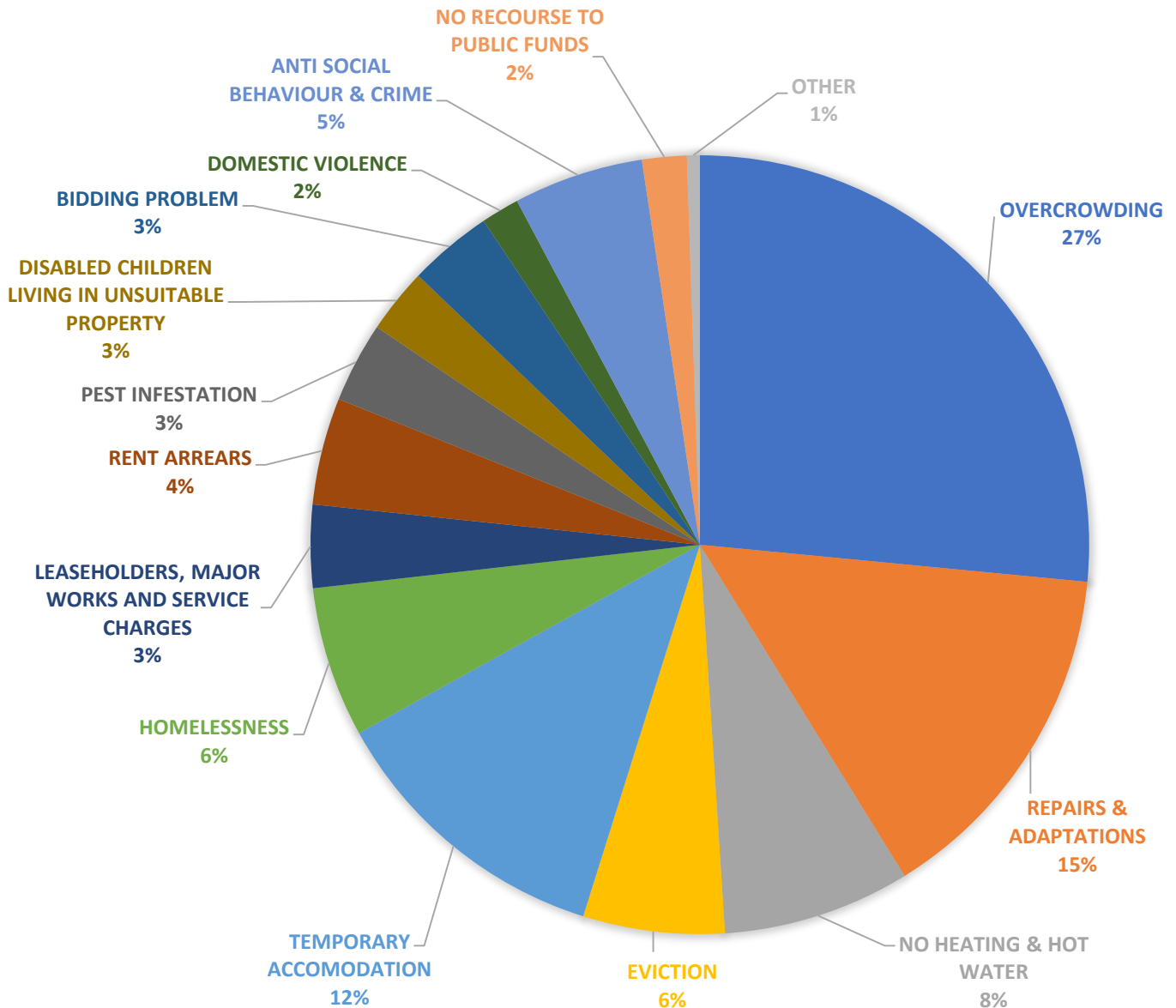


Harriet Harman
Labour Candidate for Camberwell & Peckham
SGTO Housing Hustings, 27th November 2019

New Housing Cases Breakdown: June 2017- November 2019



Cambridge House, 1 Addington Square, SE5 0HF
***Until 12 December 2019**

Housing casework statistics and trends:

- Since the General Election in June 2017, **41%** of all new cases Harriet has actioned for Camberwell and Peckham residents are related to housing issues.
- **1,889 people** have contacted Harriet to ask for her help with their housing situation for the first time since June 2017.
- **More than half (51%)** of these people and their families are living in unsuitable temporary accommodation, very overcrowded conditions or have found themselves in a precarious situation as they are homeless or soon to be evicted.
- Worryingly Harriet has seen an increase in the number of people, often disabled, at risk of eviction because they owe their landlord thousands in rent because of problems with their **Universal Credit**.
- The plight of private renters paying extortionate rents but still at risk of being asked to leave with as little as a few weeks' notice is also another worrying trend.
- In Camberwell SE5 a two-bedroom flat is up for rent for **£4,711 pcm**.

Southwark Council is one of the largest social landlords in the country and there is very high housing demand with **10,854 people on the council's housing register** (the list of people applying to live in council homes or to transfer council properties).

- **Nearly a third (27%)** of the people that have asked for Harriet's help with their housing since the 2017 General Election are Southwark Council or housing association residents that live in overcrowded conditions and desperately need to move to a larger property.
- Almost all are registered on the council's housing register and the majority will be bidding in band 3 or band 2 for a year or more.
- Camberwell and Peckham residents regularly tell Harriet that they are unhappy because of the length of time it is taking for them to successfully bid on a new home.

Case examples:

- A single mother with renal failure living in a hostel with her two young children contacted Harriet as her living situation was unsuitable for someone with her health problems. Following Harriet's intervention, she moved into a newly built flat in Camberwell and in the future, if she doesn't get the transplant she is waiting for, she will be able to get home dialysis.
- A Camberwell woman with cancer contacted Harriet because she was made homeless after the council repossessed her landlord's flat while she was in hospital following complications post-surgery. Unbeknownst to her the flat had been illegally sublet. I urgently contacted Cllr Steph Cryan and she was placed in emergency accommodation within 2 hours.
- Harriet took up the case of a disabled leaseholder that lives off Southampton Way who was due to lose her home as she owed £4,335,80 in unpaid service charge. The DWP had made an error when migrating her from Incapacity Benefit to ESA in 2014, which meant she did not receive the financial assistance she was eligible for. She has now received a back-payment of £13,783.79 from the DWP and will get £100 more each week.

Autism & housing:

- **51 families with autistic or disabled children** have contacted Harriet since the 2017 General Election because they are living in a property which is unsuitable for the needs of their child and their family.
- Too often 2 or more siblings are sharing a room which is not ideal for any child with autism but the other children often can't get a good night's sleep and they may then struggle at school.
- Harriet and her team have completed training offered by the National Autistic Society. Harriet has also joined the All Party-Parliamentary Group on Autism.

Case Examples:

- A woman from the Acorn Estate contacted Harriet because she and her 4 children, one of whom has autism and ADHD, were going to be evicted as her grandmother had passed away 3 weeks prior and she could not succeed her tenancy as it had already been passed down once before. Harriet wrote to the council and they agreed to allow her to remain in the flat.
- A single mother with a severely autistic son came to see Harriet because she was due to be evicted from her private rented flat and feared they would be offered hostel accommodation miles away from Southwark and that her son would not be able to go to school. Harriet asked the council to offer her temporary accommodation in her preferred location and they have moved into a flat in Walworth.

Loss of heating & hot water:

- **Nearly a tenth (8%)** of the people that have asked for Harriet's help with housing since the 2017 General Election have experienced loss of heating and hot water.
- 100s of residents living on estates with communal boilers have been subject to repeated heating and hot water outages. In February 2019 the **Aylesbury, Brandon, Wyndham, Comber, Barseet and Brimington Estates** were all without heating or hot water for more than 24 hours. Harriet worked with Cllr Steph Cryan, the housing lead at the time, local councillors, senior heating engineers and TRAs to get services restored and for compensation to be paid for the extra costs incurred and for the inconvenience. It's intolerable in the 21st century to be without basic services and is a particular problem for the elderly, families with children and those on low incomes.

Case Example: A Bells Garden Estate resident contacted Harriet because she had had no hot water in her flat since she moved in a one month ago despite reporting this to the council. Harriet made urgent enquiries with the council and the problem was fixed the next day.

Repairs:

- **14%** of the people that have asked for Harriet's help with their housing since the General Election in 2017 had repair issues or needed their home adapted.

Case Example: A woman whose flat on the Friary Estate was in a state of disrepair and had multiple leaks contacted Harriet because she was concerned about the effect this was having on her health as she suffers from heart and lung disease. I wrote to Southwark Council to ask them to carry out repairs urgently. The leaks were repaired and her property was redecorated.

Labour's housing promises

More affordable homes:

- Building one million new genuinely affordable homes over 10 years, and ensuring every council every year builds or commissions Labour's new affordable homes.
- Setting a new definition of 'affordable housing' linked to local income, and scrapping the Conservatives' so-called 'affordable rent' homes priced at up to 80% of market rates.
- Taking urgent action to protect private renters and stopping runaway rents by capping them with inflation, and give cities powers to cap rents further.
- Stopping the sell-off of 50,000 social rented homes a year by suspending the right to buy, ending all conversions to 'affordable rent' and scrapping the Government's plans to force councils to sell the best of their homes.
- Backing councils and housing associations with new funding, powers and flexibilities to build again at scale.
- Transforming the planning system with a new duty to deliver affordable homes, an English Sovereign Land Trust to make more land available more cheaply and an end to the 'viability' loophole that lets developers dodge their contribution to more affordable homes.
- Ending the scandal of leasehold for millions who have bought their home but don't feel like they own it. We'll do this by ending the sale of new leasehold properties, abolishing unfair fees and conditions, and giving leaseholders the right to buy their freehold at a price they can afford.

We will make homes safe and energy efficient:

- Introducing a £1 billion Fire Safety Fund to fit sprinklers and other fire safety measures in all high-rise council and housing association tower blocks.
- Enforcing the replacement of dangerous Grenfell style cladding on all high-rise homes and buildings, while introducing mandatory building standards and guidance, inspected and enforced by fully trained Fire and Rescue Service fire safety officers.
- Tackling the climate crisis and cutting energy bills by introducing a tough, new zero-carbon homes standard for all new homes, and upgrading millions of existing homes to make them more energy efficient.