

Draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2025-2034

1. Contents

2. Foreword	3
3. Introduction.....	4
4. Our vision & Principles.....	5
5. National and regional context	6
6. Our partners and stakeholders.....	8
7. How we will deliver this strategy	8
8. Funding for Homelessness & Rough Sleeping.....	9
9. Achievements since the last strategy	10
10. Priorities for Guildford’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	12
Priority 1: Focus on early intervention and prevention.	12
Priority 2: Maximise pathways to independent living	13
Priority 3: Provide complete support to people who are homeless and dealing with challenging personal issues	14
Priority 4: Work collectively with our partners to secure positive and sustained outcomes	15
11. Appendix 1. Successful completion of previous Homelessness Strategy targets	17
12. Appendix 2 The Guildford Rough Sleeper Pathway	22
13. Appendix 3 Action Plan 2025-2030	23
14. Appendix 4 Case study.....	25

Foreword

Homelessness is a powerful reminder of the inequalities that persist in our society. Behind every statistic is a real person with aspirations, challenges, and hopes. Addressing homelessness requires a compassionate, strategic, and well-coordinated response. A response that not only meets immediate needs but also tackles the root causes of housing insecurity.

This strategy reflects our commitment to ensuring that no one has to experience homelessness. We believe that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home, and that a society built on dignity, opportunity, and fairness must work to eliminate homelessness.

Our approach focuses on prevention, early intervention, and long-term solutions. By increasing the supply of affordable homes, both for rent and homeownership, and using evidence-based practices, we will provide clear pathways to stability and independence. With a strong emphasis on equity and inclusion, we are committed to reducing homelessness and ensuring that everyone has access to a secure and sustainable future.

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Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area at least every five years and to develop a strategy that provides direction for the delivery of homelessness services. Our last Strategy was published in 2018 and has now reached its conclusion. Our new strategy is built on the five key priorities listed in our Corporate Strategy:

1. A more sustainable borough
2. A more prosperous borough
3. A more inclusive borough
4. Decent and affordable homes
5. A resilient and well-managed council

Since our last Homelessness Strategy, significant legal, policy, and service delivery changes have shaped how we respond to housing need. These changes require us to adapt our services to ensure they remain effective, inclusive, and responsive.

On 3 January 2024, the council commissioned the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to conduct an Independent Governance Review of Guildford Borough Council (GBC), with a specific focus on the housing landlord function. This review, alongside wider pressures on housing supply, affordability, and service delivery, reinforces the need to reassess and strengthen our approach to housing and homelessness services.

As we continue to recover from the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize the lasting economic and social effects on housing stability. The pandemic exposed and intensified housing inequalities, making it even more critical to focus on prevention, early intervention, and sustainable housing solutions.

Our strategy is built on a foundation of fairness and inclusion, aligning with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that our services are accessible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all residents.

Understanding Homelessness: Causes and Challenges

Homelessness means having no safe, available, or reasonable place to live in the UK or elsewhere. It takes different forms, including sleeping rough, staying in temporary shelters, facing eviction or domestic violence, or living in overcrowded or inadequate housing. People experiencing homelessness may have no permanent address and rely on temporary arrangements like 'sofa surfing' or unsuitable accommodation.

The causes of homelessness are often a mix of structural and individual factors. Structural causes include poverty, housing shortages, unemployment, and limited access to social security, while individual factors can include relationship breakdown, mental or physical health issues, trauma, substance misuse, bereavement, or experiences of care or prison. There is no single solution. Ending homelessness requires a coordinated borough-wide effort alongside national strategies to improve housing access, support services, and prevention measures.

Our vision & Principles

Supporting those at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and/or rough sleeping through providing a high quality, responsive, person-centred service at the earliest opportunity.

Principles behind Guildford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

1. Reaching and supporting the hidden homeless

Providing safe accommodation for the hidden homeless, which can include those staying with friends, 'sofa surfing', under notice or in unsafe accommodation such as beds in sheds or squats.

2. Collaborating through MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter)

MEAM brings together Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council, and Surrey Police to deliver better coordinated services for people experiencing a combination of homelessness, substance misuse and mental health problems.

3. Embedding a trauma and psychologically informed approach

Trauma-informed care is an approach that looks at how trauma affects people. It guides how services are designed and delivered, as well as how practices are shaped. Using a trauma-informed approach, we aim to provide a kinder service. This helps us find the root causes of people's situations and behaviours.

4. The Guildford Housing Pathway: Tailored support for those in need

The council has created special pathways to help residents get the best support and outcomes when using our housing service. The pathway can be accessed at any point, with no need to progress in any order. There are other options for victims of

domestic abuse, gypsies and travellers, offenders, and those leaving hospital. The pathways aim to guide people towards the right outcomes. This should happen at the right time and in a way that lasts for the future.

The pathways include protocols for groups like care leavers, 16–17-year-olds, and people with mental health issues. The protocols outline how agencies in Surrey will work together. They also detail specific actions or considerations for the group.

5. Support for rough sleepers

The Guildford Homeless Outreach and Support Team (HOST) helps people aged 18 and over. It supports those who are experiencing or are at risk of rough sleeping in the Guildford area. It operates 24/7, and residents can get help for three-six month periods, including access to an on-site counsellor. The team work to stabilise and support people into accommodation by providing;

- A personalised support package tailored to meet individual's needs
- Support to access the services people require
- Help to access temporary accommodation/supported housing
- Support to help people exercise their housing and welfare benefit rights
- Support for people sofa surfing or in other short-term housing arrangements

HOST staff can access Guildford Borough Council's housing case management system. They use it to record casework and create personal housing plans with residents. These plans are then reviewed within the Housing Service.

Once settled, support is focussed on a 'supported housing lite model', to prepare people for moving on to more permanent options. There are communal facilities, a living room, dining room, laundry and kitchen provision. No meals are provided by the service, but the kitchen has donated food for residents to use. Residents receive formal support sessions every two weeks.

National and regional context

The rising cost of living, ongoing housing crisis, and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly increased demand for housing and homelessness services. While we continue to focus on early intervention and prevention, as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, we are seeing a rise in homelessness applications, temporary accommodation placements, and rough sleeping cases.

The national Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022) aims to end rough sleeping by 2024, requiring councils to take a multi-agency approach involving housing, health, social care, and voluntary organisations. Funding streams such as the Homelessness Prevention Grant

provide support, but securing long-term housing solutions remains a challenge due to rising rents, limited affordable housing, and increasing demand on local services.

Certain groups remain at higher risk of homelessness, including:

- Young people and care leavers
- Victims of domestic abuse
- People with mental health or substance misuse issues
- Ex-offenders
- Refugees and asylum seekers

In response, there is growing recognition of Housing First approaches, which provide permanent housing alongside tailored support, as a more sustainable way to prevent repeat homelessness.

The Grenfell tragedy and concerns over social housing conditions have also led to major legislative changes. The Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, and Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (including Awaab's Law) introduce stricter safety requirements for landlords, aiming to improve building safety and living conditions for social housing tenants. Additionally, the Renters' Rights Bill extends the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, improving housing conditions for families renting from private landlords and agents.

To meet these challenges, we need a coordinated, long-term approach that focuses on prevention, expands housing options, strengthens partnerships, and ensures the right support is available for those most at risk.

Policy Context

A range of national policies and priorities, alongside legislation, have influenced and helped to shape the direction of the Council's Homelessness Strategy. Ending rough sleeping, reducing overall levels of homelessness and eliminating the use of unsuitable emergency accommodation are national priorities. These are also linked to other strategies and initiatives relating to reducing substance misuse, supporting victims of domestic abuse, reducing delayed hospital discharges, supporting looked-after children and vulnerable families, supporting care leavers and helping to rehabilitate those within the criminal justice system.

Key pieces of legislation and national policies include:

- The Criminal Justice Act 2003
- The Mental Health Act 2007
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012

- The Care Act 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- HM Government Care Leavers Strategy 2014
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Homelessness Code Of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Our partners and stakeholders

This strategy has been developed with the input and support of a wide range of partners and will be delivered through continued partnership working.

As well as our Parish Councils, we work with a number of local organisations, community groups and private companies. Some of our key partners are shown below.



How we will deliver this strategy

1. Clearly communicate our vision and priorities.

Ensure that all stakeholders understand the core objectives of the strategy.

2. Engage the community.

Ensure that people affected by the strategy are actively involved in the process.

3. Partnerships and collaboration.

Engage key stakeholders to effectively collaborate and support each other to deliver the strategy's goals.

4. Develop a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan.

Break the strategy into smaller, measurable tasks and outline a detailed action plan that has clear goals, timelines, and identifies responsible parties.

5. Ensure value for money in our all decisions

Through focussing on delivering services efficiently, being transparent and accountable for our decisions while maintaining high quality. This will be evidenced through regular evaluation and data-driven decision-making.

6. Monitor and evaluate our progress.

Establish Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of the strategy and establish regular reporting on progress, and an annual review. Progress on delivering the Action Plan will be reported annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and within our published Annual Strategic Review (ASR).

Funding for Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

The Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) is allocated to all local authorities in England to help meet their statutory homelessness duties and support the delivery of local homelessness and rough sleeping strategies. In 2025/26, Guildford Borough Council received £1,341,332 to fund targeted prevention, intervention, and long-term housing solutions.

This funding supports:

- Tailored services for families, single people, and rough sleepers, with a focus on those at risk of repeat and long-term homelessness, including people leaving institutions and vulnerable families.
- Accessible, high-quality services that provide face-to-face support, ensuring people with additional needs receive personalised assistance.
- Early prevention efforts to reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and prevent first-time rough sleeping before people reach crisis point.
- Shorter periods of homelessness and rough sleeping, by reducing:
 - The number of families in unsuitable temporary accommodation or B&Bs.
 - Long stays in temporary accommodation without clear move-on plans.

- The number of people sleeping rough long-term.
- Sustainable housing solutions to prevent people from returning to homelessness or rough sleeping by offering long-term housing and support.

This funding plays a vital role in ensuring that homelessness prevention, intervention, and recovery services are effective, accessible, and long-lasting

Achievements since the last strategy

1. The time taken to assess new housing register applications has steadily decreased throughout 2023/2024, improving efficiency and access to support.

The Council remains committed to tackling homelessness through a proactive and preventative approach within its Housing Options Service. By working closely with statutory and voluntary partners, resources are focused on early intervention, helping people stay in suitable housing whenever possible.

When prevention isn't an option, the Council supports individuals in securing alternative housing solutions, including private rented accommodation and supported housing, ensuring people have access to safe, stable homes

2. **Proactive outreach and prevention in partnership approach**

Riverside Care & Support is the main provider of homelessness services in the borough. They offer five services, ranging from street outreach to settled living. The Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) provides supported housing for women experiencing homelessness. Home Group provides shared supported housing for men.

3. **Successful implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017**

We have changed our services to meet the new 'duty to prevent' and 'duty to relieve' homelessness, as well as other legal needs. This means our Specialist Homelessness and Housing Options Officers now work with more people over a longer period of time. The Act provides applicants with many more rights of review of any decisions the council has made.

4. **Successfully implemented a new software system – MRI Housing Jigsaw**

This system offers a clear framework to manage homelessness services based on the new HRA legislation. It has a guided process for recording interviews, actions, and outcomes. It also provides a customer portal. Here, users can view their personalised housing plans and chat with Housing Officers.

5. Successful interventions to help rough sleepers during the pandemic under 'Everyone In'

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020 the Government launched the 'Everyone In' programme. Local authorities had to provide emergency accommodation for all rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness under this initiative. This aimed to help contain the spread of Covid and protect vulnerable adults in society.

We expanded our programme to:

- Increase emergency bedspaces.
- Offer 24-hour support for those in urgent need.
- Speed up the process to self-contained accommodation.

6. Delivered the Next Steps Accommodation programme (NSAP) and Rough Sleepers Accommodation programme (RSAP)

The NSAP and RSAP initiatives were funding programmes introduced by the government to tackle COVID-19. They aimed to cut rough sleeping and help those in emergency accommodation stay off the streets.

We received funding from these programmes to buy two properties in Guildford Town Centre. We turned them into 9 ensuite rooms, each with dedicated support workers.

7. Delivered floating support in partnership with Surrey County Council

The Council helps fund a shared floating support service. This service has a part-time manager and two officers. They assist vulnerable clients to keep their homes and avoid homelessness.

8. We have retained our face to face services while improving digital accessibility

The pandemic pushed us towards digital solutions and remote work. However, we see the importance of face-to-face services. So, we are adopting a hybrid model. This will help us make the best use of our time while providing the services people need. It also builds resilience into our delivery model. We are working to make our digital access better. We'll keep improving it for residents who like using online systems.

9. Forging new partnerships and developing existing ones through the Guildford Pathway

The Guildford Pathway unites partners to provide a smooth service. This aims to enhance support for rough sleepers and those at risk of it. The council, along with

the Citizens Advice Bureau, has started a new money advice service. This service focuses on money and debt advice. It also helps with issues like benefits, welfare rights, consumer matters, jobs, and housing rights.

10. Ukraine Response – Homes for Ukraine Scheme

The conflict in Ukraine placed new demands on various council departments. A team effort provided safe housing and crucial support for displaced families. This helped many fleeing the war to settle in the Borough. This was made possible in part by the generosity of local residents who opened their homes to those in need.

Priorities for Guildford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

We will take a broad approach to tackle homelessness. This way, we can make sure that homelessness policies and laws work well. Our service will be based on prevention, support, and accommodation strategies.

Priority 1: Focus on early intervention and prevention.

Early intervention and prevention are key to tackling housing instability. Acting early can stop problems before they lead to crises like homelessness.

Outcome: We will help at-risk individuals and families. Our goal is to provide timely support to tackle the root causes of housing insecurity. We will offer safe shelter, guidance, and promote long-term housing security.

How we will do this:

- To find and manage risks, you can get financial advice, speak with landlords, or support those facing domestic violence.
- Offering advice and support through information. This includes help with benefits, housing options, and legal advice.
- Working with people helps create support plans that maintain their dignity. We also link them to other services. This includes mental health support, substance abuse treatment, and job training when needed.
- Providing short-term housing for the homeless includes options like hostels and temporary shelters. This may include support to help people move towards permanent accommodation.
- Helping people find long-term housing solutions, like affordable housing or private rentals.
- Working together with various agencies helps us offer complete support. We also build partnerships to form a strong support network.

Challenges we face

- Single people with complex needs such as mental health illness, physical health issues, or disability.
- Young people, including care leavers, need extra support. This help is crucial for them to develop skills. They must learn to manage their affairs and prepare for living independently. This includes taking on a tenancy and handling a household budget.
- Victims fleeing domestic abuse and complexities around family relationships and personal safety.
- Supporting ex-offenders to find suitable accommodation and reintegrate back into the community.
- Insecurity of the private rented sector.

How we will measure success

- Monitor reasons for homelessness and identify most prevalent reasons.
- Analyse which activities are most effective.
- Track how many households receive help from prevention and relief activities and what results they achieve.

Priority 2: Maximise pathways to independent living

Outcome: We will keep working to create different ways for individuals and families. This will help them move from temporary or supported housing to stable, long-term homes.

How we will do this:

- We want to expand our choices in the private rented sector. We will explore new chances to work with lettings agents and landlords near the Borough. Also, we aim to strengthen relationships to improve access to options.
- Make the most of our current stock by encouraging mutual exchanges, reciprocal moves, and downsizing.
- Reviewing the current incentives we offer and make improvements if financially viable.
- We are working on our tenancy support package. This aims to help those we assist in finding accommodation. Our goal is to boost their chances of keeping that tenancy long-term.
- Increasing the amount of affordable, self-contained family accommodation.

Challenges we face

- A competitive local rental market with high housing costs.
- Limited opportunities to increase provision locally.
- Uncertain long term revenue funding and securing the capital funds to deliver major projects.

- Cuts to public services are limiting support and options for personal, social care, and mental health.

How we will measure success

- Annual reviews of pathways to ensure they are up to date and effective.
- Annual review of move on opportunities, the number of bedspaces with housing with support and capacity within the patient journey to support movement through the pathway.

Priority 3: Provide complete support to people who are homeless and dealing with challenging personal issues

Outcome: Use a person-centred approach for people who are rough sleeping or at risk. This means involving them in decisions and recognising their strengths and goals.

How we will do this;

- Provide tailored help in our Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) for those leaving the criminal justice system. Include advice on drug and alcohol issues, smoking cessation, and how to register with a GP and dentist. Also, promote access to training, jobs, volunteering, and education.
- We work with local community, charity, and faith groups. This helps us stay aware of any new rough sleeping issues.
- Continuing to work in partnership with our providers of supported housing.
- Maximising appropriate move on options by strengthening our work with local landlords.
- Improving our links with institutions such as hospitals and prison to identify those at risk of leaving with no fixed abode.
- We will refresh and improve our pathways. This will help our intervention meet the goals of our 'Rough Sleeping No Second Night Out' policy.
- Continuing to identify new funding streams to build on all our existing work.
- We will work with our providers and partner with Surrey County Council. This will help us improve access to accommodation for people with complex needs.
- Reviewing our provision to ensure that it is still at the forefront of our approach to tackling rough sleeping.

Challenges we face

- Lack of Affordable Housing - Even when people want to leave the streets, there might not be housing that fits their needs and budget.
- Funding limits, usually from short-term grants or donations, affect long-term planning and staffing. Helping rough sleepers can be tough on staff and volunteers. This often causes burnout and high turnover rates. Organisations may struggle to maintain experienced teams and ensure continuity of care.

- Many rough sleepers face mental health issues and substance use disorders. They need specialised support. Many people have faced serious trauma. This often causes distrust in authority and makes them hesitant to seek help.
- Societal stigma can impact individuals and organisations that support them. This may stop rough sleepers from seeking help and create challenges for community integration.

How we will measure success

- Count the rough sleepers and make sure they get the support they need.
- Carrying out an annual review of people helped through our services.
- Carrying out a full review of services provided as part of future strategy development.

Priority 4: Work collectively with our partners to secure positive and sustained outcomes

- We will start a new Homelessness Forum. This will give our key partners a place to talk about issues and work together to help homeless households.
- Work with foodbanks to help vulnerable people access food. Also, offer support that helps them become independent of foodbanks.
- Hold training sessions for our partners. This will help everyone understand what's needed for smooth and effective referrals. By doing this, we can quickly support homeless households.
- Let's make sure we take part in the County-wide work by Surrey County Council on domestic abuse, mental health, and substance misuse.

Challenges we face

- Different objectives and priorities, like missions and goals, can cause conflicts. They may create inefficiencies and problems with making decisions together.
- Larger or better-resourced organisations might control decision-making. This can make smaller partners feel excluded, which may affect the partnership's long-term success.
- Differences in organisational cultures, terms, or communication styles can lead to confusion about roles and responsibilities.

How we will measure success

- Set clear goals and objectives. Then, check if you've met those ambitions.
- Measure the impact on services by sharing across the partnership how many people are being helped at different stages of the pathway. For example, look at how many rough sleepers moved into stable housing. Also, consider individual well-being, job outcomes, and the number of people who go back through the pathway.
- Constraints on time, staffing, and resources to the partnership.

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Appendix 1. Successful completion of previous Homelessness Strategy targets

Action	Target date	Progress update
Prevention of homelessness		
Homelessness Reduction Act		
Develop service delivery against evolving good practice guidance from the National Practitioner Support Service	2019	Completed, now disbanded so no longer relevant. Replaced by Shelter's new action plan.
Implement new data recording and reporting requirements of MHCLG Develop new performance monitoring systems using Jigsaw [the new HRA case management software]	Ongoing March 2019	Complete. Reporting via Jigsaw system and Hclick returns used for annual reporting.
Review use of Jigsaw in longer term pending wider Housing register software update	2019	Complete. Implementation of housing register now on Jigsaw alongside homelessness and allocations modules.
Monitor and review the impact of the HRA on use of Bed and Breakfast, and ensure resources are utilised effectively	Quarterly	Complete. As part of our service plan we record B&B statistics and review placements to reduce use and ensure families are not placed in shared accommodation for more than 6 weeks.
Work with public bodies to ensure they are aware of their duty to refer people at risk of homelessness	October 2018	Ongoing. We work closely with alcohol liaison, probation, DWP and other local organisations and promote the duty to refer with these organisations through the Alert function within the Jigsaw system. Webpages have been updated to inform professionals how to refer.
Evaluate the effectiveness of existing pathways for different client groups in consultation with referring organisations and other B&D's	2019	Complete. Pathways were developed along with protocols for specific groups (care leavers, 16-17 year olds, offenders, domestic abuse).

Make effective use of MHCLG Flexible Homeless and New Burdens Grants for prevention activity	2019/2020	All funds have been utilised and included provision of emergency accommodation, wrap around support and continued to support of upstream prevention work such as citizens advice, money advice services, art therapy and counselling. Funded trauma informed response training for local providers.
Early Intervention		
Use data gathered by new case management software to identify opportunities for early interaction with customers	2019	Software in place to enable data reporting which feeds into annual report. To take forward new initiatives for early intervention working with community groups in the new action plan.
Work with partners to identify early intervention opportunities when agreeing new procedures and through adaption of existing protocols	2019	Ongoing. We have established relationships with local providers and work together on developing procedures and protocols. Capacity for proactive activity is impacted since the change to the Council's operating model.
Ensure that all organisations who may come into contact with homeless people know how and when to access help to prevent homelessness and identify new ways to engage with people at the earliest opportunity	Ongoing	Information has been made available on the Council website. Changes to the Jigsaw system promote an alert function. We also make use of digital communication channels and social media. Training provided to partners.
Develop a housing fact sheet for customers and partners to help inform and manage expectations. Update biannually and publicise on website	December 2018	Partially completed. A fact sheet created and shared with partners. To be brought forward for update as part of new strategy.
Commissioning		
Develop a plan for future procurement and commissioning of services both directly and in partnership with SCC Adult Social Care and Families Services	2019	Complete. We jointly commission floating support services.
Support		
Welfare reform		
Prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit, support our partners	October 2018	Complete. Training sessions were provided for partners.

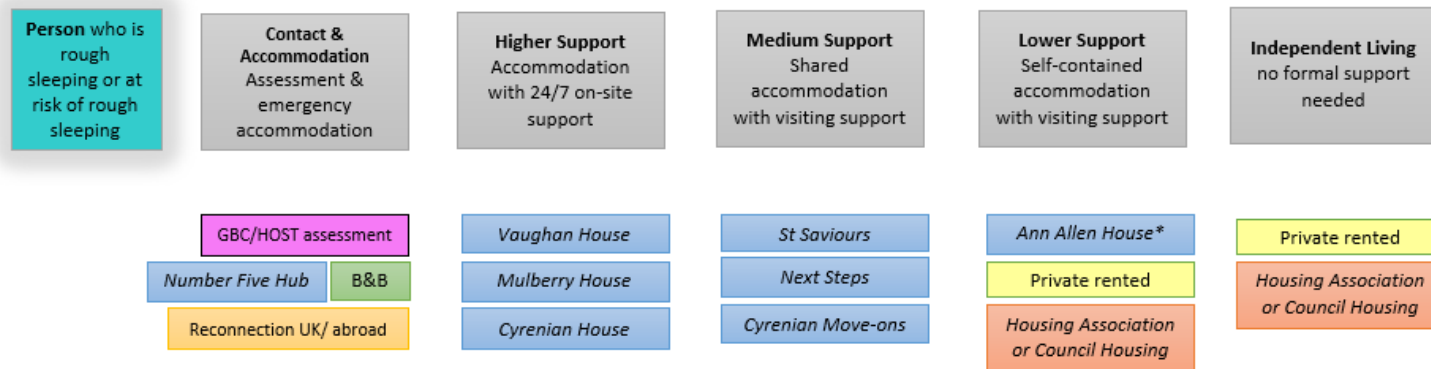
in managing change and customers in making change		
Maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure that the funding supports those most in need	Ongoing	The Housing Team work closely with Benefits Team to provide support to identified vulnerable clients.
Promote money advice and Court Desk services aiming to maximise access to such services	Ongoing	The Council supports the provision of both money advice and court desk services locally.
Evaluate existing service delivery and feasibility of future tendering for service	2019	The team has been included in a corporate restructure and are working under a new operating model.
Promote the ETHOS service aiming to maximise access Evaluate existing service delivery and options for future service delivery	Ongoing June 2018	Complete. The service was decommissioned as part of the Future Guildford programme.
Rough sleeping		
HOST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and review pathways to interface with the HRA and support clients comply with Personal Housing Plans Support and monitor HOST contract Re-commission service 	December 2018 Ongoing 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete. Embedded new legislation and ways of working with HOST. Service continues to be monitored and has been since recommissioned.
Review the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) annually and ensure that arrangements are in place and agreed with partners	September 2018	Complete and continuing.
Develop Indigo project and evaluate impact to share learning with Health and Social Care	2019	Complete. Project ran until March 2023 when SCC ended the secondment arrangements to resource the project.
Work in partnership with Public Health to undertake the Homelessness Health Needs Audit biannually	2019	Started and in progress when this was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This work is now taken forward by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
Service delivery		
Work with partners to improve the customer journey, avoid duplication and identify opportunities to streamline processes and procedures	2019	This has been reviewed and changes made as part of the Future Guildford programme.

Investigate the viability of implementing Housing First	2019	Implemented a 2-year pilot with Riverside. Moving forward we will be using the Surrey Adult Matters with support from Bridging The Gap.
Commissioning		
Review service provision for rough sleepers and prepare recommendations for future commissioning of services	July 2019	Complete. We identified the benefits of a single Guildford rough sleepers service and met with trustees to bring about a 24-hour single service hub service (delivered in April 2020).
Supply		
Private Rented Sector (PRS)		
Review the use of landlord incentives and seek to improve the offer to increase the number of letting agents and landlords willing to work with us.	2019	Complete. Landlords requested additional support with managing tenants. An additional Accommodation Officer post has been recruited to, funded by the Homelessness Prevention Grant.
Review the Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) policy	2019	The policy has been reviewed annually.
Leased to Housing Associations		
Review the use of existing premises leased to Housing Associations that re used to prevent homelessness [e.g Rosebery, Riverside leased accommodation] and explore potential for alternative use to meet identified need	2019	Review was carried out but no further action due to Covid-19 pandemic. To be picked up in new strategy action plan.
Seek to identify and acquire additional accommodation suitable to be leased to housing associations	2019	During the pandemic the council obtained funding to provide additional premises for 9 ensuite bedspace. Ongoing provision.
Hostels and Supported Housing		
<p>Work with providers to increase supply of short-term accommodation units in existing schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for relief accommodation for 56 days • Assessment beds for single homeless and those at risk of rough sleeping 	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have introduced sit up space to increase the options and flexibility for rough sleepers. • Through the 24-hour hub the council have been able to provide increased assessments.

Explore opportunities to procure accommodation for customers with high support requirements	2019	Everyone in and subsequent funding streams were utilised to support people with high support requirements.
Work in partnership with Surrey County Council Adult Social Care to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the performance of hostels and supported housing providers • Seek to ensure that we maximise access to such provision • Identifying opportunities for future service development and joint commissioning 	Quarterly	A county wide review was completed for housing related support. We continue to attend meetings for ongoing collaboration.
Work with SCC, the hostels and supported housing providers to prepare for the implementation of the Government's new funding regime from April 2020	Ongoing	The council has complied with all changing requirements.
Work with Number Five night shelter to review model of service delivery to meet local needs and in anticipation of Government future funding arrangements post 2020		Complete. Ongoing funded has been secured to provide the service.
Social Rented Housing		
Maximise stock by encouraging under occupying households to downsize (promote mutual exchanges, incentives to downsize.)	Ongoing	Complete. Following the Future Guildford Programme this function moved to another team within the Council who continue the work.
Monitor and review the impact of the HRA on use of Bed and Breakfast, and ensure resources are utilised effectively	April 2019	This is complete via the annual reporting within the service.
Implement Fraud investigation arrangements for housing and homeless applicants	September 2018	This has been centralised as part of the Future Guildford programme. A contract is in place with Reigate and Banstead Council fraud team.

Appendix 2 The Guildford Rough Sleeper Pathway

Guildford Borough Council Pathway for single people & couples who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping



This is not intended to be a linear pathway but is representative of the accommodation available and accompanying support (decreasing in intensity). The Council's Homeless Prevention Team and/or the Homeless Outreach and Support Team (HOST) will work with individuals to agree a bespoke pathway to settled accommodation in line with personal circumstances.

People need to be willing to work in partnership with GBC and/or HOST and, where able, participate actively in the resolution of their housing problem.

The bed and breakfast accommodation used by the Council's Homeless Prevention Team is often situated outside of Guildford borough. HOST will assist through provision of a travel warrant, food and toiletries, visiting and telephone support and ongoing help to find longer term accommodation.

Accommodation shown in blue is subject to eligibility criteria and is not available to people who have no connection to Guildford or Surrey. *Access to Ann Allen House is restricted to Riverside internal applicants

Guildford has a thriving private rented sector but with a hospital, University and several colleges the market is competitive, and rents remain high. This means that it often isn't possible for people on low incomes to find affordable private rented accommodation in the borough.

Access to social housing is via the Council's Housing Needs Register. Social housing is a long-term solution not a short-term option

Appendix 3 Action Plan 2025-2030

	Action	Target date	Responsible officer	Resources
1	Review of service provision: a) Allocation scheme b) Homes4U service c) Housing First pilot d) Citizens Advice Bureau Money Advice Service e) Tenants Incentive Scheme f) Housing service pathways g) Severe Weather Emergency protocol (SWEP) h) Service information online and in hard copy	March 2026	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
2	Remodel and refurbish Number Five Hub premises to ensure its sustainability and enable delivery of trauma informed practice.	Summer 2028	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Dependent on funding bid to cover capital costs of the work and ongoing funding through the HRA
3	Review Surrey County Council initiatives: a) Surrey Adult Matters Programme b) Sanctuary scheme contract c) Floating Support d) Tenants to ensure that local need is identified and addressed.	July 2025	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
4	Improve the ex-offender housing pathway with our partners in Police, Probation, Prison and Approved Premises.	March 2026	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
5	Extend the arrangements with HOST, to enable re-commissioning of a broader service of initiatives.	2028	Specialist - Strategic Housing	Existing resources
6	Develop a service improvement plan and deliver quality improvement initiatives such as training on completing assessments.	March 2025	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
7	Effective use of Homeless Prevention Grants to provide financial assistance on a case by case basis such as where Local Housing Allowance doesn't meet rents.	Ongoing	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources

8	Reduce rough sleeping and demand on the hub through proactive partnership working with community organisations.	Ongoing	Specialist - Strategic Housing	Existing resources
9	Develop a Supported Accommodation Partnership to bring together providers to share information on vacancies and service issues.	January 2026	Specialist - Strategic Housing	Existing resources
10	Complete annual performance review of the service and make any necessary updates to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	Annual	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
11	Refresh and review the Council's Tenancy Strategy.	August 2025	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
12	Work with partners to improve the customer journey, avoid duplication and identify opportunities to streamline processes and procedures.	Ongoing	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
13	Review software contracts with MRI for Housing Register and Homelessness.	TBC	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
14	Contribute to the delivery of the objectives within the Housing Improvement Programme	TBC	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
15	Ensure effective allocation to void properties to reduce the backlog of properties returning into use.	Ongoing	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources

Appendix 4 Case study

Relationship breakdown

This applicant and her young son approached after a family trauma culminated in a relationship breakdown. She moved out of the home she shared with her partner. Then, she stayed with a family member. After a few months, the family member could not accommodate her anymore because of their own health issues.

A Specialist Homelessness Officer placed the family into interim temporary accommodation in Guildford. Because they were already homeless at the time of approaching, a 'relief duty' was accepted.

Her son started a local school, and the family got support from nearby services. So, it was important to keep them close to the school. The case officer worked with the child's school. They gave hot meals and food parcels while the applicant waited for her benefit claim to be approved.

The private sector team found a suitable place. The applicant accepted an offer for a 2-bedroom property in Guildford. The Council helped pay for the property through a letting agency. They arranged a 24-month tenancy to provide security for the family.

A referral was made to Riverside Care and Support who provided the applicant with a floating support service. This was gratefully accepted. She was assisted to claim local council tax support, create a My Guildford account and set up utility payments. This service can also assist with charity applications to source furniture and other essentials.