

## Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2016 – 2021 UPDATE MAY 2019

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION						
Aims	Actions/milestones	Outcome	Timescale	Resources required	Responsible Office/Stakeholder	Update May 2019
<p><b><u>Aim 1: Housing Advice and Options</u></b></p> <p>Develop good quality and easily accessible housing advice materials</p> <p>Make information available online which reflects both the diversity and needs of the community</p>	<p>To renew and continue to revise the information around housing advice, options and homelessness</p> <p>To monitor the Council's website and other resources to ensure the most detailed and up to date information is available</p> <p>To make the website more user friendly and information on homelessness more of a focal point</p>	<p>Production and promotion of a comprehensive suite of information and advice leaflets.</p> <p>Website updated</p>	<p>August 2017</p> <p>August 2017</p>	<p>Someone from each organisation to offer their time to produce and publish the relevant information</p>	<p>All stakeholders monitored through the Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Relevant web pages kept under regular review.</p> <p>Council's website under regular review as part of Digital Transformation Project.</p> <p>All stakeholders invited to the Quarterly Homelessness Forum to ensure publicly available information relevant and up to date.</p>

<p><b><u>Aim 2:</u></b> <b><u>Education in schools</u></b></p> <p>Fund the Herts Young Homeless (HYH) education service in schools to raise awareness of the realities of homelessness and of obtaining affordable housing</p>	<p>Continue to explore possibilities of working with HYH to deliver information to young people</p> <p>To develop and deliver a clear, consistent message in schools</p> <p>Create joined up working between HYH and St Albans Women's Refuge</p>	<p>To educate 700 students in 'Home Truths' sessions</p> <p>Council Officers to attend a 'Home Truths' session</p> <p>The Women's Refuge to deliver 3 education talks in conjunction with HYH</p>	<p>July 2017</p> <p>July 2017</p> <p>July 2017</p>	<p>Council funding to HYH</p>	<p>St Albans Women's Refuge HYH</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p>	<p>Target of delivering 'Home Truths' sessions to 700 students met.</p> <p>Council Officers continue to attend 'Home Truths' sessions.</p> <p>There is currently reduced capacity for the Outreach team to work in partnership with HYH</p> <p>St Albans District Council continue to fund Herts Young Homeless to deliver 'Home Truths' sessions.</p>
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<p><b><u>Aim 3:</u></b> <b><u>Homeless</u></b> <b><u>Prevention</u></b> <b><u>Funding</u></b></p> <p>For the Council and residents to have access to a fund that can be used to prevent and relieve homelessness</p>	<p>To work with St Albans Credit Union to provide budgeting advice and expertise to ensure funding remains available</p>	<p>To assist 20 households into private sector accommodation annually</p>	<p>October 2021</p>	<p>The Council to monitor and review level of funding to St Albans Credit Union</p>	<p>St Albans Credit Union</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p>	<p>Mosaic Lettings set up to deliver a Private Rented Sector Access scheme on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>62 households assisted with a Credit Union loan to move into the Private Rented Sector in 2018.</p>
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<p><b><u>Aim 4: Work with the probation service and other related agencies</u></b></p> <p>Information to be shared with agencies such as the Probation Service and Hertfordshire Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders to flag up those being released from prison</p>	<p>To share information with agencies and Community Protection Team and to be more aware of those who are at risk of reoffending due to homelessness</p>	<p>To hold quarterly meetings with Community Protection and Probation Service</p>	<p>November 2017</p>	<p>Staffing to co-ordinate drop-in sessions with other authorities</p>	<p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p> <p>Community Protection Team</p> <p>Probation Services</p>	<p>The Housing department continue to work with the Probation services on specific cases. In particular the Council will look to provide assistance into private rented accommodation.</p> <p>Housing officers continue to attend Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements meetings to discuss cases as and when required.</p>
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	To consider whether prison drop in sessions are feasible to provide information to those who are due to be released.					The Council are looking to develop a number of advice surgeries which may include the Probation services.
<b><u>Aim 5: Ensure Information Availability</u></b>	<p>To ensure information on services within the local district is available to all agencies</p> <p>To compile and provide a comprehensive list of organisations and their functions to all partners and agencies</p> <p>To work collaboratively with other agencies and build stronger relationships</p> <p>To link the Council's website to Herts Help</p>	<p>A signposting form to be used by all stakeholders developed</p> <p>Herts Help website updated to reflect Hightown's supported housing, homelessness and outreach services available within the district.</p>	<p>January 2017</p> <p>January 2017</p>	All stakeholders to buy into use of signposting form	<p>All relevant stakeholders monitored through the Homelessness Forum</p> <p>Hightown Housing Association</p>	<p>The Council now has the ability for customers to self-refer and partner organisations have the 'Duty to Refer' via the Council's website or separate email address.</p> <p>Relevant web pages kept under regular review, including information relating to partner agencies.</p>

<p><b><u>Aim 6:</u></b> <b><u>Strengthen relationships with the travelling community</u></b></p> <p>Seek to form a better relationship with those in the travelling community</p>	<p>To work with Herts County Council (HCC) and their liaison officer to share information and build stronger relationships with the travelling community</p> <p>To work with the St Albans Women's Refuge where necessary</p>	<p>To attend quarterly meetings with HCC to raise awareness of homelessness issues in the travelling community</p>	<p>June 2017</p>	<p>Make use of expertise and work of the Traveller Liaison Officer to strengthen relationships</p>	<p>Traveller Liaison Officer</p> <p>St Albans Women's Refuge</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings being held.</p> <p>Homeless Travellers continue not to be a major issue in the district.</p> <p>Refuge has someone who provides advice and information on site and across the travelling community and have provided training.</p>
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<p><b><u>Aim 7: Monitor the supply of temporary accommodation</u></b></p> <p>To ensure the supply of temporary accommodation in the district is sufficient for ongoing demand</p>	<p>To monitor ongoing trends in homelessness</p> <p>To review redevelopment options for existing Council owned temporary accommodation sites</p> <p>To secure additional temporary accommodation as required</p>	<p>Reduction in use of Bed and Breakfast to a maximum of 2 households at any one time</p> <p>Redevelopment of The Hedges mobile home site</p>	<p>October 2017</p> <p>October 2019</p> <p>March 2017</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	<p>The Housing Support team to work in collaboration with the Housing Options team</p> <p>Working in partnership with a Registered Housing provider</p> <p>Housing Investment Programme/ Homelessness Grant</p>	<p>Housing Support Team Leader</p> <p>Strategic Housing Manager</p> <p>Hightown Housing Association</p> <p>Strategic Housing Manager</p>	<p>Regular meetings held between Housing Options and Housing Support teams to monitor use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.</p> <p>Budget set aside for 2019/2020 and 2020/21 for the redevelopment of The Hedges.</p> <p>Redevelopment of King Offa site with up to 16 modular units in 2019 to replace the loss of units at The Hedges.</p> <p>Strategic Temporary Accommodation group meets quarterly to review supply of temporary accommodation.</p>
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		<p>Completion of St Claire's to provide 10 self-contained units</p> <p>To keep the Homelessness Contingency Plan under Review</p>			<p>17 properties bought under the Street Purchase Scheme since January 2018 used for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Ensure project for completion of works to Grosvenor Road is completed on target to bring back into use 8 Council owned units of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Provision of grant support to Hightown Housing Association to refurbish a property to deliver 7 units in 2019.</p> <p>St Claire's completed to provide 10 additional units of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Homelessness Forum meet quarterly to review the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.</p>
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	To implement new procedures for void management	Improved void turnaround time	March 2020	Housing staff /New Repairs Contractor	Void Co-Ordinator	Process Mapping carried out by Value Adding. Void Co-Ordinator post created for 9 months. New Repairs contract started 1 April.
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## ROUGH SLEEPING

Aims	Actions/milestones	Measurement	Timescale	Resources required	Responsible Officer/Stakeholder	Update May 2019
<p><b><u>Aim 1: Prevent Rough Sleeping</u></b></p> <p>To prevent anyone new sleeping on the streets and to help entrenched rough sleepers</p>	<p>Continue to review incentives offered to landlords</p> <p>Review advice and support offered to landlords and clients</p> <p>Out of area moves where appropriate</p> <p>Ensure additional bed spaces available as part of the Severe Weather Emergency Provision</p>	<p>A year on year reduction in the number of rough sleepers in the district as measured by the annual Rough Sleeper count</p> <p>Every rough sleeper has a support plan in place</p> <p>0 rough sleepers during periods of extreme cold, wind or rain between November and March</p>	<p>October 2021</p> <p>October 2017</p> <p>November 2017</p>	<p>Ensure we have resources available to offer incentives to landlords</p> <p>Utilise Open Door as a resource</p> <p>Additional bed spaces provided at Salvation Army</p>	<p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p> <p>Hightown Housing Association</p> <p>Open Door</p> <p>Voluntary organisations</p>	<p>Resources available to offer incentives to landlords if required.</p> <p>Open Door Provides accommodation and housing support to rough sleepers.</p> <p>Community Engagement and Recovery Worker post funded by SADC to work with entrenched rough sleepers.</p> <p>5 additional beds provided through the Churches Winter Project</p> <p>£1365 Cold Weather Funding secured to ensure additional availability of bed spaces in winter</p>

**Aim 2:**  
**Reconnection**  
**funding**

To continue to provide a resource available for helping those reconnect with their originating area

To ensure availability of funding to rough sleepers to assist in obtaining accommodation

To work in partnership with Community Protection Officers to benefit from their reconnection policy for entrenched rough sleepers

A year on year reduction in the number of rough sleepers in the district as measured by the annual Rough Sleeper count

October 2021

Community Protection funding to be used for reconnection

Community Protection Team

Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)

Funding is available if required.

A group has been set up to meet and discuss the No Recourse to Public Funds rough sleepers' cohort.

**Aim 3: Explore options for move on for both those sleeping rough and in local night shelters**

To help those move on into more secure accommodation

To work with stakeholders to develop protocols around early contact. This will enable more comprehensive advice and assistance

To record details of those who have moved on into accommodation

100 planned move-ons from Open Door every year

March 2021

Open Door to nominate a member of staff to monitor and provide an update on Rough Sleepers

Open Door

83 planned move-ons already achieved April 2018-March 2019

**Aim 4: No  
Second Night  
Out**

Adopt principles set out in No Second Night out

Focus on adopting the No Second Night Out approach as a project that will help to prevent entrenched rough sleeping

Encourage the public to make organisations aware of those sleeping rough to ensure support is provided in the first instance

A year on year reduction in the number of rough sleepers in the district as measured by the annual Rough Sleeper count

Information relating to Homeless Link added to Council's website and web link provided

November 2017

January 2017

Use the assistance of public to inform when they see somebody rough

Public to report  
Homeless Link

Increase in number of rough sleepers from 5 in 2017 to 11 in 2018. This increase is due to an estimated count based on all Information available to stakeholders.

Rough Sleeping Steering Group set up to address the issue of rough sleeping in the district.

Public information leaflet developed and circulated

'Statement of Pledges' developed by Rough Sleeping Steering Group.

Multi-agency meetings held to address the issue of rough sleeping in the district.

						<p>Public information Leaflet developed and circulated amongst members of the public and local businesses.</p> <p>Relevant web pages kept under regular review.</p> <p>Council's website under regular review as part of Digital Transformation Project</p>
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## HELPING VICTIMS OR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Aims	Actions/milestones	Measurement	Timescale	Resources required	Responsible Officer/Stakeholder	Update May 2019
<p><b><u>Aim 1:</u></b> <b><u>Prevention</u></b></p> <p>Increase prevention of homelessness caused by Domestic Abuse</p>	<p>To keep victims safe in appropriate accommodation</p> <p>To offer advice and support by signposting to relevant agencies</p>	<p>No more than 10 referrals per year to the Housing Options department</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	<p>Take advantage of resources offered by Women's Refuge</p>	<p>St Albans Women's Refuge</p> <p>Community Protection Team</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p>	<p>Implementation Of Homelessness Reduction Act has led to an increased number of referrals.</p> <p>New provider arrangements in place has increased the range of housing options to low to medium risk victims of domestic violence.</p>

**Aim 2: Early Intervention**

To identify those at risk at an early stage to prevent crisis presentations

To develop a protocol between services to ensure those at risk are provided with advice at the earliest possible stage

Make people more aware they are at risk when they are highly likely to become homeless

Protocol developed

October 2017

Floating Support Service offered by Hightown

Communication increased between organisations

Hightown Housing Association

All stakeholders monitored through the Homelessness Forum

No protocol developed to date.

The Council are working in partnership with stakeholders to deliver appropriate housing options following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act



**Aim 3: Support Male Domestic Abuse victims**

To provide more information and assistance for male victims of Domestic Abuse

To work with St Albans Women's refuge service to launch an outreach service for men

To promote Mankind as a National Helpline for men

Training delivered to staff

Promotion material produced and made available

June 2017

June 2017

Take advantage of resources offered for men by the St Albans Women's Refuge

St Albans Women's Refuge

Training delivered.

Relevant web pages kept under regular review. This includes an information leaflet for male and female victims of domestic violence.

Council's website under regular review as part of Digital Transformation Project.

## HELPING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Aims	Actions/milestones	Measurement	Timescale	Resources required	Responsible Officer/Stakeholder	Update May 2019
<p><b><u>Aim 1:</u></b> <b><u>Understanding of services available</u></b></p> <p>To create a better understanding of support available for those affected by mental health issues</p>	<p>To have information available on Mental Health Services to all those who approach for housing advice and assistance</p>	<p>To produce performance figures in relation to the number of approaches by applicants with mental health issues</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	<p>Communication and support from Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust and Hightown Floating Support</p>	<p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p> <p>Senior Social Worker/Approved Mental Health Professional, Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust</p> <p>Hightown Housing Association</p>	<p>Regular meetings now being held Between partners to Monitor performance figures. The number of approaches is kept under review by relevant partners</p>

<p><b><u>Aim 2: Information sharing</u></b></p> <p>To ensure that relevant information about vulnerable people with mental health issues are shared adequately amongst professionals</p>	<p>To work more closely with Mental Health Services with an aim to develop an information sharing protocol with them</p>	<p>Development of protocol</p>	<p>September 2017</p>	<p>Use resources available from Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust to assist those who approach with mental health issues</p>	<p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p> <p>Senior Social Worker/Approved Mental Health Professional, Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust</p>	<p>No official protocol developed however information sharing between Housing and Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust has improved with regular meetings held.</p>
<p><b><u>Aim 3: Joined up working</u></b></p> <p>To strengthen links to ensure more joined up working between the mental health services and other agencies</p>	<p>To continue to develop links with the mental health services</p> <p>Deliver training session to highlight issues faced by mental health services</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings of the Homelessness Forum</p> <p>Training delivered</p>	<p>September 2017</p> <p>September 2017</p>	<p>Use the signposting form for everybody who is instructed to approach another organisation.</p>	<p>Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p> <p>Senior Social Worker/Approved Mental Health Professional, Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust</p> <p>Hightown Housing Association</p>	<p>Terms of reference have been developed. Regular meetings are now being held and training delivered by each organisation.</p>

**Aim 4:**  
**Reinstate the**  
**Mental Health**  
**Housing Forum**

To organise regular meetings between partners who attended the Mental Health Housing Forum

To ensure individuals with Mental Health needs are known to relevant organisations

Quarterly meetings of the Mental Health Housing Forum

September 2017

Time and commitment from all those who attend to engage with one another where mental health issues arise

Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)  
  
Senior Social Worker/Approved Mental Health Professional, Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust

Regular meetings are now held to ensure individuals are known to relevant organisations. Emphasis is placed on identifying those individuals who can be helped and assist them into accessing the appropriate support services.

## WELFARE REFORM

	Actions/milestones	Measurement	Timescale	Resources required	Responsible Officer/Stakeholder	Update May 2019
<p><b><u>Aim 1: Working with partner agencies</u></b></p> <p>To help mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform including Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap</p>	Make timely referrals to partner agencies	Appointment of Welfare Reform Project Officer	October 2016	Housing department to work together to spend time ensuring all those who need to be are contacted	Welfare Reform Project Officer	Awareness and training sessions held.
	To raise awareness of impact of the Benefit Cap to all affected customers	Joint workshop held by SADC and DWP	October 2016		Principal Benefits Officer	Continued use Of Discretionary Housing Payment maximised to mitigate impact of welfare reform.
	Utilise Discretionary Housing Payment funds to mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform	Spend 100% of allocated funds	March 2021		Housing Income Team Leader Hightown Housing Association	100% of allocated funds spent in 2018/19.

<p><b><u>Aim 2: Creating awareness</u></b></p> <p>To create awareness amongst all partners and agencies of the provision of financial support and services available both nationally and within the district</p>	<p>Provide information to all partners and agencies on the impact that it will have on people Identify those that will be affected and issue leaflets to inform them what these changes will mean for them</p>	<p>Development of Universal Support Delivered Locally (Usdl) Strategy</p>	<p>November 2017</p>	<p>Ensure there is sufficient funding for the provision of information</p>	<p>Welfare Reform Project Officer  Principal Benefits Officer</p>	<p>Usdl Strategy put in place prior to roll out of Universal Credit in November 2017. Part of the strategy involved awareness and training sessions being held.</p>
<p><b><u>Aim 3: Provide advice and support</u></b></p> <p>Promoting an effective system that can provide accurate, up to date and meaningful advice on welfare reform, in partnership with local partners and agencies</p>	<p>To continue to work with our own Housing Management department, Housing Benefit, Housing Associations and other stakeholders to identify those at risk  To provide or signpost relevant support for those at risk</p>	<p>Development of Usdl Strategy</p>	<p>November 2017</p>	<p>Shared resources from across Housing  For officers to take the time to ensure relevant information is readily available</p>	<p>Welfare Reform Project Officer  Housing Management  Housing Benefits  Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)</p>	<p>Usdl Strategy put in place prior to roll out of Universal Credit in November 2017. Part of the strategy identifies households considered 'at risk'.</p>

**Aim 4: Learn from other authorities**

Share best practices with other local authorities

Learn from pilot areas about the impact that welfare reform has had on people in these authorities and incorporate in Usdl Strategy

Development of Usdl Strategy

November 2017

Utilise useful resources from other Local Authorities

Welfare Reform Project Officer

Usdl Strategy put in place prior to roll out of Universal Credit in November 2017. The strategy incorporated feedback from other local authorities.

**Aim 5: Helping to sustain tenancies**

Prevent homelessness by helping people to sustain their tenancies across all tenures through the increased provision of advice and support

To hold regular meetings with the Housing Benefit Team, Housing Management, Citizens Advice, Housing associations and other agencies.

To provide relevant advice or to signpost to the relevant agency including the Floating Support service.

To also work with key partners and stakeholders via the Homelessness Forum

Utilise Discretionary Housing Payment funds to mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform

0 homeless applications made as a result of welfare reform

Development of Usdl Strategy

Quarterly meetings of the Homelessness Forum

Spend 100% of allocated funds

October 2019

November 2017

March 2021

March 2021

Make use of the services provided by other stakeholders that help residents sustain their tenancies

Welfare Reform Project Officer

Housing Management

Housing Benefits

Housing Options Team Leader (Housing Demand)

Citizens Advice

Hightown Housing Association

Usdl Strategy put in place prior to roll out of Universal Credit in November 2017. The strategy involved meeting with other Departments and agencies.

All partners and staff aware of resources available to mitigate the impact of welfare reform.

Housing Benefit staff continue to be co-located at Job Centre to provide advice and assistance. This will include the promotion of Discretionary Housing Payment where appropriate.