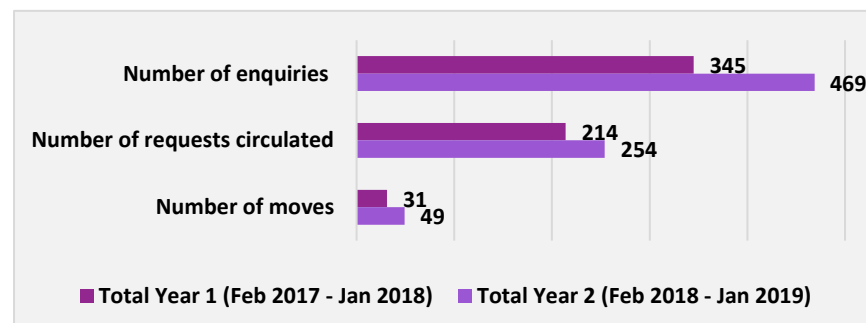


Summary of key learning from two years of the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal

The Pan-London Housing Reciprocal (PLHR) was launched on 30th January 2017 at City Hall. This housing pathway is a **voluntary collaboration** between all London **local authorities** and **47 registered housing providers and support agencies**, centrally coordinated by Safer London and funded by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). It increases options for people with a **social housing tenancy** in London who are at **high risk of harm** and need to relocate to another area of London in order to **remain safe and not lose their social tenancy**. This summary outlines emerging trends from the first two years, alongside a breakdown of PLHR activity, including comparisons between year 1 and 2. Referral forms were completed with varying levels of detail, therefore we highlight indications of trends and need, based on available data.

Overview of activity in year 2

The activity of the PLHR has seen an increase in all areas between the first year and the second year of operation, with more enquiries, requests circulated and households moved, to a point where we have now moved **over 200 adults and children to safety** (200 was reached in March 2019). Over the two years there was a total of 284 property offers made.

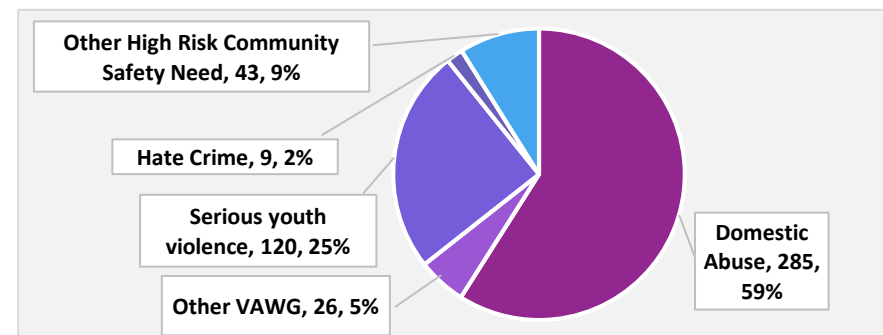


On average, there were just over **4 moves per month in the second year compared to 3 in the first year**, and a total of **189 adults and children were moved to safety**. Requests have been made for applicants from all boroughs

apart from two. The two boroughs where no tenants have made requests have made offers of accommodation to other areas so that has been some engagement now from every part of London. All boroughs have been requested at least 80 times. In addition, **we have reached over 1,500 professionals through training, workshops and events over the two years**. This includes housing professionals, alongside other support agencies.

Primary Reason for Referral

The majority of referrals were for households fleeing domestic abuse. The below graph shows the *primary* reasons for referrals across the two years of operation:



Overview of households referred

80% of our referrals have children in the household, and almost nine in ten applications (88%) have been for women-led households including single parent women (74%) and single women (14%). This was the case across all referrals, regardless of the type of violence the family was fleeing from with the exception of hate crime. For two thirds (66%) of the referrals made due to a risk of serious youth violence, the person most at risk was a female tenant’s son (or grandson), and in three cases the tenant’s daughter.

The biggest age group for lead applicants was 35-49 year olds. However, (61%) of applicants fleeing domestic abuse were aged under 35 including 12% that were under 25. Over two years, for 68% of referrals the lead applicant has been from a BME background. A similar percentage (66%) of successful referrals were for households where the lead tenant was from a BME background. We have gathered disability and sexuality data since 2018 and for 17% of referrals, the lead

applicant identified themselves as having a disability. We had four referrals for applicants identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual in the diversity section. We also had three applications mentioning that the applicant was transgender and at risk from transphobic hate crime.

Multiple forms of violence and disadvantage

For 144 referrals (30%), it was identified that the individual or family were fleeing multiple forms of violence. In our first year 47% of referrals had an additional needs identified and in our second year this increased to 59%. In **35% of referrals we received over the two years, someone within the household reported having a mental health need**, compared to just 29% in year 1. For Domestic abuse referrals this percentage was higher over the two years at 38%.

Additional housing barriers facing households fleeing violence

Rent Arrears

The proportion of applicants in rent arrears increased in year two, **with 41% of applicants in arrears compared with 32% in the first year**. For most mobility schemes for social tenants, having no rent arrears is a requirement. We do not as our applicants are often experiencing economic or financial abuse. Applicants are asked to outline plans in place to address arrears and we found that having arrears did not negatively impact the likelihood of successful move.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding continues to be prevalent for households referred to the reciprocal scheme. Over the 2 years of operation, **37% of all non-single households referred were overcrowded** – that is almost three times the overcrowding rate in the social housing sector in London (13%: *Trust for London*). We found that overcrowding did have a negative impact on the likelihood of receiving an offer. A number of housing providers informed us that they are not able to sign a new tenancy for an overcrowded household. However through the reciprocal some partners have put households forward for larger properties on an agreement that they will reciprocate a larger property.

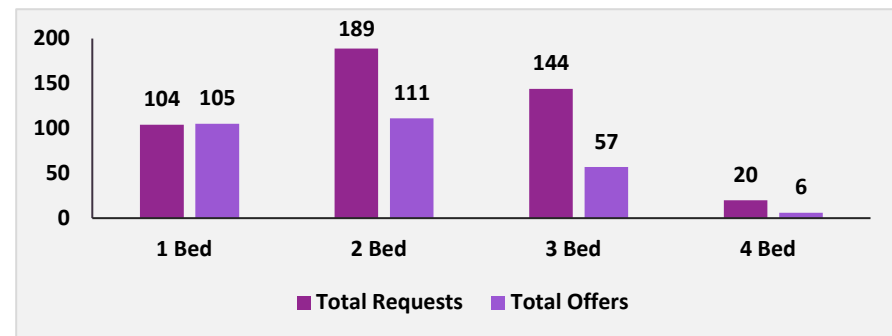
"I have now got a future as I feel safer and more secure."

Floor requirements

Ground floor properties are in short supply in London's social housing stock. **Over the two years, over one third of all applicants (39%) had a specific floor requirement in their property request**. 8% had a ground floor need and 31% had a lower floor or another requirement (e.g. a lift). This includes cases where applicants may have a physical disability or have sustained injuries that restrict their physical mobility, as well as mental health needs linked with the trauma they experienced that might make a high floor level unsafe for them.

Learning on the PLHR process

The biggest factors affecting the probability of receiving an offer were still the number of bedrooms requested (fewer larger properties available); types of referrals (serious youth violence related referrals received fewer offers); the number of boroughs requested; and whether there were any floor requirements. The below graph shows total number of property requests and offers year 1 and 2 combined by number of bedrooms.



These factors intersect, for instance the probability of receiving an offer for a 3 bed property request was 31% on average, but only 13% of the 3 bed property requests with a ground floor need have received an offer compared with 42% of the 3 bed referrals that had no floor requirement.

Property refusals

We found that almost half of property refusals were related to property type, most often due to the floor level being too high. Other reasons included: the property being part of an estate/tower block, requests for further bedrooms (which were not outlined on initial referral) and the property being too small. The

other main categories for offer refusal were location (in 22% of refusals) and risk (19%), most often due to the new property being too far from support networks or close to a risk area. Only 7% of property refusals recorded were due to change in rent or tenancy type. As coordinators, Safer London do not take any applicant off the list for refusing a property, it would be up to the referrers to withdraw the application if they no longer wish to move. If a property is refused, we re-match it with another reciprocal applicant.

Waiting Times

Waiting times to access social housing in London are very high and averages are sometimes published on councils' websites. Redbridge, for instance, published an average waiting time in 2016/2017 of 6 years for a 1-bed, 8 years for a 2-bed and 11 years for a 3-bed (Redbridge website). Our analysis has shown that for all the applicants who received at least one offer through the scheme, the average waiting time before receiving an offer was **2 months**.

Tenancy Types

As in year 1, most applicants had a secure tenancy (55%), 33% had an assured tenancy and 8% had an assured shorthold tenancy agreement. In most cases, equivalent tenancies have been offered by the partner housing provider. There have been occasions when a greater security of tenancy was received, and a small number of examples where a less secure tenancy was accepted based on property type/location.

Referring and Supporting agencies

The majority of referrals over the two years (approximately two thirds) are from housing professionals. The main other sector making referrals is the VAWG/DV sector (19%). Then other voluntary sector organisations (5%) and Social Services (4%). **Referrals from Social Services increased from 2 in the first year to 19 in the second year, due to our awareness raising work.**

Across years one and two we saw similar levels of contact with statutory services at 89% compared to 88% last year, this includes housing, social services and police. We saw a slight decrease in support from the voluntary sector at 52%

compared to 63% in year 1. This could suggest a decline in voluntary sector support provisions, due to commissioning and funding impacts. The most common support agency was specialist VAWG or DV agencies. We see that voluntary sector support positively affects the PLHR process. **Over 2 years, 57% of applicants overall had support from the voluntary sector, and this was higher for successful applicants at 66%.**

Developing the Reciprocal in Year 2

In year two we have focussed on expanding the reciprocal's reach, for instance by mapping and reaching out to new partners, delivering presentations and awareness raising sessions, and holding targeted meetings with our housing partners. We have also been working to improve **accessibility for different groups**. This included a focus on survivors leaving care or prison. We have seen an increase in enquiries or referrals for both these groups as a result.

We have also been **aligning with other housing mobility schemes, to increase the amount of properties available**. For instance, we are working to link with the GLA's Housing Moves team, who have also have access to properties across London. Through this arrangement, PLHR applicants fleeing domestic abuse or other forms of Violence against Women will have a high priority to bid on properties in safer boroughs via Housing Moves.

Finally in our second year we were delighted to be a winner of The London Homelessness Award 2018, and recognised as good practice in expanding housing pathways for households at risk. Safer London is now also working with a range of partners including DAHA and SEA to **share our learning nationally on managed reciprocals** as part of The Whole Housing project, funded by MHCLG.

"Mentally I'm in a better place, I'm happy and so are the children"

"I have no idea what I would do to support clients needing to flee a borough if the reciprocal did not exist, you are life savers!" Feedback from support professional

Timeline



Feb' 2018: Launch London VAWG and Housing Operational and Strategic Groups with Solace Women's Aid



- Achievements to date...**
- **Over 200 people** have moved through the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal
 - **76 Registered housing providers** are now signed up to the scheme including all London local authorities
 - **Award winning** scheme that has been recognised as good practice nationally
 - **Over 1500 professionals** reached through training, workshops and events

31st Jan' 17: Launch of the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal in City Hall

Nov' 17: First Named Leads workshop delivered

27th Mar' 18: 100 people moved through the PLHR!

Oct' 18: PLHR is a prize winner at the London Homelessness Awards

Mar' 17: First move through the Pan-London Housing

Jul' 17: PLHR recognised as good practice in [APPG for Ending Homelessness](#). National rollout recommended



Mar' 18: Launch of 1st year report at VAWG and Homelessness event at City Hall

Jun' 18: start work on developing the PLHR to increase accessibility including for survivors leaving care or prison

Nov' 18: Become partner in the MHCLG funded 'Whole Housing' Project to share the PLHR model in two new areas nationally for survivors of domestic abuse.

Thank you [@SaferLondon1](#) for making this project so accessible. One of our service users told us yesterday "I'm so happy. I finally feel I can put this horrific ordeal behind me and make a bright, fresh new start with my life." Keep up the good work. We cannot thank you enough! Support professional via Twitter