

Appendix 2.

**Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper
Strategy 2026-2031
Consultation Summary
Report**

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1. Consultation Overview

Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026–2031 Consultation Summary

What was the purpose of the consultation and who was consulted?	<p>The Homelessness Act 2002 outlines that Local Authorities must have an approach for homelessness prevention and rough sleeping. This strategy has to be revised every 3 to 5 years; the consultation was to revisit the key areas of homelessness prevention and support for rough sleepers in Rotherham to assess what the priorities should be over the proposed 5-year period of the strategy.</p> <p>An 8-week public consultation was delivered to ensure equal opportunity for the public, services and organisation in Rotherham were able to have their say on the direction of the revised strategy.</p>
What time period did the consultation run over?	The consultation ran for 8 weeks, launching on the 7 th of July and closing on the 1 st of September.
How many responses were received?	A total of 203 responses were received.
How will the responses be used by the Council?	The responses from the consultation, alongside the feedback attained in the community drop ins and sessions will help to shape the strategic direction for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in Rotherham from 2026 to 2031. The consultation will outline the vision, priorities and ways to ensure housing is more sustainable for local residents.
Where will the outcomes of the consultation be made public?	The outcomes of the consultation will be made available once the new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-2031 is approved by Cabinet. The current timeline for the new strategy to go to Cabinet is on the 11th May 2026; on the basis that the strategy is approved, it will be published before June 2026.

Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026–2031 Consultation Summary

2. Introduction

Rotherham Council carried out an 8-week public consultation from 7 July to 1 September, to help shape the refreshed Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026–2031. The consultation aimed to understand local views on the current vision, key priorities, barriers faced by people experiencing homelessness, and what actions should be taken over the next five years.

In total, 203 responses were received through the online survey, supported by a comprehensive programme of engagement with residents, people with lived experience, frontline staff, partners, charities and voluntary sector organisations.

The findings demonstrate strong continued support for the overall direction of the current strategy, while highlighting important areas for improvement, particularly around communication, early intervention, availability of affordable housing, and joined-up support for people with complex needs.

(Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place, so totals may not equal exactly 100%)

3. Who Responded

3.1 Respondent Type

- **77.3%** – Residents of Rotherham
- **5.9%** – Residents outside Rotherham
- **4.4%** – Statutory agencies
- **3.4%** – Voluntary organisations
- **3.0%** – Temporary accommodation providers
- **1.0%** – Housing providers
- **4.9%** – Other/Unknown

3.2 Tenure of Resident Respondents

- **49.0%** - Owner occupiers
- **10.2%** - Private renters
- **12.7%** - Council/Housing Association tenants
- **13.4%** - Temporary accommodation
- **8.9%** - Supported accommodation
- **4.8%** - Homeless / NFA

3.3 Lived Experience

- **46.8%** had current or past experience of homelessness.

4. Communications and Reach

The consultation was widely promoted through:

- **Eight Facebook posts** (33,395 views; 19,601 users reached; 147 engagements).
- **LinkedIn**, Rotherham Round-up bulletins, direct emails across Council directorates, NHS partners and voluntary sector networks.
- **Posters** were provided to organisations who supported and hosted drop-in's and focus groups.

This ensured broad awareness and opportunities for residents and partners to participate.

5. Key Messages from the Consultation

5.1 Support for the Vision

Across all respondent groups, **89.8%** agreed that the current vision remains relevant. A strong consensus emerged around:

- Working in partnership to end homelessness
- Everyone having a secure, affordable home
- Ensuring the right support is available at the right time

Additional themes suggested for strengthening the vision include:

- Communication and partnership working
- Empathy and respect
- Staff training and trauma-informed practice
- Tenancy sustainment
- More affordable and supported housing
- Early advice and information

5.2 Strategic Priorities for 2026–2031

Respondents selected their top priorities from a list of ten. The highest-ranked priorities were:

1. Prevention and early intervention (75.9%)
2. Increase access to affordable housing (70.4%)
3. Joined-up support for homeless/rough sleeping households (60.1%)
4. Make homelessness brief and not repeated (47.3%)
5. Joined-up approach for people with complex needs (43.8%)

People with lived experience identified access to affordable housing as their highest priority (80%), followed by early prevention and access to tailored support.

5.3 Main Barriers People Face

Common barriers identified through survey responses and engagement sessions included:

- Lack of affordable housing and high private rental costs
- Cost-of-living pressures
- Limited or fragmented support for mental health and substance misuse
- Domestic abuse
- Lack of ID, particularly for rough sleepers
- Accessibility issues (language, digital barriers, limited information)
- Inconsistent communication across services

These barriers impact people before, during and after experiencing homelessness.

5.4 Suggested Solutions

Respondents highlighted a range of practical and strategic solutions:

- Better relationships with private landlords and incentives to widen access
- Building more social housing and improving supported accommodation options
- More specialist provision (women, young people, people with multiple support needs)
- Earlier intervention and clearer information across the borough
- Improved cross-partner working (homeless service, health, prisons, Adult Care, voluntary sector)
- More tailored support, counselling, trauma-informed practice and help with employment
- Ensuring pathways out of supported accommodation that enable people to work and sustain housing

6. Engagement Summary: Groups Consulted

A wide-ranging consultation was carried out with partners, service users, voluntary sector organisations, and council staff to understand what is working well, the challenges in preventing homelessness, and what improvements are needed in Rotherham. Engagement took place with groups representing domestic abuse survivors, young people, rough sleepers, people with multiple support needs, veterans, supported accommodation residents, and the wider public.

A total of 18 engagement sessions took place across the borough (in addition to the online survey), ensuring wide representation. Below is the full list of groups consulted:

Group / Organisation	Date	Format	Participants
Housing Options Staff (RMBC)	02/07/2025	Online presentation	48
Shiloh	04/07/2025	Focus group	5
Rotherham Homeless Forum	08/07/2025	Workshop	28
Strategic Housing Forum	09/07/2025	Workshop	16
Safeguarding Board	16/07/2025	Presentation	17
Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA)	22/07/2025	Drop-in	3
Action Housing Breakfast Club	25/07/2025	Focus group	11
Social Supermarket	30/07/2025	Drop-in	13
Shiloh	01/08/2025	Drop-in	4
Queen Street Rough Sleeper Hostel	06/08/2025	Drop-in	3
Homeless Strategic Board	06/08/2025	Presentation	19
RMBC Staff Session	08/08/2025	Presentation	1
Young People (Rush House & Roundabout)	08/08/2025	Focus group	6
Elliot Court (Target Housing)	13/08/2025	Drop-in	6
Social Supermarket (Second session)	14/08/2025	Drop-in	3
Armed Forces Covenant	18/08/2025	Presentation	13
RMBC Staff Session	20/08/2025	Presentation	5
Rotherham Show*	06–07/09/2025	Public stall	35

(*Fell outside the 8-week online survey window but included for wider engagement.)

7. Summary of Feedback from Consultation Sessions

Across all sessions, several common themes emerged:

- **The need for more affordable and suitable accommodation** across the borough.
- **Better joined-up working**, especially between housing, social care, health, and voluntary sector partners.
- **Improved access to timely information**, advice, mental health support, and early intervention.
- **A stronger emphasis on prevention**, lived experience influence, and trauma-informed approaches.
- **More specialist provision**, including options for women, people with multiple and often complex support needs, young people, and people with pets.

Below is a further summary.

7.1 Domestic Abuse & Families

Main Themes:

- Need for more affordable housing across all areas of the borough.
- Localised support, including counselling and holistic recovery services, should be better integrated.
- Challenges when supporting victims include trauma, mental health, returning to perpetrators, and risk of re-entering abusive relationships.
- Identified gaps include female-specific supported housing.
- Emphasis on healthy relationship education for victims.

7.2 Young People

Main Themes:

- Better joint working between services (housing, social care, education).
- Need for clear leaving-care pathways and improved early financial education.
- Young people face barriers accessing affordable housing.
- Suggested improvements:
 - Mediation and support for families.
 - More education in schools and colleges.
 - More LGBTQ+ awareness and support.
 - Female-specific options.
- Importance of good quality, modern temporary accommodation.
- Need for extra emergency provision, support for young parents, and learning from failed placements.
- Support around furnishing and decorating homes would aid tenancy sustainment.
- Riverside House, Council office environment felt adult, overwhelming, and difficult for neurodivergent young people. There is a need for trauma-informed spaces for young people presenting as homeless.
- Accessing mental health support can be too slow and not always at the right level, better access is needed.
- Better understanding barriers faced by young people in the BME community.

7.3 Households with Multiple Support Needs

Main Themes:

- Greater focus on universal prevention and expectation-setting for service users.
- Stronger multi-agency working to improve MARAC referrals and reduce delays around consent.

- Strengthening crisis prevention: wraparound support, tenancy monitoring, and clearer referral pathways.
- More emergency supported accommodation is required, especially small, supported schemes like the 7-bed provision.
- More front-end housing options could help people progress into long-term models such as Housing First.
- Building trust is essential to improving engagement and recovery.

7.4 Rough Sleepers

Main Themes:

- More suitable accommodation that allows:
 - Longer stays.
 - People to work without unaffordable rents.
 - Provision for pets.
- Greater mental health support to reduce crisis-led homelessness.
- Importance of lived experience in shaping services.
- Better joint work with prison services to reduce risk of rough sleeping.
- Strengthening supported accommodation standards.
- A joined-up approach between accommodation providers is essential for crisis prevention.
- More providers needed for SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) that can offer a warm safe place to stay.

A summary of other feedback during the consultation:

What Works

- Strong support from good homelessness providers, especially around wellbeing, life skills and signposting.
- Trusted, accessible community services providing multi-agency drop-ins.
- Most services in Rotherham seen as caring and accessible.
- The continued development of partnership working for veteran homelessness.

What Needs Improvement

- More peer support and provider funding.
- More empathy from staff across agencies.
- More supported accommodation for males and females.
- Better discharge processes (hospitals/prisons).
- Earlier interventions, improved integration, better furniture support.
- Improve non-commissioned supported accommodation standards.
- Limited options for high support needs.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Health access difficulties and financial barriers.
- Practical barriers: lack of ID.

Why Change is Needed

- To sustain accommodation, provide long-term post-move-on support, improve health and wellbeing support, reduce isolation, and support employment pathways.
- Need for public perception change and reducing stigma, education on homelessness will help earlier prevention and understanding that anyone can be homeless.

8. Overall Conclusions

The consultation demonstrates strong continued support for the current direction of homelessness work in Rotherham. The refreshed strategy should retain the core vision and priorities, while strengthening the areas most highlighted by residents and partners:

- Earlier, more accessible prevention.
- More affordable and diverse housing options.
- Stronger cross-partner working.
- Better mental health and addiction support.
- Clearer information, communication.
- Focus on vulnerable cohorts such as, people with multiple needs, young people, and domestic abuse victims.
- Trauma-informed practice - More compassionate, face-to-face support needed.
- Greater use of peer support and early intervention.
- Person centred approach that is outcome focused.

These findings will directly shape the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026–2031, due for Cabinet consideration - 11th May 2026.