



Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 - 2028

1. Background

- 2.1 Housing supply and demand issues are a fundamental cause of homelessness. Each year, around 6000 households register with the Council's Homesearch scheme for re housing, with 3500 seeking support because they are at risk of homelessness. The new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 has been developed against a backdrop of a worsening cost of living and nationwide housing crisis and with the involvement of a range of stakeholders. Whilst restrictions in welfare benefits have limited the availability of affordable homes for those on low incomes, a lack of sufficient new supply coupled with increasing interest rates are all compounding to create the conditions where an increasing proportion of the local population are struggling to maintain accommodation.

Data from 2021 shows housing in the city being made up of :

▪ Owned outright or with mortgage loan	48%
▪ Renting from private landlord	23%
▪ Social renting from the Council	19%
▪ Social rented from a housing association	8%
▪ Other	2%

At 2021 there were 122,990 homes (separate dwellings) within the City of Hull (Valuation Office Agency).

- There are an estimated 267,000 people living in Hull (source: Census 2021), up by 4.2% since 2011.
- There is a wealth of evidence that confirms that a decent home is essential for a state of wellbeing and can make a positive difference to residents' quality of life and stronger communities.

There has been a net reduction in the number of council homes becoming available over the past few years, partly as fewer people are moving out and partly as the Council's new-build programme, despite a strong track record of development and regeneration in excess of Homes England targets, is not able to keep pace with the loss of affordable rented properties, predominantly through the Right to Buy.

This latter point is illustrated by figures in the table below:

Year	Demolished	Combined	Sold	Leased	Acquired	New build	Stock at year-end
2017-18							24,193
2018-19	199	13	237	31	16	161	23,890
2019-20	152		173	23	6	31	23,579
2020-21	5		140	10	7	32	23,463
2021-2	1		202	24	3	66	23,305
2022-23	6		209	17	11	0	23,084

2.2 The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out a framework of broad priorities and key actions which work towards achieving our vision for homelessness in Hull.

Our long-term vision is simple yet ambitious –

“Every resident in Hull has somewhere to call home; they are able access the housing most suitable for their needs and circumstance. Through a robust housing advice, support and options offer homelessness is prevented and – where homelessness does occur – it is rare, brief and non-recurrent”.

Organisations across the city all have a contribution to make and a role to play towards this vision; this document provides a framework for private, public and voluntary organisations in Hull to work together, with a common approach, to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

2.3 The causes of homelessness are complex, multi faceted and increasingly demand creative and innovative responses. Homelessness occurs on a “spectrum” and in a climate of ever- increasing demand for affordable accommodation, in a context of shrinking supply, more people that in the past would have been able to find their own solutions to resolve their housing issue now require the support of statutory and voluntary services to do so. Whilst certain groups of people are inherently more likely to be at risk of homelessness (for instance, young people, ex offenders) the wider cost of living and nationwide housing crisis, alongside the ongoing impact of welfare reforms, have led to a growing cohort of city residents struggling to afford to access or sustain secure accommodation. The trajectory is worsening across the country and it is within this wider context that the new Homelessness Strategy 2023-28 has been devised.

This table provides an overview of all homeless approaches to the Council over the last three, full years.

	2019/20	%	2020/21	%
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Total number of households assessed	3,295		2,672	
Total households assessed as owed a duty	2,969	90.1%	2,530	94.7%
Threatened with homelessness - Prevention duty owed	1,124	34.1%	817	30.6%
Of which: due to service of valid Section 21 Notice	220	6.7%	80	3.0%
	1,845	56.0%	1,713	64.1%
	326	9.9%	142	5.3%

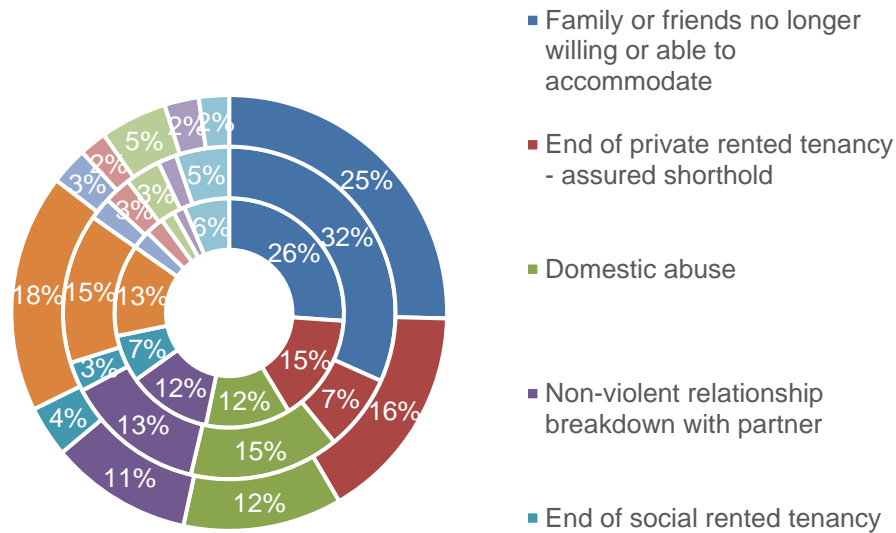
There has been a gradual shift in terms of a greater proportion of households approaching at a point whereby their homelessness can be prevented – thus allowing for more housing options to be considered, including working to keep people in their existing accommodation where appropriate to do so. Dealing with homelessness at prevention stage is less traumatic, more successful (in terms of keeping people in communities/neighbourhoods they are a part of) and often much cheaper than responding to homelessness during crisis.

2.4 This table compares Hull’s homelessness presentation data with that of England and statistical neighbours for 2021/22.

	Hull	England	Stoke	M'brough	Blackpool
No. households assessed	3,530	290,180	1,370	1,282	1,372
No. households assessed per 1,000	14.51	5.83	6.07	11.08	9.73
No. households owed a duty	3,299	278,110	1,353	1,263	1,336
% owed duty	93.5%	95.8%	98.8%	98.5%	97.4%
Households with support	1,081	143,910	505	781	1,112

need(s) owed a duty					
% with support needs	32.8%	51.7%	37.3%	61.8%	83.2%

2.5 Hull saw significantly more homelessness presentations per 1,000 of the general population than statistical neighbours.



3.1 The new draft strategy has been developed around 7 key themes, providing a framework for the council and its partners to work within, with the over arching aim of preventing homelessness occurring and identifying those at risk as early as possible in their “journey” so that services can successfully intervene.

Theme 1 Housing Supply and Access

Prevention of homelessness starts with ensuring sufficient supply of housing and providing easy-to-navigate route to it; the housing supply and access theme outlines our most upstream priorities and efforts to prevent homelessness. These are:

Build more affordable homes and bring empty homes back into use

The Council and its partners have a range of tools and grant funding schemes available to them to deliver new homes and bring empty ones back into use. The availability of such funding, who can access it and whether it is provided in sufficient amounts fluctuates all of the time – from Homes England grant to Right to Right Receipts – however, Hull has an excellent track record of delivering new homes and an approach to empty homes which has won national recognition.

The Local Plan sets out a housing requirement (the number of new homes needed in the city) of 620 units of housing each year over the plan period and of those 141 should be affordable; current land supply, sites under construction and housing allocated land suggest that these numbers are achievable but the immediate economic outlook casts some doubt over the viability of housing delivery in the short term. The Council, alongside Homes England, will continue to act as enablers of housing delivery over the Strategy period to drive delivery and meet housing demand with suitable supply.

The Council, community-led housing organisations and Registered Providers will continue to develop innovative ways of delivering the housing required in Hull – through new supply and bringing empty homes back into use – and this will be the focus of a strategic housing partnership.

Key actions:

1. Establish a strategic housing partnership in Hull to maximise affordable, new housing delivery

2. Review the Council’s approach to bringing empty homes back into use (including re-establishing the Empty Homes Partnership)

Develop a comprehensive support and finance offer for community-led housing providers to develop new housing

Continue to diversify accommodation types and tenures

An effective housing market is one which provides a range of housing tenures, accommodation types, landlords and is responsive to the varying needs of the population it serves; continuing to develop the range of different housing options available in Hull ensures that the housing market here is broad and balanced – giving choice and responding to people’s housing needs.

Housing affordability issues now affect all different parts of the market with greater numbers of households living in Hull needing assistance to purchase their own home. Appendix 1 provides further detailed information to illustrate the impact on the city over time.

Key actions:

1. Expand the shared tenancies programme to increase the numbers of people able to be affordably housed in existing housing stock

2. Develop a market position statement in relation to affordable home ownership

3. Establish and publish clear pathways to shared ownership, First Homes and other affordable home ownership options in Hull.

4. Continue to develop relationships with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to maximise external support and grant for housing and regeneration in Hull.

Make access to available housing straightforward with easy to navigate pathways to accurate and timely advice

A key element of our service improvement work has been to introduce an enhanced online tool within the Council's website, "Advice Aid", that provides easy to navigate, accurate information in accessible formats and languages for anyone concerned about homelessness. We know that homelessness disproportionately affects younger people who are more likely than other groups to search for information online. Over time, the aim is to reduce the number of people that need to make a formal homelessness approach as they will be able to identify their own solutions before situations reach crisis point.

Our new Housing Access function will include a dedicated "triage" team that will assist people to navigate their options more effectively. The team will ensure that people that are considering making an application for council re housing are provided with tailored advice about their re housing prospects and housing options, so that they can make an informed decision. The aim is to reduce the number of people registering for re housing that have no realistic prospect of securing a council home, introducing efficiencies in the service so that staff can focus on the quality customer discussions that will result in finding solutions. Recent analysis shows that the vast majority of housing applicants will not be successful in securing a council property. The reality is that people will need to pursue other options, for instance, in the private rented sector. A package of support is now available to help people who have barriers to accessing the private rented sector, which includes a dedicated Private Rented Sector Access Team and practical support where necessary, such as support with tenancy deposits and furniture packages. Pre inspection of properties will ensure that only good quality accommodation is utilised as part of this scheme. Whilst the Council's approach needs to focus increasingly on the private rented sector to identify housing solutions, this needs to be pursued with a focus on access to good quality accommodation that is affordable. Where a landlord is not part of the Council's Accreditation Scheme and therefore the quality of the landlord's stock has been established, the Council will seek to ensure that properties are assessed to ensure they are safe and suitable for the household being accommodated. Additional inspection resources will be procured to support this work.

Build public awareness of the reality of affordable accommodation in the city

The Council owns and manages around 23,000 homes, a stock that has been steadily shrinking since the peak of circa 46,000 properties in the 1990s, predominantly through the Right to Buy. There are limited opportunities to bring new stock into the system, although as outlined earlier, the Council has historically performed very well and exceeded targets in this area. As Hull is a relatively small but growing city of around 270,000 people, with a proportionately large council owned stock, the public perception has historically

been that the local authority has a lot of available homes to rent. As turnover slows and the council continues to lose stock through the Right to Buy (currently around 200 homes a year), it is important that our strategy includes focussed and sustained communications aimed at managing the expectations of the public and stakeholders, to build awareness of the current reality and encourage people that have the ability to resolve their own housing needs to do so.

In the past, it was not uncommon for residents to move between council rented and privately rented sector accommodation. The ongoing freeze to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) benefit rates has led to an increasing gap between rents charged by private landlords and the benefit rates that apply under the LHA. This is a nationwide policy issue and one that is beyond the ability of the Council to influence. In practice, this has led to more residents, both working and not working, seeking council housing as they are increasingly priced out of the privately rented sector.

Key action:

Develop and deliver a widescale communications strategy aimed at stakeholders and the public to raise awareness of the reality of affordable housing supply in the city and encouraging people to seek advice at an earlier stage.

Strengthen arrangements with other registered providers of social housing

Whilst the Council is by far the largest provider of social housing in the city, there are a number of other social landlords with significant stock. We will work closely with these providers to identify opportunities to improve access for residents who are increasingly priced out of other forms of accommodation.

Key actions:

- 1. Strengthen arrangements with Registered Providers operating in Hull to ensure that homeless households who cannot remain in their existing accommodation have the appropriate prioritisation for empty properties.**
- 2. Establish a joint ownership of the prevention of homelessness agenda by all providers of social housing operating in Hull.**

Making best use of council owned stock

As the largest social landlord in the city, we will pursue opportunities to make the best use of our existing council stock at a time when supply is scarce and the turnover is slowing down. Key activity proposed includes:

“Left in occupation” of a council home on the death of a tenant

Many council homes are lost to the supply chain due to family members of the previous tenant requesting the tenancy of the property, despite not having legal succession rights. We will follow the legislation around successions to ensure that as many council homes as possible are made available to let to those households assessed as being in the most housing need, rather than being allocated to households purely because they were living in them with the tenant. We will ensure those affected are offered rehousing advice and support so that they have onward housing options appropriate to their needs.

Downsizing

We recognise that many tenants are living in homes bigger than they need but also that there are many reasons why downsizing might not be an attractive prospect for them. We will continue to explore and develop ways in which tenants can be supported to downsize, making changes to our policy that enables this to happen; freeing up much needed large family accommodation at the same time as ensuring those downsizing move somewhere that still meets their needs and wishes.

Use of direct lettings and promotion of mutual exchange

We will explore various initiatives that will boost the number of homes available to let in order to meet more people's housing need. This will include reviewing our use of direct lets and ensuring they are not awarded when the issue is demand versus supply rather than an issue with the level of priority on the housing list. We will also explore whether the use of chain lettings can be introduced within our policy, which would give Hull City Council tenants priority for some properties. This would then resolve their housing need and free up their old property for someone else. We will better encourage mutual exchange, which in many existing social housing tenants' cases is now the only realistic option for finding a new home.

Allocations policy and overcrowding

We will review our Allocations Policy. We aim to have a much simpler policy which is easy for applicants and partners to understand both in terms of how much priority a person will get and crucially, their prospects of being rehoused with the council. We will review the level of priority awarded for issues like overcrowding, when there are wider implications on things like health and education, ensuring that our finite housing resources are allocated to those households in the most acute housing need.

Reduce the time taken to repair and re let empty council properties

When a council property becomes vacant, it is crucial that it becomes available to house another household as soon as possible. This in turn releases much needed temporary and hostel accommodation as people are able to move through the system. In the coming months, a range of methods will be put into place to make the process more efficient, which includes reviewing the team's priorities so that they are freed up to focus more time on this critical area, as

well as introducing “any day tenancy starts”. By increasing the flexibility of the tenancy start date, this will over time reduce the average number of days that a property remains empty.

Pilot the removal of restrictions for the allocation of flats to families

There is significant demand for flats, including high rise, from family groups. It is recognised that houses, rather than flats, are a more desirable housing solution for families with children, but this needs to be balanced against the need to offer decent and affordable accommodation, using the Council’s stock as efficiently as possible. In 2017, Cabinet approved the removal of restrictions on allocation of high rise flats to applicants with children under 12 on a pilot basis, with blocks in scope to be determined by the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. Due to the impact of the pandemic and more recently the need to respond to the Homes for Ukraine scheme delivery locally diverting the resources available in the team, this decision could not be put into place operationally. At a time when affordable accommodation is becoming more scarce and when building a more balanced community within some blocks would benefit all residents, opening up the supply of larger flats to family groups would contribute to meeting housing need. However, this initiative will need to be carefully piloted to ensure that the needs of all residents are taken into account, and with a focus on low and medium rise blocks which were designed with family use in mind.

Ensure there is sufficient and suitable temporary accommodation provision to meet statutory homelessness duties

Use of temporary accommodation in the city has increased by around 115% since 2019; it increased by 30% between January and April 2023 alone, a trend that is emerging across the country and one that is likely to worsen as external factors beyond the control of the local authority continue to reduce the supply of affordable accommodation.

Demand for temporary accommodation has also been impacted by international conflicts that have generated new arrivals to the city. As a “City of Sanctuary”, Hull has a proud history of welcoming people from around the world, fleeing war and persecution. This includes people arriving through the asylum and refugee routes. In the past 18 months, this has notably included significant numbers of people arriving from Ukraine, many of whom are seeking to settle in the city, and who require housing advice and support.

A range of different accommodation is currently in use to meet the needs of single people, couples and families. This includes council owned flats and houses, commissioned and non commissioned hostels, Bed and Breakfast accommodation and hotels.

The costs of providing temporary accommodation for general needs customers has more than doubled between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Last year, the Council spent £770,000 on this provision, some of which was offset by grant funding

provided through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Given the underlying direction of travel, it is likely that costs will continue to increase, reducing the ability of the Council to deploy grant funding to more preventative and less reactive initiatives.

Key actions:

- 1. We will explore all viable options to increase the availability of good quality, good value temporary accommodation, which will include the long term leasing of ex hotel accommodation and private rented sector properties.**
- 2. We will develop a procurement framework so that providers of suitable temporary accommodation can become “approved suppliers” to offer accommodation as and when required. This will reduce our reliance on more costly forms of provision that we have historically needed to use to ensure the Council can fulfil its statutory homelessness duties.**

Discharging our statutory rehousing duties with an offer of privately rented accommodation

As a local authority with a large retained stock of council properties, historically our approach has been that household's that are accepted as homeless following investigation will be offered permanent council accommodation if this is their preference. In the past, an award of a homelessness Band B priority within the Homesearch Choice Based Lettings system would result in the applicant being able to secure rehousing within a reasonable period of time. Over the past 2 years, we have seen a steady increase in the number of applicants with a very high re housing priority (Bands A and B) whilst the number of properties becoming available to let has reduced. Prior to the pandemic, the council would expect to process 2000 vacant homes every year. In the past 12 months, this has reduced to circa 1400 homes, of which only 600 were family houses. It is therefore no longer realistic to expect that homeless households can rely on an offer of council accommodation within a reasonable time frame. As the numbers being placed as well as the average length of stay in temporary accommodation are steadily increasing, there is a need to make changes to the current approach, with the aim of resolving a household's homelessness more quickly, enabling people to move on in their lives and put down roots.

The Localism Act 2011 allows local authorities to discharge their statutory rehousing duties with a reasonable offer within the privately rented sector and this is now common practice across the country. Our strategy to reduce the number of people living in less than ideal and expensive temporary accommodation for prolonged periods of time therefore needs to include the tool of a privately rented sector accommodation offer where this is appropriate to meet the household's requirements. Forthcoming changes outlined in the Private Renters Reform Bill, particularly the abolition of “no fault” Section 21

evictions, are intended to improve the protections and security available to people living in this sector. Our developing Privately Rented Sector Access Team will continue to forge strong links with private landlords, reducing barriers to accessing the sector (for instance, supporting people with a deposit) so that our approach to preventing homelessness becomes a truly cross tenure response.

Key actions:

- 1. Continue to expand the remit and reach of the Privately Rented Sector Access Team by forging links with a larger number of landlords and expanding the practical measures available to support access into the sector.**
- 2. Adopt a policy of discharging statutory homelessness duties with a reasonable offer of a privately rented sector accommodation, where this will meet the needs of the household.**

Theme 2 Strengthening tenancy sustainment and financial inclusion

In recent years the Council has recognised the importance in investing in a proactive cross tenure tenancy sustainment offer as a key element of our preventing homelessness strategy. The dedicated tenancy sustainment team working with council tenants to identify tenancies at risk at an early stage successfully achieved, on behalf of tenants, £290k in charitable funding and £537k in unclaimed welfare benefits in 2022/23. The new Housing Access service includes dedicated housing sustainment officers that are able to work in a variety of settings, including people placed in temporary accommodation or moving into their first tenancy, to support them to prepare for independent living. A cross service tenancy sustainment group brings together the council landlord service and the housing access service to identify ways to work collaboratively with the aim of preventing evictions and enabling access to the range of internal and external support that is now available.

Proactively supporting people that are struggling but who still have a home, to stay where they are is not only less traumatic and disruptive for the household concerned, but is also far more cost effective for the wider system, than trying to respond when the situation has become entrenched. Amongst the cohort of those currently sleeping rough, there are a number of examples of individuals who at some point in the past, did hold a council or private tenancy, but were evicted from it. Eviction is often the catalyst for people to enter a downward spiral in their lives, from which recovery becomes ever more challenging.

We know that poverty is a significant and worsening issue for many residents in the city. By maximising household income and supporting people to reduce outgoings wherever possible, more residents will be able to stay in their current accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so. Co location of specialist officers is already enabling a more holistic offer of support to residents. This includes:

- Dedicated DWP worker to support people with benefits issues and access to employment
- Mental Health practitioners that are able to undertake assessments and provide advice, including specialist support for people with Hoarding Disorder
- Dedicated alcohol and drugs workers embedded within the Housing Access and Landlord services.
- Dedicated private rented sector access officer and navigator to support successful move on for people leaving prison or approved premises that are “tenancy ready”
- Practical and financial support through a Tenancy Sustainment Fund assisting council tenants to manage their tenancy and a package of measures to support people to access and get set up in a new tenancy (for instance, support with furniture, deposits for a new rented home etc)
- Continued financial support to fund a “top up” to the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) from the Council’s Housing Revenue Account, supporting council tenants to manage shortfalls in their rent

Key actions:

- 1. Continue to develop and enhance a cross tenure, multi disciplinary housing sustainment offer for the city, that over time will stem “new flow” that results in entrenched rough sleeping**
- 2. Continue to develop a cross service and cross tenure partnership approach to driving down the number of evictions that can be prevented by interventions**
- 3. Map all existing floating support offers to identify gaps in existing provision**
- 4. Communicate the availability of these preventative services to key stakeholders, to maximise impact**

Theme 3 Homelessness advice and assistance

The Housing Access service undertook a survey in 2021 of people affected by homelessness which indicated that two thirds of respondents preferred to receive support with their application via online and telephone methods, rather than face to face. Whilst the majority find this more convenient and flexible, a significant segment of the population seek information and support in other ways. We will enhance our existing service offer by seeking to provide outreach services as team capacity allows, to enable us to reach communities that may struggle to engage with us by the “traditional” routes.

A key resource in the city is the strong network of third sector organisations that offer so much support to communities and in many cases provide early and preventative advice. These organisations are often the first point of call for residents that are struggling and have the trust of the people they work with.

The Housing Access service has piloted a workshop with organisations providing support to newly arrived communities, such as refugees and migrant workers, who are more likely than other groups to struggle to access accurate advice and information. Feedback from this initiative identified the value of rolling out a programme of similar events aimed at statutory and voluntary sector stakeholders that have contact with residents that are experiencing housing issues. An opportunity was also identified to commission voluntary and community sector services to provide initial housing and homelessness advice to their service users, enabling better support at an early stage and reducing the need for residents to approach the local authority at crisis point.

The issue of “sofa surfing” in the city is largely hidden. Anecdotally, we know that an increasing number of people are likely to be staying in insecure accommodation, such as with friends and family, as they are unable to afford to rent their own home. This “hidden homeless” population are at risk of exploitation and without the security of a tenancy or licence agreement, could be at immediate risk of homelessness.

Key actions:

- 1. Continue to roll out a series of workshops aimed at statutory and voluntary sector agencies, with the aim of raising awareness of housing demand and supply issues, housing rights, homelessness prevention options, housing standards and reporting channels.**
- 2. Develop a network of trusted and trained voluntary and community sector partners that are able to provide initial housing and homelessness advice to service users**
- 3. Identify opportunities to provide housing options outreach services at a variety of locations.**
- 4. Research the scale, prevalence and characteristics of people “sofa surfing” to inform our understanding of the issue and identify ways to support people living in insecure accommodation.**

Theme 4 Specialist support and accommodation

A significant proportion of homeless households in Hull – at least a third in any given year – have support needs and some of those need a supported accommodation offer in order to recover from homelessness; this support and accommodation need will be different for each and every household. This theme outlines our priorities in relation to specialist support and accommodation.

Improve the quality of supported accommodation

There is a national focus on the quality of the 'exempt accommodation' sector – primarily in response to concerns about the quality of service and value for money provided by some providers in the supported accommodation sector. In Hull there are some excellent, non-commissioned providers of supported accommodation who support some of the most vulnerable people to recover from the trauma of homelessness; there are also some examples of very poor practice. Via the Supported Accommodation Review Team, the Council will continue to commit resource to ensuring good providers are supported and encouraged to continually improve; and those not delivering the accommodation and service that tenants pay for receive the most suitable enforcement response.

Deliver the right types of temporary and housing related support

In terms of general homelessness practice, there has been a gradual, ongoing shift away from congregate supported housing models – as a result of lessons learned from the Covid pandemic and general evolution of housing-led/Housing First delivery models. Those with support needs present in any number of ways – from those with historic trauma and survivors of multiple disadvantage to those with a current substance misuse problem – and the supported accommodation system needs to provide a suitable flexible and agile response to facilitating each household's recovery.

The Council and its partners continue to develop supported accommodation services and systems, which respond to known and emerging needs, through a range of commissioning activity, clear market signalling and obtaining external grants. The primary vehicle for this commissioning is the Council's Housing Related Support framework (in place to 2029); this will be complemented via various government grant programmes (including Single Homeless Accommodation and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programmes) and joint commissioning exercises between housing, children's and adult services for those with additional needs. The impending introduction of the OFSTED regulatory environment governing the accommodation of 16 and 17 year old Care Leavers will see the costs associated with this provision increase for both commissioned and non commissioned providers. This could result in the loss of this valuable provision for this vulnerable group.

Historically, there has been a lack of reliable data on the outcomes that housing related support providers achieve with service users. For the Council to continue to make significant investment in the sector, a robust evidence base needs to be developed that demonstrates the impact of commissioned services and the valuable work they do to support people to rebuild their lives and move towards independence. There cannot be a "one size fits all" model of success, and it should be recognised that not everyone will be able to achieve independence in the traditional sense of the word.

Develop robust move-on pathways from short term supported accommodation into long term, sustainable housing

A supported accommodation needs assessment conducted in 2021 suggested that Hull has about the right amount of supported accommodation to meet this demand (a supply of 2318 units of accommodation over a 12-month period) and projected demand over the next few years. However, it also found that a significant amount of this capacity (approximately 40%) was filled with households ready to move-on to general needs, independent accommodation; this 'silting up' of units restricts the supply of supported accommodation for newly presenting homeless households. A recent emerging trend, anecdotally, is that service users are in some cases reluctant to move on into independent living as they do not believe that they can afford to meet their essential household costs if they receive welfare benefits. Whilst living in a hostel, people make a payment to cover service charges, but do not have other outgoings. As the cost of living continues to bite, this issue will create an additional pressure on the "silted up" hostel system.

As set out earlier – generally increasing the supply of, and access to, housing in Hull is a strategic priority and this work will assist to enable move on from the supported accommodation sector. However, in order to enable this to happen more quickly – as those with support needs become ready to move-on – there is a range of activity which needs to take place; namely, the further development of a supported accommodation move-on pathway which extends beyond access to the Council's own housing stock.

Key actions:

- 1. Develop a comprehensive, cross-tenure move-on pathway for those housed in the supported accommodation sector**
- 2. Deliver the right type of accommodation and support and shifting towards more housing-led and self-contained offers – through ongoing Council commissioning and encouraging the market to access government grants**
- 3. Continue to develop the Council's Supported Accommodation Review offer – ensuring that good practice in this sector is shared, encouraged and developed, whilst enforcing against poor quality and ensuring poor providers are held to account.**
- 4. Develop a "Single Point of Coordination" pathway to allow the Council to refer people into non commissioned accommodation that meets the Supported Accommodation Review team's quality standards.**
- 5. Deliver a multi-disciplinary programme to improve the quality of supported accommodation**
- 6. Commission the right types of temporary and housing related support for the needs of people who become homeless**
- 7. Develop a clear picture of the progress people make towards**

independence when accessing commissioned and non commissioned services through the implementation of the ECINS case management system

- 8. Bolster the availability of good quality floating support provision, aimed at preventing, where possible, the need to enter accommodation based provision in the first place, or to ensure that resettlement from this provision does not represent a “cliff edge” where support ends.**

Theme 5 Youth and family homelessness

Homelessness is a traumatic experience for any household – this is particularly true for families with children and young people. Homelessness is an adverse childhood experience and multiplies the likelihood of people experiencing a series of disadvantage and negative outcomes in later life; in the short-term having to move around as a result of homelessness means that children’s education is disrupted and their developing social networks are broken. Family homelessness steals wellbeing, feelings of safety and happiness during some of the most important, formative points of children and their parents’ lives.

For young people on the cusp of independence – those aged 16 – 25 – having homelessness be a factor in their journey to adulthood makes them some of the most vulnerable in our society. At a critical moment in their lives, timely and effective support can help a young person to find a stable home and support them in completing their educational programme or starting their professional career. If this opportunity is missed, homelessness can limit their chances of a successful transition to adulthood, pushing some to a vicious cycle of exclusion and deprivation.

Alignment of housing and children’s services

A home which is affordable to live in – with sufficient space – in a neighbourhood in which households have a stake is arguably the most important foundation stone of most families’ lives; not having that places enormous strain on family life and can exacerbate existing issues and tensions within the home.

It is therefore important to continue to bring together the housing sector and statutory children’s services to ensure that housing plays a role in keeping children safe, families together and minimises the disruption to family life caused by homelessness. This means preventing more cases of family homelessness – keeping families in existing accommodation where that is a suitable option – avoiding the need for use of expensive temporary accommodation and generally intervening at the earliest opportunity. Doing this requires deeper integration of the housing options and Early Help offer – making sure that families get the right homelessness advice and assistance at the right time.

Tenancy readiness

Prevention of homelessness for many can be as straightforward as having the knowledge of what managing a tenancy and a home entails; young people who may have experienced multiple episodes of homelessness, or have been removed from parents, often struggle to manage in their first independent home owing to the fact that they are not tenancy ready. Where young people become homeless as a result of being asked to leave the family home, (currently around 25% of people approaching for homelessness advice cite this reason) that crisis often takes place ahead of any well-developed independent living skills being realised.

Between targeted tenancy readiness programmes – such as the Passport to a Property – universal independent living skills training and practical support to set up home following homelessness, equipping young people with the skills to thrive in their first tenancy prevents a cycle of successive periods of homelessness.

Increase the range of care leavers and young people's housing options

In order to better manage the transition between care and independence we must continue to develop and expand the range of housing options available to care leavers and those with experience of care; the past five years have seen the development of shared tenancies, a wider range of housing related support, new semi-independent accommodation and Housing First schemes. Continuing to broaden the range of support and accommodation options to match the needs of this diverse group of young people will ensure that there is a better chance of people successfully navigating their transition into adulthood, that first offer being suitable and preventing the need for further, unnecessary and harmful transitions between unsuitable accommodation.

Key actions:

- 1. Embed the homelessness prevention advice and assistance in the Early Help offer**
- 2. Expand the shared tenancies, Housing First and support offer available to care leavers and young people who are homeless**
- 3. Conduct a review of housing pathway for care leavers and young people who are homeless to ensure sufficient move-on options exist into independent, general needs housing**
- 4. Develop an overarching tenancy readiness programme – inclusive of passport to a property – which targets all young people at risk of homelessness from sofa surfers to those who have been asked to leave the family home**

Theme 6 Rough sleeping and Severe and Multiple Disadvantage

Rough sleeping represents homelessness in its most acute form and its causes usually extend well beyond simply not having somewhere to call home; for a small minority sleeping rough may well come as a result of a case of bad luck over a very short period of time but for the vast majority it follows from a long list of traumatic events, mental ill-health, offending behaviour, substance misuse – collectively termed severe and multiple disadvantage.

For those rough sleepers who simply need a housing response the earlier parts of this document deal with how the Council and its partners seeks to respond – this section however focuses on those who need much more intensive support and rapid access to accommodation.

The numbers of people sleeping rough in Hull fluctuates significantly over the course of a calendar year but the long-term increase in rough sleeping observed between 2010 and 2017 (with the 2017 autumn snapshot counting 28 rough sleepers out that night) has been arrested and the direction of travel since 2018 has generally been downwards with a count of 10 at the Autumn count 2022. Whilst a one-night count provides a useful indicator of the overall direction of travel the scale of issue is larger – with around 180 individuals sleeping rough over a two year period. A significant part of the reason for this change has been government’s focus on - and investment in – the response to rough sleeping nationally; Hull has secured significant amounts of grant funding through funding streams announced in the national Rough Sleeping Strategy – *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good*. As a result of this Hull has been able to develop a dedicated, comprehensive rough sleeper response – a core Council team with a range of supporting services including outreach, substance misuse, mental health and social care. There are also a range of accommodation-led, intensively supported schemes being developed or in delivery spread across a range of partners; by April 2025 – and with the assistance of programmes from Next Steps Accommodation to Single Homeless Accommodation – it is anticipated that the Council and its partners will have enabled the delivery of an additional 100 units of self-contained, housing-led supported accommodation for this cohort.

In 2022 Hull was awarded further funding and Changing Futures was developed to provide drive fundamental system change in the city for those who have severe and multiple disadvantage with the intention of responding the root causes of the majority of rough sleeper cases and preventing future instances of this most extreme form of homelessness.

Key actions:

- 1. Expand the range of housing-led, self-contained supported accommodation options for those who have slept rough**
- 2. Deliver the Changing Futures Programme, make Hull a Trauma-Informed City and embed the Making Every Adult Matter approach across the entire system**
- 3. Provide a multi-agency, assertive outreach offer for those sleeping**

rough and those at risk of sleeping rough – able to provide a flexible and agile response to a range of housing, health and care needs.

- 4. Develop a comprehensive needs assessment for those with Severe and Multiple Disadvantage and ensure that this is embedded in decision making about housing, health and offending/probation services.**

Theme 7 Domestic Abuse

Hull has a long track record of delivering a comprehensive range of services for survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse and their children. We know that there is a high prevalence of domestic abuse within the city, an issue that is often hidden behind closed doors. It is estimated that locally, around 7440 females and 3720 males will have experienced domestic abuse within the past 12 months. Most of the people affected will never cross the paths of statutory services. Analysis of homelessness statistics locally shows that domestic abuse represented 12% of all reasons for approaches in 2022/3, however this is likely to be a significant under estimation of need. It is a complex and challenging issue and one that requires a specialist and sensitive response.

The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 strengthened the duties of local authorities, requiring them to conduct an assessment of local needs and commission dedicated safe accommodation and support services for their communities. In November 2021, the local authority re commissioned and expanded the services available for survivors of domestic abuse, which included the creation of a dedicated Domestic Abuse Hub, embedded within the Housing Access Service.

Key actions:

- 1. Ensure all survivors of domestic abuse have access to a specialist, risk based offer of housing related support through the provision of a dedicated domestic abuse housing hub.**
- 2. Continue to develop and continuously improve the cross service response to domestic abuse, evidenced through the retention of Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) enhanced accreditation.**
- 3. Regularly refresh the safe accommodation needs assessment to establish where gaps in provision exist, to inform future commissioning**
- 4. Ensure that children within households affected by domestic abuse have access to specialist therapeutic support and dedicated child centred service**