

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2019 – 2023



Draft for Consultation



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

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Foreword

Having a place to call home is one of the most basic human necessities and we are doing everything we can to make that possible for all of our residents.

To address current and future challenges, we have drafted a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, which champions early intervention and increased support for mental health and wellbeing.

With our statutory and voluntary partners, we have made great progress in helping people out of homelessness and into accommodation, but there is more to do. We have clear and genuine aspirations to eliminate rough sleeping in Havering by 2022. The council cannot do this alone. It must work with its partners and those with experience of rough sleeping to drive change and align agendas and resources across our statutory, voluntary and community

sectors. We will provide strategic leadership to undertake this cross-sector challenge so that our partnership is committed to the principles identified in this strategy. This approach will enable us to achieve our ambition of eliminating rough sleeping on our streets.

Addressing homelessness is particularly challenging due to a lack of good quality, affordable housing in the private rented sector and a very limited stock of social rented homes. In a bid to address this, we are undertaking one of the most ambitious council home building programmes in London, which will double our existing social housing stock, creating affordable homes for local people.

The council's revised homelessness and rough sleeping strategy provides a great opportunity to develop further an effective and collaborative approach to tackling homelessness within Havering. The strategy signals a move towards a culture where homelessness is everyone's responsibility so that all residents have a safe, stable place to live, now and in the future.

I am pleased to be sharing this draft strategy for public consultation and welcome the valuable insights and views of the community and our partners.

With best wishes,

Councillor Joshua Chapman
Cabinet Member for Housing, Havering Council.

1. Introduction

Homelessness in Havering has significantly increased in recent years and the Council has had to change and evolve to address these new demand pressures. Within the context of increasing local demand and restricted housing supply, the Council has a duty to balance the needs of the homeless with other residents on the Council's housing register looking for affordable alternative homes.

In April 2018, the [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) came into effect, placing new duties and responsibilities on local authorities in relation to how homeless people are supported. The objective is for local authorities to reduce homelessness by early intervention and prevention.

In August 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), published its Rough Sleeping Strategy that required local authorities to adopt a more proactive approach to dealing with those on the streets. Rough sleeping remains one of the most challenging aspects of homelessness.

The Council commissioned independent reviews of its services that in turn have helped to inform this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The reviews that were carried out in 2016, 2017 and 2018 by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and iMPower led to a number of changes in service delivery as well as preparation for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

At the heart of these reviews has been a drive to embed the prevention activities that we know works well, whilst developing proposals to provide personalised support to individuals and increase the supply of affordable accommodation to further address the social, human and financial costs of homelessness in the borough.

The strategy includes a proactive approach to alleviating rough sleeping. While the recorded numbers of street sleepers are low in Havering compared to neighbouring boroughs, we want more to be done to identify hidden street homelessness and provide an appropriate pathway into safe, secure accommodation for those sleeping on the streets, even if intermittently. We recognise the need to strengthen our work with rough sleepers in the borough and work in collaboration with other Council departments/external agencies who are part of the Havering Homelessness Forum, to engage with rough sleepers and support them to move into settled homes. The strategy is consistent with other statutory, regional and local plans to ensure that all relevant departments and agencies are committed to supporting its delivery.

The strategy is supported by an action plan that sets out what we will do to deliver our aims, approach and priorities. The action plan will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated to ensure delivery of the strategy.

2. Aims, approach and priorities

2.1 Our aims

To find innovative and practical ways to resolve and prevent homelessness (including rough sleeping) and reduce the health, mental health and wellbeing impacts on those living in temporary accommodation, through the provision of accessible services to those who need assistance in Havering.

2.2 Our approach

We will maximise the housing opportunities and advice available to all housing applicants, including those threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need. Our prevention service is available face to face or by telephone and advice is available on [our website](#) so that people can self-serve. This means that a tailored service is available to customers, which gives them the appropriate information and access to services that will help to prevent them becoming homeless.

However, there is an acknowledgement that with limited resources, we must focus prevention and support on those most at risk of homelessness, to ensure that we meet our legal duties as a local authority. This means that the extent of the help will vary, depending on the level of need and the ability of the individual to self-help.

We aim to intervene early and rapidly to prevent homelessness because of the adverse effects it has on people's lives, including their health and wellbeing. We also recognise that people with poor health and wellbeing are more likely to become homeless.

We will focus on keeping people in their existing accommodation, wherever it is practical and appropriate to do so, often by negotiating with landlords on tenant's behalf, mediation and conciliation for families in their home environment where relationships are breaking down and assisting people into alternative accommodation.

We will maintain existing, and set up new referral pathways with public bodies identified in the Homelessness Reduction Act for specific client groups, for example survivors of domestic violence and those discharged from hospital, which will include suitable accommodation and support.

To prevent more people from becoming homeless, we will act in a proactive and integrated way with our statutory and voluntary sector partners to ensure our services are complementary, efficient and effective in adding value to improving people's lives and opportunity.

We will aim to support residents to access and maintain stable accommodation by working closely with other statutory and non-statutory agencies to provide joined up housing, employment, skills training and education services. In pursuing this approach, we aim to increase individuals' resilience to changes in their circumstances, thereby preventing potential homelessness for those who may be struggling to manage their tenancies.

We will target available funds to projects that meet the Council's strategic objectives, provide value for money and monitor their outcomes by maximising and targeting funding through Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the Homelessness Frontline Prevention Fund to prevent households falling into debt and becoming homeless.

It is of importance to many households threatened with homelessness to remain in the area they have been living in, for example to access employment, support services or childcare. Therefore, we aim to increase our access to good quality, affordable temporary accommodation, which is located in, or as near to, the borough as possible, so that households can maintain access to their support network.

The Council will develop affordable, quality housing in order to reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and give people more permanent long-term homes.

Given that the demand for genuinely affordable housing outstrips the supply of affordable and suitable accommodation available to us as a local authority, we will also manage the expectations of potential applicants so they are provided with a realistic picture of their housing options, while helping them to explore all avenues available to them.

In order to enact significant change within our community, this strategy focuses on four key priorities which are summarised below. Our key priorities are in keeping with the increased emphasis on early intervention and prevention in the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), and the focus on providing support to enable people to live independently, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

3 Summary of the key priorities



Managing homelessness demand through effective pathways



Supporting vulnerable residents



Ending rough sleeping by 2022



Increasing the supply of affordable housing and reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation

4. Background

4.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018. Key measures in the Act include:

- **An extension of the period where someone is ‘threatened with homelessness’ from 28 to 56 days.**
- **A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants**, regardless of priority need.
- **A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants**, regardless of priority need.
- **A new ‘duty to refer’** - public services will need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Act has prompted a comprehensive review of how homelessness prevention services are delivered.

5. Strategic Context

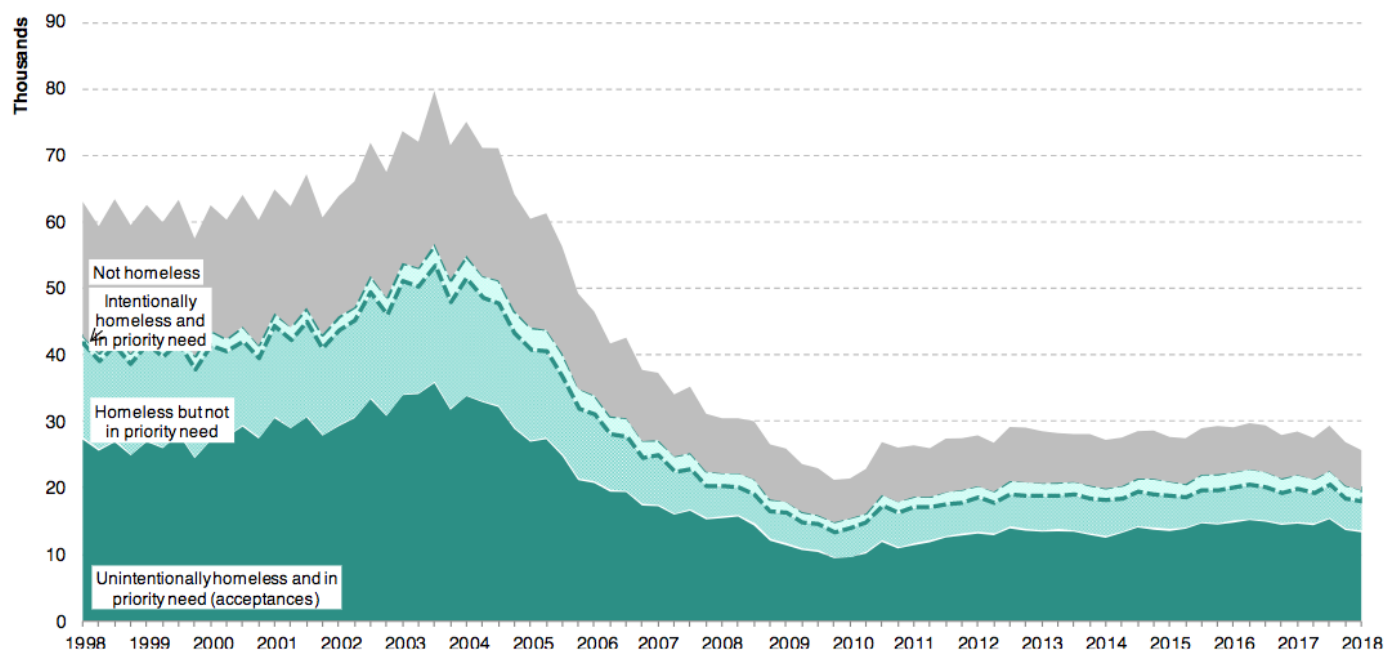
5.1. National context

5.1.1. Increase in homelessness

In their report ‘Far from alone’¹, published in November 2017, Shelter calculated the number of people recorded as being homeless in England, as at Quarter 2 2017, to be around 270,000. This figure represents around 0.5% of the total population (55,268,067). This is the highest recorded figure for homelessness for 10 years.

Shelter also produced a briefing ‘Shelter research – In work, but out of a home’². Its analysis shows that in 2017, 55% of families living in temporary accommodation were working. This represents over 33,000 families who were holding down a job despite having nowhere stable to live.

The challenge of preventing homelessness is nationwide, with particular issues seen in all major cities especially in London. Whilst homelessness has declined nationally from a peak in 2003/4, the numbers of households in temporary accommodation have slowly increased since 2011.



Source: MHLCG Statutory homelessness prevention and relief Q1 2018

5.1.2. Causes of homelessness 2009-2017

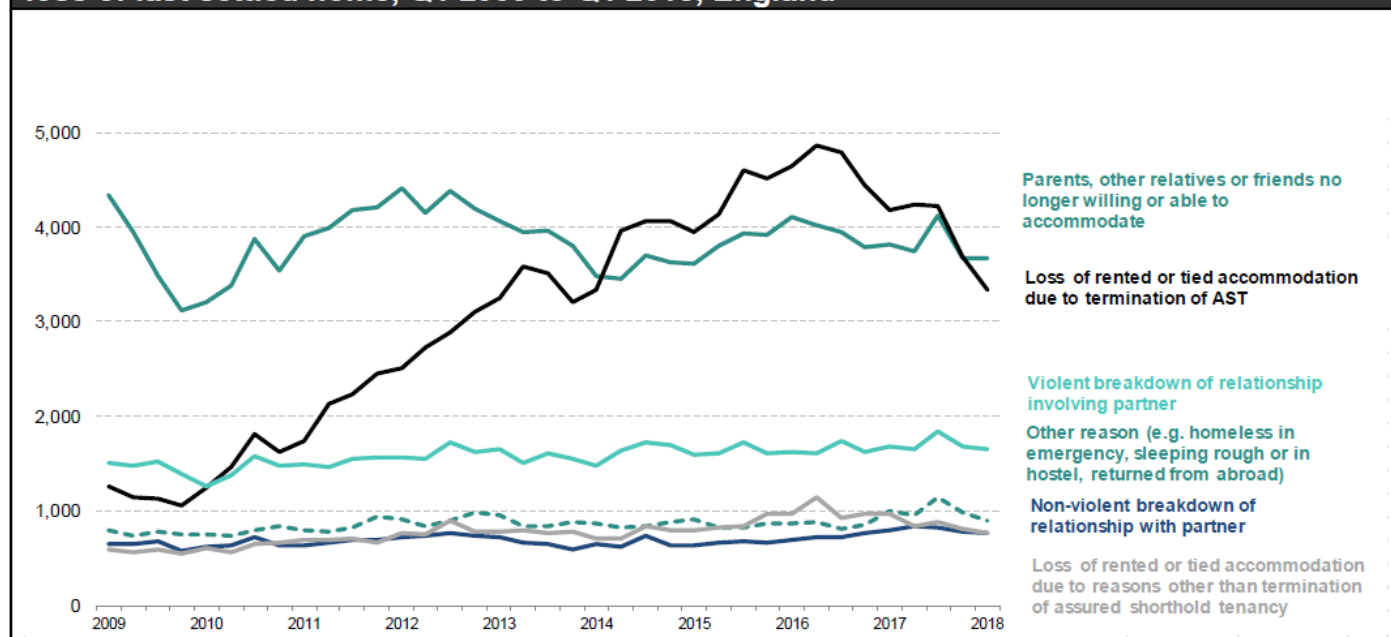
The ending of private sector tenancies (AST) has become the main cause of homelessness over the last eight years, rising from a low of 1,060 in 2009 to 3,360 in Q1 2018. This is because private sector rents have increased by three times more than the country’s median full-time, weekly earnings. In London, private sector rents increased by 27% - eight times more than median earnings, as tenancies have become less affordable.

In March 2018, the main causes of homelessness were parents, relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (28%), and loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy (25%).

¹ Shelter: ‘Far from alone’ homelessness in Britain in 2017’

² Shelter research – ‘In work, but out of a home’ 2018

Chart 4⁴: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty by reason for loss of last settled home, Q1 2009 to Q1 2018, England



Source: MHCLG Homelessness Data Bulletin

On 31 March 2018, the total number of households in temporary accommodation in England was 80,720. This was 5% higher than a year earlier and up 68% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010. In London, the number of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2018 was 55,440, 69% of the total figure for England.

5.2. Regional and sub-regional context

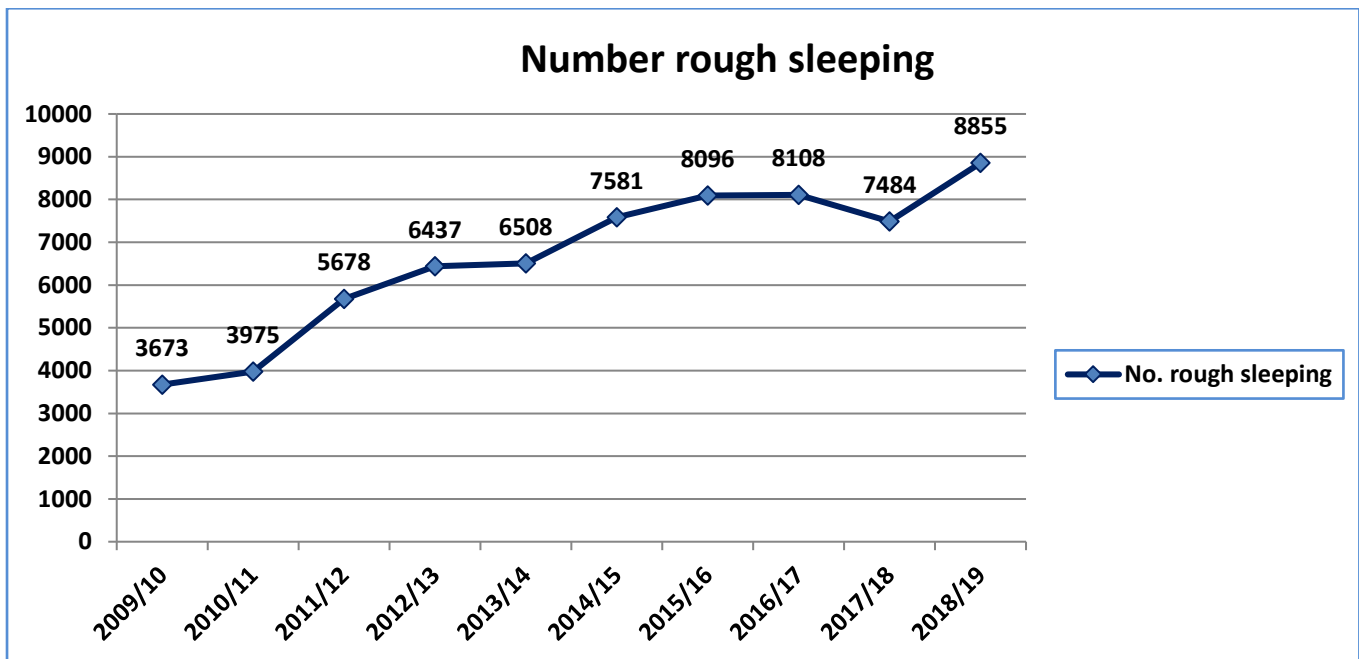
5.2.1. Homelessness and rough sleeping

In line with the national picture, homelessness in London has doubled since 2010.

CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) is a multi-agency database commissioned and funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). The database records information on rough sleepers across all 32 London boroughs as well as the City of London³.

Across the last ten years, the number of people recorded rough sleeping in London on CHAIN has risen year on year, with the exception of 2017/18. Following last year's break in the upward trend, 2018/19 has shown a return to the earlier pattern.

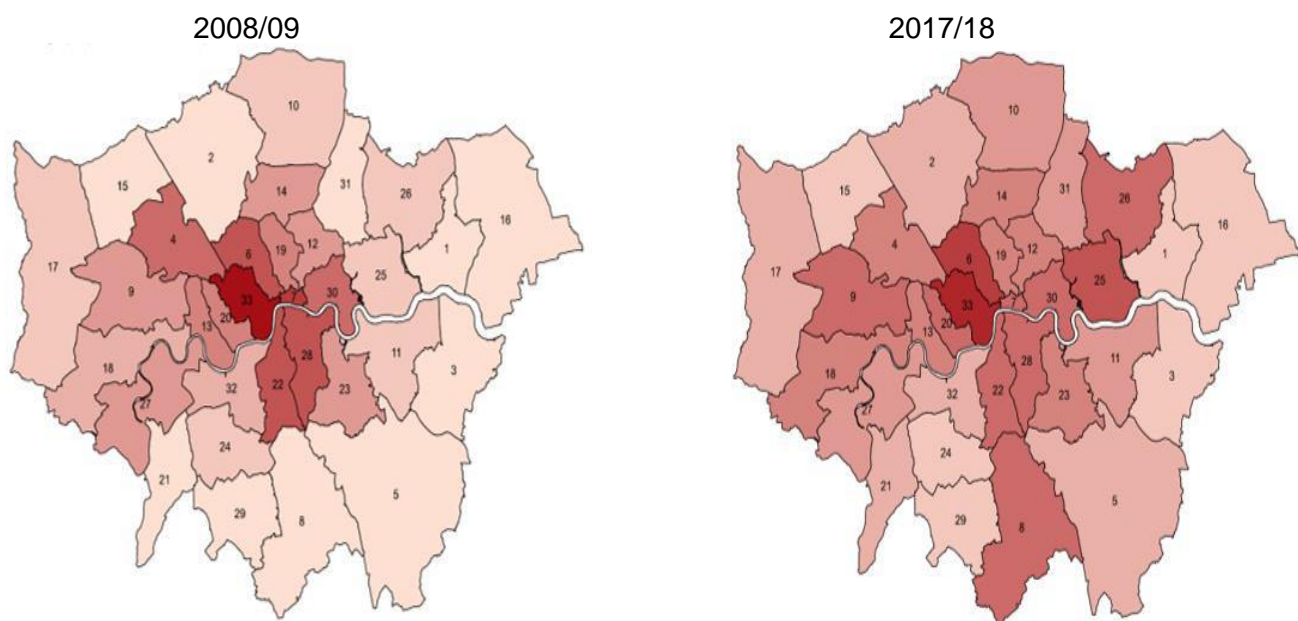
³ Annual CHAIN bulletin Greater London 2018/19



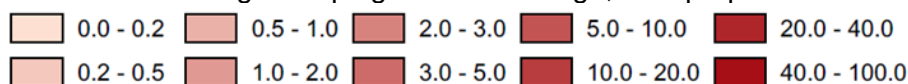
Source: GLA CHAIN Bulletin

Analysis by GLA highlighted that the very large increase in rough sleeping since 2008 meant that boroughs with previously very low levels of rough sleeping now have significant numbers of people on their streets. Increases were particularly concentrated in outer-London (see maps below).

Distribution of London's rough sleepers across London boroughs



Number seen rough sleeping in each borough, as a proportion of the London total



Source: GLA Rough Sleeping Action Plan, June 2018

5.2.2. Collaborative work with the East London Housing Partnership (ELHP)

Havering is a member of the East London Housing Partnership that is an alliance between the eight East London local authorities and registered social landlords which work collaboratively to address housing need at a sub-regional level.

The ELHP covers an area of considerable diversity of housing need and density, community make-up, income levels and socio-economic needs.



The East London Housing Partnership launched its sub-regional Homelessness and Lettings Strategy and Action plan in January 2015 after extensive consultation with partners from across the sector. The strategy sets out how the Partnership will work collaboratively to foster innovation and share good practice in lettings and in preventing and mitigating homelessness.

<http://newsite.elhp.org.uk/homelessness/homelessness-and-lettings-strategy/>

As a collective, the partnership represents East London's interest at a London and national level. There are currently two projects which the ELHP is funded to deliver on behalf of the sub-region:

(a) Private Rented Sector Access Project

The sub-region partnership has secured grant funding (PRS Access Fund) of £432,081 from the MHCLG to deliver a homelessness prevention and relief project across the sub-region.

This funding will be used to: bring together the existing New Routes and New Leaf projects into a single entity (the PRS Access Project); and increase staffing capacity to prevent homelessness for single people and couples living in the private rented sector whilst procuring affordable private rented sector accommodation for them.

(b) East London Women's Project (ELWP)

The sub-region partnership has secured grant funding of £597,000 from the MHCLG to continue delivering the East London Women's Project (a supported accommodation project in London Borough of Newham for women across East London with complex needs who have experienced domestic abuse).

With this funding the ELWP provides:

- 24-hour staff for survivors with higher support needs
- 15 bed spaces for women to move out of the refuge
- A funded bed space for survivors without recourse to public funds
- A floating support to self-defining female LGBT domestic abuse survivors in East London.

We will continue to contribute to this partnership to enable us to respond holistically to the challenges of homelessness, and to take advantage of the funding opportunities across the sub-region.

5.3. Local context

5.3.1. Key facts about Havering⁴

- The London Borough of Havering is home to 256,039 residents. It has the oldest population in London with an average age of 40 years and higher proportions of elderly residents aged 65 plus than anywhere in the country.
- The average house price has risen over the monitoring period, climbing to a record £369,313 as of March 2018, compared with highs of £357,491 over the previous year.
- There are a total of 105,798 residential properties in Havering, 29% (30,125) of which are private rented sector; 54% are owner occupied and 17% socially rented.

⁴ LBH Authority monitoring report 2018

- The borough is ranked 102 out of 152 upper tier local authorities in England for deprivation (with 1 being most and 152 being least deprived). However, pockets of severe deprivation continue to exist, with one small area within Gooshays ward falling into the 10% of most deprived area in the country.
- The rate of homeless households in temporary accommodation awaiting a settled home is 7.2 per 1,000 households. This is significantly lower than London at 15.1 per 1,000 households but significantly higher than England 3.4 per 1,000 household.

5.3.2. Havering's vision and Corporate Plan 2019/20

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy's priorities are aligned with the Council's vision which is to make Havering an even better borough that is **Cleaner, Safer, Prouder Together**. As a result, the Corporate Plan reflects our desire to work as teams across the council and beyond to make the borough an even better place to live, work and do business.

The plan focuses on four fundamentals which are all linked around economic growth, investment in infrastructure, improving our neighbourhoods and helping people achieve under the following themes:

Communities

Helping young and old fulfil their potential through high-achieving schools and by supporting people to live safe, healthy and independent lives.

- Healthy and active
- Best start to life
- Achievement at school
- Families and communities look after themselves and each other
- Supporting our most vulnerable

Places

Making sure that our neighbourhoods are great places to live by investing in them and keeping them clean, green and safe with access to quality parks and leisure facilities.

- Keeping Havering clean and safe
- Quality Housing
- Delivering excellent leisure facilities
- Award winning parks

Opportunities

Helping people get on in life by creating jobs and skills opportunities and building genuinely affordable homes.

- Helping our businesses grow
- Helping people succeed in life
- Genuinely affordable quality homes
- Delivering value for money

Connections

Making it easier for people to get around and get online by investing in road, transport links, faster internet and free Wi-Fi in town centres.

- Smart Havering
- Improving Havering's roads and pavements
- Making it easier to get around

We've got a plan, we need your help to deliver

Cleaner, Safer, Prouder Together

Communities	Places
<p>A helping hand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More school places ✓ New Free School for children with Special Educational Needs ✓ Helping people to look after themselves and others 	<p>A great place to live</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increasing the frequency of street cleaning in residential streets ✓ Even more awards for our parks ✓ More genuinely affordable quality homes
Opportunities	Connections
<p>Making life better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to deliver £3bn of investment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create jobs and skills opportunities ✓ Help businesses grow ✓ Providing the best possible services at the lowest cost 	<p>Making life easier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ £40m to improve roads, pavements and fix potholes over the next four years ✓ Exploring north-south public transport route ✓ Digitally-enabled services

go to www.havering.gov.uk/vision to see the full plan

Havering

5.3.3. Havering's relevant strategies and policies

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aligns with a number of partnership strategies and local policies including:

(a) Havering's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

Havering's Health and Wellbeing current strategy 2015-2019 is being refreshed and the updated draft strategy 2019/23 is out for consultation.

The draft strategy sets out how partners will work together to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and improve the quality of, and access to, local healthcare services. It is informed by the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) and provides the overarching direction for the commissioning of health and social care services in Havering.

Poor housing is a key determinant of health of children, young people and adults and the link between poor housing conditions and poor health is addressed in the JHWS. Therefore, the draft strategy has a number of priority actions for housing including:

- Helping people to keep their homes so they don't become homeless. Also help people who are rough sleeping or need to stay in temporary accommodation to stay as well as possible.
- Making sure that health, housing and social care services work together for people of all ages.

Public Health and Housing teams will continue to work closely together on approaches to tackle homelessness.

Link to the strategy: <https://www.havering.gov.uk/draftwellbeingstrategy>.

Havering's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2019-2022

It sets out our partnership approach and redoubles our commitment to intervene as early as possible to support survivors, children and their families to stay safe, report crimes and rebuild their lives.

The strategy includes actions specific to housing including:

- Offering safe and secure housing options for families affected by violence
- Considering potential options to prevent perpetrators from returning to their victim's address.

Link to the strategy: <http://democracy.havering.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=19736>.

(b) Havering's Housing Allocations Scheme

The housing register is an indicator of demand for affordable housing in the borough. Allocation of social housing is based on the criteria set out in the Scheme. As of September 2019, there are approximately 2,000 households on Havering's housing register ("waiting list") and in 2018/19 we let 435 council/registered social landlord properties, which equates to around 22% of the households on the housing register. Link to the policy: <https://www.havering.gov.uk/hhapolicy>

(c) Havering's Homeless Placement Policy

It sets out the Council's approach for responding to homelessness in the borough in relation to procurement and placements (allocation) of temporary and settled accommodation. Link to the policy: <https://www.havering.gov.uk/homelessplacementpolicy>

(e) Havering's Private Housing Health Assistance Policy (Disabled Facilities Grant)

We will assist people in need of support to maintain independence in the home, reduce the need for support from Housing, Social and Health care services, and help prevent unnecessary and avoidable deterioration in their conditions. Link to the policy: <https://www.havering.gov.uk/pphapolicy>

6. Challenges

Havering offers a wide range of homelessness services. Alongside the Council, service providers participate actively in a range of forums dedicated to sharing information and good practice between them. Our partnerships provide insight, experience and skills from a wide range of organisations.

However, the borough still faces a number of significant challenges. There is no 'quick fix' to resolving many of these broader social and economic challenges, but identifying them and understanding their

impact will be crucial to the delivery of this revised strategy and the future delivery of our services. Among the key challenges are:

6.1. Financial challenges

Rising costs of housing and the rising cost of living have had a direct impact on low incomes families. The changes to the benefits system, Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap have left many families in Havering less able to afford housing in the borough which can result in homelessness.

An increasing number of private landlords are reluctant to enter into new assured shorthold tenancy arrangements with tenants in receipt of benefits. Renting on a nightly basis or taking on working private tenants offers more financially advantageous alternatives.

Single under 35 year private renters are only entitled to the shared accommodation rate for local housing allowance. This means that they receive housing benefit at the rate for a single room in a shared house, even if they are living on their own. The lower rate has meant that, nationally, two thirds of landlords are unwilling to let to single claimants under 35, as they perceive them as being difficult to manage and a financial risk⁶.



6.2. Demographic and population changes

Between 2002 and 2016 Havering experienced an increase in population of 12.3%. Although the borough has the oldest population in London, between 2011 and 2016 it experienced the largest net inflow of children across London and it is projected that the largest increases in population will occur in children (0-17 years) and older age groups (65+) up to 2032. Consequently, meeting the housing and social needs of the borough's increasingly diverse population remains a significant challenge, particularly the need for family accommodation⁷.

There is also an outwards population migration in London, with Havering seen as one of the most enjoyable and affordable boroughs in London. The Cross Rail proposals in particular have increased Havering's appeal to private sector renters, who are moving to Havering from inner London and surrounding boroughs. Such changes will increase the accommodation challenges, which is likely to add to future homelessness pressures in Havering.

6.3. Council housing stock

Like many local authorities, our social housing stock has steadily reduced over the years. Development within the borough has slowed down, with housing stock calculated to have grown by just 6.1% over the last 10 years, a rate insufficient to meet current and projected housing demand.

⁶ <https://research.rla.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SHU-Access-to-homes-for-under35s.pdf>

⁷ This is Havering (September 2018)

The amount of council housing has reduced over the past 30 years however; Havering Council's ambitious regeneration plans will provide a significant number of homes across the borough over the next 10 years, which will alleviate supply pressure.

6.4. Housing register

Havering faces significant demand on its housing stock. At March 2018 there were just under 2,000 households on the housing register looking for affordable housing to rent. The largest need groups on the register are overcrowded households and those who are homeless. There have been approximately 400 social lets in each of the last two years.

Housing register by bedroom size required – September 2019

Bedrooms required	ER	CCR1	CCR2	H	RP	Total	%
1	122	45	76	206	45	494	25.1%
2	37	150	62	384	99	732	37.4%
3	34	165	72	291	79	641	32.6%
4	13	10	23	39	9	94	4.8%
5	0	1	0	3	0	4	0.2%
Total	206	371	233	923	232	1965	100%

6.5. Homelessness budget pressure

There is a significant cost in dealing with homelessness. Across the country it is estimated the cost is over £1billion per year. The National Audit Office (NAO) published a report on Homelessness in September 2017 in which it observed that of the £1.1bn spent by English local authorities in 2015-16, £845 million was spent on temporary accommodation.

Temporary accommodation costs have traditionally been met through subsidy from central government via the housing benefit system. The housing benefit support contained two elements: an LHA element directed towards payment of the rent, and a 'housing management' element which was intended to support local authorities' management of that TA tenancy. The Government removed the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (TAMF) element from April 2017 and replaced it with the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. Havering's grant allocation was £1.4M in 2017/18; £1.6M in 2018/19 and £1.5M in 2019/20.

In 2017/18, Havering incurred a gross expenditure of over £14m on provision of temporary accommodation, with a net cost to the Council of £2m and in 2018/19, a gross cost of over £12m with a net cost to the Council of £1.5m. Whilst the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant meets some of the cost of temporary accommodation, the shortfall is met from the Council's general budget.

The Council has also been provided New Burdens Funding in relation to the Homelessness Reduction Act. In 2017, we were allocated £232,196; in 2018 we were allocated £212,692; and a further £201,187 in 2019 to meet additional staffing requirements.

It is uncertain whether Councils will continue to receive these grants, making it more complex to forecast the impact our long-term position.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) can be made by the Council to people experiencing financial difficulty, with housing costs who qualify for Housing Benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit. This is an extremely useful mechanism for homelessness prevention. In 2018/19, Havering spent £627,113 of the £628,692 allocation. In 2019/20, the Government allocation has reduced to £566,060.

7. **Summary findings from the homelessness review**

In addition to the wider social and economic challenges that have contributed to the increase in homelessness and rough sleeping in recent years, there are also a range of more immediate factors that can lead to homelessness, such as relationship or family breakdown.

In Havering, we have been closely monitoring the trends in homelessness and rough sleeping. This has enabled us to target services and submit a series of successful bids for funding homelessness prevention activities. In developing this new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, a comprehensive review of homelessness in the borough was undertaken.

Among the issues raised in the review were:

7.1. Affordability

Around 29% (30,125) of residential properties in Havering are in the private rented sector and around 5,965⁸ (20%) of the households currently claim housing benefit. This underscores that the significant majority of the private rented sector is unaffordable to low-income households.

Local Housing Allowance is calculated for every local area based on local rents. For Havering, those areas are Outer North East London and South West Essex. The maximum amount of support a household can claim will depend on where they live, the number of bedrooms they need, and their income.

2017-2018

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Average monthly rent (median)*	£875	£1,100	£1,350	£1,650
Average Local Housing Allowance (Outer NE London)**	676	837	1,053	1,359
Gap that households need to find each month	£199	£263	£297	£291

2018-2019

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Average monthly rent (median)***	£875	£1,100	£1,350	£1,650
Average Local Housing Allowance (Outer NE London)**	£696	£862	£1,085	£1,400
-Gap that households need to find each month	£179	£238	£265	£250

*: Govuk - Private rental market summary statistics 2017-18

** : Govuk - Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates

***: Govuk - Private rental market summary statistics 2018-19

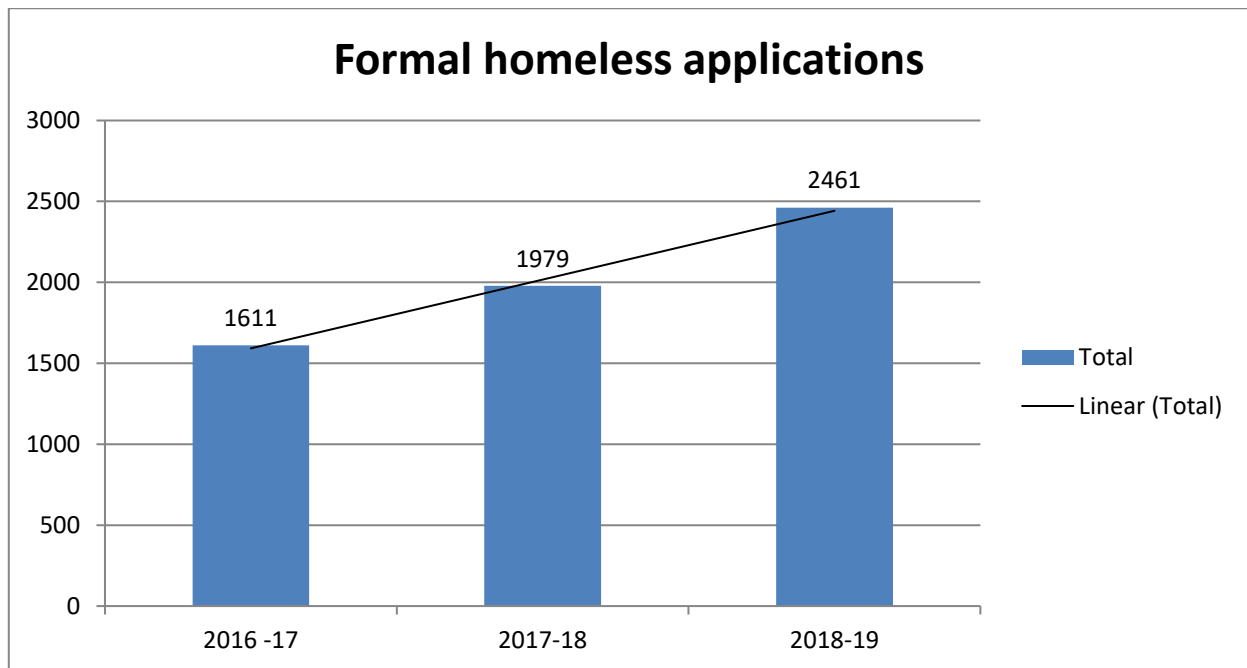
⁸ Havering Revenue & Benefit data (Aug 2019)

7.2. Homelessness demand management and temporary accommodation pathway

7.2.1. Homelessness demand management

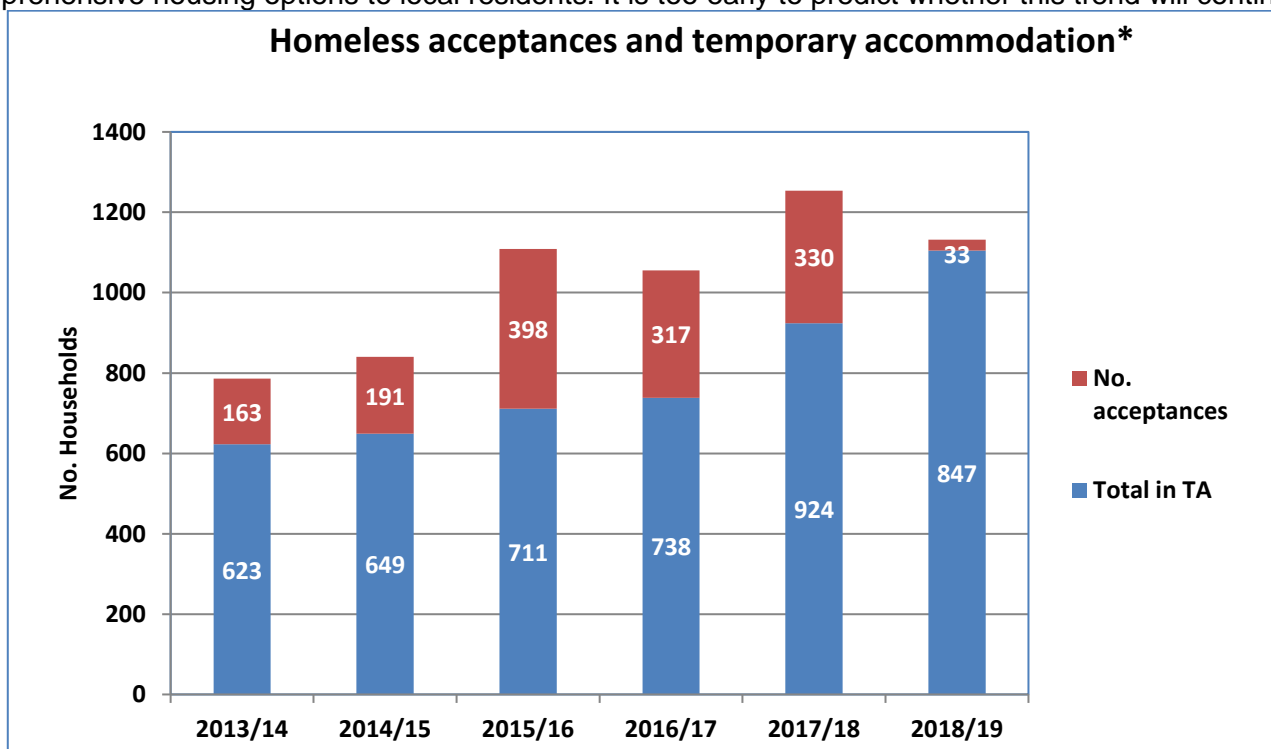
The most efficient way to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation is through homeless prevention. If individuals don't become homeless, or accept alternative housing solutions before becoming homeless, then they do not require temporary accommodation.

Formal homeless applications to the Council's Housing Solutions Service has increased year on year by 23% in 2017-18 and by another 24% in 2018-19. It should be noted that although the level of statutory homeless in Havering is rising, it is still lower than in the East London sub-region boroughs.



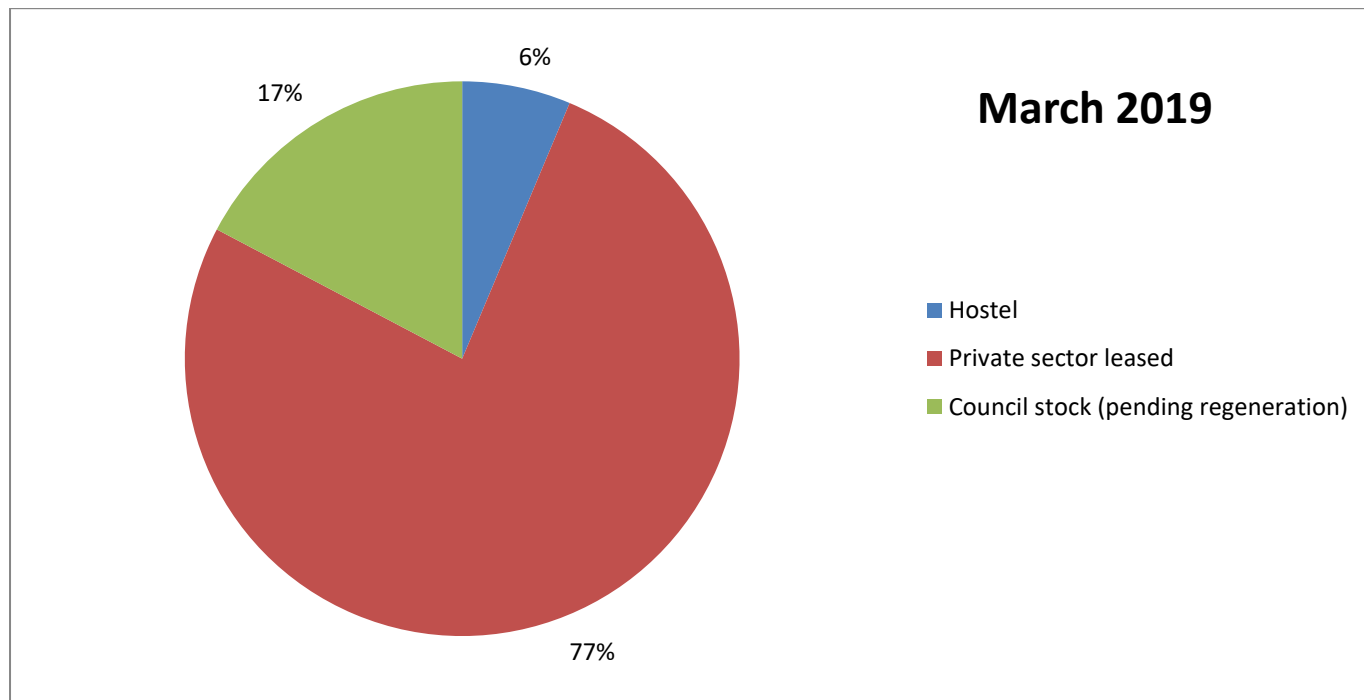
Measures to manage demand in Havering have been very successful; homelessness preventions have increased significantly and greater emphasis is being placed on conciliation, crisis intervention, and on assisting people into alternative accommodation. Incentives are available to landlords to provide private rented accommodation and over 600 households have been assisted through the rent deposit scheme over the past two years. Flexibility is encouraged and recommendations are delegated to empower Housing Officers to identify solutions and prevent homelessness through creative remedies. There has been an increased use of this fund and discretionary housing payments to enable more people to remain in their existing accommodation.

Despite this commitment to early intervention and prevention, measures to minimise the need for temporary accommodation, the number of households in temporary accommodation has been increasing. However, a steep fall in acceptances was seen in 2018/19 (as shown in the graph below) which was largely driven by the Homelessness Reduction Act which strengthened prevention activities and the provision of comprehensive housing options to local residents. It is too early to predict whether this trend will continue.



* Statutory homeless returns to MHCLG (Excludes 'no duty' households in PSL)

The Council uses a mix of temporary accommodation to fulfil its statutory duty. At the end of March 2019, there were 847 statutory homeless households residing in temporary accommodation. 77% of the households were housed in self-contained rented properties leased from the private sector; 17% were in Council stock used as short-life accommodation pending regeneration re-development; and 6% were in directly managed Council hostel accommodation. Havering Housing Services ended the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation in 2016.



7.2.2. Temporary accommodation pathway

The supply and use of temporary accommodation is a critical factor in responding to demand where it has not been possible to prevent homelessness, in particular homeless households who approach the council with acute housing need. This will often mean providing either short-term or longer-term temporary accommodation.

(a) Short term accommodation - Council hostels

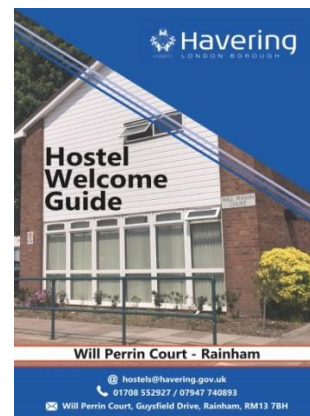
Currently, homelessness applicants are placed into first stage hostel accommodation before being moved on to second stage temporary accommodation. The stay in hostel accommodation allows for a comprehensive assessment of the household circumstances so that the Council can confirm whether it has a statutory duty under the legislation.

There are currently two hostels in Havering in convenient locations to maintain links with the community and remain close to support networks and schools. There are a total of 83 units, most are single studio style rooms and some have second rooms.

The provision is mixed with single adults and families sharing the same hostel accommodation:

- Will Perrin Court in South Hornchurch is the largest hostel with 46 self-contained family rooms plus an emergency room.
- Abercrombie House in Harold Hill has 37 rooms plus an emergency room. 15 of these rooms are single rooms and have single person occupancy. The remainder are family rooms; the accommodation is a mix of self-contained and shared facilities.

As at October 2019, there are 73 households living in our hostel accommodation.



Following a review by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CiH) it was recommended that a re-evaluation of the roles and responsibilities of staffing arrangements be carried out to ensure the service responded effectively to the needs of the residents and to implement support plans to improve the support available. As a result, changes were implemented in 2016 and Hostel Support officers were recruited with specialist support backgrounds covering domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, probation, child support and Housing. The officers were recruited to a non-shift working arrangement with on-site security covering the Hostels from 4pm - 10am. Support plans and risk assessments were implemented for all hostel residents, with Social Care and partner agencies contributing to the delivery of the support plans. This resulted in a range of programmes of activities for adults and children in addition to working with families and single people in transitioning them into more stable and permanent housing.

In addition, investment was made in the hostel buildings with space arrangement alterations, refurbishment of security and access arrangements, refurbishment of basic facilities, and general cleaning and redecoration. This investment allowed for a more effective delivery of support services and improved the overall condition of these hostels.

Notwithstanding the improvements made it is recognised that the quality of the accommodation and the lack of space available is not ideal.

Therefore, a review into a redevelopment and/or remodelling of the hostels is being undertaken in order to:

- Improve the standard of hostel accommodation
- Provide suitable accommodation for both single adults and families
- Enable enhanced support arrangements including 'wrap-around' support of multiple agencies

(b) Longer-term accommodation – Private Sector Leased properties (PSL) and Council Stock Short-life properties.

If a homeless duty is confirmed, the household is then ideally moved into second stage, longer-term leased or non-secure accommodation while they wait to secure settled accommodation through the Council's waiting list for social housing or through suitable and affordable private sector rented accommodation.

Longer-term temporary accommodation comprise of:

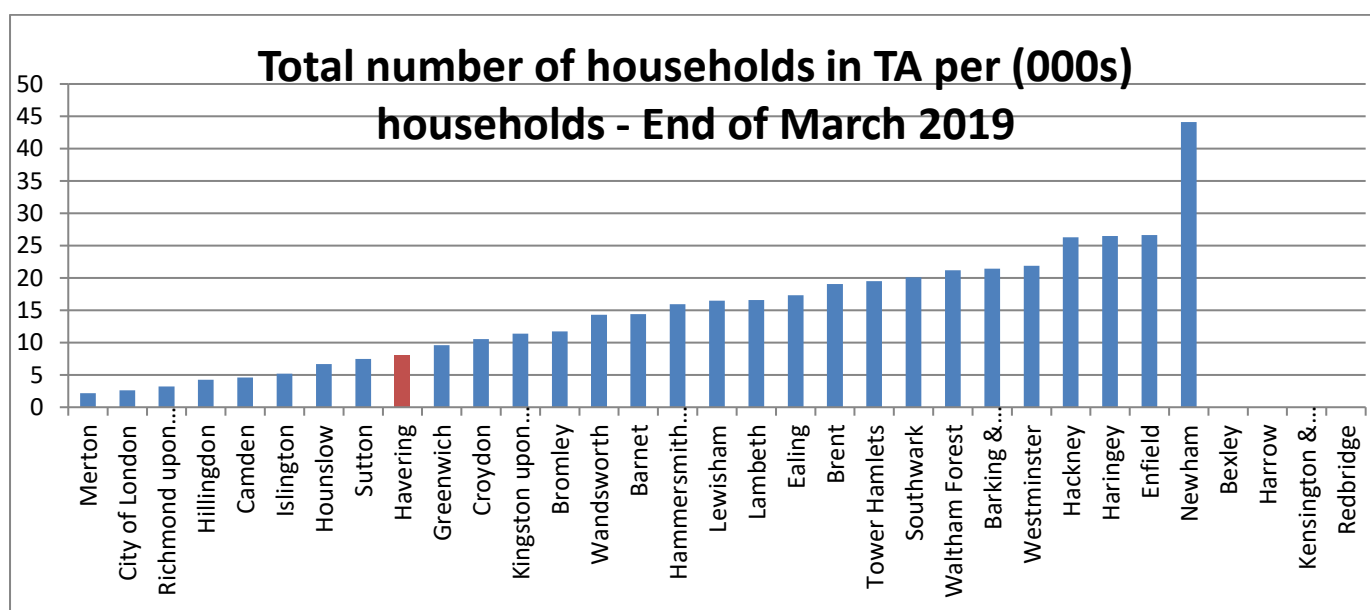
- Private Sector Leasing (PSL) which is a scheme whereby the Council leases properties from private sector landlords for a number of years. It is the Council's major source of temporary accommodation. Over recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to secure a sufficient supply of private leased accommodation due to changes in the private sector housing market which has led to landlords expecting increased rental payments and renting their properties directly to the private rented market rather than to the Council.
- Council short-life properties – they are units which become vacant as residents are moved to enable the 12 Estate Regeneration Programme to take place. The vacant units are available for the next 5-6 years before they are demolished and re-developed and are therefore used as temporary accommodation to fill the supply gap.

(c) Length of stay

The shortage of second stage longer-term accommodation means people are staying in hostel accommodation longer after a homelessness decision has been made. While the supply of longer-term temporary accommodation is diminishing, settled private rented accommodation is becoming more financially challenging for many households.

The Council's ambitions for estate regeneration (while eventually increasing the overall housing stock in the borough and long-term housing solutions for residents) will in the short term bring some pressures on council housing stock as re-housing requirements are met. Families in second stage longer-term temporary accommodation may therefore, wait longer to be re-housed as there may be fewer permanent homes available.

For context, it should be noted that there are currently relatively fewer homeless households living in temporary accommodation in Havering in comparison to other East London boroughs as shown in the graph below.



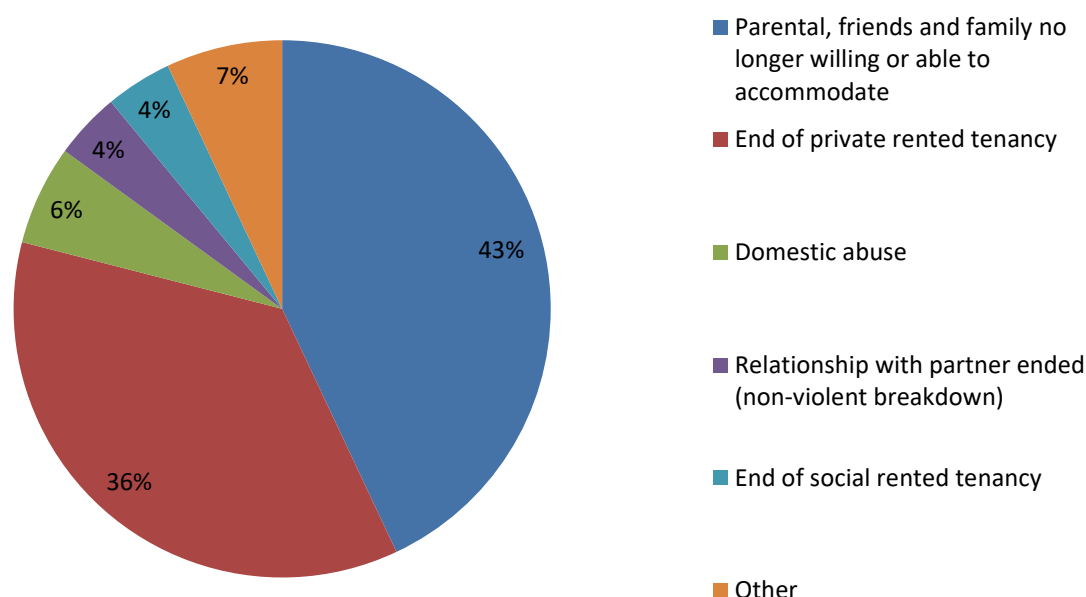
In general, the cumulative impact of the factors outlined above, coupled with local housing market conditions, may impair the ability of the Council and its partners to continue to meet the increasing demand for homelessness. In these circumstances the Council will seek to widen the available pool of affordable temporary and settled supply.

7.3. Main causes of homelessness in Havering

The most common factor leading to statutory homelessness over the past five years has been parents or other relatives not willing to accommodate their family/children. This is closely followed by the loss of a private rented tenancy, often from eviction by a private landlord.

Identifying the main causes of homelessness enables us to design early intervention services to reduce the risk of people becoming homeless.

Reasons for homelessness in Havering in 2018/19



(a) Parental, family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate

The Council's services reach out to families at risk of homelessness:

- The Early Help service provide help to families, targeting those who are most vulnerable or with multiple needs from our most vulnerable groups (such as low income, minority ethnic communities, single parents, sick/disabled parents). The service empowers and supports children, young people and families to find solutions so they are equipped to cope in independent housing without statutory support. The support offered includes parenting skills, behaviour management, and help to sort out practical challenges like debt, rent arrears, housing problems and pathways to employment. This helps sustain family cohesion and enables children and families to remain safely in their communities, improve their outcomes and prospects, while reducing the need for more specialist support.
- Housing Solutions Community Outreach staff carry out home visits to mediate where family relationships are strained or provide practical housing advice and information to help resolve risk of homelessness with families.
- Peabody Havering Service provide families with help and advice including: benefit advice and claims; finding employment and training opportunities; resolving housing problems; getting support for mental health, drug & alcohol difficulties; financial and budgeting support, advice and support for carers; and health & wellbeing.
- NELFT Mental Health Services support people with mental health issues like depression and anxiety.
- Westminster Drug Project (WDP) support people with drug and alcohol issues; (drugs and alcohol and mental health issues have a long lasting effect which makes homelessness much more difficult to address, making early intervention very important.

(b) End of assured shorthold tenancies from the private rented sector

The end of assured shorthold tenancies is the second highest cause of homelessness in Havering. However, in Q1-Q2 2019/20, there is an early indication that landlords ending private rented tenancies is becoming the main cause of homelessness in Havering, overtaking family eviction, which is consistent with most part of England.

The private rented sector (PRS) makes up 29% of all homes in Havering. The disparity between typical market rents and local housing allowance (LHA) means that often private landlords are less inclined to let to tenants claiming benefits as they have access to alternative tenants willing to pay higher rents. This can result in landlords terminating tenancies of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefits. The length of tenancies in the private rented sector, which typically are for 12 months, also adds to the uncertainty of renting in the sector.

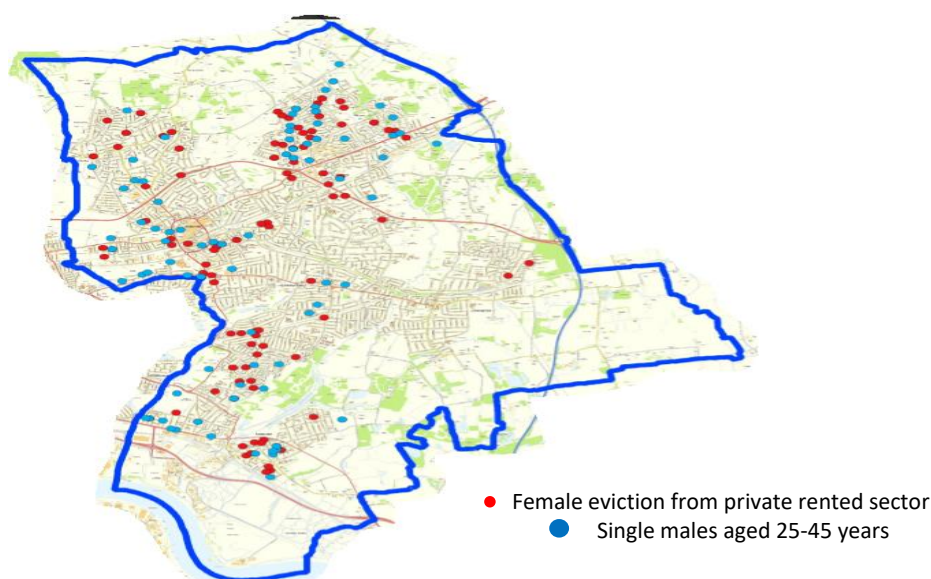
That said, the private rented sector plays a vital role in meeting housing need through supply. To that end, we will continue to work with private landlords to offer housing solutions and will offer support through advice, assistance and education with support from the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

This joint work with landlords will be supported by the Council's Environmental Health team in order to raise standards of private rented accommodation through licensing and other enforcement methods.

7.4. Homelessness by geographical areas

There are four key geographical areas where demand is originating from, based on analysed data. They are⁹:

- Gooshays
- South Hornchurch
- Romford Town
- Heaton



The highest concentration of private rented sector properties are located in Romford Town and Brooklands wards. In addition, these wards have the greatest levels of child poverty and overcrowding – both being strong indicators of homelessness.

Any prevention work and prototyping to test new ways of working will have maximum impact if it is tailored towards specific areas. An approach targeted on these key wards, tailored to particular issues, needs and characteristics could yield better results than a blanket borough-wide approach.

⁹ Havering 2016/17 Homelessness approach data

7.5. Ending rough sleeping

We remain highly committed to ending rough sleeping within Havering and also working with support agencies across the southeast to ensure our efforts are successful. As a result of our commitment, the Council created a Housing Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator post, which represents a step-change in how the Council, key stakeholders and organisations can work to address the needs of rough sleepers.



(a) Assessing the level of rough sleeping in Havering

The Council use a number of measures to inform our understanding of the level of rough sleeping in Havering.

Havering Council participates in the Government's annual rough sleeper count every year, targeting known hotspots around the borough. In 2018, only two rough sleepers were counted on the night, which is a significant reduction from the 22 encountered during the 2017 count¹⁰.

Annual counts

Estimated	Counted	Estimated	Estimated	Counted	Counted
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
2	8	10	24	22	2

This reduction shows that the Council's proactive approach in working with key partners to tackle rough sleeping is having a positive effect. However, we recognise that the count is only a snapshot on a single given night. Therefore, in addition to the official annual count, a bi-monthly count based on local intelligence gathered from local police teams in all 18 wards throughout the borough is carried out (targeted at known rough sleeping hotspot areas).

Bi-monthly counts

Sept 2018	Jan 2019	Mar 2019	May 2019	July 2019	Sept 2019
12	4	9	6	10	17*

* 5 of the individuals were from Barking & Dagenham following the closure of their Night Shelter. They returned to Barking & Dagenham on 7th October 2019 following the re-opening of the shelter.

Through this evidence base, we know that 75% of the rough sleepers are new to Havering and the majority are UK nationals. We have also built an historic 'profile' of the characteristics that would typically make up a Havering-based rough sleeper. They are most likely to:

- be a single, white male, aged between 26 and 55 years old;
- have a mental health/substance misuse issue or other complex support need;

¹⁰ MHCLG rough sleeper count 2013-2018

- c) have become homeless as a result of traumatic changes in personal circumstances - relatives or friends unexpectedly no longer being able or willing to provide them with accommodation, financial issues or relationship breakdowns; and
- d) confine themselves to a 'patch' (fixed location) that has usually been used by other local rough sleepers.

Data from the Combined Homelessness and Information network multi-agency database (CHAIN) is also used¹¹.

CHAIN data

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
20	31	27	32

The data from CHAIN shows that, despite Havering having the second lowest number of people sleeping rough in London, there has been a 60% increase since 2015/16.

Analysis from the different measures indicates that there are approximately 10 rough sleepers in the borough being supported to move off the streets at any one time.

(b) Severe Weather Emergency Provision

The Council is responsible for ensuring the safety of people sleeping rough during a period of extreme cold weather when the temperature drops to zero or below for one night or more.

In addition, Havering Council operates the Severe Weather Emergency provision in the event of extreme hot weather to protect rough sleepers. This was initiated during the intensive heat of summer 2018 in which rough sleepers were provided with emergency accommodation within the Council's owned and managed hostels and given water.

(c) Current Initiatives and Programmes

The Council received £284,500 over two years to 2020 from the Government Rough Sleeper Initiative. We are working with local partners to achieve a reduction in rough sleeping, and several organisations are funded from this grant:

- The Council recruited a Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator and a Rough Sleeping Navigator to lead and co-ordinate all rough sleeping work as well as support those with complex needs to engage with services.
- Peabody Havering recruited a Rough Sleeping Floating support worker.
- The Council has granted Hope4Havering planning permission to open a Night Shelter with 20 bed spaces which increases capacity to house known Havering rough sleepers.
- The Council and Hope4Havering secured self-contained private rented accommodation as Move-On from emergency provision.
- The Salvation Army hosts a number of statutory and voluntary agencies who work together to provide a twice weekly drop-in service for rough sleepers.
- Havering Clinical Commissioning Group has approved a primary care outreach service to be provided from the Salvation Army premises. This is an extended health check conducted by a GP, complimented by a community health nurse to provide health care and reduce pressures on ambulance services and A&E.
- Stronger partnership through the Havering Homelessness Forum which brings together about 25 public and voluntary sector organisations.

(c) Tailoring support for rough sleepers

Havering is increasingly seeing rough sleepers with multiple complex needs. A high percentage of known rough sleepers in the borough in 2018-19 were identified as having at least 2-3 additional needs.

- 79% Mental Health
- 79% Drug and Alcohol
- 72% Offending Behaviour
- 32% Physical Health

¹¹ Annual CHAIN bulletin Greater London 2018/19

We recognise that every rough sleeper is an individual with different needs and aspirations and supporting them off the streets can be challenging.

Some rough sleepers with both mental health and substance abuse resist moving to a shelter or settled accommodation, perhaps due to past experiences or due to addictions.

Better collaboration with Mental Health, and Drug and Alcohol Service needs further development in order to address this gap in service provision. This is a key priority to arise from this strategy.

(d) Tackling anti-social street activity associated with rough sleeping

The Havering Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2017 found that the most concentrated crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspot is Romford Town Centre. Romford Town ward is the largest contributor to total notifiable crime in Havering. When looking at ASB (rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour category) Romford town centre is disproportionately affected with incidents linked to homeless individuals and substance misuse related ASB featuring highly.

A multi-agency task and targeting group was established in response to complaints being made by the Business Community in Romford Town Centre about the number of beggars and street drinkers. It is led by Community Safety and the group work with internal and external partners to identify rough sleeper, and beggars in Romford Town Centre with the aim of addressing their complex needs, supporting identified homeless individuals into housing and where appropriate taking enforcement action, notably around street drinking.

The Task and Targeting group meet on a monthly basis and takes a multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social street activity. Members include Salvation Army, Immigration, Police Neighbourhoods Teams, Police Safer Transport Team, Housing, Peabody Trust, Department of Work and Pensions, Westminster Drugs Project, and Hope for Havering.

Havering being a green borough has several rural areas which can lend itself to encampments. The Council quickly identifies encampments in order to target support and enforcement resources to clear them.

Over the life of this strategy, we will enhance existing partnerships and forge new relationships with our partners and ensure that our collective efforts to tackle rough sleeping are effectively aligned.

7.6. People with additional support needs

In 2019, Havering commissioned a specialist to look at homelessness and the impact on people with additional support needs.

The review identified the following:

- People with learning disabilities who will require specialist housing over the next five years are around 50; together with an additional requirement for a further 35 units of mainstream housing.
- Care leavers require a further 45 places of shared accommodation and 43 one-bed dwellings in the first year followed by 20 per annum thereafter.
- There are also an increasing number of care leavers (currently 9) who would probably need supported housing on an indefinite basis, due to the complexity of their needs.

In addition, information held by the Havering Housing Solutions Team show that in the period from April 2018 to March 2019, 610 households (30% of those who are statutorily homeless) had support needs.

Support need	National picture	Havering
History of mental health	12,700 (26%)	166 (27%)
Physical ill health & disability	8,190 (17%)	180 (29%)
Domestic abuse	5,500 (11%)	79 (13%)
Alcohol & drug dependency	5,600 (11%)	22 (4%)
Offending behaviour	4,320 (9%)	12 (2%)
Other	12,490 (26%)	151 (25%)
Total	48,800	610 (30% of those assessed)

An operational review into the support need of households in the Council's temporary accommodation carried out in May 2019 showed that around 27% of the residents had significant support needs.

7.6.1. Mitigating the risk of homelessness amongst the identified vulnerable groups – service provision

The Council and its partners provide a number of services to support vulnerable groups in the borough which is set out below. However, the review has also highlighted a number of gaps in service provision which will be taken into account for future service delivery and action plans.

(a) History of mental health

- ✓ Havering Community Recovery Team provides specialist mental health services for adults aged 18 to 65 with serious and/or enduring mental health problems. This includes multidisciplinary assessments to identify needs with each client/carer, community interventions and a range of community-based services formulated in a care plan and delivered through the Care Programme approach process.
- ✓ NELFT also provides an extensive range of integrated community and mental health services.

(b) Alcohol and drugs dependency

- ✓ Westminster Drug Project (WDP) provides help for drug and alcohol problems. They offer a range of tailored programmes to help service users recover from drug and/or alcohol problems.
- ✓ From their service on Romford High Street, they offer: information, advice, support and assessment; one-to-one key working; needle exchange and harm reduction services; specialist services for alcohol and cocaine users; a group work programme; and access to detox and rehabilitation facilities.

(c) Dual diagnosis – lack of services for people with complex needs

Existing services are designed to deal with one problem at a time and to support people with single, severe conditions. The review has identified that, for a number of people, this is a service barrier experienced by chronically homeless people with severe mental health and substance abuse problems. There are currently minimal services available to support people with dual diagnosis of substance misuse and mental health. This may be having an impact on those seeking help, as the support services are facilitated by separate organisations.

The Department of Health's Refocusing the Care Programme Approach identifies people with coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse as one of the groups in need of an enhanced Care Programme Approach. That is because they are not being identified consistently and services are sometimes failing to provide the support they need. The policy highlights the need for a whole systems approach to their care, involving a range of services and organisations working together

A more collaborative integrated care delivery service across Mental Health and Drug/Alcohol Services should be developed in order to provide a holistic person centred care and support package.

(d) Victims / Survivors of Domestic Abuse

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference (MARAC) is a regular local meeting held by agencies to discuss and agree how to help victims at high risk of serious harm to ensure the longer term safety of the victim and their children.
- Refuge provision: - Havering Women's Aid is commissioned to provide refuge space and floating support to women fleeing violence. The refuge provides space for 23 women and their children.
- Domestic abuse advocacy project: - Havering Women's Aid also provides advocacy support to victims of domestic abuse including floating support, group support and 1-2-1 counselling. Victims can contact the service directly to receive advice and support Monday to Friday. This service is funded to March 2021.
- Men only service: - MENDAS is an organisation based in Havering that offer floating support and 1-2-1 counselling to male victims of domestic abuse. This service is funded to March 2021.
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service: - The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) fund 3 IDVA in Havering. They are co-located in Romford Police Station, Queens Hospital (Maternity and A&E) and Children's Services to provide ongoing support to high risk victims of domestic abuse. This service is currently being recommissioned by MOPAC and will be aligned to the Tri-Borough BCU going forward.
- Solace Women's Aid:- Funded through the London Councils grant scheme, Solace Women's Aid provide support groups and counselling through Havering's Children's Centres
- The Council's Housing Department in partnership with Registered Providers and other agencies is seeking to obtain the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) accreditation which requires a set of service standards for domestic abuse services to be met. By undertaking accreditation, we are sharing the Government's mission to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse.

(e) Care leavers

- The Council has a joint working protocol between Housing and Children Services (Leaving Care Service) to support care leavers over 18 years, and capable of independent living, to move into social housing.
- The Care Leaver service currently supports approximately 173 young people in a range of accommodation including Council and Housing Association properties, privately rented accommodation, foster placements and other settings.
- NELFT has a children service for care leavers and support these individuals

(f) Vulnerable adults – including physical ill-health and disability

- For adults who do not qualify for formal support under the Care Act there are a number of other schemes available, such as the L&Q 'Living' sites for people with learning disabilities which is based in Harold Hill.
- **Supporting independence** - The Council supports people to live independently who would otherwise need to move home. People in private sector housing can pay for aids and adaptations through disabled facilities grants (DFG) and older and disabled people can apply for grants for repairs to their homes to bring them up to standard.
- **Physical disability** - The Council also maintains an adapted housing waiting list so that aids and adaptations are carried out to homes of Council tenants with disabilities. At the time that this strategy was written, there were 6 people on the list; down from 20 in the previous year.
- **Supported accommodation** - The Council has a significant range of accommodation currently available for those who are eligible under the relevant Care legislation; including Residential and Nursing Care places for adults with a relevant assessment of need. Significant numbers of vulnerable people are helped in this way. As at March 2019, the Council was supporting 726 people in this accommodation. Where this intensity of support is not required, the Council may also provide Supported Housing or visiting support at a person's home. At the time that this Strategy was written, 157 people were assisted into supported housing and a further 991 people were provided with a domiciliary care service.
- **Supported Housing programme** - The Council is currently in the process of expanding the range of accommodation for people with Learning Disabilities through the addition of 12 supported housing places and a range of mixed accommodation services. The remainder required will be purchased from the private provider market.

- ✓ **Tenancy Sustainment Service** - to ensure that Council tenants are able to maintain their tenancies. For example, during December months, the service contacts over 400 council tenants aged 50 and over who were living alone to offer support.

8. Progress in delivering the 2014-17 Homelessness Strategy

Improved prevention outcome was a key objective in the 2014-17 Homelessness Strategy. The Council and its partners worked hard to coordinate activity and focus combined energies on preventing homelessness and improvising services for homeless people.

- An increased focus on homelessness prevention, including a greater focus on mediation within family settings by Housing Solutions Outreach Officers to prevent relationship breakdown, increased use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to top up rental shortfall whilst longer-term sustainable solutions is found for those at risk of homelessness; and the establishment of a new advice and support service 'Here to Help' provided by Peabody Housing Association (formerly Family Mosaic) for young people and families facing eviction.
- The acquisition of good quality, affordable private rented housing for young, single homeless people. The properties were leased from private landlords for a period of time providing shared accommodation for single people and managed by the Council.
- The establishment of a successful Rough Sleeper partnership that has brought together a wide range of statutory, voluntary and faith based organisations.
- The development of new 'Find Your Own (FYO) scheme to financially help households to access suitable private rented accommodation by contributing towards their deposit and first month's rent.
- The development and implementation of the Homeless Placements policy to set out the Council's approach for responding to homelessness in the borough in relation to procurement and placement (allocation) of temporary and settled accommodation.
- The development of the Housing Options outreach programme which contributed to ending the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation in Housing Services.
- Significant investment was made in the Council's hostel buildings with space arrangement alterations, refurbishment of security and access arrangements, refurbishment of basic facilities, and general cleaning and redecoration. This investment resulted in a more effective delivery of services and improved the overall condition of the hostel accommodation.

9. Strategic Priorities 2019-23 and action plan

We have completed a review of homelessness in Havering in order to understand future needs and the resources available to the Council and its partners to address homelessness. This has helped in developing the strategic priorities.

This four-year strategy covers the period 2019-2023 and looks at strengthening the already high level of partnership working across Havering and how we can continue to make significant improvements across homelessness services.

In order to bring about significant change within our communities, this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focuses on four key priorities. A delivery plan against each key priority is included which will be revised following consultation with the community, and our voluntary and public sector partners to ensure that the priorities are delivered.

Priority 1 – Managing homelessness demand through effective pathways

Why this action?

Given the challenges we face around increasing homelessness, it is critical that we continue to put homeless prevention at the heart of everything we do. Keeping families in their homes brings financial and social benefits

We will find new ways of both understanding and addressing the factors that can lead to homelessness - such as family/relationship breakdown, the ending of private tenancies, and discharge from other institutions. We will also develop a greater understanding of the impact of wider social issues such as poverty and disadvantage, unemployment, poor health and well-being, and lack of access to affordable, decent homes.

It is essential that we continue to encourage flexible and imaginative cost effective solutions for all households. Proactive spend to save is a key way to enable households to sustain appropriate living arrangements. We will consider and develop further ways to use homelessness prevention funding to seek to provide solutions to impending homeless households as part of our secondary and tertiary prevention responses.

We also plan to take a more innovative approach to providing housing and homelessness advice in the borough. Using the findings identified from the review, and in partnership with relevant organisations, we intend to re-establish a programme of outreach homelessness prevention work to target 'high-risk' homeless groups. This would use targeted information based on the demographic profile of the local population and the structure of the housing market.

The Council will develop and maintain a sustainable balanced portfolio of affordable, quality temporary accommodation that meets the current and projected homelessness needs. Quality, location, support to residents and value for money will remain key factors during procurement and in the operation of any schemes. We will ensure that the financial cost of provision of temporary accommodation is balanced against the need to procure properties of a suitable quality

9.1. We will achieve this by:

Ensuring that information is easily accessible	• Redesign Havering's online homelessness webpage.
	• Publicise, promote the council's prevention services more effectively in an accessible format, and encourage residents to make contact early and before a crisis.
Increasing the number of cases where homelessness is successfully prevented	• Re-establish the housing advice outreach programme targeted at homelessness hotspot wards including Gooshays, Heaton, Romford Town, South Hornchurch and Brooklands.
	• Increase capacity by accessing upstream homelessness prevention services offered through the East London Housing Partnership's Private Rented Sector Access Project.

Increasing the Council's understanding of homelessness and how it affects particular groups and develop targeted actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act and take targeted action to address identified barriers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the impact of Universal Credit on homelessness and implement initiatives to address identified barriers.
Working with private landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Private Accommodation supply schemes to diversify the supply of temporary and settled accommodation to meet homelessness demand, reduce length of stay in short term hostel accommodation and continue to implement the outcomes of the private sector leased (PSL) review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with private sector landlords and owners to bring empty homes back into use.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise arrangements and hold regular Landlord Forum, to encourage more landlords to make affordable accommodation available to households in receipt of benefits.

Priority 2 – Supporting vulnerable residents

Why this action?

The Homelessness review has highlighted the link between homelessness and health; and has illustrated the significant health inequalities experienced by homeless people, especially those with complex needs and those sleeping rough.

Whilst some aspects of poor health are attributable to being homeless, some health problems can also play a part in becoming homeless and then prevent people from moving on from the streets or temporary housing into more stable accommodation.

Access to appropriate and timely drug, alcohol and mental health treatments can play a vital role in moving people away from homelessness and into long term recovery. Some people find it difficult to access and engage with mainstream health services, particularly primary care services (GPs) and as a result health problems may be left untreated. When homeless people do access health services, it can often be in an unplanned way and at the point of crisis e.g. through accident and emergency departments.

Problems can also arise on discharge from hospital, particularly for those who do not have accommodation to return to or those that may find their existing accommodation is now inappropriate or unsafe for them. This can have a negative effect on ongoing health care and lead to readmission to hospital.

We will support and empower people to make positive decisions about their lives. This is important for everyone, but particularly so for people with additional care and support needs or vulnerabilities. We want to help these people to stay living independently in their own home, wherever possible. In some cases, this will mean helping people to get practical support services coming to help them at home; adapt to their home, or move to another general need home that helps them better manage their needs. This could include moving to somewhere with accessible facilities or where safeguarding concerns can be better addressed.

By working in partnership with key statutory and voluntary agencies, we will strive to better understand individual experiences of homelessness and use this knowledge to reshape our services.

9.2. We will achieve this by:

Building on skills and strengths to develop residents' resilience and self-sufficiency in the long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement the Sanctuary scheme to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes as outlined in the Council's Private Housing Health Assistance Policy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide skills and employment opportunities, through the Council's 'Havering Works' project and other Jobs brokerage services in the borough.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to commission independent domestic, sexual and gender-based violence advocates (IDVAs) to support and help victims. Work with schools, health services and other public services to set out the realities of homelessness.
Supporting recovery and independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a more collaborative integrated care service to support people with dual mental health and substance abuse issues. Improve access to East London Women's accommodation based service for female survivors of abuse who have multiple support needs.
Working with strategic partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on and improve existing processes to ensure an effective 'duty to refer' from all relevant public sector bodies as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 Obtain the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) accreditation for domestic abuse services.

Priority 3 – Ending rough sleeping by 2022

Why this action?

Homelessness across the UK is a growing concern with people sleeping rough remaining one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Havering's multi-agency approach to rough sleeping has seen a significant reduction in the number of rough sleepers (with the second lowest number of people sleeping rough in London based on data from CHAIN).

However, new rough sleepers continue to seek help, as well as others arriving in the borough from other parts of London and the UK. There are also a number of entrenched rough sleepers who are hard to reach due to the complexity of need that they have. In addition, we have identified that Romford Town Centre is disproportionately affected with anti-social street incidents linked to homeless individuals.

The new **National Rough Sleeper Strategy 2018¹²** identifies addressing rough sleeping as a top government priority and reaffirms the target to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eradicate it by 2027. Havering's key objective is to reduce rough sleeping by half, to 16 individuals or fewer by 2021 and to eliminate it entirely by 2022 ahead of central government's target.

The following principles will underpin the strategy's delivery:

- Knowing that there is a long-term, sustainable option for anyone sleeping rough
- Innovation: Creative responses and making the most of existing resources
- Strategic local leadership: Accountability and cross-borough working
- Partnership working: Everyone having an important role.

9.3. We will achieve this by:

Ending rough sleeping	Early intervention and prevention To address the issues that lead to rough sleeping and provide timely support for those at risk to prevent them from rough sleeping.
	Rapid intervention To intervene rapidly when prevention has been ineffective and homelessness is unavoidable by providing accommodation and support.
	Recovery and community integration To support those found a home in rebuilding their lives.
	Support and enforcement action To support identified homeless individuals into housing and where appropriate take enforcement action, notably around street drinking.
	Provision of information and alternative ways to give To provide a steer to our local communities in how they respond to people who are sleeping rough by providing sufficient and accessible

	information, support and guidance around how we collectively and individually support vulnerable people.
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Priority 4 - Increasing the supply of affordable housing and reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation

Why this action?

Using the levers at the Council's disposal, we are seeking to address the lack of affordable housing and a market-driven private rented sector.

There is high demand for social housing in Havering but limited affordable supply. The Council has approximately 2000 households waiting for social housing. The demand is highest in absolute terms for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes but the demand for 4 bed homes is proportionally more challenging. Demand for genuinely affordable housing outstrips supply both in the social housing and private rented sectors.

¹² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

The Council's regeneration programme will provide a significant number of new homes across the borough over the next 10 years. However, in the short term, the moving of existing tenants from properties earmarked for regeneration will create some permanent supply challenges but also opportunities for homeless households to be housed, albeit temporarily, in the resulting empty properties. In the longer term, the programme will provide additional supply.

Through the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, we will continue to meet the Council's priorities for allocating the limited social rented stock, whilst increasing awareness that for most people, the route out of homelessness will be into a suitable and affordable private rented sector tenancy.

Regulating the private rented sector ensures that residents have access to safe, quality and well managed accommodation. The Council acknowledges that the majority of landlords operate their businesses professionally and that the private rented sector provides housing options for local people. Nonetheless, as the number of rental properties continues to grow in Havering, the Council remains concerned about:

- levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and overcrowding
- some rented properties that fail to meet satisfactory levels of property management and standards.

The introduction of selective and an additional licensing scheme would allow the Council to focus action against landlords who ignore their responsibilities whilst providing light touch regulation for compliant landlords.

9.4. We will achieve this by:

Building, planning and enabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the ambitious house building programme to provide additional new homes over the next 10 years as part of the regeneration programme.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-develop and/or re-model the Council's hostels to improve the quality of the accommodation, provide suitable accommodation for single adults and families and enhance support arrangements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Supported Housing programme to provide a range of mixed accommodation and/or purchase some from the private provider market to meet identified need – Adult Social Care will be leading on this.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and implement changes (if necessary) within the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that current resources are used most effectively to reduce homelessness and provide adequate housing to those in need.

Improving the private rented sector standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement selective licensing – by introducing licensing of properties rented to a single family or household or two unrelated people in Romford Town and Brooklands wards.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the additional licensing Scheme for Housing of Multiple Occupation (HMO) by including the remaining 6 wards currently not covered; Cranham, Upminster, St Andrews, Emerson Park, Hacton and Hylands.

10. Governance and delivery of the Strategy

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a critical strategy for the Council as it affects the delivery of a range of statutory services to Havering residents. We need to ensure that together with our partners we have the skills and structures in place for the delivery of the strategy's priorities, and to deliver the innovative agenda that will be required to tackle homelessness over the next four years.

This means that the oversight and responsibility for the delivery of the Strategy will sit with a recognised body that spans housing, care services and health. It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board and Havering Council's Housing Services department is currently best placed to fulfil this role.

However, in the longer term, this may need to be reviewed as MHCLG are currently (July 2019) consulting on proposals that could result in the establishment of Homelessness Reduction Boards. Depending on the outcome of the consultation, it is possible that the governance arrangements for the strategy will need to change to align with new requirements.

This strategy is for a four-year period, but it will need to be responsive to change. It will, therefore, be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure all actions and strategic aims remain relevant to the law, prevailing conditions and best practice in the homelessness and housing advice sector.

The action plan will be refreshed annually to take into account emerging trends, or developments in legislation or working practices.

