

Appendix 1

Summary of the Draft Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2026-2031



NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Foreword

Everybody deserves to have a safe place they can call home, yet still we see that a significant number of our residents find themselves either without a home or living in insecure accommodation.

Homelessness is a multifaceted issue, reaching far beyond a simple lack of housing. There is a limited availability of affordable housing across the district, particularly within the more rural locations. The exact cause of a person's homelessness is invariably rooted in a complex interplay of situations and events, sometimes following the effects of national issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and housing pressures; or being due to experiences of personal trauma and loss or a combination of all of these factors.

Our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises the challenges we are facing that no single organisation can solve alone.

Introduction

Homelessness can affect people in a wide range of circumstances. It includes people sleeping rough, as well as individuals and families living in accommodation that is insecure, unsuitable or unaffordable. People may become homeless when leaving hospital, care, prison or the armed forces; as a result of domestic abuse; because housing costs and wider living costs have become unaffordable; or because they are no longer able to stay with family or friends.

These pressures reinforce the Council's statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness, assess housing need, provide advice and assistance, and secure suitable accommodation where required. They also highlight the importance of early intervention, effective partnership working and action to address the wider causes of homelessness, including relationship breakdown, poverty, ill health, trauma and financial hardship.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 sets out how the Council will address homelessness and rough sleeping within the district so that households are prevented from becoming homeless, or if they are already homeless, relief support is provided.

The Strategy's overarching aim is to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping, by focusing on early intervention and actions to prevent households from becoming homeless. The Strategy recognises the importance of working with other statutory and non-statutory organisations to achieve positive outcomes, and to provide housing support where it is needed.

A review of homelessness and rough sleeping in the district was undertaken during 2025. The information from the review was used to inform the



Councillor Jill Boyle
Cabinet Member for Housing

development of the renewed Strategy and Action Plan, which sets out the specific actions we will take to achieve our 5 strategic priorities over the next 5 years. The strategy reflects the Government's national direction to prevent and reduce homelessness, with a clear expectation on local authorities and partners to strengthen earlier prevention, reduce rough sleeping, and reduce reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation. With significant focus on these areas already underway through our 2019–2024 Homelessness Strategy, we have a strong foundation to build on.

Local Picture

The figures below provide a snapshot of homelessness demand in North Norfolk during 2025/26. They show that while many households were supported through early advice and intervention, a significant number still required formal homelessness assessment, temporary accommodation or more targeted support. The data highlights the continued importance of preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity, working with partners to address the main causes of homelessness, and ensuring that families, single people and those experiencing domestic abuse can access timely and effective help.

- Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, we opened 1,246 new cases. Over 60% of cases were closed following initial advice or early intervention, without a statutory homelessness application being opened.
- A total of 429 households were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. Of these, 51% were single females, 44% were single males, and 5% of applicants did not disclose their gender.
- Families with children accounted for 33% of households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, and 251 children were included in homelessness applications received.
- The most common triggers of homelessness, or loss of last settled home, were:
 1. End of private rented tenancy (assured shorthold tenancy): 29%
 2. Family or friends no longer able to accommodate: 22%
 3. Domestic abuse: 19%
- A total of 296 temporary accommodation placements were made for 204 households.

A summary of the homelessness review covering the lifetime of the previous strategy is provided in Appendix 4.

Our strategic priorities

The strategy has five strategic priorities. These priorities will be our focus for action over the next five years to successfully prevent and reduce homelessness.

They are:

1. Prevent homelessness earlier through proactive targeted support

Preventing homelessness before it occurs is the most effective way to reduce housing instability and its associated social, economic, and health impacts. We are committed to a proactive, prevention-first approach that identifies and supports households at risk of homelessness as early as possible.

We will:

- Identify households at risk of homelessness earlier through strengthened triage, early advice and community-based prevention routes.
- Target support towards the main causes of homelessness, including loss of private rented accommodation, poverty, debt, domestic abuse and family or relationship breakdown.
- Strengthen referral routes with public bodies, voluntary and community organisations so that risks are identified before crisis point.
- Work with the Help Hub, community outreach, financial inclusion, social prescribing and debt advice services to provide coordinated support.
- Use discretionary financial support and the Crisis and Resilience Fund where this can prevent homelessness and support housing stability.
- Provide clear information for tenants and landlords so people understand their housing rights, responsibilities and available support.
- Make services easier to find and access online, in person and within local communities.

2. Reduce the use of nightly paid forms of temporary accommodation

Nightly paid temporary accommodation (TA), such as hotel placements, is often used in emergency situations to meet statutory duties. However, it is not a sustainable or cost-effective solution. These placements can be expensive, unsuitable for families, and disruptive to individuals' health, education, and employment.

We will:

- Continue to expand cost effective, self-contained temporary accommodation where this improves outcomes, reduces reliance on nightly paid placements and provides value for money.
- Ensure all temporary accommodation is suitable, safe and compliant with statutory requirements and the Council's Temporary Accommodation Policy.
- Minimise disruption to health, education, employment, caring responsibilities and support networks when temporary accommodation is required.
- Strengthen move-on planning from temporary and supported accommodation so households spend less time in temporary accommodation.
- Make best use of the affordable housing pipeline and allocation pathways to support households in greatest housing need.
- Work with registered providers, housing organisations, private landlords and support providers to improve housing options for families, single people and people with support needs.

3. Prevent and reduce rough sleeping through rapid outreach, targeted support and effective move-on

Rough sleeping represents the most visible and severe form of homelessness and poses serious risks to health, safety and wellbeing. While the number of people sleeping rough in North Norfolk is low compared with national figures, the district experiences specific challenges relating to long-term and repeat rough sleeping, often involving people with complex needs

We will:

- Maintain outreach support so people sleeping rough, or at immediate risk of rough sleeping, are identified quickly and offered tailored housing and support options.
- Use targeted, case-led support for people experiencing repeat or long-term rough sleeping, including multi-agency planning where needs are complex.
- Strengthen local systems to prevent and resolve rough sleeping, including clear pathways from emergency, outreach and supported accommodation.
- Increase access to suitable, stable accommodation with dedicated support for people experiencing long-term rough sleeping.
- Strengthen move-on options to reduce repeat and persistent rough sleeping over time.
- Use rough sleeping data and case planning to monitor risk, identify barriers and prevent recurrence.
- Following recent announcements by the Prime Minister and the renewed national focus on ending rough sleeping, we will actively work in line with the National Rough Sleeping Programme (August 2026)

4. Strengthen support, recovery and tenancy sustainment for people with complex needs

There is high demand for support from people in urgent housing need, including those fleeing domestic abuse, vulnerable families, people with mental health needs, neurodivergent people and people affected by substance or alcohol misuse. People who sleep rough have often experienced serious and sometimes multiple traumas. This priority will strengthen trauma-informed practice, tenancy sustainment, recovery pathways and support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

We will:

- Embed trauma-informed and person-centred practice across homelessness prevention, rough sleeping, domestic abuse and tenancy sustainment pathways.
- Improve assessment, support planning and recovery pathways for people with complex needs and multiple disadvantage.
- Strengthen coordinated support for people affected by mental ill health, physical ill health, domestic abuse, substance misuse, offending history, repeat homelessness and budgeting difficulties.
- Work with health, social care, domestic abuse, substance misuse, probation and voluntary sector partners to provide joined-up support.
- Strengthen tenancy sustainment support after move-on to reduce repeat homelessness and failed placements.

- Use multi-agency case planning for higher-risk cases where people need coordinated support to access and sustain accommodation.
- Use feedback, audit learning and lived experience to improve support pathways and service consistency.

5. Build a stronger partnership, governance and evidence framework for delivery

Homelessness in North Norfolk cannot be addressed by any single organisation acting alone. It is the product of overlapping social, economic, health and housing pressures that span across many services. This priority will aim to bring together organisations across statutory, voluntary, community, faith, private and lived experience groups.

We will:

- Establish clear governance arrangements to oversee delivery of the strategy, action plan, risks and performance.
- Agree shared partner ownership of key actions, referral routes and pathway improvements.
- Align the strategy with wider council priorities, housing delivery plans, domestic abuse work, public health and community wellbeing priorities.
- Improve data quality, performance management, service evaluation and reporting so progress can be monitored clearly.
- Create meaningful ways for people with lived experience to shape services and inform improvement.
- Report progress across departments and partner organisations so delivery is transparent and accountable.
- Use annual review, partner insight, audit learning and performance evidence to refresh priorities and respond to emerging pressures.

Delivering Change and Measuring Progress

The action plan identifies practical commitments across the five-year period, including improved triage, tenancy sustainment, financial inclusion, landlord engagement, domestic abuse pathways, move-on planning, temporary accommodation management, rough sleeping outreach and multi-agency case planning.

Our measures of progress will include reductions in rough sleeping, stronger prevention and relief outcomes, fewer households in temporary accommodation, shorter stays where temporary accommodation is needed, no families in B&B accommodation beyond statutory limits, effective use of social housing for households owed homelessness duties, and stronger involvement of people with lived experience.

In addition, our performance framework will be aligned with the Government's new Local Outcomes Framework. This will ensure that our local monitoring fully reflects national expectations and that we are consistently measuring the outcomes that matter most. We will incorporate these indicators into our regular reporting so we can track whether the changes we are making are delivering the intended impact. We will use data and evidence to target resources where they make the biggest difference.

Conclusion

This strategy recognises that homelessness in North Norfolk is shaped by a combination of structural housing pressures, affordability challenges, rural access issues, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, health inequalities and complex individual circumstances. It also recognises that North Norfolk has strong foundations to build on, including committed staff, established partnerships, investment in temporary accommodation, a developing community outreach offer, and a clear focus on prevention.

Over the next five years, the Council and its partners will focus on preventing homelessness earlier, reducing the need for and time spent in temporary accommodation, improving access to suitable settled housing, preventing and reducing rough sleeping, and strengthening support so that people can recover and sustain their homes. These ambitions will only be achieved through shared ownership across housing, health, social care, criminal justice, domestic abuse services, registered providers, the voluntary and community sector and local communities.

The full version of the Strategy and Action Plan, which sets out each of our priorities in detail, is provided in Appendix 2.