



Homelessness Review 2024

Evidence Base for the Homelessness
and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30

December 2024



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Summary

This paper sets out our review of the current situation in Bristol. It provides a statistical review of trends in homelessness presentations and underlying causes, activity in preventing and relieving homelessness, cohorts that may be more likely to become homeless and the profile of households experiencing homelessness. The information and data analysis we have reviewed covers both the period before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key findings

- Over the past few years, we have seen some of the most challenging conditions for living standards on record. Private rents have surged in recent years while Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were frozen between 2020 and 2024. With the national benefit cap in place this has meant that some Bristol claimants, particularly single people and families with children, have not been benefiting in full from LHA since the freeze was lifted. The price of essentials such as food and fuel has soared, and on top of this many households have also faced significant increases in their housing costs – either due to rising rents or increased mortgage payments linked to higher interest rates. These challenges have had an impact on current levels of homelessness in Bristol and are likely to continue to do so.
- Since the start of the pandemic we have seen a 25% increase in households (average of 510 households a month) approaching Bristol City Council because of homelessness related issues. The number of households owed statutory homelessness duties and currently in temporary accommodation (TA) is 92% higher than before the pandemic.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of households that have been provided with temporary accommodation in the last few years. This has put a strain on the council's resources. The number of households living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Bristol on 30th June 2017 was 585. In March 2024 the figure was 1587.
- Our data¹ shows that the number of people sleeping rough in the city is rising again since the 'Everyone in' initiative in the pandemic. In total, there were 912 people sleeping rough in Bristol over the 2022-23 financial year. This was a rise of 28% from 701 people sleeping rough in Bristol in 2021-22. Demand for the Rough Sleeping Prevention service has increased year on year, with 653 people entering the service in 2021-23, and 812 in 2022-23; a 24% increase.
- During the pandemic and "Everyone in" the number of single people accommodated increased significantly. Family homelessness has increased since the end of lockdowns and protections like the eviction ban. The cost-of-living crisis and continuing challenges around affordability of both home ownership and private renting are contributing to high levels of homelessness presentations.

¹ Bristol City Council Housing Options Service Statistics (analysis by Street Outreach Bristol, Oct 2023)

- Increased focus on prevention needs to be a priority for future work. Homelessness Case Level Collection data (H-Clic) has shown that BCC has a low rate of prevention vs. relief cases accepted compared to many other councils. However, HCLIC data does not include early intervention work that is carried out across the city by BCC and partners.

Specific challenges, specific groups

- The main reported reasons for people presenting as homeless continues to be: 'End of Private Rented Tenancies' (27.3% in Q3 2023/24), 'Family no longer willing or able to accommodate', (24.9% in Q3 2023/24) and 'Domestic Abuse' (12.7% in Q3 2023/24).
- There is an over-representation of households from Black Asian and minority ethnic groups facing homelessness with these groups representing 18.9% of the population, but 31.1% of relief duty acceptances in 2022.
- Poverty is a key risk factor for homelessness: by equality groups, in 2022-23, the highest levels of people struggling financially were reported amongst people of Black ethnicity (27.0%), single parents (23.0%) and disabled people (25.7%).
- Where a duty is accepted, the priority need group with the largest increase since 2018 has been those reporting 'vulnerable as result of mental health problems'. This saw a sharp increase from 36 to 245 in 2022-23, with a particularly significant growth amongst young people.
- Family homelessness (couples or single parents with an expectant mother in the household or with dependent children, to whom we owe a homelessness duty to) has been increasing due to a combination of the economic environment, welfare benefit reform and affordability of accommodation, particularly in the private rented sector. Families are staying longer in supported accommodation, leading to pent up demand for families in unsupported emergency and temporary accommodation who are waiting to move into supported accommodation.
- People find it difficult to move on from supported accommodation because options available in the general needs sector consist either of unaffordable private rented accommodation, (so individuals are likely to fail affordability checks), or oversubscribed social housing that can take years on waiting lists to secure.
- We estimate there are in the region of 800+ people living in vehicles in the city. The single biggest reason put forward by vehicle dwellers themselves for choosing to live in a vehicle is inability to afford other housing options within Bristol and a lack of social housing.
- Evidence from the development of our Multiple Disadvantage strategy demonstrates that to be as effective as possible, support around homelessness and rough sleeping services should be trauma-informed¹ and person-centred.

1: Data on Homelessness

1a. Number of approaches

The total number of homeless presentations to Bristol City Council (BCC) has remained at similarly high levels since January 2020, correlating with the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the last 4 full years, applications have risen by 9.3%. This is much higher than the national increase of 2.5% or the South West position, which was a decrease of 1.7%. Whilst the pandemic may have now largely passed, homeless presentations have continued at a generally high level. (H-CLIC data)²

The below table shows the total number of homelessness presentations and duty acceptances made in the past five financial years.

Table 1 – Number of presentations to the service, and duty acceptances by year

Year	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Presentations	4,224	5,160	5,353	5,667	5,804
Acceptances of prevention duty	563	572	475	554	594
Acceptances of relief duty	1,381	1,721	2,430	2,241	2,535
Acceptances of main duty	409	704	883	1,028	1,173

The total acceptances of relief duty for all groups, (including where prevention duty had been accepted first) has increased from 1,381 in 2018-19, to 2,535 in 2022-23. This breaks down as follows:

Household type (2022): Single men account for the largest number of homelessness acceptances. Followed by lone parent households (i.e. with dependent children) headed by a woman.

Age group (2022): The 30-39 age group remain the largest cohort of households where a prevention or relief duty was accepted. The second largest group is 22-29 year olds.

Ethnicity (2022): There have not been significant changes in the proportion of different ethnic groups represented between 2018 and 2022-23 (where a relief duty has been accepted). There remains a significant over-representation of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, representing 18.9% of the population, but 31.1% of relief duty acceptances (2022). An increase in the number of cases where ethnicity is recorded as: 'Don't know/refused' indicates a lack of capacity or a training of staff at the point of registration.

² BCC sends data to DLUHC each quarter (known as the H-CLIC return). Figures are based on H-CLIC data that is currently available to us.

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The table lists all the various categories for ethnicity recorded:

Table 2 – Ethnicity of applicants where a homelessness relief duty was accepted, compared to Bristol’s population data (census)

Ethnicity of applicants where a relief duty was accepted				
	2018-2019 (%)	2022-2023(%)	Census 2021(%)	Census 2021
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	472,467
White: British	57.7%	50.6%	71.6%	338,452
Black/Black British: African	11.1%	12.9%	3.8%	18,149
Don't know/refused	7.2%	11.3%	n/a	n/a
White: Other*	4.3%	6.0%	8.5%	40,129
Black/Black British: Caribbean	4.7%	4.1%	1.4%	6,803
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	2.3%	2.8%	1.6%	7,714
Any other ethnic group	2.7%	2.1%	1.4%	6,510
Asian/Asian British: Other	0.9%	1.9%	1.2%	5,821
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	1.9%	1.5%	1.9%	9,064
Arab	1.6%	1.4%	0.5%	2,540
Black/Black British: Other	1.6%	1.3%	0.6%	2,938
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%	2,616
Mixed: White and Black African	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	2,621
Mixed: Other	0.6%	0.6%	1.1%	5,225
White: Irish	0.8%	0.6%	0.9%	4,288
Asian/Asian British: Indian	0.6%	0.4%	1.8%	8,302
Mixed: White and Asian	0.4%	0.4%	1.2%	5,556
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	273
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.2%	0.2%	1.2%	5,466
Group: White (all)	63.2%	57.6%	81.1%	383,142
Group: Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (all)	29.6%	31.1%	18.9%	89,325
Don't know/refused (all)	7.2%	11.3%	n/a	n/a
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	472,467

Table 3 - Reasons for homelessness

Most common reasons (top 3)	Q1 2020/21 (% of total acceptances)	Q3 2023/24 (% of total acceptances)
End of private rented tenancy	9.9	27.3
Parents or other relatives not willing or able to accommodate	24.9	19.8
Domestic abuse	8	12.7

The most common cause of statutory homelessness over the past five years has been 'Parents or other relatives not willing or able to accommodate', closely followed by 'End of private rented tenancy', and 'Domestic abuse'.

Causes have changed slightly over the course of 4 years, in part due to national temporary measures introduced in response to COVID-19. Bristol has a lower rate of domestic abuse as the cause of risk of homelessness, but a relatively high rate of eviction from social housing or supported housing, and from leaving an institution.

The changing picture of priority need (2022): The main category for identifying priority need among statutory homeless over the past five years has consistently been because the household includes dependent children. The priority need with the largest in numbers reported since 2018 has been those reporting 'vulnerable as result of mental health problems', where numbers increased from 36 to 245 in 2022-23. Those reporting 'Vulnerable as result of physical disability / ill health' saw an increase from 33 (2019) to 170 (2022-23).

1b. Temporary Accommodation

As of 25th March 2024, there were 1587 households in temporary accommodation (TA), having increased from 1282 on 31st March 2023. 48% of these households include dependent children.

Excluding London, Bristol has the fourth highest number of residents housed in temporary accommodation, and demand has increased by 92% since COVID-19. Due to a lack of affordable housing, much of the TA the council uses is expensive accommodation from the private rental sector. The annual TA subsidy loss³ for the council for 2023/24 is estimated to total around £13m if no steps were taken to reduce this cost. The council is working to reduce the cost of TA by increasing its supply of stable and long-term TA and move-on accommodation for homeless households.

Most households in TA are placed in Private Sector accommodation through our emergency accommodation basis (paid for on a nightly basis), either self-contained units, or those with shared facilities. Very few are placed in bed and breakfast or hotel settings, however, the number of hotels used for TA has increased over the course of 2024.

³ Subsidy Loss; for Temporary Emergency Accommodation the government only pays BCC back pre-set amounts, regardless of the amount of rent being charged to the homeless client.

2: Rough Sleeping

2a. Rough sleeping figures

Single night counts, monthly rough sleeping figures and total annual figures all show significant year-on-year rises. The average for single night counts and estimates rose from 47 people in 2021-22 to 55 in 2022-23, an increase of 18% year on year. Although only data for this financial year are available, the figures for this period show a further year on year increase of 15% when compared with the same months the previous year.

A comparison between 2021-2022 and 2023-24 shows that the average number of people rough sleeping in each month across the year rose from 90 people per month to 113, an increase of 26%. Although only data for up to April to September 2023 are available, the figures for this period show a further year on year increase of 29%. Seven out of the last eight months recorded monthly totals over 130 people, with a high point of 185 in the last count (September 2023). This compares with only five months recording over 130 people sleeping rough in the previous two years.

In total, 912 people slept rough in Bristol in the 2022-23 financial year. This was a rise of 28% from 701 people sleeping rough in Bristol in 2021-22.

New rough sleeping

Data on people beginning rough sleeping for the first time suggests a significant increase from year to year since April 2021. The average number of people who were 'new to the streets' each month in 2021-22 was 19. This rose to 35 people in 2022-23, an increase of 83% year on year. Again, data is only available for April to September of the current financial year. In this period, the average number new to the streets each month in Bristol was 56 people, compared with 38 in the same period the year before. This represents an increase of 46% year on year.

Reasons for leaving the streets

Data on the reasons for people leaving the streets since the launch of the Bristol Street Outreach service in October 2021, show the following trends:

- An increase in moves directly to private rented accommodation from the streets, from 1.5 people on average per quarter in 2021-22 to 6.5 people per quarter in 2023-24
- An increase in the average number of people moving back to existing accommodation, from 10.5 people on average per quarter in 2021-22 to 24.5 people per quarter in 2023-24
- A reduction in moves to emergency accommodation, from 63.5 people on average per quarter in 2021-22 to 44.5 people per quarter in 2023-24

The reduction in the number of international reconnections partly reflects changes in rough sleeping levels among people engaging in seasonal immigration for the purposes of begging. A sharp decrease in moves to 'other move on accommodation' is partly due to the redefinition of some types of accommodation.

Rough Sleeping Cohorts – who is sleeping out

This equalities data is for the main Bristol Street Outreach engagement service working with people sleeping rough. For the 12 months to the end of June 2023:

- For people where their gender was known, 932 who were engaged with by the Bristol Street Outreach Service were male; 311 people were female; 8 were non-binary; and 5 identified as a gender not listed.
- For people where their ethnicity was known, 194 people (13%) were from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic groups.
- For people where their nationality was known, 1,152 people (75%) were from the UK (including Republic of Ireland); 247 people (16%) were from the European Economic Area (EEA) (including Switzerland); and 122 people (8%) were from countries outside the UK and EEA.
- For people where religion was known, 437 (61%) had no religion, 195 (27%) were Christian, 47 (7%) were Muslims, 8 (1%) were Hindu, 4 (1%) were Buddhist, 1 person (0.1%) was Jewish and 24 (3%) had a religion that was not listed.
- 184 people (10%) described themselves as disabled. Of these people, 135 (74%) identified their disability type as 'mental health', 52 (28%) as 'mobility', 18 (10%) as 'learning disability', 9 (5%) as 'autistic spectrum', 7 (4%) as 'hearing impairment' and 31 (17%) as 'other disability'. It is believed in the sector that rates of reported disability significantly underestimate the levels of disability.
- For people with sexual orientation that was known, 898 (94%) identified as heterosexual, 32 (3%) as bisexual, 10 (1%) as gay or lesbian, 7 (1%) as queer and 5 (1%) as a sexuality not listed.

Young people and care leavers

The number of people aged 18-25 who have slept rough each month in Bristol has been reported since October 2022. In this period, an average of 5 people slept rough each month with a high point of 9 people in October 2022. On average, this equates to 4% of the total monthly rough sleeping population. An average of 0.5 people aged under 25 who were also care leavers slept rough each month in this period.

Non-UK nationals and people with no recourse to public funds

During the period October 2022 to August 2023, an average of 68 people in the combined cohort had a nationality other than the UK – including the category 'unknown nationality'. This equates to an average of 37% each month.

Table 4 - Support needs of people sleeping rough

The following table shows the support needs of 676 people recorded as sleeping rough in Bristol between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 where at least one support need was recorded.

The most common needs (in order) were for support with: Mental Health, Drugs and Physical Health.

Table 4: Support needs for 676 people sleeping rough in Bristol from April 2022- March 2023

Client needs at presentation	Number of clients with this need	%
Mental Health	376	56%
Drugs	352	52%
Alcohol	163	24%
Benefits/Finance	264	39%
Offending	237	35%
Physical Health	291	43%
Violent Behaviour	112	17%
Begging	213	32%
Literacy/Numeracy	50	7%
Learning difficulties	37	5%
Refused help	79	12%
Report Total:	676	100%

Table 5 - Causes of rough sleeping

The following table shows the causes of homelessness reported for the 1,305 periods of rough sleeping recorded during 2022-23:

Reason	Number	%
Unknown	210	16%
Abandoned	196	15%
Eviction	178	14%
No recourse to public funds	143	11%
Other	116	9%
Relationship Breakdown	80	6%
Just moved to area	75	6%
Leaving Prison/Remand	75	6%
N/A	64	5%
Passing through area	55	4%
Fleeing Violence/Abuse	46	4%
Inappropriate Housing	25	2%
End of tenancy	17	1%
Lost employment	9	1%
Leaving Hospital	5	0%
Looking for work	4	0%
Leaving NASS accommodation	3	0%
Overcrowding	2	0%
Leaving Armed Forces	1	0%
Repossession	1	0%
Total homelessness timelines	1305	100%

2b. Rough sleeping prevention

The number of people sleeping rough or in Emergency Accommodation only represent part of the picture of support the council provides. The Rough Sleeping Prevention Service, launched during COVID19, works with clients who have no history of rough sleeping and are accessing homelessness services for the first time. Demand for the service has increased year on year, with 653 people entering the service in 2021-23, and 812 in 2022-23 - a 24% increase.

For clients accessing the Rough Sleeping Prevention Service in 2021-22 and 2022-23, 49% of all clients were sleeping rough and 51% were 'at risk of rough' sleeping. These 'at risk' clients include people who are sofa-surfing, faced with eviction or other vulnerable living situations.

Analysis of 7,215 homelessness presentation to Bristol City Council since April 2022 showed that for 974 (13%) presentations, the person was sleeping rough at the time of their application, with the remaining 87% in some form of accommodation.

3: Prevention and Relief

Since the publication of the last [Bristol Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy \(2019-2024\)](#), in relation to accepted prevention duties, over 2,000 people have been prevented from becoming homeless in Bristol. The Government’s ban on evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-21) resulted in a higher number of successful preventions than usual. When comparing current prevention rates to the pre-covid rate.

Table 6 - Number of households owed a prevention duty, and positive outcomes by year

Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Prevention duties accepted	572	475	554	594
Number of successful part 7 preventions	146	188	155	189

*‘Part 7 presentations’ in the table above are those individuals owed a duty of homelessness assistance under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

Table 7: Benchmarking Bristol to England and South West, Key prevention statistics from Quarter 1 (April – June) of 2023/23

H-CLIC field	England		South West		Bristol		Note on Bristol trends based on last 4 Years
	S195	S189B	S195	S189B	S195	S189B	
<p>The % of applicants owed the prevention duty (S195) vs. relief duty (S189B)</p> <p>Authorities can more effectively manage their services if a higher proportion of households are owed the ‘prevention duty’ rather than the ‘relief duty’</p>	45.5%	50.6%	44.2%	52.8%	20.3%	73.9%	BCC has a low rate of prevention vs. relief cases accepted compared to many other councils. This is a long-standing trend.
<p>Rates of prevention and relief duty owed per 1,000 households</p> <p>A key statistic showing the levels and type of housing need demand for assistance in the area</p>	S195 rate 1.45	S189B rate 1.62	S195 rate 1.26	S189B rate 1.51	S195 rate 0.67	S189B rate 2.45	Over 4 years, Bristol has had a consistently low rate of prevention cases compared to most councils.

H-CLIC field	England	South West	Bristol	Note on Bristol trends based on last 4 Years
<p>% of households owed the S195 Prevention duty which have dependent children</p> <p>Families are more likely to approach at the point of seeking 'prevention' assistance than when already homeless. High performing councils tend to encourage all applicants to approach at 'prevention' stage not when in crisis (see below).</p>	44.3%	40.1%	37.3%	There is no significant change on these trends over 4 years. The % of families owed a prevention duty over a 12 month period has been around 40% but there are signs it the proportion is dropping by around 3% – 5% and there are a higher proportion of households without dependents owed the prevention duty.
<p>S195 Prevention duty ended positively</p> <p>This is a key measure for every Council, customers and DLUHC – duties can end positively with assistance to retain existing accommodation (the ideal outcome) or move elsewhere.</p>	51.2%	49.5%	40.2%	In 2019/20 Bristol's prevention 'success' rates were half that of the regional and national rates, at around 30.8% and there was little change in 2021/22.

Since a return to 'business as usual' after the pandemic, the success rate of prevention activity has decreased. Both the economic downturn in the last year and the changing housing market are contributing factors. Given Bristol's lack of availability of social and council housing, and record waiting lists for accommodation, by far one of the key tools that enables us to prevent homelessness is by supporting people to remain in their private rented sector properties or supporting applicants to find alternative PRS (Private Rented Sector) accommodation.

Table 8 – Reason for positive prevention outcome

Reason Prevention Duty Ended	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Secured alternative accommodation	101	142	140	116
Maintained existing accommodation	45	46	15	73

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Bristol City Council's Housing Options service has several teams working on homelessness prevention outside the scope of statutory part 7 applications.⁴ The total number of homelessness preventions and early interventions, including both part 7 and non-part 7 were as follows:

Table 9 - Total preventions and early interventions

Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
No. of total preventions and early interventions	1,241	1,512	1,282	1,536

Early interventions by the Homelessness Prevention Team, outside the scope of the part 7 duty has fallen from the previous quarter.

Table 10 – Number of households owed a relief duty, and positive outcomes by year

Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Relief duties accepted	1,721	2,430	2,241	2,535
No. positive relief outcomes	539	683	561	511

When a relief duty is accepted, this will add to pressure on homelessness prevention services, particularly to the numbers placed in Temporary Accommodation. The increase in annual relief duties combined with static homelessness prevention duties has contributed to a financial burden placed on services associated with the homelessness pathway.

⁴ Applications made by individuals assessed to be owed a duty of homelessness assistance under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

4: Key Challenges

A study undertaken by the Shared Health Foundation states that 'Children living in temporary accommodation are at greater risk of suffering from poor health, social and educational outcomes, with indirect consequences to their emotional well-being and mental health'.⁵

A recent health needs assessment of people experiencing homelessness in Bristol, published in December 2022 (BCC, 2022)⁶ highlighted two broad areas for action to improve health outcomes. Addressing these will help prevent ill health and improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. They should also result in improved efficiency within the health and care system. The two themes for improvement are:

Access to effective healthcare

People experiencing homelessness face stigma and discrimination which can lead to a lack of trust and engagement with health services. Supporting a cultural shift towards trauma informed practice⁷ can help to address this. Many people experiencing homelessness cannot access services using current models based on the need to attend a specific location at a specific time. Opportunities to increase outreach work and drop-in sessions can be identified and more inclusive models explored and implemented.

Care leavers and younger people experiencing homelessness have been identified as needing improved access to preventative healthcare and protection from exploitation. Access to current healthcare services and models for improvement can be explored.

Data and intelligence

There is a lack of access to health surveillance data sources such as primary care activity and a lack of consistency and completeness in identifying people experiencing homelessness in available data sources. This needs to improve. There is also an absence of identification/inclusion of those experiencing homelessness in some regular surveys such as Quality of Life and Census, as well as a lack of a regular bespoke homelessness-focussed health survey in Bristol.

People experiencing homelessness are impacted by intersections of inequality and differences have been found in recorded health needs depending on age, identity, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability. Services can continue to monitor, develop, and improve health equity only with good quality data. Data for equality groups varied in completeness and can be improved. Advisors have raised topic areas such as sexual health, social care needs and serious mental illness. Potential data sources can be identified to explore these further.

⁵ Source: '[Call for evidence findings: summary, analysis of themes and call to action](#)', APPG for Households in Temporary Accommodation

⁶ [City of Bristol Local Housing Need Assessment 2023](#)

⁷ A set of principles grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development and behaviour

Deaths related to homelessness in Bristol

The ONS estimate there were 37 deaths of people experiencing homelessness in Bristol between 2020 and 2021. The average ages of death for women and men were respectively 40.0 and 44.2 years old respectively; significantly lower than the life expectancy for people living in the UK.

Multiple Deprivation

Single homeless people are adults, aged 22 or over, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. They may be sleeping rough, living in hostels or in poor quality accommodation. This cohort includes people who have multiple and complex needs, such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental ill health and/or a history of offending. It is estimated that between 1300 and 1600 people in Bristol are experiencing three or more of the Multiple Deprivation factors in their lives currently. Of this number, it is estimated that approximately 15% of this group need a new approach to how services are delivered. Taking the mid-point in the above range, this number is estimated to be approximately 200 people.

From 835 adults and young people who are homeless and living in the Bristol Pathways accommodation:

- 79% have been identified as having support around mental health needs.
- 39% have physical health needs
- 63% have identified an issue with drugs or alcohol use
- 12% have support needs relating to domestic violence, sexual violence, child sexual exploitation, trafficking and forced marriage

From Bristol City Council's Multiple Disadvantage and Preventing Rough Sleeping analysis:

- 59% of people sleeping rough had mental health needs and 72% had substance misuse needs

Assessing future levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in Bristol

Bristol's general population is projected to increase to 499,200 by 2030 if pre-pandemic trends continue. So, if the current rate of homelessness persisted as it is now, the numbers of households requiring council homelessness and rough sleeping services are still statistically likely to increase in the next five years, due to population increase.

In terms of estimating international migration, the Council's Local Plan⁸, published in November 2023 includes various projections to establish the future Housing need for Bristol. For the 10-year period 2023-2033, the latest official projections identify a growth of between 6,903 and 19,077 households for the City of Bristol, which are based on the low and high international migration variant projections respectively.

Recent policy changes around positive asylum decisions could affect this estimate. The number of individual asylum seekers in supported asylum accommodation in Bristol has doubled since June 2023. Currently (April 2024), there are 853 asylum seekers accommodated in three Initial Accommodation hotels in central Bristol, and 235 in dispersal accommodation. The numbers may change due to various factors such as new arrivals, relocations, and application status changes.

⁸ [Local Plan](#)

Data for 2022-23: Numbers of presentations to the Homelessness Prevention Team where the reason for homelessness was recorded as “Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support” or the accommodation at time of application was recorded as “NASS accommodation”.

Presentations

Total number of presentations – 198

Of these, the number of households with dependent children – 60

The number without dependent children – 138

Total number of children – 134

Total number of applications where the lead applicant was male – 146

Total number of applications where the lead applicant was female – 52

Female lead applicants with children – 36

Male lead applicants with children – 24

Outcomes of presentations

Presentations where no statutory homeless application was taken (Advice only/ Early closure) – 52

Presentations that led to a homelessness duty being accepted – 140

Presentations still showing as no decision having been made (triage or under intervention) – 4

Presentations that led to an ineligible decision being made – 2

Outcomes of duties

Cases still owed a homelessness duty – 77

Cases where duty has been discharged without the council providing housing (application withdrawn, contact lost, duty unsuccessful, applicant not entitled to further assistance) – 38

Cases successfully housed by the council – 25

It is anticipated that the majority of asylum seeker families who receive an immigration decision will require temporary accommodation through the local authority, whether TA through the priority Homeless Duty or, if refused status, will require emergency accommodation and subsistence support under Section 17 Children Assessment. Over 200 families previously housed by the home office, will need emergency and temporary accommodation from the Local authority if the government speeds up its decision making.

Poverty is one of the drivers of core homelessness and welfare reform changes could increase the number of people in poverty. In the Autumn Statement 2023 the Government confirmed plans to tighten the criteria used in the Work Capability Assessment. The changes are purported to reflect the flexibilities now available with working from home opportunities. The Government’s proposals suggest removing a number of conditions, such as the inability to access a location outside the claimant’s home, from the list of activities and “descriptors” used in the WCA. There is a concern amongst disability activists that losing benefits due to the tightening of the criteria may force some disabled people into poverty and destitution.

In November 2023 it was announced that UK Local Housing Allowance rates will be raised to the 30th percentile of local market rents in April 2024. This comes after a period where LHA rates were frozen at their 2016 levels until 2020, and then frozen again at their 2020 levels until this new change comes in, in April this year (2024). A significant increase will make it easier for the council to help households into the PRS and will reduce council spending on temporary accommodation. See page 21 below for the new LHA levels.

The Local Plan Needs Assessment model has also concluded that overall, in the City of Bristol, there is a need to provide affordable housing for 13,973 households unable to afford to rent or buy over the Plan period 2020-40, which equates to 699 households per year.

Housing Market

Bristol has 205,270 residential dwellings in total⁹. The mix of housing tenure is: 55% owner occupied, 26% private rented, 19% social rented.

Home ownership and affordable housing

Just over half the city's homes are owner occupied (54.8%). Over the last ten years the average house price in England and Wales increased by 67%. Bristol has experienced this increase especially sharply: house prices rose by 93%, or by around £161,000. By the end of 2022, the average house price in Bristol was £330,000.

This is almost 10 times the local average annual earnings, making Bristol the least affordable of the English Core Cities. In parallel, rents in the city have increased by 52% since 2011 whereas wages have only increased by 24% over the same period.

The council and private developers continue to build homes, working towards ensuring that 2,000 homes are built in Bristol each year, with 1,000 of those being designated as affordable housing. There is more detail on this in the council's [Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2022-2025](#). During 2021/22, 2,563 new homes were built in Bristol and over 3,500 student units have been completed since 2006¹⁰.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Of the city's 207,000 homes in Bristol (2022): 29% were privately rented and 18% were for social rent. A third of households in the city – over 134,000 people – rent privately in Bristol. This is substantially higher than the national average (20%).

A key problem identified by the [2023 Bristol Living Rent Commission Report](#) is an increasing shortfall in the supply of private rental properties relative to demand. This increased pressure on the sector has been brought about by the lack of affordability in the home ownership sector, coupled with the lack of supply in the social housing sector. This increasing demand means that Bristol is the most expensive city for private rentals outside of London. Between 2011 and –2021, the cost of renting privately grew by 52%, while wages grew by 24%.

⁹ As at end of March 2022

¹⁰ BCC Internal data: [Key Facts 2022 update](#)

The table below shows how the current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates do not reflect the reality of private sector rents in Bristol. The result is that the PRS virtually excludes all people who are reliant on welfare benefits.

Table 11: Indicative Local Housing Allowance rates for 2024 to 2025 (DWP)

Property Type	Indicated LHA monthly Rates ¹¹ (April 2024-2025)	Median Monthly private rental rates ¹² (April 2022-Mar 2023)	Shortfall / gap
Shared room (single under-35 rate)	£511.35	£595	£83.65
1 bedroom	£899.98	£995	£95.02
2 bedroom	£1,095.00	£1,250	£155.00
3 bedroom	£1,300.00	£1,500	£200.00
4 bedroom	£1849.98	£2,650	£800.02

Note: the median monthly private rental rates in Bristol will have risen since 2022-23, so the shortfall indicated here is likely to be higher in reality.

The new LHA rates could create some major issues for those renting and in receipt of benefits, the main one of which is the benefit cap and its effects. For the first time, it's likely that single people will be benefit capped as will virtually all families, unless those households can achieve exemption from the cap.

The growth of the Bristol universities has resulted in a significant student population increase; over 3,500 student units have been completed since 2006 but this is not enough to meet demand for student accommodation. The overall supply of properties listed to rent declined by nearly two thirds from 2018 to 2020.

Another contributor to declining numbers of properties to let in the PRS is the effect of increasing numbers of short term-rentals. In January 2022, there were over 4000 AirBnB listings in Bristol.

Social housing

There are 21,000 households on the council's social housing waiting list. Bristol City Council has 26,669 properties for social rent, with 26,285 occupied (July 2023). The number of residents that require support with social housing significantly outweighs the number of properties available. Over the 30-year period between 1991-2021, the number of households resident in Bristol has increased from 154,054 to 191,638 households, while the number of households paying social rent has fallen from 40,405 to 35,879.¹³

The council works with many other housing associations in the city to provide homes for social rent including national chains such as: Legal and General, Brighter Places, Sovereign, Brunelcare, Elim, Curo.

¹¹ Source: Valuation Office Agency data

¹² [Private rental market summary statistics in England - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/publications/abstracts/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-in-england)

¹³ <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/6902-bristol-lhna-nov-2023/file>

Supported housing

Existing supported housing in Bristol is oversubscribed, increasing the use of expensive temporary accommodation and out-of-area provision. This has led to people being accommodated without the support they need to rebuild their lives or optimise their independence. Single homeless people may live in unsupported temporary accommodation which doesn't meet their needs.

Bristol City Council's 'Supported Housing Delivery Plan 2024 – 2029' and 'Young People's Housing & Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan 2023' set out the planned provision for additional supported housing for different cohorts in more detail:

For single homeless people:

- 100 units of Temporary Supported Accommodation (Blocks of accommodation, from 15 to 35 bedrooms, with communal rooms, including kitchens).
- 15 units of high stability housing (ideally 10-15 units in self-contained flats/with own front doors).

For homeless families

- 200 units of Temporary Move-on accommodation (Self-contained accommodation with up to five rooms suitable for sleeping)
- 1 family hostel (short-term supported accommodation for up to 15 families)

Bristol City Council currently commissions around 881 units of supported housing for single homeless people through a series of homelessness pathways, with different levels of support. There will also be 148 supported move-on properties delivered in 2024, with over 100 of these already tenanted. In February 2023 there were 119 clients (in the single homeless people cohort) waiting for accommodation in the highest support services, including 49 placed in unsuitable private accommodation.

The 2022 Needs Analysis showed that 237 families with children over 3 with support needs were in unsupported Emergency Accommodation.

Private Rented Sector and vehicle dwellers

Bristol's Private Rented Sector (PRS) faces affordability, quality, and access issues. It is the fastest growing among the UK core cities, increasing 10% between 2011 and 2021, and almost one-third of the population - this is significantly higher than the national average of 19%. Affordability issues of the PRS places pressure on social housing stock, with more than 20,000 households on the social housing waiting list and over 1,500 households in temporary accommodation.

Rents in the city increased by 52% in the decade following 2011 whereas wages grew by just 24%.

The Mayor's 2021 manifesto included a pledge to make Bristol a "living rent city" and campaign for rent control powers to be devolved to local authorities (LAs). Bristol Living Rent Commission (LRC) was formed to explore Bristol's PRS issues and what role could devolution play in addressing them.

People living in vehicles

Bristol has a large number of people living in vehicles; our best estimate is that we have 600+ living vehicles with probably in the region of 800+ people living in those vehicles. Across the South of the UK, Bristol has the highest number of vehicle dwellers. If we look at the number of vehicle dwellers as a proportion of the whole city population, they represent 0.13% of all Bristol citizens.

There are several reasons why people live in vehicles including: vulnerability, itinerant workers, lifestyle choice, heritage, retirement and to form their own community, but the single biggest reason put forward by vehicle dwellers themselves is **inability to afford other housing options within Bristol** and a lack of social housing.

In summer 2023, BCC completed a Health Needs Analysis (HNA) of people living in vehicles. Since early 2020, there has been an exponential growth in vehicle dweller numbers from about 150 vehicles five years ago. Alongside the rapid growth in numbers, we have seen a decline in the quality of vehicles used and an increase in levels of vulnerability of the people living within them. It is expected that the numbers of people living in vehicles will grow over the next 12 to 24 months, possible over a longer term.

As the numbers in Bristol have grown, so too has the demographic of people living in vehicles. We have seen an increase in younger adults, an increase in people with disregulated lifestyles, such as substance misuse and mental ill health, and larger numbers of people entering vehicles as an alternative to rough sleeping.

Cost of living

In May 2022, Bristol City Council assessed the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on the people of Bristol, drawing on national and local data to form an understanding of how the crisis will affect people's lives, health and wellbeing, the report was published in November 2022¹⁴.

The report found that the rising cost of living is not impacting on everyone equally. People who are already experiencing inequity and poverty will be disproportionately impacted. The rising cost of living may cause households to fall into debt and there is a risk that more people become homeless.

Some populations that are not typically well represented in data and research, such as refugees and asylum seekers and people experiencing homelessness and are likely to also face increased risk from rising cost of living.

The long-term impacts of rising inflation have driven up costs across the country pushing more and more families and individuals into financial hardship and risk of losing their home. Between December 2022 and February 2023, [Food banks across the Trussell Trust network](#) supported more than 220,000 children with emergency food, and 225,000 people who needed to use a food bank for the first time.

¹⁴ https://www.bristoloncity.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Nov2023_Cost-of-Living-Crisis_LearningReport_FINAL.pdf

Deprivation¹⁵

In 2022-23, on average, 10.2% of people in Bristol said they were struggling financially, higher than the previous year (8.7%) and significantly higher than 2 years ago (6.8%).¹⁶ However, when looked at by ward, deprivation and equality group, we see significant variances across the city. More than one in six people (17.5%) living in the 10% most deprived areas of Bristol said they were struggling financially, compared to 2.6% of people living in the 10% least deprived areas of Bristol.

By Equality groups, in 2022-23, the highest levels of people struggling financially were reported amongst people of Black ethnicity (27.0%), single parents (23.0%) and disabled people (25.7%).

¹⁵ JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2023/24

¹⁶ Bristol Quality of Life Survey, 2022-23

5: Glossary

Term	Definition
Homeless	A person is 'homeless' if they have no accommodation which is available for their occupation.
Being 'threatened with homelessness'	A person is 'threatened with homelessness' if it is likely they will become homeless in the next 56 days.
Rough Sleepers	'Rough sleepers' are people sleeping on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments and in buildings or other places not designed for habitation).
Statutory homelessness	Statutory homelessness refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local housing authority and have met the criteria to be accepted as eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need.
Trauma-informed policy	A set of principles grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development and behaviour.
Housing Act 1996	The duties of local housing authorities to provide assistance to people who are threatened with homelessness or are already homeless, are set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
Part 7	Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 provides the statutory under-pinning for action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless.
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on local housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness.
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 amends Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to strengthen the support available to victims of domestic abuse. The Act extends priority need to all eligible victims of domestic abuse who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse.
Prevention duty	Homelessness prevention is about helping those at risk of homelessness to avoid their situation turning into a homelessness crisis. The Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This means helping them to stay in their accommodation or helping them to find new accommodation before they actually become homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end by an event such as accommodation being secured for the person, or by their becoming homeless.

Term	Definition
Relief duty	<p>Homelessness relief is action taken to help resolve homelessness. Where an eligible applicant has sought help from the local housing authority (LHA) when they are already homeless the relief duty ends 56 days from when it was accepted if the local authority is satisfied that the applicant is in priority need and not homeless intentionally.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to help an applicant to secure accommodation if they are already homeless. The relief duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If the Council has reason to believe that the applicant is vulnerable and in priority need, this duty further extends to securing temporary accommodation for the period of the relief duty. The relief duty also extends to any applicant who may be intentionally homeless.</p>
Homelessness Main duty	<p>A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.</p>
Homelessness categories	<p>People who are categorised as 'new to homelessness' have either begun rough sleeping for the first time or returned to rough sleeping having last slept rough over five years ago.</p> <p>People who are categorised as 'returned to homelessness' have begun rough sleeping following periods of more than six months since their last date sleeping rough.</p> <p>People who are categorised as 'longer term homeless' have been seen rough sleeping in three different months over the last twelve-month period.</p>
Duty to provide advisory services	<p>The Council has a duty to provide advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness and the rights of homeless people or those at risk of homelessness, as well as the help that is available from the Council or others and how to access that help.</p>
Duty to make inquiries	<p>The Council has a duty to make inquiries if it has a reason to believe that a person may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.</p>
Assessments and personalised housing plans	<p>The Council has a duty to carry out an assessment where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. Following this assessment, the Council must work with the person to develop a personalised housing plan which will include actions to be taken by the Council and the applicant to try to prevent or relieve homelessness.</p>
Intentionally homeless	<p>A person becomes homeless intentionally if all of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They deliberately do or fail to do anything in consequence of which they cease to occupy accommodation: and, b) The accommodation is available for their occupation: and, c) It would have been reasonable for them to continue to occupy the accommodation. d) A person is not to be considered intentionally homeless if they leave supported exempt accommodation where the applicant leaves the accommodation if the standard of the accommodation or care and support does not meet the National Supported Housing Standards.

Term	Definition
Duty to refer	<p>Specific public authorities have a duty to notify local housing authorities of service users they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness. The public authorities subject to the duty to refer include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prisons ● Youth offender institutions ● Secure training centres ● Secure college ● Youth offending teams ● Probation Service ● Jobcentre Plus ● Social service authorities ● Emergency departments ● Urgent treatment centres ● Hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care.
HCLIC DATA (Homelessness Case Level Information Collection)	<p>All local housing authorities are required to report data to DLUHC for the purpose of monitoring the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) data source provides information to inform this review on the levels of homelessness, the activities undertaken by the Council to help prevent or relieve homelessness, and the outcomes of these activities.</p>



If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact us by emailing consultation@bristol.gov.uk or by calling **0117 922 2848**.

