Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy review

September 2026







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1. Introduction and Scope of the Review

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The introduction of the Government's Rough Sleeper Strategy in 2018 required all local authorities to include rough sleeping within their strategy. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will set out Hinckley and Bosworth's Council's approach to the prevention of homelessness and end to rough sleeping over the next 3 years.

The review primarily focuses on Council resources, assets and working practices, although it is recognised that there are numerous agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, that work to prevent homelessness within the borough.

The accompanying strategy sets out how we will strive to secure sufficient accommodation and support for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Homelessness in England has increased substantially over the past five years. Shelter estimated that at least 274,000 people were homeless in 2021, rising to 309,000 in 2023, 354,000 in 2024 and 382,618 in 2025. The latest estimate includes 350,480 people living in temporary accommodation and at least 175,025 children. These figures cover people officially recorded as homeless and therefore exclude some forms of hidden homelessness, meaning that the true scale is likely to be higher. Shelter identifies the shortage of social housing, unaffordable private rents and inadequate housing support as key drivers of this continuing rise.

2. Legal Context

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 is the primary legislation for homelessness and provides the statutory basis for action to prevent homelessness and assistance to people who are threatened with or actually homeless.

Rough Sleeping is defined by the Government as people sleeping, or bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters), people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018, is now an established part of England's statutory homelessness framework. It amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 by strengthening the focus on earlier intervention and extending prevention and relief duties to a wider range of eligible applicants. These requirements are fully embedded in the Council's working practices and case recording, with the Housing Options team delivering a person-centred service focused on preventing homelessness wherever possible and helping households secure suitable accommodation.

The principal duties and provisions under the HRA include:

- Duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for eligible applicants
- A 56-day period during which a household is considered threatened with homelessness, extended from 28 days
- A requirement to assess each eligible applicant's circumstances, housing needs and support needs, and to agree a personalised housing plan
- A duty on specified public authorities to refer consenting people who may be homeless

or threatened with homelessness to a local housing authority
- Rights for applicants to request a review of specified decisions made under the homelessness legislation

The Localism Act (2011) also amended the 1996 Housing Act by allowing local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty by arranging a suitable offer of accommodation within the private sector.

In December 2025, the Government published *A National Plan to End Homelessness*, replacing the earlier emphasis on the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy with a broader cross-government approach for England. Its long-term vision is that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring, with prevention embedded across housing and public services. The headline targets for this Parliament are to build 1.5 million homes; increase the proportion of people supported to remain in their home or secure alternative accommodation when they approach a council; eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families, except for very short-term emergency use; and halve the number of people experiencing long-term rough sleeping. The plan also includes cross-government commitments to reduce homelessness following discharge from public institutions, including a 50% reduction in the number of people who are homeless on their first night after leaving prison and are subject to probation supervision, alongside a measurable action plan to reduce homelessness among care leavers under 25. These priorities require the Council to strengthen early intervention, partnership working, suitable accommodation pathways and local accountability for outcomes.

The Domestic Abuse Act which became law in April 2021 places a further duty on all local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children, making provision that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have priority need for homelessness assistance. Work has already commenced to seek accreditation for our efforts in embedding these revisions into working practice at the Council.

2.1 The Allocation of Housing

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (amended) (The Act) governs the allocation of local authority housing stock in England. The Act requires all local authorities to have an “allocations scheme” which sets out the procedure followed when allocating social housing including how applications are prioritised. Certain categories of people must be given “reasonable preference” but local authorities are able to set their own rules to determine the relative position of different applicants with reasonable preference, to reflect local priorities. In England there is general allocation guidance, plus more specific guidance for vulnerable cohorts such as those affected by domestic abuse, care leavers and those serving or from the armed forces.

3. Local Context- People and Place

Hinckley and Bosworth is a predominantly rural borough covering approximately 297 square kilometres (115 square miles) in south-west Leicestershire. Situated between the cities of Leicester, Birmingham and Coventry, the borough combines a mix of urban and rural communities. The borough had a population of 113,640 at the 2021 Census, representing an

increase of 7.7% over the previous decade. Approximately 62% of residents live within the urban areas of Hinckley, Burbage, Barwell and Earl Shilton, whilst the remaining population reside across the borough's villages and rural settlements. Hinckley and Bosworth is the sixteenth most densely populated local authority area within the East Midlands.

The geography of the borough presents both opportunities and challenges. Whilst residents benefit from strong transport links and access to major employment centres, the more rural northern and western parts of the borough can experience limited access to services, support provision, affordable housing and private rented accommodation. This can create additional challenges for households at risk of homelessness who wish to remain within their local communities.

Hinckley and Bosworth has an ageing population. The median age increased from 43 years in 2011 to 45 years in 2021, compared with 41 years across the East Midlands and 40 years nationally. Residents aged over 65 now account for 22.3% of the population, whilst the number of residents aged between 65 and 74 increased by over 30% between censuses. Population projections indicate continued growth, particularly amongst older residents, with those aged 65 and over expected to increase by around 32% by 2040.

The borough has relatively low levels of deprivation compared with many areas nationally. However, pockets of deprivation persist within some urban neighbourhoods and in parts of the rural area, particularly in relation to housing affordability, access to services and transport connectivity.

Hinckley and Bosworth is less ethnically diverse than England as a whole. According to the 2021 Census, 94.3% of residents identified as White, whilst 5.7% identified as belonging to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Although diversity within the borough continues to increase, the population remains less ethnically diverse than England overall, where 81.7% of the population identified as White in 2021. English is the first language for 96.5% of residents, compared with 91.1% nationally.

The borough benefits from a strong local economy. Economic inactivity is below national levels, unemployment stood at 1.9% in 2021, and approximately 60.3% of residents are of working age. The borough is home to over 4,000 businesses, 90% of which are micro-businesses employing fewer than ten people. Key employment sectors include retail, health and social care, manufacturing and education. Average gross weekly earnings for full-time workers (£655.20) are higher than the England average.

Housing demand continues to increase across the borough. There are 52,628 dwellings, with home ownership significantly higher than the national average at 75.3%. The private rented sector has grown from 11.4% of households in 2011 to 14.4% in 2021. Whilst there are relatively low levels of vacant housing stock (1.8%), average house prices of approximately £283,000 remain above the East Midlands average, creating affordability pressures for many households. These pressures are reflected in increasing housing register numbers, homelessness presentations and demand for temporary accommodation.

Residents generally report good health and wellbeing outcomes. Life expectancy at birth is 82 years, slightly above the national average, and 47.9% of residents describe their health as very good. The borough also reports higher than average levels of physical activity and life satisfaction. However, challenges remain around obesity, an ageing population, mental health and reducing health inequalities.

3.1 Local Housing Allowance

A typical currently weekly rent for a privately rented housing in the borough is set out below, compared to the Local Housing Allowance rate, the amount used to calculate housing benefit renting from private sector landlords.

England is split into broad rental market areas (BRMA) which are decided by the Valuation Office Agency. Hinckley and Bosworth falls into the BRMA of Coventry and Leicester. There is a significant shortfall between the LHA rate and typical market rates which is an additional concern for many households renting in the private sector. Rent levels in the private sector are determined by the market, and are not subject to caps or controls.

Table 1-LHA rates compared to typical market rents

Number of bedrooms	LHA rate	Typical weekly rent	Approximate shortfall per week
Shared room	Coventry: £99.50 per week Leicester: £91 per week	£130	Up to £39pw
One bedroom	Coventry: £132.33 per week Leicester: £124.27 per week	£147.23	Up to £23pw
Two bedroom	Coventry: £155.34 per week Leicester: £149.59 per week	£194.53	Up to £45pw
Three bedroom	Coventry: £178.36 per week Leicester: £178.36 per week	£237.23	Up to £59pw
Four bedroom	Coventry: £230.14 per week Leicester: £241.64 per week	£325.38	Up to £96 pw

3.2 Private Rented Accommodation

Finding affordable accommodation in the private rented sector remains increasingly challenging. Since September 2022, the sector has undergone significant legislative and regulatory change, including the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act and the abolition of section 21 "no fault" notices. These changes provide tenants with greater security and protection from arbitrary eviction, but they also represent a substantial shift for landlords in how tenancies are managed and ended.

Alongside wider regulatory requirements, increased operating costs, mortgage pressures and the ongoing impact of the cost of living, these changes have contributed to some landlords reviewing their position, increasing rents, or leaving the private rented market altogether.

The impact of reduced supply is that residents seeking private rented accommodation face increased competition, limited choice and rising affordability pressures. Anecdotal evidence suggests that applicants are often competing with many others for the same property, with

landlords receiving multiple enquiries or applications within a short period. This creates particular challenges for households on lower incomes, those reliant on benefits and those affected by the gap between Local Housing Allowance rates and current private rented sector rents. As a result, accessing affordable accommodation in the private rented sector remains difficult.

There is also continued reluctance from some landlords to accept applicants with limited affordability, poor credit history, previous rent arrears or anti-social behaviour concerns, even where financial incentives or tenancy support are available. The wider cost of living continues to place pressure on household budgets, with rent, energy, food and other essential costs reducing the ability of some residents to secure or sustain accommodation.

These pressures continue to drive demand for housing advice, homelessness prevention support and access to the housing register, with private rented sector affordability remaining a key barrier to resolving housing need.

3.3 Council Housing

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council have responsibility for approximately 3,300 Council properties. In addition, the Council owns and manages 11 sheltered housing schemes. Since the beginning of 2023, the Council has acquired 61 new homes. Our aspiration is to continue to grow our housing supply, to meet the affordable housing need.

3.4 Our stock- Supply and Demand

There is significant demand for rented social housing in the borough and demand continues to increase year-on-year. In terms of meeting the demand, the Council currently has a total dwelling stock of approximately 3,300 units of accommodation. On average, 164 properties become void annually, representing an annual stock turnover of around 5%. The Council loses an average of 22 properties each year through the Right to Buy.

The level of demand for all Council homes is high and there is particular demand for one-bedroom flats and two-and-three-bedroom houses. The Allocation policy prioritises those most in need of housing but waiting times can still be lengthy and there is not enough Council housing available to meet social housing requirements within the borough.

3.5 Registered Providers

Agreements exist between Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and some Registered Providers (RPs) who also meet affordable housing need within the borough. Whilst the majority of RP vacancies are advertised directly through the Choice-Based Lettings scheme, there will be some RPs that advertise vacant properties through their own website. On average, RPs advertise around 100 properties a year in total, across all providers, via the Choice-Based Lettings scheme.

3.6 Affordable Housing Needs

New affordable homes for rent are generally delivered either by way of a developer providing a number of homes for affordable housing on new developments, by selling to a Registered

Provider (RP) or, in more recent years, by RPs having their own development programme and developing sites solely for affordable housing. In all these instances the legal agreement with the Local Planning Authority is that new homes for affordable housing shall be let through the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme. For the 5 years up to April 2021 a total of 260 new homes for rent were delivered.

A Housing Needs Study was carried out in 2024, and updated in 2026 to inform the Local Plan, which assessed the need for 436 new affordable homes per annum for the period 2024 to 2045 to meet the need. Need includes affordable home ownership as well as affordable homes to rent.

Targets for affordable housing in the Local Plan are set on what is viable for a developer to deliver, which is not sufficient to meet the overall need.

Since 2011 affordable housing for rent on new sites charge an "affordable rent" which is up to 80% of local market rents. These are higher than the target rents the Council charges on most of our tenancies, but less than private landlords charge. Currently rents are around, or only slightly above, Local Housing Allowance rates and so are more appealing to applicants claiming benefits. The Affordable Homes programme for the period 2026 to 2036, however, requires 60% of affordable housing to be delivered for social rent, and this approach has been confirmed in the National Planning Policy Framework issued in August 2026.

The Housing Needs Study assessed the different property types required to meet the identified need, and has assessed the different needs as follows:

Table 2- Housing Need requirements

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Affordable Home Ownership	20%	50%	25%	5%
Affordable housing for rent	25%	35%	30%	10%

These needs, and information from the Council's housing register, are used to inform negotiations with developers on the supply of new affordable housing to be provided.

4. Homelessness Data

Homelessness trends are considered using two sources of data. The first is H-CLIC data, which records statutory homelessness activity where a prevention, relief or main housing duty is accepted. The second is local Housing Options data on approaches for advice and assistance that do not progress to a statutory duty, including cases where general housing advice is issued. These approaches are not captured within H-CLIC but are important in understanding wider service demand, early intervention activity and hidden pressures on households who may not meet the threshold for a homelessness duty. Reviewing both datasets provides a fuller picture of homelessness pressures in the borough than statutory returns alone.

The data reviewed for this Homelessness Review covers the period since the previous review in September 2022 and spans four financial years: 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26. This enables the Council to consider changes in demand over time, including both statutory homelessness activity and wider approaches for housing advice that do not result in a homelessness duty being accepted.

Table 3- Number of Homelessness approaches by year

	April 22-March 23	April 23-March 24	April 24-March 25	April 25-March 26
Number of approaches for assistance	1,168	1,160	1,289	1,381
Number of households assessed	507	579	617	Data not available until 26 November 2026 (provisional date)
Prevention duties owed	174	146	149	Data not available until 26 November 2026 (provisional date)
Relief duties owed	326	424	463	Data not available until 26 November 2026 (provisional date)
Total of households with support needs owed a duty	253 – Most common support need history of mental health problems	313 – Most common support need at risk of/has experienced domestic abuse	342 - Most common support need at risk of/has experienced domestic abuse	Data not available until 26 November 2026 (provisional date)

The following sections provide the top five recorded reasons for homelessness for all approaches made to the service, alongside the top five reasons associated with accepted prevention and relief duties. Analysis of the data indicates a clear and recurring trend in reasons for approach, with the same five causes consistently featuring as the most common. In comparison, the reasons recorded for accepted prevention and relief duties show greater

variation from year to year, although the two most prevalent reasons remain consistent across the reporting periods.

Table 4- Top 5 reasons for approaching the service

Top 5 reasons	April 22-March 23	April 23-March 24	April 24-March 25	April 25-March 26
Asked to leave by family	218	227	176	216
Relationship breakdown	82	100	66	49
Section 21 notice	170	135	147	112
Fleeing domestic abuse	124	192	237	219
Sofa surfing	56	55	63	80

Table 5- Top 5 reasons for Homelessness (prevention duty accepted)

Rank	April 22-March 23	No.	April 23-March 24	No.	April 24-March 25	No.	April 25-March 26	No.
1	**End of private rented tenancy**	107	**End of private rented tenancy**	79	**End of private rented tenancy**	68		
2	**Friends/ Family no longer willing or able to accommodate**	38	**Friends/ Family no longer willing or able to accommodate**	32	**Friends/ Family no longer willing or able to accommodate**	34		
3	**Non-Violent Relationship breakdown**	8	**Eviction from support housing**	9	**Other reasons / not known**	8		

4	**Eviction from support housing**	5	**End of social**	6	**Left institution with no accommodation available**	7		
5	**Other reasons / not known**	5	**Domestic abuse**	6	**Non-Violent Relationship breakdown**	7		

Table 6- Top 5 reasons for Homelessness (relief duty accepted)

Rank	April 22-March 23	No.	April 23-March 24	No.	April 24-March 25	No.	April 25-March 26	No.
1	**Friends/ Family no longer willing or able to accommodate**	101	**Fleeing domestic abuse**	165	**Fleeing domestic abuse**	199		
2	**Fleeing domestic abuse**	94	**Friends/ Family no longer willing or able to accommodate**	106	**Friends/ Family no longer willing or able to accommodate**	97		
3	**End of private rented tenancy**	38	**Non-Violent Relationship breakdown**	39	**End of private rented tenancy**	41		
4	**Non-Violent Relationship breakdown**	27	**End of private rented tenancy**	35	**Non-Violent Relationship breakdown**	32		

5	**Other reasons / not known**	15	**Left institution with no accommodation available**	18	**Other violence or harassment**	23		

The data in Tables 3 to 6 shows sustained demand on the Housing Options service over the four-year review period. Overall approaches for assistance have increased from 1,168 in 2022/23 to 1,381 in 2025/26, demonstrating continued pressure on the service from households seeking housing advice, prevention support and homelessness assistance. The number of households assessed also increased over the completed reporting years, with relief duties accepted more frequently than prevention duties, reflecting the number of households approaching when homelessness has already occurred rather than at an earlier prevention stage.

The reasons for homelessness are captured below in three ways: the top five reasons for all approaches to the service, the top five reasons where a prevention duty was accepted, and the top five reasons where a relief duty was accepted. This allows the Council to distinguish between wider demand for advice and assistance, and the reasons recorded in cases that progress to statutory homelessness duties.

For all approaches, the top five reasons remain broadly consistent across the period. Being asked to leave by family or friends, relationship breakdown, section 21 notices, fleeing domestic abuse and sofa surfing continue to feature as the most common reasons for households contacting the service. This consistency indicates that the underlying causes of housing insecurity remain largely unchanged, although the level of demand attached to each reason fluctuates year on year.

The picture is more variable for accepted prevention and relief duties. For prevention duties, the end of a private rented tenancy and friends or family no longer being willing or able to accommodate consistently remain the two most common reasons across the completed years, but the remaining reasons change from year to year. Relief duty data shows a similar pattern: fleeing domestic abuse and friends or family no longer being willing or able to accommodate remain the most prominent reasons, while other causes such as the end of a private rented tenancy, non-violent relationship breakdown, leaving an institution with no accommodation available and other violence or harassment move in and out of the top five. This demonstrates that, while the main pressures remain stable, the specific mix of reasons behind statutory homelessness duties can change annually and should continue to be monitored alongside wider approach data.

5. Rough Sleepers

Historically, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council have not typically experienced high levels of rough sleeping within the borough and cases have remained consistently low over the last 4 years. However, there is a significant risk of an increase in rough sleeping due to the ongoing financial impacts that are likely to affect many residents over future months and years. The Rough Sleeper Initiative is a partnership arrangement with funding from the

government that aims to aims to support people off the streets and develop their wellbeing and stability, helping to reduce numbers of rough sleepers.

5.1 The Rough Sleeper Initiative Leicestershire & Rutland

Below is a breakdown of the current services /services provided by this initiative.

SERVICE/POST	PURPOSE	ORGANISATION
RSI Coordinator	The role provides a coordinated approach to all funded services and case management throughout the pathway, it also acts as a single point of contact for all services and the districts	North West Leicestershire District Council (District Lead for RSI)
Outreach Team	The outreach team respond to all rough sleeper reports across the districts, carrying out daily outreach at 6am to find and engage with anyone sleeping rough in Leicestershire and Rutland. They refer into accommodation and/or support services and offer long-term support for those unable to or refusing to accept accommodation	North West Leicestershire District Council (District Lead for RSI) - Managed by the RSI Coordinator
Flexible budget	Provides a source of funding for personal budgets and landlord incentives, to assist rough sleepers during their journey through the pathway. This can be utilised at any point for individuals who have been confirmed as rough sleeping within the timespan of the project	North West Leicestershire District Council (District Lead for RSI) – Managed by the RSI Coordinator
RSAP properties	RSAP is an MHCLG project that includes funding for capital and revenue-based accommodation schemes, as well as funding for support services to enable complex cases to sustain accommodation. Capital funding was provided to EMH Homes to source 6 one bed properties, and these properties are across different districts in Leicestershire. It operates on a Housing First approach which provides intensive wrap around support, once a rough sleeper is placed in to the accommodation.	Countywide initiative lead by Blaby District Council in partnership with EMH Homes.

Target Priority Group Workers	The role offers intensive support to cases identified that meet the criteria for the Target Priority Group from specific districts including HBBC. The aim of the role is to stabilise the most chaotic repeat and long-term rough sleepers in the districts. The workers provide an assertive outreach approach including early morning outreach, access drop-ins across the county and carry out home visits depending on the circumstance and needs of the caseload at any given time. They take a person-centred approach, provide information and advice to encourage engagement with all services needed to support this complex group.	North West Leicestershire District Council (District Lead for RSI) – Managed by the RSI Coordinator

The following information provides a snapshot of rough sleeping figures from September 25-August 26

Rough sleeper reports received during the month – via street link as self-reports or public reports

Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26
4	2	12	3	5	4	5	7	8	7	4	0

Recorded on the street on the last night of the month – verified by the outreach team

Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26
4	1	2	1	2	4	3	4	2	2	2	3

Recorded on the street throughout the month – verified by the outreach team

Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26
8	7	4	4	5	6	4	6	4	4	4	4

Of those rough sleeping over the course of the month, number of people new to rough sleeping – verified by the outreach team

Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26
1	3	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	0	1

6. Temporary Accommodation

The Council uses a variety of different types of accommodation to meet the needs of those who are homelessness or threatened with homelessness. The Council also has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in other circumstances, including people requiring emergency accommodation or existing tenants who require accommodation due to major remedial works on their property.

The Council has a family hostel, Illiffe House, which comprises 21 units of accommodation. There are shared bathrooms within this facility. Over recent years there has been sustained pressure on this facility and the lack of social and affordable housing within the borough more generally, coupled with increasing housing demand, has resulted in protracted stays in this facility for many of our families.

The Council also has a second hostel facility called the John Nichols Street hostel which has been leased to Falcon Support Services for the provision of single-person accommodation, with appropriate support. This facility houses 15 single households at any one time and is staffed 24/7.

It is recognised that there is a significant lack of supported accommodation within the borough and throughout the county for single people. In the year 2025/2026 the Council provided temporary accommodation for 380 people. Of these people 34.73% were families and 65.26% being single people. As of April 2026, to the end of August 2026 235 households had been provided with temporary accommodation with 22.97% being families and 77.03% being singles.

Temporary accommodation requirements have continued to increase over the last five years. Although the Government's ambition, set out in the National Plan to End Homelessness, is to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation, the data indicates that significant demand will remain over the coming years while services transition from a crisis-driven response to a prevention-based approach. The Council's current reliance on bed and breakfast, hotel and nightly paid self-contained accommodation is not financially sustainable.

In response, the Council has been proactively acquiring accommodation on the open market to help meet demand for temporary accommodation and reduce the overall annual cost to the Council.

7. Prevention- Our approach

The Council's approach to homelessness prevention is set out in its Prevention Policy and is based on early intervention, person-centred assessment and practical action. The Housing Options Team will seek to identify housing difficulties at the earliest opportunity, assess the causes of the threatened homelessness and understand each household's housing and support needs. The aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible by helping households remain in their existing accommodation, where it is safe, suitable and reasonable to do so, or secure suitable alternative accommodation before a crisis occurs.

Where the Council owes a prevention or relief duty, the assessment will inform a personalised housing plan. This will record the reasonable steps to be taken by the Council and the

applicant, together with any actions agreed with supporting agencies. Plans will be tailored to the household's circumstances and will focus first on resolving the immediate housing risk, then on addressing any financial, health, support or tenancy-related issues that could affect the household's ability to secure or retain accommodation.

Action that can be taken, includes:

- Mediation with family members, friends, partners or landlords where this may enable a household to remain safely in its current accommodation;
- Checking the validity of notices, explaining tenants' rights and negotiating with landlords to prevent or delay the loss of a private rented tenancy;
- Financial assistance, subject to eligibility, affordability and individual assessment, including rent in advance, deposits, cashless bonds, rent top-ups and other appropriate prevention payments;
- Support to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments and referrals for budgeting, debt advice, income maximisation, employment support and other services that may improve housing stability;
- Help to identify and secure suitable private rented, social housing, house-share or lodging options, including assistance with the Housing Register where appropriate; and
- Referrals to specialist and partner services, including domestic abuse, rough sleeping, tenancy support, health, social care, drug and alcohol, and other services able to address barriers to securing or retaining accommodation.

Financial assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Prevention Policy. Before support is approved, the Council may complete affordability and income-and-expenditure assessments, confirm that the proposed accommodation is suitable and require the Housing Options Officer to be consulted before a tenancy agreement is signed. The amount, purpose and any repayment terms will be clearly recorded in the personalised housing plan or relevant agreement.

Applicants will be supported to understand the housing options available to them and will be expected to provide relevant information, notify the Council promptly of any change in circumstances and complete the reasonable steps agreed in their personalised housing plan. The plan will be reviewed during the prevention and relief stages, normally at regular intervals, so that actions remain appropriate and progress can be monitored.

Delivering this approach requires coordinated work across Council services and with landlords, registered providers, voluntary organisations and statutory partners. By intervening earlier, using the full range of prevention measures and tailoring support to the needs of each household, the Council aims to increase the number of households able to remain in their home or move directly to suitable accommodation, reduce repeat homelessness and minimise avoidable use and cost of temporary accommodation.

8. Our Partners

The Council has strong and effective partnerships across its services. There are a number of both statutory and non-statutory partner agencies the Council works with to support those who are homelessness or those who are at risk of becoming homeless. These include;

- DWP
- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Leicestershire Probation Service
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- Leicestershire Police
- Leicestershire MARAC
- NHS services
- Social Prescribing Team
- East Midlands Ambulance Service
- Public Health
- Turning Point
- Citizens Advice
- Salvation Army
- Rough Sleeper Initiative
- Hinckley Homeless Group
- Falcon Support Services
- Come Together
- Bayith Trust
- Hope into Action
- Registered Providers
- The Bridge East Midlands
- Emergency Food Providers in Hinckley and Bosworth
- Leicester Homeless Charter
- LLR Homeless Alliance
- Voluntary Community Sector Organisations
- Local Faith Groups
- Domestic Abuse Support Services
- Other District and Borough Councils

8.1 Established Joint Protocols

There are a number of established protocols in place between agencies to help manage and respond to the needs of some of our more vulnerable customers these protocols include:

- Leicestershire Care Leavers Protocol
- Leicestershire 16- and 17-year-old Protocol
- Prison Release Countywide Protocol
- Hospital Discharge Protocol
- Heat Severe Weather Emergency Protocol
- Cold Weather Emergency Protocol

8.2 Duty to Refer

Section 213B of the Housing Act 1996, inserted by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, places a Duty to Refer on specified public authorities where they consider that a person may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. The prescribed bodies include:

- Prisons

- Youth Offender Institutions,
- Secure Training Centres
- Secure Colleges
- Youth Offender Management Services
- National Probation Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- Social Services
- Emergency Departments,
- Urgent Treatment Centres
- Hospitals providing inpatient care
- Secretary of State for Defence - in relation to members of the regular Armed Forces.

Before making a referral, the referring body must obtain the person's consent, allow them to choose the local housing authority in England to which they wish to be referred, and obtain consent to share their contact details.

The Council will maintain clear referral routes, provide feedback where appropriate and work with partner agencies to promote timely, good-quality referrals. A referral does not itself constitute a homelessness application or determine that a statutory duty is owed; on receipt, the Housing Options Team will make contact, offer advice and assess whether an application and further enquiries are required. The Council also encourages referrals from organisations that are not prescribed bodies, where a person may benefit from early housing advice.

The Government's National Plan to End Homelessness also commits to introducing a statutory Duty to Collaborate so that preventing homelessness becomes a shared responsibility across public services rather than relying on referral alone. The detailed scope, legal requirements and commencement arrangements remain subject to legislation and statutory guidance. In preparation, the Council will strengthen joint working with housing, health, social care, justice, education and relevant voluntary and community partners through agreed escalation and referral pathways, earlier identification of housing risk, proportionate information sharing, coordinated assessments and discharge or transition planning, and shared monitoring of outcomes. This will support earlier intervention, reduce the risk of people leaving public institutions without suitable accommodation and ensure that partners address the wider causes of homelessness alongside immediate housing need.

9. Funding

From 2026/27, the Council receives funding through the Government's Consolidated Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant. This grant brings together the principal revenue funding streams previously provided through separate homelessness prevention, rough sleeping and accommodation programmes, alongside funding to support the statutory domestic abuse safe accommodation duty and associated provision.

The grant supports the delivery of homelessness prevention and relief activities, rough sleeping services, commissioned support services, eligible staffing costs, and the provision of support within safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children. Funding is utilised in accordance with grant conditions, statutory requirements and identified local need.

The grant forms part of the Government's multi-year Local Government Finance Settlement covering the period 2026/27 to 2028/29. The introduction of a three-year settlement provides greater financial certainty than previous annual funding arrangements, enabling more effective

workforce planning, commissioning decisions and long-term service development. While indicative allocations have been confirmed for the settlement period, funding remains subject to annual Government approval, compliance with grant conditions and any future policy changes. The Council will therefore continue to review expenditure, service delivery and outcomes to ensure resources are targeted effectively and remain aligned with local priorities and government expectations.

In addition to the consolidated grant, further government funding opportunities may be announced during the settlement period to support emerging priorities and national initiatives. These may include programmes focused on ending rough sleeping, increasing routes into settled accommodation, strengthening homelessness prevention activity, improving support services, or responding to new and emerging pressures within the homelessness system. Such funding may be ring-fenced, competitive in nature or time-limited, and cannot be considered part of the Council's core funding base until allocations and grant conditions have been confirmed.

The Council will continue to monitor funding opportunities, assess them against local need and strategic objectives, and work collaboratively with partner organisations to maximise external investment and ensure any additional funding secured delivers positive outcomes for residents experiencing homelessness, rough sleeping or domestic abuse.

10. Cost of living

The ongoing cost of living challenges continues to place significant financial pressure on many households, increasing the risk of housing insecurity and homelessness. Whilst inflation has fallen from the peak levels experienced in recent years, many residents continue to face rising housing costs, energy bills and everyday living expenses, making it increasingly difficult to manage their financial commitments. The Council's Welfare Support Service plays a key role in helping residents navigate these challenges by providing holistic, person-centred support at an early stage. By addressing issues such as debt, benefit maximisation, budgeting, employment, health and wellbeing, the service aims to prevent homelessness before individuals and families become threatened with homelessness. Despite these interventions, the financial pressures faced by both homeowners and renters are expected to result in increased demand for housing advice and support services, with more households at risk of losing their accommodation. As a result, the Council continues to focus on early intervention and preventative measures to help residents sustain their housing and avoid homelessness wherever possible.

11. Domestic Abuse

Transformational partnership working between the Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer and Domestic Abuse Outreach Service has significantly enhanced the borough's ability to prevent homelessness amongst survivors of domestic abuse Through the introduction of locality projects including the Target Hardening Offer and the subsequent development of the Emergency Essentials Project in 2025, launched in 2026, video doorbell provision and joint housing and safeguarding interventions, survivors have been supported to remain safe, maintain accommodation where appropriate, and access rapid housing solutions when needed. These initiatives have been strengthened through effective partnership working with housing providers, specialist domestic abuse services, police, social care and wider community partners.

52 Target Hardening Packs and 6 Video Doorbells were issued to support domestic abuse survivors between November 2024 and March 2026, helping residents feel safer within their

homes and reducing risks associated with homelessness and repeat victimisation. Further resource and provision to continue with projects has been granted for 2026-27.

Partnership Working
Between 2022 and 2025, significant progress has been achieved through the close partnership between the Council's Housing Options Team, via the Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer, and the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service. This collaborative model has strengthened the housing response to domestic abuse, ensuring survivors receive coordinated, trauma informed support that addresses both immediate safety concerns and longer-term housing needs.

The model brings together Housing Options, Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, Living Without Abuse (LWA), FREEVA, Public Health, Police, MARAC, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Tenancy Management Services and local legal support services.

This integrated approach has enabled:
- Joint case management.
- Earlier intervention and safety planning.
- Coordinated safeguarding activity.
- Housing sustainment support.
- Rapid access to emergency accommodation.
- Practical safety measures to reduce risk and improve housing stability.

Domestic Abuse Awareness, Prevention and Community Engagement
A strong programme of partnership led awareness and prevention activity has been delivered throughout the period. This has included annual White Ribbon Campaign and domestic abuse awareness campaigns delivered in collaboration with statutory, voluntary and community sector partners, alongside a Domestic Abuse Forum that is well attended by professionals working within the locality.

To support professional learning and strengthen local responses, the Council has also host annual domestic abuse networking conferences, bringing together key partners working with survivors across housing, health, social care, criminal justice, and specialist support services. These events have improved professional relationships, increased awareness of available support pathways, encouraged best practice sharing and strengthened multi agency responses to domestic abuse. During this time period, housing were also instrumental in the development of the Hinckley & Bosworth Domestic Abuse & VAWG Policy & Procedure during 2025, adopted in March 2026. Campaigns, annual networking conference, and DA forum to continue for 2026-27.

Innovation and Good Practice:
Target Hardening
A new Target Hardening Offer was developed to provide practical safety measures for domestic abuse survivors.

Between November 2024 and March 2026:
- 52 Target Hardening Packs were issued.
- 6 Smart Video Doorbells were provided to high-risk survivors experiencing stalking, harassment and ongoing safety concerns.

- Fire Safety referrals via LFRS were embedded into the process to strengthen household safety.

The initiative has enabled many survivors to remain safely in their homes whilst wider housing and safeguarding solutions were progressed.

Emergency Essentials
A further innovation has been the development of the Emergency Essentials offer through collaborative working between Housing Options and the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service within 2025 and was launched in 2026. The project provides emergency clothing, toiletries, sanitary products, and practical welfare support, ensuring survivors who flee abuse with limited possessions can access necessities quickly and with dignity.

This trauma-informed approach helps remove immediate barriers to engagement, supports wellbeing and enables survivors to focus on longer-term housing and recovery needs. The approach complements housing, safeguarding and domestic abuse interventions and reflects the Council's commitment to person centred support.

Early evidence has demonstrated positive outcomes, including improved engagement with services, reduced risk of survivors returning to unsafe environments, and enhanced dignity and wellbeing during periods of crisis. Recorded project data from 2026 shows:
3 Emergency Essentials packs have been issued to survivors in crisis in 2026.
Emergency sanitary and hygiene support provided when immediate needs arose.
Support preventing survivors from returning to addresses of risk to collect belongings.
Case studies so far demonstrate improved engagement with housing services, increased dignity and wellbeing, and reduced risk of survivors returning to unsafe environments.

Preventing Homelessness
Through the development and longevity of the Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer role and close partnership working with the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, survivors of domestic abuse have been supported to remain safely within their homes where appropriate or access emergency accommodation when remaining at home was not safe.

These interventions have helped reduce the likelihood of survivors remaining in unsafe situations, returning to perpetrators, or experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse. By combining housing, safeguarding and specialist domestic abuse support, residents have been able to access safe accommodation, sustain existing tenancies (where appropriate) and engage with longer term recovery support.

12. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

In September 2026 a stakeholder event was held to ensure that agencies involved in preventing and addressing homelessness, both indirectly and directly, had an opportunity to inform the proposed strategy and accompanying action plan. During the stakeholder event 6 priority themes were identified which have provided the basis for our 3-year Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the 6 key priorities are set out below;

1. **Prevent homelessness early**
2. **Make homelessness brief**
3. **End rough sleeping**

4. **Improve accommodation and supply**
5. **Meet complex and diverse needs**
6. **Work as one system**

To ensure the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy reflects local needs, priorities and experiences, the Council undertook a six-week public consultation on the proposed strategy. Residents, service users, partners, and other stakeholders were invited to review and comment on the Council's six strategic priorities, identify any gaps or emerging issues, and provide feedback on the proposed direction of travel.

Feedback received through the consultation process has informed the development of the final Strategy, helping to ensure that it reflects local challenges, opportunities and priorities. The consultation also assisted in identifying appropriate actions and measurable outcomes for inclusion within the accompanying Action Plan.

Alongside the public consultation, engagement was undertaken with key partner organisations, statutory agencies, housing providers and voluntary sector organisations to help shape the detailed Action Plan. As the Action Plan is an operational document that will be reviewed and updated throughout the life of the Strategy, consultation on its contents was undertaken through partnership engagement rather than a formal public consultation process. The final Action Plan is published alongside the Strategy and will set out how the Council, and its partners will deliver the agreed priorities and monitor progress over the strategy period.