

# **Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030**

Brighton & Hove City Council



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# Foreword

In July 2023, we set out a vision 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. Accessible, affordable and high-quality homes for everyone is central to delivering that vision. Sadly, not everyone in the city enjoys the benefits of a settled home, with 1 in 77 people experiencing homelessness, including around 1,400 children. We are working tirelessly to change that.

This strategy builds on our homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2020 to 2025. Since that was agreed, our housing needs services have been remodelled, with prevention outcomes now consistently outperforming other councils in the region. We have revised our Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that people who have experienced homelessness can remain on the housing register after moving into private rented housing. We have also set up a tenancy sustainment service to help prevent repeat homelessness.

We have worked with our valued partners in the voluntary sector to offer advice and support, including outreach services, day centre provision and supported housing. With social care and the NHS, we have developed pathways for the most vulnerable, including rough sleepers, 16–17-year-olds, care leavers, refugees, and people with multiple compound needs. In 2021, with cross party support, Brighton & Hove became the first UK council to sign the Homeless Bill of Rights. This was a core commitment in the last strategy, reinforcing our determination to uphold the rights of people experiencing homelessness.

Housing is a fundamental human right. 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 therefore is to stop people becoming homeless in the first place. The council and many other organisations can provide information, advice and support to help people stay put or to find alternative accommodation. They can also help prevent people from sleeping rough by intervening early and offering practical assistance.

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, sometimes accommodation 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 are more likely to sleep rough. This includes people 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.

Not only are children and young people more vulnerable when they become homeless, they are hugely over-represented in the city's homeless population. Approximately 2 in every 5 people experiencing homelessness in Brighton & Hove are under 18. This is unacceptable and we will give them the priority they deserve. We have chosen to place a special focus in this strategy on tackling homelessness in children, families and young people.

Our partners and people with lived experience of homelessness have helped shape this new strategy. We have developed and refined the priorities and commitments together. We will continue to work together to deliver our shared ambitions.

Councillor Gill Williams: Cabinet Member for Housing, Brighton & Hove City Council

Councillor Paul Nann: Cabinet Advisor - Homelessness, Brighton & Hove City Council

# 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 strategy 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.

We are facing unprecedented challenges. There are specific duties that the council, as the local housing authority, must comply with. Demand for our services continues to rise however, with more people, including people with higher levels of need, approaching us for help. With this additional pressure and with rising costs, the council is spending too much on temporary accommodation. This means that we have fewer resources available for prevention and support services. We also anticipate a significant reduction in government funding over the life of the strategy. All this means that we must do things differently. To deliver our strategy it must be financially sustainable.

Preventing and alleviating homelessness are legal duties for the council. We will continue to meet our legal responsibilities and to deliver and improve our services. 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 providing 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 also depends on addressing the underlying causes of homelessness through a broader strategic lens. This includes the council plan *A Better Brighton & Hove for All*, with its focus on creating a city we can all be proud of, a fair and inclusive city that helps people to thrive.

As well as preventing homelessness and meeting housing need, *Homes for Everyone*, our housing strategy 2024 to 2025 sets out plans to improve housing quality, safety and sustainability, to deliver the homes the city needs, promote healthy housing and provide resident focused housing services. The overarching planning framework and targets for housing and infrastructure, including affordable and specialist homes can be found in the City Plan. Other key plans and strategies include the economic development strategy, joint 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 our local partners, 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.

As we developed our priorities we asked for input from people with lived experience of homelessness, frontline service providers and other partners. We also consulted publicly on a draft strategy. The priorities and areas for improvement that we have agreed are based on this engagement and consultation and on the data and evidence from our review of homelessness.

There was strong support for the principle of early identification and support to prevent homelessness. There was also an acknowledgement of the challenges we face. We need to shift resources to prevent homelessness, but we also need to ensure that those who are currently homeless receive the support they need.

The focus on temporary accommodation was also endorsed. We have put forward priorities and actions that we think will make the most difference including driving up standards in interim placements, an area of concern for many.

Our goal of improving and joining up services for those who most need help attracted many people's support. They told us that mental health, physical health and substance use needs should be addressed alongside housing needs to make the most difference. The widespread experience and impact of trauma was also emphasised by many. Domestic abuse and support for refugees and asylum seekers were areas of particular concern. The strategy contains measure that we believe will support progress in these areas. Work to integrate services is already underway.

We have chosen to give a particular focus to tackling homelessness in children, families and young people. This emphasis was strongly supported in the public consultation feedback. We acknowledge that this is a broad group with diverse needs and experiences. In delivering the strategy we will need to address the needs of children living with their family, of children separated from their family, and also of young people both within and outside families. If we can reduce the impact of homelessness on children and young people, we will have made a significant difference to their lives and to achieving the vision of a better Brighton & Hove for all.

This strategy should also be read alongside other plans and strategies to address need and vulnerability. In delivering the strategy we will develop our interventions in line with the cost-of-living plan, drugs and alcohol strategy, autism and learning disability strategies, mental health housing action plan, suicide prevention strategy, domestic abuse accommodation strategy, transition to adulthood strategy and others.

In 2024, the incoming government announced that they would begin work on a cross-government, national homelessness strategy. We anticipate that this will be published in the coming months and will have a strong focus on prevention. As we begin implementation of our local strategy, we will take national priorities into account in our delivery plans.

# What our review of homelessness in the city tells us

Our *Review of homelessness in Brighton & Hove 2025* sets out the detailed data and evidence that inform this strategy. Key facts and figures from the review can be found below.

Analysis by Shelter indicated that there were 3,580 people experiencing homelessness at the end of June 2024 in Brighton & Hove. Most (3,528) were living in temporary accommodation and a further 52 were sleeping rough. There were 1,411 homeless children aged 0-17 in the city, almost 40% of the total homeless population.

- 3,580 people in Brighton & Hove experiencing homelessness June 2024
- 1,411 children experiencing homelessness June 2024
- 52 people sleeping rough June 2024

Homeless applications have been rising since 2021. In 2024, 2,624 households approached the council for help either because they were at risk of homelessness or because they were homeless. Of these 2,366 made a homeless application. If people approach us before they become homeless, we can often help them stay in their home or find an alternative. 594 households approached the council for help before they became homeless in 2024. The number of households approaching the council after they had already become homeless rose from 993 in 2021 to 1,230 in 2024.

- 2,624 household approached council for homelessness advice and support in 2024
- 2,366 homeless applications in 2024
- 594 households approached the council before they became homeless in 2024
- 1,230 households approached the council after they had become homeless in 2024

There are many reasons why someone can be threatened with homelessness or become homeless. The four most common reasons in Brighton & Hove are the end of a private rented tenancy; family or friends no longer willing to accommodate; fleeing domestic violence; and eviction from supported housing.

- End of private rented tenancy main reason for 58% of those owed a prevention duty
- Family or friends no longer willing to accommodate main reason for 24% of those owed a relief duty

If homelessness cannot be prevented the council may have an on-going duty to help someone to find a settled home if they are eligible, have a priority need and other tests are met. This is called the main housing duty. Households accepted as owed a duty under the

main housing duty have more than doubled over the last 5 years with 616 acceptances in 2024 compared to 261 in 2020.

- 616 main housing duty acceptances in 2024

While people's homeless applications are being processed or while they are waiting to be rehoused, they may be placed in temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation can include private rented housing, council owned properties, hostels and refuges as well as Houses in Multiple Occupation, B&Bs or hotels. After falling between 2020 and 2022, the use of temporary accommodation by the council has again risen, with 1,928 households living in temporary accommodation at the end of 2024.

- 1,928 households in temporary accommodation December 2024

Almost half (47%) of households in temporary accommodation at the end of December 2024 contained children. 21% of households in temporary accommodation consist of a single female with children.

- 47% of households in temporary accommodation have children
- 21% of households in temporary accommodation single female + children

A third of households in temporary accommodation at the end of December 2024 consisted of single people.

- 22% of households in temporary accommodation single male no children
- 11% of households in temporary accommodation single female no children

There is an acute shortage of social and private rented sector accommodation in the city. For those waiting for social housing, the average waiting time is 3.3 years. If a household needs a larger home, the average wait for a 3 bedroom social rented property is 6.2 years.

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

Almost a third of homes in the city are privately rented. This is much higher than the regional or England averages. The cost of renting in the private sector in the city is high, with a private renter on an average income expected to spend around 45% of their income on rent. This is much higher than the 'affordability threshold' of 30% of household income.

- 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%.

Most people approaching the council when they are already homeless have at least one support need. The 4 most common support needs are a history of mental health problems, physical ill health and disability, drug dependency needs and experience of domestic abuse.

- 68% of main applicants owed a relief duty have 1+ support needs
- 35% of main applicants owed a relief duty have a history of mental health needs

Many people experiencing homelessness have more than one support need. In early 2025 there were 704 people in contact with homelessness services who were experiencing homelessness and had 2 or more other compounding needs, including mental health needs, substance use, experiencing domestic abuse, and a history of offending. People in this group are at much higher risk of experiencing rough sleeping.

- 704 people experiencing homelessness with 2+ compounding needs

The 2025/2026 budget for Housing People Services was £31.4 million. This includes the £28 million cost of providing temporary accommodation. Achieving the desired shift to prevention is particularly challenging in a context where increased demand and rising costs are absorbing more resources. Financial resources available are also expected to reduce over the life of the strategy.

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

Our partners in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector make a huge contribution to tackling homelessness in the city. The 2021 *Working Together* report estimated that the value of services provided by the sector in the city was well over £10 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

The NHS offers healthcare to people experiencing homelessness through universal services such as GPs, A&E and other primary and secondary care services. They also provide specialist healthcare services to some of the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.

- Specialist homeless healthcare services £3.3 million

# Our vision and priorities

The council's vision is for a better Brighton & Hove for all. A home for everyone is central to that vision. Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping will help us make Brighton & Hove a city to be proud of, a healthy, fair and inclusive city where everyone thrives.

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 someone becomes homeless, then their experience of homelessness should be brief, and it should not recur. If we are successful, then fewer people of all ages will experience homelessness and rough sleeping.

As well as a reduction in the overall number of people placed in temporary accommodation, people's experience of temporary accommodation will be improved. All households experiencing homelessness, whatever their needs, will be supported to move on into suitable housing.

By integrating our services, we will ensure that the people who are most vulnerable will receive the help they need. Our focus on support for people experiencing rough sleeping and those with high level or compounding needs will lead to improved outcomes.

Our priorities for the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030 build on our vision and housing priorities. They are to:

1. Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
2. Improve temporary accommodation pathways and experiences
3. Improve joined-up support with our partners for people who most need help
4. Tackle homelessness in children, families and young people.

To ensure accountability and monitor progress we will report regularly using performance indicators for each priority.

# 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 rough sleeping carries the greatest risk of harm and typically requires the most intensive interventions once people are on the streets. Single people, those leaving institutions, people with very high support needs, and people 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 including health services, jobcentres, education and training providers, and foodbanks to identify and support those 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 communities, 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 institutional or 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 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. We want to reduce the overall numbers in temporary accommodation through effective prevention, improve the quality of the temporary accommodation that is available 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 them maintain their 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, introducing dynamic purchasing and reducing the use of spot purchasing.
- Develop and publish contractual standards for interim accommodation.
- 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
- % of temporary accommodation spot purchased
- Successful move-ons per quarter

## **Priority 3: Improve joined-up support with our partners for 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 experience of domestic abuse. The term multiple compound needs 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 people experiencing rough sleeping. This includes the development of our single homeless supported housing pathway, to better meet the needs of single 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 young people leaving care, 16–17-year-olds, pregnant people, families with children, survivors of domestic abuse refugees and asylum seekers, LGBTQ+ people and other vulnerable groups, ensuring coordinated assessment and support pathways.
- As required by the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, develop a supported housing strategy and prepare for anticipated changes to supported housing standards.
- Improve housing options and pathways for survivors of domestic abuse, recognising their specific safety and support needs.

- Work with our partners to reduce health inequalities impacting people experiencing homelessness.

### **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 accommodations due to being unable to meet additional needs.
- % 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

Our focus on prevention means that tackling homelessness in children, families and young people is central to delivering a long-term, positive step change. We also want to ensure that the challenges facing children, families, and young people experiencing homelessness are explicitly addressed. In developing the strategy, we listened to feedback from our partners and other stakeholders and have included this dedicated chapter. Our 3 priorities provide the framework for focused action to address homelessness in children, families and young people. We acknowledge that this is a broad group with diverse needs and experiences. In delivering the strategy we will need to address the needs of children living with their family, children separated from their family, and also young people both within and outside families

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 14% of the city's population but 20% of those experiencing homelessness. 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.

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.
- Improve the collection, sharing and use of data to better understand the needs of children, families and young people, target support and evaluate interventions.
- Develop our family intervention and mediation offer for young people.
- Deliver targeted prevention for young people at risk of rough sleeping, including emergency accommodation, outreach, advice and advocacy.

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.
- Support families with children and young people to move out of temporary accommodation into more secure tenancies.
- Develop tailored pathways for vulnerable young people that meet distinct needs and experiences.

Priority 3: Improve 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 through a 'team around me' model.

### **How we will measure progress**

We will track progress using the following measures:

- Number of 16–24-year-olds owed a relief duty
- Number of households with children in temporary accommodation
- Number of children (0-17) in temporary accommodation
- Number of families in B&B over 6 weeks
- % of care leavers in suitable accommodation
- Number of people sleeping rough under 25 and care leaver

# Our commitments

Fairness and inclusion are core values for the council. The first of our three commitments in this strategy is to be fair and inclusive in the way we design and deliver our services. We recognise the impact of trauma both as a cause and a consequence of homelessness. We will work to ensure that our services are holistic, person-centred and trauma informed. Some groups are over-represented amongst those experiencing homelessness, others are more vulnerable when they become homeless. Our delivery of the strategy will take this into account. We have a legal and moral responsibility to meet our public sector equality duty, and this will underpin our approach.

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 with its goal of homes for everyone. We know that we can't do this on our own. To achieve real change, we need to work in partnership with people with lived experience of homelessness and with central government, regional and local partners including businesses, and the public and voluntary sectors.

We are in a situation where demand for support is increasing and where funding is reducing. We need to make the best use of the resources that we have. Our workforce is key to delivery. We need to ensure that they have the support, knowledge and skills to do their very best. We also need to manage our collective finances and assets effectively and share and use our data and evidence intelligently, targeting our interventions where they will have greatest impact.

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 identify additional resources and make full use of their knowledge and expertise
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 collective financial resources and assets to ensure value for money and long-term financial health
- c. Use data and 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 as equals, including people with lived experience, to design services and support for people at risk or who are experiencing homelessness. This means agreeing our plans together, reporting progress across different departments and organisations and ensuring shared accountability for delivery. We also recognise that our partnerships 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 agreeing an annual action plan, 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. It is clear, for example, from our data that people from Black and racially minoritised groups are over-represented amongst those living in temporary accommodation. Our attention has been drawn to factors including 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 have identified 3 groups where we need to do more work to understand need for services. These are people living in temporary accommodation, Gypsy, Roma, and traveller people, and people aged 55 and over at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

We also need to get better at understanding how 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 including the Supported Housing Act and the Renters Rights Act give us more leverage to tackle poor housing conditions. We also plan to work with our providers 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.

## Glossary of terms

**Asylum seeker:** A person seeking protection from persecution in another country. See also 'Migrant' and 'Refugee'.

**Care leaver:** A young person who has been in local authority care. Councils must support care leavers up to at least age 21, and sometimes to age 25. They are at increased risk of homelessness.

**Co-production:** People working in the system and those with experience of accessing the system working together, as equals, to deliver system change, service improvement and policy development and implementation.

**Early intervention:** Taking action as soon as possible to tackle problems before they worsen. In relation to homelessness, this means identifying and supporting people at risk before they lose their home.

**Homelessness:** Under UK law, a person is considered homeless if they have no accommodation that they are entitled to occupy, or they have accommodation but cannot reasonably be expected to continue occupying it. This includes situations where they have been evicted or asked to leave; where they cannot afford to pay rent or a mortgage and face eviction or repossession; where the accommodation is overcrowded, in poor condition, or unsuitable; where they face domestic abuse or harassment; or where they have been staying temporarily with friends or family but can no longer do so.

**Homelessness prevention:** Action taken to help someone keep their current home or find a new home before they become homeless. This can include help with rent arrears, mediation with family or landlords, financial advice, or assistance to find new accommodation. See also 'Prevention duty'.

**Housing First:** An approach providing immediate access to independent, permanent housing with flexible support for people with complex needs. There is strong evidence of success with this approach for people experiencing rough sleeping long-term.

**Interim accommodation:** a form of temporary accommodation, often used to accommodate people owed a relief duty by the council while their homeless application is being processed. See also 'Relief duty' and 'Temporary accommodation'.

**Joint commissioning:** When organisations work together to plan, fund and arrange services. In homelessness, this can involve councils working with health, social care and other partners to commission integrated support.

**Lived experience:** Direct personal knowledge and expertise from experiencing something yourself.

**Main housing duty:** The legal duty for a local authority to provide settled accommodation to someone who is homeless, eligible, has priority need, and whose homelessness was not caused by their own deliberate act or omission.

**Migrant:** Person who has moved from one country to another, with eligibility for services, including homelessness support dependent on immigration status. See also 'Asylum seeker' and 'Refugee'.

**Move-on:** The process of transitioning from temporary or supported accommodation, into settled housing. Good move-on options help reduce time spent in temporary or supported accommodation.

**Multiple compound needs:** When someone experiences several issues or needs at the same time that affect their ability to live independently. Our local definition is 3 or more of the following: experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, substance use, experience of domestic violence, history of offending.

**Out of area placements:** When a local authority provides temporary accommodation outside its area, usually because of local shortages of suitable accommodation or for safety reasons.

**Prevention duty:** The legal duty for local authorities to take reasonable steps to help someone threatened with homelessness (within 56 days) keep their home or find another. Applies to all eligible applicants regardless of priority need.

**Priority need:** A legal category determining vulnerability. Includes households with dependent children, pregnant people, and people vulnerable due to age, mental illness, disability or other reasons. Affects what duties the council owes to people experiencing homelessness.

**Private rented sector:** Housing owned by private landlords and rented to tenants.

**Relief duty:** The legal duty for local authorities to take reasonable steps to help someone who is already homeless secure accommodation. Applies to all eligible applicants regardless of priority need. Lasts 56 days unless ended for specific legal reasons.

**Refugee:** Person with officially recognised refugee status who can access public funds and homelessness support. See also 'Asylum seeker' and 'Migrant'.

**Rough sleeping:** Sleeping outside or in places not designed for habitation, such as doorways, parks, cars or tents. The most visible form of homelessness, but most people experiencing homelessness are living in temporary accommodation, sofa surfing or other insecure or non-secure housing.

**Settled accommodation:** Housing that someone has a legal right to occupy for at least six months. Includes social housing, private rented tenancies, and owner-occupied housing. See also 'Temporary accommodation'.

**Social housing:** Housing provided by councils or housing associations at below market rent. Usually more secure and affordable than private rented accommodation. Access is allocated according to need, but supply is limited with long waiting lists.

**Supported accommodation:** Housing with additional support services to help people live independently. Support might include help with daily living skills, managing money, accessing health services, or addressing substance use. It can be a stage in moving towards settled accommodation or provided long-term according to needs.

**Temporary accommodation:** Short-term housing provided by local authorities to people experiencing homelessness while being assessed or while finding settled accommodation. Includes hostels, bed and breakfasts, and leased properties. Costs have increased significantly, creating unsustainable pressure on council budgets.

**Trauma:** Deeply distressing experiences that can overwhelm coping ability, often part of the history of people experiencing homelessness. The experience of homelessness itself can be traumatic.

**Trauma-informed approach:** Delivering services that recognise trauma's widespread impact and how it affects behaviour and wellbeing. Seeks to avoid re-traumatisation, emphasises safety and trust, and supports recovery and empowerment.

**Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector:** Not-for-profit organisations independent of government, including charities, community groups, and social enterprises. Play a vital role in homelessness services, often reaching people that statutory services struggle to engage.

