



WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING

STRATEGY 2025–2029 SUMMARY

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's new strategy outlines a five-year plan (2025–2029) to prevent and relieve homelessness, eliminate rough sleeping, and address the housing needs of residents.

It builds on previous progress while adapting to national and local shifts in the housing environment. The strategy aligns with the council's vision to "Put the Community at our Heart" and corporate priorities including quality housing, economic inclusion, and effective service delivery.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Welwyn Hatfield, despite being relatively affluent, faces rising homelessness driven by high housing demand, evictions, and broader challenges such as COVID-19, Brexit, and the cost-of-living pressures. Since 2021, homelessness approaches have risen, exceeding 200 per month in 2024/25. Common reasons include loss of private tenancies, family exclusions, and domestic abuse.

National policy changes – like the ending of "no-fault" evictions, implementation of Awaab's Law in the private sector, and the introduction of Social Housing Standard – are reshaping how councils respond. Labour's recent election has signalled renewed focus on affordable housing and renters' rights.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS

Key developments since the 2019–2024 strategy include:

- Restructuring the housing options team.
- Collaborations with partners like Druglink, YMCA, and Citizens Advice.



- Increased prevention efforts through rent arrears support, tenancy sustainment, and mental health services.
- Expansion of Housing First projects for complex needs.

Despite limited housing stock, rough sleeping remains low (14 people in 2024), aided by temporary accommodations and emergency placements.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS

- **RESIDENTS:** From surveys, residents highlighted homelessness as a top concern, urging the council to provide more affordable homes and improve support services.
- **PARTNERS:** Commended the council's responsiveness, but called for better coordination, faster information sharing, and improved support for 'move-on' services.
- **STAFF:** Stressed rising service pressures, complexity of homelessness cases, and the need for more flexible and intermediate services.



VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

VISION: Everyone in Welwyn Hatfield has a safe, stable, and good-quality home as a foundation for a healthy, fulfilling life.

FOUR CORE AIMS

1. Eradicate rough sleeping within the borough

- Outreach engagement for all rough sleepers.
- Expanded partnerships and “move-on” options.
- Emergency shelter policies and better support for those not owed a statutory duty.

2. Proactive prevention and relief of homelessness

- Early intervention and legal compliance (e.g. Domestic Abuse Act).

- Collaboration on prevention protocols with registered social landlords and supported housing providers.

- Support programs to build residents’ resilience and self-sufficiency.

3. Maximise the efficiency of our services

- Improve internal and external service performance.
- Identify and apply for new funding streams.
- Public education campaigns and improved signposting to services.

4. Enhance housing options to meet residents’ needs

- Increase and redevelop temporary accommodation (Howlands House and Burfield Close).
- Improve pathways for vulnerable groups such as care leavers, hospital discharges and people with mental health issues.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

The council received increasing Homelessness Prevention Grants, peaking at £729,482 in 2024/25. It also secured targeted funding for rough sleeping services, though funding for 25/26 has increased significantly future funding remains uncertain. Maximising and sustaining these resources is a strategic priority.



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**