

EAST HAMPSHIRE

**PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND
ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY
2025-30**



Contents

Foreword – Preventing homelessness in East Hampshire

Homelessness and rough sleeping

Purpose of this strategy

Policy and context

Defining homelessness

National and local challenges

Making a big difference!

Our priorities

Prevention first

Maximising the use of available housing

Rough sleeper support

Provide high-quality advice

Page 3

Page 4

Page 5

Page 6

Page 7

Page 8

Page 9

Page 10

Page 11

Page 12

Page 13



FOREWORD

Preventing homelessness in East Hampshire

I am pleased to introduce you to East Hampshire District Council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-2030. It outlines in detail how we propose to prevent and tackle homelessness within East Hampshire.

Homelessness is a key part of the Government's agenda, and we are committed partners in this effort and are committed to ensuring residents of East Hampshire have somewhere to call home that is both suitable and affordable.

It is vital that our residents have access to effective, specialist support that can be offered to assist them to prevent them from becoming homeless.

This strategy offers exciting opportunities for collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sector, to maximise the delivery of homelessness prevention and support services in East Hampshire.

Its primary aims include:

- **Reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, keeping homeless families closer to their existing support and community networks**
- **Reducing the length of time which homeless households stay in emergency accommodation, to limit the disruption to accessing schools, GPs, and employment**
- **Ensure that intervention services to rough sleepers are effective and assists them to secure accommodation**
- **Investing in staff training and development so that those who need to access homelessness services receive the best available service. With Partners, we will be responsible for ensuring this strategy is implemented and highlighting areas for improvement.**

I would like to extend my thanks to our residents, service users, partners and staff members who fed into this ambitious Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which sets the foundations for homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services over the next five years.



Cllr Adeel Shah

Portfolio holder for Community Development and Engagement, East Hampshire District Council

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness and rough sleeping

The Council is required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce and monitor a Homelessness Strategy.

It is widely acknowledged that rough sleeping and homelessness does not simply mean the absence of a home, it also carries several other problems associated directly or indirectly with it.

Mental and physical health problems, substance misuse/addiction, unemployment, child poverty, offending, chaotic lifestyles, and anti-social behaviour are often issues associated with a person sleeping rough or experiencing homelessness. These additional problems may lead to a cycle of rough sleeping or homelessness.

The rural nature of the district and high house prices means households are also affected by affordability issues which impacts on levels of rough sleeping and homelessness and our ability to prevent and relieve homelessness in East Hampshire.

Resolving homelessness is not only about providing suitable accommodation. Partnership working is essential to address the households' many needs and ensure they can sustain their tenancy.

East Hampshire District Council currently receives a Homelessness Prevention Grant and a Rough Sleeping Grant from Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government which, along with other specialist funding streams, will enable us to deliver this strategy.

A review of homelessness in East Hampshire was conducted to support the development of the strategy. It considered current need, provision, current and future challenges. It consulted with residents, service users and partners to understand our current service.

MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

The factors expected to have the greatest impact on homelessness services in East Hampshire over the life of the strategy are:

- Renters Rights Bill
- Uncertainty surrounding funding (Social Inclusion, Rough Sleepers, Homeless Prevention Grant)
- Supply of affordable accommodation
- Uncertainty around Ukraine Host payments may lead to increase in Homelessness approaches

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Purpose of the strategy

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was developed from the Review of Homelessness findings.

This strategy sets out how the council will meet its priorities having regard to current legislation and available funding.

The priorities are to:

- Prevent homelessness in the district and meet our obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Secure accommodation for homeless households
- Provide support for homeless households
- Tackle rough sleeping in the district



Policy and context

Alongside existing legislation and statutory guidance, a range of national policies and priorities frame the environment in which we seek to prevent homelessness.

These include:

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
Homelessness Code of guidance for local authorities
Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003
Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Equality Act 2010
Rough Sleeping Initiative
Welfare benefits legislation and guidance
National policies on specific needs, such as: substance misuse, refugees, former Armed Service staff, those leaving hospital and care leavers.

There is also expected legislation that could impact the environment in which this strategy operates.

In particular, the introduction of the **Renters Rights Bill**. Legislation which aims to transform the experience of private renting is currently awaiting royal assent. Implementation dates are not currently known.

RENTERS RIGHTS BILL

Measures include:

- Abolish section 21 evictions and move to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic
- Ensure possession grounds are fair to both parties, giving tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when reasonable.
- Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman
- Create a Private Rented Sector Database
- Strengthen local authority enforcement. An package of investigatory powers will be introduced and civil penalties will be expanded.



DEFINITION

Defining homelessness

Homelessness is often most strongly associated with rough sleeping. However, the evidence-based review conducted to formulate this strategy has evidenced that most of those seeking assistance do so because they are being asked to leave their accommodation.

In 2024/25, 61% of applicants approaching for assistance were threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days, versus 19% who were already homeless.

A further 19% made contact for detailed advice before they were threatened with homelessness.

Those early approaches allow time to explore all options to prevent homelessness, and this strategy wishes to develop that prevention first approach.



OVERVIEW

National and local challenges

National picture

There continues to be a strong emphasis on building more new homes across the country - this also includes affordable housing and low-cost home ownership. The emerging Local Plan and the Affordable Housing Strategy both seek to address East Hampshire's response to these issues

Nationally numbers of households becoming homeless have risen and local authorities are struggling to support applicants to access the private rented market and are increasingly utilising temporary accommodation.

Changes in the funding for local authorities through the Homelessness Prevention Grant and the Rough Sleeping Initiative are expected in 2026/27 and at the time of writing the level of anticipated funding is not clear.

Local picture

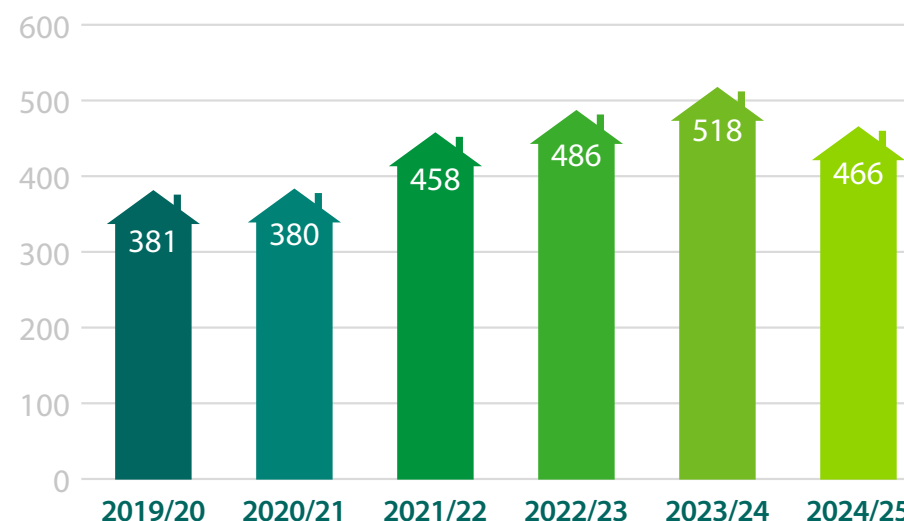
The level of homelessness applications has risen in the district, a rise of 19% over the life of the last strategy.

Rising rents, challenges in accessing private rented accommodation and complex needs make accessing and sustaining accommodation challenging for many of those approaching for assistance.

Households without children are a substantial proportion of those seeking assistance.

The Council's Affordable Housing Strategy (for review in 2025) seeks to deliver solutions to some of the issues identified in the Homelessness Strategy. This includes the development of permanent social housing, which has faced challenges in recent years. It has also looked to address the shortage of emergency accommodation in the district, which is exacerbated by the increase in homeless applications.

Number of households approaching Housing Solutions Team for advice and assistance



OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Making a big difference!

East Hampshire District Council adopted a Council Strategy for 2025-2030

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Ensure East Hampshire is an environmentally sustainable district and council.

Transform our own buildings and ways of working.

Enable everyone in the area to produce less carbon, reduce waste and recycle more.

ECONOMIC GROWTH & PROSPERITY



Attract investment to create an environment in which everyone can contribute to bring about a good quality of life across our district.

Where people are in good jobs, with affordable housing and fast digital connections.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES



Nurture the strong spirit of commitment and connection in the area to develop thriving communities.

Work with communities to ensure they have greater participation and ownership of community assets.

MODERN & EFFICIENT COUNCIL



Continue our transformation journey to be a modern and efficient council.

Making it easier for residents to get things done and to ensure money is spent wisely.

This plan sets-out our four strategic themes which will run through the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

High levels of homelessness could prevent the corporate priorities from being achieved. In particular, building thriving communities means ensuring the basic needs of housing are met for our residents. If

they are threatened with homelessness, ensuring all steps are taken for them to remain within their community, close to support and employment links.

There is a strong economic cost associated with homelessness, both for those becoming homeless but also by the local authority, particularly if they rely too heavily on emergency placements.

Prevention work is therefore at the heart of this strategy. Using the data and feedback obtained through the homelessness review, the following priorities have been identified to ensure the service to customers is developed to best meet the challenges of the next five years.

OUR PRIORITIES

Prevention first

Preventing homelessness is the central focus of this strategy. Homelessness impacts households negatively. It has a negative effect on health and wellbeing of residents, reduces educational outcomes and creates social instability – making it difficult for households to maintain support links, employment and participate in community life.

East Hampshire District Council will take all steps possible to avoid homelessness. The actions will include:

Maintaining the low usage of bed and breakfast accommodation

Avoiding the use of bed and breakfast in order to keep homeless applicants closer to their existing support and community networks.

Supporting households to ensure they can meet their housing costs

Working with colleagues within the benefits team and voluntary agencies such as Citizens Advice and other community support organisations to ensure households can maximise their income and address debts.

Supporting family and friends to sustain living arrangements

Working with those family and friends who may be asking a member of the household to leave.

Utilising negotiating skills through home visits and identifying a route to a planned move to avoid homelessness.

Seize opportunities from legislation changes

Cross-team working with Housing Solutions and Private Sector Housing to ensure the successful implementation with landlord and letting agencies within the district and that tenants' new rights are enforced.

Continuing our effective multi agency work

Ensure strong links are maintained and developed with other specialist agencies, community support organisations and registered providers to sustain tenancies and minimize evictions.



OUR PRIORITIES

Maximising use of available housing

Reducing the length of time which homeless households stay in emergency accommodation

Utilising our temporary accommodation and exploring expanding provision we can limit the disruption to accessing schools, GPs and employment and focus on the now established pathway to a permanent home

Continue to effectively administer Hampshire Home choice

Ensure applications to Hampshire Home choice are correctly administered and this valuable prevention tool is utilised effectively and continuing to work in partnerships with registered providers to ensure stock is well managed and advertised to meet applicant's needs.

Maximise the use of the Disabled facilities Grant

Cross team working with Housing Solutions and Private Sector Housing to ensure Disabled Facilities Grants are maximized. Ensuring adapted properties are matched effectively with applicants who require those adaptation wherever possible.

Private



OUR PRIORITIES

Rough sleeper support

Ensure effective intervention is carried out in the district

Work with partners to ensure that support is effective and assists them to secure accommodation.

Considering innovative solutions working with all partners and community resources to support them

Rough sleeper figures remain low in East Hampshire however we will continue to explore all solutions to work towards a zero figure.



OUR PRIORITIES

Provide high-quality advice

Investing in staff training and development

Invest in training and development to ensure that those who need to access homelessness services receive the best available service.

Continue to maintain and development partnerships

Work with Partners who can ensure this strategy is implemented and encourage discussion that can highlight areas for continued improvement.

Explore options for self service capabilities

Ensure that applicants have access to clear information about their options and the Housing Solutions Service before and during their application.

Utilise all data sources

Utilise all data sources to ensure we are aware of needs and trends and this is planned for effectively.



OUR APPROACH

Delivery and funding

Delivery

A detailed action plan has been developed to deliver these priorities. Actions have been identified in each priority area to achieve the priorities aim.

These actions primarily sit with the Housing Solutions team but also include cross team working with our Housing Development, Benefits and Private sector housing teams to work together to deliver these priorities.

This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to be effective in delivering our priorities.

Funding

The delivery of the strategy remains reliant on central government homelessness grants which are currently reviewed and awarded on an annual basis affecting the ability to forecast, budget income and expenditure to achieve the strategy aims and objectives.

Both the Homelessness Prevention Grant and the Ending Rough Sleeping funding are key funding streams to deliver this strategy.

Some of the projects funded by these grants in 2024/5 are:

- 57 rough sleepers supported by outreach staff employed by Two Saints, whose aim is to identify and engage with rough sleepers.
- 62 emergency placements including severe weather placements for rough sleepers.
- 52 residents received support at Pinewood, Buckle House through support staff we funded.
- 90 households received support from Two Saints community support worker through shared funding with Hampshire County Council.
- 17 homelessness households were supported with deposits and rent in advance to them to access accommodation.
- 64 households were provided with items through our White Goods Scheme, funded by Homelessness Prevention Grant and Household Support Fund.



EVIDENCE BASE SUMMARY

About our area and our applicants

A full review of all aspects of the current picture of homelessness in East Hampshire was conducted and can be found in our [Homelessness Review Document \(link to be added\)](#)

<p>The population of East Hampshire is increasing, with an 8.7% rise in 2021 Census.</p> <p>Population rise was largest in those over 65.</p> <p>58.5% of our population is aged between 16 to 64 with a median age of 47.1 years.</p>	<p>Development of new affordable housing has been slowed by a range of factors including Covid-19 pandemic and financial issues for registered providers whilst applications to Hampshire HomeChoice are increasing.</p>	<p>Private rented homes can be challenging to obtain but the bond/deposit scheme has helped 68 households secure a private rented home since 2021/22.</p>	<p>466 applicants approached the Housing Solutions Service in need of assistance in 2024/25, this was an increase of 22% since 2019/20.</p>	<p>75% of those approaching us whilst threatened with homelessness, do so early. This gives us time to advise them.</p>
<p>62% of homelessness applications are from households without children.</p>	<p>The most common reasons for approaching us for homelessness are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• End of private tenancy (32%)• Family no longer willing or able to accommodate (25%)• Relationship breakdown (12%)	<p>We have access to a total of 203 temporary homes managed by four different housing associations that we work in partnership with, including Two Saints who manage the Pinewood scheme that we developed.</p>	<p>The development of a pathway from temporary accommodation to a permanent home contributes to reduction in use of emergency accommodation.</p>	<p>Rough sleeping remains low in the district.</p> <p>The rate of those rough sleeping across the month per 100,000 of population is 3.7 in 2024/25.</p> <p>The figure for the South East (outside London) as a whole is 11.4 people.</p>

Survey results

To support the review and the development of this strategy, members of the public, previous applicants and partner agencies were invited to complete a questionnaire so their views on homelessness in East Hampshire could be considered.

WHAT WE ARE DOING WELL	WHERE WE CAN IMPROVE
68 % of those that contacted the Housing Team due to homelessness found it easy to contact the team	57% of those who contacted the Housing Team felt they had been clear on the options or were kept updated
73% found the Housing Solutions Team to be friendly and approachable	44% wanted more updates or felt the information was not clear.
73% of those referred to Two Saints found the support helpful.	44% of those who had experienced homelessness or been threatened with homelessness didn't contact the Housing team since they thought we would not help them.
68% of those from organisations that also work with homeless people think their relationship with the Housing Team is Strong and Effective	
86% think their organisation view homelessness as a shared responsibility.	



EHDC preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025-30

This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis (or sooner following any significant changes to policy or legislation) to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.