

# Our Priorities and Action Plan

This strategy identifies four key priority areas which will shape the way the Council will work with its partners to address homelessness in the borough. These priorities are informed by the homelessness evidence base, feedback from service users, members of staff and partners represented in the Rugby Homelessness Forum.

The priorities are focused on preventing homelessness, supporting households who are already homeless or threatened with homelessness and ensuring a range of options available to alleviate homelessness. Homelessness is complex and requires a multi-agency approach. Collaboration with partner agencies, such as Public Health to achieve positive health outcomes for homeless households who are more likely to experience health problems and inequality than the general population is key. We will deliver these priorities through our Action Plan as set out on page 35.

**The Council will work with its partners in the following priority areas:**



## 1. The prevention of homelessness

- Contract with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) providing money advice support for financial inclusion
- Ensuring support to access social housing and private sector accommodation is accessible to all key customer groups;
  - single people
  - support for rough sleepers
  - support for families
  - support for victims of domestic abuse
  - veterans and their families
- Housing services – tenancy coaches and tenancy sustainment work to ensure customers are tenancy ready and can sustain accommodation
- Work to prevent and relieve the main causes of homelessness in Rugby as identified in the evidence review (private sector accommodation and relationship breakdowns and eviction from relatives & family homes)
- Engagement with support providers and mental health services for vulnerable users
- Early engagement and open lines of communications with Registered Providers (RPs)
- Increasing supply and access to supported housing for young people
- Ensuring robust and effective delivery of the Joint Housing Protocol for homeless young people and care leavers
- Effective utilising our homelessness prevention grant to help customers to sustain their tenancy
- Mediation to prevent friends and family evictions including upstream prevention work (preventing negative outcomes before reaching crisis point)



## 2. Tailored support for our most vulnerable clients

- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Rough sleepers
- Pathways customers and customers with complex needs
- Hospital discharge customers
- Prison release customers
- IDVA trained staff to provide support for DA & to access further support services
- Homes for Ukraine scheme
- Close liaison with the Home Office and Migration services
- Continued review of the pledge for Afghans, Syria & all asylum dispersal customers



## 3. Ensure that we enable a variety of accommodation options to meet specific customer needs

- Rent deposit & Rent in advance policy
- Acquisitions strategy and links to the corporate asset management strategy
- Strategic enabling with RP's and Homes England
- Landlords Forum & engagement with key stakeholders
- Work with housing providers to secure new housing developments & alternative accommodation options
- Keep the Private Sector Leasing scheme under review (PSL) based on housing and homeless service need
- Reciprocal arrangements with other LA's alongside county wide partnership working
- Review Housing Allocations policy biannually
- Ensure we are looking to increase social housing supply



## 4. Work with our partners across the statutory and VCS to secure the best outcomes for clients

- Work collaboratively with all key partner agencies
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Hope 4 and P3, providing support & assistance to vulnerable customers
- Working to support the Warwickshire authorities joined up Warwickshire homelessness strategy
- Public health, working with and supporting referrals from medical providers and hospital discharge cases
- Housing Related Support
- Setting up an internal officer group reviewing the strategies action plan & measuring its keys objectives (annual review and assessment alongside an updated evidence base of service demand)
- Develop a collaborative action plan developed with the Councils key stakeholders
- Work with and support work with community groups and voluntary sector across the district , in line with governance reporting, annual review of our priorities and reviewing and measuring outcomes for households to help us measure success

# Appendix 1

Create efficiencies	Target or achieve by and responsible person
<b>Action 1</b> Review processes to increase operational efficiency	<b>Q4 each year alongside KPI data, HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 2</b> Review IT requirements to increase operational efficiency	<b>2025 - 2029</b>
<b>Action 3</b> Review reporting data and quality to increasingly use performance data to inform budgets and service delivery	<b>Q3 2025, HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 4</b> Provide training plans for the team to ensure continuous development	<b>2025 - 2029</b>
<b>Action 5</b> Seek to agree budget for a Housing Review and Quality Assurance Officer	<b>Q1 2025, HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 6</b> Review and management of Out of Hours provision	<b>Q1 2025, HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 7</b> Continue to review our needs and demands of temporary accommodation provision, including the reduction in the use of B&B	<b>Each quarter review for each year of the strategy</b>
<b>Action 8</b> Develop a system on collecting data on homelessness to help inform future strategies, the quarterly and annual review of the action plan, and operational service delivery	<b>Each quarter review by HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 9</b> Create a sustainability plan to help ensure long-term success of action plan activities	<b>Yearly review by HABT Manager</b>

Prevention of Homelessness	Target or achieve by and responsible person
<b>Action 1</b> Recruit an Early Intervention Officer and Housing Options Apprentice using homelessness prevention grant funding	<b>Q1 2025, HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 2</b> Develop a Rent Deposit Scheme	<b>Q2 2025, HABT Manager and Team Leader</b>
<b>Action 3</b> Develop pathways for Vulnerable groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victims of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Ukraine and asylum dispersal cases</li> <li>• Rough sleeping</li> </ul>	<b>Q3 2025, HABT Team Leader and supervisor</b>
<b>Action 4</b> Review young homelessness crisis pathway intervention and develop a joined-up approach with social values	<b>Q1 2025, HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 5</b> Continue to develop early intervention and long-term recovery housing options for rough sleepers alongside our pathway accommodation model	<b>Q3 2025, HABT Team Leader and pathway supervisor</b>
<b>Action 6</b> Review team training and team development to prepare for upcoming legislation changes such as the Renters Reform Bill	<b>Q2 2025, Service Manager and Team Leader</b>

Provision of Accommodation	Target or achieve by and responsible person
<b>Action 1</b> Draft and implement a Tenancy Accommodation Policy	<b>Q1 2025</b> , HABT Manager
<b>Action 2</b> Conduct a feasibility study on demand, potential sites and opportunities for in-borough hostel and supported accommodation provision for a range of special needs group with low and high support needs	<b>Q2 2025</b> , HABT Manager and Team Leader
<b>Action 3</b> Bring back units under our Private Sector Leasing Scheme	<b>Ongoing yearly action alongside needs of the service</b>
<b>Action 4</b> Complete acquisitions for additional social housing	<b>30 per annum led by HABT Manager</b>
<b>Action 5</b> Conduct a review of re-designation housing stock to meet housing need and demand	<b>Q3 2025</b> , HABT Team Leader and pathway supervisor

Partnership and support	Target or achieve by and responsible person
<b>Action 1</b> Work collaboratively with Warwickshire councils to manage the reduction in supporting people funding on outreach homelessness services	<b>Q1 2025</b> , HABT Manager
<b>Action 2</b> Work with the Warwickshire councils and public health to agree on action plan for collaborative working to address health inequalities for those facing homelessness	<b>Q2 2026</b> , HABT Manager
<b>Action 3</b> Set up an internal officer group as a steering group to monitor delivery of key objectives and review latest challenges (meeting quarterly with annual review)	<b>Q3 2025</b> , HABT Manager
<b>Action 4</b> Complete a community engagement/ service user consultation to inform annual review of the proposed strategy	<b>Q4 2025</b> of each year, HABT Manager and Team Leader

# Appendix 2

## Statutory Homelessness Duties Explained

**Local Authorities have a series of duties if a person meets the statutory definition of homelessness and are eligible for assistance. Irrespective of any duties owed and priority need, anyone seeking assistance will be provided with advice and support**

### Relief Duty

Local authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to relieve an applicant's homelessness.

The relief duty is owed to all eligible applicants who are homeless, irrespective of 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'. At the Relief stage applicants with no 'local connection' to the local authority where they have made their request for homelessness assistance can be referred to a 'local authority where they do have a 'local connection'.

If the local authority has reason to believe the applicant is in priority need, it may have a duty to provide interim accommodation during the relief duty.

The duty lasts up to 56 days but may be extended if no main duty is owed.

The relief duty may mean for example, helping an applicant to secure housing in the private sector with tenancy for 6 or more months, placing them in supported accommodation or deciding if they qualify for social housing.

### Prevention Duty

Local authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent an applicant's homelessness.

The prevention duty is owed to all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days, irrespective of 'local connection', 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'.

The duty is also owed where a valid Section 21 notice has been served which expires within 56 days.

The prevention duty may mean for example, negotiating with a landlord or family member, providing mediation, helping to reduce rent arrears, or securing alternative accommodation before a household becomes homeless.

### Main Duty

The main duty is owed to applicants whose homelessness has not been prevented or relieved, who are homeless through no fault of their own, and who are in priority need.

It places a duty on the local authority to secure an accommodation for their occupation until the Duty is ended. That duty is ended successfully when an applicant accepts an offer of social housing or a private rented tenancy for 12-months. The main duty can end unsuccessfully if for example the applicant abandons or loses their temporary accommodation provided to meet the main duty; refuses a suitable offer of accommodation or ceases to be eligible.

Applicants who are in priority need but are intentionally homeless may receive advice and assistance, and temporary accommodation for a short period of time whilst they make alternative accommodation arrangements

# Key terms

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- Eligibility for homelessness assistance depends on immigration and residence status. Different rules apply for British and Irish nationals, and for people from abroad.
- A Section 21 eviction notice is a legal route through which landlords can evict tenants who have an assured shorthold tenancy.
- People in priority need include those who are: pregnant or have children; care leavers aged 18 to 21; aged 16 or 17 and not owed a Children Act duty; homeless as a result of domestic abuse; homeless due to flood, fire or other disaster; and those deemed by the local authority to be 'vulnerable' due to, for example, mental or physical disabilities, old age, having been in custody or the armed forces.
- Duty to Refer Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a duty on specified public authorities to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to local authority homelessness/housing options teams. This is designed to encourage public authorities to work together and build strong partnerships to intervene and prevent homelessness by

## Disclaimer

Local Authorities report detailed information on homelessness applications to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC).

Government Homelessness Statutory Statistical Releases are based on these submissions. Data used in this strategy detailing homelessness activities and homeless applicants are mostly based on the above statistical releases.

However, where the above source is cited in this strategy, the data should be treated with caution as the statistical submission to government for Rugby Borough Council 2021/22 does not appear to have collated. The most likely reason for this is the pressures brought about by the covid 19 pandemic and the reallocation of resource to manage the emergency response. It is believed the absence of this data has not distorted the overall homeless picture and efforts over the next 12 months by the housing steering group will be taken to try and extrapolate information from IT systems to obtain this data.

To compensate for the missing data and enable an overview of the level of homelessness and relevant activities in Rugby over the last 5 years, the average of 2022/23 and 2023/24 data has been used.