



# East Sussex Housing Partnership Strategy

2025 - 2030

Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council



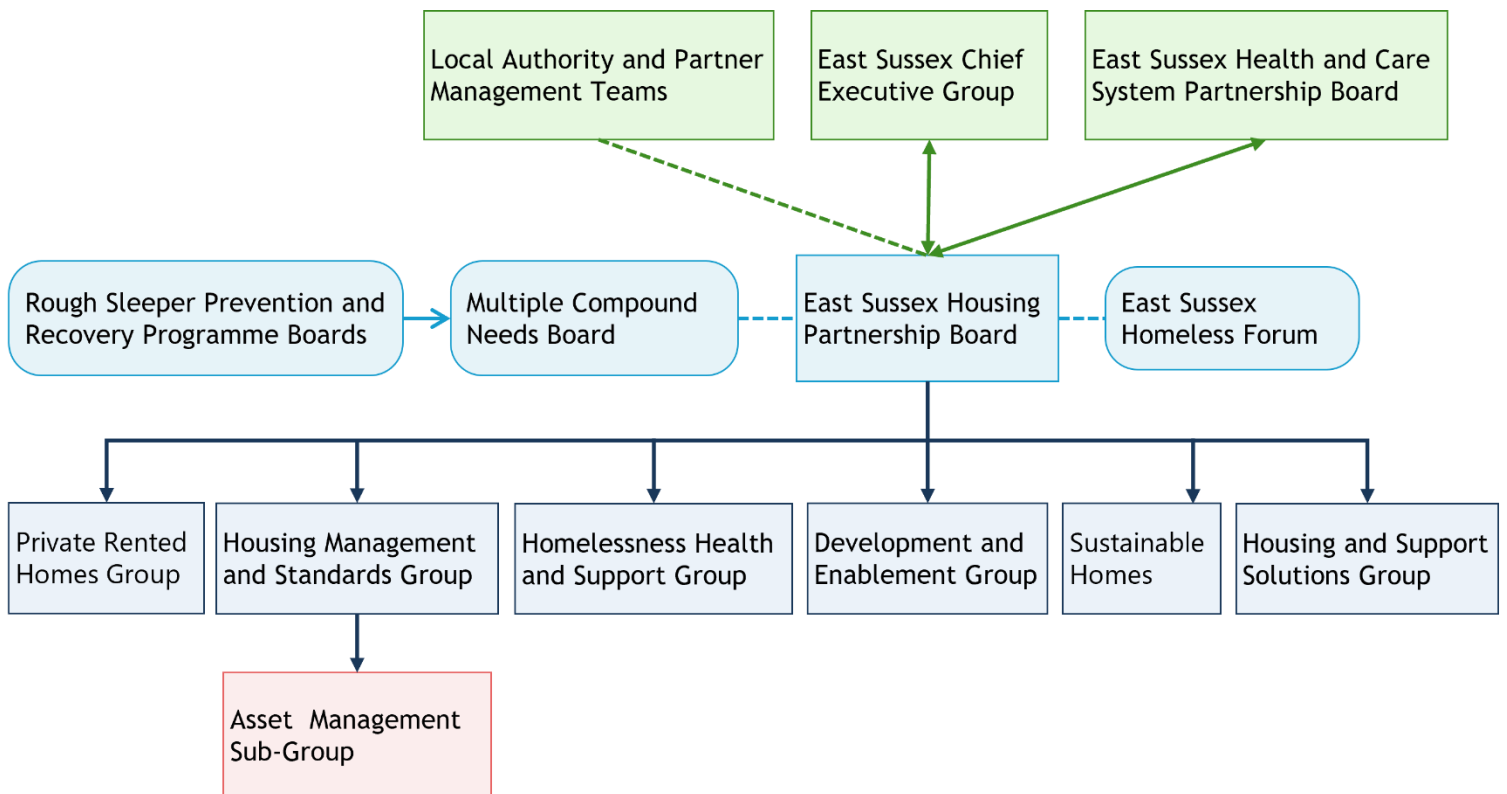
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# What is the East Sussex Housing Partnership?

The East Sussex Housing Partnership is led by the 5 local housing authorities. The partnership includes housing providers, health and social care partners, voluntary and community sector organisations, probation and representatives from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England. The partnership comprises a strategic board and a series of specialist groups, themed around different parts of the housing sector.

## Partnership Network



## Why do we need a Housing Partnership Strategy?

The reason we developed this strategy is to:

- Complement individual housing strategies in each of the district and boroughs.
- Set out a clear plan for housing in East Sussex for the next five years.

- Continue strengthening cross sector collaboration during devolution and local government re-organisation.
- Help different organisations work together on shared goals and challenges.
- Be a collective voice for housing needs in East Sussex at local and national levels.
- Support joint projects and funding bids.
- Make the best use of skills and resources and developing capacity in the housing workforce.
- Make sure short-term projects fit into a bigger, long-term vision.
- Ensure new legislation and policy is followed consistently.

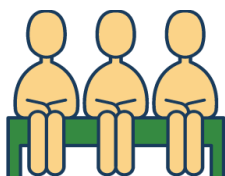
## Our Vision

Healthy, safe and affordable homes for all. With a priority on accelerating housing delivery and associated infrastructure, to help prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping.

For the partnership to drive innovation, through strong links to our communities, enabling partners to achieve more than they could alone.

# Housing in East Sussex

## Housing Needs



**3,187**

homelessness presentations last year



**55%**

rate of successful homelessness preventions



**99**

people rough sleeping



**1,137**

social housing lets last year



**6,476**

people waiting for social housing



**1,277**

households in temporary accommodation



**1,400**

children living in temporary accommodation



**£15,400,000**

spent on temporary accommodation in 2024/25, an increase of

**£1,000,000**

from the previous year



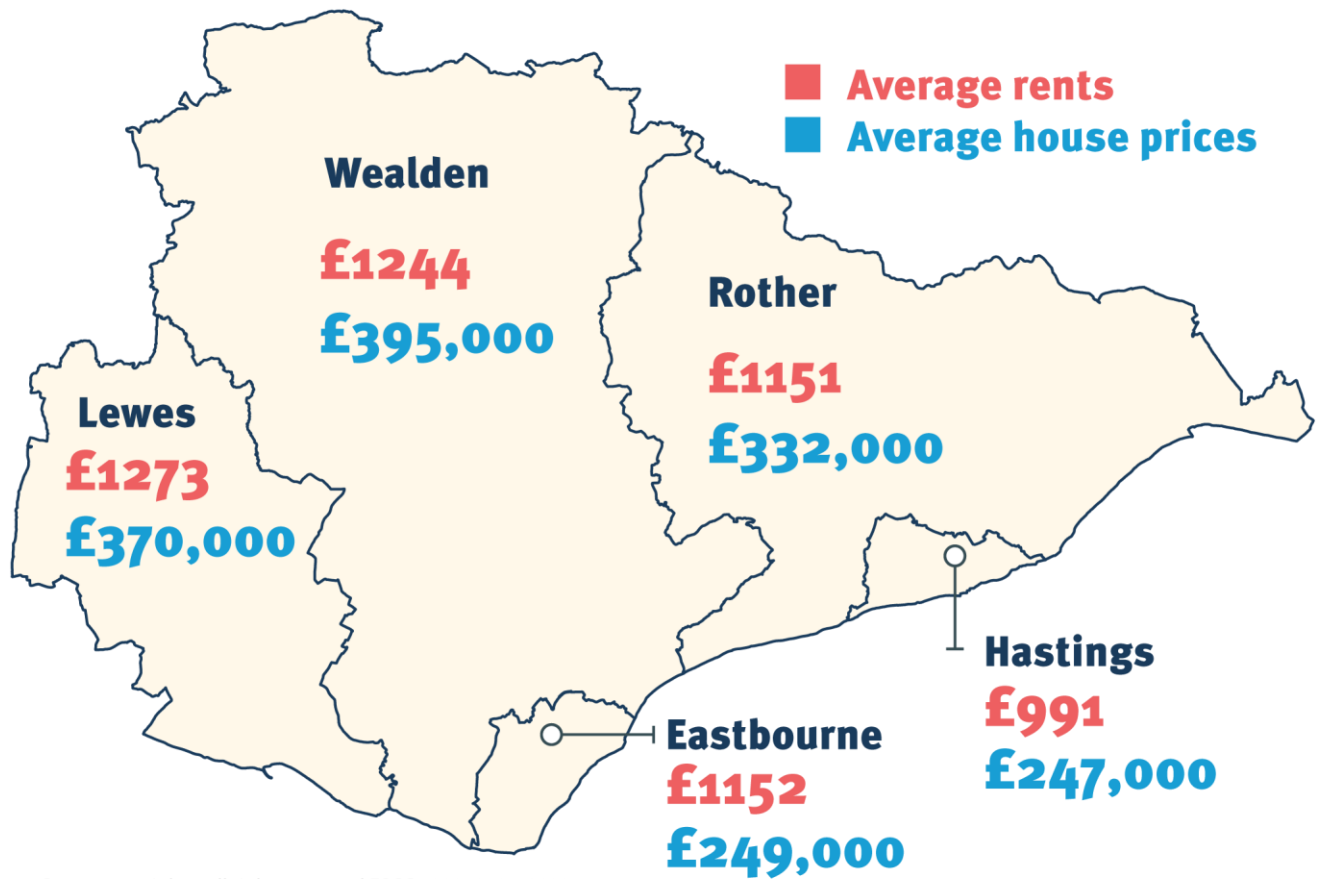
**1,360**

people living with multiple compound needs in 2022/23.

**1095**

people had a housing need.

## Housing rental and cost for each area:



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## Housing Supply



**9,131**

net new homes delivered  
over the last 5 years



**2,477**

long term empty homes

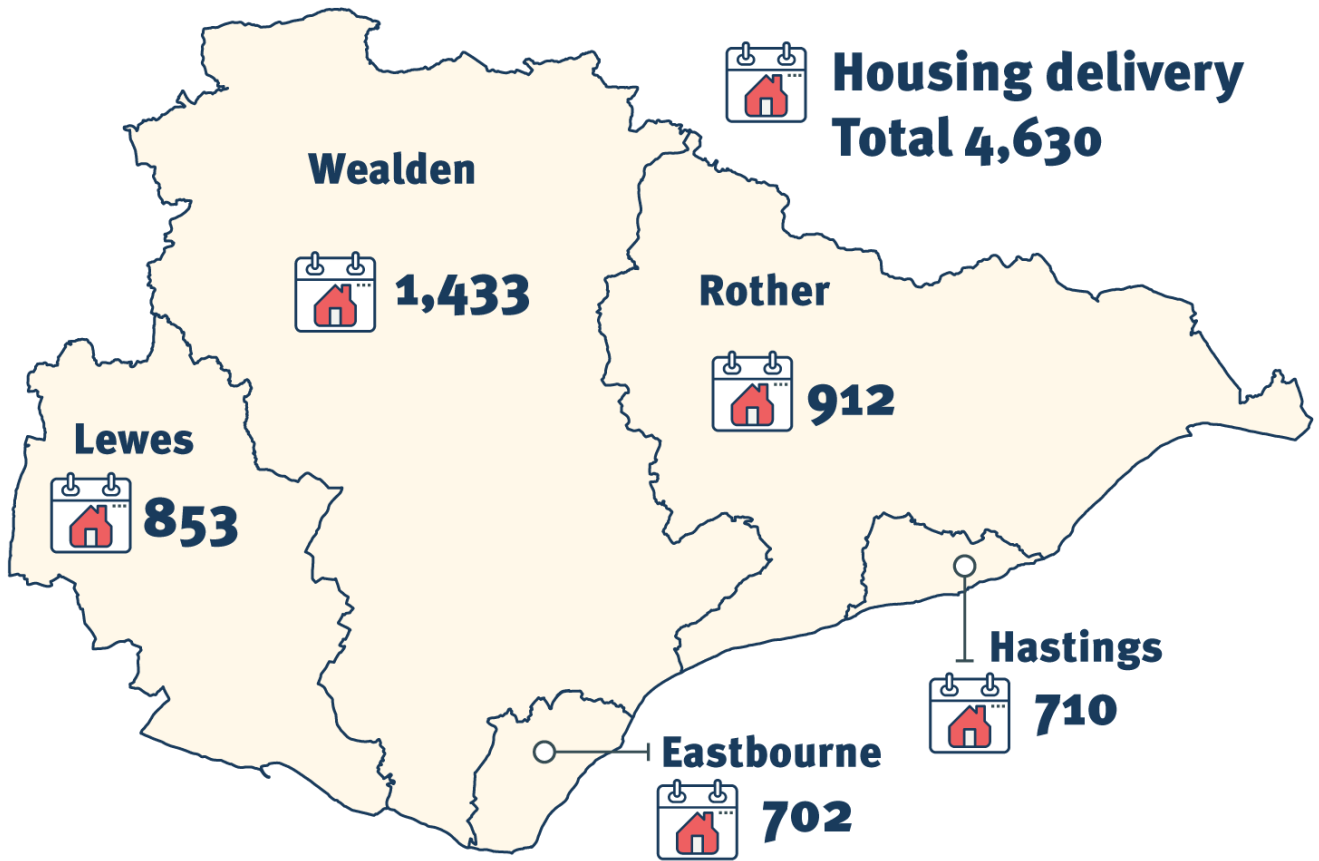


**18%**

increase in the housing  
delivery target for  
East Sussex

### Housing delivery target for each area:

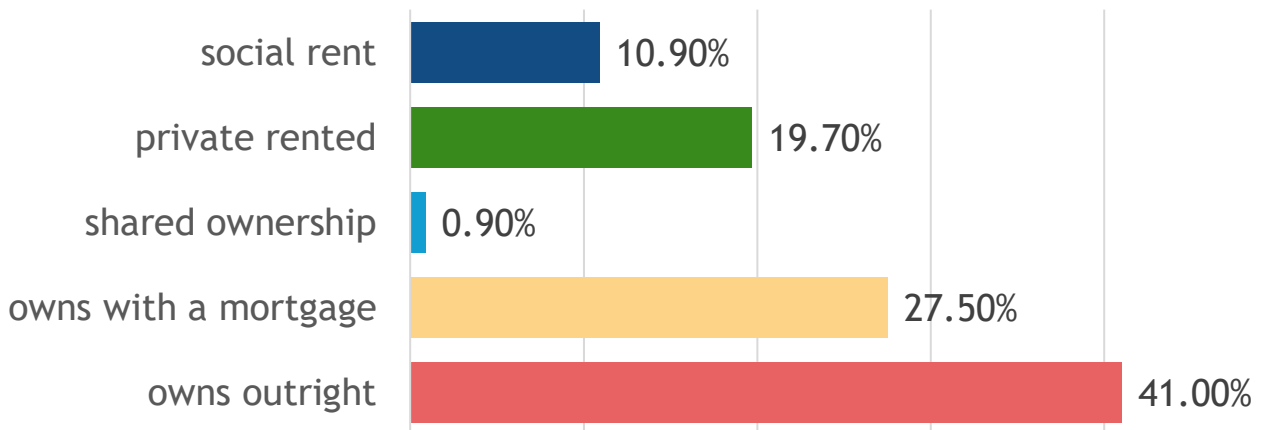
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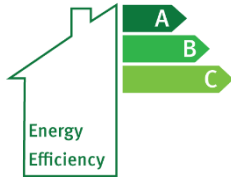
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### Tenure mix:

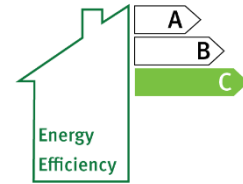
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## Housing Retrofit



**31%** of properties with A-C rating, compared to **47%** nationally



**£1,350,950,000**

Investment required to bring homes to C rating



Under **3,000** heat pumps installed



**79.9%** of homes currently have mains gas heating



**1,077,378**

CO2 emissions



**£12,000,000**

secured by East Sussex authorities since 2020



**1,357.3** tradespeople required per year until 2050

## Developing the Strategy

This strategy is collectively owned by all members of the East Sussex Housing Partnership. The strategy has been co-produced with partners including:

- Producing an evidence base using data and information provided by housing and homelessness service providers, alongside the data and themes from the earlier [Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 - Health and Housing](#). The updated data has guided scoping discussions and the priority setting process.

We have also used independent research including the evaluation of the East Sussex Wellbeing and Employment Service and multiple compound needs assessment carried out by Public Health. This research provided an opportunity to get feedback from people using and delivering services. We will use the evidence base to measure our progress and find the things we need to improve. We will also make sure the experience of people using services shapes how they are designed in the future.

- **Housing Partnership Board and Specialist Groups**, the partnership has formed a series of specialist groups bringing people with different knowledge and experience together. The specialist groups are Homelessness, Health and Support, Development and Enablement, Sustainable Homes, Housing Management and Standards and Private Rented Homes. The specialist groups have developed key actions and deliverables within each priority area. The specialist groups will be responsible for leading the implementation of their priority area.
- **Strategy Workshops**, a series of strategy development workshops have been held to share findings from the evidence base and explore national examples of good practice. Key topics included integrating housing and health services, improving housing standards and increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- We have been working with a wider network of stakeholders within housing and partner sectors, including:
  - East Sussex Chief Executives Group (including the local authorities, fire and rescue service, health partners and local colleges)
  - Local management teams
  - Developers Sussex
  - East Sussex Homelessness Forum
  - Temporary Accommodation Action Group
  - SPACES Programme Board
  - Local Plan Managers Group
  - East Sussex Energy Partnership
  - Partnership Plus
  - East Sussex Health and Care System Partnership Board

- Sussex Health and Care Mental Health and Housing Programme
- Multi-Agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group.

## What did we hear as part of the public engagement?

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- People want more affordable homes to rent and buy, especially smaller homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms. They want to know what 'affordable' really means and want to make sure these homes actually get built.
- People are worried there are not enough schools, doctors, roads and water to support new homes.
- People are worried about building on fields and green spaces. They want to protect the countryside.
- People think it's a good idea to use empty homes and shops again instead of letting them stay empty.
- People want new housing areas to have parks and green spaces.
- People think it's important to help people keep their homes, so they don't become homeless.
- Many people said homeless people need better help with mental health problems and drug or alcohol problems.
- People are worried councils won't have enough staff to check that all rented homes are safe and well looked after.
- People want all rented homes to be checked in the same way, whether they're rented from the council or a private landlord.

### How we used this feedback:

We're pleased that most of the things people told us are important match what our plan already focuses on.

People told us that homeless people need help with mental health and drug or alcohol problems. We're working on this through other projects. Different services are now working together to give better support to people who need it.

However, we can't do everything people asked for. For example, we need to build some new homes on green spaces to meet our housing targets. We will use empty buildings and brownfield land where we can, but this won't be enough on its own. We will work with planning services and take measures to protect the countryside as much as possible when building on green spaces.

## Strategic Themes

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The following themes crosscut all our priorities:



### Collaboration:

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Cross-sector working to achieve shared priorities is key to all aspects of our work.



### Regionally:

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Several key partners including health and mental health, criminal justice and domestic abuse services operate on a regional basis. The aim of the partnership is to be a strong voice for the needs and opportunities in East Sussex.

We will also share our learning and good practice, including joint lobbying on shared challenges. The partnership works collaboratively with housing partnerships in West Sussex, Kent and Essex.



### County-wide:

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We want to build on our strong history of working together across East Sussex. Some of the projects we already deliver together are the East Sussex Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme and our work to end fuel poverty. A range of county-wide groups have supported the creation of the strategy, including Developers East Sussex, East Sussex Homelessness Forum, Temporary Accommodation Action Group, SPACES Programme Board, Local Plan Managers Group, East Sussex Energy Partnership, Partnership Plus, East Sussex Health and Care System Partnership Board, Safer East Sussex Partnership and Multi-Agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group.



### Place-based:

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We want to complement the local strategies in each of the 5 district and borough authorities and support local partners to deliver their priorities. We are working with local stakeholders to highlight local needs. Some of the new ways of working in health services, including Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams follow district and borough authority footprints, which will make it easier to include direct links to housing services.



## Evidence Based Decision Making:

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We will use data and intelligence to measure progress and guide our work. Each of the specialist groups within the partnership will be responsible for monitoring key indicators for their part of the sector.

There are gaps in lived experience involvement across the local housing sector. We are working on new ways to involve people with lived experience of housing and homelessness services, ensuring that their insights are valued equally alongside quantitative data.



## Workforce:

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Building capacity within the local workforce is key to delivering our priorities. Housing faces significant challenges in terms of recruitment and retention of staff. The partnership will develop a strengths-based workforce plan which will include:

- Housing Management - aligning preparations for the new Conduct and Competency Standard which will be introduced in October 2026 and monitored by the Regulator of Social Housing, including providing workforce training and development opportunities across partner housing providers. Ensuring that learning from tenant complaints and feedback is used to identify training needs. Sharing learning and practice from inspections by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Development and Supply - addressing skills shortages, including maximising take-up of apprenticeships, which can support local authorities and housing providers to increase the supply of accommodation.
- Elected members - ensuring that housing is part of the core training and induction offer for elected members, ensuring buy-in for the partnership strategy priorities.

## Devolution & Local Government reorganisation

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In December 2024, the government published the English Devolution White Paper, setting out its approach to devolution and local government reorganisation.

The partnership is keen to provide consistency during the devolution and re-organisation process, recognising the strength of our existing partnership work and continuing to strengthen cross sector collaboration.

The partnership is also keen that the vision and priorities which stakeholders have developed through the strategy development process shape how housing services will be structured and delivered in the future.

[Further information about devolution and local government re-organisation.](#)

# Preventing Homelessness and Ending Rough Sleeping

**Lead Specialist Group: Homelessness, Health and Support Group**

## Our aims

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- Preventing homelessness is a priority across all services. Prevention gets the best outcomes for individuals and helps us make the best use of resources.
- We identify people at risk of homelessness early. We provide holistic support which reduces the risk of people becoming homeless again in the future.
- We work collaboratively and have a community-centred approach.
- We provide good quality, cost-effective temporary accommodation.
- We work to end rough sleeping.
- Needs within our homelessness services inform new developments of housing and accommodation.

## Why is this a priority?

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The number of people affected by homelessness in East Sussex is high and continues to rise. Some areas of the county report rates of homelessness twice that of the England average. Homelessness affects every aspect of someone's life, from their health and wellbeing to accessing education and employment.

The number of people living in temporary accommodation has reached un-precedented levels. There are currently over 1,200 households and 1,400 children living in temporary accommodation. The local housing authorities spent over £15,000,000 on temporary accommodation in 2024/25. This had increased by £1,000,000 from the previous year.

Identifying people at risk of homelessness early increases the options to support them. We will provide a holistic approach to support which includes links to wellbeing, employment and training.

The East Sussex Housing Authorities have also worked in partnership to deliver support for refugees and immigrants, including the Homes for Ukraine Programme. We will continue to

provide support to people for migrant communities to integrate into the local community and access essential services.

Our aim is to end rough sleeping in East Sussex. People who sleep rough are at the highest risk of harm and have much shorter life expectancy. People who are forced to rough sleep often require support from a range of services, alongside housing. We want to build on our work with health, mental health, social care and substance dependency services to make sure we offer the right support for each person. We want to increase the range of temporary and long-term accommodation options for rough sleepers.

## Case Study from East Sussex Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme




The Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme has been leading our work to end rough sleeping since 2018. The programme has around 300 people on its caseload at any time.

The programme is delivered in partnership by the 5 housing authorities, led by Hastings Borough Council. Through the programme we have expanded our outreach support and the range of temporary accommodation options, to help people who are forced to rough sleep to leave the streets as quickly as possible. There is also a dedicated team of health, mental health, adult social care and substance dependency services working together to reduce the risk of someone returning to rough sleeping. The programme has also increased the range of longer-term accommodation options, including new Housing First units for people who need ongoing support.

## Case Study from Eastbourne Borough Council - East Sussex Wellbeing and Employment Service



The East Sussex Wellbeing and Employment Service is led by Eastbourne Borough Council, working in partnership with Public Health. The team provide holistic support to people at risk of homelessness and living in temporary accommodation. In 2025, the project won the Homeless Link Excellent Support Award. Below is the story of someone who recently used the service:

 The process of moving in was very difficult for me, mentally and physically, at the age of 66, as a physically disabled person. I faced many challenges when I moved into Temporary

Accommodation. My Wellbeing Coordinator supported me for months. We spoke on the phone every week.

I had many problems in temporary accommodation which had a negative impact on me. I felt depressed, I felt like I couldn't get out of so much anxiety. My Wellbeing Co-Ordinator listened patiently and encouraged me to assess where I had come from and focus on what I wanted to achieve. She is a dedicated Wellbeing Co-Ordinator who had a positive impact on me. The results and the change are measurable.

I feel much better, more confident and calmer. I can see my goal. I would like to thank her for being with me during the hardest time.

## Key Areas of Work

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### Early identification of people at risk of homelessness

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- Create a Duty to Prevent Homelessness protocol with partners, based on the Duty to Refer
- Develop a new Care Leavers Protocol
- Expand co-location and joint working opportunities. Providing opportunities for partners to work in local housing hubs. Ensure housing is part of family hubs, integrated community teams and community organisations.
- We will lobby locally, and especially as we enter Local Government Reorganisation for sufficient funding for support services. We will use the qualitative and quantitative data and insight we have to make the case for investment through best use of resources and impact on individuals.
- Continue to support the East Sussex Homelessness Forum, to develop a community centred approach and strengthen collaboration with voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Design a range of opportunities for ongoing lived experience involvement to shape the design of homelessness services.
- Developing a new homelessness prevention programme for schools.

### Support for people to keep their existing home or find new accommodation

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- Expand outreach and home-visiting roles for people at risk of homelessness
- Strengthen links to specialist welfare and debt advice services

- Co-produce the new combined crisis fund (which combines Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the Household Support Fund (HSF) with partners to ensure the fund actively prevents and ends homelessness.

## Supporting people living in temporary accommodation

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- Holistic support services including floating support, wellbeing and links to employment support and training
- Financial incentives to support people to secure new accommodation

## Ending Rough Sleeping

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- Work with partners to develop outreach and engagement services through the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme, including opportunities for peer involvement.
- Increase the range of temporary and off the street accommodation options for people who are rough sleeping.
- Support the expansion of the [Housing First](#) service and ensure it has fidelity to the model, with the team supporting a low number of residents and giving those residents true flexibility and control.
- Continue to strengthen involvement of health, mental health and substance dependency services in the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme (RSPaR) as part of our work to support people with multiple compound needs.

## Good quality, cost effective temporary accommodation

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- Develop a shared East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy
- Increase capacity for proactive inspections of temporary accommodation.
- Develop a shared approach to procuring temporary accommodation.
- We will lobby for the temporary accommodation subsidy system to reflect the current costs of securing good quality temporary accommodation. This will help us to maximise investment in prevention services.

## How will we monitor progress?

- Successful homelessness preventions, as a proportion of homelessness presentations
- Number of individuals engaged in wellbeing, employability and training support
- Number of referrals from partner agencies increase under the Duty to Refer.

- Spend on nightly paid temporary accommodation, compared to other solutions
- Number of proactive inspections of temporary accommodation completed

## Working together to reduce health inequalities

**Lead Specialist Groups:** Homelessness, Health and Support Group and Multiple Compound Needs Board

### Our aims

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- To reduce health inequalities linked to housing.
- Housing is an enabler for people to live healthy, independent lives for as long as possible.
- Collaborate across housing, health, mental health and care services, including developing new community-based models.
- To build a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting people with multiple compound needs.

### Why is this a priority?

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Good housing is essential for people to live a healthy life. We want to make sure we have the right housing for people to live healthy, independent lives for as long as possible.

We need to build more affordable houses, so people can have a stable, secure home. Housing, health and care services also need to work together to reduce health inequalities and ensure we use our resources to support those most in need.

East Sussex has an aging population. 84% of total population growth will be amongst people aged 64 and over. The number of people aged 64 and over living in East Sussex will increase to 194,268 by 2034. We want housing that maximises independence and helps keep people safe as they get older. We will work with adult social care to identify housing needs as part of a review of older people's services, which will include residential and nursing care, home care, extra care and day services. We will also build on feedback from the public engagement about the need to increase the range of accessible, adaptable housing options and the use of Disabled Facilities Grants.

People who live with three or more needs including: homelessness, mental health needs, substance use, current or past offending and domestic abuse are described as having multiple compound needs (MCN). Our aim is to jointly develop and deliver wraparound services for people with multiple compound needs building on the Changing Futures and Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme.

We will continue to work with specialist domestic abuse services to improve pathways to housing services and increase the range of specialist accommodation and refuge provision.

A shortage of housing and accommodation is also creating delays discharging people from hospital, particularly for people who require accessible or adapted accommodation.

## Feedback from the Multiple Compound Needs Assessment

“ Experience makes all that difference. Lived experience. We pay more attention to someone with past experiences than someone who’s just done a few courses online”  
(Focus group with people with lived experience, paraphrased)

It's like I was continuously silenced and continuously just not listened to, not believed that that was a huge thing for me when all I did was tell the truth and it just. I just felt like there wasn't a justice system, that it was just they... they didn't like what I was saying.”  
(Focus group with people with lived experience, paraphrased).

## Case Study from Lewes District Council

In December 2022, works started on site to redevelop a garage site in Ringmer into a 5-bedroom bungalow designed to meet the specific needs of a Lewes district family with physical disabilities. The project had very specific outputs given the circumstances.

The development, funded by Homes England and Disabled Facilities Grant, included three bedrooms that exceeded Building Regulation approved wheelchair user dwelling size, all with accessible wet rooms and bathrooms. The other two bedrooms and kitchen were set out in accordance with adaptable standards as these provided facilities for visiting carers and those with less complex physical needs.

Extensive work between Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care was carried out to ensure the family could be housed in a property where they could each receive their specialist care - if we were unable to find / build a suitable property,

the family would have been split up and cared for separately. Not only did the partnership between East Sussex County Council and Lewes District Council mean that a family could stay together, but it also demonstrated cost savings; the cost of splitting the family up to ensure they received their specialist care in the right space would have cost the NHS and Adult Social Care a significant amount.

During the design stages of the project, the team worked collaboratively with Occupational Therapist (OT) to ensure the layout and design of the property met the needs of the occupants. Specifically, they reviewed floorplans and provided detailed input on ceiling track hoists, socket and switch positions, shower heights, as well as the positioning of beds, TVs, grab rails and other fixtures within the property. This early engagement with OT ensured the design truly supported the needs of each family member and avoided costly design changes later in the process.

The completed home also incorporates several sustainability features including mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, PV solar panels, and sun pipes to maximise natural light and reduce reliance on artificial lighting.

The development achieved practical completion in March 2024 with the family moving in shortly after.

## Key areas of work

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### Hospital Discharge

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- Develop a new hospital discharge protocol for people in housing need with partners in health and care
- Continue partnership working across housing and occupational therapy. Support access to Disabled Facilities Grants for home adaptations.
- Develop preventative approaches, to reduce admissions from those already homeless or insecurely housed.

### Multiple Compound Needs

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- Implement the recommendations from the multiple compound needs assessment.
- Prioritise settled and stable housing, with appropriate support as needed. Expand existing Housing First models for people with ongoing health and mental health needs.
- Develop a Team Around the Person with Lead Professional approach. Expand trauma informed practice.

- Develop multi-disciplinary, outreach-based services.
- Improve data sharing and risk management arrangements between services.
- Expanding training for practitioners in supporting people with neurodiversity.

## Community Based Models in Health and Care

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- Ensure housing and homelessness prevention are part of the core offer for Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams. Use the housing partnership network to share learning and good practice across the teams.
- Tailoring access to services for vulnerable groups, including people living in temporary accommodation and migrant communities.

## Cross-sector Working

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- Develop a new Supported Housing Strategy for East Sussex, working with partners to identify gaps in provision.
- Lead the implementation of the housing priorities within the Sussex Health and Care Shared Delivery Plan, Adult Social Care Strategy and Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy.
- Work with specialist domestic abuse services to increase the range of accommodation options and improve the pathways for people fleeing domestic abuse.
- Work with adult social care during 2026/27 to identify housing actions as part of a broader review of services for older people.
- Working with Public Health to develop age friendly communities.
- Ensuring learning from serious case reviews through the Safeguarding Adults Board informs service development within the housing services.
- Embed learning from the pan-Sussex Changing Futures Programme and Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme.
- Support joint research to better understand the needs of older people in the Private Rented Sector, working with colleagues in Housing Benefit and Council Tax services, Adult Social Care and the Voluntary Sector to identify the level of need. We will use this better understanding of need to better target tenancy support services, the allocation of older persons accommodation and Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Continue to support the Sussex Health and Care Mental Health and Housing Programme, including expanding the supported tenancies scheme to East Sussex.

## How will we monitor progress?

- Number of people rough sleeping.
- Annual baseline assessment against the NICE standard for integration of health and social care for people experiencing homelessness.
- Regular monitoring of delays to hospital discharge linked to housing and housing outcomes for people referred from health settings.
- Regular monitoring of admissions to hospital for people who are homeless or insecurely housed.
- Percentage of people with multiple compound needs achieving positive outcomes across at least 3 domains (housing, health, criminal justice, substance use) at 12 months

## Improving Housing Management and Standards

**Lead Specialist Group: Housing Management and Standards Group**

### Our aims

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- To create a culture of ongoing improvement against the national consumer standards.
- To create a partnership approach to the new legislation and policy, including the reformed decent homes standard, electrical safety and energy performance requirements.
- For our work to be guided by the voice and experience of people living in our homes.
- Develop our workforce to meet the new competency and conduct standards.
- To share learning and good practice from regulatory judgements.
- To make the best use of resources, including jointly commissioning services to meet shared needs.

### Why is this a priority?

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Our work is guided by the Consumer Standards for social housing providers:

- Safety and Quality Standard (stock quality, decency, health and safety, repairs, maintenance and planned improvements and adaptations).

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (fairness and respect, diverse needs, engagement with tenants, information about landlord services, performance information, complaints).
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard (safety of shared spaces, local co-operation, anti-social behaviour and hate incidents, domestic abuse).
- Tenancy Standard (allocations and lettings, tenancy sustainment and evictions, tenure, mutual exchange).

The government has published a policy paper, setting out its priorities for a decade of renewal for social housing. The paper set out plans for investment in delivery of social housing and ongoing regulator arrangements. This was followed by a proposed reformed decent homes standard, which will apply to both social and privately rented homes.

## Case Study - Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council - Regulatory Inspection



The Regulator of Social Housing is responsible for assessing how well social housing providers are delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards. The Regulator of Social Housing carries out on-site inspections and issues judgements based on their findings. The best grading is C1, which means the landlord is delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and the worst is C4, which indicates there are very serious failings.

Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council were the first local authorities in East Sussex to be inspected under the new arrangements. In October 2025, the councils received a C2 judgement, which places them in the top third of all local authorities in England. During the inspection, the regulator noted several examples of good practice, including:

Commitment to treating tenants with fairness and respect and a positive culture towards tenants.

- Evidence that tenant's views have positively impacted service delivery in a number of areas, including the council's approach to dealing with damp and mould.
- Assurance that the council has up to date, accurate information about 83% of its homes, with plans to survey all homes by March 2026.
- Assurance that the council is meeting its obligations in relation to landlord health and safety compliance.
- Repairs generally delivered in a timely way for tenants.
- Partnership working to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crimes.

- Clear tenancy policy, including a recent review of tenancy agreements and a proactive programme of tenancy audits.

Since the inspection, the councils have agreed an improvement plan with the regulator which is taking steps to strengthen the strategic oversight and reporting of health and safety compliance remedial actions, address overdue repairs, enhance the information the councils hold about the characteristics and diversity of tenants, and embed recommendations from an earlier review of the complaints handling policy.

The partnership will continue to support the councils to implement the improvement plan and share learning and practice from regulatory judgements.

## Key areas of work

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### Delivering the Consumer Standards for Social Housing

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- Sharing learning and good practice from recent regulatory judgements through the partnership network.
- Developing an annual partnership implementation plan for each consumer standard.
- Create a partnership approach to validating stock condition information.
- To lead a partnership approach to prepare for the reformed decent homes standard, electrical safety and energy efficiency requirements.

### Tenant Voice

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- Embedding and reviewing the tenant voice charter.
- Sharing tenant satisfaction measures and trends in customer complaints.
- Supporting partners to meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- Ensuring lived experience involvement in homelessness services helps to shape pathways to accommodation.
- Monitoring the impact of changes to service delivery on tenant satisfaction.

### Workforce Development

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- A partnership approach to meeting the new competency and conduct requirements. Carry out a strengths-based training needs assessment to support providers meet the

requirements for the development of the housing workforce, including maximising opportunities through skills bootcamps and apprenticeships.

- Enable providers to benefit from economies of scale through joint training schemes.

## Driving Ongoing Improvements

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- Collaboration with the Safer East Sussex Team to address anti-social behaviour and promote community cohesion.
- Support collaboration with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to meet new fire safety regulations and recommendations from the Grenfell Enquiry.
- Support the development of local Charters between local authorities, housing providers and tenants.
- Working with health and social care partners to develop a partnership approach to hoarding.
- Promoting a consistent approach to standards across social and privately rented homes.

## How will we monitor progress?

- Progress against the annual partnership implementation plan for the consumer standards
- Trends in tenant satisfaction and customer complaints
- Take up of training offer and number of staff meeting the professionalisation requirements

# Deliver the Homes We Need

## Lead Specialist Group: Development and Enablement Group

### Our aims

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- Deliver our annual housing target of 4,630 new homes across East Sussex.
- Deliver as much new affordable housing as possible, particularly homes at affordable rent and social rent.
- Deliver the aims of a decade of renewal for social and affordable housing, making the most of opportunities through the new Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) and other grant funding opportunities.
- Co-ordinate a thriving and diverse local development market. Support a strong voice for our communities within the development process and make sure that new housing is matched to the needs in our area.
- Collaborate with planning services to ensure new housing is an enabler for infrastructure improvements.
- To work with regional networks including Developers Sussex and the South East Housing and Development Group to make the most of collaboration across local authority housing teams, planning services, registered providers, community led housing providers and developers.
- Community led housing is recognised and promoted to meet local needs, build community capacity and foster community cohesion.
- To make the best use of existing housing stock and public sector assets.
- To enable regeneration and growth, by providing better housing and employment opportunities in construction.
- Work with regional and national planning colleagues to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework is continuously improved to support the sector to deliver more housing and affordable housing.

### Why is this a priority?

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We cannot meet our housing needs or improve our infrastructure unless we build more homes. We have a new target to deliver 4,630 new homes across East Sussex each year (our target has increased by 18%). We want to deliver as much affordable housing as we can, particularly:

- Social Rent - usually owned and managed by councils or housing associations. Rents are set using a national formula and are typically around 50-60% of local market rents. These are the lowest cost rented homes and provide long-term security.
- Affordable Rent - also provided by councils or housing associations. Rents can be up to 80% of local market rents (including service charges). In some parts of East Sussex, councils and housing providers may set the level of rent at or below Local Housing Allowance rate (the maximum rent level that can be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit) to reflect the needs in their area.

Housing delivery in East Sussex has remained relatively static over the past 5 years, with a total of 9,131 net housing additions. Nationally, affordable housing is making up a smaller proportion of overall delivery. Delivery of both market and affordable housing is not consistent in all areas, with some areas delivering at historically high levels while other areas are seeing much lower rates of delivery.

Whilst housing delivery, particularly affordable housing, remains lower than targets, consents remain at all-time highs (particularly in Wealden and Lewes District). It is critical that the barriers to delivering these homes are removed and consents and converted into homes.

Housing is an important enabler for growth. The new East Sussex Prosperity Strategy highlights the need to increase the range of accommodation options for young people and people looking to return to East Sussex after studying. Housing development also provides a range of employment opportunities.

In addition to new housing supply, we are keen to make the best use of our existing housing stock. There are currently around 2,500 long term empty properties around the county. The partnership will develop a county wide incentive model to bring these properties back into use for those in housing need, this will include co-ordinating with the council's enforcement action where required.

## Case Study from Wealden District Council

Wealden District Council recently completed a new housing development at Coronation Place, Uckfield.

The site comprises 4 one-bedroom flats, 8 two-bedroom houses for social rent, 2 two-bedroom houses for Shared Ownership Sale; 4 three-bedroom houses for general needs, as well as a three-bedroom house and a four-bedroom house built to mobility standards for wheelchair users.

A fabric first approach was applied at design stage, to ensure the design and construction maximises the performance of the components and materials, whilst minimising energy

use for heating and cooling. In order to achieve the highest Energy Performance rating of an A there are Air Source Heat Pumps with

under floor heating, Photovoltaic panels for electricity generation, Mechanical Ventilation & Heat Recovery units, triple glazed windows and widened cavities with full-fill insulation.

The woodland wildlife area behind the homes has been retained to encourage biodiversity and to provide a habitat for local wildlife.

### One resident said:

“ Our new home has been truly life-changing for our family, our son has a degenerative neurological disease and has struggled all his life at home, this house has provided him not only a safe and secure environment but has given him dignity in even the smallest of tasks, thanks to the thoroughness of the planning of this house he has everything he needs as he grows for it to be fully supportive of his disabilities and to fully integrate him with all aspects of our family life.

Every member of Wealden Council that participated in the planning and building of these homes did an incredible job. Living in this house has meant that we no longer face an uncertain future as our sons' condition progresses, we are incredibly thankful to everyone and hope that more homes like this will be built in the future to help all the children and adults like our son live their lives to fullest.

## Case Study - Community Led Housing

Rother District Council have been working the Sussex Community Housing Hub to support the delivery of community-led housing. The vision for this work is to empower communities to create homes that meet local needs, foster sustainability, and strengthen social cohesion.

One example of this is Orchard Close in Icklesham. The project was designed and delivered with strong community involvement and provides 12 homes at social rent and 3 shared ownership properties.

Work is continuing on a pipeline of at least 27 new homes, including a rural project and the development of a heritage building.



## Key areas of work

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### Creating a thriving and diverse development sector

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- Supporting partners to deliver 4,544 new homes each year, with at least 50% being affordable housing.
- Collaborating with Developers Sussex and South East Housing and Development Group to strengthen cross-sector working across housing, planning, register providers and housing developers.
- Collective lobbying on key issues such as rent policy and Affordable Homes Programme.

### Maximising Affordable Housing Delivery

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- Maximising grant funding opportunities through the Social and Affordable Homes Programme, Brownfield Land Release Fund and One Public Estate, including joint bids for social and affordable rented homes.
- Lobbying for a time-limited provision to enable grant funding to bring forward Section 106 sites.
- Strengthening engagement between local authorities, developers registered providers and other providers (e.g. Community Land Trusts) to support delivery of affordable housing on Section 106 sites.
- Supporting affordable housing providers to access grant opportunities to upgrade existing housing stock, to free up capacity for investment in new developments.
- Supporting sharing of knowledge and capacity across local authority partners, to enable them to deliver more homes directly.

### Making the best use of our existing housing stock

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- Develop a county-wide Empty Homes Strategy and delivery model.
- Continue working with the SPACES programme to bring forward sites from the pipeline of public sector assets which could be developed to provide accommodation.

### Ensuring housing is an enabler for regeneration and growth

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- Work with partners to ensure delivery of new homes is aligned with local needs.

- Support the delivery of housing outcomes in the new East Sussex Prosperity Strategy, including ensuring a range of accommodation options for young people, key workers and people returning to the county.
- Expanding Local Employment and Skills Plans with local businesses and education providers to build capacity in the local construction workforce.
- Work with stakeholders to identify regional infrastructure challenges, collaborating across local planning authority boundaries to improve local infrastructure and unlock land for housing development.
- Support broader work across Public Health to strengthen a health in all policies approach.

## Supporting collaboration with planning services

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- Promoting the local plan-making process.
- Working collaboratively to remove barriers to delivery of consented homes wherever they are in the system.
- Facilitating early conversations between housing developers, local authorities and registered providers to protect affordable housing delivery especially on Section 106 sites.
- Working with regional and national planning colleagues to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework is continuously improved to support the sector in delivering more housing and affordable housing.
- Responding to the outcome of the county-wide call for sites for Gypsy and Traveller communities, which is intended to inform the Local Plan, and we will support feasible opportunities to provide high quality settled sites in the area.

### How will we monitor progress?

- Number of new units delivered each year
- Number of affordable units delivered each year
- Number of affordable units delivered on Section 106 sites each year
- Time between grant of planning consent and new homes being built
- Alignment of new home deliver and infrastructure spend
- Number of long-term empty properties brought into use
- Number of community-led housing units built

# Tackling Climate Change

## Lead Specialist Group: Sustainable Homes

### Our aims

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- To create a cross-sector strategic approach to upgrading homes to improve their energy performance and move to low carbon heating systems. This will support partners to meet their carbon reduction targets.
- To ensure new developments are delivered to a high standard of energy performance.
- Ensure that home upgrades and retrofit are an enabler for growth by providing employment and training opportunities.
- To maximise resources in the sector through a combination of grant funding and direct investment.
- Prioritise support for households at the highest risk of fuel poverty.

### Why is this a priority?

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Housing is a leading source of carbon emissions across the county. A recent baseline assessment by Parity Projects found that 31% of homes in East Sussex have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of A - C, compared to the England average of 47%. The main reasons we are behind the national average are our higher proportion of older homes and rural homes.

The government is expected to introduce new requirements for the energy performance of both social and private rented homes. Housing providers and local authorities across East Sussex are committed to reducing their carbon emissions.

There is a strong history of partnership working to address fuel poverty between housing and public health, with around £12,000,000 worth of grant funding secured by the East Sussex authorities since 2020. We will be building on this work with a new Retrofit Strategy for East Sussex. The vision for the retrofit strategy is that every home in East Sussex is energy efficient, healthy and affordable for people and planet, supporting a flourishing local economy of trusted tradespeople.

This plan sets out the practical, people-focused ways we will work together to accelerate home energy efficiency action across East Sussex. We need to accelerate progress in the private rented sector (19.7% of total stock) and owner-occupied accommodation (68.5%) of total stock. A key principle of the strategy will be to support the most vulnerable households with the worst energy efficiency first.

We are keen to maximise the growth and employment opportunities for local people linked to home upgrades and retrofit. It is estimated that the local construction workforce will need to grow by over 1,000 posts per year between now and 2050 to meet our retrofit and decarbonisation targets.

The partnership will also facilitate collaboration with environment leads on the wider effects of climate change, including flooding, changes to biodiversity and overheating.

## Case Study: East Sussex Retrofit Skills Plan



The East Sussex Retrofit Skills Plan was developed in response to the Skills East Sussex (SES) priority, 'green skills for a net zero future' and workstream activity in the SES Construction and Built Environment Sector Task Group strategic plan 2024/25.

Skills East Sussex (SES) is the county's strategic body for employability and skills. The group works together to improve local employment and skills levels to increase economic prosperity in East Sussex. The group provides direction for the county's approach to employment and skills. SES has identified six priority sectors within the county. Work on the priorities is taken forward through the sector task groups, including construction and built environment.

The East Sussex County Council Employability and Skills Team secured funding via Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to develop an East Sussex Retrofit Skills Plan and oversee phase 1 activities during the first half of 2024.

Retrofit awareness training delivered for colleagues across local housing authorities and housing providers for 100 participants.

33 new businesses engaged in retrofit skills development work.

New retrofit careers campaign launched.

14 tutors enrolled to deliver retrofit training

New promotion materials developed to be shared through the DWP and ESTAR

**The second phase of the skills plan will continue into 2026.**

## Key areas of work

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### East Sussex Retrofit Strategy

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- Co-produce the East Sussex Retrofit Strategy, to upgrade homes to improve their energy performance and move to low carbon heating systems. Key areas of work to include:
  - Funding and finance
  - Practical delivery
  - Retrofit skills
  - Communications, collaboration and co-benefits
- The partnership will be responsible for the ongoing delivery of the retrofit strategy and developing an annual implementation plan.
- Ensure housing issues are fully explored in the Climate Change Health Impact Assessment. Continue to work with Public Health to implement recommendations from the assessment.

### Skills and Employment

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- Deliver the next phases of the East Sussex Retrofit Skills Plan.
- Increase awareness of retrofit among residents, statutory organisations and businesses.
- Promote careers in retrofit and support inclusive recruitment.
- Ensuring that there is the right supply of training for new entrants and employees
- Continue to work with the Employability and Skills Team, local education providers and local businesses to identify workforce development opportunities and secure funding to support this work.

### Addressing Fuel Poverty

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- Continue to support the county-wide Fuel Poverty Co-Ordinator role, hosted by Hastings Borough Council.
- Promote the Warm Homes Check service.
- Support the delivery of the Warm Homes Local Grant programme and maximise grant funding opportunities.
- Supporting links between work to address fuel poverty and the wider financial inclusion programme.

## New Housing Supply

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- Scoping a partnership approach to improving the energy performance of new developments with Developers East Sussex, including potential incentive packages and links to planning policies in each of the district and boroughs.
- Scoping broader opportunities to promote environmental sustainability, including biodiversity, and addressing risks linked to flooding.

## How will we monitor progress?

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- Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score of properties in East Sussex
- External grant funding secured to support retrofit
- Retrofit training courses delivered
- Number of owner occupied / private rented households engaged in support

# Private Rented Homes

## Lead Specialist Group: Private Rented Homes Group

### Our aims

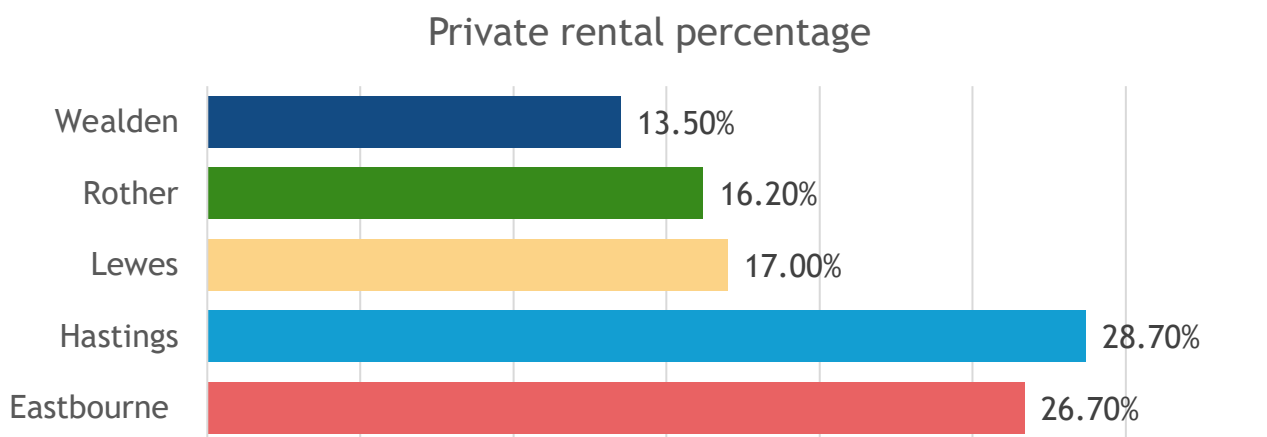
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- A network of private sector landlords and agents to support cross sector working.
- Sufficient capacity within statutory partners to implement the expanded enforcement duties.
- A consistent approach to compliance and standards across providers in the social and private rented sector.
- A shared incentive package to improve sustainment and access to accommodation for people in housing need.

### Why is this a priority?

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The private rented sector makes up 19.7% of the total housing stock across the county, however, the size of the sector in each district and borough varies considerably:



Most of the accommodation in the private rented sector is in coastal, urban areas of the county. Councils and partners need to balance their compliance and standards duties with a need to maintain access to the private sector and prevent homelessness.

We will create a network of private sector landlords and agents, working closely with the National Residential Landlords Association. The network will enable a consistent approach to planned legislative changes and support work across partners organisations in relation to compliance and access to housing. The network will also engage private landlords in key areas of work elsewhere in the partnership, such as our work on domestic retrofit.

Several new laws and policies are set to be introduced which will impact on private rented housing:

- A reformed decent homes standard for social and privately rented homes.
- Introducing Awaabs Law to the private rented sector, which will set legal expectations about the timeframes in which landlords must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards. Legislation will also strengthen the powers for local authorities to carry
- New minimum energy performance requirements for privately rented homes.
- Expanding local authorities' compliance and standards duties including enforcement, civil penalties and investigatory powers.
- Some local housing authorities are considering licensing arrangements for the private rented sector in their areas. The partnership can support this activity by sharing learning from the implementation of the reforms with social housing providers with other parts of the sector, creating a network of private landlords and agents to share learning and good practice in implement the changes and gathering evidence from partner sectors in health and care on links between housing and health.

Councils work to help people in housing need find new homes. Many privately rented homes are becoming unaffordable as local housing allowance has failed to keep pace with rising costs. To help with this, councils offer incentive programmes. We will work to make our incentive offer as consistent as possible, including expanding leasing options. We will also link our incentive offer to other key areas of work, such as upgrading homes to improve their energy performance and bringing long-term empty homes back into use.

## Case Study: Addressing Damp and Mould



A property in Hastings featured a category 1 (potent hazards are set out in Housing Health and Safety Rating System) for damp and mould with severe growth to all parts of the dwelling. The council's compliance officer had originally planned to serve a prohibition order, but the agent/landlord reacted so swiftly and positively that it was agreed to give them an opportunity to gather quotes and get the works done on an informal basis. This was largely informed by balancing the impact that making a relatively elderly gentleman with health issues homeless would have, against the risk posed by further exposure to the hazard.

Within 3 months the landlord had completed the following works to address the issue:

- Completed a deep mould clean and provided de-humidifiers.
- Installed a new heating system throughout.
- Installed a Positive Input Ventilation System.
- Installed a humidistat extractor fan to the bathroom.

- Waterproofed a flat roof and repaired broken rainwater goods.
- Replaced rotting fascia's to the rear.
- Completely re-rendered the front elevation and re-sealed all windows.
- Insulated the loft.
- Liaised with the neighbours to clear their gutters.
- Installed new hardwired smoke detection.
- Completed works to the common parts to improve fire separation.

## Key areas of work

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### Partnership Working

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- A new county-wide network of private landlords and agents established
- A shared incentive package to support people in housing need access the sector.
- Delivering a joint training programme to promote understanding of upcoming legislative changes, including the Renters Rights Bill and reformed decent homes standard.

### Standards and Compliance

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- Scoping capacity requirements across statutory partners to deliver the planned additional enforcement and compliance duties introduced by the Renters Rights Bill and the Supported Housing Regulations.
- Developing and implementing a partnership action plan to meet the requirements of the reformed decent homes standard.
- Promoting a consistent approach to implementing planned legislative changes.
- Sharing of learning and practice in relation to compliance standards across the social and private rented sector.

### How will we monitor progress

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- Membership and engagement of new landlord's forum.
- Private rented sector inspections.
- Number of households using homelessness services accessing accommodation in the private rented sector.

## Glossary

**Affordable Housing:** Homes that are cheaper than market rates. This includes social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership. Aimed at people who can't afford typical private rents or to buy a home.

**Allocations Policy:** The rules that decide who gets offered social housing and how people are prioritised.

**Article 4 Direction:** A planning tool that lets councils restrict certain property changes (like turning homes into holiday lets or HMOs) without needing planning permission.

**Awaab's Law:** New legislation that sets strict timescales for landlords to fix health hazards like damp and mould in social housing, following the death of a child caused by unsafe conditions.

**Choice Based Lettings (CBL):** A way people apply for social housing by 'bidding' for available homes that meet their needs, rather than waiting to be offered a property.

**Climate Resilience / Future-Proofing:** Designing homes to cope with future environmental conditions like hotter summers, more storms, or flooding.

**Community Led Housing:** a movement where local people organize to build affordable homes and other community assets to meet their specific needs.

**Commuted Sum:** Money paid by developers instead of building affordable homes on-site. The council can use this money to build affordable housing elsewhere.

**Consumer Standards:** a set of rules from the government that social housing providers must follow to ensure tenants have safe, good-quality homes and service.

**Decent Homes Standard:** A Government-set standard for housing quality. Homes must be warm, safe, in good repair, and have reasonably modern facilities.

**Development and Enablement Group:** the specialist group within the housing partnership that is responsible for increasing housing supply.

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):** Money from the council to help pay for adaptations (like stairlifts or accessible bathrooms) so disabled people can stay in their homes.

**Duty to Refer:** A legal duty requiring public services (like hospitals or prisons) to notify the council if someone is at risk of homelessness.

**East Sussex Housing Partnership:** A group of local councils and housing organisations working together to improve housing across East Sussex.

**Energy Performance Certificate (EPC):** A rating that shows how energy-efficient a home is. Rated A (best) to G (worst). EPC C or better is the Government's goal.

**Enforcement Action:** Legal steps the council can take if landlords don't meet housing standards (e.g., issuing fines or banning unsafe properties).

**ESTAR Employability:** a group of projects provided by the Careers East Sussex team to help people build their skills and confidence to search for work and training opportunities.

**Exceptional Circumstances (Planning):** A planning term used when the council makes an exception to normal rules - for example, allowing more shared homes due to urgent housing need.

**Fabric First:** A building approach that focuses on making homes energy efficient by improving insulation, windows, and walls before adding renewable tech like solar panels.

**Fuel Poverty:** When a household can't afford to heat their home properly, often due to low income and poor energy efficiency.

**Gypsy and Traveller Sites:** Specific areas provided or planned for people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to live legally and safely.

**HMO (House in Multiple Occupation):** There are different definitions of an HMO, depending on whether a house where three or more people from different households live and share facilities like a kitchen or bathroom.

**Homelessness, Health and Support Group:** the specialist group within the housing partnership services which is responsible for support services and integrating housing, health and care services.

**Homelessness Prevention Grant:** Government funding given to councils to help stop people becoming homeless (e.g., by paying rent arrears or offering support services).

**Homemove:** The name of the system used in East Sussex to apply for social housing through Choice Based Lettings.

**Housing First:** A support model where people who have been sleeping rough are offered permanent housing with personalised support, without conditions.

**Housing Management and Standards Group:** the specialist group within the housing partnership responsible for implementing the social housing regulations and decent homes standard.

**Housing Ombudsman:** An independent service that investigates complaints from social housing tenants if landlords have failed to resolve the issue.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA):** A separate pot of council money used to manage and build council homes. Councils with their own housing stock have HRAs.

**Integrated Community Teams:** Groups of health and care professionals working together to support people in the community, including those at risk of homelessness.

**Lettings / Reletting Strategy:** The process and rules for allocating vacant social homes to new tenants.

**Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):** A major change to how councils are structured, possibly combining existing councils into one new organisation.

**Local Housing Allowance (LHA):** The amount of housing benefit or universal credit a person can receive to cover rent in the private sector.

**Local Plan:** The council's planning document that sets out where new homes, jobs, and infrastructure can go.

**MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards):** Legal minimum standards for energy performance in rental homes.

**Modern Methods of Construction (MMC):** Innovative building techniques (like modular homes or pre-fab construction) that are quicker and more sustainable than traditional methods.

**Multiple Compound Needs Board:** the group that provides oversight of the Changing Futures Programme and Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme. The board is also responsible for implementing the recommendations from the multiple compound needs assessment.

**Mutual Exchange:** A process where two social housing tenants swap homes with each other, often to better meet their needs.

**Private Rented Sector (PRS):** Homes that are rented from private landlords (not the council or housing associations).

**Private Rented Homes Group:** the specialist group within the housing partnership that is responsible for co-ordinating work with landlords.

**Public Works Loan Board (PWLB):** A Government body that lends money to councils for big projects like building new homes.

**Regeneration Scheme:** A plan to improve or redevelop older homes or areas, often involving demolition and rebuilding.

**Renters Reform / Rights Bill:** Proposed law changes to improve rights for tenants in private rented homes, including ending 'no-fault' evictions.

**Retrofit:** Upgrading older homes with insulation, better windows, and modern heating to improve energy efficiency.

**Rough Sleeping:** When someone is sleeping outside or in a place not meant for living, such as a car, tent, or stairwell.

**SHAP (Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme):** Government funding to create housing with support for single people at risk of rough sleeping.

**Section 106 Agreement:** A legal agreement where developers contribute to local services or provide affordable housing when building new homes.

**Social Housing Regulation Act:** Recent law giving more power to tenants and stricter rules for social landlords.

**Social Lettings Agency:** A not-for-profit organisation that helps rent private homes to people in housing need at affordable rates.

**SPACES (Strategic Property Assets Collaboration in East Sussex):** a partnership of statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations which supports partners make the best use of their assets, including providing office space and co-location opportunities.

**Statutory Duty:** A legal obligation councils must follow, such as having a homelessness strategy.

**Supported Housing:** Homes with extra help for people who need it - for example, older people, people with disabilities, or those recovering from homelessness.

**Supported Housing Regulations:** a new set of requirements which will define requirements for care and support in supported housing, introduce new licensing duties for councils and a requirement to develop a supported housing strategy.

**Sustainable Homes Group:** the specialist group within the partnership that is responsible for climate change measures and delivering the East Sussex Retrofit Strategy.

**TA (Temporary Accommodation):** Short-term housing provided to homeless households while the council finds something more permanent.

**Tenure:** The type of housing someone lives in - for example, renting privately, owning, or living in social housing.

**Trauma-Informed Approach:** A way of working that recognises people may have experienced serious stress or trauma and tailors support accordingly.