

District Profile – Thanet

Local Context

Thanet District has an estimated population of 135,700. It suffers from long-term economic and social problems and contains the two most deprived wards in Kent. The unemployment level is the highest of all the districts in the South East region. There are high levels of economic inactivity.

Unemployment Level (JSA claimant level)

	Thanet		Comparators		
	Number	% 16-64 population	Kent %	South East %	GB %
Feb-13	5,052	6.3	3.3	2.6	3.9
May-13	4,700	5.9	2.9	2.3	3.6
Aug-13	4,462	5.6	2.7	2.1	3.3
Nov-13	4,181	5.2	2.4	1.8	2.9
Feb-14	4,275	5.3	2.5	1.9	3

The typical full time weekly wage before stoppages for people in Thanet is £415.10. This equates to an annual salary of £21,585. This is lowest in Kent.

Housing within the private sector in Thanet has acute problems in common with a number of coastal towns. It has a large private rented sector, 28.5%, which are closely linked to levels of deprivation. 30% of the private sector housing is accommodated by vulnerable people. Thanet has a large number of converted blocks of flats at 11% of the stock, whilst the South East has an average of 6% and England overall only 4.3%. Old guest houses and hotels have been converted to poor quality Houses in Multiple Occupation. House prices, and rents are low causing an inward migration of vulnerable people.

Local Issues

Homelessness presentations and acceptances consistently remain higher than the South East average. Homelessness approaches have increased from 131 in 2010/11 to 349 in 12/13. This being an increase of 166%. When homelessness cannot be prevented, households make a formal homeless application, which is assessed by the council to determine if a main duty to provide the household with housing assistance is owed. In 12/13, 128 households were accepted as eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

The majority of homelessness acceptances are households with children/and or pregnant women. This has increased from 8 cases in 2010/11 to 17 in 2012/13.

There are a high number of households under 25 years of age approaching us for assistance with homelessness. Demand for support services and specialist young persons accommodation is high and far outstrips the supply.

Increasing numbers of households are approaching us for assistance with specialist support needs around mental health and households fleeing domestic violence.

There is still a reliance on emergency accommodation such as B&B and the length of stay and associated costs have fluctuated over the years, however the last few years have shown a reduction in costs. The Housing Options team are actively looking at

options to reduce the use of this type of accommodation due to costs and suitability. We do have a number of families with children placed in all types of emergency accommodation but when they are in B&B the statutory guidance of no longer than six weeks is adhered to.

With a growing number of approaches for housing advice it is evident that homelessness prevention is one of our main targets. Keeping people in their home or finding alternative accommodation before becoming homelessness as a result of interventions to support them to remain in their own homes for example reconciliation support, debt advice and support to deal with rent arrears, has been increasingly successful. Last year (2012-2013) 318 cases were assisted, and this has increased this year (2013-2014) by 6%.

Following a review of our housing register, we now have 978 households on the register with approximately 500 waiting to be assessed.

Incidences of rough sleeping have increased, year on year and this is reflective of a regional trend.

2010	2011	2012	2013
1	9	8	14