



Epsom and Ewell homeless costs set to overshoot by £900k

25 November 2025



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is forecasting a substantial overspend on its homelessness budget this year, **as reported to the BBC**, with demand for help remaining “consistently high”.

According to figures provided by the council via the BBC, the number of people seeking assistance in the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year rose by 19% compared with the same period last year. The authority has already overspent by £587,412 in the first six months and now expects the gap to widen to £895,000 by March 2026.

Local and national pressures

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), who chairs the Community and Wellbeing Committee, told the BBC the pressures facing the borough echoed those “found nationwide”, driven largely by the lack of affordable, permanent housing and the continuing cost-of-living crisis.

He added that Epsom and Ewell faces its own structural challenges, including a limited supply of affordable private rented homes, no council-owned housing stock, and a long-standing shortage of social housing.

The council’s budget for 2025/26 was set on the assumption that 70 families would be in nightly paid temporary accommodation. However, as of 24 October, the figure had climbed to 114.

Prevention schemes and charity support

Councillor Woodbridge said the council was concentrating on homelessness prevention, expanding private sector leasing arrangements and making greater use of rent deposit schemes. Local charities are also involved in reducing demand for emergency housing, notably YMCA East Surrey, which provides guidance



and support for people at risk of losing their homes.

One woman from Redhill, who spoke to the BBC, said YMCA assistance stopped her falling into homelessness after a period of severe illness. She described how disability and post-traumatic stress disorder left her unable to work during and after the pandemic. With rent arrears mounting and her informal support network exhausted, she feared emergency accommodation was the next step. YMCA staff helped her with the paperwork and guided her into permanent housing.

A wider Surrey picture

Epsom and Ewell is not alone in facing escalating temporary accommodation bills. As reported by the BBC, Woking Borough Council expects to overspend by £350,000 this year, while Waverley Borough Council has forecast a £165,000 shortfall.

The national situation is equally stark. Government statistics published earlier this year showed the number of households in temporary accommodation in England at its highest level since records began in 1998, driven by rising private rents, the freeze on housing benefit Local Housing Allowance rates, and continued shortages of social housing. Councils across the South East report similar difficulties securing affordable lets for families, often at prices far above their budgets.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is expected to revisit its temporary accommodation strategy early in 2026 as financial pressures continue to mount.

Sam Jones - Reporter



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