

Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2025 - 2030



Contents

Introduction	<u>2</u>
National Policy	<u>3</u>
Linked Policies and Strategies	<u>4</u>
Our Priorities	<u>5</u>
Action Plan	<u>10</u>

Introduction and background

Over the past four years the council, together with our partners, have experienced increasing challenges when it comes to supporting our most vulnerable residents and families who have been impacted by homelessness.

In Chorley our main objective is to ensure everyone can have a safe place they can call home. However, due to the long-term impact of COVID-19, the current cost of living pressure and the national housing crisis this is becoming increasingly difficult to deliver. Unfortunately, this is leaving too many people unable to access accommodation that meets their needs.

The priorities of this strategy are to build strong relationships with partners and develop a working together approach to prevent, relieve, and tackle challenges together. We have consulted with stakeholders to develop a strategy that we can, and will, deliver.

Our strategy places strong emphasis on Intervention, Prevention and Collaboration. We want to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and break the cycle of homelessness by helping people remain in and sustain their homes, with a “get it right” approach. Working collaboratively will improve the service and the support we can provide, and our intention is to end rough sleeping, minimise the use of B&B, and reduce the time spent in any temporary accommodation.

The [Homelessness Act 2002](#) places a statutory duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their area and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years. The Act mandates that the strategy includes actions around three objectives:

- Preventing homelessness
- Securing sufficient accommodation
- Ensuring satisfactory support is available.

The [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) introduced new legal duties for housing authorities, making amendments to the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (Homelessness). This focuses on the prevention and relief of homelessness, regardless of priority status, and providing personal housing plans. This is reflected in our strategy.

Timescales: This Prevention of Homeless strategy covers the period from 2025-2030. Key actions will be completed over this timeframe and yearly updates on its objectives will be made as per legislation.

Linked Policies and Strategies

Since our last strategy, published in 2019, there have been changes to national policy and legal frameworks that have an impact on how local authorities provide housing and homelessness services.

Most recently, the cost-of-living crisis and the lack of affordable housing has contributed to increasing the risk of homelessness.

Key changes:

[Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](#): On 20 March 2019, a new law was introduced to ensure that rented houses and flats are 'fit for human habitation', which means that they are safe, healthy, and free from risks that could cause significant harm.

[The Tenants Fee Act 2019](#): Applies to new or renewed tenancies from 1 June 2019. The aim of the Act is to reduce the upfront fees and ongoing tenancy costs, with responsible payment transparency from the start for tenants.

[The Charter for Social Housing Residents](#): (Social Housing White Paper 2020) Sets out actions that government will look to introduce to ensure that social housing is safe to live in, residents are listened to, good quality homes are provided, and there is opportunity for change when things go wrong.

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#): Enacted in January 2022, it is the first Act to include a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises all the forms that domestic abuse can take. It introduces a statutory duty on local authorities to support survivors of domestic abuse.

[Ending Rough Sleeping 2022](#): Building on the progress made since the introduction of the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018, this document sets out how government will take action to end rough sleeping, with key themes being prevention, intervention, and recovery.

[Stable Homes, Built on Love](#): Implementation Strategy and Consultation. Children's Social Care Reform 2023: Provides context to the barriers faced by care leavers in securing and maintaining affordable housing and how this places them at greater risk of homelessness. Alongside the Joint Housing Protocols for Care Leavers 2020, the Strategy focuses on increasing the number of care leavers in safe, suitable accommodation and reducing care leaver homelessness.

[Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023](#): Aims to introduce new standards for supported exempt accommodation and make changes to how this type of accommodation is regulated.

[Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act](#): The Social Housing (Regulation) Act lays foundations for changes to how social housing is managed. It includes increased regulation of social landlords and new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their homes.

[Renters \(Reform\) Bill](#): Aims to provide tenants with greater security and bring an end to Section 21 (no fault evictions), whilst ensuring landlords remain confident that they can regain their property where they need to.

This strategy is interlinked with those of other services both internal and external. Some key links include:

Our [Chorley Housing Strategy](#) sets out the council's ambitions to ensure that everyone living in the borough has access to the high-quality accommodation that they need. [Currently under review.](#)

The [Central Lancashire Local Plan](#) covers the geographical areas of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble, which functions as one integrated local economy and commuting area. The Local Plan will ensure that sustainable development and investment opportunities across the three districts will be fully integrated in our interdependent region. The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and refreshed but will determine where (and what) new housing, employment and infrastructure development takes place until 2041.

The [Chorley Council Registered Provider Framework](#) is a strategic partnership between the council and Registered Providers selected by the council to deliver affordable housing in the borough via Section 106 Agreements.

The [Lancashire Joint Protocol](#) is important for the safeguarding of children and families across Lancashire. [The protocol is currently under review.](#)

The [Select Move Allocations Policy 2022-23](#) ensures that social housing is allocated in a fair, transparent, and effective manner, which prioritises applicants who are most in need.

[Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-2025](#) sets out how, in partnership, the Local Authority will respond to low level environmental crime and tackle anti-social behaviour.

Our Priorities

Key priorities

- Collaborative partnerships and early intervention
- Quality and affordable accommodation across all housing tenures
- Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

Priority One: Collaborative partnerships and early intervention

Context:

The council takes a wraparound approach to preventing and managing homelessness, bringing various services together to provide seamless support. The council recognises the importance of building strong relationships with partner organisations, and we want to build on this collaborative way of working to achieve the best outcome for our service users.

Principles

- We will support community resilience by helping individuals to cope with challenges.
- We will continue the positive work with our internal colleagues using a collaborative approach to combat rough sleeping, support joint funding initiatives and working together to prevent homelessness.
- We will engage with any of our commissioned services to provide practical skills (such as managing a budget) which are essential to independence, and we will ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to develop these skills.

What we are doing now

We are a key member of the Select Move Partnership, which includes three Local Authorities and 12 Registered Providers across Chorley, South Ribble, and Preston. We work closely with our commissioned services and the voluntary and community sector to prevent and support tenants at risk of eviction.

[KEY unlocking futures](#) assist with preventing homelessness for 16 to 25 years old's by providing help to people before they hit crisis point. The group provides housing tenancy training, family mediation, support and advice on education/training, preparing to live independently and pre-tenancy guidance.

[Chorley Help the Homeless](#) are local charity who support those at risk of or affected by being homeless in the borough of Chorley.

[Preston Care and Repair](#) deliver the Sanctuary Scheme, which enables people at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes.

[Citizens Advice Bureau](#) provide a variety of housing advice and support including budgeting, debt and benefit advice, along with general housing advice.

Key actions:

- Deliver improvements to data collection and sharing across the local housing and housing support sector.
- Review housing related information available to customers and whether the customer journey can be made more effective and efficient.
- Establish an early intervention plan with landlords of all tenures to prevent evictions.

- Develop a Strategic and Operational Supported Housing Network to enable two-way support between the council and Supported Housing Providers.

Priority Two: Quality and affordable accommodation across all housing tenures.

Context:

This priority covers all tenures of accommodation across Chorley, including temporary, supported, and permanent housing in both the social and private sector. It also covers all groups of tenants including specialist groups such as care leavers, young people, residents with complex needs, and survivors of domestic abuse.

Having a secure home is a crucial component of wellbeing, allowing people to focus on overcoming other issues they may face. The lack of secure housing leads to a range of disparities from health to education and employment.

Private Sector: The Homelessness Review carried out in 2019 identified that presentations from the private rented sector are over four times higher than from the social rented sector and this remains the same today.

The private sector is becoming increasingly difficult for people to access because of issues of property availability and affordability. In 2023, a shortage of affordable rented housing and increasing costs for landlords resulted in rents increasing significantly.

In March 2020, 38% of tenants with Assured Shorthold Tenancies (predominantly used in the private sector) had their tenancies ended due to the landlord wishing to sell their property. Since April 2022, this had increased to 64%. Landlords are facing their own challenges and uncertainties, with the possibility of abolishing Section 21 evictions under the Renter (Reform) Bill and an increase in mortgage interest rates both having an impact on the private rented sector.

Social Housing: There are proposals set out in the new Select Move policy which recognise the current cost-of-living crisis and address the issue of households living in insecure accommodation. The policy will support an early intervention approach to prevent households from hitting crisis point and becoming homeless due to their home being unaffordable.

The Housing Allocations policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and continues to reflect the partnership's priorities.

Our aim is to develop strong relationships within the council between Housing Options, Neighbourhoods, Revenues and Benefits, and Public Protection services. Working together to prevent homelessness by Housing Options being notified as early as possible of potential problems being faced by individual residents so we can act sooner rather than later, which can often result in tenants not losing their homes.

Supported Housing: We aim to extend our relationships with all Supported Accommodation providers within the borough, with a proactive approach to ensure they meet the requirements required in the Supported Housing (Overview Regulatory) Act 2023.

Temporary Accommodation: We have plans to broaden our temporary accommodation options for families and for those individuals with complex needs. This will include a review the current rough sleeper provision. We will look to improve the support provided to households whilst they are in temporary accommodation including providing resettlement support into permanent accommodation whilst developing a bespoke keep-in-touch support plan, with a "float away" support approach.

As part of the Communities and Housing Service review, we have identified the need to have a dedicated role to assist in enhancing these connections across all housing sectors to assist in the implementation of these key objectives to secure quality, permanent accommodation for residents.

We have also identified a need to have dedicated support for residents in temporary accommodation, including those in bed and breakfast, to prevent homeless and housing need re-presentations.

Principles

- Everyone should expect consistency and fair treatment regardless of housing tenure.
- Effective tenant and landlord support pathways should be available and visible to all those who rent regardless of tenure.
- Tenants should not feel deterred from reporting issues by the prospect of detriment such as harassment, eviction or unreasonable rent increases.

What we are doing now

In 2022/23 we reviewed our Allocations Policy for Social Housing, which will be implemented in Autumn 2024. It has been necessary to review how properties are allocated and how shortlisting is prioritised to ensure the process is easier to understand and priority is given to those in most need. Chorley Council already has a well-established relationship with the Select Move Partnership, holding regular meeting for both operational and strategic discussions. The Partnership focuses on the start of a social tenant's journey; processing of applications and offers of properties.

Pathways are being developed with local Supported Housing providers to provide better quality supported housing that meet residents needs and achieving the council's housing standards.

Chorley Council also hosts the Private Landlord Forum which is open to all private landlords with properties in the borough, plus letting agents, and property management companies. This Forum provides an opportunity for landlords to engage with the Housing Options Team. However, the range of council services which attend could be expanded and more needs to be done to attract a wider range of landlords so communication can be pushed further into this sector.

Key Actions

- Map and evaluate all Supported Housing providers in the Chorley area.
- Implement and embed the new Housing Allocations Policy and review annually.
- Review the Private Landlord Forum to improve engagement and awareness across the private rental sector.
- Review of temporary accommodation and Rough Sleeper provision and develop property on Gillibrand Street to accommodate families in need of Temporary Accommodation.

Priority Three: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

Context

The council has a long-term vision to prevent Homelessness and end local rough sleeping. With a high demand across all housing sectors and a lack of suitable accommodation we will have to act creatively to achieve this vision.

A key part of this aspiration is to reduce the number of repeat presentations and break the cycle of homelessness. We can achieve this by aligning our priorities of Collaboration, Early Intervention and Prevention and working closely with internal and external partners.

We will work with private landlords across Chorley, providing advice to them and their tenants as part of an early intervention approach. Some tenants experience a high risk of homelessness because of support and guidance for them and their landlord. Let us get it right! We want to ensure we place people in the correct accommodation to meet their needs, and then help them to sustain their tenancy and remain in the property long-term.

We are eager to learn and will continue our journey to improve the service we offer. We will implement new legislation, the outcomes of internal and external audit and learn from the best practices demonstrated by other Local Authorities.

Helping someone to settle into their new accommodation from the very start can be the difference between the tenancy being successful or failing. We want to ensure that those who need it most have the assistance and support they require when they begin their journey in their new home.

Collaborating with internal colleagues such as the Social Prescribing Service and having strong relationships with other outreach services will ensure that individuals receive the wrap-around support they need, reducing the risk of people failing in their tenancies. This effective collaboration extends to our external partners who we will work with to prevent homelessness in specific groups like prison leavers and people being discharged from hospital.

Principles

- Everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness will be able to access advice and assistance in creating a personal housing plan to improve their housing situation.
- We will establish strong relationships with prison services and probation to plan for and prioritise individuals with no fixed abode.
- We will work with partners in primary and secondary health care to bridge gaps between housing and health services to preventing crisis situations upon hospital discharge.
- We will focus on supporting residents to settle and stay in accommodation by offering “float away” support to help them succeed in their tenancy.

What we are doing now.

The council is already proactive in preventing homelessness. The council’s Housing Options team have measures in place to help those who are threatened by homelessness, ensuring the correct advice and support is received, often helping to prevent homelessness from occurring.

The council also maintains and manages its own purpose-built homeless unit that can provide safe and supportive accommodation for up to 25 homeless households. Additionally, we work closely with the main

social landlords plus the voluntary and community sector to assist tenants at risk of eviction. Often this results in homelessness being prevented.

The Housing Options, Social Prescribing and Accommodation Officers all provide elements of support to households in temporary accommodation, including those in B&B. This includes assistance with bidding on Select Move for social rented properties, applying for benefits, assisting with upfront costs and equipment when they are ready to move into their own accommodation.

Key Actions

- Educate tenants about budgeting and financial planning to reduce the number of presentations caused by rent arrears.
- Develop an ongoing “float away” support programme to provide pre-tenancy and initial settling-in support for residents who need it the most.
- Develop strong partnerships with specialist support providers to assist people most at risk of homelessness.

DRAFT

Priority	Action	Why	Responsibilities / Dates	Homelessness Strategy Objective(s)
Collaborative partnerships and early intervention	Develop strategies to improve data sharing across the sector.	Support evidence-informed decision-making.	Housing Options – July 2025	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Establish an early intervention plan with landlords of all positions.	Early intervention and notifications are key to addressing issues prior to crisis point and to assist in reducing the number of homelessness presentations.	Housing Options – December 2025	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Develop a Strategic and Operational Supported Housing Network to provide two-way support for both the LA and the Supported Housing Provider.	We acknowledge the importance of establishing strong relationships with supported housing providers to enhance the availability, quality and support provided across Chorley considering the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Overview) Act 2023.	Housing Options / Public Protection – March 2026	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Review our service information and the customer journey.	Providing a more efficient and effective journey for the customer, ensuring that it is accessible to everyone.	Housing Options / Transformation – December 2025	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
Quality and affordable accommodation across all housing tenures	Evaluate all Supported Housing Providers in the Chorley area.	To enhance the availability, quality and support provided across Chorley in light of the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Overview) Act 2023.	Housing Options / Environmental Health – March 2026	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Implement and embed the new Housing Allocations Policy and review annually.	To improve how properties are allocated and how shortlisting is prioritised to ensure the process is easier to understand and priority is given to those who need it most. There are new proposals set out in the new policy that recognise the current cost-of-living crisis and addresses households that live in unsecure accommodation.	Housing Options – March 2026	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Review the Private Landlord Forum for ways to raise engagement and awareness with the private sector.	The Private Landlords Forum offers an opportunity for landlords to engage with housing officers, fostering positive communication pathways. However, given the dispersed nature of the private rental sector the impact is currently limited to proactive landlords who engage. Reviewing the scope of the offer and ways to entice landlords to engage should allow for a bigger forum to share best practices and improve the quality across all tenures.	Housing Options – July 2025	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Review of temporary accommodation and rough Sleeper Provision and develop property on Gillibrand Street to accommodate families in need of Temporary Accommodation.	To reduce the number of homeless households in Bed & Breakfast and reduce rough sleeping all year round.	Housing Options – March 2026	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.	Educating tenants affected by the cost-of-living crisis on budgeting.	To reduce the number of presentations caused by rent arrears.	Housing Options / Communities – March 2026	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Develop an ongoing float away support program for those who need it the most and provide resettlement and pre tenancy support for those transitioning into new tenancies.	To reduce the number of re-representations and enable people to be able sustain and remain in their accommodation.	Housing Options / Communities – March 2030	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Develop clear pathways for service users with complex needs, underlying mental health and/or substance misuse issues, ensure this run alongside existing housing support	The demand for supported housing referrals continues to increase, addressing complex needs and providing supported housing as a step prior to general needs accommodation with an aim to break the cycle of homelessness. Complex cases often have dual diagnosis, support offerings for both are limited.	Housing Options / Communities – March 2026	Preventing Homelessness Securing Sufficient Accommodation Securing Satisfactory Support
	Carry out a final audit review	This is to ensure all actions set out in the 2024 Pattersons review have been implemented.	Housing Options – March 2030	

DRAFT