



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2022-27

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Introduction

The council has produced this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy in collaboration with partners, agencies and council colleagues. Focusing on identified themes, it has brought together a breadth of knowledge and expertise to focus on developing plans and introducing interventions for reducing and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping across Kingston.

Homelessness affects many households across Kingston; mainly families who have accommodation, sometimes shared with another family and have been unable to continue to live there due to their individual circumstances. This may be due to financial hardship, unemployment, being asked to leave shared accommodation or relationship breakdowns. Commonly, many families find themselves homeless when their landlord wants to sell the property a family is renting, forcing them to leave their home.

Rough sleeping is defined usually as people, mainly individuals who live and sleep on the street. Their circumstances are often chaotic due to mental health, drug and alcohol issues, although not all rough sleepers have any of these issues. We know during Covid 19 that many people found themselves living on the street as businesses closed and some people were forced out of work and the homes they lived in.

The strategy was developed during the Covid 19 pandemic, since when we have transformed our services for homeless households and rough sleepers. We have risen to the challenge placed upon us to ensure there was a swift and effective response to find accommodation for rough sleepers and to continue to provide services for households threatened with homelessness. The strategy will respond to these challenges and will also allow for innovative ways of working to support those who are most vulnerable to homelessness and rough sleeping across Kingston.

Kingston's Corporate Plan and objectives.

The Council's vision for the borough for 2019 - 2023 :

Kingston will be a vibrant, diverse and inclusive borough, where residents are active, empowered, engaged and able to remain independent and resilient.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will align itself to the vision and objectives of the Corporate Plan. This will ensure that the strategy is informed by and driven by the expected outcomes of the Corporate Plan and contributes to its delivery.

Mayor of London, London Housing Strategy

The London Housing Strategy offers a range of proposals to prevent and address homelessness as well as reducing rough sleeping. The proposals set out for homelessness and rough sleeping within the Mayor's strategy offers funding to make homes available for homeless people, particularly the need for more affordable housing.

The GLA Rough Sleeping Plan of Action offers new approaches to tackling rough sleeping in London, including working with partners to better identify rough sleepers and intervene more rapidly, providing specialist support for particular groups to help rough sleepers stay off the streets. Improving the provision of accommodation for rough sleepers is a key objective within the strategy.

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Kingston will ensure this strategy is aligned to the Mayor's objectives for supporting homelessness and rough sleeping across Kingston.

Homeless Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, with key priorities which include;

- An extension to the period of 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days.
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need.
- A new 'duty to refer' - public services will need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

A comprehensive review of the council's homelessness service was also undertaken in 2018/19 which examined how homelessness prevention services were delivered. An improvement plan was implemented to strengthen areas of the service to respond to the new duties within the Act.

Challenges

Delivering this strategy will be a key priority for the council and will need to do so against a backdrop of local and national challenges. These are;

- The roll out of Universal Credit which has impacted significantly and increased the likelihood of homelessness for families and individuals in receipt of the housing element of this benefit.
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels which have been frozen and is a challenge for individuals on a low income who rent privately. This has an effect on the numbers of affordable properties available in the borough and limits the council's ability to negotiate with private landlords who seek to charge rents at a local market value.
- A reduction in Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in Kingston which would otherwise help to support struggling and vulnerable families. The council's DHP funds made available by central government have significantly reduced from £452k in 2021/22 to £315k in 2022/23. 1% of the national budget has been held back until the autumn of 2022 for distribution but this is only likely to result in a few thousand pounds in additional funding, if any.
- A lack of social rented housing across the borough against a backdrop of increasing demand for affordable homes.
- A challenging and expensive private housing market which makes it difficult for households to access housing due to the high costs, either for rent or purchase
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which this strategy will ensure responds to the expectations of local authorities in supporting victims and meets the requirements of the new legislation
- The cost of living crisis and the impact this will have on families being able to meet rising living costs and afford to pay for daily essentials and meeting their rent or mortgage payments

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Some of these challenges will also be addressed through the council's Interim Housing Strategy, 2022-25 and will align the priorities of both strategies, so there is a clear understanding of how the council will achieve its ambitions.

Developing the Kingston Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy

Our vision is;

To prevent and aim to end homelessness and rough sleeping in Kingston

We have an ambitious vision to prevent and aim to end homelessness and rough sleeping. This is clearly aligned to our corporate priorities and wider pan - London and government targets. To be able to achieve this, we are heavily reliant on continued funding from the government and from the various rounds of funding we have to bid for. We received over £1.6m Homeless Prevention Grant for 2022/23 , Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding of spread over four years until 2024/25, Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for 2021/22 of £1.22m and £2.82m for the 3 year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25 . In addition, £350k was awarded from Public Health England for rough sleeper drug and alcohol interventions.

This funding is essential to provide services to support and accommodate rough sleepers and homeless families. It does not meet all the costs the council incurs and we have to use General Fund contributions to meet these costs. As an example, the increase in temporary accommodation costs for the council in an expensive housing market in Kingston does place a huge pressure on the services we are able to offer. This strategy therefore aims to continue to provide these services to some of the most very vulnerable people in Kingston, and does so in the expectation of future funding being available.

Our strategy has been developed and informed around themes which colleagues, partners and agencies helped to identify. These are seen as key issues which impact people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, including rough sleepers. We have identified some specific challenges which people face and which increase the threat of homelessness and rough sleeping. Our strategy will aim to put in place interventions and support to reduce the impact of these issues. Our identified themes included;

- Prevention of homelessness
- Support for people who are homeless
- Provision of accommodation
- Rough sleeping
- Money issues and welfare benefits
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Domestic abuse
- Disability, including mental health

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These were identified as contributing factors which can lead to a complexity of issues for homeless people or those threatened with homelessness or rough sleeping, for example, the impact of homelessness on families mental health and children's educational attainment. While we aim to prevent homelessness happening in Kingston, we will develop and implement new ways of working with our partners and agencies, so that we are able to offer the very best help, support and solutions for homeless people.

The council's priorities for homelessness

The strategy will implement the following five priorities;

- How we can prevent homelessness and help people who are homeless
- How we will support people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- How we use temporary accommodation for homeless households
- Providing permanent homes for homeless households
- Working effectively with our partners to prevent and aim to end homelessness

Priority 1

How we can prevent homelessness and help people who are homeless

The Council received £1,619.025 in Homeless Prevention Grant for 2022/23, which is ringfenced funding to reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention and reduce the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families.

With increasing homelessness across Kingston, homelessness prevention will be a key focus of everything we do. Addressing the factors that can lead to homelessness; the ending of private tenancies, relationship breakdowns, domestic abuse, unemployment, financial hardship or leaving institutions will be amongst our priorities. The impact of wider social issues such as poverty and disadvantage, poor health and wellbeing and lack of access to affordable homes all impact negatively and increase the likelihood of homelessness.

As a Prevention Trailblazer in 2018 ¹we introduced early interventions to prevent 172 families from becoming homeless. In 2020/21, the Housing Options service, including those through our partners, achieved 582 preventions and in 2021/22 this rose to 836.

Our service improvement plan for 2022/23 has a focus on helping to prevent households from becoming homeless, including recurring homelessness and those households caught in a spiral of debt and poverty. The Housing Options service had great success in 2020/21 with negotiating with landlords and hosts to retain occupation of accommodation. During 2020/21, 52 cases were recorded as having this prevention method, an increase from 22 cases the previous year. The impact of Covid 19 and the subsequent restrictions on notice periods and suspension of evictions has helped with these negotiations. However in 2021/22 this reduced significantly to 14 cases as the market reverted to pre-Covid behaviours.

During 2020/21 the Housing Options service reported that 32 households resolved their own housing needs having received direct advice and support from Options staff, without recourse to other options such as the Homelessness Prevention Fund. This perhaps points towards a shift in households taking responsibility to resolve their housing with advice and support and less reliance on social housing provision. The 2021/22 figures report that a further 29 households resolved their housing need by the same method.

The Housing Options service offers prevention fund loans to cover rent and deposit requirements for households to secure a letting in the private sector. In the 2020/21 period, 41 households were assisted through this method. In 2021/22, 25 households were assisted as the private rented market emerged from the pandemic.

Other prevention work includes signposting to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to maximise benefit entitlements for rent and advising on legal action to maintain rights to accommodation. This is also complemented by the work of the Welfare Reform Team. The team works with households

¹ Royal Borough of Kingston Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer
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impacted negatively by changes in their benefits and proactively supports adults back to work and training, encouraging financial empowerment to support the prevention of homelessness. The team works with partner agencies and council departments to facilitate information sharing and case management, to assist in preventing households from becoming homeless.

Our support services work across all tenures in Kingston. The Resettlement Team works with vulnerable people to sustain their tenancies and keep them in their own homes. The Older and Vulnerable People's team supports clients over the age of 55 years to sustain their homes, to reduce isolation and loneliness.

KCAH as partners to the council, also contributed to homeless prevention and achieved 113 preventions in the first 6 months of 2019-20. In 2020/21, the preventions were 58 and for 2021/22 were 56. These included securing temporary accommodation, securing settled accommodation for more than 6 months, income maximisation and reduced debt and retaining existing homes for more than 6 months.

The Tenant Finder Service (TFS) is used to source private rented properties, which are offered to households in order to prevent homelessness or to discharge full homelessness duty as a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO). The Council provides a free lettings service to landlords, a cash incentive, pays rent in advance and provides a paid deposit (or deposit guarantee) for tenants. The tenant repays the Council over the course of the tenancy. The TFS team supports landlords and tenants throughout the tenancy. Tenant Finder Plus is an enhanced version of TFS to deliver a Private Rented Sector Offer for the purposes of discharging duty, with increased incentives depending on property facilities.

Our Tenant Finder Service supports the ethos of prevention as early as possible and the value in the prevention and relief stages of homelessness is key to homeless prevention. We offer additional support to families through the Tenant Finder Service, which offers a rent deposit scheme to prevent homelessness and successfully accommodates nearly 400 families across private sector properties in Kingston. The Tenant Finder Service accounted for 24 preventions in 2021-22, providing the same number of prevention lettings as in 2020-21.

We implemented our Prevention Action Plan in November 2020 to continue to build on the existing work currently undertaken, recognising at the time the impact of Covid 19 on many families across Kingston. The number of households in emergency accommodation and placements in temporary accommodation increased rapidly with numbers of households in nightly paid emergency accommodation rising to 279 by March 2022.

We have introduced closer monitoring on prevention activity at an early stage and have set targets to increase the prevention performance. We are also improving advice and information for customers at an early stage in their journey and have targeted improving our relationships with partners, who can support the prevention of homelessness. These will include Citizens Advice Kingston and health and social care partners who deal with vulnerable families and individuals.

We recognise that we can do more to introduce measures to support our prevention activities, particularly around money and financial assistance to families and individuals with money and debt problems. We will explore options to offer advice to include all tenures, to ensure there is support and advice to families who are struggling financially to sustain tenancies and to offer easier access to

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the Homelessness Prevention Fund. We will also develop solutions which will ensure effective interventions at an early stage, offering clear information and advice with positive outcomes for those who are homeless or may face homelessness. We will also revisit our prevention targets and measures to more closely align with the expectations of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which has a strong focus on homeless prevention outcomes.

Our objectives to improve prevention

- Develop our approach to financial assessments, debt and money advice
- Strengthen upstream prevention methods by working closely with other agencies to create awareness of housing problems and potential home loss at an early stage
- Ensure partner agencies and organisations meet their duty to refer under the Homeless Reduction Act
- Develop the use of Connected Kingston to detect homelessness as early as possible and refer to other services for support, advice and assistance
- Develop advice and information to be readily available, particularly for vulnerable groups such as care leavers, Armed Forces Veterans, domestic violence victims, drug and alcohol abusers and people suffering from mental health problems identified as being at risk of homelessness.

Priority 2

How we will support people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

There are many people across Kingston who are threatened with homelessness because of their circumstances and who will require access to a range of support services. Recognising the different and often complex needs of individuals and families is a challenge but must be tackled to ensure there is effective support alongside our prevention approach to homelessness, e.g. tenancy support and sustainment. Support may also be available from other agencies and partners, working across Kingston. Our strategy will ensure we are engaged with partners who can contribute to supporting Kingston residents, threatened with homelessness.

- Drug, alcohol and mental health issues

Housing and support needs of specific groups, such as people with a mental health issue or with a learning difficulty, needs clearer understanding. We also need to engage with the various support providers effectively, so that households who need vital support have access to services and these channels for support can be easily understood. We want to ensure that our partnerships are effective and there are clear outcomes for customers who need support.

Access to appropriate and timely drug, alcohol and mental health treatments can play a vital role in moving people away from homelessness and into long term recovery. Some people find it difficult to access and engage with mainstream health services, particularly primary care services (GPs) and as a result, health problems may not be addressed. Accessing health services can often be in an unplanned way and reactive interventions are often costly, leading to repeated service access. We will develop improved access to services and support, so that people with mental health issues can be referred easily to Kingston Wellbeing Service or other agencies such as MIND and Kingston RISE, supporting drug and alcohol recovery. We will work together with partner agencies to overcome the issues linked to the overlap between mental health and addiction issues (potential and actual dual diagnosis issues).

- Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse has the highest repeat incidence rate of any crime and those affected may suffer long lasting and life changing impact. While domestic abuse occurs across all areas of society, a range of factors impact on an individual's likelihood of experiencing this violence and abuse, as well as on their barriers to accessing support. All too often, children are in the home and living with the impact of this abuse.

Domestic abuse remains a cause of homelessness in Kingston, with survivors of domestic abuse presenting and being accepted as homeless. The prevention of homelessness is a key message of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and this forms part of the wider package of support that is available from colleagues and partners to help assist those experiencing abuse. As part of the wider package of support offered by the Council and partners, the service is working with partners to help those experiencing abuse better understand the housing options available to them so that they can take an informed approach to help them prevent domestic abuse and associated homelessness

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From 5 July 2021, a person who is homeless as a result of domestic abuse automatically has a priority need. The abuse must meet the definition in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This applies to local authority decisions made on or after 5 July 2021. A person who leaves their home because of domestic violence can apply for homelessness assistance from the local authority and cannot be treated as intentionally homeless. As a result of this legislation, Kingston has dealt with 45 households fleeing domestic abuse from 1st July 2021 to June 2022.

Working with colleagues and partners, we need to offer support and advice, intervene earlier where we have knowledge of abuse and prevent domestic abuse and associated homelessness. We want to work with partners to encourage earlier reporting of domestic abuse and early, achievable interventions to prevent it. The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the implications for homelessness will be a priority within this Strategy.

- Young people

Young people can be disadvantaged by the combined impact of high rents, low incomes, welfare reform and limited housing options. Some young people may also have complex needs, with a range of support needs including drug, alcohol and mental health issues and may lack the skills to live independently or build relationships.

We also acknowledge that many young people are carers and need support and help to undertake their caring responsibilities and to manage these to sustain the homes they live in with their families.

- Older people

Kingston has a growing elderly population dependent on services, provided by the council and our partners, to sustain their homes and to increase housing and care choices for older people. The Older and Vulnerable Peoples(OVP) support service offers housing support across all tenures. They support people to maintain their independence in the community by helping them to engage with services depending on individual needs and circumstances. OVP work closely with Occupational Therapy to access Disabled Facilities Grants and liaise with Adult Social Care to provide aids and adaptations to support older people to continue to live independently at home.

- Tenancy sustainment support

The Resettlement Team works with vulnerable people across all tenures to sustain their tenancies and support them to remain in their own homes, accessing preventative and support services. A multi-agency effort to support them during the tenancy includes working with colleagues across the council in social services, housing and housing benefits.

Developing our floating support provision, including households in nightly paid and temporary accommodation, could also benefit from improved information and advice about accessing a range of support services. Support will be extended to include offering help to access to education, training and employment services to enhance the independence of homeless families and individuals.

Our objectives to support people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

We will;

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- review the data we collect to identify trends and possible gaps in service delivery and use this information to adapt our services in order to reduce disadvantage and prevent homelessness
- work together with partner agencies to overcome the issues linked to the overlap between mental health and addiction issues (potential and actual dual diagnosis issues).
- ensure that homelessness services and the support services we offer are accessible and effective for all residents and are appropriate for groups in the community who may be disproportionately vulnerable to homelessness.
- implement the outcomes for housing services arising from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to support domestic abuse survivors
- work with people who have experience of homelessness to offer a more personalised, inclusive approach to the overall quality of the services provided.

Priority 3

Use of temporary accommodation

The council comprehensively reviewed the use of temporary accommodation in April 2020.

²Temporary accommodation for homeless households are sourced from a variety of options which include;

- The Private Leasing Scheme (PLS)
- Nightly paid provision
- Kingston Council's four Hostels and YMCA provision

The private rented sector across Kingston forms 22.4% of the total housing market. This section of the market provides the majority of temporary accommodation supply of properties for homeless households. Rents for private rented sector properties in Kingston vary greatly across the borough, depending on the size, type and location of the property. In providing homes as temporary accommodation Local Authorities may only charge a rent up to 90% of the Local Housing Allowance applicable to rented homes in January 2011. This does not take into account current levels of Local Housing allowance or the rise in rental costs in the wider private market since 2011 in a very competitive rental market.

In essence, affordable accommodation is in short supply in Kingston, leading to a high use of temporary accommodation in the borough and some out of borough placements. Customers are placed in temporary accommodation through the council's Private Leasing Scheme until a permanent sustainable home is sourced. In March 2020, there were 862 households in temporary accommodation across Kingston and in out of borough placements which rose to over 904 families by March 2022. At present the main exit route for customers in temporary accommodation is into social housing. This is a restricted and limited option, due to the small number of properties which are available for homeless households in Kingston. We were only able to provide 85 households with family sized social housing in 2021/22 with only a small number of properties from within the council's housing stock, 47 homes and 38 from some of our Registered Provider partners. Working alongside partners will be a key priority within our Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan, to jointly plan for the housing priorities for Kingston residents and to deliver much needed affordable housing.

We are developing a range of options within the Council's Interim Housing Strategy which will support the supply of suitable housing in the next three years for people who are homeless, including the supply of supported accommodation and increasing the number of properties available to homeless people on a permanent basis. These options will aim to reduce the numbers of people we currently have living in temporary accommodation.

Discharging duty into the private rented sector is not currently routinely used by the council and needs to be considered as a valid option to ensure that households are suitably accommodated and do not remain in temporary accommodation for lengthy periods of time as recommended within the

² Review of Temporary Accommodation, Community Housing Services April 2020
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review. Due to supply and affordability issues, this may be difficult to achieve within the Kingston borough. We have achieved the following number of Private Rented Sector Offers over the last four financial years;

- 2018/19: 4
- 2019/20: 0
- 2020/21: 3
- 2021/22: 2

There is a shortage of suitable supported accommodation across Kingston with limited numbers of units available within the borough. There is also a challenge of meeting the needs of applicants requiring emergency accommodation, particularly if there are medical or other specialist requirements.

A number of additional options for providing temporary accommodation include;

- Exploring alternative arrangements for managing the temporary accommodation service
- Exploring the development of a social lettings agency with the service as a council owned entity, but potentially within an arms length management vehicle. Further work will be undertaken to explore this option and is included within the action plan.

Our objectives to improve the use of temporary accommodation

- Review the recommendations from the Temporary Accommodation Review, 2020
- Ensure the demands for accommodation from homeless households and those living in temporary accommodation are recognised within the Interim Housing Strategy and have proposed solutions to aim to offer permanent accommodation

Priority 4

Providing permanent homes for homeless people

There is a lack of supply for social housing in Kingston. ONS sources state that there are 7502 social rented properties, of which just over 5200 are council owned. Kingston has 11.8% of social housing across all dwellings, far below the London average of 24.1%.³ Realistically, applicants will wait many years for an offer of accommodation. Lettings into social housing, including Registered Provider (RP) nominations, in 2019/20 were 221, 37 below target, of which 82 were lettings to homeless families. 72 homes were let to homeless households in 2021/22. 904 applicants were in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2022, illustrating perhaps the likely length of wait for permanent accommodation through the council's Housing Register.

The housing market for private rented properties across Kingston is also very competitive. This is supported by a strong economically active population of 81.2%, the eighth highest in London and with above average wages in Kingston compared to the rest of London, competition for property is high. Competing in the Kingston market would potentially be costly for low income families or those on benefits, wishing to rent.

The council has explicit requirements to increase its housing delivery within the London Plan with a target of 2,250 properties just for small sites. The annual monitoring target will increase from 643 units a year, (under the current London Plan) to 964 units a year in accordance with the New London Plan. The 10 year target within the London Plan is 9,640 with a target over the whole plan period until 2041 of 21,208 new homes. To provide context, in 2019/20, the council delivered 624 net additional homes.

Increasing the supply of homes is a council priority and there is now a pressing need to plan to achieve this. The council has land and property holdings which, through the Property Asset Strategy, will provide a high level strategic framework to consider the most appropriate use of the Council's corporate and commercial property assets. This could offer a pipeline of homes and sites in council ownership.

Working alongside our RP partners, there is an opportunity to increase the supply of much needed social housing. Although we have good relations with RPs, we recognise the need for developing and improving these relationships to provide opportunities to work jointly to realise our goals. Working closely with them, we can achieve our targets of affordable homes across Kingston over the span of this strategy and also within the Interim Housing Strategy. Increasing the capacity for supply will offer opportunities for social rented homes for homeless families and reduce the council's reliance on the numbers of temporary homes Kingston currently houses our homeless families in.

The Council has progressed with the Cambridge Road Estate project with Phase 1 residential small sites which started on site in 2021 and will provide over 100 additional homes.

Our objectives to provide permanent homes for homeless people

- Fully align the priorities of the council's Interim Housing Strategy with this strategy to ensure there are improved outcomes for homeless families across Kingston

³ <https://data.kingston.gov.uk>

Priority 5

Working with our partners to prevent and end homelessness

Tackling homelessness will need collective action between the council and its partner agencies across Kingston. In delivering solutions to homelessness in Kingston, we will need their support and determination, using all the talent and expertise available.

Partnership working will be key to preventing homelessness and improving services we provide for homeless people. We have effective partnerships, but we need to increase the opportunities of these relationships with new partners. The Council currently has good relationships with a wide range of partners, supporting the Council's homelessness and rough sleeping objectives. The Housing Need and Homelessness Forum brings a breadth of knowledge and expertise to support our current goals and objectives. The work of our Homeless Task Force, formed in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, has provided a new network of partners and agencies who work collaboratively to support the work around rough sleepers. We will use these existing and newly formed partnerships in delivering our priorities to prevent and end homelessness.

We will continue to build on these relationships and invite our partners to continue to work collaboratively with us, bringing their skills and expertise to support our homeless families and to improve our prevention methods. Co-producing solutions to homelessness and ensuring these are effective and meet the organisational objectives of every partner will be our goal. We will bring these talents under the umbrella of a newly launched Homelessness Partnership Forum, which will co-ordinate our efforts and ensure this strategy is delivered.

We will need to forge new relationships too with other partners who have come together working with the council more recently. We have benefited from strong multi-disciplinary team working with partners from health and social care, from support partners in the third sector and voluntary organisations. These have brought new and important benefits to our services, supporting our collective team effort.

We intend to extend the network of support which will mutually benefit each organisation involved, but more importantly, to offer enhanced outcomes for our customers who are at risk of becoming homeless or who are homeless. We will develop and implement a successful multi-agency approach, building on these current relationships. We will host a conference with partners in late 2022 to develop a shared vision for improving our partnership approach to responding to homelessness and its impact across Kingston.

Our objectives to working with our partners to prevent and end homelessness

- Deliver and host a conference with partners in late 2022 to develop a shared vision for improving our partnership approach to responding to homelessness and its impact across Kingston
- improve data sharing with Job Centre Plus around universal credit recipients who are affected by the benefit cap to reduce possible incidences of homelessness
- Develop further partnership working to agree referral pathways and enhanced service provision to marginalised groups

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- Extend the range of support provision to marginalised groups.

Responding to Rough Sleeping across Kingston

Introduction

The council has brought together a wealth of knowledge and expertise to focus on reducing and ending rough sleeping across Kingston and to work collaboratively to provide interventions, help and advice for rough sleepers and those agencies who help to deliver this critical service.

The Covid 19 pandemic brought new challenges for the council. The Government's 'Everyone In' initiative changed the landscape for rough sleeping in Kingston, both for those with recourse to public funds and those without. Fundamentally for the council and our partners, it brought into sharp focus the plight of rough sleepers in Kingston, prompting a swift response to get rough sleepers off the street and into emergency accommodation. The Homelessness Task Force and Rough Sleeper Multi -Disciplinary Team were formed at the beginning of the pandemic to ensure that rough sleepers were protected from Covid 19 by understanding their health and housing needs and improving the Council's partnership approach to responding to the emergency.

The 'Everyone In' initiative and follow-on work has helped the following;

- 194 clients were accommodated under 'Everyone In' and other initiatives between March 2020 and the end of March 2022
- Between April 2020 and March 2022, 105 either left of their own accord, were evicted and not rehoused, went to prison, were sectioned or returned to the streets
- At its highest point, 45 clients were No Recourse to Public Funds which reduced to 10 at the end of March 2022.
- 20 rough sleepers will be accommodated in one bed self contained homes, 16 of which were let at the end of March 2022.
- At the end of March 2022, there were 26 clients in HMOs. 24 clients with recourse remain in hotels and nightly paid accommodation as at the end of March 2022.

In March 2021, the government announced a further £203m investment through the Rough Sleeper Initiative, (RSI) programme to provide homes, made available in every region of England, enabling people who sleep rough, or at risk of sleeping rough, to be rehoused in secure, long-term accommodation. This will provide some of the most vulnerable in Kingston with a place to live and help them to rebuild their lives as they move away from a life on the streets. The council was successfully awarded £1,221,301 of RSI funding for 2021/22. In 2022 the Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities, (DLUHC) allocated a 3 year programme of funding for Rough Sleeper Initiatives. Kingston was allocated £2,819,746 for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Through RSI, the funding will support vital projects such as shelters, specialist mental health or addiction services and targeted support to help rough sleepers off the streets for good. This funding is the next stage of longer term accommodation for rough sleepers, supporting our vision to end rough sleeping across Kingston, supporting national and regional priorities.

We commissioned ethnographic research, Revealing Reality, who engaged with 15 rough sleepers, including observations of interactions with service providers across Kingston. The outcome from this research suggested the need to introduce support around 'life building'; helping these individuals feel and become productive members of the local community. Helping these individuals build 'self-hope' and 'self-worth' is central to success. We will continue to engage with rough sleepers and involve Revealing Reality with plans to innovate and improve life opportunities for all rough sleepers.

As a consequence of these interventions, there has been a culture shift across housing and other services, putting rough sleepers and the services offered to them in the centre stage. It has prompted a fresh approach to how the council will in future commission, co-ordinate and manage services including support and accommodation provided to rough sleepers.

We continue to work to reduce rough sleeping across Kingston and have been supported by government, partners and dedicated staff. The government announced its ambitions in 2022 for ending rough sleeping, stating 'rough sleeping should be prevented wherever possible and, when it does happen, rough sleeping should be rare, brief and non-recurring'. We will ensure this strategy responds to this ambition in eliminating rough sleeping from Kingston streets.

We continue to improve services across Kingston for those sleeping rough or at risk of becoming homeless. Our service improvement plan for 2022/23 will help to shape improved and new ways of working and this will be a feature of the strategy as we deliver better ways of working.

Rough sleeping – the local and national picture

In 2017, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government highlighted that the number of people sleeping rough in England has increased by 73% since 2014, and 169% since 2010. There were 4,266 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2019 and 2,688 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2020.⁴ Although there was a 37% drop from 2019, Everyone In helped to take many rough sleepers off the street. It is against this backdrop that Kingston, along with many local authorities, has recognised the problems that rough sleeping poses on the people who experience it, the services that support them and the wider impact across our communities.

In Kingston, our rough sleeping count in November 2019 had reduced to 20, and to 14 in November 2020, largely due to the interventions and initiatives which had been in place. The rough sleeping count in November 2021 increased to 28, although this was largely due to 21 Roma rough sleepers on that night.

The Mayor of London targeted support through funding for a cohort of London's most entrenched rough sleepers; Target 1,000. There were 9 Kingston Target 1000 rough sleepers identified in February 2021 as sleeping rough in two or more years out of the last three, or in two or more months out of the last 12. Working with DLUHC, GLA and partners, we will help to find creative solutions for the Target 1000 cases who are the most difficult to engage, delivering interventions or to provide housing.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics>

Kingston, along with a number of other London boroughs has a specific issue with Roma rough sleepers from Romania who rough sleep in the borough, but the number on specific nights varies considerably. Most of the cohort have No Recourse to Public Funds, most but not all who arrived before December 2020 have applied for EUSS status and some now have Pre Settled Status and some are still awaiting decisions. The council has asked the Home Office to prioritise these cases. Those who have arrived after December 2020 are not eligible to apply for pre settled or settled status. The GLA funded Roma Rough Sleeping Team within St Mungos are working with Kingston (as one of three boroughs they are working with intensively) and in particular are working with Roma clients with Pre Settled status to help them obtain official work which may mean they are entitled to benefits.

We continue to make progress to reduce rough sleeping still further. We recognise the difficult backdrop to achieve this; the impact of Universal Credit, the lack of affordable housing, high housing prices in an area of high demand, how services in the public sector have been squeezed due to spending cuts and the unique challenges faced by those with No Recourse to Public Funds. We also have a major cost of living crisis which is impacting across all families and individuals. Some or all of these factors have or will contribute to the difficulties which rough sleepers face in Kingston.

Developing the Kingston strategy for rough sleeping

Our strategy has been developed and informed which partners and agencies helped to identify. Our strategy will aim to put in place interventions and support for rough sleepers and to reduce the impact of rough sleeping across the borough. We have worked with expert colleagues and partners who will continue to support rough sleepers and to ensure that the strategy is delivered.

There are a multitude of complex factors which can lead to rough sleeping or to those threatened with sleeping rough. While we aim to prevent rough sleeping happening in Kingston, we also recognise there are entrenched issues for many rough sleepers and these will require more urgent and direct interventions at some point.

We also recognise that rough sleeping can sometimes be the only choice for people who have been through institutions and have not been supported into the community when they leave those institutions. We will therefore focus efforts on people leaving care, the armed forces, hospitals and prison, so that they will be supported prior to leaving and have a plan for their support.

We will develop and implement new ways of working with our partners and agencies, so that we are able to offer the very best help, support and solutions for rough sleepers. For example, we understand the poor health outcomes for rough sleepers and we will work with our health partners and agencies to provide greater access to services.⁵

Three key priorities have emerged for rough sleepers;

1. Services for supporting and helping people who are sleeping rough
2. Accommodation for rough sleepers
3. Innovation in our working practices to support rough sleepers - The Supporting Complex Lives Pathway

⁵ Aldridge et al. 2017

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The Supporting Complex Lives Pathway is being scoped to include a wider remit of people other than rough sleepers

In recognising the complex needs of rough sleepers, we will require new and innovative ways of working. We are planning a new service offer which will;

- Increase our joint working within and between agencies
- Increase the specialist skills and expertise of staff who deal with rough sleepers
- Improve and simplify pathways into health services including mental health
- Provide improved and clear collective governance amongst providers
- Prevent rough sleeping and provide in reach (to those rough sleepers who are already engaged in our services), as well as outreach provision

We will provide this service, working alongside and with people who are rough sleepers or who have experienced rough sleeping. There is a more detailed explanation of the service offer in the Supporting Complex Lives Pathway section below.

Rough sleeping in Kingston

At the end of March 2022, 15 rough sleepers and those at imminent risk of rough sleeping were accommodated in emergency accommodation under Everyone In, Winter Provisions and Protect and Vaccinate.

Verification of rough sleepers is undertaken by SPEAR on behalf of Kingston and reported on CHAIN, a multi-agency database recording information about people sleeping rough and the wider street population in London. CHAIN allows users to share information about work done with rough sleepers and about their needs, ensuring that they receive the most appropriate support and that efforts are not duplicated.

The numbers of rough sleepers which had been verified across Kingston, on 31st March for each of the respective years are as follows;

- 2020 – 118
- 2021 - 85
- 2022 - 65

This illustrates the numbers of rough sleepers in Kingston over an annual period, many who will fall in and out of services and interventions and many who are entrenched. We have recognised the complex issues which impact on those people who live on our streets. Rough sleepers are likely to be exposed to a greater risk of crime, may become victims of violence and many have additional complex needs such as substance misuse, mental and physical health issues. The development of these additional needs can then make the journey to securing sustainable accommodation even more difficult. For service providers, it can have a dramatic impact on resources to manage and support those people with complex lives.

We are planning a new service offer for rough sleepers, looking at the multi-layered and complex issues of rough sleepers and how we can respond better as a community. We will launch the new

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Supporting Complex Lives Pathway to support the most vulnerable of people who live on Kingston's streets. This sits alongside and is part of our Rough Sleeper pathway.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Kingston, along with neighbouring boroughs has regularly had rough sleepers who have NRPF; both EU and Non - EU nationals. Each year, a high number of Romanian and Roma visitors come to Kingston to live on the streets where many beg. Due to our interventions during the pandemic, there has been greater success in engaging and helping these citizens. Our partner, KCAH has employed a worker who has gained intelligence and trust with some Romanian clients and has expanded their remit to include other rough sleepers. However, engaging with all rough sleepers, particularly those who are entrenched or have language or cultural issues still remains a challenge in our aim to end rough sleeping.

At the end of March 2021, there were 23 cases with NRPF, 22 of whom were EU, (of these seven were Roma). One of the EU cases has pre settled status, 12 had applications pending for pre-settled or settled status. Working closely with partners, we have achieved real success in engaging with both EU and non-EU citizens, traditionally a difficult group to engage. This work has provided the added bonus of gathering intelligence on individual rough sleepers.

As at 31 March 2022, there were only 15 rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping with NRPF who were accommodated by the Council in emergency accommodation, of these 1 was not EU and 9 were EU. Of the EU cases 3 had pre settled status, 4 were waiting for Home Office decisions on status and 2 are believed not to have applied although they had been in the UK before December 2020.

The council's response to Everyone In

Covid 19 challenged us to deal with rough sleepers and help them off the street in the pandemic. There have been a number of opportunities which have emerged, and these will help to inform the strategy and how we will work with rough sleepers in future.

The council was successful in bids for government funding in 2020/21, launched in response to the pandemic and funded through MHCLG (now DLUHC) and the GLA. These are in addition to our RSI allocations. We secured Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) of £733k for retrospective spend, hotel costs, HMOs accommodation and support for 2020- 2021. The Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme, (RSAP) allocation was £806k, spread over four years for 20 self contained units with floating support until 2024/25. We were also awarded Public Health England funding for rough sleepers of £91k for 2021/22 for complex drug and alcohol users and outreach support for rough sleepers with drug and alcohol issues.

Additionally, the council were awarded £41,000 Protect Plus funding for 2020/21, particularly relating to Target 1000 cases and £56,000 Cold Weather Fund for the winter months of 2020/21. We also repurposed Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) 3 funding for 2020/21 of £165k; £110k to support and accommodate clients in hotels and £55k to provide drug and alcohol recovery accommodation and support.

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Health services also awarded councils funding at this time. The Out of Hospital Care funding across South West London region, NHS Integrated Care Systems amounted to £746,935 for 2020-22. Protect and Vaccinate funding of £26,850 for accommodation was awarded in response to the Omicron variant in December 2021.

RSI 4 2021/22 provided accommodation and some support costs for the HMOs and emergency off street accommodation. The council was awarded £1.221m of RSI 4 funding in May 2021 and £2.82m RSI funding for the 3 year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

It is clear that funding was made available to councils to respond to the pandemic. We want to ensure that these funds and initiatives are co-ordinated, work seamlessly and provide the right interventions for rough sleepers, critical to their success. We will rely heavily on future funding being made available from government to continue to support rough sleepers in Kingston.

Outcomes from Everyone In interventions

There was a sharp focus to respond to the pandemic and ensure rough sleepers were accommodated and safe. The outcomes were far reaching, with many successes;

- Partnership working has improved, increasing the numbers of partners who responded to Everyone In and its outcomes
- Both within the council and with other agencies; charities, partners and colleagues stepped up to the challenge of getting rough sleepers off the streets quickly with over 190 taken off the streets between April 2020 and March 2022
- We strengthened and developed important relationships with DLUHC and GLA advisors
- We accessed £1.5m in grants and repurposed RSI funding to aid the newly emerging rough sleeper services
- Our partners were swift in changing how they support clients, moving from night shelter provision to hotels with many clients engaged with our services
- We established our Homeless Task Force and created our Multi Disciplinary Team with partners to respond to the challenge of health interventions. There were no Covid related deaths during this time.

We will continue to embed these successes within the new service offer for rough sleepers. We recognise there will still be challenges which we will need to develop solutions for. We will need to deliver a new service offer for rough sleepers, working with partners and responding to the need of some very complex cases.

Finding homes and emergency accommodation in Kingston continues to be difficult. Some clients may be placed outside the borough and away from familiar services and may not wish to go out of borough, preferring instead to sleep rough in the borough. The lack of supported accommodation for those with complex needs across Kingston will need to be addressed. Future funding for rough sleeper services will be required amidst severe economic conditions and a cost of living crisis. There will need to be a reliance on partners to support rough sleepers alongside our services, including health and social care service providers, which will need to be managed cooperatively.

Priority One

Our services for preventing, supporting and helping people who are sleeping rough

The council co-ordinates its rough sleeping services by supporting and working alongside partners and other agencies in preventing rough sleeping and working and supporting those people who sleep rough with an aim of offering them accommodation away from the streets . Kingston is supported in delivering services to rough sleepers through our partnerships with two key agencies, KCAH and SPEAR. Both organisations are key allies in tackling rough sleeping across the borough, intervening and supporting rough sleepers, either on the streets or providing essential services through their respective organisations. The strength of these partnerships with the council have developed in recent years.

Rough sleeping services are funded through a variety of initiatives and targets resources specifically to prevent, reduce and support rough sleepers across Kingston. The council benefits from supported government initiatives and also contributes directly to the rough sleeping services through a general fund contribution. The total cost of funding for services offered for 2021/22 was £1,221,301 under RSI and £2.82m for the 3 year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25

The Rough Sleeper Pathway

Since March 2020, the learning from Everyone In has fundamentally changed our approach and culture for rough sleepers in Kingston to one of prevention, stopping a return to the streets and seeking solutions for each individual. It has led to a revised pathway being developed for rough sleepers, including the rapid development of the MDT, overseen by the Homeless Task force which we established early on. We are now shaping our new service offer within the council so there is a sustained approach to oversee and manage rough sleeping in Kingston, focusing on prevention, in partnership with our support providers and our many partners, including health and social care. Our vision is clearly aligned to the national and regional priorities to reduce and end rough sleeping and we will do so by putting in place the people who can deliver our vision.

In addition to prevention, outreach and the work of the navigators, our pathway will aim to assist all rough sleepers including newly arising rough sleepers. They will be placed in emergency off street accommodation while the case is swiftly assessed in terms of support needs and then moved on to more suitable accommodation, either in an HMO or a one bedroom flat through RSAP funding. We will support people, mainly into the private rented sector with help from the support staff, allowing the accommodation to be let to another rough sleeper or someone at risk of rough sleeping.

The rough sleeper prevention approach is aimed to minimise and avoid where possible any new borough single homeless cases needing to sleep rough. Prevention cases will be assisted to remain where they are or moved onto suitable accommodation e.g HMOs or one bed accommodation if there are vacancies.

Both potential and actual rough sleepers, if eligible, will have access to prevention loans if funding is available to help them stay in their current accommodation or access new accommodation in the private rented sector.

To manage, coordinate and lead on this approach, the Rough Sleeper Coordinator is now based in the Council. This role will bring together all the council services, charities, stakeholders and partners helping to end rough sleeping.

Our pathway has processes to help all rough sleepers with the ultimate aim of sourcing and allocating them sustainable accommodation with support. It also has a number of interventions to catch clients should they fall outside the pathway or fail at different steps. This includes prevention at the earliest and every stage, which complements interventions from outreach/inreach, NRPF outreach and drug and alcohol outreach.

Supported accommodation for complex rough sleepers is a challenge in Kingston with many rough sleepers recovering from drug and alcohol and preventing a return to the streets. Rough sleepers are referred to the MDT where the allocation of suitable accommodation is agreed.

Our partners have also changed their approach to one of prevention and tenancy sustainment, with a navigator dedicated to prevention and the outreach team also delivering in reach services. Working together, we believe that this new pathway will eliminate rough sleeping in Kingston.

Support services for rough sleepers across the borough are provided by the following organisations.

KCAH

provide the following services;

- The Single Homeless Pathway, funded by the Council, which offers housing advice, welfare benefits advice and referrals to relevant housing options including hostels. Single people with a local connection to Kingston and who are homeless, at risk of being homeless or with housing issues can visit without an appointment. The service is currently available between 10 am-1 pm, Monday to Friday.
- As part of the Single Homeless Pathway KCAH is also able to house up to 37 people with a local connection to Kingston in its nine rented houses for a period of up to two years. KCAH offer the tenants ongoing support with benefit claims and life skills such as budgeting and every tenant has a tailor made support plan
- Floating support to clients in the council's HMOs and one bed self contained apartments is offered for rough sleepers

SPEAR

SPEAR provide the following services;

- Co-ordinating a rough sleeper outreach team working across Kingston working through the night and in the early hours of the morning twice a week to identify rough sleepers and help sign-posting to relevant services, engaging them into SPEAR's services.
- A bespoke service to each rough sleeper engaged with a navigator, delivering wrap around services and offering intensive support. During 2021/22, 69 clients moved into accommodation (including 19 who were reconnected with family/friends either within the UK or overseas), and 23 of those had a navigator supporting them

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- Homeless Health Link Service (HHLs) serves current or former rough sleepers in Kingston, offering improved access to physical and mental health services, reducing alcohol and drug use and reducing emergency and hospital admissions, improving knowledge and understanding of health issues faced by homeless people
- Supporting homeless people with severe, complex and unmet health needs
- Floating support to clients in the council's s HMOs and one bed self contained apartments for rough sleepers

Council Support services

The Resettlement Team supports people in temporary and permanent accommodation by offering advice, resettlement and support to maintain their tenancies. The support offered includes budgeting, claiming benefits, employment and training, accessing services, building and maintaining relationships and social networks, independent living skills or moving on to alternative accommodation. Once a service user has been referred they are assessed for what kind of accommodation they would be suitable for and help them to access it. This could either be a HMO, a council nomination or a flat/studio in the private rented sector.

Our objectives for supporting and helping rough sleepers

We will develop and continually improve our services for rough sleepers, working alongside our partners. We will;

- Review our service offer collaboratively with our partners and engage service users to ensure we provide a service to meet individual needs
- Develop and promote services so there is easier access and clearer information for people needing advice and support, particularly for those who are leaving institutions
- Through our Rough Sleeping Action Plan, ensure we are delivering services against agreed targets and monitoring actions with our partners

Priority Two

Accommodation for rough sleepers

Through our partners and other agencies, rough sleepers can access accommodation to help them off Kingston streets and where they will find other services to help and support them. The council is reliant on funding from DLUHC and the GLA to provide this accommodation and the services it offers to rough sleepers.

People found sleeping rough will aim to be offered places in emergency off street accommodation while the case is assessed in terms of support needs, checking benefit receipt and entitlements and then moved on to more suitable accommodation. This may be a room in an HMO where accommodation is provided to up to 30 rough sleepers or a one bedroom flat where there is funding for 20 units, depending on needs and the availability. The HMO units originally acquired under Next Steps Accommodation Programme, (NSAP) have been leased by the Council for at least 2 years and there is an expectation that individuals will move onto settled accommodation when they are tenancy ready.

The YMCA in Surbiton is contracted with the council to provide bed spaces to homeless families. They accept nominations from KCAH for rough sleepers and have a small number of bed spaces available for any referrals. They provide 103 units of accommodation and support in the hostel and continue to provide accommodation and support for 23 in the move on houses.

SPEAR provides three HMOs, supporting former rough sleepers and offering the opportunity to rebuild confidence before moving on to their own accommodation. The HMOs will be reduced to two during 2022/23.

Kingston has different complexities to other boroughs, particularly within the housing market. Innovative approaches to housing solutions for rough sleepers, such as Housing First models, would perhaps take a very different form. Using the Private Rented Sector in a more innovative way is one avenue to be explored.

There is a distinct lack of social housing in Kingston, and the Council will work more closely with Registered Providers operating across Kingston to ensure that collectively, we can explore opportunities which may support rough sleepers. The council's strategy around the use of council assets and stock could offer different types of affordable housing to various client groups, including rough sleepers.

There is a shortage of supported accommodation for complex clients and a review of supported accommodation available and future needs is being explored within the council's Transforming Places to Live Programme.

Our objectives for accommodation for rough sleepers

We will;

- review the current opportunities for rough sleepers to access accommodation, identifying gaps in provision and planning to improve these

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- explore in detail a Housing First or Housing Led model and learn from best practice examples across the UK, with a view to implementing a model across Kingston
- engage with the Private Rented Sector landlords operating across Kingston to build further the working relationship we already enjoy and explore options to support rough sleepers
- engage regularly with our RP partners and Kingston Council Landlord Services to seek support and ways to help rough sleepers
- work with colleagues across the council to identify opportunities for enhanced access to accommodation for rough sleepers, including through DLUHC funding for rough sleeper accommodation.

Priority Three

Innovation in our working practices to support rough sleepers - The Supporting Complex Lives Pathway

Work began in 2019 to look at the complex issues faced by rough sleepers across Kingston.

We identified a number of areas which needed to be developed;

- To work proactively to look at and overcome the barriers for entrenched clients with complex needs (dual or multiple diagnoses) who are rough sleeping or otherwise 'living on the edge'
- To find ways to remove the barriers so all partners can work collaboratively to help clients from regularly re-entering services
- To develop a dynamic way of working with this client group

Although the focus of this work is the impact on rough sleepers, the council is looking at widening the scope of services to homelessness prevention and vulnerable families and individuals, achieving a shared vision across Council services. Pressure on council budgets will present a challenge to direct resources to those areas with corporate priorities and particularly statutory obligations. There is an opportunity to develop a truly integrated service model, identifying savings and efficiencies across critical services and implementing a model which is designed around Kingston's priorities.

Work is being undertaken with Social Care and Health providers with an outcome to design and implement a pathway across and within services, as well as an operational team to support the pathway. There is widespread support for the opportunity to develop this approach, suggesting shared working arrangements, closer collaboration to deliver services and sharing information between departments and agencies. With a commitment to develop this model of working with colleagues across services and agencies, developing a single point of access and integrating service delivery is progressing on the Supporting Complex Lives Pathway.

The Supporting Complex Lives proposal is making significant progress and is now being rescoped to include an inclusive and holistic response for rough sleepers across council and partner services. The council has fundamentally changed service provision with the development of the pathway that aims to reduce and eliminate rough sleeping in Kingston. The pathway is intended to include rehabilitation and support towards maximising independence and step down from support services.

The pathway will;

- offer a sustained approach to oversee and manage rough sleeping in Kingston, focusing on prevention, in partnership with our support providers and our many partners, including health and social care
- help all rough sleepers with the ultimate aim of sourcing and allocating sustainable accommodation with support.
- offer prevent at the earliest stage, with outreach/inreach, NRPF outreach and substance misuse support
- support the Multi Disciplinary Team, (MDT), overseen by the Homeless Task force

Partners from substance misuse, primary care, mental health social care and the voluntary sector have committed to the MDT approach, in recognition of the barriers and a desire to improve access to support and exit planning for rough sleepers.. This will offer better and more efficient joint

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working to develop solutions based on an improved collective understanding of complex needs. The pathway will help to engage with those who find it challenging to access traditional mental health, substance misuse intervention and adult social care provision. It will also aim to prevent escalation and admission into acute and psychiatric in-patient hospitals and prevent escalation into the court or judicial system.

There will be a focus on helping our Target 1000 group of entrenched rough sleepers, who numbered 25 in March 2021 and 10 in March 2022. We aim to help individuals to feel motivated to change by enabling them to feel more hopeful and valuable as people within society, preventing a return or new flow onto the street due to an individual's complex needs.

The council was awarded Public Health England Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant to focus on providing specialist support to rough sleepers. This will support access and engagement with drug and alcohol harm reduction and treatment services and a move towards longer term accommodation.

The drivers for Supporting Complex Lives are still relevant and significant progress has been made, but challenges identified are more nuanced. Services working to different legislation, rough sleepers not wanting to access services, addiction, mental health and behavioural issues are among some of these challenges. In addition, issues of those with No Recourse to Public Funds need to be considered.

The Pathway scope has now been broadened. Supporting Complex Lives will also include those experiencing substance misuse, mental health conditions, exploitation, offending, violence including domestic abuse and self harm. The aim will be to develop a blueprint for an integrated prevention, commissioning and delivery model that will reduce inequalities and be financially sustainable. This will include developing;

- Pathways to primary, community and acute health are that are easy to navigate
- A technology supported pathway where intelligence can be shared
- Stronger links with offender, MARAC and safeguarding pathways

Supporting Complex Lives is a key transformational project within the council's Transforming Places to Live programme.

Our objectives for the Supporting Complex Lives Pathway

- Engage with rough sleepers and those with lived experiences of rough sleeping to understand their experiences of sleeping rough, our service interventions and to determine improvements in services using these experiences
- Redesign our access to services to improve opportunities for people to seek advice and support
- Engage with Primary Care providers to improve access to health care, improving outcomes for rough sleepers.
- Work collaboratively and in partnership to support rough sleepers through the work of the MDT
- Provide co-designed training sessions to upskill our operational staff to provide excellence in service delivery for rough sleepers

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- Improve understanding across agencies of the issues relating to rough sleeping, complex trauma and how best to support individuals
- Develop and implement prevention methods for those at risk of rough sleeping due to complex needs
- Provide greater access to services to improve people's health and wellbeing through a mental health pathway
- Implement challenging performance measures and outcomes and monitor robustly for delivery

Delivering the Strategy priorities and its outcomes

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be supported by an action plan, which will capture the objectives contained within and identify the key priorities. A series of key performance indicators, (KPIs) will be developed for each of the priorities within the Strategy and will be reported on regularly as part of the scrutiny progress of the Strategy delivery.

These actions and KPIs will be reported to the newly proposed Homelessness Partnership, which will be supported by the Homeless Task Force. The Partnership will include council colleagues, our partners, agencies and voluntary sector organisations. The new Homeless Partnership will be able to scrutinise progress, challenge the operational delivery of the strategy and ensure the outcomes and KPIs are delivered.

An action plan accompanies the Strategy and is attached as an appendix to this Strategy.