Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Action Plan – Swindon Borough Council

December 2026 – December 2029

PUBLICATION DATE
1 December 2026

NEXT REVIEW
1 December 2027

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1. Executive summary

This Action Plan sets out how Swindon Borough Council and its partners will work together between December 2026 and December 2029 to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, improve access to settled housing and strengthen support for residents experiencing housing insecurity.

It provides a practical framework for translating strategic priorities into defined actions, clear responsibilities, measurable outcomes and regular performance reviews. It will also support the development and implementation of the Council's forthcoming Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, anticipated in 2027.

Swindon faces a range of interconnected challenges, including pressure on affordable housing, increasing demand for homelessness assistance, limited move-on opportunities and the financial and operational demands associated with temporary accommodation. Some residents also experience overlapping needs involving mental health, substance use, domestic abuse, financial insecurity and contact with the criminal justice system.

The Council has reported positive homelessness prevention and relief performance compared with the national average. However, sustained improvement will require earlier intervention, stronger partnership arrangements, increased access to settled accommodation and more effective support for residents with complex needs.

The plan is organised around six strategic themes:

1. **Prevent homelessness before crisis point.**
2. **Expand access to suitable settled housing.**
3. **Improve the use and management of temporary accommodation.**
4. **Provide coordinated support that meets individual needs.**
5. **Prevent rough sleeping and reduce repeat and long-term rough sleeping.**
6. **Improve housing pathways for Care Experienced Young People, survivors of domestic abuse and other vulnerable groups.**

Delivery will be overseen through a multi-agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group, supported by operational partnerships and clearly assigned action owners. Progress will be reviewed quarterly, with a formal annual assessment of performance, emerging needs and required changes.

1.1 Intended strategic outcomes

Outcome	Direction of travel
Prevention of homelessness	Increase successful prevention and relief outcomes
Access to settled housing	Increase the availability and use of suitable long-term accommodation
Temporary accommodation	Reduce avoidable placements and shorten stays
Family bed and breakfast placements	Eliminate placements beyond the applicable six-week statutory limit
Rough sleeping	Reduce the number of people sleeping rough

Outcome	Direction of travel
Long-term rough sleeping	Work towards at least a 50% reduction against the agreed baseline by November 2028
Tenancy sustainment	Improve the proportion of households maintaining settled accommodation
Vulnerable groups	Improve access to safe, appropriate and specialist housing pathways

These outcomes will be supported by agreed baselines, annual targets and action-level performance measures.

2. Vision, purpose and strategic context

2.1 Our vision

Everyone in Swindon should have the opportunity to access a safe, suitable and sustainable home, with the support needed to obtain and maintain it.

We believe homelessness can often be prevented and that, when it occurs, it should be brief and should not become a recurring experience. Through early intervention, effective partnership working and better access to housing and support, we will help residents achieve lasting housing stability, wellbeing and independence.

2.2 Purpose of the action plan

The plan will:

- Translate strategic ambitions into practical and measurable activities.
- Establish clear accountability for delivery across the Council and partner organisations.
- Improve early identification of housing insecurity and opportunities for prevention.
- Strengthen access to settled housing and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation.
- Improve support for people experiencing rough sleeping, repeat homelessness and multiple disadvantage.
- Identify gaps in provision, resource pressures and barriers to effective delivery.
- Provide a consistent framework for monitoring performance, evaluating interventions and reporting progress.

The plan will be reviewed as the forthcoming homelessness strategy develops and as further local evidence, consultation findings and partnership intelligence become available.

2.3 Strategic and policy context

Homelessness is influenced by housing supply, affordability, income insecurity, health inequalities, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse and access to appropriate support. Effective responses therefore require coordinated action beyond housing services alone.

The plan will be delivered with regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and local strategies, including:

- Housing Act 1996.
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Applicable homelessness and rough sleeping statutory guidance.
- National homelessness and rough sleeping policy.
- Swindon's housing, temporary accommodation and supported housing strategies.
- Swindon's domestic abuse and community safety strategies.
- Relevant health, social care and safeguarding strategies.

The precise policy framework will be checked and updated as part of the development of the forthcoming strategy.

3. Strategic themes and intended outcomes

The six themes provide the framework for identifying interventions, allocating responsibility and measuring progress. Each theme will be supported by a set of specific actions in Annex A.

Theme 1 – Prevent homelessness before crisis point

Objective: Identify housing risks earlier and increase the number of households who can remain safely housed.

The Council and its partners will strengthen early intervention by improving access to advice, advocacy, financial assistance and tenancy sustainment support. Referrals from public services, landlords and community organisations will be used to identify emerging risks before they develop into homelessness.

Work will include improving Duty to Refer arrangements, strengthening relationships with registered providers and private landlords, developing community-based access points and improving coordination between housing and wider support services.

Intended outcome: Fewer households entering homelessness and more successful prevention outcomes.

Measures of progress:

- Improved prevention and relief outcomes.
- Earlier referrals from partner organisations.
- Fewer avoidable evictions and tenancy losses.
- Reduced repeat homelessness.

Theme 2 – Expand access to suitable settled housing

Objective: Increase the availability and accessibility of appropriate long-term accommodation.

The Council will work with registered providers, private landlords, housing developers and other partners to make better use of existing housing and improve access to suitable homes.

Activity will include reviewing allocation arrangements, strengthening private rented sector access, supporting landlords to accommodate households who are homeless or at risk and improving move-on opportunities from temporary and supported accommodation.

Intended outcome: More residents securing suitable and sustainable settled housing.

Measures of progress:

- Increased access to social and private rented accommodation.
- More homes brought back into use where appropriate.
- Reduced delays in moving on from temporary accommodation.
- Improved tenancy sustainment.

Theme 3 – Improve the use and management of temporary accommodation

Objective: Reduce avoidable temporary accommodation placements and ensure that necessary placements are safe, suitable and time limited.

The Council will strengthen prevention activity, improve placement management and expand access to move-on accommodation. Temporary accommodation will be managed with a clear focus on suitability, affordability, household welfare and timely progression to settled housing.

Particular attention will be given to reducing reliance on nightly-paid accommodation, monitoring the suitability of placements and eliminating family bed and breakfast placements beyond the applicable statutory limit.

Intended outcome: Reduced reliance on temporary accommodation, shorter stays and improved living conditions for households requiring emergency housing.

Measures of progress:

- Fewer households in temporary accommodation.
- Reduced average length of stay.
- Reduced use of nightly-paid accommodation where alternatives are available.
- No families remaining in bed and breakfast accommodation beyond the statutory limit.
- Improved compliance with accommodation suitability requirements.

Theme 4 – Provide coordinated support that meets individual needs

Objective: Ensure that residents receive timely, joined-up assistance addressing both housing difficulties and the wider factors affecting housing stability.

The Council will strengthen working arrangements between housing, adult and children's social care, public health, NHS services, employment and financial inclusion services, probation and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Support should be proportionate to individual circumstances and should reduce the need for residents to navigate multiple disconnected services or repeat their circumstances unnecessarily.

Intended outcome: Improved access to support, stronger tenancy sustainment and better outcomes for households experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Measures of progress:

- Increased engagement with relevant support services.
- Improved outcomes for households with multiple disadvantages.
- Improved tenancy sustainment.
- Reduced repeat homelessness.

Theme 5 – Prevent rough sleeping and reduce repeat and long-term rough sleeping

Objective: Identify people at risk of rough sleeping earlier and provide effective routes away from street homelessness.

The Council and partners will strengthen outreach, referral arrangements, rapid assessment and access to suitable accommodation. A coordinated approach will be developed for people experiencing repeat or long-term rough sleeping, including those with complex health, substance use, social care or criminal justice needs.

A Target Priority Group will be agreed with partners to identify individuals requiring coordinated, intensive intervention. Each person within the group should have a named lead worker, an individual plan and access to appropriate housing and specialist support.

Intended outcome: Fewer people sleeping rough and a sustained reduction in repeat and long-term rough sleeping.

Measures of progress:

- Reduced numbers recorded in the annual rough sleeping snapshot.
- Reduced long-term and repeat rough sleeping.
- Improved access to accommodation.
- More sustained exits from rough sleeping.

Theme 6 – Improve pathways for Care Experienced Young People, survivors of domestic abuse and other vulnerable groups

Objective: Develop safe, accessible and coordinated housing pathways for residents who face additional barriers to obtaining or sustaining accommodation.

The Council will work with specialist services and statutory partners to improve housing arrangements for:

- Care Experienced Young People.
- Survivors of domestic abuse.
- People leaving prison or other institutions.
- People discharged from hospital.
- Veterans.
- Newly recognised refugees.
- Residents experiencing multiple disadvantage.

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Intended outcome: Improved access to appropriate specialist housing and fewer people becoming homeless during transitions between services or institutions.

Measures of progress:

- Reduced homelessness among care leavers.
- Improved access to safe accommodation for domestic abuse survivors.
- Fewer people discharged or released into homelessness.
- Improved housing stability for vulnerable groups.

4. Local needs and evidence

4.1 Local evidence and intended outcomes

Strategic theme	Local challenge	Intended outcome
Homelessness prevention	Housing costs, financial hardship and growing demand can result in residents seeking help only when their housing situation has reached crisis point.	Earlier intervention and fewer households becoming homeless.
Settled accommodation	Demand for affordable housing exceeds available supply, while affordability and eligibility barriers limit housing options.	More residents accessing suitable long-term housing.
Temporary accommodation	Limited move-on opportunities and pressure on accommodation supply can increase costs and prolong stays.	Reduced avoidable use and shorter stays.
Coordinated support	Housing difficulties often overlap with health, social care, financial and other support needs.	Better access to integrated services and improved tenancy sustainment.

Strategic theme	Local challenge	Intended outcome
Rough sleeping	Multiple disadvantage and limited engagement with services can make repeat and long-term rough sleeping difficult to resolve.	Earlier intervention and more sustained exits from rough sleeping.
Vulnerable groups	Some residents require specialist accommodation, safeguarding arrangements or coordinated transition planning.	Improved access to appropriate housing and tailored support.

4.2 Initial local baseline

Published information provides an initial picture of local pressures.

Indicator	Published Swindon figure	Reference period
Households in temporary accommodation	376	31 December 2025
Households with children in temporary accommodation	235	31 December 2025
Children in households in temporary accommodation	467	31 December 2025
People recorded in the annual rough sleeping snapshot	12	Autumn 2025
Previous annual rough sleeping snapshot	17	Autumn 2024
Homelessness cases prevented or relieved	58%	31 December 2025
Average people sleeping rough per night	9	September 2026 update

The approximate rate of households with children in temporary accommodation is 2.4 per 1,000 households, based on 235 households and an estimated denominator of 99,688 local households.

5. Governance, accountability and partnership working

5.1 Strategic accountability

Swindon Borough Council will coordinate implementation of the plan and maintain oversight of delivery within its statutory responsibilities. Each participating organisation will remain accountable for the actions assigned to it.

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will provide multi-agency oversight, monitor performance, manage risks and agree remedial action where delivery falls behind.

5.2 Governance structure

Governance level	Main function	Reporting frequency
Cabinet and relevant portfolio holder	Set strategic direction, consider priorities and maintain political accountability.	As required and through formal reporting
Council scrutiny arrangements	Examine progress, outcomes and use of resources.	At least annually

Governance level	Main function	Reporting frequency
Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	Own the delivery framework, monitor targets, resolve barriers and approve corrective action within its remit.	Quarterly
Operational housing and homelessness services	Deliver assigned actions, maintain performance information and report exceptions.	In accordance with action-level arrangements
Thematic task groups	Deliver specific projects and report milestones, risks and results.	According to project requirements
Lived experience arrangements	Inform service design, accessibility, implementation and review.	At agreed intervals

5.3 Roles and responsibilities

The following assignments should be confirmed formally before publication.

Role	Proposed holder or function	Responsibility
Political lead	Cllr Matty Courtliff	Political oversight and presentation of the plan through the appropriate Council process.
Senior Responsible Officer	Sarah Banting	Overall delivery, escalation of significant risks and performance reporting.
Steering Group chair	Sarah Banting	Chair quarterly reviews and maintain accountability for agreed outcomes.
Rough sleeping lead	Chelsie Ntsiu	Coordinate rough sleeping partnership activity and long-term casework.
Operational action owners	Relevant service managers	Deliver actions, maintain records and report progress.
Cross-department leads	Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health, Finance and other relevant teams	Deliver assigned commitments and contribute specialist expertise.
Partner organisations	Relevant statutory, housing and voluntary sector partners	Complete agreed actions and participate in joint delivery.

5.4 Steering Group membership

Membership should reflect the organisations and services needed to deliver the plan, including:

- Housing and homelessness services.
- Children's Services and leaving-care teams.
- Adult Social Care.
- Public Health.
- Integrated Care Board and NHS Trusts.
- Probation and relevant criminal justice services.
- Police and Community Safety Partnership.
- Registered providers and private rented sector representatives.
- Domestic abuse services.

- Voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Relevant commissioning, finance and supported housing representatives.
- People with lived experience of homelessness.

5.5 Partnership commitments

Partners will work collectively to:

- Identify housing risks earlier and strengthen referral routes.
- Coordinate housing, health, care and specialist support.
- Improve access to settled housing and tenancy sustainment.
- Prevent homelessness following discharge or release from institutions.
- Improve responses to complex needs and multiple disadvantage.
- Explore joint commissioning, funding and resource-sharing opportunities.
- Involve people with lived experience in service development.
- Share information lawfully and proportionately.
- Review outcomes and take responsibility for agreed improvements.

Each action will identify its lead organisation, supporting partners, dependencies and reporting requirements.

7. Performance framework and targets

Performance monitoring will assess whether the plan is improving housing outcomes, rather than simply counting completed activities.

Baselines will be established using the best available statutory data and local management information. Targets will be agreed with service leads and partners, taking account of current performance, forecast demand, available resources and the national policy context.

Where data is unavailable or cannot be reliably compared over time, a specific improvement action will be included.

The Steering Group will review performance quarterly alongside progress against the actions in Annex A.

Where performance falls short of target, the accountable lead will explain the reasons and propose remedial action. The Steering Group will agree further intervention or escalation where necessary.

7.1 Core performance measures

Performance measure	Swindon baseline and reference date	Year 1 target	Year 2 target	Desired outcome
Households with children in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households	Approximately 2.4 per 1,000, based on 235 households at 31 September 2025	5% reduction	To be agreed	Reduction
People sleeping rough on the annual single-night count	12 people, autumn 2025; 17 in autumn 2024.	7	4	Reduction

Performance measure	Swindon baseline and reference date	Year 1 target	Year 2 target	Desired outcome
Proportion of eligible homelessness cases prevented or relieved	51%, reported September 2025.	5 percent increase	To be agreed	Improvement
Prevention and relief outcomes for households experiencing multiple disadvantage	51%, reported September 2025.	5 percent increase	To be agreed	Improvement
People experiencing prolonged or repeated rough sleeping	10 people November 2025	7	4	Reduction
Families in bed and breakfast beyond the applicable six-week statutory limit	December 2025 - 0	Zero	Zero	Eliminate or maintain at zero

> **Target-setting note:** Year 1 covers December 2026 to November 2027, Year 2 covers December 2027 to November 2028, and Year 3 covers December 2028 to November 2029

The long-term rough sleeping ambition is to achieve at least a 50% reduction against an agreed and validated baseline by November 2028.

7.3 Additional outcome measures

- Homelessness among Care Experienced Young People.
- Housing outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse.
- Number of people discharged from hospital or released from prison into homelessness.

8. Priority pathways and specific improvement plans

8.1 Preventing homelessness following institutional discharge

The Council and its partners will develop and maintain coordinated pathways so that housing needs are identified before residents leave institutions or other forms of accommodation.

Cohort	Key partners	Proposed intervention	Performance measure
Prison leavers	HMPPS, probation, housing services	Begin accommodation planning before release and establish a joint referral and escalation pathway.	Number or proportion experiencing homelessness on release.
Care Experienced Young People	Children's Services, Housing, leaving-care teams and young people with lived experience	Joint housing protocol, early transition planning and alignment with the sufficiency plan.	Homelessness duties owed to care leavers under 25; accommodation outcomes.
Hospital discharge	NHS Trusts, ICB, Adult Social Care, Housing	Identify housing status early, provide housing input where needed and agree an escalation route.	Number of discharges directly to the street; target zero.

Cohort	Key partners	Proposed intervention	Performance measure
Newly recognised refugees	Relevant Home Office and asylum accommodation partners, voluntary sector	Early notification and prevention support before accommodation arrangements end, subject to applicable duties and agreements.	Number securing settled housing and incidence of homelessness.
Veterans	Armed Forces Covenant lead, relevant support services and housing teams	Train staff to identify veterans and establish clear local referral arrangements.	Veterans supported and homelessness outcomes.
Survivors of domestic abuse	Domestic abuse services, police and Domestic Abuse Partnership Board	Coordinate safe accommodation, sanctuary approaches and specialist housing pathways.	Domestic abuse-related housing outcomes and access to safe accommodation.

8.3 Long-term rough sleeping improvement plan

> **Intended outcome:** Reduce long-term rough sleeping by at least 50% against the agreed baseline by November 2028.

The Council and partners will:

1. Agree a shared definition, validated baseline and numerical reduction target.
2. Establish a Target Priority Group of individuals requiring coordinated, intensive support.
3. Assign a named lead worker and individual support plan to each person in the group.
4. Coordinate housing, physical and mental health, substance use, social care and community safety interventions.
5. Conduct monthly multi-agency case reviews.
6. Provide rapid assessment and proportionate support for newly identified rough sleepers.
7. Monitor accommodation outcomes and whether exits from rough sleeping are sustained.

8.4 Temporary accommodation suitability and management

The Council has reviewed its Temporary Accommodation Suitability and Allocation Policy alongside this plan.

Commitment	Required approach
Demand and supply	Forecast temporary accommodation requirements by household type and size. Link forecasts to housing and supported accommodation plans.
Suitability and quality	Inspect accommodation before first use and at appropriate intervals. Check hazards, fire and electrical safety, damp and mould, facilities and compliance with applicable standards.
Location and disruption	Place households within Swindon wherever reasonably possible, taking account of schooling, health, employment, safeguarding and support needs. Record the reasons for out-of-area placements and meet applicable notification requirements.
Family facilities	Assess access to cooking, laundry, secure storage, connectivity and suitable space for children. Provide appropriate equipment where required.
Oversight and move-on	Maintain a move-on plan for every household and conduct periodic checks of property condition, suitability and changing needs. Report findings to the Steering Group.

9. Review and reporting arrangements

The action plan will be maintained as a live delivery document.

Review point	Activity
Quarterly	Steering Group review of actions, targets, risks, temporary accommodation and rough sleeping performance.
Annually	Formal assessment of outcomes, effectiveness, local needs and alignment with the homelessness strategy.
1 December 2027	First scheduled annual review and refresh of the plan.
2029	Comprehensive review to inform the next delivery period and the continuing homelessness strategy.

Conclusion

This Action Plan establishes a shared framework for preventing homelessness, improving access to settled housing, reducing rough sleeping and strengthening outcomes for residents facing housing insecurity.

Success will depend on early intervention, effective partnership working, clear accountability, reliable performance information and sustained attention to the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Swindon Borough Council and its partners will use the plan to coordinate activity, assess results and make changes where evidence shows that interventions need to improve. Through this approach, the Council aims to reduce homelessness, prevent repeat rough sleeping and support more residents to achieve safe, suitable and lasting housing stability.

10. Annex A – Action and implementation schedule

The following schedule is the principal record of delivery. Dates and named responsibilities remain provisional where indicated and must be confirmed by the relevant service leads and partners.

> **Status definitions:** Not started; In progress; Complete; At risk; On hold.

A1. Prevention and early intervention

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
P1	Develop community-based access points through Community Hubs to improve access to housing advice and support.	Scope and implementation plan agreed; date to confirm.	Housing Options Manager	Community Hubs	Early referrals; prevention outcomes	First CH operational
P2	Relaunch Duty to Refer, including training for referring bodies via video training.	Training and referral arrangements implemented by March 2027.	Housing Options Manager	DWP, NHS, Probation, Children's Services	Prevention and relief outcomes	Not started
P3	Establish pre-eviction protocols with registered providers.	Protocols agreed by June 2027.	Housing Options Manager	Registered providers	Prevention outcomes; avoidable evictions	Informal protocols in place
P4	Introduce or strengthen a Call Before You Serve offer and landlord incentive arrangements.	Scheme agreed by April 2027.	Private Rented Sector Access Lead	Housing partners	Prevention outcomes; tenancy sustainment	Not started
P5	Improve co-location and referral arrangements within partner teams and services.	Priority partners and delivery model agreed; date to confirm.	Designated service lead	Health, social care, VCFS	Referrals and prevention outcomes	Officers working out of The MASH, Harbour Project and Job Centre.
P6	Relaunch a multi-agency panel for households with multiple support needs.	Terms of reference and referral criteria agreed; proposed January 2027.	ASC HOS	Adult Social Care, Public Health, Probation,	Multiple disadvantage outcomes	Panel in place, needs audit of outcomes and relaunch
P7	Explore AI and predictive analytics to identify those at risk of homelessness	TBC	Head of Homelessness	Performance Team	Early identification	Project being scoped

A2. Settled housing and accommodation access

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
A1	Relaunch or improve the Private Rented Sector Access Scheme.	Delivery model and targets agreed; date to confirm.	Private Rented Sector Access Lead	Landlords, agents,	Settled housing outcomes	Not started
A2	Develop a registered provider move-on framework.	Framework agreed; date to confirm.	Allocations Manager	Registered providers	Move-on outcomes; length of stay	Move on arrangements in place, but not formalised and tracked
A3	Review allocations arrangements to support prevention and relief.	Review completed by September 2027.	Allocations Manager	Registered providers, Housing Options	Prevention and accommodation outcomes	Contained in Allocations Policy, but needs an audit and refresh

A3. Temporary accommodation

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
T1	Increase Council-controlled temporary accommodation to reduce reliance on nightly-paid placements.	Number of units and business case agreed; proposed March 2028.	Director of Housing	Finance	Family placements; cost and supply	Property identified
T2	Implement a quarterly temporary accommodation suitability audit programme.	Audit framework and first review completed; proposed December 2026.	Temporary Accommodation Manager	Environmental Health, relevant property teams	Suitability compliance	Not started
T3	Introduce a temporary accommodation move-on framework, including a plan for each household.	Framework agreed; date to confirm.	Housing Options Manager/Temp Accommodation Manager	Accommodation Providers	Average length of stay	Not started

A4. Coordinated support and tenancy sustainment

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
S1	Agree the Target Priority Group and individual case plans for people experiencing long-term rough sleeping.	Group and plans agreed; proposed December 2026.	Rough Sleeping Lead	Outreach, NHS, Police, substance use services.	Long-term rough sleeping	In progress
S2	Develop a tenancy sustainment service for households moving on from temporary accommodation.	Service model and outcome measures agreed by September 2027.	Housing Options Manager/Tenancy Services Manager	Housing providers	Tenancy sustainment; repeat homelessness	Not started
S3	Establish a lived experience advisory arrangement to inform service design and improvement.	Membership and terms of reference agreed by March 2027.	Rough Sleeper Lead/Housing Options Manager	Lived experience representatives,	Evidence of service changes informed by feedback	Not started
S4	Strengthen the health and housing partnership protocol for residents with multiple needs.	Protocol and escalation route agreed; date to confirm.	Designated service leads	ICB, NHS Trusts, Adult Social Care	Coordinated support outcomes	Not started

A5. Rough sleeping and specialist pathways

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
R1	Establish a coordinated outreach and rapid assessment process for newly identified rough sleepers.	Operating arrangements agreed;	Rough Sleeping Lead	Outreach, VCFS, Police, health services	Rough sleeping snapshot and daily RS numbers	Started
R2	Introduce regular multi-agency reviews for repeat and long-term rough sleeping cases.	Monthly review arrangements established;.	Rough Sleeping Lead	Housing, health, substance use services, probation	Long-term and repeat rough sleeping	Started
V1	Refresh housing protocol for Care Experienced Young People.	Protocol and transition planning arrangements agreed;	Children's Services / Head of Homelessness	Positive Futures Team, young people with lived experience	Care leaver homelessness and accommodation outcomes	Meeting arranged Nov 2026
V2	Improve and increase the domestic abuse accommodation pathway.	Pathway aligned with the relevant Domestic Abuse Strategy;	Designated housing and domestic abuse leads	Domestic abuse services, Police, relevant partnership board	Safe accommodation outcomes	Started
V3	Implement a hospital discharge housing pathway.	Referral, escalation and housing assessment arrangements agreed by June 2027.	Social Lettings Lead	ICB, NHS Trusts, Adult Social Care	Discharges to the street; target zero	Informal arrangement currently in place

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
V4	Implement a prison release accommodation pathway.	Joint pathway and pre-release arrangements agreed by June 2027.	Rough Sleeper Lead	HMPPS, Probation, Housing Options	Homelessness on release	Informal pathway in place
V5	Strengthen refugee and veteran housing referral pathways.	June 2027	TBC	Relevant statutory partners, Armed Forces Covenant lead, VCFS	Housing outcomes for relevant cohorts	Not started

A6. Cross-cutting improvement actions

Ref.	Action	Key milestone and target date	Accountable lead	Partners	Performance measure	Status
C1	Establish a consistent homelessness performance dashboard and data definitions.	Baselines, definitions and reporting ownership agreed	Head of Homelessness	Performance Team	Completeness and timeliness of reporting	In place. Further performance measures to be considered
C4	Complete the annual review of the action plan and its alignment with the forthcoming strategy.	First review by 1 December 2027.	Head of Homelessness	Steering Group and partners	Review completed; changes approved	Not started

A7. Action assurance and closure

Each action owner will provide an update at the agreed reporting interval. Updates should record:

- Work completed and progress against milestones.
- Evidence of outputs and outcomes.
- Current status and any delay.
- Risks, dependencies and resource implications.
- Corrective measures and revised dates where required.
- The latest review date and the person responsible for the update.

The Steering Group will use the action register as its central record of delivery throughout the plan period.

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10. Annex B – Data and information requirements

Temporary Accommodation Suitability Policy (Draft)

Foreword
Swindon Borough Council is committed to ensuring that households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are provided with temporary accommodation that is suitable for their needs, circumstances and wellbeing.

We recognise that temporary accommodation is often provided during periods of significant uncertainty and vulnerability. This policy sets out how the Council will assess suitability when securing temporary accommodation and how we will meet our statutory responsibilities under homelessness legislation.

The Council will seek to secure accommodation that is safe, affordable, accessible and appropriate to the needs of all household members while making the best use of available accommodation resources.

1. Introduction and Definitions

This policy explains how Swindon Borough Council assesses the suitability of temporary accommodation provided under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The policy applies to all temporary accommodation secured by the Council, including:

- Emergency accommodation
- Nightly paid accommodation
- Bed and breakfast accommodation
- Private sector leased properties
- Temporary accommodation managed by the Council
- Supported accommodation placements
- Refuge accommodation for domestic abuse survivors
- Accommodation secured through commissioned providers

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1.1 Definitions

Temporary Accommodation (TA)
Accommodation provided to homeless households whilst the Council investigates, fulfils or discharges its duties under homelessness legislation.
Suitability
The extent to which accommodation meets the household's needs, taking account of legal requirements, health, welfare, accessibility, safeguarding and location considerations.

Applicant
A person applying to the Council for housing assistance under homelessness legislation

2. Purpose / Background

2.1
This policy provides a framework for officers when making suitability assessments and aims to ensure:

- Compliance with homelessness legislation and statutory guidance.
- Consistent and transparent decision-making.
- Fair and equitable treatment of applicants.
- Appropriate consideration of individual needs and vulnerabilities.
- Effective use of temporary accommodation resources.
- Protection of applicant welfare and safeguarding needs.

The Council will have regard to:

- Housing Act 1996 (Part VII)
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Care Act 2014
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

3. Key Principles

The Council will apply the following principles when assessing accommodation suitability.
Safety
Accommodation must be free from serious hazards and suitable for occupation.
Individual Need
Each household will be assessed individually and decisions will be based on the specific needs of household members.
Equality
The Council will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and make reasonable adjustments where required.
Safeguarding
Particular consideration will be given to households with safeguarding concerns, children, vulnerable adults and those at risk of exploitation or abuse.
Location
The Council will seek to place households within Swindon wherever reasonably practicable.

Where accommodation outside the borough is necessary due to availability or other factors, the Council will consider the impact on:

- Employment
- Education
- Medical treatment
- Caring responsibilities
- Support networks
- Children's welfare

Value for Money
The Council will make efficient use of public resources while meeting statutory duties.

4. Process

Suitability Assessment Process
A suitability assessment will be completed before temporary accommodation is offered wherever possible.

The assessment will consider:
Household Composition

- Number of household members
- Ages of household members
- Pregnancy
- Gender considerations where relevant
- Family relationships

Medical Needs
The Council will consider:

- Physical disabilities
- Mental health conditions
- Mobility requirements
- Long-term medical conditions
- Healthcare access requirements
- Medical evidence may be requested where appropriate.

Accessibility
The Council will consider whether accommodation:

- Is wheelchair accessible
- Has lift access where required
- Includes adapted facilities
- Can reasonably be accessed by all household members

Welfare and Safeguarding
Consideration will be given to:

- Domestic abuse risks
- Child protection concerns
- Adult safeguarding concerns
- Risks from perpetrators
- Risks associated with particular locations

Education

The Council will consider the effect on:

- School attendance
- Special educational needs provision
- Examination years where relevant

Employment and Training

The Council will consider:

- Access to employment
- Access to training or apprenticeships
- Availability of public transport

Affordability

Accommodation must be affordable having regard to:

- Household income
- Benefit entitlement
- Service charges
- Travel costs

Property Standards

The Council will seek assurance that temporary accommodation:

- Meets health and safety standards
- Has appropriate fire safety measures
- Provides adequate facilities
- Is in reasonable repair
- Complies with relevant licensing requirements

Placements Outside Swindon

The Council recognises that accommodation pressures may mean that accommodation outside Swindon occasionally becomes necessary.

Before making an out-of-area placement, officers will consider:

- Availability of suitable accommodation within the borough
- Household circumstances
- Education arrangements
- Medical requirements
- Employment commitments
- Safeguarding risks
- Support networks

The reasons for any out-of-area placement will be recorded.

Emergency accommodation

The Council will avoid the use of emergency accommodation which does not have kitchen and bathroom facilities of the sole use of families with dependent children and pregnant women except in emergency circumstances.
Where this accommodation is used:

- The placement will be for the shortest possible period.
- Statutory time limits will be complied with.
- Alternative accommodation will be sought without delay.

Reviews of Suitability
Applicants have the right to request a review of suitability decisions in accordance with housing legislation.
Information regarding review rights will be provided when required by law.
The Council may review suitability where:

- Circumstances change.
- New information becomes available.
- Safeguarding concerns are identified.
- Medical needs change

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Housing Options Officers
Responsible for:

- Assessing housing need.
- Identifying support requirements.
- Completing suitability assessments.
- Recording decisions.
- Explaining decisions to applicants.

Temporary Accommodation Team
Responsible for:

- Securing accommodation.
- Monitoring accommodation standards.
- Liaising with providers.
- Managing placements.
- Addressing concerns regarding suitability.

Managers
Responsible for:

- Oversight of decision-making.
- Quality assurance.
- Escalation of complex cases.
- Monitoring compliance with legislation and policy.

Safeguarding Leads
Responsible for:

- Providing advice on safeguarding issues.
- Supporting risk management arrangements.
- Escalating serious concerns.

6. Governance

The Council will monitor implementation of this policy through:

- Case audits
- Complaints monitoring
- Review outcomes
- Temporary accommodation performance reports
- Service performance management arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where required by:

- Legislative change
- Updated statutory guidance
- Service redesign
- Significant case law developments