

Appendix A

# Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 – 30

Report for North Yorkshire Council

May 2025

Foreword.....	3
Executive summary.....	3
Introduction .....	4
How this strategy aligns with other North Yorkshire strategies.....	5
Key Partnerships .....	7
The profile of North Yorkshire .....	8
Key challenges.....	9
Opportunities and aspirations .....	10
Theme 1: Preventing homelessness .....	12
Priority 1: Intervening before people reach housing crisis.....	13
Priority 2: Improving the customer journey .....	14
Priority 3: Working with voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector to prevent homelessness.....	15
Theme 2: Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation options.....	16
Priority 1: Increasing access to suitable and affordable housing .....	16
Priority 2: Meeting the needs for and improving temporary accommodation.....	18
Priority 3: Increasing access to supported housing .....	19
Theme 3: Improving availability and access to support services .....	20
Priority 1: Strengthening housing related support pathways .....	21
Priority 2: A dedicated support offer for people facing multiple disadvantage.....	24
Priority 3: Embedding inclusive, trauma informed, and culturally competent practice .....	26
Priority 4: Supporting voluntary, community, and social enterprise engagement and peer-led models.....	27
Theme 4: Reducing rough sleeping.....	28
Priority 1: Meeting the accommodation and support needs of people experiencing rough sleeping.....	29
Priority 2: Supporting people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages ..	30
Priority 3: Working with local business and the voluntary sector.....	32
Governance structure and performance framework .....	32
Governance Structure for Monitoring the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025–2030):.....	32

## Foreword

### Foreword

As Executive Member for Housing, I am proud to introduce North Yorkshire Council's first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as a new unitary authority. This strategy sets out our shared ambition to prevent homelessness wherever possible — and where it cannot be prevented, to ensure it is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Homelessness in North Yorkshire is a complex and evolving challenge. From the pressures of rising housing costs and limited affordable options, to the growing number of people with multiple and complex needs, we are seeing increasing demand on our services. Our rural geography, ageing population, and economic inequalities add further layers of complexity. Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities to innovate, to collaborate, and to lead with compassion.

This strategy is rooted in the values of prevention, partnership, and person-centred support. It builds on the strengths of our communities, the dedication of our frontline teams, and the insights of those with lived experience. It aligns with our wider council priorities to support thriving places, ensure people are safe and living well, and deliver strong, local, and customer-led services.

We are investing in new models of supported housing, expanding our temporary accommodation offer, and strengthening our partnerships with the voluntary and community sector. We are embedding trauma-informed practice, improving access to services in rural areas, and developing innovative approaches like Housing First and the REACH and Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) projects. And we are committed to listening to the voices of those who use our services, and to the organisations that support them.

This strategy is not just a document it is a call to action. It reflects our belief that everyone in North Yorkshire deserves a place to call home, and the support they need to keep it. I invite all our partners, stakeholders, and residents to work with us to make this vision a reality.

### Executive summary

The North Yorkshire homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 – 2030 sets the strategic direction for homelessness and rough sleeping services across North Yorkshire.

Our vision is of preventing homelessness and rough sleeping wherever possible and where homelessness cannot be prevented, to make it rare, brief, and non-recurrent. We intend to achieve this vision through working with our local statutory and voluntary, community, and social enterprise partners, and to ensure good quality and stable temporary and long-term housing is available, with support in place where this is needed. We have a commitment to **working with people with lived experience**.

The strategy sets out the context for homelessness and rough sleeping in North Yorkshire and how the council and its partners will seek to meet the challenges it faces across four key themes. These themes are:

1. Preventing homelessness.
2. Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation options.

3. Increasing availability and access to support services.
4. Reducing rough sleeping.

The strategy will be delivered through a reducing homelessness action plan.

## Introduction

This is the first homelessness and rough sleeping strategy for the new unitary North Yorkshire Council. It outlines the council's vision for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping across North Yorkshire, its priorities, and the actions it will take to achieve these priorities over the next five years.

The strategy aligns with the vision and key priorities of North Yorkshire's Council Plan. The Plan's vision is to harness the power of North Yorkshire's natural capital, unique communities and businesses, continuously improving our services to enable a good quality of life for all. The Plan's overarching ambition is of one Council with strong, local and customer-led services. Its four key themes relate to:

- Supporting thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit and do business in North Yorkshire
- Developing more sustainable and connected places across North Yorkshire
- Ensuring the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well
- Maximising the potential of North Yorkshire's people and communities.

Also we aim to support the work of the Our Skills Focus for York and North Yorkshire in relation to targeting hard to reach communities and the Get Britain Working inactivity trailblazer.

The strategy has been developed in the context of current and upcoming legal and regulatory changes. These include:

- The primary homelessness legislation – that is, [Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996](#). This provides the statutory under-pinning for action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless.
- The [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) and [Homelessness Code of Guidance \(2018\)](#). The Homelessness Reduction Act significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide some homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. These include:
  - (a) an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with customers to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and

- (b) a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.
- **The Domestic Abuse Act 2021:** This creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse – covering emotional and economic, as well as physical abuse. Under the Act, all eligible victims of domestic abuse experiencing homelessness have an automatic priority need for homelessness assistance. Local authorities in England are now required to provide accommodation-based support to domestic abuse victims and their children, including in refuges and other safe accommodation. The Act also strengthens requirements for social tenants who have experienced domestic abuse to receive secure lifetime tenancies.
- **The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023:** This comes into effect in 2025/26. This act introduces a licensing regime and National Supported Housing Standards. Our role will include inspections to ensure compliance, and we'll work closely with social care and Revenues & Benefits to integrate licensing components. Aims to improve regulation of supported housing and improve the quality of supported exempt accommodation.
- **The Renters Rights Bill:** Is set to bring major changes to our responsibilities as a local housing authority. With the ending of Section 21 evictions, the removal of fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies, and the application of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, we can expect a substantial shift in how we operate. Our enforcement role will expand, shifting from reactive to proactive measures such as inspections and compliance checks to ensure landlords meet new standards, including Awaab's Law. We can retain financial penalties and access grants to support this workload.

Other recent changes mean that customers escaping domestic abuse, veterans, and care leavers no longer must demonstrate a local connection to the area in which they are seeking access to social housing. The closure of Home Office funded accommodation for ex-asylum seekers is increasing short term demand on local authority homelessness services. The Government has recently announced a new cross-departmental homelessness task force and plans for a new approach which is more clearly focused on homelessness prevention.

The new strategy has been developed through review of available data relating to homelessness and rough sleeping in North Yorkshire, engagement with local stakeholders – including the council, statutory partners, housing, and other voluntary, community and social enterprise services working with customers experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, and customers using these services.

### **How this strategy aligns with other North Yorkshire strategies**

The [Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029](#) recognises the challenges brought about through increased demand for homelessness services and temporary accommodation, reduced supply of private

and social rented accommodation (especially in rural areas), housing affordability, and demographic changes – including an ageing population and the emergence of new groups, such as asylum seekers and refugees. The council aims to meet these challenges through a range of initiatives, including:

- Bringing together homelessness prevention and support services.
- Developing innovative and existing accommodation solutions, including for temporary and affordable family accommodation.
- Specialist housing for specific groups, such as older people, those with a health need or requiring adaptation and those with multiple disadvantage.
- Supporting reductions in reoffending through looking at options around the provision of safe and secure accommodation for those leaving prison in partnership with statutory Criminal Justice Agencies
- Housing supply will be increased via delivering at least 800 affordable homes each year of the strategy – boosting council stock, working with existing social landlord partners and new partners such as the Ministry of Defence, and aligning delivery with the council's new Empty Homes Strategy.
- The Council will also use its legal powers to enforce and raise standards in the private rented sector, including via selective licensing schemes.
- Working with Community Safety Team to increase the number of Safe Accommodation units available to households fleeing domestic abuse.

The [North Yorkshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2030](#) recognises the contributions of a wide range of local services to people's health and wellbeing, including housing, social care, community safety, and leisure. It highlights opportunities for joined up working offered by the introduction of integrated care boards, including across the NHS, local councils, and other partners and by integrated care systems, which can coordinate services and planning to improve population health and reduce inequalities between different groups. The strategy focuses on early intervention and prevention, using asset-based community development to support local solutions to improve health and wellbeing and addressing drivers of poorer health outcomes, such as transport, housing, and service access. There is also a focus on working with communities to develop collective understanding of and responsibility for actively managing health and wellbeing.

The proposed upcoming changes to the delivery of supported housing services is a new model for delivering short and long-term supported accommodation in North Yorkshire. It focuses on expanding and enhancing short-term accommodation and support, especially for customers with multiple disadvantages. With a flexible, multi-faceted support model improving support for customers with a range of needs and reducing reliance on temporary accommodation. The model will offer a new approach, which allows customers to move between levels of support, according to their needs and life circumstances. It will strengthen joint work between housing, Adult Social Care, and mental health services, and will be

supported by a formalised multi-disciplinary offer and training for housing and Adult Social Care staff, and, in the longer-term look at options around a single assessment system. The commissioning strategy will also link with other programmes, including mental health integrated care, domestic abuse commissioning, and public health work around multiple disadvantage.

Health places a vital role in the experiences of our customers and can often be the reason for homelessness. This strategy therefore also aims to link with:

- The national framework for NHS – action on inclusion health
- Humber and North Yorkshire: Inclusion Health 3-Year Joint Action Plan.
- 10 Year Health Plan for England. This aims to shift NHS care from hospitals to communities and to increase use of digital platforms and focus on preventing illness, within the overall aim of building a more modern, accessible, and proactive health service. The 10 Year Health Plan also outlines use of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. These will bring together professionals from different organisations, including social care and the voluntary and community sector, to provide coordinated care within a geographical area
- North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy 2024-2028 – this includes a cross-cutting theme on ‘Homes and Jobs.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy also aligns with North Yorkshire strategies around climate change, economic growth, North Yorkshire Autism All Age Strategy 2025-2030, Suicide Prevention, North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028, North Yorkshire Mental Health Transformation and current local plans.

### **Key Partnerships**

North Yorkshire Housing Needs managers are active members of North Yorkshire Home Choice (NYHC) Board so have strategic input into policy decision making and development.

We work alongside housing management, allocations and Registered Social Landlords. The council is involved in managing the scheme by chairing the North Yorkshire Home Choice project board, with the aim of reflecting local housing priorities and the requirements of residents and partners in the allocation process.

Through its membership of the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership, the Housing Service participates in boosting delivery of affordable homes, supporting economic development, and strategic aims around healthy and thriving communities.

The North Yorkshire Homeless and Rough Sleeper Partnership and Forums were relaunched in December 2024, with 70 local services in attendance. The Partnership is taking a wider strategic lead and the Forums will focus operational work in the East and West of the County.

The council also participates in:

- North Yorkshire, York, and Selby Homeless Network.
- The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Strategic and Operational Boards
- North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NYSAB) and Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NYSCP). Housing Needs is a partner on NYSAB and NYSCP and is also the rough sleeper champion for NYSAB. Housing Needs is also represented on the Sub group for prevention and the Task and finish groups for rough sleeping and Transitions Child to Adult.
- Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE).
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC), Multi-agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board.
- Community Safety Partnership
- Suicide Prevention Strategic Group.
- Humber and North Yorkshire Healthcare Partnership.
- NY Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Neuro-diversity Partnership Board
- York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

### **The profile of North Yorkshire**

- North Yorkshire is the largest county in England and Wales, at over 8,000 square kilometres.
- As of 2024, the population was approximately 620,000.
- North Yorkshire is a largely rural county, with a population density of only 77 people per square kilometre, much lower than the national average of 432 per square kilometre. Only two towns (Harrogate and Scarborough) have a population of over 50,000.
- North Yorkshire's population has grown by 2.85% since 2011. Its population is ageing, with 25% of people now aged 65 or over.
- North Yorkshire is among the least deprived local authority areas in England, however, there are pockets of deprivation, particularly in Scarborough.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2024, the median salary in North Yorkshire was around £35,500 p.a. However, in some localities, median salaries are significantly below the national average of £26,000.
- Over 108,000 residents are limited by health and disability.<sup>2</sup>
- The average house price in 2024 was £284,000. The average rent is £730 per calendar month.

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<sup>1</sup> Data North Yorkshire (2015) Background to the Indices of Deprivation. Available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> North Yorkshire Council (2024) Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029. Available [here](#).

- 18.7% of people rent privately, but less than 12% of households live in social rented housing.
- There are over 9,000 active applications on North Yorkshire Home Choice.

### Key challenges

Key challenges affecting North Yorkshire include:

- **A severe shortage of affordable housing:** This continues to limit our ability to prevent homelessness and rehouse people quickly. The stock of social housing remains below national average levels, house prices are high, and private rents continue to rise. Gaps between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and market rents make it harder for low-income households to access or sustain tenancies. Reduced availability of private rented housing, including through conversions to holiday lets and second homes in some areas, is compounding these challenges and placing particular pressure on rural and coastal housing markets.
- **Geographic inequalities and rurality:** Create access challenges for many of our residents – North Yorkshire’s size, dispersed population, and localised housing markets mean that people’s access to housing and support varies depending on where they live. In rural areas, distance, limited public transport, and digital exclusion can delay or prevent engagement with services, particularly where provision is already stretched. Supported and specialist accommodation is unevenly distributed, limiting access for vulnerable groups in rural areas.
- **Economic pressures and insecure employment:** Increase homelessness risk. The cost of living crisis, low wages, and insecure work mean more households are struggling to afford housing costs, even where their needs are not complex and may previously not have required support from statutory services. These pressures are reducing resilience and contributing to rising presentations, particularly among single adults and younger households.
- **An ageing population:** This is reshaping the pattern of housing-related support needs across North Yorkshire. One in four residents are already aged 65 or over, and this is expected to rise to one in three by 2035. Older people increasingly require housing that is accessible, affordable, and linked to care, support, or prevention services, including through home improvement, adaptations, and supported move-on options.
- **Increasing complexity of need:** Shapes who comes to us for support. There has been a rise in single people with support needs, including mental health, substance use, and involvement with the criminal justice system. More customers are presenting in housing crisis, limiting the potential for early intervention and increasing demand for relief and temporary accommodation services.
- **Pressure on move-on and supported accommodation:** People are staying longer in temporary accommodation due to a shortage of suitable move-on options. Achieving successful outcomes in supported accommodation is becoming harder, with increasing levels of need, limited specialist provision, and reduced revenue funding.

- **Inconsistent experiences of our services:** Reflecting variation in how customers access support and how it is coordinated across teams and services. While there are strong examples of good practice, access routes, commissioning structures, and data systems, these are not yet fully aligned, which can make joint planning and early intervention more difficult.
- **Workforce confidence in trauma-informed practice and mental capacity.** Many homeless people experience complex mental and physical health needs, addiction, complex trauma and invisible disabilities. However, not all teams feel equipped to respond to customers with multiple disadvantages or lived experiences of trauma, exclusion, or inequality. There is an ongoing need to embed skills, through training, consistent supervision, reflective practice, and joint training across housing, social care, and wider partnerships.
- **Ongoing policy reform and national change:** The context in which we operate is reshaping. We are adapting to new responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Act, Renters' Rights Bill, Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, and changes to asylum accommodation and early release from prison. These reforms increase demand for housing and support services and require clear coordination across systems and sectors.

### Opportunities and aspirations

North Yorkshire's opportunities and aspirations include:

- **Strong leadership and unified structures:** Will give us a solid foundation to drive change. There is strong political will and senior-level commitment to addressing homelessness and rough sleeping across the council. The creation of a new unitary authority brings the opportunity to simplify service access, strengthen internal collaboration, and develop consistent models of housing and support across the county.
- **Improving the customer journey:** This has been a strategic priority for North Yorkshire Council. We have invested in aligning access routes, standardising triage processes, and ensuring a more consistent offer across the former districts. These changes are already improving how customers navigate homelessness services and access support. We now have an opportunity to build on this work, embedding a more person-centred approach across all localities and strengthening consistency in decision-making, communication, and outcomes.
- **Integrated approach with Housing Management**  
As a council we also have landlord functions, we have completed some really strong integrated work over the years within North Yorkshire Home Choice, and the priority banding the policy gives for all homeless cases, and gold band for those at risk/in priority need and main duty, inc. exceptions to non-qualifying criteria; the use of direct offer where required. This is now embedded as part of the day to day work we do. We can now build on this internally with landlord services and partner RSLs to prevent homelessness, early interventions, aim for reduced evictions and smooth transitions and successes into social housing.

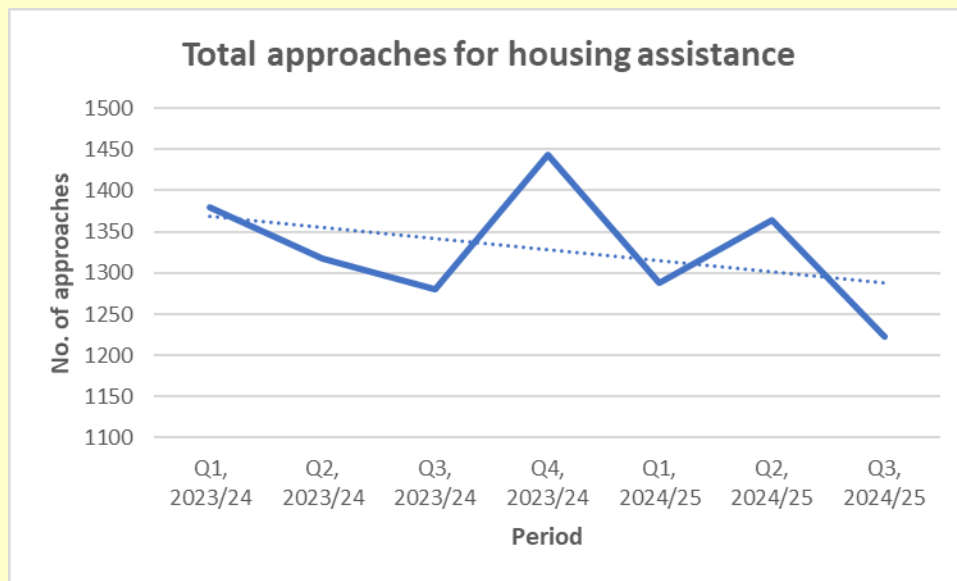
- **Digital transformation and data-led prevention:** Strengthens how we work. A single IT system for homelessness, integrated benefits systems, and access to council-held data will enable earlier identification, improved triage, and targeted support. Alongside this, we have streamlined access points, aligned processes across former districts, and begun improving the customer journey. These changes are helping us shift from reactive to preventative practice, using the data more effectively to shape future services, making it easier for customers to navigate services and receive the right help at the right time.
- **Joint Strategic planning, commissioning and delivery:** We are expanding collaboration between housing needs, Adult Social Care, and public health. We are progressing the development of a dedicated support offer for customers who experience multiple disadvantage for consistency, including with the Substance Use Strategy. The MECC (Making Every Contact Count) approach will improve the customer journey. We also want to continue a joint commissioning approach with Children and families through the Young People's pathway.
- **Partnerships with the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector:** Through renewed homelessness forums, partnership projects, and closer work with Community First Yorkshire and our localities team, we are building stronger links with community-based organisations. These partnerships help us reach residents earlier, especially in rural areas.
- **Working with local councillors and Town and Parish councils**  
There will be many competing priorities for councils in the years ahead and tackling homelessness must be one that takes centre stage. Councillors have a vital role to play in this. Whether by supporting our front line staff who deal with homeless people every day, linking up with voluntary organisations who can share knowledge of what is happening locally or making the case for investment that helps both those in need and ease future demand, councillors are able to provide genuine local leadership.
- **Lived experience and peer-led approaches:** There is clear interest across services in involving people with lived experience more meaningfully in the design and delivery of services. Harrogate's Lived Experience Network offers a strong foundation to build from, and we are committed to developing this further through a county-wide forum and consistent co-production principles. Also, the utilisation of the tenancy involvement team engaging with customers with lived experience in Council Housing.
- **Innovative models of housing and support:** Projects such as Housing First, REACH, Derwent Lodge supported accommodation and our in-house temporary accommodation service demonstrate the benefits of flexible, trauma-informed, and person-centred approaches for customers with multiple disadvantages. We aim to replicate and expand these models to reflect need. The RACCS accommodation pathway for customers working with the probation service access to settled housing in the community and is recognised as good practice across criminal justice sector partners.
- **A clear strategy for developing supported accommodation:** The forthcoming new way of delivering supported housing services will deliver a flexible model with additional

placements, improving support for people with a range of needs and reducing reliance on temporary accommodation.

- **Sustainable investment in housing priorities:** The 100% council tax premium on second homes is expected to generate over £10m per year to support affordable housing, temporary accommodation, supported housing and improvements to the private rented sector. This gives us the financial capacity to take forward long-term solutions.

### Theme 1: Preventing homelessness

Approaches to the council for homelessness assistance have fluctuated in recent years, peaking at the end of 2023/24, before falling back slightly.



Approaches are consistently highest in Scarborough and Harrogate. We are seeing more single homeless people and more people declaring support needs and multiple disadvantages, including mental health, substance use, domestic abuse, and contact with the criminal justice system. Recently, more asylum seekers have been seeking support from the council, as they receive positive decisions on their case and are given notice to leave Home Office hotels. We are also seeing an increase in the number of larger Afghan families who have ended their period of stay in Ministry of Defence (MOD) accommodation and high numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), due to legislative changes around the National Transfer Scheme (NTS).

As of 2023/24, end of private rented tenancy remained the most common reason for households owed a homeless prevention duty, with friends/family no longer willing to accommodate being the most common reason for households owed the homeless relief duty. However, many customers were at risk of homelessness following the loss of a tenancy due to domestic abuse or loss of a social tenancy. In addition, more customers are at risk of homelessness due to financial difficulties and around 30% of customers seeking assistance

from the council are in work. Some customers approaching for assistance lack tenancy management skills, especially care leavers and other single young people.

There has been an upward trend in main duty acceptances – from 121 in the last quarter of 2022/23 to 168 in the second quarter of 2024/25. At the start of 2022/23, just under half (47.8%) of households were owed a prevention duty. However, by the start of 2024/25, this proportion was just over a third (35.6%). The fact that many people approach the council when they are already in housing crisis is hampering the council's ability to prevent, rather than relieve, homelessness and underlines the need for effective homelessness prevention interventions.

### **Priority 1: Intervening before people reach housing crisis**

Our new Housing Needs Service structure brings together the seven former North Yorkshire districts and boroughs into four new localities (Hambleton and Richmondshire, Harrogate and Craven, Selby and Ryedale, and Scarborough). This structure enables us to develop services and partnerships to identify and meet emerging, existing and changing trends around homelessness.

We employ dedicated Housing Options officers, Support officers, Young people's Homelessness Prevention workers and Temporary Accommodation officers throughout the county and also Private Rented Sector Officers currently in Selby, Ryedale, and Harrogate. Through our Homelessness Prevention Toolkit, we offer rent bonds and rent in advance, support around arrears, mortgage payments, and domestic abuse, and referrals to specialist services inside and outside of the council. We support households to manage rent arrears, removals, and other housing costs.

In certain localities assistance around homeless prevention also comes via Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). In certain localities all DHP awards are agreed collectively with benefits staff, ensuring we target households most in need, we need to aim to create a consistency across all areas. We need to ensure that DHPs are utilised where possible to assist in the prevention of homelessness and targeted through joint working with the Housing Needs teams.

We work closely with Housing Management staff, including to review households' support needs, independent living skills and community links before they start their new social tenancy.

We also work with statutory criminal justice agencies to provide safe and secure accommodation for people leaving prison and to support reductions in reoffending.

We will investigate working with North Yorkshire Credit Union to help vulnerable customers to tackle financial and social exclusion. This includes access to Budgeting Accounts and purchase of domestic household appliances.

Our new county-wide homelessness standby service provides a route for all calls via a single customer services number. This enables checks to be completed on Adult Social Care and Children's Services systems, giving housing needs standby officers all the information they need to make a homelessness decision. Additionally, we have unified our IT systems for homelessness and we have a single allocation policy throughout North Yorkshire, with the recent addition of the Harrogate area. Also to aid consistency across the county our single benefits system for North Yorkshire went live in June 2025.

We will:

1. Expand the private rented sector offer across North Yorkshire.
2. Improve the employment and training opportunities for vulnerable households through collaborative work with the DWP, mayoral combined authority, internal partners including the Adult learning and skills service, companies, voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations.
3. Expand pre-tenancy support and life skills across North Yorkshire.
4. Work with Children and Young people's service to explore the introduction of youth and schools-based early intervention programmes through our Young People's Prevention workers.
5. Ensure all staff working with customers who are homeless are equipped with the right safeguarding skills through completion of all mandatory training
6. Continue to develop our data systems and explore what additional use can be made of housing benefit, council tax and other available data to identify households in financial stress and who are at future risk of homelessness.
7. Develop our relationship with North Yorkshire Credit Union to improve access to accounts and financial assistance for our customers across the county. This could include an offer of interest free loans to vulnerable families. Ensure all frontline staff receive adequate training to ensure effective signposting to relevant services to assist customers.
8. Ensure regular interactions between housing management and housing needs teams through joint meetings and collaboration on a consistent approach to information sharing, early interventions and preventative work to sustain social rented tenancies

### **Priority 2: Improving the customer journey**

There are currently variations between localities in how customers can approach the council and access housing options and homelessness support. This includes information available around available housing options and support from the council and other services, being able to self-refer, and access online support and in-person appointments. This can make it difficult to access support early, especially for people in rural areas where public transport is limited or digital access poor. Some council homelessness services are perceived by customers as being difficult to navigate.

North Yorkshire has a higher percentage of households referred via a duty to refer than the national average. We also operate a commitment to refer, giving housing associations and other organisations the opportunity to refer people at risk of homelessness. We are now able to accept online duty to refer referrals and more easily provide updates to referring organisations. However, use of duty to refer varies across referral organisations and not all staff are fully aware of the duty to refer process.

The process of application and awards for Discretionary housing payments (DHP) from Housing benefits is recognised as not yet being consistent across North Yorkshire.

Additionally, not all housing needs and Adult Social Care staff have a full mutual understanding of respective statutory frameworks and service offers. This can negatively impact on customers experiences of North Yorkshire services.

To meet these challenges, we will:

1. Develop a county-wide action plan to ensure a consistent customer journey for customers receiving support from the Housing Needs Service.
2. Ensure all our homelessness prevention offers, including debt management/income maximisation, DHP, and rent deposits/rent in advance are consistent across localities.
3. Improve the self-serve offer on the Council website for customers to apply for assistance and understand their likely entitlements to housing and support.
4. Deliver refresher duty to refer/commitment to refer and Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) training to all relevant frontline staff. This will include sessions at upcoming meetings of the Homelessness Forums and the Registered Social Landlord Partnership.
5. Increase use of the AI technology to support frontline staff with information and guidance around housing, care, and mental health legislation
6. Continue to be an active member of the Children's safeguarding partnership to ensure support and information is available for all partners.

### **Priority 3: Working with voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector to prevent homelessness**

North Yorkshire's voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector works closely with communities, meaning they are well-placed to understand local needs and how best to engage with people about the support the council can provide to help them avoid homelessness. Many of these organisations are based in areas of North Yorkshire where the council does not have a local office/presence. A network of community hubs and organisations provides food, food vouchers, clothing and financial support, including energy advice, loneliness and friendship/social spaces.

We already have effective partnerships with some providers, such as North Yorkshire Citizens Advice and Law Centre. Since April 2025, these organisations have run the Information and Advice Service contract, including the provision of homeless advice.

However, more work is needed to develop these partnerships and to build voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations' capacity to support the council's agenda around homelessness prevention. Additional funding needs to be made available to support the organisations to develop.

We will:

1. Work closely with North Yorkshire Council's localities team, Parish and Town Councils and Community First Yorkshire, to identify needs of individual communities and to develop engagement strategies, to encourage earlier engagement with council services around housing needs.
2. Link in with pre-existing community hubs/anchors and organisations with outreach programmes, including Mind and North Yorkshire Citizens Advice and Law Centre
3. Develop opportunities around Warm and Well (North Yorkshire Citizens Advice- led) and warm places/spaces.
4. Improve links with community organisations that offer North Yorkshire Local assistance fund vouchers to vulnerable customers.
5. Review current voluntary, community, and social enterprise capacity, build knowledge of the council's service offer around homelessness, explore options for funding and promote joint working with the Housing Needs Service.
6. Increase council presence and visibility in community settings. This might include joint working between voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations and the DWP, to provide a single access point for support which could also promote the council's homelessness assistance offer.
7. Work with the recently re-launched homelessness forums for the East and West of North Yorkshire to increase voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations' involvement in decisions around developing and delivering community-led solutions.

## **Theme 2: Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation options**

We want everyone facing homelessness in North Yorkshire to have access to safe, suitable accommodation. This theme focuses on the availability, quality, and distribution of temporary, supported, and settled housing across the county. It includes our work to increase affordable housing, improve the use and supply of temporary accommodation, and strengthen supported housing models for customers with different levels of need.

### **Priority 1: Increasing access to suitable and affordable housing**

In March 2023, median house prices in North Yorkshire ranged between £195,000 in Scarborough to £323,000 in Harrogate. Almost 70% of households in North Yorkshire are in owner occupation. Social rented housing accounts for less than 12% of households and in Craven and Harrogate, this figure is less than 10%. This compares to an England-wide average of 16.6%.

As of September 2024, the median salary in North Yorkshire was around £35,500 p.a. However, in some localities, median salaries are significantly below the national average of £26,000. Low wages exacerbate housing unaffordability, meaning that fewer local households can afford to purchase a home on the open market and are reliant on other forms of tenure. 18.7% of households in North Yorkshire rent privately. Median rents in North Yorkshire have increased significantly over recent years, and in 2024 the average rent was £730 per calendar month. There is a particular lack of affordable housing options in rural areas, especially for young people.

There is competition for private rented properties from professional households and other services or organisations providing accommodation for vulnerable groups. The stock of privately rented housing has reduced recently, as some landlords have exited the market due to anxieties around new legislation, increased mortgage rates, reductions in tax allowances and increasing numbers of properties are used as second homes or holiday lets. In addition, some landlords are reluctant to let to homeless households. There are large shortfalls between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and market rents. For a two-bed property these shortfalls currently range from around £95 p.c.m in Scarborough, to around £120 p.c.m in Harrogate.<sup>3</sup> As rents increase, so do top ups required by councils to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness. Together these factors are driving rent increases, with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable households and those on benefits.

In 2025, total active applications on North Yorkshire Home Choice are 9530, with highest demand in Harrogate and Scarborough. Approximately half of applicants self-report a support need, mainly around their mental health and/or mobility. Around 50% of applications in most localities relate to one-bed properties. Total social lettings are decreasing, in 2023/24, the total was 2,310 lettings – a 10% fall on the total for 2019. At the same time, some applicants have unrealistic expectations around available housing options and support and may not be aware of services in other parts of North Yorkshire which could support them.

Due to the strong integration and partnership working with North Yorkshire Home Choice, households experiencing homelessness in North Yorkshire receive priority banding to prevent or minimise the time that they are homeless, in addition to exceptions to non-qualifying criteria and the use of direct offers where required.

There has been a significant increase in non-commissioned exempt accommodation in North Yorkshire in recent years. As of March 2025, there were 1,149 exempt accommodation claims across 918 properties in North Yorkshire. However, there is currently a lack of oversight and quality assurance in this type of accommodation.

With a high proportion of elderly residents, housing development must be adaptable for all life stages. Affordable housing is crucial in rural areas where population decline, and second-

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<sup>3</sup> This figure uses 2023 rental information and LHA rates.

home ownership threaten the sustainability of local communities. A complex picture of homelessness and specialist housing shortages also adds to the housing demand.

To meet these challenges, we will:

1. Provide transparent information on housing availability and waiting times, relevant services, and support across other parts of North Yorkshire, to help housing applicants make informed choices about where they would like to live.
2. Improve how we can make best use of existing data, from Home Choice, public health needs assessments of vulnerable populations, and DEFRA mapping data, to identify gaps in commissioned support services in rural areas and identify demand for property sizes.
3. Improve the way we share needs information with the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership and work with them strategically to identify ways of delivering additional affordable homes where it is needed.
4. Increase access to privately rented accommodation through enhanced landlord liaison and relationship-building, financial incentives, and support for landlords and working through landlord forums.
5. Continue to utilise direct lets where needed, applying consistently across all localities.
6. Work up a business case to create a model for leasing and managing properties from private landlords countywide to provide affordable housing for council-nominated homelessness applicants, helping prevent repeat homelessness.

## **Priority 2: Meeting the needs for and improving temporary accommodation**

The number of households in temporary accommodation is increasing, with demand being particularly strong in Scarborough and Harrogate. There are more people in temporary accommodation who have multiple disadvantages. Gross spend on emergency accommodation has grown rapidly in recent years, from just over £500,000 in 2019/20 to over £2.1m in 2022/23 – an increase of 400%. Particular pressures are within the Scarborough area, with more people staying longer in emergency accommodation. Across North Yorkshire length of time in temporary accommodation is also increasing because of lack of access to suitable move-on accommodation. There are also concerns about the quality of some temporary accommodation.

We understand that reducing numbers in temporary accommodation is dependent on approaches to the council, however we want to reduce the number of customers that are in bed and breakfast accommodation/emergency accommodation and move this to more sustainable temporary accommodation through in-house provision providing a high level offer to our customers who are in need of this accommodation.

We are investing £11.6m within a four-year temporary accommodation development programme. This will provide an additional 116 additional bedspaces by 2027. This increased supply will reduce reliance on hotels and B&Bs, and save the council, based on current homelessness levels, an estimated £1.919m, with savings being reinvested to support our

homelessness prevention and partnership working with voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations. The programme will initially involve partnership working with registered providers, with the council providing grant funding for property refurbishment, acquisition, and/or support services, in return for property nomination rights. In the longer-term, we will seek to provide all temporary accommodation through our own assets, as this is the most financially advantageous option for the council.

The council currently has access to 191 purpose-built and converted temporary accommodation units, this has grown from 169 available 12 months ago, some of which it owns and manages through the temporary accommodation development programme and bed and breakfast usage has started to reduce. However, temporary accommodation provision is not evenly distributed across localities, and the physical quality of accommodation varies considerably.

We also employ Homelessness Prevention Support officers who support all customers within temporary and emergency accommodation and this is supporting service improvements.

We have recently completed a review around mental capacity of emergency accommodation residents - this has identified the need for closer joint working with Adult Social Care around people who may be eligible for Care Act support.

We will:

1. Audit the locations and physical standards of existing temporary accommodation to undertake an improvement plan.
2. Upgrade current temporary accommodation stock to improve standard and comply with decent homes standard.
3. Upgrade certain temporary accommodation units by adding security features to comply with safe accommodation standards, ensuring suitability for households escaping domestic abuse, with specialist support available.
4. Reduce the usage of emergency accommodation across the County

### **Priority 3: Increasing access to supported housing**

North Yorkshire Council already provides supported housing for homeless and other vulnerable single people, to build independence and tenancy management skills. There are currently 131 short-term units, providing up to two years' support for people with mental health, substance use, and offending needs,<sup>4</sup> and specialist support for people with multiple disadvantages, including our REACH (reducing the exclusion for adults with complex housing-needs) service in Scarborough. We also provide 84 units of floating support. Long-term supported accommodation is available for people who are eligible for support under the Care Act. We have a jointly commissioned Young People's Pathway with Children and families Service, which offers 172 units across all localities and provides up to two years of supported

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<sup>4</sup> Total of units listed in supported housing proposal, March 2025.

accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness and care leavers. Despite these resources, it is becoming harder to achieve successful supported accommodation outcomes – due to the increasing complexity of customers’ needs and lack of specialist accommodation for some groups.

To meet this challenge, we will develop a new way of delivering supported housing. This will provide additional supported housing and floating support placements across North Yorkshire. The new model will support customers with low, medium, and high needs and flex to people’s changing needs and life circumstances. The strategy will be supported by up to £12m second homes council tax funding. The strategy will include £4m of investment for a 20-bed ‘Place of Change’ project for people with multiple disadvantages. The model for the project will draw on learning from Fern House in Harrogate. We intend to lease the building to a registered provider, using rental income to generate revenue savings or recycle funds to support further initiatives.

The new commissioning programme will provide additional pathways for care leavers, people trying to access the Young People’s Pathway (YPP), and those currently in emergency accommodation – thus supporting Adult Social Care and mental health services and reducing demand for temporary accommodation and other support. It will also help to reduce duplication of interventions and “shunting” of customers between housing and Adult Social Care. Alongside this, we will support young people to access employment and skills opportunities, as well as tenancy, social and independent living support.

We will:

1. Develop an integrated offer between council directorates, to remove multiple access routes across housing and Adult Social Care and increase focus on achieving positive outcomes for individuals.
2. Work with public health around multiple disadvantage (MDOM), to support customers with a defined housing need, alongside wider care and support needs.
3. Strengthen the alignment of jointly commissioned Young People’s Pathway with wider supported housing models. Further detail on how the Young People’s Pathway functions as a support pathway is provided in Theme 3.

### **Theme 3: Improving availability and access to support services**

People experiencing homelessness in North Yorkshire often face challenges in accessing the right support at the right time. Too many only encounter our services in crisis, when opportunities for prevention have passed. Services and support pathways vary across the county, and those with overlapping needs, such as poor mental health, trauma, substance use, or contact with the criminal justice system, are not always well served by traditional models. In this theme, we set out how we will strengthen the system of support that surrounds housing, with a focus on inclusive, trauma-informed, and multi-agency approaches that respond more effectively to people’s circumstances.

## **Priority 1: Strengthening housing related support pathways**

We provide a range of housing-related support pathways for different groups, but people's experiences of these can vary across the county. Some, such as the Young People's Pathway and our domestic abuse offer, are well-established, while others — including hospital discharge arrangements, support for veterans, and housing planning for people leaving prison — are still developing. Certain groups, including women with multiple disadvantages, care leavers, and people in contact with the criminal justice system, may face particular gaps or inconsistencies. We need to work with partners to improve these pathways and ensure support is timely, equitable, and responsive to people's needs.

### **Young People's Pathway and care leavers**

The housing and Children and families' joint Young People's Pathway is a widely used and nationally recognised model for supporting young people at risk of homelessness, including care leavers and 16/17 year olds. The internally delivered homeless prevention arm of the pathway aims to sustain young people's current accommodation or return them to safe accommodation with family or friends. The second supported accommodation element is delivered both in-house and in partnership with commissioned providers, both are supported by integrated working between housing and Children's Services. In most areas, young people receive tailored, wraparound support, including key working, life skills, and links to education, training, or employment.

Referral pathways have become more consistent since North Yorkshire became a unitary authority. This and the integration of Young People's homelessness prevention workers into housing need teams are improving continuity of support, case coordination and homeless prevention.

However, some gaps remain. Move-on options can be limited, particularly for care leavers and young people ready to live more independently. Even though the group is supported through the Council's allocation policy with gold banding through resettlement and backdated priority banding.

In some areas, there are fewer opportunities for engagement or meaningful activity, and limited input from mental health services. There is currently no formal housing protocol with Adult Social Care to support care leavers transitioning from supported accommodation, which is a significant gap in ensuring smooth and sustainable move-on. Work is currently taking place regarding a transitions framework between Children's and adults' services, which includes care leavers if they meet the eligibility criteria, housing needs will ensure involvement within this work.

The pathway is currently being recommissioned, with a new contract due in 2026. This offers a clear opportunity to build on the pathway's strengths while addressing the specific needs of care leavers, aligning the offer with the new supported housing model, and embedding

trauma-informed, non-transactional approaches that reflect young people's diverse experiences and aspirations.

Additional work is being done with the Leaving care team on the care leavers housing protocol, this is being reviewed and will provide a holistic housing offer pulling together all options available. Domestic abuse housing and support pathway

### **Domestic Abuse Housing and Support Pathway**

North Yorkshire has a strong domestic abuse housing offer. We provide dispersed safe accommodation across rural and urban areas, including refuge spaces, dispersed units, and hosting schemes. This is supported by a county-wide referral and assessment hub delivered by Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS), and underpinned by inclusive, trauma-informed practice. The service is widely recognised for its innovation and accessibility. It supports people with no recourse to public funds, larger families, men, and LGBTQ+ survivors. Staff are supported through training aligned to Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) principles and a Champions Network.

The council is also working towards a co-ordinated and consistent approach for victims and survivors of domestic abuse across the county. To facilitate this we have employed two Domestic Abuse Housing Coordinators who will work closely with the Housing Service and Community Safety Team to address the housing and safety needs of victim and survivors of domestic abuse across North Yorkshire.

In addition the Council's allocation policy acknowledges there will be occasions where a person is unable to return to a local authority area where they have a local connection because they are fleeing domestic abuse. In line with statutory guidance, the Partnership will consider applications from those who have escaped domestic abuse in another local authority area and are living in a refuge or other form of safe temporary accommodation within North Yorkshire.

However, there are areas to strengthen. We currently lack a clearly defined pathway for women with multiple disadvantages or those at risk of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Referral numbers from military families remain low, despite outreach and awareness-raising work. We will continue to strengthen our domestic abuse offer by reviewing gaps in provision, embedding good practice through DAHA training, and developing clearer support routes for under-served groups.

### **Criminal Justice and Safety Pathway**

All partners working in the Criminal Justice System have a strong determination to place the safety of the public and victims at the forefront of their work. The council works closely with North Yorkshire Probation Service and Prisons to ensure that those involved in criminal activity are closely monitored, and that risks to others are safely managed.

Many people who are homeless find themselves involved with justice services at some point in their lives. Stable and affordable housing is a critical element in ensuring people avoid a return to reoffending and can change their lives to make a positive contribution to their local community.

All criminal justice partners are committed to working with the Council in supporting this strategy, to improve outcomes for all North Yorkshire residents.

### **Armed forces**

Veterans experiencing homelessness may face multiple barriers linked to trauma, mental health, substance use and difficulties transitioning to civilian life. While military service does not directly cause homelessness, it can increase vulnerability through factors such as mobility, combat exposure or lack of stable support on leaving accommodation. North Yorkshire's housing allocations policy includes specific provisions for armed forces personnel, including exemption from local connection criteria, disregarding compensation lump sums from income thresholds, and additional preference for those in urgent housing need. The council has also agreed that bids will not be overlooked due to arrears linked to service-related mesne profit accounts. An Armed Forces Audit is currently underway to assess and improve the council's wider offer to the armed forces community, and to inform the development of a new Armed Forces Guide.

As one of the first places in the UK to have an [Armed Forces Covenant](#) in place, North Yorkshire Council's policy in relation to this specifically mentions aspects of housing around equal access and simple processes for the armed forces community.

### **Hospital discharge**

Hospital discharge arrangements vary across the county. Some localities, such as Selby, have established regular multi-disciplinary team meetings involving housing and health partners, enabling well-planned discharges and reduced delays. In other areas, there is less consistency. Stakeholders report issues such as Friday discharges, out-of-area placements, and limited involvement of housing in discharge planning. These gaps increase the risk of housing instability and homelessness for people leaving hospital, particularly those with high needs.

Through the Council's allocation policy Emergency Band, which gives the highest priority can be provided this is allocated in extreme circumstances only and may be subject to a time limit or a direct offer of accommodation. Applicants on the waiting list who are unable to return from hospital to their current home within North Yorkshire as it is deemed permanently unsuitable and cannot be adapted for their needs or where major works are deemed not feasible

Our Home Improvement Agency and Healthy and Sustainable Homes teams will continue to support older residents to remain safely at home. This involves early intervention around mobility, energy costs, and social inclusion, contributing to hospital discharge planning and reducing delayed transfers of care—key goals of the Health and Housing Integration strategy.

We will:

1. Strengthen the Young People's Pathway (YPP) through the current recommissioning process, ensuring dedicated support for 16/17 year olds and care leavers, clearer transition points, and improved move-on into training, employment, and settled housing.
2. Co-produce a Care Leaver Housing Protocol with Leaving Care and other partners to support young people transitioning from care or supported accommodation.
3. Ensure the domestic abuse pathway remains inclusive and trauma-informed, while reviewing gaps in provision for women with multiple disadvantages, including those at risk of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
4. Develop multi-agency planning and support arrangements between housing, A&E services, hospital wards and Integrated Care Board (ICB) partners, to ensure consistent safe discharge, reduce out of area discharges and develop better transitions into housing and support, to reduce the risk of homelessness. This will draw on good practice from Selby.
5. Promote consistent support offers across localities, including access to the same models and standards of pathway-based support regardless of where people live.
6. Engage with the findings of the Armed Forces Audit to strengthen our housing and homelessness offer for veterans, including through clearer referral routes, improved awareness among staff, and the development of an Armed Forces Housing Guide.
7. Comply with the requirements of the new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act. This will include reviewing local supported housing in line with a set of national standards and setting up licensing schemes for local supported housing providers, to ensure minimum quality standards
8. Continue to work with criminal justice partners to develop a strategy for those being released from prison and serving community sentences.

### **Priority 2: A dedicated support offer for people facing multiple disadvantage**

We know that people experiencing multiple disadvantage, such as homelessness alongside mental ill health, substance use, trauma, or contact with the criminal justice system, often struggle to access coordinated support. People can fall between service thresholds, experience repeat homelessness, or cycle in and out of crisis. Many are well known to services but continue to face gaps in care.

We are already delivering some promising models. Our REACH project in Scarborough brings together a multi-agency team offering intensive, trauma-informed support. It takes a housing-led approach and moves away from traditional, appointment-based services – helping people address underlying issues such as mental health, substance use, and isolation. The team includes housing staff, a mental health nurse, a dual diagnosis worker, a clinical psychologist, domestic abuse worker, and holistic support workers, seconded or employed by partners including Tees, Esk, and Wear Valleys NHS Trust, IDAS, Horizons, and Beyond Housing. In Harrogate, the SAFE service provides a similar model for adults over 25. Both services show

how partnership, shared risk and strengths-based approaches can engage people who are often excluded from mainstream systems. We are committed to expanding these models across the county. We are also embedding the national Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach through our Multiple Disadvantage Network which will supersede SAFE as a model building on the already established networks. This includes co-located teams, a strategic coordinator, and formalised protocols based on delegated authority and shared planning. The services we will be providing in Scarborough and Harrogate aim to reduce pressure on crisis services and enabling more joined-up responses.

We recognise that access to mental health and substance use services remains a challenge, particularly for people with dual diagnosis. Fragmented systems and unaligned thresholds also present barriers to early intervention. Work is underway to develop a new approach to supported housing provision, linked to a flexible model of accommodation. This will be supported by shared protocols, data sharing, and delegated authority. Housing and Care Practice Support Meetings, involving housing, Adult Social Care, mental health, and other partners, will oversee planning and provide data and guidance to help ensure that support is flexible, personalised, and responsive to changing needs.

Temporary accommodation also plays a growing role in our support system. Not all temporary accommodation settings are yet designed to support recovery, and we are working with Adult Social Care, public health, and partners to strengthen support planning and pathways out of temporary accommodation for people with multiple disadvantages, and to ensure the support model is aligned with our wider case management and housing-led response.

We will:

1. Expand learning from the REACH and SAFE models across other North Yorkshire localities, including their approaches to housing stability, trauma-informed practice, and integrated, multi-agency working.
2. Continue to embed the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach through the North Yorkshire Multiple Disadvantage Network, supporting co-located teams, shared risk planning and delegated decision-making through the pilot in Harrogate
3. Formalise and extend multi-disciplinary team working across localities, building on current practice in Selby for hospital discharges.
4. Develop a longer-term ambition for a single assessment process to reduce duplication and improve customer experience.
5. Strengthen joint working with mental health and substance use services, particularly to support customers with dual diagnosis or inconsistent engagement.
6. Ensure that temporary accommodation can support customers with multiple and multiple disadvantage. This will include findings from our current review of support planning processes and to develop our support model and to design suitable move-on pathways and input from Adult Social Care, substance use, and other relevant services to ensure appropriate care and support is given

7. Offer training to frontline staff around supporting customers with multiple and multiple disadvantages, including around mental capacity and safeguarding.
8. Take forward opportunities for joint commissioning and shared accountability between housing, Adult Social Care, and health services for people with multiple disadvantages.
9. Deliver joint training for housing and Adult Social Care staff on legal frameworks, responsibilities, and thresholds to improve support planning and coordination in complex cases.
10. Establish joint housing protocols with probation and North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service to support people leaving institutions and reduce repeat homelessness.
11. Develop clear pathways with partners out of temporary accommodation for people with multiple and multiple disadvantage, to support sustained recovery and reduce repeat homelessness.

### **Priority 3: Embedding inclusive, trauma informed, and culturally competent practice**

We are committed to embedding trauma-informed, psychologically informed, and culturally competent approaches across all homelessness services. We recognise that people's experiences of trauma, identity, exclusion, and discrimination shape how they engage with support, and how support needs to be delivered. We are already building on strong foundations. Our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) learning and development programme, the strengths-based approaches in REACH and SAFE, and reflective practice within our Housing Options teams are helping to shape more inclusive and psychologically aware ways of working.

However, we also know that practice remains inconsistent. Not all staff feel confident in applying trauma-informed approaches in day-to-day work, and some accommodation settings, particularly shared or emergency provision, are not always designed to promote safety and recovery. People accessing services in crisis may also struggle to understand complex systems or navigate administrative processes, particularly when support is not tailored to their circumstances. We recognise the need for a more consistent understanding of trauma-informed and psychologically informed practice across teams. By improving shared language and approaches between housing, Adult Social Care, and voluntary, community, and social enterprise partners, we can create more responsive, inclusive systems of support. We are committed to strengthening supervision, joint training and reflective spaces as part of this.

As a member of North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board need to take learning from national and local Safeguarding Adult Reviews. Homeless people are vulnerable to serious violence (including murder), criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines, financial, domestic, and other forms of abuse and self-neglect. A comprehensive strategy is needed to set out how agencies will people experiencing homelessness safe.

We will:

1. Continue to roll out training on trauma-informed and psychologically informed practice across housing and homelessness services through joint working with Adult social care
2. Develop a shared understanding of trauma-informed and psychologically informed approaches across Housing, Adult Social Care and voluntary sector partners, including through joint training and reflective spaces
3. Support staff through supervision to build confidence and consistency in working with customers affected by trauma, exclusion, or systemic inequality
4. Work with accommodation providers to ensure environments support recovery and inclusion, particularly for people with mental health needs or those who have experienced trauma
5. Improve access to culturally competent and identity-aware services, particularly in rural areas and for people with communication or accessibility needs
6. Review service policies and processes to ensure they are inclusive and culturally competent, and co-designed where possible
7. Work with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board to develop a safeguarding policy for housing
8. Strengthen safeguarding protocols and clarify joint procedures between Housing Options and Children and Young People's Services in situations involving families found intentionally homeless
9. Improve the way we capture and act on feedback from customers and tenants from diverse backgrounds, as part of improving service quality and inclusion.

#### **Priority 4: Supporting voluntary, community, and social enterprise engagement and peer-led models**

Voluntary, community and social enterprise partners play a vital role in early intervention and specialist support, especially in rural areas where statutory services may be less visible. While we have relaunched Homelessness Forums across the county, we know more is needed to embed meaningful involvement of voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations in strategy, service design and delivery.

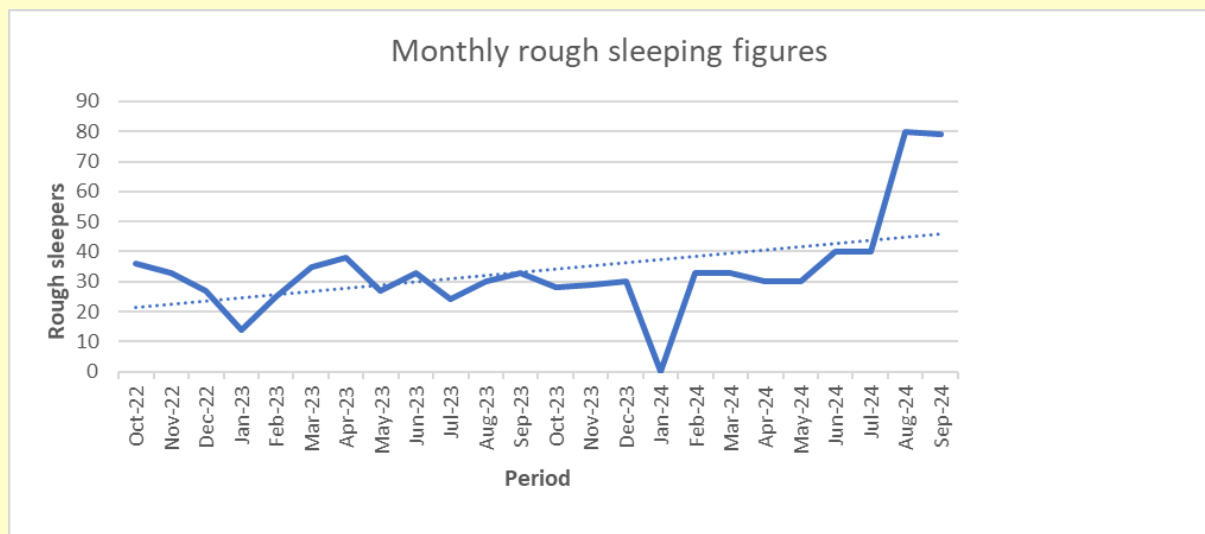
This also applies to people with lived experience. We have heard clearly that individuals with direct experience of homelessness want to be involved in shaping services. Harrogate's Lived Experience Network is already demonstrating the value of peer-led approaches, and we are committed to expanding this work across the county. Through the Multiple Disadvantage Network, we will support the development of a lived and living experience reference group to inform service design, commissioning and implementation. This will help make co-production a standard feature of our housing and homelessness services.

We will:

1. Strengthen the long-term role of voluntary, community, and social enterprise partners in delivering homelessness support, including through improved commissioning opportunities, funding partnerships, and involvement in strategic planning.
2. Support voluntary, community, and social enterprise capacity to deliver outreach and tenancy sustainment support, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
3. Work with housing management to support them to enhance their support offer to customers to ensure sustainment
4. Expand Homelessness Forums as vehicles for shared planning and communication.
5. Establish a county-wide lived experience forum, building on good practice such as the Lived Experience Network in Harrogate, and develop principles and structures to ensure it is inclusive, resourced, and embedded in decision-making around commissioning and service design. This will build on current tenant participation approaches and the work of Connected Spaces lived experience recovery organisation.

### Theme 4: Reducing rough sleeping

The number of people sleeping rough in North Yorkshire is increasing. Monthly rough sleeping figures for the period October 2022 – September 2024 indicate an upward trajectory.



Source: MHCLG.

In 2024, North Yorkshire’s annual street count found 34 people sleeping rough on a single night – a significant increase on the corresponding figure in 2023 of 14 people. There is also a wider group, estimated at around 100 people, who are at risk of rough sleeping in North Yorkshire. This group includes sofa surfers, people sleeping in cars, people at risk of losing their first accommodation placements, and those at risk of repeat homelessness.

Most people experiencing rough sleeping in the annual street counts were male, aged 26 or over, and UK nationals. There has been a recent increase in rough sleeping amongst women and couples over 30. All North Yorkshire's localities have people experiencing entrenched rough sleeping, and people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages, including around substance use, physical health, mental health, and offending. Rough sleeping in North Yorkshire is linked to loss of employment, substance use, and relationship breakdown. We know a small number of people come onto the streets each month after leaving prison or other institution.

Some people experiencing rough sleeping are not able to re-access accommodation because of previous challenging behaviour and/or perceived risks to themselves or others. Some people do not engage well with homelessness support because of previous negative experiences of services. Others are transient, moving between North Yorkshire localities or other local authority areas. There is migration to our coastal areas to sleep rough, especially during the summer months. This includes some people who are known to have tenancies in other areas. This transience is also linked to inconsistent service engagement.

### **Priority 1: Meeting the accommodation and support needs of people experiencing rough sleeping**

Our new county-wide rough sleeper team brings together all staff and funding from the previous locality-based services. In addition, our Scarborough rough sleeper team is co-located with partner agencies. The new team structure and staffing help us better meet local demand and enable people experiencing rough sleeping who have exhausted all accommodation and/or support options in one locality to access support in another area. We carry out outreach shifts at least once each week in all localities. Outreach shifts are multi-disciplinary, including police and staff from Horizons, our commissioned substance use service.

The service also has access to 49 units through RSAP/NSAP rough sleeper resettlement programmes, these are provided both inhouse and through partners. Support within these units is provided through the Rough sleeper team. Access to this accommodation is not consistent across NY and a clear pathway needs to be developed to ensure transparency across and to improve the customer journey.

The high degree of transience amongst people experiencing rough sleeping and their often sporadic engagement with services, combined with North Yorkshire's large geography and rurality, means it is difficult to reach all people experiencing rough sleeping and to build trusting relationships with individuals. This is especially the case for those who are entrenched in their rough sleeping and/or who have multiple disadvantages. We provide emergency accommodation for rough sleepers via Selby Sleepsafe and Harrogate Homeless Projects No Second Night Out (NSNO) service in Harrogate. NSNO offers emergency accommodation, person-centred support, and move on into appropriate housing and support, and has reduced

rough sleeper numbers in Harrogate and short-term B&B use. However, we do not currently have emergency accommodation for rough sleepers in all localities.

The council also activated Severe weather emergency provisions (SWEP) 16 times during winter 24/25. We helped 130 individuals with accommodation. Access to accommodation for this group is particularly difficult to find throughout NY and puts a strain on our services. In addition to this we have provided access to water and sun protection during periods of significantly hot weather as well as information relating to 'safe shelter'. This area of service provision is unlikely to reduce as weather conditions continue to be extreme. It is essential we work with partners to look at what additionality we can provide around improved support to this vulnerable group during these times.

We will:

1. Continue to develop resource-sharing across localities, to maximise opportunities for people experiencing rough sleeping to access housing and support opportunities across North Yorkshire.
2. Continue to work with police and other partners to share intelligence around rough sleeping.
3. Further develop outreach services to work with people experiencing entrenched rough sleeping, and those experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages.
4. Develop a consistent emergency accommodation offer for people experiencing rough sleeping, based on the NSNO model. We will work in partnership with North Yorkshire council colleagues, B&B providers to increase provision available for this purpose.
5. Review our approach to reconnecting people experiencing rough sleeping to their local authority area of origin, with a view to making this more robust.
6. Provide support to people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple needs in temporary and supported accommodation via the new Multiple Disadvantage offer.
7. Ensure consistent access to RSAP/NSAP properties for rough sleepers across North Yorkshire
8. Work with partners to provide additional support when Severe weather provisions are instigated across North Yorkshire

### **Priority 2: Supporting people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages**

As well as loss of a home, rough sleeping is often linked to issues around mental health or substance misuse, or lack of access to tenancy sustainment or other support services. Rough sleepers are some of the most vulnerable people in society and are open to abuse and neglect, including self-neglect.

Our Harrogate SAFE (Services for Adults Facing Exclusion) and Scarborough REACH (Reducing Exclusion for Adults with Complex Needs) projects work with people experiencing entrenched rough sleeping. REACH was recently externally evaluated, and this work produced some

valuable learning about how the project can be developed in future to support rough sleepers with multiple needs.

The REACH scheme in Scarborough provides accommodation and support for 9 people with a history of rough sleeping. This has been very successful in supporting people to maintain these tenancies.

We hold regular locality-based casework meetings. In Scarborough this includes fortnightly multi-agency tasking meetings and weekly multi-disciplinary team meeting, involving Adult Social Care, Horizons, and a local GP. At present, some high-risk people experiencing rough sleeping are not routinely identified via local tasking groups and data collection systems. Not all frontline staff are confident in working with people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple needs.

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board has done much work in recent years to raise the profile of rough sleeping issues. Rough sleeping is one of North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board's three priorities and a prevention sub-group has been established to explore how organisations can work together to meet the needs of this group.

The homeless health clinic in Harrogate provides specialist care for rough sleepers. North Yorkshire has also developed working relationships and referral routes to enhance care via GPs and other primary care services. We are developing the work of SAFE in Harrogate through a new Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM), Multiple disadvantage offer. We are working closely with Public Health and Adult Social care to bring the services together, there will be Rough Sleeper coordinators and Housing Options officers, who specialise in mental capacity as part of this team, we hope collectively we can support some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

We will:

1. Expand the Housing First model across localities – utilising North Yorkshire council stock and seeking agreement with registered providers around offering up additional units of accommodation.
2. Implement learning from the evaluation of REACH. This will include clarifying principles and protocols, to ensure consistent support and buy-in from partners; extending support outside of Monday – Friday office hours; ensuring that support continues beyond the end of a tenancy and where sideways moves are made; and sourcing additional safe and suitable housing, in order to expand the scheme.
3. Make data recording around rough sleeping more consistent – adding rough sleeping data to our existing casework management system or developing bespoke IT solutions.
4. Develop a move-on pathway for entrenched people experiencing rough sleeping, including people with multiple disadvantages and/or a dual diagnosis.
5. Develop multi-disciplinary offer to deliver holistic support for people experiencing rough sleeping. These teams would be co-located and be likely to include substance use, dual diagnosis, IDAS, and housing support staff.
6. Ensure that training in psychologically-informed practice is available for staff in all services working with people experiencing rough sleeping

7. Build on work with primary care services to improve access to dentistry for rough sleepers.

### **Priority 3: Working with local business and the voluntary sector**

There are well-established day services in North Yorkshire. These include the Rainbow Centre in Scarborough, Springboard in Harrogate, and Project 6 in Craven. The St. Giles outreach service operates from a camper van, covering rural areas in Ryedale. St. Giles offers advice, guidance, and referrals to other services. The model has been successful in engaging with vulnerable women and there are plans to start a second van service in the Skipton/Craven area. There are opportunities to strengthen collaborative working with these services and to extend the reach of outreach services.

Harrogate StreetAid enables the public to make small donations via a card terminal. Local homelessness organisations bid for this money, which is then donated to individual customers. To date, donations have funded health and wellbeing-related purchases – including bikes, driving lessons, and gaming consoles. As well as generating additional funding for people experiencing rough sleeping, StreetAid works to combat the perception of increased begging in Harrogate town centre and educates the council's partners and communities on the difference between begging and rough sleeping.

Harrogate BID (Business Improvement District) Town Centre Support Officer works to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, including by people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

We need to look at support organisations with additional funding where appropriate and available, also utilising government grants to improve services for our customers.

We will:

1. Provide better integrate outreach services and day services. This will include hubs across North Yorkshire.
2. Undertake a cost benefit analysis of commissioning a "welfare bus" to engage with people experiencing rough sleeping in rural areas, which offers support around housing, substance use, mental health, and welfare benefits.
3. Develop the StreetAid offer to support engagement with people experiencing rough sleeping and others engaged with street activity.
4. Maximise opportunities to work with BIDS across North Yorkshire.

## **Governance structure and performance framework**

### **Governance Structure for Monitoring the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025–2030):**

A number of meetings and groups are already in place that will assess and monitor the impact of the strategy:

**NY Homelessness Partnership group**, this group together with both **Homeless and Rough Sleeping Forums** will help to guide the strategy implementation and monitor its outcomes.

The NY Homelessness partnership group (NYHPG) will be the overarching governance for monitoring the strategy, the group comprises of members drawn from the following disciplines and partner organisations;

- Adult Social care
- Community development
- Housing, Homelessness and Housing Options service
- Children and Young people's service
- Public health
- The Probation Service
- Tees, Esk and Wear valley, (TEWV)
- North Yorkshire Police
- Community Safety
- Voluntary, Community and Faith services
- Registered providers

The purpose of the group will be to oversee the delivery of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and action plan, ensuring it achieves its stated aims and outcomes through the delivery of high quality, consistent services which meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across North Yorkshire.

**Strategic oversight** will also come from the;

#### **Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)**

- Rough sleeping is now a strategic priority under the SAB, recognised nationally as best practice
  - The Head of Housing needs is a named board member leading on rough sleeping, ensuring accountability and system-wide integration
  - Prevention Sub group of the board focuses on rough sleeping, transitions, and self-neglect ,Includes members from NHS, Adult Social Care, Housing, and voluntary organisations. Responsible for mapping services, identifying gaps, and proposing solutions.
  - Task and Finish Groups have been formed to address specific challenges such as health assessments, GP access, and service consistency including representatives from housing, health, social care, and voluntary sectors.

The homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forums for the East and West will feed into the NY Homelessness and Rough Sleeping partnership and assist in bringing the operational teams together to meet the targets within the action plan.

#### **Operational Delivery**

- The frontline Homelessness and Housing Options Team will be responsible for statutory delivery under the Homelessness Act

### **Data and Feedback**

- We will incorporate lived experience and customer surveys into service reviews
- Annual reviews and updates to the strategy based on outcomes and feedback
- Regular meetings with advisers from the MHCLG Homelessness and Advice Support Team (HAST)

### **Performance measures**

The aim of the performance frameworks is to;

- Understand demand within the homelessness and housing options system, including changing pressures
- Inform future investment needs and redesign opportunities, including building long term partnerships
- Highlight successes and understand areas for improvement
- Improve the quality of data

In order to track and measure the impact of the strategy, the following high level performance monitoring framework is in place.

### **Statutory measures**

North Yorkshire Council submits quarterly returns to MHCLG via the DELTA system for homelessness. In addition to this additional information is submitted to government through;

- Regular reporting on KPIs from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022–2025
- Monthly homelessness pressures

### **Corporate Performance indicators**

Largely reflecting statutory HCLIC returns, but includes additional housing advice cases and provide a breakdown of type of temporary accommodation used.

Homeless assessments completed:
<i>Number of households given a prevention duty.</i>
<i>Number of household given a relief duty.</i>
Households accepted as statutory homeless (Main duty)

<i>Number of successful homelessness preventions and reliefs (breakdown recorded below to be able to provide a percentage of all duties ended also).</i>
Total number in all temporary accommodation:
<i>Number of households in B&amp;B emergency accom as at the end of the quarter.</i>
<i>Number of households in high cost self contained emergency accom as at the end of the quarter.</i>
<i>Number of households in general temporary accommodation as at the end of the quarter.</i>
Number of approaches for Housing Advice (inc. homelessness).

## About Homeless Link

This strategy was developed in partnership with Homeless Link.

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness In England. We aim to develop, inspire, support, and sustain a movement of organisations working together to achieve positive futures for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

Representing over 900 organisations across England, we are in a unique position to see both the scale and nature of the tragedy of homelessness. We see the data gaps; the national policy barriers; the constraints of both funding and expertise; the system blocks and attitudinal obstacles. But crucially, we also see – and are instrumental in developing – the positive practice and ‘what works’ solutions.

As an organisation we believe that things can and should be better: not because we are naïve or cut off from reality, but because we have seen and experienced radical positive change in the way systems and services are delivered – and that gives us hope for a different future.

We support our members through research, guidance, and learning, and to promote policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.