



# Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

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Registered Address: arc4, 41 Clarendon Road, Sale Manchester M33 2DY

Email: [contact@arc4.co.uk](mailto:contact@arc4.co.uk)

Website: [www.arc4.co.uk](http://www.arc4.co.uk)

arc4 Limited Registered in England & Wales 6205180

VAT Registration No: 909 9814 77

Directors - Helen Brzozowski – Michael Bullock



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## Appendices

This Homelessness Review and Strategy has been prepared by arc<sup>4</sup> Ltd on behalf of Craven District Council.

The review provides a detailed analysis of the levels and nature of homelessness, an audit of the services and a review of the resources available to spend on homelessness within the county.

Both the strategy and review comply with the associated and relevant legislation Section 1 of the Homeless Act 2002 along with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018).

## Foreword

Welcome to our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which sets out our vision and plans for providing for and improving services for homeless households in the district over the next five years. Although this is not our first homelessness strategy, it is the first to have a specific focus on rough sleeping and consider the effectiveness of homelessness following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018.

Homelessness is a complex situation, often going beyond the essential requirement for suitable, sustainable accommodation and involving a number of personal support needs. For this reason, we recognise that it is not possible for Craven District Council to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping by responding in isolation.

Effective partnerships are required across the public, private and charitable sectors to ensure that the right advice and support is available when it is needed. We've started as we mean to go on, by developing this strategy in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and agreeing how we can work together better in the future.

We do however recognise that this won't be without its challenges. The strength of the housing market and changes to household incomes are putting increasing pressure on already limited resources.

In developing this strategy, we are striving to be aspirational but also realistic in our ambition. Our detailed delivery plan sets out the actions and projects we will be undertaking which we will be undertaking.

**Councillor Richard Foster**

**Council Leader**

**Lead Member for Housing**

**Chair of the York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Housing Board**



# 1. Setting the scene

## Our understanding of homelessness

### 1.1 Section.174 of the Housing Act 1996 states that:

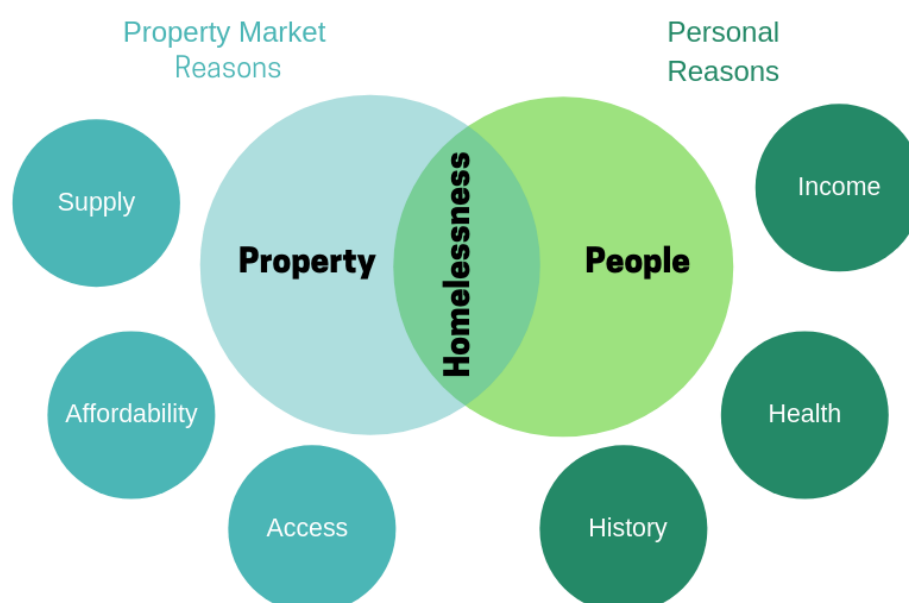
*“a person is homeless if he or she has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for his or her occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy. A person will also be homeless where he or she has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or where he or she has accommodation that is a moveable structure (such as a caravan or house boat) and there is no place where it can be placed in order to provide accommodation. A person who has accommodation is to be treated as homeless where it would not be reasonable for him or her to continue to occupy it.”*

### 1.2 A person is threatened with homelessness if he or she is likely to become homeless within 56 days, and is entitled to approach the local authority for assistance.

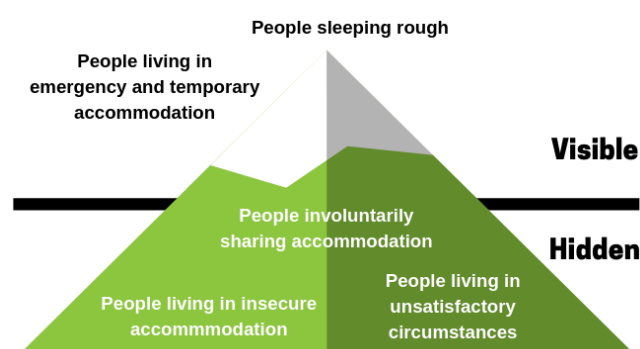
### 1.3 Homelessness can occur for a wide variety of reasons. Some will be related to the residential property market and the supply and affordability of appropriate housing options. Some will be due to the personal circumstances of the individual, their health, life history (for example, leaving an institution or care) or the income they receive.

### 1.4 Often though it is a combination of all these factors that leads to someone needing support and assistance to resolve their situation. Someone is more able to secure or sustain their accommodation in a competitive and expensive housing market where they have sufficient income and are not vulnerable and in need of support. Conversely, services are more able to secure appropriate housing for lower-income households and those with support needs if there is adequate supply, and the market is affordable. It could also be argued that these personal issues are also more able to be managed and resolved where housing is secure and sustainable.

### The Complex Nature of Homelessness



### Explaining the different characteristics of homelessness



- 1.5 It is useful to think of the visible face of homelessness, (i.e. those people who are seen to be sleeping rough or are living in temporary accommodation) as the tip of the mountain in terms of the demand on homelessness services. There are many other hidden households who are living in insecure or unsatisfactory situations who may also approach the Council for assistance.

### The role and purpose of a homelessness strategy and review

- 1.6 It is due to the complex nature of the issues that a homelessness review and strategy must take a broad view of both population and housing market characteristics. Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy based on the results of a further homelessness review, within the period of five years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness strategy was published.
- 1.7 A homelessness review must include a review of:
- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the housing authority's area
  - the activities which are carried out in the local housing authority's area for
  - the prevention of homelessness
  - suitable accommodation that is or will be available for people who are or may become homeless
  - satisfactory support that is available for people who are or may become homeless
  - the resources available to the authority, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities.
- 1.8 A homelessness strategy means a strategy for:
- preventing homelessness in the district
  - securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless
  - securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district who are or may become homeless, or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again
- 1.9 The Government's 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy committed to ensure that all councils have an up to date Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by winter 2019.

## The wider context – where this strategy fits in

1.10 It is important for us to set this strategy within the context of a range of national, regional and local plans which will shape how accommodation options and support activities are provided in the future. We’ve summarised this below and have provided more detail in Appendix B.



## What we’ve achieved so far

1.11 This is not our first Homelessness Strategy, and we should not forget the considerable achievements of the last five years which are as illustrated below. Further detail is provided in Appendix C.

### CRAVEN DISTRICT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015-2020

#### Achievements:

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR**

- Developed and launched a PRS Offer
- Secured MHCLG funding for Rough Sleeper Project
- Implemented PRS Letting Project
- Approved Discharging Statutory Duties Policy

✓

**INCREASE AND IMPROVE PREVENTION ACTIVITY**

✓

- Multi-agency health and housing Hub in Skipton
- New Housing Options ICT system
- Reviewed homeless prevention toolkit
- Revised Severe Weather Emergency Procedure

**RESPOND TO EFFECTS OF WELFARE REFORM**

- Welfare Reform Support Project
- Revised Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy
- Engagement with Department for Work and Pensions
- 94% spend of DHP fund (2017/18)
- Introduction of Leeds Credit Union
- Referral pathway from Job Centre Plus

✓

**IMPROVE HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE**

✓

- Reviewed website
- Peer review
- Bronze Standard recognition
- Implemented outreach response for households

**ENSURE HOUSING SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR HOMELESS AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

- Developed Unauthorised Encampment procedure
- Supported North Yorkshire Council to develop new homeless, mental health, young people and offender/perpetrator services

✓

**SAFEGUARD EQUAL ACCESS TO HOME CHOICE**

✓

- Non-bidder survey
- Revised allocation policy

**IMPROVE QUALITY OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

- Refurbished homeless hostel
- Financially supported provision of 6 supported units for young people

✓

## 2. Our review of homelessness – what have we learnt?

2.1 This strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive review of homelessness across the district of Craven completed in accordance with the current Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Code of Guidance. Our key findings from the review are highlighted in the following pages - with reference to where you can find more information in the appendices.

- Appendix D - Homelessness Levels
- Appendix E – Rough Sleeping
- Appendix F - Activities and Services
- Appendix G – Access to Accommodation
- Appendix H - Resources

2.2 Observations which have informed the setting of priorities for the next five years are highlighted in a box like this.

### Data Analysis

2.3 The review draws upon the findings of a desktop review of data from a wide range of sources. These include:

- Housing Options Service Requests
- Homelessness Statistics submitted to MHCLG
- Housing Register data
- Rough Sleepers' Count
- Data from support and advice services, including care leavers, domestic violence and Citizens Advice Bureau
- County Court eviction data

### Consultation

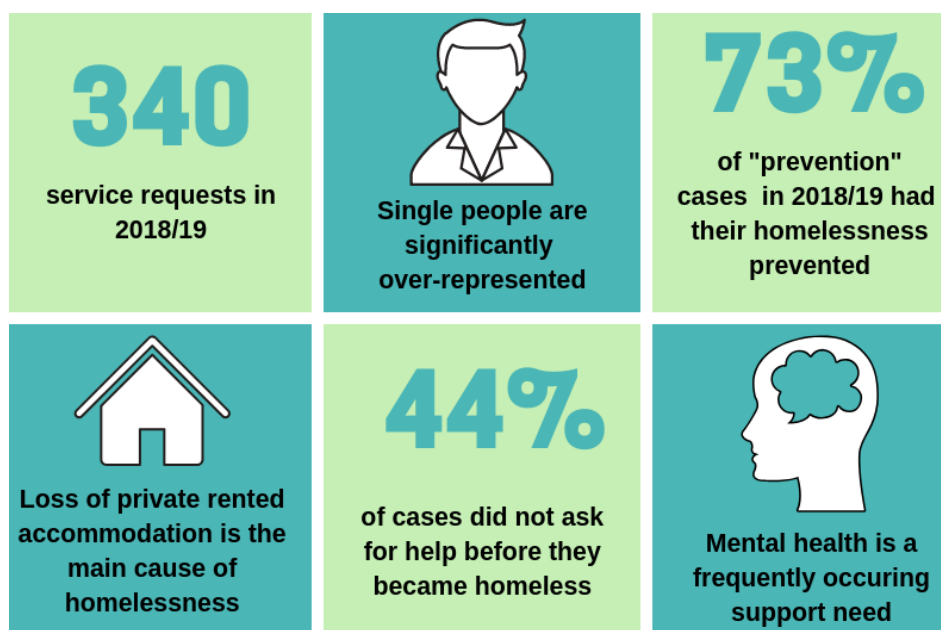
2.4 Consultation has been central to helping us to understand the current situation as well as gathering ideas on what could be improved. A range of different methods has been used, including:

- Focus group with services users/residents of Horton Housing and Foundation
- Customer questionnaire
- Individual discussions with selected stakeholders
- Stakeholder questionnaire
- Consultation with stakeholders at two Homelessness Forum meetings
- Private sector landlord questionnaire
- Focus group with Housing Options Staff

The results of the consultation exercise are available in full in Appendix I.



## Key Findings and Observations - Levels of homelessness



### Housing Options Service Requests 2018/19 (Appendix D, paragraphs D4-7)

- There were 340 service requests in 2018/19.
- Overall demand remains relatively steady, and no significant increase has been witnessed since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**It will be important to monitor the impact of the legislation on an ongoing basis to ensure that any increase in service demand can be met.**

### Statutory Prevention & Relief Duties in 2018/19 (D8-24)

- 73% of people had their homelessness prevented by the Housing Options Team and 61% of people had their homelessness relieved.
- Single people are significantly over-represented in the homeless population accounting for 73% of all households owed a prevention or relief duty.
- 56% are approaching the service before they become homeless. 44% are not. For the latter, there was no opportunity for homelessness to be prevented.
- Families in Craven are more likely than single people to approach the service prior to becoming homeless.

**There is a need to raise awareness of the Housing Options Service and encourage customers to seek help at a much earlier point in order for opportunities for effective early intervention and prevention to be maximised.**

- The most successful relief activity was securing accommodation. 39% of cases had their homelessness relieved by moving to a private tenancy. 21% accessed a social housing.

**There is a need to work with the North Yorkshire Choice Based Lettings scheme to ensure that the allocations policy supports prevention and relief activity.**

- The main reason for homelessness is loss of private rented accommodation - 39% of cases. Other causes include being asked to leave by family and friends, non-violent relationship breakdown, and domestic abuse.

**A range of prevention tools needs to be available in respect of ~~against~~ all main causes for homelessness if it is to be successfully prevented.**

- Of the clients owed a duty, 66% had a support need - the most frequently occurring support need is mental health.

**The prevalence of support needs amongst homeless households strengthens the need for a collaborative approach to service provision.**

- A total of 16 main duty decisions were made, of which 7 were owed the full homeless duty under S193.

### Demand on Specialist and Advice Services (D29-31)

- On average one to three young people leave care annually. Childrens' Services are currently working with 14 young people in the Craven area who are aged between 16 – 25 and entitled to a Leaving Care service.
- 75% of all people accessing Craven IDAS domestic abuse service have housing support needs Only 3 individuals from Craven chose to go to the refuge over the last 3 years.

**Access to affordable move-on options was highlighted as an issue for both care leavers and victims of domestic abuse, and is likely to have an impact on all vulnerable groups.**

### Eviction Levels (D32-33)

- Social landlord possessions represent a significant proportion of eviction cases.

**Pre-eviction protocols should be put in place to ensure that the Housing Options Service is aware of such cases and is able to provide an early response.**

### Social Housing Register Demand (D34-37)

- At the end of 2018/19 there were 359 registered applicants, with 24% falling within the housing need 'reasonable preference' categories.
- The most common reason for being in a 'reasonable preference' category was due to medical or welfare reasons (63%). Only 7 households were in a 'reasonable preference' category due to homelessness.
- The number of households on the Housing Register has been reducing annually since 2012/13. The reasons for this are not clear.

**There is a need to maximise access to social housing for clients of the Housing Options Team and to raise awareness of the North Yorkshire Choice Based Lettings scheme.**

## Key Findings and Observations – Rough Sleeping



### Levels of Rough Sleeping (Appendix E, paragraphs E1-4)

- Rough sleeping levels have started to decrease in Craven after a peak in 2016/17.
- 10 cases were recorded in 2018/19
- Recorded incidents are concentrated in Skipton although it may be the case that there are hidden cases occurring in more rural areas.

**It is important to recognise the rural nature of much of the district, and as such rough sleeping, and homelessness more generally, is likely to be hidden, particularly outside of Skipton and the surrounding areas.**

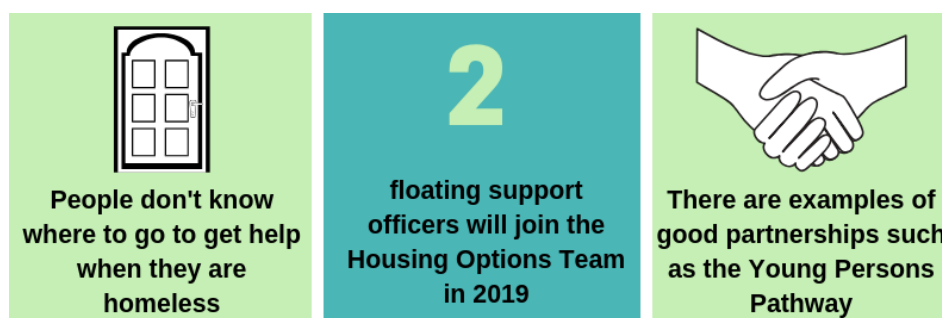
- 52% of rough sleepers in the District from 2013 to 2016 were new to rough sleeping; 32% were long term rough sleepers and 16% were returning to rough sleeping
- An increasing number of rough sleepers coming from larger cities such as Bradford and Leeds, as they experience a more “pleasant”, safer and less confrontational stay.

### Direct Access Provision (E5-E7)

- Prior to the establishment of the Homeless Hub in 2016, Craven had no direct access hostels and relied upon cross-border referrals to accommodation in Keighley, Bradford and Leeds.
- The authority recognised that it needed a different type of supported accommodation and secured funding from MCHLG for the accommodation at Pinder House.

**Securing ongoing funding for rough sleeper provision in the District is a priority for the Council and Horton Housing.**

## Key Findings and Observations - Activities & Services



### Housing Options Team (Appendix F, paragraphs F1-13)

- The Council's Environmental Services & Housing Service is responsible for the delivery of our statutory housing duties. The Housing Options Service has primary responsibility for delivery of statutory homelessness duties and sits alongside officers responsible for Housing Policy and Affordable Housing.
- The team, staffed by 5.1 FTE officers, is delivered from the Council offices in Skipton. While the team is small it is able to manage current demand effectively.
- When asked about the service, customers said that they were *"unaware of the help that was available - I didn't know where to go before I was kicked out."*

**There is a need to increase awareness of the Housing Options Service and other services available to ensure that partners and customers are aware of the help they can expect and how to access it.**

- When asked about the service, stakeholders said *"notification letters should be more personalised. A more confidential area was needed in reception for discussing sensitive issues."*

**There is a need to develop service vision, with ongoing customer satisfaction recording, and to review service standard in light of the HRA.**

- There are positive examples of effective joint working initiatives between the Housing Options Service and other key partners. These include effective joint working with the County Council's Childrens' Services and the development of the Young Persons' Positive Pathway.

**There is a need to continue to develop and implement a range of protocols with a number of internal and external partnerships.**

- In October 2019, two floating support officers are due to join the service, following changes to commissioning arrangements for floating support services by North Yorkshire County Council.

**This will provide an opportunity to target floating support at those clients at the greatest risk of homelessness.**

- The Housing Options Service convenes a multi-agency homelessness forum on a quarterly basis to provide networking and collaboration opportunities for all organisations working with homeless households in the District.

**This forum has been a key consultation tool for this homelessness review and for delivering the strategy moving forward. Strategic buy-in is required from all partner agencies.**

### Craven Homeless Hub (F14-16)

- Horton Housing provides a “hub” based at Pinder House in central Skipton for people who have a high level of housing need, in particular those currently or at risk of rough sleeping, and with an unsettled lifestyle and other support needs.

**Pinder House is funded through MHCLG grant funding, which is due to end in October 2019. Securing ongoing funding is a priority for the Council and Horton Housing.**

### Foundation Craven (F17-18)

- Concern was expressed by stakeholders about the potential for funding cuts by North Yorkshire County Council and the potential impact that this may have on homelessness levels.

**This homelessness strategy needs to raise awareness among decision makers and budget holders of the issues surrounding service provision and demand, in order to safeguard services.**

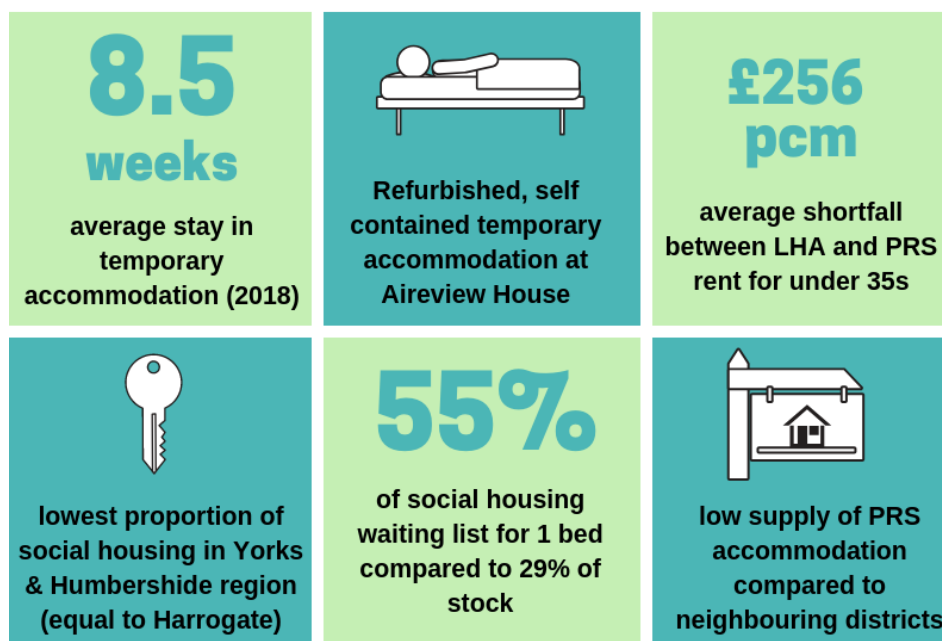
### Mediation Services (F25-26)

- Mediation for 16-25 year olds is provided through the Young Persons’ Pathway.
- Other mediation services however are less apparent in the District and there are no formal referral mechanisms from the Housing Options Service.
- There is a gap in mediation services targeted at the main causes of homelessness

**It is recommended that further research is conducted in this area into the resources available and the opportunities for collaboration. Mediation services should be particularly targeted at the main causes of homelessness.**

**Landlord and tenant liaison/mediation alongside a dedicated resource to resolve any difficulties at the outset would provide an important prevention tool.**

## Key Findings and Observations - Access to Accommodation



### Temporary Accommodation (Appendix G, paragraphs G1-G7)

- Craven District Council has one scheme of temporary accommodation, Aireview House, which is comprised of 9 self-contained units. The net loss of units available at Aireview has not caused any issues with meeting demand.
- 3 households were placed in temporary accommodation as at the 31st March 2019. The average length of stay during 2018 was 8.5 weeks. There has been an annual reduction in the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation.
- There was a short term increase in the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation whilst Aireview House was being refurbished.

### Supported Accommodation (G8-13)

- Supported accommodation options are in place for young persons, offenders and those with mental health needs.
- Pinder House provides ten units in line with Housing First principles.
- Supported housing residents expressed concerns about moving on from supported accommodation, and anxiety about coping with, and affording, independent living.
- Stakeholders identified that it was very difficult to get more complex individuals housed, including those with an offending background.

**The package of support needed to facilitate successful move-on arrangements should be considered. This could include transitional staged support, with key workers continuing to be accessible after the move from supported accommodation. It could also provide a move-on budget to contribute towards home set-up costs.**

## Social Housing (G14-19)

- Craven District was equal to Harrogate in terms of having the lowest proportion of households living in social housing across the Yorkshire and Humberside Region, with 6% of households living in this tenure
- Only 29% of social housing is one bedroom, compared to 55% of the waiting list requiring one-bedroom accommodation
- Annual lettings made to housing register applicants (general needs and sheltered) have generally decreased over time to only 169 in 2018/19

**Social housing continues to be in much demand in the district and further provision should be supported in the emerging Local Development Plan.**

## Private Rented Accommodation (G20-31)

- Craven District has one of the lowest supplies of private rented accommodation in the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- The presence of a strong tourism sector encourages a high number of second homes and makes holiday rentals an attractive alternative option for landlords.
- Affordability is a growing concern in this sector with analysis of Zoopla listings illustrating that average rents across the district have risen by 4% from 2010 to 2018. In Skipton this increase was 22%.
- Access to affordable private rented accommodation in Craven was identified as a significant issue by customers and stakeholders, with most rents much higher than LHA rates. Many people are having to move out of the district to access accommodation in other, more affordable areas, such as Keighley.
- This is particularly an issue for those with poor mental health, where such a move would mean losing their support networks.

**There is a need to develop a comprehensive landlord offer that enables clients not only to access the private rented sector, but also to successfully sustain and afford this accommodation.**

- Single persons under the age of 35 who are only entitled to a shared room rate of £260.76 pcm (Bradford BRMA) face an average shortfall of £256 pcm.
- There is a lack of affordable shared accommodation options for benefit dependent households - and in particular single persons aged under 35 and receiving the shared room LHA rate.
- 75% of landlord respondents said that they would not consider letting shared housing for single people. *“Too much hassle, less control, more likely to have tenant behaviour problems and additional licence & legislation for HMOs”*

**There is a need to develop greater options and provision for single people, specifically for people under the age of 35, including lodgings and house shares.**

## Key Findings and Observations - Resources



### Statutory Service Provision (Appendix H, paragraphs H1-H9)

- The indicative budget for the service for 2019/20 is £262,190 with a trend for budget growth. However, the budget has not been fully committed.
- Government grants are a key component of funding arrangements. It is not known whether the prevention funding programme will continue beyond 2019/20.
- The authority has retained the New Burdens funding at the present time, rolling together the annual allocations to create a more significant funding pot to fund a specific prevention project.

**There is a need for budget underspends to be managed, as cuts in Government grant funding to the authority will see revenue funded services, such as the Housing Options Service, under increasing financial scrutiny.**

- Discretionary Housing Payments are made available to households who need help with their housing costs. In 2018 a total of £29k of funding was used to pay off rent arrears and £15k was used to fund rent in advance and bonds.

**Some Discretionary Housing Payment funds have remained unallocated on an annual basis and there is scope for greater use of these for prevention activities.**

### Temporary Accommodation (H10-12)

- Funding from Homes England and Craven District's capital programme funded the refurbishment of Aireview House in 2017/18 at a cost of £457k.
- The main reason for the increase in B&B expenditure during 2018 was the closure and refurbishment of Aireview House from August 2017 - September 2019.

### Housing Related Support Budget (H13-15)

- The County has agreed that domestic abuse refuges, mental health supported accommodation and hostels for homeless people will be prioritised for future funding, but this is in the context of county-wide budget pressures.

**There is a continuing need to raise awareness with budget holders of the issues surrounding service provision and demand in order to safeguard services.**



- MCHLG funding for both the homeless hub at Pinder House and the 10 units of accommodation is due to end in October 2019.

**Securing ongoing funding for Pinder House must be a priority for the Council and Horton Housing.**

### 3. Moving forward – what do we need to do?

#### Our Vision

- 3.1 Using keywords suggested by our multi-agency homelessness forum, this strategy sets the following vision:

**Our vision is that by 2025, Craven’s services for homeless households will be delivered through a community network of holistic support. Everyone who needs it will be able to access appropriate support and accommodation.**

#### Priorities for action

- 3.2 In order to achieve this vision, we have set a number of strategic priorities which will shape the activities of both Craven District Council and its partners.



#### Raise awareness of homelessness and housing issues across the district and the services available to help

- We will look at the way in which the Housing Options Services and other relevant services across the District are promoted and accessed, with the aim of being able to assist more households before the point at which they become homeless.
- We will ensure that there is more information available about people’s realistic housing options in order for them to make informed choices about their future home.
- We will raise awareness with decision makers and budget holders of the issues surrounding service provision and demand to safeguard services and funding, including long term funding for Pinder House.



#### Join things up between services and organisations so that responses to homelessness are integrated and make the best use of the limited resources available

- We will continue to develop a range of protocols with partners to ensure that no-one facing homelessness is left without appropriate support.
- We will contribute to and support the work linking appropriate housing to health and well-being and look for opportunities to collaborate in service provision.
- We will engage with opportunities to provide multi-agency responses at a local level in our rural communities.
- We will ensure a partnership response to delivering this strategy through a strengthened homelessness forum.



### Target prevention activities where they are needed most, at those households at greatest risk of homelessness

- We will focus the new floating support resource within the Housing Options Service on activities to prevent the main causes of homelessness.
- We will develop liaison and mediation services which look to resolve conflict between landlords and tenants at the outset.
- We will conduct further mapping of mediation services available in the district with a view to adopting formal referral mechanisms from the Housing Options Service.



### Work in partnership to ensure that no one has to sleep rough in Craven

- We will ensure that we have an accurate understanding of the extent of rough sleeping across Craven, including within our rural communities
- We will work in partnership to develop a coordinated and responsive service to prevent and reduce rough sleeping
- We will develop a clear accommodation pathway from the streets into settled accommodation, with a range of options to meet the diverse needs of the client group



### Develop more affordable housing options and sustainable move-on arrangements from supported housing

- We will call for the emerging Local Development Plan to continue to recognise the demand for affordable housing in the district.
- We will review the social housing allocation policy to ensure that it supports prevention and relief activity, and maximise access for homeless households.
- We will develop a comprehensive private sector landlord offer, that enables clients not only to access the private rented sector but also to successfully sustain this accommodation.
- We will work with landlords to develop more options and provision for single people, specifically for people under the age of 35, including lodgings and house shares.
- We will consider the package of support needed to facilitate successful move-on arrangements from supported accommodation.

## How will we deliver the strategy?

- 3.3 In developing this strategy, we are striving to be aspirational but also realistic in our ambition. A detailed delivery plan, setting out what actions and projects we will be undertaking can be found as a separate document.
- 3.4 Progress against this action plan will be monitored by both the District Council's elected members and partner organisations through the homelessness forum.