

Teignbridge District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027

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Context and challenges

1. Introduction

The most visible form of homelessness involves people who are seen living on the streets, but the issue of homelessness is much broader than that, including, for example, people living in overcrowded or temporary accommodation or households who are threatened with eviction.

Anyone can become homeless, but issues such as unemployment, poor physical and mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, relationship breakdown, and combinations of all these, will increase the risk of someone losing a home and of being unable to quickly find another.

Tackling poverty is critical, particularly childhood poverty, which can have a lasting impact on a person's life. It is widely understood that there is a correlation between young people's childhood experiences and homelessness in later life – often referred to as 'adverse childhood experiences' (ACEs). A Public Health England report describes three direct experiences (verbal abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse) and six indirect experiences (parental separation, domestic violence, mental illness, alcohol abuse, drug use and imprisonment) that have an impact on childhood development. 50% of homeless people generally have four or more ACEs.

This new five-year Strategy confirms Teignbridge District Council's commitment to preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping, and sets out how we will work with our partners to meet our objectives.

It is an ambitious strategy, written at a time of uncertainty as to the long term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which may put more people at risk of homelessness. Close collaboration with partners in responding to the crisis has, however, allowed us to explore new and innovative solutions, and different ways of working. Our proposed actions and approach to preventing and relieving homelessness have been developed in this context.

2. The National Strategic Context

A range of national policies and priorities, alongside legislation, have influenced and helped to shape the direction of the Council's Homelessness Strategy. Ending rough sleeping, reducing overall levels of homelessness and eliminating the use of unsuitable emergency accommodation are national priorities. These are also linked to other strategies and initiatives relating to reducing substance misuse, supporting victims of domestic abuse, reducing delayed hospital discharges, supporting looked-

after children and vulnerable families, supporting care leavers and helping to rehabilitate those within the criminal justice system.

Key pieces of legislation and national policies include:

- The Criminal Justice Act 2003
- The Mental Health Act 2007
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012
- The Care Act 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- HM Government Care Leavers Strategy 2014
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Homelessness Code Of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, national levels of homelessness, rough sleeping and placements into temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast style accommodation had risen year on year over the last decade.

Thanks to temporary protective measures (especially income protection programmes and eviction moratoria) the Covid-19 pandemic triggered no overall increase in homeless applications nationally. Temporary accommodation placements surged however, particularly of single homeless people, as the result of the emergency measures to protect those at risk of rough sleeping (*Everyone In*) during the pandemic.

The pandemic has also further exposed England's severe shortage of affordable homes. Access to long-term housing was generally seen to be the biggest capacity challenge posed (or increased) by the pandemic on local authorities. A majority of councils surveyed said it had become harder to place homeless households in both social rented and private rented sector housing during the pandemic. (*Crisis homelessness monitor 2021*)

3. The Local Strategic Context

Teignbridge

At a district level, the key strategic plans linked to this strategy are:

- The Teignbridge District Council Housing Strategy 2021-2026
- The Teignbridge Tenancy Strategy 2019

- The Teignbridge Council Strategy 2020-2030
- The Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2033
- The Dartmoor National Park Local Plan 2006-2026

The Teignbridge Housing Strategy 2021-26 sets out what the Council and its partners will be doing over the next five years to improve the housing situation for our current and future residents, and should be read alongside this document. Our vision is grouped into five key themes which reflect the broad range of work that we do to meet housing need in Teignbridge. The five key themes are:

1. Building affordable homes.
2. Improving homes
3. Preventing homelessness and addressing rough sleeping
4. Putting the client first
5. Tackling climate change.

Devon

At a county-wide level, the key strategic plans linked to this strategy are:

- Happy and Healthy Communities, Devon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025
- Wider Devon Sustainability and Transformation Plan 2016
- Promoting Independence in Devon, 5 Year Plan for Adult Social Care 2018
- The Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2023
- Healthy Lives, Vibrant Communities, Housing Choices, a Joint Strategic Approach to Supporting People to Live Independently in Devon 2020-2025
- Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation in Devon (currently at consultation phase)
- The Devon Partnership Trust Community Mental Health Framework (currently under development)
- Team Devon COVID-19 Economy and Business Recovery Prospectus 2020

The Devon Recovery Co-ordination Group (DRCG) was established following the first response phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The group brought together representatives across Devon to work with communities and help to reset, restart and regrow Devon. A crucial element of the RCG's work has been to assess the impacts of the pandemic in Devon. Some of the key findings include:

- Communities stepped up to the challenge of the pandemic, and community-based groups have played a critical role in supporting vulnerable people and those with additional needs.
- The impact of the pandemic has not been felt equally and has fallen disproportionately on those groups who already suffered entrenched and systematic inequality.
- Those who privately rent their homes are at higher risk of rent increases or eviction, and food insecurity has also risen and most at risk are households where someone has a disability or mental health issue, single adult households with children and those with a low income.
- The pandemic has exacerbated existing health inequalities including those around age, occupation, ethnicity, health status, place of residence and areas of deprivation.
- There have been rising numbers of people seeking support for domestic abuse, and there has been a rise in hate crime including that motivated by sexuality and race.

We therefore face significant challenges over the coming years which are likely to be further exacerbated should we enter a period of austerity and reduced financial support for key public services. However, the work of the Recovery Coordination Group, and the many other multi-agency forums established in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, shows the value of collaborative knowledge sharing and partnership work through which we can build successful approaches to meeting the needs of those who require support.

4. Homelessness in Teignbridge

A full and detailed homelessness review has been conducted and can be read alongside this strategy. Here is a summary of some of the key findings:

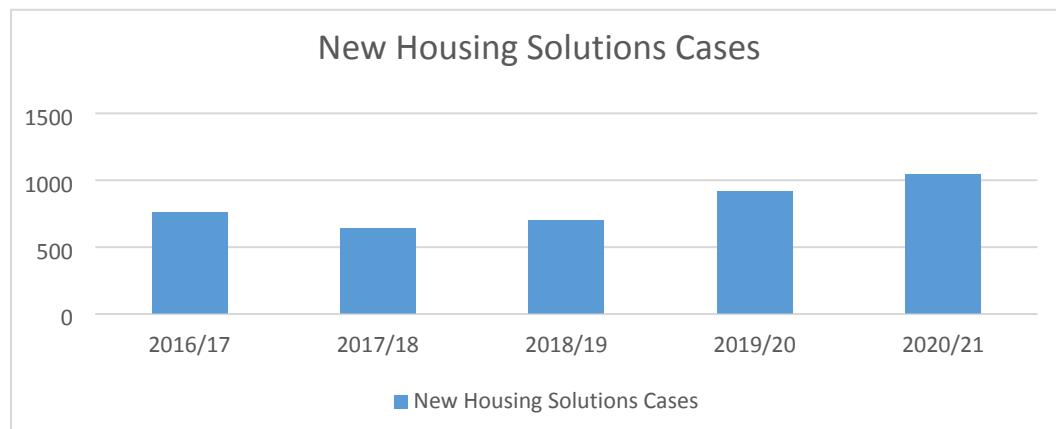
Overall demand for housing advice and support:

Our Housing Solutions Team is led by our Housing Solutions Lead and Senior Casework Supervisor and includes eight full time Housing Caseworkers. We also fund a full time Youth Homelessness Prevention Worker based at the Youth Enquiry Service in Newton Abbot.

Our front-line officers work with people who are threatened with homelessness or who have been made homeless at the earliest opportunity and develop Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) which meet the specific needs of each household. Where possible, they try to help people remain in their existing home. When this is not possible, for example because a landlord is selling their property, or it is not suitable

for the household to remain, they try to find people alternative housing either within the social or private rented sector.

The graph below shows the total number of new housing advice cases each year in Teignbridge since 2016, and illustrates a steady rise in demand for our services since 2017.



The top five reasons for people needing our help have remained consistent over the past few years. These are:

1. The ending of an assured shorthold tenancy
2. Family or friends no longer being able or willing to accommodate
3. Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner
4. The ending of a social rented tenancy
5. People needing help as a result of domestic abuse

Demand for Temporary Accommodation

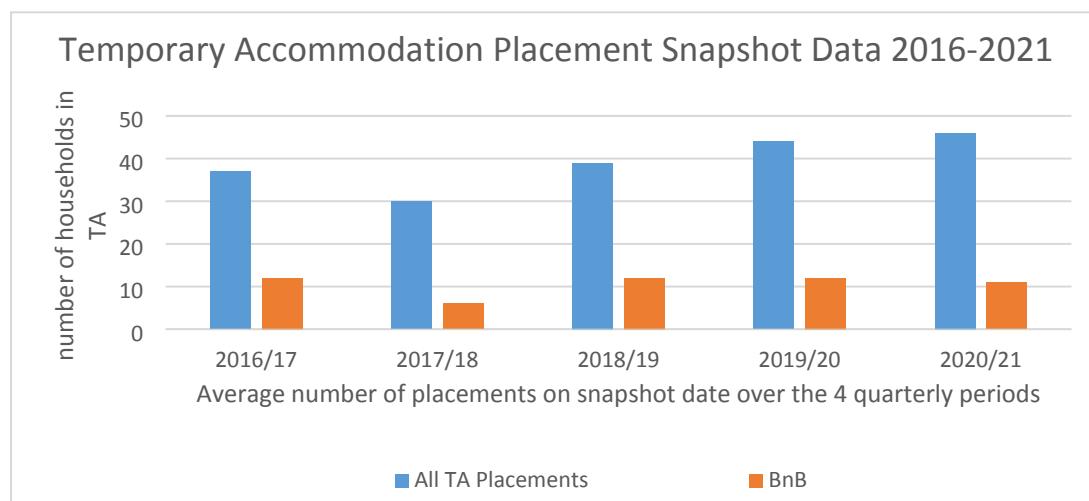
The Accommodation Team is led by our Accommodation Lead and includes a team of officers whose job it is to manage placements within temporary accommodation, collect rent and oversee financial arrangements, and resettle people into secure and suitable homes.

Our temporary accommodation provision is made up of:

- A supported temporary accommodation project for single homeless households and families called Albany House. Albany House is made up of ten rooms including six single rooms, two small family rooms and two large family rooms.
- A Housing First Project made up of 11 self-contained one-bedroom properties where enhanced support is provided by our Rough Sleeper Team and contracted support provider, Sanctuary Supported Living.

- A further 28 units of leased, self-contained properties of varying sizes spread across the district area.
- We also help to fund two accommodation projects for young people which are managed by Young Devon.
- When no other options are available, we have to place people into bed and breakfast accommodation, however this is not considered to be suitable accommodation. We endeavour to not place 16- or 17-year-olds into bed and breakfast and we cannot legally place families or expectant mothers into bed and breakfast for any longer than six weeks.

The graph below aggregates the average number of households placed in temporary accommodation by Teignbridge Council each year since 2016. In line with the overall rise in demand for housing advice and support, we have seen a consistent rise in the demand for temporary accommodation placements. As a result of the expansion of our self-contained temporary accommodation provision, including our Housing First project, placements into bed and breakfast-style accommodation have remained static over the same period.



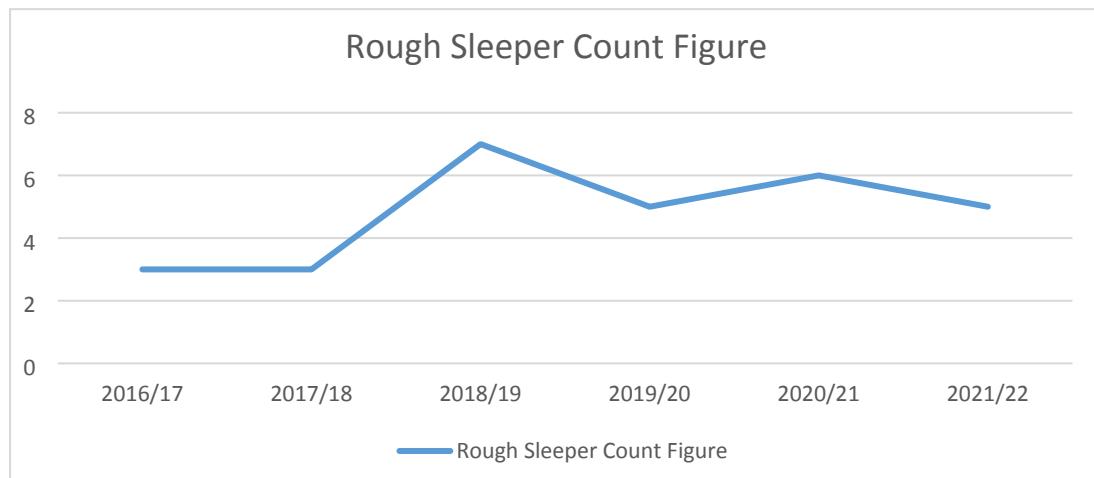
Rough Sleeping in Teignbridge

For the past five years, we have been committed to offering accommodation and support to anyone who we confirm is rough sleeping in Teignbridge and who has a local connection to the district. This offer is made regardless of whether we have a statutory duty to do so under the Homelessness Reduction Act. Our Rough Sleeper Team responds to intelligence provided by members of the public, Teignbridge Council colleagues or partner agencies such as local policing teams, by conducting outreach visits in order to verify the reports.

People who are found to be rough sleeping but do not have a local connection to Teignbridge are offered reconnection to the area with which they do hold a local connection. We provide a range of accommodation options, including our Housing First Project which compromises 11 one-bedroomed properties. Support is provided by our Rough Sleeper Navigator, and support workers from Sanctuary Supported Living.

Each year in the autumn, we conduct an official rough sleeper count, undertaken with a representative from Homeless Link, a national membership charity working directly with people who become homeless in England. Community and voluntary sector agency representatives and local police officers also help us to conduct the count and the findings are reported to central Government.

Despite the overall rise in demand for homelessness services and temporary accommodation placements over the last four years, we can be proud that we have not seen a correlating increase in the most acute form of homelessness, rough sleeping. The graph below shows the annual rough sleeper count figures in Teignbridge since 2016, including the most recent figure from our official count conducted in November 2021.



Maintaining relatively low rough sleeping numbers has been the product of intensive outreach work on the part of our Rough Sleeper Team, combined with the targeting of resources and collaborative partnership working. Together with our commitment to provide accommodation and support to all verified rough sleepers who have a local connection to Teignbridge, we have also:

- Provided increased staffing resource to the Rough Sleeper Team, which now has 2.6 full time equivalent officers, through the Rough Sleeper Intervention funding stream.

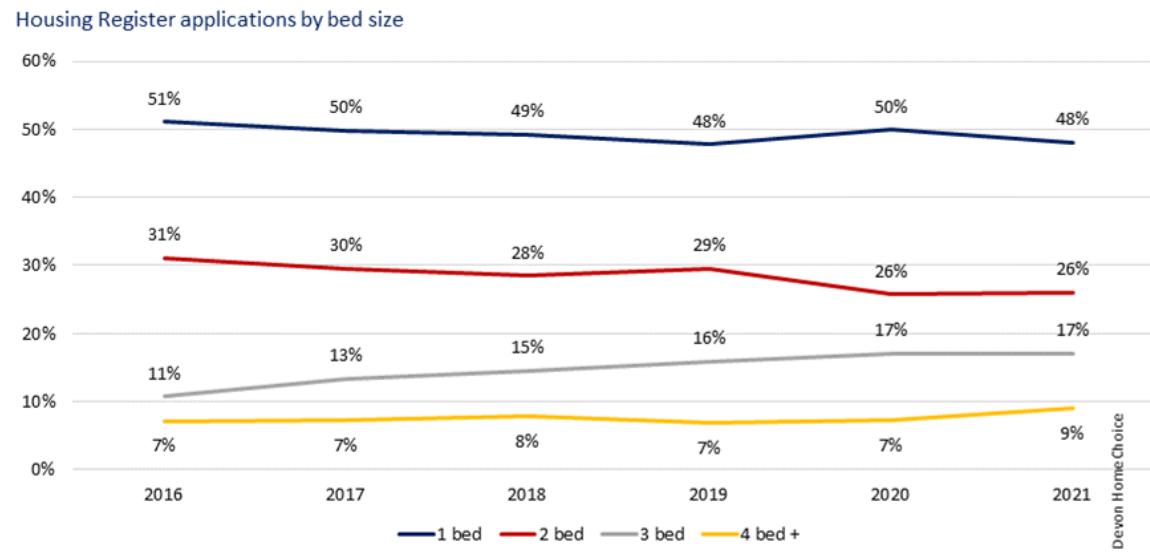
- Expanded our Housing First project to 11 one-bedroom self-contained properties.
- Expanded our provision of leased one-bedroom transitional ‘crash pad’ accommodation which can be accessed by the Rough Sleeper Team for those former rough sleepers who do not require the intensive level of support provided in our Housing First Project.
- Established a Multi-Disciplinary Team, led by our Rough Sleeper Coordinator and made up of representatives from key statutory agencies such as Probation, The Police, Adult Social Care, and Mental Health Services, together with community and voluntary sector representatives.

[Devon Home Choice](#)

We have two full time allocations officers who manage the social housing register of need (Devon Home Choice) in Teignbridge. They process applications and changes of circumstances, assign priority ‘banding’ status in line with the Devon Home Choice Policy and act as points of contact for applicants. The team is managed by the Housing Solutions Lead who is also responsible for conducting reviews and appeals.

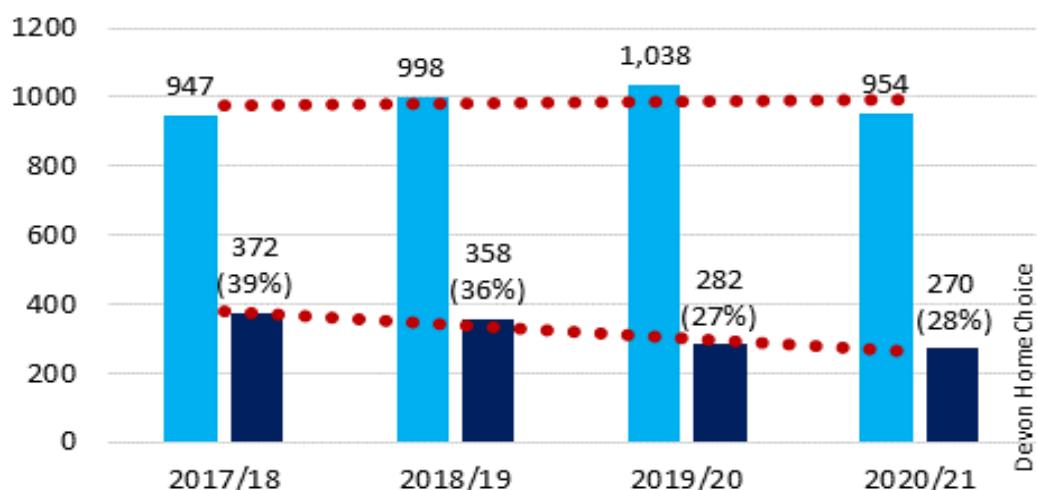
Demand for social housing within Teignbridge remains high as illustrated through the graphs below.

People with a one bedroom need consistently account for around half of all applications on the Devon Home Choice register, however we have also seen an increased need for larger three and four bedroom properties in recent years.



The total number of applicants on the housing register has remained fairly static over the past four years, however there has been a reduction in total social housing allocations in the last two years. This is in part a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and associated Government-led interventions which caused stasis and limited movement within the housing market.

Total on Housing Register vs allocations



5. Key Challenges

National

Nationally, local authorities are experiencing significant budget pressures and increasing challenges to meeting the high levels of demand for housing and support services. Covid-19 has inflicted extensive damage on the economy and on public finances, and there is concern about a potential tidal wave of 'new' homelessness as many households suffer significant changes to their financial situation.

Government has increased the amount of grant funding available to address homelessness in recent years, however funding pots have tended to be short term and highly specified and focused overwhelmingly on rough sleeping.

Ongoing uncertainty around the impact of Brexit has also made the operating environment for house builders and housing associations more difficult. For many, there are major concerns around the economic certainty to secure finance, a reduction in frictionless trade needed to source materials for housing development, the loss of funding streams and the shortage in both skilled and unskilled labour.

Rising energy costs are also causing financial hardship for many households across the country, and are likely to increase the number of people considered to be living in 'fuel poverty' whereby a household's income is below the poverty line, taking into

account energy costs, and its energy costs are higher than typical for its household type.

Local

High demand and lack of affordability

There are currently around 1000 households on the council's housing register. Although this includes some people with low priority for housing, we know that there are also people in housing need who are not registered. For example, those with very complex needs – including some rough sleepers - may not be sufficiently well engaged with services to register; others may decide not to if they feel they have no chance of being housed – e.g., if they have been evicted from previous accommodation or have a housing related debt.

The following issues mean that the number of people in need for suitable, affordable housing within the district are likely to remain high, and could increase over the coming years:

A mismatch between the profile of social housing applicants on our register and the size and type of housing becoming available for letting:

Around half of all applicants on the housing register have a one bedroom need and there is a corresponding shortage of one-bedroomed properties available for general needs social housing applicants.

There is also a shortage of larger social housing properties available to let, meaning that households with a need for properties with four or more bedrooms can spend a long time on the register waiting to be rehoused. We will continue to work with local Registered Providers to address this issue, and ensure as far as possible that the available social housing stock matches the needs of people on the housing register.

Shortage of private rented homes, leading to high rents:

There is an acute shortage of private rented homes which are affordable to people on low incomes in Teignbridge. This is compounded by a Local Housing Allowance (the maximum amount which housing benefit, or the housing element of Universal Credit will cover for housing costs) which is intended only to meet the lower one-third of local private rents - for which there is great competition.

The table below illustrates the mismatch between local housing allowance rates in Teignbridge, and the average rents for private sector properties as of November 2021:

Bedroom size	One Bedroom	Two Bedroom	Three Bedroom	Four Bedroom
Monthly Local Housing Allowance rates for South Devon	£448.76	£598.35	£728.00	£897.52
Average rents per calendar month (pcm)	£538 pcm	£738	£938	£1,350

Buoyancy within the housing market as people relocate to the South-West:

The disparity between the local housing allowance rate and average private rents in Teignbridge is a long-standing issue which has been further exacerbated by the impacts of Covid-19. The pandemic has brought increased buoyancy to the housing market in Devon as households have sought to relocate to the South-West from large metropolitan areas.

The table below shows compares the average house prices nationally, in Devon and in Teignbridge as of November 2021:

Average House Prices, November 2021:

National	Devon	Teignbridge
£264,000	£312,935	£275,991

Although house prices in Teignbridge are higher than the national average, household wage levels are lower as illustrated in the table below:

Average weekly and annual total pay earnings 2021

	National	Devon	Teignbridge
Weekly Gross	£578	£567	£533
Annual Gross	£30,056	£29,484	£27,716

Therefore, the average property for sale in Teignbridge is currently 10 times the average annual wage level.

Poverty and Inequality

The impact of Covid-19 on jobs and incomes is likely to lead to many more people in Teignbridge experiencing economic hardship, including some who have previously been relatively well off. It will also exacerbate existing poverty; those who have no credit history or savings to fall back on are likely to be particularly hard hit.

The Devon County Council Economy, Enterprise and Skills Team established an economic vulnerability index in order to track the impacts of Covid-19. The index uses an existing economic baseline but is combined with more real-time information when this is available. It is helping identify areas of both need and opportunity in a potentially rapidly changing post-Covid-19 economy.

It includes factors such as current unemployment levels, alongside respective furlough vulnerability, age profile, sector make up (highlighting potentially vulnerable sectors) and overall deprivation.

Most of Devon has been significantly impacted by the economic effects of COVID-19 and more broadly a slowing global, national and local economy, with patterns of economic difficulty spread more widely across the whole County than in previous recessions.

The impacts and future vulnerabilities identified in the Index are being felt most significantly in Devon's market and coastal towns, with the 10 most vulnerable areas currently being:

1. Barnstaple Town Centre
2. Teignmouth: Town Centre and Seafront area
3. Ilfracombe – High Street, Fore Street and Quay
4. Newton Abbot: Station Road and Osborne Street area
5. Newton Abbot: Central – Union Road and Halcyon Road area
6. Ilfracombe West – Wilder Road and Torrs Park
7. Totnes Town Centre
8. Barnstaple – Forches Avenue Area
9. Honiton – Streamers Meadows and King Street
10. Ilfracombe – College Area

Three of the wards (numbers 2, 4 and 5, highlighted in red above) considered to be most economically vulnerable are located within the Teignbridge district area.

In terms of protected characteristics, evidence from the Cabinet Office identifies that Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people are more likely than non-BAME people to experience housing issues in relation to quality of housing, cost of renting as a proportion of income and overcrowding. LGBTQ research from Stonewall also found that around one in five trans people had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. Inequalities in health and educational attainment are also factors.

A full Equality Impact Assessment for this strategy has been completed and will be published alongside it.

Our Core Principles

6. Working in Partnership

We understand that working closely with partners is key to helping prevent and relieve homelessness. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act's 'duty to refer' mechanism, partnership working is now also a statutory requirement. The value of working collaboratively with statutory agencies and community and voluntary groups was highlighted through the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and we are committed to building on and galvanising these relationships.

Teignbridge Council has a long history of working collaboratively with a wide range of partner agencies to develop and deliver homelessness and wider health and wellbeing services.

We have played a key role in establishing the Devon and Cornwall Housing Options Partnership and the Devon and Cornwall Rough Sleeping Partnership, and we helped establish the Devon Homelessness and Health Partnership in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We also provide representation on a wide range of partnership boards relating to the underlying causes and impacts of homelessness, the full details of which can be found in our Homelessness Review.

New partnerships have emerged more recently in response to legislation and policy changes such as:

- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which was established as a result of the Domestic Abuse Act and;

- The Community Mental Health Framework Southern Locality team - established to help develop the Community Mental Health Framework in South Devon.

We will continue to work collaboratively but recognise there is more we can do. We need to work more closely with community and voluntary sector groups, for example, recognising the critical role they play in addressing homelessness locally.

To achieve this aim we will establish a Teignbridge Strategic Homelessness Forum.

The Forum will:

- Agree the Delivery Plan attached to this Strategy and set out the steps required in achieving the vision within the lifetime of the Strategy.
- Meet regularly to review progress against the delivery plan and ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs.
- Identify funding opportunities and develop services where there are identified gaps in provision.
- Share relevant updates and best practice in providing homelessness services and solutions.
- Commit to joint working and to co-deliver improved services and combined projects providing effective responses to homelessness.
- Collaborate and agree solutions to common system blockages.
- Include representation from operational leads and commissioners of mental health services and be strategically aligned with the new Community Mental health Framework for Southern Devon.
- Explore the potential to include organisations within the private and social enterprise sectors in recognition of the positive financial and social benefit this could engender for people experiencing homelessness in Teignbridge.

7. Using data effectively

Our Covid-19 recovery work, both within Teignbridge and through our wider representation on the Devon-wide Recovery Coordination Group, has shown that certain areas have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, as illustrated on page 14.

Consultation and partnership work with our statutory and voluntary sector colleagues throughout the response and recovery phases of the pandemic has also highlighted the value of holding and evaluating geographically specific indicators of need for the services we provide.

Historically, however, we have focused on analysing past trends, rather than predicting future demand, and we have lacked the means to effectively combine our key data sources.

We intend to capitalise on our improved partnership arrangements so that we can move from a position of analysing historic trends, to one where we can more effectively predict future demand for services, and target interventions within the areas and communities that most need our support.

To achieve this aim, we will establish a pilot scheme to combine key data sources in order to predict demand for housing, homelessness and related support services in Teignbridge.

Teignbridge District Council, Devon County Council and Citizens Advice Teignbridge (CAT) will combine key Teignbridge ward level data sources relating to:

- Weighted Vulnerability Index information such as unemployment levels, benefit claimant counts, income deprivation levels, health outcome information, crime statistics etc. collated by Devon County Council.
- Demand for advisory services broken down by ward area and the type of advice sought, provided by CAT.
- Demand for support services provided by Teignbridge District Council, such as help with housing benefit claims, council tax support, and housing advice and assistance, broken down by ward area.

These data sources will be combined into a smart dashboard which will enable us (Teignbridge District Council), Devon County Council, and voluntary and third sector organisations operating within the Teignbridge district area to more accurately predict demand for services, and target communications and ward specific preventative interventions.

8. Putting the client first

Putting the client first means developing homelessness and housing support services which focus on the person rather than the process. We need to ensure we deliver personalised support which helps people sustain their homes and ensures they receive early help when they are at risk of homelessness. When people fall into crisis, we will act swiftly to give them targeted, bespoke support to get them into accommodation and off the streets.

The operating environment of front-line homelessness services is fast paced and can often be reactive. We recognise that we need to do a better job of learning from successful projects, and listening to those with a lived experience of homelessness.

We also need to ensure that we empower people to make decisions about their lives and help people build on their strengths and assets in a way that works for them.

To achieve this aim we will:

- Work with people with lived experience of homelessness to ensure the Strategy delivers the right outcomes; that the commissioning of projects maximises effective interventions; and that local initiatives improve the life of those experiencing homelessness.
- Draw on local best practice examples when developing mechanisms for capturing the voices of lived experience of homelessness such as the co-designing of services by local organisations like Young Devon.
- Establish local networks to provide support to sustain tenancies including furniture and home start packs, access to foodbanks, befriending and help with integration into the local community and help with budgeting, money management, benefits advice and claiming benefits.
- Create specific projects to help people access and maintain appropriate training and/or employment opportunities.
- Develop peer advocacy, employment and training opportunities for people with lived experience.
- Be proactive in understanding and responding to current homelessness causes and risk factors by undertaking research and evaluation with households who have engaged with homelessness services – which will inform continual service improvement and the design of future provision.
- Procure a homelessness case management IT system that enables people to easily update their case-file via a ‘client portal’, thus improving our digital offer to those experiencing homelessness.

Strategic Priorities

9. Priority 1: Prevention

Although there are many reasons why a household may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, the most common reasons recorded locally are the loss of a private rented home and family and friends who are no longer willing, or able to accommodate. Other reasons include relationship breakdowns, evictions from supported housing, the end of a social tenancy and people needing to flee violence and harassment, including domestic violence.

For many people there will be a number of reasons, and for some will require enhanced support because they have multiple complex needs.

We try to work with people at the earliest opportunity when they are threatened with homelessness, and take proactive steps to enable them to remain in their existing home, provided that it is safe and suitable to do so. Where this is not possible, for example because a landlord has decided to sell their property, we try to assist people to find another home which meets their needs.

There are a number of services available to help people remain in their homes, including:

- Financial and debt advice
- Targeted financial support provided to people struggling to meet their rental liability
- Putting adaptations in people's homes for people with disabilities
- Work undertaken with landlords and lettings agents to resolve tenancy issues
- Mediation with family and friends where relationships have broken down
- Partnership work to tackle anti-social behaviour, harassment and domestic abuse
- Taking a trauma informed approach to supporting people with complex needs.
- Find suitable, affordable alternative accommodation for people who cannot remain in their existing home

Homelessness prevention also means ensuring that local residents and representatives from our partner agencies are aware of the support we can provide. We try to ensure those who are threatened with homelessness either contact us directly, or are referred to us by their advocates, at the earliest opportunity.

We will continue to try to prevent homelessness wherever possible, as soon as possible.

To achieve this aim we will:

1. Continue to improve the Housing Solutions Service, to make sure that we give residents high quality advice when they need it.
2. Continue to recognise the strong links between mental health, substance misuse and homelessness, and work with Devon County Council and the Devon Partnership Trust to ensure that service design supports tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention.
3. Improve our approach to preventing private sector evictions and to preventing homelessness for people living with family, or friends through targeted and proactive mediation.
4. Explore further tenancy rescue solutions for private tenants including the potential for targeted grants and loans.

5. Improve our digital offer to service users, ensuring that our IT systems incorporate self-service capabilities, and do not act as a barrier to people accessing the right help at the right time.
6. Review the financial advice services available to identify any gaps, duplication, or problems with accessing services.
7. Raise awareness in relation to homelessness and homelessness prevention through interventions such as school visits and the promotion of local services and support.
8. Continue to work with housing providers operating locally, through which we have agreed common policies and approaches and help minimise the number of social housing evictions.
9. Improve how we capture the reasons for homelessness and identify trends, particularly in relation to cases of repeat homelessness, understanding that some people will require more support than others to sustain a tenancy in the future.
10. Improve our understanding of what impact COVID-19 might have on the risk of homelessness, so that we can plan and respond accordingly.
11. Collect and analyse data coming from a number of sources, including from Devon County Council and the Community and Voluntary Sector so that we can target communications and interventions at those areas within the district that need the most support.

10. Priority 2: Intervention

It is not always appropriate for people to remain in their existing home and sometimes it is not possible to prevent homelessness. Intervention covers a broad range of activities that ensure local people who are made homeless are given the support and help they need to access and sustain suitable accommodation.

In order to intervene effectively to relieve homelessness, we will: seek to improve access to a range of accommodation options both temporary and permanent; act to minimise the use of unsuitable emergency accommodation; improve access to and the effectiveness of support services; and continue to build on our commitment to end rough sleeping within the district through the use of targeted outreach and the development of homelessness and health pathways.

To achieve this aim we will:

1. Continue to review the Devon Home Choice Policy and our approach to Local Lettings Plans to ensure access to housing for people with high levels of need.
2. Review the extent to which housing related debt should remain a barrier to being offered a home.
3. Work with housing providers to explore how we can use existing homes better.

4. Encourage and promote the take-up of private rented housing options, considering additional incentives and improving the support available to landlords and tenants.
5. Build a register and needs assessment of affordable, suitable private rented properties to ensure they are allocated to households in an equitable way.
6. Investigate the feasibility of delivering more specialist forms of housing, such as acquiring houses of multiple occupation to provide more housing options for young people on low and middle incomes.
7. Further develop our existing plans to reduce reliance on the use of Bed and Breakfast style emergency accommodation.
8. Look for alternative ways of providing temporary and emergency accommodation to more effectively support people with complex needs.
9. Develop effective homelessness and accommodation pathways to ensure people are not discharged from hospital or released from prison directly onto the streets.
10. Promote and utilise apprenticeship schemes as a route into employment.
11. Endeavour to better understand the relationship between debt and mental health crisis, and support people impacted by debt and associated mental illness.
12. Work collaboratively with Substance Misuse Services to investigate the potential for rapid prescribing for people experiencing street homelessness.

Priority 3: Recovery and Sustainment

We need to make sure our interventions are focused on helping people sustain safe and suitable accommodation in the long term. Sustainment means breaking the cycle of repeat and chronic homelessness, and enabling people to lead healthy and productive lives.

To build a model of sustainment we will: ensure that tackling the social, economic and health impact of homelessness is the business of all local services; adopt an inclusion health approach aimed at improving the health outcomes of those at risk of, or already homeless; work with local landlords and social housing providers to support people before they reach a point of crisis; and develop pathways through which people who have experienced homelessness can access employment and training opportunities, building their resilience and independence.

To achieve this aim we will:

1. Review the scope and effectiveness of accommodation based and floating support, particularly in relation to 'move on' advice and maintaining settled homes.

2. Develop a model of accommodation based and floating support that meets the housing and health needs of our local service users.
3. Continue to provide financial inclusion advice and support for those at risk of or already homeless.
4. Work with the Department of Work and Pensions and the community and voluntary sector to improve options for employment, education and training for people who have experienced homelessness.
5. Promote and utilise befriending services where appropriate.
6. Improve collaboration with statutory partners at a strategic level to address the underlying causes of homelessness.
7. Build on the work of our Rough Sleeper Multidisciplinary Team, and explore how joint working arrangements with mental health, substance misuse and social services can be improved including the potential of some co-location of services.
8. Continue to work in partnership with representatives from statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector, consolidating the brilliant partnership work undertaken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
9. Ensure we provide support to landlords and social housing providers experiencing issues with tenants so we can resolve problems before they reach crisis point.
10. Develop an ethical framework which enables us to hear and understand the voices of people with a lived experience of homelessness, ensuring that those experiences are embedded within and directly inform future service design.
11. Promote an approach based upon harm reduction and harm minimisation prior to service users being fully engaged in alcohol and drug treatments.