

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Prevention Summary Action Plan

The Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention Team continue to develop and work to a broad action plan, as below, based on the Denbighshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-21 (the Strategy) and the Supporting People/Homelessness Prevention Annual Commissioning Plan 2018/19 (the Plan), as well as the recommendations of the Welsh Audit Office report: ‘How Local Government Manages Demand – Homelessness’ (January 2018). The Strategy, which provides the over-arching direction, has been developed, and will be delivered, in accordance with the statutory requirement placed on us as a Local Authority by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Strategy must be delivered in partnership across Council departments and with our external partners, if we are to be successful in achieving its vision: To end homelessness in Denbighshire. This is all the more imperative given budgetary pressures in Homelessness Prevention.

Priority Area	Progress since 2017	Future Actions & Considerations for 2018/19
<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 commenced 1st June 2018. The project provides holistic homelessness prevention support to people with a range of needs. • 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. • 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. • Co-production meeting 21st September to develop new homelessness assessment form/process, informing a a much more integrated and psychologically informed process, which focusses on what matters to the individual. We have begun to trial a much more conversation-based approach. • Following a successful pilot, we have now have in place a full-time Triage Officer – providing first contact information, advice and assistance for people experiencing housing problems. 	<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. Currently considering opportunities for Hafal services. • Further work to be undertaken to improve our online presence (including developing online tools, supporting people to help themselves). We will work with ICT and Communications to reach SOCTIM four star rating. Regular planning meetings taking place. • A range of Homelessness Prevention Service Key Performance Indicators are currently being developed and will be in place in soon - ensuring high standards of delivery across a broad range of service functions. • 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). • 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 with the support of the new Social Worker.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have recruited a Social Worker in the Homelessness Prevention Team. Starting in October 2018, they will be supporting the team to develop more holistic ways of working with citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some further joint protocols with key partners to be developed/finalised.
<p>Prevention of Homelessness Against the Main Causes, including tackling poverty</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 commenced in 2018; foremost in response to the introduction of Universal Credit, they are based primarily in the Job Centre, offering early intervention advice, support and assistance to prevent homelessness. Some really positive outcomes have already been achieved. • Universal Credit awareness training offered to all Homelessness Prevention (including commissioned services) staff in 2017/18. • Criminal Justice Homelessness Prevention Officer post commenced 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 Working Denbighshire projects, 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, and an improved landlord offer. • 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. A Wallich mediation worker now sits within the Homelessness Prevention Team one day a week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme to be developed in 2018/19, to ensure homelessness prevention awareness amongst key agencies. We will need to consider how YouTube/social media could effectively be utilised for this awareness raising. • Domestic Abuse homelessness prevention services to be reviewed/developed in 2018/19 in line with new commissioning guidance/expectations from Welsh Government. We'll engage with DCC Strategic Planning, continue to attend the Regional Commissioning Group, and engage with our DA services to ensure any developments are in line with strategic and operational priorities. • 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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). Also currently undertaking a supported housing needs analysis piece of work, undertaking an in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis of a sample of supported housing referrals to gain a better understanding of emerging needs, and how far supply meets need and demand. 	
<p>Reduce the use of Temporary Accommodation and seek to end the use of Bed & Breakfast Accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work commissioned with Imogen Blood and Associates consultancy to review and undertake an options appraisal for our use of emergency temporary accommodation – due to conclude early November 2018. Support service remodels and key performance indicators have been developed to support statutory homelessness functions, including swifter move on from, and preventing the use in the first place of, temporary accommodation. Protocol developed with the Single Pathway (Supporting People referrals Team) to ensure everyone in temporary accommodation can access Supporting People 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. As a result of this work we have seen a significant reduction in arrears, going from £10,336.99 in May 2017 to £2,940.36 by the end of that financial year. Projects with Public Protection and Crest commenced 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). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCC corporately will need to make decisions around funding of temporary accommodation / sourcing alternative options – this is not something that the Homelessness Prevention Team can do in isolation. 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. We will explore procurement options, including the possibility of obtaining tender exemptions to trial the use of serviced private landlord accommodation as emergency temporary accommodation. This will also be informed by the TA report from Imogen Blood and Associates.

<p>Improve Access to Accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Protection and Crest posts, and emergency temporary accommodation review work, as above. • Key performance indicators including target time frames for sourcing accommodation are being included in all new/amended Supporting People contracts. • 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.) Renting Ready courses now successfully being rolled out. • KPIs including target levels of citizen access of Renting Ready are being included in all new/amended Supporting People contracts. • Better landlord offer has been developed and will be rolled out imminently, to incentivise private sector landlords to offer their accommodation to homeless households. • We have reviewed the two rent bond schemes in Denbighshire and reduced duplication across the two to maximise resources and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to be done around our move-on process/protocol, establishing better pathways for citizens who may come through temporary accommodation/supported housing/who need to access alternative accommodation. This will be particularly informed by the temporary accommodation report findings, and we will also be informed by the Homeless Link Guidance and best practice for move-on protocols. • Working with Communities, Assets and Housing, to be involved in work around utilising empty homes. • To enhance our needs mapping, inform commissioning, and development of housing-led approaches, we are in the process of undertaking an in-depth supported housing needs analysis, as described above.
<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 etc. Homelessness Prevention is also represented on the Together for Mental Health Strategy Local Implementation Team, working to implement the Strategy and develop joined up approaches across Health, the Local Authority and third sector to supporting people with a broad range of mental health support needs. • Integrated Housing First feasibility study completed in 2018 – currently awaiting confirmation of available funding from Welsh Government (verbal confirmation received, just waiting on written confirmation), then we will look to recruit Housing First posts to work across Denbighshire and Conwy. • Developed a Tenancy Enabler service in the DCC Complex Disabilities Team, enabling people with learning disabilities / acquired brain injury / autistic spectrum 	<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. • 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. • We'll explore opportunities to develop a MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) approach to

	<p>disorder to move on to more independent accommodation, reducing the demand on statutory managed care/support services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a risk-based approach to our contract monitoring and reviewing, including incorporation of key performance indicators in new/amended Supporting People contracts, which allows a more complexity informed outcomes focus, i.e. providers are not financially penalised for failure to meet KPIs – rather we are primarily using them to help us better understand the challenges citizens and providers may face, including the various accountabilities/influences in terms of achieving outcomes. 	<p>coordinating support for people with complex needs. Further work to be undertaken with the Single Pathway Team to reduce the admin burden/processes, allowing a greater focus on individual needs and circumstances, to coordinate the best service offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While full funding flexibility is no longer going to be rolled out, we will work with our tackling poverty funding stream partners to develop better integration of our service offers, in particular for families, young people and people with domestic abuse related support needs. Scoping exercise around domestic abuse services/gaps is currently in progress. Further work to develop a fully risk-based approach to monitoring/reviewing our contracts.
<p>Prevent Youth Homelessness, including embedding a 'Positive Pathway' approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a 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 1 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. Full team (Coordinator and 2 support workers) now in place as of July 2018. The House share previously managed by Homelessness Prevention will now be a dedicated house share for young people, managed by the Positive Pathway project. The Dyfodol young people's supported housing project continues to be remodelled, with the Collaborative Agreement for the new service having commenced in October 2018. The new service is, and will be further, 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. CAMHS has very much come on board, providing advice and training, as has Barnardo's substance misuse service. 	<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, being lead on by DCC 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. We are starting to explore opportunities with our Tackling Poverty and other partners to develop

		better support for children/young people affected by domestic abuse. Scoping exercise ongoing.
Citizen Involvement	<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. • As part of reviewing our overall service in line with Equal Ground Standard, our Citizen Involvement Officer carried out a piece of work to help us better understand people’s experiences throughout their journey, from the point that they first approach Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention, through to living in temporary accommodation and planning for move-on – how they felt, what was working, and what needed to change. • 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. • Homelessness Prevention Planning Group agreed the ring-fencing of a small pot of Supporting People grant to facilitate meaningful co-production. • The Homelessness Prevention annual event, ‘Homes and Hopes’, was successfully co-produced. This also very much feeds into SP Planning. Citizens have also been far more significantly involved in informing the content of the draft Commissioning Plan for 2019-22. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Prevention service review in line with the Equal Ground standard to continue. The work undertaken by the Citizen Involvement Officer with people in TA will be further rolled out – and will inform our commissioning/service development/training. • We will work to support the setting up of a citizen advisory board (‘shadow board’ to Homelessness Prevention Planning Group). To start with, the group who worked with us to co-produce the annual event will be invited to develop this. • We will need to monitor the financial arrangements for co-production to inform funding decisions next year.
The sustainability of housing related support, including maximising existing provision	<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. This also puts us in an advantageous position in terms of future funding changes - the merged housing support grant (incorporating Supporting People grant, statutory homelessness and Rent Smart Wales enforcement), which will be in place for at least 3 years from 2019. • 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. • 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. This has helped to inform the development of the triage pilot and the Community Navigator post. • We are also working to ensure that commissioned services best complement statutory functions, including via the key performance indicators incorporated into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must await confirmation of the arrangements for the recently confirmed merged housing support 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 are currently attending monthly meetings, and considering options as set out in the draft 2019-22 Commissioning Plan (these options currently relate to the full flexible funding as the housing support grant was announced after the start of the consultation; however, we will still be exploring opportunities for

	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported housing needs analysis, as above.• We have self-assessed our service according to the WAO 'Key considerations for local authorities in managing demand' checklist, which has informed elements of this action plan	<p>better joined up commissioning with the relevant funding streams in any case).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will be continuing with the supported housing needs analysis, aiming to have a report concluded by the end of the financial year.• We will need to consider how we can make sure supported housing works better for people in temporary accommodation, while at the same time ensuring that allocations are always made based on greatest need. We will be informed by the findings of the (Imogen Blood) Emergency Temporary Accommodation Review, as well as the supported housing needs analysis.
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