

# City of York Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation briefing: October 2024

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## 1. Background and introduction

Since 2023 a review of the previous [Homelessness Strategy 2018-23](#) has been underway, in accordance with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) expectations<sup>1</sup>. Advice from DLUHC has indicated that having a review process underway is the priority and a strategy that is approved during 2024 would be acceptable.

This briefing note summarises the progress made during the 2018-23 strategy period, and sets out recommendations on the new strategy approach in the context of local provision and housing needs. Views are sought on the proposals and we will be keen to understand your perspective on tackling homelessness together in York.

The strategy aims to build on existing successes and partnerships to make homelessness **rare, brief and non-recurring**, offering pathways to suitable housing that can be sustained with high quality, person-centred support.

The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will take a **Housing First** approach for single homelessness clients, focusing on the rapid re-housing of those facing homelessness, ideally avoiding time in a hotel or temporary accommodation. Where an individual or family need help to establish and maintain their tenancy, **we will support the**

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<sup>1</sup> “Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years. The social services authority must provide reasonable assistance.”

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation>

**delivery of cross-agency support services** We will give attention to the specific **needs of disabled people** will work to **prevent rough sleeping** and **tackle domestic abuse**. We will work with partners to develop and sustain services which achieve these goals. **The supply of suitable and affordable homes** is key to the success of this strategy, alongside **prevention of homelessness** and keeping people in their own homes where possible. We will take action, harness resources and work in partnership to make more homes available. Raising the level of ambition is critical to reducing the number of children in unsuitable housing and at risk of homelessness, with **long-term benefits to the City across Education, Skills, Health and Wellbeing**.

Provision of good quality housing to meet the range of needs across the City’s residents is recognised as central to the Council’s 2023-27 Plan<sup>2</sup> as part of Core Commitments, Affordability and Health and Wellbeing, and to the vision of “One City, for all”. Important elements of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>3</sup> and Economic Strategy are also met by support for vulnerable households at a time of crisis to achieve sustainable housing<sup>4</sup>.

It is intended to bring the Homelessness Strategy to council Executive in December 2024.

## 2. Proposed Homelessness Strategy Framework summary

Theme	Key elements over 2024-29
1. Expansion of Housing First with 250 additional 1-bed homes over strategy period	<p>Expansion of Housing First through a formal partnership investment model to increase revenue funding, alongside strategic purchases of suitable flats into the HRA stock and Registered Provider commitment</p> <p>Multidisciplinary Team providing holistic support for service users with complex needs, including e.g. dual diagnosis (Annex A)</p> <p>This takes into account core elements of the Resettlement Review recommendations and builds on existing service strengths including the Mental Health Housing First provision</p>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/9262/council-plan-2023-to-2027>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.york.gov.uk/HealthWellbeing10YearStrategy>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/8949/york-economic-strategy-2022-to-2032>

Theme	Key elements over 2024-29
2. Resettlement service redesign delivering review recommendations	Incorporate Resettlement Review recommendations into the new services, including a revised model with Mental Health specialism and considerations of other specialist service areas
3. Expansion of social housing	Maximise delivery through Section 106 planning permissions and the council's Housing Delivery Programme, in addition to work with social housing partners to increase the level of Homes England grant funded investment in the City Priorities informed by the Local Housing Needs Assessment 2022 or successor evidence base document <sup>5</sup>
4. Expansion of Temporary Accommodation: providing needs evidenced	Analysis of needs with proposals for additional Temporary Accommodation to ensure capacity is sufficient for families faced with homelessness. Options include purchase of additional properties into the Housing Revenue Account for 'dispersed' Temporary Accommodation.
5. Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment	Develop City of York Tenancy Sustainment Strategy for CYC as Landlord and in partnership with other Registered Providers in the City Build on homelessness prevention offer and support high quality delivery of Homelessness Reduction Act statutory duties
6. Tackling Domestic Abuse	To achieve the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. Support survivors through earlier identification of domestic abuse and working with survivors using a co-ordinated community response, prevent homelessness where possible, including preventative work with perpetrators or individuals at risk of perpetrating abusive behaviour.
7. Revised governance structure and performance framework	A new governance structure and enhanced data reporting to establish clearly "what success looks like" in the new service delivery model as an effective performance framework.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/8270/ex-cyc-92-local-housing-needs-assessment-by-iceni-july-2022>

Theme	Key elements over 2024-29
	Regular performance review integrated into ongoing service improvement to achieve the strategy objectives.

### 3. Review of the 2018-23 strategy lifecycle

2018-23 Strategic Priority	Actions and achievements during 2018-23
<p><b>1. Reduce Rough Sleeping</b></p>	<p>A significant reduction of the number of people sleeping rough, from 29 in 2017 to 15 in 2023 using street count figure, and 4 using late 2023 estimate</p> <p>Implementation of the Rough Sleepers Initiative and additional resources to support people with complex needs, providing effective outreach</p> <p>Rough Sleeper Housing Navigator Team playing a critical role in identifying needs at an early stage for anyone rough sleeping or faced with from July 2020: supporting over 300 rough sleeping individuals during 2024/25</p> <p>An increase in Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) to work with complex / entrenched rough sleepers and people with complex mental health issues</p>
<p><b>2. Prevent Homelessness</b></p>	<p>Full implementation of the new homeless legislation the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, which extended LA responsibilities and embedded the prevention approach in service delivery</p> <p>A maintained and sustained core focus on early intervention and the prevention and prevention of homelessness: 1,174 successful homelessness preventions from 2018-23 and a total of 4,035 statutorily homelessness households supported from 2018-23 across both prevention and relief</p>

	<p>An increase in the number of housing options workers</p> <p>Use of the YorHome social lettings service to offer accommodation for people at risk of homelessness</p>
<p><b>3. Ensure appropriate accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness</b></p>	<p>The development and opening of James House 57 purpose built and fully furnished units of temporary accommodation</p> <p>An increase in emergency bed spaces available so services can react quickly to rough sleeping through NSNO, NAP Pads, B&amp;B and other forms of temporary accommodation. This creates additional spaces to meet short term peaks in demand.</p> <p>Zero homeless 16 or 17 year olds have been placed in B&amp;B and zero families for longer than 6 weeks</p> <p>Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme attracted capital and revenue funding to provide appropriate accommodation and support for 6 individuals with complex needs</p>
<p><b>4. Ensure appropriate support for people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness</b></p>	<p>Joint working with Housing, Mental Health clinical services and Adult Social Care via the mental health and housing meeting</p> <p>Housing First established with 33 tenancies providing both a home and the support needed to resolve homelessness</p> <p>Trauma informed service provision developed</p>
<p><b>5. Maintain and develop partnership working and strategic direction</b></p>	<p>Continued delivery of a comprehensive resettlement programme</p> <p>“Everyone in” successful emergency response to pandemic conditions in 2020</p>

## 4. Context and evidence base

A primary driver of homelessness in the City of York is the City's ongoing housing affordability challenge. Using data from the council's statutory homelessness returns alongside delivery data and the Local Housing Needs Assessment<sup>6</sup>, a shortfall is clearly evidenced which is exacerbated by the central government policy of Local Housing Allowance freeze since 2020 despite significant local private rent increases in this time. Local Housing Allowance is expected to be reindexed to the lowest 30% of rents in April 2024 however a review of the government's indicative uplifted figures indicates a significant shortfall is expected to remain<sup>7</sup>.

This has been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis since 2021 in food and other essentials which has increased housing and homelessness pressures at the same time as longer term rough sleeping has been tackled through initiatives in the last strategy period.

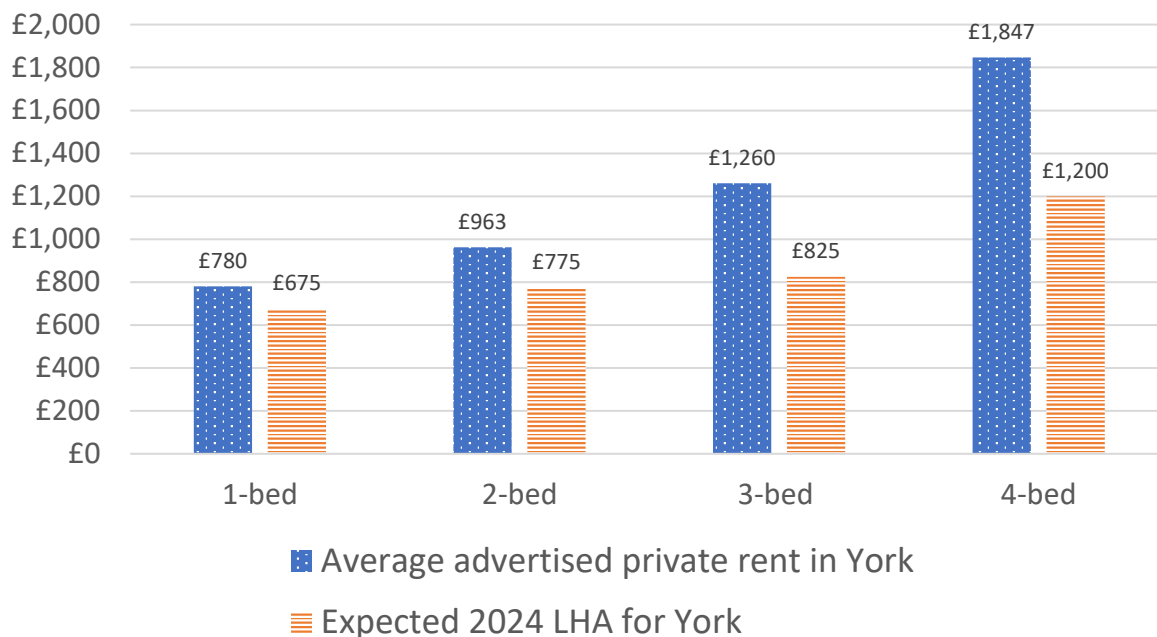
From a review of 40 lower market advertised private rental properties in the City of York in December 2023, none of the 1-4 bedroom homes were affordable within the 2024 Local Housing Allowance level. Average shortfalls are significant and act to effectively prevent the lowest income households to access the private rented sector.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/8270/ex-cyc-92-local-housing-needs-assessment-by-iceni-july-2022>

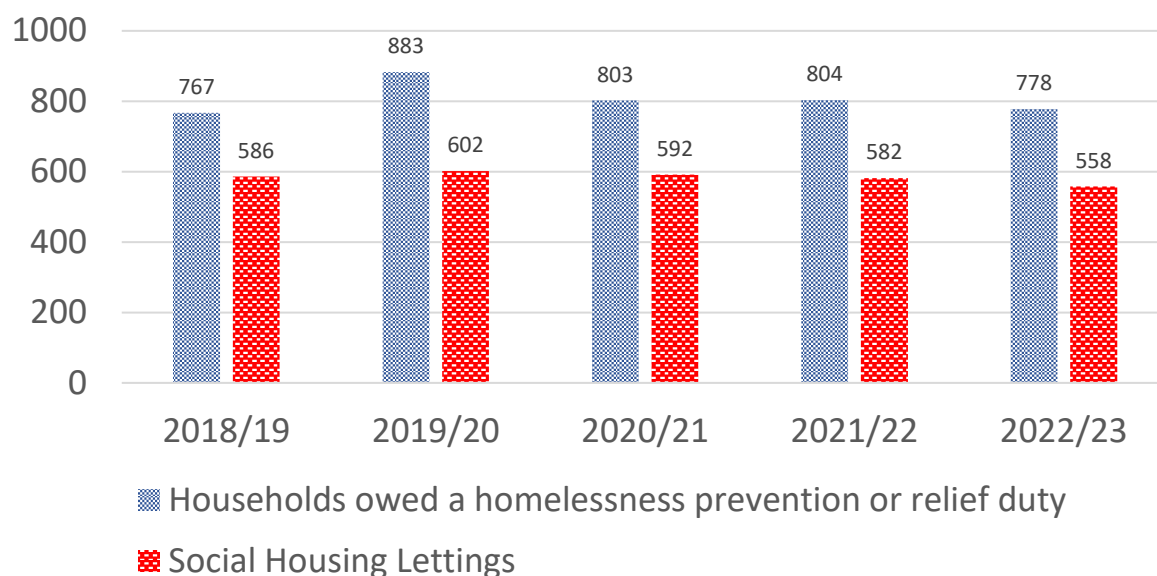
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-housing-allowance-indicative-rates-for-2024-to-2025/indicative-local-housing-allowance-rates-for-2024-to-2025>

## York comparison of monthly private rents and 2024 Local Housing Allowance

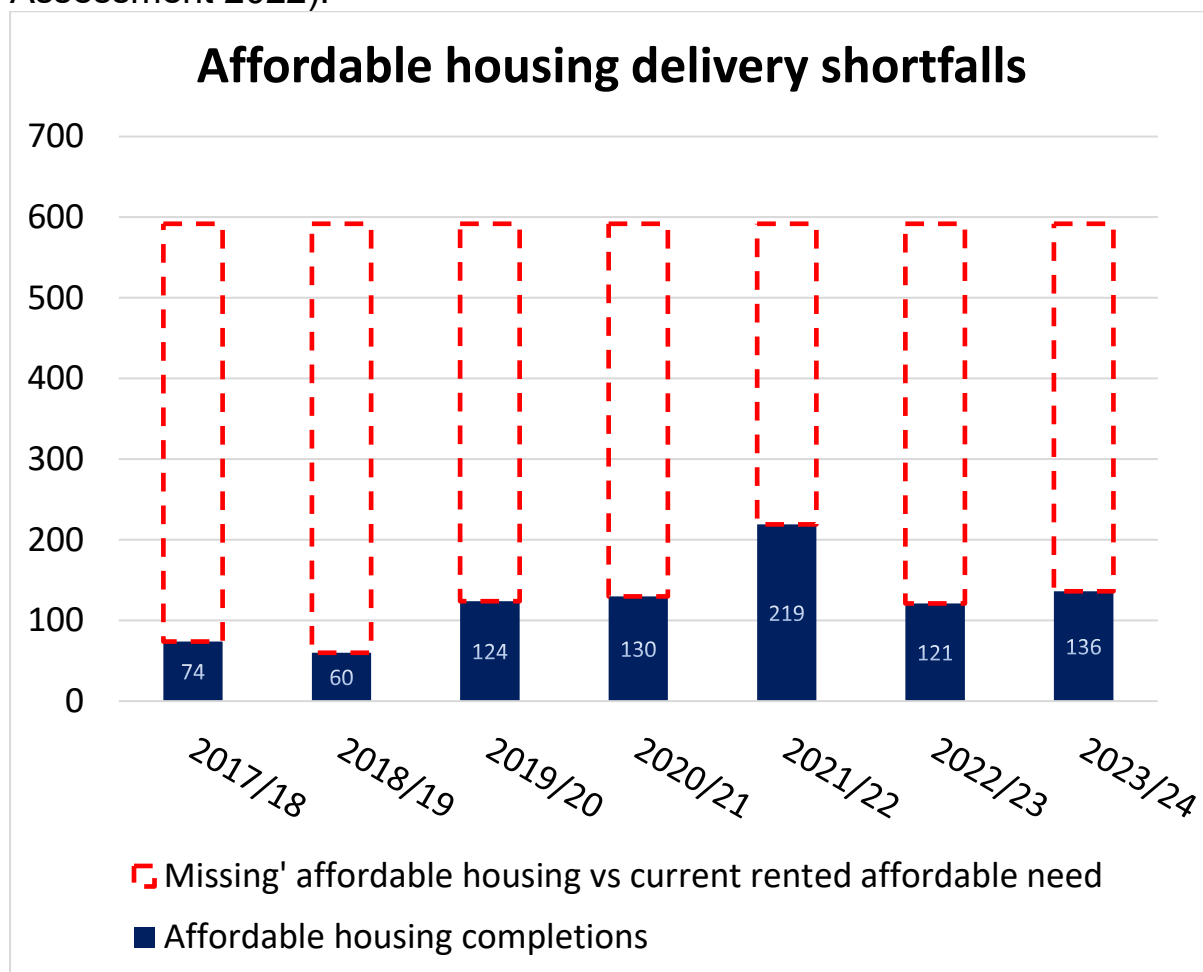


Statutory homelessness duties for prevention or relief are high relative to annual social housing lets.

## Statutory duties and social housing lettings



Annual housing delivery falls consistently far below the assessed annual need of 592 additional affordable homes (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2022).



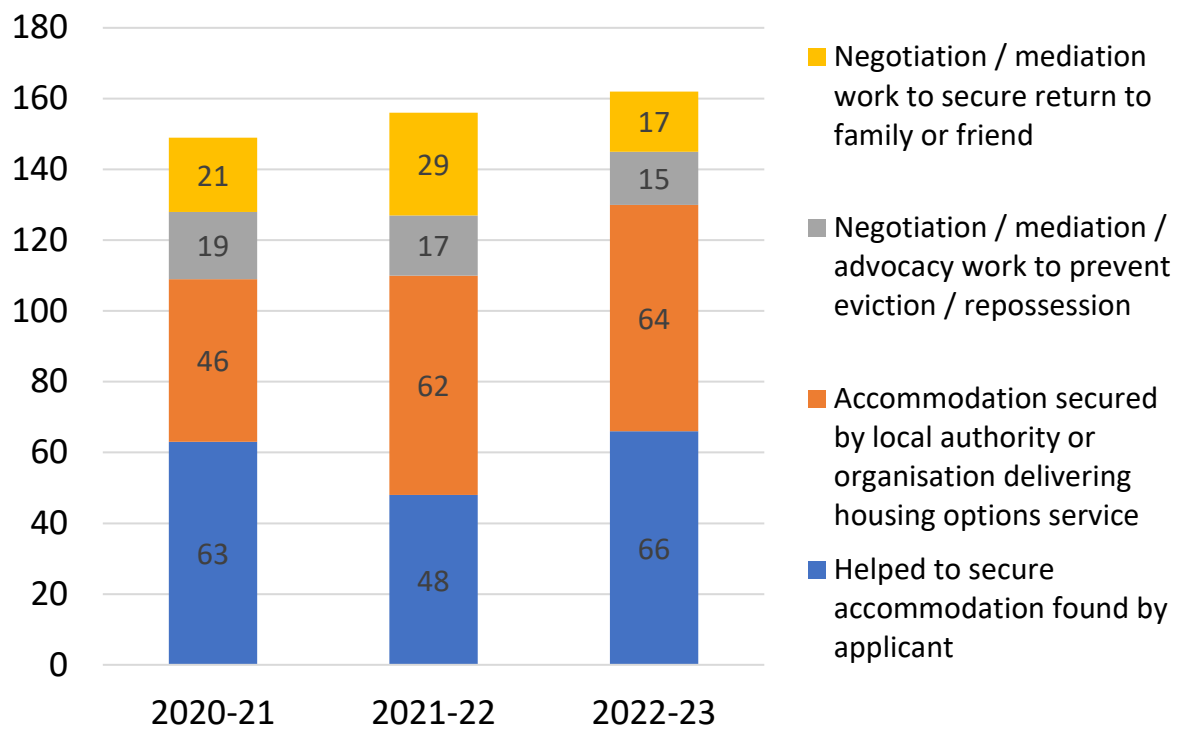
In addition key services such as mental health clinical care and social care are undergoing unprecedented pressure, with an estimated increase of 60% in adults with moderate to severe depressive symptoms nationally (p15) and a more than doubling of estimated 17-19 year olds with experiencing a mental health condition (p14).<sup>8</sup>

Around 150 successful homelessness prevention cases are achieved annually through the Housing Options service, significantly reducing the overall homelessness impact in the City. 50-70 of these are typically households including children.

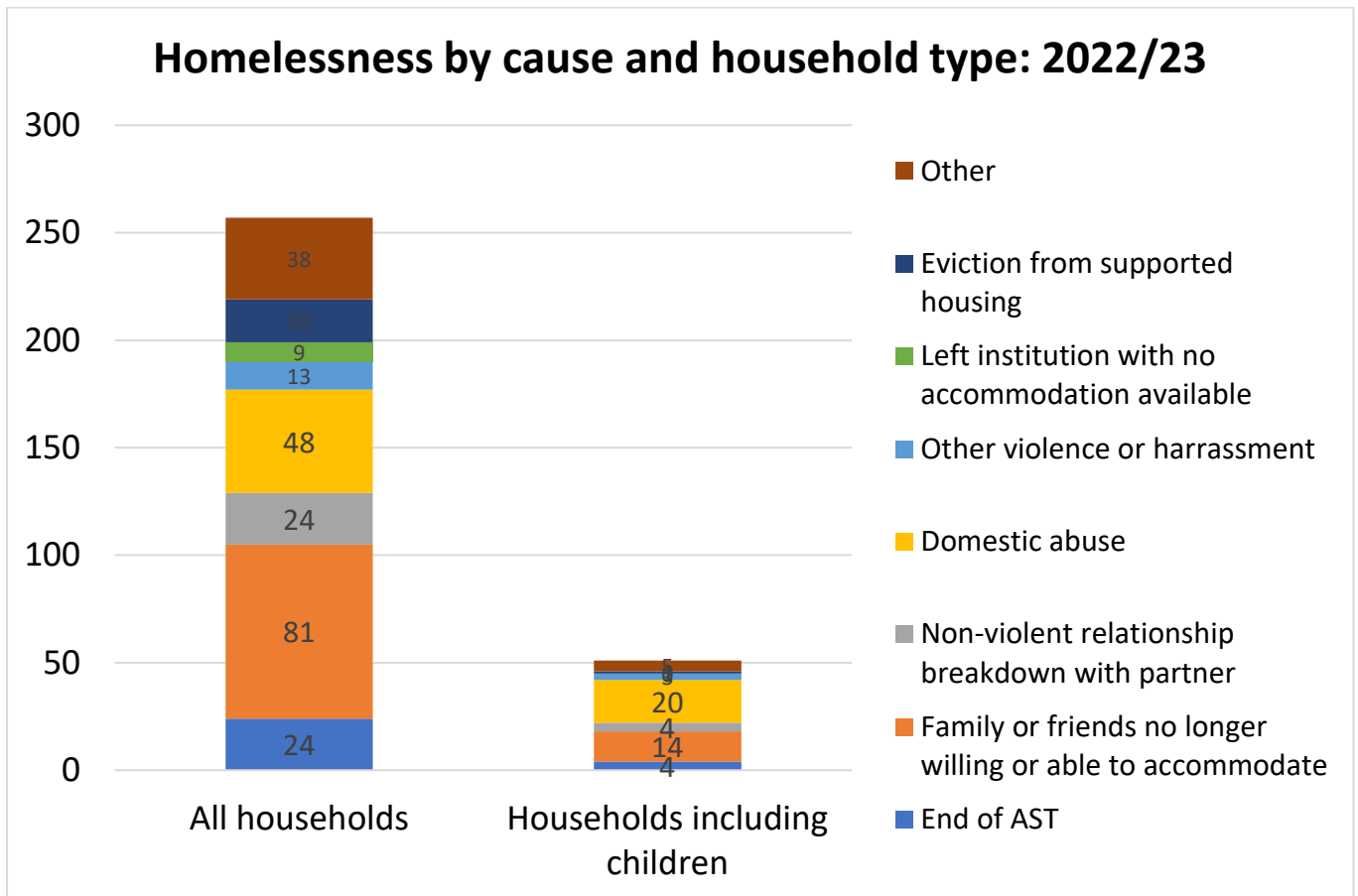
<sup>8</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06988/>



## Successful statutory homelessness prevention outcomes

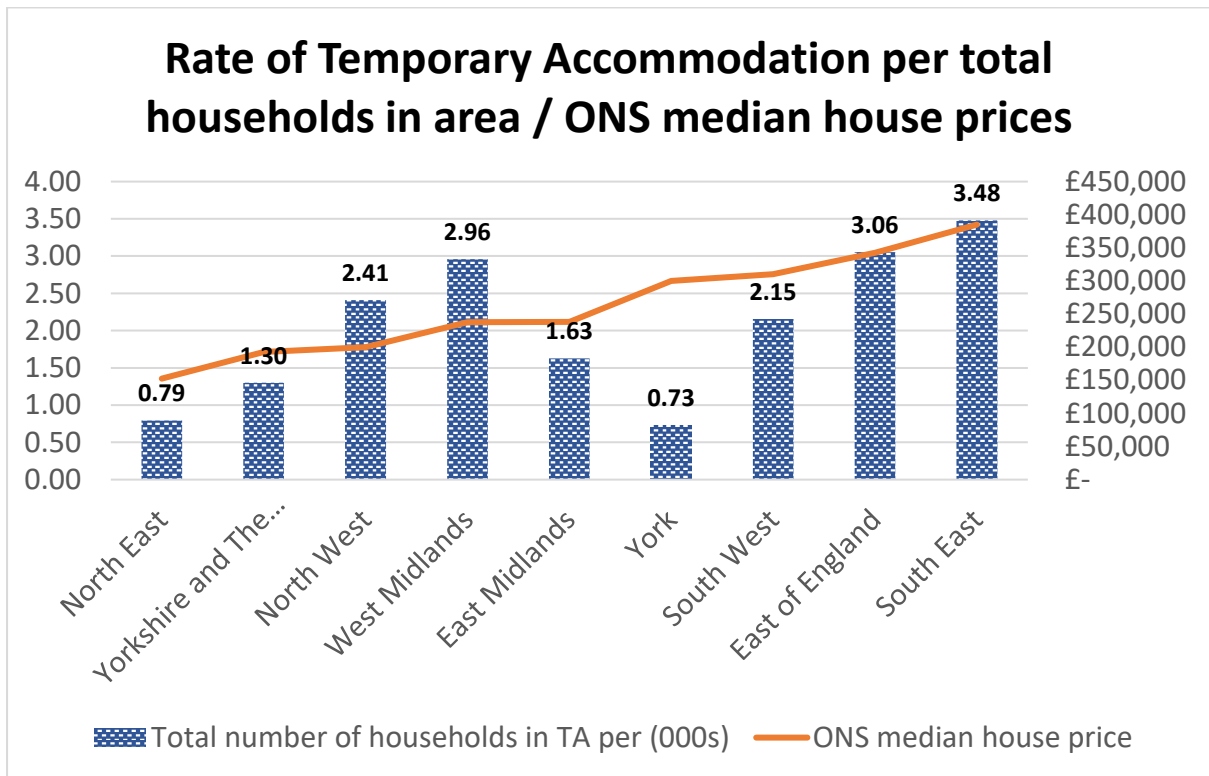


A leading cause of homelessness for all household types is “Family and friends no longer willing to accommodate”. In many cases this is likely to be related to housing market and benefit cuts pressures as noted above, and/or unmet needs support issues. For households with children, domestic abuse is the single highest cause of homelessness, highlighting the need for priority actions to reduce the occurrence. From 2023/24 onwards, newly accepted refugees accommodated within York have now become a significant homelessness needs group. This has not been the case historically and is a result of Home Office policy changes in respect of the City of York.



An extensive snapshot evidence gathering exercise was undertaken within the Resettlement Pathway in January 2022. Full details are in the link below, summarised in the table below. This highlights the needs of individuals at risk of rough sleeping or with other complex needs and in the process of resettlement following homelessness.

[York Homelessness Pathways](#)



City of York Council has a relatively low use of Temporary Accommodation, and one of the highest proportions of Temporary Accommodation in Local Authority owned hostels, at 83% (December 2023 snapshot data). This greatly reduces the financial pressures that other councils have seen through use of expensive Private Sector Lease and Bed and Breakfast arrangements, and reflects the benefit of the development of James House hostel and the Resettlement pathway hostels.

[UK Government homelessness statistics](#)

## Resettlement Pathway Needs<sup>9</sup>

Needs type / category	Number of service users	% of total service users	
Total service users in snapshot	323	100%	More frequent in service
Experience of trauma	220	68%	
Moderate/High Stress & Anxiety	178	55%	
Current / past TEWV involvement	171	53%	
Mid/High needs complexity	139	43%	
Repeat presentations	136	42%	
Female service users	103	32%	
Contact with criminal justice: Medium / High / Significant	87	27%	Less frequent
10+ years “in the system”	61	19%	
Alcohol & Drug Dependence*	58	18%	
High / significant level MH needs	48	15%	

\* Alcohol & Drug Dependence more frequently present in:

- Multiple Presentations: 40%
- High Complexity: 60%
- Older males: 25%

The UK Government provides specialist support through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the principles of this strategy are considered consistent with its “Ending rough sleeping for good”<sup>10</sup> plan and “From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives”<sup>11</sup>. However, resources are not currently made available

<sup>9</sup><https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s171078/Annex%201%20York%20Homelessness%20Pathways%202022.pdf>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

at the scale necessary to deliver on the ambitions of these national strategies<sup>12</sup>.

A good practice review of comparable locations around the country has been carried out to inform themes and priorities for the review.

## 5. Strategic priorities for new Homelessness Strategy 2024-29

In addition to the statutory requirement for a review, there are a number of objectives that give value to the provision of a new 5 year Homelessness Strategy.

- The overarching goal of the strategy is to build on existing successful delivery and partnership to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring
- Accompanying action plan focussed on key priorities and investment opportunities, including Housing First led system transformation, more affordable homes for client groups with and without children, and high quality homelessness prevention services
- Embed strategic partnership and multidisciplinary approach
- Integrate services to offer person-centred, trauma informed pathways
- Use partnership and work with Mayor and Combined Authority to influence new central government agenda
- Enhanced performance monitoring, data and governance frameworks
  - Operational group – chaired by Head of Housing Management & Housing Options, partners take responsibility for resolving operational issues and establishing working protocols
  - Strategic group – chaired by Corporate Director of Adults and Integration, identify resources and investments and revise strategies and service design
  - A proposed structure would also include existing groups such as the Mental Health and Housing group, and potentially 1:1 meetings between Adults & Integration, and Housing services

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/were-calling-for-a-renewed-commitment-to-the-delivery-of-the-housing-transformation-fund/>

## Annex A: Multidisciplinary team potential elements appraisal

This has been informed by University of York research, Housing First pilot research<sup>13</sup>, National Institute of Clinical Excellence guidance<sup>14</sup>, and informal consultation within the council. It may also be considered a “Team around the Tenant” and fits in with emerging thinking around Health integrated community teams approach and the Council’s development of a Locality Model, learning also from Family Hubs Pilot work.

Multidisciplinary Team element	Responsible partner
Rough Sleeper Navigators	City of York Council
Housing Options Prevention Workers	City of York Council
Clinical Psychologist / Trauma specialists	TEWV / NHS / ICB
Drug & Alcohol / Addiction workers / prescribing nurses or doctors	Public health Team / ICB
Occupational Therapist	ICB
Employability Support and Skills	Led by City of York Council
Offender rehabilitation	Probation
Peer specialist / experts by experience	To be confirmed
Welfare benefits advisors – when not already covered by Navigators	City of York Council
Learning Disabilities or other social worker, offer care needs assessments	City of York Council
Voluntary sector professionals	Other partners
Potential to access to ‘hub’ location offering GP, dentistry and other services	Wider partnership

## Acronyms

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-first-pilots-2-year-extensions-funding-allocations-202223-and-202324>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng214>

**TEWV:** Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)

**ICB:** Integrated Care Board