

**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION**

CONTACT US AT
Homelessness Prevention Project
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Preventing Evictions Protocol

**A partnership agreement between Newcastle
City Council, Your Homes Newcastle,
Housing Associations and Supporting People**

April 2009

What is it?

This Protocol is updated from the Preventing Evictions and Repeat Homelessness Protocol launched in 2006.

The simple principle behind the establishment of the Protocol is that where somebody is receiving support, social landlords will meet with those support agencies to work together to support the person to remain in their home.

Homelessness prevention is a key part of sustaining vulnerable people in the community. Agencies in Newcastle work hard to prevent and tackle homelessness, with particular emphasis on preventing people who are known to be vulnerable from becoming homeless.

This approach has already led to a significant reduction in the number of council tenants losing their homes. The updated Protocol is aimed at helping to prevent more council tenants and Housing Association tenants from losing their homes.

It will do this by bringing landlords and support agencies together to try to ensure that vulnerable people:

are not set up to fail by being given a tenancy they cannot cope with - risks have been identified, and support and other arrangements put in place from the start

have the support they need to cope with the demands of a tenancy

are helped by the landlord and support agency working together (in a co-ordinated and integrated way) as soon as problems are identified, to minimise and manage any risk of the tenant not being able to manage their tenancy

leave their tenancy in a planned way if they cannot cope

The Protocol sets out what is expected as good practice, and provides guidance on what can be realistically expected from each type of agency involved, to protect tenancies which might be at risk. Contact information for agencies involved can be found in the Resource Pack which goes with the Protocol.

Sharon Williams or Myra Milne	Children's Social Care Services	0191 295 5535 sharon.williams@newcastle.gov.uk 0191 275 2500 myra.milne@newcastle.gov.uk
Rod Stapley or Paul Brownlee	Youth Offending Team	0191 277 7377 rod.stapley@newcastle.gov.uk paul.brownlee@newcastle.gov.uk

Where can you get more information?

Both the Protocol and Resource Pack can be downloaded from:

- Newcastle Homelessness Forum protocols and policies page:
http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf_policies

The Resource Pack contains pro-formas, a note on how to set up a Preventing Evictions case meeting, and flowcharts showing how the Protocol should work.

What if the Protocol is not working?

If the Protocol is not working as it should, there are several opportunities to raise this with someone who can try to address the problem.

There are regular liaison meetings between the City Council and Housing Associations, and regular monitoring meetings between the City Council and the other key agencies.

- You can ask that a problem be discussed at either of these meetings by contacting the Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Project on 0191 277 1731/1733 or hpp@newcastle.gov.uk.
- If you are a housing officer with one of the 5 larger Housing Associations working in the city, you should discuss the problem with your senior manager who is the main contact point with the City Council.
- You could contact any of the people listed below to discuss a problem:

Neil Munslow	Housing Services	07855 828048 neil.munslow@newcastle.gov.uk
Martyn Burn	Your Homes Newcastle	0191 278 8599 or 07970 515907 Martyn.Burn@yhn.org.uk
Ian Oliver	Supporting People & Adult Services	0191 211 6392 ian.j.oliver@newcastle.gov.uk
Grainne Fegan	Children's Services Prevention and Early intervention	0191 246 1867 grainne.fegan@newcastle.gov.uk
Janette Brown	(CAF/ContactPoint)	0191 277 4497 janette.brown@newcastle.gov.uk

Who is signed up to the Protocol?

- Your Homes Newcastle
- Supporting People
- Adult Services
- Children's Services and Children's Social Care
- The 5 major Housing Associations providing general needs housing in Newcastle:

Cheviot Housing
Home Housing Group
NomadE5
Places for People
Riverside North East

Who does it help?

The Protocol is designed to help vulnerable people, using the following definition:

A person is vulnerable for the purpose of this Protocol if it is considered that they:

Receive support (housing-related or other support, social care) from an agency with whom a housing officer can jointly work as described in this Protocol

or

Need support in order to manage a tenancy and would not be able to manage a tenancy without assistance beyond ordinary housing management. If support cannot be secured, this Protocol is not applicable.

Agencies should check to see if the person falls into one of the following groups:

- People accepted as statutorily homeless or housed through an urgent or immediate need
- People with a housing support worker
- People with a social worker
- People who have just left hospital, care, prison, or the forces
- Offenders involved with Probation or Youth Offending Team
- People with a drug or alcohol problem
- People who are vulnerable because of a physical disability, sensory impairment, or learning disability
- Refugees
- People with communication problems
- Families with children about whom there are concerns

The Resource Pack that comes with the Protocol provides information about where to check if the person is already engaged with an agency providing support, care, or supervision, and falls into one of the groups in the list.

What does it ask agencies to do?

In summary, the Protocol asks agencies to:

Part One: Before the tenancy starts:

Identify anyone who is vulnerable who might not be able to manage a tenancy without support.

Identify who is providing support or care, and make a referral to an appropriate support provider if support is needed but not being provided.

Ensure a flag is put on the application / tenancy record to show that the person is vulnerable and who is supporting them.

Hold a Preventing Eviction case meeting to discuss any serious concerns about whether the person would be able to manage a tenancy. Share information between housing providers and other agencies. Help to complete a Preventing Eviction Plan, so that

everyone knows who will be doing what to support the person, and who to contact if things start to go wrong.

Keep other agencies informed and respond if any agency (the housing provider or a support provider) spots that things are not going well as the tenancy gets underway.

Part Two: If there are problems during the tenancy

Look for another agency to talk to, or make a referral to a support agency to get support in place, if a tenant appears to be vulnerable and at risk of not managing their tenancy.

As in Part One, put a flag on their tenancy record, talk to support agencies, and hold a case meeting to complete a Preventing Eviction Plan if necessary.

Part Three: Where there are serious concerns about a tenancy

Where any tenant is at risk of losing their tenancy, the housing officer is asked to check if the household is vulnerable, and if so, to make contact with any other professionals working with them.

Where there are children in the household, a Pre-Common Assessment Framework should be completed.

If a Preventing Eviction Plan had been completed already, the case meeting should be reconvened, to see if agencies could possibly prevent the eviction.

If there was no Plan completed previously, a case meeting should be considered, to see if drawing up a Plan could prevent the eviction.

Where eviction action becomes inevitable, agencies should work together to plan for a move to another type of accommodation.

Any agencies working with the household must be informed (through an Impending Eviction Pro-Forma) that the eviction is going ahead. Where the household has children but no particular agency is known to be involved, Children's Social Care must be informed.