

working in partnership to deliver
Derby's Homelessness strategy

Action Plan Review

Introduction

On 20th June 2017, Derby City Council and Derby Homes held a workshop with all partners from across the city to develop a new action plan to tackle homelessness. We are confident that the Derby City Homeless Strategy 2015–2019 is still fit for purpose, but the action plan which underpins it needs to be refreshed. The event consisted of table discussions across five key themes that are detailed in the following pages, and which support the priorities detailed in the Homeless Strategy. This booklet is a summary of the feedback and notes of those table discussions and will be used to support the development of the new action plan.

A Message from Councillor Fareed Hussain

Homelessness in Derby has been on the rise for the past few years – as it has nationally. As we all know, the reasons for this are complex, including the impact of welfare reforms and government grant cuts which has meant tough decisions have had to be taken locally.

Local Authority approaches as homeless are due to a variety of different factors, including loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies in the private rented sector; parents and friends being no longer willing to accommodate people, and domestic abuse. Derby has struggled to cope – but this struggle would have undoubtedly been far worse without the incredible work of voluntary, faith and third sector organisations, who work with homeless people in Derby and in partnership with the Council.

In light of this, the Government has pledged a renewed focus on reducing homelessness across the country. In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act will be enacted. This will see the biggest shake up of Homeless legislation since 1977. This legislation places a major emphasis on preventing and relieving homelessness.

So should we embrace the new Act?

- It won't work unless everyone is committed to making it work
- It won't build or produce more accommodation
- It won't reverse welfare reform

But

- It finally puts a statutory framework in place to preventing homelessness
- It puts prevention of homelessness at the centre of the legal framework
- It opens additional Local Authority support to those not classed as 'priority need'.
- If we make it work, the effects will last for a generation or more.

This workshop to review the Homeless Strategy Action Plan invites all partners to think about how the Homelessness Strategy can be refreshed, in light of the new legislation and in responding and renewing our partnership commitments to the Citizens of Derby.

I thank you for your continued help and support.



Councillor Fareed Hussain

Cabinet Member for Housing

and Urban Renewal

Partnership and Governance

Key aim

To ensure we continue our strong culture of partnership work and have the governance arrangements in place to drive our work forward.



Partners gather at the Homeless Strategy Action Plan workshop in June

During table discussions, partners suggested:

- Reviewing governance arrangements and board structure
- Developing a Partnership Charter to ensure accountability and escalation processes
- Ensuring all partners, housing providers, support providers and statutory agencies are involved
- Developing data protection/info sharing protocol agreement
- Mapping services & identify gaps in provision funding with partners
- Using the Homelessness Liaison Forum as a means of attracting external funds, and as a sounding board for developing spending of existing funds
- Exploring funding opportunities from local businesses corporate social responsibility.
- What local business forums are there?
- Ensuring clear pathways, training for partners and training on legislative changes in other areas (such as the Deregulation Act 2015)
- Collaborating on the development of new Personal Housing Plans
- Colleagues that are already working with homeless clients and are familiar with their needs should be included in the development and delivery of their individual plans
- Ensuring plans follow pathways that are specific to client groups
- Developing a programme of peer support across partner agencies, and mentoring support from former homeless people

Early Intervention

Key aim

To identify potential risks of homelessness, and provide education and support to those who may be vulnerable as far in advance as possible.



During table discussions, partners suggested:

- Providing support, advice & education in schools
- Exploring options for early input prior to release from prison, and work on resettlement
- Improving identification of people at risk of homelessness
- Working with social workers to support Young People who are failing in their transitions
- Partnering with hospitals & health authorities
- Working with the Citizens Advice Bureau & debt advice
- Engaging with the private sector by promoting housing options and prevention with landlords, and also working with housing benefit teams
- Reviewing data to better understand causes of homelessness and to target specific services.
- Looking at best practice nationally

Prevention at the Point of Crisis

Key aim

To ensure that, if a person is at risk of losing their home, services are in place to immediately step in that will ensure they do not end up sleeping rough.



During table discussions, partners suggested:

- Looking at access points, including online options so there is 'no wrong front door'
- Providing better information in more locations, such as doctors surgeries
- Developing training for partners to help them deliver Hub-type access points and begin creating Personal Housing Plans. Partners may be able to deliver extended hours front door.
- Reviewing provision of emergency bed-spaces
- Consulting with Care-line (out of hours service) on new action plan
- Looking at provision of family support & mediation
- Developing triage & specialisms for housing options team
- Reviewing methods of landlord mediation
- Reviewing the use of homeless prevention funds
- Ensuring good links with use of Discretionary Housing Payments former community care grants (now called Single Discretionary Allowance)

Support and Stabilisation

Key aim

Ensure we have good support services to help people stabilise and move out of homelessness.



During table discussions, partners suggested:

- Reviewing processes that supported providers have for eviction, to tackle repeat homelessness
- Developing common warnings processes
- Looking at support for providers of supported accommodation when tenancies become at risk. Exploring plans for post April 2019 and our strategic response
- Undertaking a mapping exercise, and reviewing what services are currently available
- Exploring options for 'Step Back' pathways, which would allow former homeless people to move back to supported accommodation from independent accommodation if they encounter difficulties
- Increasing planned and managed move on - as much as appropriate - including managing client expectations from the start, to support turnaround that maximises availability

Independence and Housing Supply

Key aim

To provide people with the skills that will allow them to maintain a home independently, in the most appropriate housing for them.



During table discussions, partners suggested:

- Looking at support with tenancy sustainment
- Creating links with furniture projects and food banks
- Developing pre-tenancy life-skills sessions
- Developing peer support groups for life skills and tenancy sustainment
- Ensuring links with employment opportunities, working with local business, to maximise sustainability
- Increase access to private rented sector through avenues such as
 - Social Lettings Agency
 - Landlord accreditation (including for accommodation provided by partners/charities)
 - Empty homes & compulsory purchase
 - Leasing private sector & former student accommodation
- Continuing our strong links with the Homes and Communities Agency to maximise new builds
- Making use of the voluntary sector to help with tenancy support and sustainability
- Looking strategically at accommodation options for under 35s
- Exploring development of lodgings schemes
- Implementing flexible tenancy start dates to help effective transitions
- Providing support for landlords with tenants applying for Housing Benefit and direct payments

Thank you to our partners who attended



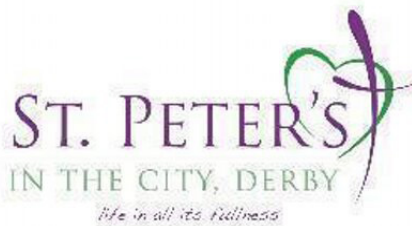
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