Liverpool’s Homelessness Strategy
2016-2020

If you see a rough sleeper you can help by calling the helpline
0300 123 2041 and support will be offered.
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Cabinet Member’s foreword

Our purpose as a council is to serve and represent the interests of Liverpool’s citizens and communities and to ensure that we provide or commission the best possible services for our residents, particularly the most vulnerable. In particular, we aim to ensure that we have a strong, clear approach to support people in Liverpool who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

We and our partners have made great progress in reducing homelessness and rough sleeping despite the challenging economic climate. More people than ever before are contacting the council for help with housing issues and our Housing Options Service continues to focus on preventing homelessness whenever possible, working hard to keep people in their own homes. In the instances where we are unable to prevent someone becoming homeless we have excellent temporary accommodation available and can find people new homes as soon as possible.

We have a small number of people rough sleeping, street drinking and begging in the city centre and we have specialist services to support them to move away from the street lifestyle.

We fully embrace the concept of “No Second Night Out” and we have a range of services in place, including emergency accommodation, so that no-one needs to sleep rough in our city. We also have a specialist service for people who have complex needs, Liverpool Waves of Hope, funded by £10m of Big Lottery funding.

However, we know that we can still do more and I am delighted to introduce this strategy. It sets out the actions we will take over the next four years to help prevent even more people from becoming homeless and increase the support for those who are struggling financially or have specific needs.

Councillor Frank Hont
Cabinet Member for Housing
Liverpool City Council
Executive summary

This strategy sets out the future actions that will be taken in Liverpool to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping over the next four years. We recognise that much has been achieved throughout the life of the last strategy, including:

- The introduction of No Second Night Out
- The introduction of MainStay which acts as our gateway to housing and support services
- Improvements in the quality of supported housing through capital investment.

These achievements are set against a difficult economic climate when resources have been diminishing, whilst, at the same time, more and more people need help with housing issues. Liverpool City Council's (LCC) Housing Options Service has seen an increase of 26 per cent in customer contacts since 2010/11 and has continued to focus on preventing as many people from becoming homeless as possible.

Prevention and early intervention will continue to be our focus over the next four years, as we recognise that there is still more that we can do, particularly in terms of developing different ways of preventing homelessness and providing support to enable people to become more financially resilient. We will also continue to focus on those people with complex needs who need specialist help.

The strategy has been based on extensive consultation and research with stakeholders, partners and service users and has three clear priorities:

1. Adopt an early prevention and intervention approach directed particularly towards single people and childless couples
2. Develop and encourage economic resilience, including through access to affordable settled housing
3. Address the needs of people who are homeless and have complex needs.

As with previous strategies, LCC recognises that it cannot solve homelessness by itself and that homelessness is an issue that should be owned by all services, businesses and communities. It is essential that all stakeholders in Liverpool, including those whose remit is to work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, work together with LCC to achieve this strategy's priorities.
1. Introduction

1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every council in England to develop and publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years. This is the fourth homelessness strategy for Liverpool and it has been developed in conjunction with people who are homeless or potentially homeless and the city’s key statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

1.2 This strategy sets out LCC’s aim to tackle and prevent homelessness across the city and details how LCC will continue to work in partnership to provide housing options and homelessness services for the people of Liverpool over the next four years.

1.3 Our priorities for this strategy are to:
   a. Adopt an early prevention and intervention approach directed particularly towards single people and childless couples
   b. Develop and encourage economic resilience, including through access to affordable settled housing
   c. Address the needs of people who are homeless and have complex needs.

1.4. As with previous strategies, LCC recognises that it cannot solve homelessness by itself and that homelessness is an issue that should be owned by all services, businesses and communities. It is essential that all stakeholders in Liverpool, including those whose remit it is to work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, work together with LCC to achieve this strategy’s priorities.

2. The national context

2.1 This strategy has been developed in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011, Welfare Reform Act 2012, government guidance from the Code of Guidance 2007, and Ministerial Working Group papers, “Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to tackling homelessness” and “A vision to end rough sleeping.”

2.2 The government’s specific agenda for homelessness is to tackle the complex underlying causes of homelessness, have earlier prevention interventions and provide an integrated approach to services.

2.3 This is, however, set against a backdrop of decreasing resources and increasing need. There has been an increase in levels of homelessness across the country, and an increase in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Whilst levels of mortgage repossessions have not risen as dramatically as they have in previous recessions (due predominately to low interest rates), stagnation in the construction industry and the withdrawal of the private rented sector from accepting local authority nominations have increased pressure in all areas. This can be seen in a reduced turnover in the social rented sector and an overall rise in homelessness.

2.4 The Localism Act 2011 has provided greater flexibility in the way local services are delivered and the way in which social housing can be allocated. New freedoms are available which allow local authorities to make greater use of the private rented sector in order to discharge their homelessness duties.

2.5 Since the enactment of the Localism Act in 2012, local authorities have been able to discharge their homelessness duty by offering a homeless applicant a suitable property let on an assured shorthold tenancy for a minimum of 12 months from a private landlord. The former position, where an applicant could refuse an assured shorthold tenancy without losing his or her entitlement no longer applies.

2.6 There is now a right to further accommodation on re-application during the period of two years following acceptance of a private sector offer, even if the applicant lost his or her priority need while in the accommodation. There is also a duty to ensure that any such offers are suitable, including ensuring they are affordable.
2.7 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 which has a focus on reducing worklessness and the overall cost of benefits, has also had a negative impact on homelessness through the changes to benefits, the introduction of sanctions and the introduction of Universal Credit, which replaces Housing Benefit for new claimants.

2.8 The strategy has also taken into account the Care Act 2014 which sets out a stronger focus on prevention and a duty to integrate care with health-related provision and highlights the role key sectors such as housing can play.

3. The regional context

3.1 The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and includes the Mayor of Liverpool, the five local authority leaders of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral councils, and the chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

3.2 On 17 November 2015, the LCR Combined Authority agreed proposals for a devolution of particular powers with government which will draw down powers and resources to the LCR. This deal sets out the new powers and budgets that we believe should be devolved from central government to help us strengthen our economy, create new jobs and improve our public services.

3.3 Adult Services and Health, which is the LCC directorate where homelessness and the Housing Options Service sits, are not included in the first part of the programme so there is unlikely to be any immediate changes to these services. In the future, however, there may be some changes to the way these services are delivered across the LCR.

3.4 Whilst these services are not included in the first phase of devolution, there is a positive foundation for joint working on both commissioning of services and homelessness across the LCR. Homelessness leads across the LCR have been working together over the span of the previous homelessness strategy on a range of regional initiatives including No Second Night Out (NSNO), the roll-out of MainStay and commissioning of a cross-authority intensive support service.

4. The local context

The strategic context:

4.1 The strategy has been written, taking into account the larger local strategic context of:

- The Mayor's Priorities for Liverpool
- The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF)
- The Public Health Outcomes Framework
- Healthy Liverpool Programme.

4.2 We have also taken into account LCC’s Allocation’s Policy and Tenancy Strategy, although the tenancy strategy is currently being reviewed and the new strategy will be on an LCR footprint. This will be timely as at the time of writing the Housing and Planning Bill has been approved by the House of Commons and is going through the House of Lords. This Bill, if enacted, will have significant impact on security of tenure for tenants.

4.3 The Mayoral commitment to building new homes and refurbishing empty homes to improve housing opportunities for Liverpool’s communities continues to be a key priority. This will include co-ordinating activities to make sure communities are more self-sustainable, with the right homes in the right place and increased home ownership. The Housing Strategy 2013–16 sets out ten strategic priorities:
• Housing to support economic growth
• Improving housing choice
• Providing affordable homes
• Tackling empty homes
• Improving housing standards
• Making homes energy efficient and tackling fuel poverty
• Helping vulnerable households
• Improving access to housing
• Preventing homelessness
• Equalities in housing.

4.4 During 2015, a strategic housing market assessment was undertaken to inform the review of the current housing strategy and again there will be opportunities to develop a LCR approach.

4.5 In Liverpool, the Health and Wellbeing Board is committed to an integrated health, wellbeing and social care system that eliminates the health inequalities faced by our communities. This is strongly evidenced in the Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group’s (CCG) Healthy Liverpool Programme which aims to deliver service improvements and better outcomes for patients, service users, carers and families and a local health system that is sustainable. Adult Services and Health supports this approach focusing on the principles of “Right Care”, ensuring that care and support is personalised and delivered in the right setting. This includes a strong focus on prevention, working at a community and neighbourhood level to promote self-care, advocacy, and supporting people to live as independently as possible.

4.6 Homelessness services are at the forefront of this approach and have a track record of delivering integrated approaches that both address the holistic needs of service users and strongly promote independence. This will now be further enhanced through a closer working relationship between health and homelessness services. There is now an integrated commissioning team between Adult Services and Health and Liverpool CCG which is led by one programme director. Commissioning for homelessness and complex needs will form part of this function providing opportunities to realign pathways, improve outcomes and enable a seamless approach to commissioning services, making best use of resources and funding which will result in better value for money.

4.7 However, our aspirations in relation to housing, homelessness and health and wellbeing have to be delivered in a decreasing financial envelope. Liverpool, like all local authorities, has experienced significant funding pressures. Since 2010 we have experienced a £330m reduction in funding from central government, which equates to 58 per cent of LCC’s overall budget. This has had a profound impact on the ability to maintain services and new services cannot be funded without savings elsewhere. This economic
situation has put pressure on all aspects of council provision including homelessness and the Housing Options Services. LCC will, of course, continue to deliver its statutory services, however there is a clear acknowledgement that non-statutory services are under increasing pressure.

4.8 However, there is a clear commitment to tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in the city which is demonstrated by the amount of internal investment in specific services, including non-statutory services to prevent and reduce homelessness (£12.4m approximately in 2015/16).

4.9 The financial pressures have driven an increasingly innovative culture regarding funding and contracting models. For example, a significant amount of external funding has been brought into the city, through initiatives such as the Liverpool Waves of Hope project which received approximately £10m funding from the Big Lottery and approximately £900,000 has been secured for regional homeless initiatives via the Help for Single Homelessness fund from the Department for Communities and Local Government. LCC has also supported local providers to leverage social investment via the Fair Chance Fund providing outcomes for young people at risk of homelessness. Most of this funding required LCC’s support but was directed at registered providers and the voluntary sector. Exploring external funding and alternative financial models such as social investment will continue to be a key priority going forward.

Need / Household Profile

4.10 We have, as per the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, carried out an extensive review of the nature and extent of homelessness within Liverpool and have taken into account the main findings in putting together this strategy. The review included:

- Engagement with over 104 service users
- Seventy-eight participants from 55 agencies contributed to a workshop and 44 agencies responded to an online survey. One-to-one conversations were also held with many of these agencies, by telephone or during service visits
- A review of the national and local drivers for homelessness and the shape of the response locally
- An analysis of a wide range of data to understand the homelessness picture in Liverpool
- A mapping exercise of services, based on conversations and information provided by organisations
- A review of positive practice in Liverpool and elsewhere.

4.11 The full review is very detailed and is available to view on www.liverpool.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing/homelessness-strategy/ so only the headlines will be repeated here.

4.12 The review has clearly identified that during the life of the last strategy (2011/2015), much has been achieved. When the previous homelessness strategy was being developed in 2011, it was anticipated that there would be some pressures around funding, therefore its aims were to increase prevention and reduce the amount of temporary accommodation. There would also be a focus on improving the quality of the physical environment and making better use of accommodation through a gateway approach, whilst at the same time introducing a NSNO commitment to reducing rough sleeping.

4.13 Although at that time no-one could have predicted the scale of the reductions to LCC’s overall budget and despite the significant financial pressures, the previous strategy’s aims have been achieved.
4.14 Our focus on preventing homelessness continues and we were contacted 6,306 times by members of the public during 2014/15 about homelessness issues. This is an increase from 2010/11 of 26 per cent.

4.15 From 2010/11 to 2014/15, the number of prevention interventions has almost doubled from 999 in 2010/11 to 1,852 in 2014/15.

4.16 The number of statutory homeless assessments and decisions made has decreased accordingly. There were 610 assessments during 2010/11 compared with 271 in 2014/15, a decrease of 56 per cent. This was the intention of the last strategy as we were aware that the more households we prevented from becoming homeless, the fewer statutory assessments we would need to do. We strongly believe that preventing homelessness in the first instance is a much better outcome for Liverpool’s citizens.

4.17 However, there will continue to be occasions when we cannot prevent a household becoming homeless. The main reasons for homelessness is a violent breakdown of a relationship and households being required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support. On the whole, it is lone parents and single people who are becoming homeless because of violent relationship breakdown.

4.18 There are roughly twice as many families with children than single-person households becoming homeless due to being required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support.

4.19 Family reunions for former asylum seekers have increased demand for temporary accommodation to the point where we have occasionally used bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families for short periods of time and never for more than six weeks.

4.20 We are aware that there is often a delay between the introduction of welfare reform and the impact on homelessness as households do not initially seek help, especially in Core Cities like Liverpool. However, we do anticipate that as the reforms continue to be implemented there will be households that have previously not had any contact with homeless services who will approach us for help, often at crisis point. We will continue to work with housing associations, advice and information agencies, and the Department for Work and Pensions to improve the financial resilience and ensure we have a service offer in place for these households.

4.21 One of the key priorities from the last homelessness strategy was to introduce common access to short-term temporary accommodation and other support services. MainStay was introduced in Liverpool in 2013 to improve, simplify and streamline access into services. Initially, this was aimed at temporary accommodation services for single people (hostels and supported housing), but more recently has been expanded to include domestic violence refuges, floating support and outreach services.
4.22 This system has allowed us to understand more about the homeless population particularly single homelessness. During 2014/15 there were 1,850 assessments for accommodation completed via MainStay. Most of these are single people who are unlikely to have a priority need. Of these people:

- Seventy-eight per cent were men
- No 16 year olds were assessed
- Eighteen were aged 17
- Three hundred and thirty-five were aged 21 and under
- Under 2 per cent said they were in full-time work
- Forty-eight per cent (1,244) said they had current mental health issues and almost half (47 per cent) said they had been assessed by a psychiatrist
- Fifty-six per cent said they had criminal convictions and 44 per cent said their convictions were for violent offences
- Thirty-two per cent said they had problems with alcohol misuse with 40 per cent (328) of these using daily and 45 per cent said they had previously had treatment
- Twenty-four per cent said they were currently using drugs and 29 per cent said they had been in treatment
- Thirty per cent said they used alcohol also said they used drugs.

4.23 Rough sleeping has increased from eight in the 2014 official count to 15 in the 2015 official count. LCC is very aware that this is a snapshot and does not reflect the true extent of rough sleeping within the area, however, it is a consistent method of measuring rough sleeping over time, and counts have taken place at least yearly since 1998.

4.24 Of the 15 people officially counted rough sleeping in 2015, seven were from eastern Europe and had no recourse to public funds, four were from the wider city region, (three from Wirral and one from Sefton).

Supply of services and housing

4.25 LCC and our partners commission and undertake a range of activities to support people who are affected by homelessness and associated issues. These fall into three categories:

- Homelessness prevention and community support
- Temporary accommodation and supported housing
- Support for rough sleepers and people with complex needs.

4.26 As part of our focus on prevention, LCC commissions floating support services, which work to assist people in the community who are at risk of homelessness or who may have other support needs. These services have been recently re-commissioned to provide homelessness prevention and wellbeing interventions using a tiered-model approach across three geographical areas: north, south and central, with the central service also delivering a city-wide resettlement service. Support can be delivered at home, over the telephone, at a drop-in session or in other community settings.

4.27 These services will work to assist people who are at risk of homelessness or who may have other support needs to, for example:

- Maintain their accommodation and avoid eviction
- Access health or other support services
- Manage debts or other outgoings
- Improve their physical/mental health, or address any substance misuse issues.
4.28 In addition, we have a range of preventative services for people who have experienced domestic abuse as follows:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)
- Advice and information
- Target hardening
- Telecare, which provides additional security and reassurance through the provision of assistive technology (via sensors in the home) linked to a 24/7 monitoring and response centre.

4.29 LCC has also recently re-commissioned a range of temporary accommodation services for single people who are homeless and who have a range of underlying support needs. In total, there will be approximately 700 bed spaces of temporary accommodation/supported housing for single people who are homeless. This will include:

- Hostels staffed 24 hours a day and dispersed accommodation with support for people with lower-level support needs or those who need to move on
- Supported housing provision for people aged from 16 to 21 who are homeless
- Provision for people with an offending background or other complex support needs
- A service for people who are homeless who have complex support needs and who also need personal care.

4.30 This provision is accessed through the MainStay gateway system or the Housing Options Service depending on a person’s individual circumstances.

4.31 We also commission temporary accommodation with support for families who are homeless due to a range of reasons. This includes:

- Self-contained flats with onsite 24-hour support for families at risk of homelessness
- Domestic violence refuges that offer self-contained accommodation coupled with onsite support services
- Supported housing for teenage parents.

4.32 However, we recognise there are still gaps in provision in relation to domestic violence accommodation solutions and therefore we will be developing a number of units of dispersed accommodation to meet identified needs.
4.33 We continue to have a strong NSNO approach to tackling rough sleeping. A range of support for people sleeping rough, street drinking and begging are delivered by the Urban Outreach and Response Service (UROS). This is a jointly-funded service commissioned in partnership between Adult Services and Health and Public Health and which, from April 2015, brought together a number of different arrangements and separately funded contracts into a single service. The range of interventions offered by this service includes:

- Assertive outreach including hospital discharge coverage at the Royal Liverpool Hospital
- Needs assessment and support planning, leading to personalised solutions for service users
- A NSNO and cold weather response for rough sleepers
- Building-based provision for partnership working with universal and specialist agencies such as health
- Support to access longer-term placements and/or specialist services where appropriate.

4.34 In September 2014, Liverpool was selected by the Big Lottery Fulfilling Lives programme to receive £10m to “transform the landscape for people with multiple and complex needs including homelessness, reoffending, substance misuse and mental ill-health in the city” over a period of five years. The funding is being used to develop the Liverpool Waves of Hope (LWoH) Programme with Plus Dane Housing Association, as the accountable body, working with statutory partners and stakeholders to oversee partnership and delivery arrangements for the programme.

4.35 LWoH is delivered by a multi-agency partnership that works to provide a co-ordinated and holistic service for service users. The project has five broad elements:

- Intensive support service delivered by Riverside Housing
- Accommodation-based service delivered by Liverpool YMCA
- Peer mentor service delivered by Whitechapel Centre
- New Beginnings delivered by Whitechapel Centre
- Independent user engagement service delivered by Big Life.

Key public sector agencies in Liverpool are working closely with LWoH to ensure that learning around complex needs service delivery is disseminated and to stimulate and embed wider systems change.

4.36 Whilst we have a positive range of temporary accommodation, access to permanent housing is key in reducing homelessness. There is a very good relationship between homelessness and allocations, and waiting times for social rented properties have decreased. In 2013/14 there were 73 properties let to homeless cases who placed a bid via the sub-regional choice-based lettings system. Of these, 19 were signed up and tenancy date was within two weeks, 24 were four weeks or less, 30 longer than four weeks but 16 were done in five weeks and the remainder were 15 weeks at the longest.

4.37 There are sufficient properties advertised through the choice-based letting scheme, however, there is a need for larger properties to rehouse larger families and these very rarely become available in the social housing sector.
5. Procuring and allocating accommodation to homeless households

5.1 All temporary accommodation for statutory homeless households is commissioned and procured in accordance with LCC’s financial standing orders and public contract regulations. There are clear contracts in place with providers which are currently for up to four years and these reflect LCC’s statutory obligations under both the Housing Act 1996 Act and the Children’s Act 2004.

5.2 LCC has a strong commitment to reducing and eradicating the use of bed and breakfast for homeless people and tries to avoid this whenever possible. However, in the event that all other temporary accommodation is full and there is no alternative but to use bed and breakfast accommodation, this is sourced through LCC’s approved supplier. It is important to note that when we do use bed and breakfast accommodation, it is for the shortest time possible and never for more than six weeks.

5.3 All accommodation for homeless households, whether temporary or to discharge duty, is allocated on the basis of need versus supply. In general, all statutory homeless families who require temporary accommodation will be placed in Belvidere Family Centre. In the event that this centre is full and there are no other options available to the household, such as refuge accommodation or temporary dispersed tenancies, bed and breakfast accommodation will be used.

5.4 All statutory homeless single people will access temporary accommodation through MainStay and the property allocated will be in line with MainStay’s allocation scheme and the vacancies available. Statutory homeless households receive the maximum priority on the MainStay system.

5.5 In discharging our statutory duty, we have until now used only the social housing sector, however, as part of this strategy we intend to make use of the new powers made available to local authorities through the Localism Act 2011, to develop and implement a private rented sector offer (PRS0) policy, and thus also be able to discharge duty into the private rented sector.

5.6 Determining how duty is discharged will be based on how the household’s need (family size, location, affordability etc) compares with the properties available either in the social sector or the private rented sector and which type of property will be available first.
6. Our strategic priorities

6.1 The key findings from the review fall into three areas which have formed our strategic priorities:

a. Adopt an early prevention and intervention approach directed particularly towards single people and childless couples
b. Develop and encourage economic resilience, including through access to affordable settled housing
c. Address the needs of people who are homeless and have complex needs.

Adopt an early prevention and intervention approach directed particularly towards single people and childless couples

6.2 The review has identified that although there is a wide range of housing and homelessness services within Liverpool, there is still a lot of scope to prevent more people from becoming homeless through the development of a no-wrong-door approach.

6.3 It has also been identified that it is not clear where to go for help if someone has a housing need. There is some evidence that single people in particular end up accessing homelessness accommodation through MainStay without first seeking any advice to prevent their homelessness.

6.4 There are also some operational concerns about the impact of closing some of LCC’s One Stop Shops, and the lack of interview facilities and reduced hours at others, is having on the accessibility of the Housing Options Service.

6.5 It is clear that there is a need to promote the prevention initiatives which are available for people experiencing domestic abuse to enable them to stay in their own home when it is safe to do so.

6.6 There is clear value in continuing with our NSNO approach to tackling rough sleeping.

6.7 Our key actions for this strategic priority are to:

- Develop a hub/one stop shop for homelessness, in one central location to provide homelessness-related advice and access to services
- Establish a clear pathway for accessing the Housing Options Service, advice, accommodation-based services, and floating support which takes into account the needs of all groups including military veterans and young people
- Introduce Housing Options Service drop-in sessions in community locations
- Modernise and improve the delivery of the Housing Options Service
- Develop and implement a communication strategy to publicise how to access the Housing Options Service and other services with a no-wrong-door approach
- Co-ordinate the delivery of the Housing Options Service and MainStay to ensure that we are not missing opportunities to prevent homelessness for people approaching MainStay for accommodation
- Ensure there is a range of accommodation and prevention options available for people experiencing domestic abuse
- Continue to provide a NSNO approach to preventing and reducing rough sleeping
- Increase the joint working between enforcement teams and support/outreach teams to reduce rough sleeping, street drinking and begging in the city centre.

Develop and encourage economic resilience, including through access to affordable settled housing

6.8 The review has identified that it is not clear where to find advice about money and debts in Liverpool.

6.9 There is a need to support people to set up bank accounts and to be digitally included.
6.10 We are concerned about the length of time it can take refugee families to be given their National Insurance numbers when they are given leave to remain as this impacts on their ability to claim Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance and move into settled accommodation. It also results in these families accruing rent arrears in temporary accommodation.

6.11 This issue adds to the existing pressure on temporary accommodation for families which operates at maximum capacity, causing LCC to have to use bed and breakfast accommodation for families who subsequently present as homeless.

6.12 There is considerable and unmet demand for affordable and good quality smaller accommodation (shared and one bed). This results in some single people without support needs accessing temporary accommodation (at a cost to LCC) just because they need somewhere to live. There is a need to improve the housing offer across the social and private sector for these households.

6.13 People who have not previously held a tenancy will often find it difficult and expensive to establish a home that they want to be in, but this is really important in preventing a cycle of homelessness. Short-term accommodation providers could do more to help people to prepare for a tenancy by encouraging them to set up a credit union account and start saving.

6.14 Social landlords could consider making different use of unpopular properties by letting these as shared tenancies, targeted towards people in temporary accommodation or living with friends and relatives. This would tackle longer void times and provide an affordable housing solution for people who need it most.

6.15 There are opportunities to make better use of the private rented sector for all homeless households, including statutory homeless cases. There are already a number of successful private sector bond schemes in the city, including the scheme operated by the Housing Options Service. All services can better support the prevention of homelessness or improve planned move on through accessing good quality private accommodation. LCC will continue to promote the use of the bond scheme and will adopt the PRSO policy to enable the rehousing of some statutory homeless households.

6.16 It is currently anticipated that at some point in 2017 new claims for Housing Benefit from working-age customers will cease. Instead new claims will have to be for Universal Credit which is normally claimed online and paid as a single payment around one month in arrears. From 2018 existing Housing Benefit claimants will have their claims migrated to Universal Credit over a three-year period up until 2021.

6.17 Some customers will need support with going online or personal budgeting to ensure they are paid their housing costs and avoid rent arrears. Other customers may need help in securing an alternative payment arrangement with the Department for Work and Pensions, where the housing element of their Universal Credit is paid directly to their landlord.

6.18 There are currently around 41,000 working-age Housing Benefit recipients in Liverpool. It will be important to develop a robust advice model, working closely with partners including social landlords, to deliver advice and support and prevent escalating rent arrears and the threat this may pose to tenants. The Revenues and Benefits Service will lead on developing this advice model with partners.

6.19 The advice model for the expansion of Universal Credit to all claimants must be available early in 2017 and that the advice model for migrating claims is ready to start in 2018.
6.20 Our key actions for this strategic priority are to:

- Support customers to manage and reduce debt, budget, access bank accounts and be digitally included
- Reduce and eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation through expanding the options to discharge LCC’s homelessness duty through using the new powers set out in the Localism Act 2011, and to use the private rented sector to discharge our statutory duties (PRSO)
- Enable the implementation of a PRSO policy and the take up of LCC’s bond scheme, and develop, through the Housing Options Service, a more focused approach to working with the private rented sector
- Develop dispersed accommodation for people who have experienced domestic violence
- Develop clear pathways to education, training and employment for people who are or have been homeless
- Develop a robust advice model, working closely with partners, including social landlords, to deliver advice and support and prevent escalating rent arrears and the threat this may pose to tenants
- Ensure single homeless people are equipped with the skills to manage a tenancy through promoting the roll out of the Renting Ready pre-tenancy training programme (a free resource from Crisis).

Address the needs of people who are homeless and have complex needs

6.21 The review tells us that there is a number of people, mainly single, who are moving in and out of homelessness and between services. Liverpool has higher numbers of people with multiple and complex needs than other Core Cities. This is supported by the findings from LWoH, where the majority of service users have all four of the identified complex needs (offending, substance misuse, mental health, and homelessness).

6.22 However, there is a unique opportunity to use the learning from the LWoH project to influence the development of services to enable people with complex needs to access the right services at the right time.

6.23 There is an evidence base developing both locally and nationally regarding the benefits of psychologically informed environments and there are opportunities to further explore these approaches. This includes embracing the learning from LWoH.

6.24 Another example of a new approach is AIMS, delivered by Local Solutions. This service is funded by the government’s Fair Chance Fund initiative that supports 18-24-year-olds in Liverpool and Knowsley through housing, mentoring and training.

6.25 There is a need to consider the particular needs of veterans and service users with multiple needs when developing substance misuse services.

6.26 There is a need to address the physical and mental health needs of the homeless population. People with complex needs are also a priority for Liverpool CCG and there are opportunities to improve pathways and reconfigure services for joint outcomes.
6.27 There are tensions between statutory services when people have either a social care or mental health need in addition to a housing need, but they do not meet the eligibility criteria under the Care Act 2014. This can be particularly challenging for people being discharged from hospital leading to a need to review hospital discharge pathways.

6.28 There is a gap in services for people with alcohol-related brain injuries.

6.29 People with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) now make up almost half of the rough sleeping population but the options to support them away from a street lifestyle are limited.

6.30 There are particular issues in this cohort in relation to how we make an appropriate housing and support response when there has been a diagnosis of tuberculosis. The number of cases of tuberculosis in Liverpool is low and declining but local arrangements are needed between LCC and Liverpool CCG to ensure people with NRPF or access to housing have the necessary stable environment and support to complete their TB treatment which can take up to six months.

6.32 **Our key actions for this strategic priority are to:**

   - Ensure the learning from LWoH and the AIMS scheme informs changes which benefit people with complex needs and “upstream” action that will prevent these needs arising in the future
   - Ensure the commissioning of rehabilitation services in the city are fit for purpose and take into account the needs of veterans
   - Encourage the adoption by homelessness and housing support services of alternative approaches to identifying and responding to needs such as cognitive analytic technique (CAT), psychologically informed environments (PIE), and adverse childhood experience psychology (ACE)
   - Where possible and appropriate, jointly commission and develop integrated pathways and services that meet the physical and mental health needs of the homeless population
   - With Liverpool CCG, review the hospital discharge pathways and consider how intermediate care models can be flexed to meet the needs of the homeless population
   - With Liverpool CCG, develop approaches for people who have alcohol-related brain injuries.

7. **Resourcing the strategy**

7.1 At the time of writing, LCC has invested approximately £12.4m a year in services for people who are homeless and threatened with homelessness. However, going forward we are aware that this will reduce in line with the overall reduction in LCC’s budget. Therefore, as seen in our first strategic priority, the prevention of homelessness will be a critical focus.

7.2 LCC has also consistently used the Preventing Homelessness Grant, received from the Department for Communities and Local Government, in full, to fund activities to prevent and tackle homelessness and will continue to do so, as long as the grant is provided for these purposes.

7.3 The Department for Communities and Local Government has set out the indicative amount for this grant for the next four years, therefore it has been decided that the strategy should be a four-year strategy.

7.4 We will also continue to support the sector in external funding bids for projects which meet this strategy’s objectives.
8. Governance of the strategy

8.1 The overall responsibility for the strategy sits with the Adult Services and Health directorate. It is a live document and will be reviewed regularly as it is implemented.

8.2 The Housing, Health and Care subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board will oversee the development and implementation of this strategy. This subgroup was established in March 2014 with a specific remit to address cross-cutting housing issues which impact on vulnerable people with health and social care needs.

8.3 The homelessness strategy also has a strategic link into the Healthy Liverpool Programme: to improve joint working between housing, homelessness, and health and care providers to improve the health outcomes of the vulnerable homelessness population and prevent unnecessary emergency admissions to hospital.

8.4 The associated action plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis and revised as necessary in accordance with any new legislation, policy or funding framework.

8.5 As the homelessness strategy is rolled out, we will also develop a mechanism to engage with all services to help tackle and prevent homelessness within the city, including a wide range of stakeholders and service users.
THERE MAY BE A MILLION REASONS WHY SOMEONE SLEEPS ROUGH FOR ONE NIGHT

THERE IS NO REASON FOR ANYONE TO SLEEP ROUGH A SECOND NIGHT

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TELL US ABOUT A ROUGH SLEEPER ON 0300 123 2041 AND WE WILL DO THE REST

NOSECONDNIGHTOUTMERSEYSIDE.CO.UK
Did you know that Liverpool City Council’s Housing Options Service works across the city to:

- Stop people from losing their homes
- Help people to find their own solutions to housing problems
- Assess people’s housing needs and to offer a range of housing options
- Give free, impartial and confidential advice about housing issues.

If you think that you are about to lose your home you can contact the Housing Options Service by calling into any One Stop Shop, Monday to Friday from 9am-4.30pm (from 8.30am-5.30pm in the Municipal Buildings One Stop Shop, Dale Street).

Outside of these hours you can contact Careline, the council’s 24-hour social care contact centre on 0151 233 3800 (Freephone 0800 731 6844).

The Housing Options Service does everything it can to stop people from becoming homeless and works with people to find a new home if they have become homeless.