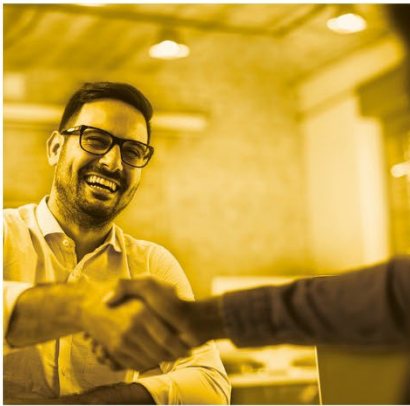




SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2024 – 2028



March 2024

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Contents

Homelessness and rough sleeping Review and Strategy 2024 – 2028 1

1. Introduction	3
2. Tackling the causes of homelessness	9
3. Finding Pathways for At Risk Groups	17
4. Increasing the supply of accommodation	30
5. Resources	31
6. Partnerships	32
Annex A Action Plan.....	34
Annex 2 Equality Impact Assessment.....	48
Stage 1: Scope of the assessment.....	48
Stage 2: Assessment and analysis.....	50



1. Introduction

The Council has a [duty](#) to publish a homelessness strategy based on a review of homelessness in the area.

For the strategy to be effective it should be aligned with other local plans and be developed with the support of other Council departments and wider partners. This will ensure that work in the Borough to tackle homelessness does so by addressing a wide range of factors that contribute to homelessness rather than narrowly focusing on 'housing' issues.

The review we have completed gives us an evidence base to inform our direction and this strategy sets out our approach.

The strategy is underpinned by an action plan that details the work we will do to tackle homelessness and the resources we have to do this work. The action plan has shared ownership with those partners working with us.

Over the period of this strategy we will review the effectiveness of our approach and our response to new challenges and opportunities. The action plan will be updated annually.

1.1 A review of homelessness

We have looked at level of homelessness, considered who becomes homeless, identified the things that lead to homelessness both directly (e.g. being served notice) and indirectly (e.g. debt, or ill health) and the service and accommodation options available to both prevent homelessness and support those who do become homeless.

When we are talking about people who are homeless we are not just looking at those people who are actually sleeping rough. Homelessness has a much wider definition and can affect many in our community. It includes people whose home is not suitable because of disrepair, risk of violence, affordability, overcrowding, health or disability issues, or because they have been served notice.

It is important to remember that during the period of the last Strategy we had Covid. This brought with it many challenges, notably 'Everyone In', a concerted effort to tackle rough sleeping, and a whole new approach to being able to deliver frontline services, as well as a number of opportunities to access funding and find new ways of working with partners.

1.2 Formulating our response

Our strategy looks at how we can:



- Prevent homelessness in the Borough;
- Secure that sufficient accommodation is, and will be, available for residents who are or may become homeless; and,
- Secure that support is available to those who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or have been homeless and need support to prevent it happening again.

For each identified area of activity we set out the evidence from our review (what we know), the work that has and is happening (what we have done) and our ambition over the term of this strategy to further develop services to tackle homelessness (what we will do).

1.3 Links with the Council's Priorities

The [Council's Strategy 2024 -2028](#) outlines its vision, aims, objectives, values and key performance targets. This Strategy supports the Council's priorities to:

Promote Healthier and More Inclusive Communities

- By working with and supporting voluntary sector partners who work with homelessness household;
- Supporting those in greatest need
- Ensuring services delivered recognise and champion equity and inclusion

Support a Strong Economy and Create More Homes

- Help create more homes that meet residents needs, delivering the right home at the right time, including housing with support and temporary accommodation
- Working with social housing providers to maximise the use of the local social housing stock.

1.4 Delivering our Services

The homelessness legislation is set out in [Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 \(as amended\)](#) and this provides the strategic framework for the work we do.

There have been a number of amendments to the legislation increasing the duties of local authorities. Most recently the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed the legislation by placing duties to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness, and to provide homelessness services to all homeless people not just those deemed to be in 'priority need'.



Specific timetables are placed around the help people can expect including duties to 'prevent' homelessness for those who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and further 56 day duty to try to 'relieve' homelessness for those who are actually homeless. For those who do not fall into this group there is still a general duty to ensure advice is available to people in the Borough who have a housing problem.

Everyone owed one of these duties is given a Personal Housing Plan (PHP). This sets out both what the Council will do and what they should do to resolve their housing situation.

It has long been recognised that early intervention can prevent homelessness and the Council's message to residents and the agencies that work in the community has always been 'talk to us early'. The Homelessness Reduction Act was partly in response to those authorities who have not worked with people in this way, sending them away until they are actually roofless.

It has also always been our ambition to assist those that are not in 'priority need', generally these are single people who when they are homeless do not have to be provided accommodation. Since 1997 the Council has run 'Rent Choice', a scheme providing upfront money to secure a home in the private sector, and this has always been available to single people. The Homelessness Reduction Act is partly in response to those authorities who turned these people away with no practical help.

The premise of the legislation is therefore one with which we agree and have worked towards: early intervention and homeless prevention services and support for all.

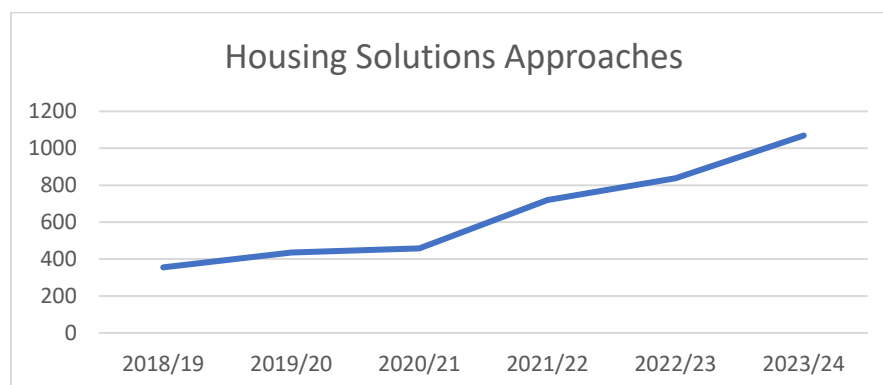
1.5 Homelessness in Surrey Heath

Looking at who we work with, we record all those households who approach us with a housing need that could lead to homelessness. Some of these people we will give general advice to and they will be able to act on this advice, others will need more detailed case work where we actively work with them to resolve their housing need.

The chart below shows the number of advice approaches each year over the term of the last Strategy.



Not all



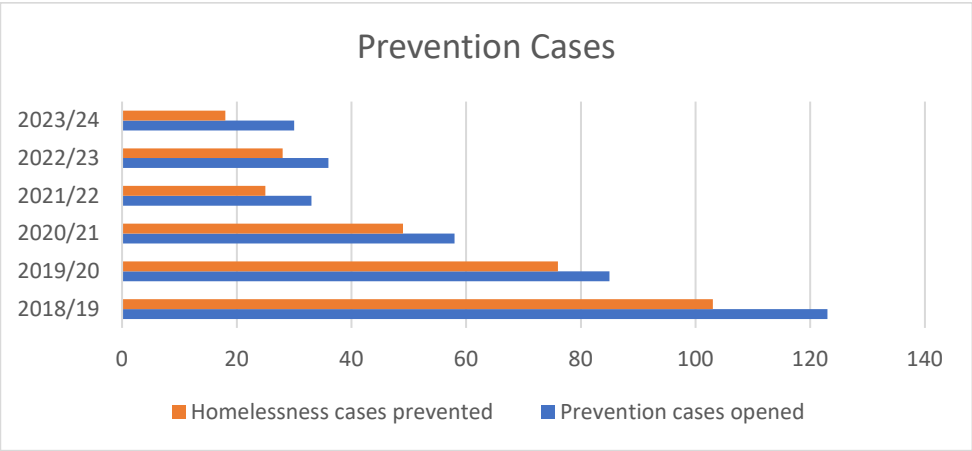
approaches trigger a duty under the homelessness persons legislation. Where there is a trigger, the legislation sets out the actions the Council must take and the decisions that must be made. The decisions that can be made are:

- A prevention duty is owed if the household is going to be homeless within 56 days;
- A relief duty is owed if the household has already become homeless;
- A full housing duty is owed to a household until settled housing is found;
- The applicant is intentionally homeless i.e. they did something to cause their homelessness so there is a not a duty to provide housing but advice and assistance is offered;
- The applicant in non-priority which means that they don't have children and are not vulnerable in some way so there is a not a duty to provide housing but advice and assistance is offered; or,
- The applicant is found not homeless i.e. they can remain in their home; or, found ineligible i.e. certain people from abroad who do not qualify for help from the Council.

The chart below shows the number of households who approached each year threatened with homelessness, along with the number of cases where the Council were able to prevent that homelessness.

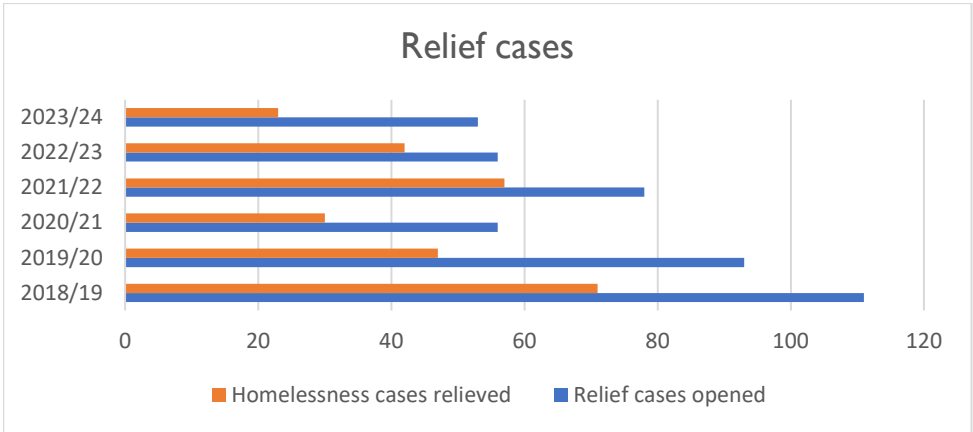


The
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below shows the number of cases who approached each year where the household was already homeless, along with the number of these cases where action from the Council secured settled accommodation.

If the

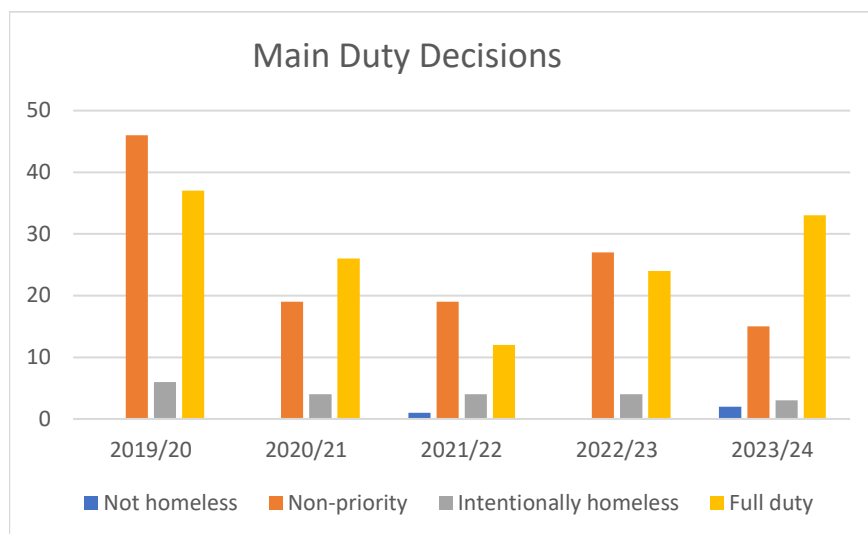


Council is unable to prevent or relieve a households homelessness a decision has to be made as to what duty is owed. These are the decisions relating to whether there is a full housing duty, whether the household has priority need and whether the household is intentionally homeless and will determine the level of support the Council is required to provide. Only those owed the full housing duty have a right to be provided with as settled homes. The duty to non-priority households and intentionally homeless households is to provide advice and assistance in support of securing them a settled home.

The chart below sets out these decisions over the last 5 years.



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emergency homelessness is bed and breakfast accommodation. We recognise that is not ideal for either families with children or for residents who are vulnerable in some way as it is out of area and usually has shared facilities.

The chart below shows our B&B usage over the period of our last Homelessness Strategy in which we have sought to reduce the use of this accommodation. It is measured in 'bed and breakfast days'. This is the total number of days we had households in B&B and is calculated by adding those days together (so 5 families in B&B for 5 days each = 25 B&B days).

Year	B&B days
2018/19	1009
2019/20	787
2020/21	3174
2021/22	3099
2022/23	2163
2023/24	894

The higher use in 2020/21 and 2021/22 represents use of B&B during the pandemic to house single people who would not usually be provided with accommodation.

As well as the social cost of placing households in B&B there is a financial cost to the Council and the table below shows our expenditure on B&B over the last 7 years. The actual cost is



arrived at by taking the rent charged to households in bed and breakfast, including any help they have from Housing Benefit, away from the actual charge made by B&B proprietors.

Year	Gross	Net
2018/19	£75,430	£37,749
2019/20	£58,810	£35,202
2020/21	£68,611	-£1,718
2021/22	£183,718	£108,514
2022/23	£134,509	£76,136
2023/24	£157,319	£139,139

NB the year of negative net spend was when more rent was collected than the cost of accommodation, this is due to rent collection being monitored by financial year even if it relates to previous year's placements.

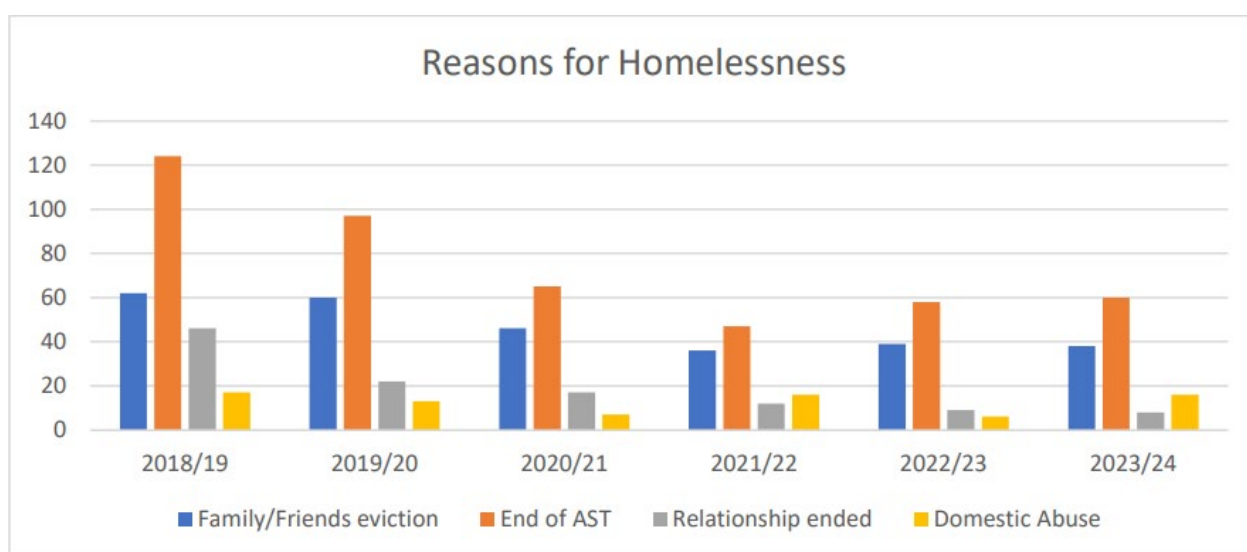
2 Tackling the causes of homelessness

What we know

The Council is required to complete returns for Government setting out detail about who becomes homeless and the reasons behind why they become homeless.

The chart below shows the 3 main reasons for the loss of the last settled home over the period of the previous strategy from residents who had a prevention, relief or full housing duty accepted. In total these reasons account for 75% of all homelessness duties accepted. The reasons are: people excluded by family or friends, residents losing an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the Private Rented Sector and relationship breakdown (separated here into non-violent and breakdown due to domestic abuse). The years covered are 2018/19 through to 2022/23.





Other reasons include statistically less significant reasons and reasons that do not fit into Government reporting categories, i.e. they happen to a small number of households in any given year. Those with reasons are detailed in the table below:

Year	End of social housing	Evicted from supported housing	Left Institution	End of private rented (not AST)	Fleeing non-domestic violence	Due to emergency	Mortgage repossession	Dis-repair	DA perpetrator excluded
2018/19	14	8	9	6	2	0	0	0	0
2019/20	6	7	5	2	2	1	3	4	0
2021/1	4	2	3	6	1	1	0	0	0
2021/22	3	3	4	6	1	0	0	0	5
2022/23	4	9	2	9	2	1	1	0	4
2023/24	3	3	2	0	3	1	0	0	1

These are monitored by the Team to see if any trends emerge.

A new trend in 2023/24 was approaches from residents in Home Office accommodation. 18 households who were granted asylum approached the Council on leaving the accommodation and were owed a housing duty.

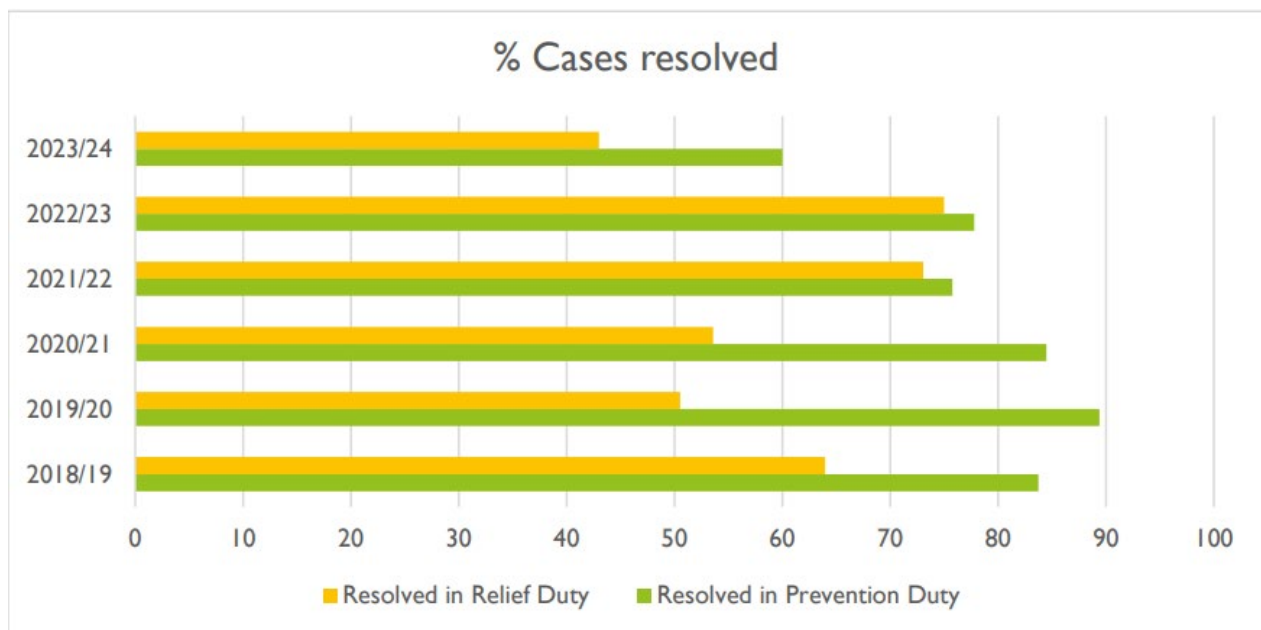


It should be noted that in 2018/19 the Government changed reporting requirements on local authorities and it was necessary to change the software used by the Team. This initially led to a higher number of cases being marked as 'other' so in 2018/19, 52 cases were marked as other, and this has reduced year on year to 3 cases being marked as other in 2022/23. This means our data is now more accurate.

What we have done

Since 2002 we have had a succession of homelessness strategies with a focus on preventing homelessness and helping people move in a planned way. This has been achieved through a number of project-based initiatives and the individual work that Case Officers carry out with residents at risk of homelessness.

The chart below sets out of success over the period of the previous strategy in preventing homelessness, both by keeping residents in their current home or finding a planned move for them:



What we have done

We have increased the staff team using external funding to provide additional support to residents with a housing problem and better integrated the work we do in improving housing conditions in the private sector and providing adaptations and improvement to the homes of disabled and vulnerable residents with our housing advice and homelessness work.

We successfully bid for Surrey County Council's Floating Housing Support Service and integrated that team into the Housing Solutions Service. The service works both with residents



who are at risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless in order to support them to move on to settled homes in the community

We have invested in new software to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act and to produce Personal Housing Plans so all homeless households have written advice and can access and update their plans on-line.

We have bid for funding to both deliver individual solutions for residents (e.g financial support to maintain or secure a tenancy) and project work (e.g. investing in a Case Officer role focused on working with residents before they reach the threshold to be supported through the Homelessness Legislation – a 'pre-Prevention' Duty homeless 'prevention' service).

What we will do

While we look at individual solutions to each person's homelessness through our Housing Solutions Service, working with our partners this strategy focuses on the main reasons for homelessness. To that end, after reviewing homelessness in the Borough our priorities over the term of this strategy are:

- To provide an effective and person-centred service that reduces homelessness against its main causes;
- To develop and support service pathways for those residents at greater risk of becoming homeless to access the support they need to live settled lives in the community; and,
- To work with a range of partners to deliver a shared approach to homelessness that maximises available resources and expertise.

2.1 Relationship and Family Breakdown

What we know

This area of homelessness is one of the most complex as it involves very individual and very personal circumstances.

In this strategy we have taken all aspects of family breakdown and looked for some common features or areas of work we can undertake to reduce homeless for this reason while recognising that often it will be our approach to resident's individual circumstances that will be the defining factor in finding a successful outcome.

The main areas of family breakdown leading to homelessness are the breakdown between parent and adult child leading to the adult child being excluded from the family home, and relationship breakdown between a couple whereby one has to leave the home, or the home ceases to be available for both partners.



Often the adult child leaving the parental home has a child of their own and will be moving to their first independent home.

In previous Homelessness Strategies the data available showed that only small numbers of households were accepted as statutory homeless due to fleeing domestic abuse although Case Officers were involved in many more cases where other options to homelessness are found. With data now collected on prevention work there is a more realistic picture of need.

The Housing Solutions Team is a partner on the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC). This forum considers multi agency actions in the cases of the most serious domestic abuse cases where there is a risk of serious harm, including considering housing options.

The Team also sits on MATAC (Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination) which is the process for identifying and tackling serial perpetrators of domestic abuse. The overarching objectives of the MATAC is to safeguard adults and children at risk of domestic abuse and to reduce the offending of domestic abuse perpetrators, including through housing interventions. Reporting on reasons for homelessness show that in the last three years 10 alleged perpetrators have approached for homelessness assistance after being excluded from the family home.

What we have done

We seek to mediate to resolve potential conflict that leads to family breakdown, and where homelessness cannot be prevented we negotiate to avoid bed and breakfast.

We provide Rent Choice financial support to help those leaving the family home to secure a tenancy with a private landlord to avoid homelessness.

We reviewed the Allocation Policy to ensure that there was no priority advantage for parents to evict adult children when it comes to securing social housing.

We jointly fund a Sanctuary Scheme with other Borough's and Districts, providing security works to the homes of victims of abuse to make them safe in their home rather than requiring a move to alternative accommodation.

We work with other Surrey Boroughs and Districts to move those at risk of serious domestic abuse to other areas, with tenancies offered on a reciprocal basis across the County.

We are a partner in MARAC to ensure the housing options of those at risk of serious domestic abuse are considered as part of wider multi-agency interventions.

We reviewed the Allocation Policy to ensure that there was a mechanism to give priority to those MARAC cases where there was an urgent need to provide an alternative settled home and avoid emergency accommodation.



We are a partner in MATAC to ensure the housing options of alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse are considered as part of protecting victims of domestic abuse and supporting interventions to change offending behaviour.

We are commissioned to deliver Surrey County Council's Floating Housing Support service in Surrey Heath with the remit including to support residents who need help to secure or maintain a home. This contract will be reviewed during the life of this Strategy.

What we will do

We will deliver a pathway for Housing Register applications received from adult children living in their parents' home to support them to manage and plan for leaving home rather than it happening in a crisis.

We will review the Allocation Policy to ensure that it does not incentivise homelessness and does not penalise those residents who work with us to resolve their housing issue.

We will continue to work with local partners and across Surrey to provide a range of housing and support options for residents fleeing domestic abuse.

We will set up a local forum for agencies working with residents experiencing domestic abuse to ensure services are co-ordinated and responsive to local demand.

We will develop contacts with organisations working with perpetrators of domestic abuse to ensure they have access to the support and accommodation options needed to address their behaviours and protect victims.

We will work with Surrey County Council to demonstrate the benefits of the Floating Housing Support Service being embedded in wider housing work at a Borough level and the requirement for continued funding when the service is recommissioned.

2.2 The loss of a tenancy in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

What we know

The end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) has been an increasingly common cause of homelessness over the last 10 years, locally and nationally. Over the period of the last strategy this reason has accounted for 37% of the households we accepted homeless duties for, and in all 5 years was the single biggest reason for homelessness.

An AST can be ended with a Section 21 notice which, if served correctly with landlord having completed the right paperwork throughout the tenancy, ends the tenancy and allows the landlord to gain possession of the property without a reason.

As no reason is needed to gain possession the Section 21 notice can be used by a landlord to evict for a variety of reasons and the tenant has no defence. For example should a landlord



serve a notice for rent arrears the tenant could defend those proceedings to prevent the Court granting possession; if instead the landlord serves a Section 21 because they want to evict a tenant in arrears then the tenant has no defence to these proceedings.

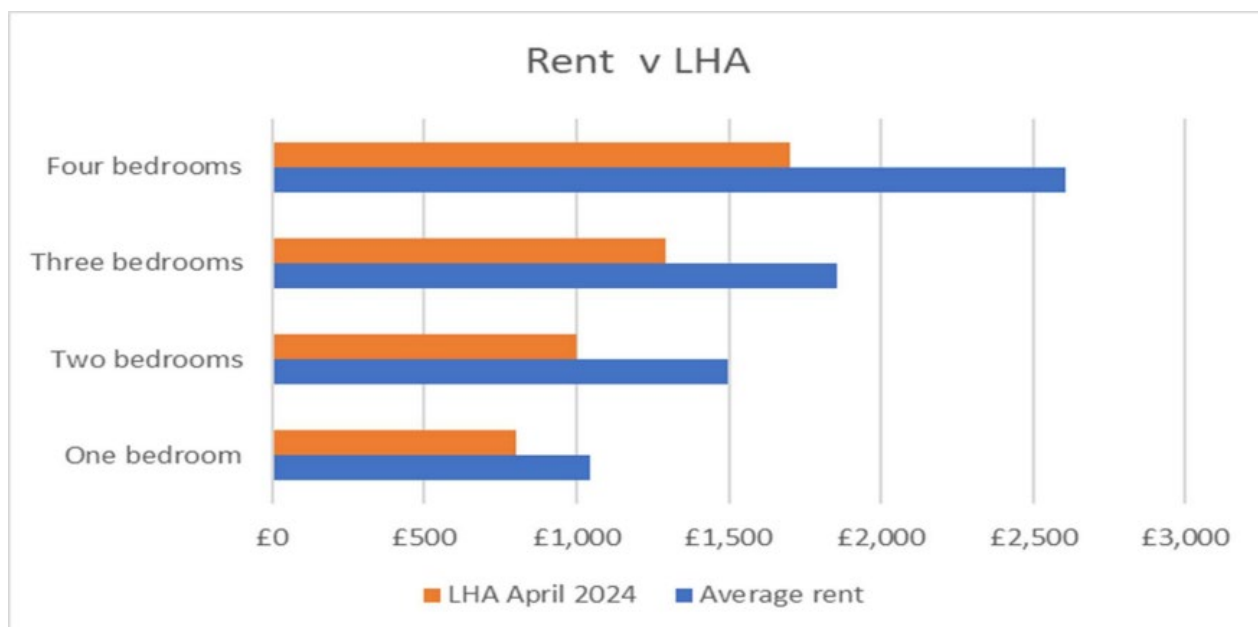
There is currently legislation going through Parliament, the Renters Reform Bill, that seeks to remove Section 21 as a way of ending tenancies.

The increase in numbers may have a number of underlying factors: the increased number of people in the private rented sector (both those unable to access a scarce supply of social housing and those unable to access homeownership) and the issue of affordability with incomes not keeping pace with rent levels and Local Housing Allowance being frozen. There has also been increased regulation landlords are required to adhere to, changes to tax rules and uncertainty concerning the impact of the Renters Reform Bill.

For those on low incomes or reliant on benefits the freeze in Local Housing Allowance, the financial help available towards rent, has meant an increasing gap between the help available and average rents requiring households to find money to 'top up' the assistance they get to meet their rent obligations.

A recent announcement of a one off LHA increase from April 2024 does not bridge the gap between the rent of available properties locally and the financial support residents can receive towards their rent.

The table below sets out rents in Camberley as at September 2023 and the maximum LHA available for each size of property from April 2024.



It should be noted that during Covid there was a ban on s21 eviction, however since these restrictions were lifted there has been a steady increase in tenants being served notice.



What we have done

We have consolidated our housing services into one team. This Housing Service includes Case Officers working on homelessness prevention and housing advice (Housing Solutions Team) and Environmental Health Officers working on private sector housing enforcement who also have responsibility for the Councils grants programme, delivering financial assistance for adaptations and home improvements (Home Solutions Team).

This cross disciplinary work has improved the service to tenants and landlords: giving us the ability to give both advice and support to make tenancies successful and prevent homelessness, as well as being able to tackle issues where a small minority of landlords do not meet their responsibilities in terms of serving correct notice, managing their homes or keeping the homes safe for tenants.

This work is further enhanced by employing a Letting Negotiator within the Housing Hub. While the primary focus of the role is accessing additional tenancies, having a single point of contact for landlords and agents has improved our ability to support landlords and access homes for residents.

Case Officers in the Housing Solutions Team have been trained in tenancy law, and this training is regularly updated. This means that notice served on tenants can be properly scrutinised to ensure that landlords are meeting their obligations and tenants advised on their rights.

Often small interventions can resolve a tenancy issue and prevent homelessness. Case Officers have access to a pot of funding to assist tenants who would otherwise become homeless. Payments from this 'prevention pot' could be used to address a small amount of arrears accrued through hardship and pay fees at renewal of a tenancy. These are cost effective interventions and are linked with other work with the tenant (for example if we help with arrears we might ask the tenant to engage with Money Advice services as a condition of that assistance).

For those with an entitlement to Local Housing Allowance it is possible to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). While administered by the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service decisions on DHP are made jointly with the Housing Solutions Team, with weekly meetings to assess applications. As with payments from the prevention pot, DHP awards are linked to wider housing advice and involve the tenants to commit to actions that will resolve any issues in their tenancy. The Council is committed to spending its full DHP allocation flexibly to support residents each year.

The Council is a member of ATLAS (Accreditation and Training for Landlords and Agents Service), giving local landlords access to an accreditation scheme that supports them with training, advice and other services covering all aspects of tenancy and property management. At September 2023 there were 400 local landlords accredited.



The Council offers landlord's of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) a discount on their licence fee if they are a member of the accreditation scheme as a way of encouraging best practice in the local market.

Following a successful bid lead by Accent and supported by the Council and the Hope Hub we were national pilots for the Crisis Renting Ready programme, providing tenancy training for people who have not held a tenancy or who have not been successful in maintaining a tenancy previously.

What we will do

We will continue to ring-fence Homelessness Prevention Grant for homeless prevention work allowing Case Officers the flexibility to find individual and innovative interventions to support residents keep their home from a 'Prevention Pot'.

The Revenues and Benefits Service and Housing Solutions Team will continue joint work to ensure that Discretionary Housing Payments are used flexibly and effectively to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies.

Early intervention is essential if there is a way of preventing a tenancy from ending, to this end we will undertake the following work:

1. Undertake a campaign to promote landlord accreditation, considering what incentives can be offered to landlords who are accredited. Accredited landlords have the knowledge and support to effectively and legally manage their properties, and proactive management is likely to lead to less tenancy issues and more sustainable tenancies.
2. Undertake a campaign to ensure landlords understand the implications of the Renters Reform Bill to encourage positive engagement with providing accommodation in the Borough.
3. Ensure that tenants served with a notice, or who are worried that they cannot sustain their tenancy, know to seek advice at an early stage.
4. Investigate other interventions in the sector to support landlords and tenants including rent guarantees, and a social lettings agency.
5. Investigate whether local landlords see benefit in holding a local landlord's forum, and, if so, what form this should take in order to support them to provide a sector that is a secure and suitable option for residents.
6. At a strategic level we will take every opportunity to lobby Central Government to ensure that the support for low income residents needing help with their rent is based on the reality of local rent levels.

3 Finding Pathways for At Risk Groups



3.1 Rough Sleepers

What we know

Prior to 2018 when formulating the previous Strategies, action on rough sleeping was not a priority, and it was noted that there was not a significant rough sleeping issue in the Borough.

Since 2018 this situation has changed as demonstrated by the Council's Annual Rough Sleeper count. The Council is required to do an annual count or estimate of the number of rough sleepers out on a given night in November. While we do an estimate rather than a physical count the numbers we return are based on named individuals identified by the Council and partner agencies and independently verified by Homeless Link on behalf of Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The table below shows our reported numbers.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Count	0	4	18	12	5	6	12	7	5	9	8

Further evidence can be found by looking at the number of single people on the housing register who are no fixed abode which, as well as rough sleepers, captures those who are sofa surfing or in other precarious housing situations. As there are a number of strict criteria to join the Housing Register this still does not reflect every single person in this position in the Borough.

At 10th May 2019 there were 16 NFA applicants on the Housing Register, all with a Surrey Heath connection. As at 21st March 2024 this number had increased to 25.

At the beginning of March 2024 the Housing Solutions Team's Homelessness Reduction Act case load is currently 133 cases, of which 80 are single people. This contrasts with a total case load of 83, with 47 of those being single people when the last strategy was written in 2019.

Housing associations provide single person accommodation but there is limited availability. Currently there are 208 single people and couples on the Housing Register (constituting 50% of all applications) while table below shows the availability of housing association one bedroom homes over the last 5 years.

2020/21 - 75 homes available

2021/22 - 117 homes available

2022/23 - 57 homes available

2023/24 - 87 homes available



While it is difficult to identify specific trends amongst this population the Housing Solutions Team are aware of the following issues that both lead to homelessness and make finding a housing option difficult: LHA freeze meaning financial assistance with rent does not meet local rent levels (see table below); Universal Credit being unpopular with landlords especially for single people who have been in prison, have drug and alcohol issues or other vulnerability; lack of affordable shared housing; and, lack of supported housing options.

As at 21/3/24	Average rent per week	Local Housing Allowance per week (Camberley)	Difference
Single Room	£155.77	£86.50	£67.27
One bedroom property	£252.92	£161.10	£91.82

Problems with drugs or alcohol can be part of a person's experience of homelessness. Of course not everyone who has problems with alcohol or drugs becomes homeless and not every homeless person has problems with drug or alcohol abuse. However, levels of drug and alcohol misuse are relatively high amongst the homeless population.

There are complex links between homelessness and reoffending, where each can be a cause and a result of the other. A Homeless Link survey found over 75% of homelessness services in England support clients who are prison leavers. In turn Home Officer research showed, ex-prisoners who are homeless upon release are more likely to re-offend than those who have stable accommodation.

For details on mental health and multiple disadvantage see 3.4 below.

What we have done

As this issue has presented the Housing Solutions Team has undertaken a number of initiatives:

We have made successful bids to the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) programme for a number of projects (detailed below).

The Hope Hub has moved into their new premises provided by the Council at the Poratacabin (Rear of Library). While they have a wider remit as a charity to supporting vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness they are specifically funded by the Housing Solutions Team for their work with single homeless residents using Homelessness Prevention Grant from DLUHC.



In 2018 a successful bid was made to the LGA for Housing Advisor support. This was for targeted consultancy from industry specialists and in Surrey Heath looked at and reported on the options for delivering accommodation for single people using developer contributions.

This led to the purchase of Connaught Court, a 9 bedroom former temporary accommodation scheme. Connaught Court provides accommodation for 9 single homeless residents, along with support, for up to two years to enable them to move on to settle lives in the community.

Through Covid we worked with Surrey County Council to provide emergency pods for rough sleepers and single people who could not go to shared housing at a temporary site in Deepcut.

We purchased a 6 bedroom property to lease to the Hope Hub to provide an Emergency Accommodation Scheme (EAS). The EAS provides housing and support for rough sleepers for a short period to access their housing and support needs to facilitate move on.

Using RSI funding, with Transform Housing Support and Accent we set up a Housing Led scheme. Based on 'Housing First' the scheme provide 4 tenancies for rough sleepers in Accent homes with support delivered by Transform to make that tenancy successful. This offers a route out of rough sleeping for individuals with more complex needs that make other supported options such as Connaught Court or the EAS with shared facilities unsuitable.

We have employed a Single Homelessness Support Officer into the Surrey County Council commissioned Floating Housing Support Service. This role provides support to single people at risk of homelessness and to those who have been homeless and now have move on accommodation to set them up for success in the community. This RSI funded role continues to March 2025.

We commissioned HomelessLink, the national single homeless charity, to undertake a review of the services and accommodation options available for single people in the Borough. The recommendations in their report inform the actions over the life of this Strategy.

Our RSI funding includes money to support delivering outreach to rough sleepers out of hours, although a delivery mechanism for this service has not yet been identified.

We produce an Annual 'Ending Rough Sleeping Plan' for DLUHC to support our RSI bids.

We complete monthly monitoring on rough sleeping activity. To facilitate this we have monthly intelligence meetings with the Hope Hub to understand the flow of people into and out of rough sleeping.

We have produced an annual Severe Weather Emergency protocol (SWEP) operational policy to support people in periods of severe weather. We also provided grant funding to the Hope Hub to ensure there is an offer of accommodation for rough sleepers over Christmas and the New Year when services are harder to access.



Case Officers in the Housing Solutions Team have training on issues relating to single homelessness and rough sleeping, including training on safeguarding, mental health and drug and alcohol issues and including both the skills to deal with clients and the legal framework in which support is delivered.

We provided data for the Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Housing chapter, highlighting the lack of provision for rough sleepers facing multiple disadvantage.

What we will do

The Council will continue to work with the Hope Hub to deliver an offer to single homeless people that navigates them to the services they need and supports them to settled lives in the community

Agree a local outreach protocol to all rough sleepers notified to us.

Deliver an annual Ending Rough Sleeper Plan to DLUHC to support future bids to the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.

Deliver annual Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)

Work with the Hope Hub to maximise use of the Emergency Accommodation Scheme

With the Hope Hub collect data to continue understand the local cohort to develop the right housing and support responses to these residents and set up a Pathways Group to map the journey of rough sleepers in the borough and their service interactions.

Work with Surrey County Council and other partners to deliver the Changing Futures programme locally.

Feed data into Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board and Health and Well-being Boards to support wider service development including specific work on the rough sleeper and single homeless strand of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Look at ways of capturing service users' voices and involvement in the assessment and design of services.

Complete evaluations of Housing Led and the Single Homelessness Floating Housing Support service to inform future funding bids.

Continue to ensure that Case Officer training is up to date, including on ensuring a trauma informed approach when dealing with individuals with multiple disadvantage.

3.2 Young People and Care Leavers

What we know



Research in 2017 by Centrepont found that 1 in 4 care leavers had sofa surfed and 14% had slept rough.

16 and 17-year olds and care leavers under 21 have an automatic priority need under the legislation.

We have not accepted any 16 and 17-year olds or care leavers as homeless in the last 10 years, not placed any in bed and breakfast accommodation and the Council's joint work on this area of activity has passed the National Practitioner Service's Local Challenge for 16/17 year olds as part of the Gold Standard assessment.

A rapid improvement event was arranged in 2012, by Surrey County Council to address the challenges raised by the G v Southwark 2009 UKHL judgement. The judgement gave clarity on the responsibilities of Children's Services and housing authorities regarding homeless young people. The result of the event was the implementation of a new Youth Support Service for Surrey.

The Surrey 16-17-Year-Old Young Person and Care Leavers Protocols, implemented in 2010, have been reviewed with working arrangements setting out a pathway for homeless young people and care leavers.

The Protocols set out pathways for these young people with Surrey County Council leading in providing emergency housing and support and supported housing options, and the borough and district councils providing options for young people to move onto independence.

We are aware that the County Council is responsible for a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who will come through the care system and need to move to independence however at this time the impact of this is on housing services is unclear.

What we have done

Revised protocols were adopted in 2024 by Surrey County Council and the Boroughs and Districts, taking into account of changes in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as changes at Surrey County Council.

We have amended the Allocation Policy to ensure we are supporting care leavers who need to access social housing and are meeting the requirements of the Protocol.

We have used accommodation at Connaught Court to provide a supported environment for care leavers and other young people to support them in their journey to independence.

The Floating Housing Support Service, both the commissioned Surrey County Council Service and the RSI funded Single Homelessness Service, is available to care leavers and young people at risk of homelessness or who have experienced homelessness.



What we will do

Ensure newly adopted Protocols work at a local level and train all staff in on the Protocols so we provide consistent advice to vulnerable young people.

Attend monthly meetings with Surrey County Council and housing and support providers to ensure no 16 or 17 year old or care leaver falls between services.

3.3 Former Armed Forces Personnel

What we know

There are regular news stories about the prevalence of veterans in the homelessness population, especially amongst rough sleepers.

Unfortunately Government figures focus on those households accepted as having a 'priority need' meaning there are limited official figures available to fully assess the extent of the issue. Various charities offer different estimates although many concentrate on London. For example, The Royal British Legion suggests veterans among London's homeless population is around 6%, around 1,100 individuals.

Locally it is hard to assess numbers although it is fair to say in spite of the local military presence numbers are low:

1. Over the last 5 years we have only been approached as homeless by 3 households whose last settled accommodation was armed forces accommodation (1 Family and 2 single people);
2. In the last five years we have not accepted any single person as having a priority due to being vulnerable as a result of serving in the Armed Forces; and,
3. At 20/3/24 there were only four households on the Housing Register who were currently serving or had left the Forces in the last 5 years.

This low number may be due to the fact that unless a household establishes a reason to stay in the Borough, for example due to employment, then on discharge they are more likely to return to an area of previous residence or one with a family connection.

There are lots of charities offering support and services to veterans which can assist us in helping those ex-Armed Forces personnel who approach us.

What we have done

We signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant in 2012.

We represented all Surrey Boroughs and Districts as the housing representative on the Surrey Community Integration Task Group.



On individual cases we have used the available resources to assist including accessing SPACES supported accommodation for veterans and securing financial assistance from veterans' charities.

Updated the Allocation Policy and introduced new ICT reports to allow monitoring of approaches from former and serving members of the Services to inform service delivery and development.

What we will do

We continue to monitor housing need from the Armed Forces and former Armed Forces community both through direct approaches and our joint work to ensure that we have the right assistance in place, reporting annually in the review of this Strategy.

We are sitting on the Countywide review of the Joint Housing Needs Assessment (JNSA) for serving and former Armed Forces personnel.

3.4 Residents whose housing is impacted by their mental health and multiple disadvantage

What we know

Housing and mental health are often linked. Poor mental health can make it harder to cope with housing problems, while being homeless or having housing problems can make mental health worse. Related factors can also impact on the mental health of residents leading to homelessness, such as debt, loss of employment or relationship breakdown.

139 households on the Housing Register at 21/3/24 indicated that there was a household member with a mental health issue (ranging from anxiety and depression to severe and enduring conditions). This represents a third of the households on the Housing Register.

Feedback from our work with rough sleepers found that while many had mental health issues they had difficulty in accessing and staying engaged with services due to their chaotic life styles.

Home Group provide three shared houses in Camberley for people recovering from poor mental health and moving back to independence within the community.

Often those experiencing poor mental health also have other needs, this multiple disadvantage (formerly known as complex needs) mainly originates in adverse childhood experiences; approximately 85% of people facing severe multiple disadvantage (SMD) have experienced childhood trauma. For many, their current circumstances are shaped by long-term experiences of poverty, deprivation, trauma, abuse, and neglect. Many also face racism, sexism, and homophobia. These inequalities intersect in different ways, manifesting in a combination of experiences including homelessness, substance use, domestic abuse, contact with the criminal



justice system and mental ill health. Other risk factors can include neurodiversity, physical disabilities, and learning difficulties.

What we have done

With other Surrey Boroughs and Districts, CCGs and hospital trusts we have agreed a mental health protocol that seeks to support those people who are in the mental health system who are also experiencing a housing problem so they can access a co-ordinated response and not approach in crisis. This was renewed in 2023.

We work with Home Group to ensure access to their accommodation for residents needing supported housing.

We hold regular multi-agency meetings with Home Group and the Community Mental Health Recovery Service to have a planned approach to individuals and services locally.

Reviewed the Allocation Policy to ensure that residents who are ready to move on from supported housing have a sufficient priority to move to a home in the community.

We secured Government and CCG funding for a mental health case worker at the Hope Hub, with Surrey Heath CCG continuing to fund the post after the initial DLUHC grant ended.

Since 2022 Surrey County Council have funded the Bridge the Gap Service, in Surrey Heath provided by the Hope Hub and funded by Surrey County Council. Bridge the Gap is a specialist "trauma informed" multiple disadvantage outreach service that has been developed in conjunction with lived experience experts and Surrey Homeless Alliance members to offer person-centred keyworker support to individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage. The support includes, but is not limited to:

- Assistance with finding/sustaining accommodation.
- Physical and mental health care
- Substance use and harm reduction.
- Financial arrangements including benefits applications and form filling.
- Health appointments
- Assisting with daily living tasks

We are a partner in Surrey Adult's Matter (SAM). Run by Surrey County Council (SCC) the aim is to design and deliver better coordinated services for people facing multiple disadvantages such as rough sleeping and homelessness, substance misuse, mental health, and criminal justice. It delivers both interventions for individuals through panel meetings and assessment of the whole system of services interacting with these complex individuals.



Using Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding, with Transform Housing Support and Accent we set up a Housing Led scheme. Based on 'Housing First' the scheme provide 4 tenancies for rough sleepers in Accent homes with support provided by Transform to make that tenancy successful. This provides a route out of rough sleeping for individuals with more complex needs that make other supported options such as Connaught Court or the EAS unsuitable.

We successfully bid for Surrey County Council's floating support contract the remit of which includes to work with residents whose mental health affects their ability to secure or maintain accommodation. With RSI funding we added a Single Homelessness Floating Housing Support Officer into this service.

What we will do

Action to support these residents overlap with the work detailed in the rough sleeper section:

With the Hope Hub collect data to continue understand the local cohort to develop the right housing and support responses to these residents and set up a Pathways Group to map the journey of rough sleepers in the borough and their service interactions.

Work with Surrey County Council and other partners to deliver the Changing Futures programme locally.

Feed data into Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board and Health and Well-being Boards to support wider service development including specific work on the rough sleeper and single homeless strand of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Look at ways of capturing service users' voices and involvement in the assessment and design of services.

Complete evaluations of Housing Led and the Single Homelessness Floating Housing Support service to inform future funding bids.

Undertake training to deliver a trauma informed approach

3.5 Resettlement Groups

What we know

In January 2014 the Government committed to assist people fleeing Syria and in 2015 this was enlarged to a commitment to 20,000 refugees being settled in the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This was a local authority led scheme with a five year funding package. The scheme allowed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify displaced Syrians requiring safe routes to participating countries.



The 20,000 target was reached in February 2021, and the Syrian scheme replaced with a wider UK Resettlement Scheme, with funding to support refugees from across the world.

Following the withdrawal from Afghanistan, Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) started in August 2021 with the aim to assist those Afghan nationals, and their families, who had worked with British Armed Forces and government.

Data published in the [Immigration System Statistics](#) December 2023 release show a total of 25,042 individuals under the Afghan ARAP and ACRS schemes (see next section for further details on scheme breakdowns). This number differs from the total number of arrivals following the evacuation from Afghanistan, as not all those evacuated required resettlement (e.g. British citizens or those with settled status). The total number of arrivals up to the end of December 2023 is around 27,900.

Qualifying families were identified and assessed by the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office. This was another local authority led programme, with funding available for the first 3 years of resettlement.

In 2023 following the Russian attacked on Ukraine the Government set up two schemes to permit those fleeing the war to come to the UK.

Local authorities have been operating the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The scheme requires Ukrainian residents to identify a UK resident able to provide them with accommodation for at least 6 months with local authorities ensuring that the sponsor and the sponsor's home is suitable to receive the household, and offer ongoing support following arrival.

As at 19th March 2024 72,200 visas had been offered through the Family Scheme, and 182,100 visas issued through the Sponsorship scheme.

The annual number of [asylum applications](#) to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132. After that the number fell sharply to reach a twenty-year low point of 17,916 in 2010. It rose steadily throughout the 2010s, then rapidly from 2021 onwards to reach 81,130 applications in 2022, the highest annual number since 2002.

In 2023, 67,337 applications for asylum were made in the UK, which related to 84,425 individuals (more than one applicant can be included in a single application). Of these, 62,336 people were granted refugee status or other protection following an asylum application. This is the highest number of people granted since records began in 1984.

People in the asylum system who are destitute receive support from the UK Government. This could be the provision of accommodation, subsistence (cash support) or both, overseen by the



Home Office. At the end of December 2023, there were 111,132 individuals in receipt of asylum support, of which 41% were in hotel accommodation (45,768 individuals).

Lakeside Hotel in the Borough is being used by the Home Office as initial accommodation (section 98) for asylum seekers since March 2022. Section 98 support is meant to be temporary, emergency support for people seeking asylum while waiting for section 95 support, which is the support offered pending an outcome on the asylum application.

Section 95 support will be granted after some days, weeks, or sometimes months in initial accommodation under section 98. If housing support is needed from the Home Office, under section 95 new accommodation is provided, usually a flat or shared house, somewhere else in the country. This is called 'dispersal'.

The experience is that asylum seekers are spending months, and in some cases years, at Lakeside and are not being dispersed. Further, due to time spent here without dispersal accommodation being offered people are receiving their asylum decision and the accommodation is being ended. For those receiving a grant of status they then are homeless with a right to approach the Council and make a homeless application.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 49 households have approached the Council for housing advice and assistance.

At March 2024 Lakeside holds 139 individuals with a capacity of 180.

What we have done

Through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme we welcomed 5 families. Accommodation was provided by Accent into family homes and the Family Support Team arranged a full package of support from furnishing properties, meeting families as they arrived and helping them settle in the community: including accessing English lessons, claiming benefits, registering for health services and schools, looking for training and work as well as encouraging them to build their own network

Through the Afghan Resettlement Programme we welcomed 5 families. Initially offering temporary accommodation in Accent accommodation at Lawrence Lodge then supporting move on to the private sector with financial assistance and providing continuing support. By September 2024, all the Afghan families who originally arrived in the borough will close to the service, following completion of support.

We have received a total of 171 individuals to the borough through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Of these, 72 individuals (45 households) continue to reside in the borough under the H4U scheme with a sponsor. Each individual comes with an attached funding stream of £10,500 per person, which reduced to £5,900 for anyone arriving in the UK after 1st January 2023.



This funding is apportioned between SCC and SHBC who are collaboratively delivering support to Ukrainian guests. Support for these resettlement groups has been funded by Government revenue grant and the service delivered from within the Family Support Team, using their strong person focused approach, networks with other statutory and voluntary groups, and knowledge of local services.

In December 2022 the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced the £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund to provide housing for those who had come to the UK under the Afghan and Ukraine resettlement schemes. In March 2023 Executive approved the Council's participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) with officers proceeding to acquire six affordable/low-cost properties and 1 bridging property to support those who may be homeless, at risk of homelessness or who live in unsuitable temporary accommodation.

In June 2023, round 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund was launched which provided a £250 million fund (LAHF R2), with the majority of the additional funding used to house those on Afghan resettlement schemes currently in bridging accommodation and the rest used to ease wider homelessness pressures. The Council committed to the delivery of 2 further properties in this round of funding.

What we will do

While a number of agencies are assigned to work with the asylum seekers in the hotel and when they have to move out, the experience is that limited pre-work is being carried out with many households approaching the Council with an expectation of being given a 'Council' property. In order to better manage the advice households receive, support people who receive status to make informed decisions about their options and provide move on in a planned way a Home Office grant is being used to employ a Resettlement Case Officer in the Housing Solutions Team. This role will provide a high quality first point of contact and triage service for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness from Asylum Seeker accommodation.

Initially the role will focus on providing individual support to households however it is intended that this work will widen out to more general work providing advice and guidance on housing for all residents to better manage expectations and therefore the pressure on local housing.

9 further ARAP/ACRS families will be received into the LAHF 1 and 2 properties that we have committed to delivering, which will provide the service with a further stream of funding for support the next 3 years.



DLUHC have indicated there will be more capital funding through LAHF 3 in 2024. We will consider the prospectus with partners to see if there is a further opportunity to increase the local housing stock with this fund.

3.6 Other factors

While these are the main presenting factors we know that there are other groups of people whose needs or circumstances lead to them being homeless or at risk of homelessness. These include people with physical disabilities and long-term health problems, people with learning disabilities, ex-offenders, and people with substance issue issues. We will continue to address the needs of individual clients through a personalised approach, while monitoring approaches to identify any issues or trends that need to be addressed in our work and included in the annual review of this strategy.

4 Increasing the supply of accommodation

What we know

Housing associations provide social housing in the borough however demand always outstrips supply.

The Thames Basin SPA and viability issues impact on the delivery of new affordable housing.

Private rented housing is increasingly unaffordable for people on low incomes and benefits.

There is a limited supply of shared housing for single people.

While there has generally been a sufficient supply of temporary accommodation our main temporary accommodation site comprising 32 units with Accent is to be redeveloped and there is a need to find alternative temporary accommodation.

Bed and breakfast (B&B) use is the last resort when there is no local temporary accommodation, or the accommodation available is not suitable for the homeless household. With additional homelessness pressures and the loss of 32 units of temporary accommodation there is a risk that the current low use of B&B could increase.

What we have done

Surrey Heath Borough Council is preparing a new [Local Plan](#). Once adopted, the Surrey Heath Local Plan would play an important role in shaping Surrey Heath's future - how our towns and villages develop, protecting and enhancing our natural environment, developing our local economy, improving leisure and visitor facilities, and supporting more sustainable forms of travel.

The Plan is underpinned by an evidence base that includes our [Housing Needs Assessment](#).



Rent Choice provides financial assistance to help people secure private rented accommodation and employing a Letting Negotiator within the Housing Solutions Team has improved our ability to support landlords and access homes for residents.

In 2020 we introduced a new Allocation Policy designed to best meet the individual housing need of residents as well as make the best use of the available social housing stock.

In the last Strategy we identified the lack of accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people and have now delivered Connaught Court and, in partnership with the Hope Hub, the Emergency Accommodation Schemes (EAS). Housing Led has also meant that 4 individuals with complex needs have been able to access settled accommodation with Accent, with support provided by Transform.

We have commissioned an independent assessment of the temporary accommodation options available to meet local needs both now and considering future demand. This reports in July 2024.

We work with Home Group to ensure that the available supported housing for people with mental health issues is maximised for those who need it by regularly meeting to plan for residents and facilitating timely move on. Move on provides the right home at the right time for those who are ready for independent living, and also frees up the placement for someone who needs it.

We have responded to the Government's [consultation](#) on changes to social housing allocations indicating where changes impact on our ability to meet local need.

What we will do

Review the Allocation Policy to ensure that it works both for individual households in housing need and makes best use of the housing stock.

Investigate social letting agency models to see if supply in the private rented sector can be increased by direct involvement with the sector, and investigate other interventions to increase access to the sector.

Consider the recommendations in the Temporary Accommodation review to deliver a costed programme to deliver new TA to meet current and future demands.

Review empty homes data to target properties that need an intervention to be brought back into use, including working with owners to access that accommodation for residents in housing need.

5 Resources

The Council's Housing Service sits within Homes, Planning and Enforcement.

It is split into two teams:



Housing Solutions providing homelessness prevention case work, statutory homelessness functions, housing advice, private rented sector housing access, the allocation of housing association homes, floating housing support and the single homelessness project at Connaught Court.

Home Solutions providing private sector housing enforcement, licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and the Council's Home Improvement Agency, delivering Disabled Facilities Grants.

The Teams are supported by a small business hub providing administrative and financial support.

While the core staff Team is funded by the Council much of the support provided to individuals and to fund project work is grant reliant. As well as funding provided by Government as part of national programmes successful bids have been made for other pots of money.

Homelessness Prevention Grant is allocated to deliver both person-centred support to individual households and to fund projects, although realistically it needs to pump prime longer term project with schemes either becoming self funding or alternative funding being identified. In 2024/25 we will receive £475,158 HPG although a new formula from 2025/6 is likely to see this reduce to £161,000 p.a.

Rough Sleeper Initiative funding ends in March 2025. This means that alternative funding will need to be secure to continue the Single Homeless Floating Support Officer role, and the Housing Led programme.

Other projects will be identified as this strategy progresses and bids will be made for any additional funding that is made available.

It should be noted that many of the Council's projects and individual interventions for homeless residents are funded by external grant monies. This work in preventing homelessness offers savings on core Council budgets. If grants are reduced or withdrawn this could impact on budgets, both in terms of finding replacement funding and also the consequences of losing the 'spend to save' approach external funding allows

6 Partnerships

The Council has a priority to maintain services by working collaboratively with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Such collaboration is central to the delivery of homelessness prevention and housing support, both when working with individual households as well as in developing a strategic approach to shared agendas and designing shared services.

We work closely with other Surrey Boroughs and Districts across a range of issues, from supporting moves across Surrey for people at risk of violence to sharing training costs.



We have protocols with Surrey County Council in working with homeless 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers, a mental health protocol with health agencies and an offender's protocol with Probation.

In working with individual households Case Officers attend child protection and adult safeguarding meetings, and multi-agency meetings for a variety of client groups.

We are part of the MAPPA arrangements, managing the most serious offenders in the community, MARAC, protecting those at serious risk of harm through domestic violence, and CharMM, delivering a joined up response to community safety issues.

We work with housing and support providers in the voluntary sector: partnership working with Frontline and Citizen Advice Surrey Heath, and providing funding to the Hope Hub.

We have nominations agreements with Registered Providers (housing associations) and Accent, our largest provider, is a partner in our Joint Allocation Policy which sets out the framework for the allocation of housing association homes.

All our partnerships are focused on meeting housing need, preventing homelessness and supporting residents to settle lives in the community.





Annex A Action Plan

<u>Priority Area</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Milestone/Target</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Review</u>
Tackling the causes of homelessness	Maximise the benefits of external funding for delivering individual interventions and project work	A range of options that add value to core services and support residents to avoid or move on from homelessness are developed and resourced	2024 -2028 Fully utilise allocated grant to support delivery of this Strategy Bid for available revenue and capital funding that supports delivery of this Strategy	Housing Services Manager	1/4/25 Grant has been used for individual interventions (e.g. addressing rent arrears, providing financial assistance to secure private rented accommodation) and project work (e.g. bringing all rough sleepers into accommodation over Christmas).

March 2024

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Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Tackling the causes of homelessness	Keep this Strategy under review to ensure resources are targeted	Up to date intelligence is available to the Council and its partners to inform decision making, and support funding bids	Annual review reported to Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee, and shared with partners	Housing Services Manager	Reports made to P&F March 2024 and November 2024
Relationship and family breakdown	Develop a new pathway for single people leaving their parents home, with support for the adult child and the parents	Residents are able to make informed decisions to move in a planned way, avoiding housing crisis	Tailored Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) and written resources available by October 2024	Case Officer (Prevention)	October 2024 Completed
Relationship and family breakdown	Develop a new pathway for people with a child leaving their parents home, with support for the adult child and the parents	Residents are able to make informed decisions to move in a planned way, avoiding housing crisis	Tailored Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) and written resources available by October 2024	Case Officer (Prevention)	October 2024 Completed



<u>Priority Area</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Milestone/Target</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Review</u>
Relationship and family breakdown	Review the Social Housing Allocation Policy in light of local need and potential legislative changes	The Policy prioritises the right residents, at the right time to support planned moves and move on from homelessness	Changes adopted and implements by April 2025	Housing Services Manager	March 2024: response to Government consultation on changes to qualification for social housing April 2025: interim changes agreed ahead of full Policy review
Relationship and family breakdown	Develop a new Domestic Abuse housing pathway with local partners to provide a range of housing and support options for residents fleeing domestic violence	There is a clear pathway for survivors of domestic abuse to be safe in their current home or access accommodation that is safe	Published pathway and training for local agencies completed by September 2025	Housing Services Manager	March 2025: SHBC and YourSanctuary agreed new liaison arrangements, including the Housing Independent Domestic Abuse (IDVA) Advisor working more closely with Case Officers in Surrey Heath House



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Relationship and family breakdown	Respond to increasing homelessness approaches from alleged perpetrators	Homelessness prevention work is linked into the support and accommodation options being developed for perpetrators, and officers are trained in working with this client group	Operational links established and delivering outcomes by March 2025	Housing Solutions Team Manager	April 2025: regular attendance of Housing Solutions team Manager at MATAC
Relationship and family breakdown	Demonstrate the benefits of the Floating Housing Support Service being embedded in wider housing work at a Borough level	Floating Housing Support is recommissioned with Surrey Heath Borough Council as the provider	April 2026: service recommissioned	Housing Solutions Team Manager	Completed for 24/25. Ongoing throughout 25/26 to secure funding for future financial year.
Loss of accommodation in the private rented sector	Use Homelessness Prevention Grant and Discretionary Housing Benefit to support residents to maintain their tenancy	Personalised payment options to keep people in suitable homes in the private rented sector, preventing homelessness from this sector	2024 - 2028	Housing Solutions Team Manager Benefits Team Leader	Business as usual



<u>Priority Area</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Milestone/Target</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Review</u>
Loss of accommodation in the private rented sector	Promote landlord accreditation	Help landlords to operate in a legal and best practice way, and support their business	September 2025	Home Solutions Manager	
Loss of accommodation in the private rented sector	Respond to changes in the Renters Reform Bill	Staff trained on changes and the impacts, information produced for landlords	Dependent on legislative timetable	Housing Services Manager	April 2025: training for managers started, training to be rolled out once there is a timescale for the legislation
Loss of accommodation in the private rented sector	Promote early intervention support for landlords and tenants	Landlords and tenants will seek advice at early stage when a tenancy is at risk to find a solution to maintain the tenancy, or find a planned move for the tenant	Planned media and targeted campaigns running for period of the Strategy	Housing Services Manager	
Loss of accommodation in the private rented sector	Investigate the benefits of a landlords forum	Local landlords consulted on if and how they would like to communicate with the Council, and what issues would be of interest	April 2025 April 2026	Housing Services Manager	April 2025: Timing changed to link with implementation of new legislation



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Rough Sleepers	Develop a local outreach protocol	Ensure there are robust outreach services in place both to those newly rough sleeping and to maintain contact with long term rough sleepers	September 2024	Housing Services Manager	April 2025: no formal agreement in place but operationally outreach being provided by Hope Hub
Rough Sleepers	Produce an annual Ending Rough Sleeping plan for DLUHC to support bids for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding	Funding secured for local projects	July 2024, ongoing	Housing Services Manager	July 2024: completed April: no current RSI funding available from Government
Rough Sleepers	Deliver an annual Severe Weather Emergency Protocol provision	Options available to prevent harm and street deaths during periods of severe weather	November 2024, ongoing	Housing Solutions Team Manager	November 2024: published April 2025: SWEP has been operational throughout winter months



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Rough Sleepers	Maximise take up and move on from the Emergency Accommodation Scheme (EAS)	The EAS is embed in the local pathway for preventing and ending rough sleeping	March 2025	Hope Hub Housing Services Manager	February 2025: new monitoring and liaison meeting framework agreed with Hope Hub to support better take up. Occupancy rates have improved
Rough Sleepers	Set up a Rough Sleepers Pathway Group	A pathways group keeping track of the small cohort of rough sleepers, repeat rough sleepers and those new to the streets to provide appropriate housing and support interventions, and identify gaps in services	September 2024	Housing Solutions Team Manager	April 2025: Action dropped as the small cohort is not a priority for other agencies however SHBC and Hope Hub meet fortnightly to discuss who is out and ensure housing support needs are being optimised



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Rough Sleepers	Evaluate Housing Led to inform future funding bids when current allocation ends in March 2025	Evidence base demonstrating cost effectiveness of service	December 2024	Housing Services Manager	Funding secured for 2025/6
Rough Sleepers	Evaluate Single Homelessness Floating Housing Support service to inform future funding bids when current allocation ends in March 2025	Evidence base demonstrating cost effectiveness of service	December 2024	Housing Services Manager	Funding secured for 2025/6
Young People and Care Leavers	Deliver the 16-17 Housing Protocol	Joint working and active participation in Countywide systems is embedded in local working	Actioned, ongoing	Housing Solutions Team Manager	April 2024, all officers completed training
Young People and Care Leavers	Deliver the Care Leavers Protocol	Joint working and active participation in Countywide systems is embedded in local working, all staffed trained	Actioned, ongoing	Housing Solutions Team Manager	April 2024, all officers completed training



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Young People and Care Leavers	Surrey County Council Shared House Scheme	Participate in the evaluation of a number of shared hub houses for Surrey Care Leavers across the County	June 2024	Housing Services Manager	Project dropped by SCC. New project initiated (see action below)
Young People and Care Leavers	Surrey County Council House Project	Participate in independence training for a cohort of care leavers, leading to successful move on to independent livings	From April 2025	Housing Solutions Team Manager	New project added April 2025
Former Armed Forces personnel	Monitor the demand from and housing needs of serving and former Armed Forces personnel	An accurate picture of need is available for service planning	April 2024. ongoing	Housing Services Manager	Business as usual. April 2025: no unmet need identified
Former Armed Forces personnel	Deliver a new Armed Forces Housing chapter for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	New chapter delivered with countywide action plan	September 2024	SCC Housing Services Manager	April 2025: Completed
Mental Health and Multiple Disadvantage	See actions above in Rough Sleeper chapter				



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Mental Health and Multiple Disadvantage	Trauma informed training	All frontline Housing Staff have trauma informed training and the approach is embedded in day to day working	March 2025	Housing Services Manager	November 2024: training completed
Resettlement Groups	Target housing advice delivered to Lakeside residents	Case Officer employed to work with residents at Lakeside to explore individual housing options advise and provide more general information to support informed decision making and manage expectations	From March 2024, ongoing	Housing Solutions Team Manager	Business as usual



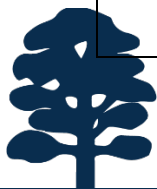
Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Resettlement Groups	LAHF 1 and 2	Deliver 7 properties through the capital programme for resettlement groups	From March 2024, ongoing	Family Support Manager	3 LAHF properties were successfully acquired in the property, including the 4 bed bridging element. Due to specific requirement from MGHA, they were unable to acquire any further properties in the budget given, in the timeframes provided. Outstanding funding was returned to MHCLG in March 2025.



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Resettlement Groups	LAHF 3	Consider the prospectus with partners to see if there is a further opportunity to increase the local housing stock with this fund. Bid made.	April 2024	Family Support Manager	An Expression of Interest was submitted to DLUHC for 1 additional property however this was not accepted for progression by DLUHC.
Other groups	Monitor the demand from and housing needs of residents approaching homelessness services	Trends in approaches from particular cohorts or in certain reasons for homelessness identified through annual monitoring, and appropriate responses incorporated into future work	April 2025, ongoing	Housing Services Manager	
Increasing the supply of accommodation	Review the Social Housing Allocation Policy	The Policy continues to meet local needs and maximises the local housing stock	Review form December 2024, for consultation and implementation April 2025	Housing Services Manager	April 2025: interim changes implemented, timetable for full review to be agreed



Priority Area	Action	Outcome	Milestone/Target	Lead	Review
Increasing the supply of accommodation	Deliver new supply of temporary accommodation	Costed options for delivery of temporary accommodation to meet current and future demands	August 2024	Housing Services Manager	November 2024: consultants report received with costed options April 2025: project work going to identify options in new build social housing/s106 sites, with private developers in the town centre and direct development of a Council asset
Increasing the supply of accommodation	Ensure all homeless households have a pathway plan to move on from temporary accommodation	All residents entering temporary accommodation have a targeted plan that identifies their move on options	August 2025	Housing Solutions Team Manager	
Increasing the supply of accommodation	Investigate private rented sector (PRS) interventions, delivering an appropriate project	Costed Option for PRS that supports a partnership approach with landlord to provide homes for residents in housing need	September 2025	Housing Services Manager	





<u>Priority Area</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Milestone/Target</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Review</u>
Increasing the supply of accommodation	Review empty homes data to target properties that need an intervention to be brought back into use, including working with owners to access that accommodation for residents in housing need.	The Council has up to date intelligence on all empty properties, and has developed options to support homes being returned to use	From September 2024, ongoing	Housing Services Manager	Project dropped as available funding reallocated to EV chargers in the town centre



Annex 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1: Scope of the assessment

Service area: Housing

Assessing Officer: Clive Jinman

Date: 3rd July 2024

Activity/policy being assessed: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

What are the aims, purpose of the work under consideration (this may be a policy, committee paper, strategy/service etc)?

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all housing authorities must have a Homelessness strategy in place based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The Strategy must set out the Council's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Detail who is / is going to be affected by the strategy, service etc (is it all Borough residents, or is it a particular group or groups of people).

'Affected' may mean those who use the service but it also could be people who live near the service or travel through the area in which the service operates. Please consider the word in its wider sense.

Homelessness can affect any resident: it can happen as a result of an emergency such as fire or flood, be the result of a relationship breakdown or come about because of someone's physical or mental health needs. As such it is not confined to one socio-economic group, tenure, age range, or other factor. It is recognised however that while some parts of the community will be more resilient to the risk both personally or within their networks others are more vulnerable and are often over represented in homeless numbers.

Procured services and grants



The general equality duty applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This will include private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority. The duty therefore applies to where the Council has contracted out a service or is considering contracting out or is decommissioning a service. It also applies to the allocation or withdrawal of grants.

Please state if the service is being provided by another organisation on the Council's behalf and what actions have been taken to ensure that the service complies with the equality duty e.g. provisions in the contract, monitoring of the service provided in terms of the protected groups (please refer to the Council's Procurement Toolkit). Please ensure that accessibility considerations are included in the procurement process.

To ensure that the right housing and support is available by default requires a partnership approach that includes statutory partners (e.g. health and social), third sector organisations (e.g. housing associations and Citizens Advice Surrey Heath) and private sector, notably private landlords.

Knowing our customers

Understanding our community is an important part of developing and delivering our services.

To help understand how your work impacts on the protected equality groups please detail the information that you have about the interaction of these groups with your service. Please consider all data available for example census data or other data that provides information about communities who may be affected by the service. Please contact Community Development for more information about data available. Please also consider consultation with protected characteristic groups. The Council holds an 'Achieving Equities Forum' which may be useful particularly for the delivery of complex services when understanding community need and impact.

From this information detail any evident gaps or issues that need to be investigated e.g. in who accesses the service, satisfaction or other outcomes.



In completing this assessment it has been recognised that while the information systems used by the Housing Service capture lots of data in terms of housing needs, household make up, etc it is not currently possible to pull out targeted reports on all protected characteristics. Resolving this will be an action for Year 1 of the Strategy and equalities data will be included in the annual review.

Impacts are highlighted in each section below. By implementing the recommended actions, the Council can mitigate potential inequalities and enhance the overall effectiveness of homelessness services.

Race (Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Strategy and service delivery generally includes measures to ensure this characteristic is not a barrier to support.

Where language is a barrier to accessing services, translation services are provided to ensure access.

In response to asylum seeker accommodation in the Borough a dedicated Case Worker has been employed using Home Office funding to ensure when residents in this accommodation are granted asylum they have access to services.

Stage 2: Assessment and analysis

Disability (A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and this impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.



Positive Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Strategy and service delivery generally includes measures to ensure this characteristic is not a barrier to support.

The Strategy recognises that mental health can be a contributing factor in homelessness and sets out the work we do to support these residents to ensure they have access to the right housing and support, including through the delivery of the Floating Housing Support Service.

Sex (Under the Equality Act, 'sex' is understood as binary, being a man or woman. For the purposes of the Act, a person's legal sex is their biological sex as recorded on their birth certificate. A trans person can change their legal sex by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Strategy and service delivery generally includes measures to ensure this characteristic is not a barrier to support.

As there continues to be inequality in pay woman are disadvantaged in the housing market, especially at a time when affordability of housing is an issue. Women are also more likely to be the victims of domestic abuse.

The Housing Service sits as part of MARAC (considering multi-agency approaches to serious cases of domestic abuse including housing options) and are part of reciprocal arrangements with Surrey Authorities to facilitate residents fleeing domestic abuse being able to move to an are where they are safe). Funding is also provided to support a Sanctuary Scheme, providing security works to eth homes of victims of violence.

The Strategy recognises while these services are in place there has been no recent review of their effectiveness and therefore commits to work that will ensure our work is still meeting need and there is a clear pathway for survivors of domestic abuse to be safe in tehri current home or can move to accommodation that is safe.

The Strategy also contains work with perpetrators of domestic abuse so that they are able to access the services that can support addressing their behaviour.



Sexual orientation (Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual attraction whether this is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Review on which this Strategy is based did not identify any barriers to support.

Age (A person belonging to a particular age (for example 45 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds))

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Strategy and service delivery generally includes measures to ensure this characteristic is not a barrier to support.

The Strategy recognises the importance of joined up services for homeless 16/17 year olds and care leavers, who are often over represented in homeless population. To this end the Council has a protocol with Surrey County Council and other Boroughs and Districts to ensure that the right services are in place for these young people.

Religion or belief (Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Review on which this Strategy is based did not identify any barriers to support.



Gender reassignment (Gender re-assignment includes anyone who is proposing to undergo or has undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Review on which this Strategy is based did not identify any barriers to support.

Pregnancy and maternity (Pregnancy refers to the period when a person is pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating someone unfavourably because they are breastfeeding)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Review on which this Strategy is based did not identify any barriers to support.

A number of households in temporary accommodation are young families expecting or with their first child, often at a young age. The Floating Housing Support Service is available to all these households to support them through homelessness and into a settled home.

Marriage or Civil Partnership (Marriage is a union between a man and a woman, or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act))

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No Impact: Homelessness services are universal and available to everyone, and being based on individual assessment of circumstances are tailored to residents individual needs. The Review on which this Strategy is based did not identify any barriers to support.

