

Rotherham

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2022

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce Rotherham's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy. This defines how the Council intends to tackle homelessness and support those at risk of becoming homeless over the next 3 years.

Preventing homelessness in Rotherham continues to be one of the Council's highest priorities. Having a home is the first step in helping the most disadvantaged people who approach us for assistance.

Homelessness is an ever increasing problem in Rotherham and the Council are now seeing a rise in demand for homelessness services as people find themselves facing a housing crisis and need our help. This is demonstrated in the Homelessness Team's caseload figures which over the course of 2017/18 more than doubled (from 132 to 403 households open to the team).

Understanding and tackling the root causes of homelessness is at the heart of this strategy. We need to ensure that the right services and support are in place as quickly as possible to allow people not only to secure a decent quality home, but to have the skills and knowledge to deal with the challenges they may face in day-to-day life to sustain accommodation.

It is imperative that suitable accommodation is available to relieve homelessness so the Council are working with housing providers and private landlords to increase the availability of new homes to replace affordable homes as a result of the Right to Buy.

During the last two years the Council has:

- Increased temporary accommodation provision from 29 units to 50.
- Increased good quality welfare advice and support services for homeless people and rough sleepers through additional advice outreach services.
- Improved working relationships with the voluntary sector such as working alongside Shiloh.
- Developed positive relationships with private landlords in order to improve standards and the availability of private rented homes.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to our statutory and voluntary sector partners for their continued support. The Council knows that if it wants to eradicate homelessness it needs to work together across sectors and across borough boundaries. Effective joint working arrangements within the borough and across the South Yorkshire region are key to our ability to offer options and opportunities to prevent and resolve homelessness at the earliest opportunity. The Council will continue to build upon and further develop our partnership arrangements to ensure that it maximises our resources and continue to meet the needs of people who use our service.

Councillor Dominic Beck
Cabinet Member for Housing

Introduction

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2022 sets out the Council's long term vision for addressing the root causes of homelessness. The strategy seeks to develop a partnership approach to reducing homelessness over the next three years, working with all stakeholders and most importantly people who have experienced homelessness in order to develop effective solutions and to increase the range of available options.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with key partners including homelessness forums, elected members, staff and volunteers from a range of local organisations. It takes into account the recent legislative changes and the increasing demand being evidenced through presentations to the Council's Housing Options Service.

The Vision

- *To end homelessness in Rotherham*
- *Everyone has a place to call home*
- *The right support is in place at times of crisis to prevent homelessness occurring*

What is homelessness?

The legal definition of homelessness is that a household has no home in the UK or anywhere else in the world available and reasonable to occupy¹. Individuals do not have to be living on the street to be homeless - even if they have a roof over their head they can still be without a home.

Whilst rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and will be perceived by many as representative of homelessness generally, it in fact represents one of the smallest percentages of homelessness in Rotherham.

The following housing circumstances are examples of homelessness:

- without a shelter of any kind, (sleeping rough)
- with a place to sleep but temporary, (in institutions or a shelter)
- living in unsecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence, or staying with family and friends – ‘sofa surfing’)
- living in inadequate housing (illegal campsites in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding)

What are the causes of homelessness?

For individual households, homelessness has many causes and often multiple interrelated factors. These can be ‘structural’ factors such as financial hardship, housing availability and access to welfare benefits, or ‘individual/personal’ factors such as family breakdowns, drug/alcohol problems, bereavement, experience of violence or abuse and their accommodation becoming unsuitable due to age or disability.

For most people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, there is not a single intervention that can tackle this on its own, at population, or at an individual level. Co-ordinated multi-agency action is often required to enable people to access suitable support and deal with their personal challenges in order to sustain stable and suitable accommodation.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-applying-all-our-health/homelessness-applying-all-our-health>

National Context

The Government's Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, implemented the most significant changes to homelessness law in decades. The principle of the Act is to help more people sooner and to prevent repeat homelessness. It effectively combines two new duties onto the original statutory rehousing duty. These are the Homelessness Prevention Duty and the Homelessness Relief Duty. The other changes to the homelessness legislation are:

- The Act extends the period an applicant is "threatened with homelessness" from 28 to 56 days. This means more homeless applications are triggered for people with a housing problem and risk of homelessness who meet the legal definition of 'may become homeless in the next 56 days'.
- The Act places a new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people, regardless of priority need, who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness.
- There is a duty for 'specified public bodies' with the agreement of the homeless person to refer them to the Council's homeless service that will need to take a homeless application, effective from 1st October 2018.
- There are no local connection criteria at the 56 day prevention stage.
- The new duty requires a local housing authority to meet the person or family and agree the actions that will form a written personal housing plan.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are currently consulting on proposals to improve support for Veterans (March 2019). These proposals:

- Make it clear that local authorities are expected to dis-apply any local connection requirement from divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.
- Set out how local authorities can ensure that members of the Armed Forces and Veterans suffering from mental ill health are given appropriate priority for social housing.
- Set out how local authorities can identify applications from Members of the Armed Forces and Veterans to ensure that they are considered appropriately.

The Council's Housing Allocation Policy already complies with all of the above proposals; however the Council intends to improve information and awareness so that Members of the Armed Forces and Veterans are aware of the policy.

In 2018 the national homelessness charity Crisis, published their new plan called “Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain”². This was developed in collaboration with homelessness experts, world-wide research and pulled upon their 50 years of experience to outline evidence-based solutions that can end homelessness. This strategy has embedded the solutions detailed in the Crisis’s plan which are to:

- **Prevent homelessness** - The best way to tackle homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place.
- **Offer rapid housing solutions** – The Council can’t prevent all cases of homelessness, so when people do lose their homes they need a rapid response to find somewhere safe and secure to live.
- **End rough sleeping** - Rough sleeping is the most visible and damaging form of homelessness. It rightly causes the most concern among the public, decision makers, and advocates for homeless people in the charity sector. Rough sleeping is not usually the first form of homelessness people experience. However, tackling it must be central to our plan to end homelessness, given the extreme dangers posed to people living on our streets.
- **Making Welfare work** - To end homelessness, those who cannot afford housing must be given enough assistance to do so. And adequate support must be available to help homeless people into work where it’s appropriate for them.

² https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/plan-to-end-homelessness/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMI-6qQtLbc4AlVprXtCh0ChACKEAAYASAAEgJ7W_D_BwE

The Local Picture

Since the Government's Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force in April 2018, the Rotherham picture has reflected the increasing trend being experienced nationally. The numbers of households who have lost their home, the use of temporary accommodation, the numbers of homeless presentations and the number of people sleeping rough have all seen an increase.

This is demonstrated in the Homelessness Team's caseload figures which over the course of 2017/18 more than doubled (from 132 to 403 households open to the team). In total, over the duration of 2017/18, the team prevented 714 households from becoming homeless either by assisting them in remaining in their existing home or through support in moving to a new home. Full outcome breakdown is detailed below:

Homelessness Prevention Outcome	Number of household in 2017/18
Assisted to remain in their existing home (<i>through crisis intervention, negotiation with family/friends, resolving benefit issues, working with private sector provider etc.</i>)	204
Moved to supported accommodation	131
Moved to private rented accommodation with the help of rent in advance or bond	84
Moved to private rented accommodation without support for upfront costs	85
Moved to social housing (either Council or Housing Association)	210
Total	714

During 2017/18 homelessness acceptances also increased by over 20% from 100 to 122. This relates to people who are homeless, eligible, in priority need, not intentionally homeless and who have a local connection. The main reason for homelessness is from people whose private rented tenancy has come to an end. The other primary reasons for homelessness are; family or parental evictions and domestic abuse/other forms of violence.

There has been an increasing demand from homeless households waiting for suitable accommodation which leads to sofa surfing. The Council currently have 722 applicants on the Council's Housing Register who have told us they have a homelessness issue and worryingly, 215 are families with children.

Vulnerable young people (aged under 25), are at particular risk of homelessness with approximately 7 presentations each month. These can include but are not limited to: lack of adequate income, access to affordable housing, family break-up and

experience of a traumatic event of domestic violence. This is particularly evident in those who were previously a Looked After Child in the care system.

The Youth Offending Team have also provided evidence that approximately 5 young offenders aged 16/17 have no accommodation and a further 4 young offenders are in need for support when they are being released from prison each month. The Council must work with accommodation support providers to ensure the correct level of suitable provision exists in Rotherham. That support must be put in place prior to release, to give young people the best possible start.

There has been increased demand for temporary accommodation to respond to the immediate issues of some of those facing homelessness. The increase in demand for temporary accommodation is due to people fleeing domestic abuse or having a physical or mental ill health need or have lost their private rented tenancy. As at the end of October 2018, there were 38 people were living in temporary accommodation compared to 21 in October 2016. Often those people using Council temporary accommodation have very complex or multiple needs which this can make the search for a permanent home more difficult leading to a longer stay in the temporary provision. Finding a permanent home with the right support to sustain the tenancy is essential to prevent further episodes of homelessness.

The incidents of people sleeping rough in Rotherham, when compared to neighbouring authorities, is low. The official 2018 annual return identified 5 individuals (2 in 2017). However, as this is based on a single 'sample night', the Council commissioned a rough sleeper outreach service to gain a more accurate figure; this found over 12 months 19 rough sleepers in Rotherham. All of were aged over 25 with the majority of these are men (16 individuals) and of a White British background (15 individuals). Although relatively low in numbers the suffering of people who experience rough sleeping is overwhelming. It severely affects their physical and mental health and personal safety. Research demonstrates that those affected by homelessness are ten times more likely to die than those of a similar age in the general population. The average age of death for homeless people is just 47 years old.

The national welfare reform changes have increased the financial vulnerability for residents on low incomes or receiving benefits this in turn impacts on their housing options as they struggle to find the upfront costs of accessing accommodation. This is clearly evident in Council tenant's rent arrears; with the average arrears for a tenant on Universal Credit being 84% higher than other tenants (£727 compared to £395) this presents a significant risk to income collection and manifests itself through increased bad debt provision. The forecast arrears balance for new Universal Credit claims is £320,000 for 2018-19.

Voice and Consultation

The strategy has been developed in consultation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Over the past 12 months the Council has listened to and acknowledged the views of people with lived experience of homelessness. To help shape the strategy the Council has held forums, worked with members, staff and volunteers from a range of local organisations, as well as seeking the input from officers across all directorates. Feedback from the consultation is detailed in Appendix 3. The main themes arising from the consultation were for the Council to increase homelessness prevention methods, increase tenancy support, improve access to information and end rough sleeping and begging.

Some of the key messages from the consultation included the need to:

- Support young people to access the right accommodation
- Provide appropriate support for people with complex needs
- Support victims of domestic abuse
- Provide appropriate temporary accommodation
- Prevent homelessness to reduce the impact on health
- Ensure there is easier access to services via digital methods and/or outreach
- Prevent evictions and early intervention
- Prevent the loss of private rented accommodation
- Reduce the number of aggressive beggars who are begging for money in a manner considered to be unduly intimidating.

Current Service Offer

Working in Partnership

Working in Partnership is an overarching principle of this strategy. The Council is one of a number of organisations including major public bodies, such as the police, health agencies, education and the fire and rescue service, local businesses and the voluntary and community sector who will be working together to achieve the aims of the strategy.

Positive multi-agency working is already being undertaken with the Adult Social Care, the Police and the Homelessness Team to specifically and proactively support help rough sleepers.

Partnerships will be maximised and will operate in a coordinated way to prevent homelessness and build on strong working relationships, common assessments and referral processes. The Council will also share information effectively to deliver better outcomes for homeless people

Housing is also part of the South Yorkshire Multi-agency Accommodation Hub-Strategic Group whose purpose is to improve multi-agency support in relation to offender accommodation during prison sentence and on release.

The aim is to ensure that no one is discharged from services without appropriate accommodation in place. For example prisons, mental health services and hospitals.

Rotherham Homelessness Service

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council has reshaped and continues to develop its homelessness service.

The service now has an increased focus on the quality of assessments and the development of Personal Housing Plans. These are a vital part of the initial contact and allow for the identification and addressing of the root causes and risks relating to homelessness early in the process. Increasing access to support at an earlier stage enables any intervention to be as effective as possible before the point of homelessness.

In recognition of this there has also been an increased investment in pre and post tenancy support services. New and existing tenants have the support in place to ensure that they have access advice and support with welfare benefit entitlement to be able to secure and sustain a tenancy. An Employment Solutions Officer has also been appointed to improve access to employment, education or training to ensure people have the means to pay housing rent and other associated costs of running a home.

The Homelessness Team currently work alongside Shiloh the charity that operates a Homelessness Day Centre. The centre supports local people facing homelessness. Shiloh offers support to adults who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by working with partner organisations to provide opportunities to help bring about

positive change in the lives of homeless people. Rough sleepers tend to go to Shiloh for a hot meal during the day but at night they sleep rough or sofa surf. Some of the rough sleepers lead chaotic lifestyles which makes it difficult to sustain a tenancy and independent living. As a result of this the Council has a provision of emergency housing.

Emergency Housing

The Council has a duty to provide emergency housing for people who may be eligible, homeless and in priority need of housing if they have nowhere else to stay. In addition to the Homelessness services available during working hours, the Homelessness “Out of Hours Service” is set up to help people move into temporary accommodation at weekends or during the night.

In 2018 the Council increased its temporary accommodation from 29 to 50 units. These units are fully furnished emergency homes, which include a mixture of flats, bungalows and houses and all can be assessed at any time by a key code. These properties are visited weekly to undertake a safe and wellbeing check and housing plans are completed for all using the properties to ensure there is a pathway to alternative suitable permanent housing.

There is currently a known gap in provision of emergency accommodation for rough sleepers with dogs. Dogs Trust’s Hope Project provides help with the cost of veterinary treatment for any dog whose owner is homeless but there is no emergency housing where a dog owner can take their pet. The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Action Plan will address this gap in provision.

Rough Sleepers

Those on the streets are at greater risk of weather related illnesses particularly in the winter. Rotherham has a flexible approach to triggering and co-ordinating the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and also do not follow a fixed approach solely based on temperature. An emergency shelter is provided to keep rough sleepers safe when the SWEP is triggered. It will also be triggered when factors such as wind, heavy rain and ice chill is forecasted.

The Homelessness Team had set up a Winter Shelter in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a safe and warm space for Rough Sleepers at one of the local fire stations. There is now a process in place if it is necessary to use the Winter Shelter in the future.

Housing Strategy and Services

The Rotherham Housing Strategy 2019-22 sets out the Council’s commitment to increase and accelerate the supply of new homes to meet local need. It includes the development of care and support ready housing and makes a commitment to piloting new ways of working, and working in partnership to address issues such as homelessness and the need for more affordable homes.

The Housing Strategy 2019-2022 will help enable people to secure homes they can afford. Increasing demand for affordable housing means that some households find it difficult to access or sustain social or private rented accommodation.

Changes have also been made to the Council's Housing Allocation Policy, which should have a positive impact and improve the Council's ability to respond to the demand for accommodation from homeless households and for those people with other urgent housing need. These changes increase the higher banding status for homelessness households and increase the quota for properties advertised in the urgent housing need group (Band 2) from 50% to 60%.

Housing Selective Licensing

The Housing Selective Licensing Scheme is set up in Eastwood, Maltby, Dinnington, Thurgroft and Parkgate. The scheme has improved the conditions and quality of private rented housing in these areas. It is important that any housing offer is of good quality. Poor housing can have a negative impact on people's lives. The Council housing stock is of high quality with all properties consistently meeting the Government's decent home standards. However, quality can vary within the private sector. The Council's Selective Licensing Team are improving standards, tackling low housing demand and significant and persistent levels of antisocial behaviour related to the private rented sector in detailed areas. Levels of anti-social behaviour have fallen significantly in the selective licensing areas, and at a faster rate than the borough average.

Housing Support for Young People (aged under 25)

The local Early Help Assessment forms the basis of a shared partnership approach in helping young people who do not meet statutory intervention threshold. By sharing information and offering support when families/young people begin to experience difficulties (e.g. rental debt, antisocial behaviour etc.) their needs are addressed promptly and can effectively help to reduce the risk of escalation. Housing Services are currently funding two Early Help workers within Children and Young People's Services. The role is to work closely with the Housing Income Team to offer support to families who are at risk of homelessness.

Last year the Leaving Care Team was successful in receiving grant funding from Department for Education to develop a local 'House Project for Care Leavers'. The project enables young people to project manage, design, and get involved in maintenance and decorating their own property.

Complex Needs

The Council currently commission Housing Related Support to deliver a preventative programme to assist individuals with multiple needs where traditional statutory services have not been effective, (e.g. chaotic lifestyles or a history of failed tenancies). Many of these people require support packages to gain their independence and obtain suitable permanent accommodation or to help them sustain their current tenancies where there is a greater risk of homelessness.

Housing Related Supported services aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- More people living independently without support.
- A reduction in the number of people experiencing repeat homelessness, relapse and an escalation of negative behaviour.
- Improve the health and wider wellbeing of those accessing the service.
- Improving support for people experiencing domestic abuse

Rotherham's Housing First Scheme

Housing First concept is an established approach to long-term homelessness for the most complex and disengaged elements of the homeless population. There are 3 key elements to the model:

1. **The offer of mainstream housing.** The housing is offered on the basis that support is available, but continued occupation is not dependent on continued engagement with the support offered. The terms of tenancy do have to be abided by and people on Housing First should be subject to normal housing management processes.
2. **The support offered is much different to conventional Housing Related Support (HRS).** It is explicitly less goal-based and focuses on the building of relationships of trust and patient but persistent engagement with people on their own terms. This requires a highly-skilled and intensively managed set of staff, with sufficient time and space to build and maintain relationships with a group of people who can be highly chaotic.
3. **There are no time limits for the offer of support.** The key is for the support staff to persist and ensure that they are available to help at the point when people ask for help.

In April 18 the Council with partners from South Yorkshire Housing Association and Target Housing launched a Housing First Scheme providing a home for people, with highly complex needs, who were homeless or sleeping rough in the Rotherham area. The scheme offers housing to people first, with no conditions around receiving support with the belief that securing a stable home-base can be the starting point for the achievement of positive change. Whilst there are no conditions for the people receiving the accommodation the providers will always offer support, and persist with this offer.

The 7 principles for Rotherham's Housing First pilot are to ensure that:

- People have a right to a home
- Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
- The provision of housing and support should be separated
- Individuals should be given choice and control
- An active engagement approach is used
- The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations
- A harm reduction approach is used.

Since the launch of the scheme 20 people with complex needs have been accommodated and there are 14 on the waiting list. The majority of people are now engaging more effectively with a range of support services. This creates the necessary condition for progress on issues such as reducing anti-social behaviour and anxiety leading to self-harm to be achieved. A six month review of the pilot was carried out by Homelessness Link and concluded that it had a positive impact and was operating within the principles of Housing First.

Delivering a new approach to addressing homelessness and rough sleeping

The strategy sets out a new approach to ensure that in Rotherham:

- No one sleeps rough; whether they are in tents, cars or, at worst, on the streets.
- Everyone has a safe, stable place to live: so that nobody is in emergency accommodation without a plan to quickly move into permanent housing.
- When homelessness is predictable the Council can prevent it: so that no-one leaves their home or is forced to leave a state institution like prison with nowhere to go.
- Those who cannot afford housing are given advice and support with welfare benefits. Help is provided so that homeless people can access employment where it is appropriate for them.

This will be delivered in partnership through **six overarching aims** based on the local picture, views of people with lived experience of homelessness and consultation with a partners and stakeholders.

These aims are;

1. To support people with complex needs.
2. To prevent homelessness and offer rapid housing solutions to get people in urgent need rehoused quicker.
3. To increase support for young people to prevent homelessness.
4. To end rough sleeping and begging.
5. To improve access to tenancy support, employment and health support services.
6. To ensure there is sufficient decent emergency accommodation.

In support of the Strategy the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping an action plan has been developed. The action plan will continue to develop and will be updated over the lifespan of this document to reflect changes or emerging demand. The action plan sets out the detail, ownership and timeframe on how the six aims will be achieved. The following tables provide a high level summary of the key actions and associated impact measures and outcomes.

Summary Aims, key actions and impact measures (for the next 3 years)

Aim	1. To support people with complex needs
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ambition is to work with housing partners to extend the Housing First Model to enable more people to access the service by increasing the number of available units. ▪ Work in partnership with support providers to ensure there is a whole person approach to support people with complex needs ▪ Develop joint working arrangements with adult social care, children's social care, mental health and substance misuse services. ▪ Provide a resettlement/floating support package for every person with complex needs to support them in accessing independent tenancies
Impact Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the number of homeless people with complex needs awaiting accommodation ▪ Reduction in the number of people with complex needs who present as homeless within 12 months of previously being accommodated
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No one sleeps rough; whether they are in tents, cars or, at worst, on the streets

Aim	2. To prevent homelessness and offer rapid housing solutions to get people in urgent need rehoused quicker
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve access to information for people including landlords about services to prevent homelessness ▪ Provide a digital web based service to help people find Private Landlords who have available properties ▪ Evaluate the impact of the changes to the Housing Allocation Policy for people at risk of homeless ▪ Expand selective licensing areas for private rented accommodation ▪ Improve the referral pathway and service for people being discharged from hospital without suitable housing accommodation ▪ Improve information on how to access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and their families ▪ Monitor the local causes of homelessness to align resources and services

Impact Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the proportion of households supported by the Homelessness Team who are prevented from becoming homeless within 56 days ▪ Reduction in the number of applicants on the Council's Housing Register who have told us they have a homelessness issue ▪ Increase in the number of applicants assisted to move to private rented accommodation
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When homelessness is predictable the Council can prevent it: so that no-one leaves their home or is forced to leave a state institution like prison with nowhere to go.

Aim	3. To increase support for young people to prevent homelessness
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide information for young people on their housing options to prevent homelessness ▪ Undertake housing advice sessions in special schools and colleges ▪ Continue to fund an Early Help Support Worker in Children and Young People's services ▪ Co-design the Children and Young Person's Housing Related Support service which will be procured in 2019 and jointly monitor performance with Commissioners. ▪ Provide a planned approach to rehousing prior to all young offenders leaving prison who have a local connection to Rotherham ▪ Set up 10 properties as part of the House Project for Care Leavers ▪ Ensure Early Help Assessments are completed by housing for families to prevent families being evicted
Impact Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in the number of young people (aged under 25) requiring Homelessness Team support ▪ Reduction in the number of young people who received homelessness support (aged under 25) who require support again within 12 months of being accommodated
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When homelessness is predictable the Council can prevent it: so that no-one leaves their home or is forced to leave a state institution with nowhere to go.

Aim	4. To end rough sleeping and begging
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore the development of an “Alternative Giving Scheme” which aims to reduce rough sleeping and begging ▪ Ensure people have access to ongoing support if required when they move out of temporary accommodation into their own tenancy. ▪ Continue to work with partners to ensure continued advice and support for rough sleepers ▪ Consult with homeless rough sleepers to identify barriers to services ▪ Conduct quarterly rough sleeper counts and continue to undertake weekly outreach to connect people to services ▪ Provide outreach work in key locations ▪ Ensure there is sufficient capacity and support available to run SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocols) all winter. ▪ Work closely with community protection and the police to carry out assertive outreach to beggars and to consider taking enforcement action when appropriate.
Impact Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the number of rough sleepers in Rotherham ▪ Increase the engagement rate of people identified as rough sleepers with support services
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No one sleeps rough; whether they are in tents, cars or, at worst, on the streets. ▪ All people begging will not be homeless

Aim	5. To improve access to tenancy support, employment and health support services
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all people presenting as homeless who have substance misuse issues are referred straight away to commissioned treatment services ▪ Connect people to employment, training, volunteering ▪ Implement ‘Tenancy Health Checks’ to prevent problems from escalating and tenancies being jeopardised. ▪ Provide a planned approach via the South Yorkshire Accommodation Hub to rehousing prior to all offenders leaving prison who have a local connection to Rotherham ▪ Explore the introduction of a family mediation service ▪ Ensure people have speedy access to money advice, debt services and gambling support when needed

Impact Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all people presenting as homeless who have substance misuse issues are referred to commissioned treatment services within 24 hours ▪ Increase the proportion of individuals successfully connected to employment, training, volunteering opportunities ▪ Ensure no one is discharged from partner services without appropriate accommodation in place. (Including prisons, young offenders' institutes, rehabilitation centres, mental health services and hospitals).
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved health and financial resilience so that there are more options to access work and training opportunities. ▪ Those who cannot afford housing are given advice and support with welfare benefits. Help is provided so that homeless people can access employment where it is appropriate for them.

Aim	6. To ensure there is sufficient decent emergency accommodation
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address the gaps in temporary emergency accommodation provision by setting up temporary accommodation for dog owners and for people being discharged from hospital without suitable accommodation ▪ Provide an alternative option to refuge accommodation for those who this is not the most appropriate form of accommodation ▪ Carry out a regular safe and well-being checks ▪ Maintain decency of temporary accommodation
Impact Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the number of households accessing temporary accommodation ▪ Reduce the average time spent in temporary accommodation
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone has a safe, stable place to live: so that nobody is in emergency accommodation without a plan to quickly move into permanent housing.

Resourcing the Strategy

In preparation for the delivery of this strategy the Council and partners have committed resources to tackle and prevent all forms of homelessness including:

- **Affordable Housing** – The council are investing £56m into the Rotherham affordable housing programme
- **Investing in Staff** – Three additional staff have been appointed in the Homelessness Team to help manage the increased volume of case work.
- **Out of Hours Homelessness Service** – The telephone service operates from 5pm to 8am Monday to Friday and 24/7 over the weekends and Bank Holidays. It is now run by staff that have experience in homelessness assessments and also have a full knowledge of homelessness legislation.
- **Using our assets** – To assist with the Council's statutory duty to offer temporary accommodation the Council has used Council assets to increase the portfolio of temporary accommodation from 29 to 50 units.
- **Increasing Housing Options** - The Council has recently reviewed its Housing Allocation Policy to give more priority to homeless households on the housing register.
- **External Funding Bids** – Over the past three years the Council has been successful in accessing additional Government Grant funding. A new sub regional funding bid covering Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster has been submitted for a rough sleeper initiative programme.
- Over the past 3 years we have been successful in accessing additional Government Grant funding:

Grant	17/18	18/19	19/20
Domestic Abuse	200,000	14,573	0
Flexible Homelessness Support	102,519	117,430	172,524
New Burdens	65,537	60,030	74,120
Rough Sleeper	37,500	37,500	0
Hcllc	9,200	946	0
Cold Weather			6,270
Totals	414,756	230,479	252,914

- **Street Outreach** - The Council has recently commissioned a rough sleeper outreach service up to the end of March 2019. We will continue to seek alternative funding by bidding for external grants from the Ministry of Communities and Local Government. In the absence of additional funds we will use existing officers within the Homelessness Team to undertake early morning checks in the Town Centre.

The Street Outreach service provides information of people found to be sleeping rough. They work intensively with rough sleepers on Mondays, Wednesdays and

Fridays, starting at 6am to 9am to assist in finding accommodation, help to make benefit claims and seek medical help that may be needed.

- **Extreme Cold Weather Provision** – A winter shelter provision has been set up jointly with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Homelessness Team. The winter shelter provides a safe warm place in the Fire Station for rough sleepers. The service enables a swift response to help rough sleepers in Rotherham to stay overnight in a local Fire Station when the temperature is or feels like sub-zero.
- **Working with Partners** - The Council is working closely with partners and voluntary organisations to gather more information regarding individual circumstances. This will allow us to offer help and support at the earliest possible stage, and have more means of communicating with people due to extensive partnership working and through increased outreach work.

Governance and Monitoring

Governance of this strategy will be via the Strategic Housing Partnership which includes representatives from Council services, housing associations, developers, support providers, health services, police voluntary and community organisations.

The Strategic Housing Partnership will receive quarterly progress updates against the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Action Plan and associated impact measures and other supportive evidence. Where there is little evidence of sufficient progress the Strategic Housing Partnership will hold relevant agencies to account and may request further remedial action plans.

Additional management information relating to service demand and customer needs will be maintained and reported to Side-by-Side Homelessness Forum on a 6 weekly basis with more regular management oversight by the Housing Senior Management Team. The Side by Side Homelessness Forum's membership includes providers who work with homeless people. The Forum aims to work effectively together so that there is a clear local picture of homelessness issues in Rotherham. The Forum also increases the awareness of services, interventions available to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

Conclusion

This Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy is Rotherham's response to a period of unprecedented change, including the Homelessness Reduction Act, public services facing significant financial challenges and social housing and welfare reforms. It builds on the recent achievements, whilst responding and adapting to the changing environment in which homelessness and support services are delivered.

The next three years will be very challenging given the wider economic climate and complex needs of local people who are at risk or experiencing homelessness. It is therefore essential that Rotherham continues to strengthen local partnership working and improve quality of joint support to help prevent and reduce homelessness.

To do this we will explore new models and approaches so that there is a shift in the focus from managing emergencies and crisis towards a way of working that supports prevention and sustainability of long term accommodation