

**County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**  
**Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025**

Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless					
Ambition	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
Review of County Durham lettings policy		<p>Review four areas of the policy in relation to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the housing register</li> <li>• Homelessness prevention</li> <li>• Medical assessment</li> <li>• Applicants with no housing need</li> </ul> <p>Review current access to housing for those applications requiring specialist accommodation, e.g. with adaptations</p>	12 months +	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	
Improved access to quality homelessness and housing information		<p>Update webpage with homelessness information, adding appropriate links to partner websites, e.g. Shelter, Crisis.</p> <p>Work with Customer Services to direct people to webpages for self-help information (following update).</p> <p>Work with communications/media teams to improved comms and promote self-help tools on the website.</p>	12 months	<p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p>	

Targeted early intervention to those most likely to be at risk of homelessness		Carry out a review of specialist officer posts, including Visiting Officers (working with families), Domestic Abuse Officers and Housing Key Workers (working in the PRS)	6-12 months	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
		Work with partners to explore options to assist victims of Domestic Abuse to remain in the home.	6-12 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	
Front line staff are fully equipped with the tools, techniques and skill set to prevent homelessness where possible		Develop and implement a bespoke training programme for front line staff, including mediation techniques, trauma informed approach, mental health.	3 months	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
An improved approach across all tenures to reduce evictions and assist people to remain at home		Work with Registered Provider's, Private Landlords and Supported Housing Providers to develop pre-eviction protocols.	12 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	
		Review the 'Stop before you serve' project within the Private Rental Sector.		Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
Co-design services with people with lived experience to ensure they are accessible and fit for purpose		Develop a tenant engagement panel to assist with co-production of policies, best practice etc.	12 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	
				Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	

<p>Develop creative approaches to working with young people to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place</p>		<p>Work with Childrens and Young People's Services (CYPS) and other council services to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share information about homelessness with young people in the care system and in schools/colleges</li> <li>• Roll out communications plan with Family Hubs</li> <li>• Fully understand the potential demands to the service as young people progress to adulthood</li> </ul>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p>	
<p>Establishment of a multi-agency Homelessness Forum</p>		<p>Collaborate with Homeless Link to understand best practice.</p> <p>Establish and implement a Homelessness Forum with key partners.</p>	<p>3 months</p>	<p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p>	

<b>Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation</b>					
<b>Ambitions</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Links to other Priorities</b>
Utilise Council House Delivery Programme to provide affordable accommodation		<p>Increase the Council's own stock of temporary and longer-term accommodation, with a provision for larger families.</p> <p>Develop a strategic approach to the provision and utilisation of temporary accommodation for homeless people.</p> <p>Implement the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).</p> <p>Work with CYPS to acquire accommodation for children within the care system.</p>	12 months	<p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p>	

<p>Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable and specialist groups</p>		<p>Work jointly with commissioning teams to develop a strategic approach to providing housing for specialist groups, including partnership working with Registered Providers (RP's) and supported housing providers</p> <p>Develop a programme of inspections of empty properties to identify any that may be suitable to be brought back into use.</p> <p>Carry out a review of purchasing properties at auction.</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to extend New Start for those excluded from DKO.</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to explore initiatives that could support ex-offenders to access social housing.</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p>	
<p>Delivery of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)</p>		<p>Develop a gateway approach with non-commissioned supported housing providers to ensure expansion of accommodation is of the right type in the right locations.</p> <p>Implement an improved referral pathway via a specialist software portal</p>	<p>12 months</p> <p>6 months</p>	<p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p>	

Development of clear housing pathways for the most vulnerable groups.		Work with key partners to review current housing pathways for rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse, migrants and asylum seekers and those leaving prison, hospital or the children's care system	12 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager  Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
Make information readily available, setting out the various housing options available, how people can access those options and how they can help themselves		Update current webpages with links to relevant sites including accessing social, private and supported accommodation.  Work with the corporate data team to improve snapshot information available via Durham Insight.	12 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager  Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	Priority 1

**Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people)**

Ambitions	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
Identification of all available support services for homeless people		<p>Work with commissioning teams and members of the Supported Housing Steering Group to map out all support services.</p> <p>Ensure all information is readily available for front line staff and they are fully aware of the differences in provision</p>	9 months	<p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p>	
Develop and implement a Charter with SHIP providers		<p>Work with SHIP providers and people with lived experience to develop and implement a clearly defined charter setting out expectations in relation to support standards and property conditions in non-commissioned housing.</p> <p>Work with health services including the health squad and Humankind to promote health and well-being with SHIP providers.</p>	6 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	



Ensure support needs are identified at the earliest opportunity		Ensure front line staff embed support needs into the personalised housing plans and the necessary referrals are made to meet the needs of the individual (build into training plan)	3 months	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	<b>Priority 1</b>
Increase specialisms with the housing service to ensure a targeted approach for individuals with complex support needs		Work with Public Health to review existing posts, e.g., drug and alcohol co-ordinators, social workers  Identify gaps of specialist officers within the housing service and work with Public Health and other key partners to secure any potential funding opportunities.	12 months	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager  Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	
Develop clear pathways of support for homeless people		Work with commissioning teams to identify support pathways for those homeless people who have complex support needs, but don't have a 'care need'.	12 months	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager  Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	

<b>Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping</b>					
<b>Ambitions</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Links to other Priorities</b>
Joint working with health and social care professionals to deal with the root causes of homelessness		Re-establish a social work post within the Rough Sleeper Team, to work with all clients and provide a tailored approach and improve access to health and adult care services	6mths	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	Priority 3
Work with partners to reduce rough sleeping and prevent evictions		Work with supported housing providers to establish new approaches to reduce evictions and prevent rough sleeping (SHIP).	6mths	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager  Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	Priority 1

Develop awareness around rough sleeping and begging		<p>Implement a 'give wisely' campaign to reduce cash given to rough sleepers and channel funds towards established rough sleeping charities that operate within the City Centre or to encourage volunteering opportunities within this cohort</p> <p>Develop communications to raise awareness of the rough sleeping service and differentiation of begging in the City Centre</p> <p>Work with key partners to improve awareness of rough sleeping via attendance at monthly multi-agency problem solving (MAPS) meetings and Durham City Operational Group .</p>	6/9 mths	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
Review existing accommodation and support pathways for rough sleepers		<p>Implement a Tenancy Sustainment Officer to provide floating support to rough sleepers in tenancies without support.</p> <p>Improved access to temporary accommodation for rough sleepers out of hours.</p>	6mths	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
Establish a night shelter that can be accessed all year round.		Work with key partners to establish an appropriate approach to develop a night shelter that is available all year round with provision for males and females.	12mths	Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	