

**Arun District Council: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**  
 Public consultation findings

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## **Arun District Council: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy** Public consultation findings

### **Introduction**

This report summarises the findings from public consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Arun District Council. The consultation period ran between July 10<sup>th</sup> and August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and included a survey alongside a stakeholder meeting, and briefing for members as well as two public meetings.

Both public meetings were poorly attended, with only one individual present at each session. This attendee shared concerns and feedback on the housing strategy, which is being developed alongside the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy. However, these sessions did not yield any concrete outcomes relevant to the homelessness strategy and, therefore, are not discussed further in this report.

The first section presents the overall findings of a survey conducted to gauge the level of agreement among residents and local stakeholders with the priorities and visions outlined in our draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29. The survey aimed to understand community perspectives and to gather insights on how to effectively prevent and alleviate homelessness and rough sleeping in the area.

The second section of this report draws out the feedback gathered from stakeholders via the survey and the stakeholder events that were held in person in the local area during the consultation period. Drawing out stakeholder feedback specifically is crucial to ensure that the perspectives, needs, and concerns of those directly impacted are accurately understood and addressed in our analysis and decision-making process.

By capturing a wide range of opinions and suggestions, this report aims to inform and refine the strategic approach, ensuring it aligns with the needs and expectations of the community, as well as the statutory requirements and guidance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

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### **Headline survey findings:**

The survey received a total of 50 responses from 42 residents and 8 stakeholder representatives. Stakeholder organisations included:

- Chichester District Council
- Bognor Regis Town Council
- Arun District Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Southern Housing
- Arun Homeless Support
- West Sussex County Council
- Action in Rural Sussex

The survey findings underscore broad support for the draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy but emphasise the need for enhanced collaboration and resource optimisation. Respondents advocate for:

- **Collaboration with Local Agencies:** This could be achieved by establishing formal partnerships with organisations like West Sussex County Council and Sussex Health and Care and ensuring effective communication with stakeholders involved in homelessness services. For example, creating joint task forces to address specific issues could streamline efforts and resources.
- **Enhanced Health and Social Services:** Expanding mental health and addiction support services is seen as crucial by respondents. Implementing initiatives such as a dedicated Mental Health Triage Worker could reduce pressure on emergency services and provide targeted support.
- **Feedback and Engagement with the Homeless Community:** Engaging with individuals currently experiencing homelessness is essential. Setting up a lived experience network to regularly consult with those who have firsthand experience of homelessness could ensure that services are tailored to actual needs.
- **Education and Community Involvement:** Incorporating educational outreach and community engagement can foster greater understanding and support. For instance, school programs could raise awareness about homelessness among young people, while community forums could address local concerns and mitigate “not in my backyard” attitudes.
- **Leveraging Resources and Expertise:** Collaborating with private landlords and leveraging sub-regional partnerships can increase housing availability and quality. Initiatives could include developing agreements with private landlords to provide affordable housing or creating sub-regional housing schemes to address broader accommodation needs.

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- Support Services and Emergency Accommodation: Improving emergency accommodation could involve establishing more day hubs for those experiencing homelessness and increasing the availability of temporary shelters. Additionally, expanding outreach services and ensuring adequate support workers can help people find stable housing and connect with necessary services.

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### **A. Resident/ stakeholder priorities**

#### **What are the top three things you think Arun District Council should do to alleviate homelessness and rough sleeping?**

The responses highlight a strong community consensus on the need for more affordable housing and supportive services as priorities for addressing homelessness and rough sleeping. Many respondents call for an increase in social and council housing, emphasising the importance of "more affordable housing" and "permanent housing" options. Several suggest utilising "empty properties," "empty shops," and "converting empty premises" to provide immediate accommodation. There's also a notable demand for enhanced support services, particularly for mental health and substance abuse, with respondents stating the council should "support homeless people/those at risk to overcome health issues, substance abuse issues" and "provide counselling and help to all homeless persons."

Preventative measures are a recurring theme, with calls for "early intervention" and "support in new properties" to help people before they become homeless. Additionally, there is a push for the council to "work in partnership with local organisations" and provide "better collaborative working with housing associations." Some respondents also emphasised the need for more active measures, such as "more active policing to stamp on drug supplies" and "removing rough sleeping encampments quickly."

Several responses suggest practical and immediate solutions like "providing hostels," "more shelter housing," and "short term temporary accommodation." Innovative suggestions like moving people into "caravans" or "prefabs" were also mentioned. There is also a call for "building more sustainable developments" and ensuring "new builds are only sold to landlords if all social need is covered."

A minority of respondents expressed a viewpoint against government intervention in homelessness, advocating for a reduction in government involvement and regulation.

Overall, the priorities for respondents were:

- creating a robust infrastructure of affordable housing,
- providing comprehensive support services, and
- implementing preventive measures to tackle the root causes of homelessness.

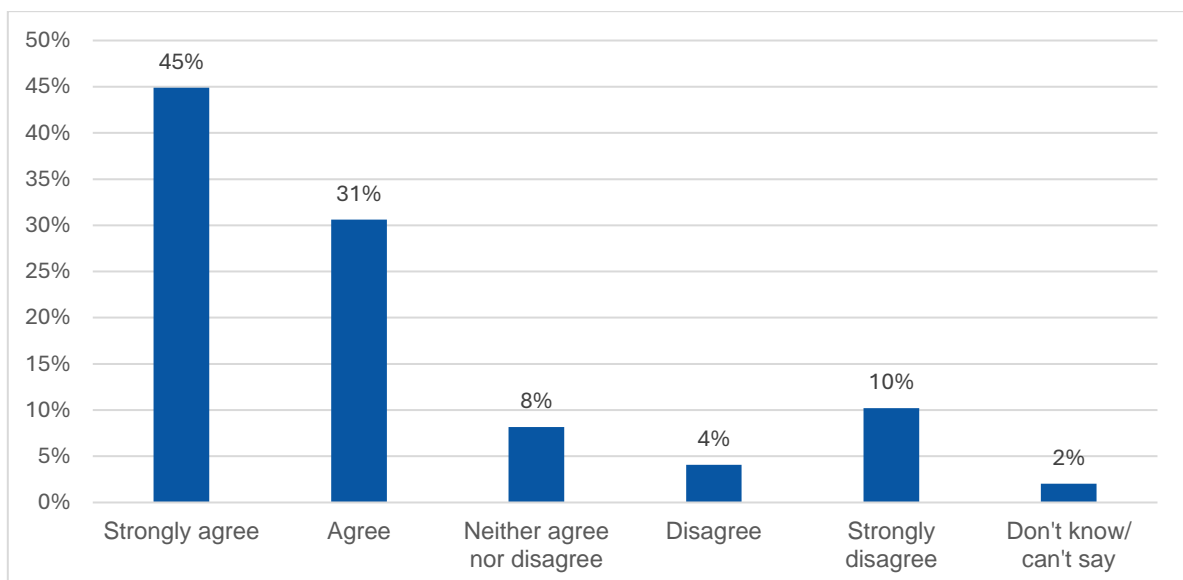
The responses reflect a community-driven call for both immediate and long-term solutions, with a strong focus on collaboration and support.

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**B. Our Vision**

*“Our vision is to prevent homelessness wherever possible, and where it is not, to ensure it is rare, brief and non-recurring.”*

**To what extent do you agree with this vision for Arun?**



The vision received substantial support, with 76% of respondents either strongly agreeing (45%) or agreeing (31%). A minority expressed dissent, with 4% disagreeing and 10% strongly disagreeing. The remaining respondents were neutral (8%) or unsure (2%). This indicates broad approval but highlights the need for addressing concerns and uncertainties.

Explanatory comments:

The responses to the council's vision for the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy reveal a mixture of support and scepticism. While some respondents' express agreement with the vision, such as "I believe that your vision is the way to tackle homelessness," and acknowledge its importance, there is significant concern about its practical implementation. Many find the vision "purely aspirational" and lacking in concrete strategies, emphasising

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that "visions are great but they need substance." There is also a strong demand for immediate action, as highlighted by comments like "time scales do not help the homeless now" and criticism of lengthy stays in temporary accommodation: "Many families in TA have been waiting 2/3 years and more!"

Additionally, some respondents criticise the council's handling of homelessness applications, pointing out failures in legislation adherence and the dismissive attitude of staff, stating that "full details are not even being taken by staff members." Others stress the need for holistic support that addresses the root causes of homelessness, including mental health issues, and suggest that support should be a fundamental part of all stages of the strategy, not just making homelessness brief. The sentiment that "everybody deserves decent housing" underscores a widespread call for more social housing and better utilisation of empty properties.

Overall, while the vision is seen as commendable, respondents highlight a pressing need for practical, timely, and holistic measures to make it a reality.

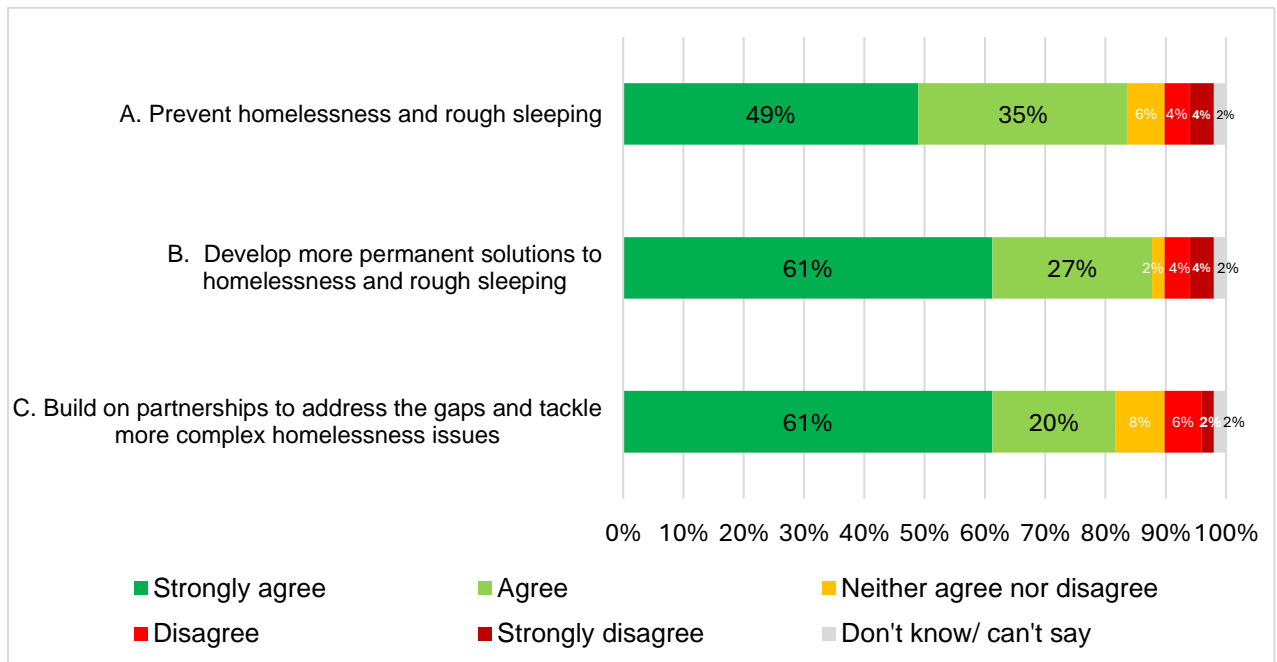
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**C. Strategic themes**

*“The key themes of our strategy are:*

- *to prevent homelessness wherever possible*
- *to develop long term solutions within our housing market to help us respond to the housing needs of people living in Arun*
- *to build on the partnerships we have to ensure an effective response”*

**To what extent do you agree that these are the right things to focus on?**



Most respondents support all three strategic priorities, with the highest strong agreement for building partnerships and developing permanent solutions (61% strongly agree), followed by preventing homelessness (49% strongly agree). Disagreement remains low across all priorities, indicating overall positive reception.



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**D. Actions**

As part of our commitment to the three core areas of focus, we have set out a series of possible actions the council might wish to take to achieve their goals. Respondents were asked to indicate how important they consider each of these actions to be in relation to the core areas of focus in the strategy.

**i. Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping**



Overall, there is strong support for all proposed strategies, with most respondents rating most actions as "very important" or "important." The highest support is for specialist

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arrangements for care leavers, followed closely by tenancy sustainment services. Few respondents consider these measures unimportant, reflecting broad endorsement of the proposed strategies to prevent and alleviate homelessness. Although 14% felt that using DHP was unimportant and this was the only action that received less than full support.

### Explanatory comments

Respondents provided a range of suggestions for overlooked prevention strategies to address homelessness and rough sleeping. Many emphasised the importance of utilising empty houses and buildings, with one noting "so many houses not being used." There is a strong preference for increasing social housing stock over private rentals and for building council houses rather than relying on housing associations. Some respondents suggest projects where unoccupied homes or those needing renovation could be made available for tenants to undertake remedial work, resulting in homes they can occupy and live in, while paying rent to the council. This approach would allow individuals to control their destiny with assistance, thereby helping to provide social housing stock and support throughout this journey to achieve the result of a home or accommodation.

Addressing addiction, mental health, and overall ill health is seen as crucial, as these factors significantly contribute to homelessness. One respondent stated, "Sadly addiction, mental health illness, and ill health are all a big part of the cycle... this needs to be dealt with as well." Holistic support, including affordable rent and targeted actions against substance abuse, is advocated for breaking the cycle of homelessness. Ensuring that housing is suited to every homeless person, being serviceable, clean, and secure, is also deemed essential.

Community integration and creating a sense of belonging are highlighted, with a call for developments of social housing only, to avoid isolating those in social housing. Engaging homeless and previously homeless individuals in strategy development is suggested, as they are considered experts on the issue. Additional support for young people, better use of empty buildings, and clear pathways for sustaining tenancies are also recommended.

Some respondents mentioned the need for more specific measures, such as discretionary housing payments, support for individuals leaving prison, and collaboration with private sector landlords to ensure suitable quality housing. There is also concern about dealing with overseas people who are sleeping rough and may not be in any of the systems, with some respondents suggesting that these individuals may be begging to make a living.

Preventing domestic abuse victims from becoming homeless is another critical area, with a recommendation to address legal aspects to support these individuals effectively. Joint commissioning and funding of services with key partners and stakeholders are also suggested to enhance the overall strategy. Overall, the responses call for a multifaceted

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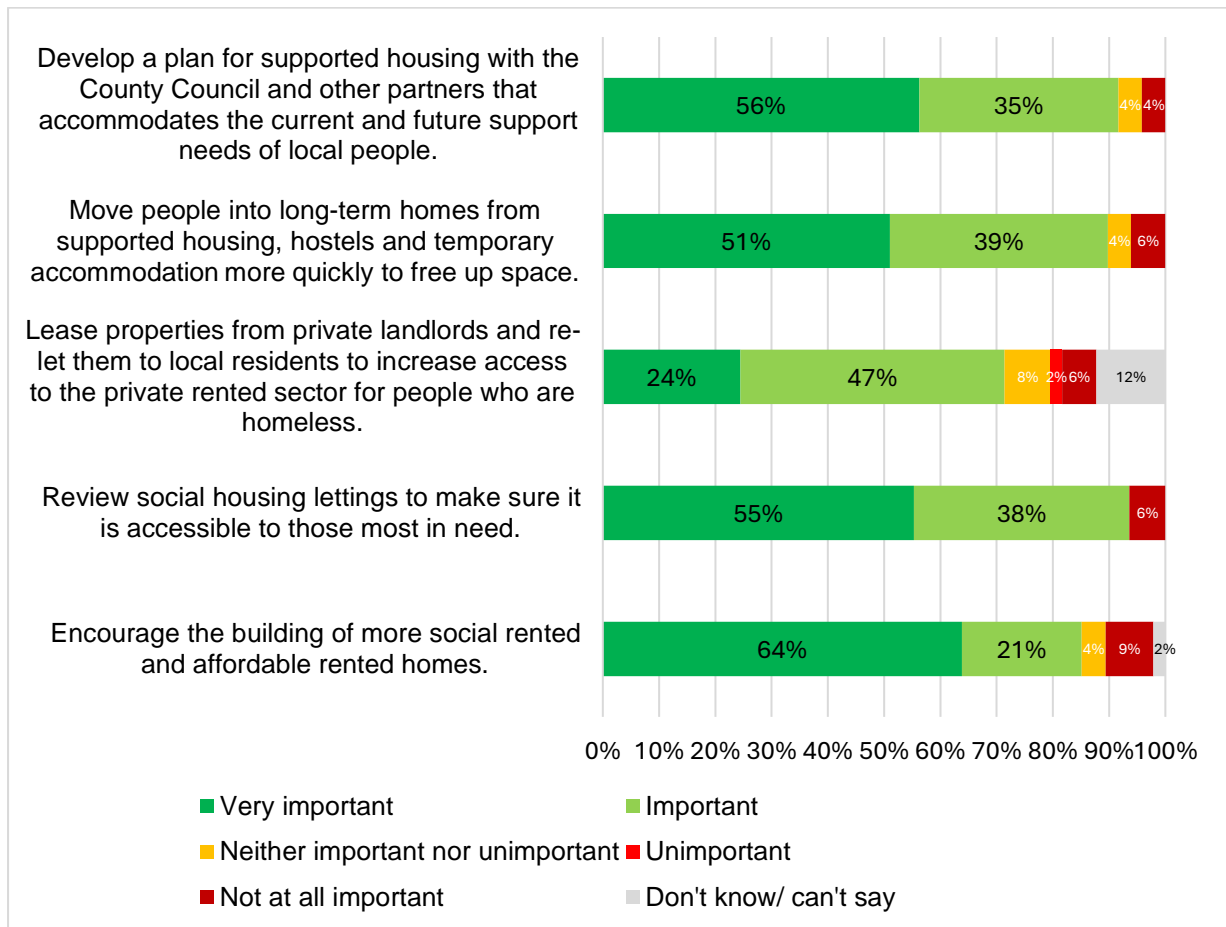
approach, integrating immediate housing solutions, comprehensive support services, community building, and legal and policy adjustments to prevent homelessness effectively.

Overall, key priorities included:

- Utilise empty houses and buildings for housing.
- Increase social housing stock over private rentals.
- Build council houses rather than relying on housing associations.
- Develop projects where tenants renovate unoccupied or dilapidated homes in exchange for council rent.
- Address addiction, mental health, and ill health as key contributors to homelessness.
- Provide holistic support services, including affordable rent and substance abuse programs.
- Ensure housing is serviceable, clean, and secure for all homeless individuals.
- Promote community integration and avoid isolating those in social housing.
- Engage homeless and previously homeless individuals in strategy development.
- Provide additional support for young people.
- Create clear pathways for sustaining tenancies.
- Implement specific measures such as discretionary housing payments and support for individuals leaving prison. (although note the overall grading for this)
- Collaborate with private sector landlords for quality housing.
- Address issues related to overseas individuals sleeping rough and begging.
- Prevent domestic abuse victims from becoming homeless by addressing legal aspects.
- Joint commissioning and funding of services with key partners and stakeholders.

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**ii. Developing more permanent solutions to homelessness and rough sleeping:**



Overall, there is strong agreement across all proposed actions, with most respondents rating them as either "very important" or "important." The highest support is for encouraging the building of more social and affordable homes and reviewing social housing lettings. The priority which received the lowest levels of support was leasing properties from private landlords to re-let them to residents. Disagreement with this priority was nonetheless still low, at 8%, whilst neutral (8%) and unsure (12%) responses accounted for 20%. This indicates that while there is some hesitation, most respondents are not opposed to the idea.

Explanatory comments

The responses on developing more permanent solutions to homelessness and rough sleeping emphasise several key areas for improvement and highlight some perceived gaps

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in the current strategy. A common theme is ensuring that affordable housing quotas in new developments are genuinely affordable for residents. This includes re-assessing council housing stock to better match housing sizes to current needs, such as moving under-occupying elderly individuals to smaller homes.

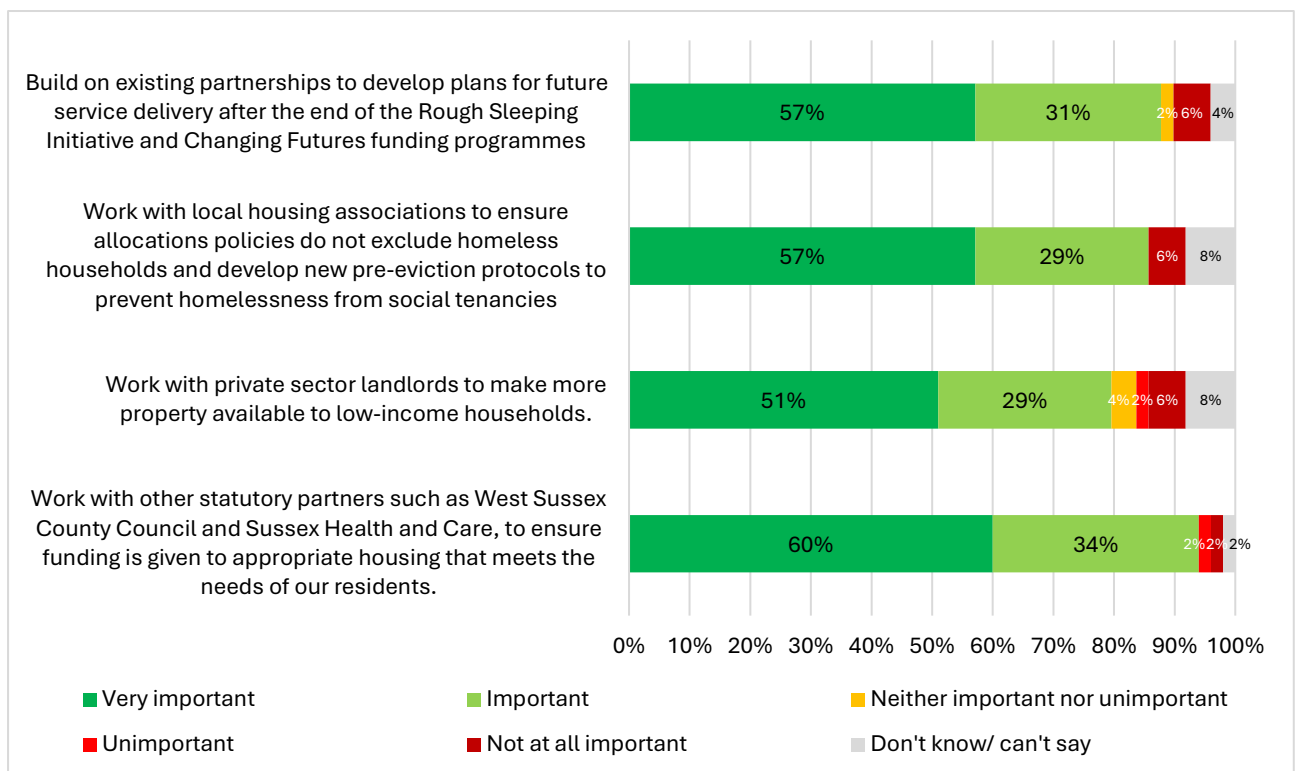
The need for better management of temporary housing, such as hostels, is mentioned, along with a preference for building on brownfield sites rather than farmland. Several respondents advocate for developments with 100% social housing specifically for the local community, expressing scepticism about the actual implementation of plans to build more social and affordable rented homes. Ensuring that provided accommodation is adequately furnished and supports a reasonable standard of living is another concern. There is a call for housing strategies that address the needs of young adults who must leave their family homes but cannot find affordable housing locally. Respondents also highlight the importance of integrated support services, including help with budgeting, claiming benefits, and accessing employment.

The necessity of drug and alcohol support services, alongside mental health funding, is reiterated. Some suggest that leasing properties from private landlords may not be cost-effective and recommend prioritising other actions, such as purchasing these properties to remove landlords from the equation. The issue of non-priority individuals who end up homeless, such as those staying in cars or sofa surfing, is also brought up, indicating a gap in support for these groups. Furthermore, there is a call for the council to actively engage with homeless and rough sleeping individuals to understand their needs and gather their ideas on solutions.

Finally, there is a concern that while the strategy includes many commitments ("we wills"), it lacks details on how these will be achieved, including specific targets and available funding. This suggests a need for more concrete plans and accountability measures to ensure the strategy's success. Additionally, respondents emphasise the importance of providing stability, ongoing counselling, and financial advice, ensuring that services are fully resourced and not subject to cutbacks.

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**iii. Building on partnerships**



All proposed actions related to building partnerships and future planning receive strong support, with most respondents deeming them either very important or important. Working with statutory partners, private sector landlords, and housing associations, along with planning for future service delivery, is seen as crucial for addressing homelessness and rough sleeping effectively.

Explanatory comments

From the responses provided throughout the survey, several comments emphasise the importance of building partnerships with local organisations and services to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Respondents emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration with supporting agencies, including local organisations and stakeholders, to enhance the effectiveness of homelessness strategies. They highlighted the need for improved communication and partnership, particularly with housing associations, and better coordination with health and

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social services, such as increased mental health and substance abuse support. Feedback from the homeless community and the formation of a lived experience network were deemed crucial for tailoring services to actual needs. Involvement of educational institutions and community engagement were also seen as vital to avoid resistance and ensure comprehensive support. Additionally, leveraging resources, such as collaborating with private landlords and developing sub-regional approaches, was highlighted, alongside the need for effective support services and emergency accommodation, including day hubs and temporary shelters.

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### **E. Rough sleeping**

Respondents were asked whether the draft strategy does enough to prevent and relieve rough sleeping reflect a mix of cautious optimism and scepticism, largely dependent on the successful implementation and adaptation of the strategy. The main points raised included:

- **Financial Constraints:** Some respondents acknowledge the challenges posed by restricted council finances but emphasise the importance of addressing homelessness as a preventive measure to avoid higher costs later.
- **Compassion and Complexity:** There is hope that the council will demonstrate compassion and respond effectively to the complex needs of its residents, with a recognition that some individuals may be difficult to engage.
- **Mental Health and Root Causes:** Many highlight the need to address unaddressed mental health issues and other root causes of homelessness, suggesting that current strategies may not sufficiently tackle these aspects.
- **Affordable Housing:** There is a strong call for more affordable council housing and criticism of the reliance on developers, who often fail to provide genuinely affordable homes. The high cost of housing is driving local young people away, underscoring the need for council intervention.
- **Private Sector Involvement:** There is scepticism about working with private sector landlords, with some respondents suggesting that private landlords are part of the problem, not the solution. They argue that the strategy should prioritise removing private landlords from the equation and focus on direct council intervention. There is wariness of partnerships between the private and public sectors. Respondents point out that the private sector does not own the homelessness problem and may not be motivated to address it, especially when the rental market is booming with "good" clients.
- **Implementation and Review:** Successful implementation and regular review of the strategy are deemed crucial. Without effective delivery, the strategy's proposals may not lead to significant improvements.
- **Comprehensive Support:** There is a sense that the strategy focuses too much on housing and not enough on the broader issues linked to homelessness, such as supporting the voluntary sector and providing holistic support throughout the process.
- **Prevention and Eviction:** More proactive measures to prevent evictions and support individuals facing no-fault Section 21 notices are called for. The council is urged to take residents' concerns seriously and intervene more effectively in cases of domestic/sexual abuse and hate crimes.



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- **Tangible Actions:** Finally, there is a critique that the strategy lacks tangible actions and hard-edged proposals, with too many vague commitments to "work with" other agencies without clear implementation plans.

Overall, while there is some agreement with the proposed strategy, its success hinges on concrete actions, addressing root causes, providing comprehensive support, and ensuring affordable housing availability. Regular review and adaptation are essential to meet the evolving needs of the community.

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### **F. Any other comments**

Respondents were asked whether they thought there was anything else we should consider as part of the development of the local rough sleeping and homelessness strategy.

The responses highlight several key areas for improvement and suggestions:

- **Immediate and Ongoing Support:** There is a strong call for the availability of immediate and continuous advice and emergency support for those at risk of homelessness.
- **Education and Expectation Management:** Some respondents emphasise the importance of managing long-term expectations by providing education in schools about homelessness.
- **Social Housing over Private Landlords:** A preference for relying on well-managed social housing stock rather than private landlords is evident.
- **Daytime Support Hubs:** The establishment of hubs for homeless individuals to go to during the day is suggested.
- **Local Prioritisation:** The strategy should prioritise the most vulnerable residents and avoid taking in individuals from other areas until local needs are addressed.
- **Streamlining Affordable Housing:** To quickly address the need for affordable homes, respondents suggest finding ways around bureaucratic delays, such as allowing councils to receive cash equivalents from developers to support their own housing schemes.
- **Mental Health and Communication:** The introduction of a Mental Health Triage Worker is recommended to relieve pressure on other services. Improved communication with the homeless community and between partners is seen as crucial to avoid duplication of work and create a more efficient safety net, as well as working in a trauma informed way.
- **Community Involvement:** Engaging with local hostels, supported accommodation, and communities to understand issues and deliver strategies collaboratively is highlighted as essential.
- **Temporary Shelters:** The provision of temporary shelters until permanent housing is assured is considered important.
- **Wider Support Services:** Addressing wider issues such as mental well-being, drug, and alcohol support is repeatedly mentioned.
- **Lived Experience Network:** The formation of a lived experience network to maintain ongoing dialogue with service users is suggested to ensure their voices are represented in the development of services and initiatives.

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**G. Survey Demographics**

**i. Tenure**

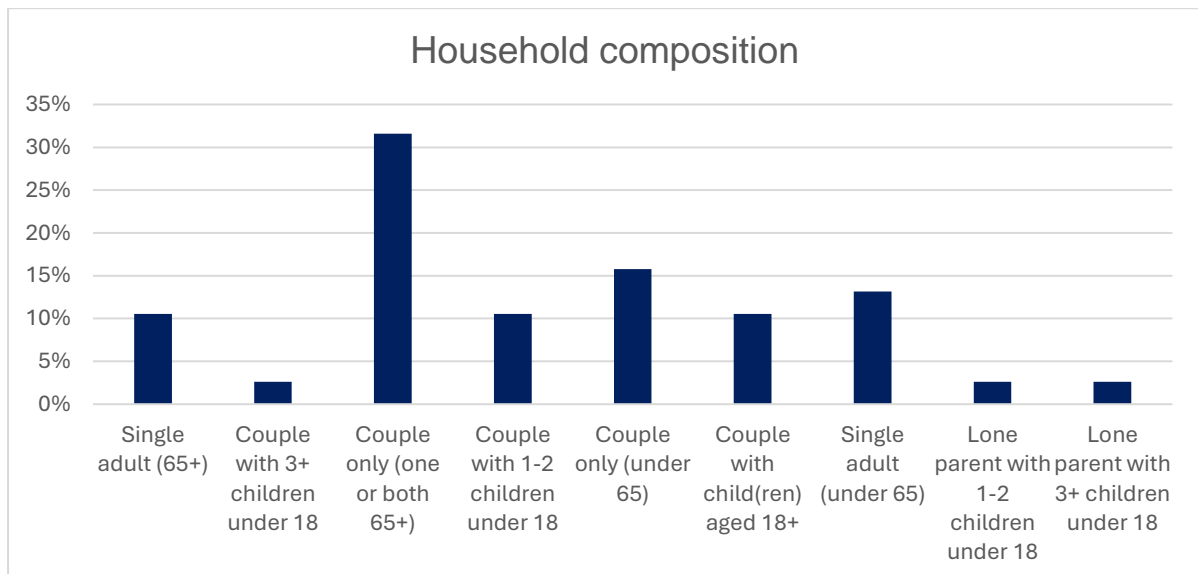
78% of respondents were homeowners, either owning their house outright or with a mortgage agreement. 8% of respondents lived in private rented accommodation, and another 8% lived in social housing. 8% of respondents to the survey could be classed as homeless or at risk of homelessness, living in temporary accommodation (5%) or being of no fixed abode (3%).

According to the census, 72.4% of dwellings in Arun are owner occupied. Homeowners are slightly overrepresented in the survey by 5.6%. This is a marginal difference but indicates a slight bias towards responses from homeowners.

Private renters are significantly underrepresented in the survey. The survey shows a 10.3% lower participation rate from this group compared to their actual representation in the housing market (18%). This suggests that the views of those in private rented accommodation may not be fully captured.

Social housing tenants are slightly underrepresented by 1.3%. This is a minor discrepancy but still indicates that the survey could better capture the perspectives of social housing residents.

**ii. Household type**



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The largest sub-group of respondents according to household type were older couples with one or both over the age of 65, at 32%. This was followed by younger couples without children, at 16%, and single adults under the age of 65 (13%).

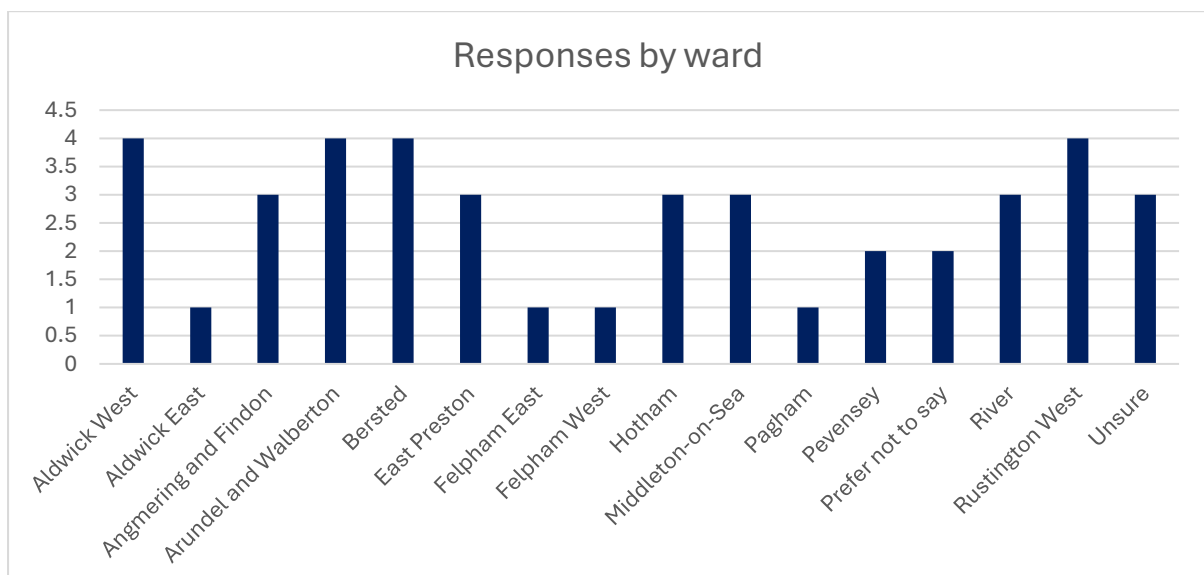
According to the census, the spread of household types amongst respondents is not representative of the wider population. The census data shows that one-person households aged 66 and over make up a substantial 22.5% of the total, but this group represent just 7.7% of the survey sample.

For single-family households, the largest groups include married or civil partnership couples with dependent children (19.3% of the census) and those aged 66 and over (16.6%), yet the survey gathered just 12 responses from couples, which is only 23.1%.

The lone parent households with dependent children, which make up about 7.6% of the census data, were represented by only 1 response in the survey (7.7%).

These discrepancies indicate that the survey results may not adequately reflect the proportions of household types found in the area's census data.

### iii. Geographic spread



While there is a wide geographical spread of responses, indicating engagement from various parts of the area, certain wards were not represented in the survey. These include Barnham, Beach, Brookfield, Courtwick with Toddington, Ferring, Marine, Orchard, Rustington East, and Yapton. Stronger engagement in underrepresented or non-represented wards could have ensured a more comprehensive understanding of the community's views and needs.

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**iv. Respondent characteristics**

61% of respondents were female, 29% were male, and the remaining 10% chose not to disclose their gender. This indicates a gender imbalance, which may affect the representativity of the results.

93% of respondents were White, and the remaining 7% of respondents chose not to disclose their ethnicity. According to the census, 95.8% of people in Arun identified their ethnic group within the "White", suggesting the survey results are largely representative of the predominantly white population of Arun. However, the absence of any responses from under-represented groups is of concern as it limits the ability to address specific issues and challenges faced by these groups locally.

56% of respondents were Christian, making up the largest religious group. This was followed by those with no religion (32%). 4% of respondents belonged to other religions, whilst the remaining 7% preferred not to disclose this information. This is reasonably representative of the spread indicated by the census, in which 39.9% of Arun residents reported having "No religion", and 52.1% of people described themselves as Christian.

37% of respondents stated that they consider themselves to have a disability. This is a slight over-representation of disabilities according to the census, in which 17.6% of Arun residents were identified as disabled. Of the respondents that had a disability 20% stated that their condition reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities by a lot, and a further 73% stated that their condition only affected them a little.

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### **Stakeholder feedback**

#### **A. Stakeholder feedback workshop: 10th July 2024**

Stakeholders agreed that the findings in the review reflect local sector knowledge, as stakeholders expressed their intention to learn from the review and consultation process, using the strategy as a guide to rework their services to better support those struggling.

Key discussions centred around:

#### **Rehousing and Move-On**

Recent discussions have focused on creating a chain of movement through rightsizing. However, caution was advised to ensure this does not compromise Arun's strong record in housing homeless people. Balancing rightsizing with prioritising homelessness is essential. ER inquired about efforts to identify underoccupancy in larger properties and incentivise downsizing. Suggested approaches include:

- Improving void standards
- Offering packages to enhance new homes
- Clarifying tenant expectations
- Providing more accessible properties for those with mobility issues
- Considering flexible tenancies over secure ones

Though some incentives exist, the price difference between larger council properties and smaller housing association homes deters downsizing. Notably, council properties are unaffected by the bedroom tax.

There was some discussion around the need to amend the strategy to include an additional action around encouraging social landlords to review their tenancy bases to identify under occupiers and consider incentives that could assist them moving to smaller properties.

#### **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Fund**

Stakeholders from Stone Pillow shared that their tenancy sustainment work in Chichester benefits from local DHP use. In Arun, the homeless prevention grant covers arrears, but DHP is underutilised. Attendees pointed out the limited options on the DHP referral form, emphasising its discretionary nature, which allows for varied uses like covering deposits and removal costs. It was agreed that DHP is underused, with council members blocking its implementation.

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### **Exempt Accommodation**

Regulation efforts by SHIP and SHA for exempt accommodation are noted, but limited information from the benefits department hampers local assessment.

### **Department of Housing Benefit**

Members expressed frustration over poor communication and assistance from the housing benefit department, suggesting a corporate culture issue hindering partnership efforts.

### **Prison Leavers**

CT confirmed the strategy does not expand accommodation options for prison leavers, focusing instead on the DTR process. Attendees agreed on the need for better partnerships to make the process effective.

### **Partnership Working**

The supported housing sector was criticised for not optimising partnerships, resulting in stagnant service movement. Emphasis was placed on client-centred approaches, involving RPs and social landlords, and ensuring accountability throughout the homelessness journey. Opportunities for collaboration were identified, including forums for private landlords, joint referral workshops, clear service offers for frontline staff, collaborative client tracking, and reviving pre-pandemic actions like in-person case discussions and community hubs.

Stakeholders agreed the strategy should be revised to accommodate an action or priority around partnership working during intake into services as well as the referrals process to focus on routes in as well as move on. This could refer to Homeless link's move-on pathways protocol.

One idea was also put forward that the strategy be amended to stress the importance of developing a strategic relationship between local housing providers and Arun District Council. This should include an RP forum for the sharing of best practice around for example housing first and tenancy sustainment services.

### **Housing First**

Attendees stressed the need for greater housing association involvement in housing first programs, noting stigma-related challenges for single homeless clients compared to families. Clarifying expectations and tackling stigma are crucial for sustaining tenancies. Once established, ongoing wraparound support is vital to help clients maintain their tenancies.

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### **B. Arun District Council: Members Briefing**

During the briefing on the draft housing strategy, members provided valuable feedback, highlighting several key areas for consideration and action.

Firstly, there was a strong suggestion to explore a **potential role for Parish Councils in preventing homelessness**. Members believe that local councils could play a significant part in early intervention and support, leveraging their close community connections to identify at-risk individuals and provide timely assistance.

The **integration of health sector partners** into homelessness prevention efforts was also emphasised. It was noted that collaboration with healthcare providers could ensure better support for individuals facing homelessness, particularly by addressing underlying health issues that may contribute to housing instability.

**Economic growth** was identified as a crucial driver for the housing strategy. Members stressed the importance of incorporating economic development into action plans, suggesting that a robust economy would create more job opportunities and increase housing affordability, thereby reducing homelessness rates.

**Strengthening planning policy** emerged as a key recommendation. Members called for more stringent measures to improve the delivery of social housing. They suggested a thorough investigation of developers' financial claims when they assert that social homes cannot be provided on certain sites, ensuring accountability and transparency in the planning process.

There was a general consensus on the need for a **significant increase in social housing**. Members expressed a desire for the strategy to prioritise the development of more social homes to meet growing demand and support vulnerable populations.

**Holding poor private landlords accountable** was another priority. Members advocated for the introduction of **licensing and standards** to ensure that private rental accommodations meet acceptable living conditions. This would protect tenants from substandard housing and promote better management practices among landlords.

Lastly, there was a query regarding the specific **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** for the housing strategy. Members sought clarity on the targets, particularly the number of houses to be built annually. Clear KPIs are essential for tracking progress and ensuring that the strategy meets its goals.



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**C. Summary of stakeholder survey feedback**

Stakeholders that completed the survey shared a variety of suggestions for how the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy might be improved to best help prevent and alleviate homelessness in Arun, as well as sharing their thoughts on what is most important to achieving this.

Approaches that were stressed as important included:

- **Enhance Engagement and Support:**
  - **Effective Collaboration with Agencies:** Stakeholders emphasise the need for improved collaboration with agencies specialising in homelessness and rough sleeping. They believe that leveraging the expertise of these organisations is crucial for developing more effective strategies.
  - **Act on Feedback:** There is a strong call for actively listening to and incorporating feedback from those directly involved with the homeless community. Stakeholders argue that this approach will ensure that policies are better aligned with real-world needs and challenges.
  - **Consistent Support Services:** Stakeholders suggest that the strategy should include comprehensive support for health issues, substance abuse, and other challenges faced by homeless individuals. Ideally, they recommend that this support be provided directly by the Council to ensure consistency and accessibility.
- **Increase Housing and Financial Assistance:**
  - **Expand Housing Options:** Stakeholders advocate for increasing the availability of a diverse range of housing options, including rented, private, and council properties at various cost points. They believe this is essential to meet the diverse needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.
  - **Protect Tenants:** There is a strong recommendation for implementing measures to protect tenants from excessive rent increases and ensure housing affordability. Stakeholders view this as crucial for maintaining stable housing for vulnerable populations.
  - **Utilise Financial Mechanisms:** Stakeholders suggest that the Council should better use financial mechanisms to help residents maintain and secure stable accommodation. They believe exploring innovative financial solutions is key to supporting those at risk of losing their homes.

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- **Strengthen Prevention and Early Intervention:**
  - **Prioritise Prevention:** Stakeholders emphasise the importance of focusing on prevention strategies by identifying and addressing risk factors early. They believe this proactive approach is vital for reducing the overall incidence of homelessness.
  - **Develop Action Plans:** There is a recommendation to work closely with housing associations to create action plans for at-risk individuals and families. Stakeholders argue that these plans should proactively address issues to prevent homelessness.
  - **Implement Planning Policies:** Stakeholders suggest setting local planning targets and policies to encourage diverse new housing developments. They believe increasing the housing supply through various methods can help reduce housing costs and improve availability.

Stakeholders generally support the vision of the strategy but express concerns about its implementation. They recommend that the vision explicitly include "support" in all its aims, as it is currently only mentioned in the goal to make homelessness brief. Additionally, they argue that the strategy lacks clarity on how its aims will be realised, with few concrete proposals and measurable targets provided.

The key suggestions stakeholders provided around how the strategy could be improved, and the council can ensure it is implemented effectively included:

- **Preventing Homelessness:** Several areas are identified for improvement:
  - **ASB Clause in Leases:** Stakeholders suggest incorporating Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) clauses in leases for properties managed by ADC to better manage tenancy issues.
  - **Efforts to Reintegrate Relocated Individuals:** There is a call to increase efforts to support individuals who become homeless after relocating from another authority, including efforts to return them to their previous accommodation where feasible.
  - **Review of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP):** Stakeholders recommend investigating the underutilisation of DHPs and exploring ways to expand their use as a preventive measure.
  - **Support for Prison Leavers:** There is a recommendation to ensure robust support for individuals leaving prison and at risk of homelessness, with coordination from His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.
  - **Engage Private Sector Landlords:** Stakeholders suggest strengthening collaboration with private sector landlords and improving planning policies to enhance the availability and quality of rental housing.

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- **Address Domestic Abuse and Hate Crimes:** They advocate for targeted support for residents fleeing domestic abuse, sexual violence, or hate crimes, even if they do not have a formal eviction notice.
- **Developing Permanent Solutions:**
  - **Ensure Adequate Furnishing and Living Standards:** Stakeholders propose guaranteeing that accommodation is adequately furnished with essential items to support long-term stability. They recommend collaborating with organisations like Stonepillow to maintain high living standards.
  - **Reevaluate Leasing Private Properties:** While leasing from private landlords could be beneficial, stakeholders believe it may involve significant costs. They suggest prioritising other immediate actions that might have a more direct impact on reducing homelessness.
  - **Address Non-Priority Need Cases:** Stakeholders recommend providing support to individuals who are homeless but do not meet the priority need criteria. Ensuring these individuals have access to housing opportunities and support is seen as crucial.
  - **Clarify Implementation and Targets:** There is a call for specific details on how goals will be achieved, including clear targets for reducing homelessness and information on available funding.

### **Additional Considerations**

- **Mental Health Support:** Stakeholders propose introducing a Mental Health Triage Worker to alleviate pressure on other services and provide specialised care.
- **Enhanced Communication and Coordination:** Improved communication with the homeless community and better coordination with local partners, such as Grandad's Frontroom, Turning Tides, Outreach, and Stonepillow, are seen as essential for avoiding duplication of efforts and maximising resource efficiency.
- **Local Prioritisation:** Stakeholders recommend prioritising housing for residents affected by homelessness within their local area to promote community integration.
- **Lived Experience Network:** Establishing a network of individuals with lived experience of homelessness is suggested to ensure their insights are incorporated into service development.
- **Sub-Regional Approaches:** Exploring sub-regional partnerships to enhance resource sharing and improve responses to homelessness is also recommended.