

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Action Plan 2019-21

Priority 1: Develop Services for Rough Sleepers

| Action | Detail/ Progress | Lead | Resource | Timescale for completion | Outcome/Performance indicator |
|---|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Set up emergency accommodation to accommodate rough sleepers during severe weather conditions (SWEF) | Successful application to the Cold Weather Fund | | | | Awarded £7,500 to fund a support worker and furnish the unit |
| | Identify suitable property from NCC housing stock | Colin Blackett | Property from council owned stock | | 3 bed property identified. |
| Collaborate with other services to tackle the root causes of homelessness | Rough Sleeper Action Group set up and initial cases discussed with actions allocated to key partners | VF | Monthly meeting established | ongoing | |
| Understand the reasons for non-engagement and develop policies for prevention, intervention and recovery for rough sleepers | Implement learning from the Rough Sleeper Initiative programme. Monthly meeting set up to discuss all rough sleeper cases | Housing Services | | ongoing | |
| Work across the region to establish reconnection policies | Currently in progress with Regional Homeless Group | | | | |

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| and develop cross boundary services | (RHG) Protocol written awaiting approval by the RHG group | | | | |
| Develop accommodation for rough sleepers | Procurement process commenced with soft market testing process to identify providers who can deliver an accommodation service specifically for rough sleepers | JS/VF | | March 2020 | Less people sleeping rough in Northumberland |
| Apply for funding as and when it becomes available | Cold weather fund Second round of RSI funding | RG/VF | | Ongoing | Waiting to hear if successful re RSI |

Priority 2: Prevent homelessness by improving support to vulnerable client groups

| Action | Detail/ Progress | Lead | Resource | Timescale | Outcome/Performance indicator |
|---|--|------|----------|-----------|---|
| Work in partnership with other organisations such as health services (including drug, alcohol and mental health); advice agencies; money advice; voluntary and community groups; police and other emergency services; | Duty to Refer system setup. Ongoing monitoring to assess effectiveness | | | | More households identified as being at risk of homelessness |

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| and domestic abuse services to set up an early warning system to identify those at risk of homelessness | | | | | |
| Review support services throughout the county and understand how to access these services | Locality team producing a comprehensive directory of services for the whole county | | | | |
| Understand the client groups that services work with and how they can work more closely with the council | Coordinate with the Early Health Team | | | | |
| Ensure that Personal Housing Plans are effective in identifying housing and support needs of clients | Homelessness and Housing Options Service | VF | | | |

Priority 3: Increase options for, and ensure access to, suitable temporary accommodation

| Action | Detail/ Progress | Lead | Resource | Timescale for completion | Outcome/Performance indicator |
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| Review the provision and range of temporary accommodation options, especially for those with complex needs, to | Identify gaps in the Council's existing provision of temporary accommodation for | | | | |

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| minimise spending on Bed & Breakfast | people with complex needs | | | | |
| Increase the amount of flexible temporary accommodation options for single homeless people | | | | | |
| Review housing options for customers with mental health issues/complex and chaotic behaviour, who may be deemed high risk, to ensure sustained tenancies, particularly in the private rented sector | Identify gaps in current provision and provide options to access permanent accommodation and support | | | | More suitable accommodation provided for this client group (Monitored through the Homeless Case Level Information Collection HCLIC) |
| | Raise awareness of the support needs people with complex needs have with private sector landlords providing information and advice where appropriate | NCC Housing Services team and NCC Private Sector team | Current resources, NLA, Mental Health team | | Performance indicator: Fewer evictions from the private rented sector More people supported to sustain their tenancies |
| | Explore opportunities to work with other service providers | NCC Housing Services | Current resources | | Increased options in accommodation and support. More people supported to sustain their tenancies |

Priority 4: Support people through Welfare Reform; particularly universal credit

| Action | Detail/ Progress | Lead | Resource | Timescale | Outcome/Performance indicator |
|---|---|------|----------|-----------|--|
| Work with partners to effectively support those affected by welfare reform | Work with the voluntary, charity and community organisations to support access to financial and welfare benefits advice | | | | |
| Raise awareness of Discretionary Housing Payments to assist people who are affected by cuts to remain in their home | | | | | |
| Monitor impacts of UC, respond with action if possible and keep under review | Information can be obtained from HCLIC reports | | | Ongoing | Performance indicator: Number of households made homeless due to rent arrears (Monitored through HCLIC.) |
| Investigate different ways of communicating to tenants and landlords about the potential impacts of Welfare Reform | Explore the possibility of getting information from Council Tax and Housing Benefit to flag when households move onto benefit - could be an indicator | | | | |

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| Improve early information and advice making sure that it is available through appropriate and accessible channels | Welfare Rights team for council tenants | | | | |
| Monitor the impacts of Universal Credit | Work across the Council and with partners to fully understand the impact of Universal Credit and seek to mitigate its impact on rent arrears and tenancy sustainment. | | | | Performance indicator: Number of households made homeless due to rent arrears (Monitored through HCLIC.) |

Priority 5: Remove barriers to permanent accommodation

| Action | Detail/ Progress | Lead | Resource | Timescale for completion | Outcome/Performance indicator |
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| Review the current rent deposit guarantee scheme, and other incentives to encourage landlords | Undertake a scoping exercise to examine RDGS' used by other local authorities and identify opportunities for improvement to enable NCC to confidently discharge the homelessness duty | NCC Housing Policy and NCC Private Sector team | Current resources | | Performance indicator: More households rehoused in the private rented sector |

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| | to the private rented sector | | | | |
| Investigate the practicalities of negotiating longer term tenancies for households placed in the private rented sector | Research how other local authorities have achieved longer term tenancies | NCC Private Sector team | | | |
| | Engage with private sector landlords on this issue via the council's Private Sector Landlords Forum | NCC Private Sector team | | | |
| Continue to promote quality property and management standards through the council's private rented sector accreditation scheme | Review PRS scheme to ensure standards are achievable for landlords and not acting as a barrier to rehousing | | | | |
| Work with Registered Providers to ensure that vulnerable clients are linked into their tenancy support schemes when rehoused | Procedure to be developed for the Homeless team to ensure RPs are made aware new tenants who have struggled to maintain a tenancy in the past and vulnerable people with no previous experience. | | | | |
| Work with local private registered providers to | | | | | |

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| find solutions to excluded households | | | | | |
| With partners develop an accredited 'tenancy ready' scheme that will be accepted by registered providers | Tenancy ready scheme currently being delivered by Crisis for Changing Lives at the Reef | | | | |

Priority 6: Prevent youth homelessness

| Action | Detail/ Progress | Lead | Resource | Timescale for completion | Outcome/Performance indicator |
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| Review the joint protocols between Strategic Housing Services and Children's Services and implement changes or develop new procedures | Strategic Housing Services to work collaboratively with the Children's Services team to jointly review of the protocols and recommend changes | NCC Housing Services team and NCC Children's Services | Current resources | | I |
| Develop a range of information aimed specifically at young people with regard to their housing options and the implications of welfare reform | Compile information specific to young people and their housing options Update website to include information specifically for young people | NCC Housing Policy | Current resources, Youth homeless providers | | Raised awareness of housing solutions available to young people, ensuring fewer young people present as homeless (monitored through the HCLic) |

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| Identify opportunities to work with young people at an earlier age ie schools | Make links with youth services such as Silks Bar, Youth Parliament and NCC Youth Service | | | | |
| Identify mediation training courses for staff to work between the family and young person | | | | | |
| Review permanent housing options for young people including move-on from temporary accommodation or supported housing | Identify gaps in the Council's existing provision and explore the options available for working with other providers | NCC Housing Services team | Current resources, Youth homeless providers | | Performance indicator Reduced youth homelessness (Monitored through the HClic) Fewer tenancy failures Improved customer experience |