

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2024

Preventing homelessness is
everyone's business



NEWARK &
SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL



homeless link

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NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL - HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019-2024

Foreword

We are pleased to introduce our new District Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 and would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that contributed to the collation of the comprehensive District Homelessness Review which has formed the basis for this strategy.

This is the Council's fourth Homelessness Strategy, our last strategy covered the period 2013-2018 and was extremely successful in its delivery. However, there are still challenging times ahead, particularly with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the biggest change in homelessness legislation for many years in addition to the Government's pledge to end rough sleeping by 2027.



The issues around homelessness affect us all and are of great importance to me and the Council.

Preventing homelessness has been at the core of our service for many years and remains one of our priorities. However, the provision of a home alone is not always a solution for some of the most disadvantaged people who approach us for assistance. We hope to ensure there are holistic services providing advice and support to support the health and well-being of all is considered and enabled to allow a contribution within their local community.

Our new strategy outlines the challenges we face over the coming years. We have already remodelled features of our service to allow us to respond effectively to the new legislation and will review our action plans annually to ensure a better understanding of the impact of these changes.

This strategy sets out the key findings from the homelessness review and our resultant themes and priorities which will be delivered by working with our strategic and voluntary sector partners whose contribution is vital and greatly appreciated.

This strategy sets out how we aim to respond to the challenges ahead, reduce homelessness and the impact of homelessness in Newark and Sherwood and subsequently support the Council's Strategic Priorities.

We are very keen that this strategy is a live document and all progress on the action plan and the impact of the strategy will be continually reviewed by the Council's Housing, Health and Community Relations Business Unit and the Homeless Inter-agency Forum in addition to a second homelessness review to measure the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Cllr Tim Wendels

CHAIR OF HOMES AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Introduction

In 2018, Newark & Sherwood District Council decided to carry out a Homelessness Review and develop a local Homelessness Strategy, under the terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The review and strategy follow on from the council's existing strategy document that covered the period 2013-2018.

The review was commissioned in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils. Homeless Link were engaged to carry it out. Homeless Link was also commissioned to help the councils to produce their local homelessness strategies. This strategy sets out Newark & Sherwood District Council's response to the joint homelessness review which can be found at <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/housing/homelessstrategy/strategiesandactionplans/>

Vision, Aims and Objectives

It is Newark & Sherwood District Council's vision that the population should be living in, or can access, homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that homelessness affects the smallest possible number of residents and where it does; there is help available to quickly resolve their situation so that it does not happen again.

This Strategy identifies a number of priority areas and actions that need to be taken to ensure this vision is achieved.

The aims of this Strategy are to:

- Prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless
- Ensure that if anyone has to sleep rough, it is brief and does not happen again
- Help as many residents as possible to move seamlessly from one home to another without the need for emergency or temporary accommodation
- Provide a good quality service that customers are highly satisfied with.

The objectives of this Strategy are:

- To improve financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness, through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
- To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies
- To deliver additional supported housing and housing related support as required
- To increase the amount of private rental sector (PRS) housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies
- To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met, in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of

homelessness increasing their support needs

- To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness
- To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Housing Options
- To ensure services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The Council recognises that it cannot achieve this vision on its own and a central theme to this Strategy is partnership working.

Acknowledgements

Newark & Sherwood District Council would like to thank all the service users, providers and practitioners from across all sectors, who contributed to the Homelessness Review and the development of this strategy.

THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

The Homelessness Review that underpins this strategy followed the methodology set out below:

- A call for evidence, aimed at harnessing the intelligence of local providers, local authority officers and commissioners, across the housing, welfare benefits, social care, criminal justice, health and community safety sectors, through semi-structured interviews
- Quantitative analysis, using an existing modelling tool which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for modelling of the housing and support solutions required by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Mapping of the current supply of commissioned and non-commissioned services, to enable comparison against the estimations of need produced by the quantitative analysis
- A survey of support needs, completed by providers, covering an extensive sample of accommodation based services, in order to gain a deeper understanding of service users' characteristics, pathways, support needs, engagement with services and move-on requirements
- Service user engagement through interview, focus groups and surveys
- A particular focus on the Private Rented Sector, by embedding the topic in all of the above and engaging with an industry body for lettings and management agents with members in the area

A Project Steering Board comprising representatives from the three councils involved oversaw the review. Regular presentations were made to (and discussions held with) the Joint Homelessness Interagency Forum during the course of the project.

The review also included a desk top study, looking at current national, regional and local policy. The national and regional policy context is set out in the review document. The local Newark & Sherwood policy context is set out below.

THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Newark & Sherwood District Council's Community Plan 2019-2023

'Serving people, improving lives'

The Community Plan 2019 to 2023 highlights our focus on the needs of the Newark and Sherwood community. The plan is available in full via our [website](#). The eleven objectives that underpin our work are:



Preventing homeless is everyone's business. Specifically, we will:

OBJECTIVE: Accelerate the supply of new homes including associated facilities (playing pitches, health, schools, community centres etc.)

What do we want to achieve?

The lack of housing is a national and local issue. This view is also shared by residents within our communities who consider that this is something that the Council should seek to influence. By working with developers, partner organisations and individuals we hope to unlock key development sites to facilitate the delivery of a range of mixed tenure homes across the district. We will also work directly with individuals to ensure that planning decisions are made in a timely and effective manner.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce levels of deprivation in target areas and remove barriers to social mobility across the district

What do we want to achieve?

Many parts of Newark and Sherwood are prosperous yet there are pockets of severe deprivation that make it more difficult for some residents to achieve their potential. Over the plan period the Council will work closely with our most vulnerable residents, to ensure that they are given access to key services and/or are empowered to deliver relevant services within their own communities. We will adopt a targeted approach in those areas that face the highest levels of deprivation with the intent of raising aspirations and improving social mobility.

OBJECTIVE: Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, with a particular focus on narrowing the gap in healthy life expectancy and other health outcomes

What do we want to achieve?

Through our work with partners we are aware that there are a range of health inequalities across the district. Over the period of the plan we will work with partners to ensure that interventions are targeted to secure improved health outcomes for residents within our district. At the same time we will focus on increasing the number of residents who are classified as physically active by working directly with residents and community groups. By the end of the plan period we aim to ensure that all of our residents live in warm, decent and affordable homes.

HOMELESSNESS IN NEWARK & SHERWOOD

Progress since the 2013-2018 Strategy

Since the last strategy was written, the Council has:

- successfully implemented a private rented sector access scheme, with both landlord and tenant support
- Effectively implemented the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 requirements, including the creation of new posts to ensure tenancy support and sustainment
- Ensured older people have access to housing support, to ensure suitable housing is maintained through the creation of an older person's worker
- Commissioned Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice to deliver a debt service
- Enhanced partnership working between a range of agencies, including police, probation, DWP, social care, health, substance misuse, community, voluntary and faith groups
- Supported the creation of a complex needs worker, funding by the Community Safety Partnership to work and assist entrenched rough sleepers with issues such as substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse
- Secured funding for a countywide Street Outreach Service for rough sleepers, delivered by Framework

These achievements provide a firm basis for our 2019-2014 strategy, which will be informed by the findings of the 2018 review.

Key Findings from the 2018 Homelessness Review

The Homelessness Review found that in 2017/18:

- Newark & Sherwood had recorded 88 statutorily homeless people. This was less than half of the number in neighbouring Mansfield
- Of these, 26% were aged 16-24
- Newark & Sherwood had the lowest number of homeless people (1.7) per 1,000 of the population of the three districts included in the review
- This number of homeless people per 1,000 of the population was much lower than the average for the East Midlands (2.29) and England (2.41)
- Historically, Newark and Sherwood had a rising number of statutorily homeless people up to 2013/14, when numbers over all started to decline.

Reasons for Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness

As regards causes of homelessness, the picture in 2018/19 (based on data from the new H-CLIC recording system that, from April 2018 has underpinned implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) was as follows:

Cause	Homeless people	People threatened with homelessness
Loss of Tenancy or Mortgage Repossession	44	59
Family or friends no longer able to accommodate	33	16
Relationship break-up (non-violent)	38	13
Domestic abuse	18	9
Other	34	7
Not Known	0	2
Total	167	106

This and other relevant data was used in the quantitative analysis that formed part of the review. The analysis used an existing modelling tool, which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for assessing the balance of housing and support solutions required. The analysis suggested that the following approximate levels of service provision would be required going forward.

Type of Service Required 2019-20	Newark & Sherwood
Prevention of homelessness through advice, assistance and mediation etc.	45
Tenancy sustainment / resettlement support	62
Access to alternative affordable accommodation	274
Housing First level support	10
Crisis Accommodation	33
Supported Housing	43
Refuge Accommodation	3

THEMES AND PRIORITIES

In response to the above and to the other recommendations set out in the review, the council intend to work with partners to implement the following high level action plan. This action plan will be developed further, through the interagency forum or additional governance mechanisms as required. Timescales and partners will be identified as the plan is implemented over the five year period.

Measuring success:

- Increased rates of prevention of homelessness by Newark and Sherwood and partners
- Reduced number of households seeking advice and assistance from Newark and Sherwood Housing Options?
- Reduced use of Newark and Sherwood temporary accommodation
- High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Newark and Sherwood Housing Options and partners
- Any rough sleeping is brief and non-recurrent

Theme 1 - Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Homelessness

Objective – To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homeless households through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system

What we will do:

- Research how households at risk of homelessness can be proactively supported by NSDC and partners to improve their financial resilience to mitigate against adverse events that may cause homelessness (ending of a tenancy, relationship breakdown, bereavement, redundancy, large

unexpected costs, etc) Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

- Review the accessibility and take up of advice on money, debts and benefits provided by NSDC and partners by households at risk of homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify opportunities to integrate local welfare benefits services (such as NSDC C Housing Benefit, DWP, Citizens Advice) with the NSDC Housing Options team to proactively support households at risk of homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to develop sustainable pathways out of homelessness that minimise the levels of poverty experienced. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the prevention of homelessness by local welfare benefits services
- Monitor the amount of DHP spent on the prevention of homelessness
- Monitor the referrals made to Housing Options by DWP and other local welfare benefit partners
- Review case studies of the customer experience of the local welfare benefits services
- Continue to support and monitor the debt service awarded to Citizens Advice

Theme 2 - Responding to the Shortage of Social Housing

Objective – To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by homeless households/at risk households

What we will do:

- Deliver the relevant NSDC core strategy objectives
- Work with social housing partners to deliver the required additional tenancy sustainment support, using external funding where available
- Research the underlying causes of tenancy failure in social housing. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify the barriers to homeless households accessing social housing. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to reduce the number of evictions from social housing

How we will measure success:

- Number of additional social homes delivered
- Additional tenancy sustainment support delivered
- External funding secured
- Number of social housing evictions
- Number of households rehoused in social housing

Theme 3 - Supported Housing and Housing Related Support

Objective – To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support

What we will do:

- Work with partners to deliver the required additional supported housing using external funding where available
- Work with partners to deliver the additional required housing related support using external funding where available
- Identify the barriers to sustainable move on from supported housing. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify barriers to accessing supported housing by those households who need it. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct an annual review of support needs of supported housing residents and evaluate if these needs are appropriately met

Create a governance structure that includes oversight of all supported housing and housing related support

How we will measure success:

- Number of additional supported housing schemes delivered
- Additional housing related support delivered
- External funding secured
- Average length of stay in supported housing
- Tenancy sustainment rates in move on accommodation
- Number of households refused supported housing
- Monitor trends in support needs

Theme 4 - Working with the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Objective – To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by homeless households/at risk households

What we will do:

- Work with partners and PRS landlords to remove the barriers to homeless households accessing the PRS, from, establishing any required products and services (subject to resource availability) using external funding where available
- Secure funding to introduce the Call Before You Serve scheme in the district
- Research the underlying causes of loss of a PRS tenancy. Make recommendations to address these causes to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of homeless households accessing the PRS
- Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from the PRS

Theme 5 - Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Homelessness

Objective – To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs

What we will do:

- deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support – see Theme 3
- Work with partners to ensure robust pathways to prevent homelessness upon discharge from an institution. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify the barriers to homeless households accessing specialist support and treatment. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify options to prevent the underlying causes of homelessness in the next generation (schools programme, family mediation/support, peer support, education/employment/training, perpetrator programmes, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify how households at risk of homelessness as a result of their support needs can be identified and proactively assisted as early as possible. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to provide joined up support to households with multiple and complex needs at risk of homelessness. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Contribute to the development of Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Homelessness Strategy in 2020

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from institutions
- Monitor the number of households seeking housing advice and assistance following institutional discharge
- Monitor the support needs of homeless households and the services they are accessing
- Monitor the preventative programmes delivered and outcomes realised
- Monitor the prevention of homelessness for those with support needs

Theme 6 - Reducing the Impact of Homelessness on the Community

Objective – To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness

What we will do:

- Ensure any rough sleeping is brief and non-recurrent

- Minimise and manage the negative impacts of street activity by rough sleepers, supported housing residents and others
- Work with partners to ensure the welfare needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping are met (winter shelter, breakfast club, soup kitchen, outreach nurse, day centres, public support, community safety, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Establish the Homeless Reduction Board as required by the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Create a community homeless prevention charter and encourage partners, public, businesses, etc to pledge to do their bit to end homelessness

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of rough sleepers
- Monitor street activity
- Monitor the welfare needs of rough sleepers and the services they are accessing
- Monitor the prevention charter pledges and outcomes

Theme 7 - Improving Customer Services for People who are Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness

Objective – High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by NSDC Housing Options and partners

What we will do:

- Regularly gather customer feedback and utilise this to continuously improve the service and its integration with our services. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Research customer journeys into homelessness to identify early opportunities to prevent their homelessness and any barriers to doing so. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct a 6/12 month review of the Duty to Refer operation and identify opportunities to enhance its contribution to preventing homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct an annual review of NSDC staff and partner training needs, arrange required training. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Tailored pathways – Work with partners to ensure there are clear pathways to resolving a household's homelessness for the key causes of homelessness, integrating services wherever possible (end of AST, fleeing violence, friends/family exclusion, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Customer satisfaction rates
- Homeless prevention rates
- Duty to Refer numbers and outcomes
- Monitor the number of pathways developed and the outcomes
- Training courses delivered
- Monitor the number of people with lived experience involved in the design and delivery of homelessness

Theme 8 – Improving the data available to relevant agencies

Objective – Services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated

What we will do:

- Work with partners to develop a governance structure to oversee the delivery of this strategy
- The governance structure will agree the monitoring and outcomes data to be reported to them
- The governance structure will be responsible for identifying good performance and areas for improvement, ensuring any required remedial action is taken as appropriate
- The governance structure will regularly share the monitoring and outcomes data with all relevant partners

How we will measure success:

- Good practice examples identified
- Remedial action taken against poor performance
- Use of data in service design and decision making
- High/improving performance

FUTURE REVIEW

Newark & Sherwood District Council (in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils) have also asked Homeless Link to carry out a progress review later in 2020, in order to more fully assess the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This legislation came into force on 1 April 2018 and was in the process of being implemented when the Homelessness Review was carried out. The findings of this further review will be made available in due course.

