

Active Inclusion Newcastle

Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Briefing 2018-19 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 council house 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: upstream responses to residents at risk
- Secondary prevention: residents presenting to us at risk
- Crisis: rough sleeping: finding residents who are on the streets

As this briefing shows we are making good progress in developing a whole city 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 resolve 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 responses.

2. Primary prevention: upstream responses to residents at risk

In this section we will look at those interventions that the council and partners undertake to identify and target households who may be at risk of homelessness. The Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer has provided opportunities 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 the outcomes for those residents experiencing homelessness, the following provides a summary of this work as examples of our case finding and targeted partnerships.

- Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer (in partnership with DWP, Jobcentre Plus, Crisis and YHN)
- Multi-disciplinary Team (case finding team targeting those impacted hardest by welfare reform)
- Sustaining Tenancies Process

Multidisciplinary team

The multidisciplinary team began approaching residents on 12 November 2017 and have so far identified **180 residents** to approach with support. Throughout the course of the pilot, the multidisciplinary team will test new approaches for working with residents who face complex challenges. They are currently taking their cases via four routes

- The first route was Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) tenants affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy (commonly referred to as the "bedroom tax") in the outer west area of the city. To date, the multidisciplinary team had approached 71 of these residents
- The second route through which the team identified cases was YHN tenants affected by the benefit cap and categorised as 'red' by YHN, with the initial dataset consisting of 69 tenants. To date, the multidisciplinary team had approached 61 of these residents
- In April 2018, the multidisciplinary team began to identify residents who may be at risk of homelessness using predictive analytics developed with Policy in Practice, using Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer funding. The team are currently approaching 36 of these residents

- In May 2018, the multidisciplinary team began contacting residents at various stages of YHN's 'Sustaining Tenancies' process. To date, the team have approached 12 of these residents

The work done by the team to this point can be broadly split into two categories; short term mitigation to stabilise the resident's situation in the short to medium term and seeking longer term solutions that stabilise residents over a longer period

1. Short-term mitigation: replacing YHN furniture packs with SIS awards, referring to Energy Services, applying to Northumbrian Water's Support Plus scheme, applying for a repeat DHP

Table 12: Short-term outcomes achieved for residents by the multidisciplinary team

Outcome type	No. of residents	Total amount gained
Successful application for a DHP	20	£19,129.51
SIS award replaced furniture pack	12	£10,301.62
Successful application to the Northumbrian Water Support Plus scheme	9	N/A
Successful application for a Crisis Support Scheme award	4	£458.00
Gained awards for Debt Relief Order (DRO) fees	5	£450
Referral to Energy Services	3	N/A
Gained award through William Moulton charity (for washing machine)	1	£269

2. Seeking longer term solutions: seeking an exemption from the benefit cap (e.g. through a PIP or Disability Living Allowance), writing off debts (e.g. through a Debt Relief Order), supporting the resident to move to more affordable housing, supporting the resident to move towards employment

Outcome type	No. of residents	Total amount gained
Provided debt advice	29	N/A
Provided budgeting advice	11	N/A
Supported debts to be written off through a Debt Relief Order (DRO)	5	£55,613.25
Negotiated reduction in Northumbrian Water Debts	6	£2,168.25
Negotiated council tax debts	6	£359.13
Reduced expenses	4	N/A
Successful application for a Personal Independence Payment	2	£9714.80 (per annum)
Gained Employment Support Allowance (ESA)	1	£3801.20
Gained an exemption to the benefit cap	1	£2860

The multidisciplinary team have generally first sought to mitigate a resident's situation by focusing on relatively quick ways to either increase income or reduce outgoings. This short-term mitigation 'buys time' for the team as they seek to find longer term solutions. These longer-term solutions require significant, albeit varying, lengths of time and depend on consistent engagement with the resident. In comparison to quarter two, the team have achieved significantly more longer-term solutions for residents. Working towards employment could take significantly longer, depending on the nature of the barriers faced by the resident. As a result, there are relatively few reportable employment-based outcomes.

Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Pilot with Jobcentre Plus

The Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Pilot with Jobcentre Plus helped us to prepare for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and build on our aim of using our collective resources to make preventing homelessness everyone's business by identifying the potential causes of homelessness at the earliest opportunity and to improve the alignment of our services to respond to these causes. The referrals from JCP help identify potential homelessness further upstream and enable positive early interventions and is contributing to the DWP's approach to the duty for public agencies to identify and refer clients at risk of homelessness to the local housing authority

Referrals from JCP to partners in the pilot	5 June 2017 – 30 June 2018
Crisis Skylight	183 (45%)
Newcastle City Council	193 (47%)
Your Homes Newcastle	34 (8%)
Total	410

(Your Homes Newcastle referrals are lower than the other partners due to the earlier interventions they implement with their tenants when problems are identified).

The table below details the support provided by partners and the outcomes reported to date, the categories given are those provided by MHCLG for homelessness recording.

Support provided by partners	5 June 2017 – 30 June 2018
Advice and information provided	75
Accommodation secured with assistance from local authority through housing options service	11
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	5
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	14
Supported housing provided	20
Negotiation/mediation to return to family or friend	4
Negotiation/mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction/repossession	28
Discretionary Housing Payments to reduce shortfall	5
Housing related support to sustain accommodation	1
Debt advice	4
Resolved benefit problems	2

As part of the next steps to develop partnership working a new post was created for a council officer to support the DWP Local Partnership Manager. This post has created an even closer working relationship between the local authority and the JCP's. A key component of the role has been to oversee the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer pilot: referral process, weekly progress reports analysing referrals and agreeing improvements. This post also acts as a point of contact between Newcastle City Council and JCP and has streamlined the process for case level interventions, see below for examples:

- A homeless applicant living in temporary accommodation was not in receipt of Universal Credit and was accruing rent arrears. The council officer raised this case with JCP and was able to establish the reason the claim was suspended and the review date. Supporting evidence was uploaded to the journal and the mandatory reconsideration was successful. The claim was backdated, and the rent arrears cleared, allowing the family to move on to permanent accommodation debt free.

- A resident who regularly sleeps rough was raised as being at risk of having his Universal Credit sanctioned after he missed multiple interviews at JCP. It was agreed with outreach support that they would accompany him to his interview and that the council officer would sit in on the interview alongside the Work Coach. The council officer was able to access local IT and advise the Work Coach of the progress of accommodation referrals. It was agreed to award an easement removing work search requirements whilst the individual was assisted in resolving his accommodation needs.
- A resident approached the Council asking for help with housing costs. The resident advised she was living in a shared private rented tenancy but that her former partner had left the address after their relationship ended. Her application for housing costs through Universal Credit was partially successful but she was only awarded half of the permitted costs on the understanding she was only responsible for half the rent. The council officer was able to contact the former partner and his mother to establish he was no longer living in the joint tenancy. A supporting letter was written and provided to the DWP who in turn awarded full housing costs making the full rent affordable.

Other examples of this has helped to improve processes are below:

- a transport protocol agreed to assist those who are homeless reach the Council office when they may otherwise be unable to travel.
- joint briefings for Work Coaches by the Council officer and the DWP Local Partnership Manager to reinforce the initial training at the start of the JCP HPT.
- introduction of monthly meetings with the JCP single points of contact (SPOC) to share good practice and problem solving.
- assisting the Local Partnership Manager to set up outreach surgeries in Council commissioned supported accommodation to address issues with residents failing to attend Universal Credit appointments and address problems with existing claims.

Sustaining Tenancies and YHN prevention of homelessness

From now we will include a breakdown of the homelessness prevention and relief cases reported to us by YHN Support and Progression service, the headings are those provided the definitions used below are those provided by MHCLG for homelessness recording.

YHN homelessness preventions	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4	2018-19
Housing related support to sustain accommodation	295				295
Debt advice	58				58
Resolved benefit problems	258				258
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	3				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 to maintain their tenancies, this could include support to attend appointments and referrals to additional support where required.

The table below covers their contribution towards homelessness relief, as they work for a landlord it is inevitable that these numbers will be lower, and it in the main reflects the work that the pathways team within the service do to help those leaving institutions (hospital, supported accommodation, asylum accommodation) find permanent suitable and sustainable accommodation

YHN homelessness relief	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4	2018-19
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	86				86
Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend	1				1
Other activity through which accommodation secured	4				4

The table below shows us that there has been a rise this quarter in the evictions from YHN, but that this quarter is still within the range that we have seen in the last couple of years and is testament to the work by the YHN Support and Progressions service as covered above

	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Evictions from YHN	61	4	18			

3. Secondary prevention: residents presenting to us at risk

Within this category we will cover those people presenting to the Housing Advice Centre at risk of homeless, but also those information on those people accessing accommodation commissioned by the council to respond to homelessness.

With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRAct) which came in to operation on 3 April, a new reporting system (H-CLIC) was also introduced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The introduction of this new recording system has not been without issue and at the time of writing the deadline for final submission of data by local authorities had been extended to allow authorities to resubmit information following a change to the data recording made post deadline by MHCLG. Because of this we are not currently in a position for this briefing note to include the full data regarding presentations to the Housing Advice Centre and those outcomes until the information has been submitted and is publicly available. We will ensure that the information for Q1 is added to future briefings to ensure a full picture is available as the year progresses.

Hospital discharge referrals	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	2017-18
Total number of referrals	80	19	17			
General (RVI and Freeman)	43	9	8			
Mental health (NTW)	37	10	9			
Outcomes						
Accommodation secured	43	11	10			
Returned to friends and family	2	1	0			
Returned to own tenancy	6	1	2			
Admitted to CTV	0	0	0			
Homelessness presentation – no notice	0	0	0			
Out of area case – referred back	15	2	2			
Advance notice – not yet ready for discharge	15	4	3			

We will continue to include a breakdown of those referrals received as a result of someone living either hospital or prison as both are potential triggers for homelessness. We have a good process for liaison with the hospitals that involves a weekly check with them as to which patients are experiencing issues with their housing as this allows us to plan for discharges in a way that avoids the crisis presentation.

We will build on the [Hospital Discharge Protocol](#) to develop the duty to refer introduced with the HRAct, which will be effective from October 2018 and staff from the Active Inclusion Service will be meeting with representatives of NTW and nursing and social care staff at the RVI and Freeman in early September to ensure a smooth transition.

In addition to the referrals to the Housing Advice Centre from the hospitals, Your Homes Newcastle provides additional support to staff and patients seeking assistance with housing and we are working closely with their pathways team to ensure there isn't a duplication of service. Often patients will be referred to this service when they have accommodation, but that accommodation is no longer suitable for them to return to. In Q1 2018-19, this service received 14 referrals from patients who were in this position. Often, they will be discharged to this accommodation on a temporary basis and will require social care involvement to put in temp measures to support them until permanent suitable accommodation can be found. In most case they will be in need of either adapted or extra care sheltered accomodation.

We will also continue to capture in this section those people presenting to us from custody where they have no accommodation on release, the table below represents those cases where a direct presentation was made to us either by the client or by one of the services working with the prison estate to support clients find accommodation for their discharge.

Prison release referrals	2017-18	17-18	18-19	18-19	18-19	18-19
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of referrals to HAC	46	12	15			
Outcomes						
Accommodation secured	34	9	13			
Out of area case – referred back	7	2	2			
Refused accommodation offer	4	1	0			
Recalled to prison	0	0	0			
Returned to previous accommodation	1	0	0			

In addition to those captured above an additional 21 people were admitted to our commissioned accommodation where prison release was given as the reason for the admit and where the referring agent was the probation service or an agency acting on their behalf. The Housing Advice Centre now approves all assessments and referrals to accommodation in advance allowing us to confirm the needs of those being admitted and offer additional support where necessary. In relation to the prisons and the Duty to Refer we are working with the North of Tyne Homelessness Operational Group to develop a similar approach to the management of discharges from prison as we have for hospital discharges.

We will within this section also include information about those people accessing our commissioned homeless accommodation. The table below shows us the number of admits in to services for Q1 2018-19, broken down by crisis, supported and emergency accommodation.

Supported accommodation admits, reason for admission and social needs

Supported accommodation admissions	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Total number of admits	1,307	307	377			
• Emergency beds	160	38	121			
• Crisis accommodation	497	114	110			
• Supported accommodation	621	155	146			
Total number of individuals	829	263	280			
Reason for admission (crisis)						
Not recorded / not known	61	26	26			
Move from another hostel	151	32	25			
Relationship breakdown	57	16	14			
Discharge from institution	64	17	18			
Reason for admission (supported)	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Not recorded / not known	50	13	10			
Moved from another hostel (planned)	200	66	50			
Relationship breakdown	128	36	47			
Discharge from institutions	80	24	12			

We can see from the table above a rise in the number of placements made this quarter in to the emergency beds. To meet the rise in need expected by the introduction of the HRAct we extended the number of emergency beds held across the city from 5 to 11, including 2 beds in the YWCA which is accommodation outside of our commissioned provision. Under the new provisions of the HRAct we have sought to relieve homelessness in all cases where someone has presented to us as literally homeless and this helps to account for the rise in the admits to the emergency beds. There is a degree of double counting with the admits to the crisis and supported accommodation on the basis that 70 of those admitted in to an emergency bed had a subsequent admit in to crisis or supported accommodation in that quarter. In future briefings we will break down this information to better reflect the use of the emergency provision and the journey through the system for people.

The table below shows us the measures recorded under the Supported Housing Move On protocol and shows that whilst there has been a rise in the numbers of discharges there has not been a related rise in the numbers of people moving to independence.

Table 12 – Supported Housing Move on Protocol

Move on assessments completed in the quarter	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3
Total assessments added	508	545		
• Number of 'red' (likely to require long-term support)	135	129		
• Number of 'amber' (further support required)	279	308		
• Number of 'green' (ready to move to independent living)	94	108		

Tyne and Wear Homes applications submitted in the quarter		17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	
Total applications submitted		28	20			
• Number of 'qualifying'		6	6			
• Number of 'non-qualifying'		1	4			
• Awaiting decision		15	9			
• Information not given		6	1			
Move on destination	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Total number of discharges	1,118	303	369			
• Supported accommodation	302	80	135			
• Friends and family	141	36	38			
• Independent tenancy	201	55	52			

A part of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme a Service Improvement Lead has been funded to work with providers to ensure that access to accommodation to prevent and relieve homelessness is available to meet the council's aim that no one need be homeless. They currently have three main areas of focus,

- Increase access to beds - to ensure all accommodation placements fulfil our statutory duties and political expectations to prevent and relieve homelessness, and to ensure that no-one sleeps rough due to a lack of available accommodation;
- Reduce evictions from accommodation – working towards a planned and consensual approach to ensure any evictions do not result in people rough sleeping and to also improve our understanding of why evictions happen and what interventions could prevent them
- Increased and improved move-on from accommodation to increase access to accommodation by ensuring the approach and culture within services supports people to move-on to suitable and sustainable accommodation, through conversations early in the support plan process that positively promotes move-on but recognising and responding to barriers that prevent move-on.

In relation to move on this will mean building on the initial work undertaken by Social Finance earlier this year to change how readiness for move on is recorded on Gateway so we can see better the challenges that clients are facing, and the actions being taken to address these. We are holding internal review sessions to identify key requirements from the move-on panel and process, and success dependencies throughout September and before the end of the year we will have begun a co-production approach to review of panel and move-on process with both accommodation providers and YHN who are integral to this process as both a landlord and provider of the additional support through their Pathways team to assist people to move to independence.

Linked to this the Service Improvement Lead has also undertaken a review of 'long-stayers, i.e. those people who have been supported longer than would ordinarily be expected in that accommodation setting. Crisis and Supported accommodation providers have reviewed the needs of their residents who fit within this description and as the end of June 2018 there were 105 people in this category (of which 24 have been supported for 5 or more years in supported accommodation for people who have mental health problems) In all cases the reason for continuing support relates to complex and enduring need, specifically significant mental health problems and substance misuse, which in some cases has resulted in poor physical health and self-neglect and it is a combination of these factors, enduring needs and

ongoing support requirements that generally are preventing people from moving to independent living. Ongoing work is now being carried out to review these support needs to understand whether there is a need for a social care intervention.

Further analysis of the 'long-stayers' and a collective agreement on how to best meet the needs of those residents who require longer term support, will help to inform the future recommissioning of services. There will be an opportunity at the Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Forum (12 September) to hear more about some of the work outlined above but also to hear about the initial plans for the recommissioning process.

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 fall this quarter in the numbers of people being evicted from accommodation, though continues to confirm that most of those evictions, 59%, are for either violence or disruptive behaviour.

Prevention of Eviction from Supported Housing Protocol

	2016-17	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Total number of evictions	187	53	44			
• Evictions from crisis accommodation	118	39	28			
• Evictions from supported accommodation	67	14	13			
• Evictions from accommodation for young people	14	0	3			
Total number of Notice to Quits (NTQ) issued	166	20	42			
• NTQs resulting in eviction	56	8	21			
• Evictions without NTQ	156	45	23			
• NTQs issued and client still in accommodation	100	12	21			
Reason for eviction						
• Violence to staff or other residents	66	20	11			
• Disruptive behaviour	50	15	15			
• Drug / alcohol abuse	16	3	3			
• Rent arrears	25	7	4			
• Theft	3	1	1			
• Other	28	8	10			
Move on destination						
• Crisis or supported accommodation	17	5	2			
• No forwarding address	146	43	33			
• Friends and family	11	1	0			

As we noted in the Q4 2017-18 briefing note the Service Improvement Lead was undertaking a review of evictions with one of the commissioned providers and they are now almost 6 months in to piloting an "Alternative Response Checklist" at one of the crisis accommodation hostels

as attempt to prevent incidents from escalating into a potential eviction, the checklist follows Homeless Link principles and gives guidance and clarity as to what level of behaviour is to be expected and what the likely response will be to unacceptable behaviour. Initial reports suggest that 4 potential evictions have been prevented and as a result the provider is looking to extend the use of the checklist across other provision.

3. Crisis: rough sleeping: finding residents who are on the streets

In Newcastle, people don't generally sleep rough due to a simple shortage of housing. Many individuals have entrenched substance misuse problems, mental health conditions, as well as other complex health problems. This means they often struggle to meet the conditions currently required to sustain accommodation and to pay bills and break away from entrenched patterns of behaviour that have been developed over their lifetime. The overlapping traumas and life experiences that leads to people sleeping rough makes it much harder for them sustain accommodation.

In 2017-18, 254 individuals were found rough sleeping in Newcastle, down from 260 in 2016-17. On average, there were 6 individuals per night, although this ranged from 0-20 people per night. In November 2016, Newcastle carried out an official count that was verified by Homeless Link. This involved 22 volunteers carrying out a city-wide search for people who were either bedded down or about to bed down for the night. The official count in 2016 found 5 individuals who were sleeping rough. In 2017, the estimated snapshot of people reported to be sleeping rough was 10.

Table 1 Rough sleepers

	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Average found per night	6	5	6			
Individuals:	254	35	77			
• Stock	121	15	47			
• Flow	110	9	20			
• Return	28	11	10			

Although these numbers represent a relatively small percentage of the overall homeless population, they are by far the most visible, often the most complex, and can present with the greatest risks to both themselves and to the community.

Table 2– Reasons for rough sleeping and outcomes

Reasons for rough sleeping	2017-18	17-18 Q4	18-19 Q1	18-19 Q2	18-19 Q3	18-19 Q4
Evicted / abandoned accommodation	84	10	32			
Unknown	68	11	25			
Relationship breakdown	39	10	14			
Discharge from institutions	12	3	3			

Information about people rough sleeping in Newcastle is recorded on the Newcastle Gateway and the main source of the information is from 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 that is rough sleeping. However, it does provide a

good indication based on verified contacts with people who are bedded down as opposed to self-reports. Alerts from members of the public are also received via a dedicated email address (roughsleeping@newcastle.gov.uk) and telephone number (0191 278 3899) if there are concerns that a person might be sleeping rough.

Case Study

C is a 60-year-old male who first had contact with our Street Outreach Team in 2010 when he was sleeping rough in Jesmond Dene. He stated at this time that he had been evicted from a private tenancy due to non-payment of rent. C disappeared after a few months and in 2015 contact was made again following a concern raised by a Park Ranger. C advised the Street Outreach Team that he had left another private tenancy as he preferred to sleep rough and was happy staying in Jesmond Dene. C didn't want any support to obtain accommodation and he would only agree to access the day centre to use the shower and laundry facilities.

C did not interact with other people when accessing the day centre. Concerns were raised as C had been observed talking to himself and he was very guarded when staff enquired about his wellbeing. A referral was made to a Homelessness CPN however C refused to engage. C slept rough for a further 12 months and concerns continued to be raised about the possibility of an underlying mental health issue.

In July 2016 C was arrested for drunk and disorderly. In the police station C was observed talking to himself and stated that he was the son of God and could cure cancer. The Police requested a mental health assessment. Following the assessment C was admitted to hospital and following assessment he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. C is now living in his own tenancy and his Community Treatment Order was recently extended as he still struggles to accept his diagnosis and the reason why he was admitted into hospital.

This case study illustrates the challenges of working with people who sleep rough and refuse to engage with our current service.

In addition, there are a people on the streets of Newcastle who are not rough sleeping but who are begging. This does not mean that they don't need help, in most cases they do and there are many different reasons why people beg including mental and emotional ill health, relationship breakdown, bullying and exploitation, financial problems and addictions. We recognise that we need to collectively better understand these problems to prevent them. In 2017, Fulfilling Lives undertook consultation [Exploring begging in Newcastle City Centre: Consultation](#) which explored the experiences of 7 people who beg and to understand the causes and impact of begging; the main reason they identified was that people beg to fund their addictions.

As part of our response to these issues Street Zero is the opportunity to start a place-based leadership approach to doing what's right for Newcastle and maximise value by aligning our charitable, philanthropic, private and public funding sources. It will provide a platform to enable everyone, including the public and businesses, to donate and support services to help us end rough sleeping. The aim will be for this to be housing-led; offering suitable accommodation as part of a package of support. Hostels are currently the backbone of our responses to rough sleeping. However, we know that larger, single site hostels do not work for everyone, and we must consider what can better promote independence. The biggest reason for sleeping rough in Newcastle in 2017-18 was eviction from a hostel, and 75% of hostel residents have spent more than 3 years in them; too many people get locked into or locked out of our hostels. Newcastle needs to move from a hostel by default model, to a housing by default model, to move people into settled accommodation as rapidly as possible and move on from homelessness and a life on the streets.

There are a number of services in the city (commissioned and non-commissioned) providing support to rough sleepers. However, this activity needs to be re-focused and better coordinated. A new approach is needed to divert people away from options which reinforce rough sleeping, and to realign services towards helping people to achieve the confidence required to live independently.

Central to achieving this will be:

- Establishing an integrated outreach service offer which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week to manage crisis and safety planning and to provide rapid rehousing and multi-disciplinary responses to support people away from a life on the street. This includes personalised and assertive forms of outreach and harm reduction approaches which works intensively with individuals, around their housing, drug and alcohol use, mental and physical health, and emotional wellbeing. This requires alignment and targeting of existing resources and services across Street Zero partners.
- Rough Sleeping Prevention Fund drawing from the single charitable giving point, to fund initiatives that enables residents to move away from a life on the streets and prevent people from returning to the streets. This will:
- provide Personal Budgets for long term rough sleepers with high support needs to help them off the streets and/or sustain their accommodation. For example, by paying off small arrears or by buying gas, electricity or food when there were problems receiving benefits. The budget could also help people to plan for a future in accommodation, for example by paying for courses. A Personal Budget can work in different ways in different circumstances.
- enable testing and piloting of new initiatives and ways of working by supporting services to prevent rough sleeping.
- Designated care coordination for rough sleepers, operating within a clearly defined multi-disciplinary arrangements.

5. What we are doing – follow up from the June Homelessness Prevention Forum

- **Duty to refer**

In Newcastle the [duty to refer](#) will supplement, not replace, our existing AIN [partnerships](#) and [protocols](#), like the [Sustaining Tenancies Guidance](#) which was the foundation for the reduction in YHN evictions and our [Hospital Discharge Protocol](#), which has helped to ensure that no one becomes homeless as a result of leaving hospital, will remain in place.

Similarly, partners should continue to use the [Newcastle Gateway](#), as they have since 2010, to directly refer to accommodation and support services without requiring their client to go through a statutory homelessness assessment by the Council.

We appreciate that agencies like the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice will develop a national form for the duty to refer. Whatever way the referral is made we will continue to work with organisations to agree the partnership arrangements that will provide the best outcomes for residents and the duty to refer will be incorporated into our workforce development and support to help partners to prevent and relieve homelessness and Active Inclusion Service officers will be meeting with partners to agree how best to incorporate the duty to refer into our partnership arrangements. For more information on this specific approach you can contact dutytorefer@newcastle.gov.uk

- **Service user involvement**

We know that this an area that we need to improve on and as start we will be looking to work with [Groundswell](#) (who presented at our June Forum) to work with us on assisting service users to have a voice in the preparation of the Newcastle Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy with the aims

- To work with stakeholders across Newcastle to move service user representation towards meaningful participation at all levels of service design and delivery.
- Improve understanding to inform homelessness reviews and strategy
- To ensure that the views of people with experience of homelessness are at the centre of decision making in the city as a matter of practice.
- Inform public perceptions of homelessness by the voice of those with experience

As this work develops we will update partners via the Homelessness Prevention Forum.

6. 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](#) on 13 June 2018 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.

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