

MAKING HOMELESSNESS THE UNACCEPTABLE OUTCOME

*A homeless prevention overview for
registered providers*





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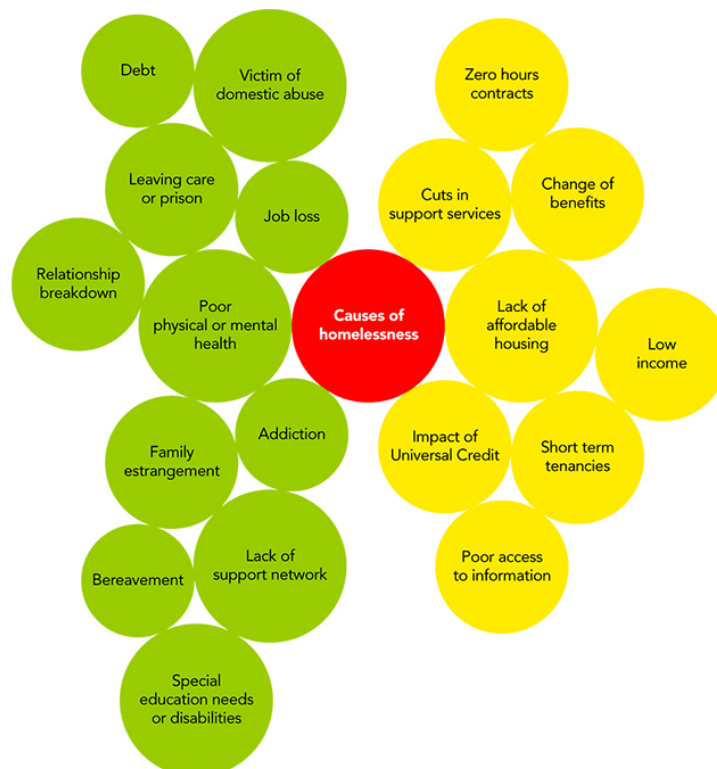
Homelessness is everyone's business

This document is aimed at frontline workers at registered providers that deal with tenants that come into difficulties that may put their tenancy at risk. The reasons can be wide-ranging, complex and often require a great deal of empathy on the side of the professional in order to fully understand an individual's specific need. It also requires a professional to think creatively and spot the early warning signs of homelessness. A multi-agency approach working in partnership is often key. Further reading on the importance of housing associations and councils working together to end homelessness is available within the LGA/NHF joint document in the [Appendix](#).

There is no great blanket solution to preventing homelessness however the earlier applicable services are notified the greater the chances of a successful outcome for the individual.

It can be easy to judge and assume people become homeless simply because they have an addiction or have made a bad choice in life. But it's important to remember there is always a real person and a complicated story behind every case of homelessness. Everyone's story is different but it's almost always the case that someone can be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to a number of complex personal and external factors.

And it's true that it can happen to anyone – all it can take is a run of bad luck, a few poor decisions or a change in circumstances to find yourself in a position where you're unable to cover rent or mortgage payments. And if you don't have a support network to help you get you back on your feet, homelessness can become a real risk.¹



¹ <https://launchpadreading.org.uk/homelessness/causes-of-homelessness/> (image included)



Trailblazer Service Overview

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trailblazer began life in April 2017 as a result of a successful bid by partners within the region to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's *Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers Fund*. The original vision was that "by empowering all public facing staff to identify the risk of homelessness and work together to prevent it, we make homelessness the 'unacceptable outcome'". The project was originally funded by MHCLG for 2 years and due to its success has been funded by partners since. The project is currently funded until the end of 2020.

We provide a service across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that supports partners to reduce homelessness by getting as upstream in the process as possible. Originally the Trailblazer supported local authorities to implement the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Trailblazer Team continues to deal with people with more notice of homelessness than the local authorities are statutorily required to work with. We encourage early referrals into the service.

We help professionals to identify the early warning signs of homelessness along with encouraging ways to prevent it. We promote and build good working relationships between services by being the link between agencies thus improving the customer experience.

Evictions and voids are costly! There are proven cost savings from preventing homelessness therefore we can save you money by supporting you to support your tenants .

For every £1 spent on the Trailblazer and its projects from 2017-19 more than £18 was saved from across the public sector.

Trailblazer can offer (list not exhaustive):

- ✓ Help partners recognise early warning signs of homelessness and ways to prevent it
- ✓ Help people threatened with homelessness as early as possible regardless of "priority need"
- ✓ Work closely with housing options teams and other partners to prevent homelessness
- ✓ Debt management advice especially linked to rent arrears
- ✓ Accessing grants and other financial resources
- ✓ Applying for appropriate benefits and understanding current entitlements
- ✓ Mediation between tenants and landlords, and other services
- ✓ Highlight tenants difficulties to their current landlord/housing association to produce best outcomes
- ✓ Bespoke 1-2-1 support to you and your tenants
- ✓ Ongoing additional support via referrals into other services

Referrals and general enquires are welcomed and encouraged

Anyone residing within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can be referred to the service. Unfortunately we cannot accept referrals for those residing within the East Cambs district.

Please refer using the following email address.

trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk – inbox is monitored Monday to Friday by duty officer.

Referral form attached in [Appendix](#)

COVID-19 RESPONSE: *Currently home visits and face-to-face appointments with customers are not being conducted. Telephone and virtual appointments are being offered.*



Homeless Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was implemented on 3rd of April 2018; it places new duties on housing authorities such as to act earlier in order to prevent homelessness. Housing authorities have to take reasonable steps to prevent/relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, not just those who have priority under the Act.

The Homelessness Reduction Act does not replace the old act however what it does it adds new duties that local housing authorities have to follow.

The three main objectives of this act are:

Prevent – Prevent more people from becoming homeless in the first place by identifying people at risk and intervening earlier with evidenced solutions.

Intervene – Intervene rapidly if a homelessness crisis occurs, so it is brief and non-recurrent.

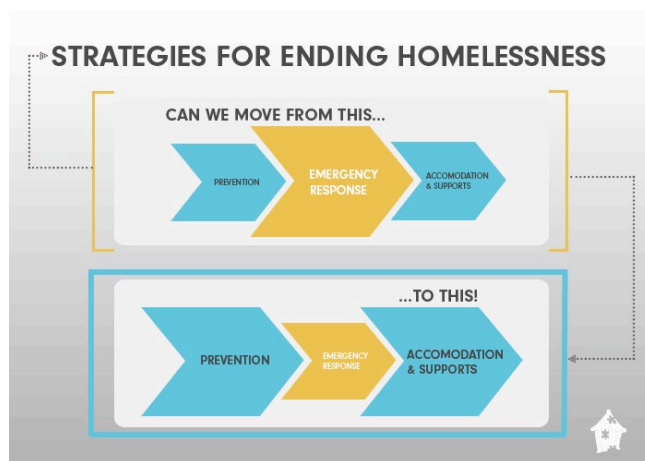
Recover- Help more people recover from and exit homelessness by getting them back on their feet.

The Act has been introduced on the basis of the work of an independent panel of experts established by Crisis (the national charity for single homeless people) and draws heavily on changes made to the Welsh homeless legislation in 2015. Crisis highlighted a number of issues with the way the current law was working in practice:

- ✓ A lack of meaningful advice and assistance, which in some areas was not tailored to the individual's needs
- ✓ Some local authorities were only helping at crisis point
- ✓ Local authorities were doing prevention work, but it was outside of the legal framework
- ✓ There was little protection for single people who did not have priority need or those who were 'intentionally homeless'

The Act aims to reduce homelessness by:

- ✓ Improving the quality of the advice available
- ✓ Refocusing local authorities on prevention work
- ✓ Increasing support for single people
- ✓ 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 leavers²



² <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/about-homelessness-reduction-act-hra#back>

³ <https://ighhub.org/resource/what-are-5-ways-end-homelessness>



Housing Options Services

Housing Options provide a service of support and advice around housing and homelessness issues. Any member of the public is entitled to free housing advice and can approach their local authority for advice around their specific housing issues. When a person is threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days they are entitled to make a homeless application.

Housing Options Team can offer:

- ✓ Free housing advice for any member of the public from general information to booking an appointment for a homeless application
- ✓ During a homeless application a personal housing plan is created where a list of tasks will be created for both the Housing Options Officer and applicant/s to create a working partnership
- ✓ Temporary accommodation can be offered depending on circumstances and if in priority need
- ✓ Help to build relationships between tenants, landlords and registered providers
- ✓ Some Housing Options Team's offer specialist workers who can offer more intense support including home visits
- ✓ Financial support via rent deposit schemes and other initiatives
- ✓ Signpost and refer to other services that offer the individual/family more direct support e.g. Trailblazer, Citizen Advice, debt management, specific grant entitlement and floating support services

Each team will work differently in how they offer appointments. Some teams will offer face to face appointments for advice and homeless application while other teams will handle the majority of contact via telephone appointments and email.

COVID-19 RESPONSE: *Currently home visits and face-to-face appointments with customers are not being conducted. Telephone and virtual appointments are being offered. If a customer is extremely vulnerable this will be reviewed on a case by case basis.*

We work closely with these teams so if you are unsure who to refer to please refer to the Housing Options Team in the first instance. If applicable they will then refer to the Trailblazer team.

If you have any more questions relating to a housing issue then please find the relevant contact details for your area below:

Cambridge City District Council
housing.advice@cambridge.gov.uk
01223 457438

Fenland District Council
housingadvice@fenland.gov.uk
01354 654321

Huntingdon District Council
housingadvice@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
01480 388218

Peterborough City Council
housing.needs@peterborough.gov.uk
01733 864064

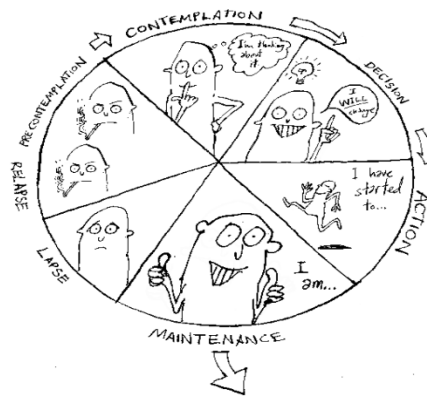
South Cambridgeshire District Council
housing.advice@scambs.gov.uk
03450 450051



Motivational Interviewing

The Trailblazer Team recognise the importance of working in a strength-based way and undertook ‘train the trainer’ sessions on Motivational Interviewing (cambridgetraining.org) to be able to embed this practice across teams working with people facing homelessness. The training was delivered in partnership between different organisations including CHS Group, Job Centre plus and CGL. Cohorts were made up of a wide range of professionals, including Housing Officers and work coaches. The mixed cohorts allowed for networking and skills sharing and feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the over 200 delegates “the training was really great!”, “I’ve taken away some very practical techniques to try”

Positive and early engagement with individuals facing homelessness increases the likelihood that they will be able to make positive changes to avoid losing their homes. By focusing on what’s strong, not what’s wrong, we can build on a person’s successes and help them to develop the self-belief to make positive changes in their lives. Motivational Interviewing uses the cycle of change, a powerful tool which enables a practitioner to work out where a person is in their change journey and how best to use curiosity and listening skills to help them work out a way forward. Crucially the approach is about working with, not doing ‘to’.



Core Principles

- ✓ The relationship between worker and person at risk of homelessness is key. We build a positive relationship by showing empathy, unconditional positive regard and by with-holding judgements
- ✓ Expressing empathy is demonstrating through skilful reflective listening; feelings are understood without blame, criticism or judgement
- ✓ We roll with resistance, or avoid argument, by letting go of our own agenda, and avoiding unhelpful conflict.
- ✓ Only the client can take responsibility for their own behaviour, which is as true for us as the next person. By allowing this, we support self-responsibility.
- ✓ Using open questions, affirmation and reflective listening we can help people understand their own position in the cycle of change. The training included extensive work on effective listening – easier to describe than to do! – as well as other key techniques such as panning for gold.

The training slides are available at [Appendix](#) and further resources are here: <https://www.cambridgetraining.org/motivational-interviewing/>



Trailblazer Case Studies

Case Study One

Referred by:

Local Authority

Household type and any vulnerability

1 Adult and 1 Child

Tenure

Social tenancy

Risk of homelessness

A referral was received as the tenant had been made redundant a few months ago. They were not entitled to any benefits due to the redundancy pay, the Tenant had been trying to secure new employment for the past few months and been using the redundancy money to pay for the rent and bills including shopping and clothes for their child. Redundancy money was almost gone and not able to upcoming rent of £650 PCM.

Action required and completed

- ✓ Advised Tenant to apply for DHP to cover rent until Housing Benefit was in place. DHP awarded for 6 weeks of rent. (Around £975)
- ✓ Applying for appropriate benefits including Housing Benefit.
- ✓ Communicated with letting agency to discuss current issue and plan that was in place.
- ✓ Client secured new employment meaning they could cover the rent once DHP finished.
- ✓ Debt advice given over current finances and free debt management schemes which accessible.

Outcome and tenancy sustainment options used

Tenant was able to remain in the property without accumulating any rent arrears and successfully gained employment. They also sought debt advice to set up a payment plan and froze interest they were paying to increase their monthly income.

Case Study Two

Referred by:

Local Authority

Household type and any vulnerability

1 adult with autism

Tenure

Private tenancy

Risk of homelessness

Tenant was under the age of 35 and therefore only entitled to a shared room rate of housing benefit. Tenant was autistic and their DLA had recently ceased which had led to a significant decrease of income. Full rent not being covered by current support. Tenancy put at risk due to affordability issues.

Action required and completed

- ✓ Review benefits entitlement.
- ✓ Tenant advised via third party (mother) to apply for PIP. This was later awarded and opened entitlement to a disability premium.



- ✓ Applied for HB back payment in view of PIP/disability premium award and worked with tenant to provide correct evidence for this. This meant that the tenant could potentially become eligible for a 1 bed rate.
- ✓ Set up direct payments and contact/advocate information

Outcome and tenancy sustainment options used

Tenant able to remain in property as 1 bed LHA rate awarded and backdated. HB awarded at 1 bed rate back to start of tenancy totalling more than £6k. ESA backdated assessed in WRAG totalling £3k. Direct HB payments to LL set up. HB record marked as vulnerable tenant with mother as contact/advocate.

Case Study Three

Referred by:

Family Worker

Household type and any vulnerability

1 Adult and 2 Children. Service user suffered with anxiety and depression.

Tenure

Social tenancy

Risk of homelessness

Due to ongoing ASB complaints by Tenant, they are unwilling to stay in the property and therefore breaking the conditions of their tenancy. Referral received by Family worker to help bridge the gap between the Housing association and the Tenant.

Action required and completed

- ✓ Advised tenant to record all present and future issues with neighbours, this would all be recorded as potential evidence in the ASB Case. Advised to make a log of all the different professionals that they speak to, to show they are acting as a responsible tenant by reporting issues relating to the property.
- ✓ Advised Tenant that if they felt themselves or their children are unsafe at any point following an incident to phone the police, to prepare a continuously plan for such moments and to make both their Family worker and Housing officer aware.
- ✓ Due to the impact of the ASB complaints and the negative impact this was having on the service users Mental Health, signposting was used with the local GP for further support.
- ✓ Legal advice was shared around the Housing Act, Homelessness Reduction Act and how surrendering a tenancy could impact on the person's future when applying for housing through Home-Link or making a Homeless Application.
- ✓ Support and information was shared regarding complaint procedures as the Service user felt not valued and not respected by Housing Services and the ASB process.
- ✓ Advice and concerns were shared to the Housing Association Management team and local Housing benefit team to make sure collaborative working was being maintained.
- ✓ Several Options were explored and general advice was given to what services and support could be accessed, depending on what decision the Service user made regarding their tenancy. This helped the service user with their informed final decision.

Outcome and tenancy sustainment options used

The Tenant was given more opportunities to work with the Housing Association to remain in the property, after further concerns the Tenant did not feel safe to remain in the property and therefore surrendered their tenancy, they felt this was having a derogative impact on them and their children's mental wellbeing.

The Service User decided to return to their parent's property but felt relieved and happy they had made the informed choice. A referral was made to P3 Support where it was agreed at a later date



telephone support would be given to help them move forward with their housing situation, when they felt in a more stable place with their mental health.

Although the desired outcome was not met in terms of the client to remain in their property, this is a good example of how to adapt your working practice and general support when a case does not go to plan. In this situation the service user made an informed choice and identified they were feeling unwell with their mental health and staying at the property would further impact on their wellbeing, they believed by staying at the property eventually this would lead them to being evicted for not living their full time. The client felt happier they left on their own terms and were able to follow the support plan and felt safe within their own family.

The service user also felt that when they were in a happier more secure state with their Mental Health, they would like to continue to receive housing support to help aid their ability to live independently.

Case Study Four

Referred by:

Registered Provider

Household type and any vulnerability

1 Adult

Tenure

Social tenancy

Risk of homelessness

Rent arrears of £2821.71

Arrears accrued due to tenant becoming unemployed and not paying the shortfall in rent. They were no longer engaging with the RP.

Action required and completed

- ✓ Mediation between tenant and RP. Possession order had been applied for.
- ✓ Mediation between tenant and Housing Benefit
- ✓ Back payment from HB of £1,431.73 and payment plan of £30 pm set up for the remainder of the arrears.

Outcome and tenancy sustainment options used

Tenant was able to remain in the property and no longer at risk of eviction. Referred to CAB for ongoing support with other debts. A note was placed on rent account for Trailblazer to be contacted if any payments missed so that RP can act swiftly. Tenant referred to New Horizons Project for employment support.

Case Study Five

Referred by:

Children's Social Care

Household type and any vulnerability

2 Adults and 4 Children

Tenure

Social tenancy

Risk of homelessness

A referral received a week before eviction date. Tenant in arrears of over £4000.

Tenant would not engage with RP, believed that nothing could be done as it has all gone too far.



Benefits were very fluctuant due to being in and out of employment and few times were HB was suspended meaning that arrears added up. Adults were also substance misusers therefore not always on board with the housing and their spending was sometimes not priorities on housing.

Action required and completed

- ✓ Advised Tenant to apply for stay hearing – suspended possession order granted.
- ✓ Mediated between tenant and landlord regarding the actions that we were taking.
- ✓ Applied for HB back payment and work with tenant to provide the right evidence so this could be done so. HB back paid £1800.
- ✓ Applied for DHP which was also granted (around £1300)
- ✓ Remainder of rent arrears a payment plan set up of £10 p/w.

Outcome and tenancy sustainment options used

Tenant was able to remain in the property with her family. Tenant has set up a payment plan for the remaining arrears. Also HB is all set up for future rent payments. Registered Provider keeping an eye out on the arrears and payment plan make sure tenant is able to afford and paying the arrears off, registered provided keep a close eye and if any red flags come up to come back to us again. Tenant supported by Aspire and making good progress.



Financial Support Available

Cambridge City Council DHP – Paper based application form (located in [Appendix](#)) to be completed and sent to: RichardO.smith@cambridge.gov.uk
sue.london@cambridge.gov.uk

- ✓ Homeless Prevention Fund and Rent/Deposit scheme can be accessed through Cambridge City Council housing team

Fenland District Council DHP -

<https://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk/fenland/index.cfm>

- ✓ Homeless Prevention Fund and Rent/Deposit scheme can be accessed through Fenland District Council housing team

Huntingdon District Council DHP - <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/1108/discretionary-housing-payment-application-form.pdf> (paper application)

- ✓ Homeless Prevention Fund and Rent/Deposit scheme can be accessed through Huntingdon District Council Housing Team

Peterborough City Council DHP - <https://forms.peterborough.gov.uk/356656>

- ✓ Homeless Prevention Fund and Rent/Deposit scheme, can be access through Peterborough City Council Housing Options Team

South Cambs District Council DHP – <https://www.scams.gov.uk/portal-eform-landing-pages/?u=https://scams-framework.egovhub.net/APPLYFORDISCRETIONARYHOUSINGPAYMENTS/launch>

- ✓ Homeless Prevention Fund and Rent/Deposit scheme can be accessed through South Cambridgeshire Council housing team.

* Always make a DHP application before attempting to access other local authority financial support. If initial application is rejected then request a reconsideration of the original decision and supply further evidence. Other options should be explored after the DHP option has been exhausted.

Documents required to support DHP application:

1. Latest two months of bank statements for all accounts (for all applicants)
2. Income and Expenditure details
3. Copy of Tenancy agreement
4. Copy of latest rent statement
5. Any medical evidence (if applicable)



Other ways to find support

Grants for individuals in need

<http://makingmoneycount.org.uk/help-in-a-crisis/>

Grant Search

<https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/>

Making Money Count

<http://makingmoneycount.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice Bureau

<https://www.citizensadvice.ruralcambs.org.uk/>

<https://www.cambridgecab.org.uk/>

Benefits info

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

<https://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/disability-and-sickness-benefits>

Prescription prepayment

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs/save-money-with-a-prescription-prepayment-certificate-ppc/>

Warm Home Discount

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

Anglian Water (discounted tariffs)

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/extra-support/help-paying-your-bill/>

Cambridge Water (discounted tariffs)

<https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/help-and-advice/read/how-can-you-help-me-pay-my-bill-200100000002216>

Easy utility price comparison and switching

<https://www.uswitch.com>

Q&A Offer

Would you like a focussed session on this document for your front line staff?

We plan to run a 2 hour Q&A session in the near future on the document content so that your teams can further understand the detail behind the words.

Within this session current cases can be brought for discussion within the group.

Email trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk to register your interest.

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Separate copies of the below appendix documents are available on request, for more information please email trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk

Trailblazer referral form



Please complete as much as possible. Send to trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk

Applicant details:

Name:	
Date of Birth:	
National Insurance Number:	
Contact Number:	
Email:	
Address (including postcode):	
Accommodation type (Private/Social tenancy, homeowner, hostel, etc):	
Landlord /housing provider name and details (if known):	
Date moved in (if known):	

Referrer's details:

Organisation:	
Name and job title:	
Contact details:	
Referral date:	

Support agencies currently involved (if known):

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Other household members (if applicable):

Name:	Name:	Name:
DOB:	DOB:	DOB:
Relationship to main applicant:	Relationship to main applicant:	Relationship to main applicant:
Address (including postcode):	Address (including postcode):	Address (including postcode):
Contact number:	Contact number:	Contact number:

Name:	Name:	Name:
DOB:	DOB:	DOB:
Relationship to main applicant:	Relationship to main applicant:	Relationship to main applicant:
Address (including postcode)	Address (including postcode):	Address (including postcode):
Contact number:	Contact number:	Contact number:

Trailblazer referral form

Nationality:

Actual nationality of main applicant:	
Residential status of main applicant (UK resident):	
Employment status of main applicant:	
Benefits status of main applicant (eg Housing Benefit claim):	

Rough sleeper details:

Has main applicant ever slept rough?	
How many nights slept rough in past year?	
What age when first slept rough?	

Previous homelessness:

Has main applicant ever been homeless before?	
When was applicant first homeless?	
What age when first homeless?	
How many addresses held in past 2 years?	
Has main applicant been temporarily accommodated by any Local Authority in past 5 years?	

Prison:

Has main applicant been in prison in last year?	
Date main applicant left Prison?	
Was main applicant homeless prior to Prison?	
Did main applicant receive resettlement advice in prison?	

Housing situation:

Please explain in as much detail as possible what the applicant's current housing circumstance is. Are there any rent arrears at their current or previous property? Etc..

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DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS APPLICATION

Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	
HB Ref:	Date Issued:

Please list all of your household income

Type of Income	Amount £	How Often Paid (e.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly)
Earnings (including self-employed)		
Earnings (partner)		
Child Benefit		
Child Tax Credits		
Working Tax Credits		
Disability Living Allowance		
Attendance Allowance		
Carers Allowance		
Personal Independence Payments		
Income Support		
Job Seekers Allowance		
Employment & Support Allowance		
Child Maintenance Payments		
Universal Credit (including Housing Cost Element)		
Other (please specify)		

What **savings / investments** do you or your partner have?

- Please list any accounts you have and the balances for each.
- Please list any other savings / investments you hold (e.g. premium bonds, shares).

We may ask for proof of these.

Please list all of your weekly outgoings, if you are paying debts or arrears, please say when these will be paid off. We may ask for proof if amounts appear excessive.

Payment	Amount £	Frequency of payment	Date ends (if applicable)
Rent			
Council Tax			
Water Bill			
Electricity			
Gas			
Buildings/Contents Insurance			
Life Insurance			
Food / Household Products			
TV Licence			
Telephone			
Broadband / TV Package			
Clothing & Shoes			
School Meals / Trips / Nursery fees			
Travel costs (public transport)			
Petrol/ Diesel			
Road Tax / MOT			
Car insurance / Breakdown Cover			
Credit Cards / Other Debts			
Catalogues			
Pet Expenses			
Other Expenses (please list):			

If you and / or your partner are disabled in any way, please tell us about any expenses (not already mentioned above) which you pay as a result of the disability.

Do you and / or your partner have any **other financial help** that you could rely on i.e. family or friends? If yes, please give details.

Please describe any **health problems** that you or members of your family suffer from which may affect your request for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

Also confirm if:

- You or any family member have **overnight carers**, and provide confirmation from your doctor or health professional as to why this is required. Also a letter from your **carer** to confirm their name, address and how often they provide overnight care; or
- You and a partner cannot share a bedroom for medical reasons. If so, please explain why; or
- You have children who cannot share a bedroom because of the medical condition of one of the children who receives either the middle or higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (care component). Please explain why they cannot share and provide a letter from a doctor or other professional confirming this.

Is there a particular reason why your **accommodation is suited to the needs** of you and your family? If so, please explain.

Please answer the following if you pay rent (to the Council or a Private Landlord or Housing Association).

Are you in rent arrears and, if so, by how much?	
Have you received a Notice to Quit and, if so, when?	
Have you contacted the Council's Housing Advice Section for advice? Telephone number: (01223) 457918	
Have you registered on Homelink and, if so, are you actively bidding?	
Have you looked for other cheaper accommodation (in or outside of the City)?	

Thank you for completing the above, if there are any details that you feel may assist your application, please write them in the box below.

Additional Information.

Please tell us how long you need Discretionary Housing Payments for.

Declaration

The information I have given on this form is true and complete and I will notify Cambridge City Council of all changes of circumstances that may affect my entitlement to a Discretionary Housing Payment.

In making this application for a Discretionary Housing Payment, I authorise:

- Cambridge City Council to make all reasonable enquires to validate and substantiate this claim.
- I also agree to the Council passing details of this application to the Citizens Advice Bureau and / or an Employment Advisor if a referral is made and to discuss the outcome of any referral.

Any overpayment of a Discretionary Housing Payment that is deemed recoverable will be repaid by myself.

Signature	
Print Name	
Date	

If anyone helped you to complete this form please ask them to sign and date below.

Signature	
Print Name	
Relationship to Applicant	
Date	

Water Bill Reduction

I confirm that I am the bill payer and I give permission for you to pass relevant personal details to the Cambridge Water Company (part of South Staffordshire Water) in order that they can potentially award me a 60% tariff reduction on my water bill. These details would be my name, my partner's name if applicable and my address.

Signature	
Print Name	
Address	
Date	

Please return it to: Revenues & Benefits, Cambridge City Council, FREEPOST PO Box 130, Cambridge, CB2 1BR

Useful Contacts

Citizens Advice Bureau	<p><u>Drop-In Sessions (no appointment needed)</u></p> <p>They have drop-in sessions at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 66 Devonshire Rd, Cambridge. (Monday – Friday: 9.15am – 12.45pm)• Cambridge City Council, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge. (Tuesday & Thursday: 11am – 3pm)• The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Catherine’s Road, Cambridge. (Wednesday: 11am – 3pm)• Trumpington Pavilion, Paget Road, Cambridge. (Thursday: 11.30am – 2.30pm) <p><u>Debt Management Service</u> They also run a debt management service at the City Council’s Mandela House on Wednesday between 9.30am – 1.30pm by appointment.</p> <p>To make an appointment please phone Cambridge City Council on (01223) 457762</p> <p><u>Advice Line</u> The advice line is: 0344 848 7979 (Monday – Friday)</p> <p><u>Emails</u> You can email them by going to their website (www.cambridgecab.org.uk) and then going to “Help & Advice” – “Get Advice” – “Email us” – and then clicking on “Email for advice”.</p>
Child Maintenance Payments	<p>Child Maintenance Options is a free service that provides impartial information and support to do with child maintenance payments.</p> <p>Telephone number: 0800 988 0988 (8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am – 4pm Saturday)</p>

<p>Housing</p>	<p>The Council’s housing advice service can be contacted by the following</p> <p><u>Drop-In Sessions (no appointment needed)</u> A drop-in service is available Monday – Friday (excluding Wednesday) between 10am – 4pm. This is at the Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge.</p> <p><u>Rent Advice for Council Tenants</u> James Stephenson will be providing rent advice to council tenants by appointment only every Friday between 9am – 4pm at Mandela House and every Tuesday and Thursday at 171 Arbury Road. To book an appointment please phone James on (01223) 458418</p> <p><u>Website</u> Go to Cambridge City Council’s website (www.cambridge.gov.uk) and type “Get advice about housing” in the “Search” field. Amongst others things here, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Make an online enquiry about housing; or○ Register with “Homelink”, which is how you apply for council or housing association accommodation. <p><u>Advice Line</u> The advice line is: (01223) 457918.</p>
<p>Downsizing Incentive Scheme</p>	<p>If you've been a Cambridge City Council tenant and lived in your current home for two years or more, we offer incentives to move to one of our smaller properties.</p> <p>You would receive a grant and removal expenses if you want to move - this lets us make larger homes available to larger families.</p> <p>The under-occupancy scheme is available to tenants downsizing to a smaller property through the <u>mutual exchange process</u> as long as both sets of tenants are moving into properties that only have the number of bedrooms they require.</p> <p><u>Example</u> If moving from a two-bed property to a one-bed property there would be a removal allowance of £800 and a grant available of £1000 (total payable £1800).</p> <p>Telephone number: 01223 458415</p> <p>Email: housingincentivescheme@cambridge.gov.uk</p>

<p>Lodgers</p>	<p>If you have a spare room and are considering taking in a lodger, please speak to Andy King from Cambridge City Council. He can advise you on how to go about doing this and what impact, if any, it will have on your benefits.</p> <p>Telephone number: (01223) 457870 Email: andy.king@cambridge.gov.uk</p>
<p>Disability-Related Benefits</p>	<p>The CAB can assist with both advice and applying for these benefits. Their contact details are above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Allowance (For those aged 65 or over) Telephone number: 0345 605 6055 • Disability Living Allowance (Typically for children aged under 16) Telephone number: 0345 712 3456 • Personal Independence Payments (For those aged 16-64). Telephone number: 0800 917 2222 • Carer's Allowance (providing care for someone for at least 35 hours per week). Apply online at www.gov.uk/carers-allowance
<p>Utility Bills</p>	<p>Look at comparison websites to find the most competitive rates.</p>
<p>Taxi Card</p>	<p>Taxicard is a scheme that helps disabled people on low incomes to pay for taxi journeys.</p> <p>When you join, you'll be given 100 vouchers, that you show to the taxi driver before every journey, each entitling you to £3.30 off your fare.</p> <p>Telephone number: 01223 457200</p> <p>Email: taxicard@cambridge.gov.uk</p>

**Prescription
Prepayment Certificate**

If you know you'll have to pay for a lot of NHS prescriptions it may be cheaper to buy a prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) – effectively a prescription 'season ticket'. A PPC covers you for all of your own NHS prescriptions, including NHS dental prescriptions, no matter how many items you need.

1. A three month PPC costs £29.10 and will save you money if you need more than three prescribed items in three months
2. A 12 month PPC costs £104.00 and will save you money if you need more than 12 prescribed items in a year

Telephone number: 0300 330 1341



ALASDAIR CANT & ASSOCIATES

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Motivation an inner state of willingness. This 'state' is not fixed, but ebbs and flows according to mood, circumstances, perceptions etc.

Motivational Interview

A conversation that explores a situation afresh, harnessing an individual's motivation and helping it move positively towards change. This is not an interview in the traditional sense of a formal 1:1 or a job interview. Rather, from the Latin prefix *inter* = mutually, reciprocally and from Anglo-Norman French *veu* = to regard. So, interview literally means to 'to look at together'.

Empathy – trying to understand another person's perspective. It is about making a real effort, even if only for a short time.

Sympathy – when we feel sorry for someone. It is easy to get 'sucked into' someone's story or drama if we sympathise

Apathy – when we can't be bothered. Often we cover this up because we know that to do otherwise would be unprofessional. But even if only a 30 second opportunity, this might become a lost opportunity

Congruent – being real. As far as possible it is being true to our thoughts and feelings so that what is said/done externally, reflects what is going on internally

Being **child-like** in curiosity. Enjoying people and enjoying difference by staying curious about them. This makes it easier to actively recognise an individual's strengths, talents and needs as described in Ealing's Equality and Diversity policy

Positive Regard (sometimes also known as unconditional positive regard, as first described by Carl Rogers in 1959) Withholding judgement and believing in the individual as a fellow human being, even if you struggle with or dislike their behaviour.

Ambivalence a state of flux, where we don't have strong attachment or preference to a chosen route/behaviour/choice. There is nothing that particularly repels or attracts. This is often a reality for many. A motivational skills approach respects this and explores it.

Cycle of Change This is simply a metaphor to help make the stages of behaviour change more understandable. The various stages are not usually apparent, so becoming conscious of the stages helps us engage more effectively with where someone is at (their agenda), rather than be caught up too much with where we want them to be (our agenda). The key stages are described below.

Pre-contemplation 'Before thinking', when we are attached to the current behaviour

Contemplation Thinking about it, although this might be early stage thinking with lots of ambivalence

Decision This represents an inner state of determining. It will involve planning and preparation, telling others, but not yet commitment to action

Action The first step or steps of behaviour change. This may be a small step(s), but in a positive direction towards the change that is wanted

Maintenance Keeping going with the change. This might be for 24 hours, but it may represent something greater to the individual and of course, 24 hours of change is a success in itself, however small, and something to build on.

Lapse A temporary setback. The premise in motivational skills is that lapse is an entirely natural and expected part of the journey towards success. It is not about failure, but all about opportunity for learning.

Relapse This is at or near to the original behaviour. A passive listener would just hear about failure and the negative talk. Actively listen and there often lies hidden some successes in the past that are still of value because of the learning.

Cognitive Dissonance Literally 'thinking disconnect'. We all deliberately disconnect/distance ourselves from some aspects of the truth about a situation in order to justify or make easier some of our actions or inaction.

A MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH TO FACILITATE CHANGE

To help prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people



The necessary bits...

Housekeeping and Introductions



Aims

- A creative development initiative that will have a positive and lasting impact in reducing homelessness
- To reach all practitioners across the Districts and County Councils who may have conversations with clients at risk of homelessness
- Positive and early engagement with these individuals increases the likelihood of raising awareness and personal responsibility as well as willingness to access support
- We will introduce a motivational skills approach to making sensitive or difficult conversations as constructive and productive as possible



Objectives of the day

- ❑ To gain a practical understanding of Motivational Interviewing
- ❑ To know the fundamentals of a motivational skills approach
- ❑ To understand and be able to use the cycle of behaviour change
- ❑ To become familiar with a range of Motivational Interviewing techniques
- ❑ To have opportunities to apply theory to practice



Early conversations about homelessness are important. Why?

- ❑ Prevention better than cure
- ❑ Homelessness has an impact on all areas of people's lives;
 - Health
 - Education
 - Mental Health
 - Family well being
 - Offending
 - Substance misuse
 - Financial wellbeing

What is Motivational Interviewing?

- ❑ *'Motivational interviewing is a technique in which you become a helper in the change process and express acceptance of the individual'* (Miller and Rollnick, 1991).
- ❑ *'A collaborative, person-centred form of guiding to promote and strengthen motivation for change'* (Making it Count ,2013)

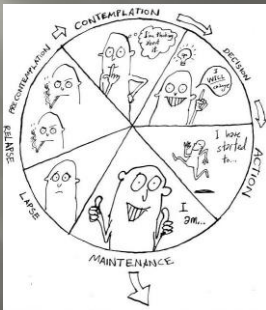


How do we work in a motivational way?

- ❑ Listening and observing
- ❑ Empathy
- ❑ Congruence
- ❑ Unconditional positive regard (withhold judgement)



Cycle of Change



Lets Break ☺



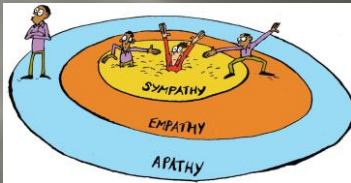
Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- Clarify Contracts



Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- Express Empathy



Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- Develop Desire to Change



Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- ❑ Avoid Argument (Roll with Resistance)



Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- ❑ Support Self-belief and Self-responsibility (Self-efficacy)



Key Motivational Skills

All change involves a loss

- ❑ Affirm
- ❑ Listen
- ❑ Open questions
- ❑ Summarise and Reflect
- ❑ Support self-motivating statements



Lunch

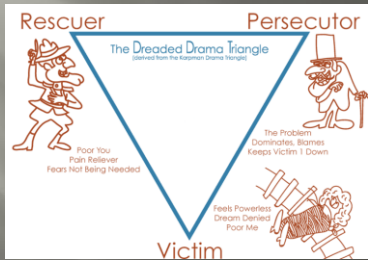


Welcome back

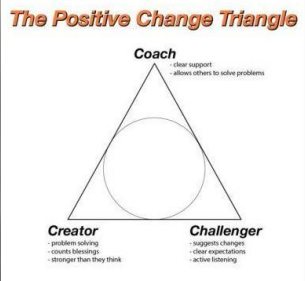
- ▣ Group icebreaker



Triangle of Drama



Positive Triangle



Motivational Techniques

Cognitive Dissonance



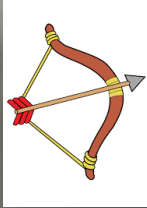
Motivational Techniques

Cost Benefit Analysis



Motivational Techniques

Overshooting



Motivational Techniques

Columbo Technique



Motivational Techniques

Metaphors

A metaphor is a word or phrase that is used to make a comparison between two people, things, animals, or places.

pick your feet up Keep your eyes peeled

he's a right owl The apple of my eye the weight of the world on my shoulders

Come on, slow coach A recipe for disaster

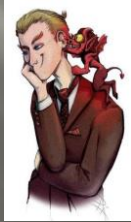
You can't pull the wool over my eyes Turning over a new leaf makes my eyes stare

peek in a pod bitter fingers he's a road hog



Motivational Techniques

Devils Advocate



Break time ☺



Recap of techniques and skills

- ☐ Reflective and active listening
- ☐ Expressing empathy
- ☐ Cost benefit analysis
- ☐ Avoid Argument (Roll with Resistance)
- ☐ Overshooting, Columbo, Devils Advocate



Housing associations and councils working together to end homelessness

Forewords

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) is the most important piece of homelessness legislation we've seen in a generation. It brings a shift in the way we provide support, so that it's available to everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, regardless of priority need.

Along with this important step, the Act is about encouraging collaboration and partnerships. While these have long existed across the housing sector, the Act gives new impetus to strengthening these relationships and identifying new, joint solutions to tackling homelessness.

As the country's housing and homelessness crisis continues, there are key structural changes we need to see before homelessness will end. This includes the need for urgent government investment to enable housing associations and councils to build 145,000 new affordable homes a year – of which 90,000 must be social rent – a fair and effective welfare system and secure, long term funding for support and supported housing.

So, while the Act alone can't solve homelessness, it has helped to develop strong local partnerships and collaboration, like the ones this report explores. With these partnerships and the policy changes described above, we will be so much closer to our goal of ending the housing crisis for good.

Kate Henderson

Chief Executive, National Housing Federation

In life, every one of us needs good health, a stable home, a job, and a support network of friends and family; they are fundamental to being fulfilled, happy and productive.

The rise in homelessness is a very visual demonstration of the challenges that society and the economy is facing in helping everyone to achieve those fundamentals.

Homelessness is at the acute end of a long journey into housing crisis, which, at the other end, includes families and individuals experiencing challenges that are causing housing stress for the very first time. In many cases, the first opportunity to address these challenges will lie with councils' partners, rather than with councils themselves.

Prevention of homelessness is therefore everything, it is everyone's business, and it requires collective and coherent action.

The Homelessness Reduction Act has a welcome focus on prevention, and the duty to refer in particular begins to acknowledge the role of councils' partners in tackling homelessness.

Whilst Housing Associations are not bound by the duty to refer, they are critical partners for councils if we are to succeed in reducing homelessness, and – and with support from the National Housing Federation (NHF) – many have made a voluntary commitment to cooperate.

There is more to be done, and we need Government action to tackle the root causes of homelessness. Councils need support to build homes through the reform of Right to Buy, and our welfare system must enable the people most in need to access stable homes.

Nevertheless, there is a role for genuine partnerships to achieve the outcomes we all want to see. In this report, we begin to explore the benefits of strong local collaboration, and we hope that councils and their partners continue the conversation, so that, together, we can address one of the greatest challenges of our times.

Cllr David Renard

Chairman, Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, Local Government Association

Introduction

In November and December 2018, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Housing Federation (NHF) hosted five roadshow events across England, under the theme: 'Working Together to tackle Homelessness'.

Held in the months leading up to the Homelessness Reduction Act's first anniversary, these events were a valuable opportunity to reflect on the challenges that councils and housing associations collectively face in tackling homelessness. They were an opportunity to discuss how we can work together to achieve solutions.

In this report we outline: our motivation for the events, what we learned, and how we can continue the conversation.

About the Homelessness Reduction Act

The HRA, which came into force on 3 April 2018, placed new duties on councils and some public bodies. It is one of the biggest changes to homelessness legislation in 40 years and shifts the focus towards preventing homelessness. It allows anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness to access meaningful help, regardless of their priority need status.

The Act also encourages local collaboration to enable people to access the right support for them, in recognition of the fact that homelessness is not simply about a lack of housing, but related to poverty and issues associated with employment and income. Although local housing authorities have the primary responsibility to tackle homelessness, they cannot do this alone.

The Act recognises this with a new duty to refer, which came into force on 1 October 2018. This obliges public bodies to refer anyone to a council if they believe they are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Housing associations are not one of the public bodies bound by the duty to refer. However, many are keen to support councils to implement the HRA. In response to this the NHF have developed a housing association offer on the duty to refer called the commitment to refer.¹

This is a voluntary commitment that a housing association will refer an individual or household to a local housing authority if they are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Signing up to the commitment is an opportunity for housing associations to make a positive, public statement that shows they're serious about helping councils end homelessness.

Over 200 housing associations have signed up for the Commitment to Refer so far, representing over two million homes. **See who has signed up.**

Why did we hold these events?

Housing associations and councils have a long history of working together to tackle homelessness. The two providers of social housing are inextricably linked through the processes of allocation and nomination agreements. This is underpinned by legal and regulatory duties for housing associations

¹ <https://www.housing.org.uk/topics/welfare-reform/homelessness/commitment-to-refer/>

to assist local housing authorities with homelessness duties. Many councils and housing associations have strong partnerships resulting from historic relationships. Together they deliver innovative collaborations that go beyond what is required.

However, despite this collaboration, homelessness is rising in the UK, driven by increasing challenges in the supply of social housing, welfare, support, and severe restrictions in funding for councils. The NHF and LGA wanted to get a better understanding of the contemporary experience of partnership working to reduce homelessness, and to see what more social housing providers can be doing. The events held last year were a key opportunity to find this out.

Key facts

- Homelessness acceptances by councils in England increased by **48 per cent** between 2009/10 and 2017/18
- There has been a **250 per cent** rise in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation during this period
- Since 2010, rough sleeping estimates show an increase of **165 per cent**
- The private rented sector has **doubled in size** since 2002, while the social rented sector is now the smallest tenure
- **On average**, households in the private rented sector spend 33 per cent of their income on rent, compared to 28 per cent in the social sector
- Restrictions on the local housing allowance mean that **in 97 per cent** of areas in England, four fifths of the market are now unaffordable within current rates
- Councils' homelessness services face cost pressures of **£104 million** each year due to demand and inflation alone.

What did we do?

We held five half-day events across England, in the East of England (Cambridge), South East (Brighton), London, North-west (Manchester) and South West (Bristol).

These events were an opportunity for senior leaders from housing associations and councils to discuss the challenges faced by each sector, share best practice, and identify further opportunities for strengthening collaboration.

At each event, housing associations and councils gave their view on how the homelessness crisis had unfolded in each region. All speakers shared the challenges of regional complexities and shared how they had tackled these challenges through collaboration. We heard case studies from each region and finally, we held a workshop to generate new ideas and solutions.

5 workshops

10 case studies

70 attendees

What we learned

Case studies

At each event, we heard from one council and one housing association about how they had worked well with their social sector partners to tackle homelessness locally.

These case studies are presented below.

East of England

Hightown Housing St Claire's, St Albans and Homes for Cathy

Who we are

Hightown housing association manage almost 6000 homes, mostly in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Hightown largely deliver general needs housing but also have some specialist services. Hightown are also founding members of the Homes for Cathy group of housing associations, who work together to develop solutions to the current homelessness crisis.

What we did

With homelessness rising and St Albans being one of the least affordable areas in the region, Hightown wanted to be able to support people in urgent housing need in the area. In 2017, with capital and revenue from St Albans Council, Hightown converted what was previously a mental health care home into temporary accommodation.

St Claire's has 10 modern, self-contained and fully furnished apartments for local homeless households. Situated within a few minutes'

walk from the town centre, the location is ideal for people who need easy access to local services or who have no access to a car. Cheaper than using bed and breakfast for temporary accommodation, St Claire's represents a great example of housing associations and councils collaborating to provide practical, economical solutions.

Homes for Cathy

On top of the local solutions developed in the East of England, Hightown have been instrumental in the development of Homes for Cathy. Homes for Cathy now has 72 members and is working to encourage all housing associations to tackle homelessness through the following nine commitments.

1. To contribute to the development and execution of council homelessness strategies.
2. To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants' unique set of circumstances and housing history to be considered.
3. To offer constructive solutions to applicants who aren't deemed eligible for an offer of a home.
4. To not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless (as defined by the Crisis plan definition).
5. To commit to meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups.
6. To work in partnership to provide a range of affordable housing options which meet the needs of all homeless people in their local communities.
7. To ensure that properties offered to

homeless people should be ready to move into.

8. To contribute to ending migrant homelessness in the areas housing associations operate.
9. To lobby, challenge and inspire others to support ending homelessness.

South Norfolk Council Early Help Hub

Who we are

South Norfolk Council is a district council based in South East England. It represents an area with a population of roughly 124,000 people.

What we did

The Early Help Hub is a partnership between 27 public, community and voluntary sector services, that all sit in one location. It is a multi-agency triage process to allow people to get to the right help early.

Housing associations both support and have representation in the Early Help Hub. This has led to further collaboration, including an improvement in the Discretionary Housing Payment process, improved mutual exchanges, use of the Commitment to Refer, aligning policies to reduce voids, and working together to increase direct lets.

The Hub has strengthened local collaboration and garnered cross-council involvement and support. The collaborative approach means that local services are integrated rather than reinvented, protecting resources and creating better support across partner organisations.

South East

Brighton and Hove City Council Homelessness Reduction Act Trailblazer

Who we are

Brighton and Hove City Council covers a city with a population of over 270,000. It took part in the Homelessness Reduction Act Trailblazer programme. Twenty-eight councils were awarded Trailblazer funding in 2017 to pilot new approaches to preventing homelessness

What we did

As part of their trailblazer work, Brighton and Hove Council established an Early Intervention service, based on the premise that housing issues are resolved when people are offered help at an early stage. The council has started home visits to at-risk households, offering them help with current housing problems and showing them how to plan for future housing need amid the challenges of the Brighton & Hove housing market.

The council has encouraged landlords, including its housing association partners, to make referrals into the service, and has carried out engagement work with partners to facilitate this, and to raise the profile of homelessness prevention.

Where people have been eligible and involved with support available, the outcome is successful in 89 per cent of cases (229 households have been prevented from becoming homeless). As opposed to office-based processes, the approach of an officer meeting an applicant at their home can encourage a much more meaningful disclosure as part of the assessment and planning process, leading to positive

engagement, and finding a solution to their current housing need.

Accent Housing Renting Ready Pilot

Who we are

Accent housing association has provided homes and services for a diverse range of customers since 1966. They have 20,000 properties, which are spread over the North, East and South of the country, and are home to over 35,000 people.

What we did

Accent, Crisis and the Surrey Heath Borough Council partnered to embed tenancy training into the homeless allocation pathway, with the aim of using tenancy training to create an allocation offer to those excluded from the housing register.

The partnership used a Crisis tenancy training programme 'Renting Ready', which is designed for homeless people, those at risk of homelessness and those with little experience of independent living. It teaches learners about tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities. The programme teaches tenants how to search for, secure and sustain a tenancy, how to manage money on a low income and how to get along with landlords, neighbours, and flatmates. It can either be delivered as part of pre-tenancy support and preparation for moving on to independent accommodation or to tenants who might need to develop some extra skills that allow them to sustain their tenancies.

Sixty per cent of those who took part in this programme said that their confidence in managing a tenancy had improved a lot. Accent are working with Crisis to feedback their findings from the course and develop it for future participants.

South West

Bristol City Council Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer

Who we are

Bristol City Council (BCC) covers a region with a population of roughly 449,000 people. The council was a homelessness prevention trailblazer, and received £925,000 to help build evidence on 'what works' in homelessness prevention activities. The council has recently finalised its Bristol's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24.

What we did

BCC developed a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focused on three key issues to effectively prevent homelessness:

- **Supply of genuinely affordable housing:** build hundreds of thousands more homes per year if we are to genuinely tackle the housing and homelessness crises. Homes for social rent must be prioritised.
- **Welfare reform:** the reduction and freeze of Local Housing Allowance, Universal Credit, the Benefit Cap, the removal of Housing Benefit for under 22s and the Spare Room Subsidy all place major strains both on individuals and on housing providers.
- **Support funding and commissioning:** the removal of the Supporting People ring-fence has been difficult for the support services and for vulnerable people, and short-term commissioning cycles bring additional insecurity into the sector.

Its vision for the strategy is grounded in partnership principles, and to implement the strategy, the council worked closely with its housing association partners, including the Bristol Housing Partnership, and the Bristol Supported Housing Partnership.

The strategy is intended to:

- deliver a strong partnership approach – governance of the strategy will be through the multi-agency Early Intervention and Preventing Homelessness Challenge Group, acting as a Homelessness Reduction Board
- combine homelessness, housing delivery, social care, health, welfare reform, justice and education, to deliver a reduction in homelessness and rough sleeping 2019/24
- be integrated with the One City Plan citywide vision
- provide a strategic fit for funding bids to central government
- deliver an innovative ‘living system’ document.

Within a year of the project running, the amount of rough sleepers in Cornwall has decreased by almost one third. Cornwall's rough sleeper count for 2016/17 reported 99 rough sleepers, the third highest in the country. The Cornwall count for 2017/18 reported 68 rough sleepers, a reduction of 31 per cent, a significant success against a 15 per cent rise nationally. These results have seen Cornwall drop to tenth highest in the country.

Coastline Housing Nos Da Kernow

Who we are

The Nos Da Kernow project is a partnership of three organisations, Coastline Housing (registered social landlord), St Petroc's (homelessness charity) and Cornwall Housing (council housing options) who each bring specialist expertise and knowledge in the areas of resettlement, housing options and outreach.

What we did

The project has a multi-agency steering group with representatives from health, the private rented sector, social housing providers and social care.

The team cover the whole of the Cornwall. The project focuses on working with individuals before they reach the point at which something causes them to sleep rough. This approach enables an appropriate and specific response to people with a variety of needs ranging from those with a basic need for housing, to those who are at risk of rough sleeping as a result of complex social needs.

West London Housing Partnership Rough Sleeping Prevention Partnership

Who we are

The partnership is an umbrella organisation for the seven West London local housing authorities: Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It works to:

- lobby for the interests of the West London boroughs on housing issues
- develop collaborative working across the sub-region
- improve provision of housing services
- develop an excellent understanding of housing demand, needs and conditions across West London.

What we did

In collaboration with St Mungo's, the Partnership set up a rough sleeping prevention project. Built on **No First Night Out** principles.

The model involves a safe space assessment hub, including emergency accommodation, where people can be assessed for their risk of rough sleeping and given intensive support. People are referred to the hubs by local support agencies, under a set of defined referral criteria. Demand has been high, with 1045 referrals between August 2017 and October 2018. Of these, 718 people were taken on for casework.

The programme exceeded its target ahead of schedule, preventing rough sleeping for 505 people. Interventions used were primarily mediation, floating support, and help to access private rental tenancies. Its success

was underpinned by a strong focus on “what works” in prevention, an effective referrals system which created high-quality referrals, and excellent partnership working with landlords and housing associations.

For the future, the programme will be engaging with other others, such as Jobcentre Plus, to create another referral route, and investigating the provision of employment support. It will seek future funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)'s Rapid Rehousing Pathway, as its model bears strong similarities to the Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs announced in the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Evolve housing and support CR Zero 2020

Who we are

Previously part of the South London YMCA, Evolve Housing and Support charity has been operational since 1861. It works across Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Wandsworth, Kingston, Kensington and Chelsea to provide supported housing for around 700 people. Alongside this, it also provides community services including mentoring, health and wellbeing, work and learning, and nurseries.

What we did

Evolve recognised that rough sleeping is a growing issue in Croydon, which affects the whole community. In response, they launched the CR Zero 2020 campaign in July 2016: part of a European-wide initiative to end rough sleeping across Europe, the aim of the campaign is to eradicate chronic street homelessness in Croydon by 2020.

The campaign is delivered in partnership with Croydon Council, Crisis, Expert Link, Homeless link, and Thames Reach. Its focus,

however, is on involving the entire community in identifying the problem and becoming part of the solution. For example, the first part of the campaign was a 'connections week', where 100 community volunteers were engaged to get to know every rough sleeper in Croydon by name, and identify what they needed to move off the streets.

The partnership then formed a 'solutions group', including citizens, third-sector organisations, council housing and health teams, and faith-based groups, to address the barriers to people moving off the streets. The group has chosen to focus on Housing First, council system changes, policy and influence, health, and supported housing.

Its success is based on harnessing the energy of the community to support the council in its objectives. Through careful timing, it's succeeded in keeping the needs of rough sleepers on the policy agenda, and is looking to influence commissioning priorities, and involve a bigger section of the community, including local businesses, housing developers, and health providers.

The Housing First part of the project is particularly successful, with people now moved into their homes. As the community has always been involved in this project, there is a high level of community support and tenancy sustainment is going well.

North West

Stockport Homes Group Strategy to prevent homelessness

Who we are

Stockport Homes is an Arms-length Management Organisation (ALMO) formed in 2005. Under a management agreement with Stockport Council, it delivers statutory homelessness duties, including Housing Options services, temporary accommodation, administration of the social housing register, and Homechoice.

What we did

Stockport has seen a strong commitment across the housing sector to 'designing out' homelessness, supported by strategic buy-in from the Greater Manchester Housing Partnership.

The council convened the Stockport Housing Strategy Group, Housing Partnership, and Homelessness Forum to contribute to its strategy to prevent homelessness. This led to the Stockport Housing Partnership, which is comprised of local registered providers who are committing to the following pledges:

- new ways of working to support complex needs clients
- work collaboratively for tenancy sustainment
- support Greater Manchester initiatives to prevent and relieve
- support employment and health based initiatives
- ensure all frontline teams have up to date knowledge and awareness
- prioritise the building of affordable homes to rent.

As a result, Stockport Homes group has reformed its allocations and lettings policy, and now aim for 50 per cent of all lettings and 20 per cent of accepting nominations to go people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. They have also geared their processes towards preventing homelessness, with an early intervention policy, and a commitment to not evict anyone who is engaged in relieving the threat of homelessness.

Greater Manchester Homes Partnership Social Impact Bond

Who we are

The Partnership is a consortium of housing providers across Greater Manchester, formed with the aim of preventing and relieving homelessness in the region. It's been launched and funded by One Manchester and Trafford Housing Trust – two of Greater Manchester's largest housing providers – in partnership with Bridges Fund Management. The programme is delivered by Shelter, Great Places and the Brick, and supported by 17 specialist housing providers, who are commissioned to deliver better outcomes for rough sleepers.

What we did

The programme has been commissioned on a payment-by-results basis by the Mayor of Greater Manchester, as part of a wider strategy for tackling homelessness in the region. Over a three-year period, providers are working with entrenched rough sleepers to help them off the streets and into a new life. This is done by providing a stable tenancy, alongside the intensive emotional and practical support needed to maintain successful homes and access appropriate health, training and employment services.

The programme has also partnered with Bolton Council to form a complex case

panel, which makes multi-agency decisions on support for individuals, and with Oldham Council to create a coordinated outreach programme.

Seventeen partners have provided 300 homes, with over 200 people successfully housed so far and zero evictions. The success of the programme is based on three key tenets:

- **Trust:** the programme uses staff with lived experience, who take a strengths based approach to support and outreach.
- **Collaboration:** communication, flexible budgets, flexible policy, and a commitment to learning from experience are key.
- **Systems change:** the programme aims to embed positive practice, through the identification of gaps in services, participant consultation, and the integration of local health, homelessness, justice and housing strategies.

Work is ongoing to adapt regional policies to support prevention, promote inclusion and personalised support, improve access to employment training and volunteering opportunities, and share learning from the programme. Already, the project is seeing its reach extend beyond the project itself.

Moving the conversation on – next steps

It has never been more important for housing associations and councils to collaborate to tackle homelessness. These workshops opened up the conversation, and to help you move them on, we have listed the details of regional networks. We have also included some reference materials for further information.

If you'd like to discuss homelessness, please contact priya.thethi@local.gov.uk, or your local NHF representative.²

Regional networks

Homes for Cathy

Homes for Cathy run a series of regional forums alongside their national campaigning work.

<https://homesforcathy.org.uk/about>

South East Homelessness Forum

This forum brings together housing associations, councils, and voluntary sector colleagues, to share learning and challenges relating to tackling homelessness, and to hear the latest updates from central government.

Contact:
anna.suswillo@homelesslink.org.uk

North East Homelessness Think Tank

This group, comprising academics, researchers, and policy officers from landlords and the voluntary sector, aims to inform and influence policies affecting homeless client groups through research, campaigning and other collaborative activities.

Contact: info@yhne.org.uk

Youth Homelessness Regional Network (South)

This network is for managers and staff of specialist youth homelessness services to discuss current challenges and examples of good practice.

Contact:
tasmin.maitland@homelesslink.org.uk

Youth Homelessness Regional Network (North West)

This network is for managers and staff of specialist youth homelessness services to discuss current challenges and examples of good practice.

Contact:
tasmin.maitland@homelesslink.org.uk

Homeless Link Manchester Training hub

This is the new centre of Homeless Link's training programme in the North of England, which provides access to a selection of public training courses for its homelessness and supported housing members.

Contact:
iana.newby@homelesslink.org.uk

² <https://www.housing.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/member-services/member-relations/>

Further reading

‘Duty to refer: an opportunity to cooperate to tackle homelessness’

Local Government Association, 2018

‘Homelessness survey: discussion paper’

National Housing Federation, 2018

‘Commitment to refer’

National Housing Federation, 2018

‘Tackling homelessness together: the importance of local authorities and housing associations working in partnership’

Chartered Institute of Housing, 2017

‘The Homelessness Monitor: England 2018’

Crisis, 2018



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