

South Lakeland District Council

Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024

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Foreword

Executive Summary

Nationally and locally homelessness is increasing. This is reflected in the rising numbers of homeless presentations here in South Lakeland. The other notable increase is the number of people presenting with other needs which can be complex in nature such as drug and alcohol issues, and mental health issues.

The Council's Homelessness Strategy is a key document that outlines the priorities that will address homelessness in the District and the actions that the Council will undertake with its partners in order to do this.

The Council recognises that homelessness is not an issue that can be tackled alone, but in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations.

This Strategy has been developed in partnership with other organisations through a multi-agency Steering Group. It builds on the work undertaken in the last Strategy. The vision and priorities reflect the Group's priorities. The vision is:

To prevent homelessness wherever possible, to ensure homelessness is quickly relieved, and that settled accommodation and support is provided to those that need it.

Priorities

The Homelessness Strategy Group has identified four priorities for this Strategy which are in no particular order:

- 1 Homelessness Prevention**
- 2 Increasing the supply of settled accommodation**
- 3 Ensuring the right support is available to those that need it**
- 4 Tackling complex needs**

A comprehensive review of homelessness was undertaken in 2018 to examine the current levels of homelessness, the needs of homeless people and factors that could have an influence on future levels of homelessness. A summary of the findings is shown in Appendix 2 of this Strategy.

Consultation was held with service users and the results of this is shown in Appendix 4 of this Strategy. It was useful to have feedback from people who have experienced homelessness and this has been taken into account in the development of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Achievements from the Previous Strategy

The following key achievements demonstrate successful work that has been undertaken to address homelessness in the District:

- Education work in schools/ college has been undertaken in partnership with Children's Services and Impact Housing Association.

- A 16/17 year old Joint Protocol was developed in partnership with a range of agencies including the County Council; a South Lakeland Local Commitment was signed up to and is working well..
- Cumbria County Council commissioned a Night stop service across Cumbria and in South Lakeland.
- An early warning system was set up with key Registered Providers to prevent evictions where possible.
- The Council adopted a housing options approach established to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
- Adoption of 'no second night out' across Cumbria.
- Work undertaken for the Gold Standard and peer review undertaken and the Council achieved a bronze standard.
- Many partners provide pre-tenancy training.
- A Private Sector Accommodation Officer is in post and has been targeting empty homes under 6 months to bring back into use for those in housing need/homeless/ threatened with homelessness.
- 302 empty homes have been brought back into use through targeted interventions during the period 2014/15 to 2017/18. More work will under taken in line with the Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2015 – 2020.
- We are working with 26 private landlords on the provision of housing for people homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- We are on target to enable the delivery of 1000 affordable homes to rent during the period 2014 – 2025 with 457 completions to 31 December 2018. We have also enabled the delivery of 121 affordable homes for sale in the same period.
- South Lakeland District Council was successful in securing £100k funding for a domestic violence project in partnership with Springfield, Impact Housing and Cumbria and Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Project for victims of domestic violence and perpetrators.

It is recognised that further work needs to be undertaken now to continue this work and to build upon these successes.

Section One

1.0 Introduction and purpose of the Strategy

Local authorities are required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of

A key challenge is that homeless presentations have increased by 380% since 2012-13 in South Lakeland.

homelessness and to then develop a homelessness strategy and update this every five years. The focus of the Strategy needs to be on homelessness prevention, securing an adequate supply of housing for people who are or may become homeless and that sufficient support is available to prevent homelessness reoccurring. This Homelessness Strategy builds upon the work undertaken in the previous 2013 – 2018 Homelessness Strategy but recognises that amidst a changing environment with changing needs, homelessness has been increasing, both nationally and locally here in South Lakeland.

We recognise that we cannot achieve successes on our own and this Strategy has been the result of joint work with other agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector. It is recognised in the Homelessness Act 2002 and in the revised Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 that there needs to be greater co-operation and closer joint planning and closer operational co-operation between social services authorities and housing authorities. Collaboration to address the wider determinants of health is recognised in the Cumbria Public Health Strategy. Cumbria County Council is represented on the multi-agency steering group and has inputted into the development of the Homelessness Strategy. Further work to develop this relationship will be crucial to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, especially those with complex needs.

The key issues that this Strategy wishes to address are:

- The significant increase in homelessness in South Lakeland and understand the causes;
- The need for interventions to be at an earlier point to prevent homelessness;
- Pathways need to be in place for people who may be in hospital, prison or be vulnerable due to being a care leaver;
- The need to secure more appropriate temporary accommodation to meet the needs of individuals and families;
- There is a need for accommodation with support, especially for people with complex needs, however, supported accommodation has more than halved in South Lakeland and we need alternatives;
- There is need to increase the supply of settled accommodation.

We now have additional powers and responsibilities under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and as such need re-examine what we are doing and what we need to do to intervene earlier.

1.2 Overview of Homelessness in South Lakeland

A review of homelessness was undertaken in 2018 and this reveals that the main causes of homelessness remain the same:

- Loss of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector – this is the largest cause of homelessness in South Lakeland.
- Relationship breakdown – either violent or non-violent, and young people leaving the family home.
- Complex issues that exacerbate the type of issues that may lead to homelessness, i.e. rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol addictions and mental health issues (sometimes, though not always, as a result of substance misuse). Such issues make it more difficult for people to cope and resolve their housing issues on their own.

Key findings from the Review can be found at Appendix 2 of this document.

1.3 Development of the South Lakeland District Council Homelessness Strategy

The Strategy has been developed in partnership with agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector through a Strategic Homelessness Group which was established in 2018. The Group has met to discuss priorities and an initial survey was sent out to agencies that would have an interest in the issue of homelessness in South Lakeland. A workshop was held on 4.12.18 to discuss what actions we should be undertaking to help deliver the priorities that have been identified by the Group. Feedback from the workshop is set out in Appendix 3. Service user consultation was undertaken by a small number of agencies and the results of this are shown at Appendix 4.

In order to implement this Strategy an Action Plan has been developed by partners and is shown at Appendix 1. Consultation on the draft Strategy took place in March to April 2019.

1.4 The national and local context of homelessness

1.4.1 National Context

Legislation

The **Homeless Reduction Act 2017** extends the responsibilities of local authorities including;

- A duty to prevent homelessness
- Amending the definition of homelessness to households served with a section 21 notice seeking possession.
- Extending the ‘threatened with homelessness’ period from 28 to 56 days
- Requiring households to agree a Personal Housing Plan
- A new relief duty on councils to work to prevent homelessness and secure accommodation for all applicants regardless of priority need or intentionally homeless.
- A new duty on public bodies to notify councils when they suspect someone may be homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- The Council is required to review the Action Plan on an annual basis.

Welfare Reform Act 2016

Universal Credit merges several benefits into one monthly payment. Payments were made

The Residential Landlords Association (RLA) found that three in every five landlords (61%) with tenants claiming Universal Credit have experienced them going into arrears at some point. In 2016, the proportion of landlords experiencing arrears from Universal Credit claimants was 27%.

on a weekly basis prior to Universal Credit and therefore people have had to learn how to budget on a monthly basis rather than week by week. Housing payments are also made direct to the tenant rather than the landlord unless there is a vulnerable tenant or the tenant gets into rent arrears of at least two months’ rent. Then an alternative payment arrangement can be set up for a landlord to receive the housing element direct. In South Lakeland this has been rolled out.

In South Lakeland arrears due to these changes could account for the fact that loss of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector is the largest cause of homelessness.

1.4.2 Government Policy/Strategy

Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

This gives a commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to end rough sleeping by 2027. The approach described within the Strategy is one of prevention, intervention and recovery. The Strategy requires that Local Housing Authorities review their Homelessness Strategy Action Plan on an annual basis.

Extension of the Right to Buy to tenants of Registered Providers which could reduce the amount of social housing over time. Despite a pledge to replace homes that are lost through replacement schemes, the reality shows that this has not happened and the Government has acknowledged this.

Social Housing Green Paper - sets out a commitment to build more social housing, consider social housing complaints resolution and regulation, remove the stigma associated with social housing tenants and ensuring homes of a decent and safe standard, particularly in the light of Grenfell. Consultation responses are being considered.

1.5 Local Context and links to other Strategies

South Lakeland covers a 600 square mile area with large parts of the District falling within two national parks, the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park. The District is predominantly rural and the housing market is dominated by issues of affordability. South Lakeland is a very popular holiday area with some villages dominated with second and holiday homes. South Lakeland is also a popular retirement destination and the resident population is aging considerably.

This Strategy sits within the wider context of other relevant Council Plans and Strategies, namely:

- *South Lakeland District Council Plan updated 2019* – Housing – providing homes to meet need.
- *South Lakeland District Council's Housing Strategy* - Priority A - Developing new affordable and open market homes to meet need and support economic growth, Priority B – Providing specialist housing and services to improve the health and well-being of older, young and vulnerable people, and Priority E – Preventing and reducing homelessness.
- *The Tenancy Strategy* – priority to assist vulnerable households and reduce the risk of homelessness. The Strategy is in the process of being reviewed in 2019.
- *Cumbria Choice Joint Allocations Policy* - the Council adopted the Cumbria Choice Joint Allocations Policy and is a partner on Cumbria Choice, the choice based lettings system through which most housing association homes are let. The Allocations Policy gives priority to homeless households in line with statutory requirements.

1.5.1 The Review of Homelessness in South Lakeland

A Review of homelessness was undertaken in 2018 and key findings can be found at

Key Fact: homeless applications have increased by 93% since 2012-13 in South Lakeland.

Appendix 2. The main findings are that homelessness is increasing in South Lakeland due to a number of factors, not least, welfare reform. The level of complex needs cases is also increasing. The loss of supported accommodation in South Lakeland has left a void for such people as they find themselves with increasing difficulty accessing secure accommodation and are unable to maintain their tenancies leading to a revolving door of homelessness. The

knock on effect of this is a spiral of decline with interventions from other public sector services such as health – hospital admissions, mental health teams, drug and alcohol services, prisons and probation and the voluntary sector. Dealing with the root causes of homelessness can positively impact on the circumstances that individuals find themselves dealing with.

Section Two – What we are looking to achieve and how we will do this

2.0 Vision

Our vision is:

To prevent homelessness wherever possible, to ensure homelessness is quickly relieved, and that settled accommodation and support is provided to those that need it.

2.1 Priorities

The Homelessness Strategy Group has identified four priorities for this Strategy which are in no particular order:

- 1 Homelessness Prevention**
- 2 Increasing the supply of settled accommodation**
- 3 Ensuring the right support is available to those that need it**
- 4 Tackling complex needs**

All four priorities are embedded within the theme of partnership working as mentioned in Section One. The Homelessness Strategy Group has worked on a number of key actions that will help us achieve the priorities and are detailed below.

2.2 Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness prevention is about tackling issues before they become a crisis that could lead to a person losing their home.

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act a person is threatened with homelessness if this could occur within 56 days rather than the original 28 days. This gives more opportunities to prevent homelessness at an earlier point or source alternative accommodation if necessary. For example, landlords can identify tenants who are falling into rent arrears or for whom there are other issues with their tenancies that could lead to a breach of the tenancy agreement. An early warning system was set up following the last Homelessness Strategy and works well with South Lakes Housing. There is scope to extend this scheme to other Registered Providers and also in the private rented sector. Additionally, the Cumbria Choice Allocations Policy will need to be reviewed in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act to ensure that it is compliant.

2.2.1 Key Measures

HS1 - Not to place homelessness families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless exceptional circumstances and then for no longer than 6 weeks.

HS2 - Not to place young people (under 24) in bed and breakfast accommodation.

2.2.2 Key Actions

1. Organise appropriate training for statutory and voluntary agencies.
2. Conduct a review of the education programme in schools and redesign this to ensure it remains effective.
3. Develop the early warning scheme for Registered Providers and private landlords.
4. Raise awareness of existing services – so that staff know where to signpost to.
5. Input into the development of the care leavers joint protocol.
6. Develop appropriate referral pathways for hospital discharge, mental health, drug and alcohol and prison services.
7. Work in partnership to set up a scheme to support people attending Court subject to available resources.
8. Review and monitor the reasons for loss of assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector.
9. Review the Cumbria Choice Allocation Policy to ensure that this is compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2019.
10. Promote positive stories with Communications to help remove the stigma associated with homelessness and supported housing schemes.
11. Consider and implement options for pre-tenancy training where schemes do not already exist.
12. To seek assurances from Registered Providers that they will sign up to the Homes for Cathy commitments.

2.3 Increasing the supply of settled accommodation

The Council's ambitious targets for housing delivery are set out within the Council Plan and Housing Strategy. These targets are to maximise the number of affordable homes for rent and to purchase, and to bring empty homes back into use as homes. The Council is on target to deliver 1000 homes to rent by 2025 and 700 affordable homes to buy by 2025.

2.3.1 Key Measures

HS3 - by 2025, the number of long-term empty homes, currently 827, will have reduced by 20%.

HS4 - To enable 1000 homes to rent in the period 2016 – 2025 and 700 affordable homes to buy.

HS5 – Between 2015 and 2019, the Council through targeted interventions will, year on year, bring a minimum of 70 empty homes back into use.

2.3.2 Actions

- Work with private rented sector to secure accommodation for people in housing need/at risk of homelessness.
- Work with Registered Providers and developers to ensure that new homes will meet future evidenced housing needs.
- Bring empty homes back into use by implementing the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan.
- Consider options for enabling modular housing.
- Review the Council's Local Connection Policy as part of the work on the Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2019.
- Work with public sector bodies and churches to identify any potential sites that could be used for affordable or supported housing.
- Use housing renovation grants to enable potential new schemes suitable for tenants with specific needs.
- Work with providers to enable a shared housing scheme in South Lakeland for young people.
- Work with housing associations to develop new affordable homes with the help of low-cost loans.

2.4 Ensuring the right support is available to those who need it

There is now less than half of the number of supported housing units that were available in 2014 reducing from 91 units to 29. A study was undertaken by South Lakeland District Council to consider the impacts of Cumbria County Council's Supporting People funding reductions. The results of this work showed that there was a significant increase in homelessness shortly following and ongoing increases which could be linked to the loss of short-term supported accommodation. Recommendations from the study were:

1. South Lakeland District Council to work with Cumbria County Council Supporting People Officers' Group to influence the next commissioning round and limit if possible further cuts being made.
2. South Lakeland District Council to recommend that Cumbria County Council maintains services currently being provided through the Supporting People pot.
3. South Lakeland District Council to consider funding for the continuation of supported housing, if this is not to be provided by Cumbria County Council.
4. South Lakeland District Council to consider other options and models for supported accommodation.
5. South Lakeland District Council to continue to monitor the effects of the loss of supported housing.

The Council recognises that the needs of these people still exist and to ensure that they are successful in maintaining a tenancy in the social rented sector, there needs to be consideration given to alternative methods of delivering support that do not solely rely on Supporting People funding. The recommendations are therefore reflected in the Key Actions in this Section.

As Universal Credit has been rolled out in South Lakeland households are faced with a change to the frequency of payments from weekly to monthly. This is putting increased

pressure on Housing Options service with people struggling to maintain their rent payments and falling into arrears.

In other areas there are social prescribing schemes, whereby GPs can prescribe a new boiler for example in homes they may not be of a decent standard. This was an issue also discussed at the workshops and a proposed action has been developed below.

2.4.1 Key Actions

- Consider alternative supported housing models that do not rely on SP but can still be funded.
- Feed into the commissioning process for supported short term accommodation services to represent the needs of South Lakeland.
- Consider adopting formal agreements with some of the prescribed bodies who have a duty to refer under the Homelessness Reduction Act and also with Registered Providers who do not have this duty.
- Ensure support is available for tenants undergoing transition to Universal Credit – referral to food banks, furniture schemes and budgeting support via Christians Against Poverty (CAP), referral for potential discretionary housing payments.
- Consider options where GPs can prescribe measures to remove hazards in homes that can affect health, taking into account good practice in this area.

2.5 Tackling complex needs

Tackling the need for housing is just one of a number of issues that a person may need to address and there are often other issues that leads to a spiral of social isolation, poverty, addictions, criminology and homelessness. Tackling a housing issue is the tip of the iceberg. The underlying issues can remain and this in turn can lead to a loss of tenancies and repeat homelessness.

The Council recognises that a multi-agency approach is needed with relevant partners including health, education, probation, Children's and Adult Services, Registered Providers, and the voluntary sector.

2.5.1 Key Actions

- To undertake an evaluation of the Housing First pilots to see if an approach like this would work in South Lakeland.
- To undertake a needs assessment to identify the number of people with complex issues in South Lakeland making use of existing evidence such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Housing Register.
- Consider options to set up a Step Up/Step Down service in South Lakeland with Home Group and partners from Health.
- Consider options for a multi-agency panel or a MEAM approach in South Lakeland.
- Undertake an evaluation with people who have experienced homelessness or been at risk of homelessness with a range of needs to gain a greater understanding of what support could have been provided to meet their needs.
- Provide information and/or advice in places such as GP surgeries, libraries, Sure Start centres, village halls etc about services and support available.

Section Three – Implementing the Strategy

3.0 Funding and commissioning

The Strategy will be financed through South Lakeland District Council's own funding, Government funding such as homelessness support grant funding, the new burdens grant to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act, and Discretionary Housing Payments. The Council will work with partners to secure other external funding including Government funding on work to improve access to the private rented sector, work around complex needs and rough sleeping. The Council will also work with voluntary sector partners to secure funding such as Fulfilling Lives Big Lottery funding. Opportunities for joint commissioning will be explored to help implement the Strategy priorities and actions.

The former Supporting People contracts for young people, generic and domestic violence are all being reviewed. Elements of the young people's supported accommodation services have been re-commissioned for 1 year from 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020 to give a consistent end date to contracts county-wide. The effect of this in South Lakeland has been no change and the service will be provided for a further year by Impact Housing through the South Lakeland Foyer.

The Council will work with Registered Providers to enable new affordable homes to rent and buy. The Council's new loans scheme provides Registered Providers with resources to support delivery as well as a return for the Council. Homes England funding for affordable housing and rough sleeping will be sought to enable the delivery of the Strategy.

3.1 Staff Resources

The right people are crucial in order to implement this Strategy. It is anticipated that internal Council staff resources will be used in partnership with other partners to deliver the actions outlined in the Action Plan, thereby achieving our identified priorities.

3.2 Monitoring and Review

The Strategy will be reviewed in 2022 and the Action Plan will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis by the Strategic Homelessness Group and the Housing Advisory Group. The Action will be submitted on an annual basis to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government following sign off by the Director of Customer and Commercial Services.

Glossary

Affordable housing – social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Cumbria Choice – a partnership of housing associations and local authorities operating a joint Allocation Policy for social and affordable homes to rent.

Eligible homeless – a homeless household who has made an application and found to be eligible for assistance. Eligible homeless households may not necessarily be found to be homeless or in priority need and therefore the figure differs to homeless acceptances who are eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless.

Empty Home - properties that are unoccupied. They may be empty as they wait to come onto the market, sit empty despite being available for sale or rent, or be held off the market as an asset. Empty homes are in the majority of cases in private hands, given that social landlords such as housing associations let homes through Cumbria Choice and there is high demand for the few that become empty in any one year.

Extra Care Housing - Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self-contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property. Extra Care Housing is also known as very sheltered housing, assisted living, or simply as 'housing with care'. It comes in many built forms, including blocks of flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages.

Homeless presentation – this refers to households who come to the Council as potentially homeless or actually homeless.

Homeless application – a homeless application is taken by the Council where there is reason to believe that the household is homeless or at risk of being homeless (within the next 56 days).

Homeless acceptances – a homeless household who has made an application and has been accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance, homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (i.e. they have not done something/or omitted to do something that has led to them becoming homeless).

Homelessness prevention means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.

Homelessness relief is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

Modular housing - a home built indoors in a factory-like setting. The finished products are covered and transported to their new locations, where they are assembled by a builder. A modular home is not a mobile home; it is simply a home that is built off-site, as opposed to on-site.

Supported housing – normally refers to housing where additional support is given to a household to help them to maintain their tenancy. This could include but is not limited to signposting to budgeting support, ensuring they are receiving the correct benefits and helping to ensure that the household does not do anything that could jeopardise their tenancy. This support can be provided in a specific supported housing scheme or support in independent housing in the community.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan 2019 – 2020

Homelessness Strategy – Action Plan Draft 2019 - 2020

PRIORITY 1 – Homelessness Prevention					
Action	Milestone	Outcomes	Lead Officer	Key Partners	By When
Organise appropriate training for statutory and voluntary agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable training courses and costs. Set up training and invite statutory and voluntary agencies to attend. 	Awareness of homelessness prevention measures, new duties and referral mechanisms.	HOM	Statutory and voluntary agencies. Training providers.	December 2020
Conduct a review of the education programme in schools and redesign this to ensure it remains effective.	Using best practice from elsewhere review the education plan to target young people in schools (Year 9-10) and further education colleges. Deliver on a cyclical basis	Reduced levels of youth homelessness Increased awareness of the reality of homelessness (ie that it will not = your own flat)	HOM	Children’s Services – Youth Homeless and Housing Team Education Inspira Manna House Housing Options	March 2021
Develop the early warning scheme for Registered Providers and private landlords.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing early warning scheme with South Lakes Housing. Link with accredited private sector landlords to introduce an early warning scheme. Enable an early warning scheme with other Registered Providers. 	Prevent homelessness.	HOM	Housing Options Housing Standards Registered Providers Private Landlords (Private Landlords’ Forum)	March 2021
Raise awareness of existing services – so that staff know where to signpost to through Gateway referral mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a directory or referral mechanisms via the Gateway. 	Prevent and alleviate homelessness.	AHO	Housing Options Voluntary and Statutory Sector agencies	Ongoing
Input into the development of the care leavers joint protocol	Work with Children’s Services to develop the Care Leavers’ Protocol and Local Commitment in South Lakeland	Prevent and alleviate homelessness	HOM	Children’s Services Housing Options	December 2019

Develop appropriate referral pathways for hospital discharge, mental health, drug and alcohol and prison services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable meetings to raise awareness and identify relevant partners. Work on a pathway with relevant partners and implement. 	Prevent and alleviate homelessness	HOM	Health Adult Social Care/Children's Services Probation	
Work in partnership to set up a scheme to support people attending Court subject to available resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify relevant courts covering SLDC. Set up a scheme subject to funding to provide advice to individuals attending possession proceedings hearings. 	Prevent and alleviate homelessness	HOM	Court service CAB Manna House	March 2020
Review and monitor the reasons for loss of assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up system to record the reasons for loss of an assured shorthold tenancy. Monitor on an annual basis. 	Prevent and alleviate homelessness	HOM	Private landlords Housing Standards Team	March 2020
Review the Cumbria Choice Allocation Policy to ensure that this is compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Policy complies with legislation. Review Registered Providers' approach to housing prospective tenants with rent arrears/former rent arrears as part of the review of the Cumbria Choice Allocation Policy. 	Prevent and alleviate homelessness	HOM	Housing Strategy Registered Providers Voluntary and Statutory sector agencies	2019
Promote positive stories with Communications to help remove the stigma associated with homelessness and supported housing schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get in touch with Communications teams to promote any positive stories, e.g. scheme openings, successes etc. 	Promote positive stories and remove stigma of homelessness and supported housing schemes.	HOM	Housing Strategy Registered Providers Supporting Housing Providers	Ongoing

Monitor the implementation of the 16/17 year old Protocol and Local Commitment for South Lakeland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the Protocol Implementation Group, engage in timely reviews of the Protocol. Ensure that no 16-17 year olds are placed in bed and breakfast and monitor on quarterly basis 	Evidence of need provided that will enable targeted provision to meet the identified need and reduce youth homelessness	Intensive Early Help Manager (CS) HOM	Children's Services Housing Options RPs Private landlords	Ongoing
Ensure that no families are placed in bed and breakfast except in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks and monitor on a quarterly basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the need for additional temporary units in South Lakeland Continue to monitor bed and breakfast on an ongoing basis Source additional private rented sector properties to use as temporary accommodation. 	Meet Government targets Reduce uncertainty for families securing a settled housing solution	HOM	Housing Options Private landlords Housing Standards	Ongoing
Review and update the leaving home guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review agency information for guide to ensure this is kept up-to-date 	Reduce levels of youth homelessness	AHO	Housing Options Inspira Children's Services Colleges	December 2020
Monitor discretionary housing payments to prevent homelessness in light of welfare reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up monitoring system with Revenues and Benefits to ensure payments are effectively used. 	Prevent homelessness	HOM	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Ongoing
Consider and implement options for pre-tenancy training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider available options and work with partners to deliver pre-tenancy training courses 	Prevent homelessness	HOM	Housing Options Registered Providers Private landlords	2019 - 2020
To seek assurances from Registered Providers that they will sign up to the Homes for Cathy commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Registered Providers operating in South Lakeland to request their commitment to sign up. 	Prevent homelessness	HOM	Registered providers	2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor sign up of the Homes for Cathy commitments. 				
PRIORITY 2 – Increasing the supply of settled accommodation					
Action	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer	Key Partners	By When
Work with private rented sector to secure accommodation for people in housing need/at risk of homelessness.	Develop the private landlords' scheme in South Lakeland.	Increase available supply of accommodation.	HOM	Housing Options team Revenues and Benefits	Ongoing
Work with Registered Providers and developers to ensure that new homes will meet future evidenced housing needs.	Undertake actions from the Housing Strategy to increase the supply of homes suitable for a range of needs.	Increase available supply of accommodation	PHStraO	Registered Providers Developers Landowners	Ongoing
Bring empty homes back into use by implementing the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan.	Undertake the actions within the Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan.	Increase available supply of accommodation	PHStraO	Empty Homes Officer Empty home owners Registered Providers	Ongoing
Consider options for enabling modular housing.	Review examples available to determine a suitable model for South Lakeland. Arrange visit to other schemes as necessary. Work with a Registered Provider to enable a scheme in South Lakeland.	Increase available supply of accommodation	PHStraO	Registered Providers Developers Modular housing companies	2020
Review the Council's Local Connection Policy as part of the work on the Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2019.	Conduct a review of the Council's Local Connection Policy to feed into the SPG to ensure greater clarity.	Increase available supply of accommodation	PHStraO	Registered Providers Developers Mortgage Lenders	2019
Work with public sector bodies and churches to identify any potential sites that could be used for affordable or supported housing.	Identify suitable sites owned by public sector bodies and churches that could be suitable for affordable or supported housing.	Increase available supply of accommodation	PHStraO	Public sector organisations Churches	Ongoing
Use housing renovation grants to enable potential new schemes suitable for tenants with specific needs.	Identify suitable properties that may benefit from a housing renovation grant that could be used for tenants with specific needs.	Increase available supply of accommodation	HOM	Housing Standards Developers Registered Providers	Ongoing

	Consider grant applications from owners for such properties.				
Work with providers to enable a shared housing scheme in South Lakeland for young people.	Identify a suitable site for a scheme. Work with a registered provider to work up a scheme in South Lakeland suitable for young people.	Increase available supply of accommodation to meet specific needs.	PHStraO	Registered Providers HOM	2020
Work with housing associations to develop new affordable homes with the help of low-cost loans.	Identify suitable sites in partnership with Registered Providers. Facilitate the loans application and approval process.	Increase available supply of accommodation to meet specific needs.	DSHM	Registered Providers	Ongoing subject to loan finance availability.
PRIORITY 3 – Ensuring the right support is available to those that need it					
Action	Milestone	Outcomes	Lead Officer	Key Partners	By When
Consider alternative supported housing models that do not rely on SP but can still be funded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit to Calico housing scheme in Burnley and other schemes to identify a suitable funding model. Review options available to fund a suitable scheme in South Lakeland. 	Increasing the availability of supported accommodation.	PHStraO	Registered providers Supported housing providers Revenues and Benefits Manager	2019-20
Feed into the commissioning process for supported short term accommodation services to represent the needs of South Lakeland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feed into the SP commissioning process to represent the needs of South Lakeland. 	Tackling complex needs Ensure support is available to those that need it.	PHStraO	Relevant CCC Service Leads Registered Providers Support Providers	2019-20
Consider adopting formal agreements with some of the prescribed bodies who have a duty to refer under the Homelessness Reduction Act and also with Registered Providers who do not have this duty.	Set up agreements with the prescribed bodies that have a duty to refer and also with Registered Providers.	Increase support to those that need it.	HOM	Statutory and voluntary agencies Registered Providers	2019

Ensure support is available for tenants undergoing transition to Universal Credit – referral to food banks, furniture schemes and budgeting support via CAP and referral for potential discretionary housing payments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify those most vulnerable to homelessness with partners. Ensure that advice is available to tenants on services that are available. 	Ensure the right support is available to those that need it.	HOM	Housing Options Registered Providers Manna House CAP DWP	2019 - 2020
Consider options where GPs can prescribe measures to remove hazards in homes that can affect health, taking into account good practice in this area.	Consider available options for a scheme in South Lakeland taking into account good practice from elsewhere. Work with partners to develop a scheme in South Lakeland.	Ensure support is available to those that need it.	HOM	Health – GPs Adult Social Care	2020
Through the Tenancy Strategy monitor the rate of conversion from social rents to affordable rents, and the level of newbuild affordable rented homes	Set up monitoring system and report on six-monthly basis to SLESH Group	Ensure affordability of registered provider tenancies	AHO	Registered Providers	Ongoing
PRIORITY 4 – tackling complex needs					
Action	Milestone	Outcomes	Lead Officer	Key Partners	By When
To undertake a needs assessment to identify the number of people with complex issues in South Lakeland making use of existing evidence such as the JSNA, Housing Register.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify data sources to carry out this work. Work on a methodology for the work to identify complex needs individuals. 	Address complex needs	HOM	Relevant CCC Service Leads Registered Providers Private Landlords Children’s Services Adult Social Care Education Inspira	On-going
Consider options to set up a Step Up/Step Down service in South Lakeland with Home Group and partners from Health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what options are available to set up a scheme in South Lakeland/Cumbria. Work with partners to work up a scheme and link to discharge protocols above. 	Tackling complex needs	HOM	Health Home Group Adult Social Care Voluntary Sector	2020

Consider options for a multi-agency panel or a MEAM approach in South Lakeland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to consider options for a panel or a MEAM approach in South Lakeland for people with complex needs. • Consider Fulfilling Lives Big Lottery Fund working with voluntary sector partners. 	Tackling complex needs	HOM	Health Adult Social Care Voluntary Sector Probation Prison service Mental Health teams	2020
To undertake an evaluation of the Housing First pilots to see if an approach like this would work in South Lakeland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the learning from the pilots. • Evaluate options for a scheme in South Lakeland. Work with providers to develop a scheme in South Lakeland as necessary. 	Prevent and relieve homelessness. Increase available supply of accommodation.	HOM	Housing Strategy Registered Providers Third Sector	2020
Undertake an evaluation with people who have experienced homelessness or been at risk of homelessness with a range of needs to gain a greater understanding of what support could have been provided to meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a feedback form to gather information to improve services and support available. • Monitor the feedback on an annual basis. 	Ensure support is available to those that need it.	HOM	Registered Providers Statutory and voluntary sector agencies	2019
Provide information and/or advice in places such as GP surgeries, libraries, Sure Start centres, village halls etc about services and support available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leaflets and distribute to various venues across the District. • Consider housing options surgeries where appropriate in rural areas. 	Ensure advice and support is available and can be widely accessed.	HOM	Health Parish Councils Registered Providers Voluntary Sector	Ongoing

Abbreviations:

CCC – Cumbria County Council

DSHM – Development Strategy and Housing Manager

PHRO – Principal Housing Standards Officer

HOM – Housing Options Manager

AHO – Affordable Housing Officer

PHStraO – Principal Housing Strategy Officer

SLH – South Lakes Housing

Appendix 2 – Summary of the Review Findings

Current levels of homelessness Statistics

Table 1 and 2 detail the breakdown of homelessness presentations in South Lakeland, together with the outcome from initial presentation, i.e. whether they were eligible for assistance, and the reasons for homeless acceptances. As can be seen the number of homeless applications and presentations has been increasing significantly since 2012/13.

Table 1 – Homelessness Presentations/Acceptances and Outcome

	Homeless Applications	Homeless Acceptances	Eligible Homeless (not in priority need)	Advice & Assistance (outcome recorded)	Advice & Assistance (no outcome recorded)	Total presentations
2012/2013	82	27	26	15	29	126
2013/2014	40	15	7	402	51	493
2014/2015	15	4	2	340	32	387
2015/2016	42	26	5	289	18	349
2016/2017	102	22	30	312	15	429
2017/2018	158	47	34	425	22	605
Total	439	141	104	1783	167	2389

Table 2 – Acceptances reasons

By far the biggest reason for acceptances was the loss of rented/tied accommodation followed by parents/other relations unwilling to accommodate and other relationship breakdowns.

Acceptances breakdown							
	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	Total
Loss of rented/tied accommodation	11	5	1	12	11	26	66
Parents/other relations unwilling	8	2	1	4	2	9	26
Non-violent breakdown	3	3	1	3	4	2	16
Violence DV	2	4	0	3	1	6	16
Mortgage Arrears	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Left prison	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Harassment	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Left hospital	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Other	3	1	1	3	2	0	10
Total	27	15	4	26	22	47	141

Summary of Review Findings

Issues	Key Findings
Current levels of homelessness	The number of people presenting as homeless to the Housing Options Team (HOT) has risen sharply since 2015 (82 applications in 2015 increasing to 158 in 2017-18 and in 2012-13 there were 126 people presenting to the Options Service which had increased to 605 in 2017-18) and in tandem with this the number of prevention and relief cases has equally risen (297 cases in 2015-16 increasing to 430 in 2017-18).
Rough Sleeping	The official number of rough sleepers in the district has remained fairly static and the last declared figure was 3 in November 2017. We are aware that there are likely to be more across the district, but due to the rural nature of the area this is hard to assess.
Temporary Accommodation	Town View Fields is the main source of temporary accommodation in the area backed up by some bed and breakfast accommodation when TVF is full or is unsuitable for some reason. TVF is a mixed use hostel for families and singles, and we are currently considering procuring different accommodation for families as it is really not fit for purpose as mixed accommodation anymore.
Causes of homelessness	The main causes are relationship breakdown (violent and non-violent) and ever increasingly the loss of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy from the private rented sector. The Local Housing Allowance rates has been frozen for the last four years which affects the supply of private rented landlords willing to take tenants on benefits. Knowing this information allows us to target our prevention budget as intelligently as possible.
Discharge from hospital, prison, armed forces and young people leaving care.	The numbers of people discharged from these areas directly to the Housing Options Team are few, but there is still room for improvement in working with institutions to give us more notice before releasing them without trying to find service users possible housing solutions in advance. There is a need for a protocol for young people leaving care.
Location of homelessness	Although the majority of people presenting as either homeless or potentially homeless are from the urban hubs of Kendal and Ulverston, there are still some pockets of homelessness from other more rural areas as well as the Windermere and Bowness areas.
Support Needs	The South Lakeland area has a higher than average population of older people and also of those with physical and health issues. There are also a significant number of people who are victims of domestic abuse and who are supported by either SLDC or by Springfield Refuge and outreach service. Finally, there are a notable group of people with drug and alcohol addictions. Support needs include support for young people, people with mental and physical health issues, alcohol and drug addictions. There are increasing levels of complex cases. The number with substance misuse issues is increasing in South Lakeland and rates of hospital admissions due to substance misuse is above the national levels. Of the acceptances, 57% had physical or mental health issues and of these a significant number will also have substance misuse issues. Loss of over half the units of supported accommodation in the district since 2015 has had a knock on effect to SLDC as the statutory body.
Mortgage and Landlord Possession Claims	As set out above, figures for both landlord and mortgage possession claims have reduced in recent years, but changes to benefits have shown that in other areas where for example Universal Credit has been in place for some time that levels of rent arrears in particular

	have sharply risen, which will in turn have a knock on effect for presentations to the Housing Options Team.
Future levels of homelessness	Key issues are the ongoing implementation of Universal Credit in South Lakeland, the supply of affordable homes as South Lakeland is one of the least affordable places to live in Cumbria (additionally the lack of availability of social housing with 3200 households on the Housing Register compared to 276 general needs vacancies arising last year), the complexities of needs, the impact of the number of second and holiday homes as well as empty homes, the reducing resources for supported housing provision.

Appendix 3 - Feedback from Workshop Discussions held on 4.12.18

The workshop considered the four identified priorities, the issues that need to be addressed and actions that could be considered for the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan:

Priority 1 - Prevention

Issue - Rent arrears being a prohibitive factor to rehousing, and the approach of registered providers towards this

Action - to review approaches taken by such providers to prospective tenants with rent arrears.

Issue - stigma associated with social rented tenants

Action - to work with Communications teams to publicise successful social rented schemes that could reduce negative stereotypes and in turn could help to increase the supply of accommodation available in the private sector.

Issue – the roll out of Universal Credit has greatly impacted the need for help with budgeting skills.

Action – refer into schemes that provide budgeting advice such as Christians Against Poverty (CAP).

Action – to request that Registered Providers sign up to the Homes for Cathy commitments to tackle homelessness:

They are:

1. To contribute to the development and execution of local authority homelessness strategies
2. To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants' unique sets of circumstances and housing histories 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 homeless any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness (as defined in the Crisis plan)
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 are 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

Issue - understanding root causes of homelessness and the need to base interventions to address these root causes such as trauma, drug and alcohol addictions, and family breakdown.

Action - develop appropriate pathways for hospital discharge, mental health, drug and alcohol and prison services to ensure that homelessness is prevented.

Issue – the need for formal housing pathways for specific needs such as drug/alcohol, discharge from hospitals and prisons etc

Action – to devise pathways for specific client groups.

Issue – the need for Registered Providers to give the Council as much notice as possible that they are intending to evict.

Action – to extend the early warning scheme with South Lakes Housing to other Registered Providers and the private rented sector.

Issue – the changes in legislation and how this relates to the Allocations Policy.

Action – to review the Cumbria Choice Joint Allocations Policy.

Priority 2 – Increasing the Supply of Settled Accommodation

Issue - new supply needs to match the evidenced need and future need set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and any local surveys/housing needs assessments undertaken and the Housing Register. One Registered Provider is considering building larger one bedroom flats that could be reconfigured to two bedroom flats in the event of changing needs and policies such as the 'bedroom tax'.

Action - discussions need to take place with Registered Providers and Developers so that future needs can be met.

Issue – need for a quicker pace of delivery.

Action – could consider use of modular homes to enable new affordable homes at a quicker pace of delivery.

Issue - the availability of suitable sites is a barrier

Action - public sector owned land or land owned by churches could be considered where the social value of developing affordable homes could be promoted. NB South Lakeland District Council has very little land available as there has been ongoing development of land for affordable housing over the years. However, other partners may be able to help.

Issue – need to increase supply of affordable homes

Action - the Council currently provides Landlord Renovation Grants that enable non-residential premises such as former pubs to be developed into homes and let at an affordable rent for a period of five years. Some schemes may be suitable for tenants with specific needs and this could be reflected in the criteria for grants. Additionally, grant criteria could stipulate that landlords need to be accredited through the National Landlord Accreditation Scheme operating in South Lakeland.

Action - the Council has recently agreed to provide a fund of £6m for low-cost loans to housing associations for development of new affordable homes, particularly in high-cost areas such as the national park areas. This fund may be increased if the programme proves successful.

Issue - restrictive covenants can be a barrier to people accessing suitable accommodation.

Action - could review the Local Connection Policy as part of the work on the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Issue - young people who may be in education or employment need access to shared accommodation so that this is affordable to them, particularly due to welfare reform issues that means that the housing costs would not otherwise be covered.

Action - work could be undertaken with Registered Providers to enable a scheme in South Lakeland subject to funding.

Priority 3 – ensuring the right support is available to those that need it

Issue – the duty to refer – there needs to be formal agreements with the prescribed bodies in the legislation but also with Registered Providers.

Action – as per above.

Issue - there needs to be consideration given to alternative methods of delivering support that do not solely rely on Supporting People funding given the reducing budget available to the County Council.

Action – consider alternative funding methods for supported housing that do not rely on Supporting People funding.

Issue – housing conditions can impact on health and wellbeing and the need for support.

Action - In other areas there are social prescribing schemes, whereby GPs can prescribe a new boiler for example in homes they may not be of a decent standard.

Issue - as Universal Credit has been rolled out in South Lakeland households are faced with a change to the frequency of payments from weekly to monthly. This is putting increased pressure on Housing Options service with people struggling to maintain their rent payments and falling into arrears.

Action - need to refer to organisations that can help with budgeting skills such as CAP and Cumbria County Council's Young People's services re their work in schools and also pre-tenancy training provided by Registered Providers.

Priority 4 – tackling complex needs

Issue – the need for a multi-agency approach and buy in for other partners to tackle complex needs. It was evident that the small number of households who present with these issues are likely to be known to several agencies who, if they were to work more closely together, could make a real impact with individuals experiencing multiple issues. Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) is a coalition of the national charities Clinks, Homeless Link and Mind; with Collective Voice as an associate member. Working together, the MEAM coalition is supporting 21 local areas across England to develop effective, coordinated approaches to multiple needs that can increase wellbeing, reduce costs to public services and improve people's lives. These local areas use a framework called the MEAM Approach to guide their work.

Action – to consider this type of approach in South Lakeland provided partners commit to this.

Issue – the need for supported housing schemes for people with support/complex needs

Action – to develop schemes for people with complex needs.

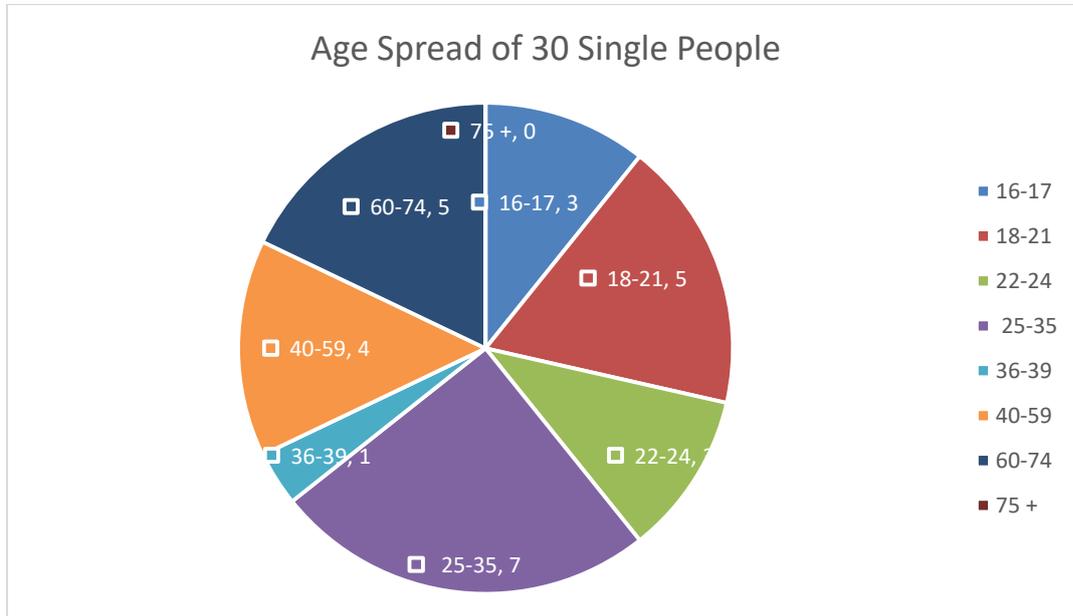
Action – consider whether a Step Up/Step Down service would work in South Lakeland. There is a scheme operating in Lancashire. Step Up is short-term intensive support to people with complex needs such as mental health issues that are on a trajectory to being admitted to hospital. Such intervention helps to prevent hospital admissions in other areas reducing the burden on the health sector. Step Down is for people who are already in hospital but need to be discharged and the service can provide the type of support to enable a discharge and prevent readmission.

Action – to consider Housing First models and take the learning from the pilots to help determine whether this approach could work in South Lakeland. Housing First is an approach to provide secure housing for people who may have complex needs with intensive support to help them set up and maintain a tenancy. Ordinarily if a person breaches their tenancy agreement through rent arrears/anti social behaviour this can lead to them either being ineligible for future rented accommodation or being placed in a reduced preference band. The onus is very much on the individual to prove that they have changed their behaviour that led to them losing their tenancy. Housing First works differently offering a housing solution irrespective of previous behaviour.

Action - Fulfilling Lives provides funding for the voluntary sector to work with people with complex needs. Work could be undertaken with voluntary sector partners to explore this further.

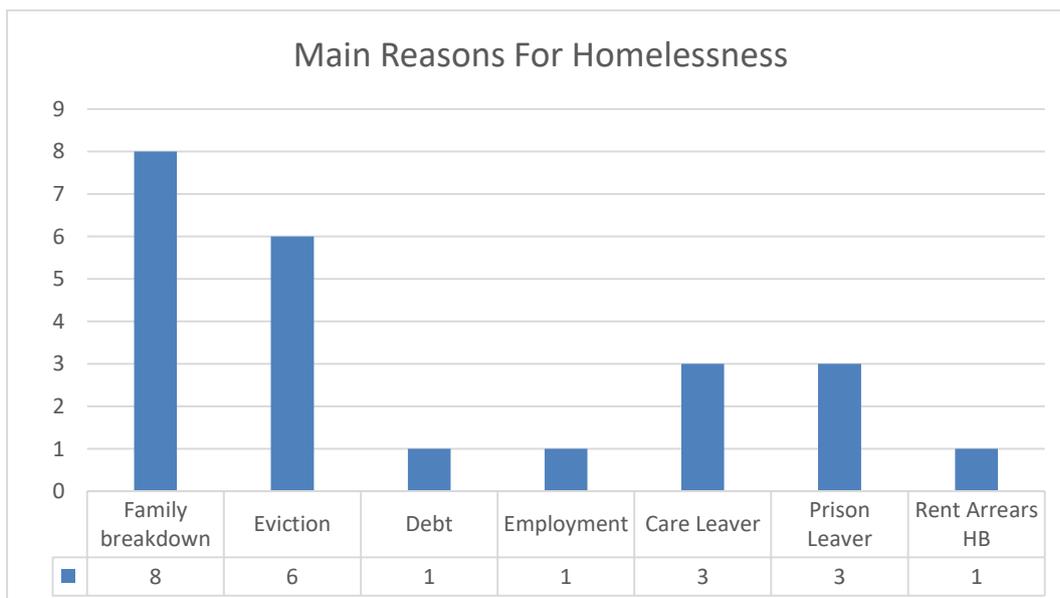
Appendix 4 - Homeless Service User Survey Results January 2019

Thank you to those organisations who returned the surveys. We received 30 responses in total from agencies therefore analysis will be limited and not comprehensive and is not representative of all households.



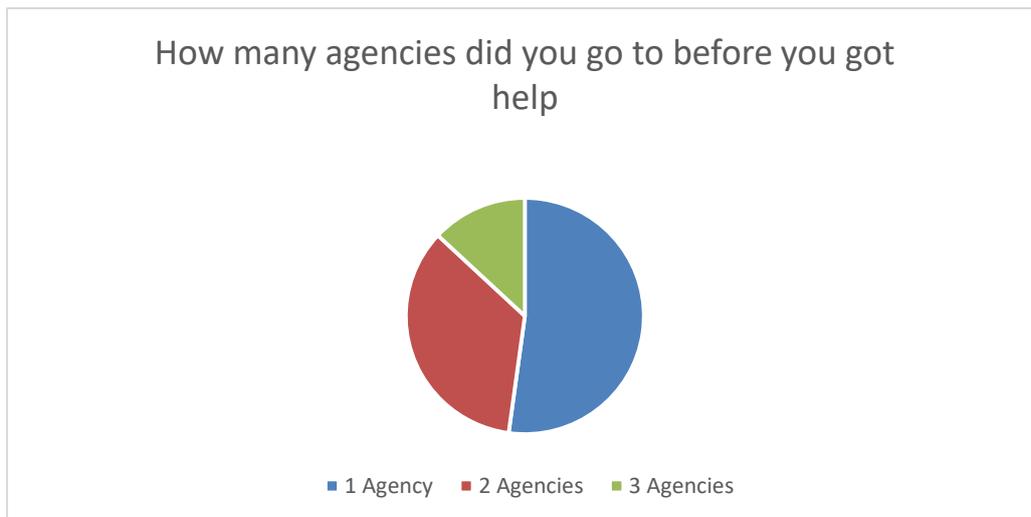
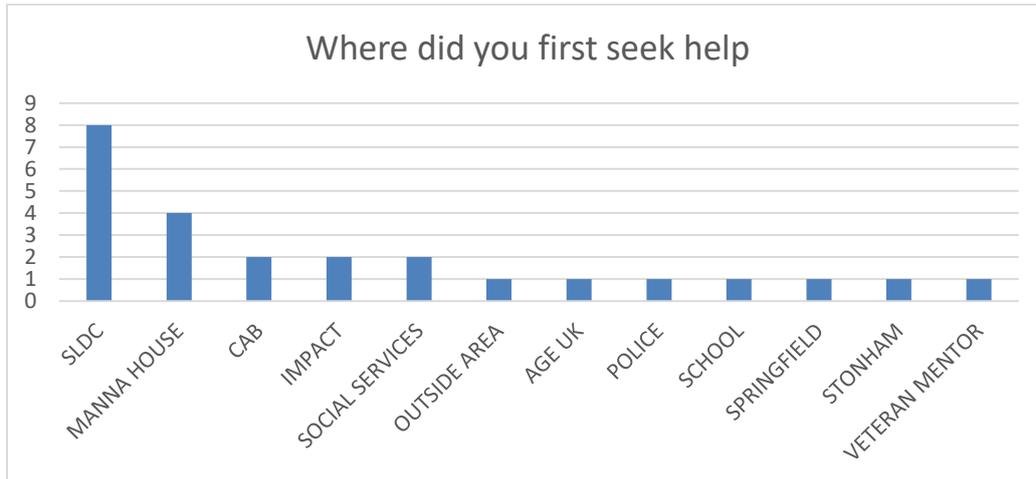
All respondents were single people without dependent children. They were not asked for gender. Further feedback from people experiencing homelessness could target other groups in the future.

The main reasons given for losing their homes followed the general theme stated in the Homelessness Review 2018. Relationship breakdown included family breakdown as well as partners. However, it doesn't delve into the more complex issues that may have led to this.



When asked about the type of tenure lost; private letting at 9 and social rented at 7 were the top responses. Bail hostel, the Army and leaving care had the fewest responses.

Access to the right service



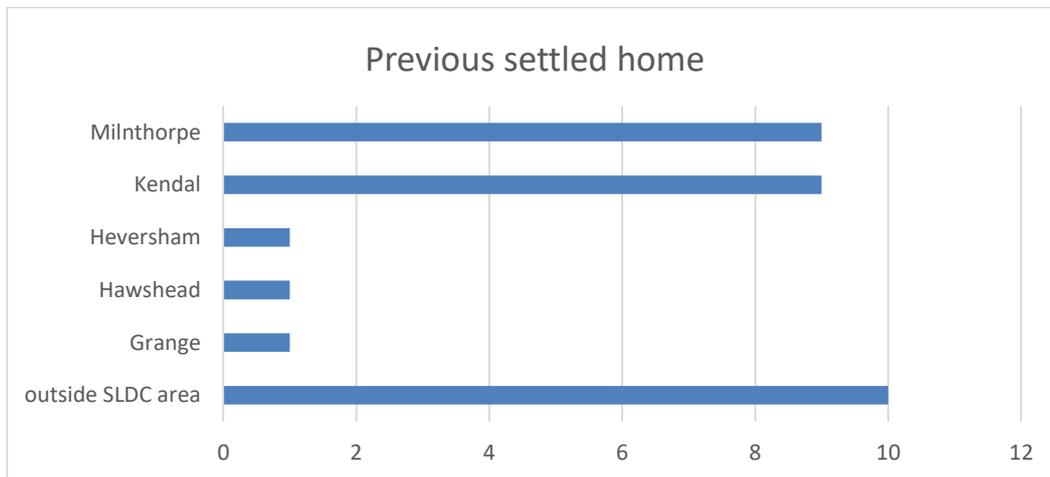
Is there any else that could have been done by the Agency to help you?

Most respondents stated no but the following comments were made;

- Having needs assessed by individual rather than categorised
- More hostel places
- Onward housing support
- Housing refused to help because assumed he would be a bad tenant
- No one offered me temporary accommodation and this was not explained



The above graph doesn't take into account whether this was temporary or permanent housing nor does it reflect whether the respondent was in housing awaiting more suitable accommodation.



Rough Sleepers

Out of the total 30 respondents 17 had said that they had been sofa surfing. There was a high number of respondents who said that they had slept rough; 13 said that they had been rough sleeping and 2 had used the winter shelter. However, as the sample of respondents was so small and from limited sources it does not give the full picture.

What could you have done differently?

- I should have opened up more but I was ashamed.
- Go direct to places to live in, explaining an illness worked quicker.

Comments on temporary accommodation

- 12 respondents were placed into temporary accommodation (10 in TVF); one comment,
- 'After prison into hostel I don't really like time restrictions being 'locked up', need better accommodation for young people'

Ideas offered for service improvement;

- More flats/ supported housing in small towns
- More emphasis on night stop
- Have wider range of properties. Not just for over 55s as wasn't given a choice for younger generation 18-30
- More places for people

Overview

It was felt that due to the low number of respondents the survey is not fully representative of all households, such as families, and the figures should be used with caution. During our recent Homelessness Strategy Steering Group meeting, it was suggested for future surveys to commission a University/ PHD student to carry out the work. This will ensure improved questions, consistent interview style, data collection and ultimately produce more representative results. It was felt that as an independent person the respondent may feel more inclined to be more open with their Responses. However, it was useful to see that the ideas for service improvement seem to be in line with the draft Homelessness Strategy, e.g. more supported housing and homes in general to meet the need.