

1 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation Report

- 1.1. The consultation exercise was undertaken for 6 weeks, from 12 July 2024 to 23 August 2024. Details of the consultation were sent to the following groups and platforms, (including potential reach).
1. Elected members briefing, 12 July (36)
 2. Devon Home Choice applicants (approx. 1,700) – advert published on the portal
 3. Households in temporary accommodation (approx. 160)
 4. Included in emails to those approaching and engaging with the Housing Options Service
 5. Social media activity – 6 posts between 15 July – 29 August. Reach of 18,788, 19,437 impressions, 242 clicks, 25 comments, 37 likes and 24 shares.
 6. One Torbay newsletter on the 12 and 26 July, 16 August (9,223)
 7. Housing associations
 8. Schools and colleges
 9. Local churches and other faith organisations (press release distribution list)
 10. Torbay Community Development Trust (press release distribution list)
 11. Community Partnerships (press release distribution list)
 12. Public sector partners such as the local NHS, Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and a range of others (press release distribution list)
 13. Voluntary sector partners (press release distribution list)
 14. Town Centre Partnership
 15. Neighbourhood Forums
 16. Chamber of Commerce
 17. Voluntary Sector organisations (press release distribution list)
 18. Devon Communities (press release distribution list)
 19. Staff news (1287) – 833 click on the survey
 20. Food safety Newsletter (6039) – 19 clicks on the survey
 21. Torbay Business Newsletter (878) – 3 clicks on the survey
 22. Adult Social Care news (382) – 16 clicks on survey
 23. Included in Children’s Services, Community Equipment and Young Person Participation Communications.
 24. Facebook (15K followers)

The Strategy was also reviewed at the Adults Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board on the 8 August 2024, with the following resolution:

That the Cabinet be advised that the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board supports the Draft Homelessness Strategy 2024 – 2030 being included within the Council’s Policy Framework and that the Cabinet be recommended that a key data table with

clear key performance indicators be included within the Action Plan, to measure performance of the Strategy and impact, including details of external influences.

2. Who responded to the Consultation

- 2.1. 117 people took part in the main survey (56% female, 37% male, others preferred not to say).
- 2.2. From which we received 231 comments and suggestions. 3 additional responses were provided by email, comments were also made via social media.
- 2.3. To help us understand the feedback provided, people were asked which best describes the position from which they were responding to this survey. There were 117 responses.

Response	%
I work in / am part of a partner organisation	29%
I have never experienced homelessness	48%
I am or have experienced homeless or a member of my family or friend is homeless, and I am supporting them	21%
Interested individual or impacted by homelessness	2%

- 2.4. The question was asked, are you worried that you might become homeless in the future, for example in the next 12-months? There were 111 responses to this question. 9% said they were worried and 9% preferred not to say, 82% said no.
- 2.5. The majority of respondents (80%) were over 45 years of age.
- 2.6. Of those that responded we asked what their current accommodation status was.

Response	%
Owned their own home	79%
Rented privately	9%
Rented from a social landlord	4%
Living with family and friend	3%
Homeless	5%

- 2.7. Of the 93 responses related to employment status 26% worked full time in Torbay, 24% were retired, 13% worked part- time in Torbay, 11% worked outside of Torbay, 11% self-employed, 6% were unemployed and 2% looked after family at home.

2.8. A spread of responses was received from across Torbay, 53% Torquay, 24% Paignton and 5% Brixham, with 18% living outside Torbay or preferring not to say

3. Strategy Priorities Feedback

3.1. The consultation results generally demonstrate an endorsement of the Strategy's three priorities.

3.2. Percentage of respondents who 'strongly agree and agree' for each priority:

Priority	% Strongly agreed or agree
One - Increasing early help and prevention	96%
Two - Intervention	97%
Three - Better outcomes, better lives	95%

3.3. Of the 32 written responses provided as part of the response for additional comment there were the following themes:

- The impact homelessness can have on the economy and the importance therefore of resolving the problem and reduce fear of crime. 31% raised rough sleeping as an issue for Torbay.
- The requirement in Torbay to provide more affordable homes both through developments but also through the private rented sector. 25% raised this as an issue.
- Requirement to fund the strategy appropriately if the outcomes are to be achieved.
- That it is a complex area and that there are many different classifications of homeless and reasons why and therefore strategy could be shaped in many different ways.
- A strong commitment and recognition that this matter cannot be delivered by one department in Torbay Council, but the entire Council and Torbay as a whole. Also, that this is a wider societal issue not just effecting Torbay.
- The role of the private rented sector in Torbay, in preventing homelessness, the quality of accommodation and fear of losing accommodation if complaining about poor standards.
- The role of enforcement related to quality of accommodation.
- Needs for accessible services both to assist those that are digitally exclude, but also face to face.
- The information related to the night shelters has not been included.
- The need for support for people is important e.g. form filling, mental health, addictions, basic hygiene for those rough sleeping.
- Delivery is key.
- The need to provide accommodation to meet people's needs which can be varied and therefore a mix of specialist provision for women or domestic abuse etc.
- Needs for accessible service both to assist those that are digitally exclude, but also face to face to make contact meaningful.

4.0 Priority One Feedback - Increasing early help and prevention

We know there is more we can do to support our residents and stop them from reaching the point of homelessness through increasing early help and intervention. The percentage of respondents who 'strongly agree and agree' with each of the objectives in priority 1.

Priority One Objectives	% Strongly agreed or agree
Providing the right advice at the right time	91%
Targeted prevention to reach people whose homelessness is hidden and to prevent and reduce repeated homelessness, rough sleeping and youth homelessness	88%
Reduce homelessness from private rented accommodation 'caused by no fault evictions' as this is the main reason for homelessness in Torbay	75%

Of the 26 written responses provided, if people disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the objectives listed above, there were the following themes:

- Strong theme related to no fault evictions and the balance between tenant and landlord responsibility. 42% of responses.
- Need to improve early intervention that is also accompanied with appropriate support.

4.1 Additional comments were also sought on developing priority one, increasing early help and prevention objectives. Of the 27 response the following themes were identified:

- Ability to be able to response to the extent of the problem and provide enough prevention activity.
- Sharing of information between service/organisations to identify risk and improve early intervention.
- Investment into support service and social care support.

Quote provided from of the consultation:

“Ability of smaller organisation to be agile. A collaborative approach, involving both funded organisations and smaller agencies, is necessary to ensure comprehensive interventions strategies. Without concerted effort, we will continue to see individuals fall through the cracks, becoming victims of a system that fails to protect in their most critical moments. “

5.0 Priority Two Feedback – Intervention

5.1 When people become homeless, we need the right type of accommodation and support in place as part of a wider approach to provide timely interventions. This requires strong and different partnerships and the ability to adapt. The percentage of respondents who 'strongly agree and agree' with each of the objectives in priority 2.

Priority Two Objectives	% Strongly agreed or agree
Providing somewhere safe to stay so that no one needs to sleep rough	94%
To provide targeted support to help maintain accommodation and support to those that lose it.	93%
Never place a young person aged 16 or 19 in a Bed and Breakfast except in exceptional circumstances	80%
To not place families in Bed and Breakfast except in exceptional circumstances. If we do, for no more than six weeks.	83%
Ensure there is appropriate awareness of care leavers circumstances to reduce the risk of them experiencing homelessness	89%

5.2 Of the 27 written responses provided, if people disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the objectives listed above, there were the following themes:

- That we should not use B&B for families. This was the strongest theme in the feedback at 11%.
- Reword the strategy – never place any family in a B&B unless in an emergency.
- That information should be provided on what is the right type of accommodation for people, as this is varied.
- That there is a need for accommodation to support older people
- That there needs to be close links with other strategies to improve employment opportunities and income levels for people.
- Need for ongoing support.

5.3 Additional comments were also sought on developing priority two objectives. Of the 15 response the following themes were identified:

- The need to provide affordable accommodation. This was the strongest theme at 20%.
- Recognition in the strategy of the large single homeless population.
- Digital exclusion and the impact this can have.
- Education on what to do and how to manage money.
- Intentionally homeless needs to be better understood more.

Quote provided from the consultation:

“Teaching skills to people to provide them with hope for the future and to encourage working environments where they can help each other in group settings”

6.0 Priority Three Feedback - Better outcomes, better lives

6.1 We aim to create services that are equitable in their approach where people at risk of or experiencing homelessness have the best chance of better life outcomes. The percentage of respondents who ‘strongly agree and agree’ with each of the objectives in priority 3.

Priority Three Objectives	% Strongly agreed or agree
Supporting people with complex lives	85%
Building people's resilience	79%
Building upon experience to develop and improve services	84%

6.2 Of the 17 written responses provided, if people disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the objectives listed above, there were the following themes:

- The impact that rough sleeping has on communities in general was the strongest theme at 17%.
- The need for new ideas.
- The provision of workshops for life skills, healthy relationships, dealing with trauma area of more benefit that building resilience is important.

Quote provided from the consultation:

“Resilience comes from life experience. Often the most vulnerable people in society are the most resilient even if they aren’t aware of what is and isn’t socially acceptable.”

6.3 Additional comments were also sought on developing priority three objectives. Of the 11 response the following themes were identified:

- Recognition that the support required for those that have complex lives maybe different.
- To look at data and case law to identify trends.
- Trusted relationships are important in making a difference.
- Education and awareness.

7.0 Feedback on key prevention and support ideas

7.1 Finally, respondents were asked, what do you think are the key prevention and support actions that we should be providing for those at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping? Of the 63 response the following themes were identified:

- Provision of affordable accommodation this was the strongest theme at 13%
- Sufficient support services, ideas include, keyworks, information in the right places, caring approach. 11% of responses.
- Face to face contact and the importance of this.
- Recognition of substance misuse and action required to address this.
- Need for provision for rough sleepers and keep people safe.

8.0 Amendments to the Strategy

Generally, the comments received tend to echo that within the strategy. Amendments have however been made as follows (highlighted in **Bold**):

1. Inclusion of single homelessness information in the key facts to illustrate this highlight this significant are of need.
2. Amendment to Priority one objectives:
 - a. Change of wording to - Strengthen our **collective** partnership commitment to joint working on homelessness prevention across **all tenures of housing including the provision of support.**

This reflects the feedback on the role of all organisations in the voluntary and statutory sectors and that work needs to be undertaken to assist everyone of all ages and irrespective of housing tenure. As such the support may therefore differ.

- b. Change of wording to - Put information sharing agreements and consent forms in place so that anyone approaching services **or voluntary sector organisations** (with their permission) need only tell their story once.

To strengthen and recognise the role that the voluntary sector and other organisations play in providing a service in Torbay.

- c. Change of wording to - Develop an upstream approach to income maximisation **including training and employment opportunities** to reduce the risk of homelessness occurring in the first place.

To reflect feedback around the integration with employment and wider economic strategies around employment and increasing wages in Torbay.

3. Amendment to Priority two objectives:
 - a. Change of wording to - Collaboratively develop a Supported Housing Strategy to enable the commissioning of supported accommodation that is tolerant and trauma informed environment so that we can support people **of all ages** and address the cause of homelessness.

To reflect feedback on the need to recognise all ages, especially older people. Reference to complex needs has also been removed as covered in other objectives therefore making this more balanced.

- b. Change of wording to - Never place any young person aged 16 or 17 in B&B except in an **exceptional circumstance** by ensuring there is sufficient accommodation for this age group.

Reworded so that it is more appropriate from emergency to exceptional circumstances.

- c. Change of wording to - Never place a family in B&B except in **an exceptional circumstance**. If we do it will be for no longer than 6 weeks.

Reworded so that it is more appropriate from emergency to exceptional circumstances.

4. Amendment to Priority three objectives:
 - a. Change of wording to - Develop peer advocacy, employment, volunteering, and training **offers** to help improve **opportunities**.

Rewording to recognise peoples development and support.

- b. Change of wording to - Work collaboratively to achieve the objectives of the Housing Strategy **to provide affordable accommodation in Torbay.**

To reflect the strong feedback within the consultation on the need for affordable accommodation in Torbay of any tenure.

- c. Change of wording to - Raise the profile of homelessness ensuring that it is visible within the Council and embedded in other strategies. **Recognising the impact that rough sleeping can have on the wider community.**

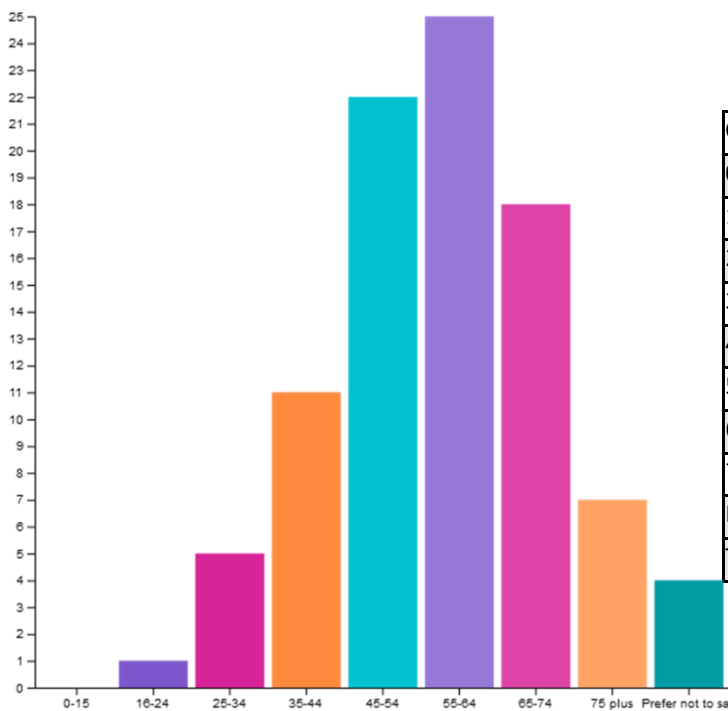
To reflect the strong feedback within the consultation of the impact that rough sleeping can have on the wider community.

Other comments will be picked up as suggestions and areas for development as part of the production of the Torbay Homelessness Partnership action plan. This will include the feedback from Adults Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board. This was for the development a key data table with clear key performance indicators be included within the Action Plan, to measure performance of the Strategy and impact, including details of external influences.

Sometimes it's simply not possible to achieve all of the suggestions included in the consultation feedback as there are insufficient resources to do so. This was a theme within the consultation feedback, recognising the need for resources to address the problem holistically to ensure delivery.

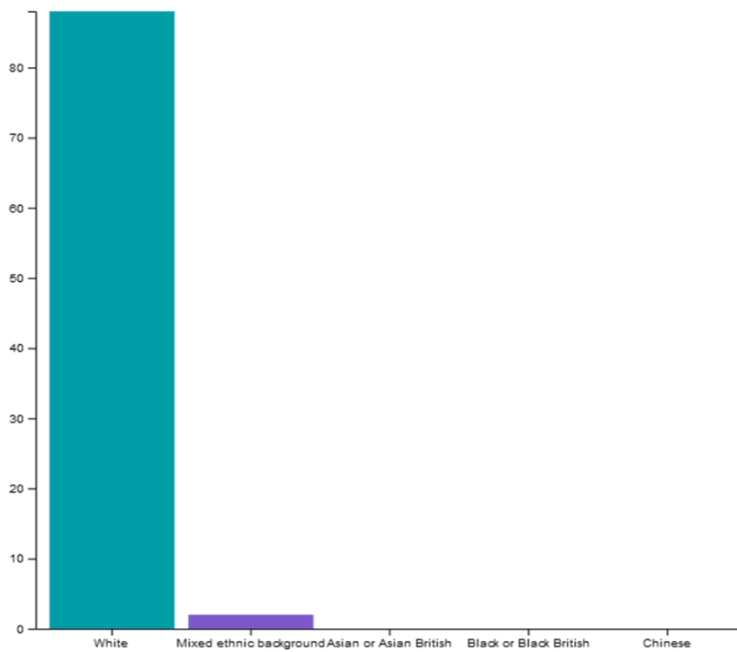
9.0 Other Demographic Information from the consultation

The following questions were asked as part of the consultation.
Which of the following age groups applies to you?



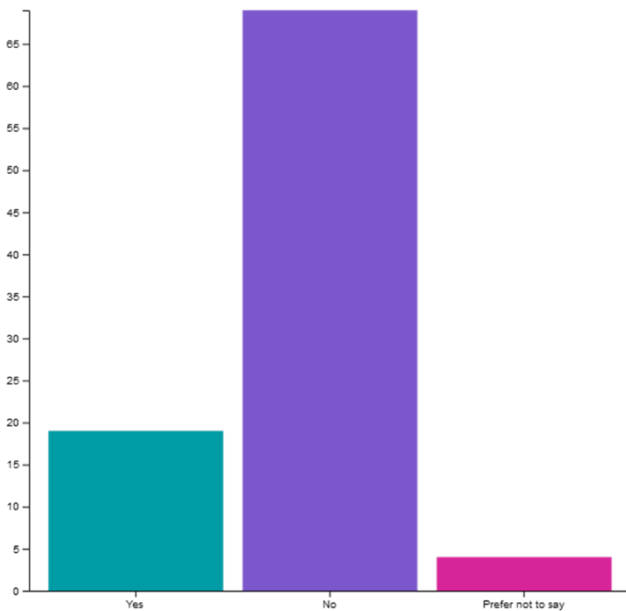
Option	Total	Percent
0-15	0	0%
16-24	2	2%
25-34	6	6.1%
35-44	11	11.2%
45-54	25	25.5%
55-64	25	25.5%
65-74	18	18.4%
75 plus	7	7.1%
Prefer not to say	4	4.1%
Total	98	

Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?



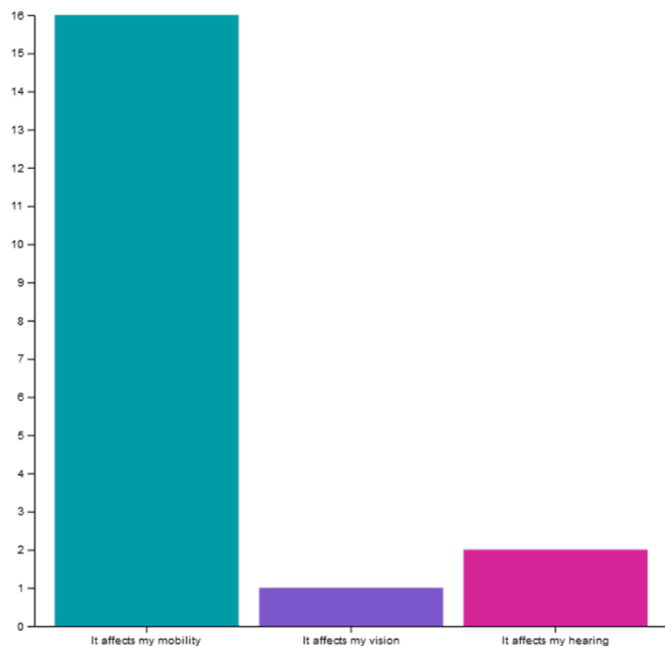
Option	Total	Percent
White	94	97.9%
Mixed ethnic background	2	2.1%
Asian or Asian British	0	0%
Black or Black British	0	0%
Chinese	0	0%
Total	96	

Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?



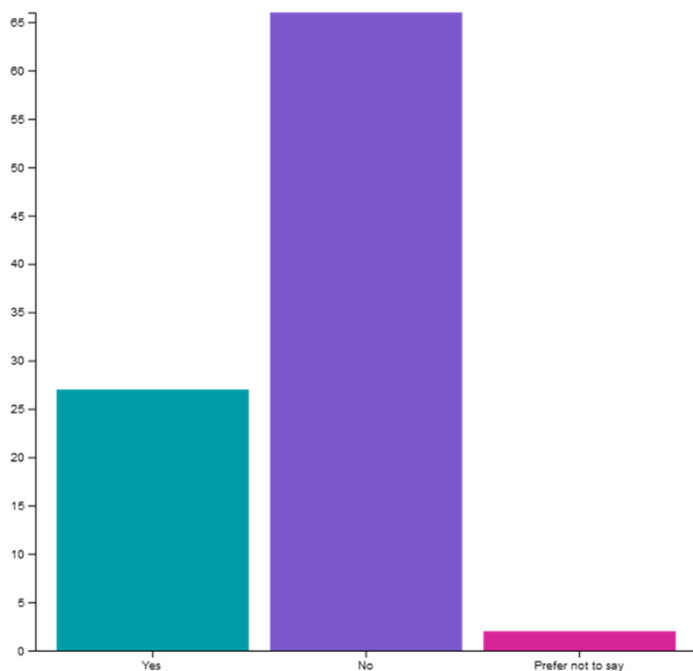
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	20	20.4%
No	73	74.5%
Prefer not to say	5	5.1%
Total	98	

If you answer 'yes' to the above question, please tell us how your disability affects you. Tick all that apply.



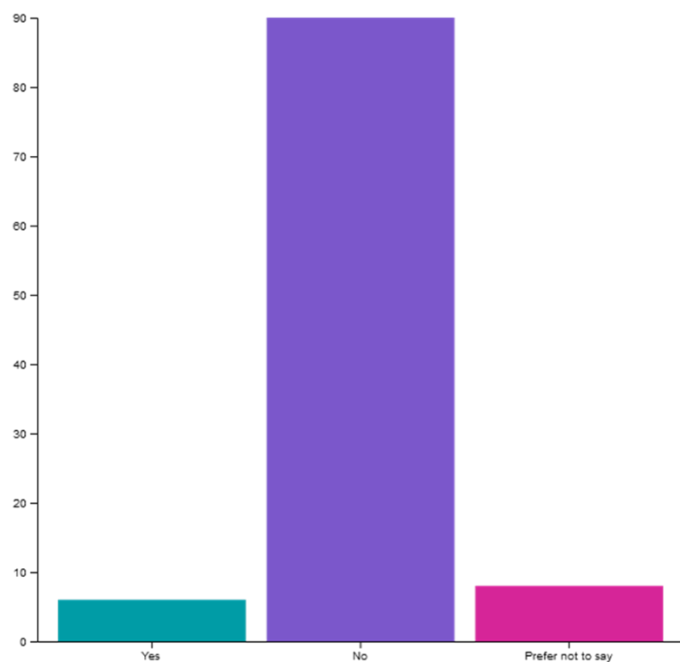
Option	Total	Percent
It affects my mobility	17	85%
It affects my vision	1	5%
It affects my hearing	2	10%
Total	20	

Do you consider yourself to be a carer? This question asks if you provide unpaid care to for example a friend, relative or neighbour.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	28	27.7%
No	70	69.3%
Prefer not to say	3	2.97%
Total	101	

Have you been in care? This question asks if you have had experience of the care system at any point in your life.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	7	6.66%
No	90	85.7%
Prefer not to say	8	7.61%
Total	105	