



**Ipswich Homelessness
and Rough Sleeping
Strategy
2025 - 2030**

PROUD OF IPSWICH
enabling residents and preventing
homelessness and rough sleeping in Ipswich.



PLAIN ENGLISH VERSION



“
*Proud of Ipswich,
Proud of our homes.*
”



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Foreword

Homelessness and rough sleeping continue to be an important issue for the Council and the residents of Ipswich.

Our services, as well as those of all Local Authorities in the country, have been affected by increasing financial pressures. Households have also had to deal with higher living costs which has meant that some families have struggled to pay their bills, possibly becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness. This strategy aims to overcome these challenges with a new approach.

Rough sleeping is the most visible and dangerous form of homelessness and is a key priority for this strategy. The problems and needs of this group are complex, and this strategy sets out how we will continue to work with our partners to end rough sleeping. The Rough Sleeping Project has grown with the support of government funding, meaning we have been able to help more people affected by rough sleeping.

However, homelessness is not just about rough sleeping.

Homelessness can affect anyone, and indeed in recent years more households have found themselves experiencing financial difficulties and in need of our help.

A key focus of this strategy is the prevention of homelessness by providing effective and reliable services. Helping people find good quality housing and supporting households to stay in their current home, where suitable, is crucial. It is also important to help households access the private rented sector.

Other key themes in this strategy include working with our partners to deal with the wider issues causing homelessness, and using data and technology to create services that are easy to use and good value for money. We want to make sure we continue to deliver a housing advice service that we can be proud of.

Councillor Alasdair Ross
Housing Portfolio Holder



Key Facts

about homelessness and rough sleeping in Ipswich

2023/24: over 1,800 approaches for housing advice.	March 2024: 55 households in temporary accommodation, of which 23 included children.	2022/23: 830 applications for supported housing. 32% were able to obtain support.
2022/23: Half of the households accepted as homeless were in priority need because there were dependent children in the household.	2023/24: just under a 1/3 of households were homeless or at risk of homelessness due to family or friends no longer being willing to accommodate them.	2024: Rough Sleeping Initiative 10 STEP beds, 23 Housing First tenancies, 3 Navigators, 1 Outreach, 1 Inreach, 1 Senior mental health practitioner, 4 Housing First support workers.
2022/23: Ipswich LET helped 55 households to obtain private rented accommodation.	2022/23: 133 households assisted through Spend to Save.	2023/24: we helped 524 households to remain in their current home or to find a new home.
2022/23: 64% of those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness were one-person households.	Rough sleeper count: 2018: 11 2019: 7 2020: 9 2021: 3 2022: 9 2023: 5	2023/24: 719 social houses let through Gateway to Homechoice. 27% let to homeless households.

Achievements

2023/24: 4,129 active applications for social housing in Ipswich.	We expanded the Husing Options team to include a financial inclusion officer , a criminal justice link worker and a domestic abuse link worker .	2023/24: weworked with 380 people to help them avoid or move away from rough sleeping.
2022/23: Ipswich LET secured 27 rent guarantee scheme tenancies in the private rented sector.	We improved our relationship with our partners , including National Probation Service, Suffolk County Council, NHS teams, and Suffolk Constabulary.	We activated Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) beds when appropriate to protect homeless people from adverse weather conditions.
We kept our rough sleeping numbers low despite increases across the country. 2023 annual count: 5 rough sleepers found.	We created a new job role within the Rough Sleeping Project team to work with people from out of area and non-UK nationals .	We developed and opened a new temporary accommodation unit for vulnerable single homeless people.
We increased the number of Housing First tenancies we provide and support. 2018: 4 2024: 23 Housing First tenancies allow us to help complex homeless people.	We worked to continue to fund a mental health practitioner post within the Rough Sleeping Project, alongside Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust .	We recruited a new policy and strategy officer and a new performance and project officer to gather and examine data to improve our services.

8 The challenges

Ten of the challenges we face to deliver high quality housing advice services.

01 Affordable accommodation.

lack of appropriate and affordable housing.

02 Welfare reform.

changes to benefits and other forms of welfare and the impact this has on the claimant's ability to find and stay in accommodation.

03 High demand on social housing.

there is not enough social housing for the people that need it.

04 Funding cuts within supported housing.

budget cuts to supported housing for single people with complex needs are putting pressure on housing advice services.

05 Time-limited government funding.

the budget for homelessness prevention services provided by the government is limited to a few years and this creates uncertainty.

06 Wider health and social issues that contribute to homelessness.

individuals and families are more likely to find themselves homeless because of social and health issues, such as lack of well-paid jobs or unaffordable care needs.

07 Uncertainty around Rough Sleeping Project funding.

the government budget to tackle rough sleeping only runs until 2025, and the future budget has not been announced yet.

08 High demand for accommodation for single households.

there are a lot of single people in need of accommodation, such as private rented HMO's and one bed social housing.

09 Increase in approaches from care leavers.

there has been an increase in the number of care leavers becoming homeless when they turn 18.

10 Financial pressures on public services.

general pressure on public services has an impact on the homelessness services the Council can provide.

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy priorities

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focuses on five key priorities which explain how we will go about preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping in Ipswich.

Our priorities

01 Provide a high-quality advice service.

02 Focus on early prevention.

03 Work with our partners to end rough sleeping.

04 Facilitate access to suitable accommodation.

05 Build and maintain partnerships that support residents.

10 **Priority 01:** **Provide a high-quality advice service**

We will provide a high quality, efficient and easy to use housing advice service to all residents and local people in need. We will work with other Council departments and partner agencies to support vulnerable residents to find and stay in suitable accommodation.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Ensure housing staff are highly trained professionals who provide a welcoming, inclusive, and compassionate service which encourages people to seek help as early as possible.
- **Aim 2** Provide a variety of ways to access our services so we can meet the needs of everyone in our community.
- **Aim 3** Be open, fair, and honest in our advice, putting the person at the centre to ensure they have clear options and to manage expectations. Listen and learn from complaints to improve our services and customer experience.
- **Aim 4** Work with other Council departments and partners within the town delivering advice and support to share best practice and to provide comprehensive support to customers.

11 **Priority 02:** **Focus on early prevention**

We will focus our resources on early prevention to ensure that as few residents as possible experience homelessness as it is upsetting to those who go through it and costly to the public. We will work with our partners to ensure the delivery of other services that support our residents and those in need.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Explore new ways to prevent and relieve homelessness by using data to identify at-risk groups and the best way to use resources.
- **Aim 2** Create new pathways and reassess current pathways for vulnerable groups, such as residents with mental health problems, care leavers, survivors of domestic abuse, and any other groups that might be relevant.
- **Aim 3** Work with our partners to further develop processes and deliver interventions to prevent homelessness early.



12 Priority 03:

Work with our partners to end rough sleeping

We will ensure rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur, that it is rare, for a short time only, and that it doesn't happen again.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Deliver joined-up services for the most vulnerable.
- **Aim 2** Make an off-the-street offer to all rough sleepers, where possible.
- **Aim 3** Actively work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG).
- **Aim 4** Continue to campaign for funding for Housing First.
- **Aim 5** Continue to host a regular steering group to discuss data, trends, and funding, and promote joint working. Continue to review and expand this group.
- **Aim 6** Be the strategic lead for local services for rough sleepers, by actively working with all partners and sharing resources.
- **Aim 7** Boost support for Housing First tenants.
- **Aim 8** Raise awareness of the work being done.
- **Aim 9** Encourage participation and ideas from interested parties.
- **Aim 10** Be open to new information and research to ensure we are learning from and sharing best practice. Compare and share our outcomes with relevant groups.
- **Aim 11** Apply a better system to support clients to get care needs assessments.
- **Aim 12** Apply joint working to ensure all rough sleepers are safeguarded.

13 Priority 04:

Facilitate access to suitable accommodation

We will help residents to find, access and stay in accommodation that is appropriate and affordable. We will continue to develop our offer so that it meets the housing needs of residents and those in need.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Reassess the Council's current temporary accommodation to ensure it is high quality and value for money.
- **Aim 2** Work with Council departments on the development of new affordable housing, ensuring the right split of property types and sizes as need changes.
- **Aim 3** Be a proactive member of Gateway to Homechoice allocations scheme by ensuring vulnerable groups are given the correct priority.
- **Aim 4** Increase access to the private rented sector by offering attractive rent deposit and guarantee schemes to landlords and tenants.
- **Aim 5** Continue to develop ways to support residents to maintain their accommodation through schemes such as money advice and mediation.
- **Aim 6** Continue to work with our partners to provide custom support for those with complex needs.
- **Aim 7** Continue to work with our partners to develop housing options for single/one-person households.
- **Aim 8** Explore funding opportunities for specific groups such as refugees and rough sleepers.



14 **Priority 05:**

Build and maintain partnerships that support residents

We will work with partners to make sure that partnerships, processes, and the right resources are in place to support residents, including those most vulnerable.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Work to minimise the impact of the ending of housing related support (HRS) funding on residents and explore other funding options to protect services to vulnerable single/one-person households.
- **Aim 2** Work with statutory partners through the Suffolk Housing Board to ensure a joined-up approach across Suffolk with shared aims.
- **Aim 3** Facilitate access to mental health services for vulnerable groups.
- **Aim 4** Contribute to the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure projects carried out include people experiencing homelessness as a vulnerable group and to ensure access to health and wellbeing services.
- **Aim 5** Ensure we have a strategic approach to partnership working and are aware of how we fit into the policies and strategies of our partners.



Delivering our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping priorities

To deliver on the priorities presented here, we must achieve the aims we set out.

The aims set out here are supported by an action plan that contains exact steps to achieve each aim (appendix 1). We will regularly review and update the action plan.

We will prioritise our actions to make sure we meet the most important aims first.

We will assess how we are doing in achieving these aims and actions regularly and will involve our partners in this process.

Consultation

To make sure that our housing colleagues who work within the council, the organisations we work with, and the residents of Ipswich agree with the strategy and could help to develop it we:

- Had regular meetings with a manager from each housing team.
- Had regular meetings with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Organised a consultation workshop event for the organisations we work with.
- Included feedback from the Corporate Management Team into the public consultation documents and the strategy.
- Had a public consultation.

The consultation report can be found in appendix 4.



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01473 432000



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www.ipswich.gov.uk/contactus



Ipswich Borough Council, Grafton House
15-17 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2DE