



Warwick District Council

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2021 – 2026

Foreword

Homelessness and rough sleeping are perennial problems and as a local councillor I have seen the harm that can be caused to those who become homeless and to their families. I am therefore delighted to be introducing the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Warwick district.

Since adopting our previous strategy in 2017 we have made great strides forward in enhancing and delivering services for people at risk of or experiencing these problems and you can read more about some of our achievements in this strategy. These are in the most part down to the hard work and dedication of our staff and those across our fantastic voluntary sector, who can be proud of the improvements that we have seen over the last three years, especially in the context of the enormous upheaval caused by the pandemic during 2020.

For many years we have favoured a preventative approach so we welcomed the normalising of this with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. However we now want to take this further through our “universal prevention” plans. We recognise that many of the problems that can lead to homelessness begin, not when someone is threatened with homelessness but when they are securely housed. Debt, family problems and abuse, external harassment or poor property conditions are all examples of problems that can develop and result in homelessness if left unchecked. So good, effective landlord services across all rented sectors, appropriate use of enforcement powers and effective, timely advice and support services are all important preventative tools that we intend to strengthen and develop further.

Sadly it is inevitable that some people will still slip through the net and so we will ensure that intensive prevention services are directed towards those who are at risk of becoming homeless. Our aim will always be to help people keep their existing home wherever that is possible and appropriate but where we are not able to do this and individuals and families become homeless we will ensure that the appropriate support is available to help them through the crisis and to get back to a life of stability as quickly as possible.

Rough sleeping is of course the most visible and severe form of homelessness and requires a bespoke and targeted response. We know that this issue is complex in nature and that, for many entrenched homeless people, the journey from the streets is fraught with personal challenges and setbacks. Therefore, we have been working hard to ensure that the right support is available, provided at the right time, by the right people.

In forming its approach to tackling rough sleeping, the Council has consulted widely, including with those who are closest to the matter: the voluntary and statutory agencies who work day in and day out directly with homeless people. We have looked carefully at the work of other councils to learn from their experiences and have spoken to rough sleepers themselves as they are often best placed to help us to shape the most effective services.

The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, saw the Council, with the assistance of voluntary sector agencies, bring inside over 80 people who were sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. Numbers on our streets are now very low with agencies quick to respond when a new rough sleeper is found. We believe that no one should need to sleep rough on our streets and are committed to eradicating rough sleeping in the district.

Homelessness and rough sleeping are issues at national, regional and local levels. National government has set out its policy agenda in this area and is supporting it with specific funds that we will bid for when we believe that it will support our own approach. The joint strategy “Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach”, which the Council has signed up to, addresses those policy areas which can best be dealt with through joint working at the sub-regional

level: health; financial inclusion; young people; domestic abuse and offending. This strategy sets out our plans for the services that can help at the most local level: universal and directed prevention; crisis support and rough sleeping services.

Taken together I believe this provides the most comprehensive and ambitious programme for preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping ever put forward for our district and I am looking forward to seeing its implementation in the coming years as it makes a real and positive difference to the lives of people and their families.

Cllr Jan Matecki
Housing and Culture Portfolio Holder

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Introduction

Warwick district covers an area of around 110 square miles in the southern half of the county of Warwickshire in the West Midlands and is home to around 61,300 households (143,800 people). The area includes the towns of Kenilworth, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick and Whitnash, which together accommodate around 80% of the population while the remainder live in a number of small rural villages many of which are in the green belt. The district is bordered to the south and west by Stratford-on-Avon district, to the east by Rugby borough and to the north by Solihull and the city of Coventry.

Warwickshire has a two-tier structure of local government so Warwick District Council (the Council) is the local housing authority while Warwickshire County Council is the social services authority.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, local housing authorities have a duty to carry out a review of homelessness in their district from time to time and to prepare and publish a strategy in response to the findings. A homelessness review should consider, for that district:

- (a) The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness;
- (b) The activities which are carried out for the purposes of: preventing homelessness; securing that accommodation is or will be available for people who are or may become homeless; and providing support for people who are or may become homeless, or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- (c) The resources available to the authority, the social services authority, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities.

The Homelessness Strategy should then be directed towards ensuring sufficient and satisfactory provision for preventing homelessness, and for securing accommodation and support provision for people who become homeless.

The Council's previous review was carried out in 2016 and the strategic response was incorporated into the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-20. During 2020 a new homelessness review has been undertaken and the results of this, together with the forward plans for dealing with the issues identified, are incorporated into this new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Over the last three years, considerable progress has been made in tackling the most visible form of homelessness, rough sleeping, with figures now in the low single figures. The actions taken to tackle this serious issue, one about which members of the public and the media expressed considerable concern, have been successful. In this strategy, this work is reflected upon and plans are set out to ensure that numbers do not rise again. The Homeless Reduction Act was also successfully implemented and the new approach has been embedded into standard ways of working, enabling reductions in statutory homelessness too.

The first section of this strategy sets out the current situation on homelessness in terms of policy and casework and outlines the new objectives. The second section details the known operational, financial and partnership resources available for dealing with homelessness in the district. The final section explains the consultation that has informed the strategy, the action plans that have been determined and how these will be monitored and reviewed.

A number of broader cross-cutting themes linked to homelessness have been identified over recent years that can better be addressed by a partnership response at a county level. The Council has therefore worked with the county council and the four other district and borough councils in

Warwickshire (North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council and Stratford on Avon District Council) to produce a joint countywide Homelessness Strategy: "Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach, 2021-2023". The joint strategy sits alongside, and is complementary to, this strategy in providing a comprehensive and holistic approach to the issues of homelessness and rough sleeping in the district.

Section one – Context and objectives

This opening section of the strategy contains the first part of the homelessness review, as required by the Homelessness Act 2002. It begins by explaining the national and local context of homelessness policy. This is followed by information on the levels of homelessness in the district and statistics on casework and the outcomes of work on homelessness in recent years. Some notable specific achievements of the past three years are then explained, along some of the lessons learned and new issues that seem to be emerging. Taken together this illustrates a picture of homelessness and rough sleeping in the district in 2020/21. There is then a discussion about issues that may affect homelessness levels in the coming years, all of which enables objectives to be drawn up for the duration of the strategy.

1.1 National context

All councils have to frame plans and strategies for dealing with homelessness within the wider context of national government policies and legislation.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the government department with principal responsibility for housing and homelessness. It defines its job as “to create great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area” and its responsibilities as:

- driving up housing supply;
- increasing home ownership;
- devolving powers and budgets to boost local growth in England;
- supporting strong communities with excellent public services.

1.1.1 Homelessness

While the Homelessness Act 2002 contains the strategic duties, the main operational legislation on homelessness is contained in the Housing Act 1996 (“the 1996 Act”). This includes a statutory definition of homelessness which broadly means that you may be legally homeless if:

- You have no legal right to live in accommodation anywhere in the world;
- You have a home but cannot get into it for some reason;
- It is not reasonable to stay in your home, for example because you are at risk of violence or abuse or because of affordability problems;
- You are forced to live apart from your family, or people you normally live with, because there is no suitable accommodation for you;
- You are living in very poor conditions, such as overcrowding.

The 1996 Act goes on to set out the duties of local housing authorities towards people who are homeless. The duties vary depending upon whether the household has a “priority need”, is “intentionally homeless” and has a “local connection”. All of these terms have specific meanings that are defined in the legislation and have been clarified in case law.

1.1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

This Act made sweeping changes to the 1996 Act demonstrating the direction of government policy: towards a more collaborative approach between the local housing authority and the customer and also between public bodies, with a focus upon preventing homelessness rather than tackling it once it has happened. The key changes were:

- **A new prevention duty**

Local authorities must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any eligible applicant at risk of homelessness within 56 days, regardless of priority need. This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live.

- **A new relief duty**

Local authorities must take reasonable steps to help an applicant to secure suitable accommodation. Help could be, for example, providing a bond guarantee, funding a rent deposit or working with a private landlord to make properties available.

- **Personal Housing Plans**

Local authorities must carry out a holistic assessment of the applicant's housing needs, support needs and the circumstances that led to them becoming homeless. This assessment will result in developing a Personal Housing Plan with the applicant that sets out the reasonable steps that the housing authority, the applicant and, if applicable, other professionals will take in order to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

- **A Duty to Refer**

Certain named public authorities must refer users of their service, who they have reason to believe are homeless or threatened with homelessness, to a local housing authority of the service user's choice. The aim of this is to help people to get access to homeless services as soon as possible and ensure that people's housing needs are considered when they come into contact with a range of public bodies.

1.1.3 Rough Sleeping Initiative

In addition to supporting the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 into law (it was originally a private member's bill), in 2018 the government set up a new Rough Sleeping Team and created a targeted £30 million fund for local authorities with high levels of rough sleeping. Later that year it went on to publish a Rough Sleeping Strategy¹, to deliver upon a commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to end it completely by 2027. The strategy sets out the government's approach under the three headings of prevention, intervention and recovery and draws this together with a table outlining 61 commitments across the course of the strategy. In December 2018 a Delivery Plan was produced that described progress on the strategy to that point with further activities and milestones and a delivery date for each commitment.²

1.1.4 Everyone In

When the Covid-19 pandemic emerged in the United Kingdom in the first months of 2020 the government announced a strategy to work with local government and to provide £1.6bn in funding in order to "bring in those on the streets to protect their health and stop wider transmission, particularly in hot spot areas, and those in assessment centres and shelters that are unable to comply with social distancing advice". This became known as Everyone In.

1.2 Local context

The Council defines its purpose as "to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Warwick District." This is expanded upon in the Corporate Plan, known as "Fit For the Future", in which the following key aims are elucidated:

In the Warwick District of 2026:

- Everyone will feel safe going about their daily lives.
- Everyone will be able to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and sense of well-being.
- Everyone will have their housing needs met.
- There will be a strong, diverse economy which provides jobs for all.

For the purposes of this strategy, the most significant aim on the corporate agenda is that of meeting all housing needs, which is to be delivered by:

- Reducing homelessness.
- Enabling older and vulnerable people to live more independently.

¹ [The rough sleeping strategy, MHCLG, 2018](#)

² [Rough Sleeping Strategy: delivery plan, MHCLG, 2018](#)

- Creating more sustainable, affordable and quality housing.

Reducing homelessness can therefore be seen as a key corporate goal of the Council.

Warwick district is a relatively affluent area with wages above the national average and high house prices but there are still a significant number of households on lower incomes and many issues of deprivation.

The proximity of the district to the universities of Warwick and Coventry and the attractive night-time economy of, in particular, Royal Leamington Spa make the district popular with students. The latter are in turn a desirable target market for private landlords and therefore absorb a proportion of the properties that would otherwise be available in the private sector for single people and young families, i.e. smaller and cheaper properties that can be economically converted into houses in multiple occupation. The resulting limited supply for non-students then drives up rents in the private sector to levels that are well above the limits eligible for welfare benefits, i.e. the Local Housing Allowance and, for people under 35 with a one-bedroom need, the Shared Accommodation Rate.

This situation adds to the high demand and need for the already limited supply of affordable housing, particularly for one-bedroomed accommodation. Rents in the affordable sector are fully eligible for welfare benefits, except that a reduction is applied for those with a spare bedroom, and this prevents one-bedroom needs from being met by an offer of a slightly larger property.

Taken together these trends, along with a number of other factors, present challenges to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

1.3 Data about homelessness in Warwick district

Following on from the above brief outline of the local housing market, greater detail and data will now be provided about the local homelessness situation.

Housing authorities have for many years reported data on homelessness to central government on a quarterly basis. However, with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 the government substantially overhauled the system, introducing a completely new dataset and computer database for collating it: the Homeless Case Level Information Collection system (H-CLIC).

The revised dataset includes information about: the new duties owed for prevention and relief; the long standing main homelessness duty; the reasons for homelessness; the support needs of applicants; the use of temporary accommodation; and the new duty to refer placed on other statutory agencies.

Because of this fundamental change to the system, data prior to 2018/19 is no longer directly comparable and, for that reason and also because of the new duties since April 2018, the bulk of this sub-section and appendix two will only present data for 2018/19 onwards. As this strategy is being prepared during the final quarter of 2020/21 full statistics are not available for this year but this sub-section will conclude with a brief look at emerging data trends over recent few months.

1.3.1 Homelessness in 2017/18

Notwithstanding the fact that data under the two systems are not directly comparable, for reference purposes it is worth briefly summarising the situation in Warwick district during the final year of the old system.

During 2017/18 there were 411 homelessness decisions made, of which:

- 158 (38%) were found to be eligible for assistance but not homeless;
- 112 (27%) were eligible, homeless but not in priority need;
- 25 (6%) were eligible and in priority need but intentionally homeless; and

- 116 (28%) were owed the full duty.

During the year there were 32 cases where positive action was taken to prevent homelessness, and at the end of that year there were 21 households in temporary accommodation.

1.3.2 Levels of homelessness

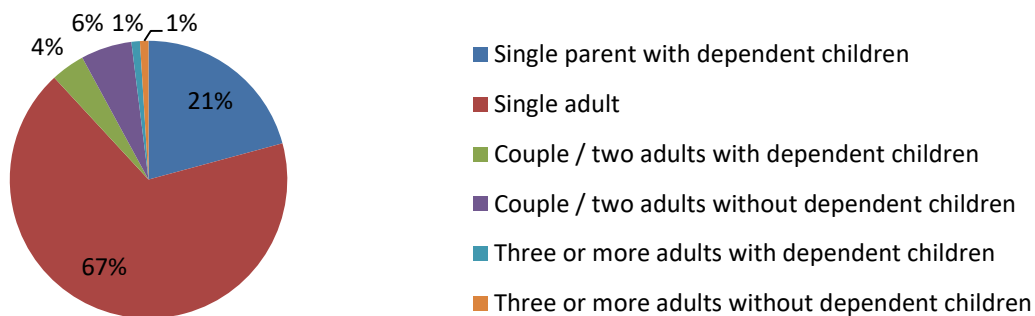
In 2018/19 and 2019/20 almost exactly the same number of approaches from households under the new legislation were received: 451 and 453 respectively. However the number owed a new duty (either prevention or relief) increased from 410 in the first year to 431 in 2019/20. For comparison purposes this equates to around seven per thousand households in the district, well below the figure for England as a whole which is nearer to 12. The analysis in the rest of this sub-section only includes those households to whom a duty was owed.

Around 60% of households were owed the prevention duty in 2018/19, but this fell to 47% in 2019/20, compared to England where it was 55% in 2018/19 falling to 52%.

1.3.3 Characteristics of households

In considering the characteristics of homeless households, it would be most instructive to compare the household characteristics of homeless applicants with those for the district. However, the most accurate source of data for a whole district is the national census which is carried out every ten years and as the most recent census was in 2011 that is now out of date. Such comparisons will be possible as new data emerges from the 2021 census. Therefore data for Warwick district only is shown in tables three to seven of appendix two and the key characteristics of the 431 households owed a duty in 2019/20 are shown in charts one to five.

Chart 1 – Household composition, 2019/20



The data for chart one is in appendix two, table three. It can be seen that almost 9 out of ten households were either single adults (67%) or single parents with dependent children (21%).

Chart 2 – Age profile of main applicant, 2019/20

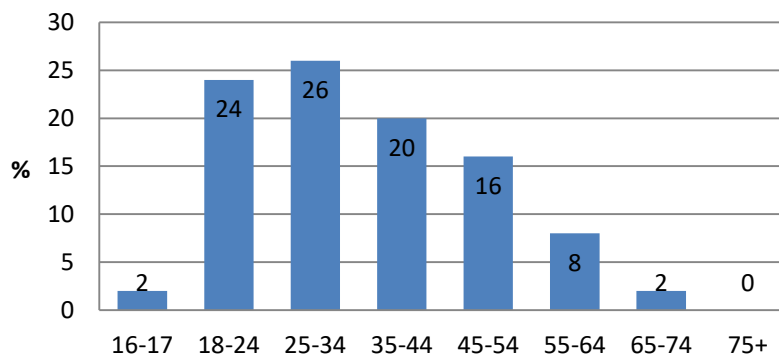
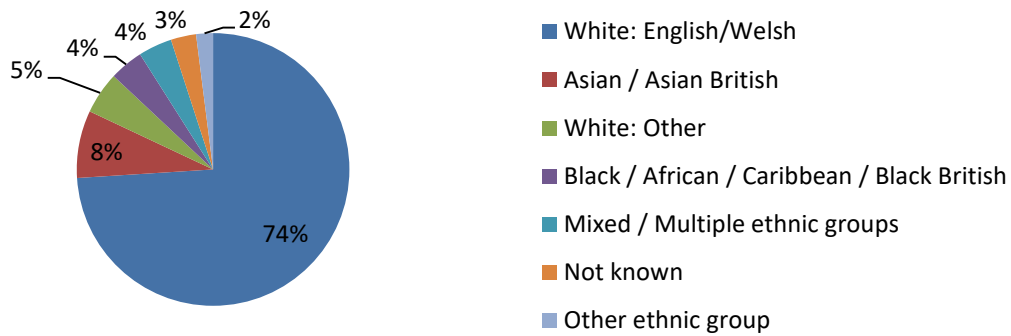


Chart two illustrates data from appendix two, table four. The most common age band was “25-34”, accounting for 26% of all households, while just over half of main applicants (52%) were younger than 35. People aged 55 or more made up 10% of main applicants.

Chart 3 – Ethnicity profile, 2019/20



With data from appendix two, table five, chart three shows that 79% of households were white, with 8% coming from Asian/Asian British backgrounds and small proportions (5% or fewer) from other ethnic groups.

Chart 4 – Employment status, 2019/20

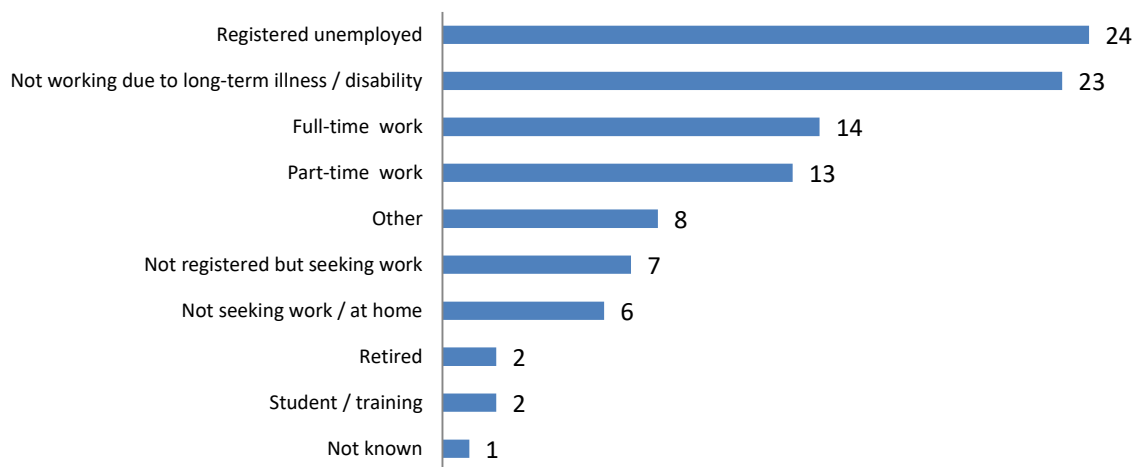


Table six in appendix two, and chart four, show that: 27% of applicants were in either full-time or part-time work; 24% were registered unemployed; and a further 23% were not working due to a long-term illness or disability.

Chart 5 – Support needs, 2019/20



Because of the large number of different categories in appendix two, table seven, for the purposes of chart five all those with a prevalence of below 5% have been combined into a single category.

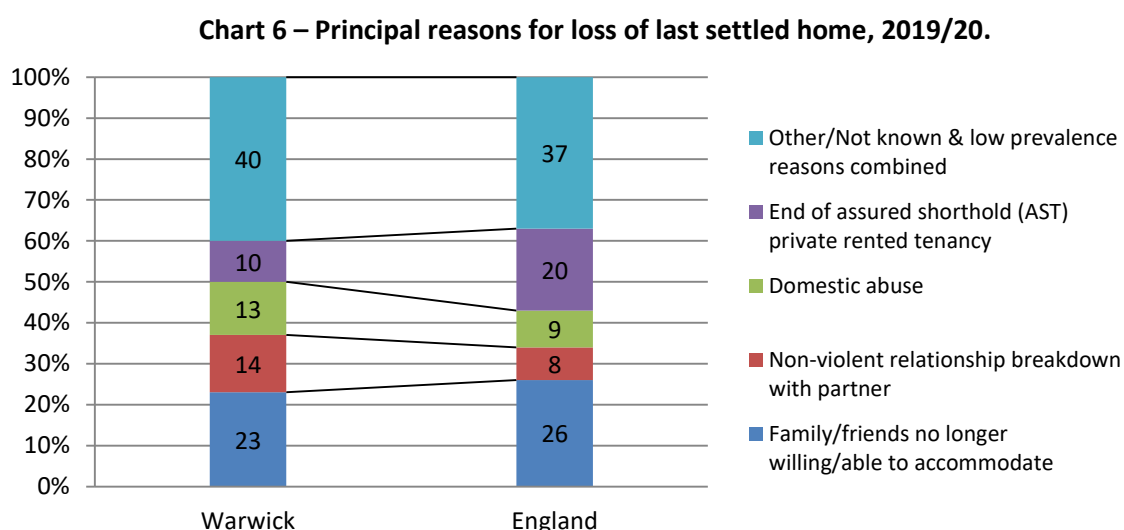
The key points about support needs are:

- 32% of households included someone with a support need and over two-thirds of these households had more than one such need. (N.B. This is not shown on the chart.)
- The four most common support needs in the table in the appendix, accounting for over 50% of needs, were: history of mental health problems (19%); physical ill health and disability (13%); at risk of/has experienced domestic abuse (10%); and offending history (9%).
- However it is worth noting that drug dependency and alcohol dependency are recorded separately in the statistics although people often suffer from both and support services often target both. A combined substance misuse indicator would account for 12% of needs making it the third most recurrent type of need. This has been done in chart five to illustrate the significance of this issue.

1.3.4 Reasons for homelessness

Table one in appendix two shows the full statistics on reasons for households losing their last settled home in Warwick and in England. Excluding “Other reasons/not known”, the four most significant reasons were the same in both areas and both years (although not in the same order of prevalence).

These are shown in chart six, where the “Other/not known” category has been combined with the categories with the smallest percentages so that the main points and comparisons are easier to see.



In Warwick the main reasons were:

- Family or friends being no longer willing or able to accommodate (23%).
- A non-violent relationship breakdown with a partner (14%).
- Domestic abuse (13%).
- The ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (10%).

The two-year data in appendix two, table one shows that the most notable changes from 2018/19 in the Warwick district were:

- A fall in the proportion of cases from the ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy from 18% to 10%; and
- An increase in non-violent relationship breakdown with a partner from 7% to 14%.

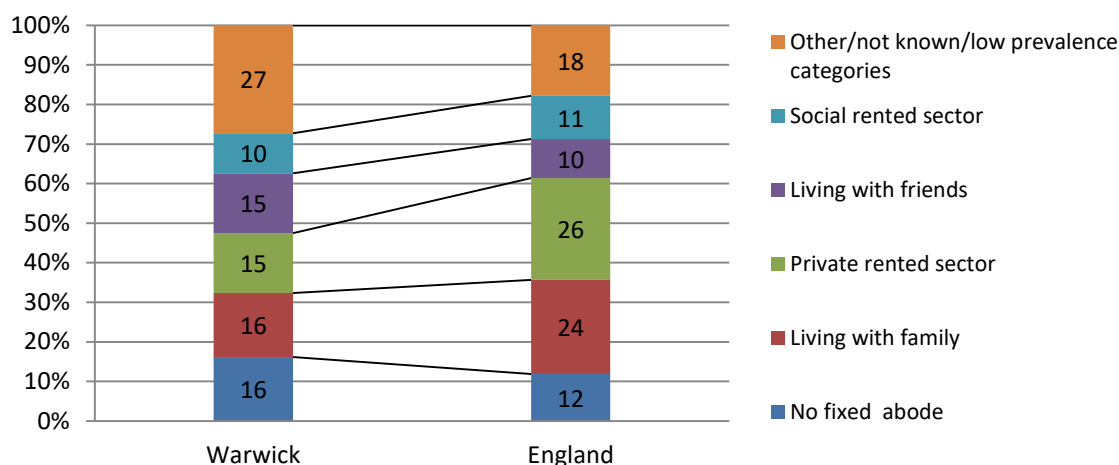
1.3.5 Previous home

Table two in appendix two shows the accommodation of households at the time that they made a homelessness application.

This shows that there are five main types of accommodation from which threatened homelessness arises. While the order of prevalence may vary, these five are the same in both years and in Warwick and England. These are shown in chart seven, where the “Other/not known” category has been

combined with the categories with the smallest percentages to make the main points and comparison easier to see.

Chart 7 – Main types of accommodation at the time of application, 2019/20



The five most prevalent types of accommodation in the district in 2019/20 were:

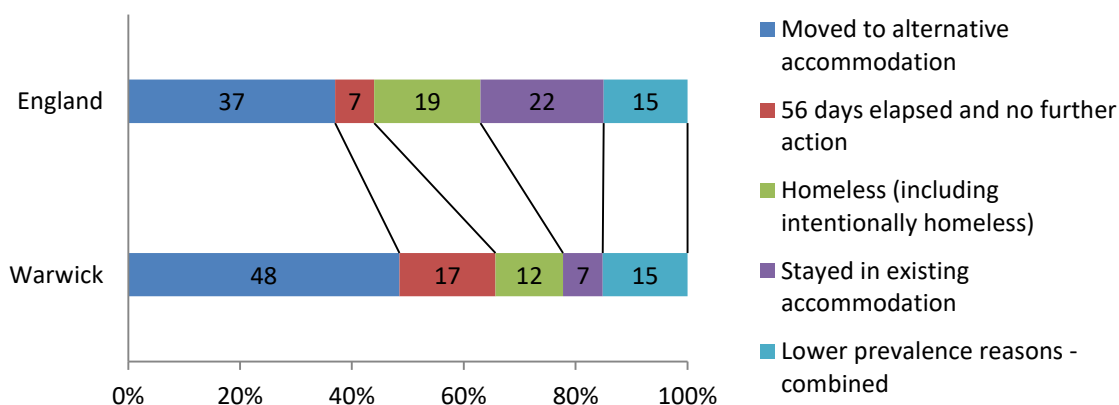
- No fixed abode (16%);
- Living with family (16%);
- Private rented sector (15%);
- Living with friends (15%);
- Social rented sector (10%).

In comparing the Warwick figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 in appendix two, table two, the most notable difference was a significant fall in the proportion of households living with family at the time of the application from 27% to 16%. Other variations were smaller but the increases in those who were homeless on departure from an institution (up from 2% to 7%) and in those living in temporary accommodation (up from 2% to 5%) both suggest trends that need to be monitored.

1.3.6 Prevention outcomes

In 2019/20, there were 206 cases where a prevention duty came to an end. It is important to note that this figure differs from the number owed a prevention duty during the year. This is because there will be some cases where the duty arises in one year but does not end until the following year. Table eight in appendix two, illustrated in chart eight below, shows the reasons for the prevention duty ending.

Chart 8 – Prevention resolutions, 2019/20



For 48% of cases accommodation was secured by finding alternative accommodation, with a further 7% being enabled to stay in their existing home. Other significant reasons were that for 17% of cases the 56 day statutory prevention period elapsed and no further action was taken while 12% of cases became homeless.

Nationally, significantly higher proportions were helped to stay in their existing homes (22%) or became homeless (19%) while smaller proportions moved to alternative accommodation (37%) or had no further action after 56 days (7%).

For the 113 cases (55%) where accommodation was secured, table nine shows the type of accommodation and table 10 shows the main prevention activity that was undertaken.

The type of accommodation was spread fairly evenly between: a council tenancy (26%); the private rented sector (25%); a Registered Provider tenancy (22%) and supported housing/hostel accommodation (18%). England as a whole used the private rented sector much more (40%) with fewer cases accommodated in council housing (11%) or in supported housing (9%).

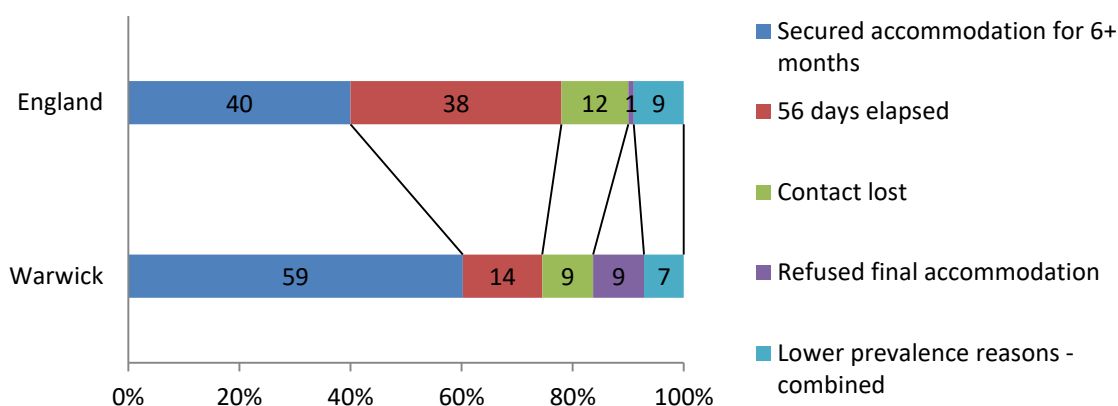
The main prevention activity was accommodation being secured by the local authority housing options service. This was true for both Warwick (37%) and England (27%). Other notable activities were: provision of supported housing (16% for Warwick but only 5% for England); helping the applicant to secure accommodation that they had found, without financial payment (14% and 11% respectively for Warwick and England); and advice and information only (12% for Warwick and 15% for England).

1.3.7 Relief outcomes

In 2019/20, there were 249 cases where the relief duty came to an end. As with the prevention duty these are not the same as the cases arising during the year.

Table eleven in appendix two shows the reasons for the relief duty ending.

Chart 9 – Relief outcomes, 2019/20



The most common reason was that accommodation was secured for more than six months (59% of cases). The other main reasons were either that the 56 day statutory relief period elapsed (14%), contact was lost (9%) or a final offer of accommodation was refused (9%).

Nationally the most common reason was also the securing of accommodation for six months or more (40%) but there was a much higher proportion where the statutory 56 day period lapsed (38%).

For the 146 cases (59%) where accommodation was secured for six months or more (which is the statutory minimum) table 12 shows the type of accommodation and table 13 shows the main relief activity that was undertaken.

As with the prevention cases the type of accommodation was spread between: supported housing/hostel accommodation (36%); a council tenancy (23%); a Registered Provider tenancy (21%)

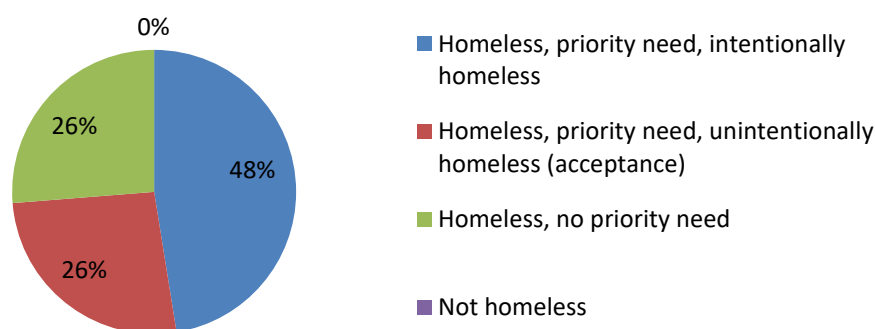
and the private rented sector (18%). England as a whole used the private rented sector much more (29%) with fewer cases accommodated in each of the other three main types of accommodation.

The main relief activity was accommodation being secured by the local authority housing options service. This was true for both Warwick (40%) and England (42%). Other notable activities were: provision of supported housing (32% for Warwick but only 18% for England); and helping the applicant to secure accommodation that they had found, with financial payment (12% for both Warwick and England). “Other activity” was also significant nationally (11%) but less so in Warwick (6%).

1.3.8 Main duty outcomes

In 2019/20 there were just 38 cases where the relief duty came to an end and a decision had to be taken as to whether a main homelessness duty was owed. When numbers are low care needs to be taken with percentages and comparisons become less relevant because relatively small differences may appear more significant than they truly are. For this reason, national figures have been included in the tables in appendix two for information but only the local figures have been shown in the chart. Table 14 shows the duties owed at the end of the relief duty, illustrated in chart 10.

Chart 10 – Decisions on main duty owed in Warwick district, 2019/20



As can be seen 47% of cases were found to be homeless, in priority need but intentionally homeless, while a full duty was found to be owed to 26% of cases and a further 26% were found to be homeless but to have no priority need.

Of the 10 cases owed the full duty table 15 shows the priority need of the households. Six had dependent children while two were vulnerable due to physical disability or ill health and two were vulnerable due to mental health problems.

There were seven cases where the main duty came to an end and the reasons for this are shown in table 16. Four households accepted an offer of social housing, while one refused such an offer and the other two cases voluntarily left temporary accommodation.

1.3.9 Temporary accommodation

Table 17 shows the profile of types of temporary accommodation in use at the end of the financial years while table 18 shows the profile of household types accommodated.

The figures for 2019/20 are seriously skewed however by Everyone In - the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in many single adults being housed who would not normally qualify for temporary accommodation. Thus, while there were only 12 households in temporary accommodation at the end of 2018/19, all of whom were in local authority housing, there were 32 in 2019/20 in a mixture of local authority (11), hostels (10), bed and breakfast (9) and nightly paid private accommodation (2).

Of the 12 cases at the end of 2018/19, five were single adults, three were single parents with dependent children, three were other household types and one was a couple with dependent

children. However at the end of 2019/20, of the 32 cases 29 were single adults with one case of each of the other three categories.

National percentages are shown in the tables for information only, comparisons not being appropriate given the small numbers locally.

1.3.10 Rough sleeping

The official rough sleeping count that takes place every autumn has found the following numbers of people over the past five years:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of people sleeping rough in Warwick district	18	21	12	21	4

Chart 11 – Rough sleeping trends, 2016 - 2020

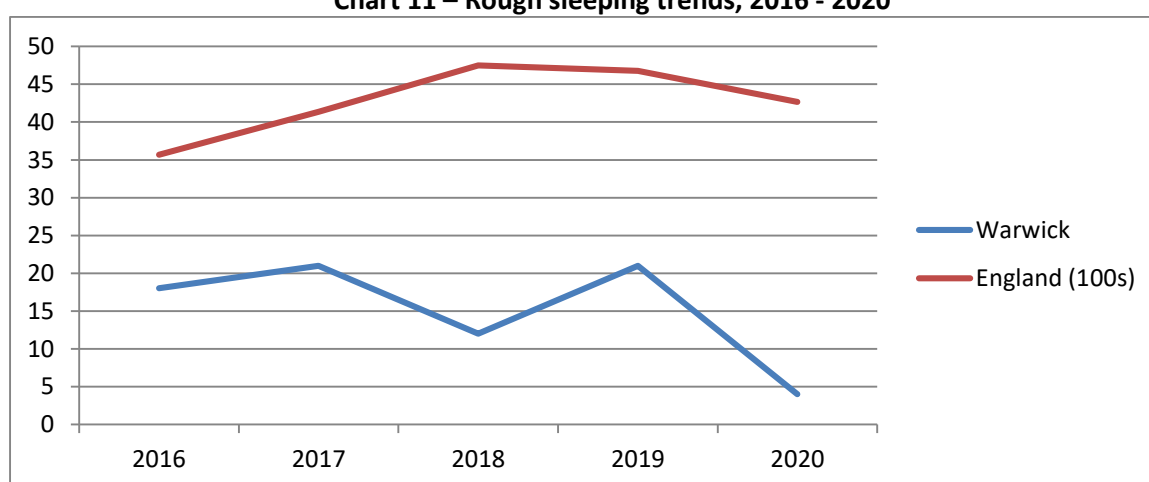


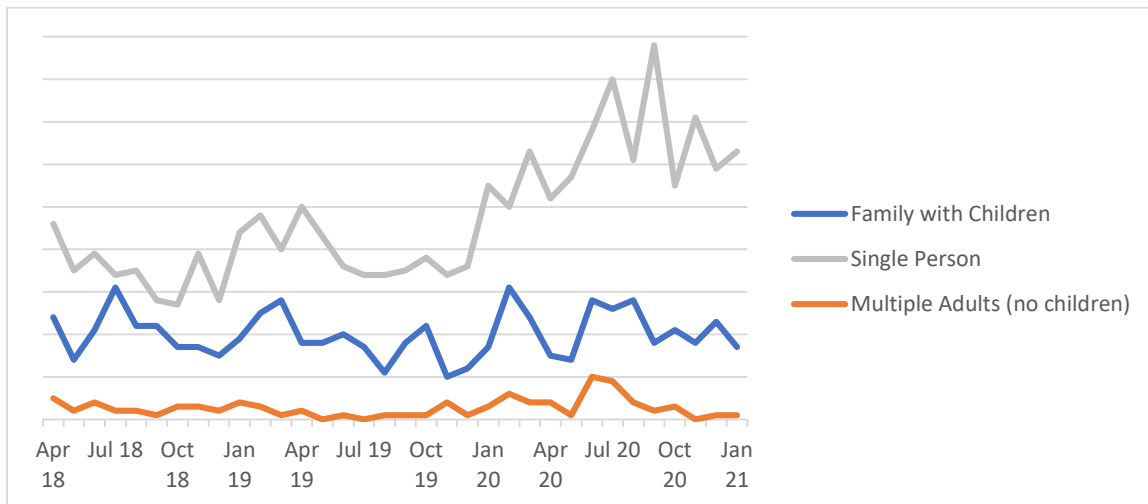
Chart 11 includes the trend line for England and shows that the fluctuations in Warwick district have been different to the national trend over the last five years, but again the 2020 figure has been sharply affected by Everyone In.

Note that this data has been collected in a completely different way, which has been consistent over many years, so that, unlike the preceding sub-sections, comparisons over this longer time period are valid.

1.3.11 Emerging data 2020/21

The above graphs and charts have largely shown the situation in 2019/20 using H-CLIC data from the government website. Over 2020/21 a quite substantial increase in approaches has been seen, of which the proportion of single people has also been rising as chart 12 shows.

Chart 12 – Homelessness applications by household type, 2018-2021



It is important to note that this data is from the Council's internal records and is shown solely as an illustration of potential emerging trends during the current year. The above data is not H-CLIC data and should not be compared with data in the earlier parts of this section. Following the end of the financial year full data will be submitted through the H-CLIC system, audited by MHCLG and published online, at which point appropriate comparisons can be made.

1.4 Achievements, lessons learned and emerging issues

This sub-section describes what the district looks like now as regards homelessness. It begins by looking back at the situation when the Council's previous strategy was adopted in 2017 and sets out some of the achievements since then, along with some of the lessons learned, which have helped to change the landscape of homelessness patterns across the district. It then rounds out this picture by explaining the new homelessness and rough sleeping issues that have begun to emerge recently.

1.4.1 Achievements

The Council's previous strategy for dealing with homelessness was the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2017-2020. In 2017 the two biggest issues were the then forthcoming Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, representing the biggest ever reform of operational homelessness services, and an escalating number of people sleeping rough on the main streets of the district's towns.

The strategy had as its first objective: "Promoting the provision of suitable accommodation, information and advice for the homeless in an effort to prevent and reduce homelessness" and included nine specific actions. These are shown in full, with outcomes, in appendix one.

At that time resources were expected to be extremely limited but the announcement by the government of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant in the spring of 2017, and the potential to bid for funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2018 meant that it was possible to do a great deal more over the following three years than was originally anticipated. The most significant achievements have been:

Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Council already took a preventative approach to homelessness so embraced the extension of this, as envisaged by the Act, and successfully introduced the new legislation with effect from 1st April 2018. The range of information available to customers was increased and available resources were used more creatively to find new ways of preventing homelessness. Work with customers became more closely focussed, to help to address all of their housing and support needs rather than looking narrowly at the definitions and tests of the previous legislation.

Launch of the homelessness early intervention project as a countywide partnership

Officers played a leading role in developing a countywide bid in partnership with the other district and borough councils of Warwickshire for funding from the government's Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Fund in 2016/17. The bid was successful and enabled the service, Preventing Homelessness Improving Lives (p.h.i.l.) to operate across Warwickshire for three years from 2017 to 2020. p.h.i.l. aimed to identify the potential for homelessness at a much earlier stage and to take a more proactive, holistic and preventative approach towards addressing people's needs. It therefore foreshadowed the Homelessness Reduction Act legislation which came later.

A successful bid for Rough Sleeping Initiative funding

As one of the councils identified in 2018 as having high levels of rough sleeping in England, a bid was submitted to government for funding to provide an ambitious programme of projects to help tackle rough sleeping in the district. These included:

- Employing a Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator to oversee and implement the projects;
- Opening a direct access hostel in the district, open 24/7, 365 days a year;
- Commissioning an in-reach, dispersed supported housing service for people with complex needs who would be moving on from the hostel into shared council accommodation;
- Employing an officer to trial the "Housing First" approach whereby people with specific needs who have been rough sleeping are provided with accommodation and the services that they need are then delivered in that home, rather than seeking to resolve their specific needs first;
- An additional outreach worker to engage with people who are rough sleeping across both Warwick and Stratford district.

Complementary actions were also taken which included:

- Establishing a further supported housing unit;
- Securing funding from Warwickshire County Council to pilot a hospital discharge scheme;
- Weekly meetings with relevant agencies to discuss and progress individual cases;
- Jointly funding a Family Support Worker;
- Developing money advice services for Council tenants.

Opening a Direct Access Hostel in the district

Of the projects envisaged in the bid referred to above, the most significant and transformative was the proposal to open a direct access hostel in the district. Following approval of the funding, premises were swiftly identified and the existing occupier (a supported housing provider) was moved to alternative premises provided by the Council. Management and support workers were recruited, the building was converted and the hostel opened its doors in the autumn of 2018.

This initiative proved to be controversial and initially the vicinity experienced increased levels of anti-social behaviours. Work to improve the management of the hostel, to reduce exclusions and act swiftly to address local concerns were successful alongside the establishment of a liaison group and the involvement of local councillors.

A joint countywide homelessness strategy

This was not included as an action in the previous strategy but it is nevertheless an extremely important development.

Ever since the first national legislation on homelessness in 1977 it has been local housing authorities that have had the primary responsibility for helping homeless people in their area. Prior to that time, the responsibility had fallen to Social Services Departments as homelessness was seen to be a social and welfare issue rather than one of bricks and mortar. To this day, considerable numbers of people become homeless as a result of mental ill health or substance misuse, domestic abuse, offending behaviours, poor money management and/or poor life choices for example. This demonstrates that housing alone is not the solution and in fact tackling homelessness requires strong partnership approaches.

One of the most significant changes brought about by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was the introduction of a “Duty to Refer” which required other public bodies to become more involved in homelessness service provision. This new obligation intensified conversations that were already ongoing between the five district /borough councils and Warwickshire County Council culminating in a conference on homelessness in the autumn of 2018 that involved a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations with remits connected with homelessness. Following the conference all six councils agreed to develop a joint strategy: Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach, 2021-2023. This sets out specific objectives and recommendations in five key social policy areas where co-ordinated action can have the greatest impact in preventing and tackling homelessness:

- Health – to reduce the inequalities and improve the health of people at risk of homelessness, homeless or sleeping rough.
- Financial inclusion – to ensure that a wide range of appropriate services are available to support those at risk of homelessness due to financial difficulties.
- Young people – to enhance and improve services that prevent homelessness among young people.
- Domestic abuse – to prevent domestic abuse and the crisis homelessness resulting from it wherever possible.
- Offending – to deliver better-focussed housing and related support services for those at risk of homelessness when leaving prison.

The full recommendations of the strategy are included in appendix four of this document.

1.4.2 Lessons learned

It must be recognised that the scale of change involved in implementing these initiatives also brought challenges and was at times controversial and lessons were learned as a result.

The direct access hostel, William Wallsgrove House, had to be made ready and brought into use very rapidly in order to meet the deadlines for government funding. As a result, public consultation with local people was lacking and insufficient time was available to gather learning from other hostels elsewhere in the country that could have informed the development of management policies.

There is always a balance to be struck between the benefits to be obtained for the whole community by reducing homelessness, and the impact upon the more local community in the vicinity of the facilities needed in order to achieve this. Government required that initiatives were in place within a short time frame which impacted on the project and its deliverability. Ideally more time should have been taken to inform and explain the project to the community and their earlier involvement and invaluable local knowledge would no doubt have prevented many of the issues that subsequently had to be dealt with.

From the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act another lesson learned was that where officers were freed to work with customers to identify creative solutions to their housing needs better results could be obtained and homelessness prevented more frequently than was the case under the previous legislation.

Stronger partnership working with other public and voluntary sector organisations, including weekly meetings to discuss specific cases, also yielded more positive outcomes for customers. Seeing these outcomes has motivated those organisations to play a greater role in working strategically with the Council on developing its plans for dealing with homelessness and rough sleeping issues.

Joint working with the Police and the Community Safety Team has, through weekly intelligence sharing meetings, enabled much greater awareness among all organisations about what is happening on the street, for example in terms of “county-lines” activity, and enabled a much more

informed, comprehensive and structured approach to managing difficult clients. It has facilitated a risk-based approach whereby a “RAG” (Red- Amber-Green) rating is used to limit the numbers of higher-risk clients accommodated in any one housing establishment to an acceptable level. This actually enables greater numbers to be accommodated as landlords may be reassured that the caseload will be spread around and will be manageable.

In implementing the Everyone In initiative it became apparent that while many people who were sleeping rough were happy to move into accommodation there remained a very small core of people that refused assistance and were content to continue living on the streets. It also transpired that while the majority of those accommodated were happy to move into bed and breakfast accommodation, taking the next step and accepting the responsibilities associated with a more permanent housing arrangement was a step too far without adequate preparation and support to sustain a licence or tenancy. A specific and individually-focussed response is required for each person. Government money from the Cold Weather Fund and Protect Plus is now being targeted to continue to fund those people that are not yet ready for self-contained accommodation to remain in bed and breakfast while appropriate training and support can be provided to prepare them for a permanent home.

1.4.3 Emerging issues

As a consequence of the changes that have been introduced over the last three years the landscape as regards homelessness and rough sleeping in Warwick district now appears very different to what it was when the previous strategy was adopted. The challenges prevalent in 2017 have been dealt with successfully: the numbers rough sleeping have been substantially reduced and the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act has led to greater numbers of households being prevented from becoming homeless resulting in far fewer cases of statutory homelessness. While this position needs to be maintained, new issues have begun to emerge that require a new response and which are set out in this strategy.

Although the data for 2020/21 is not yet available, issues have been identified and confirmed by those working most closely with people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or sleeping rough. Some evidence is anecdotal, however these issues are no less important as indicators of the current situation in the district.

- “Everyone In” was widely welcomed and recognised as an essential and positive development. However, the implementation of it in a very short space of time, due to the urgency of the public health emergency, did place a heavy burden on staff and services.
- There is a high turnover of housing advice staff. This has knock-on effects on services, but also on the remaining members of the team, as new staff take time to settle in and need internal training and mentoring to be able to deliver a high quality of service.
- Drug dealing and “county lines” activity, and the violence associated with it, has intensified and this has impacted upon homelessness levels. A multi-agency response is essential to dealing with this and is in place. A number of the recommendations in the joint strategy around substance misuse, along with the strengthening relationships that it will help to engender, will provide a basis for developing this further.
- Warwickshire County Council plans to substantially reduce its budget for housing-related support by 2024. This pays for services for clients with needs that place them on the edge of care, supporting them to maintain a tenancy and helping with issues that could lead to homelessness. Some of the services include short-term accommodation to support households who are homeless.
- There is an ongoing difficulty in accessing the private rented sector, principally due to the high rents locally which greatly exceed the levels eligible for welfare benefits, i.e. the Local Housing Allowance and, in particular, the shared accommodation rate for young single people.
- Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a notable change in the profile of homelessness approaches with a considerable rise in the numbers of single people

presenting. Anecdotally it appears that many of these have more complex needs compared to previously when the majority would have been relatively straightforward cases of friends or family no longer being willing to accommodate the individual.

1.5 Potential future policy impacts

It is necessary to consider the likely future levels of homelessness in the district over the period of the strategy. This is never an easy task given the number of unknowns. However there are some issues that will clearly have an impact and may be considered. These will be discussed in this sub-section of the strategy.

Issues are considered on the assumption that policies remain as they are at present. This enables objectives to be considered and action plans drawn up in later sections, to address the likely future trends.

It is important to stress that this sub-section is not about whether the policies on the whole are positive or negative. It is purely an assessment of the likely net effect on homelessness levels: reducing or increasing.

1.5.1 Government policy

The Conservative Party manifesto of 2019 stated “We will also end the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament by expanding successful pilots and programmes such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Housing First”.

During 2020 the government has continued to put forward policies in pursuit of this aim, and the broader objective of tackling homelessness:

- In January a further tranche of Rough Sleeping Initiative funding was announced.
- In July the Next Steps Accommodation Programme allocated money to support local authorities and their partners to prevent people housed under Everyone In from returning to the streets.
- In October new guidance was issued to councils to help ensure care leavers have a stable home and to prevent them from becoming homeless. The same month a £150million package was announced to create more than 3,300 new long-term homes for rough sleepers and other vulnerable people.
- In November a further £15 million was allocated to support the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic - the ‘Protect Programme’. “The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper” was also published. While this is principally about landlord services rather than homelessness it includes a commitment to “ensure that housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities”.
- In December a £23 million government fund was launched, designed for people sleeping rough with drug and alcohol support needs. The same month a further £47 million was released, targeted at areas with high numbers of homeless people, those at risk of homelessness, or those living in temporary accommodation.

While not all of the above were relevant to Warwick district, this focus and commitment from government, if continued, should provide many opportunities to bid to further funding programmes to gain the resources needed to continue to bear down on homelessness.

The government has indicated that it intends to reform private sector tenancies in due course and to abolish Assured Shorthold Tenancies, which currently allow landlords to end the tenancy after its initial fixed term without needing to give any reasons. These “no fault” evictions are a frequent cause of homelessness so the proposal, if taken forward, will have a significant beneficial effect on levels of homelessness. It could also however cause some reduction in private rented sector supply.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Reduction.**

1.5.2 The Covid-19 pandemic

The pandemic, and the policy response to it, has had a tumultuous effect upon the whole country in 2020. Three broad national dimensions to the potential impact of the pandemic upon homelessness may be discerned.

The first dimension is the longer term impact of the lockdown upon the economy. As many sectors of the economy were closed down a deep recession inevitably followed and as measures have been alternately relaxed and re-imposed a climate of uncertainty has been created. There have been bankruptcies and business closures, with resultant job losses, while others have managed to avoid this, relying upon the government's Furlough Scheme to pay their workers' salaries.

At the time of writing, three vaccines against the virus have been approved for use in the United Kingdom and ministers have produced a "roadmap" progressively lifting restrictions by 21 June 2021. The trajectory of the economy from that point forward will be crucial in determining the long-term impact upon homelessness.

The second dimension is how the government, having embarked upon an unavoidable but huge borrowing and spending programme to get the country through the lockdowns, approaches the public finances. If public spending cuts are applied, this could lead to pressure to cut back on services which may mean a reduction in homelessness prevention work. An increase in homelessness would then be likely because fewer people would be able to access the timely advice and support needed to avoid it.

The final dimension is the fact that the government introduced a wide range of temporary mitigation measures when it took the country into lockdown. From a housing perspective some of the most important interventions were:

- Longer notice periods and a ban on most evictions in rented accommodation;
- For owner-occupiers with mortgages, availability of repayment "holidays" and a moratorium on possession actions;
- Everyone In, explained earlier, for people sleeping on the streets;
- An increase in the amount of Universal Credit paid to people who were in receipt of the benefit;
- An increase in the rates of Local Housing Allowance, which determine the amount of private sector rent that may be eligible for welfare benefit payments;
- A reduced rate of Stamp Duty Land Tax on residential property sales.

As the pandemic is brought under control these measures will be scaled back, with implications for the housing market and for individuals and families that could lead to homelessness. Much will depend upon how quickly the government does withdraw these measures and whether any additional support is provided for a transitional period to help people to adapt to their changed circumstances.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Increase.**

1.5.3 Leaving the European Union

Following the referendum in 2016 the United Kingdom left the European Union in January 2020, with transitional arrangements in place until the end of the year. In December 2020 the government and the European Union agreed a deal establishing trading arrangements between the two parties from 1st January 2021.

While there are still likely to be teething problems in the short term, the deal should help to reduce these and lessen the economic impact of the new structure. The medium and longer term economic effects are harder to predict and will be difficult to disentangle from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic given the contemporaneous timing of these two major events.

The long-term success, or otherwise, of the country following the departure from the European Union will also determine future trends in household numbers, which will partially drive national level housing needs and, in turn, have a knock-on effect upon homelessness levels.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Uncertain.**

1.5.4 Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020

A corollary of leaving the European Union was the passing of this act in November 2020 to end the free movement of people between the United Kingdom and the continent. It introduces a points-based system with the aim of ensuring that decisions on who is allowed to enter the country on a long-term basis are “based on the skills they have to offer - not where they are from.” It does not change the position as regards asylum seekers.

If the new system functions in the manner that the government intends it to, then it may be expected that a greater proportion of those coming from abroad will be able to address their own housing needs thus exerting less pressure on the affordable housing stock.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Reduction.**

1.5.5 Affordable housing supply

The government remains committed to building 300,000 new homes a year by the mid 2020s – a target which it first set in the 2017 budget. The Conservative Party manifesto also stated that it would: “commit to renewing the Affordable Homes Programme, in order to support the delivery of hundreds of thousands of affordable homes. This is a key part of our efforts to prevent people from falling into homelessness”.

In February 2020 the government opened a three-month consultation on a new home-ownership product – “First Homes”. This would enable first-time buyers to buy a home in their local area for a 30% discount on the open market price. The discount would be passed on every time a First Home is resold. Following the conclusion of the consultation the government confirmed that it intends to go ahead with the product, commencing with a pilot scheme to be delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme. These homes would count as affordable housing for planning purposes.

The effect of a continued increase in housebuilding, with a proportionate increase in new affordable homes will clearly have a positive impact on homelessness. However the First Homes initiative will reduce the amount of that new affordable housing that will be available at social or affordable rent levels and it is the latter that is normally required by people who are homeless. First Homes are therefore likely to offset some of the positive impact.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Reduction.**

1.5.6 Domestic Abuse Bill

During 2020 the government introduced its Domestic Abuse Bill into the House of Commons and, at the time of writing, it had completed its passage through the commons and had reached the report stage in the House of Lords. The bill provides that “a person who is homeless as a result of that person being a victim of domestic abuse” should be treated under homelessness legislation as having a priority need for accommodation. The bill also replaces the term “domestic violence” in homelessness law with “domestic abuse” and provides a definition of this term that is broader.

While this is a very welcome, necessary and positive development it is likely to result in an increase in the number of people to whom the authority owes a full homelessness duty.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Increase.**

1.5.7 Green Industrial Revolution

In November 2020 the government announced its plans for greening the UK economy. Among the package announced were measures to: make homes “greener, warmer and more energy efficient”; to replace petrol and diesel-fuelled cars with electric vehicles; and to move to lower carbon energy sources such as offshore wind, hydrogen and nuclear power.

The government’s intention is to stimulate the green economy, investing and creating jobs as a result and from that perspective the policy would be expected to have a positive impact. However there are risks and much will depend upon how the transition takes place, what support the government provides and how energy and vehicle prices adjust.

If household energy costs rise as a result of the new energy sources then, unless there is a corresponding rise in wages and benefit levels, that could push people on lower incomes into fuel poverty. On the other hand, more energy efficient homes should result in lower energy costs per dwelling. If the price of electric cars were to remain significantly higher than current vehicle prices then people on low incomes that are dependent upon a car may find themselves in debt. Poverty is one of the known major routes into homelessness.

The move away from gas-fired central heating may also have a public-spending impact if stock-owning local authorities such as Warwick have to fund boiler conversions from their own resources. This could have a knock-on impact upon financing of other housing services.

However as it will take some years for these changes to start to take effect it is likely that the impacts, positive and negative, will not start to be felt until the latter years of this strategy at the earliest. The policy is therefore considered neutral at the present time.

Likely net impact on homelessness levels: **Neutral.**

1.5.8 Conclusion

Despite the mixture of increasing and reducing potential impacts, the level of uncertainty at the present time suggests that it would be prudent to plan on the basis that there will not be a reduction in homelessness numbers and it would seem sensible to plan for a moderate increase.

1.6 Summary and objectives

Tackling the issues surrounding homelessness and rough sleeping is seen as a corporate priority by Warwick District Council. From this perspective the most important points shown in the data for 2019/20 are that:

- Almost 90% of applicants were either single adults (67%) or single parents with dependent children (21%).
- The four most common support needs were: a history of mental health problems; physical ill health and disability; being at risk of/has experienced domestic abuse; and having an offending history. (But note the comment in 1.3.3 above about substance misuse.)
- The main causes of homelessness were: family or friends being no longer willing or able to accommodate; a non-violent relationship breakdown with a partner; domestic abuse; and the ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy.
- The four most prevalent types of accommodation prior to homelessness, all with roughly the same frequency of occurrence, were: no fixed abode; living with family; private rented

sector; and living with friends. However a worrying 10% of cases came from the social rented sector.

As regards the Council's operational response to homelessness, the data for 2019/20 shows:

- An increase in the proportion of households owed the relief duty compared to 2018/19.
- At the end of a prevention duty, compared to the national level: higher proportions were helped to move to alternative accommodation but smaller numbers enabled to keep their existing home; the private sector was used much less and more cases were accommodated in the Council's own housing stock; and relatively higher numbers were helped into supported accommodation. However, it should be borne in mind that figures for England include large numbers of councils that no longer have a housing stock and therefore do not have the option of using their own stock.
- At the end of a relief duty more cases were helped to find accommodation than was the case nationally and there were fewer cases where the 56-day period lapsed. The private rented sector was again used less and council and supported housing accommodation more.
- For those cases where neither prevention nor relief proved possible and a full homelessness decision was required, significantly higher percentages of households were found intentionally homeless compared to the national proportion.

Over the last three years there have been many changes made with some significant achievements and also some lessons learned along the way, that have dealt with the issues that were prevalent previously. Everyone In was successful and means that the focus for work on rough sleeping should shift towards ensuring that those who were accommodated do not return to the streets and that rough sleeping does not recur as an issue in the district in the future. The pattern of homelessness and rough sleeping in the district has changed as a result of all this activity and new issues have started to emerge that require a new response.

A number of potential uncertainties and impacts upon future levels of homelessness and rough sleeping have been considered that suggest a prudent response would be to plan at the least for approaches to continue at their current levels or possibly to increase.

The joint strategy "Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach" takes work forward in five key policy areas where results can best be secured by strong partnership working. This Warwick district document can therefore focus upon those operational aspects of preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping that can better be dealt with at the local district level. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that there will be some overlap between the two and that many of the actions proposed in this strategy will have a positive impact, either directly or indirectly, in the policy areas covered by the joint strategy and vice versa.

Overall this analysis suggests that a renewed focus upon earlier prevention work is needed to keep more people in their existing homes. Prevention can be viewed as having two separate strands: universal and directed.

Universal prevention is based on the perspective that the prevention of homelessness may need to start when a person first moves into their new home. While for many no further assistance will be necessary and they will simply get on with their lives, for some people support will be needed at this very early stage in order to make a long-term sustainable success of their future. This could be in the form of low-level help with, for example, claiming the right benefits, budgeting advice, decorating and furnishing the home. However, for people with more specific needs, or coming from chaotic lifestyles and previous homelessness, more intensive forms of social support may be needed.

For people who have been rough sleeping, the early stages of a new tenancy may be very precarious as they seek to turn around what may have been a particularly chaotic lifestyle. Support is vital at this time but is also very case-specific and needs-based, ranging from normal tenancy management, through floating support and the "Housing First" model to fully supported accommodation.

Unfortunately supported housing isn't always available for those that ideally need it. This leaves a gap in care because the client moves into mainstream housing without the full amount of support that they need. Close links between the support provider and the landlord are then essential to maximise the prospect of a successful tenancy.

Universal prevention can also be achieved through the availability of appropriate services at any time prior to a person or household becoming "threatened with homelessness" (i.e. likely to become homeless within 56 days). Debt advice, tackling poor property condition, mediation with landlords, relationship counselling and many other support services can all prevent the threat of homelessness before it has become an issue.

Directed prevention refers to the more specific and targeted level of prevention that is required when an individual or household is threatened with homelessness in line with the legal definition, i.e. likely to be homeless within 56 days. This represents the more "traditional" homelessness prevention work that local authorities have been providing since the Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect and before.

For those whose homelessness cannot be prevented the necessary crisis support needs to continue to be provided through the relief and main duty stages as appropriate and the statistics suggest that in this district greater use of the private rented sector may be possible.

Finally, a continued focus upon the problems of people sleeping rough is required and particular attention needs to be paid as the Everyone In support is withdrawn, to try to ensure that as many as possible of the people temporarily housed are assisted, to avoid them returning to the streets. The aim is to try and eliminate rough sleeping within the district by providing accommodation and support to the rough sleeping cohort. This will be done by linking in with the voluntary sector and the Housing Advice and Allocations Team to accommodate individuals and provide them with the support and guidance that they need to maintain a tenancy.

In summary, the over-arching strategy is to shift the focus towards a much greater use of universal prevention measures while retaining directed prevention and crisis resolution for those who slip through the net. At the same time continued pressure needs to be maintained to assist those sleeping rough to come in off the streets and rebuild their lives. Consequently, four objectives have been defined to guide work on homelessness in the next five years.

Objective one - Universal prevention

To provide a wide range of low-level, early intervention services to support people at any time, not just when homelessness is a possibility.

Objective two - Directed prevention

To assist those who are threatened with homelessness to remain in their existing home if at all possible or, where this is not possible, to help them avoid homelessness by all other practical means.

Objective three - Crisis resolution

To support those who become homeless, by providing suitable temporary housing and a broad palette of assistance to secure long-term, sustainable accommodation.

Objective four - Rough sleeping

To continue to innovate and expand the range of services available in order to maintain downward pressure on the number of people sleeping rough in the district.

Section two – Current resources

This section of the strategy covers the remainder of the statutory requirements for the homelessness review. It explains the resources available for preventing and tackling homelessness in the district and for dealing with rough sleeping. Resources can be broken down into three different types: the Council's own operational services; the services of partners, both statutory and voluntary, who work in the district helping those with housing issues; and financial resources.

2.1 Housing services

The Council has a wide range of services to help with work to prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping.

2.1.1 New affordable housing programme

Ultimately the most effective way to prevent homelessness, and rehouse people who are homeless or rough sleeping, is by securing an adequate supply of affordable homes for those who need them. In policy terms this is a matter for the Local Plan and the Housing Strategy rather than this strategy. However, suffice it to say that all available tools will be used to increase numbers including:

- Working with partner Registered Providers (also known as housing associations) and Homes England to lever government grant into the programme.
- Using internal resources and borrowing powers to purchase land and buildings for a future programme of Council housing.
- Using planning policy to require developers to provide a proportion of affordable housing on large private development sites. These are then either purchased by the Council or by a Registered Provider to be allocated to people in need, or sold to first-time buyers as low-cost affordable homes.

2.1.2 Allocations Scheme

As well as building new homes best use must also be made of the existing stock of affordable homes. The mechanism for this is the allocations scheme and the Common Housing Register, through which allocations of available Council homes and nominations to partner Registered Providers are administered. This includes both new and existing homes as and when they become vacant.

In 2016 a revised policy was introduced, and subsequently amended in 2018 to make allowance for those owed the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are accorded an appropriate degree of priority for affordable homes. The scheme also recognises housing needs other than homelessness. It therefore helps towards universal prevention as well as crisis resolution and directed prevention. After two years of operation under the Homelessness Reduction Act regime, the allocations scheme has been reviewed to assess whether it is working in the most effective manner and further changes will be implemented in 2021.

2.1.3 Housing Needs

The focal point of case work for all those with housing issues is the Housing Needs section in Housing Services. This section incorporates the Housing Advice and Allocations Team, the Private Sector Housing Team, and the Rough Sleeping Initiative Team.

As well as administering the allocations scheme referred to above (offering vacant Council homes and making nomination to Registered Providers) the Housing Advice and Allocations Team also provides the housing options service for the Council. This service is free of charge and available to anyone in the district. It provides comprehensive advice on a wide range of housing problems including, but not limited to, rehousing and homelessness. It fulfils the Council's responsibilities under the homelessness legislation and also arranges temporary accommodation where necessary. Prevention work includes: mediation and advocacy with landlords; trying to maintain or re-establish

a tenant's relationship with the landlord; supporting with Housing Benefit/Universal Credit claims; and paying deposits/rent in advance for people who are homeless.

The team also administers the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, which aims to temporarily accommodate people sleeping on the streets during severe weather episodes. It is in operation in the district all year round, on any night when the temperature falls to zero or below, with a wide definition of severe and it can be triggered by very hot as well as cold weather.

The Private Sector Housing Team aims to ensure a viable, well-managed private rented sector by providing advice and support for all landlords to help them to understand the, often complex, workings of housing law, but also taking enforcement action against landlords who knowingly disregard or breach the rules and regulations.

2.1.4 Rough sleeping services

The Rough Sleeping Initiative Team is led by the Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator and oversees the delivery of the initiatives for reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough that were set up as a result of the successful bid for government Rough Sleeping Initiative funding explained earlier.

Now that most of those who were sleeping rough have been, and at the time of writing still are being, accommodated through the principles of Everyone In, it is important that they receive the amount of support that they will need to sustain a tenancy and future plans for the team need to be directed towards this aim.

However, there are still a very small number of people sleeping rough in the district, including those who declined the Everyone In offer and new cases arising, for example following discharge from prison, hospital or rehabilitation.

2.1.5 Landlord Services

Landlord Services in Housing Services has an important role to play in homelessness prevention because this can also be achieved through the pro-active management of Council tenancies to try to ensure that eviction only ever takes place as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted. The service includes:

- Housing Officers for all day-to-day management issues, including early settling-in visits for new tenants to ensure that they are not having any problems or to identify and resolve such issues at the earliest possible stage.
- Access to a Resettlement Fund for setting people up in their own homes with basic essentials such as carpets, curtains and cookers.
- Financial Inclusion Officers to help people maximise their incomes and avoid rent arrears.
- A Housing Support Officer who helps people to maintain their tenancy and stay in their home.
- Access to a Family Support Worker who helps families with children of school age involved in low-level anti-social behaviour to turn this around and avoid enforcement action such as injunctions/eviction. This post is joint-funded by Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council.
- A Housing Link Worker works with hospital discharge teams to ensure that those leaving hospital are coming out to appropriate accommodation. This is a permanent post based in Tenancy Services and joint-funded by Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The team operates within the policy context of the Council's Tenancy Strategy which provides for introductory 12 month tenancies that, if completed successfully, lead to full, secure periodic tenancies. The "flexible" fixed-term secure tenancy is not used and Registered Providers are encouraged to work in the same way. However, it is recognised that, while they must have regard to

the Tenancy Strategy, ultimately as independent bodies it is their decision as to the tenancies that they offer.

2.2 Key partners

As well as Council services, there are a great many other invaluable services for homeless people provided by partner organisations, both statutory and voluntary. It is not possible to provide details of all of them (they can be found in the Homelessness Directory on the Council's website) but the most important for the purposes of this strategy are included in this sub-section.

2.2.1 Key public/statutory partners

- Other teams in Warwick District Council provide services including Lifeline (home emergency response), Housing Benefits, planning and development services and community safety.
- MHCLG is the central government department with responsibility for homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Warwickshire County Council is the social services authority for the area, the commissioner of housing-related support services and a co-signatory of the joint homelessness strategy.
- The other four district and borough councils in Warwickshire are neighbouring homelessness authorities and also co-signatories of the joint homelessness strategy.
- Prisons and probation services have responsibility for the discharge and ongoing management respectively, of offenders in the community.
- Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust provides a wide range of mental health and learning disability services for people of all ages.
- The Department for Work and Pensions has responsibility for Universal Credit and for the local job centres.
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub works to safeguard children, young people and adults. It is a partnership between Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police, the National Health Service and other key partner agencies.

2.2.2 Voluntary sector key partners:

- Registered Providers are an important additional source of affordable housing, which can include supported housing. Through their housing management services, they can play a part in universal prevention similar to that provided by Landlord Services. As a case in point, supported housing providers operating in the district now routinely discuss cases with Council officers before taking eviction action.
- There are two housing-related support providers commissioned by Warwickshire County Council to offer services in Warwick district: P3 (for people aged 25 or more) and St Basils for people younger than 25. There are two types of housing-related support service:
 - Floating support. This consists of short term interventions that help people: to stay in their homes; to work towards living in their own home; or to prevent homelessness, hospitalisation or institutional care.
 - Accommodation-based services for homeless people including ex-offenders. These services provide short term accommodation-based support to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care and support through being homeless.
- P3 employs an additional Outreach Worker in Warwick and Stratford, funded by the successful Rough Sleeping Initiative bid mentioned earlier. It also provides physical and mental health nurses to support street outreach work with vulnerable clients.

- The Coventry Cyrenians are commissioned by the Council to provide in-reach support services for people with complex needs who are moving on from the direct access hostel into shared Council accommodation. This was another of the Rough Sleeping Initiative projects but is moving towards a self-funded service that will support up to 18 individuals in five properties across the district.
- Prior to the pandemic there were two night shelters, each operating in the district on a limited number of evenings: Leamington Night Shelter and the LWS Night Shelter. Overnight accommodation and food were made available for people who were homeless or vulnerable.
- The Salvation Army runs the Way Ahead Project. This is a drop-in for homeless people with services including breakfast, food vouchers, sleeping bags, laundry facilities, showers, computers, and help with referrals & addiction support.
- Helping Hands supports low income individuals and families, victims of domestic violence, people who are homeless locally, and vulnerable people. Services include: a soup kitchen where they give out food, toiletries and clothing; furniture for people on low incomes; and opportunities to gain NVQ's by helping out the charity in their storage facility and shop.

2.3 Financial resources

All of the Housing Services detailed in section 2.1 are fully funded through the Council's base budgets for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, subject to review through the annual budget-setting process. From time to time a case may be made for additional funding internally for specific initiatives, and these are considered by the Council, which has to weigh them against other competing priorities and decide whether to approve the resources.

Additional funding is sometimes received from central government for homelessness provision. In the past this included money: to assist with implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act; towards new data collection requirements referred to earlier; to enable Everyone In to accommodate people sleeping rough during the pandemic; and, most recently the Next Steps Accommodation Programme to help those accommodated under Everyone In to avoid returning to the streets.

In 2017 the government introduced the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, which it distributes to local authorities, with the flexibility to use it in any way to support their activities in preventing and relieving homelessness. This was a very welcome and important source of new finance for the development of homelessness services particularly as it could be carried forward from one year to the next if not spent immediately allowing the ability to take a longer-term view in addressing needs. This has now been combined with Homelessness Reduction Grant to create the new Homelessness Prevention Grant from 2021/22.

When opportunities arise to bid for external funding these are actively pursued. For example, the rough sleeping services currently being provided are supported by successful bids to the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Cold Weather Fund. New government initiatives to ameliorate the homelessness impacts of the pandemic that offer opportunities to bid for new funding to enhance or introduce new services will be closely monitored and pursued where they are appropriate for the district.

Partnership working with other local organisations sometimes secures additional funding for homelessness work. For example, an important contribution from Warwickshire County Council was

secured and aligned towards the Rough Sleeping Initiative projects and resources were pooled with resources from the county and the other district and borough councils to develop the joint homelessness strategy. Financial support has been given by Homes England towards infrastructure enabling affordable housing development. Other notable external contributions include joint funding from Warwickshire County Council for the Family Support Worker and Housing Link Worker posts mentioned earlier.

Section three – Action plans

3.1 Stakeholders' views

This section summarises the consultation undertaken with partners, service users and communities, and the changes made to the document in response.

Over the past three years work with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector has become ever more closely aligned. Consultation with them and their involvement has become more of a continuous process than a formal one. Their thoughts and views routinely inform the Council's work and plans and these have been integral in the development of this strategy. In addition to this ongoing dialogue, a formal 28-day public consultation process was undertaken, with a draft version of the strategy published on the website inviting comment. This was widely publicised and promoted through the press, social media channels and email alerts.

As a result of comments received from the formal consultation the following changes have been made:

- A number of general textual amendments have been made clarifying certain points;
- Data charts and graphs have been added to the data section to make the key points more visually apparent and easier to note;
- Additional information has been included about lessons learned over the past three years and future plans for William Wallsgrove House;
- Comments relevant to specific actions have been passed to the appropriate lead officer to take into account when project planning.
- An additional appendix has been added that contains the recommendations from the joint strategy – Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach.

3.2 Action plans

Detailed plans for each of the four objectives are contained in appendix three of this document and identify the action to be taken, the responsible officer, the resources to be directed towards its achievement and the deadline for completion.

3.3 Monitoring and review

While this is a five-year strategy, it is clear from all of the preceding analysis that it is being adopted at a time of significant change. While this document sets out the framework for the next five years, the action plans focus upon those projects that can be taken forward over the first two years of the period and careful monitoring and review are essential.

Progress on each action is the responsibility of the nominated lead officer, reporting to their line manager. Strategic monitoring will be undertaken by the Housing Services Management Team on a bi-annual basis where overall progress will be tracked and any necessary short-term adjustments to priorities and resources can be considered and agreed.

The action plan will be reviewed each year when the latest data, changes in the policy environment, and progress against the action plans and objectives can be assessed. Any changes required will be agreed by the Head of Housing Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property.

Appendix One – Review of Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2017-2020

The following table shows progress on the action plan for objective one of the previous Housing & Homelessness Strategy - Promoting the provision of suitable accommodation, information and advice for the homeless in an effort to prevent and reduce homelessness.

	Action	Progress
1.1	Implementing the extension of our legal duties to the homeless, including single people, under the Homelessness Reduction Bill.	Complete. The bill became an Act of Parliament which was implemented from 1 st April 2018.
1.2	Developing a Mental Health Protocol for homeless people.	Co-ordinated support for tackling all the health problems associated with homelessness is being developed with the other district and borough councils and Warwickshire County Council through the introduction of the joint countywide homelessness strategy from April 2021.
1.3	A co-ordinated delivery of emergency help with the night shelter and other voluntary providers.	Complete. This is a key function of the new Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator post.
1.4	Improving the provision of adequate transitional accommodation for the homeless in general and the vulnerable in particular.	Significant progress made: The acquisition of Beauchamp House and its conversion for use as supported homeless accommodation. The conversion of William Wallsgrove House for use as a direct access hostel. The establishment of supported housing schemes, including those operated by Coventry Cyrenians.
1.5	Participate in the “Warwickshire Together Homelessness Early Intervention Project” to develop a countywide system ensuring early identification of residents at risk of homelessness and tailored support services to address the issues which could result in the resident becoming homeless.	Complete. Government funding was secured countywide for the three-year project (called p.h.i.l.) which ran until December 2020. The learning from the project is being translated into follow-on prevention services tailored towards the needs of each part of the county.
1.6	We will continue to work collaboratively with other districts and agencies to explore and pursue bids for government funding for initiatives on homelessness.	Ongoing but with notable success in bidding for Rough Sleeping Initiative funding from central government, securing over a million pounds over 3 years.
1.7	Ensure good advice on housing options is available by the provision of staff that are well trained, supported by good publicity materials.	Significant improvements made while implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 but an ongoing commitment.
1.8	Review and improve our system for tackling rough sleeping.	Complete. The opening of the direct access hostel provided a focal point for bringing services to people that are rough sleeping in tandem with a temporary roof over their head.
1.9	To improve financial difficulty prevention work between our Income Team and the Housing Advice Team to reduce the number of evictions and prevent homelessness.	Achieved. The number of evictions for rent arrears fell from 36 in 2016/17 to 10 in 2019/20.

Appendix two – Homelessness data

All of the data in this appendix is taken from the detailed homelessness data tables on the gov.uk website which are, in turn, derived from the quarterly returns from local authorities.

For ease of reading, comparison and clarity, all figures are rounded to the nearest whole number but this means that percentage columns may not always add up to 100%.

Table one – Reasons for loss of last settled home 2018/19 and 2019/20

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Family/friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	23	26	22	25
Other reasons / not known	20	20	28	22
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	14	8	7	8
Domestic abuse	13	9	10	9
End of assured shorthold private rented tenancy (AST)	10	20	18	22
Eviction from supported housing	7	4	4	3
End of non-AST private rented tenancy	4	2	2	2
End of social rented tenancy	4	5	5	5
Other violence or harassment	2	2	2	2
Left institution with no accommodation available	2	2	2	2
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	1	2	0	1

Table two – Accommodation at the time of the homelessness application

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
No fixed abode	16	12	15	11
Living with family	16	24	27	24
Private rented sector	15	26	18	28
Living with friends	15	10	13	10
Social rented sector	10	11	10	10
Other / not known	9	6	6	7
Homeless on departure from institution	7	4	2	3
Temporary accommodation	5	1	2	1
Rough sleeping	3	3	2	3
Refuge	2	1	1	1
Owner-occupier / shared ownership	1	1	1	1
National Asylum Seeker Support accommodation	0	2	0	1

Table three – Composition of homeless household - Warwick district

	2019/20 (%)	2018/19 (%)
Single adult	67	60
Single parent with dependent children	21	25
Couple / two adults without dependent children	6	7
Couple / two adults with dependent children	4	8
Three or more adults with dependent children	1	0
Three or more adults without dependent children	1	1

Table four – Profile of main applicant by age band - Warwick district

	2019/20 (%)	2018/19 (%)
16-17	2	2
18-24	24	25
25-34	26	32
35-44	20	19
45-54	16	12
55-64	8	8
65-74	2	1
75+	0	0

Table five - Profile of main applicant by ethnicity – Warwick district

	2019/20 (%)	2018/19 (%)
White: English/Welsh	74	82
Asian / Asian British	8	4
White: Other	5	5
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	4	3
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	4	1
Not known	3	3
Other ethnic group	2	1

Table six - Employment status of main applicant – Warwick district

	2019/20 (%)	2018/19 (%)
Registered unemployed	24	23
Not working due to long-term illness / disability	23	15
Full-time work	14	17
Part-time work	13	18
Other	8	5
Not registered but seeking work	7	5
Not seeking work / at home	6	13
Student / training	2	2
Retired	2	1
Not known	1	1

Table seven - Household support needs – Warwick district

	2019/20	2018/19
	(%)	(%)
History of mental health problems	19	26
Physical ill health and disability	13	13
At risk of / has experienced domestic abuse	10	10
Offending history	9	6
Drug dependency needs	7	5
History of repeat homelessness	6	5
History of rough sleeping	6	2
Alcohol dependency needs	5	3
At risk of / has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	5	3
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	4	6
Learning disability	4	7
At risk of / has experienced sexual abuse / exploitation	3	3
Young person aged 16-17 years	2	2
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	2	3
Access to education, employment or training	2	2
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	1	2
Old age	1	0
Care leaver aged 21+ years	1	1
Former asylum seeker	1	1
Served in HM Forces	1	1

Table eight – Reasons for end of prevention duty

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Moved to alternative accommodation	48	37	55	37
56 days elapsed and no further action	17	7	6	6
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	12	19	7	20
Stayed in existing accommodation	7	22	11	20
Refused suitable accommodation offer	7	1	13	1
Contact lost	4	9	7	10
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	2	4	2	4
Refused to cooperate	1	0	0	0
No longer eligible	1	1	0	1

Table 9 - Type of accommodation (where prevention duty ended with accommodation secured)

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Council tenancy	26	11	23	12
Private rented sector	25	40	23	41
Registered Provider tenancy	22	22	24	20
Supported housing or hostel	18	9	11	10
Staying with family	5	9	9	9
Not known	4	2	3	3
Staying with friends	1	3	3	3
Owner-occupier	0	1	1	1
Other	0	2	3	2

Table 10 - Main prevention activity (where prevention duty ended with accommodation secured)

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	37	27	50	27
Supported housing provided	16	5	6	6
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	14	11	10	11
No activity – advice and information provided	12	15	7	15
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	8	12	5	12
Negotiation / mediation / advocacy work to prevent eviction / repossession	6	11	8	10
Negotiation / mediation work to secure return to family or friend	3	6	9	6
Other	2	7	6	7
Discretionary Housing Payment to reduce shortfall	1	4	0	4
Other financial payments (e.g. to reduce arrears)	1	3	0	3

Table 11 - Reasons for relief duty ending

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	59	40	65	42
56 days elapsed	14	38	6	33
Contact lost	9	12	12	13
Refused final accommodation	9	1	6	1
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	4	6	7	6
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	3	1	3	1
Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided	0	1	1	1
Notice served due to refusal to cooperate	0	0	1	0
No longer eligible	0	1	0	1

Table 12 - Type of accommodation (where relief duty ended with accommodation secured)

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Supported housing or hostel	36	27	19	24
Council tenancy	23	10	9	9
Registered Provider tenancy	21	15	6	12
Private rented sector	18	29	22	25
Staying with family	1	4	4	4
Staying with friends	0	2	2	2
Owner-occupier	0	0	0	0
Other	0	4	3	4
Not known	0	8	36	20

Table 13 - Main relief activity (where relief duty ended with accommodation secured)

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	40	42	50	40
Supported housing provided	32	18	21	21
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	12	12	4	11
No activity	7	9	1	8
Other activity through which accommodation secured	6	11	9	11
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	3	8	16	8

Table 14 - Decision on duty owed at end of relief duty

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless	47	7	13	8
Homeless + priority need + unintentionally homeless (acceptance)	26	64	18	58
Homeless + no priority need	26	24	30	19
Not homeless	0	4	38	15

Table 15 - Priority need of households owed a main duty

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Household includes dependent children	60	61	55	63
Vulnerable - Physical disability / ill health	20	10	0	9
Vulnerable - Mental health problems	20	11	0	11
Household includes children, but other priority need reported	0	3	0	2
Household includes a pregnant woman	0	5	18	5
Vulnerable - Old age	0	1	0	1
Vulnerable - Young applicant	0	2	0	2
Vulnerable - Domestic abuse	0	3	9	2
Vulnerable - Other reasons	0	4	18	4

Table 16 - Reasons for end of main duty

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Housing Act 1996 Part 6 social housing offer - accepted	57	69	97	65
Voluntarily ceased to occupy temporary accommodation	29	7	0	10
Housing Act 1996 Part 6 social housing offer - refused	14	3	3	3
Private rented sector offer - accepted	0	9	0	10
Private rented sector offer - refused	0	1	0	1
Refused suitable temporary accommodation offer, withdrew or lost contact	0	7	0	4
Ceased to be eligible	0	1	0	2
Became intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation	0	3	0	4
Not known	0	0	0	1

Table 17 – Households in temporary accommodation at the end of the year, by type of accommodation

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Local authority or Registered Provider stock	34	22	100	21
Hostels (including reception centres, emergency units and refuges)	31	7	0	7
Bed and breakfast hotels (including shared annexes)	28	9	0	8
Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained	6	27	0	26
Private sector accommodation leased by the Council or leased or managed by a Registered Provider	0	30	0	30
Any other type of temporary accommodation (including private landlord and not known)	0	5	0	8

Table 18 – Numbers in temporary accommodation at year-end by household type

	2019/20 (%)		2018/19 (%)	
	Warwick	England	Warwick	England
Single adult	91	25	42	22
Couple with dependent children	3	19	8	21
Single parent with dependent children	3	45	25	48
All other household types	3	11	25	9

Appendix three – Detailed action plans

	Objective one – Universal prevention			
	Action	Responsible Officer	Resources	Deadline
1.1	Promote housing options and advice services, enable broader access to the service and encourage earlier interaction. This should include providing bespoke information to different customer groups and updating and extending information on the Council's website.	Housing Advice & Allocations Manager	Existing	December 2021
1.2	Introduce more mechanisms to gain customer feedback on homelessness and rough sleeping services.	Housing Needs Manager	Existing	September 2021
1.3	Provide more early intervention for Introductory Tenants in addition to the settling-in and 12 month visit.	Landlord Services Manager	Existing	September 2021
1.4	Employ two Support Workers on a fixed term basis to support tenants with arrears accrued during the Covid-19 pandemic to avoid them becoming threatened with homelessness.	Housing Needs Manager /Landlord Services Manager	Existing /FHSG /MHCLG bid	July 2021
1.5	For people suffering domestic abuse, work with partners to draw up a procedure guide for staff on finding the appropriate measures for each case: sanctuary; injunctions/other ASB measures; excluding the perpetrator; moving elsewhere in the district; moving out of the area.	Housing Needs Manager /Landlord Services Manager	Existing	March 2022
1.6	Improve joint working with Registered Providers over domestic abuse cases, including investigating the option of reciprocal moves.	Housing Needs Manager	Existing	March 2022
1.7	Work with housing-related support agencies to maximise available floating support.	Housing Needs Manager/ Head of Housing Services	Existing	To WCC recommissioning timelines
1.8	Promote greater awareness among relevant staff and organisations, of floating support services, including the Council's own Support Officer to maximise referrals.	Landlord Services Manager & Rough Sleeping Coordinator	Existing	August 2021
1.9	Develop further universal prevention initiatives with private rented sector landlords.	Housing Advice & Allocations Manager & Private Sector Housing Manager	Existing /MHCLG bid	March 2022

Objective two – Directed prevention

	Action	Responsible Officer	Resources	Deadline
2.1	Set up an eviction panel including the Housing Advice and Allocations Manager to make sure eviction is the most appropriate option.	Landlord Services Manager /Housing Needs Manager	Existing /FHSG	June 2021
2.2	Work with Registered Providers to develop earlier work on eviction prevention – promoting the model of the West Midlands Combined Authority Task Force Tenancy Recovery Scheme (WMCATF).	Housing Needs Manager	To be clarified	To WMCATF
2.3	Consider a policy of payment of rent arrears in exceptional circumstances as a directed prevention option.	Housing Needs Manager	FHSG	June 2021
2.4	Develop a range of financial inclusion initiatives, including provision to write off arrears for WDC tenants.	Landlord Services Manager	Existing /FHSG	September 2021
2.5	Take forward a proposal to joint fund one worker to support 16 and 17 year-olds who are vulnerable to homelessness. The post would be based in Warwickshire County Council Children's Services.	Housing Needs Manager	FHSG	TBC
2.6	Review and update the Homelessness Directory.	Housing Advice & Allocations Manager	Existing	September 2021

Objective three – Crisis resolution

	Action	Responsible Officer	Resources	Deadline
3.1	Consider a new policy to support people who are found intentionally homeless and owed no further duty.	Housing Needs Manager	Existing	October 2021
3.2	Ensure an adequate supply of appropriate and suitable temporary accommodation.	Housing Advice & Allocations Manager	Existing /HRA	March 2022
3.3	Minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children and for 16 and 17 year olds.	Housing Advice & Allocations Manager	Existing	Ongoing
3.4	Utilise staff from William Wallsgrove House to support clients in the community.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	Existing /MHCLG	Ongoing
3.5	Maintain Beauchamp House as supported housing for single homeless people.	Housing Needs Manager	Existing	Ongoing

	Objective four – Rough sleeping			
	Action	Responsible Officer	Resources	Deadline
4.1	Extend the term for the post of Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator.	Housing Needs Manager	MHCLG /Existing	Ongoing
4.2	Complete the refurbishment of William Wallsgrove House to provide a more supportive environment.	Housing Needs Manager /Housing Strategy & Development Manager	Various	TBC
4.3	Re-direct 12 units of mainstream stock from across the district to be used as supported accommodation for single people.	Housing Needs Manager	MHCLG /HIP	September 2021
4.4	Improve the links between the voluntary sector and the Housing Advice & Allocations Team.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	Existing	Ongoing
4.5	Decant individuals accommodated under Everyone In to mainstream housing with wraparound support.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	Existing /FHSG	Ongoing
4.6	Set up an early warning system for people who are permanently rehoused following Everyone In, taking a multi-agency approach to deal with issues early and maximise prospects of a successful and sustainable tenancy.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator /Landlord Services Manager	Existing	June 2021
4.7	Hold weekly Rough Sleeping Initiative meetings to discuss all cases with relevant agencies to ensure the multi-agency approach is maintained.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	Existing	Ongoing
4.8	Take forward the winter planning actions following the successful bid to the Cold Weather Fund.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	Cold Weather Funding	March 2021
4.9	Establish a process of liaison with Landlord Services before any mainstream housing offer to someone who has been sleeping rough.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator /Landlord Services Manager	Existing	April 2021
4.10	Maintain the Coventry Cyrenians support service.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	MHCLG	Ongoing
4.11	Strengthen the Housing First model, generating provision for an additional eight units.	Housing Needs Manager	MHCLG	Subject to bid
4.12	Maintain the additional outreach and physical and mental health nursing services that support work with vulnerable clients.	Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	MHCLG	Subject to bid

Abbreviations: FHSG – Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, HIP – Housing Investment Programme, HRA – Housing Revenue Account, MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Appendix four – Recommendations from the joint strategy - Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire: a multi-agency approach.

This appendix sets out the recommendations from the strategy. For more detailed explanations of any or all of the recommendations please refer to the document itself.

Health

1. Supporting the development and mobilisation of the Mental Health Enhanced Care Pathway in Warwickshire.
2. Holding collaborative discussions with Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust around options for prioritisation of mental health support for people who are homeless/rough sleeping.
3. Supporting the development and embedding of the Dual Diagnosis protocol and pathways into mental health/drugs and alcohol services.
4. Considering system-wide options to address the physical health needs of people who are homeless/sleeping rough.
5. Ensuring access to pharmacies.
6. Maintaining good dental health.
7. Facilitating entry into residential rehabilitation and inpatient detoxification services.
8. Improving the accessibility of services available for homeless individuals who may have a learning disability or autism.

Financial inclusion

1. Making a collective effort to lobby government over required national policy changes.
2. Ensuring homelessness is seen as a more broadly-based problem than simply a “housing issue”.
3. Learning from the Community Financial Inclusion Officer scheme.
4. Undertaking a financial support gap analysis across the county, identifying target audiences, geographical areas covered and areas of potential duplication.
5. Making the most of available funds by reviewing activities within local authorities to ensure best use of resources.
6. Encouraging engagement with financial inclusion services as a condition within support provided under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
7. Promoting the use of schemes such as Housing First and the Rugby Housing Pathway to enable engagement with financial inclusion services.

Young people

1. Expanding pre-tenancy training.
2. Maximising opportunities for joint working for officers and roles between partner agencies.
3. Considering expanding the House project across the county.
4. Embedding Duty to Refer processes at a county level.
5. Reviewing the long standing Young Persons Protocol in Warwickshire.
6. Moving forward with the Warwickshire County Council review of support arrangements for young people.

Domestic abuse

1. Taking forward the Independent Strategic Review of Domestic Abuse Services and Support Across Warwickshire.
2. Catering for multiple dis-advantage.
3. Treating all survivors of domestic abuse as having a priority need for accommodation.
4. Creating women-only spaces in temporary accommodation.
5. Increasing outreach work.
6. Promoting and encouraging early contact with district and borough councils and domestic abuse support services.
7. Specialist training to ensure early identification.
8. Addressing "Move On" challenges.

Offending

1. Achieving greater housing opportunities for offenders.
2. Planning support services for offenders that need them.
3. Enhancing strategic leadership
4. Preparing offenders for release.
5. Working better together.
6. Considering reciprocal rehousing arrangements between district and borough councils.