

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2019-2023

Consultation Document

This action plan links to the Regional Dyfed-Powys Homeless Strategy in response to the requirements set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.



Aims & Objectives of the Strategy Action Plan

We recognise that we are not able to achieve homelessness prevention solely through interventions and support offered by the Housing Department. As a result this ambitious and challenging action plan has been developed to adopt, commit to and recognise the role of local services internally and externally to assist the local authority in preventing homelessness.

The action plan is a working document and builds on pre and post legislative implementation transitional work and financial support provided by Welsh Government.

Following a review of our homelessness service, we have identified the following aims and objectives we are looking to achieve over the period of this five year strategy. Whilst some actions are not due to be completed until the end of Year 5, work will have commenced on these and will be monitored by reporting to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Homelessness Forum.

Aims	
Aim 1	Through early intervention provide homelessness services personalised to customers' needs to prevent homelessness occurring.
Aim 2	Keep homelessness as brief as possible and reduce repeat homelessness.
Aim 3	Improve access to settled accommodation.
Objectives	
Objective 1	<p>Involving Customers In Service Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recognise that customers are at the centre of our service, as users of our services we will ensure that they are involved in service development.
Objective 2	<p>Anyone At Risk Of Homelessness Is Aware Of How To Access Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the reports commissioned by Welsh Government and from feedback from customers and stakeholders we will look to enhance the visibility of our service.
Objective 3	<p>Strengthen Approaches To Early Intervention & Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and statistics evidence that early intervention and prevention has the highest success rate in resolving and preventing homelessness. We will continue to strengthen services which have been developed to meet this agenda.
Objective 4	<p>Review Temporary Accommodation (TA) Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with customers who have accessed TA to design, commission and deliver accessible models.
Objective 5	<p>Strengthen Services For Complex Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is wide held recognition that customers accessing services are presenting with ever more complex needs. As such we will look to review and develop services to support customers' needs.
Objective 6	<p>Make Best Use Of Resources And Funding Streams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Authorities are required to make annual efficiencies to their budgets as austerity continues. As such we will make collaboration and use of resources key to supporting the homeless agenda.

	Action to achieve objective	Activity to measure impact and progress of action	Calendar year for completion	Lead Officer	Outcomes/ Monitoring
Objective 1: Involving Customers In Service Development					
R.1.1	Review Personal Housing Plans (PHP's) and Housing Advice Packs	Task and Finish Group established engaging customers and stakeholders to make PHP's and Housing Advice Packs more person centred/ individualised and easier to understand whilst also fulfilling statutory obligations.	1	Senior Housing Officer (Allocations & Housing Advice)	Ensuring Customers' are at the centre of services by monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking written exit questionnaire with customers once duty is discharged • Undertaking random phone interviews with customers 6 months after duty has been discharged (this will allow for any issues to be picked up) • Annually review following similar process as above

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R.1.2	Review notification letters	Task and Finish Group established engaging customers and stakeholders to make letters easier to understand whilst also fulfilling statutory obligations.	1	Senior Housing Officer (Allocations & Housing Advice)	Ensure simple and clear information is provided to customers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking written exit questionnaire with customers once duty is discharged • Undertaking random phone interviews with customers 6 months after duty has been discharged (this will allow for any issues to be picked up) • Annually review following similar process as above
R.1.3	Develop Service Standards for Housing Advice and	Explore best practice options and present these to the Task and Finish Group for them to agree a set of	1	Customer Liaison Officer	Ensure service standards are co-produced with

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	Temporary Accommodation	appropriate and user friendly standards.			customers and stakeholders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually reviewing standards including complaints/ compliments • Progress and feedback from Task and Finish Group reported to Homelessness Forum
R.1.4	Review Customer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify best practice models across Wales through the Homelessness Network to review each aspect of the customers' interaction with the Housing Advice Service and Temporary Accommodation. • Review triage system to ensure that it is accessible to all customers e.g. people with multiple/ complex needs, learning disabilities and mental health. 	2	Senior Housing Officer (Allocations & Housing Advice)	Ensure that customer feedback is embedded in service developments by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing customer feedback and reporting this to Housing Advice team meetings and Homelessness Forum

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review undertaken evidencing thematic issues
R.1.5	Improve Equalities Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to improve collection and monitoring drawing on best practice models across Wales. Undertaking a review of services to ensure they are accessible to all by undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment of the service. 	1	Housing Support Officer	<p>Ensure that services are accessible to all by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing and making recommendations following the Equality Impact Assessment Update if amended by Welsh Government Ensuring regular training for staff is completed
Objective 2: Anyone At Risk Of Homelessness Is Aware Of How To Access Services					
R.2.1	Review Housing Advice Section on Pembrokeshire County Council Website	<p>Task and Finish Group established engaging customers and stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make the website more user friendly 	1	Customer Liaison Officer	Improving accessibility of information to ensure people are aware of how to receive

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAQ section - Advice pathway - basic but informative - explore online application function - publish standards - clear links through to agencies (who work within sectors which complement the housing advice service) that can provide other assistance - ensure regularly updated with relevant information - link to leave feedback - support worker section of site to hold relevant information to support and advise customers 			<p>support and advice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing clear and updated information on the Council website • Regular monitoring of updated legislative changes to update website • Relevant and useful links • Monitor traffic and hits on website
R.2.2	Work with stakeholders to ensure information linked to their website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange rollout of information package to Supporting People Providers, Town and Community Councils and other identified third sector agencies to ensure 	2	Principal Housing Officer	Ensure that stakeholders are provided with information which enables them to

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		<p>Housing Advice is as widespread as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of and ensure that options for inclement/ extreme weather placements are reaching people who require them. 			<p>signpost customers to advice services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving stakeholders in Task and Finish Groups and Homelessness Forum • Completion of online stakeholder feedback forms • Report presented to Homelessness Forum with a strategy to ensure all stakeholders are targeted.
R.2.3	Explore alternative platforms to target all customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link with IT to view options and develop a social media plan • Undertake focus groups across services to identify platforms to engage all customers e.g. social media • Review best practice across Wales 	2	Customer Liaison Officer	<p>Ensure all platforms are utilised to target different customers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing a Briefing report following Task and Finish Group

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore an 'Ap' solution 			<p>feedback which will be monitored by the Homelessness Forum with agency actions developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of social media plan • Monitor usage
Objective 3: Strengthen Approaches To Early Intervention & Prevention					
R.3.1	Ensure that housing advice and temporary accommodation staff receive relevant training	<p>Develop core training programme to include (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VAWDASV - Mental health awareness - Substance misuse awareness - Cognitive impairment awareness - Immigration - Safeguarding - ASD - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) - Psychologically-informed environments (PIE) - Homelessness legislation 	1	Senior Housing Officer (Allocations & Advice)	<p>Ensure housing staff are provided with relevant and key training by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training plan in place with set review periods and method of delivery e.g. e-learning, regional training sessions, accredited training, mentoring, shadowing etc

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welfare Reform updates - Mental Capacity Act - Motivational interviewing - Mediation <p>Opportunities to attend training with colleagues across the Authority, third sector partners and regional training will be encouraged.</p>			
R.3.2 (Links to R.2.1)	Raise awareness of realistic housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring accurate information and advice is provided to customers through the development and delivery of a programme of homelessness prevention briefing sessions to partner organisations, agencies, internal departments, County Councillors, Town and Community Councillors. • Provide regular updates. • Produce online information packs with general advice and case studies which can be given to new starters, include induction session availability with the team 	2	Senior Housing Officer (Allocations & Advice)	Ensure that correct information and guidance is provided to customers by having a training programme in place (to be reviewed annually or more urgently if changes are made to Code of Practice and Guidance).

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		and shadowing where appropriate.			
R.3.3	In collaboration with partner organisations have a range of interventions in place to prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the triggers, risk factors and cause of homelessness through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of data available, - customer and stakeholder engagement. • Work with partner agencies to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issues they have in supporting their customers, - what they can offer in terms of solution focus, - explore/ trial Housing First initiative, drawing on existing trials and best practice, - explore pre-eviction support models. 	2	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Ensure a range of interventions are available which includes other funding streams and advice services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on findings with action plan provided to the Homelessness Forum • Homelessness Forum to explore and trial options • Review deadlines in place which are evidenced with outcomes
R.3.4	Reduction in Youth Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute information packs (online information) to all Secondary Schools and Pembrokeshire College to raise young people's awareness of the 	5	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Numbers of youth homelessness reduces by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring information

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		<p>causes of homelessness and where to get help and advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore role of School/ Youth Worker Link Officers to liaise with Housing Advice Team. • Through support from Welsh Government Homelessness Prevention Grant funding and the commitment to end youth homelessness, have effective pathways embedded to commit to the authority's role to prevent homelessness and to improve our role as corporate parents. • Support and accommodation models (including shared accommodation) available to prevent homelessness occurring utilising targeted multi-agency support. 			<p>provided is updated regularly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Homeless Steering Group meeting regularly • Regular updates provided to Corporate Parenting Board and Youth Justice Board • Supporting People Planning Group updated
R.3.5	Develop processes to reduce arrears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Revenues Department to mitigate the impact of welfare benefit reform by targeting Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) 	1	Principal Housing Officer	<p>There is a reduction in arrears by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking a review where an intervention has taken place to

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		<p>Direct Payments to Landlords where there are evidenced issues around vulnerability, financial management etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review processes with the Revenues Department to target interventions earlier and reduce the likelihood of arrears accruing. • Review processes with DWP/ Jobcentre Plus – local working protocols developed, explore dedicated link officer roles, creating stronger links into employment with work programmes/ housing advice interface. 			<p>assess the success rate e.g. DHP and LHA direct payments have been made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of actions on impact on prevention of poverty and of welfare benefit reform through a presentation to the Homelessness Forum • Review of arrears • Review if customers who engage are engaging more in employment opportunities
R.3.6	Develop new approaches to working with Private Sector Landlords	Work with the Public Protection Department, Shelter, Landlords and Letting Agencies to:	3	Principal Housing Officer	Improve access to private sector accommodation for

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduce barriers to letting to tenants on benefits through a targeted communication package/ press release, - reduce evictions and work with third sector partners to identify best practice models across Wales which can be trialled, - develop a tenancy accreditation scheme (TAS), - explore pre-tenancy assessments to identify vulnerable tenants so targeted support including budgeting support is made available, - explore the role of 'keeping in touch' arrangements to prevent tenancy breaking down once tenancy has started. 			<p>homeless customers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing statistics to determine if evictions have reduced • Regular review meetings with agencies • Regularly review communication – how this can be improved (case studies)

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R.3.7	Enhance working arrangements with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to support homeless customers	<p>Work with RSL's to reduce barriers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - define how we can collectively support homeless customers/ households and important role of duty to co-operate, - trial projects rolled out and supported by Welsh Government, - provide detailed information and monitoring for RSL partners in their 'duty to co-operate role', - review and undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of our joint ChoiceHomes@ Pembrokeshire Allocations Policy. 	1	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Ensure all social landlords are working together to reduce/ prevent homelessness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating standing agenda for Housing Partner meetings and Partner Boards • Monitoring data regarding discharge of homelessness into social housing and barriers are identified • Regularly review Allocations Policy to ensure changes in external factors are captured and considered

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R.3.8	Develop protocols for hospital discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Health and Social Services colleagues to develop a hospital discharge protocol, so that no one is discharged without suitable accommodation. • Explore processes of support and engagement once in the community, learning from best practice models across Wales. 	3	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Effective hospital discharge protocol is in place by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review meetings with relevant teams/ officers • Action plan developed • Protocols implemented and reviewed with customer feedback as per previous actions
R.3.9	Improve collaborative working with colleagues to support the National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Prison, National Probation Service/ Community Rehabilitation Company, Police and Youth Justice colleagues to support prison leavers in line with the Pathway. • Explore ways of supporting prison leavers more effectively. 	1	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Effective prisoner pathway is in place locally by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review meetings with relevant officers • Data analysis of prison leavers with trends/ barriers identified and

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					action plan developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback as per previous actions
Objective 4: Review Temporary Accommodation (TA) Models					
R.4.1 (link to R.5.5)	Review Temporary Accommodation (TA) model	Task and Finish Group established engaging customers and stakeholders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review current and potential alternatives, - identify trends, barriers, demand, age profile, reasons why TA has broken down, reasons for refusal to accept TA, length of time in TA, accessibility, - more detailed experience of time in TA and what could have improved it. 	2	Principal Housing Officer	Ensure that TA is accessible to customers and meets their needs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report on findings from exit questionnaire for customers to Homelessness Forum • Cabinet Report proposing alternative models
R.4.2	Review service charges for TA	Review arrangements across Wales to benchmark current charges and arrears.	1	Temporary Accommodation Officer	Ensure that affordable charges are made to customers:

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of service charges and arrears, Cabinet report if required to increase/ decrease charges
R.4.3	Reduce length of time in TA	RSL and Local Authority social and affordable house building programmes in place to meet needs of homeless customers.	5	Temporary Accommodation Officer	Ensure customers stay in TA is as short as possible by monitoring whether there is a reduction of time in TA due to house building programme
R.4.4	Review support arrangements in TA	Work with colleagues in Supporting People to review arrangements and look at best practice models across Wales.	3	Principal Housing Officer	Ensure support is targeted and effective by reviewing Supporting People monitoring and reporting for TA

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Objective 5: Strengthen Services For Complex Needs					
R.5.1	Improve suitable and timely accommodation for customers with multiple and complex needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and Finish Group established engaging customers and stakeholders to review the Move-On Process. • Review in conjunction with Supporting People repeat homelessness presentations where this is due to complex needs. • Ensure involvement with the Homeless and Vulnerable Groups Health Action Plans (HAVGHAP). • Continue to monitor rough sleeping within the county. 	3	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Ensure that services are available where complex needs are identified by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report on findings from exit questionnaires (as per previous actions) for customers with complex needs to Homelessness Forum • Report to Supporting People Planning Group • Cabinet Report proposing alternative models • Links built with HAVGHAP

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R.5.2	Enhance working arrangements with Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Health and Social Services colleagues to develop a discharge protocol, so that no one is discharged without suitable accommodation and with a housing plan in place. • Explore processes of support and engagement once in the community, learning from best practice models across Wales. • Explore barriers to accessing services for customers who become homeless due to Mental Health and Substance Misuse issues. • Explore use of shared accommodation models. 	3	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Effective services are in place for customers with Mental Health/ Substance Misuse by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review meetings with relevant officers • Action plan developed • Protocols implemented and reviewed
R.5.3	Enhance working arrangements with the Transitions Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Social Services colleagues to develop a transitions protocol, so that customers receive timely advice and options. • Explore use of shared accommodation models - prior to move-on as a step down option. 	4	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Customers going through 'transitions team' are supported to prevent homelessness occurring and tenancy sustainment is the focus of support by:</p>

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing monitoring of tenancy sustainment success which is reported to Transitions Working Group • Monitoring evictions and reporting to Transitions Working Group
R.5.4	Enhance working arrangements with the Community Team for Learning Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued input with the Learning Disability Strategy to ensure that customers receive tailored support and information in a suitable format including digitally. • Work with Social Services colleagues to develop protocols when a customer is ready to live independently to prevent homelessness, but also to tailor support. • Explore use of shared accommodation models. 	4	Private Sector Housing & Strategy Manager	Customers who are ready to live independently are supported to access housing and homelessness is prevented by regularly updating and attending the Learning Disability Partnership

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R.5.5	Increase portfolio of adapted properties to meet needs of/ prevent homeless customers with physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Social Services to understand future demand. • Ensure mixed range of Homes for Life properties are within social housing design schemes to meet demand. • Review viability of disabled adapted accommodation pods which can be moved from property to property. • Review current adapted stock • Explore further adaptation/ extension work to social housing stock. • Analyse data and target work around homeless customers who require adaptations to determine best model for TA, utilising best practice models across Wales. 	4	Private Sector Housing & Strategy Manager	<p>A selection of options are available to meet the needs of customers with physical disabilities so they are not homeless due to unsuitable accommodation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing updates/ reports to the Housing Revenue Account Working Group on demand for adapted housing • Agenda Item for Housing Development Project Board
R.5.6	Ensure sheltered accommodation meets the needs of tenants with physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current sheltered complexes/ accommodation • Identify best practice options for consideration • Consultation with residents and applicants on the housing 	3	Principal Housing Officer	Sheltered accommodation is future proofed to meet demand for older people by:

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		<p>register re: expectations from living in sheltered accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify if lack of suitable accommodation is leading to homelessness. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative models presented to the Housing Revenue Account Working Group and Cabinet • Monitoring waiting time for homeless applicants who have physical disabilities and reporting to Housing Partners Board, Social Services etc. • Working with Social Services to monitor future trends
Objective 6: Make Best Use Of Resources And Funding Streams					
R.6.1	Review Funding Streams supporting prevention models to explore opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review use of transitional funding (what worked well) • Explore regional funding for specific projects 	2	Principal Housing Officer	Ensure funding is focussed on homelessness prevention by:

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	to work more effectively together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure involvement and close working arrangements with Supporting People services and re/de-commissioning • Explore joint funding opportunities through new Housing Support Grant 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending Supporting People Planning Group and Regional Collaborative Committees • Annual report on use of homelessness prevention monies to Cabinet Member • Report to Cabinet re: Joint Funding opportunities
R.6.2	Explore co-location of homelessness prevention services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and Finish Group established to explore feasibility and interest from partner agencies 	5	Principal Housing Officer	<p>Ensure that services are accessible to customers at risk of homelessness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Task and Finish Group meetings, minutes and recommendations for consideration

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					by partner agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Report with findings and suggested progress

Note: All monitoring will be put into a RAG (red, amber, green) rating system to improve monitoring internally.