City of Wolverhampton Council Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Draft for Consultation

Contents

Introduction

Homelessness is a crisis that can have a profound impact on the lives of those affected. Homelessness is most obviously seen on our streets, but it is an issue that is wider than rough sleeping – including those hidden from view who may sleep on a friend's sofa, or those housed in accommodation which is unsafe or severely overcrowded. Homelessness is everyone's business as long-term exposure can affect a person's health and wellbeing, with people more likely to suffer from greater levels of ill health, unemployment, access to education and drug and alcohol dependency.

Not having a home or living somewhere that is unsafe or unsuitable can have a devastating effect on individuals and families. We want to ensure that we are taking the right approach to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping and supporting those who become homeless.

The causes of homelessness are often connected to a wider set of more complex circumstances. Homelessness can affect physical and mental health wellbeing, educational achievement, the ability to gain and sustain employment, together with increased pressure on personal and family relationships. These effects, especially on children, can be life long and can cause repeated homelessness of a generational nature.

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a statutory obligation on all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness at least every five years. In accordance with the legislation, our strategy sets out how we will:

- Provide an array of advice and guidance services and tools that will alleviate homelessness.

- Establish quality and consistent support to prevent and relieve homelessness.

- Ensuring that a range of safe, suitable and affordable accommodation options are available for households.

- To prevent homelessness wherever possible, and where it does occur for a household, it will be rare, brief, and non-recurrent.

To inform and develop this strategy we have carried out a review of our homeless data over the period of the previous Homelessness Prevention Strategy, alongside a series of consultation points with customers, stakeholders and key partners. This has allowed us to understand the challenges and gaps within existing homeless services and identify the opportunities that we want to develop over the next five years.

Our strategic approach is clear in that we recognise no single organisation can prevent homelessness alone. We are lucky to have already developed strong partnerships locally with many homeless services. As a city, we must continue to be proactive in working together to enable early intervention particularly in a framework of increasing pressure on household and sector budgets and housing market pressures.

Together we need to tackle the root causes of homelessness by creating opportunities for people to break the cycle of chaos that they are in. With a wealth of high-quality service providers in the city, each one of them has a role to play in achieving the prevention of homelessness, intervention to those who need our support and a range of sustainable housing solutions to meet all needs.

This strategy will outline our priorities and approach for homelessness prevention over the next five years. The strategy will be underpinned with an action plan which will be flexible and respond to emerging needs, trends and policy changes.

Strategic Vision – Our City: Our Plan

Our city: Our Plan is the Council's overarching strategic framework, developed with over 4500 local people and stakeholders. It sets out how we will work with our partners and communities to build a more prosperous and inclusive Wolverhampton where everyone can share in the opportunities and success of our city.

The Plan sets out how the Council will continue to work alongside its local, regional, and national partners to improve outcomes for local people. The plan sets out an ambition that 'Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier lives.' Delivery of this ambition will be supported by six overarching priorities shaped by local people.

All Wolverhampton strategies feed into "our city our plan" and is a key enabler of its delivery. The Homelessness Prevention Strategy is intrinsically linked to all the priorities set out in Our City: Our Plan. The particular emphasis is on delivering 'good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods' priority, whilst also recognising the role of good homes in strengthening families, enabling adults of all ages to live fulfilled and independent lives, improving health and wellbeing, and the knock-on impacts on access to good work and inclusive economic growth.

National Policy

The **Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)** seeks to transform the way in which homelessness is addressed by local authorities to ensure that households at threat of homelessness receive help earlier and for longer, with a much greater focus on homelessness prevention, than ever before.

At the same time, the **Care Act (2014)** makes explicit the need for integration and better working arrangements between housing, health and social care services through a 'duty to cooperate' and the acknowledgement that housing is a health-related provision.

At the same time, the **Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018)** seeks to half rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027, through organisations and services working together in new ways. Likewise, the **Ending Rough Sleeping for Good (2022)** vision is to prevent rough sleeping wherever possible, providing early support, swift and effective intervention and help to aid recovery for those who need it: delivered through a more transparent and joined up system.

To assist with the delivery of the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, £2 billion will be invested over a three-year period from 2022 to 2025, including an expanded £500m Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and £200m Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).

£20m was made available by the government as part of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP), to help address poor quality supported housing and improve standards of support.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on Integrating Health and **Social Care for People Experiencing Homelessness (2022)**, demonstrates the need to improve access and engagement with health and social care, by homeless individuals/households, while ensuring the provision of coordinated care through greater partnership working.

This then sets a strong framework upon which to base the forging of even better partnerships and joint working approaches, which underpin the main priorities of this strategy.

Furthermore, the **Armed Forces Covenant Duty (2022)** is a promise that the armed forces community should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage when accessing public services, ensuring good access to advice and information on housing options for veterans and service families. In addition, flexibility in local connection criteria within allocation policies and appropriate prioritisation for social housing is also key – currently demonstrated well through Salford's own allocation policy.

Affordability

There is a growing lack of affordable housing in the UK. Recent global factors, such as cost-of-living crisis, rising energy bills and inflation rising at unprecedented level, has made it much more challenging for residents to pay essential housing bills. As well as this, welfare support, such as Universal Credit and the Local Housing allowance, have not increased in line with rising costs. Figures from Shelter indicate that the average home in 2000 cost 4 x the average salary. By 2021, this had risen to 8 x the average salary. The rise in interest rates between August 2022 and March 2023 has further impacted on the affordability of mortgages for homeowners and prospective buyers. Landlords are also impacted by the challenge in paying mortgages and as a result many increase their rental rates.

There is also a shortage of available accommodation. There has been a decline of national housebuilding, halving in 50 years. This includes a drop in new social homes being built. Social houses are also being purchased under the Right to Buy schemes so, many are no longer available for renting. The pool of available rented accommodation is also reducing as many landlords are selling up and exiting the sector entirely. So, whilst residents are increasingly struggling to afford housing costs, there is a growing lack of available accommodation. Therefore, people are struggling to find affordable housing to buy or to rent, and there is an increasingly long waiting list in social housing. People face a lack of viable options if they do become homeless or are threatened with homelessness.

Regional Approach

WMCA Homelessness Taskforce

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Homelessness Taskforce includes Officer and Strategic Lead representation from Wolverhampton City Council and the other six constituent local authorities; as well as representation from key public-sector agencies, voluntary, private and charitable organisations.

Established in 2017, the Taskforce's central objective is to design out homelessness across the region and taskforce members have undertaken a commitment to collaborate across local authority areas, sectors and disciplines to ensure that we are drawing on our collective resources to prevent and relieve homelessness, in all its forms.

A sub-group of the Homelessness Taskforce for Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Leads from the constituent local authorities has collaborated on a Reconnections Protocol for people who lack a local connection to the area they are homeless in, and has also been part of the 'Early Adopter' testing of new data sets for the Monthly Rough Sleeping Survey.

Local Context

In Wolverhampton we believe that everybody has the right to a safe, suitable, and stable home. The stability of a home will give, a sense of belonging, keeps people safe, together, and protected from the outside elements. It is where we make memories with friends and families, and it helps us to build a strong foundation for our lives.

Yet sadly, figures from homeless charity Shelter indicate that nationally at least 271,000 people were recorded as homeless in England in January 2023 (123,000 being children). In Wolverhampton, the rate of homelessness is significantly higher than the national average.

Homelessness and rough sleeping are not new problems and, since the Covid-19 pandemic with the Government's 'Everyone In' policy, ensuring that all rough sleepers (regardless of entitlement to funding or residency status) were housed in temporary accommodation to keep them safe during the pandemic over 37,000 people had been helped. This policy enabled councils to build relationships and reach homeless people who had been either unknown to, or ineligible for, local housing services previously. In addition, the temporary eviction bans during the pandemic also kept people in their homes who may have otherwise become homeless.

These policies have since ended, but we want to build on this momentum to tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping. We have a lot of work to do, and we face the same funding and budget challenges as many local authorities.

We have analysed key information and data to understand the current needs in Wolverhampton around homelessness. This strategy is our plan to address these needs and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Wolverhampton. The strategy will be accompanied by an action plan explaining in detail how we will achieve our aims.

In Wolverhampton:

- the rate of households threatened with homelessness in 2022/23 (5.2 per 1000 households) is slightly below the national average (6.0 per 1000 households). (The Government's annual statistics for 2022/23 outlines that in England alone, 311,990 households were assessed as either being at risk of homelessness or already homeless in April 2022 to March 2023).

- The rate of homelessness (13.1 per 1000 households in 2022/23) is significantly higher than the national average (6.7 per 1000 households).

- The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2023 in Wolverhampton was down by five to six from 2022. 33% reduction since 2010 when the snapshot approach was introduced and a 68% reduction from 2018.

Wolverhampton Homelessness Data 2022/23

Assessments and Duty owed

2031 had an assessment initiated

95% were owed a prevention or relief duty

Prevention duty – Reason for loss of last settled home

48% End of private rented tenancy

21% family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate

Relief Duty – Reason for loss of last settled home

36% family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate

16% Domestic abuse victim

Main Applicant age

55% of households headed by a person under the age of 35

22% headed by a person under the age of 25

Main Applicant Ethnicity

42% identified as white

15% identified from a black ethnic group

10% identified as Asian

Prevention Duty household type

36% single adults

35% single adults with dependent children

Relief Duty household type

54% single adults

29% single adults with dependent children

Main Duty

56% of all Main duty decisions were homelessness acceptances

77% accepted a Social Housing offer

Rough sleeping

6 rough sleepers on a single night in autumn 2023

45% reduction since 2022

68% reduction since 2018

Temporary Accommodation

875 placements during 2022/23

70% increase since 2018/2019

Contextual Data

Deprivation and poverty

24th most deprived Local Authority in England (out of 317)

19th worst for employment deprivation

11th most income deprived

Benefits

23.4% of 16–66 year-olds are claiming Universal credit (as of March 2024)

2nd highest rate in the west Midlands behind Birmingham

15.6% is the claim rate in England as a whole

Earnings

£613 median average per week in 2023

6% lower than regional average

11% lower than national average

Housing Affordability

7.4 times annual earnings to buy a home

7.7 times annual earnings to buy a home in the West Midlands

Social housing demand

6864 households were on the housing waiting list as of March 2024

On average, a 3-bedroom council house received **240** bids (2023/24)

Council Housing Stock

	Right to Buy	Buy Backs	New Builds		
2021/22	198	28	5	165	⬇
2022/23	168	20	0	148	⬇
2023/24	172	19	83	70	⬇

Substance use

3rd Highest Alcohol mortality rate in the West Midlands (2022)

15th highest alcohol mortality rate from 154 areas in England (2022)

12th highest area for admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions in England (2021/22)

Crime

133 crimes per 1,000 people 2022/23.

2nd highest crime rate in the West Midlands behind Birmingham

England crime rate 93 per 1000 people.

Partnership Approach

Ultimately, no one organisation can end or prevent homelessness alone; the priorities, objectives and outcomes contained within this strategy can only be achieved through partnership and collaboration across organisations. Those opportunities do not just lie with specialist homelessness services. Everyone has a part to play, and everyone can make an impact including schools, health visitors, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, welfare rights and debt advice, mental health services, registered housing providers, GP's and many more. All services have a vital role in identifying when there may be concerns about someone's housing, facilitating referral to specialist services to enable early intervention.

Wolverhampton already benefits from many excellent examples of good practice in relation to partnership approaches, across different settings. The work of many partners in collaboration with the City Council has achieved significant outcomes for people in need and we now want to build on this so that homelessness prevention is seen as everyone's business.

Successes since the last Strategy

Everyone in

In March 2020, the government took the unprecedented step of asking councils to move all those, and those at risk of, sleeping rough into accommodation in a scheme known as 'Everyone In'.

That initiative saw partners in the multi-agency Homelessness Taskforce pool their resources at one location - a city centre hotel - to safeguard individuals from the streets.

The facility helped more than 100 people either facing the threat of homelessness or who were rough sleeping to successfully move on from the city's emergency shelter into long term safe, suitable, and sustainable accommodation.

Peter Bilson House

The idea for the centre was sparked by lessons learnt from the success of supporting Wolverhampton's homeless people through the 'Everyone In' initiative during the coronavirus outbreak.

Peter Bilson House provides 34 units of accommodation, including six accessible apartments, and will be the location for the Single Persons Accommodation Project. It includes emergency accommodation and settled accommodation units, and offers bespoke, multi-agency support for the vulnerable people living in the units.

This approach will allow people to live safe and independent lives with the backing of arms-length support as and when required. Peter Bilson House opened in April 2023.

Housing First

Housing First is a specialised service for people where supported housing is not suitable and who have experienced sustained or recurrent homelessness. The Housing First model prioritises getting people quickly into stable homes. From this point, any other support needs they might have – such as alcohol and drug dependency, physical and/or mental health problems are addressed through co-ordinated and intensive support. The Housing First programme commenced in 2019 in Wolverhampton, and 52 people who were, or who have a history of rough sleeping were housed through this model.

Rough Sleeping

The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2023 in Wolverhampton was down by five to six from 2022. It is down 33% since 2010 when the snapshot approach was introduced, and is down 68% from 2018.

Rough Sleeper Initiative

The RSI funded services in Wolverhampton supported a total of 4208 individuals from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, with a variety of needs. The reasons for people requiring support ranged from family asking them to leave, sofa surfing and relationship breakdown. Preventative services are key to ensuring that people at risk of rough sleeping are supported to ensure that they do not feel that they have no other option than bedding down on the street.

Resettlement Schemes

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme was launched in January 2014 and has helped those in the greatest need, including people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk. Since 2017, 100 Syrians were resettled in Wolverhampton through this scheme.

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) opened on 6 January 2022.   The ACRS is designed to support those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for UK values, as well as vulnerable people, such as women and girls at risk.

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched on 1 April 2021. Under the policy, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served.

Wolverhampton Homeless Health Needs Audit

The Wolverhampton Homeless Health Needs Audit (HHNA) 2023 aims to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities for single adults experiencing homelessness in the City by:

- Bringing statutory and voluntary services together to develop responses to local priorities and address gaps in services.

- Increasing the evidence available about the health needs of people experiencing homelessness and the wider determinants.
- of their health, as well as the effectiveness of current services.
- Enabling local strategic and operational decisions to be driven by evidence of local need.
- Ensuring that the voices of people experiencing homelessness are incorporated into local commissioning processes and service design.

'Call us First'

Call Us First has emerged from 'Rent with Confidence' scheme and the project has been realigned to respond to city priorities, the service commenced in 2023. Unstable housing, threat of losing your home or Homelessness can significantly impact the wider detriments of health and will influence a person's overall health and wellbeing. 'Call Us First' is inclusive of both preventative & targeted approaches which provide support and early intervention to tenants, landlords, owner-occupiers, lodgers to reduce the likelihood of homelessness, the collective approach is to keep people in their Homes.

January 2024 – Mach 2024, the service had over 230 referrals being made to Call Us First team to support and assist cases covering legal notices threatening eviction in the private rented sector, rents and affordability issues to housing advice for owner occupiers facing increasing financial costs because of rising mortgage rates alongside cost of living.

The Call Us First is a unique service in the city because it is free and impartial, available to all tenures in the housing sector.

Cold Weather Protocol

During periods of cold weather, additional accommodation is arranged to prevent people sleeping rough. When existing emergency bed provision is already occupied, this can take the form of a sit-up space in a supported accommodation service or, occasionally, a hotel room. To ensure that this provision is utilised only for people with no other accommodation options, a robust referral process was introduced in Winter 2022-23 and continued for Winter 2023-24.

In Winter 2023-24, 21 people were accommodated under Cold Weather Provision, and more than half of these were transferred directly into longer-term supported accommodation provision.

Corporate social responsibility – Alternative Giving

The Alternative Giving CIO provides funding for local charities, communities and organisations which support homeless and vulnerably-housed people. Money comes from donations given by the public, including at 16 donation points and 2 'tap to donate' points in shops and areas with high footfall. This scheme provides members of the public who want to support vulnerable people with the reassurance that their money is being spent on items or initiatives which will really help, and therefore aims to contribute to a reduction in street begging. Alternative Giving is run by Wolverhampton's Business Improvement District, which maintains strong links with the council and partner agencies. In May 2023, grants totalling £17,000 were paid to six local services, and between October 2023 and April 2024, £9,915 has been raised from donations.

Realigning of commissioned supported housing services under a new contract

The contract for commissioned housing-based support services has been realigned under five sections: emergency accommodation, Complex Needs Supported Accommodation, Tenancy Sustainment Support (including floating support and Housing First), Rough Sleeper Gateway & Outreach and Peter Bilson House. Bringing these elements together will enable a cohesive service which can support an individual on their journey from first becoming homeless and being supported by the Outreach service to having a placement in supported housing, and then ongoing floating support in their own accommodation if needed. The three models of supported accommodation included in this contract will allow for short-term stays with intensive support, longer-term accommodation once initial support needs have been met, and at Peter Bilson House, supported accommodation for people with lower levels of need, including those who are employed.

Vision and Goals

Our Vision

Wolverhampton is a city where we all work together to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping, and where everyone has a safe place to call home.

Our Goals

- ❖ No rough sleeping in Wolverhampton for more than one night
- ❖ No evictions from social housing to the streets
- ❖ No families with children to be placed in hotels or B&B's.
- ❖ No evictions from supported housing provision to the streets
- ❖ Every person at risk of homelessness will be offered face to face advice
- ❖ Residents of Wolverhampton can get good quality housing advice 24hrs a day 365 days a year

City of Wolverhampton homelessness Prevention Strategy 2024

Priorities

1. Advice and Guidance - Ensure residents have access to quality advice and guidance to help maintain their home and preventing homelessness.

2. Support - Ensure sufficient and appropriate support services are in place to meet the needs of homeless or threatened with homelessness households.

3. Short term and Emergency Accommodation - The provisions, standards and best use of emergency or short-term accommodation available in the City.
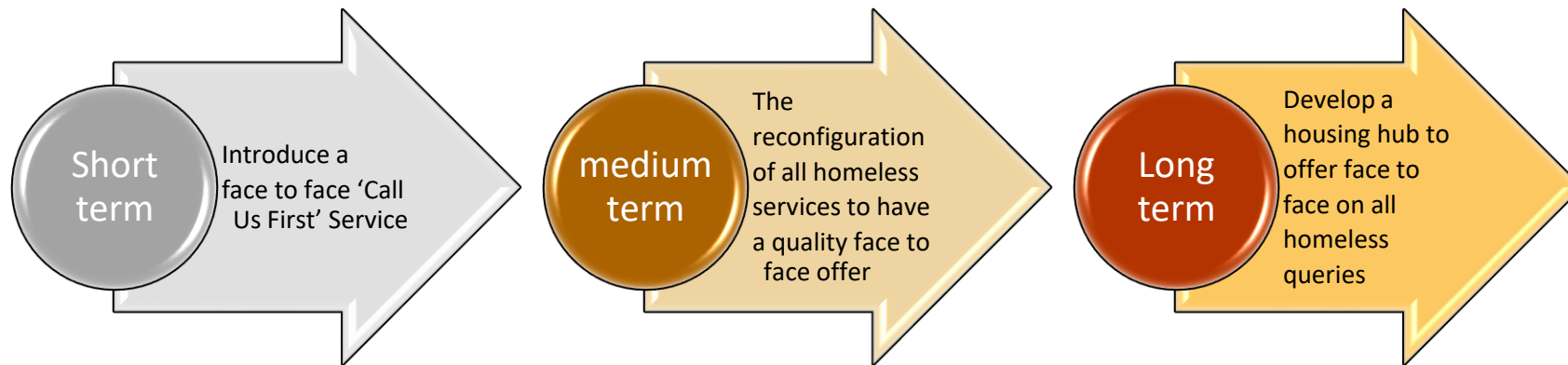
4. Move-on Accommodation - Ensure the availability of safe, suitable and affordable move-on accommodation to meet the demand and needs of households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

1. **Advice and Guidance** - Encouraging City residents to make informed decisions about their own housing choices and options by providing access to a diverse range of advice and guidance services and tools, that will alleviate homelessness.

2. **Support** - Establish quality and consistent support to prevent and relieve homelessness.

3. **Emergency and Short-term accommodation -** Enabling households who are 'roofless' to access a safe temporary place of shelter.

4. **Move-on Accommodation** - Ensuring that safe, suitable, and affordable accommodation is accessible to prevent and relieve homelessness and will be delivered working with City Housing.

Encouraging City residents to make informed decisions about their own housing choices and options by providing access to a diverse range of advice and guidance services and tools, that will alleviate homelessness.

Key priority - Increase face to face housing advice provision

Short term	Introduce a face to face 'Call Us First' Service	medium term	The reconfiguration of all homeless services to have a quality face to face offer	Long term	Develop a housing hub to offer face to face on all homeless queries

This priority is focussed on providing residents with the most appropriate type of advice and guidance to prevent homelessness and enable them to maintain their home.
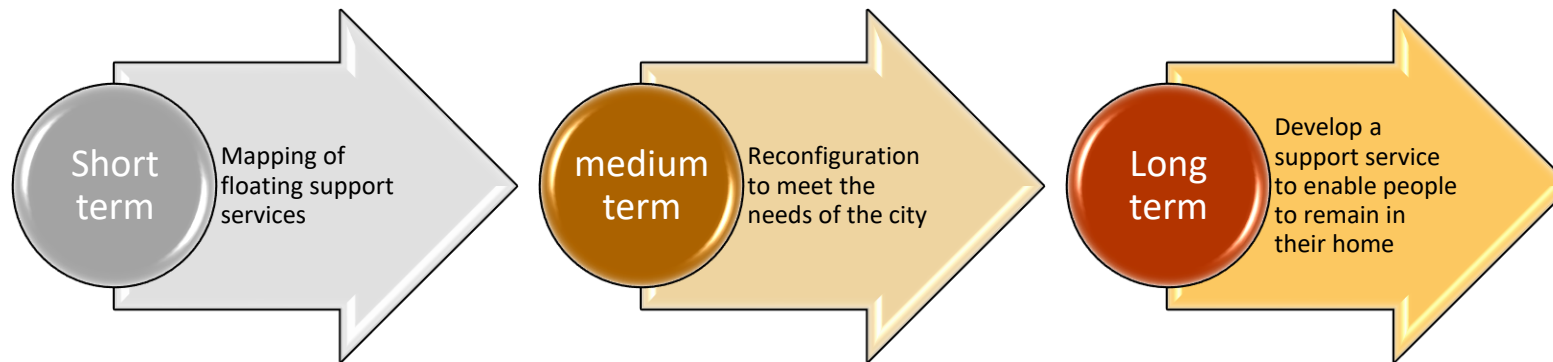
It is vital that a person, or household who becomes homeless, or is at risk of homelessness, is provided with the most appropriate advice and guidance at the earliest opportunity. Wolverhampton has a range of advice and guidance provisions available, provided via a combination of commissioned services and in house support. These services need to be made as accessible as possible for all residents to assist with homeless prevention, as well as supporting people to sustain their home.

Objective	Outcomes
Encouraging City residents to make informed decisions about their own housing choices and options by providing access to a diverse range of advice and guidance services and tools, that will alleviate homelessness	- Continue to offer a mediation service that aims to facilitate a mutually beneficial resolution between landlords and tenants to help sustain tenancies. - Ensure on-line advice includes tailored information for those seeking housing advice, with signposting to other services as appropriate. - Continue and develop prevention services to improve outcomes for all eligible households. - Provide accurate advice and guidance to any household approaching for homeless assistance. - Prevent homelessness wherever possible, and where it does occur for a household, it will be rare, brief, and non-recurrent. - Promote good standards of accommodation in the private rented sector which meets legal requirements and good management standards. - Ensure quality advice and guidance is available and accessible to landlords. - Continuously monitor, review, and develop the homelessness support and advice available on the council website. - Face to face housing advice. - Tailored advice and guidance to manage expectations and the reality of available housing.

Establish quality and consistent support to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Key priority - Implementation of floating support services to prevent homelessness.

Short term — Mapping of floating support services

medium term — Reconfiguration to meet the needs of the city

Long term — Develop a support service to enable people to remain in their home

This priority is focussed on providing people with the most appropriate type of support to meet their needs and to enable them to access and maintain sustainable accommodation.

It is vital that a person, or household who becomes homeless, or is at risk of homelessness, is provided with the most appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Wolverhampton has a range of support services available, provided via a combination of commissioned services and provided by staff working in the Homeless Services Team.

The number of households identified with support needs has increased from 25% in 2021/22 to 39.7% in 2022/23. At risk of/has experienced domestic abuse was the highest support need recorded at 21.9%. 58.7% of the support needs identified in 2022/2023 were centred on the needs of mental health, physical ill health and disability and persons at risk or experiencing domestic abuse. Levels of repeat homelessness were recorded on 21 occasions last year, although this only accounts for persons who were previously owed a duty.
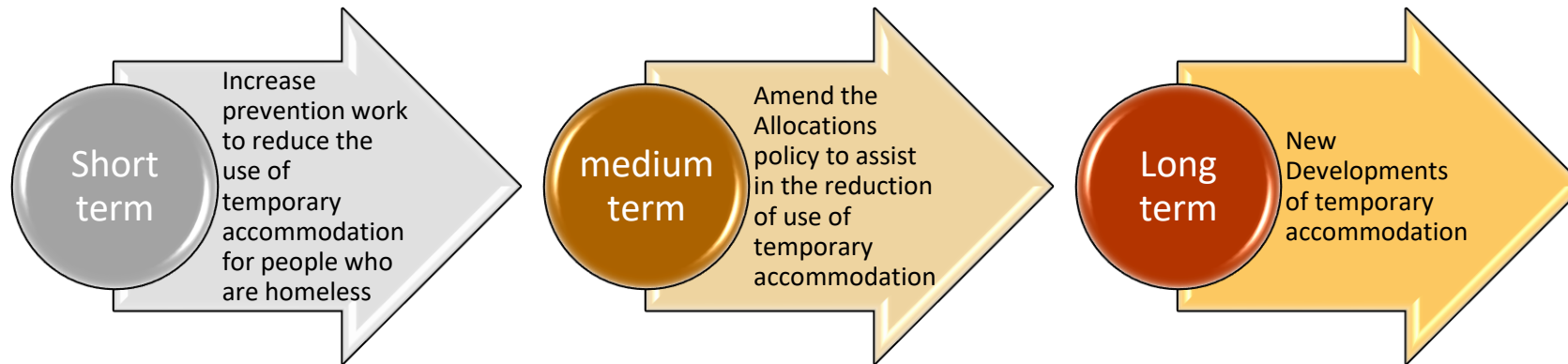
People with complex and multiple support needs can end up being inappropriately housed in accommodation that doesn't provide the right type of support, which can result in tenancies failing and people re-presenting back to housing solutions as homeless. It is important to prevent this happening by ensuring that the support needs are being met, as well as their housing needs.

Objective	Outcomes
Establish quality and consistent support to prevent and relieve homelessness.	- Develop a robust process for early homelessness referrals from public bodies and stakeholders under a duty to collaborate agreement. - Utilise assistance and/or adaptations to enable households to remain in a safe and suitable home. - Continue to provide appropriate and effective outreach and support services to prevent and relieve homelessness. - All services who deliver homelessness prevention will adopt a three E approach - Engagement, Education, and Enforcement (on those households who may cause alarm, distress, and anti-social behaviour). - Support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to access or maintain employment, education, and training opportunities. - Ensure people are supported to budget and maximise their income. - Ensuring quality support is available and accessible for people to sustain their home. - Work in partnership with health services to better address the health needs of people who experience homelessness, including access to primary care.

Enabling households who are 'roofless' to access a safe temporary place of shelter.

Key priority - Reducing the use of temporary accommodation and develop suitable alternatives.

Short term	Increase prevention work to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for people who are homeless	medium term	Amend the Allocations policy to assist in the reduction of use of temporary accommodation	Long term	New Developments of temporary accommodation

Staying in temporary accommodation is stressful and takes people away from employment, schools, and support networks at an already difficult time. The cost of providing temporary accommodation is increasing and takes valuable funding away from the delivery of other homeless services. We need to ensure that when we provide emergency accommodation it is for as short a time as possible and provides a stable and supportive base that allows people to move forward with their lives.

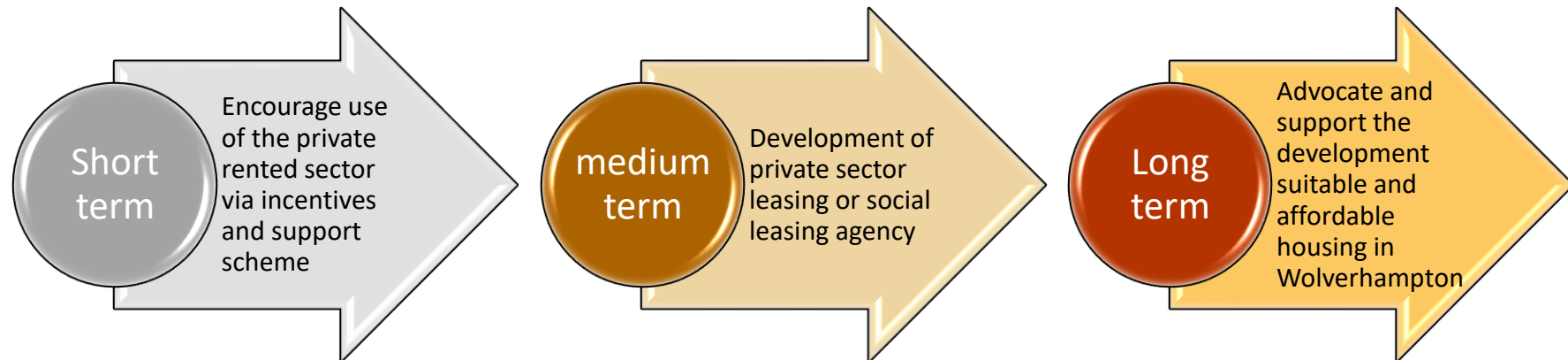Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, there was a:

- 85% increase in single placement
- 63% increase in family placements
- 70% increase in total placements
- 942% increase in non-Local Authority temporary accommodation costs

Objective	Outcomes
Enabling households who are 'roofless' to access a safe temporary place of shelter.	• Remodel and recommission domestic violence and abuse services. • Ensuring robust pathways are in place to prevent people from being released without safe, suitable, and affordable accommodation from prison or discharged from approved premises. • Ensure the limited use of B&B/Hotels used as temporary accommodation via offering alternative and suitable accommodation options. • Reconfigure and recommission single person homeless accommodation and support. • Develop a standards framework for the provision of temporary accommodation. • Ensure affordable, emergency, or short-term accommodation is available for people who work. • Ensure a safe and suitable transit site for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. • Ensure appropriate accommodation for underrepresented cohorts and those with protected characteristics. • The Local Authority to develop a temporary supported accommodation model, to assist vulnerable families to manage tenancies. • Improve the access to, and standards of supported accommodation, including families.

Ensuring that safe, suitable and affordable accommodation is accessible to prevent and relieve homelessness and will be delivered working with City Housing.

Key priority - Development of affordable accommodation

Short term	Encourage use of the private rented sector via incentives and support scheme
medium term	Development of private sector leasing or social leasing agency
Long term	Advocate and support the development suitable and affordable housing in Wolverhampton

In situations where homelessness cannot be prevented or be addressed temporally then a longer- term housing solution is required. The role that settled and secure "move-on" accommodation plays in offering stability to vulnerable households is of key importance. There is a direct correlation between an ever-reducing amount of affordable housing and the increase in homelessness in the city. According to the Big issue (2021) "There are simply not enough of the type of homes people need and that can lead to homelessness, people trapped in temporary accommodation or stuck paying over the odds for housing and that can force people into poverty"

Objective	Outcomes
Ensuring that safe, suitable, and affordable accommodation is accessible to prevent and relieve homelessness and will be delivered working with City Housing.	• Reconfigure and recommission rough sleeper homeless accommodation and support. • Increase the access and support into the provision of private rented sector accommodation. • Work with developers and housing providers with the development of affordable accommodation. • To enable the City's housing allocation policy to offer accommodation to those in most need. • Ensure best use of housing stock across the city, including Hard to let, Empty Homes, Buy Backs and Purchasing • Work closely with planning and housing enabling teams to ensure we encourage development of diverse appropriate housing to meet local needs. • Maximise a range of housing options to improve throughput from supported accommodation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Homelessness Prevention Steering Group

Key to the delivery of this strategy is the collaborative work across the council and its partners. We are committed to maintaining and building on existing partnership working to support people to stay in their properties, or to find lasting and affordable housing options. Tackling homelessness is complex and can require several organisations to pull their knowledge, skills, and resources together to find solution. We will create a new Homelessness Prevention Steering Group to bring together all the key partners in Wolverhampton to enable us to work together to find solutions to help tackle homelessness in our city.

A Delivery Plan will be developed which will provide detailed actions on how to deliver outcomes, outline who is accountable for the delivery of each action and timelines for implementation. The Delivery plan will be reviewed annually ensuring we remain on track to achieve our aims over the next five years.

Performance Measures

The Delivery Plan includes target dates for achieving some specific milestones and outcomes. Other outcomes are more reliably measured over a period of time. The following is a suite of measures, against which the adherence to the strategic aims will be assessed.

Priority 1 – Advice and Guidance	Measure
Increase the proportion of homeless applications made at 'prevention' stage.	Percentage of applications made at 'prevention' stage.
Increase the number of prevention cases resolved.	Percentage of successful preventions.
Reduce the proportion of applications that are ended for lost contact.	Percentage of applications ended for recorded reason of 'lost contact' or 'application withdrawn'.
Reduce the number of Section 21's with early intervention by providing housing advice and signposting.	Number of valid Section 21's Number of invalid Section 21's Number housing advice cases ('Call Us First')

Priority 2 – Support	Measure
Increase the proportion of duty to refer notifications that are received at the 'prevention' stage.	Proportion of duty to refer notifications made at prevention stage.
Ensure people receive meaningful assessments and tailored, collaborative personal housing plans.	A quality audit framework reviews assessments and personalised housing plans to be meaningful and tailored to the individual.
Reduce the number of new rough sleepers via delivery of support (better prevention).	Number of new rough sleepers over time.
Supporting households to remain in a safe and suitable home.	Number of households remaining in a safe and suitable home following utilising assistance and/or adaptations.
Supporting households to reduce the number of evictions from social housing providers.	Number of evictions from social housing providers.
Support individuals and households to access primary care who have a history homelessness and rough sleeping.	Review of Wolverhampton Health Needs Audit 2023.

Priority 3 – Short-term and emergency accommodation	Measure
Ensure anyone sleeping rough has an offer of accommodation.	How many current rough sleepers do not have an offer of accommodation? What are the reasons?
Reduce the proportion of temporary accommodation that lacks adequate cooking and washing facilities.	Proportion of temporary accommodation being used that is B&B/hotel/otherwise unsuitable.
Increase the number of households with support needs access supported housing.	Reduction of households with support needs in Temporary accommodation who would now be accessing supported housing.

Priority 4 – Move-on Accommodation	Measure
Increase the number of households at risk of homelessness who are assisted into privately rented accommodation	Number of households assisted into PRS (privately rented) Accommodation.

Increase the number of move-on accommodation options for households experiencing homelessness and in Temporary accommodation.	Number of properties leased. Number of properties let through Allocations Policy. Number of available properties through social housing provider.
Increase the number of households move-on from supported housing into own tenancy across all tenure.	Number of households assisted into own tenancy from support housing.