



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

West Northants Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2027)

Children, Education and Housing Overview
and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2024



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Legal context

- The Local authority must publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years
- As a new unitary authority a new strategy needs to be published by April 2024
- Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the duty on local authorities to:
 - ❖ Carry out a homelessness review
 - ❖ Formulate and publish homelessness strategy based on that review.

National context

Landscape of homelessness is evolving quickly; with cumulative impacts:

- Austerity
- Benefit and welfare reform
- Covid-19
- Cost of living crisis
- Fewer social rented homes
- Affordability concerns

Strategic Links

- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will:
 - ❖ Link to the wider contributory factors of homelessness, such as health, wellbeing, employment and economic factors (currently working with Public Health and the wider determinants of health, the impact of the integrated care partnership and local area partnerships)
 - ❖ Be consistent with other corporate strategies and objectives
 - ❖ Involve partners in implementing the strategic homelessness objectives.
 - ❖ Develop a delivery plan to show how the strategic objectives will be achieved.
 - ❖ Be monitored and reviewed during the life of the Strategy.

Aims and Vision

- The draft strategy is aiming to place a strong emphasis on:
 - ❖ Increasing activity around prevention of homelessness
 - ❖ Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation
 - ❖ Sourcing more suitable and affordable accommodation
 - ❖ Reducing rough sleeping
 - ❖ Customers have the right access to information, advice and support to stop them becoming homeless

Golden thread throughout the strategy is around partnership working and collaboration – with homelessness being everyone’s business

How the strategy has been developed

- **Completion of a Homelessness Review**
- **Health Needs Assessment of people who sleep rough**
 - ❖ Jointly commissioned, with **Public Health**, the consultancy PPL to conduct an independent assessment of the needs of people at risk or with experience of sleeping rough
 - ❖ Reviewed customer journey, existing accommodation and support; identified gaps and recommendations for maximising service provision.
- **Homelessness and Housing Solutions Health check:** Commissioned an internal 'service health check' of Housing Solutions provision, including mystery shopping of access points, staff interviews and case file reviews. This has informed service aggregation, transformation and bespoke staff training.

How the strategy has been developed

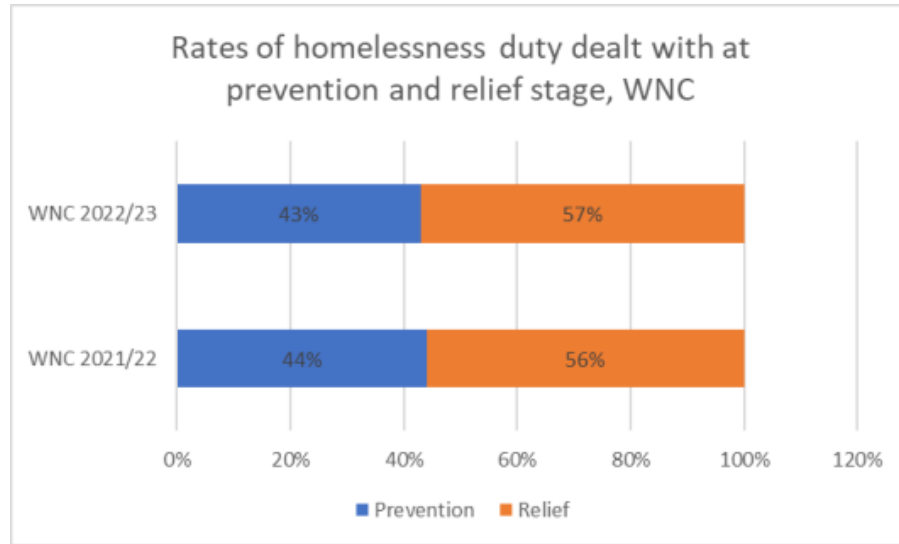
- **Desk review:** Internal review of data and discussions with internal teams and key partners
- **Single Homeless Forum and Homelessness Prevention Networks:** partners fed into review and strategy development.
- **Prevention of rough sleeping engagement event:** In conjunction with Homeless Link, half day event focused on prevention of rough sleeping
- **Prevention and general homelessness engagement event**
- **Wider Determinants of Health Workshops**
- At an early stage in the development and delivery of a **reshaped Rough Sleeper pathway across housing, health and social care**

Homelessness Review – what does it tell us

- **Homeless approaches:** Almost 5,000 approaches to the housing services was made in 2022/23 - an increase of 14% from the previous year
- **Homeless applications:** In 2022/23 there was an 11% increase in the number of homelessness approaches owed a prevention or relief duty
- **Main reasons for approach:**
 - ❖ Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate
 - ❖ End of a private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy
 - ❖ Domestic abuse
 - ❖ End of supported housing

Homeless duties if households are assessed as being eligible for assistance and homeless or threatened with homelessness then they will be owed a prevention or relief duty

➤ Prevention vs relief



The proportion of households at the point of approach owed a relief duty exceed those with a prevention duty.

Key challenge is to achieving higher homeless prevention activities and outcomes

Prevention of homelessness is defined as ensuring people at risk of homelessness can stay in existing home or make a planned move to alternative accommodation.

Alternative accommodation must be:

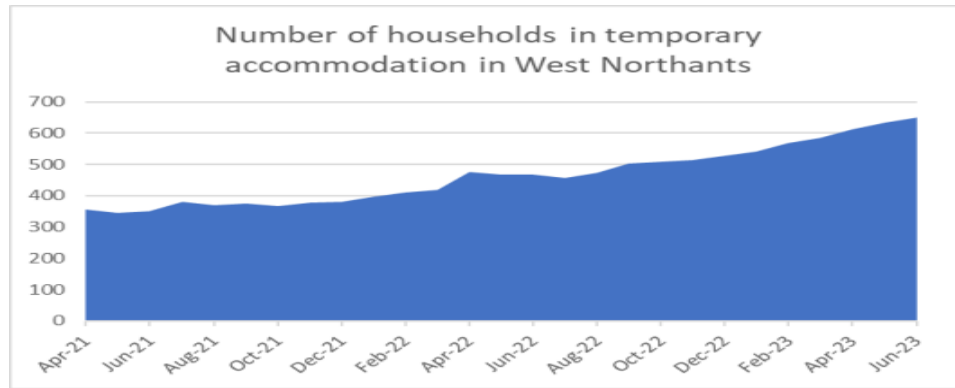
- Suited to the household's needs
- Affordable
- Medium long term solution (minimum of 6 months)
- Safe

➤ **Main duty acceptances:** 483 households were owed a main housing duty during 2022/23 (compared to 321 in 2021/22)

➤ Despite current challenges, the service improved performance around prevention and relief outcomes, with 896 successful outcomes in 2022/23 compared to 870 in 2021/22.

- **Repeat homelessness** – nearly 50% of those approaching the service during 2022/23 have approached the service previously

- **Temporary accommodation**



Nearly a quarter of repeated homelessness are single people

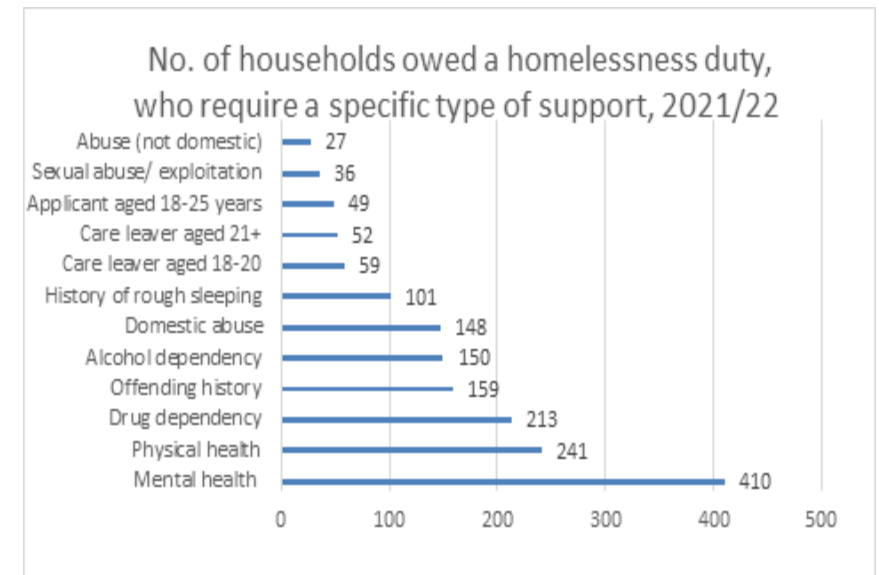
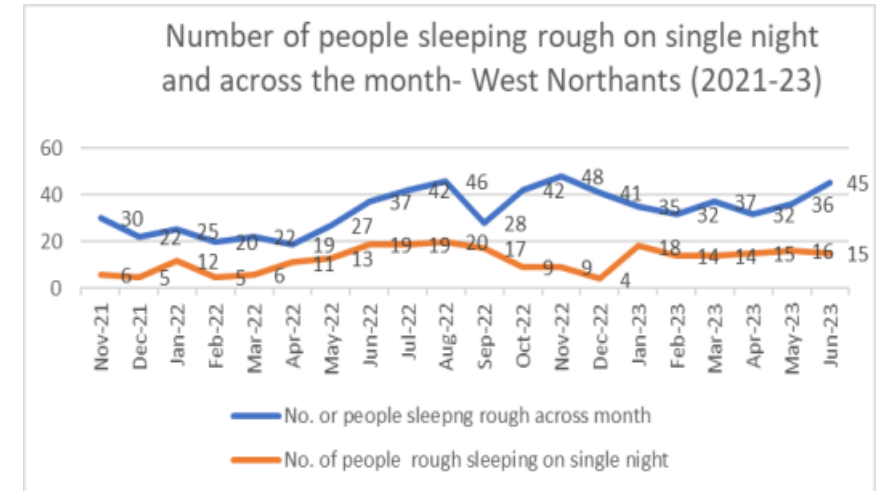
- High % of households in temporary accommodation and in private sector nightly paid accommodation
- Increasing costs in the private rented sector are affecting residents with affordability of rents and living costs.
- This makes it challenging to discharge our homelessness duty into the private rented market

➤ Rough Sleeping

- ❖ Annual count 2023 - 36
- ❖ Number of people sleeping rough on a single night: 16

➤ Complexity of need

- ❖ Increase in the complexity of need and support needed
- ❖ Mental health recorded as a significant support need
- ❖ Support needs require specialist intervention



- Transformation
 - ❖ Service restructure
- Temporary accommodation
 - ❖ New target operation model
 - ❖ Acquisition of properties
- Rough sleeping
 - ❖ Commissioning of supported provision at Oasis House
- New West Northants Housing allocation scheme
 - ❖ New policy to be operational from 1 April
- New Affordable housing delivery

Themes and Priorities

- **Theme 1:** Improve collaboration between partnerships to make homelessness everyone's business
- **Theme 2:** Early joined-up intervention and prevention of homelessness
- **Theme 3:** Increase provision and access to suitable and sustainable settled housing solutions
- **Theme 4:** Ensure that when rough sleeping occurs, it is rare, brief and non-recurring

Underneath each of the themes will be a series of measurable priorities and action that will form a delivery plan

Theme 1 and priorities

Theme 1:
Partnerships to
make
homelessness
everyone's
business

- The establishment of specialist multi-disciplinary teams
- Exploring the opportunities to work with strategic partners to use different types of commissioning to improve the delivery of a range of homelessness services
- Continued collaboration and joint working with key partners to prevent homelessness and improve outcomes
- Supporting recovery and independence by ensuring that those experiencing alcohol and substance abuse dependency issues can access rehabilitation and recovery interventions across a range of accommodation settings.
- Understanding the barriers that impede access to support for specific communities and individuals, through work with local communities and our developing Local Area Partnerships (LAPS)
- Improve and strengthen data collection and insights into homelessness from partners to inform new service improvement

Theme 2 and priorities

Theme 2: Early identification, joined-up intervention and prevention of homelessness

- Provision of timely, consistent and effective homelessness prevention
- Publicise and promote the prevention service more effectively through high quality accessible formats and encourage residents to contact the service early if seeking advice, guidance and support.
- Develop strength based and trauma informed approaches to the delivery of homelessness services to increase resilience and prevent homelessness
- Improve coordination and integration of support services around individuals and families to help prevent recurring instances of homelessness and the need to recount difficult experiences to access help.
- Continually improve the timeliness and quality of partner agencies' use of the duty and commitment to refer and that we act swiftly on referrals
- Reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse as a cause of homelessness and repeat homelessness

Theme 3 and priorities

- Work with registered provider to ensure an adequate supply of new social homes that are genuinely affordable and use out existing assets more effectively
- Reduce the number of households needing temporary accommodation through effective, timely homelessness prevention
- Develop a new temporary accommodation strategy
- Improve the rate at which households living in temporary accommodation move on to settled, sustainable homes
- Ensure that supported accommodation provision provides a settled and sustainable end to homelessness for those who need it
- Develop accommodation pathways that do not incur housing benefit subsidy loss
- Explore opportunities to improve access to private rented accommodation

Theme 3: Increase provision and access to suitable and sustainable settled housing solutions

Theme 4 and priorities

Theme 4: Ensure that where rough sleeping occurs, it is rare, brief and non-recurring

- Develop and deliver a reshaped Rough Sleeping Pathway across Housing, Health & Social Care
- Develop a joint Adult Social Care and Housing protocol on assessment and service provision for people with care and support needs who experience homelessness
- Ensure Safeguarding Adult Reviews inform service delivery and design
- Assess the impact and outcomes of Rough Sleeping initiatives funded projects and develop business cases to help secure future funding opportunities
- Adopt Housing led principles to resettle people into mainstream accommodation, with appropriate floating support
- Develop and implement an evidence-based framework for commissioning supported accommodation and support services for people at risk of, or experience of rough sleeping

Questions.....

- Themes and Priorities: Do you agree with these?
- Is there anything you would change?
- Is anything missing?

Next steps

- Cabinet: 12th March (Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy)
- March/ April: work with partners to develop the delivery plan
- Cabinet: 7th May (Delivery Plan)