

Active Inclusion Newcastle

Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Briefing 2019-20 Q1

We want preventing homelessness in the city to be everyone's business. Our quarterly briefings aim to build consensus and a cooperative approach by providing information on:

- **data and narrative that tell us about the causes of homelessness**
- **the perceptions of clients, partners, and workers**
- **the outcomes and what works for people supported by homelessness services**
- **new initiatives, policy and legislative changes**

This will help us to work together to consider how to:

- **make the most of our resources to prevent homelessness and respond to crisis**
- **build on what is working well to identify and meet our challenges**
- **create opportunities to intervene earlier, build resilience, prevent homelessness and understand and respond to the underlying causes of homelessness**
- **revise the city's statutory Homelessness Strategy [action plan](#)**

Our [Active Inclusion Newcastle partnership approach](#) seeks to create the partnership arrangements to prevent homelessness through coordinated support that provides consistent information, advice, and support to develop the foundations for a stable **life**:

- somewhere to live
- an income
- financial inclusion
- employment opportunities

Our primary challenge is to maintain our high levels of homelessness prevention in the face of the largest public sector and welfare cuts in 60 years. We work with partners to innovate, reduce duplication, increase prevention and provide more effective responses for vulnerable people. More information is provided in [Newcastle's Homelessness Strategy 2014-19](#).

1. Our homelessness prevention system




Newcastle's approach to responding to homelessness is based on prevention wherever possible and humanely responding to crisis where not. This means understanding demand and the causes of homelessness and intervening upstream to prevent the threat of homelessness turning into a crisis. We work in this way because it's the right thing to do for our residents and it's cost effective, it also means making the most of our limited resources.

In Newcastle, there are two broad 'groups' who are at risk of homelessness: thousands of residents who are at risk of a crisis in their lives, mainly due to poverty exacerbated by the welfare reforms; and a much smaller group who live a life in crisis, who have had a life of severe and multiple disadvantage that leads to repeated social exclusion over the life course. The needs of the most at-risk residents who sleep rough are complex, e.g. 80% have drug addictions, 55% mental health problems and 95% an offending history. For both groups, lives are dominated by uncertainty and homelessness is more a symptom of the underlying issues that cause homelessness. Hence, our approach is based on developing coordinated advice and support for residents to have the foundations for a stable life: somewhere to live, an income, financial inclusion and employment opportunities.

Our approach to preventing homelessness is to intervene early. This means building on the value of a secure home as a foundation for a stable life, aligning our systems to further improve the identification of the risk of homelessness and the effectiveness of our responses and consolidating our upstream interventions.

Our homelessness prevention system operates at following levels:

- Primary prevention: for those residents who may be at risk of homelessness in the future, but are not immediately threatened in the next two months
- Secondary prevention: for those residents who are threatened within the statutory definition of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Crisis: for those residents who are ‘literally’ homeless (they do not have any accommodation they can reasonably occupy)

Risk timescale		
At risk	Over 57 days 	Residents identified through our “upstream” prevention projects and those who we identify using predictive data and information received from other “touch points” to target those at greater risk of homeless. These include residents who present direct to services and, if we offer no support, will require statutory homeless assistance in the future. Many residents self-present to services unaware there is a threat of homelessness if issues remain unaddressed.
Threatened	Within 56 days 	Residents identified by our specialist services through “case finding” or self-identification to services and partner agencies. These are residents for whom, without intervention, homelessness is likely to occur within 56 days.
Crisis	Already homeless 	Residents presenting in crisis to statutory services at the point of homelessness, or who are already homeless – some members of this group will have prolonged experience of homelessness including rough sleeping.

We are making good progress in developing a citywide, systemic approach to proactively identifying and responding to the risk of homelessness, by working with partners in the voluntary, business, church and public sector to maximise the value of our collective investment to better achieve our common aim to end homelessness. We are using the learning from our [Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer](#) to improve crisis responses. This requires developing a learning framework approach, based on a common evidence base and a common understanding of residents needs so we can collectively understand the individual, systemic and structural causes of homelessness and the effectiveness of our responses.

2. Primary prevention: for those residents who may be at risk of homelessness in the future, but are not immediately threatened in the next two months

Primary prevention activities are interventions that the council and partners undertake to identify and target households who may be at future risk of homelessness – information for the

public and professionals, training for non-specialists, developing resources, partnership working and system coordination to identify risk and prevent crisis.

In 2018-19 we provided universal advice and information to 3,550 subscribers and had 76,937 hits on our web pages dedicated to [homelessness prevention](#) and [financial inclusion](#). We now want to build on this work by gaining a better understanding of how the information we provide is used by partners and the impact it has as in preventing homelessness as part of the wider Newcastle advice and support system.

We seek to make the best use of our limited face to face specialist advice services by helping non-specialist services to identify the risks of homelessness earlier, to enable timely preventative responses. This means moving from signposting to proportionate partnership arrangements. To help us with this we have developed “spectrums of advice” for [housing and homelessness](#) and [financial inclusion](#), which describe three broad tiers (general information, general advice and specialist advice) and act as a guide to help us better understand where partners fit into Newcastle’s homelessness prevention system and what support they need to do this. 134 agencies currently participate in our [partnership working arrangements](#), which helps to develop ‘universal’ responses.

To complement our [spectrum of advice](#) we provide quarterly 'Introduction to Housing and Homelessness in Newcastle' training for those working in tier 1 and 2, supplemented by e-learning. This training offers an overview of homelessness legislation, an explanation of the different kinds of housing tenure and the rules that govern them, how to apply for social housing, and how to query and challenge housing and homelessness decisions. They also cover practical information about the role of the council and the local policies and procedures that we and partners have put in place to prevent homelessness. We also offer online and face to face training in benefits, debt and budgeting and preventing sanctions, in recognition that these issues, unaddressed, can lead to homelessness. In 2018-19 we provided training to 503 volunteers and professionals from our network of partners.

The Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer has also provided an opportunity to test new ways of working to upstream the prevention of homelessness, to make the identification and prevention of homelessness everyone’s business and to improve outcomes for those residents experiencing homelessness.

In working towards integrated responses for residents, Newcastle is a transformational city that aims to break down the barriers between public services to enable residents to get better, more proactive, integrated advice and support that seeks to solve problems rather than just to pass problems on to another service or place. To help us to do this, to maximise the contacts that residents have with publicly funded services and to provide more integrated responses to residents, as part of our Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme we developed:

- A Homelessness Prevention Pilot with Jobcentre Plus to identify and respond to the risk of homelessness related to benefit administration and unemployment, and to reduce the impact that unstable housing can have on residents’ search for work; and
- A multidisciplinary team to trial delivering integrated casework on housing, financial and employment issues for residents facing specific challenges or changes in circumstances, or where existing services aren’t designed to provide the intensity of support required, and to systematically capture the learning from doing so

Homelessness Prevention Pilot with Jobcentre Plus

The pilot is a partnership between Newcastle City Council, Jobcentre Plus, Your Homes Newcastle (YHN – the arms’ length management organisation which manages council housing in Newcastle) and the national homelessness charity Crisis. The pilot started in June 2017 and has involved:

- Training 134 Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches in how to identify and respond to residents who have unstable housing or are at risk of homelessness
- Giving Work Coaches ways to refer residents who have unstable housing or are at risk of homelessness to specialist advice and support, clarifying which is the most appropriate service to respond
- Helping Work Coaches and staff from the above organisations to jointly determine the best way to respond to those residents, with housing and homelessness services working to resolve residents’ housing issues and updating Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus can then put in place easements to residents’ work-related conditionality and adapt Claimant Commitments, if necessary

By 31 March 2019 this pilot had identified 729 residents in unstable housing or at risk of homelessness, referring them to specialist advice and support (353 to Newcastle City Council’s Housing Advice Centre, 325 to Crisis and 51 to YHN). The pilot is included in the government’s [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) (August 2018) with a commitment from the government to “*share as best practice the innovative partnership work between Newcastle Jobcentre Plus and Newcastle Local Authority, an early adopter of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Programme across the whole Jobcentre Plus network*”.

The Homelessness Prevention Pilot is continuing beyond the end of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme, rather than reverting to the minimum requirement for Jobcentre Plus to identify residents at risk of homelessness, as set out in the [‘duty to refer’](#) in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. We are aiming to strengthen the partnership to make further improvements to identifying and responding to the risk of homelessness related to benefit administration and unemployment and to reducing the impact that unstable housing can have on residents’ search for work.

Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer multidisciplinary team

To extend the above approach towards more integrated working for residents who require a more intensive approach, we have developed a multidisciplinary team which includes the following specialist caseworkers aligned to the foundations for a stable life:

- Somewhere to live – secondment of an Income Recovery Officer from YHN
- An income – outposting of a Welfare Rights Officer from Newcastle City Council
- Financial inclusion – outposting of a Debt Advisor from Newcastle City Council
- Employment opportunities – loan of a Work Coach from Jobcentre Plus

The multidisciplinary team started working together in October 2017 with three main aims:

- To deliver integrated casework on housing, financial and employment issues for residents facing certain issues or changes in circumstances, or where existing services aren’t designed to meet the intensity of support required
- To provide infrastructure support to help services and organisations to adapt to meet the challenges of a reduced welfare state and to strengthen our local system

- To capture the learning from their ways of working and to contribute to evidence on the issues that residents are experiencing and the challenges they face to inform local and national policy and practice

Our hopes for the multidisciplinary team were that it would enable us to:

- Bringing together the specialisms that support the foundations for a stable life to work in an integrated way would provide a more joined-up approach to working with residents
- Collectively agreeing values and ways of working would build trust, which in turn would create a stronger foundation and credibility – with each other, as well as with others
- Prioritising practical solutions around human needs would help to build trust with residents
- Having more flexibility would allow a shift in focus from managing time and resources to focusing on what is best for residents
- Having an underlying focus on purpose and considering how things feel would result in a more meaningful, humanised experience – for practitioners as well as for residents – helping us to understand whether people respond differently when we respond to them differently (combining being cool-headed and warm-hearted)
- Through questioning and reflection, we could reach insights that had a wider reach than the individual case – working our way together through the vague, unknown and uncertainty to a more defined understanding. Having a balance between empathy and interrogation (questioning systematically) could be possible – to test that being understanding and giving factual information and advice don't have to be mutually exclusive; they just need to be balanced appropriately and in context

Case study – Rob

Rob is a 55-year-old single man who lives in a YHN tenancy & was identified by the multidisciplinary team through the “bedroom tax” route for YHN tenants. The team’s Welfare Rights Officer sent him an introductory letter, made two phone calls, sent two text messages, & made two home visits. Engagement was established with Rob at the second home visit. He is ‘under occupying’ his home by one bedroom, meaning his housing benefit receipt is reduced by £10.71 per week. He had already had 3 DHP payments to cover the shortfall caused by the under-occupation charge

Intervention

- Rob was struggling with around £3,000 of electricity debts. The Welfare Rights Officer referred him to Energy Services for support with these and Energy Services managed to support the resident to move onto a cheaper tariff
- Rob was in the ESA Support Group but was receiving £54.26 a week less than he should have been. The team’s Work Coach was able to liaise with the DWP to determine that this was because they mistakenly thought he was receiving Working Tax Credits (WTC)
- The Welfare Rights Officer also identified that Rob had significant breathing difficulties due to working in the mining industry abroad but did not have a diagnosis, and after undergoing tests at hospital, he was diagnosed with COPD. The Welfare Rights Officer assisted him to make a claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Outcome

Rob gained £6,549.96 in backdated ESA payments for the error in deductions dating back to 2016. He used this payment to pay £2,000 off his electricity bills. His ongoing ESA payments were also increased. Following further intervention by the Welfare Rights Officer, Rob was also awarded PIP daily living and mobility elements. This rise in income allows him to more than meet the shortfall in rent and means he can now sustain his accommodation.

We believe that we have sufficient information to identify who is at risk of homelessness and to proactively target preventative advice and support, so the multidisciplinary team use a case-finding approach rather than taking referrals. In their 18 months of operation to 31 March 2019, the multidisciplinary team used a range of data sources to identify residents potentially at risk using seven different groups of criteria (or 'routes' as we refer to them). These range from simple datasets, such as residents living in a certain tenure affected by a certain welfare reform in a certain area of the city, to algorithms comprised of a much greater range of data to enable us to test predictive analytics as part of the multidisciplinary team's work.

By 31 March 2019 the multidisciplinary team had proactively identified and approached 296 households using this case-finding model, establishing contact with over 60% and providing holistic support to 40% of those households. The 'headline findings' from the summative review of the multidisciplinary team (available [online](#)) show that:

- most of the residents the multidisciplinary team identified were living in precarious, complicated and stressful circumstances that had been worsened by welfare reform policies since 2010. The team also found some successes and failings with the local system, in terms of the way residents with integrated challenges are supported. Most importantly, what they found in most cases were residents exercising incredible resilience, grace and humility given the frustration many of them felt. Many of these residents were trying to get on with their lives but were also incredibly glad of some support to help them feel more stable
- the multidisciplinary team have most been able to achieve integrated outcomes across more than one of their disciplines (housing, welfare benefits, budgeting and debt, and employment) with the more complex cases, which have also been the most enduring
- even within an extremely challenging context, the multidisciplinary team have achieved some very positive outcomes for residents, stabilising the situation for many. Nevertheless, the extent to which a single team can overcome challenges of a structural nature on an individual level is inevitably limited

The findings broadly suggest that the multidisciplinary team have reduced the risk of homelessness for those households they have been able to work with (this is indicative rather than definitive). However, it has a bittersweet tone because although it shows that the team's work has been effective in reducing the risk of homelessness, the findings also show that for those households who the team were unable to engage with the risk of their homelessness has persisted and even worsened.

In summary, the multidisciplinary team has tested a new approach that combines research and practice with the aims of providing holistic, multidisciplinary support to households facing integrated challenges and informing local and national policy and practice. The learning captured from their initial pilot indicates that this approach has been successful in meeting these aims, but also emphasises the limitations in the capacity and scope of a single service in bringing about sustainable change in the face of such a challenging structural context. We have secured continuation funding and the team will be extended for 18 months, until 30 September 2020, with the addition of a staff member from Early Help.

Sustaining Tenancies and YHN prevention of homelessness

The tables below show a breakdown of the homelessness prevention and relief cases reported to us by YHN's Support and Progression service; the headings and definitions used below are those provided by Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for homelessness recording. YHN employ 70 staff within their Support and Progression Service,

supporting prospective and existing tenants to have suitable and sustainable accommodation. The risk of homelessness in YHN is usually identified by changes to the tenant's rent account and then support is offered. This approach has seen evictions from Newcastle's council housing fall by 71% between the introduction of [Sustaining Tenancies Guidance](#) in 2007 and 2019. This has been achieved despite the impact of the welfare reforms and YHN rent arrears rising to £4.23m in April 2019 from £2.4m in 2012. The level of forbearance is a policy decision based partly on understanding the cash flow problems Universal Credit creates for tenants and this forbearance is aligned to the provision of advice and support. The low level of evictions from YHN can be seen in section 4.

YHN homelessness preventions	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3
Housing related support to sustain accommodation	976	228	157		
Resolved benefit problems	663	120	133		
Debt advice	154	32	26		
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	10	0	3		

We can see from the table above that most of the interventions to prevent homelessness fall in to two categories: housing related support (where additional support is given to tenants to help them maintain their tenancies, which could include support to attend appointments and referrals to additional support where required) or where advice and support is given to resolve benefit issues.

The table below covers Support and Progression's contribution towards homelessness relief. As they work for a landlord it is inevitable that these numbers will be lower than their prevention figures which reflect the work they do to keep people in accommodation rather than find an alternative, and in the main these figures reflect the work that the pathways team within the service do to help those leaving institutions (hospital, supported accommodation, asylum accommodation) find suitable and sustainable accommodation.

YHN homelessness relief	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	331	96	41		
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	23	1	2		
Other activity through which accommodation secured	18	2	6		

We are fortunate in Newcastle to be able to make good use of social housing with Your Homes Newcastle to be able to both prevent and relieve homelessness, As part of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme Heriot-Watt were commissioned to research [Homelessness Prevention in Newcastle: Examining the role of the 'local state' in the context of austerity and welfare reforms \(2019\)](#). This research found that council housing and a partnership culture of homelessness prevention as the main enablers for the prevention of homelessness in the city:

“Newcastle has low levels of homelessness compared to other core cities, and its surrounding Housing Market Area, on almost all measures. In particular, the city records very low levels of homelessness acceptances, households in temporary accommodation, and levels of street

homelessness, and no use of unsuitable temporary accommodation like Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless households.

The most likely combined explanations for these low levels of homelessness are Newcastle’s housing market context – a relatively large stock of council housing more conducive to homelessness prevention, higher social lettings rates and lower private rent levels – and the city’s very strong emphasis on and network of services for homelessness prevention.”

The role of Cherry Tree View in upstream homelessness prevention is shown in the table below which shows us the admits to the Preventative Outreach Service and subsequent discharge information.

Admits to Cherry Tree View preventative outreach	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total admits	243	69	70			
• Sustaining Tenancies referral	164	45	41			
• CTV move on	50	16	22			
• HAC homelessness prevention cases	29	8	7			
Discharges from preventative outreach	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total discharges in the quarter	153	50	41			
• Tenancy sustained / YHN engaging with client	88	22	17			
• Move on case – support ended	32	14	16			
• Service failed to engage with client	27	13	8			
• Evicted – no further contact	5	1	0			

We can see that in Q1 that the numbers of referrals and referral routes were very similar to the previous quarter, with most referrals coming via the Sustaining Tenancies guidance route. We have asked YHN and Cherry Tree View to work together to look in more detail at which YHN tenants are being referred for additional outreach support and to ensure there is continuity of support at the point that Cherry Tree View believe their involvement can end and the resident is still in their tenancy. YHN Support and Progression are moving their case recording to the Gateway from October 2019 and this will aid the joint support planning process and give us the ability to better track a resident’s journey through support.

What do we need to do next

We are working to prevent homelessness in Newcastle by improving our collective sharing, reviewing, analysing, understanding and responding. We do this by providing [partnership working arrangements](#), jointly planning, providing consistent communications and workforce development, and simplifying processes, wherever possible. This has been especially important given that the government’s welfare reforms, and the increased conditionality that now comes with welfare benefits, mean that residents have limited options to prevent homelessness.

We know that there is more we can do to further strengthen our homeless prevention system. We must improve our information and evidence to better understand the causes of homelessness. Improving our targeted responses would require us to further develop our partnerships with other public sector agencies, including those within our own council (e.g.

Social Care, Revenues and Benefits). We also want to extend our homelessness prevention work to health and social care services, to support vulnerable residents to have a stable life.

3. Secondary prevention: for those residents who are threatened within the statutory definition of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRAct)

This category covers our support for people presenting to the Housing Advice Centre (HAC) at risk of homelessness and information on people accessing accommodation commissioned by the council to respond to homelessness. Information on the work done to relieve the homelessness of clients is included in section 4.

Under the HRAct local authorities have two new main duties:

- The “prevention” duty – In cases of threatened homelessness the local authority must take ‘reasonable steps’ to help them avoid becoming homeless. The tables below cover this element
- The “relief” duty – In cases where the resident is homeless the local authority must take ‘reasonable steps’ to help applicants to secure accommodation for at least six months. We have included the figures on this in section 4, which covers those residents who are ‘literally’ homeless (they do not have any accommodation they can reasonably occupy)

The table below shows the headline figures of presentations to HAC. In Q1 there was a small drop in the number of calls to the EHO compared to the previous quarter, but that the general contacts and HAC casework figures remained relatively stable (though still higher than pre-HRAct).

Volume	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Emergency out of hours calls	943	253	207			
General HAC contacts	2,984	853	831			
HAC casework	2,523	643	620			
Support needs (top 3)						
Mental health	1,190	312	300			
Physical health	899	230	246			
Offending history	845	209	225			

The table below shows the number of cases where the prevention duty was owed and the reasons why the resident presented to HAC.

	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Prevention duties owed	557	98	89			
Top reasons for presenting						
End of private rented tenancy	144	21	27			
Other	114	25	1			
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	77	13	11			
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent)	40	1	5			
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	39	6	13			

We can see from the table below that as with pre-HRAct presentations, the end of a private rented tenancy continues to be the biggest reason for presentations. The number of cases recorded as 'other' has fallen as we have worked to refine the recording of cases under the HRAct. It is important to fully understand the reasons that people present to us as threatened with homelessness if we are to improve our responses to them, but also to correctly report on homelessness prevention in the city

Case study: Bena

Bena had been living with her 2 dependent children & 2 grandchildren in the same private rented tenancy for 9 years. She contacted HAC in June 2019 after being served a notice for possession following building up rent arrears of £6,000. She had been in receipt of Universal Credit since start of 2019 & had been receiving housing costs direct. Resident was also in arrears on water rate, council tax & owed money to Provident & from an advance payment of Universal Credit.

Intervention

- Bena saw a Homeless Prevention Officer who referred her to a debt advisor based in the Housing Advice Centre. She was advised at this point to request that housing costs be paid direct to landlord via her Universal Credit journal
- A Debt Advisor applied to Northumbrian Water for Bena to be accepted on to their arrears scheme to address the £1,000 she owed. Arrangements were already in place for Bena to repay Council Tax arrears and she was reminded of the importance of keeping to the arrangements. A family member has made a payment to Provident on her behalf
- The Debt Advisor completed a full financial statement with Bena & with some budgeting adjustments & reduced water payment resident was in a position to pay an additional £20 pcm toward the arrears on top of her rent which would be paid direct to landlord. Landlord accepted this offer & withdrew the possession proceedings

Outcome

Bena remains in her tenancy, housing costs continue to be paid direct to the landlord & the resident is addressing her arrears with the aim of applying through Tyne and Wear Homes to move to a larger property.

The table below shows the number of cases where the prevention duty was ended in the quarter, the main activity carried out and the outcomes.

	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Prevention duties ended	454	122	127			
Top 5 prevention activities						
Advice and information provided	164	60	59			
Accommodation secured	117	30	37			
Negotiation / mediation / advocacy to prevent eviction	18	8	10			
Mediation with friends / family	34	2	2			
Supported housing provided	12	3	5			
Top 3 outcomes						
Alternative accommodation secured for 12 months or more	93	28	43			
Contact lost	84	22	20			
Alternative accommodation secured for 6 months or more	84	19	17			

In Q1 47% of prevention cases were closed with alternative accommodation found, the majority of which was secured for 12 months or more. We are continuing to review the measures we use to record our interventions under the HRAct and, whilst some indicators are driven by requirements of the official returns to MHCLG, we are keen to widen the scope of our information in order to gain a clearer idea of the range of our interventions and their outcomes. This is particularly true in the reporting of the homelessness prevention figures.

The Council commissions a range of services for people at risk of homelessness including those with complex needs. These include supported accommodation and providing floating support to help people to maintain their tenancies. The table below shows us the number of admits to accommodation-based services, broken down by crisis, supported and emergency units and the reason for admission to crisis and supported accommodation (Further detail on the emergency bed admits is given in section 4).

Supported accommodation admissions	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total number of admits	1,567	414	381			
• Emergency beds	479	132	102			
• Crisis accommodation	481	126	114			
• Supported accommodation	607	156	165			
Total number of individuals	906	291	286			
Reason for admission (crisis)	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Not recorded / not known	105	13	8			
Move from another hostel	111	35	36			
Relationship breakdown	50	23	27			
Discharge from institution	77	28	17			
Reason for admission (supported)	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Not recorded / not known	51	14	14			
Moved from another hostel (planned)	227	65	80			
Relationship breakdown	164	38	26			
Discharge from institutions	57	11	18			

We can see from the table above that there was a slight fall in the total number of admits this quarter and in the number of individuals that those admits relate to, and a slight increase in admits to supported accommodation. We look in more detail at the emergency bed admits in section 4 of this briefing, as the use of these beds has helped us to deliver on our aim to make an offer of accommodation to everyone with a connection to Newcastle who is literally homeless, regardless of their priority need status. There will be degree of double counting with the admits to the emergency accommodation as in many cases there is a subsequent admit to crisis or supported accommodation in the same quarter. We are looking at way of separating out this recording for future briefings so that it is clearer where multiple placements in a quarter are the result of an emergency bed admit and a subsequent move to crisis or supported accommodation.

The table below shows us the measures recorded under the [Supported Housing Move On protocol](#) and shows that whilst there has been a small rise in the number of discharges, the

majority of those discharges (39%) are still moves to another supported accommodation placement, confirming our analysis that there is a high degree of churn within the sector.

Move on assessments completed in the quarter		18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3		
Total assessments added		528	499				
• Number of 'red' (likely to require long-term support)		101	96				
• Number of 'amber' (further support required)		281	269				
• Number of 'green' (ready to move to independent living)		146	107				
Tyne and Wear Homes applications submitted in the quarter		18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3		
Total applications submitted		18	32				
• Number of 'qualifying'		5	12				
• Number of 'non-qualifying'		6	8				
• Awaiting decision		6	9				
• Information not given		1	3				
Move on destination		2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total number of discharges	1,566	402	390				
• Supported accommodation	556	165	153				
• Independent tenancy	211	57	61				
• Friends and family	172	38	53				

We have always seen a move to YHN as highly desirable due to the level of security of tenure and support available for potentially vulnerable tenants. Through the MHCLG Rapid Rehousing Pathway we were successful in our bid to deliver additional support to move residents on from supported and hostel accommodation, support that will be provided by YHN's Support and Progression Service. This funding will:

- increase the capacity of the YHN Support and Progression team, to enable specialist workers to support the pathway from supported accommodation (including emergency crisis beds) and those being discharged from institutions into YHN tenancies
- provide tenancy support to enable independent accommodation to be sustained
- fund 2 Pathways Workers who will engage with supported accommodation providers to identify actions to address barriers that would otherwise prevent those most excluded from accessing accommodation. These workers will also directly support people through the Pre-Tenancy Readiness Assessment process (PTRA) and, in conjunction with their Support Worker and specialist drug and alcohol and mental health practitioners, identify support needs and offer appropriate interventions to ensure tenancies can be sustained

This work will be alongside the development of the Beechgrove project which YHN opened last quarter, an innovative scheme to deliver 5 units of semi-independent living with support for people moving on from supported accommodation and hostels. The next step is to evaluate this project and hopefully see the concept rolled out to other small blocks throughout the city.

The table below covers the measures recorded as part of the [Prevention of Eviction from Supported Housing Protocol](#) and shows us that there has been a rise this quarter in the number of people being evicted. Most evictions (66%) have again come from crisis accommodation, with violence and disruptive behaviour again accounting for most evictions (66%). Addressing the level of evictions from commissioned provision is one of the main areas of focus for Commissioning's Service Improvement Lead and they have undertaken a review of the protocol in line with Homeless Link principles around managing risk in accommodation.

	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total number of evictions	212	38	45			
• Evictions from crisis accommodation	139	25	29			
• Evictions from supported accommodation	73	13	16			
• Evictions from accommodation for young people	16	5	5			
Reason for eviction						
• Violence to staff or other residents	62	12	13			
• Disruptive behaviour	77	18	14			
• Drug / alcohol abuse	15	1	4			
• Rent arrears	12	0	2			
• Theft	5	1	3			
• Other	41	6	9			

What we need to do next

Beyond the end of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme, building on the closer working with our commissioned accommodation services and with the Housing Advice Centre, Commissioning has been able to identify and co-design specific functions and requirements that have been reflected in the system models and service specifications for the new 'Homelessness Prevention and Relief Responses' contracts that will be in place from 1 October 2019. These contracts have a stronger preventative focus and greater emphasis on partnership working to support our statutory duties and policy aims, including:

- improving our evidence base by increasing data quality – this will be achieved through a “data payments” Payment by Results element in the new contracting arrangements;
- developing accommodation models that can respond flexibly to unpredictable demand, including scaling up of a Housing First provision – this will be a longer-term programme of work with cross-council partners and accommodation providers in the city to transform our accommodation, moving from larger single site hostels to smaller environments that are more dispersed and community-based; and
- creating more opportunities for collaboration through a ‘distributed leadership’ approach with commissioned accommodation providers, looking at joint solutions to improve our responses

Although we have outlined a wide range of our activities, it is important to recognise that there are differences in the availability and quality of homelessness ‘pathway’ services, e.g. our responses for those leaving prison and asylum were identified in the Heriot-Watt research as

areas for improvement. It was also highlighted that prevention activities differ by tenure, e.g. private rented sector and housing association tenants have fewer and less effective responses, which are limited by a lack of information making it more difficult to systematically identify and respond to the risk of homelessness at a sufficiently early stage. We also know we need to improve our information systems to better understand the impact of our interventions. YHN's Support and Progression Service starting to use the [Newcastle Gateway](#) in October 2019, which will help to improve our understanding of residents' needs and the effectiveness of our responses.

Since January we have been working with [Groundswell](#) 2019 to review our options for supporting residents who have experience of homelessness to inform the design of our homelessness prevention system. We want to move beyond a service user representation model to embedding meaningful participation routinely across our review processes. To do this, it is important to ensure that the views of residents with experience of homelessness are embedded into our decision making processes, rather than undertaking 'one-off' consultation exercises. The next steps of the project are to:

- Co-produce a model for participation of people with experience of homelessness
- Conduct a pilot to embed the recommendations in our homelessness review structure

We see this as a first step in improving resident involvement and strengthening our insights from residents. We have committed funding for this beyond the end of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer period and will be working to embed the model of participation in these homelessness review structures.

4. Crisis: for those residents who are 'literally' homeless (they do not have any accommodation they can reasonably occupy)

This section covers our responses to people who are literally homeless and includes those sleeping rough as well those presenting to HAC as literally homeless and those admitted to Cherry Tree View.

The table below shows the main reasons that people presented to us when already homeless and in need of the 'relief' duty under the HRAct. The majority are as a result of friends or family no longer being able to accommodate them.

	2018-19	18-19	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Relief duties owed	1, 234	320	338			
Top 5 reasons for presenting						
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	257	64	67			
Other	209	67	13			
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent)	127	25	38			
Eviction from supported housing	93	18	33			
End of private rented tenancy	85	19	21			

As with the prevention figures in section 3 above, we have aimed to reduce the number of cases categorised as 'other' and this has fallen substantially as a reason for homelessness. There is also a lower rate proportionally of people presenting as homeless due to the end of a private rented tenancy.

	2018-19	18-19	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Relief duties ended	1,069	366	336			
Top 5 relief activities						
Supported housing provided	479	155	119			
No activity / advice and information provided	307	122	115			
Accommodation secured	187	66	76			
Other activity through which accommodation secured	48	9	14			
Negotiation / mediation to secure return to friends / family	25	7	6			
Top 5 outcomes						
Secured accommodation for 6 months	433	126	101			
Contact lost	248	92	58			
Secured accommodation for 12 months or more	166	70	98			
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	114	42	38			
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	59	21	21			

The table above shows that the outcome under the relief duty for 59% of people was securing accommodation for at least 6 months (the minimum requirement under the Act) and 11% of presentations were reconnected back to the local authority area where they had a connection.

Admits to Cherry Tree View temporary accommodation	2018-19	18-19	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total admits	294	69	59			
• HRAct admits	247	60	53			
• Non HRAct admits	47	9	6			

The table above shows the number of admits to Chery Tree View temporary accommodation. We have aggregated the admits showing those that came via the Housing Advice Centre after an assessment under the Homelessness Reduction Act and those that were placements outside of this duty and include temporary moves requested by YHN and placements in an emergency by social care.

The table below shows that this quarter saw a fall in the number of evictions from YHN to the lowest we have record of 2 in a quarter. these evictions represent those cases where every intervention has been exhausted.

	2018-19	18-19	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Evictions from YHN	57	10	2			

We have included these figures in the Crisis section as they represent those cases where interventions have in the most part failed to prevent a crisis

The table below represents our drive towards real time reporting of literally homeless presentations to the Housing Advice Centre. Our aim in Newcastle is to ensure there is at least one offer of accommodation to all those who present with nowhere to go that night, whilst accepting there are some limitations to this. The table below shows the total numbers of presentations by people who are literally homeless and the offer (where applicable) made to them. We are continually seeking to improve the way we collect and present this information in order to better explain the offer available and the outcomes available to people. It is important to note that the numbers in this table relate to all those presenting to HAC as literally homeless, which covers a wider definition than just those sleeping rough. However, there will be some crossover and we need to develop a more sophisticated way of identifying these cases within the literally homeless figures.

	Q4 2018-19	April 19	May 19	June 19	Q1 2019-20
Literally homeless presentations	401	106	99	74	279
Accommodation offered	298	67	68	52	187
• Accepted by applicant	271	60	59	48	167
• Refused by applicant	28	7	9	4	20
No accommodation offer made	33	8	9	10	27
• No accommodation available	15	3	6	3	12
• Accommodation providers refusing to accept	18	5	3	7	15
HAC not seeking accommodation	70	28	24	10	58
No local connection	46	20	15	10	45
• Reconnection accepted by applicant	33	15	12	5	32
• Reconnection refused by applicant	13	5	3	5	13
Other	14	8	6	0	14
• Serious unacceptable behaviour	6	3	3	0	6
• Exhausted all legal duty	8	4	3	0	7
Not legally eligible for assistance	10	4	1	2	7

The table below gives shows us the admits to emergency accommodation this quarter. We have also included some discharge information to show that the majority of those placed in an emergency bed then move on to a full placement in either crisis or supported accommodation. 72% of placements in emergency accommodation lasted less than 5 days.

Admits to emergency beds	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total admits	479	132	102			
Outcomes						
Total discharges in quarter	478	134	102			
• Moved to crisis accommodation	148	45	50			
• Moved to supported accommodation	146	43	27			
• Abandoned placement	116	32	13			

The table below shows us that this quarter there has been a 51% increase in the number of individuals found but also in the average number of people found per night, which is a significant cause for concern. 75% of the individuals identified were only found on one or two days in the quarter with a core group (8%) found on more than 5 days. 35% of those found had a connection to an area outside of Newcastle. For those presenting without a local connection our offer is support and reconnection back to the area of their connection.

People sleeping rough	2018-19	18-19 Q4	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3
Average found per night		5	7		
Individuals:		86	130		
• Stock		52	78		
• Flow		11	28		
• Return		4	16		

Rough sleeping is rarely a result of a lack of accommodation alone and we can see that substance misuse is often an issue for people found by the outreach team, as are mental health issues. Information about people sleeping rough in Newcastle is recorded on the Newcastle Gateway by Newcastle's street outreach service based on their daily contacts with people who are found in the city centre and surrounding areas. This has limitations and might not capture everyone who is sleeping rough. However, it does provide a good indication based on verified contacts with people who are bedded down as opposed to self-reports

Case study: William

William is a single 65-year-old man who presented to the Housing Advice Centre after being found sleeping in a tent in Exhibition Park. He had previously been found rough sleeping in 2017 & had been rehoused on that occasion in to a social housing tenancy with additional floating support. William had abandoned his tenancy after feeling it was unaffordable. He stated that his only income was £700pcm from a private occupational pension & he had accrued £800 of rent arrears

Intervention and outcome

- After presenting at HAC, William was placed in Cherry Tree View (CTV) with a view to the Homeless Prevention Officer speaking to the landlord about the resident returning to his tenancy. William was also referred to a debt advisor at HAC for advice around budgeting & affordability. A benefit check was carried out & additional advice sought from Welfare Rights, following this it was established that William would qualify for his state pension in November 2019
- Homeless Prevention Officer negotiated with landlord to allow William to return to his tenancy, advised that William was working with a debt advisor and with budgeting advice would be able to afford the rent and in addition from November when income increased, he would be able to repay amount towards arrears each month. Landlord initially resistant but agreed to arrangement that Newcastle City Council would guarantee the rent payments until November when William's income would increase
- William returned to his tenancy & is receiving ongoing support from CTV preventative outreach to ensure he continues to sustain his accommodation

What we need to do next

We have been successful under the MHCLG Rapid Rehousing Pathway where we were awarded navigator funding to support extended street outreach and harm reduction for people sleeping rough. We will use this funding to:

- Work with Changing Lives to maintain the additional capacity that enables extended outreach and an enhanced navigation offer that includes a 'refer and accompany' support for people sleeping rough. The funding will enable increased provision of the drop in at City Road and opportunities for targeted interventions including 1:1 appointments, in-reach from other partners, and accompanying people to appointments to increase access to support and services, particularly to take up offers of accommodation
- Provide an integrated harm reduction offer – the team will be complemented by a Harm Reduction Worker seconded from CGL

The Street Outreach element of the navigator funding will commence from 15 July, and we are working with CGL to secure the Harm Reduction Worker as soon as possible.

Separate to MHCLG funding, we have worked with Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW), and the Clinical Commissioning Group to submit a bid for a Public Health England Rough Sleeping Grant: Testing Community Based Models of Access to Health Services. Our proposal is based on a model of in-reach provision of dual diagnosis workers into short-term relief accommodation (ie East and West short-term relief accommodation), which would enable increased engagement and improved pathways to services. A decision on whether we have been successful with this bid is expected soon, with the expectation that if awarded the service would start from January 2020.

A new Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator will begin work in September 2019 and will the work in this area with their focus to be:

- coordinate activity to reduce rough sleeping of the relatively small number of people known to be sleeping rough now and to focus on the core street lifestyle group
- work towards to make a positive difference by ending these people's rough sleeping by testing the efficacy of existing resources and procedures
- identifying opportunities based on individual casework for system improvement and workforce development

The rough sleeping coordinator will also work closely with the existing Rough Sleeping Learning Framework lead and their role to develop an understanding the impact of Newcastle's policy aim to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping and the effectiveness of our responses in meeting this aim. Their role will also be a link with the [Street Zero](#) approach, a movement for Newcastle to become a city where no one has to sleep rough and which seeks to bring together the city's collective investment, commitment and resources and to make it everyone's business to end rough sleeping by 2022. A Street Zero Partnership Board has been established providing an opportunity for these partners to provide the place-based leadership to improve our collective understanding of the causes of rough sleeping and ensure that all our investments respond to these causes.

5. How can you get involved

Please discuss the issues raised in this briefing with residents and service users. Staff from the Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit are happy to attend team meetings / service user groups if there are any specific issues that people would like to raise or discuss in more detail. You can also comment on the Homelessness Strategy action plan and our progress towards the actions and on the protocols and procedures we have developed with partners to tackle homelessness.

Copies of the action plan, protocols and governance arrangements are available online [here](#)

Some of the issues raised in this briefing will be discussed at the [Homelessness Prevention Forum](#) in September where you will have opportunity to feedback but if you are unable to attend the Forum and have comments you would like included please contact Sarah Blakey (Active Inclusion Officer) on 0191 277 1733 or email activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk if you have any comments or would like to get more involved.

September 2019