

Active Inclusion Newcastle

Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Briefing 2019-20 Q4

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.

On 20 June 2019 Newcastle City Council and Crisis announced a formal partnership focused on ending homelessness in Newcastle. This partnership will enable us to move from this strong record of preventing and relieving homelessness, to ending it altogether. The partnership will begin with an evidence review that will help us to start to form this collective understanding, but we will also need to learn and develop as we go on. The evidence review will inform the development of a strategy to end homelessness in Newcastle over ten years, which in turn creates a realistic and exciting opportunity to unite the city, enabling us to align

our resources to do what's right by making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring in Newcastle.

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 2019-20 we provided universal advice and information to 3,721 subscribers and had 69,199 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 2019-20 we provided training to 860 volunteers and professionals from our network of partners. Face to face training was suspended in March 2020 in light of the restrictions in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic however we are currently investigating methods of delivering these sessions remotely and would hope to be able to deliver a form of “face to face” training from Q2 2020-2021 if not before

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:

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 75% between the introduction of [Sustaining Tenancies Guidance](#) in 2007 and 2020. This has been achieved despite the impact of the welfare reforms and YHN rent arrears rising to £4.45m in 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	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Housing related support to sustain accommodation	976	157	120	101	72	450
Resolved benefit problems	663	133	99	81	121	434
Debt advice	154	26	23	14	19	82
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	10	3	2	1	2	8

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.

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	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Total admits	243	70	80	109	86	345
• Sustaining Tenancies referral	164	41	55	72	56	224
• CTV move on	50	22	22	24	19	87
• HAC homelessness prevention cases	29	7	3	13	11	34
Discharges from preventative outreach	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Total discharges in the quarter	153	41	64	61	115	281
Ave length of support at point of discharge		87 days	132 days	151 days	143 days	
• Tenancy sustained / YHN engaging with client	88	17	30	23	52	122
• Move on case – support ended	32	16	16	29	28	89
• Service failed to engage with client	27	8	17	9	35	69
• Evicted – no further contact	5	0	1	0	0	1

We can see that in Q4 that the numbers of referrals and referral routes are like previous quarters, 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 currently moving their case recording to the Gateway from and this will aid the joint support planning process and give us the ability to better track a resident’s journey through support systems

Suitable and sustainable accommodation

In Newcastle, many residents at risk of homelessness are supported by our upstream prevention partners, with the aim of maintaining them in accommodation or finding alternatives before they reach crisis point. In addition, the current legal definition does not include all the criteria being applied locally to determine whether accommodation is suitable for a household, or the support and resources available to households who may need extra help to sustain independent accommodation.

Through this workstream, we aim to work together to develop a local definition of suitable and sustainable accommodation that is adopted by all partners working with households at risk of homelessness. In doing this, we want to ensure that as a city, we are confident that whenever we support a household into (or back to) accommodation, it is both suitable for their needs and sustainable given their circumstances, with support in place where necessary. Developing a

rights-based approach to suitable and sustainable accommodation gives households at risk of homelessness or who have experienced homelessness the best chance of avoiding future crisis and creates a basis from which to work towards the remaining foundations of a stable life:

Before the pandemic we had begun testing our definition with YHN Refugee Move on Team, using their standardised action plans for clients leaving asylum accommodation, receiving support as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons resettlement Scheme, or receiving support for family reunion. In January 2020 we completed a desktop exercise to check these standardised actions against the components of our definition, to determine the level of overlap between existing (standardised) activity and our ambitions. We have found that most areas of our working definition of suitable and sustainable accommodation are included in the standardised approach, and we want to develop a checklist approach that can be extended to other teams and organisations.

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.

In relation to the partnership work with the Jobcentre we will be reinstating the quarterly liaison meetings with the other partners in the process, Crisis and YHN. This will allow us to reinforce the aims and objectives of the partnership and ensure the referral and outcome information can be captured accurately. There will also be a refresh of the initial training of Jobcentre work coaches that took place in 2017 to ensure they remain aware of the role in the partnership and in the prevention of 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.

We have been able to quickly develop and implement processes to direct specialist advice and support to individuals identified through Newcastle City Council's newly established Citylife Line. Between 24 March and 31 May 2020, Citylife Line received 2,470 requests for support, including 1,070 requests from residents saying that they didn't have means to pay for food and 451 requests for financial support. We have also worked with partners to identify residents who are at greater risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) due to underlying health conditions, so that we can put measures in place to reduce this risk. The Government's three month ban on evictions from private rented accommodation has also protected many tenants. However, we know that we will need to provide proactive support to many of these tenants when this ban is lifted. We want to use each of these opportunities to identify how we can better target preventative advice and support to residents. Through our Active Inclusion Newcastle multidisciplinary team, we have developed a case finding approach that can be adapted to target support to these residents.

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	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20	2019-20
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Emergency out of hours calls	943	207	214	236	233	890
General HAC contacts	2,984	831	829	999	891	3,550
HAC casework	2,523	620	631	630	580	2,461
Support needs (top 3)						
Mental health	1,190	300	296	305	267	1,168
Physical health	899	246	245	223	204	918
Offending history	845	225	206	226	183	840

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

	2018-19	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20	2019-20
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Prevention duties ended	454	127	100	113	135	475
Top reasons for presenting						
End of private rented tenancy	127	39	26	30	47	142
Other	107	20	6	2	4	32
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	63	16	14	23	28	61
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent)	43	3	10	6	7	16
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	36	12	8	18	11	49

We can see from the table above 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 substantially as we have worked to refine the recording of cases under the HRAct.

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	19-20	19-20	19-20	19-20	2019-20
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Prevention duties ended	454	127	100	113	135	475
Top 5 prevention activities						
Advice and information provided	164	59	42	37	12	150
Accommodation secured	117	37	20	44	36	137
Negotiation / mediation / advocacy to prevent eviction	18	10	11	11	2	34
Supported housing provided	12	5	3	5	1	14
Mediation with friends / family	34	2	2	6	2	12
Top 3 outcomes						
Alternative accommodation secured for 12 months or more	93	43	22	35	28	128
Contact lost	84	20	21	24	44	109
Alternative accommodation secured for 6 months or more	84	17	14	17	22	70
Secured existing accommodation for 6 months	59	14	13	11	13	51
Prevention duty failed	50	17	12	10	9	48
Secured existing accommodation for 12 months	39	9	6	4	2	21

In 2019-20 57% of prevention cases were closed with either existing accommodation secured, or a longer-term alternative found. 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. The responses we commission have historically been to meet our homelessness duties. This includes rooms from third party providers for people facing homelessness in a range of supported accommodation settings.

The table below shows us the number of admits to accommodation-based services, broken down by short term relief, supported and emergency units and the reason for admission to short term relief and supported accommodation (Further detail on the emergency bed admits is given in section 4). What was previously described as crisis accommodation is now known as short term relief accommodation

Supported accommodation admissions	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Total number of admits	1,567	381	382	430	430	1,623
• Emergency beds	479	102	86	139	124	451
• Short term relief	481	114	133	113	123	483
• Supported accommodation	607	165	163	178	183	689
Total number of individuals	906	286	297	307	301	918
Reason for admission (short term relief)	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Not recorded / not known	105	8	7	6	5	26
Move from another hostel	111	36	37	33	48	154
Relationship breakdown	50	27	30	19	1	93
Discharge from institution	77	17	23	26	21	87
Reason for admission (supported)	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Not recorded / not known	51	14	19	11	3	47
Moved from another hostel (planned)	227	80	58	55	117	310
Relationship breakdown	164	26	40	53	33	152
Discharge from institutions	57	18	22	21	11	73

We can see from the table above that there was a rise in the total number of admits this year and in the number of individuals that those admits relate to. There is more detail on 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 short term relief 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 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	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total assessments added	499	513	519	50
• Number of 'red' (likely to require long-term support)	96	97	102	95
• Number of 'amber' (further support required)	269	286	291	287
• Number of 'green' (ready to move to independent living)	107	115	126	120

Tyne and Wear Homes applications submitted in the quarter	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total applications submitted	32	25	43	38
• Number of 'qualifying'	12	10	7	8
• Number of 'non-qualifying'	8	4	2	7
• Awaiting decision	9	8	29	20
• Information not given	3	3	5	3
Move on destination	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Total number of discharges	390	379	407	439
• Supported accommodation	153	107	161	156
• Independent tenancy	61	45	48	41
• Friends and family	53	69	52	39

Only 9% of those leaving commissioned accommodation in 2019-20 moved to an independent tenancy of any kind, and over half of those who did moved to a YHN tenancy.

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.

	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Total number of evictions	212	45	45	43	39	172
• Evictions from short term relief accommodation	139	29	31	28	19	107
• Evictions from supported accommodation	73	16	14	15	20	65
Reason for eviction						
• Violence to staff or other residents	62	13	15	11	14	53
• Disruptive behaviour	77	14	14	15	10	53

• Drug / alcohol abuse	15	4	6	5	1	16
• Rent arrears	12	2	5	4	4	15
• Theft	5	3	1	3	2	9
• Other	41	9	4	5	8	26

The table above 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

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 came in to place on 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](#) will help to improve our understanding of residents' needs and the effectiveness of our responses.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has shifted our focus and more of our resources to responding to those residents who are homeless or are immediately threatened with homelessness. However, our preventative and partnership driven approach has meant that we were able to adapt quickly to the challenges presented by the pandemic which included a Rapid rehousing pathways through the Emergency Housing Panel – the numbers of evictions from our council housing stock were already low, but we were able to quickly stop all evictions and our strong partnership between Newcastle City Council's Active Inclusion Service, Fairer Housing

Unit and YHN meant that we could also suspend our social housing allocation policy. In its place, we quickly implemented an Emergency Housing Panel which has allowed us to focus our attention and resources on residents who are homeless; prioritising, reviewing and reaching consensus about those residents daily to enable moving them into independent housing quicker than we ordinarily would have been able to do. From 30 March to 27 May 2020, 194 referrals were made to the panel preventing homelessness. The panel has strengthened collaboration and enabled a clearer pathway between our supported homelessness accommodation and general needs social housing. As a result, it has been promoted as good practice by the Local Government Association. Strengthening this approach will help us to bridge the gap between these sectors. It should also help to identify how much emergency and supported accommodation we need.

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	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Relief duties ended	1,069	336	292	349	354	1,331
Top 5 reasons for presenting						
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	227	74	52	82	72	279
Other	184	32	19	22	12	85
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent)	119	34	33	27	37	131
Eviction from supported housing	81	26	27	35	34	122
End of private rented tenancy	72	27	18	26	19	90
Required to leave NASS accommodation	65	34	27	38	26	125

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	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Relief duties ended	1,069	336	292	349	354	1,331
Top 5 relief activities						
Supported housing provided	479	119	122	163	189	593
Advice and information provided	307	115	84	103	73	375
Accommodation secured	187	76	63	62	70	271
Negotiation / mediation to secure return to friends / family	25	6	4	3	12	25

	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Top 5 outcomes						
Secured accommodation for 6 months	433	101	69	103	117	390
Contact lost	248	58	83	83	116	340
Secured accommodation for 12 months or more	166	98	87	92	75	352
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	114	38	27	32	17	114
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	59	21	15	24	19	79

The table above shows that the outcome under the relief duty for 56% of people was securing accommodation for at least 6 months (the minimum requirement under the Act) and 9% of presentations were reconnected back to the local authority area where they had a connection.

Admits to Cherry Tree View temporary accommodation	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Total admits	294	59	65	44	49	216
• HRAAct admits	247	53	58	42	45	198
• Non HRAAct admits	47	6	6	2	4	18

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 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. 75% of placements in emergency accommodation lasted less than 5 days.

Admits to emergency beds	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Total admits	479	102	86	139	124	451
• Sleeping rough		15	25	50	10	
• Leaving an institution		19	14	24	10	
• Asked to leave – family / friends		37	22	21	14	
Outcomes						
Total discharges in quarter	478	102	85	134	120	441

The table below shows that there has been a fall in the number of evictions from YHN. These evictions represent those cases where every intervention has been exhausted and whilst they are risen the last two quarters this is still a low number of evictions from a provider with the amount of housing stock that YHN has. 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

	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4	2019-20
Evictions from YHN	57	2	15	14	19	50

The main source of the information we have on people rough sleeping in Newcastle is from Changing Lives' Outreach Team which we commission to provide daily street outreach and a rough sleeping drop in centre. Information from the Outreach Team shows increasing numbers of people found rough sleeping as shown in the table below. The above figures are based on the Outreach Team's **daily reports** on their contacts with people who they find in the city centre and surrounding areas. The Outreach Team also respond to alerts from members of the public that contact the Council's rough sleeping line. Although the information has limitations and might not capture everyone that is rough sleeping, it does provide a daily snapshot in contrast to government's single annual snapshot.

People sleeping rough	2018-19	19-20 Q1	19-20 Q2	19-20 Q3	19-20 Q4
Average found per night	5	7	10	11	8
Range per night		0-21	0-25	2-25	0-17
Individuals:	224	130	121	155	118
• Stock	114	78	90	106	83
• Flow	83	28	15	18	14
• Return	27	16	16	31	21

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

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

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. This proposal was successful and will deliver a model of in-reach provision of dual diagnosis workers into short-term relief accommodation.

MHCLG have also made available funding to Newcastle for a Rough Sleeping Reconnections Navigator to provide assertive reconnection support to people sleeping rough in Newcastle who don't have a local connection to the city.

We are also developing a partnership with the Police to improve identification & consistency of responses to rough sleeping and begging in the city this will build on a pilot undertaken between City of London Police and City of London local authority. More information on this will be available in future briefings

During the lockdown we saw an 89% reduction in people found sleeping rough¹. This reduction was achieved for two key reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, all of our specialist homelessness accommodation remained open during lockdown, allowing a safe and suitable place for people who were homeless. This was only possible due to the commitment and responsiveness of our partners, and the heroic efforts of frontline staff working in those accommodation projects. Secondly, our partnership arrangements with our Rough Sleeping Coordinator, Housing Advice Centre, Changing Lives' Multiple Exclusion Team, and the Police have allowed us to coordinate more personalised responses for each individual person sleeping rough. We want to build on this partnership work to realise this opportunity to achieve our Street Zero vision of ending rough sleeping in Newcastle by 2022. Funding through the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative has already helped us to expand our outreach support to people sleeping rough in the city and to develop a Housing First pilot with YHN. As part of our approach we will explore how we can work as a city to best respond to people who have no recourse to public funds.

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.

Some of the issues raised in this briefing will be discussed at the [Homelessness Prevention Forum](#) 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.

June 2020

¹ 59 people were found on 130 instances 30 March to 9 August 2020 compared with 169 people found on 1,157 instances from 17 November 2019 to 29 March 2020.