



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 - 2028



**LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL**
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Foreword from our Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing

I am delighted to be able to introduce the new Homelessness Strategy for Lancaster District. It is important to note we have taken the unusual step of revising our strategy earlier than the necessary five-year interval. This reflects the impressive changes that have taken place here within homelessness provision. They have rendered the previous strategy in large part irrelevant.

Four years ago, the context of homeless provision was often scattered, largely reactive and even competitive. Things have changed because our thriving local partnership focuses on what is best and most effective in keeping people housed and getting rough sleepers off the streets for good. We now have key improvements; floating support, the nurse provision, Let's Be Friends and the SHIP project but we know there is far more to do to reach those in danger of homelessness earlier, to support mental health difficulties and to improve the endless problem of finding suitable, affordable accommodation.

My thanks go to council officers, but I acknowledge everybody in the district who contributed to the strategy and contributes every day to the work of getting and keeping people housed. The partnership between the city council, agencies and the third sector has brought renewed kindness and hope to many. With your help the new strategy will continue and extend that work.

Councillor Caroline Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Contents

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1. | Introduction | 4 |
| 2. | Progress since our last Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy | 6 |
| 3. | Our Ambition for the next five years | 8 |
| 4. | Summary of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review 2022/23 | 10 |
| 5. | Strategic Fit | 16 |
| 6. | Governance and Strategy Delivery | 18 |
| 7. | Relevant Links | 19 |
| 8. | Priorities and Actions | 20 |

1

Introduction



Lancaster's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2023-2028 has been developed during a period of national economic uncertainty. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the tightening housing market, typified by demand outstripping supply and rising rental costs, have combined with other underlying challenges affecting communities and public services, to have an impact on homelessness in our local area.

Demand for homelessness services has been rising in Lancaster and it is likely this will continue for two years or more, as low-income households in particular struggle to keep a foothold in the housing market. Helping people to find alternative suitable housing is increasingly difficult as the private rented sector becomes less affordable to those on low incomes and fewer social housing properties are available for rent. It can be more difficult for people who have experienced multiple disadvantage and complexity of needs.

Local, but increasingly national and global factors can play a large part in risks of homelessness and these factors are beyond the control of individual households at risk and those agencies working on homelessness locally. For example, the invasion of Ukraine and withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan have both resulted in the UK taking more refugees. Lancaster is playing a significant part in the County response, including finding homes for families and single people arriving in the area.

To ensure we are focused on clear priorities, designed to overcome some of the challenges and make continual improvement in our services to those who are or may be homeless, we decided to review homelessness in Lancaster and develop a new strategy only 3 years since our last strategy, 2 years earlier than was legally required.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to build on what is working well in our area, our local partnerships and our work with other District Councils and Lancashire County Council. We want to focus on the prevention of homelessness, making any episode of homelessness one that is short, and better meeting customer's needs so homelessness is not a feature of their lives. Our priorities need to be broad enough to have longevity, despite any change in trends, and actions will have to be reviewed routinely to adjust according to evidence based information. Where possible, we need to change what has not been working well, through together identifying and addressing barriers to continual improvement.

We have used data, other information, and feedback to review homelessness in the Lancaster City Council area, its causes and how these affect different groups of people in our communities. There is a lot of detail provided in our Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, which we undertook in the Autumn and Winter of 2022/23. The Review is available separately to this strategy document.

2

Progress since our last Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy



Over the last 3 years, which have been some of the most unpredictable and challenging times for the nation, Lancaster City Council, usually with the help and support of some of our partners, have continued to work on our priorities as set out in our previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Overall, our partners have told us that there is improved partnership working, in part because of our much closer joint working to assist people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness over the Covid-19 pandemic.

Examples of some of the progresses are:

- Everyone In - supporting people rough sleeping off the streets during the first lock down of the pandemic and helping to prevent rough sleeping for single people who were on the 'edge' of being roofless during the pandemic.
- Development of accommodation and support services to assist people recovering from rough sleeping, including new accommodation options and a befriending organisation run by people with lived experience of homelessness.
- There have been some developments in health provision for people who are rough sleeping or recovering from homelessness, for example:
 - A new Parish Nurse role has been established to work with people who are or have been rough sleeping on their health and well-being.
 - Establishing Health and Well-Being Coaches from Salt Ayre Leisure Centre to support homeless people in our supported housing schemes, and free gym passes are available to all those recovering from rough sleeping.
 - The Protect and Vaccinate Programme offered Covid-19 vaccinations to people who were formerly rough sleeping.
 - A multi-agency planning approach for people who are homeless and with complex or multiple needs who are in hospital, including the A&E Department
- A partnership in Lancaster and Morecambe is delivering Changing Futures, which is a government funded programme to pilot a new way of working on a voluntary basis with people experiencing multiple disadvantages, including homelessness. We have a multi-agency team in place, including a nurse practitioner.
- We have strengthened our day-to-day working relationships with local hospitals and with the National Probation Service, to try to reach people earlier who may be at high risk of homelessness on leaving either hospital or prison.
- The Home Improvement Agency within the Council works to prevent homelessness by helping people to stay in their own homes, through making improvements and adaptations.
- There is significantly more refuge and second stage accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, provided by SafeNet.
- There is a new 4 bed supported accommodation scheme specifically for LGBTQIA young people.
- Calico run an Accommodation Finding Service, working with local private landlords. They also provide floating support for people who have been rough sleeping to assist them in sustaining tenancies. The remit of the Accommodation Finding Service has been expanded to include other households who are at risk of homelessness.
- A number of new specialist functions have been created in the Housing Options Service - a Temporary Accommodation Officer, a Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer, and an additional Housing Options Prevention Officer. A private sector liaison officer is employed by Calico, assisting to source accommodation and build relationships with private landlords.
- Lancaster City Council has also funded a full-time homeless debt advisor at NLCAB.
- We are now part of a scheme called Help2Rent, which provides landlords with private accommodation free insurance packages for homeless households coming through the Housing Options Service
- Lancaster City Council with Preston City Council have been awarded £627,299 funding through the Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP). This is a 3-year national programme to improve non-commissioned supported housing provision where it is of poor quality and has been funded via 'exempt' Housing Benefit.

3



**Our ambition over
the next 5 years**



Our ambition is to end rough sleeping and significantly reduce the numbers of households having to present as homelessness in the Lancaster district; we aim to provide services which mean no one is sleeping rough due to a lack of support or accommodation being made available. We will do this by working in collaboration with our voluntary and statutory sector and with the voices of those with lived experience at the forefront of our commissioning decisions and good practice, ensuring the service is focussed on the prevention of homelessness and the service offered is tailored to meet local needs.

4



Summary of findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review undertaken in the Autumn and Winter of 2022/23

About Lancaster City Council area:

- The population of the Lancaster City Council area has grown by 3.3%, from 138,400 in 2011 to 142,900 in 2021 and is predicted to rise to 154,297 by 2032.
- Overall, the population has become older, with a slight decline in numbers aged under 50 and an increase in the numbers and proportion of the population aged over 50.
- Out of 317 local authority areas in England, Lancaster is in the third which are most deprived, based on a scoring of measures within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation
- The proportion of income needed to buy a house for those in the lowest quartile of earnings has almost doubled over the last 20 years, with properties in the lower end of the market costing an average of £132,500, a rise from around £40,000 in 2001.
- Private rented housing accounted for 21% of the housing market in the Lancaster City Council area in 2020, this has not changed since 2014. 10% of the housing market was social and affordable rented in 2020, again this has not changed.
- The number of people of working age claiming out of work benefits decreased from 5.4 % (5,405 people) in March 2020 to 2.8% (2,620 people) in August 2022.

Homelessness and its causes

- Homelessness applications have increased - in the first 3 months of 2021 there were 139 applications for assistance, but this had risen to 234 in the same period, in 2022. This is a rise of 62% and is in part a result of the impact of Covid-19, which led to temporary changes to the law on evictions resulting in fewer people moving during periods of lockdown.
- The most common causes of people being at risk of homelessness have changed in Lancaster, with ending of a tenancy in private rented sector driving more threats of homelessness in 2022 than the previous year. There have been changes in the private market, with higher demand as more landlords are selling up and leaving the market or seeking higher rents. The increase in evictions appears to be set to continue at the moment, based on the most available data.
- Family and friends being no longer willing or able to accommodate was the second most common reason where there was a threat of homelessness.
- The most common causes of people becoming homeless in 2022 are different – with ‘family and friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate’ being the most given reason. Domestic abuse, ending of a non-violent relationship and eviction from supported housing were also reasons which featured strongly in reasons for homelessness.
- It is widely expected that the pressures on low-income households as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and the lack of supply of accommodation which people can afford to rent, will increase the levels of homelessness. This is a national issue.

Which groups are at highest risk of homelessness?

- Single people are at higher risk of homelessness in Lancaster than those with children.
- Men are more likely to present as homeless than women. Most men in this position are single, whereas most women who are seeking assistance have dependent children.
- People aged between 25 and 44 are at much higher risk of homelessness than people aged over 45.
- Younger adults overall do not appear to be at greater risk, but this position is not straightforward to understand as the population includes a large proportion of students who are not from Lancaster. The extent of youth homelessness within the non-student population may well be slightly hidden as a result.
- Care leavers may be at higher risk of homelessness than other young people in Lancaster because referrals from Children’s Social Care are not made with sufficient notice to enable planned moves for looked after placements. This is an area that needs to be addressed.
- People who are not working are at much higher risk of homelessness than those in employment. A quarter of the working age population in Lancaster is not working for a range of reasons, including ill health, being unemployed, caring for children or being a student. Around 75% of homeless households are not in work.
- There is a strong link between poor physical and mental health and homelessness, with 38% of people self-reporting poor physical health or a disability and nearly half of all applicants reporting mental health issues. There are better joint working arrangements in place but still gaps, especially for those with mental health issues who have multiple or complex needs and need more direct access routes and responses to what are often significant unmet mental health needs.
- More data collection and analysis are needed to understand if people from different ethnic groups or with different sexual orientation identities are more at risk of homelessness locally.

People with support needs

- The 5 most common assessed support needs for people who were accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness in Quarter 4 2021/22 were:
 - mental health problems
 - physical ill health and disability
 - offending
 - rough sleeping
 - repeat homelessness.
- Domestic abuse also featured highly, with around 17% of all support needs relating to domestic abuse. The number seeking assistance with homelessness due to domestic abuse rose slightly from 14 to 17 households, between 2021 and 2022, based on numbers taken from January to March in both years.

Rough sleeping

- Early in the Covid-19 pandemic the Government instructed all councils to bring in off the streets all people rough sleeping. Within a few days in March 2020, 22 people in Lancaster were offered accommodation. By the end of Everyone In, 59 people had been assisted, not all of whom were rough sleeping, but at high risk of doing so.
- Despite our shared focus on ending rough sleeping, this is still a problem in Lancaster. At the last 'snapshot' in November 2022, 9 people were reported to be rough sleeping, a rise from 3 people on a single night in November 2021.
- Most people reported to be sleeping rough are men aged between 25 and 60.
- Over the last 3 years, the local authority has developed a much better understanding of rough sleeping in the area and ways to address this. There has been significant investment in local services, funded by central Government.
- There are a mixture of services providing outreach, short term supported accommodation, help to find and to keep a home, befriending and drop-in services. A partnership of voluntary and faith organisations, as well as housing associations, Lancaster City Council, Police, the National Probation Service and health agencies, all work together to support people away from rough sleeping.
- There are some new accommodation options for people who have been rough sleeping: A new Housing First pilot is under development. In the Summer of 2023 Jubilee Court opened - 12 units of 'second stage' self-contained accommodation. This is move - on from the first stage supported accommodation in Calico's Acorn Recovery Services (Portland Street, Mary Street, Aldcliffe House and Walter Lyon House). Jubilee Court has been commissioned by the Council and provided by Calico. This provision has been modelled so the rents are low and will therefore enable people to work.
- There is more focus on improving the physical and mental health of people who have experienced rough sleeping. Substance misuse services are accessible and available to people who need them, there is strong partnership working with local hospitals and there is a new Parish Nurse role and access to Health and Well-Being Coaches.
- Whilst this is positive there are still gaps in health provision for vulnerable people who are or have been homeless. There are significant issues accessing mental health services. There is no straightforward route into more specialist mental health services and there are no counselling services which people with more complex needs can easily engage with.
- Funding for Changing Futures was awarded for a 3-year period, but due to central Government delays in start times, this has reduced to around 26 months. The focus of this programme is on positive outcomes for people with multiple and complex needs, including finding and keeping a home.

Temporary Accommodation

- The number of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA) rose from 8 in March 2019 to 38 in March 2022. By June 2022 this had reduced to 28 households. This is a mixture of single people (13), households with dependent children (13) and two households which were neither of these groups.
- The most used type of Temporary Accommodation is Bed and Breakfast (B&B) which includes hotels. This is high cost for councils and tends to be of lower quality. More single people are placed into B&B as this type of accommodation is not suitable for families. It is unlawful for families to be placed in B&B when homeless for more than 6 weeks.
- Eight of the 28 households in TA were in stock owned by a housing association or by Lancaster City Council. This arrangement is more suitable for homelessness households whose homelessness is not resolved quickly and is also lower cost for the local authority.

Types of supported housing

- There are a range of types of supported accommodation in Lancaster and Morecambe to better meet the needs of different groups:
 - Young people aged 16 – 25, including a bespoke accommodation scheme for LGBTQIA young people.
 - Refuge and second stage accommodation for victims of domestic abuse
 - People who were formerly rough sleeping
 - Those recovering from addiction to alcohol or other substances.
 - People with complex needs
 - People with mental health problems
 - Some accommodation has shared facilities, and some is self-contained.
 - In addition, there is some 'floating support' available for people when they move into their own tenancies.

Settled accommodation - finding a home

- At the end of October 2022 there were 2,655 people on the housing register, a rise of 36% from 2019.
- Waiting times vary from a few months to several years. This is dependent on the level of priority awarded and types of housing that are in most demand. There has been a slowdown in the amount of vacant social housing each year, with around 8% of all stock being let, around 290 properties.
- A significant proportion of social housing lettings recently have been to older people, for Independent Living housing, as these were suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic to avoid the spread of infection.
- The demand for and cost of renting privately has risen in Lancaster City Council area. Some areas are more affordable for people who are on low incomes and may need to claim benefit for assistance with housing costs.
- Overall, there continues to be a shortfall between the amount of Local Housing Allowance which can be claimed, and the rent charged, with the difference being most significant for 1 bedroom and 3-bedroom properties. This makes access into the private rented sector challenging for those on low incomes.

Partnership working

- Lancaster City Council works with a wide range of other agencies to prevent and relieve homelessness in our area. A Homelessness Advisory Group has been established, with representatives from the public and voluntary sectors, as well as housing associations and private landlords.
- People with lived experience of homelessness are a key stakeholder as well in the Homelessness Advisory Group, through Let's Be Friends, a peer led organisation offering company and support to people who have experienced homelessness.
- Lancaster City Council works with Lancashire County Council and is party to some cross-borough working with neighbouring Councils on some homelessness and related initiatives – for example, young people and victims of domestic abuse.
- Whilst not an exhaustive list, the below sets out some of the key partners that Lancaster City Council works with to prevent and relieve homelessness and assist people in their recovery from homelessness.
 - Acorn Recovery
 - Barnardo's
 - Calico
 - Change Grow Live
 - Changing Futures
 - Citizen's Advice North Lancashire
 - SafeNet - services for victims of domestic abuse
 - Global Link Refugee Service
 - Jigsaw
 - Job Centre – Department for Work and Pensions
 - Lancaster and District Homeless Advice Service
 - Lancashire County Council
 - Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trust Foundation
 - Lancashire Police
 - Let's Be Friends
 - Methodist House
 - National Probation Service
 - Out in the Bay
 - The Salvation Army
 - University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust
 - The Well Communities
 - West End Impact



5

Strategic fit



The 2023 - 2028 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy reflects a number of local and national priorities:

National context:

The most recent Rough Sleeping Strategy, 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' was published by the Government in September 2022. The strategy aims to focus on 'prevent first' to stop more people rough sleeping in the future. Earlier identification of those who may be at risk of rough sleeping, prevention, and swift intervention to stop homelessness are key themes in the new strategy. The importance of partnerships between statutory and community sector partners and a more transparent and joined-up system are highlighted, so all partners are doing what they can to deliver these goals. There is an intention to reduce and end homelessness when people leave institutions like hospital and prison.

Government introduced new legislation to improve rates of preventing homelessness and to assist all households which are eligible and may be at risk of homelessness through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. One aim of the Act was to encourage more single people to approach for assistance, regardless of whether they have a priority need for accommodation or not.

Assistance on prevention of homelessness within 56 days has been in place since April 2018, to help eligible households to resolve a threat of homelessness. Some public bodies must, with consent, refer people under 'the duty to refer' to a housing options service, if they believe they may be at risk of homelessness.

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent in April 2021 and introduced some significant changes in homelessness, through the amending of Part 7 of Housing Act 1996, giving victims of domestic abuse a priority need for accommodation. The definition of domestic abuse, as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act has been incorporated into the homelessness legislation. Consequently, local authorities must ensure they can offer safe temporary accommodation to those fleeing domestic abuse and set out an annual strategy for doing so based on local needs.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) produced a report in February 2023, with several recommendations, to improve standards, these could be implemented during the lifetime of the Strategy and impact the expectation on private sector landlords.

Local context:

Lancaster Corporate Priorities 2030

There are some outcomes in the Corporate Plan which align directly with the Lancaster Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, for example:

- being focused on early intervention approaches and involving our communities in the service design and delivery
- (re) developing housing to ensure people of all incomes are comfortable and able to maintain their independence.
- Working in partnership with residents, local organisations, anchor institutions and partners, recognising the strength and skills in our community to build a powerful force working for our District.

Lancaster City Council's Homes Strategy 2020 – 2025 has set out a wide range of plans which indirectly and directly support work to prevent and relieve homelessness, in terms of improving the quality and quantity of affordable housing locally. Set out in the Strategy are plans to commence small scale social and affordable house building programmes, developing a new local authority owned housing company as a vehicle for achieving this, as well as measures to improve the energy efficiency of social housing and the overall quality of both social and private rented housing stock, working with other landlords to do so.

6

Governance and Delivery of the Strategy



The Homelessness Forum will oversee the delivery of this Strategy through developing an action plan, with timescales and leads for each action and monitoring the Plan quarterly. The Group is comprised of representatives from Lancaster City Council and a range of partner organisations from the public, voluntary and faith sectors, as well as people with lived experience, and some housing associations.

Lancaster City Council's Cabinet will be presented with an annual update on progress against the actions, any changes made to the Plan and the areas which are more challenging to address regarding delivery.

It is expected that priorities and actions within the Plan will change over the 5 years duration of the Strategy and any significant changes will be noted in the Strategy and Plan, updated accordingly, and published on-line.



7 Relevant Links

[Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Ending rough sleeping for good - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Housing strategy - Lancaster City Council](#)

[Corporate plan - Lancaster City Council](#)

8

Priorities
and Actions



FOR THE
NEXT 3 YEARS
(OCT 2023 – SEPT 2026)

PRIORITY AREA 1:

Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1.1 Encouraging people to contact us earlier if there is a housing need or risk of homelessness by:</p> <p>1.1.1 Updating our website to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information to people, with specific information aimed at different groups who are at high risk of homelessness.</p> | <p>Make Changes in Year 1</p> | <p>Homelessness Strategy Officer</p> | |
| <p>1.1.2 Supporting and updating partner agencies who work directly with or have 'touch points' with people where there may be a future risk of homelessness, so households get help earlier, understand the limitations of housing options locally and work with agencies to avoid a threat of homelessness.</p> | <p>Agree With Agencies Based on Agreed Priority Over Year 1 & 2</p> | <p>Homelessness Strategy Officer / Housing Options Manager</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A year on year increase in the proportion of households assisted whose homelessness is prevented. • A year on year increase in proportion of households where homelessness is prevented and which retain their accommodation. |
| <p>1.2 Mitigating risks of homelessness due to the Impact of the cost-of-living increases on vulnerable households by:</p> <p>1.2.1 Providing money advice services through the North Lancaster Citizen's Advice Bureau and support to households at risk of losing their home, including court desk services, due to cost-of-living crisis.</p> | <p>Years 1, 2 & 3</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / NLCAB</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the number and proportion of single people who become homeless whilst owed the prevention duty. • A higher number of referrals per year via the 'Duty to Refer.' • Lower numbers of households report the main cause of homelessness is leaving an institution. |
| <p>1.2.2 Working together to utilise available funding sources, including the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments, to prevent homelessness.</p> | <p>Deliver Through Years 1, 2 & 3</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / LCC Community Hub / Revs and Bens (Shared Service)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instances of repeat homelessness, including rough sleeping, are reduced. |
| <p>1.2.3 Enabling and supporting households living in social housing to 'downsize' where they have spare bedrooms, to reduce their household costs.</p> | <p>Years 1, 2 & 3</p> | <p>Council Housing Team / LCC Choice Based Lettings Team</p> | |
| <p>1.2.4 Working more closely with private landlords through a landlord offer of tangible solutions /problem solving where there is a risk of a Section 21 or Section 8 notice leading to homelessness.</p> | <p>Develop In Year 1 Options Available Years 2 & 3</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Housing Options Team / Private Sector Housing Team</p> | |

PRIORITY AREA 1:

Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1.2.5 Take pre-emptive action with Lancashire County Council to prevent repeat homelessness by identifying families with dependent children who seek assistance and have already had one or more episode of homelessness, ensuring a multi-agency approach as required. | Years 1, 2 & 3 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Housing Options Team | |
| 1.3 Increasing the number of single people where a threat of homelessness is prevented by: 1.3.1 Enhancing our prevention options/ tools for single people to ensure we offer solutions which are bespoke and innovative, and which enable people, including victims of domestic abuse, to retain their accommodation wherever possible. | DEVELOP IN YEAR 1. OPTIONS AVAILABLE YEARS 2 & 3 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Housing Options Team | |
| 1.3.2 Developing incentivised 'planned move' options for some single people who cannot remain in their current accommodation long term, so they avoid the cliff edge of homelessness. | Develop In Year 1. Options Available Years 2 & 3 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer | |
| 1.3.3 Reviewing with partners the effectiveness of joint protocols, the use of Duty to Refer and working arrangements for people who are leaving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority Care • Hospital • Prison • The Armed Forces • Relationships which feature domestic abuse | Review And Update in Years 1, 2 & 3 Based on Current Effectiveness | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Lancashire County Council (Social Care) / NHS Foundation Trust / Lancaster Farms (Prison Service) / Armed Forces links including named LCC Officer / MARAC partners | |

PRIORITY AREA 2: Intervention to relieve homelessness and rough sleeping

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>2.1 Improving options and access into the Private Rented Sector by:</p> <p>2.1.1 Working with Calico to review, enhance and promote the package of financial and other incentives for private landlords, including specific incentives for 12 month lets, which enable the main housing duty to be ended, more floating support for tenants if needed; a Landlord Forum for improved communication and contingency plans for tenancies which are at high risk of failure.</p> | Review In Year 1 And Implement in Year 2 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Calico | |
| <p>2.1.2 Increasing the speed and efficiency of provision of rent in advance and deposits to landlords through transferring some of the Homelessness Prevention funding from Lancaster City Council to Calico's Accommodation Finding Service</p> | Decide in Year 1 And Allocate Funding | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Calico | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A year on year increase in proportion of households assisted whose homelessness is relieved. |
| <p>2.2 Developing more access to social renting options in Lancaster by:</p> <p>2.2.1 Building of new social housing, as set out in the 2020-2025 Lancaster Homes Strategy.</p> | Years 1, 2 & 3 | Principal Housing Strategy Officer / Head of Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in use of B&B for families. No families in B&B for more than 6 weeks. TA portfolio is more balanced, with less use of B&B overall and minimal use of B&B for families. |
| <p>2.2.2 Continuing to ensure there is flexibility and discretion to allow for direct lets into social housing to households in Temporary Accommodation or supported housing</p> | Years 1, 2 & 3 | LCC Choice Based Lettings Team / Housing Options Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decrease in eviction from supported housing being the cause of homelessness over the next 5 years. |
| <p>2.3 Lowering numbers of single people approaching as already homeless by:</p> <p>2.3.1 Creating with partners a Lancaster 'minimum service offer' of practical assistance and support for people who were formerly rough sleeping and are now re-settling, to reduce risks of repeat homelessness.</p> | Develop In Year 1 And Implement in Year 2 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved rates of successful relief of homelessness for single people. |
| <p>2.3.2 Reviewing and improving the package of relief tools/options for single people who are not rough sleeping and do not have a priority need for accommodation or support needs, e.g., mediation with family /friends, practical assistance to access short- term/ emergency accommodation which is safe and suitable.</p> | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer | |

PRIORITY AREA 2: Intervention to relieve homelessness and rough sleeping

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 2.3.3 Reviewing as a partnership the need for emergency/off the street options for people who are rough sleeping and if this is a gap, how this could be best addressed. | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer | |
| 2.3.4 Establishing and embedding multi-agency contingency planning for people with multiple disadvantage /complex needs, including victims of domestic abuse, who have been rough sleeping, are rehoused but at risk of eviction and rough sleeping again. | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer | |
| 2.3.5 Reducing rates of eviction from supported housing as a cause of homelessness through agreeing a pre-eviction protocol with commissioners of supported accommodation and providers | Develop And Implement in Year 2 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Lancashire County Council / Supported Accommodation Providers | |

PRIORITY AREA 3: Recovery from homelessness and rough sleeping

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>3.1 Ensuring every person sleeping rough receives the support they need to recover and move away from the streets long-term, helping them set up a stable home, and move into work or training if they can by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from the Changing Futures Programme and shaping services based on what is working well. • Continuing to improve what is already working well in meeting the health needs of people formerly rough sleeping. • Undertaking with Health partners and other stakeholders, including people with lived experience, a Joint Needs Analysis - to cover physical and in particular mental health & well-being, relating to people recovering from rough sleeping and using this as the basis for planning. • Setting up and opening the Housing First provision and support for people with multiple and complex needs recovering from rough sleeping • Working with Calico to open Jubilee Court as second -stage low cost rented housing for up to 12 people formerly rough sleeping, so they can enter work/training and afford to pay the rent. • Developing further the partnership with the Job Centre to support people recovering from rough sleeping to take up work experience and/or paid employment or apprenticeships. • Continuing to fund Let's Be Friends and support other work which offers peer support and company to people recovering from rough sleeping, as well as lived experience expertise and insights. | <p>On-Going In Years 1 & 2</p> <p>On-Going In Years 1, 2 & 3</p> <p>Set Up and Complete Audit in Year 1. Planning Agreed to Address Gaps in Provision Year 2. Changes To Access Routes/ Additional Services</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>On-Going Through Years 1, 2 & 3</p> <p>On-Going Through Years 1, 2 & 3</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Calico</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instances of repeat homelessness, including rough sleeping, are reduced. |

PRIORITY AREA 3: Recovery from homelessness and rough sleeping

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| <p>3.2 Assisting other homeless households, including families, to recover from homelessness and minimise risks of any repeat homelessness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local multi-agency offer for resettlement support to victims of domestic abuse leaving SafeNet or other refuge provision and returning to the area. • Incentivising and supporting households to seek employment once homelessness is relieved, through discretionary short-term topping up of private sector rents where there is a shortfall for people who are in work or actively seeking work. | <p>Develop In Year 2</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Job Centre</p> | |

PRIORITY AREA 4: Underlying improvements to reducing homelessness in Lancaster and improving our services locally

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>4.1 Improving partnership working through the Homelessness Forum and other networks/ groups in Lancaster by:</p> <p>4.1.1 Establishing joint planning and improved communication within the Homelessness Forum by sharing of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homelessness & rough sleeping statistics • other related data from partner agencies • customer feedback • local/regional/national policy changes • what is working well. • analysis and other business intelligence insights | <p>Review In Year 1 And Implement in Year 2</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners and stakeholders report improved joint working around homelessness. • H-CLIC returns are submitted and published in full, with significantly reduced use of 'catch all' categories e.g. 'Not Known' or 'Other' • Rough sleeping reporting is a standing agenda item on the Homelessness Advisory Group/ Homelessness Forum • Business intelligence reporting and analysis is a standing item on the agenda for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Options meetings • Homelessness Forum • Homeless Advisory Group meetings |
| <p>4.1.2 Ensuring the voices and insights of people who have lived experience through Let's Be Friends and other routes/ forums are at the heart of service planning and improvements.</p> | <p>Establish In Year 1</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Lets Be Friends / other lived experience groups e.g., young people, families</p> | |
| <p>4.1.3 Supporting and retaining the local workforce (staff working in public sector, voluntary, community and faith-based services) through agreed shared training needs and holding shared training events</p> | <p>Programme Of Training in Place by End of Year 1</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Homelessness Forum / Homelessness Advisory Group</p> | |
| <p>4.2 Improving the performance of the Council's work on homelessness and rough sleeping by:</p> <p>4.2.1 Reviewing Temporary Accommodation (TA) to better project future demand, reduce use of B&B and consider options for a more flexible portfolio of suitable TA which also represents better value for money.</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | <p>Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer</p> | |

PRIORITY AREA 4: Underlying improvements to reducing homelessness in Lancaster and improving our services locally

| What will we be doing and when? | Timescales | Responsible Officer/ Service | How will we know if actions are having an impact? |
|---|-------------|--|---|
| 4.2.2 Reviewing and clarifying roles, responsibilities, workflow, and key processes and amend within the different functions of the Housing Options Service and in work with the Choice Based Lettings service. | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / LCC Choice Based Lettings Team | |
| 4.2.3 Developing an internal workforce strategy to retain and develop Housing Options Service officers | Years 1 & 2 | Housing Options Manager | |
| 4.2.4 Building a team culture of learning, confidence, support, and inclusion through a blend of all the team working both remotely at agreed times, and in person in the Town Hall and with other agencies. | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager / Housing Options Team | |
| 4.2.5 Undertaking dip sampling of cases to improve casework recording | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager | |
| 4.2.6 Agreeing a set of performance targets for the Team and service standards residents can expect from Lancaster's Housing Options Services to work towards around improving prevention and relief of homelessness and reducing rough sleeping. | Year 1 | Housing Options Manager | |

