



Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030 Draft for consultation

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Foreword

Brighton & Hove is an amazing city – vibrant, creative and inclusive. Our vision is for a better Brighton & Hove for all - a city we can all be proud of, somewhere that is fair and inclusive and a healthy place where people can thrive.

Last year we outlined our plans to deliver accessible, affordable and high-quality homes in Homes for Everyone, our housing strategy for 2024 to 2029. Sadly, not everyone in the city enjoys the benefits of a stable, safe and suitable home. We want to change that. Housing is a fundamental human right and homes for everyone is central to achieving our vision. This draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy sets out our proposed priorities to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next 5 years.

Homelessness can happen to anyone, but it disproportionately affects people who are already vulnerable: those who can't afford to pay the rent, people fleeing violence and abuse, and those evicted by their landlord or asked to leave by family or friends. The consequences can be devastating.

Our overarching priority is to stop people becoming homeless in the first place. The council and a whole range of other organisations can provide information, advice and support to help people stay put or find alternative accommodation.

If people do become homeless, the council can help them find a settled home, and in some cases offer temporary accommodation. However, too many people are spending too long in temporary accommodation, often in homes of a poorer quality. This is unacceptable and unsustainable. Our second priority, therefore, is to ensure that there is sufficient good quality temporary accommodation available; to support people while they are there; and to help them move on as quickly as possible.

Some people are more vulnerable when they become homeless or more likely to sleep rough. This includes children and young people, those fleeing domestic abuse, people with mental health needs, substance use issues, or a history of offending. Our third priority is to work with our partners to provide joined-up support for people who most need our help, with a long-term goal of ending rough sleeping in the city.

The input of people with lived experience of homelessness and our partners has helped shape this draft strategy. We have developed our proposed priorities and commitments together. We are deeply grateful to those who have contributed and look forward to your feedback in our public consultation.

Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act (2002) all housing authorities must have a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed every 5 years. This draft strategy for consultation sets out the council's plans for preventing and reducing homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are available for people who are at risk or those who become homeless.

There is increasing demand for our services and there are specific legal duties that the council, as the local housing authority, must comply with. Currently we are spending too much on temporary accommodation and our resources are shrinking. We anticipate a significant reduction in funding over the life of the strategy. To deliver the strategy it must be financially sustainable.

Preventing and alleviating homelessness is a legal duty for the council. We will do everything we can to make sure that people are treated fairly and with respect when they approach us for help, whatever their housing situation. Everyone deserves our support, but we will prioritise those with greatest need and the most vulnerable. This includes support to access appropriate housing and to maintain independence and dignity.

Homelessness is rooted in structural inequalities and system wide challenges. Unemployment, disability, ill health, mental health needs, substance use, domestic abuse, and family breakdown create pathways into homelessness for many. The current cost of living crisis has intensified these pressures, while a chronic shortage of genuinely affordable housing means that

even those in work can struggle.

The structural determinants of homelessness require comprehensive, coordinated responses that span multiple policy areas and levels of government. This draft strategy focuses on prevention and early intervention, temporary accommodation, and support for those in greatest need. We recognise that sustainable progress depends on addressing the underlying causes of homelessness through a broader strategic lens. This includes the council plan, the housing strategy, the city plan, economic development strategy, health and wellbeing strategy and more.

While many determinants of homelessness lie beyond our direct control, we will use our voice to advocate for policy change at regional and national levels. This includes pressing for increased investment in social housing, reforms to the welfare system, improved discharge planning from institutions, and better funding for mental health and substance use services. We will work with the new Mayor for Sussex and Brighton, neighbouring local authorities, the Local Government Association, and other networks to amplify the case for addressing the root causes of homelessness.

What our review of homelessness in the city tells us

Almost
3,600
people in
Brighton & Hove
experiencing
homelessness
June 2024



Around
1,400
children (0-17)
experiencing
homelessness
June 2024



76 people
sleeping rough
November 2024



2,624
household
approached council
for homelessness
advice and support
in 2024



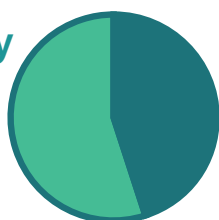
2,366
homelessness
applications
in 2024



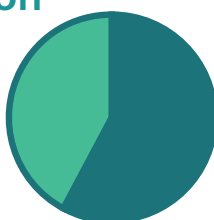
31%
of homes in the
city are privately
rented
(South East 17%;
England 18%)



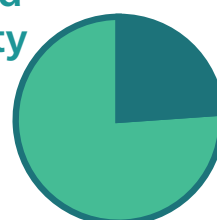
A private renter on
an average income in
Brighton & Hove can
expect to spend
45% of their
household income on
rent. The
'affordability
threshold'
is 30%.



End of private
rented tenancy
reason for
homelessness for
58% of
those owed
a prevention
duty



Family or friends
no longer willing
to accommodate
reason for
homelessness for
24% of
those owed
a relief duty



616
main housing
duty acceptances
in 2024



7,500
households on
waiting list for
social housing



3.3 years
- average wait
for socially
rented home



6.2 years
– average wait
for 3-bedroom
socially rented
home



68% of
main applicants
owed a relief
duty have 1+
support needs



1,928 households in temporary
accommodation

22% of
households
in temporary
accommodation
single male
no children



47%
of households
in temporary
accommodation have
children



21%
of households
in temporary
accommodation
single female +
children

35% of main applicants owed a relief duty have a history of mental health needs



704 people experiencing homelessness with 2+ compounding needs (mental health, substance use, domestic abuse, history of offending)



Council homelessness services **£31.4** million in 2025/26 budget, of which £28 million for temporary accommodation



NHS specialist homeless healthcare services **£3.3** million



110 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations offering 204 specialist and support services



2,220 volunteer hours per week



Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector estimated added value

£10+ million



Our vision and priorities

The council's vision is for a better Brighton & Hove for all. We want a city we can all be proud of, somewhere that is fair and inclusive, a safe and healthy place where people can thrive.

Our housing strategy Homes for Everyone, sets out our priorities for housing in the city. These are to improve housing quality, safety and sustainability; to deliver the homes our city needs; to promote improved health and wellbeing for all; to provide resident focused housing services; and to prevent homelessness and meet housing need

Our primary goal is to prevent homelessness. If a family or individual does become homeless, then their experience should be brief, and it should not recur. This draft strategy was developed with our partners and, most importantly, with the input of people with lived experience of homelessness. It draws on evidence from our review of homelessness in the city.

We propose 3 main priorities with 9 areas for focused action and a small number of targeted, strategic actions for each. We will continue to work to meet our legal responsibilities and to deliver and improve existing services. To ensure accountability, we will report on progress using the proposed indicators for each priority.

Our proposed priorities for the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030 are to:

1. Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

- 1.1 Early identification of risk and early intervention
- 1.2 Support people to stay in their homes or to find a new home
- 1.3 Deliver targeted prevention for people at risk of rough sleeping

2. Improve temporary accommodation pathways and experiences

- 2.1 Improve move on from temporary accommodation into settled housing
- 2.2 Support people living in temporary accommodation
- 2.3 Improve the supply and quality of temporary accommodation

3. Provide joined-up support with our partners to people who most need help

- 3.1 Target support for people who are most vulnerable
- 3.2 Create integrated services for people with Multiple Compound Needs
- 3.3 Support people experiencing rough sleeping to access services and accommodation

Priority 1: Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

Why this is important

Prevention is central to our strategy because it offers the best outcomes for individuals while making the most effective use of our resources. Homelessness can create lasting trauma, disrupt employment and education, and damage physical and mental health in ways that become increasingly difficult and expensive to address. By working with our partners, sharing information and using digital technologies we can get better at identifying who might be at risk and offer support before they reach crisis point.

Helping people to stay in their home prevents the trauma and cost of homelessness while preserving social connections and stability. Proactive landlord engagement, financial advice and support, and mediation services are some of the most cost-effective

interventions we can make. For those who need to leave their home, where attempts to stay have been unsuccessful or because it is unsuitable or unsafe, then support to find a new home is usually a better option than temporary accommodation.

Preventing rough sleeping is critical because it carries the greatest risk of harm and typically requires the most intensive and demanding interventions once people reach the streets. People leaving institutions, those with high support needs, and individuals with multiple compound needs are more likely to sleep rough. Targeted early intervention can break this cycle and prevent the deterioration in physical and mental health that makes future housing solutions more difficult to achieve.

What we will do

1.1 Early identification of risk and early intervention

- Develop a homelessness risk model using data from a range of sources to identify and target support to people at greatest risk of becoming homeless before they reach crisis point.
- Work with universal public services such as Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, Family Hubs, schools, and foodbanks to identify and support individuals and families at risk of homelessness as early as possible.

1.2 Support people to stay in their homes or to find a new home

- Develop integrated tenancy sustainment services, bringing together housing, employment and skills, and financial inclusion partners to deliver coordinated support packages including income maximisation, debt advice, financial literacy training, and flexible crisis prevention funding.
- Improve access to alternative accommodation in the private and socially rented sectors for those who need to find a new home.
- Work with community, voluntary and faith organisations to develop targeted, culturally appropriate information and advice for people from Black and Racially Minoritised groups, including people seeking asylum and refugees, so they can access the support they need.

1.3 Targeted prevention for people at risk of rough sleeping

- Develop a financially sustainable 'no first night out' model to identify and support those who are known to services, including people in temporary or supported accommodation or leaving institutions and care settings, who are at greatest risk of going on to sleep rough.

How we will measure progress

We will track our progress using the following indicators:

- Number of Duty to Refer referrals
- % presenting at prevention duty stage
- % of duties owed where homelessness was prevented
- % of households placed in temporary accommodation
- Number of people sleeping rough on a single night

Priority 2: Improve temporary accommodation pathways and experiences

Why this is important

The number of households living in temporary and emergency accommodation has risen to unprecedented levels. Temporary accommodation is expensive, with costs rising over time. This impacts our ability to invest more in prevention. More importantly, it is insecure and may be unsuitable for people's specific needs long-term.

Too many people are spending too long in temporary accommodation. Children aged 0-17 make up around 40% of the city's homeless population, with most of them living in households in temporary accommodation. Extended stays in temporary accommodation can have a negative impact on children's educational attainment, social development, and mental health. For adults, the experience can worsen existing vulnerabilities and make it harder to find solutions and routes into settled accommodation. Living in temporary accommodation can disrupt support networks and community connections, especially where people are placed outside the city.

We recognise that while we need to prevent homelessness from occurring, we must also ensure that when people do need temporary accommodation, their experience is as positive as possible and that they move on to settled housing quickly. This requires us to reduce the overall numbers in temporary accommodation through effective prevention and reduce the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation through better pathways to settled housing.

Increasing the supply of good quality temporary accommodation reduces our dependence on more expensive forms of accommodation. Having an adequate supply also means we can better match households to appropriate accommodation types, ensuring people have suitable facilities and space. Finally, having sufficient supply reduces the pressure to place households out of area, helping maintain community connections and support networks.

What we will do

2.1 Improve move on from temporary accommodation into settled housing

- Reduce our overall use of temporary accommodation by working with our supported and social housing partners to develop bespoke pathways into settled housing.
- Develop intensive, personalised move-on support to households in temporary accommodation, including assessment of barriers to move on, practical assistance with housing applications, financial support for deposits and removals, and tenancy sustainment support once in permanent housing.

2.2 Support people living in temporary accommodation

- Explore floating support services for people living in temporary accommodation to help them maintain community connections and social support networks and develop the skills and confidence needed for move on.
- Undertake a comprehensive needs assessment to better understand the needs and support requirements of households in temporary accommodation and inform service improvements.

2.3 Improve the supply and quality of temporary accommodation

- Put in place a recovery plan to address the short- and medium-term impact of rising temporary accommodation costs, a changing private rented sector market and expected loss of grant funding.
- Develop a comprehensive temporary accommodation acquisitions strategy to increase supply, raise standards and achieve long-term financial sustainability by retendering block booking contracts, introduce dynamic purchasing and reduce the use of spot purchasing.
- Strengthen accommodation supply by developing additional provision in partnership with private and social landlords and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

How we will measure progress

We will track our progress using the following indicators:

- Total number of people in temporary accommodation
- Average length of stay in temporary accommodation
- Number of households with children in temporary accommodation
- Families with children in B&B over 6 weeks
- % of temporary accommodation spot purchased
- Successful move-ons per quarter

Priority 3: Provide joined-up support with our partners to people who most need help

Why this is important

There is a high demand for support and services from people in urgent housing need, including those fleeing domestic violence, vulnerable families, refugees and asylum seekers, LGBTQ+ youth, people with mental health needs, neurodivergent people and others. These factors often interact to amplify need and vulnerability. Our services are seeing increasing numbers of people with significant, and often complex, needs. In responding to those needs we will tailor our services to ensure fair access to good quality, people centred, and trauma informed support.

People who experience three or more of the following are described as having multiple compound needs: homelessness, mental health needs, substance use, current or past offending and domestic abuse. The term attempts to capture the way these issues combine to impact someone's life. Addressing multiple compound needs is a priority for our Health and Care Partnership. Together, we aim to jointly commission and deliver wraparound services for people with multiple compound needs.

Our ambition is to end rough sleeping in the city. People who sleep rough have often experienced serious, sometimes multiple traumas in their lives. The experience of rough sleeping itself is traumatic. Women and young people are at greater risk of victimisation and physical and sexual violence when sleeping rough. As well as preventing rough sleeping where we can, we will work with our partners to review and improve our accommodation and support offer for rough sleepers. This includes the development of our single homeless supported housing pathway, to better meet the needs of people with high levels of need.

What we will do

3.1 Target support for people who are most vulnerable

- Establish multi-agency protocols for supporting priority groups including care leavers, 16–17-year-olds, pregnant women, families with children, domestic abuse survivors, refugees and asylum seekers, LGBTQ+ people and other vulnerable groups, ensuring coordinated assessment and support pathways.
- Develop a supported housing strategy and prepare for the anticipated changes to supported housing standards.
- Improve housing options and pathways for domestic abuse survivors, recognising their specific safety and support needs.

3.2 Create integrated services for people with multiple compound needs

- Improve the join up between the council's homelessness services and homeless healthcare services through a new Homeless and Multiple Compound Needs Partnership.
- Embed co-production approaches by working with people with lived experience to co-create innovative services, policies and practice improvements that reflect their expertise and priorities.
- Agree a care and support protocol for people with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues, which disproportionately affect people experiencing homelessness.
- Collaborate with our NHS and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector partners to take forward our shared ambition for a new integrated homeless healthcare hub.

3.3 Support people experiencing rough sleeping access services and accommodation

- Review and recommission our Housing First service to improve outcomes for residents and ensure a better distribution of Housing First tenancies across a range of housing stock.
- Provide enhanced support for those who return to rough sleeping, using data to track flow and target prevention work.
- Review and improve homeless day centre provision in the city to ensure that it meets a broader range of needs and is financially sustainable.
- Develop our housing offer and support services for those experiencing long term rough sleeping.
- Work with our partners to pilot a new multidisciplinary in-reach support approach to inform the development of the wider single homeless supported housing pathway.

How we will measure progress

We will track our progress using the following indicators:

- Households with accommodation secured at end of prevention/relief duty for households also experiencing at least two areas of overlapping disadvantage
- Number of households unable to be supported at domestic abuse safe accommodation due to being unable to meet additional needs.
- Percentage of people with multiple compound needs achieving positive outcomes across at least 3 domains (housing, health, criminal justice, substance use) at 12 months
- Number of people sleeping rough over the month who are long term

Tackling homelessness in children, families and young people

Children (0-17) comprise around 17% of the population of Brighton & Hove but make up almost 40% of the city's homeless population. Most are part of families living in temporary accommodation. Families with children make up 42% of those seeking help from the council because they are at risk of homelessness, 19% of those owed a relief duty and 42% of those owed a main duty. National evidence tells us that outcomes for children living in temporary accommodation are significantly worse than for those in settled accommodation.

Young people aged 18-25 comprise around 14% of the city's population and approximately 20% of the homeless population. National and local data tell us that youth homelessness is increasing. Young people face distinct and often overlooked challenges that put them at greater risk of homelessness - from family breakdown, trauma and care experience, to lower pay, reduced benefit entitlements and limited access to safe housing. They are also more vulnerable if they do become homeless.

In developing this draft strategy, we have listened to feedback from our partners and other stakeholders and have included a dedicated chapter on children, families and young people. We want to ensure that the challenges facing children, families, and young people experiencing homelessness are explicitly addressed. We are seeking views on actions which will transform outcomes for some of the city's most vulnerable children and young people. We have suggested some areas below where we think we could make the most difference.

Priority 1: Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

- Increase early identification of children, families and young people at risk of homelessness through early help and universal services such as schools and Family Hubs.
- Develop our family intervention and mediation services to prevent homelessness.
- Deliver targeted prevention for young people at risk of rough sleeping.

Priority 2: Improve temporary accommodation pathways and experiences

- Support children, families and young people maintain connections to services and support networks.
- Improve standards for children and families living in temporary accommodation.
- Minimise the use of B&B, other forms of non-self-contained accommodation and out-of-area placements for families with children.
- Develop tailored pathways for vulnerable young people that meet distinct needs and experiences.

Priority 3: Provide joined-up support with our partners to people who most need help

- Ensure that children, families and young people experiencing homelessness receive coordinated protection and support.
- Support care experienced young people and other vulnerable young people to sustain their tenancies.
- Strengthen our support offer for the most vulnerable children and young people.

How we will measure progress

We will track progress using the following measures:

- Number of households with children in temporary accommodation
- Number of families in B&B over 6 weeks
- Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation

Our commitments

Our strategy is an ambitious, 5-year plan and is intended to contribute to delivering our long term vision of a better Brighton & Hove for all and our goal of homes for everyone. We know that we can't deliver it on our own.

Many of the factors that cause homelessness are outside our direct control. To achieve real change, we will need to collaborate with government, with regional and local partners and with people with lived experience of homelessness.

We are doing this in a context where demand for support is increasing and where resources are becoming scarcer. We need to manage our finances effectively and use data and evidence intelligently, targeting our interventions where they will have greatest impact.

We need a compassionate, skilled and knowledgeable workforce to deliver inclusive, person-centred services.

To deliver our strategy, we commit to:

1. Be fair and inclusive

- a. Develop holistic, person-centred and trauma informed services
- b. Champion equality, diversity and inclusion
- c. Challenge stigma, build trust, and promote community integration and social connections

2. Work in partnership

- a. With people with lived experience to jointly design services and policy
- b. With government, regional and local partners to tackle the root causes of homelessness
- c. With the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to bring additional resources and expertise to deliver the aims of the strategy

3. Make best use of our resources

- a. Ensure our workforce has the support, knowledge and skills to do their very best
- b. Manage our financial resources and assets to ensure best value and financial sustainability
- c. Use our information to better understand need, deliver evidence-based solutions and drive innovation

Delivering the strategy

The council is embedding a learning framework to support our journey to become a learning organisation. We will use this framework to underpin the delivery of our strategy.



Be connected

We are committed to work with our partners, including people with lived experience, to design services and support for people at risk or who are experiencing homelessness. We also recognise that partnership across the broader system will help us tackle the structural determinants of homelessness.

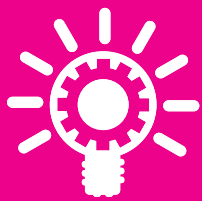
Together with our partners, we will put in place governance arrangements to ensure oversight and delivery of the strategy. As well as an annual action plan to accompany the final strategy, more detail on delivery will be set out in our service and operational plans. We will work with our partners and with people with lived experience to develop these. We will report on progress and update the action plan annually.



Be confident

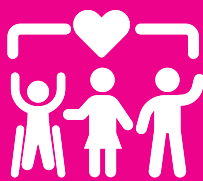
We face significant challenges. The cost of meeting our legal duty to provide temporary accommodation continues to rise rapidly. We allocated £28 million to meet the cost of temporary accommodation in 2025/26. It is likely that we will significantly overspend this by the end of the year. Due to a change in the funding formula for the Homelessness Prevention Grant we also expect that over the life of the strategy we will lose grant funding from central government.

All this means that we must do things differently. We know that we need to shift our approach to focus more on prevention and early intervention. Over the long term, we are confident that this will improve outcomes for people and reduce the cost of temporary accommodation to the council. In the short to medium term, however, we need to make some difficult decisions, including how and where we source our temporary accommodation.



Be innovative and creative

Our financial position means that we need to think creatively with our partners about how we pool resources, integrate services and develop innovative solutions. We need to invest in our collective workforce to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge that is needed. We also need to make best use of our buildings and other physical assets across the city and develop a plan to ensure these are used to greatest effect. We will continue to develop our joint commissioning arrangement to ensure integrated, multi-agency, wrap-around support to people experiencing homelessness.



Be diverse and inclusive

In reviewing homelessness and developing our priorities, the unequal impact of homelessness on some groups and individuals is striking. Our attention has been drawn to factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, disability and more. What is equally striking is that while these factors can help us understand risk, none of them alone can help us predict who is likely to become homeless or the impact of homelessness on their lives.

We need to get better at understanding how these and other characteristics interact in different contexts to develop interventions and services that recognise the diversity of experiences and needs, challenge stigma and promote inclusion. We believe that the best way to do this is by working in partnership with people with lived experience of homelessness.



Be healthy and psychologically safe

The impact of homelessness on health and wellbeing is clear from the evidence we have gathered. Poor health is also a factor that can contribute to someone becoming homeless. Changes in national policy will give us more leverage to tackle poor housing conditions in both the private and social rented sectors. We also plan to work with our providers across sectors to drive up standards in temporary accommodation.

The interaction between homelessness and mental health is one of the most significant issues that we have identified. Many individuals who become homeless have a history of traumatic experiences prior to losing their homes. These can include childhood abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, or significant life crises such as the death of a loved one or financial hardship. The trauma of homelessness compounds these earlier experiences. In delivering this strategy, we have committed to work in ways that are trauma informed and psychologically safe.





