# Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update

## Report Author

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## Purpose of Report

To update the committee on the status and recent activity in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services

## Recommendations

**The Committee is recommended to note the latest position of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services**

## Decision Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? | No |
| What are the relevant corporate priorities? | Housing<br>Effective council |
| Which wards are impacted? | All |

# 1.    Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

***Finance and Procurement***

1.1    Costs associated with the delivery of the homelessness function fluctuate during the course of a year due to the ongoing pressure around emergency accommodation.  Looking back at 2024-25 in terms of funding the Council received a total of £662k in Flexible Homelessness funding to support service delivery which due to fluctuations in the need for homeless units has resulted in an underspend of £197k.

1.2    Similar regarding the rough sleeper initially which was funded from a carry forward of £109k from 2023/24, only £22k has been required so the remainder will go back into reserves for use within 2025/26.

1.3    For 2025/26 the Council will receive £754k in Flexible Homelessness funding and further £646k for Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant which funds the change for lincs team.

*Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy s151 officer)*

***Legal and Governance***

1.4    This is an update report for noting, there are no known governance implications.

*Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

# 2.    Background to the Report

2.1.    It was agreed by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee that there will be a standing agenda item updating the committee on Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services. This report will give an overview of the recent work and status of both teams as well as some key updates in specific areas of interest.

## 3.   Key Considerations

### Rough Sleeper Initiative

3.1.   As previously reported, SKDC's Rough Sleeper initiative is delivered via the Change 4 Lincs (C4L) team which covers four local authority areas: South Kesteven District Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council

3.2.   The team is hosted by South Kesteven District Council and was created by each district council contributing their Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.

3.3.   The team consists of seven team members who provide an outreach service, support service and access into the private rented sector. The team is managed by the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager and managers from the other three districts also provide support to help shape the service.

3.4.   As the funding model has remained the same for 2025/26, it has been decided that all existing staff will be retained by SKDC but tasked to work in other local authority areas where appropriate. This will allow each district to have a dedicated team in place to complement their existing Housing Options service.

3.5.   In addition, following confirmation regarding the funding for 2025/26, the Council has commenced recruitment for another outreach worker post. At time of writing this report, this role is being advertised.

3.6.   Table 4 details the C4L case numbers as of 4th June 2025

### Table 1 – C4L Case Numbers

| District | Number In Temporary Accommodation | Number of Open Cases |
|---|---|---|
| South Kesteven | 4 | 27 |
| North Kesteven | 0 | 4 |
| West Lindsey | 2 | 14 |
| South Holland | 2 | 12 |

3.7.   The number of people in accommodation is low compared to the number of people being supported. This could be because the people being supported are already in accommodation and require support to maintain it, or they have refused the offer of temporary accommodation.

3.8.   Those who are placed in temporary accommodation must engage with the intensive support that is available to them, or their placement will come to an end.

### Rough sleeping in Grantham

3.9.   In recent weeks, there has been an increase in the visibility of rough sleepers across parks and green spaces in Grantham, with a number of individuals setting

up tents in these areas. All individuals currently rough sleeping are known to the Housing Options service, and ongoing efforts are being made to engage with them to offer support.

3.10. However, rough sleeping is often complex and entrenched, with many individuals facing multiple and overlapping challenges such as mental health issues, substance dependency, and a history of trauma.

3.11. All those currently sleeping rough have exhausted the housing options available to them through the Council. For some, this includes being asked to leave the night shelter when this provision was open in February 2025. Despite this, the team continues to make regular contact, offering support and working closely with partner agencies to help these individuals move away from the streets.

3.12. While the good intentions of organisations that distribute tents to individuals identifying as rough sleepers are recognised, this practice often results in tents being pitched in areas where camping is not permitted. The Council does not provide tents to individuals sleeping rough

3.13. The homeless team are working closely with our colleagues in Public Protection and the police on this matter so it will be closely monitored over the coming months.

**Homelessness update**

3.14. The Housing Options team provide the Council's statutory homeless function. The team consists of four Housing Options Assistants, six Housing Options officers, a Senior Housing Options Officer and a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager.

3.15. Table 2 provides details of the homelessness case figures for the last three months:

**Table 2 – Homelessness Case Figures**

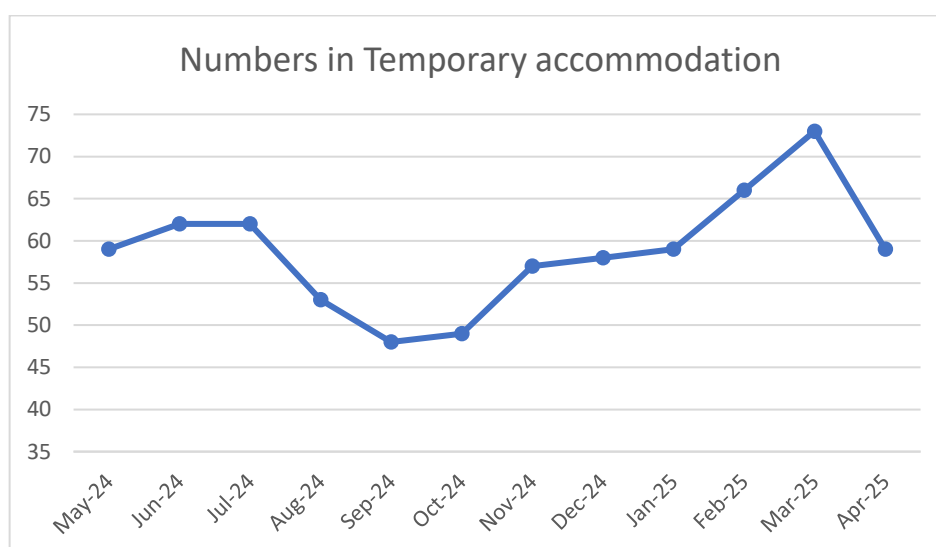|  | Feb 25 | March 25 | April 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of active Homelessness cases | 282 | 294 | 304 |
| Number of new approaches | 188 | 165 | 149 |
| Number in temporary accommodation | 66 | 73 | 59 |
| Of which – nightly paid | 11 | 15 | 17 |
| Of which – our stock | 55 | 58 | 42 |

3.16.  Graph 1 shows the number of homelessness approaches since May 2024 to the present date

**Graph 1 – Number of Homelessness Approaches**



Number of Homelessness approaches

3.17.  As this graph shows, there were significant increases in the number of approaches at two key points in the year: July 2024 and January 2025.

3.18.  These trends are broadly in line with expectations. During the summer months such as the current period an increase in approaches is typically observed. Various factors may contribute to this seasonal rise, including improved weather conditions, which can make rough sleeping more visible or more likely.

3.19.  Similarly, a spike in approaches is often observed in January. This is commonly linked to post-holiday household tensions, with families asking individuals to leave, or landlords choosing to sell properties or end tenancies in the new year.

3.20.  Graph 2 shows the number of households in temporary accommodation since May 2024. Interestingly, these figures appear to show little correlation with the number of approaches, although there has been a clear upward trend in recent months, with a sharp decline in April 2025.

**Graph 2 – Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation**



3.21. It is important to note that not every homelessness case results in a need for temporary accommodation. The Housing Options team works closely with households at risk of homelessness to prevent it wherever possible, helping reduce the demand for temporary placements.

3.22. As indicated in the data above, while Table 2 shows the number of active homelessness cases has been rising steadily, Graph 1 shows the number of new homelessness approaches has been gradually falling. This trend is expected heading into the summer months, when fewer people typically present as homeless. However, the number of individuals in nightly paid accommodation has seen a slight increase over the same period.

3.23. To support the reduction of nightly paid placements, the Council has secured access to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Grantham through a partner agency. This accommodation is now being fully utilised and has proven effective in helping meet temporary housing needs for individuals for whom other options are unsuitable.

**Night shelter**

3.24. As previously reported to the committee on 17th March 2025, the night shelter in Grantham closed on 28th February 2025.

3.25. Since the closure, discussions have continued with partner organisations to explore the option of operating the shelter on a year-round basis.

3.26. At the time of closure, demand for the shelter was low. However, with the recent increase in visible rough sleeping, there is a renewed sense that reinstating this provision may now be necessary.

3.27. That said, as noted earlier in this report, many of those currently rough sleeping have either previously accessed the night shelter and been asked to leave due to their behaviours or declined the night shelter, raising uncertainty about whether reopening the facility would provide an effective solution to the current challenges.

**Resettlement pressures**

3.28. Officers have been working in close collaboration with partners from the Strategic Migration Partnership and East Midlands Councils to fulfil our obligations under the National Resettlement Scheme. This scheme is a pathway for refugees in vulnerable situations from around the world.

3.29. Across SKDC, Serco manages 31 properties for resettlement purposes. This includes 2 self-contained properties and 29 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), collectively providing 128 bedspaces, 85 of which are currently occupied.

3.30. The council is now receiving funding to help address resettlement pressures. Various options are currently being explored to determine the most effective use of these resources.

## 4. Other Options Considered

4.1 This report is for noting