

ROTHERHAM'S HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2026-2031



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FOREWORD

By Councillor Linda Beresford, Cabinet Member for Housing



I am pleased to introduce Rotherham’s Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026–2031, building on the strong foundations of our previous work. Over the past three years, we’ve made real progress thanks to the collaborative working between partners and council colleagues. Together, we’ve strengthened an early prevention approach and improved access to support, helping more people achieve stability, security, and hope for the future.

Our new strategy builds on this momentum. It aims to deepen our impact, scales up proven approaches, and fosters innovation. It champions trauma-informed practice and cross-sector collaboration to improve health, reduce inequalities, boost employment, and build resilient communities. Guided by local needs, national policy, and lived experience, it sets out a coordinated, compassionate, and proactive approach to homelessness prevention and tackling rough sleeping. Developed through meaningful consultation with residents, communities, and partners, it reflects a shared ambition for lasting change.

In Rotherham, the aspiration for a safe, affordable home is a shared value. A secure home is more than bricks and mortar, it’s the foundation for health, education, employment, and wellbeing. For families with children, housing stability is critical, it provides the security they need for their children to attend school consistently, build friendships, and thrive in their development. Yet rising living costs, limited affordable housing, and pressures on support services continue to create barriers, especially for those facing complex circumstances.

Homelessness is a challenge that no single organisation can solve alone. In times of financial pressure, collaboration matters more than ever. By working in partnership and creating integrated services, we can share resources, cut duplication, and deliver the right support to those who need it most.

Our strategy aligns with the Government’s ambition: Together, we will make homelessness in Rotherham rare, brief, and not repeated.

Thank you to everyone who helped shape this strategy and for your ongoing commitment to tackling homelessness and supporting our communities.



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INTRODUCTION

Our vision for tackling homelessness in Rotherham

This strategy sets out our vision for preventing and responding to homelessness and rough sleeping across Rotherham. It builds on our previous commitments and introduces a values led approach with clear priorities to address all forms of homelessness over the next five years.

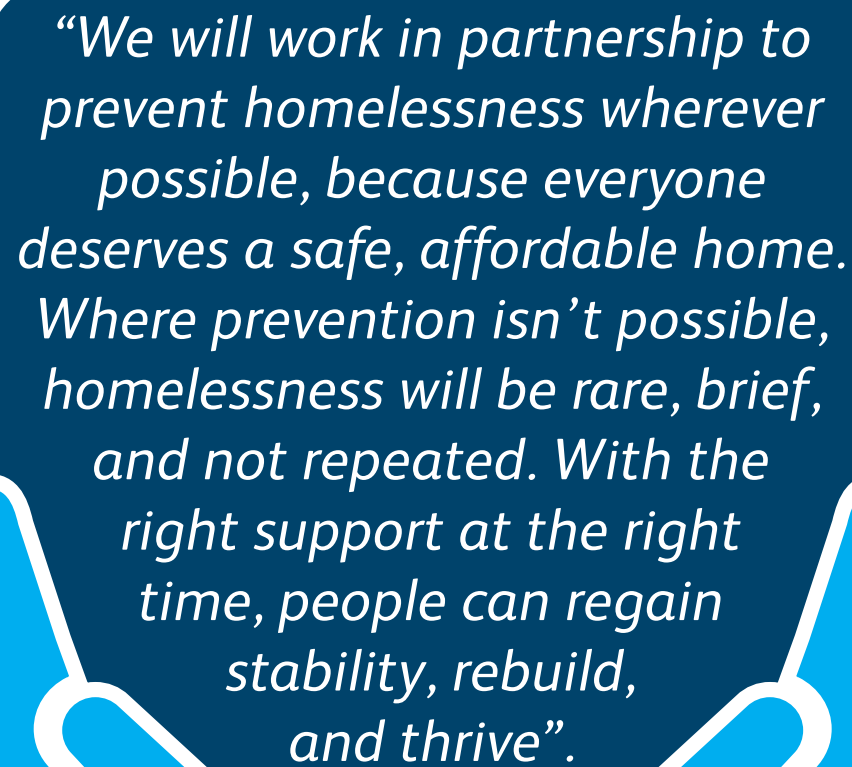
Homelessness is complex and often the result of multiple challenges, including financial hardship, relationship breakdown, mental ill health, substance misuse, limited tenancy skills, and the shortage of affordable housing. These pressures make it harder for individuals and families to both secure and sustain a home. Addressing them requires coordinated, person centred and compassionate responses across services and partners.

Our goal is to prevent homelessness wherever possible by identifying risks early, offering timely and practical advice, and working collaboratively to tackle the root causes. This includes supporting households experiencing financial strain, family or relationship breakdown, or other pressures that can lead to homelessness.

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we will act swiftly to secure safe accommodation, minimise impact, and ensure people receive the support they need to recover, rebuild their lives, and successfully settle within their community.

As part of refreshing our previous strategy, we have revisited and strengthened our shared vision to reaffirm our commitment.

Our shared vision



“We will work in partnership to prevent homelessness wherever possible, because everyone deserves a safe, affordable home. Where prevention isn’t possible, homelessness will be rare, brief, and not repeated. With the right support at the right time, people can regain stability, rebuild, and thrive”.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

In line with the Homelessness Act 2002, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance, the Council must review homelessness and publish a strategy at least every five years. While this fulfils our statutory duty, our commitment goes far beyond compliance.

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will work together to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, and support those at risk of losing their home. It provides a clear framework to help individuals and families stay in safe, secure housing, access timely support, and achieve long-term solutions when homelessness occurs.

Tackling homelessness requires collaboration across housing, health, social care, voluntary organisations, and other public services.

By working together, we can:

- Understand the complex causes of homelessness
- Share resources and expertise
- Deliver person-centred, trauma-informed support that improves outcomes for residents

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This strategy aligns with key local priorities, including the Council Plan 2025-2030, Rotherham's Housing Strategy 2025-2030, and the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2026-2029. It also reflects national reforms and commitments, such as the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness (2025), the Renters' Rights Act, and the Supported Housing

Act. Through a coordinated, integrated approach across partners and services, it aims to strengthen housing stability, health and wellbeing, financial resilience, and community safety.

For more information, please refer to the Council website:

www.rotherham.gov.uk/homelessness where the Strategy is published online and provides supporting information – How the Strategy Aligns with Local Priorities, National Homelessness Reforms and the National Context.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

What the law says about homelessness

The Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) is the main legislation governing homelessness in England, setting out local authorities' duties to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, introduced in April 2018, strengthened this framework by focusing on early intervention and prevention.

It created new duties for councils to:

Prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants at risk within 56 days, regardless of priority need or intentionality.

Relieve homelessness for those already homeless by helping them secure accommodation for at least six months.

If homelessness is not resolved during the relief stage, and the applicant is in priority need and unintentionally homeless, the Council owes the Main Housing Duty to secure suitable longer-term accommodation.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy was developed through an evidence based and collaborative approach, combining local data with meaningful engagement from stakeholders, partners, and residents. Central to the process was listening to people with lived experience of homelessness, whose insights have helped shape practical, person centred solutions.

This strategy uses some statutory and technical terms. A glossary explaining these terms is provided in *Appendix 1* to support accessibility and understanding.

For more information, please refer to the the Council’s website:

www.rotherham.gov.uk/homelessness where the Strategy is published online and provides supporting information – Local Context – Homelessness: Summary of the Data and Analysis 2022/23 and 2024/25.

Consultation headlines

In summer 2025, the Council carried out a wide ranging public consultation, including an online survey, focus groups, drop ins and pop up events with voluntary sector partners. These created safe, accessible spaces to hear directly from residents, partners and people with lived experience; 46.8% of survey respondents had experienced homelessness themselves, offering crucial insight into priorities and barriers.

Across all engagement activity, people emphasised the need for trusted, accessible services and stronger multi agency support. They highlighted ongoing challenges such as unclear information, communication barriers, stigma, ID requirements and isolation in temporary accommodation. Participants called for clearer guidance, more compassionate face to face help and greater peer involvement. This feedback has shaped the strategy and will continue to guide our work.

These quotes highlight what people told us and the key messages that helped shape our strategy.



“More homeless education in schools and colleges for young people.”

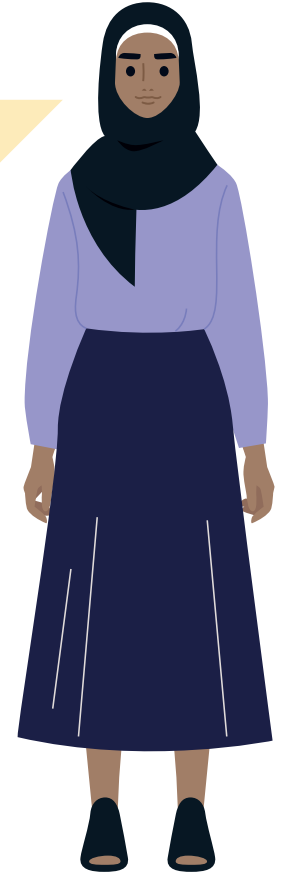


“The rough sleeper team were persistent to help me, never giving up, it really felt like somebody cared.”

“There needs to a better understanding of what homelessness is, the barriers and what it looks like, it may prompt people to seek support earlier, before things reach crisis point.”



“We want to be more involved using our own experiences is future services.”



“More and better joined up working between different agencies.”



“Better relationships with private landlords, we need to increase access to affordable private rented accommodation.”



“We need more community face to face support, these needs promoting, so people know where to go and get help.”



OUR VALUES LED APPROACH

Shaped by consultation, four core values sit at the heart of this strategy, guiding both its development and delivery. These values define how we work, how we support people, and how we create meaningful outcomes for our communities. They are:



Collaborative working

We work collaboratively across agencies, services, and communities to tackle homelessness and inequality through early, coordinated intervention preventing escalation and improving outcomes.



Outcomes focused

We will drive innovation and share best practice to deliver lasting homelessness solutions shaped by lived experience across Rotherham.



Caring, empathetic and honest

We will treat people with dignity, compassion and understanding, and communicate openly to build trust and encourage positive engagement.



Trauma-informed

We deliver services with compassion and with an understanding of trauma, creating safe, respectful environments that support recovery and prevent re-traumatisation.

BUILDING ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Three years ago, we launched Rotherham's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023–2026, setting out our ambition to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping. Since then, we have focused on early prevention and timely intervention, improved the quality of temporary accommodation by increasing the number of council owned furnished properties, strengthened local partnerships, and successfully prevented homelessness for many individuals and families. This has demonstrated the value of a proactive, person centred approach.

However, homelessness remains a growing challenge both nationally and locally, driven by rising housing costs, increased pressures on temporary accommodation, and growing demand for support. To meet these challenges, we must continue to adapt and keep prevention at the heart of our services.

The next phase of our work will build on these foundations, with a renewed focus on sustainable housing solutions, earlier identification of risk, and stronger multi agency collaboration to tackle the root causes of homelessness.

RESPONDING TO CHANGE OF NEED AND DEMAND

Responding to changing needs and demand is a cross cutting theme that underpins all four priorities. By drawing on lived experience and real time data, we will develop services that can adapt quickly, track repeat homelessness to understand system effectiveness, and share insights through the Homelessness Strategic Board to support joined up decision making. This approach enables timely adjustments, strengthens health and wellbeing outcomes, and aligns with both Rotherham's Healthy Homes Plan and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's vision for South Yorkshire to become the healthiest region in the country.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Rotherham is committed to tackling homelessness and related social challenges through strong collaboration. Partnership working is central to this strategy, driving sustainable, person-centred solutions that improve lives across the borough.

Working alongside statutory partners, voluntary organisations, and regional bodies such as the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, we will build a truly joined-up system of support, making services more responsive, inclusive, and rooted in lived experience.

ACTION PLAN

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be underpinned by a detailed cross working action plan that clearly sets out priorities, timescales, and accountabilities. In line with the national homelessness plan, the action plan will strengthen collaborative delivery by aligning responsibilities across housing, health, adult and children's services, criminal justice, and voluntary sector partners, ensuring a coordinated and system wide approach to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Action Plan will be published by Autumn 2026 to meet national expectations with updates made publicly available after each annual review to ensure transparency and accountability.

Measurables

To understand whether our priorities are being met, we will establish a robust set of measurables indicators. These measurables will be developed collaboratively during the action planning phase and will align with statutory reporting requirements, local priorities, and national strategic expectations.

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS AND THE CAUSES

Understanding homelessness and its causes is crucial, as the term is often misunderstood. Many people associate homelessness only with rough sleeping, the most visible form, but the reality is far broader. It also includes individuals living in overcrowded, unsuitable, or temporary accommodation, as well as those moving between friends or relatives, commonly known as “sofa surfing”. These hidden forms of housing insecurity are just as urgent and deserve attention.

Households are considered homeless if any one of the following applies

No accommodation available to occupy

At risk of violence or domestic abuse

Accommodation exists but is not reasonable to continue living in

Accommodation exists but cannot be accessed

No legal right to occupy the accommodation

Living in a mobile home or houseboat with no place to station or reside in it

The causes of homelessness are varied and interlinked. Structural issues such as a shortage of affordable housing, poverty, and unemployment are major contributors. Personal circumstances, such as leaving prison, care, or the armed forces without suitable housing can also lead to homelessness.

Many affected individuals have escaped abusive relationships or face financial hardship, including rent or mortgage arrears.

Homelessness has a significant impact on individuals, families, and communities. It is closely linked to poor physical and mental health, substance misuse, relationship breakdowns, and barriers to employment. It also places increasing financial pressure on the Council and wider public services.

Rough sleepers

Rough sleeping is rarely caused by a single issue, often resulting from a combination of factors such as loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown, financial hardship, and barriers to accessing housing. These challenges are frequently compounded by mental health issues, substance misuse, and experiences of trauma.

Sleeping rough exposes people to severe and immediate dangers, including physical harm, poor mental and physical health, and vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and crime. Prolonged exposure to the elements can lead to serious illness or even death. It also causes social isolation, loss of dignity, and reduced access to essential services, making recovery harder.

Youth homelessness

Youth homelessness is often driven by family breakdown, domestic abuse, leaving care, poverty, and limited access to affordable housing, alongside challenges such as mental ill health, substance misuse, exploitation, or criminal justice involvement. Homelessness at a young age increases vulnerability and the risk of long term disadvantage, including poorer health and reduced education and employment outcomes. This underscores the importance of upstream prevention, aligned with the national homelessness plan, through early identification of risk, trauma informed support, and joined up partnership working across housing, children’s services, education, health, youth justice, and the voluntary sector to prevent homelessness before crisis occurs.

KEY PRIORITIES IN DETAIL

Why it's important, what we have done so far, our aims and how we will measure success

Priority 1: Prevent homelessness through early, proactive intervention

Why is this important?

Preventing homelessness through early, proactive intervention ensures risks are identified and addressed before they escalate into crisis. Effective prevention combines universal actions, such as tackling poverty, insecure renting, and limited housing supply with targeted support for households at higher risk and sustained help to avoid repeat homelessness.

Early recognition of pressures such as financial hardship, relationship breakdown, or housing insecurity enables people to remain in stable accommodation. This reduces distress and disruption, particularly for families with children, and helps individuals maintain their wellbeing, employment, education, and community connections. By promoting stability, resilience, and long term positive outcomes, early intervention not only benefits individuals and families but also delivers significant savings for the wider public sector and strengthens communities.

What we have done so far:

- **Improved prevention outcomes:** Successful prevention outcomes for households at risk of homelessness within 56 days have significantly increased, with a 65.4% rise in prevention cases between 2022/23 and 2024/25.
- **Strengthened the Domestic Abuse Pathway:** The Domestic Abuse Pathway and the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy were refreshed, resulting in a new 2026–2029 strategy that enhances support for people affected by domestic and sexual abuse.
- **Expanded tenancy readiness support:** The 'A Place of Your Own' tenancy ready course, delivered by a local homelessness charity, supported 510 residents between April 2023 and March 2025, helping people to sustain tenancies and reducing the risk of repeat homelessness.

Aims over the next 5 years:

1. Adopt a proactive, early intervention approach:

We will continue to adopt proactive, early intervention models that address the root causes of homelessness, ensuring clear, accessible information and advice reaches all residents, particularly those who are vulnerable or at heightened risk.

2. Target prevention and intervention support to those most at risk:

We will continue to focus targeted prevention efforts on groups disproportionately affected by homelessness, including young people, care leavers, LGBTQ+ residents, survivors of domestic abuse, people leaving institutions, members of the armed forces community, and individuals with multiple or complex support needs.

3. Strengthen duty to refer practice across public bodies:

We will work proactively with public bodies to embed a strong understanding of their Duty to Refer responsibilities, ensuring consistent compliance, timely referrals, and improved partnership working to identify risk earlier.

4. Improve pathways and coordinated support:

We will work towards improving pathways and coordinated support by ensuring clear routes between housing, health, social care and other services, supported by shared information and early risk identification. This will be strengthened by the new Duty to Collaborate once implemented.

How we will measure success:

- Increase the rate of successful homelessness prevention and relief through timely, effective interventions, reducing the number of individuals who go on to require the main homelessness duty.
- Reduce repeat homelessness amongst homeless households
- Successful outcome at prevention or relief for households with 3 support needs or more
- Reduce the number of homeless households requiring temporary accommodation
- Increase the number of Duty to Refer (DtR) notifications received from all specified public bodies (e.g., hospitals, prisons, Jobcentre Plus, probation).

KEY PRIORITIES IN DETAIL (continued)

Priority 2: Increase the supply of and access to suitable, affordable housing

Why is this important?

Increase the supply of and access to suitable, affordable housing, and ensuring we have the right types of homes, such as larger properties for families experiencing overcrowding and more single-person accommodation to meet our biggest homelessness need, is essential to addressing the diverse needs of our communities.

A shortage of affordable homes forces many households into overcrowded, unsuitable, or temporary accommodation, which can negatively impact health, wellbeing, and life opportunities. By expanding the availability of quality, affordable housing, we create stability for families, support economic growth, and reduce reliance on costly emergency interventions. This proactive approach ensures that everyone has access to a safe, secure home, which is the foundation for thriving individuals and resilient communities.

What we have done so far:

- The Housing Strategy 2025–2030, was reviewed and published, reaffirming the Council’s commitment to tackling homelessness by prioritising prevention and increasing access to affordable homes through new developments and property acquisitions.
- The Council’s target is to deliver 1,000 new council homes by summer 2027, with over 761 already completed as of 25 Feb 2026 and a new programme being developed for 2027/28 onwards.
- The Council in partnership with a young people’s charity secured over £700,000 through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme for specialist supported housing for young people, providing 14 additional homes for young people experiencing homelessness.
- Following extensive consultation, an updated Housing Allocation Policy was published which refines eligibility and banding, ensuring social housing goes to those in greatest need.
- The Council expanded temporary furnished properties from 127 to 173, improving quality and reducing hotel use.
- The Council introduced a new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, shaped by lived experience, to make decisions clearer and transparent.

Aims over the next 5 years:

1. Increase the supply of, and access to, suitable affordable housing:

We will increase the supply of, and access to, suitable affordable housing through new developments and partnerships with housing developers and providers.

2. Reduce reliance on hotels and ensure high quality temporary accommodation:

We will minimise the use of hotels as temporary accommodation and ensure that council-provided temporary housing meets local needs, while commissioned supported housing is tailored to deliver the right support for those who need it.

3. Strengthen engagement with the private rented sector:

We will continue to explore landlord incentive schemes to strengthen engagement with private sector landlords and increase the supply of affordable housing.

4. Improve standards and ensure a robust housing pathway:

We will promote high standards across all landlords and continue to review the housing pathway, to ensure it provides a diverse range of housing solutions. This includes supported housing for people with multiple disadvantages and support needs, ensuring it is well managed and meets all relevant regulations. We will also work with Housing Associations to maximise nominations.

How we will measure success:

- Increase the number of council homes available, including through new build and acquisitions.
- Increase the number of homeless households rehoused into settled affordable housing.
- Increase the number of partnerships with private landlords to expand the range of housing options available to homeless households.
- Reduce the number of households with children placed in hotel temporary accommodation
- Number of households with children that remain in hotel temporary accommodation for more than six weeks.
- Reduce the average length of stay across all forms of temporary accommodation for all household types.

KEY PRIORITIES IN DETAIL (continued)

Priority 3: Ensure support reaches those most in need at the right time

Why is this important?

Providing timely support is essential to preventing homelessness and promoting long-term stability. Early intervention through advice and practical support helps individuals avoid homelessness, repeat homelessness, financial hardship, and poor health outcomes. When help is delayed, people often experience greater stress and disruption, leading to more complex and costly solutions later. By prioritising those at greatest risk and acting promptly, services can make a meaningful difference improving lives, strengthening resilience, and using resources effectively. This includes access to employment and health services, enabling people to achieve financial independence, enhance wellbeing, and build a secure resilient future.

What we have done so far:

- The Council reviewed its commissioned housing-related support services in partnership with key stakeholders, leading to the development of a new Framework. This Framework strengthens service quality and consistency, drives innovation, leading to better outcomes for people at risk of homelessness.
- In partnership the Council along with local organisations, delivered 102 multi-agency drop-in sessions in 2025/26, hosted by a central local homeless charity, providing people at risk of homelessness with coordinated access to advice, essential services, and timely support.
- The Employment Hub and Employment Solutions Services have supported more people into positive outcomes, receiving 4,626 referrals between January 2023 and December 2025, with 2,014 households assisted, 451 people supported into training, and 568 into employment.
- The Council has published its Adult Social Care Mental Health Strategy for 2026–2029.

Aims over the next 5 years:

1. Strengthen multi agency working through collaborative working:

We will strengthen multi-agency working and embed person-centred, trauma informed approaches to ensure individuals receive coordinated, flexible, support at the right time.

2. Empower residents to build resilience through strengthening support pathways:

We will provide targeted support to households during the cost-of-living crisis while creating clear pathways to employment, education, and training. By combining immediate help with long-term opportunities, we aim to empower residents to build financial resilience and achieve lasting stability.

3. Identify gaps in support and develop new opportunities:

We will identify gaps in support provision and actively pursue new opportunities to strengthen and expand effective interventions, shaped by lived experience.

4. Personalised, connected support at the right time and place

Personalised support will be delivered within communities, at the right time, through a joined-up, locally driven approach.

How we will measure success:

- Number of people who are supported to access employment, training and education.
- Successful outcome at prevention or relief for households with 3 support needs or more
- Decrease use of all forms of temporary accommodation, due to more households accessing support early and avoiding homelessness crisis.
- Number of households who were assisted to remain in their existing home

KEY PRIORITIES IN DETAIL (continued)

Priority 4: Tackle rough sleeping through prevention and rapid response

Why is this important?

Preventing and responding to rough sleeping is vital to safeguarding health, dignity, and life chances. Rough sleeping exposes people to severe risks, including physical harm, poor mental health, social isolation, and vulnerability to exploitation and crime.

This strategy prioritises early prevention, stopping people from reaching crisis point rather than waiting until they are sleeping rough. Where rough sleeping does occur, rapid identification and response are essential to provide immediate support, safe accommodation, and access to vital services.

Our approach aligns with the government's ambition to halve long term rough sleeping by 2029, our aspiration is to go further by driving innovative prevention, rapid intervention, and strong partnership working. It also supports national goals to strengthen collaboration between housing, social care, and safeguarding services, particularly for people with multiple support needs.

The Council remains fully committed to responding to Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) activations as a critical safeguarding measure. SWEP ensures that during periods of severe weather, no one is left sleeping rough due to conditions that pose an immediate risk to life and health.

What we have done so far:

- The Rough Sleeper Initiative Team tripled early morning walks and added daytime checks, increasing visibility and enabling quicker identification and assistance for those sleeping rough. This has led to a 25 % increase in number of rough sleepers the outreach team have engaged with, moving them off the streets into safe accommodation.
- We have strengthened our partnership working with statutory and voluntary agencies, ensuring rough sleeping remains a shared priority and that no one falls through the cracks.
- The Council reviewed and recommissioned the Rotherham Housing First provision, an initiative designed to end homelessness by providing people with a home first, focusing on people with multiple support needs.

Aims over the next 5 years:

1. Rapid and responsive housing solutions:

We will provide and regularly review rapid housing solutions to help people move off the streets and into stable accommodation, while identifying gaps in provision and responding to households with multiple support needs.

2. Community based support and assertive outreach:

We will continue to work with partners and local communities to ensure support and advice are based in community settings, complemented by assertive outreach approaches that proactively engage individuals who may not otherwise seek help.

3. Strengthened multi agency coordination:

We will strengthen coordination across housing, health, criminal justice, benefits and voluntary sectors to ensure no one falls through the gaps.

4. Enhanced safeguarding for people sleeping rough:

Recognising the heightened risks faced by rough sleepers, we will strengthen integrated safeguarding through Rotherham's vulnerable adult pathway in collaboration with partners and social care.

How we will measure success:

- Reduce number of people sleeping rough long term
- Reduce number of new people sleeping rough.
- Reduce the number of people returning to rough sleeping.

EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION

Homelessness does not affect everyone equally. Certain groups face higher risks and greater barriers to accessing support, including people with disabilities, care leavers, older people, refugees, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those from minority ethnic communities. Our strategy is committed to ensuring that all services are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of Rotherham's residents.



Equality impact assessments: this strategy has undergone an equality impact assessment to identify and mitigate potential disadvantages for protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.



Accessible services: We will provide information in multiple formats and ensure physical and digital accessibility for all.



Cultural competence: Staff will receive training to understand and respect cultural, religious, and personal identities, ensuring services are delivered without discrimination.



Targeted support: We will work with partners to identify and address the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including, individuals fleeing domestic abuse, people with learning disabilities, people with neurodiversity needs which includes, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



Data and monitoring: We will collect and analyse data on service use by protected characteristics to monitor fairness and improve outcomes.

Tackling inequalities

Together the Council and partners recognise that structural inequalities and discrimination can exacerbate homelessness.

Our approach will:

Embed equality principles in all homelessness prevention and response services

Actively challenge discrimination and stigma faced by vulnerable groups

Ensure fair access to housing and support services regardless of background or identity

Work with community partners to co-design solutions that reflect the lived experiences of diverse groups

Monitor outcomes to identify and close gaps in service provision for underrepresented or disadvantaged communities

GOVERNANCE, ASSURANCE, AND DELIVERY

Delivery of this strategy will be monitored through a tiered governance structure designed to track progress, ensure accountability and transparency, maintain focus on strategic outcomes, and support continuous improvement.

Regular monitoring will consider:

- Progress against the cross-working action plan
- Achievement of key milestones
- Performance against measurable indicators
- Emerging risks, barriers, and opportunities
- Feedback from service users with lived experience, frontline staff, and partners



CASE STUDY

Laura's Journey: The impact of safe supported housing for young people

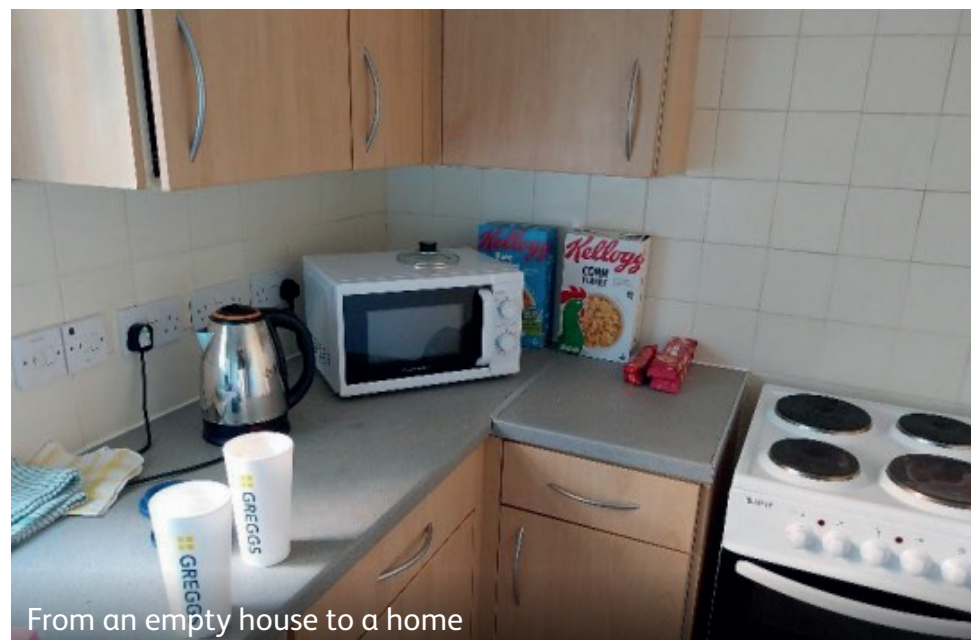
At 17, Laura became homeless after her relationship with her parents broke down. She moved between family, friends and temporary social care placements. Through joint work between Children's Services and the Council's Homelessness Team, Laura was offered a place in a young people's supported housing group living project.

This gave her a secure home and staff who could support her to rebuild her life. Laura engaged with specialist young people services, including education, employment and training support, trauma informed services for young women experiencing crisis or vulnerability, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to support her mental health.

With stability, Laura went on to secure a retail job and attended consistently, demonstrating strong commitment to her future. Nine months later, Laura had developed the independence and confidence to move into a dispersed property in the community, while continuing to receive support. When Laura became pregnant, staff helped her prepare for parenthood and navigate the process of applying for her own tenancy. Laura also enrolled on a business course to pursue her ambition of starting a beauty business.

Support continued throughout Laura's housing journey. Laura was matched with a two bedroom home, and support staff helped her secure the grants she was entitled to, sourced donated and affordable furniture, and supported her to set up her utilities, helping turn an empty property into a real home.

Today, 2 years later Laura is happy, safe and settled, continuing to pursue her aspirations. Her journey shows how the right support and a stable home can truly transform a young person's life.



From an empty house to a home

“The kindness, generosity and non judgemental support I received from my support worker has been invaluable to my progress. Having someone willing to lend an ear and offer guidance has been incredibly helpful, whether it's been a difficult day at work, a personal challenge, or just a rough day”.

– Laura

CASE STUDY

Peter's Journey:

From domestic abuse and rough sleeping to a safe home

Peter, employed in a professional role, experienced homelessness for the first time after fleeing domestic abuse. Despite being in work, he could not afford hotel accommodation and was forced to sleep in his car while continuing to work. Isolated, worried about losing his job, and unable to have his children stay with him, Peter's mental health deteriorated. Following encouragement from his employer, he contacted a local homeless charity, who provided reassurance and notified the Council's Rough Sleeper Outreach Team.

The following morning, the outreach team located Peter sleeping in his car and acted quickly to secure emergency hotel accommodation, followed by a fully furnished temporary flat close to his workplace. Peter was referred to specialist domestic abuse service and allocated a dedicated Domestic Abuse Housing Officer. With tailored support, including a male peer support group, Peter began to rebuild his confidence.

During his stay in temporary accommodation, Peter received support with budgeting, financial management, and securing a permanent home. Within six weeks, he was matched to a two bedroom property, providing stability and a safe home where his children could stay. Peter expressed gratitude to the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team, the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service, and the local homeless charity for helping him move from crisis to safety and a fresh start.



Collaborative working

Working together with local organisations, communities, and people with lived experience to prevent homelessness and improve support.

Complex needs

When someone faces several challenges at the same time, such as mental health issues, disability, substance use, domestic abuse, or involvement with the justice system, and needs joined up support.

Cross partner delivery

Services delivered together by the Council and partner organisations, so people receive the right help without having to repeat their story.

Data analysis

Looking at information and evidence to understand homelessness in Rotherham and improve services and decisions.

Domestic abuse

Abusive behaviour by a partner, ex partner, or family member. This can include physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or controlling behaviour and can lead to homelessness.

Duty to refer

A legal requirement for certain public services, with a person's consent, to tell the Council if someone is homeless or at risk so they can get help early.

Duty to collaborate

The duty to collaborate is a central government led requirement for local partners to share information and work jointly to prevent homelessness more effectively.

Evidence based

Using information, research, and people's lived experience to make sure actions and decisions are effective.

Inequalities

Unfair differences in outcomes for some people or groups, such as poorer health, housing, or financial security. The Strategy aims to reduce these differences.

Intentionality

A check the Council must make to understand whether someone has deliberately done something that caused them to lose their home.

Legislation

The laws that set out the Council's responsibilities to prevent and deal with homelessness.

Lived experience

Knowledge and insight shared by people who have experienced homelessness.

Local connection

How the Council decides which area is responsible for helping someone, based on where they live, work, have family, or other special reasons.

Main housing duty

When the Council has a legal responsibility to provide suitable accommodation because someone meets the required criteria.

Multiple disadvantages/multiple support

When someone experiences more than one difficulty at the same time, such as homelessness alongside poor health, domestic abuse, poverty, or exclusion from services.

Our value led approach

Providing services in a fair, respectful, and compassionate way, treating people with dignity and understanding.

Person centred

Putting people at the centre of decisions and shaping support around their individual needs and circumstances.

Prevention duty

A legal duty on the Council to take reasonable steps to help prevent homelessness when someone is at risk within the next 56 days.

Priority need

Groups of people recognised in law as particularly vulnerable and who may be entitled to extra housing support.

Rapid rehousing

Helping people move as quickly as possible into a settled home, with support to help them stay there.

Relief duty

A legal duty on the Council to take reasonable steps to help someone find accommodation if they are already homeless.

Upstream prevention

Taking action early, before a crisis happens, to reduce the risk of homelessness in the future.

Rough sleepers

People who are sleeping outside or in places not meant for living in, such as doorways, tents, or vehicles.

Solution focused

Concentrating on practical actions and next steps to resolve housing problems and prevent homelessness.

Temporary accommodation

Short term housing provided while longer term, settled accommodation is found.

Trauma informed

Recognising that people may have experienced trauma and providing support in a safe, respectful, and understanding way.

Vision

The Council's long term aim for preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping in Rotherham.

Youth homelessness

Homelessness affecting young people, usually aged 16 to 25, often linked to family breakdown, care experience, mental health, or money problems.