

Housing and Health Needs Assessment

Current service provision

Suffolk 2024



What does the H&HNA tell us about current service provision in Suffolk?

There are a range of providers delivering support aimed at preventing homelessness, providing temporary accommodation, assisting with independent living skills and facilitating hospital discharges. Examples include supported housing, outreach, tenancy, training, care services and step down units.

Research is being conducted by the University of Suffolk and Generation Rent to gain insights into housing conditions, quality, and impact on health and wellbeing. Other notable initiatives are a county-wide landlord engagement project to improve rental conditions, and a council insulation offer to reduce energy costs.

Overall, this section maps out the range of existing public, private and voluntary sector housing assistance in Suffolk. It indicates efforts to understand needs, engage landlords, and coordinate care, while more could be done to expand successful programmes.

Current service provision

Local authority homelessness offers

If you are at risk of becoming homeless, lower-tier local authorities offer support and assistance in the form of prevention and relief duties, as well as temporary accommodation. Support is available from:

1. [Babergh and Mid Suffolk](#)
2. [East Suffolk](#)
3. [Ipswich](#)
4. [West Suffolk](#)

Safe Suffolk Renters

The [Safe Suffolk Renters](#) project aims to build new and better relationships between landlords, tenants, property managers and Suffolk's district and borough councils. Safe Suffolk Renters aim to understand the challenges and scope of the private rented sector in the county, by building relationships with voluntary, statutory, commercial, and educational organisations. The aims of the project are to:

- gather better data and information on Suffolk housing to inform work
- work with landlords and property managers to build their knowledge and competency to become better landlords
- support tenants to understand what to expect in a rented home and to become better tenants
- identify and deal with rogue landlords so they leave Suffolk
- research the health and wellbeing benefits of improving living conditions for all

Safe Suffolk Renters are using a three-stage approach:

1. **empower:** September 2023 to March 2024. The focus of this phase will be to empower tenants and engage communities on housing standards and management. Focus groups and tenant engagement sessions will be run with a focus on damp and mould growth, and excess cold
2. **encourage:** March 2024 to August 2024. The second phase will be another multimedia campaign to educate landlords. Engagement with landlords will take place to help improve housing conditions and management in the sector
3. **enforce:** August 2024 to January 2025. The final phase will concentrate on the potential consequences of noncompliance, if the Empower and Encourage phases have not successfully achieved engagement²⁵⁰

As part of the Safe Suffolk Renters project, the University of Suffolk are producing a report exploring the links between health and housing within the rented sector. The aim of the research is to better understand the lived experience of tenants and landlords in specific geographic locations within the county, focusing on areas with differing needs to enable a better understanding of housing within the sector, what works for tenants, residents, and landlords in improving the quality of housing stock, and in turn impacts on quality of life, health, and wellbeing.

The research will explore creating sustainable, healthy communities with interviews and focus groups of residents and landlords. Residents will self-define their own health and wellbeing, providing a granular picture of the qualitative health and wellbeing of individuals within Suffolk's rental sector.

Generation Rent have also been commissioned to deliver 8 focus groups (one per geographic area within Suffolk) to establish resident's experiences of living in the private rented sector. These focus groups and interviews will be followed-up 6-months later, with interim findings expected to be shared in early 2024.

Suffolk Safe Renters will also receive a Housing Stock Modelling Report and dataset from BRE in March/April 2024. This integrated stock model will include Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), tenure, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) record data. The report will include summary figures for excess cold and falls (Category 1 hazards within the HHSRS).

The report will also include information to identify the private rented stock in Suffolk. The BRE approach uses a variety of different data sources including the BRE Model, Tenancy Deposit Scheme, Council Tax, Ordnance Survey and Land Registry data.

Step down accommodation

The NHS spends around £820million a year treating older patients who no longer need to be in hospital²⁵¹. Delayed transfers of care happen when people are medically ready to leave hospital but are unable to be discharged, often because there is nowhere suitable for them to move on to.

This can be due to a variety of reasons such as delays in getting a care package or adaptations that would allow an individual to move home, or because there is not a space available in a residential or nursing home.

The National Housing case study report provides examples of schemes to reduce the impact of delayed hospital discharges on the NHS and presents housing providers' solutions, like step-down units and care packages, that can facilitate timely discharges, reduce readmissions, free hospital beds, lower costs, and ease strain on the NHS²⁵².

Examples of housing and health services provided by housing associations and local authorities to provide step down accommodation include:

- temporary homes for people who cannot return to their own home immediately
- extra care, and health and wellbeing services
- home improvements, including safety, sustainability, and suitability of homes
- occupational therapists, telecare solutions and advice on housing options

A large proportion of housing association's residents are aged 60 and over, and with this demographic increasing both in Suffolk and nationally, housing associations are stepping in to ensure patients are discharged from hospital earlier.

By doing so, capacity is freed up within the NHS to deliver services to those who need them most and prevent hospital re-admissions. Currently these contributions are small-scale and localised – the National Housing case study presents the significant cost-benefits that could be unlocked if the services were extended.

Other sources of information

Below is a summary table of other sources of information on current service provision:

Name	Summary
Anglia Care Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT provides a variety of housing services to help people keep a roof over their heads. They have over 280 housing units ranging from individual flats to shared houses across Suffolk and Essex. • They support people with different needs - from rough sleepers to those needing extra support maintaining a tenancy, to those ready for their own independent tenancy. • Services offered include supported accommodations, outreach for rough sleepers, temporary housing, Housing First, and domestic abuse housing support. • In the last 3 years they have grown their accommodation services from 146 to 284 beds.
The Benjamin Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Benjamin Foundation aims to help young people ages 16-24 at risk of homelessness secure housing and live independently. • They provide accommodation and support for up to 2 years to help young people develop skills for

	<p>independent living, manage finances, access services, find employment, and build relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals are through Suffolk County Council. • Current housing includes 8 self-contained units in Lowestoft and 5 shared units in Ipswich, with 5 more shared units coming soon.
Suffolk Mind	<p>Suffolk Mind has a range of supported, transitional housing services for mental health service users, providing personalized support and skills building to enable progressive independence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The services aim to provide stable housing and support tenants in their recovery through person-centered approaches. • Services include residential care homes, supported shared housing, and self-contained flats with visiting support. Locations are in Ipswich, Woodbridge, Saxmundham, Felixstowe, and Cambridge. • Staff provide support with daily living, medication, appointments, social activities, college, work opportunities etc to promote independence. Support levels vary across services. • Referrals come from secondary mental health services. Placements require approval and assessment. Stays are intended to be temporary to facilitate move-on to fully independent housing.
Solo Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solo Housing (East Anglia) is an ambitious organization aiming to make a difference for single people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in East Anglia. • They provide practical help and support customized to each person's unique situation, whether it's securing housing, overcoming personal challenges, or accessing other services. • Their goal is to not just give people a place to live, but also empower them to get back on their feet through tailored support.
Ipswich Housing Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ipswich Housing Action Group (ihAg) is a homeless charity that supported over 3,000 people facing homelessness in Ipswich between April 2022 and March 2023. • They provide a range of services including a listening ear, showers, food, clean clothes, mail collection, money management advice, help accessing accommodation, coordination with other agencies, and guidance. • Homelessness in Ipswich increased dramatically (88%) compared to the previous year. • ihAg aims to end homelessness in Ipswich but relies on partnerships with other agencies, community groups and businesses.

<p>Newmarket Open Door</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Door Newmarket is a charity founded in 1997 by Churches Together to provide housing and support for homeless and vulnerable young people aged 16-24 in the Newmarket and Mildenhall area. • Their mission is to help homeless people change their lives through accommodation, support, poverty relief, and changing perceptions. • They offer supported housing in two properties for young single homeless people to transition to independent living. • They run charity superstores in Newmarket and Mildenhall selling donated furniture and household items. These provide volunteering opportunities. • They operate a foodbank redistributing food and household products to those in need and other charities. • They work in partnership with others to prevent homelessness and create opportunities in the local community.
<p>Mavam Supported Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mavam provides bespoke 24/7 supported housing for people with mental health issues, learning disabilities, and other complex needs across several locations in Suffolk. • Their goal is to help people gain skills for independent living in a safe environment with overnight staffing. Housing includes shared rooms and self-contained flats. • Their philosophy is to build on strengths, develop living skills, increase self-reliance and confidence to support independent community living. • They offer tailored support packages based on individual needs. Staff are trained in areas like medication, safeguarding, risk assessment, communication.
<p>Citizens Advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The page provides advice on various housing issues like renting privately or emergency nightly paid accommodation, homelessness, repairs, mortgages, eviction, discrimination, armed forces housing, buying/selling, and problems with neighbours. • For private renters, it covers assured shorthold tenancies and tenant rights. For social housing, it advises on council evictions. • On homelessness, it provides guidance on applying for council support and challenging decisions. • For repairs, it outlines options for private and social renters, common problems, and asking the council for help. • Other topics include reducing mortgage payments, selling your home, possession orders, proving the right to reside, council tax reductions, and more.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim is to inform people of their housing rights and responsibilities and provide guidance across all housing situations. • It is a comprehensive resource on housing matters from the Citizens Advice consumer organisation.
Suffolk County Council loft insulation offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffolk councils have launched a loft insulation offer with builder's merchant Travis Perkins to help residents make their homes warmer and reduce energy bills. • There is 50% off (up to £200) on four insulation product options, with free delivery. • Loft insulation helps retain heat and reduce energy loss through the roof. It can pay for itself over time through energy savings. • The offer is open to all Suffolk residents until the allocated funding runs out. People can apply online via a form on greensuffolk.org.
'At Home' section of the Green Suffolk website Low Impact Living – Green Suffolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your home more energy-efficient, to support Suffolk's ambition of Net Zero by 2030.