



Draft 1

**New Forest Homelessness and
Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2031**

Contents

Foreword.....	3
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in New Forest	4
National context.....	4
Homelessness pressures in New Forest	6
Rough Sleeping in New Forest.....	8
Duty to Refer	9
Temporary Accommodation.....	9
Areas of success	10
Areas to progress.....	11
Corporate Context	12
The New Forest District Council Corporate Plan	12
Our Vision.....	13
Rough Sleeping	14
Family Homelessness	13
Early Intervention and Prevention	13
Meeting health and support needs	13
Accommodation	14
Communication and partnership	14
Preventing and relieving homelessness	15
Context	15
What we will do.....	15
Ending Rough Sleeping	16
Context	16
What we will do.....	17
Investing in Accommodation.....	17
Context	17
What we will do.....	17
Providing Support.....	18
Context	18
What we will do.....	19
Working in Partnership	20
Context	20
What we will do.....	20
Monitoring and review	21

Foreword

I am proud to introduce this new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for New Forest District Council. It is based on our past achievements and future ambitions including almost putting an end to rough sleeping since 2018, whilst improving our temporary accommodation and support services, and remaining committed to tackling homelessness in all its forms and preventing its causes going forward.

Ending rough sleeping in the District was the ambition of our existing strategy produced back in 2018. This new strategy updates our position, highlights our successes, and strengthens our ambition to further improve our proactive, compassionate, and sustainable approach to homelessness. It builds on our long-standing commitment to tackling homelessness and reflects the evolving challenges and expectations placed on local authorities like ours at the present time.

It is anticipated that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the proposed Hampshire Mayoral Strategic Authority may start to reshape our homelessness service delivery from 2027. Nevertheless, we are committed to work collaboratively and seek opportunities to ensure homelessness priorities are embedded in any new unitary council structure created by LGR whilst remaining responsive to any future government policy changes.

Our mission to ensure that every resident has access to safe, secure, and affordable accommodation, and that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring remains and will live-on through this strategy. We identify our priorities as prevention first, rapid responses to homelessness and rough sleeping, and providing timely personalised assistance to support households at risk of homelessness.

Despite uncertainty, NFDC remains focused on delivering secure, warm, and affordable homes, preventing homelessness, and supporting residents through life's challenges. This strategy aims to protect the most vulnerable, strengthen communities, and create a foundation for long-term housing stability.

We recognise that Homelessness is a complex and deeply personal issue. Behind every statistic is a story of hardship, resilience, and hope. Our strategy recognises that preventing homelessness is not just about housing. It's about working together across services, sectors, and neighbourhoods to build a safety net that catches people before they fall.

As Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, I am proud to present our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This document sets out our commitment to ensuring that every resident has access to safe, secure, and sustainable accommodation, and that no one in our community is left without support.

We know that temporary accommodation, while essential in crisis situations, must be a stepping stone—not a destination. That's why this strategy focuses on early

intervention, wraparound support, and long-term housing solutions that restore stability.

I want to thank our dedicated officers, partners, and voluntary organisations who work tirelessly to support those at risk of homelessness. Their compassion and commitment are the foundation of this strategy.

Together, we can create a future where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring—and where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Cllr Steve Davies

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in New Forest

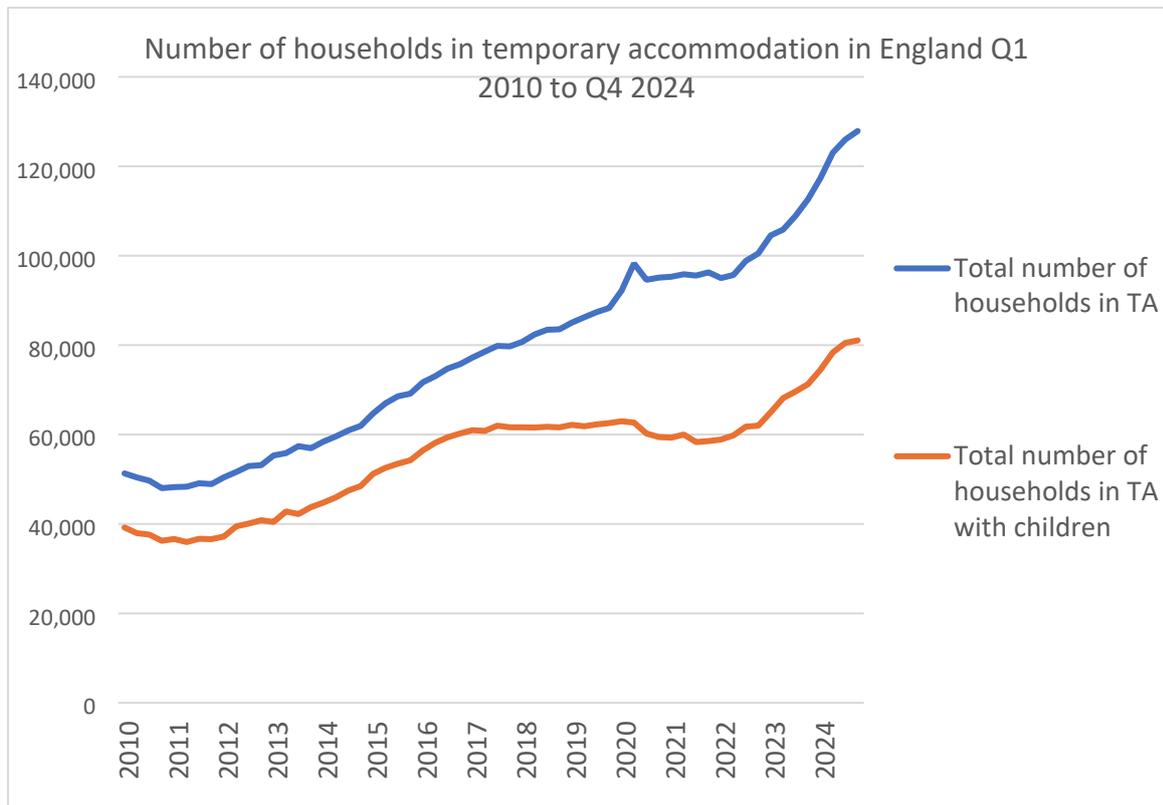
National context

This five-year strategy comes at a time when statutory homelessness has been rising nationally and the number of households in temporary accommodation are at record levels.

178,560 households were owed a homelessness relief duty in England during 2023/24, up 12.3% from 2022/23 and up 27.01% from 2019/20

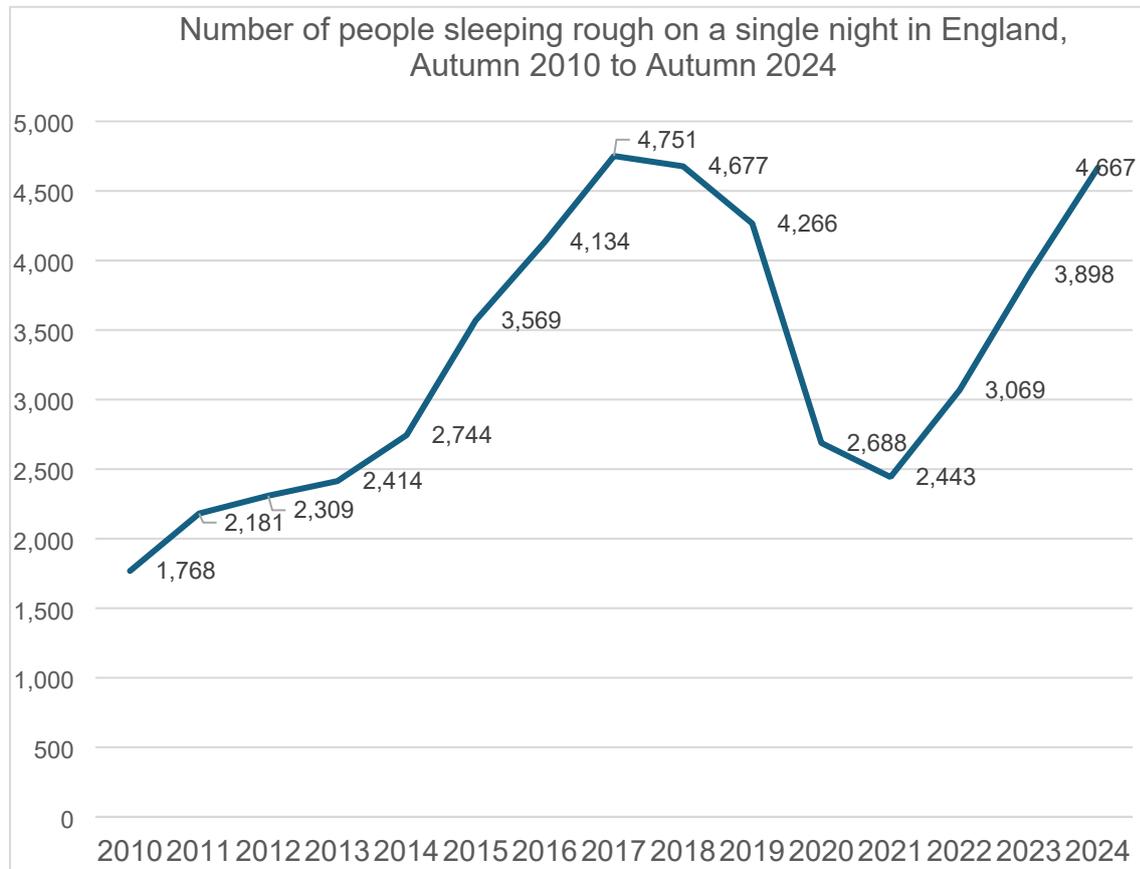
146,430 households were owed a homelessness prevention duty in 2023/24, up 3.1% from 2022/23 but down 1.9% from 2019/20, the last year before COVID.

In December 2024, 127,890 households were accommodated in temporary accommodation (TA), the highest ever figure, up by 13.6% since December 2023 and 44.8% since December 2019. The December 2024 figure includes 165,510 children in TA.



The latest rough sleeping snapshot statistics show that in Autumn 2024 there were 4,667 individuals recorded as sleeping rough on a single night in England, up 19.7% from 2023 and up 91% since 2021. The 2024 figure equates to an estimated 8.1 people sleeping rough on a single night in England per 100,000 population. The

number of people sleeping over the course of a month is estimated by local authorities to be roughly twice the single night figure¹.



It is too early to say what the impact of the new government from May 2024 will be on homelessness.

A national homelessness strategy is expected before the end of 2025, which may bring radical changes to national homelessness policy.

There has already been a significant increase in local authority homelessness funding and the promise of much greater capital funding for social housing. The total national Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) has increased over a number of years and rose significantly from £440m in 2024/25 to £633m in 2025/26, including a significant uplift in HPG funding for New Forest.

The Renters’ Rights Act became law in 2025 and will be implemented from 2026 onwards. This will make it significantly harder to evict private rented sector tenants and over time to improve accommodation standards.

The new regulations on supported housing, implementing the Supported Housing Act 2023, are also expected to come into effect in 2026.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-data-framework-january-to-march-2025>

National government introduced the Ending Rough Sleeping Data Framework² from December 2023 which is designed to move beyond the single-night snapshot by tracking whether rough sleeping is:

- Prevented
- Rare
- Brief
- Non-recurring

Local authorities report quarterly on five key indicators showing progress in each of these areas.

However, the fundamental causes of increased homelessness and rough sleeping, such as the lack of affordable accommodation available in both the social rented and private rented sectors, do not look set to improve in the near term, with Local Housing Allowance rates frozen in 2025/26 while rents continue to rise, and with the decades long growth in the private rented sector having come to a halt.

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act from April 2018 has widened the legal responsibilities on local authorities to provide help to prevent and relieve homelessness for a larger group of households, including in some cases, people approaching from outside the local area.

Homelessness pressures in New Forest

The independent homelessness and rough sleeping review carried out to support the development of this strategy highlights the great success of New Forest in achieving a dramatic reduction in rough sleeping and reducing its use of temporary accommodation. In both cases this has been achieved against rising national trends.

The review also makes clear that the team at New Forest District Council have a high level of professional integrity, strongly recognised by partner agencies, and are administering homelessness duties fully and proportionately within both the letter and spirit of the law.

The geography and demographics of New Forest are quite unusual compared to national and regional averages. Much of the district is within a National Park, which places significant restrictions on new housing development. The level of owner

² https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-data-framework-december-2023/ending-rough-sleeping-data-framework-december-2023?utm_source=chatgpt.com

occupancy in New Forest is high at 75%³ with the proportion of private rented accommodation at 15% and social housing stock lower than average at 11%.

However, the Council has retained its social housing stock and the common allocations policy in New Forest allocates to 100% of social and affordable rented accommodation in the district, including Registered Provider (RP) accommodation.

Housing affordability in New Forest is low, as measured by the ratio of median house prices to median earnings, with a ratio of process to median earnings of 10.6 in 2024, compared to an average of 8.9 for the Hampshire district authorities and 7.7 for England as a whole.

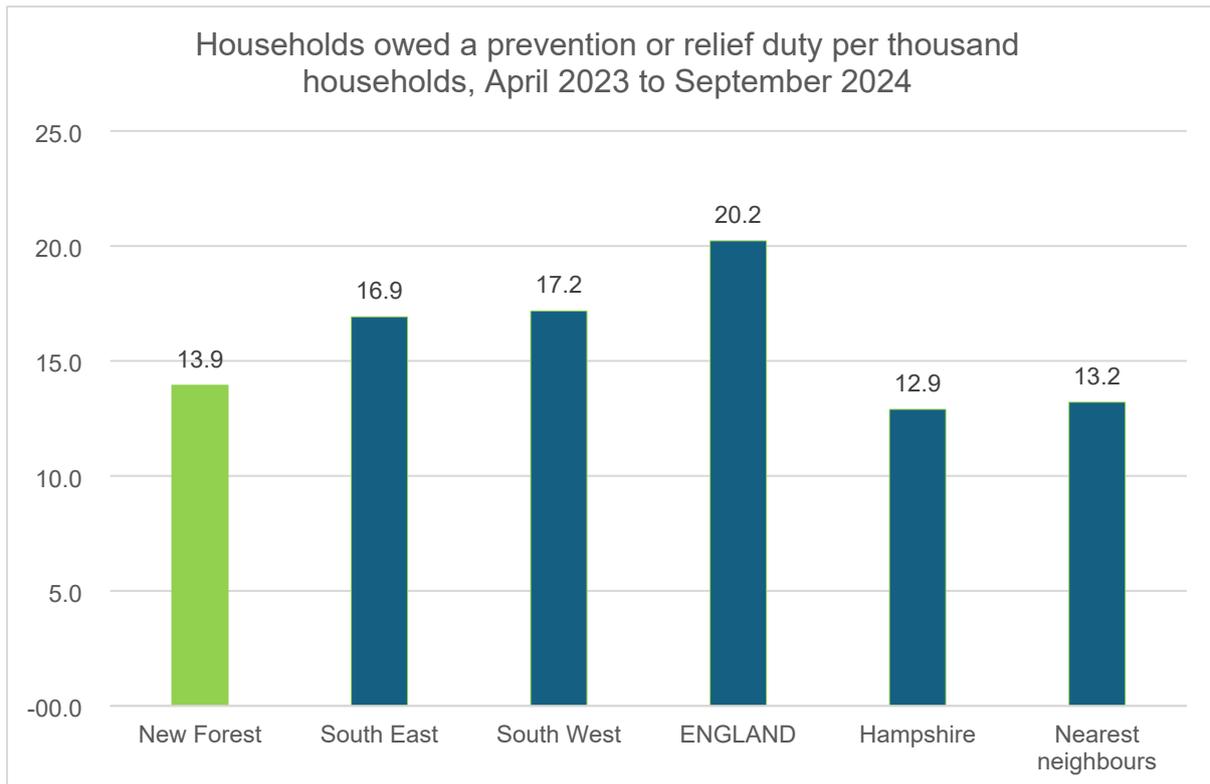
In the period April 2023 to September 2024 1,380 households in New Forest were assessed to establish if they were homeless or at risk of homelessness, with 1,135 households (82%) assessed as being owed a homelessness prevention duty due to risk of homelessness within 56 days or a relief duty due to homelessness at the time when they approached the council.

Compared to local authorities in Hampshire, regionally and nationally. New Forest had less households owed a prevention or relief duty per thousand households living in the area than England, the South East or the South West. However, New Forest had slightly more prevention and relief duties than the Hampshire district average and the average from a group of 'nearest neighbour' local authorities with similar demographics to New Forest based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) data⁴

³ Based on 2021 data:

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁴ There is a more detailed explanation of this in the New Forest Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review



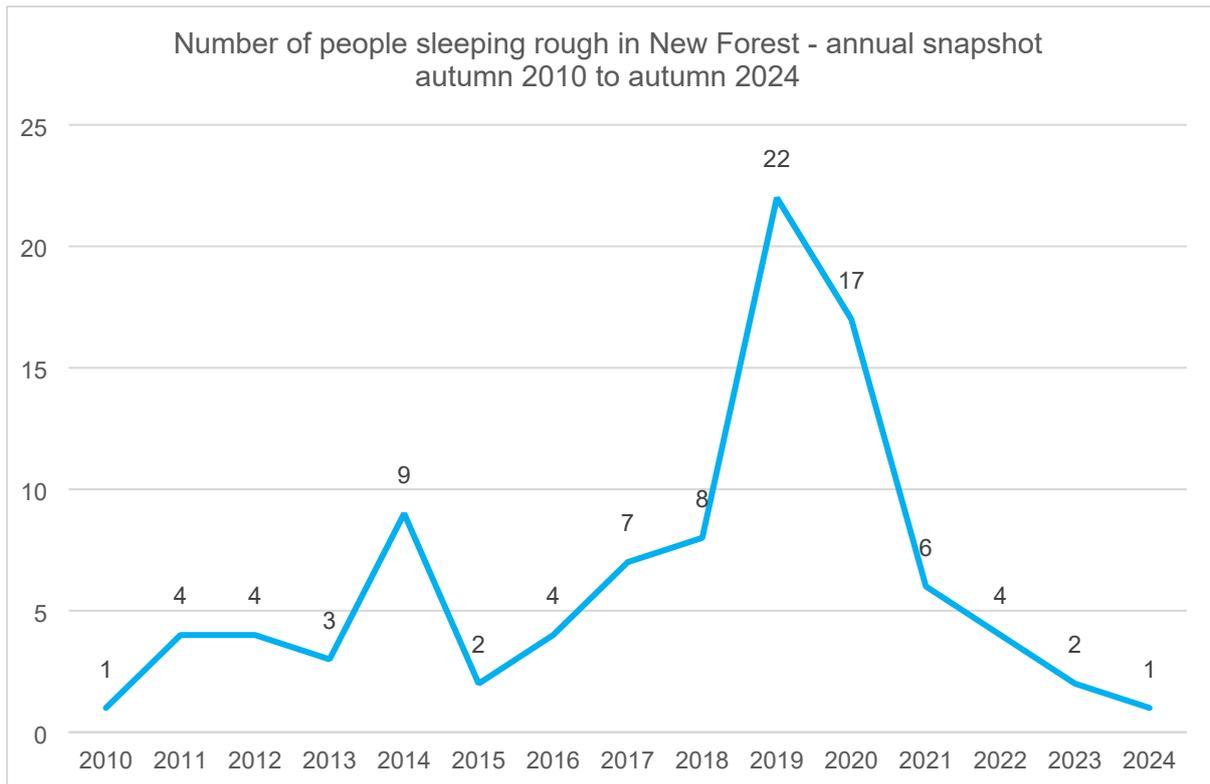
Compared to other local authorities, New Forest had proportionally more people approach them when at risk of homelessness within 56 days and less people approach when already homeless. This is positive as it offers a greater opportunity to prevent homelessness.

Although, as in most of the country, homelessness as a result of loss of a private sector tenancy has been increasing, the trend has been less marked in New Forest than in many other areas, with the largest cause of homelessness in New Forest being the result of family and friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate (37% of relief duties and 33% of prevention duties) followed by loss of a private sector tenancy (13% of relief duties and 38% of prevention duties), with homelessness as a result of domestic abuse being the third most common cause (20% of relief duties and 6% of prevention duties). Homelessness as a result of leaving an institution with no accommodation available (prison, childcare, or hospital) was also important (10% of relief duties and 4% of prevention duties).

Compared to other areas, the biggest difference is that New Forest had proportionally lower homelessness risk from the ending of a private sector tenancy and higher risk from friends and family evictions.

Rough Sleeping in New Forest

Following a spike in rough sleeper numbers in 2020, there has been a considerable decline in Rough Sleeping in New Forest, with only one person sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2024.



The fall in rough sleeping in New Forest contrasts with an increase nationally and regionally.

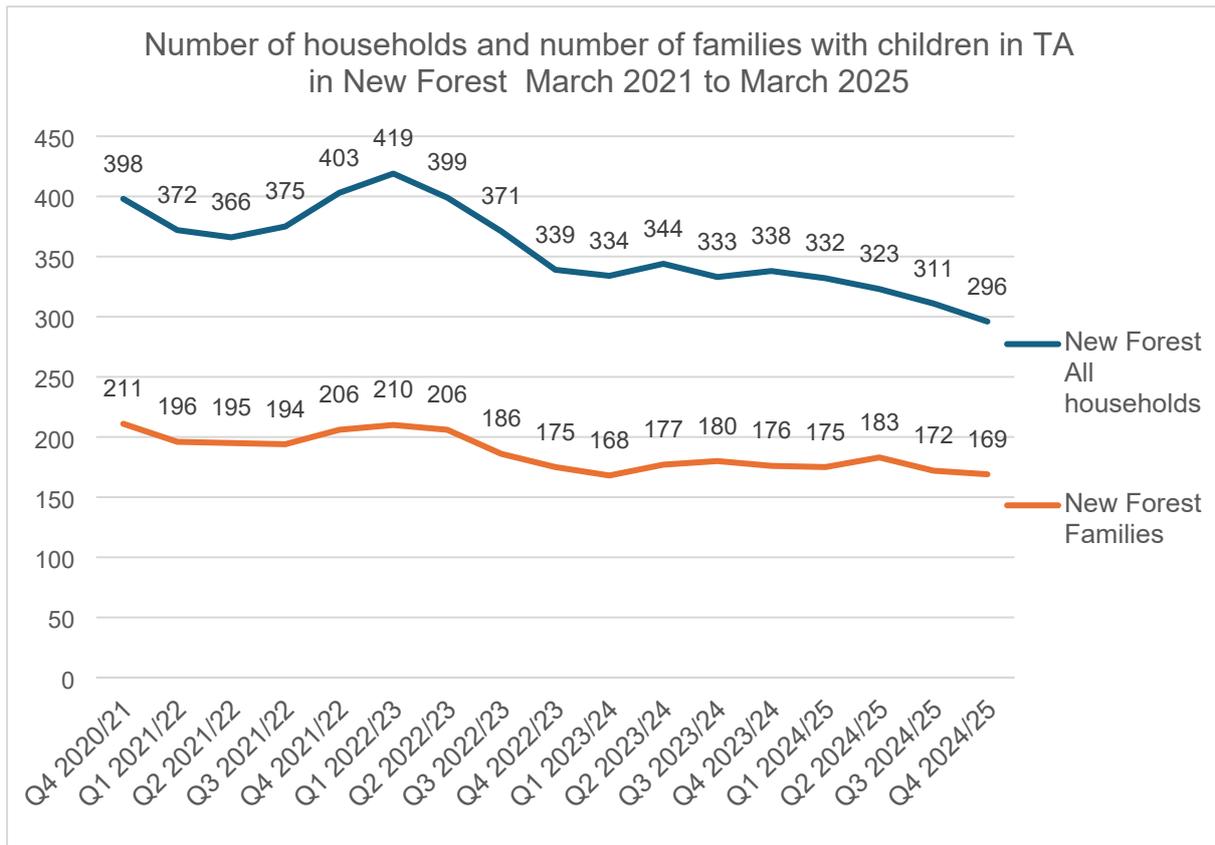
The fall in rough sleeping is due to Council’s proactive work in responding swiftly and professionally to any reports of rough sleeping in the district, the development of specialist temporary accommodation for people with experience of street homelessness, and good partnership working with Hampshire social services, prison and probation services and health services.

Duty to Refer

The introduction of the Duty to Refer in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, has been a success in New Forest, with 10% of all homelessness duties accepted by the Council being as a result of referrals from an organisation included in the Duty to Refer legislation, significantly higher than the national average. The highest number of DTR referrals come from the National Probation Service, children’s social services, and hospital inpatient services.

Temporary Accommodation

The use of temporary accommodation to accommodate homeless households in New Forest has been falling since June 2022, with 296 households in TA in March 2025, including 169 families with children.



This fall is against the national trend of rising TA over the period, but the number of households in TA in New Forest is still high compared to the Hampshire district average.

Almost half of the TA New Forest uses is private sector leased accommodation, with a further 28% in properties owned by the council. Less than 1% of New Forest’s TA is outside the district. New Forest has a much lower proportion of nightly paid accommodation than most neighbouring authorities.

However in December 2025, New Forest still had 64 households in nightly paid Bed & Breakfast accommodation of whom 44 were families, at an estimated net cost to the council of around £1.4 m in 2025/26. Based on 2024/25 financial data, the cost to the council’s budget of a household in B&B is around 10 times the cost of a private sector leased placement.

Despite the demands, the number of households in B&B is expected to reduce during 2026 while operational procedures , resources and structure are reviewed.

Areas of success

New Forest has been extremely successful in recent years in reducing rough sleeping to almost zero. Rough sleeping in New Forest has for the most part become rare, brief and non-recurrent. However, there is no room for complacency. This has

been achieved due to ongoing hard work by the Council and its partners.

The Council has managed to reduce the use of temporary accommodation against an increasing national trend, with TA down 25% in the 3 years to March 2025, compared to an increase in TA of 38% nationally over the same period.

New Forest has also improved the quality of its TA including through the development of new, council owned TA and improved accommodation standards in private sector leased accommodation.

The Council also enjoys an excellent reputation with Hampshire Children's Services, Adult Services, the Probation service, local housing associations and voluntary sector organisations for strong partnership working and the care and professionalism with which it supports people who have experienced homelessness.

There are very low rates of homelessness from the loss of social housing tenancies in New Forest and there is effective use of the Duty to Refer.

Areas to progress

The homelessness and rough sleeping review, which supports this strategy, identified a number of areas where we want to improve over the life of the strategy, including:

- A stronger housing advice offer for people who are not yet homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness
- Better success rates for homelessness prevention, especially prevention which allows people to stay in their existing home
- Earlier intervention to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, including reducing the number of households who become homeless through eviction by family and friends
- More transparent communication to support people at risk of homelessness getting the information they need to help them, including online and in person.
- Improving the proportion of people owed homelessness relief duty who have homelessness relieved successfully within 56 days
- Reducing the use of B&B to as close to zero as possible, including through more provision of better quality, more cost-effective TA

Corporate Context

The New Forest District Council Corporate Plan

This strategy comes under the strategic priorities for New Forest as set out in the New Forest Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028⁵. The vision expressed in the plan is:

“To secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place, and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest”

The Corporate Plan has three priority areas:

People: Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

Place: Delivering growth, opportunity and services that shape our place now and for future generations, within a unique environmental context, to ensure we remain a special place to live, work and visit.

Prosperity: Promoting a strong local economy that delivers its inclusive aspirations through effective partnerships, attracting investment, and increasing skills and employment opportunities.

All three themes are important to delivering a successful homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

Key commitments in the corporate plan, which are directly relevant to this strategy include:

- Provide more quality, temporary accommodation for single people and families and work with our partners to tackle homelessness.
- Support community engagement, working with partners and our town and parish councils to help resolve local issues, including those associated with the cost of living, homelessness and community, health, safety and resilience.
- Provide increased numbers of affordable homes by 2026 and explore innovative models with landowners, partners and developers to enable sustainable and affordable homes for the future.

⁵ <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3645/Corporate-plan-2024-to-2028>

- Work with partners to best support our residents to access employment opportunities regardless of the barriers they face.

Our Vision

Our vision for homelessness and rough sleeping over the five years of this strategy can be summarised as:

Family Homelessness

Family homelessness is prevented wherever possible, including through co-ordination between different services and effective use of data to identify and address homelessness risk.

No families are placed in B&B accommodation except for very short periods in an emergency.

Disruption to children's education as a result of homelessness is minimised and support to meet children's needs is provided for families in TA at least as effectively as in other forms of accommodation.

Early Intervention and Prevention

All parts of both the district and county councils actively look for risks of homelessness among those they are working with, including through effective use of data and artificial intelligence.

Where risks of homelessness are identified these are met by implementation of an agreed approach which cuts across departmental boundaries to achieve the best outcome for the household and prevent homelessness wherever possible.

This approach extends beyond the council to include the Council's main partners in both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Meeting health and support needs

People using hospital or other health services, who are at risk of homelessness have their needs assessed as early as possible so that a planned approach can be agreed to preventing homelessness upon discharge and ensuring needs for support and care are met.

Support needs of all those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are assessed and met.

There is enough provision of housing related support, floating support and other services to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness.

Accommodation

There is enough suitable and affordable accommodation available to meet the needs of existing and emerging households within New Forest for those who cannot afford to buy their own home or to rent privately without financial assistance.

Temporary accommodation is of consistently high quality and used only when necessary and as briefly as possible, until settled housing solutions can be found

Communication and partnership

Clear information about the range of services available to support people who are experiencing homelessness or may be at risk of homelessness in the future is widely available in a range of formats, including online.

This includes not only services provided by New Forest District Council but also by Hampshire County Council and the voluntary sector as well as information to support self-help.

All written communication from the council to people who access homelessness and housing advice services is written in a clear and accessible format.

Strong partnerships are actively maintained between the Council and all relevant partners including children and adult social services, health services, prison and probation services, housing associations, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Rough Sleeping

Rough Sleeping in New Forest is prevented wherever possible and remains rare, brief and non-recurring.

People who do sleep rough are assisted quickly and provided with the support they need to be able to move on with their lives and not return to the streets.

Services working to tackle and prevent rough sleeping are co-ordinated across the whole system in order to achieve the best outcomes, including housing and homelessness services, social services, mental and physical health services, drug and alcohol services, police and the voluntary sector.

Preventing and relieving homelessness

Context

The large majority of successful homelessness preventions in New Forest are achieved by helping people to move into alternative accommodation in the private rented sector.

The council has had much less success in assisting people to stay in their existing accommodation or, where appropriate to move into supported housing. The difficulty in securing moves into supported housing reflects the lack of supported housing in New Forest.

This is partly because resources for homelessness prevention have until recently been relatively low. However, there is an opportunity to address this through effective use of the increased homelessness prevention grant from 2025/26.

This allows us to increase the staffing resources available to prevent homelessness within the council, to provide additional staff training and to provide additional funding and support to voluntary and community sector groups across New Forest.

We also want to add to the New Forest District Council website, so that it provides a clearer and more comprehensive set of options for those seeking housing advice or who are at risk of homelessness.

We recognise the potential to make better use of data and rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) to be able to identify people at risk of homelessness earlier and provide more tailored interventions to help people address who may be at risk of homelessness to achieve better outcomes.

We are very aware that a large percentage of homelessness in New Forest is the result of young adults leaving their family home without the resources needed to obtain their own accommodation and wish to develop more effective ways to address this issue over the life of the strategy.

What we will do

- Increase the size of the Council's homelessness prevention team to include a dedicated team leader and additional homelessness prevention floating support workers working in a variety of ways to help people keep their existing accommodation or move to the private rented sector.
- Invest in enhanced and specialist staff training, including through the Locata Academy

- Revamp the homelessness and housing advice section of the New Forest District Council website to provide more user friendly and comprehensive information, promote self-help, signpost to organisations offering specialist advice, and make it easier to get in touch with council officers when this is the best option.
- Review and refine the Council's approach to homelessness prevention which helps people to stay in their existing home
- Explore options for earlier intervention to prevent homelessness, including exploring alternative accommodation pathways for emerging households.
- Working with partners, make better use of data and AI to identify homelessness risk, and develop intelligent and tailored solutions to meet those risks.
- Review the Council's telephone triage service to encourage access to help and advice at an earlier stage before homelessness is imminent
- Encourage community-based housing and homelessness prevention advice in all parts of New Forest, building on our existing partnerships with organisations including Citizens Advice, The Crossings, and Youth and Family Matters (Totton)
- Establish family mediation services, including home visits, to help reduce the number of family and friends evictions which lead to homelessness
- Conduct an options appraisal of young people's pathways into housing in New Forest

Ending Rough Sleeping

Context

The Council has been successful at reducing rough sleeping to a minimum through effective use of government revenue and capital funding to provide comprehensive outreach support and specialist accommodation for people sleeping rough.

The Council has also invested in specialist homelessness officers working with the NHS on mental health and with probation on ex-offenders.

What we will do

- Continue to provide a responsive and effective in-house rough sleeping outreach service.
- Maintain and strengthen links with Hampshire adult social care, NHS, probation and the police, to prevent and tackle rough sleeping.
- Work closely with MHCLG as the RSI or replacement revenue funding programme is relaunched from April 2026 to ensure the continuation and development of New Forest's successful rough sleeping services.

Investing in Accommodation

Context

The Council has been successful in improving the quality of TA and reducing the use of both total TA and emergency accommodation, but still has too many households in emergency accommodation, including some families.

There is an acute shortage of accommodation in both the social and private rented sectors which is affordable to New Forest residents on low to moderate incomes.

Although there is access to Extra Care accommodation in New Forest in partnership with Hampshire Adult Services, there is a shortage of supported accommodation for people who do not meet the Care Act threshold, including people who have experienced homelessness.

What we will do

- We will reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast and other emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness to as close to zero as possible, so that it is only used briefly in an emergency and never for families with children for longer than 6 weeks.
- We will review the Homesearch allocations scheme to ensure that it is meeting housing need as effectively as possible, including the needs of households experiencing homelessness.
- We will continue to work with housing associations and developers to maximise the development of new affordable housing in New Forest and will work with the government to increase the planned total beyond what is expected in the current development pipeline

- We will build on our success of delivering 76 new units of council owned TA between 2018 and 2024 through acquisitions, development and conversions, by delivering more TA during the life of this strategy. This will include taking advantage of new government capital funding schemes such as the Local Authority Housing Fund and any new capital funding to provide accommodation for people with experience of rough sleeping.
- We will review the terms of our current PSL scheme with a view to expanding it as a means to reduce the use of emergency accommodation in the future. This will include consideration of 10 year plus leasing schemes which have the potential to attract additional housing benefit subsidy.

Providing Support

Context

Over 90% of those assessed as being owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty in New Forest between April 2023 and September 2024 were assessed as having at least one support need including 62% with a history of mental health problems, 43% with physical ill health or a disability, 31% with a history of rough sleeping, 29% with a learning disability, and 28% who were at risk of or had experienced domestic abuse.

New Forest has access to Supported Living schemes in partnership with Hampshire adult services.

Funding for housing related support in New Forest from Hampshire County Council has been ended from 2025/26 due to budget pressures.

There is limited access to floating support or supported housing for people experiencing homelessness who do not meet the Care Act threshold.

The Tourlands House scheme developed with the support of MHCLG Capital funding provides accommodation for people with complex needs and a history of sleeping rough, but does not have on site support provided

The council has approved a domestic abuse strategy 2025 to 2028⁶ for formal consultation which is aligned to the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023 to 2025⁷, and sets out how New Forest is implementing the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

This includes a statement that: 'NFDC Housing Services is at the forefront of

⁶ <https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk/documents/s32189/Appendix+1+-+DRAFT+Domestic+Abuse+Strategy.pdf>

⁷ <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/public-health/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-strategy-2023.pdf>

delivering services to survivors of domestic abuse including providing early housing advice, housing options, prevention and homelessness services to survivors. We also engage with alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse, signposting to specialist support services. We also provide a fully funded additional security scheme, allowing victims survivors to remain in their homes through enhanced security measures, should they choose.'

What we will do

- The Council will provide additional tenancy sustainment support to people at risk of homelessness and move on support to people in TA through the recruitment of two additional homelessness floating support workers to create a team of four workers in total
- The Council will review its Extra Care community agreements to ensure that extra care support can be delivered a cross a full range of support needs
- The Council will conduct a supported housing needs assessment and develop a supported housing strategy in line with the requirements of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, which will include an assessment of housing related support needs for those with experience of homelessness and rough sleeping
- The Council will continue to work with partners to provide support to people with mental health issues and ex-offenders who are at risk of homelessness through the employment of specialist officers in the homelessness team.
- The Council will put the commitments in its domestic abuse strategy into practice by strengthening measures to support victims of domestic abuse to remain in their existing home if they wish to or to move through a management transfer in order to avoid homelessness and moves into TA for those victims.

Working in Partnership

Context

New Forest District Council's homelessness service already works well with both county council adult and children's social services on both a strategic and operational basis.

However, there are opportunities to develop this further, for example building on existing joint work to provide housing and support for Care Leavers which can avoid

the need for the use of homelessness temporary accommodation.

The common allocations policy in New Forest is effective at ensuring that 100% of housing association properties, as well as council properties, are let according to the priorities set out in the policy.

New Forest enjoys good relationships with NHS services and Prison and Probation services around homelessness and rough sleeping, which has helped to reduce rough sleeping numbers and keep them low.

The Council also works well with Citizens Advice and with The Crossings and Youth and Family Matters, Totton to prevent homelessness, including attendance of council officers to provide housing and homelessness advice at voluntary sector led drop-in sessions.

The Council now wants to do more work in partnership with schools and the County Council to help to prevent the likelihood of future homelessness.

What we will do

- The Council will explore ways to strengthen homelessness prevention and early intervention through deeper relationships with Hampshire children and adult services including clearer protocols, and making better use of data to identify homelessness risk
- The Council will review the quality of data collected from applicants to provide improved analysis to inform service design, and current and future partnerships.
- The Council will explore opportunities to work more closely with the voluntary and community sector to prevent homelessness and provide relevant advice, including commissioning services when appropriate. This will include developing relationships with groups covering as much of New Forest geographically as is practicable
- The Council will consider expanding its work with Hampshire children's services to develop training flats for care leavers and other vulnerable young people who would otherwise have to go into mainstream TA.
- Working with partners, the Council will explore opportunities to deliver workshops in schools to help children to understand housing pathways and learn important life skills including how to manage a tenancy and how to budget.

- The Council will set up regular Homeseach partnership group meetings to strengthen joint work with housing associations

Monitoring and review

Performance and progress against each of the actions within this strategy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with members and stakeholders.

A transparent annual position statement will be produced to highlight our progress and how effective these measures have been in reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

New actions and targets may be agreed if further changes are made to national legislation and policy. It is expected the Government will seek to work closely with Councils to implement its new Homelessness Strategy, expected by the end of 2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, working with the Executive Head of Governance & Regulation and Service Manager – Housing Options will lead the review of the delivery plan.

In reviewing its strategy annually this council remains committed to embracing amended policy direction and incorporating it within annual updates.

New Forest Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Work Plan (2026–2031)

Preventing and Relieving Homelessness

Action	Lead	Timeline	Resources	KPIs
Expand homelessness prevention team	Housing Options Manager	Q2 2026	HPG funding	Team in place by Q2 2026
Staff training via Locata Academy	HR / Housing Options		Training budget	100% staff trained by Q4 2026
Revamp website housing advice section	Communications team and Service Manager Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts	Q2–Q3 2026	Internal IT, Communications team and Housing Options staff	Website live by Q2 2026
Review telephone triage service	Housing Options	Q3 2026	Internal review	Increased early contacts
Establish family mediation service	Housing Options Manager	Q4 2027	Commissioning budget	Service operational by Q1 2027
Conduct Young People's housing pathways appraisal	Service Manager Service Manager Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts	Q1 2026	Research budget	Report published Q2 2026

Ending Rough Sleeping

Action	Lead	Timeline	Resources	KPIs
Maintain in-house outreach service	Housing Options	Ongoing	RSI funding	<5 rough sleepers annually
Strengthen links with NHS, probation, police	Strategic Partnerships	Q2 2027	Staff time	Formal protocols in place
Engage with MHCLG for RSI funding	Service Manager Housing Options	Q1 2026	Service Manager Housing Options	Funding secured by Q1 2026

Investing in Accommodation

Action	Lead	Timeline	Resources	KPIs
Review Homeseach allocations scheme	Allocations Team	Q1 2026	Internal review	Scheme updated by Q1 2026
Deliver new council-owned TA	Housing Strategic and Development Service Manager	2026–2031	Capital funding	Increased units by 2031
Expand PSL scheme	Service Manager Housing Options & Service Manager Resident Services	On going	Private Sector Landlord Liaison Officer	New leases signed
Reduce B&B use to near zero	Housing Options	Ongoing	TA budget	<10 families in B&B

Providing Support

Action	Lead	Timeline	Resources	KPIs
Introduce a Prevention Advice Service across the district	Service Manager Housing Options	Q1 2026	HPG funding	Service in place. Number of users.
Conduct supported housing needs assessment	Service Manager Housing Options	Q3 2026	Research budget	Strategy published Q4 2026
Implement domestic abuse strategy	Housing / DA Lead	Q3 2026	DA funding	Measures in place by Q4 2026

Working in Partnership

Action	Lead	Timeline	Resources	KPIs
Develop clearer protocols with HCC	Strategic Partnerships	Q2 2026	Staff time	Protocols signed Q3 2026
Review the quality of data collected from applicants	Service Manager Housing Options / Housing Options Manager /	Q4 2027	Staff time	Requisite information is captured at receipt of application. Target KPI to be determined.

	Performance and Insight Manager			
Investigate developing “training flats” for care leavers	Housing Options and Strategic / HCC	Q4 2027	Capital funding	Options available Q1 2028
Deliver school workshops	Housing Education	Q1 2026	Outreach budget	4 schools reached by 2027
Set up Homesearch partnership group	Allocations Team	Q2 2026	Staff time	Group meets quarterly

Monitoring and Review

Action	Lead	Timeline	Resources	KPIs
Annual strategy review	Service Manager Housing Options	Annually	Staff time	Review published each year
Bi-annual position statement	Service Manager Housing Options	Bi-annually	Staff time	Statement published Q2 and Q4 each year presented to Scrutiny Panel