

Article 4 Direction: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Evidence Document – January 2026

Removal of permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling-houses) to Use Class C4 (Houses in Multiple Occupation)

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Legislative context.....	4
3. National Planning Policy Context.....	5
4. Local Planning Policy Context.....	6
5. Defining houses of multiple occupation (HMOs).....	7
6. Evidence Base.....	9
7. Justification and proposed Article 4 Direction area.....	30
8. Procedural route of implementation.....	32

Executive Summary

This document sets out the evidence gathered to determine whether an Article 4 direction should be implemented in an area of Wyre Borough in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The summary of the findings is as follows:

- There are 173 HMO's in the Borough as a whole.
- The majority of the HMO's are concentrated in Fleetwood followed by Thornton-Cleveleys
- Pharos ward has the most HMO's, with 72 HMO's being located here which is also one of the most deprived wards in Wyre based on the indices of multiple deprivation (IMD).
- Many of the HMO's in operation are supported accommodation and accommodation provided by the Home Office, some of which does not require a licence or planning permission.
- The majority of HMO's in operation did not require planning permission and many do not require a licence.
- There is a correlation between lower property prices and the intensification of HMO's.
- The concentration of HMO's is impacting upon the Environmental Services department, for example they have increased refuse collections for some of the HMO's.
- Most Lancashire district authorities have implemented an Article 4 direction to positively influence the character and amenities of their areas.
- The numbers of licenses granted has steadily increased each year since 2021
- In 2025/26 there were nearly three times the amount of licenses issued for HMO's as there were in 2021/22.
- Anti-social behaviour reports and reports of violent crimes against a person are highest in the wards that also have the most HMO's.

Therefore, based on the evidence it is recommended that an Article 4 direction is implemented for HMO's in Fleetwood and Thornton-Cleveleys, with the remaining parts of the Borough to be monitored to ensure this direction does not cause any overspill or intensification into other parts of Wyre.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This evidence document sets out the national and local policy context and supporting evidence as to justify the introduction of a new Article 4 Direction to control Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) within the defined areas of Fleetwood and Thornton-Cleveleys.
- 1.2 Under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO) the introduction of the Article 4 Direction will remove permitted development rights for the change of use from dwelling houses (Use Class C3) to houses in multiple occupancy (Use Class C4) for 3 to 6 persons.

2. Legislative context

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2010 describes use 'Class C4 as houses in multiple occupation' (HMO) which is defined as 'use of a dwellinghouse by not more than six residents'. These are shared houses occupied by unrelated individuals as their only, or main residence, who share basic amenities.
- 2.2 HMOs with seven or more occupants fall into the Use Class 'Sui Generis'. As these are referred to as large scale, a change of use from a dwellinghouse to a large HMO already requires planning permission.
- 2.3 Usually a proposed change of use, from a dwellinghouse (Class C3) to Class C4 HMO (no more than six residents), would meet the definition of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, giving permission to carry out works under permitted development, subject to conditions.
- 2.4 An Article 4 Direction withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO). Therefore, implementing an Article 4 Direction will result in any proposed change of use to a property, covered by the direction, from Class C3 to Class C4, requiring planning permission from the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 2.5 Schedule 3 of the GPDO sets out the procedures for Article 4 Directions. Paragraph 2 is applicable for introducing Article 4 Directions with immediate effect, this outlines the consultation process and procedures required which will be covered in Section 8 of this document.

3. National Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 Paragraph 54 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) states the following: The use of Article 4 Direction to remove national permitted development rights should:
- a) Where they relate to change from non-residential use to residential use, be limited to situations where an Article 4 Direction is necessary to avoid wholly unacceptable adverse impacts (this could include the loss of the essential core of a primary shopping area which would seriously undermine its vitality and viability, but would be very unlikely to extend to the whole of a town centre);
 - b) In other cases, be limited to situations where an Article 4 Direction is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area (this could include the use of Article 4 Directions to require planning permission for the demolition of local facilities.
 - c) In all cases, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.
- 3.2 Further guidance is set out in Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK. The introduction of an Article 4 Direction must be justified for its extent and a purpose to remove specific permitted development rights with temporary or permanent effect. This does not restrict development, rather it provides the opportunity to the LPA to consider the proposal through the planning process.

4. Local Planning Policy Context

Adopted Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031) (incorporating partial update of 2022)

- 4.1 The Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031) (incorporating the partial update of 2022) was adopted in January 2023. This was a revised replacement of the Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031) retaining all policies except those revised by the partial update.
- 4.2 The revised Local Plan contains Policy HP10 Houses in Multiple Occupation. The policy states HMOs will be permitted provided they meet the requirements of the Core Development Management Policies and a list of criteria. The criteria consider impact of harm to nearby residents and character of the surrounding areas, unacceptable over concentrated use having an adverse effect on amenity, appropriate outdoor space including parking, refuse facilities.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Planning Advisory Notes

- 4.3 Wyre Council do not have any Supplementary Planning Documents or Planning Advisory Notes relating to HMO's within Wyre's Local Development Framework.

Emerging Wyre Local Plan (2022-2040)

- 4.4 The emerging Wyre Local Plan is proposing amendments to the existing HMO policy and a new policy regarding accommodation for vulnerable persons. High concentrations of these provisions within a neighbourhood can result in harmful impacts including, community cohesion issues, high turnover of occupants, poor upkeep of houses and gardens, refuse collection issues, adverse impact on the affordability of rents, noise and disturbance and issues with parking provision. The aim of the updated and new policies for the emerging local plan, which should be complementary to one another, is to restrict the intensification of HMOs across the district and limit the expansion of existing properties in Wyre.

5. Defining houses of multiple occupation (HMOs)

Definition

- 5.1 A HMO is a property rented to at least three people who are not from one 'household' but share a common space such as a toilet, bathroom or kitchen. A household could be a single person or family, which includes couples, relatives, half-relatives, step-parents or step-children.
- 5.2 To be classified as a HMO the accommodation must be used by persons as their only or main residence. This includes full-time students in further or higher education, those seeking refuge in temporary accommodation, provided accommodation for migrant or seasonal workers and accommodation provided by a private landlord for the occupation of asylum seekers and their dependents.
- 5.3 Night shelters or hostels providing accommodation to those experiencing homelessness, may qualify as an individuals' only residency even if the accommodation was overnight.

Housing Act, Council Tax and Planning

- 5.4 Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004 provides a definition of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO):
- (1) For the purposes of this Act a building or a part of a building is a "house in multiple occupation" if –
- (a) It meets the conditions of subsection (2) ("the standard test");
 - (b) It meets the conditions of subsection (3) ("the self-contained flat test");
 - (c) It meets the conditions of subsection (4) ("the converted building test");
 - (d) An HMO declaration is in force in respect of it under section 255; or
 - (e) It is a converted block of flats to which section 257 applies.
- 5.5 Further detail regarding criteria for these tests is outlined throughout section 254. A HMO could be a house or an individual flat that is in multiple occupation. The criteria to meet the self-contained flat test are the same as the standard test.
- 5.6 The Council Tax (Chargeable Dwellings and Liability for Owners) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 defines HMO properties for Council tax purposes. The definition is mostly similar than that provided by the Housing Act, although does not include converted blocks of flats. Properties which are exempt from HMO regulations are not exempt from the definition of a HMO for council tax purposes.

- 5.7 For planning purposes, HMOs are defined based upon the number of individuals or individual households in the property as discussed in Section 2.
- 5.8 Numerous searches on LPA websites have shown that the definition provided by the Housing Act 2004 is used to determine if a property is defined as a HMO and The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2010 determines which class the property falls under for planning purposes.
- 5.9 It is also important to note that student accommodation (halls) often fall under the HMO definition. However, halls of residence (or other accommodation occupied by students) that are managed or controlled by one of the education establishments listed in the regulations are exempt from licencing provisions.

HMO Licences

- 5.10 Whether an HMO requires a licence or is exempt from requiring a licence, does not determine whether it can be used and occupied as a HMO. A licenced HMO refers to a house that meets the mandatory licencing criteria, these are required by properties that are occupied by five or more people, forming two or more households, who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom. Under the Housing Act Section 232, the Council are required to maintain a public register of all mandatory licenced HMOs in the Wyre Borough. This register can be made available to view at our Council offices by making a prior appointment with the Housing Services Manager.
- 5.11 If a HMO does not meet the criteria required for a licence, it is referred to as a licenced exempt HMO. In addition, the following groups can provide and manage accommodation in the form of a HMO but do not require a licence to do so, the health service, private registered providers of social housing, a co-operative, a local authority, police or fire authority.
- 5.12 The Housing Act 2004 also provides powers, in certain closely prescribed circumstances, to Local Authorities to licence HMOs which are not covered by mandatory licencing. This is known as Additional Licencing. Furthermore, if HMOs are in a specific area defined within the Housing Act 2004, a selective licence is required. Wyre does not currently operate selective licencing.

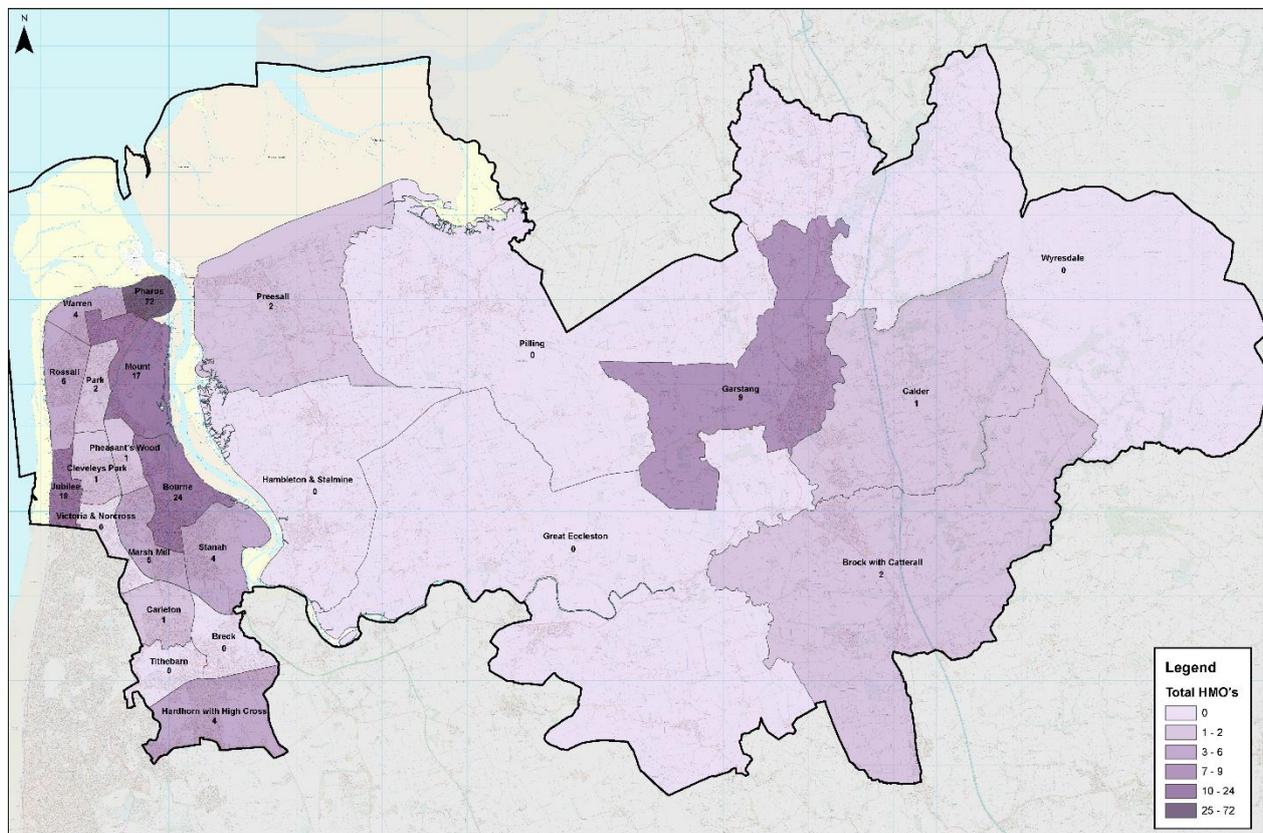
6. Evidence Base

- 6.1 The following sources are not conclusive or an exhaustive record of all HMOs in Wyre. There may be existing HMOs which are occupied but not known to the Council, as they may not have required planning permission or a licence to operate.
- 6.2 Our evidence shows a total of 173 HMO's in the Wyre Borough (as of November 2025), which are particularly prevalent in Fleetwood and Thornton-Cleveleys. The highest concentration of HMO's is in the Pharos Ward of Fleetwood.
- 6.3 Of the 173 HMO's, 71 are licenced and 102 are unlicensed/licence exempt. 40 of the HMO's are supported accommodation. 51% of the HMO's are SERCO accommodation.

Ward	Licensed	License Exempt	TOTAL
Bourne	12	12	24
Breck	0	0	0
Brock with Catterall	0	2	2
Calder	0	1	1
Carleton	0	1	1
Cleveleys Park	0	1	1
Garstang	0	9	9
Great Eccleston	0	0	0
Hambleton & Stalmine-with-Staynall	0	0	0
Hardhorn with Highcross	0	4	4
Jubilee	8	11	19
Marsh Mill	1	4	5
Mount	8	9	17
Park	2	0	2
Pharos	36	36	72
Pheasants Wood	0	1	1
Pilling	0	0	0
Preesall	1	1	2
Rossall	1	5	6
Stanah	1	2	4
Tithebarne	0	0	0
Victoria and Norcross	0	0	0
Warren	1	3	4
Wyresdale	0	0	0
TOTAL	71	102	173

- 6.4 When grouping the wards and analysing the data by settlement, Fleetwood has the highest number of HMO's followed by Thornton-Cleveleys. 24% of HMO's are supported accommodation.

Town/Village	Total Number of HMO's	Of which are Supported Accommodation
Bowgreave	1	0
Cabus	1	1
Catterall	2	1
Fleetwood	101	19
Garstang	7	4
Knott-End-On-Sea	1	0
Nateby	1	1
Poulton-le-Fylde	5	3
Preesall	1	1
Thornton-Cleveleys	53	10
TOTAL	173	40



wyre council HMO's per ward

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wyre Council Licence Number: 100018720 2025

HMO Licences

6.5 The following table shows the number of additions to the HMO licence register in Wyre, broken down by year and the running total for each year of licensed HMOs. The data shows a doubling of licenses issued during 2023-2025 and a steady increase in the number of licenced HMO during this period.

Year of licence issued	Number of HMO licences issued	Total number of licensed HMOs
2021/22	8	26
2022/23	12	34
2023/24	20	41
2024/25	21	53
2025/26* part way through year	1	71

6.6 Prior to October 2018, mandatory licencing only applied to properties occupied by 5 or more people and were 3 storeys and above. From 1st October 2019, 2-storey properties, flats and bungalows which operated as HMO's with 5 or more occupants require a licence.

Student Accommodation

6.7 Wyre has a limited amount of student accommodation, the majority of which is in Fleetwood, and is used by students attending the Nautical Campus in Fleetwood.

Impact of short term lets

6.8 A search on some holiday letting websites shows a very small number of rooms available in Wyre. Most of the listings are in the neighbouring Borough of Blackpool. This very limited evidence does not show what, if any, impact this may have on Wyre.

Conservation Area

6.9 Wyre has several conservation areas, which have been reviewed and consulted upon. It is expected that changes will be adopted in early 2026. These areas are Calder Vale, Churchtown, Lower Dolphinholme, Fleetwood, Garstang, Poulton and Scorton.

6.10 Two of these areas contain HMO's, Fleetwood and Garstang. There is a single HMO within Garstang conservation area and 54 HMO's in the Fleetwood conservation area.

6.11 The current conservation area appraisals did not identify any specific issues in the conservation area relating to HMO's. However, during officer site visits there was evidence of additional bins per property which in some cases were overflowing in the front yard, as well as numerous letterboxes and doorbells; broken windows and doors; which presents a threat to the heritage value, character and appearance of the conservation area as well as creating a visual and environmental health impact.

6.12 In the Pharos Ward several 'to let' signs were displayed suggesting that properties are increasingly being converted for use as HMO's within the conservation area.



6.13 There have been several planning enforcement and housing standards complaints received about HMO's in the conservation area. The following table shows the number of complaints received each year. The complaints are mainly about unauthorised conversion to a HMO, queries over unauthorised change of use and non-compliance with approved plans.

Year	Number of planning enforcement complaints	Number of housing standards complaints
2021	1	10
2022	0	2
2023	3	8
2024	4	5
2025	2	5

Planning Applications

6.14 Applications relating to HMO's typically are submitted as a full application or request for a lawful development certificate. The following table shows applications submitted and determined between 2021 and 2025.

Application Number	Type	Decision
21/01222/FUL	Full Application	Permitted
22/00741/FUL	Full Application	Refused
23/00069/FUL	Full Application	Permitted
23/00646/FUL	Full application	Permitted
23/00764/FUL	Full Application	Permitted
24/00797/FUL	Full Application	Permitted
24/00521/FUL	Full Application	Permitted
24/00450/FUL	Full Application	Permitted
24/00383/LAWP	Lawful Certificate	Is Lawful

6.15 Of the nine applications submitted to the local planning authority, there were eight full applications and one lawful development certificate. One application was refused with the remaining being permitted.

6.16 The list of applications above shows an increase from 2023-24 on previous years.

Comparing Planning Permissions to the HMO Register

6.17 In comparison to the numbers of licenses granted for HMO's only a few of these premises currently require planning permission. The table below compares the number of permissions granted by the local planning authority and number of HMO Licenses given.

Year	Planning Approvals (this data is captured per calendar year)	Number of licences granted (this data is captured per financial year)
2021	1	8
2022	0	12
2023	3	20
2024	4	21

2025	0	1
------	---	---

6.18 The data indicates there are far more HMO's in use than those approved for HMO use, through the granting of planning permission.

Spatial Portrait of Wyre

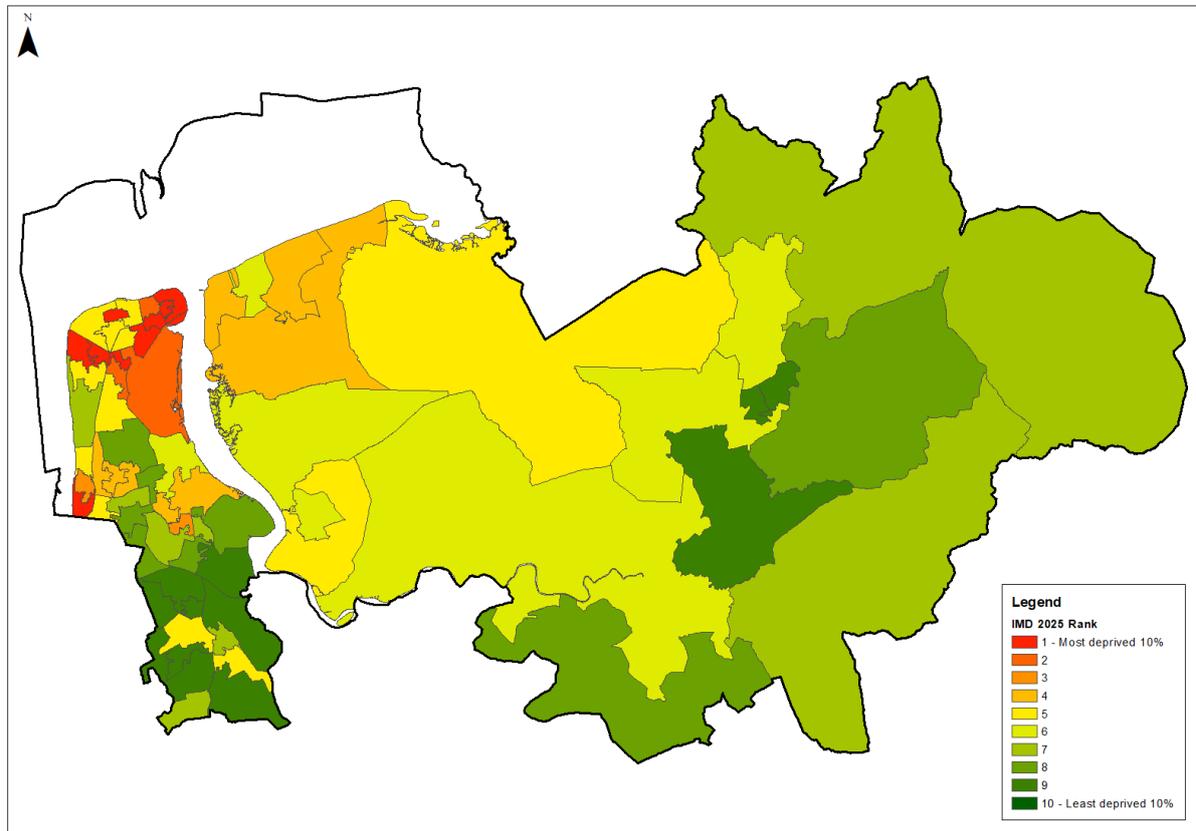
6.19 Wyre Council covers 282 square kilometres over 24 wards. Based on the mid 2024 estimated, Wyre had a population of 118,743 with a population density of 421 per km² which is below the England average.

Deprivation

6.20 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England. It is based on 39 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains which are combined and appropriately weighted. The indicators include income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, skills training, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment.

6.21 IMD is calculated for every Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in England. Areas are ranked from the most deprived area (ranking 1) to the least deprived area.

6.22 The 2025 IMD illustrates that Wyre was ranked 150th most deprived authority out of 296 district and unitary authorities in England, when measured by the average LSOA rank. This data set shows that spatially, there are significant differences between the urban and rural parts of the borough, with the more deprived areas being found exclusively in the urban areas particularly Fleetwood.



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wyre Council Licence Number: 100018720 2025

6.23 The map above shows the significant difference across the Borough, with many of the wards in the urban peninsula within the most deprived.

6.24 There are correlations between those wards which have high numbers of HMO's and deprivation wards. Pharos, Jubilee, Mount and Bourne are the wards with the most HMO's which all score as some of the most deprived in our borough.

Housing and Homelessness

6.25 Wyre had a total of 53,346 dwellings in the 2021 census and 50,747 households. It is estimated that there will be a 21.2% increase in population in Wyre by 2042.

6.26 HMO's in Wyre can attract individuals from outside the district. Any person who becomes resident for a minimum period of 6 months will establish a local connection to an authority, which can support access to housing and homelessness services should an individual seek assistance. An increase of HMO's may increase demand on housing services if the accommodation is not of a secure nature, or of good quality.

Wyre's Homelessness Statistics

6.27 The following two paragraphs are taken from data published by government here [Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tables-on-homelessness)

- 6.28 In the latest reported quarter, 0.44 of households per 1000 were found to be homeless. Wyre was ranked 12th lowest out of 296 authorities.
- 6.29 The following table shows that the number of homelessness assessments has slowly increased from 2021-2024. 2024/25 data has not been published and 2020/21 captured the period during the COVID pandemic where the government urged authorities to get ‘everyone in’ which is likely to account for the spike in assessments. The data shows that the percentage of presentations of single people has steadily reduced, year on year from 2021/22.

Financial Year	Number of Homelessness Assessments	% of which were single people
2023/24	472	58%
2022/23	456	67%
2021/22	448	77%
2020/21	528	85%

Supported Housing

- 6.30 The Council encourages HMO providers of supported accommodation to engage with the local authority at an early stage and will jointly inspect premises with the fire service prior to and during occupation to ensure they are of a good standard. However, it is worth noting that engagement with the local authority is often not mandatory.
- 6.31 Whilst Wyre Council is not part of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme - GOV.UK) it is still seeking to monitor and manage standards within the supported housing sector, in the borough, by reviewing and inspecting provision where capacity allows. This work will include speaking with residents of the provision to ensure they are being appropriately supported and analysing data from homelessness presentations and housing enforcement to measure the success of provision.
- 6.32 A review of the supported housing provision in Wyre shows concentrated areas of provision, particularly in deprived areas which are then occupied by often vulnerable people which can result in increased demand on already pressured services such as health and policing. Concentration of HMO's and supported housing is being considered as part of the future local plan.
- 6.33 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 was passed in parliament in 2023. The act intends to regulate supported housing and will require provision to be licensed. The act is yet to be implemented, as of May 2025 the government were consulting on the licence proposals the results of which are expected in 2026. The act also allows for the

Secretary of State to create a specific use class for supported housing under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 within 3 years of the licence requirement being implemented and reviewed.

Housing Register

- 6.34 Wyre Council is part of the Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings System, My Home Choice Fylde Coast (MHCFC). Regenda Homes process housing register applications submitted to Wyre on our behalf.
- 6.35 Applicants must have a local connection to one of the three participating boroughs (Blackpool or Wyre or Fylde) to apply to MHCFC. The application process requires applicants to provide details of their current residency and household details, applicants can choose to provide their reason for seeking accommodation via the housing register.
- 6.36 The postcode of the housing register applicants has been matched to postcodes of known HMO's within Wyre. This has then been compared against applicants reasons for applying.
- 6.37 Analysing housing register data for those applicants registered with Wyre/Regenda, there are 16 applicants who currently live in HMO's within Wyre. Their reasons for wishing to be rehoused varies, and is as follows:

Reason applicants wish to be rehoused via the housing register	Number of applicants
To move to independent living	7
Neighbour issues/Anti-social behaviour from within the HMO	3
Requires ground floor accommodation	3
Landlord selling property	1
Disrepair	1
Financial difficulties	1

- 6.38 Most applicants residing in HMO's in Wyre who had applied to join the housing register were living in supported accommodation which occupiers can reside in for up to two years, until they are ready to live independently. See paragraph 6.30 onwards which details further information about supported housing HMO's.

Housing Quality

6.39 The 2021 census information shows that Wyre has a very low level of overcrowding, across the Lancashire-14 authorities Wyre was ranked the lowest.

Area name	Occupancy rating of rooms: -1 (%)	Occupancy rating of rooms: -2 or less (%)	Total % overcrowding
Blackburn with Darwen	6.3	2.3	8.6
Blackpool	3.3	0.3	3.6
Burnley	5.4	1.7	7.1
Chorley	2.3	0.3	2.6
Fylde	2.4	0.2	2.6
Hyndburn	5.6	1.6	7.2
Lancaster	3.3	0.4	3.7
Pendle	5.8	2.9	8.7
Preston	5.0	1.2	6.2
Ribble Valley	2.7	0.3	3.0
Rossendale	4.3	0.9	5.2
South Ribble	2.2	0.3	2.5
West Lancashire	2.6	0.3	2.9
Wyre	2.0	0.2	2.2

6.40 A low figure is positive however it is important that this is maintained, as evidence¹ shows that overcrowding has a detrimental effect on household members physical and mental health. 11.5% of households² in Wyre are in fuel poverty. This is slightly higher than the mean for all single tier and county councils in England which is 11.4%.

Wyre's Housing Stock and House Prices

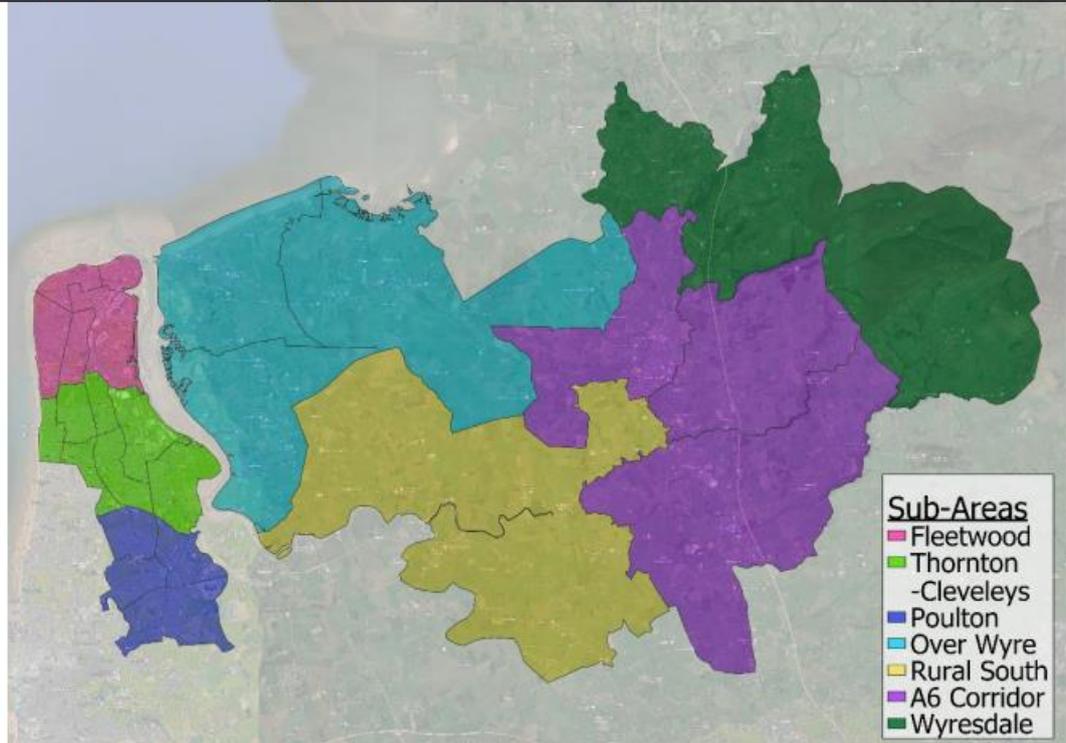
6.41 In Wyre the housing stock is dominated by detached and semi-detached homes, making up 30% and 40% of all dwellings respectively.

6.42 Wyre Housing Needs Assessment 2024 focuses on sub-areas of the Borough, the following map shows how the sub-areas are divided.

¹ [Overcrowded housing \(England\) - House of Commons Library](#)

² Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Fuel poverty sub regional statistics, [Percentage of households in fuel poverty](#), **Data updated:** 01 May 2025

Sub-area	Wards
Fleetwood	Mount, Park, Pharos, Rossall, Warren
Thornton-Cleveleys	Bourne, Cleveleys Park, Jubilee, Marsh Mill, Pheasant's Wood, Stanah, Victoria & Norcross
Poulton	Breck, Carleton, Hardhorn with High Cross, Tithebarn
Over Wyre	Hambleton & Stalmine, Pilling, Preesall
Rural South	Great Eccleston
A6 Corridor	Brock with Catterall, Calder, Garstang
Wyresdale	Wyresdale



Source: Map provided by Icen Projects

- 6.43 The HNA 2024 shows that the median house price is significantly lower in Fleetwood than it is along the A6 corridor and Wyresdale. The median house price in Wyre is £186,000 this is a drop from the previous year which was £200,000. The data shows that overall, in the last 10 years the trend is upwards, last year was an exception to that trend.
- 6.44 In 2022 the median affordability ratio for Wyre was 6.18 which marked an improvement for Wyre in affordability, in contrast to national trends.
- 6.45 Based on data from the Office for National Statistics 2024, Wyre was ranked as the 72nd most affordable local authority out of 318 in England.
- 6.46 The following table compares all the Lancashire authorities median house prices for the last 4 years.

Lancashire Local Authority	Median House Price 2024	Median House Price 2023	Median House Price 2022	Median House Price 2021
Wyre	£186,000	£200,000	£185,000	£185,750
Fylde	£230,000	£242,000	£225,000	£224,995
Blackpool	£133,000	£135,000	£130,000	£125,000
Preston	£178,000	£190,000	£177,995	£172,500
Lancaster	£195,000	£188,000	£180,000	£180,000
Blackburn with Darwen	£143,500	£155,500	£140,000	£145,000
West Lancashire	£230,000	£230,000	£210,000	£220,000
Ribble Valley	£260,000	£269,995	£260,000	£253,127
Burnley	£116,500	£116,000	£125,000	£119,000
Chorley	£215,000	£205,000	£189,500	£197,000
Hyndburn	£130,000	£126,500	£127,000	£120,000
Pendle	£135,000	£135,000	£130,000	£135,000
South Ribble	£200,000	£212,000	£196,998	£190,000
Rossendale	£175,000	£175,000	£167,125	£170,000

6.47 Analysing the Lancashire authorities median house prices, Wyre is ranked 9th out of 14th lowest priced.

6.48 The following table is taken from the HNA 2024 which is sourced from the Land Registry Price Paid Data.

Sub-area from Housing Needs Study 2024	Median House Price
Fleetwood	£126,000
Thornton-Cleveleys	£174,100
Poulton	£210,500
Over Wyre	£186,200
Rural South	£233,300
A6 Corridor	£250,700
Wyresdale	£412,800

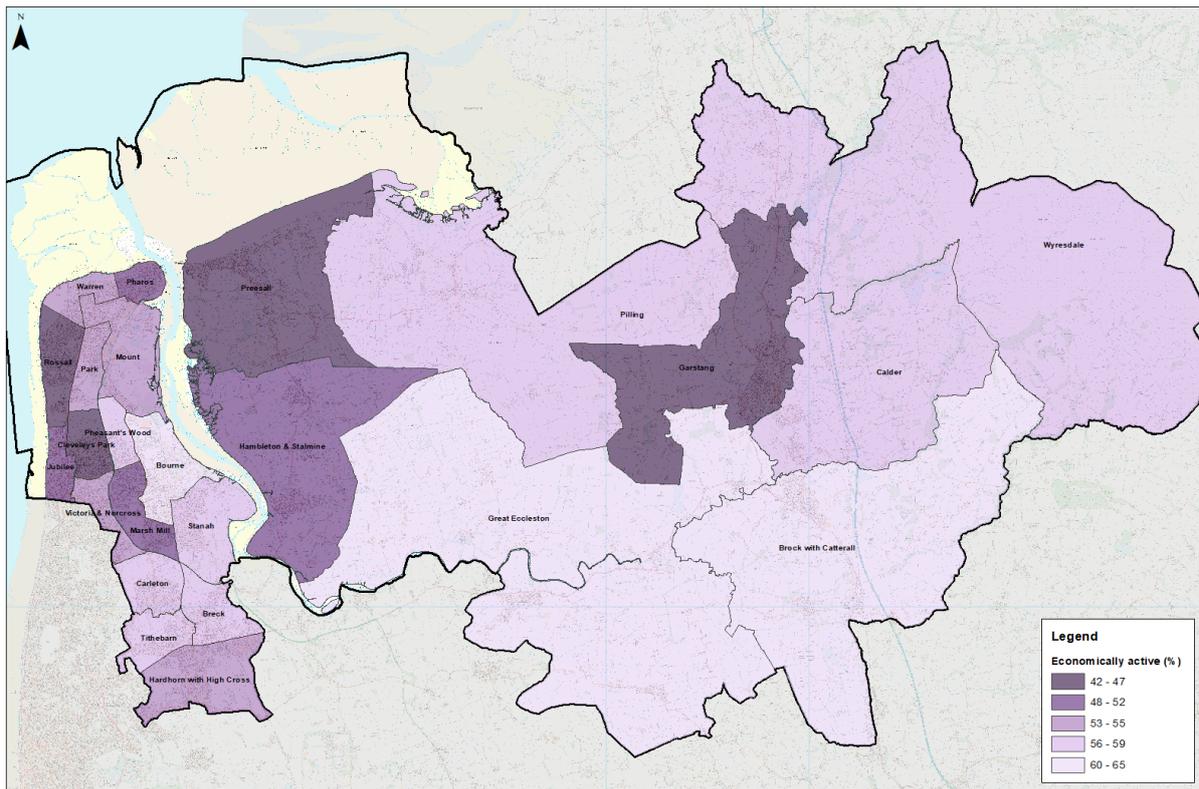
6.49 Comparing median house prices across Lancashire, against specific parts of Wyre you can see that the price in certain sub-areas of Wyre is significantly lower than the table above. The lower house prices correlate with the areas where majority of the HMO's are located. The higher the house price, the fewer HMO's.

6.50 A brief search on Rightmove shows a number of 3 bedroom homes, and larger, for sale in Fleetwood starting from as little as £65,000. Low house prices make it more likely that landlords will purchase properties to then split into smaller units to maximise their rental income. In turn this makes Fleetwood and potentially Thornton-Cleveleys an attractive

choice for vulnerable and low-income households thus the cycle continues, increasing the number of HMOs in these areas.

Employment and Income within Wyre

- 6.51 The employment rate in Wyre is 67.7% which is lower than the average rate in Great Britain.
- 6.52 The following map shows the rate of economic activity for working age people across Wyre, broken down by ward.



wyre Number of all usual residents aged 16 to 74 who are economically active (Census 2021)

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wyre Council Licence Number: 100018720 2025

Average Earnings³

- 6.53 In Wyre, median workplace-based earnings are lower than their respective residence-based earnings. The weekly workplace-based estimate was £639 and the weekly residency-based estimate was £709 which is £70 per week difference. The weekly workplace-based earnings is lower than the average for England. Gross annual earnings for all employees by place of residence stood at £38,048 in Wyre in 2025.

Household income

³ **Source:** Nomis, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Median gross weekly pay of employees by residence (resident base), **Data updated:** 03 Nov 2025
 Nomis, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Median gross weekly pay of employees working in the area (work base), **Data updated:** 03 Nov 2025

- 6.54 In Wyre, 20.4% of the population was income-deprived in 2025. Of the 296 local authorities in England, Wyre is ranked 149th most income deprived.
- 6.55 Of the 69 neighbourhoods in Wyre, 13 were among the 20% most income-deprived in England. These are concentrated across parts of Fleetwood.
- 6.56 In the least deprived neighbourhood in Wyre, 4.2% of people are estimated to be income deprived. In the most deprived neighbourhood, 41.9% of people are estimated to be income deprived. The gap between these two, which are called internal disparity, is 37.7 percentage points.
- 6.57 The gross disposable household income per head is £22,854 in Wyre. This has increased each year and for the last 4 years but is still below the national average.

Unemployment and benefit claimants

- 6.58 The percentage of people aged 16-64 who are unemployed in Wyre is 6.1%. which is higher than the national average for England which stands at 4.2%⁴.
- 6.59 In 2024, the claimant count in Wyre was 3.2 which is an increase from the previous year.
- 6.60 Page 67 of the Housing Needs Assessment 2024 shows that around 83% of all privately rented households in Fleetwood claim housing benefit or Universal Credit. The information which was obtained from the Department of Work and Pensions and the 2021 Census shows that Fleetwood followed by Thornton-Cleveleys has the highest percentages of claimants across the Borough.

Figure 4.22: Number of Housing Benefit claimants in the private rented sector and size of the sector (March 2021)

	Housing Benefit	Universal Credit	Total	% of total	Households in PRS	% of PRS claiming
Fleetwood	809	1,256	2,065	38.8%	2,494	82.8%
Thornton-Cleveleys	873	909	1,782	33.4%	2,669	66.8%
Poulton	240	359	599	11.2%	1,186	50.5%
Over Wyre	276	203	479	9.0%	689	69.5%
Rural South	26	32	58	1.1%	172	33.7%
A6 Corridor	165	135	300	5.6%	705	42.6%
Wyresdale	17	28	45	0.8%	143	31.5%
TOTAL	2,406	2,922	5,328	100.0%	8,058	66.1%

Source: Department of Work and Pensions and 2021 Census

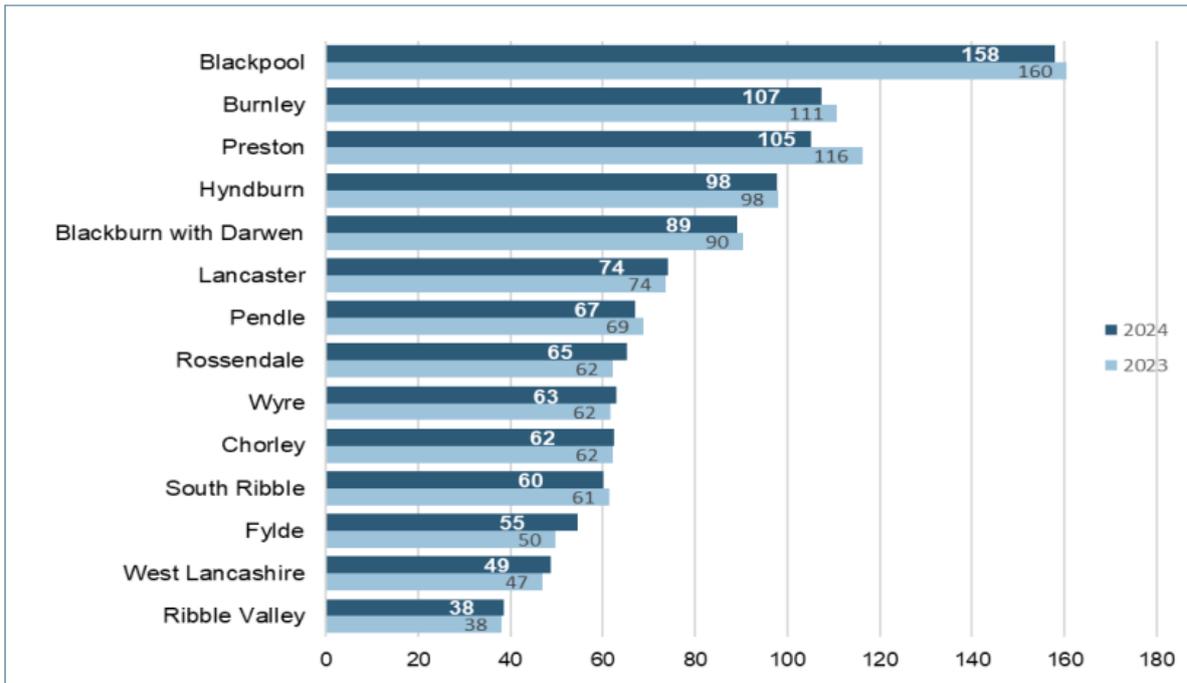
⁴ **Source:** Nomis, Annual Population Survey, Population - Percent of people of working age who are unemployed, **Data updated:** 14 Oct 2025

Crime

6.61 The chart below compares the Lancashire authority's crime rate per 1000 households for 2023 and 2024. Wyre is ranked 9th out of 14 authorities and saw a slight decrease of 1 from 2023 to 2024.

6.62 Up to the end of quarter 2 of 2025, this had decreased further to 59.1 per 1000 people. The average across Lancashire is 72 crimes per 1000 people therefore Wyre ranks below average.

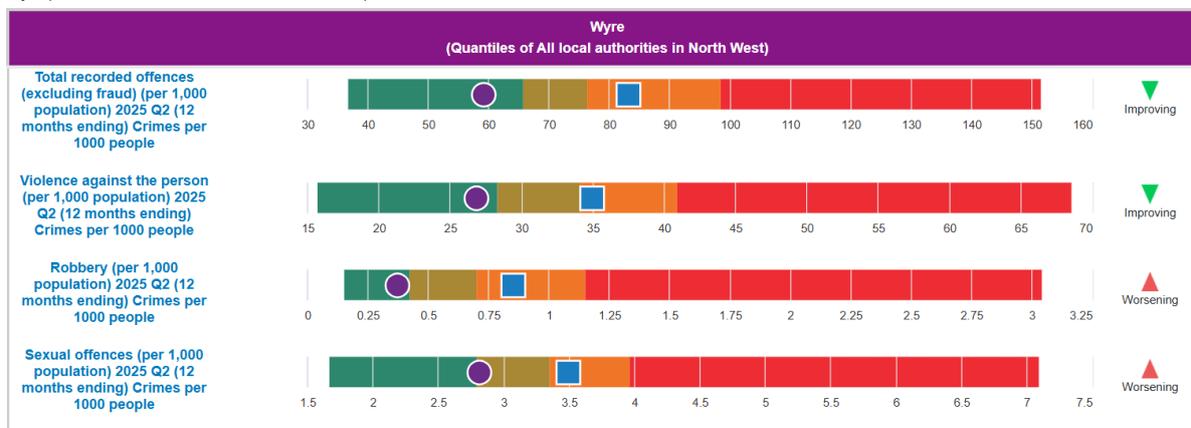
Chart 3: Recorded crime rate per 1,000 population/households for headline offences, by CSP area, year ending March 2024



Source: [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/crime-in-england-and-wales)

6.63 The number of recorded offences (excluding fraud) in Wyre for the past 12 months was 7,018 crimes. This ranks Wyre as 6th out of 36 local

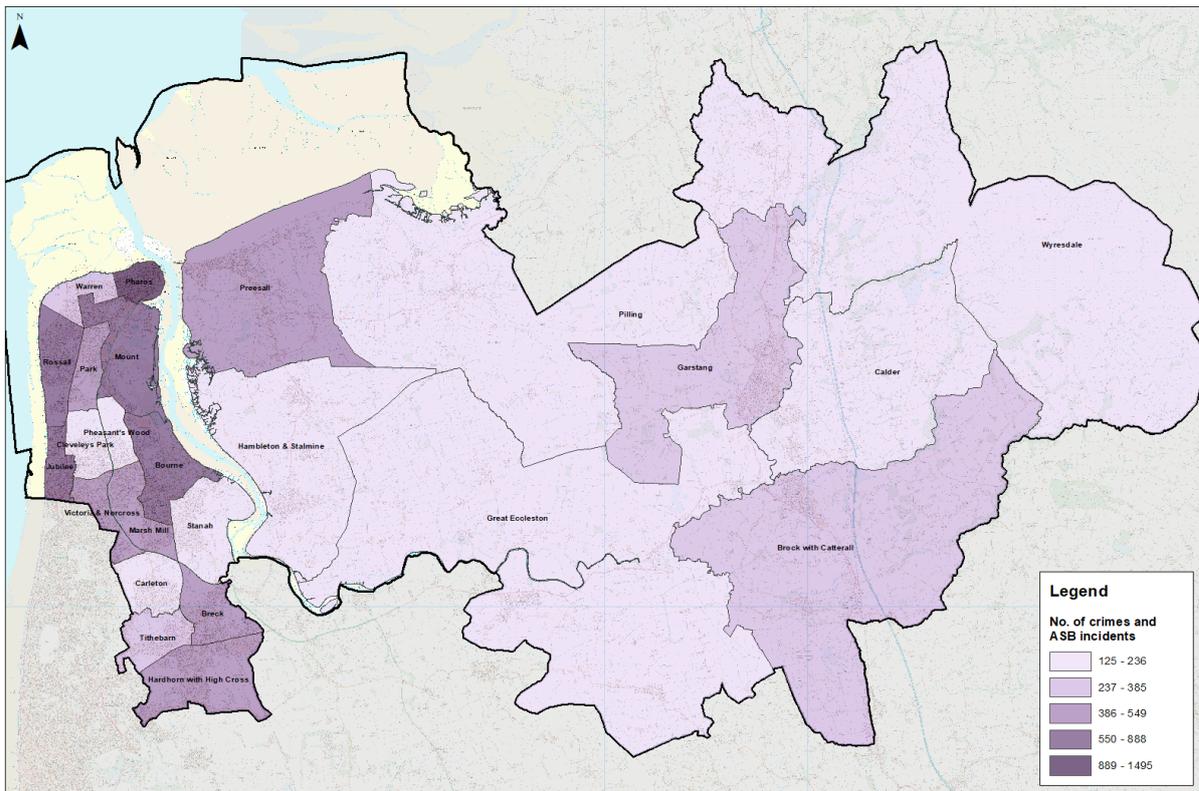
Wyre (Quantiles of All local authorities in North West)



● Wyre
■ Mean for All local authorities in North West
 Indicators that have a polarity will show a direction of travel (D.O.T) label of: Improving, No change or Worsening
 Indicators that have no polarity will show a direction of travel (D.O.T) label of: Increasing, No change or Decreasing

authorities across the North West. This information was sourced from [Crime and justice - Office for National Statistics](#)

- 6.64 There were 3,182 violence against the person offences recorded for Wyre in 2025 quarter 2. Violence against the person crimes include homicide, death or serious injury caused by illegal driving, violence with or without injury, stalking and harassment.
- 6.65 There were 689 records crimes of theft for Wyre in 2025 quarter 2. This figure had decreased from the last equivalent period.
- 6.66 The following map shows the numbers of crimes and anti-social behaviour reports over a 12-month period broken down by ward.



wyre council Total number of crimes and ASB incidents recorded between October 2024 and September 2025

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wyre Council Licence Number: 100018720 2025

- 6.67 Data also shows that for the period March 2025-May 2025 Pharos Ward recorded the highest number of 'violence against a person' offences which was a 12% increase on the previous month. Comparing this period to the same period for the previous year, Pharos ward also had the greatest increase of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents (148 for March-May 2024 and 172 for March-May 2025).
- 6.68 The following table ranks the wards in order of the highest number of ASB incidents to the lowest, based on data for the period March 2024-October 2025.

Ward	Ranking
------	---------

Pharos	1st
Jubilee	2 nd
Mount	3 rd
Rossall	4 th
Bourne	5 th
Park	6 th
Preesall	7 th
Brock with Catterall	8 th
Hardhorn with Highcross	9 th
Garstang	10 th
Marsh Mill	11 th
Breck	12 th
Victoria & Norcross	13 th
Warren	14 th
Tithebarne	15 th
Hambleton & Stalmine with Staynall	16 th
Stanah	17 th
Cleveleys Park	18 th
Pilling	=19 th
Great Eccleston	=19 th
Carleton	20 th
Calder	21 st
Wyresdale	22 nd
Pheasants Wood	23 rd

6.69 The highest ranked wards are also where the most HMO's are in the Borough.

Clear, Hold, Build (CHB)

6.70 Clear Hold Build (CHB) is an innovative framework, developed by the Home Office, to help police forces tackle serious and organised crime. In 2023 Lancashire was one of seven pilot areas, with a CHB area being adopted in an area of Fleetwood with evidenced serious crime gang activity. More information can be found about this in the [annual report 2023/24 for Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner](#). Significant work has been undertaken for under CHB by numerous stakeholders, including Wyre Council in particular housing, community safety and environmental departments. The core aims are to reduce serious organised crime threat, reduce crime, and help local communities become more resilient to serious organised crime in the future. A review of the pilot can be found here [Evaluation of Clear, Hold, Build: A local response to serious and organised crime - GOV.UK](#).

Streetscene and Physical Environment

6.71 HMO's increase the density of residents in an area, potentially creating an imbalance which can put pressure on the streetscape and physical environment. Areas or clusters of HMO's can cause pressures on parking provision, waste facilities and community infrastructure. Due to the

transient nature of some residents, communities may become imbalanced and unsustainable.

6.72 We have analysed the known HMO addresses against complaints of anti-social behaviour (including noise complaints). The following table shows the number of complaints received by year, which demonstrates that the highest number of complaints were received in 2025. This data was obtained in October which means that in 10 months alone there were nearly as many complaints as the previous 4 years combined.

Year	Number of complaints
2020	2
2021	2
2022	3
2023	2
2024	2
2025	10

6.73 The following photographs were taken during recent site visits, which show some noticeable examples of the visual harm and pressure on the physical environment, excessive numbers of recycling bins and waste, letterboxes, doorbells. During this information gathering exercise it was established that additional waste collections are being undertaken at several HMO addresses due to the amount of rubbish accumulated. This creates additional pressure on resources and further intensification of HMO's will only add to this.





6.74 The known HMO addresses have been compared to the planning enforcement records. HMO's within the conservation area are listed in paragraph 6.10 In non-conservation areas, since 2020 there have been 8 planning enforcement cases relating to HMO's, the nature of the complaints has been unauthorised conversion of residential houses to HMOs and unauthorised change of use relating to HMO's.

6.75 Since 2020 that have been 5 complaints to the Housing Standards team about HMO's which have resulted in enforcement action being taken.

Life Expectancy and Mortality Rate

6.76 Life expectancy at birth for females is significantly worse in Wyre (81.9 years) compared to England (83.1 years).

6.77 Life expectancy is 9.3 years lower for men, and 8.7 years lower for women, in the most deprived areas of Wyre than in the least deprived areas⁵.

Substance misuse

6.78 The following table shows the number of hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions for the period 2018-2023.

Year	Number of hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions
2018/19	767
2019/20	713
2020/21	656
2021/22	724
2022/23	776

6.79 The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 756 per 100,000 population, worse than the average for England⁶.



6.80 The following table shows the number of deaths for drug misuse per 100,000 in Wyre over the period 2018-2023 which is showing that the rate of deaths from drugs misuse is worsening.

Year	Deaths from drug misuse per 100,000 in Wyre
2018/19	5.8
2019/20	6.7
2020/21	5.8
2021/22	6.8
2022/23	7.0

Comparison with other Local Authorities

6.81 In Wyre, many of the HMO's, in use, are being used as supported accommodation or to provide accommodation on behalf of the Home Office. These are often in large concentrations in residential areas in the most deprived wards, as they are in other areas of Lancashire that have implemented an Article 4 directive.

⁵ 2019 Public Health Statistics – published 3/3/2020 - [E07000128](#)

⁶ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

6.82 In other parts of Lancashire, such as Lancaster and Preston, students are the primary occupiers of HMO's however this is not the case in Wyre.

6.83 Most Lancashire authorities have an Article 4 Direction in place. The following table shows the Lancashire authorities ranked by median house price (from the table at paragraph 6.46) as per the 2024 ONS data and which authorities have an Article 4 Direction for HMO's.

Lancashire Local Authority	Article 4 Direction for HMO's in place
Burnley	Yes
Hyndburn	Yes
Pendle	No
Blackpool	Yes
Blackburn and Darwen	Yes
Rossendale	Yes – Borough wide. Immediately in implemented September 2025
Preston	Yes
Lancaster	Yes
Wyre	-
South Ribble	No
Chorley	Yes – Borough wide. Immediately implemented September 2025.
West Lancashire	Yes
Fylde	No
Ribble Valley	No

6.84 There is a risk that neighbouring authorities who have implemented an Article 4 directive for HMO's could force HMO's to open in nearby Borough's.

6.85 In Preston, the Article 4 Direction was expanded following review; one of the factors for the expansion being an overspill from the existing directive areas.

7. Justification and proposed Article 4 Direction area

Rationale and Justification

- 7.1 Government guidance is that Article 4 directions should apply to the smallest geographical level possible.
- 7.2 The evidence presented through this document has demonstrated that HMO numbers have grown considerably in Fleetwood and Thornton-Cleveleys. This is consistent with the average house price being lower in these areas in comparison to the rest of the Borough.
- 7.3 The areas with the most HMO's also have a higher crime rate, so much so that Fleetwood is receiving specialist input from Lancashire Police/Government to implement 'Clear Hold Build' and tackle serious organised crime.
- 7.4 Without Council intervention, there is a risk that some of our most deprived wards in Wyre will see a continued intensification and will ultimately change the landscape of those areas causing harm by impacting character and amenity.
- 7.5 Further concentration of HMO's specifically in the conservation areas could also have a detrimental effect on the character and heritage of an area.
- 7.6 There is also a risk of HMO growth within the adjacent wards when this approach is implemented.

Proposed Article 4 Direction Area

- 7.7 To protect local amenity and the well-being of the area from further harm, the Council therefore proposed to apply the Article 4 Directions to cover the towns of Fleetwood and Thornton-Cleveleys.
- 7.8 The wards included in the proposed area are Bourne, Cleveleys Park, Jubilee, Marsh Mill, Mount, Park, Pharos, Pheasants Wood, Rossall, Stanah, Victoria & Norcross, Warren.
- 7.9 The following map shows the proposed area:



wyre council **Proposed Article 4 Direction Area**

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wyre Council Licence Number: 100018720 2025

- 7.10 As shown above, the proposed area is the smallest, most appropriate geographical level to apply for the reasons evidenced through this document.
- 7.11 The remaining towns and villages in Wyre are considered to be self-regulating due to higher house prices and rural locations dissuading their conversion to HMO's, by potential landlords. However, the Article 4

Direction will be subject to future monitoring and review and should issues disperse into those other areas and cause negative impact upon local amenity, then the boundaries will be re-considered.

- 7.12 The proposed Article 4 Direction would not remove the permitted development right for an existing Class C4 (small HMO's) to revert its main use back into Class C3, dwellinghouse.

8. Procedural route of implementation

- 8.1 An Article 4 Direction can be introduced with or without immediate effect.
- 8.2 It is recommended, based on the evidence, that the Council should utilise the immediate procedural route, to remove the permitted development rights for the conversion of residential properties into small HMO's.
- 8.3 The first step is to make the Article 4 direction. As soon as practicable after the Article 4 direction has been made, notice of the direction must be made available by local advertisement, site notices in at least two places, at the Council offices and a copy sent to the Secretary of State. Individual service of the notice on the owner or occupier of every part of the land within the Article 4 direction area will not take place due to the size of the direction making it impractical to serve notices on such a scale.
- 8.4 The notice must also specify a 21-day period for when representations can be made regarding the Article 4 direction.
- 8.5 An immediate Article 4 direction, unless confirmed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), will expire after 6 months from coming into force. Therefore, for the direction to remain permanence, it is required that the direction if confirmed by the LPA no sooner than 28 days following the latest date on which the notice was served but no later than 6 months from said date. As part of this confirmation process, any representations received must be taken into consideration.
- 8.6 As soon as practicable after the direction has been confirmed, the LPA must give notice of this confirmation and send a copy of the direction as confirmed to the Secretary of State.

Timescales

- 8.7 An indicative timescale as anticipated as follows:
18th Feb 2026: Delegated decision from the Assistant Director of Planning and Building Control.
25th Feb 2026: Article 4 direction is made and comes into force. The Secretary of State is notified, and the public notice is made available.

25th February - 19th March 2026: 21-day consultation runs on the Article 4 direction.

July 2026: The Article 4 direction is confirmed, considering consultation responses, and the Secretary of State is notified within 6 months from being made.

Risks and Mitigation Measures

8.8 The Council have set out identified risks associated with the approach of bringing the proposed Article 4(1) Direction into force within Wyre, these are set out within the table below.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>An immediate direction is introduced. In this time which could leave the Council exposed to the risk of financial compensation for a 12 month period.</p>	<p>Whilst it is acknowledged that this opens an avenue for compensation claims, it is considered that such compensation claims are likely to be minimal, based on similar cases at other Local Authorities, and the urgency to ensure the control takes precedence.</p>
<p>Planning applications for the conversion to an Article 4 Direction area are exempt from a planning fee.</p>	<p>The cost of processing applications will be met through the existing budget for the Development Management department.</p>
<p>Implementation of an Article 4 Direction could result in a reduction in the supply of HMO's.</p>	<p>The Council's Housing Needs Assessment 2024 identified no need for further HMO accommodation.</p>
<p>Transfer of displacement of problems to other areas in the Borough not covered by an Article 4 Direction.</p>	<p>The evidence shows a growth of HMOs in the most deprived wards that have the cheapest house prices. Other parts of the Borough are considered to be self-regulating due to higher house prices, better-quality housing stock and rural location thus dissuading conversion to HMO's.</p>
<p>The Secretary of State may intervene and reduce the area of Article 4 direction covers or halt the direction entirely.</p>	<p>Wyre Council believes it has strong evidence to justify such an Article 4 direction.</p>