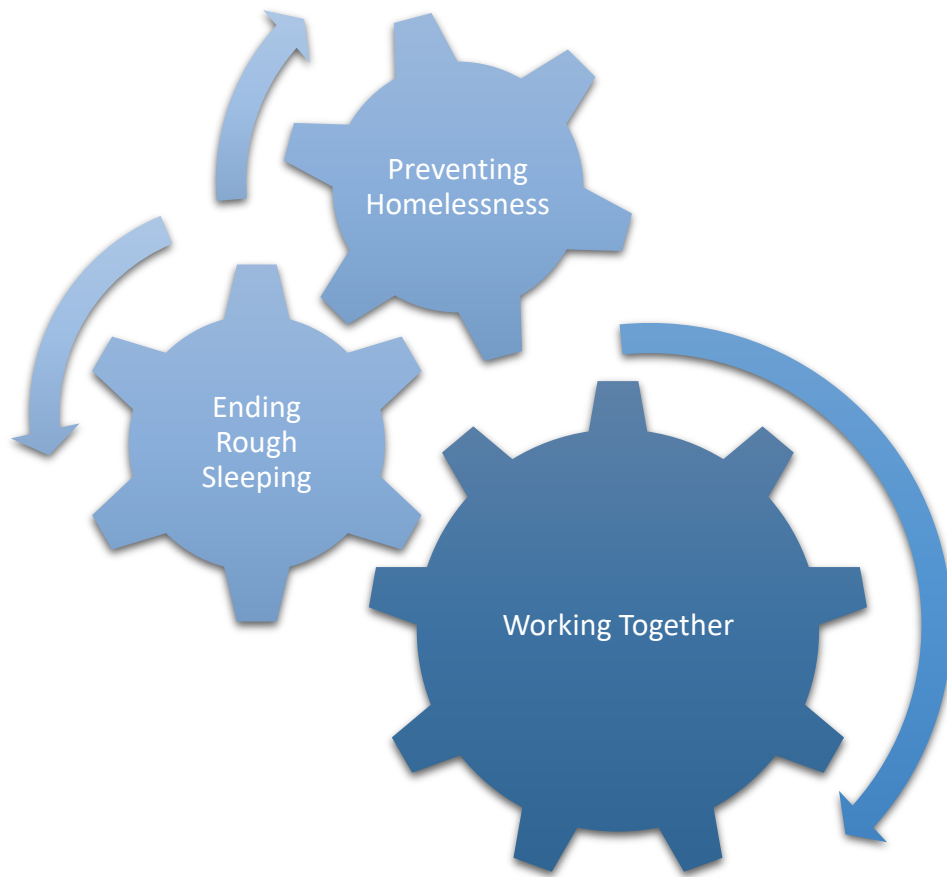


# Draft Darlington Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024



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## FORWARD

For many years now Darlington Borough Council has successfully focused on Homelessness Prevention. We therefore welcome the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 which imbeds prevention as a core activity. However, we will face many challenges as we to deliver the 2019-24 strategy. The number of people who are approaching us for help continues to increase and the uncertainty in the economy has only seen a limited recovery for some sections of the community. As a result, financial hardships along with the impact of the welfare reforms and the reduction in public services have combined to push more people to the brink of losing their homes.

Our response has been to review our systems and the way we work with our partners, to focus more on how we help people at an earlier stage and on giving them the most appropriate help for their particular circumstances. We have been able to attract funding for a Government funded trail-blazer project that has seen us target support at those who exhibit early warning signs that they could be on a path to homelessness.

Over the next five years we want to ensure that, with the strong partnership of agencies and organisations we have in Darlington, we continue to strive to minimise the risk of homelessness and effectively support those who become homeless back to a stable home and an independent life.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy cover the next five years and is heavily influenced by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018.

The Strategy falls into four main sections:

1. The review of homelessness
2. Rough sleeping
3. The Strategy which is based on the review and
4. The action plan to deliver the Strategy

## The Review

Overall there has been a 6% increase in the numbers who are approaching the Council for assistance. However the numbers who are being rehoused as homeless actually reduced during the same period. This has much to do with the way the Council and its partners deal with homelessness. In 2015 the Council formally adopted a preventative approach to homelessness and this has resulted in a significant number of those who approach for help avoiding homelessness. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 also has an emphasis on prevention but places a number of new duties on Local Authorities that build on the work already being done in Darlington.

The reasons for homelessness are varied but family breakdown of different forms is an important feature. However, an underlying issue is the complexity of the reasons behind someone approaching. This can make finding a solution more challenging and often it is not only Housing Options who are involved in finding a solution. A key factor noted throughout the strategy is therefore the

importance of working with partners to find solutions.

The review recognised that although effective services are being delivered there is more to do and that this will lead to changes in the way we work as we strive to meet the challenges of this strategy.



## Rough Sleeping

The Government has introduced an increased focus on rough sleeping. In Darlington proactive work on street homelessness means numbers involved are consistently very small. However an increase in begging has made it seem that the problem is actually much larger. Anyone who is found to be sleeping rough is offered help and support. The challenge is addressing the complex problems of people who refuse any form of help.

The solutions usually require a multi-agency response and can be resource intensive.

## The Strategy

There are five key objectives within the strategy:

- 1. Those at risk of homelessness will be made aware of and have access to the services they may need to prevent it.**

As a result of the Homeless Reduction Act there is now statutory duty on Councils to prevent homelessness and this has far reaching implications. To deliver this the Housing Options Service must continue to evolve, developing new ways of delivering timely advice and support. The management of the new requirements are still being embedded and further work is needed with partners to explore additional ways that earlier interventions can reduce the risk of homelessness.

- 2. Provide suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become homeless.**

A fundamental element of this objective is ensuring that a range of housing is available and that it is accessible to those who need it. This includes interventions in social housing and private sector housing as well as ensuring the right forms of support are provided.

- 3. Reduce rates of repeat homelessness.**

Repeat homelessness is seen as a failure of the system. It is not just repeat homelessness with an applicant but the challenge of some families where the cycle of homelessness has been passed between the generations. These can be the most challenging to work with due to the complex and multiple problems that are associated with it.

- 4. Provide the right support and services so that no person needs to sleep rough**

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. The numbers found sleeping rough in Darlington in any year are very low in comparison to the major urban areas but it remains a key priority to address.

- 5. Build a strong partnership to deliver our aims**

Delivery of this strategy is dependent on the strength of the broad partnership who deliver a wide range of services, some of which are related to wider needs beyond dealing with the specific issues of homelessness. Building on the obligations of the Duty to Refer, found in the Homeless Reduction Act requirements, provides a helpful starting point in developing the more in depth relationships with a range of partners that are needed to deliver this strategy.

## The Action Plan

This section sets out what we intend to do over the next 5 years and covers actions across the five objectives. The Strategy will be regularly reviewed and updated in 2022.



## ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

In 2015 we decided to change the name from Homelessness Strategy to include “preventing” reflecting the aims we wanted to achieve. We saw avoiding homelessness as a key priority, recognising the devastating impacts that homelessness have on people’s lives and that the best way we could help those people was to avoid them getting into that position. The strategy therefore established that it was not good enough to respond to a homeless event but it was essential that we put in place systems that avoid it happening.

This new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy builds on the work we have achieved but also now reflects in the title the importance the Government now places on addressing rough sleeping. Since producing our last strategy the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 has been published and that reinforces the importance of prevention as well as placing new duties on Local Authorities. The approach to homelessness is enshrined in legislation and its supporting guidance:

- The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, which was the first homeless legislation, requires Local Authorities to prevent as well as respond to homelessness and assist people under imminent threat of homelessness (and classed as ‘in priority need’) by taking reasonable steps to prevent them from losing their existing accommodation.
- Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to publish a strategy based upon a review of homelessness in their area. The strategy should be for up to five years in length and should be reviewed regularly. We have worked closely with partner organisations to

produce this strategy and consulted widely on its contents.

This strategy is heavily influenced by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The Act adds additional duties to prevent homelessness and the requirements came into force in April 2018:

- (a) The Act requires Councils to help all those who are homeless and not just those who are considered a priority need such as those with dependent children or who are particularly vulnerable.
- (b) The duty towards people threatened with homelessness is extended from 28 days to 56.



- (c) It amends the definition of homelessness to apply to households served with a notice seeking possession where the landlord intends to apply for possession and the council does not ask the applicant to remain in the accommodation.
- (d) Strengthens and clarifies the duty on housing authorities to provide advisory services to help to prevent homelessness.
- (e) A new duty to assess and agree a personalised plan where an applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- (f) A new ‘prevention’ duty in cases of threatened homelessness which

requires local authorities to help to ensure that suitable accommodation does not cease to be available for applicants who are threatened with homelessness.

- (g) A new 'relief' duty to help to secure accommodation: It requires local authorities to help to secure accommodation for all applicants who the authority is satisfied are homeless and eligible for assistance.
- (h) A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This has become known as the Duty to Refer.

The Government also published its Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 that brings together a number of approaches to rough sleeping in a more coherent approach. It is a response to the national increase in rough sleeping in recent years. It also required Local Authorities to rebadge their Homelessness Strategies as Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping to reflect the importance of avoiding people falling in to rough sleeping.

Thankfully, Darlington has seen no increase in rough sleeping although there has been a public perception that it has increased as a result of the increase of begging in the Town Centre. It is an understandable misunderstanding of the situation but virtually all of those who have been approached by our street homeless services when begging have been found to have a home. However, begging is symptomatic of other problems and so help is offered to everyone who is seen to be begging.

There have been other policy influences on the development of the strategy:

- Domestic Abuse has also been given priority with the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2018 that introduced the first statutory definition of domestic abuse that includes financial and emotional abuse. There have also been a number of other strategic plans introduced as well as guidance.
- Another change introduced by the Government has affected the way statistics are gathered and therefore the way performance is measured. The National Office of Statistics criticised the previous system of gathering performance information and as a consequence a new system was introduced in April 2018. This means that in some cases there have been significant changes in data sets and made some comparisons of performance with previous years difficult.
- There are also a number of key pieces of non-housing related legislation that have a direct impact on homelessness services to which we must have regard. These include the Children's Act, and since the time of last strategy, the introduction of the Care Act.

The strategy is also influenced by local circumstances and policies. Set out in Figure 1 is a map of the relationship between this strategy and other strategies. The key influence is Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed<sup>1</sup>. More detail on these strategies can be found on the Council's Website.

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<sup>1</sup> One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. A vision for Darlington 2008-2021

**Fig.1: Influences on the Preventing Homelessness Strategy**



Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy divides in to four main parts:

- Review of Homelessness; which looks at performance and draws out issues in the delivery of the strategy
- Rough Sleeping; which looks at how the Council is addressing this challenging issue
- The Strategy; which is based on the review and legislative and policy influences
- An Action Plan; for the delivery of the strategy over the next 5 years.





## HOMELESSNESS IN DARLINGTON

Homelessness is something that could happen to anyone. A sudden change in circumstances like the loss of a job or a family member can eventually lead to having no home. More often though homelessness is caused by family breakdown. Poverty is another critical factor. Therefore in aiming to prevent homelessness a broad range of drivers have to be factored in.

### Housing Market

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-2014 population of Darlington was estimated to be 105,400. Since the 90s, the population of Darlington has grown with a need for a growth in the housing market. Darlington is ranked as the 97th most deprived local authority area out of 326 while the level of child poverty is worse than the England average with 20.6% of children aged under 16 living in poverty. In contrast to this Darlington was also identified as the second fastest growing economy in the North East.

Funding was secured from the then Homes and Communities Agency for the development of 347 social housing homes over the period 2015-18. As part of this the Council also established a new Council Housing building programme and developed 180 properties across various sites.

Detailed statistical information on Darlington including health and economic factors that may impact on this strategy can be found at

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/your-council/council-information/documents/darlington-joint-strategic-needs-assessment-2018/>

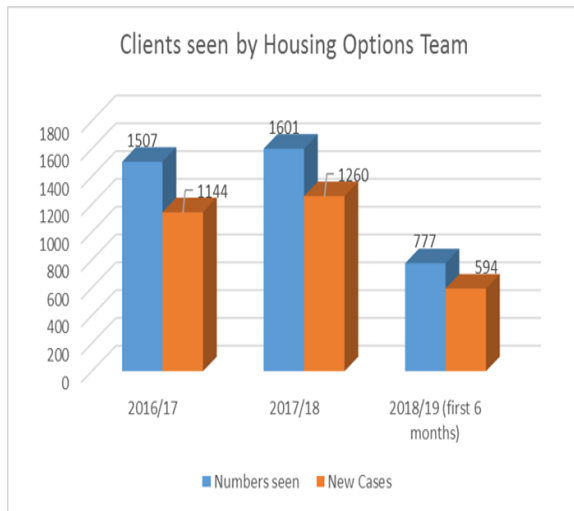
### Review of Homelessness

The way that the Council delivers its Housing Options service has had to change to reflect a changing environment over the life of the previous strategy. As part of the changes that were introduced to support services, Housing Options introduced a “triage” service that diverts some applicants to short term support, leaving those in greatest need to be assessed by Housing Options. The intention was to prevent homelessness through this early intervention while focusing on those in most need. The results of the review of homelessness suggest that this was successful evidenced through the high levels of prevention.

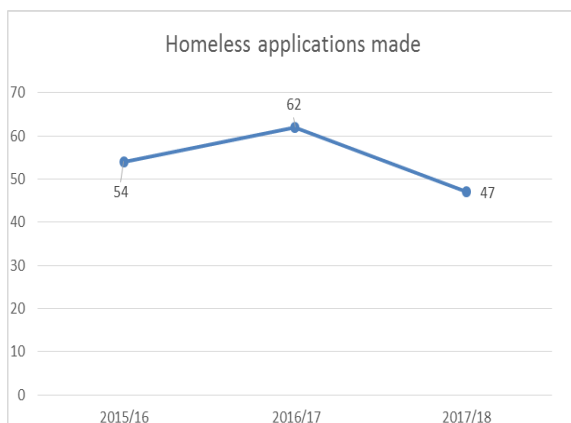
The implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act has also had an impact. The Government have acknowledged that Local Authorities will incur additional costs and granted us £70,505 over three years towards these costs. The Act’s requirements have led to increased pressure for temporary accommodation with early indications of an increase in its use.

The review demonstrates that the numbers approaching the Council for advice or help increased by 6% from 2016/17 to 2017/18 as shown in Figure 2. In terms of homeless applications accepted, Figure 3 shows some variations year on year but no significant trends up to the end of 2017/18.

**Figure 2: Applicants Presenting to Housing Options**

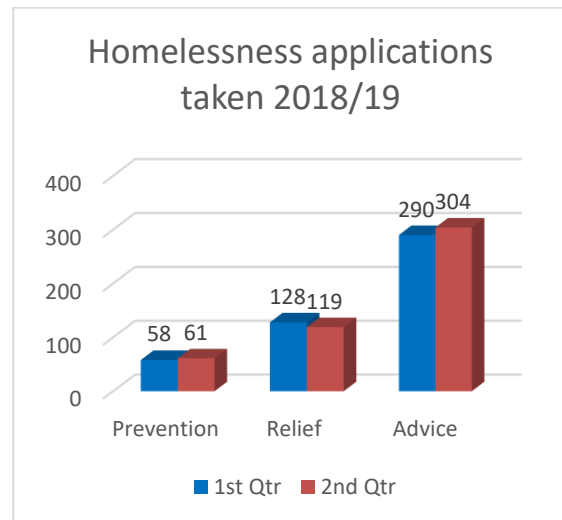


**Figure 3: Homeless Applications Accepted**



Unfortunately direct comparisons cannot be made for 2018/19 with other years due to the Homelessness Reduction Act and the changes in how we are now required to work with individuals. Also the way data is recorded has changed. Figure 4 however shows how individuals have been assisted for the first 6 months of 2018/19.

**Figure 4: Assistance**



The emphasis on prevention has enabled the Council's Housing Options team to find solutions for those seeking help that has meant that comparatively few people have had to go to the stage of making a homeless application. This is a very important aspect of the work as the trauma of homelessness, even for a short period can have a devastating impact and was the driver behind the emphasis on prevention in the Homeless Reduction Act. Key elements of the prevention include:

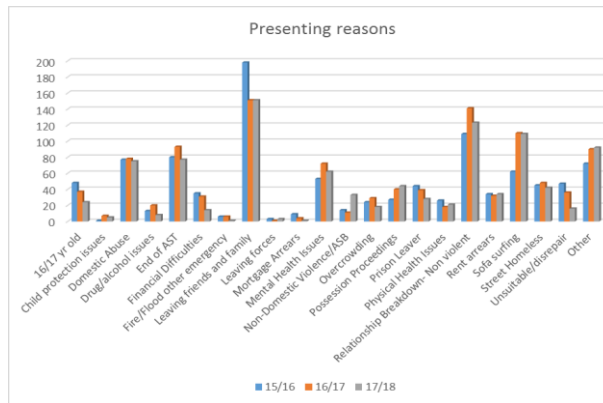
- (a) advice and information
- (b) early identification
- (c) pre-crisis intervention
- (d) preventing recurring homelessness
- (e) partnership arrangements

As shown in Figure 5, approaches for assistance can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- (a) The impact of the Welfare Reforms, the impact of Universal Credit which is discouraging private landlords from accepting those on benefits.
- (b) The number of people losing their accommodation in the private sector with the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST).

- (c) Relationship breakdown.
- (d) Financial issues.
- (e) Health related issues

**Figure 5: Presenting Reasons**



**“Homelessness is not just about having a roof”**

The presenting reasons are often not the only issue an applicant may have. It is not unusual for an applicant to be faced with multiple problems. For example someone leaving family and friends may have financial problems due to unemployment. It is therefore important to recognise these multiple issues. In developing a solution that is lasting there may well be a need for other, non-housing services to become involved in finding a path for the applicant that will resolve the homelessness risk.

**Support Services**

The current strategy recognised that it was steering through a period of considerable challenges. The changes to public finances have presented challenges for all aspects of Local Government and that included the way support services are delivered. A review of support services had seen changes to contracts and the

way support was been delivered. Due to the reduced financial position, services were remodelled to provide a ‘triage’ approach with the onus being on the client to engage. The impact of these changes continue to be reviewed over the long term as although, feedback suggests they are proving to be successful.

We need to ensure that in the longer term it does not increase the number of vulnerable people who get stuck in the ‘revolving door’ of being at risk of homelessness.

Darlington Council had also secured money from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government ‘Homeless Trailblazer’ funding. This was a 2 year project looking at preventing homelessness ‘upstream’ based on responding at the earliest opportunity to “Vulnerable Adult reports” where they do not meet the threshold for a safeguarding or adult social care intervention. The project has now secured further funding and will be known as the Early Intervention Outreach Project. This project, along with Community Care/Crisis awards, need to be fully understood to ensure we have an holistic overview of emerging pathways and earlier opportunities for preventative work.

**ROUGH SLEEPING**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has said that 4672 people were sleeping rough in the autumn of 2018<sup>2</sup>. This is a slight reduction on the previous year but since 2010 it represents a 165% increase and illustrates why the Government are concerned about this issue. However, the numbers are not evenly spread across England with over a quarter accounted for in London. The annual count in Darlington to determine the number of people sleeping rough found that there were three people sleeping on the streets, all of whom

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[http://maninplace.org.uk/Rough\\_Sleeping\\_Statistics\\_2018.pdf](http://maninplace.org.uk/Rough_Sleeping_Statistics_2018.pdf)

refused assistance at that time when approached. Each year the 12 local authorities in the North East Regional Homeless Group take part in a count on the same night in the autumn and this feeds into the national figures.

In Darlington the increase in the number of people begging has attracted the attention of both the public and the press and that has increased the perception of increased rough sleeping. For many the sight of people begging equates with people being “street homeless”. The evidence suggests that this is not the case.

The Council’s Housing Options Service ensures that everyone who is found to be begging is approached to see what assistance can be given to them. They have found that virtually all of those begging in the town centre have a home. In a number of cases they do have other problems such as addictions and assistance is always offered. Work is ongoing to address the begging issue through a multiagency approach. There is however an issue of people who do not have a fixed address and these are often described as “hidden homeless”.

The Council has put in place a number of programmes to ensure that no one in Darlington needs to sleep rough including programmes that intervene at an early stage to avoid the crisis of losing a home.

In the year 2017/18, the Housing Options team provided interim accommodation for people in the following areas:

- (a) No Second Night Out – 51 people
- (b) Severe weather emergency protocols – 40 people
- (c) Sofa surfing – 109 people



The number of people who are “sofa surfing” is indicative of a problem of hidden homelessness; people who will move between family and friends and occasionally will sleep rough. A further issue has been the challenges found in helping people with mental health issues. There has been an overall upward trend in numbers approaching with this problem but the main challenge has been in the complexity of the problems that some present with. Some have numerous problems such as mental health, drug addiction and financial problems. These cases can often take longer to resolve resulting in longer stays in temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast.

Our Trailblazer Early Intervention service is prompted by Vulnerable Person Alerts and is designed to prevent homelessness, worked with 259 people in the last 18 months, and of these 22% were at risk of homelessness. The majority are male, aged 30-50 and support needs are mainly related to substance dependency (drugs and alcohol). We see fewer women street sleeping, though sofa-surfing numbers are higher, 57% male 43% female.

The cohort includes prison leavers and those who have had a military background. Addiction has been found to mask other problems like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and domestic violence (both perpetrator and victim).



Darlington has been proactive in developing a range of innovative and creative services corresponding to the objectives of prevention, intervention and recovery as outlined in the recently issued national Rough Sleeping Strategy. As a Unitary Authority we are able to implement and deliver new services rapidly in response to need. For example, many of the components for a Rapid Rehousing Pathway are already in place.

Substantial investment has been made in preventative work, addressing the issues that are well recognised as the precursors of homelessness and rough sleeping. Commissioned floating support services are targeted at housing related support, drug and alcohol addiction, domestic violence and mental health. There is a strong multi-agency commitment to early intervention, building on the Trailblazer Project and we have commissioned sufficient 'recovery-focussed' supported accommodation to meet current needs.

The ethos of all commissioned services is that of building the independence of the

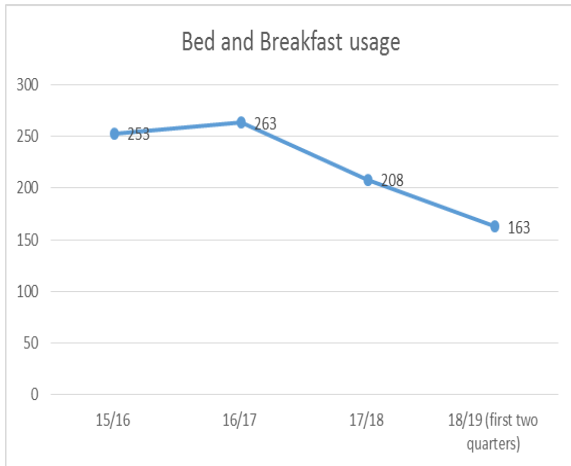
service-user so that they are able to exit into their chosen accommodation in an enduring sustainable way. We fully embrace the principles of the 'Housing First' model across all our work with vulnerable individuals. To ensure that services are effective, we monitor short and long term outcomes. Monitoring demonstrates that although some rough sleeping persists, interventions already made have been successful in keeping numbers low. By engaging with those who are at risk, rough sleeping is prevented.

Elements of the pathway as described in the Rough Sleeping Strategy which are already in place are:

- Short term emergency accommodation
- Capacity in the private landlord sector accessible through Bond Scheme
- Supported accommodation (commissioned) for vulnerable individuals
- Housing related Floating support services (specialist and generic)
- An innovative and creative third sector, particularly in the area of housing, but including a Credit Union
- Established drug and alcohol services
- A strong local partnership that embraces the Statutory, Voluntary and Commercial sector that is driven by a local strategic plan ("One Darlington Perfectly Placed") that embodies the commitment to "Housing First"

The number of households being placed in Bed and Breakfast has been reducing although this may change if the trend of the first six months of this year continues as shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Numbers in Bed and Breakfast**



provide a framework for the Council and applicants to work together to identify appropriate actions to prevent or relieve the applicant's homelessness. This includes non-priority households and the workload, as well as the overall timescales, have increased accordingly, leading to a corresponding increase in bed and breakfast usage.

The main reason for the increased usage in the first six months is the changed requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act which, as anticipated, has seen more people being placed in temporary accommodation due to the longer decision making process.



**Members of the Partnership**



The numbers referred for supported housing or receiving a support service have been reducing in recent years although, like Bed and Breakfast, the first six months of this year suggest an overall increase.

Overall, the Homeless Reduction Act has brought the most significant changes to homeless practice in recent times. Everyone who approaches for assistance now has a detailed personalised plan to

## STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Figure 7: Strategic Objectives



The strategic direction of the strategy reflects the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act which enhances the overall “prevention” direction that the Council had established in 2015. There are five objectives that form the basis of the strategy:

**1. Those at risk of homelessness will be made aware of and have access to the services they may need to prevent it.**

As a result of the Homeless Reduction Act there is now statutory duty on Council’s to prevent homelessness and this has far reaching implications. To deliver this the Housing Options Service must continue to evolve, developing new ways of delivering timely advice and support. The management of the new requirements are still being embedded and further work is needed with partners to explore additional ways that earlier interventions can reduce the risk of homelessness:

- The way we look at needs have to change if we are working with people at an earlier stage. We need to be able to divert people away from a path that could lead to homelessness so we need to consider wider issues that drive people towards homelessness. The Sustainable Communities Strategy is therefore a key element in the overall approach. The Councils’ plans to develop thriving communities by addressing issues of inequalities are an important first step in prevention. In developing the structures for the Duty to Refer we need to build partnerships that will go beyond the remit of a referral process to address the wider prevention issues. This should aid the development of more “upstream” solutions.
  - At the point of contact with those who seek help we will need to consider issues that are beyond the direct causes of homelessness and will need the support of other partners to effectively deal with those.
  - We will need review the way we deliver information and in particular the use of social media and the Council’s Website to ensure that the right information is available and easily accessible
- 2. Provide suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become homeless.**

A fundamental element is ensuring that a range of housing is available and that it is accessible to those who need it:

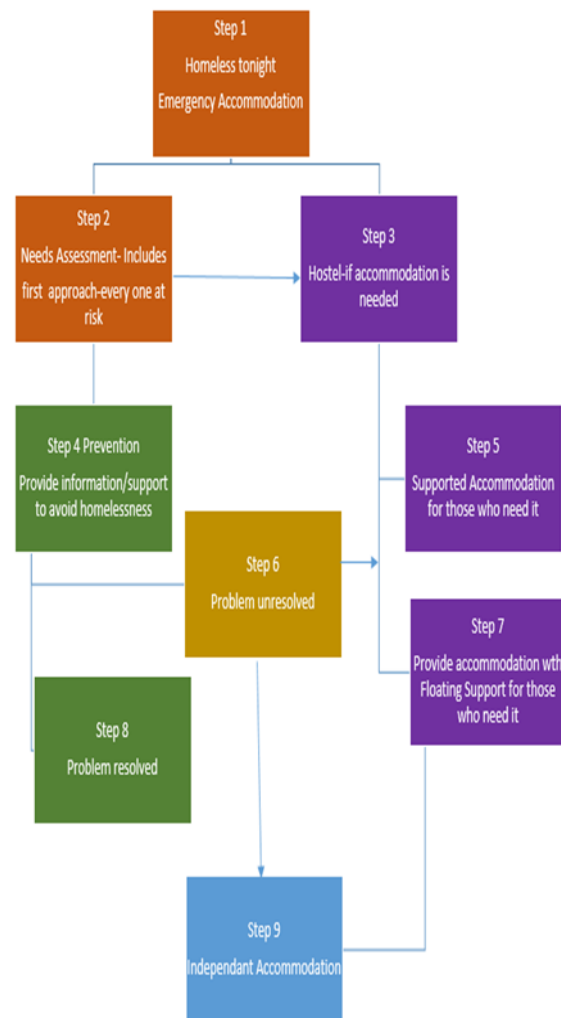
- The Council has committed to develop 1000 new affordable homes for rent over the next 10 years, this with the addition of housing developed by Housing Associations will help address the basic need for good quality accommodation.
- As well as building new homes there will be a need to consider the use of existing supported housing. Remodelling of the Tees Valley YMCA supported housing is an example of

this while the 700 Club are at an advanced stage in purchasing Pembroke Court, a sheltered housing scheme to convert to supported housing.

- Allocations policies need to reflect the changing obligations that have been introduced but also are able to support a range of different needs often with an appropriate support service. Adult Social Care, who are responsible for commissioning housing related support will need to review the way services are delivered to ensure that the right types and levels of support are being provided. There is also a need to consider the future role of supported housing as a result of changing needs.
- Private sector housing is also a key element but access to this accommodation has been made more difficult by the impact of the Welfare Reforms. Good access needs to be maintained and if possible improved.
- Through establishing a good working relationship with the DWP the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit has not, as yet, seen the same level of problems that have been reported in other areas. The continuing roll out of the service will see a large growth in the numbers in receipt of UC during the life of the strategy and the situation will need to be closely monitored. Universal Credit along with other Welfare Reforms will continue to be a prominent feature of prevention work.

The first two objectives above form the core of the “pathway out of homelessness” making use of the “stepping stones” principle, applicants do not need to take every step on the pathway:

**Figure 8: Pathway out of homelessness**



\*There are two main avenues for those who need hostel accommodation:

- Age 16 – 24 – YMCA Hostel.
- Age 25 plus – 700 Club Hostel.

### 3. Reduce rates of repeat homelessness.

Repeat homelessness is seen as a failure of the system. It is not just repeat homelessness with an individual applicant but the challenge of some families where the cycle of homelessness has been passed between the generations. These can be the most challenging to work due to the complex and multiple problems that are associated with it:



- Address the challenges of those with more complex problems, particularly in relation to mental health and dual diagnosis. The needs of this group tend to be the most resource intensive to meet. Finding the right solution will be one of the key challenges of the strategy and will require close working within the Council as well as key partner agencies and the voluntary sector.
- New solutions need to be developed but as important will be ensuring that robust personal action plans are put in place that will enable change. These approaches will take time and therefore a consistent approach is needed.
- We need to make better use of the information we already hold to understand the nature of the challenges and this will help drive changes in procedures but also support the development of better solutions.
- There are particular challenges concerning people who are not receiving care services but are close to needing this type of help that need to be specifically addressed.

#### **4. Provide the right support and services so that no person needs to sleep rough.**

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. Even though the numbers sleeping rough in Darlington are very low in comparison to the major urban areas this will be a challenge

- Procedures for identifying individuals who are rough sleeping are already in place. Partnerships with the Police, Voluntary Agencies and the general public (through Street-link), alongside

our own intelligence, mean that we know the identity of those who need to be on the Rapid Rehousing Pathway. Experience has shown, however, that the very individuals who most need to access the pathway are the ones most resistant to doing so. We need to further develop our collective approach to this challenge recognising that those who are not homeless but begging may also be in need of assistance.



- Sofa Surfing is generally a hidden problem that can lead to rough sleeping. We therefore need to develop earlier interventions to address this challenge.
  - We have been very successful in delivering the No Second Night Out programme, the challenge now is to stop rough sleeping.
  - We need to consider the types of support we are providing to those who are rough sleeping. The Housing First initiative has been piloted in a number of areas and we need to evaluate its usefulness as a solution in Darlington. We also need to consider the type of street support that we provide and treat those that go into emergency accommodation as being on the first step to independent living.
- #### **5. Build a strong partnership to deliver our aims.**
- Delivery of this strategy is dependent on the strength of the partnership. Building on the obligations of the “duty to refer” requirements provides a helpful starting point in developing more in depth relationships with partners:

- The breadth of work involved and the need to coordinate organisations’ roles within the “duty to refer” suggest that a new forum should be established to help to deliver the new strategy.

This provides the opportunity to extend the remit to discuss the wider delivery and develop mutually beneficial interventions that will deliver the aims of the strategy.



- We already rely on a number of partners to deliver key support services. They are a very important element of overall delivery and they assist at various stages in the pathway as Figure 9 below illustrates:

**Figure 9: Housing Related Commissioned Support**

Housing Related Commissioned Support - Provider	Type of Service
700 Club	Bond Scheme Hostels Substance Misuse Floating Support Drop In Hub Trailblazer in association with CAB
Humankind	Support for All – Low, Medium and High Needs High Level Mental Health Support Temporary Accommodation Drop In Hub
CAB	Community Care Grant Financial Assistance Loans
Creative Support	Mental Health Floating Support
Darlington BC – funded by Housing	Housing Plus – Tenancy Sustainment Refugee Support Homeless Temporary Accommodation No Second Night Out Prevention Fund

Family Help Foundation	Women’s Refuge Offender Contract Emergency Accommodation and Floating Support Vulnerable Parent – Accommodation and Floating Support
Harbour	Domestic Abuse Services
YMCA	Hostel Positive Support Pathway Crash Pad Mediation Leaving Care

These support services are supplemented by other providers who offer non-commissioned services that Housing Options will refer to as shown in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10: Non Commissioned Support**

Provider/Partner	Type of Service
First Stop	Lottery funding for Benefit Support Shower and laundry service Advice and Support Drop in Hub
Darlington Mind	Mental Health Support Accommodation
NECA	Substance Misuse Service
Private Sector Housing	Disrepair
Private Landlords and self-funding B&Bs	Access to accommodation
Adult Social Care	Social Care
Children Services	Social Care
Carr Gomm	Learning Disabilities and mental health accommodation

It is therefore our intention to invite key organisations together with the statutory organisations specifically identified in the “duty to refer” to join the partnership group.

**Delivery**

Each one of the five objectives is supported by actions contained in the Action Plan detailed in the next section.

## ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<b>1.0 THOSE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS WILL BE MADE AWARE OF AND HAVE ACCESS TO THE SERVICES THEY MAY NEED TO PREVENT IT.</b>			
1.1 Establish an effective Duty to Refer	Going beyond the original remit to build ownership with partners.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services	2022
1.2 Improve needs assessment to address individual issues	Adopt a holistic needs assessment.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services	On going
1.3 Improve information on the Website	Update information regularly More focused information and supports self-service.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	On going
1.4 Increase use of Social media	Open new channels of communication to provide information.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	On going
1.5 Address discharges from hospital that lead to Homeless applications	Develop hospital referral and information system.	Health; Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager	2020
1.6 Reduce risk of young people becoming homeless	Work with pre 16's to provide information and to identify risk groups.	Helen Watson, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	2021
1.7 Improve support to people with mental health issues	Work in partnership to address information and support gaps for in transitions in service.	Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Janette McMain, Housing Manager - Housing Options and Lifeline Services	2022

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<b>2.0 PROVIDE SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE, OR WHO MAY BECOME HOMELESS</b>			
2.1 Develop the allocations process to meet the needs of the Homeless Reduction Act	Ensure that access to social housing is available through continuing a new build programme. Ensure that longer term needs of vulnerable clients are addressed within the allocations process. Encourage social housing providers to develop sustainable tenancy policies to reduce the risk of evictions.	Pauline Mitchell, AD – Housing and Building Services; Veruta Barlow, Housing Manager – Management Services; Ken Davies, Housing Strategy Officer	On going Ongoing Dec 2019
2.2 Maintain and if possible improve access to private sector housing	Work with the Private Sector Housing team and Landlords to address the impacts of the Welfare Reforms.  Work with DWP and Landlords to build better relationships and understanding to prevent evictions and increase access to private sector housing.	David Burrell, Private Sector Housing Manager; DWP  David Burrell, Private Sector Housing Manager; DWP	On going  2020
2.3 Improve access to private sector housing for those who have difficulties funding a bond	Develop the Bond Scheme with the Third Sector.	700 Club	2020
2.4 Address the housing and support implications of the Homeless Reduction Act	Working with in the requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act to provide support on various pathways. We will fully implement personal housing plan.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	On going  Summer 2019
2.5 Review Support contracts	Review housing related support contracts to ensure they meet current and future needs.	Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager	End 2019
2.6 Support the development of appropriate supported housing	Work with the 700 Club on the development of new supported Housing for more vulnerable people.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services; 700 Club	End 2019 2022

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
	Consider the reprovision of the Refuge to meet future needs.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services; Family Help	
2.7 Address the challenges of Universal Credit	Maintain good links with DWP and ensure good quality information is available to those who need it.	Claire Gardner-Queen, Housing Manager – Housing Income and Customer Services	Ongoing
<b>3.0 REDUCE RATES OF REPEAT HOMELESSNESS</b>			
3.1 Improve the chances of people avoiding repeat homelessness	Develop robust action plans to help people make long term changes to break the cycle of homelessness.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	Summer 2019
3.2 Address the issues of those who have the most challenging behaviour	Continue to develop a range of responses to those with chaotic lifestyles and mental health issues.	Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager; NECA; Health	2021
3.3 Identify and address the needs of those who are vulnerable but not eligible for additional support	Work with Adult Social Care to develop upstream interventions for those who borderline and do not receive care.	Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services	2020
3.4 Analyse case management for occurrence of repeat homelessness	Introduce regular case auditing to identify repeat homelessness in order to shape better responses.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	2019
3.5 Analyse overall approach to repeat homelessness	Use Gateway system to track “customer journey” and develop new responses to improve the process.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader; Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager	2020
3.6 Recognise the specific needs of those with dual diagnosis	Develop a pathway for those with dual diagnosis.	Health; Commissioning; Janette McMain, Housing Manager –	2021

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
		Housing Options and Lifeline Services	
<b>4.0 PROVIDE THE RIGHT SUPPORT AND SERVICES SO THAT NO PERSON NEEDS TO SLEEP ROUGH</b>			
4.1 Reduce the number rough sleeping	Develop a multi-agency approach to dealing with those who rough sleep.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services; Police; Graham Hall, Head of Community Safety	2019
4.2 Reduce the numbers sofa surfing	Develop more interventions to specifically reduce sofa surfing.	Third Sector Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	2022
4.3 Develop a new preventative approach to rough sleeping	Develop the No Second Night out approach into No First Night.	Third Sector Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader	2022
4.4 Improve the response to those who sleep rough	Evaluate the Housing First Approach Develop a range of pro-active street support.	Third Sector Multiagency group around Begging	2020 2019
4.5 Review the pathway to independence	Applicants going in to emergency accommodation should be included in the first step to independence pathway.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager - Housing Options and Lifeline Services; Commissioning	2019
<b>5.0 BUILD A STRONG PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER OUR AIMS</b>			
5.1 Improve partnership planning and information exchange	Set up strategic network and Homelessness forum to improve cooperation and monitor progress.	Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services; Ken Davies, Housing Strategy Officer	2019

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
5.2 Improve partnership working	Build in new holistic approach into partnership work.	Karen Chittenden, Housing Options Team Leader Naomi Garbutt; Strategic Commissioning Manager	2019
5.3 Support the development of partnership working	Develop sharing and learning systems across the partnership.	Third Sector; Naomi Garbutt, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Janette McMain, Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services	On going
5.4 Improve internal Council joint working	Develop the Council's internal partnerships to ensure efficiency in responding to needs.	Anthony Sandys Head of Housing and Revenues Services	On going