

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2026–2031

DRAFT



Brent

Foreword by Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Housing

Brent is facing a homelessness emergency.

The homelessness emergency isn't unique to Brent – the whole country has been affected, especially London. But the emergency is particularly acute in Brent. Every week, over 170 households approach us as homeless.

In the five years since we adopted our first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025, homelessness has reached a new level of urgency. A record number of people are experiencing homelessness or the risk of homelessness. At the same time, we are facing an acute shortage of affordable housing.

But this is more than just a housing crisis.

Experiencing homelessness is a traumatic experience that has an adverse impact on many other areas of life, from employment to mental health to life opportunity. Children experiencing homelessness are less able to learn and benefit from school. Residents experiencing homelessness find it harder to get and hold down a job. Experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity causes stress that can negatively impact a person's mental wellbeing. Homelessness is a health and wellbeing issue too.

The last five years have been difficult. Covid had a significant impact on the affordability of the private rented sector market, and led to an increase in homelessness, including residents experiencing homelessness for the first time. Since recovery from Covid, increasing rental costs combined with the cost-of-living crisis has made it more difficult than ever for individuals and families to afford the housing that is available.

Added to these challenges, councils right across the country are facing significant financial pressures. In Brent, we're seeing rapidly escalating costs associated with homelessness. We now spend over £30 million each year on temporary accommodation. What we're spending is much more than we receive in financial support from the government. This is contributing to our need to find significant savings over the next three years, while continuing to deliver critical services to our residents.

Despite these challenges, we still strongly believe that everyone deserves a safe, stable place to call home. We are committed to preventing and tackling homelessness across the borough – so that we can minimise the negative impacts that it has on our residents.

This Strategy sets out our commitments for how we will build on the homelessness services

we deliver, to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations and strive to end homelessness in Brent. But more than that, it makes commitments to deliver services that are people-centred and forward-thinking. That's why the Strategy makes a number of commitments around working with others to address homelessness. We know that our public, private and community sector partners are already working hard to address homelessness, and by combining our efforts and resources, we'll be able to achieve more together.

The Strategy reflects the Council's broader commitments to change how we're delivering services to residents. It reflects and complements our commitments to:

- Develop a deep understanding of local communities, listening to and working with residents to achieve the changes they want.
- Work collaboratively with partners in the public, voluntary, community and private sectors.
- Transform how we deliver services by starting with the person, not with the service.

The homelessness crisis requires us to all work together, to try new things, and to put the

needs of people first. We look forward to working with our partners and communities to tackle this crisis, so that no one is left behind and so that everyone can live their best lives.

How we'll deliver this Strategy

To help us deliver this Strategy and urgently address the escalating homelessness crisis, we've developed a comprehensive Preventing Homelessness programme. This critical programme of work includes activities and initiatives to improve the service that we're providing to residents, to prevent people from becoming homeless, and to reduce the number of people living in expensive temporary accommodation.

We'll work closely with partners to deliver this programme, because we know that we make greater progress when we collaborate with others who are working hard to address homelessness across the borough. Only through urgent, united action can we deliver real and lasting change.

The delivery of this Strategy will be monitored by Senior Managers and by the Brent Homelessness Forum. We will collectively develop key results to measure progress against the commitments and outcomes set out in the Strategy. We will review this strategy regularly, working in partnership with our Homelessness Forum and through engagement with residents with lived experience of homelessness, to make sure it remains relevant and timely. We will regularly publish updates on the progress that we're making on each of the Strategy's commitments.

How we developed this strategy

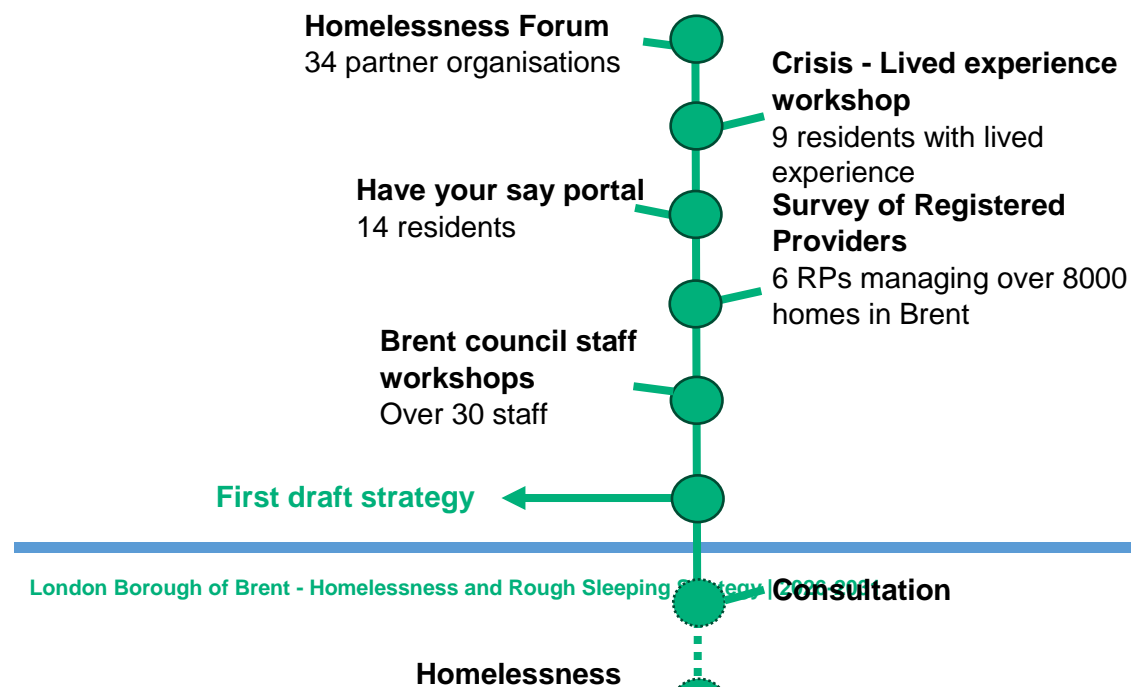
We believe it is critical that our work to address homelessness is shaped by people who have experienced homelessness themselves. It's also important that what we do is informed by people who are working to address homelessness. That's why this Strategy has been informed by engagement with people with lived experience of homelessness, key partners, registered providers and stakeholders.

We engaged with 90 of you to develop our draft Strategy. We carefully listened to staff, partners, and residents with lived experience to develop our draft priorities.

We then ran our draft Strategy and priorities by staff, partners, and residents to hear what they thought. We received feedback from:

- 156 people who responded to our online consultation.
- A workshop with over 40 members of the Brent Homelessness Forum.
- Discussion with Crisis Action Group service users with lived experience of homelessness.
- An online workshop with Brent Council officers who work directly with residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- Engagement with Registered Providers and tenants and leaseholders.

Here is the journey we've been on to develop this strategy:



Vision

We will tackle the homelessness emergency by working across the entire council and with our partners to prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless. We will put the resident and their needs at the heart of our support, and will intervene earlier and more effectively to support residents. Where homelessness cannot be avoided, we will house residents in better quality, more affordable temporary accommodation for shorter periods of time. All of this will minimise the impacts of the ongoing homelessness emergency on residents' wellbeing and life opportunities.

Our Priorities and Action

Understanding homelessness

We seek to fully understand the homelessness emergency in Brent and how it is experienced by different individuals and groups so we can develop informed, person-centred, targeted solutions, and continually improve the quality of the services we deliver.

To achieve this, we will:

- Provide person-centred, respectful support for residents built on better understanding of resident experiences – including residents worse affected by the crisis and with complex needs
- Engage with residents with lived experience & co-produce services
- Build digital systems that enable good data, and use that insight to drive good decision-making

Preventing homelessness

We are focused on preventing people from becoming homeless. We offer people the advice and support they need to ensure housing stability.

To achieve this, we will:

- Train frontline staff, use data and work with communities to identify risk of homelessness early
- Join up our services so they provide early and holistic support to households at risk of homelessness
- Communicate clearly what support is available to residents

Affordable supply of housing

We work to increase the supply of and access to stable, affordable and quality homes across the borough.

To achieve this, we will:

- Maximise the supply of new, truly affordable accommodation

- Improve conditions in the private rented sector through licensing, the Renters Rights Act and landlord engagement
- Improve the quality of supported accommodation through provider engagement and a new supported housing licensing scheme

Good quality, affordable temporary accommodation for short spells

We minimise the use of temporary accommodation, but where a resident needs it, work to improve the quality of accommodation offered, reduce the cost, and keep the stay as stable and as short as possible.

To achieve this, we will:

- Eliminate use of shared facilities in temporary accommodation and procure cost-effective long-term leased accommodation at scale
- Maximise use of the private sector to support homeless households out of temporary accommodation
- Improve the quality of temporary accommodation and the support and services provided to homeless households

Partnership working

We work together with partners and communities across the borough to ensure we're doing all we can collectively to address the homelessness emergency.

To achieve this, we will:

- Strengthen partnerships with community and voluntary organisations, faith groups and other providers
- Work with Brent's Homelessness Forum to better understand our residents, join up services, and develop a Brent prevention framework

National Context

Homelessness in England has escalated into a full-blown crisis, affecting hundreds of thousands of people and reaching critical levels in 2025. In London alone, over 183,000 individuals are estimated to be homeless and living in temporary accommodation. Since 2024, rough sleeping in the capital has surged by 58%. This alarming rise is driven by a combination of factors including skyrocketing rental costs, the end of private sector tenancies and cost of living pressures, which were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

These statistics highlight the importance and immediate need of having a clear, strategic approach for addressing the homelessness crisis, and associated monitoring systems.

The Government is making several important steps towards addressing homelessness. It is expected to pass the Renters' Rights Act in early 2026, which will abolish section 21 'no fault evictions'. This should make a difference, given that 'no fault evictions' are a leading cause of homelessness in England. In 2024 alone, 32,287 households in England were served with a 'no fault' eviction notice. We are proactively preparing for the new Renters' Rights Bill and implementing this will be an important part of our work in 2026.

The Government is also significantly investing in addressing homelessness. In the 2025 Spending Review, the Government committed £39 billion of new funding for a new Affordable Homes Programme (a ten-year programme of affordable and social housebuilding) and ringfenced £100 million for early interventions to prevent homelessness.

The Government has also provided £950 million to the Local Authority Housing Fund between 2026/27 and 2029/30 to support local authorities to obtain housing for those unable to find settled accommodation on resettlement schemes, and increase the supply of good quality temporary accommodation. The Crisis and Resilience Fund, backed by £1 billion each year until 2028/29, will provide vital support to those facing financial hardship.

This longer-term funding approach is designed to empower and enable local authorities to provide preventative support to communities (in partnership with the voluntary and community sector) and will provide critical assistance to people facing financial crisis.

The Mayor of London has committed £17 million of funding to refurbish up to 500 homes across the London, and establish a dedicated rough sleeping prevention phone line. The Mayor's Office has also committed to working with London's local authorities and key organisations to ensure that people

don't have to 'verify' that they are sleeping rough before they can access support. An approach based on an assessment of people's needs will be developed by 2028.

Although changes to policy settings and additional investment will likely make a substantial impact, local authorities will continue to bear the brunt of addressing the escalating homelessness crisis and play a critical role in supporting residents with accessing the support and services they need.

Brent's Housing Emergency

Brent is facing a homelessness emergency. Brent faces a complex set of challenges relating to homelessness and rough sleeping. Each week, an average of 170

households approach the council as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless – and 20 new households enter temporary accommodation. Of the 2,400 households in temporary accommodation, just over half are living in very basic and costly ‘temporary’ accommodation – and nearly 1-in-10 are having to share facilities. About 4,600 children are living in temporary accommodation. The borough has one of the highest rates of temporary accommodation usage in London.

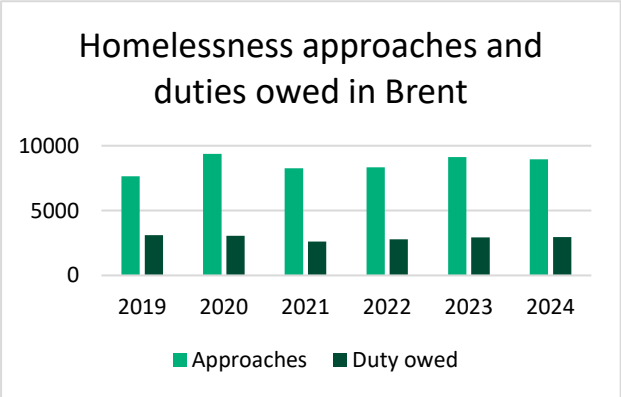


Figure 1. Approaches and duties over the past 5 years. Data from internal systems

sector tenancies, family/friend exclusions, and homes no longer being suitable due to disability and ill health. We have also seen concerning increases in homelessness due to domestic abuse and eviction from supported housing.

Rough sleeping remains a concern borough-wide, with outreach teams seeing up to 373 people in 2023 (compared with other London boroughs, which saw an average of 219 rough sleepers), and regularly engaging individuals with complex needs, including mental health issues and substance misuse. These challenges are being addressed through a multi-agency approach that includes the implementation of a By-Name List under the Built for Zero model for targeted prevention initiatives.

Housing affordability is deeply strained. Average rents in Brent significantly exceed Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels, leaving low-income households vulnerable to eviction and housing insecurity. The private rented sector dominates locally,¹ with limited access to social housing and long wait lists for council accommodation.

¹ [Tenure by household composition - Office for National Statistics](#)

Tenure Type ¹	Homes	%
Owned: Owns outright	23,933	20%
Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	23,906	20%
Private rented or lives rent free	42,897	36%
Rented: Social rented	27,875	24%

Single parent families, families with non-dependent children, and one-person

households aged 66 years and over are more likely to be in social rented housing.¹ Family households all aged over-66 are most likely to own their home outright.¹ Married couples and couples with children are more likely to own their home with a mortgage, loan, or shared ownership.¹ And non-traditional household types, student households, over-66 households, and cohabiting couples without children are most likely to rent privately.¹

We also know that residents are much more likely to experience homelessness if they are from Black, African and/or Caribbean backgrounds, Arab backgrounds, or from any other ethnic group. The median age of homeless approaches in Brent is 35 – the same as our overall median age in Brent. We also know 5.6% of recent homeless approaches identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation – higher than Brent’s average of 3.2% and London’s average of 4.2%.

All of this means that Brent has experienced increased pressure on housing and homelessness services and we are now at breaking point.

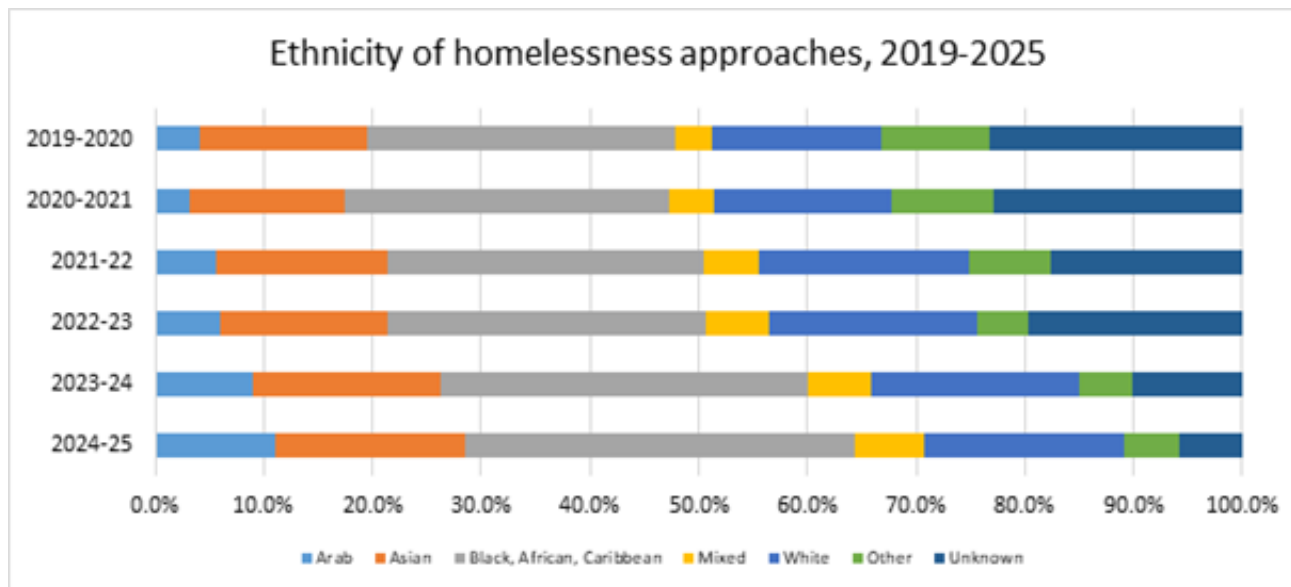


Figure 2. Ethnicity of homelessness approaches since 2019. Data from internal systems.

Existing services in Brent include the Council's Housing Needs and Support services, specialist outreach services (such as St Mungo's and Thames Reach), and a range of community and voluntary sector partners including Crisis, Beam, food banks and faith-based organisations. However, service gaps persist. There is limited availability of supported accommodation for individuals with complex needs, and a lack of specialist provision for groups requiring tailored approaches, including young people and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

Stakeholder and partner involvement remains central to addressing homelessness in Brent. Strong partnerships with NHS services, local mental health teams, probation and prisons, community and voluntary organisations and community groups are essential. Recent consultation with residents with lived experience of homelessness has highlighted the importance of culturally competent support, trust in services, and clearer information in multiple languages.

Brent has also driven innovation and success, launching the Find a Place You Can Afford scheme and continuing to emphasise providing residents with face-to-

face services. However, ongoing regeneration in parts of the borough, including Wembley, may risk displacing vulnerable residents unless protections are built in.

This Strategy is underpinned by a need to deliver place-based, preventative and inclusive services – recognising the multiple challenges Brent residents face while striving for long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.



Commitment One:

We seek to fully understand the homelessness emergency in Brent and how it is experienced by different individuals and groups so we can develop informed, person-centred, targeted solutions, and continually improve

the quality of the services we deliver.

To effectively prevent homelessness, and support residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness, it is crucial that we understand the causes, experiences, and impact of homelessness – by bringing data and lived experience together.

Accurate and reliable data is key to understanding the increasing demand on our homelessness services and how homelessness is experienced by different individuals and groups. It allows us to better target resources and maximise the impact of our initiatives and interventions. Ensuring we have good quality data also means we can better share an accurate representation of homelessness in Brent as part of our statutory submissions to central government, allowing us to effectively inform national policy and decision making around funding.

But it's just as important to have conversations with the people who we support. Through conversation, we're able to gain insight into people's lived experience of how they become homeless, how they experience it and the support they need. These conversations also help us to understand the emotional and psychological impacts of homelessness, and how people feel about the support we provide to them.

It is important that these conversations are not one-offs and that we continue to take

opportunities to listen to residents and act on what they tell us, so we can improve our services and develop interventions that work long-term. Developing person-centred approaches and an empathy driven culture, as well as effectively using the feedback we receive, is key to improving the experience of those who are accessing our services.

“The process was very difficult and confusing. I didn't know what documents to bring and had to explain my situation over and over.”
Resident survey

People's experiences of homelessness are different, including because of their individual needs, circumstances and backgrounds. That's why it's also important that we do even more to provide empathetic, individually tailored advice and support, for different groups who disproportionately experience homelessness.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Continue to embed and deliver service standards that foster a culture of respect and empathy and reduce stigma, working with front-line officers to drive forward a person-centred approach to our services, improving the experience of those who access them.**

- **Continue, and build on, our approach of meeting residents face-to-face, out in the community, in places that are accessible to them.**
- **Improve our approach to data collection across different services, and ensure that data quality is maintained so we can identify and monitor trends, understand how homelessness is experienced by different individuals and groups, make strategic decisions and more effectively target resources.**
- **Build the digital infrastructure to collect more information to continuously improve our understanding of resident demographics, the causes of homelessness, and what drives successful preventions and outcomes for residents.**
- **Engage even more with people with lived experience of homelessness, and co-produce services and solutions with them. We'll work ever more closely with community and voluntary sector partners to do this.**
- **Develop and enhance accessible mechanisms for receiving and acting on feedback, including seeking feedback from residents and by reviewing complaints. We will use this feedback to shape and drive improvements and monitor progress.**

- **Provide additional training to officers so they feel equipped to provide tailored advice. This will include training on providing person-centred, psychologically-informed and trauma-informed advice and support, and training on how to provide appropriate support for different groups of individuals.**
- **Seek to continually improve the quality of service we're providing to residents, including by ensuring that there is stronger information-sharing between our officers, to minimise the need for residents to tell their stories multiple times.**
- **Continue to work in partnership with our Homelessness Forum and other partners to develop a better understanding of those with complex needs and how we can support them more holistically.**
- **Explore options for sharing and using data across key partners so that we have a full picture of who is experiencing homelessness and reduce the need for residents to share their story with multiple agencies.**

How we're already delivering on this commitment

Face-to-face service

Brent Council prides itself on providing face-to-face services to those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness – and plans to continue this approach. While many local authorities only receive and process homelessness applications online, a core part of Brent's offering is seeing residents face-to-face, and in the places where homelessness and the risk of homelessness are most acute. Residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can access Brent's services at Turning Point and the New Horizons Centre in Harlesden, and at the Brent Civic Centre. Providing services in-person means that as well as receiving advice and support on housing, residents can access other support such as debt advice, employment and skills advice and a community shop.

How we're already delivering on this commitment

Domestic Abuse Service

Our dedicated Domestic Abuse Service is embedded in the Housing Options team and provides a specialist service to survivors of domestic abuse; supporting them to find a solution to their housing needs. The team have been working with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) to improve our response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and are working to achieve DAHA Accreditation status.

Commitment Two:

We focus on preventing people from becoming homeless. We offer people the advice and support they need to ensure housing stability.

In Brent, we're continuing to experience an extremely high number of approaches to our Housing Needs and Support service for advice and support. On average, 170 households approach us each week about homelessness – one of the highest rates in the country. We anticipate over 9,000 households approaching us in 2025-26. We

want to reduce this number by providing targeted advice and support to try and prevent homelessness.

Recognising that resources are scarce and the urgency of the situation, it is vital that we make our services more prevention-focused, so that we can avoid the costly and traumatic impact of a household reaching crisis point.

“We wait until crisis point, rather than intervening earlier.”
Staff workshop

How we're already delivering on this commitment **Brent Hubs**



Brent Hubs provide free advice and support on housing, council tax, housing benefit, employment support, money management, welfare benefits, etc.

While we've made significant progress introducing several initiatives to prevent people from becoming homeless, we need to go further. And it's not just our Housing Needs and Support directorate that has a role to play. All teams across the Council have a role to play identifying residents who need support and providing the right advice and support to individuals and families – and doing so early, such as our Children & Young People, Adult Social Care, Employment & Skills and Brent Hubs teams. Further, we need schools, community leaders, GPs, and other key parts of our communities to be doing the same. We need to make sure that every contact counts, by connecting people with the help they need at their first point of contact with us.

This means being more proactive about tackling the prevailing housing conditions in the area by helping to sustain existing tenancies where possible and by increasing the supply of affordable accommodation to those who are in the greatest need.

It's important that we all have a good understanding of who is at risk of homelessness as soon as possible so we can proactively target prevention advice and initiatives that will work for affected individuals and families at an early stage.

We will do more to work across the Council, and with our partners and communities (such as social care, public health and

welfare teams, schools, GPs, hospitals and community organisations), to identify risk of homelessness early. And we will all work together to develop and implement effective interventions that prevent households reaching that point – including by ensuring that we're all setting realistic expectations regarding the lack of available social housing.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Get upstream of homelessness, enabling earlier and more effective prevention work, including using data to identify where residents might be at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness, so we can put in place effective pre-crisis interventions. This should include targeted interventions for particular groups that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.**
- **Deliver initiatives to grow awareness across different Council services, partners and communities of homelessness pressures, how to identify people who are at risk of homelessness, and the support that is available to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.**
- **Better join up our services, so that all services are providing holistic and accessible support to homeless households, or households at risk of becoming homeless (e.g.**

employment and training, debt advice etc). We know that tackling homelessness is a whole council mission.

- **Continue to improve our communications and outreach, including online information, so that people know what services and support are available to them and how they can access them. This includes making sure that the information we're providing is culturally appropriate and provided in multiple languages.**
- **Work with our partners to identify and implement new approaches for identifying residents who are at risk of homelessness early, and providing them with the support and advice they need to help them to stay in stable housing.**

How we're already delivering on this commitment

Find a Place You Can Afford

The Find a Place You Can Afford scheme is a service provided by the Housing Needs team. They proactively work with households who are threatened with homelessness to help them to secure accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) before they become

homeless. Households are encouraged to access services as soon as they are aware that there is a threat that they may become homeless, to maximise the time available for prevention work to be successful. This is already making a difference: in 2024/25, 122 residents found their own place they can afford – 104 before needing to access temporary accommodation. To date in 2025/26, we have supported 51 residents to find their own place.

How we're already delivering on this commitment

Hospital Housing Advice Service

The Hospital Housing Advice Service is embedded in the Council's Single Homelessness Service, to support the hospital discharge teams within the London North West Healthcare Trust Hospitals to facilitate a timely and effective discharge from hospital into suitable accommodation. The team works in partnership with Healthcare Trusts to reduce delayed discharges by ensuring that patients with a housing need are identified on admission and works to address issues such as the need for minor adaptations to facilitate patients' discharge.

Commitment Three:

We work to increase the supply of and access to stable, affordable and quality homes across the borough.

At the centre of the homelessness crisis in the UK sits the housing crisis. In London, in particular, we are facing a severe shortage of affordable housing. The average house price in Brent is about twice that of the national average, has increased 3.9% in the past year,² and has more than doubled since 2005.³ Rental prices in Brent rose sharply between June 2023 and 2024, up 33.9%—although they have since cooled slightly. Overall, the average rent has increased by 50% since 2015.⁴ This has

² [Housing prices in Brent](#)

³ [House Price Statistics - UK House Price Index](#)

⁴ Calculated using 16 July 2025 version of the ONS Price Index of Private Rents [Price Index of](#)

[Private Rents, UK: monthly price statistics - Office for National Statistics](#)

meant that a typical one-bed property cost 70% of the median income at the end of 2024.⁵

Our aim remains ensuring there are more affordable homes across the borough.

As a local authority, it is important that we drive forward our own housing development plans, as well as working with registered providers to encourage and support their building programmes, with the aim of providing more affordable homes across the borough.

In Brent, we know that the loss of a private rented sector assured-shorthold tenancy is still the most common reason people approach us for help. While we expect the end of no-fault evictions to reduce the number of people who become homeless, there's more we can do to work with private sector landlords to ensure ongoing availability of affordable housing. Improving access to the private sector is vital for providing a wider housing offer for Brent residents.

But it's not just affordability and access that matter. We also need to ensure that private rented sector homes are of a good quality and suitable for people's physical needs, so that people can live stable, comfortable and healthy lives. We will go further driving up standards in the private rental market.

"Affordable housing must be the priority. Families can't live long-term in B&Bs." *Resident survey*

Supported housing also has an important role to play. We are proactively working to strengthen supported accommodation and housing related support services in Brent. For many residents, a home is more than just accommodation. Some residents can benefit from support before being ready for independent living. We will go further driving up the quality of supported housing and creating the right pathways for residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness, so they are able to live independently in stable, secure and sustainable accommodation.

While there's work that the Council can do to build more affordable housing, or encourage others to do the same, there are factors that are outside of the Council's control. However, the Council can play a role in advocating to the government for the support and legislative and policy changes that local authorities and communities need to address homelessness challenges.

To achieve this we will:

- **Continue to deliver our own new build programme where viable, providing new affordable homes**

across the borough that effectively meet local need in accordance with the annual lettings plan.

- **Work in partnership with registered providers to maximise development opportunities in the borough.**
- **Continue to maximise the supply of stable, affordable private rented accommodation through schemes such as i4B.**
- **Engage with landlords to find ways to ensure that existing private rented sector tenants can stay in their homes.**
- **Prepare for and implement the Renters Rights Act so that residents privately renting have a more secure housing situation.**
- **Drive up conditions in the private rented sector across Brent through licensing and enforcement processes, and continue to work with local landlords to improve standards.**
- **We will use the new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act to introduce a new supported housing licensing scheme and improve the quality of supported housing – and explore other options**

⁵ [Housing prices in Brent](#)

to develop and improve supported housing across the borough.

- Continue to work with our partners and other local authorities to advocate to the government for changes to legislative and policy settings, and additional financial support, that would help to address homelessness challenges.

Good practice example - i4B



Innovations such as i4B Holdings – a company set up by Brent to provide high quality, affordable rental properties with the specific intention of reducing homelessness.

Good practice example – 294 homes at Fulton Road



As part of Brent's commitment in the previous strategy to increase the supply of and access to stable and affordable homes across the borough, the Council acquired 294 flats located on Fulton Road, Wembley.

Commitment Four:

We minimise the use of temporary accommodation, but where a resident needs it, work to improve the quality of accommodation offered, reduce the cost, and keep the stay as stable and as short as possible.

Temporary accommodation is not only costly to us as an organisation but also has severely negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of those who need to use it. While originally intended as a short-term solution, temporary accommodation often becomes a long-term reality exposing residents to unsuitable living conditions and social isolation. These factors contribute to physical health issues as well as mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety. Many residents with pre-existing mental health issues find that temporary accommodation can exacerbate their issues. The longer people remain without a home, the more health issues multiple and the more difficult they are to overcome.

In Brent temporary accommodation usage has increased from 2,088 households in September 2019 to 2,400 in August 2025. The number of households in B&B has increased from 49 in August 2019 to 208 in August 2025.

We will work harder to reduce the number of people living in temporary accommodation and eradicate the use of B&B accommodation completely. It is especially important that we eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for families and pregnant women so that no child's life quality is affected by shared facilities and inadequate accommodation.

Sometimes it's unavoidable that people end up in temporary accommodation. Where this happens, we will work hard to reduce the length of time people are spending in temporary accommodation and do all that we can to improve the quality of the accommodation and other support services being provided. We will continue to build on our existing floating support service.

Given the urgent financial impact of the homelessness emergency, it's also critical that we reduce the cost of temporary accommodation where it is unavoidable. We will do all we can to secure more long-term leased temporary accommodation rather than using costlier – and typically poorer quality – emergency accommodation that is purchased on the day at a nightly rate. This will allow us to reduce the urgent financial strain on the council related to homelessness.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Develop a plan for eliminating use of B&Bs as temporary accommodation.**
- **Procure more cost effective long-term leased accommodation at scale – and move residents out of emergency accommodation and B&B into this accommodation.**
- **Identify even more opportunities for residents to move out of temporary accommodation, including into the private rental sector.**
- **Better manage expectations around the limited availability of social housing.**
- **Work with our providers and partners to improve the quality of temporary accommodation, and ensure individuals with specific or complex needs are provided accommodation through Housing Related Support services.**
- **Continue our commitment to the Setting the Standard scheme, which is a London-wide inspection regime of temporary accommodation properties.**
- **Where people do become homeless, identify ways to provide them with appropriate support as they transition into temporary accommodation, and subsequently into more settled accommodation.**
- **Ensure that people in temporary accommodation are being connected with other relevant services to help them access long-term, stable accommodation (eg employment and training, debt advice etc).**
- **Ensure that temporary accommodation residents can provide us with regular feedback, and that we use this to inform improvements.**

Good practice example – Anansi House and Knowles House



In 2019, Brent began building new council homes as part of Brent's commitment to reduce reliance on external temporary accommodation providers. This was a key commitment in our previous strategy. This was part of a broader plan to deliver 5,000 affordable homes, including 1,000 new council homes. All the new homes at Anansi House are purpose-built and self-contained, so no family will need to share a kitchen or bathroom with anyone else, and some have been adapted for wheelchair users. Anansi House will save the council on average £1.63m per year as we won't need to pay an external supplier for these rooms. This money can be invested back into the New Council Homes Programme, helping us meet our targets and move families into a permanent home more quickly.

Commitment Five:

We work together with partners and communities across the borough to ensure we're doing all

we can collectively to address the homelessness emergency.

Brent Council isn't the only organisation working to address homelessness in the borough. There are countless other community and voluntary sector organisations, faith groups and other providers who're working tirelessly to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness during these challenging times.

We've made good progress in recent years on working more closely with our partners to collectively eliminate homelessness. But as the situation has worsened, it's more important than ever that we strengthen our collaboration to deliver better outcomes for our residents.

Working with our partners can help us tackle this crisis. It can help us to identify individuals and families that are at risk of homelessness early, including those who might've 'fallen through the cracks', and provide them with appropriate support and advice to prevent them from reaching crisis point. It can help us to provide access to stable and affordable accommodation and move people on from temporary accommodation.

Ultimately, by working together we can ensure we leave no one behind.

"When teams come together, outcomes improve. But too often it

relies on individual officers, not the system.”
Staff workshop

To achieve this, we will:

- Continue to engage and work closely with Brent’s Homelessness Forum, including to develop a better understanding of those with complex needs and how we can support them more holistically.
- Strengthen partnerships with community and voluntary organisations, faith groups and other providers to understand how we can provide streamlined services and interventions to address the complex needs of those experiencing homelessness.
- Identify ways that we can better support and enable partner organisations to continue, and enhance, the important work that they do.
- Work with partners to identify and implement opportunities to deliver joined up services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, so services are easier to access and we support people in a holistic way.
- Lead work with the Brent Homelessness Forum and other

community and voluntary sector partners to develop a borough-wide prevention framework.

- Where helpful, co-locate with partners, allowing them to work more closely with us and us to work more closely with them closer to communities. We will also work to share data, where relevant and appropriate, so we can work together as effectively as possible to tackle homelessness in Brent.

How we’re already delivering on this commitment **Beam**

Brent Council has worked closely with Beam for a number of years now. Beam is a social enterprise which helps residents find jobs, homes and complete courses. Initially, our partnership focused on employment support for residents in temporary accommodation. We have expanded our partnership to focus on supporting households into homes they can afford. Beam will provide dedicated 1-

1 support, advice on budgeting and Universal Credit, tenancy training and landlord mediation, and tech to find jobs and homes that is easy to use. To date, 95% of residents supported into new homes sustain their tenancies.

How we’re already delivering on this commitment **Built for Zero**

Built for Zero is an international movement to end homelessness. It seeks to create a just and equitable future where homelessness is rare, brief when it occurs, and never a way of life. Starting in the USA over a decade ago, Built for Zero has helped hundreds of communities across the USA, Canada, Australia, France, Denmark and the UK drive sustainable, equitable reductions in homelessness. At the core of Built for Zero is a belief that homelessness is a systems issue that can, and must, be solved. The methodology is built around four pillars: a

strong backbone organisation; a shared aim owned by the community; high quality real-time data; and strategic partnerships. Brent is proud to partner with Crisis (the national homelessness charity) to carry out a test and learn pilot of Built for Zero in the UK. In Brent, we are testing the methodology with those who are rough sleeping – some of the most vulnerable in our community. Since the start of the pilot in September 2023, Brent has made steady progress towards its aim to sustainably and equitably reduce rough sleeping in the borough. The learning from the project is being shared throughout the borough's homelessness response system, as well as with wider stakeholders.

Tackling the homelessness emergency

This Strategy commits the whole council to working more closely with partners and organisations to tackle the homelessness emergency. We're seeing more households struggling to make ends meet - so we will do more to prevent homelessness, identifying people who are at risk of homelessness and intervening early, making sure the support we offer is joined up has residents at its heart. The urgency of the situation means we must change, adopting a proactive, innovative and partnership-based approach towards the future challenges that we face.

By better understanding the challenge of homelessness in Brent, through data and how individuals experience homelessness, we can develop informed, targeted solutions and continually improve how we support residents. By making our services more personalised and user-informed we can ensure that specialised and complex needs are met and that the housing solutions we provide are suitable and sustainable. By focusing our services on prevention, we can make the right advice and support available to those who need it at the right time. By increasing the supply of and access to stable and affordable homes across the

borough, we can meet local housing need. By minimising the use of temporary accommodation and reducing the cost and improving the quality of what we do offer, we can reduce the negative impacts of homelessness upon health and wellbeing.

By working with our partners, and drawing on our collective strengths, we'll have a better chance of addressing the homelessness crisis in Brent.

Together, we can turn the tide on the homelessness emergency.

