



HOUSING STRATEGY

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW

Harrow Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030

1. Introduction

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the council's approach to preventing homelessness, securing sufficient accommodation for people who are or may become homeless, and providing support for people who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

The number of households approaching the council for housing advice and assistance remains high and the focus continues to be on homelessness prevention.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is central to delivering the council's corporate priorities, specifically 'a council that puts residents first' and 'place where those in need are supported', and the council's flagship actions.

Through this strategy the council aims to:

- build capacity and resilience in the community, by working with the right partners, in the right way, and at the right time to unite assets to deliver accessible consistent housing advice and achieve early prevention of homelessness
- ensure the approach to procuring homelessness accommodation and placing homeless households in accommodation is clear to applicants, officers, and professionals, to manage expectations, help residents make informed decisions, and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

The service will always aim to prevent homelessness by helping residents to keep their current accommodation where this is possible. Alternatively, the service will support residents to find suitable alternative housing options and minimise the use of emergency accommodation.

2. Strategic Priorities

The homelessness and rough sleeping strategic priorities for 2025-2030, developed with stakeholders and partners, are to:

1. **Work collaboratively with a wide range of partners** to build capacity and resilience in the community and effectively prevent and address homelessness and rough sleeping.
2. **Deliver early advice and support** to empower residents, help them maintain their current accommodation and make confident and informed decisions about their housing options.
3. **Assist households to access suitable, affordable, and settled accommodation** that matches their housing needs.
4. **Support the wellbeing of residents** by improving access to consistent and empathetic advice and to support that is delivered in a psychologically informed environment.

The approach to delivering these priorities will be ambitious, outward focused and innovative.

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3. Harrow's Housing Profile

The London Borough of Harrow is an outer London borough which is bordered by Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hillingdon and Hertfordshire (Three Rivers and Hertsmere). Harrow is the 12th largest London Borough in terms of geographical area, at 19.49 square miles (50.47 km²). Harrow is the 13th least densely populated of London's 33 local authority areas but is among the top 10% most densely populated English local authority areas.

The 2021 Census showed that population growth was higher in Harrow than across London, with an increase of 9.3% to around 261,200 residents across 89,600 households.

Harrow is a convenient place to live and is well served by public transport. Harrow is sited on and near the green belt and has a very high proportion of land that is classed as domestic gardens. Rising property prices in all London areas have led to a large increase in the property redevelopment of Harrow's existing Edwardian and 1920s-1940s housing stock.

Around 10% of homes in Harrow are social housing (council and housing association), 30% are private rented homes and 60% are owned outright or with a mortgage.

The social housing stock in Harrow is much smaller when compared to other London boroughs, with around 4800 council rented homes and a similar number of housing association homes.

The average house price in Harrow was £526,000 in November 2024, up 2.4% from November 2023, while across London there was little change in the average house price over the same period.

Private rents in Harrow rose to an average of £1,685 in December 2024, an annual increase of 10.3% from £1,528 in December 2023. This was lower than the rise in London (11.5%) over the year, with the average monthly rent in London being £2,220 in 2024.

The average price paid by first-time buyers in Harrow was £438,000 in November 2024, 3.1% higher than the average of £425,000 in November 2023.

4. Reviewing homelessness and formulating the strategy

The council is required to develop and publish a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy every five years, based on the results of its homelessness review and owned jointly with all relevant local authority departments, stakeholders and partners who will be responsible for its delivery and the early identification and intervention to prevent homelessness.

A wide range of activities is carried out in Harrow to prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for people who are or may become homeless, provide support for people who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again. Resources from the council and key stakeholders and partners enable these activities to be delivered.

It is important for the strategy to be consistent with other local plans and to link to other strategies that aim to address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in the local area, such as health and economic development.

In Harrow the key relevant strategies include the:

- Corporate Plan
- Housing Strategy

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- Social Housing Allocation Scheme
- Harrow Economic Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The benefit of cross-boundary co-operation with neighbouring authorities is recognised, and the London Borough of Harrow is an active member of the West London Alliance.

5. Consultation

Key stakeholders and partners have been consulted when developing the strategy. The consultation activities included an online survey on the council's consultation platform My Harrow Talk, consultation at the Conversation Café, and engagement with partners through the Harrow Community Touchpoint, Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board, Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board Operational Sub-Group, and other meetings.

Respondents broadly agreed with the proposed strategic priorities and found them clear and easy to understand. There was a strong emphasis on the need to continue working closely and collaboratively with local community partners and supporting the wellbeing of homeless households.

Feedback also highlighted the importance of early support and advice, engaging effectively with residents to find accommodation to match their needs, and support to enable tenancy sustainment. A key theme in communicating with residents was the importance of offering more accessible channels.

A summary of the consultation is included in Appendix 4.

6. Action Plan

An effective action plan has been developed, with targets, milestones and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, to help ensure that the objectives set out in the homelessness strategy are achieved.

Respondents to the consultation provided a range of suggestions which have been included in the action plan where possible.

The action plan can be found in Appendix 3.

7. What we learned from our homelessness review

Approaches

- There has been a sustained growth number of households approaching London Borough of Harrow for housing or homelessness advice and support.
- The monthly upward trend in approaches reached 425 in January 2025—the highest monthly figure recorded.

Applications

- In 2020/21 Harrow had one of the lowest rates of households assessed as threatened with homelessness (2.46) in London.
- Harrow's rate of households at risk of homelessness rose from 2.46 per 1,000 in 2020/21 to 7.94 in 2023/24—a 223% increase, the fastest among nearby boroughs, and now higher than the London (7.62) and England (6.05) averages.

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- Data suggests seasonal patterns, with higher application numbers during warmer months and fewer during colder periods.
- The Homelessness prevention success rate has averaged around 60% over the past five years, indicating effective early intervention.
- The number of main duties accepted significantly increased from 122 in 2020 to 380 in 2024.
- In 2024, Edgware and Greenhill accounted for the highest proportion of applications, with a decline in applications from outside Harrow.

Homelessness Applicant Profile

- In 2024, the top three largest ethnic groups in homelessness applications were Any other Asian background (18.52%), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African (14.00%), and White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (11.84%).
- Between 2021 and 2024, the ethnic groups with the largest increases in homelessness applications were Other ethnic group: Arab (up by 4.36%), Any other Asian background (up by 3.08%), and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African (up by 1.75%).
- Compared with population data, during 2024, people who identified as being from Black ethnic groups in Harrow were 4.6 times more likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness, when compared those who identified from White ethnic groups.
- The trend in homelessness applications shows that younger adults (18-24) and older individuals (65+) are increasingly represented, demonstrating a broadening of the age range of those facing homelessness.
- Compared with population data, individuals aged 35-44 are 1.45 times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population of Harrow.

Reasons for Homelessness

- Loss of private rented accommodation, has accounted for nearly one in three of all homelessness applications over the last five years, increasing to nearly one in 2.5 in 2024.
- Highest known levels of end of Private rented tenancy – Edgware and Marlborough.
- Other trends in reasons for homelessness applications include a slight decrease in cases where family or friends were unable to accommodate (from 24% to 22%), a doubling of evictions from supported housing (from 37 cases in 2019 to 134 cases in 2024, rising from 4% to 8%), and relatively stable domestic abuse cases, which saw a small drop from 8% to 7%.

Support Needs of homelessness applicants

- During the last five years there has been an increase in the proportion of that applicants with support needs related to health and mental health.
- Male applicants consistently show higher proportions with a history of rough sleeping and offending.
- Females have a slightly higher rate of mental health support needs than males in most age groups. The only exception is in the 55-64 age group.
- 14% of females and 10% of males had a single support need, while 6% of females and 9% of males had multiple support needs.

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Rough Sleepers

- Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) data shows that less than 2% of people seen sleeping rough in London are seen in Harrow.
- The number of verified rough sleepers in Harrow peaked at 145 in 2023 before reducing to 122 in 2024.
- The majority of verified rough sleepers between 2019 and 2024 were male (85%), with females accounting for 14%.
- Looking at the total of verified rough sleepers over the five year period, a high proportion (91%) of rough sleepers were registered with a GP.
- The largest ethnic group among rough sleepers in 2024 was White - British, increasing from 24.1% in 2019 to 34.1%.
- UK nationals made up the largest group of rough sleepers in 2024 at 49%, while 22% had no clear immigration status.
- Rough sleepers with low spoken English ability rose from 10% in 2019 to 16% in 2024, indicating growing language barriers.
- The proportion of rough sleepers who were care leavers decreased from 12% in 2019 to 9% in 2024.
- The proportion of rough sleepers from an Armed Forces background increased from 0% in 2019 to 6% in 2024.

Support Needs of rough sleepers

- Mental health is consistently the most common support need.
- The proportion of rough sleepers' drug and alcohol support needs has significantly declined, with alcohol needs reducing from 20% in 2020 to 11% in 2024, and the proportion with drug-specific support needs falling sharply from 39% to 17% over the same period.
- In 2024, around one in five males (21%) and one in 33 females (3%) had a single support need, while almost one in three males (31%) and around one in 14 females (7%) had multiple support needs.

Key Structural Drivers

- Private rental costs in Harrow have increased by 25% from 2019 to 2024.
- Harrow's Rent-to-Income Ratio has grown from 40.5% in 2019 to 45% in 2024.
- The proportion of low-wage earners and the gender pay gap in Harrow have increased in recent years.
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are significantly lower than average rent levels, suggesting many tenants will face a gap between their rent and the support they receive.
- Child Poverty in Harrow has increased by 8.9% (from 26.64% to 29%) between 2016 and 2024, with the London average rising less than 3.5% (from 32% to 33.1%).
- Deprivation levels (2019) in Harrow remain high in Wealdstone, Roxbourne, Greenhill wards, showing no significant improvement since 2015.
- Overcrowded Households in Harrow increased from 10% in 2011 to 12% in 2021-slightly above the London average of 11.6%.

Outcomes of Homelessness applications between 2019-2024

- Since 2019, most Prevention Duties (78%) and Relief Duties (76%) in Harrow were successfully resolved through the private rented sector. Smaller proportions secured

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accommodation with family and friends (5% for prevention, 3% for relief) or through social or support housing (6% for prevention, 15% for relief).

- For Main Duties, the majority (52%) were resolved through council properties, followed by registered providers (30%), while 13% moved into the private rented sector.
- Across all duties, 6-11% were resolved through other solutions.

Temporary Accommodation

- At the end of 2024 there were 1,350 households in temporary accommodation in Harrow which equates to one in 66 households. This represents 1.5% of total households in Harrow and a 17% increase of households in temporary accommodation compared to the end of 2022 (1128).
- Of the 1,350 households in temporary accommodation, 573 (43%) were placed outside of Harrow.
- The number of children living in temporary accommodation increased from 1,914 in 2023 to 2,614 in 2024, (37% increase). This equates to approximately one in every 22 children in Harrow (4.5%) living in temporary accommodation.

Housing Register

- Demand significantly exceeds supply, with around 4800 social housing properties in stock and only 150-200 of these properties becoming available each year.
- The total number of applicants on the housing register rose from 913 in 2020 to 1,964 in 2024.
- Half of all applicants were assessed as Band C in 2024, up from 42.8% in 2020.
- The number applicants assessed as homeless increased significantly from 363 in 2020 to 912 in 2024.
- In 2024, 92% of applicants were applicants seeking social housing while 8% were existing social housing tenants with an identified need to move to a more suitable property.
- The most common reasons to be on the housing register were cited as Initial Preference (assessed as having a priority need) (28.9%), followed by Medical needs (7.6%) and Overcrowding (3.4%).
- In 2024, the main reasons for applicants seeking to transfer were medical need (27.1%, 42 applicants) and under-occupation (21.9%, 34 applicants).

8. Lived Experience and Personal Stories

The complexities of homelessness and rough sleeping may not always be immediately visible, but they are deeply embedded within the lives of many residents. Through engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness, the Housing Needs service and its partners can better understand the daily realities, challenges, and potential pathways for change, reflect on the lived experiences of those affected, and consider the broader community response to homelessness in Harrow.

Homelessness in Harrow is multifaceted, with individuals' stories reflecting the broader issues facing the community, and requires a collective approach that consider housing needs but also stability, security, and dignity.

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The Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board aims to keep the voices of those experiencing homelessness central to its work, as their lived experiences provide invaluable insights into what is truly required to break the cycle of homelessness.

One customer, a single male, had been living on the streets for over a year after losing his job in the hospitality sector due to a disability. "I never thought this could happen to me," he shared, recalling the stark contrast between his stable past and his current predicament. He explained how his condition deteriorated without the necessary support, and his disability benefits were insufficient to keep up with rising rent costs, which ultimately led to his eviction. For this customer, rough sleeping came as a result of systemic failures, leaving them without the housing or support they needed.

Another customer, a woman with children, spoke to staff of her experience in temporary accommodation. She described a constant sense of anxiety, as she and her family moved from one place to another, never knowing where or when they would find stability. "It's exhausting" she said. The absence of a permanent home disrupted her children's education and mental wellbeing. Despite the temporary housing provided by the council, her sense of security remained fragile, and the uncertainty surrounding their future weighed heavily on her family.

The local network of agencies, groups and services is a critical lifeline for those in crisis, but the infrastructure is under significant strain and there are some challenges and gaps in provision. The common concerns are that resources are stretched, and demand continues to exceed supply. The homelessness assessment process can be lengthy and complex, with strict eligibility criteria for housing assistance. Professionals juggle multiple cases with limited support options, leading to an overreliance on temporary housing, which, while necessary, is often inadequate for those facing long-term homelessness.

The Housing Needs service tries to prevent homelessness before it happens, but sometimes by the time someone reaches the service it's too late to avoid a crisis or in some cases rough sleeping.

9. Activities and resources to prevent homelessness

The public, private and voluntary sectors in Harrow all contribute, directly or indirectly, to the prevention of homelessness and the provision of accommodation and support for homeless people. The key partners in Harrow who contribute to preventing and addressing homelessness and rough sleeping bring a wealth of assets and resources, including specialist expertise, trust, a range of services, venues and networks.

The council's own resources include the Housing Needs service which comprises Prevention & Solution (Relief, Prevention, Duty), Housing Register, Rough Sleeping, Allocations, Accommodation, Procurement & Settlement, Voids Control & Income Recovery, and Reviews.

Many other council services work closely with the Housing Needs service, including Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Education, and Economic Development. Other statutory partners include NHS trusts, the London Probation Service, and DWP.

Commissioned services delivered by different organisations also play a key role, including information and advice, housing-related support, mental health support, domestic abuse services and substance misuse services.

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is key to preventing homelessness. Charities focused on homelessness in Harrow include FirmFoundation and Harrow Street Pastors.

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Other specialist organisations include Citizens Advice Harrow, HAD, Mind in Harrow, Harrow Carers, Age UK (Hillingdon, Harrow & Brent), Community Connex, the Romanian and Eastern European Hub, Help Harrow and Romanian Culture and Charity Together (RCCT).

There are many smaller voluntary, community, and faith organisations in Harrow that all have a very important contribution to make.

VCS Infrastructure organisations are also important to partnership working, including Voluntary Action Harrow (VAH), Young Harrow Foundation (YHF) and Harrow VCS Forum.

The council and the Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board will keep under review whether these resources are appropriate and adequate to meet local homelessness needs and the aims of the strategy, and whether any realignment of resources or additional provision is needed.

10. Continuous Improvement

Colleagues from other council services, including Digital Services, have been supporting the Housing Needs service to process map elements of the service, identify areas for improvement, and consider how technology and automation can support specific tasks. This includes the use of online forms and developing a dashboard of on demand data. The aims of the project are to create a shared understanding of homelessness, move from a reactive to a more proactive approach, and to assess more effectively the impact of changes in demand.

11. Working with Social Care

A significant proportion of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Harrow are vulnerable adults or have children in their care, so it is necessary for the Housing service to work in partnership with Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care when formulating an effective homelessness strategy and developing homeless services.

Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care are represented on the Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board. Other joint working occurs around specific topics such as hospital discharge, care leavers, and move-on from supported housing.

The Housing Needs service engages with the Adult Safeguarding Service and with the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB), a partnership of agencies that work together to keep adults safe from abuse and neglect. The board includes the police, health services, and other partners. The board makes sure everyone works together to protect adults at risk.

One area of collaboration between the Housing Needs service and Adult Social Care is the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), a mandatory entitlement administered by the council for eligible disabled people in all housing tenures. It can enable residents to remain living an independent life at home.

Keeping children and young people safe is everybody's business. The Housing Needs service engages with the MASH and Harrow's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), a multi-agency body set up to ensure agencies work in partnership to achieve this and meet the statutory requirement under the Children Act 2004.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) in social care assists the Housing Needs service by taking out of hours calls from people who are homeless and in crisis.

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In cases where a family with children is not eligible for housing assistance under homelessness legislation they will be referred to Children's Social Care for assistance under the Children Act 1989.

12. Young People and Care Leavers

The Housing Needs service in Harrow refers homeless young people aged under 18 years to Children's Social Care for assistance.

The local Care Leaver Offer, currently under review by Children's Social Care, sets out the rights and entitlements of care leavers to support, accommodation, and other services.

Homeless Care Leavers aged 18-20 years old have priority need under homelessness legislation.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities, to provide Personal Advisor support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want this support, but did not introduce additional duties in relation to accommodating care leavers.

13. Deaths of homeless people

Deaths of homeless people include people sleeping rough or using emergency or temporary accommodation at or around the time of death. There were an estimated 741 deaths of homeless people in England and Wales registered in 2021. The Housing Needs service and the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) are working together to better understand local deaths of homeless people and ensure that appropriate safeguarding adult reviews are carried out.

14. Working with Health

One of the building blocks, or determinants, of good health is having a home that is warm, energy efficient, safe and secure.

The links between poverty, housing and health are well documented. Insecure or irregular work can make it difficult to afford good quality housing. Living in cold, damp housing can result in respiratory problems and other health issues. Worrying about paying the rent and household bills can also lead to chronic stress, anxiety and/or depression.

The intersection of housing and health emerges as a consistent theme when speaking to households experiencing homelessness. Many homeless people report a lack of access to appropriate healthcare, mental health support, and substance abuse services.

Addressing the needs of homeless households and rough sleepers requires a holistic approach, integrating housing with a range of support services. While this is recognised by partners, gaps remain in the coordination of housing, health, and social care services, particularly for those with complex needs and for those who do not meet statutory thresholds.

Families, such as those who have been evicted or fled domestic abuse, often spend extended periods in temporary accommodation. These families may experience mental health challenges, compounded by barriers to accessing appropriate support services. Long waiting times and administrative hurdles can lead to isolation and delays in journeys to recovery. The shortage of affordable and permanent housing remains another significant barrier.

15. Harrow Borough Based Partnership

The Harrow Borough Based Partnership brings together health, social care, wider Local Authority services and Harrow's voluntary and community sector, working alongside local communities, to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. This partnership offers opportunities to collaborate, particularly around homeless health.

16. Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

The new Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) offer new opportunities for partnership working. The INTs integrate primary care, community and mental health services, social care and the voluntary sector across three geographical areas that are meaningful to local residents and allow the efficient delivery of services in a range of settings, including patients' homes. The Housing Needs will develop closer working relationships with the East, West and Central ITNs.

17. Health Inequalities Project: Homelessness prevention for young adults in Harrow

The Harrow Borough Based Partnership commissioned Homeless Link to facilitate a collaborative initiative in 2024/2025 focused on supporting young adults at risk of homelessness in the borough, aged 25 to 35 years. This was funded through North West London ICB health inequalities transformation funding.

The work brought together and leveraged the collective expertise of local partners working across housing, welfare, employment, health and social care in order to identify the challenges faced by young adults, understand the gaps in support and provision, and identify and co-design upstream prevention solutions, including short-term improvements to existing support pathways and long-term, innovative interventions. Funding is also available to pilot and test interventions.

The Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board will consider and implement recommendations from the project.

18. Duty To Refer

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 extended the statutory rehousing duty to include the duty to prevent homelessness and the duty to relieve homelessness. It created a duty on certain specific public authorities to refer users of their services who are threatened with homelessness to a housing authority of their choice, to enable earlier identification of people at risk of becoming homeless through their interactions with other services.

The Duty to Refer started on 1 October 2018. The specified public authorities subject to the Duty to Refer are (in England only): prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, secure colleges, youth offending teams, probation services (including community rehabilitation companies), job centres, social service authorities (both adult and children's), emergency departments, urgent treatment centres, hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care, and the Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the regular armed forces.

19. Prevention Strategy

The council aims to work with partners to provide effective and consistent advice and information to residents, identify households at risk of homelessness early, intervene before crisis stage, and prevent recurring homelessness.

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The Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board has identified different groups who may experience homelessness in Harrow and who each may require a targeted prevention approach.

These include people being discharged from hospital, victims/survivors of domestic abuse, care leavers, prison leavers, youth detention leavers, people who have left the Armed Forces, and people with mental health needs.

There is a range of other groups and needs to consider including single people, rough sleepers, families, young people, pregnant women, older people, disabled people, people with learning disabilities, certain ethnic groups, people with different immigration statuses, Gypsies & Travellers, people with a low income or who are unemployed, people who lose their accommodation through bereavement, people with substance misuse issues, and people from the LGBTQIA+ community.

The Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board will continue to develop its understanding of the needs of people who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless in Harrow, consider how to adapt services, target resources most effectively and develop innovative responses and initiatives.

20. Advice and information

The Housing Needs service provides housing advice and information to Harrow residents, to assist them in having appropriate information or access to services that will help to prevent them becoming homeless.

Partners such as other council services, statutory services, and voluntary and community sector organisations, also have an important role in delivering advice and information. Maintaining a high level of awareness about housing options and homelessness amongst partner agencies contributes to preventing homelessness.

Housing Advice can be accessed by residents by telephone, online or face to face (by appointment). Housing Needs officers regularly attend the council's Community Café and the Family Hub network. An active outreach programme is being delivered, in the form of talks and workshops delivered in a diverse range of community settings.

The Housing Needs service continues to work with other council services to develop access to the service. A range of posters, leaflets, and online information is available and kept under regular review. These resources are shared with partners in order to reach as many residents as possible.

21. Early Identification

The Housing Needs service aims to identify people at risk of homelessness at an early stage, and to intervene to prevent them from being threatened with or becoming homeless. The 'duty to refer' engages public bodies to assist with earlier identification, and the Housing Needs service has developed local protocols and referral arrangements with appropriate agencies, whether they are included within the duty to refer or not.

22. Pre-crisis Intervention

The Housing Needs service aims to intervene proactively where a household may be at risk of homelessness in the future. This includes joint working arrangements with partners such as the Environmental Health service to ensure that tenants are displaced through

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enforcement action in a planned way and Children's Early Help service to support families at risk of losing their tenancy. A growing area of need is households at risk of mortgage repossession.

23. Preventing recurring homelessness

Detailed analysis of local data is used by the Housing Needs service to identify applicants most at risk of repeat homelessness. This area of work will be developed further, in order to target resources and provide support to sustain their tenancy in settled accommodation where this is possible.

24. Partnership arrangements

The Housing Needs service works with a range of stakeholders and partners who are central to a holistic and comprehensive approach to preventing, addressing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

Practical arrangements, joint protocols and procedures have been developed to clarify roles and responsibilities and to ensure the continued commitment to joint working to prevent homelessness and improve outcomes.

25. Ensuring a sufficient supply of accommodation

The Housing Needs service must ensure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless, in order to prevent or relieve homelessness and meet the needs of those who are owed the main housing duty.

Accommodation needs and resources are kept under review, including the range of accommodation that is available and is likely to be required for people in Harrow who are, or may become, homeless.

Landlords, accommodation providers and housing developers across all sectors may contribute to the provision of accommodation in Harrow.

A shortage of affordable housing can lead to increasing numbers of people being accommodated in temporary accommodation whilst waiting for settled housing, either good quality private rented sector accommodation or social housing, to bring the main homelessness duty to an end.

The Housing Needs service keeps under review the supply and demand for:

- social and affordable housing held by the council and private registered providers of social housing
- temporary accommodation provided on an interim basis, or under the main housing duty under section 193(2) of the Act
- private rented accommodation, including shared housing options for single people under 35 years
- supported accommodation available for specific cohorts of people in need of accommodation with support
- low-cost home ownership schemes.

The Homelessness Accommodation Procurement Strategy is in Appendix 1.

26. Capital Letters*

Capital Letters is a not-for-profit company with a social purpose, set up to help London boroughs address the housing crisis and find secure, affordable homes for Londoners. Capital Letters is owned by its member London Boroughs. It has grown to offer housing services to member boroughs, investors, and landlords.

Capital Letters is a landlord, a property management company, a lettings agency, a service provider, a housing partner and a consultant. Its market rent lettings agency cross-subsidises its work with its members, to help families who are experiencing homelessness find good quality, safe, secure, and affordable homes.

The London Borough of Harrow is a member of Capital Letters, and this allows us the council to secure high-quality housing for homeless families, reduce reliance on temporary accommodation, and meet homelessness responsibilities.

27. Beam*

Beam is working in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow to reduce the pressure on temporary accommodation by supporting homeless Harrow households to find properties in the private rented sector, and employment to lift the benefit cap and increase the affordability to rent. Beam offers homeless residents intensive, 1:1 person-centred caseworker support to help them access sustainable private rented sector housing and long-term independence.

Beam aims to end repeat homelessness through empowerment, upskilling and training, for long-term sustainable outcomes. Beam offers an integrated pathway bespoke to the client's needs, with the option employment support as a route to unlock affordability for PRS if needed, or a fast-track option to begin house-hunting immediately if the client already has affordability for PRS.

28. Increasing the supply of new housing

National guidance on planning and affordable housing is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting planning guidance. The Planning service is required to assess the housing needs for market and affordable housing in Harrow and to develop the Local Plan and a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The aim is to deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes (size, type, tenure), widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

The housing needs of different groups should be considered, including families with children, young single people, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes.

The shortage of affordable homes is a challenge across the country, including Harrow. The Council currently has 2054 applicants on its Social Housing Register. Harrow has a small number of social rented homes that it can nominate households to, relative to other London boroughs.

Each year there are approximately 180 to 210 Council homes which become available for allocation. In addition, sales of local authority homes under the Right to Buy provide an

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important opportunity for tenants to move into home ownership, but these sales further reduce the number of affordable homes available for rent.

The Council is helping to address this challenge through different activities and programmes.

29. Affordable housing delivery and planning obligations

Our Housing Investment team has a key role in enabling the development of affordable housing. The team works with the Planning service to review the provision of new housing in Harrow and aims to secure as much affordable housing as possible through the planning system. It is helped to achieve this by the Greater London Authority (GLA), Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) and private developers.

30. Section 106 (s.106) agreements

A s.106 agreement is a legally binding agreement or planning obligation between a local planning authority and a property developer. The purpose of a s.106 agreement is to reduce the impact of the development on our local community and infrastructure. The agreements secure contributions to affordable housing and other services. We aim to secure affordable housing from schemes that can provide 10 residential units or more, in line with the London Plan and Local Development Framework (LDF) Policy.

31. Property Acquisition Programme

The Property Acquisition Programme increases the supply of available homes and helps to reduce the annual expenditure on emergency accommodation. It includes buying back leasehold properties previously sold under the Right to Buy. The Property Acquisition Programme receives funding from the GLA Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP) and the MHCLG Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). The PAP increases the supply of good quality temporary accommodation for homeless households to whom the council has a duty, as well as a small number of homes for refugee resettlement.

32. Building Council Homes for Londoners Programme (BCHfL)

- **Grange Farm Regeneration**

The first phase of the Grange Farm Regeneration programme is complete and has provided 89 new homes, consisting of 69 social rented homes and 20 for shared ownership. Phase 2a will see up to 50 new homes being built.

- **Infill Sites**

Our most recent developments are Brookside Close and Charles Crescent, delivering 14 new homes and a new community centre.

- **Milton Road**

Milton Road is an affordable housing development, with 12 homes for rent and low-cost home ownership.

- **Homes for Harrow**

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The council house building programme to be delivered by the Harrow Strategic Development Programme (HSDP) has been allocated grant from the Greater London Authority (GLA) under the Affordable Housing Programme 2021-2026.

- **Byron Quarter**

Byron Quarter is a low-rise residential development utilising the vacant land next to the Harrow Leisure Centre car park. The target date to start on site is September 2025, subject to planning permission. The construction process for Byron Quarter is expected to take two years. Phase 1 of the Byron Quarter regeneration scheme which will, when completed, deliver 149 new homes, including 71 three-bedroom houses and new council homes.

- **Poets Corner**

Poets Corner comprises around 1,000 new homes and retail/commercial spaces in three phases, including Social Rent homes and London Living Rent homes.

33. Accessing the private rented sector

The Housing Needs service works closely in partnership with local private rented sector landlords to increase the provision of private rented accommodation that is available to people threatened with homelessness or who are homeless. This is achieved through leasing properties for use as temporary accommodation (Private Sector Leasing) or through procuring properties from landlords to rent privately to people we put forward. Homeless households are also encouraged to search for accommodation themselves, where they can have more choice about the location and amenities.

The Renters' Rights Bill is expected to be enacted during the life of this strategy and to deliver significant changes to private renting, including by ending Section 21 'no fault' evictions.

34. Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the maximum amount of help that households living in the private rented sector can receive from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (housing element). The LHA rates are different in each area and are determined by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in accordance with The Rent Officers Order 2025.

The LHA rate for a household is determined by the number of people in the household, the ages of the people in the household, and the size of the property.

Most people who are single and under 35 years of age will only qualify for shared accommodation LHA rate, though there are some exceptions. A shared room means exclusive use of one room with shared use of at least the kitchen, bathroom and toilet.

LHA is capped at the four bedrooms rate, regardless of household size. If a household needs or lives in a property with more than four bedrooms, they can only get the four bedrooms rate.

In view of the local housing market and the LHA rates many private rented tenants in Harrow who rely on help with their housing costs from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit experience a gap between the rent they are charged and the help they receive, which they

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must meet from other income. For some, this is a challenge creates the risk of homelessness due to unaffordability and they may seek assistance from the local authority.

35. Incentives

Financial incentives are used to help some households to maintain their current housing and prevent homelessness, or to support some households to access private rented housing.

One initiative for single homeless households is the single homeless voucher to assist them in securing private rented accommodation.

Some homeless households may be eligible for assistance with a financial package such as a deposit and rent in advance.

Private Rented Sector landlords are encouraged to improve poor quality accommodation and/or to bring empty properties back in to use for homeless households.

36. Help2Let

Help2Let is a lettings agency managed by the London Borough of Harrow, that works with hundreds of private sector landlords across London and beyond. They all provide homes for families that have come to the council for help. There are no lettings fees, no management fees and no admin fees. Landlords are given a financial package; cover is provided for rent arrears and every prospective tenant put forward has the right to rent.

37. Access to social housing

The Housing Needs service is responsible for the council's Social Housing Allocation Scheme which must be reviewed regularly. The Housing Needs service keeps under review how the council's Social Housing Allocation Scheme for its own stock and nominations to private registered providers contributes to preventing or relieving homelessness.

The council's Social Housing Allocations Scheme reflects local priorities and needs. It also provides reasonable preference to people who are homeless or are owed specific homelessness duties as set out in section 166A(3) of the Act, including people who are owed the prevention (section 195(2) of the Act) or relief (section 189B of the Act) duty.

The Housing Needs service takes into account the need to prevent homelessness and to provide settled accommodation to people owed the main housing duty and considers the proportion of lettings that should be made available to applicants who are owed the main housing duty (section 193(2) of the Act).

The Housing Needs service has arrangements with Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care to enable the planned move-on from commissioned supported accommodation, specifically for care leavers, mental health supported accommodation, young people, and rough sleepers.

The Housing Needs service works closely with private registered providers of social housing (housing associations) to prevent and tackle homelessness in Harrow. Private registered providers have a key role to play in sustaining tenancies, reducing evictions and abandonment, and preventing homelessness through their housing management functions.

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The Housing Needs service ensures that there are effective procedures in place to identify and refer tenants at risk of becoming homeless.

38. Temporary accommodation

Although temporary accommodation is provided to eligible households, the long-term sustainability of this housing is uncertain. Housing Needs officers in Harrow consistently express concerns over the difficulty of securing long-term, affordable housing in a borough where demand for social housing vastly outstrips supply. There is a crisis, with insufficient properties and a growing waiting list. Many families are unable to escape the cycle of temporary accommodation.

During 2023/24 financial year, expenditure on temporary accommodation reached £17,705,810, up from £14,713,031 in 2022/23 and £13,243,207 in 2021/22.

The Housing Needs service keeps under review the need for and use of temporary accommodation, with the aim of maximising the supply of good quality accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households and reduce the financial burden of temporary accommodation on the applicant, council and the public purse.

The Housing Needs service uses bed and breakfast to accommodate families in emergencies but aims to reduce or eliminate its use.

The Homelessness Accommodation Placement Policy is in Appendix 2.

39. Children living in temporary accommodation

Temporary Accommodation has been identified as a potential contributing factor in the deaths of 74 children in England between April 2019 and March 2024, 78% of which were deaths of babies under one year old. Within this figure, a disproportionate number of children were from deprived areas. Children from non-white families were also overrepresented, accounting for 38% of deaths across the five-year period despite making up only 27% of the population.

Between April and June 2024, there were 159,380 children living in temporary accommodation across the UK. In London, it is estimated that 1 in 23 children were living in temporary accommodation, equivalent to one child per classroom.

Research by the National Child Mortality Database revealed that child death increases when homelessness is combined with overcrowding, mould, and a lack of safer sleep options, such as cots and Moses baskets. Co-sleeping with babies, a known risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), is also prevalent in overcrowded environments.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities addresses concerns with overcrowding, the requirement for adequate space for a cot for each child aged under 2 in temporary accommodation (Chapter 17.12), and the provision of cots to families who do not have access to one (Chapter 17.13). Families in emergency situations, such as homelessness due to domestic abuse, are more likely to need support to access a cot.

Adequate physical space is necessary for children's physical development, supporting their gross motor skills and ability to engage in play. Research conducted by the University College London found that children living in temporary accommodation may feel isolated from their peers and have unconventional development trajectories due to a lack of physical space and strict visitor policies that do not allow children to invite their peers over.

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Older children may find it difficult to do homework and to study, without adequate space and a quiet environment.

The Housing Needs service works with partners to support homeless families with children and aims to minimise the use of temporary accommodation for these households, especially where there are shared facilities.

40. Supported housing and refuges

The Housing Needs service works closely with Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care to assess the need for supported housing to help prevent and resolve homelessness for people with support needs.

In Harrow the pathway to supported housing is generally through Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care. A range of good quality supported housing options are commissioned for people with mental health needs, people who have learning disabilities, older people, young people and care leavers. Consideration is given as to whether existing local needs are met or whether new units or additional support should be commissioned to address identified needs.

The council expects providers of supported housing to engage with the council early on when considering setting up a new scheme or service in Harrow. Depending on the delivery model, specifically what type of organisation will be delivering the landlord function, housing management, and support, there are complex rules which may result in a subsidy loss to the council and a financial pressure. Early engagement is therefore essential.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 will require Local Authorities to publish a Supported Housing Strategy by April 2026. It is anticipated that this will be developed jointly by Adult Social Care, Housing, Planning, and others, and will include how much supported housing is in our borough, for which client groups, and projections of needs and gaps in supply.

The government will be consulting in 2025 on the national standards for supported housing and on the new licensing scheme. DWP will be consulting on proposals to change Housing Benefit rules. A National Advisory Panel is being set up.

Refuge provision is very important for victims/survivors of domestic abuse at high risk. They will often need to be placed in a refuge in another area to reduce the risk. The provision of refuge provision is therefore by its nature reciprocal.

Harrow Women's Refuge provides accommodation for 6 women (and their children) who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse. The refuge is managed by the council's commissioned provider of domestic abuse services, Cranstoun.

41. Empty homes

Local authorities are encouraged to make use of their powers and the incentives available to tackle empty homes. The Housing Investment team work to bring empty homes in Harrow back into use.

Activities include:

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- Financial incentives in the form of grants (up to £15,000) towards refurbishment works needed to bring empty properties back into use.
- Joint working with the Council Tax service, including the policy to charge an additional council tax premium on properties that are empty for more than 2 years.
- Promotion of the government VAT exemption for refurbishing empty properties as a tool to encourage landlords and developers to develop properties that have been empty for more than 2 years.
- Letting schemes that offer competitive rental income as encouragement to bring empty property back into use.
- Joint working with the Planning service and the Environmental Health service to pursue enforcement action against landlords, owner, and developers, where there are environmental and nuisance issues.
- CPO and EDMO powers are considered as a last resort, subject to available resources.

42. Support Services

The Housing Needs service works closely with partners on the provision of support for people in Harrow who are or may be homeless, or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

The range of providers whose activities contribute to this area embraces the public, private, voluntary and charitable sectors.

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 Act the Housing Needs service must assess the support needs of all applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and agree a personalised housing plan which should include any reasonable steps required to meet any support needs identified.

The Housing Needs service will continue to work with partners to map support services and activities in Harrow, both geographically and thematically, to ensure appropriate signposting and referral, avoid duplication, and identify gaps in service provision.

Budgets and resources from a wide range of sources may be available to provide support for people in Harrow. Due to the cross-cutting nature of homelessness there will be opportunities for the Housing Needs service to work with local organisations specialising in primary care, substance dependency, mental health or employment and training. These include NHS services, Compass, Via, Mind In Harrow, Xcite, Learn Harrow, and Job Centre Plus (DWP).

The Housing Needs service recognises that for some households homelessness cannot be tackled, or prevented, solely through the provision of accommodation. Some households will require a range of support services, such as housing related support to help them sustain their accommodation and personal support with issues such as relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction, poverty, debt and unemployment.

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Housing-related support services have a key role in preventing homelessness occurring or recurring through specialist information, advice, training and support.

This may include support with:

- finding, establishing and maintaining a suitable independent home in the community
- daily independent living skills (such as budgeting and cooking)
- accessing welfare benefits, health and community care services
- establishing (or rebuilding) and maintaining social support to counter isolation and help with independent living.

43. Support for single people

Some individuals may be at particular risk of homelessness, for example young people leaving care, ex-offenders, veterans, people with mental health problems or individuals leaving hospital. They may require a broader package of resettlement support.

The Housing Needs service aims to work effectively with partners to prevent homelessness amongst these groups and ensure that appropriate support is available.

Many young people who have experienced homelessness will be in particular need of support to develop independent living skills, sustain their tenancy and manage their household budget. Those estranged from their family, particularly care leavers, may lack the advice and support available to other young people. The Housing Needs service works closely with Children's Social Care, which commissions support services for young people and care leavers. Key partners in this area of work include YMCA and Centrepont.

44. Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme

The Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme (AFEO) provides funding to local authorities to support ex-offenders at risk of rough sleeping into private rental sector accommodation and help them to sustain their tenancies.

In Harrow the Housing Needs service works in partnership with the Probation service and other partners to support ex-offenders who meet the eligibility criteria, and who usually are moving on from CAS2 or CAS3 accommodation- either short-term accommodation for those who have no suitable accommodation and may otherwise be held in custody or temporary accommodation for up to 84 nights for homeless prison leavers and those moving on from CAS1 or CAS2 accommodation.

45. Support for rough sleepers

The Housing Needs service works with partners towards eliminating rough sleeping. This includes considering alternative ways to provide accommodation and support that might improve outcomes for people who have slept rough, such as 'Housing First' and other service models.

The Housing Needs service works with partners to prevent rough sleeping, particularly for those groups that are over-represented amongst those identified as sleeping rough, which includes people who have been in care or in prison, people who have mental health problems and those with a history of drug or alcohol misuse.

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The Housing Needs service cannot tackle rough sleeping alone and needs to involve partners in health, social care and criminal justice, as well as third sector and charitable service providers.

Joint working with agencies to tackle issues such as street drinking, begging, drug misuse and anti-social behaviour in a collaborative manner can help reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough and target services at those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

46. Rough Sleeping Outreach team

The Rough Sleeping Outreach team comprises specialist officers who tour the borough twice a week, early morning and late evening, building rapport with rough sleepers and starting the conversations that may ultimately offer a way off the streets. The team receive alerts and referrals from members of the public, professionals, and volunteers, regarding people who are sleeping outside, preparing to bed down, or sleeping somewhere not designed for habitation (such as a car).

The team works in partnership with StreetLink, a platform that connects people rough sleeping in England and Wales to support provided by local authorities and charities. To make these connections, the platform relies on alerts submitted by members of the public and people sleeping rough. They also work with key local partners including FirmFoundation, Harrow Street Pastors, Via, and CNWL.

There is a focus on the Target Priority Group (or T1000) which is made up of all people sleeping rough in an area who are furthest from having their rough sleeping resolved, have been in this position for some time and will remain so without a bespoke multi-agency intervention. The TPG / T1000 can include people currently sleeping rough, or those currently in off the street settings who are most likely to return to rough sleeping.

The Housing Needs service is also piloting the Rough Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool.

47. Rough Sleeping Hub

The London Borough of Harrow has a hub for rough sleepers, with five private bedrooms, which provides a safe place to stay for 28 days. This time allows the Rough Sleeping Outreach team to assess need, plan next steps, provide intensive personalised support, and signpost and refer on key issues including mental health and substance misuse.

48. Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

The Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme supports rough sleepers into longer term accommodation. Once in their new home, rough sleepers are supported by specialist staff to access the help they need, such as support for mental health and substance abuse problems, moving towards training and work.

In London RSAP is administered by the GLA. The London Borough of Harrow received capital funding to purchase nine one-bedroom properties and revenue funding to commission a Housing First style support service.

Rough sleepers are identified by the Rough Sleeping Outreach Team, referred to the commissioned housing provider and allocated a property.

49. Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

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SWEP is a locally agreed procedure and offer, followed to minimise harm or death to anyone who might be sleeping rough in severe weather, through the provision of emergency accommodation. Severe weather can be either very cold weather or very hot weather. Anyone sleeping rough can be assisted during SWEP, including those whose immigration status would usually mean that they are ineligible for assistance.

In London SWEP is activated by the Mayor of London. The London Borough of Harrow participates in SWEP, to provide shelter for everyone in need during severe weather.

50. Annual Rough Sleeping Street Count

Every year Local Authorities in England provide a figure for how many people they believe are sleeping rough on a typical night between 1 October and 30 November, either through undertaking a physical count or making an intelligence-led estimate. The purpose is to produce a snapshot figure that helps to evaluate the extent of rough sleeping in each area.

Homeless Link provides training and guidance for local authorities and officially verifies each figure. Aggregated data is shared with MHCLG.

Since 2010, the figures used for national statistics have used the following definition of rough sleeping:

“People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as, on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or ‘bashes’).

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, sofa surfers, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protests, squatters or Travellers sites.

The most recent annual rough sleeping street count in Harrow was held in November 2024. Volunteers from different organisations joined the London Borough of Harrow to carry out the count during the night and the charity FirmFoundation provided a base for the event. 7 male rough sleepers were identified across the borough and encouraged to engage with services if they were not already known.

51. Support for families

The Housing Needs service works with Children’s Social Care and other partners to support families who are at risk of homelessness, including preventing them from becoming homeless. The Early Help service delivered by Children’s Social Care can contribute to the identification of families that are struggling to maintain accommodation, and require help and support before problems escalate and they are placed at imminent risk of homelessness.

Providers of services to children and families contribute to improving early intervention and supporting families who become homeless or require support to access and sustain settled accommodation.

The Supporting Families programme has been extended for 2025/2026 and is delivered by Children’s Social Care and contributes to preventing the most vulnerable families from becoming homeless.

52. Family Hubs

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The East, Central & West Family Hubs were launched in February 2025. Three children's centres serve as central hubs for each area of Harrow: Hillview, Kenmore Park, and Cedars. They are supported by local 'spokes' in neighbourhoods to deliver information, advice and support to families. The family hub network provides a range of early help and support services and activities at sites across Harrow for the whole family.

The right support at the right time and at the right place can make a real difference. The family hubs are improving the way families access support, information, and advice, and offer an opportunity for Housing Needs to do outreach work with families and professionals to encourage early access to homelessness prevention.

53. Support for victims of domestic abuse

The Housing Needs service considers the particular needs that victims of domestic abuse have for safe accommodation, including accommodation placements available outside of Harrow.

The Housing Needs service works cooperatively with the Community Safety team, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, the council's commissioned provider of domestic abuse services (Cranstoun), the Police and MARAC partners to address domestic abuse in Harrow.

There are numerous smaller organisations, such as 'by and for' organisations, who have a very crucial role in supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse, because of their specialist approach to supporting groups with different needs.

The Housing Needs service works closely with Harrow Women's Refuge on fair and efficient move on arrangements. The Housing Needs service also ensures that policies and practices do not disadvantage people who have lost settled accommodation because of domestic abuse.

The Sanctuary Scheme managed by the Housing Needs Service can support a victim/survivor of domestic abuse to remain in their home, if it is safe to do so, through different interventions to increase security.

54. Support for households in temporary accommodation

The provision of support to households placed in temporary accommodation helps to ensure that they can maintain a reasonable quality of life and access the range of services they need.

This may include access to:

- primary care services such as health visitors and GPs
- appropriate education services
- relevant social services
- employment and training services.

Homeless households have a personalised housing plan and a named officer.

55. Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Asylum Accommodation is provided by the Home Office and its contractors. It is the responsibility of the Home Office and its contractors, including Clearsprings Ready Homes,

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Migrant Help, and Reed in Partnership, to provide services and support to asylum seekers in asylum accommodation.

Once asylum seekers receive their positive decision, they usually become eligible for housing assistance. They may approach the council when they receive their position decision, are served with a notice to vacate their asylum accommodation, or later on. If they have not yet made an application for Universal Credit it can be particularly challenging to secure accommodation.

The responsibility for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) is held by Children's Social Care.

The Housing Needs service works with other council services and external partners on refugee resettlement programmes, such as for households from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

56. Pan-London Initiatives- Greater London Authority (GLA)

The Mayor's Life Off the Streets programme provides a range of services and initiatives to help people sleeping rough come off the streets and rebuild their lives. These services complement those provided by London's boroughs.

The priorities underpinning all the Life Off the Streets rough sleeping services, projects and initiatives funded by the Mayor are set out in the pan-London Rough Sleeping Commissioning Framework.

The 'Street Outreach' services include:

- Rapid Response and Night Transport Outreach (27 boroughs including Harrow)
- Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN)
- StreetLink London
- Roma Rough Sleeping Team (in boroughs with Roma communities)
- London Navigator Team

The 'Immediate Routes Away from Rough Sleeping' services include:

- Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)
- No Second Night Out (NSNO)
- Migrant Accommodation Pathways Support service
- Equipping Shelters Project (ESP)
- Welfare to Wellbeing
- Pan-London Youth Hub
- The Outside Project - LGBTIQ+ Emergency Accommodation and Community Centre

The 'Longer Term Accommodation' services:

- Clearing House
- Tenancy Sustainment Teams North and South (TSTs)
- London PRS Tenancy Sustainment Teams
- Mayor's Move On Programme
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)
- Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)

The 'Support To Rebuild Lives' services include:

- Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Programme (RAMHP) (South West London and St George's, Oxleas)

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- Mental health support for people sleeping rough
- Homeless Heath Peer Advocacy Service (HHPA)
- Sub-regional Immigration Advice Services (SIAS)
- Training Programme on Migrant Homelessness

57. West London Initiatives

A range of services and projects are commissioned by the West London Alliance on behalf of the West London boroughs (Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Hounslow). They are funded through MHCLG Prevention and Recovery Grant (PRG), and were previously funded through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant.

Service	Provider	Provision
Somewhere Safe to Stay (SSTS)	St Mungo's	34 bed short term assessment centre for rough sleepers / people at imminent risk of rough sleeping with a connection to any of the seven WL Boroughs. Referred into by Outreach and Housing Solutions.
West London Female Complex Needs Service	St Mungo's	9-bed 24h service and 11 step down flats. Complex needs RS. Given case complexity, referred to by Outreach / Borough Rough Sleeping Leads (Coordinators)
West London Floating Support Service	Depaul	former rough sleepers who have moved into PRS or Social within the subregion. Support for 3-6m.
West London Refugee Support Service	Bridges Outcomes Partnership	support to access PRS and 6m resettlement for refugees with positive status who are leaving Home Office Hotel accommodation
Change Communication		speech and language therapy for RS with complex needs / possible brain injury

The London Borough of Harrow attends a number of sub-regional meetings, including the West London Housing Directors Meeting, West London Homelessness Managers Meeting, and the West London Rough Sleeping Group.

Additional Winter Pressures funding for rough sleepers was recently announced for the subregion and a delivery plan is being developed.

A range of employment support programmes are commissioned by the West London Alliance (Connect to Work, IPSPC, WorkWell, IPS ASC & FE, and IPS D&A) and the Housing Needs service works with the council's Learn Harrow and Xcite services on access to employment support, to increase household income and prevent homelessness.

58. Next Steps

The action plan will be delivered and monitored by the council and the Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board, to help ensure that the objectives set out in the homelessness strategy are achieved.

They will also keep under review whether the resources are appropriate and adequate to meet local homelessness needs and the aims of the strategy, and whether any realignment of resources or additional provision is needed.

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Appendix 1: Homelessness Accommodation Procurement Strategy

In its Judgment in *Nzolameso v City of Westminster* (2015), the Supreme Court held that local authorities should ideally maintain and regularly update policies for procuring sufficient temporary accommodation units to meet anticipated demand, along with a policy for allocating these accommodations to individual homeless households. In response, the Council has developed a Homelessness Accommodation Procurement Strategy to meet these objectives.

The Homelessness Accommodation Procurement Strategy takes into account the Council's statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), the Children Act 2004, and the Homelessness Act 2002.

The Council will seek to procure accommodation that complies with the standards outlined in the *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012* (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) and will also ensure that it meets the requirements of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which places a Public Sector Equality Duty on local authorities.

The demand forecast is derived from historical data on homelessness acceptances, current acceptance rates, projected future trends, homelessness prevention outcomes, and the number of families in emergency temporary accommodation requiring alternative housing.

The Council plans to facilitate or procure 587 units of accommodation annually, from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, and for the following two years, to be used as self-contained longer-term or permanent accommodation. Any changes to the procurement targets will be agreed upon in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Accommodation	Number of Units	Local
PSL	40	y
PRSO	60	y
PRSO OOL	30	n
Perm as TA	50	y
Tenants finding	250	60% local, tenants' choice
Council Purchasing	25	y
*Capital Letters	60	Possible 30%
*Beam	49	Possible, tenants' choice

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Social Housing (Homefinders)	15	
Housing Association (HALs)	8	

- Agreed for one year only

Inter Borough Accommodation Agreement (IBAA)

The IBAA agreement has become somewhat outdated over the past two years, primarily due to rising rents demanded by landlords and a significant increase in homelessness driven by factors beyond the control of local authorities. The agreement is increasingly difficult to follow, as property prices have surged due to cost-of-living increases and higher market prices. While we are still able to secure some properties close to the IBAA agreed rates, for the majority, we are now paying more than the amounts previously stipulated in the agreement.

However, there is a strong consensus amongst London Local Authorities to relaunch the IBAA that is fit for purpose that will meet the needs.

Procurement of accommodation in other areas of London can be challenging due to the Inter Borough Accommodation Agreement (IBAA), a pan-London agreement among all London Councils that prohibits paying more for accommodation than the borough where it is located. This agreement can restrict the Council's ability to procure accommodation within London, resulting in a greater likelihood of securing accommodation that is either local, outside of London, or beyond the M25.

Emergency Accommodation

This procurement strategy does not cover emergency accommodation, which is also procured by the council, however, emergency accommodation is primarily 'spot purchased' as required and often on short notice. In instances where the Council is unable to secure emergency accommodation locally, it will source accommodation from any available location. Priority will be given to procuring private rented accommodation to accommodate families, where feasible.

For short-notice placements, the Council will ensure that compliance is reviewed, and inspections are conducted promptly. All emergency accommodation will be subject to

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inspection unless it is part of the Setting Standards (SST) scheme. The SST scheme includes inspections for shared nightly paid accommodation and studio units.

The aim is to ensure that emergency accommodation is procured and inspected in a manner that complies with safety and regulatory standards, with a priority placed on securing suitable accommodation for families in need.

Accommodation standards

We aim to procure temporary accommodation that we believe meets the standards set out in the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012, as amended by the HRA 2017:

- a) the accommodation is in reasonable physical condition with no significant issues of mould or damp.
- b) any electrical equipment supplied with the accommodation meet the requirements of the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- c) suitable fire safety precautions have been taken with the accommodation and any furnishings supplied with it
- d) reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning in the accommodation
- e) the landlord is a fit and proper person to act in the capacity of landlord
- f) a valid energy performance certificate is supplied as required by the Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 (and from April 2018 is category A-E) in accordance with government update.
- g). a current gas safety record is supplied in accordance with regulation 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- h) an adequate written tenancy agreement is supplied
- i) relevant licenses have been obtained if the accommodation is subject to licensing i.e. mandatory HMO license, additional HMO license or selective license

Appendix 2: Homelessness Accommodation Selection Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out how the Council will allocate accommodation to homeless households in accordance with its statutory obligations under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), s.11 of the Children's Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010 namely:

- Interim duties (s.188),
- Main homelessness duties (s.193), and
- Private sector accommodation deemed suitable to bring both relief and main duties to an end through private sector accommodation offers (s.195 and s.189B)

The accommodation provided will generally be procured in line with the Council's

Homelessness Accommodation Procurement Strategy.

This policy does not cover offers of accommodation under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), which are allocated in accordance with the Council's **Housing Allocation Scheme for Part VI accommodation.**

When allocating temporary accommodation, the Council will have regard to this policy. However, it retains the right to consider the individual circumstances of the applicant or their household.

Policy Framework

The Council is committed to securing and providing suitable accommodation within Harrow wherever it is practically reasonable to do so. However, this may not always be feasible due to factors such as:

- Availability of suitable housing,
- Property size requirements,
- Affordability, and
- Conflicting priorities.

The ongoing shortage of affordable housing, combined with the effects of welfare reforms, presents significant challenges in procuring sufficient affordable accommodation locally. Consequently, some households may need to be placed in accommodation outside of Harrow or, in certain cases, outside of London to meet their housing needs.

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Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

a) Ensure fair and needs-based allocation

Allocate accommodation in a manner that considers the specific needs of all household members, ensuring fairness and equity in the decision-making process. The Council will consider the issue of disruption to the applicant and/or household when deciding whether a property outside of the borough, including outside of London, is suitable.

b) Promote and safeguard the welfare of children

Prioritize the welfare of children within the household in accordance with the statutory duty to safeguard and promote their well-being.

c) Ensure compliance with legal obligations

Ensure that the allocation of accommodation complies with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as statutory guidance such as the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Orders 2003 and 2012, and any subsequent regulations issued by the Secretary of State. Additionally, the policy has regard to the requirements of the Children Act 2004.

d) Manage expectations and provide transparency

Clearly communicate to applicants and supporting agencies the likely areas in which accommodation may be offered. Outline the key factors and criteria that will be considered when making allocation decisions to ensure transparency and manage expectations effectively.

Responsibilities

The implementation of the Homelessness Accommodation Selection Policy is the responsibility of the Head of Housing Needs, who is accountable for ensuring adherence to the policy's provisions and the effective delivery of its objectives.

Legal Framework

This policy has regard to the following legislation and case law:

Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012

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- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
- Children Act 2004
- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Code of Guidance
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 1996
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Travel to school for children of compulsory school age statutory guidance for local authorities
- Nzolameso v City of Westminster (2015)
- Zaman v London Borough of Waltham Forest [2023] EWCA Civ 322
- ElKundi v Birmingham and Imam v Croydon

Allocation of accommodation

In accordance with s.208(1) of the 1996 Act, the Council is required, so far as reasonably practicable, to provide accommodation within its own area. When this is not possible it must try to place homeless applicants as close as possible to where they were previously living. When allocating accommodation under this policy and before offering accommodation outside of the Borough, the Council will consider the individual circumstances of the applicant and the availability of accommodation in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance.

The Council must be mindful of the disruption an out of borough placement will cause. The following principles will also apply:

1. Accommodation offers will be limited to the properties currently available.
2. A bespoke procurement exercise will not typically be undertaken for individual applicants.
3. Offers will be made from the available accommodation that the Council is generally able to procure.
4. The type and location of accommodation offered may be influenced by the resources available to the Council to address homelessness and housing need, as well as by the practical challenges of procurement.

The Council is committed to housing all families locally whenever possible. Any location within the London Borough of Harrow will normally be deemed suitable, unless the application is at risk of violence or there is an overwhelming social, medical or welfare need to accommodate

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within a particular area of Harrow. There is some flexibility in where the Council can accommodate, if it meets the applicant's needs and no suitable accommodation within the local area is available. Temporary accommodation will be categorised into Zones as follows:

- **Zone A** - Within the London Borough of Harrow **or up to 45 minutes** by public transport travel time from any area within the borough
- **Zone B** - between **45 and 75 minutes** by public transport travel time from any area within the borough
- **Zone C** - any other area

Whilst individual circumstances must be taken into account, when allocating temporary accommodation, the Council shall use the following priority groups within the respective zones as guidance:

Priority Zone	Criteria
Zone A Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Households with one or more persons receiving physical or mental health treatment from a specialist hospital unit or local community health service, where a transfer to another NHS service is not possible, or where they are at a critical point in their treatment.• Households containing a child with special educational needs receiving education or support within the London Borough of Harrow, where relocation would be detrimental to their well-being.• Households containing an individual receiving a significant care package from Adult Social Care and a range of healthcare options that cannot be transferred within a reasonable timeframe, where relocation would be detrimental to their well-being.• Households with exceptional circumstances, where applicants demonstrate an exceptional need to be housed close to the London Borough of Harrow.• Households with children registered on the Child Protection register in Harrow, or families with high social needs linked to local health services,

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Priority Zone	Criteria
	where it is confirmed that a transfer to another area would impact their welfare.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households with children in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) and Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13): The council shall try to offer accommodation within Zone A in the first instance, but may offer accommodation within Zone B if no suitable accommodation is available in Zone A.
Zone B Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants continuously employed for at least six months in a role requiring travel to a workplace within the London Borough of Harlow, working 24 hours or more per week. Women on maternity leave who meet this employment criterion are also prioritized. Placements for employed applicants (or those on maternity leave) must be within 75 minutes of their workplace but may be more than 75 minutes from any area within the London Borough of Harlow. Households with a longstanding arrangement to provide essential care to another resident of the London Borough of Harlow (not part of their household), where Social Services confirms no other suitable care arrangements are available.
Zone C Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households where the London Borough of Harlow is not deemed safe for the family to remain. Any household that does not meet any criteria within Zone A or Zone B.

Offers of Self-Contained Accommodation

In line with the **Homelessness Accommodation Procurement Strategy**, offers of available self-contained accommodation will be made to homeless applicants with dependent children and/or a household member who is vulnerable. This applies to those owed the prevention or relief duty or the **s.193 homelessness duty**. Accommodation offered will typically consist of an assured shorthold tenancy within the private rented sector.

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Unless there is a compelling reason to prioritize another applicant, the following order of priority will usually apply to those who are unlikely to be able to source their own accommodation:

1. Applicants in shared accommodation who are owed a duty under **s.193**.
2. Applicants who need to move because their current **s.193** accommodation has become unsuitable.
3. Applicants who have waited the longest in shared bed-and-breakfast accommodation and are likely to be assessed as unintentionally homeless.
4. Applicants who will shortly become homeless, would need **s.188** accommodation, and are likely to be assessed as unintentionally homeless.
5. Applicants accommodated under the **s.193 duty** who will shortly become unintentionally homeless from their current accommodation.
6. Families in **s.193 accommodation**, to end their homelessness and satisfy the homelessness duty.
7. Families in **s.193 accommodation**, to make the best use of the limited supply of available housing.
8. Other applicants to whom the Council has a duty to offer accommodation.

If resources allow, accommodation may also be offered to homeless applicants where no statutory accommodation duty exists at the discretion of the service in exceptional circumstances.

Private Rented Sector Accommodation Offers

Offers of private rented accommodation will usually be made as a final offer during the relief duty. For applicants in temporary accommodation under the **s.193 duty**, this will be made as a **Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO)**, which will bring the homelessness duty to an end.

In some cases, families may receive assistance to secure their own accommodation, provided it is suitable and affordable. This could help prevent homelessness, enable families to move out of shared housing, or bring the homelessness duty to an end.

Use of Private Rented Sector Offers (PRSO)

For homeless applicants accepted for **s.193 duty** after **November 9, 2012**, suitable PRSO accommodation will be offered, based on what affordable options are available. Making such an offer satisfies and ends the homelessness duty. Given the limited supply of social housing in Harrow, it is expected that most post-November 9, 2012, **s.193 duty applicants** will have their duty ended through a PRSO.

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Local vs. Out-of-District Accommodation

Even if local accommodation is available on a given day, families without a high priority to remain within the local area may be offered accommodation out of the district. This ensures that families with a more urgent need to stay locally can access the available housing when required.

In accordance with **Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance**, the local authority will make every reasonable effort to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place, or will be put in place, to meet the educational needs of children in any household placed out of the district. This includes working to ensure that suitable school places are available within proximity to the household's new location.

1.1 Size of the Accommodation

The accommodation offered may be required to accommodate residents up to its maximum capacity, in line with **Part X of the Housing Act 1985**. As a result, the property may not include a separate living room.

1.2 Offer of Accommodation/Right to view the accommodation

Statutory guidance recommends that applicants are given the opportunity to view accommodation, save for interim or emergency temporary accommodation. However, case law indicates that there is no inherent right for applicants to view temporary accommodation before deciding to accept or reject the offer. Due to operational reasons directly linked to the Council's ability to procure accommodation, it is not practically possible for applicants to view offers of temporary accommodation prior to acceptance or rejection. . However, the Council may provide assistance with travel and resettlement, if required at the discretion of the local authority, to help ease the transition into the new home. This will be determined on the individual circumstances of the case.

1.3 Right to Review

The policy recognises the requirements of legislation and that applicants accommodated under s.193 and s.189B (the relief duty), in accordance with this policy, can request a statutory review of the suitability of any accommodation offered to them in accordance with s.202 of the Housing Act 1996.

1.4 Exceptions to This Policy

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In exceptional circumstances, the Council may offer accommodation outside of the **Homelessness Accommodation Selection Policy**. This flexibility allows the Council to respond appropriately to unique situations and to make the best use of the affordable accommodation available.

Decisions regarding such exceptions will be made by one of the following:

- **Head of Housing Needs**
- **Housing Needs Operations Managers**

Applicants maintain the usual right to request a review for decisions relating to homelessness duties.

2. Equality and diversity

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed on the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy (incorporating this Homelessness Accommodation Selection Policy), taking into account the evidence base and the consultation outcomes.

3. Staff training

The responsibility for training staff on the Homelessness Accommodation Selection Policy is held by the Head of Housing Needs.

4. Publicity

The Homelessness Accommodation Selection Policy will be made available publicly.

5. Review

A review of this policy will take place within 5 years, or earlier should there be a significant change to the homelessness pressures in Harrow.

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Appendix 3: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 Action Plan

Priority 1: Work collaboratively with a wide range of partners
Priority 2: Deliver early advice and support
Priority 3: Find homes that match the needs of residents
Priority 4: Support the wellbeing of residents

The delivery of the action plan will be monitored by the Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board.

Priority	Issue	Action	Timescale
1	Family Hubs	Collaborate with Children's Services to maximise the opportunities offered by the new Family Hubs model.	Underway
1	Homelessness Reduction Board	Develop the Homelessness Reduction Board and Operational Sub-Group by widening the membership and delivering tangible outcomes in line with the strategy.	Underway
1	Homelessness prevention materials	Provide posters, leaflets and online resources to stakeholders and review regularly.	Underway
1	Upskilling partners	Deliver training to partners to upskill them to deliver accurate and consistent housing advice in the community.	Short-term
1	Co-designing with stakeholders	Identify, clarify, and refine the pathways available to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness by creating processes and materials co-designed with VCS partners.	Medium-term
1	Outreach programme for partners	Plan and deliver an outreach programme to a wide range of partners.	Short-term
1	Greater evidence building and data sharing	Increase data sharing between internal and external partners to improve the homelessness evidence base and the understanding of the full impact and cost of homelessness.	Medium-term
1	Identifying at risk individuals	Utilise agencies on the ground, such as schools, who have a close working relationship with families to help with early identification of those at risk or experiencing homelessness. Explore the use of existing multi-agency forums to identify individuals at risk of homelessness.	Long-term
1	Widen the range of partners that we work with	Increase and widen the range of local community partners that the service engages with, including more faith organisations.	Medium-term
2	Targeted Outreach Programme	Deliver an outreach programme targeted at specific groups of residents.	Underway
2	Mapping pathways	Design engaging, clear and comprehensible materials including visual aids to explain pathways to residents.	Short-term
2	Family exclusion	Explore different options for family mediation and incentives to prevent exclusions. Promote more effectively housing advice and support to young people and families.	Medium-term

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2	Rights and responsibilities in the private rented sector	Raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities of tenants in the private rented sector, to help residents to keep their current accommodation.	Medium-term
2	Enforcement and licensing	Work effectively with the Environmental Health service to analyse data related to homelessness and residential licensing, support landlords, mediate disputes between tenants and landlords, prevent illegal evictions, and raising quality standards.	Medium-term
2	Duty to Refer	Encourage agencies who are subject to the Duty to Refer to meet their statutory duty and extend to GPs and social prescribing services.	Short-term
2	Effective communication	Use new and existing community channels (including social media) and outreach opportunities to distribute housing information, dispel myths, improve knowledge of the homelessness system, raise awareness of the support available and how to engage.	Medium-term
2	Empathy and honesty	Be clear & honest about the customer journey from first contact, ensure empathy in our customer service approach. Keep the voices of those experiencing homelessness central to our work.	Short-term
2	Risk of homelessness	Develop an understanding of disproportionality in homelessness, starting with ethnicity and age, and identify partners to work with to tailor early support and advice. Develop an understanding of repeat homelessness and consider how to prevent this.	Medium-term
2	Young People	Build partnerships with schools and colleges to deliver life skills in schools or via roadshows, focusing on finance, housing advice and living independently.	Medium-term
2	Young Adults	Consider and implement recommendations from the Homeless Link project.	Medium-term
2	Housing-related support	Commission housing related support services to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness.	Short-term
2	Preventing loss of PRS	Review incentives offered to landlords to retain tenants at risk of homelessness.	Short-term
2	Refugees	Work with the Home Office, Clearsprings Ready Homes, and SBHL to manage the demand from refugees being evicted from asylum accommodation. Work with colleagues on refugee resettlement programmes to prevent homelessness	
2	Domestic Abuse	Work effectively with MARAC, Cranstoun, and the Police to effectively address domestic abuse, including the Sanctuary Scheme and Pan-London schemes. Work to achieve DAHA accreditation.	
2	Out of hours	Review the protocol in place with the Emergency Duty Team for out of hours calls.	
2	Ineligible families	Work effectively with Children's Social Care in cases where a family with children is not eligible for housing assistance under homelessness legislation.	
2	Hospital discharge (acute)	Work with colleagues in Adult Social Care and Health to review the hospital discharge protocol with LNW.	
2	Hospital discharge (mental health)	Review hospital discharge protocol with CNWL.	

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2	Rough Sleeping	Hold a well-managed annual street rough sleeping count, effectively manage the SWEP, swiftly verify rough sleepers and maximise the use of the rough sleeping hub and RSAP.	
2	Maximise Income	Maximise income of households at risk of homelessness, including using the Policy In Practice LIFT platform and routinely referring clients to Learn Harrow, Xcite, and to WLA programmes (Connect to Work, IPSPC, WorkWell, IPS ASC & FE, and IPS D&A).	
2	Resources	Assess effectively the impact of changes in demand. Keep under review whether resources are appropriate and adequate to meet local homelessness needs and the aims of the strategy, and whether any realignment of resources or additional provision is needed.	
2	Continuous Improvement	Process map elements of the service, identify areas for improvement, and consider how technology and automation can support specific tasks such as online forms and on the demand data dashboard.	
3	Webinar sessions	Deliver regular webinar sessions for households in Temporary Accommodation (TA).	Underway
3	Single applicants	Target work on single applicants and shared accommodation.	Underway
3	Rent costs for TA households	Increase % of eligible households in TA claiming HB/UC for housing costs.	Underway
3	Income collection	Improve rental income collection rates for TA.	Underway
3	Occupancy assurance	Conduct regular occupancy checks to provide assurance of occupancy in TA.	Underway
3	Supply of Temporary Accommodation	Increase the supply of Temporary Accommodation through a range of opportunities including working with the Corporate Estates team to review assets, Help2Let, the Property Acquisition Programme, and innovative options such as modular housing	Underway
3	Void time in Temporary Accommodation	Improve void turnaround rate for temporary accommodation.	Underway
3	Access to Private Rented Sector	Review incentives for landlords to take on homeless households as tenants (PSL or PRSO). Work effectively with Capital Letters and BEAM. Develop an approach to empty homes.	Medium-term
3	Supply of Social Housing	Increase the supply of Social Housing through a range of opportunities including reviewing HRA land, building new council housing, regeneration, and working with Registered Providers. Review under-occupation scheme. Explore developing a scheme to incentivise council tenants to give up their tenancy.	Long-term
3	External Funding	Build capacity within council teams and partnerships to seek grant funding from GLA, MHCLG and other sources to increase supply of affordable housing and provision of support services.	Medium-term
3	Pan-London Scheme	Engage in developing and supporting a Pan-London approach to managing TA supply and costs.	Medium-term

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4	Strength-Based Client-Led Assessment Interviews	Conduct Strength-Based Client-Led Assessment Interviews, including staff training in the approach.	Underway
4	Narrative	Change the narrative around homelessness, including motivation and empowerment.	Underway
4	Customer Access	Improve engagement including face to face contact and digital access.	Underway
4	Trauma and Psychology	Develop trauma-informed approaches and psychologically-informed environments	Medium-term
4	Staff Training	Commission staff training including 'personal safety', 'managing behaviour that challenges', and 'motivational action planning' in partnership with Learn Harrow, and mental health, domestic abuse, and other relevant topics	Medium-term
4	Health Inequalities	Use opportunities to link homelessness and health inequalities, especially around mental health and disability, and work with Public Health and Health colleagues (including the INTs)	Medium-term
4	Identifying clients across services	Consider whether a unique identifier could be used to track residents across housing needs and social care	Medium-term
4	Sub-Regional working	Actively participate in the West London Alliance and refer to services that it commissions.	Short-term
4	Pan-London working	Refer to services commissioned by the GLA.	Short-term
3	Aids and Adaptations	Work effectively with Adult Social Care on aids and adaptations and the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), to help residents to remain living an independent life at home.	Underway
3	Families with young children	Provide space for cots and/or cots for under 2s. Work with Public Health on accident prevention and safe sleep.	Short-term
4	Death of homeless individuals	Work with the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) to better understand local deaths of homeless people and ensure that appropriate reviews are carried out.	Medium-term
4	Homeless Health	Work effectively with health partners on initiatives including the One Stop Shop proposal, roving immunisations, and accident prevention.	Long-term
4	Support Needs	Work with Adult Social Care and Public Health to clarify pathways for homeless people with support needs who do not meet statutory thresholds.	Medium-term

Appendix 4: Consultation summary on the review of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Summary

Consultation has been carried out with a range of stakeholders, and their feedback has been taken into consideration when developing the new Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

There was a strong emphasis on the need to continue working closely and collaboratively with local community partners and supporting the wellbeing of Homeless Households.

Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board and Operational Sub-Group

The Project Team engaged with the Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board and Operational Sub-Group at meetings from September to December 2024. Members from statutory services and the voluntary and community sector organisations were consulted on the draft priorities, given updates on the review process, and were encouraged to answer the online survey once the consultation began.

Members include other council services, NHS colleagues and partners from the VCS such as FirmFoundation, Harrow Street Pastors, HAD, Mind Harrow, Citizens Advice Harrow, and Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent.

Community Touchpoint Meeting

The project team attended the Community Touchpoint meeting 28 November 2024. Attendees were given the opportunity to share their thoughts on what the priorities should be for the new strategy, with a view of building capacity in the community to prevent homelessness.

Key points included what kind of information can the London Borough of Harrow give to partners to help with early support and advice, what advice voluntary and community partners can give to prevent homelessness and what is considered a reasonable distance to travel into the borough. Attendees were also encouraged to answer the online survey uploaded to MyHarrow Talk.

Online Survey

A six-week online consultation survey was published on 2nd December 2024 on the council's consultation platform MyHarrow Talk. The survey was open to any interested respondent. The survey received 25 responses including paper copies handed out during the Conversation Café and surveys emailed to the Residents Board and VCS partners. The

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number of responses is too small to be statistically significant however the survey successfully captured useful quantitative data from a range of voices including VCS partners, and residents who have previously experienced homelessness or rough sleeping.

The link to the survey was publicised widely to a range of stakeholders including council services, statutory services, the Residents Board, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Of the 25 respondents of the survey, ten respondents had experienced or been at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping.

Feedback from respondents highlighted the importance of support to enable the sustainment of tenancies and accommodation, knowledge sharing between community partners, engaging with residents to find accommodation to match their needs, and early support and advice. A key theme in communicating with residents was the importance of offering more accessible channels.

Feedback also included the need for more support for issues such as mental health, drug and alcohol dependency, and longer-term support for homeless households.

Comments on the four priorities include:

“I agree because I was homeless and put in temporary emergency accommodation which is a small room and unsuitable for my son to come and stay with me. Harrow made it very difficult to put my son on my housing so hopefully these priorities will help solve that.”

“All are generally in agreement with, however in order to address the issue most effectively partnerships with already existing community centres, religious institutions, schools, community centres etc. should be the most prioritised.”

“It is important to overcome a somewhat fragmented system in dealing with people who are homeless. Their needs are many and it is important that they are not shunted from pillar to post to get the advice and support they need. Addressing the health needs of people who are in a precarious situation with their housing is extremely important. Therefore, an integrated approach which enables the local health service, council and the voluntary sector to work seamlessly together is imperative”

Comments on how we can support residents at risk of homelessness to keep their current accommodation where this is possible include:

“Work with private landlords re an affordable Harrow mortgage scheme “

“Negotiate funds / mediation”

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“Start to find underlying cores, i.e. mental health, i.e. speak to Bentley house, discussing with the LL. Monitor every 6 months when we have placed someone to check in on them to prevent any further issues at an earlier stage. i.e. using students as support”

“Speak with their landlords, help residents to access training and jobs and clear arrears”

Conversation Café

Face-to-face drop-in sessions were arranged at Conversation Café to assist residents with completing the online survey. The drop-in sessions were advertised on the MyHarrow Talk survey homepage and were conducted across three Conversation Café locations during December and January.

Two to three Housing colleagues attended each Conversation Café, offering support to attendees in completing the online survey on MyHarrow Talk, and answered any questions or queries. A printed copy of the survey was also available for residents to complete. Six surveys were completed across the three Conversation Café drop-in sessions.

Meeting with London Borough of Harrow's Education Service

The Project Team met with the council's Education Service.

Key points included that disruption at any stage of education can be difficult for children to navigate, regardless of year group, and that travel to school can be a challenge for families who are allocated accommodation further away and choose to keep their children at the same school (either by choice or due to limited options).

Feedback also included that prioritisation to stay in or near Harrow should be given to children enrolled in GCSE, AS or A-Level courses with an exam to be taken within the next academic year (pupils currently in Year 10 or Year 12), as well as in the current academic year (pupils currently in Year 11 or Year 13). Changing schools while studying towards an exam is disruptive to the child's education and curricula and exam boards vary between schools. Colleagues commented that a 2015 study showed that moving children in KS4 correlated to five grades lower than anticipated exam results for that child.

The service asked for data to be shared about the number of homeless households with children with SEND.

Workshop for internal stakeholders

A workshop was held in February 2025 for internal stakeholders including Finance, Children's Service, Adult Social Care, to further develop the strategy and action plan.

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Case Studies:

Case Study: Launch of Harrow's First Stage Rough Sleepers Hub

As part of a programme of initiatives to support rough sleepers in Harrow, offering them a route back to settled accommodation, we provide an outreach service where specialist council officers tour the borough twice a week, building rapport with rough sleepers and starting the conversations that may ultimately offer a way off the streets.

And in December 2022, we opened a first stage Rough Sleeping Hub in Harrow. The Hub has five private bedrooms and gives service users a safe place to stay for 28 days – which gives time to provide intensive support for personal issues.

Cllr Mina Parmar, our Housing Portfolio Holder, said “Rough sleeping is a small but significant issue in our borough. I was delighted to support the opening of the Hub by providing some Welcome Hampers and meeting our outreach team, who work so hard to assist rough sleepers in Harrow”.

Case Study: Harrow Housing First/Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme

A is a 34 year old male of Somali descent and experiences persecutory delusions and second-person auditory hallucinations, which began 5 years ago and worsened during the pandemic. He has a family history of mental illness and was impacted by his mother's own mental health. He discontinued medication for ADHD at age 18. A became homeless after a mental health clash with his mother made living together untenable.

A was referred to EACH by Harrow's Complex Needs Navigator, and was initially hesitant to engage. He received a comprehensive needs assessment and a support plan.

A was supported to make his welfare benefits claims and to manage his utilities accounts.

He is supported to engage with health and mental health services.

A has been supported to apply for social housing via the Locata CBL system with the goal of securing permanent social housing and moving on from his current accommodation.

Outcome:

A has built a strong relationship with his support worker, now consistently engages with services, and continues to be supported to sustained his tenancy. He has been provided with food bank vouchers as needed to ensure his basic food needs are met. A has maintained employment for a year, a significant achievement.

Case Study: Working with partners- Beam supported Linda to confidently navigate the rental market and helped her find a property within one month

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Beam is working in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow to reduce pressure on Temporary Accommodation by supporting homeless Harrow households to find properties in the Private Rental Sector, and employment to lift the benefit cap and increase their affordability to rent.

Linda was living in Temporary Accommodation with her fiancé and young baby when she was referred to Beam. She was really motivated to find a PRS property but was getting a lot of rejections from landlords. Linda's Beam caseworker helped build her confidence and resilience and supported her in her outreach to landlords and negotiations. Within one month, Linda had found a property meeting her family's needs and they were able to move out of temporary accommodation into their own home.

“The best thing about Beam was when I nearly gave up on my house-hunt because I wasn't getting any positive feedback from landlords and Beam encouraged, motivated me and actually helped me to overcome these challenges. They also helped me find a sustainable, peaceful and long-term private accommodation and helped me and my family move in.”
Linda, homeless Harrow resident supported by her caseworker Y.

Case Study: Out of London case study

P's family joined him as part of a family reunion visa. Our team assisted him to move from a studio flat in Harrow to a 3-bedroom property in Halifax.

Box: Homeless Prevention and Solutions Team wins Team of the Year at the Harrow Staff Awards 2024

The Homelessness Prevent Team won Team of the Year at the London Borough of Harrow's annual staff awards 2024, this caps yet another year of delivering one of the highest levels of homelessness prevention in the country, helping hundreds of families avoid homelessness.

Case Study: Help2Let

We are working with local landlords to find accommodation within 35 miles of Harrow for homeless families. We hold regular Landlord Forums, and we have launched a campaign to promote our Help2Let Service to private rented sector landlords. Help2Let is a lettings agency managed by the London Borough of Harrow. We have hundreds of landlords on our books across London and beyond. They're all providing homes for families that have come to us for help. Help2Let guarantees landlord income even when between tenants, offers full

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cover against tenant damage and helps with the cost of getting properties market ready.



**My letting agents
gave me 3 months'
rent upfront...**

Help2Let from the London Borough
of Harrow also guarantees landlord
income even when between
tenants, offers full cover against
tenant damage and helps with
the cost of getting properties
market-ready. Oh yes, and we
don't charge fees, at all, ever.

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