

# Consultation review and outcomes for: Share your views on how we should tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading

## Objectives of the consultation

The consultation aimed to gather valuable insights from the public, partners, and professionals on the proposed priorities and guiding principles for Reading's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 – 31. It also provided an important opportunity to reflect on how current services are being delivered – exploring whether they effectively meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness, as well as the expectations of our partners across statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups, and faith-based services.

Before adopting or revising a homelessness strategy, housing authorities are required to consult with a range of stakeholders – including members of the public, local authorities, voluntary organisations, and any other groups they deem relevant. Meaningful engagement with service users and specialist agencies that support people experiencing homelessness is also strongly encouraged, ensuring that the strategy reflects lived experience and frontline expertise. The Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the legal framework for homelessness strategies in England. Importantly, under Section 3(4) of the Act, a housing authority cannot include specific actions to be undertaken by another organisation without first securing their agreement – reinforcing the importance of collaboration and shared ownership in delivering effective solutions.

## How consultation results influenced the way the strategy was drafted and delivered

Consultation responses were collated, reviewed, and thematically analysed. Feedback was then shared with the public, stakeholders, and service users, outlining which contributions were incorporated into the strategy and providing clear explanations for those that were not.

The proposed priorities, consulted on, for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30 were:

- **Priority 1:** Intervening early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- **Priority 2:** Breaking the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping
- **Priority 3:** Providing access to decent, suitable and sustainable homes

The proposed principles were:

- **Collaborative and joined-up working** - improving how we work with other government funded organisations such as hospitals, prisons and the Home Office
- **Community, voluntary and faith sector support** - making our partnerships stronger in supporting the work of local charities and community interest groups
- **Customer and stakeholder input** - improving how we gather and use feedback from our customers
- **Cross-sector accountability** - helping people to receive support from multiple services to keep a roof over their head
- **Innovation** - finding new ways to deliver our homelessness services that offer best value for money

- **Access to services and information** - making sure that housing options and advice are available to everyone, either on-line or in person, and promoting public awareness of homelessness issues
- **Data-driven delivery** - using the information we collect about Reading residents to understand how best to deliver services

## Consultation methods

The consultation on the three proposed priorities and seven guiding principles ran from 3<sup>rd</sup> July to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2025. A three-pronged approach was used to ensure a broad and representative range of views were captured across the community.

There were:

1. **Consultation method:** Online survey via RBC's Go Vocal platform (see Appendix A), promoted through social media.  
**Target audience:** Residents, businesses, university students, statutory partners, voluntary, community, and faith sector organisations and internal Council staff.  
**Supporting Document:** See: *Go Vocal Consultation Responses Summary*
2. **Consultation method:** Cross-sector workshops and focus groups held via Microsoft Teams (see Appendix B for PowerPoint presentation used).  
**Target audience:** Statutory sector partners, voluntary, community, and faith sector (VCFS) organisations supporting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
3. **Consultation Method:** Service providers supported individuals to complete survey questions, using paper copies where needed.  
**Target audience:** People using homelessness and rough sleeping services delivered or commissioned by Reading Borough Council.

## Chronology of key promotional activities

Date:	Promotional activity
3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2025	Launch email, with poster, to homelessness and rough sleeping professionals/stakeholders, other sector partners and voluntary, community and faith sector partners to support promotion of the consultation
9 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Homelessness Prevention Officers Team Meeting
10 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Team Reading newsletter to council employees
17 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Reading Lived Experience Forum (Homelessness and Rough Sleeping)
22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025	Workshop with homelessness, rough sleeping and other sector stakeholders
28 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Workshop with homelessness, rough sleeping and other sector stakeholders
29 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Housing Needs Managers Meeting

<b>29<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>	Domestic Abuse Forum
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> August 2025</b>	Deputy Leader's column for The Reading Chronicle: <a href="#">Have your say on tackling homelessness in Reading   Reading Chronicle</a>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> August 2025</b>	Drop-in for homelessness, rough sleeping and other sector stakeholders
<b>7<sup>th</sup> August 2025</b>	Drop-in for homelessness, rough sleeping and other sector stakeholders

The on-line consultation was promoted via the following means:

- **Social media:** Facebook, X and NextDoor.
- **On-line:** Consultation hub Go Vocal, RBC website, Council employees Intranet, email signatures across Housing Needs, email to promote to all known stakeholders.
- **Leaflets and posters:** QR code for accessibility (see Appendix B).
- **Multiple cross-sector partnership meetings:** including the Access Panel, Co-production meetings, Domestic Abuse Forum.

Invites to the two-hour workshop/focused sessions were targeted at operational and managerial partners across council and non-council statutory partners – including health, criminal justice, children's and adult social care, commissioned homelessness and rough sleeping and VCFS services.

## Ensuring inclusive representation and accessible engagement

To ensure the consultation captured a diverse range of voices – including those with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping – targeted efforts were made to reach individuals who may face barriers to participation. Surveys were completed in person where needed, with support from frontline services such as outreach teams and drop-in centres – helping to bridge any digital exclusion and encourage engagement with online consultation tools.

Recognising the challenges faced by harder-to-reach groups – such as people currently rough sleeping, seeking asylum, and refugees – paper versions of the survey were available via support agencies. Agencies assisted with completion and uploaded responses to the platform, ensuring these voices were included. They were also asked to actively promote the consultation within their premises and among their service users.

A blended approach was adopted to meet both professional and service user access needs. Online meetings via Microsoft Teams were held to maximise attendance, with separate focus groups tailored to different stakeholder groups to ensure relevance and representation. Sessions were recorded and transcribed, allowing those unable to attend to access the discussions. Additional drop-in sessions were offered online to capture one-to-one feedback and accommodate those who missed group sessions, and these were well-attended.

Accessibility features were embedded into digital tools, including browser-based read-aloud functions for sight-impaired users and translation options to support non-English speakers. Support agencies could also provide assistance by reading surveys aloud and recording responses for individuals with visual impairments.

## **Key findings: Summary of all on-line consultation responses**

Key findings from the online consultation are detailed in the *Go Vocal Consultation Responses Summary*. These insights have directly shaped the feedback themes and informed the review of proposed priorities and principles. Where feedback was not incorporated, clear rationale has been provided.

## **Key findings: Workshops/Focus groups**

### **General agreement**

- Support for a cohesive approach to integrate homelessness and rough sleeping strategies
- Agreement that proposed priorities are strong and appropriately high-level
- Broad support for the principles, pending the detail of an action plan

### **Most significant day-to-day concerns for partners in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping**

- Housing affordability
- Housing availability and standards – especially within the private rented sector
- Health inequalities contributing to rough sleeping and homelessness
- Support services and move-on from supported accommodation
- Funding and resources
- Early traumatic experiences contributing to rough sleeping and homelessness
- Safeguarding responses to complex needs

## Feedback themes and responses:

Theme	Feedback	Included via...	Rationale (if not included) / further comments
<b>Clarity and communication</b>	Clarify definitions of key terms such as 'decent', 'suitable', and 'sustainable'.	Strategy	-
	Reduce jargon and include a glossary to avoid confusion.	Strategy	-
	Use Plain English to ensure accessibility for the public and service users e.g. 'stakeholder' or 'cross-sector accountability' are words used by professionals, that will not resonate with the public/residents.	Strategy Action Plan	-
	Break down long sentences to highlight key points and use consistent defined terminology (e.g. rough sleeping or sleeping rough and breaking or interrupting cycles).	Strategy Action Plan	-
	Improve phrasing and explanation of priorities, e.g., distinguish between prevention and breaking the cycle of homelessness, explain what intervening early will mean.	Strategy Action Plan	-
	Reconsider the order of priorities (e.g., swap Priority 1 and 3).	-	Priorities are closely interlinked. The order is fluid/interchangeable depending on the customer's journey.
	Clarify the strategic/priority approach when existing support mechanisms or intervention are unsuccessful.	Strategy	-
<b>Implementation and action</b>	Translate priorities into tangible, visible actions.	Action Plan	-
	Ensure real outcomes for customers.	Action Plan	-
	Provide more detail on implementation.	Action Plan	-

<b>Funding and resourcing</b>	Ensure proper resourcing and upfront investment in Council, commissioned, and voluntary sector services.	Strategy	This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.
	Invest in workforce development through training, retention, and career progression across Council delivered, commissioned and voluntary sector services.	Strategy	
	Address the lack of sustainability of short-term commissions and projects.	Strategy	
<b>Systemic and national policy challenges</b>	Address systemic barriers/policy at national level, including challenges related to benefits, immigration status, and eligibility for support.	Strategy Action Plan	This is influenced by national level politics and international socio-economic factors.
	Address structural barriers and market dynamics, including affordability of the private rented sector, poor housing quality, and lack of social housing.	Strategy Action Plan	
<b>Integration with other strategies</b>	Embed homelessness strategy within broader Council and external strategies.	Strategy Action Plan	-
	Establish joint working protocols and strategic alignment with other services and organisations.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</b>	Position EDI as a core strategic value alongside respect and dignity.	Strategy	-
	Ensure fair treatment, representation, and opportunities across all priorities.	Strategy	-
	Use inclusive language to reduce stigma and avoid subjugating specific homeless groups.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Action Plan and further consultation</b>	Continue consultation with partners and people with lived experience during action plan development	Action Plan	-
	Ensure the action plan is practical, realistic, and reflective of frontline challenges.	Action Plan	-
	Include clear, measurable actions connected to each principle with mechanisms for accountability/governance.	Action Plan	-

## Review of proposed priorities and subsequent changes:

<p><b>Proposed Priority 1:</b> Intervening early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p><i>Why it matters:</i> Early intervention reduces homelessness crisis and costs of emergency accommodation. Loss of accommodation negatively impacts families, individuals and communities. When homelessness occurs, time spent in emergency accommodation or sleeping rough must be brief.</p>		
Feedback	Included via...	Rationale (if not included) / further comments
<p><b>Explicitly recognise hidden homelessness</b> in its definitions and priorities</p> <p>The proposed priority was perceived as too narrow in scope, excluding significant forms of hidden homelessness such as sofa surfing, families staying with friends or relatives, and individuals living in tents, caravans, B&amp;Bs, or overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation. These groups often do not meet statutory and/or crisis thresholds and remain invisible to services, missing out on early intervention and support.</p>	<p>Amendment to priority and description of priority</p> <p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	-
<p><b>Enable early intervention</b> for those outside statutory or crisis definitions.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	-
<p><b>Use inclusive language and criteria</b> to ensure visibility and support for vulnerable groups who are experiencing hidden homelessness.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	-
<p><b>Rationale for change / inclusion:</b></p>		
<p><b>Explicitly recognise hidden homelessness in definitions and priorities</b></p> <p>→ Many individuals experiencing homelessness – such as sofa surfing, families staying with friends, or those in tents, caravans, and B&amp;Bs – are not approaching services to be considered against statutory thresholds and remain invisible. Including these groups ensures the strategy reflects the full scope of homelessness and targets support where it's most needed.</p>		
<p><b>Enable early intervention for those outside statutory or crisis definitions</b></p> <p>→ Early support prevents escalation into crisis, reduces long-term harm, and improves outcomes. Recognising non-statutory cases allows services to act sooner and more effectively.</p>		
<p><b>Use inclusive language and criteria</b></p> <p>→ Clear, inclusive language ensures vulnerable groups are not excluded due to technical definitions or service thresholds. It promotes equity, transparency, and accessibility across the strategy and action plan.</p>		

**Priority amended to:**

**Priority 1: Intervene early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping**

**What:** Identify housing problems early, before they turn into a crisis

**How:** We will work closely with public services and community partners to help people at the first sign of housing instability, and we will find ways for those experiencing hidden homelessness to access services and support.

**Why:** By acting quickly to help people before they lose their home, we can reduce crisis, avoid long stays in emergency accommodation, with better outcomes for individuals and families.

**Proposed Priority 2: Breaking the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping**

*Why it matters:* Ending the cycle improves individual and community health and well-being. It interrupts cycles of trauma and creates safer, more inclusive neighbourhoods.

Feedback	Included via...	Rationale (if not included) / further comments
<p><b>Recognise domestic abuse as a distinct driver of repeated homelessness</b>, requiring dedicated priority and access to specialist support.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p>Not included as a separate priority but will ensure addressed in strategy and action plan as vulnerable group.</p>
<p><b>Address root causes</b> such as substance misuse and mental health through improved access to rehabilitation and integrated support services.</p> <p>Proposed priority does not sufficiently consider or address the root causes of homelessness, for example illegal substance misuse. Support services for mental health and addiction to substances highlighted as essential, with suggestions for increased access to rehabilitation programmes.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p>Rehabilitation programmes are accessed via Public Health which highlights need for collaborative and joined up working in tackling homelessness.</p>
<p><b>Ensure a range of supported accommodation options</b>, with emphasis on smaller, self-contained units and high-quality supported housing.</p> <p>Emphasis on the importance of temporary and long-term options for people sleeping rough, including more off-the-streets offers and supported housing. View that smaller, self-contained supported housing options are better for people with complex needs who struggle to manage and move-on from larger hostel type environments. Embed trauma-informed approaches and ensure safe, appropriate accommodation.</p> <p>Ensure that all supported housing commissions for people experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping, are well-resourced (to ensure high quality recruitment and retention of staff), regularly reviewed/monitored and held to high standards.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p>This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.</p>

<p><b>Support the provision of practical support</b> for people sleeping rough to aid recovery and employment</p> <p>Suggestion that practical support like showers, clothes, and a postcode for job applications would make it easier for people sleeping rough to access work.</p>	<p>Action Plan</p>	<p>This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.</p>
<p><b>Respond to street-based behaviours</b> like begging and anti-social activity, that may be linked to rough sleeping, using multi-agency, trauma-informed and compassionate approaches.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p>Begging and anti-social behaviour is not always synonymous with rough sleeping but addressing these sometimes-associated behaviours highlights need for collaborative and joined up working in tackling homelessness.</p>

## Rationale for change / inclusion:

### **Recognise domestic abuse as a distinct driver of homelessness**

→ Recurring domestic abuse leads to repeated homelessness presentations, especially for families and children. Recognition of this within the strategy ensures timely access to safe accommodation and specialist support, reducing disruption and trauma.

### **Address root causes such as substance misuse and mental health**

→ These are often underlying factors in homelessness. Integrated support and enabling access to rehabilitation are essential for recovery and long-term stability.

### **Ensure a range of supported accommodation options**

→ Smaller, self-contained units are more suitable for individuals with complex needs, offering greater privacy, stability, and potential for successful move-on.

### **Embed trauma-informed approaches**

→ Ensures accommodation and support services are sensitive to the experiences of those affected by trauma, improving engagement and outcomes.

### **Provide practical support for people sleeping rough**

→ Access to basic amenities helps individuals regain dignity and access employment, services, and housing.

### **Respond to street-based behaviours with compassion**

→ Addressing begging and anti-social behaviour through trauma-informed, multi-agency approaches reduces harm and supports recovery, rather than criminalising vulnerability.

## Priority amended to:

### **Priority 2: Break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping**

**What:** Help people move on from homelessness for good by recognising that housing alone is not the solution.

**How:** We will work with public sector and community groups to tackle root causes and reasons for repeat homelessness. We will provide advice and support in ways that our customers can access. We will ask for customer feedback and use this to improve all our services – including supported housing.

**Why:** Breaking the cycle helps people, especially children, stay healthy and builds safer, more welcoming communities. Listening and learning all the time helps us support people better and make sure everyone feels respected and understood. Helping with connected problems gives people a better chance to recover and stay stable long term.

<b>Proposed Priority 3: Providing access to decent, suitable and sustainable homes</b>		
<p><i>Why it matters:</i> When people have a permanent home, they have more chance of controlling their lives and finances. They are more likely to access healthcare and keep employment. Their children are better able to attend school and succeed in their education. A settled home reduces the likelihood of recurring homelessness and rough sleeping.</p>		
<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Included via...</b>	<b>Rationale (if not included) / further comments</b>
<p><b>Use accessible language</b> by replacing “permanent home” with “stable” or “settled” housing.</p>	Amendment to priority and description of priority.	-
<p><b>Clarify terminology</b> by defining words like “access” clearly to ensure shared understanding across services and communities.</p>	Amendment to priority and description of priority.	-
<p><b>Emphasise affordability</b> by making affordability a core theme across priorities and principles.</p>	Amendment to principles and description of principles.	-
<p><b>Support the expansion of affordable housing options</b> via development of social and affordable housing, including council-owned stock and new builds, alongside move-on options from supported housing.</p> <p>Provide more and better long-term housing which is safe and provided without conditions, by prioritising the development and access to social and affordable housing, including council-owned stock and new builds.</p> <p>Increase availability of move-on options from supported housing, especially for people who have previously slept rough for many years.</p>	-	Connect this strategy to the Council’s Housing Strategy responsible for the strategic delivery of new homes and social housing in Reading.
<p><b>Engage the private rented sector</b> by strengthening regulation, improving standards, and building ethical landlord partnerships through forums and targeted schemes.</p>	Strategy Action Plan	Wider Renter’s Rights Reform implications.

Strengthen regulation and engagement with private landlords to increase private rented sector supply, including improved standards, landlord forums, and developing an ethical/altruistic landlord portfolio.		
<b>Strengthen tenancy sustainment support offer</b> via floating support and practical assistance post-housing.	Action Plan	-
<b>Explore community-led models</b> by considering replicating initiatives like Refugees at Home to unlock altruistic housing offers for people seeking asylum and others in need.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Rationale for change / inclusion:</b>		
<p><b>Use accessible language</b> → Improves clarity and inclusivity, ensuring the strategy resonates with both professionals and the public, and reflects the varied realities of homelessness and customer journeys.</p> <p><b>Clarify terminology</b> → Promotes shared understanding across services and communities, reducing misinterpretation and improving service navigation.</p> <p><b>Emphasise affordability as a core theme</b> → Affordability is a key barrier to housing stability. Embedding it across priorities/principles ensures the strategy addresses both immediate and long-term housing needs.</p> <p><b>Expand affordable housing options</b> → Developing social housing, alongside move-on options, increases supply and supports sustainable pathways out of homelessness.</p> <p><b>Increase move-on options from supported housing</b> → Enables progression for individuals with complex needs, especially those with long histories of rough sleeping, reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and ensure vacancies and availability for those who need it next.</p> <p><b>Engage the private rented sector</b> → Strengthening regulation and building ethical landlord partnerships improves housing quality, expands options, and fosters more inclusive tenancy practices.</p> <p><b>Strengthen tenancy sustainment support offer</b> → Reduces repeat homelessness and supports long-term stability.</p>		

**Explore community-led housing models**

→ Initiatives like Refugees at Home demonstrate potential of altruistic housing offers, expanding capacity and community involvement in solutions.

**Amended to:****Priority 3: Make sure everyone can access safe, settled, and affordable housing**

**What:** Provide homes that meet both legal standards and personal needs – places where people can live well.

**How:** We will use new and existing social housing to meet homelessness needs in the best way. We will build stronger partnerships with landlords to increase housing supply. We will make sure everyone can get the right support to find, move into and keep a stable home. We will be creative, but open about the limits on housing choices – like costs, legislation, and what the market can offer – so people understand what is possible and avoid unnecessary frustration.

**Why:** A home gives people the foundation they need to rebuild their lives, avoid crisis, and recover in the long term. By working creatively and in partnership we can help people access homes that meet our required standards and suit individual need.

## Review of proposed principles and subsequent changes:

<b>Proposed principle: Collaborative and joined-up working</b> Improving how we work with other government funded organisations such as hospitals, prisons and the Home Office.		
<b>What is working well</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proactive partnership working</b> is helping to prevent homelessness and support recovery.</li> <li>• <b>Improved relationships</b> over the last decade, with voluntary, community, and faith-based organisations are strengthening the local response.</li> <li>• <b>Strong cross-sector collaboration</b>, particularly between housing services and probation, is enabling open, solution-focused communication and effective outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>Effective coordination</b> between the Council and outreach teams in health, substance misuse, and rough sleeping is supporting timely interventions.</li> </ul>		
<b>Feedback and improvements</b>	<b>Included via...</b>	<b>Rationale (if not included) / further comments</b>
<b>Provide clearer examples</b> in the explanation of this principle.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Show how this principle will prevent people from falling through the gaps</b> and provide holistic support.	Action Plan	-
<b>Offer trauma counselling when people are in supported housing, in-reach housing advice</b> to hospital, prison and Home Office accommodation settings and <b>develop stronger prison-to-housing pathways</b> .	Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Improve cross-agency communication</b> , including clearer service updates, referral pathways, and information sharing—especially for vulnerable groups.	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Promote personalised, multi-agency support</b> , with stronger links to adult social care, mental health, and community organisations.	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Deepen understanding of commissioned services</b> through regular Council engagement, such as site visits or mentorship-style partnerships.	Action Plan	

<p><b>Establish a purposeful Homelessness Partnership</b>, with a clear purpose beyond networking, ideally led by an independent body, to drive shared projects, co-production, data-informed impact (as a sector collective), and inclusive engagement.</p>	Action Plan	
<p><b>Explore collaborative, joint commissioning models</b> to reduce competition, foster sector cohesion and promote efficiency.</p>	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<p><b>Advocate for structural change</b>, including rent caps and better housing benefit alignment, through engagement with central government</p>	Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<p><b>Rationale for change / inclusion:</b></p>		
<p><b>Clarify and illustrate principles with practical examples</b>  → Ensures the strategy is understandable and actionable for both professionals and service users, helping prevent individuals from falling through the gaps.</p> <p><b>Embed trauma-informed support</b>  → Recognises the complex experiences of people facing homelessness and ensures services are responsive, compassionate, and tailored to individual needs—especially in high-risk settings like hospitals, prisons, and asylum accommodation.</p> <p><b>Strengthen multi-agency collaboration</b>  → Improves coordination, reduces duplication, and ensures vulnerable groups receive consistent, joined-up support across services.</p> <p><b>Deepen Council engagement with commissioned services</b>  → Builds trust, improves insight into frontline realities, and strengthens partnerships – leading to more informed commissioning and better service delivery.</p> <p><b>Establish a purposeful Homelessness Partnership</b>  → Creates a shared space for strategic alignment, co-production, and collective impact, especially when led independently to ensure impartiality and broad engagement. Shows that the existing Homelessness Forum is not promoted/accessible for some groups.</p> <p><b>Adopt collaborative commissioning models</b>  → Reduces competition between providers, fosters sector cohesion, and promotes best value and innovation in service design and delivery.</p> <p><b>Advocate for structural reform</b>  → Addresses root causes of homelessness by influencing national policy on housing affordability and benefit alignment, ensuring local strategies are not undermined by systemic barriers.</p>		

**Principle amended to:**

**Work together across services to give people better support**

Strong partnerships between the Council, health services, probation, community groups, and national agencies like hospitals, prisons, and the Home Office help prevent homelessness and support recovery. By sharing information, coordinating referrals, and offering joined-up services we can make sure advice and support is tailored to each person's needs.

**Proposed principle: Community, voluntary and faith sector support**

Making our partnerships stronger in supporting the work of local charities and community interest groups.

**What is working well**

- **Improved relationships** with voluntary, community, and faith-based organisations are strengthening local collaboration and service delivery.
- **High-quality VCFS and commissioned support services** in Reading are recognised and valued, though their effectiveness may be contributing to increased demand from outside the area - highlighting the town's reputation as a place of strong provision.

Feedback and improvements	Included via...	Rationale (if not included) / further comments
<b>Importance of cross-sector support</b> - including health, substance misuse services, training, and community involvement - as key to helping people move on from homelessness.	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Close communication gaps</b> between services to improve coordination, reduce duplication, and ensure consistent support – especially for vulnerable groups.	Action Plan	-
<b>Leverage community-led models</b> (e.g. Homes for Ukraine, Refugees at Home) to harness public goodwill and expand housing options.	Action Plan	This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.  Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

<p><b>Avoid duplication by mapping existing services</b> and ensuring teams work in alignment toward shared goals. Conduct a service mapping exercise to identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities for better integration.</p>	Action Plan	-
<p><b>Secure sustainable funding for VCFS</b> to maintain and strengthen their vital role in homelessness prevention and support.</p>	Action Plan	<p>This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.</p> <p>Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sectors.</p>
<p><b>Rationale for change / inclusion:</b></p>		
<p><b>Cross-sector support is essential for recovery and move-on</b>  → Integrating health, substance misuse services, training, and community involvement ensures holistic support, addressing the complex needs of individuals and improving long-term outcomes.</p> <p><b>Close communication gaps between services</b>  → Strengthening coordination reduces duplication, improves efficiency, and ensures vulnerable individuals receive consistent and timely support.</p> <p><b>Leverage community-led models</b>  → Initiatives like Homes for Ukraine and Refugees at Home demonstrate the power of public goodwill and offer scalable, inclusive housing solutions that complement formal systems.</p> <p><b>Avoid duplication through service mapping</b>  → Identifying existing services and gaps ensures resources are used effectively, promotes team alignment, and supports strategic planning.</p> <p><b>Secure sustainable funding for VCFS</b>  → Voluntary and community sector organisations play a critical role in prevention and frontline support. Long-term funding is essential to maintain their capacity, stability, and impact in prevention, outreach and support.</p>		
<p><b>Principle amended to:</b></p>		
<p><b>Work closely with charities, community groups, and faith organisations to support people facing homelessness</b>  Local organisations play a vital role in preventing homelessness and helping people recover. We will agree shared values to align service objectives and activities – this will make sure everyone understands what each sector can and can't do. By improving coordination, facilitating access to funding, and learning from community-led models, we can make sure support is joined-up, inclusive, and reaches those who need it most.</p>		

**Proposed principle: Customer and stakeholder input**  
Improving how we gather and use feedback from our customers.

**What is working well**

**Establishment of a co-production forum** in June 2025, along with the **exploration of peer mentoring and a co-production framework**, reflects a growing commitment to involving people with lived experience in shaping homelessness services in Reading – helping to ensure that support is more relevant, inclusive, and responsive to real needs.

Feedback and improvements	Included via...	Rationale (if not included) / further comments
<b>Embed genuine co-production from the outset</b> , ensuring people with lived experience help shape services, pathways, and strategic decisions.	Action Plan	-
<b>Ensure strategic oversight includes exposure to lived experience voices</b> , including engagement with key stakeholders like the police and senior decision-makers.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Improve communication and consistency across services</b> around messaging to clients and what they can expect from services	Action Plan	-
<b>Introduce tools like an assessment passport</b> to reduce duplication, minimise trauma, and promote trust and flexibility in support delivery.	Action Plan	-
<b>Map existing services to avoid duplication</b> and ensure customers know what services are available and out there, and teams work in alignment toward shared goals that meet customer needs and service gaps.	Action Plan	-
<b>Rebuild post-COVID community and volunteer networks</b> to strengthen local capacity and engagement and enhance customer involvement and input.	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

### Rationale for change / inclusion:

#### **Embed genuine co-production from the outset**

→ Involving people with lived experience ensures services and pathways are shaped by real needs, improving relevance, trust, and outcomes.

#### **Ensure strategic oversight includes lived experience voices**

→ Engaging key stakeholders (e.g. police, senior decision-makers) with lived experience stories fosters empathy, informs policy, and drives meaningful change.

#### **Improve communication and consistency across services**

→ Clear, unified messaging helps clients understand what to expect, reduces confusion, and strengthens trust in the system.

#### **Introduce tools like an assessment passport**

→ Reduces duplication and trauma, promotes continuity of care, and encourages collaborative working across agencies.

#### **Map existing services to avoid duplication and align efforts**

→ Identifying gaps and overlaps ensures resources are used effectively and services are coordinated around client needs.

#### **Rebuild post-COVID community and volunteer networks**

→ Strengthens local capacity, enhances client involvement, and reconnects people with community-led support and opportunities.

### Principle amended to:

#### **Listen to people and use their experiences to shape services**

People who've experienced homelessness know what works. By involving them from the start, improving communication and feedback, and making services easier to understand and access, we can build trust, reflect real customer journeys, and design services and support that truly meets people's needs.

**Proposed principle: Cross-sector accountability**

Helping people to receive support from multiple services to keep a roof over their head.

**What is working well**

**Bringing housing and adult social care into one directorate** is starting to improve internal collaboration by fostering better communication, joint decision-making, and more coordinated support for individuals with complex needs.

**Feedback and improvements**

**Included via...**

**Rationale (if not included) / further comments**

**Adopt a whole-system approach** treating homelessness as a multi-dimensional issue requiring wraparound support (e.g. mental health, substance misuse, employment pathways). **Housing alone is not the solution.**

Strategy  
Action Plan

Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

**Embed systemic collaboration** by moving beyond reliance on personal relationships and establishing formal structures for consistent internal and external collaboration.

Strategy  
Action Plan

Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

**Ensure strategic integration** by embedding homelessness into wider strategic agendas (e.g. public health, domestic abuse, education, safeguarding) and aligning action plans across statutory and VCFS sectors.

Strategy  
Action Plan

Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

**Improve communication and visibility by addressing service disconnects and raising awareness of homelessness across all departments**, mirroring public health’s cross-strategy visibility ‘Health in all Policies’ approach.

Strategy  
Action Plan

Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

**Introduce cross-sector shared accountability mechanisms** (e.g. Service Level Agreements, strategic forums like the Integration Board) across housing, adult social care, mental health, and other services.

Action Plan

Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

**Strengthen early Intervention across sector services by linking with early years services** (e.g. Children’s Social Care) to recognise homelessness as a safeguarding concern and promote early identification and support.

Strategy  
Action Plan

Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

<p><b>Take a balanced approach</b> in supporting public safety concerns and the needs of vulnerable people sleeping rough by combining support and enforcement.</p>	<p>Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p>Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.</p>
<p><b>Rationale for change / inclusion:</b></p>		
<p><b>Adopt a whole-system approach</b> → Recognises that housing alone is not the solution; addressing interconnected needs supports long-term stability and recovery.</p> <p><b>Embed systemic collaboration</b> → Builds sustainable partnerships and ensures consistent service delivery regardless of individual staff changes.</p> <p><b>Ensure strategic integration</b> → Promotes joined-up working and ensures homelessness is prioritised across all relevant policy areas.</p> <p><b>Improve communication and visibility by addressing service disconnects and raising awareness of homelessness across all departments</b> → Fosters shared responsibility and improves coordination, making homelessness everyone’s business.</p> <p><b>Introduce cross-sector shared accountability mechanisms</b> → Ensures clear roles, responsibilities, and ownership of outcomes across sectors.</p> <p><b>Strengthen early intervention across sector services by linking with early years services</b> → Prevents crisis by identifying risks early and embedding homelessness awareness into safeguarding frameworks.</p> <p><b>Take a balanced approach in supporting public safety concerns and the needs of vulnerable people</b> → Addresses community concerns while ensuring compassionate, person-centred responses for those most at risk.</p>		
<p><b>Principle amended to:</b></p>		
<p><b>Make sure everyone knows their role in preventing homelessness, so people get the help they need to stay housed</b> Homelessness isn’t just a housing issue – it’s linked to health, care, safety, and support. We will help other services and sectors understand, and act on, their role in preventing homelessness. A strategic approach will be adopted to ensure consistent outcomes for customers, reducing reliance on informal operational relationships. By joining up services like housing, social care, mental health, community safety, and education, and making everyone responsible for outcomes, we can offer better, more consistent support and stop people falling through gaps in provisions.</p>		

**Proposed principle: Innovation**

Finding new ways to deliver our homelessness services that offer best value for money.

**What is working well**

**Positive feedback on Housing First** and its principles highlights that this approach is working well by providing stable, person-centred housing that prioritises individual needs without preconditions, fostering trust, recovery, and long-term stability for people with complex and multiple support needs.

Feedback and improvements	Included via...	Rationale (if not included) / further comments
<b>Address constraints around the capacity to be innovative</b> which are caused by statutory obligations and limited resources to enable more creative and responsive service design.	Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Prioritise evidence-based practice</b> , proven approaches and learning from organisations like the Centre for Homelessness Impact and international best practice.	Action Plan	-
<b>Incorporate cross-sector learning, best practice and insights</b> from other local authorities and sectors to strengthen strategy and delivery.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Explore joint/collaborative commissioning</b> with Adult Social Care and Mental Health to deliver integrated, person-centred support.	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Review application of procurement processes to be more agile</b> in supporting innovation, flexibility, and timely responses to emerging needs.	Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Develop self-contained, client-focused housing options rather than large-scale sites</b> that may hinder recovery and move-on.	Action Plan	This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.

<p><b>Ensure year-round, continuous access to off-the-streets accommodation</b> and support, not limited to seasonal or emergency responses.</p>	<p>Action Plan</p>	<p>This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.</p>
<p><b>Introduce innovative inclusive accommodation models</b> like “wet hostels” to meet the needs of individuals with ongoing substance use and complex challenges.</p>	<p>Action Plan</p>	<p>Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.</p>
<p><b>Continue and expand Housing First</b> for people experiencing, or at risk of, rough sleeping</p>	<p>Action Plan</p>	<p>This is dependent on the Council's overall Council Plan and central government decisions and awards.</p>

**Rationale for change / inclusion:**

**Address innovation constraints caused by statutory obligations and limited resources**

→ Enables more creative and responsive service design to better meet the complex and evolving needs of people experiencing homelessness.

**Prioritise evidence-based practice and learning from expert organisations and international models**

→ Ensures interventions are grounded in proven effectiveness, improving outcomes and resource efficiency.

**Incorporate cross-sector learning and best practice from other local authorities and sectors**

→ Strengthens strategic thinking and delivery by building on successful approaches and avoiding duplication of effort.

**Explore joint commissioning with Adult Social Care and Mental Health services**

→ Supports integrated, person-centred support that reflects the full spectrum of individual needs and reduces service fragmentation.

**Review procurement processes to support agile and flexible innovation**

→ Facilitates timely responses to emerging needs and removes barriers to implementing new and effective solutions.

**Develop smaller, self-contained housing options tailored to individual recovery and progression**

→ Provides environments better suited to client needs, reducing disruption and improving move-on outcomes.

**Ensure year-round access to off-the-streets accommodation and support**

→ Prevents seasonal gaps in provision and promotes stability and continuity in support.

**Introduce inclusive accommodation models such as “wet hostels”**

→ Meets the needs of individuals with ongoing substance use and complex challenges, reducing barriers to engagement and support.

**Continue and expand Housing First for those experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping**

→ Delivers stable housing without preconditions, fostering recovery and long-term stability for people with high support needs.

**Principle amended to:**

**Find new and better ways to support people facing homelessness**

We need to be creative and flexible in how we design services, using proven approaches and learning from what works elsewhere. We'll be ready to act quickly when funding or opportunities come up – always focusing on what's best for our customers. By working together across sectors, improving how we fund and commission services, and offering tailored housing and support options, we can make sure services and support meet people's needs in ways that make the best use of our funding.

**Proposed principle: Access to services and information**

Making sure that housing options and advice are available to everyone, either on-line or in person, and promoting public awareness of homelessness issues.

**What is working well**

**Drop-ins at community hubs** that provide accessible, informal opportunities for engagement, helping build trust, increase visibility of services, and connect people to support in familiar local settings.

<b>Feedback and improvements</b>	<b>Included via...</b>	<b>Rationale (if not included) / further comments</b>
<b>Improve public understanding, education and awareness</b> of homelessness services, triggers, and realities through myth-busting and clear messaging. Practical, visible action not policy rhetoric.	Action Plan	-
<b>Build public engagement and trust</b> by increasing transparency and sharing successes with communities and stakeholders and to provide reassurances of action regarding support vulnerable communities and residents.	Action Plan	-
<b>Implement early education and awareness of homelessness</b> e.g. by introducing homelessness education in schools and using case studies to highlight diverse experiences.	Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.

<b>Deliver tailored and inclusive services and support</b> to explicitly include groups such as care leavers, prison leavers, individuals with substance misuse issues, and those experiencing hidden homelessness.	Action Plan	-
<b>Improve stakeholder communication</b> with councillors, MPs, and businesses to ensure regular, proactive updates and consistent messages about homelessness and rough sleeping are provided.	Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Manage public and stakeholder expectations</b> of what the Council, services and interventions can achieve and provide by clarifying the scope of feedback and what can realistically be changed. A “You Said, We Did (or Didn’t) approach.	Action Plan	-
<b>Use inclusive messaging</b> - subtle, positive language in communications - especially around asylum and refugee support.	Action Plan	-
<b>Ensure services are accessible and culturally sensitive</b> by addressing language, cultural, and accessibility barriers for refugees, asylum seekers, and other marginalised groups.	Action Plan	-
<b>Communicate clearly and compassionately</b> to improve reach and service visibility, reduce stigma, and ensure non-judgemental approaches.	Action Plan	-

### Rationale for change / inclusion:

#### **Improve public understanding, education and awareness of homelessness**

→ Builds empathy, manages expectations (e.g., around council housing), and fosters informed public discourse.

#### **Build public engagement and trust**

→ Strengthens trust, counters criticism, and demonstrates impact through visible, practical action.

#### **Implement early education and awareness of homelessness**

→ Builds long-term understanding and empathy, especially for underrepresented groups.

#### **Deliver tailored and inclusive services and support**

→ Ensures services meet the needs of all individuals, not just those in visible crisis.

#### **Improve stakeholder communication**

→ Enhances collaboration and ensures consistent messaging across sectors.

#### **Manage public and stakeholder expectations**

→ Maintains transparency and avoids frustration among service users and stakeholders.

#### **Use inclusive messaging**

→ Promotes compassion and avoids public concern while reinforcing inclusive values.

#### **Ensure services are accessible and culturally sensitive**

→ Ensures equitable access to services and tailored support for diverse needs.

#### **Communicate clearly and compassionately**

→ Helps people understand available support and feel safe accessing it.

### Principle amended to:

#### **Make sure everyone knows what help is available and how to get it**

Services should be easy to find and understand – online, in person, and in the community. Clear, inclusive communication helps people access support, reduces stigma, and builds trust. By improving public awareness, tailoring services to different needs, and sharing success stories, we can make sure everyone can access the services they need.

**Proposed principle: Data-driven delivery**

Using the information we collect about Reading residents to understand how best to deliver services.

**What is working well**

**Improved data collection** and use is helping homelessness and rough sleeping services **better understand the needs of people experiencing homelessness**, allowing for more targeted support, improved planning, and stronger coordination across teams – ultimately leading to better outcomes and more efficient use of resources.

<b>Feedback and improvements</b>	<b>Included via...</b>	<b>Rationale (if not included) / further comments</b>
<b>Rename ‘data-driven delivery’ to ‘data and intelligence driven delivery’ or include the word ‘insight’</b>	Strategy	-
<b>Clarify the purpose of data use to avoid public concern</b> Ensure this principle does not incite public concern/perceptions about how their data is being used and any implication that they are under surveillance. Emphasise how data will be used to improve service targeting and customer outcomes.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Share data and performance outcomes with partners and customers</b> to make the Council accountable, foster shared responsibility among agencies and ensure, and show that, resources are being used effectively.	Strategy Action Plan	-
<b>Use data and intelligence</b> to understand pathways into homelessness	Strategy Action Plan	Requires strategic buy-in and input from other sector services to deliver on this.
<b>Increase transparency</b> through the sharing of performance data, including publicly available statistics, to inform service improvement, gaps in service and improve partnership working.	Strategy Action Plan	-

## Rationale for change / inclusion

### **Rename 'data-driven delivery' to 'data and intelligence-driven delivery' or include the word 'insight'**

→ Reflects a broader, more thoughtful use of information and avoids narrow or technical interpretations.

### **Clarify the purpose of data use to avoid public concern**

→ Emphasises that data will be used to improve service targeting and outcomes, not for surveillance, fostering trust and transparency.

### **Share data and performance outcomes with partners and customers**

→ Enhances accountability, encourages shared responsibility, and demonstrates effective use of resources.

### **Use data and intelligence to understand pathways into homelessness**

→ Supports strategic planning and early intervention by identifying patterns and risk factors, such as safeguarding referrals.

### **Increase transparency through publicly available performance data**

→ Informs service improvement, strengthens partnership working, and builds public confidence in homelessness responses.

## Principle amended to:

### **Use data and insight to improve services and support**

By understanding patterns and sharing information, we can better focus our efforts, target support, plan ahead, and make sure services work well for everyone. We'll use data and information responsibly and transparently – always being clear about how and why we are using it. We will use what we learn from people and services to focus on improving outcomes and making sure resources are used effectively where they'll make the biggest difference.

## Appendix A: On-line Consultation Questionnaire

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey.**

Once completed, please:

- **Email this survey to [Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk); or**
- **Hand this survey in at the Civic Offices on Bridge Street/Fobney Street for the attention of the Rough Sleeping Initiatives Teams; or**
- **Pass this survey to your supporting agency for them to submit**

### **Your voice matters!**

We have proposed some priorities for our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30 and we would like your views.

Your answers will help us make things better for people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading.

**Closing date is 10 August 2025.**

Please contact [Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk) with any queries about this consultation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please read our proposed priorities and answer the questions below:

### **Priority 1: Intervene early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping**

**Why it matters:** Early intervention reduces homelessness crisis and costs of emergency accommodation. Loss of accommodation negatively impacts families, individuals and communities. When homelessness occurs, time spent in emergency accommodation or sleeping rough must be brief.

### **Priority 2: Break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping**

**Why it matters:** Ending the cycle improves individual and community health and well-being. It interrupts cycles of trauma and creates safer, more inclusive neighbourhoods.

### **Priority 3: Increase access to decent, suitable and sustainable accommodation**

**Why it matters:** When people have a permanent home, they have more chance of controlling their lives and finances. They are more likely to access healthcare and keep employment. Their children are better able to attend school and succeed in their education. A settled home reduces the likelihood of recurring homelessness and rough sleeping.

**1. Are the proposed priorities for the strategy clear?**

*\*Only choose one option.*

- Yes
- No
- This question is not clear / I prefer not to say

**2. If your answer to the question above was 'no' please tell us why.**  
(optional)

**3. Do you agree or disagree that the proposed priorities above are important?**

*For each row, mark one circle with a cross to indicate your preference.*

	Agree	Disagree	I don't know / I prefer not to say
Intervening early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Breaking the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing access to decent, suitable and sustainable homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4. Please rate how well the Council currently delivers homelessness and rough sleeping services, against our proposed priorities:**

*For each row, mark one circle with a cross to indicate your preference.*

	Exceptional	Satisfactory	Neutral	Unsatisfactory	Unacceptable	Prefer not to say
Intervening early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping	<input type="radio"/>					
Breaking the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping	<input type="radio"/>					
Providing access to decent, suitable and sustainable homes	<input type="radio"/>					

**5. How can we deliver better services for people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and rough sleeping? (optional)**

**6. Please select the three principles that are most important to you.**

To guide us in how we should deliver our proposed priorities, we have set out some principles:

**Collaborative and joined-up working** - improving how we work with other government funded organisations such as hospitals, prisons and the Home Office.

**Community, voluntary and faith sector support** - making our partnerships stronger in supporting the work of local charities and community interest groups.

**Customer and stakeholder input** - improving how we gather and use feedback from our customers.

**Cross-sector accountability** - helping people to receive support from multiple services to keep a roof over their head.

**Innovation** - finding new ways to deliver our homelessness services that offer best value for money.

**Access to services and information** - making sure that housing options and advice are available to everyone, either on-line or in person, and promoting public awareness of homelessness issues.

**Data-driven delivery** - using the information we collect about Reading residents to understand how best to deliver services.

*\*Choose exactly 3 options*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative and joined-up working | <input type="checkbox"/> Community and voluntary sector support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer and stakeholder input      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-sector accountability            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to services and information     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data-driven delivery                |   |

**7. Why do you feel these principles are the most important? (optional)**

**8. Are there any other principles you think we should include? (optional)**

**9. What would you like to see the Council focus on in tackling rough sleeping and homelessness? (optional)**

**10. Are you responding as a:**

*\*Only choose one option.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Member of the Public who has not experienced homelessness  | <input type="radio"/> Member of the Public who has rough slept / is rough sleeping    |
| <input type="radio"/> Member of the Public who has been homeless / is homeless (excluding rough sleeping)              | <input type="radio"/> Voluntary, Community or Faith sector organisation               |
| <input type="radio"/> Homelessness sector service provider (Council commissioned)                                      | <input type="radio"/> Homelessness sector service provider (non-Council commissioned) |
| <input type="radio"/> Other Public Sector organisation (e.g. Adult Social Care, Public Health, Police, Probation, NHS) | <input type="radio"/> Housing Association / Registered Provider                       |
| <input type="radio"/> Local business   | <input type="radio"/> Landlord or emergency accommodation provider                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Other  |   |

## About you

**11. What is your age?**

*\*Only choose one option.*

- 16 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44

- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 – 74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

**12. What is your sex?**

*\*Only choose one option.*

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

**13. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**

*\*Only choose one option.*

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**14. What is your ethnic group?**

*\*Only choose one option.*

- Asian or Asian British
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- White
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

**15. Do you have a disability?**

A disability is defined in the Equality Act as a physical or mental health condition or illness that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

*\*Only choose one option.*

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thank you for contributing to this survey about Reading's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 - 30.**

If you are currently experiencing rough sleeping or have concerns about someone who is, please refer yourself, or them, to the rough sleeping outreach team using [www.thestreetlink.org.uk](http://www.thestreetlink.org.uk).

Alternatively, you can approach or refer someone to the Council's Homelessness Prevention Service at the Civic Centre on Bridge Street during opening hours, or to call the team on 0118 937 2165 or 01344 351 999 in an out of hours emergency after 5pm or at weekends.

## Appendix B: Consultation materials

Email signature with link to consultation:



Poster for promoting consultation:

A poster with a purple header and footer. The header contains the Reading Borough Council logo and the text "Reading Borough Council Working better with you". The main body of the poster is white and contains the following text:

**Share your views on tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading**

Your input will shape how we address homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading over the next five years.

Our proposed priorities are:

- Priority 1:** Intervene early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Priority 2:** Break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Priority 3:** Increase access to decent, suitable and sustainable accommodation

Complete this short survey at: <https://reading.govocal.com/en-GB/projects/homelessness-rough-sleeping>

On the left, there is a QR code with a black border and the text "Scan me!" below it. On the right, there is a circular graphic with the words "homelessness", "rough sleeping", and "priorities" repeated in various orientations, with the central text "Have your say" in a larger font.

**Closing date: 10 August 2025**

Contact us on [Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk) with any queries.

## Workshop/focus group format and slides:

**Have your say!**  
**Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30**

Emma Tytel – Rent Guarantee Scheme Manager  
Verena Hutcheson – Rough Sleeping Initiatives Manager

 Reading Borough Council  
Working better with you

### Welcome: Session aim and agenda

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#### Aim

For you, as valued stakeholders, to discuss and give your views on how we tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading over the next five years.

#### Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Why consult?**
- **Breakout Session 1:** Proposed priorities – what we will do
  - Regroup to feedback themes
  - Chat check
- **Breakout Session 2:** Proposed principles – how we will do it
  - Regroup to feedback themes
  - Chat check
- **Summary and close**



### Welcome: Session aims and agenda

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Breakout **facilitators will take notes and feedback** on the themes of these sessions.

Main Teams room session **will be recorded** to ensure all feedback can be accurately recalled and recorded.

Please be **open and honest** in your opinions, but **considerate of others** when voicing them.

Let us know what you are most concerned about day-to-day when tackling homelessness and rough sleeping [**word cloud in chat – open throughout**]



## Introductions

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Please introduce yourself:

- Your name
- Your organisation and your sector

Then...

- Hand over to someone else on the Teams call



## Why consult?

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- At least every five years all local authorities have a duty to review homelessness in their area and publish a strategy that outlines how we intend to tackle and prevent homelessness.
- Rough Sleeping Strategy expired 2024 and Homelessness Strategy expires 2025 (statutory requirement)

### We must:

- Undertake a needs analysis to inform the strategy
- Review and publish the previous strategies outcomes
- Consult with customers and stakeholders on proposed priorities/strategic direction and publish findings
- Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment
- Publish an Action Plan and provide updates, at least annually



## Why consult?

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### We are taking the opportunity to:

- Combine the two strategies
- Use feedback from MHCLG diagnostic outcomes (2023) and Rough Sleeping Deep Dive outcomes (2025)

**Find out from you what you think about existing services and what we can do better to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading!**



## Proposed Priorities – what we will do

Priority	Why it matters
<b>Priority 1: Intervene early to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping</b>	Early intervention reduces homelessness crisis and costs of emergency accommodation. Loss of accommodation negatively impacts families, individuals and communities. When homelessness occurs, time spent in emergency accommodation or sleeping rough must be brief.
<b>Priority 2: Break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping</b>	Ending the cycle improves individual and community health and well-being. It interrupts cycles of trauma and creates safer, more inclusive neighbourhoods.
<b>Priority 3: Increase access to decent, suitable and sustainable accommodation</b>	When people have a permanent home, they have more chance of controlling their lives and finances. They are more likely to access healthcare and keep employment. Their children are better able to attend school and succeed in their education. A settled home reduces the likelihood of recurring homelessness and rough sleeping.



# Breakout session 1: Priorities

 **Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

## Breakout Session 1 - Priorities

**Please spend 20 minutes in your group discussing:**

- If you agree with the proposed priorities?
- Are we missing any priorities?
- What would you like to see the Council focus on strategically in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping?

Your group facilitator will make themselves known, take notes and feedback three key points for each question on behalf of your group.

We will copy/paste the questions and priorities into your breakout chat for reference.



# Breakout session 1: Re-group and feedback



### Proposed Principles – how we will do it

Principle	For example, by
<b>Collaborative and joined-up working</b>	Improving how we work with other government funded organisations such as hospitals, prisons and the Home Office.
<b>Community, voluntary and faith sector support</b>	Making our partnerships stronger in supporting the work of local charities and community interest groups.
<b>Customer and stakeholder input</b>	Improving how we gather and use feedback from our customers.
<b>Cross-sector accountability</b>	Helping people to receive support from multiple services to keep a roof over their head.
<b>Innovation</b>	Finding new ways to deliver our homelessness services that offer best value for money.
<b>Access to services and information</b>	Making sure that housing options and advice are available to everyone, either on-line or in person, and promoting public awareness of homelessness issues.
<b>Data-driven delivery</b>	Using the information we collect about Reading residents to understand how best to deliver services.




# Breakout session 2: Principles



## Breakout Session 2 - Principles

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Please spend 20 minutes in your group discussing:

- If you agree with our guiding principles?
- Are we missing any principles?
  
- How well does the Council currently deliver its operational homelessness and rough sleeping services?
  - What works?
  - How can we do better?

Your group facilitator will make themselves known, take notes and feedback three key points for each question on behalf of your group.

We will copy/paste the questions and principles into your breakout chat for reference.



## Summary and close

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Thank you for your time and honesty – it genuinely helps us.

**Next steps for us:**

- Consultation closes 10 August 2025
- Feedback to be shared during September 2025
- Intending to take draft strategy to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in November 2025

Please complete a survey yourself and share the link with your teams:

<https://reading.govocal.com/en-GB/projects/homelessness-rough-sleeping>

Any questions or requests for a printable/hard copy of the survey, please email

[Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Homelessness.StrategyConsultation@reading.gov.uk)

