

Blaby District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping numbers have increased nationally and locally over the last five years. Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the national and local context on which future Rough Sleeping and Homelessness objectives are based. The need to address homelessness issues is crucial both for the individuals directly affected and the wider community.

The strategy replaces our Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2014 - 2019 and includes a more detailed approach to our rough sleeping interventions and how homelessness services have changed since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Our Vision:

To prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping in the Blaby District by working in partnership to meet the housing and broader needs of those in risk of, or who are already homeless.

Our Priorities:

1. Preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation
2. Increasing the supply of affordable housing
3. Developing partnership work and wider communications to ensure efficient service user led provision
4. Supporting vulnerable households to be independent and self reliant

Links to other Blaby District Strategies & Plans:



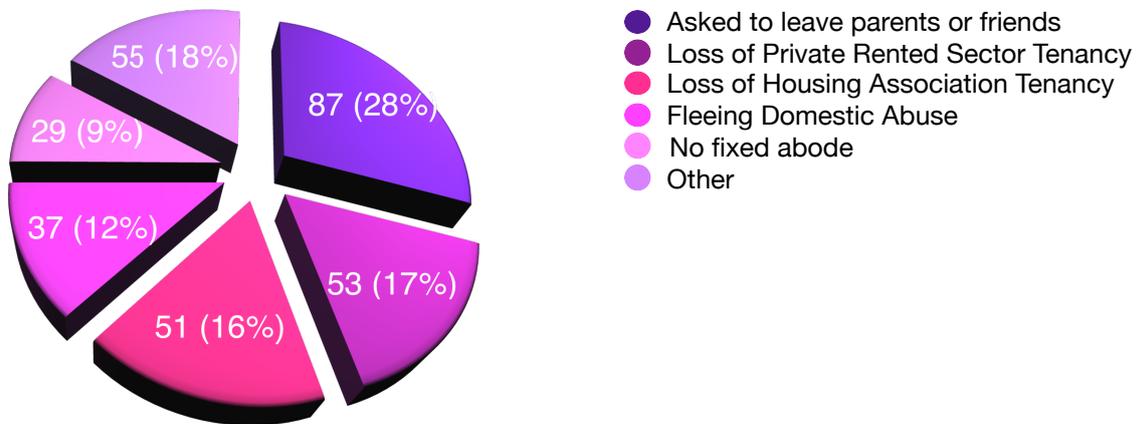
Key Facts and Figures:

4,677 people are sleeping rough across England with a 14% increase in the East Midlands	84,790 households (including 126,000 children) are living in temporary accommodation	34 households have been placed in temporary accommodation in the Blaby District since April 2019	355 households have approached the Council for assistance due to being threatened with homelessness since April 2019	681 households assessed as in housing need and accepted onto the Councils housing register	52 new Affordable Homes have been built in the Blaby District so far in the financial year 2019 / 2020
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Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new legal duties on Councils to ensure who is homeless or at risk of homelessness has access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an applicant is homeless, the Council must take reasonable steps to help all homeless eligible applicants to secure accommodation for at least 6 months. This is known as 'The Relief Duty' and once triggered will also continue for 56 days.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an applicant is threatened with homelessness, the council must take reasonable steps to help them avoid becoming homeless. This is known as 'The Prevention Duty' and once triggered will continue for 56 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the first homelessness strategy to be informed by the new ways of working outlined in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and measured by the new method of collecting Statutory Homelessness statistics (H-CLIC). www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted

Reasons for Homelessness in the Blaby District 2019 - 2020 (to date):



Key Challenges for Blaby:

- The District has a much lower stock of Private Rented accommodation compared to the East Midlands and the National average
- The Private Rented Sector in the District is largely unaffordable and somewhat inaccessible to people on low incomes or in receipt of state benefits
- The above demand exceeding supply scenario adds additional pressure to the Councils housing register
- Average house prices are high, meaning that there is difficulty in working households accessing mortgages.
- A couple earning an average wage would fall short of the entry level mortgage requirement by approximately £40,000, this again adds additional pressure to the already constrained Private Rented Sector
- At a time where homelessness cases relate to those with more complex needs the District lacks appropriate supported accommodation for such households
- Temporary accommodation options are limited, meaning that there is a threat of families and young people staying in bed and breakfast establishments for a period that exceed the statutory six week limit
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of Government funding for homelessness

Main Challenges Identified by our Partners:

Prior to the writing of this strategy we carried out an initial survey with our partners to help to identify the challenges we face in tackling and preventing homelessness, these are listed below and have been incorporated into our wider priority actions:

Accessing support
Violent / Family relationship breakdown
Getting all agencies to work together
Availability of suitable accommodation
Access to the Private Rented Sector
Identifying households at risk of homelessness
Debt issues
Getting people into education, employment and training
Mortgage arrears
Availability of suitable housing options

Our Priorities - What are we going to do?

Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation
Continue to make effective use of discretionary housing payments (DHP) to prevent homelessness and maintain tenancies
Provide effective and timely advice which is outcome focussed for those in housing need and concentrates on the prevention of homelessness
Be creative and innovative in finding solutions to prevent homelessness, including using funding in a flexible manner.
Continue to strengthen and develop multi-agency working, to enable joint initiatives and identify those at risk of homelessness, for example, those leaving prison or hospital, families, young people and care leavers and provide support to help sustain tenancies
Reduce stays in temporary accommodation and ensure that the use of bed and breakfast accommodation is only used as a last resort and for short spells
Priority 2 - Increase the supply of affordable housing
Continue to work in partnership with registered housing providers and Homes England to maximise the number of affordable homes built, to meet the demand of those households on our housing register
Seek innovative solutions to develop move on and supported housing for households who are Rough Sleepers and/or vulnerable with complex needs
Work closely with colleagues across the council to contribute to the ambitions for housing development opportunities within Blaby
Review the landlord incentive package currently offered to assist with the recruitment of new landlords
Continue to encourage owners of empty homes to consider renting their property to those who need affordable homes and do this in partnership with neighbouring authorities

Priority 3 - Develop partnership work and wider communications to ensure efficient and effective use of resources

Develop inter-agency joint working and understanding of respective procedures, pathways and expectations

Work with partners to address the gap in the provision of support and to minimise the impact of welfare reform

Review Rough Sleeper and homelessness communications with stakeholders

Pursue cross-authority projects and strategic and operational planning

Promote the prevention agenda and ensure that all council staff, members and partners are kept updated and informed

Review the current in-house rent deposit scheme to ensure that those people at risk of parental/friend exclusion are prioritised

Priority 4 - Supporting vulnerable households

Work with active Registered Providers to deliver new supported accommodation for Rough Sleepers and vulnerable households with complex needs

Work with our partner agencies to deliver outreach and advice services to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

Enable vulnerable households to access our Tenancy Sustainment Officer and / or Resident Support Team to help support them to sustain tenancies and access other services e.g. specialist financial support

Build on relationships with key partners including adult and children's services to increase support and accommodation options available

Reduce the number of people sleeping rough by developing a person-centred approach where all personal circumstances are considered, and interventions are tailored accordingly

Work in partnership to support service users to get in or nearer to the workplace

Our Priorities - How are we going to do it?

The strategy is a working document which will be reviewed and monitored by partners across the sector who work in the Blaby District, this group will be created following the publication of the strategy. There is an action plan in place which focuses on our key priorities and how we intend to deliver them. The plan sets out a range of objectives that will contribute to each priority, including who is taking the lead, the timescales involved and how they will be resourced. The Action Plan will be fully reviewed and refreshed with input from the monitoring group each year, as well as undertaking regular dynamic reviews to develop and drive forward the plan.

This strategy is supported by the Blaby District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Strategic Review document 2020 - 2025.

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