



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025



Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	6
Our vision	7
Summary findings from the Homelessness Review	8
Strategic Priorities 2022-2025	9
Meeting demand	10
Providing solutions	11
Preventing homelessness and supporting tenancies	12
Ending rough sleeping	13
Monitoring our performance	14
<hr/>	
Our Plan	16
ACTIONS: Meeting demand	18
ACTIONS: Providing solutions	20
ACTIONS: Preventing homelessness and supporting tenancies	22
ACTIONS: Ending rough sleeping	26

Foreword

Executive Member for Housing Cllr Fred Birkett



The impacts of homelessness can be devastating for individuals and families. It can affect both physical and mental health, educational and employment opportunities and has long term consequences for those affected. For these reasons, preventing homelessness and rough sleeping is a priority for the Council.

This strategy aims to build on Fareham's positive track record of investing in front line housing services, and its positive approach to preventing and relieving homelessness effectively. It will support the aims of the Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 to "ensure that Fareham remains a prosperous, safe and attractive place to live and work" and has been developed with due regard to both the Council's Allocation of Social Housing Policy and Affordable Housing Strategy.

Rough sleeping is the most visible face of homelessness. Finding lasting and effective solutions to this challenge requires a holistic and joined up approach from organisations and our partners across the Borough. Following a Rough Sleepers Conference in 2018,

chaired by Cllr Seán Woodward, the Council launched StreetAid, a multi-agency initiative to help entrenched rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation. The success of StreetAid has been down to the level of engagement from our partners, as they all have a stake in successful outcomes for the individuals assisted within their own areas of responsibility. The initiative continues to work well and has been incorporated into the Community Safety Partnership Action Group (PAG), a tactical group of operational partners chaired by the Council's Executive Portfolio Holder for Health & Public Protection. Local faith and community groups are integral to the on-going success of StreetAid and its aim to "Help people live off our streets".

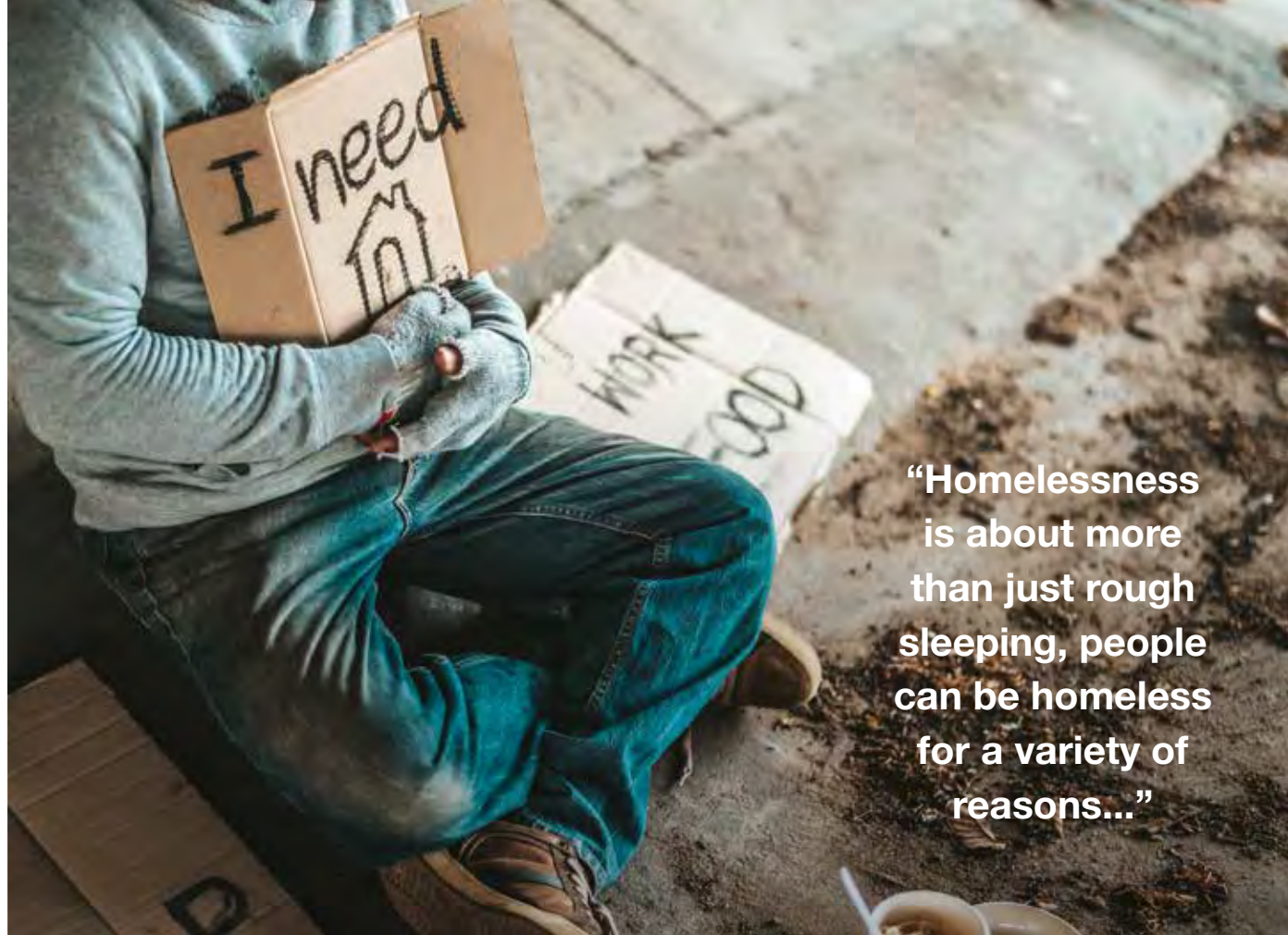
It is our intention that this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy will provide:

- **Better support to vulnerable families, individuals, and communities**
- **Improved help for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness**
- **Effective collaboration with partner agencies, public bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups and others.**

Preventing and relieving homelessness is a high priority for us. I am very pleased to endorse this strategy on behalf of Fareham Borough Council.

"This strategy aims to build on Fareham's positive track record of investing in front line housing services..."





“Homelessness is about more than just rough sleeping, people can be homeless for a variety of reasons...”

Introduction

Homelessness can be defined as not having a legal right to occupy a home that you call your own, or your home is unsuitable to live in. People become homeless for lots of different reasons and can be at risk of homelessness at different stages in their lives.

Homelessness is about more than just rough sleeping, people can be homeless for a variety of reasons including if they are staying with friends or family, ‘sofa-surfing’, squatting, living in unsuitable conditions or at risk of losing their home due to the end of a private tenancy, domestic abuse, financial circumstances, or other challenges.

Homelessness is closely linked to poverty and has a negative impact on a range of outcomes including health and education.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new legal duties on councils to ensure that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness has access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance.

If an applicant is threatened with homelessness, the council must take reasonable steps to help them avoid becoming homeless. This is known as the ‘Prevention Duty’.

If an applicant is homeless, the council must take reasonable steps to help them secure accommodation for at least six months. This is known as the ‘Relief Duty’ and once triggered will also continue for 56 days.

Our vision

Our Corporate Strategy (2017 to 2023) sets out the Council’s six priorities to ensure Fareham remains a prosperous, safe and attractive place to live and work.

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy will support Corporate Priority 1 “Providing Housing Choices”.

Ensuring everyone has somewhere to live is a vital role for the Council but we know that for people who are homeless this ambition can feel like a long way off. Our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy provides a road map to support people to achieve this.

Providing Housing Choices by working with our key partners to enable and support a diverse housing market so that residents have access to good quality housing that is affordable and offers a choice of tenures. We will take positive steps to prevent homelessness and assist individuals and families in finding good quality accommodation.



“Ensuring everyone has somewhere to live is a vital role for the Council...”

Summary findings from the Homelessness Review

We appointed an independent Housing Consultant (Neil Morland & Co) to undertake a comprehensive, impartial, and transparent review of homelessness in Fareham.

The full body of evidence can be downloaded from the Council's website at www.fareham.gov.uk.

The key headlines arising from the review include:



The number of people approaching the Council for housing advice and assistance increases each year

25-44

The age of most people approaching the Council for housing advice and assistance; however we are seeing an increase in those aged under 24.



Fareham's higher than average house price to earnings ratio means that many people struggle to pay their housing costs

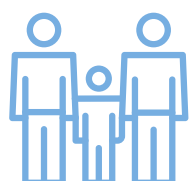


Parents, other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate continues to be the main reason why a person loses their home

10 | 3

est. 2019 | est. 2020

The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough in 2019. The estimate for 2020 followed the 'Everyone In' initiative and 3 people were still sleeping rough, having refused offers of accommodation



Households which include a dependent child are more likely to be owed a main housing duty



The number of homeless households with physical or mental health problems has doubled

700

The number of applicants in housing need requiring social housing currently on Fareham Borough Council's Register

"The number of homeless households with physical or mental health problems has doubled."

Strategic Priorities 2022-2025

The review of homelessness has found our approach and provision of homelessness services has delivered effective results in the face of growing demand.

We therefore plan to retain our core focus on early intervention and the prevention of homelessness, backed up by high quality joined up support to get people back on their feet when things do go wrong.

To bring about significant change within our communities, this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focuses on four key priorities. More detail on the actions against each priority is included in the accompanying Delivery Plan.

Our vision and key priorities are in keeping with the increased emphasis on early intervention and prevention in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018.

Early Intervention and Prevention of Homelessness





Meeting demand

- Provision of high quality, consistent housing advice, tailored to the individual and delivered in a sensitive and supportive manner.
- Improve the capacity and capability (of the Housing Options Team) to better inform what we do and place ourselves in a position whereby we can respond more quickly and more effectively to changing demands in the future.
- Improve the range and quality of information to ensure they remain relevant to our changing customer base.



“Provision of high quality, consistent housing advice...”

Providing solutions

- Improve access to the private rented sector as this will continue to play an important part in tackling homelessness.
- Update and improve the offer to private sector landlords as part of our Farelets scheme,
- Continue to provide good quality and a diverse range of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure bed and breakfast accommodation is used only as a last resort.



“Improve access to the private rented sector...”

Preventing homelessness and supporting tenancies

- Strengthen our mediation capacity to reduce family/friend evictions and return young people to their family home where it is appropriate and safe to do so.
- Continue to improve our working relationships with key agencies such as Social Services and Mental Health Teams, domestic violence agencies, probation and substance misuse services.
- Strengthen early planning for those people leaving care or institutions to ensure they don't become homeless.
- Continue to provide people affected by welfare reforms with access to advice service.
- Continue to provide high quality tenancy support to help vulnerable households sustain their tenancies.

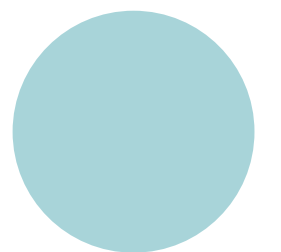


“Strengthen our mediation capacity to reduce family/friend evictions...”



Ending rough sleeping

- Ensure there continues to be effective outreach services to deliver intensive support and encourage people who are sleeping rough into services and accommodation.
- Explore new ways of creating additional emergency bed spaces.
- Continue to expand the supported accommodation options for those sleeping rough or ready for move-on from the hostels.
- Embed the 'Housing First' model to provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs.



“Ensure there continues to be effective outreach services to deliver intensive support...”

Monitoring our performance

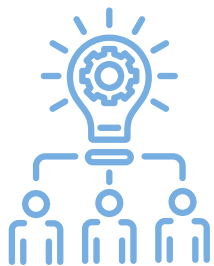
This strategy sets out our plans for the next three years. It has been developed following a comprehensive review of homelessness in the Borough so we are confident that the strategic aims will stand the test of time during the life of the strategy.

New priorities may however emerge over the next three years. The strategy will therefore remain under review to ensure it is kept up to date and the Delivery Plan will be updated annually to enable a flexible response to any emerging needs, trends, and policy or legislative changes.

The Delivery Plan on the following pages sets out the main areas of work over the period of this strategy and progress against each action will be monitored through:



Annual reports to the Council's Housing Scrutiny Panel



Key Partnership Forums



Updated Delivery Plan published annually on the Council's website



Mandatory statistical returns to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

“The strategy will therefore remain under review to ensure it is kept up to date...”



OUR PLAN

Fareham Borough Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of the Council and its partners to address homelessness.

We will achieve these aims and objectives by concentrating our efforts and resources on four priorities to ensure we deliver services which focus on early intervention and the prevention of homelessness, backed up by high quality joined up support to get people back on their feet when things do go wrong.



Meeting Demand



Preventing Homelessness & Supporting Tenancies



Providing Solutions



Ending Rough Sleeping



We will...

Use local and national data and benchmarking information to determine service development and delivery.



Monitor demand across all sets of indicators.



Conduct regular casework reviews to ensure consistency of decisions and compliance with legal framework and to identify potential areas for training and improvement.



All staff to receive training to ensure they have the skills to deliver excellent customer service.

Ensure staff can identify and assist customers who have specific needs and/or protected characteristics.

Review and improve the range and quality of online housing advice with consideration given to “off the shelf” self-help IT packages.



Collect and analyse statistics on hidden homelessness.



Analyse quarterly, the rate of major decisions and acceptances, looking at what action was taken to prevent and/or relieve homelessness and whether anything more might have been done.

Continue to work with the Hampshire-wide Strategic Housing Officers Group (SHOG) to collaborate on performance, benchmarking and joint commissioning.

Explore the reasons why we lose contact with people we are working with.



Fareham Borough Council Resources

Third Party Resources



Intended outcomes

Understanding of positive practice and policy.

Understand the pressures and demands affecting Housing Options Team.

Allocate resources effectively to meet demand.

All staff working consistently.

All staff working in a procedurally compliant way.

Performance issues addressed.

Training needs addressed.

Delivery of training resulting in a fully skilled Housing Options Team.

Officers are skilled in negotiation, confidence building, motivating, and supporting customers.

Improved range and quality of online housing advice.

Increased ‘self-serve’ opportunities.

Inform bespoke interventions to help those who are sofa surfing.

Improved outcomes for customers.

Development and continuous improvement of joint work arrangements, sharing of positive practice and policy.

Fewer households lose contact with the service without any clear understanding of why they have disengaged.

Prevention and relief of homelessness for those customers who disengage.

ACTIONS

Providing solutions



We will...

Formulate and publish a Temporary Accommodation Procurement Policy and a Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy.



In conjunction with the Council's private sector housing service, consult with private rented sector landlords to understand what could be done to prevent the end of an assured shorthold tenancies.



Use data held by the Council about occupants of TA, about household formation, needs of children and last settled address to inform future procurement of temporary accommodation.



Increase the number of households whose main duty is ended by an offer of suitable private rented housing, HMO or lodgings.



Continue to promote the FareLets scheme and ensure it is adequately resourced.



Formulate a new Tenancy Strategy.



Explore consultation opportunities to learn from people with lived experience of homelessness.



Intended outcomes

The Council meets all requirements set out in legislation and due regard to statutory guidance.

Reduction in the number of people approaching the Housing Options Team for assistance as their private rented sector tenancy is ending.

A portfolio of suitable and affordable temporary accommodation that meets the needs of customers.

Increased move-on from temporary accommodation into the private rented sector.

A successful scheme that supports both landlords and tenants.

Increased options for customers in the privately rented sector.

To support the delivery of the priorities within the Council's Allocations Policy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Service users' experiences and views shape and inform policy and practice for tackling homelessness.

ACTIONS

Preventing homelessness and supporting tenancies



We will...

Monitor annually the reasons for loss of last settled home outcomes of households.



Gather intelligence on child poverty rate at a ward level.



Continue to monitor employment circumstances of people seeking homeless assistance from the Council (ongoing).

Review the range, effectiveness and quality of initiatives being used to prevent and relieve homelessness.



Improve how the Council works with other public organisations to fulfil the Duty to Refer, such as:



- Agreeing joint working protocols
- Providing training
- Encouraging other bodies not subject to the DtR to voluntarily comply with it
- Distribute more widely housing advise information
- Encouraging housing associations that have not already signed up to the commitment to refer to do so
- Adding a DtR button on the homepage of the Council's website.

Ensure there continues to be funding for independent housing rights assistance; this is currently provided by Citizens Advice Fareham (ongoing).

Improve joint working with other public bodies by adopting protocols and shared working relationships:



- Prison/young offender releases
- Care Leavers
- Ex-service Personnel
- Hospital discharges
- Adult Social Care.

Fareham Borough Council Resources

Third Party Resources



Intended outcomes

Track long-term trends to inform future prevention and relief activities.

Identify which areas might be targeted for early interventions to prevent homelessness.

Inform plans for early interventions to prevent homelessness.

Identify areas for improvement.

Earlier identification of people who are at risk of homelessness.

Instances of homelessness arising when people are discharged from institutions are absolutely minimised.

Provision of independent and impartial advice.

Positive working relationships with agencies.

Identification of specific professionals to maintain contact with each agency.

Partner agencies liaise positively to enable customers to access appropriate services.

ACTIONS

Preventing homelessness and supporting tenancies



We will...

Investigate further as to why levels of prevention activity have fallen since the introduction of the HRA17.



Adopt a pre-eviction protocol with all local housing associations.



Explore opportunities with the Tenancy Services Team, Private Sector Housing Team and other neighbourhood-based services, to identify at an early stage those at risk of losing their accommodation and to develop new ways to help people remain in their existing home.



Improve recording of main reasons for loss of settled home.



Share data collected on support needs with key stakeholders.



Fareham Borough Council Resources

Third Party Resources



Intended outcomes

Identify areas for improvement.

Housing Associations are contacting the Housing Options Team at an early stage to prevent problems accumulating and enabling tenants to sustain their tenancy and prevent future evictions.

Reduced numbers of Housing Association tenants triggering a prevention or relief duty as a result of being served notice by their landlord.

Housing Association tenants know where and when to seek help to ensure their tenancies are not at risk.

More targeted prevention work with households to prevent homelessness.

Identify areas for improvement.

Inform discussions about future joint working arrangements and commissioning of suitable support services for those at risk of homelessness.

ACTIONS

Ending rough sleeping



We will...

Increase the parameter of matters monitored via the annual rough sleeping count carried out every November.



Build on the existing success of tackling street homelessness through the delivery of additional move-on accommodation and, working with the Partnership Action Group, embed the Housing First model



Work with Hampshire County Council Adult Services with regard to the commissioning of homelessness services.

Ensure there continues to be adequate Outreach and Complex Needs provision to include:

- Access to accommodation
- Access to primary health care
- Access to substance misuse treatment services
- Access to employment and training opportunities
- Provision of personalisation budgets to address financial and material hardships
- Coordination of and support to voluntary and faith organisations

Fareham Borough Council Resources

Third Party Resources



Intended outcomes

To better understand how many people have newly flowed onto the streets, how many are stuck sleeping rough and how many are experiencing a repeat occurrence of street homelessness.

To better understand how many people have newly flowed onto the streets, how many are stuck sleeping rough and how many are experiencing a repeat occurrence of street homelessness.

New/revised County funded homelessness service provision and accommodation in Fareham from April 2023 (end of current contract).

Effective pathways for rough sleepers to enable them to move from the street to independent and sustainable accommodation.



FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL