

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2024.

Summary of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2024

“All residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services in Wokingham Borough”

	Helping people keep a roof over their head	Helping people to find a settled home	Housing crises – our statutory duty	Creating opportunities for vulnerable residents
What we have delivered so far:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased homelessness preventions and reduced homelessness acceptances. Implemented Universal Credit and provided advice and support to those impacted by welfare reform. Focused on early intervention, including using creative solutions to prevent homelessness. Worked with partners to improve outcomes for families in housing need. Continued to offer a range of support to vulnerable residents. Supported people to break the cycle of recurring homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to assist households with our Rent in Advance/Deposit Loan Scheme to access private rented accommodation. Built more affordable homes. A total of 482 new homes were built in 2017/18 and in 2018/19, we saw 365 affordable completions. Identified a site for our first self-build scheme. Opened new schemes including supported accommodation at Road and an extra care facility at Fosters. Updated our shared ownership scheme. The scheme is now run by Help to Buy South. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively reduced the numbers of households accepted as homeless in the borough since 2015/16. Reduced the borough rough sleeper count from 10 in November 2017 to 7 in November 2018. Refurbished 12 mobile home units for use as temporary accommodation. Provided 14 additional units of temporary accommodation across the borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to work with numerous partners, agencies and the Housing Delivery Partnership Group, to address the wider causes of homelessness and housing need. Focused on prevention and early intervention to stop households becoming homeless. Worked with our providers to continue to create employment and training opportunities across the borough, including via programmes such as Elevate and Strive.
16	Early intervention and prevention	Working towards ending rough sleeping and tackling hidden homelessness.	Building more affordable homes.	Supporting our vulnerable residents.
In the next 3 years, we aim to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide effective housing advice to residents experiencing housing crisis. Focus on early intervention and prevention. Work jointly with partners to tackle homelessness and housing crisis. Support our private rented sector residents. Reduce the Council’s use of emergency and temporary accommodation. Embed a clear housing pathway for key groups, including care leavers and those in specialist accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for the development of a night shelter in the borough. Carry out targeted work with entrenched rough sleepers and transient communities. Develop our understanding of hidden homeless in the borough. Explore the feasibility of a pilot Housing First (or similar) scheme in the borough. Hold regular Rough Sleeper Meetings with partners. Work to address the root causes of homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the right homes are built in the right locations for those most in housing need. Develop specialist housing that meets demand. Adopted a refreshed Allocations Policy. Continue to negotiate with developers to provide a percentage of all new build homes for social rent. Maximise opportunities to provide homes for key groups, including key workers and low income households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that vulnerable residents have access to tailored advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness. Continue to work in partnership to tackle housing crisis. Enable the provision of advice and training for residents on key topics including budgeting, employment, tenancy management, wellbeing and independent living skills. Collaborate with residents to improve services based on feedback.

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1.0 Introduction

The impacts of homelessness can be devastating for individuals and families. Homelessness can affect health, education and employment. Homelessness can have long term consequences for those affected. As a result, reducing homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for Wokingham Borough Council.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how we will, over the next three years, tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough and support residents in housing crisis.

Our actions over the next three years will be targeted across four strategic priorities:

- ❖ Early intervention and prevention.
- ❖ Working towards ending rough sleeping and tackling hidden homelessness.
- ❖ Building more affordable homes.
- ❖ Supporting our vulnerable residents.

All local housing authorities have a duty to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness service provision for their area and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years.

The Council carried out a Homelessness Review in 2018. The review 2018 is an assessment of the levels, and future levels, of homelessness in the borough and the activities which are carried out, or contribute to:

- Preventing homelessness
- Ensuring accommodation is available for people who may become homeless
- Providing support for people who are or may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

Our Homelessness Review also takes account of the resources available in the borough. Wokingham Borough Council's Homelessness Review 2018 is available on the Council's website. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the findings of this review.

We will monitor our progress continually and update our action plan annually to ensure that we are responding to local and national pressures.

What is homelessness?

- People sleeping rough.
- Single homeless people living in hostels, shelters and temporary supported accommodation.
- Statutorily homeless households.
- People who are at risk of violence or abuse in their home.
- Those living in homes where the condition of the dwelling is poor.
- 'Hidden homeless' households. People who may be considered homeless but whose situation is not 'visible' either on the streets or in official statistics.

“The right to a safe home isn’t just the right to a roof over your head.
It’s the right to somewhere safe, secure and affordable”.

Shelter

2.0 National Context and Policy Framework

Nationally, incidents of homelessness have been increasing for a number of years.

Between January and March 2019, 70,430 households were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness or homeless. This is up 10.7% from 63,620 households in the previous quarter. 37,690 households were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness, up 10.2% from 34,190 in the previous quarter. 32,740 households were initially assessed as homeless, up 11.2% from 29,430 in October to December 2018.

Between January to March 2019, 31,180 households who were owed assistance for being threatened with homelessness or homeless, secured accommodation for 6 months or more. This is up 1.3% from 30,780 the previous quarter. Between January to March 2019, 7,570 households were accepted as owed a main homelessness duty. This decreased 1.4% from 7,680 during October to December 2018¹. In England in 2017/18, annual homelessness acceptances reached 56,630. This is a 41.5% increase from 2009/10.

On 31st March 2019, the total number of households in temporary accommodation was 84,740. This is a 77% increase from 31st December 2010 (48,010) when the use of temporary accommodation hit its lowest point since 2004. The 84,740 households include 126,020 children.

In November 2019, data released by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government shows that local authorities in England spent £1.1 billion on temporary accommodation for homeless households in 2018/19. This is an increase of 9% in the last year and 78% in the last five years. £344 million of the £1.1 billion was spent on emergency B&B accommodation, which is a 111% increase in the last five years.

As at March 2018, the biggest reasons for loss of last settled homes nationally were family or friends no longer accommodating (28%), end of assured shorthold tenancy (25%) and violent relationship breakdown (12%).

Figures provided by Crisis estimate that there were 2.24 million households containing concealed single persons in England in 2018, in addition to 295,000

¹ These national statistics were reported by MHCLG as experimental official statistics as at September 2019.

concealed couples and lone parents. The number of adults in these concealed household units is estimated at 3.74 million².

The total number of rough sleepers in England in autumn 2018 was recorded as 4,677. This is down 2% from the 2017 total of 4,751 and was up 2,909 people or 165% from the 2010 total of 1,768. 64% were UK nationals, compared to 71% in 2017. 22% were EU nationals from outside of the UK, compare to 16% in 2017. 3% were non-EU nationals, compared to 4% in 2017. Wokingham recorded 7 rough sleepers in the 2018 count (see page nine for further details).

Other key drivers of change include Licensing of Homes in Multiple Occupation 2018, Social Housing Green Paper 2018 and Tenant Fees Act 2019.

The **Homelessness Reduction Act**, which came into force on 3rd April 2018, amended the Housing Act 1996 and placed new duties on local authorities.

The key new provisions are:

- An extension of the 'threatened with homelessness' period from 28 days to 56 days.
- A duty to prevent homelessness for up to 56 days for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.
- A duty to relieve homelessness for up to 56 days for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need.
- A duty to consider all applicants and to agree a personalised housing plan (PHP) which will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- A duty on public services to refer to the local authority.
- A duty for local authorities to provide free advice on homelessness, preventing homelessness and people's rights.

The **Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy** launched in August 2018 and committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027. Government will spend over £1 billion until 2020 to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, part of which is the £50 million Homelessness Prevention Programme.

3.0 Local Context - homelessness and rough sleeping in Wokingham

3.1 Housing Advice

Preventing the distress and disruption caused by homelessness is a priority for the Council. Wherever possible, we will work to prevent homelessness and help people to sustain their homes.

² Crisis, Homelessness Monitor: England, 2019.

The table below shows homelessness presentations and acceptances from 2011/12 to 2018/19.

Year	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Presented	50	81	81	141	236	196	180	248
Accepted	13	20	28	70	102	111	87	91

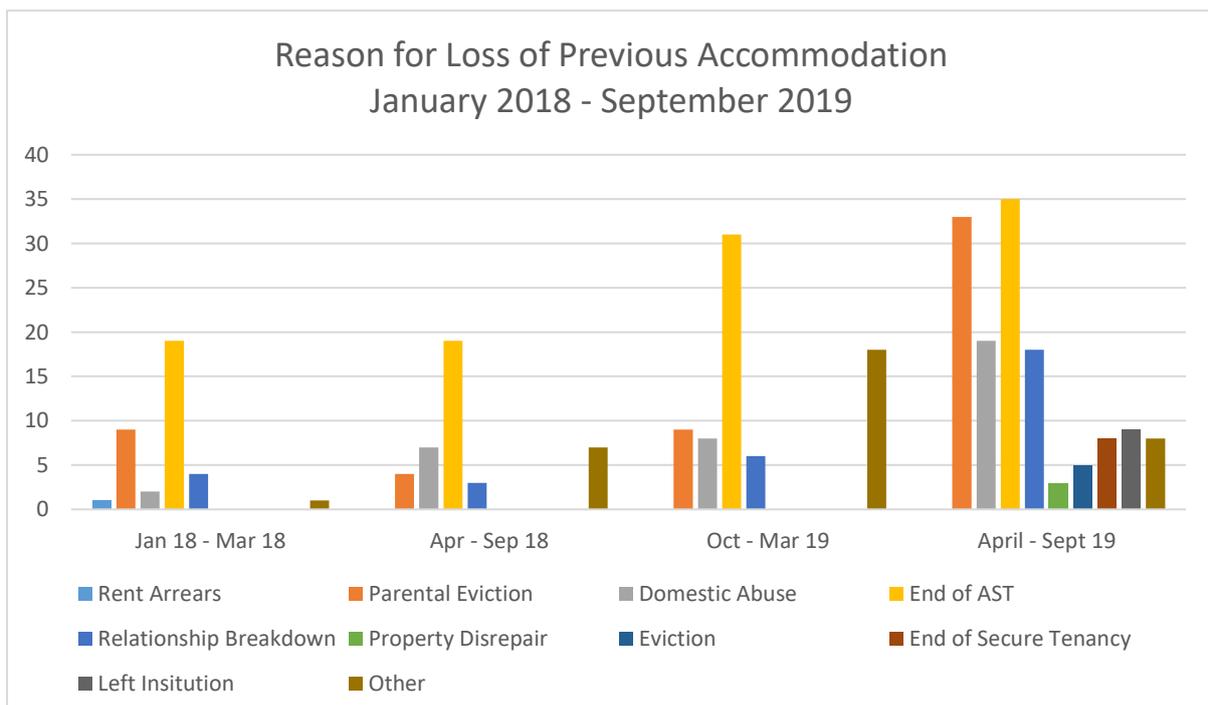
The percentage increase in presentations from 2011/12 to 2018/19 is 396%. The percentage increase in acceptances from 2011/12 to 2018/19 is 600%.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, Wokingham Borough Council saw a total of 248 homelessness presentations (148 families and 100 singles). This is a significant increase from 180 (129 families and 51 singles) homeless presentations in 2017/18 prior to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. This is an increase of 37.7% in overall homelessness presentations; a 14.7% increase in presentations from families and a 96% increase in presentations from singles.

From January 2019 to June 2019, the Council received 62 homelessness applications from singles and 22 of these applications were accepted. During this same period, 17 singles were offered B&B accommodation (10 accepted, 7 refused).

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, including the Duty to Refer, has had a significant impact on the numbers of households presenting to the Council as homeless. The Council has seen a particular increase in single household presentations, linked to the numbers of referrals received under the Duty to Refer from other public sector organisations.

The chart below shows the main reasons why households/individuals have declared themselves as homeless in the first two quarters of 2018/19. Assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) ending is the biggest reason, followed closely by family evictions:



Over the next three years, we expect to see a reduction in acceptances and an increased in prevention and relief activities as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Although statutory homelessness and actual rooflessness numbers in Wokingham are comparatively low, urgent and complex housing need is an area of growing work in the borough.

Early Intervention and Prevention at Wokingham Borough Council.	
✓ Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) agreed with each household.	✓ Links to support agencies and services.
✓ Accessible advice in person, via our website, by telephone, and in writing.	✓ Access to the Housing Register.
✓ Mediation with family and negotiation with landlords.	✓ Tenancy sustainment.
✓ Income maximisation.	✓ Rent in Advance/Deposit Loan Scheme to secure privately rented accommodation, and assistance with where and how to look for it.

Housing advice is a key part of the work we are doing to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. We focus on practical responses, and early intervention and prevention underpinned by legislative requirements.

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to supporting vulnerable people who may be more likely to experience housing crisis in the borough. This includes care leavers, domestic abuse victims, veterans, those with mental health problems, people with learning disabilities, those with physical disabilities, older people, ex-offenders, those with substance misuse issues and people experiencing financial hardship. The Council's Homelessness Review 2018 (available via the Council's website) provides further detail regarding the support available to each of these groups across the borough.

3.2 Rough Sleeping

Our annual rough sleeper count (a single night snapshot taken each November) for 2019 was 10. The figure from our 2018 count was 7, and in 2015 the figure was 14.

Of the 7 individuals recorded in 2018, 6 were male, and 1 was female. 5 were UK nationals and 2 were EU non-UK nationals. All 7 were aged 26 and over. The borough rough sleeping rate (per 10,000 households) in 2018 was 1.1. Of the 7 recorded rough sleepers in the Council's 2018 count, 2 were undergoing relationship

breakdown, 1 had lost employment leading to eviction from an AST and 1 had been asked to leave by their family (3 are not recorded).

In 2018/19, we recorded 30 households without dependents who approached the Council for assistance as having no fixed abode. 5 of these households were verified rough sleepers. Between April and August 2019, we have recorded 18 households without dependents who had approached the Council for assistance as having no fixed abode. 2 of these households were verified as rough sleepers.

934 rough sleepers were counted in the South East during the 2018 count, which is a 17% reduction on the 2017 figure (1,119). The rough sleeping rate (per 10,000) across the South East was 2.5³.

We have identified three priority rough sleeper cohorts in the borough:

- Rough sleepers in Wokingham town centre, some with a local connection to other parts of Berkshire.
- Rough sleepers on the border with Reading.
- Rough sleepers from Wokingham sleeping in other parts of Berkshire.

The Council is committed to reducing rough sleeping in the borough. Between April 2017 and March 2018, we rehoused six residents who had become known rough sleepers.

The support and assistance provided by the Council to rough sleepers is individualised, and will include creating a personalised housing plan (PHP) which focuses on steps that the applicant should be taking to relieve their homelessness and the support that we can offer with this. Safeguarding referrals are made when required, and the Housing Needs Team link in with Adult and Children's Services regularly.

The Council is part of the Streetlink Scheme. Streetlink is a national venture which enables concerned residents to alert local authorities and other agencies to incidents of rough sleeping so that support and advice can be offered.

In 2017, the Wokingham Drop-in Centre (Sturges Road, Wokingham) was developed, funded and opened by Wokingham In Need for use by the Salvation Army to assist the homeless and vulnerable in Wokingham. Services offered here also include regular podiatrist sessions and computer training.

Wokingham Borough Council has identified two homes as resources to provide shared supported housing to young people (up to 25 years old), and particularly care leavers, in need in the borough. This accommodation will supplement the supported accommodation currently available in the borough, including at Reading Road (a

³ Gov.uk, Homelessness Statistics.

purpose built scheme that provides 16-25 year olds with a stepping stone to independence).

The Government has made further commitments to tackling homelessness by investing in private rented sector access schemes (£20million) and providing funding for Housing First pilots. As part of this movement, the Council is exploring ways of working together with local partner agencies to tackle rough sleeping.

3.3 Emergency and Temporary Accommodation

Emergency B&B accommodation is expensive, disruptive and especially difficult for families with children. Wokingham Borough Council avoids using B&B accommodation wherever possible, but where homelessness is urgent and attempts at prevention and other provision have failed, it is the last resort.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, the Council spent £255,359 on emergency accommodation. Between January 2019 and June 2019, B&B accommodation was offered to 35 households (18 families and 17 single households). The Council is working towards reducing the use of B&B emergency accommodation.

Wokingham Borough Council committed to improving temporary accommodation in the borough under the 2014-2019 Homelessness Strategy.

Temporary accommodation may be offered to homeless households as an interim measure. The following units of temporary accommodation are now owned by the Council:

- Oxford Road - 9 self-contained units (including one disabled adapted flat)
- Foxwood - 5 self-contained units (including one disabled adapted flat)
- Grovelands - 12 mobile home units at which have been renovated, including skirting to enclose the underside of the units.
- Broadway House – 10 units.
- Other council-owned stock as required and available.

The Council has a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) in place throughout the year to assist any rough sleepers in adverse weather. If the temperature is zero degrees or below for three nights or more, or reaches dangerously high temperatures, the Housing Needs Team will find temporary accommodation for anybody (regardless of eligibility, priority need or local connection). This is usually B&B accommodation.

3.4 Key Groups in Wokingham

3.4.1 Care Leavers and Young People

Young homeless people are significantly at risk of experiencing other disadvantages such as poverty, substance misuse issues and mental health problems. Early intervention, before crisis point and homelessness, is key for this cohort.

Homeless Link's sixth 'Young and Homeless' study shows that family relationship breakdown is the leading cause of youth homelessness and that support is often received too late. Care leavers, LGBTQ+ young people, those growing up in deprivation and those with poor educational experiences are at higher risk. Overcrowding, unemployment, financial difficulties and illness of a family member were identified by young people as key factors in contributing to relationship tensions and eventual breakdown.

Wokingham Borough Council is being proactive in helping young people who are struggling to access accommodation in the borough. Our Housing Needs Services can assist young people with a loan for rent in advance/deposit, offer advice and promote early intervention. Mediation services are also available to facilitate a young person remaining at home if appropriate.

Care leavers are supported by Here 4 You, Children's Services and a housing pathway plan is formed for each individual in conjunction with their overall care and support plan. Wokingham Borough Council takes a proactive approach to its corporate parenting responsibilities and has adopted a policy that allows care leavers more than one chance to sustain their own accommodation.

The Council has a Young People's Housing Strategy which aims to ensure that young people, and in particular, those leaving care and other vulnerable young people, are housed in good quality sustainable accommodation. As part of this commitment, the Council's closed Seaford Court in January 2018 and has built a new scheme that provides 16-25 year olds with a stepping stone to independence. There are seven en-suite bedrooms and two bed-sitting apartments at Reading Road, with support provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week by an on-site care support team who help young people with the transition into adulthood.

In partnership with the Housing Needs Service, Children's Services are looking at ways to improve the housing protocol for young people leaving care. This work includes exploring options to deliver more move on accommodation in the borough.

3.4.2 Single People

Provisions within homelessness legislation (Housing Act 1996 as amended) can exclude many single homeless people. However, with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there is a greater emphasis on helping people from all familial circumstances and the Council has seen a significant increase in single homeless presentations as a result.

The Council is aware that there are many key workers in the borough who are struggling to afford accommodation and that may present as homeless as a result. The Council is exploring ways of providing additional accommodation for key workers (those on a low income providing an essential service). Some key worker accommodation is designed for couples and families too.

Many single people opt to live in cheaper shared accommodation. On 1st October 2018, the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)(Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018 came into force. These regulations control the size of rooms, level of occupancy and waste storage/disposal schemes for HMOs. As at 31st March 2019, there were 24 properties within mandatory HMO licenses in the borough. This number is expected to be low when compared to neighbouring authorities, particularly Reading.

There are no single person hostels in the borough, but in rare cases it may be possible to find a space in neighbouring authorities.

3.4.3 Domestic Abuse

Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) provide a helpline, a first stage refuge and an outreach service for women experiencing domestic violence in Wokingham. They also provide support to children and young people who are living in an abusive household, or involved in an abusive relationship, either as victims or perpetrators.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) recorded 190 new referrals into the service which represents a 13% increase when compared to 2017/18 (170). The largest proportion of referrals to BWA were from clients self-referring directly to BWA for support (44%) and Children's Social Care (26%). 138 clients had children, amounting to a total of 279 children.

Of those who recorded a housing situation at referral, 12% were council tenants. Of those that records support needs at referral, 31% recorded mental health support needs, 6% recorded alcohol support needs and 3% recorded substance misuse support needs.

BWAs helpline received 765 calls from Wokingham residents in 2018/19, a 1% increase from 2017/18. BWA received 20 calls requesting refuge in 2018/19. This is an increase of 25% in comparison to 2017/18.

BWA's outreach service and helpline, and our Housing Needs Service, work together to support women experiencing domestic abuse. The Wokingham Home Refuge Scheme is a victim centred initiative, offering increased security measures for the homes of survivors of domestic abuse or hate crime in circumstances where it is deemed safe for them to stay at home (and where they wish to).

In Quarter 1 of 2019/20, BWA received a total of 63 new referrals. This is an 85% increase in victim referrals compared to the same quarter in 2018/19 and a 31% increase from Q4 2018/19. The Council is currently holding regular meetings to monitor this spike, and will be working with BWA to ensure a safe and efficient services is in place for residents.

3.4.4 People with Mental Health Problems

Housing need for those with mental health problems can often be urgent and complex. A response that recognises and provides an individual and tailored solution seems to be the most effective form of help. The Council's Housing Needs Team are able to provide this type of assistance in conjunction with Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) and a commissioned service for housing related support which is delivered by an external provider. The service offers housing related support in the form of floating support, a drop-in service and supported accommodation.

The service is available to help clients with mental health problems by:

- Looking at all possible housing options, and how they can be accessed
- Liaising (on behalf of clients) with landlords or mortgage companies to try to address arrears issues and prevent people losing their homes. The provider actively works with the Local Authority, Housing Associations, private landlords and mortgage providers.
- Finding activities and signposting clients to other organisations that can help.
- If the client had just started their first tenancy after living with family or coming out of long term care, the provider helps them settle in, set up bills, claim benefits, etc.
- The provider take a holistic approach with the client including addressing debts, signposting to employment services, health professionals and dealing with statutory and other voluntary agencies that can help the client.

The provider aims to gradually increase the independence of its clients.

Our Housing Needs Service frequently send referrals to the provider to offer support skills, including help with forms and budgeting. This is particularly useful for non-council tenants who do not have access to the Council's tenancy sustainment service.

3.4.5 People with Learning Disabilities

The Council has also been increasing and improving the accommodation available for other vulnerable groups, including people with learning disabilities. Examples include Hillside Park and Vauxhall Drive.

The Housing Needs Service will support residents with long-term disability who wish to purchase a home on a shared ownership basis to use the HOLD (housing options for the disabled) scheme.

The Council aims to reduce private sector leases for residents with learning disabilities, and is considering further provision for this key group at various

development locations. In the next 10 years, we expect the number of clients with learning disabilities requiring support from the Council to grow, particularly those with more complex needs.

3.4.6 People with Physical Disabilities

There are very few people presenting as homeless and on the Housing Register with a physical disability in Wokingham. If need be and appropriate, the Council will re-house people with physical disabilities via our Housing Register using the medical priority scheme. Wokingham has been able to create some very individual provision for some households with very specific and urgent needs. We can also request new affordable housing with full disabled access on new developments where we have a known need for this type of accommodation. This is secured via policy CP5.

Where social housing is being built on new developments, consideration is given each time to whether there is need for any specific accommodation for those with physical disabilities.

Disabled Facilities Grants are available in certain circumstances to enable people to stay at home with the help of required adaptations. Grants can be used for adaptations to give better freedom of movement into and around the home. They can also be used to provide essential equipment and make changes to the inside of a home. Only adaptations which are necessary to meet the needs of the individual are considered, and the work must be reasonable and practical. Examples of acceptable work include widening doors, installing ramps, installing a stair lift, and adapting heating or lighting controls.

3.4.7 Older People

The Council committed to improve the choice of housing options available to older people by the provision of Extra Care Housing and has delivered the following schemes as a result:

- Alexandra Place opened in 2011 as an award-winning Extra Care Housing Scheme in Woodley providing 64 apartments with on-site care and facilities. A small number of units were offered for shared ownership.
- Beeches Manor in Wokingham was built in 2012 and consists of 16 ground floor apartments for older people with dementia, with a further 8 first floor flats for clients with learning disabilities. Owner occupiers with dementia are eligible for Beeches Manor.
- Fosters Extra Care Scheme consists of 34 units
- The Birches Extra Care Scheme consists of 60 units, 50% of which are shared ownership.

3.4.8 Ex-Offenders

Often ex-offenders leaving custody have an urgent housing need even if family and friends provide temporary assistance. The Housing Needs Service has good contact with criminal justice agencies (especially the Probation Service, Police and Youth

Offending Service) and will work with agencies acting on behalf of offenders to provide advice and assistance.

The duty to refer imposed by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into effect on 1st October 2018 and we expect to see more ex-offender applicant referrals accordingly. A customer can choose which local authority they are referred to. Public authorities carrying out referrals should have mind to local connection criteria.

Homelessness legislation alone is often not a solution for ex-offenders because frequently applicants will fail to establish priority need or they will fail the intentionality test.

Working with partner agencies to find solutions has proven the most efficient way to address the housing needs of ex-offenders and solutions have included;

- Rent in advance/deposit loan scheme
- Advice and assistance with benefits
- Providing information about private sector landlords
- Direct re-housing in the most urgent and vulnerable instances

Examples of formal multi-agency working for offenders and ex-offenders in Wokingham include;

- IOM (Integrated Offender Management)
- ASB (Anti Social Behaviour)Panel
- MAPPA arrangements
- Youth Offending Service Board

3.4.9 Substance Misuse

Data from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) for April 2018 shows that 293 people were in treatment for substance misuse in the borough. Nationally, the NDTMS report for 2018/19 shows that 11% of all new presentations to treatment had a housing problem and that 8% had an urgent housing problem. Nationally, 49,680 children were living with people starting treatment.

Wokingham has a small treatment population. Wokingham does not follow the national trend because the largest treatment cohort presenting is for alcohol misuse and opiate presentation is the second largest group. In quarter 4 of 2016-17, 43% of new presentations were for alcohol misuse. In addition to this, 40% of all those in treatment were doing so for alcohol misuse, compared with 39% for opiate misuse. Between the 1st of July 2015 and the 30th of June 2016, it was estimated that 33.6% of opiate and/or crack users in Wokingham were in the treatment system.

As of Quarter 4 in 2017, the successful completions of those in treatment who did not re-present within 6 months had increased for all clients. The percentage of local opiate clients was significantly better than the national average at 15%, non-opiate clients were similar to the nation average at 45.8% and alcohol clients were better than the national average at 50%.

Wokingham Borough Council's Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2018-2022 sets out three priorities as follows:

1. To protect and support families, carers and significant others affected by substance misuse.
2. To recognise, treat and support residents with potentially problematic alcohol use and intervene early.
3. To work in partnership to better understand the needs of the borough, including crime related substance misuse, and the emerging national trends and respond in an agile manner.

SMART delivers community based drug and alcohol treatment for adults and young people in Wokingham. They provide:

- Structure day programmes
- Support groups, including alternative therapies
- Support for community detox (drug and alcohol)
- A prescribing service
- Needle exchange services
- Supervised consumption services
- Shared care services
- Brief intervention
- Awareness raising
- An facility online to offer support and advice to adults and young people
- A dedicated young person's service
- An overdose prevention kit

Other provision in Wokingham includes:

DrugFam – A local charity, that aims to help families, friends and partners affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use; including those bereaved by addiction, or related causes. DrugFAM provides a weekly support group within the borough. The charity also provide a helpline which operates 9am-9pm that can easily be accessed by borough residents and email support.

Housing Related Support Service – While this service primarily delivers housing related support, many clients are supported who also have substance misuse needs.

Dual Diagnosis – Within the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) there is a post specifically for dual diagnosis. This worker supports clients with both substance misuse and mental health issues. The worker and SMART run joint assessments and appointments.

Rehabilitation - Wokingham Borough offers support for residents to attend rehabilitation as part of the local integrated recovery-orientated system if deemed appropriate by our local substance misuse service. The process of supporting residents to access rehabilitation is governed by robust eligibility criteria.

Regular meetings take place both locally and at a regional level. These include bi-monthly Community Safety Partnership meetings, quarterly Strategic Substance Misuse and Violence Against Women and Girls meetings and regular Public Health South East England meetings.

Appropriate and sustainable housing is a foundation for the successful rehabilitation of substance misusers. This group is typified by complex vulnerabilities and intense support is often required to prevent homelessness.

3.4.10 Veterans

The Royal British Legion estimated that there are currently 6,000 homeless veterans in the UK⁴.

Accurately identifying the number of Armed Forces community that reside in an area can be difficult, given the range and quality of data that is available. The 2011 census identified 508 people in Wokingham Borough as “usual residents aged 16 and over who are members of the Armed Forces.” The Census also identified 497 “associated persons” who are not a member of the Armed Forces, but are a spouse, same-sex civil partner, partner, child or step child of a member of the Armed Forces.

Arborfield Garrison was the only Ministry of Defence establishment within Wokingham Borough and the site closed in 2015. Nearby sites include the Territorial Army Brock Barracks, Oxford Road, Reading (Seven Rifles) and the Hermitage Denison Barracks, near Chieveley in West Berkshire.

In 2013, the Council and its partners signed a local Community Covenant with the Armed Forces Community. The Covenant’s two principles are that:

- the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of services in the area where they live.
- special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

Veterans can access specialist advice from the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) housing advice service - the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) - before leaving the forces. The JSHAO also runs the MOD referral scheme which helps veterans to find housing association accommodation. Veterans also have access to a range of military charities, including Royal British Legion and Veterans Aid.

Former armed forces personnel can also access our Housing Needs Service following broadly the same process as other residents in the borough. Priority need and intentionality may be looked at as part of this.

⁴ <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/armed-forces-veterans-homeless-crime-prison-mental-health/>

Veterans can apply to go onto the housing register of any council within the first five years of leaving the armed forces. There is no limit on the number of councils a veteran can apply to. Veterans get extra priority on the housing register if they:

- previously served in the regular forces
- have a serious injury, illness or disability relating to your current service in the regular or reserve forces.
- have to leave services family accommodation (SFA) because your husband, wife or civil partner died in service.

Veterans are also eligible to apply for our Rent in Advance/Deposit Loan Scheme, and will receive priority for shared ownership properties within the borough.

3.5 Housing Register

There is insufficient supply to meet the high demand for social rented accommodation in the borough. As at 31st March 2019, 1498 households were on the Council's Housing Register.

233 homes were let by the Council between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, and a further 261 nominations were made to housing providers. During this same period, the number of lettings increased due to the rise in new affordable homes available in the borough.

Our Housing Register operates an Allocations Policy to prioritise applicants based on their housing need. The Council will be refreshing the Allocations Policy to ensure best use of affordable housing stock.

3.6 Affordable Housing Delivery

Wokingham Borough Council negotiates with developers to provide a percentage of all new build homes for social rent, with the Council securing nomination rights to these homes. We also work with our housing providers to create more employment and training opportunities for tenants.

During 2017/18, 482 affordable homes completed in the borough consisting of 231 homes for social rent, 162 homes for shared ownership and 89 homes for intermediate rent. We saw 365 affordable completions in 2018/19, 182 homes for social rent, 167 homes for shared ownership and 16 intermediate/affordable rented homes.

During 2018/19, 365 affordable homes completed in the borough: 182 homes for social rent, 167 homes for shared ownership and 16 intermediate/ affordable rented homes.

3.7 Private Rented Sector

The Council is keen to work with Government to explore ways to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector. The Council is committed to supporting our private rented sector (PRS) residents and to working with PRS landlords to prevent homelessness. We seek to challenge landlords and agents who are providing poor

quality accommodation. We plan to set up a Landlord Forum in the borough to facilitate a stronger working relationship with PRS landlords.

Over the next three years, the Council will explore the benefits of a Selective Licensing Scheme for private rented homes not currently covered by mandatory or additional licensing for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) to improve management and housing conditions for private renters in the borough.

3.8 Partnership Working

A joint strategic approach is essential to achieving successful outcomes for our residents in housing need. We work in partnership with agencies across the borough to share expertise, resources and best practice, and to provide a holistic service for our residents. This way of working also maximises opportunities to explore jointly funded services, which in turn provide positive joint performance outcomes.

The Council works in partnership with many local agencies, including a provider of housing related support and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Housing Needs Team and Adult's Services carry out monthly Housing Panel meetings to discuss complex and urgent cases. Officers also attend quarterly Homelessness Forums for the borough, and Here4U Housing Panels.

The duty to refer imposed by the Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect on 1st October 2018. There is now a duty on public bodies to refer consenting individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to the Council. We must work together to prevent and relieve homelessness. This presents an opportunity to maximise partnership working in the borough.

Strategic Priority One

Early Intervention and Prevention.

What we want to achieve:

- Prevent households from experiencing housing crisis.
- Reduce homeless presentations and acceptances.
- Increase early intervention and prevention success.
- Help sustain tenancies for renters across the borough.
- Reduce the Council's use of emergency and temporary accommodation.
- Prevent and relieve cyclical homelessness.

In order to do this, we will:

- Continue to provide effective housing advice to our residents, and maximise the use of creative solutions and innovative approaches.
- Focus on early intervention and prevention.
- Work collaboratively, between organisations and across boundaries.
- Implement the requirements and principles of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Work with PRS landlords to prevent homelessness, and consider setting up a Landlord Forum.
- Embed a clear housing pathway for key groups, including those in specialist accommodation.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Between January and March 2019, 70,430 households in England were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness or as homeless.

Nationally, on 31st March 2019 the total number of households in temporary accommodation was 84,740.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, Wokingham Borough Council saw a total of 248 homelessness presentations (148 families and 100 singles).

Between April 2018 and March 2019, the Council spent £255,359 on emergency accommodation.

Strategic Priority Two

Working Towards Ending Rough Sleeping and Tackling Hidden Homelessness.

What we want to achieve:

- Rough sleepers and hidden homeless households are engaging with the Council for advice and support.
- The root causes of homelessness, including affordability, complex needs and relationship breakdown, are being addressed.
- A night shelter is available in the borough during the winter months.
- Targeted support for entrenched rough sleepers is available.

In order to do this, we will:

- Explore options for the development of a pilot Housing First (or similar) scheme.
- Quantify the number of hidden homeless households in the Borough, with a view to developing plans to assist hidden homeless residents.
- Explore options for the development of a night shelter in the borough, and engage with neighbouring authorities to ensure adequate provision of night shelters in the region.
- Continue outreach work with rough sleepers and transient communities.
- Hold regular Rough Sleeper Meetings with partners and consider different approaches to gathering evidence and data, to support collaborative working and enhance our evidence base.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The total number of rough sleepers in England in autumn 2018 was recorded as 4,677.

The annual rough sleeper count for Wokingham Borough recorded 10 rough sleepers in November 2019.

Figures provided by Crisis estimate that the number of adults in concealed household units is 3.74 million in England in 2018.

In Wokingham in April 2018, 8% of homeless applicants reported overcrowding as the cause, and 3% classified themselves as sofa surfing.

Strategic Priority Three

Build More Affordable Homes.

What we want to achieve:

- The right homes are built in the right locations for those most in housing need.
- Specialist housing is developed that meets demand.
- Care leavers, key workers and low income households are supported, alongside other key groups.
- The demand for affordable housing of all tenures is being met by the delivery of new homes in the borough.

In order to do this, we will:

- Develop a strong evidence base of affordable housing need and specialist housing need.
- Adopt a refreshed Allocations Policy.
- Continue to negotiate with developers to provide a percentage of all new build homes for social rent.
- Maximise opportunities to meet demand for specialist housing.
- Explore opportunities to deliver other affordable housing products, for example Rent to Buy.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

In April 2019, there were 1,498 households on the Council's Housing Register.

In April 2019, 1,470 households were on the Shared Ownership Register.

Demand is higher for some tenures and property sizes, and for some locations within the borough.

The Council is committed to providing specialist housing. This includes supported accommodation for older people.

Affordability is a significant issue for many residents in the borough.

Strategic Priority Four

Support Our Vulnerable Residents.

What we want to achieve:

- Ensure that vulnerable residents have access to tailored advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Strong partnership working across the borough.
- Provide vulnerable residents with advice and training on key topics, including budgeting and tenancy sustainment.
- Collaboration with residents and service users.

In order to do this, we will:

- Ensure that vulnerable residents have access to tailored advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Continue to work in partnership to tackle homelessness and housing crisis, including the wider causes and impacts.
- Enable the provision of advice and training for residents on key topics including budgeting, employment, debt, tenancy management, wellbeing and independent living skills.
- Survey residents who have engaged with the Council when in housing crisis to learn from their views, ideas and experiences.
- Ensure that residents moving into their first homes are provided with appropriate advice to promote tenancy sustainment.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The biggest reasons for loss of settled homes in Wokingham Borough continue to be recorded as the end of assured shorthold tenancies and family/friend evictions.

Berkshire Women's Aid's helpline received 765 calls from Wokingham residents in 2018/19.

In June 2018, St Mungo's reported that 9 in 10 rough sleepers need support for mental health, drug and/or alcohol issues.

There are an estimated 6,000 homeless veterans in the UK, according to figures compiled in 2018.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy forms part of our wider Housing Strategy. Progress against this Strategy and Action Plan is principally overseen by the Council's Place Commissioning Team, Housing Needs Team and Affordable Housing Implementation Group (Member and Officer meeting).

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be available to view via our website (paper copies available on request), and will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as required.

The Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan is intended to be a working document, which will be subject to continuous review and updating to ensure it is responsive and current. We will update and publish our Action Plan annually.

Contact Details

Area	Contact	Details
Housing Needs, Homelessness, Housing Advice, and Tenant Services.	Simon Price, Assistant Director, Housing, Income and Assessments.	Simon.Price@wokingham.gov.uk
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Registered Provider Partnership, and Affordable Housing.	Rhian Hayes, Category Manager, Economic Prosperity and Place.	Rhian.Hayes@wokingham.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan

Actions						
1 - Strategic Priority One: early intervention and prevention.						
No.	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets	Lead Officer / Service Area	Anticipated Achieved By	RAG
1.1	Continue to provide effective housing advice to our residents.	Residents facing housing crisis are aware of how to access help and advice, and feel supported when they do.	100% of households who present as threatened with homelessness within 56 days to be offered an initial assessment within 5 working days.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2021, if not before.	
			100% of households presenting as homeless on the day to be offered an initial assessment that same day, or the following working day if presenting outside of office hours regardless of whether or not the applicant has priority need.		2021, if not before.	
			Maximise the use of creative solutions and innovative approaches, including mediation and negotiation.		Ongoing.	
1.2	Focus on early intervention and prevention.	Minimisation of the disruption and harm caused by homelessness, including the wider impact on quality of life and opportunities.	5% of all Prevention Duty cases are discharged as successfully securing existing or suitable alternative accommodation for the household for 6 months. Target to increase by 5% each year as the Act becomes embedded, so that by 2024, the target is 20%.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2024 (staged delivery).	
			An increase in early intervention and prevention success, resulting in a reduction in homeless presentations.		Ongoing.	
			Tenancy sustainment increases, resulting in a reduction in homeless presentations.		Ongoing.	

1.3	Work in partnership with key agencies across the borough to tackle homelessness and assist people at risk of losing their home.	Fewer residents experience housing crisis, particularly cyclical homelessness.	5% reduction in the number of overall homelessness acceptances. Target to increase by 5% each year, so that by 2024, the target is 20%.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2024 (staged delivery).	
		Residents in housing crisis have access to the range of support and advice they need.	5% reduction in cyclical homelessness, increasing by 5% each year to 20% in 2024.		2024 (staged delivery).	
1.4	Implement the requirements and principles of the Homelessness Reduction Act.	Ensure compliance with legislation and meet the Council's statutory obligations.	100% of all Relief Duty cases are discharged as successfully securing accommodation for the household for 6 months.	Housing Specialists.	2021, if not before.	
			85% of PHPs are reviewed every three weeks whilst the household is under either the Prevention or the Relief Duty. This figure is not 100% to take account of non-engagement.		2021, if not before.	
			5% reduction in cyclical homelessness, increasing by 5% each year to 20% in 2024.		2024 (staged delivery).	
			Households due a main decision after the Relief Duty ends should receive this decisions within 15 working days.		2021, if not before.	

1.5	Support our private rented sector residents.	Prevent homelessness and promote tenancy sustainment in the private rented sector. Provide financial assistance and advice to residents to enable them to access the private rented sector. Ensure that private rented sector homes meet legal standards, to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents.	A Landlord Forum is set up in the borough.	Housing Specialists. Environmental Health/Enforcement.	2022.	
			To continue to provide a Rent in Advance/Deposit Loan Scheme, with homes to be inspect before agreement.		Ongoing.	
			To challenge private rented sector landlords and agents who are not meeting their obligations.		Ongoing.	
			Explore the benefits of a Selective Licensing Scheme for private rented homes not currently covered by mandatory or additional licensing for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) to improve management and housing conditions.		2024.	
1.6	Embed a clear housing pathway for vulnerable key groups, including care leavers and for specialist accommodation.	Vulnerable residents have access to services designed to support them and are prevented from becoming homeless.	Map the housing pathway for key groups, including care leavers, move on accommodation and for specialist housing.	Housing Specialists. Strategy & Commissioning – Place. Partners.	2022.	
2 - Strategic Priority Two: working towards ending rough sleeping and tackling hidden homelessness.						
No.	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets	Lead Officer / Service Area	Anticipated Achieved By	RAG
2.1	Explore options for the development of a pilot Housing First (or similar) scheme in the borough.	Rough sleepers would be provided with tailored support to sustain a tenancy. The root causes of homelessness including	Feasibility/business case/options report produced.	Housing Specialists. Strategy & Commissioning – Place. Partners.	2022.	
			To ensure sufficient provision of specialist support and accommodation for rough sleepers.		2024.	

		affordability, complex needs, substance misuse, mental health problems and relationship breakdown are addressed.				
2.2	Quantify the number of hidden homeless households in the borough, with a view to developing plans to assist hidden homeless residents.	To assist residents who are not counted in the official statistics, and may be staying in hostels, B&Bs, overcrowded accommodation or with relatives or friends.	Develop a clearer understanding of the quantity and types of hidden homelessness in the borough.	Housing Specialists. Strategy & Commissioning – Place. Partners.	2021.	
			Work with partners to develop plans for targeted work with this cohort based on a greater understanding of the issue.		2023.	
2.3	Explore options for the development of a night shelter in the borough.	A safe and secure night shelter is available in the borough for those in need.	To work with local delivery partners to explore options to deliver a night shelter in the borough. The Council will regularly review the impact and effectiveness of the night shelter.	Housing Specialists. Strategy & Commissioning – Place. Partners.	2021.	
			Engage with neighbouring authorities to ensure adequate provision of night shelters in the region.		2024.	
			A reduction in rough sleeping as a direct result of the availability of the night shelter.		2024.	
2.4	Continue outreach work with rough sleepers and transient communities.	Tailored advice and assistance is available to rough sleepers and transient communities (including tented communities and boat dwellers when relevant).	An increase in the number of rough sleepers and the hidden homeless accessing advice and support.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2024.	
			A reduction in the number of rough sleepers in the borough.		2024.	
			Work with partners to support and promote foodbanks, and access to clothing and medical help for rough sleepers and transient communities.		Ongoing.	
2.5	Hold regular Rough Sleeper Meetings	To support collaborative working.	To ensure sufficient provision of specialist support and accommodation for rough sleepers.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2020.	

	with partners and consider different approaches to gathering evidence and data.	To supplement information obtained at the annual count in November, and enhance our evidence base.				
3 - Strategic Priority Three: build more affordable homes.						
No.	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets	Lead Officer / Service Area	Anticipated Achieved By	RAG
3.1	Develop a strong evidence base of affordable housing need and specialist housing need.	The right homes are built in the right locations for those in most housing need.	Ensure that the tenure mix and unit type of affordable housing coming forward seeks to address demand.	Strategy and Commissioning – Place.	Ongoing.	
			Analyse the Housing Register and other data sources to understand the current and future demand for affordable homes in the borough.		2020.	
3.2	Refresh the Council's Allocations Policy.	<p>A fair and transparent allocations system is in place that responds to need.</p> <p>Homeless applicants receive appropriate priority.</p> <p>Residents understand their housing options, including the likelihood of being allocated social housing.</p> <p>The Council is able to make best use of available housing stock.</p>	New Allocations Policy agreed and implemented.	Strategy and Commissioning – Place.	2020.	

		To that the Council continues to make fair, consistent and lawful allocations.				
3.3	Continue to negotiate with developers to provide a percentage of all new build homes for social rent.	High quality, social rented new build homes are delivered to meet housing need.	The Council secures nomination rights to new build homes for social rent in the borough. Work towards target of 1000 homes, over a 4 year period with a 5% return.	Strategy & Commissioning – Place.	Ongoing. 2023.	
3.4	Maximise opportunities to meet demand for specialist housing.	Residents have access to a range of appropriate housing options to meet their housing and care needs.	Provision of specialist housing will meet the needs of vulnerable groups.	Strategy & Commissioning – Place.	2024.	
3.5	Explore opportunities to deliver other affordable housing products, for example Rent to Buy.	The demand for affordable housing of all tenures is being met by the delivery of new homes in the borough.	To meet emerging demand for different types of affordable housing in the borough.	Strategy & Commissioning – Place.	2024.	
4 - Strategic Priority Four: support our vulnerable residents.						
No.	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets	Lead Officer / Service Area	Anticipated Achieved By	RAG
4.1	Ensure that vulnerable residents have access to tailored advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness.	Residents experiencing housing crisis are provided with advice and assistance.	Enhance the digital advice and guidance available to residents via the Council’s website and other sources. 100% of households who present as threatened with homelessness within 56 days to be offered an initial assessment within 5 working days.	Housing Specialists. Strategy & Commissioning – Place.	2021. 2021, if not before.	

			100% of households presenting as homeless on the day to be offered an initial assessment that same day, or the following working day if presenting outside of office hours regardless of whether or not the applicant has priority need.		2021, if not before.	
4.2	Continue to work in partnership to tackle homelessness and housing crisis, include the wider causes and impacts.	<p>Strong partnership working in the borough.</p> <p>The escalation of support needs for statutory services are delayed, prevented and reduced.</p> <p>Support vulnerable residents experiencing housing crisis, including those with health issues and domestic abuse victims.</p>	Continue to work with statutory agencies to ensure that the Homelessness Reduction Act duty to refer is met, and work with none statutory agencies to adopt a similar process.	Housing Specialists. Strategy & Commissioning – Place. Partners.	2021.	
			Ensure that Council actions from personalised housing plan (PHP) are effective.		Ongoing.	
			Through our partnership with a provider of housing related support, 100% of referrals to the service should be contacted within 2 days and met within 5 days, 85% of clients maintain their accommodation and 90% of clients are not accessing statutory services.		Ongoing.	
			Continue the provision of the Wokingham Home Refuge Scheme.		Ongoing.	
4.3	Enable the provision of advice and training for residents on key topics including budgeting, employment, debt, tenancy management, wellbeing and independent living skills.	<p>Provide vulnerable residents with advice and training to maximise tenancy sustainment, employment opportunities, independent living and wellbeing.</p> <p>Address underlying causes of homelessness, including unemployment, debt, and the impact of welfare reform.</p>	Work with partners to identify areas of need within the borough (e.g. budgeting and managing debt) and take pro-active steps to help address these gaps.	Strategy & Commissioning – Place. Partners.	2022.	
			Explore funding opportunities for preventative projects e.g. 'warm and well scheme'.		2022.	
			Work with housing providers and supported living providers to maximise employment and training opportunities.		2024.	
			Vulnerable people and those harder to reach or who are socially isolated are engaged in activities		2024.	

			that will promote their health and wellbeing and increase independence.			
4.4	Service improvement is informed by resident feedback.	Collaboration with residents and service users.	Survey residents who have engaged with the Council when in housing crisis to learn from their views, ideas and experiences.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2021.	
4.5	Ensure that residents moving into their first homes are provided with appropriate advice to promote tenancy sustainment.	Residents moving into their first homes receive advice and guidance regarding budgeting, maintaining their home, complying with their tenancy agreement, living independently and how to access further help.	Tenancy sustainment increases, resulting in a reduction in homeless presentations.	Housing Specialists. Partners.	2022.	
			5% reduction in cyclical homelessness, increasing by 5% each year to 20% in 2024.		2024.	

Appendix 2 – provision of specialist support and accommodation for rough sleepers.

The Council's Homelessness Review 2018, and this Strategy were prepared by the Council in consultation with stakeholders, partners and service users to ensure a comprehensive approach that was supported by all involved in working in this field. This engagement has also further informed our operational approach to working with rough sleepers.

The number of rough sleepers in the borough is comparatively low. We provide a person centred approach to rough sleeping, and work closely with our partners to ensure that support and help is provided. Most of the entrenched rough sleepers are known to use by name and location, and all have been contacted in order to offer advice and assistance.

The Council aims to ensure that individuals can access resources and that their particular needs are considered. Where appropriate, the aim is that each rough sleeper will have their own Personalised Housing Plan that will outline who is responsible for their care, which services are working with them and the support available.

Further details of the Councils plans to provide specialist support and accommodation for rough sleepers can be found in the Action Plan above, most notably in the actions listed under Strategic Priority Two: end rough sleeping and tackle hidden homelessness.