

Homelessness Strategy

Forward

To be added - from Councillor Shuttleworth and chair of Housing Forum

Introduction

Homelessness is increasing rapidly across the country. The number of homeless households in England increased by nearly ten per cent between January and March 2016 compared to the same period last year, according to statistics from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Homelessness has a devastating effect on the lives of individuals and families. Children's education and life chances suffer, as does the health of homeless people whether living in temporary accommodation or on the streets.

The responsibility for preventing homelessness is shared between a wide range of agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors, just as the costs of dealing with homelessness are shared. It is estimated that the costs of homelessness are between £24,000 and £30,000 per household. Those costs fall on local councils, health services and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Department for Work and Pensions, the criminal justice system and a wide range of voluntary sector organisations working with vulnerable people – advice agencies, Foodbanks, faith organisations, support providers and many offering specialist services.

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to publish homelessness strategies every five years. The Act requires local authorities to carry out a thorough review of the extent and nature of homelessness in their area. The Guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government recommends that the Strategy is developed in collaboration with local partners.

This Strategy has been developed by the Eastbourne Housing Forum and is based on the findings of a Homelessness Review carried out early in 2016 which collated information on housing and homelessness in Eastbourne from a range of sources. A full list of Eastbourne Housing Forum members is included at Appendix A.

Background

Nationally all forms of homelessness have increased since its lowest point in recent years in 2009/10 and the ability of local authorities and their partners to prevent or relieve homelessness has dropped:

- in 2014/15 112,330 households applied to their local authority as homeless, an increase of 28% since 2009/10. This increased further in 2015/16 and has continued to rise with the last reported quarter, January to March 2016, showing an increase of 2% on the previous quarter and 9% compared with January to March 2015.
- These figures do not take account of the number of households applying as homeless who are found to be intentionally homeless – as a result of rent or mortgage arrears or other actions on their part
- The number of households prevented from becoming homeless as a result of local authorities actions had dropped nationally from 205,000 in 2014/15 to 198,100 in 2015/16 and the number helped to secure accommodation immediately (homelessness relieved) had dropped from 15,700 in 2014/15 to 14,400 in 2015/16
- the number of households in temporary accommodation at 31st March 2016 has also increased nationally – by 11% on the previous year
- the number of people counted as Rough Sleepers in 2015 was 3,569 – more than double the level in 2010
- hidden homelessness has also increased with lone-parents, couples and families unable to move out of parental housing and unrelated single people sharing housing. This is in addition to those people who are sofa-surfing or sleeping in cars or tents. ⁱ

Changes to the housing market

The last few years have seen significant changes in the housing market and in national government policy which are likely to have an impact on homelessness.

In the years since the housing market crash in 2008, the proportion of people renting their accommodation has risen significantly leading to pressures on rents. Nationally, homeownership has fallen from 71% of tenures in 2003 to 63% currently (June 2016).

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Despite the housing market crash, market prices recovered and have continued to rise leaving home ownership unaffordable to a majority of people new to the market. Younger adults and first-time buyers have been particularly affected.

Contributing to the high costs of buying a home, the rate of housebuilding has also dropped to its lowest levels in recent years. Recent increases in construction activity have done little to affect the problems with supply.

The government is trying to redress this by bringing forward proposals which aim to build more homes that people can afford and promote home ownership.

The shift to rented housing has in turn led to increased rents leaving many people excluded from the rental market. There is a lack of market housing for rent which households on average incomes can afford. This is exacerbated by the high costs of securing a home with Rent in Advance, Deposits and Agency Fees now reaching levels previously required for buying a home. In addition, many landlords will not let properties to anyone in receipt of benefit, and many now ask for a guarantor who must be a home-owner themselves, earning, for example, more than £30,000 and willing to guarantee two and a half times the monthly rent.

Financial context

In recent years local authorities have had to deal with radical reductions in grant from national government, including the removal of the Homelessness Prevention Grant in 2015 and reductions in Revenue Support Grant, which previously accounted for 50% of all Eastbourne Borough Council income. The Council has already adapted to a 50% cut in central government funding and the government plans to reduce this by a further 30% eliminating revenue support grant altogether by 2020. The Council received the second worst Revenue Support Grant settlement in the country for 2016/17.

Pressures on Council budgets will become increasingly acute over the next few years and will inevitably affect the resources available for a range of housing and support services.

The changes to central government funding to local authorities also impact on East Sussex County Council which accounts for 72% of Council Tax bills. The County Council is facing a reduction in its central

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government settlement from just over £45 million in 2016/17 to just under £15 million in 2018/19. This will impact on care and support services at a time of increasing demand.

The removal of the ring-fence around Supporting People funding has also required strategic planning to ensure essential services are protected. Homeless people are amongst the most vulnerable in our communities and statutory agencies are working closely together to manage these and pool resources where we can to prevent homelessness.

The local voluntary sector also faces acute economic pressures as demand for their services grow, grant funding becomes more competitive and the profile of volunteering is changing.

To date, Eastbourne Borough Council has protected its funding to voluntary and community organisations. Grants of £205,500 were awarded to advice services and organisations working with vulnerable homeless people in 2016 covering 2016/17 to 2018/19, an increase of £15,000 on the previous three years.

Advice services have faced particular financial challenges over the last three years as they have had to deal with changes in the rules governing Legal Aid. Grants from the Advice Services Transition Fund came to an end in 2015.

Nationally, a shift in focus on government funding to high profile, large-scale projects, loans and payment by results along with reductions in public funding for voluntary sector in many areas have all led to an increased demand for grants. The move away from grants to short-term contracts also presents challenges and risks for smaller organisations making it difficult to plan for longer-term sustainability.

At the same time, the profile of volunteering has changed with students needing to secure paid work to cover loans and people needing to work to a later age before retiring. The costs of training and supporting volunteers have increased as financial pressures and the need to care for family members, both parents and grand-children, have restricted many people's ability to commit to long-term volunteering.

Meanwhile, organisations working with single homelessness people with high support needs struggle to access private rented housing for those

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clients ready to move on from supported accommodation and are therefore unable to offer places to new clients.

The costs of homelessness and need for multi-agency response

There is an increasing body of evidence showing the costs to different services of homelessness and potential savings to services that can be made by investing in housing linked with intensive support services.

The costs of street homelessness can be particularly high as many street homeless people have multiple needs and some can become trapped in a cycle of ill health and offending. The Department for Communities and Local Government 2012 'Evidence review of the costs of homelessness' refer to

"two case studies of individuals with multiple needs both with recent episodes of homelessness, for whom drug treatment and detox costs, and mental health support costs, were reduced from £16,000 to £2,700 and £32,000 to £3,000 in moving from a state of homelessness with more piecemeal support, to stable accommodation with a more comprehensive and coordinated support provision" quoted by Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)ⁱⁱ

The report also considers evidence that homelessness can exacerbate offending behaviour in some cases and can contribute to re-offending. The report quotes the estimated costs to the criminal justice system of a male convicted of shop-lifting estimated at around £3,500 and of a drug offence conviction at £16,000.

East Sussex County Council is currently employing a housing specialist to work as part of the Better Together programme to develop joint approaches across East Sussex to housing, health and social care across a wide range of housing-related needs, including homelessness, and this will inform future work and investment by relevant authorities.

Given the pressures on all budgets it is vital that this multi-agency work continues and is extended where possible to reduce the risks of escalating costs in the future.

Changes in national policy

From April 2016 social housing rents will be reduced by 1% a year, reducing budgets by £560,000 over the next four years, severely constraining Business Plans in the Housing Revenue Account.

The **Housing and Planning Act** passed in May 2016 includes a range of provisions which will impact directly or indirectly on the levels and risks of homelessness likely to be faced by local residents.

The Act encourages local authorities to sell a proportion of their higher value housing as this becomes vacant and authorities will be required to pay the Government a sum based on the estimated value of this each year whether or not they sell the properties. The formula for these payments is still to be set out in regulation to be approved by Parliament. Councils will need to make an assessment of the relative value of selling off or retaining this housing. It is likely that this will affect the availability of affordable housing, particularly social rented housing and depending on the level of the tariff this could significantly impact on the viability of the HRA Business Plan.

The Right to Buy will be extended to tenants of housing associations and other Registered Providers. The Government will use capital receipts received from Council Housing sales to invest in new housing developed by these Registered Providers.

These measures are all expected to reduce the availability of social housing and the Council's ability to carry out repairs and adaptations to ensure housing meets people's needs. This is particular concern given the high proportion of people in Band A with the most urgent needs requiring adapted properties.

The Government is keen to restrict the use of social housing to those households in greatest financial need. Registered Providers in the social rented sector will be required to offer fixed term tenancies only to prospective tenants and these will not be automatically renewed. These may be for periods of up to ten years in some circumstances with the potential for longer tenancies for families with children. This will also apply to existing tenants moving to a different social rented property and this, in turn, is expected to reduce the flow of available housing.

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Succession rights will be restricted to spouses and partners only. Social landlords may have discretion to award tenancies to other family members who have had succession rights to date, but can only offer fixed term tenancies. This is likely to increase demand from those who would previously have succeeded to housing.

Social housing tenants with higher household incomes will have to 'Pay to Stay' by paying near or market rent for the properties. Initially this will apply to those with incomes of £31,000 and above with households paying a 15p increase for every £1 they earn above this threshold. Councils will be required to pay any additional income from this, less any administrative costs, to the Government.

There are also risks that the amount and quality of affordable rented accommodation will reduce as private landlords affected by tax changes reduce their investment or increase rents and anecdotal reports of landlords selling their properties.

Welfare Reform

The programme of reforms introduced by governments since 2010 has been directed at reducing worklessness and welfare dependency, ensuring that work pays and the financial risks of moving into work are reduced and at simplifying the benefit system.

Many households in Eastbourne who receive benefits will find their incomes reduced from a variety of angles.

- Universal Credit has been introduced for new claims by single person households. This replaces several current state benefits and is paid as a new single monthly payment for people in or out of work. The roll-out of Universal Credit which started in Eastbourne in 2015 is due to extend to all other new claims from some point in 2017 and for all existing claims by March 2022.
- From April 2017 people aged 18 to 21 who are claiming Universal Credit will be affected by a Youth Obligation. This means after 6 months of claiming they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, go on a mandatory work placement or gain work based skills.
- The government has also flagged its intention to remove any automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds.

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- Payments of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) to new claimants who are deemed able to prepare for work have been aligned with Jobseekers' Allowance.
- The Benefit Cap has been introduced limiting the total amount of benefit that most working age claimants can receive whilst out of work. The limit will be reduced further to £20,000 per year in November 2016.
- The current freeze on working age benefits, including tax Credits and Local Housing Allowance will apply for 4 years from 2016 to 2020. We estimate that around 5,000 benefit claimants will be affected by the freeze on the 'eligible amount' for Housing Benefit in Eastbourne.
- Currently, the biggest threat to supported housing is the imposition of the Local Housing Allowance to supported housing due to come in April 2018 which affects the long-term business plans for providers. Whilst this has been delayed by one year from April 2017, the risk to the future viability of supported housing beyond 2018 is severe. The government has been reviewing the funding of all Supported Accommodation and is expected to take a view on this in 2016.
- From May 2016 new claimants and current claimants who have a child for the first time will not be awarded the Family Premium of £17.45.
- From April 2017 Universal Credit and Child Tax credit will be limited to two children.
- Housing Benefit claims will no longer be backdated to six months for working age claimants. This has been reduced to one month only. This is likely to have a severe impact on tenants who do not claim Benefit immediately. In 2014/15 £200,000 was paid in backdated Housing Benefit.
- From April 2016 Mortgage Interest Relief will only be paid to those claimants buying their housing after 39 weeks instead of 13 weeks.
- Mandatory digital claims are now being rolled out in East Sussex and are expected to be introduced in Eastbourne in 2017.
- From April 2018 the amount of rent that Housing Benefit will cover in the social sector will be capped to the relevant Local Housing Allowance. This will impact most on single people aged under-35 living in or applying for self-contained properties in the social rented sector as they will only be eligible for the Shared Accommodation Local Housing Allowance rate.
- The relief on finance costs that landlords of residential properties can get to basic rate of income tax will be restricted from 2017 and will be phased out over 4 years.

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- The wear and tear allowance which private landlords can claim against tax will be removed and landlords will only be able deduct costs actually incurred in the future.

These changes and the potential impact on housing debt are a particular concern. To date, those changes already introduced, including the removal of the 'Spare Room Subsidy' for some tenants and the initial Benefit Cap, appear to have had a limited impact on homelessness levels in Eastbourne with many of those affected by these changes being supported through the changes with awards of Discretionary Housing Payments for short periods. However, the lower threshold for Benefit Cap being introduced later this year and the roll-out of Universal Credit and monthly payments pose significant risks. Whilst the government has allocated additional funding for Discretionary Housing Payments for the five year period ending 2020, we anticipate major pressures on these payments.

In addition to these changes, major reductions in government funding to local authorities have increased financial pressures on services and on individual residents.

- Funding for some supported housing, including projects designed to support people to stay in their housing has been reduced. Funding for the Home Works service was reduced by £300,000 in 2016/17. Funding for the five refuges in the county was reduced by 20%, a saving of £80,000 in 2016/17. The proposed removal of all support funding to supported housing for young people at risk and people with mental health needs was reprieved after the government allowed additional funding to the County Council through the Adult Social Care levy. Whilst the County Council has stated its intention of protecting the current funding for this, there can be no guarantees given the problems faced setting budgets.
- As of April 2016 all working age adults in Eastbourne have had to pay a minimum of 20% of Council Tax and the way the incomes of self-employed people are assessed for Council Tax purposes has changed. Approximately 5,500 residents have been affected overall and some 3,300 people now have to pay Council Tax for the first time.

Local strategic context

Pride of Place

In 2006, the six local authorities in East Sussex worked together with a wide range of local partners to produce a sustainable community strategy – Pride of Place – for East Sussex. This sets out a long term vision for improving people’s quality of life and the main things we must do to achieve that vision. Pride of Place focuses on the issues and priorities that local people told us they were most concerned about.

The Eastbourne section of the Strategy sets out the main aims for our town. The aim for housing is that Eastbourne will be a place that has a good supply of high quality sustainable housing which offers choice for local people and those wishing to move to the town to work.

The key objectives for housing are:

- A housing market that provides greater housing choices for all
- High quality condition and management in all housing stock
- Appropriate housing with support for vulnerable people
- Successful, well run safe neighbourhoods supported by appropriate infrastructure and amenities

East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 - 2016

Healthy Lives, Healthy People is the first Health and Wellbeing Strategy of the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, a partnership of local authorities, the NHS and local people. Members include local GPs, county councillors, the local Healthwatch and senior County Council officers overseeing Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children’s services.

The strategy focuses on a small number of big issues where a more joined up approach will help to improve outcomes, reduce inequalities and deliver efficiency savings that could be re-invested in service improvements.

A number of the priorities agreed relate directly to the provision, security, safety and quality of housing:

- enabling people of all ages to live healthy lives and have healthy lifestyles

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- preventing and reducing falls, accidents and injuries
- enabling people to manage and maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

Better Together

Better Together is a major 150-week programme begun in August 2014 to transform health and social care services ensuring budgets are used to achieve the best possible services for local people.

Eastbourne Borough Council has worked closely with the Better Together team to ensure that housing and related services are fully integrated with this programme of transformation and chairs the Housing and Health working group. Better Together has created a short-term post to explore the needs and potential for closer integration between Health, Care and Housing Services in the future and a Council officer has been seconded to this position.

At Home in Eastbourne

This is Eastbourne Borough Council's Housing Strategy covering the period 2013 to 2020. The Strategy anticipated the rise in homelessness which we have seen over the last 3 years and stressed the need to continue preventing homelessness and helping those who lose their home find a new place to live.

The Strategy sets out the Council's aims in relation to 'finding and keeping a home':

- ensuring that people can make quick and informed decisions about their housing choices with accurate and pragmatic advice and help for people who are homeless
- helping people who have fallen on hard times maintain their aspirations to remain home owners, offering practical support for people who are behind with their mortgage retain rather than lose their home
- helping people avoid the loss of their home through income reductions through advice and support to help them manage their money so that they can cover their housing costs
- reducing the time people spend without a place to live or stay while they are looking for a home
- recognising the high start-up costs for private tenancies and providing practical help such as rent deposits

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- avoiding unnecessary homelessness and costs and disruption to landlords and supporting people, including those with life-skill problems, to maintain a tenancy
- supporting rough sleepers to find a place to live
- providing safe sanctuary-style accommodation and security works to their home for people who have suffered domestic abuse
- helping people who want to be home owners to buy a home
- providing stability and security for families in well kept, affordable and well managed homes and encouraging private landlords to offer longer term tenancies for those who want or need to rent.

The Strategy was developed on the basis of wide consultation and is designed to be delivered in partnership with local agencies including the Eastbourne Housing Forum and local Landlords' Forum.

Eastbourne Borough Council Corporate Plan

The Council approved a new Corporate Plan 2016 to 2020 at its meeting on 11th May 2016. The Plan sets out the context for service development over the next few years as local authorities face a continuing period of significant economic uncertainty and a continued and increasing demand for some services.

The Government has indicated that it will withdraw Revenue Support Grant altogether by 2019. This previously accounted for 50% of the Council's income present major financial challenges to the Council.

The Plan is clear about the need for the Council to have an appropriate balance between our ambitions for change, the resources available to deliver them and our desire to continue to provide good day to day services at an affordable cost.

The Plan has four priority themes: Sustainable Performance, Prosperous Economy, Quality Environment and Thriving Communities. Priorities include investing in housing and economic development, meeting housing needs and making the best of our assets. Underlying principles are Valuing all People, Being Sustainable, and Being Efficient. The vision for housing is a housing market which will provide a wide range of quality homes including affordable housing for those in need.

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Consultation carried out to underpin the Corporate Plan identified the development of new affordable housing as one of a number of priorities for local residents. The Plan describes the aims and work of the Housing and Economic Development Partnership. These include:

- placing local communities at the heart of the regeneration process and ensuring that maximum benefits are derived which support sustainable communities
- improving the built environment in key identified areas, encouraging greater tenure diversity, the highest quality of supply and providing some much needed new affordable housing, through new build, redevelopment and purchase and repair initiatives.

Specific actions cover:

- Welfare Reform - to support those vulnerable residents affected by the government's Welfare Reform programme so that residents are able to access and retain good quality accommodation and meet their Council Tax liabilities
- An enhanced Housing Options service – to help people gain the most appropriate accommodation to support a healthy and independent life. Our aims are to improve accommodation to allow people to remain independent longer; to reduce costs to the public purse; and to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and bed-blocking.

East Sussex Children and Young People's Plan 2015 to 2018

A revised Children and Young People's Plan was developed in 2015. Priorities for the current plan are:

1. Improving the school readiness of young children, particularly early communication, language development and numeracy
2. Helping more parents enter, sustain and progress in work
3. Improving the quality of life of low income families in other ways where possible
4. Maintaining and strengthening early help for vulnerable families; and ensuring effective safeguarding for all children and young people
5. Improving skill levels of young people 14-19, including through better access to a wider range of apprenticeship, vocational training

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and work experience opportunities as well as a strong academic route

6. Improving support to children, young people and families to help maintain and enhance emotional well-being and mental health

Members of the Housing Forum play an important role in delivering this Plan, particularly in relation to priorities 3, 4 and 6.

Eastbourne and Lewes Joint Transformation Programme

National policy has been to encourage local authorities to integrate, collaborate and share in order to deliver sustainable services and a greater “strategic presence” within their area.

In the autumn of 2015, both Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council agreed to share services with the aim of protecting front-line services and delivering £2.9m savings needed by 2019/20.

The sovereignty of each council will be retained, meaning that there will still be two separate sets of elected councillors setting the priorities for their areas, but service delivery will be integrated.

In practice this means that work has begun to develop a new staff structure and to plan and align the way services will be delivered in the future. Officers are also working closer together to identify common aims and opportunities to align policies and procedures.

This Eastbourne Homelessness Strategy is being developed in advance of a new strategy covering the Lewes area. Lewes District Council is currently working on its own Homelessness Review. It is envisaged that work on future Strategies will be aligned as far as possible taking account of differences in local conditions, opportunities and service providers.

Shared services and devolution

District and Borough Authorities are increasingly sharing services and East Sussex County Council is exploring opportunities with neighbouring authorities for devolution.

Overview of homelessness in Eastbourne

This section summarises the key messages from the Homelessness Review carried out at the beginning of 2016. This identified a number of trends and challenges as well as some opportunities to inform our planning over the next few years.

Key messages

This section summarises the main trends, concerns, risks and opportunities arising from this review of homelessness and suggests areas we need to focus on in the future:

- The number of homeless applications rose significantly to 124 households in 2015 and continues to rise. The percentage of those where the Council accepted a s193 duty also rose significantly in 2015 as did the number who became homeless as a result of their own actions, such as housing arrears.
- There was an increase in the number of families with children and of households with a pregnant woman accepted as homeless in 2015 and a particularly sharp rise in the number of female lone parents presenting as homeless.
- The main reason applicants to the Council give for the loss of their last home is the termination of their tenancy in the private rented sector.
- There is an urgent need to examine the use and effectiveness of prevention measures and identify any further work that we can do to prevent and relieve homelessness, particularly where this arises as a result of arrears or landlord decisions to end the tenancy.
- There was a marked increase in the number of households becoming homeless as a result of relationship breakdown.
- The main 'priority need' of single homeless households is vulnerability arising from poor mental health and there is an ongoing need for support services to this group.
- A range of housing is needed to meet these needs including
 - Housing with shared facilities to meet the needs of single people under 35 who may be reliant on Housing Benefit
 - 2 and 3-bedroom properties – given the large number of families with children becoming homeless

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- a small number of larger homes. The costs of keeping families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation are particularly high. A shortage of larger family housing may become particularly acute if the Council sells off larger properties as part of its response to the Government's proposed requirement to sell high-value properties which fall vacant in the future.
- The Joint protocol between Children's Services and housing authorities and the role of the Young Person's Housing Coordinator have proved invaluable keeping numbers of homeless young people at lower levels than in previous years and ensuring they are accommodated appropriately.
- The Sanctuary Scheme continues to be needed given the increase in Domestic Abuse incidents being reported and the number of households becoming homeless as a result of violent relationship breakdown.
- The decrease in the level of homelessness prevented by negotiation with private landlords needs to be addressed.
- The increasing gap between incomes and rents in the private sector is a major cause for concern with particular problems faced by people reliant on Housing Benefit to contribute to their housing costs and those in supported housing ready to move out but unable to access housing. The problems are particularly acute for those people only eligible for the Local Housing Allowance shared room rate, set to include all under-35s.
- Work with Rough Sleepers undertaken as part of the SHORE project has been effective but is at risk of being radically curtailed with the end of government funding for the project in September 2016.
- Rough sleeping, sofa-surfing, overcrowding and other forms of hidden homelessness are increasing.
- Any increase in demand for services moving into Eastbourne from neighbouring areas needs to be monitored and managed, particularly in light of high levels of rough sleeping recorded in Brighton and the pressures on housing and temporary accommodation in London.
- The Council faces increasing difficulties placing homeless households in temporary housing and there is an urgent need to explore options which provide greater control over costs and quality.

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- The majority of private market housing for rent is unaffordable to people on average household incomes in Eastbourne. The need to prevent homelessness is paramount given the problems of accessible affordable housing in the private market.
- Supported Housing schemes are at significant risk of becoming blocked by a lack of affordable housing which their tenants can move on to when ready. These problems are particularly acute for young people.
- The supply of very low cost accommodation for people with a history of homelessness and/or rough sleeping is extremely limited and reducing further.

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Strategic Priorities

Provide a comprehensive homelessness prevention service

- Monitor trend and manage risks particularly in relation to market pressures and welfare reform
- Ensure access to housing, legal, debt and money advice
- Work with DWP to minimise risks of homelessness
- Make best use of financial resources to prevent homelessness
- Raise awareness of the risks of homelessness
- Work with those people most at risk of homelessness including young people especially care leavers and those not in employment, education or training; those escaping domestic abuse
- Work with partners in Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Health through Better Together to ensure appropriate housing and support services are available to people with health, care and support needs, including those with complex needs and others at risk
- Continue working with rough sleepers and the agencies supporting them to achieve 'no second night out'
- Increase awareness of services available to support people needing help with on-line applications and processes.

Improve access to housing

- Enable housing development to meet the needs homeless people and those at risk of homelessness
- Work with development partners to increase access to private rented housing
- Work with local private landlords and Registered Providers to protect and improve access to rented housing
- Review policies on Council tenancies to make best use of resources
- Review options for temporary accommodation in partnership with East Sussex County Council and neighbouring authorities and work with neighbouring Councils to reduce the time homeless households spend in emergency accommodation, to address problems accessing good quality temporary accommodation and to minimise the need to place homeless households out of area.

Action Plan

The Action Plan on the following pages sets out the work we will undertake to achieve these priorities. The Housing Forum will review the progress every three months along with any new data for that quarter. The column 'Lead agency and partners' is not intended as an exhaustive list of all those agencies who contribute to delivering services and support to homeless people, and, where it appears, the term 'Housing Forum' is intended to cover all those agencies who have a role in that particular action.

Provide a comprehensive homelessness prevention service			
Actions	Milestones	Lead agency and partners	By when
Identify trends and risks	Monitor trends in homeless applications and outcomes, including intentional homelessness, prevention and relief of homelessness and compare with neighbouring authorities	EBC; BHT; ESHOG	Quarterly from 2016
	Share data on homelessness and rough sleeping at meetings to monitor trends in demand for services – format to be agreed	Housing Forum incl. BHT, CAB, Probation, Salvation Army, Matthew 25 Mission, Home Works, Fulfilling Lives, The Bridge, ESCC (Youth), DWP (DPA1), monthly hubs	Quarterly from 2016
	Maintain overview of impact of Welfare Benefit changes and action planning to address risks	EBC; Eastbourne Homes	Ongoing

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	Work through Financial Inclusion Steering Group to address risks of housing debt and homelessness	EBC, EHL, CAB, SCDA, DWP	Ongoing
Ensure people at risk of homelessness have access to housing, legal, debt and money advice services	<p>Deliver independent housing advice services</p> <p>Deliver and improve use of homelessness prevention service - monitor and track referrals made</p> <p>Deliver generic and money advice services and support to people to claim benefit entitlements</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate impact of EBC funded services</p> <p>Provide Welfare Benefits phone line</p>	<p>BHT</p> <p>BHT in liaison with EBC Casework and Specialist Advice teams</p> <p>CAB, Shinewater Shaftesbury Centre, East Sussex Credit Union plus Housing Forum members</p> <p>EBC</p> <p>Sussex Community Development Association</p>	<p>EBC funding to March 2019</p> <p>EBC funding to March 2019</p> <p>Ongoing – some funded by EBC grants to March 2019</p> <p>To March 2019</p> <p>CCG funding 2016/17</p>
Work with DWP to minimise risks of homelessness	<p>Provide budgeting support to people moving on to UC referred by DWP</p> <p>Maintain close working relationship with DWP staff to minimise delays in payment of benefit</p> <p>Deliver Welfare Reform Action Plan</p>	<p>CAB</p> <p>EBC Casework and Accounts teams plus Housing Forum members</p> <p>ESCC, EBC, EHL</p>	<p>Ongoing to completion of UC roll-out</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing to completion of UC roll-out</p>

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	Reduce risk of sanctions through use of DPA1 form. Liaison with DWP to enable client to meet the requirements of their 'Claimant Commitment'	Home Works	Ongoing
Work in partnership to reduce the time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation	Work proactively with homeless people in temporary accommodation to secure alternative housing and support those out of work into employment, and review progress weekly	EBC, BHT, Home Works	Ongoing, weekly
Make best use of financial resources to provide assistance to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness	Maximise use of Discretionary Housing Payment budget	EBC	DHP budget £210,798 2016/17
	Support homeless people to access DESSS and Budgeting Loans, and other financial assistance	BHT, CAB, Shinewater Shaftesbury Centre, Home Works	Ongoing
Raise awareness of the risks of homelessness	Contact people moving onto UC to make them aware of advice and support services	EBC	From 2016 ongoing
	Promote awareness to Council tenants through Open House, Resident Area Panels	Eastbourne Homes	From 2016 ongoing
	Deliver training on money management	Street Learning partners	Ongoing
	Support community organisations to provide services which help residents claim on-line – through Eastbourne Digital Inclusion Network	EBC	Ongoing

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	<p>Support EBC customers to claim on-line as per Delivery Partnership agreement with DWP</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities for work with schools and young people to raise awareness</p>	<p>EBC</p> <p>EBC, Eastbourne and Wealden YMCA</p>	<p>Ongoing to end of UC roll-out</p> <p>December 2016</p>
<p>Continue work to minimise the number of young people becoming homeless</p>	<p>Continue working with East Sussex authorities to resource specialist Young Person's Housing Coordinator</p> <p>Maintain focus on reducing numbers of young people not in employment, education or training</p> <p>Use mediation and family conciliation using Family Key Work, Youth Employability Service and specialist services where appropriate</p>	<p>ESCC Children's Services; EBC; ESCHOG</p> <p>ESCC Children's Services – Early Help Family Key Work, Youth Employability Service</p> <p>ESCC Children's Services – Early Help Family Key Work, U19 Substance Misuse Service</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Provide options for people at risk of homelessness as a result of domestic abuse</p>	<p>Deliver Sanctuary Scheme</p> <p>Ensure adequate refuge accommodation is available to women and families escaping domestic abuse</p> <p>Support clients to stay safe at home, or move to a place of safety</p>	<p>EHL</p> <p>Better Together – EBC in liaison with ESCC and CCGs</p> <p>Home Works</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2016/17 and ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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Deliver support to people with health, care and support needs	Continue delivering housing-related support services	Home Works, STEPS	Ongoing
	Review findings of Health Audit to identify service needs	SHORE; EBC	2016/17
	Work with Better Together to protect housing and services to people with high support needs	EBC	2016/17
	Deliver housing support for vulnerable people with health needs, plus support to improve health outcomes	Home Works	Ongoing
Improve access to services for people with complex problems	Deliver services to homeless people and those at risk who are affected by substance misuse	Change Grow Live	Ongoing
	Work with those in the Criminal Justice system to reduce risks of street homeless	National Probation service; Community Rehabilitation Companies; Fulfilling Lives	Ongoing
Work with neighbouring authorities to secure housing and services for Syrian refugees	Fund and recruit coordinator to identify and secure appropriate housing in west of county	EBC with East Sussex District and Borough authorities	September 2016
	Jointly commission services to ensure refugees access the services they need and are well supported and integrated	EBC with East Sussex District and Borough authorities	December 2016
Identify options for people needing to move from hospital and from	Complete a survey of hospital and housing protocols	SHORE	By March 2017

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supported housing schemes	Review hospital admissions protocol	EBC	By March 2017
Continue working to achieve 'no second night out' for rough sleepers and improve services to street homeless people	Identify resources for responding to Street Link reports of rough sleeping	EBC	By September 2016
	Deliver a range of practical services to street homeless and other vulnerable people at risk of homelessness	Salvation Army, Matthew 25, Foodbank	Ongoing
	Develop and promote a map of homelessness services in Eastbourne and evaluate impact	Fulfilling Lives; BHT	By December 2016
	Continue delivering and evaluating monthly hubs to ensure rough sleepers have access to resettlement, advice, health and support services	EBC, Salvation Army, Housing Forum members	Ongoing
Improve access to housing			
Actions	Milestones	Lead agency and partners	
Enable housing development to meet the needs homeless people and those at risk of homelessness	Use Strategic Housing Market Assessment to develop policies to address affordability in rental market	EBC	SHMA to be completed by Dec 2016
Identify new opportunities for housing development	Carry out a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment to identify potential housing sites	EBC	To be completed by Dec 2017

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Work with development partners to increase access to private rented housing	Develop Issues and Options for consultation and new Local Plan	EBC	Issues and options 2018; Local Plan 2020
	Develop a strategy for acquisition of property and land for the development of a mixed portfolio of housing to include market and affordable housing – rent and sales – including shared accommodation for u35s at LHA rates	EBC with Eastbourne Housing Investment Company Ltd.	End 2016
	Consider appropriate options for housing single homeless people with support needs moving out of supported housing	EBC; EHIC; Better Together	End 2016
	Develop Affordable Housing policy document setting out proportion of different tenures, types and sizes of affordable housing needed	EBC	2017/18
	Liaise with Registered Providers in the local area to update understanding of policy on lettings in light of recent changes to Housing and Planning and to benefits.	EBC; Eastbourne Homes	End 2016
Review housing policies to implement Housing and Planning Act	Review tenancy policies setting out the terms for Fixed Term tenancies	Eastbourne Homes	Timing subject to further legislation

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	Monitor impact of 'Pay to Stay' on vacancy rates	Eastbourne Homes	From April 2017
Work with developers to deliver housing which meets local need – through s.106 agreements, liaison with Registered Housing providers	Review s.106 agreements	EBC in partnership with LDC Housing	Ongoing
	Maintain close working relationship with Registered Housing providers developing in the Eastbourne area	EBC and LDC Housing	Ongoing
Work with private landlords to increase access to housing for people at risk of homelessness	Continue working to develop a portfolio of landlords willing to rent to people on benefits	EBC	Ongoing
	Maintain liaison with private landlords through the Landlords Forum	EBC	Ongoing
Work to improve the quality of private sector housing	Tackle empty properties	EBC	Ongoing
	Use licensing powers and inspection to improve standards in poor quality private housing	EBC	Ongoing
Review options for temporary housing for homeless people	Carry out an options appraisal for provision of emergency / temporary accommodation – including procurement of nightly paid emergency accommodation, rental properties at LHA rates and leasing	EBC	December 2016

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	<p>Identify potential for providing guarantees and additional financial incentives to secure private rental properties</p>	<p>EBC with private landlords / owners</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
	<p>Review the potential for private landlords to let properties at LHA rents</p>	<p>EBC with private landlords / owners</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
	<p>Develop a Business Plan (including review of scope/capacity, financial model, risk assessment) covering the potential use of some Council housing as temporary / emergency accommodation – taking account of benefit reforms/ move to UC and Direct Payment to tenant</p>	<p>Eastbourne Homes</p>	<p>December 2016</p>
	<p>Review the Eastbourne Homes Independent Living Scheme</p>	<p>Eastbourne Homes</p>	<p>December 2016</p>
	<p>Agree standards and monitoring arrangements for Temporary Accommodation – covering Health and Safety, Safeguarding, level of service provided</p>	<p>EBC; CAB; Temporary Accommodation providers; Housing Forum</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
	<p>Explore best practice elsewhere – e.g. Housing First model</p>	<p>Housing Forum</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Work with neighbouring Councils to address problems accessing good quality temporary accommodation and to minimise the need to place homeless households out of area</p>	<p>Assess the potential for reducing costs of Emergency Accommodation provision by joint contracting</p>	<p>EBC; Lewes District Council; ESCC Children's Services; ESHOG</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
	<p>Establish a Temporary Accommodation Board to explore the potential for implementing the recommendations of the IPPR North 'Nowhere Fast' report</p>	<p>EBC</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
	<p>Carry out a shared review of out of area placements identifying where these could be reduced. Liaise with neighbouring authorities to ensure the Council is notified of placements in Eastbourne.</p>	<p>East Sussex District and Borough authorities</p>	<p>December 2016</p>
	<p>Identify and agree minimum and preferred temporary accommodation standards.</p>	<p>EBC; Lewes District Council; Housing Forum</p>	<p>June 2017</p>

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ⁱ Crisis: the homelessness monitor: England 2016

ⁱⁱ The Department for Communities and Local Government 2012 'Evidence review of the costs of homelessness'

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