



BCP Council

Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy

2026 – 2036

Foreword

Providing safe, comfortable and stable homes is among the most impactful intervention we can make to improve people's lives across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. We are therefore delighted to introduce this Strategy, which sets out our vision for supported and specialist housing for the next ten years, and how we plan to deliver it.

Supported and specialist housing is an essential lifeline for those who may require additional support to maintain their independence. This encompasses thousands of people across BCP, including those with long-standing illness, disability, experiencing homelessness, living with severe and enduring mental illness; and those approaching the latter stages of their life. Many of whom still face significant social, economic and health inequalities. Getting this right has significance beyond the profound impact it will have on people and their families.

This won't be easy. The coming decade will see shifts in demand from an aging population and rising levels of specialist need. This is against the backdrop of rising costs within housing and social care services, and financial pressures faced by providers. We can only meet these challenges by working in partnership. BCP is committed to working closely with our providers and communities to innovate, respond to what's needed; and find solutions that work.

We will focus on delivering genuine choice to residents, accelerating the availability of varied good quality housing options including self-contained, shared, accessible, adaptable and comfortable homes in a wide range of formats.

This will include a focus on delivering more supported and extra care housing across BCP, widening access to mainstream housing with the right support for those able to live independently; and diversifying and improving our age-designated accommodation for older adults. These next 10 years will see us build on our successes and not lose sight of our goal to deliver diverse and equitable housing provision for all.

This strategy has been shaped by the insights and experiences of a wide range of contributors, including people who access support, carers, staff, and partners. We are grateful for their valuable input and hope the recommendations lead to the development of the supported and specialist housing they have told us is needed.

Councillor Richard Burton/ Councillor David Brown/ Councillor Kieron Wilson

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	5
Context for this strategy	5
BCP population.....	7
Consultation & Engagement.....	8
Key Principles	9
Older people (over 65s).....	10
Working age adults with physical disabilities, long term conditions and/or sensory impairments	12
Adults with severe and enduring mental illness	13
Adults with learning disabilities and/or autistic people	15
People with complex Housing Histories and/or experiencing homelessness	16
Young people	18
Delivery approach	19
Monitoring and Review of the Strategy	21
Glossary.....	22

Executive Summary

Providing safe, stable and appropriate homes is one of the most powerful ways to improve people's lives. This Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy sets out Bournemouth,
Page | 3

Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's ten year vision for planning, delivering and improving supported and specialist housing between 2026 and 2036, ensuring residents can live independently, safely and with dignity in homes that meet their needs.

Supported and specialist housing is a vital part of BCP's housing, health and care system. It supports people who may otherwise be unable to live independently, including older people; adults with physical disabilities, long-term conditions or sensory impairments; people with severe and enduring mental illness; people with learning disabilities and/or autism; people experiencing homelessness; and young people requiring additional support. Good quality housing improves health and wellbeing, promotes independence and choice, and reduces pressure on health and care services.

Demand for supported and specialist housing in BCP is increasing and changing. The population is growing and ageing faster than the national average, with significant projected growth in older people and people with complex needs. At the same time, rising costs, workforce pressures and a constrained housing market present significant delivery challenges. Without a clear, coordinated and long-term approach, the gap between need and supply will continue to widen.

This Strategy brings together evidence from detailed needs assessments, engagement with residents and partners, and alignment with national and local policy. It supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy and Housing Strategy, reflects the Adult Social Care ambition to support people to live a "gloriously ordinary life", and fulfils the strategic planning duty introduced through the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

The Strategy is underpinned by a clear set of principles, including genuine choice and control, independence, person-centred approaches, flexible support, quality and accessibility, transparency, and community connection. Housing should be designed as "homes for life", adaptable to people's changing needs and embedded within local communities.

Across six key resident groups, the Strategy identifies current provision, future demand and priority actions. These include expanding extra care housing, increasing the supply of accessible and adaptable mainstream homes, growing supported living for people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs, strengthening housing-led responses to homelessness, and improving pathways and choice for young people. A strong emphasis is placed on self-contained accommodation, small-scale schemes, and support models that promote independence, stability and successful move-on.

Delivery will rely on strong partnership working across housing, health and social care, alongside registered providers, developers and the voluntary and community sector. The Council will use a mixed delivery approach, including new build, acquisition and remodelling of existing stock, while playing an enabling role to unlock funding and development opportunities. Clear quality standards, co-commissioning models and proactive market engagement will be essential.

Implementation will be overseen through the Supported and Specialist Housing Steering Group, with progress monitored via annual updates to the needs assessment and alignment with housing delivery and commissioning plans. The Strategy will remain a live document, responsive to emerging needs, funding changes and regulatory requirements.

Through this Strategy, BCP Council commits to working collaboratively with residents, carers, providers and partners to deliver a diverse, high-quality and sustainable supported and specialist housing system that improves lives, promotes independence and supports thriving communities across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole over the next decade.

Introduction

We know that good quality, safe and accessible supported and specialist housing can be transformative, and for so many BCP residents and families it is the foundation for living a “gloriously ordinary life”. So much of our wellbeing begins with where we live, impacting our independence, our comfort, and our way of connecting with others and our communities. We want all BCP residents to have access to a choice of accommodation which suits them, can meet and adapt to their needs; and is a place they feel at home.

This Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy sets out our aspirations over the next ten years to deliver a choice of good quality housing to those we support. The strategy focuses on the following resident groups:

- Older people (over 65)
- Working age adults with physical disabilities, long term conditions and/or sensory impairments
- Adults with severe and enduring mental illness
- Adults with learning disabilities and/or autistic people
- People with complex housing histories and/or experiencing homelessness
- Young people

This strategy considers projections of future need for supported and specialist housing across BCP and provides a view of how we plan to meet this need up to 2036. The conversation does not stop here. Our strategy reflects one step in an ongoing dialogue with our partners, residents, and communities to continuously shape the strategy and its delivery; and we look forward to working in partnership with everyone to deliver provision fit for the future.

Context for this strategy

Amid widespread financial pressures and increasing demand for support, now is a time of acute challenge for Local Authority services. We have already made good progress toward defining a way forward, which is both aspirational and achievable for residents.

In 2024, the Council published its corporate strategy for 2024-28, setting out a new vision for BCP “where people, nature, coast and towns come together in sustainable, safe and healthy communities”. This strategy defined two key priorities and set ambitions against each.

One of the key priorities is “Our People and Communities” which focuses on the following ambitions:

- High quality of life for all, where people can be active, healthy and independent
- Those who need support receive it when and where they need it
- Good quality homes are accessible, sustainable and affordable for all

The Council's 2021-26 Housing Strategy commits to improving choice for residents, by reviewing specialist housing provision, meeting future growth needs by delivering new homes; and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping through early intervention. The strategy is underpinned by the Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment (2021), the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2015); and SHMA Summary.

An updated Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28, 'Supporting People to Live a Fulfilled Life', succinctly captures BCP's aspirations for its residents to live “a gloriously ordinary life”¹. Where all residents, irrespective of need, should have the right support to be able to do all the fulfilling and mundane things which make up an ordinary life in the community.

Supported and specialist housing is a cornerstone of the NHS's prevention agenda. Good quality, safe and accessible homes reduce risks such as falls, accidents, and deterioration of health, helping to prevent avoidable hospital admissions. Housing that promotes independence and recovery enables people with long-term conditions, mental health needs, and disabilities to manage their health at home, reducing reliance on inpatient care.

Well-designed homes located within communities encourage physical activity, social connection, and access to local health services, supporting early intervention and wellbeing.

Digital connectivity within housing also facilitates remote consultations and monitoring, aligning with the NHS vision for integrated, technology-enabled care. By providing environments that support healthy lifestyles, specialist and supported housing plays a vital role in delivering the NHS goal of prevention and care and support closer to home.

This strategy builds on this direction of travel, recognising supported and specialist housing as essential provision driving equity, independence, access; and quality of life for all residents across BCP. This strategy also draws in recent detailed work within housing and Social Care² to present a complete view of where we need to focus over the next ten years.

This Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy represents the culmination of multiple strands of work undertaken by BCP Council to identify the diverse housing needs of vulnerable residents. It provides a single strategic approach building upon previous strategy for Extra Care Housing and strategic plans addressing housing for Older and Younger People, people with a Learning Disability and Autism, physical disabilities, including long-term conditions and people experiencing homelessness and other multiple disadvantage. By integrating

¹ After Tricia Nicholl - [What is a Gloriously Ordinary Life — Gloriously Ordinary Lives](#)

² Including 2022 Extra Care Strategy, the 2024-29 Day Opportunities Strategy, and ongoing work to develop Learning Disabilities, Neurodivergence, and Mental Health strategies, homelessness & rough sleeping strategy (2021-25)

these frameworks, alongside other specialist housing priorities for adults, the strategy provides a unified, long-term vision for delivering safe, accessible, and adaptable homes that promote independence, choice, and wellbeing across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act became law in August 2023 and gave the Secretary of State powers to introduce National Supported Housing Standards, requiring local authorities to create locally led supported accommodation licensing schemes, introduce a strategic planning duty for local authorities; and create a national expert advisory panel to monitor the sector.

Local Authorities are now required to have a Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy that outlines their plans on how they will meet future housing needs. This document fulfils this purpose. At present, the exact dates for implementing the new regulations are still under consultation, we will continue to proactively plan, respond to changes, and update this strategy as needed.

BCP population

BCP's population is expected to see significant changes in the coming years, which will drive increased demand for supported and specialist housing.

BCP's population is growing:

- By 2028, there will be a predicted 403,600 people living in BCP
- This will increase to 409,000 by 2043

There is expected to be a significant increase (above the national average) in the number and proportion of older people living in BCP:

- In 2018, 22% of our population was over 65 years old
- By 2043, the proportion of our population over 65 will increase to 29%

BCP expects to see increases in the number of people with severe and enduring mental illness, Learning Disabilities and/or Autistic people:

- By 2035, the number of working age adults in NHS Dorset ICB receiving mental health services will have increased by 31%, and 58% for adults over 65
- By 2035 the number of adults with Learning Disabilities and/or Autistic people will have increased by 4%

Our diversity is our strength:

- Over 80 languages are spoken across the BCP area
- In 2023, 18% (around 70,000 people), identified as a global majority group

We are, on average, healthy:

- 82% of adults are in good health
- Overall health and wellbeing is as good or better than the national average

Many of us provide unpaid care to loved ones:

- In 2021, 8.8% of BCP residents reported providing unpaid care

- 2.5% of residents are providing 50 hours or more of unpaid care a week

We face health inequalities:

- There is a significant difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in BCP—in the most deprived areas men live on average 6.9 years less, and women 6.4 years less, than those in the least deprived areas.

Consultation & Engagement

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.

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.

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.

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.

As we move into implementation, 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.

Our Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities set out how we will strengthen the supply, quality, and coordination of housing and support across the system. Together, these priorities guide how we will create safe, sustainable housing that meets the diverse needs of residents.

Delivering High Quality, Specialist & Accessible Housing

Through working with our partners, we will increase the supply of **safe, adaptable, and self-contained homes** that meet modern accessibility & quality standards. This includes improving age-designated stock, expanding extra care housing, and ensuring new developments and refurbishments for both supported and specialist housing meet clear

quality benchmarks. Housing quality is central to promoting independence, reducing health risks, and contributing to the prevention agenda.

Embed Person-Centred Independence and Flexible Support

Everyone needs housing that enables **choice, control, and independence**, supported by care and support models that adapt to changing needs. This includes floating support in mainstream housing, modernised older people sheltered housing, and bespoke solutions for complex needs. Housing should be designed as “homes for life,” with integrated assistive technology and digital connectivity to support health and wellbeing.

Strengthen Integrated Pathways and Co-Commissioning

Delivery depends on **joined-up planning and commissioning** between housing, health, and social care partners. Co-commissioning is most relevant for schemes requiring both accommodation and specialist support (e.g., extra care, supported living for mental health or learning disabilities). The strategy commits to transparent pathways, market engagement, and collaborative commissioning models that promote flexibility, sustainability, and quality standards.

Key Principles

When delivering this specialist and supported housing strategy, we will follow a set of key principles; shaped by conversations with our residents, staff and partners:

- **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. Housing options should be designed to empower people and give them control over everyday life.
- **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. Our housing assessments, allocations, and planning will place the individual at the heart of these decisions. We aim to develop housing that reflects this.
- **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. Thoughtfully designed, adaptable homes, and long-term planning are among the ways we will achieve this.
- **Partnering with unpaid carers:** we recognise quality housing does not only benefit the tenant, but also families, unpaid carers, and the wider community. We aim to work in close partnership with unpaid carers to design and deliver housing and support that considers their role and networks.
- **Transparency:** we recognise there's still work to do to deliver a supported and specialist housing provision that meets all our residents' needs. 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. We aim to design spaces that bring residents together, encourage social interaction, and foster wellbeing.
- **Getting the basics right:** good housing and support must consistently meet quality and accessibility standards. We will regularly review what works, gather feedback and make improvements.

Older people (over 65s)

Who are we talking about? People over 65 years old who have Care Act eligible needs, and/or require specialist or adapted accommodation. This includes those with a limiting long-term illness or condition which significantly impacts day to day activities, such as a mobility impairment, a serious personal care disability, a serious visual impairment, or a serious hearing loss. This section excludes those with a Learning Disability, autistic people, or those with severe and enduring mental illness (see relevant sections).

We aim to provide a range of accommodation options to meet the diverse needs and preferences of older people in BCP. We know that choice matters housing that supports community, independence, and support "aging in place". Most older people prefer not to live in a care or residential home, so we are focused on providing housing that promotes independence.

There are several different supported and specialist accommodation options available to older people within BCP area:

- Extra care
- Mainstream housing – accessible and adaptable, and fully wheelchair adapted
- Age designated sheltered/retirement housing ('care ready')

There are gaps in BCP's current supported and specialist housing provision for older people, and with this group expected to grow by 19% over the next 10 years, we must take action now to strengthen and "future proof" our provision.

Extra Care

BCP currently provides 356 extra care flats across 8 schemes. Four schemes support older adults (at least 45+), while the others support mixed-age residents over 18. Five schemes offer 24/7 support, and night support is available in the remaining schemes for those who need it.

We estimate by 2035, BCP will need 1,052 extra care units for residents aged 65+ receiving council funded care and support; this equates to 38% of over 65s projected to need care and support. This means BCP will need an additional 796 extra care flats for residents aged 65+ receiving council funded care and support to meet future demand.

Age designated/sheltered housing

BCP Homes provides 1,848 age designated/sheltered housing units across 47 schemes in Bournemouth and Poole. Accessibility varies across these schemes, so our priority is to upgrade them to meet key accessibility standards, replenish our stock and move towards a modern 'care ready' model.

Mainstream housing – accessible and adaptable, and fully wheelchair adapted

As of January 2025, 180 residents over 65 with a mobility need were waiting for housing via the Housing Register. This is nearly three times the number of adapted homes usually let each year.

By 2035, BCP is expected to need between 5,200-6,900 more accessible and adaptable accommodation for older people.

Recommendations

Over the next 10 years, we will aim to:

- **Work with housing providers and housing developers** to create a wide range of retirement housing options that are well designed, adaptable, accessible and supports independence and community.
- **Expand extra care housing** across BCP, offering residents access to 24/7 care and support within the community
- **Review hospital discharge pathways** to ensure people can move into supported and specialist housing quickly when ready to leave hospital
- **Upgrade age-designated housing** by improving accessibility and refurbishing or replacing schemes that do not meet key standards

- **Continue supporting housing adaptations**, and make sure adapted homes are reallocated to those who need them most
- **Modernise sheltered housing** using best practice learning, and feedback from residents to improve service models
- **Make information about specialist housing options for older people clear and easy to access** and offer support to those who may find online resources difficult to use.

Working age adults with physical disabilities, long term conditions and/or sensory impairments

Who are we talking about? Working age adults between the ages of 18 and 64 years old who have Care Act eligible needs and require specialist or adapted/ accessible accommodation. This can include those with a limiting long-term illness or condition which significantly impacts daily life, such as mobility issues, personal care needs, or serious visual or hearing impairments.

For adults with long-term conditions, the right housing can be life-changing, helping them to live independently, make choices, and stay connected to their community. Many working age adults with long term conditions face accessibility issues at home, and residential care is often used as a fall back, even though it is not the preferred option for younger adults. We want BCP to be a place where all residents can find a home that meet their needs, even as these change. Our housing must be accessible in design, location and functionality.

In BCP, adults with physical disabilities, long term conditions or sensory impairments have access to three main types of supported and specialist housing:

- Extra care housing
- Mainstream housing – accessible and adaptable housing, including fully wheelchair adapted homes
- Supported Living

In BCP we do not expect a significant increase in demand for supported and specialist housing for adults with long term conditions, as this group is predicted to decrease. However, it is still important to offer a mix of high-quality housing options.

Extra Care

BCP currently provides 356 extra care flats across 8 schemes. Four schemes are for adults aged 45-60+, while the other schemes support mixed-age residents over 18. Four schemes offer 24/7 support

By 2035, BCP will need 121 extra care units for adults with long-term conditions – 40 more units than currently available.

Mainstream housing

As of January 2025, 425 residents aged 18-64 with mobility needs were waiting for housing via the Housing Register – nearly five times the number of lets usually made to adapted homes per year.

By 2035, BCP will need between 1,900 to 2,600 additional accessible and adaptable homes for adults with long term conditions. Only a small number of these homes are currently planned, highlighting the need to work with Registered Providers to expand supply over the next 10 years.

Supported living

As of 2025, BCP commissions supported living placements for 35 adults with long-term conditions. Based on current projections, this figure is expected to increase slightly to 38 units by 2035, indicating a relatively stable demand over the next 10 years.

Recommendations

Over the next 10 years, we will aim to:

- **Expand extra care provision** to increase availability of schemes for wider groups of residents
- **Prioritise supported living** that is suitable for wheelchair users, ensuring accessibility is built in new or refurbishment developments
- **Ensure equitable access** to supported housing options across all areas of BCP
- **Collaborate with housing providers** to increase the supply of wheelchair accessible homes
- **Continue supporting housing adaptations**, and ensure adapted houses are re-allocated to those who will benefit most
- **Review tenancy support** for individuals who lack the mental capacity to sign a tenancy, but for whom residential care is not appropriate
- **Develop flexible commissioning models** that can adapt to residents' changing needs over time

Adults with severe and enduring mental illness

Who are we talking about? People with serious and enduring mental health needs, who have assessed care and support needs under the Care Act 2014 and/ or are eligible for aftercare under the Mental Health Act 1983. This can include those discharged from inpatient acute and rehabilitation units, residents in care homes, and young people transitioning to adult services.

Housing can play a transformative role in the lives of people with severe and enduring mental illness, serving as a vital foundation for mental health recovery and wellbeing for individuals. Through well planned housing pathways, residents can access the right level of care and support—whether transitioning from inpatient settings back into the community or requiring ongoing assistance to maintain their independence.

We aim to deliver a diverse range of housing support options to support recovery and wellbeing for residents with severe and enduring mental health needs:

- Short term 'step down' accommodation to support transitions from inpatient services offering an alternative to bed-based care
- Long term or permanent supported living in small scale, self-contained flats with onsite support

- Long term or permanent high stability housing
- Extra Care
- Floating support within mainstream housing to promote independence in general needs accommodation

By 2035, the number of working age adults in NHS Dorset ICB receiving mental health services is projected to increase by 31%, with a 58% increase expected among adults over 65. This equates to approximately 52 additional individuals requiring support from BCP each year, including 7 young people transitioning from Children's to Adult services. To meet this growing demand, our current provision must evolve and expand to ensure timely access to appropriate care, support and accommodation.

Supported living

BCP currently commissions supported living schemes from 7 providers for adults with severe and enduring mental health needs, offering a total of 111 units. Based on projected demand, we estimate that by 2035, 217 supported living units for adults with severe and enduring mental health needs will be required. This represents 37% of those receiving care and support for mental health needs through BCP Adult Social Care, up from 27% in 2025. Of these units, approximately 70-75 units will be needed for adults over 65. To meet this demand, BCP will need to deliver an additional 104 supported housing units for people with severe and enduring mental health needs over the next 10 years.

Floating support in mainstream housing

We are committed to improving access to mainstream general needs housing for people with severe and enduring mental health needs, supported by floating support services. By 2035, we anticipate that 302 residents will be living independently in the community with floating support, almost double the current figure of 155 individuals. This reflects our ambition to promote independence and recovery through integrated housing and support pathways.

Recommendations

Over the next 10 years, we will aim to:

- **Engage with the market** to prioritise delivery of the supported housing provision outlined in this strategy
- **Review housing pathways** for individuals with severe and enduring mental health needs, with a focus on transitions from Children's to Adult services and improving access to mainstream general needs housing. This may include strengthening community support networks and improving floating support, including for those Shared Lives accommodation arrangements.
- **Reassess eligibility criteria** for Extra Care housing to improve access for people with severe and enduring mental health needs
- **Review housing options and support models** for individuals with forensic support needs, or dual diagnoses of severe and enduring mental illness and learning disabilities

- **Improve access to information** about accommodation options and simplify navigation through housing processes for residents
- **Develop community building approaches** within new and existing schemes, creating opportunities for social connection and wellbeing.
- **Develop a bespoke, small-scale scheme** for young people transitioning to adult services, drawing on existing learning and good practice from similar schemes initiatives

Adults with learning disabilities and/or autistic people

Who are we talking about? People aged 18 and over with a Learning Disability and/or autism, who have assessed care and support needs under the Care Act 2014. This group includes those living with family or carers, residents in care homes, people transitioning from inpatient settings, and young adults moving into adult services.

People with Learning Disabilities and/or autism should have the same opportunities as everyone else - to live independently, feel secure, develop new skills, and actively participate in their communities. Supported and specialist housing plays a vital role in achieving these goals, and we are committed to offering genuine choice that enables both residents and their families to thrive.

We aim to deliver a diverse range of housing support options to support recovery and wellbeing for residents with Learning Disabilities and autism:

- Shorter term 'step down' provision from restrictive settings or provision for young people transitioning to adult services (small scale, assessment or training flats)
- Longer term/ permanent supported living – small scale developments with self-contained flats or small shared houses (3 or 4 beds max.)
- Extra Care
- Shared Lives

We expect to see an increase in demand for supported and specialist housing for people with Learning Disabilities and/or autism. 25 residents enter the cohort each year, and by 2035 the number will have increased by 4%.

Supported living

BCP currently commissions 133 separate supported living properties, providing a total of 442 units across 20 providers. Many of these properties are shared accommodation, where tenants have their own bedroom but share communal facilities, with varying levels of on-site support. Just over half of these properties include sleep-in support.

By 2035, demand is projected to rise to 581 supported living units for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism, this represents 58% of those receiving BCP care and support services, up from 43% in 2025. To meet this need an additional 165 supported housing units will be required by 2035.

Recommendations

Over the next 10 years, we will aim to:

- **Expand choice for residents** by prioritising the development of high-quality, mixed provision with a particular focus on increasing self-contained accommodation.

- **Ensure all new housing for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism includes en-suite facilities** to promote dignity and independence.
- **Review and improve matching processes and guidance**, ensuring residents have as much choice as possible in shared living arrangements.
- **Assess all existing accommodation for safety and accessibility**, and take action to address any gaps.
- **Enhance provision for autistic adults with low levels of support needs**, ensuring options reflect their preferences and independence goals.
- **Develop bespoke housing solutions for individuals with high levels of need**, aligned with the Transforming Care agenda and tailored to those with “challenging behaviours”.
- **Strengthen joined-up care planning** integrating housing preferences with wider care and support needs, and considering access to complementary services such as day opportunities.
- **Improve access to mainstream general needs** housing with floating enabling people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism to live independently in the community.

People with complex Housing Histories and/or experiencing homelessness

Who are we talking about? *Single households, including couples, aged 25 and over who are experiencing homelessness. This provision is commissioned by Housing.*

Our current BCP Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy commits to delivering long-term, housing-led solutions for everyone. We aim to create clear local pathways into settled accommodation, with a strong emphasis on personalised, person-centred support.

While there will always be a need for short-term and high-quality emergency accommodation, this should be psychologically informed, providing a safe space where risks can be managed; and individuals can access any specialist support they require. We will continue to develop the Single Homelessness Pathway, which has already increased choice and reduced barriers for people experiencing homelessness to access suitable housing.

We anticipate that year-on-year demand for supported and specialist housing for people experiencing homelessness will remain stable. Both the number of single households (25+) owed statutory homeless duties, and the number of people sleeping rough each month have remained relatively consistent. However, approximately 336 individuals are expected to enter the cohort annually. Future demand will largely depend on how quickly we can help people move into their own settled homes.

BCP currently provides:

- 535 Housing Related Support (HRS) units through the current mental health (housing related support) and single homeless adult accommodation pathways.
- 178 units through the general singles pathway which are accommodation-based (i.e. the support is tied to the accommodation). Approximately 38% of which provide high intensity support, with 55% medium, and 7% low.
- 121 floating support units: 54 of which are Housing First units, and 67 are from SHAP/RSAP (grant funding)
- The Mental Health (HRS) pathway contains 67 accommodation-based units, and 135 floating support. This pathway is for those with a formally diagnosed mental health illness or those in the process of being assessed.

Alongside the core pathways, there is the BCP homes tenancy sustainment team, a drug and alcohol housing support team; and Accommodation for ex-Offenders (AfeO) floating support officers. There are at least 87 additional units of non-commissioned supported exempt accommodation across 5 providers.

We estimate that by 2035 there will be a total need for 566-1,161 Housing Related Support units for those experiencing homelessness, depending on move-on rates achieved. This could require up to 588 additional housing related support units. This could be more/less depending on funding settlements for rough sleeping from 26/27 onwards; and the move-on/throughput rates achieved.

Recommendations

Over the next 10 years, we will aim to:

- **Remodel and reprofile provision within the pathway to strengthen our housing-led approach**, focusing on:
 - Housing First
 - Floating support in mainstream accommodation (basic or intensive)
 - Single homelessness accommodation-based pathway aligned with best practice standards
 - High-stability housing for individuals requiring long-term, 24/7 onsite support
- **Conduct targeted reviews** on the experiences of specific groups whose needs are often unmet in traditional supported housing contexts.
- **Review service performance monitoring** to ensure alignment with a housing-led approach and priorities that matter most to residents.
- **Establish formal mechanisms for co-design and strategic engagement** with housing providers, leveraging the supported housing provider forum.
- **Review the pathway allocation system** to enable greater flexibility and personalisation in matching residents to suitable accommodation.
- **Increase the proportion of self-contained, dispersed units** within the pathway to promote independence and choice.

- **Develop a strategic approach to managing the supported exempt accommodation market**, as part of implementing the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.
- **Improve awareness and understanding of existing protocols and processes** to support smooth transitions for people moving on from the pathway into settled tenancies

Young people

Who are we talking about? Care experienced young people aged 18-24, former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), young people aged 16-24 experiencing homelessness. This provision is commissioned by Housing and Children’s Social Care.

Young people requiring specialist and supported housing come from diverse circumstances and backgrounds. Our provision must reflect this diversity offering meaningful choice, adapting to changing support needs, enabling positive transitions; and setting young people up for the future. Young people should have access to supportive unconditional relationships, and the space to make mistakes without fear of “falling out” of the system.

Demand for supported and specialist housing for young people has remained relatively stable year-on-year, with 439 young people owed statutory homelessness duties in 2024; and 334 aged 18-24 with care experience. We anticipate just over 100 young people entering this cohort annually from a range of situations.

BCP currently provides:

- 75 Housing Related Support units through the young person homelessness pathway, delivered by 3 providers. Of these, 12 units offer floating support, while support is tied to the accommodation in the remaining 63 units
- “Staying Put” (with long-term foster carers) and “Staying Close” arrangements (accommodation and enhanced support close to the young person’s former children’s home)
- 72 independent accommodation units held by Children’s Social Care, with support provided by Personal Advisors

Looking ahead, by 2035 we estimate a need for 214 designated Housing Related Support units for young people—requiring an additional 139 units to meet demand. This figure may vary depending on future funding settlements for rough sleeping from 2026/27 onwards and the move-on/throughput rates achieved.

Recommendations

Over the next 10 years, we will aim to:

- **Review Children’s Social Care commissioned accommodation** within the context of wider services for young people, ensuring value for money.
- **Remodel supported and specialist housing provision for young people** to provide genuine choice, following St. Basil’s *Positive Pathway* and the Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Framework. This should focus on:

- Family-type supported accommodation (Staying Put / Supported Lodgings)
 - Young People designated supported accommodation (short stay or crisis, foyers, low–high levels of support)
 - Housing First
 - ‘Step-down’ provision (independent tenancies with floating support, Staying Close)
- **Develop an easily accessible crisis/short-stay service** to assess young people's housing and support needs in a safe setting.
 - **Ensure no young people under 25 are accommodated within the adult homelessness pathway.**
 - **Replicate the successes of the SHAP intensive support service**, applying lessons learned to promote independence and successful move-on

Delivery approach

Collaboration between social care, health, housing departments, planners, care providers, housing providers, housing benefit teams, and other partners will be essential to increasing the pipeline of supported and specialist housing.

To deliver this strategy, we will use a range of mechanisms, including:

- **Acquiring existing properties** that meet satisfactory standards for use as supported and specialist self-contained accommodation
- **Remodelling existing properties** to better meet current needs, for example, converting council owned properties into self-contained units
- **Developing new build accommodation**, either by identifying suitable council owned sites or acquiring new sites
- **Working through Registered Providers**, with the Council playing an enabling role in securing grants and funding

Recognising financial pressures and local housing market challenges, we will adopt a mixed approach to manage and mitigate risks. This includes our ambition to directly provide more supported and specialist housing, either as a housing provider or care/support provider.

Council New Homes

CNHAS (Council New Build Housing and Acquisition strategy) is BCP Council's strategic housing programme responsible for delivering general needs housing, extra care schemes, and supported or specialist accommodation. Following a recent review of the programme and updated financial projections, the forthcoming BCP Homes Business Plan will outline a target to deliver 937 new homes by 2034/35.

As part of this Business Plan, certain sites will be identified as suitable for supported and specialist accommodation. This strategy will set out how the plan aligns with these priorities and will include supplementary guidance to ensure opportunities to deliver the required supported and specialist housing are fully maximised.

Commissioning models

This strategy sets out a diverse range of supported and specialist housing types to ensure genuine choice for residents. Each housing type will require an associated care and support model, which in turn lends itself to different commissioning approaches. These models must promote flexibility, throughput, structure and the specialist expertise needed to meet varying support needs.

As new solutions emerge, we will work collaboratively with providers, residents, and wider stakeholders to design commissioning models that are:

- **Innovative** – embracing new approaches and technologies.
- **Grounded in best practice** – drawing on evidence and lessons learned.
- **Sustainable and diverse** – fostering a resilient market that can adapt to changing needs.
- **Quality-focused** – ensuring high standards of care and housing provision.

Funding models and sources

Best practice in supported and specialist housing separates the housing provision from delivery of care and support. Housing should ideally be delivered through Council and

Registered Provider stock, while care and support are commissioned separately often through specialist providers.

Our focus will be on reviewing our stock options both within BCP ownership and working closely in partnership with Registered Provider's to deliver tailored housing solutions through property acquisition or re-purposed housing stock within Council and Registered Provider ownership and some new build for the longer term needs, making use of the Specialist Supported Housing (SSH) Rent Standard exemption. To support this, we will develop clear guidance on quality standards and processes for working with Registered Providers (landlords) on SSH schemes.

In addition, we will maximise opportunities to access external capital funding streams including:

- Homes England
- MHCLG (including Brownfield land release fund)
- NHS England

By leveraging these funding sources and partnerships, we aim to secure the resources needed to deliver the supported and specialist housing required across BCP.

Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

The Council's Supported and Specialist Housing Steering Group will provide oversight for the implementation of this strategy.

The needs assessment that informs this strategy will be reviewed and updated each year, ensuring the Housing Delivery pipeline and relevant care and support commissioning plans remain aligned with requirements over the 10-year period.

We will continue to collaborate closely with established resident groups and partner organisations so that our housing solutions are shaped by real lived experiences and meet the needs of the people who rely on them.

Background Papers

1. BCP Council Supported and Specialist Housing Needs Assessment

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Adult Social Care	BCP Council's Adult Social Care directorate, which covers a wide range of activities and services to help adults live independently and stay well and safe.
Autism	Autism is "a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive, communicate and interact with others", recognising that not all autistic people see themselves as disabled. Autistic people may experience challenges with social communication and social interaction, and restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour, activities or interests since early childhood, to the extent that these limit and impair everyday functioning.
Care Act eligible	Section 13 of the Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to assess an adult's needs for care and support and decide whether a person is eligible for publicly funded care and support. A person's eligible needs are those that are determined after the Care Act assessment.
Children's Social Care	BCP Council's Children's Social Care directorate, which covers a wide range of activities and services to give children and young people the best start in life.
Dispersed accommodation	Accommodation that is spread across the area.
Exempt Accommodation	Accommodation provided by a council, housing association, registered charity or voluntary organisation where that body, or person acting on their behalf, provides the service user with care, support or supervision.
Extra care housing	Specialist housing (originally but not exclusively) designed for older people offering help with personal care, and suitable for people with higher or increasing care needs.

Floating support	The support is not linked to a specific building or type of accommodation and is not normally provided by someone's landlord.
General needs or 'mainstream' housing	Housing that is not purpose built, adapted, or managed for a particular client group.
High Stability Housing	Stable self-contained accommodation for service users with Care Act eligible needs and who are experiencing multiple disadvantage.
Housing First	A housing and support approach which provides non-conditional access to housing, and an offer of high intensity person-centred support.
Housing Related Support	An umbrella/inclusive term that encompasses a range of housing models designed to provide individuals with the appropriate level of assistance and support to maintain or regain their independence and improve their quality of life.
Hub and Spoke Model	A model of support where providers are localised to a particular area, allowing them to have a 'hub', or main support service, from which they can flex background support or, additional one to one support as needed to other properties/ services within their locality (the spokes).
Learning Disability	A Learning Disability is defined as "a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), which started before adulthood".
M4	Part M4 of the building regulations cover access to and circulation within buildings, with requirements for facilities for Disabled people.
NHS ICB Dorset	The NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board is a statutory organisation bringing together partners involved in planning and providing NHS services, including BCP Council and Dorset Council.
Registered provider (RP)	A provider of social housing registered with the Social Housing Regulator
Self-contained accommodation	The basic elements of living (sleeping, washing, preparation of food, and so on) are located together within a defined area and are not shared by more than one household or tenant.
SEND	Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn.
SHAP intensive support service	A block of 10 new flats in BCP designated for women only, specifically for those with a history of rough sleeping. This has helped with successfully housing several women for whom more traditional provision had not been suitable or successful.
Specialised Supported Housing (SSH)	A sub-category of supported housing that is exempt from usual social rent setting requirements as set out in the Rent Standard (these are requirements for registered providers in England in relation to social rent setting) and the Government's Policy statement on rents for social housing.
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme	A government funding programme to increase the supply of high-quality accommodation with accompanying support to address gaps in homelessness pathway provision for single people aged 18+.

Step-down	Services provided to support an individual to transition to a lower intensity of care and support, for instance after discharge from a stay in hospital.
Social Housing	Social housing is a vital part of the UK's housing ecosystem. It offers affordable housing options for those on lower incomes, people in vulnerable situations, as well as people with disabilities and specialist housing needs.
Supported Housing	Accommodation which is provided alongside care, support or supervision to help people with specific needs to live as independently as possible in the community.
Supported Living	Tailored care and support provided to a person in their own home, normally the home that they plan to occupy indefinitely.
Temporary Accommodation	Under Housing Law, if a person or family becomes homeless and urgently needs a home, the council may provide temporary accommodation while helping them find long-term housing.
Voids	Empty units of commissioned accommodation
Wraparound support	Wraparound care is a flexible and dynamic approach to care. By considering the holistic needs of the person receiving care, the aim is to ensure all of a person's personal and medical needs are met.