

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

**2025 - 2030**



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## Introduction

**Since the last Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, Housing Options has faced unprecedented demand for housing advice and assistance.**

This increase in demand has been coupled with increased complexity of cases, where housing is often the symptom of wider social, economic and health needs.

We know that Housing Options are not alone in facing additional demand on services. Our wider partners including health, drug and alcohol services and social care, amongst others, are also facing increasing pressures. These increased system pressures have resulted in housing and homelessness responses being synonymous with crisis-based interventions.

We recognise that this cannot continue. To change this narrative, we must work with our partner agencies to look upstream at the systems and processes that impact homelessness.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy provides us with an opportunity to work with partner agencies to achieve this - seeking to prevent homelessness and where this is not possible to ensure that suitable housing and support is available that aids long-term recovery.



# Local Context and Challenges

**Stafford Borough Council is the local housing authority with the statutory function of providing housing advice and assistance and preventing and relieving homelessness.**

Housing Options is part of Wellbeing, comprising of Community Safety, Health, Housing Assistance and Leisure who work closely alongside stakeholders to deliver joint outcomes to improve health and housing for residents in Stafford Borough.

Since 2021/2022, the number of households approaching Housing Options for advice and support has increased by 120%, with those requiring emergency accommodation increasing by 130%, placing unprecedented demand on the service. However it has not just been increase in demand that has placed pressures on housing options but also increases in complexity of cases requiring intensive case management. In the last Strategy, 40% of cases presented with a support need - this has increased to 71% with a third of those cases presenting with three or more support needs (referred to as 'multiple and complex needs').



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Complex support needs impact the causes of homelessness. Although the main causes of homelessness are recorded as 'being asked to leave by family and friends' and 'end of private rented sector tenancy' it is often the result of a number of inter-related support needs that have led to a tenancy coming to an end or a relationship breaking down. Further, domestic abuse remains a main cause of homelessness within the Borough - those experiencing domestic abuse are vulnerable and often have complex needs requiring enhanced support to resolve their housing need.

Households experiencing homelessness may fall between the gap of not meeting the criteria for mental health or other statutory support services but present needs that are too complex to sustain accommodation without support. Individuals and households within this cohort risk becoming homeless and housing options provides the safety net catching those who have fallen outside the criteria for wider services within the Borough.

Housing Options works closely with our wider health, social care and third sector partners to provide support and address the underlying causes of homelessness.

Households with unaddressed support needs find it difficult to access housing where eligibility criteria may exclude those who have a challenging housing history. Nomination agreements with social housing providers gives Housing Options the best opportunity to support households facing homelessness into long-term housing. However, with increased demand and pressures on Housing Associations we know that our ability to discharge our homeless duty into the social housing sector will become increasingly challenging.

Since the last Strategy, increased rent and competing demand within the private rented sector has made this inaccessible. Households with vulnerabilities, who may have a low income or need additional support to maintain a secure tenancy, get overlooked for more financially stable households who present with little or no need, placing additional demand on homeless services.

Housing Options continues to work with housing providers and partner agencies to bridge this gap and provide options for those who would have previously fallen between services. We have continued to build on existing relationships with registered providers of social housing to strengthen our nomination agreements by sharing information and agreeing support plans enabling access to social housing. Housing



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Options regularly co-ordinate multi-disciplinary plans, where agencies with the ability to provide support are part of the housing process, sharing risk and responsibility for housing those with perceived complex needs and providing reassurance to housing providers who may otherwise have felt unsupported in the process.

Covid impacted the way we work with partners. Changes in working practices, alongside practical challenges such as the ability to arrange in person appointments can impact otherwise resilient partnerships. As partnership meetings have become virtual, the ability to build rapport with colleagues from different agencies has become more difficult, with frontline practitioners facing competing pressures. With multi-disciplinary meetings often taking place online, it can be more difficult to portray the challenges we have as a service.

Despite the above, we have significant support of our partner agencies for our work in ending rough sleeping. We have continued our joint working to provide 33-bed purpose built accommodation at Eagle House for those experiencing homelessness utilising homeless grants to provide additional support to meet the developing need. Although the new model has provided accommodation for single homeless with complex need there remains challenges with availability of move on accommodation

for the cohort and uncertainty of future funding that is currently dependant on top-up homeless prevention grant.

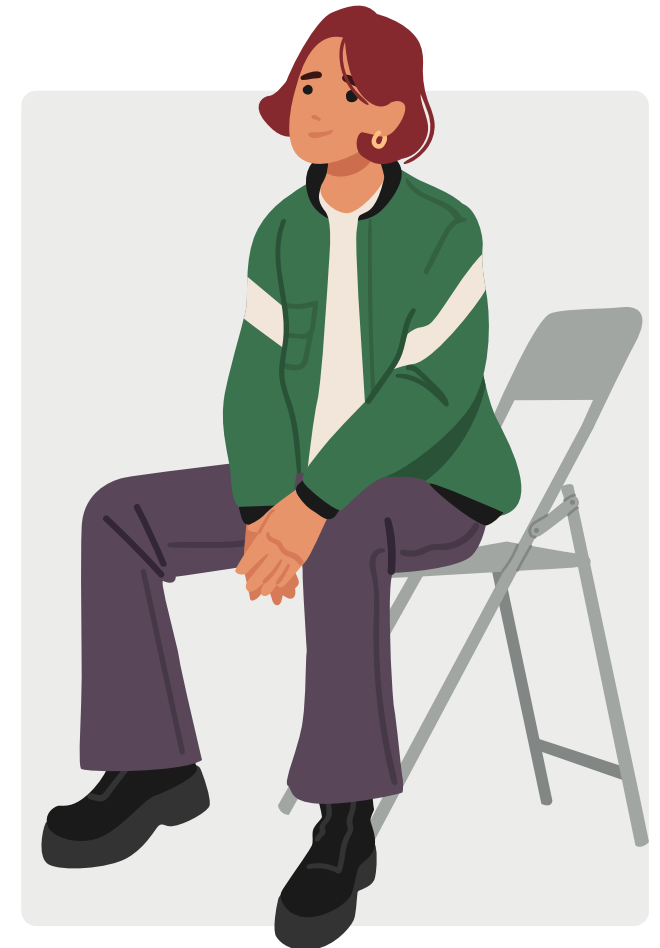
In 2022, Stafford Borough Council were successful in bidding for two rounds of rough sleeping funding resulting in five units of dispersed 'housing first' accommodation with support and six units of purpose-designed accommodation under one roof for entrenched rough sleepers, who had been repeatedly excluded from other provision. This funding has been pivotal in providing secure accommodation for those rough sleepers and ensuring appropriate support is in place.

Since opening, all units have been fully occupied with providers maintaining waiting lists for those requiring accommodation with support.

Whilst pressure on the sector and increasing demand has brought with it unprecedented challenges, we have maintained positive case outcomes that sit above the national average. Looking forward, we anticipate that this will be a challenge to maintain. Asylum dispersal and resettlement schemes risks placing further demand on a sector already facing existing pressures.

This Strategy seeks to build on that existing work and achieve a balance between addressing the presenting need of those experiencing

homelessness and working upstream to prevent homelessness from occurring by influencing the systems and processes that impact a household's ability to sustain housing.



# Upstream Prevention - Designing out homelessness



**Upstream prevention is a commitment to a whole systems, integrated approach to designing out homelessness and addressing need at the earliest opportunity.**

To prevent homelessness we must look at the wider systems, structures and environments that households, who are most likely to be at risk of homelessness, navigate before they reach housing crisis. We recognise that there is no single demographic that is most at risk of homelessness however what our evidence review has demonstrated is that those experiencing social and health inequalities are at increased risk. Homelessness is fundamentally an issue of inequality that will not be addressed until we tackle the structural issues that surround it.

In order to address the structural drivers of homelessness, we must understand the root causes which are often complex and interrelated. Recognising that health is intrinsically intertwined with housing and homelessness helps us to make sense of these interrelated factors - acknowledging that detriment to one can have an equally severe impact on the other as demonstrated by the complex support needs of those approaching Housing Options for advice and assistance.

Our evidence review has shown that 43% of homeless applicants presented with a history of mental health problems, whilst 22% presented with physical ill health or disability.

Over 70% of applicants approaching Housing Options have at least one support need, with over a third of those applicants presenting with multiple and complex needs (defined as having three or more support needs). For these cases, we recognise that homelessness is often the symptom, not the cause and to secure suitable accommodation we need to address the wider support needs impacting the household. By doing this at the earliest possible opportunity, and with the support of our partner agencies, we can prevent homelessness from occurring by working together to put the right safety net in place for vulnerable and marginalised groups to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

However, resources for early intervention that enable Housing Options to address the root cause of homelessness are limited across all sectors. Wider pressures result in short-term or crisis-based interventions that generally lead to short-term or emergency interventions, rather than tackling systemic issues that can create long-lasting change.

# Universal and Targeted Prevention

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**Whilst systemic change is the long-term goal for upstreaming prevention, it is important that we continue to build on existing workstreams for both universal and targeted prevention.**

Universal prevention allows for an equitable approach where services are targeted at those in most need.

Universal prevention is about keeping as many households as possible in the universal domain through early interventions. For example, by ensuring information and advice on housing and homelessness is readily available and accessible for all, including marginalised groups.

Since the last Strategy, Housing Options have co-located with other departments, organised drop in sessions with community groups and upskilled our voluntary and third sector partners in housing and homelessness. With this approach, we ensure that information and advice is consistent, accurate and delivered to those at risk at the earliest opportunity. For households facing homelessness, they can receive advice and guidance from those that they already have a working relationship with and trust the most. For professionals, it provides a network of homeless

advice and assistance where colleagues can turn to each other for help and support.

With 30% of homeless applicants being in work, we recognise that our service needs to be accessible in different forms. Stafford Borough Housing Advice Self-Assessment tool is an advice portal on Stafford Boroughs website, where households can access immediate housing advice specific to their situation. Individuals using the Housing Advice Self-Assessment has increased from 102 in 2018/2019 to 902 in 2023/2024 demonstrating the demand for readily accessible, digital interventions.

For targeted prevention, analysing cross-sector data is key so we can target interventions for specific vulnerable groups who may be most at risk of homelessness. Through the Youth Homeless Partnership, data on care leavers who may be at risk of homelessness is shared through regular Steering Groups with housing options and housing providers to provide options and solutions to those at risk before they reach crisis. Similarly, for those experiencing domestic abuse, Housing Options work alongside Staffordshire Womens Aid to provide early intervention advice and assistance to women fleeing domestic abuse who may otherwise be homeless and jointly fund a Resettlement Worker to support those experiencing domestic abuse to sustain long-

term housing.

Whilst we look upstream to influence the systems and processes impacting homelessness, it is important that we continue to build on the existing universal and targeted prevention work that was achieved during the last Strategy.

## How we will achieve this

- › Accurate information and advice about housing options, available to everyone who may be at risk of homelessness, that is delivered in a range of ways including web-based information and through community interventions.
- › Build on internal and external data analysis to understand and address the main causes of homelessness in the Borough that will improve our ability to tailor targeted interventions to prevent homelessness, i.e. understanding why family/ friends exclude and evaluate success of current mediation offer.
- › Advocate for services that provide space for early universal intervention by integrating services where appropriate, for example current co-location with Children's Service;



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- › Make best use of data to project forthcoming trends in homelessness, including pressures on the housing market, asylum resettlement programme and children in care so we can best prepare for increases in demand on the service, including sourcing of appropriate emergency accommodation.
  - › Continue to advocate a systems-change approach for designing out homelessness and health inequalities amongst partner agencies where opportunities arise, for example, through the Drug and Alcohol Strategy, Community Wellbeing Partnership, Housing with Care Strategy, Corporate Parenting Panel, Youth Homeless Partnership and Adult Safeguarding Board.
  - › Explore options for sustaining grant funded service that prevent homelessness and work with partners to make best use of resources, including Discretionary Housing Payment.





# Empowerment - The Start of Co-production

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**Empowerment is a commitment to listening to the voices of lived experience, recognising that homelessness cannot be fully understood without learning from those who have experienced it.**

Homelessness is not a process, but an individual experience that goes beyond completing an application form. To understand the drivers behind homelessness, the wider causes and systemic issues, we have to listen to those who are experiencing it and recognise that the way we treat households who need our support has a direct impact on the households ability and willingness to seek the support they need.

It is within our gift in Housing Options to create a safe environment where individuals feel empowered to break down barriers and take ownership of their housing and support needs.

To fully understand what we can do to reduce trauma, we must see through the eyes of those with lived experience and learn from what those who have experienced homelessness will share with us.

Using these skills, the Housing Options team will have the best opportunity to empower individuals accessing the service, improving positive outcomes and reducing the number of homeless applications closed for non-engagement.

Further, partner feedback through the Evidence Review suggests that homeless households may struggle to access mainstream services indicating that health inequalities exist amongst services with those experiencing homelessness, where discrimination, exclusion and the stigma associated with being homeless remains an issue.

To understand why individuals do not access services, or 'fail to engage', we must level up the power inequality that sits within systems and actively listen and learn from the voices of lived experience. We must be open to service reviews and provide platforms for those with who have experienced systems and structures to feedback what worked well, as well as what needs improving.

If, as a whole system, we do not act differently, we will see the same outcomes, that will continue the cycle of homelessness. We need to change the narrative that systemic issues cannot be changed and provide those who are experiencing services the power to make positive change.

## How we will achieve this

- › Commitment to provide a flexible supportive face to face service for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- › Commitment to exploring reasons why households do not approach housing options or disengage from services through the help of our internal and external partner agencies to reduce the proportion of applications that are ended for lost contact.
- › Explore provision of targeted accessibility points for specific cohorts of excluded or marginalised households, i.e. specialist advice drop-in services for people with complex needs;
- › Champion genuine coproduction with individuals with lived experience, both internally and through stakeholder engagement, Increasing opportunity for engagement and input from people with lived experience of homelessness in consultations, service design and delivery;
- › Explore training and wellbeing opportunities for front-line practitioners in the sector, including vicarious trauma therapy, psychologically informed interviewing and trauma informed approaches and listening skills.



## A Poem by Mr J Ellement

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Resident at Stafford Mental Health Supported Accommodation | April 2024

**T** is for troubles and tribulations we had  
**U** is for the unity we now have  
**R** is for the reality we all now feel  
**N** is for never turning back  
**I** is for interesting new abilities  
**N** is for now is the time for us all  
**G** is for great, generous support we all get  
  
**P** is for promising new outlook on life  
**O** is for the olive branch we been offered  
**I** is for all the ingenious ways  
**N** is for negotiating our future selves  
**T** is for the thanks that I truly have

**TURNING  
POINT**  
inspired by possibility



# Rough Sleeper Pathway - Ending Rough Sleeping



The Rough Sleeper Pathway is a commitment to end rough sleeping by preventing it wherever possible and where it cannot be prevented making it rare, brief and non-recurring. This means:

## Prevention

stop people from being forced to sleep out in the first place;

## Rare

reduce numbers to as close to zero as possible;

## Brief

if a person sleeps rough, the episode should be as short as possible;

## Non-recurring

No one should experience multiple episodes of rough sleeping.

Rough sleeping is the most severe and visible form of homelessness, often the manifestation of complex support needs that unless addressed, will impact on an individual's ability to access and sustain housing

Since the last Strategy, rough sleepers presenting with multiple and complex needs has increased by 20%, demonstrating the need for specialist services, tailored to meet the needs of rough sleepers.

It is well documented that housing alone cannot resolve homelessness. Intertwined and complex needs can be seen as the controlling factors impacting a households ability to sustain accommodation. Whilst these factors remain unresolved, it can be difficult for people experiencing rough sleeping to see maintaining long-term housing as the priority, often resulting in challenges in both accessing and sustaining accommodation.

Since the last homeless strategy, tailored services such as Complex Care and ICON have been established within substance recovery services designed to meet the needs of those with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse needs, including rough sleepers. The use of Synthetic Cathinones (Monkey Dust) amongst rough sleepers in Stafford and the surrounding areas has made it increasingly difficult to obtain positive interventions.

Although rough sleeping figures in Stafford are relatively low, rough sleeping is the most complex and resource intensive element of the service.

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Since the pandemic, national rough sleeping figures have increased and Stafford Borough has not been exempt from this. Housing Options have continued to work with partner agencies, including the Vulnerabilities HUB and Community Safety Partnership, to end rough sleeping.

Grant funded opportunities has enabled Stafford Borough to develop services to address rough sleeper need, by developing projects aimed at addressing both the housing and support needs of entrenched rough sleepers.

Since 2022, Stafford Borough have developed 11 units of accommodation specifically for those experiencing rough sleeping. We have developed a six bed purpose designed building that provides off-the-street accommodation for rough sleepers with the most entrenched needs who have been excluded from other accommodation provision in the Borough. In addition, we have developed five units of dispersed one bedroom properties with wrap around support - providing a 'Housing First' model for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

The pathway recognises that no single housing solution will meet the need of rough sleepers but instead requires a variety of options, tailored to meet the needs of those experiencing the most severe and complex form of homelessness.

Since opening, all rough sleeper accommodation provision has been full. Whilst housing supply

provides its own challenges to move on, we recognise that there is a delicate balance for those with experience of rough sleeping who need to regain trust, build relationships and often start a process of addressing underlying traumas which means that move on within specific timeframes is not always an option.

To support access to accommodation, Stafford Borough Council has commissioned Rough Sleeper Outreach to provide assertive outreach in the community for those rough sleepers who are most hard to reach. It has been essential for Rough Sleeper Outreach to have an off-the-street offer that meets the individuals wants and needs and is immediately available. Without this, meaningful engagement is difficult.

We have worked with existing accommodation providers, such as Eagle House, to provide additional resource that increases the level of support they are able to provide so they can house those with experience of rough sleeping and complex needs. Utilising grant funding, and with the support of agencies including substance misuse and mental health services, we have been able to utilise 12 bed spaces for those with experiencing of rough sleeping at Eagle House.

Funding for rough sleeper initiative and supported accommodation provides uncertainty for the above provision. Without this provision, we would see increasing in rough sleeping in Stafford.

## How we will achieve this?

- › Commitment to maintaining a flexible, proactive service that responds rapidly to the needs of rough sleepers;
- › Explore options for continuing current grant funding services, including accommodation and support;
- › Promote coproduction as a golden thread through the Rough Sleeper Pathway, promoting trauma informed and recovery focused responses from internal and external partners;
- › Analyse data on rough sleepers in Stafford in order to upstream rough sleeper prevention;
- › Review move on options for the rough sleeper pathway, including the use of personalised budgets;
- › Build on existing rough sleeper partnerships through the Vulnerabilities HUB and ensure relevant cases are escalated via the Adult Safeguarding Board, where appropriate.
- › Contribute to the developing Drug and Alcohol Strategy to ensure that Monkey Dust and services designed around rough sleepers remains a priority;
- › Explore options for rough sleeper recovery with partner agencies, including access to meaningful activities, volunteering, employment and options for 'exiting the system.'

# Robust Partnerships

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**Robust partnerships is a commitment to advocating for shared agendas with our partner agencies that addresses the root causes of homelessness and seeks to end rough sleeping.**

Homelessness is rarely a need that can be resolved in isolation of other social and economic factors. For us to reduce levels of repeat homelessness and prevent homelessness from happening in the first place, our partner agencies must share our agenda of addressing the root causes of homelessness and provide systemic changes that prevent homelessness and rough sleeping from occurring in the future.

Since the previous Strategy, our partnerships have developed - moving from operational delivery to strategic direction and influence. We have strong operational relationships that have the ability to flex systems on a case by case basis to get the best outcome for the individual household. However, this needs to develop further to sustainable systems change that does not rely on individual relationships but is built into systems and processes that provides an equitable cross-sector services for those experiencing homelessness.

Where systems flex have been achieved and

proven successful, those with strategic oversight have the gift to champion these approaches and take steps within their own organisations, and their wider partnerships, to embed those changes. Recent examples in Stafford have shown that when partners work together to resolve complex issues it reduces wider cost pressures on public services. For example, Staffordshire Police have reported up to a 73% reduction in police call outs for repeat offenders when both housing and multi-agency support has been provided.

Upholding our partnerships, is the support of the third sector, voluntary faith and community groups who provide frontline support and advocacy to those at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. Community groups who support our partnerships enable statutory agencies to navigate systems and processes in order to obtain the best outcome for the individual. Through developing our robust partnerships, our vision is to eliminate the requirement for agencies to navigate complex systems and processes for those experiencing homelessness and instead, a whole systems approach becomes the norm.

Robust partnerships provide unique opportunities for collaborative commissioning and aligning of resources. At an operational level, there are opportunities for colocation of staff between agencies that enable skills and knowledge to

be shared within the workforce and in turn can improve staff wellbeing and retention. Developing these initiatives, can lead to aligning strategies and commissioning agendas, that not only shares resource but also shares risk and provides joint responsibility and opportunity for flexibility between partner agencies, including our housing providers.

## How we will achieve this?

- › Revitalise the Homeless Forum that links operational partnerships with strategic oversight, celebrating our partnerships and providing opportunities for reflective practice and future development.
- › Develop existing operational partnerships to challenge barriers to resolving homelessness and recognise good practice within the partnership where risk and responsibility is shared and positive outcome are achieved.
- › Utilise opportunities to collaborate local strategies where each stakeholders role in preventing and relieving homelessness is clearly recognised within local priorities and is central to commissioning agendas resulting in targeted interventions.
- › Explore opportunities for joint commissioning in line with local strategies and partnership agendas, where funding allows.



# Expanding Housing Options



**Expanding Housing Options is a commitment to providing suitable and sustainable options for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.**

We cannot resolve homelessness without safe, secure offers of housing that is suitable and meets the needs of those who call it home.

Wider pressures on the housing market has widened the net of those seeking affordable and secure housing options. Pressures on home ownership have saturated the private rented sector making it more difficult to access for those on lower incomes. Increased private sector demand, and corresponding increased cost of renting, has in turn placed increasing pressures on social housing and more households seek affordable and secure housing options.

Landlords across all sectors have the ability to 'choose' their tenants, with those perceived as low risk in terms of income or wider support needs being offered accommodation.

What we see, is a domino-effect on supported housing and other homelessness services, where those households being pushed aside by wider demand are relying on the safety

net of homelessness services to respond to their housing needs. We have seen this locally with emergency accommodation placements increasing by 130% since 21/22.

Since 2014, completion of affordable homes has been in line with this target however we recognise the pipeline in the short-term is reduced. In July 2024, Government announced an overhaul of the planning system which has seen new mandatory housebuilding targets for councils. Stafford has a new target of 751 dwellings per year. This is a significant uplift on previous figures and will result in significantly more affordable housing being delivered.

The majority of applicants approaching Housing Options are single people. However, one bedroom properties amount to only 30% of available social housing stock in Stafford Borough.

We need to expand our options to look at other tenures and housing solutions that meet the needs of those approaching our service.

The private rented sector remains difficult to access with 'no-fault' evictions remaining one of the main causes of homelessness, both nationally and within Stafford Borough. The Private Renters Bills seeks to abolish Section 21 Notice and introduce a simpler tenancy structure.

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However, there are market pressures that continue to make it challenging for households facing homelessness to access the private rented sector. In many cases, the 'no fault' eviction is often a result of more complex needs, for example, affordability and poor mental health, and if these wider factors are not addressed households will struggle to sustain secure housing.

The disparity between Local Housing Allowance and market rents has increased from 19.6% in the previous Strategy, to 27.6% meaning that the sector is increasingly unaffordable for low income households. A RightMove snapshot completed in December 2024 showed that out of 128 properties available, only 3 were within Local Housing Allowance rates. Notwithstanding Local Housing Allowance challenges, there remains a stigma attached to households facing homelessness that makes the sector difficult to access.

70% of households approaching as homeless have at least one support need. Increases in single homeless approaches and complex support needs has brought with it increased demand for housing with support.

Supported accommodation is not a one size fits all approach but is based on different models depending on the life experience of the persons

it is designed to support. Specialist provision designed around the needs of specific cohorts, such as young people, those recovering from poor mental health, or those recovering from substance misuse enables for tailored support to be provided in a housing environment that is safe and meets the needs of the individual.

Since the repurposing of Supporting People funding, supported accommodation providers have relied on supported exempt accommodation (SEA) to fund housing related supported. SEA does not cover activities that provide care and support, but housing-related supported only. This gap in funding has meant that providers can only offer low to medium levels of general tenancy-related support leaving a gap in specialist supported accommodation that addresses wider care and support needs relating to mental health, social care and offending behaviour amongst others. As a result, there is often an insurmountable barrier where those facing homelessness are required to be accessing recovery services or already taking steps to address their support needs before they are accepted onto accommodation waiting lists. Where, what is needed, is the accommodation setting to provide a safe and stable environment to aid recovery, similar to the principles that we know as 'Housing First.'

In practice, supported accommodation providers end up housing those whose needs cannot be met by their service alone, often because there are little to no alternative options. This disparity between housing related support and the individuals wider care and support needs results in costly crisis interventions, placing additional pressures on health, social care and the police. In some situations, this can result in the placement breaking down which continues the cycle of homelessness but with

Stafford Borough Council have made best use of various grant funded initiatives that provides a temporary solution to plug this gap but ultimately there remains a disconnect between the provision of support and the provision of housing. Housing Options work closely with Staffordshire County Council to align our strategies on housing with support which we envisage will be further embedded with the implementation of the Supported Accommodation Act.

Since the previous Strategy, Housing Options has been successful in drawing down ring-fenced grant funding to provide eleven units of specialist supported accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers including those who had been repeatedly excluded from local provision. There are waiting lists for this provision which is dependent on future grant funding to continue.



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The funding of supported accommodation going forward remains a concern, particularly for those who have experienced rough sleeping. Those with experience of rough sleeping often carry with them past traumas and have care and support needs that require specialist, often 24/7 staffed, support. Chaotic lifestyles and past traumas can often make it difficult for individuals to voice their support needs, which assessed in isolation may not meet current eligibility criteria for statutory services however when considered holistically, their need for support is clear. Individuals who are not eligible for health or social care funded services are reliant on general housing provision which does not always meet their needs.

Specialist accommodation for other cohorts, including young people, remains a gap in Stafford Borough.

As with other specialist groups, accommodation pathways for young people should be designed to meet the needs of the individual. There is not a one size fits all approach. For some young people, including those who are care experienced, the provision of social housing provides the security and independence needed to start adulthood. For others, the provision of a social rented tenancy is overwhelming and can be difficult for the young person and the agencies who support them to manage as their first home.

For those who require a stepping stone, supported accommodation provides a critical transition into adulthood. Supported accommodation provides a safe space for individuals to overcome barriers they may face, for example due to past trauma, learning disabilities, behaviour difficulties or complex needs whilst also providing skills required to manage and maintain a tenancy and live independently. Pathways of suitable accommodation for young people provide us with an opportunity to prevent homelessness upstream.

### How we will achieve this?

- › Review provision of emergency accommodation in line with demand to reduce bed and breakfast expenditure;
- › Consider options for purchasing and refurbishing accommodation for use as general needs and emergency accommodation in line with the emerging Housing Strategy.
- › Work with stakeholders at Staffordshire County Council to align homelessness with housing with care and other relevant strategies for vulnerable groups, including young people, domestic abuse and multiple and complex needs;

- › Work with all housing providers to improve move on options from supported accommodation;
- › Work with internal and external stakeholders to review supported exempt accommodation in line the Supported Housing (Regulatory) Oversight Act 2023, pending regulations.
- › Commitment to understanding the barriers facing the private rented sector and to work with landlords to provide innovative solutions to improve access.



# Sustainment

**Sustainment is a commitment to breaking the cycle of homelessness by advocating for sustainable tenancies that enables households to access local services and integrate into local communities.**

Closely linked to upstream prevention, sustainment recognises the need to reduce the revolving door impact of repeat homelessness. In Stafford, 22% of applicants with support needs presented with a history of repeat homelessness whilst 18% of homeless applications had accessed the service on more than one occasion within the last twelve months.

Within Stafford Borough, Tenancy Sustainment Officers provide flexible floating support designed around the needs of the individual that enable vulnerable households to access and sustain tenancies. Since the previous strategy, demand for tenancy sustainment support has increased and grant funding has been utilised to employ a second officer.

The Tenancy Sustainment Officers provide a wide remit of practical support to households, such as setting up bills, arranging appointments, managing utilities and applying for grants for furniture and white goods however in most recent years the

needs of those they are supporting have become more complex and have included health, social care, criminal justice and substance recovery, amongst others. Officers coordinate multi-agency support plans to engage statutory agencies and enable households to remain at home.

## How we will achieve this

Whilst the Tenancy Sustainment Officers provide vital work to ensure households remain in their own accommodation, not all residents will need this level of support.

For many, the community provides a source of support, both in terms of signposting to relevant agencies where needed but also to provide a safe place and a listening ear.

- › Commitment to funding tenancy sustainment support within Housing Options that supports vulnerable people in the community, who would otherwise not have access to support services;
- › To work alongside external stakeholders to improve the network of support to help households sustain their tenancies.
- › To continue liaising with voluntary and faith-based organisations to support integration in local communities.



## Governance

The key priorities within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy will be delivered and monitored through an action plan expanding on the commitments set out in this strategy to prevent and relieve homelessness in the next five years.

This will be led by Housing Options, as part of Wellbeing and will require active engagement from partners, recognising that one agency alone cannot end homelessness. The Strategy will be progressed via the Homeless Forum, which will be monitored and evaluated by the Community Wellbeing Partnership.

Stafford Borough's Corporate Plan commits to supporting households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and quarterly performance reporting is providing for Cabinet and the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

### Moving upstream - social determinants and social needs



# Tenancy Sustainment Case Study

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*When I first met T and his dog Max he had spent six years on the streets. When I approached T he would run away from me and it took weeks of outreach to build trust and for T to feel comfortable around me.*

*Although T was offered accommodation when the Government launched its 'Everyone In' campaign at the start of the first lockdown in 2020, he was still using substances and felt that he couldn't live a normal life at that time. He preferred to stay rough sleeping until he could get on a script, especially as few places were also not willing to accept his dog Max.*

*T stayed on the streets and continued begging however his health issues were getting worse. T was registered with a local GP and started a methadone programme through STARS. He was encouraged to accept temporary accommodation through the 'Everyone In' campaign.*

*Bromford Housing Association had become aware of his case through the weekly Vulnerability HUB. The Housing Association invited T for an assessment and accepted him and his dog, Max. T received the keys to his flat in November 2021.*

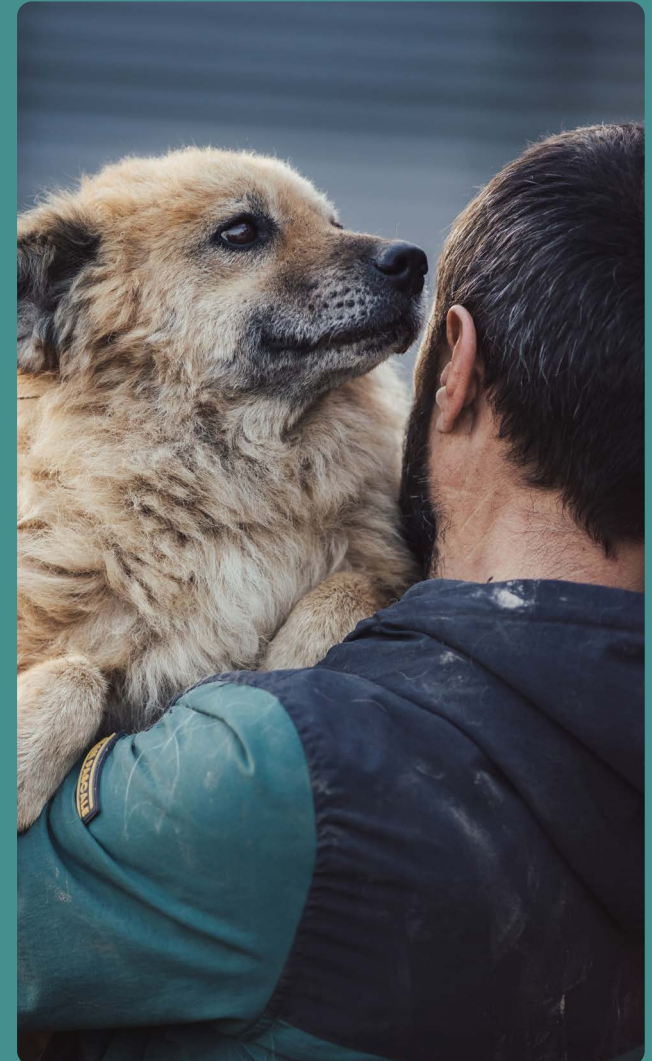
*Since then, T has engaged with Tenancy Sustainment with support varying to meet his needs at the time. Tenancy Sustainment have helped T to open a bank account, get copies of ID, previous Landlord references, set up utility bills, attend health appointments, apply for grants and maximise income including applying for PIP.*

*A case like this was not going to be easy but when you see what it means to the person, it's worth all the effort to make a difference to someone's life.*

*T's tenancy has just been reviewed and signed off by Bromford, he has now been accommodated by them for 3 years and will be spending another Christmas in his own home. T's is at the point of living independently, but we will always be here to provide support if he needs us.*



Tenancy Sustainment Officer,  
Stafford Borough Council



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Health and Housing, Stafford Borough Council  
Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ

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