Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan

2025 - 2028

South Oxfordshire District Council

Listening Learning Leading

Vale of White Horse District Council

Early intervention to prevent homelessness

What do we aim to achieve?	What will we do to achieve this?	Actions	Measurable outcomes	Responsible officer/team	Timescale for target to be acheived (end of 3-month period)
Prevent homelessness via early identification and pre-crisis intervention	Ensure service is publicised and accessible to the public	Monitor cases that indicate a risk of homelessness through the self-service system on the Homechoice website	EHOs allocated to officers within 7 days. Urgent cases identified and allocated within 24 hours	Housing Advice / Rough Sleeper Lead Officer	Q1 2026/27
		Ensure council website provides appropriate advice and information including contact details for the housing needs and lettings teams. Ensure that phone menu provides clear instructions to enable access to the desired service area	Websites updated – customer satisfaction exercise completed		Q4 2025/26
		Update all digital advertising to access hard-to-reach groups i.e. publicising rough sleeper services and SWEP e.g. on social media platforms	Digital advertising project completed		Q4 2025/26
		Diagnosing the problem: prompt identification of threat of homelessness at first point of contact	Homeless prevention cases adopted by officers within 7 days of first contact	Housing Advice	Q4 2025/26
	Ensure appropriate advice and casework actions carried out to support residents to remain in their homes	Provide officers with training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to undertake high quality casework in line with legislation and government guidance	80% successful prevention KPI met	Housing Advice Team Leader	Q1 2026/27
		Work with partner agencies e.g. Private Sector Team, Housing Benefit, CAB, Adult Social Care, support agencies and Registered Social Landlords to address factors that could lead to homelessness		Housing Advice	
		Creative use of Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) to help keep people in their homes e.g., help with arrears, short-term bridging payments, pet insurance fees, cleaning costs		Housing Advice	

Prevent homelessness via early identification and pre-crisis intervention	Support residents to secure sustainable long-term housing	Provide advice and support to residents to maximise access to Registered Social Landlord properties through the councils' Homechoice system, i.e., prompt processing of applications, ensuring correct priority is awarded and working with customers to support them to bid for properties		Housing Advice / Housing Lettings	Q4 2025/26
		Make referrals to local supported accommodation providers e.g., MIND, YPSA, Life Housing, Place of Safety, as well as out-of-district providers for customers who are willing to relocate	Increase in new tenancies / licences created in supported accommodation	Housing Advice	
		Refer customers to White Horse Lettings (WHL), the councils' in-house lettings service, for offers of privately rented accommodation with financial assistance with rent-in-advance and deposits	WHL new tenancies created KPI met	White Horse Lettings / Housing Advice	
	Improve administrative protocols to ensure best practice	Adopt a new suite of letters which incorporates changes to legislation and caselaw	New suite of letters adopted and installed	Housing Advice	Q4 2025/26
		Update all tasks and leaflets to incorporate changes to legislation and caselaw, and to record new services and agencies within the districts	All tasks updated on the system; all leaflets updated on the council websites		

Strong partnership working to tackle complex homelessness

What do we aim to achieve?	What will we do to achieve this?	Actions	Measurable outcomes	Responsible officer/team	Timescale for outcome
Prevent and relieve homelessness for clients in the highest level of need through the development and strengthening of relationships with partner agencies	Engage in countywide schemes to provide input and to learn from other agencies	Attend Joint Housing Steering Group (young persons), Joint Management Group (adults) and Countywide Housing Steering Group meetings	100% attendance at all meetings. Formalised procedures implemented for the sharing of resources, data and information with neighbouring local authorities and agencies	Housing Advice	Q4 2025/26
		Attend all statutory meetings such as multi-agency meetings, joint tasking and risk management			
		Attend 2-monthly meetings with Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire to develop working practices for Housing Needs Officers countywide			
		Attend Homeless Mortality Review meetings to provide input into the deaths of deceased clients who were homeless			

What do we aim to achieve?	What will we do to achieve this?	Actions	Measurable outcomes	Responsible officer/team	Timescale for outcome
Prevent and relieve homelessness for clients in the highest level of need through the development and strengthening of relationships with partner agencies	Streamline communication channels with other agencies	Work with Adult Social Care, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, and to improve sharing of information required	Ensure that assessments of clients' needs, including capacity assessments and care plans are completed within the agreed timescales	Housing Advice / Housing Lettings	Q4 2025/26
		Ensure that referrals from Probation are received well in advance of the client's release date, to allow ample time to explore housing options and assess priority need for temporary accommodation	6 prison leavers approached the council in need of emergency advice in 24/25		
		Develop relationships with the Out of Hospital Team for an improved understanding of what the councils can offer vulnerable clients with health issues	10 hospital leavers approached the council in need of emergency advice in 24/25. Through improved communication, reduce this to 9 in 25/26 and 8 in 26/27	Housing Advice	
	Strengthen partnerships with registered providers	Negotiate with providers to agree the new Housing Allocations Policy, and to agree a more flexible approach when assessing affordability and eligibility	90 nomination rejections in 24/25 – reduce to 81 in 2025/26	Housing Lettings	Q4 2025/26

Increase access to suitable, long-term housing

What do we aim to achieve?	What will we do to achieve this?	Actions	Measurable outcomes	Responsible officer/team	Timescale for outcome
Increase the number of permanent, genuinely affordable accommodation options available to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness	Add to the portfolio of properties owned by the council	Complete the purchase of properties using suitable capital funds available to be brought within the housing landlord model	Purchase accommodation for general needs housing for singles / couples	Strategic Landlord / Housing Compliance	Q4 2025/26
			Purchase of new Housing to meet LAHF targets		
		Progress the development of more council owned sites for housing	Submission of planning pre-applications (if issues of due diligence can be overcome)		

Increase the number of permanent, genuinely affordable accommodation options available to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness	Support developers, RPs and CLTs to deliver more suitable social and affordable housing	Offer regular meetings with Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to understand what support they need to deliver community-based housing solutions	CLTs have information necessary to bring forward new housing schemes	Affordable Housing Housing Lettings	Q4 2025/26
		Provide RPs, developers and CLTs with a quarterly newsletter of housing issues and updates within the districts	Newsletter published and circulated quarterly to all RPs operating in the districts		
		Where funds are available, accept and review the application of S106 housing grants, putting those that are suitable forward for council-decision	Handling of applications for S106 housing grant funding in line with the updated policy and process		
		Engage with RPs to discourage them from advertising properties too soon which can lead to long lead-in times and delays for clients	Establish baseline of lead time for RP adverts – use the figure to develop a target to reduce waiting time	Housing Allocations	
	Support and regulate the private rental sector to increase the delivery of good quality private rental homes	Help owners of empty homes to bring them back into use	12 empty homes identified and supported to be reoccupied in each district annually	Private Sector Housing	Q4 2027/28
		Work with Communications Team to agree a White Horse Lettings (WHL) rebranding and digital marketing campaign to increase the number of private properties available	Completion of rebranding and marketing campaign	White Horse Lettings	Q3 2025/26
	Implement current and emerging planning policies to maximise the delivery of affordable housing to meet established, district-wide housing needs	Monitor the progression of the Joint Local Plan 2041 to understand timeframes around the potential implementation of emerging policies	Adoption of emerging planning policies which may raise the overall percentage of affordable housing developers are required to provide, and alter tenure mixes require to meet established local needs	Affordable Housing	Q4 2025/26

Effectively end rough sleeping

What do we aim to achieve?	What will we do to achieve this?	Actions	Measurable outcomes	Responsible officer/team	Timescale for outcome
Prevent rough sleeping wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief, and non-recurring	Work closely with Outreach workers to tackle rough sleeping	Daily contact with Outreach to ensure that rough sleeping sites are visited next working day	All rough sleeping sites visited and checked within 48 hours of notification	Outreach worker / Rough Sleeper Lead Officer / Housing Advice Team Leader	Q4 2025/26
		Weekly meetings with Outreach to agree actions for all identified and prospective rough sleepers	Outreach able to provide current status of all rough sleepers at weekly meeting		
		Ensure that Outreach meet with clients as often as required to complete and provide the paperwork required to progress their homeless and housing register applications			
	Explore all housing options available to rough sleepers	Complete Access Panel referrals for all identified rough sleepers within 48 hours of verification	Weekly processing of referrals at Access Panel	Rough Sleeper Lead Officer / Outreach worker	Q4 2025/26
		Work with all identified rough sleepers under the Homeless Relief Duty	All identified rough sleepers to be opened under Relief within 48 hours of verification	Rough Sleeper Lead Officer	
		Request urgent processing of housing register applications for rough sleeping clients	All identified rough sleepers to be accepted onto the housing register within 7 days of verification, if eligible	Rough Sleeper Lead Officer / Housing Assistant	
		Complete referrals for all housing schemes, shelters and supported accommodation units within 7 days of verification	Increase in numbers of rough sleepers accepted into housing projects such as SSTS, Cedar and O'Hanlon House	Rough Sleeper Lead Officer / Outreach worker	Q4 2025/26
	Utilise the Housing First scheme to accommodate the most entrenched rough sleepers	Identify 6 x suitable clients (3 x South, 3 x Vale) for forthcoming vacancies and support them to engage with the process	6 clients housed in registered provider properties with support in place	Housing Needs Team Leader / Rough Sleeping Lead Officer	Q4 2025/26
		Complete referrals into countywide Housing First panel and advocate for their acceptance	1+ new Housing First tenancy per authority each year	Housing Needs Team Leader	Q4 2026/27

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Prevent rough sleeping wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief, and non-recurring	Reduce reliance on nightly charged accommodation	Place clients in council-owned properties wherever possible as an alternative to emergency accommodation	Maximum of 8 clients in nightly charged accommodation per authority KPI	Housing Compliance Team Leader / Housing Advice Team Leader	Q4 2025/26
		Vale - Purchase of 9 new housing units for temporary accommodation South – Purchase of up to 30 housing units, which may be used as temporary accommodation to avoid use of B&B and hotels		Housing Advice Team Leader	Q4 2026/27

Minimise use of temporary accommodation

What do we aim to achieve?	What will we do to achieve this?	Actions	Measurable outcomes	Responsible officer/team	Timescale for outcome
Decrease the number of placements in temporary accommodation and the length of time clients stay there	Explore all options available to prevent placements in the first place	Provide mediation between clients and excluders to enable them to remain in the property	80%+ successful homelessness prevention KPI met	Housing Needs Officer / Housing Needs Team Leader Housing Needs Officer	Q4 2026/27
		Use the homeless prevention grant creatively to maintain tenancies	Quarterly monitoring of prevention outcome Secured existing accommodation for 6 months		
		Liaise with registered providers at the earliest opportunity to negotiate for clients to remain in their properties	Maximum of 20 clients in TA per authority - weekly monitoring of temporary accommodation numbers	Housing Advice Team Leader	
		Focus on vulnerable customers to secure the best housing outcomes available, rather than emergency placements			
	Move clients from TA into suitable accommodation at the earliest opportunity	End placements promptly by rapidly exploring all alternative housing options	Stay within 42-day ceiling for average length of stay	Temporary Accommodation Team	Q4 2025/26
		Proactive weekly bidding to support clients to secure long-term social housing	Bids placed weekly for all suitable properties and Final Offer issued within 24 hours of nomination acceptance	Housing Needs Officer	
		Monitor tenancy start dates and, where appropriate, offer alternative accommodation options	Actively monitor tenancy start dates at weekly meetings – alternative accommodation options offered to clients Reduction in delays to tenancy commencements	Allocations Team / Temporary Accommodation Lettings Officer	Q4 2025/26

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The councils are committed to achieving the outcomes detailed above. It should be noted, however, that some outcomes may be influenced by external factors beyond the councils' direct control, such as changes in national policy, housing market conditions and increasing levels of housing need. These factors may impact the councils' ability to deliver certain outcomes within the given timescales.