

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2024 - 2029



*Working together to
end homelessness*



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FOREWORD

It is a statutory requirement for all Local Housing Authorities to have a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy. This document serves to demonstrate to members, stakeholders, residents, customers and the Department of Levelling Up Homes and Communities (DLUHC) that the Council has carried out a review of homelessness in the Borough and has developed a Strategy for addressing needs and preventing homelessness where possible.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council recognises that investing resources into homeless prevention is an important element of the services it delivers to tackle homelessness in the Borough. It is with this in mind that the recent appointment of dedicated Homeless Prevention Officers has seen an enhanced Housing Solutions Service that will continue to deliver excellent customer-centric services to those that are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Although the Council has taken the lead in developing this strategy, it must be acknowledged that without strong partnership working with our statutory and third sector agencies, all who deliver services to often the most vulnerable people in our communities, the prevention of homelessness, the delivery of homelessness services, and finding solutions to housing need would be extremely difficult.

The Council has long recognised the value of our partner agencies who contribute to enabling homeless prevention and tackling housing need. There is a shared commitment to tackling the issue of homelessness in our Borough.

As Deputy Leader, and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety I endorse the commitment to this strategy and its delivery and wish to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all partners involved in tackling homelessness.



**Councillor Clare Golby
Portfolio Holder for Housing and
Communities at Nuneaton and
Bedworth Borough Council**



INTRODUCTION

The Homelessness Act 2002 imposes a duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area, and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation, making amendments to the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (Homelessness), and introduced new legal duties for local housing authorities. This Act focuses on prevention and relief of homelessness, regardless of priority need.

This strategy is developed in consultation with our partners, includes the findings of our homelessness review, and sets out the Council's priorities for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping within its Borough over the next five years from 2024 to 2029. It has been developed against the backdrop of significant national and local challenges.

Our strategy for homelessness and rough sleepers reflects the wider social and economic causes and effects. By working collaboratively with our statutory and third sector partners we aim to continue to develop a wide range of innovative solutions to effectively prevent and respond to those who are homeless or who are at risk of losing their homes, including the most extreme form of homelessness, rough sleeping.

Through this strategy we want to build on the collaborative work we do by setting out our plans for the prevention of homelessness and our approaches to ensure that sufficient accommodation and support will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Our aim is to understand better and address the underlying causes of homelessness and rough sleeping. This will enable multi-disciplined approaches for people with multiple/complex needs, collaborative wrap-around support for those who are at high risk of repeat homelessness, and enable early interventions to prevent those at risk from losing their home.

OUR VISION

To reduce homelessness in the Borough by providing information, advice, and early interventions to prevent those at risk losing their home. To support people who are homeless to find a safe and secure place to call home and reduce the use of temporary accommodation. To end rough sleeping for good.

PRIORITIES 2024 TO 2029:

Priority 1: To provide access to free housing advice and/or assistance to all who are homeless or facing homelessness:

Priority 2: To enable homelessness prevention:

Priority 3: To relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity to enable suitable alternative accommodation for those becoming homeless:

Priority 4: To enable access to suitable and affordable accommodation that is sustainable, with support provided where appropriate.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Homelessness in England is a major concern, set against the backdrop of significant national challenges. We are living amidst a rising cost of living crisis, households are experiencing an unprecedented and increasingly unaffordable housing market, coupled with a major shortage of affordable homes to rent, and the additional pressures to support the resettlement of asylum seekers and foreign nationals displaced by war and conflicts.

LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS CONTINUED TO RISE ACROSS ENGLAND OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS:

ENGLAND HOMELESSNESS 1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023	LEVEL (DLUHC STATISTICS)
Households assessed for homelessness duty	311,990
Household owed a homelessness duty	298,430 (95.7%)
Owed a prevention duty	140,790 (45.1%)
Owed a relief duty	157,640 (50.5%)
No duty owed	13,560 (4.3%)
Duty owed with at least one support need	157,470 (52%)
History of mental health - support need	79,000 (26.6%)

DLUHC = government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

ENGLAND – HOMELESSNESS DUTIES OWED:

PREVENTION DUTY OWED	LEVEL (DLUHC STATISTICS)
Reasons for loss of home	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. End of private rented tenancy (38.6%)2. Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (25.3%)3. Domestic Abuse (7%)
Household Type	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Single adult male (27.8%)2. Single female with dependent children (25.3%)3. Single adult female (20.4%)

RELIEF DUTY OWED	LEVEL (DLUHC STATISTICS)
Reasons for loss of home	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (31.9%)2. Domestic Abuse (16.8%)3. End of private rented tenancy (12.8%)
Household Type	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Single adult male (45.7%)2. Single adult female (21.4%)3. Single female with dependent children (18.1%)

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CHANGES:

Since we published our last strategy in 2019 there have been legislative and policy changes that impact on how we tackle homelessness and the wider delivery of housing services.

THE TENANTS FEE ACT 2019:

This Act banned the charging of letting fees by Lettings Agents and introduced financial caps reducing the amount that private renters are required to pay up front.

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021:

This introduced new statutory duties on local authorities and changed homelessness legislation to give automatic priority need to survivors of domestic abuse.

It provided the first legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the many forms domestic abuse can take.

ENDING ROUGH SLEEPING FOR GOOD 2022:

This builds on the progress made since the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeper Strategy and sets out what actions they will take to meet their aim to end rough sleeping for good. It focuses on four themes: prevention; intervention; recovery; and ensuring a joined up transparent approach.

SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATION ACT 2023:

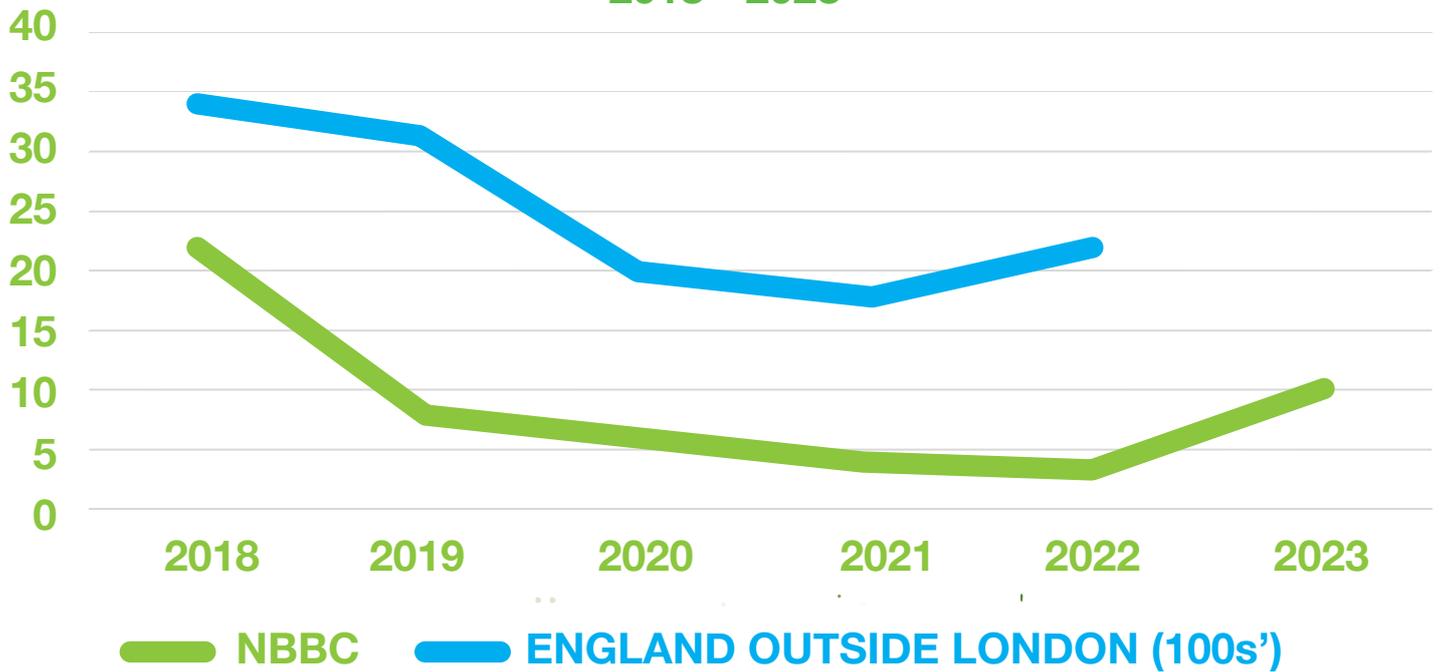
Introduces measures aimed at improving fairness and accountability for tenants. The Act strengthens the rights of tenants and gives greater powers to tackle failing social landlords and tenants living in unsafe homes.

ROUGH SLEEPING IN ENGLAND

Rough sleeping in England is increasing and returning to the levels seen before the pandemic and the “Everyone In” campaign in 2020. The 2022 annual rough sleeper spotlight count estimated that on any night in England (outside of London) 2,211 people were sleeping rough, with a further 858 people estimated in London, the total for England was estimated to be around 3,069 on any typical night in October or November.

The graph below shows the level of rough sleeping for all England (outside of London) and Nuneaton and Bedworth as recorded during the annual rough sleeper spotlight counts in the autumns of 2018 to 2022, this shows the trend in figures both nationally and locally. This graph includes the Borough’s 2023 count; the number of rough sleepers counted rose from three to 10 in a year, the 2023 figures for England were not available at the time this document was created.

ANNUAL ROUGH SLEEP SPOTLIGHT COUNT ENGLAND AND NBBC 2018 - 2023



WHAT IS CAUSING HOMELESSNESS NATIONALLY?

Research into the causes of homelessness nationally have identified a range of factors. The lack of affordable housing, and the unaffordability of housing outside of the social housing sector are obvious major contributory factors. There are other less obvious reasons, and often a combination of multiple reasons, as to why people are homeless. Unexpected life events such as domestic abuse, family/relationship breakdown, losing a job, mental and physical health problems are all major contributors to homelessness.

Below is a list of commonly given reasons:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Reduced number of households moving to home ownership
- Loss of private rented sector homes due to:
 - Termination of assured shorthold tenancies
 - Inability to afford rent rises
 - Rent level exceeds local housing allowance
- Family or friends no longer able to, or willing to accommodate
- Domestic abuse
- Relationship breakdown
- Mental and/or physical ill health
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse that impacts on a person's ability to maintain a home
- Discharge from prison/hospital and the care system
- Loss or change of income or welfare benefits

Below are the key findings from their report:

- 63% reported long-term illness, disability, or infirmity
- 82 % diagnosed mental health problem; increase from 45% in 2014
- 45% self-medicate with drugs and alcohol to cope with their mental health
- 48% used hospital Accident and Emergency in the last year, three times more than the general population
- 38% admitted to hospital within the last 12 months with a mental health condition including self-harm or attempted suicide
- 25% discharged to the streets from hospital
- Barriers to accessing physical and mental health support means homeless people are over reliant on emergency health care services

IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Promote residents' health and wellbeing

Supporting an improvement to the health and wellbeing of residents is a fundamental priority. The Council will work to ensure facilities and services take advantage of opportunities to realise that improvement. Reducing the levels of poorer health experienced by our residents, including both mental and physical health.

Losing your home can be extremely traumatic to individuals and families. The impact on health and wellbeing must never be underestimated. In 2022 Homeless Link published the findings of their homeless health needs audits, the findings show the harsh reality of the impact homelessness has on people's physical and mental health, and that people experiencing homelessness suffer from worse physical and mental health than the general population.

Homeless Link, Unhealthy State of Homelessness 2022, Homeless Health Audits 2018-2022

In 2022 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported over 741 deaths recorded were while the person was homeless, the majority 87.3% were male. The mean age of deaths whilst homeless is 45.4 years for men and 43.5 years for women. Over 50% of the deaths were due to three main causes:

- 35% drugs
- 9.6% alcohol
- 13.4% suicide

ONS Death Registration Statistics 2022

In 2018 the Salvation Army estimated the average age of a rough sleeper at death was just 44 for men, and 42 for women.

The Nuneaton and Bedworth Annual Rough Sleeper Spotlight Count in November 2023 found the average age of those sleeping rough in our Borough to be 40.

In 2022 Crisis estimated rough sleepers are 17 times more likely to be victims of violence, and 8 out of 10 rough sleepers say they had suffered some form of violence, abuse, or anti-social behaviour within the last year.

These startling facts are key reminders of how serious the impact of homelessness and rough sleeping have on a person's health and wellbeing.

LOCAL CONTEXT - OUR BOROUGH

Nuneaton and Bedworth is one of the five borough and district councils in Warwickshire. A completely urban authority, covering 79 square kilometres; it is the smallest geographically of the five, but has the third largest population according to the census in 2021. The Borough is the 10th most densely populated of the West Midlands' 30 local authority areas and is amongst 33% of the most densely populated English local authority areas. According to the 2021 census this represented 12.1 people living on each football pitch-sized piece of land.

The population rose by over 8,000 between 2011 and 2021 to 134,200 people residing in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and it continues to rise, ONS estimate the population will rise steadily by around 15% to over 154,000 by 2046.

TENURE TYPES (CENSUS 2021)

- **Homeownership (68%) down 3% from last census 2011**
- **Private sector rented (17%) 5% rise since 2011**
- **Social rented (14%)**
- **Shared ownership (below 1%)**

The level of demand for rented accommodation is high and continues to grow as people struggle to be able to afford homeownership. High demand for private sector rented accommodation, rising cost of living and substantial rent rises in the private sector over the last two years means that the current level of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is now consistently below average rents for the Borough, meaning most private rented properties are now unaffordable to those in receipt of benefits and/or on low incomes.

In November 2023 in recognition of the impact LHA levels are having on homelessness; the Government announced that LHA will be raised to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April 2024. It is anticipated that this will help to increase the affordability of private sector rented homes and in turn ease some of the burdens of homelessness the Borough face.

The Indices of Multiple deprivation (IMD) continue to highlight significant inequalities between the Warwickshire districts and boroughs. The Borough has areas that are amongst the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country. The IMD demonstrates the Borough has the highest levels of deprivation as well as high numbers of priority families and defined children living in poverty in Warwickshire, all of which contribute to the profile of the Borough's homelessness.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN OUR NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH



Enable appropriate housing development

Our residents deserve an excellent quality of life, fundamental to which is the homes that are available. We will seek to provide the right homes, with the right services in the right places, to meet the need of our residents. This means homes that are affordable to both buy and rent, and which are good quality.

The lack of availability of affordable social housing, and the increasing reliance on the private rental sector for those who would normally have looked to buy a property is affecting rises in the level of private rents which is reducing the amount of affordable rental options available in our Borough. End of private rented tenancies is already a main reason for homelessness, and we are seeing an increase in households having no option but to give up their homes due to affordability.

This has affected a rise in demand for affordable social housing, and although the lack of affordable housing is not the sole cause of homelessness, it is a major contributory factor.

In the five years April 2018 to 31 March 2023, 877 new affordable homes were built in our Borough: 565 affordable rent and 312 affordable home ownership.

Affordable Home ownership	2022/ 2023	2021/ 2022	2020/ 2021	2019/ 2020	2018/ 2019	2017/ 2018
Affordable Rent	127	116	57	110	103	52
Affordable Home ownership	88	59	67	36	33	29
Total Affordable dwellings	215	175	124	146	136	81

Source: NBBC Planning Policy

Despite a substantial building of new affordable homes, the demand for affordable rented housing continues to outweigh the supply. The figures above include 32 new Council homes built since 2018, however these do not compensate for the reduction in council housing effected by tenants exercising their right to buy; in the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023 178 Nuneaton and Bedworth tenants purchased their council home.

We will: continue to work closely with Registered Providers, Developers, and our colleagues in the Borough’s planning department to maximise opportunity to not only increase the supply of affordable housing but also ensure that the right type of housing is made available in the Borough to help to ease homelessness and rough sleeping.

We continue to look for innovative ways to ensure the best use of Council housing stock.

In 2024 we will be introducing an incentive scheme to encourage and support tenants under occupying family sized properties to “right size”. The aim of the scheme is to house people in homes that meet their household size, by providing them with practical support and financial compensation to free up much needed large family homes. The intention is for the rightsizing move to create a further chain of moves for people on our waiting list with the final property in the chain going to a homeless household.



HOMELESSNESS IN NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH

HOMELESSNESS REVIEW 2023

The Borough has a statutory duty to carry out a review to examine homelessness in Nuneaton and Bedworth. It enables us to identify and understand the trends in homelessness that are used to shape homelessness and rough sleeper services and priorities for the next five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced new processes and terminology for the way local authorities manage homelessness applications.

The Act legally obliges local authorities to assess and provide more meaningful assistance to all people who are eligible and homeless, or

threatened with homelessness, irrespective of their priority need status.

The Act focusses on prevention. It places a duty on local authorities to intervene early and attempt to prevent homelessness. If prevention cannot be achieved the local authority must relieve homelessness; this means helping the homeless individual/household to find suitable accommodation with at least a six-month tenancy.

Below are some of the main findings from our review and statistics from the DLUHC homelessness data for the Borough for the year 2022 to 2023:

NBBC Homelessness 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023	Level (DLUHC statistics)
Households assessed for homelessness duty	877
Household owed a homelessness duty	815 (92.9%)
Owed a prevention duty	299 (34.1%)
Owed a relief duty	516 (58.8%)
No duty owed	62 (7.1%)
Duty owed with at least one support need	511 (58.8%)
History of mental health - support need	229 (28.1%)

HOMELESSNESS DUTIES OWED 2022/2023: Prevention:

NBBC Prevention duty owed	Level (DLUHC statistics)
Reasons for loss of home	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End of private rented tenancy (44.8%) 2. Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (21.1%) 3. Domestic Abuse (13%)
Household Type	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single female with dependent children (31.4%) 2. Single adult male (19.1%) 3. Single adult female (18.1%)

Relief:

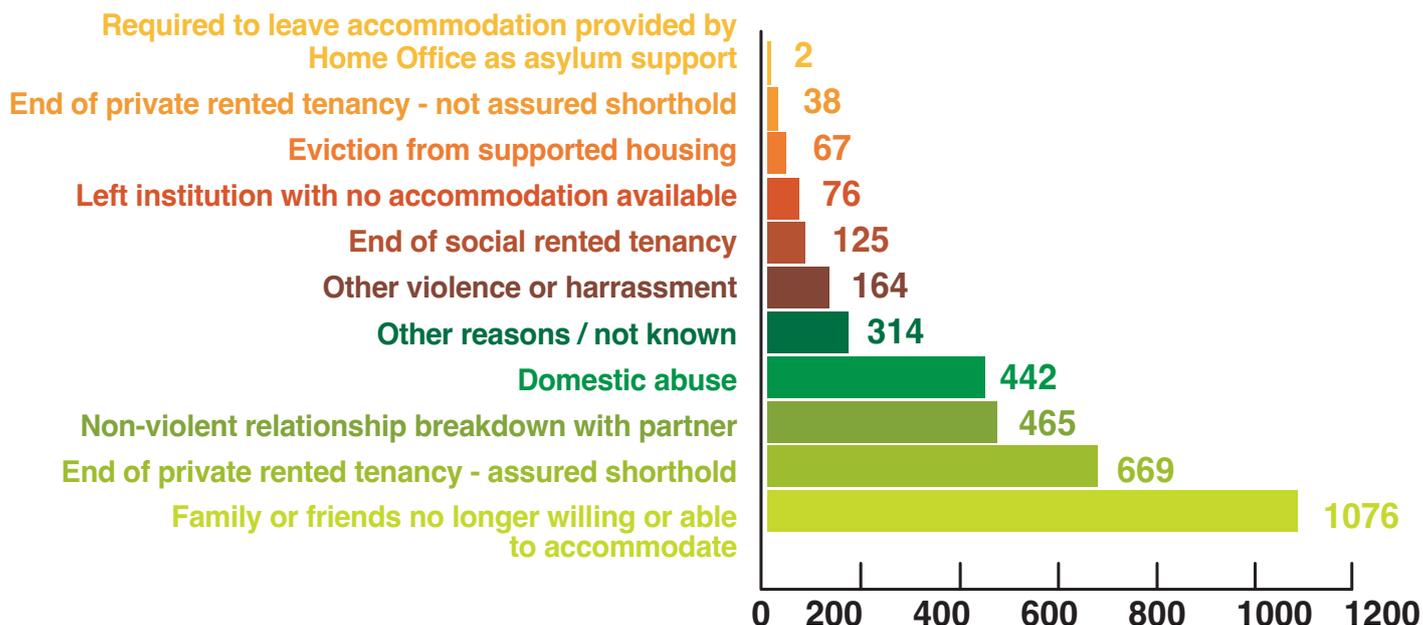
NBBC - Relief duty owed	Level (DLUHC statistics)
Reasons for loss of home	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (33.3%) 2. Domestic Abuse (21.3%) 3. Relationship Breakdown (14.1%)
Household Type	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single adult male (42.4%) 2. Single female with dependent children (20.9%) 3. Single adult female (19%)

MAIN REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

The reasons for homelessness all duties owed are consistent with the national reasons. The table below shows the collective reasons for homelessness for the last four years:

NBBC HOMELESS DUTY OWED - REASON FOR LOSS OF LAST SETTLED HOME

4 YEARS TOTAL 2019 TO 2023



In the year April 2022 to March 2023 the most common reason for homelessness in the Borough (36%) for all duties owed was the ending of private sector assured shorthold tenancies. This is an increase of over 34% from the previous year and is a clear indication of the impact of the rising rents, and lack of affordability of private sector rented accommodation is having on homelessness.

AGE:

• 25 to 34

continued to be the highest age band throughout the last four years

• 18 to 24

remains the secondary homelessness age group but has fallen over the last four years by almost 24%

• 35 to 44

the number in this age group fell year on year until 2021 to 2022, we have seen an increase of duties owed within this band over the last two years

• 16 to 17

substantially reduced since 2019 and has remained below 10 for the last two years.

• 55 to 64

constantly low in number, homelessness in this age group dropped in to its lowest during the pandemic but has continued to increase since 2021

• 65 to 74

years, low in number overall homelessness in this age band has steadily risen year on year from 13 in 2019/2020 to 24 in 2022/2023; the equivalent to an increase of 85%

• Over 75's

homelessness within this age group remained small and the smallest group owed a duty

• 45 to 54

there was a consistent number from this age group over the last 4 years

ETHNICITY

The ethnicity of those owed a duty is consistent with the ethnicity of the Borough recorded in the 2021 census. Most households owed a duty 89.4% identified as British white; 2% Black African/Caribbean/British Black; 1.9% Asian/Asian British; 1.4% Mixed/Multiple ethnic group; 1.3% Other and 4% unknown ethnicity.

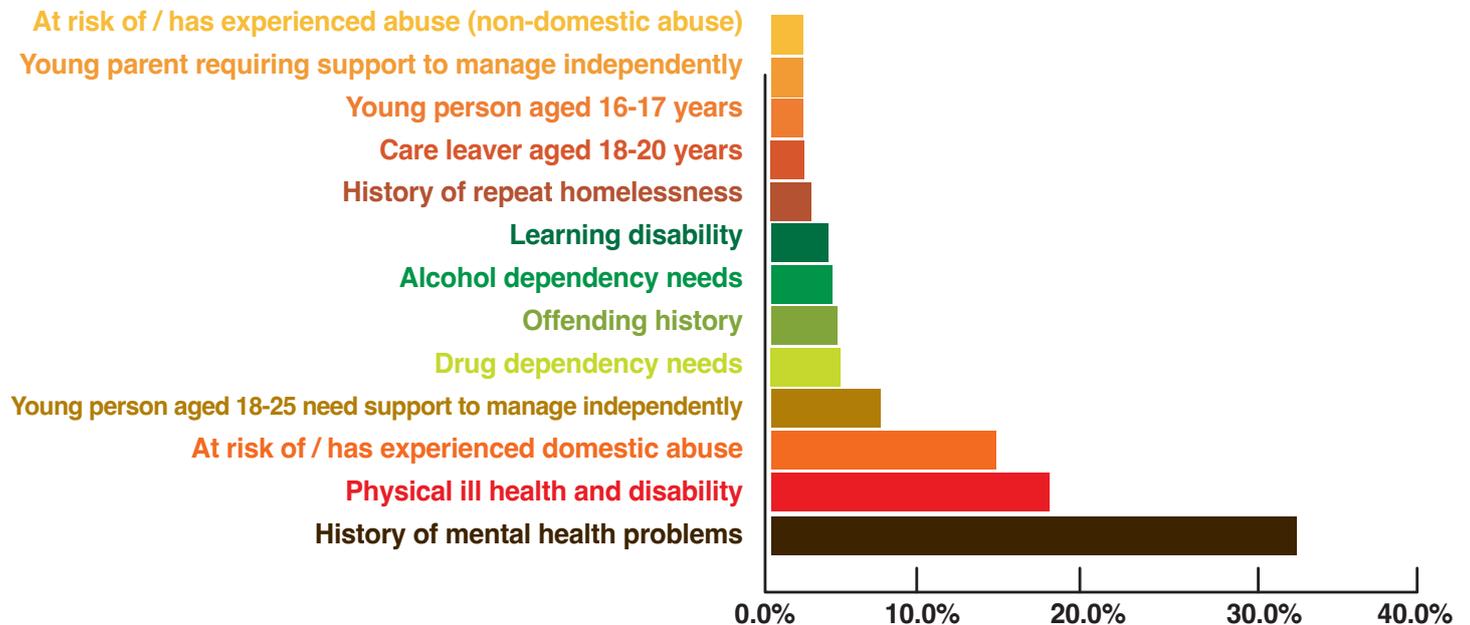
SEXUALITY

Between 2020 to 2023, 90% of applicants owed a prevention or relief duty identified as heterosexual or straight and 2% as homosexual (Gay or Lesbian). The remaining 6% of applicants chose not to disclose, with 2% selecting 'Other'. The number of homeless households owed a duty is consistent with the sexuality of the population of the Borough as per the 2021 census data.

SUPPORT NEEDS

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH - MOST COMMON SUPPORT REASON OF PEOPLE OWED A HOMESLESSNESS DUTY

1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2023



The most common support need of households owed a homelessness duty in the Borough and all England, is mental ill health. Over the last four years around 32% of all homeless applicants in the Borough identified as having a mental health support need. This is followed by people with physical ill health and disability and then thirdly with the most marked increase, is the number of people identifying as having a support need due to being at risk of or who have experienced domestic abuse, with an increase of over 127% between April 2019 and March 2023.

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE

By combining the economically inactive categories to compare with those classed as economically active (those in full time and part time employment, and full-time students), it shows that on average across the four years over 73% of those owed a homelessness duty were not economically active. This is starkly different to the percentage of economically inactive for the Borough recorded in the last census in 2021, only 42% of the adult population in the Borough were considered economically inactive.

This shows there is a clear link between unemployment and homelessness, whilst it may appear a little obvious that people who are not working are less likely to be able to afford private housing, it also must be noted that being homeless makes it more difficult for people to secure employment.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Single male homeless applicants continue to form the largest percentage of those owed a homeless duty between 2019 to 2023, however those single males owed a prevention duty decreased substantially in the last two years from the peak in 2020/2021.

The number of households owed a duty with dependent children remains lower than households without dependent children throughout the four-year period.

REASON FOR LOSS OF LAST SETTLED HOME:

The four main causes of homelessness over the four years from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023 have been:

- **Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate - main reason relief duty owed**
- **End of a private rented assured shorthold tenancy - main reason prevention duty owed**
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Non-violent relationship breakdown**

ACCOMMODATION TYPE AT TIME OWED A HOMELESSNESS DUTY

PREVENTION

The types of accommodation occupied at the point a prevention duty is accepted, has been predominantly renting in the private sector and living with family. The other two main reasons are living with friends and renting in the social housing sector.

RELIEF

Living arrangements of households owed a relief duty is as expected different from those at the prevention duty stage and reflects the circumstances and acute housing need of households at this stage. At the relief stage, we can see higher proportions of applicants coming from insecure housing or without accommodation. The numbers of people at risk of, or who are, rough sleeping are higher.

STAFFING RESOURCES

In 2023 we carried out a fundamental review of our Housing Solutions and Landlord Services staffing structure, and duties they perform. The review included looking in depth into the resources needed to deliver the homelessness services and in particular our preference to increase the prevention of homelessness wherever possible.

Following the review, a restructure of staffing was put in place, this included the creation of the Homelessness Prevention Officer role. This new role reinforces and focusses on preventing homelessness and incorporates the preventative work that was already being done by the existing Financial Inclusion Support Officers. The new job description gives a clearer more specific focus on our early intervention and preventions.

The restructure is not a new resource but a repurposing of staffing hours and current job roles.

HOMELESSNESS DUTIES

The Homeless Reduction Act places a duty on the Authority to prevent people becoming homeless (the prevention duty). If the person is already homeless, the authority has a duty to help them secure accommodation for at least six months (the relief duty).

The Housing Solutions Team completed a total of 3,767 initial assessments of homeless households during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023. In reality, a much higher number of people contacted the team, but not all contacts led to a homeless application as many were resolved with advice and assistance.

NBBC initial assessments of statutory homelessness duties owed 2019-2023	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Households Assessed	990	989	915	873
% Total owed a duty	94.4%	92.8%	84.2%	92.9%
% Prevention Duty owed	48.6%	48.0%	30.4%	34.1%
% Relief duty owed	45.8%	44.9%	53.8%	58.8%
% No duty owed	5.6%	7.2%	15.8%	7.2%

PREVENTION DUTY

A prevention duty is owed when the Council is satisfied a person or household is eligible and threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Working with the homeless applicant a personalised housing plan is created that determines what prevention activities are required to prevent the applicant becoming homeless.

PREVENTION DUTY ENDS

- If the prevention activities remove the homelessness threat
- If after 56 days if the applicant becomes homeless
- If the applicant refuses an offer of suitable accommodation

RELIEF DUTY

Relief duty is owed when the Council is satisfied a person or household is eligible and is homeless. The Council has a duty to assess and provide a personalised housing plan.

RELIEF DUTY ENDS

- If the relief activities work and the applicant is no longer homeless
- If suitable accommodation is available for six months
- If the applicant deliberately and unreasonably refuses to cooperate
- If the applicant refuses a suitable offer of accommodation



The table below shows the number of homelessness cases that were prevented or relieved in Nuneaton and Bedworth from April 2019 to March 2023.

Homelessness prevented or relieved April 2018 to March 2023	No. prevented cases	No. relieved cases	Total cases
2018/2019	69	143	212
2019/2020	215	150	365
2020/2021	227	153	380
2021/2022	99	187	286
2022/2023	117	171	288
Totals 2018 to 2023	727	804	1531

Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Statutory Homeless Levels

This shows that between April 2018 and March 2023, homelessness was successfully prevented, or relieved, for a total of 1,531 households. This is a 46% increase from the 824 households in the period April 2012 to March 2018.

The Council's preference is to prevent someone from becoming homeless rather than help them to find a new home. From April 2018 to March 2023, 727 households were prevented from homelessness compared to April 2012 to March 2018 where 603 were prevented, this is only a 17% increase, It is the Council's aim to increase the number of homelessness preventions in addition to introducing early intervention initiatives.

This duty is currently carried out by the Housing Solutions team. Their role is to assist households who are:

- Living in all tenure types of accommodation where notice has been given
- Living with family or friends and they have been asked to leave
- Homeless or think that they are likely to become homeless.
- Experiencing domestic abuse
- Having difficulties paying their rent or mortgage
- In need of information on accessing privately rented accommodation

The Housing Solutions Officer discusses the various options with the tenant including:

- Negotiating with landlords, family, or friends to remain in the property
- Providing information about how to apply for social, supported, or shared ownership housing
- Providing information on how to access the Homeless Prevention Support Scheme

HOMELESSNESS

ADVICE AND INFORMATION

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 extended the existing duty to provide advisory services for people faced with homelessness and placed a duty on all councils to provide free information and advice to any person in their district on preventing and relieving homelessness. The change ensured that all people have access to the same help in the first instance, including providing advice and information that is detailed and tailored to specific needs on:

- **The rights of homeless people or those threatened with homelessness**
- **The help available from the Council or others and how to access that help**

This service is important in enabling households to help themselves and seek support or solutions to their current situation, in order to prevent their homelessness. This is an important service that means that opportunities to prevent homelessness are not missed; in particular providing advice and information to single homeless people that the Council do not owe the main homelessness duty.

WE HAVE:

- Developed and trained our staff to provide bespoke advice and information that is tailored to meet the needs of the individual or household who are homeless or likely to be at risk of homelessness. The needs are determined when the individual or household first approach the Council.
- Developed the homelessness area of the Borough's website to provide instant 24/7 access to information about what to do if faced with homelessness. This includes a suite of advice leaflets and guidance that provide general advice for those faced with homelessness, and specific homeless situations. Below is a list of the guidance and advice we provide:

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

- **Homelessness Reduction Act - What it means to you**
- **Homelessness how we can help**
- **Know your housing options**
- **Applying as homeless flowchart**
- **Advice for finding a place to stay if you are street homeless.**
- **Useful contact details for local support groups**
- **A guide to stop house repossession**
- **Homeless released from prison**
- **Suffering mental illness or impairment and threatened with homelessness**
- **Homeless – Armed Forces**
- **Help and housing for care leavers**
- **What is domestic abuse?**
- **Options and facilities for older people**
- **Advice about evictions and the ending of a tenancy**
- **Advice on parental eviction**
- **Non-violent relationship breakdown**
- **Homeless after leaving hospital**

ACCOMMODATION GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND CARE LEAVERS IN WARWICKSHIRE

In addition, we provide links to the Warwickshire County Council websites for young people and care leavers:

- **Accommodation guide for 16- and 17-year-olds who may be homeless in Warwickshire**
- **Accommodation guide for Care Leavers**

Below is the Link to the advice leaflets and guidance:

https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/20021/housing_solutions_and_homelessness/193/homelessness/5

WE WILL:

- Continue to provide good quality accurate information and guidance for those faced with homelessness.
- Include homelessness guidance and advice training in inductions for all new Housing Solutions team members.

- Regularly review, at least annually, and update as needed, the information, guidance, and advice we provide to ensure that it is current and reflects legislative and policy changes, local support service provision, and good practice.
- At least annually or in the event of a legislative, or internal policy change, review the Homelessness area of the Council's website to ensure all pages are accessible, relevant, and current.

PREVENTION

How we intend to prevent homelessness

From 2012 to 2018, the Housing Solutions team had access to various homeless prevention funds and initiatives. In 2019, the initiatives were reviewed to develop the Housing Solutions Support Scheme. Administered by our Landlord Solutions team and strengthened in 2021 by the recruitment of a dedicated Early Intervention Prevention Officer, the scheme's aim is to prevent private sector evictions as early as possible.

OUR INTENTIONS ARE TO:

- Work with both landlords and tenants to resolve any issues before a notice is served, or in the early stages of an eviction notice, with the aim being able to sustain the tenancy where possible, and if required, assistance in finding alternative accommodation. We will also look to work in conjunction with partnership agencies to provide additional support where needed.
- Provide a free specialist project for landlords considering serving a notice, or for tenants who are at risk of losing their tenancy. We recognise the importance of early intervention working with both the landlord and tenant to prevent homelessness and any subsequent potential eviction.

- Recognise for landlords that eviction is often the last resort and is a costly process as well as a stressful time for both the landlord and tenant.
- Help clients who are threatened with homelessness in advance of our statutory duty, which is owed 56 days prior to becoming homeless.

WE HAVE

- Assisted 41 clients with bond and/or rent in advance to secure a private rented property.
- Assisted 30 clients with various funding interventions to secure new accommodation, prevent eviction, provide furniture packs and white goods.
- Assisted 27 clients who applied for Government funding for people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding for each case ensured eviction was prevented, or helped secure alternative accommodation to prevent homelessness.

- Dealt with 212 tenant/landlord cases, working to prevent homelessness by providing mediation, advice and support, and sign posting to relevant support agencies. Where preventing eviction was not possible, giving advice and guidance on securing rented accommodation and assisting with funding.
- Added 47 new landlord contacts to our already extensive mailing list for engagement.
- Received 76 “property to rent” enquiries from landlords or letting agents, with 51 being positive in that property options were available to our clients or potential future options and engagement.
- Undertaken a review of staffing and service provision required to improve the prevention of homelessness.

WE WILL

- Enhance the number of early intervention/prevention officers to meet the Council’s preference to prevent someone from becoming homeless rather than helping them to find a new home. This dedicated team will support all tenure types not just the private rented sector.
- Promote early intervention with tenants and landlords and continue to offer a free specialist project for landlords considering serving a notice, or tenants who are at risk of losing their home.
- Review our Housing Solutions Support Scheme to ensure it is current with today’s economic climate.
- Further engage with landlords and agents for available properties to support our customers transition into the private sector.
- Support customers to maximise their income and provide budgeting advice to ensure that homes remain sustainable.

The delivery of the scheme and the Homeless Prevention Officers will sit under the Landlord Solutions Team Leader who is a dedicated member of the National Residential Landlord Association (NRLA). The NRLA help members navigate challenges and offer learning resources and market intelligence within the private rented sector.

In addition, we are working with our partners to ensure our customers are given robust advice around the support options available within the Borough.

OTHER PREVENTATIVE MEASURES INCLUDE:

COMPLEX CASE REVIEWS

Universal Credit was introduced in the Nuneaton and Bedworth area in 2017, the impact that this has had on local authority rent arrears and the threat of eviction is still a concern, the Council continues to engage with a joint review board.

The group consists of senior officers from the Council’s Benefits and Recovery Department, Enforcement, and Housing.

The review board is used to ensure that appropriate support is given to households with high rent arrears or those with complex issues. It is the opportunity for all teams to consider the support options for customers; on average 10 households are supported at any one time.

TENANCY SUPPORT OFFICER

NBBC Tenancy Support Officer’s (TSO) role is to provide a support service to Council tenants to help them overcome any problems that may affect their ability to maintain accommodation.

The TSO gets involved at an early intervention stage and will focus on engaging and delivering support.

The TSO will help Council tenants with:

- Staying in their present accommodation
- Settling into a new home
- Filling in forms such as benefit claims and ensuring that they are claiming the benefits they are entitled too
- Living independently

RELIEF

How we intend to relieve homelessness

Homelessness relief is action taken to relieve homelessness. Relief duty is owed when the Council is satisfied a household is eligible for assistance, has a local connection and is homeless. The Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to secure accommodation that they are satisfied would be available for at least six months, this could be for example by giving debt advice or providing a rent deposit.

Relief duty lasts for up to 56 days regardless of whether a person is considered a priority need. Those considered to be eligible and who have a priority need, will be provided with temporary accommodation while the Council take reasonable steps to resolve their homelessness.

During the period 2019 to 2023 we relieved a total of 804 cases of homelessness, by providing temporary accommodation for those in priority need, and assisting households to secure accommodation for at least six months, including finding homes in the private rented sector.

OUR INTENTIONS ARE TO

- Work closely with clients to provide a personalised housing plan to find permanent housing solutions for those in temporary accommodation, including working with landlords to secure private rented homes.
- Reduce the overall number of clients in temporary accommodation.
- Reduce the length of time clients spend in temporary accommodation.
- Provide suitable, appropriate, and good quality temporary accommodation options, to eradicate the need to use expensive Bed and Breakfasts (B&B) and Hotels.
- Reduce the temporary accommodation cost burden for the Borough.

- Work with our partners to find alternative/additional solutions for temporary accommodation.
- Increase and maximise the availability of affordable housing for homeless clients, by ensuring we provide prompt responses for vacant property allocations and nominations.

WE HAVE

- Increased the number of temporary accommodation units available (see below).
- Reduced the use of B&Bs and hotels for temporary accommodation.
- Worked with developers, registered providers of housing and planning to ensure the maximum amount of affordable rented housing is delivered.

WE WILL

- Review the solutions to relieve homelessness including the provision of debt advice and financial assistance for example rent deposits.
- Continue to review the level of temporary housing needed to ensure supply meets demand.
- Review all temporary housing solutions available to reduce costs to the Borough.
- Continue to work with clients and landlords to find private rented housing solutions.
- Ensure prompt allocation, and nomination for vacant social housing properties.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

The Council has a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation to some households who are homeless and have no accommodation available to them. Not all households qualify for this; the Council has a duty provide temporary accommodation for those who are eligible and in priority need as detailed in the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.



The Council has developed its own temporary accommodation. We previously had a Homeless Hostel, providing 14 rooms with shared facilities across two buildings in Nuneaton. This hostel remains in use and is due to be refurbished in 2024.

THE COUNCIL NOW HAS A FURTHER THREE HOSTELS

- 37 room hostel in Nuneaton town centre, with shared facilities or the option of self-contained units, with emergency crash pads providing a place for people in crisis such as severe weather.
- Eight room hostel in Bedworth with shared facilities.

- 14 room hostel in Nuneaton that are self-contained and allow pets.

In addition, the Council has furnished 13 of its own flats to use as temporary accommodation.

We continue to contract with Nuneaton and Bedworth Commercial Enterprises Ltd (NABCEL) Homes to manage our hostels; NABCEL have two bed and breakfast hostels comprising 17 rooms with shared facilities that the Council are able to use for temporary accommodation.

This brings the total number of rooms and self-contained units to 103. The Council will continue to increase this stock to avoid the use of temporary accommodation out of our area and to avoid the use of hotels.

Year	Total cost of temporary accommodation	Number of households placed into temporary accommodation
April 2019 – March 2020	1,162,610.63	244
April 2020 – March 2021	1,849,797.65	280
April 2021 – March 2022	1,480,716.52	277
April 2022 – March 2023	1,445,118.36	278

ROUGH SLEEPERS

Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute form of homelessness. Rough sleepers are extremely vulnerable and often have a history of repeat homelessness and struggle to break the cycle. In 2018 the Government published the Rough Sleeping Strategy to reduce rough sleeping numbers and, more importantly, to change the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our society. This has been driven and delivered by the hard work and collaboration of local councils, central government, the voluntary, community and faith sectors and other delivery partners.

In September 2022, the Government published a refreshed strategy, Ending Rough Sleeping for Good. It focuses on a “four-pronged approach” of prevention, intervention, recovery and ensuring a joined-up transparent approach, supported by over £2 billion worth of funding available up to 2025.

- **Prevention – activities to stop people sleeping rough for the first time**
- **Intervention – Support for those currently sleeping rough to move off the streets**
- **Recovery – Support for those who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the streets**
- **Joined-up transparent approach (System Support) – Systems and structures to embed changes and monitor progress**

In our previous strategy we advised that we did have instances of rough sleeping in the Borough, and that numbers were on the increase, so this announcement and funding opportunity was welcomed. The Council has managed to increase the services available to Rough Sleepers with the funding opportunity. We saw a significant drop mid last strategy and our number remained low until mid-2023. However, we have seen, and are continuing to see as are many local authorities, a return to the number of rough sleepers reported pre-pandemic in 2020.

ANNUAL ROUGH SLEEPERS COUNT

All local authorities are required to carry out an annual rough sleeper “snapshot” count and submit their findings to DLUHC, to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a ‘typical’ night between 1 October and 30 November. A local authority can use one of three approaches (listed below)

- **Count-based estimate - a full physical count of visible rough sleeping**
- **Evidence-based estimate meeting - using evidence from different partner agencies, which may include people in hidden rough sleeping sites**
- **Evidence-based estimate, including a spotlight count – this combines the two methods above**

All approaches record only those people seen or expected to be found sleeping rough on a single ‘typical’ night. The Borough has chosen the “evidence-based estimate, including spotlight count” approach for the last three years. This method gives our partners who work closely with people sleeping rough the opportunity to provide evidence to ensure that well known and entrenched rough sleepers are counted, especially those who refuse to engage or choose to stay well hidden from the outreach services. Partners who have provided evidence include health outreach, homelessness, drug and alcohol and disability services as well as the police, faith, and charity organisations who regularly interact with rough sleepers.

Below is the definition of rough sleeping provided in the DLUHC guidance; this definition is shared and discussed with our partners in advance of our count:

For the purpose of the estimates, people sleeping rough are defined as: People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”). A bash, or bender, is a makeshift shelter structure, often made from tarpaulin or wood.

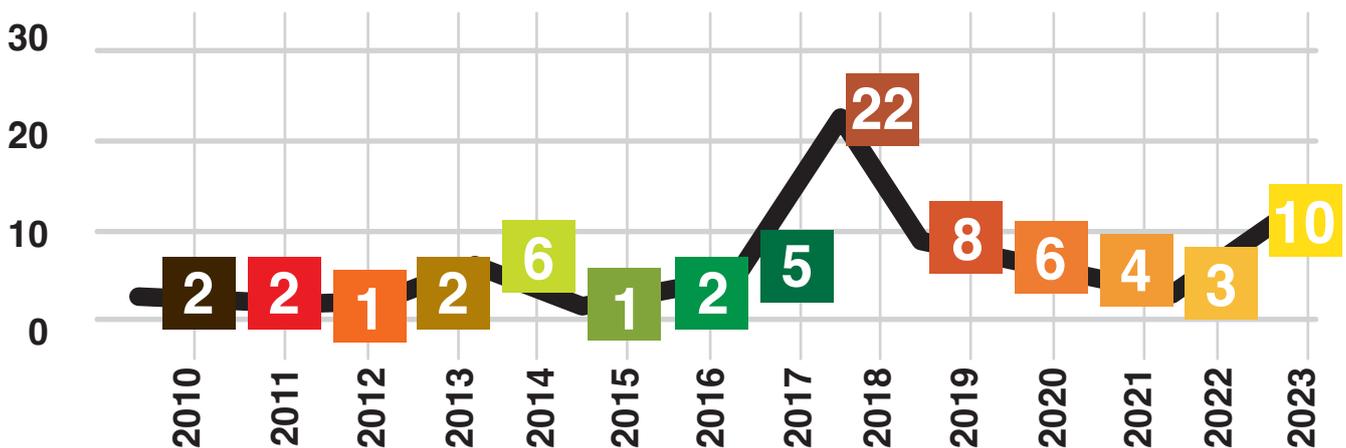
Following the count, we meet with our partners to discuss the evidence received to verify our findings to ensure those identified meet the definition of rough sleeping before meeting with an independent partner to agree our final submission figure. For the last two years the Salvation Army have acted as our independent partner.

In 2018, the Borough reported its highest number of rough sleepers since 2010. From 2019 the number reduced year on year until the 2023 count. Although still considerably lower compared to many other authorities, the rise in numbers from three to 10 over the period of a year represents an increase of over 200% and is reflective of the reported numbers throughout 2023.

The number of rough sleepers recorded in the Borough in 2023 is an acknowledgement of the collaborative work we do, and the information our partners provide. Our 2023 annual spotlight count recorded 10 known rough sleepers, of these only two were seen bedded down on the night of the count; the other eight are all long term well known rough sleepers that all partners agreed should be included during our evidence meeting.

The graph below shows the Nuneaton and Bedworth annual spotlight figures since the count began in 2010.

NBBC ANNUAL ROUGH SLEEPER SPOTLIGHT COUNT 2010 TO 2023



Since our first homelessness strategy published in 2019, we have seen significant changes in terms of Government rough sleeping priorities, funding opportunities, and a national pandemic.

Page 25 demonstrates what we have achieved; what we will continue to do, and how we intend to achieve to meet the four-pronged approach to end rough sleeping for good.



PREVENTION

ROUGH SLEEPERS OUTREACH TEAM

WE HAVE

worked with the charity P3 and their rough sleeper outreach team who regularly visit the street homeless in the Borough, offering them help to access support services, and secure suitable accommodation.

WE WILL

- Continue to work with P3 and their outreach team; they seek out and find rough sleepers using their knowledge of known sites, reports from Streetlink, and information provided by partners such as the police, health professionals, and support agencies.
- Continue to work with our partners to:
 - raise awareness and promote the services available to people at risk of rough sleeping.
 - promote the importance of, and how to report the locations of, people seen sleeping rough.
 - promptly disseminate and share important information to help to prevent the risks to the health and safety of rough sleepers.

WINTER NIGHT SHELTER

WE HAVE

Supported the night shelter for rough sleepers which ran from 1 December to 28 February in six local churches and community centres: providing a hot meal, bed, and breakfast, and in some centres, shower and clothes washing facilities. This service was vital but could not continue during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak in Spring 2020. With the reduction on numbers of rough sleepers in the Borough and the opening of our crash pads at Eaton House we have not needed night shelters for the last three years.

WE WILL

Annually review the need for local night shelters through our four-weekly Rough Sleeper Outreach Forum and in liaison with the Salvation Army and other local churches through the No Second Night Out (NSNO) meetings. We recognise in times of high levels of rough sleepers, night shelters can offer an invaluable service, we will continue to work in partnership to help people off the streets into more settled accommodation.

RECOVERY

HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT SERVICE CONTRACT - ROUGH SLEEPER INITIATIVE (RSI)

From 2022, DLUHC allocated RSI funding to be awarded on a three-year basis commencing in 2022, we were successful, and our funding application was agreed. The funding is over a three-year period and reduces in years two and three as rough sleeping is prevented. P3 were the successful bidder and are required to work collaboratively with the Council.

In year 1, the aim of the service was to temporarily accommodate individuals who are sleeping rough in the Borough by placing them in a room in a hostel with shared amenities and 24/7 on-site support: in addition, supporting other rough sleepers in other temporary accommodation locations.

The support to be provided included helping individuals to gain the skills, knowledge, and experience required to enable them to secure and maintain their own accommodation, to live independently, and to access and sustain permanent secure accommodation as part of a move on plan.

WE HAVE

- provided a direct access hostel with five bed spaces that is owned by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, providing person centred, housing-related support for homeless single people aged 18 and over that were at risk of, or who were already, sleeping rough.
- provided floating support at the same level for up to 10 (at any one time) to other single homeless people staying in other temporary accommodation who were at risk of, or already sleeping rough.

YEAR 1: NUMBER OF REFERRALS FOR SERVICES

Service Type	Number of referrals	No. of referrals accepted
Floating Support	53	36
Rough Sleeper Initiative	22	13

REASONS REFERRAL REFUSED FOR FLOATING SUPPORT AND RSI YEAR 1

FLOATING SUPPORT

Reason referral refused; Floating	Number of referrals refused
Person ineligible for the service	6
Failed to attend assessment	6
Support needs greater than service can meet	1
Declined service no longer required	3
Person withdrew their request for the service	1

RSI

Reason referral refused: RSI	Number of referrals refused
No availability of service – accessed floating support	4
Ineligible for service referred to alternative service	2
Did not meet the criteria, potentially referred in error	2
Person withdrew application no longer required service	1

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ACCESSING BOTH SERVICES IN YEAR 1

Service Type	No. of people accessing service
Floating Support	35
Rough Sleeper Initiative	22

NUMBER OF PEOPLE MOVING ON FROM SERVICE RSI IN YEAR 1

No. leaving RSI Year 1	No. planned	No. unplanned
14	7	7

REASONS FOR PLANNED MOVE ON FROM RSI SERVICE YEAR 1

Reason for planned move on from RSI Year 1	No. planned move on
Left to live with partner	1
Moved to long term supported living	1
Moved to private rented accommodation	2
Moved to local authority accommodation	1
Transferred to floating support	2
Moved to long-term residential care	1

REASONS FOR UNPLANNED MOVE ON FROM RSI IN YEAR 1

Reason for Unplanned move on from RSI Year 1	No. Unplanned move on
Abandoned accommodation (all female)	3
Moved out of area due to previous abusers finding location	1
Left due to non-engagement with support	1
Left due to service charge arrears and no engagement with support.	2

The two people who left due to service charge arrears and non-engagement had previously been successful in the RSI project and it was the longest period of time that they had remained in stable accommodation.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE LEAVING FLOATING SUPPORT IN YEAR 1

No. leaving Floating Support Year 1	No. planned	No. unplanned
32	16	16

REASONS FOR PLANNED MOVE ON FROM FLOATING SUPPORT YEAR 1

Reason for Planned move on from Floating Support Year 1	No. planned move on
Transferred to RSI	11
Moved to private rented accommodation	1
Moved in with family or friends	2
Moved to Local Authority accommodation – had completed programme of support	1
Completed programme of support & remained in temporary accommodation	1

REASONS FOR UNPLANNED MOVE ON FROM FLOATING SUPPORT YEAR 1

Reason for Unplanned move on from Floating Support Year 1	No. Unplanned move on
Failed to engage with support placement ended	3
Accommodation abandoned left to stay with family	3
Taken into custody following physical assault	1
Placement in Temporary accommodation ended due to ASB	3
Placement ended due to breaches of license agreement	3



WE WILL

Years 2 and 3: we will continue to provide a direct access hostel with five bed spaces, providing person centred housing related support, for homeless single people that are at risk of, or who are already sleeping rough, aged 18 or over.

In addition, the Council will provide self-contained independent properties to be let to a selected number of rough sleepers who have been able to demonstrate their commitment to becoming tenant ready and wanting to maintain their own tenancy. Let on a starter tenancy license agreement, a dedicated support worker contracted to work 37 hours a week will provide those selected with intensive one-to-one

support for the first 12 months to help maintain their tenancy and acquire the necessary life skills to prevent them becoming homeless again. This will be available for a maximum of five to six people at any one time.

This will replicate a Housing First-type model which is an approach to ending homelessness through housing and support provision. It prioritises access to permanent housing with tailored, open-ended wraparound support for the individual that emphasises choice and control.



SUPPORT SYSTEMS

COLLABORATIVE WORK

To end rough sleeping and maximise the impact of the support available the Council recognises that services need to work together. The pandemic brought systems and partners closer together than ever before, seeing rough sleeping as a housing and health problem. We have learned from this that partnership working has a positive impact, better joined-up service provision and multi-agency collaboration was one of the factors credited to the success of the pandemic response, which we have built on, and will continue to build on in the long-term.

WE HAVE

- Continued to strengthen our partnership working through regular Homelessness, Anti-Social Behaviour and Rough Sleeper Outreach meetings, discussing, and identifying individuals known to be at high risk of, or who are already, sleeping rough.
- Worked collaboratively with the physical and mental health outreach nurses who provide services to homeless people on the street, in temporary accommodation and working with partners at hubs and homelessness drop-in services. The nurses are vital and active members of the Rough Sleeper Forum, and critical to providing information about those sleeping rough.

- Undertaken a major review of the Rough Sleeper Outreach Forum. We recognised a need to change and revitalise the format of the meetings. In March 2023, we relaunched our Rough Sleeper Outreach Forum.

This included:

- adopting a more formal approach.
- a new terms of reference that clearly set out the aims and objectives for the group.
- a reviewed, refreshed, and extended membership to ensure that the right key partners who work with and have knowledge of rough sleepers were included.

The meetings are held every four weeks and have grown from strength to strength. The intel provided about rough sleepers is now robust and based on clear evidence rather than hearsay and has allowed us to gather a wider understanding of those who are rough sleeping in our Borough, especially those who were previously hidden.

The Forum has substantially strengthened collaborative partnership working to ensure individuals sleeping rough are referred to, and provided, with the multiple services they need.



- Continued to attend the NSNO meetings chaired and hosted by the Salvation Army. The NSNO meeting brings together representatives from the wider community such as local churches/ faith groups and foodbanks who support rough sleepers, as well as our homelessness partners P3, Doorway, St Basil's, and health outreach nurses. These meetings enable us to gather a better understanding of the high level of need and reliance rough sleepers have on other organisations and has strengthened our ability to reach out to individuals who are reluctant or refusing to engage with support.

WE WILL

- Continue to strengthen our collaborative working through our Rough Sleeper Forum by meeting regularly to identify, review, and discuss the support needs of individual rough sleepers in our Borough.
- We will through our discussions focus on the individual person and the holistic support they require to end their rough sleeping journey for good, including understanding and overcoming the barriers they face to accessing services and their reluctance or refusal to engage when offered help.
- Continue to be an active participant in the NSNO meetings.
- Share and disseminate information to raise awareness of rough sleepers and factors that pose risks to their safety, health, and wellbeing.

WE WILL: work with our partners overcome the barriers and challenges faced by those rough sleeping, to end rough sleeping in Nuneaton and Bedworth for good and prevent repeat homelessness through:

- **Prevention**
- **Intervention**
- **Recovery**
- **Joined up transparent approach**



DOMESTIC ABUSE

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a number of tools and powers that will positively impact on Warwickshire's victims-survivors, their children, and perpetrators.

The Act placed a Safe Accommodation duty on Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to develop and publish a Safe Accommodation Strategy to provide an overall and holistic approach to deliver a rounded offer of support to victims in safe accommodation. Tier 2 district and borough authorities have a duty 'to cooperate' with the Domestic Abuse Act. The Act defines Safe Accommodation as: "Solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse including expert support". For WCC to deliver there is a requirement for all District and Borough authorities to co-operate. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council are working closely with WCC and partners to achieve the five objectives of the Strategy.

THE FIVE OBJECTIVES ARE:

- **Early intervention and prevention**
- **Accessible services**
- **Appropriate safe accommodation**
- **Multiagency delivery**
- **Support to return home or move on**

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR AND WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE:

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

- We have recruited a specialised Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator so that victim-survivors are supported at an early stage. We have provided survivors with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness or are assisting to find more suitable accommodation if the option to remain at home is not safe. To date the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator has helped 77 victim-survivors.
- We will work in partnership with victim-survivors, our partners and neighbouring district and boroughs to learn, ensuring that victim-survivors are at the centre of our provision. We will listen to and understand their wishes to provide appropriate options for accommodation and support.

ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

- We have trained officers, so they have the knowledge on how to refer victim-survivors to receive specialised help and support, we have provided a single point of contact, we have published on our website the services that are available.
- We will continue to work with partners to ensure that all services are known, continue with officer awareness training throughout our workforce, ensure that information is accessible, reach out to hidden victim-survivors through community groups and charitable organisations.

APPROPRIATE SAFE ACCOMMODATION

- We have provided accommodation options and ensured appropriate support is in place for all victim-survivors who need it, such as refuge support, self-contained temporary accommodation, supported with sanctuary schemes (which is a multi-agency victim-survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes), provided permanent social housing.
- We will through our prevention of homelessness initiatives be working in partnership with our private landlords to provide suitable permanent housing which will provide more housing options for victim-survivors.

MULTI-AGENCY DELIVERY

- We have worked in partnership with partners to share information and develop joint plans to protect victim-survivors and hold perpetrators to account through Warwickshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings, take a joint approach to risk assessment and safety planning for victim-survivors living in Warwickshire.
- We will continue to work together to consider the wishes of the victim-survivor, working together to provide options, reviewing the options available and the option gaps so individuals feel safe in their home, in addition reviewing the powers that can be used to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

SUPPORT TO RETURN HOME OR MOVE ON

- We have worked with partners for victim-survivors to return home safely and/or to move into alternative permanent accommodation. Our Allocations Policy gives the highest priority band to those who require urgent re-housing for those escaping domestic abuse. Our Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator is a single point of contact for victim-survivors who are applying for social housing, to date 44 victim-survivors have been permanently housed through the support of our Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator.
- We will continue to give applicants a single point of contact to assist with housing applications. Working in partnership, we will consult with victim-survivors on their experiences of applying for social housing to review our processes.

The Borough recognises that Domestic Abuse can affect anyone regardless of their age, gender identity or reassignment, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, and marital status. Notwithstanding this, evidence shows women are more likely to experience repeat victimisation, be physically injured or killed as a result of domestic abuse and experience non-physical abuse including emotional and financial abuse, and we have taken this into account when designing and delivering our services.



ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS

The Armed Forces Covenant is about fair treatment. For most of the armed forces community, the Covenant is about removing disadvantage so that they get the same access to services as the civilian community. The Armed Forces Covenant sets out the relationship between the nation, the government, and the armed forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the armed forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated.

Our Housing Solutions Team has a long-established, mutually supportive working relationship with Veteran Contact Point (VCP) in Nuneaton. We work collaboratively to find wraparound solutions to housing and preventing homelessness. We recognise the importance of the Armed Forces Covenant within our Housing Strategy, and how fortunate we are to have a VCP in Nuneaton.

All applicants completing our online application process for housing, are asked to identify if they are serving or former members of the armed or reserve forces. Once they identify themselves, they are automatically sent a digital support leaflet that gives specific advice and important links to external services for the armed forces.

Our Allocation policy closely follows the statutory requirements for the armed forces to award additional preferences, placing them in the highest priority banding for housing, providing they meet the other eligibility criteria to join our waiting list.

Our Rough Sleeper Outreach Forum meets every four weeks to discuss the risks, concerns, and housing needs of rough sleepers, and includes representation from health, homelessness, substance misuse and disability support agencies. All partner agencies identify former armed forces personnel sleeping rough as part of their assessment process. We work together to provide multi-agency support, tailored to the individual's needs, including working with VCP to try to find long term solutions for armed forces veterans with multiple complex needs who are homeless and/or sleeping rough.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS

We are proud of the relationship we have with our partners, and never underestimate how important collaborative working is for providing successful outcomes for homeless people in our Borough. The collaborative work and achievements especially during the pandemic are testament to how strong, and successful the relationship is that we have with both the statutory and voluntary sector partners. We would like to thank our partners in general, but more so for the way we came together during Covid to help those who were at risk of becoming, or were already, homeless including rough sleepers, and for the platform this has established on which we can continue to grow our relationships and shape future service offers.

OUR PARTNERS

The Council works with many agencies, both in the statutory and voluntary sectors. The excellent partnerships established over the years in the Borough have enabled a multi-agency approach to tackling homelessness and the causes of homelessness, including rough sleeping. Without the ongoing support for clients, and the excellent services delivered by these organisations, the Council would struggle to deliver a comprehensive homelessness prevention service in the Borough.

It is important that we recognise the individual role and services provided by our partners that support the delivery of priorities within this strategy. Our homelessness partners provide bespoke specialised services that prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping. They provide information and guidance, bespoke and often intensive support, and temporary accommodation solutions. Through their interventions people at risk of homelessness, or who are homeless, find successful outcomes and do not need to seek additional homelessness duty from the Council.

HOMELESSNESS PARTNERSHIP FORUM

The Homelessness Partnership Forum is hosted and chaired by the Council, and meeting every quarter the forum has grown from strength to strength. Attendees include representatives from both statutory and third sector organisations who come together to explore homelessness prevention, reduction, and relief, and to share information and promote good practise within homelessness services. The forum acts as a support network for members, and provides a platform for sharing successes, discussing new initiatives, and problem solving.

The Council is firmly committed to strengthening partnerships to continue to support the delivery of first-class services to those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or who have a housing problem.

WIDER REPRESENTATION

In addition to the remit of various posts and roles within the Council, the Housing and Community Safety Directorate plays an active part in county-wide and sub regional fora.

NBBC Housing representation is present at the:

- **West Midlands Combined Authority Homelessness Taskforce**
- **West Midlands Housing Officers Group**
- **Warwickshire Housing Partnership Group**
- **Warwickshire Strategy Officers Group**
- **Warwickshire Heads of Housing**
- **Warwickshire Migration/Resettlement partnership**
- **No Second Night Out**
- **Warwickshire Better Together (Housing) Group which includes County council social care and Health partners**
- **Warwickshire Public Health**
- **Warwickshire North Health and Wellbeing**
- **Warwickshire Safe Accommodation**

- **Nuneaton and Bedworth Private Sector Landlords Forum**
- **Warwickshire Housing Related Support Group**

These fora serve to consider, consult, and develop best practice initiatives to prevent and relieve homelessness. By sharing good practice and learning from other organisations we maximise the potential to reduce homelessness.

Registered providers (Housing Associations)

We work closely with the registered providers in our Borough to ensure people on our housing list have maximum opportunity to access the homes they provide. We work with those developing new homes to maximise the delivery of properties that best meet the needs of our waiting list. This includes working together to determine the property type, bedroom size, and tenure mix that will best support local housing need and in turn reduce homelessness.

REGISTERED PROVIDERS IN OUR BOROUGH INCLUDE:

- **Anchor**
- **Bromford**
- **Citizen**
- **Clarion**
- **Derwent**
- **Housing 21**
- **MHA**
- **Midland Heart**
- **Orbit**
- **PA Housing**
- **Platform**
- **Sage**
- **Sanctuary**
- **Stonewater**
- **WHG Housing**

Registered providers enter into a formal nomination agreement that sets the proportion of lettings they will make available annually to households on the Borough's housing register. Although we set these proportions, the majority of our registered providers no longer hold their own waiting lists and choose to advertise all vacant properties through our choice-based lettings system. This ensures local properties go to local people in the greatest housing need, many of whom are homeless households in temporary accommodation.

WHO WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH

Below are details of some of our partners

including service descriptions from organisations working with the Council at the time of publication of this strategy:

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL:

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is the social services authority for the area and the commissioner of housing-related support services.

In 2021 the county council with the five district and borough councils in Warwickshire, co-produced the first ever Warwickshire-wide homelessness strategy: Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach.

Developed by the six councils and working in partnership with both statutory and voluntary organisations, this strategy is important because it supports the district and borough council's own homelessness and rough sleeper strategies. It aims to address the broader underlying issues of homelessness and brings together the organisations working in those other policy areas to help to develop the way forward to reduce homelessness in Warwickshire.

THE WARWICKSHIRE FIVE KEY HOMELESSNESS PRIORITY AREAS:

- **Health**
- **Financial Inclusion**
- **Young people**
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Offending**

The Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire strategy is currently under review and is not due to be published until after the publication of this strategy.

Housing related support services are commissioned by WCC. The services they commission are for clients with support needs that place them on the edge of care, supporting them to maintain a tenancy and helping with issues that could lead to homelessness. Some of the services include short-term accommodation to support households who are homeless.

WARWICKSHIRE POLICE:

Warwickshire Police work in partnership with a number of other organisations to address Domestic Abuse in Warwickshire, including specialist services commissioned to work directly with victims or survivors. Domestic Abuse affects all districts and boroughs within the county and victims can be of any age or gender. Safe accommodation is a significant issue in cases of domestic abuse as victims are often forced to flee their home, leaving them in need of immediate and long-term support.

Warwickshire Police work closely with local authority housing colleagues to provide housing support for victims, including through the county Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process which allows high risk cases to be discussed between partner agencies and a plan of support agreed for victims.

Warwickshire Police currently works in partnership with local authorities and key partners across the county to address modern slavery. Public bodies have certain obligations to identify and support potential victims of Modern Slavery, however no single agency has all the knowledge, skills, and resources to do this effectively. It is known that adult victims of Modern Slavery can often experience challenges in accessing accommodation, both in an emergency and as they move towards recovery which can lead some individuals to present as homeless. In many cases victims can also present with additional or complex needs including physical or mental health, immigration status or substance misuse. Through our strong multi-agency relationships we will work with local authority housing teams and charitable organisations to secure safe accommodation for victims of modern slavery.

The link between Modern Slavery and Homelessness has been identified nationally. In Warwickshire there have been previous cases identified where victims were recruited into exploitation whilst homeless and the offer of accommodation used as an inducement.

NHS OUTREACH NURSING TEAM:

The Homeless Nursing Service/Street Outreach Team has been operational since January 2020, provided by the Warwickshire Foundation Trust, and funded via public health and rough sleeper initiative monies. The service has adapted to meet the needs of homeless individuals, whether on the streets or in temporary accommodation. It has grown considerably in scope and number of contacts.

In collaboration with the mental health service, weekly clinics are held outside of the Salvation Army in Nuneaton in a camper van, offering privacy and dignity in the healthcare assessment process. Health interventions include wound care, long-term condition management, drug and alcohol support, GP registrations, and liaising with other agencies. The team is often the first point of contact for individuals seeking homelessness support.

The work is aimed at seeing the individual on the street to prevent frequent hospital emergency department admissions. This proactive response has also seen collaborative working with acute hospital nurses, vaccinators, and mental health services. The strong relationships formed create trust and reliability, enabling patients to receive valuable ongoing care.

Initiatives have included arms-length treatments for blood-borne viruses, urgent dental care for the homeless, fit note provision to support unregistered individuals to register with the Department of Work and Pensions and prescribing for minor ailments.

NABCEL (NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE LTD):

Formed in 2013, NABCEL is the commercial arm of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. NABCEL provides accommodation and property-related services across Nuneaton, Bedworth, and the West Midlands.

In response to the increasing requirement for suitable temporary accommodation, the Council, through NABCEL, has provided two Bed and Breakfast properties to supplement our homeless hostels in Nuneaton. These additional 17 rooms, with shared cooking facilities means that homeless households are more adequately accommodated while permanent housing is sourced, or whilst further investigations are conducted into their homelessness situation.

DOORWAY: YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-25 YEARS:

Doorway is a Nuneaton based charity for homeless young people aged 16 to 25 years in Warwickshire. Our organisational vision is “to prevent youth homelessness and minimise its impacts by ensuring that all young people have a safe and secure place to live, a productive fulfilling purpose, positive relationships with others and good health to enjoy them”.

Our Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accredited Advice Service aims to prevent homelessness by identifying appropriate housing options focused on young people’s individual needs combined with advice to maximise their income which may also reduce the likelihood of homelessness. New Home Workshops help them to prepare for living independently in accommodation including budgeting and understanding occupancy agreements. In the year to March 2022, the Advice service received 389 referrals and of these 232 were from the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council area with 32 young people reporting sleeping rough at first point of contact.

Doorway manages 53 units of accommodation in the Borough and as this does not meet the demand it is important to work in partnership across the Borough to identify preventative options and solutions. Finding appropriate accommodation is essential for young people

and a platform to leading productive and fulfilling lives. Those who move into our accommodation are referred to Doorway’s Support Service where our support workers adopt a strengths-based approach in both floating and accommodation-based support. Our focus on understanding their individual needs means using flexible and innovative methods in our approach to ensure successful outcomes for the young people. Our Wellbeing Service delivers a range of activities such as weekly Jobwise and Healthwise sessions, along with cooking, gardening, and craft sessions. As well as developing their independent living skills the activities have a huge impact upon improving their physical, mental, and sexual health.

Doorway has a drop-in centre which is open Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm where young people can be seen daily for advice, support, and wellbeing advice. We also have a shower for use by people sleeping rough and a warm space for them. Thanks to generous donations from the local community, we are able to provide clothing and food to them if required. In addition, donations enable us to provide starter packs of household items when young people move into our accommodation.
www.doorway.org.uk

ST BASILS:

St Basils is one of the largest organisations in the country working with young people who are homeless. A registered charity and a registered provider of social housing they provide a range of accommodation and support services to young people aged 16 to 25 years who are homeless, vulnerable or at risk.

P3:

P3 is a national registered charity with offices in Nuneaton. P3 carry out vital work with people aged over 25 who are homeless or likely to become homeless. They provide floating support services to prevent homelessness before it happens by working with people whose accommodation is at risk.

P3 also have a Street Outreach team who visit known rough sleeper locations in the Nuneaton and Bedworth area in the early hours of the morning to identify people who are sleeping on the streets and offer them the help they need to find suitable accommodation.

REFUGE: DOMESTIC ABUSE:

Refuge is a national charity providing specialist support for women and children experiencing domestic violence. The largest domestic abuse organisation in the UK, on any given day their services support thousands of women, and their children, helping them to overcome the physical, emotional, financial, and logistical impacts of abuse and rebuild their lives free of fear.

People experiencing abuse or violence will often leave their home to escape the situation.

In the majority of cases, it is women who flee the family home with their children and come to the Council for help. Domestic violence is one of the major reasons for homelessness in the Borough and obviously has a traumatic effect on the victim and any children that have witnessed it and been made homeless. The Nuneaton and Bedworth Refuge provides a safe house and specialist support to women and children escaping domestic and other forms of violence.

The Council works in partnership with Refuge to help accommodate women and children and find them a more settled home when they are ready to move on.

CGL (CHANGE GROW LIVE): DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTIONS:

Those with addictions can be evicted from their homes if they prioritise the funding of an alcohol or drug habit over paying their rent or mortgage. Anti-social behaviour due to addiction can also cause them to lose their social or private sector tenancy.

CGL delivers a recovery-focused service designed to support people to take control of their recovery and achieve their recovery goals. Services will include counselling, emotional support, and supported access to mutual aid.

CGL also provides support in accessing training and employment and works with the Council and other third sector organisations to help with housing and homelessness issues.

TOGETHER: PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND LEARNING DISABILITIES:

Together is a national registered charity. Together Warwickshire provides housing related support to people with disabilities which includes, physical and learning disabilities, mental health, sensory impairments, and autism. They support people aged 16 years and over.

Together provide floating support services to prevent homelessness before it happens by working with people whose accommodation is at risk. They also support people to set up, understand, manage, and maintain their tenancies. They do this by one-to-one support usually within their home via self-directed support sessions. The aim is to empower people so that they can independently maintain their tenancies once support comes to end.

Together also provide support via a SWIFT Service, to those who may not require our full floating support service. This offer is usually over the phone, by text or email, and provides short-term help and guidance on how best a client can approach their immediate housing need.

Together work in conjunction with other agencies/professionals and the Council and look forward to this partnership continuing.

WARWICKSHIRE PROBATION SERVICE:

The Probation Service Warwickshire manages People on Probation who are subject to Community Orders, Suspended Sentence Orders or Licence/Post Sentence Supervision (PSS). Stable accommodation is a key element in the rehabilitation of people on probation and the probation Service works closely with the Council, strategic partners and third sector organisations, such as P3, to address housing and homelessness issues.

Whilst not an accommodation provider the Probation Service currently provides a very limited scheme - Community Accommodation Service (CAS3) - for some prison leavers, aged 18 years or older, who will be homeless on release from prison. A requirement of CAS3 is that a Duty to Refer must have been submitted and all other housing options explored. The accommodation provided is limited to a maximum of 84 days and its intention is to provide some initial stability, to enable the Person on Probation to secure more longer-term accommodation.

Alongside CAS3 the Probation Service also has a contract with National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) to provide two Accommodation Support workers in Warwickshire. These officers work with our People on Probation to help them find accommodation and/or support them to maintain accommodation.

HOME AND ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE TEAM (HEART):

The HEART service provides assessments for, and delivery of, disabled facilities, adaptations, home improvement grants and home safety prevention work. It is a shared service bringing together teams from the six councils in Warwickshire.

The service aims to maintain residents living independently in warm and safe homes and carry out preventative work to reduce accidents.

In turn this prevents housing crisis as residents are able to continue living independently, accidents are prevented, and health and safety is protected. This is especially true for the older residents who may end up in care, hospital or unsuitable housing following a general decline in ability, accident or housing related ill health. Although unlikely to become homeless in the traditional sense, it does help prevent the need to move from unsuitable accommodation into more expensive care or hospital settings.

The organisations above have been consulted on this document and have had the opportunity to contribute where appropriate. Their input has been much appreciated and demonstrates a clear commitment for continued partnership working. We all have a common agenda to prevent, relieve and tackle homelessness and support the most vulnerable people in our community in this respect.

PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES 2024 - 2029

PRIORITY

PRIORITY 1

Provide access to free housing advice and/or assistance to all who are homeless or facing homelessness

OBJECTIVES

- To provide good quality accurate information and guidance for those faced with homelessness.
- To ensure staff are trained and equipped to provide good quality, accurate homelessness advice and guidance.
- To ensure that the information, guidance, and advice we provide is current and reflects legislative and policy changes, local support service provision, and good practice.
- To ensure the homelessness information, guidance, and links on the Homelessness area of the Council's website are accessible, relevant, and current.

PRIORITY 2

To enable homelessness prevention

- To ensure staffing resources meet the Borough's preference to prevent someone from becoming homeless rather than helping them to find a new home.
- To promote early intervention with tenants and landlords and offer a free specialist project for landlords considering serving a notice, or tenants who are at risk of losing their home.
- To ensure our Housing Solutions Support Scheme is current with today's economic climate.
- To ensure through engagement with landlords and agents our customers are supported to transition into the private sector.

PRIORITY 3

To relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity to enable suitable alternative accommodation for those becoming homeless

- To provide innovative and alternative solutions to relieve homelessness including the provision of debt advice and financial assistance.
- To ensure the level of temporary housing needed meets demand.
- To ensure temporary housing solutions are value for money and reduce costs to the Borough.
- To ensure private rented housing solutions are available and accessible.
- To ensure prompt allocation, and nomination for vacant social housing properties.

PRIORITY 4

To enable access to suitable and affordable accommodation that is sustainable, with support provided where appropriate

- To ensure social and affordable housing stock in the borough is let to those in greatest need.
- To work with developers, registered providers, and planning colleagues to maximise the delivery of affordable housing that meets local needs.
- To further develop initiatives with private sector landlords to improve access to the private rented sector.

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