



North Tyneside Council

Appendix 1

# North Tyneside

## Homelessness Prevention Strategy

### 2013 - 2018

and

### Action Plan

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## **Foreword**

Homelessness is greater than someone not having a home and preventing homelessness is not just about securing accommodation for a household. Homelessness is commonly linked to health and emotional wellbeing, substance misuse issues, poor educational attainment, poverty, worklessness, crime and a fear of crime. A housing crisis not only affects individual households, but can also impact on local services and the wider community.

Our last homelessness strategy covered the period 2008 -2013. Working together with a range of partners we have been successful in introducing new services and reshaping existing ones to meet changing need. This has resulted in positive outcomes for homeless people or those threatened with homelessness.

Despite these achievements there is still more to do. We must continue to do all we can to prevent homelessness in this challenging economic climate, through working with partners to deliver improved services.

One of the biggest challenges will be responding to the impact that changes to the welfare reform system will bring. Supporting people to secure and sustain a home will be crucial to ensuring that homelessness within the borough does not increase.

**John Harrison**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment**

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# 1.Introduction

**Our vision is:**

'Everyone has a place to call home and receives support when needed to prevent homelessness'

Two key documents make up the North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018. The first one '[A review of homelessness in North Tyneside 2008 -2013](#)' sets out:

- Why we need a homelessness prevention strategy;
- What has been achieved in terms of homelessness prevention during the life span of the homelessness strategy 2008 -2013;
- Current homelessness data and how this has informed the current picture of homelessness in the borough; and
- The priorities for our Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 -2018.

The second document, this one, is the strategy and action plan. It sets out the priorities in more detail, identifies why they are a priority and what needs to be done to deliver them.

Whilst the local authority has taken the lead on developing this strategy, it would not have been possible without the support and contributions from our partners and other stakeholders, including service users. Their input informed our review of homelessness in North Tyneside and priorities moving forward. These are to:

- Widen housing choice;
- Support people to secure and sustain a home;
- Provide timely and accessible housing and homelessness information; and
- Deliver excellent housing advice and homelessness services.

Our priorities will help move us towards a 'gold standard' service, based on meeting the ten challenges set out in the government report: [Making Every Contact Count: a joint approach to preventing homelessness](#), August 2012.

Partnership working and a shared commitment to tackle homelessness in North Tyneside is central to delivering this strategy. Together we have achieved a lot since our last strategy was published in 2008. Here are only some of the achievements:

**The provision of new supported housing schemes** for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless:

- Maritime Court: a purpose built scheme consisting of 9 x 1 bed self contained flats for 16 – 24 year olds with 24 hour on site support;
- New Beginnings: 14 x 1 bed flats for young parents with on site facilities and support; and
- Domestic abuse scheme: 14 self contained homes for women fleeing domestic abuse with 24-hour on-site support.

**Improving existing accommodation services** - for example the award of £439,991 to Depaul UK from the Homelessness Change Programme to increase capacity and improve living standards in their supported housing scheme for vulnerable young people;

The **delivery of 623 affordable homes** in the borough to meet growing need;

**Improving access to homes in the private rented sector** for vulnerable people through:

- Delivering a Deposit Guarantee Scheme, that has helped vulnerable people access private sector tenancies. Over 280 tenancies have been created since the scheme began;
- Securing £25,000 from homelessness charity Crisis, for the development of a Bond Bank scheme to assist non priority homeless applicants access the private rented sector; and
- £40,000 being awarded from the same funding stream in 2012 enabling Depaul UK to create a Private Rented Access Development Scheme to support 18 -35 year olds secure a private rented sector tenancy.

**Supporting people to achieve independent living** through:

- Working with Job Centre Plus, the creation of Working Homes Outreach Team to support vulnerable people, including people at risk of becoming homeless into employment;
- £48,000 being awarded from the regional homelessness group to appoint a co-ordinator to work with people with multiple needs;
- Barnardos 'crash pad' scheme for 16 – 17 year olds, and up to 21 years old if a care leaver;
- The creation of trainer flats for young people leaving care, both in the private and social housing sector; and
- Delivery of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme that, since 2010 has resulted in 34 households being able to remain in their own home.

**Improving services and processes:**

- The restructuring of the homelessness team and changes to working practices have led to an increase in preventions and a decrease in homelessness acceptances;
- Changes to the allocations policy have helped people move on from supported housing into their own tenancies;
- The introduction of a 'Support Gateway' that provides supported housing and outreach support to vulnerable groups that are, or who may become homeless; and

- Implementation of North Tyneside's Joint Protocol between North Tyneside Homes and Children's Services for homeless 16 and 17 year olds.

We need to build on these achievements and continue to deliver services that prevent homelessness. What we will do is set out in the action plan that supports this strategy.

A range of funding sources is needed to support the action plan. The review of homelessness identified the funding currently available to deliver homelessness services. However, successful delivery of the this strategy will also require securing additional resources, depending on whether resources are needed for capital expenditure (e.g. renovation or building of housing) or revenue expenditure (day to day costs of housing services).

The action plan identifies how the work undertaken will contribute to reducing youth homelessness. It includes performance indicators and will be monitored on a quarterly basis, with an annual review and revision to ensure that emerging priorities and legislative changes are taken into account.

## 2. Our Priorities

Our priorities have been informed by the homelessness review, which includes an analysis of homelessness data, best practice and the views of stakeholders. Most importantly we have listened to people who have experienced homelessness.

### Priority 1: Widen housing choice

The homelessness review identified a lack of accommodation for homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless. This ranges from short term emergency accommodation that would help someone off the streets that night, supported housing to provide a stepping-stone to independent living and 'move-on' accommodation to help a person to live independently.

Working with service providers and relevant partners, we will need to commission the right type of housing to enable a 'pathway' through to independent living.

In addition to providing specific accommodation for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, we need to increase the overall supply of affordable homes in the borough. This will help meet the growing need from people on the housing register, including homeless people.

#### Did you know?

During 2012 -2013 the Council's Support Gateway Service received 703 referrals for supported housing and outreach support

#### Did you know..?

There is an annual shortfall of 479 affordable homes in North Tyneside

Finally, we need to explore how current stock can be used more effectively to meet changing household requirements, taking into consideration the financial impact that benefit changes may have on a household's income.

This may include investigating the feasibility of property conversions and single people under the age of 35 sharing larger properties. Linked to this is bringing empty homes in the private sector back into use. We will build on the work that is already taking place, including work with registered providers achieved through funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.

#### What do we need to do?

- Develop a range of housing options that provide a pathway from short term emergency accommodation through to independent living;
- Appraise options for making better use of the existing housing stock;
- Improve access to the private rented sector;
- Enable the delivery of more affordable homes; and
- Work with partners to identify and address barriers to accessing permanent accommodation.

## Priority 2: Support people to secure and sustain a home

The provision of housing related support is key to helping vulnerable people maintain independent living after a period of homelessness. Support should be at the right level and at the right time if we are to empower someone to develop their life and social skills, confidence and the independence that comes with securing and sustaining a settled home.

Commissioned housing related support services must be accessible and meet the needs of vulnerable households. A range of options will be explored including the potential of individualised, personalised support and the introduction of peer mentors and volunteers to assist with service delivery.

These 'support pathways' will incorporate assessment and delivery of a range of services ranging from those needed to keep someone safe in emergency accommodation, intermediate services where people can learn and develop the skills they need to live independently and 'floating support' in the form of resettlement and outreach services that help to people to sustain their tenancy.

Services will vary according to need and may include for example, support for people with high and complex needs, such as drug and alcohol abuse; support and training to develop employment skills; developing skills to improve health and pre-tenancy training to minimise levels of tenancy failure.

### **Did you know..?**

New NT Homes tenants receive support and financial advice and assistance for the first 6 weeks of their tenancy

### **What do we need to do?**

- Use feedback from service providers and service users to help shape future housing-related support services; and
- Work with partners to improve support and housing options for those with multiple needs.



### **Priority 3: Provide timely and accessible housing and homelessness information**

Knowing where to go for appropriate housing advice and how to access relevant information to help prevent a housing crisis were issues raised by both service providers and service users. Service providers felt this impacted on their ability to provide people with relevant and timely advice and assistance that would help prevent a person becoming homeless. For service users their lack of knowledge about the services available often led to a housing crisis.

We need to make sure information is up-to-date, clear, easy to understand and as jargon free as possible. This includes information provided about the Council's housing advice service and other advice and support agencies. Working in partnership we will ensure that information is consistent and linked-up and that it is available in a range of formats to meet the needs of service users, service providers, partner agencies and the general public.

Getting the message across to young people about the reality of leaving home, homelessness and the housing options available to them will continue through the pupil awareness sessions. We will continue to engage with the secondary schools and ensure pupils within all of them are able to attend these sessions.

#### **Did you know..?**

During 2012 – 2013 the Youth Homeless Prevention Officer carried out 47 homeless awareness sessions in schools

#### **Did you know..?**

The local authority carries out a rough sleeper survey every year. 3 rough sleepers were recorded for a specific night in 2012.

With our partners we will work to eliminate rough sleeping within the borough through raising awareness of rough sleeping amongst the general public, and how to report anyone thought to be sleeping rough. This work will link to the regional and national awareness campaign that aims to ensure that no one has to spend a second night out on the streets.

#### **What do we need to do?**

- Review and revise current information available on housing and homelessness services;
- Review and improve the enhanced housing options toolkit;
- Increase the number of homeless awareness sessions carried out in secondary schools; and
- Engage partners and the public to monitor the level of rough sleeping in the borough.

## **Priority 4: Deliver excellent housing advice and homelessness services**

Anyone can become homeless; therefore the provision of homelessness services must be flexible enough to respond to a range of needs.

Preventing homelessness in the first instance is crucial. The service must therefore focus on more than just housing, providing guidance on measures that will prevent homelessness, for example signposting to other services such as health, employment and debt advice.

### **Did you know..?**

Almost 1,000 households had their homelessness prevented during 2012 -2013

### **Did you know..?**

During 2012 -2013 almost 3,000 households contacted the housing advice team for information and advice on their housing situation

Service delivery must be consistent so that it meets the advice, housing and support needs of everyone who approaches the local authority for housing advice, regardless of statutory duty.

One of the biggest changes to the welfare system for many years will bring about a number of challenges in terms of supporting customers to both access and sustain a tenancy. The Welfare Reform Act (2012)

introduces a new Universal Credit which will replace most existing benefits and limits the total amount of benefit a person can claim. It also introduces a new size criteria or 'bedroom tax' in the social rented sector. The Act also impacts on the way tenants receive benefit, in many cases, removing the option of having benefits paid direct to landlords.

The changes will have a significant impact upon some of the most vulnerable people in society and we need to be prepared to assist our customers in meeting these challenges.

### **What do we need to do?**

- Review the housing advice service; and
- Assess the impact of the Welfare Reform Act (2012) upon homelessness and homelessness services.

### **3. Monitoring and review**

Delivering the priorities set out in this document is the responsibility of both the local authority and partners. Monitoring delivery of the action plan will be the responsibility of the North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Strategy Monitoring Group. The group will meet on a quarterly basis to:

- Monitor progress towards the completion of the action plan milestones;
- Address any issues in relation to the completion of action plan milestones;
- Evaluate the impact new or amended legislative policies or practices may have on services within North Tyneside; and
- Identify responses to changes in government legislation.

The group will also monitor the following key performance indicators:

- Number of presentations, open cases and preventions;
- Top three reasons for households being accepted as homeless and in priority need;
- Age profile of primary applicant within households accepted as homeless and in priority need;
- Number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation (last day of each quarter); and
- Priority homeless acceptances per 1,000 households.

Quarterly progress reports will be produced and shared with the North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Forum. The annual homelessness prevention strategy review event will also provide the opportunity for partners and stakeholders to influence and shape priorities for the next year's action plan. This event enables stakeholders to share good practice and identify new initiatives.

By effectively monitoring this strategy and action plan we will be best placed to adapt and respond to any challenges that occur during the life of the strategy.

# Action Plan

## Priority 1: Widen housing choice

### Making Every Contact Count Challenge:

To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support.

To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord.

To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in bed and breakfast accommodation.

To not place families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks.

No	What we will do	When do we need to do it by?	Lead	Who else will help to deliver this?	Performance indicators	How will this contribute to reducing youth homelessness?
1.	Develop a range of housing options that provide a pathway from short term emergency accommodation through to independent living	March 2018	Housing Strategy	Service providers Developers Registered providers Adult Social Care North Tyneside Homes (NT Homes) Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of additional supported housing properties provided</li> </ul>	384 people aged between 16 – 25 years were referred to Support Gateway during 2012 – 2013. Increasing the supported housing options available through a pathway approach will enable more young people to be supported through the process
2.	Appraise options for making better use of the existing housing stock	March 2015	Housing Strategy	NT Homes Registered providers Private landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options appraisal completed</li> <li>Number of tenancies created</li> </ul>	Introducing innovative measures to existing stock will increase the affordable housing options available to young people.

No	What we will do	When do we need to do it by?	Lead	Who else will help to deliver this?	Performance indicators	How will this contribute to reducing youth homelessness?
3.	Improve access to the private rented sector	March 2018	Housing Strategy	Private Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of homelessness preventions through the provision of a private rented home</li> </ul>	34 young people were supported through the Deposit Guarantee Scheme and 4 young people were helped through the Bond Bank Scheme during 2012 - 2013. Increasing the number of private rented sector homes available for rent will enable more young people to be housed in this sector.
4.	Enable the delivery of more affordable homes	Ongoing	Housing Strategy	Developers Registered providers NT Homes Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of affordable homes completed</li> </ul>	Increasing the range of housing options available to young people will improve their prospects of securing a home.
5.	Work with partners to identify and address barriers to accessing permanent accommodation	September 2014	Housing Strategy	NT Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of homelessness presentations</li> </ul>	Over 1,000 young people presented for housing advice during 2012 -2013. Overcoming barriers to accessing a permanent home will reduce the number of young people who approach the housing advice service.

## Priority 2: Support people to secure and sustain a home

### Making Every Contact Count Challenge:

To actively work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.

No	What we will do	When do we need to do it by?	Lead officer	Who else will help to deliver this?	Performance indicators	How will this contribute to reducing youth homelessness?
6.	Use feedback from service providers and service users to help shape future housing-related support services	May 2015	Adult Social Care	Service providers Housing Strategy NT Homes Private landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of people supported to achieve independent living</li> </ul>	Fewer young people will experience a service breaking down as delivery will be flexible and responsive enough to meet individual need.
7.	Work with partners to improve support and housing options for those people with multiple needs.	December 2014	NT Homes	Service providers Criminal Justice Agencies Public Health/ Clinical Commissioning Group Employment and training services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of people supported through the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) project.</li> </ul>	The provision of a co-ordinated approach to support young people with multiple needs will reduce the number of tenancies that fail amongst this client group.

### Priority 3: Provide timely and accessible housing and homelessness information

#### Making Every Contact Count Challenge:

To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness, which has buy in across all local authority areas.

To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative.

No	What we will do	When do we need to do it by?	Lead officer	Who else will help to deliver this?	Performance indicators	How will this contribute to reducing youth homelessness?
8.	Review and revise current information available on housing and homelessness services	April 2014	NT Homes	North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Forum (NTHPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of homelessness preventions</li> <li>The number of people contacting the housing advice team.</li> </ul>	1005 young people contacted the housing advice team between April 2012 – March 2013. This number should reduce through the promotion of advice and information on social media sites that are popular with young people. This will increase and improve opportunities for information to be accessed in a timely manner.
9.	Review and improve the enhanced housing options toolkit	April 2014	Housing Strategy	NTHPF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of people using the enhanced housing options toolkit</li> </ul>	1005 young people contacted the housing advice team between April 2012 – March 2013. This number should reduce through the promotion of advice and information on social media sites that are popular with young people. This will increase and improve opportunities for information to be accessed in a timely manner.



No	What we will do	When do we need to do it by?	Lead officer	Who else will help to deliver this?	Performance indicators	How will this contribute to reducing youth homelessness?
10.	Increase the number of homeless awareness sessions in secondary schools	Ongoing	NT Homes	Service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of sessions held.</li> <li>• The number of secondary schools engaged.</li> <li>• The number of young people under the age of 18 who contact the housing advice team.</li> </ul>	<p>This initiative is specifically aimed at young people under the age of 18 years. 125 young people aged 16 – 17 years presented to the YHPO during 2012 -2013 for housing advice.</p> <p>Young people will be better informed of the housing options available to them and the pitfalls and consequences of homelessness.</p>
11.	Engage partners and the public to monitor the level of rough sleeping in the borough.	Ongoing	Housing Strategy	<p>NTHPF</p> <p>Service providers</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Community groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of rough sleepers recorded in North Tyneside</li> </ul>	<p>Past annual estimates of rough sleeping have found some rough sleepers were young people. Raising awareness of how to report rough sleeping and monitoring it will contribute to reducing rough sleeping overall, including for young people.</p>

## Priority 4: Deliver excellent housing advice and homelessness services

### Making Every Contact Count Challenge :

To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness, which has buy in across all local authority areas.

To offer a housing options prevention service to all clients including written advice.

To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs.

No	What we will do	When do we need to do it by?	Lead officer	Who else will help to deliver this?	Performance indicators	How will this contribute to reducing youth homelessness?
12.	Review the housing advice service	March 2016	Housing Strategy	NT Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard of service according to the Government's gold, silver or bronze standard.</li> </ul>	By reviewing and improving the housing advice service young people will receive timely advice and support to enable informed decisions to be made on their housing situation.
13.	Asses the impact of the Welfare Reform Act (2012) upon homelessness and homelessness services	Ongoing	NT Homes	Revenues and Benefits Team  Adult Social Care  Housing providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of homelessness presentations.</li> <li>Level of NT Homes rent arrears.</li> <li>Number of evictions due to rent arrears.</li> <li>Number of</li> </ul>	Many of the welfare reform changes impact on young people. Monitoring the impact will help in understanding the issues facing young people and measures needed to prevent homelessness.

					applications for Crisis Loans.	
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