

REPORT TITLE: DRAFT PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2025-2030

4 NOVEMBER 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Kathleen Becker, Cabinet Member: Healthy Communities

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on Local Authorities to develop a strategy to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy should be formulated based on a comprehensive assessment and review of local homelessness within the district.

Preventing homelessness remains a core priority for the council, aligning with the council's wider commitments of good homes for all, healthy communities and thriving places.

This report presents the updated draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025–2030, setting out the council's approach to tackling homelessness and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

The strategy responds to both local needs and national policy, including the Government's approach to ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief, non-recurring and to prevent homelessness wherever possible. It reflects our learning from recent years, including the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Everyone In initiative, which demonstrated what is achievable through partnership, urgency, and flexibility. The strategy also celebrates the achievements over the last five years with a focus on building on this success.

Homelessness is rarely the result of a single factor. It is often driven by a combination of personal, structural, and systemic issues including poverty, mental

health challenges, domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, and a shortage of affordable housing. The council's draft strategy adopts a holistic, prevention-first approach, the council's vision is.

'Working together to ensure that everyone at risk of homelessness has early and effective access to the right support, and where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensuring a safe, suitable, and sustainable home is secured as quickly as possible.'

Through this strategy the council aims to:

- Create, share, and replicate best practice and innovation in responses to homelessness.
- Develop a community and partnership approach to prevent homelessness across the entire system by intervening earlier, developing service pathways, and creating individual solutions.
- Respond to homelessness by ensuring individuals have prompt access to homes and tailored support.
- Increase the range of affordable settled and supported housing options available.

This Strategy sets out an ambitious plan for Winchester's response to addressing homelessness. This Strategy will meet the vision and aims through the delivery of four clear priorities.

- Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership wide approach.
- Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.
- Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.
- Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.

This report outlines the strategy's vision, priorities, and delivery plans, and asks members of the economic and housing policy to comment on the draft strategy and our updated approach across the council and with our partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Cabinet Committee: Housing adopt the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

1.1 Greener Faster

1.2 The strategy aligns closely with the council's plan's overarching priority of tackling climate emergency; the strategy incorporates sustainable housing solutions and improved energy efficient temporary accommodation and support for ecofriendly housing developments by aligning with the council's housing strategy 2023-2028.

1.3 Thriving Places

1.4 The strategy will foster inclusive, resilient communities where everyone has access to safe and secure housing and the support needed to maintain it. The strategy promotes early intervention, partnership working and place-based solutions that address the root cause of homelessness helping individuals reintegrate into their community and contribute to their local area. By investing in sustainable housing, wraparound support services, and community engagement, the council aims to create environments where people not only live but flourish supporting wellbeing, economic participation, and social cohesion.

1.5 Healthy Communities

1.6 The strategy encourages healthy communities by focusing on the social determinants of health, such as stable housing, access to support services, and community inclusion. The strategy recognises that homelessness is both a cause and consequence of poor health, and therefore integrates holistic, person-centred support that addresses mental health, substance misuse, and physical wellbeing. By working in partnership with health services, voluntary organisations, and housing providers, the council aims to reduce health inequalities and promote long-term stability. This approach not only improves individual outcomes but also strengthens the overall health and resilience of communities across the district.

1.7 Good Homes for All

1.8 The council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025–2030 encourages good homes for all by prioritising access to safe, secure, and affordable housing as a foundation for wellbeing and opportunity. The strategy supports the development and availability of sustainable, quality housing options that meet a range of needs from emergency accommodation to long-term homes. It also promotes tenancy sustainment, ensuring that individuals and families receive the support they need to remain housed. By working in partnership with housing providers, health services, and community organisations, the council aims to reduce housing inequality and ensure that everyone in the district can live in a home that supports their dignity, independence, and quality of life.

1.9 Efficient and Effective

- 1.10 The strategy is designed to be efficient and effective by focusing on early intervention, data-driven decision-making, and collaborative partnerships. The strategy builds on lessons learned from previous initiatives and uses targeted government funding to deliver services where they are most needed. It streamlines service delivery through coordinated efforts across housing, health, and voluntary sectors, reducing duplication and ensuring timely support. The council also plans to leverage technology and performance monitoring to track outcomes and continuously improve services, ensuring resources are used wisely and impactfully. This results in a more agile, responsive system that delivers better outcomes for individuals and communities alike.

1.11 Listening and Learning

- 1.12 This strategy embeds a culture of continuous improvement, informed by the homelessness forum, the proposed homelessness charter, service user feedback, and evidence-based practice. The strategy was shaped through engagement with service users, residents, partners, and frontline services to ensure it reflects real needs and lived experiences. It includes mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, allowing the council to adapt its approach based on what works. This commitment to learning ensures that services remain responsive, inclusive, and effective, building trust and improving outcomes for those at risk of homelessness.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The delivery of homeless prevention services is supported by various Government grants allocated specifically to help the council fulfil its obligations under the national homelessness agenda.
- 2.2 The council have had confirmed funding of the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2025/26 of £781,643 for the purpose of supporting the council towards the expenditure lawfully incurred by preventing homelessness. A further £96,000 has been awarded as part of Rough Sleepers Initiative associated with the agenda of rough sleeping being rare, brief, and non-recurring. The council also receives one off smaller grant awards to tackle specific concerns or implement projects.
- 2.3 To achieve the priorities set out in the strategy there will be a reliance on grant funding which is not guaranteed long term. The council will need to ensure they remain committed to the prevention of homelessness agenda and use funding in a creative way to meet the needs of the district.
- 2.4 This is paramount as there will be a new funding formula for the Homelessness Prevention Grant 2025/26 which will be calculated and confirmed in late 2025 and there is a risk that the grant will reduce.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A local housing authority has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 to secure that accommodation is available for eligible applicants who are homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless. Once the local housing authority is satisfied that a housing duty is owed, it may discharge its duties by making: a) an offer of suitable accommodation under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996; b) a final offer of suitable accommodation by way of allocation through Part 6 Housing Act 1996; or c) an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy with a private landlord (d) referring the applicant to another local housing authority.
- 3.2 The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has increased the council's obligations, which encourages local authorities to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness and to improve the provision of support to anyone who is eligible and homeless, regardless of priority need or local connection. The Act has also changed the period so that "a person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that he will become homeless within 56 days" instead of 28 days. The two additional duties introduced are as follows: a) the "Prevention Duty" "where an authority has to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available." i.e. prevent the threatened homelessness of anyone eligible (s4) b) the "Relief Duty" applies to all eligible people who are homeless, where the authority must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that suitable accommodation becomes available(S5)
- 3.3 Services or works that are to be commissioned to meet the priorities set out in the Strategy will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Constitution, Financial Procedure Rules, and Contract Procedure Rules
- 3.4 The introduction of this Strategy does not introduce any new statutory duties for the council as the service works in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Homelessness Act 2002.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The intention is to prioritise existing staff time and resources within the Strategic Housing Service as well as the council's partners to implement the strategy. All immediate activity summarised in the strategy is accounted for within existing budgets. If it is identified that additional staff resources are required; in the first instance consideration will be given to using temporary project/support resources from other services. If this does not meet demand, then consideration will be given to further use of grants provided by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for prevention of homelessness activities or identifying relevant funding opportunities that are made available. Consideration will need to be given to the fact that grant entitlement fluctuates year on year and cannot be relied upon as a consistent income stream.
- 4.2 The Strategic Housing service has undergone a restructure and further resourced to respond to the council's delivery of preventing homelessness.

- 4.3 The Strategic Housing service have used and will continue to use government grants to commission services to deliver the council's priorities in preventing homelessness.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will seek to make best use of all housing assets and links within provisions of other related strategies such as the Housing Strategy 2023-2028 and the Temporary Accommodation Plan and Pathways 2024.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Consultation has been a critical component of this strategy, and as such extensive consultation has been undertaken with service users, key stakeholders, and council staff. It is essential that the new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy responds to the issues that are affecting the residents of Winchester, and as such we have listened to a wide range of views and experiences to ensure that the new strategy builds upon the good practice already in place, whilst addressing identified issues
- 6.2 Extensive consultation with individuals with lived experience of homelessness has been critical to the strategy development process and has taken the form of several face-to-face interviews, focus groups and an online questionnaire. Face to face interviews and focus groups were undertaken with seventeen service users (11 male and six female) across a wide range of services and client groups including rough sleepers' day centre, supported accommodation and single households living in temporary accommodation. Conversations focused on individual's personal experience of homelessness, together with their views on what services are required in responding to homelessness and where improvements are needed.
- 6.3 Consultation with stakeholders has also been critical to the strategy development process and has taken the form of several face-to-face consultation events, one-to-one interviews, and an online questionnaire. Two Homeless Forum events were held with providers, statutory agencies and other local agencies to help identify priorities for the strategy and the actions needed to deliver these objectives, and the overall strategic vision.
- 6.4 Consultation with frontline staff was essential to understand some of the challenges and pressures experienced in responding to homelessness. Consultation was undertaken through a series of face-to-face focus groups with managers and frontline staff alongside a questionnaire. A focus group was also held with key managers within the Housing Management service responsible for the council's housing stock.
- 6.5 Three focus groups were held with to service users of The Beacon, Trinity, and residents of the council's temporary accommodation, to get the views of the service users on the strategy. 8 Service users participated and all 8

agreed with the council's vision and the 4 priorities. Full details of the consultation can be found in Appendix 3

6.6 The draft strategy has also been circulated to all attendees of the homeless forum, key council officers and key members. A brief survey was attached to the strategy and 11 stakeholders responded, all agreed to the proposed strategies' vision. Full details of the consultation can be found in Appendix 3.

6.7 Through the consultation process the strategy has been carefully developed through an inclusive process to ensure it has as, as far as possible, considered a range of views and the results of considerable evidence and analysis.

6.8 The findings and recommendations of the consultation can be found in appendix 3.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy includes actions that will ensure rough sleeping and homelessness is minimised which will have a positive impact in terms of local environmental protection services.

7.2 Improved city centre environment through reduced street homelessness and associated street activity by offering sustainable housing provision, support, and quality housing options. The homelessness outreach supports those out of rough sleeping and reduces the anti-social behaviour of those attached to city centre street activity.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

8.1 The council is required when exercising its functions to comply with the duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, namely to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 Data sharing agreements and housing options privacy statements are in place in line with GDPR requirements.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure Failure to invest in homelessness services reducing the effectiveness of the Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. The potential for economic factors leading to an increased demand on statutory services	Some of the core duties are met from the general fund budget, the grant is used to enhance and improve service provision. Continued Corporate commitment to the prevention of homelessness agenda. Government grants/general fund prioritised to support the delivery of homelessness services	Increasing and promoting earlier intervention and homelessness prevention services. Exploring alternative and discretionary housing options
Exposure to challenge	Compliance with the council's Preventing Homelessness duties is a legislative statutory duty	
Innovation Opportunity to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness through new strategy initiatives and delivery of the ambitious 5-year action plan	Partnership working.	Opportunity to positively enhance the council's reputation through discretionary and joint preventing homelessness initiatives and projects through utilising the reserve and funded projects through the HPG spending plan.
Reputation Failure to deliver the aims and objectives of the Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.	Annual monitoring of the action plan and regular review of strategic priorities through the homelessness forum, Staff's 1-1 and appraisal, Strategic Housing Management team (SHMT) and housing options team meetings	Opportunities to celebrate and publicise the successes of the Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030. Good news stories, publicity opportunities.

Achievement of outcome Meeting homelessness statutory duties. Making best use of the government's Homeless Prevention Grant. Demonstrating best practice service delivery through partnership working and discretionary funding. Rough Sleeping is rare, brief, and non-reoccurring. Continue to remain in the top quartile for homeless prevention.	Government statistical returns Budget monitoring and reviews SLA's with partner agencies Homeless Forum Yearly review of the action plan Staff appraisals, 1-1's, team meetings	Opportunity to positively enhance the council's reputation through discretionary and joint preventing homelessness initiatives and projects funded through the grants and spending plan.
Property Aspects of the strategy include using the council's housing stock as use of temporary accommodation.		
Community Support Failure to prevent homelessness and make rough sleeping rare, brief, and non-reoccurring across the district by 2030.	Partnerships in place to deliver shared objectives within the Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy at both strategic and operational levels.	Increased partnership working and co-commissioning opportunities with stakeholders.
Timescales Failure to deliver the aims and objectives of the Preventing	Annual monitoring of the strategy action plan.	Opportunities to celebrate and publicise the successes of the

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan within timescales	Reviewing service trends and demands.	Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030
Project capacity Impact of changed local and national initiatives over the lifetime of the Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Risk that LGR could remove key officers from delivering the action plan to prepare for LGR.	Working closely with central government homelessness advisors. Reviewing sector trends.	Opportunity to positively enhance the Council's reputation through delivering of the strategy action plan.
Other None		

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 Since 2002, The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on Local Authorities to develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy should be formulated based on a comprehensive assessment and review of local homelessness within the district. The outcome of the full homelessness review can be found in Appendix 4.
- 11.2 This report presents the updated draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025–2030, (Appendix 1) setting out the council's approach to tackling homelessness and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The draft strategy fulfils all legal requirements and has been augmented by a detailed action plan; the action plan can be found in Appendix 2. The action plan may need to be adjusted throughout this strategy's lifetime to ensure it remains up to date and reflects the council's evolving approach to tackling new emerging pressures and developing innovative solutions.
- 11.3 For Winchester City Council, homelessness is a corporate priority, and the production of a periodic homelessness strategy is not just about meeting legal requirement, it is about best practice and striving to deliver effective and efficient services. The council is committed to preventing and relieving all forms of homelessness and the draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy reflects this.
- 11.4 It is important to note that homelessness cannot be prevented alone, and the council works in close partnership with the statutory, voluntary, and charitable

organisations to achieve the council's outcomes. As such the Strategies' action plan sets out activities that best support partnership working opportunities whilst underpinning the council's statutory housing responsibilities to ensure preventative initiatives are central to service delivery.

- 11.5 Building on the council's corporate plan and the Housing Strategy 2023-2028 the strategic housing service completed a comprehensive evidence base and service review during 2024/2025. This work included consultation with stakeholders, service users, residents, key council officers and members. The results of the consultation can be found in Appendix 3.
- 11.6 The strategy is built upon successes and achievements across the partnership in tackling homelessness since the last strategy (2019-2024) was adopted, these include:
- Delivery of 239 new affordable council homes and 1,383 Registered Provider homes between 2018/19 to 2022/23
 - Development of Bradbury View in partnership between the council and Trinity, providing twelve flats for individuals with complex needs, adding a further three beds in 2024
 - Establishment of a Housing First model of housing provision for those with multiple needs
 - Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)- successful funding for forty-nine homes- Ukrainians, Afghan's, and Temporary accommodation
 - Provision of a rapid response to rough sleeping through a renewed assertive outreach service
 - Review of the outreach provision to ensure support is targeted to meet the needs of those sleeping out for the first time, those returning to the streets and for single women rough sleeping
 - Embedded trauma-informed principles within the staff working practices through an established framework and staff training opportunities.
 - Successful in obtaining Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding providing a Complex Needs Navigator, commissioning the Housing First project and the provision of a personalisation fund
 - Funded Trinity via the RSI to employ a Complex Needs navigator providing intensive support to those individuals with a history of rough sleeping who have the most complex needs, supporting them to navigate the systems and find solutions.

- Provision of assistance to thirty-three individuals over the last three years through severe weather emergency protocols (SWEP)
- Over the last 5 years successfully prevented 839 households from becoming homeless, and secured accommodation for a further 378 households experiencing homelessness under a relief duty
- Accommodated over fifty people during the Covid Pandemic. (Everyone in initiative)
- Winchester City Council's achievement of DAHA accreditation

- 11.7 Since the last Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy was adopted, there have been huge changes and challenges in the national policy landscape, for example responding to the pandemic, the humanitarian responses to provide assistance to those fleeing Afghanistan and Ukraine, the cost of living crisis which has changed the direction of travel from the action plan adopted with that strategy and reshaped the design of the services responding to homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 11.8 This strategy has been developed considering the national direction of travel and any potential opportunities or pressures that may arise from future change. It has also been developed in the context of our operational experience of administering applications under the Housing Act 1996, part 7 since it was amended by the commencement of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, enacted in 2018.
- 11.9 The draft Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2030 has been developed with a clear vision and four key priorities which will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- 11.10 The council's vision for homelessness in Winchester is that, by 2030, we will be:

Working together to ensure that everyone at risk of homelessness has early and effective access to the right support, and where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensuring a safe, suitable, and sustainable home is secured as quickly as possible.

This Strategy will meet the vision and aims through the delivery of four clear priorities.

- ***Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership wide approach.***

We will work collaboratively to reduce homelessness through a unified Homelessness Charter, coordinated services, joint commissioning, and aligned efforts across council directorates, statutory agencies and the

community and voluntary sector to improve lives and maximise public resources, making the prevention of homelessness everyone's responsibility.

- ***Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.***

Through early intervention and prevention, we will endeavour to prevent homelessness from occurring. Where it does occur, we will ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring by providing timely access to early comprehensive and personalised help and support, clear housing pathways, accessible information, and trauma informed services.

- **Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.**

We will work to reduce rough sleeping in Winchester by preventing rough sleeping in the first place and implementing clear pathways, preventing returns to the street. We will deliver a multi-agency, trauma-informed approach to meet the multiple and complex needs of individuals through multi-disciplinary support. We will prevent repeat homelessness through individually tailored accommodation and support options.

- **Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.**

We will reduce the reliance on costly and unsuitable temporary accommodation and ensure any stay is as brief as possible and any impact upon the customer and wider household is mitigated. We will develop and improve access to a suitable range of settled, supported and sustainable accommodation solutions through effective partnership working.

11.11 This Strategy is a multi-agency document and has been developed with partners, in recognition that a collaborative partnership approach is fundamental to being able to effectively tackle homelessness. Together with its partners, the council will work to tackle the underlying causes of homelessness, create effective pathways out of homelessness, and design out system blockages.

11.12 To conclude, this Strategy sets out an ambitious plan for Winchester's response to addressing homelessness. The scale and complexity of the challenges that face the partnership over the lifetime of this strategy cannot be underestimated; these challenges include the cost-of-living crisis, national increases in homelessness and rough sleeping, refugee resettlement and pressures on budgets, set against an increasingly unaffordable housing market.

- 11.13 Through the delivery of the Strategy, the council will build upon its successful approach to working together to prevent and respond to homelessness. This strategy seeks to ensure that the council collaborates closely with its partners to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity, while providing rapid housing responses to those that need them.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 None- It is a legal requirement set out in The Homelessness Act 2002 for local housing authorities to publish a strategy, setting out its plans for preventing and tackling homelessness in its borough/district. If the council fail to develop and publish a homelessness strategy it would be at risk of legal challenge. Dissatisfied applicants could challenge the council's decision making under the statutory homelessness framework, on the basis it did not have a current preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy in place.
- 12.2 Failure to publish a homelessness strategy would be at odds with the council's corporate plan and values. Preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping within the borough, amongst our residents, is key to achieving the corporate priorities and ensuring our communities can thrive and have good homes for all.
- 12.3 Whilst some local authorities have opted to combine their Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies within their overarching Housing Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy remains a standalone legal requirement. There is merit to ensuring it stands alone among local policies and plans to ensure that it can be consulted on in a focused way and that homelessness remains a visible high priority, not only for the council, but for the wider system of public services in the local area.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: -

Previous Committee Reports: -

Temporary Accommodation Plan and Pathways [CAB3472\(H\) Temporary accommodation plan & pathways paper](#)

Housing Strategy 2023-2030- [CAB3410\(H\) Housing Strategy](#)

Housing Strategy Review paper 2025 [CAB3491\(H\) Housing Strategy 23-28 progress and update](#)

Homelessness Prevention Grant spending review 2023-2024 [CAB3393\(H\) Preventing Homelessness Grant Spending Plan 23-24](#)

Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024

<https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/documents/s7963/CAB3184%20Preventing%20Homelessness%20and%20Rough%20Sleeping%20Strategy.pdf>

Other Background Documents: -

None

APPENDICES:

**Appendix 1- Draft preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
2025-2030**

**Appendix 2- Draft preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
2025-2030 Action Plan**

Appendix 3- Consultation document & Consultation on the Draft strategy

Appendix 4- Full Homeless Review

Appendix 1- Draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030

Winchester Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30

Political Foreword

The development of our new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy marks an important step in transforming our collective response to homelessness.

Homelessness is not just about a lack of housing – it's about people, their experiences, and the challenges they face. It's also about the systems, services and partnerships that can either help or hinder those on the path to stability and security.

This strategy is built upon the successful work that is already taking place across Winchester, connecting individuals to resources, advocating for systemic change. It is based upon a wide range of services making real and lasting differences to the lives of those that need it most.

Our aim through the development of this strategy is to bring together the expertise across the sector, innovative thinking and lived experience to create a strategy that is ambitious, practical and most importantly effective. Through the delivery of this strategy, we hope to embed a response to homelessness which is truly collaborative; one that strengthens our partnerships, builds upon our collective successes to date and challenges us to improve further.

We recognise that the strategy that we have developed is ambitious and that the landscape in which we are operating is very challenging; but we are confident that through the effective partnership working already in place we can meet its aims and further transform Winchester's response to homelessness.

Cllr Kathleen Becker, Portfolio Holder - Healthy Communities

1. Introduction

Winchester's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out a clear strategic direction and priorities for the council's approach to tackling homelessness over the next 5 years. This strategy has been developed in close collaboration with a wide range of partner agencies, and will be delivered through a joint partnership commitment, signifying a collective and joined up approach to addressing homelessness across Winchester, building upon the joint success to date.

The council knows that homelessness, in its causes and consequences, is a cross-cutting issue, which cannot be tackled by one agency alone. In order to effectively prevent and respond to homelessness it is essential that all partner agencies work

collaboratively together in an integrated way not only to address the underlying causes that have led to homelessness but also develop services and pathways that meet the needs of this, often vulnerable, client group in a coordinated way. This strategy creates the platform to do this.

Integral to the council's response to addressing homelessness, is to ensure that the vision, priorities and actions are informed by those who have had direct experience of homelessness. Throughout the strategy development process the council has worked to capture the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness and is committed to ensuring that their views and experiences help to shape the strategic response.

This strategy has been written at the precipice of significant change, with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon. The Homelessness Review identified the success of Winchester's approach in tackling homelessness, particularly the effectiveness of the Housing Options service at a time of significant pressures. It will be critical moving forward into Local Government Reorganisation that Winchester's approach and service culture helps to shape and inform future service delivery so that, although commission and service delivery may be at scale, delivery will be localised to meet specific and local needs.

It is important to acknowledge that this strategy has been developed at a time of unprecedented pressures in relation to homelessness, rough sleeping and temporary accommodation. These pressures are significant, and therefore the importance of a joined-up strategic approach is more critical than ever before if the council is to meet its vision for tackling homelessness across Winchester.

This strategy sets out a clear and ambitious plan to further transform the response to homelessness and has been developed through close collaboration with Winchester's Homelessness Forum, building upon the partnership's success to date. The vision and priorities are ambitious; but the council believes that, with the commitment of all of its partners, we can work together to make them a reality.

Legislative Context

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and to develop and publish a homelessness strategy based on the review findings.

Under the Act, the Homelessness Strategy must seek to achieve the following objectives in the local housing authority's area:

- a) The prevention of homelessness

- b) That suitable accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless
- c) That satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless.

This strategy has been developed in accordance with the Act and in response to the findings of the Homelessness Review, which provides a comprehensive evidence base of homelessness across Winchester.

Developing the Strategy

This strategy has been developed in close consultation with partners working across the homelessness sector, alongside the wider public and voluntary sector. This approach has ensured that the strategy has been developed using the expertise of other professionals and has helped to identify further opportunities to work together to achieve improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Most importantly this strategy has been developed in close collaboration with people with lived experience of homelessness to ensure that the strategy responds to their needs and takes into account their personal experience of what it is like to experience homelessness in Winchester.

This process has provided an invaluable insight and understanding of where the council can make the most effective changes and have the biggest impact. The strategy sets out the council's commitment to build upon this process by ensuring that it continues to work with people with lived experience of homelessness through the implementation of this strategy.

2. Vision

Our vision for homelessness in Winchester is that, by 2030, we will be:

Working together to ensure that everyone at risk of homelessness has early and effective access to the right support, and where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensuring a safe, suitable, and sustainable home is secured as quickly as possible.

Through this strategy the council aims to:

- Create, share and replicate best practice and innovation in responses to homelessness.
- Develop a community and partnership approach to prevent homelessness across the whole system by intervening earlier, developing service pathways and creating individual solutions.

- Respond to homelessness by ensuring individuals have prompt access to homes and tailored support.
- Increase the range of affordable settled and supported housing options available

Meeting our Vision

This Strategy sets out an ambitious plan for Winchester's response to addressing homelessness. The scale and complexity of the challenges that face the partnership over the lifetime of this strategy cannot be underestimated; these challenges include the cost-of-living crisis, national increases in homelessness and rough sleeping, refugee resettlement and pressures on budgets, set against an increasingly unaffordable housing market.

Through the delivery of the Strategy, the council will build upon its successful approach to working together to prevent and respond to homelessness. This strategy seeks to ensure that the council works closely with its partners to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity, while providing rapid housing responses to those that need them.

This Strategy is a multi-agency document and has been developed with partners, in recognition that a collaborative partnership approach is fundamental to being able to effectively tackle homelessness. Together with its partners, the council will work to tackle the underlying causes of homelessness, create effective pathways out of homelessness, and design out system blockages.

The response through this strategy recognises the individual and unique needs of people experiencing homelessness and as such the council intends to deliver solutions that are tailored to the individual needs of people; recognising the strengths and assets they have. The council will build upon these strengths, empowering individuals, and ensuring a trauma-informed approach across all key services.

In line with the national agenda, the council is committed to ensuring that homelessness is prevented early, is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This Strategy will meet the vision and aims through the delivery of 4 clear priorities.

Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership wide approach.

We will work collaboratively to reduce homelessness through a unified Homelessness Charter, coordinated services, joint commissioning, and aligned efforts across council directorates, statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector to improve lives and maximise public resources, making the prevention of homelessness everyone's responsibility.

Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.

Through early intervention and prevention, we will endeavour to prevent homelessness from occurring. Where it does occur, we will ensure homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring by providing timely access to early comprehensive and personalised help and support, clear housing pathways, accessible information and trauma informed services.

Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.

We will work to reduce rough sleeping in Winchester by preventing rough sleeping in the first place and implementing clear pathways, preventing returns to the street. We will deliver a multi-agency, trauma-informed approach to meet the multiple and complex needs of individuals through multi-disciplinary support. We will prevent repeat homelessness through individually tailored accommodation and support options.

Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.

We will reduce the reliance on costly and unsuitable temporary accommodation and ensure any stay is as brief as possible and any impact upon the customer and wider household is mitigated. We will develop and improve access to a suitable range of settled, supported and sustainable accommodation solutions through effective partnership working.

3. Building on Success

The council, together with its partners, is proud of how homelessness services are delivered in Winchester and the outcomes that they achieve. This success provides the partnership with an excellent starting point upon which to base the new homelessness strategy.

It is recognised that this strategy sets out an ambitious plan and vision for tackling homelessness over the next five years, and successful delivery of this will require significant commitment from all key partners. However, the council is not starting

from scratch as this strategy is built upon a number of successes and achievements across the partnership in tackling homelessness. These include:

Housing Supply – Supported & Settled

- Delivery of **239** new affordable council homes and **1,383** Registered Provider homes between 2018/19 to 2022/23
- Development of Bradbury View in partnership between the council and Trinity, providing 12 flats for individuals with complex needs, adding a further 3 beds in 2024
- Establishment of a Housing First model of housing provision for those with multiple needs

Outcomes for vulnerable groups and those at risk of homelessness

- LAHF- successful funding for 45 homes- Ukrainians, Afghan's and Temporary accommodation
- Provision of a rapid response to rough sleeping through a renewed assertive outreach service
- Review of the outreach provision to ensure support is targeted to meet the needs of those sleeping out for the first time, those returning to the streets and for single women rough sleeping
- Embedded trauma-informed principles within the staff working practices through an established framework and staff training opportunities.
- Successful in obtaining Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding providing a Complex Needs Navigator, commissioning the Housing First project and the provision of a personalisation fund
- Fund Trinity via the RSI to employ a Complex Needs navigator providing intensive support to those individuals with a history of rough sleeping who have the most complex needs, supporting them to navigate the systems and find solutions.
- Provision of assistance to 33 individuals over the last three years through severe weather emergency protocols (SWEP)

Prevention of Homelessness

- Over the last 5 years successfully prevented 839 households from becoming homeless, and secured accommodation for a further 378 households experiencing homelessness under a relief duty
- Accommodated over 50 people during the Covid Pandemic.
- Winchester City Council's achievement of DAHA accreditation

Housing Register and Allocations

- 3086 lets through Hampshire Home Choice for the period April 2019-April 2024

4. Homelessness in Winchester

Data below to be turned into infographics internally

Homelessness in Numbers 2024/25

There were 612 approaches to the Housing Options Service, representing a 72% increase over the last 2 years	436 households were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness
There has been a 71% increase in the number of households experiencing homelessness over the last three years	The proportion of people accessing the service when they are already homeless has increased , meaning that opportunities for prevention work have passed

Profile of Homelessness

Single households accounted for 71% of all households experiencing homelessness	In Winchester, younger people are disproportionately affected by homelessness with 18–34-year-olds accounting for 34% of all homeless households	65% of households have an identified support need
Mental health is the most prevalent support need accounting for 30% of all support needs	In the last few years there has been an increase in the number of families experiencing homelessness	

Main Causes of Homelessness in Winchester

Family and friends unable to accommodate and the end of private rented accommodation are the main causes of homelessness in Winchester	Family and friends unable to accommodate accounts for 24% of all homelessness cases	End of private rented accommodation accounts for 20% of all homelessness cases
Other main causes include domestic abuse, eviction from supported housing and relationship breakdown	In November 2024 5 rough sleepers were found on a single night.	

Prevention and Relief Activity

Homelessness was successfully prevented for 86% of households owed a prevention duty. This is higher than the national average of 51%.	Despite increased demand and pressures on services, successful prevention outcomes have remained high	Homelessness was successfully relieved for 31% of households owed a relief duty, in line with the national average
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Temporary Accommodation

In March 2025 there were a total of 72 households in temporary accommodation, of which 34 households had dependent children	There has been an 80% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation over the last three years	The average length of stay in temporary accommodation is 312 days
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Demand for Social housing

In 2025 there were 1,611 households on the housing register , this has increased by 11% over the last 5 years	The biggest demand is for single person accommodation, accounting for 64% of all households on the housing register	In 2024/25 there were 528 annual lets of social housing
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5. Priorities

Priority 1 - Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership-wide approach.

We will work collaboratively to reduce homelessness through a unified Homelessness Charter, coordinated services, joint commissioning, and aligned efforts across council directorates, statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector to improve lives and maximise public resources, making the prevention of homelessness everyone's responsibility.

To support the delivery of this Strategy's vision, the council plans to create a clear and concise Winchester Homelessness Charter for partner agencies to adopt. The Charter will outline the shared vision for addressing homelessness, and partners will be invited to sign up and commit to working collaboratively with the council to achieve this vision and prevent homelessness.

The council will work with partners and local communities to ensure that the factors that lead to homelessness can be better understood and identified, with effective pathways into preventative services in place, and clear and accessible referral mechanisms. The council aims to embed this approach across Winchester, significantly reducing crisis presentations and ensuring effective homelessness prevention interventions, partnerships and pathways are in place.

The council will build upon the strength of the existing Homelessness Forum to create a platform for collaboration and joint working to meet its shared vision to prevent homelessness.

Through the strategy, the council will work with key partners to ensure that a range of joint protocols are in place to prevent homelessness and to create clear pathways out of homelessness. The review identified a high prevalence of support needs in relation to the mental and physical health of those experiencing homelessness. The council intends to improve its understanding of the health needs of the homeless population and ensure timely access to services and interventions that meet those needs.

The council will also work to identify opportunities for the joint commissioning of homelessness and support services to meet the multiple, often complex, needs that people present with.

“Homelessness can happen to anyone, I used to think that anyone who was homeless were drunks and addicts, but they’re completely not, you’d be amazed at what talent people have got.”

Service User

“I felt like I could be honest with her, she rang me regularly, she was concerned about my welfare, it felt like she wasn’t just doing her job, I felt like she cared.”

Service User

How we will make homelessness everyone’s priority through a partnership wide approach.

- Develop a Homelessness Charter for partner agencies across Winchester to sign up to.
- Develop a Commitment to Collaborate in order to embed homeless prevention across key services and wider partners

- Identify the key triggers for homelessness and work with partners to ensure that they are equipped to prevent homelessness and/or make seamless referrals where necessary.
- Ensure that current and former service users fully shape service delivery, design, review and commissioning.
- Work with Hampshire County Council and Public Health to influence and inform the commissioning and delivery of mental health, substance misuse and adult social care services to ensure they are accessible and meet the needs of homeless clients with complex and multiple needs.
- Evaluate the extent of rural homelessness across the area and raise awareness of the help available through community champions.
- Better understand the health needs of people experiencing homelessness in Winchester through undertaking Homeless Link's Homelessness Health Audit.
- Ensure that the best practice elements of Winchester's Housing Options service and wider homelessness services can positively influence future service delivery under Local Government Reorganisation

Priority 2 - Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.

Through early intervention and prevention we will endeavour to prevent homelessness from occurring. Where it does, we will ensure homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring by providing timely access to early comprehensive and personalised help and support, clear housing pathways, accessible information and trauma informed services.

The homelessness review identified that an increasing proportion of individuals are contacting the Housing Options service when they are already homeless and at the point of crisis, with the opportunity to prevent homelessness lost.

"If I'd known where to go for help it might have stopped me from being homeless."

Service User

By acting quicker and earlier to identify problems, alongside the provision of high-quality advice, assistance, and advocacy, the partnership will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home.

To enhance opportunities for effective homeless prevention it is essential that customers contact the Housing Options service as soon as they begin to experience housing problems. The council will therefore invest in an awareness raising campaign to raise the profile of the service internally within the council, with partners and the wider public.

The council will ensure that, when people approach the Housing Options service for help, it has the ability to effectively and promptly respond to these requests for help, either by enabling them to remain where they are or by facilitating a move into more appropriate accommodation. The council will ensure that it has the right resources in the right places to meet this need, with effective systems and processes to support service delivery, with a strong focus on maintaining positive customer outcomes and experience.

The council will continue to work with partners to develop and deliver effective homelessness prevention services and pathways targeted at the main causes of homelessness.

Cost of living challenges mean that many Winchester residents are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their housing costs. In partnership, the council will implement a variety of measures to prevent homelessness related to economic challenges and rising living costs. In collaboration with its partners, the council will ensure that adequate services are available to enhance financial capability, including support for accessing education, employment, and training. Additionally, the council will provide targeted interventions to assist both tenants and landlords, aiming to reduce evictions within the private rented sector.

Drawing upon its DAHA accreditation, the council will strive to ensure that individuals experiencing domestic abuse have access to a range of safe and suitable housing options, providing them with the support and choice needed to secure a safe home.

In collaboration with its housing association and supported housing providers, the council will work to prevent evictions through the development of pre-eviction protocols.

The impact of homelessness on families with children can be significant – not only do children feel an overwhelming sense of displacement having lost their home; experiencing homelessness and living in emergency accommodation can impact upon health, wellbeing, support and education, alongside potentially leading to severe emotional trauma.

With increases in the cost of living, there will be an increase in the number of children living in poverty, an increase in families being able to meet their housing costs, and a very likely increase in homelessness amongst families. The council will work closely in partnership with a range of agencies, including Children's Services, to minimise the detrimental impact of homelessness on families, specifically children.

The council is committed to supporting the Home Office in the resettlement of refugees. This includes those from Ukraine and Afghanistan arriving through specific

resettlement schemes, but also refugees from other countries who may have arrived through alternative routes. Through the lifetime of this strategy, the council will ensure that it can provide tailored support to vulnerable refugees and meet this increased demand.

Through the strategy, the council will also work to ensure that homelessness is not repeated and will work together partners to develop a tenancy ready programme.

How we will prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.

- Undertake an awareness raising campaign focusing on homelessness prevention, encouraging individuals to seek help at the earliest point.
- Seek a corporate commitment to homelessness prevention across all departments within the council
- Commit to working to prevent homelessness prior to 56 days for groups at increased risk of homelessness
- Empower community organisations to provide advice, information and signposting.
- Ensure that the Housing Options service has the right resources in the right place to effectively prevent and relieve homelessness and keep this under review in light of data intelligence
- Review Housing Options policies, processes and procedures to ensure an effective focus on prevention, managing demand and continuing to achieve positive customer outcomes.
- Ensure a range of measures are in place to prevent homelessness linked to the wider economy and increases in the cost of living, including increasing financial capability through access to education, employment and training
- Develop a range of targeted interventions focused on the main causes of homelessness in Winchester
- Develop pre-eviction protocols with social and supported housing providers
- Review specialist pathways for clients at increased risk of homelessness including prison release, hospital discharge, care leavers, and refugee resettlement
- Work alongside partners to develop a tenancy ready programme to ensure efficient and sustainable move on

Priority 3 - Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.

We will work to reduce rough sleeping in Winchester by preventing rough sleeping in the first place and implementing clear pathways, preventing returns to the street. We will deliver a multi-agency, trauma informed approach to meet the multiple and

complex needs of individuals through multi-disciplinary support. We will prevent repeat homelessness through individually tailored accommodation and support options.

Through the establishment of a Multi-Disciplinary Team, the council aims to provide assertive and coordinated support to individuals with the most complex needs. This approach ensures a holistic and collaborative response to both their homelessness and associated health and support needs. It will help overcome existing system barriers and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness.

Through the expansion of this multi-agency approach, and with the collaboration of key partners, the council will develop services to meet the complex needs of homeless families with a view to preventing intergenerational homelessness.

“Rough sleeping shouldn’t happen; there is nowhere you can go at night.”

Service User

Through this strategy, the council is committed to ensuring that it can end the need for anyone to sleep rough across Winchester. The partnership will continue to reduce rough sleeping and address the multiple harms it brings to individuals and communities through rapid intervention and assertive outreach to offer a route off the street.

In order to minimise this harm, the council will work to prevent rough sleeping happening in the first place. The council will work with its partners to identify the key triggers and risk factors that lead to rough sleeping, ensuring they are recognised early, and appropriate referrals are made. The strategy will also ensure that effective preventative work is targeted at groups who have a greater likelihood of experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

For those that do end up on the streets of Winchester, the council will ensure that there is a rapid intervention which will offer a route off of the streets for everyone. Through partnership working, the strategy will ensure that ‘off the street’ accommodation is available to all, which will signal the commencement of their journey out of homelessness through safe and supported accommodation, and multi-disciplinary support.

Expanding the current Housing First offer, together with increasing the provision of supported accommodation that meets the multiple and complex needs of clients with entrenched histories of homelessness, will be critical components in the strategy’s response to rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.

How we will meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.

- Extend the multi-disciplinary team approach to deliver assertive and coordinated services to rough sleepers and individuals experiencing homelessness with multiple, complex needs, with a focus on preventing repeat homelessness.
- Review current outreach arrangements to ensure effective, responsive and assertive outreach in order to provide a rapid response to those new to the streets and an active engagement approach with entrenched rough sleepers
- Embed a targeted prevention approach to prevent the flow of new rough sleepers on to the street.
- Provide a rapid offer of 'off the street accommodation' for anyone sleeping rough
- Expand the current Housing First offer
- Assess the impact and outcomes of any rough sleeper initiative funded projects and develop a business case to secure future funding, including a cost-benefit analysis.
- Develop a street support app to ensure those facing homeless can access information and services.
- Collaborate with key partners to develop services to meet the complex needs of homeless families, with a view to preventing intergenerational homelessness.

Priority 4 - Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.

We will reduce the reliance on costly and unsuitable temporary accommodation and ensure any stay is as brief as possible and any impact upon the customer and wider household is mitigated. We will develop and improve access to a suitable range of settled, supported and sustainable accommodation solutions through effective partnership working.

The council will work to develop suitable temporary accommodation in response to identified need, reducing its reliance on emergency accommodation placements. The partnership will ensure that households in temporary accommodation in need of support are able to access this support, alongside having the opportunity to engage with meaningful diversionary activities and skills development.

The council will also work to minimise the length of stay for households in temporary accommodation by reviewing the allocations policy, to ensure that priority for move on is in line with the customer's individual needs. This will be achieved by actively working with households in temporary accommodation to continue to review their housing options and plan their move into settled accommodation through individual move on plans.

The council will also learn from the rapid rehousing work happening across Scotland and Wales to understand what more can be done to ensure rapid access to settled homes, minimizing the length of stay in insecure temporary accommodation.

To support settled housing solutions, the council will make full use of all available mechanisms to increase the supply of affordable housing across Winchester, helping to both prevent and relieve homelessness and provide long-term stability for individuals. A diverse range of accommodation options—including social housing, affordable private rentals, and supported housing—is essential to meet the varied needs of those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

The council will work across Winchester with all social housing developers to increase the provision of appropriate and affordable social housing to meet the identified need, particularly in relation to the one-bedroom need.

Commitment will be sought from social housing providers to help in the response to homelessness, including through the provision of social housing to help meet the council's homelessness duties and to provide settled homes to the most vulnerable customers, and those with multiple needs. To cement social housing providers' commitment to support the council in its response to homelessness it will encourage them to sign up to the principles of Homes for Cathy.

"The housing stock is woefully inadequate, and homelessness is inhumane."

Service User

The private rented sector plays an increasingly critical role in meeting the housing needs of those who are experiencing homelessness or threatened with homelessness. The council will work to increase access to the private rented sector by closely aligning the current private sector work strands and ensure that an attractive, comprehensive and competitive landlord offer is in place. The council will mitigate any adverse impact of the Renters' Rights Bill by consulting with private landlords to understand their concerns and ensure the landlord offer responds to any perceived risks, to prevent landlords leaving the market.

“There is nothing like peer support, it’s really important, it’s not something you would talk about with anyone, but it is easier with people who understand.”

Supported Housing Resident

In line with the requirements of the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act, the council will undertake a supported housing needs assessment and develop a new Supported Housing Strategy. The strategy will set out commissioning intentions based upon evidenced need and define the approach to working with non-commissioned providers.

The council will work to increase the overall provision of supported housing in Winchester, including specialist provision for women, through spend-to-save approaches and through ensuring that the evidence base is in place to respond to any national funding opportunities.

“It’s overwhelming living here, I didn’t know places like this existed, the support I’ve got here I needed for a long time, we need more places like this.”

Supported Housing Resident

In partnership with Adult Social Care, the strategy will seek to identify supported housing solutions for those people with entrenched and complex histories of homelessness who have emerging social care need through an integrated and joined up model.

The council is committed to ensuring that there is sufficient floating support available across Winchester. Timely access to floating support is an essential component of any homeless prevention toolkit; alongside ensuring effective and sustainable resettlement. A business case for an invest-to-save model to fund this floating support will be developed, which will both prevent homelessness, and ensure timely move on from temporary and supported accommodation.

“I’m worried about living on my own, there is a fear of being alone, and the services I’ve relied on not being available.”

Supported Housing Resident

How we will develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.

- Ensure that residents of temporary accommodation are able to access support
- Develop a programme of meaningful and diversionary activities for residents of temporary accommodation, including skills development
- Develop a range of temporary accommodation options in line with identified need to reduce reliance on Bed & Breakfast
- Review the Allocations Policy to ensure timely move on from temporary accommodation which is personalised to the customer's ability to live independently
- Develop move on plans for all households in Temporary Accommodation, as part of their Personal Housing Plan, ensuring this is reviewed regularly
- Undertake a supported housing needs assessment and develop a supported housing strategy in line with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023
- Review current housing stock designations across the council-owned housing and RP stock in order to identify opportunities for the provision of supported housing, temporary accommodation and a range housing options for single people
- Develop additional units of supported accommodation in response to identified need, including those with complex needs, and dedicated provision for women.
- Consult with and support private landlords ahead of the enactment of the Renters Reform Bill to develop a comprehensive landlord offer to mitigate any negative impact ahead of enactment.
- Work with social housing partners to identify perceived barriers and opportunities to accommodating people experiencing homelessness, improving access to social housing.
- Encourage all social housing providers to become a member of Homes for Cathy.
- Work with our housing providers to increase the delivery of Housing First, one-bed homes and supported housing.
- Review any learning from the rapid rehousing work happening across Scotland and Wales to understand what more can be done to ensure rapid access to settled homes, minimizing the length of stay in insecure temporary accommodation.
- Develop a business case for an invest-to-save model to deliver a floating support service to prevent homelessness and provide support to households in temporary accommodation to support sustainable move on
- Ensure adequate resettlement support is in place to support transitions into independent settled accommodation, and preventing repeat homelessness

6. Delivering our Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

To achieve the priorities outlined in this strategy, it is essential that the council continues to work closely with its key partners. Together, the partnership must ensure that, across Winchester, there is the necessary expertise, services, resources, partnerships, provision, and infrastructure in place to successfully deliver the strategy's objectives

The strategy and its action plan will be reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs, alongside policy and legislative changes.

The delivery of the strategy will be governed by the Homelessness Forum, cementing the partnership approach required to deliver the strategy.

It is recognised that the ambitions outlined in this strategy are challenging, but the council is confident that, with the continued commitment and collaboration of all key partners, the partnership can further strengthen and transform the response to homelessness across Winchester, building upon the collective success

Appendix 2

Winchester City Council

Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 - 2030

Priority 1 - Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership wide approach.

We will work collaboratively to reduce homelessness through a unified Homelessness Charter, coordinated services, joint commissioning, and aligned efforts across council directorates, statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector to improve lives and maximise public resources, making the prevention of homelessness everyone's responsibility.

Key Objectives		What will we do	When will we do it	Lead Officer	Progress
1	Develop a Homelessness Charter for partner agencies across Winchester to sign up to.	In partnership with the Homelessness Forum draft a Winchester Homelessness Charter Promote the charter across all homelessness, housing and support services and seek sign up	Nov 26	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	- Winchester Homelessness Charter in place, signifying a shared commitment to prevent homelessness. - All members of the Homelessness Forum have signed the charter

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		Promote the charter more widely with local businesses and services			
2	Develop a Commitment to Collaborate in order to embed homeless prevention across key services and wider partners	Get partner agencies to sign up to a commitment of collaborate Train partner agencies on the work of Housing Options and referral pathways Explore with partners opportunities for the joint location of services to provide a multi-agency response for customers that meets the holistic needs of customers	Nov 26 Nov 26 Nov 27	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• Joined up response across all partners to prevent homelessness • Agencies work together to identify risks of homelessness and make speedy referrals • Homeless prevention is everyone's responsibility • Increase in the number of duty to refers received
3	Identify the key triggers for homelessness and work with partners to ensure that they are equipped to prevent homelessness and/or make seamless referrals where necessary.	Undertake customer journey mapping with people with lived experience of homelessness to understand the triggers for homelessness Using the findings of the mapping exercise to develop a range of prevention interventions Train partner agencies on how to identify the trigger and risk factors linked to homelessness Identify with partners opportunities for them to undertake prevention work or make timely referrals to other	Nov 26	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• Prevention is everyone's responsibility • Increase in homeless prevention cases • Timely and seamless referral arrangements are in place • Joined up approach to homeless prevention resulting in reduced homelessness • Improved customer outcomes • Reduced levels of repeat homelessness • Closer working with partner agencies providing a comprehensive range of services tackling underlying causes of homelessness

		key services			
4	Ensure that current and former service users shape service delivery, design, review and commissioning.	Develop a service user engagement plan Establish a service user engagement panel Ensure service user representation at the Homelessness Forum		Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	- Service user plan in place alongside service user engagement panel - Regular service user representation at the Homelessness Forum
5	Work with Hampshire County Council and Public Health to influence and inform the commissioning and delivery of mental health, substance misuse and adult social care services to ensure they are accessible and meet the needs of homeless clients with complex and multiple needs.	Establish a joint commissioning and delivery group to meet the needs of clients with complex and multiple needs Review best practice in meeting the needs of this client group in a joined up and co-ordinated way Identify opportunities to make services accessible through MDT approaches, outreach and in-reach approaches and jointly commissioned services.	Nov 26	Service Lead-Strategic Housing Senior Housing and Mental Health Practitioner	Clients experiencing homelessness with multiple needs are able to access appropriate services and have their mental health, substance misuse and care needs met in a joined up and personalised way
6	Evaluate the extent of rural homelessness across the area and raise awareness of the help	Raise awareness with rural communities of the help and support available	Nov 27	Lead Housing Options	Understand the levels of and nature of rural homelessness

CAB3508(H) – Appendix 2

	available through community champions.	Undertake research to understand the nature and extent of rough sleeping within the rural areas of Winchester		and Outreach Officer Outreach Officer	• Raise awareness within rural communities of the risks of homelessness and how they may be helped to prevent it. • Ensure effective monitoring arrangements are in place to build up local data in relation to rural homelessness moving forward
7	Better understand the health needs of people experiencing homelessness in Winchester through undertaking Homeless Link's Homelessness Health Audit.	Undertake Homeless Link's Health Needs audit across Winchester to better understand the health issues faced by the local homeless population Work with colleagues in health to remove the barriers which some homeless people face in registering with mainstream GP services Ensure that all accommodation and support providers are knowledgeable about health care services and can help people experiencing homelessness access health care services. Promote health and wellbeing with Housing Options clients	Mar 28	Service Lead- Strategic Housing Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer Strategic Housing Manager	• Improved data and understanding of the health needs of those experiencing homelessness • Improved health and wellbeing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness • Improve choices in relation to health care for people experiencing homelessness

8	Ensure that the best practice elements of Winchester's Housing Options service and wider homelessness services can positively influence future service delivery under Local Government Reorganisation	Work with partnering LAs to benchmark key demand and outcome data Identify best practice across partnering LAs Learn from other LA's Housing Options services who have been through LGR Promote the successful approach of Winchester's Housing Options service through the strategy launch, local press, social media and via national award opportunities Ensure customer consultation regarding future service delivery options	Mar 28	Service Lead-Strategic Housing	• Customer focused and personalised service and outcomes are delivered through the new service delivery model • Positive prevention outcomes are maintained • Low use of B&B is replicated across the area
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Priority 2 - Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.

Through early intervention and prevention we will endeavour to prevent homelessness from occurring. Where it does, we will ensure homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring by providing timely access to early comprehensive and personalised help and support, clear housing pathways, accessible information and trauma informed services.

	Key Objectives	What will we do	When will we do it	Lead Officer	Progress
1	Undertake an awareness raising campaign focusing on homeless prevention, encouraging individuals to seek help at the earliest point.	Raise awareness of the Housing Option service with partners and customers to ensure that opportunities for prevention can be maximised Understand in detail the reason why many customers are only approaching the Housing Options service once they are homelessness Develop a range of promotional literature to include posters and flyers, Use social media and local press to update customers and partners on service developments Hold an event to raise awareness of the service and launch the Homelessness Strategy	Nov 26	Service Lead- Strategic Housing Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	- Housing Options are known widely across Winchester and residents can access the services when required resulting in an increase in queries and opportunities for early intervention - Communities are aware of the approach and commitment to preventing homelessness in partnership - Most customers are approaching the service at the prevention stage - Increase in successful homeless prevention outcomes achieved - Increase in the number of households assisted to remain in their existing accommodation - Reduction in the use of temporary accommodation and B&B - A range of clear advice and information available online to enable customers to access the correct information at the right time - Customers have access to a range of information to enable them to make informed choices

2	Seek a corporate commitment to homeless prevention across all departments within the council	Seek a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which managers and elected members across the Council can sign up to Train elected members and senior managers on homelessness Train other internal departments on the role of the Housing Options team Work across departments to jointly commission homelessness prevention services using various funding streams		Service Lead- Strategic Housing	• Homelessness prevention is a corporate priority for Winchester City Council • All service areas within Winchester work together to prevent homelessness • Funding opportunities are used to jointly commission homelessness prevention services
3	Commit to working to prevent homelessness prior to 56 days for groups at increased risk of homelessness	Identify customers at increased risk of homelessness and develop targeted interventions Ensure partners and customers are aware that assistance is available prior to 56 days	Nov 26	Service Lead- Strategic Housing Housing Options Manger Lead Housing	• Increase in positive prevention outcomes • Reduction in homelessness levels for groups at risk

				Options and Outreach Officer	
4	Empower community organisations to provide advice, information and signposting.	Train partner agencies and community groups on the work of the Housing Options service, how to identify housing stress and how to make effective referrals Use social media and flyers to raise further awareness across a range of services e.g. GP surgeries, health visitors,		Service Lead-Strategic Housing Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• Increase in the number of people contacting the service at pre-prevention or prevention stage • Maintaining current successful prevention outcome rate • Community groups empowered to recognise housing stress and make streamlined referrals.
5	Ensure that the Housing Options service has the right resources in the right place to effectively prevent and relieve homelessness and keep this under review in light of data intelligence	Ensure that effective triage arrangements are in place to ensure timely assessments and decisions, and to manage customer demand through working with the Council's Customers Services	Mar 26 and/ BAU	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and	• Customers receive a high quality consistent service that meets their individual needs • That sufficient resources are in place to focus on early intervention and effective prevention work • Reduction in the number of cases actually becoming homeless • Reduction in the use of B&B and temporary accommodation • Staff have manageable caseloads

		Undertake a light touch operational review of the Housing Options Service to ensure effective processes are in place to ensure homelessness can be prevented wherever possible Keep demand, caseloads, and structure under review to ensure that caseloads remain at a manageable level and opportunities for effective homeless prevention are maximised		Outreach Officer	
6	Review Housing Options policies, processes and procedures to ensure an effective focus on prevention, managing demand and continuing to achieve positive customer outcomes.	Develop a range of customer standards in consultation with service users Develop a suite of policies and procedures to ensure legal compliance, consistent service delivery, improved customer outcomes while reducing duplication and waste Review notification letters, forms and other paperwork Ensure a full range of factsheets are in place to	Nov 27/BAU	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• All customers receive a high quality customer focused and consistent service that meets their individual needs • Effective policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed • All decisions are legally compliant • Reduction in complaints • High levels of customer satisfaction

		provide accessible information for customers Review the Personal Housing Plans regularly to ensure that they are tailored to the individual needs of the customer with a view to co-producing PHPs in the longer term Explore how technology can be used to effectively maintain customer contact with reduced impact upon staff resources Understand the impact of the customer's services reception opening hours on customers experiencing homelessness			
7	Ensure a range of measures are in place to prevent homelessness linked to the wider economy and increases in the cost of living, including through increasing financial capability through access to education, employment and training	Ensure fast access to financial inclusion/debt advice is available for clients at risk of homelessness Raise awareness of the help and support available through social media and local press	Nov 26	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and	• A range of prevention measures are in place linked to the cost of living • Fast track access to money advice for customers at risk of homelessness • Greater awareness of the services and support available

		Develop a responsive service to home-owners at risk of homelessness Work with internal colleagues to identify support for customers to access employment, training and education		Outreach Officer	
8	Develop a range of targeted interventions focused on the main causes of homelessness in Winchester	Develop a checklist for staff to ensure that all prevention options/housing options are considered throughout the assessment process Ensure an effective response to all cases of family/friends evicting, including access to effective mediation and home visits, required notice periods and supporting planned moves through the Housing Register Ensure a range of options are available to clients fleeing domestic abuse that promote choice	Mar 26	Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer Domestic Abuse Lead	• Increase in homeless prevention and relief outcomes • Increase in the number of households supported to retain their existing accommodation • Decrease in homelessness against the main causes of homelessness • Reduction in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation and B&B

9	Develop pre-eviction protocols with social and supported housing providers	Research best practice in relation to pre-eviction protocols Work with housing management and social housing providers to develop a pre-eviction protocol Work with supported housing providers to develop a pre-eviction protocol Monitor eviction levels and periodically review cases to see if any lessons can be learnt		Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• Reduction in evictions from social housing • Reduction in evictions from supported housing
10	Review specialist pathways for clients at increased risk of homelessness including prison release, hospital discharge, care leavers, and refugee resettlement	Deliver targeted housing advice aimed at young people through social networking sites and school educational programmes Working with Leaving Care ensure that an effective care leaver accommodation and support pathway remains in place Review the hospital discharge protocol	Jun 26	Housing Options Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• Reduction in youth homelessness • Reduction in repeat homelessness • Suitable provision is in place for young people with complex needs, including care leavers • Reduction in homelessness on release from prison • Reduction in homelessness linked to hospital discharge • Reduction in homelessness linked to refugee resettlement

		Review prison release protocol Work with the Home Office and SERCO to develop a pathway for refugee resettlement		Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	
11	Work alongside partners to develop a tenancy ready programme to ensure efficient and sustainable move on	Research best practice in relation to tenancy ready programmes Work with housing management colleagues to develop a Winchester tenancy ready programme Roll out programme to households in temporary accommodation and supported housing	Nov 26	Strategic Housing manager Senior Allocations Officer	• Reductions in repeat homelessness • Customers are able to successfully sustain move on accommodation • Reductions in evictions from social housing

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Priority 3 - Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.

We will work to reduce rough sleeping in Winchester by preventing rough sleeping in the first place and implementing clear pathways, preventing returns to the street. We will deliver a multi-agency, trauma informed approach to meet the multiple and complex needs of individuals through multi-disciplinary support. We will prevent repeat homelessness through individually tailored accommodation and support options.

	Key Objectives	What will we do	When will we do it	Lead Officer	Progress
1	Extend the multi-disciplinary team approach to deliver assertive and coordinated services to rough sleepers and individuals experiencing homelessness with multiple, complex needs, with a focus on preventing repeat homelessness.	Establish a multi-agency complex needs group to support those clients with the highest needs out of homelessness Review existing provision and identify gaps and issues in meeting the needs of people with multiple and complex needs Review best practice approaches in MDT outreach delivery	Nov 26	Housing Options Manager Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	- Improved outcomes for clients with multiple and complex needs - Reduction in repeat homelessness - Rough sleeping remains as close to zero as possible
2	Review current outreach arrangements to ensure effective, responsive and assertive outreach in order to provide a rapid response to those new to the streets and an	Review best practice in delivering assertive and targeted outreach Review outreach times and casework approach	Mar 26	Lead Housing Options and	- Assertive outreach service in place resulting in a reduction in the number of people sleeping rough - Accurate intelligence base into the nature and extent of rough sleeping across Winchester

	active engagement approach with entrenched rough sleepers	Ensure targeted interventions are in place that focus on both new rough sleepers and entrenched rough sleepers		Outreach Officer Outreach Officer	
3	Embed a targeted prevention approach to prevent the flow of new rough sleepers on to the street.	Review national research in relation to risk factors associated with rough sleeping and the development of rough sleeping prevention projects Embed learning locally and develop a Winchester approach to identifying risk factors and preventing rough sleeping through the provision of accommodation for anyone identified to be at risk		Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer Outreach Officer	• Reduction in rough sleeping • Reduction in the number of people new to the street
4	Provide a rapid offer of 'off the street accommodation' for anyone sleeping rough	Ensure that the Street Link service is well publicised and linked into local services. Ensure that emergency accommodation is available for anyone found sleeping rough. Develop an assessment centre model or emergency off the street accommodation		Strategic Housing Manger Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• More effective reporting of rough sleeping by communities • No one needs to sleep rough in Winchester • Anyone sleeping rough is provided with a safe off the street offer

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				Outreach Officer	
5	Expand the current Housing First offer	Identify opportunities to increase the Housing First provision using both private rented and social housing properties	Nov 26	Strategic Housing Manger	• Reduction in rough sleeping and repeat homelessness • Increase in housing first provision available in Winchester
6	Assess the impact and outcomes of any rough sleeper initiative funded projects and develop a business case to secure future funding, including a cost benefit analysis.	Undertake a cost benefit analysis of the RSI funded projects, measuring outcomes and compare RSI investment to counter factual costs Develop a business case based on the above	Nov 26	Service Lead- Strategic Housing Housing Options Manager Strategic Housing Manager	• Ongoing funding of the RSI projects • A clear understanding of cost benefits of rough sleeping services
7	Develop a street support app to ensure those facing homeless can access information and services.	Review street support app options available Develop a Winchester street support app	Mar 28	Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	• Reduction in rough sleeping • Increased awareness amongst rough sleepers of the services available

8	Collaborate with key partners to develop services to meet the complex needs of homeless families, with a view to preventing intergenerational homelessness.	Develop an integrated approach to working with complex families to ensure that homelessness is prevented Work with children's services to ensure support is in place for families at risk of repeat homelessness	Mar 28	Housing Options Manager Lead Housing Options and Outreach Officer	- Reduction in homelessness and repeat homelessness for families with complex and multiple needs - Reduction in intergenerational homelessness and the associated trauma
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Priority 4 - Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.

We will reduce the reliance on costly and unsuitable temporary accommodation and ensure any stay is as brief as possible and any impact upon the customer and wider household is mitigated. Develop and improve access to a suitable range of settled, supported and sustainable accommodation solutions through effective partnership working.

	Key Objectives	What will we do	When will we do it	Lead Officer	Progress
1	Ensure that residents of temporary accommodation are able to access support	Identify opportunities to fund support to residents of temporary accommodation	Dec 25 Dec 25	Strategic Housing Manager	- Residents of temporary accommodation are able to access the support that they need - Reduction in repeat homelessness

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		Review staffing arrangements at Milford House to ensure that support is available and that staff are accessible		Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer	
2	Develop a programme of meaningful and diversionary activities for residents of temporary accommodation, including skills development	Establish a resident's group for temporary accommodation residents Consult with temporary accommodation residents regarding the activities and skills development opportunities they would like to access Identify opportunities to provide activities and skills development by working in partnership	July 26	Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer Temporary accommodation officers	• Temporary accommodation residents' group established • Temporary accommodation residents have the opportunity to attend activities and develop skills
3	Develop a range of temporary accommodation options in line with identified need to reduce reliance on Bed & Breakfast	Improve throughput in temporary accommodation through effective monitoring, case work and maximising move on options Source alternative, more appropriate forms of emergency accommodation,	Nov 26/BAU	Service Lead-Strategic Housing Strategic Housing Manager	• Households are only placed in B&B in emergencies and for no longer than 6 weeks • Sustained low levels of B&B use and in the longer term no households are placed in B&B accommodation • Other more suitable nightly paid accommodation is procured

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		including exploring options for procuring nightly paid accommodation, potentially on a sub-regional basis.			
4	Review the impact Allocations Policy to ensure timely move on from temporary accommodation with is personalised to the customer's ability to live independently	Review the current allocations policy to ensure enhanced priority for households ready to move on from temporary accommodation Seek approval for changes	Nov 25	Service Lead- Strategic Housing Strategic Housing Manager Senior Allocations Officer	• Reduction in length of time spent in temporary accommodation • Increased throughput of temporary accommodation
5	Develop move on plans for all households in temporary accommodation, as part of their Personal Housing Plan, ensuring this is reviewed regularly	Ensure that all households in temporary accommodation have a personalised move on plan Ensure households in temporary accommodation have access to support and assistance to address underlying issues, including improving their financial capability	Mar 27	Strategic Housing Manager Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer	• Reduced length of stay in temporary accommodation • Reduction in the use of B&B • Customers able to access settled housing solutions speedily • Customers have the skills to sustain a tenancy
6	Undertake a supported housing needs assessment and develop a	Commission a supported housing needs assessment	April 2027		• Supported housing provision aligns with identified need

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	supported housing strategy in line with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023	to understand the demand and nature of need for supported accommodation Develop a supported housing strategy		Service Lead-Strategic Housing Strategic Housing Manager	Supported housing strategy adopted
7	Review current housing stock designations across the council owned housing and RP stock in order to identify opportunities for the provision of supported housing, temporary accommodation and a range housing options for single people	Review council owned housing stock designation and identify opportunities to redesignate any underutilised provision to meet the need for supported and temporary accommodation	Nov 26/BAU	Service Lead-Strategic Housing Strategic Housing Manager	Increased temporary accommodation and supported housing provision
8	Develop additional units of supported accommodation in response to identified need, including those with complex needs and dedicated provision for women.	In line with the findings from the supported housing needs assessment develop a range of supported housing options to meet the identified need through both commissioned and non-commissioned provision	Nov 2028	Service Lead-Strategic Housing Service Lead-New Homes	Increase in supported housing provision in line with need and for specific clients' groups including women only provision
9	Consult with and support private landlords ahead of the enactment of the Renters Reform Bill to develop a comprehensive landlord offer to mitigate any	Undertake consultation with private landlords to understand what incentives and wider support they would like alongside understanding their concerns	Oct 25- Mar 28	Service Lead-Strategic Housing	- Increased access for Housing Options customers into the private rented sector - Increased number of private rented landlords working with Winchester City Council - Reduced number of private landlords leaving the sector in comparison to other areas - Competitive landlord offer in place

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	negative impact ahead of enactment.	in relation to the Renters Rights Bill Research wider best practice in relation to successful landlord offers. Develop a competitive Winchester landlord offer Market landlord incentives with a suite of options to suit individual landlord's requirements Develop a rent a room scheme to encourage households to take in lodgers		Senior Private Rented Sector Housing Officer Private Rented Sector Housing Officer (tenancy sustainment)	• Increased provision of accommodation available within the LHA shared room rate • Increase in the number of people renting out a spare room • Increase in the number of successful prevention and relief outcomes into the private rented sector • Increase in the number of cases where the s193 duty successfully discharged into the private rented sector.
10	Work with social housing partners to identify perceived barriers and opportunities to accommodating people experiencing homelessness, improving access to social housing.	Identify any barriers for people experiencing homelessness to access social housing Identify potential solutions to barriers and research good practice	Apr 2027	Strategic Housing Manager	• Increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness accessing social housing • Reduction in the number of people being overlooked for allocations

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		Monitor access			
11	Encourage all social housing providers to become a member of Homes for Cathy.	Promote Homes of Cathy to housing management colleagues and social housing providers and encourage membership	Jun 27	Strategic Housing Manager Senior Allocations Officer	- Housing management become a member of Homes for Cathy - All local social housing providers become members of Homes for Cathy
12	Work with our housing providers to increase the delivery of Housing First, one bed homes and supported housing.	Ensure the local development plan identifies the need for single person's affordable housing Identify opportunities to develop one bedroom accommodation and supported housing in line with identified need	Nov 26	Strategic Housing Manager Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer	- Increase in one bedroom provision - Increase in supported housing provision
13	Review any learning from the rapid rehousing work happening across Scotland and Wales to understand what more can be done to ensure rapid access to settled homes, minimizing the length of stay in insecure temporary accommodation.	Research best practice and learning from Rapid Rehousing programmes Identify opportunities to apply learning at a local level	Dec 26	Service Lead-Strategic Housing Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer	- Research into rapid rehousing undertaken - Identified learning applied locally
14	Develop a business case for an invest to save model to deliver a floating support service to	Ensure the supported housing needs assessment	Nov 26	Strategic Housing Manager	- Provision of floating support service available - Reduction in repeat homelessness

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	prevent homelessness and provide support to households in temporary accommodation to support sustainable move on	captures the need for floating support Identify cost benefits of floating support models against the counter factual costs of repeat homelessness Develop a business case on a spend to save basis to provide floating support		Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer	
15	Ensure adequate resettlement support is in place to support transitions into independent settled accommodation, and preventing repeat homelessness	Work with supported housing providers to identify opportunities for resettlement support and funding opportunities	BAU	Strategic Housing Manager Housing Options Manager	• Reduction in repeat homelessness • Successful tenancy sustainment

Appendix 3- Consultation for the Draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Homelessness Review 2025 - Consultation

Consultation has been a critical component of this review, and as such extensive consultation has been undertaken with service users, key stakeholders and council staff. It is essential that the new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy responds to the issues that are affecting the residents of Winchester, and as such we have listened to a wide range of views and experiences to ensure that the new strategy builds upon the good practice already in place, whilst addressing identified issues.

Lived Experience Consultation

Extensive consultation with individuals with lived experience of homelessness has been critical to the strategy development process and has taken the form of a number of face-to-face interviews, focus groups and an online questionnaire. The council is committed to ensuring that the voice and experience of service users helps to shape the new Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and our response to addressing homelessness across Winchester.

Service User Interviews & Focus Groups

Face to face interviews and focus groups were undertaken with 17 service users (11 male and 6 female) across a wide range of services and client groups including rough sleepers day centre, supported accommodation and single households living in temporary accommodation.

Conversations focused on individual's personal experience of homelessness, together with their views on what services are required in responding to homelessness and where improvements are needed.

The consultation feedback is broken down under key themes.

Awareness Raising

The majority of service users spoken to felt that more was needed to raise awareness of the services available to those who are facing homelessness, with a high number having had no idea where to go for assistance when in housing difficulty.

“It was not easy to find out where to go.”

Many who were at risk of homelessness were unaware of where to go for help, and many found out via word of mouth.

“If I’d known where to go for help it might have stopped me from being homeless.”

“If I had of get help at the first point it could have reduced how long I was homeless for.”

For those individuals who had slept rough, they also commented that they were unaware of the services available to assist those living on the streets, which in some instances led to them spending longer periods on the streets, than might have been the case if they had been able to access services earlier. A number of service users commented that they had relied upon other individuals sleeping rough to find out where to go for help, with one service user commenting that they felt that they had *‘got more help from other rough sleepers than the council.’*

Service users also felt that there was a need to break down the stereotypes and stigmas associated with homelessness; with a clear view that anyone can be at risk of homelessness.

“Homelessness can happen to anyone, I used to think that anyone who was homeless were drunks and addicts, but they’re completely not, you’d be amazed at what talent people have got.”

There was a strong sense that work was needed to change people’s perception of homelessness and raise awareness that homelessness can happen to anyone, with the aim of both preventing homelessness, raising awareness of the help and services available and to also change people’s responses and engagement with people experiencing homelessness.

“You don’t remember those that were kind, but you do remember those that are mean when you’re on the streets.”

For those service users experiencing domestic abuse, many were not aware of the help, support, and services available to those experiencing domestic abuse and stated that had they been aware of the help and support available, they would have left the relationship at an earlier point.

There is a clear need to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the services and help available across all communities, and to address some of the misconceptions around living within a refuge.

“There is a need to raise awareness, if I had known of the help I would have left earlier, I didn’t recognise that it was coercion and control.”

Recommendation

- There is a need to raise awareness of the services available to those at risk of homelessness to ensure that people can get access to the correct advice and information as soon as possible, maximising opportunities for homelessness prevention.
- Ensure that following any campaign that services, staff, and tools are in place to respond to this demand so that opportunities for achieving positive prevention outcomes can be maximised.
- Work to break the stereotypes and stigmas associated with homelessness
- Undertake an awareness raising campaign to raise awareness across Winchester in relation to identifying domestic abuse and the help and support available.
- Ensure increased awareness of the services available to those at risk of sleeping rough via an app or wallet guide.

Rough Sleeping

A number of service users spoken to had either previously experienced sleeping rough or were currently sleeping on the streets. Service users talked about how terrifying life on the streets is, and a number felt that had there been more help available they would not have ended up sleeping rough

“It was terrifying on the street, I felt very vulnerable”

For those that had slept rough service users felt that their mental health, substance misuse and offending history had contributed to their homelessness.

A number of those who had experienced sleeping rough were women, and they spoke of how vulnerable they felt while sleeping rough.

“It’s awful I feel really unsafe; I try and keep myself to myself as there’s lots of people taking drugs.”

Service users talked of feeling invisible while on the streets and felt that members of the public looked down on them. One service user had recently been released from prison and had slept rough upon his release; they expressed frustration that more had not been done to prevent them from ending up on the streets

“Probation told me to sleep rough; the services aren’t joined up, I feel like the council don’t care.”

Another service user felt that hospital discharge arrangements had not been joined up and there was a need for closer working between services, together with the need to raise awareness of the help available.

Service users felt that there was a need for off the street accommodation or a night shelter to provide an emergency response.

“Rough sleeping shouldn’t happen, there is nowhere you can go at night, I went to A&E to keep warm.”

A wide number of service users were hugely positive of the help from the Trinity Day centre, and there was a clear dependency on this service for those individuals sleeping rough, as too was there a dependency on other service users for peer support, with an indication that there was a clear sense of community amongst those sleeping rough.

“Everyone here helps each other out, we look out for each other, if we’ve not seen someone then we will check in to see if they are around.”

A number of individuals using the day centre had been successfully rehoused but continued to access the day centre for a range of reasons including accessing support, food provision, support and the companionship of peers.

“I’m still coming here for the social aspect... the staff here are amazing and if I need any support, I know they will help.”

While the majority of service users felt that Trinity provided an essential resource for those sleeping rough or vulnerably housed, a couple of service users described the facility as chaotic and were reluctant to access the day centre; other service users felt it very much depended upon who was in the day centre as to the environment, acknowledging that some ‘characters’ could cause it to “kick off.”

One individual suggested that there was a need for wider support and felt the co-location of key agencies in one building on a regular basis would improve

accessibility and enable customers to have their wider support needs met within one setting, including accessing mental health support, substance misuse services and benefits. This was considered to be important for individuals currently sleeping rough to ensure they could access the help that they need.

“The last priority for me was getting my benefits, I was desperately looking for where to put my head down at night, but it is important to sign on, but my top priority was somewhere safe to stay.”

Recommendations

- Work to develop an off the street offer for anyone sleeping rough in Winchester to ensure any period on the streets is brief and non-recurring.
- Explore the opportunity to develop a multi-agency drop-in service for customers including those sleeping rough.

Housing Options

The majority of service users were very positive regarding the service that they had received from the Housing Options service, with individuals commenting that staff were caring, emphatic and very helpful, and that the service was very accessible and customer focused. All customers appreciated the ability to speak to a member of the team face to face.

“The staff I spoke to were really good and helpful.”

“I can’t emphasise enough how brilliant the staff were, they were empathetic and helpful.”

“The homeless team were incredible.”

The personalised service delivered by the housing options service was very apparent in the feedback from service users.

“I felt like I could be honest with her, she rang me regularly, she was concerned about my welfare, it felt like she wasn’t just doing her job, I felt like she cared.”

However, not all service users described a positive experience of the Housing Options service, these were largely customers who had been found to have no priority need and as such had not been provided with temporary accommodation.

“I felt I had to be on my death bed to get help, I felt I was on the bottom of the pile.”

Some customers did express some frustration that services across the council did not appear to be very joined up and that there were unnecessary levels of bureaucracy for example having to provide evidence of family members’ local connection to Winchester when this information is readily available internally via council tax records.

Other frustrations were expressed in relation to Home choice and local connection rules to access social housing

“I would complain about Home choice, it’s hard to get on the list, they keep asking for more and more information, they need to ask for it all in one go.”

“They make it more complicated than it needs to be.”

One service user felt that there was a need for improved communication between the council and other services, which had led to mixed messages from different organisations which had a detrimental impact upon their mental health.

A few individuals commented that it was a positive that the council still retains its own housing stock and felt that this had “made the world of difference’ in the services provided by the council. Some concern was expressed about the ramifications of devolution and local government reorganisation and how this may impact upon the quality of the service provided.

A number of service users felt that the council could take a more strategic approach to addressing empty properties in order to increase affordable housing stock.

“There’s lots of empty buildings, they should be converted into hostels.”

Recommendations

- Embed regular customer satisfaction monitoring
- Review housing register processes to ensure they are efficient, and customer focused

Supported Accommodation

A number of service users spoken to were residents of the Beacon and Trinity and were overwhelmingly positive regarding their experience of living within supported housing. Many talked about the importance of having their own rooms, and for some self-contained space, but many also felt that they benefited from access to communal spaces and the support of peers.

“The peer support really helps, I feel comfortable just talking to someone, you won’t get judged it really helps to relate to each other.”

Residents talked about how they had benefited from the support and access to wider services and agencies while resident.

“It’s boosted my confidence living here, it’s given me space to sort things out....it’s given me space to breath.”

“It’s overwhelming living here, I didn’t know places like this existed, the support I’ve got here I needed for a long time, we need more places like this.”

“I’m good at isolating myself and if I was just in a flat on my own, I wouldn’t have coped.”

Access to being able to develop wider skills and attend courses and activities was considered to be of significant benefit. Some service users talked about the opportunity to attend a healthy eating cooking course and had received a slow cooker on completion which was described as a ‘morale booster.’

Residents of the Beacon spoke positively in relation to the practical help in being able to source identification and support in relation to building the skills to live independently but also having the opportunity to volunteer at the food pantry, to access the gym, and socialise with other residents alongside opportunities to work with a local musician on projects.

“This is the best place I’ve ever lived.”

“It has given me space to plan my future a bit more.”

A number of individuals felt that they would benefit from more budgeting advice and assistance with how to prioritise payments and organise their finances with a view to building the skills to successfully move on. Service users spoke of the need for more support in the community and improved access to work and training opportunities.

One service user did comment that it can be challenging to live in supported housing alongside those actively using substances when you are trying to stay sober, but that the groups available had assisted them in remaining sober but felt an increase in the number of groups available would help further.

A number of women were spoken to who were living in mixed supported housing. For some of these women they found living in a supported housing project alongside men did not pose any issues, however, some women, including those that had experienced domestic abuse, felt that there was a need for female only provision. They felt that there was a need for a safe female-only environment for women, and a need for specialist domestic abuse provision for those with more complex support needs for whom traditional refuge provision was not considered suitable.

“It’s hard living in a male space..... it can feel less safe coming somewhere like here.”

“It can be quite volatile living here; I feel vulnerable at times.”

One female service user talked about how at the time she moved into the supported accommodation project, another two women had moved in and as a result of this they had formed a bond and were able to provide peer support to each other.

“There is nothing like peer support, it’s really important, it’s not something you would talk about with anyone, but it is easier with people who understand.”

Recommendations

- Ensure residents of supported housing have access to money and budgeting advice to prepare them for successful and sustainable move on.
- Ensure that supported housing creates safe places for women and identify opportunities to develop specialist female only supported provision.

Temporary Accommodation

A focus group was held with current residents at Milford house, a total of 5 individuals attended

A number of residents expressed a desire to have self-contained accommodation and felt sharing facilities was difficult.

“It can be hard living in just one small room; the facilities aren’t the best maintained.”

“It’s dehumanising living here, not being able to see my own children.”

Current residents commented that it can be unpredictable at times living in temporary accommodation alongside strangers with high support needs. One former resident of Milford house had found the staff to be really helpful but felt that many of the residents living there needed much more support than was available. In contrast, some individuals described the temporary accommodation as calm and pleasant.

In relation to support a number of residents didn’t feel well supported while living at Milford House, they felt staff weren’t accessible with the shutter to access staff more frequently closed than open, creating a barrier between staff and residents; individual comments suggested that some staff were more approachable and supportive than others. It was also commented that when certain staff are in the shutter is down; residents expressed concern that there is no bell and therefore no way of accessing staff, and those that had then knocked on the door had been ‘told off’ for doing this.

“Some staff make me feel like I’m a second-class citizen, looking down on me.”

“It makes me feel like my feelings don’t matter.”

“I feel the system takes away hope, everything is so hard.”

A number of residents felt that it would be beneficial to receive more contact and support from staff while living in temporary accommodation, and to have the opportunity to engage with staff on a regular basis both formally and informally. One positive suggestion included having a mentor who could provide support and advice.

“I feel staff could be more pro-active, there’s no conversation to check on how I am.”

“There’s no opportunity to engage with staff and to feed back.”

Frustration was also raised in relation to how long it takes to get repairs completed with an example of the accessible shower having been out of order for over a month.

Some concern was raised in relation to security staff being very 'lax', and appearing to be 'mates' with residents, rather than security.

"I don't feel he's there to keep me safe."

Residents of Milford House expressed some frustration at the lack of communal space, and felt that this very much restricted their living space to their rooms, which in some cases could be small. While there is a large room which was previously a resident's lounge, this is now used by staff. A number of residents also expressed some frustration that part of the garden had been cut off from residents following neighbour complaints, although moving forward it may be possible to enable limited access to this area for planned activities. Some residents felt the garden wasn't accessible due to the steep stairs and the need to access it via the former lounge. The garden provides a large outdoors space and appears to be an under-utilised resource, which could have a positive impact upon resident's mental health and wellbeing. A few service users expressed frustration that nothing has changed in the past in response to resident's suggestions, further compounding the divide between staff and residents.

"I asked if we could have a pool table, but I was told no due to the risk of the cues and balls, but this is stereotyping us. Any risk could be managed, a person could sign them out and be responsible for them."

"There's no opportunity to interact with other residents.....it can be lonely."

"Too much time on your own isn't good for your mental health."

Residents described feelings of frustration at having nothing to occupy their time during the day, and it was evident during the focus group many had never had the opportunity to meet each other prior to the consultation event. While there was clear disappointment at the lack of resident involvement and activities, there was clear motivation and enthusiasm from those that attended to become involved and instrumental in the establishment of a resident's group. There was a whole array of suggestions as to the diversionary activities that could be implemented, and offers of assistance in the establishment of these, including a gardening group, garden furniture repair workshops, art workshops/therapy and cooking courses.

"It would be good to have house meetings to address issues that crop up."

"The days are long and excruciating."

“If we could have a group to restore the garden furniture or do gardening, I would feel that I have achieved something.....here is an opportunity to help people with their circumstances, to help people move forward and give them hope.”

Recommendations

- Review how the large room can be used to create a multi-functional space, including for planned activities and to provide a resident's lounge area
- Review garden accessibility and consider opportunities to ensure the outdoor space is fully accessible and utilised.
- Ensure that staff are accessible to residents and that the issue in relation to the shutter is addressed
- Review the support available to residents of temporary accommodation
- Review the concerns identified in relation to repairs and security.
- Set up a residents meeting with opportunities for resident feedback/suggestions
- Work with residents to create opportunities for diversionary activities.

Move On

In relation to move on service users expressed confusion as to how Home choice works, and felt they had little information regarding their prospects of being offered social housing.

Service users considered the private rented sector to be largely unaffordable and considered reliance on benefits to be a significant barrier in accessing this form of move on accommodation. One service user commented that the list of landlords provided by the Council included out of date details and landlords who were not willing to accept benefits. It was felt that the council needed to develop stronger relationships with private landlords to increase access for customers who had experienced homelessness and address some of the barriers that customers currently face.

There may be a need to undertake closer work with supported housing projects in relation to move on to help manage customer expectation.

A number of individuals commented that the prospect of moving on felt daunting, with a number not feeling sure that they would be ready to move on; concerns expressed included feeling isolated and lonely and concerns around managing money and being able to afford to meet all of the expenses associated with living independently.

“I’m worried about living on my own, there is a fear of being alone, and the services I’ve relied on not being available.”

“I do worry about living on my own, I need to use this time to develop my own skills and develop resilience with my mental health.”

One survivor of domestic abuse expressed some trepidation about the future and moving on, including her ability to gauge dangerous situations.

“I feel trepidation, I can’t visualise moving on at the moment.”

Some service users felt that there was a need to develop step down move on options, providing a step towards independence with support still accessible.

Recommendations

- Work with supported housing projects in relation to move on and customer expectation.
- Explore opportunities for step down provision within the supported housing pathway.

Service User Questionnaire

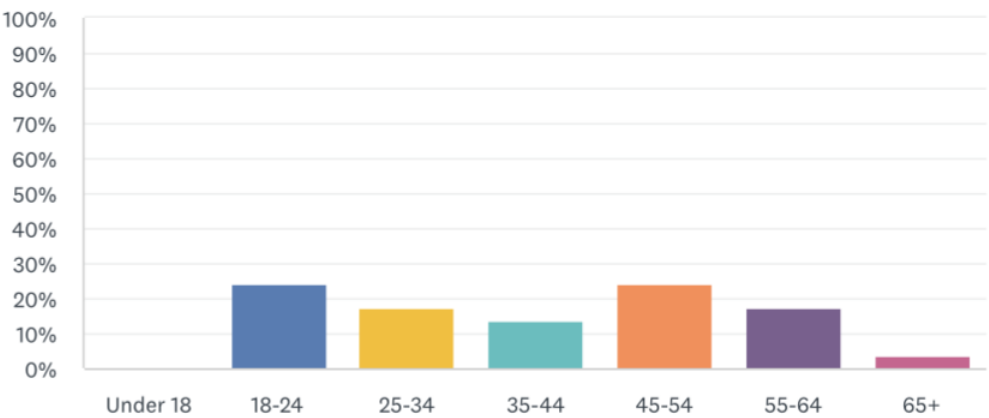
In order to widely capture the views of service users an online survey was developed for service users to complete. There was a total of 30 responses, which is considered to be a reasonable response rate.

Demographics

Of the 30 surveys completed 41% were completed by females and 51% by males, 7% of respondents preferred not to say what their gender was. The graph below shows the age of the service user completing the survey and is broadly in line with the age data for service users owed a homeless duty.

Age

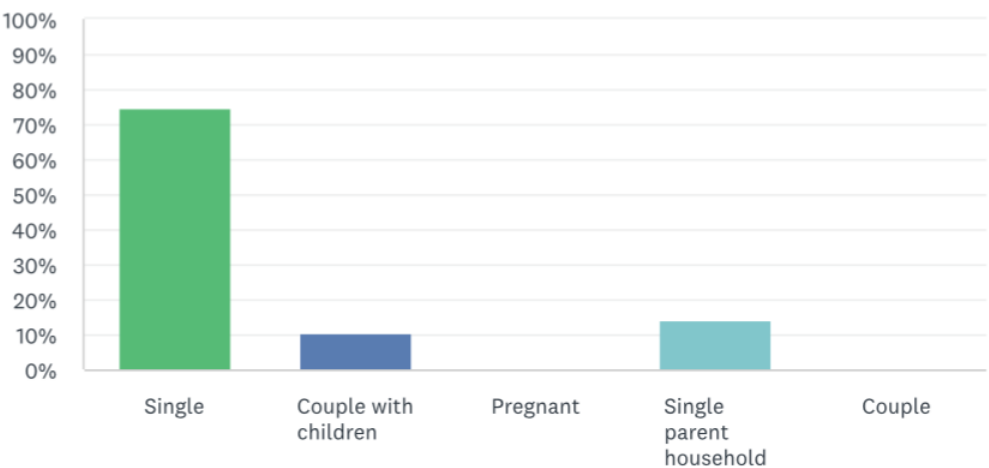
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



The graph below shows the household composition of those individuals who had completed the survey.

Household composition

Answered: 28 Skipped: 2



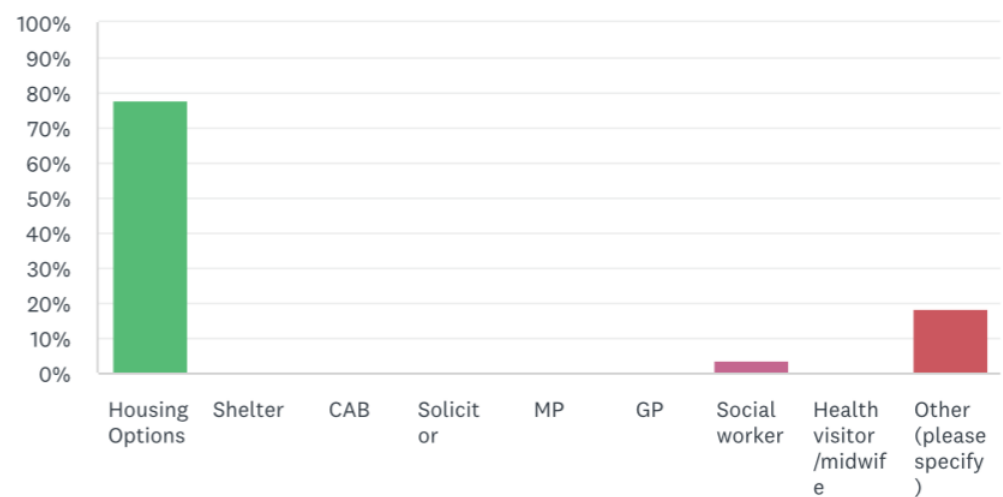
A total of 75% respondents were single person households, 15% were single parents and 11% were couples with children.

Awareness of Services

The graph below shows the organisation that the respondents first contacted when they were at risk of homelessness.

Who did you first approach when you were homeless or threatened with homelessness?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 3



The questionnaire responses show that the majority of service users (78%, 21 service users) contacted the Housing Options service in the first instance, and 5 individuals contacted another agency.

Customers were asked if they knew where to go for help and advice, the response showed that 62% knew where to go, but 39% were unaware of where to go for advice and support when threatened with homelessness.

“I was unsure what to do.”

“I did not know of the service.”

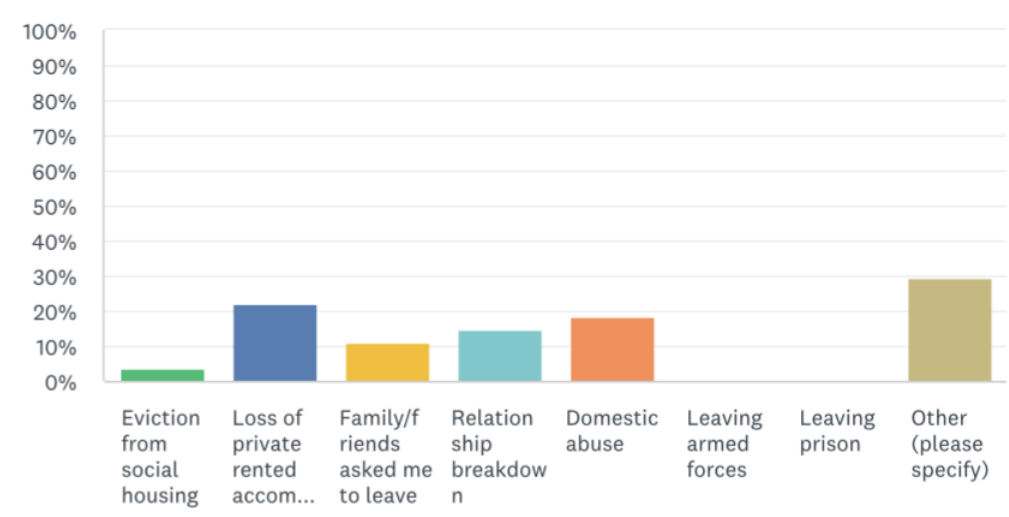
This provides further evidence that there is a need to raise awareness of the Housing Options service and the need to encourage customers to contact the service as soon as they are in housing difficulty.

Cause of Homelessness

Service users were asked what had led them to them becoming homeless; the responses are shown in the graph below.

What caused your homelessness?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 3



The responses largely mirror the main causes of homelessness as shown within the data analysis report. The main cause of homelessness, accounting for 22% of responses, was the loss of private rented accommodation, followed by domestic abuse (19%), relationship breakdown (15%) and family/friends asking to leave (11%).

Other causes of homelessness include health issues, fleeing war and having to leave host family arrangements.

Prevention of Homelessness

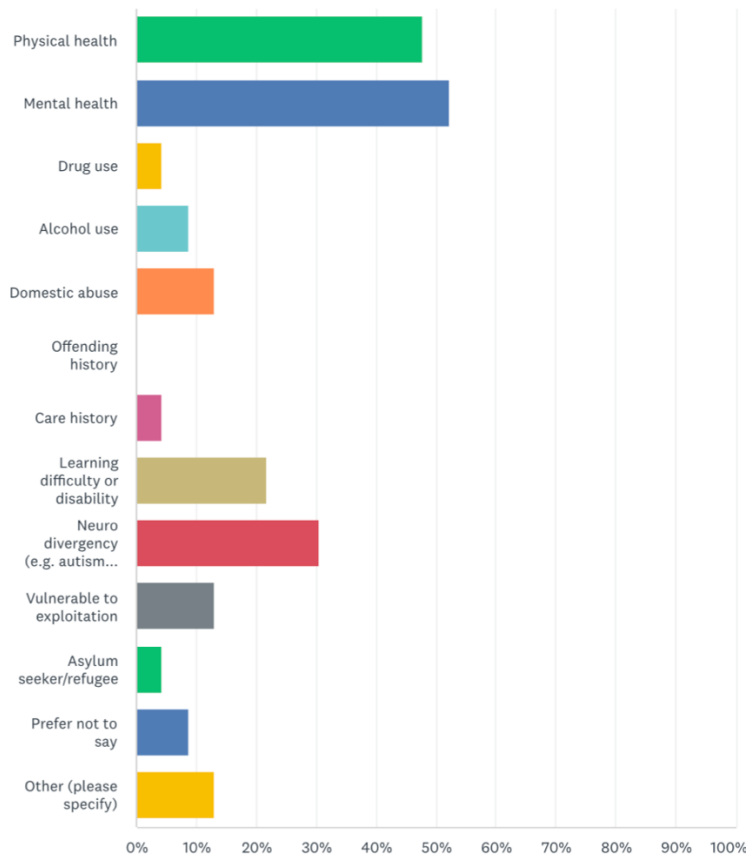
Service users were asked at what point they contacted the service; 85% of respondents replied that they contacted the service at the point when they were already homeless. This does not correspond with H-CLIC data generally but may be linked to the high proportion of single households who completed the survey who are more likely to be owed a relief duty and contact the service once they are homeless.

Support Needs

Customers were asked if they had a support need, the results are shown below. In line with the H-CLIC data mental health is the most prevalent support need, followed by physical health.

Do you consider yourself to have a support need in relation to any of the following (tick all that apply)

Answered: 23 Skipped: 7



Customers were then asked if they felt that their support need may have contributed to their homelessness, 46% of respondents felt that it had; this provides further evidence of the need to address the wider support needs that individuals are presenting with, and the need for homelessness prevention to be recognised as a system wide responsibility across all services.

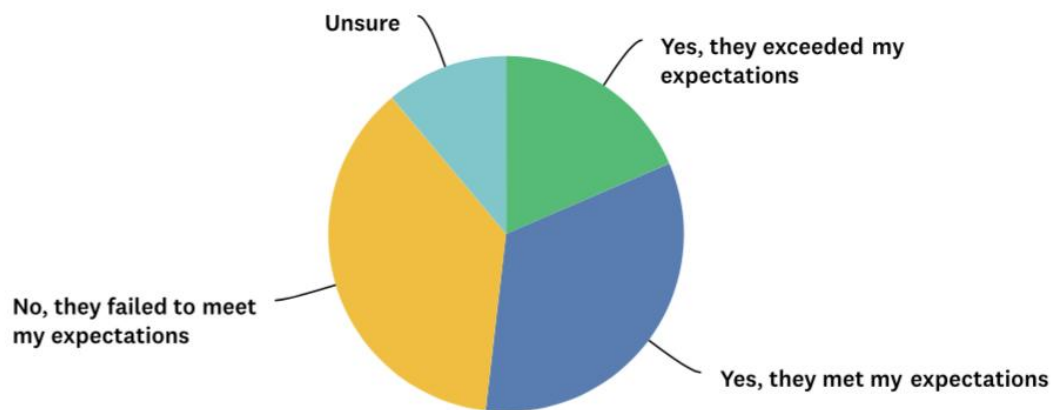
Housing Options Service

The following questions focused upon the housing options service and the quality of service received.

Service users were asked if the Housing Options service had met their expectations; the results are shown below.

Did the service provided by Housing Options meet your expectations?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 3



Of the service users that completed this question 33% felt that the service met their expectations, and 19% felt the service had exceeded their expectations. A total of 37% felt the service failed to meet their expectations and a further 11% were unsure.

"I am struggling to put into words just humanity when I needed it most and I will never forget."

"(Officer's name) was tremendously helpful."

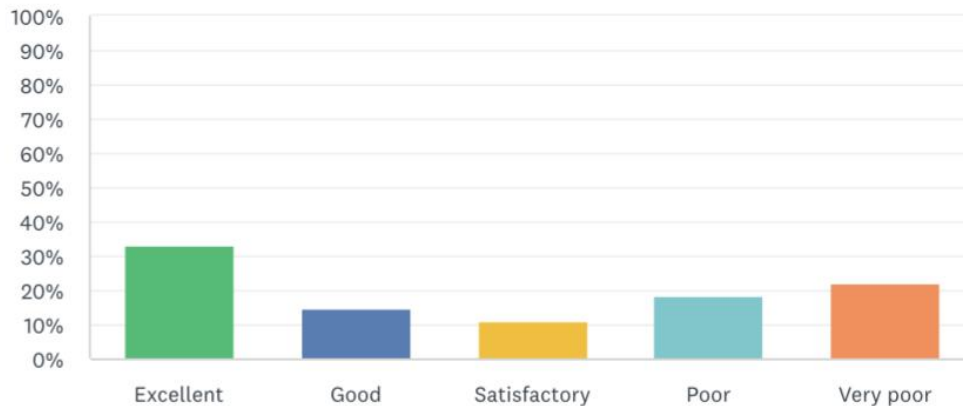
"(Officer's name) is absolutely amazing with her help."

"They have been awful and done nothing to help, which has left me homeless, despite them knowing about impending homelessness since 3 Dec 2024."

In relation to the quality of the service received the majority of service users 33% described the service as excellent and 15% as good. A total of 11% described the service as satisfactory. The remaining 41% described it as poor or very poor.

How would you rate the service that you received from the Housing Options team?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 3



Service users were asked if they had received clear information and advice about the services available; with 60% feeling that this had been the case and 40% felt that they had not.

A total of 73% found staff to be knowledgeable and 70% found staff to be helpful, understanding and kind.

In relation to being kept informed of how the case was progressing, 52% felt they were kept informed and 48% did not feel that this had happened.

Service users were asked if they had been provided with a full housing assessment and personal housing plan. A total of 48% stated that they had and the remaining 52% felt that this had not happened.

Prevention of Homelessness

Service users were asked if the Housing Options team had prevented them from becoming homeless; 44% of individuals stated that the service had prevented them from becoming homeless, and 31% stated that the service had helped them to find alternative settled accommodation so that they did not need temporary accommodation.

Service users were asked what they felt could have prevented them from becoming homeless in the first place. It was felt that more mental health services and earlier support would have helped at the stage they were threatened with homelessness. A

number of services users felt that changes to provide better protection for private rented tenants were needed, alongside improved access to social housing and private rented housing, together with employment opportunities. One service user felt that improved community support was also needed.

“Better community. Less isolation. Immediate mental health care for people in crisis, not a waiting list. More social housing. My journey would have been unimaginable without charity assistance to help me access this service. I was not in a fit state to seek it out. It shouldn’t be luck of the draw.”

A number of service users felt that their homelessness could not have been prevented.

Service improvements

Service users were also asked what could be done to improve existing services. Responses include improved communication and clear explanations of the housing options and help available, an increase in the help and support available, employing staff with the right values and those with lived experience of homelessness, more frequent updates and easier access to information, alongside increased resources.

“More resources so they can make everyone who is in this situation feel visible and not so vulnerable. The housing stock is woefully inadequate and homelessness is inhumane. I consider myself very fortunate to have had such a positive experience so far. I have a long way to go but am definitely reassured by the people I have dealt with. They are a credit to the service.”

“Everything was done really good.”

“Everything is fabulous”

While many service users were satisfied with the service they had received, a number raised concerns regarding their experience including the need to be helped at a much earlier stage and a need for improved empathy and support.

“Well, they cannot help you very well until everything gets more worst, first you need to teach them to help everyone, and give time for them... they take too long to meet...you can hire people who had experience to live as homeless because they know the pain we are suffering, you need to hire homeless people in the office to support homeless people.”

“Treat people facing homelessness with respect and dignity. The way I have been treated is appalling and has worsened my mental health issues.... They did not care one bit that I was becoming homeless.”

“The staff at the hostel should treat us better not like they are above us looking down.”

Customers also suggested that there was a need for an improved understanding of mental health conditions and neurodiversity and the implications of these conditions amongst staff alongside the delivery of more personalised responses.

Emergency Accommodation

Service users were asked if they had been placed in a B&B by Housing Options, 7% answered yes. (2 individuals)

Customers were asked if the accommodation was suitable for their needs, one customer felt it was suitable and the other did not. Customers were asked to rate the standard of the B&B accommodation; one customer described it as good and the other as satisfactory. Concern was raised in relation to being unable to access halal food while in B&B.

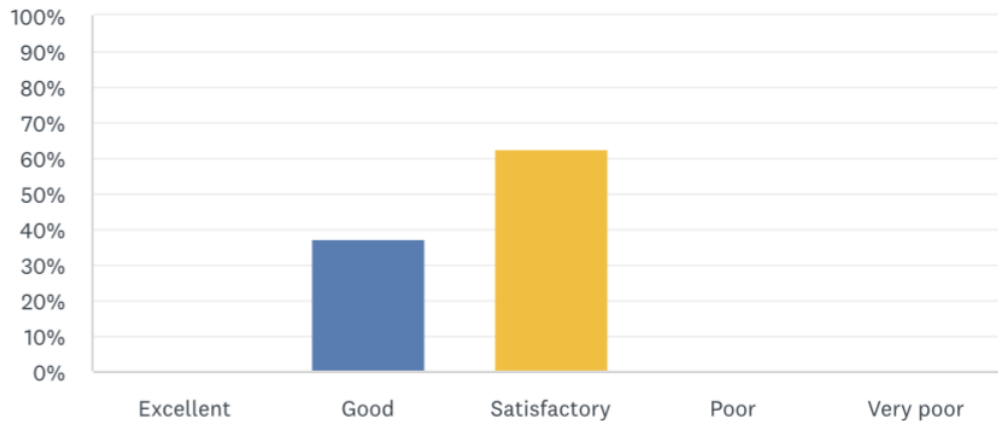
One customer stated that the move to B&B necessitated them giving up support networks.

Temporary Accommodation

A total of 8 individuals stated that they had been placed in temporary accommodation, of which 5 considered it to be suitable for their needs and 3 did not. Concerns were raised in relation to the lack of cooking facilities, lack of ensuite bathroom facilities, and challenges for one client who struggled to negotiate flights of stairs. Customers were asked to rate the temporary accommodation; the results are shown in the graph below.

How would you rate the standard of temporary accommodation provided?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 22



A total of 3 individuals rated the temporary accommodation as good and 5 as satisfactory. A total of 3 people felt that they received adequate support whilst in temporary accommodation and 5 did not. Concerns were raised in relation to the lack of mental health support. Only 2 people felt that the Housing Options team remained in regular contact with them whilst in temporary accommodation 6 did not feel this had happened.

“Not really received any help, had to struggle myself.”

“Some contact and offer of “just ask” but I won’t unless pushed, encouraged or asked. The care received in the early stages lead me to think it is more likely that the staff are working flat out than don’t care. They invest time in the people they help and I don’t feel intentionally neglected by my housing options officer. She has been amazing but can only do so much with the workload I imagine she has at this time.”

Additional Services

Service users were asked what additional services they felt were needed in Winchester in responding to homelessness. Responses included:

- Improved communication whilst homeless
- Need for additional support
- Access to employment opportunities

- Increased social housing
- Community projects and community support
- Debt advice
- Increased access to mental health services
- Temporary accommodation provision for everyone
- Provision of temporary accommodation for households with pets
- Creation of communal spaces for residents in temporary accommodation
- Tackle slum landlords
- Develop a booklet with tips and useful numbers
- Improved understanding of autism and ADHD

Recommendations

- Identify opportunities to utilise lived experience to inform service delivery and consider opportunities to employ those with lived experience.
- Ensure that customers in temporary accommodation receive regular contact, have their PHPs regularly reviewed, have a clear move on plan, and ensure that this is set out in a procedure.
- Ensure that all Housing Options staff are trained on trauma-informed and person-centred approaches.
- Ensure that all systems, processes, and policies are reviewed to ensure that they are trauma informed and person centred, and do not result in further trauma.
- Work with customers to develop a range of meaningful and measurable service standards.
- Implement regular customer feedback and monitoring in line with customer service standards

Stakeholder Consultation

Extensive consultation with stakeholders has been critical to the strategy development process and has taken the form of a number of face-to-face consultation events, one-to-one interviews, and an online questionnaire.

A number of consultation events were held with providers to help identify priorities for the strategy and the actions needed to deliver these objectives, and the overall strategic vision. The notes from these events are available as an appendix.

Stakeholder consultation event

A large consultation event with stakeholders was held as part of the review work to inform the evidence base. Discussions focused on four key themes.

Rough Sleeping & Complex Needs

It was felt that greater partnership approaches were required in responding to complex and multiple needs and rough sleeping, with the need for other agencies to see homelessness as their responsibility.

It was identified that there was a need for multi-disciplinary approaches to respond to the multiple needs of customers, with improved interventions, information sharing and communication. Person centred and trauma informed approaches were considered to be critical to the service response, as too were responsive services that could operate outside of normal office weekends.

Stakeholders felt that more was required to raise awareness of the services available for those sleeping rough and to educate the public.

Specific gaps and challenges were identified in relation to accessing mental health service provision and the need for increased understanding of neurodiversity amongst those sleeping rough or vulnerably housed.

Identified gaps included the lack of off the street accommodation, reduction in the provision of supported accommodation and the requirement for specialist provision for those still actively drinking or using substances chaotically.

Homelessness Prevention

There was a wide consensus that there was a need to develop holistic approaches and ensure all agencies were clear of their potential role in preventing homelessness. Understanding the wider costs of homelessness across all services may help to ensure improved joint commitment. Improved information sharing was seen as critical to effective joint approaches to prevention, both amongst agencies, but more widely with the public to ensure that all residents were aware of what to do when faced with housing difficulty. Social media was considered to be central to this.

Stakeholders felt that there was a need for improved education in relation to both homelessness and housing-readiness, including work with schools and colleges and jobcentres. It was widely felt that there was a need for floating support and tenancy sustainment across all sectors, alongside dedicated pathways for clients at increased risk of homelessness and pre-eviction protocols with social landlords.

Future Pressures

As with previous themes information sharing and awareness raising were critical to mitigating the impact of future pressures.

Future pressures that are likely to impact on homelessness levels include the pressures associated with the cost of living, Renters' Rights Bill, refugee resettlement and housing market pressures.

Access to timely money advice was seen as critical in responding to pressures, as too was access to crisis responses such as food banks and furniture schemes. The need to develop a mortgage rescue scheme was identified as one potential solution for homeowners.

Tenancy sustainment services were seen as essential in responding to increased pressures, as too was the importance of peer support.

Stakeholders were keen to see more work in terms of bringing empty properties back into use.

Close work with private rented sector landlords was identified as critical in preventing landlords leaving the sector ahead of changes to the private rented sector, as too was increasing the Housing Options team's capacity to work with private landlords

In response to pressures in relation to refugee resettlement it was felt that closer working and information sharing with the Home Office was required to understand the demand, numbers and timeframes so that planned approaches could be embedded.

[Accommodation](#)

The lack of supported accommodation was an area of significant concern following the closure of Westview. It was considered that there was a need for more supported provision, both generic and specialist. Specific gaps in provision include domestic abuse provision for those with complex needs, complex needs provision, young person's provision, learning disability provision and provision for those with mental health support needs who don't meet the threshold for social care interventions. The expansion of the existing Housing First scheme was considered critical in meeting current and future demand.

Within supported housing schemes it was felt that more of a harm reduction approach was required rather than zero tolerance approaches, with trauma informed approaches embedded.

It was also felt that additional temporary accommodation was required in response to the increase in the use of Bed & Breakfast provision, suggestions included repurposing low demand sheltered schemes.

In relation to settled solutions it was identified that there was a need for access to resettlement and floating support, and to address some of the potential barriers that customers face including former arrears, affordability and former anti-social behaviour.

[Stakeholder questionnaire](#)

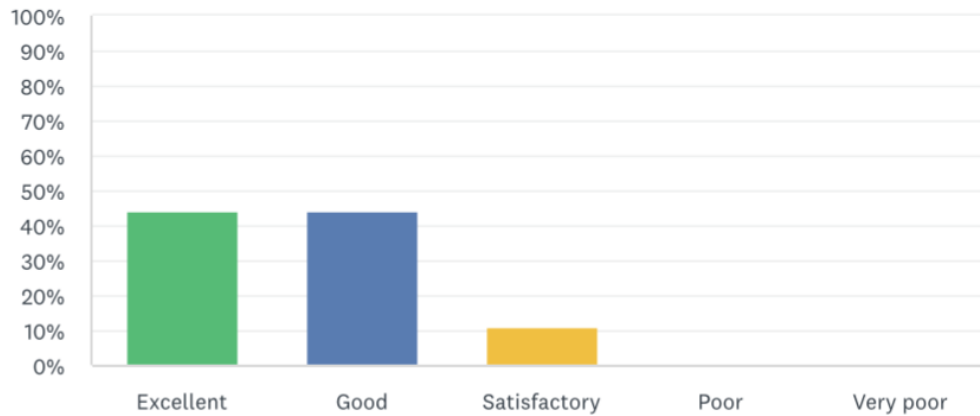
Online surveys were sent out to wider stakeholders and housing associations to capture their views on the challenges in responding to homelessness locally together, with an understanding of their views on the Housing Options service. There was a total of 9 responses, although not all questions were answered by all respondents.

Housing Options

Stakeholders were asked to rate the Housing Options service; of the 9 agencies who responded, eight considered the service to be either excellent or good and one considered the service to be satisfactory.

How would you rate the service delivered by the Housing Options team?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



Identified strengths of the service included a flexible approach, good communication and information sharing, prompt responses, an available and accessible service, collaborative working, partnership approaches, quality outcomes and the provision of outreach services for clients who are hard to reach.

“Innovative when solutions are not one size fits all, we work as one team, even though statutory and third sector sometimes doesn’t align.”

“Great partnership working in place”

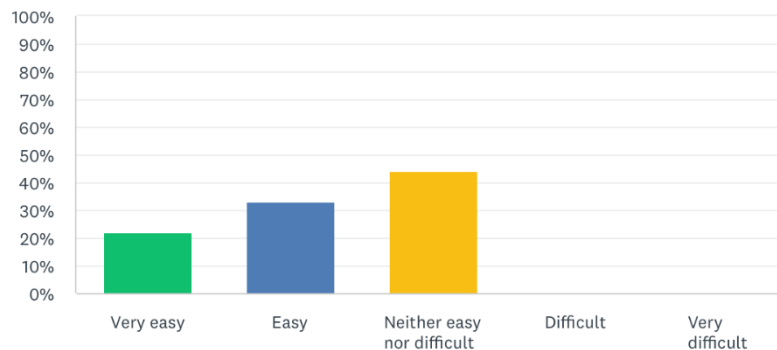
Suggestions for how the service could improve include:

- Increased outreach workers
- Consistency across the whole service
- Increased knowledge in relation to those seeking sanctuary outside one of the formal resettlement schemes
- Bridging the gap following the closure of services

The questionnaire asked how easy partner agencies felt it was for customers to access the Housing Options service. A total of five agencies felt customers were able to access the service easily or very easily, with no responses indicating that the service was difficult to access.

How easy do you think it is for customers to access the Housing Options service?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

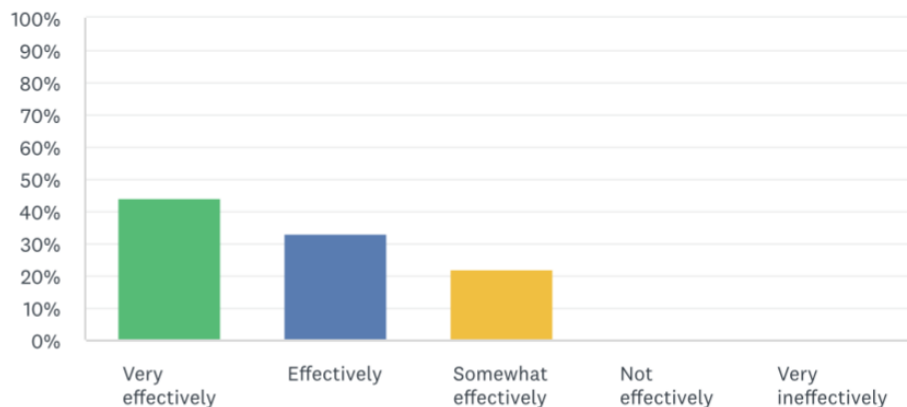


Identified barriers to accessing the Housing Options service include the council's reception opening hours, having to access the council offices for those under the influence of substances, with a suggestion of using Teams for these clients facilitated by support staff, lack of knowledge of the service, language barriers for published information and resistance to the word 'authority.'

Stakeholders were asked how well does the Housing Options team work in partnership, a total of 7 agencies felt the team worked effectively or very effectively in partnership and 2 agencies felt they worked somewhat effectively.

How effectively does the Housing Options service work in partnership with you?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



Suggestions as to how partnership working could improve included:

- Open communication channels
- Provision of more regular updates regarding joint clients

A total of 7 partner agencies felt the Housing Options team communicated well or very well with its partners and 2 agencies felt communication was satisfactory. Suggested improvements included increasing awareness of the term intentionally homeless and the provision of regular updates.

“The consistency of their presence is key and works very well.”

“Overall, we have had very positive experiences and engagement with the service. I don’t think many people outside of the service understand about what can happen if they make themselves intentionally homeless though so I think the local community could benefit from knowledge sharing in this area. We know some people that have felt their housing situation is not sustainable, but they didn’t realise they may fall outside entitlement if they are perceived to have made themselves intentionally homeless even in situations where they felt pushed to leave. I think people may benefit from learning about this more.”

Prevention of homelessness

Stakeholders were asked if any services, schemes, or projects were needed in Winchester to prevent people from experiencing homelessness. The following were identified:

- Provision of specialist accommodation and a wider agreement to not be quick to evict
- Move on flats with floating support to prevent repeat homelessness
- Support back into employment
- Better awareness and promotion of services
- Community education in relation to the causes of homelessness and routes out of homelessness
- Greater resource supporting private rented tenants
- Alternative giving awareness raising
- Increased outreach provision
- Effective mental health interventions and more joined up approach to addressing substance misuse
- Floating support and tenancy sustainment
- Effective responses to those who are granted refugee status and need to move on quickly following a decision
- Supported accommodation for those with complex needs
- Support for residents struggling with pressures associated with the cost of living

Partner agencies were asked what they felt their own organisation could do to assist with the prevention of homelessness. Identified suggestions included:

- Support with outreach services and tenancy support services
- With funding for more staff provide further outreach and weekend services at Trinity
- Out of hours service
- Opportunities to deliver community support

Future levels of homelessness

Stakeholders were asked if they anticipated anything that may lead to increases in homelessness. Identified factors include:

- Impact of the closure of Westview and general decline in the provision of supported accommodation despite a high demand for this provision
- Concern that the closure of Westview will mean there is no stage 1 provision in Winchester which may impact on rough sleeping numbers
- Dispersal programme with the requirement for refugees to move on quickly following a positive decision will lead to increasing pressures and wider unmet support needs

Partner agencies were provided with the opportunity to make additional comments, all of which were overwhelmingly positive.

“Our partnership with the housing options team is very strong and we continue to work well together. Trinity is always keen to be part of the solution!”

“Thank you to Winchester Housing Options for being great partners, long may it continue.”

“Great team of officers who do their very best in an area where the pressures never abate.”

Identified Gaps & Recommendations

- Need for additional supported housing provision, both specialist and generic
- Need for floating support provision
- Need for awareness raising and promotion of services

- Raise awareness in relation to planned moves to prevent customers from inadvertently making themselves intentionally homeless
- Development of non-eviction policies across supported housing providers
- Improved mental health interventions required
- Development of interventions and options for those granted refugee status
- Support for residents struggling to meet their housing costs due to the cost-of-living pressures

Staff Consultation

Consultation with frontline staff was essential in order to understand some of the challenges and pressures experienced in responding to homelessness. Consultation was undertaken through a series of face-to-face focus groups with managers and frontline staff alongside a questionnaire.

Housing Options Service

Housing Options Service Delivery

Winchester provides a good quality housing options service, with a high number of positive prevention outcomes achieved. Staff consider the strengths of the service to include a strong focus on homelessness prevention with partnership working sitting at the heart of this. Staff felt that they provide a personalised and trauma informed service and work to ensure that customers are listened to and their needs are fully understood, with empathetic responses. The service considers itself to be extremely customer focused working to achieve the best possible customer outcomes and offer full support.

Staff members feel that they have a strong team approach with good leadership, a strong and varied skill set and clear person-centred values sitting at the heart of service delivery. The team have a flexible approach with effective communication both within the team and with wider services. The service considers itself to be very accessible and responsive ensuring opportunities for homeless prevention are not lost.

It was felt that there was a good level of support from senior management with strong corporate commitment and political support for preventing homelessness, and clear hands-on director support. Staff felt that their hard work and commitment was appreciated by senior management, but there was less awareness of the pressures across other departments.

Some staff expressed that they would like to have the opportunity to be able to spend more time with customers, and one member of the team felt that team meetings could be restricted to one hour to ensure time can be spent on working to achieve customer outcomes. A restructure is currently planned which will increase management capacity and staff hope this will provide more management support for staff. Staff identified opportunities to improve joint working between departments ensuring end-to-end delivery for the customer. It was also felt that there is a gap in

the provision of support for customers in relation to mental health and learning difficulties.

Generally, it was felt that the hybrid working model worked well and provided the right balance of case work time and customer contact; although new starters remarked that it had taken a long time to train and be equipped to undertake the requirements of the role due to more limited opportunities for shadowing and staff presence within the office. It was felt that information sharing across the team could be improved, and it was suggested that the use of Teams messaging could improve communication and peer support. It was also felt that the forms and systems could be streamlined to reduce duplication and enable staff time to be more focused on achieving positive customer outcomes.

“Sometimes it feels like communication is quite rushed, this is linked to the pressure across the service.”

There was a strong view that the reduced opening hours for customers to access the building has had a detrimental impact on accessibility for customers and this concern was echoed by stakeholders. It was felt that this had had a disproportionate impact upon the most vulnerable customers with complex needs and posed real challenges in relation to service delivery. Concern was also raised in relation to the lack of privacy and confidentiality for customers visiting the office in person, this included both in the open reception area and within interview rooms.

It was identified that the fact that Winchester provides such an accessible and high-quality service can lead to pressure from residents of neighbouring boroughs who are not receiving the same quality of service, and in some instances neighbouring authorities are not applying the legislation correctly. This increases overall pressure and appears to be a specific issue in relation to domestic abuse and other forms of abuse and harassment. There is a need for more robust and improved joint working with neighbouring boroughs across Hampshire

Meeting Demand

There was a strong consensus that the service has grown and developed to respond to both the increased demand and changing needs of clients. These developments included an increase in the provision of temporary accommodation, specialist training in response to customer's identified needs, improved partnership working and housing pathways and the development of specialist roles within the service including a mental health practitioner. The increase in staffing levels in response to increased demand has resulted in staff continuing to be able to dedicate time to working with customers and achieve positive outcomes.

“We are listened to and supported.”

Challenges and Gaps

Challenges to being able to effectively prevent homelessness were identified as the lack of affordable settled accommodation options and the lack of supported housing available. The length of void turnaround for social housing was also considered to have an impact upon achieving positive outcomes. The lack of move on options was also a recurring theme in feedback from staff. Cuts to wider services were also considered to have an impact upon the services' ability to prevent homelessness and secure sustainable solutions for customers, particularly in relation to mental health support at both the preventative and acute ends.

“The lack of external support agencies has reduced massively over the last few years for all customer groups.”

Further challenges are brought about through the cost-of-living pressures posing challenges around affordability and households ability to meet their housing and wider costs. The increasing complexity of need that customers present with was a recurring theme, placing further challenges upon the service, and identifying the gaps in the response from other key statutory services including adult social care and mental health services.

Concern was raised in relation to the poor support provided to unaccompanied minors upon turning 18 years old, with children's services not being very accessible for both staff and customers. The lack of specialist young person's supported housing was a significant gap and means that where young people are able to access supported accommodation this is general needs provision placing young people at risk of exploitation from older and entrenched residents.

Unplanned prison release was identified as another area that placed additional pressure upon the service, with prison release to homelessness and rough sleeping being common practice, similar issues were also acknowledged in relation to hospital discharge.

Gaps in the provision of services were largely identified to be in relation to supported housing generally and specifically in relation to meeting specific customer's needs including young people, females, those with complex needs, those with complex mental health needs, clients with active substance misuse issues and clients with learning difficulties. It was also identified that there was a need for off the street accommodation for anyone sleeping rough. A number of staff raised concerns about the impact of the closure of West View, and the gap this will leave in overall provision

and the impact upon achieving positive outcomes for single people experiencing homelessness.

“It’s frustrating wanting to help more but working with such limited resources and having to manage customer’s expectations.”

The need for generic floating support was identified and echoed by both stakeholders and customers both in relation to homelessness prevention and resettlement support. Other challenges in relation to resettlement for clients having experienced homelessness include the lack of infrastructure in rural areas, isolation, access to affordable furniture, flooring and white goods.

It was also felt that there was a need to further increase the provision of temporary accommodation and increasing access to the private rented sector. The lack of one bedroom settled accommodation options was a further challenge in relation to move on.

Customer expectation was a recurring theme in both the questionnaires and focus groups, with a strong sense that many customers had unrealistic expectations in terms of access to settled housing. It was felt that while sufficient information was provided to customers regarding the housing register and property availability customer expectation remained unrealistic and further work was required in this area. There were some specific concerns expressed in relation to refugee resettlement and the expectations of some of these customers, this was in part due to the close-knit community that many live within, alongside the high quality of some of the host accommodation that they have previously resided within.

Concern was expressed by all staff regarding the implications of devolution and local government reorganisation and what this will mean in relation to service delivery. Staff were concerned regarding the legacy of the service delivery model of the housing options service and wanted to ensure that the good proactive and positive customer outcomes are not compromised following reorganisation.

Partnership working

In relation to partnership working, it was felt that while there many good areas of partnership working; there were opportunities to improve this in relation to joint working with children’s services in relation to care leavers, and more widely improved joint working with adult social care and health, including community mental health. The impact of cuts and budget constraints on partner agencies, including statutory services, was widely felt by the Housing Options service.

Housing Management

A focus group was held with key managers within the Housing Management service responsible for the council's housing stock.

It was considered that there was good and effective joint working between Housing Options and Housing Management colleagues, particularly focused on homeless prevention work for tenants whose homes were at risk due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, resulting in very few cases of actual evictions. In the last year there were 3 evictions due to rent arrears and 3 for anti-social behaviour.

It was identified that there is good joint working in relation to lettings and information sharing; although concern was raised that some prospective tenants are not yet ready to be able to manage their tenancy. It was felt that there would be many benefits to introduce a pre-tenancy training course.

Concern was expressed in relation to the allocations policy and move on from temporary accommodation, with customers being placed in higher band after having spent a set period of time in temporary accommodation. It was felt that some customers were not able to successfully manage a tenancy after this time, equally other customers were able to manage a tenancy immediately. It is suggested that developing a more personalised approach would be beneficial in both ensuring timely move on and successful tenancy sustainment; increased banding should be provided at the point it is evident the customer can manage a tenancy with or without support.

The reliance on multiple different ICT systems across housing raised some challenges in relation to information sharing and duplication. It was felt that there was a need to improve information sharing to address this issue or explore opportunities to procure one system that meets each department's needs.

It was identified that the lack of wider support, both generic and specialist was impacting upon tenant's ability to successfully sustain their tenancies. There was an identified need for floating support for both new and existing tenants. Particular concern was expressed in accessing support and help from adult social care and mental health services. Increases in tenant's needs in relation to both of these areas and the lack of support and provision was placing tenancies at increased risk.

Concern was also raised in relation to the lack of ongoing support from children's services for those that had left care. Care leavers were considered to not have had the support, training and skills development to enable them to successfully manage a tenancy. Given the lack of supported housing for young people, this results in care leavers moving straight into social housing without the skills to be able to successfully manage the tenancy, placing them at risk of tenancy failure and

homelessness. Concern was expressed that these young vulnerable individuals are being set up to fail. There is a need for an improved care leaver's pathway.

Challenges in relation to cost of living have impacted upon tenants of social housing, however, the team's proactive approach to addressing arrears as soon as they occur has prevented this from becoming a significant issue that results in homelessness. Contact is always made with tenants following the first missed payment to ensure that the arrears do not begin to accumulate and support and help can be put in place. Concern was raised in relation to the proposed changes to disability benefits, whereby if many existing tenants are no longer eligible for these benefits their homes (affordable rent) will no longer be affordable.

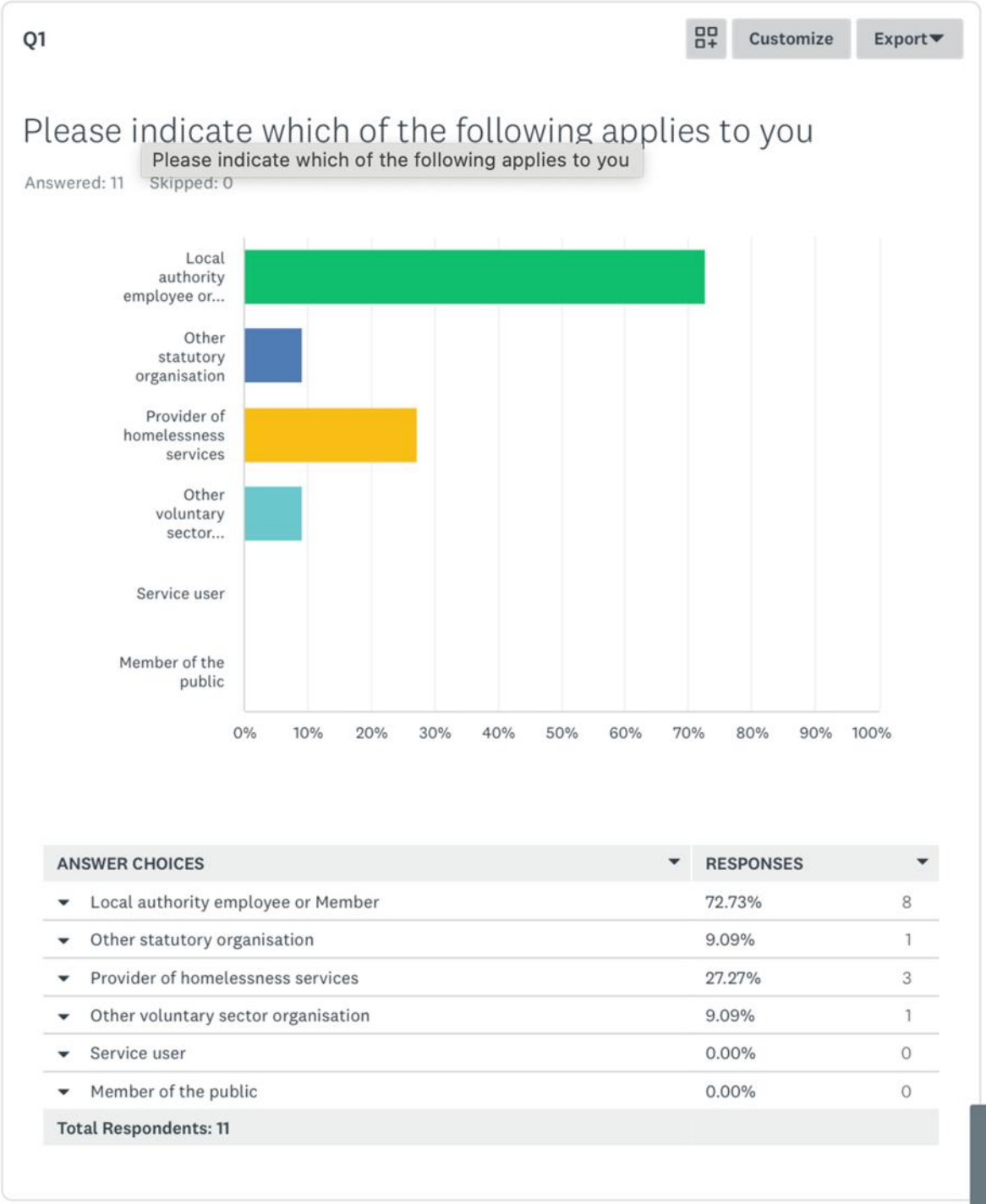
A particular challenge was identified in relation to individuals left in occupation after the death of a parent where there are no succession rights. The allocations policy allows for these individuals to be offered a one-bedroom property; however, there are identified challenges in being able to engage with these individuals many of whom were considered to have an undiagnosed learning disability or neurodiversity. It was felt that there was a need for specialist support for these individuals to avoid homelessness and to enable these family homes to be used to meet the housing needs of families.

Recommendations

- Ensure new starters have a clear training programme with opportunities for shadowing and peer support
- Consider the use of Teams messaging, with clear parameters, to improve communication across the service.
- Raise awareness corporately of the impact of reduced opening hours on customers experiencing homelessness; in the interim ensure that customers can be seen outside of the opening hours at homelessness projects on an outreach basis.
- Work corporately to ensure access to private and confidential interview spaces.
- Work with neighbouring authorities to develop clear joint protocols and standards generally and more specifically in relation to local connection, with a particular focus on fleeing domestic abuse and other form of violence.
- Work to develop improved pathways for those leaving care, including unaccompanied minors
- Work to improve pathways with adult social care and mental health services

- Review the prison release protocol and the hospital discharge policy
- Work with partners to effectively manage customer expectation
- Review the allocations policy to ensure a more personalised approach to increased banding for households in temporary accommodation in line with their readiness to be able to live independently.
- Review opportunities for an integrated ICT platform and improved information sharing across housing.
- Develop a joint approach to individuals left in occupation with no succession rights.

Stakeholder Consultation response on the draft strategy

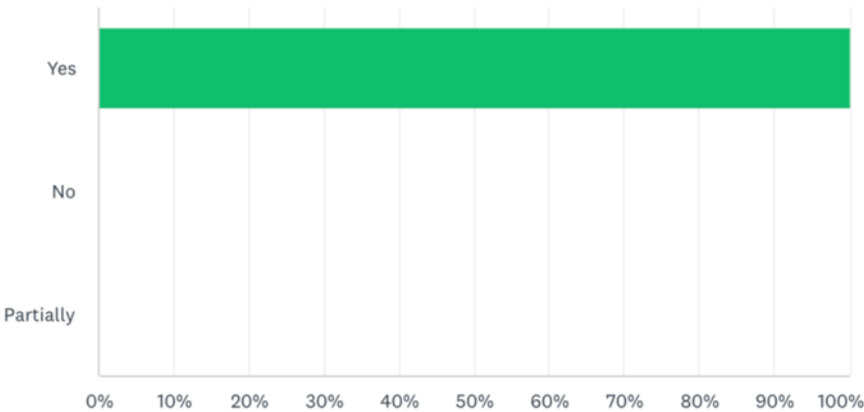


Q2

CustomizeExport

The strategy's vision is: 'Working together to ensure that everyone at risk of homelessness has early and effective access to the right support, and where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensuring a safe, suitable, and sustainable home is secured as quickly as possible.'Do you agree with Winchester's vision for addressing homelessness?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	11
No	0.00%	0
Partially	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Comments (0)

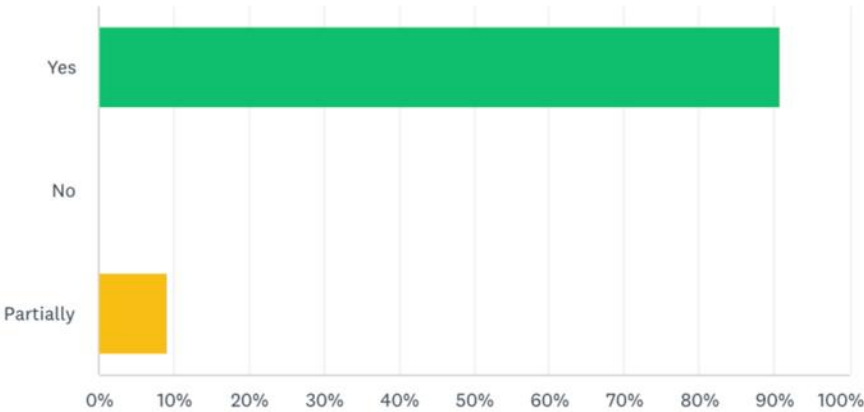
Q3

Customize

Export▼

The strategy is made up of the following 4 priorities- Making homelessness everyone’s priority through a partnership wide approach.- Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.- Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness. - Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions. Do you agree that these are the right priorities for the strategy to focus on?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.91%	10
No	0.00%	0
Partially	9.09%	1
TOTAL		11

[Comments \(1\)](#)

RESPONSES (1)

WORD CLOUD

TAGS (0)

Search Responses

Filter: by tag ▼

☐ Showing 1 response

- ☐ - Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness via signposting to correct services, both voluntary and statutory.

Q4

Export▼

Do you feel there are any key areas that the strategy has failed to consider?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

RESPONSES (2)

WORD CLOUD

TAGS (0)

Q

Search Responses

?

Filter: by tag ▼

Showing 2 responses

We appreciate this is a draft and matters cannot stand still but the impact/ risks of local Government reorganisation and possible mitigation measures / pre-emptive activities might be worth considering.

08/08/2025 16:49

View respondent's answers

Add tags▼

None

22/07/2025 16:15

View respondent's answers

Add tags▼

Are there any priorities or individual actions that you or your organisation would like to be involved in helping to deliver?
(Please include your contact details)

Answered: 4 Skipped: 7

RESPONSES (4)

WORD CLOUD

TAGS (0)

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Showing 4 responses

Increased dialogue with the Winchester Beacon would help to identify and progress areas where we can assist - we currently provide 22 beds in total + support + winter emergency beds, with a desire to increase this but it is not noted in the draft. Increased framework for collaboration and reference to all of the local providers would be useful.

08/08/2025 16:49

View respondent's answers

Add tags ▼

Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership wide approach and Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.

28/07/2025 12:42

View respondent's answers

Add tags ▼

Review of supported accommodation, reduction in TA use.

23/07/2025 09:50

View respondent's answers

Add tags ▼

...

Q6

Export▼

Any further comments?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 7

RESPONSES (4)

WORD CLOUD

TAGS (0)

Search Responses

?

Filter: by tag ▼

☐

Showing 4 responses

☐

The removal of social inclusion funding by HCC risks the collapse of the homeless pathway across Hampshire, and the displacement of vulnerable people into rough sleeping. Providers report HCC funds c172 bed spaces for people experiencing homelessness across Hampshire plus community/outreach support programmes providing support for an overall caseload of c900 people. Homelessness is complex - prevention, early recognition of issues leading to homelessness is an area we feel needs more focus. The Homelessness charter is an important part of this. To lever real change the Charter should be underpinned by an Anti-Poverty Strategy coproduced by partners. Is this achievable? Crisis are piloting Built for Zero methodology which may be a mechanism which sits underneath a system Charter. Built for Zero Targeted interventions in HMP Winchester, Crown and Magistrates Courts Targeted interventions in Acute and Community Mental Health inpatients and A&E departments including specialist drug and alcohol services Specialist services for care leavers The draft notes an increase in people accessing services after they become homeless. Increased collection / review of data re the sources of homelessness would assist in addressing the issues. It is believed the probation service / NHS account for a fair proportion which could be addressed with multi-agency working.

08/08/2025 16:49

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags▼](#)

☐	It is great to see a big emphasis on partnership working however it is concerning that with several supported housing projects closed or potentially due to close partners will no longer be working in the area. It also feels like many services are being brought in house which doesn't feel in line with the theme of working together.	23/07/2025 09:50	View respondent's answers	Add tags ▼
☐	None	22/07/2025 16:15	View respondent's answers	Add tags ▼
☐	It may be helpful to add a Glossary to explain terms used in the strategy document - LAHF, Trauma Informed, Housing First model, DAHA, Home for Cathy. Who are the 'partners' mentioned in the strategy? If Winchester is known to provide 'off the street' accommodation for all, what will prevent neighbouring areas sending their street homeless here, overwhelming the service?	22/07/2025 13:30	View respondent's answers	Add tags ▼

Service User Consultation

A total of 8 service users provided feedback from The Beacon, Temporary Accommodation and Trinity: Winchester.

Vision

Working together to ensure that everyone at risk of homelessness has early and effective access to the right support, and where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensuring a safe, suitable, and sustainable home is secured as quickly as possible.

Do you agree with this vision?

All 8 service users agreed

Does it cover everything that it needs to?

All 8 service users felt it covered everything and did not have any thing to add.

Comments

'I agree with the sentiment but Winchester needs more supported housing for people.'

'I agree with what's written on paper, you need to make sure practical help and support is available.'

Priorities

The strategy is made up of the following 4 priorities

1. Making homelessness everyone's priority through a partnership wide approach.

We will do this by

- getting all organisations to commit to work together to prevent homelessness
- Making sure services are more joined up

- Making sure that preventing homelessness is everyone's responsibility
- Ensure that service users can help to shape homelessness services
- Ensure better access to health services

Do you agree with this priority?

All 8 service users agreed.

Have we missed anything important?

No

Comments

None

2. Prevent and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.

We will do this by

- Making sure we can prevent homelessness as soon as possible
- Making sure that all help is personalised and responsive
- Ensuring there is clear information available
- Raise awareness of the help and support available
- Work with communities so that they can refer into the housing options service
- Tackle the main causes of homelessness

Do you agree with this priority?

All 8 service users agreed.

Have we missed anything important?

No

Comments

None

3. Meet the complex and unique needs of our customers by preventing rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.

We will do this by

- Preventing people from having to sleep rough
- Ensure that we can provide joined up responses to people who are homeless with multiple needs
- Prevent repeat homelessness through good accommodation and support
- Ensure that there is an offer of accommodation for anyone sleeping rough

Do you agree with this priority?

All 8 service users agreed.

Have we missed anything important?

No

Comments

'There needs to be more support for people.'

4. Develop sustainable, supported and settled housing solutions.

We will do this by

- Making sure that we have enough suitable temporary accommodation so that we don't have to use B&B
- We will reduce the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation
- Ensure people in temporary accommodation can access support and activities
- Develop more supported accommodation
- Develop more settled accommodation options both in private rented accommodation and social housing
- Develop a floating support service

.

Do you agree with this priority?

All 8 service users agreed.

Have we missed anything important?

No

Comments

'Moving into a new property is overwhelming, we all need support when we first move into a property otherwise we will fail.'

Appendix 4- Homelessness Review

Winchester Homelessness Strategy Evidence Base

Homelessness Review 2025

This Homelessness Review will form the principal element of the required evidence base for Winchester City Council to develop its Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The evidence base is compromised of the following elements:

1. Introduction and Methodology
2. Legislative Context
3. Strategic Links – local and national policy context
4. A profile of Winchester – People and Housing
5. Nature and Scale of Homelessness across Winchester – Data Report
6. An overview and audit of services including the homelessness service, temporary accommodation, advice, prevention, access to permanent accommodation, and provision of support.
7. Future forecasting
8. Building on Success – achievements over the lifetime of the last Homelessness Strategy

Introduction & Methodology

BACKGROUND

This Homelessness Review has been prepared and undertaken by Laura Paterson Ltd on behalf of Winchester City Council. The Review complies with the associated and relevant legislation and Code of Guidance. This review is an independent review of homelessness across Winchester using a range of data sources and based upon extensive consultation.

This Homelessness Review will form the principal element of the required evidence base for Winchester City Council to develop its Preventing Homelessness and

Rough Sleeping Strategy. It identifies, captures and quantifies the levels of current provision and future demand for homelessness services within the area and through its findings will underpin and inform the development of the Council's strategic response to homeless prevention and ending rough sleeping.

WINCHESTER'S APPROACH

Tackling and preventing homelessness is a key priority for Winchester City Council and its partner organisations. This comprehensive review will provide an evidence base to inform the Authority's Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Whilst Winchester City Council, as part of its statutory duty, has produced this document; it is not simply a review of the services provided by the council. There are multiple and complex issues that can cause homelessness, therefore in compiling this review, we have worked closely with a variety of other statutory and voluntary agencies to gain a detailed understanding of homelessness across Winchester.

The review is a multi-agency document, which recognises that partnership working is key to preventing homelessness and developing sustainable housing and support solutions.

METHODOLOGY

The review process sought to identify the needs of all people experiencing homelessness, and those likely to become homeless. This was achieved by compiling a detailed picture of the past, current and future nature and levels of homelessness across the area.

The review pulls together available data from a wide range of sources including H-CLIC data, Local Authority data together with information from partner agencies. Several consultation and mapping exercises were also completed. This information provides a detailed picture of the levels and causes of homelessness across Winchester, and used together with demographic data, the review identifies unmet need and future trends.

Consultation with staff, partners and customers has been critical to the review process and will continue to inform the development of the strategy and improvements to existing council services. We have consulted extensively with service users and stakeholders through a range of methods to ensure that the review directly reflects the experiences of those who have been homeless and those working in the sector.

Legislative Context

Requirement to undertake a Homelessness Review and develop a Homelessness Strategy - Homelessness Act 2002

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every local authority to carry out a review of homelessness in its area every five years, to develop and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review, and to consult with other local statutory and voluntary organisations.

This review will provide a basis for a strategic approach to tackle and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping and will build upon the positive work already taking place to provide individuals in housing need with a range of housing options to prevent and alleviate homelessness across Winchester.

The homelessness review is required to cover:

- A picture of the scale and nature of homelessness in the area, and likely future levels of homelessness.
- A map and audit of services including the homelessness service, temporary accommodation, advice, prevention, access to permanent accommodation, and provision of support.
- The gaps in provision and any overlaps.
- A review of resources available to be spent on homelessness.
- A record of the views of stakeholders and service users.
- An analysis of the links between homelessness and other key strategies.

The legislation states that the homelessness review must consider the following:

1. Current and future levels of homelessness.
2. Activities which are carried out for any of the following purposes:
 - a. Preventing homelessness.
 - b. Securing that accommodation is available for people experiencing homelessness in the district and will be available for people in the district who may experience homelessness.
 - c. Providing support for people in the district who:
 - Are experiencing homelessness.
 - May experience homelessness.
 - Have experienced homelessness and need support to prevent them experiencing homelessness again.
3. Resources available to the housing authority, the social services authority for the district, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for activities mentioned in (b).

The homelessness strategy must include actions to:

1. Prevent homelessness.
2. Ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are or may experience homelessness.

3. Ensure there is satisfactory support for people who are, or may experience homelessness, or need support to prevent them from experiencing homelessness again.

The Act states that reviews and strategies apply to all people experiencing homelessness, not just those to whom the council has accepted a full duty towards under the Housing Act.

Homelessness Legislation

The statutory framework for local authorities to provide assistance to people who are experiencing homelessness or threatened with homelessness is embedded within Housing Act 1996, part 7, and modified by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2022, and more recently the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) was one of the biggest changes to the rights of people experiencing homelessness in England for many years. The Act placed new legal duties on local housing authorities and amends the existing homelessness legislation in the Housing Act 1996.

The HRA made the following changes:

- The HRA duties apply to all eligible applicants (i.e., based on immigration status), and ignore intentionality and priority need. The Act requires thorough assessment of homelessness applications and a personalised response, placing new duties on local authorities to properly assess the cause of homelessness, circumstances, and needs of all household members, including children.
- The HRA places renewed emphasis on prevention of homelessness; extending from 28 to 56 days the period in which a household is defined as “threatened with homelessness”. The Act places a new “prevention” and “relief” duty on local authorities to “take reasonable steps” to prevent the threatened or actual homelessness of anyone who is eligible, and to develop and agree with applicants a personalised plan of the steps that will be taken to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- If the relief duty expires (after 56 days) and the household is unintentionally homelessness and in priority need, then the main rehousing duty applies, and they must be offered suitable settled accommodation (or temporary accommodation until a suitable offer of settled accommodation has been made).
- The HRA aims to encourage joint working to tackle homelessness by placing a new duty on public authorities, such as hospitals and prisons, requiring them to make a referral, with the individual’s consent, to the local housing authority if someone they’re working with appears to be experiencing homelessness or threatened with homelessness.

Care Act 2014

The Care Act represents a significant reform of care and support placing vulnerable people in control of their care and support. One of the core principles of the Act is the promotion of wellbeing. The Act aims to actively promote well-being and independence, supporting the delivery of person-centred services, which enable people to retain their independence as long as possible. Under the Act anyone, regardless of their level of need for care and support is entitled to an assessment under the Act.

The Act stipulates that local authorities have a duty to meet service user needs rather than having a duty to provide services. As everyone has individual needs, local authorities are not able to comply with the Act by providing a 'one size fits all' type of service, instead they need to put the individuals at the centre of their care and/or support.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act placed new duties on local authorities. Measures in the Act include:

- A statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not only physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.
- Extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- A duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- All eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have priority need for homelessness assistance.
- When local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy.
- A new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour.

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act became law in August 2023 and aims to introduce new regulations to tackle poor quality supported exempt accommodation. The Act introduces National Supported Housing Standards, which

will provide minimum standards for both the property and the support provided in supported accommodation. In addition, the Act will require local authorities to create local supported accommodation licencing schemes, and it will also introduce a strategic planning duty on local authorities.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, came into force in August 2023, and includes a requirement on local housing authorities to develop a supported housing strategy informed by an assessment of needs.

Renters Right Bill 2024

The Renters Rights Bill aims to:

- **Abolish section 21 evictions** and move to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic – providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction.
- **Ensure possession grounds are fair to both parties**, giving tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when reasonable. The bill introduces new safeguards for tenants, giving them more time to find a home if landlords evict to move in or sell, and ensuring unscrupulous landlords cannot misuse grounds.
- **Provide stronger protections against backdoor eviction** by ensuring tenants can appeal excessive above-market rents which are purely designed to force them out. As now, landlords will still be able to increase rents to market price for their properties and an independent tribunal will make a judgement on this, if needed.
- **Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman** that will provide quick, fair, impartial and binding resolution for tenants' complaints about their landlord. This will bring tenant-landlord complaint resolution on par with established redress practices for tenants in social housing and consumers of property agent services
- **Create a Private Rented Sector Database** to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance (giving good landlords confidence in their position), alongside providing better information to tenants to make informed decisions when entering into a tenancy agreement. It will also support local councils – helping them target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Landlords will need to be registered on the database in order to use certain possession grounds.

- **Give tenants strengthened rights to request a pet in the property**, which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse. To support this, landlords will be able to require pet insurance to cover any damage to their property
- **Apply the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector** to give renters safer, better value homes and remove the blight of poor-quality homes in local communities.
- **Apply ‘Awaab’s Law’ to the sector**, setting clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards.
- **Make it illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children** – helping to ensure everyone is treated fairly when looking for a place to live.
- **End the practice of rental bidding by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent.** Landlords and agents will be required to publish an asking rent for their property and it will be illegal to accept offers made above this rate.
- **Strengthen local authority enforcement** by expanding civil penalties, introducing a package of investigatory powers and bringing in a new requirement for local authorities to report on enforcement activity.
- **Strengthen rent repayment orders** by extending them to superior landlords, doubling the maximum penalty and ensuring repeat offenders have to repay the maximum amount.

The Winchester District

Overview

The Winchester district spans 250 square miles (661 square kilometres) of central Hampshire and is a distinctive mix of rural and urban communities, including a historic city centre, traditional market towns and a National Park.

Winchester is located in the heart of Hampshire in the central south of England, transport links to the city centre are good, however, the sprawling geography poses challenges for movement within the district itself. Transport is often cited as a barrier to accessing services for those without access to their own vehicles.

Large parts of Winchester district are rural with 40% of the district comprised of South Downs National Park and encompassing 18 Sites of Special Scientific

Interest. The lack of physical and digital infrastructure can pose a barrier to engagement in rural locations.

The Winchester district is an attractive place to live, with a thriving, vibrant, and diverse economy. As at the 2021 census, the Winchester district population is approximately 127,500, comprised of 51.3% females and 48.7% males. There are around 51,700 households. The Winchester population projection suggest a 5.2% increase over the next 12 years. The most prevalent age groups predicted to rise are 65 plus with the over 85's population increasing by 65.4%.

Other demographics are also shifting with increased representation across religions and ethnicities between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

Over 78.2% of residents aged between 16-74 are economically active with median earnings of £32,783 (Northern district area is £62,500) representing a higher level than regional and national medians.

There is a notable drop-off in early career individuals (25- 40 years old) living in the district and this could be linked to the higher-than-average cost of homes in the area.

Housing Market

The Winchester housing market is characterized by relatively higher house prices compared to the wider Southeast region, with average house prices in March 2025 at £483,000. The market also experiences significant demand, leading to rising rents and competition among first-time buyers.

Key aspects of the Winchester housing market:

- **House Prices:**

The average house price in Winchester was £483,000 in March 2025, up 2.8% from the previous year. This increase was lower than the South East's 5.3% rise.

- **Rent:**

Private rents in Winchester increased to an average of £1,445 in April 2025, a 9.6% increase from the previous year.

- **First-Time Buyers:**

The average price paid by first-time buyers in March 2025 was £366,000, a 4.4% increase from the previous year.

- **Mortgage Buyers:**

The average price for homes bought with a mortgage was £482,000 in March 2025, a 3.2% increase from the previous year.

- **Market Dynamics:**

Winchester's popularity and affluence contribute to higher average house prices compared to the broader Southeast. The market has experienced significant price growth since the start of the pandemic, reflecting a "boom" in housing.

- **Comparison to Wider Region:**

Winchester's house price inflation (9.5% over the last year) is slightly below the national average (12.9%). However, house prices in Winchester are significantly higher than the national average.

- **Impact of Affluence:**

The affluence of Winchester and its proximity to London have contributed to a higher proportion of wealthy buyers, further driving up prices.

Affordable Housing

Rising interest rates have impacted on the affordability of housing, as the cost of retail bank lending increases impact on mortgages. The median house price to income ratio in the district stands at 13.19 as of 2023.

The council aims to enable and deliver 1000 homes by 2032. The basis of good housing policy and decisions regarding affordable housing supply stems from good data on housing need and demand.

The draft Local Plan establishes strategic requirements of type, size, and tenure across the district which will help developers to deliver the right type of housing. However, markets across the district have different local requirements. The Northern and Southern Market Areas have much higher proportions of larger accommodation, the Winchester Town Market Area has much higher proportions of smaller accommodation.

The tenure profile in Winchester is made up of 67.5% owner occupied, 16.1% private rented and 16.4% affordable housing, comprising of a total of 46,865 dwellings.

The profile of dwelling stock in the Winchester district is different to regional and national figures, with higher proportions of larger stock in the Winchester district and smaller proportions of flatted accommodation.

The Northern and Southern Market Areas have much higher proportions of larger accommodation and Winchester Town Market Area has much higher proportions of smaller accommodation, reflecting the usual stock found in the private rented sector and that of a town.

National & Local Context

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Pressures

This review is being conducted in a time of continuing and new challenges both locally and nationally. Homelessness has increased over the past several years nationally following a sustained period of government austerity coupled with a challenging, and increasingly unaffordable housing market. Welfare reform and legislative changes alongside these factors creates a difficult environment for tackling homelessness; this has been compounded by the impact of the pandemic and more recently the cost-of-living crisis, and increasing demand linked to refugee resettlement.

There have been several national, regional and local policies and announcements that have impacted upon the housing sector since the last Homelessness Strategy was launched.

- The legacy from the Covid-19 pandemic is far reaching. While the initial response to the pandemic was focused on saving lives and protecting vulnerable individuals through the Everyone In initiative. The longer-term impact has been increased use of temporary accommodation, and changes to service delivery. The pandemic cemented the importance of safe and suitable accommodation on health and wellbeing outcomes.
- The UK has experienced a cost-of-living crisis since late 2021, which has had a significant impact on the affordability of housing, energy and living costs. The impacts of this are felt across the country but this is particularly compounded in Winchester, which is considered to be one of the most unaffordable places to live. In addition, high-cost borrowing continues to put pressure on homeowners with mortgages and private sector landlords.
- The current asylum arrangements have had a significant impact upon homelessness across the country. In 2022 the annual number of asylum applications has reached the highest level for 20 years linked to war and economic instability across parts of the world. Whilst the number of asylum claims has since reduced the number of individuals with refugee status seeking assistance through homelessness services has increased significantly in the last year, which has been compounded by the Government's directive to fast track claims to address the backlog of applications, often providing housing authorities with very limited notice of being required to leave Home Office accommodation
- In response to prison overcrowding the Government has announced that many prisoners will be eligible for release after serving a third of their

sentence. Early prison releases, especially when not accompanied by adequate support can significantly exacerbate homelessness. Homelessness and a lack of suitable housing are major risk factors for reoffending. Research by NACRO indicates that 800 people leave prison each month directly into homelessness, many of whom are rough sleepers. Early release is likely to compound the current pressures in relation to single homelessness.

- Pressure on public services, budget pressures has seen a reduction in many services, alongside an increase in demand for key statutory services, with many people experiencing homelessness not able to access the wider help and support they need to address underlying support needs that have impacted upon them becoming homeless and/or their successful pathway out of homelessness. This has in part resulted in an increase in the complexity of need that customers are presenting with, and the challenges of meeting these wider needs.

These combined challenges and pressures have led to increases in homelessness across the country, and in Winchester. These challenges are compounded by the lack of affordable housing in the area.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

The government's devolution white paper sets out the detail of Labour's 'devolution revolution'. Ministers plan to further empower England's existing 12 metro mayors, to extend devolution to the whole of England and to reorganise local government, transferring power out of Westminster to local communities.

Devolution deals could mean that local leaders will be able to make decisions directly affecting their communities, with the intention of encouraging local authorities to come together to take on new powers through new Combined Authorities.

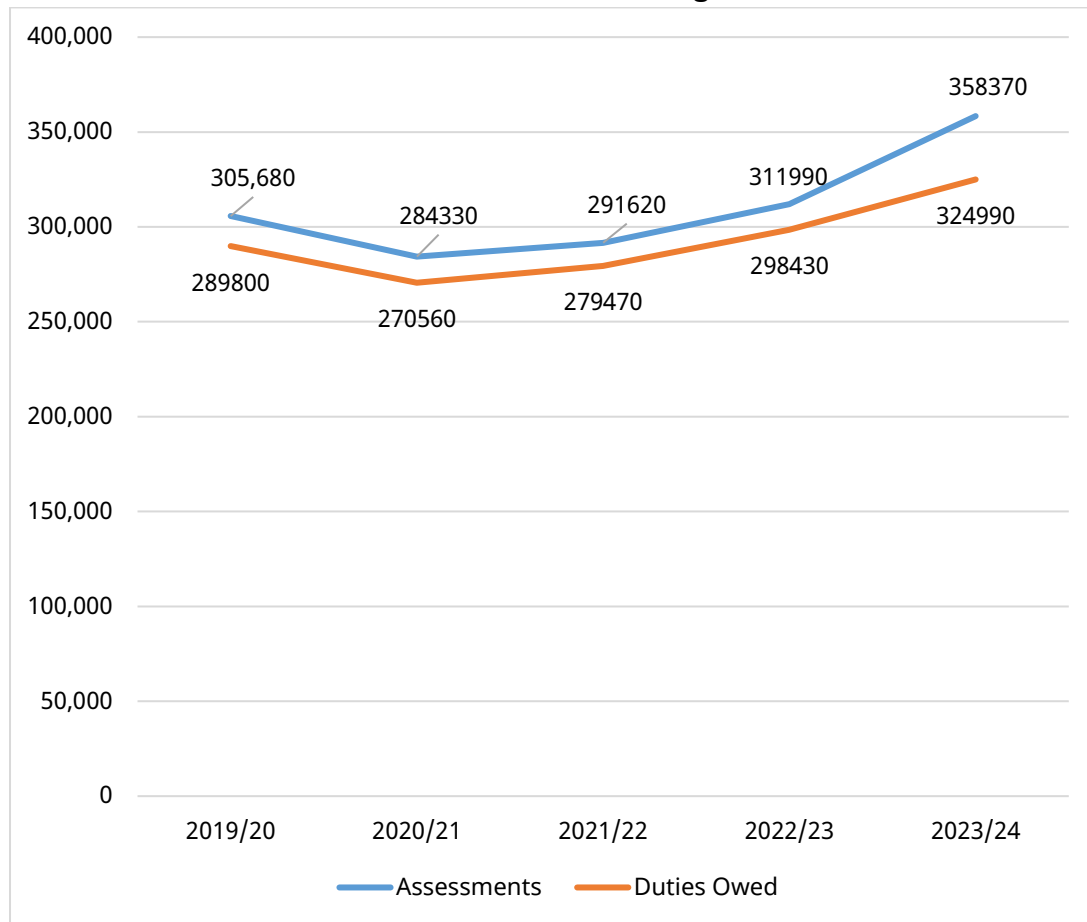
The Government plans to provide more powers to local authorities over transport, adult education and skills, employment support, and housing and planning, are aimed at allowing towns and cities the tools they need to pursue growth, create jobs, and improve living standards.

Alongside devolution, the Government also plans to replace the current two-tier system of counties and district councils with unitary councils across the country. Each unitary council will have a population of at least 500,000. This re-organisation will also include existing small neighbouring Unitary Authorities.

NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS DATA

Homelessness duties owed and the number of households in temporary accommodation nationally has reached record levels. In 2023/24 the number of homelessness duties owed increased by 9% compared with the previous year. Since 2018/19 homelessness duties increased by 21%.

Homelessness Assessments and Duties - England



Source: MHCLG

In 2023/24 there were an initial 358,370 homelessness assessments in England, up 10.4% from the previous year. Of these, 324,990 households were assessed as owed a homelessness duty, due to being threatened with homelessness or already being homeless in 2023-24. This increase from 2022-23 is driven by the increase in both households assessed as being threatened with homelessness, as well as households assessed as already homeless at the time of application.

146,430 households were assessed as being threatened with homelessness and therefore owed a prevention duty in 2023-24. This is a 3.1% increase from 2022-23.

The increase from 2022-23 has been influenced by a 4.6% increase, to 57,340 households, in those threatened with homelessness due to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy. Conversely, there was a 5.2% decrease in households owed a prevention duty due to family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate.

178,560 households were assessed as homeless and therefore owed a relief duty in 2023-24. This is up 12.3% from 2022-23. Similar to increases in prevention duties, this also has been influenced by an 8.9% increase, to 22,160 households, in those threatened with homelessness due to the end of an assured short hold tenancy. There has also been a 4.8% increase in households owed a relief duty due to family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate.

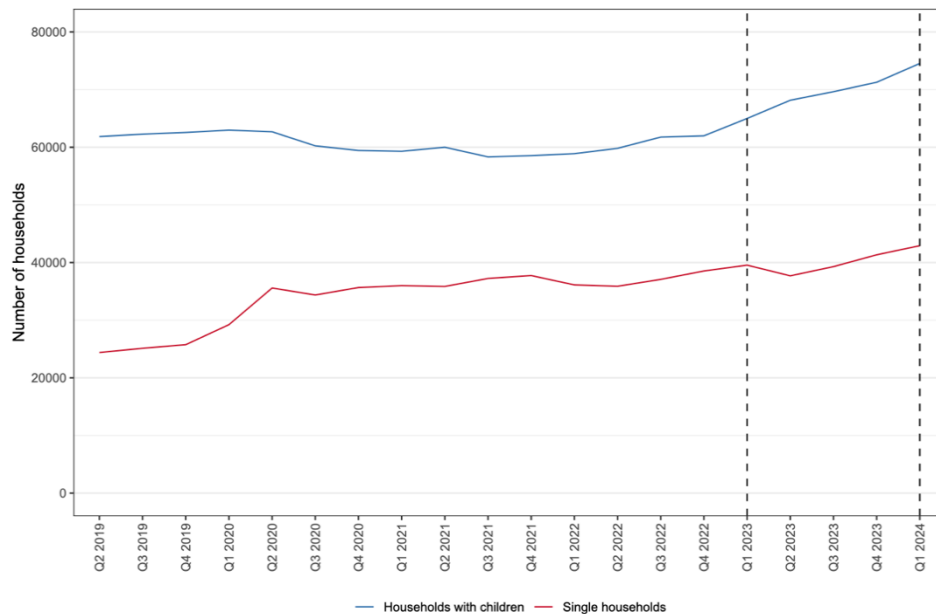
For those owed a prevention duty, the most common reason for the threatened loss of last settled home was due to the end of their private rented assured shorthold tenancy (AST) at 32,860 households or 52.8% of households with children owed a prevention duty. the majority of the households owed a prevention duty due to private rented AST's ending were due to the landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property at 68.0% (22,350 households), an increase of 2.6% compared to 2022-23.

The most common reason for loss of last settled home for those owed a relief duty was due to domestic abuse at 12,130 or 25.6% of households with children owed a relief duty. This is a 0.5% increase from 2022-23. However, for those owed a prevention duty, domestic abuse as a reason had decreased by 1.8% from 2022-23.

On 31 March 2024, 117,450 households were in temporary accommodation, an increase of 12.3% from the same period last year.

Households with children in temporary accommodation increased by 14.7% to 74,530, while single households increased by 8.5% to 42,920

Households in Temporary Accommodation



NATIONAL RESEARCH- RURAL HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness in the Countryside: A Hidden Crisis – March 2023

The report was commissioned, funded and co-designed by a coalition of housing and homelessness organisations concerned by the growing issue of rural homelessness.

The research found that:

- Rural homelessness is a real and growing problem that requires specific, locally informed and properly funded policy interventions. Without active interventions and good preventive services rural homelessness will keep increasing.
- People with intersecting disadvantages are particularly at risk of homelessness in rural areas. Support services are very dispersed and often unavailable.
- The voices of those experiencing, or who have experienced homelessness in rural areas are rarely heard. Concerns include- high costs of food and transport and unavailable support services.
- The shame and stigma associated with homelessness in prosperous areas is a significant barrier to getting support. This intensifies the invisibility of rural homelessness which in turn leads to reduced support services, exacerbating need.
- Frontline workers have valuable insights into rural homelessness. 91% of professional respondents in rural areas think homelessness has increased in the last five years. This is corroborated by analysis of the latest statistics from

DLUHC (now MHCLG) which indicates that there is a 24% increase in rural rough sleeping in the past year.

- Rural poverty exacerbated by high housing costs are fundamental drivers of rural homelessness. Severe restrictions in local authority funding since 2009 intensifies risk. Rural areas receive 65% less funding per capita than urban for homelessness prevention who themselves are severely underfunded. Funding for genuinely affordable housing and state support for housing costs are also highly inadequate and have limited impact in rural areas.
- The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis leave people in rural areas at much greater risk of homelessness than before.

Right to Home? Rethinking homelessness in rural communities¹

This 2017 Institute of Public Policy Research report suggests that “Idyllic images of rolling hills, countryside pursuits, and village life” can mask significant experiences of inequality and deprivation. Homelessness across England is on the rise. While rates are high in urban areas, many households in rural areas are also threatened with or experience homelessness:

- In 2015/16, 6,270 households were accepted as homeless in England’s 91 mainly and largely rural local authorities.
- In 16 of these predominantly rural authorities at least, two in every 1,000 households was accepted as homeless.
- In 2015/16, mainly and largely rural areas in England reported making 12,977 decisions on homelessness approaches – representing 11% of local authority decisions, nationally: and
- From 2010 to 2016, mainly rural local authorities recorded a rise from 191 to 252 rough sleepers – an increase of 32%.

Rural areas have experienced a more significant decline in social housing over the past 12 years. This can contribute to further deterring individuals from approaching their authority. They may feel there is simply no point since there will be no appropriate accommodation available for them.

The economies of rural areas have historically experienced seasonal work patterns, responding to peaks, particularly in the agricultural and tourism calendars. Individuals may move to rural areas and then struggle to access accommodation alongside any employment they have secured. Tied accommodation, typically linked to employment, may offer only a fixed-term solution.

Challenges for rural service delivery, not unique to homelessness provision, include:

- Balancing economies of scale.
- Providing specialist services.
- Overcoming travel distances and accessing public transport.
- Reaching isolated groups.

¹ <https://www.ippr.org/publications/right-to-home>

- Commissioning in two-tier structures.
- Ensuring accurate monitoring and reporting.
- Finding alternative accommodation; and
- Managing falling budgets.

Captive and Controlled – Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas ²

The National Rural Crime Network recently completed a detailed inquiry in 2019 seeking to discover how and why the experience of domestic abuse in rural areas and getting help for it is different from urban areas.

Key findings of the report included:

- Abuse lasts, on average 25 % longer in most rural areas.
- The policing response is largely inadequate.
- The more rural the setting, the higher the risk of harm.
- Rurality and isolation are deliberately used as weapons by abusers.
- Close-knit rural communities facilitate abuse.
- Traditional, patriarchal communities' control and subjugate women.
- Support services are scarce – less available, less visible, and less effective.
- Retreating rural resources make help and escape harder.
- The short-term, often hand to mouth funding model has created competing and fragmented service provision; and
- An endemic data bias against rural communities leads to serious gaps in response and support.

Recommendations for support services and commissioners included a call for services to be improved and greater collaboration locally to provide secure, longer-term funding.

Local Policy Context

Winchester Plan 2025 -30

The Council Plan 2025-30 was adopted in January 2025. It sets out what the council wants to achieve and informs other strategies and plans including the Local Plan and individual service plans. Tackling the climate emergency is the overarching priority for the council and will be at the heart of everything that it does.

² <https://www.ruralabuse.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Domestic-Abuse-in-Rural-Areas-National-Rural-Crime-Network.pdf>

The vision for the plan is that the council 'will make a real difference to the lives of our residents, the strength of our business and the quality of our environment.'

The priorities are:

- Greener, Faster
- Healthy Communities
- Thriving Places
- Good Homes for All
- Efficient and Effective
- Listening and Learning

Under Good Homes for All the plan commits to:

- Continue to increase the number of affordable homes across the district, including our 2023 commitment to delivery 1,000 more council homes by 2032.
- Ensure all council homes are decent, safe, energy efficient and resilient to the effects of climate change
- Decarbonisation of district homes, consistent with our net zero goal
- Every homeless person to secure a permanent home
- Policy-led planning to deliver NPPF objectives without 'planning by appeal', ensuring the right mix of homes for all, including young people and key workers

Winchester's Housing Strategy 2023-28

The Housing Strategy's vision is that by 2028 there will be healthier, greener homes meeting housing need within better neighbourhoods.

The vision of the strategy is not to just create new homes but to create high quality homes and adaptable new housing to meet local need, including a range of sizes and tenures.

The strategy is made up of 4 overarching objectives

- More Homes for all
- Greener Homes
- Homes that better meet different needs
- Better managed homes, better neighbourhoods

Strategic Market Assessment Update 2024

The SHMA supports the identified housing need within the Council Plan and the adopted Local Plan part 1 and 2. It identifies the need for affordable housing and the relevant need for different types of housing within the National Planning Framework. The Housing need of specific groups including older persons, younger people, families, service families and students and the need to provide for emerging housing market segments including self-build housing and build to rent.

The analysis shows that there is a need for 411 rented affordable homes per annum from 2023 to 2040 across the area– an affordable need is seen in both sub-areas.

Local Planning Policy & Objectives

There are two local planning authorities for the District, Winchester City Council, and the South Downs National Park Authority.

Winchester City Council's Local Plan, set out in two documents part 1 and 2, have both been adopted. The adopted Local Plan supports the Council Plan priorities, in particular the Homes for All priority with the objective that everyone should have the opportunity to live in a high-quality, well-designed home, in sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities that they want to live in and which they can afford.

The Local Plan makes provision for approximately 12,500 new homes (2011 to 2031). Priority will be given to the provision of affordable housing within the overall supply of new housing, with priorities including maintaining the supply of housing so that it meets a wide range of community needs (including older persons and those with disabilities), maximising the provision of new affordable housing throughout the district, including rural areas, and increasing the supply of family housing. To support this aim, policies are included to ensure a range of housing types, sizes and tenures are provided, including affordable housing on "market led" sites, to promote and enable new homes on "land led" sites and on "exception sites" where housing development would not normally be permitted.

The Local Plan identifies the need for flexible and adaptable accommodation and the need for specialist accommodation such as homes for those with disabilities, older persons including extra care housing, student housing and private rented sector housing. There is a requirement that all new housing is built to Nationally Described Space Standards and affordable housing to high accessibility standards.

The Local Plan also contains area-based policies relating to Stanmore and Abbots Barton that provide a framework to deliver new affordable housing. A policy to plan for Housing in Multiple Occupation in the most appropriate places is also included.

Policies to limit environmental impact on new development relating to energy efficiency and water consumption are contained within the plan.

The design of the built environment has a direct effect upon where we live and work, good design means delivering high quality and sustainable places. To achieve this, the Draft Local Plan requires the design of new development to respond positively to local distinctiveness, have active frontages, and encourage residents to cycle and walk through the development, as well as providing strong connections to existing communities, with access to public transport links, whilst enhancing the natural environment and addressing the challenges of climate change.

South Downs Local Plan (2014-2033)

The South Downs Local Plan covers the Winchester City Council area that lies within the South Downs National Park and plan for a medium level of housing growth of 4,745 homes and aims to provide a balance mix of housing, including affordable housing.

Private Sector Renewal Strategy

The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy for 2023-2028 sets out how the council will;

- a) Use its powers to ensure properties are maintained and brought up to the right standard
- b) Use grant funds to allow people to adapt their homes so residents can continue to live independently
- c) To promote carbon reduction measures in the private sector housing stock and improve energy efficiency
- d) To offer advice, assistance, and support to private sector tenants around issues such as damp and mould

Empty Homes Strategy 2022-27

The overarching aim of the strategy is to help return long term private sector empty homes to occupation through primarily informal methods, although ultimately enforcement action may be required.

The council's main approach to tackling the issue of long-term empty homes is to work with the owners to encourage them to bring their homes back into use voluntarily. The council will work with the owners of empty homes and pursue the following objectives to bring about the return of empty homes to occupation with legal action being considered as a last resort.

- Identify and monitor

- Engagement
- Signposting
- Enforcement

Winchester Council – Homelessness Data Review

Homelessness Data Overview

This report forms part of the Homelessness Review evidence base, which has been used to inform the council's new Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

This report seeks to understand the scale, nature, and causes of homelessness in Winchester.

To understand fully the levels and causes of homelessness a range of data collected by both Winchester City Council and a number of other agencies is considered.

These sources include:

- Housing options approaches.
- Homelessness statistics (H-CLIC data) submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).
- Data from other services.

Winchester City Council are required to provide homelessness statistics in the form of quarterly submissions to MHCLG, which records the numbers of households who have approached the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness and what duties are owed. It is widely acknowledged that this data source only captures those individuals experiencing homelessness who seek statutory assistance and does not enable a true understanding of the level of hidden homelessness across the area.

All of the data contained in this document needs to be read in context. Low figures could result in higher percentages and distort some of the results.

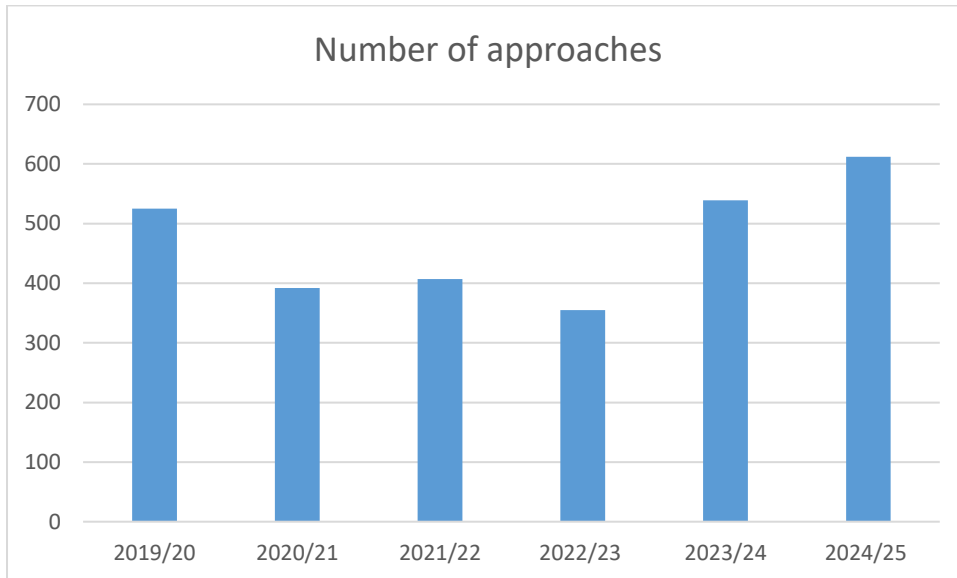
DEMAND ON THE HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE

The table below details the total number of approaches to the Housing Options service for the last six years.

Year	Number of approaches
2019/20	525
2020/21	392

2021/22	407
2022/23	355
2023/24	539
2024/25	612

Source: Winchester data returns



Source: Winchester data returns

The data shows that approaches have increased over the last two years. In 2024/25 there was a total of 612 approaches for advice, representing a 14% increase in the last year and a 72% increase since 2022/23. This growth in demand places increased pressure on the service; it will be important to continue to monitor demand and ensure that sufficient resources are in place to meet this demand if the current success rate in relation to customer outcomes is to be maintained.

Recommendation

Regularly monitor demand and ensure sufficient resources are in place to respond to this demand.

CASE LOADS

Caseloads are around 30 cases per officer. These are considered to be manageable caseloads. Prior to Covid DLUHC advised that the average caseload for officers is between 35-40 cases but where local authorities manage demand and systems well, the caseload is between 20-25 per officer. However, this approach

involves regular management support. The current case load in Winchester will directly correlate with the team's success in preventing and relieving homelessness; any significant increase in caseloads would have a negative impact upon the current success rate.

DUTY TO REFER

The table below shows the number of duty to refers received for the last three years.

Duty to Refer	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total number of Duty to Refers	16	29	31	36	25	44

Source: H-CLIC data

The number of duty to refers received has remained relatively steady in recent years but increased slightly in 2024/25. The table below details the referring agency.

Referring Agency	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Prison	1	0	1
Youth secure estate	0	0	0
Probation	11	11	10
Community rehabilitation company	0	0	0
Hospital	5	4	4
Mental health in-patient care	2	3	4
Jobcentre plus	4	3	9
Adult social service	5	1	1
Children's social services	7	3	15
Nil recourse team	1	0	0
Secretary of state for MOD	0	0	0
Other/not known	0	0	0
Agencies not subject to duty to refer	53	30	44
Other LAs	3	2	3

Source: H-CLIC data

The main referring agency subject to the duty is probation, although there was a significant increase in the number of referrals from children's services in 2024/25. There are a high number of referrals from other agencies outside of the duty to refer, indicating positive partnership working with a wide range of agencies.

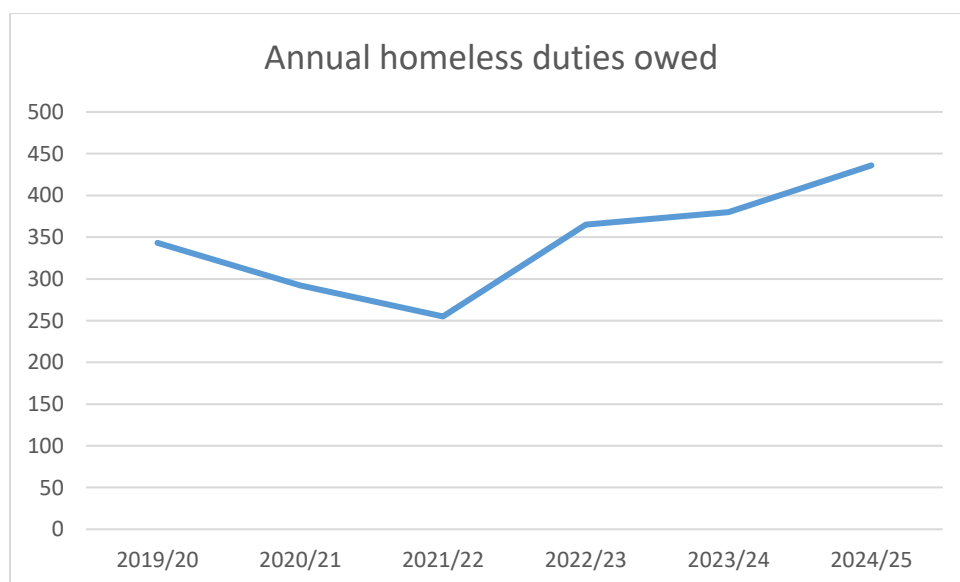
Homelessness Assessments and Duties

The data below analyses the assessments and outcomes recorded under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. An assessment is undertaken where the Local

Authority has reason to believe the customer is homeless or threatened with homelessness. A prevention duty is owed where the council is satisfied the customer is threatened with homelessness within 56 days and a relief duty is owed where the council is satisfied the customer is homeless.

Assessments	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total number of assessments	345	293	257	369	394	439
Total owed a duty	343	292	255	365	380	436
Threatened with homelessness – prevention duty owed	226	160	158	228	219	239
Homeless – relief duty owed	117	132	97	137	161	197
Not homeless	2	1	2	0	6	3
Withdrew application	0	0	0	2	5	-
No longer eligible	0	0	0	2	3	-

Source: HCLIC data

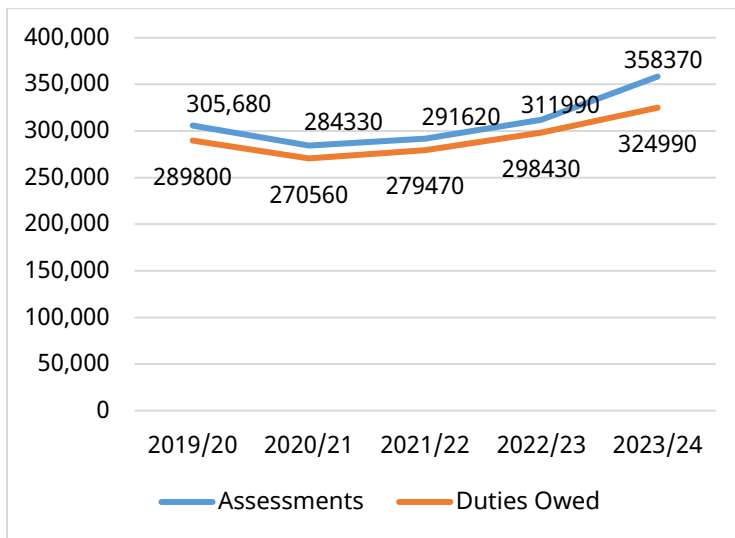


Source: H-CLIC data

The annual number of homelessness duties owed has increased since 2021/22, representing a 71% increase over the last 3 years. In the last year there has been an increase of 15% in homeless duties owed.

The graph below shows the increase in homeless duties owed across England between 2019/20 and 2023/24.

Homelessness Assessments & Duties – England



Source: H-CLIC Data

In Winchester there has been a significant increase in homelessness duties owed, representing a 23% increase over the last 6 years.

The graph below provides a comparison of the change in homelessness duties owed in Winchester across the Southeast and across the rest of England.

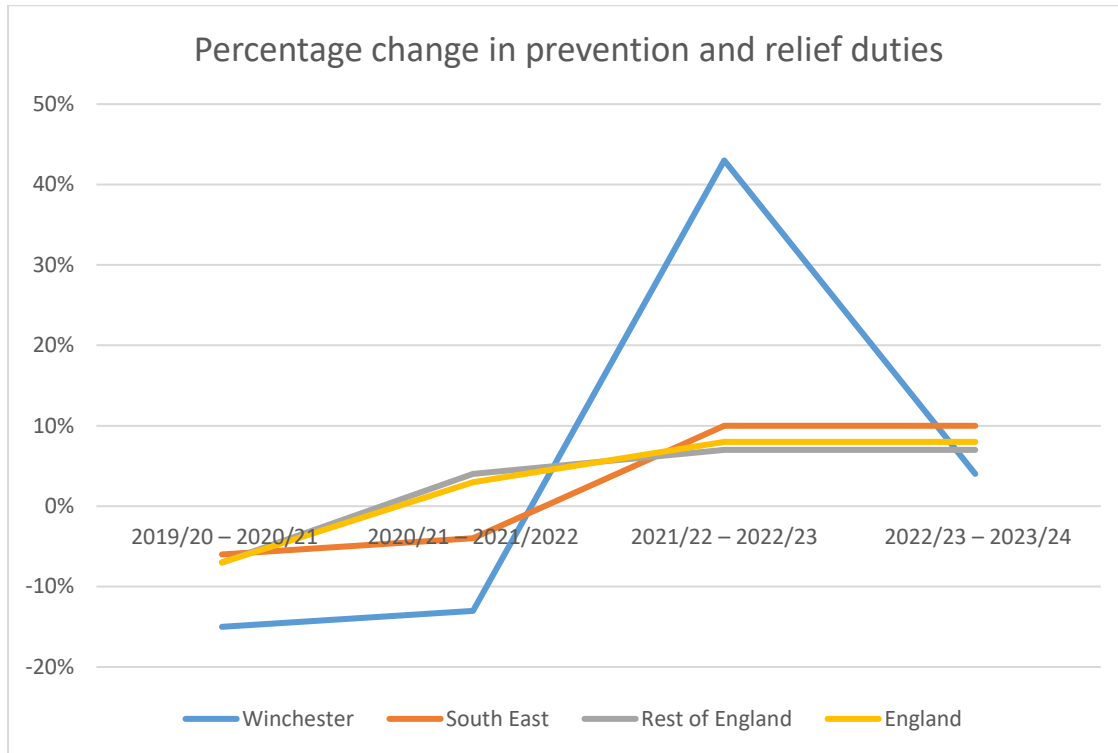
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Winchester	343	292	255	365	380	436
Southeast	40,560	38,090	36,710	40,240	44,280	-
Rest of England	235,520	218,350	227,550	243,030	259,640	-
England	289,800	270,560	279,470	300,910	324,990	-

Source: H-CLIC data (24/25 national and regional data not published)

The table below shows the percentage change in homeless duties owed in Winchester and across the region and country.

	% change 2019/20 – 2020/21	% change 2020/21 – 2021/2022	% change 2021/22 – 2022/23	% change 2022/23 – 2023/24	% change 2023/24 – 2024/25	Change over 5 years between 2019/20- 2023/24
Winchester	-15%	-13%	+43%	+4%	+15%	+11%
Southeast	-6%	-4%	+10%	+10%	■	+9%
Rest of England	-7%	+4%	+7%	+7%	■	+20%
England	-7%	+3%	+8%	+8%	■	+21%

Source: H-CLIC data (24/25 national and regional data not published)

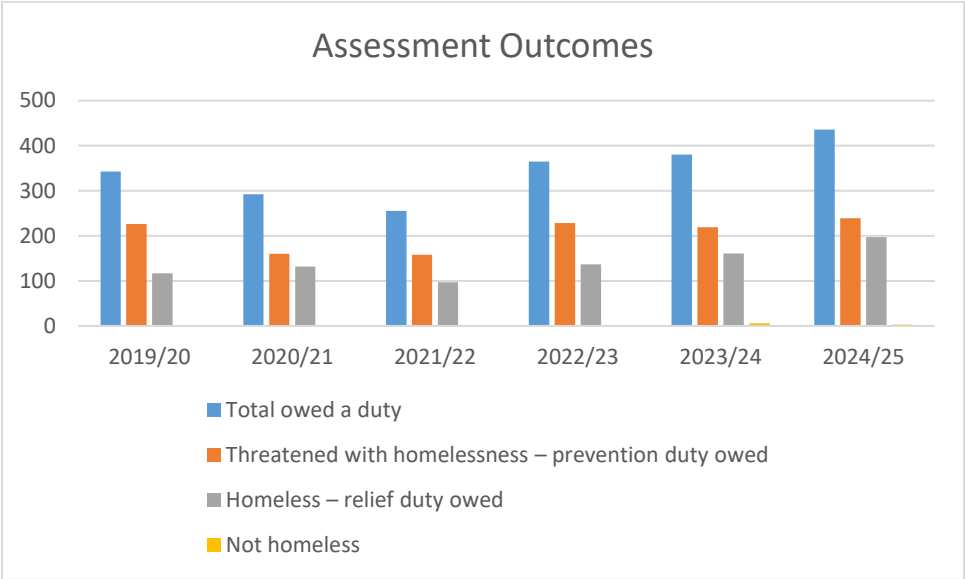


Source: H-CLIC Data

The analysis indicates that Winchester is not mirroring the national picture in relation to homelessness duties, with larger decreases seen in 2020 and much larger increase in 2021/22, which has since plateaued, although increased by 15% in 2024/25. It is however important to note that the numbers are much smaller in Winchester therefore any changes in duties owed will show as a bigger percentage change than figures at a regional and national level.

Between 2019/20 and 2023/24 Winchester has seen an 11% increase in homeless duties owed which is just above the regional increase of 9% but lower than the national increase of 20% over the same time period. The percentage increase between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 23% in Winchester, data has not been published at a regional and national level to enable comparisons.

Assessment Outcomes

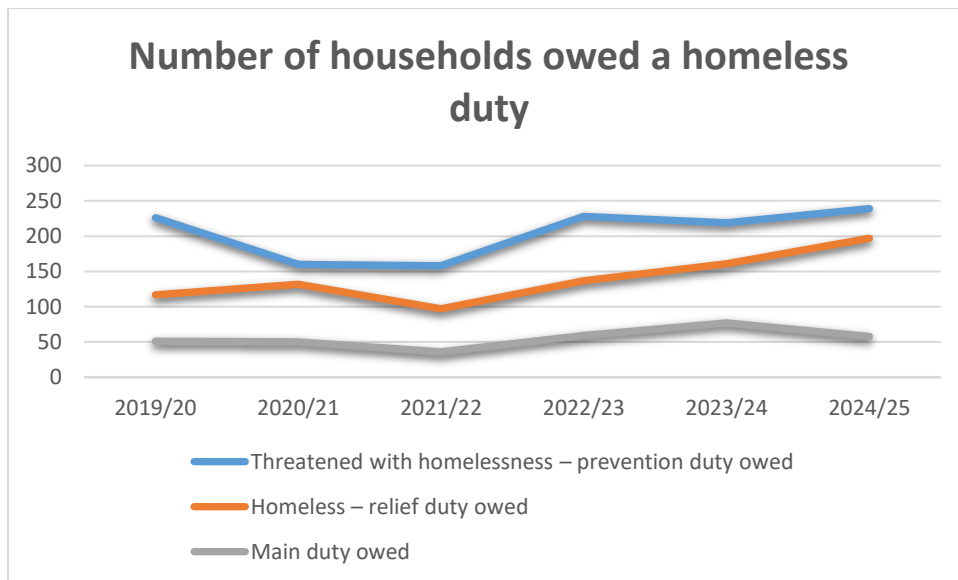


Source: HCLIC data

Over the last six years the majority of customers were owed a prevention duty compared with a relief duty, which is very positive and indicates that the team is working well with a clear focus on prevention and early intervention; this remained the case even through the pandemic. The ratio between prevention and relief work has, however, changed; in 2019/20 66% of customers were owed a prevention duty, this reduced to 55% in 2020/21 and then increased to 62% in 2021/22, but has since reduced to 54% in 2024/25.

In 2023/24 56% of assessments owed result in a prevention duty being owed compared with 41% nationally.

The graph below shows how the breakdown of duties has changed over the last six years.



Source: HCLIC data

While the service is more successful than many areas in the proportion of households it is able to work with under a prevention duty, it is evident that this has reduced slowly over the last few years. It will be essential to ensure that clients access the service at the earliest opportunity so that opportunities for homeless prevention can be maximised, however it is equally important that there are sufficient resources in place for staff to be able to dedicate time to prevention work. An awareness raising campaign would assist in ensuring that customers are encouraged to access help at the earliest opportunity.

Recommendation

Undertake an awareness raising campaign to encourage more people to access help at the earliest possible point to ensure opportunities for prevention work are maximised.

The number of not homeless decisions made is low, accounting for 1.5% of all assessment outcomes in 2023/24 and 0.7% in 2024/25; this may indicate that triage arrangements are working effectively.

PROFILE OF HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

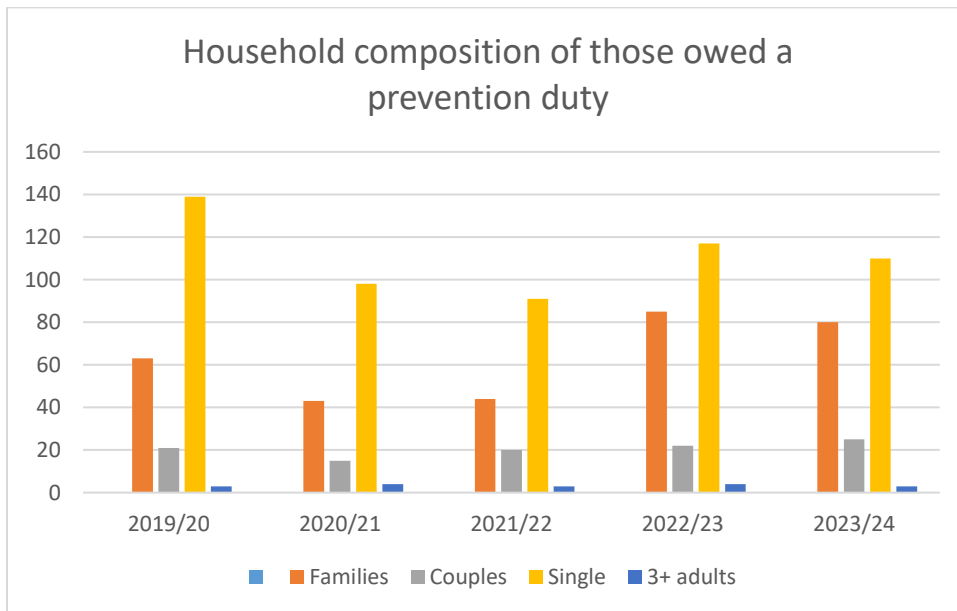
The family composition of households owed a prevention duty is detailed in the table below. (Data is not available for 2024/25).

Household Composition Owed a Prevention Duty	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Families	63	43	44	85	80

Couples	21	15	20	22	25
Single	139	98	91	117	110
3+ adults	3	4	3	4	3
Not known	0	0	0	0	1
Total owed a prevention duty	226	160	158	228	219

Source: HCLIC data

In 2023/24 single people account for 50% of those owed a prevention duty and families account for 37%.

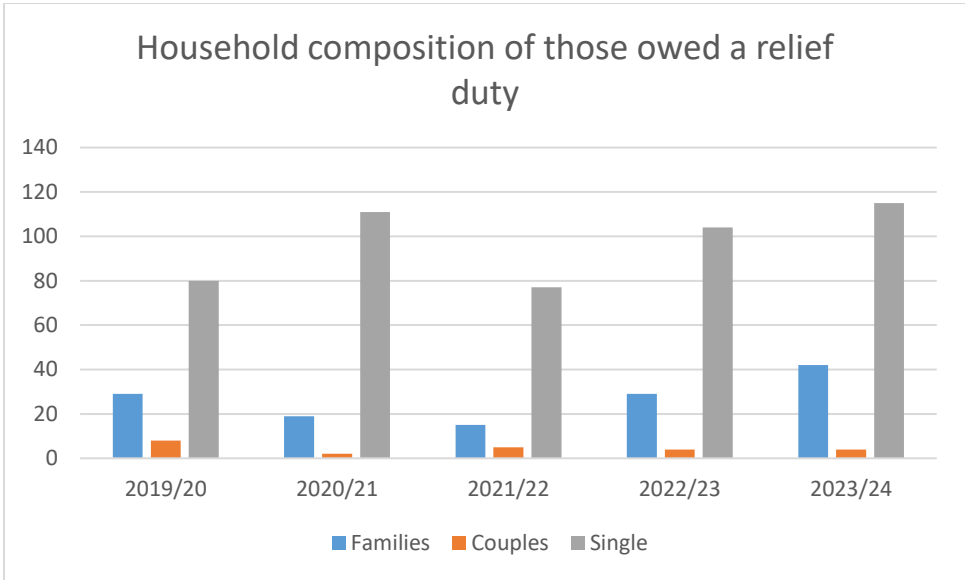


Source: HCLIC data

The family composition of households owed a relief duty is detailed in the table below. (Data is not available for 24/25).

Household Composition Owed a Relief Duty	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Families	29	19	15	29	42
Couples	8	2	5	4	4
Single	80	111	77	104	115
Total owed a relief duty	117	132	97	137	161

Source: HCLIC data



Source: HCLIC data

Over the last three years the majority of households owed a relief duty were single people accounting for 71% in 2023/24. There has been a steady increase in the number of both single households and families owed a relief duty over the last three years.

Single households are over-represented at relief stage in all years. This may indicate that families are more likely to approach the service prior to becoming homeless than single people. More work may need to be done to raise awareness of the service with single people to ensure that they approach the service when there is a threat of homelessness as opposed to once they become homeless. It is also possible that it may be more difficult to prevent homelessness for single households due to the availability of affordable housing options for single households. It is also important to note that single people are more likely to be vulnerably housed, or their homelessness may be hidden, and as such at increased risk of a crisis presentation.

In total singles account for 59% of all households owed a prevention or relief duty in 2023/24, compared with 72% in 2020/21; this indicates that there has been an increase in family homelessness, this could be linked to the pressures associated with the cost of living.

Gender

The table below shows the gender of single homeless households owed a homelessness duty.

Year	Single women owed a	Single women	Total single women	Single men owed a	Single men owed a	Total single men
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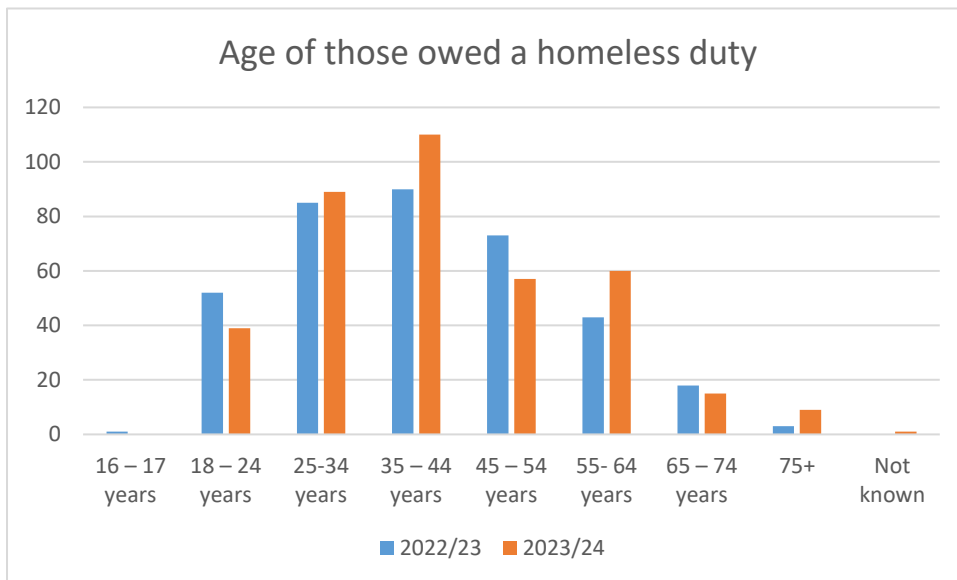
	prevention duty	owed a relief duty		prevention duty	relief duty	
2021/22	41	20	61	48	57	105
2022/23	60	30	90	55	74	129
2023/24	53	37	90	57	78	135

In 2023/24 single women account for 40% of all single households owed a homeless duty and single males account for 60%.

Age

The table below shows the age of the main applicant owed a prevention or relief duty over the last two years.

Year	2022/23	2023/24
16 – 17 years	1	0
18 – 24 years	52	39
25-34 years	85	89
35 – 44 years	90	110
45 – 54 years	73	57
55- 64 years	43	60
65 – 74 years	18	15
75+	3	9
Not known	0	1



Source: H-CLIC Data

The largest age group in the last two years is those aged 35-44 years, followed by those aged 25-34 years. In 2023/24 people aged 18 – 34 years accounted for 34% of all customers. Younger people are more likely to struggle to find affordable

housing options, particularly single under 35-year-olds who are subject to the single room rate.

Ethnicity

The table below shows the ethnicity of those owed a prevention or relief duty for the last two years.

Ethnicity	2022/23	2023/24
White	327	352
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	8	10
Asian/Asian British	10	5
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	9	3
Other ethnic groups	6	5
Not known	5	5

Source: H-CLIC data

In 2023/24 White households account for 93% of those owed a duty, and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British account for 3%. The 2021 census recorded that 93.7% of the population of Winchester described themselves as white, 3.1% as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh and 1% as Black. This may indicate that Asian households are under-represented in homelessness data, and households that describe their ethnicity as Black are over-represented when compared with census data.

SUPPORT NEEDS

The table below shows the total number of assessed households who have a self-identified support need.

Support Needs	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Households with a support need	214	217	170	211	230	282
Total support needs	459	426	367	486	407	434

Source: HCLIC data

In 2024/25 a total of 434 support needs were identified for 282 households. Of the clients owed a duty by the Housing Options team in 2024/25 65% had a support need; this is an increase on the previous year when 61% had a support need.

The number of households with an identified support need has increased over the last 6 years, by 32%, while the number of homeless duties owed has increased by

23%. Although the actual number of support needs has remained relatively static; suggesting that while the number of people with a support need has increased, this increase appears to be for households with one support need as illustrated in the table below.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Households with one support need	81	80	121
Households with two support needs	44	64	64
Households with three or more support needs	45	67	45

Source: H-CLIC Data

In 2023/24 in Winchester the total number of households owed a homeless duty with a support need equates to 61% of all households, this is above the average for England of 54% and the Southeast 54.3%.

2023/24	Winchester	Southeast	Rest of England	England
% of all households owed a duty with a self-identified support need	60.5%	54.3%	57.5%	54%

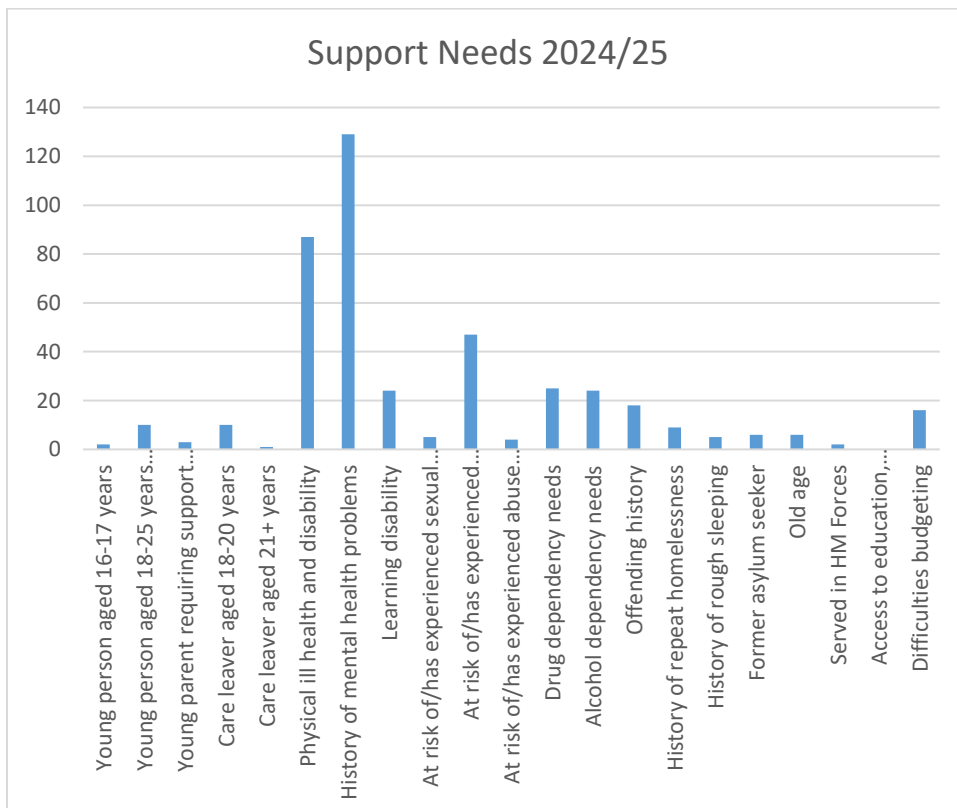
This indicates that the percentage of households in Winchester with a self-identified support need is higher than both the regional average and the rest of England average.

The nature of the identified support needs is detailed below.

Support need	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Young person aged 16-17 years	7	2	1	2	0	2
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	20	12	8	11	6	10
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	5	1	4	6	2	3
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	3	6	6	6	4	10
Care leaver aged 21+ years	7	4	7	0	0	1
Physical ill health and disability	77	64	57	87	83	87
History of mental health problems	124	125	97	125	123	129
Learning disability	17	14	18	24	18	24
At risk of/has experienced sexual abuse/exploitation	8	6	11	8	10	5

At risk of/has experienced domestic abuse	52	39	44	53	47	47
At risk of/has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	3	1	7	9	5	4
Drug dependency needs	34	31	25	24	20	25
Alcohol dependency needs	20	30	18	28	18	24
Offending history	23	35	19	30	21	18
History of repeat homelessness	22	26	21	20	14	9
History of rough sleeping	17	19	12	12	5	5
Former asylum seeker	0	1	1	0	1	6
Old age	7	7	8	9	10	6
Served in HM Forces	7	2	6	3	0	2
Access to education, employment or training	6	1	0	3	0	0
Difficulties budgeting	-	-	-	19	20	16
Total support needs	459	426	367	486	407	434

Source: HCLIC data



Source: HCLIC data

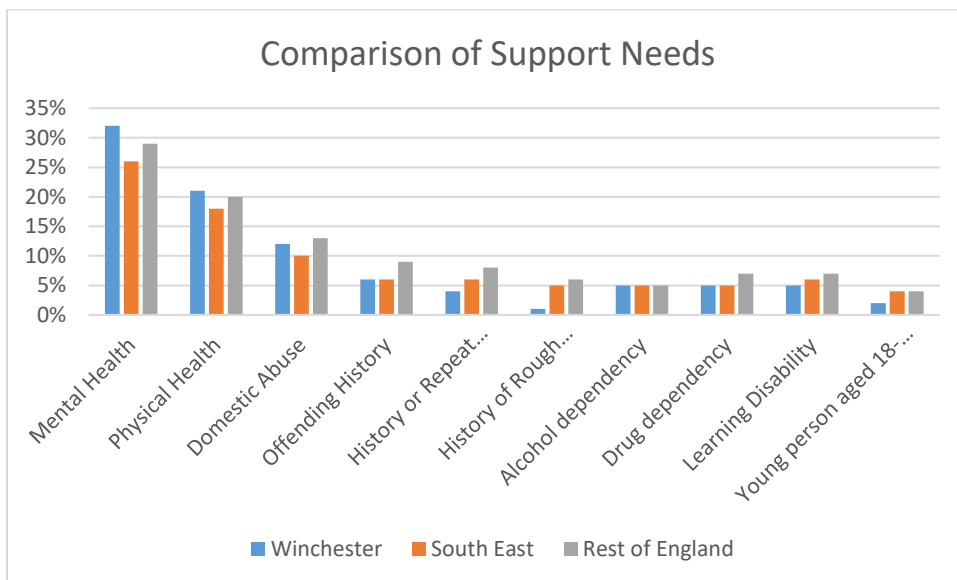
The most frequently occurring support need is mental health, accounting for 30% of all declared support needs in 2024/25. Other frequently occurring support needs

include physical ill health and domestic abuse, and to a lesser extent drug dependency, alcohol dependency, and learning disability.

The table and graph below compare the position in Winchester with that of the Southeast and the rest of England.

Support Needs 2023/24	Winchester	South East	Rest of England
Mental Health	32%	26%	29%
Physical Health	21%	18%	20%
Domestic Abuse	12%	10%	13%
Offending History	6%	6%	9%
History or Repeat Homelessness	4%	6%	8%
History of Rough Sleeping	1%	5%	6%
Alcohol dependency	5%	5%	5%
Drug dependency	5%	5%	7%
Learning Disability	5%	6%	7%
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	2%	4%	4%

Source: H-CLIC Data



Source: H-CLIC Data

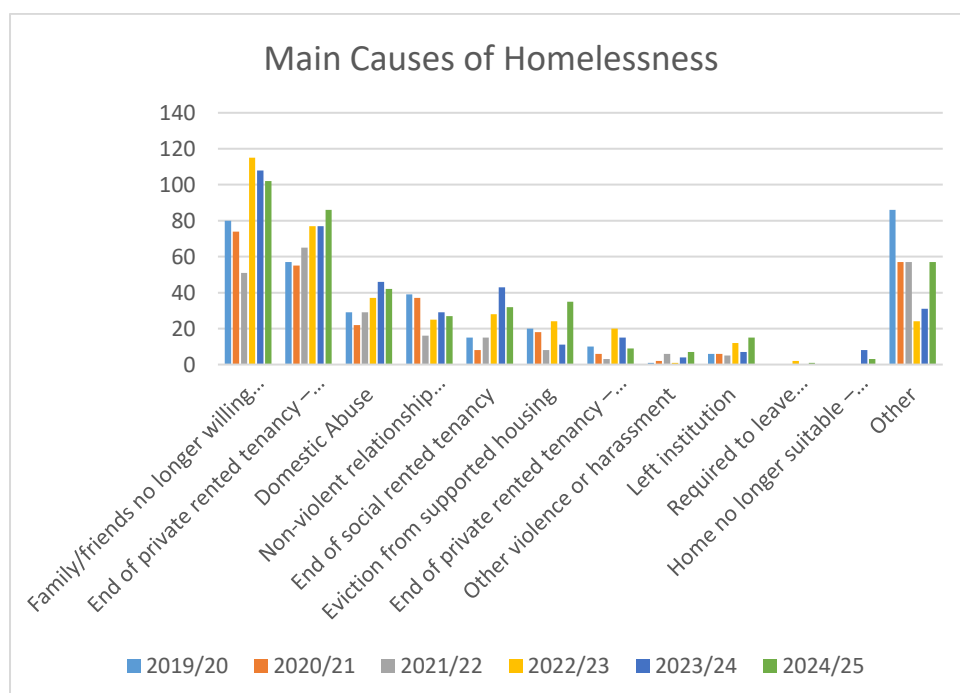
Broadly, the prevalence of support needs is in line with the regional and national averages; although the prevalence of a support need in relation to mental health and physical health is slightly higher in Winchester and support needs in relation to rough sleeping lower.

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

The table and graphs below detail the main causes of homelessness for those owed a prevention and relief duty.

Main reason for homelessness	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Family/friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	80	74	51	115	108	102
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold	57	55	65	77	77	86
Domestic Abuse	29	22	29	37	46	42
Non-violent relationship breakdown	39	37	16	25	29	27
End of social rented tenancy	15	8	15	28	43	32
Eviction from supported housing	20	18	8	24	11	35
End of private rented tenancy – non assured shorthold	10	6	3	20	15	9
Other violence or harassment	1	2	6	1	4	7
Left institution	6	6	5	12	7	15
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	0	0	0	2	0	1
Home no longer suitable – disability/ill health	0	0	0	0	8	3
Other	86	57	57	24	31	57

Source: H-CLIC data



Source: H-CLIC data

The main reason for homelessness in Winchester in 2024/25 was due to family and friends asking to leave, accounting for 24% of cases, followed by end of private rented accommodation (20%). The number of actual cases whose homelessness was due to family and friends evicting has reduced over the last three years, however homelessness due to the end of private rented accommodation has increased in the last year.

The other main causes of homelessness are domestic abuse, eviction from supported housing, eviction from social housing and relationship breakdown.

The table below compares the main causes of homelessness in Winchester with the regional and national average, and in most areas, Winchester is broadly comparable, however end of private rented accommodation is lower in Winchester compared with the other averages and eviction from social housing is higher.

In relation to social housing, most of these (80%) were owed a prevention duty. In Winchester in order to access the household support fund to address rent arrears the Housing Options team will undertake a full housing assessment to ensure that any other measures required to help the household manage their tenancy are put in place, and as such this is the reason that the figures relating to threat of homelessness from social housing is higher than the national picture. In 2024/25 there were only 4 evictions from Council housing.

Main Reason 2023/24	Winchester	South East	Rest of England
Family/friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	28%	26%	27%
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold	20%	27%	24%
Domestic abuse	12%	11%	12%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	8%	6%	7%
End of social rented tenancy	11%	4%	3%
Eviction from supported housing	3%	4%	5%
Left institution	2%	3%	4%

Source: H-CLIC Data

Recommendation

Ensure prevention tools are developed that focus on the main causes of homelessness and this is regularly reviewed in line with data.

Pressure Points

This section considers acceptance rates and pressure points across prevention, relief, and the main duty.

Overall, the data suggests that an increasing number of households are entering the system later (i.e., when they are already homeless), which is reflected in the reduction in the proportion of households owed a prevention duty from 62% of all duties owed in 2021/22 to 55% in 2024/25. Although it is important to note that Winchester compares positively to the national picture and continues to work with a higher proportion of households under a prevention duty.

Moving forward the challenge will be to encourage customers to access the service at an earlier point in time and reduce the proportion of cases that are reaching crisis point, where immediate intervention is necessary because households are already homeless.

There is a range of specialist work and protocols and pathways in place to support groups at a higher risk of homelessness, and these pathways and associated partnership working are considered to be effective, progress, however, is hindered by limited availability of suitable temporary, supported and settled accommodation.

Family or friends no longer able to accommodate

The most common reason for homelessness in Winchester is family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, accounting for 22% of all prevention duties owed, and 27% of all relief duties. There has been a gradual increase in the number of households owed a homeless duty due to this reason over the last six years, and is likely to be linked to the affordability pressures within the housing market making it challenging for households to secure affordable housing alongside the pressures associated with the cost of living and the impact this can have on family dynamics.

It is notable that this is the main cause of cases owed a relief duty and as such there may be merit in working with household members to require reasonable notice to be served (where this is safe to do so) to enable the team to undertake prevention work and enable planned moves and reduce the number of crisis presentations. This would provide the team with some breathing space in which to be able to effectively commence prevention work, the implementation of this alongside home visits may help to mitigate the pressure linked to this area.

Recommendation

Require households to provide reasonable notice to enable time for prevention work to commence and for home visits and planned moves to take place.

Private rented sector

A notable pressure point is the private rented sector. A total of 30% of customers owed a prevention duty, and 12% of those owed a relief duty, are due to the loss of private rented sector accommodation. There has been a gradual increase in cases triggered by the end of a private rented tenancy over the last six years equating to a 51% increase (increase of 30 cases over the time period.)

The service, despite market challenges, remains successful in securing private rented accommodation as a prevention and relief outcome

Cost of living pressures

Financial payments have become an increasingly important tool in preventing homelessness, accounting for 26% of all prevention outcomes in 2024/25. Over the last 5 years there has been an increase in the proportion of families seeking assistance from the team which may be linked to cost-of-living pressures.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is the third main cause of homelessness in Winchester, and 12% of all recorded support needs are linked to domestic abuse. The number of cases presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse has gradually increased over the last five years.

It is possible that this increase may be linked to the expanded interpretation of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act and increased awareness of the help and support available.

PREVENTION OUTCOMES

The table below details the number of cases where the prevention duty came to an end during the year and the outcomes achieved.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total number of households whose prevention duty ended	202	170	138	259	186	159
Total prevented	141	121	103	199	138	137

Successful prevention rate	70%	71%	75%	77%	74%	86%
56 days or more expired and no further action	12	13	3	20	5	6
Contact lost	7	8	6	9	8	10
Homeless (including Intentionally homeless)	35	19	15	22	31	57
No longer eligible	0	0	0	1	0	0
Refused suitable accommodation	0	0	2	0	1	0
Refused to cooperate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrew application/applicant deceased	7	9	9	8	3	6
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0

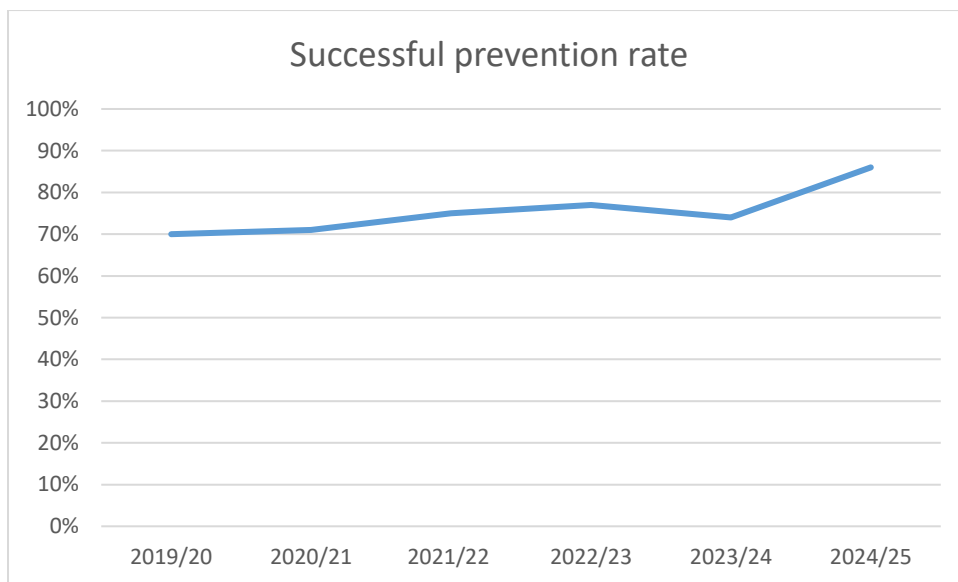
Source: HCLIC data

For the 159 cases in 2024/25 owed a prevention duty, where the duty has ended, accommodation was secured for 137 of these households, this indicates that of those households owed a prevention duty homelessness was successfully prevented for 86% of these households and is a significant increase from the previous year.

In 2023/24 the successful prevention rate was 74% compared with a national prevention rate of 51%. This is a huge achievement given the wider pressures on homelessness services and the overall increase in demand.

While the actual number of prevention outcomes peaked in 2022/23 and has decreased in subsequent years, the successful percentage rate has increased; this is linked to the change in the number of households owed a prevention duty.

The graph below shows the prevention rate in Winchester over the last 6 years and shows that despite the pressures linked the pandemic and wider housing market, Winchester have managed to maintain a successful prevention rate which is significantly above the national average and is a huge achievement that should be celebrated.

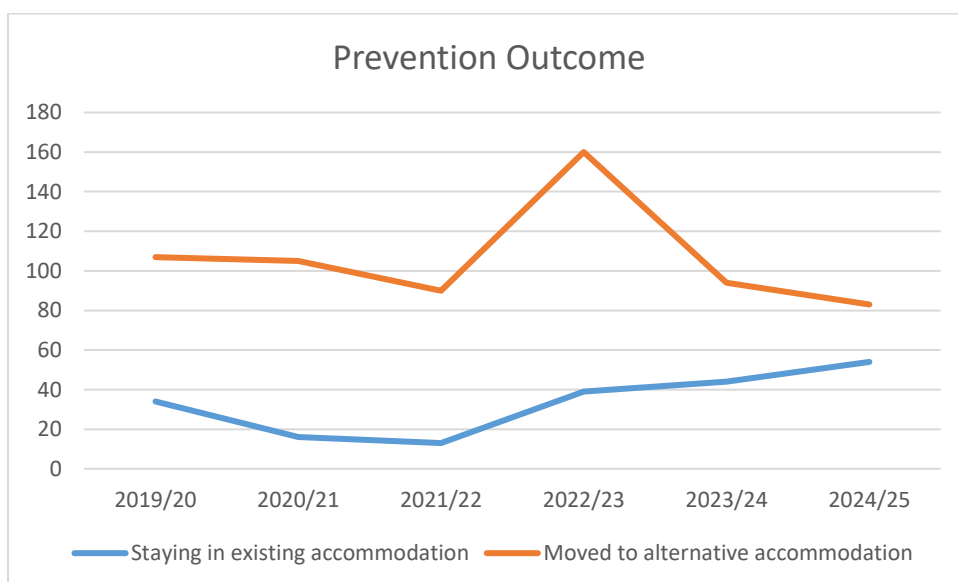


This enhanced focus on prevention and early intervention has been critical in stemming the flow into temporary accommodation and the low use of bed & breakfast accommodation.

The table below illustrates how the prevention outcomes have been achieved.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Staying in existing accommodation	34	16	13	39	44	54
Moved to alternative accommodation	107	105	90	160	94	83

Source: HCLIC data



Source: HCLIC data

In 2024/25 of those cases prevented from becoming homeless 61% were helped to secure alternative accommodation and 39% were supported to retain their existing accommodation.

The service is much more successful at assisting households to secure alternative accommodation and rather than enabling them to remain in their existing accommodation.

Given the overall pressures in accessing affordable accommodation, moving forward there may need to be a greater focus on preventing people losing their existing accommodation, although there has been an increase in this activity since 2021/22 which is a positive development.

The table below illustrates the prevention activity that resulted in homelessness being successfully prevented.

Prevention Duty: Positive Outcome Prevention Activity	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	90	47	31
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	25	11	35
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	29	16	18
Negotiation/mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction/repossession	6	4	6
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	4	7	9
Supported housing provided	5	2	3
Discretionary housing payment to reduce shortfall	0	0	0
Other financial payments (to reduce arrears)	25	23	0
Housing related support to sustain accommodation	-	-	17
Other	9	14	4
No activity – advice and information provided	8	14	14

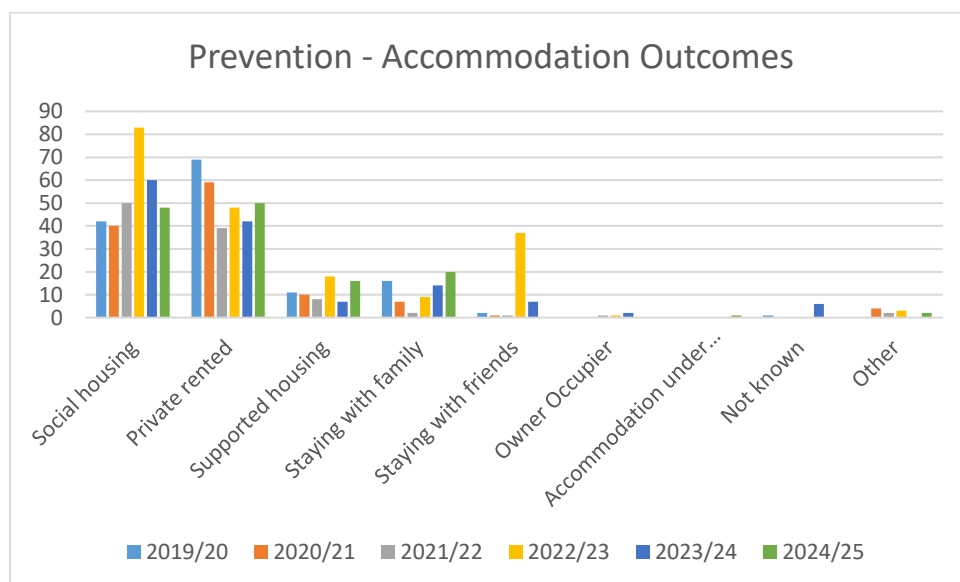
Source: H-CLIC Data

The main prevention activity in 2024/25 was help to secure accommodation both with and without a financial payment.

The table below shows the type of accommodation secured under prevention activity.

Accommodation Outcome Prevention	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Social housing	42	40	50	83	60	48
Private rented	69	59	39	48	42	50
Supported housing	11	10	8	18	7	16
Staying with family	16	7	2	9	14	20
Staying with friends	2	1	1	37	7	0
Owner Occupier	0	0	1	1	2	0
Accommodation under a resettlement scheme/sponsorship	0	0	0	0	0	1
Not known	1	0	0	0	6	0
Other	0	4	2	3	0	2

Source: HCLIC data



Source: HCLIC data

In 2024/25 the majority of households whose homelessness was prevented were helped to access private rented accommodation accounting for 36% of all preventions, closely followed by accessing social housing accounting for 35%.

Relief Outcomes

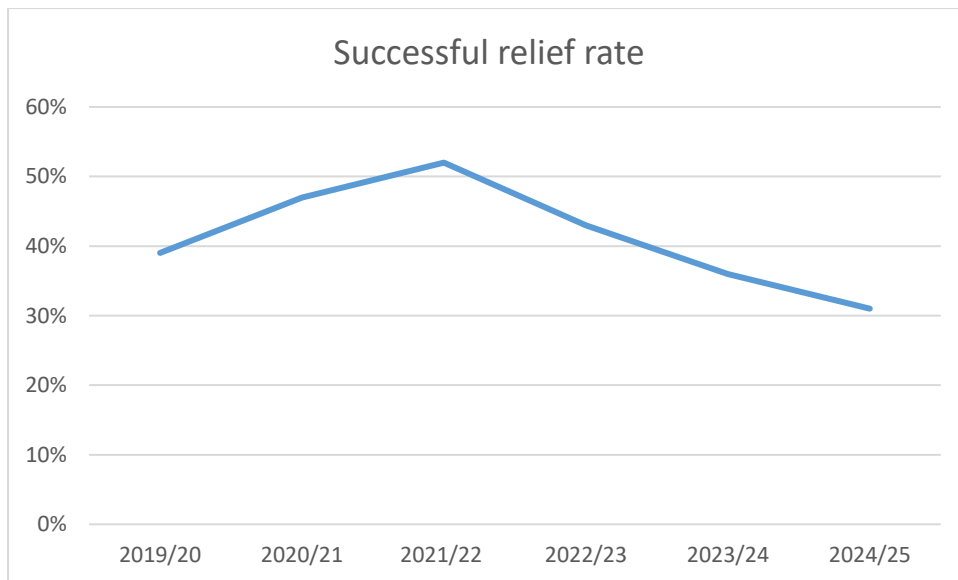
The table below shows the reasons where the relief duty has ended during the year.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total number of households whose relief duty came to an end	160	159	107	158	184	167
Secured alternative accommodation for 6 months	62	74	56	68	66	52
Successful relief rate	39%	47%	52%	43%	36%	31%
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	0	0	0	0	2	0
56 days elapsed	73	65	32	67	87	87
Contact lost	21	10	8	9	17	14
Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided	0	3	1	3	0	0
No longer eligible	0	0	0	0	1	0
Notice served due to refusal to cooperate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refused final accommodation	0	1	1	0	0	0
Withdrew application/applicant deceased	4	6	9	11	11	12
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	1

Source: HCLIC data

In 2024/25 a total of 167 relief duties came to an end of which 52 were successfully relieved equating to 31%.

In 2023/24 the successful relief rate was 36% compared with a national relief rate of 32%.



The graph above shows the relief rate in Winchester over the last 6 years and shows a reduction in the percentage of positive outcomes being achieved since 2021/22. This is likely to be impacted by access to affordable housing options and will be further impacted in 2025 by the closure of Westview.

Relief Activity	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	35	30	22
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	7	4	14
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	9	10	9
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	0	0	0
No activity – advice and information provided	2	6	3
Other activity through which accommodation secured	9	6	8
Supported housing provided	7	10	3

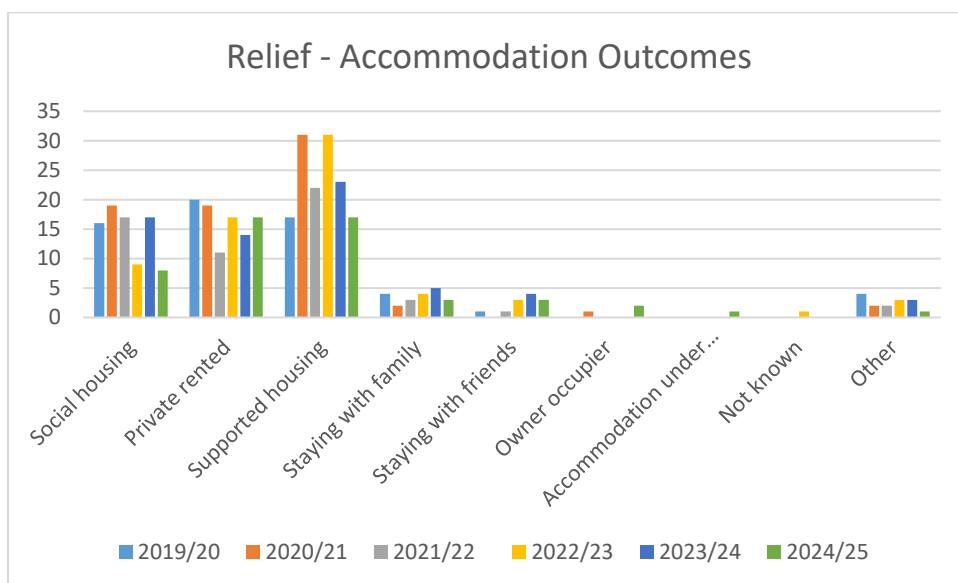
Source: H-CLIC Data

The table below shows the accommodation secured under relief work.

Accommodation Outcome (Relief)	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Social housing	16	19	17	9	17	8
Private rented	20	19	11	17	14	17
Supported housing	17	31	22	31	23	17

Staying with family	4	2	3	4	5	3
Staying with friends	1	0	1	3	4	3
Owner occupier	0	1	0	0	0	2
Accommodation under a resettlement scheme/sponsorship	-	-	-	-	-	1
Not known	0	0	0	1	0	
Other	4	2	2	3	3	1

Source: HCLIC data



Source: HCLIC data

Across all years the majority of households who had their homelessness relieved were helped to access supported housing, however this decreased in 2024/25 and is linked to the reduction in supported housing available. In 2024/25 there was also a reduction in the number of households accessing social housing compared with previous years.

MAIN DUTY DECISIONS

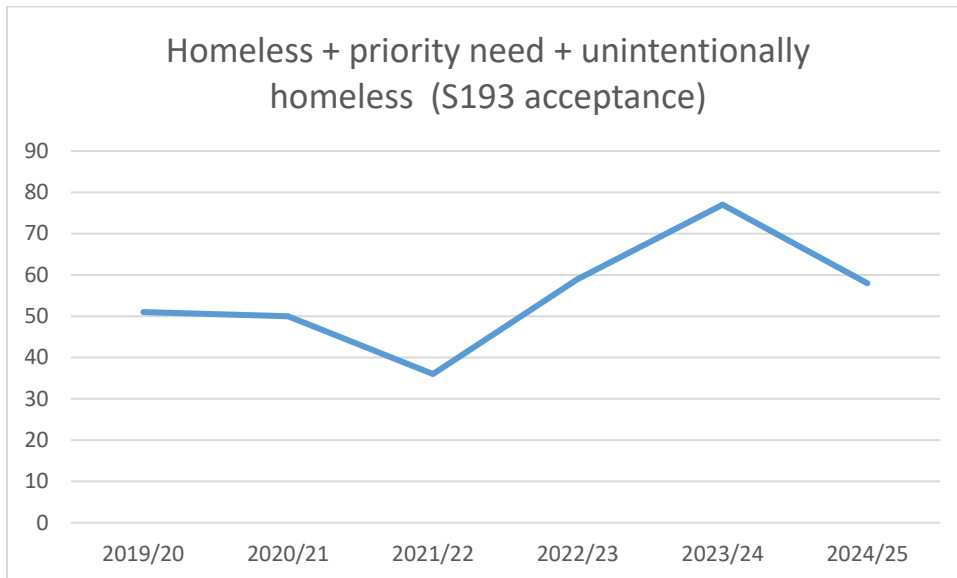
The table below details the number of main duty decisions for households where the homelessness could not be prevented or relieved.

Main duty decisions	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Homeless + priority need + unintentionally homeless (S193 acceptance)	51	50	36	59	77	58
Intentionally homeless	4	3	1	4	2	0

No priority need	7	18	5	12	10	27
Not homeless	0	0	0	0	0	2

Source: HCLIC data

The graph below illustrates the number of full duty (S193) cases over the last six years. Homelessness acceptances have increased from a low in 2021/22, peaking in 2023/24 and reducing slightly in 2024/25.



Source: HCLIC data

Of the original 380 households owed a prevention or relief duty in 2023/24 89 households (23%) went on to have a main decision made, compared with 29% nationally, and (20%) had a full duty (s193) owed, this compares with 20% nationally.

The table below shows the reason as to why the section 193 (full housing duty) has come to an end for all of those households where the duty has been discharged. The main reason for discharge is due to an offer of social housing.

A total of 14 households had the s193 duty brought to an end of which 8 had a successful outcome, compared with 58 households who had a s193 duty owed to them in the year.

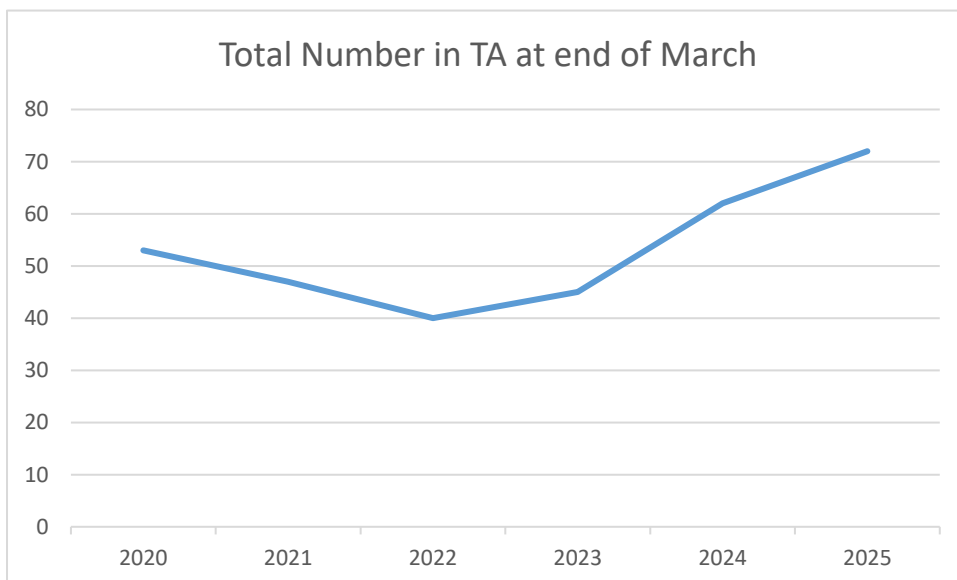
Main duty Discharged	2024/25
Accepted a Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer	8
Applicant withdrew or lost contact	2
Became homeless intentionally from temporary accommodation	1
Ceased to occupy temporary accommodation	2

Refused suitable temporary accommodation offer	1
Total Main duty Discharged	14

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The graph below shows the total number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation at the end of each financial year. This provides a snapshot of those in temporary accommodation at the end of each year.

Main duty Discharged	2024/25
Accepted a Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer	8
Applicant withdrew or lost contact	2
Became homeless intentionally from temporary accommodation	1
Ceased to occupy temporary accommodation	2
Refused suitable temporary accommodation offer	1
Total Main duty Discharged	14



Source: H-CLIC data

The number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of each year has increased since 2022, representing an 80% increase between 2022 and 2025. The number of households with dependent children has also increased over this time period.

The table below shows the total number of temporary accommodation placements over the last three years; while the snapshot figure has increased, the total number of placements in 2024/25 was lower than the previous year.

Year	Total Number of individual temporary accommodation placements
2022/23	77
2023/24	97
2024/25	84

In the last year the average length of a temporary accommodation placement was 312 days.

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is defined as “People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes")”.

Each Authority is required to submit an official figure of numbers of rough sleepers found per year or to submit an estimate. The graph below details the number of rough sleepers found/estimated since 2010.



Source: MHCLG Rough Sleeping Data

Please note there was no data available for 2016

Rough sleeping levels have fluctuated in Winchester peaking in 2014. Prior to the pandemic in 2019 10 rough sleepers were found on the count, this number has since reduced and the last count in the Autumn of 2024 identified 5 rough sleepers. The reduction since 2020 is likely to be linked to Covid, whereby many individuals who may have otherwise slept rough were provided with emergency accommodation under Covid provisions. Changes to the night shelter provision has since provided a much improved accommodation offer, which is also likely to have had a positive impact on rough sleeping levels.

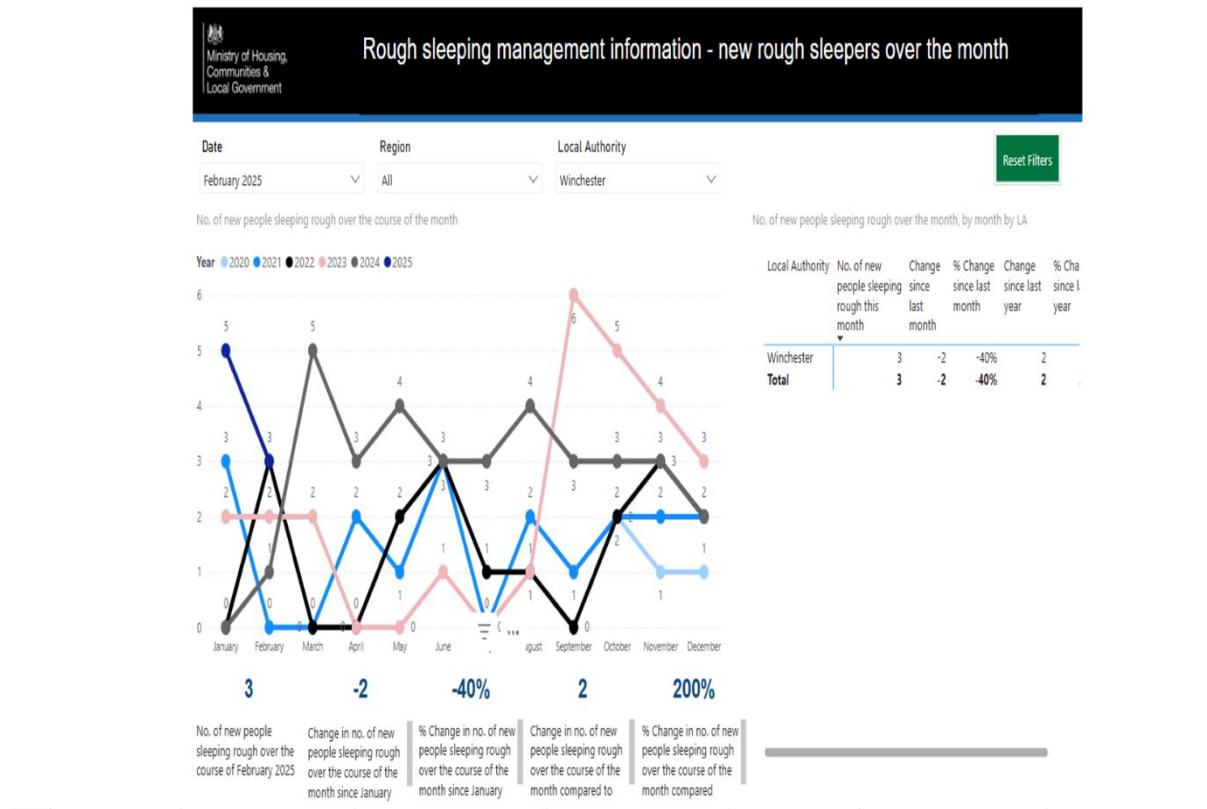
Outreach data

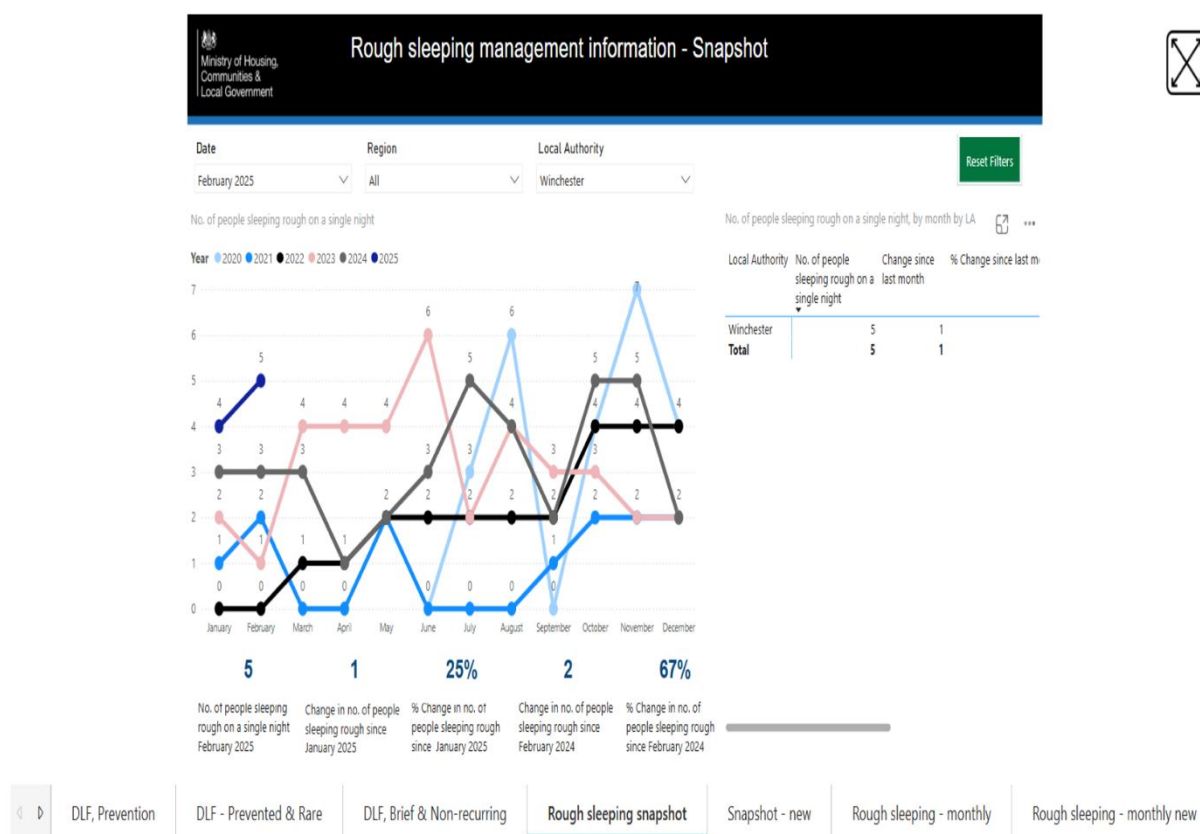
The graph taken from the rough sleeping dashboard details those sleeping rough over a month. July 2024 saw this figure peak at 16, but since reduced to 11 in February 2025. The data does indicate an increase during the summer months and a decrease during the winter, which is likely to be linked to a range of factors including individuals finding other temporary arrangements during cold weather, activation of SWEP arrangements, and increased opportunities for begging during the tourist summer months.



The graph below shows the number of individuals sleeping rough on a single night; in February 2025 there were 5 individuals found to be sleeping rough.

The graph below displays the same information for those new to the streets; 3 new rough sleepers were identified in February 2025.





Housing Register & Social Housing

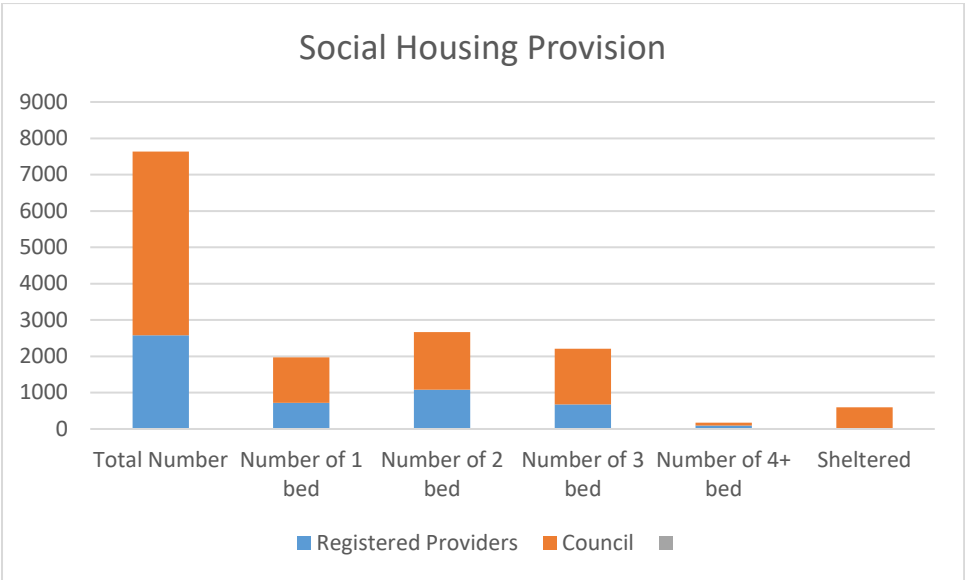
Social housing provision

The table below details the social housing provision across Winchester.

	Total Number	Number of 1 bed	Number of 2 bed	Number of 3 bed	Number of 4+ bed	Sheltered
Registered Providers	2580	724	1081	672	98	0
Council	5054	1249	1589	1536	80	600
Total	7634	1973	2670	2208	178	600

Source: Winchester City Council

There is a total of just under 7,634 homes, of which around two thirds are owned by the Council and one third are registered provider properties. The greatest proportion of homes are 2 bed properties accounting for 35% of the stock, followed by 3 bed properties (29%), with 1 bed properties making up 26% of the total stock.



Source: Winchester City Council

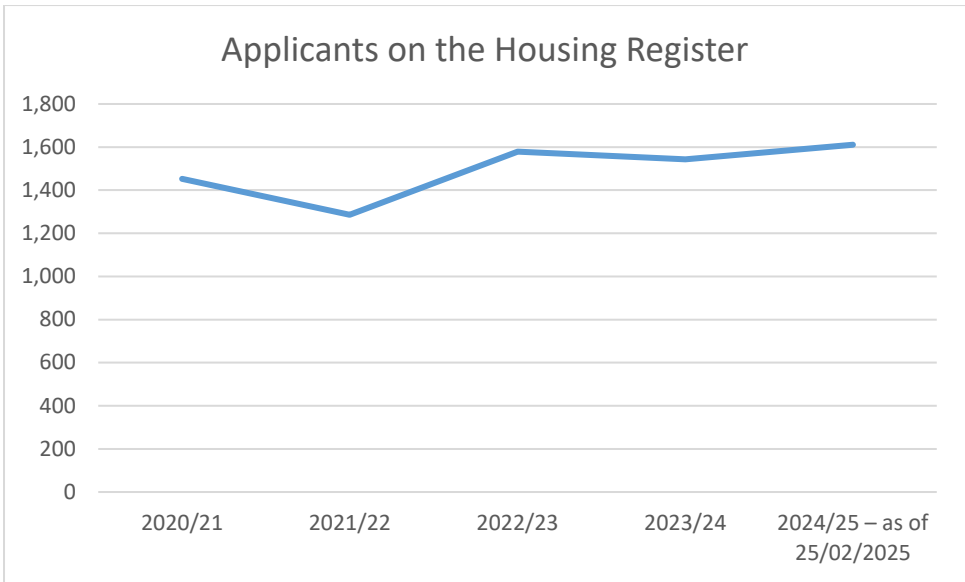
Housing Register

The table below details the number of households on the Housing Register for the last five years.

Number of Households on the Housing Register

	Total Number	Number requiring 1 bed	Number requiring 2 bed	Number requiring 3 bed	Number requiring 4+ bed
2020/21	1,452	943	303	159	47
2021/22	1,286	874	226	138	48
2022/23	1,579	1,015	324	168	72
2023/24	1,544	1,009	303	169	63
2024/25 – as of 25/02/2025	1,611	1,035	337	175	64

Source: Winchester Council

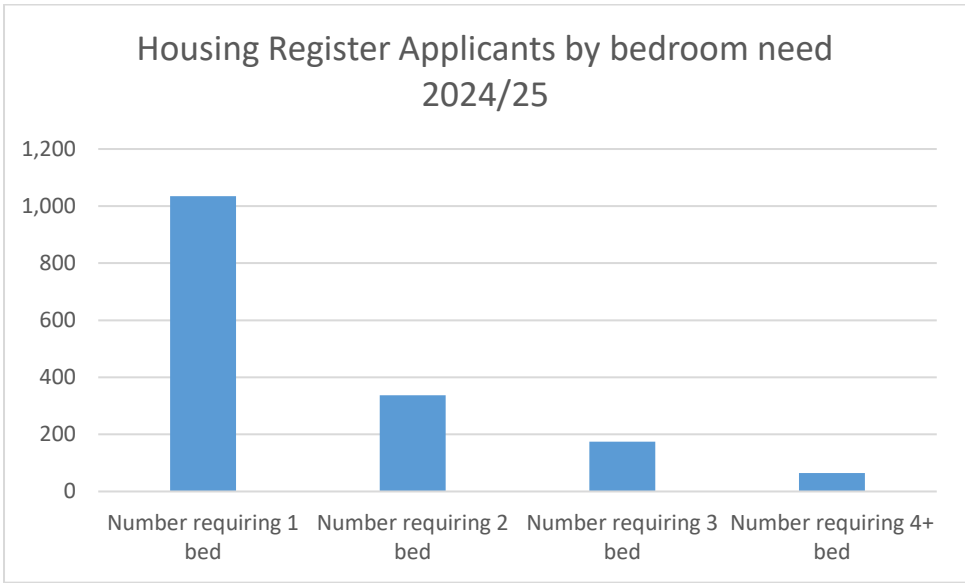


Source: Winchester Council

The number of households on the Housing Register has increased steadily over the last five years representing an 11% increase over that time period.

Of the households on the housing register 77% are general applicants and 23% are transfer applicants.

The number of households on the Housing Register in February 2024 is broken down by property size need in the graph below.

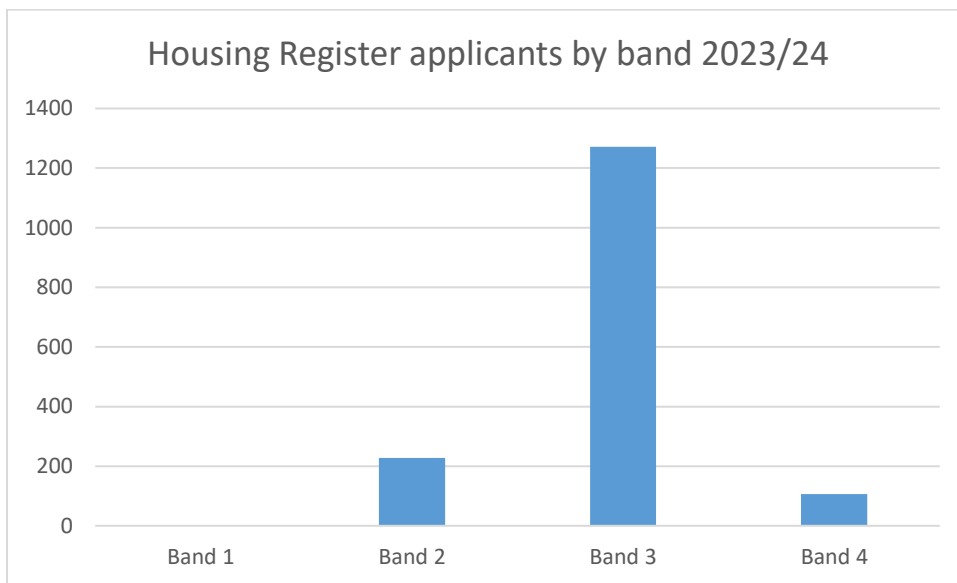


Source: Winchester Council

The greatest demand is for one-bedroom general needs accommodation, accounting for 64% of all applicants, followed by two bed accommodation (26%) and three bed accommodation (15%).

The table and graph below illustrate the band that households on the housing register are in.

	Households
Band 1	2
Band 2	228
Band 3	1271
Band 4	106



A total of 79% of applicants are in Band 3, followed by band 2 (14%).

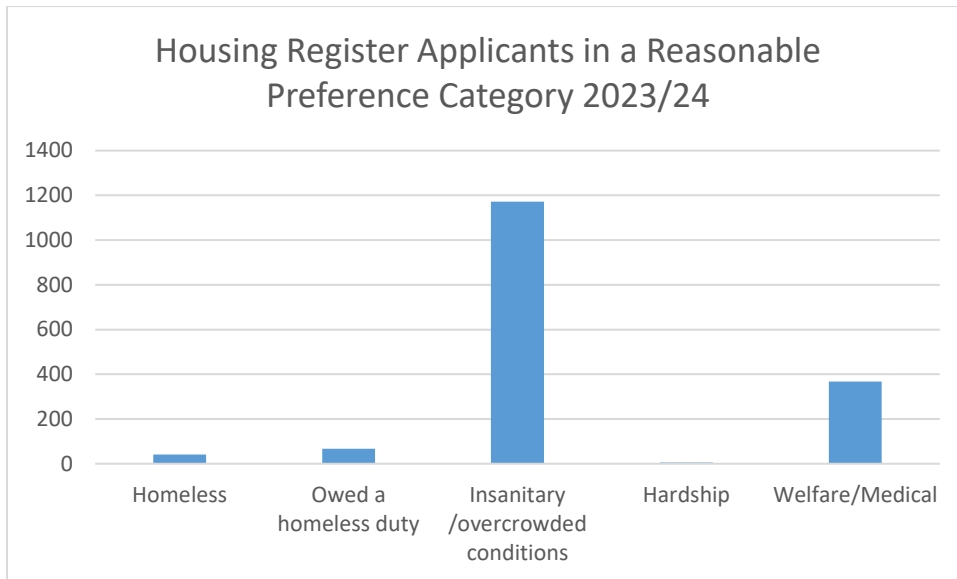
The table below illustrates the total number of households on the Housing Register who are in a reasonable preference category.

Reasonable Preference Category

	Total Number in RP	Homeless	Owed a homeless duty	Insanitary /overcrowded conditions	Hardship	Welfare/Medical
2020/21	1369	92	54	890	3	301
2021/22	1179	30	47	696	2	276
2022/23	1463	52	54	1321	8	319
2023/24	1441	41	67	1172	5	367

Source: Winchester Council

In 2023/24 a total of 93% of housing register applicants were in a reasonable preference category. The majority of these are due to insanitary and overcrowded conditions. A total of 108 households are in a reasonable preference category due to homelessness.



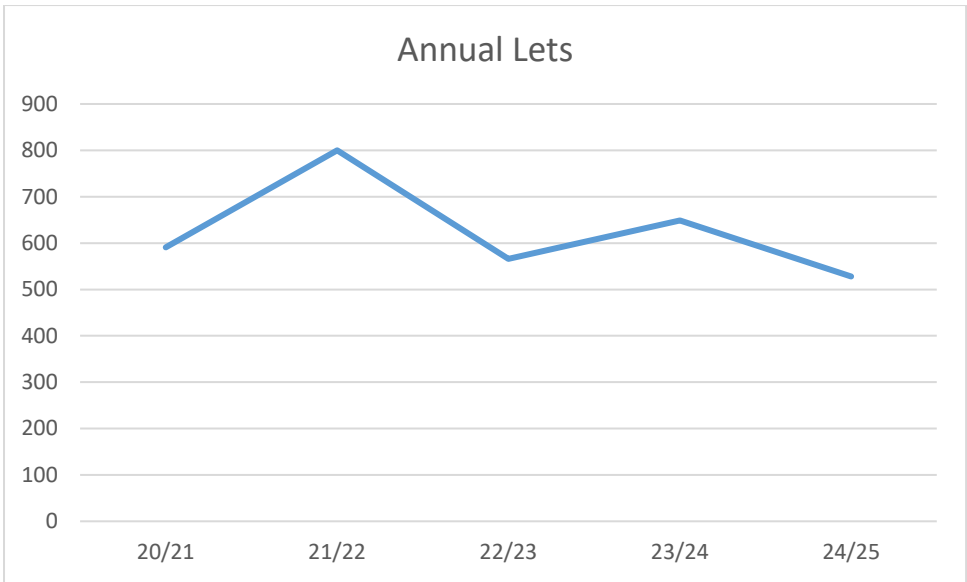
Source: Winchester Council

Lettings

The table below shows the number of lettings for the last five years broken down by property type via Home choice

	Total Number	60+ GN bungalows	1-bed including bedsits	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed +	Number of sheltered or extra-care
20/21	591	66	107	197	86	22	113
21/22	800	65	233	301	119	11	71
22/23	566	78	123	198	88	9	70
23/24	649	63	169	256	99	16	46
24/25	528	44	103	188	112	21	60

Source: Winchester Council



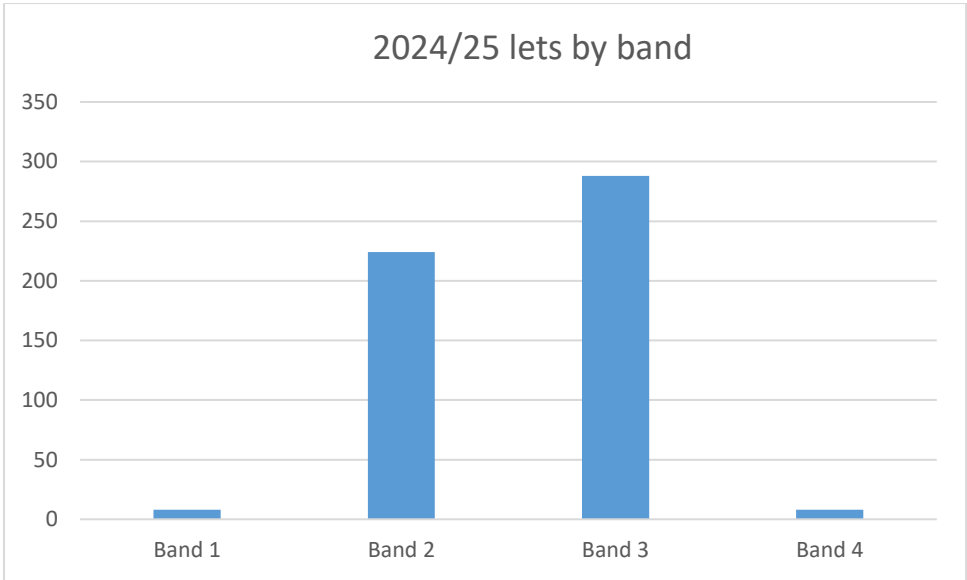
Source: Winchester Council

The number of annual lets has ranged from just over 500 to 800 annual lets over the last five years with the peak seen in 2021/22. The number of annual lets recorded in 2024/25 was the lowest number over the last five-year period.

The table below shows the 2024/25 annual lets broken down by the assessed band that applicants were in.

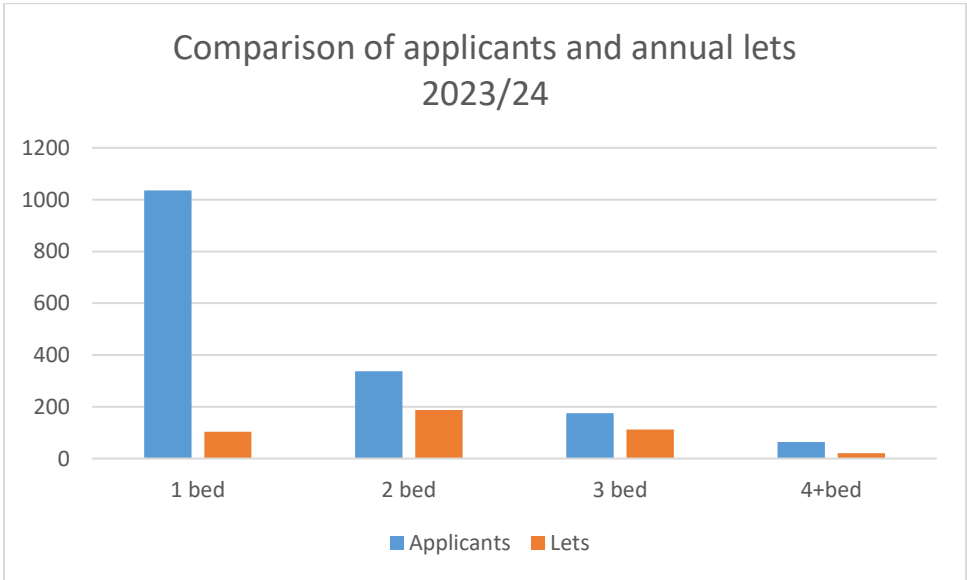
2023/24	Lets made
Band 1	8
Band 2	224
Band 3	288
Band 4	8

Source: Winchester Council



The majority of lets were made to band 3, followed by band 2. In total 55% of lets went to applicants in band 3 and 42% went to households in band 2.

The graph below compares the demand from the housing register against the annual lets.



Source: Winchester City Council

Demand significantly exceeds supply for all property types; however, the greatest unmet need is in relation to one bedroom accommodation.

Supported housing move-Ons via the Housing Register

Supported accommodation is predominantly made up of the Beacon, Trinity, Hostels, (current and historic,) Care-Leaver accommodation but also includes mental health supported accommodation and learning disability accommodation within the Winchester District and other forms of supported accommodation outside of the Winchester District where the applicant has a standard qualifying local connection to the District of Winchester and/or a homelessness application with Winchester.

The table below shows the number of move-Ons from supported accommodation via the Housing Register.

Year	Move-Ons
2022/23	13
2023/24	12
2024/25	13

Resources

The table below shows the grant funding received for the purposes of responding to homelessness.

General Fund Costs 2024/25	£396,505
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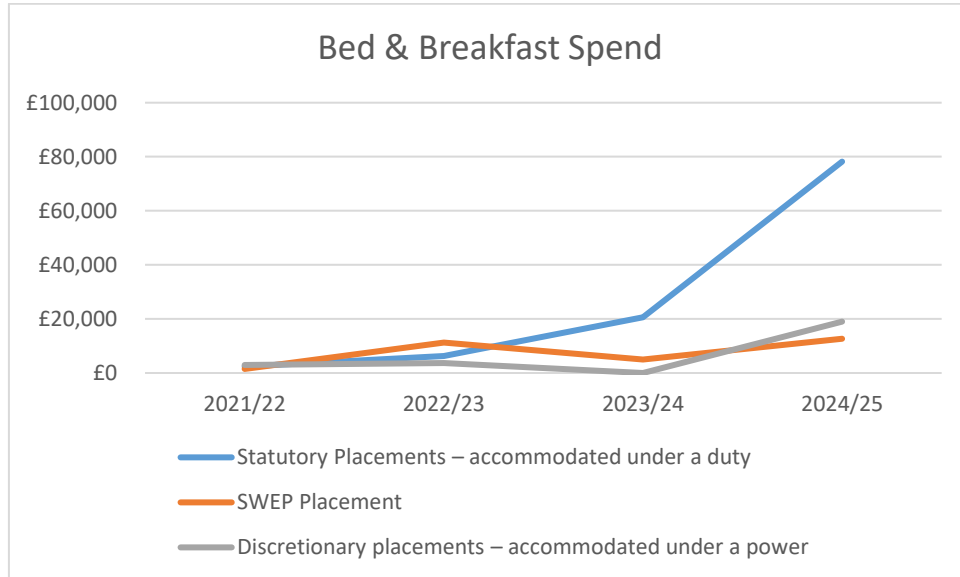
General Fund Costs 24/25		£396,505
Income		25/26
RSI		£96,000
HPG (2 tranches of HPG was allocated in 24/25)		£781,000
HCC contribution to SI (Beacon)		£24,500
Safe Accommodation Domestic Abuse Support		£37,467
HHC Social Inclusion Funding		£83,000
Home Office Asylum Dispersal Funding		£0
Total Income		1,021,967

B&B expenditure

	Statutory Placements – accommodated under a duty	Of which for Ukrainian households	SWEP Placement	Discretionary placements – accommodated under a power
2021/22	£2,400	£0	£1,500	£3,000
2022/23	£6,275	£0	£11,215	£3,700
2023/24	£20,600	£0	£4,968	£0

2024/25	£78,200	£15,233	£12,671	£19,000
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As can be seen the spend on bed and breakfast accommodation has risen sharply in the last year, both on households accommodated under a statutory temporary accommodation duty and for households accommodated under a power. This is likely to be linked to both the overall increase in demand and the closure of a supported housing project due to a withdrawal of county council funding.



Homelessness Services and Provision across Winchester

Homelessness & Prevention Services

Winchester City Council Housing Options Service

The Housing Options Service is delivered by the council and is largely accessible with customers being able to access the service in person, over the phone and via email. The Council also delivers an out of hours service.

The Housing Options service delivers the council's statutory duties in relation to housing advice, homelessness and its prevention. The Housing Options team, also manages temporary accommodation, delivers support, provides private rented sector support and initiatives and services for rough sleepers. The council's duties in relation to Allocations are also delivered from within the Housing Options service.

Winchester Council, are in many ways unique, delivering a good quality customer focused service which achieves positive outcomes, even through the pandemic. The council has also largely managed to avoid the use of B&B accommodation. It is only

recently (since October 2024) that there has been a dependency on B&B, with on average 5 single households accommodated in B&B at any one time, with an average stay of only 2 weeks. No families are placed in B&B.

Housing Options officers undertake a generic role; they provide the triage function on a duty rota basis. The officer will decide how much detail to go into at the initial appointment very much in line with the customer's needs, for example for a rough sleeper they would seek to undertake the full assessment while the window of opportunity to engage presents, but for other customers they may only take basic information and then arrange a full assessment at a later date once not on duty. This approach is entirely bespoke based upon the customer's needs and ensures the best use of staff time while on duty. Following duty, the officer will retain responsibility for the case all the way through from prevention to discharging the section 193 duty; providing consistency for the customer, enabling positive relationships to be developed, and removing any duplication from the system.

Assessments are expected to take at least an hour in order to ensure that they are robust and following this each customer is provided with a bespoke and meaningful PHP.

Case officers spend 2 days a week on duty in the office, 2 days working from home and 1 day out and about undertaking proactive casework and meeting customers.

The success in achieving a high number of prevention outcomes is considered to be attributable to the following factors.

Accessible Service

The Housing Options service is fully accessible to all customers throughout the week, customers are able to drop into the council offices during the week and be seen in person, alongside telephone and online access. The service ensures that all calls are responded to that day. The accessible and responsive service is considered to be critical in achieving positive outcomes and ensuring that windows of opportunity for prevention work are not lost.

Members of the team also spend time at the local homelessness day service and supported accommodation projects to ensure further accessibility.

The service also ensures that housing register applications are managed in a timely manner and promptly screened for any suggested risk of homelessness or unsuitable accommodation so that a timely prevention response can be implemented.

Personalised Approach

Customers are given the choice as to how they wish to access the service and can choose face to face appointments and the location of where they would prefer to be seen, or telephone access if this is more convenient.

The service has found that face to face contact helps them to achieve positive and sustainable customer outcomes. Through face-to-face contact officers are able to often discover underlying support needs and/or other factors that have impacted upon their homelessness and put measures in place to address this.

The housing options officers work very closely with customers to ensure a personalised approach. Staff “know their cases inside out” and remain in regular contact with them with ongoing communication and will often undertake visits. Staff will pull in other key services to support the customer as necessary, and co-ordinate these services around the needs of the customers. This means that staff are very ‘hands on’ in their approach rather than being desk based and process driven. This is another factor that has led to the success of their prevention approach.

Effective Partnerships

There are a range of effective partnerships in place including monthly pathway meetings. In these meetings all single households in need of housing related support are discussed with the aim of finding a suitable supported accommodation solution. All referrals into supported accommodation are discussed to ensure the most suitable placement for customers, matching based on need rather than vacancy. Within this meeting upcoming hospital discharges and prison releases are discussed with plans put in place. In addition to this any cases where an existing supported housing resident is struggling or at risk of losing their placement are brought to the meeting, so that a housing options officer can ‘parachute in’ to try and resolve the issue and prevent the placement from breaking down.

Prevention Options

A number of successful prevention outcomes are achieved through accessing social housing; the team has a successful approach to working with customers and providing support and interventions at home until a planned move becomes available through the housing register. Further successful outcomes are achieved through having a Private Rented Sector Tenancy Sustainment officer embedded within the team, mediating between tenant and landlord in situations where there is a chance that the tenancy can be saved. The officer also works with those more complex PRS

tenants, even where the tenancy can't be saved, to help put measures in place to address any unmet support needs and money management issues to help get them tenancy ready for any future tenancies.

Integration with the wider team

There is very close working between housing options and the wider housing team. There is close working between allocations and temporary accommodation staff ensuring that staff are aware of vacancies and can work with customers to bid and successfully move on. There is also an ongoing focus on ensuring that the allocations team is properly resourced to enable housing register applications to be promptly administered and thus ensuring that opportunities for prevention aren't lost.

The integration with the private sector team also helps to achieve positive outcomes with regular referrals to housing standards for property inspections and a pro-active and positive approach to working with private landlords. The use of DFGs can also assist in preventing homelessness by enabling properties to be made suitable for customer's needs. There is also an Occupational Therapist within the team that is of huge benefit particularly in relation to property suitability.

The service considers these peripheral services to be vital to the outcomes achieved by the service

Trinity Day Services

Trinity Winchester provides direct access services for anyone experiencing homelessness, social isolation and the impact of poverty within the city.

Services range from meeting service user's basic needs in terms of bathing, laundry, clothes, warmth and hot meals. Alongside this Trinity deliver Support, Change and Aspire programmes to enable people to access all levels of help from learning, advice and therapies to housing qualifications and employment opportunities.

Staff within the centre provide support to help people keep their homes and to access housing, alongside advice and signposting to other key agencies.

A range of key agencies and services provide in-reach to the day centre including GP access, social prescriber appointments and dental care appointments.

Trinity Women's Services

Trinity provides a woman only service to support women who are experiencing any area of vulnerability. The service is led by a team of qualified counsellors, support staff and learning tutors on hand to help women address the effects of trauma, domestic abuse, loneliness and unemployment alongside any other issues they may be facing. The service also hosts the nationally accredited Freedom programme for women who have or are experiencing domestic abuse.

Other Advice Services/Key services

Advice Services/Key services				
Domestic Abuse Services:	Debt/Money advice services:	Substance misuse Services:	Mental health Services:	Food banks:
Stop Domestic Abuse – provide support and advice to those experiencing DA.	Citizens Advice – provide free, impartial advice on debt and other money matters, in addition to other issues such as benefits, housing and employment.	Inclusion/ Harm Reduction Services – Provide services that include advice, information, harm reduction interventions, recovery plan alongside pharmacological interventions.	No Wrong Door - provide support for those who might have dual diagnoses (e.g., substance use and mental health)	Community Food Pantry (Unit 12) – customers can pay £6 per shop and receive goods worth approx. £15
No Women Turned Away - It provides dedicated support and telephone advocacy to women experiencing domestic abuse who face barriers in accessing a refuge space or safe accommodation	CAP – free debt advice and help with money management/benefits	No Wrong Door – provide support for those who might have dual diagnoses (e.g., substance use and mental health)	Cruse Bereavement Support – supports those who have gone through a bereavement and need some support/counselling.	Winchester Basics Bank – provide access to emergency food and clothing around the Winchester district.
	Step Change Debt Charity – UK's most comprehensive free debt advice service. As well as advising	Parent support link- for family members / partners of people struggling with addiction.	The Lighthouse – out of hours mental health service for anyone over the age of 18 who	

	they assist with setting up debt solution and support for as long as needed.	Offer a telephone or face to face support service across Hampshire. 02380 399 764	requires short term support with their mental health, based in Southampton.	
			Adult Community Mental Health Team and Talking Therapies – part of the Hampshire and IOW NHS Trust	
			Reconnect – Links prison healthcare with appropriate follow up care in the community for up to 6 months.	

Accommodation

Supported Accommodation

Alleyne House – Trinity

Alleyne House provides 8 units of self-contained supported accommodation, with a live-in supervisor and a Housing Support Officer. Alongside housing related support the service provides training opportunities to support residents into employment.

Bradbury View – Trinity

Bradbury view comprises of 12 flatlets for people who are rough sleeping, including the most entrenched or hard to reach rough sleepers. Each flatlet has ensuite bathrooms. Residents are provided with individualised person-centred support to help them to move towards living independently and meeting their wider support needs. Residents are provided with:

- A full health needs assessment with the GP team
- A named care coordinator to help set up residents housing and tenancy related income and expenditure, alongside settling them into their new accommodation
- A well-being practitioner to help residents to help them access therapies and identify any additional needs.

- A full range of therapies and groups to attend
- A learning programme to further skills
- A focus on reducing addiction and moving towards recovery
- Life skills such as cooking and budgeting
- Tenancy management groups to set residents up for independent living
- Volunteering opportunities
- Recovery groups for ongoing support
- Preparing to move on into independent living
- Job club and CV building

The Beacon

The Beacon provides 10 units of supported accommodation for both men and women. Accommodation comprises of self-contained bedrooms and bathrooms. A home cooked evening meal, lunch and breakfast is provided. Support includes person centred one to one advocacy and support with housing, employment, personal finances and other essential needs. The project also provides:

- Wellbeing and coping sessions and a confidential free counselling and psychotherapy service
- Support with finances, budgeting and support with benefit claims
- Access to training and volunteer work placement schemes with local business to help improve employment prospects
- Opportunities to develop independent living skills, including tenancy and first aid training
- Access to drug and alcohol advisory services and support
- Peer mentoring
- Life coaching
- Wellbeing activities

Other Accommodation Projects

<u>84-86 Sussex Street (Two Saints)</u> Stage 2 supported accommodation, funded by Hampshire County Council until March 2026. Not 24 cover of staff Provides accommodation and accommodation-based support	13 beds
<u>Quakers</u> PR rooms, shared facilities, for more stable single people who struggle to rent on the open market. Tenancy management, no support. If support required, can be supported by WCC PSH Tenancy sustainment officer.	7 beds

<u>Emmaus</u> residential community in Winchester, provides a home and tailored support for up to 40 people, known as Emmaus companions. Package of support for people who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness covers a wide range of areas including personal development, training, work experience and life-changing opportunities.	30 beds
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Domestic Abuse and Refuge Provision

Dispersed refuge accommodation across Hampshire- offering a safe and secure, self-contained living space outside of a traditional refuge. This accommodation is designed to provide the same level of support as a refuge but in a more independent setting, suitable for individuals who may not thrive in a communal environment or who have specific needs that require more privacy.

Trinity provides day services for women and has 2 flats within the service specifically for survivors of domestic abuse.

Temporary Accommodation

Accommodation	No of bed spaces provided
Milford House (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	20
Gordon Watson House (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	14
Lent Hill Court (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	9
Brittany House (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	6
Pepper pot Temporary Accommodation units (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	28
1 King Harold Court (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	3
17 East Acre (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	4
59 Colebrook Street (WCC Temporary Accommodation)	6

Private Rented Accommodation

The private rented sector (PRS) provides a significant and growing proportion of the total rented stock in England. Nationally the PRS represents 20% of the total housing market, in Winchester the PRS accounts for 16% of the total housing stock. Given the limitations on the size and investment in the social rented stock, it constitutes an essential element in the provision of housing for people who may otherwise be homeless.

Within Winchester most private landlords are small landlords, or 'accidental' landlords, there are very few portfolio landlords. The private rented sector in Winchester is largely unaffordable, for anyone on a low income or dependent upon benefits, low proportions of properties are within Local Housing Allowance levels although there are likely to be more at rent levels just above Local Housing Allowance levels,

Homeownership is reducing nationally due to 'would be' first time buyers being unable to access mortgages due to high house prices and high deposit requirements and increasing interest rates. This is having an impact upon the private rented market, with these 'would be' first time buyers accessing private rented accommodation, placing increased pressure on the private rented market with demand exceeding supply.

As a result of this the private rents are inflated, resulting in a gap between actual rent levels and the Local Housing Allowance. The increased demand on the private rented sector means that private landlords have a greater choice in relation to prospective tenants, which results in landlords choosing to work with professional households over those that are reliant on welfare benefits. In Winchester many households on low incomes and those in receipt of Local Housing Allowance struggle to find affordable accommodation in the private rented sector or landlords willing to accept housing benefit. For some, the need for upfront deposits, agent's fees and lender requirements to avoid the benefit dependent make the sector inaccessible. This problem has been further exacerbated with the introduction of universal credit.

While this affects all household types, the impact is the greatest on both single people under the age of 35 and large families due to benefit caps, and a lack of suitable affordable accommodation.

Despite these challenges the Council has some success in preventing and relieving homelessness through accessing private rented accommodation.

While the Renters' Rights Bill will provide more security for social housing tenants there is concern that some landlords will choose to leave the market due to perceived risks linked to the new legislation. It will be important to consult with local landlords to understand their concerns and to develop a comprehensive landlord offer in response to this to mitigate any perceived risks.

Alongside increasing access, emphasis needs to be placed on sustainment. The loss of private rented accommodation is one of the main causes of homelessness, it is therefore essential that any offer to enable clients to access the private rented sector

needs to be coupled with support for both landlords and tenants, with the ability for early intervention should any issues arise during the course of the tenancy.

Social Housing Provision

There is a total of 7,634 units of social housing across Winchester, of which just over 5,000 is council owned stock. In 2025 there were a total of 1,611 households on the housing register in need of social housing, this has increased by 11% over the last five years. Of those households on the housing register, 54% have a one-bedroom need.

These figures contrast strongly with the total number of annual lettings, which in 2024/25 was 528 lets.

Demand significantly exceeds supply for all property types; however the greatest unmet need is in relation to one bedroom accommodation.

The Council aims to deliver 659 affordable and energy efficient council homes by 2028/29 and council commissioned new build housing through:

- S106 new build acquisitions
- Off the shelf new build acquisitions
- Off the shelf purchase of existing properties
- Acquiring land for development- working in partnership with others.

Customer Pathways

The below pathways have been developed for customers in response to their specific needs

FAMILY PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

Early Help Hub
Children's Services
Basics Bank

Duty To Refer process

Flexible Prevention Grant
Household Support Fund

Activity and Support

Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Tenancy coach (Trinity)
Recovery worker (Trinity)
Learning manager (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)

2. Options to prevent or relieve homelessness

Mediation/Negotiation/Home Visits – remain with family/friends

Flexible Prevention Grant

Hampshire Home Choice

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit
Flexible Prevention Grant

Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
High need
Lent Hill Court

Shared TA
Medium need
Pepper pot units
Brittany House

Shared TA
Low need
Pepper pot units
Brittany House

Emergency Accommodation
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

Tenancy Ready officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant

Tenancy ready programme (WCC)
Tenancy sustainment support officer (WCC)

ROUGH SLEEPING PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

The Beacon open 24/7 hour to provide support and signposting
Basics Bank
Intervention and signposting (all agencies)

Duty To Refer
Pathways meetings
Complex Needs Meetings

Daily outreach
Partner referrals
Streetlink referrals
Trinity day service

Flexible Prevention Grant
Household Support Fund
Rough Sleeping Initiative funding

Multi-agency approach to Target Priority Group
Complex Needs
Navigator caseload

Activity and Support

Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Tenancy coach (Trinity)
Recovery worker (Trinity)
Learning manager (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)

2. Options to prevent and relieve homelessness

Outreach
The Beacon
Triage session at Trinity – from 7.30am
Reconnections

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit
Flexible Prevention Grant

Accommodation – Low level
Emmaus
Alleyne House

Accommodation – Medium
The Beacon
Sussex Street

Accommodation – High
Bradbury View
Housing First

Bid Rangers
Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)
Tenancy Support (The Beacon)
Night worker (Trinity)
Support Worker (Sussex Street)
Housing First Worker (A2Dominion)

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
(High)
One bedroom unit
Pepperpot units

Shared TA
(Medium)
Large units with security – Milford/Barnes

Shared TA
(Low)
HMOs

Emergency Accommodation
Emergency bed (Trinity)
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

Tenancy Ready officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Mental Health Practitioner)

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme
All providers - monthly 121 meetings with SHOO to determine move-on

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant

Move-on and development coach (Trinity)
Tenancy ready programme and tenancy support officer (The Beacon)
Tenancy sustainment support officer (WCC)

SINGLE HOMELESS PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

Daily Outreach – WCC officer
Outreach support – Beacon window 24/7
Basics Bank

Duty To Refer process
Pathways meetings
Tenancy Sustainment Officer/Services

SHOO monthly meetings with partners to identify any individuals at risk
Care Act Assessment

Flexible Prevention Grant
Household Support Fund
Rough Sleeping Initiative funding

Activity and Support

Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Tenancy support (Trinity & Beacon)
Recovery worker (Trinity)
Learning manager (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)

2. Options to prevent or relieve homelessness

Mediation/Negotiation/Home Visits
Flexible Prevention Grant/RSI funding
Hampshire Home Choice

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit

Accommodation – Low need
Emmas
Alleyne House

Accommodation – Medium need
The Beacon
Sussex Street

Accommodation – High need
Bradbury View
Housing First

Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)
Night worker (Trinity)
Tenancy Support (Beacon)
Support Worker (Sussex Street)
Housing First Worker (A2Dominion)

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
High need
One bedroom units
Pepperpot units

Shared TA
Medium need
Large units with security – Milford House/GWH

Shared TA
Low need
HMOs

Emergency Accommodation
Emergency bed (Trinity)
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

Tenancy Ready officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Mental Health Practitioner)

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant

Move-on and development coach (Trinity)
Tenancy ready programme (WCC)
Tenancy sustainment support officer (WCC)



OVER 55's PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

Adult Services – Care Act Assessments
Winchester Basics Bank

Flexible Prevention Grant
Landlords Tenancy sustainment services

Activity and Support

Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Tenancy coach (Trinity)
Recovery worker (Trinity)
Learning manager (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)
Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)
Night worker (Trinity)
Support Worker (Sussex Street)
Tenancy Ready officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Mental Health Practitioner)
Move-on and development coach (Trinity)
Tenancy ready programme (WCC)
Tenancy sustainment support officer (WCC)
Winchester Basics Bank
St Johns Charity
Housing 21 (Housing Officer)

2. Options to prevent or relieve homelessness

Hampshire Home Choice
Extra Care Accommodation
Sheltered Accommodation
Other providers (not HHC)
Housing 21
St Johns Charity

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit
Flexible Prevention Grant

Accommodation – Low level
Emmas
Alleyne House

Accommodation – Medium
The Beacon
Sussex Street

Accommodation – High
Bradbury View

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
(High)
One bedroom unit
Pepperpot units

Shared TA
(Medium)
Large units with security – Milford/Barnes

Shared TA
(Low)
HMOs

Emergency Accommodation
Emergency bed (Trinity)
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme

Private Rented Sector
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant



MENTAL HEALTH PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

Mental Health Practitioner based at WCC
Care Act assessments

Duty To Refer process
Pathways meetings
Trusted assessor process

SHOO monthly meetings with partners to identify any individuals at risk

Flexible Prevention Grant
Household Support Fund

Activity and Support

Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Tenancy coach (Trinity)
Recovery worker (Trinity)
Learning manager (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)

2. Options to prevent or relieve homelessness

Mediation/Negotiation/Home Visits
Flexible Prevention Grant
Hampshire Home Choice

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit
Flexible Prevention Grant

Accommodation – Low need
Emmas
Alleyne House

Accommodation – Medium need
The Beacon
Sussex Street

Accommodation – High need
Mental Health accommodation
Bradbury View
Housing First

Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Beacon)
Night worker (Trinity)
Support Worker (Sussex Street)
Housing First Worker (A2Dominion)

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
High need
One bedroom unit
Pepperpot units

Shared TA
Medium need
Large units with security – Milford/Barnes

Shared TA
Low need
HMOs

Emergency Accommodation
Emergency bed (Trinity)
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

Tenancy Ready officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Mental Health Practitioner)

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant

Move-on and development coach (Trinity)
Tenancy ready programme (The Beacon)
Tenancy sustenance support officer (WCC)

DOMESTIC ABUSE PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

DASH process
MARAC/HRDA
Multi-agency work (Police, ASC)

Trinity – Womens Service
National Domestic Abuse helpline
Womens Aid

Stop Domestic Abuse Services
Hampton Trust
IDVA

Activity and Support

IDVA (Sdas)
Victim Support (Police)
Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Tenancy coach (Trinity)
Recovery worker (Trinity)
Learning manager (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)
Move-on and development coach (Trinity)
Tenancy ready programme (The Beacon)
Tenancy sustenance support officer (WCC)
Tenancy Ready officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Mental Health Practitioner)
Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)
Night worker (Trinity)
Support Worker (Sussex Street)
Housing First Worker (A2Dominion)

2. Options to prevent or relieve homelessness

To remain in accommodation:
Target Hardening – Blue lamp/Landlord
Management move

To remain in accommodation:
Non-molestation order
Occupation Order

To leave accommodation:
Refuge
Support to approach other LA
Referral to other LA

To leave accommodation:
Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit/Flexible Prevention Grant

To leave accommodation:
Hampshire Home Choice (Management move/Health and welfare)

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
High need
One bedroom unit
Pepper pot units

Shared TA
Medium need
Large units with security – Milford/Barnes

Shared TA
Low need
HMOs

Emergency Accommodation
Emergency bed (Trinity)
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme

Private Rented Sector
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant

PRISON LEAVERS PATHWAY

1. Early intervention and prevention options

Duty To Refer process
Ingeus – commissioned rehabilitative services
Homelessness Prevention Taskforce

Pathways meetings to identify individuals due to be released
Prison visits
Complex Needs Navigator

Flexible Prevention Grant
Household Support Fund
Rough Sleeping Initiative funding

Activity and Support

Counselling service (The Beacon and Trinity)
Homeless Practitioners (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)
Ingeus
Probation
Homelessness Prevention Taskforce

2. Options to prevent and relieve homelessness

Ingeus community accommodation -
Approved premises
BASS accomm
CAS 3 programme

Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit
Flexible Prevention Grant

Accommodation – Low need
Emmaus
Alleyne House

Accommodation – Medium need
The Beacon
Sussex Street

Accommodation – High need
Bradbury View
Housing First

Housing manager (Trinity)
Tenancy support worker (Trinity)
Night worker (Trinity)
Support Worker (Sussex Street)
Housing First Worker (A2Dominion)
Support workers (The Beacon)

3. Temporary Accommodation (Main Housing Duty)

Self-contained TA
(High)
One bedroom unit
Pepperpot units

Shared TA
(Medium)
Large units with security – Milford/Barnes

Shared TA
(Low)
HMOs

Emergency Accommodation
Emergency bed (Trinity)
Bed and Breakfast/Nightly paid accommodation

Tenancy Sustainment officer (WCC)
Temporary Accommodation Team (WCC)
Complex Needs Navigator (Trinity)
Mental Health Practitioner (WCC & Southern Health)

4. Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

Social Housing via Hampshire Home Choice
Band 2 priority
Tenancy Ready Programme

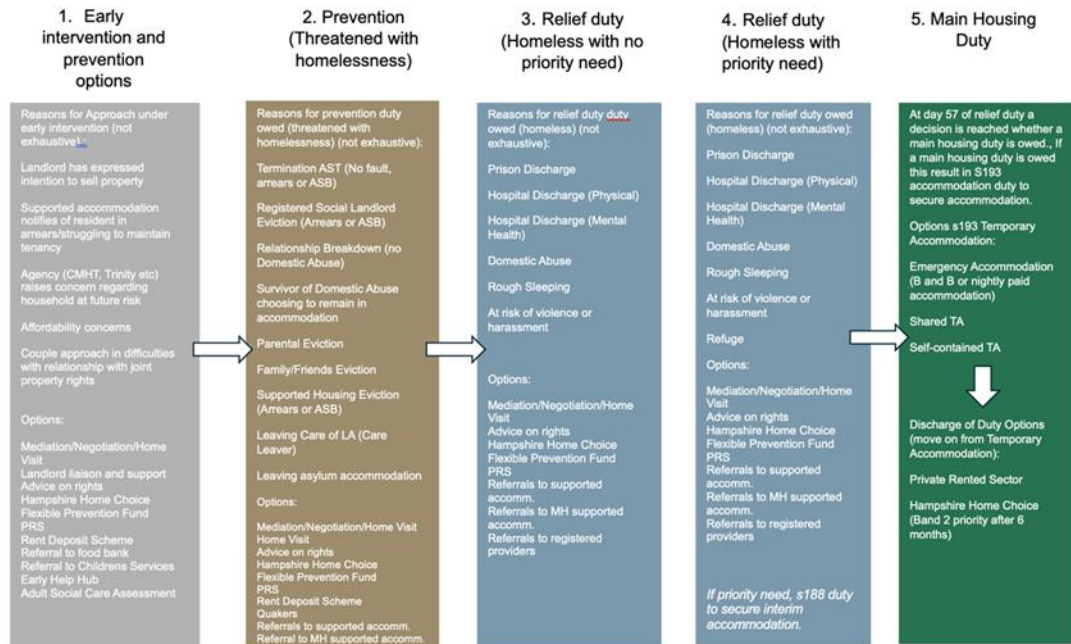
Private Rented Sector
Quakers
Rent Deposit Scheme
Flexible Prevention Grant

The Beacon (if moving on from Beacon)
12 rooms in move-on houses with ongoing support for all individuals

Move-on and development coach (Trinity)
Tenancy ready programme (The Beacon)
Tenancy sustainment support officer (WCC)



OVERARCHING HOMELESSNESS PATHWAY



Likely Future Levels of Homelessness

This report forms part of the Homelessness Review Evidence Base to inform Winchester's new Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. This report considers national and local issues that could impact upon homelessness levels in both the short and longer term and indicates what future levels of homelessness and associated demand on services may look like.

National Policy Change

Labour key policies & budget announcements

Summer 2024 brought about a change in Government; Labour's key manifesto pledges in relation to housing and homelessness include:

- Introduction of the Renters Reform Bill, including the commitment to end no fault evictions
- Commitment to deliver the biggest increase in social housebuilding in a generation; £500 million boost to the Affordable Homes Programme to build up to 5,000 additional affordable homes. Pledge to deliver 1.5 million new homes while in power
- Reducing the discounts on the Right to Buy scheme and enabling councils in England to keep all receipts generated by sales
- Consulting on a new long-term social housing rent settlement of CPI+1% for 5 years
- £223 million of additional spending in 2025/26 on homelessness, taking the total spending up to £1 billion to prevent increases in the number of families in temporary accommodation and prevent rough sleeping
- The treasury indicates a two-stage fiscal process. The autumn budget acts as Phase 1 – which 'resets departmental budgets for 2024-25 and sets budgets for 2025-26', providing certainty until March 2026. Phase 2 sets the scene for the long-term spending review, and for a wider system of reforms to the public sector. The indicated approach includes simplifying funding streams, moving away from competitive tendering and a shift toward multi-year settlements as well as taking a more preventative approach and devolving more power to communities.
- Cross-government taskforce to address homelessness and rough sleeping ahead of the spring spending review
- An extension of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for 2025/26

- £1 billion in 2025/26 to extend both the Household Support Fund in England and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) in England and Wales
- A new Fair Repayment Rate which caps debt repayments made through Universal Credit at 15% of the standard allowance.

Homelessness Monitor

Crisis' homelessness monitors forecasts that homelessness will continue to rise significantly in the immediate future with core homelessness **one fifth** higher in 2024 than in 2020.

Drivers include:

- Inflation squeezing real incomes.
- Increasing poverty
- Rising private rents and evictions
- Declining social rented lettings

The Legacy of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Like many housing options services, Winchester's Housing Options service has not yet recovered from the impact that the pandemic has had on service demand and housing pressures; particularly in relation to temporary accommodation.

During the pandemic, the government introduced emergency legislation and powers to protect and manage everybody affected by the pandemic, in order to protect those at greatest risk. In March 2020, the government provided a clear directive to ensure all people experiencing rough sleeping were accommodated under 'Everyone In'. The then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued clear guidance to local authorities to ensure that everyone known to be experiencing rough sleeping, or those deemed to be at imminent risk of experiencing rough sleeping, would be offered accommodation. The initiative was undertaken to protect people experiencing rough sleeping, particularly those who were at increased risk of severe illness, with the aim of keeping them safe and to reduce the wider transmission of COVID-19. In order to ensure that social distancing could be maintained, and people could safely self-isolate, it was necessary that any offer of accommodation should be self-contained.

It is widely recognised that this response helped to save lives. A study published in the Lancet estimated that the interventions carried out had prevented hundreds of additional deaths from COVID-19 and had managed to maintain an infection rate of

only 4% amongst the population of people experiencing homelessness.³ In contrast, internationally where such far-reaching measures were not taken, an estimated 40% of the population experiencing homelessness in Paris had COVID-19, and in New York the age adjusted mortality rates for people experiencing homelessness and living in shelters was 321 deaths per 100,000 people, compared with a citywide average of 200 deaths per 100,000.⁴

In Winchester, the impact of the pandemic has resulted in increases in the use of temporary accommodation, although it is important to note that Winchester has mitigated this through the delivery of effective prevention outcomes, and as such has not witnessed the same increases as many local authorities nationally which is most notable in the low reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation. While the council no longer operates Everyone In, the impacts of this policy during COVID-19 are ongoing, and the pressures associated when severe weather emergency protocol (SWEPP) are activated exacerbates the pressure around emergency accommodation provision. The use of temporary accommodation has increased from a snapshot of 53 households accommodated in March 2020 to 72 in March 2025. Between March 2022 and March 2025 there has been an 80% increase in the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year end. The average length of stay in temporary accommodation is 312 days.

The spend on Bed & Breakfast accommodation has increased from £2,400 on statutory placements and £3,000 on discretionary placements in 2021/22 to £78,200 and £19,000 respectively in 2024/25.

The provision of good quality supported accommodation provision is critical in ending rough sleeping and responding to single person's experience of homelessness. The recent loss of a supported accommodation project has further exacerbated pressures and impacted upon the increased use of bed & breakfast accommodation.

Homelessness data indicates that 59% of customers presenting to the service are single people, and 65% of all customers accessing the service have an identified support need.

In order to avoid expensive B&B accommodation, which provides an unsuitable offer, and one that is unlikely to lead to a successful pathway out of homelessness, it is essential that funding continues to be available to existing supported accommodation projects and that further projects are commissioned in line with identified need.

³ Lewer, D., Braithwaite, I., Bullock, M., Eyre, M., White, P., Aldridge, R., Story, A., Hayward, A. (2020) COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness in England: a modelling study. The Lancet. 8 (12), pp. 1181 – 1191. Available [here](#).

⁴ Crisis (2020) The Impact of COVID-19 on People Facing Homelessness and Service Provision Across Great Britain. Available [here](#).

The impact of the closure of West View will have an impact upon the available options for single households experiencing homelessness and could lead to an increase in temporary accommodation and B&B placements. It is recognised that it can take considerable time to commission supported accommodation projects, and there may be value in considering alternative options in the interim, which could include a soft market testing exercise to understand the appetite from providers to develop small, shared accommodation projects in the area funded through intensive housing management or the delivery of such projects in house.

In line with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 there will be a requirement to undertake a supported housing needs assessment and to develop a Supported Housing Strategy; this will enable the Council to understand the requirements for supported housing in the area and ensure commissioning aligns with evidenced need. Indications suggest the strategy will need to be in place by mid-2027, needs assessments take on average at least 6 months to complete and as such this work should commence in early 2026. It would make sense for this work to be undertaken on a county basis or in partnership with those local authorities that Winchester will be paired with as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

Recommendation

In line with the requirements of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 undertake a supported housing needs assessment and develop a Supported Housing Strategy

Mitigate the impact of the closure of West View through the development of alternative supported housing in house or through working with providers to develop shared housing.

Homelessness in the Private Rented Sector – Renters Reform Bill

Following the pandemic, the housing market has become even more increasingly unaffordable – with an increase in house prices and rental levels being seen in most areas. The pandemic, together with changes to tax allowances, has also led to a number of smaller private landlords or ‘accidental’ landlords choosing to leave the market, and in many areas an increase in private rented sector notices have been served due to the landlord choosing to sell the property. Alongside this, the increases in mortgage interest rates means that for some landlords it will no longer be financially viable to continue to rent the property without increasing the rent.

Since 2015 private rented levels have increased by 30% in Winchester, with an 8% increase in the last year. The average monthly rent, according to the Office of National Statistics, in April 2025 was £1,445, compared with £1,319 the previous year, representing a higher increase than that seen across the South East. While rents have continued to increase, real wage growth has not kept pace, with the affordability gap increasing.

While the proposed end of no-fault evictions contained within the Renters Reform Bill is very welcome, and in the longer term will help to reduce homelessness from the private rented sector there is a risk that there may be an increase in private sector evictions ahead of enactment, as landlords choose to leave the market.

In Wales, ahead of the introduction of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, which introduced new occupation contracts with a minimum term and required landlords to issue 6 month's notice, a number of landlord's left the market. The increased administrative and financial burden drove some private landlords out of the market, leading to both an increase in homelessness, and a reduction in private sector properties available. Six months before the Act was enforced there was a 9% reduction in private rented sector properties, although it has since increased but still remains just below 2019 levels.

For those landlords who are considering leaving the market, this may present a time limited opportunity for the council, possibly together with a housing provider, to target these landlords with a leasing or buying scheme to ensure that these properties remain available to clients in housing need, however the window of opportunity to do this is small and would involve being able to develop a scheme quite quickly. It will be critical to consult with local landlords to understand their concerns ahead of the Renters' Rights Bill being enacted to ensure a landlord offer can be developed that mitigates these concerns.

Recommendation

Consult with local private rented landlords to understand their concerns ahead of the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act and develop a comprehensive landlord offer in response to this.

Cost of Living Increase

The other huge pressure that continues to impact upon homelessness levels and demand on the Housing Options service is pressures around the cost of living, which risks leaving large numbers of households unable to meet their housing costs.

Analysis by Crisis found outgoings of the lowest income households – those earning an average of £12,650 – would exceed their average monthly incomes by a third.⁵ It is believed as a result hundreds of thousands of low-income people could be facing being on the brink of experiencing homelessness and destitution. Crisis identified in the worst-case scenario 1.7 million of households on the lowest incomes will be spending on average 133% of their monthly income on rent, food and energy. Crisis have warned that households in high rent areas or in poorly insulated homes are most at risk.

Shelter and HSBC undertook research published in January 2024 on the impact of the cost of living and housing pressures. The research found that

- 19.7 million people (66%) in England reported pressures on their housing in 2023
- 6.3 million people (21%) struggled to keep up their mortgage or rent payments
- 3.1 million people (10%) worried about eviction
- 11.7 million people (39%) had to cut back on essentials to keep up with their housing costs
- Families with children are more likely to have experienced a housing concern than those without children
- 12 million people (40%) worry their housing pressures will get worse
- 30% of people say they did not know where they could get help with their housing concerns.

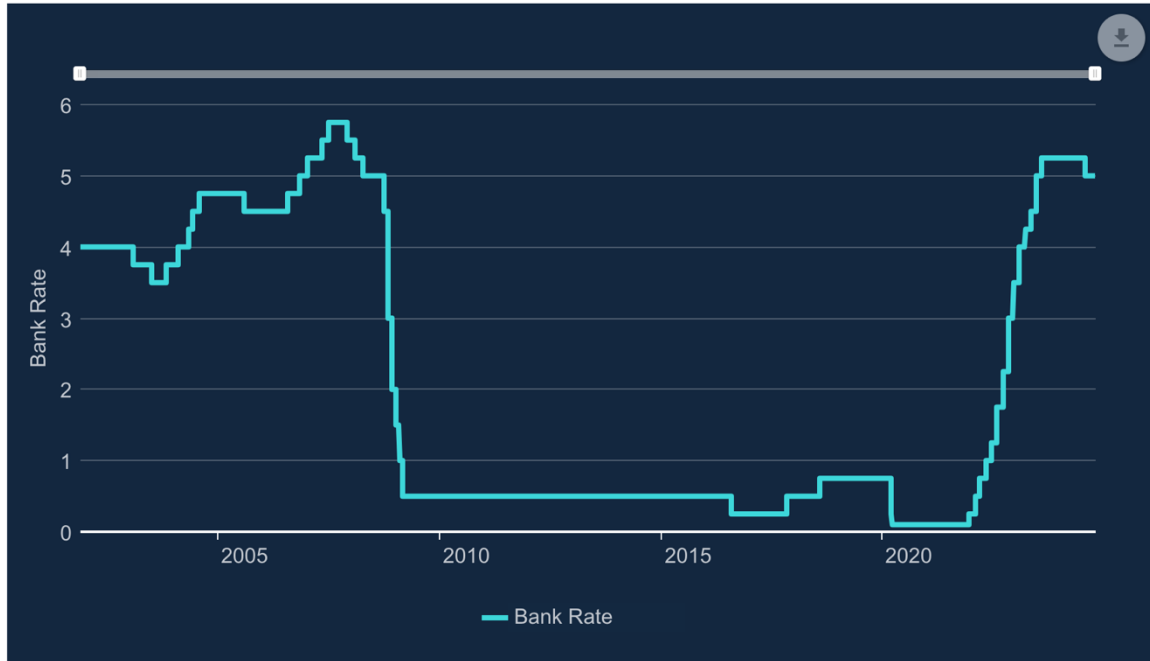
The research identified that more than half of adults (56%) report being kept awake at night in the last year as a result of housing pressures, while seven in ten (70%) said they felt anxious, and half said their housing situation has left them feeling hopeless (49%).

The series of monthly increases to the Bank of England base rate has seen mortgage interest rates increase impacting upon those on variable and tracker mortgages, while this has more recently begun to stabilise the impact of these increases will place increased pressure on many households, including those whose fixed rate mortgages are coming to an end, and buy to let landlords. It will also impact upon those households looking to buy their first properties. All of these

⁵ Crisis (2022) Cost of living crisis threatens homelessness surge – with the lowest income households spending 133% of their monthly income on rent, energy and bills. Available [here](#).

factors place further pressure on the housing market, and will result in households falling into mortgage arrears, and being at risk of homelessness.

Official Bank Rate



There is a need to ensure that households at risk are able to access advice and information as early as possible, this will include making advice and information available to a wide range of households, including those who may not traditionally approach a local authority for assistance. It is recommended that a publicity and awareness raising campaign is put in place to make households aware of the help that is available, and to encourage them to access advice early on so that the opportunities for homelessness prevention can be maximized.

However, if more people are encouraged to access the service, then it is essential that resources are in place to meet this increasing demand. In the first instance there will be a need to develop a factsheet and improved web content providing advice for those who may be struggling to cope financially.

There may also be a need to put plans in place to increase the staffing resource available to manage any increased demand, initially in a prevention capacity by providing early intervention advice with the aim of preventing homelessness occurring. While this may require an additional investment, it would be hoped that the provision of upstream advice would help to minimise crisis presentations and the need for temporary accommodation, and as such could deliver longer term savings. If data indicates that demand on the service does increase due to households being unable to afford to meet their housing costs, there will be the need to increase staff capacity to manage this increase in demand.

It will also be essential that customers are able to access money and debt advice – there are often long waiting lists to access specialist money advice, with the increase in the cost of living, the demand for money advice will increase. Good quality money advice will be an essential component of the council's strategy to prevent homelessness linked to affordability and it will therefore be essential for housing options customers to be able to access timely money advice. It is recommended that consideration is given as to how this can be achieved. Options could include reviewing any existing contracts for the provision of money advice to ensure that housing options customers are prioritised, commissioning the provision of additional money advice for customers, potentially including surgeries within the council's offices, or the appointment of in-house money advisers to sit with the housing options team.

Recommendation

Undertake an awareness raising campaign to ensure households in housing difficulty linked to cost of living know how to access help and advice at the earliest point possible.

Continue to monitor demand to ensure sufficient resources are in place.

Review access to money and debt advice to ensure that customers can have easy access to appropriate advice and support.

Refugee Resettlement

The Centre for Homelessness Impact identifies:

- Correlation between the UK's asylum system and a 223% increase in people sleeping rough after leaving asylum housing.
- Large scale resettlement programmes, including Homes for Ukraine scheme, leave people at increased risk of homelessness due to a lack of support when leaving host households.
- Short move on periods after asylum application decisions, contribute to housing instability for refugees.

Homes for Ukraine

At the time of completing the review there have been a total of 353 households in Winchester on the Homes for Ukraine scheme; this includes some rematches where a household has been rematched from one host to another.

As of June 2025, there are 56 households remaining with hosts. Since the scheme began a total of 57 households have been rehoused via the Housing Register, and 103 have been supported to move into private rented accommodation, of which 48 households were provided with financial assistance to access this accommodation.

Since the commencement of the scheme in 2022 a total of 18 households have been accommodated in temporary accommodation.

The funding for host families has been extended until March 2026, but it is likely that over time host families may not be able to accommodate Ukrainian guests, which has the potential to have a significant impact upon demand. It is likely that demand on the service will increase as a result of the Homes for Ukraine work based upon evidence to date, alongside the wider pressures around refugee resettlement.

The government has not yet given any indication as to what will happen beyond March 2026.

Afghan Resettlement

There are currently 5 Afghan families currently accommodated in Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) properties, and a further property will be purchased using LAHF funding for a family and 3 properties for general temporary accommodation use.

Dispersal Arrangements

As of May 2025, there were a total of 34 dispersed asylum seekers placed in Winchester, compared with 39 the previous month. Since October 2024 there have been a total of 11 properties which were of interest to the Home Office for the provision of accommodation for Asylum Seekers, representing 65 bedspaces, including 9 HMOs and 2 family properties. This places further pressure on the housing market and the availability of affordable housing options.

There are currently 600 unaccompanied minors accommodated across Hampshire by Children's Service. The potential future demand from this client group on the Housing Options service is not yet fully understood.

There is a need to ensure that work is underway to develop a range of housing options for clients granted refugee status, and those under resettlement schemes, alongside a clear supported pathway for unaccompanied minors due to turn 18 years old.

Recommendation

Work with Children's Services to develop a supported housing pathway for unaccompanied minors due to turn 18.

Develop a range of housing options for clients granted refugee status.

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

The government's devolution white paper, published on 16 December, sets out the detail of Labour's 'devolution revolution'. Ministers plan to further empower England's existing 12 metro mayors, to extend devolution to the whole of England and to reorganise local government, transferring power out of Westminster to local communities.

Devolution deals could mean that local leaders will be able to make decisions directly affecting their communities, with the intention of encouraging local authorities to come together to take on new powers through new Combined Authorities.

The Government's plans to provide more powers to local authorities over transport, adult education and skills, employment support, and housing and planning, are aimed at allowing towns and cities the tools they need to pursue growth, create jobs, and improve living standards.

Alongside devolution, the Government also plans to replace the current two-tier system of counties and district councils with unitary councils across the country. Each unitary council will have a population of at least 500,000. This re-organisation will also include existing small neighbouring Unitary Authorities.

Hampshire County Council and its local government partners were asked to submit outline proposals for consideration by Government in Spring 2025.

Central Government has provided feedback on these interim proposals, which will inform final proposals to be submitted to Government in the Autumn.

New Unitary Council arrangements are likely to take effect in 2027 or 2028.

In Hampshire, local government services are currently provided by one county council and 11 district and borough councils. Local government reorganisation (LGR) would completely change the landscape of Hampshire's local councils by

replacing the current two-tier council system and neighbouring Unitary Councils of Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight with a number of large new unitary (all-purpose) councils. This change aims to simplify how councils are organised and run, creating large and financially resilient unitary councils that are more efficient, effective and deliver better value for money for taxpayers.

It is not currently known how many local authorities there will be in Hampshire following LGR, but what is known is that Winchester will join together with a number of other authorities and this will impact upon the way in which both homelessness services are delivered and funded.

Throughout the review it is evident that Winchester delivers a high quality, customer focused service; one that achieves very positive prevention outcomes and one that has been able to mitigate the significant pressures on homelessness services over the last five years without compromising customer outcomes, while minimising the use of unsuitable and costly temporary accommodation.

If positive customer outcomes are to be maintained post local government reorganisation, then it is critical that the service model that Winchester's Housing Options service has developed and the wider partnerships and services that have been established are not compromised. Winchester Council has proven that its approach can not only deliver personalised and positive customer outcomes, but importantly reduce the costs associated with temporary accommodation reliance. Winchester has been able to minimise these costs in a way that many neighbouring authorities have not been able to. There is a clear opportunity moving into local government reorganisation to replicate Winchester's successful delivery model across a wider area.

Recommendation

Ensure that Winchester's successful Housing Options service delivery model helps to inform future service delivery through local government reorganisation.

Other Factors Likely to Impact Upon Homelessness Levels

- Reducing numbers of social rented housing through historic right to buy sales coupled with a reduction of void levels could result in less available accommodation for those on the housing register.

- Affordability issues and the very limited access to private rented accommodation, including shared accommodation options, makes it increasingly more difficult for the housing options services to be able to find affordable and sustainable housing options for clients. Unless affordable accommodation is available, it is anticipated that homelessness will continue to increase as households are less able to resolve their own housing situation.
- The reduction in supported housing provision. Following the withdrawal of County Council funding for homelessness supported housing projects across Hampshire, West View in Winchester has closed. The impact of this will include a reduction in prevention and relief outcomes and less options for single homeless people with support needs. At worst, this could lead to an increase in rough sleeping.
- The newly announced early prison release, especially when not accompanied by adequate support, has the potential to increase levels of homelessness. Homelessness and a lack of suitable housing are major risk factors for reoffending. Early release is likely to compound the current pressures in relation to single homelessness.

What Might an Increased Demand Look Like?

As detailed in the data report, homelessness levels have not followed national trends, while homelessness duties have increased by 21% over 5 years across England between 2019/20 and 2023/24, in Winchester they have increased by 11% over this time period, but increased by 27% if we measure the increase between 2019/20 and 2024/25

Below are a number of different potential scenarios to help understand what future demand could look like. All of the factors detailed within this report indicate that homelessness levels will continue to rise, at least in the short term.

Illustration of percentage increases on demand

It is difficult to anticipate exactly what an increase in demand is likely to look like, and as such an uplift of various percentages has been calculated to give an indication of what the impact of this would be on resources and temporary accommodation. It is also important to recognise that the customer profile of households who may experience homelessness due to the cost of living may be different to the existing

customer profile that the service is currently working with, in recent years an increase in families experiencing homelessness has been witnessed in Winchester. An increase in demand from families has the potential to lead to higher increases in temporary accommodation as these households would all be in priority need.

Currently, 59% of customers are single and 65% have an identified support need. It is likely that the cost-of-living increases may mean that the service continues to see more families who are struggling financially and are threatened with homelessness, and as such there may be a need to procure more family sized temporary accommodation. It would be sensible to engage in discussions with registered providers in relation to the provision of social housing units to be used as temporary accommodation as demand increases.

The table below illustrates what an overall increase in demand on the service may look like, although it is important to recognise that there are a lot of variables. This is based on a percentage increase based on the current service delivery model and the team's ability to effectively prevent homelessness. If this is compromised, which may be the case if demand reaches unmanageable levels, the number of households in temporary accommodation would rise significantly more as the team would be unable to effectively prevent homelessness.

Moreover, if there are more households in temporary accommodation, move on from temporary accommodation is likely to be impacted, and as such the number in temporary accommodation will continue to rise, which will also directly impact upon caseloads, and the workload of the temporary accommodation team. Therefore, the data below provides a very rough indication based upon current service delivery. It is also likely that caseloads would increase more than highlighted below due to cases remaining open for longer periods of time.

Predicted Overall Increase in Demand on the Service

Increase	Approaches	Prevention & Relief Duties owed	Caseloads	S193 duties owed	Temporary Accommodation Snapshot
2024/25 Position	612	436	30	58	72
5% increase	643	458	32	61	76
10% increase	673	480	33	64	79
15% increase	704	501	35	67	83
20% increase	734	523	36	70	86

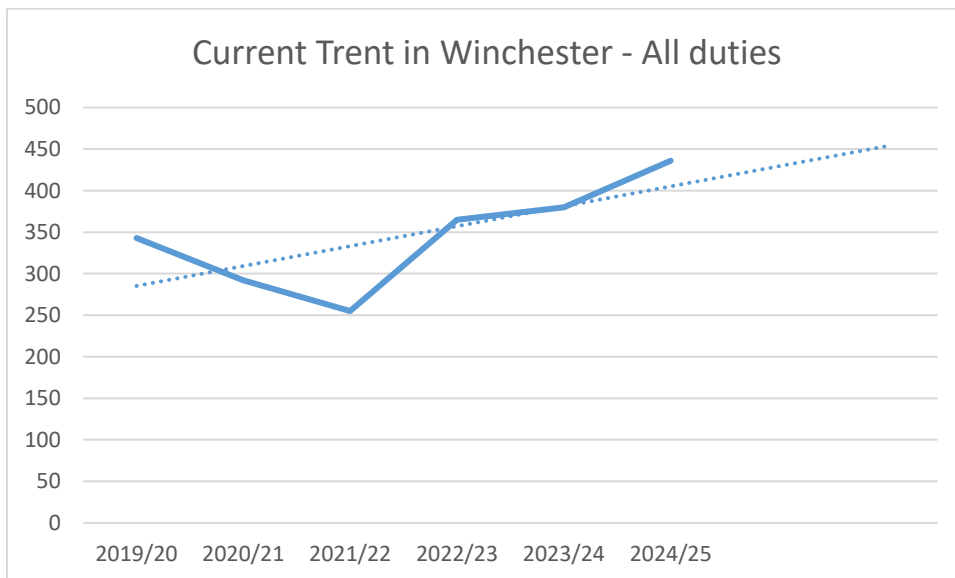
25% increase	765	545	38	73	90
30% increase	796	567	39	76	94

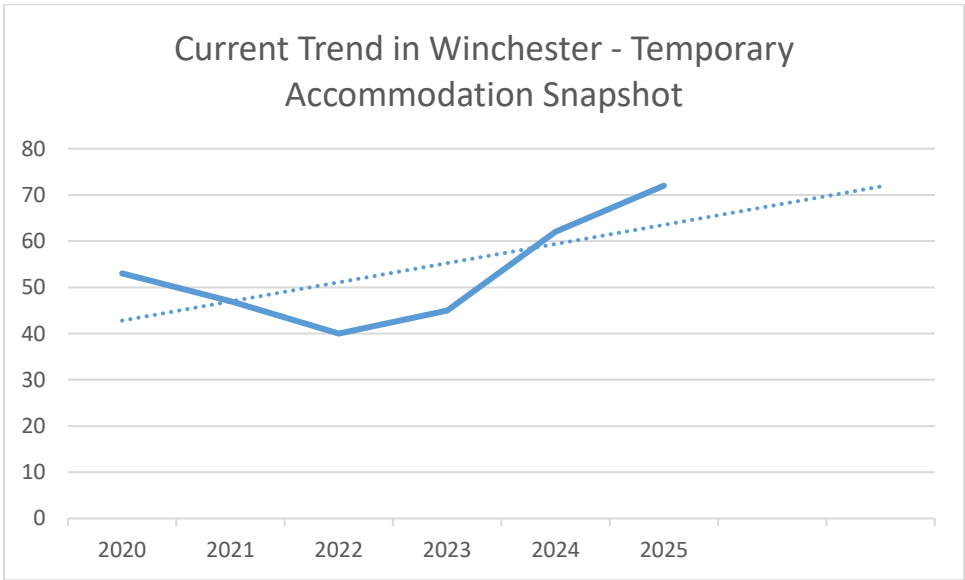
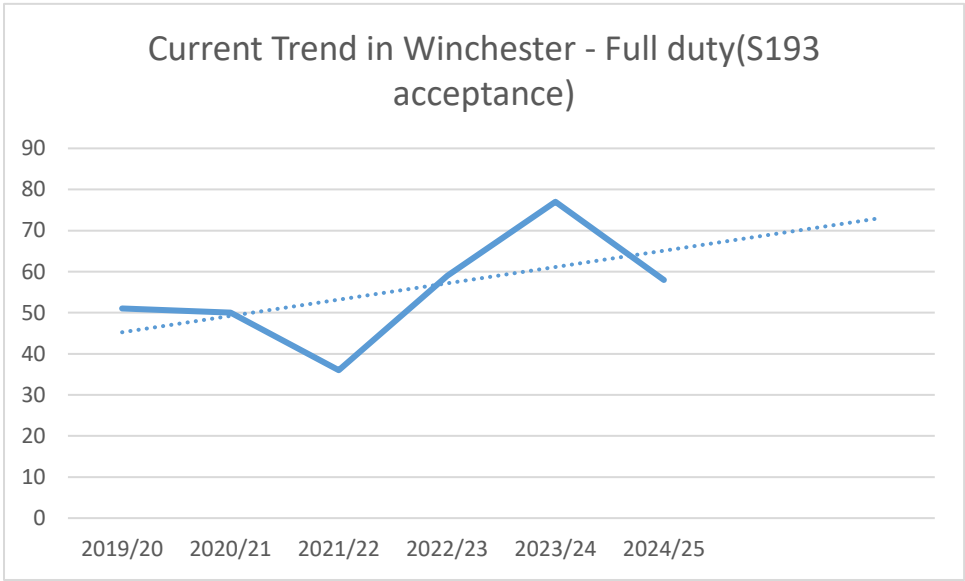
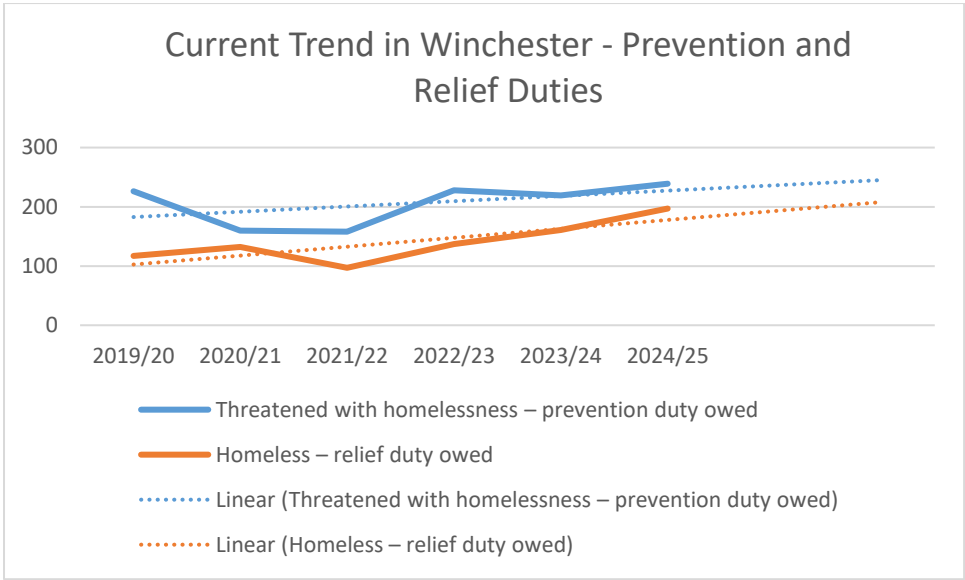
Data shows that the number of duties owed increased by 15% in the last financial year in Winchester.

It is also of note that the use of temporary accommodation and caseloads would be likely to increase at a higher percentage rate than assessments, as if demand grows there will be more cases that will remain open if a full duty is accepted and less opportunity for meaningful casework and focus on move on. As such, the figures in these columns are likely to be an under-representation.

Applying the current trend in Winchester

The graphs below illustrate if demand continues at a similar rate as it has in Winchester the projected trend for the next two years. In relation to homeless duties there will an increase of up to 450 per year in the next two years. Based upon the evidenced increase in the last year of 15% this is a conservative estimate. This is true of all the graphs shown below.





Summary

It is difficult to accurately forecast what future level of homelessness may look like in Winchester given the high number of variables, it does however seem certain, given both the national and local pressures, that demand on homelessness services will continue to increase. The only way the impact of this on temporary accommodation and the associated costs can be mitigated is through an ongoing investment in prevention work and resources, and the development of affordable and sustainable housing solutions both supported and settled.

Key Findings

- Broader pressures within the wider housing market, anticipated changes to private rented sector tenancies, the cost-of-living crisis, increasing mortgage rates, and pressure around accommodating refugees indicates that demand for homelessness services will continue to rise for the foreseeable future.
- In order to recover from the impact of the pandemic, there is the need for more supported accommodation provision in line with identified need, including meeting multiple and complex needs.
- In order to mitigate the impact of changes to the private rented sector, the council with its partners should consider the development of a competitive landlord offer, including exploring opportunities for a leasing or purchasing scheme in consultation with private landlords.
- To mitigate increases in homelessness associated with the cost of living there is a need for an awareness raising campaign of the help available, alongside access to timely money advice.
- There will be a need to develop a range of housing options for Ukrainian guests and other refugee households, and work with SERCO to ensure adequate notice is provided for prevention work to take place, alongside joint work with children's services in relation to unaccompanied minors.
- In preparation for further increases in the demand for temporary accommodation the council should enter into dialogue with social housing providers to identify additional units that can be used as temporary accommodation.
- Ensure that Winchester's successful Housing Options service delivery model helps to inform future service delivery through local government reorganisation.
- The council will need to ensure that there are adequate resources in place to meet any increased demand and should monitor data regularly to identify increases and causes.

Building on Success

Achievements since the last Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025

Housing Supply – Supported & Settled

- Delivery of **239** new affordable council homes and **1,383** Registered Provider homes between 2018/19 to 2022/23
- Development of Bradbury View in partnership between the Council and Trinity, providing 12 flats for individuals with complex needs, adding a further 3 beds in 2024
- Established a Housing First model of housing provision for those with multiple needs.
- Established a Housing Company- Venta Living.
- Introduced a private landlords forum.
- Back filled Hampshire County Council's social Inclusion cuts to funding to support The Beacon

Outcomes for vulnerable groups and those at risk of homelessness

- LAHF- Council were successful in obtaining funding for 45 homes for Ukrainians, Afghan's and Temporary accommodation.
- Brought back into use 2 empty homes for households on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Providing a rapid response to rough sleeping through a renewed assertive outreach service
- Funding two beds for young people leaving care.
- Reviewed the Outreach provision to ensure support is targeted to meet the needs of those sleeping out for the first time, those returning to the streets and for single women rough sleeping. Enables the council and wider partners to capture and evaluate outreach intelligence and identify early indicators of rough sleeping to prevent street attachment
- Embedded trauma informed principles within the staff working practices through an established framework and staff training opportunities.
- Successful in obtaining Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding providing a Complex Needs Navigator, commission Housing First project and to provide a personalisation fund
- Funding for Trinity via the RSI to employ a Complex Needs navigator who provides intensive support to those individuals with a history of rough sleeping who have the most complex needs, supporting them to navigate the systems and find solutions.
- Provision of financial support to the BID for their 'Spare Change real Change' campaign to help reduce street activity.
- By working in partnership with the voluntary sector and charities entrenched rough sleeping, the annual rough sleeping snapshot reduced from 7 in 2020 to 5 in 2023.
- SWEP – During periods of either freezing conditions or Amber weather warning the council activates its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. Providing accommodation for anyone who is sleeping rough. The council has assisted 33 individuals in the last 3 financial years

Prevention of Homelessness

- Over the last 5 years the council has prevented 839 households from becoming homeless, and secured accommodation for a further 378 households experiencing homelessness under a relief duty
- Administration of the Better Care fund/DFG to enable households to remain in their own home

Housing Register and Allocations

- 3086 lets through Hampshire Home Choice for the period April 2019-April 2024
- Assisted social tenants to downsize to smaller homes to free up the larger family homes.
- Promotion of Home Swapper (Mutual exchanges)