

County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025

Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless					
Outcome	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
An effective and fair lettings policy for those people that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless	1.1	<p>Review four areas of the policy in relation to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the housing register • Homelessness prevention • Medical assessment • Applicants with no housing need <p>Review current access to housing for those applications requiring specialist accommodation, e.g. with adaptations</p>	12 months +	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	2.2
Improved access to quality homelessness and housing information	1.2	<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>	2.5

Targeted early intervention to those most likely to be at risk of homelessness	1.3	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	1.4	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	1.2, 2.5
An improved approach across all tenures to reduce evictions and assist people to remain at home	1.5	Work with Registered Provider's, Private Landlords and Supported Housing Providers to develop pre-eviction protocols Review the 'Stop before you serve' project within the Private Rental Sector	12 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	2.3
Co-designed services with people with lived experience to ensure they are accessible and fit for purpose	1.6	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>An improved and creative approach to working with young people to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place</p>	<p>1.7</p>	<p>Work with Childrens and Young People's Services (CYPS) and other council services to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share information about homelessness with young people in the care system and in schools/colleges • Roll out communications plan with Family Hubs • Fully understand the potential demands to the service as young people progress to adulthood 	<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>1.8</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>	

Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation

Outcome	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Utilisation of the Council House Delivery Programme to provide affordable accommodation	2.1	<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>	4.4

<p>Increased supply of accommodation for vulnerable and specialist groups</p>	<p>2.2</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>2.4, 4.4</p>
<p>Improved access to non-commissioned supported accommodation via the delivery of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)</p>	<p>2.3</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>	<p>3.2, 4.2</p>

Transparent and accessible housing pathways for the most vulnerable groups	2.4	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	3.5, 4.4
Improved customer information in relation to housing options	2.5	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	1.2

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

Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Accessible support services with clear pathways for all vulnerable groups	3.1	Work with commissioning teams and members of the Supported Housing Steering Group to map out all support services	9 months	Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager	
		Ensure all information is readily available for front line staff and they are fully aware of the differences in provision		Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager	
		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		

Improved support services for those living in non-commissioned supported accommodation	3.2	<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	4.2
Improved knowledge of frontline staff in relation to available pathways and referral agencies	3.3	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	1.4
Increased specialisms with the housing service to ensure a targeted approach for individuals with complex support needs	3.4	<p>Work with Public Health to review existing posts, e.g., drug and alcohol co-ordinators, social workers</p> <p>Identify gaps of specialist officers within the housing service and work with Public Health and other key partners to secure any potential funding opportunities</p>	12 months	<p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p>	4.1

Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping					
Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Improved joint working with health and social care professionals to deal with the root causes of homelessness	4.1	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	
Improved partnership working to reduce rough sleeping and prevent evictions	4.2	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	3.2

Improved awareness around rough sleeping and begging	4.3	<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	
Improved access to accommodation and support pathways for rough sleepers	4.4	<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	2.1
A night shelter for rough sleepers that can be accessed all year round	4.5	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	