



Background information on the **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029**

August 2024



Overview

Bristol City Council is developing a new five year Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

There is a legal requirement for local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area, and to create and publish a five year strategy based on the results of that review.

Over the last twelve months, work has been carried out, with input from a wide range of organisations, to develop a new strategy that better reflects the current issues and priorities for tackling the high levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in Bristol.

Between 2019 and 2024 we have seen some of the most challenging cost of living conditions on record. Homelessness and rough sleeping have increased significantly both in Bristol, and nationally.

Over the past few years, private rents have increased rapidly, while Local Housing Allowance rates have been frozen. The price of essentials such as food and fuel have soared, and on top of this, households have faced significant increases in their housing costs. These challenges have increased the numbers of people facing homelessness in Bristol and across the UK.

In Bristol we have a wide network of organisations working hard to prevent homelessness and support people in difficult situations. The council supports many to ensure that there are different and specialist services available, including longer-term prevention.

Through the last strategy we:

- provided more move-on accommodation for people sleeping rough in the city through a range of affordable options
- built on existing work with our partner organisations to develop a 'Housing First' approach for homeless people with the highest level of need
- developed greater understanding of the triggers that are causing tenancies to end, especially in the private rented sector

A recent 'Deep Dive' by experts from central government (in November 2023) concluded that Bristol has the right services in place, and that increases in rough sleeping were not a result of inappropriate provision in the city.

In 2022-23, 1534 households were supported with homelessness prevention¹ – including early intervention. However, the huge increase in numbers of households currently in temporary accommodation shows us that we must develop and sustain an increased focus on prevention and this needs to be a priority for our work in the next five year period.

¹ this includes early intervention provided by Housing Advisers, Youth Maps Team, Welfare rights team, and tenancy support services

Key findings from the Homelessness Review

As part of the work to develop a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy, a comprehensive review of homelessness in the city was undertaken. Among the issues raised in the review are:

- **Increase in service demand** - A 25% increase in households (average of 510 households a month) approaching Bristol City Council because of homelessness related issues since the start of the pandemic. During 2023/24 there were 3,985 presentations² in Bristol.
- The number of people in **temporary accommodation** has increased by 87% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of households living in temporary accommodation in Bristol in June 2017 was 585. In July 2024 the figure was 1523.
- The number of **people sleeping rough** in the city is rising again since the 'Everyone in' initiative during the pandemic. In total, 912³ people slept rough in Bristol in the 2022-23 financial year. This was a rise of 28% from 701 people sleeping rough in Bristol in 2021-22.
- The main reported reason for people presenting as homeless is the **loss of a private rented tenancy**.
- **Equalities** - There is an over-representation of households from global majority ethnic groups facing homelessness, with these groups representing 18.9% of the population, but 31.1% of relief duty acceptances in 2022.
- People find it difficult to move on from **supported accommodation** because private rented accommodation is unaffordable or inaccessible. The waiting list for social housing in Bristol is very long, and most people have to wait many years to secure a property.

² Number of Part 7 homelessness presentations to BCC / citizens assessed under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 during 2023/2024.

³ figure taken from analysis carried out for BCC by Street Outreach Bristol.

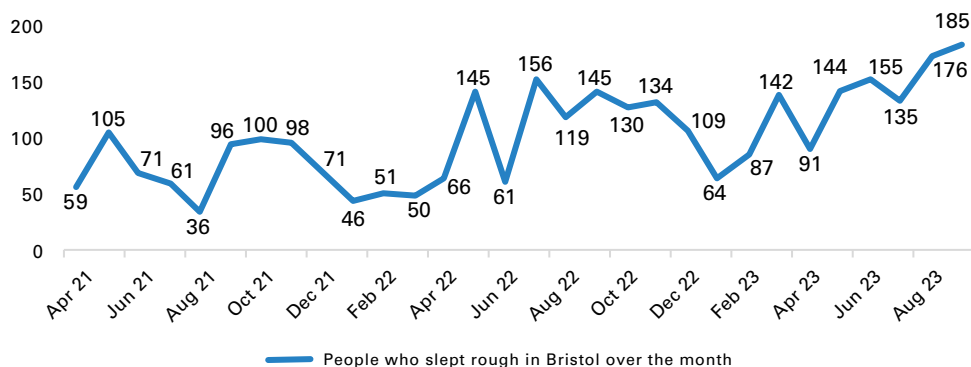
Challenges

- Over the last ten years the average **house price** in England and Wales increased by 67%. Bristol experienced a particularly sharp increase: house prices rose by 93%. The average Bristol resident now needs almost 10 times their annual salary in order to be able to buy a house
- **Shortage of affordable housing.** In Bristol, there is a need to provide affordable housing for 13,973 households unable to afford to rent or buy over the period 2020-40⁴, which equates to 699 households per year. The council’s delivery for some of these affordable homes is called ‘Project 1000 Affordable Housing Delivery Plan’: bit.ly/Project_100_plan
- **Social housing is in extremely high demand.** There are 20,000+ households on the social housing waiting list (HomeChoice Bristol), and statutorily homeless households can expect to wait for 2.5 years or more to make a successful bid for council or housing association housing.
- **Bristol is one of the UK’s most expensive areas for private rentals,** and generally local housing benefit rates do not fully cover the cost of rent here. This means that tenants receiving housing benefit are often required to make up the difference from their own pocket.

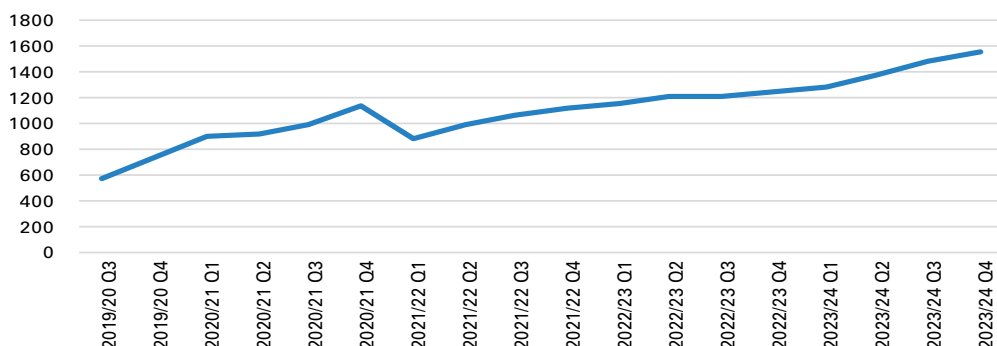
Graph: Numbers reported as sleeping rough 2021–2023

‘Monthly rough sleeping⁵’ counts and estimates show all people who have been found bedded down in Bristol over the course of the month. This graph shows the significant rise in the number of people sleeping rough in the city between 2021 and 2023.

Monthly Rough Sleeping 2021–2023



Total number of households in temporary accommodation 2020–2024



4 Research carried out for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024: bit.ly/Local_Housing_Needs_Assessment

5 DELTA reporting – these are real time figures reported to central government each month

Current provision

Services

Bristol City Council has many different teams that work with and within communities that provide activities contributing to homeless prevention. The service many households will first approach is the council's Housing Options Team, which delivers the front line of our statutory response to homelessness.

We also fund services that provide support to make sure that fewer people become homeless, and if they do, we support them to recover, with the aim that they do not become homeless again.

This includes:

- prevention services and services for those new to rough sleeping
- services for those who have been rough sleeping for a long time or who have returned to rough sleeping
- emergency shelter provision
- a range of low to high support hostels, supported accommodation and 'move-on' accommodation
- floating support for people in their own homes to help maintain housing and prevent a return to homelessness
- a specialist single point of access for young people facing homelessness
- dedicated primary health care services available for homeless people.

Grant funding from Government

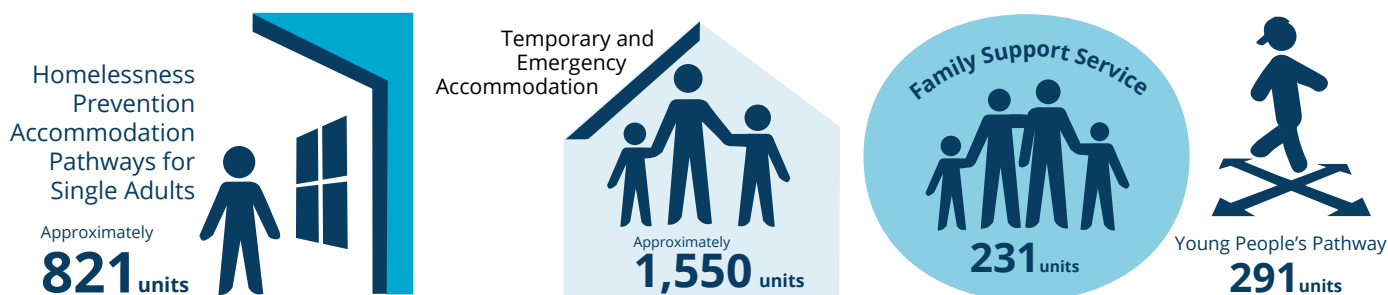
Over the past two years, we've been able to fund services and interventions across Bristol through grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government). Projects funded through the Government fund called the 'Rough Sleeper's Initiative' include:

- Prison Release Workers
- Private sector support for people leaving prison
- Higher Needs Floating Support
- Rough Sleeping and Prevention Service
- Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service Link Workers
- Supported Lettings Resettlement Support
- The Rough Sleeping Navigator Service
- Private Rented Lettings Negotiators
- Homeless Prevention Team embedded advisors
- Homelessness Move-On Social work Team
- Limited Recourse support
- Respite Rooms support
- High Stability Housing pilot
- One25 Prevention worker

Short-term accommodation

The council has the following units of accommodation available for people who need short-term support:

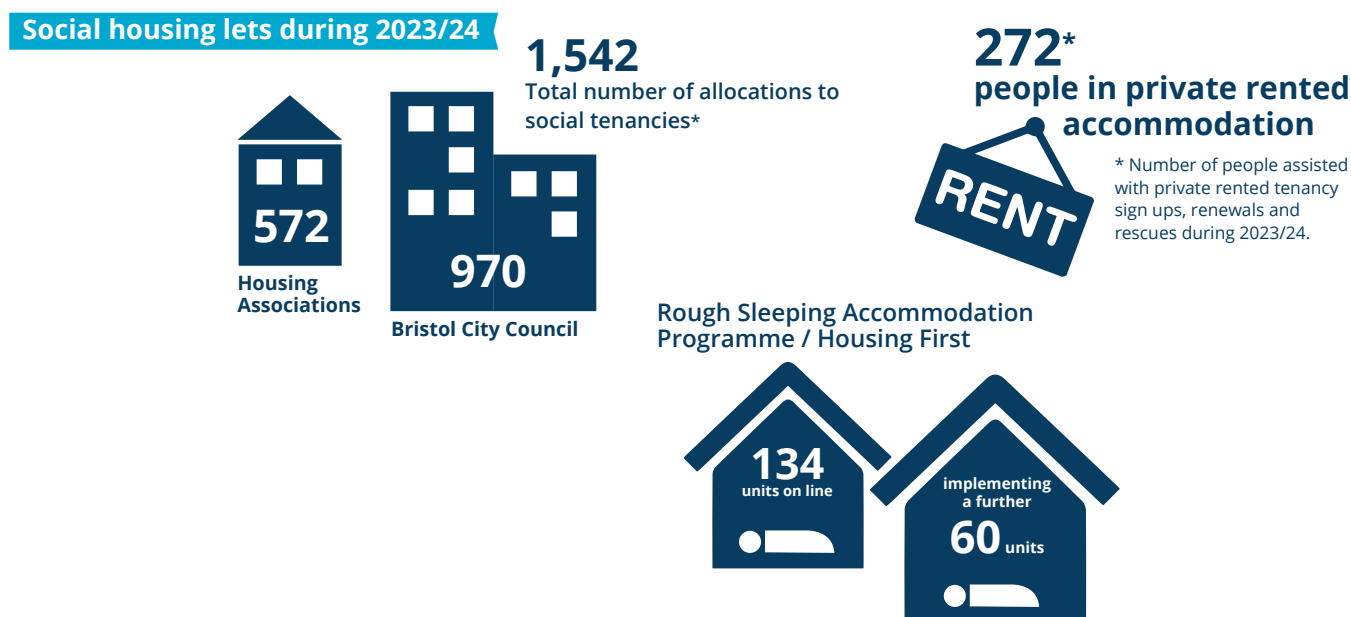
- Homelessness Prevention Accommodation Pathways for Single Adults – Approx 821 units
- Temporary and Emergency Accommodation – Approx 1,550 units
- Family Support Service – 231 units
- Young People’s Pathway – 291 units



Longer-term accommodation

The council has the following units of accommodation available for people needing to access long-term accommodation:

- Social housing lets during 2023/24 – The total number of allocations to social tenancies was 1,542. As of May 2024 approximately 21,600 households (singles and families) are on the Homechoice Bristol waiting list. Unless households are in bands 1 or 2, the wait for social housing could be many years
- 272* people supported into private rented accommodation (*number of people assisted with private rented tenancy sign-ups, renewals and rescues during 2023/24)
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme / Housing First: 134 units currently active, and a further 60 units are being developed





If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact us by emailing consultation@bristol.gov.uk or by calling **0117 922 2848**.

