

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 12 th March 2024
Report Subject	Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Update Report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing & Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness is a statutory service that continues to be under significant strain. External factors associated with the cost-of-living crisis and housing market conditions are increasing the levels of homelessness and the risks associated with homelessness for the people of Flintshire.

The need to offer accommodation and support to everyone who is homeless and at risk of rough sleeping continues to be a significant capacity and financial challenge. The local private sector housing market is seeing significant challenges with fewer properties available each year and many landlords leaving the market, which in turn creates homelessness as properties are being sold and residents are asked to leave, whilst at the same time meaning fewer properties are available to support the relief of homelessness.

Changes to homeless legislation (Housing Wales Act 2014) and specifically the introduction of an eleventh category of Priority Need for Rough Sleeping and those at risk of sleeping rough, sees a sustainment of the “no one left out” approach adopted during the covid pandemic and now firmly establishes the principles of “no one left out” on a legal footing and as standard practice.

As a result, more people have been owed accommodation duties which results in increasing demands on already stretched homeless accommodation, at significant cost to the Council. This paper provides an insight into homelessness and rough sleeping for 2023 and includes the draft Homeless Accommodation Policy for review and approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the report and continue to support the work being undertaken by the Housing and Prevention Service.
2	To approve the draft Homeless Accommodation policy.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE HOMELESSNESS UPDATE REPORT																
1.01	<p>Statutory Homeless Services Local Authorities duties are outlined in the Housing Wales Act 2014 Part 2, with regards to the prevention of homelessness and the management of homelessness when it occurs. Detailed in section 6 of this report is information about the duties within this legislation (Helping Your Understand Housing Wales Act 2014).</p> <p>The core team activities for the Statutory Homeless Team includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Case Management • Homeless Accommodation Management • Homeless Accommodation Costs 																
1.02	<p>Funding Homeless Services Whilst a significant amount of funding is provided for prevention activity through the Housing Support Grant (HSG), statutory services cannot be funded through HSG. Therefore, the Council Fund is the main source of funding for the delivery of statutory homelessness services. This extends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Officers and other staff dealing with homeless duties and assessments. • Homeless accommodation costs through lease charges and hotel accommodation expenditure. • Staff costs associated with the management of homeless accommodation. • Other costs associated with duties around homelessness such as storage costs and removals when people become homeless. <p>Budgets in relation to homelessness are summarised below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Budget Purpose</th> <th>Budget Amount</th> <th>Expenditure 23/24 (p10)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Homeless Team Staffing</td> <td>£0.716m</td> <td>£0.576m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rental / Lease for Homeless Accom</td> <td>£0.276m</td> <td>£0.288m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emergency Accommodation Costs</td> <td>£1.146m</td> <td>£4.250m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Costs</td> <td>£0.070m</td> <td>£0.230m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Budget Purpose	Budget Amount	Expenditure 23/24 (p10)	Homeless Team Staffing	£0.716m	£0.576m	Rental / Lease for Homeless Accom	£0.276m	£0.288m	Emergency Accommodation Costs	£1.146m	£4.250m	Other Costs	£0.070m	£0.230m
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To assist with the additional pressures around homelessness and as the Covid Emergency Funding has now ceased, there has been additional grant funding available to Councils in recent years. A breakdown of funding is provided below. We await final confirmation of the funding to be awarded to Councils for 24/25:

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
COVID Hardship Fund	£1.448m	n/a	n/a	n/a
No One Left Out	n/a	£0.520m	£0.382m	TBC
Discretionary Homeless Payment	n/a	£0.111m	£0.255m	TBC

Members have received briefings on the current financial pressures relating to homeless accommodation, and in particular the emergency housing cost pressures, in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

1.03

Demand for Services

Demand for services continues to be high and appendix 1 outlines data relating to:

Homelessness Presentations

Numbers of homeless presentations continues to be high. Homeless presentations account for approximately 55% of all housing enquiries recorded through the Councils Housing Helpline. If any resident has a concern about a homelessness (or risk of homelessness) then they approach the Housing Helpline on 01352 70377. Those enquiries where homelessness is referenced are then referred to the Homeless Team for initial contact.

Not all enquiries will progress from initial presentation to formal assessment (s.62 Housing Wales Act 2014). Table 1 shows homeless assessments increased by 35% in 2023 when compared to 2022. This is a result of more people having clearly identified risks of homelessness at the point at which they present. Those who present but are not at statutory risk of homelessness or their homeless is longer term, would not be owed a formal assessment but still receive housing advice under s.60 Housing Wales Act 2014.

The top 5 reasons for homeless presentation continues to be: Loss of private rented sector, relationship breakdown (non violent), relationship breakdown (violent), asked to leave by family and asked to leave by friends or others. This is common across Wales and in keeping with recent years in terms of reasons for homelessness.

Table 2 highlights the level of risk of homelessness by timeframe at the point of assessment. This ranges from homeless on the day, to homeless in the next 6 months (6-month notice periods are now standard for notice periods in Wales). This table demonstrates the very high level of homeless on the day cases (40.9%). Such presentations mean there is minimal opportunity to prevent homelessness other than through immediate crisis intervention (examples: negotiation with friends or family to keep people where they are, or to help people temporarily access support from other

friends or family). If these efforts are unsuccessful, it is likely those residents affected would be requiring homeless accommodation.

There has been significant instability within the private rented sector this past year. In part this is due to the introduction of the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016. This, along with financial pressures for some landlords, has resulted in an increase in notices from the private rented sector. Table 3 outlines the trend of increases in notices served in the run up to the implementation of the 6 month notice period (31st May 2023) for existing contract holders. Notices then reduce, having peaked between February 2023 to June 2023.

With more people triggering assessments as they are homeless or at risk of homelessness, along with fewer opportunities to prevent or relieve homelessness, it is inevitable that homeless caseloads will increase. Table 4 outlines the active caseload of homeless cases managed by the Homeless Team at the end of each month across 2022 and 2023. The table shows an increase of 72% from January 2022 to December 2023.

Every day is different for the Homeless Team and cases are often complex. To highlight this a “day in the life of the homeless team” case study is attached as Appendix 2, to outline the types and the complexity of cases that the Homeless Team regularly deal with on a daily basis.

Out Of Hours Emergency Response

Homelessness services operate 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Flintshire’s “out of hour’s emergency response” is available evenings and weekends as many instances of homelessness occur outside of office hours. Detailed in Table 5 is the number of calls received via the emergency helpline during 2023.

New arrangements have been established during 2023, for staff at the Glanrafon Homeless Hub to deal with all initial contacts for out of hours emergencies. The homeless hub operates 24/7 and the new approach relieves pressure on an already stretched workforce within the Homeless Team. A bank of Homeless Officers are on a duty rota for on call duties, to support homeless hub staff with complex case advice during out of hours and to authorise placements if required. The approach is working well for the Homeless Team with a significant reduction in enquiries working their way through to Duty Officers of an evening and weekend.

Homeless Accommodation

Emergency and temporary accommodation is limited in Flintshire and a lot of positive work is undertaken to help people sustain their housing to avoid the need to access emergency and temporary housing through prevention. However, in the last 18 months, with increases in homelessness and significant barriers to successfully moving people on, there have been more people requiring homeless accommodation and for longer periods. Table 6 outlines the numbers of homeless accommodation placements from April 2023 to January 2024 as a snapshot at the end of each month.

Data is reported to Welsh Government monthly by all Local Authorities for the number of homeless people being assisted within homeless accommodation. This is end of month snapshot data. Table 7 highlights

the numbers of people in homeless accommodation across Wales by accommodation setting in October 2023 broken down to the Local Authority level. This data shows that we have notably lower numbers of homeless people than Wrexham, Denbighshire, Conwy and Gwynedd.

The Link within the notes section of Table 7 provides further breakdown of people in homeless accommodation by accommodation types. It highlights Flintshire's over reliance on hotels as a form of homeless accommodation (56%), with only Gwynedd (62%) having a higher percentage of their homeless people accommodated in hotels in North Wales.

This dataset from October 2023 (released end Jan 2024) is the first time Local Authority level data has been publicly available. There will generally be a 3 month delay on release of this monthly data due to validation periods, but this data allows comparison and benchmarking in relation to homeless accommodation pressures across Wales.

Rough Sleeper Response

Rough sleeper outreach activities are usually delivered through the Housing First service who are skilled at dealing with the most complex residents. They provide the initial response during office hours and will respond within a few hours of an alert being received. Alerts come in through a wide range of sources:

- Streetlink Referrals
- Calls into the Flintshire Homeless Team
- Calls to Flintshire Out of Hours Services
- Referrals from partners across FCC and other public services
- Referrals from elected members
- Referrals from Community Groups and Charities

Alerts received outside of office hours are not always responded to immediately but can be channelled through our Out Of Hours service on 01267 224911. Situations are risk assessed in terms of safety for officers to attend and may be actioned at a later stage.

Table 8 details the number of rough sleepers in Flintshire at the end of each month from April 2023 to October 2023. Similarly, to the numbers of people in homeless accommodation report referenced above, this data is now released monthly. Rough sleeping is on the increase across many Council areas and is up nationally from April 2023 to October 2023 by 34%. Flintshire's numbers are however decreasing and since November 2023 there were no rough sleepers at the end of each month reported to Welsh Government.

1.04

Positive Homeless Outcomes

When managing homelessness under the Housing Wales Act 2014, the primary aim is to prevent homelessness at every opportunity. When it does occur, the intention is that it is rare, brief and non-repeated. Positive outcomes can be achieved through a range of interventions. Detailed below are some examples of the tools or interventions to prevent homelessness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent arrears repayment planning. • Rent rescue payments – arrears payments. • Rent tops ups through Discretionary Housing Payments and other grant funding. • Budgeting support and income maximisation. • Repairs and property maintenance support. • Time critical interventions such as tenancy support . • Mediation and negotiation between the contract holder and landlord. • Support for family’s around managing relationships with young people. <p>Prevention activities within the Homeless Team when residents are at risk of homelessness within 56 days (linked to s.66 Housing Wales Act 2014) are crisis interventions. The most effective and sustainable prevention activities are achieved through much earlier interventions and can be achieved across a wide range of services, to avoid people needing to access statutory homelessness services.</p> <p>Relief of homelessness is when people are assisted to exit homelessness. This is often achieved through positive move on from homeless accommodation and is primarily focussed on securing new accommodation or helping people to return home or to another place of safety for a prolonged period. Table 9 details the most common outcomes for successful discharge of homelessness duties in Flintshire.</p>
1.05	<p>National Policy - Homelessness</p> <p>In October 2023 Welsh Government published a White Paper on Ending Homelessness in Wales with consultation closing on the 16th January 2024. Welsh Government received over 160 formal responses and are now reviewing these responses.</p> <p>A wide range of changes to legislation relating to homelessness are outlined within the White Paper, with the most notable changes outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 66 statutory prevention duty to be triggered at 6 months risk of homelessness, an increase from the current 2 months. • Abolition of the priority need test – all eligible residents / households to be offered full duties. • Merging of the s73 Relief Duty and s75 Full Duty. • Changes to Local Connection Test – variation and additional protections for certain groups of people. • Significant changes to the Intentionality Test principles. • Firming up the Personal Housing Plan (PHP) process on a legal footing and creating statutory review points for PHP’s. • Improved standards in regard to homeless accommodation duties. • Changes to the Allocations Code of Guidance for Social Housing to increase access for homeless households. • Statutory powers for Local Authorities to compel Housing Associations to take homeless nominations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending “partners duties” around homelessness to a wider group of public sector services. • Introducing a “duty to identify and refer” homelessness on a range of public sector services. • Introduction of a Housing Sustainment Duty to support risks of repeat homelessness. <p>There is an acknowledgement from Welsh Government that in light of the ambition of the changes suggested, and the current housing pressures across Wales, there will need to be careful consideration to the cost implications of the suggested changes and the timeframes for the roll out of additional duties within any new Act.</p> <p>We expect further information relating to the outcome of the consultation in the Summer 2024. All Local Authorities have responded formally and continue to make representations about the current financial challenges associated with Welsh Governments ambitions around ending homelessness at the present time, and also in light of additional statutory responsibilities outlined within the White Paper.</p>
1.06	<p><u>Housing Support Grant</u></p> <p>The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is a significant grant provided to Local Authorities to deliver a wide range of homeless prevention interventions. The funding cannot be used for statutory services such as homeless case management (homeless team costs) or homeless accommodation, but is available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt advice and support services • Tenancy / housing related support services • Learning disability services • Domestic abuse services • Wellbeing and independent living services • Supported housing projects • Housing First services <p>Since 2021-2022 Flintshire’s annual HSG award has been c.£7.8million, with the same award in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. Recent budget announcements in December 2023 suggest that the HSG award will again be a standstill position for 2024-2025. We await formal confirmation of this when the Budget is finalised and many organisations including Cymorth Cymru, Community Housing Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association, along with Council Leaders, continue to lobby Ministers for an uplift in HSG for Wales.</p> <p>There are significant risks associated with standstill budget position for HSG and these are captured within the risks and mitigations section of this report. Of note is the potential for a lack of bids from housing support providers for new services the Council wishes to commission as limited budget makes service delivery challenging. There are also risks that current services will seek to withdraw from delivery of existing contracts as they are increasingly financially unviable. This has been seen elsewhere in Wales and we continue to monitor the situation closely.</p>

As a commissioner of services, the Council acknowledge that service delivery costs are on the increase (staffing costs, utility costs and other operational finances). It is likely we will have to work with some providers to reduce capacity within some services to ensure those services can continue to operate, or we risk notice being given on contracts as they may be financial unsustainable.

A recent survey of Housing Support providers across Wales was completed by Cymorth Cymru as part of their “Housing Matters Wales” campaign. This report highlights feedback nationally on the instability and uncertainty within the housing support and homelessness sector at a time of growing demand.

1.07 Housing Market Challenges

The housing market continues to be challenging. Housing needs recorded on the Flintshire Housing Register (not just homelessness) continue to be significant as reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2024 and availability of social housing is limited. The private rented sector should be an option for people to consider but again demand is greater than supply and this drives up prices.

Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable for many low-income households however it is encouraging to note the UK Government have increased the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from 1st April 2024 and this will hopefully make private renting more affordable for some residents, assuming landlords don't increase rental charges significantly.

Local Housing Allowance	Current	From 01/04/24
Shared Room Rate	£87.50	£87.50
1 Bed Rate	£92.05	£103.56
2 Bed Rate	£120.82	£136.93
3 Bed Rate	£136.93	£159.95
4 Bed Rate	£184.11	£212.88

Whilst increases in LHA is much needed and positive, the availability of private rental accommodation is still a challenge. Research commissioned by the Council to help inform the Local Housing Market Assessment, which is due to be refreshed this year, evidences availability in the private rented sector is down approximately 60% in the last 5 years with many landlords having sold their properties or found other uses for them.

Barriers to securing housing

Many clients have needs in addition to housing. Some of the most significant needs can present additional complexities and barriers to helping people secure housing:

- Young people with no independent living skills
- People with issues around substance misuse
- People with significant mental health issues
- People with criminal offending history
- Register sex offenders

	<p><u>Social Housing Supply</u> There are significant shortages of social housing when it comes to the homeless cohort. Whilst any household can experience homelessness, a significant proportion of homeless households are single people of working age who require one bed homes. There is very little one bed general needs social housing in Flintshire and c.80% of the homeless cohort require one bed general needs housing as they are under the age of 55 (sheltered housing age criteria). Social housing supply does not align with the homeless cohort demand profile.</p> <p><u>Competing Demands on limited housing locally</u> The delivery of resettlement schemes in Flintshire has been successful. Those residents not assisted through the Homes for Ukraine hosting scheme were supported into housing through access to the private rented sector. This does however reduce the supply of private rental homes for other residents. Asylum seeker dispersal operating across the UK also means Home Office contractors are seeking to secure accommodation in Flintshire resulting in an additional pull on already limited housing supply in the private rented sector.</p> <p>With a lack of available housing and competing pressures locally, many people are trapped in homelessness due to limited move on options and the direct costs associated with managing homelessness sit with local authorities.</p>
1.08	<p>Homeless Accommodation Pressures Options A homeless pressures options paper was presented to Scrutiny Committee in November 2023 and an operational working group has been established to progress the options that Members have endorsed. This group is focussed on increasing housing supply for residents to successfully move people on from homeless accommodation, as well as improving the homeless accommodation offer. Further updates on progress of the working group will be shared with Members later in the year.</p>
1.09	<p>Homeless Accommodation Policy In response to an Audit recommendation following the audit of temporary accommodation, a Homeless Accommodation Policy has been developed. The draft policy is attached as Appendix 3 for review.</p> <p>The policy is set within the legal frameworks of the Housing Wales Act 2014 for homelessness legislation and the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 for accommodation management. As outlined within the policy, certain accommodation types (holiday lets, hotel accommodation and homeless hub) are exempt from the Renting Homes Act 2016 regulations, and in those settings, a reduced security of tenure is in place through License Agreement arrangements.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Detailed below are the cost implications associated with the delivery of Homelessness and Rough Sleeper activity in Flintshire:</p> <p>Revenue: Statutory homeless services are funded through Council Fund. Additional duties placed on Councils and the current demands on services and emergency housing is resulting in additional expenditure and budget pressures, when the Council is already facing significant financial challenges. Whilst some grant is available for 2024-2025 for emergency housing and other discretionary funding, this is not yet confirmed and will not be sufficient to cover the full scale of the financial risk.</p> <p>Capital: Increasing housing supply will require significant capital investment and has been flagged early within the Council's Capital Programme. The Flintshire Housing Prospectus has been approved by Council and shared with our Housing Partners. Delivery of the Social Housing Grant supports the Council's ambitious plans to increase housing supply at scale and pace. The Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) grant regime also supports the purchase and redevelopment of accommodation for the purpose of move on accommodation or additional homeless accommodation.</p> <p>Human Resources: The Homeless Team has seen a significant amount of staff turnover in recent years. Further recruitment as part of the Housing and Prevention Service restructure is required and is costed through Council Fund and HSG. Levels of sickness and work-related stress is closely monitored within this high demand service. Vicarious trauma because of difficult cases is managed through a range of additional support activities in addition to the Council's Corporate Employee Assistance Programme (Vivup).</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The following risks and mitigations have been identified by way of control measures:</p> <p>Risk: Insufficient turnover and move on from emergency and temporary housing creates blockages and insufficient capacity to meet future demand and increasing financial pressures</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the 50% nominations process to support move on from homeless accommodation into social housing. • Continue to maximise discretionary homeless funding and spend to save budgets to support rent in advance and deposits to help people secure private rental accommodation. • Progress the homeless accommodation pressures options and increase move on options and the supply of homeless accommodation.

Risk: Failure to recruit or retain staff within statutory homeless services and in HSG funded services local homelessness and housing support needs.

Mitigations:

- Maximise communications and engagement opportunities for all recruitment activities.
- Ensure packages of training and development opportunities to attract, develop and retain appropriately skilled workforce.
- Ensure officers internally and through commissioned services are paid a good wage for the services they deliver.

Risk: Failure to utilise all available grants including “no one left out”, Discretionary Homeless Payment, and Housing Support Grant

Mitigations:

- Maximise spend against individual grant eligibility criteria.
- Financial monitoring and control for various grant regimes.
- A robust delivery plan aligned to the Housing Support Programme and needs assessments.
- Prompt commissioning and variation of services as required to meet local needs within budget.
- Maximise communications and engagement opportunities for all recruitment activities.

Risk: Reduction or continued standstill position in grants in future years as a result of budget cuts at Welsh Government

Mitigations:

- Ensure new tender exercises accurately reflect operational running costs and ensure the HSG Spend Plan is robust.
- Work with partners and internal services to address financial stability of HSG funded services.
- Lobby Welsh Government on the importance of existing grants.

3.02

Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact

Long-term	Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all.
Prevention	Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of people’s needs.
Integration	Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations.
Collaboration	Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users.

	Involvement	Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely, and person centred.
3.03	Well-being Goals Impact	
	Prosperous Wales	Positive – With additional funding more jobs will be created to deliver housing related support on a greater scale within Flintshire. Opportunities to support the labour market through training and development opportunities are being considered in conjunction with colleagues from Communities for Work.
	Resilient Wales	Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless.
	Healthier Wales	Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping, overcoming health inequalities associated with homelessness and poor housing conditions and investment to increase targeted support for people with housing issues and mental ill-health.
	More equal Wales	Positive – Services are delivered in a way that are inclusive for all. Consideration has been given to local and regional gaps in provision for often marginalised communities such as the homeless, those with mental health or substances issues and the LGBTQ+ community.
	Cohesive Wales	No Impact
	Vibrant Wales	No impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No impact

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Consultation with housing support providers to ensure sustainability of services for those people who need them.
4.02	The report was presented to the Community, Housing and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 6 th March, 2024.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Homeless Data 2023.
5.02	Appendix 2: A day in the life of the Homeless Team Case Study.
5.03	Appendix 3: Homeless Accommodation Policy.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Helping you understand the Housing Wales Act 2014
6.02	Cymorth Cymru Report: Housing Matters, Wales Budget 24/25

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Martin Cooil, Housing & Prevention Service Manager Telephone: 07880 423234 E-mail: martin.cooil@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Rough Sleeper - A person who is homeless and who sleeps without adequate shelter, typically on the streets of a town or city. Includes people living in sheds, outbuildings etc.</p> <p>Housing Support Grant - This is an early intervention housing related support programme targeted at people in housing need and at increased risk of homelessness. The HSG programme brings the historic funding streams for Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales grants into 1 single funding stream.</p> <p>Housing First - A housing and support approach which gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. Provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended.</p> <p>Priority Need - Categories of people who are protected the most when assisting people under the Housing Wales Act 2014 homeless legislation. Those in Priority Need are owed accommodation duties and when homelessness is not prevented or relieved within 56 days, they will be owed full homeless duties.</p> <p>Cymorth Cymru - Cymorth Cymru is the representative body for providers of homelessness, housing and support services in Wales. They act as the voice of the sector, influencing the development and implementation of</p>

policy, legislation and practice that affects members organisations and the people they support.

Streetlink - StreetLink is a platform that connects people rough sleeping in England and Wales to support provided by local authorities and charities. This includes anyone who is sleeping outside, preparing to bed down, or sleeping somewhere not designed for habitation, such as a car.

Local Housing Allowance - Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are decided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) using information provided by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).