

Appendix 2

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review

December 2020
Update 2023

*Informing a new Homelessness
& Rough Sleeping Strategy
for Bedford Borough*

Contents

1. Introduction	3	3. Local Context Update	7
2. Legislative and National Context Update	5	Bedford Borough's Strategy to Address & Reduce Domestic Abuse 2021 – 2026	7
The Domestic Abuse Act 2021	5	Ending Rough Sleeping Plan (Rough Sleeper Initiatives) 2022 – 2025	7
From Harm to Hope 2021	5	4. Statistics Update	8
Ending Rough Sleeping for Good 2022	5	5. Conclusion	17
Renters (Reform) Bill 2023	6		
Census 2021	6		
Global Political Environment	6		
National and International Economic Environment	6		

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Bedford Borough Council's previous Homelessness Strategy covered the period 2016 – 2021. In March 2023 this was extended to cover the period to June 2024 to allow additional time for the development of a new strategy to be undertaken.
- 1.1.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that local authorities undertake a review of homelessness in their area every five years and, based on the findings of the review, develop and publish a new strategy for tackling homelessness in their districts.
- 1.1.3 In August 2018, the MHCLG published its Rough Sleeper Strategy, which sets out a requirement for all local authorities to update and rebadge their strategies as 'homelessness and rough sleeping' and to include rough sleeping as part of their reviews.
- 1.1.4 The Council completed such a review in December 2020 (Appendix 1). Since that time, work on developing a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been delayed due to ongoing continuous and significant change in the delivery of homelessness and rough sleeping services through the post Covid pandemic period. The impact of some of these changes has meant that the 2020 Review now requires an update to ensure that the new strategy, upon which it is based, is effective for the future.

1.1.5 This Update does not re-examine all of the information contained in the 2020 Review. It focusses on those matters which have changed significantly, and which have a noteworthy impact on the delivery of homelessness and rough sleeping services and are therefore of importance in the drafting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 (the New Strategy).

- 1.1.6 Based upon the findings of the 2020 Review and this update, the New Strategy must set out how the Council will;
- Prevent homelessness.
 - Secure sufficient accommodation for people who are, or may become, homeless.
 - Deliver support to people who are, or may become, homeless, or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

1.2 The Covid Pandemic

1.2.1 The aftermath of the Covid pandemic and its accompanying lockdowns have brought a new focus on the needs of people experiencing homelessness, which has had a substantial impact on their lives and practice in this area of work. The success of the Government's 'Everyone In' initiative in 2020, which enabled local authorities to offer accommodation to anyone rough sleeping or living in shared facility night shelters, and thereby protection from Covid19, has demonstrated what can be achieved when there is investment and coordinated intervention aiming to meet people's accommodation, physical and mental health, and care and support needs.

1.2.2 The pandemic, however, has also led to a significant increase in the number of individuals and families in need of homelessness and rough sleeper services including an unprecedented number of households living in emergency and temporary accommodation.

1.2.3 Changes to our priorities in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping, the actions required and the financial considerations post-pandemic will be reflected in the New Strategy.

2. Legislative and National Context Update

The 2020 Review detailed the full legislative and national context at that time. The key additions, changes and / or potential changes that will influence the New Strategy are as follows:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- 2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which came into force on 29th April 2021, changed the homelessness legislation to give automatic priority need to survivors of domestic abuse. Changes to homelessness legislation mean that the new statutory definition of ‘domestic abuse’ replaces the term ‘domestic violence’ and people made homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse have automatic priority need for homelessness assistance.

These changes are brought about by amendments to Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and to the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.

From Harm to Hope 2021

- 2.2 The Government’s 10-year drugs plan, published in December 2021, to cut crime and save lives, includes focus on making sure that the needs of people with drug addictions are addressed to reduce harm and support recovery.

The strategy works alongside the commitment to end rough sleeping and break the cycle of homelessness often associated with drug addiction. It sets out investment in the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG) to improve services for people who sleep rough or are at risk of sleeping rough.

The full plan is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

Ending Rough Sleeping for Good 2022

- 2.3 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published its new strategy to end rough sleeping, reflecting on the significant progress that has been made since the 2018 National Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy sets out how it will deliver:

- Better prevention;
- Swift and effective intervention;
- Extra help to aid recovery;
- Where rough sleeping does happen, for it to be rare, brief and non-recurrent.

The full publication is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good>

The strategy includes the delivery of homes and wrap-around support through accommodation funding programmes which led on from the first Next Steps Accommodation Programme in 2020. The most recent funding announcement is the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme. (SHAP).

Details and prospectus are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/single-homelessness-accommodation-programme>

Renters (Reform) Bill 2023

- 2.4 In June 2022 DLUHC published its white paper; ‘A fairer private rented sector’ setting out plans to fundamentally reform the private rented sector and level up housing quality.

The Renters (Reform) Bill sets out reforms proposed in the white paper introduced to parliament in May 2023. One of the measures set out in the Bill abolishes section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions and moves to a simpler tenancy structure.

Any consequential changes to homelessness legislation as a result of the Bill are not expected to have an impact on how local authorities exercise their duties, but will align the homelessness legislation with the wider reforms. The contents of this Bill may change during the development of the Strategy and amendments will need to be taken into account as the Strategy is developed.

Census 2021

- 2.5 Since the full review was completed, a new census has been undertaken by the Office for National Statistics. The Census is completed every ten years and provides demographic data on people and households in England and Wales. The Census helps to build a detailed picture of local society. Information from the census helps the government and local authorities to plan and fund local services. Relevant updated census findings are detailed in a Statistics Update (Section 4, below).

Global Political Environment

- 2.6 The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has resulted in an ongoing need to support refugees fleeing Ukraine in addition to the refugees already being supported by the UK from other war-torn countries including Syria and Afghanistan. Housing plays an important and positive role in the lives of refugees, but this in turn places further pressure on the demand for affordable housing in the UK.

National and International Economic Environment

- 2.7 The ongoing effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, uncertainties in financial markets, interest rate increases and the rising cost-of-living all create uncertainty for the national and / or international economy. In turn, these factors impact on people’s ability to meet their own housing needs and increases the risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.

3. Local Context Update

The local context relating to homelessness and rough sleeping is detailed in the 2020 Review. Key updates, additions and / or changes are as follows:

[Bedford Borough's Strategy to Address & Reduce Domestic Abuse 2021 – 2026](#)

3.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed statutory duties on local authorities, including the setting up of a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and completion of a needs assessment to identify gaps in support so as to inform a new domestic abuse strategy. Bedford Borough's new strategic domestic abuse plan identifies five key areas of priority:

- Provision of services in safe accommodation;
- Raising awareness of domestic abuse;
- Provision of services in the community;
- Justice, recovery and ongoing protection;
- Early Education and Intervention.

The link to the full strategy is available here:

[Bedford Borough Strategy to Address & Reduce Domestic Abuse 2021 - 2026](#)

[Ending Rough Sleeping Plan \(Rough Sleeper Initiatives\) 2022 – 2025](#)

3.2 To maintain the Council's well-established initiatives in tackling rough sleeping, DLUHC awarded a further £2,633,216 funding for the two-year period covering 2020/21 and 2021/22.

In 2022 this funding continued with a three-year award of £3,137,167 for 2022/25. This funds the on-going delivery of the following initiatives to help the Council achieve the Government's goal of ending rough sleeping:

- Prevention and Rough Sleeper Coordinator;
- Casework Co-ordinator;
- Prevention Surgery, Outreach and Floating Support Staffing;
- Specialist Homelessness Assessment Navigators;
- Local Lettings Officers;
- Off the Street Emergency Shelter Support;
- Prevention / Personal Budget Funding;
- Surge Accommodation (to meet peaks in demand and Severe Weather Emergency response).

4. Statistics Update

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 The 2020 Review set out a detailed analysis and review of homelessness and rough sleeping in Bedford Borough focussing on the period 2018 - 2020.
- 4.1.2 Since then, the impact of changes in the global and national context detailed above has led to an unprecedented increase in the demand for homelessness services, in turn placing significant pressure on current resources, both staffing and accommodation supply. The need to ensure the Council's statutory duties are met whilst also balancing a need for holistic support and pathways for an increasing number of vulnerable customers has led to the Council's service delivery focus to be on addressing immediate issues.
- 4.1.3 The 2020 Review sets out detailed statistics taken from DLUHC's published data on homelessness. These statistics do not, however, provide a simple story of the flow in and out of the Council's Statutory Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Services, or the backlogs caused by unprecedented demand nor the complexities of delivering solutions to end homelessness. Some of the 2020 Review dashboard data appears counter-intuitive and updated key data in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping – obtained from the Council's own records – adds further explanation and is provided below.

4.2 Key Data Update ⁽¹⁾

4.2.1 Requests for Assistance due to Homelessness or Risk of Homelessness

Table 1, below shows the number of approaches for assistance from households homeless or at risk of homelessness by year from 2019 to 2022.

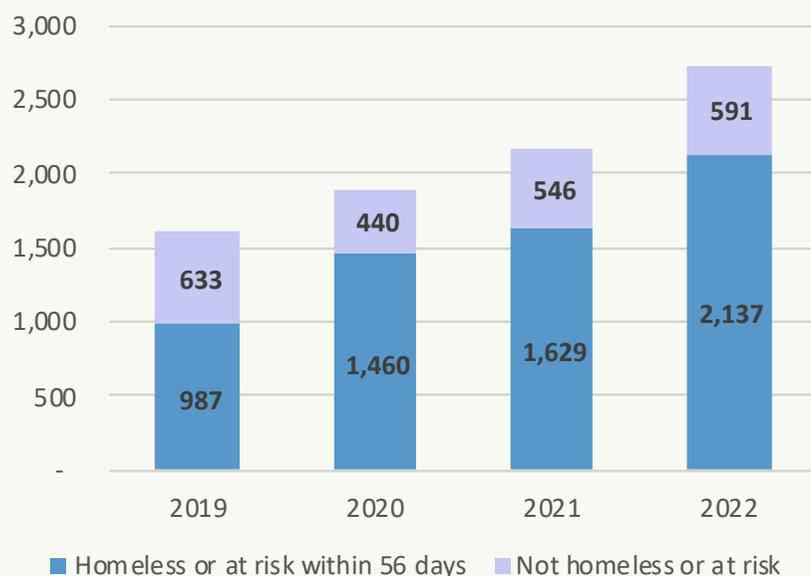
Figure 1 shows this information in graphical form. The number of households approaching the Council for assistance because they are homeless or at risk of homelessness has increased by 25% over the four years 2019 – 2022, with a noteworthy rise of 9% in 2022.

A proportion of the people requesting help do not meet the statutory definition of being either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days. Where this is the case officers will offer the person general advice about housing options and homelessness support.

Table 1: Number of Approaches to the Council for Assistance 2019 - 2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Homeless or at risk within 56 days	987	1,460	1,629	2,137
Not homeless or at risk	633	440	546	591
Total requests	1,620	1,900	2,175	2,728
Annual % increase	-	17%	14%	25%

Figure 1: Number of Approaches to the Council for Assistance 2019 - 2022



4.2.2 Homelessness Duties Accepted

Table 2 below shows a breakdown of the number of homelessness duties accepted during 2022 broken down by the duty owed (Prevention or Relief). At the time of the data being reported 1,214 of the 2,137 households had been assessed to determine whether a prevention or relief duty was owed, with duties being accepted in 1,191 cases.

Of the remaining 923 cases, some would have found their own solution to their homelessness before needing a full assessment, or they never attended the assessment appointment and we lost contact. The remainder would be caught up in assessment appointment backlogs, which would mean that their assessment took place later and in the new calendar year, and therefore are not captured in this data.

Table 2: Homelessness Duties Accepted by Duty Owed 2022

	No.	%
Prevention duty owed	463	39%
Relief duty owed	728	61%

Table 3 shows the percentage breakdown of homelessness duties owed by type for Bedford Borough, the East of England and England as a whole during the last quarter of 2022/23. The proportion of cases for which a prevention duty was accepted in Bedford Borough (40%) was lower than the average for England (48%) and the East of England (46%). The percentage for which a relief duty was owed in Bedford Borough (60%) was higher than for England (54%) and significantly higher than for the East of England (25%).

Table 3: Homelessness Duties Accepted – Bedford Borough, East of England and England (Quarter four 2022 / 23)

	Bedford Borough	East of England	England
Prevention duty owed	40%	48%	46%
Relief duty owed	60%	25%	54%

It should be noted that where a prevention duty has been accepted, but the person subsequently becomes homeless, a relief duty will normally then be accepted. Therefore, applicants may be included in both the prevention and relief figures.

Reasons for Homelessness

Table 4 below shows for each duty accepted the reasons that households had become homeless or were at risk of homelessness.

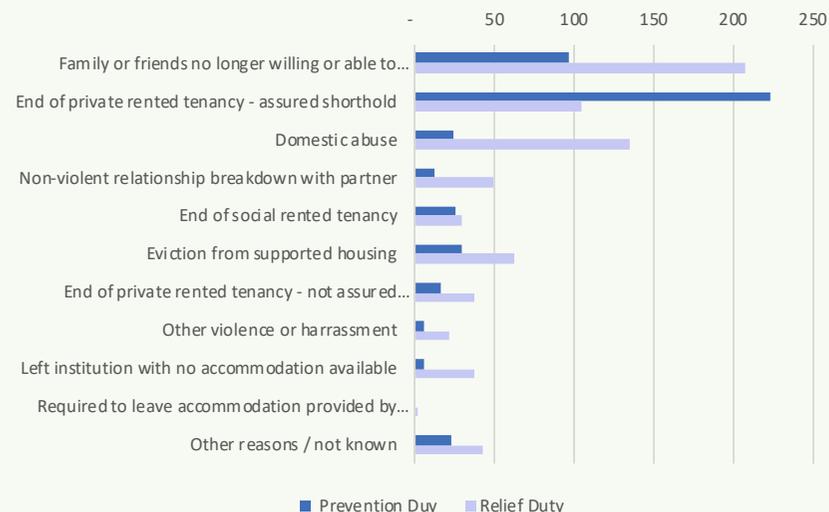
Figure 2 shows this in graphical form. Overall, the most significant causes of homelessness in the Borough can be seen to be the ending of a private sector tenancy (48% for prevention duty and 14% for relief duty) and family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate someone (21% for prevention duty and 28% for relief duty).

Escaping from domestic abuse was also a significant reason for homelessness, with 19% of people owed a relief duty and 5% a prevention duty due to domestic abuse.

Table 4: Reasons for Homelessness or Risk of Homelessness Where Duty Accepted 2022

Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a duty	Prevention Duty		Relief Duty	
	No.	%	No.	%
Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	97	21%	207	28%
End of private rented tenancy - assured short hold	223	48%	104	14%
Domestic abuse	24	5%	135	19%
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	12	3%	49	7%
End of social rented tenancy	26	6%	29	4%
Eviction from supported housing	30	6%	62	9%
End of private rented tenancy - not assured short hold	16	3%	37	5%
Other violence or harassment	6	1%	22	3%
Left institution with no accommodation available	6	1%	38	5%
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	-	0%	2	0%
Other reasons / not known	23	5%	43	6%
Total	463		728	

Figure 2: Reasons for Homelessness or Risk of Homelessness Where Duty Accepted 2022



4.2.3 Household Composition

During 2022, the majority of households owed a duty continued to consist of single people.

Figure 3 below shows the breakdown of households, by composition, owed a prevention duty.

Figure 4 shows the breakdown by household composition of those owed a relief duty.

Figure 3: Composition of Households Owed a **Prevention** Duty in Bedford Borough 2022

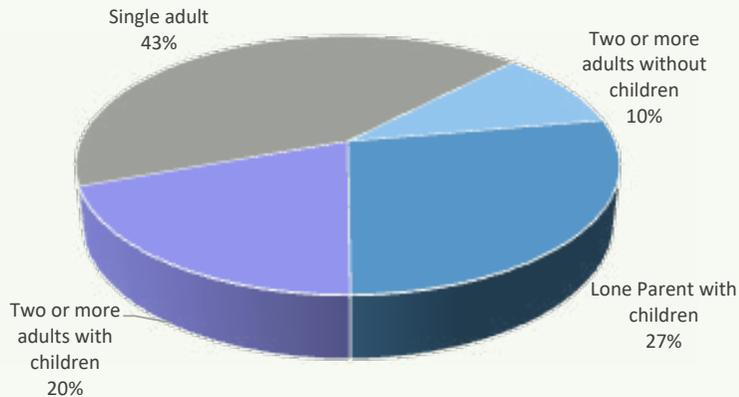
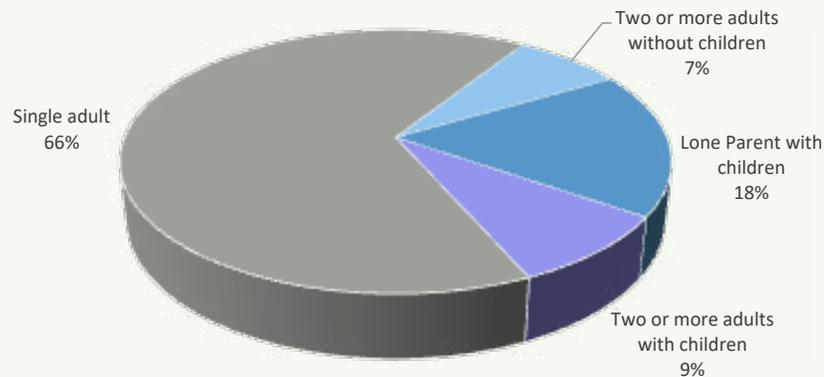


Figure 4: Composition of Households Owed a **Relief** Duty in Bedford Borough 2022



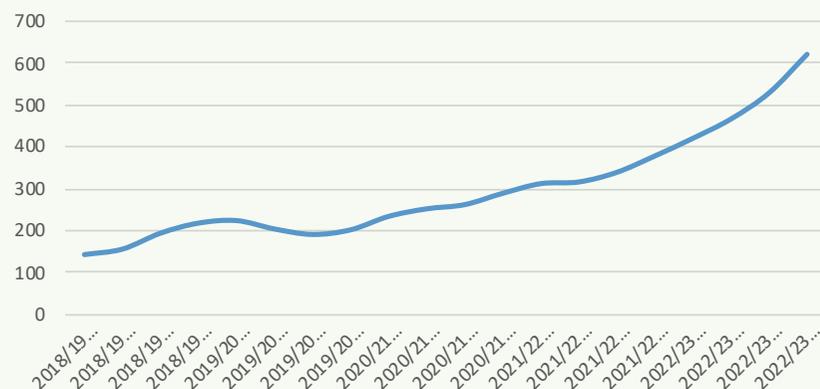
4.2.4 Duty to Secure that Accommodation is Available (temporary accommodation)

Where the Council has reason to believe that a person is eligible for housing assistance, is homeless, and is in priority need, it has a duty to secure that suitable accommodation is available to the household whilst it carries out its enquiries to determine if a duty is owed. This accommodation duty will continue whilst the household is owed the relief duty and the main housing duty.

In some circumstances, a household may be statutorily homeless because their accommodation is not suitable as permanent accommodation, but it may be reasonable for them to continue to occupy the accommodation on a temporary basis. However, in the majority of cases the only way that the Council can ensure suitable accommodation is available is by providing them with some form of temporary accommodation.

The need for temporary accommodation has been increasing significantly due to the increasing number of households becoming homeless that is not matched by the availability of affordable rental properties. Figure 5 below shows the upward trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation by quarter from Q1 2018/19 to Q4 2022/23 in Bedford Borough.

Figure 5: Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation in Bedford Borough Q1 2018/19 to Q4 2022/23



At the time of writing this review update – July 2023
 - there were 660 households placed in temporary accommodation. Table 5 below shows how this accommodation was sourced.

Table 5: Sources of Temporary Accommodation in Bedford Borough July 2023

Type of Accommodation	No.
BBC owned or leased accommodation	75
Block booked hotels / guest houses	22
Nightly let accommodation	397
Ad-hoc hotel bookings	166
Total	660

In accordance with national standards, the Council aims to ensure that families do not spend longer than six weeks in hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation.

4.2.5 Housing Supply and Affordability

The majority of people that approach the Council for homelessness assistance are on a limited income and will rely on Universal Credit or Housing Benefit to help them meet the cost of renting. Therefore, the Council’s ability to prevent homelessness depends significantly upon the availability of properties at rent levels affordable by those claiming benefits.

During 2022/23 there were 563 lettings of social housing through the Council’s choice based letting scheme. Of these, 306 were let to people who were eligible for social housing because they were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The maximum amount of Universal Credit Housing Element and Housing Benefit for a private sector tenancy is set by the Local Housing Allowance, which is based on the size of property required by the household.

There is now a very significant difference between the typical market rents in the Borough and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which makes it very difficult to source affordable private tenancies. Table 6 below compares the LHA rates to the cheapest properties available on Rightmove in July 2023 and shows that the cheapest rental properties available in the private sector were at rents well in excess of LHA across properties of all bedroom sizes.

Table 6: Comparison of LHA rates to cheapest property available to rent on Rightmove in Bedford Borough July 2023

	Local Housing Allowance per Month	Number of Properties Advertised on Rightmove	The Three Cheapest Monthly Rents Advertised		
One bedroom	£575	18	£695	£700	£750
Two bedroom	£725	24	£850	£895	£925
Three bedroom	£875	21	£1,100	£1,150	£1,250
Four bedroom	£1,150	15	£1,550	£1,575	£1,575

4.2.6 Rough Sleeping

Local housing authorities are required by DLUHC to carry out an annual count and / or estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in their area. Bedford Borough Council provides an estimate based on a snapshot of the number of people known to be sleeping rough on a date determined by the Council between 1st October and 30th November each year. Our estimate is backed up by a daily search and count of rough sleeping in Bedford Borough which occurs every weekday morning.

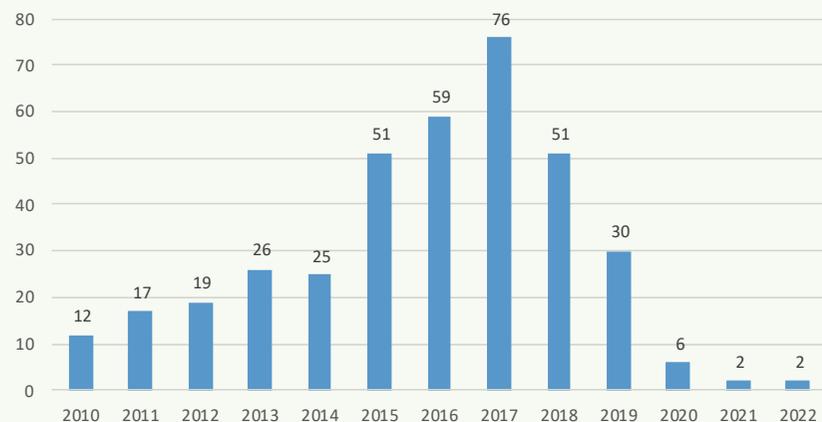
At the onset of the COVID19 lockdown, the Council embraced the Government’s “Everyone In” scheme to ensure that people who were rough sleeping were offered accommodation. The Council has continued to offer shelter to homeless people who would otherwise be sleeping rough by offering them rooms at a local hotel, with 32 rooms currently being used.

A wide range of support services, funded through the Rough Sleeper Initiative grant secured from the Government, are also provided to ensure rapid delivery of holistic support pathways as well as a daily outreach service to identify and quickly support any new cases of rough sleeping. Since 2020, up to the time of writing this review, a total of 615 individuals have stayed at the hotel.

This ongoing initiative, together with the completion of 20 units of accommodation at Rogers Court, funded through the Governments ‘Next Steps Accommodation Programme’, has enabled the number of people sleeping rough to be kept to minimal levels. Just two people have been reported sleeping rough on the last two annual estimate days in 2021 and 2022, in contrast to the higher numbers of people found sleeping rough prior to 2020.

Figure 6 shows the numbers of people estimated to have been sleeping rough in Bedford Borough at the DLUHC annual estimate from 2010 to 2022.

Figure 6: Numbers of People Estimated to Have Been Sleeping Rough in Bedford Borough – Annual DLUHC Count



4.3 Census Data Update - 2021

Source; Office for National Statistics -

<https://census.gov.uk/census-2021-results>

4.3.1 National Population Summary

On Census Day, 21st March 2021, the size of the usually resident population in England and Wales was 59,597,542; this was the largest population ever recorded through the census.

The population of England and Wales has grown by more than 3.5 million (6.3%) since the last census in 2011, when it was 56,075,912.

The population grew in each of the nine regions of England and also grew in Wales; the region with the highest population growth was the East of England, which increased by 8.3% from 2011 (a gain of approximately 488,000 residents).

There were 24,783,199 households in England and Wales on Census Day; the number of households had increased by more than 1.4 million (6.1%) since 2011, when there were 23,366,044 households.

4.3.2 Local Population Summary

The population of Bedford Borough increased by 17.6%, from around 157,500 in 2011 to around 185,200 in 2021.

This means that Bedford Borough's population saw the largest percentage increase in the East of England.

The population of the East of England increased by 8.3%, while the population of England rose by 6.6%.

4.3.3 Ethnicity Update National and Bedford Borough

Table 7 below shows the ethnic breakdown of the population of Bedford Borough, England & Wales and the East of England at the Census dates of 2011 and 2021.

Table 7: Ethnicity of Population Bedford Borough, England & Wales and East of England 2021 and 2011 Census

Census Year	Bedford Borough		England & Wales		East of England	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
Asian	12.6%	11.4%	9.3%	7.5%	6.41%	4.8%
Black	5.3%	3.9%	4.0%	3.3%	2.92%	2.0%
Mixed	4.6%	3.5%	2.9%	2.2%	2.84%	2.0%
White	75.7%	80.6%	81.7%	86.0%	86.48%	91.2%
Other	1.8%	0.7%	2.1%	1.0%	1.36%	0.5%

“White” remained the largest high-level ethnic group in Bedford Borough; 75.7% of usual residents identified this way in 2021, a decrease from 86.0% in 2011.

The percentage of the population in all high-level ethnic groups, excluding “White”, has increased since 2011.

There are many factors that may be contributing to the changing ethnic composition of Bedford, such as differing patterns of ageing, fertility, mortality, and migration. Changes may also be caused by differences in the way individuals chose to self-identify between censuses.

4.3.4 Housing – Tenure of Households Bedford Borough

Table 8 below shows the tenure of households in Bedford Borough in 2021 and 2011.

Table 8: Tenure of Households in Bedford Borough 2021 and 2011

Census Year	Bedford Borough	
	2021	2011
Owned; outright, with mortgage or shared ownership	64.6%	65.7%
Rented; social rented	16.3%	16.1%
Private rented (including lives rent free)	19.2%	15.8%

Of Bedford Borough households, 19.2% rented privately in 2021, up from 15.8% in 2011.

In 2021, just under one in six households (16.3%) lived in socially rented housing, compared with 16.1% in 2011.

The percentage of Bedford Borough households that owned their home (outright or with a mortgage or loan) decreased marginally from 65.7% to 64.6%.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review 2020 and this accompanying update demonstrate that tackling homelessness over recent years has seen significant change and faced previously unforeseen challenges.
- 5.2 The introduction of The Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018 significantly changed the way that statutory homelessness duties were delivered. Before the Council had been able to embed this change and undertake a sound review of the outcomes of the act, the Covid-19 pandemic brought about further unprecedented change which, in its aftermath, has left the Council with significant numbers of households being owed a homelessness duty.
- 5.3 The data and information gathered in the 2020 Review and this update will inform the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029, and will set out how the Council will deliver solutions to prevent more homelessness, ensure an increased supply of suitable and affordable homes for homeless households, and support people in never facing homelessness again.
- 5.4 The New Strategy will also set out how the Council will continue to strive to end rough sleeping; setting out how it will prevent it occurring in the first place, intervene quickly when it does occur, and ensure everyone receives the right support to recover from its impacts.

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

معلومات کے لئے

برای اطلاع

للمعلومات

Za Informacije

ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ

Per Informazione

Informacja

তথ্যের জন্য



01234 718585 / 267422



Environment

Planning & Highways

Bedford Borough Council

Borough Hall

Cauldwell Street

Bedford MK42 9AP



housing.strategy@bedford.gov.uk



www.bedford.gov.uk