

Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention Action Plan

| Priority Area | Progress since 2017 | Future Actions & Considerations for 2018/19 |
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| <p>Develop a Holistic Homelessness Prevention Service, that is psychologically informed</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remodelled four Supporting People (SP) contracts, creating one Multi-Disciplinary Homelessness Prevention project that will commence 1st June 2018. The project will provide holistic homelessness prevention support to people with a range of needs. R.1.2 • Homelessness Prevention Officers have chosen individual specialisms (e.g. mental health) to lead on. • PIE development - All of the Team (and a lot of our commissioned services) have had Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) training – we are committed to developing all of our services to become PIEs. • We have developed a number of joint homelessness prevention protocols with key agencies, e.g. Shelter Cymru, Children’s Social Services. R.6 • We have recently trailed a new triage service, providing first contact information, advice and assistance to people experiencing housing problems. R.3.2 • Case file systems have been improved to allow for more streamlined and needs-led service delivery. • We have developed a user friendly homelessness prevention advice leaflet, and are working on improving our other resources. R.4; R.5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to look at opportunities to remodel commissioned services, to ensure they deliver multi-disciplinary support that is needs-led. • Learning from the triage pilot to inform future commissioning. R.3.3 • Further work to be undertaken to improve our online presence (including developing online tools, supporting people to help themselves through online advice/signposting). We will work with ICT and Communications to reach SOCTIM four star rating. R.5 • A range of Homelessness Prevention Service KPIs are to be developed, ensuring high standards of delivery across a broad range of service functions. R.4 • Clear service standards will also be published, also incorporating the findings of the service review in line with the Equal Ground Standard (see Citizen Involvement priority area, below). R.4 • Further development of PIEs, to include further staff training around areas such as ACEs (adverse childhood experiences), complex trauma and motivational interviewing, and beginning to use reflective practice. R.1.1 • Some further joint protocols with key partners to be developed/finalised. R.6 |
| <p>Prevention of Homelessness Against the Main</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is now a clear corporate commitment to tackle homelessness and its causes in Denbighshire • Community Navigator post to commence in 2018; foremost in response to the upcoming introduction of Universal Credit, they will be based primarily in the Job | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme to be developed in 2018/19, to ensure homelessness prevention awareness amongst key agencies. Will need to consider how |

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| <p>Causes, including tackling poverty</p> | <p>Centre, offering early intervention advice, support and assistance to prevent homelessness. R.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit awareness training offered to all Homelessness Prevention (including commissioned services) staff in 2017/18. • Prison Resettlement Officer post to commence in 2018, ensuring the effective delivery of the Prisoner Pathway, ensuring early intervention and coordinated support and accommodation options to prevent homelessness amongst people leaving prison. • Working closely with employment support agencies, including DCC Strategic Employment, to ensure that people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are able to access employment opportunities. This includes supporting the development of work experience opportunities. • Pre-eviction protocol developed with Community Housing. • Continued work to improve relationships with private sector landlords, including dedicated tenancy sustainment support for people moving on from temporary accommodation. • KPIs including very low level eviction targets are being included in all new SP contracts. • Paperwork and processes have been updated to ensure/allow for more creative options to be explored to prevent homelessness (e.g. use of the Homelessness Prevention Fund). • Awareness raising of mediation, with this often being a key element of a support offer to prevent homelessness due to relationship (e.g. family, landlord) breakdown. R.1.1 • We continue to closely monitor emerging needs (significantly revising our needs mapping system in 2017 to ensure a more valid and reliable picture of needs to inform service commissioning and delivery). This includes equality and diversity monitoring, which informs Team training (e.g. transgender awareness training). R.7 | <p>YouTube/social media could effectively be utilised for this awareness raising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse homelessness prevention services to be reviewed/developed in 2018/19 in line with new commissioning guidance from Welsh Government. • Pre-eviction protocol to be finalised with other RSLs. • Ongoing work to allow the focus to really shift from reaction to prevention – resources and partnership working will be key to this. |
| <p>Reduce the use of Temporary Accommodation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support service remodels and KPIs have been developed to support statutory homelessness functions, including swifter move on from, and preventing the use in the first place of temporary accommodation. R.6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC corporately will need to make decisions around funding of temporary accommodation / sourcing |

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| <p>and seek to end the use of Bed & Breakfast Accommodation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol developed with the Single Pathway (SP referrals Team) to ensure everyone in temporary accommodation can access SP support where needed. • Continued close working with SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing).* • Continued work to improve availability in the private sector via improving landlord relations and developing the landlord offer. • Significant work undertaken to reduce rent arrears amongst people in temporary accommodation, ensuring that arrears will not be a barrier to move on. • Projects with Public Protection and Crest are to commence in 2018, supporting the provision of quality move on accommodation – ensuring compliance with legal standards, and that accommodation is also of a standard to improve wellbeing, and that people are equipped with the skills and confidence to maintain their home (e.g. undertaking practical maintenance tasks). | <p>alternative options – this is not something that the Homelessness Prevention Team can do in isolation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets around reducing the use of B&B accommodation will be incorporated into the Homelessness Prevention KPIs (as referenced above) • *Further work is needed to ensure a fully coordinated approach between SARTH and the Homelessness Prevention Team. R.6 |
| <p>Improve Access to Accommodation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Protection and Crest posts, as above. • KPIs including target time frames for sourcing accommodation are being included in all new SP contracts. R.6 • Obtained grant funding for 5 internal and external homelessness prevention staff members to be trained in delivering the ‘Renting Ready’ course, equipping people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness with the skills and confidence to sustain a tenancy (e.g. manage bills, cook on a budget etc.) • KPIs including target levels of citizen access of Renting Ready are being included in all new SP contracts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move-on panel/protocol, in line with Homeless Link Guidance and best practice must be developed. This is a significant project that we aren’t currently able to undertake within current resources – this will need to be looked at in 2018/19. • Working with Communities, Assets and Housing, to be involved in work around utilising empty homes. • We will review the two rent bond schemes in Denbighshire, to avoid duplication and maximise citizen outcomes. |

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| <p>Develop an integrated approach to supporting people with multiple/complex needs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secured dedicated high standard temporary accommodation for people with serious mental health issues, working closely with mental health services to provide specialist support packages. Continued close working with mental health services, including close working with hospital discharge, attending ward rounds, and contributing to the North Wales Together for Mental Health Local Implementation Team. Integrated Housing First consultancy/development work has been commissioned in 2017/18 – to scope needs, build partnerships, identify accommodation sources and develop an integrated Housing First service specification. R.6 Developed a Tenancy Enabler service in the DCC Complex Disabilities Team, enabling people with learning disabilities / acquired brain injury / autistic spectrum disorder to move on to more independent accommodation, reducing the demand on statutory managed care/support services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the multi-agency Denbighshire Homelessness Forum is a priority. With the loss of the Homelessness Strategy Officer, we will need to consider resources to get the Forum off the ground. A lot of joined up working will be needed to develop an integrated Housing First service, based on the findings of the consultancy/development work in 2017/18. Homelessness Prevention cannot deliver Housing First in isolation. We must continue to explore options for best supporting people with serious alcohol use problems, including looking at options around safe drinking environments offering holistic support, and learning from Alcohol Concern’s ‘Blue Light’ multi-agency harm reduction agenda. |
| <p>Prevent Youth Homelessness, including embedding a ‘Positive Pathway’ approach</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed Young People’s Positive Pathway Project – a partnership between Homelessness Prevention, Children’s Services and Youth Justice – providing dedicated homelessness prevention interventions and support for all young people (up to 25) presenting as homeless/at risk of homelessness to DCC. As a result of the project’s development, in 2017/18, between quarter and quarter 3, referrals for formal support reduced significantly from an average of 83% to 39% - with young people being empowered to use their own strengths and resources, and remain in the family home wherever possible. The Dyfodol young people’s supported housing project continues to be remodelled, with the Collaborative Agreement for the new service due to commence in October 2018. The new service will be better geared up to supporting young people with a range of needs, offering more appropriate accommodation to best safeguard and improve the wellbeing and other outcomes of young people supported. R.6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving employment opportunities for young people continues to be absolutely vital, so that they are able to afford to live in their own accommodation. We will support the trial project offering DCC catering work experience placements, in the pipeline for this year. We must also contribute to work in DCC to develop strategic employment. We must work alongside DCC Housing Strategy and other partners to consider options for shared accommodation in future. Community housing accommodation to be identified that can be solely maintained for 16/17 year olds – work needs to be done to ensure a joined up commitment and understanding of roles and responsibilities across key partners, including Homelessness Prevention, Children’s Services etc. |

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| <p>Citizen Involvement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC Homelessness Prevention Citizen Involvement Policy finalised in 2017 – setting out our commitments and service standards in relation to meaningful involvement and co-production in all that we do. R.4 • Citizen Involvement Officer has begun a series of citizen consultations – part of reviewing our overall service in line with Equal Ground Standard. R.4 • Citizen Involvement Officer and Commissioning Officer have begun to work far more closely, including joint visits to meet supported housing residents, to ensure that citizen feedback is a much more organic part of our commissioning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Prevention service review in line with the Equal Ground standard to continue. • The Annual Commissioning Plan and Homelessness Prevention Day must be far more citizen led – this must be a real co-production project in 2018. |
| <p>The sustainability of housing related support, including maximising existing provision</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supporting People and Homelessness Prevention Teams merged in 2017, enabling a far more integrated approach and maximisation of resources, supporting greater sustainability, especially in light of future proposed funding changes (the 'Super Grant') • We now have less dependency on the SP Grant for Homelessness Prevention roles – from April 2018 all Grant Administration Staff are funded via, and sit within, central Community Support Services. • Continuing to contribute to consultations around the future of supported housing funding regimes. • We have critically reviewed the activities undertaken by the Homelessness Prevention Officers, to determine aspects of work that can be completed by other roles within the service and ensure a focus on prevention. This has helped to inform the development of the triage pilot and the Community Navigator post. R.1.1; R.1.3; R.8 • We are also working to ensure that commissioned services best complement statutory functions, including via the KPIs incorporated into each new SP contract, and rolling out a programme of awareness raising/training on the work of the Homelessness Prevention Team amongst all of our commissioned services. R.6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must await the outcome of the proposed super grant, and contribute to its development wherever possible, to ensure that front-line homelessness prevention services are protected. Guidance from Welsh Government is at present inconclusive. • DCC Strategic Employment and Strategic Planning are leading on preparations for the grant changes, which we will support throughout the year. • We will self-assess our service in 2018/19 according to the WAO 'Key considerations for local authorities in managing demand' checklist. R.8 |