



**SHELTER HOUSING ADVICE AND RESEARCH PROJECT
LEICESTER'S INDEPENDENT HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE SINCE 1974**

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**Shelter Housing Advice & Research Project (SHARP)
RESEARCH & IMPACT EVALUATION
LEICESTER AUGUST 2019 – MAY 2021**

Introduction

As part of its housing advice work, SHARP digitally maintains details of everyone seeking advice (enquiries). This research, prompted primarily by the steady increase in numbers of enquiries over the period under review, August 2019 -May 2021, (see Diagram 1 Below) draws out the main circumstances and reasons that characterise these enquiries.

About SHARP

In the late 60's early 70's a small group of people were very concerned about the problem of homelessness and poor housing in Leicester. The individuals concerned initially set up the Leicester Shelter Group. The group identified a need to provide a housing advice service and carry out some campaigning for decent affordable homes in Leicester & Leicestershire.

In 1966 the BBC broadcast "Cathy Come Home" about a family trapped in homelessness and poverty. Such was the outcry after the play's screening that homelessness organisations such as Shelter England were formed. Leicester and Leicestershire's local Shelter group – SHARP – was established in 1974.

Nearly 50 years on there remains the same crisis in the homelessness and housing, as demonstrated by numerous reports, for example, The Archbishop of Canterbury on <https://www.churchofengland.org>. Tackling the housing crisis, Shelter on <https://england.shelter.org.uk> . Crisis – Together, we will end homelessness on <https://crisis.org.uk> and Action Homeless, Leicester, Our Impact 2019 on <https://actionhomeless.org.uk>. Thus at the local level the work of SHARP unfortunately and damningly remains as important today as when it was formed.

SHARP is currently principally funded by a National Lottery grant. As part of the contractual agreement associated with this grant SHARP is required to deal with 20 or so clients per month/ 60 per quarter. As can be seen from Diagram 1, SHARP is currently working with a much higher rate of demand (and having to refer further enquiries on to alternative agencies for help). SHARP has recently received a grant from the Carlton Hayes Mental Health Charity and during the course of the pandemic has had financial help from the Lloyds Bank Foundation, the CAF Resilience Fund, Homeless Link/MHCLG, the National lottery and Leicester City Council.