

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

2025 – 2030

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Introduction

Homelessness in all its forms should have no place in modern society. In a civilised society, care should be given to our most vulnerable people and the basic right to accommodation that is safe, warm and that they can call home....

And yet we all know that homelessness has been getting worse. Across the country, compared to just a few years ago, there are more people sleeping rough on the streets, more people approaching local authorities for help because they cannot find somewhere decent and secure to live without help, and more families with children living in Bed and Breakfast or other unsuitable temporary accommodation, where they cannot settle, may be severely overcrowded, and have difficulty getting to work or school.

This not only causes unnecessary suffering and disruption to people's lives today but stores up problems for the future as well because of the missed opportunities to work, study and contribute to society that homelessness causes, as well as the poor impact on both physical and mental health which it creates.

This is true across the whole of England, but Tameside has not been immune, and this Council has been affected by increasing homelessness demand, less affordable accommodation and less resources for local government. Emergency accommodation alone is costing us much more than we can afford, for accommodation that is often of a lower quality than we would like to see.

This strategy is an opportunity to turn that around. Coupled with a national new strategic approach, which aims to address the root causes of homelessness and lack of affordable accommodation, in Tameside we are determined to do our part to become an exemplar local authority when it comes to preventing and tackling homelessness.

Following a thorough review of Tameside Council's homelessness service, we intend to use the next five years to work across all communities in the borough and in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders across the council, with registered providers of social housing, voluntary organisations, homeless people and people with lived experience of homelessness, and the private sector to make homelessness Rare, Brief and Non-recurring.

It's time to get stuck into that work as a top priority for Tameside Council and everyone who wants to work with us to get this done!

Councillor Andrew McLaren, Deputy Leader – Growth, Housing and Homelessness

Our Vision and Priorities

Our vision is that over the lifetime of this strategy and in partnership with stakeholders, communities and decision makers we can work towards making homelessness in all its forms rare, brief and non-recurrent in Tameside.

Homelessness occurs as a result of poverty and inequality and the impact of both the risk of homelessness and the direct experience of homelessness on citizens is profound. Homelessness is rarely, if ever, the product of one set of circumstances or events but is the product of multiple factors.

There are the structural factors such as limited supply of truly affordable housing, poor access to support services, low incomes combined with rising cost of living, and male violence towards women. These structural factors interact with people's needs, such as poor mental health, limited social support; their protective factors, for example stable and supportive relationships, secure employment and their experiences, including adverse experiences during childhood and adulthood.

Interacting with both the structural and personal issues, is the way service systems and design inadvertently promote or hinder homelessness prevention and inclusion, for example the way in which Universal Credit is administered when a claim is first made.

To tackle all forms of homelessness and to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring we therefore need to focus on the following themes:

- Building protective factors with communities and stakeholders
- Collectively tackling the structural factors that contribute to homelessness
- Ensuring that we focus on prevention of homelessness both holistically and at the earliest stage

The Council cannot do this alone, and we propose that through a reformed Homelessness Forum we can begin the work of developing a broad cross agency consensus and plans for promoting early prevention of homelessness (pre the 56 days set out in the Homeless Reduction Act 2017) and effective responses to avoid repeat homelessness.

Across the council and our wider partnerships, including with Public Health, DWP and the Voluntary and Community Sector, we will focus efforts on building the protective factors in communities that promote homelessness prevention at the same time as addressing the structural factors that make homelessness more likely to occur in the first place. Promoting access to high quality Information, Advice and Guidance, to good employment and to affordable housing.

Working with the Homelessness Forum and our wider strategic partnership we will use the following 'Positive Pathway Model'¹ as conceptual framework to help us ensure that we are tackling not just homelessness as it happens but work to get upstream and ensure that homelessness prevention is embedded in the work of all parts of the Council's services and in the work of our partners. Over time shifting the balance of our investment and efforts from crisis to prevention focused solutions.

Positive Pathway Model



To make a reality of this desire for a strategic shift in our collective focus we will need to continue the work we have already started on:

- Preventing homelessness, in all its forms, through proactive prevention
- Securing accommodation for people in Tameside who are or maybe come homeless
- Supporting people in Tameside who are or maybe come homeless, or were previously homeless, including rough sleepers

We are well placed to build on these early steps and by working in close collaboration with the widest range of partners to make a reality of our strategic aim of making homelessness, in all its forms, Rare, Brief and Non-recurrent for the people of Tameside.

¹ Originally developed by St Basils Youth Homelessness Services

Preventing homelessness

Current data

In this section we briefly set out the key data we have used to help shape this part of the strategy. The data is based on statistical returns that all English local authorities submit to the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government.

Table 1: Homelessness assessments and duties owed

	22/23	23/24	% change Tameside	% change North West	% change England
Total homelessness assessments	1272	1571	24%	8%	15%
Total owed a duty under the HRA	1271	1566	23%	7%	9%
Total owed a prevention duty	507	533	5%	2%	4%
Total owed a relief duty	764	1033	35%	11%	13%
Homeless Households per (000)	7.6	10.22	34%	11%	13%

The table above shows the change in the numbers of people who are approaching Tameside Council for help with homelessness and are judged to be owed a duty of assistance under homelessness law, between the financial years 2220/23 and 2320/24. The last two columns show the percentage changes for the same period for the North West and England as whole.

It is clear from the data that Tameside Council has experienced a significant rate of growth in both the number of people seeking help and the number assessed as being owed a duty; and that the increase is greater than experienced in both the North West and England. The increased level of need has undoubtedly added extra pressure on all our homelessness services. The growth in the numbers of households per 1,000 to 10.22 is concerning and is higher than many areas across the region, it is another indicator of the scale of the challenge we face locally.

The data also indicates a significant growth in the numbers of households owed a relief duty when compared to the region and England. Whilst the growth rate in those owed a

prevention duty is in line with the region and England. This figure indicates that we are working with more families at crisis point and work needs to be done to step in at an earlier stage, in order to provide preventative solutions, advice and support as an intervention measure.

Our aim will be to increase the numbers of people we can help through prevention of homelessness

Reasons for homelessness

The next two tables highlight the 'reasons' for homelessness for those assessed as being owed a homelessness duty. We have split this into those owed a 'prevention duty' and those owed a 'relief duty'.

Table 2: Reason for a prevention duty owed

Reason for risk of homelessness	22/23	23/24	% change Tameside	% change North West	% change England
Ending of AST	237	220	-7%	+ 6%	+ 6%
Friends and Family no longer willing to accommodate	84	95	+ 13%	-10%	-4%
Domestic Abuse	18	12	-33%	+14%	+ 3%

Table 3: Relief Duty owed

Reason for risk of homelessness	22/23	23/24	% change Tameside	% change North West	% change England
Ending of AST	71	92	+ 30%	+ 5%	+10%
Friends and Family no longer willing to accommodate	284	337	+ 19%	+ 5%	+ 6%
Domestic Abuse	121	176	+45%	-3%	+ 5%

Overall, the main reasons for being owed a duty are consistent with the pattern across the country and over time.

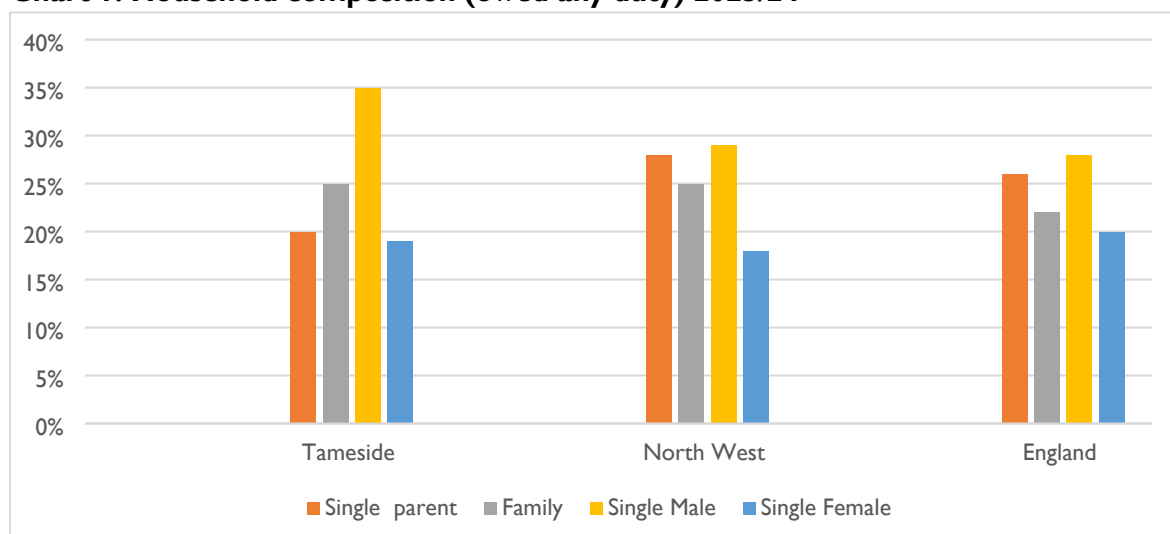
There are some emerging trends in this data that we will need to monitor closely over the coming 12 to 24 months.

The 33% reduction in the number of women fleeing domestic abuse being helped through prevention of homelessness is out of line with national trends and is matched by a

concomitant increase the number of women fleeing domestic abuse being owed a relief duty.

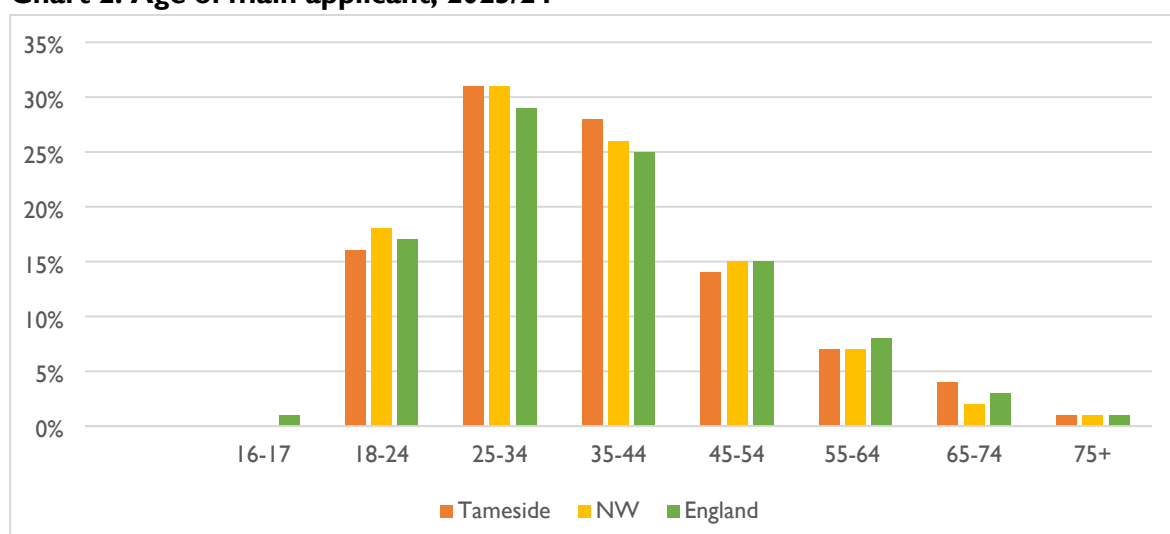
It is also clear that the bulk of the households who make up the increase in numbers of households being assessed as being owed a duty over all (first table) are much more likely to be owed a duty of relief than prevention. This is demonstrated by the larger percentage increases for each reason for homelessness in the 'relief duty' data than the national average.

Chart 1: Household composition (owed any duty) 2023/24



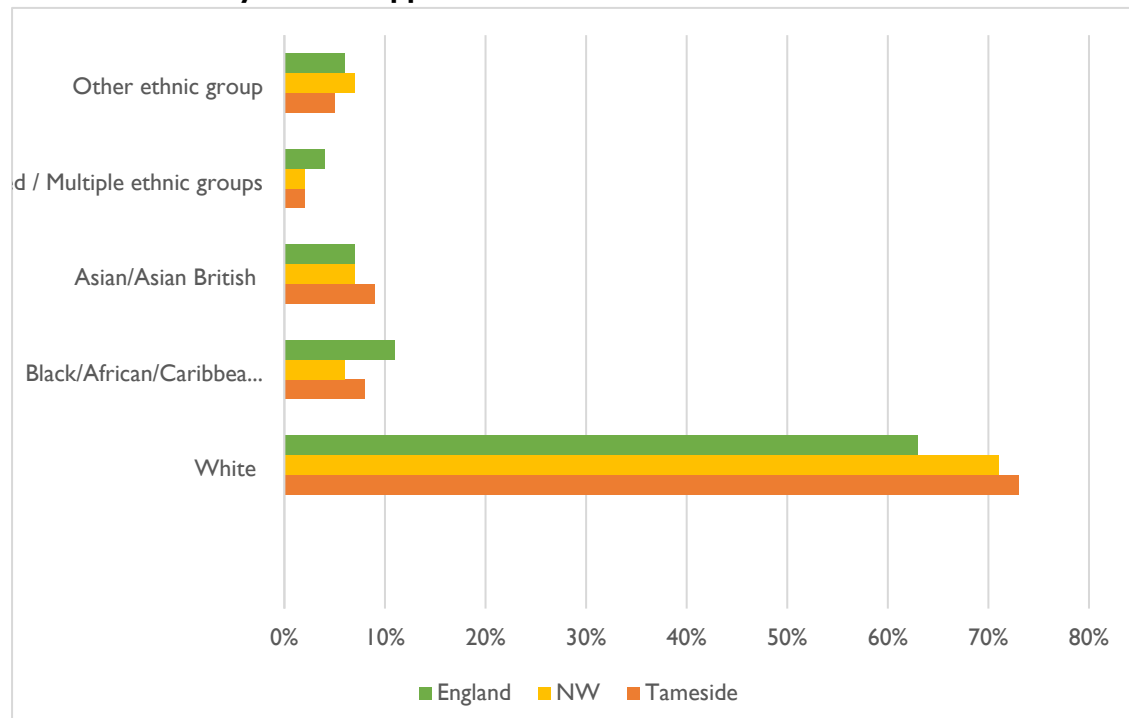
The data suggests that the percentage of single men owed a duty is higher in Tameside than for both the rest of the region and England as a whole and that single parents owed a duty make up a smaller % of the homeless households in Tameside than in other areas.

Chart 2: Age of main applicant, 2023/24



The age profile of for the main applicant is in line with the regional and national picture.

Chart 3: Ethnicity of main applicant 2023/24



The ethnicity profile for the main applicant is in line with the regional picture.

The overall picture that the data suggests is that we have experienced a significant increase in the number of households seeking help and being owed a homelessness duty.

Finally, the fall in prevention work with women fleeing domestic abuse and the rise in the number being owed a relief duty needs to be better understood and acted upon.

Securing accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

Our intention over the life of this strategy is to bring about a transformation in the way we work with partners to provide accommodation to prevent and relieve homelessness and to end homelessness duties.

A key first priority is to eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless families and to reduce it to a minimum for single people.

One of the most important ways we will achieve this is by improving our approach to homelessness prevention as described above, but it is also very important that we are able to increase access to good quality settled accommodation locally, through both access to social housing, working with our registered providers partners, and to private rented sector accommodation within Tameside.

Where we do need to use temporary accommodation, this will be good quality, well managed, local accommodation, where residents get the help and support, they need to move on as quickly as possible.

This means working with registered providers partners to develop a common housing allocations scheme covering all of Tameside.

We will review and revise Tameside Council's housing allocations policy to increase the number of housing allocations available through Council nominations to registered providers and reduce the length of time spend by homeless households in temporary accommodation.

This will be accompanied by significantly increased engagement with the private rented sector to enable more homelessness prevention and relief into private rented accommodation.

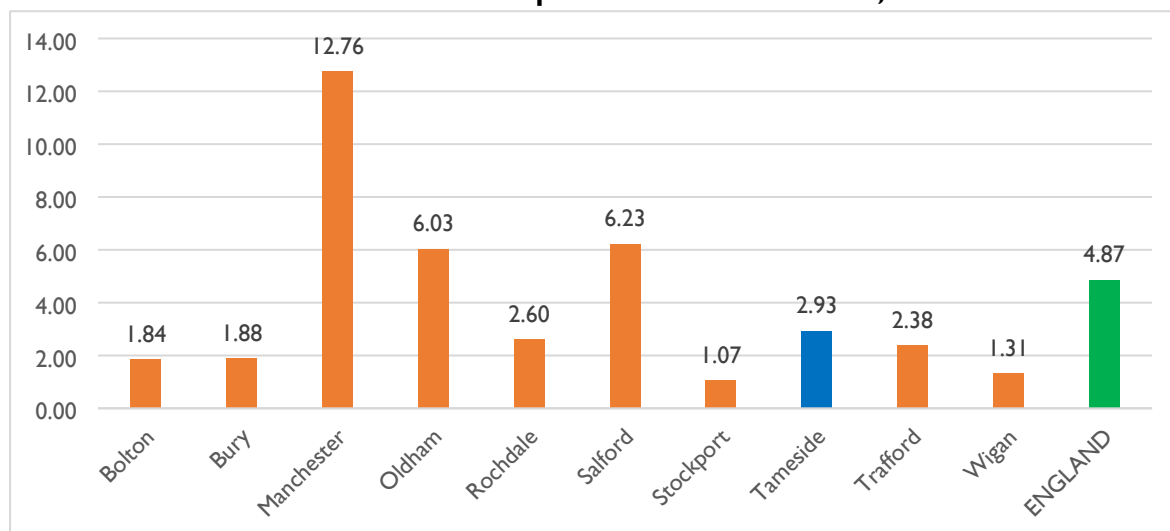
We will develop a new approach to procurement of temporary accommodation to improve standards and get better value for money.

And, working with partners, we will also radically increase investment in the development and acquisition of accommodation, and the conversion of existing assets to be able to better meet the most acute housing needs in Tameside, especially to help tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

Temporary Accommodation

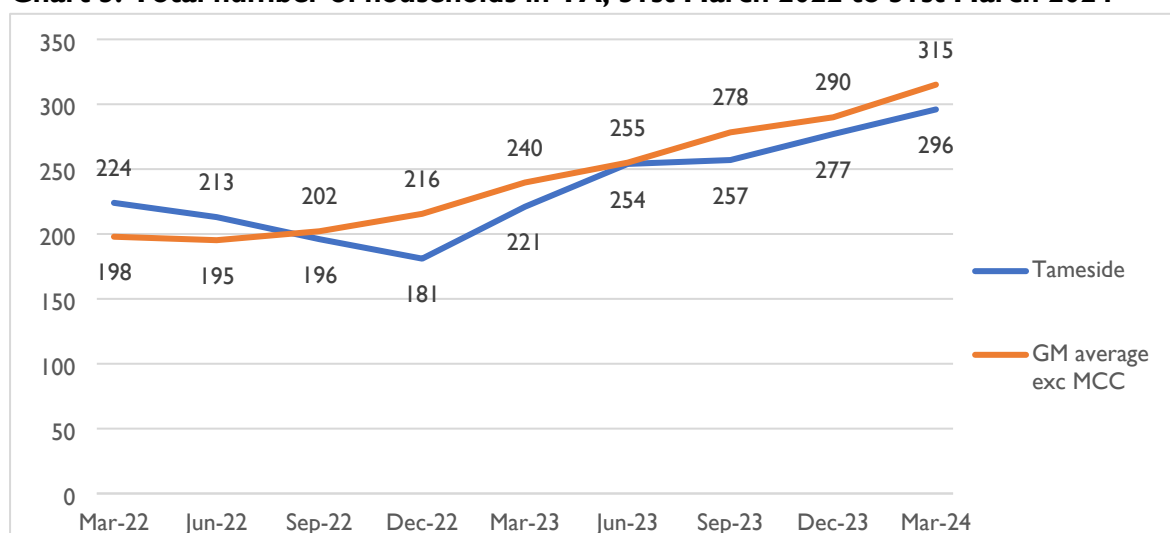
The number of households living in temporary accommodation in Tameside is still relatively low compared to many other parts of the country, with 296 households in TA in March 2024.

Chart 4: Number of households in TA per thousand households, 31st March 2024



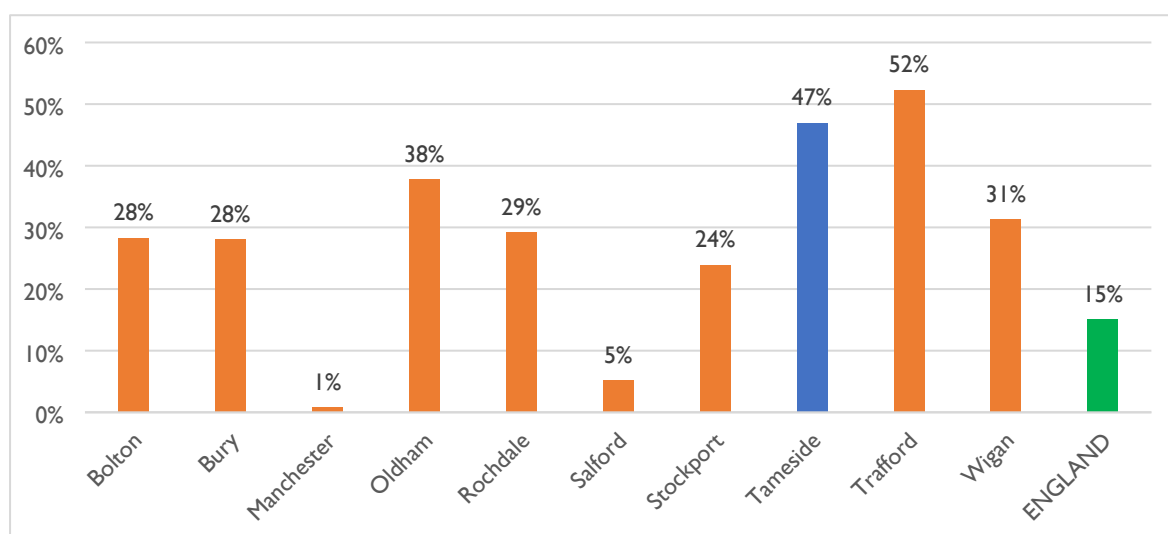
However, over the past two years, the number of households in temporary accommodation has been growing rapidly, with a 64% increase in TA between December 2022 and March 2024.

Chart 5: Total number of households in TA, 31st March 2022 to 31st March 2024



Tameside have 81 good quality supported units. 47% of their temporary accommodation stock as of March 2024. Improvements can be made by following a bed and breakfast reduction plan.

Chart 6: Percentage of TA which is B&B, 31st March 2024



Tameside Council's approach to temporary accommodation

Like many other local authorities, Tameside Council has been hit by rapid increases in homelessness demand in 2023 and 2024. The stock of temporary accommodation provided by Jigsaw Homes has not been sufficient to meet the gap between the number of homeless households coming into temporary accommodation and the lower number of households leaving temporary accommodation into permanent social housing.

This has led to more and more placements into forms of temporary accommodation which could be sourced quickly such as Bed & Breakfast and other nightly paid temporary accommodation. These types of accommodation are often unsuitable for anything beyond a short stay and are also very expensive. Much of this emergency accommodation is also outside Tameside, sometimes causing disruption to Children's education because of the difficulty in getting to and from school and making it harder to keep local employment.

Recognising that homelessness pressures are unlikely to fall quickly in the short to medium term, Tameside Council is committed to taking a more strategic approach to securing accommodation more local to Tameside, which is better for those living there and less expensive for the Council. This will be a mix of both settled accommodation and temporary accommodation as both are needed.

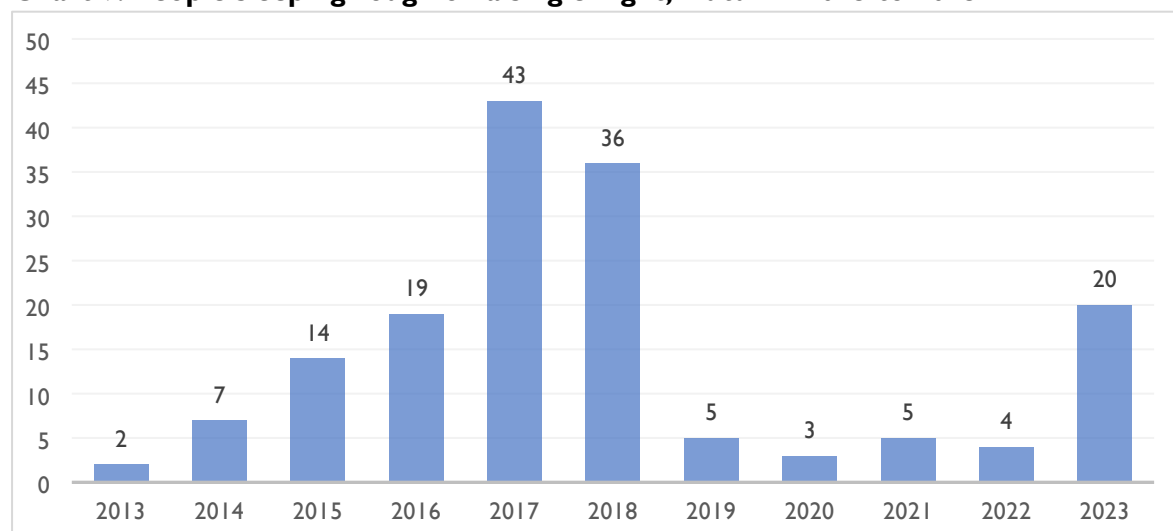
We will develop better resourced and better organised systems to deliver all aspects of temporary accommodation management and the provision of support to temporary accommodation residents.

Support for people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or were previously homeless

In recent years we have seen numbers rise across England, the annual Rough Sleeping estimate figures published in February 2024 saw a rise of 27% from the previous year and numbers are 61% higher than they were ten years ago. This is due to a combination of increasing housing costs, limited housing supply, wider cost of living increases, the long-term freezes in Local House Allowance and benefits rates, and reductions in homelessness services as demand is increasing.

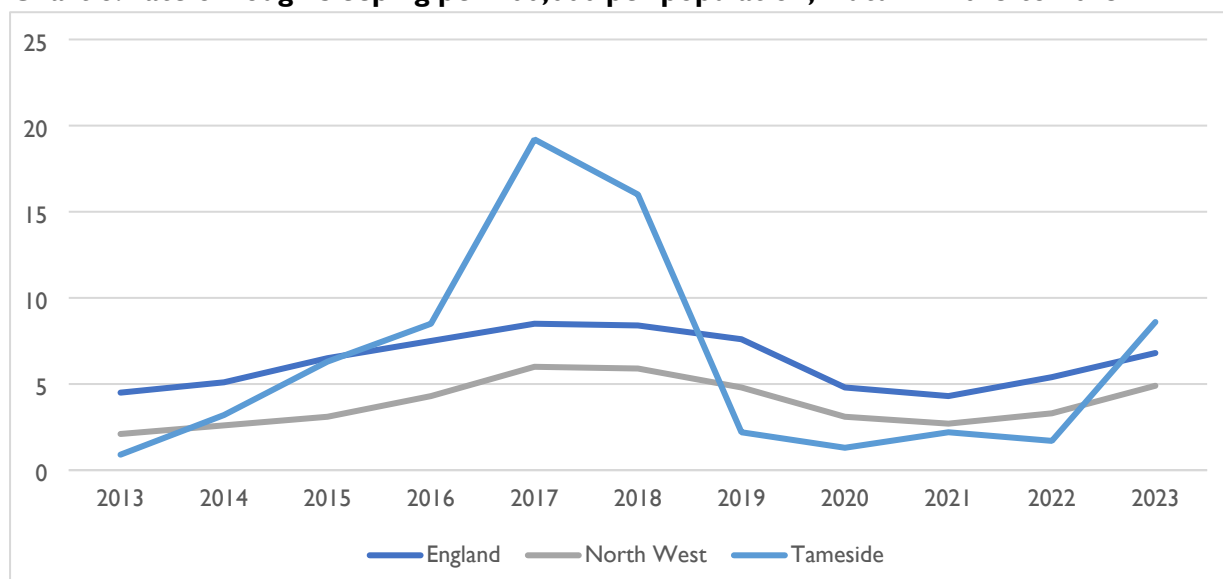
In the North West region, the annual Rough Sleeping snapshot figures rose by 49% between 2022 and 2023.

Chart 7: People sleeping rough on a single night, Autumn 2013 to 2023



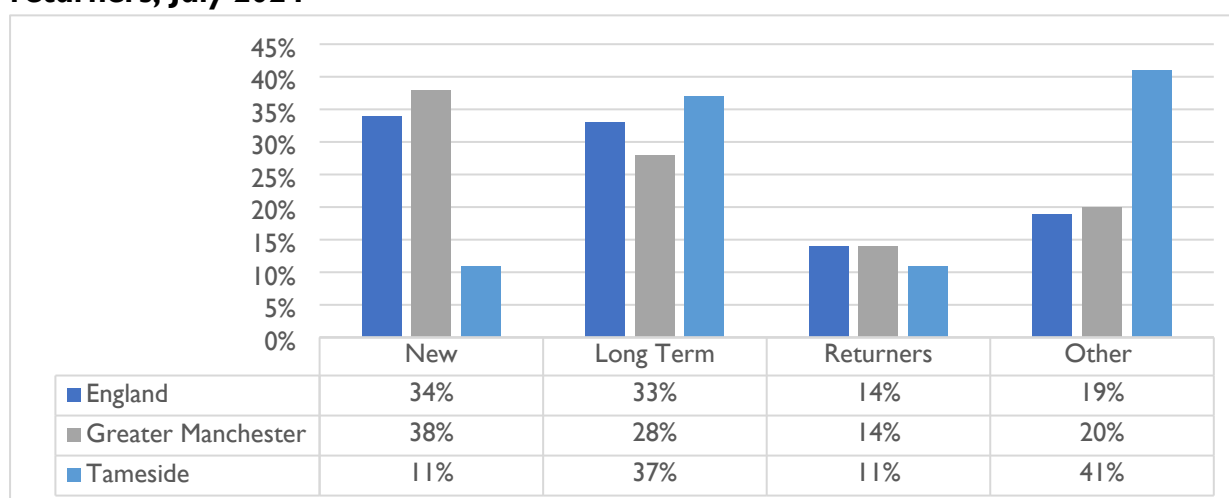
In Tameside the annual Rough Sleeping estimate figures show a 400% increase, counting 20 people, up from 4 in 2022, and much higher than the numbers of between 3 and 5 over the previous 4 years, but not back up to the peak of 43 in 2017.

Chart 8: rate of rough sleeping per 100,000 per population, Autumn 2013 to 2023



Rough sleeping per 100,000 population in Tameside is now above both the England and North West averages.

Table 4: Percentage of people sleeping rough who are new, long-term and returners, July 2024



n.b People in the "Other" category have most likely they been sleeping rough for some time but don't fall into the definition of long term

Tameside also has a higher prevalence of long-term rough sleeping than its neighbours and England-wide, indicating gaps in provision for entrenched rough sleepers including people experiencing complex needs.

In summary, the data on rough sleeping in Tameside indicates a higher-than-average upward trend coupled with a higher-than-average number of people sleeping rough long term.

Tameside's approach to rough sleeping

Tameside Council addresses rough sleeping primarily through emergency accommodation and outreach. The Town House night shelter, funded through Greater Manchester Combined Authority's A Bed Every Night initiative and Tameside Council resources, served as the primary emergency response until October 2024, with 35 beds in shared rooms. On the closure of the Town House, a temporary solution was put in place with a private provider of supported accommodation, with 22 beds over 3 buildings and severe weather provision in a local church when needed provided by the Townhouse. The Rough Sleeper Team provides crisis intervention and support.

There are opportunities for taking a more strategic approach and investment in the prevention of rough sleeping. Partnerships with community organisations, such as The Station, New Day Church and the British Red Cross, can be built on, while initiatives like the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Housing First offer longer-term solutions for individuals with complex needs, and can help develop a strategic focus on individuals experiencing multiple disadvantages, a key driver of entrenched rough sleeping.

Developing an Integrated Approach to Homelessness

Our approach in the future will be wide reaching and firmly rooted in taking actions that contribute to making homelessness in all its forms 'rare, brief and non-recurrent'.

This means:

- Working with partners and communities to promote early prevention of homelessness, by actively encouraging partners to fulfil their 'duty to refer'.
- Working with partners to align service systems where possible to minimise gaps in services and to maximise the use of resources, for example implementing best practice pathways for young people at risk of homelessness with Children's Services, strengthening our joint work with Domestic Abuse services.
- Encouraging and making it easy for households at risk of homelessness to seek help as early as they can, for example by updating prevention information on our web pages, ensuring that our housing advice service is easily accessible.
- Developing a range of prevention options for all households at risk of homelessness, for example by increasing our work with landlords in the private rented sector, ensuring we have maximum flexibility and easy access to homelessness prevention money, developing an effective mediation offer.
- Where homelessness is unavoidable developing a range of options to ensure households can find suitable and sustainable accommodation quickly and limiting the time households spent in temporary accommodation as far as is practicable, for example developing a robust offer for landlords in the private rented sector, by maximising the use of nomination rights with social landlords.
- Ensuring that people who need support to maintain a tenancy or move away from crisis situations have access to high quality support for as long as they need it.

- Recognising that people who are rough sleeping and experiencing multiple complex needs need a person-centred, multi-agency response which helps them off the streets and into stable housing with the right level of support as quickly as possible.
- Building effective partnerships with stakeholders and others at both a practical level and at a strategic level, for example refreshing and relaunching our Homelessness Forum.

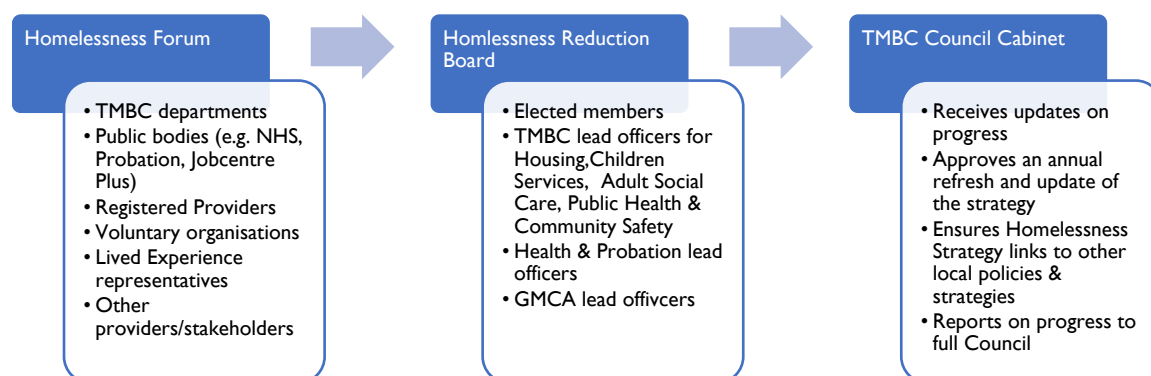
Later in this document we outline the short- and medium-term actions that we will be taking on route to delivering the strategy. We will be able to create the scale, and depth, of change we need to maximise the impact of this strategy by working in collaboration with the rest of the council's services and by achieving robust engagement from and with other strategic partners.

Delivering this Homelessness Strategy

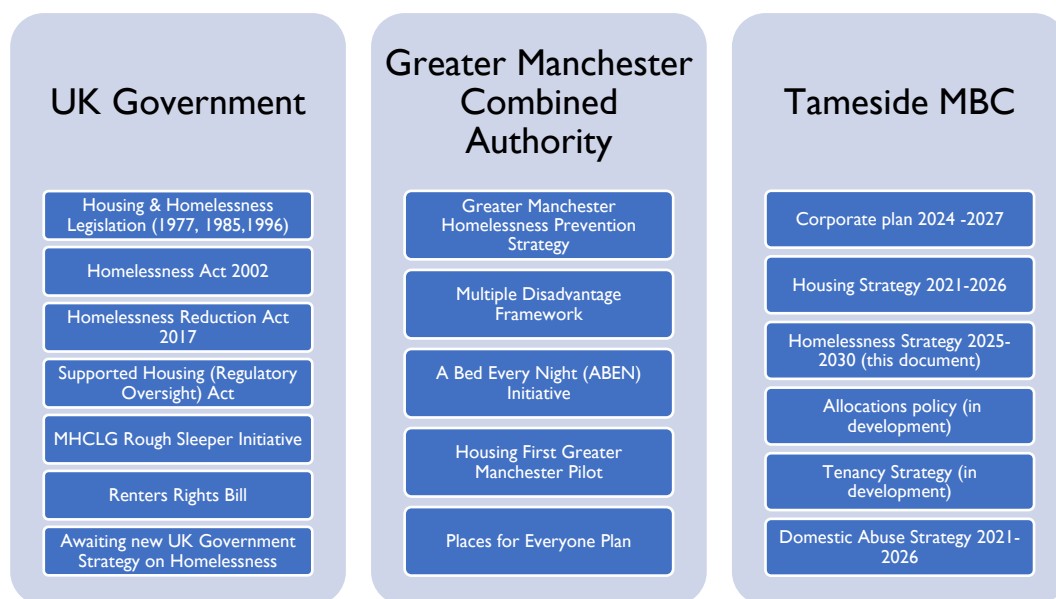
Whilst Tameside Council will take the lead in coordinating efforts and ensuring that this homelessness strategy is implemented effectively, we can only prevent and reduce homelessness by working together across the borough and Greater Manchester.

A Homelessness Reduction Board will be formed to ensure this strategy is delivered, progress monitored, is kept up-to-date and takes account of any new, emerging priorities. The group will be chaired by the Deputy Leader (Growth, Housing and Homelessness) and report into the Health and Wellbeing Board.

A Homelessness Forum will be created to involve all stakeholders in preventing and tackling homelessness and developing cross-sector alignment and the integration of homelessness services. The Homelessness Forum will also ensure that the views of people with lived experience of homelessness are integral to the delivery and review of the strategy.



The annual review of the strategy will consider progress, barriers to implementing the action plan, data on homelessness for the year and consider emerging trends or issues that need to be added to the strategy. It will also take into account updates or changes to national, regional and local policy, guidance or legislation (outlined below).



The homelessness strategy, action plan and annual updates will be publicly available to promote transparency and encourage community engagement.

We need to acknowledge that at the time of writing this strategy that there are still significant environmental pressures such as the lack of social housing as well as significant policy changes on the horizon such as the implementation of the Renters Rights Bill. These pressures and changes will undoubtedly shape the pace of change we can achieve and will require us to keep our strategy and our actions under constant review.

Measuring Progress

Throughout the lifetime of the strategy, we will actively track our progress of delivering the priorities and actions set out in this strategy, in order for us to be able to judge the impact, and to refine them if needed, we will also track and monitor the set of performance measures below. We will report on these on a regular basis to both the Homelessness Reduction Board and to the Homelessness Forum.

1. The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation and hostel accommodation for households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman.
2. The number of people on a single night within Tameside, sleeping or bedding down in the open air, or in buildings or other places not designed for habitation.
3. The percentage increase or decrease, from the previous financial year, in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation.
4. The number of households that considered themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness, who approach Tameside Council and for whom casework intervention resolved their situation.
5. The proportion of households owed any homelessness duty, who had previously been owed any homelessness duty by Tameside Council within the last two years.
6. The proportion of homelessness cases on which Tameside Council completes within 33 working days.

Action Plan

We have the opportunity to develop a highly effective and innovative homelessness prevention, accommodation and support offer in the coming months and years. The actions below show what we will complete during the year ahead.

Preventing homelessness

What	Who	With	When
Improve access for the public to Tameside Council's homelessness service and ensure our Homelessness Prevention 'Digital Offer' is up to date and includes self-help and other information that will promote prevention.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Tameside One	2025
Update our staff structure, staff numbers and introduce specialist roles in line with the recommendations of the independent review.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Children's Services, Domestic Abuse Coordinator, Jobcentre Plus, NHS	2025
Enhance the suite of Homelessness Prevention Tools in line with the recommendations of the independent review.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service		2025
Design and implement a new and robust offer to Landlords in the PRS.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Private Sector Housing Service, Housing Benefit	2025
Establish youth specific pathways with Children's Services, using the St Basils models as a template	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Children's Services	2025
Introduce a specific role in Tameside Council's homelessness service to focus on the prevention of and support for single people and couples experiencing non-priority need homelessness, including rough sleeping.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service		2025
Continue to fully align relevant practice and pathways with Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Probation and Domestic Abuse Services.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Domestic Abuse Coordinator Probation,	2025
Review the potential impact of the Renters Rights Act and develop plans to maximise the benefits of the new Act and to minimise any short term down sides.	Private Sector Housing Service	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service PRS landlords, Registered Providers,	2025

What	Who	With	When
		voluntary organisations	
Reestablish a sector wide Homelessness Forum and include representation from Health, Social Care and other non-specialist stakeholders.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Probation, Domestic Abuse Coordinator Registered Providers, voluntary organisations, PRS landlords,	2025
In collaboration with the Homelessness Forum, and others, use the 'Positive Pathway Model' to review our collective investments and efforts to prevent homelessness.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Probation, Domestic Abuse Coordinator Registered Providers, voluntary organisations, PRS landlords,	2025
Use the results of the review above, and the findings of the wider public consultation, to develop a sector wide consensus, strategy and plan to develop and promote 'early help' prevention approaches.	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Chairperson of Homelessness Reduction Board	2026

Securing accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

What	Who	With	When
Develop and implement a B&B reduction plan	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TMBC Finance Department, Registered Providers	2025
Develop a procurement strategy and framework to increase good quality, well managed, local TA and settled accommodation supply at a fair price	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TMBC Finance Department, TMBC Procurement Unit	2025
Develop an investment programme to support the acquisition of property which could be used in the long term to provide accommodation in Tameside to prevent and relieve homelessness	TBC	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service TMBC Finance Department	2025

		TMBC Procurement Unit	
Review and go out to tender for the supported TA contract to provide supported TA on a longer term basis.	TBC	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service, TMBC Finance Department, TMBC Procurement Unit	2026
Employ a team of officers to procure PRS accommodation to end homelessness duties with appropriate incentives and support to landlords to secure sufficient supply	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TBC, Private Sector Housing Service, PRS Landlords	2025
Review current TA provision to ensure it is safe and meets a defined set of standards	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TBC, Private Sector Housing Service	2025
Review and renew the Council's allocations policy	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Registered Providers, TBC	2025
Increase resources for administering housing allocations functions	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TMBC Finance Department, TMBC IT Unit	2025
Introduce a common housing allocations scheme with RPs	TBC	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service, Registered Providers, TMBC IT Unit	2026
Increase resources for TA, allocation, management, support and rent collection	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TMBC Finance Department	2026
Implement a suitable rent accounting system to ensure rent due to the Council from TA is collected including both HB and payments from residents	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	TMBC Finance Department, TMBC Procurement Unit, TMBC IT Unit	2026
Consider the viability of developing Council owned sites to provide TA or settled accommodation for homeless households	TBC	TMBC Asset Management Unit, TMBC Finance Department, Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	2025

Develop and resource a programme to reduce the number of empty homes, including making use of accommodation for homeless households	TBC	Private Sector Housing Service, Homelessness & Housing Advice Service, Registered Providers	2025
Develop joint plans and protocols with Adults and Children's Services to improve joint working with households in TA and to support earlier intervention to prevent homelessness	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Adult Services Children's Services	2025
Work with GMCA and the other GM authorities to reduce competition for accommodation, and increase co-operation and information sharing	TBC	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service, GMCA, Other GM Councils	2026
Prioritise the development of one-bed accommodation	TBC	Registered Providers	2026

Providing Support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, or were previously homeless

What	Who	With	When
Develop a Supported Housing Strategy to address the issues of unregulated providers and the lack of options for single homeless people, including longer term rough sleepers and comply with the forthcoming requirements of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act	TBC	Adult Services, Children's Services, Public Health, Community Safety Registered Providers, Voluntary organisations, PRS landlords, Others	2026
Commission a supported accommodation service for rough sleepers.	TBC	GMCA, Others	2026
Commission a Floating Support service to help people remain in their own homes or sustain a new tenancy.	TBC	Others	2027
Promote the use of and facilitate the development of housing-led, 'rapid rehousing' approaches, including Housing First	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	Adult Services, Public Health, Registered Providers, Voluntary organisations, GMCA, Others	2028

Develop an approach for people experiencing multiple disadvantages, in partnership with GMCA	Homelessness & Housing Advice Service	GMCA Adult Services Public Health Registered Providers, Voluntary organisations Others	2029
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