



Manchester  
Homelessness and  
Rough Sleeping  
Strategy

2024–2027



**ENDING HOMELESSNESS TOGETHER**

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# Foreword

In Manchester, a place to call home is what we all want for ourselves, our children, and our loved ones. To have the best start in life, a safe, secure and comfortable home in which to live, work and play is an essential part of the human experience that should be available to everyone. Good housing provides the bedrock for good health, good education, good jobs and a good life.

Due to the cumulative impact of austerity, COVID-19, cost-of-living increases, and the national housing crisis, this is simply not the case for far too many people. This needs to change; together we can achieve this change.

We are proud to be launching our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024–27. We have included the views of residents, colleagues, and partners on how, collectively, we can continue to turn the tide in Manchester. Our new three-year strategy and action plan aims to tackle inequality, and places greater emphasis on the impact of homelessness on children and families. The supporting action plan will have a positive impact on our aim to tackle homelessness head on and to support residents to maintain or find a place to call home.

Our strategy places strong emphasis on ensuring we maintain a position of increasing prevention of homelessness, reducing rough sleeping, maintaining a position of not placing families in bed and breakfast accommodation, reducing the number of accommodation placements we make outside of Manchester and providing more suitable and affordable accommodation for our diverse communities. To help achieve this we are working in close partnership with Early Help, schools, with health services to tackle health inequalities and with the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector to provide a robust approach to prevention work.

This is a strategy for and developed by Manchester – a city with a diverse population. Where suitable, the action plan will adopt localised approaches to reflect the diverse needs of the city.

The strategy is framed around the four principles of Manchester City Council's Homelessness Transformation Programme (A Place Called Home):

- Increasing prevention
- Reducing rough sleeping
- More suitable and affordable accommodation
- Better outcomes, better lives.

We are determined to make homelessness in Manchester rare, brief and unrepeated. With demand rising, there is a greater pressure on existing and future resources available to the Council and our partners across the city however, together we will do everything in our power and continue our mission of working towards ending homelessness in all its forms.

Councillor Joanna Midgley

# Complementary strategies

Our strategy has direct alignments with the following Manchester strategies:

- **Our Manchester** – outlining plans to improve the lives of the people of Manchester putting equality, inclusion and sustainability centre stage – with renewed focus on young people, our economy, health, housing, our environment and infrastructure
- **Making Manchester Fairer** – addressing health inequalities across Manchester to tackle social determinants of health
- **Manchester Anti-Poverty Strategy** – tackling poverty, its causes, and consequences
- **Manchester Housing Strategy 2022–32** – a long-term vision on how best to deliver the city’s housing priorities and objectives
- **Domestic Abuse Strategy** – improving the lives of those affected by domestic abuse
- **Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)-aware and trauma informed city 2019-24** – practitioners working in a trauma informed way and applying an ACE lens to ensure their practice is informed by trauma
- **Children and Young People’s Plan** – ensuring children and young people can enjoy a safe, happy, healthy and successful future
- **Enabling Independence Accommodation Strategy** – setting out a partnership approach to improving housing with care and support options to meet people’s needs and better enable their independence.

And will influence:

- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Topic Report on Homelessness and Health** – collating an evidence base on the health of people and families experiencing homelessness and the services that support this group in Manchester
- **Communities of Identity report** – exploring the inequalities faced by specific communities within the city
- **LGBTQ+ Communities Deep Dive** – exploring the inequalities faced by LGBTQ+ communities and the support provided by Council services to improve access, experience, and outcomes
- **Mental Well-being Strategy** – focusing on prevention, lower-level mental illness, emotional wellbeing and tackling inequalities of all ages
- **Bringing Services Together for People in Places** – a shared Manchester collaborative approach that delivers services around the person, with a flexible place-based workforce, breaking down silos and building on strengths within communities, supporting every resident to thrive.

## Manchester Housing Strategy

The Manchester Housing Strategy (2022–2032) sets out the long-term vision on how best to deliver the city’s housing priorities and objectives based around the following four priorities:<sup>1</sup>

1. Increase affordable housing supply and build more new homes for all residents
2. Work to end homelessness and ensure housing is affordable and accessible to all
3. Address inequalities and create neighbourhoods and homes where people want to live
4. Address the sustainability and zero carbon challenges in new and existing housing stock.

Sitting underneath each priority are a series of measurable objectives including the headline target of delivering 36,000 new homes including 10,000 new affordable homes by 2032.

Annual monitoring report findings provide additional context to the landscape of homelessness and rough sleeping in Manchester.<sup>2</sup>

Findings include:

- Following the freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates at 2019–20 levels, average rent in all wards is now above the LHA rate and in many locations, there is a growing gap between the LHA rate and 80% of market rent
- The number of homes let to households in Priority Bands 1-3 through the Housing Register has fallen from 2,314 in 2021–22 (97%) to 2,057 in 2022–23 (93%). This decline is in line with the long-term trend in the availability and reduced turnover of social housing and is further evidence of the pressing need to increase affordable housing delivery across the city.

Councils have a legislative duty to assess, and if appropriate, accommodate vulnerable residents. The scale of the financial pressure on Councils is significant and increasing on an ongoing basis.

Despite the challenging economic climate, Manchester’s residential pipeline is showing signs of resilience. There are currently over 11,800 new homes under construction including over 1,500 affordable homes plus a further c.11,200 with full planning permission (including c.1,600 affordable) – the majority of which are expected to come forward in 2022–2027. Once built, these homes will take us to around 75% of the 36,000 homes target and 38% of the 10,000 affordable homes target respectively.

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1 Source: [Manchester Housing Strategy \(2022–2032\)](#)

2 Source: [Manchester Housing Strategy \(2022–2032\) – Annual Monitoring Report](#)

## Making Manchester Fairer

Making Manchester Fairer is Manchester City Council’s five-year action plan to address health inequalities in the city focussing on the social determinants of health.

The need to tackle inequalities in the city continues to be a corporate and political priority in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and housing crisis.

The Making Manchester Fairer strategy and approach are crucial drivers for this strategy, as all 8 thematic areas intersect with this strategies’ four principles.<sup>3</sup>

See [Appendix A](#) for more on the Making Manchester Fairer thematic areas.

We know that:

- Poor-quality and inaccessible housing is harmful to physical and mental health and widens health inequalities
- Unaffordable housing contributes to poverty and mental ill health and can lead to homelessness
- Poverty in Manchester is distributed unevenly, with certain groups and communities disproportionately affected.<sup>4</sup>

Homelessness and lack of housing security manifests in different ways for different communities and some communities are disproportionately affected. For example:

- There was a significant increase in Asian/Asian British and Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups owed a prevention or relief duty, with increases of 73% and 69% respectively over the last strategy period, compared to 51% for all applicants.<sup>5</sup> This translated into a significant increase in Mixed/Multiple ethnic group households in temporary accommodation, but for Asian/Asian British households an increase in temporary accommodation was only seen for families with dependent children.
- People owed a homeless duty in Manchester with recorded support needs of physical ill health and disability increased by 103% over the previous strategy period.<sup>6</sup> This is a major cause for concern as people with poor physical and mental health are more likely to present as homeless or end up in unstable accommodation settings. There is a lack of suitably adapted accommodation for people with disabilities both for temporary and settled accommodation.
- The number of children in temporary accommodation doubled over the previous strategy period, peaking at 4,424 in January 2023.<sup>7</sup> This contravenes the Making Manchester Fairer theme of giving children and young people the best start in life.

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3 Source: [Making Manchester Fairer Plan](#)

4 This includes but is not limited to: communities experiencing racial inequalities, particularly Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani residents; women, disabled people, older people, children and young people; and residents in certain spatial areas, particularly north Manchester, east Manchester and Wythenshawe.

5 Source: [Appendix 2 – The Equalities Data Table](#) from Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2023

6 Source: Statutory homelessness statistics from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

7 Source: Manchester City Council Homelessness Case Management System – Locata (HPA2)

Alongside this strategy, Equality Impact Assessments will analyse how the city's diverse or vulnerable groups are affected, to ensure there are no negative impacts upon our communities. Findings will be shared with partners to inform the development of service provision, as well as informing the strategy action plan and evidence-based interventions.

The ways in which different forms of marginalisation, prejudice and oppression can combine in certain contexts – known as 'intersectionality' – have in recent years become more widely acknowledged though still overlooked by many health researchers, policy makers and practitioners. For example, trans young people who have been rejected by their families and are consequently struggling to find somewhere to live, and trans young people from certain ethnic, cultural and/or religious backgrounds are likely to need more help.

Intersectional data tells a nuanced story that better reflects the overlapping experiences of peoples' everyday lives. An intersectional approach to data collection (both qualitative and quantitative) is fundamental to raise awareness, demonstrate where problems exist, challenge misinformation, galvanise communities and holds decision-makers to account. This can only be achieved in a meaningful way, which brings everyone on board, when intersectionality is embedded throughout the life journey of data, from its collection to use for action.

# Vision

It is a legal requirement for Housing Authorities to publish a strategy every five years as a minimum, having completed a review into current and future homelessness.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024–27 has been co-produced with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership. All partners agree that the strategy must continue to set out the citywide vision to work towards **ending homelessness in Manchester**.

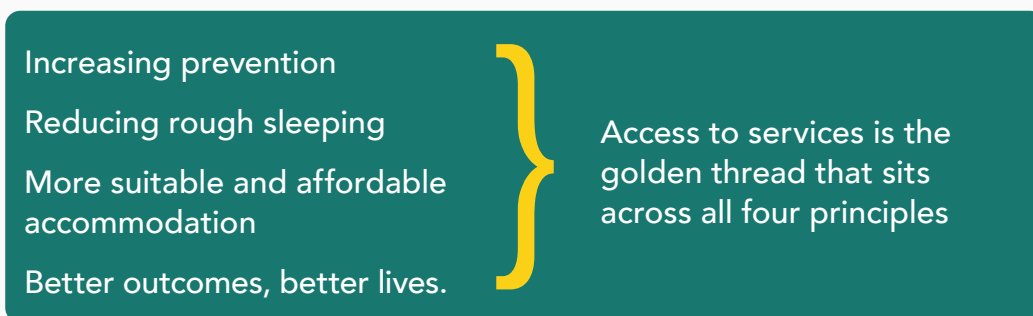
The strategy aims to make:

- Homelessness a **rare** occurrence: increasing prevention and earlier intervention at a community level
- Homelessness as **brief** as possible: improving temporary and supported accommodation so it becomes a positive experience
- Experience of homelessness **unrepeated**: increasing access to settled homes and the right support at the right time.

## A Place Called Home: principles for homelessness

The strategy is framed around the four principles of Manchester City Council’s Homelessness Transformation Programme (A Place Called Home). The principles offer a thematic and solution-focused response to working towards ending homelessness in Manchester.

More information on each principle is set out on pages (18–34).



### A Place Called Home: principles

Homelessness for any period of time can have a devastating impact on individuals and families.

The Council and partners across the city are absolutely committed in their mission to prevent homelessness in all its forms and to ensure residents have a place to call home.



## Access to services

Access to services has been identified as the golden thread, running throughout the four principles and will be a cross-cutting theme on the action plan.

Together we want to ensure that residents of Manchester have access to information, advice, and support. We want our residents to be able to access the right service(s) at the right time, via a 'no wrong door approach' and recognise the importance of a diverse range of access routes that reflect residents' differing needs.

How, when and where our residents access services are essential components of making all services inclusive. Things we will consider when reviewing or designing new services include:

- **How** – Developing multi-channel access points including face to face / telephone / video appointments, drop ins, webchat and a digital offer that meet the needs of diverse communities and actively tackle inequalities within the city. This includes overcoming language and other access barriers to deliver information and advice in accessible formats and ensuring that services are culturally competent and inclusive
- **When** – Developing access at the point of need and at times that meet diverse resident needs (including out of hours), as well as exploring opportunities to provide more upstream support in a preventative way
- **Where** – Exploring how to take support out into the community in order deliver services in places that people already visit such as schools, GP surgeries, and places of worship. This includes a spatial focus to delivery, that focuses resources in areas most impacted by inequality, and developing an offer that is responsive to the changing needs and demographics of the city.

We will be placing a stronger emphasis on understanding what is preventing or excluding people from accessing services e.g. settled address requirements, trust in services, language, and cultural-perceptions.

## Ways of working

We are continuously reflecting upon our ways of working. This involves reviewing who is 'round the table' via increasing diversity of representation on working groups, panels and boards etc. including people with lived experience of homelessness and a greater representation of those working with families.

The sector is learning from best practice to shape our ways of working, this includes:

**Manchester Homelessness Partnership's Coproduction Action Group** aims to consistently create space for the involvement of people accessing services at all levels of decision-making and delivery. The action group wants to make working in a co-produced way second nature for groups across the Manchester Homelessness Partnership and wider city, supportively and collaboratively addressing the power balance between people accessing services and those delivering them.

Over the next strategy period, the Coproduction Action Group aims to create co-produced training workshops and 'best practice' guides to support organisations in embedding co-production, and act as a welcoming and open space for people to come for advice and support on how to do this.

**Public Service Reform** – Manchester has an excellent track record of Public Service Reform (PSR). This is driving forward change within the Council and across the city, developing new ways of working and designing innovative service models. PSR is the long-term strategic approach to changing the way that the Council delivers services in the future to achieve improved outcomes for our residents. The intention is to provide a single, seamless resident journey – all ages, all-purpose – supporting every resident to thrive.

There are some key principles which inform PSR ways of working as we continue long-term work with partners to reform our public services. These include taking person centred and strengths-based approaches, putting community voice at the heart of service design and delivery, and multi-agency collaborative working.

**Case conferencing** – The Council is leading on a case conferencing approach which involves focusing on individual support and housing needs. The approach involves bringing together expertise through collaboration with internal and external partners to find the best solution for individuals. This has been particularly successful for cases requiring a multi-agency response in order to support households to secure new accommodation or retain existing accommodation. Hospital discharge, prison release and school-led panels have brought statutory and non-statutory services together to respond flexibly and creatively for our residents.

# National context

The landscape of homelessness is evolving quickly – shaped by the cumulative impact of austerity, welfare reform, COVID-19, cost-of-living increases, and the national housing crisis.

The enactment of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 has impacted the increasing number of people who have become homeless nationally via the following:

- Universal Credit – A single payment generally made direct to the applicant, which covers some or part of any housing costs. The failure of benefit rates keeping up with market rental values, may lead to rent arrears and can contribute towards the on-going cost of living crisis. For some households in temporary accommodation the Local Housing Allowance rates have been frozen at 2011 levels, therefore exacerbating issues around affordability
- The under-35 shared-room rate – which restricts more people to a very low rate as well as putting homelessness services under pressure to find affordable shared properties for people to move on to
- Underoccupancy charge – which reduces the maximum amount of rent people could be covered by Universal Credit or housing benefit
- The introduction of the benefit cap – which limits the overall amount that people can claim if they're unemployed by reducing their Universal Credit housing element.

Most recently, the cost-of-living crisis has resulted in more contributing factors, increasing the risk of homelessness and a lack of affordable housing has created a perfect storm for people who were already struggling with unrelenting pressure.

The following timeline highlights the key political, social, legislative, and economic changes since the publication of the last strategy. All of which – directly or indirectly – have contributed, or will contribute, to homelessness nationally: See [Appendix B](#) for full details.

Year	Key changes
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Homelessness Reduction Act</li> <li>– Rough Sleeper Initiative</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– COVID-19</li> <li>– Local Housing Allowance rates frozen</li> </ul>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Domestic Abuse Act</li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Unstable international conflict</li> </ul>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Renters Reform Act</li> <li>– Asylum case processing</li> <li>– Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act</li> <li>– Social Housing (Regulation) Act</li> </ul>

Headline measures for homelessness and rough sleeping over the past five years (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023) in England are as follows:

- **Homeless assessments** – the number of households assessed remained relatively stable between 70,000 and 80,000 per quarter
- **Temporary accommodation** – households in all types of temporary accommodation increased by 26%
- **Bed and breakfast accommodation:**
  - Households in bed and breakfast accommodation increased by 107%
  - Families in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks increased by 83%
- **Rough sleeping** – the single-night count of people sleeping rough decreased from 2018 to 2021, and then increased in 2022 by 26%.

There was a spike in use of bed and breakfast accommodation during the pandemic due to Everybody In, which reduced as soon as pandemic restrictions ended. However, nationally numbers in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation have been increasing significantly.

Local authorities and partners working in the sector are increasingly faced with rising demand and shrinking resources which have considerable implications on the use of temporary accommodation and local authority budgets.

It must be recognised that the national government holds the most significant power in preventing homelessness especially when it comes to legislation, policies, and funding.

Therefore, Manchester has the following specific asks of National Government:

- Immediately unfreeze and uprate Local Housing Allowance
- Lifting of the benefit cap and underoccupancy charge
- Paying the Homeless Prevention Grant in line with the agreed formula
- Allowing people who are seeking asylum the right to work
- Removing the shared room rate for under 35-year-olds
- Ending Section 21, no fault evictions
- Removing the subsidy loss for local authorities
- Fund local authorities and registered providers to build more social rent housing to ease the housing crisis
- Restricting privately sourced temporary accommodation to other options (eg. Home Office asylum use)
- Ensure Local Authorities are adequately funded to meet local pressures and demand.

# Greater Manchester context

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for the ten local authorities in Greater Manchester that are covered by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

Manchester City Council and the Manchester Homelessness Partnership welcomes the Greater Manchester Prevention Strategy 2021–26 and supports its missions to prevent homelessness:

- Mission 1:** Everyone can access and sustain a home that is safe, decent, accessible and affordable
- Mission 2:** Everyone leaves our places of care with a safe place to go
- Mission 3:** Everyone can access good-quality advice, advocacy and support to prevent homelessness
- Mission 4:** People experiencing homelessness have respite, recovery and reconnection support
- Mission 5:** Homelessness is never an entrenched or repeat experience

The Greater Manchester Homelessness Programme Board and Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network are examples of strategic homelessness forums that operate across the city region.

The GMCA strategic team complement and add value to work led by homeless services within each local authority area. This includes:

- **Housing First** – A partnership approach delivering a Housing First model to help find safe and secure accommodation for people facing multiple disadvantage
- **A Bed Every Night** – A cross-sector scheme aiming to provide a bed and personal support for anyone who is sleeping rough or at imminent risk of sleeping rough in Greater Manchester
- **GM Young Peron’s Homeless Prevention Pathfinder** – A programme aiming to prevent 18–35-year-olds from becoming homelessness, supporting them to sustain an existing tenancy or move into new accommodation whilst building a greater understanding of the pathways to homelessness to inform system wide change
- **Community Accommodation Service – Tier 3 (CAS-3)** – Co-commissioned by GMCA and Greater Manchester Probation Service, CAS-3 provides temporary accommodation for up to 84 nights for homeless prison leavers and assistance to help them move into settled accommodation
- **Restricted Eligibility Support Services** – Delivering legal advice and support (including training and volunteering) to non-UK nationals and those restricted from services due to their immigration status.

The Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Deal (March 2023) provides GMCA with greater control than ever before and includes devolving £150 million brownfield funding to drive placemaking, housing, commercial development and urban regeneration that will support the delivery of 7000 homes over the next three years. In addition, there is £3.9 million to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families in Greater Manchester.

A Good Landlord's Charter will be co-produced with stakeholders across the housing sector and will reaffirm Greater Manchester's commitment to deliver safe, decent, and affordable housing for all residents, and acknowledge that housing is fundamental to people's health and wellbeing.

Some actions in the Manchester Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan will require a collaborative solution at a city region level however, as with National Government that are some specific asks of GMCA.

## Asks of GMCA

- Lead a funded programme of work to make better use of long-term vacant dwellings, bringing property back into residential use
- Regional Mayor to put forward a strong case to DLUHC to increase Homelessness Prevention Grant
- The Good Landlord Scheme (GLS) budget of £1.5 million to be used to strengthen and focus enforcement capacity to help redress enforcement resource constraints at a local authority level.

## Manchester Homelessness Partnership

The Manchester Homelessness Partnership upholds the vision to deliver real change for people who are homeless by using the assets of all partners in the city.

In 2016, members set in motion their cross-community approach to ending homelessness. Those visiting Manchester's homelessness services from within the sector often express they are inspired by the city's pioneering partnership approach.

The Partnership unites people with personal experience of homelessness, with organisations from different sectors to co-produce solutions to end homelessness. The Partnership influences and has connections with multi-disciplinary and strategic forums involving representation from Manchester City Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

- The Action Groups talk to the Manchester Homelessness Partnership Board and vice versa
- The Board then sponsors asks around systems change and removing barriers across the city.

The Action Groups operate an open membership and actively involve people who are or have been homeless in the planning, design and evaluation of services. The action groups tackle specific challenges that people who are homeless may face and offer a voice to women, LGBTQIA+ people, and those experiencing restricted eligibility or subject to immigration restrictions, which is not always heard.

The Board includes Manchester residents that have experienced homelessness, poverty, and exclusion, and consists of voluntary, community and faith organisations, statutory organisations and businesses with personal insight into homelessness.

# Key findings from the review of homelessness and rough sleeping in Manchester

The following findings are taken from the strategy review for the previous Manchester Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023. The review includes statutory homelessness statistics, rough sleeping snapshot statistics and rough sleeping management information submitted to Government (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – DLUHC).<sup>8</sup>

We understand the landscape of evidence held by statutory and non-statutory partners is vast. The Manchester Homelessness Partnership is developing approaches to improving data sharing, to support evidence-informed decision-making across the sector.

Headline measures for homelessness and rough sleeping in Manchester for the last strategy period<sup>9</sup> are as follows:<sup>10</sup>

## Homeless applications

Of the local authorities that submitted data, Manchester opened the highest number of homeless applications in England (6,660) between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. The strategy period has seen an increase in the number of homeless applications opened in Manchester, with the number of cases assessed as being owed a homeless duty<sup>11</sup> following that trend.

## Reasons for loss of settled home

Manchester reflects the national trend in the reasons for loss of settled home.

The top five recorded reasons in Manchester are:

1. Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate
2. End of private rented tenancy – assured short-hold tenancy
3. Domestic abuse
4. Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)
5. End of private rented tenancy – not assured shorthold tenancy

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8 Source: Homelessness statistics from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/homelessness-statistics)

9 Due to changes in national reporting and availability of data, the review covers a shorter timeframe. 'Strategy period' dates cover 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023, rather than the full period covered by the previous strategy (1 January 2018 to 31 December 2023). Any other timeframes are otherwise specified.

10 Source: Statutory homelessness statistics from [Homelessness statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/homelessness-statistics)

11 If households are assessed as being eligible for assistance and homeless, or threatened with homelessness then they will be owed a prevention or relief duty.



The categories above have remained the same over the strategy period, with slight fluctuation in order. 'Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate' has remained at the top of the list, and it increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## People sleeping rough

The number of people sleeping rough<sup>12</sup> is either counted or estimated by local authorities across the UK between 1 October and 30 November each year. The number of people sleeping rough in Manchester has decreased from 123 people seen bedded down in one night in November 2018 to 58 people seen bedded in November 2022.<sup>13</sup>

Since November 2020, Manchester has also conducted bimonthly street counts (once every two months). The bimonthly count data shows that rough sleeping fluctuates seasonally – more people are found sleeping rough in the summer and fewer in winter.<sup>14</sup> A bimonthly count undertaken at the end of October 2023 showed there were 52 people sleeping rough in Manchester

Further review findings are included in the [four principles sections](#).

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12 People sleeping rough are defined as those sleeping or about to bed down in open air locations and other places including tents and make shift shelters. The snapshot does not include people in hostels or shelters, or those in recreational or organised protest, squatter or traveller campsites. The snapshot records only those people seen, or thought to be, sleeping rough on a single night. The snapshot does not include everyone in an area with a history of sleeping rough, or everyone sleeping rough in areas across the October to November period.

13 Source: Rough sleeping snapshot statistics from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

14 Rough sleeping management information from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# The four principles

## 1. Increasing prevention

Supporting people at risk of becoming homeless and/or ensuring people at risk of homelessness can stay in their existing home or make a planned move to alternative accommodation

### Early help and prevention

We know there is more we can do to support our residents and stop them from tipping into crisis. Manchester services are being more pro-active by placing greater emphasis on early help and prevention.

In the context of homelessness, early help and prevention means supporting people in a range of circumstances before they might be considered (by themselves or those around them) at risk of becoming homeless. This also includes having access to the right advice at the right time. Some of the most common preventable pathways to homelessness include people who:

- Are in rent or mortgage arrears
- Have recently been issued a Section 21 notice – a no fault eviction notice
- Are living in accommodation with disrepair issues
- Are experiencing a relationship breakdown
- Are experiencing restricted eligibility or subject to immigration restrictions
- Are due to be discharged from hospital or leaving prison without accommodation arrangements.

Early help and prevention reduces impact on the individual, reflected in the lesser complexity of intervention required at an earlier stage, than if circumstances were to escalate and reach crisis.

### Manchester Communications Academy

Schools know all too well how housing issues can damage students' school life and the wider welfare of their whole families. All 17 local schools in our working group have many students whose families are homeless – or at risk of becoming homeless, in temporary accommodation or in poor rented housing.

That's why we've come together – with training from partners Shelter – to better understand housing systems and processes, so we can effectively 'triage' any housing issues our students' families are facing to get them fast, effective support to stop things getting worse and to minimize the impact on schooling.

In just one year we've set up direct referrals for close to 100 of our families to specialist partners in this working group including Shelter, the Council, Citizens Advice Manchester, Greater Manchester Tenants Union, homelessness prevention charity Mustard Tree and the Shared Health homelessness health support foundation.

**David is a great example we're proud to have supported.**

He was already a carer for his seriously ill mum, so preparing for GCSEs was tough. Then, on the day before his first exam, the family was forced into hotel accommodation.

The calm atmosphere David needed to revise and prepare had gone. During five weeks of exams, the family were moved into five different hotels as they waited for temporary accommodation.

These hotels were spread over Greater Manchester – far from the school where he was sitting his exams – yet another stress added to his young life at such a critical time.

We supported David and his family through this crisis as best we could. For instance, navigating new public transport routes from far-flung parts of Oldham and Salford to get to his exams was never going to be good for David's results – let alone the family finances – so we arranged a taxi to get him home and back into school again the following morning.

David is a brilliant example of the incredible strength and resilience our students show. We're so proud that despite all that was going on, this young man went on to receive a fantastic set of GCSEs that will improve his prospects and make him a valuable member of Manchester's workforce.

He is a great example of how homelessness is never an isolated problem – it always comes alongside other issues that our students and their families will be facing, including poverty, health concerns or family breakdown. Co-ordinating our approach and creating direct, speedy links to the right support is at least minimising the complex impact that housing need has on families like David's.

### Prevention of homelessness

The prevention of homelessness is defined as ensuring people at risk of homelessness can stay in their existing home or make a planned move to alternative accommodation.

Alternative accommodation must be:

- **Suited to the households' needs** (see [page 26](#) on housing needs)
- **Affordable** (see [page 26](#) on affordable accommodation)
- **A medium-long term solution**. Accommodation must be suitable for a minimum of six months
- **Safe**. The Council and some registered providers operate a Sanctuary scheme/Target Hardening schemes that makes the victim/survivors home more secure, so they feel safer and don't necessarily have to move homes)
- **Include a support offer** if required (see [page 28](#) on support offers).

Homelessness can sometimes be prevented when the individual stays with family and friends, whilst other accommodation and/or support arrangements are being made. This is a short-term solution and therefore not included in the list above.

Many existing services are pivoting their service focus upstream towards preventative outcomes. Prevention work heavily relies on a range of specialist support and advice across Manchester, including a range of specialist support from partners including social housing providers, voluntary, community and faith organisations. Prevention solutions need to be person-centred and are best-placed embedded in communities via organisations that residents trust.

Many services, both within the Council as well as external, are best placed to identify early signs and triggers which could lead to someone becoming homeless. Knowing the signs and having clear referral routes into specialist accommodation and support services is imperative to improving prevention-based outcomes.

In instances where homelessness is prevented, it is critical that residents receive continuity of support services, allowing them to sustain tenancies and live independent lives.

### **Housing Solutions Service**

University student Maria shared her privately rented home with her daughter and dependent brother. When her landlord sent an eviction notice for rent arrears, she came to Housing Solutions for help.

The arrears had built up when Maria was switched from housing benefit to Universal Credit, leaving her owing nearly £2,000.

Housing Solutions worked with Maria and her landlord on how to stop the eviction – which the landlord agreed to do if the arrears could be cleared.

A detailed income and outgoings plan helped clarify Maria's position. It showed she would struggle to offer the landlord an acceptable repayment plan.

But thanks to the Homelessness Prevention Fund – which can be used to stop evictions with one-off payments for qualifying tenants – Maria was able to pay some of her arrears at once and offer a repayment plan to the landlord for the remainder.

The landlord agreed, and renewed Maria's tenancy for a further 12 months.

Housing Solutions' support didn't stop there: we future-proofed Maria's tenancy by correcting her benefits to make sure she can afford her rent in future.

This thorough and timely approach to housing problems has not only prevented three people becoming homeless, it has given Maria's dependents more security and Maria herself now has the stability and peace of mind she needs to complete her university studies and become part of Manchester's high-skill workforce.

### Increasing Prevention review findings:

Manchester opened more homeless applications at the relief duty than prevention duty, indicating a weighting towards cases where it was deemed homelessness could not be prevented.<sup>15</sup> This pattern is close to the national average, however local authorities such as Leeds have much lower relief duty figures, this could be interpreted as showing they have focused more on prevention activities.

- Manchester is currently working towards achieving higher homeless prevention outcomes. The Prevention Action Group meets monthly and is attended by organisations who can contribute their knowledge and experience to achieve positive outcomes on an operational level as well influencing strategic change in their organisation
- End of private rented tenancy (assured shorthold tenancy) is on track to become the top recorded reason for loss of settled home. This upwards projection follows a sharp decrease in cases due to legislative changes in response to COVID-19, including a ban on evictions, but cases have steadily recovered, exceeding pre-pandemic levels, and are on track to become the top reason for loss of settled home
- Manchester calls for Government to end Section 21, no fault evictions.

In instances where homelessness was prevented,<sup>16</sup> there was an even split between people staying in their existing accommodation and finding new accommodation. When new accommodation is found, this is more often in the private rented sector than the social rented sector.

(See [page 26](#) on increased use of the private rented sector and the Good Landlord's Charter).

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15 H-Click homelessness data – [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

16 Prevention duty discharges resulting in a settled accommodation outcome.

## 2. Reducing rough sleeping

Providing a range of advice, accommodation, and support services to people sleeping rough so they can move away from the streets and access and sustain long term, settled accommodation

Rough sleeping is perhaps the most visible form of homelessness and can have long term detrimental impacts on an individual's health and well-being. Reducing rough sleeping and breaking the cycle of homelessness requires the right support at the right time to help people make the transition from the street into settled accommodation. We aim to do this by quickly identifying those people who are sleeping rough, helping them into accommodation, and putting in place longer term support so that they are less likely to return to the streets.

The needs of people experiencing long-term homelessness and those new to rough sleeping can be different and require a different response. For those people new to rough sleeping, a quick response is needed to get them into accommodation and linked in with advice and support to prevent them from becoming entrenched in rough sleeping.

Many people with prolonged or repeat experiences of rough sleeping may face a range of complex health and social issues, which are likely to get worse the longer they are street homeless. They may need support around substance misuse and mental health, often at the same time. Some will have a diagnosis of cognitive impairment that affects their social functioning and decision making, and multiple experiences of harm, exclusion and adversity often means an inability to engage with mainstream services.

Collaboration, partnership, and multi-agency working is at the heart of our work to reduce rough sleeping, involving amongst others health services, housing providers, and the voluntary, community and faith sectors. An effective response requires a range of agencies coming together in a coordinated way, delivering advice and practical support as well as wrap around, personalised support to enable long term recovery.

### Street Engagement Hub

The Hub is a partnership of voluntary organisations, the Council, the police and other key agencies giving practical support and advice for people on Manchester's streets who may be homeless or sleeping rough. This includes:

- Basic wound care
- Mental health support
- Alcohol and drug use support
- Support applying for identification and bank accounts
- Accommodation
- Moving from begging to selling the Big Issue
- Referral to other organisations
- Money and debt advice
- Providing a safe space.

Voluntary partners at the Street Engagement Hub currently include Coffee4Craig, Riverside, Mustard Tree, St John Ambulance, and the Big Life Company.

**Mustafa**

We first met Mustafa, a refugee from Sudan, at the hub in 2022. What happened to him in Sudan left him with post-traumatic stress disorder and he has real trouble trusting anyone. For instance, he often won't sign paperwork – which has stopped his housing payment claims.

So, he's slept rough for several years in Manchester, and despite being offered accommodation, he rarely stays anywhere for long. His English isn't great, and engagement with him has been on-and-off.

But Mustafa has always worked well with ASBAT (Antisocial Behaviour Action Team), and he's built a level of trust which recently meant the team could refer him to the multi-agency prevention and support service (MAPS) for residents with complex support needs who are aren't getting the right help, despite lots of contact with different services.

Thanks to an Arabic-speaking, dedicated worker at MAPS, Mustafa is now developing a support package that he thinks would work for him. It's early days, but with frequent lifts to the HUB thanks to the ASBAT team and the police – the outlook for Mustafa is looking more positive.

**Ryan**

We'd seen Ryan once at the Hub in 2022, but he'd never returned for any of the support offered.

He arrived in Manchester as a student four years before, but gradually fell out of education and into drug addiction, and for the past three years he'd been sofa-surfing, and more recently sleeping rough in the Hulme area.

We'd recently had reports of rough sleepers around the Mancunian Way in Hulme and during one of our Wednesday outreach sessions we found Ryan sleeping under the flyover. We invited him to come to the HUB the following day and he turned up to take advantage of six different services on offer!

By the time Ryan left us that day he'd had an appointment to re-instate his benefits, an offer of accommodation, a 'script' from Change Grow Live who work with anyone looking to make positive changes to their drug use, a wound on his knee seen to by St John Ambulance and he'd attended a probation appointment, as well as signing up with homelessness prevention charity Mustard Tree for a food parcel.

We know help is most effective if people on the street are identified and engaged with quickly and assertively, as well as the importance of establishing trusting relationships with those who are the most vulnerable and entrenched. The Council's Rough Sleeping Support Service, working closely with partners, will continue to deliver an effective, flexible street-based outreach service to ensure that people spend as little time as possible on the streets, and that they can access accommodation and the tailored support that they need. The team consists of Outreach Engagement Officers, Navigators, Housing Solutions Officers, and Social Workers who will conduct crucial safeguarding work and complete Care Act assessments with people.

### **Social Worker Fiona's view**

George has been homeless, on and off, for almost 20 years. He's 71 years old, has no drug or alcohol issues and in recent years has been sleeping at the Airport, spending his days in St Ann's Square or the Library. Despite attempts, he was distrustful of services and wouldn't engage.

About six months ago I opened a social work case on George and began trying more proactively to engage with him, seeking him out at the Library or the Airport. I'd try telling him his housing options, but he'd always just say, "I'm sorting it".

George has some health problems and was registered with Urban Village, the medical practice specialising in health for homeless people, but even when the GP bus was outside the library, he wouldn't go in.

I kept persisting, and finally, a couple of months ago, I bumped into George outside the Town Hall. He had all his worldly belongings in one bag-for-life. He said, "Could you help me a bit?"

I knew that if he went into homeless accommodation I'd lose him again – he'd been there before and didn't feel safe. I went straight to Tesco and got him a phone to keep us in touch this time. I then booked him into a Travel Lodge for a few days while I quickly tried find him an over-55's neighbourhood apartment. We got one that was fully furnished – but only available for six weeks.

George seemed overwhelmed by all this and for the first time started to open up and trust me.

He told me how he'd been severely sexually abused as a child. He said he'd always lived with his mum but when she died, he lost the family home.

A few weeks later – a lucky break – I managed to secure a permanent tenancy for George at the same accommodation he was already settling into! I liaised with Manchester's great homeless charities and the Council's welfare provision, and we furnished his apartment with everything he needs, including a new fridge and cooker.

This has been a huge transition for George, and he's had some ups and downs, but he's now settled and has friends in his new home who he likes to have breakfast with.

He's rung me every day since then, saying things like "Fiona, I'm just smiling my head off!"

George is also now going to the GP every week to get his health sorted. He's organised his own bills and a bus pass – he's self-caring and loves to cook. He tells me he just gets into bed every night and just chuckles.

We have identified 66 people in Manchester (the Target Priority Group) who have been sleeping rough for long periods of time and present with complex support needs and are experiencing multiple disadvantages. This group, and many other people sleeping rough, often have a history of failed tenancies or recurrent stays in temporary accommodation, and we need to identify the right housing and support solutions for them that will lead to recovery



and long-term independence. There are existing pathways into longer-term supported housing such as the Protect Programme, Housing First, commissioned Housing Related Support, and the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, which can provide people with intensive, wrap around support, and support that follows them between accommodation placements.

But we know there is a need for additional, longer term supported housing schemes, including accommodation that is accessible to people with limited mobility, and more women-only provision. The lack of appropriate accommodation, including longer term settled housing, can act as a barrier to getting people off the streets. We also recognise that there are gaps in specialist mental health provision for homeless people.

### Reducing rough sleeping review findings:<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the previous strategy period, around a third of people sleeping rough each financial quarter have been new to sleeping on the streets. The remaining two thirds are already known to Manchester City Council's Rough Sleeping Support Service. However, the number of new people sleeping on the streets has increased, showing the need for early intervention and prevention.<sup>18</sup>

- Manchester City Council and partners are increasing efforts to identify those at risk of sleeping rough, and provide them with advice so that we can prevent people from sleeping rough in the first place. For example, Manchester City Council took part in a pilot for a rough sleeping risk assessment tool and is embedding this into the Housing Solutions Service to identify and offer extra support for people at high risk of rough sleeping
- The Rough Sleeping Support Service co-ordinates a weekly multi-disciplinary team meeting to discuss plans for people new to sleeping rough and has developed new pathways into private rented sector accommodation for people with low support needs. A rapid, off the street accommodation offer is in place to minimise the time people are on the street
- Manchester is leading the way in accommodating and supporting people who are not eligible under homelessness legislation, as well as refugees who were recently granted leave to remain from an area outside of Manchester. The Rough Sleeping Support Service has developed pathways into the private rented sector for refugees sleeping rough in Manchester and is working with local community groups to improve opportunities for people recently granted leave to remain.

Around 15% of people seen bedded down are female. However, we know this is likely to be an underestimate, as women are more likely to remain hidden when sleeping rough.

- In September 2023 Manchester took part in the women's rough sleeping census. Findings from this will reveal the true scale of women's rough sleeping in Manchester and inform the design of outreach, accommodation and support services for women going forward.

The age profile of people found sleeping rough has got younger: the most common age groups are now 25–35 and 35–45 (previously 35–45 and 45–55). Housing options for this group are limited due to lower Local Housing Allowance rates for people aged under 35.

<sup>17</sup> Source: Unless otherwise specified, these statistics are taken from the GMCA rough sleeping case recording system, GM Think

<sup>18</sup> Source: Rough sleeping management information from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-statistics)

### 3. More suitable and affordable accommodation

#### Increasing access to settled homes for people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness

Relieving homelessness under this principle starts with increasing access to settled homes. (See [page 4](#) for delivery and allocation of new homes in Manchester).

Settled homes (including temporary accommodation, social housing, or private rented sector properties) must be:<sup>19</sup>

- **Suited to the households' needs** – Space and arrangement, for households with particular medical and/or physical needs, social considerations etc.
- **Affordable to the household** – Accommodation needs to be financially sustainable, taking all financial resources available into account
- **A medium-long term solution** – Accommodation must be suitable for a minimum of six months
- **Accompanied with a support offer if required** – eg. floating support, housing related support, resettlement support etc.
- **Of good quality** and compliant with national standards and guidelines.

The Council strives to rehouse individuals and families close to their support networks in Manchester, however it is not always safe or feasible to do so. Accommodation options are always approached on a case-by-case basis.

Manchester is undertaking an internal Housing Needs Assessment to ascertain the different types, sizes and number of homes needed in the city. Findings will inform the Enabling Independence Accommodation Strategy, which sets out a partnership approach to improving housing with care and support options to meet people's needs and better enable their independence. The Housing Needs Assessment will calculate a pipeline of additional homelessness accommodation including evidenced need for homelessness accommodation alongside learning disability, autism, mental health, Extra Care and care leaver accommodation.

Manchester is already making greater use of its private rented sector. The Council has changed the Allocation Policy to enable households to take a private rented sector property and keep their banding on the housing register, thereby freeing space within temporary accommodation. Feedback from residents who have experienced homelessness revealed interest in greater use of the private rented sector to relieve homelessness but voiced scepticism around private landlords and housing conditions. It is anticipated the Good Landlord's Charter may support increased appropriate use of the private rented sector across Greater Manchester, as a solution to relieving homelessness.

There is a need for emergency accommodation and temporary housing provision to continue moving people through homelessness as quickly as possible. Bed and Breakfast accommodation (a type of temporary accommodation) is never classed as suitable for people

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19 The [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#) gives national guidance.

with family commitments. A study undertaken by Shared Health Foundation for states that 'Children living in [temporary accommodation] are at greater risk of suffering from poor health, social and educational outcomes, with indirect consequences to their emotional well-being and mental health.'<sup>20</sup> The action plan will take a closer look at the experience of homelessness for children and families.

### **Morning Star**

Bed and breakfast accommodation (B&B) is known to be one of the least suitable options for those in housing need, often lacking kitchens or private bathrooms. Efforts are made not to use B&Bs routinely or for long periods, and the Council is developing a range of alternatives, inviting partners – such as the charitable organisation Caritas – to run the accommodation.

In 2022 the Council worked with Caritas to develop this kind of new alternative to B&B accommodation at its Morning Star hostel. The aim was to reduce numbers of single homeless people in unsupported B&Bs and instead provide high-quality, supported accommodation giving those in priority need support to move on to a permanent home or longer-term supported accommodation more quickly.

For this programme, Caritas upgraded 20 rooms in its hostel for single homeless men in priority need. Along with more en-suite bathrooms, a new self-catering kitchen, refurbished bedrooms and an outdoor gym and allotment garden, Caritas built support offices and staffed them with a new team trained in complex needs, strengths-based working, and reducing evictions.

#### **Mr A was one of their first residents.**

He'd become homeless when his relationship broke down and his poor health put him in priority need, but he'd gone into a B&B where he spent over a year with limited support.

One day he dropped into the Caritas Cornerstone Day Centre. Staff helped him with practical things including laundry, food parcels, and hot meals.

He'd lost weight due to his living conditions which had affected both his physical and mental health. Cornerstone staff knew of a vacant room at Morning Star's new scheme and asked Mr A if he'd like to transfer there. He was very keen, and the Council helped organise his move on the same day.

Mr A's support at Morning Star meant he could register with the on-site GP and see the visiting nurse and mental health worker. At Cornerstone he joined in several activities and soon reported an improvement in his mental health.

He met regularly with his support worker at Morning Star and together they applied for longer-term supported housing for him. He has now successfully moved on but still enjoys the activities and support at Cornerstone – continuity that he finds very beneficial.

When he gets his own tenancy, this continuing homelessness prevention support at Cornerstone will help make sure that Mr A doesn't become homeless again.

<sup>20</sup> Source: 'Call for evidence findings: summary, analysis of themes and call to action', APPG for Households in Temporary Accommodation

## Support offers

There is a wide range of support available for singles, couples and families experiencing various forms of homelessness. This includes, but is not limited to support via:

- Housing Related Support in commissioned accommodation
- Accommodation Support in hostels
- Floating Support in dispersed temporary accommodation
- Resettlement support in private rented sector/registered social landlord tenancies
- Wrap around, multi-agency support for people sleeping rough – which is fixed to the person, not accommodation.

Advice services and specialist support services is delivered by in-house support workers, commissioned providers and partners across Manchester.

## Accommodation pathways

The current lack of suitable and affordable accommodation provides a challenge for the sector, resulting in some individuals and families deemed ready to move on, being stuck in temporary accommodation, supported housing or in hospitals.

### Accommodation for Ex-Offenders

#### Jamie

The Accommodation for ex-Offenders (AfEO) programme aims to reduce reoffending and homelessness by supporting ex-offenders who might otherwise become homeless to get a privately rented home.

Manchester has the best national AfEO results, with 157 private rentals in 2022/23.

Jamie was one of last year's success stories. He's now independently managing his own tenancy close to his family. Here's our checklist of how we got him there:

- we developed a rapport with Jamie, building a trust-based relationship.
- we helped him identify his needs, gave advice and referred him to the right services.
- we helped fix some financial difficulties, registered him with a foodbank and gave him budgeting advice
- we referred Jamie to the homelessness prevention charity Mustard Tree for a £60 voucher for essentials
- we supported regular contact with his Probation Officer around risk and substance misuse issues.
- Jamie made regular contact with his landlord to make sure there were no issues.
- we listened when Jamie said he'd like to live closer to his support networks and helped him get on the housing register where the independent living skills he'd developed with us helped him get the home of his own, close to family and friends, that he wanted.

**More suitable and affordable accommodation review findings:**

Compared to other Core Cities<sup>21</sup>, Manchester has the highest number of temporary accommodation per 1,000 households: an increase of over 50% during the strategy period. However, Manchester is currently reducing the number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation, while other local authorities are increasing it in the current climate.

The number of children in temporary accommodation doubled over the previous strategy period, peaking at 4,424 in January 2023. As of the end of June 2023, the number in Manchester has decreased to 3,830, a reduction of 13% since January 2023. Bed and Breakfast accommodation (a type of temporary accommodation) is never classed as suitable, especially for children and families.

On 3 October 2022, there were 12,806 long-term vacant dwellings across Greater Manchester, demonstrating a wasted housing resource across Greater Manchester.<sup>22</sup>

An ask of Greater Manchester Combined Authority is to lead a funded programme of work to make better use of Long-term vacant dwellings back in to use.

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21 Core Cities include: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield

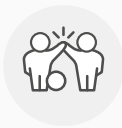
22 Source: Local authority housing data – [www.gov.uk/housing-local-and-community/housing-and-communities](https://www.gov.uk/housing-local-and-community/housing-and-communities)

## 4. Better outcomes, better lives

Ensuring we redress structural and systemic inequalities which might require us to equalise access to services to ensure equal opportunity across our communities.

Drawing on the Making Manchester Fairer framework, better outcomes better lives is about removing inequalities to achieve a fairer Manchester – where people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness have the best chance of better life outcomes.<sup>23</sup>

Better life outcomes include:<sup>24</sup>



**Giving children and young people the best start in life.**



**Lifting low-income households out of poverty and debt.**



**Cutting unemployment and creating good jobs.**



**Preventing illness and early death from big killers – heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and cancer.**



**Improving housing and creating safe, warm and affordable homes.**



**Improving our environment and surroundings in the areas where we live, transport, and tackling climate change.**



**Fighting systemic and structural discrimination and racism.**



**Strengthening community power and social connections.**

The better outcomes, better lives principle is about creating homelessness services that are equitable – services which are:

- Strengths based
- Person centred
- Trauma responsive
- Culturally safe and responsive
- Anti-racist
- Accessible.

<sup>23</sup> Source: [Making Manchester Fairer: Tackling Health Inequalities in Manchester 2022/2027](#)

<sup>24</sup> Making Manchester Fairer identifies eight themes we need to take action on to tackle health inequalities.

### **LGBTQ A Bed Every Night Service: Tom Takes Back control**

Tom arrived at our specialised LGBTQ supported accommodation, quiet and timid, struggling with a drug habit, in need of support with housing and mental health. To fund his habit, he'd been engaging in sex work. His situation was precarious, and he needed support to break this cycle and get back control of his finances and life.

Tom's support started with budgeting and organising his finances. Accommodation staff worked closely with him to create a budget plan, ensuring sufficient funds for bills, household essentials, and food.

After a few months living there, Tom had his money under control. He no longer felt the need to continue sex working and stopped socialising with the people introducing him to drug use.

TOM was transforming from the quiet and timid individual we first met, into a more confident person with clear goals. With our help, Tom was reassessed for ADHD – the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder he'd been diagnosed with as a child. We supported him to contact a GP about his mental health concerns, resulting in proper medication and counselling.

Over his two years with us Tom made remarkable progress and successfully moved to a non-supported 'next-steps' home – while keeping his essential support in place. Here he also benefits from support from BeWell whose non-medical approach to support suits his developing sense of community and helps keep him feeling well and connected. We also arranged a HumanKind referral for Tom – guidance and emotional support for those with complex health needs.

With his finances stable thanks to Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit, Tom is actively looking for his own independent tenancy with minimal future support needs.

His journey from supported to non-supported housing is testament to his determination and the support from accommodation staff. Through careful budgeting, personal development, and improved mental health management, Tom has made significant strides towards achieving independence and self-sufficiency. His success story serves as an inspiration and demonstrates the positive impact of holistic support in transitional housing.

We look forward to seeing Tom thrive in his new living arrangements and continue his journey towards a bright and independent future.

The better outcomes better lives principle recognises and is focused on communities and individuals who are disproportionately affected by homelessness or whose experience may be noticeably different from others.

Homelessness and lack of housing security manifests in very different ways for communities, and individual circumstances affect people's ability to find suitable housing and to remain housed. The banner of better outcomes better lives is fairly new to Manchester's homelessness sector, but its ways of working are clearly visible via:

- **Research into our communities** – Including a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Topic Report on Homelessness and Health, Communities of Identity report, LGBTQIA+ Communities Deep Dive
- **Multi-agency collaboration** – Working in partnership with all sectors including Adults Services, Early Help, Children and Families Services, all health services, housing, homelessness, and the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector
- **Training** – Joint training with partners (mentioned above).

There is more exploratory work to be done around homelessness pathways of known groups including care leavers, refugees and asylum seekers, non-UK Nationals, women, Black and Asian households, ill-health/vulnerable patient groups, LGBTQIA+ people and people with disabilities. Any findings will support future service provision.

The Making Manchester Fairer principles for delivery will play a role in developing services that have a:

- Proportionate universalism and focus on equity
- Respond to and learn from impact of COVID-19
- Tailor to reflect the needs of Manchester
- Collaboration, creativity and whole system approach
- Monitor and evaluate to ensure we are making Manchester fairer – narrowing gaps within Manchester as well as regional and national averages
- Take a life course approach with action on health inequalities starting before birth and right through to focus on ageing and specific needs of older people.

### **A Bed Every Night Women’s Service: Ann and Her baby**

Nine-weeks pregnant Ann was referred to the female-only A Bed Every Night scheme from hospital where she was having leg surgery after being hit by a car.

She’d been rough sleeping in the city centre and there were concerns about her mental health, earlier suicide attempts, levels of substance misuse and dependence on prescription medication.

In addition, Ann had a history of domestic abuse with various perpetrators and had been referred to safeguarding. An assault by an ex-partner was discussed at MARAC – a multi-agency risk assessment conference where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases.

All these factors contributed to Ann’s chaotic lifestyle and were the catalyst for six months of concentrated support from accommodation staff and Ann’s support agencies, which started with referrals to a specialist midwife and children’s services.

Working closely together, each support element had a tailored plan for Ann, with clear objectives and regular reports.



Her unborn child was already being supported too – with child protection planning from all the agencies involved including children’s services, the homeless mental health team, specialist midwives, Manchester’s thriving babies scheme which intervenes and supports at an early stage potentially vulnerable prospective parents, Change, Grow, Live, who work with those looking to make positive changes to their drug use, and, of course, the accommodation staff themselves.

Ann responded positively to this cohesive support and settled into her accommodation with regular visits from professionals.

As Ann progressed through her pregnancy, she reached a point where children’s services and the core agencies felt that she’d be able to care for her baby in appropriately supported family accommodation. Accommodation staff worked with the Council to secure Ann a place at a local family unit, and she moved there in her 33rd week of pregnancy.

Ann continues to work with agencies and has ongoing staff support at her new home. When it is born, both Ann and her baby will have the maximum opportunity to thrive together with child protection measures and tailored support continuing through their first years together.

### Better outcomes better lives review findings:<sup>25</sup>

The top three support needs<sup>26</sup> of people owed a homeless duty in Manchester and the percentage increase since 2018:

Position	Support need	Increase
1	History of mental health problems	56%
2	Physical ill health and disability	103%
3	At risk of or has experienced domestic abuse	97%

People owed a homeless duty in Manchester with recorded support needs of physical ill health and disability increased by 103% over the previous strategy period.<sup>27</sup> This is a major cause for concern as people with poor physical and mental health are more likely to present as homeless or end up in unstable accommodation settings. There is a lack of suitably adapted accommodation for people with disabilities both for temporary and settled accommodation.

25 Source: Statutory homelessness statistics from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/homelessness-statistics).

26 Where a local authority is satisfied that a homeless applicant is eligible and either homeless or threatened with homelessness, it must complete a ‘holistic and comprehensive’ assessment of their needs, including support needs.

27 Source: Statutory homelessness statistics from [Homelessness statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/homelessness-statistics)

The top three increases in support need recorded:

Position	Support need	Increase
1	Old age	225%
2	Care leaver aged 21+	125%
3	Former asylum seeker	121%

Alongside this strategy, Equality Impact Assessments will analyse how the city's diverse or vulnerable groups are affected, to ensure there are no negative impacts upon our communities. Findings will be shared with partners to inform the development of service provision, as well as informing the strategy action plan and evidence-based interventions.

(See [page 6](#) for more information on Making Manchester Fairer strategy and approach.)

# What next?

We are proud to say this strategy has been co-produced with Manchester City Council services and the Manchester Homelessness Partnership, including the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector.

We accept that homelessness is an everchanging landscape, bringing new challenges all the time, and that making homelessness entirely a thing of the past may not be achievable in the lifetime of this strategy – nonetheless, working towards ending homelessness in Manchester is the vision we strive for.

## Action plan

The Manchester Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-27 is supported by a dynamic three-year action plan:<sup>28</sup>

- Dynamic by design – flexible and resilient to the changes that will occur during the course of the strategy
- Dynamic in its implementation – capturing activity across the city, by Council services, and public and voluntary sector partners.

The action plan is owned by all Manchester City Council services, and public and voluntary sector partners, via the Manchester Homelessness Partnership.

The action plan follows national guidance and legislation, in that actions can be split into three key areas:

- What can the Council do
- What can other public bodies do
- What can the voluntary sector do.

We expect many actions will involve collaboration and partnership work between one or more of the above, as well as across different sectors.

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<sup>28</sup> The action plan is being developed at the point of publication. Partners have agreed to review actions in April 2024 before launching the action plan.

# Appendix

## Appendix A

### Making Manchester Fairer – Delivery plan themes and principles

Themes	Principles for delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Poverty, income and debt</li> <li>– Work and employment</li> <li>– Prevention of ill health and preventable deaths</li> <li>– Homes and Housing</li> <li>– Places, transport and climate change</li> <li>– Systemic and structural racism and discrimination</li> <li>– Communities and power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportionate universalism and focus on equity</li> <li>– Respond to and learn from impact of COVID-19</li> <li>– Tailor to reflect the needs of Manchester</li> <li>– Collaboration, creativity and whole system approach</li> <li>– Monitor and evaluate to ensure we are making Manchester fairer – narrowing gaps within Manchester as well as regional and national averages</li> <li>– Take a life course approach with action on health inequalities starting before birth and right through to focus on ageing and specific needs of older people.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

Heading needed for accessibility

Year	Heading needed here
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Homelessness Reduction Act</b> – introduced new legal duties, including the prevention and relief of homelessness and the development of Personal Housing Plans. The Act places a duty on assisting more single people experiencing homelessness and ensuring they receive help</li> <li>– <b>Launch of the Rough Sleeper Initiative</b> – key funding programme to reduce incidences of rough sleeping by funding additional bed spaces and tailored support. This includes helping individuals find work, manage their finances and access mental and physical health services</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>COVID-19</b> – led to embargo on evictions, and once lifted led to an increase in the number of homeless applications</li> <li>– <b>Local Housing Allowance</b> – the Local Housing Allowance rates have been frozen since April 2020 and no longer covers the true cost of renting in the private sector</li> </ul>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Domestic Abuse Act</b> – grants ‘priority need’ to people who are homeless as a result of being a survivor of domestic abuse and Councils have a duty to find accommodation for people who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse</li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Unstable international conflict</b> – has led to an increase in migration to the United Kingdom from Afghanistan, Ukraine and via the asylum route. This has led to increased demand for housing in areas of the country where people want to settle and places greater pressures on an already limited resource</li> </ul>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Renters Reform Bill</b> – proposed Abolition of Section 21, which has still not been implemented, is leading to a rapid rise in homeless applications and Section 21 notices</li> <li>– <b>Asylum case processing</b> – the increasing number of expected asylum seekers will result in a higher number of homeless applications being taken from people given leave to remain. This may potentially result in an increase in the number of people sleeping rough with no leave to remain</li> <li>– <b>Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act</b> – broadly welcomed but capacity and resources are key to delivery. A key requirement of the Act will require local authorities to produce a supported housing strategy</li> <li>– <b>Social Housing (Regulation) Act</b> – broadly welcomed but capacity and resources are key to delivery as the Act involves increased regulation of social landlords (including local authorities) and to hold landlords to account with regular inspections.</li> </ul>

