

SAFE | WELL | PROSPEROUS | CONNECTED

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2019 - 2024

**North
Lincolnshire
Council**

www.northlincs.gov.uk

Foreword

Welcome to the North Lincolnshire Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2019 – 2024.

This revised Strategy has been coproduced with a wide range of people and organisations and I thank them for their assistance.

Anyone, at any age can become homeless for many reasons but it should never be seen as inevitable. It is, however, very harmful for those living with it and their families; for communities; and for society more generally. As 'One Council', we are committed to keeping people safe and well and enabling communities to flourish.

The council, through this strategy, is committing to building upon its success of working together with partners to help to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

Ending homelessness doesn't mean that no-one will ever lose their home again, but we want to make sure that everyone facing homelessness gets the help they need quickly. It means making sure we all have a safe place to live, and together doing everything we can to stop people from losing their homes in the first place.

Thank you to all those who contributed to developing this new strategy and to everyone who works with us every day to help deliver the services that contribute to tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

There is no place for homelessness in North Lincolnshire and I look forward to working with partners over the life of this strategy and beyond to ensure that homelessness can become a thing of the past.

Cllr John Davison – Cabinet Member for Safer Communities



Signatories to the Strategy

The following agencies are committed to delivering the strategy and are members of our Homelessness Forum and Making Every Adult Matter champions:

Health watch

Addaction

Community RC

North Lincolnshire Health watch

ONGO Homes

The Forge Project

Addaction

Sanctuary Housing

Framework Housing Association

The New Life Church

Police & Crime Commissioner

Healthwatch, Clinical Commissioning Group

Home Group

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust

The Blue Door

The Department of Work & Pensions

Humberside Police

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service

Community Rehabilitation Company

North Lincolnshire Council Commissioning Team

North Lincolnshire Council Housing Related Support Service

North Lincolnshire Council Adult Services

Summary

This strategy builds on achievements delivered through previous homelessness strategies. It sets out a new approach to ensure we fully understand homelessness, not just as a social issue to be viewed in isolation but where the individual and their environments are at the centre of that understanding.

The strategy shows how we will tackle the complex causes of homelessness by focusing on prevention and early intervention tailored specifically around the intelligence we have of our own local area. Nationally homelessness has increased significantly, and rough sleeping remains the most visible manifestation of homelessness, consequently it is a high priority for everyone. This strategy aims to bring together a shared approach to prevention and early intervention across a wide spectrum of partner agencies in ensuring that prevention is “everyone’s business” and there is a joined up way of working which tackles the issues in the most effective way.

We recognise that preventing homelessness is far more cost effective for individuals, communities and services than dealing with the consequences of it and the resultant trauma.

This strategy highlights that we are striving for better outcomes for all through the support that is on offer.

The aims of this strategy align both with North Lincolnshire Council Plan which is set out below but also builds on the Government’s own Rough Sleeping Strategy to put an end to rough sleeping by 2027.

The strategy has been written to incorporate the significant changes following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which dramatically changed the statutory landscape within homelessness to provide better services for all. This legislation has introduced changes to both the duties and prescribed processes used by local housing authorities in managing homelessness and assisting those who may become homeless. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Homelessness Review Document 2018, which is at Appendix 1.

Through this strategy we will increase our efforts to make prevention and early intervention the backbone of our approach and commit to the annual review of an Action Plan (Appendix 2) to underpin this strategy. This will ensure that we are accountable in fulfilling our strategic aims and priorities in delivering services to those in North Lincolnshire.

Council Plan 2018/19

For 2018/19 our priorities are...

- Growing the economy
- Keeping people safe and well
- Enabling communities to flourish

Our values...

- Equality of opportunity
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Self-responsibility

Outcomes for North Lincolnshire

Safe	Well
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safer roads• Safer people• Safer communities• Safer environments• Safer spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaner and greener spaces• Good health and wellbeing• Quality housing• Vibrant leisure and culture• Improved quality of life
Prosperous	Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More jobs, better paid jobs• Improved skills• Excellent education• Thriving businesses• Accessible childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible transport• Flourishing communities• Superfast digital connectivity• Better roads and rail• Strong sense of pride and belonging

Our Ambition

- #BestPlace
live • work • visit • invest
- #BestCouncil
sustainable • commercial • progressive • enabling

The Council is committed to building upon its success of working together with partners to provide advice, support, and help to prevent homelessness wherever possible. This links to the council priorities in the following ways.

Keeping people safe and well:

Why is it important?

- √ The safety and wellbeing of residents is our primary purpose
- √ To achieve a better quality of life for residents
- √ So people can live longer in their own homes

Taking action – we will:

- √ Continue to work hard to keep people safe
- √ Lead partnership working across North Lincolnshire to promote wellbeing and improve health outcomes for everyone
- √ Prioritise the most vulnerable

Enabling communities to flourish:

Why is it important?

- √ Strong communities create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live, get on well together and support each other
- √ So people experience improved wellbeing

Taking action – we will:

- √ Design services that enable more choice and control in how you interact with us
- √ Enable our communities to become more involved in community life
- √ Engage in new conversations about the things that matter most to you.

As a council, our Organisational Development and our culture means that we are organised around people and place, with integrated functions, both internally and with partners, to deliver once and deliver well.

We look to manage demands, ensuring the right people get the right support at the right time and we enable people and communities to do things for themselves and have choice and control over their lives.

Why invest?

Estimated costs of rough sleeping to the public purse is between

£14,300
AND **£21,200**
PER PERSON PER YEAR



THIS IS
3 TO 4 TIMES
THE AVERAGE COST OF
£4,600

TO PUBLIC SERVICES OF AN AVERAGE ADULT

Source: *Hard Edges* report, 2015

The causes of homelessness and rough sleeping

Structural factors include:

- Poverty
- Inequality
- Housing supply and affordability
- Unemployment or insecure employment
- Access to social security

Individual factors include:

- Poor physical health
- Mental health problems
- Experience of violence, abuse and neglect
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Relationship breakdown
- Experience of care or prison
- Bereavement
- Refugees



Key points from the Homeless Review Document 2019

The Homeless Review carried out in 2019 provides an evidence base using data and intelligence.

- Homeless can take many forms and when defining homelessness it is important that we all use a shared and agreed definition.
- Contacts with Housing Services are being more targeted with the introduction of Personal Housing Plan's and this changes the nature of the interaction between services and individual's.
- Services are focussing on enabling individuals through a wide range of mediums, including the use of digital technology, Personal Housing Plans and Outcome Star support plans.
- Traditionally homeless acceptances in North Lincolnshire have been low. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 these have reduced further with greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention.
- The level of preventions have increased from 17/18 in line with the new prevention agenda, with a higher proportion of contacts resulting in positive action.
- In line with the national picture, rough sleeping figures increased in North Lincolnshire up to 2017. Since then we have seen a reduction, bucking the national trend, due to the use of innovative approaches. However, the figure for 2019 sees the number increase.
- The numbers of individuals placed in bed and breakfast accommodation has increased since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Greater numbers of single homeless being placed in emergency accommodation irrespective of whether they are priority need.
- Referrals into the First Stop service show that of those being referred, homelessness, substance misuse and mental health are the top three identified support needs.
- There are stark physical and mental health inequalities experienced by many people who present as homeless.
- Through experience with the MEAM approach there is a recognition that improvements in joined up multi agency working across services improves outcomes for our clients. We have a shared responsibility to support vulnerable clients, particularly at transitional points and as early as possible in the process.
- Sharing and tagging of records between agencies may help facilitate a more integrated approach and there is also a need to consider the health needs of all members of a household presenting as homeless.
- For clients with more complex needs, input from all services need to be sustained over time. The potential for an intensive case management support model, such as Housing First, could be considered for the small cohort of clients who have high needs and have difficulty maintaining a tenancy.



Consultation

Our priorities in this strategy have been shaped around conversations and engagement with our partners, both internal and external, to the council. We took account of the local and national context and emerging trends and issues by working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The strategy needs to be a “living” document sensitive to changing trends and needs, therefore engagement also needs to be dynamic in nature.

Consequently, whilst we will consult on the final draft of the policy once approved, we will also review it annually to ensure that it still reflects our agreed and shared priorities and outcomes around Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

Strategic aims and priorities:

Priority one:

Greater understanding of the causes of rough sleeping with year on year reductions of the number sleeping rough in North Lincolnshire. No-one sleeping rough by 2027.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government has announced a national target to reduce rough sleeping by half by 2022 and to eliminate it altogether by 2027. North Lincolnshire saw an increase in rough sleeping leading up to 2017. Since then our rough sleeper count has indicated a decline. We are now exploring additional ways of addressing this issue.

Rough sleepers are some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents. Many have experienced some form of trauma in their life, often occurring in childhood. So whilst living on the street is often seen as a “choice”, in reality it is a lot more complicated than that. We need to do all that we can to protect them. Nationally, the life expectancy of a rough sleeper is 44 for men and 42 for women and the longer a person sleeps on the streets, the greater the deterioration in their mental and physical health.

Average age of death:

Average age of death of people who experience homelessness was:

In comparison, in the general population the average age at death was:



Source: Office for National Statistics (2018) - figures for deaths registered in England and Wales, 2013 to 2017

Conducting quarterly Rough Sleeper Counts

Rough Sleeping remains the most visible and damaging manifestation of homelessness.

In August 2018, the Government announced the new Rough Sleeping Strategy. The aim of this 9-year strategy is not just to reduce rough sleeping but to eradicate it by the year 2027.

Progress against the target is measured by a single night's street count in areas where there is a known, or suspected, rough sleeping problem. Counts and estimates have taken place in most local authority areas since 1997.

The results have helped establish illustrative annual estimates of people sleeping rough across England.

Since 1997, Councils have been encouraged to develop local strategies to address rough sleeping, particularly where there is a significant problem (more than 10 rough sleepers identified). The annual count helps inform the continuing development of such strategies, measures their success and identifies gaps in services.

In order to ensure a more informed measure throughout the year, we are committed to conducting quarterly counts to ensure we are ahead of the curve in being able to have a clear up-to-date picture of our rough sleeper population.

Increase resource into Assertive Outreach provision

The most successful programmes for this client group are person-centred support and interventions that are tailored around them and work at their pace. Hence the success of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) programme.

North Lincolnshire currently has an assertive outreach worker to support and engage with those individuals sleeping rough. We will build on Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Re-housing Funding through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to add further capacity to our outreach services. We will explore the options for sustainability of this resource, with the intention of embedding it into the mainstream work of the Housing Advice and Support Service to ensure that provision continues in the longer term.

North Lincolnshire Council will ensure that we have the necessary resources to work with complex rough sleepers and the single homeless to help secure and retain more individuals in accommodation.

Commitment to severe weather winter provisions

As a local authority, North Lincolnshire Council aims to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and provided for during the cold winter season. Extreme cold temperatures for extended spells can threaten the safety and wellbeing of some people living in the borough. There is a humanitarian obligation on all local authorities to do all they can to prevent deaths on the streets caused by winter weather.

During periods of extreme cold weather, the council operates a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), which was previously triggered when night-time temperatures were predicted to be freezing on any given night. We have committed to review this procedure annually and make continual improvements to ensure that the SWEP provision moving forward should be continuously activated from November through to March. By doing so we eliminate any confusion around whether SWEP has been activated or not, we do not need to worry if temperatures drop suddenly out of normal working hours and that provision was available throughout this period without the need for a subjective assessment that often caused ambiguity.

MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter)

Making Every Adult Matter is the cornerstone of the support offered by the Housing Advice and Support Service to the most chaotic clients with the most complex needs. The MEAM approach is designed to help local areas deliver better and more coordinated services for people with multiple needs, using a person centred approach. MEAM is currently being used by partnerships of statutory and voluntary agencies in 15 local areas across England.

MEAM will ensure that the Housing Advice and Support Service will be able to target those complex cases to prevent re-entry into the service on a cycle which has yet to be broken. North Lincolnshire is now a designated MEAM area and we have a MEAM coordinator embedded within the Housing Advice and Support Service.

MEAM Approach areas consider seven key principles, which they adapt to local needs and circumstances. They will provide hands-on support to the local partnerships as part of this process. North Lincolnshire continues to commit to this as the approach to supporting those with multiple disadvantage and will further develop the approach as a one council way of working across a number of service areas.

Since 2019, using the MEAM approach, we have managed to secure housing for 49 complex and vulnerable individuals who would otherwise have been homeless.

Housing First

Housing First is an international model, providing accommodation and intensive support to homeless people with complex needs.

North Lincolnshire has not formally adopted the model but has indirectly piloted the model with MEAM clients in that the flexibility this approach provides enable us to work effectively with agencies to provide longer term, ongoing support which is tailored around the individual within their own accommodation rather than in a traditional supported accommodation setting. This has the advantages of creating sustainability within longer term accommodation and builds resilience within a community setting.

A key focus will be to further embed this approach to a greater number of MEAM clients and to continue building on the commitments made by partners to provide the appropriate support and flexible approach that is required.

The MEAM approach will undergo continual improvement. The Outcome Star will provide both an aid to support workers as well as service users in order to recognise and identify areas to target whilst allowing a tailored approach and for milestones to be celebrated and recognised in an individual's journey.



Out of hours/ flexible services

Traditional services have operated with the standardised working hours of the Local Authority. It has been identified that the complexity and chaotic natures of the lives of those we try to support don't necessarily fit into these times.

The future of support services will be developed ensuring that the right support is reaching those who need it, when they need it. At the same time we have identified a key area of support to also help our communities with particular emphasis on the night-time economy and rough sleeping.

Priority two:

Earlier interventions to prevent homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a statutory duty on preventing homelessness. Ensuring timely and accessible housing advice and information is critical to helping people make planned housing moves and avoid a housing crisis. As part of the legislation, a Personal Housing Plan is required. This is an important document which will assist us in moving away from a transactional relationship with those in housing need towards a more relational approach. This will allow individuals to take more of an active role in finding a solution to their housing issues and providing a dynamic "living" document that is a helpful guide and support to all those finding themselves at risk.

We will continue to develop our Housing Advice and Support Service to ensure it is used proactively to avoid housing crisis. We will ensure that we develop these services in conjunction with internal and external partners which will involve consultation on the definition of Housing Related Support and what this means to stakeholders across North Lincolnshire.

Whilst North Lincolnshire has been successful in recent years in preventing homelessness more clients with complex and entrenched needs are seeking advice and support. Our Services will remain flexible and responsive so we can adjust to the changing needs of our service users and emerging trends. This proactive approach will continue to allow us to target those in most need to avoid crisis. By offering a more targeted service, we aim to ensure a long term solution and reducing the number of re-referrals to service.

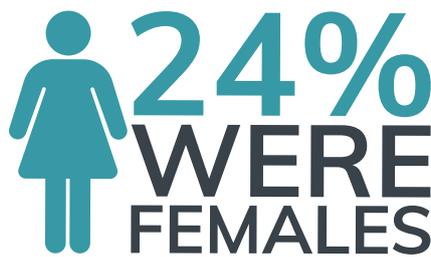
We will continue to develop our information through digital channels to promote how to access the help and assistance we offer not only to agencies but the public regardless of tenure.

Data indicates that the main reasons for being at risk of homelessness, is relationship breakdowns and tenancies being ended. We will continue to ensure that advice and prevention tools are relevant to tackling these main causes of homelessness. Using the data we have, we intend to try to ensure that advice is given when homelessness can still be prevented rather than having to provide relief. We are also aware that national Government policy impacts on this area significantly, e.g. the review of Section 21 notice seeking possession and the link between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the thirtieth percentile.

We will continue to identify specific triggers, risk factors and causes of homelessness at different points in people's lives developing a range of interventions specifically targeted at addressing these.

In order to specifically target these triggers and risk factors we will undertake a Homeless journey mapping exercise with the view to improve understanding of need and to demonstrate "what works" whilst providing efficient and effective services.

North Lincolnshire's supported Rough Sleepers



United Kingdom's supported Rough Sleepers



Priority three:

Provision of a wide range of appropriate, suitable accommodation for people who are homeless

In North Lincolnshire we recognise the importance in the availability of suitable accommodation in the social, private and supported housing sectors. Key areas include the provision of suitable "move-on" accommodation and the affordability of those households trying to access housing.

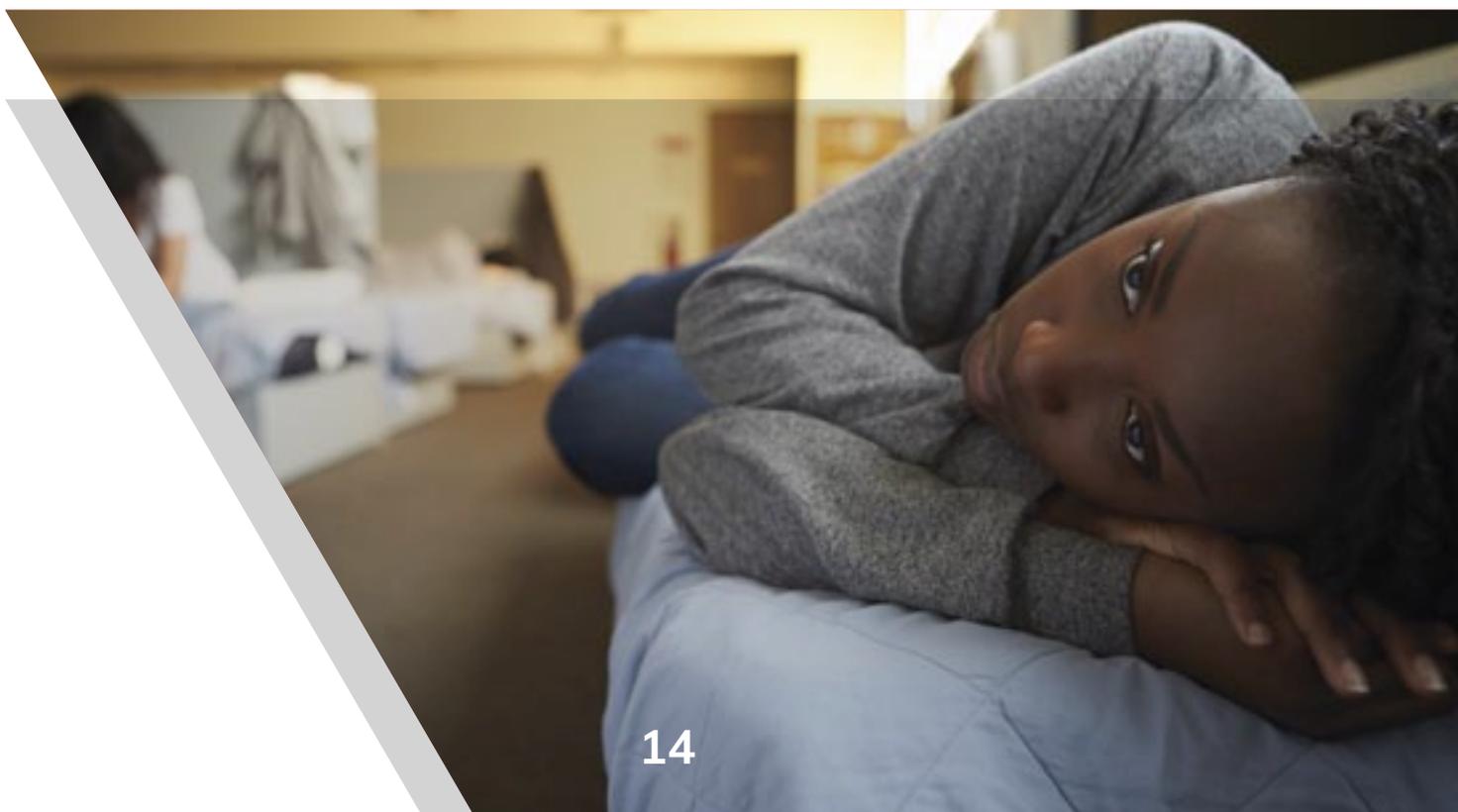
We will work with private landlords, developers and Registered Social Landlords to increase suitable housing supply for vulnerable households and those on low incomes.

With Private landlords we will continue to build on the introduction of our Private Leasing Scheme and existing relationships to provide better access to this sector for all our service users.

We will continue to make best use of the available housing stock and consider alternative uses and tenancies including shared accommodation and flexible tenancies.

There remains a commitment with the homeless services not to place any young person age 16/17 in bed and breakfast accommodation or place any families in such accommodation except in an absolute emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks. We were congratulated by the MHCLG in September 2019 for managing to avoid using this type of temporary accommodation for this client group.

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act we have seen an increase in the amount spent on Bed & Breakfast accommodation. This is as part of our commitment to offer emergency accommodation to those who find themselves homeless but not in priority need. We are committed to reducing spend on such accommodation across all service areas within the council, through searching and procuring alternative types of accommodation for those households which would be more suitable and appropriate as a part of our wider Council ambition.



Priority four:

Providing targeted support focussing on tenancy related issues

A decision was taken at the end of 2019 following consultation to approve the transfer of Housing Related Support (HRS) services back in-house. The service will operate as part of the existing Housing Advice Team within the Waste, Fleet and Public Protection service area in Operations. These services play a significant preventative role in ensuring the council meets its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The HRS service seeks to provide targeted help to those people who may be at risk of not being able to sustain independent living. The focus of the service is to enable clients to find solutions to resolve the issues and underlying factors that risk the security of their tenure.

Our Housing support service provides assistance to enable individuals to secure and maintain independent living in quality housing.

Housing support services are those that help such vulnerable groups both acquire and then maintain a quality home. A range of interventions may help achieve this and a range of agencies, both internally and externally, will contribute to differing aspects of the support on offer.

Help and assistance will be delivered in such a way that it encourages the individual or household's independence rather than continuing dependence. Our aim to help our service users live independently within their community and achieve the outcomes of safe, well and connected and prosperous.

By avoiding dependence, we can ensure interventions are time-limited and focussed on specific assistance required to achieve the outcome agreed within an individual's support plan. This can include one-off advice or similar help. The need for assistance may well repeat itself, and we need to be ready to provide additional support as and when it is required, or in a limited number of cases it may be ongoing.

Quality homes

We define quality housing as a home that will keep people safe, well, connected to their communities and affordable. A quality home is considered important because this is one of the foundations upon which health and wellbeing are based. Having such a home gives the best opportunity to people to be able to manage their long-term health conditions, overcome short-term breakdowns in their health, develop and maintain healthy family relationships, overcome addiction, refrain from offending, and contribute positively to their community to enable it to flourish.

Having a quality home is a basic human right and makes a significant contribution to public health objectives. Without somewhere to stay that is safe, warm and healthy, a person can't hope to engage successfully with training, education, employment and development of skills, and be a fully integrated member of society.

Provide access to wider services which link into areas such as employment, training and volunteering

The delivery of such assistance will be through the use of our MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) and tenancy coaching approaches which specifically focus on flexibility of the approach taken by services and the co-ordination of a comprehensive package to address any issues which may impact on an individual's housing. Having a home is just one element of ensuring wellbeing that is intimately linked to others including health, family and community relationships and employment/engagement. Housing Support Services inevitably therefore sometimes need to address these issues as well. In particular the ability to pay for accommodation is central to the capacity to acquire and maintain a home, and therefore assistance to obtain appropriate benefits, resolve debts, actively budget and in particular find appropriate employment are inevitably likely to be key elements in any programme of housing support.

Priority five:

Maintaining and developing partnership working

The successful delivery of this strategy is dependent on co-operation and joint working with internal departments, statutory bodies, voluntary sector agencies, and faith and community groups.

There are a number of forums within North Lincolnshire that facilitate this such as the MEAM coalition and the creation of MEAM Champions. With rising public concern about homelessness and rough sleeping we will use this forum as a way of encouraging others to be involved through the creation of a Homeless Charter.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces a new duty on statutory authorities to refer anyone who is known to be homeless (with consent) and will enable planned moves from hospital or prison.

Central to effective joint working will be workable pathways for specific client groups, such as those leaving prison, hospital or domestic violence/ care leavers. We will work together collectively to ensure that all agencies work towards and operate in the spirit of the Homelessness Reduction Act and particularly the Duty to Refer for statutory bodies for which it is intended.

We will build closer working relationships between the Council and registered social landlords to ensure earlier intervention and support. We will establish formal systems to better monitor and understand failed tenancies and abandonments. This work would build on the Panel meetings we have established to tackle rent arrears in RSL's. We will look at formalising joint protocols and pathways between Housing Services and other statutory bodies to ensure consistency of approach and clear identification of duties. This communication and creation of a more formalised approach will ensure that we are all working to a shared definition of homelessness and further clarity on terminology used by internal departments, statutory bodies, voluntary sector agencies, and faith and community groups.

We will work in a collaborative way across North Lincolnshire so that housing advice and information is consistent and linked up. We will refer vulnerable clients into relevant support services at the earliest opportunity and look at the creation of a comprehensive training programme provided by Housing services which is available to volunteers, peer mentors and those working with people that are homeless.

Priority six:

Improving health, well-being and resilience of our communities.

As part of “Intervention”, the Government announced that it would aim to address the health needs of rough sleepers and those facing homelessness.

The NHS has already embarked on major transformations within mental health services under the Mental Health Five Year Forward View looking at increasing the number of patients being treated and increasing their workforce in this field. The Strategy highlights the importance of targeted health support for those on the streets now and makes references to models of integrated care where health professionals, in particular those with mental health specialisms, work hand in hand with homeless outreach teams to identify those in need of support.

Provide an enhanced Housing Options Service

With a new targeted approach being taken by the Housing Advice and Support Service as a whole it has been considered that the Team offer a universal service, with access for all clients on a digital platform. With a bespoke system we are able to concentrate our resources on the more complex and vulnerable but still provide free access for all housing advice, allowing those who can help themselves to do so.

The Supported Accommodation Gateway is to be built in conjunction with FirstStop which sits within the Housing Advice and Support Service. It has been identified that a more systematic way of allocating referrals is required to make the best possible use of the resources on offer within North Lincolnshire in terms of supported accommodation and support provided to individuals in their own homes.

Both the Enhanced Housing Options and Gateway systems have been commissioned and we are currently involved with creating content that we feel will best service the needs of our clients.

The Enhanced Housing Options will ultimately be available online and clients will be directed to access this service as a triage mechanism before being contacted by officers and invited to appointments.

The system will identify those who have input data which we would consider a priority and they will be contacted and invited to speak to us regarding their situation, ensuring that these cases are prioritised as opposed to overlooked due to any changes " instead of "ensuring that those cases are not overlooked with the changes taking place.

The Enhanced Housing Options should result in a reduction in contacts to the Housing Advice team and allow advice workers to concentrate their time on more complex cases which require more input to reach a level of enablement. This together with a more robust triage offer, with advice available at the point of contact will further build around these principles and ensure we target our support and advice, providing specialist interventions to those most in need.

Conduct a Health Needs Assessment

Health inequality features heavily in the Government’s strategy. We recognise the need to develop a long-term plan, with partners in public health, CCG and NLaG to look at reducing health inequalities, including the different life expectancies of people who are rough sleeping. The long-term plan will look at setting out the barriers to accessing health services to this client group and look how we can reduce inequalities and build this into each programme.

We have already started this process by conducting, together with Public Health, a Homeless Health Needs Assessment identifying the specific health needs of our rough sleeper population. We will then build on this further to develop a Health Needs Toolkit to tackle the barriers faced by this cohort in accessing primary and secondary healthcare.

Develop a Supported Housing Gateway

The First Stop service sits at the heart of the Housing Advice Team, the gateway to all supported accommodation providers in North Lincolnshire including the Floating Support.

Being at the heart of housing support services allows the service to be influential on the placement and securing of support from appropriate providers. The Housing Advice and Support Service / First Stop lead the Allocation Panel meetings which decide all cases placed in those services.

We have plans to improve the efficiency of this referral gateway with a new targeted approach being taken by the service as a whole. Our digital platform will allow us to deliver a universal service, along with the training of hub staff to answer routine enquiries, so we can then concentrate our resources on the more complex and vulnerable but ensuring there is a basic universal offer available across all platforms and outlets from where advice may be sort. In so doing, we will hope to ensure that those who can help themselves do so.

As One Council, there is recognition that the services we offer should be available across all client groups. First Stop provides us with that single point of access into Housing Related Support Services and ensures that the right help is given at the right time and by the right people. It also gives us an unrivalled ability to be able to monitor progress for all clients receiving assistance. The gateway or single point of access has also been identified as providing a more systematic way of allocating referrals to make the best possible use of the resources on offer within North Lincolnshire in terms of housing related support.

Trauma/ Psychological led environment approach

The people we work with are often vulnerable and socially excluded. Many have experienced adversity or trauma, and as a result may have complex psychological and emotional needs. This can lead to difficulties interacting with people and engaging with services. It's important that we recognise and address this when working with clients.

To embed this understanding across all aspects of our work, we will explore the use of an approach known as Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE). We would apply PIE in five key areas: relationships, staff training and support, the physical environment, our psychological framework, and evaluation. Any potential model of PIE would be based upon consultation with both those we support and health partner agencies, making it an approach which has been tailored to our services.

Through supporting individuals using the MEAM approach it has become apparent for the need to be able to express the complex issues underpinning and maintaining homelessness as an interaction between individuals and their environment and to move away from, and develop our thinking in terms of the problems faced by those who are homeless as either purely at a social level or at an individual level.





Maintain and develop partnership working and strategic direction

The successful delivery of this strategy is dependent on co-operation and joint working with internal departments, statutory bodies, voluntary sector agencies, and faith and community groups.

There are a number of ways that we can facilitate such working, such as the Homeless Forum, but we acknowledge that with rising public concern about homelessness and rough sleeping we need to encourage this more and involve others. One of those ways is to look at a comprehensive training available to volunteers and those working with people that are homeless. This will also help disseminate good practice in this area.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces a new duty on statutory authorities to refer anyone who is known to be homeless (with consent) and will hopefully enable planned moves from hospital or prison rather than last minute homeless presentations.

The Homeless Forum will continue to meet and they can help review this strategy, under the strategic leadership of the Council.

This approach has served us well in the past, ensuring effective partnership working across a diverse range of services with good links into relevant client groups.

Central to these close working partnerships is the development of shared and workable pathways for different client groups, such as care leavers, those fleeing domestic abuse etc.

We must ensure that all agencies understand and adhere to the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act and particularly the Duty to Refer for statutory bodies. And ensure these are fully reflected with websites and information to customers.

There is a need to ensure closer working relationships between the council and registered social landlords to ensure earlier intervention and support. We must establish formal systems to better monitor and understand failed tenancies and abandonments.

We must ensure information sharing agreements and consent forms are General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliant.

A particular focus for the future is the Homeless Health Needs Assessment which will help us to gain a deeper understanding of how early homelessness prevention results in much better outcomes for people and significant financial savings for health and other budgets further down the line.

We will work in a collaborative way across North Lincolnshire so that housing advice and information is consistent and linked up.

We will refer vulnerable clients into relevant support services at the earliest opportunity.

Action Plan



The commitments outlined above are set out more fully in the strategy action plan that can be viewed or downloaded from www.northlincs.gov.uk

Making sure we deliver:

The Homelessness Forum will meet at least annually to review progress against the action plan and ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs. We will publish an annual report on the council's website in the first quarter of each new financial year.

