



South Tyneside Council

A photograph of a person wearing a brown hooded jacket, crouching on a street at night. The background is blurred, showing city lights and a car. A teal and white wavy graphic line separates the image from the text below.

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024 - Policy Statement

Published May 2024

Spread the word!

**THIS IS  
SOUTH  
TYNESIDE**

## **Introduction**

This policy statement sets out the work that will be undertaken over the next 12 months whilst ongoing development of a comprehensive Homelessness Review and Strategy. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy will be published next year, and this statement highlights what work South Tyneside Council and partners are doing to, 'prevent homelessness wherever possible, and where it does occur that it is rare, brief and non-recurrent.'

## **Background: Why does the council require a Homelessness Strategy.**

The Homelessness Act 2002 & The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, places a statutory duty on all Local Authorities to carry out a homelessness review in their area and in consultation with partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy, based on the results of that review every five years.

Further to this the government, following the publication of the 'Ending Rough Sleeper Strategy', in 2022, placing more emphasis on the ending of rough sleeping, and ensuring that homelessness will be prevented where possible and where it does occur is rare, brief, and non-recurrent,' This has also resulted in the duty for Local Authorities to produce a Rough Sleeping Strategy to demonstrate how the local authority in partnership with partners and stakeholders are working together to achieve this aim.

South Tyneside Council currently have in place the Integrated Housing Strategy 2019, which incorporates the Current Homelessness Strategy and demonstrates the council's continued commitment to prevent homelessness where possible and assist and advise those who find themselves homeless or rough sleeping. This was published in April 2019 and under current legislation the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy should be published in May 2024.

## **Current Position Statement**

South Tyneside has seen an increase in homelessness presentations and in particular the numbers of people found to be rough sleeping, many with high needs. This has led to the decision to move away from an Integrated Housing Strategy and have a separate Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, given the importance on focusing on homelessness prevention.

South Tyneside Council began a review of the current strategy and homelessness services in 2023. This involved discussions with South Tyneside Homes, the council's housing company who provides the frontline homelessness service, as well as partners and stakeholders who work within the South Tyneside area with those who are rough sleeping, homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Following the minded to decision made in December 2023 to bring South Tyneside Homes, the council's housing company back in house, this work is now moving forward, this will allow us to review front line homelessness services. This work has resulted in a delay in reviewing certain policies and strategies, including the

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 which will not be published before the May 2024 deadline.

The council will continue work on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 and will look to undertake consultation on this in due course. The final strategy will be published at the latest, once the work to bring South Tyneside Homes back in house is completed as this will impact on the delivery of homelessness and rough sleeper services.

One of the greatest drivers for bringing all housing services back into the council is the ability to better align services and ensure that we work in a more joint up way for the benefit of some of our most vulnerable residents.

The council are currently working on a homelessness prevention framework to change the way in which we delivery both frontline and prevention services around homelessness. This will be owned corporately and will ensure that it integrates with other related strategies or policies.

The council will continue to work within the current Integrated Housing Strategy and associated action plan, as these actions and priorities are still relevant to the work being done to end rough sleeping and assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, until which time the new strategy can be published.

## **Current Commitment to ending rough sleeping and preventing homelessness.**

- The council will continue its commitment to provide the following Homelessness services:
- A full housing options and homelessness service delivered by South Tyneside Homes.
- Continue to provide a rough sleeping outreach service with the current provider, Oasis Community Housing.
- Continue to hold a regular Rough Sleeping Action Group to investigate assistance for those individuals struggling to find accommodation when found to be rough sleeping.
- To continue to deliver initiatives provided as part of the government's Rough Sleeper initiative funding and move on funding.
- Continuing to deliver a South Tyneside Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, which seeks to accommodate or provide shelter to those rough sleeping during periods of extreme weather.
- To review and revamp the current South Tyneside Homelessness Forum which will meet during 2024 to look at strategic and operational issues concerning those facing or who are homeless and look to provide options for those.
- To continue gathering and providing rough sleeping and homelessness data to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which then uses this to provide a national picture on Homelessness across the United Kingdom.

- To analyse the current data to better understand the reasons for rough sleeping and to look to see what additional provisions need to be provided to help this situation.
- To continue to ensure that rough sleeping and homelessness is embedded within the council's suite of strategies and policies, including the Council's Strategy, as well as the ambitions which are set out within the Council's vision.
- The council will continue to update its rough sleeper action plan and work to meet the priorities within that.

### **Next Steps\*:**

\*The following timeframes are subject to change.

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Description</b>
May- September 2024`	Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 completed
June- September 2024	Consultation to be done on Draft Homelessness Strategy 2024
Autumn 2024	New Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 to be published.