

Report subject	<b>Supported &amp; Specialist Housing Strategy 2026 to 2036</b>
Meeting date	4 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This Supported &amp; Specialist Housing Strategy (Appendix1) sets out BCP Council's ten-year commitment to developing specialist housing and commissioning appropriate support services to meet the needs of residents. The strategy is required under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, which mandates all local authorities to publish a supported housing strategy by May 2027.</p> <p>This is the first such strategy for BCP Council and outlines the projected requirements of the following resident groups, ensuring access to appropriate accommodation and support models that promote independence and community integration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people (over 65 years)</li> <li>• Working age adults with physical disabilities, long term conditions and/or sensory impairments</li> <li>• Adults with severe and enduring mental illness</li> <li>• Adults with learning disabilities and/or autistic people</li> <li>• People with complex housing histories and/or experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Young people</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet approves the proposed Supported &amp; Specialist Housing Strategy at Appendix 1.</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To meet statutory obligations under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, ensuring a published strategy is in place.</li> <li>• Sets out BCP Council's commitment to developing supported and specialist housing in line with projected resident needs over the coming decade and ensure that both the Council's Newbuild Housing &amp; Acquisition Strategy and the Local Plan reflect this.</li> <li>• To reduce pressures on health and social care services through the provision of good quality housing which</li> </ul>

	<p>improves health and wellbeing and promotes independence and choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide guidance to private developers and social housing providers in shaping development plans for the area.</li><li>• To maximise opportunities for central government capital and revenue funding by putting in place a strategy that sets out the specialist housing needs of the BCP area for the next ten years.</li></ul>
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Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Kieron Wilson Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection
Corporate Director	Laura Ambler, Corporate Director for Wellbeing
Report Authors	Tracey Kybert, Specialist Housing Programme Lead
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Approval

## Background

1. The Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy (2026-2036) is proposed to meet both local needs and new national requirements under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, which places a statutory duty on local authorities to develop a Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy and prepare for licensing and compliance with forthcoming National Supported Housing Standards. This legislation aims to improve quality, safety, and accountability in supported housing provision.
2. The Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP), delivered between September 2020 and October 2021, demonstrated that targeted enforcement and strengthened oversight can significantly enhance the quality and value for money of supported housing. The evaluation found that focused measures in five pilot areas led to improved accommodation standards, higher quality resident support, and stronger local authority control over local supported housing provision. Key improvements included more robust property inspections, enhanced reviews of support delivery, tighter scrutiny of Housing Benefit claims, and better strategic planning to understand local supply and future demand. These actions helped reduce illegitimate Housing Benefit claims and limited the development of poor quality or unnecessary schemes. The pilots were designed to test how far improved enforcement could drive up standards and ensure better outcomes for residents.
3. The publication of statutory guidance and implementation of the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act have been significantly delayed. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is expected to publish strategy guidance within the next month. Initial briefings indicate that the draft Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy and the Needs Assessment (Appendix 2), including governance arrangements, will meet the forthcoming requirements.
4. Locally, the BCP area faces significant demographic and social changes, including an ageing population, rising demand for accessible and adaptable homes, and increasing numbers of residents with severe mental illness, learning disabilities, and complex housing histories. Without a clear, long-term strategy, there is a risk of widening health and housing inequalities.
5. The Supported & Specialist Housing Needs Assessment updates the previous data on the demand for extra-care housing across the BCP area. Its findings are now reflected in the revised Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy, which replaces the BCP Council Extra-Care Housing Strategy 2022–2030.
6. The Council commissioned a specialist Social Enterprise organisation providing consultancy and research services to deliver a comprehensive needs assessment on supported and specialist housing in the BCP area. This work was essential to identify

current and future demand, gaps in provision for key cohorts as well as exploring areas of good practice and innovative service delivery.

7. The main findings from the needs assessment have shaped the strategy's key principles, which will guide how we deliver supported and specialist housing in the future.

**Genuine choice and control for all:** we must provide meaningful choice to residents across BCP not just the type of accommodation, but also in where they live and who they live with which make their accommodation home.

**Independence:** we want residents to be able to live as independently as possible, with the right support.

**Flexible care & support:** we want our housing and support to be able to adapt to residents' changing needs day by day, month by month, and year by year.

**Person-centred:** housing decisions should start with the individual, their needs, preferences and what matters most to them.

**Homes for life:** we want to provide residents looking for long-term options with not just housing, but a place where they can settle and call home.

**Partnering with unpaid carers:** we recognise quality housing does not only benefit the tenant, but also families, unpaid carers, and the wider community.

**Transparency:** We'll be honest about what we can and cannot provide and clearly communicate what residents can expect.

**Community-centred:** housing should help people connect within their community.

**Getting the basics right:** good housing and support must consistently meet quality and accessibility standards.

8. The Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy (2026-2036) is shaped by the Needs Assessment and informed by engagement with residents, staff, stakeholders and partners.

9. The strategic priorities are to create safe, sustainable housing that meets the diverse needs of residents:

- Deliver High Quality, Specialist & Accessible Housing
- Embed Person-Centred Independence and Flexible Support
- Strengthen Integrated Pathways and Co-Commissioning

10. The Supported & Specialist Housing Steering Group, chaired by the Director of Housing & Public Protection and including Adults, Childrens and Housing Commissioning, Housing Delivery and the ICB will oversee delivery of the strategy and the associated workstreams. Please see Appendix 3.

11. Each workstream will work to a delivery plan for short, medium and long-term goals over the ten year term of this strategy and will be updated in line with needs assessment reviews. Plans to commission and implement new housing related support services will begin in 2027 in alignment with forthcoming licensing requirements.

12. Future accommodation delivery aligned to this strategy will be achieved through the Council's existing Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy, together with Registered Providers' development programmes. Any forthcoming opportunities for

capital funding from Homes England or the Department of Health & Social Care will be coordinated to support this approach.

13. The Local Plan will set an overall housing requirement for the BCP area, including policies relating to the size, type and tenure of housing needed. The Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy is feeding into the Local Plan evidence base ensuring the needs of specific groups can be reflected in the forthcoming Local Plan policies.
14. The Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy will play a key role in providing the evidence to inform planning policy and outcomes with developers to ensure the housing provision delivered meets the needs of our population.

### **Engagement and Consultation**

15. This strategy has been shaped through extensive contributions from teams across the Council, including Adults' and Children's Commissioning, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, and Housing.
16. The Needs Assessment informing this strategy drew on the insights and experiences of a diverse range of contributors across all resident groups, including people who use services, carers, Council staff, stakeholder organisations, and registered providers.
17. Through workshops, interviews, surveys, and participation in established group meetings, we gathered valuable feedback that has directly shaped the recommendations for the future development of supported and specialist housing.
18. National engagement findings from organisations such as Housing LIN echoes the local themes and strengthens the evidence base that informs the recommendations set out in both the needs assessment and this strategy.
19. During implementation phases we will continue to work closely with residents and communities to ensure our housing solutions reflect real lived experiences and meet the needs of the people who use them.

### **Summary of financial implications**

20. Any projected growth in resident needs, including an increase in people requiring supported and specialist housing, may create further pressure on Adults', Children's and Housing revenue budgets over the life of the strategy. Any financial impacts arising from this demand will be reflected in future Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) updates as part of wider demand led budget planning.
21. Implementation of new housing-related support services, together with requirements linked to forthcoming national supported housing licensing arrangements, may lead to additional ongoing revenue commitments to ensure effective delivery and compliance. These would be subject to separate decision making processes, and any need for new or additional funding would be considered through the Council's standard MTFP approach.
22. New Burdens funding of £76,849 has been allocated by MHCLG to BCP Council for 2025–26 under a memorandum of understanding for Local Supported Housing Strategies, to support the delivery of a needs assessment and the development of a strategy aligned with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.
23. Delivery of future supported and specialist accommodation will depend on separate Cabinet decisions on capital investment proposals. Any individual schemes brought

forward under this strategy will require full business cases and capital approval under the Council's usual governance processes, and the level of external capital funding available will influence the timing and scope of delivery.

24. Financial monitoring associated with implementation of this strategy will be built into the governance arrangements and aligned with established corporate budget monitoring processes to enable early identification of financial pressures, risks and opportunities.

### **Summary of legal implications**

25. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 requires all Local Authorities to have a published document in place setting out the Council's commitment around the development of specialist housing and commissioning of support services to meet the needs of BCP residents.
26. This strategy includes a review of existing supported and specialist housing commissioned by the Council as required under the Act.
27. Social Services and Housing must have due regard to the published supported housing strategy when carrying out their functions.
28. Most of our supported and specialist housing will provide accommodation and/or care and support that fulfils our statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Care Act 2014.
29. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 introduces a strengthened national system to raise the quality and consistency of supported exempt accommodation by establishing National Supported Housing Standards that set minimum expectations for both property conditions and the support provided. Alongside these standards, the Act requires local authorities to implement a local licensing scheme, creating a mandatory framework that ensures providers meet these standards before operating. The licensing regime gives councils powers to regulate, monitor and enforce compliance, helping to tackle poor quality provision and ensure residents receive safe, appropriate accommodation and support. All supported and specialist housing services commissioned under this strategy will need to align with national supported housing standards and licensing requirements put in place by BCP Council.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

30. The strategy work programme will be carried out by existing commissioning staff across Adults, Housing and the Housing Delivery Team.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

Sustainable Cities and Communities.

31. There will be an environmental impact from the development and delivery of our supported and specialist housing services under this strategy, and we are committed to encouraging developers and social housing providers to choose local and sustainable organisations to carry out works. Any commissioned support providers are required to adopt sustainable business practices where possible including waste reduction and sustainable transport.

### **Summary of public health implications**

32. Public health in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole works closely with the Planning Authority to shape environments and make sure that the places in which we live, work and play are 'healthy places'.
33. The Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy will improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

### **Summary of equality implications**

34. A full Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 4) has been completed to assess the strategy's impact across protected characteristics. This ensures that the strategy is inclusive, equitable, and sensitive to the diverse needs of BCP residents.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

35. The current supported housing contracts have been extended and procurement postponed so new services can be commissioned in line with the recommendations of the Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy. Any further delay will risk non-compliance with procurement legislation.
36. The requirement for local authorities to have a Supported Housing Strategy is a new statutory duty introduced by the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. While the consequences of non-compliance are still being developed through secondary legislation and consultation, this remains an important consideration for the Council at this stage.
37. Without a clear plan for the provision of supported and specialist housing setting out the needs of residents over the next ten years, sites and services will continue to be developed without strategic coordination. This creates a risk of oversupply in some areas and insufficient provision in others, with limited consideration of actual need. It also reduces alignment with national good practice and proven delivery models.
38. Without a clearly defined plan for the provision of supported and specialist housing, setting out residents' needs over the next ten years, we are unable to undertake effective financial planning or maximise opportunities to secure central government capital and revenue funding.
39. As the recommendations of the strategy were developed through engagement with people, carers, registered providers and the voluntary and community sector, if these are not supported there is a risk of reputational damage to BCP Council for not considering the views of the people the strategy has been written for.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

1. Draft Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy (2026-2036)
2. Supported & Specialist Housing Needs Assessment (2026-2036)
3. Supported & Specialist Housing Governance Structure
4. Equality Impact Assessment