



Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2024

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1.0 Introduction

Many factors can influence the loss of a home including the breakdown of a relationship, the loss of a job, bereavement and health problems. Whatever the cause, the loss of a home is devastating.

Over the last 10 years, homelessness nationally has increased. During this period we have seen welfare reforms freeze local housing allowance levels, the introduction of the benefit cap for low-income families and the introduction of universal credit. Average rents in the private sector have also increased and the demand for social housing is outstripping supply.

In 2018, more than 250,000 people in England were officially recorded as being homeless or living in inadequate homes. While the number of people counted or estimated by local Councils to be sleeping rough on any one night in autumn 2018 was 4,677, down 2% from 2017, the numbers sleeping rough are still more than double than in 2010.

West Lancashire reflects the national trend in the number of households that have lost their home. Both the number of homeless presentations and the use of temporary accommodation has increased, however, in respect of rough sleeping, we are against the national trend having recorded 0 or 1 on our rough sleeper estimates over the last five years.

Locally, the number of affordable private rented accommodation has reduced and there is more pressure on social housing. Suitable, affordable housing options are becoming limited for those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.

To prevent homelessness, we need to address inequalities and create equitable access to skills, education, employment and health care alongside good quality affordable housing. We need to ensure that personal circumstances are not a barrier to accessing services and opportunities and give extra support to those who might need to overcome these issues.

We want to put people's strengths and potential at the heart of our approach to tackling homelessness and inequality and to recognise the contributions that are needed from lots of different people, partners and organisations to make this strategy work. We are committed to working with these partners both at a local, regional and national level to ensure we make a difference.

2.0 Vision, Values and Principles

This strategy outlines our vision, values and principles that will underpin the work to prevent homelessness in West Lancashire.

Our Vision:

To end homelessness in West Lancashire.

Our Values:

We believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to:

- A safe and secure home and if needed the support to sustain that home and live a good quality independent life
- Be treated with respect and receive an excellent service
- Equality of access to information and services
- Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities

We believe that those who work with homeless people have a collective responsibility to ensure that:

- Good communication, co-ordination and a consistent approach is delivered across all services
- People with experience of homelessness have a voice and are involved in determining the solutions to their own issues and homelessness in general

Our Principles:

Recognise strengths and potential

To tackle the effects of homelessness, we want to create environments for people to thrive by recognising the strengths that they have and building on them. It also means thinking about more than just housing. By putting the person at the heart of everything we do and recognising that a wider more diverse approach is needed.

We need to support increased wellbeing, greater social inclusion and positive relationships to create a deeper and more effective support structure. Increasing access to arts, sports, leisure opportunities, employment, education and physical health are all an important element of tackling and preventing homelessness.

Services will be aimed at people and families including those in complex situations, to ensure they have access to effective support.

Listen and learn

We value the experiences of people who use our service, have been homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. We will improve how we increase our customer's involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of our services to find innovative and joined up peer led solutions.

Inclusive partnerships

We will improve how we work with the voluntary sector, statutory services, health, community and faith groups, businesses, schools, universities to ensure we provide services that are joined up with strong communication and clear goals.

Putting people first

We will focus on what really matters to people and take the time to consider the underlying causes of homelessness and their experiences rather than making assumptions. We will work WITH people to create change and enable them to flourish.

3.0 Key Objectives

The key objectives of the strategy are:

Objective 1: Reduce homelessness by increasing prevention and early intervention

Objective 2: Enhance the housing offer available for both temporary and longer term accommodation

Objective 3: Improving health and wellbeing

The strategy also reflects the Council's vision of being ambitious for West Lancashire by being:

- **Ambitious for our Economy**
Retain and grow jobs, increase skill levels and encourage business and wealth
- **Ambitious for our Environment**
Enhance the built and physical environment and its cleanliness
- **Ambitious for Health and Wellbeing**
Improve the health and wellbeing of local communities

The Council and our partner agencies all have a contribution to make and a role to play in achieving these objectives in order to prevent homelessness.

4.0 Action Plan

Delivery of the objectives will be achieved through the actions presented in the Action Plan. Given the context of rapid change, the action plan will be reviewed every year to ensure that the tasks remain relevant and are revised where appropriate.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE 1: REDUCE HOMELESSNESS BY INCREASING PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To develop a homelessness prevention toolkit	Review the homelessness prevention measures offered specifically focussing on ways to help applicants who do not have a priority need for assistance	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness Advice & Prevention Officer	Homelessness Prevention Toolkit in operation An increase in the number of successful homeless prevention cases	October 2020 March 2023
To develop an advice offer that addresses the needs of individual client groups	Create an advice offer that is tailored to the needs of each client group	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Dedicated advice offer developed A reduction in the number of homeless presentations	December 2020 March 2023
To reduce the number of contact lost cases both in the public and private sector	Identify solutions used by both the public and private sector in reducing the number of cases where contact is lost with a customer e.g. text reminders for appointments	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness Advice & Prevention Officer	Implement the identified solution A 50% reduction in the number of contact lost cases	March 2021 March 2023

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To provide a multi-agency Advice Hub	<p>Set up an advice hub that provides easy access to specialist advice from a range of agencies both from the statutory and voluntary sector</p> <p>Create links through the hub to local services offering opportunities to improve physical and mental health</p>	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Produce an appraisal of all the options	March 2022
Early identification of people who are at risk of homelessness	Identify good practice around successful initiatives in the early identification of people who are at risk of homelessness and develop options for introduction in West Lancashire	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Produce an appraisal of all the options	March 2021

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To provide a mediation service to anyone at risk of becoming homeless	Commission a third sector organisation to provide or develop an existing mediation service to ensure it is available to all residents in West Lancashire	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Mediation service in operation A 25% reduction in the number of homeless presentations	March 2021 March 2023
To provide a new tenants training course	Develop a training course covering landlord and tenant responsibilities, budgeting, welfare rights and being a good neighbour	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Course participants gain the skills needed to ensure future tenancy sustainability A 25% reduction in homeless presentations	April 2022 March 2023
To develop training for partner agencies	To develop training for partner agencies to help them identify and refer those who might be at risk of homelessness at an early stage	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Officer	To have completed training sessions for partner agencies To increase the number of referrals into the service from partner agencies Agencies work better together To increase the number of successful homeless prevention cases	March 2021 May 2021 May 2021 March 2023

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
Involve customers in service planning and development	Create a meaningful customer satisfaction survey Invite customers to participate in service planning workshops Invite a customer representative to attend homeless forum meetings	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	To achieve high customer satisfaction by involving customers in the planning and delivery of services	March 2021

OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE THE HOUSING OFFER AVAILABLE FOR BOTH TEMPORARY AND LONGER TERM ACCOMMODATION

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
Work with private landlords to promote the private rented sector as a viable housing option	Establish a private landlord working group to establish the barriers in offering tenancies to homeless households and to find ways to reduce the number of evictions from private rented accommodation	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Officer	Private landlord working group established A 25% reduction in the number of evictions in the private rented sector	December 2020 March 2023
Work with private landlords to reduce the number of s.21 notices served	Encourage landlords to seek advice before serving a s.21 notice Work with landlords to find ways of resolving issues to prevent the tenant losing their home	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Officer	An increase in the number of landlords contacting the Council for advice prior to eviction An increase in the number of successful interventions prior to a risk of homelessness A decrease in the number of homeless presentations as a result of a S.21 notice being served	September 2020 September 2021 March 2023

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To provide a private sector leasing scheme	To explore the viability of operating an private sector leasing scheme	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	To provide a more affordable private sector accommodation offer	March 2022
To provide temporary accommodation that is fit for purpose including provision of emergency shelters for those at risk of rough sleeping during extreme weather	To carry out a full review of temporary accommodation provision and identify options for extreme weather provision To ensure those in temporary accommodation are supported until a long term solution is found	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	To have fit for purpose temporary accommodation in the right location	March 2022
				Support for those in temporary accommodation is in place to ensure they are not isolated or disadvantaged	March 2022
				To have a suitable emergency accommodation response for extreme weather conditions	December 2020
To provide a supported accommodation offer to residents with complex needs	To provide shared accommodation with on-site support to help people develop life skills for sustainable independent living	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Two units of supported accommodation in operation	September 2020

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To provide a Housing First scheme	To provide a shared housing scheme with support for people with substance misuse issues that enables recovery to take place whilst being accommodated	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	A fully operational housing first scheme supporting up to 15 people	September 2021
To provide a Night Stop service for those aged 16-25 and 26+	To work with a third party provider to set up a Night Stop service for young people aged 16-25 and adults aged 26+	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	To have two Night Stop services in place, one for young people and one for adults	March 2023

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To provide outreach support to residents at risk of or who are already homeless due to substance misuse	Work with a partner agency to secure funding for a substance misuse outreach worker	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Outreach worker in post	April 2022
				A reduction in the number of people with substance misuse issues becoming homeless	March 2023
				An increase in the number of homeless people with substance misuse issues being assisted into accommodation and sustaining that accommodation	March 2023

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	PROJECT LEAD	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME	TIMESCALE
To provide outreach support to residents at risk of or who are already homeless due to mental health issues	Work with a partner agency to secure funding for a mental health outreach worker	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	Homelessness & Private Sector Housing Manager	<p>Outreach worker in post</p> <p>A reduction in the number of people with mental health issues becoming homeless</p> <p>An increase in the number of homeless people with mental health issues being assisted into accommodation and sustaining that accommodation</p>	<p>April 2022</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p>