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Ref. No.	
Category:	
People	Yes
Place	
Corporate	
In Constitution	

Dorset Council Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 - 2026

Policy Details

What is this policy for?	<p>Under the Homelessness Act 2002 local authorities have strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.</p> <p>In accordance with the provisions in The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018 Dorset Council requires a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by 1 April 2022</p>
Who does this policy affect?	<p>Dorset communities</p> <p>Homeless individuals and families</p> <p>Service providers</p> <p>Third Sector</p> <p>Police and crime services</p> <p>Health services</p>
Keywords	<p>Homelessness</p> <p>duty of assistance</p> <p>temporary accommodation</p> <p>supported housing</p> <p>sleeping rough</p> <p>transient arrangements</p> <p>housing</p> <p>health problems</p> <p>relationship breakdown</p> <p>Domestic abuse</p>
Author	<p>Name : Sharon Attwater</p> <p>Job Title: Service Manager Housing Strategy and Performance</p> <p>Tel: 01929 557371</p> <p>Email: Sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</p>
Does this policy relate to any laws?	<p>Homelessness Act 2002</p> <p>Rough Sleeping strategy</p> <p>Housing first strategy</p>
Is this policy linked to any other Dorset Council policies?	<p>Local Plan</p> <p>Housing strategy</p>

<p>Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)</p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)</p> <p>The impact assessment concluded that in general the impacts were positive for most groups as the new policy includes additional provisions.</p>
<p>Other Impact Assessments</p>	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>The resources required to deliver the housing service strategy are expected to be affected</p> <p>A service wide restructure will be completed in 2021 which is intended to reprioritise council resources to deliver the strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Where necessary, relevant costs will be identified through the 2022/23 budget setting process.</p> <p>It is also anticipated that Dorset Council will continue to provide capital contributions – this is a required criteria the council must meet in order to submit bids for some of the external homelessness and rough sleeping funding streams in the future.</p> <p>In addition, the strategy anticipates continued Government support for homelessness and rough sleeping households e.g. Next Steps Accommodation Programme, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeping Initiative.</p> <p>Funding opportunities tend to be short notice and short term and rely on the submission of successful funding bids submitted by the council. A reduction in government funding would reduce Dorset Councils ability to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>Climate implications</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will have an adverse effect on the environment or climate change.</p> <p>Risk Assessment</p> <p>A full list of high risks could be found in the 27 July 2021 Cabinet paper</p> <p>Well-being and Health Implications</p> <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published independent research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in 2019.</p> <p>The rapid evidence assessment concluded: For families, causes are linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse • Relationship breakdown

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Issues • Poverty • Lack of suitable housing <p>For single households, causes are linked to: • Relationship breakdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Substance misuse <p>The strategy identifies and supports action to improve the health and wellbeing of homeless and rough sleeping households and addresses each factor.</p>
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Status and Approvals

Status	Live	Version	
Last review date	July 2021	Next review date	July 2026
Approved by (Director)	Vivienne Broadhurst, Interim Executive Director of People - Adults	Date approved	27 July 2021
Member/ Partnership Board Approval	Cabinet	Date approved	27 July 2021



Dorset
Council

Dorset Council
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
2021 - 2026

Dorset Council

Dorset Council is a unitary local authority that was founded on 01st April 2019. The Council's boundaries are largely co-terminus with those of the Dorset Ceremonial County area. The Council's leadership consists of a Chair of the Council, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. The Council has 82 seats.

Acknowledgement: This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy was commissioned and funded by Dorset Council and formulated by Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants. Thanks go to Sharon Attwater, Andrew Billany, Fiona Brown and Sarah How from Dorset Council for providing invaluable assistance. The time and materials that numerous people and organisations have generously contributed to help produce this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, especially those persons with lived experience of homelessness, is very much appreciated.

Disclaimer: All views and any errors contained in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed should not be assumed to be those of Dorset Council or any of the persons who contributed to this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. The information contained in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is accurate at the date of publication. The information in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy should not be considered legal advice. Dorset Council, nor Neil Morland & Co, are not authorised to provide legal advice. No responsibility can be taken by the commissioners or the authors of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy for any loss or damage incurred, by any persons or organisation acting or refraining from action as result of any statement in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

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Dorset Council was formed in 2019 and as we continue to emerge as a new Council, I am proud to be the Portfolio holder for Housing. We have worked hard to manage the effects of the current pandemic on all our residents and during this time, we have also thought about those households who need our help to tackle the pressures of homelessness and rough sleeping. I am delighted to have been involved with the development of this new Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.



We commissioned a review of homelessness in the Dorset Council area. The extensive research with many of the organisations we work with, people who have been or are homeless, our own Council services and Councillors, has helped us to develop the strategy and its action plan for the next 5 years.

This strategy aims to provide us the right strategic approach needed to achieve this. It was also clear the very important role our community partners and voluntary organisations have in supporting us to deliver the help where it is most needed. From these conversations it is clear there are specific areas of focus if we are to truly tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

By focussing our efforts we hope to be able provide better support for vulnerable families and communities where homelessness exists: Improve the help for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness: Take action against any of the reasons that cause homelessness: Work well in collaboration throughout our Council services especially housing, adult social care, children services and public health so that we can demonstrate need and fund the right activities: Benefit from the essential contribution by local and national public bodies, housing associations, voluntary organisations and community groups.

This strategy provides a single plan for all the agencies across Dorset including the Council and will help to concentrate our efforts for tackling and preventing homelessness over a short-medium term for all people who are at risk of homelessness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those organisations and individuals that contributed to the development of the strategy and action plan and look forward to working together to deliver it.

Cllr Graham Carr-Jones
July 2021

1.0 Introduction

The approach taken to formulating this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, complies with the obligations found in the Homelessness Act 2002. This legislation requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy provides a single plan for all Dorset agencies to concentrate their activities for tackling and preventing homelessness.

In formulating this strategy, Dorset Council's housing services were assisted by its adult social care and children services and had the co-operation of housing associations. Numerous other agencies also made contributions. Elected Councillors were actively involved via workshops and individual discussions.

It is intended to be in place for a maximum of five years, from 2021-2026. A new strategy shall be published sooner, if there are substantial changes to homelessness legislation or significant revisions to statutory guidance on homelessness.

Prior to this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy being formulated, a review of homelessness (the Homelessness Review) was completed, to evaluate the current picture of homelessness in Dorset. This concentrated on:

- levels of homelessness,
- activities for preventing homelessness,
- activities for securing accommodation,
- activities for providing support, and
- the resources available to deliver the above activities.

The strategy is a forward-looking document that includes a summary of the findings from the Homelessness Review. This separate document paints a picture of homelessness at the time the research was carried out, looking at what has happened over the past five years.

It incorporates a comprehensive action plan, that shows clearly:

- which organisations are going to be involved in completing each action,
- specifics of each action to be taken,
- a deadline for when each action is expected to be completed,
- the resources that will be needed to complete each action,
- the intended change that accomplishing each action will achieve, and
- the steps that will followed to complete each action.

The strategy includes an explanation about the delivery and accountability of achieving the agreed objectives and actions. This encompasses arrangements for democratic oversight of a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, steering the enactment of the action plan, sharing good practice, and case conferencing of complex cases.

When formulating this strategy, the objectives of Dorset Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Strategy have been cross-referenced. Statutory guidance on

homelessness strategies was also considered, as was national guidance published the by Local Government Association.

This strategy acknowledges the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan and a new Dorset Council Housing Strategy will impact the delivery of affordable housing in this area and our objective to ensure there is enough suitable accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The objectives set out in this strategy will referenced in these emerging plans.

The action plan forms part of this strategy and shall be updated annually. Doing so will help Dorset Council demonstrate which actions have been completed and which are yet to be carried out. This will ensure accountability and explain why any actions might be behind schedule, or have been completed early, or are no longer relevant.

Dorset Council carried out consultation on the objectives and actions of the strategy, prior to publishing it.

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is available to download from Dorset Council's website. It can be viewed at the Council offices during usual opening hours. Copies are also available free of charge.

2.0 Summary

2.1 Introduction

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy seeks to tackle all forms of homelessness, including those who are owed a statutory duty of assistance and often living in temporary accommodation, as well as people who are staying in supported housing, sleeping rough on the streets, or have other transient arrangements (e.g. sleeping on a friend's sofa).

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Objectives:

- 1) Reduce the current and future levels of homelessness.
- 2) Prevent homelessness
- 3) Ensure there is enough suitable accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 4) Ensure there are adequate services to support people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, or were previously homeless, to prevent a reoccurrence of homelessness.
- 5) Appropriately resource the delivery of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

A range of actions has been identified for Dorset Council, along with other public bodies, housing associations and voluntary organisations, that can help tackle and prevent homelessness. Specific actions have been included for people who are more at risk of homelessness. The priorities and actions contained in this strategy have had regard to the functions exercised by Dorset Council in respect of its housing, adult social care, and child social care services. It promotes working across organisations and policy boundaries, to ensure social inclusion and equality of access to services. When developing this strategy, a broad range of organisations have been consulted including support providers, voluntary organisations and health services as well as people who were experiencing homelessness or had done so previously.

2.2 National homelessness context

There is national legislative framework setting out the rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and the responsibilities of local authorities, other public bodies and private registered providers of social housing (housing associations).

Causes of homelessness include poverty, inadequate housing, health problems and relationship breakdown. All contribute to why people become homeless.

Nationally, levels of homelessness have increased over the past decade, with more people approaching local authorities for assistance and rising numbers of people sleeping rough. The number of households living in temporary accommodation has doubled since March 2010 from 50,000 up to 93,000 at March 2020. Persons of black ethnic origin are disproportionately more likely to become homeless, as are young people aged 16-25 years of age.

The UK Government has an ambition to end rough sleeping by 2024. As part of their pursuit of this objective, an internationally proven method of helping people exit street

homelessness, known as the Housing First approach is being piloted. During 2020, the UK Government launched the Everyone In campaign as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in over 29,000 people being helped to find accommodation.

Since December 2019, The UK Government has allocated over £700m to local homelessness services, with over 300 councils across England receiving a share of funding to support people experiencing homelessness in their areas.

2.3 Local homelessness context

The information in Section 4 of this Strategy is a summary of the evidence found in the recent review of homelessness¹.

When formulating this strategy, regard was had to the conclusions of the Review, which assessed the levels and patterns of homelessness, and identified gaps in local knowledge and services. Regard was also had to local Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Strategy, plus other relevant strategies and policies.

Households aged 24 to 44 years, with dependent children and of White British origin are the main type of household to seek assistance from the council in relation to homelessness in line with national trends. In addition, a growing number of single male and single females who have difficulties as a result of physical and mental health problems are becoming homeless in Dorset, also in line with national trends.

Levels of homelessness in Dorset have increased over the past five years and several factors indicate that this is set to continue including; 23.6% of children in Dorset living in poverty; high house price to income ratios; and the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic leading to potential job losses and reduced incomes.

It is clear from the Review that activity to prevent homelessness and support for those who are or may become homeless is the key to tackling homelessness in Dorset. The council has developed excellent partnerships with services in Dorset that have been commissioned to support homeless people and help to prevent homelessness. These services are well placed, experienced and keen to expand to help meet the growing need.

The Action Plan in appendix 2 of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been designed, with input from stakeholders, to help meet the growing levels of homelessness and secure additional suitable housing for those in need.

During the recent Covid pandemic new initiatives have been introduced to tackle rough sleeping. This strategy introduces objectives and actions which support the new initiatives.

¹ Morland, N, Christou, A, A Review of Homelessness in the Dorset Council Local Authority Area, 2021.

3.0 National Homelessness Context

The UK Government is responsible for making decisions about homelessness law and strategy for England. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is charged with leading on policy formulation and programme delivery.

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities, to formulate a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy at least every five years. A review of homelessness in a local housing authority area must take place prior to a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy being formulated and published. The legislation requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness in their area. This duty complements other duties local authorities have, to freely provide advice to anyone at risk of homelessness and assist persons in specified circumstances who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

3.1 Homelessness legislation

A legal framework setting out the rights of people who are experiencing homelessness and duties local authorities must administer, has been in force since 1977², with significant amendments being made to it 1985³, 1996⁴, and 2017⁵.

Definition of homelessness

Households (single persons, couples, families with dependent children are all covered by the term) who are homeless or threatened with homelessness include those who:

- are street homeless
- are hidden homeless
- have been illegally evicted,
- are living in accommodation that is unaffordable, unfit, overcrowded, are experiencing domestic abuse or threats of domestic abuse, and other exceptional circumstances,
- are at risk of becoming homeless due to parents/family/other no longer willing or able to accommodate, leaving care, prison, the armed forces or escaping domestic abuse), and
- have been served a valid notice to quit their tenancy by their landlord.

All local authorities have a duty to ensure advice and information is available and free of charge to any household, about preventing homelessness, finding a home, rights when homeless and help available locally.

Any adult, or child aged 16-17, who believes they are homeless or threatened with homelessness, is entitled to make an application for assistance to any local authority.

² Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977

³ Housing Act 1985

⁴ Housing Act 1996, Part 7

⁵ Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

A household who usually lives in the UK and has a right to enter and remain in the country without any restrictions, is normally eligible for assistance.

Local authority duties

When a household is eligible for assistance, local authorities must:

- Carry out an assessment of their housing and support needs and formulate a personal plan to meet these needs.
- Arrange temporary accommodation, when a local authority believes they have a priority need for accommodation due to them having a specified vulnerability.
- Attempt to prevent homelessness for them if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days of them making their application for assistance.
- Attempt to relieve homeless for up to 56 days, when they are already homeless, when making an application for assistance.
- Arrange short-term accommodation when they are intentionally homeless and have a priority need.
- Obtain permanent accommodation where they are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need.

Local authorities have discretion to consider whether a household has a local connection with the local authority to which they have made an application for assistance.

A household has a right to request review of certain decisions made their application.

When administering their public law homelessness duties, local authorities must co-operate with each other and can expect co-operation from housing associations and child social care services. Specified public authorities have a duty to refer a household who is at risk of homelessness to a local authority.

3.2 Causes of homelessness

MHCLG with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) published independent research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping⁶. An assessment of evidence concluded that for families there was strong evidence of domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, financial issues, poverty and lack of social housing being the causes of homelessness. For single persons there was strong evidence that relationship breakdown, mental health and substance misuse were the causes. In terms of rough sleeping, the strongest cause identified was relationship breakdown.

3.3 Homelessness statistics

Official statistics published by the UK Government, for April 2019 – March 2020⁷, showed:

- Households with children are more likely to be owed a prevention duty at initial assessment than a relief duty
- Single adult households are the largest group of households owed a prevention or relief duty, representing 60.1% of all households who had a duty accepted.

⁶ Alma Economics. 2019. Homelessness: Causes of homelessness and rough Sleeping: rapid assessment of evidence, London, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Department for Work & Pensions

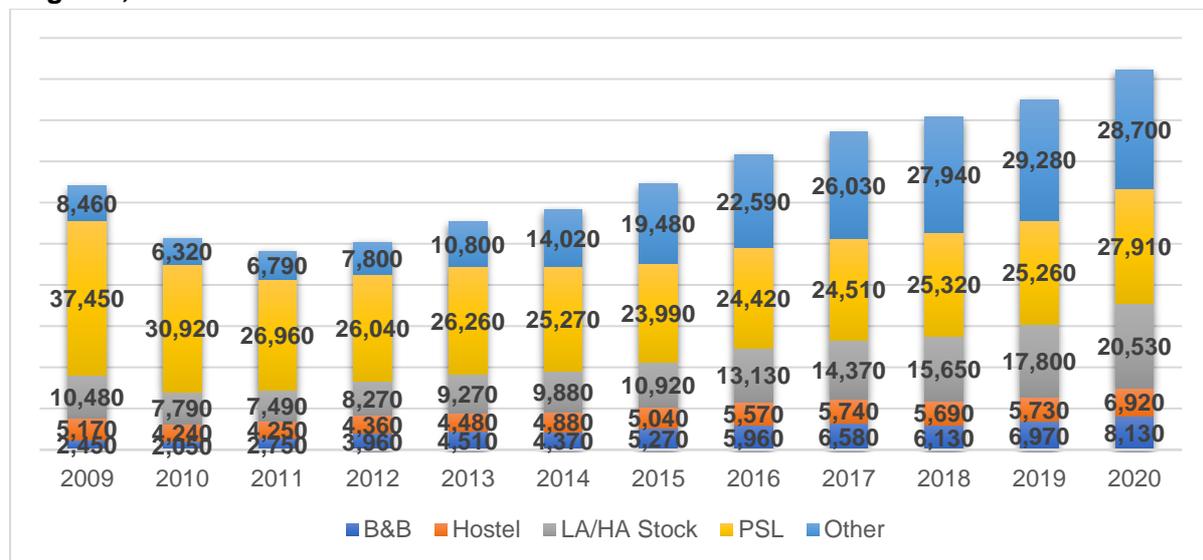
⁷ Statutory Homelessness Annual Report, 2019-20, England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

- 57.6% of single adults are initially accepted under the relief duty.
- Of the households that were owed a duty in in 2019-20, those that were owed a prevention duty were more likely (58.5%) to have an accommodation secured outcome than households owed an initial relief duty (40.0%)
- Accommodation secured under the prevention duty is more likely to be in self-contained private rented sector accommodation at 36.3%, or in a social rented sector registered provider tenancy at 21.7%.
- Accommodation secured at relief is more likely to be a social rented supported housing or hostel offer at 26.6%
- Main duty acceptances have reduced by 29.3% over the past three years, due to the number of households who are prevented from becoming homeless or have homelessness relieved

The number of households owed the main duty of assistance (obtain permanent accommodation for households that are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need) has decreased 29.3%, from 56,600 in 2017-2018 before the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17) to 40,040 in 2019-2020, two years after the new legislation came into force. This is because more households are receiving assistance at an earlier stage, through prevention and relief duties, one of the aims of the legislation.

The number of households in temporary accommodation has risen to 93,000 on 31st March 2020, the highest level in almost 15 years. This is largely driven by single households, while the number of households with children in temporary accommodation has remained more stable.

Chart 1: Households in temporary accommodation, annual snapshot taken on 31st March, England, 2009 - 2020



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Demographics of homeless households

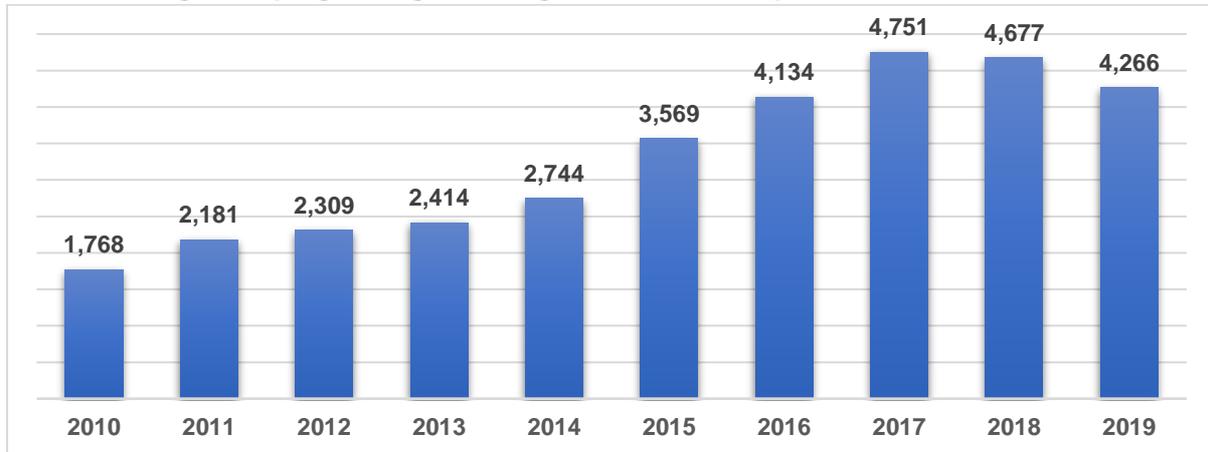
During 2019-20 69.8% of homeless households had a White lead applicant, while 84.6% of individuals in England are White, suggesting White households are less likely to be homeless. Households containing an Asian lead applicant are also underrepresented as

they account for just 6.3% of homeless applications and for 8.1% of the population. Households with a Black lead applicant are the most disproportionately homeless as they account for 10.7% of those owed a duty while they are estimated to comprise of 3.6% of the population.

In 2019-20, the most common age group of lead applicants in households owed a prevention or relief duty were aged between 25 and 34 years old, making up 87,990 households or 30.5% of the total.

The latest rough sleeping snapshot statistics⁸ show that in 2019 there were 4,266 individuals recorded as sleeping rough on a single night in England.

Chart 2: Rough sleeping in England, England, annual snapshot taken Autumn 2010-2019



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

3.4 Homelessness Policy

The UK Government has an ambition of ending street homelessness by 2024⁹.

From 2017-2019, the UK Government invested £1.2bn to tackle homelessness, which included £76m for an initiative to reduce street homelessness and £28m to pilot the Housing First approach. In August 2018, the MHCLG published a Rough Sleeping Strategy¹⁰.

The UK Government appointed an independent advisor to lead a review into the causes of street homelessness, that will provide advice on additional action required to end street homelessness by the end of 2024.

Everyone In campaign

The UK Government's initial response to COVID-19 and rough sleeping in March 2020 was to bring in those people experiencing street homelessness to protect their health and stop wider transmission, particularly in hot spot areas, and those in assessment centres and shelters that are unable to comply with social distancing advice.

⁸ Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

⁹ The Conservative and Unionist Party, Manifesto 2019.

¹⁰ The rough sleeping strategy, 2018, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

By September 2020, over 29,000 people were reported as being helped, with 10,000 provided with emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move-on support.

An eviction ban for six months was put into force. Subsequently the law was changed to increase notice periods to six months. Bailiff enforcement action is not permitted during national restrictions.

All local authorities were asked to update actions plans for tackling rough sleeping by the end of 2020, following which they have been expected to carry out a rapid assessment of need for everyone they assist who is experiencing street homelessness.

As new restrictions came into force in from January 2021, MHCLG asked local housing authorities once again to make sure those experiencing street homelessness were helped to obtain accommodation and also register with a GP.

An independent review of the HRA 2017¹¹, commissioned by MHCLG, concluded that more people are getting help who previously would not. The review also identified improvements could be made to how the HRA is being administered, data collection and joint working.

Research¹² carried out by MHCLG with over 500 people who had experienced street homelessness found that before sleeping rough most had not been in stable accommodation. The research estimated the annual cost of a person who is experiencing street homelessness was £12.2k, compared to £3.1k for people at risk of homelessness who do not have to sleep rough.

3.5 Homelessness Funding

Since December 2019, The UK Government has allocated over £700m to local homelessness services, with over 300 councils across England receiving a share of funding to support people experiencing homelessness in their areas.

¹¹ Knight, Tim., Greenstock, Jane., Beadle, Shane., Charalambous, Steph., Fenton, Catherine. 2020. Evaluation of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London.

¹² 2020. Understanding the multiple vulnerabilities, support needs and experiences of people who sleep rough in England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London.

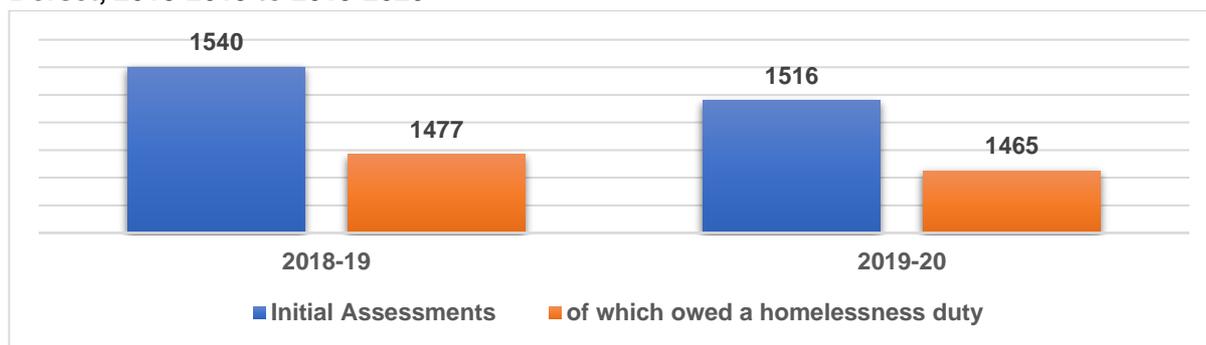
4.0 Local Homelessness Context

The information in this section of this Homelessness Strategy is a summary of the evidence found in a recent review of homelessness in Dorset¹³.

4.1 Levels of Homelessness

Initial assessments, introduced by the HRA17¹⁴, determine if a duty is owed to a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness. The number of assessments carried out by Dorset Council, and former component housing authorities, reduced by 1.5% between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Of those assessed, 95.9% during 2018-2019 and 96.6% during 2019-2020 were found to be owed a homelessness duty.

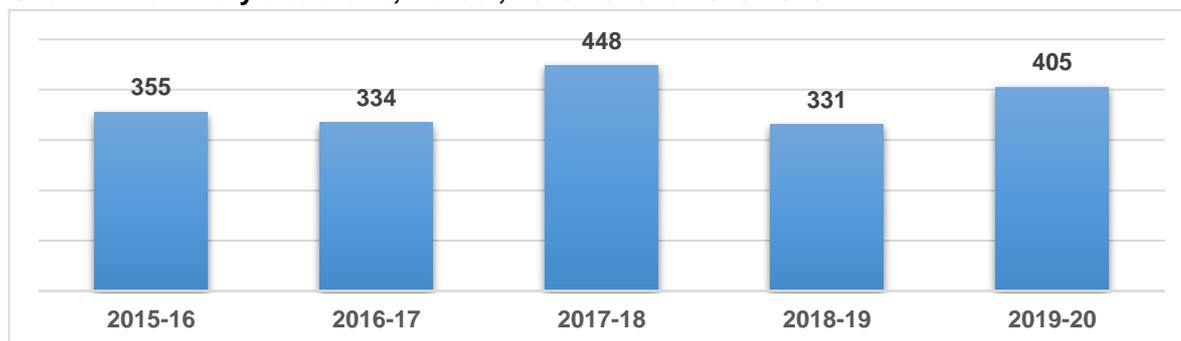
Chart 3: Number of households initially assessed for a homelessness duty post enactment of HRA17, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The number of main housing duty¹⁵ decisions made on homelessness applications in Dorset for the period 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, was at a peak in 2017-2018, reducing by 25% the following year to the lowest number for the five-year period. It is not clear why there was an increase in 2017-2018, but Dorset Council followed the national trend in 2018-2019, all showing significant reductions with the enactment of the HRA17.

Chart 4: Main duty decisions, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

During 2019-2020, 65.18% of main duty decisions found applicants to be eligible for assistance, in priority need and homeless. 18% were found to be not homeless. The proportion of not homeless

¹³ Morland, N., Christou, A., (2019). A review of homelessness in the Local Authority of Dorset

¹⁴ The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (Commencement and Transitional and Savings Provisions) Regulations 2018

¹⁵ Housing Act 1996, Pt VII s193(2)

applicants has reduced significantly since the enactment of HRA17, as should be expected with an increase in prevention activity.

The main ethnic group was white and main applicants were predominantly aged between 25-44 years. Households which included dependent children were the majority household type that were found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and having a priority need for accommodation.

For the period 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 the use of all types of temporary accommodation has increased in Dorset, in particular the use of bed and breakfast accommodation which for the last quarter of 2019-2020 was the most commonly used form of accommodation.

The levels of rough sleeping in Dorset have remained low over the past 5 years (2015-2019), recording 18 persons sleeping rough on the 2019 annual count.

The relative rate of homelessness, temporary accommodation usage and rough sleeping for Dorset is lower than that of Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP), South West England, England not including London, and the whole of England.

To forecast future levels of homelessness, child poverty rates, labour market statistics, and house price data has been analysed.

At a local level 23.4% of Dorset children were identified as living in poverty, according to the latest data. The number and portion of children in poverty in Dorset is lower than BCP, South West, England without London and the whole of England.

Chart 5: Number of children in poverty after housing costs, Dorset, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019



Source: Child Poverty Action Group. End Child Poverty

Indicators of future likely levels of homelessness

In Dorset the percentage of 16-64-year-olds recorded as unemployed is lower compared to elsewhere. Of the Dorset population aged 16-64, 2.7% are in receipt of out of work welfare benefits. Of these, 52% are between the ages of 25 to 49 years This is lower than BCP, South West England, and all of England. The percentage of 16-64-year-olds in employment in Dorset is lower than BCP, South West England and all of England, while there are a higher percentage of self-employed workers.

Gross weekly pay is on average lower in Dorset compared with BCP, South West England and all of England.

Conversely, median house prices in Dorset are higher compared to BCP, South West England, and England which means a higher than average house price to earnings ratio of 10.06 times median gross annual earnings for Dorset. This is higher than BCP, South West England and all of England.

4.2 Preventing Homelessness

Duty to refer

A dedicated online referral form and specific email address is available on Dorset Council's website for public authorities and other organisations to use when contact is made with someone who might be at risk of homelessness. 202 referrals were made during 2019-2020, of which 31% were from public authorities. In addition to the Duty to Refer¹⁶, many housing associations that hold stock in the Dorset Council area have signed up to the National Housing Federation's voluntary Commitment to Refer¹⁷.

Responsibilities performed by Dorset Council include:

- Providing housing advice,
- Taking applications for homelessness assistance,
- Determining eligibility for assistance,
- Providing accommodation for an interim period to people who might be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need,
- Completing assessments and formulating personalised plans,
- Fulfilling duties to prevent and/or relieve homelessness, provide accommodation to people who are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need, plus provide advice and accommodation for a reasonable period to people who are intentionally homeless and have a priority need,
- Making referrals to other local authorities for persons who do not have a connection to Dorset,
- Completing reviews of decisions made about entitlements to assistance,
- Ensuring suitability of accommodation offered, protection of a household's belongings, working with children services when cases involve children, receiving referrals from specified public authorities, and
- Detecting fraudulent applications for assistance.

Dorset Council's website has a specific page which includes details about how to access the housing and homelessness services, plus links to information and services for:

- Rough sleeper outreach workers
- Dedicated support for victims of domestic abuse
- Initiatives that can prevent homelessness (e.g. landlord incentives that can assist to secure private rented sector (PRS) accommodation)
- Facts about people's rights to assistance when homeless.

Dorset Council also offers a range of information about homelessness within its web pages, including:

- The duty of specified public authorities to refer cases of homelessness to a local authority,
- Rights to make an application for homelessness assistance,
- Provision of temporary accommodation, and
- Entitlements to seek a review of a homelessness decision.

¹⁶ Homelessness (Review Procedure Etc) Regulations 2018, Part 4 Duty to Refer

¹⁷ National Housing Federation. (2018). Commitment to refer: guidance for housing associations

Dorset Citizens Advice office operates a face to face triage service, five days each week at the Dorchester Branch. Advice is also available online and at other branches, by telephone, email webchat, and video link.

An officer from Dorset Council's Homelessness Service will attend a local Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement meeting if required.

Dorset Council's Homelessness Service and Children's Social Care work with children aged 16 and 17, plus young adults leaving care aged 18, 19, or 20 years, each fulfilling any relevant duty owed. Children's Social Care facilitate the organisation of a personal adviser for each person leaving care, to provide support until their 21st birthday (or 25th if they remain in full time education). For 16- and 17-year olds there is a joint protocol setting out how officers from both services will work together to ensure that these children receive a seamless service from the first approach as homeless or threatened homelessness. Following the introduction of the HRA17, new guidance was published jointly with MHCLG and the Department of Education on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 years-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation¹⁸ therefore a review of the current protocol is required.

There are some specific homelessness prevention initiatives to respond to the common characteristics of adults who experience homelessness. Contact details are available on the council website.

The You First Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Sexual Violence Integrated Service provides outreach support in the community and accommodation-based services in Dorset, including a safe house for those at significant risk of harm.

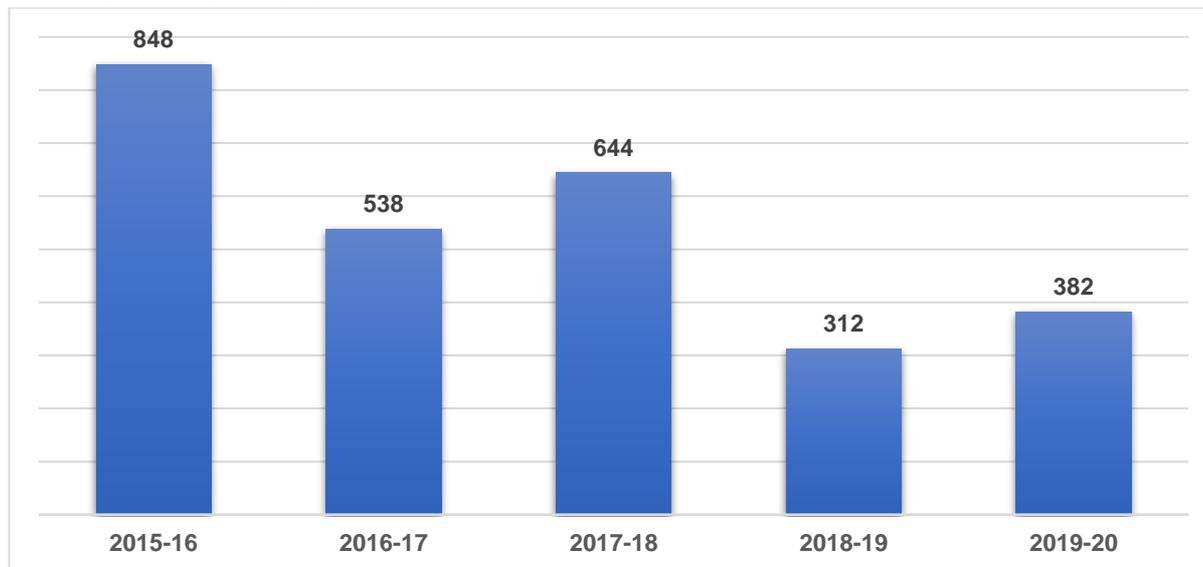
The Lantern Trust in Weymouth help to prevent homelessness by mediating and advocating with landlords on behalf of individuals and assisting with rent deposits. The Lantern Trust has their own housing and benefits team and provide premises for Shelter Housing First, and Citizens Advice, who has a drop-in service two days each week plus a GP service each Friday. The Dorset Council Integrated Prevention Support Service fund the core running costs of the Trust.

Royal British Legion and SSAFA provide access to welfare benefits, debt and money advice and other support to anyone who has served in the armed forces, including helping rough sleeping veterans off the street and into move on accommodation when they are ready.

The number of cases where positive action by Dorset Council (and the local authorities that preceded it) prevented homelessness was highest in 2015-16, and has reduced each year since, becoming lower in 2018-2019 than all other years. This coincided with the implementation of the new HRA17 duties, and new recording methods being instigated by MHCLG, as well as the reorganisation of local government in Dorset.

¹⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Education. (2018). Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17-year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation. Guidance to children's services authorities and local housing authorities about their duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure or provide accommodation for homelessness 16 and 17-year-old young people

Chart 5: Number of cases where positive action succeeded in preventing homelessness, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The majority of main applicants of households owed a prevention or relief duty are between the ages of 25-34 for both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, followed by those aged 18-24 and those aged between 35-44. All three aged groups had small reduction in numbers for the two-year period, while those aged 75+ increased by 46% to 32 households. Those aged 16 to 17-year olds, the age group who cannot yet be legally responsible for a tenancy, increased by 28% to 23 households.

For 2019-2020, the main ethnic group of those owed a prevention or relief duty in Dorset was White British at 95.4%, followed by Mixed at 0.7%, Black or Black British and Asian or Asian British, both at 0.5% and Other Ethnic Origin at 0.4%. 2.5% of cases had no ethnic group stated.

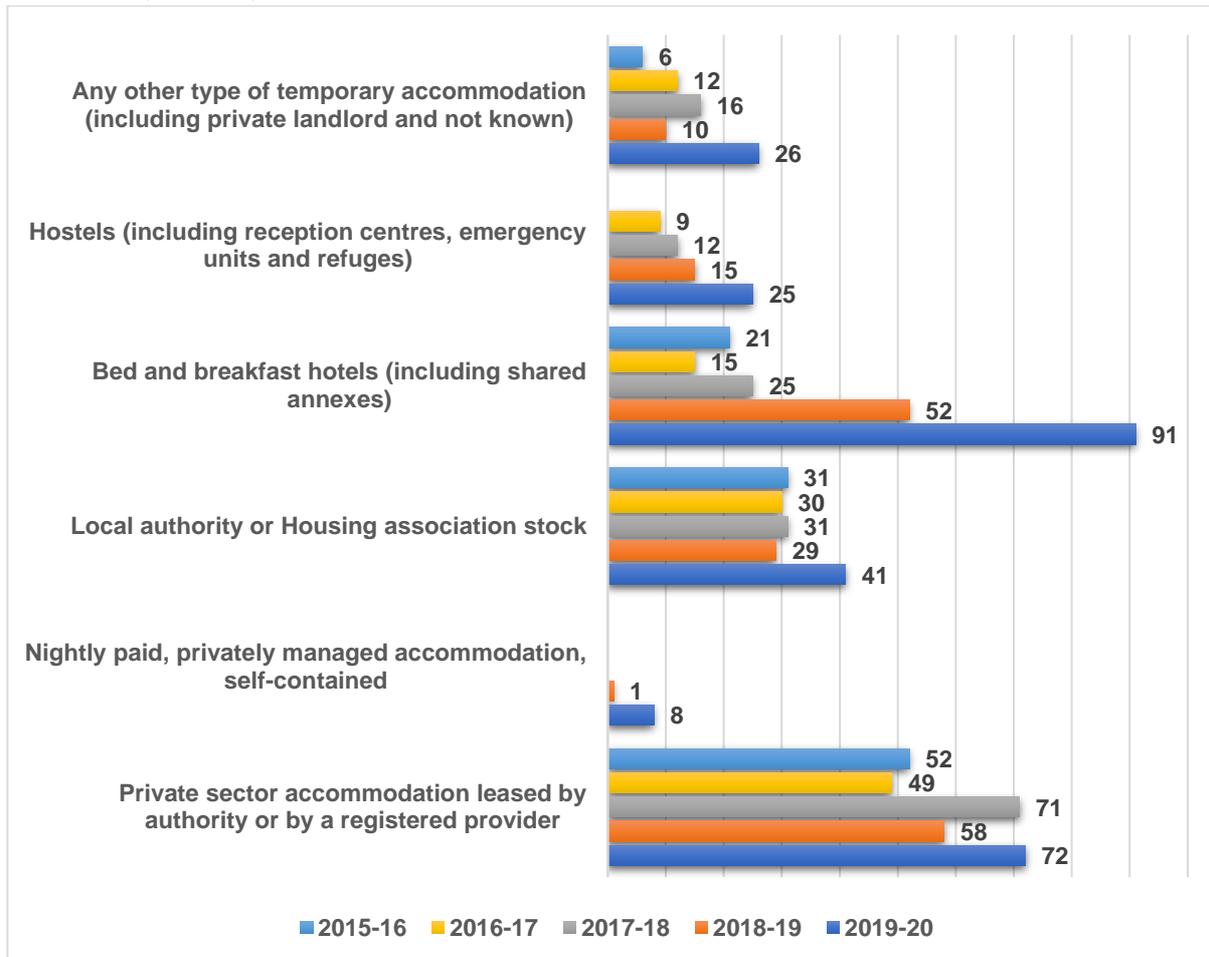
4.3 Securing accommodation

Housing homeless households

Dorset currently have access to 224 units of temporary accommodation located across the area and is seeking to increase this portfolio. Emergency bed and breakfast accommodation in the towns of Weymouth (in the south west of the local authority area) and Bournemouth (in a neighbouring local authority area) is also used regularly. During the past five years, temporary accommodation usage has increased across Dorset, BCP, South West England, England not including London, and the whole of England. The relative and actual usage of temporary accommodation is lower in Dorset than all comparator areas.

Most households to whom Dorset Council owe a duty because they are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and have a priority need for accommodation, are provided with temporary accommodation for the foreseeable future. Leasing of private sector housing for use as temporary accommodation, is the most common method used to accommodate homeless households in Dorset and all comparator areas.

Chart 6: Number of households in temporary accommodation at end of final quarter by type of accommodation, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Homelessness relief activities are typically carried out by Dorset Council's homelessness service, as well as the commissioned Integrated Prevention Services.

449 cases of accommodation being secured to relieve homelessness, have been recorded in the two years since the commencement of the HRA 17. The number of relief cases increased between 2018-19 and 2019-20 across Dorset and all comparator areas.

There are three common forms of accommodation used to relieve homelessness, locally and nationally: (i) supported housing, of which there is only a limited amount in Dorset; (ii) private rented sector accommodation; and (iii) social rented housing. Demand for all types of accommodation exceeds the supply available. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping action plan includes activity to increase the housing supply and make best use of stock.

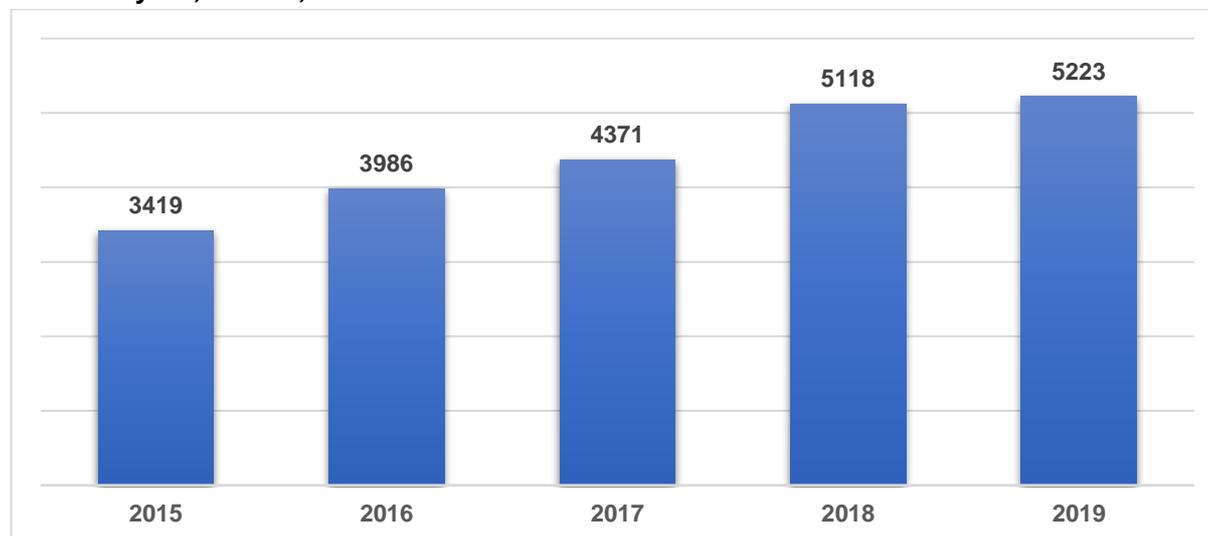
The former districts making up Dorset Council, previously adopted the use of discretionary powers to make a suitable¹⁹ offer of private sector housing²⁰ to make an offer of accommodation to people who are homeless. In order to assist with securing this accommodation, Dorset Council's Homelessness Service works with housing benefit administrators to arrange discretionary housing payments, to help cover rent in advance and/or rental security deposits.

¹⁹ Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.

²⁰ Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) Policy 1. Policy Christchurch Borough Council & East Dorset District Council, 2017

Dorset Council has a common housing allocation scheme, named Dorset Home Choice, with BCP Council, plus with seven housing associations. Between 2015 and 2019 the number of households on the Dorset Council's housing waiting list has increased each year. This is slightly contrary to trends in the other comparator areas which have seen increases only since 2018.

Chart 7: Number of households registered for an allocation of social rented housing at end of calendar year, Dorset, 2015 to 2019.



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Social rented accommodation is still the main type of housing secured for those owed a main homelessness duty, with 128 properties being allocated to homeless household owed the main duty in 2019-2020 and a further 127 properties allocated in the same period to those owed a relief duty.

1.4% of Dorset's active housing applicants have indicated that they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Additionally, 0.9% are owed a prevention or relief duty and 0.8% are owed a main duty.

The Dorset Home Choice policy was reviewed following public consultation in November 2020, with changes to be implemented in during 2021. Homeless households owed a full housing duty²¹ will be placed in Band A²², alongside exceptional housing need: disrepair, medical and welfare, and statutory overcrowding²³. Those owed a relief duty²⁴ will be placed in Band B, and those owed a prevention duty²⁵ will be placed in Band C. The policy also confirms that serving prisoners with a local connection who will be homeless will have their application considered up to 2 months prior to their release date.

Dorset Council Tenancy Strategy²⁶ sets out the matters that must be considered by all social landlords in Dorset Council area when developing their own tenancy policy. The strategy included a commitment to prevent the termination of a fixed term tenancy from leading to an increase in homelessness approaches and requiring registered providers to provide households affected by the termination of a tenancy with relevant advice and assistance to enable them to relocate to alternative suitable accommodation.

²¹ Housing Act, 1996, Part 7, section 193 Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally

²² Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, 2021 – 2026, p.21

²³ Housing Act 1985, Part X, section 324 definition of overcrowding

²⁴ Housing Act 1996, Part 7, Section 189B Initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless

²⁵ Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 195(2) Duties in cases of threatened homelessness

²⁶ Dorset Joint Tenancy Strategy, Dorset Councils, plus Christchurch and Poole, 2012 to 2015

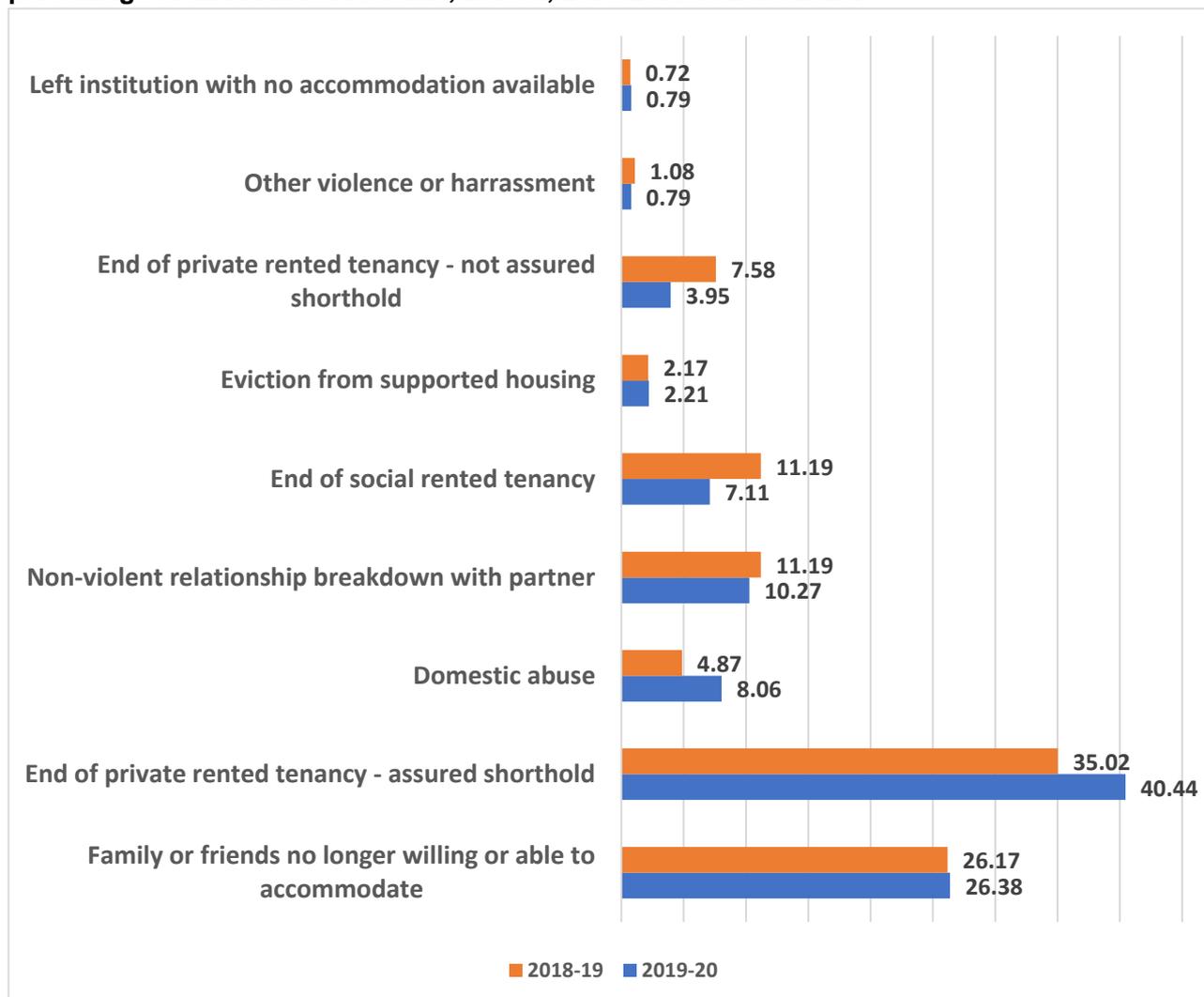
In 2021 work will begin to develop a new Housing Strategy which will set out a 5-year plan for housing in the new unitary area of Dorset Council. This will contain our plans to increase the supply of housing for all sections of the Dorset community, to drive incremental improvements to the quality of Dorset housing and to address housing needs across all localities, vulnerabilities and for all groups of vulnerable residents. This strategy will support objectives and action plan of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

4.4 Providing Support

The type and prevalence of support needs for households owed a prevention, relief or main duty has been monitored since the introduction of the HRA 17. During 2019-20, 47% of households owed any homelessness duty by Dorset Council, had a support need, of which 69% had more than one support need.

Of all households owed a homelessness duty, 26.57% lost their last settled home as a result of friends and family no longer willing or able to accommodate, 21.57% due to end of private rented assured shorthold tenancy, 12.8% due to non-violent relationship breakdown and 7.64% due to domestic abuse. 7.16% were due to the end of social rented tenancy, 2.65% as a result of eviction from supported housing and 1.70% due to leaving an institution with no accommodation to go to.

Chart: 8 Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a homelessness duty, by percentage of all recorded reasons, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020.



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The main type of nationality of main applicant to whom the local authority has accepted a duty of assistance are UK Nationals.

Presently, information, advice and assistance for people experiencing street homelessness is provided by the Council from each of the former district or borough locations. Support is also provided by Julian House who have a dedicated assertive outreach service that help provide food, assist with access to drug and alcohol services, mental health support and accommodation to people sleeping on the streets.

The Lantern Trust in Weymouth is commissioned to deliver a supported lettings service for rough sleepers, assisting with rent deposits, applications for welfare benefits, organising GP access and helping to set up tenancies. People who use this service receive a personal budget of £800, funded through short-term grant awarded by MHCLG as part of its Rough Sleepers Initiative, which enables a fast tenancy set up, purchasing of white goods and other necessities.

The Dorset Healthcare University NHS Trust Homeless Health Service²⁷ provides intensive medical support for people experiencing street homelessness, who have a physical or mental health problems. The links between health and housing are recognised in this strategy. The action plan includes commitments to maximise opportunities to strengthen the provision of support to people experiencing complex and multiple health needs.

Support from community groups is valuable. The strategy recognises the valuable contribution positive community engagement has for people who are homeless and encourages the inclusion of community representation in delivering the objectives set out.

4.5 Resources

Alongside the money committed from Dorset Council's General Fund budget to fund homelessness services, funding has been awarded by MHCLG to support prevention and reduction of homelessness and rough sleeping:

- £225,777 – Homelessness Reduction Grant 2020-2021
- £442,352 – Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) 2020-2021
- £472,470 – Rough Sleeper Initiative 2020-2021
- 624,000 – Next Steps Accommodation Programme Short Term and Intermediate Support fund
- £1,556,730 – Next Steps Accommodation Programme Longer Term and Move on Accommodation Capital Funding

The Homelessness Reduction Grant and Flexible Homelessness Support Grants have from 1st April 2021, been combined into a Homelessness Prevention Grant, and uplifted by £47m nationally. Dorset has been awarded £889,494 has been awarded for 2021-2022. This does not currently fully fund the cost of homelessness in Dorset but contributes to work to reduce the financial and human impact.

Dorset Council, and the former constituent local authority areas, have received a grant funding from MHCLG to enable the delivery of local strategies and services since 2003. The funding can be used for initiatives carried out by the local authority or invested into projects operated by voluntary organisations.

²⁷ Homeless Health Service www.dorsethealthcare.nhs/homeless-health-service

Dorset Council employs a total of 31 officers (26.2 full-time equivalent) to administer public law homelessness duties. A service review is currently underway to ensure that the necessary number of experienced officers are in the appropriate locations across Dorset in order to meet current and future demand.

In accordance with Council rules a new IT system is presently being procured. The new system should continue to deliver a range of automated efficiencies including effective case management, compiling statistics and receiving referrals.

4.6 Consultation

Interviews of 22 stakeholders and staff were carried out to inform the Homelessness Review and this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Two online surveys were made available, one for service users, another for stakeholders. A total of 30 responses were completed by people who had experienced homelessness. 27% of these described themselves as currently homeless, including two people describing themselves as currently sleeping rough, 20% as being threatened with homelessness and 43% as formerly homeless, now in settled housing. 12% of respondents had been homeless on at least one previous occasion and 46% believed being helped up to two months before crisis would help them prevent homelessness.

53% thought that the best housing option when homeless or threatened with homelessness was social rented housing. 70% felt that when homeless or threatened with homelessness, the most important matter to get help with was to find a house and 67 of service users agreed that homelessness funding should be used to secure additional accommodation.

57% of service users completing the survey were female, and 51% were aged 25 to 54 years. 43% lived alone and all stated they were of a white ethnic origin.

A total of 8 responses were received from stakeholders, an 11% response rate.

75% of these work for a public authority within Dorset and the same number believe that homelessness has increased during the past five years, with 62.5% believing it will continue to increase. The number of respondents was insufficient to provide information on the questions within the survey.

5.0 Delivering this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

5.1 Delivery arrangements

Legal and regulatory requirements require the delivery of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy to involve close working between Dorset Council's housing, adult social care and children services. Additionally, housing associations are also expected to play an active role.

A steering group shall be established to oversee the delivery of the strategy. The Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group shall meet every three months, covering an agenda that will include:

- information about the current levels of homelessness,
- discussion about the progress towards achieving the objectives and actions of the strategy, to prevent homelessness, secure accommodation and provide support, and
- decisions about the allocation of resources to deliver the strategy.

The Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group shall be responsible for changing or recommending updates to the action plan, to ensure it remains relevant. The steering group shall be chaired by Dorset Council's Corporate Director of Housing and Community Safety. Other members of shall include chief or principal officers from bodies that have a statutory obligation to assist with delivering the strategy and administering homelessness duties, these being:

- Adult Social Care,
- Children's Services (social care, leaving care, youth offending), and
- Housing Associations (especially those that own social rented housing previously voluntarily transferred by the former Dorset district local authorities – Magna Housing Limited, Sovereign Housing Association Ltd, and Synergy Housing Limited - a subsidiary of Aster Group).

Senior officers for the following public bodies shall also be invited to be members of the Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group, as these organisations have duties to refer individuals who are homeless or threatened homelessness, and/or are responsible for setting local policy for people who are more at risk of homelessness:

- Local prisons
- National Probation Service:
- Jobcentre Plus
- NHS
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner
- Chairpersons of any casework action groups
- Chairperson of the Dorset Homelessness Service Providers Forum
- Chairperson of the Dorset Homelessness Lived Experience Panel

Membership could also include periodic attendance, whenever a specific reason warranted it, from other agencies who can contribute to tackling homelessness, such as –

- other public authorities,
- voluntary and community organisations (or a representative body on behalf of the sector), and
- Any other interested persons (including those with experience of homelessness).

Short life (e.g. less than 12 months) task & finish groups shall be created as and when needed, to accomplish a specific action from the strategy. Membership of these groups shall vary, depending on the

specifics of any given actions. Nevertheless, it will be necessary for a member of the steering group to chair any task & finish group, to ensure accountability and deliverability.

A homelessness forum shall take place, twice a year, to promote progress towards achieving the objectives and actions of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Attendance at the Dorset Homelessness Forum shall be open to everyone with an interest in tackling and preventing homelessness. The Dorset Homelessness Forum shall be chaired by a Dorset Council cabinet member, whose responsibilities include homelessness. Local or national expert figures shall be invited to speak at the forum. A core agenda will cover the following matters:

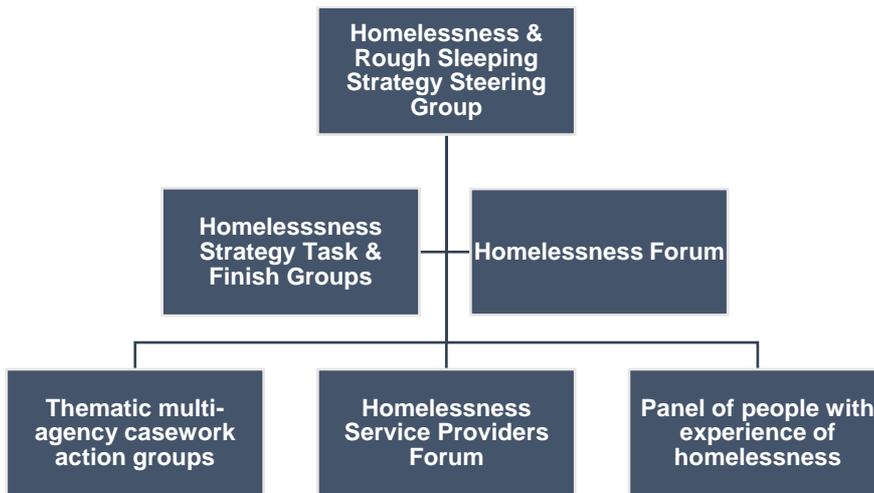
- a report from the Chair of the Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group, on progress being made to accomplishing the objectives and actions of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy,
- reports from any Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Task & Finish Groups, on the work they have completed,
- recruitment of volunteers to join any Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Task & Finish Groups, to carry out actions from this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy before the next meeting of the Dorset Homelessness Forum,
- reports from thematic and multi-agency casework action groups, that might meet to better co-operate to tackle and prevent homelessness,
- a report from any service provider forum that might meet to improve practice and service standards, and
- a report from any forum of people with experience of homelessness that might meet, to share their expertise and advocate for improvements to policy and practice.

Any number of casework action groups might be set-up, to better coordinate activities across agencies that either commission or provide services for people experiencing any form of homelessness (e.g. street homelessness or hidden homelessness), or due to specific characteristics (e.g. young adults aged under 24 years, persons of a black or other minority ethnic origin), or due to specific causes of homelessness (e.g. persons leaving care, hospital or prison). Chair of such any forums shall attend the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy steering group, to represent views of the forum members.

A forum for organisations that provide services to tackle homelessness, shall be formed, to benchmark service standards relating to advice, accommodation, support, and other matters. The Chair of the Dorset Homelessness Service Providers Forum shall attend the Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group, to represent views of the forum members.

A panel of service users shall be established, to review the progress of delivering the objectives and actions from the strategy, plus be consulted about the priorities looking ahead. Their know-how can be used to ensure that the actions carried out will have a relevant impact on the lives of those who it is intended to benefit. The Chair of the Dorset Homelessness Lived Experience Panel, shall attend the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy steering group, to represent views of the panel.

Graphic 1: Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Structure



Any of the above groups, forums and panels shall be extended to cover neighbouring local authority areas, when there is evidence that doing so would improve the deliverability of this strategy.

5.2 Accountability Structures

Elected councillors have seen the findings from the Homelessness Review and understand how this affects the wards they are elected to represent. Councillors have been active in decision-making about homelessness matters, taking responsibility to develop and review the strategy.

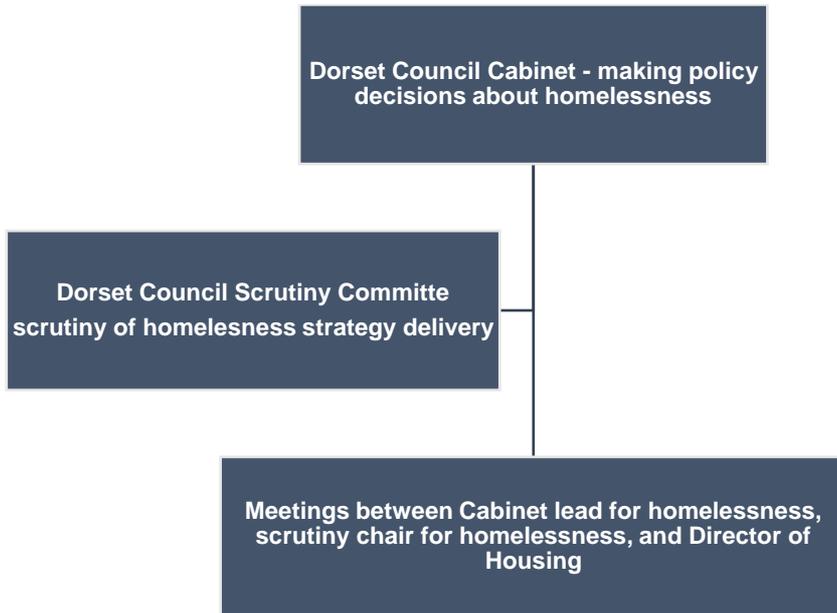
Elected councillors that are members of Dorset Council’s Cabinet, have taken decisions about this strategy. Evidence from the Homelessness Review, plus annual action plan updates shall provide valuable information for members of Dorset Council’s Cabinet to consider. Sufficient time shall be set aside for a discussion by members of Dorset Council’s Cabinet, to consider how the council’s policies can help deliver this strategy. The member of Dorset Council’s Cabinet whose portfolio of responsibilities includes homelessness, will benefit from regular (e.g. quarterly) updates, from the Director of Housing, about the delivery of the strategy, plus information on the levels of homelessness and activities being carried out to tackle homelessness.

A committee of elected councillors, who are not members of Dorset Council’s cabinet, have scrutinised the findings from the Homelessness Review and the priorities and actions of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. A committee of elected councillors shall scrutinise its delivery and any subsequent modifications made to the action plan that accompanies it.

A committee charged with scrutinising homelessness policy and strategy, shall do so at least annually. The chairperson of such a committee, on behalf of the other members of the committee, will benefit from receiving updates from Dorset Council’s Director of Housing, akin to what is set out above for the cabinet member with responsibility for homelessness.

To help ensure all elected councillors understand the statutory homelessness duties the council is charged with, training and briefing notes shall be provided when a councillor is first elected, and periodically thereafter.

Graphic 2: Dorset Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Accountability Structure



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Sharon Attwater
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Email address:	Sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Andrew Billany, Fiona Brown
Date assessment started:	January 2021
Date of completion:	21 May 2021
Version Number:	2

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	√
New or proposed	
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	√

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

The strategy will:

- **Describe homelessness and rough sleeping**
- **Explain Dorset Council's public law duties in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping**
- **Provide a single plan to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the Dorset Council area for the period 2021 to 2026**
- **Provide information in the form of description and data evidence in national and local context**

- **Consider levels of homelessness; preventing homelessness; securing accommodation; providing support and resources**
- **Provides a framework of accountability and delivery arrangements**
- **Identify and explain objectives and outcomes**
- **Include an action plan to deliver the objectives**

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Due to Local Government Reorganisation to form Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council a new Dorset Council Homelessness Strategy is required.

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

Prior to the formation of Dorset Council, the relevant district and borough authorities each had homeless strategies all of which are now expired.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

Dorset Council commissioned Neil Morland Housing & Co. Consultants who carried out a review of the current homeless service.

The review included benchmarking homelessness in the Dorset Council area with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area; The South of England; All of England and All of England with London. Data sources included:

- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCL)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- STRIVE evaluation: Final Report
- ICF Consulting
- Fair Chance Fund: Final Report
- Alma Economics 2019 Homelessness: Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Community Performance quarterly release March 2019. Ministry of Justice
- The Conservative and Unionist Party, Manifesto 2019
- Heriot Watt University
- Homeless Link
- London Assembly Housing Committee (September 2017), Hidden Homelessness in London

- Office of National Statistics 2011 Census
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2010)
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Professor Glen Bramley & Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick – Homelessness in the UK 2017
- Housing Studies Journal
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), Sustainable Communities: settled homes, changing lives, London, UK
- National Housing Federation
- Dorset CCG

*This list is not exhaustive.

The review considered:

- Levels of homelessness
- Activities for preventing homelessness
- Activities for securing accommodation
- Activities for providing support
- The resources available to deliver the above activities.

Consultation was carried out by Neil Morland & Housing Co. (see later section 3) as part of the review.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Elected members, stakeholders, service users and employees are committed to tackling homelessness in Dorset. There has been broad agreement that social rented housing is the preferred housing tenure due to security and cost. There was also agreement from the review findings that the number of single people with mental and physical ill-health who are finding themselves homeless is increasing and more support to prevent and relieve homelessness is needed generally.

Levels of homelessness

24% of children living in Dorset are living in poverty, at risk of homelessness and the repeat cycle of poverty. This is a reduction of 5% compared to 2018/19 and is lower than the national average and the lowest of the benchmarking group.

The proportion of working age (16 to 64) unemployed in Dorset is the lowest in the benchmarking group. Those in employment is lower than all England but higher than BCP and South West. Those self-employed is the highest of the benchmarking group.

An increasing number of single adults with poor mental or physical health becoming homeless as well as those with drug and alcohol problems.

An average of 30 new initial assessments were carried out each week; 90% of these assessments were owed a homeless duty following the initial assessment; the number of main duties accepted reduced from 448 in 2017/18 to 405 in 2019/20 following the national trend.

95.6% of main applicants are recorded as white British, 4.4% as Black and Minority Ethnic; 22% were recorded as 'Ethnic Group Not Stated'.

The aged group for main applicants with the highest number of accepted prevention or relief duties is 25 to 44.

The number of decisions resulting in an acceptance as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need has increased by 26% in 2019/20 and is 61% of all decisions of the 5-year period reviewed.

The number of households with dependant children owed a main duty fell by 24% in 2019/20.

The number of households with no dependant children owed a main duty with mental health problems has risen at 53 cases in 2019/20.

The number of households with priority need due to physical disability or ill-health was the third highest at 37 cases in 2019/20.

The number of households with priority need due to domestic violence or abuse reduced by 50% to 5 households between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The top two reasons for loss of last settled home in Dorset is the termination of assured shorthold tenancy and family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

76% of outcomes for those owed a main duty is the offer and acceptance of a social rented home.

Dorset has the lowest number of rough sleepers compared to the benchmark group most of whom are single males.

Households with dependant children are most likely to approach at a prevention or relief stage. Single households are most likely to approach when they are already homeless.

Preventing Homelessness

There is a good range of commissioned and non-commissioned activities to prevent homelessness.

The route to housing for offenders released from secure estates needs clarification.

There is a strong provision for Armed Forces and former Armed Forces personnel who become homeless.

The top 3 types of household in Dorset recorded as being owed a prevention duty are single parent families with dependant children; single adult males; and single adult females.

The top 3 types of household in Dorset recorded as being a relief duty are single adult males; single adult females; and single parent families.

The top 3 age ranges of those main applicants owed either a prevention or relief duty is 25-34 years; 18-24 years; and 35-44 years.

The top 2 reasons recorded for households owed a prevention duty is the end of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold followed by family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

The top 2 reasons recorded for households owed a relief duty is family or friends no longer able to accommodate followed by non-violent relationship breakdown with partner.

Most households owed a prevention duty were living with family or friends at the time of their application.

Most households owed a relief duty were of no fixed abode at the time of their application.

Dorset is the lowest of the benchmark group in terms of successful relief activity per thousand.

The most common reason for the ending of prevention duty (35%) is new accommodation secured for at least 6 months.

The most common reason for the ending of relief duty (138 households) is that 56 days elapsed.

31% of referrals were under the new Duty to Refer mostly from non-public authorities e.g. Citizens Advice and Social Landlords.

The most commonly recorded main prevention activity for 2019/20 was negotiation and mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction.

The number of intentionally homeless households is low compared to the number where the main homelessness duty has been accepted.

Further investigation is required to mitigate rough sleepers migrating between Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council areas (BCP).

Activities for securing accommodation

Dorset Council has access to a portfolio of 224 units of temporary accommodation (as at February 2021) including accommodation adapted for people with physical disability.

Additionally, bed and breakfast accommodation is used to provide temporary accommodation.

The number of households per thousand placed into temporary accommodation by Dorset Council is lower than all the benchmarking group except South West.

The number of households with children in temporary accommodation is higher in Dorset than BCP and South West but lower than England and All England.

The type of temporary accommodation used by Dorset in order of high to low 2019/20 is:

- Bed & breakfast hotels (including shared annexes)
- Private Sector leased by authority or social landlord
- Local authority or social landlord stock
- Any other type of temporary accommodation (including private landlord and not known)
- Hostels (including reception centres, emergency units and refuges)
- Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained

43% of Dorset homeless households as at 31.3.2020 were in temporary accommodation outside the Dorset Council area.

74% of households ended their main homeless duty due to an offer of social rented accommodation.

Successful activity to secure accommodation in the order of high to low is:

- Activities of Dorset Council Housing Solutions Team
- Financial support from Dorset Council
- Information and advice

Private rented sector accommodation is nationally the second most common method to relieve homelessness.

Financial assistance to help prevent or relieve homelessness in 2018/19 (latest data available) is:

- £41,855 – Rent Bond
- £87,950 – Rent Deposit
- £126,368 – Rent in Advance

Dorset has 182,677 homes and 12.3% are socially rented.

In 2019 there were 5223 households registered with Dorset Council for an allocation of social rented housing.

The number of new lettings of social housing has declined from 1636 in 2016/17 to 1469 in 2018/19.

3.15% of the 2019/20 housing register stated in their application they are at risk of homelessness, are homeless or have been identified as such during their assessment.

1 Bedroom properties are the most common size property required, then 2 bedrooms then 3 or more bedrooms.

Activities for providing support

Almost half the households owed a homelessness duty in 2019/20 have at least one support need.

Over (644)70% of the households owed a homeless duty with support needs had more than one support need in 2019/20.

Although there has been a reduction in Dorset from 2018/19 to 2019/20 the total number of households with support needs per one thousand is higher than BCP.

The most common support need is due to mental health followed by physical health and disability and the third most common support need is due to domestic abuse.

Resources available to deliver the above activities

Dorset had an award of £225,777 from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Homelessness Reduction Act Grant 2020-21 to help fund new burdens from the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Dorset had an award of £442,352 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2020-21 to spend on preventing homelessness and assisting those who are homeless.

Dorset had an award of £472,470 Rough Sleeper Initiative 2020-21 funding to support or create street outreach services, secure hostel and shelter type accommodation and deliver specialist support to rough sleepers to help them remain off the streets.

Dorset had an award of £624,000 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Revenue funding 2020-21. This is for interim accommodation and support for those rough sleepers accommodated during the pandemic.

Dorset had an award of £1,556,730 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Capital Funding 2020-21. This is to bring forward long term move-on accommodation.

Dorset works with several commissioned and non-commissioned providers to deliver a range of activities and support.

70% of respondents to the public consultation either agreed or partially agreed with the strategy proposals.

Respondents agreed with the need to provide

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

As part of the external review of the homeless service Neil Morland and Housing Co. carried out stakeholder interviews with internal services including:

- Dorset Council's Housing Service
- Adult Social Care Service
- Children's Services

Stakeholder interviews were offered to all our partner organisations. 8 external partner organisations took part including:

- Social landlords
- Public Authorities such as Armed Forces, Prisons, Police and NHS
- Voluntary Organisations such as not for profit groups, community and faith groups for example those providing outreach and support and homelessness advice

Stakeholder interviews were offered to our service users and 30 took part including:

- 4 Statutory Homeless Households– owed a duty by a local authority
- 0 Single Homeless Households – living in supported accommodation
- 2 Street Homeless Households – sleeping rough
- 2 Hidden Homeless Households – sofa surfing with family or friends
- 6 Households living in current home but at risk of losing it
- 13 Households now living in settled accommodation but previously homeless in one of the above situations

- 3 Other households who did not meet the above definition.

*In the above description 'Household' can mean an individual or more than one individual.

A public consultation started on 22 March 2021 and ended on 7 May 2021. Any individual or organisation could responses and 106 responses were received. The response from residents was reasonably representative of the Dorset population.

There was an uneven balance between males and females with 57% from females and 37% from males. Responses came from a wide range of ages but 48% came from respondents aged 65 or older. This compares to only 29% of the population being in this age band in the wider Dorset population. With 88% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population. Responses from disabled people were above average at 6.5% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.

There were 17 organisational responses with 11 of them providing an official organisational response.

The responses indicate overall good support for the strategy with confirmation that health, wellbeing, money and employment factors ranking as influential factors people are concerned about. Other respondents highlight the lack of accommodation and financial resources to tackle this matter as concerning. One respondent mentioned support for LGBT households was not specifically mentioned in the draft. A new action has been added to review the support and challenges faced by households with protected characteristics.

Dorset Council communications team used social media, Dorset Council website, focussed emails, e-newsletters and general media sources to promote the public consultation. We promoted the consultation with organisations working locally with people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

During the development of the strategy and action plan two workshops were held with members of the Dorset Council People and Health Overview Committee, plus additional Dorset Council councillors including People and Health Scrutiny members, the Portfolio Holders for Adult Services and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Neil Morland & Co. Housing Consultants and Dorset Council Housing Service.

During the workshops, details about the structure of the review were discussed. Results of the review were received and discussed. Options were discussed and agreed to identify the strategy objectives and future actions.

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

On the Dorset Council website and where appropriate as part of future working groups to deliver the agreed objectives.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqIA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqIA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqIA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	√
An EqIA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqIA because:

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Name: Sharon Attwater Job Title: Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance
Date: 21 May 2021

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

Next Steps:

- The EqIA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the 'Please provide details' box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
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Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Choose impact from the list above</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	All ages. Positive
Please provide details:	Identified activity to work to tackle future levels of homelessness amongst young people from age 6 via education routes; recognises those age groups most commonly affected from current data and seeks to improve understanding and options tailored to each age group; review joint working for care leavers and other young people; align the work of early help and adolescent services with homeless services.

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	Positive
Does this affect a specific disability group?	It is not restrictive but recognises those households with physical, emotional and mental health disabilities as groups who require tailored responses to tackle homelessness more effectively.
Please provide details:	Action plan includes specific work to explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes; to consider the location of services and map to need including accessibility; review hospital discharge policy; review housing supply in regard to accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; complete a supported housing needs gap analysis

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.

Pregnancy and maternity:	Positive
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Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
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Race and Ethnicity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The service seeks to ensure these households can fully participate in the homeless service. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.

Religion or belief:	Neutral
Please provide details:	The action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics. Consideration will be given to the findings of the review although no specific requirements were identified in the review.

Sexual orientation:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.

Sex (consider both men and women):	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.

Marriage or civil partnership:	Neutral
Please provide details:	The action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics. Relationship breakdown is a recognised factor that can lead to homelessness. Consideration will be given to the findings of the review although no specific requirements were identified in the review.
Carers:	Positive
Please provide details:	The action plan includes numerous activities to enhance prevention work for people who may be at risk of homelessness. This work seeks to support the household. Working with those who care for others to prevent their homelessness would be included but it is not specifically focussed on this group alone. Action includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Rural isolation:	Positive
Please provide details:	The actions include mapping access to services and support, improving the outcomes or removing barriers and identifying reasons for homelessness this includes those households in rural isolation.
Single parent families:	Positive
Please provide details:	The activities to tackle homelessness considers the reasons for single parent homelessness, the events that trigger approaches to the service and the associated reasons. The strategy seeks to improve outcomes for these households and identifies joint work with Dorset Council Children's Services and other external organisations that can be carried out.
Social & economic deprivation:	Positive
Please provide details:	The impact of social and economic deprivation is recognised as a factor in causing homelessness. Locally focussed actions are identified to better tackle homelessness for households in this specific group.
Armed Forces communities	Positive
Please provide details:	There is recognition these households experience different factors that impact on homelessness. The current support and routes to support for these households is acknowledged and actions are identified to strengthen this.

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Age	Review joint working for care leavers and other young people; align the work of early help and adolescent services with homeless services; develop awareness training for school settings; analyse and invest in measures to ensure housing is suitable to need.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention and Advice Service Manager for Housing Solutions Service Manager for Housing Standards	March 2022
Disability	Explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes; consider the location of services and map to need including accessibility; review hospital discharge policy; review housing supply of accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; complete a supported housing needs gap analysis	Service Manager for Housing Strategy Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	2022
Gender	Action plan seeks to review current challenges and support	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Pregnancy	The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022

Race & Ethnicity	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Religion or belief	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Sexual Orientation	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Sex	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Carers	The action plan includes numerous activities to enhance prevention work for people who may be at risk of homelessness. This work seeks to support the household. Working with those who care for others to prevent their homelessness would be included but it is not specifically focussed on this group alone. Action includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	TBA
Rural Isolation	Map access to services and support, improving the outcomes or removing barriers and identifying reasons for homelessness this includes those households in rural isolation.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2022
Single Parent Families	Action beginning in wards with the highest levels of child poverty seeking out and targeting households in or at risk of poverty to develop and embed early, proactive homelessness prevention and support. Make available information and support across the area at natural locations such as schools, DWP, supermarkets and GP surgeries.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2026

Social & Economic Deprivation	Action beginning in wards with the highest levels of child poverty seeking out and targeting households in or at risk of poverty to develop and embed early, proactive homelessness prevention and support.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2026
Armed Forces	A review of homelessness prevention activities and ways of identifying these households to raise awareness of and refer to specialist support available.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2022

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Sharon Attwater	Date:	21 May 2021
Equality Lead:	Susan Ward-Rice	Date:	27 May 2021
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:	Rick Parry	Date:	27 May 2021

Next Steps:

- Please send this draft EqIA to: [Diversity & inclusion Officer](#)
- The report author will be invited to an Equality & Diversity Action Group (these are held monthly - dates are available on the intranet)
- The Equality & Diversity Action Group will review the EqIA and you may be asked to make some alterations
- EqIAs are signed off and published
- The report author is responsible for ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Objective No. 1

Reduce the current and future likely levels of homelessness

Impact

1. Advice and information is accessible within communities at every opportunity to educate and inform those who are likely to face the threat of homelessness in the medium to long term
2. Families are able resolve the issues that lead to homelessness.
3. Homelessness in families and young people is reduced in long term.

Progress measures

- Number/amount of pre-56 days early prevention activity (new local measure)
- Ratio or positive outcome duty ended prevention cases against all duty owed cases of families with children (Higher is good)
- Number of 'no duty owed' initial assessment outcomes (lower is positive)
- Ratio of potential or threatened homelessness cases referred by public authorities and other organisations against all referred cases

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.1	Prevent today's six-to-eight-year olds from becoming homeless at 16 -18 years.				Red = not started Yellow = underway Green = completed
1.1.1	Develop, implement and embed a proactive, early homelessness prevention and support service, beginning in the wards with the highest levels of child poverty, seeking out and targeting households in, or at risk of poverty including those: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with children living in poverty, • in receipt of in-work means tested welfare benefits • known to have difficulty managing welfare benefit claims 	Budget: Funding through future recommissioning of prevention services and uplift in MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant. IT: IT system to have progress measure a) added to integrated data collection, with reporting function. People: Strategic housing commissioning resources; Dorset families matter; Homelessness services; Adult Services/ supporting people commissioning officer; Adult services mental health specialist worker; Revenue and Benefits service lead;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	Programme of early prevention services ready for commissioning March 2025 Services go-live October 2026	Once implementation begins, progress on the above measures should be reported quarterly and annually. Review at year end to agree future of each activity depending on cost-benefit.

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in receipt of Council Tax Benefit, • known to not engage with other services • regularly visiting foodbanks <p>Ensure that effective early prevention information, advice and support is available at points across Dorset that are naturally accessed, such as schools, DWP, supermarkets, sports clubs, foodbanks, GP surgeries and hospitals etc, to alleviate real poverty and prevent the threat of homeless at every possible opportunity.</p>	<p>Department for Work and Pensions local service lead; Children’s social services Commissioning lead; Primary and secondary schools; Housing Associations; NHS Trust; Clinical Commissioning Group; Other public authorities; Voluntary organisations; Other materials: Training resources Printed and online Information Venues for training/promotion/information (e.g. foodbanks, sports clubs, etc.)</p> <p>Budget: Funding through future recommissioning of prevention services and uplift in MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant IT: design of training resources People: Task and finish group of families in, and at risk of, poverty, as well as families at each stage of homelessness; Education authority; Homelessness services officer(s); Children’s commissioning lead & troubled family’s worker; Project manager homelessness & improvements;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	Material available by March 2025	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.1.3	Teach homelessness awareness in primary and secondary schools, plus provide teaching resources and training for teachers to deliver within curriculum.	Budget: Funding through future recommissioning of prevention services and uplift in MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant IT: design of training resources People: Task and finish group of families in, and at risk of, poverty, as well as families at each stage of homelessness; Education authority; Homelessness Services officer(s); Project manager homelessness and improvements;	Service Manager Homeless Prevention and Housing Advice	Teaching and training programme approved by the Local Education Authority approved and ready to start at September 2026 term.	
1.2 1.2.1	Housing waiting list as early prevention tool. Ensure the housing register application and assessment process include mandatory identification of applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and automatically refer to Homelessness Services to provide prevention/relief support to those identified.	Budget: Funding for IT system alteration. IT: System to create mandatory fields and automated workflow or email referral and effective and reporting People: Software implementation team; Housing registration/allocations officers; Homelessness service team leaders; Strategic housing performance officer;	Service Manager for Housing Solutions	Plan and monitoring in place October 2021 First annual report due October 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.2.2	Identify through housing register applicants who are not eligible for housing association accommodation due to housing association (HA) lettings policies and provide advice/prevention/relief support or signpost to other services.	Budget: Within existing resources IT: New housing system People: Housing registration/allocations officers; Housing officers; Other materials: HA lettings policies	Service Manager for Housing Solutions	Start date October 2021	
1.3	Maximise early referral opportunities.				
1.3.1	Use Duty to Refer data and other referral data to map service user route to the referring agency, using this information to identify and use early opportunities to divert early homelessness prevention interventions.	Budget: Within existing resources IT: simple analytical tool, e.g. spreadsheets People Project manager homelessness and improvements; Homelessness team leaders; Front Door programme; Homelessness Forum;	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Review and mapping complete December 2023 using two year's Data to October 2023	
1.4	Explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes, including mental health.				
1.4.1	Improve joint working with mental health and public health services to prevent homelessness, especially people who misuse alcohol and/or drugs.	Budget: Within existing resources and potential funding opportunities People: Homelessness team leaders; Public health leads; Adult service leads; NHS mental health homeless service;	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Begin October 2021	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.4.2	Improve joint working with diversity and inclusion services to review and mitigate challenges and ensure suitable support is available to households with protected characteristics.	<p>NHS mental health and substance misuse lead(s); Dorset Healthcare; Relevant commissioned service providers; Police; Probation; Service Users;</p> <p>Budget: Within existing resources and potential funding opportunities People: Homelessness team leaders; Diversity and inclusion service lead; Relevant support providers; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Begin December 2021	

Objective No. 2

Prevent homelessness

Impact

- Homelessness is prevented at the earliest possible stage
- More households able to either remain in existing accommodation or move to a sustainable alternative home within the 56-day prevention of relief period,
- Proportionately fewer households needing temporary accommodation.

Progress measures

- (a) Ratio of prevention duty owed cases against number of prevention or relief duty owed (higher is positive)
- (b) Ratio of relief duty owed cases against number of prevention or relief duty owed (lower is positive)
- (c) Ratio of numbers in temporary accommodation against number of cases owed a duty
- (c) Number of people whose homelessness resolved before leaving prison/young offenders institute, care, armed forces or hospital

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.2	Continually improve the range and quality of homelessness assistance and housing advice services across Dorset.				
2.2.1	Review homelessness cases that move from the prevention stage to the relief stage, and to the main duty stage. Map the flow from the prevention duty owed stage to other stages to determine why households move through the stages to establish any trends, including household type or location, that require specialist support to prevent homelessness.	<p>Budget: Review within existing resources.</p> <p>People: Homelessness team leaders; Homelessness services front line staff; Homelessness forum; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Review start September 2021	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.2.2	Capture homelessness prevention outcomes achieved by all stakeholders, including Dorset Council, to inform a strategic approach to prevention. This includes early prevention activity that has not been commissioned as a homelessness prevention service, (e.g. housing association tenancy support, DWP employment support, money advice workshops at food banks, etc.)	Budget: Monitoring within existing resources. IT: possible adjustment to Housing software People: Local housing authority; Project manager; homelessness and improvement; Homelessness forum; Integrated prevention services commissioning officer; Public authorities; Housing associations; Voluntary organisations; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Review start October 21	
2.2.3	Review homelessness cases that move from the prevention stage to the relief stage, and to the main duty stage. Map the flow from the prevention duty owed stage to other stages to determine why households move through the stages to establish any trends, including household type or location that require specialist support to prevent homelessness.	Budget: Review within existing resources. People: Homelessness Team Leaders Strategic Homeless Officer Service Manager for Housing Strategy Homelessness Services front line staff Homelessness forum Service Users	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Start review October 2021 and complete March 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.3	<p>Using data from 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, Increase the range of early homelessness prevention activities within the recommissioning of Dorset Integrated Prevention Services.</p>				
2.3.1	<p>Review commissioned services to ensure best practice and achieve improved value for money in priority areas. Matching services to identified need to provide greater financial security to a wider range of organisations who provide services within Dorset.</p>	<p>Budget: Within existing council resources. People: Integrated prevention services; Commissioning officer; Homeless service team leaders; Homelessness forum; Commissioned services; Project Manager homelessness & Improvement; Service users;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Housing Strategy Corporate Director for Housing & Community Safety</p>	<p>1 December 2021</p>	
2.3.2	<p>Review existing arrangements with criminal justice agencies and agree a joint pathway with to prevent offenders becoming homeless following release from all secure estates. Consider carrying out case reviews of a selection of cases over last 12 to 18 months in all areas.</p>	<p>Budget: Within existing resources People: Service manager for housing solutions; Homelessness officers; Governors/Directors of prisons; Youth offenders service; Dorset Healthcare - forensic team; Probation service;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice</p>	<p>Complete March 2022</p>	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.3.3	<p>Review existing arrangements of the joint work to update how care leavers and other young people are prevented from becoming homeless, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updating the 16 /17 year olds protocol to include any new legislative developments • building on the key trained officer role within housing to develop a champions role in each service where joint cases can be administered • Take up co-location opportunities to maximise benefit to service user 	<p>Police; Jobcentre Plus; Voluntary organisations; Private registered providers of social housing; Adult services;</p> <p>Budget: Review within existing resources IT: None People: Young persons; Homelessness officers: Homelessness Team leaders; Children’s social services; Adult services transitioning team; Service users; Youth hub/advice and information centres;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention and Housing Advice</p> <p>Corporate Director for Housing & Community Safety</p>	Completed by March 2022	
2.3.4	<p>Review homeless prevention activities available to members or former members of the Armed Forces and ways of identifying former serving personnel to raise awareness of and refer to the specialist support available.</p>	<p>Budget: Within Existing Resources IT: Possible modification to housing Software People: Homelessness team leader; Housing allocations team leader Armed Forces covenant lead officer; Royal British Legion;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Completed by March 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.3.5	Adopt a Homeless from Hospital Discharge Policy to prevent patients from becoming homeless when leaving acute and mental health hospitals.	<p>SAAFA; Homelessness forum; Dorset Healthcare – operation courage lead; Service users;</p> <p>Budget: Within existing resources People: Homelessness services team leaders; Project manager homelessness & improvements; Adult services homes first lead; Adult services occupational therapy lead; Adult services mental health lead; NHS Hospitals Dorset Healthcare; Clinical Commissioning Group; Housing associations;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Completed March 2022	
2.3.6	Explore opportunities with Clinical Commissioning Group for a multi-disciplinary approach.	<p>Budget: within existing resources IT: not applicable People: Homelessness team leaders; Clinical Commissioning Group; Dorset HealthCare; Community providers;</p>	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	Complete March 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
		Adult Services;			
2.4	<p>Evaluate and improve early warning systems used to prevent homelessness when tenancies are coming to an end.</p> <p>2.4.1 Review social landlord activity against the Dorset Tenancy Strategy, then carry forward the findings to formulate a new tenancy strategy.</p> <p>2.4.2 Develop an early warning system for tenancies coming to an end in a) the social sector and b) private sector</p>	<p>Budget: Within existing resources IT: Council and Housing Association lettings IT People: Homelessness team leaders; Service Manager for housing solutions; Project manager homelessness & improvement; Housing associations;</p> <p>Budget: Within existing resources IT: Potential modifications to existing People: Dorset landlord local authority partnership (LLAP); Chair of landlord forum; Housing associations; Homelessness forum; Housing benefits lead; Housing standards lead; Housing allocations officer; Current and former private and social tenants;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance</p> <p>Service Manager Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice</p>	<p>New Tenancy Strategy in Place March 2023 Ongoing monitoring and annual review</p> <p>Complete March 2023</p>	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.5	Improve understanding of local homelessness to encourage earlier approaches to homeless services in order to reduce repeat homelessness and seek out hidden homelessness				
2.5.1	<p>Research and analyse local patterns of and reasons for rough sleeping and rough sleeper service provision with neighbouring counties to ensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. appropriate services and accommodation are in place locally to support rough sleepers 2. reduce the transience of rough sleepers and help to prevent rough sleeping 3. rough sleeper action plan is updated 	<p>Budget: Within existing budgets People: Homelessness forum Project manager homelessness & improvement; Homeless team leaders Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and other neighbouring council homelessness leads; Commissioned rough sleeper services; Service users;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice</p>	<p>Complete March 2022</p>	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.6	Better demonstrate the impact of social landlords on tackling homelessness				
2.6.1	<p>Introduce a peer led benchmarking scheme for social landlords to evidence activity against the following themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board member commitment to tackling homelessness and evidence of spend to tackle homelessness 2. Prevention of evictions due to rent arrears 3. Actions for tackling homelessness featuring in organisational strategy 4. Involvement of tenants in activities to prevent homelessness 5. Prioritisation of homeless applicants when letting homes 6. Prevention of homelessness due to anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance 7. Effective early warning and joint working with local authority homelessness and housing benefits services to prevent homelessness in complex cases 	<p>Budget: Within existing People: Corporate director for housing & community safety; Project manager homelessness & improvement; Housing allocations officer; Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Housing benefits lead; Housing association directors; Service users including those on waiting list not yet tenants;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance</p>	<p>Completed April 2024</p>	

Objective No. 3.

Arrange for suitable accommodation to be available for everyone

Impact.

Suitable housing available for all households in need; the right location, the right cost, the right quality, the right size, and the right tenure.

Progress measures

(a) number of new social rented homes provided each year

(b) number of new supported homes provided each year

(c) number of suitable private sector rented discharge of duty acceptances

Of which: (c)(i) requiring Discretionary Housing Payment to ensure rent is affordable

(d) number of temporary accommodation units at rates not requiring a discretionary housing payment or exempt/specified housing benefit payment

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
3.1	Increase housing supply and make best use of stock.				
3.1.1	Formulate housing strategy that prioritises: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. increasing the supply of affordable housing, including one-bedroom accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs 2. maximise the potential of the private rented sector across Dorset 3. bringing empty homes back into use 4. rough sleepers or with temporary housing solutions due to end 	Budget: Approved council transformation fund People: Corporate director of housing & community safety; Housing enabling team; Housing standards lead; Empty homes officer; Homelessness team leader; Planning lead; Housing associations; Housing developers; Corporate property & estates lead; Housing benefits lead; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Housing Strategy adopted: September 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
3.2 3.2.1	<p>Ensure all temporary accommodation (TA) is appropriate in size, type, location, quality, cost, and support levels.</p> <p>Undertake a strategic review of all temporary accommodation including an options appraisal into future TA arrangements, including private sector leasing and use findings to update policy for how temporary accommodation will be procured and allocated.</p>	<p>Budget: MHCLG Next Steps Programme Fund; IT: Temporary accommodation module integrated with homelessness system People: Service manager for housing solutions; Temporary accommodation officer; Homelessness team lead; Temporary accommodation providers; Support providers; Housing benefits lead; Housing standards lead; Children's services; Adult services; Housing associations; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Start October 2021	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
3.2.2	Adopt a new temporary accommodation placement policy which includes information to the service user on costs of the accommodation, the standards, the level of housing management and any support they can expect as early as possible.	Budget: Within existing resources People: Homelessness services TA placement officers; Temporary accommodation owners; Housing Standards lead; Housing benefits lead; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Solutions	Complete September 2021	
3.3 3.3.1	Create a pre-tenancy accreditation award for homeless households. Develop pre-tenancy training and a qualification to equip households to become tenancy ready, including saving for rent in advance, resolving former tenancy debts or demonstrating sustained improvement in behaviour which would normally be a barrier to being offered a tenancy.	Budget: within existing resources People: Homelessness team leaders; Resettlement officers; Project manager homelessness & improvement; Service manager for housing solutions; Housing associations; Service users; Credit Union; Landlords;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Available from October 2022	

Objective No. 4

Support households to retain their accommodation

Impact

Improvement in tenancy sustainment, reduced homelessness and repeat homelessness, proportionate reduction in costs of temporary accommodation in the long term.

Progress measures

- (a) Number of tenancies sustained for more than six months after homelessness
- (b) Number of cases of repeat homelessness
- (c) Number of relief cases
- (d) Proportion of households in temporary accommodation against those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
4.2	Improve monitoring and review of local support services in relation to homelessness outcomes.				
4.2.1	Complete a housing needs and gap analysis for properties where support is provided, to better understand whether current provision reflects the needs of actual and potential users who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	<p>Budget: Within existing resources</p> <p>IT: Collection of H-CLIC style support data for wider groups, such as housing register applicants, as well as other agencies data.</p> <p>People: Service manager for housing strategy & performance; Project manager homelessness and improvements; Adult services; Children's services; NHS – Dorset Healthcare; CCG; Housing benefit lead;</p>	Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice	Complete by January 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
4.2.2	Agree a method for carrying out performance inspections of support services that benefit people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to understand if collaboration, co-location or other partnership initiatives would improve performance and outcomes of these services.	<p>Supporting people commissioning officer; Commissioned services; Supported housing providers; Housing associations; Homelessness forum;</p> <p>Budget: Within available resources. Will include the cost of inspection training and potentially additional staff resources. People: Supporting people commissioning manager; Project manager for homelessness & improvements; Support services; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance; Commissioning Manager for Housing;	Inspections Programme available March 2022	
4.2.3	Develop a series of prevention, relief and support initiatives that will benefit people who otherwise would remain in unsupported temporary accommodation or 'sofa surfing' as hidden homeless.	<p>Budget: within existing resources People: Homelessness service team leaders; Service manager for housing solutions; Project manager homelessness & improvements; Commissioned service manager; Housing benefits lead; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Start April 2022	

Objective No. 5

Suitably resource activities for tackling homelessness

Impact

The Council Homeless Service is lawful and effective at providing services to Dorset Residents, and commissioned services are appropriate in scale, scope, and effectiveness.

Progress measures

Progress measures: (a) Percentage of Council funds spent on homelessness; (b) Working days spent on receiving training.

a) Percentage of Council funds spent on homelessness

(b) Working days spent on receiving training.

(c) Number of successful prevention cases

(d) Number of relief cases

(e) Number of main duty cases

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.1	Ensure resources required to deliver activities are available.				
5.1.1	Ensure staff levels are sufficient to administer statutory homeless duties and deliver activities identified.	Budget: Within existing resources subject to restructure and 22/23 budget setting People: Homelessness team leaders	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	September 2021	
5.1.2	Procure and implement a new housing software system that can deliver the necessary functionality to deliver the requirements of the Housing Service.	Budget: Capital identified from Dorset Council plus annual service and maintenance charges IT: Software supplier and Dorset Council ICT support People:	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	October 2021	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.1.3	Explore Care Act funding opportunities with Clinical Commissioning Group	<p>Project manager for homelessness & improvements; Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Homelessness team leaders; Service manager for housing solutions; Housing solutions team leader; Housing service officers; ICT; Procurement; Legal;</p> <p>Budget: within existing resources IT: N/A People: Homelessness team leaders; Clinical Commissioning Group; Housing enabling team; Adult social care MH lead;</p>	Service Manager Housing Strategy & Performance	March 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.2	Demonstrate effective, value for money, services delivered to a high standard.				
5.2.1	<p>Develop effective performance management arrangements through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. regular auditing of performance information such as HCLIC 2. consistent application of appropriate quality assurance systems 3. benchmarking the range and success of activities in place to prevent homelessness with other local housing authorities. 4. monitoring and reporting on outcomes against each funding stream, including case studies in reporting. 5. carrying out cost benefit analysis of activity within each programme to test value for money 6. the use of peer review assessments. 7. Form a benchmarking club with like housing authorities, potentially BCP and Wiltshire to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the development of effective performance management • improvement • share staff training curriculum • external peer audit function for regular casework audits and independent file reviews. 	<p>Budget: within existing resources IT: Effective monitoring function on homelessness ICT system People: Local housing authorities, e.g. BCP and Wiltshire; Project manager homelessness and improvements; Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Homelessness team leaders; Corporate performance lead;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	All arrangements in place by April 2023	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.3	Maximise the productivity and effectiveness of operational resources.				
5.3.1	Review all operational policies, procedures, and paperwork associated with administering the homelessness service from the perspective of the merged council services and the new duties arising from the HRA17.	Budget: Within existing resources People: Project manager homelessness & improvements; Homelessness officers; Housing allocations officers; Housing solutions lead; Service users;	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	April 2022	
5.3.2	Develop a comprehensive training programme including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. induction for new homelessness and housing allocations staff, 2. 12 month programme in housing and homelessness policy, practice and law for those new to the housing service, 3. regular refresher training for homelessness and allocations assessment officers 4. additional regular training for all staff covering case law and other legislative updates training 5. best practice and new initiatives updates training 6. ICT and monitoring systems training for all system users 7. Specialised training for those managing the monitoring and reporting of H-CLIC 	Budget: Training budget; Officer time for training People: Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Homeless team leaders; Service manager for housing solutions; Housing benefits lead; Housing association lead; Adult services; Children's services; Service users; Diversity & Inclusion lead;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	Programme in place March 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
	<p>and other data to ensure that evidence is always accurate and current to provide for evidence-based decision making.</p> <p>8. Housing benefit regulations and practice annual update training from Housing Benefits Team.</p> <p>9. Internal training programme for internal services e.g. Adult and Children's Services</p> <p>10. Diversity and Inclusion training for housing staff</p> <p>with consideration of making some of the above training available to stakeholders and peers.</p>	<p>Other materials: Access to specialist legal texts and case law updates</p>			
5.4 5.4.1	<p>Utilise feedback and consultation resources to help focus and refine activity that provides the most successful outcomes.</p> <p>Through the established homelessness forum, harness stakeholder enthusiasm and resources for tackling homelessness by carrying out cost benefit analyses and joint bidding for external funding.</p>	<p>Budget: within existing budget People: Elected members; Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Homelessness forum; Adult services; Children services; Director of Public Health; Police and Crime Commissioner; Voluntary organisations; Youth offending team;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	April 2023	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.4.2	<p>Seek out feedback from service users to ensure their knowledge helps to shape policy and practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. during the provision of the service at regular points such as initial assessment, placement in temporary accommodation etc. 2. through regular customer satisfaction consultation including an annual consultation exercise which includes stakeholders 3. through an annual event, at which users of homelessness services are invited to put questions to key decisions makers about what works well and what could work better. 	<p>Jobcentre Plus; Housing benefit administrators; NHS Trusts; Service users; Clinical Commissioning Group;</p> <p>Budget: Consultation budget required People: Lead Member for homelessness; Director of Housing; Service manager for housing strategy & performance; Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Service manager for housing solutions; Corporate consultation lead; Homelessness forum; Housing associations; Service users; People with lived experience of homelessness who are not service users;</p> <p>Budget: Training Budget</p>	Project Manager for Homelessness & Improvements	Points 1 and 2 in place by July 2022 Point 3 planned for May 2023	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.4.3	Develop a process for feedback and complaints from service users to be cascaded to the homelessness and housing advice team. Consider any training needs or changes to processes if required.	People: Homeless team leaders; Housing allocations officer; Housing review & complaints officer; Corporate complaints lead; Homelessness forum;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Training in Place December 2021	