



## Homelessness Strategy 2026

- **Project:** Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031
- **Period:** 13 November 2025 - 5 February 2026

### Report summary

The Draft Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031 document highlights the extent of homelessness nationally and in the BCP Council area and highlights the support and partnerships currently in place to support those experiencing homelessness. It also shows the progress made towards the Aims and Commitments in the previous strategy.

The draft strategy sets out a new set of Core Aims, each with a set of Commitments and it is these Aims and Commitments that were the focus of the consultation. In total, 165 responses were received and there was a good level of agreement for all of the proposed Core Aims and Commitments. This report includes AI generated summary of the open comments.

The consultation ran for 12 weeks from 13 November 2025 to 5 February 2026.

### Visitors

Throughout the survey period, the

#### Visitor timeline

Visitors i

1709

Visits i

2205

Visit duration

00:02:13

Pageviews per visit

1.94



## Participants timeline

Total participants

165

Participation rate ⓘ

10%



## Project results

The first three Core Aims, to ensure that homelessness is Rare, Brief and Unrepeated, were strongly supported with more than 90% of respondents stating that they Agree or Strongly Agree.

Support for Core Aims 4 and 5 was still strong (more than 80% Agree / Strongly agree) but slightly less so than the first three aims, with more neutral responses.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following core aims proposed in the Draft Homelessness Strategy?

164/165 - Matrix - optional

	1- Strongly agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly disagree	6- Don't know
Core Aim 1: Rare – Prevent Homelessness Before It Occurs	73.62%	19.63%	4.29%	1.23%	1.23%	0%
Core Aim 2: Brief – Minimise the Duration of Homelessness	71.88%	21.25%	3.75%	1.88%	1.25%	0%
Core Aim 3: Unrepeated – Ensure Homelessness Does Not Recur	69.57%	25.47%	1.24%	0.62%	3.11%	0%
Core Aim 4: Change the Narrative – Foster Empathy, Understanding, and Action	58.28%	22.7%	11.04%	1.84%	4.91%	1.23%
Core Aim 5: Embed Lived Experience – Co-Produce Solutions at Every Level	56.17%	28.4%	10.49%	2.47%	2.47%	0%

Respondents who disagreed with any of the Core Aims were asked to tell us why.

A recurring theme is the lack of suitable accommodation options, particularly for those seeking "dry" or abstinent environments, with respondents highlighting that current provision does not meet the needs of people in recovery, often resulting in relapse and a return to homelessness. There is also strong criticism of the inflexibility and rigidity of homelessness services, which are seen as overly process-driven and not sufficiently person-centred.

Respondents note that high thresholds for being recognised as having a "priority need" exclude many vulnerable individuals from support until they reach crisis point, and that accommodation offered often does not match individual needs in terms of safety, location, or stability, leading to repeat homelessness.

Overall, the most common concerns are the lack of appropriate accommodation and the need for more flexible, individualised support.

## **Core Aim 1: Rare - Prevent Homelessness Before It Occurs**

There is a good level of agreement with all of the Core Aim 1 Commitments; all have at least 75% of respondents who either agree or strongly agree.

Cross-Sector Collaboration has the highest level of strong agreement. Private Sector Prevention Role and Recognition of Non-Traditional Living Situations have the lowest level of agreement. While disagreement with these aims is slightly higher than other aims, the main difference is in the proportion of neutral responses.

## Core Aim 1 - Commitments

162/165 - Matrix - optional

	1- Strongly agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly disagree	6- Don't know
System Change & Multiple Disadvantage	59.87%	25.48%	10.83%	1.91%	1.91%	0%
Cross-Sector Collaboration	67.5%	18.75%	10%	1.88%	1.88%	0%
Strategic Advocacy for Funding Reform	56.88%	23.75%	13.75%	3.75%	1.88%	0%
Youth and Family Focus	58.97%	22.44%	16.03%	0.64%	1.92%	0%
Health-Informed Prevention	62.66%	23.42%	9.49%	1.27%	2.53%	0.63%
Private Sector Prevention Role	47.77%	27.39%	19.75%	1.91%	3.18%	0%
Recognition of Non-Traditional Living Situations	49.37%	27.85%	15.19%	3.8%	3.8%	0%
Plain English & Inclusive Language	63.29%	21.52%	7.59%	4.43%	2.53%	0.63%

## **Summary of comments about Core Aim 1**

Several respondents highlighted the need for clearer, plain English in the strategy, noting that the current language is difficult to understand and sometimes contradictory, especially given the stated aim of inclusivity and clarity. There was also concern that focusing too much on inclusive language and political correctness could hinder open discussion about homelessness.

Engagement with landlords and the private rented sector was a recurring theme. Respondents suggested adopting initiatives like a Good Landlord Charter and working more closely with landlords to improve renting standards and prevent homelessness. There was also concern that recent renters' rights reforms might unintentionally increase homelessness by making landlords more risk-averse.

The importance of addressing mental health, addiction, and substance misuse as key factors in homelessness was mentioned several times, with calls for greater involvement of frontline outreach groups and charities that specialise in these areas.

Some respondents questioned the effectiveness of current emergency accommodation measures, such as SWEP, and suggested more innovative or practical solutions for temporary housing, including repurposing shipping containers.

There were also comments about the need for healthier food donations to homeless shelters and foodbanks and a suggestion to ensure that council-owned companies and partners are not contributing to homelessness among their tenants.

Overall, the main trends were calls for clearer communication, better landlord engagement, more focus on mental health and addiction, and practical improvements to temporary accommodation and support services.

## **Core Aim 2: Brief - Minimise the Duration of Homelessness**

There is good support for all of the commitments under Core Aim 2. In particular, 'First Contact Counts' has over 90% of respondents saying they either agree or strongly agree.

None of the suggested commitments has significant levels of disagreement.

## Core Aim 2 - Commitments

160/165 - Matrix - optional

	1- Strongly agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly disagree
First Contact Counts	69.62%	22.15%	5.06%	1.9%	1.27%
Navigator Roles & Service Finder Tools	51.27%	34.18%	11.39%	1.27%	1.9%
Rapid Rehousing Pathways	60.13%	27.85%	8.86%	0.63%	2.53%
Health Integration Expansion	56.33%	31.65%	9.49%	0%	2.53%
Business-Supported Navigation	44.87%	34.62%	17.95%	1.28%	1.28%
Equity of Opportunity	52.83%	29.56%	10.69%	1.89%	5.03%

## Summary of comments about Core Aim 2

Respondents most frequently highlighted the need for more effective, flexible, and tailored housing solutions, with an emphasis on long-term tenancy sustainment and collaboration with landlords and support services. Several called for a clearer, more joined-up approach across departments, with a single point of contact for homeless individuals or families to navigate the system more easily. There was also a call for the adoption of proven models like Housing First, rather than vague commitments to “developing something like it”.

The issue of local connection criteria was divisive: some respondents argued for prioritising local homeless residents while others felt that local connection should not determine who receives support, advocating for a more needs-based approach.

Business engagement was seen as important for supporting long-term stability, with suggestions to encourage local businesses to help reintegrate homeless people into productive roles. The need to reintroduce homeless people into society was also mentioned.

Some respondents wanted more focus on reducing time spent sleeping rough, rather than just time in temporary accommodation. There was also a call for increased pet-friendly accommodation to prevent people from having to choose between a roof and their pets.

A few responses expressed confusion or scepticism about the strategy’s language and actual actions and one highlighted the need for a reliable contact point for those at risk of homelessness, rather than relying on overstretched GPs.

There were also isolated comments reflecting frustration about the use of hotels for non-UK nationals instead of local homeless people.

## Core Aim 3: Unrepeated - Ensure Homelessness Does Not Recur

Again there is a very good level of agreement in this section, with more than 80% of respondents in agreement and fewer than 5% disagreement for every one of the commitments listed.

The highest proportion of 'strongly agree' is for 'Health-Linked Wraparound Support' at 60%. However, combining 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' shows 'Employment and Business Engagement' as having the highest proportion of overall agreement at 92%

## Core Aim 3 - Commitments

159/165 - Matrix - optional

	1- Strongly agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly disagree	6- Don't know
Strengths-Based & Story-Informed Approaches: Design services that build on individual strengths and are informed by lived experience narratives.	52.83%	32.7%	10.06%	2.52%	1.26%	0.63%
Peer Support & Community Integration	55.06%	32.28%	8.23%	2.53%	1.9%	0%
Longitudinal Tracking:	48.73%	33.54%	13.29%	1.9%	2.53%	0%
Health-Linked Wraparound Support:	60.38%	27.67%	7.55%	1.89%	2.52%	0%
Employment and Business Engagement	56.05%	35.67%	7.01%	0%	1.27%	0%
Employment & Opportunity Pathways	57.59%	32.91%	7.59%	0%	1.27%	0.63%
Co-Production at Every Level	52.87%	31.21%	13.38%	1.91%	0.64%	0%

## **Summary of comments about Core Aim 3**

Respondents most frequently highlighted the need for improved wrap-around care and support, noting that current provision is lacking and must be strengthened. Mental health and substance abuse were repeatedly identified as major barriers, with calls for clear, separate strategies to address these issues within homeless accommodation, to prevent negative impacts on others and reduce returns to the streets. Financial inclusion, income maximisation, and clear discharge planning from health services were also mentioned as important.

Some respondents suggested practical solutions such as using volunteering as a pathway to employment, providing training and references and ensuring accommodation accepts pets, recognising their importance to people experiencing homelessness. There were also calls for realistic expectations and clarity on what is actually being done, with some expressing confusion or frustration at jargon and lack of clear action. A few respondents expressed general support or offered to discuss previous suggestions in more detail.

## **Core Aim 4: Change the Narrative - Foster Empathy, Understanding and Action**

While agreement with the Core Aim 4 Commitments is less strong than for previous ones, agreement is still above 75% for all commitments in this section.

The last two commitments listed, 'Create spaces for community dialogue and participatory workshops' and 'Monitor progress through feedback, media audits and annual reporting' have the lowest proportion of 'strongly agree' but have the highest proportion of overall agreement at 80% and 81% respectively.

## Core Aim 4 - Commitments

160/165 - Matrix - optional

	1- Strongly agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly disagree	6- Don't know
Use inclusive, person-first language in all communications.	53.5%	25.48%	13.38%	2.55%	5.1%	0%
Co-produce visual and written materials with Experts by Experience.	49.37%	28.48%	13.29%	3.16%	5.06%	0.63%
Lead public education campaigns to challenge myths and promote understanding.	54.78%	22.93%	13.38%	3.18%	5.73%	0%
Deliver staff training on inclusive communication and unconscious bias.	53.46%	25.79%	11.95%	1.89%	6.29%	0.63%
Create spaces for community dialogue and participatory workshops.	44.65%	35.22%	12.58%	2.52%	5.03%	0%
Monitor progress through feedback, media audits, and annual reporting.	45.86%	35.03%	13.38%	1.91%	3.82%	0%

## **Summary of comments about Core Aim 4**

Many respondents expressed concerns about the effectiveness and focus of Core Aim 4, with several questioning whether current efforts actually reduce homelessness or simply result in wasted public money and resources. There is a recurring theme that more emphasis should be placed on measurable outcomes rather than language, inclusivity training, or bureaucratic processes.

Funding and cost implications were also highlighted, with calls to ensure resources are directed towards directly helping homeless people rather than administrative functions. Some respondents felt the consultation process itself was too narrow and did not allow for genuine input.

On the positive side, a few respondents supported the inclusion of community collaboration and public education, noting its importance for stability and changing perceptions. There were also suggestions to expand efforts to better represent and engage diverse and marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers and refugees, through targeted campaigns, inclusive co-production, and accessible materials.

Additional ideas included improving education about homelessness among senior school children and providing staff training on pet-friendly hostels and the importance of animal bonds for homeless individuals.

Overall, the most common themes were scepticism about the strategy's practical impact, concerns about funding priorities, and calls for more direct, measurable action. There was also some support for greater inclusivity and education, particularly around marginalised groups and community engagement.

## **Core Aim 5: Embed Lived Experience - Co-Produce Solutions at Every Level**

A good level of agreement again for all the commitments under Core Aim 5. The lowest level of overall agreement is for 'Ensure diversity of representation' at 71%. This commitment is the only one in the draft strategy with over 10% disagreement, though this is still a very low level of disagreement.

The highest level of agreement is for 'Integrate lived experience into staff training' at 84%.

## Core Aim 5 - Commitments

161/165 - Matrix - optional

	1- Strongly agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly disagree	6- Don't know
Establish a Lived Experience Advisory Panel to guide implementation and evaluation.	52.5%	25%	14.37%	3.13%	5%	0%
Ensure diversity of representation.	48.43%	22.64%	18.87%	4.4%	5.66%	0%
Provide safe spaces, training, and support for participation.	50.93%	32.3%	13.04%	0.62%	3.11%	0%
Embed lived experience involvement in monitoring and accountability frameworks.	48.43%	33.96%	10.69%	3.14%	3.77%	0%
Collect and share stories of difference to inform service design and public education.	48.43%	30.82%	12.58%	3.14%	5.03%	0%
Integrate lived experience into staff training, recruitment, and service evaluation.	53.13%	31.25%	10%	1.25%	4.38%	0%

## Summary of comments about Core Aim 5

Respondents frequently emphasised the importance of genuine diversity and representation, with several calling for meaningful involvement of marginalised groups, including asylum seekers, refugees, and LGBTQ+ individuals. There is a strong preference for merit-based selection and removing structural barriers, rather than relying on quotas or “tick box” approaches.

Several responses stress the need for service users to be directly involved in designing services and for a narrative shift towards omnichannel engagement. Suggestions include providing culturally competent participation, trauma-informed spaces, and tailored training for those with lived experience, especially refugees and asylum seekers.

A minority of respondents expressed scepticism about the strategy’s practical impact, questioning its complexity, clarity, and effectiveness for homeless people. One respondent simply described the aim as “Excellent”.

Overall, the most common themes are calls for authentic, inclusive representation and involvement, and concerns about avoiding tokenism and unnecessary complexity.

## Summary of overall comments

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments about the Draft Strategy.

Many respondents expressed frustration with the consultation process, feeling it is ineffective and that the council does not listen to feedback, suggesting instead that BCP should work more closely with experienced homelessness charities. There is a strong call for more compassionate, individualised, and optimistic support from housing officers, with an emphasis on not discriminating against people due to their life challenges.

Several responses highlight the need for more direct engagement with homeless people and ensuring that nobody is left without support. Mental health, addiction, and complex needs are frequently mentioned as requiring more tailored interventions.

A recurring theme is the inadequacy of “sticking plaster” or short-term solutions, with multiple respondents advocating for the construction of more council or social housing as a long-term fix. There is also concern that recent legislative changes, such as the new renters bill, may worsen homelessness in the short term.

Some respondents feel the strategy is comprehensive and well-researched but others criticise it for being full of “corporate speak” and lacking clarity or conviction. There are also calls for clearer information on timescales and more specific actions.

Additional points raised include the need for more support for homeless veterans prioritising immediate pathways for those homeless due to abuse or domestic violence and separating the issues of homelessness from drug-related anti-social behaviour. There are also suggestions for increased police or community worker presence to address anti-social behaviour and begging.

Finally, there is an offer from the community to help build accommodation and a desire for better collaboration with the council.

