

Report of Lynn Hall, Strategic Housing Manager, Housing Solutions, Durham County Council

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update of the housing and health related projects that Housing Solutions have delivered between April 2022 – March 2023, as well as any planned initiatives, which align to the priorities outlined in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25.
- 2 Future annual updates will align to the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-25, which was agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting in May 2023.
- 3 A presentation providing a summary of the report will be presented by the Strategic Manager for Housing at the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting.

Executive summary

- 4 A report was last presented to the Board in November 2022 by the Strategy and Partnerships Housing Manager, which provided an overview of the work delivered and planned by Housing with a health-related theme or output.
- 5 A detailed review of homelessness has recently been carried out analysing data from April 2019 through to October 2022, looking at the current and future trends in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping and the challenges that we face as a housing authority.
- 6 A revised draft strategy has been produced which sets out how we aim to achieve the four priorities of homelessness over the next five years covering the period 2024 to 2029.
- 7 The draft strategy will go out to consultation between 30th October 2023 to 18th December 2023. The final strategy will go to cabinet in March 2024 for approval before implementation. This consultation will run alongside the consultation on the draft Housing Strategy and will be joined up where appropriate.
- 8 The draft Housing Strategy will also be presented to this meeting for consultation.

- 9 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 221-25 has three strategic priorities: Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well. The projects and initiatives within Housing Solutions cuts across each of these, as set out below:

Starting Well

- 10 Key projects include:
- Administration of Disabled Facilities Grants for children aged 19 and under
 - Remain Safe – target hardening initiative supported financially by the Stronger Families Programme, to support children and their families to live safely and securely in their home.
 - Young Persons Joint Protocol

Living Well

- 11 Key projects include:
- Disabled Facilities Grant Adaptations
 - Fuel Poverty
 - Joint working with Registered Housing Providers
 - Selective Licensing
 - Private Sector Housing Team
 - Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service Officers (Health & Recovery)
 - Domestic abuse
 - Hospital Discharge
 - AFOS (Armed Forces Outreach Service)
 - Accommodation for vulnerable people
 - Rough sleeping
 - Afghan Resettlement Scheme
 - Homes For Ukraine
 - Temporary Accommodation

- Accommodation for Ex Offenders (AfEO)
- Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

Ageing Well

12 Key projects include:

- Council New Build Programme
- New housing for older people
- Needs Based Accommodation Programme Board

Recommendation

13 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:

- (a) Note the content of the report

Background

- 14 Housing and a positive home environment are a key determinant to health and wellbeing. Poor quality housing is a risk to health - living in housing which is in poor condition, cold, overcrowded, or unsuitable will adversely affect the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. It can cause or exacerbate a range of underlying health conditions, from falls to poor mental health.
- 15 Housing plays an integral part in the health of individuals and the general population. The suitability of homes for people with a long-term condition, or the ability to adapt homes to changing needs as they get older makes a big difference to wellbeing, physical health, and independence. It is important that all homes in County Durham provide a safe, inclusive and secure environment for people to live and grow within their local community.
- 16 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 - 25 has three strategic priorities: Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well. The projects and initiatives within Housing Solutions cut across each of these and are detailed below.

Strategic Priority 1 – Starting Well

- 17 Social factors including poverty and poor housing can act against the ability of the parents and families to create a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for their children. Children who are exposed to adverse events such as domestic abuse or alcohol misuse can be affected negatively, both physically and mentally, throughout their childhood into adult life. The paragraphs below set out the projects and initiatives that help contribute towards this priority.

Adaptations for children

- 18 During 2022/23, Housing Solutions approved 38 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) for children aged 19 and under, which is an increase of approximately 12% from 2021/22. These grants will fund suitable adaptations and will enable those children to live more independently in their own home, which will help to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

Target Hardening for families

- 19 Housing Solutions co-ordinates the target hardening initiative 'Remain Safe', which is a partnership approach to support victims of domestic abuse, harassment and hate crime to remain safely in their own home or make a new home secure for themselves and their family. The Stronger Families Programme contributes financially, by paying up to

£250 per case where children who are currently working with them are involved.

- 20 During 2022/23 there were 199 Remain Safe cases assisted under the initiative, of which 38 cases (19%), were supported by Stronger Families, and 3 were victims of domestic abuse moving on from refuge accommodation into their own home.
- 21 Stronger Families data is low, due to issues with implementation of the new recording system.

Young Person's Joint Protocol

- 22 Housing Solutions are working closely with Children's Services to further develop the joint protocol for 16- and 17-year-olds who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. In 2022/23, 42, 16 and 17 year-olds presented to housing solutions as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Strategic Priority 2 – Living Well

- 23 While the length of life of local people continues to increase, the years that people can expect to live a high quality of life sees significant differences across County Durham. Housing conditions can influence our physical and mental health, for example, a warm and dry house can improve general health outcomes and specifically reduce respiratory conditions and good housing promotes positive mental health.
- 24 Alcohol and substance misuse causes harm to people's health including their mental health and can impact on the ability of individuals to access or sustain employment and housing. The paragraphs below set out the projects and initiatives that help contribute towards this priority.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Adaptations

- 25 In addition to DFG's for children, during 2022/23 Housing Solutions approved a total of 966 grants for adult clients, an increase of approximately 22% from 2021/22. 776 were for people aged 60 and over (an increase of 82 from the previous year), 108 were people aged 50 to 59 (77 fewer than the previous year) and 95 were for people aged 20-49 (an increase of 62 from the previous year). These grants will fund adaptations to help people to remain safely in their own homes and could range from installing ramps, handrails, LAS's, ground floor extensions, etc.

Fuel Poverty

- 26 Housing Solutions coordinates the delivery of the corporate Fuel Poverty Strategy and action plan overseen by the County Durham Energy and Fuel Poverty Partnership. This is a multi-agency partnership that uses countywide networks to help promote awareness and uptake of the fuel poverty grants and assistance.
- 27 Housing Solutions oversee the delivery of the Warm and Healthy Homes (WHH) project. WHH is a Public Health commissioned service that commenced in 2017 in response to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) NG6 guideline. This guideline makes recommendations on how to reduce the risk of excess winter deaths and ill health associated with living in a cold home. The aim is to help meet a range of public health and other goals, including:
- Reducing preventable excess winter death rates
 - Improving health and wellbeing among vulnerable groups
 - Reducing pressure on health and social care services
 - Reducing 'fuel poverty' and the risk of fuel debt or being disconnected from gas and electricity supplies (including self-disconnection)
 - Eligible residents who have a condition exacerbated by the cold can get a boiler repair or service. 47 households have benefitted from the scheme between April 2022 and March 2023.
- 28 Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 2239 fuel poor households have been assisted and received a grant for energy efficiency measures including Low carbon technology, Insulation and new gas boilers. This has been via the OFGEM ECO4 scheme along with the Local Authority Delivery and the Social Housing Decarbonisation project. Over the same period the Managing Money Better (MMB) Service has assisted 498 low-income households to save over £92,000 off their energy bills.
- 29 The team also provide advice and assistance with fuel and food vouchers, warm homes discount and winter fuel payments.

Joint working with Registered Housing Providers

- 30 As part of the strategic housing role, regular meetings take place with housing providers through a range of partner forums. Housing and health is a priority and a number of initiatives including Making Every Contact Count (MECC), housing for older people, new developments,

poverty and regeneration are discussed on a regular basis as part of the Housing Strategy action plan.

Selective Licensing

- 31 In County Durham, many of the private rented housing stock is older terraced property in ex mining communities and is often in poor condition. This can have a serious impact on health including exacerbation of respiratory illness, accidents, and mental ill-health, as well as a long-term illness or disability. In response to this, one of the aims of our Housing Strategy is to maintain and improve standards across all housing sectors in County Durham, which includes raising standards in the private rented sector.
- 32 An application was made to central government in December 2020 for a large-scale Selective Licensing scheme in County Durham. Selective licensing requires a private landlord to obtain a licence to rent properties in a designated area. The scheme was approved by the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 30 November 2021.
- 33 The scheme covers 42% of the private rented sector (PRS) in County Durham (approximately 28,500 homes) and 103 of the 324 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in County Durham (32%). In each LSOA evidence was provided to demonstrate that the area met at least one of the conditions required by legislation, and some areas met the conditions for all three. These relate to:
 - Significant and persistent anti-social behaviour
 - Low demand
 - High levels of deprivation
- 34 Selective licensing provides a regulatory framework which allows for pro-active monitoring of the private rented sector and the opportunity for enforcement against poor landlords at the earliest opportunity. It facilitates a full multi-agency approach making the best use of a range of powers available in addition to selective licensing.
- 35 A complex needs officer, working with tenants to sustain tenancies in designated areas, and two additional staff within the existing private rented sector team, are also funded to work within designated areas supplementing licensing work.
- 36 Since April 2021 to October 23:
 - 12,260 licence applications received

- 10,484 licences issued
- 2,000+ inspections
- 52 Improvement Notices issued for disrepair
- 457 properties in disrepair improved
- Successful prosecution for non-compliance with and Improvement Notice and not having licence x 2 (same landlord) (£15,743.69 fine)
- 8 Pending prosecutions in October 2023 for no licence
- 70 case files being prepared for no licence – likely be for financial penalty as alternative to prosecution.

Private Sector Housing Team

- 37 Although not covered by licensing rules under legislation, 48% of the private rented stock within County Durham is open to inspection by the Private Rented Sector Team under HHSRS (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) guidelines to prevent housing in poor condition being let.
- 38 The private sector housing team includes 1 x Principal Private Rented Sector Officer, 3 x Private Rented Sector Officer; 1 Private Rented Sector (Humanitarian); 2 x Support Officers
- 39 The aim of the team is to reduce the number of private rented housing stock, which is in poor condition, potentially having a serious impact on the household's health.

Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service Officers (Health & Recovery)

- 40 The provision supports those who are homeless, in supported accommodation or private accommodation with substance misuse issues; or for those accessing drug & alcohol services who have housing issues so are provide associated specialist support.
- 41 There are 10 roles; 1 x Housing & Recovery Co-ordinator; 3 x Housing & Recovery Workers (Housing Solutions); 3 x Housing & Recovery Workers (Supported Housing Improvement Programme); 3 x Housing & Recovery Workers (Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service)
- 42 In addition, there is a Mental Health Homeless & Liaison Clinical Lead to support those who present to Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service and have housing and mental health issues.

Domestic Abuse

- 43 Those suffering from domestic abuse are identified as being vulnerable in terms of the impact that their housing situation can have on their health. In 2022/23 there were 719 presentations to Housing Solutions in relation to domestic abuse, 510 (71%) of these were provided with early advice and intervention or were closed and the remaining 209 (29%) were supported through the duties under the Homeless Reduction Act. Of the total presentations in relation to domestic abuse 357 (50%) were families with children.
- 44 Due to the high number of people presenting to the service as homeless, with Domestic Abuse being consistently one of the main causes, it was decided in early 2021 to appoint 2 Domestic Abuse specialist Housing Officers as part of the homeless service. These specialist officers provide a holistic approach for the client. In addition, New Burdens funding has enabled Housing Solutions to have a full-time Support Worker from Harbour Support Services to work alongside the specialist officers to provide practical support specifically to those placed in temporary accommodation under homelessness legislation. This role will be funded until March 2026.
- 45 Housing Solutions are working closely with Public Health to feed into the new Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2024 - 2027. This will align to the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 which is being developed, and will be presented to the meeting as part of the consultation process.

Hospital discharge

- 46 Housing solutions is involved in the daily interagency hospital discharge meeting, which includes the discharge management team. This includes a daily call between CDDFT hospital medical professionals, Adult Services Hospital Social Work Managers, Mental Health, Commissioning Services and housing. The purpose of the daily meeting is to discuss cases where patients are ready for discharge but require involvement from another service, e.g., Social Services, a care home or care package or other assessment or housing intervention.
- 47 Housing attendance at the meetings has proven to be effective by having a direct link between health and housing colleagues and being able to work together to address housing related issues, reducing delays in discharge when a Duty to Refer is made by CDDFT hospital staff. A homeless team duty officer attends these meetings where required and is able to offer advice and guidance to those on the call and is also able to pick cases up directly if the person is roofless on discharge.

AFOS (Armed Forces Outreach Service)

- 48 AFOS (Armed Forces Outreach Service) provide bespoke support to veterans, serving personnel and their families as a single point of contact for those who may be reluctant to approach statutory services. AFOS is funded until March 2024.

Accommodation for vulnerable people

- 49 A Local Lettings agency was established in 2020 to provide homes for people who may otherwise be excluded through more traditional housing pathways because of their chaotic lifestyles and support needs, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health.

These groups include victims of domestic abuse, prison and hospital leavers, adult and children's care leavers, homeless or those in danger of imminent homelessness. The properties are provided via direct acquisition and private sector leasing coupled with intensive support to ensure tenancies are sustained. To date there is a portfolio of 110 properties.

- 50 There is a planned need to purchase an additional 40 properties during 2023/24 to meet temporary accommodation duties. In addition, 20 properties are being purchased to assist with resettlement of Afghan refugees from bridging hotels.

Rough Sleeping

- 51 Rough sleeping can have a major impact on someone's physical and mental health. Within Housing Solutions, there is a rough sleeper team with roles dedicated to supporting those sleeping rough. The team work intensively with clients to source suitable long term accommodation and support to meet their needs.
- 52 During 2022/23, the Rough Sleeper Team responded to 714 reports of rough sleepers across the County. Following investigations, 363 were verified as rough sleeping. When someone is verified as rough sleeping Durham County Council try to support them into accommodation. Nine short term 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' beds, supported accommodation providers and CDLA are utilised to try and rehouse the person quickly. Some clients want to go straight into independent accommodations and so they are supported to complete DKO applications and to look at private rented accommodation.
- 53 Housing Solutions received 'Rough Sleeper Initiative 5' funding that covers 3 years up to 31st March 2025, in line with the Government's aim of ending rough sleeping by this date. Durham County Council use this funding to provide a rough sleeper coordinator, 3 outreach

workers, 9 Somewhere Safe to Stay beds, 9 complex needs beds at the Jigsaw Complex Needs Project and a dedicated Adult Social Worker. We are also supported by three rough sleeper drug and alcohol workers who are employed by the Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service. They provide bespoke support to those rough sleeping or living in hostels who have substance misuse issues.

- 54 In addition, Housing Solutions have 2 x social workers work with anyone with open homeless case to prevent re-presentation and becoming rough sleepers due to substance misuse.
- 55 Rough sleepers can access the 'Health Squad' initiative. The health squad is made up of 3 x team leaders, 6 x health Squad workers, 3 x admin support.

The health squad offers health services to specific targeted groups - substance misusers, those at risk of homelessness, rough sleepers, Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, Veterans and those in contact with criminal justice system. Screening with include height, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, oxygen sats etc. There are also opportunities to check a person is registered with GP and to encourage enhanced health screening, providing support to attend appointments where necessary.

The health squad can also access the wound care nurse to offer care for those with drug injection wound issues.

- 56 The Council has recently submitted a bid to DLUHC and Homes England as part of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) which if approved will see the provision of an additional 32 bed spaces of supported accommodation specifically targeted towards rough sleepers in two cohorts.

- Those aged 18 to 25 years, and
- Older rough sleepers

The Council is expected to be notified whether its bid has been successful in November 2023.

Afghan Resettlement Scheme

- 57 The Government is supporting the resettlement of Afghan Refugees currently in holding accommodation through the Afghan Resettlement Scheme. These refugees were instrumental in supporting the British operations in Afghanistan.

- 58 The Council will provide accommodation for a further 20 Afghan Refugees by the 31st of March 2023.
- 59 Every effort will be made to house the families in clusters so they can provide mutual support to each other. There will also be a range of wrap around support provide through the council's humanitarian support team.

Homes For Ukraine

- 60 Homes for Ukraine scheme is a sponsorship scheme that allows people and organisations in the UK to offer Ukrainians fleeing the war at home.
- 61 The scheme allows individuals to seek sanctuary from the war and who have no family in the UK, to be sponsored by named individuals who can offer them a home, such as a spare room or unoccupied residential self-contained unit for at least 6 months.
- 62 In addition to Homes for Ukraine there is also the Family visa route, this is a private arrangement with an individual's family, Local authorities are not notified of arrivals.
- 63 A team of support workers based within Housing Solutions provides support to both the host and guests following their arrival in the UK. The team also work proactively to support those who wish to move on from the host accommodation in planned way.
- 64 In 2022/2023 251 Ukrainian households arrived in Durham and were provided wrap around support from Housing Solutions, within the same period 82 of these households were supported into independent living in the social and private sector.

Temporary Accommodation

- 65 The council has been heavily reliant upon the private sector to provide temporary accommodation for applicants who are homeless whilst their applications are being assessed or are waiting for alternative housing to become available.
- 66 In addition to private lets the council has been forced into using bed and breakfast accommodation, hotels and holiday lets. This form of accommodation has proved to be expensive, and the council has seen the costs of providing temporary accommodation escalate since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017.
- 67 In order to address this the Council is in the process of acquiring 20 properties in the private sector which it will utilise to provide temporary

accommodation. This will provide a more suitable and cost effective alternative to the existing provision.

Accommodation for Ex Offenders (AfEO)

- 68 Durham County Council were successful in securing £639,000 of additional funding to extend 'Accommodation for Ex Offenders (AfEO)' from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities from April 2023 until March 2025. The funding is to build on the progress already made to support ex-offenders into sustainable accommodation. The project aims to secure 90 tenancies by the end of March 2024 and a further 90 new tenancies by the end of March 2025 – a total of 180 tenancies by end of March 2025.
- 69 The funding is to support and provide help to access private rented sector housing for ex-offenders who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping, and need additional support to access the private rented sector due to previous convictions, risk and ability to provide the references that landlords require.

The project priorities are:

- Reduce the number of homeless prison leavers sleeping rough on release.
 - For prison leavers owed a homelessness duty, increase the proportion that secure PRS tenancy as their outcome, with every individual being settled accommodation with a minim expected tenancy length of 3 months.
 - Increase in the number of offenders that are in settled accommodation 3 months post release.
- 70 The team is now fully mobilised with x2 tenancy support officers, x2 accommodation officers and x1 housing officer.
- 71 The team has successfully supported 26 ex-offenders into new private rented tenancies from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023, with zero failed tenancies to date.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

- 72 Durham County Council secured £578,795 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in autumn 2022 to implement a Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) through to March 2025. The programme will enable DCC to increase its oversight, and address emerging challenges (poor properties standards, lack of adequate support and ASB) within the non-commissioned supported housing sector.

- 73 The funding enabled DCC to start recruitment in December 2022 and set up a multi-disciplinary team (MDT), involving staff from Housing Benefit, Housing Solutions and Adult Services, who will work directly with the supported housing providers currently operating in the County, to achieve the following outcomes:
- Improved property and management standards of supported accommodation
 - Improved knowledge to better manage supply
 - Quality support tailored to meet individual tenant needs
 - Value for money for both providers, tenants and the council
 - Upskilling of the providers' workforce
 - Improved engagement and support to service users from the council
 - Collaborative production of a supported accommodation charter to help establish and maintain high standards
- 74 The MDT has been recruited, and direct work with the supported housing providers (property inspections and tenant support reviews) is underway. Over the next two years the programme will review each of the 19 providers. Feedback from the reviews will be shared with the providers and action plans developed to address areas for improvement.
- 75 From the work with providers to date, challenges that are emerging within the sector include: a lack of tailored support for tenants; instances where tenants are not being moved on to independent living, after a period of time in supported accommodation; a need to improve referrals into other agencies including mental health services, adult care and drug and alcohol agencies; and instances where property standards need to be improved.
- 76 In addition to funding to recruit the MDT, funding has been secured via the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Housing Funding to employ three dedicated Drug and Alcohol Recovery officers to work alongside and support clients identified as part of the SHIP programme.
- 77 Public Health have secured funding for three 'health squad teams', based geographically in the North, East and South of the County. The purpose of the health squads is to provide health checks and screening to vulnerable people who are detached from health services.

The SHIP team will work closely with the health squads to assist with the engagement with non-commissioned providers and their tenants.

Strategic Priority 3 – Ageing Well

Council New Build Programme

- 78 In October 2020, Cabinet approved a 5-year Council New Build Programme for the delivery of 500 affordable homes by becoming a direct housing provider. The programme has been subject to an extensive review following the change of political control in 2021 and further review in the light of rising construction costs. The programme was reaffirmed in July 2023 with some changes to the financial model following advice from Savills.

The report highlighted that there is a clear under provision of affordable rented homes in the County with the annual delivery falling short of the numbers required, as well as there being a specific lack of provision of bungalow accommodation.

- 79 The Council acquired its first 6 bungalows in 2022 as part of a Section 106 agreement with Chapter Homes. The procurement process to appoint an external partner to help the Council deliver its housing programme is now underway.

The first two scheme will provide 40 further bungalows at Portland Avenue and Greenwood Avenue.

New housing for older people

- 80 In addition to the Council New Build Programme, the County Durham Plan (CDP) includes policies to help meet the housing needs of older people and people with disabilities. Policy 15 of the CDP states that to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, on sites of 5 units or more, 66% of dwellings must be built to 'Building Regulations Requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) standard'.
- 81 Furthermore, on sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings on the site should be of a design and type that will increase the housing options of older people. This will include appropriate house types including level access flats, level access bungalows and other housing products that can be shown to meet the specific needs of a multi-generational family.

Needs Based Accommodation Programme Board

- 82 An integrated commissioning Needs Led Accommodation Review (NLAR) Programme Board meets monthly to plan and implement projects to meet the future needs for older people, children and those

with learning disabilities (LD), homelessness, and poor mental health. The Board includes members from integrated commissioning, housing, health, and adult care.

83 Joint working with housing and commissioning is ongoing in a number of areas:

- immediate needs for Children's Services to identify and source temporary accommodation
- future planning for accommodation and support for people with LD and poor mental health
- future needs and demand for older people. A specific piece of work has been carried out by Housing to develop a Power BI dashboard showing older persons housing supply and demand. This work is being shared with Housing Providers to enable a planned approach to needs led development.
- existing provision for homelessness accommodation and support
- Housing is feeding into the review of non-assessed accommodation and support.

Approach to Wellbeing

84 Joint working has taken place with public health to ensure the core principles of the Wellbeing approach have been applied in the development of both the draft Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This approach is also a valuable tool to use as both strategies are implemented via a partnership approach.

Conclusion

85 Housing is a key determinant to health and wellbeing. Housing and health is referenced in our key strategic documents including the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the County Durham Plan, the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

86 Access to housing, improving housing and the home environment is key to improving health outcomes for individuals, families, and the elderly. Housing have delivered a number of key projects to assist with improving the health of the population of County Durham. Housing will continue to work with partners to deliver the strategic aims of our key strategies.

87 This annual update is based on the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25. Future annual updates will align to the new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28, which was agreed by

the HWB in May 2023, outlining how the Housing Solutions team supports the following:

- Making smoking history
- Enabling healthy weight for all
- Improving mental health, resilience and wellbeing
- Reducing alcohol health harms

Background papers

- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2025
- Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 28
- County Durham Plan 2018-2035
- County Durham Housing Strategy 2019 - 2025
- County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2022

Author

Paul Sailes, Housing Strategy & Partnerships Coordinator
Paul.Sailes@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Legal Implications

The Homelessness Reduction Act published in 2017, signalled a significant change to homelessness protection across England over the next 3 years. The Act aims to reduce homelessness by joining up services to provide better support for people, especially those leaving prison/hospital and other groups at increased risk of homelessness, such as people fleeing domestic abuse and care leavers.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 brought about the 'Everyone In' initiative to house all rough sleepers during the peak of the pandemic.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – one of the main implications on Housing Solutions is to ensure support within safe accommodation is provided for all those who require it.

Under the Housing Act 2004, local authorities currently have powers to introduce selective licensing of privately rented homes to address problems in their area, or any part of them, caused by low housing demand and/or significant anti-social behaviour. It is therefore illegal for a private landlord to rent a property in a designated area without the appropriate licence, unless an exemption applies.

Finance

n/a

Consultation

Consultation was carried out with the residents of County Durham, which helped inform the final revised Housing Strategy 2019-2025.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Housing is a 'social determinant of health', meaning that it can affect physical and mental health inequalities throughout life.

Climate Change

A warm, but energy efficient home will contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions.

Human Rights

n/a

Crime and Disorder

A reduction in homelessness and risk of homelessness will contribute to a reduction in antisocial behaviour in local communities.

Staffing

n/a

Accommodation

n/a

Risk

None

Procurement

None.