

City of Wolverhampton Council Supported Housing Strategy

Draft for Consultation

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Executive Summary

This strategy sets out the Council's vision and priorities for supported housing over the next five years.

Supported housing plays a vital role in helping people across Wolverhampton live safely, independently and with dignity. It provides a stable home alongside tailored support for people whose needs cannot be met through general housing alone.

Demand for supported housing is increasing, while needs are becoming more complex. At the same time, the city faces challenges relating to supply, affordability, quality, regulation and movement through services. Wolverhampton's Supported Housing Needs Assessment estimates that demand could rise from around 1,203 units currently to between 1,314 and 1,628 units by 2040, creating a need for an additional 111 to 425 supported housing units.

This strategy recognises that supported housing is not a standalone service, but an essential part of a wider system encompassing housing, health, social care, homelessness prevention, public health and community safety. Effective supported housing prevents crisis, promotes independence and delivers better outcomes for residents while reducing pressure on public services.

The strategy focuses on four priorities:

1. Prevent crisis and reduce demand through early intervention and support

Supporting people earlier and strengthening prevention pathways to reduce homelessness, improve wellbeing and prevent needs from escalating.

2. Ensure the right type, quality and amount of supported housing to meet current and future need

Using evidence to shape a sustainable supported housing market, increase provision where needed and ensure residents can access the right accommodation and support.

3. Improve pathways, flow and move-on to support independence and free up capacity

Creating clear pathways into, through and out of supported housing, improving move-on opportunities and ensuring people are supported to live independently.

4. Strengthen quality, oversight and safeguarding across all supported housing

Building on the success of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme and preparing for new regulatory requirements to ensure services are safe, effective and person-centred.

Delivery of the strategy will be supported through strong partnership working, a dedicated Supported Housing Board, a detailed delivery plan and a robust performance framework.

Success will depend on continued collaboration between the Council, supported housing providers, health partners, adult social care, children's services, probation services, the voluntary and community sector, and residents themselves. By working together, sharing information, aligning resources and taking a whole-system approach, we can create a supported housing system that is more responsive, sustainable and focused on achieving positive outcomes for residents.

Together, these priorities will support the development of a more sustainable, coordinated and high-quality supported housing system that enables residents to live independently, thrive in their communities and achieve better life outcomes, while ensuring that limited resources are used effectively to meet current and future demand.

Introduction

Everyone in Wolverhampton should have a home that meets their needs. Supported housing plays a vital role in achieving this, providing safe, stable accommodation alongside tailored support that enables people to live independently, maintain their wellbeing and participate fully in their communities.

Demand for supported housing is increasing, and the needs of residents are becoming more complex. At the same time, the system faces pressures around supply, quality, cost and flow through services. In Wolverhampton, this is reflected in a growing gap between current provision and future need, alongside challenges in ensuring that people can access the right support at the right time and move on when they are ready.

This strategy sets out how the Council, working with partners, will respond to these challenges over the next five years. It provides a clear framework for planning and delivering supported housing across Wolverhampton, ensuring that provision is sufficient and high-quality.

Our approach recognises that supported housing is not a standalone service, but a critical part of a wider system spanning housing, public health, social care, homelessness and community services. When it works well, supported housing prevents crisis, reduces demand on public services and supports long-term independence. When it does not, the impact is felt across the whole system.

This strategy therefore focuses on four key priorities:

- 1. Prevent crisis and reduce demand through early intervention and support**
- 2. Ensure the right type, quality and amount of supported housing to meet current and future need**
- 3. Improve pathways, flow and move on to support independence**
- 4. Strengthen quality, oversight and safeguarding across all supported housing**

Together, these will support a more joined-up and person-centred supported housing system for Wolverhampton. Value for money underpins this approach. In supported housing, this is not simply about reducing cost, but about making the best use of resources to achieve the strongest and most sustainable outcomes for residents.

What do we mean by supported housing?

At the national level, supported housing is a critical component of the social safety net, providing thousands of vulnerable people with a home and support. The sector comprises approximately 634,000 supported housing units across Great Britain (around 84% of these in England). Roughly two-thirds of this provision serves older adults, with the rest supporting working-age people with disabilities or short term needs such as homelessness, substance misuse recovery, or fleeing domestic abuse.

There are various definitions of supported housing, which are often used interchangeably. Collectively, according to the York Policy Engine¹, these refer to a specific form of accommodation where care, support and supervision are offered to tenants as part of their tenancy, to support people with specific needs to live as independently as possible.

Supported housing plays a vital role in helping people live safely and independently. It supports residents with a wide range of needs. High-quality supported housing can prevent crisis, reduce pressure on health and care services, and enable people to live fulfilled lives in their communities.

Who supported housing is for:

In Wolverhampton, there are a wide range of models and provider types within the supported housing sector. To reflect the diversity of residents supported across Wolverhampton, supported housing encompasses provision for:

- **Adults:** including working-age adults with learning disabilities, mental health needs or physical disabilities
- **Older people:** whose needs may relate to frailty, dementia or long-term health conditions
- **Young people and care leavers:** transitioning to adulthood and independent living
- **Families:** who need stability, safety and support to sustain a home
- **Residents with complex needs:** including multiple and overlapping disadvantages
- **People experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness**
- **Survivors of domestic abuse:** requiring safe, specialist accommodation

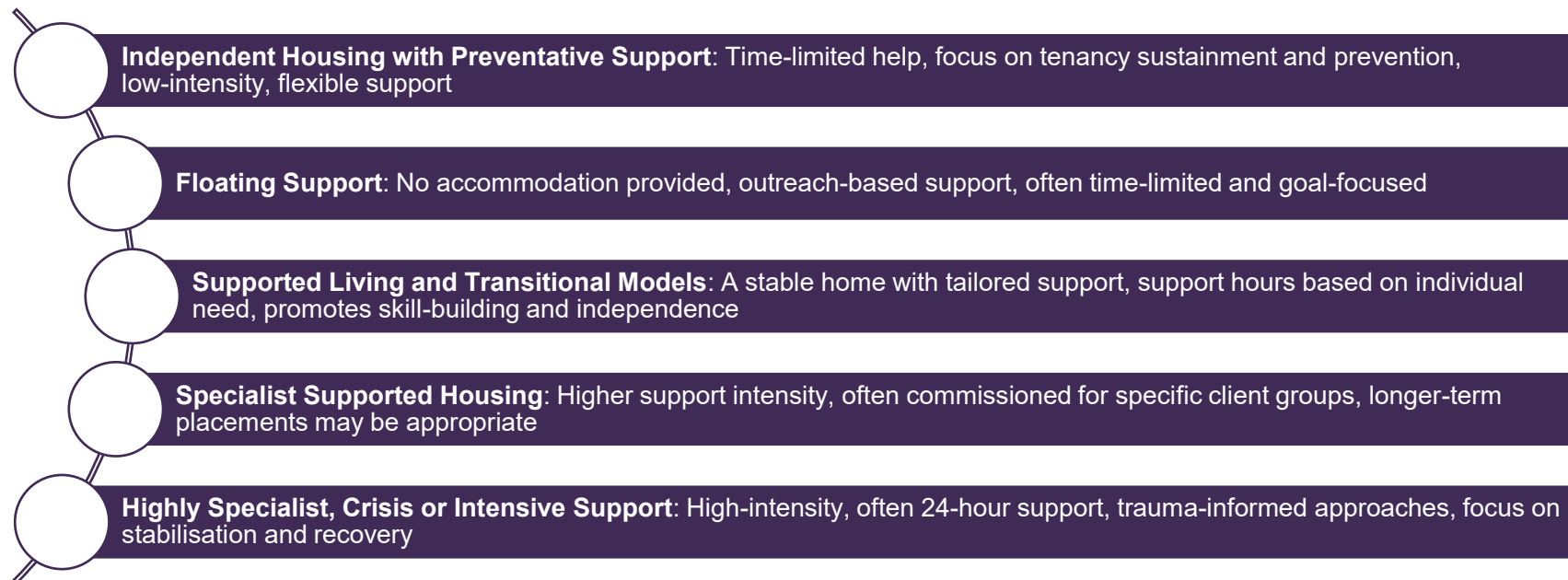
¹ [How could local authorities improve supported housing? Lessons from research evidence on public health, wellbeing and inequalities outcomes, The York Policy Engine, NIHR](#)

Rather than fitting people into rigid categories, supported housing can respond flexibly to individual circumstances. Supported housing across Wolverhampton includes a range of models, each meeting different needs:

- **Supported living:** helping people live as independently as possible, often in self-contained homes
- **Floating support:** flexible, time-limited support that helps people sustain a tenancy
- **Housing First:** providing stable housing as a starting point for people with entrenched homelessness and complex needs
- **Shared Lives:** offering family-based living arrangements with tailored support
- **Staying Put:** enabling care leavers to remain in a familiar home beyond the age of 18
- **Supported lodgings:** providing a safe home and guidance for young people and adults

Alongside these are specialist services, commissioned across different service areas, responding to specific needs.

Supported housing operates across a continuum, matching the level of support to people's needs at different points in their lives. People may move along the spectrum over time as their circumstances change.



Our City Our Plan

Our City: Our Plan is the Council's overarching strategic framework.

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.

Supported housing has a critical role to play in delivering Our City: Our Plan. By providing safe, stable homes with the right support, supported housing helps residents live longer, healthier lives, contributes to healthy, safe and inclusive communities, and ensures that those who need quality care can access it.

It supports pathways into education, training and employment, strengthens family stability, and helps people recover from crisis and build independence. Supported housing is not only a housing solution, but a key enabler of the Council's wider ambitions.

Our City, Our Plan is underpinned by four key principles: Driven by Digital; Climate Action; Fair and Equal; and Wolverhampton Pound.



This strategy also aligns with, and supports delivery of, a range of other Council strategies and plans that collectively shape housing, public health, care, and community outcomes. Given the breadth of Supported Housing and the number of existing strategies, policies, and work programmes across the Council and its partners, it is important that these are aligned.

The Supported Housing Strategy has therefore been developed to support and strengthen the delivery of these wider strategic priorities, while ensuring that supported housing services respond effectively to identified needs and contribute to shared outcomes for residents and communities.

- **Childrens Social Care Sufficiency Strategy (2025-2028):** Children's supported accommodation and care leaver provision form a key part of the wider supported housing system. Actions from the Children's Sufficiency Strategy are embedded across this strategy, particularly in relation to future supply, transitions and pathways into adulthood.
- **Empty Homes Strategy (2029-2024):** The Empty Homes Strategy focuses on bringing vacant properties back into use to increase housing supply and reduce blight across communities. Its objectives align with the Supported Housing Strategy, particularly in creating additional housing opportunities, making better use of existing stock, and supporting pathways into suitable and sustainable accommodation.
- **Housing Strategy (2024):** The Housing Strategy sets the overarching framework for meeting housing need across the city, with priorities around supply, quality and access. Actions within this strategy are closely aligned with the Supported Housing Strategy, particularly in relation to increasing affordable provision, improving standards, and strengthening pathways through supported housing into settled accommodation.
- **Homelessness Prevention Strategy (2024-2029):** The Homelessness Prevention Strategy sets out the council's approach to early intervention, partnership working and reducing homelessness across the city. It sets out four interconnected priorities, which will help to tackle rising pressure on supported accommodation.
- **Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023-2028):** The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023–2028) for Wolverhampton sets out city-wide priorities to improve health outcomes and tackle inequalities. Although it does not specifically centre on supported accommodation, it recognises that stable, appropriate housing underpins success in all aspects of health and wellbeing.

National Landscape

The supported accommodation provision in Wolverhampton is influenced by a complex national policy landscape, shaped by various regulations, legislative reforms, and government guidance.

Nationally, demand for supported housing significantly outstrips supply, driven by an ageing population, rising complexity of need and pressure elsewhere in housing, health and care systems. At the same time, the sector faces persistent challenges, including constrained capital and revenue funding, rising operating costs, workforce shortages and a funding framework that does not always fully cover the costs of delivering effective support.

Recent estimates suggest a current shortfall in England of around 180,000-388,000 units, and a requirement for an additional 360,000 640,000 units by 2040 to keep pace with increasing demand.

These national pressures form the backdrop against which a range of reviews, pilot programmes, policy developments and legislation have been introduced all aimed at improving the provision of supported housing. These include:

- The outlining of national standards for supported housing as part of the National Statement of Expectations (NSE), published in October 2020;
- Guidance – Interventions to Improve Quality in Supported Housing 2022;
- The Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP), running from 2022 – 2025, to devise approaches to developing better quality and value for money in supported housing provision;
- The Exempt Accommodation Third Report of Session 2022-23 from the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee;
- A Supported Housing Review by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University, published in 2023;
- The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

The Supported Housing Strategy sits within a changing national policy and legislative landscape. In particular, the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act marks a significant shift in how supported housing is defined, monitored and assured across England.

The Act has been introduced in response to national concerns about variable quality, poor standards and lack of oversight in some parts of the supported housing sector. Its intention is to strengthen protections for residents, provide greater clarity for local authorities, and ensure that supported housing delivers genuine support alongside suitable accommodation.

The Act reinforces the role of local authorities in understanding and influencing their supported housing markets, alongside existing housing, care and safeguarding responsibilities. It supports a stronger focus on quality, outcomes and resident experience, and clearer links between supported housing, local needs assessments and wider health, care and homelessness pathways.

Under the Act, English local authorities are required to review exempt accommodation and publish a Supported Housing Strategy for the provision of supported exempt accommodation, renewable every five years. They are also required to implement licensing regulations, compliant with national standards.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

Across England, supported housing has faced increasing scrutiny due to concerns about inconsistent quality, weak oversight, and some providers delivering poor accommodation or inadequate support. A persistent challenge has been that information on supported housing is fragmented across different systems. For instance, some services are commissioned directly by the Council (with defined capacity and contracts), while many others operate independently as exempt accommodation financed through housing benefit. Data on the latter comes through housing benefit claims rather than a central registry of placements.

As a result, historically there has not been a single, up-to-date view of all supported housing provision and usage in the city. This fragmentation can lead to inefficiencies – such as referral routes that rely on ad-hoc knowledge, or individuals potentially falling through the cracks between services. For example, people leaving institutions (hospital discharges, care

leavers, prison releases) may not always have a smooth pathway into suitable supported accommodation, leading to some ending up in inappropriate housing or even homeless.

To tackle these issues, Wolverhampton launched a Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) as part of a national programme. Through SHIP, a cross-agency group has been working to strengthen oversight of the sector. A key element is a new Gateway process to vet and approve new supported housing providers and projects. Providers are encouraged to sign up to quality standards, and the Council is beginning to use its new oversight powers to inspect and engage with the previously unregulated parts of the market.

This initiative has started to bring greater transparency – for instance, clarifying how many units each provider offers, what client groups they serve, what support is in place, the compliance of accommodation with legal requirements, etc. – and to improve coordination of referrals across housing, social services, and other agencies.

SHIP Key Achievements

Driving Up Standards

193

Enforcement
Actions Issued

534

Hazards
Addressed

24%

Of Hazards Addressed
were Category 1 Hazards

202

Tenant
Support
Reviews
Completed

Spending and Value for Money

**Over £6
Million**

Expenditure Avoided

103

Successful Housing
Benefit Interventions

Wolverhampton's Supported Housing Landscape

Wolverhampton is home to around 272,000 residents, with a population that continues to grow and become increasingly diverse. The city has a relatively young population compared with many areas, but the number of older residents is rising, creating increasing demand for housing and support that enables people to live independently for longer.

Wolverhampton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)² highlights that the city's older population is growing rapidly and becoming more diverse, with a need for accessible homes, age-friendly neighbourhoods, and preventative support that helps people maintain their independence and wellbeing.

Wolverhampton is also of the most deprived areas in England (ranked 24th out of 317 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation), with nearly half of its neighbourhoods among the bottom 20% nationally. Local unemployment (c.7-8%) is above the national average (c.4%), and youth unemployment exceeds 10%. Household incomes lag behind regional and national averages, and many communities experience poor health outcomes. These persistent challenges translate into a high baseline need for housing with support.

Supported housing also has an important role in meeting the needs of people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, mental health needs, frailty and dementia, helping residents to access the right support while remaining part of their local community. These themes are reflected throughout the JSNA's assessment of current and future health and care needs.

Together, these demographic trends reinforce the need for a flexible supported housing system that can respond to a wide range of needs across different life stages, from working-age adults requiring specialist support through to older people seeking to maintain independence.

Supported Housing Needs Assessment

In 2025, the Council commissioned Neil Morland & Co to assess the current availability and need for supported housing in Wolverhampton to inform this strategy³.

² [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) | WV Insight | City of Wolverhampton Council](#)

³ [Assessment of Supported Housing Availability and Need in Wolverhampton, City of Wolverhampton Council](#)

Supported Housing Supply

Wolverhampton currently has around 1,203 supported housing units.

These are split between short-term services (about 45% of units, e.g., refuges, temporary or emergency supported housing for people in crisis) and long-term services (around 54%, e.g., supported living for those likely to need long-term or permanent support), with a small remainder being flexible or unknown-length placements.

Provider Types

Provision is predominantly delivered by non-profit organisations:

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

873 Units (70%)

Registered Charities

196 units (19%)

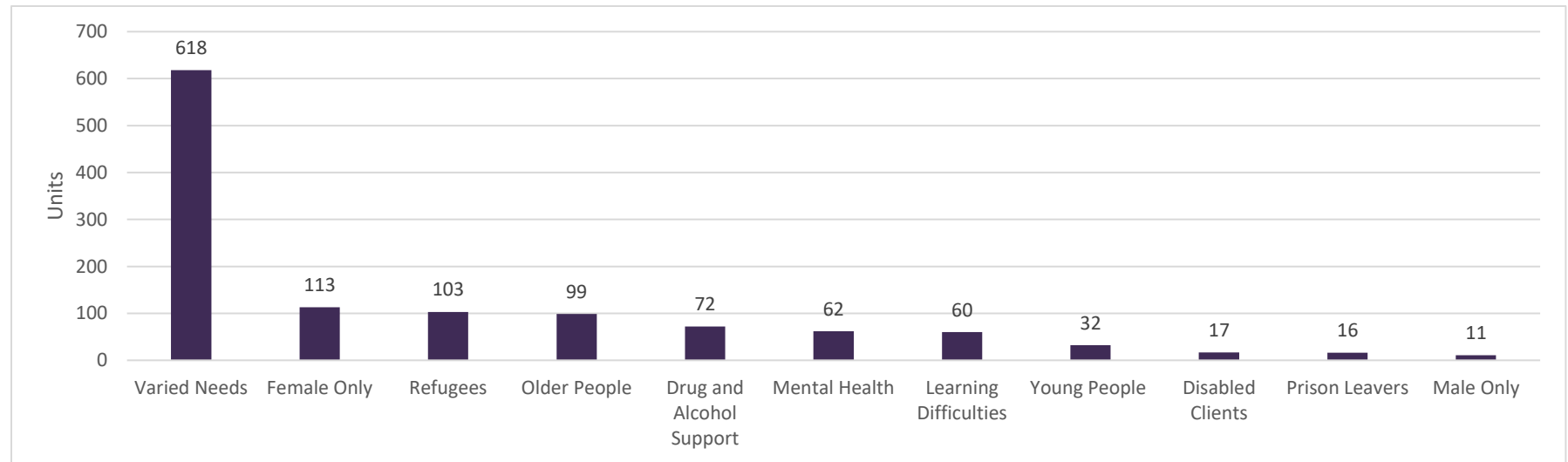
Non-profit voluntary organisations

72 units (6%)

Community Interest Companies (CICs)

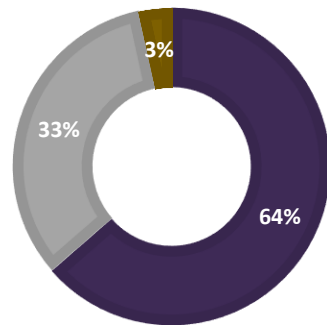
62 units (5%)

Client Group Profile



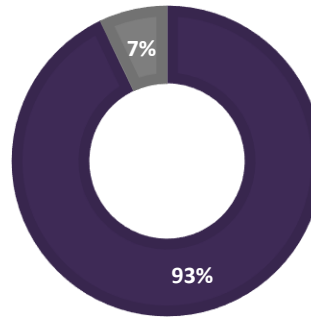
Commissioned vs Non-Commissioned Services

64% COMMISSIONED, 33% NON-COMMISSIONED



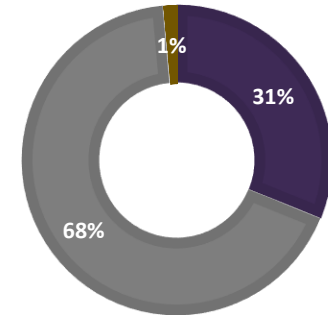
■ Commissioned
■ Non-Commissioned
■ Commissioning Status Unknown

93% OF NON-COMMISSIONED IS SHORT TERM



■ Short Term ■ Long Term

68% OF COMMISSIONED IS LONG TERM



■ Short Term ■ Long Term ■ Both

Out of Area Referrals

465 Total

Supported housing units accept out of area referrals

349 short-term

116 long-term

97% of Non-Commissioned Services

Accept out of area referrals

10% of Commissioned Services

Accept out of area referrals

Supported Housing Future Demand

By 2040, demand is expected to increase to between 1,314 (best case) and 1,628 (worst case). This equates to an additional requirement of 111 to 425 units.

Every resident category is expected to see some level of growth. The most pronounced increases in the worst case are in the broad varied category and significant rises for groups like older people, women-only services, refugees, and those with mental health needs. The table on the following page breaks future demand down by client group.

Wolverhampton will likely need to expand supported housing capacity by at least around 10% in the next 15 years, and potentially by more than 26%.

The divergence between best and worst cases reflects uncertainties in factors such as socio economic circumstances, policy changes, health trends, and social issues.

Table 1: Best and worst case estimates from the current baseline

Wolverhampton	Baseline 2025	Best Case 2040	Change	Worst case 2040	Change
(i) Older People	99	106	+7	134	+35
(ii) Female Only	113	121	+8	153	+40
(ii) Refugees	103	110	+7	139	+36
(ii) Drug / Alcohol	72	77	+5	97	+25
(ii) Mental Health	62	67	+5	84	+22
(ii) Learning Difficulties	60	84	+24	81	+21
(ii) Young People	32	35	+3	43	+11
(ii) Physical Disabilities	17	25	+8	23	+6
(ii) Prison Leavers	16	18	+2	22	+6
(ii) Male Only	11	12	+1	15	+4
(ii) Varied*	618	659	+41	836	+218
Total	1,203	1,314	+111	1,628	+425

What this strategy is addressing

The evidence shows that Wolverhampton does not face a single supported housing challenge, but a set of interconnected needs across different users and pathways. This strategy focuses on where intervention will have the greatest impact.

The Needs Assessment made a number of recommendations, each of which is addressed by, or through, delivery of this strategy:

1. **Adopt a 5-year supported housing strategy:** Develop a comprehensive plan that quantifies unmet need and sets out how to meet future demand (with clear targets for new provision).
2. **Improve multi-agency coordination:** Set up a permanent supported housing forum or board with all key partners (Council, health, criminal justice, providers) to regularly review needs, coordinate referrals and move on pathways, and jointly address gaps.
3. **Expand supply to meet demand:** Make it a priority to increase the number and variety of supported housing units in the city.
4. **Secure sustainable funding:** Strengthen the financial foundations of supported housing.
5. **Continue to raise standards through oversight:** Leverage new regulatory powers to enforce minimum standards.
6. **Enhance data and evidence:** Invest in better data systems to inform planning and track outcomes.

Working with our partners

Supported housing is not delivered by a single organisation or service. It sits at the intersection of housing, health, adult social care, children's services, homelessness, community safety and the voluntary and community sector. Effective supported housing therefore depends on strong partnership working, with shared understanding of need, roles and outcomes.

One of the key recommendations from our Needs Assessment was to **'improve multi-agency coordination'** to ensure a whole-system approach and enable pooling of knowledge and resources.

Local authorities are uniquely placed to bring partners together to shape supported housing as a whole-system response, rather than a collection of individual services. This includes working closely with providers, health partners, commissioning teams and communities to ensure supported housing meets local need, delivers positive outcomes and represents good use of public resources.

This strategy has been developed through engagement with a range of stakeholders central to the system, including:

- Supported housing providers
- Current and prospective residents
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations
- OneWolverhampton Partnership
- Safer Wolverhampton Partnership

We will continue to work collaboratively with partners to ensure supported housing is planned, commissioned and delivered in a coherent and coordinated way – and strengthen these partnerships where possible.

A **Supported Housing Board**, comprising representatives from the NHS, providers, probation services and other key partners, will oversee the delivery of the Supported Housing Strategy and associated delivery plan.

Sustainable Funding Model

A further recommendation from the Needs Assessment was to '**secure sustainable funding for supported housing**'. Delivering the right type and amount of supported housing will depend on a funding model that is stable, sustainable and reflects the true cost of both accommodation and support.

We will work with health, social care and other partners to explore opportunities for joint commissioning, pooled budgets and innovative funding arrangements that maximise the use of public resources. Alongside local action, we will continue to support sector-wide efforts to advocate for long-term national funding solutions for supported housing. We will continue to lobby and advocate through our professional and political networks for increased (and ring-fenced) funding to support both the housing and support elements of supported accommodation.

A more sustainable funding model will strengthen market confidence, protect existing services and support future growth in provision.

Our Strategic Priorities

Supported Housing Strategy

1.Prevent crisis and reduce demand through early intervention and support

2.Ensure the right type, quality and amount of supported housing to meet current and future need

3.Improve pathways, flow and move-on to support independence and free up capacity

4.Strengthen quality, oversight and safeguarding across all supported housing

Climate
Action



Driven by
Digital



Fair &
Equal



Wolverhampton
Pound



1. Prevent crisis and reduce demand through early intervention and support

We will strengthen the preventative role of supported housing by taking a more joined-up approach to preventing crisis and reducing demand.

Prevention will be understood and delivered as a whole-system, whole-journey approach. This means intervening at the earliest possible point, from childhood and family support, through transition to adulthood, and at key risk points such as tenancy breakdown, institutional discharge, domestic abuse, deteriorating mental or physical health, or changes in support need, rather than responding at the point of crisis.

This approach is particularly important as local evidence shows that the complexity of need among people experiencing or at risk of homelessness is increasing, with significant growth in mental health needs, physical ill-health and disability, young parents and care leavers. Prevention activity must therefore be proactive, targeted and informed by data, ensuring support is available before needs escalate and homelessness occurs.

To achieve this, services must operate as a single system, with housing, adult social care, children's services, public health, and voluntary and community sector partners working in a coordinated way. Residents should experience one coherent pathway, with consistent information, clear expectations and seamless access to the right support at the right time.

This priority will focus on:

- Early identification and intervention, including supporting families and young people before need escalates
- Joined-up “front door” arrangements, ensuring consistent advice, assessment and referral across services
- Clear, end-to-end pathways, covering prevention, crisis, supported housing and move-on, with defined roles and responsibilities across partners
- Consistent communication, so residents and professionals understand what support is available and what can realistically be accessed

Outcome	Objectives
Residents know where to get help and access the right support early.	• Develop and implement a consistent supported housing communications and engagement framework, including accessible information and promotion across partner settings. • Strengthen the interface between Housing Advice, social care ‘front door’ and wider services, ensuring consistent information and joined-up access. • Use needs assessment data to identify priority cohorts and locations for proactive outreach, particularly where access or awareness is currently limited.
Support is delivered that tackles underlying causes of instability, enabling long-term resilience.	• Develop a data-led early intervention and referral model to identify and support households at risk of homelessness. • Strengthen financial resilience support through welfare advice, income maximisation and targeted prevention funding. • Expand and maintain appropriate floating support across the city to address a wide range of needs at the earliest stage. • Expand prevention activity to a whole-family approach, ensuring families are supported alongside individuals.
Prevention activity is coordinated across services and partners	• Develop integrated multi-agency prevention and transition pathways across housing, health, social care, criminal justice and voluntary sector services. • Provide support on employment, education and health and wellbeing to clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

2. Ensure the right type, quality and amount of supported housing to meet current and future need

The Council, alongside providers and partners, will plan and shape a supported housing market that is fit for purpose, evidence-led and sustainable.

One of the key recommendations from the Needs Assessment was to **expand supply to meet demand**. The assessment identified a supported housing market comprising 1,203 units across the city, but also highlighted growing pressure on available provision, with approximately 1,418 referrals received between July 2023 and March 2025. Of these, only 309 referrals (22%) resulted in a successful placement, while 761 referrals (54%) were unsuccessful and a further 321 households remained either awaiting a decision or on a waiting list. This demonstrates the need to increase capacity and ensure provision is better aligned to local need.

The Needs Assessment also found that support needs are becoming increasingly complex. Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, the number of households owed a homelessness duty with a support need increased by 57%, including increases of 142.9% in mental health needs and 164.4% in physical ill-health and disability. Demand is also rising among groups requiring specialist support, including care leavers, young people and people with multiple and complex needs.

Looking ahead, the Needs Assessment projects demand for an additional 132 to 446 supported housing units by 2040, equivalent to a total requirement of between 1,314 and 1,628 units.

This means making it a priority to increase both the number and variety of supported housing units available in Wolverhampton, working closely with providers, registered housing providers, health and care partners and the voluntary and community sector. This will include making best use of existing assets, refurbishing or repurposing properties, encouraging new supported housing developments, and expanding proven models such as Housing First to provide greater choice and flexibility for residents with different levels of need.

This priority will focus on:

- Using robust evidence to plan future supply across short-term, long-term and specialist provision.
- Increasing the availability of self-contained, accessible homes that promote independence while retaining specialist options for people with higher or more complex needs.

- Modernising and repurposing existing stock.
- Reducing reliance on out-of-area placements by strengthening local options.
- Shaping the market through commissioning, planning, partnerships and engagement with providers to encourage the right provision in the right places.
- Ensuring existing provision is fully and effectively utilised, including reducing avoidable voids and aligning placements to need.

Outcome	Objectives
An increase in the provision of high-quality supported and specialist accommodation	• Develop and clearly communicate Market Position Statements, setting out strategic priorities, gaps in provision, and the types of services the council is seeking from the market. • Use needs assessments and market intelligence to ensure residents can access accommodation and support that meets their needs. • Increase the availability of accessible, adaptable and specialist housing options through development and home adaptation programmes.
Local people are supported in appropriate local bedspaces, ensuring supported housing capacity is used effectively	• Align housing benefit and commissioning to ensure value for money and minimise avoidable void charges. • Improve utilisation of supported housing through better access, quality, referral pathways and placement processes. • Develop a pipeline of local provision to reduce out-of-area placements and improve value for money.
A well-functioning provider market shaped through effective commissioning, partnerships and planning	• Strengthen the use of regional and local commissioning frameworks to reduce reliance on spot purchasing and improve consistency of provision. • Identify opportunities for joint commissioning.

3. Improve pathways, flow and move-on to support independence

We will create clear, joined-up pathways into, through and out of supported housing. The needs assessment highlights blocked pathways, delayed move-on and increasing lengths of stay due to a lack of suitable step-down and independent housing. This reduces throughput and limits access for those who need support most urgently.

We need to ensure that as soon as someone has a support need, they can access the right service for them. Our customers need to be able to move to different services at the right time if their needs change. We need to make sure that if people have been living out of their community, they are supported to move back into the community and continue to receive support until they are settled. We also need to make sure that people can move out of our services into independent living as soon as they are ready.

Improving pathways, flow and move-on is one of the most significant opportunities to enhance value for money. Delays in accessing supported housing, extended lengths of stay, and avoidable voids create inefficiencies that result in both unmet need and additional cost across the system. Ensuring that people are in the right accommodation at the right time will maximise the use of existing capacity and reduce reliance on high-cost temporary and emergency provision.

Effective pathways will increase resident independence, improve flow and ensure supported housing capacity is used where it has the greatest impact.

This priority will focus on:

- Strengthening planning at the point of entry so that supported housing placements are clearly linked to outcomes and next steps.
- Expanding step-down and move-on options, including access to social housing, the private rented sector and ongoing low-level support.
- Improving pathway coordination across homelessness, adult social care, health, probation and children's services.
- Strengthening referral, access and void management processes across supported housing to ensure the right people are in the right bedspaces at the right time, reducing unmet need, delays and unnecessary use of temporary accommodation.
- Supporting residents to build skills, confidence and networks that enable sustainable independence.

Outcome	Objectives
A consistent, transparent and efficient access and allocation system across all supported housing	• Explore the opportunity to introduce a single referral forum, and ensure stronger oversight of placements – utilising an IT solution if available. • Develop a consistent referral and access framework across supported housing providers and commissioners.
Clear and coordinated pathways through supported housing	• Develop clear supported accommodation pathway models, from entry through to move-on, with defined expectations and outcomes. • Strengthen transition planning between children's and adult services, including earlier identification of future housing and support needs. • Work with providers to ensure that move-on is considered from day one, with key milestones mapped out as part of the resident's journey.
Timely move-on and sustained independence for residents.	• Increase access to move-on options, including social housing, private rented sector and adult supported housing pathways. • Ensure ongoing access to floating or low-level support following move-on to sustain tenancies and prevent repeat homelessness. • Explore options for building securing move-on accommodation into supported accommodation contracts, building on the approach with care leaver provision. • Work with providers to ensure that residents build the skills they will require to gain (and maintain) independence.

4. Strengthen quality, oversight and safeguarding across all supported housing

One of the key recommendations from our Needs Assessment was to **prepare for implementation of new regulatory powers**. This includes leveraging new regulatory powers to enforce minimum standards, preparing for a supported housing licensing scheme to regulate providers, and establishing clear quality expectations for all providers operating in the city. In the meantime, we will continue to build on the success of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP), using inspection, enforcement and quality assurance activity to drive improvements across the sector.

The SHIP programme has already demonstrated the value of proactive regulation and quality assurance. Between 2022 and 2024, the programme carried out 60 property inspections, issued 60 enforcement actions, addressed 115 hazards, of which 83% were Category 1 hazards, completed 128 tenant support reviews, and secured 52 successful Housing Benefit interventions. These achievements have helped improve accommodation standards, strengthen provider accountability and improve outcomes for residents.

As demand for supported housing continues to grow and support needs become increasingly complex, maintaining high standards will be critical. We will ensure supported housing is safe, well-managed and genuinely supportive. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act and national guidance place a clear duty on local authorities to improve assurance, quality and resident protection. The SHIP programme has created strong foundations that this strategy will build on.

High-quality supported housing is essential to protecting residents and ensuring public investment delivers meaningful outcomes.

This priority will focus on:

- Strengthening oversight across both commissioned and non-commissioned provision.
- Using gateway processes, data sharing and quality standards to shape the local market.
- Preparing for national supported housing standards and potential licensing arrangements.
- Ensuring accommodation and support meet the needs of residents, with a strong focus on safeguarding and lived experience.
- Tackling poor-quality provision that undermines outcomes, public confidence and value for money.

Outcome	Objectives
All supported housing meets clear, consistent quality standards aligned to national expectations	• Develop and implement a supported housing quality assurance framework, including clear standards, provider expectations and proportionate monitoring arrangements aligned to national guidance and SHROA requirements. • Strengthen provider compliance and governance arrangements, including self-assessment, provider support, and assurance processes to evidence compliance with national standards and legislative requirements.
Residents and those that advocate for them have a strong voice in shaping services and assessing quality	• Strengthen resident engagement and influence, ensuring residents and advocates are informed, empowered and able to shape service delivery and quality improvement. • Embed co-production in service design, commissioning and review processes, building on existing good practice such as Adult Voice and Choice.
Poor-quality provision is identified and addressed quickly and effectively	• Empower residents to report poor-quality provision by ensuring they are aware of reporting routes and feel confident raising concerns, with clear mechanisms for feedback and escalation. • Explore options for introducing reviews of provision, providing a proportionate approach to monitoring whilst maintaining oversight of standards. • Work as a system on the regional level to identify and flag where provision is falling below the appropriate standard. • Take proportionate action where provision falls below expected standards, including enhanced monitoring, targeted support, and enforcement activity.

Delivery, Monitoring and Evaluation

Delivery Plan

A detailed delivery plan is being developed alongside the strategy. This plan will translate strategic priorities into practical actions, with timescales, responsible leads, and resource requirements.

A Supported Housing Board, comprising representatives from the NHS, providers, probation services and other key partners, will oversee the delivery of the Supported Housing Strategy and associated delivery plan.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

One of the key recommendations from our Needs Assessment was to **‘enhance strategic data and intelligence for an evidence-based approach’**.

This includes: investing in better data systems to inform planning and track outcomes; creating an integrated database of all supported housing in Wolverhampton (commissioned and non-commissioned) to monitor supply and demand in real time; conducting regular needs assessments and sharing data across agencies to spot trends early (e.g. a surge in demand for mental health support housing). Strong evidence will enable more responsive management and support efforts to secure external funding.

Progress against this strategy will be monitored through a defined set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Where appropriate, we will align with existing KPIs used across related strategies, avoiding duplication and ensuring a streamlined approach to performance monitoring.

The Supported Housing Board will use performance information data to regularly review progress, identify gaps in provision and respond to emerging trends. This approach will help ensure that the strategy remains evidence-led, resources are targeted effectively, and future service development is informed by a clear understanding of local need and demand.