Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030

March 2025

CONTENTS

FYLDE COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2025-30

1. HOMELESSNESS LEGISLATION

1. A household is considered homeless if the local authority deems that they do not have a legal right to occupy accommodation that is accessible, physically available, which it would be reasonable for the household to continue to live in.

2. **The Housing (Homeless persons) Act 1977, Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002** gave local authorities a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

3. Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 provides the statutory under-pinning for action by Local Authorities to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or who are actually homeless.

4. In 2002, the Government amended legislation through the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) Order 2002. Every housing authority is to have in place a Homelessness Strategy and the legislation strengthened assistance available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by extending the priority need categories.

5. Priority need categories under homelessness legislation:

    1. a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
    2. a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
    3. a person who is homeless as a result of that person being a victim of domestic abuse
    4. a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, learning disability or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
    5. a person aged 16 or 17 who is not a 'relevant child' or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
    6. a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
    7. a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered
    8. a person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
    9. a person who is vulnerable as a result of: i. having served a custodial sentence; ii. having been committed for contempt of court or any other kindred offence; or, iii. having been remanded in custody;
    10. a person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out
    11. a person who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster.

6. There is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to have a five year homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that sets out information about; the scale and causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough; how we will prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping and national and local context. This strategy covers the period 2025-2030.

7. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 reformed England's homelessness legislation further by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas and provide homelessness services to all those affected and not just those who have 'priority

need'.

8. Firstly, an enhanced **Prevention Duty** from 28 to 56 days requiring local authorities to work with people to prevent homelessness and secondly, a new **Relief Duty** for 56 days requiring the local authorities to relieve homelessness by helping people to secure accommodation. If homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved, a housing authority will owe the **Main Housing Duty** to applicants who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally.

9. The Homelessness Code of Guidance provides the procedures local authorities are required to exercise in delivering their homelessness functions in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This guidance is updated regularly by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The latest guidance was updated in February 2025[1].

10. Local Authorities must have in place an application process for all applicants who require housing assistance and if they have reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homelessness make enquiries to establish if they owe them any duty under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act. The local authority also has a duty to provide advice and information about homelessness, the rights of homeless people and how to access help and support.

11. Fylde Council adhere to the Homelessness Code of Guidance procedures in delivering the Local Authority's homelessness functions. Staff within the Homelessness service are provided with annual training to ensure their knowledge and skills under homeless legislation are up to date.

12. Applicants at risk of homelessness can approach the local authority by requesting an appointment at the Town Hall, via our website, ringing 01253 658658 or emailing housing@fylde.gov.uk.

13. All applicants will be contacted on the day of approach under the Triage Service to gather initial information on the reasons why applicants have approached the Local Authority, their housing circumstances, reason for homelessness and to provide housing advice as required.

14. Clients are then offered an appointment for a full homelessness assessment to be completed where either the appropriate housing advice is provided or a formal Prevention or Relief Housing Duty is accepted.

15. If clients are not in a Priority Need Category (5) Fylde Council must determine whether the person would be significantly more vulnerable than an ordinary person if they became homeless and we do this by undertaking a vulnerability assessment that considers the person's circumstances as a whole.

[1] Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK

2. THE NATIONAL PICTURE 2023-24

16. Nationally, 2023 saw increases in the number of households owed homelessness support by their local authority and increases in the number of households reaching the end of their homelessness duties with no suitable accommodation being sourced.

17. Nationally in 2023/24[2], 146,430 households were assessed as being threatened with homelessness and therefore owed a prevention duty in 2023/24. This is a 3.1% increase from 2022/23. This increase from 2022/23 to 2023/24 is seen both in households with children (0.8% increase to 62,200) and households without children owed a prevention duty (4.6% increase to 83,930).

18. 178,560 households were assessed as homeless and therefore owed a relief duty in 2023-24. This is up 12.3% from 2022-23. This increase from 2022-23 to 2023-24 is seen in both households with children (8.3% increase to 47,380) and households without children owed a relief duty (13.7% increase to 130,930).

19. The number of households reported in temporary accommodation has been increasing since 2021-22, and reached 117,450 on 31 March 2024, higher than at any other point since the data series began in 1998.

20. Other notable changes in 2023-24 compared to the previous year include:
    a. Increase in households owed a prevention duty (up 113.9%) or a relief duty (up 251.2%) on being required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support.
    b. Increase in households owed a prevention duty (up 92.0%) or a relief duty (up 79.2%) due to rent arrears from an increase in rent, although this comprises less than 1% of households owed each type of duty.

21. For those owed a prevention duty, the most common reason for the threatened loss of last settled home was due to the end of their private rented assured shorthold tenancy (AST) at 32,860 households or 52.8% of households with children owed a prevention duty. The majority of the households owed a prevention duty due to private rented ASTs ending were due to the landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property at 68.0% (22,350 households), an increase of 2.6% compared to 2022-23.

22. The most common reason for loss of last settled home for those owed a relief duty was due to domestic abuse at 12,130 or 25.6% of households with children owed a relief duty. This is a 0.5% increase from 2022-23. However, for those owed a prevention duty, domestic abuse as a reason had decreased by 1.8% from 2022-23.

23. Other notable trends from 2023-24 for those owed a prevention duty include an increase in ASTs ending due to an increase in rents (89.0% higher than 2022-23 – 850 compared to 450 households), and decreases in the following reasons for loss of last settled home: Changes in benefit entitlement (39.5% lower than in 2022-23), Breach of tenancy, not related to rent areas (12.1% lower than 2022-23) and other violence or harassment (down 26.5% compared to 2022-23).

24. For households with children owed a relief duty, non-violent relationship breakdown with partner slightly rose (a 3.5% increase from 2022-23), in line with the number of households with children owed a relief duty increasing from 2022-23.

[2] Statutory homelessness in England: financial year 2023-24 - GOV.UK

25. The most common accommodation at time of application was in the private rented sector at 38,270 households or 61.5% of households with children owed a prevention duty. For those owed either a prevention or relief duty, 50,500 households with children living in the private rented sector at time of application is higher than the 41,610 households with children citing the end of a private rented AST as their reason for threat of loss of last settled home, indicating other reasons for leaving their private sector accommodation, such as family exclusions, domestic abuse and relationship breakdowns.

26. For households with children owed a relief duty, the most common accommodation at time of application is living with family (30.6%) at 14,510 households, up 6.1% from 2022-23. For those owed a prevention duty, 12,480 households with children were living with family, down 3.7% from 2022-23, despite the number of prevention duties owed increasing.

27. In September 2022 Government published a commitment to Ending rough sleeping for good [3] with £500m invested through the Rough Sleeping Initiative and a further £200m invested through a new Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme with a target to deliver 2,400 homes by March 2025, including supported housing and Housing First accommodation aimed at adults experiencing severe multiple disadvantage. Additional funding was also provided by the Homelessness Prevention Grant.

3. THE LOCAL PICTURE 2020/21 TO 2024 UP TO 30th SEPTEMBER

28. Appendix 1 provides the 'Overview of Homelessness and Housing Advice Service at Fylde Council 2020/21 to 2024 up to 30th September.

29. The number of households approaching the service at risk of homelessness continues to increase annually. Since 2020/21 the service has seen a 37% increase in enquiries received and a 56% increase in Duty to Refer from Statutory partners. The service expects to receive 1000 enquiries per annum, and approximately 50% of these will require a full homelessness assessment and support to source permanent move on accommodation.

30. The main reasons for persons approaching the service is as a result of receiving a Section 21 notice to end a private sector tenancy or being asked to leave by family or friends.

31. The service is seeing an increase in persons approaching the service as a result of domestic abuse and leaving institutional care, such as Custody or Asylum Seeker accommodation.

32. Support needs of clients are increasingly complex. The service supports a high number of individuals with mental health needs, in physical ill health and registered disabled. Other areas where support needs are high are clients at risk of or experienced domestic abuse, learning difficulties , offending history and at risk of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.

33. Despite the level of support needs from persons at risk of homelessness the service supports a range of clients with different socio-economic backgrounds with a third of households being in employment, a third unemployed and a third suffering from a long term sick or with a disability.
34. The service has seen an increase in families with children approaching as homeless due to section 21 notice to end the private sector tenancy. Since 2020/21 the service has seen since a 56% increase in homeless presentations in 2023/24 and 2024/25 which has led to a 72% increase in the number of children in temporary homeless accommodation.

[3] Ending rough sleeping for good - GOV.UK

35. The numbers of households in Interim or Temporary accommodation remains high and at the 30th September 2024 we had 48 households in temporary accommodation.

36. Move on options for families and single households is restricted due to lack of suitable and affordable opportunities for accommodation within both the social and private rented sector.

37. The increase in homelessness assessments required following approach for advice has naturally increased the number of households to whom the local authority owe a Prevention or Relief Homelessness Duty.

38. Comparing the number of Households in Prevention, Relief or Main Housing Duty at the 31st March each year since 2022/23, the service continues to be successful in resolving an applicant's homelessness while in Prevention or Relief Housing Duty, with the number of households moving into Main Housing Duty remaining at around 15 households.

39. The service continues to perform well to source suitable move on accommodation for households. Compared against homelessness assessments undertaken from presentations in Diagram 1, the service on average is able to source secure accommodation for over 50% of applicants, either by securing new accommodation or assisting the household to remain in their own home with a 6 month tenancy.

40. The service has increased the number of units available in Fylde for temporary homeless accommodation from 10 to 31 units. The existing arrangements with Progress Housing for 10 units remain in place. This has been added to with 12 units in a partnership with the YMCA providing specialist support from 18 to 25 year olds and under the LAHF2 funding provided by DLUHC, an additional 9 units will have been provided by the end of 2024/25.

4. FUNDING TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

41. Fylde Council Housing receive funding directly from Central Government to deliver homelessness service and apply for funding to undertake initiatives that improve the service available to households in Fylde, who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

42. The Homelessness Prevention Grant is awarded annually from MHCLG[4]and the fund is designed to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness within their Local Authority area. Prior to 2021/22 funding was provided via several different routes which were combined into the Homeless Prevention Grant.

Homelessness Prevention Grant

43. Table 1 details the history of grant funding Fylde Council have received from central Government, to take forward their statutory duties under Homeless Reduction Act 2017. Funding has been committed through the Committee reporting systems into the implementation of projects that ensured the housing service has adapted to the changes in approach required under HRA.

Table 1 – Central Government Funding towards Homelessness Services

Financial Year	FHSG standard	FHSG Top Up	HPG Top Up	Section 31 HCLIC	HRA New	Homeless Reduction	HPG Allocation	Total

[4] Homelessness Prevention Grant: 2023 to 2025 - GOV.UK

	allocation			new Burdon's funding	Burdon's funding	Grant		
2017-18	£45,834.98				£8,409			£54,244
2018-19	£51,026.56	£11,000	£5,000	£2,953	£7,703			£77,683
2019-20	£42,766	£11,000	£5,000	£2,228	£9,927			£70,921
2020-21	£42,766					£26,655		£69,421
2021-22							£107,457	£107,457
2022-23							£107,457	£107,457
2023-24			£9,735				£107,457	£117,192
2024-25			£92,380				£123,821	£216,201
2025-26								£288,910

FHSG – Flexible Homeless Support Grant: HPG – Homeless Prevention Grant: HRA – Homeless Reduction Act

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

44. The purpose of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is to raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and its impact on victims, to further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice, and to strengthen the support for victims of abuse and their children provided by other statutory agencies[5].

45. The Act creates a cross-government statutory definition of domestic abuse, to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. The four main objectives of the act are to promote awareness of domestic abuse, protect and support victims, transform the justice process and improve performance from agencies in the response to domestic abuse.

46. Four main objectives of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

    1. **Promote awareness** – to put domestic abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, and raise public and professional awareness
    2. **Protect and support** – to enhance the safety of victims and the support that they receive
    3. **Transform the justice process** – to prioritise victim safety in the criminal and family courts, and review the perpetrator journey from identification to rehabilitation
    4. **Improve performance** – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas, agencies and sectors

47. New duties have been placed on Tier 1 and Tier 2 Local Authorities. Tier 1 Authorities are to appoint multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims or children, including those who come from outside the area. The partnership is also responsible for developing a Domestic Abuse Strategy that details support available within a locality and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the support as part of that Strategy. Tier 2 Authorities are to co-operate with the lead Tier 1 local authority to deliver this support within their areas, under Part 4 duties of the Act, namely, to provide safe accommodation and provide support.

48. Fylde Council have been awarded funding annually since 2021/22 to undertake forward new Part 4 duties and provide support within their local authority area. Funding since 2021/22 has increased from £33,000 to £36,000 in 2024/25.

[5] Domestic Abuse Act 2021: overarching factsheet - GOV.UK

49. Fylde Council work in partnership with Wyre Council and Fylde Coast Women's Aid (FCWA) to support victims and their children by commissioning a Housing Outreach Worker to engage and support female and male victims and their children across both local authorities, employed by FCWA. The funding is also used to provide emergency accommodation if Refuge provision is not immediately available.

50. The funding provides a Sanctuary Scheme for victims which aims to enable households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing security measures such as lighting, window and door locks provided through Preston Care and Repair with referrals being received from FCWA and support agencies in Fylde[6].

Accommodation finding service for Rough Sleepers and Ex-Offenders 2020/21

51. In 2020/21, working jointly with Wyre Council, Fylde Council were awarded funding under the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme[7].

51. The purpose of the funding launched by MHCLG was to support ex-offenders into their own Private Rented Sector (PRS) Tenancies. The scheme aims to build a pathway from prison into the PRS and is supported by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The funding is to enable the introduction of new schemes specifically focused at supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of PRS tenancies.

52. Fylde and Wyre Councils jointly submitted an application to support 50 ex-offenders based on the number of prison releases to both boroughs in 2020/21. Funding was approved at a lower level to support 20 service users totalling £68,345, split between both authorities. Fylde Council received £34,172. Support included rent bond, rent in advance, rent top up for 6 months and assistance with essential items, white goods and carpets if required.

53. This project has now ended.

Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2021/22

54. In December 2018 Fylde BC, working jointly with Lancaster City and Wyre Council, were awarded Rapid Re-housing funding from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The funding was launched as part of MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 and the commitment under the Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018, to half rough sleeping in the UK by 2022 and to end it by 2027. Fylde Council were awarded £30,000.

55. MHCLG have announced a continuation of the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for 2021/22. Fylde Council have been awarded a further £52,000. £27,000 is from the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding with an additional £25,000 emergency funding for accommodation, support and move on costs.

56. The initial funding enabled a Rapid Rehousing Officer to be employed to undertake support for clients presenting with multiple complex support needs, at risk of, or sleeping rough to take forward Fylde Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 that had a vision to work to prevent and relieve homelessness in Fylde and provide homelessness services that are accessible, professional and make a difference.

[6] Home - Preston Care & Repair
[7] Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme: local authority funding allocations between July 2021 and March 2025 - GOV.UK

57. The post worked with clients facing homelessness to ensure they have the expertise needed to enable them to engage with a range of services to support them to resolve their housing situation and improve their health and well-being and give them the confidence to access and a tenancy with the skills required to ensure their home is affordable, settled and if they are facing difficulties know who to approach for help.

58. This project has now ended.

Changing Futures Funding 2022/23

59. The Changing Futures programme[8] was announced by MHCLG in December 2020 and local authority areas were invited to submit an expression of interest for the funding. Changing Futures is focussed on improving outcomes for people facing multiple-disadvantage. It arose from examples of local partnerships to support vulnerable people in communities during the Covid 19 pandemic. The programme is a significant cross-cutting challenge and collaboration between local partners, government departments, the NHS, the voluntary and community sector and those with lived experience to co-ordinate a better system-wide response to address multiple dis-advantage.

60. The bid to the Changing Futures Fund for Lancashire was led by Blackburn with Darwen Council on behalf of the whole county (including Blackpool). The EOI proved sound, and a formal bid was invited, and a team involving partners from across Lancashire, submitted an ambitious plan, which has now been approved, awarding Lancashire £6.5m in July 2021. The target cohort the programme is to support is Lancashire adults, experiencing 3 or more multiple complex needs indicators, for example mental health issues, substance misuse and history of failed tenancies. The project projects that approximately 1,382 individuals will be supported over the life to the programme across Lancashire.

61. The project is based around an integrated model of Enhanced Service Hubs with lived-experience Navigators supporting engagement and delivery. Navigators will advocate on behalf of individuals experiencing multiple dis-advantage and connect them with the service hub provision. This model includes accessing Enhanced Service Hub support, which is existing provision from Statutory Agencies, enhanced with additional resources as part of the bid.

62. As part of the Enhanced Service Hub support 'Fylde Coast', there were appointed three 'Housing Support Workers' within each of the Fylde Coast authorities. Fylde Council has been awarded £62,500 to appoint a Housing Services Officer for a 25-month period as part of the enhanced service hub support offer.

63. This project is still ongoing, but the availability of funding to continue the project in Fylde was limited after the initial 25 month period.

Asylum Seeker Dispersal Funding from 2022/23

64. The Asylum Seeker Dispersal Grant (ASDG)[9] is a scheme that provides financial support to local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales to house people seeking asylum. The grant is intended to address concerns raised by Local Authorities in relation to pressure on local services associated with supporting Asylum Seekers with settled status leaving National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation within their areas.

[8] Changing Futures - GOV.UK
[9] Asylum Dispersal Grant: funding instruction - GOV.UK

65. Different grants are paid at different times of the year and it is not possible to predict with financial certainty the funding the Local Authority will receive for new and occupied bed spaces in NASS accommodation within the financial year.

66. DLUHC have advised:

''The Recipient shall be free to determine how best to utilise the Funding but for monitoring and Schemes' evaluation purposes must be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the eligibility conditions in supporting Asylum Seeker Dispersal''

67. As of 1st April 2024 £67,000 Asylum Seeker Dispersal Funding has been received since 2022/23. In 2024/25 to date one payment of £13,500 has been received. There is an expectation that further funding is to be received which will be focussed on priorities within the Housing Service Budget.

68. Table 2 below provides an overview of the funding initiatives the service has been awarded to enhance the service and keep up to date with changing Government priorities, in addition to Homeless Prevention Grant Funding.

Table 2: Funding initiatives to enhance homelessness services

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 – Sept 2024
Next Steps – Covid 19 emergency response	£55,444				
MHCLG Ex-Offenders and Rough Sleepers		£34,172	£21,530		
MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative		£27,000	£33,967	£38,735	
DLUHC Rapid Rehousing Phase 3	£32,250	£26,259	£25,105		
Home Office Asylum Seeker Dispersal Funding			£13,750	£67,000	£91,750
MHCLG Changing Futures		£5,913	£30,000	£26,587	
Housing Benefit towards temporary accommodation costs	£65,905	£54,191	£83,132	£133,787	£72,746
External Charities and DHP to establish tenancies	£24,659	£7,172.50	£10,579	£16,607	£16,250

Local Authority Housing Fund 2

69. The Local Authority Housing Fund[10] is capital grant funding provided to local authorities in England by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support the supply of accommodation for households on government resettlement schemes who are unable to source alternative housing.

70. In June 2023 DLUHC notified local authorities about the launch of Round 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF2). This purpose of this funding is to provide £250 million to support local authorities in England to increase their stock of affordable housing. The funding is to be used to house those on Afghan Resettlement Schemes and increase the provision of temporary accommodation for households experiencing homelessness.

71. The objectives of LAHF2 are:

1. Provide sustainable housing to those on Afghan resettlement schemes at risk of homelessness so that they can build new lives in the UK, find employment and integrate into communities.
2. Reduce local housing pressures beyond those on Afghan resettlement schemes by providing better quality temporary accommodation to families owed homelessness duties by the Local Authority.
3. Reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs.
4. Reduce impacts on the existing housing and homelessness systems and those waiting for social housing.

72. DLUHC funding under the LAHF2 equate to 40% of total project costs, plus an additional £20,000 per unit to fund associated purchase and refurbishment costs. Fylde Council submitted an Expression Of Interest in July 2023 that was accepted and funding awarded totaling £1,017,600 plus £240,000. The project will provide 8 units of temporary homeless accommodation and 4 units of settled accommodation under the Afghan Resettlement Scheme.

73. The local authority was required to use existing streams to provide 60% match funding. This was met by S106 developer contributions to the sum of £1,526,400, giving a capital grant programme to the sum of £2,784,000.

74. In 2024/25 the Local Authority had successfully secured 7 units of temporary homeless accommodation and 4 units of settled accommodation under the Afghan Resettlement Scheme, and we are working to provide the one remaining unit of temporary accommodation required under the Memorandum of Understanding and addition units, under both schemes with the remaining funding.

5. DEVELOPING THE HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SERVICE IN FYLDE

75. The next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30 for Fylde has to deliver towards new priorities in order to tackle the changing landscape of homelessness pressures facing the local authority.

76. Historically the service has maximised funding opportunities available to develop the offer to clients under its Statutory Functions in a flexible way. This has resulted in the service growing rapidly over the period of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 and projects created that sit across the service to deliver new against new statutory and non-statutory demands.

[10] Local Authority Housing Fund - GOV.UK

77. The structure of the service has been altered to separate the Homelessness and Housing Advice Function and support required to households to whom an Interim or Temporary Accommodation Duty is owed, by the creation of a dedicated Moving On Service.

78. Chapter 2 detailed the national picture of homelessness pressures with increases in households being threatened with homelessness and a Prevention Duty is owed and households experiencing homelessness to whom a Relief Duty is owed, and if homelessness is no relieved a Main Housing Duty is owed. The number of households reported in temporary accommodation has been increasing since 2021-22, and reached 117,450 on 31 March 2024, higher than at any other point since the data series began in 1998.

79. Chapter 3 detailed the local picture on Fylde with the number of households increasing year on year who are approaching the service at risk of or experiencing homelessness, with increasingly complex support needs of clients for example mental health needs, in physical ill health and registered disabled. The service has also seen an increase in households who are at risk of or experienced domestic abuse, learning difficulties, offending history and at risk of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping. As a result the number of households in temporary accommodation has doubled since 2020/21 from 27 to 48 at the same period in 2024/25 with concern regarding the number of children in temporary accommodation that has increased from 3 to 37 in the same period.

80. Chapter 4 detailed the funding available to support homelessness pressures in the Borough and the proactive approach the service has taken towards accessing funding to improve the service offer to meet the changing needs of Agencies and clients approaching the service.

81. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 gave new powers with funding attached, to assist Local Authorities to provide emergency accommodation and support. The Act sought to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse and as a result the number of clients approaching the Homeless Service at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse has doubled to on average 50 households per annum.

82. The service has also experienced demand from Refugee and Asylum Seeker Dispersal Schemes managed by the Home Office, during the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25. The service has engaged with Ukraine, Syrian and Afghan Resettlement Scheme and seen an increase in accommodation procured by the Home Office in Fylde as NASS (National Asylum Support Service). This refers to support provided to eligible Asylum Seekers in the UK and includes accommodation and financial assistance while an individuals' claim for Asylum is assessed. On leaving NASS accommodation the majority of Asylum Seekers are supported under Homeless Legislation by the Local Authority.

83. Applicants at risk of homelessness can approach the local authority by requesting an appointment at the Town Hall, via our website, ringing 01253 658658 or emailing housing@fylde.gov.uk. All applicants will be contacted on the day of approach under the Triage Service to gather initial information on the reasons why applicants have approached the Local Authority, their housing circumstances, reason for homelessness and to provide housing advice as required.

84. Clients are then offered an appointment for a full homelessness assessment to be completed where either the appropriate housing advice is provided or a formal Prevention or Relief Housing Duty is accepted. At this appointment if a client is not in a defined Priority Need category, a vulnerability assessment will be completed to establish if we have a reason to believe an individual is vulnerable for any 'other special reason' (Section 189 (1)(c) of the Homelessness Code of Guidance)[11].

[11] Homelessness code of guidance

85. A Personal Housing Plan is put in place with actions for both the clients and the Local Authority to work towards to relieve homelessness. This includes information on accessing permanent accommodation, support agencies where referrals have been made and a requirement to complete an on-line Tenancy Training Course regardless as to whether an individual has held a Tenancy previously.

86. The assessment process is important in order to identify the assistance an applicant may need, either to prevent or help them to find another home. A person is threatened with homelessness if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days. A person is homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in.

87. Due to rising costs and demand for temporary accommodation in 2024/25 the service increased the supply of temporary units from 10 units leased from Progress Housing to 31 units.

88. Working in partnership with the YMCA we have secured 11 one bedroom flats for 18 to 25 years olds to whom the Local Authority holds a homelessness duty, where support is provided on site to ensure the appropriate support is in place and source move on accommodation. These additional units have helped to address the limited supply of one bedroom temporary accommodation available in the borough and reduce the reliance on out of area B&B placement.

89. In August 2023 Fylde Council were successful in bidding for LAHF2 (Local Authority Housing Fund – Phase 2) and DLUHC approved Fylde Council's proposal to provide 12 homes under LAHF2 with a grant of £1,257,600. This as matched funded from Section 106 funds (Developer Contribution) totalling £1,526,400. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MofU) Fylde Council agreed to deliver:

- 4 properties for households that meet the resettlement scheme eligibility criteria under the ACRS (Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme)
- 8 properties to be allocated to households that meet the Temporary Accommodation element eligibility criteria

6. FYLDE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2025-30

90. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30 has one vision to end rough sleeping and reduce homelessness in Fylde. The strategy is focused on improving the outcomes for customers by providing the required support and working with external partners to ensure the support they are able to offer is accessed.

91. Staff within the homelessness service have been integral in the preparation of the Strategy to identify where the service is efficient and effective and areas where improvements can be made and how. This has created a strategy that the wider Housing Service have ownership of and enthusiasm to take forward throughout 2025-30.

92. The objectives of the Strategy are to:

a. Develop a customer centered service to reduce homelessness

The structure of the Homelessness and Housing Advice service has been altered to separate the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service to ensure that customers receive the required support in an efficient and timely way to empower them to make proactive decisions to resolve their homelessness. This support will include a streamlined and clear route into and continuing support, enhancement of the Personal Housing Plan tool to provide clear direction, maximizing support from external partners, developing advice

available via Fylde Council's website and developing a meaningful approach to receive and act on customer feedback. There will be a focus on ending rough sleeping in Fylde by ensuring all rough sleepers are fully informed about how to access support and the outcomes they can expect to achieve if they wish to.

b. A quality homelessness service that is accountable and professional

The service has made a commitment to staff to ensure they have the necessary training to undertake their roles effectively with annual updates on homelessness legislation. The Renters Reform Bill will become Law in 2025/26 and staff will need to be fully competent on how these changes will affect their working with clients. The service will ensure there is consistency across working practices with regular reflective training sessions to share knowledge and best practice. The service is focused on efficiently using public funds and will work towards reducing the reliance on B&B placements and increasing the supply of interim and temporary accommodation in Fylde.

c. Working together with external partners to provide better outcomes

The longer individuals remain homeless and repetitive homelessness, can have a negative impact on an individual's health, safety and overall well-being. Housing staff support clients' with varying needs that cannot all be packaged together as a 'Housing Issue'. The service must work to ensure the support provided by other statutory and non statutory partners is in place and accessed. This can include family and well-being services, drug and alcohol, mental health, financial, employment and access to benefits. The service will proactively arrange Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings when required and offer training and advice to other agencies to improve partnership working. This will help to inform how we can work differently or better together and share best practice.

93. Appendix 2 contains the Action Plan connected to the Strategy which will be used to provide annual updates.

Updates

Date	Amendment	Officers
Feb 2025	Draft for internal consultation	Kirstine Riding
March 2025	Final document for Committee approval	Kirstine Riding
April 2025	Executive Committee	Kirstine Riding