

Homelessness prevention

& Rough Sleeping

Strategy | 2025-2029

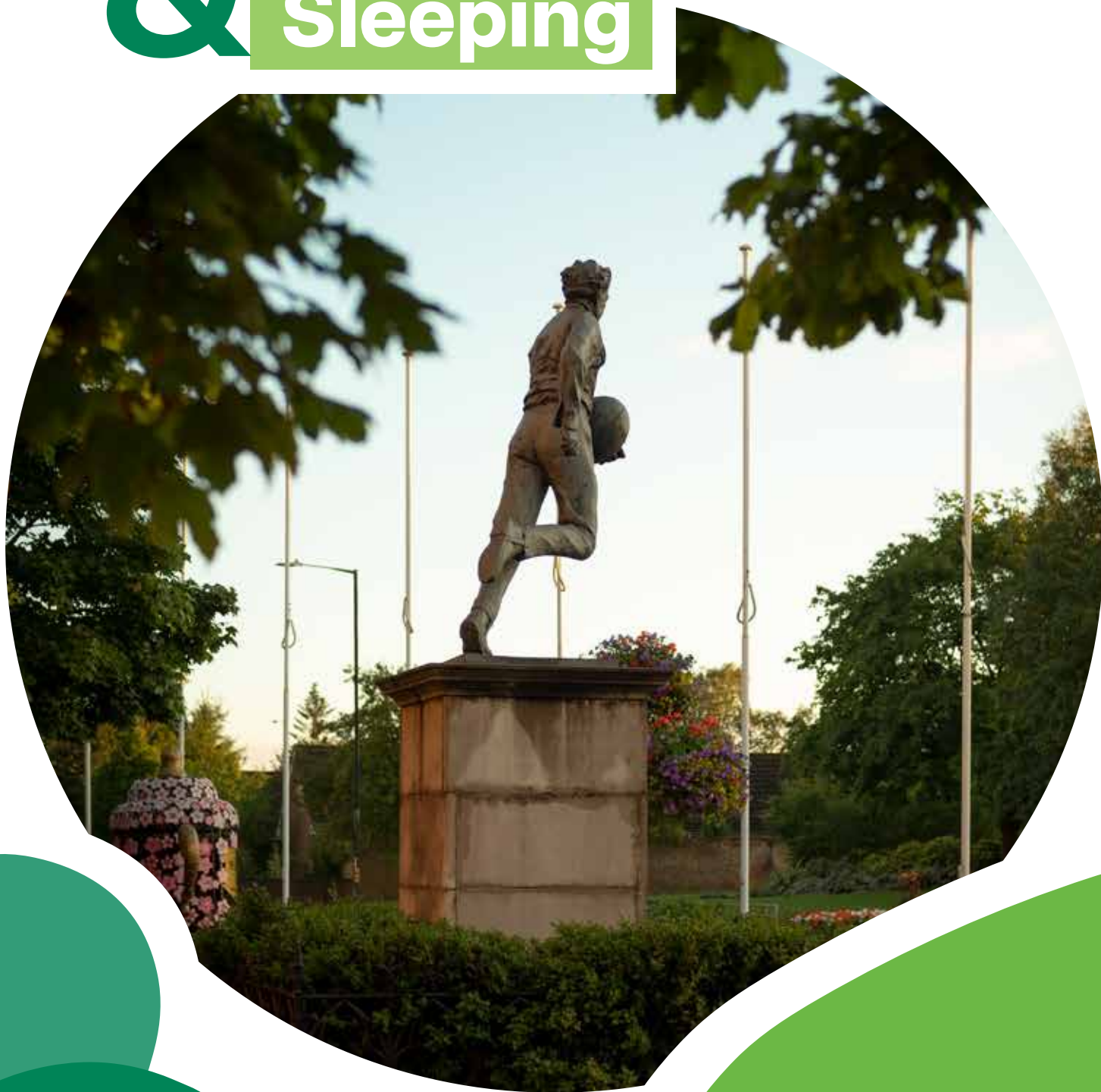




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Foreword

I am delighted to present the new Homeless Strategy on behalf of Rugby Borough Council (RBC) for the period 2025 – 2029.

Firstly, I would like to thank the hard work of RBC staff and officers who work so hard to provide support for the most vulnerable of our residents. This is a pivotal time for the provision of housing in this country, with a new national government drive to increase housing delivery, and as the administration at RBC, continues to embed and deliver its corporate strategy vision, I am very conscious that these issues will align to alleviate the detrimental impact of homelessness on our community.

We are making good progress to reduce the number of main duty homeless acceptances accepted under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) through proactive prevention work, and as we increase the supply of affordable housing by providing 100 new council owned homes at the newly named Navigation Way on the site of the former Biart Place (which will be ready for occupation in early 2026) we are reducing costs to the council from having to use temporary accommodation.

We will also refresh the Housing Allocations Policy in 2025 which sets out the eligibility criteria for households, who are in housing need, to access social housing. The creation of a new landlords' forum of private rented sector landlords will provide an opportunity to work more closely with local landlords and in doing so will seek to deliver further housing solutions for those in need.

We want to continue to work with other housing providers, both Registered Providers and the private sector to provide good quality, affordable housing that meets residents needs across the Borough whether in the town or in our parishes and villages. Tackling inequality is a key feature of our new Corporate Strategy 2025-35 and this strategy is one of many ways in which we will deliver it.

My thanks to everyone who is preparing and delivering this strategy and its implementation and to Cllr Noreen New, the Liberal Democrat lead on Housing.

Cllr Claire Edwards,
Portfolio holder for Homes and
communities



Introduction

Local Authorities have statutory duties to assist people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Appendix 2 provides an explanation of these duties. Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 defines someone as 'homeless' if there is no accommodation available for their occupation, or if it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy the accommodation they have. A person is threatened with homelessness, if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days or have been issued an eviction notice under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, which is due to expire within 56 days. Homelessness legislation and the Code of Guidance shape the way homelessness services are designed and delivered by Local Authorities.



The Government funding arrangement for statutory homelessness duties include a combination of the Homelessness Prevention Grant, Housing Benefit Temporary Accommodation Subsidy reimbursed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Local Government Finance Settlement. There are also other programmes available which allocate or receive bids from Local Authorities for funding such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative.

Both individual and structural factors can cause or exacerbate homelessness. These factors are often interrelated and reinforced by one another. On the individual level issues such as relationship breakdown, mental health problems, substance misuse and experience of violence, abuse and neglect can lead to homelessness. On structural level poverty, inequality, unemployment, housing supply and affordability can lead to or compound homelessness.

Due to multiple disadvantages faced by homeless households across various policy areas such as housing, health, education, welfare benefits, social care, migration, crime and employment it is imperative that homelessness is addressed with a joint and multi-agency approach. In line with Rugby Borough Council Corporate Strategies key objectives that Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation to help residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected.

The new strategy builds on the successes and partnerships built over the course of the previous Homelessness Strategy 2015-18 and paves the way for the Council to continue to work with statutory and voluntary organisation partners by coordinating activities, sharing best practice and learning. Also, by maximizing on collaborations with Warwickshire Public Health and partnerships for Safe Accommodation and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) the Council can address health inequalities, achieve positive health outcomes and provide access to safe accommodation for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the borough.



The Council is a member of the **Warwickshire Homelessness Strategic Group** formed in 2019 in response to the fundamental changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in the way Local Authorities assess and assist homeless applicants, with a strong focus on prevention. This officer group is non statutory and commissions countywide homelessness services and reports to the statutory Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board. It also published a *Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach* in 2021 focusing on health, financial inclusion, young people, domestic abuse and offending.

The **Rugby Homelessness Forum** brings together local statutory and voluntary organisations to prevent and tackle homelessness in the borough. The Forum provides a platform for partners to collaborate, develop and promote solutions to issues affecting those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Rugby. This multi-agency partnership has helped shape this strategy and will play a crucial role in delivering it over the next five years.

The **Rugby Homelessness Strategy 2025 – 2029 Action Plan** will be monitored quarterly and reviewed annually by the Council and its partners to deliver on the following priorities:

-  **Prevention of homelessness**
-  **Tailored support for our most vulnerable clients**
-  **A variety of accommodation to meet specific customer needs**
-  **Work with our partners across the statutory and voluntary and community sector to secure the best outcome for clients**

Our Partners

Rugby Homelessness Forum

- Rugby Borough Council
- Homeless Link
- P3 Charity
- Hope4 Charity
- CGL (Change, Grow, Live)
- Doorway
- Futures Unlocked
- Together UK
- Rugby Job Centre (DWP)

Warwickshire Homeless Strategy Group

- Warwickshire County Council, Social Care and Public Health
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
- Rugby Borough Council
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Warwick District Council
- Warwickshire Police
- Probation

Housing Delivery Partners

- Rugby Borough Council
- London and Quadrant Housing Trust
- Bromford Housing
- Citizen
- Clarion Housing
- Heylo Housing
- Midland Heart
- Orbit Homes
- Platform Housing
- SAGE Housing
- Warwickshire Rural Housing
- WHG
- Sanctuary Housing Association
- PA Housing

Achievements over the last 5 years

New homes

4,852 homes were delivered. Of which, 1,033 were affordable (21%). The Council will continue to seek 20%-30% of all new homes to be affordable, where the sites meet the thresholds outlined in the Local Plan.

Private Sector Housing Leasing Scheme (temporary accommodation)

231 properties have been leased, increasing the range of housing options available to customers which also helped raise property standards in the private sector and bring empty properties back

Property Acquisition and Disposal Policy

Completed 105 property acquisitions over the last 5 years, increasing the housing supply for applicants on the Housing Waiting List.

Length of Stay in Temporary Accommodation (TA)

86% of households placed in temporary accommodation spent less than 6 months in temporary accommodation between 2019/20-2023/24. The maximum stay of 6 weeks for all 134 households with children in B&B was also achieved.

Warwickshire Homelessness Strategy Group

Was formed in 2019 providing a platform for a joined-up approach to tackling homelessness on a county and local level.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA)

Full implementation of the HRA 2017 legislation embedding the early intervention and prevention approach into service delivery and new responsibilities introduced by the Act.

Statutory duties

The Council successfully ended duties to 796 (42%) households who were owed a Prevention or Relief Duty by helping them to remain in existing accommodation or securing accommodation in the social or private rented sector.

Main Duty Owed

The number of applicants to whom the Council owes Main Duty has declined by 84% over the last 5 years due to the successful outcomes preventing homeless through Prevention and Relief Duties.

Housing & Hospital Liaison Service

This service enables timely hospital discharge by providing housing related support ensuring patients have access to suitable and safe accommodation upon discharge.

Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) Funding 2022-25

Secured £400K delivering positive outcomes including expansion of the Housing Outreach Team and a new Rugby Pathway Scheme which supported and provided accommodation to 33 rough sleepers.

Next Step Accommodation Programme (NSAP)

Part of MHCLG 'Everyone In' initiative helping rough sleepers supported during pandemic to remain off the streets by providing accommodation and support. The funding helped support 15 rough sleepers into accommodation.

Early Intervention - Outreach

Since April 2023, Outreach Officers engaged with 139 customers during multiple surgeries held at various partner venues including the Food Bank, Job Centre.

Tenancy Ready

Tenancy Coach, a new innovative support programme assisted 429 tenants on a range of areas including income maximisation, form filling and utility set up since its inception in December 2022.

Impact of Homelessness

The impact of homelessness especially on health have been documented in various studies including the publication by Shelter in 2004, *Sick and Tired - The Impact of Temporary Accommodation on the Health of Homeless Families and the most recent report on the Independent Investigation of the National Health Service 2024* (by ARA DARZI, Paul Hamlyn Chair of Surgery, Imperial College London Consultant Surgeon & Independent Member of the House of Lords) which identifies significant health inequalities faced by homeless households in temporary accommodation and those who are rough sleeping.

The stress of not having a secure home often combined with poor living conditions, inappropriate for the health and social needs of the household, impact both physically and mentally. Homeless households living in temporary accommodation are far more likely to be vulnerable to diseases such as bronchitis and tuberculosis, and existing physical health conditions such as asthma, are often exacerbated. Depression, increased visits to doctors or hospitals, negative impact on children's education and development are also documented.¹

People who are rough sleeping are particularly vulnerable. They experience some of the most severe health inequalities and report much poorer health than the general population. Many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives.² Studies in the 2024 report above found 64% of homeless hospital inpatients had three or more physical health co-morbidities and 82% had a mental health diagnosis.

The longer a person spends rough sleeping, the more complex their needs become. Rough sleeping over a long period leads to a higher likelihood of premature death. The average age at death of people who experience homelessness is 45.4 years for men and 43.2 years for women.³

The proposed new '**ending homelessness unit**' with a cross-government taskforce which will produce a long-term cross-government strategy to address homelessness is welcome. This will enable a multifaceted approach to address homelessness where households face multiple exclusions and challenges in accessing services.

In recent years household finances have been significantly hit by the cost of living crisis, driven by high levels of inflation, increasing living costs and steep increase in the cost of fuel. The impact of the crisis is disproportionately felt by those who are already struggling financially and who are therefore at a greater risk of homelessness. This has led to increased pressure on Council's homelessness and other services and is expected to continue. Going forward, working in partnership with statutory services and the voluntary sector will be key to address pressures and challenges to service delivery.

- ¹ Shelter, *The impact of homelessness and bad housing on children's education*, November 2020.
- ² Guidance- *Health matters: rough sleeping* Updated 11 February 2020
- ³ Office for National Statistics *Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales: 2021 registrations*



Legislation Update

There have been several legislative updates during the period of the Council's last homelessness strategy. This has changed the way the Council's homelessness services are delivered. With the new government in place since July 2024, other changes are expected to follow during the lifetime of this new strategy. Key changes that have (and continue to) shaped the way homelessness services are provided and potential new provisions that are likely to make an impact are as follows:

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Imposed new duties on local authorities requiring statutory homelessness services to focus on prevention of homelessness with a more person-centered and collaborative approach. **It includes:**

- New duties called Prevention Duty and Relief Duty requiring Councils to take reasonable steps to help eligible applicants regardless of their priority to prevent homelessness within 56 days or if they are already homeless help them secure suitable accommodation;
- Requirement to carry out an assessment and create personalised housing plan;
- Duty on public bodies to people who they know are threatened with homelessness; and
- Right of applicants for a review of any part of the legislation.

The Tenant Fees Act 2019

Aims to reduce costs in the private rented sector by capping tenancy deposits and introducing 'permitted' fees that landlords and agents are allowed to charge tenants.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Introduces a statutory definition emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse. The Act also grants homeless victims of domestic abuse automatic priority need status for homelessness assistance.

It also places a duty on Local Authorities to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. In addition, the Act protects the victim's secure lifetime or assured tenancy when being rehoused by social landlords.

Renters' Rights Bill 2024

Seeks to create a fairer and more secure private rented sector. It aims to abolish Section 21 of Housing Act 1988 also known as 'no fault' evictions. The landlords instead will be required to provide tenants with 'reasonable' grounds for ending their tenancy e.g. breaking rental agreement and change of use. Amongst many other provisions, the bill also includes:

- A new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman;
- Making it illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children;
- End the practice of rental bidding by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent;
- Apply the Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law to the private rented sector, and;
- Strengthen local authority enforcement.

An expected reform of the **National Planning Policy Framework** will place more emphasis on presumption in favour of development with mandatory target for 1.5 million homes nationally for the next 5 years.



National Context

The latest Crisis Report December 2023 into the scale of homelessness found that there were 309,000 homeless people in England. This is based on recorded homelessness by Local Authorities on households living in temporary accommodation and those who are rough sleeping. During 2023/24, local authorities recorded around 336,000 (out of 348,000) households who were owed statutory homelessness duties by Local Authorities following initial homelessness assessments.

In England, the number of households owed a homelessness duty has increased by 36,520, an 11% increase over the last 5 years. The main reasons for loss of home or being threatened with homelessness include Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, End of private rented tenancy (assured shorthold), Domestic abuse and Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner. The proportion of homeless households owed a duty and needing support has also increased (by 41,710) from 46.6% in 2019/20 to 54% in 2023/24. History of mental health problems and physical ill health and disability are the most common support needs cited by households owed a duty.

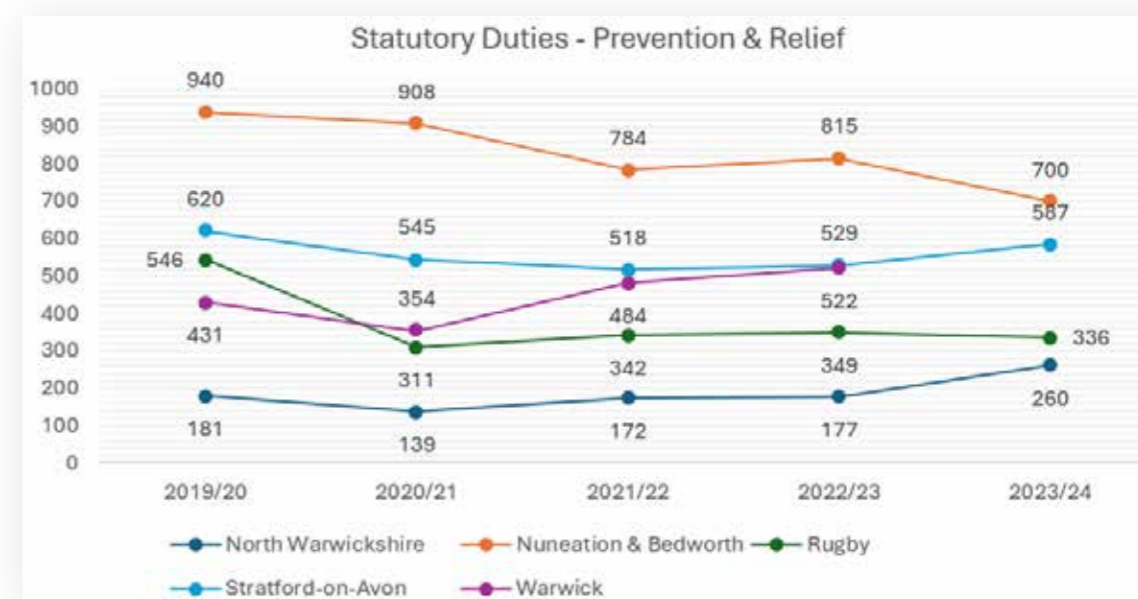
The latest government release ⁴ on rough sleeping snapshot in England estimated that 3,989 people were sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2023. ⁵ An increase by more than a quarter for two years in a row. Of the total 82% were men, 82% were over 26 years of age and 62% were from UK.

⁴ Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023
⁵ At 4,751, the number of people sleeping rough reached its peak in 2017.
⁶ Total Duty owed in 2021/22 is an average of 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Local Context

The chart below illustrates the number of households owed a Prevention or Relief Duty following initial assessments across Warwickshire over the last 5 years. Notably, the beginning of the period was marked by the Covid pandemic in 2019. Rugby, like all boroughs in the County experienced a significant number of households owed a duty during 2019/20. Of the 2,874 applications assessed across the County, 95% (2,718) were owed a Duty. 20% (567) of which were owed by Rugby.

However, in Rugby, following a sharp drop (43%-243) since 2019/20, the number of households owed a Duty following initial assessments has remained stable with an average of 335 households owed a duty per year. ⁶



The top 3 reasons for loss of last settled home or threat of homelessness were due to family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (30%), end of private rented assured shorthold tenancy (20%) and domestic abuse (12%). Households owed a Prevention Duty were mainly threatened with homelessness due to end of private rented tenancy, whilst those who were already homeless and owed a Relief Duty mainly lost their homes due to family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate or are fleeing from domestic violence.

A significant proportion of households owed a statutory duty were Single Adults (61%) or single parent with dependent children (27%). 29% were between the age 24 and 34. A majority of the main applicants reported their ethnicity as 'White' (84%). 38% (721) ⁷ of households accepted as owed a Duty were registered unemployed and only 13% (249) were in full-time employment.

Profile		2019/20 to 2023/24	% of Total	2022/23	2023/24	% Change
Age	16-17	13	0.8	7	1	-85.0
	18-24	345	22.4	73	72	-1.3
	25-34	452	29.3	101	87	-13.8
	35-44	351	22.8	82	85	3.6
	45-54	199	12.9	41	53	29.2
	55-64	127	8.2	31	28	-9.6
	65-74	40	2.6	10	6	-40
	75+	14	0.9	3	4	33.3
	Not known	1	0.1	1	0	-100
Nationality	UK	1311	85.0	290	259	-10.6
	EEA	124	8.0	22	31	40.9
	Non-EEA	104	6.7	37	46	24.3
	Ireland	3	0.9	0	0	0
Ethnicity	White	1281	83.7	277	266	-3.9
	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	99	6.4	21	28	33.3
	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	81	5.2	26	17	-34.6
	Asian / Asian British	39	2.5	14	15	7.14
	Not known	24	1.5	5	3	-40
	Other ethnic groups	18	1.1	6	7	16.6
Household Type	Single adult	946	61%	224	198	-11.6%
	Single parent with dependent children	421	27%	100	93	-7%
	Couple with dependent children	95	6%	16	27	68.7%
	Other (not defined on MHCLG data)	80	5%	9	18	100%
Main Applicant – Work	Registered unemployed	585	37.9	124	149	20.1
	Full-time work	262	16.0	61	48	-21.3
	Part-time work	203	13.1	53	35	-33.9
	Not working - long-term illness / disability	197	12.7	37	49	32.4
	Not seeking work / at home	100	6.4	16	21	31.2
	Not registered unemployed - seeking work	47	3.0	6	6	0
	Retired	37	2.3	10	7	-30
	Student / training	13	0.8	3	2	-33.3
	Other	71	4.6	31	17	-45.1
	Not known	27	1.7	8	2	-75

Homelessness Assessments in Rugby

The Housing Advice and Benefits Team (HABT) is responsible for providing advice and assistance to anyone who approaches the Council for housing assistance. Households may approach directly or referred by internal or external services. Some public authorities have a statutory duty to refer with the consent of their service users where they are considered homeless or at risk of homelessness. The specified public authorities subject to the duty to refer are:

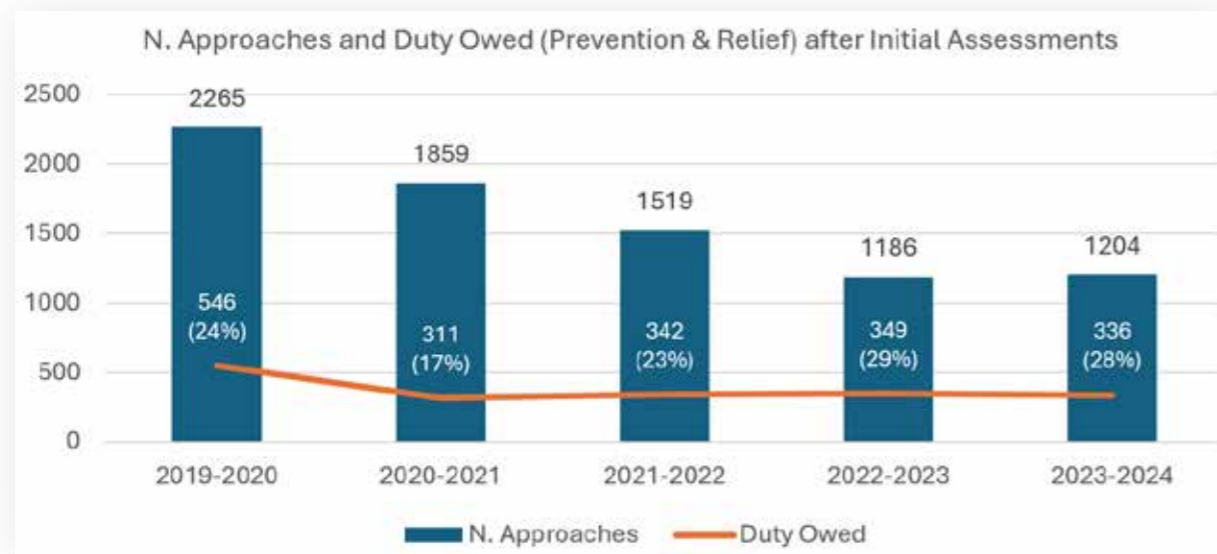
- Prisons
- young offender institutions
- secure training centres
- secure colleges
- youth offending teams
- probation services (including community rehabilitation companies)
- Jobcentres in England
- social service authorities (both adult and children's)
- emergency departments
- urgent treatment centres
- hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care
- Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the regular armed forces

Every household that presents to HABT has an initial assessment to determine their circumstances and what duty under Part 7 Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2022 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, if any, is owed to them. New duties introduced in HRA 2017 meant that more people will be eligible for assistance from local authorities.

2019/20 experienced a 27% increase from previous year in the level of assessments completed. Although there has been a reduction in the overall number of approaches year on year since (except small increase in 2023/24), the proportion of households owed a Prevention or Relief Duty following initial assessments has remained steady below 30%. ⁸

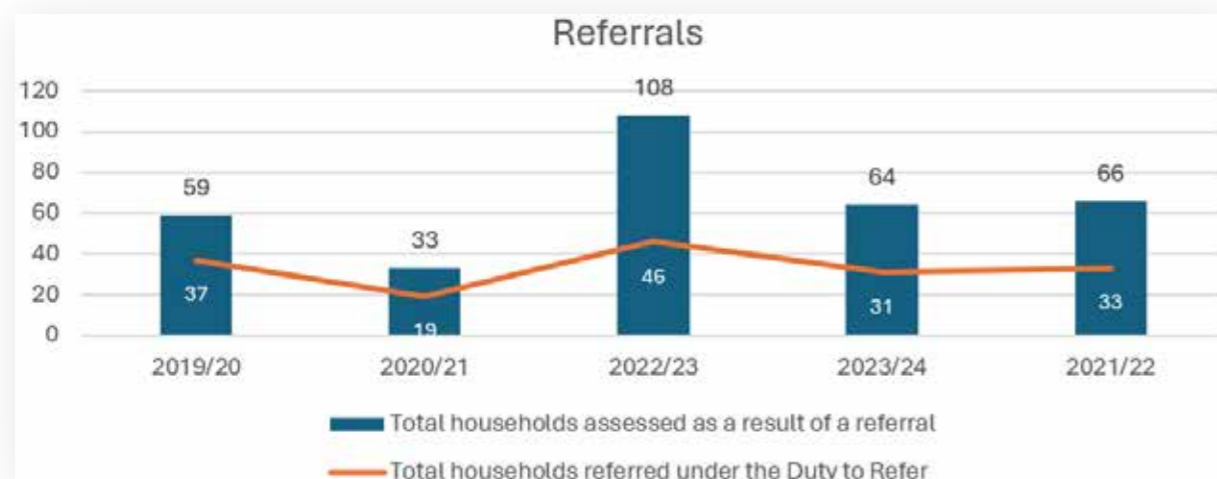
⁷ Data for 2021/22 is an average of 2022/23 and 2023/24
⁸ The data for total households owed a Duty for 2021-22 is an average of 2022-23 and 2023-24

Reasons for an increase in homeless assessments in Rugby



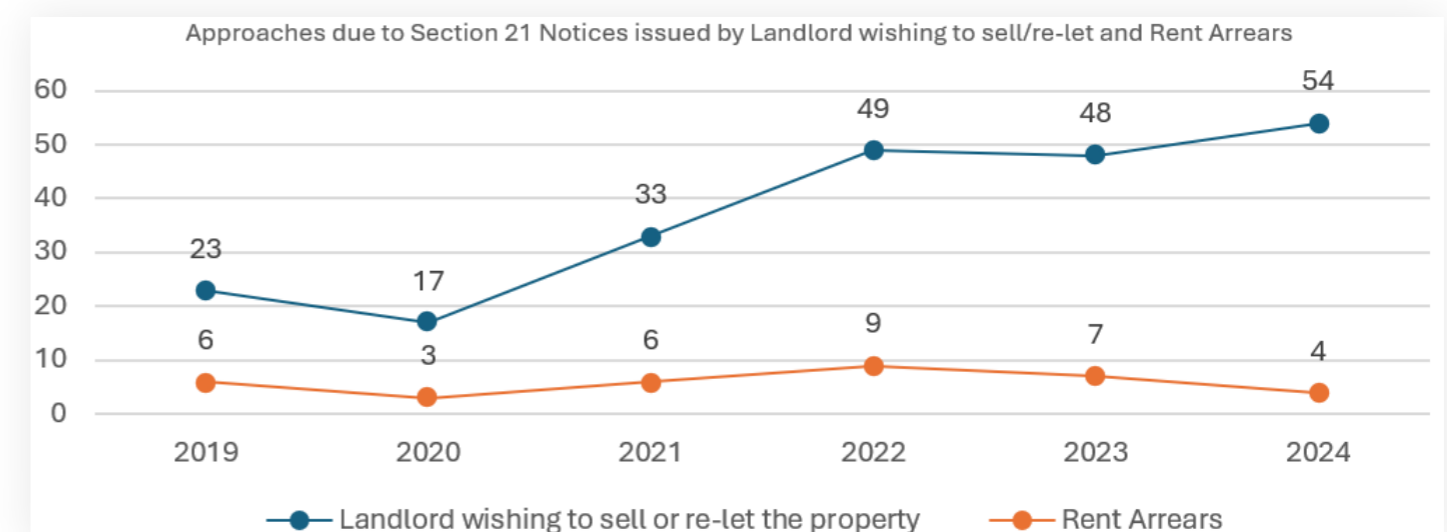
The large number of households who are not owed a duty would still receive advice and support from HAST in terms of information, signposting and referrals to other services.

At 82% (1,554), most of the approaches were directly made by households themselves. Only 18% (330) ⁹ of the applicants assessed were referred by agencies of which 59% (196) are subject to Duty to Refer. Most of the referrals under Duty to Refer came from The Probation Service, Adult and Children Social Services. The remaining 41% (134) of referrals came from agencies not subject to Duty to Refer such as Supported housing, hub or Housing Related Support Provider, Refuge Provider and other non-housing related provider such as Citizen Advice Bureau/Debt Advice Agency and community based mental health services.



There has been a marked increase in the number of people approaching the Housing Service who were issued a Section 21 No Fault Eviction Notice due to landlords wishing to sell or re-let their property. This could be attributed to the cost-of-living crisis since 2021 and the 2022 mini budget crisis that led to a significant increase in mortgage rates which became unaffordable to many homeowners and landlords. The chart below shows that the Notices issued due to rent arrears were low, which may have been reported by households under landlords wishing to relet/sell as they were not able to meet the increased rental costs. The overall number of households owed a Prevention Duty who were issued valid Section 21 Notice over the last 5 years made up 16% (89) of all Prevention Duties most of which is likely to be due to landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property.

Action: *The Council will seek to prevent homelessness as set out in the Action Plan 'Prevention of Homelessness' (1-6)*

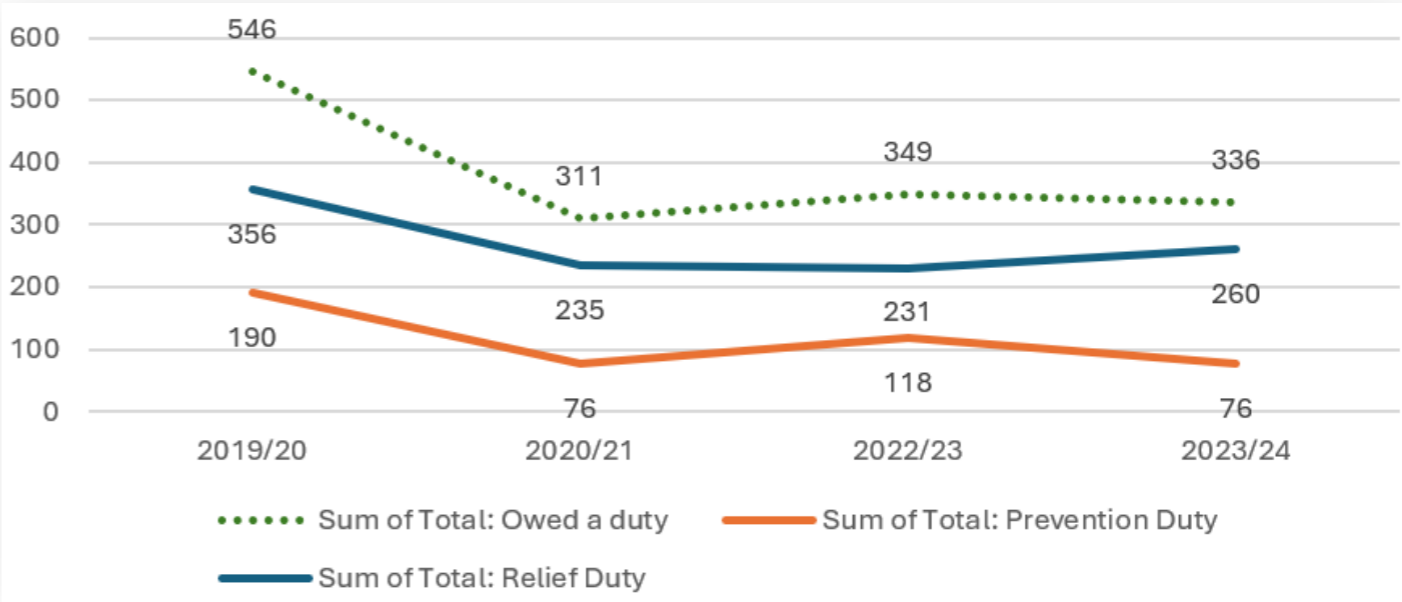


⁹ Data for 2021/22 is an average of data available for the 4 years between 2019/20 – 2023/24.

What this means for Rugby – This indicates a trend of private landlords withdrawing from the market in Rugby. This increases the importance of formulating positive relationships with those landlords who remain in the marketplace to enable us to effectively discharge our duty into the private sector, where appropriate to do so.

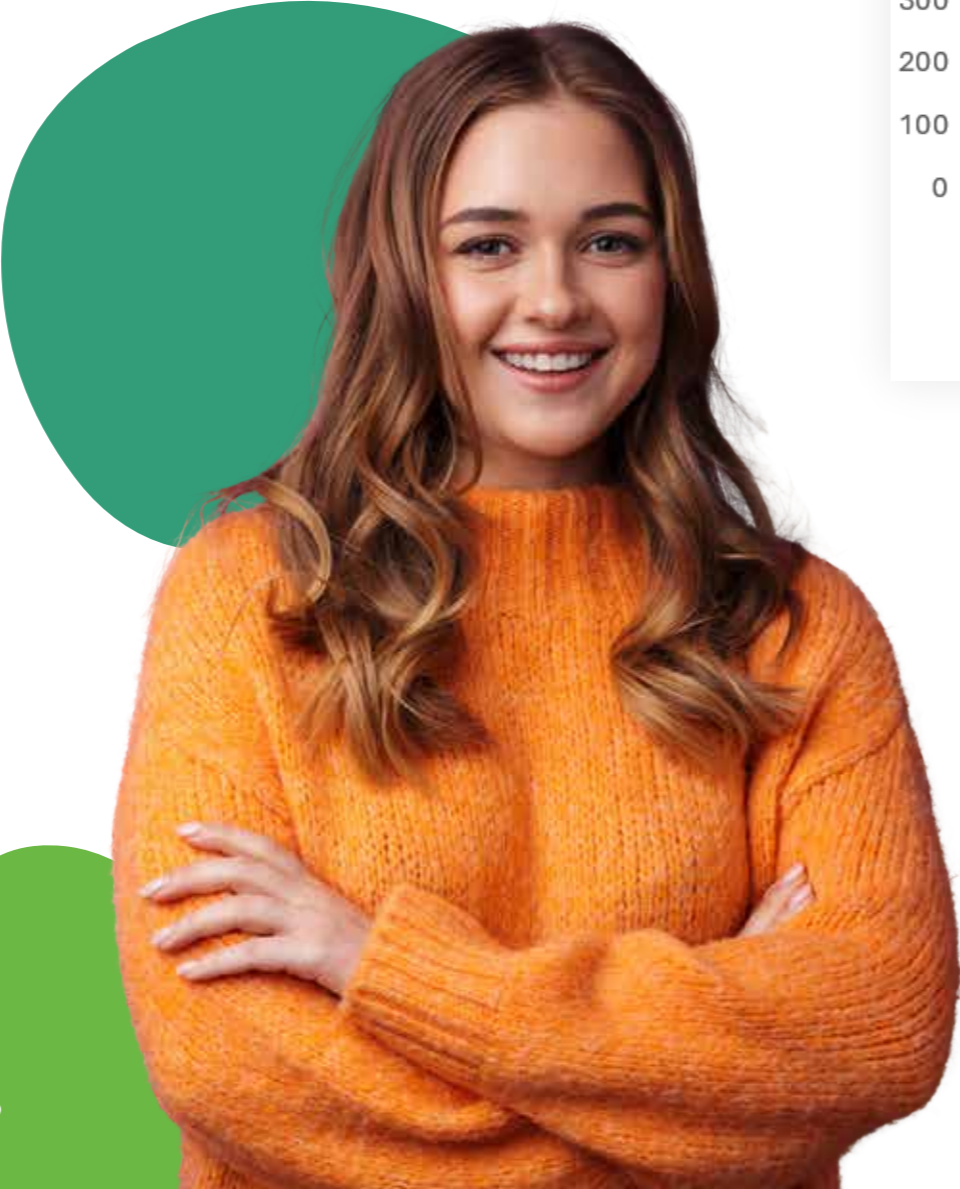
Homelessness Duty and Outcome in Rugby

Of all approaches made to the Council 23% (1,884) were assessed as being owed a Prevention or Relief Duty by the Council. Of which, 30% (557) were Prevention Duties and 70% (1,327) Relief Duties. As the number of Relief Duties remains consistently higher over the last 5 years, it indicates that the Council is reaching fewer households at their preventative stages where support needs could potentially be identified early and enabling a more targeted approach and interventions to prevent homelessness.



What does this mean for Rugby?

However, the Council successfully prevented homelessness for 217 households by either helping applicants remain in their existing (92) or securing alternative accommodation (125). Of those who were owed a Relief Duty, the Council helped additional 579 households into secure accommodation.



The main activities that led to successful ending of prevention and relief duties involved:

- Social or private rented housing secured by the Housing Advice and Benefits Team accepted by the applicants;
- Financial payments to fund rent deposits or reduce rent arrears;
- Helping applicants on to the Council's housing register;
- Mediation, negotiation and advocacy; and
- Referral to supported accommodation.

Over the last 5 years, social rented housing is the main type of accommodation secured to end Prevention and Relief Duties successfully, followed by private rented accommodation.

	Prevention Duty	Relief Duty	Total
Private Rented Sector	79 – 36%	144 – 25%	223 (28%)
Social Rented Sector	99 – 46%	334 – 58%	433 (54%)
Staying with friends or family	23 – 11%	47 – 8%	70 (8%)
Temporary Accommodation	0	1 – 0.1%	1 (0.1%)
Owner-occupier	3 – 1%	0	3 (0.3%)
Other	13 – 6%	45 – 8%	58 (7%)
Not known	0	8 – 1%	8 (1%)
Total	217 (27%)	579 (73%)	796

What does this mean for Rugby? Social housing remains a hugely valuable tool in discharging our homelessness duties. This underlines the importance of working closely and collaboratively with registered providers operating in the borough and with developing and acquiring stock for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

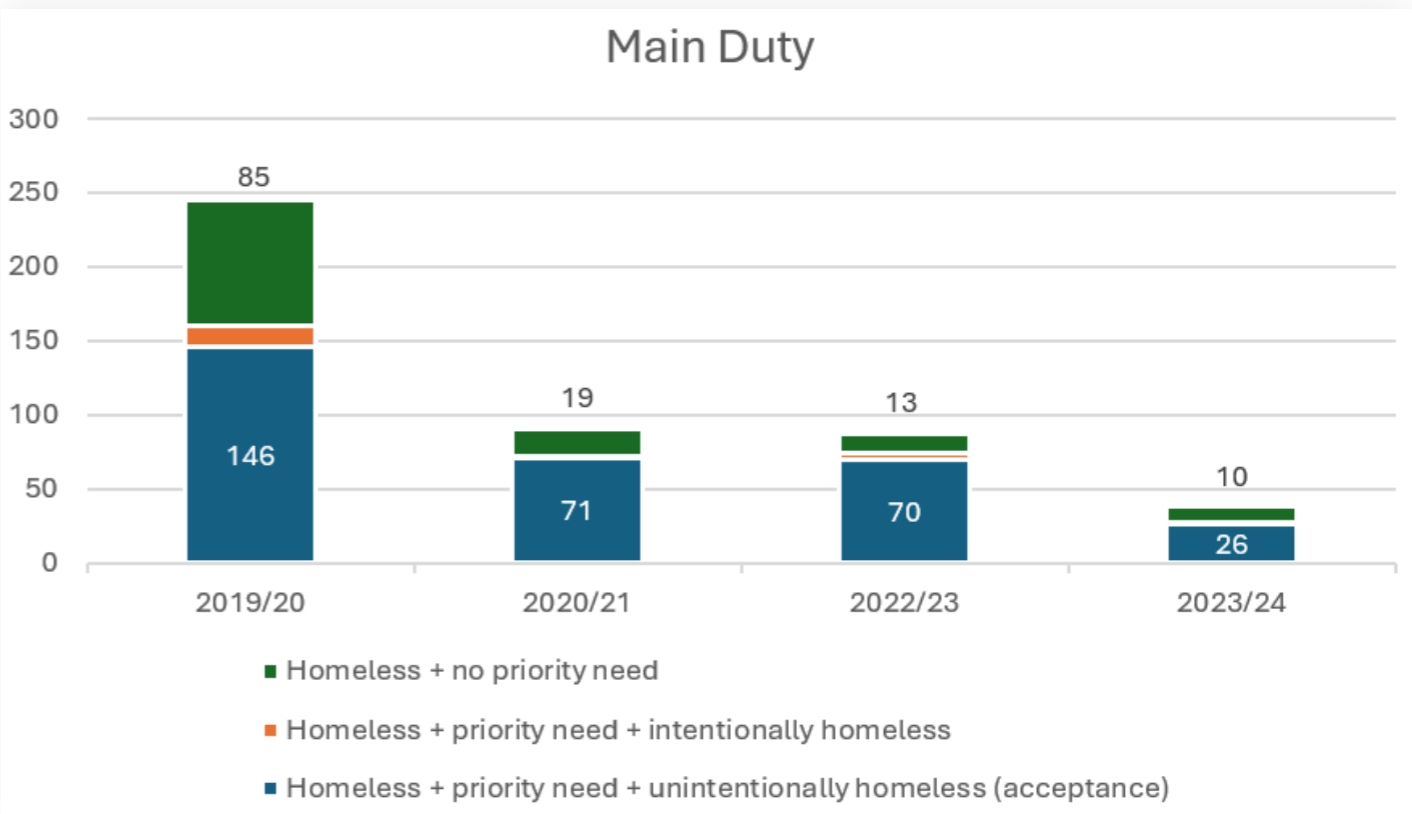
Where duties ended unsuccessfully, they were due to a number reasons ranging from households' lack of engagement with the process, becoming intentionally homeless, losing contact, chaotic lifestyle that hinders meaningful participation in the process or opting out due to factors such as resolve housing problem by themselves. In all cases, the Housing Service provides support in terms of advice, signposting and referral to other services or agencies if appropriate.

Main duty

If homelessness has not been relieved within 56 days of Relief Duty, the Council must establish if it owes a Main Duty to the household. That is, they are eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (individuals or households with greater vulnerability as defined in the Housing Act 1996).

The proportion of households owed a Main Duty has declined sharply by 84%, from 245 households in 2019/20 to 38 in 2023/24. This is hugely successful reflecting the activities undertaken as part of Relief and Prevention Duties.

Of the 313 households owed a Main Duty, 259 (83%) accepted social housing offer and 10 (3%) private rented sector offer thereby, successfully ending Main Duties owed by the Council. For the 44 remaining households the Main Duty ended due to refusal of Housing Act 1996 Part 6 social housing offer (13), became intentionally homeless from Temporary Accommodation (23) and voluntarily ceased to occupy or ceased to be eligible (8).



The table above shows that successful activities to prevent homeless at the relief and prevention stage has dramatically reduced the levels of decisions needed at main duty stage which is positive to ensuring people can be helped out of homelessness at a much early stage.

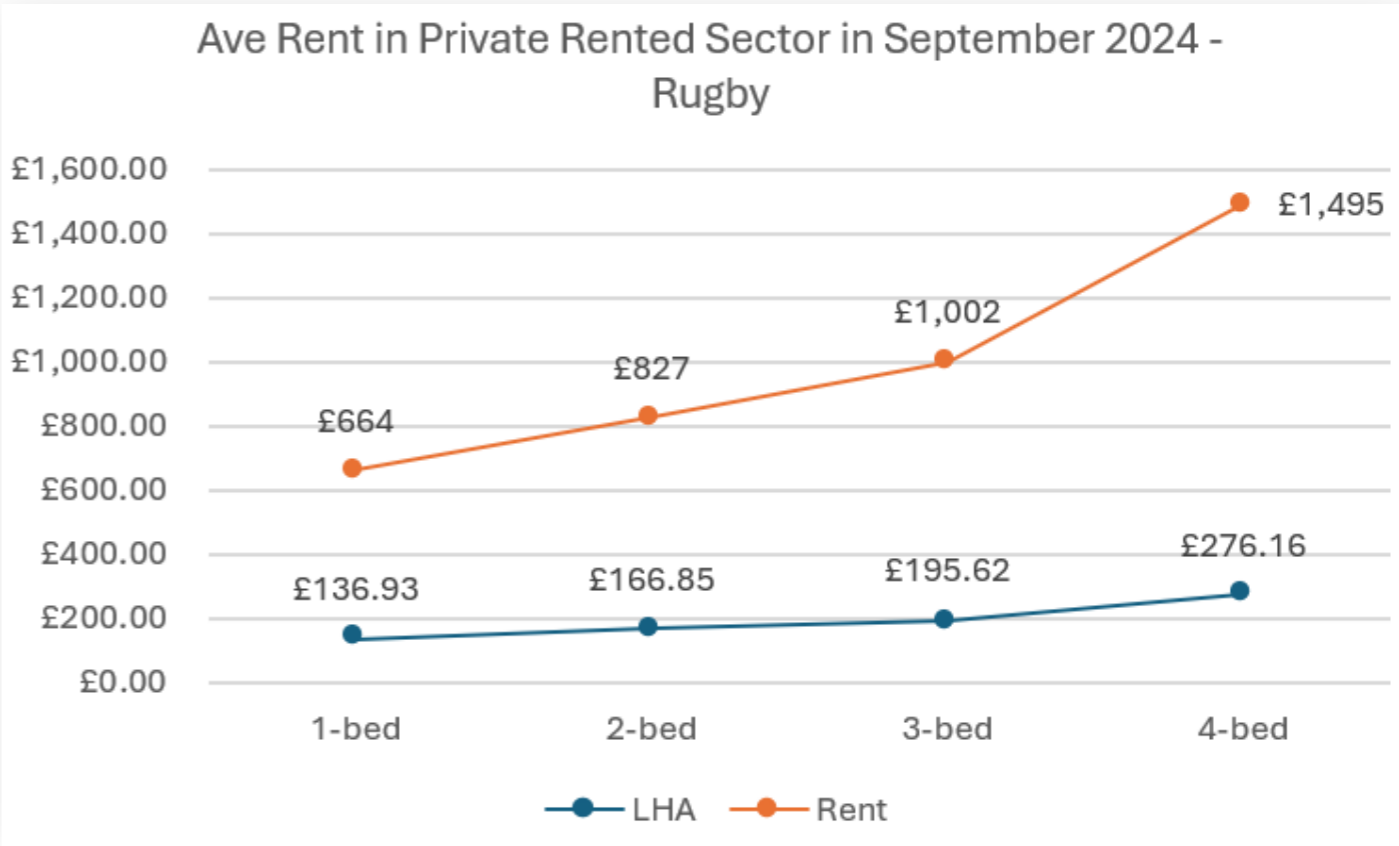
Action: The Council will seek to prevent main duty acceptances by working to prevent homelessness and provide accommodation solutions as set out in the Action Plan ‘Provision of Accommodation’ (1-4).

Affordability

The average price of a home bought with a mortgage in Rugby was £306,000 in August 2024 ¹⁰. An increase from the average of £297,000 in August 2023. This is higher than West Midlands, which experienced a lower increase from £261,000 to £254,000 in the same period. ¹¹

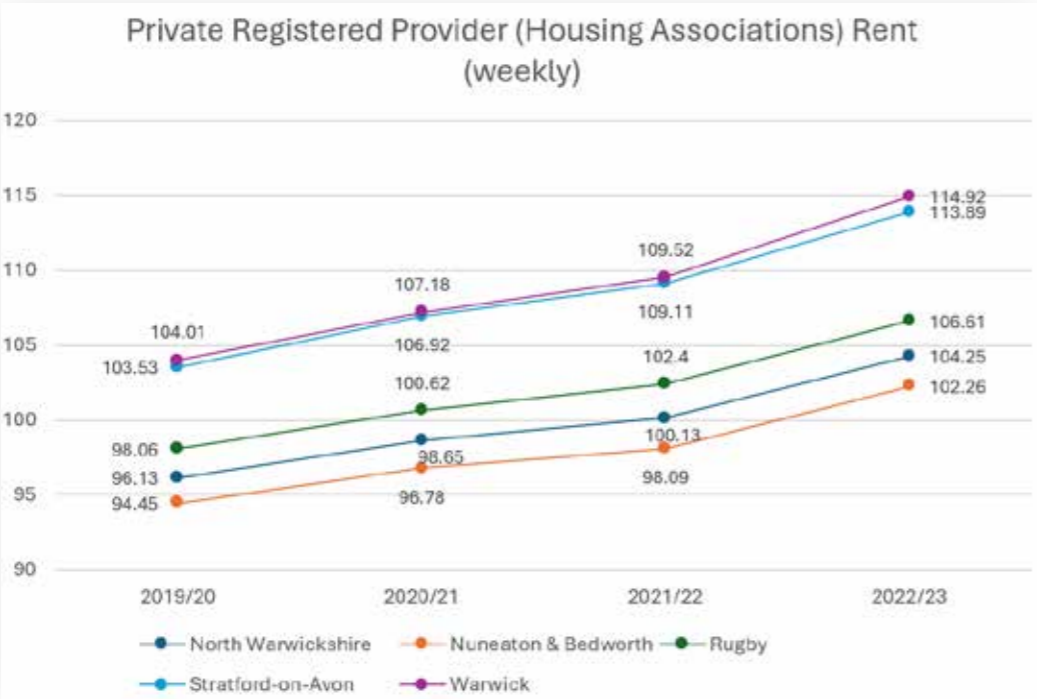
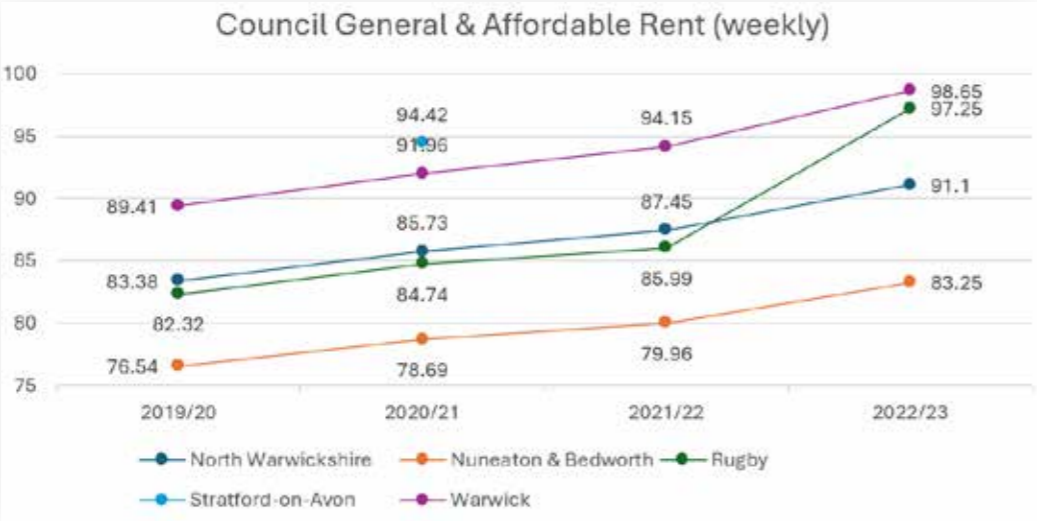
The average monthly private rent in Rugby was £996 in September 2024. An 8.2% increase from £865 in September 2023. Across the West Midlands, the average monthly rent was £896, up from £823 a year earlier. During the same period, the average rent for England was £1,336 in September 2024, up 8.5% (£105).

The chart below illustrates the gap between Local Housing Allowance Rates (LHA is a the amount of housing benefit for the Rugby area for Rugby & East BRMA & Coventry BRMA) and average rent claimants are expected to meet. The LHAs cover between 19-21% of the average rent across different bedsizes. As rents continue to increase and without any significant increase in LHA rates, private sector rents will remain unaffordable for households on low income.



¹⁰ Office for National Statistics – provisional data
¹¹ Office for National Statistics

The charts below show continued increase in rents across Warwickshire for both Council and Housing Association properties.¹² However, compared to private rented sector, social housing remains the choice of accommodation for the majority of homeless households due to the comparative low levels of rent.



What this means for Rugby – continued provision of social housing is vital in preventing homelessness and council housing offers great VFM

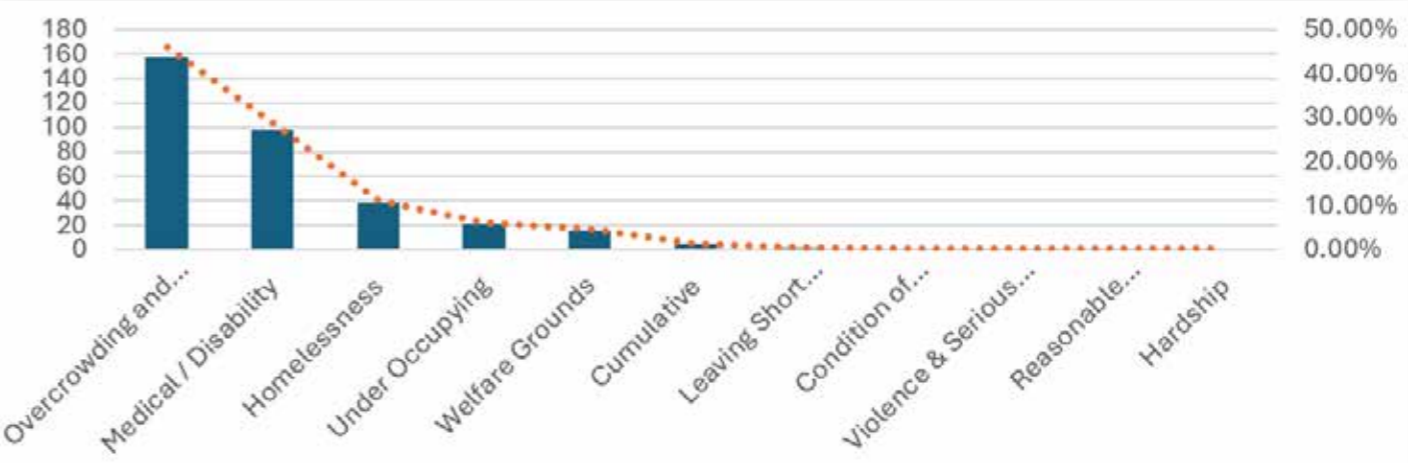
Housing Options in Rugby

Over the last 5 years, 38% of the households owed a duty following initial assessments were registered unemployed and 16 % were in full-time unemployment. 18% of the households had support needs, the majority of whom reported mental health problems, physical ill health, disability or domestic abuse. The unemployment rate for Rugby at this time was 12.9% in the year ending December 2023.

Affordability combined with cost-of-living crisis reduces housing options especially for those who or on low income and have support needs. Social rented housing is therefore often a preferred option for service users due to lower level of rents and security of tenure.

Waiting list

Currently¹³ there are 341 applicants on the Council Housing Waiting List. 11% (38), applicants have been assessed with Reasonable Preference¹⁴, (awarded higher priority based on their housing need) of which Homelessness applicants make up the 3rd largest group on the List followed by Overcrowding and Size (46%) and Medical /Disability (29%).

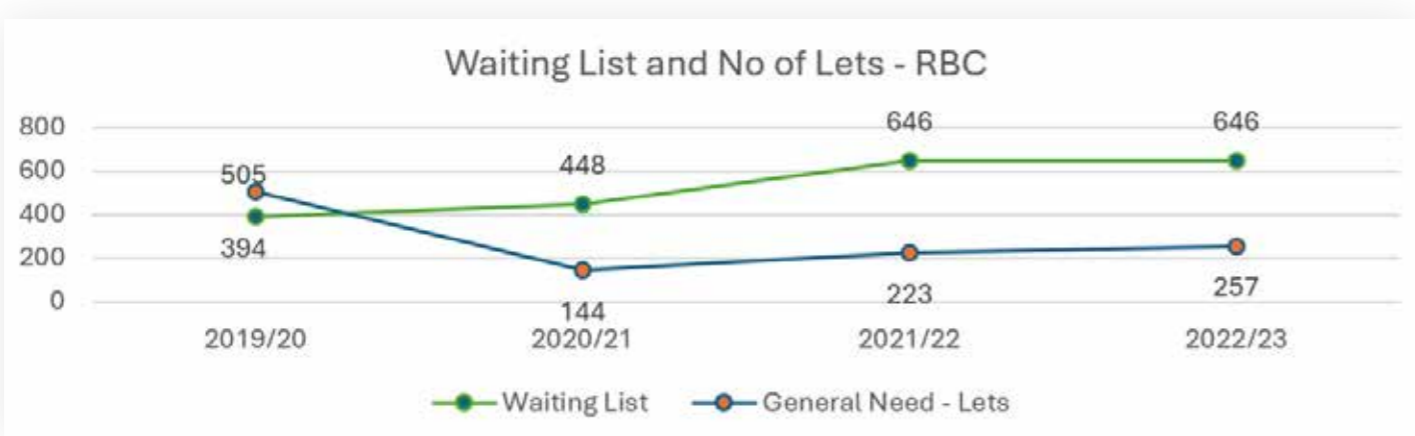


¹² Government Statistics

¹³ As at 18 October 2024

¹⁴ 'Reasonable Preference' refers to level of priority given to applicants under certain

MHCLG Local Authority Housing Statistics show that the demand for social rented housing has increased by 69% since 2019/20. Although the proportion of lets has increased from 32% to 40% between 2020/21 and 2022/23, demand continues to exceed supply, as only over one third of the demand was met during this period. The disproportionate low number of lets during 2019/20 is likely to be due to exceptional circumstances during the Covid pandemic, whereby landlords were unable to let properties for a period of 12 weeks.



The Council has been delivering various initiatives to increase housing options for both private and social housing.

Acquisition – The Council is seeking to Increase the supply of additional suitable affordable housing and temporary accommodation owned and managed by the Council. This includes the purchase of new build S106 planning agreements, open market purchases and buying back properties sold under the Right To Buy scheme.

Number of property acquisitions by property type 2019/2020 to 2022/2023:

Property type	Number
1 bed	36
2 bed	75
3 bed	39
4 bed	9

Private Sector Leasing Scheme – The scheme was implemented in 2022. The Council leases properties from the Private Sector to help meet our interim accommodation needs to applicants who are homeless. This helps us to ensure we have suitable accommodation available in line with legislation and to help reduce our reliance on nightly paid accommodation.

Private Rented Sector – Homelessness legislation considers the private rented sector to be a suitable housing option subject to meeting suitability criteria. The Council helps secure and provides financial assistance to households to access and remain in private rented sector.

New builds – Continued investment in improving the housing stock to ensure that it remains fit for purpose

Supported Accommodation – can be interim to long-term accommodation for various vulnerable groups ranging from care leavers, ex-offenders, rough sleepers, people fleeing violence, have history of substance misuse and mental health conditions.

Countywide provision is available for those needing supported accommodation. Doorway and P3 Places to Stay provide accommodation for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Hope4 also provide short to medium term accommodation for offenders under probation supervision, young care leavers/asylum seekers and people with mental health problems.

The reduction in County level funding to provide support services and the inadequate provision of in-borough supported / move on accommodation make it challenging to maintain engagement with vulnerable client groups and help them remain in accommodation usually away from social networks and support services. This may be further compounded by the new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

The Act allows the government to create a new set of standards and introduces licensing regulations applicable to supported accommodation that are exempt from the housing benefit cap. The regulations are currently in draft stage and how service providers will respond to new requirements on licensing and new standards is unknown. Failure or inability to comply would reduce the much-needed medium to high need supported housing provision.

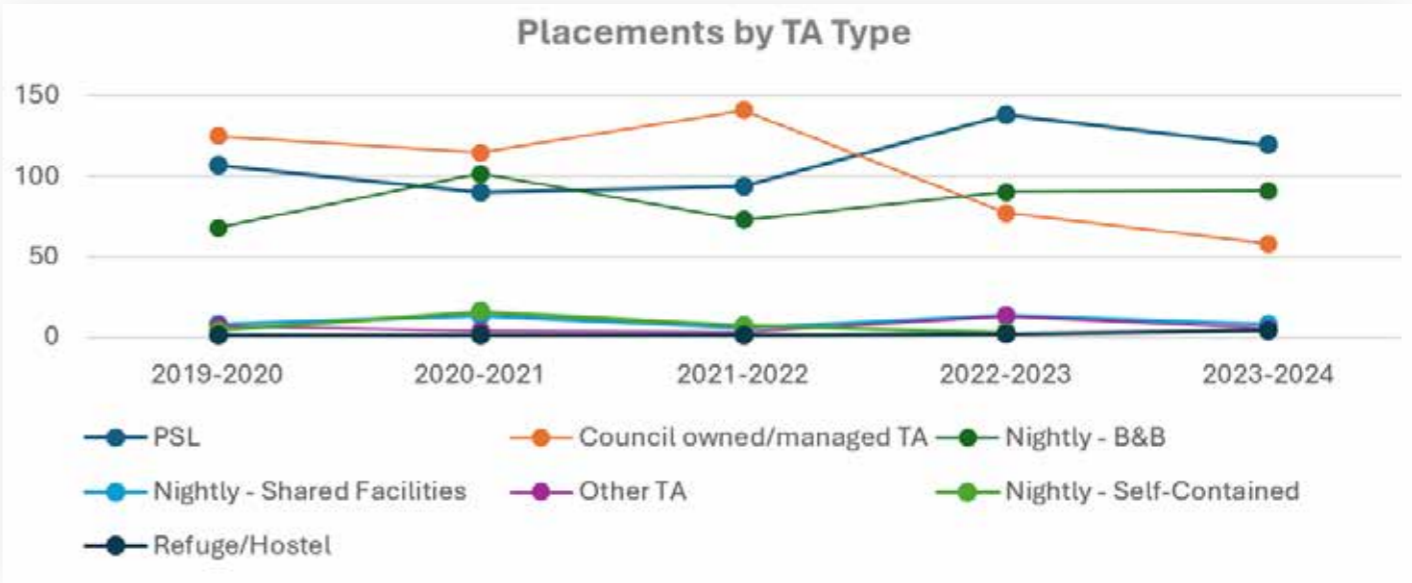
The requirement on Local Authorities to carry out a review of supported exempt accommodation in their area and publish a supported housing strategy provides an opportunity to address demand for and supply of all types of supported accommodation at local or county level.

Action: *The Council will seek to increase the supply of accommodation options and solutions as set out in the Action Plan ‘Provision of Accommodation’ (1-4).*

Temporary Accommodation

On occasion, the council can use its own housing stock as a means for temporary accommodation provision. However, this is a complex arrangement and only by exception when it can be clearly demonstrated that the ring fence between Housing Revenue Account activities and General fund activities (of which homelessness is) are clearly ringfenced. Increasing housing supply will continue to be a priority during the lifecycle of this strategy.

Placements in hostels and refuges have been very low, with 5 and 4 placements respectively. Almost half of the placements (4) were made recently in 2023/24. The low level of placements has been due to the work of the designated team of outreach support through the Rugby Pathways scheme (see below) coupled with specialist officers in the service finding accommodation for people experiencing domestic abuse.



Rough Sleeping

In Rugby, the average number of rough sleepers supported by the Council and its partners per month has increased fourfold, from 2 rough sleepers in 2021/22 to 10 in 2023/24. ¹⁵

The latest release on Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England: autumn 2023, published in February 2024 shows that the number of people sleeping rough in a single night has increased regionally and nationally for a second year in a row. Although Rugby has experienced a reduction in the number of people sleeping rough on a single night which peaked 11 in 2019, the latest count of 13 rough sleepers at the time of developing this strategy shows that the number of rough sleepers has more than doubled since the last count in 2023 and has also exceeded the peak of 2019.

Rough sleeping on a single night in Autumn

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
N. Warwickshire	0	0	0	0	0
Nuneaton & Bedworth	8	6	1-4	3	10
Rugby	11	4	3	6	4
Stratford-on-Avon	6	4	1-4	4	2
Warwick	21	4	6	11	7
West Midlands	319	214	213	250	256
England	4,266	2,688	2,440	3,069	3,898

		Gender		Age				Nationality			
Year	Total	Men	Women	18-25	26-40	40+	Not known	UK	EU	Non EU	Not known
2022	6	5	1	0	1	5	0	4	2	0	0
2023	4	4	0	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1
2024	13	13	0	1	9	3	0	4	5	1	3
Total	23	22	1	1	13	8	1	8	10	1	4
%		96	4	4	57	35	4	35	44	4	17

¹⁵ The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) collects monthly data from local authorities via DELTA. This is designed to understand local authority progress against ending rough sleeping.

Based on single night counts over the last 3 years in Rugby, the majority of rough sleepers are likely to be men, between 26-40 years of age and are mainly UK or EU nationals.

Services for Rough Sleepers

The Homelessness Awareness Panel made up of the Housing Service Outreach Team, statutory and voluntary organisations provide coordinated services for those found to be sleeping rough in the borough. The Panel meets regularly to discuss progress in terms of support and accommodation for rough sleeper clients.

The Council successfully secured £400K of Rough Sleepers Initiative funding for the period of 2022 to 2025. The funding has been a lifeline in redesigning existing and delivering new services that are crucial in keeping people safe, supported and off the streets. **The following outcomes were achieved:**



A proactive service for rough sleepers with a focus on early intervention and prevention. This involved the **restructure and expansion** of the Housing Outreach Team providing outreach, floating and accommodation support; and



A new **Rugby Pathway Scheme** (Outreach Team) for long term entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs. The Scheme is based on Housing First model with dedicated support to help a small cohort of rough sleepers at a time to transition into settled accommodation. To date, 33 rough sleepers have been supported into secure accommodation. The Council provides self-contained accommodation from its own stock on licence agreement to enable transition to independent living.



In addition **Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NASP)** part of 'Everyone In' initiative introduced during Covid pandemic helped fund a dedicated officer to help 15 rough sleepers remain off the street and into secure accommodation through person centred planning and support package to develop skills for independent living.



Securing further central government funding to ensure continuity of the support and building on the successes to date will be a priority during the course of this new strategy, as the increase in the number of rough sleepers is expected to continue in line with national trends.



In addition to the above, the newly created role for an Outreach Worker has been crucial in identifying opportunities for early interventions. Since April 2023, surgeries had been held at various locations managed by partner organisations including the Job Centre, Food Bank and Citizens Advice Centre which resulted in engagement with 135 service users.



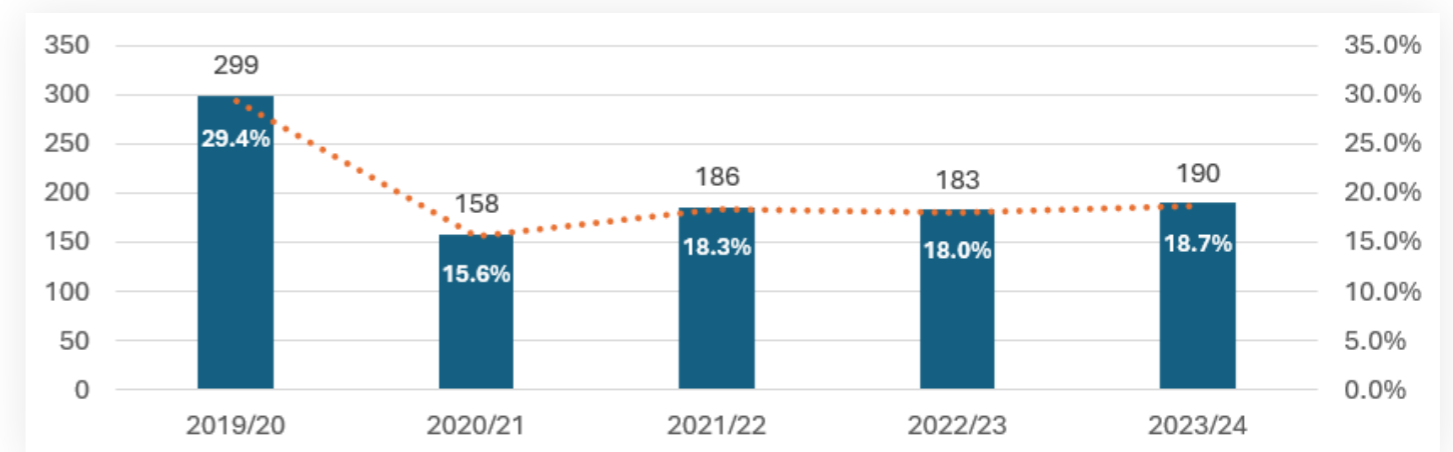
The Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) provides emergency accommodation during severe weather. Also, winter placements are provided throughout winter months, during which individuals can access accommodation and support. This provides further opportunities to engage with most entrenched rough sleepers in the borough and closely support them in identifying long term solutions.

Action: *The Council will seek to increase the supply of accommodation options and solutions as set out in the Action Plan 'Provision of Accommodation' (1-4).*

Supporting those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

54% (1,016) of the households owed a Duty had support needs. The majority of them had a history of mental health problem, followed by physical ill health and disability and at risk of or have experienced domestic abuse. A majority of the applicants were also either single adults or single parents with dependent children.

At 299 applicants, the number of households needing support reached its peak in 2019/20, which declined by -47% in 2020/21 (158). However, following an 18% increase between 2020/21 and 2021/22, the number of households owed a duty needing support remained steady and below 2019/20 level over the last 3 years.



The Council works with statutory and voluntary organisations to provide a range of services to households who are at risk of or are already homeless. The table on page 8 gives an overview of the services available from the Council and its partners which are delivered in the form of:

- **Advice and guidance:** information provided on the range of options available to service users in terms of housing, welfare benefits, skills, employment and getting specialist help.

- **Floating support:** for those who need support to manage and maintain their accommodation if it is at risk.
- **Accommodation based support** for homeless households with low to medium support needs, providing a short-term safe place and tailored support with an aim to secure longer-term suitable accommodation. This is available for both young people and those aged 25 years and over.
- **Financial Support** to eligible homeowners, private sector and housing association tenants to remain at home by providing various grants such as Disability Facilities Grant, Hospital Discharge Grants (hospital liaison officers have this budget), Home Safety Grants and Warm and Safer Homes Grants.
- **Financial support** to secure or help remain in existing accommodation by such as rent deposit, rom homeless prevention fund for rent arrears, pay rent deposits .
- **Specialist support** for vulnerable groups such as people who have experienced or at risk of violence and abuse, people with substance misuse, ex-offenders and people with mental health problems and/or disabilities.
- **Dedicated resource** to support those who are sleeping rough including the provision of safe place in severe weather conditions and cold weather provisions
- **Housing Pathways Scheme** – interim accommodation and intensive support to help entrenched rough sleepers who may have experienced trauma and repeat homelessness come off the street.
- **Pathways for vulnerable groups** – to help prevent homelessness, transform lives and develop independent living skills by providing coordinated support. Cohorts include those with mental health and/or substance misuse problems, leaving criminal justice system and rough sleepers.
- **Outreach Team** - Rough Sleepers Solutions Officers work with people identified as sleeping rough by providing information, advice and arrange referral to support services.
- **Hospital Discharge** - County wide Hospital Liaison Officers working with hospital discharge teams and Housing Service to ensure patients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have accommodation and/or support before discharge.

Services for households who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness in Rugby

Services for households who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness		Service Level	Young People	Single Adults 25+	Families	Rough Sleepers	Special Need Groups
General advice & Support	Rugby Council Homelessness & Prevention Team	Local				/	/
	Rugby Citizens Advice Bureau	Local				/	/
	Housing Benefits Team	Local					
	Rugby Job Centre (DWP)	Local					
	P3 – Navigator Hubs for general advice and support	County				/	/
	Together <u>SWIFT</u> – for people with disabilities	County					/
	Doorway – supports homeless young people	County					
Accommodation based support	Rugby Hope4 Centre	Local					
	HEART financial assistance for <u>aids</u> and adaptations, improving home conditions and hospital discharge	County					
	Disability Facilities Grant- help homeowners carry out adaptations	Local					
Floating Support/ Outreach	Hosing and Hospital Liaison Service	County					
	Rugby Council Rough Sleeper Solution Officers	Local				/	
	Rugby Council Tenancy Coaches	Local					
	St Basils	County					
	Hospital Liaison Officer (Countywide)	County					
	Together – Disability Floating Support including Mental Health	County					/
	P3 – Floating Support	County					/

Services for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness		Service Level	Young People	Single Adults 25+	Families	Rough Sleepers	Special Need Groups
Specialist Support	SWEP – Severe Weather Emergency Provision	Local				/	
	Cold weather provision	Local				/	
	<u>RoSA</u> – support for victims of sexual abuse or violence	County					/
	Blue Sky Centra Sexual Assault Referral Centre	County					/
	Futures Unlocked – support for ex-offenders	County					/
	Nacro (pre and post probation) – West Midlands	Regional					/
	Change, Grow, Live - recovery focused drug and alcohol services	County					/
	Rugby Wellbeing Hub for people with mental illness or impairment	Local					/
Supported Accommodation	Doorway	County					/
	Coventry and Warwickshire YMCA	County					
	Langley Trust – Ex offenders	County					
	Joy Homes in-borough supported accommodation	County					
	P3 – Young People Supported Accommodation	County					
	P3 – Accommodation based HRS Service for adults 25+ years	County					
General Need Accommodation	Rugby Housing Pathway – entrenched and repeat homelessness	Local					
	Housing Allocation Scheme for access to Social Rented Housing	Local					
	Rugby Council Private Sector Leasing Scheme	Local					
	Council Financial Assistance to help secure Private Rented housing	Local					
	Intermediate Home Products <u>e.g.</u> Intermediate Rent and Shared Ownership	Local					
	Financial assistance to help remain in existing accommodation	Local					

Rugby Borough Council is committed to supporting the use of digital channels.

This will allow residents, businesses and communities to engage with us in a way which works for them.

This document contains hyperlinks, text, images and other interactive content. For best viewing experience we recommend using a digital device.

If you require this document in large print, an alternative accessible format or different language please contact:

Email - alternative-documents@rugby.gov.uk

Phone - 01788 533 588

