



Cheshire West & Chester Council

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2025-2030



Building futures, opening doors



Cheshire West  
and Chester

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## Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 - 2030

### Foreword

Cheshire West and Chester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out our vision and priorities for homelessness in the borough over the next five years. I would like to thank partners from all sectors who contributed and supported the development of this strategy.

This strategy aims to help people as soon as possible and emphasises the importance of getting the right advice and support at the right time, maximising opportunities for early intervention and prevention work.

The reasons that lead to homelessness are multiple and often extremely complex. Many people have needs that extend beyond the basic need for a home and impact their health and well-being. The longer someone is homeless, the more complex their problems can become and the more difficult it can be to get back on their feet.

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness. We are determined to build on our multi-agency approach recognising the complexity that leads to an individual sleeping on the streets and supporting them to achieve the best and most suitable outcomes for themselves.

The homelessness response to the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a collective partnership approach to protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities. This unprecedented challenge has led to creativity, innovation, improved partnerships, and a wider recognition of the intrinsic link between homelessness and health.

It is important in such times when homelessness pressures on Councils are rising, that we work together to ensure that people in our local communities get the right support, at the right time. No single organisation can solve homelessness alone; we must proactively work together to intervene earlier and prevent it from happening.

*C. V. W. Warner*

Cllr Christine Warner  
Cabinet Member for Homes, Planning and Safer Communities



## Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and then formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the review findings.

The Cheshire West and Chester Homelessness Review 2024 is a published document which should be read in conjunction with this strategy. A summary of the findings is included in this document.

The Homelessness Reduction Board have been responsible for overseeing the development of this strategy and will continue to be responsible for the monitoring and delivery of the strategy and action plan.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed with partners and people with lived experience. The voice of service users was fundamental to the review of homelessness, and consultation on the strategy and we will continue to ensure they those with lived experience are at the centre of future service design and delivery.

The strategy will run from 2025 until 2030 and sets out our vision and priorities for a partnership approach to tackling homelessness across the borough.

The vision for the strategy; is 'Working in partnership to end homelessness in Cheshire West and Chester'. We will achieve this vision by delivering the following strategic priorities, which are set within the fundamental principles of the Homeless Reduction Act, 2017:

1. Prevent homelessness through early intervention and personalised housing options.
2. End rough sleeping and support those with complex support needs.
3. Develop and improve access to a range of settled, supported and temporary accommodation options.

Underpinning the strategy is the importance of a person-centred approach, partnership work and ensuring there is a clear evidence base on which to inform decision-making, without which we will not be able to tackle the big challenges that lie ahead.

We believe delivering a person-centred approach is key to achieving successful outcomes. This means placing the person at the centre of the service they receive by individualising support and opportunities so that it is tailored to the person's preferences, which can be crucial to achieving successful outcomes.

A collaborative partnership approach is fundamental to being able to effectively tackle homelessness. This involves working with people at the earliest point to ensure that opportunities for homelessness prevention are maximised and will be the foundation for this strategy. Early help and prevention reduce the impact

on the individual, reflected in the lesser complexity of intervention required at an earlier stage than if circumstances were to escalate and reach a crisis point. Together as partners, we can expand on this approach, not only to prevent homelessness, but also to achieve wider outcomes such as improved health and well-being and better job prospects.

The Council and partners have made progress in tackling homelessness over the lifetime of the previous strategy, but the landscape we are working in has changed. Through this strategy, we want to build upon a collaborative approach and create a new 'normal' designed around prioritising homeless prevention and the needs of the household.

This strategy sets out a clear and ambitious plan to transform our response to homelessness. The previous homeless strategy had a clear focus on homelessness prevention and that remains the golden thread through this strategy. It will be underpinned by a clear action plan and monitored by the Homelessness Reduction Board.

What success will look like:

- Reduced rates of homelessness
- Increased number of homelessness preventions
- Ending rough sleeping
- Reduced use of unsuitable hotels as temporary accommodation
- Increase in affordable homes

## National Strategic Context

This strategy has been written in a time of change with new challenges, both locally and nationally, and with a change in central government.

The general election in July 2024 has resulted in a change to a Labour government that was elected on a manifesto promise of 1.5 million new homes over the lifetime of the parliament. It promises to deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and overhaul the regulation of the private rented sector. Labour has committed to developing a new cross-government strategy working with Mayors and Councils across the country to end homelessness.

There is a national housing crisis. Housing is less affordable, and many people have support needs making it even more difficult to access and sustain accommodation. Welfare reform and legislative changes alongside these factors create a difficult environment for tackling homelessness; this has been compounded by the impact of the pandemic and more recently the cost-of-living crisis.

Homelessness has increased over the last several years. In England in 2022-23, 311,990 households had initial assessments for homelessness which is a 7% increase compared with the previous year. Of these, 298,430 households were assessed as owed a homelessness duty due to being threatened with homelessness or already being homeless. This is up 6.8% from the previous year and also 3.0% above the pre-COVID level in 2019-20. On 31 March 2023, 104,510 households were in temporary accommodation, an increase of 10% from the same period last year.

Local housing allowance (LHA) increased from 1 April 2024 after rates had been frozen for four years. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) use LHA rates to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. LHA rates relate to an area in which a claim is made and are set at the lowest 30th percentile of market rents. They are calculated by the Valuations Office Agency. As LHA has not kept pace with the market it has resulted in an increasingly unaffordable private rented market for households on low incomes who are dependent either wholly, or in part, for assistance with their housing costs. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of homelessness applications resulting from a loss of accommodation within the private rented sector, alongside an increase in the number of private landlords wishing to leave the market.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) set out the previous government's ambition to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027 through organisations and services working together in new ways. The sharp drop in rough sleeping registered in Autumn 2020 is likely to have reflected the extraordinary action taken during the early part of that year under the Everyone In programme to shelter people at risk of sleeping rough during the height of the

pandemic. As the pandemic subsided during 2021 and into 2022, Everyone In arrangements began to lapse in many areas.

The rough sleeping snapshot for 2023 unfortunately shows a national upward trend in the number of people living on the streets across England, with every region seeing an increase in numbers on the streets compared to the previous year. The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough in England on a single night in Autumn 2023 was 3,898. This was an increase of 829 people or 27% from 2022.

The situation in Syria, Hong Kong, Afghanistan, and most recently Ukraine, has mobilised the Government to set up schemes to support refugees from these countries to settle in the UK. The longer-term impact of these resettlement schemes is not fully clear, but the data demonstrates the increased demand. This is likely to place increased pressure on the Council's Housing Options team in the future.

The following timeline highlights the key political, social, legislative, and economic changes that have contributed to how homelessness services are delivered:

Year	Key Change
2016	Syrian Resettlement Scheme in 2016
2018	Homeless Reduction Act
	Rough Sleeping Initiative
2020	Covid -19 Pandemic
	Local Housing Allowance rates frozen
2021	Domestic Abuse Act
	Afghan/Kabul evacuation
2022	Ukraine war
2023	Renters Reform Act
	Asylum Streamlined Application Process
	Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act
	Social Housing (Regulation) Act
2024	General election and change of government

## Our challenges

There can be a wide number of factors at play in people's lives which may make them more vulnerable to homelessness. These can be either structural issues or individual circumstances and they are often interconnected. Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for Cheshire West and Chester, however, locally there are challenges:

- A lack of affordable housing particularly for single people, especially those under 35, who are on low incomes or unemployed. This group is impacted by the under-35 shared room rates. This is the largest group of people who approach the Housing Options service for assistance.
- Poverty and low incomes are key barriers to accessing suitable housing and maintaining stable and financially sustainable tenancies.
- Whilst Cheshire West is an affluent borough the overall picture masks stark gaps between areas of prosperity and deprivation. The median local household income is £35,100 per year but, 17.7% of local households have an annual income of less than £20,000 compared to 17.5% nationally. Some 24,670 local people live in neighbourhoods ranked in the most deprived 10% in England.
- While it is widely recognised that there are strong correlations between homelessness and physical and mental health conditions, alongside significantly reduced life expectancy, the pandemic has crystallised the links between health and homelessness. Partnerships between health services and homelessness services that were promoted by the pandemic now need to evolve further and be maintained. Only by working together can we effectively tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Locally, the end of private rented accommodation for the last three years has remained the second main reason for homelessness in the borough. This is reflected nationally for households owed the prevention duty during 2022/23. There may be a further increase in private sector evictions ahead of the ending of no-fault evictions, whereby private landlords will no longer be able to seek possession of their property by serving a Section 21 Notice or they choose to leave the market.
- The political and economic landscape over the next few years is currently uncertain. The ongoing need for efficiencies and savings in local government and the short-term nature of some funding programmes will impact the support and services available locally.

For many people experiencing homelessness is not just a housing issue it is closely linked with complex and chaotic life experiences, often having their roots in entrenched disadvantage, and leaving people socially and economically



excluded. A local collaborative partnership approach is fundamental to being able to effectively tackle homelessness in the borough.

### **What the Homelessness Review is telling us**

The review was completed in June 2024 and includes data on homelessness levels in Cheshire West and Chester, the demographics affected by it, and the causes leading to homelessness. It considers the challenges faced by households and services impacting both present and future homelessness levels. The information and data analysis included covers the year before the Covid-19 pandemic up to March 2024.

The homelessness statistics for 2020/21 were impacted by the pandemic and homelessness trends changed. The change in trends has continued to be reflected in the most current financial year.

- The Housing Options team have experienced a 62% increase in demand over the last five years.
- Since 2021 the main reason for homelessness in Cheshire West and Chester is due to family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate.
- The end of private rented accommodation for the last three years has remained the second main reason for homelessness.
- Duty to Refer notifications has increased significantly over the last 3 years, with the last 12 months seeing a 53% increase alone. The main referring agency is the criminal justice organisation.
- Over the last four years, the majority of households were owed a relief duty compared with the prevention duty. This means that more households presented to us as homeless rather than threatened with homelessness.
- The ratio between prevention and relief work in 2023/24 indicates that 37% of households were owed a prevention duty compared with 63% owed a relief duty.
- In 2023/24 single people accounted for 45% of those owed a prevention duty and families accounted for 46% of those owed a prevention duty.
- Households with children presenting at prevention stages have remained consistently between 43% and 46% for the last 3 years.
- Over the last three years the majority of households owed a relief duty were single people accounting for 75% in 2023/24.

- The largest age group for the past five years presenting as homeless is those aged 25 – 34 years, followed by those aged 35 – 44 years.
- We know that there are currently missed opportunities across the system to prevent homelessness. The service is much more successful at assisting households to secure alternative accommodation rather than enabling households to remain in their existing accommodation.
- Only 5% of prevention activity during 2023/24 was due to successful negotiation or mediation work to enable a return to family or friend's accommodation.
- The most successful way that the council is currently able to prevent and relieve homelessness is through an offer of social housing.
- The Council has had some success in preventing and relieving homelessness through accessing private rented accommodation, however, the numbers are relatively small.
- During 2021/22, 'Non-UK: Granted refugee status' represented just 0.4% of the reasons for eligibility for homeless assistance. The latest figures for 2023/24 demonstrate that 'Non-UK: Granted refugee status' now represents 11% of households eligible for homeless assistance.
- The most common employment status for lead applicants of households owed a homeless duty is registered as unemployed.
- In 2023/24 a total of 2,003 support needs were identified for 1,070 households, this accounts for 56% of households owed a duty having a support need.
- The most frequently occurring support need is mental health. Improved mental health support is seen as a priority by residents and stakeholders.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of January each year has increased significantly since January 2019, peaking recently in January 2024 when 226 households were placed in temporary accommodation. This represented a 179% increase in demand over five years.
- Expenditure on hotel provision has increased by 341% during the last five years. During 2023/24 the cost of hotel provision was £4,387,910.

- There is a lack of appropriate housing options for people with complex or additional support needs, including those with poor mental health, substance misuse and a history of homelessness and rough sleeping. This is demonstrated by the supported housing waiting lists, the number of households in hotel accommodation and the number of people sleeping rough.
- The autumn single-night snapshot of people sleeping rough that was taken on 9 November 2023 found 22 people sleeping rough, which was up by 12 people from 2022.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Outreach team contacted 479 (different) people rough sleeping across the borough. The majority of rough sleepers are verified in Chester.
- The average number of new rough sleepers each month was 30, whereas 7 were considered to be long-term and 17 were defined as returners to rough sleeping.

The review details the range of services available across the borough. These services play a vital role in preventing, supporting, and accommodating homeless households.

## **Our vision and priorities**

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a partnership document providing a shared vision and clear focus and direction.

We accept that homelessness is an ever-changing landscape, bringing new challenges all the time, and that making homelessness entirely a thing of the past may not be achievable in the lifetime of this strategy. However, working in partnership towards ending homelessness in the borough is the vision we strive for.

‘Working in partnership towards ending homelessness in Cheshire West and Chester’.

There are three strategic priorities:

### **Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness through early intervention and personalised housing options.**

Providing clear and accessible information and advice about where and how to resolve homelessness and working with partners to tackle the root causes of homelessness.

### **Priority 2 - End rough sleeping and support those with complex needs.**

Providing a range of advice, accommodation, and support services to people sleeping rough and those with complex needs so they can move away from homelessness and access and sustain long-term, settled accommodation.

### **Priority 3 - Develop and improve access to a range of settled, supported and temporary accommodation options.**

Providing a range of accommodation options across the borough including social housing, affordable private rented accommodation, and supported housing to accommodate a wide range of housing needs.

To help achieve our priorities we are working in close partnership with key council services, members of the Homelessness Reduction Board and the voluntary sector.

## **Delivering our three priorities**

### **Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness through early intervention and personalised housing options.**

Evidence suggests that the longer someone is homeless, the more complex their problems become and the more difficult it can be to overcome their situation, emphasising the importance of early intervention and the right advice being available at the right time. We have had successes in both preventing and relieving homelessness following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, but we know there is more we can do to imbed the key ethos of the Act. We know there is more we can do to support our residents by being more proactive and placing greater emphasis on early help and prevention to support households to remain in their current homes.

We need to improve the advice and awareness of services in the borough. There needs to be clear and accessible information to increase the knowledge and understanding of homelessness and the various housing options available at a local level. Advice and information must support people to self-help, but also provide clear information about where and how to access services for assistance in resolving their housing needs.

The Housing Options team work with households owed a prevention duty to assist them in either retaining their current accommodation or moving to alternative accommodation in a planned way. We do this through a homelessness assessment which includes the household's housing circumstances, housing needs, and support needs. We then develop a 'Personal Housing Plan'. We know there is more we can do to support households who are in the prevention stage of their homelessness journey and are committed to improving consistency through our 'Homeless Prevention Toolkit' that has an enhanced focus on the reasons why households in the borough are experiencing homelessness. We will ensure housing plans are personalised and targeted to build on a person's strength and set out clearly the expectations and commitments on both sides.

In Cheshire West and Chester our aim, is for all residents to live lives free from domestic abuse. We want to improve the health and well-being of individuals and their families who experience domestic abuse, by creating an environment that supports disclosure and recovery for those who are harmed and provides challenge and support for those who harm. Households at risk of domestic abuse often have to leave their homes because of the risk of repeat incidents of abuse. Refuges and other forms of safe accommodation can provide a safe and supportive environment for households fleeing domestic abuse. As part of this strategy, we want to ensure that all households requiring safe accommodation are supported to access this as soon as possible and we have the most suitable safe offer of accommodation for the household. Many people do not wish to leave their homes, and a Sanctuary Schemes are an additional accommodation

option for people at risk of domestic abuse which can, where suitable and appropriate, offer households the choice of remaining in their homes.

Cheshire West and Chester have a strong network of partners, and we need to make sure that organisations can identify when a housing need may arise and have the right information to give early, basic advice, and if necessary, signpost to Housing Options for early intervention. Partners also deliver a significant range of services to prevent homelessness. We will build on the existing partnerships to prevent homelessness and tackle the root causes of homelessness focusing on health, education, training, and employment. We will work closely with landlords in both the private and social rented sector to develop policies, procedures and practices focused on promoting tenancy sustainability and keeping households in their homes. To deliver our priority we will work with partners to develop and deliver effective, targeted, and consistent homelessness prevention methods focused upon the main causes of homelessness.

Actions:

<b>What we will do to prevent homelessness through early intervention and personalised housing options.</b>
1. Ensure there are a range of ways to access services and implement measures to support individuals who may be excluded from digital access to services.
2. Ensure that homelessness and Housing Options information remains up-to-date and accessible through various delivery methods.
3. Develop an awareness-raising campaign focusing on homeless prevention and enabling households to remain in their own home.
4. Ensure that households experiencing domestic abuse are supported to access safe accommodation or supported to remain safely in their current accommodation.
5. Increase awareness and compliance with Duty to Refer legislation, resulting in timely support and intervention for individuals at risk of homelessness.
6. Strengthen workforce development, policies, and procedures to enhance and improve prevention opportunities.
7. Improve the provision of high-quality advice and assistance through a consistent approach to the prevention toolkit that will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their homes.

8. Undertake detailed research into family evictions and root causes of homelessness to develop targeted preventative tools accordingly.
9. Develop housing pathways for young people, including our care leavers, which provide options that support progression and can meet a wide range of needs.
10. Ensure that 'veterans' are identified during the application process to make sure that they are signposted to services that specialise in help and support for veterans and their families.
11. Work with Employment and Skills Teams to develop pathways for people into local employment opportunities.
12. Review homelessness support provision, identifying future needs and an options appraisal for future delivery arrangements.
13. Working with private landlords to develop and promote an 'early notification' process, to contact Housing Options before they service notice on their tenant.
14. Work with Registered Providers to develop policies, procedures and practices focused on promoting tenancy sustainability and keeping people in their homes.
15. Ensure that we provide support and a welcoming place of safety for refugees and continue to work towards Cheshire West and Chester becoming a Council of Sanctuary.
16. Ensure as we implement the strategy, that we actively involve a range of people with experience of homelessness in developing services.
17. Demonstrate a strong corporate commitment ensuring a joined-up approach with a focus on developing, designing and implementing new practises.
18. Work in partnership with Public Health and the Cheshire West and Chester Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that services are accessible to those experiencing multiple health problems.
19. Build on current work with health and social care partners to ensure that preventing homelessness is at the heart of services.

## **Priority 2 - End rough sleeping and support those with complex needs.**

Rough sleeping is the most acute and extreme form of homelessness but is not simply a housing issue. We aim to prevent anyone having to sleep rough wherever possible, and where it does occur the experience of rough sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

We will focus on preventing rough sleeping earlier in people's journey, intervening well before the crisis point to help people off a path to rough sleeping across the system. We will develop an operational risk assessment tool to assist with the prevention of rough sleeping. The tool will be developed to include those factors that regularly lead to rough sleeping with the intention of being made available to local networks to improve the use of the resources they have available to end rough sleeping.

More can be done to avoid delays in discharging people from hospitals or discharging them to the streets therefore we will work with hospitals, primary care and existing partnerships to review the hospital discharge protocol. This will ensure that people are supported during and after a stay in hospital to avoid ending up on the street and will establish a consistent process that is agreed upon and signed up to by relevant agencies.

We will develop a prison release protocol to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping on release and establish a consistent process that is agreed upon and signed up by relevant agencies – including local prisons and probation services. We know we need to take coordinated, multi-agency action at the right stages to reduce the risk of prison leavers sleeping on the streets and make sure pathways of support are in place.

We know the longer a person stays on the street, the more difficult it becomes to rebuild a life of it. Where it has not been possible to prevent someone from sleeping rough, we need quick and targeted help to get them back on track. Our aim is for everyone experiencing rough sleeping, or those that have complex needs, to have an appropriate and timely offer of support tailored to their needs.

We will tailor interventions to ensure that they take a person-centred approach by reviewing our services particularly for people experiencing multiple disadvantages, women, victims of domestic and sexual abuse, LGBT, care leavers and young people. We will also improve the support available to help people into training, employment or apprenticeships and we will support community projects as well as the voluntary, community and faith sectors which can play their part alongside other delivery partners.

Evidence suggests that recovery from homelessness and rough sleeping needs to go beyond simply finding accommodation. While an offer of suitable accommodation is hugely important, we know that many people who experience rough sleeping and have complex needs may often be experiencing multiple



disadvantages and need to access support alongside accommodation to ensure they receive the right treatment and are able to sustain their tenancy.

To help long-term recovery we will provide additional targeted support for those that need it for their recovery (including specialist accommodation). We will support housing-led approaches such as Housing First, and make sure suitable homes and support are in place. We will commission the right type of accommodation to meet needs and provide high-quality supported housing. We will review resettlement support for clients with complex needs moving on from supported accommodation to prevent repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.

Actions:

<b>What we will do to end rough sleeping and support those with complex needs.</b>
1. Review rough sleeping data and support services to identify future needs and an options appraisal for future delivery arrangements.
2. Develop a risk assessment tool to assist with the prevention of rough sleeping.
3. Work with hospitals and existing health partnerships to review the hospital discharge protocol
4. Undertake an awareness-raising campaign focusing on outreach services and Streetlink to make it easier for the public to support our aims.
5. Develop a prison release protocol with the Probation Services.
6. Tailor interventions to ensure that they are person-centred.
7. Improve the support available to help people with experience of rough sleeping into training, employment or apprenticeships.
8. Support community projects as well as the voluntary, community and faith sectors so that they can play their part alongside other delivery partners.
9. Provide specialist accommodation for those experiencing rough sleeping or complex needs to help with long-term recovery.
10. Review resettlement support for clients with complex needs moving on from supported accommodation to prevent repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.
11. Ensure that the Safeguarding Adults Board is represented by a rough sleeping specialist and work with the Board to review the procedure to follow when someone rough sleeping dies.

### **Priority 3 - Develop and improve access to a range of settled, supported and temporary accommodation options.**

A range of accommodation options are needed across the borough including social housing, affordable private rented accommodation, and supported housing to accommodate a wide range of housing needs and most importantly ensure long-term options for residents housing situations.

We know there is a lack of social housing, and our housing register continues to grow. The Council will work across the borough with all social housing developers to increase the provision of appropriate and affordable social homes. Future developments will be informed and led by our 'housing need' data and new properties reflect the needs of homeless households. Increasing social housing will allow more households to rent social homes and build sustainable local communities.

The Common Allocations Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate social housing. It is vital the policy strikes the balance between supporting sustainable, settled communities whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need. To ensure that local residents who are in housing need are able to access social housing we will review the Common Allocations Policy to ensure the policy promotes planned moves and households in need can be accommodated via the policy rather than through homelessness.

The private rented sector plays an increasingly critical role in meeting the housing needs of those who are experiencing homelessness or threatened with homelessness, and we are already making greater use of the sector. The Council is developing an in-house Private Rented Sector service that will be focused on preventing homelessness from the private rented sector and increasing the supply of good quality affordable housing. A key challenge is the affordability of rented accommodation in the borough, particularly for those on benefits but we will work closely with landlords to develop a range of incentives and support to increase provision. We are committed to exploring innovative approaches to leverage the private rented sector effectively in both homelessness prevention and relief efforts.

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, temporary accommodation is an essential part of a household's journey out of homelessness. There has been an increase in the use of temporary accommodation over the last five years, and to meet this demand the Council has relied on hotel accommodation. Hotel accommodation is expensive and can have a negative impact on households due to the limited facilities and lack of support. By ensuring a continued focus on early intervention and prevention work we aim to reduce the flow of households having to access temporary accommodation and we will increase the number of suitable units of temporary accommodation ensuring that hotels are only used as a last resort.

Supported housing has an important role to play in meeting the housing and support needs of people who are not ready to live independently. We know there is a need for a range of different types of supported housing, providing different levels of support and specialist provision for different cohorts. We will review the existing provision and develop options to ensure there is a range of good quality supported accommodation that provides tailored support to meet the needs of the individual.

Actions:

<b>What we will do to develop and improve access to a range of settled, supported and temporary accommodation options.</b>
1. Carry out a review of the use of temporary accommodation, identifying future need and an options appraisal for future delivery arrangements.
2. Increase the number of temporary accommodation units available across the borough in line with identified need, including relevant safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse.
3. Review the delivery options for the pathway into supported accommodation ensuring supported accommodation is allocated fairly and transparently.
4. Carry out a review of supported accommodation and an options appraisal for future delivery arrangements.
5. Increase the number of supported accommodation units in line with demand and consider different delivery models including smaller units using intensive housing management funding.
6. Ensure the best use of existing provision by improving move-on from supported accommodation.
7. Develop a charter of rights and quality standards for exempt supported accommodation.
8. Develop housing pathways for young people, including care leavers, which provide options that support progression and can meet a wide range of needs.
9. In partnership with Children's Services and partners, develop and deliver realistic information and advice on housing options for young people.

10. Explore ways to increase the range of affordable housing options for single individuals, particularly those under 35.
11. Review the Housing Options Private Rented pilot and develop services to increase access for homeless households to the private rented sector.
12. Explore the viability of developing a leasing scheme which could include temporary accommodation options.
13. Implement the Government changes to regulation in the Private Rented Sector and develop a tenant's charter to improve standards in the private rented sector.
14. Review the Allocations Policy to ensure the policy promotes planned moves and households in need can be accommodated via the policy rather than through homelessness.
15. Increase the number of affordable and social homes by 1000 by 2028 with a preference for social homes where possible and ensuring that housing need data informs future development.
16. Undertake a Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show people and consider how any unmet needs will be met.

## **Governance of the strategy**

In order to deliver the priorities that we have set out in this strategy we will continue to work closely with our key partners to ensure that in Cheshire West and Chester, we have the expertise, services, provision, resources, partnerships, and infrastructure to deliver the strategy.

The Homelessness Reduction Board will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the strategy and action plan. The Council's Homelessness Reduction Board is a partnership aimed at tackling homelessness across the borough through local delivery partners working together on an agreed vision and local strategic direction identified in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Board promotes accountability and partnership working and ensures that by working more closely together the wide range of existing services already in place from a variety of agencies to tackle homelessness, are better utilised and coordinated to maximise the benefits.

The Board membership ensures robust links are in place to other strategies and boards including, Health and Wellbeing, Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting, and the Community Safety Partnership. Membership of the group is open to strategic lead representatives from statutory bodies including the local housing authority, Adult Social Care, Public Health, Police, Probation, and local authority strategic leads for domestic abuse. This helps to ensure homelessness is regarded as a priority for all parts of the local system.

In addition to the statutory core membership, other non-statutory groups have representation on the Board. This includes the charitable and voluntary sector, housing association/providers, faith groups, individuals with lived experience, local businesses, and service providers.

We have built this strategy on comprehensive evidence base and will continue to invest in monitoring, developing, and sharing the data and performance information to show what is working and to consider what changes are needed over the lifetime of this strategy. We will also work with clients with lived experience to shape our services.

We will regularly update the evidence base and complete an annual review of homelessness. This information and other housing related data will be available through the Cheshire West and Chester Council website on the Housing Strategies, Policies and Research page and State of the Borough dashboard.

We will monitor the performance of this strategy against the following indicators:

- Number of dependent children in temporary accommodation
- Number of homeless preventions
- Number of households in temporary accommodation
- Percentage of households in temporary accommodation which is hotel accommodation.
- Rough sleeping numbers
- Number of new affordable homes delivered per annum.

Results will be published on a quarterly basis on the Cheshire West and Chester Council Performance Management Framework.

The strategy will be reviewed annually, and a detailed annual review and action plan will be developed to enable a flexible response to emerging needs, alongside policy, and legislative changes.