



Lambeth Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025–30

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About this document

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Foreword

London is currently facing the most severe housing and homelessness pressures of anywhere in the UK. With half of England's homeless population in the capital, inner-London boroughs such as Lambeth, where there are high levels of housing need and a severe lack of affordable housing, are at the forefront of the crisis.

With 45,000 households on the Lambeth housing register, and over 4,700 in temporary accommodation (TA), and only about 700 council and housing association tenancies available each year, we face an increasingly challenging task.

This task is all the more difficult against the backdrop of severely constrained financial resources. The cost of housing homeless families this year has gone up to £90 million – £30 million more than what was available and in light of this, we are taking prudent steps to address this year's significant budget gap.

More challenging decisions and deeper savings will be necessary to maintain financial stability, so that we can continue to provide the vital services Lambeth's most vulnerable residents rely on. If we fail to make these decisions now, we risk worsening our financial position, which could lead to the need for even more drastic measures.

Despite this stark financial situation, the council remains steadfast in its commitment to improving homelessness services where possible, through a people-centred approach, focusing on prevention and early intervention. Collaborating with partners, including London Councils, Lambeth will continue to call for improved government funding to support efforts to tackle homelessness and ensure fair housing access for all residents within and outside the borough.

Councillor Danny Adilypour,

Deputy Leader of Lambeth Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, Investment and New Homes

Executive Summary

Lambeth's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (the strategy) sets out our priorities to prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping. Our Borough Plan, Lambeth 2030 sets out our key ambitions, including ensuring that Lambeth is a place we can all call home. This aim is confirmed in our Housing Strategy 2024–30.

The golden thread in the Borough Plan is the aim that Lambeth is a borough of equity and justice - housing is central to this ambition. Homelessness and rough sleeping disproportionately impact on people who are affected by structural inequalities. This strategy recognises the important contribution which an effective approach to tackling homelessness can make towards reducing inequality, by preventing homelessness, supporting people who are homeless and offering a better customer experience, taking an empathetic and human centred approach. It also stresses the key role of working in partnership and early intervention to address the wide range of issues that can be linked to homelessness.

The other thread that runs through this strategy is financial, recognising the unprecedented fiscal pressures being faced. It is essential we reduce the overspend on temporary accommodation and manage within budget.

Our Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Ensuring there is suitable accommodation for homeless people to move to

Priority 2: To ensure that rough sleeping is prevented where possible and that when it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurrent

Priority 3: Working together to prevent homelessness

Priority 4: Improve the quality of homelessness data

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy every five years. Lambeth's current homelessness strategy was agreed in December 2019, running until December 2024.

The development of this strategy has been informed by the Lambeth [Homelessness Review](#) which we completed in July 2024.

The Homelessness Review includes detailed information on the current and likely future levels of homelessness in Lambeth. It provides a comprehensive overview of key issues relating to homelessness and rough sleeping including the following:

- Overview of the council's legal duties
- Local, Regional and National Context including local priorities in the Borough Plan 2030 and our Housing Strategy 2024–30
- Lambeth state of the borough including demographic, housing tenure, housing market information
- The Homelessness Service at Lambeth including Homewards
- Temporary Accommodation and Causes of Homelessness
- Supported housing pathways
- Rough sleeping
- Working with Partners

This list is not comprehensive and further detail is in the full length Homelessness Review.

Following on from the findings of the Review, this strategy sets out Lambeth's approach to preventing homelessness and tackling rough sleeping over the next five years to 2030.

Key Stats

4.8%

The last census in March 2021 showed that in the last 10 years, Lambeth's population had grown by 4.8% to 317,654. Lambeth is the 4th most densely populated borough in England and Wales.

17.6%

In 2021, there were 27,260 people aged 65 years and over in Lambeth, up from 23,187 in 2011, representing a 17.6% increase.



Lambeth is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the UK. Lambeth is home to the 3rd largest Black / Black British community nationally and in London at 24% of the population.



Families in Lambeth are significantly more likely to experience deprivation than the national average.

1 in 5

18.97% of Lambeth households experience housing-related deprivation. This means nearly 1 in 5 households experience either a combination of overcrowding, living in a shared dwelling, or lacking central heating.



Housing is very expensive in Lambeth. In April 2024, the average property price in Lambeth was £512,463 compared to £501,880 in London and £298,229 in England.

£2,167

In June 2024, the average monthly private rent in Lambeth was £2,167, compared to £2,098 in London and £1,271 across Great Britain.

45,000

In April 2024 there were almost 45,000 households on the housing register.



10 years ago we had around 1,200 social housing lets per year - there has been a gradual decrease and last year there were just under 700 lets excluding transfers.



In March 2024 changes to the allocations scheme were approved including higher priority for households in TA and removal of Band D (to be phased in over 2024/25).

4,500

Overall the number of households in TA has increased from 2,500 in April 2019 to 4,500 in April 2024.



There's been more success at preventing homelessness rather than relieving it, emphasising the importance of early intervention. The total number of prevent and relief outcomes in 2023/24 was 2,336 of which over a third had successful outcomes.

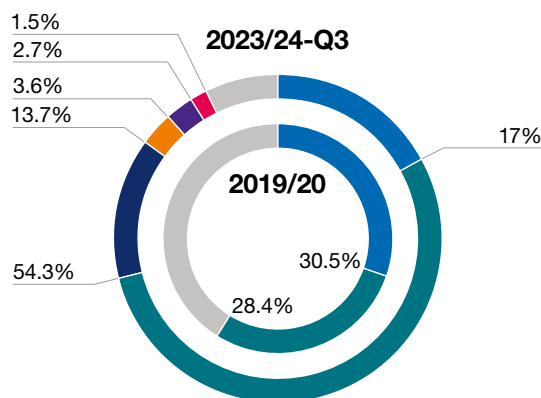


From 2020/21 to 2023/24, the number of advice cases opened increased from 4,214 to 6,102.



At the end of March 2024, there were two families in B&Bs for over six weeks.

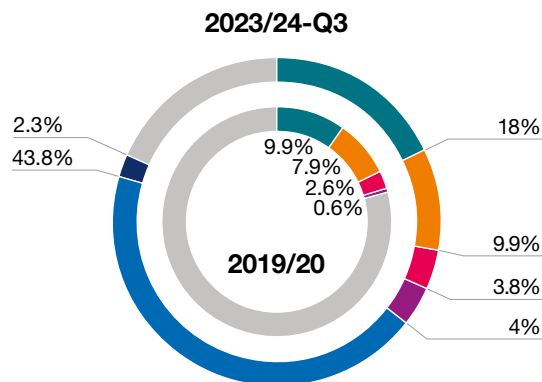
Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a prevention duty:



In 2019/20:

- 30.5% of cases were due to family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, compared to 17% in 2023/24-Q3
 - The end of private rented tenancy increased from 28.4% to 54.3%
- In 2023/24-Q3, other reasons include:
- End of social housing tenancy 13.7%
 - Domestic abuse 3.6%
 - Eviction from supported housing 2.7%
 - Other violence or harassment 1.5%
 - Other reason

Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a relief duty:



In 2019/20:

- The end of private rented tenancy was the reason for 9.9% of cases compared to 18% in 2023/24-Q3
- Domestic abuse as the reason increased from 7.9% to 9.9%
- Other violence or harassment from 2.6% to 3.8% of cases
- Where required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support increased from 0.6% to 4%

In 2023/24-Q3:

- Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate was the reason for 43.8% of cases
- Left institution with no accommodation available, accounted for 2.3% of cases
- Other reason

£14,000

At June 2024, three quarters of TA occupants are in 'nightly paid' accommodation – the average net cost to the council for each household in nightly paid accommodation is circa £14,000 per year

70%

of our households in TA in June 2024 were in a different local authority area, principally in neighbouring boroughs - up from 55% in 2019.



The majority of TA residents are from a Black background, this is disproportionate to the borough population overall and the total of other households on the housing register.



The majority of households in TA are families with children.

41.3%

of households owed a duty have support needs.



There were 331 households in TA in October 2024 where the main applicant was aged 60 years or older representing 6.9% of main applicants in TA.

60

There were 60 rough sleepers in Lambeth in March 2024 Over 80% of rough sleepers are male.

Priority 1: Ensuring there is suitable accommodation for homeless people to move to

In common with many other local authorities, Lambeth faces an acute housing crisis. Temporary Accommodation (TA) continues to be an option which is required to respond to housing need, so it's vital to ensure we can access a supply of quality TA. We want to reduce or avoid the time that people are in TA and key to this is maximising the supply of settled accommodation which is available for people to move to.

These two strands are reflected within Priority 1. Due to a lack of affordable TA, in common with other London councils, Lambeth is finding that the Inter-borough Temporary Accommodation Agreement (IBAA), which sets limits on what councils spend on TA, is increasingly being breached.

In 2024 the projected overspend for TA costs in Lambeth is estimated at £30m, placing significant financial pressure on the council. It is essential we reduce the overspend and manage the service within budgets.

Local authorities are under a “Best Value Duty” to secure value for money in all spending decisions. It is important that we support more people to move on from TA and where TA is needed, we want to ensure it is the required quality and financially sustainable.

Black households make up 24% of the borough population but 56% of households in TA. They are disproportionately much more likely to be affected by the negative impacts of homelessness than other ethnic groups. Increasing access to settled accommodation is key to our ambition to become a borough of equity and justice.

What's happened in the last five years

- The number of households in TA has increased from 2,500 in April 2019 to 4,500 in April 2024. Just under a third of those in TA are in Lambeth while the rest are in out of borough placements. Most are placed in expensive self-contained nightly booked accommodation sourced from private sector suppliers.
- We have pro-actively reviewed opportunities to boost the supply of financially sustainable TA, working with private sector landlords or other housing providers including those who provide specialist housing. We work in partnership with registered providers and support charities and will continue to seek out opportunities for joint initiatives and investment vehicles.
- We are considering options for TA and continue to do so, with the aim of minimising the use of nightly paid accommodation, increasing access to leased accommodation.
- We have made use of our own assets as meanwhile TA in areas undergoing redevelopment and we also manage our own hostel accommodation.

- We work with landlords to encourage an improved quality of TA, and stop using a property if landlords don't make the necessary improvements. Our Service Level Agreement with providers of nightly paid accommodation clearly sets out the expected standard.
 - We are part of the London-wide "Setting the Standard" programme which inspects and ensures the quality of certain types of TA. For larger properties we have a team of property inspectors who carry out inspections when disrepair is reported. Spot checks on property condition are carried out.
 - In 2024, we introduced a new transfer procedure for applicants who need to move within TA.
 - We asked Lord Kerslake to review how we were delivering affordable homes and are now implementing the recommendations as detailed in our Housing Strategy and New Homes Programme.
 - Work has been ongoing to ensure that when our properties become vacant, we work to bring them back into use and re-let in a timely manner.
- Council housing is a destination for only a small minority of housing applicants. It's important that we continue to work with other landlords to maximise the supply of good quality settled accommodation in other tenures, including the private rented and registered provider sectors.
 - We have introduced additional selective private sector licensing to drive up standards in the private rented sector.
 - We want to reduce the time which families and individuals spend in TA, and in 2024 we updated Lambeth's Allocations Policy so that households in TA now have a higher priority for rehousing.
 - Other updates to the Allocations Policy have included limiting the number of offers and restricting access to the housing register to ensure limited housing resources are directed to applicants in housing need.



Our goals: Priority 1 - Ensuring there is suitable accommodation for homelessness people to move to

Improve access to a supply of financially sustainable good quality and value for money TA. We will achieve this by:

- Recognising the need to source TA in more affordable locations including outside London
- Continuing to minimise the use of hotels and not having families in B+B accommodation for longer than six weeks
- Reduce our reliance on nightly paid accommodation and sourcing properties from private sector landlords on longer leases and less costly terms
- Property inspections and spot checks to ensure the quality of TA
- Ensure suitability of TA as set out in our Housing Placements Policy
- Making the most of options for ‘meanwhile’ TA in areas pending re-development, and other council assets
- Development and delivery of the homeless households procurement strategy which will set out our approach moving forward
- Maximising income from TA
- Keep residents well informed throughout the process. Communicating effectively and regularly should help reduce anxiety and stress for residents dealing with a very difficult time in their lives

Improve access to settled accommodation. We will achieve this by:

- Discharging our housing duty using suitable private rented sector properties
- More officers in post to support move on from TA
- Ensuring the suitability of settled accommodation as set out in our Housing Placements Policy
- Making the best use of our available stock, including specialist housing, looking at under occupation and using our allocation policy effectively
- Supporting the council’s commitment to making Lambeth an age-friendly borough, with the aim to support residents as they get older. Working with third sector led schemes such as Homefinders and Bridge Housing Solutions
- Working with partners to ensure access to housing e.g. via our pathways, working with specialist housing providers
- Reducing the number of empty homes across all tenures in Lambeth
- Supporting the development of new affordable homes including accessible homes
- Welcoming innovative projects from partners

Key measures of success:

- Reducing the proportion of TA which is nightly paid
- Reducing the overall average length of time in TA
- Increased number of households moving out of TA on an annual basis
- A reduction in the number of upheld complaints about TA accommodation

Priority 2: To ensure that rough sleeping is prevented where possible and that when it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurrent

The long-term physical and mental health impacts of sleeping rough are often significant. Where it occurs, we will take steps to ensure that these occurrences are rare, brief and not repeated.

In January 2024 Lambeth passed a motion to support the London Charter to End Rough Sleeping. [Home | London Charter \(endroughsleepinglondon.org.uk\)](https://www.endroughsleepinglondon.org.uk)

We will continue to work in partnership with commissioned and non-commissioned services to support rough sleepers away from the street as quickly as possible. Lambeth commission accommodation services for rough sleepers and single homeless people, via the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway, to the annual value of £4.5 million. This is a significant investment by the council and we are proud of this, however we are also reliant on grant funding to enhance services via initiatives such as the Mayor's Life Off the Streets programme and the Rough Sleeping Initiative grant funding from

the Ministry of housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The cost-of-living crisis has impacted on those at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping, exacerbating housing need and other vulnerabilities. People who are rough sleeping may have a complex range of needs, and we will continue to work with partners across the council and with external agencies, voluntary sector providers, service users, communities and statutory partners to provide access to specialist support.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 which came into force on 29 August 2023, is aiming to enhance the regulation of Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA) and Specified Accommodation (SA) which will help improve the standard of accommodation provided to former rough sleepers.

Although the Act uses the term 'Supported Exempt Accommodation', this Act covers all accommodation meeting the definition of 'Specified Accommodation' in Housing Benefit regulations.

The key provisions in the Act require the government to publish regulations or take other steps before these measures take effect.

There are four key elements of the Act:

1. National Supported Housing Standards: The Act enables the government to establish new standards specifically for SEA, aiming to ensure a consistent quality of accommodation and support services across the country.
2. Licensing Regulations: New licensing frameworks will be introduced to better regulate SEA, ensuring providers meet set criteria before offering supported housing.
3. Supported Housing Advisory Panel: The Act mandates the creation of a panel to advise on supported housing and contribute to the establishment of new standards.
4. "Intentional Homelessness" Adjustments: The Act includes changes to rules around "intentional homelessness" for individuals leaving non-compliant accommodation.

Local authorities will be required to conduct a review of SEA's, and this must include an assessment of the current SEA provision, and a forecast of the accommodation needs for the next five years. Following this review, authorities must then publish a Supported Housing Strategy, detailing their findings and all future plans. This will require initial investment to fund a response to this and will also provide opportunities and positive outcomes. We will work through the requirements as further information is released from MHCLG.

Simon (not his real name) had been bedded down in Waterloo under the railway arches near the IMAX which is one of Lambeth's rough sleeping hotspots.

He had previously rejected all offers of accommodation but by building a relationship of trust, our dedicated Waterloo outreach worker was able to support him into a hostel, help him replace personal identification documents which had been stolen during his time living on the streets and he is now working towards acquiring accommodation in the private rented sector.

What's happened in the last five years

- The Supported Housing team commission a rough sleeping outreach service who conduct shifts seven days per week and offer support to rough sleepers found in the borough. This includes those with restricted eligibility, to ensure individuals are supported to end their rough sleeping as quickly as possible.
- The outreach team access accommodation via the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway (VAP), which includes the Lambeth Assessment Centre, specialist hostels and shared supported housing schemes. The pathway accommodates rough sleepers and single homeless people with support needs around substance use, physical and mental health issues, and offending.
- We commission support to move on from the pathway to private rented accommodation from the Single Homeless Project's (SHP) move on service.
- The Supported Housing Commissioning team secured over £6 million from the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative for 2022–2025 to provide interventions including emergency

accommodation (hotel, spot purchased hostel spaces and a night shelter); training and employment support; specialist workers including in mental health, and a prison release navigator.

- Using funding from MHCLG and the GLA, we have two Housing First projects for rough sleepers and single homeless people with support needs. The first project launched in 2021 with ten Lambeth housing units and support from St Mungo's, and the second project (2024–26) includes 37 Lambeth housing units.
- The Supported Housing Commissioning team and Substance Use Commissioning team secured Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG) provided by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to support rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping, to access substance misuse treatment and health services.
- Lambeth also provides several accommodation options for rough sleepers with restricted eligibility. This includes night shelter provision, which supports people to access education, training and employment opportunities, private rented sector accommodation and immigration advice where appropriate.

Our goals: Priority 2 - To ensure that rough sleeping is prevented where possible and that when it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurrent

Support people off the streets and into independent living. We will achieve this by:

- Recommissioning the rough sleeping outreach service to ensure we can respond effectively to the changing needs of the borough
- Recommission the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway services to ensure all provision can respond to the changing needs of the borough
- Ensure robust and clear pathways and processes exist to support individuals away from the street
- Work in partnership with other London boroughs to support with complex cases of rough sleeping
- Explore reciprocal arrangements where appropriate
- Work with partners across the council and externally to seek or extend grant funding to bolster existing services that support rough sleepers
- Continuing to work in partnership with commissioned and non-commissioned services to support rough sleepers and enable them to move away from the street

Improve rough sleepers' lives. We will achieve this by:

- Ensure that all rough sleepers are supported to access the requisite ID and benefits to help them to access services
- Ensure rough sleepers are referred to supported accommodation where required
- Ensure that the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers is a priority for all services
- Ensure that education, training and employment opportunities are available to rough sleepers
- Work with partners to ensure the provision of housing options and support which is tailored to the needs of the individual and empathetic
- Ensure that people are supported to move forward in their lives and offered help to move out of supported accommodation into independent accommodation

Key measures of success:

- Reduction in the number of people sleeping rough and the incidents of repeat rough sleeping
- Number of rough sleepers accessing support via the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway
- Number of rough sleepers supported into settled accommodation
- Number of people moving out of the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway into independent accommodation
- Grant funding secured

Priority 3: Working together to prevent homelessness

Working together has a holistic approach at its core. It can mean supporting households to remain in their homes or helping them to find alternative accommodation. It can also entail working in partnership across the council to respond to homelessness, with the voluntary sector, and other housing providers or landlords to prevent homelessness or help sustain tenancies. Tackling the wider root causes of homelessness such as poverty, unemployment and health problems is a key part of any solution. We also want to ensure that our approach is informed by listening to the lived experience of people affected by homelessness.

Early intervention can play a key role in preventing homelessness. As well as access via on-line services, we will look at providing more in-person contact in future where appropriate. A person-centred approach also entails housing services such as the Homeless Prevention or Housing Support teams working closely across the council and with external partners to ensure residents can access the support they need at the right time.

We will ensure that residents are provided with tailored advice and information to empower them to make informed decisions about their housing options. We will make best use of digital and on-line resources to ensure residents have clear information about the available housing options including information about our statutory obligations, and advice for people who are not in priority need.

Where applicable, we will signpost to other agencies or teams for advice or support. This can include referral to teams such as Every Pound Counts for advice on benefits including discretionary housing benefit, support from the Homelessness Prevention Fund, and working closely with housing management or other landlords to support residents to sustain their tenancies.

Residents with health problems requiring adult social care intervention and who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness are likely to benefit from a needs assessment. A joined-up approach with Adult Social Care and housing may minimise the risk of homeless with early intervention.

Our Housing Strategy and Lambeth's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2028 recognises that housing is one of the wider determinants of health which impact on people's health and wellbeing. Poor health can be both a cause and a consequence of homelessness¹. A holistic approach to preventing homelessness can include linking in with services including primary care, social prescribers, mental health and substance misuse services, hospital discharge, financial wellbeing and support for people to remain in their homes.

The Public Health team support people experiencing homelessness in Lambeth through a number of projects, including residents engaging with substance misuse services and sexual health services.

¹ UK Government (2019) Homelessness: applying All Our Health, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-applying-all-our-health/homelessness-applying-all-our-health>



We use Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Team Grant to fund the Integrated Health Network which is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary group that works closely together from South London and Maudsley (SLaM), Thames Reach, Groundswell and Guy's and St Thomas' (GSTT).

Regarding sexual health services, people experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping will be supported by the newly commissioned sexual health outreach services. As well as providing support through, for example, sexual and reproductive health interventions and 1:1 support, the service will also support street outreach teams and the provision of grant funding to grassroots organisations supporting this population.

Public Health and Housing teams work in partnership on a number of areas including the Lambeth Housing Partnership Health workstream, which seeks to integrate and coordinate health services and projects and housing workstreams.

Our Vulnerable Adults' Pathway and Young Person's Pathway both have partnership working at their core, ensuring that the services within the pathways work collaboratively to provide tailored person-centred support for vulnerable adults and young people who are homeless.

The Vulnerable Adults' Pathway is an accommodation pathway which includes the Lambeth Assessment Centre, specialist hostels and shared supported housing schemes. It accommodates rough sleepers and single homeless people with support needs around substance use, physical and mental health issues, and offending.

The Young Person's Pathway, "Routes to Independence" was co-produced with our young people and launched in 2023. It provides housing-related support for 16+ year old young people including those who have been homeless, children looked after and care leavers including unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. It brings together service providers and key stakeholders including Housing Needs; Children's Social Care; National Probation Service; Youth Justice Service; Health.

The Routes to Independence Pathway has been designed with clear emphasis on preventing youth homelessness, with services including an Early Identification and Intervention Service which works with schools and other youth settings to identify children and young people aged 11+ who would be at risk of homelessness at 16 years, and to intervene earlier. We have a Family Floating Support and Mediation Service; Housing First;

Tenancy Support; and Floating Support. We also recognise that “hidden homelessness” and “sofa surfing” may particularly affect young people under 25 and those who identify as LGBTQ+, and we are working in partnership with specialist organisations to ensure housing support is available for this group.

Poor mental health is a significant cause of and consequence of homelessness. We have a Living Well Network Alliance which supports people in Lambeth who are experiencing mental illness or distress. This partnership receives referrals from partners including housing to make sure we have the right mental health support in place and prevent tenancy breakdown where possible.

There is a Mental Health Pathway for people where we have a statutory duty under the Care Act and Mental Health Act where there is an identified care need and we decide the best way to meet the need is to place someone in accommodation. We have 360 units in our mental health pathway spread across the borough. There is a range of options available including some with support on-site 24/7.

Lambeth will continue to make the most of options to tackle homelessness, tackling housing insecurity in all tenures and in all parts of our borough. We will work in partnership with residents and service users.

We will seek funding which is aimed at preventing and responding to homelessness in collaboration with partners. We work with partners including London Councils and the Local Government Association to effectively lobby central government to deliver our local asks to end homelessness.

Homewards is a five-year locally led programme, created by The Royal Foundation, that aims to demonstrate that it is possible to end homelessness, making it rare, brief, and unrepeatable. In 2023 Lambeth became one of six Homeward locations, aiming to build coalitions of committed people and organisations at a local and national level, to try new things to prevent homelessness. Each of the Coalitions in the six Homewards flagship locations have created a Local Action Plan. This plan will be reviewed and will adapt and change according to the needs of the locations. For Homewards Lambeth, the following has been set out: the initial groups of people that the local Coalition will support (lone female parents in TA); the actions to be taken by organisations in the local Coalition over the next 12 months and beyond; the success indicators. Homewards is focused on adding value around existing activity in Lambeth, and the approach aligns with that set out in this strategy.

What’s happened in the last five years

- Lambeth entered a new partnership with The Royal Foundation, as part of the five-year locally-led Homewards project.
- Housing moved to become part of a joint Housing and Adult Social Care directorate.
- The homelessness prevention team work with applicants, families and friends, and landlords, providing advice and support to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies where appropriate.
- We work with partners to ensure residents can access advice on benefits, financial assistance, employment and training, and support with the cost of living and energy costs.
- The council has provided direct support to help residents in need minimise their costs, maximise their incomes and build their financial resilience through Cost of Living Response Plans. The plans included reducing the energy bills of the council’s most vulnerable tenants, support to help residents in the private rented sector to maintain their accommodation and targeted prevention campaigns utilising council data.

- The Vulnerable Adults Pathway entails working closely across council directorates, and with external partners such as those providing specialist support with substance abuse or providing supported housing.
- We work in close collaboration with hospital discharge to ensure the right support is in place when people are moving.
- We secured £719,500 funding for the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme (AfEO). Under the programme, we work with partners to support ex-offenders who might otherwise become homeless.
- We undertook a needs assessment to review the needs of all young people who require housing-related support and commissioned a new joint Children's Social Care and Housing pathway, "Routes to Independence". Our pathway brings together housing-related and other services to support young homeless people, focusing on prevention, assessment of need, being psychologically informed, mental health interventions, housing support and move-on support. The pathway was a winner at the London Homelessness Awards in 2024.
- The Housing Protocol for Care Leavers has been updated and includes direct offers of accommodation.
- We work collaboratively with partners to prevent and tackle domestic abuse, and fund the Sanctuary Scheme, delivered by the Gaia Centre which provides specialist support for victims and survivors of abuse. We have been working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA).
- We have set-up an innovative pilot housing-related support service for young males involved in gangs, with a consortium of providers – Depaul, St Giles, MAC-UK, Juvenis.
- As a Borough of Sanctuary, we are committed to supporting people seeking refuge. We work with the Sanctuary Services Team to provide equitable access to services and housing options support to asylum-seekers.
- Housing staff attend a range of key multi-agency groups such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which coordinates risk management options for victims and survivors assessed as being at highest risk due to domestic abuse.
- We regularly meet with key partners such as the Lambeth Housing Partnership – this partnership with Lambeth housing associations is now well established and has been cited as an example of good practice.



Our goals: Priority 3 - Working together to prevent homelessness

Working together to deliver effective prevention

We will achieve this by:

- Early intervention - at the prevention stage rather than relief stage. Taking a prevention first approach is the most cost effective way to deal with homelessness
- Raising awareness of prevention services, including clear information on our website – the right advice at the right time
- Supporting people to remain in their home or sustain their tenancy by working with friends and families, housing services, private landlords and other housing providers
- Working with partners to ensure access to specialist support agencies, including support for those experiencing domestic abuse
- Signposting or referral to agencies for advice and support on financial wellbeing, benefits, arrears, and tenancy issues e.g. via Lambeth's cost of living advice webpages and Every Pound Counts
- Working together with Adults and Children's Services to identify any safeguarding concerns
- Delivering the Lambeth Borough of Sanctuary strategy

- Support the development and delivery of the Homewards Action Plan
- Support the development and delivery of a borough-wide action plan to reduce the impact and incidences of poverty in the borough
- Delivering training, education and employment pathways
- Delivering the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, supporting people to lead healthy lives and have good physical and mental wellbeing
- Learning and implementing into policy national advice and findings including from government guidance, domestic homicide / child safeguarding practice reviews and the housing and local government and social care ombudsman
- Embedding the Routes to Independence Pathway through whole systems change work to ensure partners work collaboratively to prevent and relieve youth homelessness

Work together to respond to homelessness.

We will achieve this by:

- Working towards better relief outcomes by supporting families who are already homeless to access good quality settled accommodation
- Deliver the Vulnerable Adults' and Young Person's Pathways, working collaboratively and ensuring a person-centred approach
- Strengthening links with health and other agencies to ensure a holistic approach which recognises the link between homelessness and poor health
- Working closely with Adults and Children's Services to ensure support is in place for residents
- In line with our Safer Lambeth Partnership Strategy 2023–30, we will continue to work with partners to support those affected by domestic abuse or violence. This may involve working with partners such as the Gaia Centre to support those affected by domestic abuse, and working with the police, neighbourhood services and Children's Services to support young people affected by violence

- Working with the voluntary, community sector (VCS), police and statutory sector who can have an important role supporting people who experience homelessness
- We will continue to seek funding opportunities for initiatives aimed at homelessness prevention and supporting people who are homeless, working collaboratively with partners in and outside the council
- Maximising online resources for those able to access them, complementing rather than replacing services
- Making sure staff are trained to provide the best customer experience possible in the circumstance

Key measures of success:

- Proportion of prevention and relief cases which have a successful outcome
- Increasing the proportion of cases seen at prevention stage rather than relief
- Homelessness Forum established and working effectively
- Achieving Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation
- Publication of a supported housing needs assessment and strategy.

Priority 4: Improving homelessness data

The review has confirmed that we need to improve the quality of the data which we collect about our homelessness service – new, existing and predictive. The collection of accurate data is important in terms of our service provision and with particular regard to issues around vulnerability.

It has a vital role in ensuring we have a robust evidence base which will enable the council to access funding for our prevention and homelessness services, which will benefit our residents.

What's happened in the last five years

- In 2022, we transferred our homelessness data to the system used by our other housing functions.
- The new housing needs module was set up.
- We are submitting the quarterly Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) statistical return, though there is still work to do. The return includes information about statutory homelessness cases and our activities within the legislative framework.
- Lambeth's commissioned outreach team, use the London wide CHAIN database to record important information relating to rough sleepers. This is monitored by the Supported Housing Commissioning team to ensure that data is being collected as robustly as possible, and targets are being achieved. The data also allows the council to monitor any changes or trends that emerge and then implement appropriate responses.
- To raise the standards of existing TA, we are introducing software which will record safety compliance information for properties.
- We contribute to a wide range of data reporting on homelessness issues led by London Councils.



Our goals: Priority 4 - Improve Homelessness Data

Improving homelessness data. We will achieve this by:

- Further improvement of the homelessness and allocations modules to ensure information can be recorded accurately and comprehensively.
- Training on the data system for housing staff to ensure accuracy when information is being recorded.
- Data cleansing and complete working on specific reports to improve accuracy.
- Reports more aligned to business needs.
- We will continue to work with the IT team to ensure the data fits with statutory and in-house requirements.
- Submitting accurate and complete returns to government.
- Data analytics supports corporate strategic planning and improved service outcomes with more targeted interventions.
- Referrals made under the Duty to Refer are made formally and properly recorded.

Key measures of success:

- H-CLIC return is consistently RAG-rated green.
- Reports with homelessness data accurately recorded.

Our asks from government

Our efforts to tackle the issues outlined in this document have been significantly challenged by financial strains including, most significantly, 14 years of government underfunding.



The housing crisis is a tragedy for so many families in Lambeth who deserve a permanent home. Sadly, the scale of the demand in boroughs like Lambeth makes that impossible for many.

It isn't sustainable for those families, or for councils like Lambeth, for this huge demand to fall on a small number of local areas and we need a national solution to this crisis that supports families and puts councils on a sustainable footing. Without action, the scale of our overspend in temporary accommodation means we'll need to consider even more drastic savings in other services, services that many people value and rely on.

We continue to lobby government for changes that are required to deliver this strategy effectively.

Our asks:

- **Address the housing crisis.** Rapid increases in the cost of rents and other living costs has created a crisis for thousands of families who cannot access good quality and affordable housing. The long term solution has to be more homes, and we desperately need proper investment in new, genuinely affordable housing, so there are decent options for families facing homelessness.

- **Properly fund temporary accommodation.** Update the funding that councils can claim from government to meet temporary accommodation costs which has been frozen at 2011 levels despite housing being significantly more expensive.
- Provide **long term certainty** on funding arrangements so we can plan properly.
- **Increase early interventions.** The key to reducing homelessness is funding and joining up comprehensive services to identify individuals and households that risk losing their home. Once they have lost their home it is complex and costly to re-establish their household. The government needs to adequately resource these early interventions.