

ENDING HOMELESSNESS, PERSON BY PERSON

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
2024-2029

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FOREWORD

Cllr. Jo Rust, Cabinet Member for People and Communities

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is titled "Ending Homelessness, Person by Person". It puts people first and foremost.

The strategy recognises the need for support and, most importantly, a secure roof over each person's head. It has been developed alongside people who have lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. It fully integrates people's voices into what we plan to do and how we plan to do it.

It is a 'live' document that won't gather dust, but that will act as a framework for the next five years.

We recognise the huge efforts that have been taken to reduce rough sleeping, the most visible form of homelessness, in the borough. But we also recognise our new set of challenges, many of which are hidden from sight.

Hidden homelessness includes families living in temporary accommodation. We don't want local children to face the uncertainty of not knowing if they're going to have a space to do their homework or the stability to sustain friendships. We seek to move families into safe, sustainable tenancies where children can grow and thrive. Crucially, we will further develop services and systems to avoid them needing temporary accommodation in the first place. Our strategy aims to provide housing security for residents of all ages, contributing to them being able to live life to its fullest potential.

As a council – a public body with a legal responsibility to respond to homelessness – we recognise how we can improve the services that we offer. The staff that deliver these vital services have my thanks for the work that they do and for the way they continue to develop their offer for the people that they serve.

This strategy doesn't set out every single action that we need to take but sets the tone for the way that we will deliver these services: with care, compassion and an intention to end homelessness, person by person.

I hope that you will be able to support the work to deliver this strategy, whether as an employer who provides mentorship and employment support to someone with lived experience, a landlord who will work with us to keep a family in a tenancy, or a partner organisation working with us to provide crucial services.

PART A: INTRODUCTION, VISION AND VALUES

A1 INTRODUCTION

A1.1 Setting the Scene

The council published its last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in January 2020. The strategy document was illustrated heavily with images that members of the public might associate with homelessness: abandoned mattresses, tent encampments, and sheds that people were sleeping in. When the strategy was written, West Norfolk was responding to an all-time peak in rough sleeping, the most visible form of homelessness.

We are in a different place as a borough¹. There has been a sustained and successful partnership effort to reduce instances of rough sleeping locally. Looking forward, though, we have a different, less visible set of challenges.

Homelessness in the borough is largely hidden, but the volume of households approaching the council as homeless has doubled since the COVID pandemic. Levels of rough sleeping in the borough are comparatively low², but there are people in the borough who are neither street homeless nor adequately housed. Services exist to help prevent homelessness, but we don't always get to people early enough.

Harvard Business Review describes strategy as:

***“An integrative set of choices,
that positions you on a playing field of your choice,
in a way that you win.”³***

The 2024-2029 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed with this definition in mind. It is *integrative*, in that it relies on systems, services and resources beyond those of the council's housing teams. It is *a set of choices*, made by a partnership of people who have chosen to use their collective skills and energy to support local people in housing need. And it doesn't merely set its sights towards each individual organisation “doing its thing well”. It is a tactics sheet that considers and addresses the likely barriers it will face, making the most of the resources available.

The strategy doesn't play out every move, but it establishes key principles and priorities that can be used as a basis for the borough's response over the next five years.

In short: this document describes a shared vision towards ending homelessness in the borough, along with measurable steps towards achieving the vision.

A1.2 The Story So Far – Homelessness Review

During the autumn and winter of 2023/24, the council conducted a Homelessness Review, to examine:

¹ In this document “the borough” refers to King's Lynn and West Norfolk as a whole – including partners working with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness - as opposed to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

² Compared with other districts in the region, the average total monthly rough sleepers per 100,000 population was one of the lowest. See [BCKLWN – Homelessness: A Review](#), section 3.5 'Rough Sleeping'.

³ Harvard Business Review, 2023. A Plan Is Not A Strategy. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuYIGRnC7J8>

- The current and predicted future levels of homelessness in the borough,
- The available provision of services for people experiencing or facing homelessness,
- The ability of such services to meet current and future demand.

The review highlighted that the number of households approaching the council as homeless (or at risk) doubled in a two-year period, driven by:

- An increasingly inaccessible private rental market,
- An increase in reports of domestic abuse,
- An increase in families seeking help, and
- An increase in homeless presentations for people in some form of employment.

The document outlined the broad range of services available to support homeless households (and those at risk of homelessness). It concluded that:

“There is a clear focus on prevention within the partnership, with some strong results, but the effectiveness of the partnership towards homelessness prevention appears to be ebbing away due to significant external influences.”

“There is a strong and varied ‘off-the-street’ offer to people sleeping rough or at risk, but the cost of accommodating homeless households is unsustainably expensive.”

“The partnership has benefitted from the impact of new services across the pathway, but many of these services are vulnerable to future reductions in central government funding.”

“There are strong informal partnerships between services, but the partnership would benefit from a stronger “whole system” vision, bringing in a wider net of service.”

“Services were able to identify some strong individual outcomes, and some good work towards building services around service users, but there is still a clear gap between some key services and the people that they serve.”

The review was presented to external partners and elected members and was endorsed publicly in April 2024⁴.

A1.3 Developing Our Strategy - Methodology

The Homelessness Review laid a foundation for developing a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. As written in the review, *“it is like the first act of a play, setting the scene, leaving questions unanswered”*. The review formed the basis of the council’s strategy development work, which was conducted between April and June 2024.

Overall, 118 people contributed towards the development of the strategy, including at least 27 people with lived experience of homelessness.

⁴ [BCKLWN Homelessness Review 2024 - draft.pdf \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

This included:

- **Sessions with council staff:** housing staff, as well as other council departments who play an important part in preventing and relieving homelessness.
- **Sessions with local partners:** we were pleased to welcome over 30 local partners to two sessions at the King's Lynn Town Hall. As well as homelessness charities and housing providers, partners attended from mental health services, social care, social prescribers, probation, police, substance recovery, advice services, domestic abuse services and key local charities.
- **Sessions with people with lived experience of homelessness:** we carried out development sessions at The Purfleet Trust and the King's Lynn Night Shelter, with just under 20 people with lived experience of homelessness attending across the two sessions.
- **A public survey:** we received 28 responses to a public survey that was promoted on the council's website, on social media and in local news outlets. These included eight responses from people who declared that they were homeless or at risk (or had been homeless in the past).

We encouraged participants to contribute ideas around five themes:

Prevention What can we do to work further upstream? What specific tools for homelessness prevention could we use? What should our Homelessness Prevention Fund look like? How can we educate the borough to help avoid homelessness?	Intervention How can we reduce our B&B spend? What should we offer to people sleeping rough? How can people be involved more effectively in their own homeless application? How should we support people who are long-term homeless?	Accommodation How can we improve 'flow' through the hostel system? What accommodation is missing in the pathway? How can we improve the supply of good-quality private sector housing?	Recovery How can we support people with higher support needs? What should 'floating support' like? What health support would be effective to prevent repeated homelessness? What should the substance recovery pathway look like?
Systems support and service culture What should good partnership work look like? How can we better recruit and retain staff? How can we narrow the gap between services and people who are homeless?			

These themes have been developed from (and informed by) a framework within the national Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in 2022⁵.

⁵ [Ending rough sleeping for good - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good)

We also asked participants to describe their vision (and hopes) relating to homelessness prevention in the borough, and their views as to how the partnership should work. In the sessions with people with lived experience of homelessness, we asked participants how they would like to be treated by services supporting them. Their answers have been used to develop several of the ideas underpinning this strategy.

We would like to thank the following organisations for contributing towards the creation of this strategy:

Access Community Trust	Money Advice Hub
Broadland Housing Association	NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board
Change, Grow, Live	Norfolk Constabulary
Freebridge Community Housing	Norfolk County Council
Headway Norfolk and Waveney	Sanctuary Supported Living
HM Prison and Probation Service	Shelter
Home Group	The Benjamin Foundation
King's Lynn Foodbank	The Bridge for Heroes
King's Lynn Night Shelter	The Purfleet Trust
Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services	West Norfolk Coastal Primary Care Network
MAP Norfolk	

A1.4 Scope

This strategy provides a **framework for responding to homelessness in the borough**. As such, the actions laid out in the strategy are not exhaustive. There is much good work being carried out within the partnership that already fits within the framework (as laid out in part four of the Homelessness Review) and that we expect to continue in line with the partnership's vision, values and key strategy aims.

As a framework, it is designed to respond flexibly to unexpected challenges beyond the partnership's control. The strategy was developed during a pre-election period, which may culminate in a change in national government. This in turn may result in a shift on national government policy, a change in funding structures, and a set of national priorities.

Regardless of the outcome and impact of the July 2024 General Election, the action plan will be updated regularly by the newly formed Strategy Implementation Partnership (see [B5.1](#)) in response to emerging priorities and available resources.

A1.5 Funding

This strategy has been developed at a time where there is no certainty relating to future central government funding for homelessness services. Therefore, it has been costed on a likely 'worst case scenario' basis, as follows:

- The DLUHC Rough Sleeping Initiative⁶ ceases in March 2025 and is not replaced.
- The DLUHC Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme⁷ ceases in March 2025 and is not replaced.

⁶ [Rough Sleeping Initiative: 2022 to 2025 funding allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁷ [Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- The DLUHC Homelessness Prevention Grant⁸ reduces significantly from 1 April 2025.
- The council relies on ringfenced central government homelessness funds to commission services.
- No cuts are made to the council's 'core budget' for housing needs and allocations.

Due to uncertainty around central government funding for activities set out in the strategy, we have been conservative around how much funding will be available. We have therefore planned activities prudently at this stage. The strategy and action plan outlines where (a) we can commit to funding, and (b) where we will seek funding towards strengthening a particular strategy aim. Any new services included in the strategy will be commissioned for a minimum of three years.

A1.6 Threats to delivery

Alongside the strategy and action plan, we will maintain a Risk Register outlining the key threats to delivery. Key potential risks and threats include:

- **A change in policy direction / funding** because of a new government, meaning that we could not afford (or were not permitted) to deliver in line with the strategy.
- **An end to Rough Sleeping Initiative funding** which could limit the scope of our strategic objective.
- **An increase in homelessness presentations** which could outstrip the supply of emergency and move-on accommodation and increase the council's Bed and Breakfast / nightly-paid⁹ accommodation costs.
- **Recruitment and retention issues** for key partners including the council, impacting on the ability to mobilise and deliver strategic aims.
- **A lack of buy-in from partners** regarding the strategic aims, impacting on the effectiveness of the strategy.

Senior managers within the Council will update the risk register regularly and present key issues to the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group.

⁸ [Homelessness Prevention Grant: 2023 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homelessness-prevention-grant-2023-to-2025)

⁹ Nightly-paid accommodation includes accommodation where individuals have access to their own cooking and washing facilities (as opposed to a traditional B&B set-up)

A2 VISION

“My hope is that there would be an end to homelessness. I would like the future to look hopeful. A future where every person has a safe and private place to lay their head.” – survey respondent

“Anyone who wants a home should be able to have one.” – survey respondent

“What would I like the future to look like for me? Just to have a future.” – group participant.

A2.1 Our Vision

Put simply, our vision is:

ENDING HOMELESSNESS, PERSON BY PERSON

This means that we are aiming for a future where we:

Prevent homelessness where possible.

Provide accessible, immediate help in a crisis.

Deliver a pathway of good, sustainable accommodation for all.

Build personal strength, resilience and independence.

Deliver everything in partnership.

As described in the Homelessness Review, many services in the borough are already set towards this vision. However, this strategy sets out to address the gaps and challenges identified in the review.

A2.2 In Practice

As part of the development of this strategy, we discussed at length whether we should include “ending homelessness” in our vision. We considered whether to adopt a vision that may not be achievable within the lifetime of the strategy, if at all. We reflected that there are many uncontrollable factors that create homelessness. And we reflected upon the risk of creating ‘mission fatigue’ if we set our vision towards something that may be many years away from being achieved.

However, we concluded that:

- **We should set our sights towards ending homelessness.** As services, we want to achieve more than “delivering our service well”. We should avoid creating an environment where we perpetuate the need for services that people should never have to access in the first place.
- **We should measure, recognise and (where appropriate) celebrate progress** towards ending homelessness. By ending homelessness, person by person, we recognise the person-centred efforts of frontline workers, as well as the role played by people experiencing homelessness in working towards their own recovery.

A3 VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

“I think that being kind and supportive towards people is key and [is] something that can be done without cost. In addition, being able to explain the system in a way that is understandable, and being patient with helping people understand, will help with transparency, as well as setting expectations for service users and staff.” – survey respondent.

“[Be] person-centred, personal, informed. [Place an] emphasis on choice. Simple actions can have huge impact e.g. space to talk, time for people to express how they feel” – group participant.

“[Treat me with] respect and dignity: as a human being and not a number.” – group participant.

A3.1 Our Values and Behaviours

During the process of developing the strategy, much of the discussion focused on *how* we do things, rather than what we do. This is consistent with the tone of the Homelessness Review. The borough has an impressive range of services dedicated to supporting homeless people¹⁰, but some of the key challenges identified related to how we communicate with people experiencing homelessness, how we work in partnership with one another, and how quickly we intervene to prevent a crisis from escalating.

In our development meetings, we discussed the importance of identifying behaviours – the practical outworking of our values – so that our values are framed authentically and accountably. This is reflected in the five statements below.

A3.2 In practice

The table below reflects the central themes shared by partners, survey respondents and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Value	What this looks like	Notes
Dignity	We will treat people with dignity and compassion, in the light of current and past traumas.	This was the biggest theme emerging from discussions with people with lived experience of homelessness. Many homeless applicants have experienced multiple layers of trauma – our approach must be informed by this.
Transparency	We will make it clear why we are doing things, what we’re doing, what people can expect and how it’s going.	As a partnership, we make difficult decisions on how to manage limited housing and support resources. These decisions need to be transparent. As one respondent stated, “we appreciate you can’t please everyone, but we at least need to understand your reasons.” We will be up-front and clear about our performance in key areas.

¹⁰ This report may use the term “homeless people” to cover people who are currently experiencing homelessness, those at risk of homelessness, and those who are recovering from an experience of homelessness.

Flexibility	Where we can, we will work services flexibly around the needs of an individual.	Our services need to be underpinned by clear processes and principles to provide a fair service. However, processes should be sufficiently flexible to ensure that people (especially those facing multiple disadvantage) are able to access them.
Collaboration	We will work with each other to get the best results.	As part of this, we will be curious: we will listen and be prepared to learn from each other, wherever we are in the partnership.
Empowerment	We will enable people to engage in, shape, and benefit fully from the services they use.	We will design services in a way that enables people to develop 'social capital' – positive connections with others in the borough, beyond the network of services explicitly designed to address homelessness. We will ensure that the voices of people with lived experience are central to the development of services.

We acknowledge that values and behaviours take time to develop and be embedded, but we will develop our services in line with these principles.

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PART B: STRATEGY IN DETAIL

B1 PREVENTION

Overall aim

Prevention is perhaps the most important strand of the 2024-2029 Strategy. To end homelessness, we need to prevent it happening in the first place. Homelessness prevention should go beyond identifying people at the 'crisis' stage, where our chances of success in a 56-day period are limited.

The Homelessness Review identified that, whilst the council is more effective at prevention than it was five years ago, its effectiveness has ebbed away because of significant external pressures.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that, where possible, a person at risk of homelessness does not become homeless.

Identify at-risk groups and individuals as early as possible.

Support “universal” measures that will reduce the risk of homelessness for all residents.

B1.1 Education and communication

WHY?

During the strategy development sessions, participants suggested that some members of the public, and some public-facing services, lack confidence to support and signpost people who are at risk of homelessness. Recent public campaigns around safeguarding, domestic abuse and mental health demonstrate that it is possible to change public perceptions of (and responses to) social issues.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will develop a clear and universal, proactive, **borough-wide education plan** around homelessness prevention. Mirroring other public campaigns, this will communicate central messages as widely as resources allow, including to schools, GPs, faith groups, local employers and businesses.

Alongside the education plan, we will develop an online “**early help portal**” for homelessness prevention. Rather than waiting for situations where a referral *must* be made, the portal will encourage early help, linked with the partnership’s existing Early Help Hub. An accessible online portal will accompany this, but consideration will be given to groups who may struggle to access online content.

We will also develop a **proactive campaign with letting agents** towards homelessness prevention. This strand will focus specifically on informing and supporting local letting agents, to identify at-risk tenants before crisis stage. A new role will be created to support this work (see strands [B1.4](#) and [B3.2](#)).

B1.2 Client-centred prevention services

WHY?

Although many people will be able to avoid homelessness independently, some will require support through the process. For people who are facing homelessness because of money problems, there are certain remedies (such as Debt Relief Orders) that can only be accessed through a qualified debt adviser.

We choose to work in partnership with local providers, to give people the widest range of support and expertise possible.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

The council has recently commissioned a new **information, advice and guidance contract** – held by Citizens Advice Norfolk and Shelter – covering money advice, income maximisation and housing. We will work closely with both partners to ensure that all opportunities for homelessness prevention are maximised, and that the service coordinates well with other prevention services.

Linked to this, the council (alongside Norfolk County Council) has co-commissioned the **Sustainable Housing Pathways Service (SHPS)** – a homelessness prevention service – for a further year. This year, the service has developed to receive referrals further ‘upstream’, particularly from individuals identified by Social Services.

We will work with SHPS to ensure that there is enough ‘flex’ to work further upstream where possible, maximising the service’s chance of success.

During the COVID pandemic, the council’s **home visiting function** for households at risk of homelessness ceased. Since then, the service has been unable to reinstate the function due to staff shortages and increased homelessness applications. We will aim to reinstate the function with a particular focus on preventing family/parental evictions.

Since 2022, the council (through central government funding) has commissioned an **Intensive Support Service** – currently delivered by the Purfleet Trust – focused on people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. We will aim to redesign and recommission this service when the current funding ends in 2025.

We plan to extend the new service to provide targeted support to families, with a firm emphasis on prevention, as well as those who are neither at risk of rough sleeping nor adequately and sustainably housed.

B1.3 Community Links

WHY?

We need to provide every opportunity for the public to learn what we do, so that people at risk of homelessness can access advice as early as possible. There are multiple existing venues and platforms that could be used to spread the word.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Shared sites such as the forthcoming Multi-Use Community Hub present an excellent opportunity to promote services and maximise opportunities for homelessness prevention. We will work closely with delivery partners to ensure that services are co-located and easily accessible.

We will also ensure that homelessness prevention services are **accessible to rural communities**. We will work with local parishes and community contacts (making good use of existing communication channels) to achieve this. We will explore working with local partners such as West Norfolk Community Transport where travel costs are a barrier to accessing support.

The Homelessness Review identified a relative shortage of services for families facing homelessness, who represent a growing proportion of people approaching the council for assistance. We will ensure that prevention activities have a **specific remit towards families**, based in the community. Existing partnerships and networks provide a strong opportunity to promote homelessness prevention.

B1.4 Grants and Incentives

WHY?

The cost to the state of a homeless person is estimated to be £20-£30,000 per year¹¹. A pragmatic, strategic “spend to save” approach will enable us to reduce the cost of emergency accommodation, as well as achieving wider savings to the public purse.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will work with **private rented sector (PRS) landlords** to reduce homelessness arising from the end of PRS tenancies. We will create a flexible, early intervention fund to support landlords where eviction could be avoided, linking PRS tenants with support services to address underlying support needs.

We will explore creating a new strategic, enabling role, bringing together multiple PRS liaison functions across internal and external partners, and encouraging positive engagement with PRS landlords and letting agents.

Linked to this, we will **redesign our grant scheme for individuals** to better meet the needs of households at risk of homelessness. The scheme will have a wider scope, greater flexibility, a clearer application process and more explicit links with other services.

We will explore the possibility of opening the scheme to “match funding”, so that individuals’ compassion towards homeless households can be harnessed to prevent homelessness (and prevent repeated instances). This enables members of the public, local businesses and charitable organisations to work together, provide funding to support individuals facing (or recovering from) homelessness¹².

Working with the Benefits team, we will explore carrying out **a review of regular Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) recipients**, to maximise the effectiveness of DHPs for the purpose of

¹¹ [Cost of homelessness | Crisis UK | Together we will end homelessness; Ending homelessness isn't just morally right, it's cost-effective \(connection-at-stmartins.org.uk\)](#)

¹² The [Street Aid](#) model (launched in Cambridge and now operational in other cities such as Norwich and York) provides one example of how public generosity can be harnessed effectively.

homelessness prevention. We will improve joint-working and signposting, where there is a clear housing need that has been masked by DHP use.

B1.5 Partnerships and Data

WHY?

A partnership-led approach is crucial to preventing homelessness. We rely on people across the borough to be the 'eyes and ears' in the community, ensuring that people are supported and encouraged to seek early help. We need to underpin our approach with clear, accessible data, to identify individuals and groups at particular risk of homelessness.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will **develop a homelessness champion function** to be rolled out borough-wide to all interested services and settings. We will model this on existing safeguarding and domestic abuse champion roles, also learning from the 'mental health first aider' model¹³.

Ultimately, the aim is for at least one person in every public setting (school, hospital department, major employer, faith group and so on) to have a good knowledge of homelessness services and support and be able to direct colleagues and customers for support. Initially though, the function will focus on settings most likely to identify people at risk of homelessness.

Improved data collection, analysis and data presentation forms an integral part of delivering the objectives of the strategy, as well as forming a condition of the council's annual homelessness prevention grant¹⁴. In response, we have recently appointed a new **Housing Data Analyst**, covering a wide range of functions within the department but with a focus on improving the quality of homelessness data, partnership wide.

The post will monitor and evaluate housing data to help improve performance, and to support the commissioning of appropriate services, in line with service demand. We will embed this new role to better identify people at risk of homelessness.

¹³ [Mental health training online and face to face](#) · MHFA England

¹⁴ The government has proposed changes to how the [Homelessness Prevention Grant](#) is calculated, which are due to take effect in 2025. Robust and accurate data is critical in ensuring the Council receives the correct funding allocation to support key homelessness services.

B2 INTERVENTION

Overall aim

This strategy aims to prevent homelessness wherever possible. However, even with the best efforts of the partnership, there will be occasions where we cannot avoid homelessness – such as a family fleeing domestic abuse, or an individual migrating to the borough from elsewhere.

In these emergency situations, we aim to provide a rapid, dignified and cost-effective service, assessing individuals' needs and addressing the factors contributing to a small number of repeated homelessness presentations.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that people who are homeless are identified quickly and placed into suitable, cost-effective accommodation where necessary.

Avoid and reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation.

Ensure that support is provided to overcome barriers to accessing (and sustaining) emergency accommodation.

B2.1 Accommodation

WHY?

At present, the cost of accommodating homeless households is at an all-time high. More importantly, there is a profoundly negative impact on individuals' wellbeing of staying in emergency accommodation. Whilst we have developed good relationships with local providers locally and keep out-of-area placements to a minimum, bed and breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation is regarded in national guidance as a 'last resort'¹⁵.

Additionally, the welfare cabins, procured by the council to accommodate people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 pandemic, are unsustainably expensive to manage.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As part of our strategy, we will work towards **commissioning and designing sufficient emergency accommodation to meet need**. Our Housing Strategy team will lead this work, developing accommodation in line with the volume of homeless applicants and likely future demand¹⁶. We will develop and procure any new accommodation in sustainable locations and ensure it is cost-effective for the council.

¹⁵ Homelessness Code of Guidance 16.30 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-16-securing-accommodation>

¹⁶ This information will be gathered by the new Data Analyst post (see [B1.5](#)).

To support this objective, the council is currently working with Broadland Housing Association to deliver seven units of temporary accommodation in Reid Way, King's Lynn in the next two years, and with West Norfolk Housing Company to deliver another seven units in Fairstead by September this year. All units will offer good quality emergency housing for homeless families, linked with support. This objective will link with work to **address the continued under-supply of new social housing in the borough.**

As a council, we will ensure planning policy mechanisms are in place to deliver new affordable housing in line with need. We will monitor and respond to any national policy changes in relation to increasing the supply of housing – particularly new opportunities arising from future changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. We will also continue to work with Housing Providers to maximise opportunities for investment-led affordable housing schemes in the borough.

The council's two wholly owned Housing Companies will continue to support the supply of suitable accommodation for households who are homeless or at risk. The **West Norfolk Housing Company**¹⁷ will continue to be agile in responding opportunities that will assist the Council in meeting the priorities of the strategy, as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the conflict in Ukraine.

The company cannot predict the potential interventions that could be needed but will only deliver interventions that align with the council's strategic objectives.

West Norfolk Property¹⁸ was set up to provide high-quality accommodation in the private rented sector within the borough. The company currently lets 74 private rented homes in King's Lynn and has plans to increase this to 139 homes by 2028. West Norfolk Property offers three-year, fixed-term tenancies and is committed to providing exemplary customer service.

Over recent years, the council has been proactive in **responding to asylum and migration pressures** and will continue to do so as part of its strategy implementation. This has included the delivery of 29 newbuild homes, arising from rounds one and two of the Local Authority Housing Fund. The council will continue to take advantage of funding opportunities to meet demand, whilst seeking to manage the impact of any increased pressures on existing housing and homelessness systems.

As part of our emergency accommodation offer for those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, we will **design and commission emergency accommodation to replace the remaining four welfare cabins**. The cabins have proven a life-saving option for people who would struggle in a shared setting and who may have higher levels of support need.

We will work with partners and people with lived experience to design an offer that would suit this small group of people, who may be sleeping rough or at risk.

In general terms, we will **review our offer of accommodation to people sleeping rough**¹⁹. Following feedback from our development sessions, the offer should be clearly communicated and transparent to partner agencies. We will also review the effectiveness of the discretionary placements made for people sleeping rough and explore alternatives to the use of nightly-paid accommodation in such circumstances.

¹⁷ [West Norfolk Housing Company – A registered provider of social housing \(wnhc.co.uk\)](https://www.wnhc.co.uk)

¹⁸ [West Norfolk Property Limited – An independent private rental property company wholly owned by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(wnpl.co.uk\)](https://www.wnpl.co.uk)

¹⁹ This relates to offers of accommodation to those who may be sleeping rough but may not be owed a legal duty to accommodate under s.188 Housing Act 1996 ([see Homelessness Code of Guidance ch. 15](#))

B2.2 Support

WHY?

We have processes in place to ensure that people facing immediate homelessness are accommodated and supported, but feedback tells us that we need to go further, particularly in terms of our communication with homeless applicants and partner agencies. Clear, empathetic communication will improve the effectiveness of the support provided during what can be a traumatic and unsettling experience.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Firstly, we will **redesign and redevelop the Personal Housing Plans (PHPs)** issued by the council to homeless applicants. PHPs are intended as a two-way agreement between council and applicant, but since their introduction in 2018²⁰ they have not worked as effectively as intended. We will produce an easy-to-read document that can be used as a conversation starter and an ongoing support plan, exploring whether other partner agencies can amend and co-develop them.

We will also **develop a “what to expect” document for homeless applicants and partner agencies**, providing clear guidance as to what the housing needs service can do and what the service asks of others. We will develop this in partnership with a new “co-production group” (see [section B5.2](#)) to ensure that the advice given is clear to all.

We will make it clear how members of the public can help people sleeping rough. This will include improving the promotion of the national Streetlink²¹ service – an online reporting tool, linked to local outreach services.

As part of our accommodation offer, we will **review the provision of basic items** to meet the need of all people who are living in emergency accommodation²². We will work with local homelessness charities to achieve this. We will aim to ensure that, where there is no alternative but to make an emergency accommodation placement, the placement is dignified and sustainable.

As part of our wider work to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation²³, and linked to the countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy, we will **review the emergency offer (and processes) for victim-survivors of domestic abuse**. This will include reviewing emergency accommodation placements made for victim-survivors. We will review the use of DASH²⁴ forms to ensure that these are completed in a sensitive, trauma-informed manner.

As part of our wider accommodation review, we will explore further accommodation options for victim-survivors of domestic abuse who have wider support needs.

²⁰ Introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. [Personal housing plans - Shelter England](#)

²¹ [StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services \(thestreetlink.org.uk\)](#)

²² Note that some basic items are already provided to households by charities – this strand aims to ensure that there is a universal basic standard of provision for all occupants of emergency accommodation.

²³ Accreditation covers eight priority areas: Policies and procedures; staff development and support; partnerships and collaboration; safety led case management; survivor led support; intersectional & anti racist practice; perpetrator accountability; publicity and awareness raising.

²⁴ [Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence \(DASH 2009-2024\) Risk Identification and Assessment and Management Model](#)

B2.3 Partnerships

WHY?

Homeless households often have a complex network of support services around them. We need to ensure that the partnership works well for them: that advice and support is comprehensive, clear, coordinated and consistent. Partnership work stretches beyond the examples below – as expressed in the homelessness review, it takes a borough-wide effort to end homelessness.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

The Homelessness Review identified a cohort of people who are the furthest away from having their accommodation needs met permanently and sustainably. We will **develop a “by name” meeting / partnership**, working creatively and collaboratively to address individuals’ accommodation and support needs. We will work in partnership with local probation services, who are beginning to coordinate a similar piece of work, through the lens of people who are currently in prison and who are at risk of homelessness upon release.

Linked to this, we will explore opportunities to assist people with no recourse to public funding and consider whether accommodation or support is required to meet the needs of this vulnerable group. We will forge closer links with organisations who can provide humanitarian help to people who have no recourse to public funds and improve data monitoring of this group.

As mentioned previously ([B1.2](#)), we will seek to **recommission the Intensive Support Service** (currently funded to March 2025) to meet current need. We will ensure that the service retains an assertive outreach function, to identify and support people sleeping rough, but we will also ensure that families are supported where necessary, as well as other households at risk. We will ensure that this service is joined up with other services such as NIHCSS²⁵ and SHPS.

Crucially, we will also **improve our working relationship with local Social Care partners** to ensure immediate crisis assessment where needed. We will establish regular strategic meetings, re-establishing a clear first point of contact and escalation routes. We will continue to work with Norfolk County Council to strengthen the offer to care leavers facing homelessness. We will monitor closely to address any gaps in provision for individuals assessed.

²⁵ [Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Services](#)

B3 ACCOMMODATION

Overall aim

Good quality accommodation is central to ending homelessness, and central to many individuals' personal vision for the future. In the words of one respondent during the strategy development sessions, *"I just want a flat, to have well-being and to get on with all I've got planned"*.

The Homelessness Review identified the lack of local accommodation as a key barrier to personal and collective progress, as well as a key contributor to the volume (and cost) of people accessing emergency accommodation at any given time.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that safe accommodation is available to everyone who needs it.

Ensure that accommodation is suitable to a household's needs.

Ensure that people residing in short/medium-term accommodation (such as hostels) are supported to move on in a timely and sustainable manner.

B3.1 Single Person Accommodation

WHY?

Although the proportion has reduced over time, applicants without children²⁶ represent the greatest proportion of those approaching the council for assistance over the last four years. There are more than 110 bed spaces in the borough²⁷ for people who are single and homeless (or at risk of homelessness), tailored to age and support need. Supported accommodation forms an essential part of the borough's efforts to end homelessness.

For our strategy to be effective, supported accommodation should operate as a cohesive system, with the expectation that residents will gain independence, gain resilience, and move on into sustainable 'mainstream' housing.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

To ensure that single person accommodation is operating effectively, we will work with partners **to review the effectiveness of the existing hostel pathway**. Amongst other factors, we will consider the expectations that residents have when entering accommodation, the level of positive and sustained outcomes, the factors leading to an unsuccessful stay, and the proportion of individuals accessing supported accommodation repeatedly.

²⁶ More accurately: applicants who do not have custodial access to their children. The strategy acknowledges the importance of parental responsibility and family ties (see [B4.2](#))

²⁷ BCKLWN Homelessness Review 2024, 4.3 "Accommodation"

We will work with support workers to help maximise the effectiveness of their communication and support, particularly with a view to empowering residents towards employment or other meaningful activity.

We are due to launch a **Supported Housing Partnership** this summer, to improve the coordination of referrals into supported housing. The partnership will be tested initially with three local accommodation providers. Currently, each provider has its own referral form, resulting in multiple referrals from multiple agencies into multiple supported housing providers.

Through the partnership, all referrals to supported housing providers will be made using a common referral form, with the partnership acting as a 'gateway', so that cases can be discussed by partners before identifying suitable accommodation.

The partnership will ensure that all individuals who need supported accommodation are considered and prioritised appropriately, identifying barriers to move-on and preventing multiple and repeated periods for clients living in supported accommodation. Once established, we will look to extend the scope of the partnership to youth and other provision.

Based on the success of the model since its launch in 2022, we will issue a tender to **recommission the Housing First model**²⁸ when the current commissioned service expires in March 2025. We will aim to extend the project to support up to 18 individuals at a time (subject to funding), ensuring that the model aligns as closely as possible to Housing First England principles.

As part of the exercise, we will review the 'entry criteria' for the service, to ensure that Housing First accommodation and support is available to those who need it the most.

We will also seek to develop **single person accommodation that incentivises paid employment**. We will work with partners to develop a model where an individual's rent is affordable even when in work²⁹. We will link this to the revised Homelessness Prevention Fund ([B1.4](#)) to create 'flow' through the supported accommodation system, by helping people to move out of accommodation when ready.

B3.2 Private Rented Sector (PRS)

WHY?

The Homelessness Review identified the end of PRS tenancies as the most common cause of people presenting to the council as homeless or at risk of homelessness. As well as working to prevent PRS tenants from becoming homeless (see [B1.4](#)), the strategy seeks to develop opportunities for homeless households to find and sustain PRS accommodation.

²⁸ Housing First provides intensive support to individuals with a history of rough sleeping, who have previously been unsuccessful in sustaining housing through the hostel route. By providing the housing 'first' (rather than as a reward for graduating through the hostel system) and providing wrap-around support, the scheme aims to break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping for individuals facing multiple disadvantages. Further details can be found on the [Homeless Link website](#)

²⁹ Much supported accommodation is let on an Intensive Housing Management (IHM) basis – an above-average rent (typically between £200-300 per week), which funds the support provided to residents, who claim housing benefit when out of work. As a model, IHM can (in some circumstances) serve to disincentivise work, due to the reduction in housing benefit received (and increase in net rent) when in paid employment. Conversely: if the same person moves into a room in a PRS shared house, the typical rent may be much lower. They would still stand to lose their housing benefit if they gained work, but they could see the benefits of paid work more quickly. Therefore, we could work towards commissioning PRS-style accommodation, of good quality, that is priced in line with the wider market, rather than in line with supported accommodation rates.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

At the core of the strategy, **we will re-engage PRS landlords and agents**. We will create a new strategic, enabling role to bring together various existing strands of work and to develop and re-establish relationships with PRS landlords. The role will act as a central point of contact for landlords and agents, to de-escalate concerns and to work creatively for the benefit of landlords and tenants alike.

We will create **a new PRS access fund** to incentivise landlords and clients. This could potentially include small grants for repairs or to bring a property up to standard, for use by a homeless household. We will explore the possibility of extending the rent guarantor product currently used by SHPS or guaranteeing rent to landlords (where this may secure a property for a homeless household). The fund will operate flexibly and pragmatically in line with household need.³⁰

We will ensure that this fund is linked with incentives elsewhere (such as energy efficiency grants) to maximise the support available. We will work closely with our colleagues in Housing Standards to ensure that households are supported into safe, good-quality homes. We will also review the effectiveness and impact of offering rent deposits and rents in advance as a loan at the start of a tenancy, rather than offering as a grant.

Additionally, we will **explore the viability of a rent-a-room scheme** to link suitable single households with residents who have available spare rooms. Such schemes have worked well in other settings (for young people or for Ukrainians seeking accommodation). We will carry out 'market engagement' first to establish whether there is sufficient supply and demand to launch such a scheme.

We will also explore the viability of a **"tenant swap" scheme for private sector tenants**. Where a household is unable to sustain PRS accommodation – for example, a family living in a 3-bed house who cannot afford the rent due to ill health – we would accept a homelessness duty for them. We would then nominate a suitable household – for example, another family who are in temporary accommodation and have recently gained employment – to replace them³¹. Both above schemes would link with the wider engagement work with current and prospective PRS landlords.

B3.3 Social Housing and Other Accommodation

WHY?

There is a proportion of homeless households whose needs will only be met by social housing³². This may be because of their income, support needs or support network. As part of our strategy, we will work with partners to maximise the supply of good quality social housing, including developing the specialist accommodation available to the borough's residents.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As part of this strand, we will **conduct a review of the council's allocations policy for social housing**, to ensure the best use of both social housing and PRS. Linked to the review of supported

³⁰ Here, the key is creativity: the fund is likely to be limited at first but may be increased if a clear financial gain / saving to the council can be demonstrated.

³¹ We would assist the household at risk into alternative accommodation before possession action is taken if the landlord agrees to accommodate the household in temporary accommodation. The landlord avoids having to take the tenant to court for rent arrears and avoids having to pay a letting agent to find another family to occupy the property. The tenant avoids the trauma of eviction; the other household moves into suitable long-term accommodation.

³² This figure will be included in the forthcoming Housing Needs Assessment

accommodation, we will explore creating a 'gateway' out of the hostel system, ensuring that social housing is prioritised for those who cannot move on elsewhere. This will link with the work to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of the current hostel system, and the barriers towards move-on.

The review will include a review of the housing needs of young carers and their families, as well as individuals exiting the care system.

We will also explore the viability of **creating good-quality, shared accommodation for homeless applicants** who choose to share with others. During the strategy development sessions, some participants expressed a desire for such accommodation. If viable, we would look for accommodation that is good quality, low energy and low cost, incentivising paid employment where possible and encouraging positive relationships between tenants and with the wider community.

We will continue work with housing providers to **reduce levels of void properties**. The supply of good-quality social housing is essential to the success of our strategy – we will continue to work proactively with housing providers, challenging them to bring properties into use promptly, and working collaboratively and creatively to achieve this.

Finally, we will work with partners to **develop a pathway to support and accommodate substance users**. In a recent meeting, inclusion health partners described alcohol use as the key contributing factor to deaths of their patients over the last year. During the strategy development sessions, participants described a common scenario whereby individuals could not access residential treatment services because of the lack of suitable post-treatment accommodation. We will work to remove accommodation as a barrier to substance treatment and recovery. When complete, a pathway would provide a harm-reduction setting in advance of treatment, and a safe 'dry house' post-treatment.

B4 RECOVERY

Overall aim

For many, the process of recovering from the trauma of homelessness will occur naturally, through social ties, existing support networks and personal resilience. Others will need the help of specialist services, both to help them avoid a return to homelessness and to address the underlying issues that led to them losing their home.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that nobody experiences homelessness more than once.

Ensure that formerly homeless people are empowered to thrive in the borough.

B4.1 Health and substances

WHY?

More than 70% of homeless applicants over the last four years have expressed that they have at least one support need. Health issues, whether physical, mental or substance related, are the most common support needs identified by homeless applicants.

To enable formerly homeless people to live safe, independent lives, the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy needs to align and coordinate with the work of local health partners. The strategy will also align with the wider work to establish West Norfolk as a Marmot Place (see [B5.1](#)).

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

To help achieve this, we will **improve access to mainstream health services for homeless people**. Currently, there are 21 GP surgeries signed up as Inclusion Health practices. Using the Inclusion Health framework and existing Integrated Care Boards (ICB) contacts, we will develop our work with partners to ensure homeless people have access to suitable treatment, wherever they are in their housing journey.

We will also explore the possibility of establishing health outreach functions operating from two or three practices, focused around the areas of highest need but ensuring that rural locations are served well.

As described in the previous chapter, we will **develop a recovery offer for people with alcohol dependency** who are experiencing homelessness, dovetailing accommodation and support. We will develop this in partnership with local support services, including CGL and NIHCSS.

Additionally, we will review and **develop the offer for people with brain injuries and/or learning difficulties** – both of which are key contributory factors to homelessness. Working with Norfolk County Council and with local specialist partners, we will assess the level of need locally and identify areas that need strengthening. We will review and develop risk management plans for those commencing tenancies, to ensure they have the best chance of success in their new setting.

B4.2 Community

WHY?

To enable formerly homeless people to live fulfilling lives, we need to improve access to the range of facilities and opportunities offered by the wider community. We have some excellent local services that specialise in supporting homeless and formerly homeless people, but we don't want people to be limited in what they can access. This strategy aims to build and strengthen bridges between specialist and mainstream services and structures.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As part of this, we will seek to **engage local businesses in the recovery process through employment placements and apprenticeships**. We will build on existing links with the DWP, as well as drawing upon existing relationships between local homelessness services and local employers. Existing covenants are in place locally for armed forces veterans and care leavers – such covenants may act as models that could inspire or inform local agreements between employers and formerly homeless people.

Linked to this, we will engage residents to support formerly homeless people through a **'skills-based' mentoring scheme**. Several of the respondents to our online survey indicated a desire to work as a mentor to someone looking to recover from homelessness and gain independence. Building on a model established in Cambridge, we will seek to match residents with people who have experienced homelessness, based on a shared interest.

The aim of such a model is to avoid a 'paternalistic' mentoring scheme, and instead identify shared strengths, such as guitar playing, board games or sports. The scheme will help to tackle loneliness, ensuring that people have equal access to the facilities offered by the borough.

Working with local social prescribers, we will ensure all **formerly homeless people have access to a range of leisure and cultural facilities** to aid their recovery. This work will be driven and guided by a new co-production group (see [B5.2](#)).

Finally in this section, we will **make use of 'father-inclusive' practices**, particularly for single people looking to develop and/or restore their relationship with their children. Father-Inclusive Practice is a key current priority for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NCSP)³³. In the words of a recent report, "fathers are a point of reference for all children as they grow up and they have a significant impact on the health, safety, wellbeing and life chances for those children"³⁴.

Additionally, many formerly homeless people have found that their recovery has been strengthened by regaining/developing contact with their children, strengthening their social capital and improving their wellbeing.

The above services could be delivered by existing services, but (subject to funding) we will look to create a new project coordination role, with a specific remit of developing links between specialist services, homeless people and 'mainstream' life in the borough.

³³ <https://norfolklscp.org.uk/people-working-with-children/nscp-priorities>

³⁴ Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Partnership, "[Keeping Fathers In Sight: Good Practice Guid for Engaging and Working With Fathers](#)"

B4.3 Sustainment

WHY?

To end homelessness, we should ensure that people who experience homelessness never experience it again. The borough already benefits from several services that work towards this aim – this strategy seeks to strengthen and emphasise the work to ensure that formerly homeless people sustain their accommodation and live resilient, independent lives.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As mentioned in previous chapters, we will **recommission the existing Intensive Support Service**, placing a firm emphasis on sustainment and the inclusion of families. The service has already begun to move away from crisis intervention in the light of reduced rough sleeping numbers – we will aim to commission a service that prioritises upstream prevention and longer-term sustainment, linking with the community development strands described above.

As described in the Prevention chapter, we have **recommissioned SHPS** and will use the new framework to measure recovery and sustainment outcomes. We have worked closely with Bridges Outcomes Partnership and the Benjamin Foundation to ensure that SHPS service users identify realistic targets that address the underlying causes of their homelessness. We will examine these measures periodically and seek to learn lessons that can be applied to other strands of our work.

We will ensure that the **new information and advice service (B1.2)** incorporates a focus on **sustainment**. As well as dealing with immediate crises, we will work with Shelter and Norfolk Citizens Advice to identify opportunities for building financial capability and developing resilience in service users. We will ensure that the commissioned services work well with each other, potentially developing a ‘recovery subgroup’ to share good practice and coordinate work effectively.

We will work with external partners to **review the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (AfEO)³⁵**. This strand of work will link with the ‘by-name’ reviews of homeless offenders described in the Intervention chapter. Working with other commissioned providers above, we will identify and address barriers to recovery for ex-offenders.

Finally, we will **develop a programme of “multi agency check-ins”** for new tenants who are identified as being at risk of losing the accommodation that they have found. This could work as an extension of (or could be based on) the principles developed by the West Norfolk Help Hub³⁶, seeking to identify and resolve issues before they escalate, and viewing sustainment as a form of prevention. We will work with partners to identify where similar work is already taking place, developing on any good and effective practice.

This will link with work planned with Shelter for prospective tenants, under their new Information and Advice contract with the council. This work will support prospective tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities, reducing the risk of tenancy failure and fostering good landlord-tenant relationships.

³⁵ [Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme: local authority funding allocations between July 2021 and March 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³⁶ [West Norfolk Help Hub | West Norfolk Help Hub | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk)

B5 SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE

Overall aim

Strong systems support and service culture acts as a framework upon which to build excellent services. During the process of developing this strategy, partners and service users talked about how we do things, and how we do things together, more than possibly any other area of work. To end homelessness, our good work and innovative services need to be underpinned by comprehensive, positive and effective structures and partnerships.

Our service culture must be developed with and alongside homeless people, closing the 'communications gap' (identified in the Homelessness Review) between key services and the people they serve.

This strand aims to:

Work as one borough to achieve prevention, intervention, accommodation and recovery aims.

Design services *with* service users.

Deliver services in line with the values of the partnership.

B5.1 Partnerships and Staffing

WHY?

Strong partnerships, consisting of well-trained, resilient staff, are at the centre of this strategy. Frontline staff, service leaders and people with lived experience of homelessness all talked passionately on this subject during our development sessions. As stated in the introduction, strategy is "*an integrative set of choices*". To end homelessness, we need to work more effectively as an integrated system, both in terms of 'core' homelessness services and the wider system that supports often vulnerable residents.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Following the launch of this strategy, we will create a **multi-disciplinary Strategy Implementation Partnership**, to replace the existing Strategic Housing Collaboration Group. We will create several sub-groups to implement the strategy, as well as acting as a platform for training, networking and mutual support. The partnership will share characteristics with Communities of Practice³⁷ - partners will be given opportunities to lead each other in their areas of specialism, with the council acting as a facilitator.

The partnership will link closely with the wider countywide strategic work including No Homelessness in Norfolk, the Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Forum, the Norfolk Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and others. It will link with, and reinforce, the countywide commitments under Homes for Cathy³⁸.

³⁷ [Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier \(hbr.org\)](https://www.hbr.org)

³⁸ [Homes for Cathy - Broadland Housing Association \(broadlandgroup.org\)](https://www.broadlandgroup.org)

As well as strengthening links between core services, we will further **develop links between key services, other council departments and elected members**. This could include training and development for staff and members on what the partnership does, and how to take part in its work. With the consent of the group, we could explore opening up the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group, so that key frontline services (and even service users) are invited to share their experiences, successes and challenges with group members.

We will also **develop a partnership-wide “best practice” guide to supporting and developing staff**. The Homelessness Review identified the recruitment and retention of staff as a key challenge (and barrier) to effective service delivery. We will work as a partnership to share what works well in terms of recruiting, training and retaining staff within services that support homeless people. This may include training and progression opportunities, team development, embedding trauma-informed ways of working, rewarding and celebrating success, reflective practice and so on.

The Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy will link with the borough-wide work to **establish West Norfolk as a Marmot Place**. Marmot principles will address health inequalities in the borough “[arising] from a complex interaction of many factors - housing, income, education, social isolation, disability - all of which are strongly affected by one's economic and social status”³⁹.

Positive health outcomes will impact, and will be impacted by, positive housing outcomes. We will work closely with Norfolk County Council and the local Integrated Care Board towards Marmot principles, over a timeline beyond the length of this strategy.

B5.2 Lived Experience and Co-Production

WHY?

To position our services effectively, we need to understand what works well for the people who are using the services. We cannot end homelessness without understanding the needs and aspirations of people who are experiencing (or who have experienced) homelessness. We will work with partners towards a co-production model, where services are shaped and developed by the people who may use (or may have used) them.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Alongside the Strategy Implementation Partnership, we will **establish a co-production group** comprising individuals with lived experience of homelessness. We will draw on good practice from elsewhere in the country to ensure that group members are trained and empowered to contribute effectively to the group. The group will act as a ‘feedback loop’ to key services, to shape policy and practice.

We will also **embed trauma-informed principles and practices**⁴⁰ across all services, drawing on feedback from service users and partners. This work also forms one of the Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Board's current priorities, and links well with Marmot principles previously mentioned. Trauma-informed principles are regarded as particularly effective in supporting people who have multiple barriers to sustaining accommodation but will be of value to all homeless applicants.

³⁹ [Marmot Review report – 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives | Local Government Association](#)

⁴⁰ [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Linked to the above (and to the 'best practice' guide for staff), we will **develop a career pathway model** to actively encourage people with lived experience into homelessness support roles. As described in the Homelessness Review, many local services employ people with lived experience in either paid or voluntary roles, but further intentional work is needed to develop a partnership-wide approach.

The above aims could be delivered by existing services, but (subject to funding) we will look to create a new "lived experience coordination" role, with a specific remit of amplifying the voices of people with lived experience in the borough.

B5.3 Communication

WHY?

Communication was a key theme arising from the sessions that supported the development of this strategy. To be effective in ending homelessness, we should communicate clearly and empathetically with people who have approached us in crisis, and we should communicate effectively with partners and with the wider borough. Our messages should be underpinned by reliable and transparent data.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will develop a **clear and comprehensive communications strategy** around homelessness. This will include explaining who we are and what we do. It will set out the goals we are aiming for and the progress we have made towards these, celebrating success and acknowledging challenges faced by the partnership.

The strategy will also include a section designed to help members of the public who are concerned about homelessness and want to help, explaining how they can take part in the work to end homelessness. This will include a "myth busting" section to address common misconceptions about homelessness.

We will also **review and refresh all advice letters, leaflets and external communications** issued by the Housing Options Service. As part of our statutory duties, we have an obligation to communicate legal decisions to homeless applicants. The review will ensure that letters and communications are both clear and empathetic. We will explore digital means of communication to do this, whilst recognising that more traditional means of communication are necessary for some client groups. Where possible, we will involve people with lived experience in this process, linking with the new co-production group ([B5.2](#)).

We will establish a **clear, public-facing data portal** to support the communications strategy. We have begun work on the portal, using BI technology to present information clearly. The portal will convey the partnership's successes and challenges in relation to key performance indicators. Amongst other applications, this will be used to support and inform the work of the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group.

Finally, we will develop a **clear and straightforward Information Sharing Protocol** between partners, to improve joint-working and problem-solving around homeless applicants and those at risk. We have drafted an Information Sharing Protocol to support the work of the Supported Housing Partnership ([B3.1](#)) – we will explore the possibility of extending this protocol for the benefit of other services.

PART C – DRAFT ACTION PLAN

KEY

AfEO	Accommodation for Ex Offenders
BCKLWN	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
HNS	Housing Needs Service (BCKLWN)
HPG	Homelessness Prevention Grant (DLUHC)
HSIP	Homelessness Strategy Implementation Partnership
ICB	Integrated Care Board
MUCH	Multi Use Community Hub
NCA	Norfolk Citizens Advice
NCC	Norfolk County Council
SHPS	Sustainable Housing Pathway Service
s.106	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
WNCT	West Norfolk Community Transport

C1. PREVENTION

Aim: To ensure that, wherever possible, a person at risk of homelessness does not become homeless. To identify at-risk groups and individuals as early as possible and to support “universal” measures that will reduce the risk of homelessness for all residents.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding and Resourcing	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
1.1	Education and Communication	Develop a clear and universal proactive borough-wide education plan around homelessness prevention	BCKLWN HNS HSIP	Partially funded. Can be delivered to an extent by existing staff / website but may need additional resourcing dependent on the scope of the plan and the design of the portal.	Within one year	Initial meeting with comms
1.2		Develop a universal “ early help portal ” for homelessness prevention to include a “power to refer” function			Within two years	
1.3		Develop a proactive campaign with letting agents towards homelessness prevention in line with 1.1 and 1.2	BCKLWN HNS, working with Housing Standards, SHPS, AfEO	Fully funded 3 years - HPG	Within one year	Create and advertise job role
1.4		“ Road test ” the above with people with lived experience.	Co-production group	Partially funded. Could deliver limited lived experience coordination with existing resources / services.	Ongoing but commence within one year	Create co-production group (see 5.5)
1.5	Client-centred Prevention Services	Embed the new information advice and guidance contract to ensure that all opportunities for homelessness prevention are maximised	BCKLWN; Shelter; NCA	Fully funded committed for 3+2 years	Ongoing but initial work within three months	Meet regularly with Shelter and NCAB; confirm and monitor KPIs

1.6		Embed new SHPS upstream service and ensure that lessons are learned from data gathered.	BCKLWN; SHPS; NCC	Fully funded committed annually via HPG – possibility to extend funding subject to NCC match commitment	Within 3-6 months	Review contract; ensure that SHPS aligns with Intensive Support Service
1.7		Reinstate a home visiting function aimed at preventing family evictions	BCKLWN	Existing resource – achieved with changes within budget or changes to work practices	Within 6-9 months	Agree plan with HNS staff
1.8		Redesign and recommission the existing Intensive Support Service	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
1.9	Community Links	Maximise use of shared sites to deliver homelessness prevention	BCKLWN; HSIP; NCC	Existing resource – existing staff working flexibly in multiple locations	Ongoing but commence within first year	Initial scoping of suitable sites; liaison with NCC re: MUCH
1.10		Ensure that homelessness prevention services are accessible to rural communities	BCKLWN; HSIP; WNCT	Existing resource – may need a small amount of HPG to cover transport costs	Ongoing but commence within first year	Initial needs analysis; liaison with WNCT.
1.11		Ensure that prevention activities have a specific remit towards families , based in the community	BCKLWN; HSIP; SHPS, Shelter, NCA etc	Existing resource – ensure that strand is included in Invitations to Tender	Ongoing but commence within first year	Link with Draft Invitations to Tender
1.12		Grants and Incentives	Work with private rented sector (PRS) landlords to reduce homelessness arising from the end of PRS tenancies	BCKLWN; all prevention partners	Fully funded for 3 years – will use HPG funding for new role	Within 3-6 months
1.13	Redesign homelessness prevention grant scheme to better meet the needs of		BCKLWN	Repurpose existing funding – extend scope of existing Homelessness Prevention Grants	Within 3-6 months but by April 2025 at latest	Review existing payments; consult with partners to map out gaps in provision

		households at risk of homelessness				
1.14		Review allocations of discretionary housing payments (DHPs) and identify where prevention has been achieved	BCKLWN	Develop existing DHP pot.	Within first year	Initial meeting with Benefits team; review of allocations
1.15	Partnerships and Data	Develop a homelessness champion function to be rolled out borough-wide to all interested services	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing resource and staffing – though new roles elsewhere in strategy will help feed into this.	Ongoing but commence within first year	Initial actions to emerge from strands 1.1 and 1.2
1.16		Embed new data analyst role to better identify people at risk of homelessness		Develop existing job role	Within 3 months and then ongoing	Launch of Power BI homelessness information portal

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C2. INTERVENTION

Aim: To ensure that people who are homeless are identified quickly and placed into suitable, cost-effective accommodation where necessary, avoiding the use of Bed and Breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation. To ensure that support is provided to overcome barriers to accessing (and sustaining) emergency accommodation.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding and Resourcing	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
2.1	Accommodation	Using data, commission and design sufficient emergency accommodation to meet need.	BCKLWN Housing Strategy	Partially funded – could use monies arising from s.106 payments.	Within six months – in line with audit recommendation	Continued liaison with Housing Strategy. Needs assessment already carried out. Fairstead 7 units Sept 2024 Reid Way 7 units by 2026
2.2		Design and commission sufficient emergency accommodation to replace Welfare Cabins.	BCKLWN Housing Strategy	Partially funded – could use monies arising from s.106 payments.	By October 2024	Initial discussion with potential supplier July 2024
2.3		Review offer of accommodation to people sleeping rough.	BCKLWN	Existing resource staff and partners.	Within first year	Conduct analysis of all offers of accommodation outside s.188 duty
2.4	Support	Redesign and redevelop Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) issued by the council to homeless applicants.	BCKLWN plus coproduction group, HSIP	Existing resource staff and partners – but would benefit from coproduction coordinator	Within first year	Schedule initial review of current PHPs
2.5		Develop a “what to expect” document for homeless applicants and partner agencies.	BCKLWN plus coproduction group, HSIP, comms team	Existing resource staff and partners – but would benefit from coproduction coordinator	Within first year	Schedule initial review of current comms

2.6		Review the provision of basic items to meet the need of people accessing emergency accommodation.	BCKLWN plus co-production group, HSIP, comms	Fully funded based on estimate of current provision. Could use HPG to top-up.	Within first year	Schedule initial review of current provision
2.7		Embed processes introduced during Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation . Review the emergency offer (and processes) for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.	BCKLWN plus DAHA implementation group	Existing resource staff and partners	Ongoing but commence by December 2024	Work towards DAHA accreditation, with Standing Together charity
2.8	Partnerships	Develop a “by name” meeting / partnership to resolve the homelessness of those who are furthest away from having their housing needs met.	BCKLWN plus probation and HSIP members	Existing resource staff and partners	Ongoing but commence by December 2024	Coordinate with Probation services to expand quarterly meeting
2.9		(linked to 1.8) Recommission Intensive Support Service , reflecting current need	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
2.10		Improve working relationship with local Social Care partners to ensure immediate crisis assessment where needed.	BCKLWN; NCC	Existing resource staff and partners	Ongoing but commence within six months	Initial meeting with NCC

C3. ACCOMMODATION

Aim: To ensure that safe affordable accommodation, suitable to their needs, is available to everyone who needs it. To ensure that people residing in short/medium term accommodation (such as hostels) are supported to move on in a timely and sustainable manner.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
3.1	Single Person Accommodation	Review the effectiveness of the existing hostel pathway, conducting a needs assessment of all residents	BCKLWN; accommodation partners	Existing resource staff and partners	Within first year	Establish initial parameters of review with partners and data analyst
3.2		Embed Supported Housing Partnership to develop the effectiveness of the hostel pathway	Supported Housing Partnership	Existing partnership and services		Complete Info sharing agreement and arrange first meeting
3.3		Recommission the Housing First model	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
3.4		Develop single person accommodation that incentivises paid employment.	HSIP	Partially funded – could use HPG funding to fund incentives, or use partner resources / s.106 / Housing Companies to develop accommodation	Within two years	Explore accommodation options arising from pathway review.
3.5	Private Rented Sector	Re-engage Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords and agents. Create a flexible PRS access fund to incentivise landlords and clients.	BCKLWN plus key partners e.g. SHPS, AfEO	Partially funded – new PRS enabling role plus small incentives fund (will need to test against demand)	Within six months	Develop and advertise new job role
3.6		Explore viability of a rent-a-room scheme for single homeless households	BCKLWN, HSIP	Partially funded through new roles and existing	Within two years	Commence once PRS liaison work is well-established

				capacity but may need incentives fund (HPG?)		
3.7		Explore viability of “tenant swap” scheme for private sector tenants	BCKLWN, HSIP	Partially funded through new roles and existing capacity but may need incentives fund (HPG?)	Within two years	Commence once PRS liaison work is well-established
3.8	Social Housing and other accommodation	Conduct a review of the council’s allocations policy for social housing	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing resource but will need to shift priorities to enable within timescales	By September 2025	Initial scoping and consultation
3.9		Explore the viability of creating good quality shared accommodation for homeless applicants who choose to share with others.	BCKLWN; HSIP	Partially funded through new roles and existing capacity but may need incentives fund (HPG?)	Within two years	Commence once PRS liaison work is well-established
3.10		Continue work with housing providers to reduce levels of void properties	BCKLWN; housing providers	Existing resource to work with housing providers	Ongoing, immediate	Continued work
3.11		Develop a pathway to support and accommodate substance users.	BCKLWN; health partners	Not yet funded other than existing resource to research. Could use s.106 money to commission suitable accommodation.	Completion within three years	Initial design with health partners

C4. RECOVERY

Aim: To ensure that nobody experiences homelessness more than once, and that formerly homeless people are empowered to thrive in the borough.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
4.1	Health and substances	Improve access to mainstream health services for homeless people	BCKLWN; ICB	Existing resources including ICB provision	Ongoing but commence within six months	Initial scoping exercise re: GP outreach services
4.2		Develop recovery offer for people seeking to address alcohol dependency	BCKLWN; health partners	Not yet funded other than existing resource to research. Could use s.106 money to commission suitable accommodation.	Completion within three years	Initial design with health partners
4.3		Develop support for people with brain injuries and/or learning difficulties	BCKLWN; health partners	To be confirmed – existing resource to scope out level of need	Commence within first year	Initial scoping exercise with partners and data analyst
4.4	Community	Engage local businesses in the recovery process through employment placements and apprenticeships	BCKLWN; HSIP; DWP	Partially funded – could be delivered through existing roles and partnership, but may benefit from specific recovery/activity coordinator, linked to partners' existing streams of work	Commence work within first year	Establish "community" subgroup from HSIP
4.5		Engage residents to support formerly homeless people through a ' skills-based ' mentoring scheme	BCKLWN; HSIP			
4.6		Develop and improve access to leisure and cultural facilities for formerly homeless people.	BCKLWN; HSIP; Alive Leisure?			

4.7		Make use of ‘father-inclusive’ practices , particularly for single people looking to develop and/or restore their relationship with their children	BCKLWN; HSIP; NCC		Commence work within six months	Further training / liaison with Dr Mark Dobson – possible bespoke advice
4.8	Sustainment	Ensure that recommissioned Intensive Support Service emphasises sustainment and the inclusion of families	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
4.9		Review SHPS framework to measure recovery and sustainment	BCKLWN; SHPS; NCC	Fully funded committed annually via HPG – possibility to extend funding subject to NCC match commitment	Within 3-6 months	Review contract; ensure that SHPS aligns with Intensive Support Service
4.10		Ensure that new information and advice service incorporates sustainment skills	BCKLWN; Shelter; NCAB	Fully funded committed for 3+2 years	Ongoing but initial work within three months	Meet regularly with Shelter and NCAB; confirm and monitor KPIs
4.11		Review “accommodation for ex-offenders” programme , identifying and addressing barriers for recovery.	BCKLWN; Shelter; NCC	Existing resources and partnership.	Within six to nine months	Work with other districts to establish scope of review
4.12		Develop “multi-agency check-ins” for new tenants who may be at risk of losing accommodation	BCKLWN; Help Hub partners	Could be delivered through existing services but may need new project coordinator	Commence within first year	Initial meeting with help hub coordinators

C5. SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE

Aim: To work as one borough to achieve prevention, intervention, accommodation and recovery aims, designing services with service users and in line with the values of the partnership.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
5.1	Partnerships and staffing	Create a multi-disciplinary Strategy Implementation Partnership	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing resources and partnership.	Launch within three months of strategy	Draw up invitation list and Terms of Reference
5.2		Further develop links between key services , other council departments and elected members.	BCKLWN	Existing resources and partnership.	Commence within three months of strategy	Draw up engagement action plan prioritising departments
5.3		Develop a “best practice” guide for the partnership for supporting staff	HSIP	Existing staffing and partnership	Within one year	Initial meeting with personnel – learn from staff survey
5.4		Link with the borough-wide work to establish West Norfolk as a Marmot Place	BCKLWN; NCC; ICB	Existing resources and partnership.	Ongoing throughout strategy	Continue liaison with NCC and ICB
5.5	Lived Experience	Establish a co-production group comprising individuals with lived experience of homelessness	BCKLWN; HSIP	Partially funded – could be delivered through existing roles and partnership, but may benefit from specific lived experience coordinator, linked to partners’ existing streams of work	Commence within first year	Establish “lived experience” subgroup from HSIP
5.6		Embed trauma-informed principles and practices across all services	BCKLWN; HSIP; NCC		Commence within first year	
		Develop a career pathway to actively encourage people with	BCKLWN; HSIP		Commence within two years	

		lived experience into homelessness roles				
5.7	Communications	Develop a clear and comprehensive communications strategy around homelessness	BCKLWN; comms team; HSIP	Existing staffing and partnership including council comms team	Within six months	Initial meeting with comms team and HSIP members
5.8		Review and refresh all advice letters, leaflets and external communications issued by the Housing Needs Service	BCKLWN; co-production group	Existing staffing and partnership including council comms team	Within one year	Set up task group within Housing Needs
5.9	Data and information	Establish a clear, public-facing data portal	BCKLWN Housing Strategy	Existing staffing and partnership including data analyst	Within three months	Meeting between members and data analyst July 2024
5.10		Develop a clear and straightforward Information Sharing Protocol between partners	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing staffing and partnership	Within six months	Circulate Supported Housing Partnership protocol once agreed

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Progress against the above actions will be reviewed at least once every three months at the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group meeting, with key successes and challenges reported to the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group. We will also present an annual report to the council's Environment and Communities Panel, outlining our progress and updating the plan to reflect any changes in circumstance.

We will also record and monitor the following, as an indication of our progress towards ending homelessness:

Strand	Key indicator(s)
Prevention	Number of households with a homelessness declaration
Prevention	Number of households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at risk of becoming homeless e.g., insecure accommodation, sofa surfing prevented from becoming homeless for a minimum of 6 months accepted as homeless with a need to be rehoused (Full housing duty)
Intervention	Percentage of homeless households who were offered a prevention and relief duty, who remain homeless and are owed no further duty.
Intervention	Nightly paid accommodation (inc. B&B): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number in accommodation Spend on accommodation
Intervention	Average length of stay in temporary accommodation
Intervention	Number of people verified as sleeping rough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly total Monthly new to sleeping rough Snapshot (single night) total Snapshot – new to sleeping rough
Accommodation	Number of applicants on the HomeChoice register, by priority band
Accommodation	Number of lettings to social housing
Accommodation	Number of new Safe Accommodation units and places delivered.

Additionally, we will introduce the following new measures, to ensure that homeless applicants' voices are listened to:

- A customer feedback button ("how did we do?") at the foot of standard emails from the Housing Needs Service, linking to a brief survey about their experience
- A quarterly review of any complaints received to the Housing Needs Service, with a record kept of lessons learnt and remedial action taken
- A clear interface between the work of the council and the work of the newly formed co-production group.

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GET INVOLVED

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a framework for ending homelessness in the borough. It makes clear where we want to be heading, how we want to do things, and the key aims and objectives of the partnership.

The extent to which we achieve our aims and objectives is proportionate to the resources at our disposal. As written in our Homelessness Review earlier in the year: it takes a borough to end homelessness.

Over the next year, we will be launching many of the initiatives described in the strategy, including:

- Strengthening our relationship with private sector landlords.
- Procuring accommodation to replace expensive bed and breakfast use.
- Creating a 'co-production group' so that our future work is designed with people who have used (or are currently using) homelessness services.
- Support improving access to job opportunities and leisure/cultural facilities for people recovering from homelessness.

If you would like to be involved in the work to end homelessness in the borough – through any of the initiatives described in this document, or through any other ideas that would fit well within the framework – please email us at Strategic.Housing@west-norfolk.gov.uk or call 01553 616200.