



# Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2028

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# Foreword

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Homelessness extends far beyond rough sleeping and can impact anyone, often without warning. It's frequently hidden, encompassing individuals living in insecure, inadequate, or unsanitary housing, as well as those affected by domestic abuse.

Homelessness is often linked with multiple and complex health needs, and tragically, the life expectancy of individuals experiencing homelessness is significantly lower than that of the general population. Health challenges, combined with limited access to support, can create and perpetuate a cycle of homelessness that is difficult to escape.

This strategy sets out a clear vision for how we'll shape our services to better meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents. It represents a proactive step towards breaking the cycle of homelessness and ensuring that support is accessible, effective, and timely.

While levels of homelessness within our districts remain lower than in many other parts of the country, the impact on those affected is profound and often life-altering. This strategy reaffirms our councils' strong and ongoing commitment to preventing homelessness at the earliest possible stage and to reducing rough sleeping to the absolute minimum.



## **Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers**

Statutory Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Housing and Community Hub

South Oxfordshire District Council



## **Councillor Andy Crawford**

Cabinet Member for Property and Housing

Vale of White Horse District Council

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# 1. Introduction

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**1.1** This strategy sets out our vision and commitment to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts. We recognise that homelessness is a complex issue, requiring a coordinated and multi-agency response. Our approach is built on early intervention, strong partnership working, and the provision of sustainable housing solutions.

**1.2** In line with Section 2(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002, this strategy was formulated based on the findings of a homelessness review which considered the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in South and Vale. It also assessed the activities carried out to achieve:

1. the prevention of homelessness
2. the securing of accommodation for people who are or may become homeless; and
3. the provision of support for people who are homeless or who may become at risk of homelessness

**1.3** Finally, the homelessness review explored the resources available to the councils, including social services, other public authorities and voluntary organisations.

**1.4** The strategy promotes a collaborative, outcome-focussed approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. Data-driven learning is also key to achieving the objectives of the strategy over the next five years, as well as a trauma-informed approach and drawing from the lived experience of service users to address the underlying factors that lead clients to become homeless.

**1.5** The strategy is supported by a detailed three-year action plan to ensure its successful delivery.

**1.6** The following legislation and regulation informs the content and priorities of this Strategy:

- Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
- Localism Act 2011
- Care Act 2014
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan in 2018
- Ending Rough Sleeping Data Framework 2023

## 2. Engagement and Consulting

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### 2.1 Consultation exercises

**2.2** When devising a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, local authorities are required to consult providers who contribute to the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping. This includes the public, private, voluntary and charitable sectors. It is also important to consider the views of service users and the general public.

**2.3** Consultation exercises were conducted to complete the homelessness review which forms the basis of this strategy. Consultees were asked to consider whether they would support the five proposed objectives for the new strategy:

### 2.4 Internal consultation

**2.5** This was a single session comprising 16 officers representing 9 different departments from the councils, including Housing Lettings, Housing Advice, Private Sector Housing, Resettlement, and Housing Delivery. Consultees were unanimously in favour of the five objectives within this strategy.

**2.6** In addition, workshops were carried out with frontline housing officers who offered insightful information and recommendations regarding the day-to-day dealings with homeless clients.

### 2.7 External consultation

**2.8** Registered providers of social housing, neighbouring local authorities, police and probation, social care, and health care were all consulted on the proposed objectives for this strategy. Consultees were overwhelmingly in favour of the proposed objectives and were keen for more detail on how we will deliver the objectives.

### 2.9 Members consultation

**2.10** Elected councillors from South & Vale attended an event in May 2025 to consider the proposed objectives.

### 2.11 Public consultation

**2.12** An online survey was available online for one month in May 2025 to capture the thoughts and feedback of the general public. This was used to consider any amendments to the objectives.

### 2.13 Service users consultation

**2.14** Ten interviews took place with clients in temporary accommodation in March 2025 to capture their experiences of dealing with the councils' Housing Needs Team when experiencing homelessness. The exercise produced positive feedback about the Temporary Accommodation (TA) team:

“The TA team couldn't have been better. They were really good at always keeping me informed about my bookings... I have been treated so well.”



“Yes, just a really quick, professional service.

“The TA Team were easy to deal with and I felt they cared about me and dealt quickly with any problems in the hostel. No other comments apart from thank you.”

“The TA was nice, and I made some good friends whilst in Wantage. No further comments apart from keep up the good work.”

**2.15** Clients who received advice and assistance from Housing Needs Officers were asked to comment on the service they received, and if they were satisfied with it:

“I feel everyone has been open and honest with me and acted in my best interests. No further comments.”

“Yes, definitely happy. I feel I have been supported from start to finish.”

“Yes. I think my case was handled well. No further comments.”

“I’m looking forward to being in my forever home now.”

**2.16** The negative feedback, which was very limited, was shared with officers to further develop the service and to improve the customer journey.

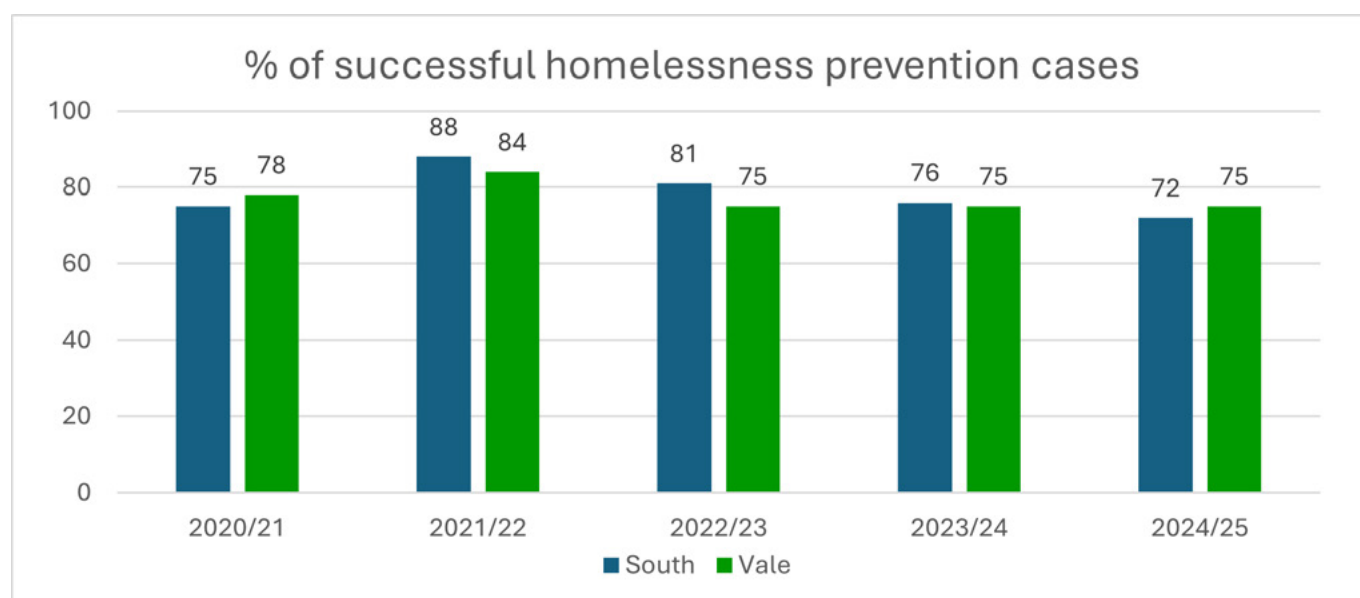


## 3. Achievements

**3.1** The homelessness review highlighted a number of areas in which South and Vale has excelled during the lifetime of the current Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. A full list can be found in the Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Review. A summary of the key achievements is shown below:

### 3.2 High prevention rates

**3.3** South and Vale have achieved high prevention rates since 2020. In 2021/22 the rates for both South and Vale were particularly high because many new build schemes were completed and advertised through the housing register, following delays caused by Covid-19. Although prevention rates have fallen gradually since then, homelessness levels have increased markedly, and despite all the additional pressures on the service, successful prevention rates remain very high in South and Vale, consistently 20%<sup>1</sup> above the average in the South East:



**3.4** Since 2020/21, prevention rates in England have not exceeded 60%, and fell to 51% in 2023/24. In the same period, the average prevention rate in the South East fell from 55% to 52%.

### 3.5 Reduced TA usage

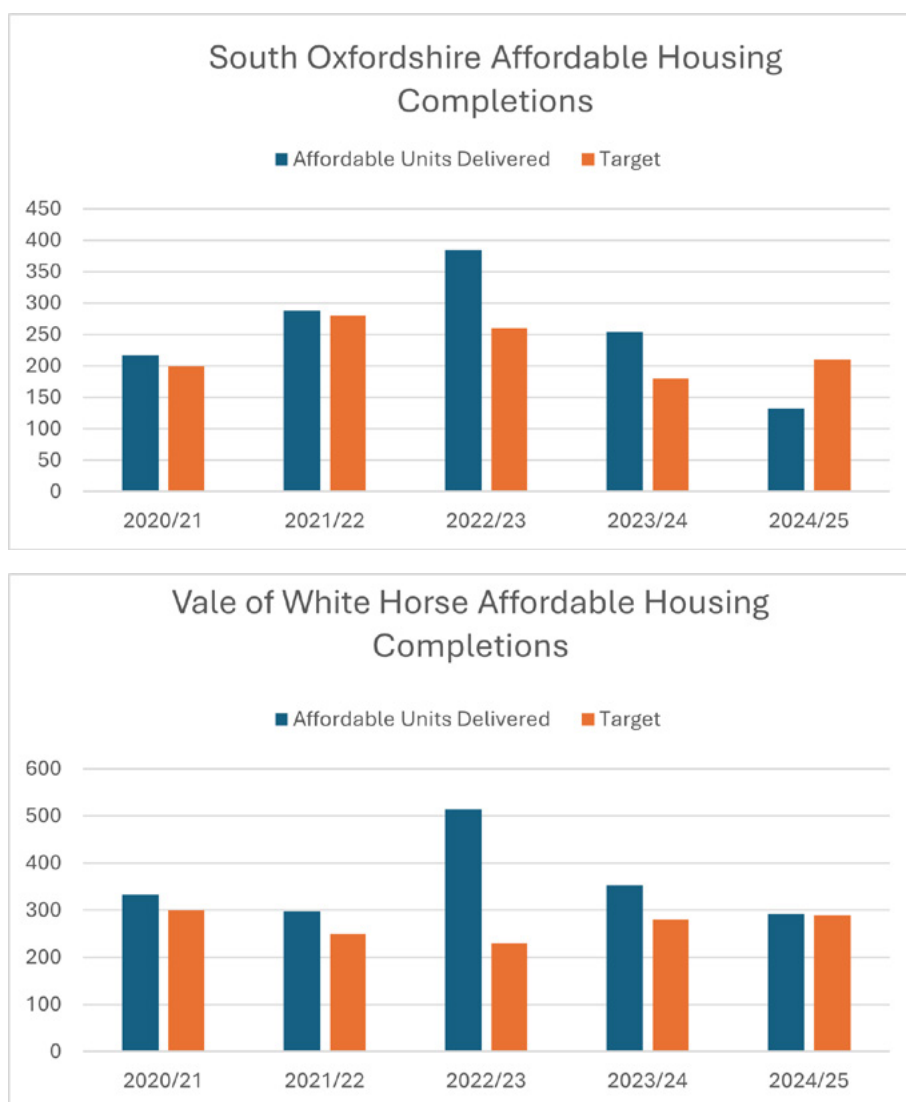
**3.6** Both councils have managed to reduce the number of households in temporary Accommodation since January 2023 when nightly charged usage reached its peak. Most local authorities have seen numbers continue to rise since this time, including some neighbouring authorities and those within the MHCLG benchmarking group. South and Vale, however, adopted a more proactive approach with regular meetings and monitoring, including the implementation of final offers of accommodation which has seen numbers decrease and remain at a manageable level.

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness)

**3.7** Both South and Vale have purchased units of temporary accommodation which reduces the reliance on nightly charged accommodation, which can be out of area, expensive, and usually lacking cooking facilities.

### 3.8 Affordable housing completions

**3.9** Completion targets for affordable housing in South Oxfordshire have been exceeded every financial year between 2020/21 and 2023/24. In the Vale, targets were exceeded in all of the five previous financial years:



### 3.10 Rough sleeper numbers low

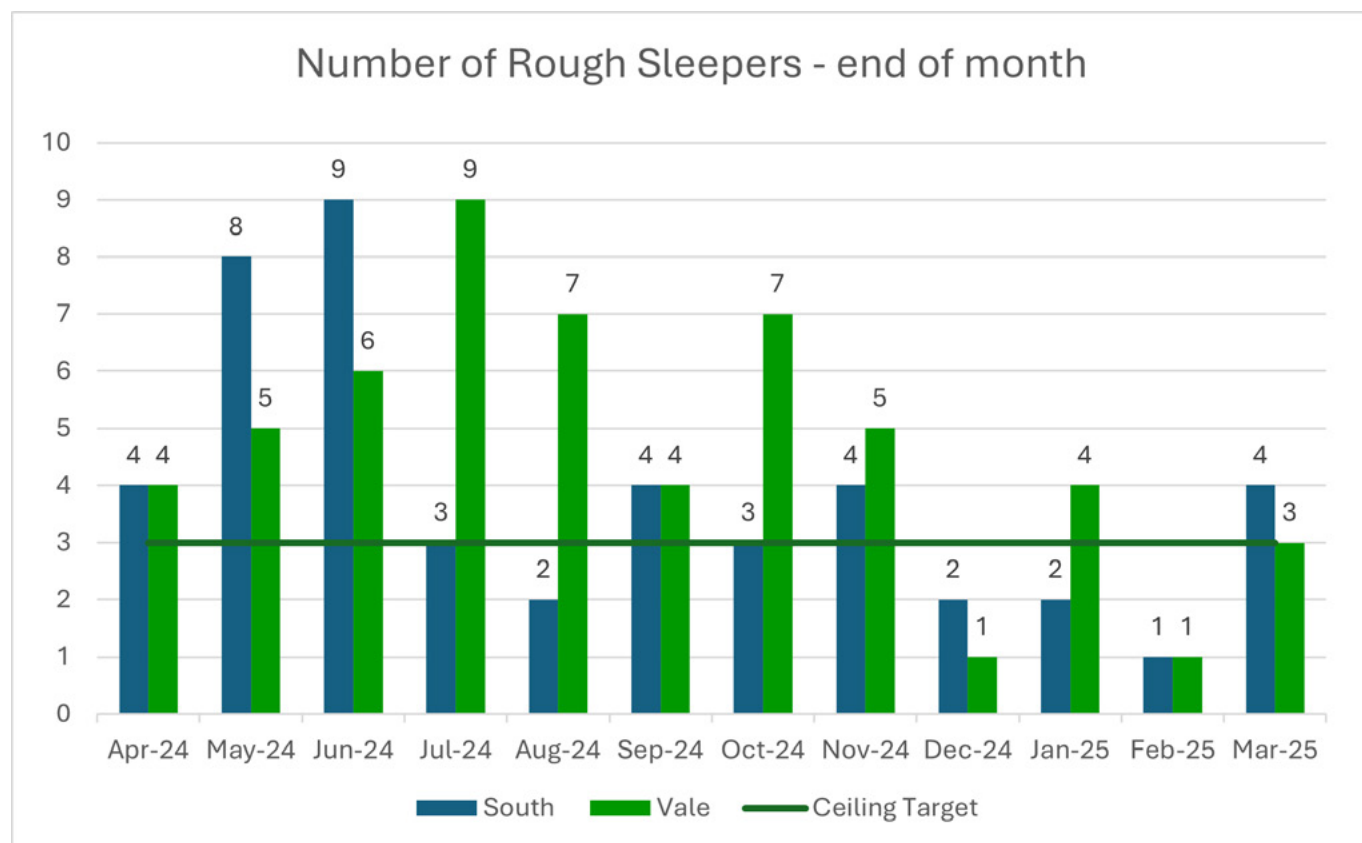
**3.11** South and Vale have managed to keep numbers of rough sleepers down, despite numbers nationwide continuing to increase. Numbers in England increased by 91% between 2021 and 2024<sup>2</sup>. The relationship between South and Vale and its Outreach Team has proved to be effective in identifying any rough sleepers without delay, ensuring that they receive advice from our dedicated rough sleeper lead officer promptly. The annual rough sleeper count, which is conducted every autumn, identified 4 rough sleepers across South and Vale combined in both

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness)



2023 and 2024, whereas numbers across the country increased by 20% in this period. South and Vale received a commendation from its official partner agency for its work on the annual count in 2024.

**3.12** Rough sleeper numbers spiked in summer 2024, but officers and the outreach team have worked hard to drive numbers down to a much lower level:



### 3.13 Housing First success

**3.14** Self-contained properties have been secured for some of the most vulnerable and entrenched rough sleepers and homeless clients through the Housing First scheme. 13 clients across South and Vale are currently accommodated, 7 of whom are receiving intensive support to maintain their tenancies, as well as to attend appointments, access benefits and to seek job opportunities.

### 3.15 Resettlement

**3.16** Since 2020 the councils have participated in a number of resettlement schemes including UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS) and Homes for Ukraine.

**3.17** In 2022 South and Vale established a dedicated resettlement team to protect and to find homes for vulnerable refugees who have been displaced from a range of regions of conflict and instability across the globe.

**3.18** Nearly 300 households who fled the war in Ukraine have been permanently accommodated in homes in South and Vale.

**3.19** The councils have also used the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) to obtain housing for 85 families from Afghanistan who were unable to find settled accommodation through resettlement schemes. A further 26 Afghan families were supported to secure permanent accommodation in South & Vale.

**3.20** Work with the Home Office has also supported 28 households to move out of transitional accommodation in the Vale, and a number households across both districts have been helped to secure accommodation following successful asylum applications.

### **3.21 Participation in countywide working**

**3.22** South and Vale have joined neighbouring local authorities and agencies to work collaboratively towards adopting a unified approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. These include: Joint Housing Steering Group (JHSG), Countywide Housing Steering Group (CHSG), Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) and Young Persons Supported Accommodation (YPSA) Partnership Board.

**3.23** The councils have also made key contributions to statutory meetings including: MAPPA, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) and Joint Tasking Meeting (JTM) which protect some of the most vulnerable clients, such as victims of domestic abuse.

### **3.24 Successful use of supported housing projects**

**3.25** Since 2020 South and Vale have better utilised supported housing projects such as Somewhere Safe To Stay (SSTS) and MIND, which provides accommodation and support for clients with mental health issues.

**3.26** Participation in the Countywide Access Panel which secures supported accommodation for rough sleepers has also been effective in ensuring that vulnerable clients are not on the streets and get the support they require to break the cycle of homelessness.

### **3.27 Social landlord**

**3.28** With the use of government funding, South and Vale purchased 45 homes [27 in South Oxfordshire and 18 in the Vale] to become social landlords for the first time since 1997. The properties will support the councils' joint Housing Delivery Strategy and provide access to suitable, affordable homes for local people.

## 4. National Challenges

**4.1** Homelessness in England has increased significantly in the last decade as a result of rising rents, reduced welfare benefits, the cost-of-living crisis, and a shortage of affordable housing. This has led to increased pressure on statutory services and record numbers of clients in temporary accommodation, including record numbers of children.

**4.2** The systemic pressures facing local authorities, compounded by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, shortage of affordable housing, and under-resourced mental health services, continue to escalate homelessness crisis.

**4.3** The latest official statistics show alarming trends: 358,370 households contacted their local authority for homelessness advice and assistance in 2023-24, an increase of more than 10% in a year. Of these, 324,990 were assessed as homeless. Approximately 40% of homeless families are living in B&Bs<sup>3</sup> or nightly-let accommodation, and the use of this emergency accommodation has doubled in three years.

**4.4** The official rough sleeping snapshot revealed 4,667 people were homeless on England's streets in autumn 2024, a 20% increase in just a year.

**4.5** The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact households. A 2022 study showed that low-income families faced an average £372 deficit between their LHA and the cost of the cheapest rents in their local areas. In March 2023, just 23% of households in England were able to afford to pay their usual household bills.

**4.6** In February 2025, the MHCLG released the initial findings from its Systems-Wide Evaluation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Services<sup>4</sup>. The study involved interviews with local authority staff who cited a wide range of external pressures which have increased pressure on the homelessness and rough sleeping system in recent years. These include:

- cost-of-living crisis;
- shortages of available mental health services;
- ongoing impact of austerity;
- limited availability of affordable accommodation;
- shortages of social housing;
- welfare provision not meeting needs;
- staff retention challenges due to burnout;
- reduced funding for other public services;
- Home Office policy on asylum seekers/refugees

**4.7** The study also identified the misalignment of local authority housing services and health systems as a contributing factor.

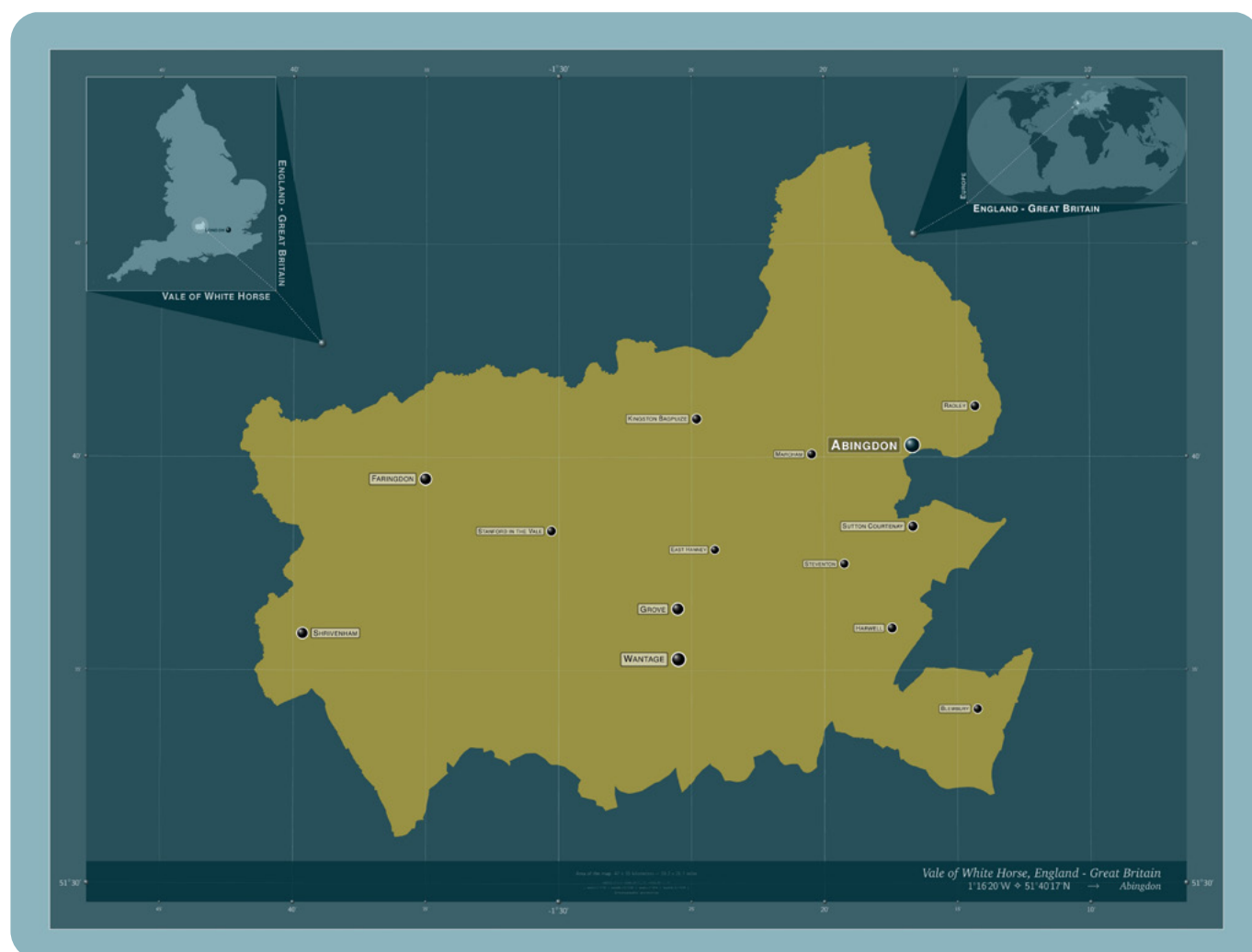
<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/news/largest-ever-cash-boost-to-turn-the-tide-on-homelessness](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/largest-ever-cash-boost-to-turn-the-tide-on-homelessness)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings)

**4.8** The lack of affordable housing has resulted in large numbers of low-income households having to find homes in the private rented sector. The number of households in the private sector increase by 45% between 2008-09 and 2020-21 according to the English Private Landlord Survey 2021.

**4.9** The supply of privately rented properties has dwindled in the last decade as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), despite an increase in April 2024, continues to lag behind open market rents. Since 2011, the rate only covers the bottom 30% of the local housing market, reducing the pool of properties available.

**4.10** Inflationary pressures have also impacted mortgage interest rates, which have seen significant increases over recent years, reaching as high as 6.10% in May 2024. This has had an impact on owner-occupiers' finances, and some landlords have increased rent levels to cover the increased mortgage costs. Some landlords have opted to leave the market altogether it is no longer profitable. This has had a knock-on effect on private renters who struggle to meet the higher rents as well as increased food and utility costs.



## 5. Local Challenges

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**5.1** The challenges in South and Vale reflect the challenges felt by most local authorities nationwide:

**5.2** A lack of genuinely affordable housing remains an issue in the districts, particularly the shortage of 1-bedroom and 4-bedroom properties. These property sizes can attract in excess of 100 bids, such is the demand for them.

**5.3** Some registered providers are unwilling to offer tenancies to clients who have, for example, rent arrears or historic criminal convictions, leaving certain client groups with extremely limited options of accommodation.

**5.4** There can be lengthy delays for properties to become available as demand for property maintenance services remains high following the Covid-19 pandemic. Homeless clients might remain in temporary accommodation for extended periods until their tenancy commences.

**5.5** The supply of privately rented properties has decreased markedly in the last decade as many landlords have opted to leave the market.

**5.6** Most properties in the open market are simply unaffordable for low-income families.

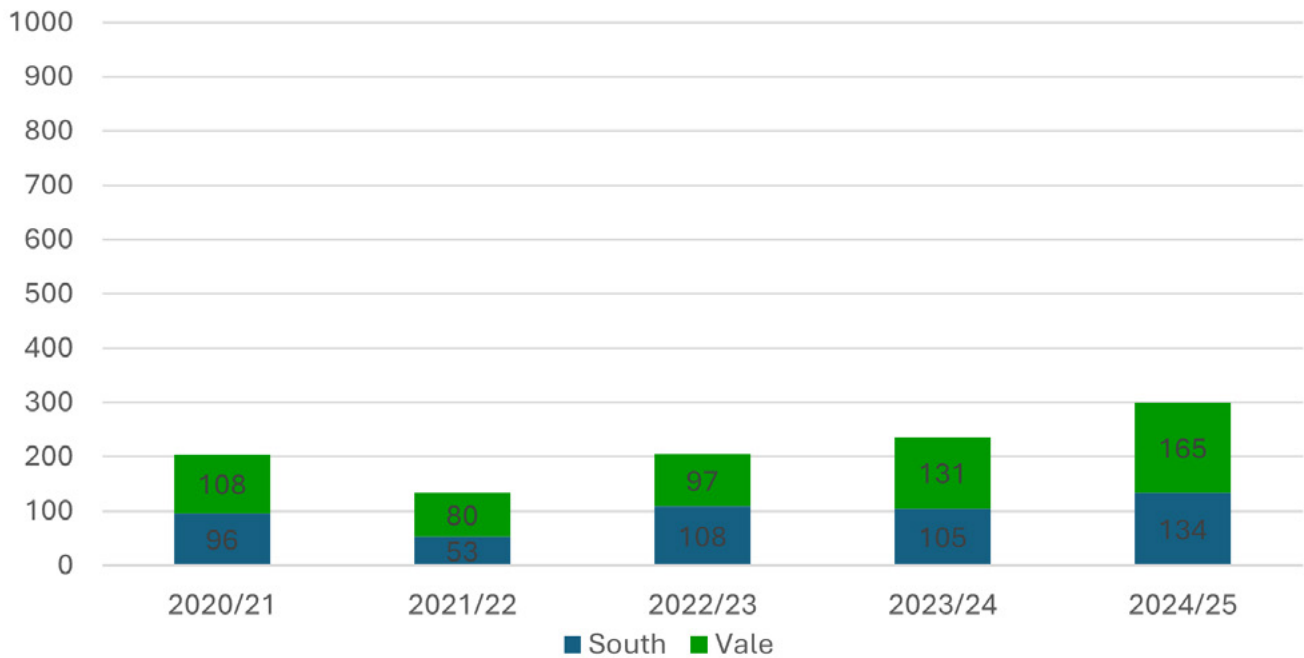
**5.7** The complexity of cases in South and Vale has risen greatly in recent years with approximately 60% of clients having some kind of support need, which might include a physical or learning disability or substance misuse issue.

**5.8** The Housing First scheme, while very effective in supporting and accommodating our most vulnerable and entrenched clients, has limited capacity. There are many other clients who would benefit from the scheme, but move-on levels are very low. Often, clients would struggle to maintain their tenancies without the ongoing support of the support agency, so they get stuck in the system long-term, meaning that vacancies are scarce.

**5.9** In 2024/25 the total number of homeless prevention cases (clients at risk of homelessness within 56 days) fell by nearly 20%. However, the number of homeless relief cases (clients who are already homeless) increased by 27%.

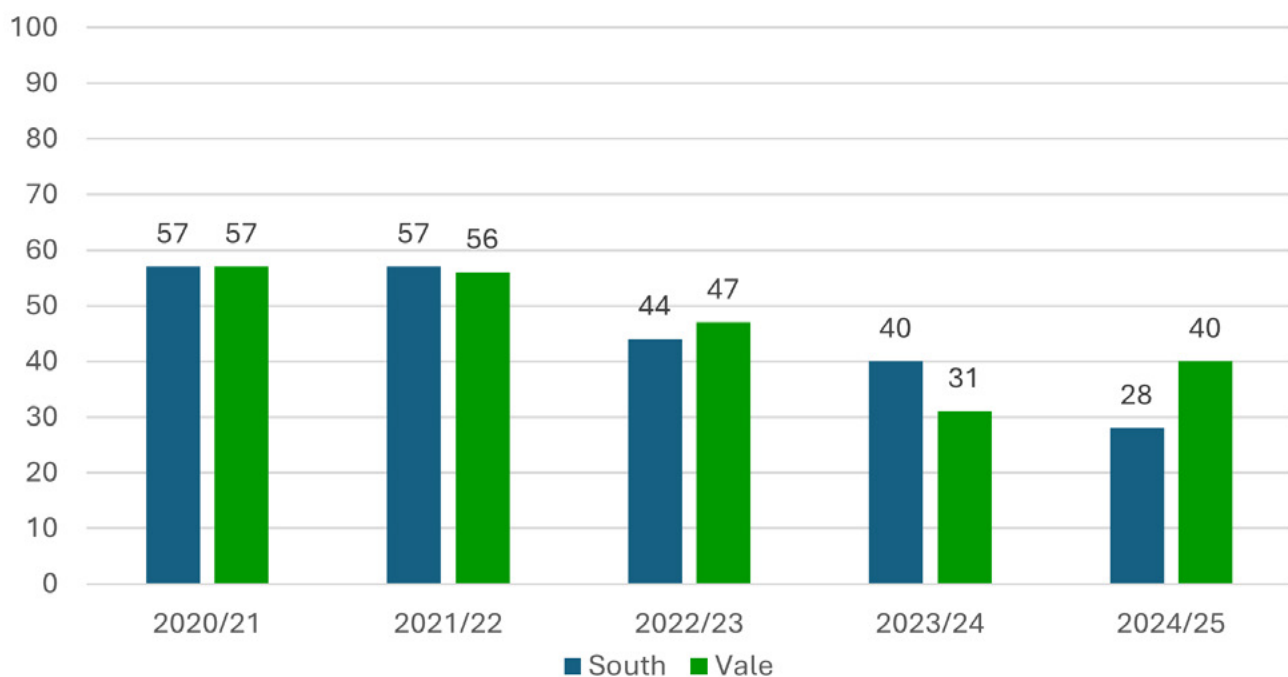


## Homelessness relief cases

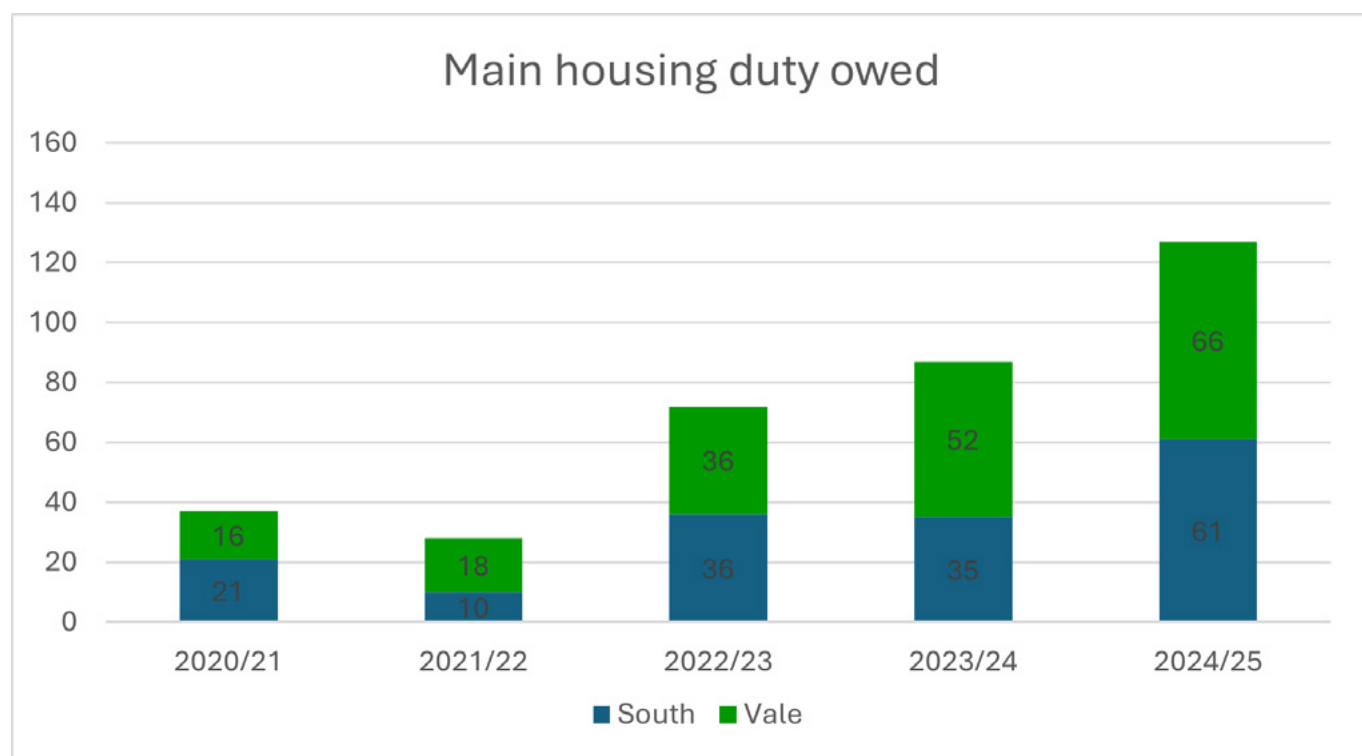


**5.10** This is reflected in the falling levels of homeless relief. South and Vale are very successful in preventing homelessness, but clients whom the council is unable to prevent from becoming homeless are often in the highest level of need or have behaviours and histories that make most mainstream housing options inaccessible for them:

## % of successful homelessness relief cases



**5.11** The increasing number of approaches from clients who are already homeless has inevitably resulted in a sizable rise in main duty acceptances, for “legally homeless” clients, for whom the councils must provide suitable permanent accommodation. The number of acceptances increased 47% in the 12 months from 2023/24:



**5.12** Internal consultation exercises have revealed the growing need to ensure the coordination of services between the councils, health services and partner agencies. Health and social care services are under pressure, with high demand leading to a reduction in timely access to services. Delays in care assessments, for example, have impacted homeless clients who cannot move to more suitable accommodation until these are completed.

**5.13** The need for strong partnership working was highlighted in the Systems-wide evaluation of homelessness and rough sleeping: preliminary findings<sup>5</sup>:

**“All local authorities agreed that partnership working was key to successfully delivering programme activities... all local authorities referenced the importance of working with the voluntary and community sector, as well as mental health, probation, and employment services. Given the varied and multiple needs of some people experiencing homelessness, support from these specialist services was fundamental to delivering effective interventions.”**

**5.14** Officers at South and Vale have also cited delays in the processing of Universal Credit claims as a cause of homelessness, as tenants accrue arrears while awaiting the activation of their claims. There is currently no formal mechanism in place between South and Vale and the DWP to resolve these issues – the escalation process has proved ineffective in raising such matters. Officers report that the DWP refuse to discuss claims with the councils, even when consent is on file, or that requests by email are simply ignored.

<sup>5</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings)

**5.15** This forms part of a wider issue with data sharing – many agencies, including the Police and healthcare, are unwilling to disclose information about clients. This can stunt the councils' enquiries when considering whether a client might be in priority need, for example, or assessing the risk of placing a client in particular accommodation.

**5.16** Improved joined-up working is required in order to optimise the use of existing resources and funding to meet the demands of rising homelessness.

## 6. Predicted future levels of homelessness

**6.1** Central government has announced new funding<sup>6</sup> to support councils to address the housing crisis, including:

- Over £633 million for the Homelessness Prevention Grant in 2025/26, a £192 million increase from 2024/25
- £185.6 million for the Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant
- More than £37 million for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme
- £58.7 million for the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant
- £10 million to the Changing Futures Programmes which offers long-term support for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage
- £7.6 million for Sector Support grants that will strengthen the capacity the voluntary sector with more staff
- £5 million for Emergency Accommodation Reduction Pilots

**6.2** The landmark Renters' Rights Bill<sup>7</sup> will see the abolition of Section 21 'no fault' evictions, one of the leading causes of homelessness. This might reduce the number of evictions from assured shorthold tenancies, as well as giving greater security to new and existing tenancies.

**6.3** Despite these positive intentions, the data points toward an ongoing crisis, with increasing demand on homelessness services. Systemic pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis are creating greater mental health challenges. This will continue to increase the demand for tailored mental health and substance abuse services, particularly for rough sleepers and vulnerable individuals.

**6.4** The 20% rise in rough sleeping from 2023-2024 could continue, driven by high rents, evictions, and the lack of affordable housing.

**6.5** In terms of temporary accommodation usage, Shelter predicts that the number of households who are homeless and living in TA could increase to almost 182,000 households by 2029. This is an increase of 44% compared to current levels<sup>8</sup>.

**6.6** High demand for housing will continue to be a challenge for the districts, as housing supply is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the need across both private and social rented sectors. The demand is expected to increase owing to increased financial pressure on vulnerable households, brought about by increasing rents, food prices and energy costs.

<sup>6</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/news/largest-ever-cash-boost-to-turn-the-tide-on-homelessness](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/largest-ever-cash-boost-to-turn-the-tide-on-homelessness)

<sup>7</sup> [bills.parliament.uk/bills/3764](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3764)

<sup>8</sup> [assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndnnpn0s/1N3D1Sy0gku1afA4OBwKOK/3790d73804451e722a6ce83d57e48e37/Growing\\_demand\\_-\\_future\\_trends\\_in\\_temporary\\_accommodation.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndnnpn0s/1N3D1Sy0gku1afA4OBwKOK/3790d73804451e722a6ce83d57e48e37/Growing_demand_-_future_trends_in_temporary_accommodation.pdf)

**6.7** The councils have seen an increase in approaches from single people with multiple needs in recent years. This trend is expected to continue. The increase in the proportion of approaches from complex singles impacts the council in a variety of ways including the availability of supported accommodation, rough sleeper numbers, risk factors and the suitability of temporary accommodation, demand for one-bedroom properties advertised on the councils' choice-based lettings system, the councils' relationship with housing associations and commercial temporary accommodation providers.

**6.8** Large families are expected to continue to face long waiting times for affordable housing owing to a lack of four bedroom or larger properties available on the councils' choice-based lettings system. This is compounded by affordability concerns related to benefit cap, affordability criteria applied by providers and increased demand from resettlement cohorts with a greater composition of larger households (see below).

**6.9** Movement of households from temporary accommodation into permanent housing is often delayed owing to the lag between a provider advertising a property, and the property being ready to let. These delays can lead to an increase in homeless presentations, as households in precarious situations are unable to sustain their housing arrangements. Revisions to the Homechoice Agreement should improve the situation, but delays are likely until this can be agreed.

**6.10** The councils' ongoing work to support households applying for assistance under the Afghan and Ukraine resettlement schemes will contribute to demand for accommodation. In the case of the Afghan cohort, many of these are large households and require accommodation of four bedrooms size or larger.

**6.11** In addition to these cohorts, the council will continue to receive applications from refugee households leaving Home Office dispersal accommodation in the district after receiving their leave to remain decisions.



# 7. Our Objectives

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**7.1** Based on the findings of the homelessness review, five objectives for the new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy have been identified.

**7.2** Some objectives were amended based on the results of consultation exercises.

## **7.3 Early intervention to prevent homelessness**

**7.4** Findings from the homelessness review highlight that South and Vale perform particularly well in preventing homelessness. We must maintain this focus in order to protect clients from falling into homelessness and temporary accommodation.

**7.5** Preventing homelessness before it occurs is our priority. We will:

- Improve access to advice and support services for those at risk
- Deliver the right housing solutions at the earliest opportunity
- Increase the options available to resolve the needs of those at risk of becoming homeless
- Implement targeted prevention initiatives for vulnerable groups, such as care leavers and victims of domestic abuse

**7.6** The Systems-Wide Evaluation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Services highlighted the need to shift from focussing on homelessness relief to homelessness prevention: Right now, a lot of government efforts are focused on crisis relief – that is, responding to emergencies – but not enough is being done to prevent homelessness in the first place. This limits our ability to create long-term solutions and stores up problems for the future.<sup>9</sup>

**7.7** We will work proactively to ensure that people received tailored advice, assistance and support to help them to find or remain in a safe home.

## **7.8 Strong partnership working to tackle complex homelessness**

**7.9** Many individuals experiencing homelessness have complex needs that require coordinated interventions. Effective services have the potential to positively impact many of the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping. We will:

- Strengthen collaboration between housing, health, criminal justice, the DWP and social care services
- Develop partnerships with local agencies to support vulnerable clients
- Develop multi-agency case management approaches to support those with multiple needs

<sup>9</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings)

**7.10** The Systems-wide evaluation of homelessness and rough sleeping: preliminary findings<sup>10</sup> also highlights the need for strong partnerships with statutory agencies, but also with local agencies and the third sector: Collaboration is Important: We've seen some positive signs of cross-departmental work, particularly on health and criminal justice... Local Partnerships Make a Difference: The best results come when local councils, charities, and other groups work closely together.

**7.11** South and Vale will continue to forge strong relationships with local agencies and charities to support vulnerable clients, as well as work with neighbouring authorities as part of the CHSG and JHSG.

## **7.12 Increase access to suitable, long-term housing**

**7.13** Sustainable housing solutions are key to breaking the cycle of homelessness. We will:

- Increase the supply of genuinely affordable and supported housing options
- Work with landlords to enhance access to the private rented sector
- Ensure wraparound support services are in place to help individuals maintain their tenancies

**7.14** The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>11</sup>, part of the Plan for Change, was revised in December 2024. It is a positive step towards giving councils greater powers to build more social homes alongside vital infrastructure such as GP surgeries, schools and shops.

**7.15** This supports the government's ambition to build tens of thousands of affordable homes across the country.

**7.16** The government is also bringing forward reforms to the Right to Buy scheme to reverse the decline in much needed council housing and better protect existing housing stock. Decisive action has already been taken to reduce maximum discounts and allow councils to retain all receipts from sales to scale up delivery to meet future housing need.

**7.17** Councils already have greater flexibility to use Right to Buy receipts to build and buy more homes as well as an additional £450 million to secure and create homes for families at risk of homelessness.

## **7.18 Effectively end rough sleeping**

**7.19** Everyone should have a safe space to sleep, so we are we are committed to ensuring that rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurrent. To achieve this, we will:

- Strengthen outreach services to engage with rough sleepers and provide tailored support
- Improve access to emergency accommodation and specialist support
- Work with health, social care, and voluntary sector partners to address the underlying causes of rough sleeping

<sup>10</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-preliminary-findings)

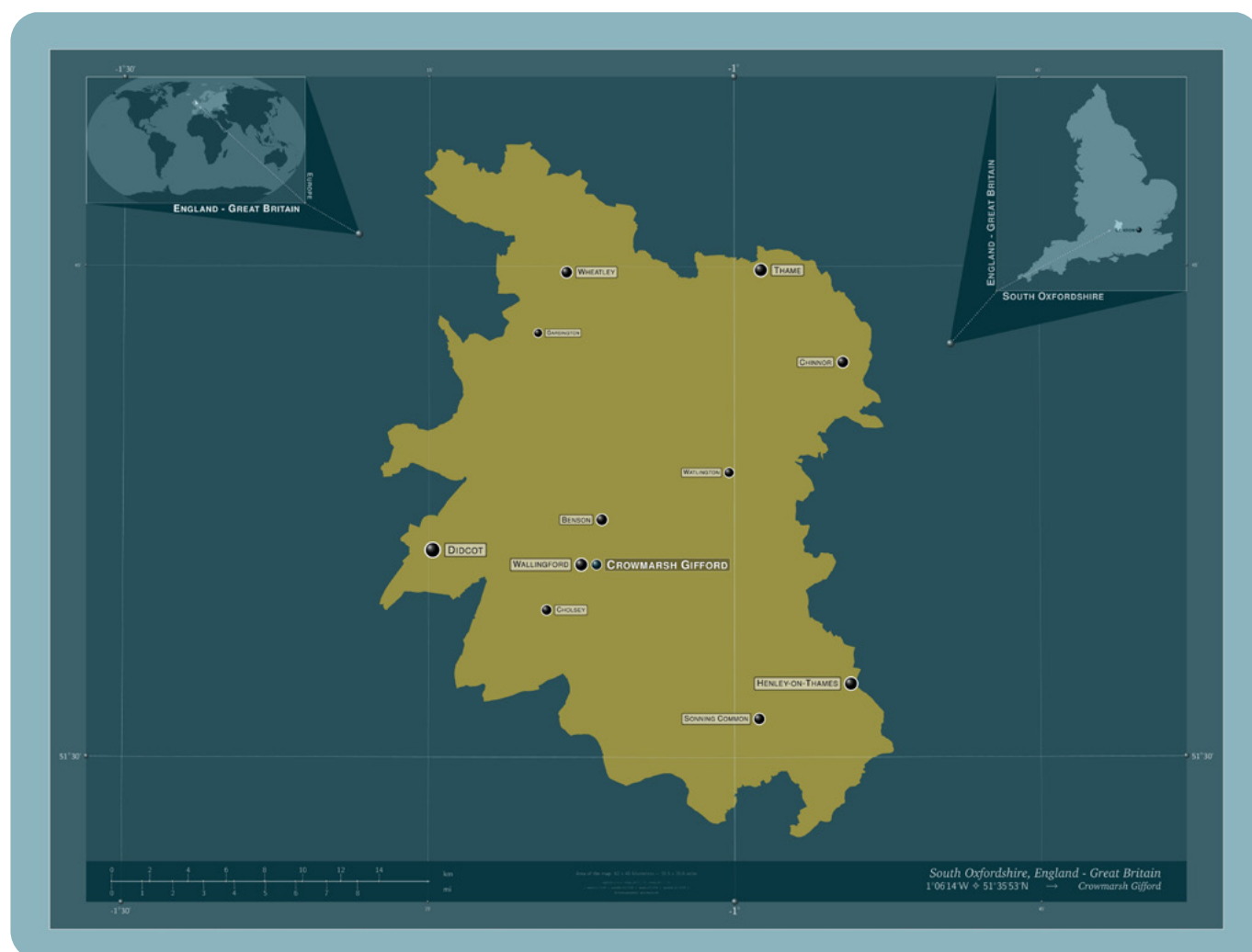
<sup>11</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

## 7.20 Minimise use of temporary accommodation

**7.21** The councils recognise the detrimental effect that temporary accommodation can have on clients, particularly families and those with mental health issues.

**7.22** We will reduce reliance on temporary accommodation by prioritising rapid rehousing solutions and ensuring timely support for those at risk of homelessness. Our approach will focus on:

- Pre-crisis intervention to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity
- Expanding the availability of move-on accommodation
- Working with registered providers to facilitate quicker transitions from temporary accommodation into permanent housing
- Increasing the supply and availability of council-owned stock to reduce the reliance on nightly-charged emergency accommodation



# 8. Delivering the Strategy

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**8.1** This strategy will be delivered through a three-year action plan, setting out clear milestones and measurable outcomes. Progress will be monitored through regular partnership meetings and reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability and responsiveness to emerging challenges. We will engage with service users and stakeholders to review and refine our approach over time.

## 8.2 Measurable outcomes

**8.3** The success of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be measured against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- **The percentage of successful homeless prevention cases\***  
The KPI target for 2025/26 is 80% successful prevention cases\*\*
- **The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation**  
The KPI target for 2025/26 is a ceiling of 20 households per council
- **The number of homeless households in emergency (nightly charged) accommodation**  
The KPI target for 2025/26 is a ceiling of 8 households per council
- **The number of rough sleepers**  
The KPI target for 2025/26 is a maximum of 3 rough sleepers in each district
- **Average length of stay in emergency accommodation**  
The KPI target for 2025/26 is a maximum of 42 days

\* The definition of a successful homelessness prevention case is that the household has suitable and sustainable accommodation available for a minimum of six months.

\*\* The most recent South East regional figure for successful homelessness prevention is 52%<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness)

# 9. Appendix

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Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review 2025

Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils Action Plan – 2025 - 2028



# Alternative Formats

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Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Housing Lettings team if you would like this policy in an alternative format – 01235 422 436 or email [housing@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:housing@southandvale.gov.uk)

# Communication and Contact Information

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For further information about this policy, please contact the Housing Advice team on 01235 422 452 or email [housing@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:housing@southandvale.gov.uk)

# Change Record

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Author(s):	T Gaunt
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