



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Telford and Wrekin's Strategy to address homelessness and rough sleeping

Foreword

This strategy sets out how Telford and Wrekin Council and its partners across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors will continue to work together to prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. The strategy has been developed through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders all of whom have a critical role to play.

This strategy is integral to the Council Plan and our commitment to 'protect, care and invest to create a better borough.' The Council Plan highlights housing as a key priority, recognising the role it plays in creating a vibrant and successful area and seeking to ensure that all residents, no matter their background and circumstances, can benefit from a strong economy and fulfil their potential, living well.

Our Housing Strategy recognises that a decent place to live is the foundation on which people build their lives. A good quality home makes health, employment, educational achievement and a happy family life much easier to obtain. But we know that financial difficulties and some national policies make it harder for some households to find and maintain a roof over their heads.

In the past year 3,000 households approached the council for advice and support to prevent them becoming homeless. Working with our partners, we were able to prevent 40% of

these from becoming homeless while working to 'relieve' homelessness by supporting households to move to new accommodation in the majority of other cases. Our 'Everyone In for Good' programme first established during the pandemic has to date supported over 500 people to prevent them sleeping rough and find accommodation. We remain committed to this programme and to finding solutions, with our partners, to eradicate the need for anyone to sleep rough.

As well as tackling homelessness, the council is working hard to ensure that families can access good quality affordable housing; that young people are able to stay living and working in the borough; that vulnerable people can access housing which supports and empowers independence. We have delivered over 1,000 new homes every year, including affordable, adapted and specialist homes.

This strategy builds on strong foundations: an innovative council willing to try new solutions; strong partnership working across the statutory and voluntary sectors; and a service which is already delivering good outcomes for many customers.

As we launch this strategy, rises in the cost of living and especially in energy costs are putting enormous financial pressure on households. More households will be at risk of becoming

homeless without support. Our key goal of early advice and intervention sits at the heart of preventing homelessness.

I am delighted that so many partners attended engagement events to develop this strategy; their input has made a real difference. We have also benefited from those with lived experience of homelessness sharing their experiences and helping us to improve the delivery of services by seeing things from their perspective.

As we move forward to deliver the strategy, we will continue to engage with partners through a new Homelessness Forum and an annual event to evaluate our progress. As a co-operative council, our commitment is to work together with our community and partners to develop new ideas, to empower others to take action to extend the impact of what we can do as a council and to involve people in decisions that will affect their lives.



Cllr Paul Watling
Cabinet Member for
Safer and Stronger
Communities

Commitments from our partners

**As a community nurse
for Midlands Partnership
Foundation Trust (MPFT) I
will continue to work across
all services to help tackle
health inequalities within
the rough sleeper cohort –
Mike Cooper**



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1. Executive summary

The council's vision is to protect, care and invest to create a better borough. This strategy sits within that overall vision, and the council's housing strategy, and is an essential part of delivering it. It also complements other strategies such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the strategy for responding to Domestic Violence and Abuse.

Informed by our work to date and our engagement with partners and those with lived experience our strategy includes four shared objectives:

Prevention through early intervention

- Map and ensure that all advice and support services in the borough are working to prevent homelessness; agree and implement a communications plan so that all partners are aware of the vital importance of early prevention work and timely referrals
- Review and update information on the council website to enable customers to take steps to prevent themselves becoming homeless; ensure access to appropriate advice on debt and budgeting
- Maximise the impact of current services across the partnership to prevent increased homelessness in response to the rising cost of living; identify gaps and ways to address these

- Continue to improve the customer journey through regular sharing of learning across partners and through feedback from those with lived experience
- Work with housing providers to prevent evictions wherever possible
- Work with health partners to address underlying health issues which could lead to homelessness

Accommodation to support and empower

- Facilitate delivery of the required supported and specialist housing identified in the 'Homes For All' strategy
- Explore options to deliver more 1 bed accommodation; consider whether any existing stock can be used more effectively
- Explore different models for the provision of shared accommodation
- Continue to work with private landlords to reduce entry barriers for those with a high housing need and support tenancy sustainment
- Continue to work with housing associations on nominations to maximise the role played by social housing
- Continue to work with supported housing providers to ensure a joined-up approach to meeting need

- Continue to deliver more specialist and supported accommodation through Nuplace and Telford & Wrekin Homes

Addressing rough sleeping

- Build on the 'Everyone In for Good' initiative to ensure that any instances of rough sleeping are brief, rare and non-recurring
- Develop the successful work of the Rough Sleeper Task Force in identifying, monitoring and responding to rough sleepers
- Sustain existing comprehensive services for rough sleepers including outreach, provision of support and accommodation
- Bid successfully for funding for rough sleeper services from 2025 onwards
- Further develop Telford Housing First offer

Collaboration delivering services that are responsive, targeted and maximise impact

- Develop a cross partnership Homelessness Forum with shared responsibility for delivering the new strategy
- Hold an annual homelessness event to raise awareness, share progress and renew the commitment of all partners
- Ensure that data is captured widely and effectively across the system and is used to improve interventions and joint approaches

- Explore options for shared risk assessments and shared information where it will ensure more joined-up services for customers
- Ensure delivering appropriate accommodation and support services for the homeless is recognised in related council and partner strategies and investment decisions
- Develop more effective links with the Integrated Care System (ICS)



2. Introduction

It is a statutory requirement that every local authority has a strategy for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. This strategy has been drawn from a robust evidence base which looks at patterns and trends in homelessness, the personal and structural factors that lead to people becoming homeless, and the effectiveness of different interventions in preventing homelessness.

This strategy has been developed to reflect and conforms to statutory requirements, including the updated Code of Guidance 2018.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) sets the statutory framework. The ethos of the HRA is to:

- prevent more people from becoming homeless in the first place by identifying people at risk and intervening earlier;
- intervene rapidly if a homelessness crisis occurs, so it is brief and non-recurrent; and
- help more people to recover from and exit homelessness by getting them back on their feet.

This strategy reflects the requirements of the HRA and the recognised need to continue to intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent homelessness.

The government published a new rough sleeping Strategy in September 2022 which drives forward their manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping: rough sleeping should be prevented wherever possible and where it cannot be prevented it is a rare, brief and non-recurring experience.



3. Engagement

The council alone cannot prevent homelessness but relies on working with many partners and stakeholders. Engagement events were held with a wide range of partners to shape and prioritise the strategy. Those participating included housing associations (Registered Providers or RPs), voluntary organisations who work in homelessness and wider advice and support services, private landlords and statutory partners including adult care services, children and young people's services, health partners including mental health services, and those involved with the justice system.

Key issues raised through discussion included:

- continuing the 'person-centred' approach and increased flexibility to meet needs that don't always fit within specific service criteria
- continuing need to work together to deliver fully joined-up services; a need to increase awareness of the range of services available and how to access these
- the need for more affordable housing, both general needs housing and more supported and specialist accommodation
- honest conversations between all partners about what can be achieved.

There were also some specific comments about different needs groups which are picked up in the relevant sections below.

These engagement events benefitted from input from those with lived experience of being homeless; this included participation in group discussions and one-to-one interviews by housing officers and through our partners. Feedback was generally very positive, both for the overall service and for individual staff members and agencies. Many felt that the service they had received exceeded their expectations. It is also recognised that not everyone who contacts homelessness services will feel this way. Peer support is also important – this was particularly highlighted by one woman who had become homeless because of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA).



4. Our role in preventing homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act places a range of duties on the council. We work with any household who is homeless or threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days to try and prevent them becoming homeless. We can talk to landlords, friends and family to try and persuade them to let someone stay in their accommodation for longer. We can help to resolve issues over arrears or behaviour.

Often people are referred to us by our partner organisations and in turn we can refer people to our partners for support on a wide range of issues, or to access specific services.

Where we cannot prevent someone becoming homeless, we can work with them to secure alternative accommodation, including in the private rented sector. This is termed 'relieving' homelessness.

There are only a small number of cases each year where we cannot prevent or relieve homelessness and have to consider whether the household is eligible for support under the 'main duty'. This includes whether they have done or failed to do anything which has led to them becoming homeless, as well as whether anyone in the household is vulnerable.

There are many reasons why people become homeless, from financial issues and employment challenges to broader lifestyle issues which might

impact on tenancy sustainment. Sometimes the reasons are complex and inter-related. Some homelessness is invisible, for example those who are 'sofa surfing'.

Becoming homeless has a significant impact on the quality of life for individuals and for families. Health, education and employment are all affected for the individual household, but the wider impacts are felt across our communities. Homelessness can lead to greater demands on our health and care services, and on emergency services.

Commitments from our partners

Commitment to Cohesive working – Alan Olver, Maninplace



5. Headline figures

- Almost **3,000** households approached for advice and support in 21/22
- The council had a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act to **880** of these
- Homelessness was prevented in **361** cases ie **40%**
- Homelessness was 'relieved' through a move to alternative accommodation in a further **418** cases ie a further **50%**
- There were **34** households where homelessness could not be prevented or relieved and who were assessed for the main statutory duty

Case study

Kristine and her three children (two boys aged seven and five and one girl aged two) fled London to Telford after she suffered domestic abuse at the hands of her ex-husband.

She was living with friends at first, but the place she was staying in had no cooking or laundry facilities. She ran out of funds and approached Telford & Wrekin Council following a police recommendation.

Kristine and her family moved into temporary accommodation in August 2022. She has been helped by a Housing Solutions Officer to find and be placed into temporary accommodation and then helped to settle in by an outreach Tenancy Sustainment Officer, who has also supported getting her children settled into school and nursery.

She has been nominated for a property and work is ongoing to help her with her budgeting.

Kristine said: “I don’t know how different it would have been, but I’m happy with the support I’ve had.

“Without this support, particularly from my support worker, I might not have been that strong enough.”

6. Our achievements



We have delivered over **1,000 new homes every year**, including affordable, adapted and specialist homes.



The Rapid Mental Health support scheme working with Midlands Partnership Foundations Trust has resulted in **estimated savings to health and other partners of over £10,000 in the first 6 months through diverting the need from emergency services alone.**



We have secured **11 new units of emergency accommodation** with 24/7 support and **8 new units within intensive supported accommodation hub.**



Through Nuplace and T&W Homes we have delivered **447 new homes to date** including affordable, accessible and specialist housing, with a further 437 in the pipeline.



We have attracted over **£1.6m funding** to address rough sleeping.



There continues to be **daily meetings** of the Rough Sleepers Task Force.



Our 'Everyone In for Good' programme in response to the pandemic has to date **supported over 500 people** to prevent them sleeping rough and find accommodation.



We have **purchased 23 properties** to establish the Telford Housing First programme providing accommodation for rough sleepers with wrap around support.

90%

We have **prevented or relieved homelessness for 90%** of those approaching us for help for whom an HRA duty applies.

7. The national picture

Across England, homelessness has risen year on year since 2010; this is generally accepted to be down to a reduction in the amount of social housing available and benefit restrictions which make the private rented sector less affordable for many. During the pandemic, fewer households were faced with becoming homeless, partly due to temporary legislation that prevented eviction from a rented home.

The number of rough sleepers has also increased significantly over the last decade. During the pandemic, the number of rough sleepers rose by 40%, reflecting the drive to get 'everyone in' from the streets.

Looking ahead, many families will be affected by the increased cost of living, particularly increases in food and energy costs. With budgets under pressure, it is possible that arrears may increase in both the private rented and social housing sectors, potentially leading to increased homelessness without intervention and support. Mortgage rates are increasing rapidly, which could also lead to arrears and reposessions.

The strategy must also respond to changes in legislation, particularly in the private rented sector. The government's White Paper 'A fairer private rented sector' proposes a move to new tenancy types which will abolish 'no

fault' possession. This type of possession is a significant cause of homelessness; such a move could reduce the number of households losing their tenancies. The White Paper also proposes applying the Decent Homes Standard to private rented housing, which should ensure good quality housing. However, there is some concern that the changes may leave some landlords to leave the sector, reducing the supply of available properties.

The rest of this section looks in more detail at the national picture of homelessness during 2020/21 across England.

For households with children, the main reasons for loss of last settled accommodation were:

- ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (generally in the private rented sector)
- family and friends no longer willing to accommodate
- domestic abuse.

The main support needs for these households were:

- domestic abuse
- mental health
- physical health/disability.

Commitments from our partners

STAY will endeavour to home individuals who need emergency accommodation.





For single households across England during the same period, the main reasons for loss of last settled accommodation were similar ie:

- family/friends no longer able to accommodate
- ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (generally private sector rent)
- relationship breakdown (including non-violent relationship breakdown).

The main support needs for these households were:

- mental health
- history of rough sleeping
- physical health
- drug and alcohol
- offending.



The majority of households with children where there is a support need have only one support need, but up to a third of single households have two or three support needs.

2020/21 national figures also show a large increase in applications from households with a history of offending; this may be due to the work of the new Homelessness Prevention Task Forces established by the Ministry of Justice.

8. Our borough

In Telford and Wrekin, the numbers approaching the council for support has increased by around a third since 2018/19. This increase is higher than national trends, which saw numbers plateau or drop during the pandemic. This may well be due to the council continuing to offer a full range of services over this period (2021-2022).

Reasons for homelessness



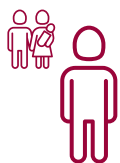
235

were homeless due to a **S21** (no fault eviction) **notice on a private rented tenancy**



A further 210

were faced with losing a private rented tenancy on other grounds



493

were homeless as friends or family were no longer willing to accommodate



189

were sofa surfing



148

were rough sleeping.



247

were homeless as a result of domestic abuse.



24

were homeless on leaving an institution.



43

had no fixed abode or had been rough sleeping.

Support needed



173

had a history of mental health problems.



113

needed support because of physical health or disability.



92

needed support as a result of domestic violence and abuse.

Age/household breakdown



401

single adults



320

were single parents;



85

were couples with children;



Not surprisingly, most heads of households were aged **25-44**

Employment



170

households were headed by someone working full or part time,



454

households were headed by someone unemployed,



63

unable to work due to a disability.

Households



80 households

were homeless because their current accommodation was detrimental to their health.



297

households threatened with becoming homeless live in the private rented sector,



298

households threatened with becoming homeless live with family or friends.



115

households threatened with becoming homeless live in social rented housing,

A key challenge is the affordability of rented accommodation in the area, particularly for those on benefits (including in-work benefits): the table below shows the maximum housing costs that can be paid through the benefits system compared to lower quartile market rents – the cheapest market rents available. In all cases, the rent is higher – usually significantly higher – than the housing cost that benefits can cover (data as of Jul 2022).

	Monthly max benefit rate £	Lower quartile monthly market rents £
Single room rate	325	347
1 bed	398.88	425
2 bed	523.55	550
3 bed	623.31	625
4+ bed	792.83	850

Commitments from our partners

To explore direct referrals with Citizen's Advice for DHP customers with severe debts – Becky Owen-Jones, T&WC



Objective one: Prevention through early intervention

What's working well

- There are a **wide range of services** in place which help to prevent people becoming homeless, from debt and benefits advice to general support for non-specific client groups, to specialist support targeted for particular needs.
- The council has built on the statutory **Duty to Refer** to encourage all partners and council services to identify those at risk of becoming homeless and to make the fastest possible referral to the homelessness team so that prevention work can take place at the earliest opportunity.
- Debt and **benefits advice** is offered through Citizen's Advice, housing associations, a number of voluntary sector organisations, and the council's housing benefits and Safer Stronger Communities teams. Discretionary funds may be offered alongside **food and energy vouchers**, and vouchers for free school meals.
- The council offers **advice and support** to private sector tenants who are at risk of losing their tenancy; **tenancy relations** officers will advise on the validity of notices and can mediate with landlords if required. Housing officers will also negotiate with landlords, help tenants to pay off arrears, and refer them for further support if needed.
- Advice and support is available to those suffering **domestic violence and abuse**. This can help to prevent people becoming homeless or needing to move to a refuge.
- There is a **mental health alliance** in place which brings together statutory and voluntary sector organisations delivering mental health services. Those who may be at risk of homelessness because of mental health challenges can access a range of services from low-level support to specialist accommodation.
- Some services use **volunteers** or peer mentors.
- Services are in place for those suffering from **drug or alcohol addiction** through **local services**, including STARS. Support covers harm reduction, relapse prevention, detox, and rehabilitation. There is also specialist accommodation. Support also includes help with claiming benefits, seeking employment and finding accommodation.
- Joint working is in place with **Children's services** to ensure 16- and 17-year-olds are appropriately safeguarded. There is a **care leavers protocol** in place; care leavers are supported to find and sustain a tenancy. Specialist services and accommodation are available, including specialist housing for those aged over 18 with a learning disability and/or mental health issues.
- **Disabled Facilities Grants** have a key role to play in enabling both older people and those with a disability to remain in their existing accommodation. Although it is rare for older people to approach the council because they are at risk of becoming homeless, some will be referred through other services.
- Many services use volunteers with **lived experience** of homelessness, which brings a range of benefits. Some services also offer peer mentor support.
- When someone approaches the council who is at risk of becoming homeless, the council will do an initial assessment; a **Personalised Housing Plan is produced for** all those at risk of becoming homeless in the next 56 days.
- **Effective interventions** will depend on the individual circumstances of the household, including the resources available to them. These may include:
 - **Contacting a landlord** where a private sector tenancy is ending to ascertain the circumstances and see if the tenancy can continue.
 - **Contacting the family or friends** where someone has been asked to leave to understand the circumstances and see if a longer stay can be negotiated; mediation can be offered where helpful.
 - Finding someone a **place in a refuge** for those fleeing domestic violence and abuse.
 - Sorting **debt and benefit issues** including advising on benefits which can be claimed.
 - Referral to a **floating support** service as appropriate.

- Referral to a **mental health nurse** where appropriate.
- In some circumstances, providing funding through **Discretionary Housing Payments**, or through the homelessness prevention fund.
- **Preventing eviction** from social housing by resolving any underlying issues or delaying eviction to allow a planned move where possible.
- Referral for specialist accommodation where appropriate.

Commitments from our partners

Review homelessness policy for the organisation and ensure embedded in all service delivery areas/links with strategy – J Griffiths, BVT



In order to further meet this objective, the council and its partners will:

Advice and information:

- Deliver the council's Cost of Living strategy which aims to support households to maintain their current housing.
- Maximise the impact of current services across the partnership to prevent increased homelessness in response to the rising cost of living; identify gaps and ways to address these.
- Explore options and provide training to ensure that all partners can easily access information about advice and support services to promote early referral.
- Review and update information on the council website to enable customers to take steps to prevent them becoming homeless; ensure access to appropriate advice on debt and budgeting.
- Agree and implement a communications plan so that all partners are aware of the vital importance of early prevention work and timely referrals.

Customer experience

- Continue to improve the customer journey through regular sharing of learning across partners and through feedback from those with lived experience.
- Ensure personalised housing plans build on customer strengths and set out clearly the expectations and commitments on both sides.

Preventing eviction

- Develop a protocol with private and social landlords to work to prevent homelessness.
- Develop a Landlord and Tenant Support Programme with a single point of contact.
- Work with housing association partners to encourage early referral where tenant is finding it difficult to sustain the tenancy through a pre-eviction protocol.

Young People

- Work with Education Services to establish an education programme for young people to promote awareness of housing options and pathways that prevent homelessness.
- Work with education service and partners to develop youth offer to continue to raise aspirations at an early age, linking to prevention of homelessness as well as crime/drugs/asb etc to try and stop the cycle in future generations.

Health

- Work with health colleagues to ensure that housing issues are raised on admission to hospital so they can be addressed before discharge.
- To review and develop the Hospital Discharge policy to ensure early engagement prior to discharge for those with no accommodation.
- Work with the Ageing Well Partnership to ensure that older people have access to appropriate advice and support to prevent homelessness.

Employment and skills

- Work with employment and skills teams to strengthen links with employers and increase opportunities for work experience, volunteering and employment for those who have been homeless, including rough sleeping.
- Explore options to include requirements for work experience, volunteering and employment for those who have been homeless as part of the social value in council-commissioned contracts.

Commitments from our partners

**We will work in partnership to
make more nominations work –
Wrekin Housing Group**



Objective two: Accommodation to support and empower

What's working well

- Around 50% of those approaching the council where an HRA duty applies have their **homelessness 'relieved'** with support to find alternative accommodation. This may be in the social or private rented sectors. This avoids the need for people to move into emergency or temporary accommodation, providing less disruption and more certainty.
- The council and its partners **work together** to ensure that households in the greatest housing need are nominated to social housing landlords for accommodation.
- The council works closely with **private landlords** operating within Telford and Wrekin.
- The council has expanded provision of emergency and **temporary accommodation** to meet rising demand. Existing schemes have been reconfigured to **better meet demand**, for example there is increased management and support at for those experiencing domestic abuse. An accessible room has also been created within the refuge.
- Although the number of households going into temporary accommodation increased significantly during the pandemic (due to the Everyone In initiative), we have **halved** the average **number of nights** spent in temporary

accommodation from 110 in 2019/20 to 55 in 2021/22.

- The **housing strategy** aims to maximise the number of **affordable properties** available, including affordable rented properties for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Over 300 new affordable homes are being built each year.
- The council is using information about housing need to **shape** and maximise the **delivery** of new affordable and specialist housing provision through S106 planning agreements and work with Homes England who grant fund provision by RP.
- The council is using its **£10m Housing Intervention Fund** to help bring stalled development sites forward to deliver specialist and supported housing including for those who are homeless.
- The council's wholly owned housing company, **Nuplace**, has a portfolio of 447 privately rented homes including a proportion of affordable, adapted and specialist homes. In 2021/22 the council launched **Telford and Wrekin Homes** which is refurbishing existing properties for rent.
- The council has carefully assessed the need for **specialist and supported accommodation**, publishing a separate **strategy** running to 2031. This includes accommodation for those who have experienced, or are at risk of, homelessness. The strategy identifies the need for:

- **800** units of accommodation for those with non-assessed mental health needs (including mainstream accommodation with low-level support)
- **330** units of accommodation for care leavers and other vulnerable young people (again, some of these will be mainstream accommodation)
- just under **300** properties suitable for those with a physical disability, including households with a disabled child.

The strategy is supported by a Homes for All Supplementary Planning Document to shape market provision and ensure these needs are met.

Commitments from our partners

Continue to tackle health inequalities in homelessness – Maninplace



In order to further meet this objective, the council and its partners will:

Facilitate delivery

- Continue to facilitate delivery of the required supported and specialist housing identified in that strategy through planning, engagement with developers and housing associations.
- Continue to invest in Nuplace and Telford and Wrekin Homes to deliver affordable, adapted and specialist homes; grow the combined portfolio to 880 properties by 2026.
- Work with community and voluntary sector partners to help them acquire additional properties to meet need and provide move on accommodation.
- Ensure that planning agreements continue to maximise the delivery of new affordable and specialist homes in accordance with existing policy.

Smaller and shared accommodation

- Explore options to deliver more one bed accommodation; consider whether any existing stock can be used more effectively.
- Explore different models for the provision of shared accommodation; we know that most people want self-contained accommodation, but it is unaffordable for those under 35 who rely on benefits to pay part or all of their rent.



Case study

Siobhan was a victim of domestic abuse and fled to Telford from Rochdale.

She was accommodated in Telford & Wrekin Council's local refuge and received support from a Domestic Abuse Support Worker and the tenancy sustainment and housing solutions teams.

Siobhan was nominated for housing with a social landlord and moved from the refuge into her own property where she has settled well. She has started to attend local courses to help her socialise and learn new skills.

Siobhan said: "I'm really grateful for all the help and support I've received and want to say a big thanks to the Telford & Wrekin Council teams who have helped me to make a completely fresh start in life."

Private rented sector

- Continue to work with private landlords to reduce entry barriers for those with a high housing need and support tenancy sustainment.
- If S21 abolished, implement a communications plan for private landlords to encourage them to remain in the market; work with partners and stakeholders to understand and monitor the impact.

Social housing

- Work with our housing association partners to maximise the number of successful nominations into social housing; agree a clear, shared definition of 'tenancy ready'.
- Work with our housing association partners to ensure that new properties reflect the needs of homeless households.

Emergency and temporary accommodation

- Improve (where feasible) on the existing performance on number of nights customers spend in emergency accommodation.
- Identify and explore innovative solutions to provide move-on accommodation and minimise the need for temporary housing
- Explore the need for a small crash pad room for young people as additional emergency accommodation with mediation/arbitration

services which enable them to return home where safe and appropriate

Customer expectations

- Work with partners to manage customer expectations about the type, size and location of housing they may be offered

Commitments from our partners

Adapt services to fill a need ie fleeing domestic violence, older adults etc – ORSA housing



Objective three: Addressing rough sleeping

The council is committed to eradicating rough sleeping, working with the definition in the National End Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy ie rough sleeping should be prevented where possible but where it does occur it should be rare, brief and non-recurrent.

What's working well

- The multi agency **Rough sleepers Task Force** meets daily to co-ordinate services and ensure that anyone sleeping rough is quickly identified and offered support.
- All partners work to the same triage criteria; information on rough sleepers is shared so that the most **appropriate services** are offered.
- **Maninplace** offer a **responsive** service outside working hours, including a night inn service.
- There is an **outreach** team funded by the council and delivered through **Urban Kip** and **STAY**.
- Emergency **night by night** accommodation is provided where appropriate.
- There are comprehensive support services in place, including **specialist support** around mental health and positive diversion.
- There is a range of emergency, temporary and **move-on accommodation** available, including new provision for homeless couples.

- Accommodation is also available under the Telford Housing First scheme, putting a **roof over people's heads** combined with support to address underlying issues.
- The council and its partners have attracted over **£1.6m government funding** to date to support and accommodate rough sleepers. This includes revenue funding through to 2025 to maintain existing support services, and capital funding to purchase 23 new properties to provide accommodation for those who were previously rough sleeping.
- The **Rapid Mental Health support** scheme in partnership with Midlands Partnership Foundations Trust supports rough sleepers and those in volatile tenancies with mental health challenges, often complex problems. The scheme is funded to December 2022 and to date has supported 139 individuals; 84 of them needing no additional service input.

In order to further meet this objective the council and its partners will:

Services

- Continue the successful work of the Rough Sleeper Task Force in identifying, monitoring and responding to rough sleepers.
- Sustain existing comprehensive services for rough sleepers including outreach, provision of support and accommodation.
- Work with the emerging primary care networks to maximise access to health services for

those who are homeless, including dedicated mental health resources, substance misuse workers and other support functions.

- Further develop the Telford Housing First programme.

Funding

- Bid successfully for further funding to provide additional accommodation and services rough sleepers



Case study

Thomas is turning his life around after being re-housed through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme.

He had been homeless and living in and out of temporary accommodation for over a decade until the council stepped in to find him a home.

Thomas now lives in a flat in Newport thanks to the programme – which has also helped him to get his whole life back on track.

During his spells of homelessness, Thomas turned to a life of drugs and crime which led to several spells in prison.

But now his new home has given him a new lease of life and the chance to look forward to a brighter future.

“

Thomas said: “I was in a bad way and it spiralled. I had no home, I was taking drugs, I wasn’t eating properly and I was in trouble with the law.

“I had brief spells in shared accommodation but it didn’t work out for me and I found myself mixing with the wrong crowd all the time.

“Having a permanent roof over my head through this programme has helped me to sort my life out completely.

“I’m now drug free, I’m able to see my young daughter regularly and I just feel far more settled. The past is in the past and it’s something I don’t want to go back to.”

”



Objective four: Collaboration: Delivering services that are responsive, targeted and maximise impact

What's working well

There is already a **strong foundation in** place of **partnership working** on which we can build. This is particularly evident with the Rough Sleeper Task Force but there is a much wider set of partnerships in place working across all facets of housing and homelessness.

The process of developing this strategy has **re-energised** and refocused some of those partnerships including work with private landlords, social housing landlords, other statutory services and voluntary sector services.



In order to further meet this objective, the council and its partners will:

All partners

- Develop a Homelessness Forum with shared responsibility for delivering the new strategy.
- Hold an annual homelessness event to share progress and renew the commitment of all partners.
- Continue to ensure that all partners are aware of and using referral pathways into the service.
- Report on and seek support for the delivery of the Strategy through key partnerships including the Health & Wellbeing Partnership and Telford & Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership.
- Ensure that data is captured widely and effectively across the system and is used to improve interventions and joint approaches.
- Explore options for shared risk assessments and shared information where it will ensure more joined-up services for customers.
- Facilitate shared training, shadowing and other joint working opportunities.

Health and social care

- Build on current work with health and social care partners to ensure that preventing homelessness is at the heart of services for mental health, substance misuse and adult

care; review whether the risk of becoming homeless should be a factor when considering the thresholds and criteria to access services.

- Work with healthcare partners to promote awareness of the importance of their contribution to preventing homelessness, including the emerging Integrated Care Partnership.
- Work with the Rapid Response Team working with older people at risk of hospital admission to provide a joined-up response including housing considerations.
- Offer fast-track appointments through the hub for interim assessment for adult care services.

Children and young people

- Build on current joint working with Children and Young People's services to ensure that young people at risk of becoming homeless are identified and supported at the earliest possible stage; build a 'Care Leavers' covenant which includes an appropriate housing pathway.

Commitments from our partners

**Recruiting more volunteers with
lived experience – MIND**



Rough Sleeper Task Force Success

The Rough Sleeper Task Force was set up in 2020 to initially support those rough sleeping or faced with rough sleeping to access support and accommodation during the Covid pandemic.

Partners meet daily to discuss, monitor and identify cross partnership actions on supporting those rough sleeping or faced with rough sleeping.

Due to the success of the partnership, the Rough Sleeper Task Force continues to meet daily to provide support and a collaborative approach to those faced with rough sleeping

Our Rough Sleeper Task Force partners include:

- **Telford & Wrekin Housing Solutions**
- **Maninplace**
- **Kip**
- **STAY**
- **A Better Tomorrow**
- **Orsa Housing**
- **STARS**
- **Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT)**



9. Delivering the strategy

Our offer

The council will work with partners, stakeholders and customers to deliver this strategy building on the themes raised through engagement to date.

The council will build on existing partnership working and establish a new Homelessness Forum with shared responsibility for delivering the strategy. This will be supported by an annual event where all partners can review progress against the action plan and commit their on-going support.

The council will promote the interests of the borough in advocating for resources and policy changes which help to prevent homelessness and respond appropriately to those who are homeless.

The actions in the strategy will be pulled together into a live action plan which will be shared and owned by the council and partners and managed and monitored through the Homelessness Forum. The action plan is intended to be flexible, to be updated at least annually and respond to emerging needs, trends and policy changes.

Our asks

During the engagement work to develop this strategy, partners made a range of commitments to support its delivery: some partners committed to increased collaboration, others to specific changes or additions to current services. All commitments were documented and form part of our action plans.

The council values its partners without whom the work to date would not have been possible and asks them to:

- continue to work in partnership with us to prevent and respond to homelessness
- share information and insight to help us understand the causes of homelessness and the impact of our interventions
- work with us to ensure that access criteria and thresholds for services reflect the reality of the demand we are facing.

Commitments from our partners

Link in with wider services such as probation to ensure robust support is offered – Telford MIND



Resources

Despite funding pressures, the council will continue to direct resources into preventing and responding to homelessness. We have secured funding from central government for core services until 2025 but we need to do more if we are to deliver our ambitions and address the needs of our residents and communities. We will build on our successful track record of bidding for funds to secure additional resources to provide more properties, particularly for those who have been sleeping rough, or at risk of doing so.

We will also work with partners to support them to secure external funding for new accommodation, including through Homes England. We continue to use our Disabled Facilities Grant funding to support older people and those with a physical disability to remain in their homes where feasible and appropriate. Before taking any council-owned land to market we will consider its potential for use as supported or specialist housing. We will look at opportunities to tailor planning contributions for affordable housing to meet specialist housing needs and to shape provision by Nuplace and Telford and Wrekin Homes wherever possible.

When commissioning support services we will give priority to services which meet the objectives of this homelessness strategy.

10. How we will measure and report on success

The new Homelessness Forum will agree a set of performance measures to evidence the impact of delivering the strategy. Measures may include (but are not limited to):

- A year-on-year increase in the proportion of people for whom homelessness can be prevented
- A year-on-year increase in the proportion of people for whom homelessness can be relieved
- The number of rough sleepers sleeping out for more than one night
- The number of rough sleepers who return to the streets
- Maintaining the average number of nights spent in temporary accommodation at 55 or less
- Ensuring that all those in the refuge as a result of domestic abuse achieve a planned move to long-term accommodation within an agreed timescale

Progress will also be monitored through an annual report to the council's Cabinet.

Commitments from our partners

Work closely with local authority to do something different with our newbuilds/homeless list – Bromford



Case study

Chloe and her partner Brendon benefited from our service during lockdown in 2021 after they became homeless.

They were placed into B&B accommodation and were extremely grateful to be accommodated in a warm and safe environment.

In June 2021, Chloe and Brendon were housed in Newport as part of our Next Steps Accommodation (NSAP) project.

They both settled well into the area and engaged with all of their support appointments which helped them thrive and gave them the tools to become tenancy ready and independent in all aspects of life.

Chloe and Brendon have now secured a tenancy with The Wrekin Housing Group and have moved into their 'forever home.' They have both worked extremely hard and are a credit to the NSAP project.

Chloe said: "I'd like to say thanks to Telford & Wrekin Council for all the support we have been given. We wouldn't be in our own home without that help and we're really grateful."





Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Telford and Wrekin's **Strategy to address homelessness and rough sleeping**