

# **Newcastle's Homelessness Review 2013**

**Reviewing progress since our 2008-13  
Homelessness Strategy and exploring the current  
profile of homelessness in the city**

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## Acronyms

AIN	Active Inclusion Newcastle
CTV	Cherry Tree View
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
FHU	Fairer Housing Unit
FIP	Family Intervention Project
HAC	Housing Advice Centre
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
IIA	Integrated Impact Assessment
MAPPA	Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
NASS	National Asylum Seeker Service
NCC	Newcastle City Council
NFNA	Newcastle Future Needs Assessment
NSNO	No Second Night Out
PRS	Private Rented Service
YHN	Your Homes Newcastle

# 1. Introduction to the Homelessness Review

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities every five years to review homelessness in their area and then to produce a strategy to prevent homelessness. This Review informs our Homelessness Strategy that contributes to the Council's aims to reduce inequality and create decent neighbourhoods. Through this Review we aim to create a shared view of the challenges we face in preventing homelessness.

Much has improved since our first Homelessness Strategy in 2003. This includes no bed and breakfast use since 2006, the removal of all shared hostel rooms, attracting £8.5 million of capital to create 9 Places of Change, replacing the Council's statutory emergency accommodation with a state of the art building, one of the country's highest rates of homelessness prevention, lowest rates of full homelessness duty acceptances and low rates of rough sleeping.

This good performance has been based on citywide partnerships and political support for preventing homelessness and was recognised by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) who made Newcastle their Homelessness Champions in 2007-8 and Rough Sleeping Champions in 2008-9. The strength of our partnerships in preventing homelessness was also recognised in the research "Evaluating Homelessness Prevention in Newcastle" by Heriot-Watt and Northumbria Universities in 2011 that concluded that prevention work in Newcastle was "highly effective", see: <http://www.sbe.hw.ac.uk/research/ihurer/institute-news.htm>.

In the last 10 years homelessness in Newcastle has been more the product of poverty and vulnerability than of a housing shortage. However, homelessness still exists and is very distressing for those affected and the risk appears to be growing in terms of individual vulnerability and housing shortages due to the Government's Welfare Reforms.

The political, financial and housing market contexts have changed considerably since our 2003 and 2008 strategies. These strategies were produced in the context of increased resources and national encouragement for Councils to develop strategic approaches as seen in the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Supporting People commissioning programme. We are developing our 2014-19 strategy at a time of the biggest ever cuts to public services and welfare benefits. We have also seen change in the housing market with the private rented sector growing to respond to the growth in the student population. The increase in students combined with reductions in the levels of housing benefit subsidy has made the private rented sector more difficult for vulnerable people to access.

Newcastle's response to these challenges is built on our foundations for preventing homelessness which are based on these principles:

- Taking a life course approach based on encouraging predictive interventions at the earliest opportunity. We seek to prevent homelessness and build resilience through mainstream services working with specialist homelessness agencies;
- Understanding the causes of homelessness and how effective our services are at reducing homelessness;
- Having strong partnerships, particularly with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) and the voluntary sector;
- Having clarity on the roles of partners based on citywide agreements that are translated into targeted support for individuals;
- Taking a consensual approach based on agreement at a strategic and individual level about the best use of resources and of commissioning improvements;

- Providing high quality services to respond to crises and then using that opportunity as a platform for the prevention of further crises;
- Promoting individuals' resilience and long term sustainability by providing training, employment and recovery opportunities.

Our aim has been to develop a citywide strategic approach that aligns commissioning, partnerships and budgets with services that respond to individual needs. This Review seeks to test how well we have done this.

The financial pressures the Council faces mean that the Budget is the primary strategic process for deciding expenditure. The importance of services to prevent homelessness is recognised within Newcastle City Council's 'Newcastle 2016' Budget (covering 2013-16) with the creation of the Crisis Response workstream, one of 13 dedicated workstreams. However we appreciate that despite the relative protection of homelessness services a 24% cut in 2014-15 will be acutely challenging. Details of the Crisis Response workstream can be found at <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/your-council/budget-and-annual-report/crisis-response>.

Therefore, the emphasis of our 2014-19 Strategy will be on maximising the value of existing resources to prevent homelessness. This Review builds on our ongoing review of homelessness as part of the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment (NFNA), which we update quarterly. To aid analysis we have created 4 groupings of homelessness:

- People who are owed the full homelessness duty;
- People at risk of homelessness;
- People living in accommodation with support;
- Multiple exclusion and rough sleepers.

We recognise that these groupings have limitations and that people may not exactly fit our definitions, or may move between groups. However, differentiating between the risks of homelessness helps us to develop relevant and realistic options that include the wider aspects of social and financial inclusion, health and wellbeing. Over the last 10 years we have found that homelessness is best prevented by building resilience through coordinated support that provides the foundations for stability by providing integrated, consistent information, advice and support that enables people to secure:

- **An income;**
- **Somewhere to live;**
- **Freedom from excessive debt;**
- **Training and 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 will do this by supporting partnerships and coordinating services that provide the foundation for stability. We will continue to work with partners to innovate, reduce duplication, increase prevention, provide more effective responses to individuals in crisis and prevent the repeat presentations of the multiply excluded.

## **2. Context of the Review**

### **2.1 The policy, economic, demographic, housing market and Welfare Reform context**

#### **2.1.1 Policy context**

This Review considers how we can maintain and improve partnerships to prevent and respond to homelessness. They sit in the wider context of the Council's strategies and delivery plans. We know that the prevention of homelessness is dependent upon a range of macro economic and national policy factors. To help partners understand the context in which we prevent homelessness we reference the key documents that influence the delivery of services in Newcastle, these are:

The Council's Newcastle 2016 Budget explains how decisions will be made about the allocation of Newcastle City Council resources for 2013-16, online at:

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/your-council/budget-and-annual-report/budget-proposals-2016>

The Council's Housing Delivery Plan explains Newcastle City Council's housing capital requirements and plans, online at:

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy>

The report of the Newcastle Fairness Commission explains how we promote equality, online at:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/socialrenewal/engagement/fairnesscommission/documents/index.htm>

The Council Plan 2013-14 sets out Newcastle City Council's priorities for the year ahead and the values that underpin our work, online at:

<http://commsandmarketing.newcastle.gov.uk/content/council-plan-2013-2014>

The Wellbeing for Life Strategy 2013 articulates how we work in partnership to improve the wellbeing of residents, online at:

<http://www.wellbeingforlife.org.uk/our-strategy>

In addition from 2013 the Council has responsibility for Public Health, which provides further opportunities for closer working.

The key underpinning principles and cross-cutting themes, described on page 6, of the Wellbeing for Life Strategy are those that we also work to to prevent homelessness. Rather than attempt to summarise the Wellbeing for Life Strategy we would recommend that you read this excellent document that is the blueprint for holistic working in the City.

#### **2.1.2 Economic context**

The post-credit-crunch downturn in the UK economy has been more prolonged than other recent recessions<sup>1</sup>. The Coalition Government's policy has been to cut public spending to contain Government borrowing and debt. The economic downside of the public spending cuts has been slower economic growth, with the UK economy moving into a 'double dip' recession in 2012. The economy is now starting to recover, with growth of 1.5% predicted

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.crisis.org.uk/publications-search.php?fullitem=375>

for 2013<sup>2</sup>, although recovery has not been consistent across the country and the North East has the UK's highest unemployment rates. 10.4% of the North East's economically active population were unemployed as of July 2013<sup>3</sup>.

The economic downturn and high unemployment rates increase the risk of homelessness. However in Newcastle the people who are more at risk of homelessness have been those who have endured deprivation and the recession and cuts lessen the opportunities for them to improve their lives.

Through the Newcastle Advice Compact (see 2.24) we coordinate the extensive range of directly delivered and commissioned advice services that contribute to preventing homelessness. The effectiveness of this approach is seen in the increase in the prevention of homelessness through debt advice from 8 cases in 2009-10 to a high of 620 cases in 2011-12. There are many good examples of work to build resilience through providing employment opportunities to people at risk of homelessness. This includes YHN's Your Home Your Job programme, The Cyrenians' peer employment work and the work of Newcastle Futures that supports over 1,600 people into employment a year.

Our challenge is to strengthen the coordination and integration of employment and inclusion services. This coordinated approach is central to our work in response to the Welfare Reforms which will inform this further by providing employment opportunities for those at risk of homelessness due to the "bedroom tax".

### **2.1.3 Demographic context**

The Council Plan 2013-14 explains the challenges of inequality in the city including:

- Newcastle has some of the most deprived areas in the country: 25% of residents live in areas which are in the 10% most deprived areas in the country;
- Newcastle has more children living in poverty (29.9%) compared to the rest of the country (21.2%);
- Life expectancy varies between the most and least deprived areas of Newcastle, for men the difference is 13.7 years and for women 10.8 years.

In addition, the Housing Delivery Plan shows:

- There is an overall predicted increase in the population of Newcastle from 282,500 in 2012<sup>4</sup> to 298,700 by 2021; a growth of 16,200 (6%);
- The most significant feature in the population projections is the projected growth of older people aged 65+. Against 2012 figures it is projected the numbers in this age group will rise 7% by 2016 and 15% by 2021<sup>5</sup>. The increase in older households will have implications for support services, extra care housing, adaptations and other age related care requirements.

These issues have been consistent over the last 10 years and confirm that the need for the integrated approach of Active Inclusion Newcastle to provide the foundations for stability is all the more important given the strong correlation between poverty, deprivation and the risk of homelessness.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23944091>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/topics/unemployment.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics - 2011 Interim Sub-national Population projections Sept 2012

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics, Interim 2011 based sub-national population projections

## 2.1.4 Housing market context

The impact of our interventions on homelessness are affected by the wider housing market, a complex system in which the public sector's influence is affected by capital and revenue subsidy levels and the availability of affordable housing.

Newcastle's housing market in 2013 is made up of 124,200 properties and is segmented as follows:

- 61,200 owner occupied (50%; below the national average of 65%)
- 27,000 private rented (22%; higher than the national average of 18%)
- 36,000 social rented

The most dominant effect on preventing homelessness in Newcastle is the role of YHN who manage slightly fewer than 30,000 of the city's socially rented housing. In 2012-13 YHN accommodated 86% of households owed the full homelessness duty by the Council and were responsible for 42% of homelessness preventions. YHN invests in advice and support to prevent homelessness; the effectiveness of this is seen in the 50% reduction in evictions from YHN tenancies between 2007-8 and 2012-13.

Information from the Council's Fairer Housing Unit (FHU) shows that in 2011-12 68% of YHN allocations were to people without a priority need for housing, of these 72% of general needs allocations were for 1 and 2 bed properties; and in February 2013 our housing register (waiting list) stood at 4,700<sup>6</sup>. This shows that unlike in most of the rest of the UK, Council housing is the primary and most popular response to housing need. The dynamics of this are likely to change due to the Government's Welfare Reforms. It also helps us to understand that for many people in Newcastle the risk of homelessness is more closely linked to support needs than a crude housing shortage.

The strength of the Council and YHN's partnership to prevent homelessness was recognised in the research by Heriot-Watt and Northumbria Universities in 2011, referenced earlier. It is important to note the effect of YHN's culture of care and support, proactively seeking to meet the needs of people in Newcastle and not just to maximise the value of the asset base. This is not always the case with all social housing providers. The Council works very closely with YHN and develops initiatives with them that are then extended to other partners. The work on preventing youth homelessness and preventing evictions are good examples that were recognised by Shelter in their 2010 good practice guide, '*Eviction – assessing and meeting the needs of children*', online at: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/357998/Good\\_practice\\_briefing\\_Eviction\\_assessing\\_and\\_meeting\\_the\\_needs\\_of\\_children.pdf](http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/357998/Good_practice_briefing_Eviction_assessing_and_meeting_the_needs_of_children.pdf).

We appreciate that we have limited influence over market rents, house prices and individuals' behaviour. However, we seek to make the best of our limited resources by understanding the signs of the risk of homelessness and intervening as early as possible, e.g. through our campaign on where to get debt advice which has been running since 2011. Through our Financial Inclusion Network we also seek to help the 31% of households in Newcastle estimated to be in fuel poverty (which is higher than the national average of 22%).

Access to and sustaining accommodation in the private rented sector remains a challenge. This is predominantly due to market and housing benefit subsidy factors. The number of full time higher education students has increased from 25,271 in 2001 to 39,887 in 2012-

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<sup>6</sup> Housing Delivery Plan 2013-16 Evidence Paper

13 – a growth of 58%. This has created competition and rent inflation in parts of the private rented sector. Students are outside of the housing benefit subsidy arrangements and landlords can attract higher returns renting by the room to students. The rents in Newcastle are higher than other areas in the region which means that one bedroom self contained accommodation is particularly hard to find. Between April and August 2013 there were 11 one bedroom flats advertised as available through the Council's Private Rented Service (PRS). This is a concern due to the additional demand for one bedroom accommodation that is likely to be created by the "bedroom tax".

The PRS is leading this work and is restructuring to better meet these demands. A review of the PRS in 2010 resulted in landlords being charged for services rather than being provided with incentives to engage. This is in the process of returning to a proactive engagement approach that includes incentives. Our aims are to engage transparently with landlords to ensure they are well placed to understand the issues in managing tenants with higher needs. The PRS face a further challenge in securing sustainable accommodation due to the relatively low levels of floating support services aligned to the private rented sector. Floating support has tended to be aligned to social landlords' provision. In 2013 there are 2 support workers aligned to the PRS whereas there are 41 support workers just in YHN. This is not to imply that these workers should be relocated as they directly contribute to YHN's high performance on the prevention of homelessness.

The PRS consider the provision of support to be key to sustainable access to the private rented sector for vulnerable people. This would help to make the private rented sector comparable to the YHN offer. We have seen this through the 2012-13 Cyrenians' Homelessness Transition Funded Housing First pilot. With 40 former rough sleepers moving into private rented accommodation, this is the largest Housing First scheme in the country and is viewed as exemplary practice. A significant factor in the success of this work has been the provision of peer support to residents; this provides a higher level of support that is sympathetic to their needs.

Through the PRS we provide rent deposit guarantees, insurance, training and incentives, monitor landlords' standards and hold the Interventions List that warns prospective tenants of landlords with bad practice. We are looking to build on this work to respond to the challenges of Welfare Reform<sup>7</sup>.

### **2.1.5 Welfare Reform context**

The Government's Welfare Reform programme was extended in the 2012 Autumn Statement to 2017, and the level of the cuts have been further increased, with the aim to:

- Reduce benefits expenditure by £23.31 billion by 2017;
- Make the benefits and tax credits system fairer and simpler;
- Make work the most financially attractive option;
- Reduce benefit dependency.

We estimate that the Government's Welfare Reforms will cost Newcastle residents approximately £110 million a year by 2014 and will affect up to 45,000 people in the city. It is too early to be specific about the impact on homelessness. The impacts of the Reforms are complex and dynamic and there is not a simple housing-related solution to these issues. Newcastle's responses are coordinated by the Welfare Reform Board chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council. The relevant Cabinet papers can be found at: <http://democracy.newcastle.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=857&Year=2013>

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<sup>7</sup> Housing Delivery Plan 2013-16 Evidence Paper

In summary, the Welfare Reforms include a wide range of specific measures, with different impacts and consequences for Newcastle. Reductions in Working Tax Credit affect people in work, and reductions in the rate of annual uprating will affect all those claiming benefits. Reforms targeting people claiming health and disability related benefits will involve over 10,000 households in Newcastle being subject to review and around 2,000 people likely to have their benefits withdrawn. The nature of Newcastle's housing mix also means that cuts to Housing Benefit for over 5,000 households in social housing, known as the "bedroom tax", have the most significant impact upon the city. Because of the nature of this particular change, it is having complex effects on the housing market and the accommodation opportunities facing individuals.

Newcastle is developing a phased approach that provides people affected by the "bedroom tax" with realistic options that will help them meet the costs of their daily living, whilst also being able to afford their housing payments. This could include increasing household income, through employment or benefit entitlement, or support to manage debt or daily expenditure. We want to help people remain in their home or, if this is not possible, to move in a planned way to more affordable accommodation. To help people meet the additional costs of the "bedroom tax" YHN have carried out over 7,000 visits to tenants that build on their existing approach to supporting tenants. This is based on integrated assessments of 4 key areas of activity:

- **Maximising income** – through ensuring benefit entitlement;
- **Reducing expenditure** – through debt and budgeting advice;
- **Securing employment** – through employment support and targeted employment;
- **Affordable housing** – if the above fails, through targeted offers of alternative housing.

It is unlikely that everyone affected will be able to find work to replace their lost income. For these people the PRS will provide support to find alternative accommodation and to move when a suitable offer is found. The reality of the housing subsidy system and Newcastle's housing market is that this is likely to be worse accommodation than their current homes and may mean moving into shared housing or away from the area. We will seek to provide the best available offer of accommodation but this is predominantly determined by housing benefit subsidy levels.

This integrated offer of support will help those at risk of losing their homes with realistic options. The provision of this level of support will also help us to demonstrate that we have acted fairly when we have to end a tenancy because the person demonstrably cannot afford to maintain it.

The purpose of including this section is to acknowledge the impact of the Welfare Reforms and that homelessness related services will continue to contribute to minimising the risk of homelessness through the Welfare Reform Board.

### **2.1.6 Challenges**

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- Working with partners to embed the principles of the Wellbeing for Life Strategy into our partnerships and processes. In particular, our recording and commissioning needs to reflect the life course of the people supported;

- Further strengthening the coordination and integration of employment and homelessness services;
- Working with the FHU and PRS to ensure access to affordable sustainable private rented accommodation;
- Working with partners on the Welfare Reform Board to reduce the risks of people becoming homeless due to the Government's Welfare Reforms.

## **2.2 Newcastle's strategic approach to preventing homelessness**

This Review considers our strategic and partnership approach, which is based on:

- An evidence base – since 2011 we have had quarterly NFNA Homelessness Reviews that combine quantitative analysis with qualitative reviews by workers;
- Policies and protocols that describe the partnership arrangements to prevent homelessness and how we apply this to individuals;
- Case management and partnership arrangements that apply the protocols to the delivery of services;
- Strategy and information sharing meetings;
- Infrastructure support to develop partnerships and improve the coordinated delivery of services – over the last 10 years this has been predominantly provided by the Newcastle Homelessness Liaison Project which became part of the Housing Coordination Unit. In 2013 this became part of the Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit.

### **2.2.1 An evidence base – quarterly NFNA Homelessness Reviews**

Since 2011 we have conducted our quarterly reviews with the Council's Housing Coordination Unit, Housing Advice Centre (HAC) and Commissioning. This has been to ensure that we consistently review our performance management data to identify priorities for improving performance. It is also used to improve everyone's understanding of the data collected and how this relates to service delivery. We have found this has been a useful process to improve delivery and also to understand the limitations of the data collection processes. These reviews have been held internally, our challenge is to develop a more inclusive approach that involves and feels accountable to external partners.

The data used comes from the Gateway (the single access point for housing-related support services within Newcastle which manages referrals to all supported accommodation and floating support services in the city), the HAC database and our statutory P1E returns. We test this against the experience of those working with homeless people and then agree priorities based on a combination of data and practice. This is useful because many of the statutory groupings are broad e.g. friends and family asked to leave or loss of private rented accommodation. This does not necessarily lead to an understanding of the reasons for the loss of accommodation and the balance between individual and housing market factors, which we get from the practice analysis. We know that there are limitations in our data collection processes and particularly in the ability for data systems to be cross referenced. The Newcastle 2016 Budget Crisis Response workstream Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) identified the need to review IT processes to improve efficiency. We know that many people at risk of homelessness are also supported by other services and that there are further opportunities to better understand opportunities for prevention and partnership working. We have seen this partnership approach work e.g. with the increase in the prevention of homelessness through debt advice which rose from 8 cases a year in 2009-10 to 620 in 2011-12.

We have developed the following process for our quarterly Review cycle:

- Review data against practitioners experience;
- Identify an issue or trend that can be improved by early intervention and partnership working e.g. the transition to independence of care leavers and people leaving supported housing;
- Identify the practice most likely to secure successful outcomes;
- Capture the best practice in a policy or protocol;
- Agree outcome measures;
- Identify partners and the responsible Council officer/s and procedure for individual case management and resolving disputes;
- Establish a review cycle;
- Agree changes based on analysis of the quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Whilst we acknowledge that we can improve this process we believe that the model has improved outcomes that improves delivery, policy and strategic development. We particularly recognise the need to develop more meaningful partnerships with health and social care partners. We also acknowledge that we need to incorporate the Supporting People monitoring to create a single picture that also shows outcomes achieved by providers that includes: training and employment, reducing debt and compliance with statutory orders.

### **2.2.2 Homelessness policies and protocols**

Our policies and protocols are used to develop common understanding and consistent practice. This approach has enabled us to break down seemingly intractable problems into manageable areas. This then facilitates getting the right people involved in working together to find solutions for named individuals. We have found it most effective when we can apply our policies to named individuals; basically if you know the person's name you stand a better chance of helping them. We have taken a proportionate response to the development and review of these processes. For example, our work on preventing evictions and responding to rough sleeping is reviewed more frequently and has more rigorous data collection than the Clean Homes Protocol that is used infrequently. Our homelessness prevention protocols can be found online<sup>8</sup> and are briefly outlined below:

**Sustaining Tenancies Guidance:** (previously known as the Prevention from Eviction Protocol; introduced in 2007, reviewed in 2009 and 2012)

This aims to prevent evictions from YHN and housing association tenancies. This approach is based on the early identification of the risk of homelessness e.g. because the person is vulnerable, they are moving to independence from supported accommodation or they are at risk due to debt. This involves targeting advice and support to those at risk of homelessness as a routine response to risk triggers e.g. rent arrears. The key partners are YHN and the five largest housing associations, Newcastle City Council Housing Services (now Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit) and Commissioning.

Table 1 below shows the improvement made since 2007 and why this protocol is one of the best examples of our approach and of the key role that YHN plays in preventing homelessness and building resilience. We know that the Government's Welfare Reforms, particularly the "bedroom tax", are likely to make it difficult to maintain this performance and why it is important to build on this effective approach to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/nhf-policies-protocols>

<b>Table 1: Number of evictions from YHN properties</b>	<b>2007-8</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Number of evictions	197	137	118	95	106	85

**Supported Housing Move on Protocol (incorporates Pathways to Independence):**  
(introduced in 2012)

This aims to identify barriers to moves to independence from supported accommodation and to promote appropriate use of resettlement support services. This protocol was developed to improve links between supported and general needs housing. Prior to the development of the protocol supported housing providers said that around 20% of their residents were ready but could not move on due to the lack of availability of accommodation and YHN had identified people being put forward for a tenancy who were obviously not ready. The aim of this protocol is to create agreement about residents' readiness for independence and the support required. This allows us to target support and prevents setting people up to fail. Key partners are Newcastle City Council Commissioning and Housing Services, YHN and supported housing providers.

As of August 2013 there were 629 completed move-on assessments on the Gateway, with the breakdown shown in table 2 below.

<b>Table 2: Move on status of supported housing residents at August 2013</b>	
Further intervention/support needed before move on (Amber)	325 52%
Ready to move to independence with or without support (Green)	187 30%
Likely to require ongoing support in accommodation (Red)	117 19%

For the first two quarters of this year, all those who moved on to an independent tenancy had been highlighted as 'Green' on their last assessment. We also use the monthly Move on Panel meetings (see 2.2.4 below) to discuss those individuals who remain on the same assessment for 2 consecutive quarters.

**Preventing Evictions from Supported Housing Protocol:** (introduced in 2013)

This aims to ensure that there is a consistent and consensual approach to preventing people losing their hostel accommodation through eviction. The aims of the protocol are that all evictions from supported housing are 'endorsed' by the Council as action taken as the last resort, and the information gained as the reasons for evictions is used to help inform the commissioning of services and the impact of unmet needs, which are predominantly related to mental health and drug and alcohol addictions. Between April and June 2013, only 2 evictions were carried out without the endorsement of the Council.

**Hospital Discharge Protocol:** (introduced in 2007, reviewed in 2009 and under review in 2013)

This aims to prevent homelessness on discharge from hospital. Key partners are Newcastle City Council Housing Services and Commissioning, YHN, Tyne and Wear Homes, Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust. This will be enhanced by the £250,000 secured by The Cyrenians in September 2013 for improving hospital discharge arrangements.

**Drug Management Protocol:** (introduced in 2007, reviewed in 2009 and undergoing review by Safe Newcastle, Northumbria Police and Housing Services in 2013)

This was predominantly a response to the “Wintercomfort” court ruling in 2000 when the managers of a day centre were convicted for allowing their premises to be used for the supply of drugs. This judgement created a concern that drug users would be evicted from supported housing by providers not wanting to fall foul of the legislation. The protocol aims to provide agreement on the safe and legal management of drug use in supported accommodation and give confidence to those providing accommodation to drug users that they are acting within the law. Key partners are Northumbria Police, Safe Newcastle, supported housing providers, Drug Treatment Services and Newcastle City Council Commissioning and Housing Services. Evictions for drug use alone have not been a major issue in Newcastle and this, combined with reduced capacity, has meant this protocol has not been regularly reviewed. However Safe Newcastle are currently leading a review of this protocol to respond to the drug related issues that impact upon people living in supported accommodation e.g. debt, violence, and drug related deaths in hostels.

**Prison Discharge Protocol:** (currently under review)

This is based on the Housing and Returning Prisoners Protocol (HARP) and aims to prevent homelessness on discharge from prison. The HARP had limited success due to the difficulty in getting consistency with Prison and Probation services. It is also difficult to get accurate data on homelessness caused by the lack of resettlement planning from prison. Key partners are Newcastle City Council Commissioning and Housing Services, Shelter, Probation and supported housing providers. This protocol seeks to ensure that nobody with a connection to Newcastle is released from custody without an offer of accommodation where they are engaged with prison resettlement services.

**Care Leavers’ Transitions to Independence:** (introduced in 2013)

This is based on a common assessment between children’s and adults’ services of a young person’s ability to live independently and the level of support they require. Similar to the Supported Housing Move on Protocol (described above) this process asks that the young person’s readiness for independence is assessed as one of 3 groupings:

- Ready for independence (Green);
- Close to independence with additional support (Amber):
- Not ready for independence (Red).

This is an assessment of readiness for independence following discussion with all those working with the young person. This work has been enhanced by the £50,000 secured by Home Group in partnership with the Council and YHN for the provision of enhanced transitional support.

**Prohibitions Order Protocol:** (introduced in 2007, reviewed in 2012)

This is aimed at reducing homelessness as the result of a Prohibition Order, which result in the emergency closure of a house in multiple occupation (HMO). We have had one closure (in September 2007) and work closely with Regulatory Services and review risks at our monthly PRS meeting. Key partners are Newcastle City Council Housing Services, Public Health and Private Sector Housing, PRS and Legal Services, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and Newcastle and Northumbria Universities.

**Clean Homes Protocol:** (introduced in 2007)

This is aimed at preventing homelessness from accommodation designated as “filthy and verminous” by Regulatory Services. This protocol, like the Prohibitions Order Protocol, is rarely enforced and the use of it has reduced, as the targeting of floating support has improved. Key partners are Newcastle City Council Housing Services, Public Health and Private Sector Housing, PRS, Adult Services and Neighbourhood Services, YHN and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust.

These protocols have contributed to joint planning, improved responses to crisis, and joint commissioning of services and initiative. We will report back on the protocols and the measures we use to monitor to them on a quarterly basis, through the Active Inclusion Forum briefing. We will ensure that the protocols are fit for purpose on an annual basis and we will ask our partners to comment on their use and appropriateness.

**2.2.3 Case management and partnership arrangements**

Partners meet to review and improve joint working arrangements. Some of these meetings focus on individual people and some combine this with a wider approach that includes reviewing procedures. The meetings are described below:

**Homelessness and Lettings Group**

Held quarterly, these meetings in part focus on those people who have been evicted from YHN properties. It is attended by YHN and the Council’s Housing Services and FHU. Each eviction is examined to evaluate interventions and opportunities for improvements in future practice.

**Private Rented Sector Liaison**

Held monthly with Council officers (a wider quarterly meeting is attended by partners from Shelter, CAB and other housing providers), this affords an opportunity for the review of the Prohibitions Orders Protocol and allows for the monitoring of the Interventions List that helps to ensure that no vulnerable person is housed in unsuitable private rented accommodation. It also develops improved access and resilience initiatives in the private rented sector e.g. a rent deposit guarantee and deposit insurance schemes to assist tenants to access accommodation and incentive schemes which help to encourage landlords to offer accommodation to more vulnerable client groups.

**Move on from Supported Housing Panels**

Held monthly with representatives from all of the city’s supported housing providers and YHN. This monitors the traffic light reporting of residents’ readiness to move on and links providers with additional support for people they are seeking to move to independence.

**Rough Sleepers’ Common Case Management Group**

Held weekly, this meeting coordinates the responses of agencies in the city to those who are rough sleeping and those at risk of ending up on the streets. The meeting is attended by representatives from Housing Services, supported housing providers, drug and alcohol agencies, Northumbria Police and street outreach teams. It provides a coordinated and holistic response to the issues facing some of the most vulnerable and multiply excluded people in the city.

**Temporary Accommodation Move-on Coordination Meeting**

Held monthly, this brings together representatives from Housing Services and YHN to facilitate the speedy and smooth transition of households who are owed the full homelessness duty from temporary accommodation to YHN tenancies. This has been key to ensuring that the city does not use bed and breakfasts.

### **Care Leavers' Transitions to Independence Meeting** (introduced 2013)

The Care Leavers' transition process is guided by a monthly operational meeting and an additional quarterly meeting which takes a strategic overview. The monthly meeting covers liaison arrangements for joint casework and provides a formal arrangement for liaison between Housing Services and the 16+ team, along with YHN Young People's Service and Home Group. This meeting allows for discussion of individuals and for the monitoring of the RAG rating that is described in 2.2.3 above. The quarterly strategic meeting is responsible for the forward planning of the process and future arrangements.

### **Gateway user group**

Held quarterly, this group addresses issues arising from the use of the Gateway for referring agents and providers, and acts as a user forum for development of the system.

### **Newcastle Advice Compact** (incorporating Debt Advice Partnership since April 2013)

Held monthly and attended by all the advice agencies in the city who work in partnership to ensure targeted delivery of advice provision across the city. The Compact has developed a range of partnership initiatives including a single shared phone number between the Council's debt advice team and the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), widening the access to debt advice in the city. Through the Newcastle Advice Compact partners coordinate the use of the limited resource of face to face advice and promote consistent communications, standards and advice across the sector with the aim of reducing confusion and duplication. This will be further enhanced by the £355,000 funding awarded by the Big Lottery Fund Advice Services Transition Fund to a partnership led by Shelter North East.

In addition to the processes listed above that are facilitated by the Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit, staff also attend and contribute to a number of other external coordination or safeguarding processes. These include:

- **MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)** meetings;
- **MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)** conferences;
- **Safeguarding Adults** meetings;
- **Children's Trust Board**;
- **Youth Offending Team Board**.

Attendance at such groups contributes to the wider prevention and resilience agenda. These are good examples of operational partnerships and governance arrangements providing an opportunity to meet the Council's requirement for services to be integrated to respond to life course events.

## **2.2.4 Strategy and information sharing meetings**

The meetings described below include representatives from service users, the voluntary sector (supported housing, advice, education and learning, counselling, and others), housing associations, private landlords, and statutory agencies such as health, Police, Probation, Youth Offending Team and Safe Newcastle.

- **Active Inclusion Forum** (previously Newcastle Homelessness Forum) – meets quarterly. The change of name is recognition that the prevention of homelessness requires a broader focus that includes representation from debt, welfare benefits and financial inclusion agencies;
- **Youth Independence Forum** – meets monthly and carries out a similar role, focusing on young people's issues.

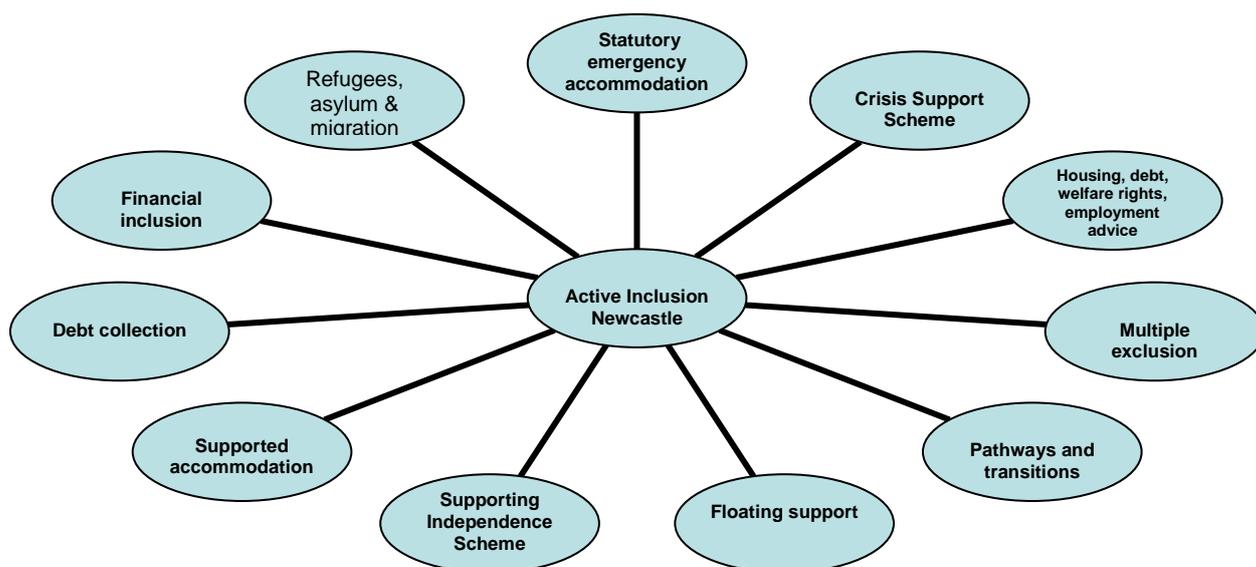
These meetings provide the opportunity for partners to share information, review trends and explore opportunities to prevent homelessness.

## 2.2.5 Infrastructure support – Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit

Despite the significant cuts to the Council's budget the importance of preventing homelessness was recognised by creating the Crisis Response workstream, see: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/your-council/budget-and-annual-report/crisis-response>.

As part of this, the Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit was created to develop an integrated holistic approach to financial and social exclusion. Most of the functions shown in Figure 1 are primarily delivered by Newcastle City Council, with 'Supported accommodation' and 'Floating support' being primarily delivered by commissioned providers. From April 2013 the Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit has coordinated activity across all the crisis services illustrated below. The aims of this are to create a consistent partnership approach to the provision of information, advice and support, including information for the public, training and improving standards; to work with partners to reduce duplication by agreeing impact analysis, prioritisation of need and the deployment of resources; to provide performance monitoring and policy responses; and to link to commissioning. This unit incorporates elements of previous Council services and includes the Supporting Independence Scheme (the replacement Community Care Grant element of the localised Social Fund).

**Figure 1: Activities coordinated by the Active Inclusion Newcastle (AIN) Unit**



The Unit coordinates services that support vulnerable people and helps Newcastle to maintain:

- **Primary prevention activities for local residents** – providing information, advice and support to help people at life changing moments, e.g. starting and losing work, retirement, childbirth, ill health and disability, old age, divorce and separation;
- **Secondary prevention activities for people at risk of homelessness** – predictive preventative support and advice to those at risk of housing or income loss and debt;

- **Crisis prevention activities** – supporting those people who are at imminent risk of home or income loss, e.g. coordinating responses for rough sleepers, the provision of our statutory emergency accommodation, outreach services.

To facilitate this requires infrastructure support that helps partners to focus resources on those in the greatest need. The Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit supports partnership work by developing an agreed evidence base, shared objectives, language, definitions and a culture in which partners are committed to making a positive difference.

## 2.2.6 Challenges

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- Consolidating and extending our partnership approach to make the most of our limited resources in order to maintain our levels of homelessness prevention in the face of the cuts to services and to individuals' budgets. Part of our challenge will be to extend our NFNA review approach to all partners. To this end we will:
  - Publish a quarterly briefing on the key indicators and priorities. This will incorporate feedback and comment from partners;
  - Review the protocols and demonstrate the following:
    - what the protocol is for – who it serves and why;
    - what its value is – why we do it and who it helps;
    - how well we do it – what the standards are and who the national comparators are;
    - how many people are better off because of our help;
    - how it is decided how people get help;
    - how it contributes to preventing homelessness, maximising income, reducing debt, and securing employment;
  - Provide communication to partners (directories, websites, consultancy, briefings);
  - Review our shared action plan to improve outcomes;
- Improving data collection and sharing to both maximise officer capacity and to follow the life course of clients. This will then facilitate the analysis of more complex opportunities for the prevention of homelessness. At present our data collection processes are more suited to measuring demand rather than to identifying opportunities to better manage demand e.g. by better understanding both the reasons why people become homeless and those people who have existing support services we can more effectively target our resources to ensure people don't reach crisis point;
- Incorporating the Supporting People monitoring to create a single picture that also shows outcomes achieved by providers that includes: training and employment, reducing debt and compliance with statutory orders.
- Developing more meaningful partnerships with health and social care partners;
- Better incorporating the involvement of clients and residents. The effective participation of people affected by homelessness in the development of future policy, practice and service delivery should be widely promoted and given practical effect in activities directed at tackling homelessness.

### **3. The current picture of homelessness in Newcastle**

#### **3.1 How we describe the risk of homelessness**

Homelessness is used to describe a range of circumstances in which people have no safe and/or secure accommodation. This Review covers the needs of around 10,000 people who require supported housing or who are at risk of homelessness. Most of the data we hold on people relates to those who have received direct support to prevent homelessness, so does not necessarily reflect the needs of everyone at risk.

Our main aim is to prevent homelessness and to do this we need to understand people's needs before they present to us. We do this by trying to understand people's life courses and the routes in to homelessness, but individuals' circumstances are complex and gathering data that reflects this is expensive and beyond our current capacity. However we do make the most of the data we have and use this to facilitate debate with practitioners and service users to identify opportunities to prevent homelessness. For the purposes of simplification we have broken our definitions into 4 groupings:

- People who are owed the full homelessness duty – whom the Council has a duty to accommodate;
- People at risk of homelessness – around 6,000 households a year receive housing advice and although we do not know the exact number of people at risk of homelessness, it is likely to be higher than this 6,000. The spectrum of risk fluctuates with changes in the economy, welfare system, lenders' forbearance, interest rates and demand for private rented housing;
- People living in accommodation with support – at any one time around 800 people live in supported accommodation and 2,000 live in general needs accommodation with floating support, totalling around 4,000 people per year;
- Multiple exclusion and rough sleepers – this affects a small number of people; on average 8 on any one night and around 180 individuals per year.

Our 2003 and 2008 Strategies highlighted the adverse impact of shared rooms and poor environments. To a large extent this has been resolved by securing £8.5 million of capital to create 9 Places of Change and by replacing the Council's statutory emergency accommodation with a state of the art building.

The information that follows shows that one of the challenges we face is the churn of people around the homelessness "system". We know that we have to work with providers and commissioners to separate this churn from true demand and to follow the pathways of people through homelessness services. Therefore, whilst this heuristic helps us to understand need we also have to be mindful of the need to support progress rather than perpetuating these cycles of repeat homelessness. We need to understand better why around 9% of clients appear to get locked into our homelessness services.

The statutory duties affect how the Council defines and responds to people who are homeless and the funding of the provision of accommodation. The limitations of the statutory duties, explained below, means that Councils have a duty to provide advice to most people who are homeless but to provide accommodation for only a small number. Unlike most Councils in the North East, Newcastle has over 800 beds that are predominantly used for homeless people that the Council does not have a statutory duty to accommodate. This is due to locally made political decisions to provide services for all homeless people.

The Council's statutory homelessness duties are split into two main areas:

**a. Statutory priority need households: people to whom the Council owes the full homelessness duty under part VII of the 1996 Housing Act**

The Council has a duty to assess and advise everyone who believes they are at risk of homelessness and it owes the full homelessness duty to secure accommodation to households who are homeless, not intentionally so, have a local connection and where the household contains:

- Dependent children; and/or
- People who are young and elderly; and/or
- People who are acutely ill; and/or
- People who are fleeing violence, harassment or an emergency.

The Council has a duty to secure accommodation for these households but only has to give advice and assistance to other households who are homeless. This split complicates Councils' response to homelessness and for most the resources available invariably focus on meeting statutory duties first, which can be to the detriment of other homeless people.

**b. Homelessness prevention – 2002 Homelessness Act**

The 2002 Act widened the duty to prevent homelessness through a strategic approach, based on the recognition of the limitations of homelessness services alone in countering the causes of homelessness, much of which is affected by wider housing market and social deprivation factors. We know that we must work in partnership to provide integrated responses to housing, employment, support, and care and health needs. Our strengths have been predominantly in the housing related partnerships and our challenge is to extend this to employment support, and care and health.

We aim to be as accurate as possible in this review whilst appreciating that we are not resourced to conduct academic level research and that there are limitations in our primary data sources (the P1Es, HAC database and the Gateway). However we balance this by testing the data with practitioners and by using the data to identify opportunities for prevention. We also recognise that often the most effective interventions e.g. Housing First and peer support, have been suggested by innovative practitioners rather than the data. As discussed previously, the data is a starting point for identifying our challenges and what has worked and for developing a better understanding of the routes into homelessness.

**3.2 People who are owed the full homelessness duty**

This category covers those households for whom the Council has accepted the full homelessness duty to secure accommodation under part VII of the 1996 Housing Act. This is our most robust measure as it is based on investigatory interviews; however it is limited by the statutory definition of homelessness (as outlined in section 3.1 above). This mainly covers people with dependent children or those who are acutely vulnerable. Households in this category often require support due to their vulnerability.

<b>Table 3: Households that are owed the full homelessness duty</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Full homelessness duty households	336	233	231	204	220

Table 3 above shows that the overall trend in the number of full homelessness duty acceptances in Newcastle has remained steady since 2009, with a slight increase from 2011-12 to 2012-13. This overall trend has continued in the context of increased demand for the service (see section 3.3). In 2003-4 there were 1,038 households accepted. The reduction since then is mainly attributed to the homelessness prevention activities put in place by the local authority. Homelessness prevention initiatives such as debt advice services and early identification of at-risk households assist people to remain in their current accommodation where possible and, if this is not an option, help them find alternative accommodation to prevent homelessness.

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Act 2002, full homelessness duty acceptances (also known as statutory homelessness) has reduced nationally from 128,540 in 2002-3 to 53,550 in 2012-13<sup>9</sup>. Section 3.6 shows the trend in the Core Cities and Newcastle's positive relative performance. A low rate of full homelessness duty acceptances could be the result of gatekeeping by denying people their rights. The check on gatekeeping is the right to request a review of the decision and of court action. Newcastle has strong advocacy agencies working in the city e.g. Shelter North East and Newcastle CAB. However, in 2012-13 there were only three requests for a review, of which two were upheld; there have also been no court actions or Judicial Reviews.

<b>Table 4: Repeat cases</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Full homelessness duty repeat cases	12	2	2	1	0

As Table 4 shows, our full homelessness duty repeat cases are low and have continued to fall since our last Strategy. This is indicative of our partnership approach and our success in finding sustainable outcomes for households to whom we owe the full homelessness duty.

The level of full homelessness duty acceptances in Newcastle is unlikely to reduce further without significant, and perhaps disproportionate, investment. We currently have relatively low levels of resources to meet our statutory duties to respond to crisis and our impact assessment for the Newcastle 2016 Budget process identified that we could not safely reduce this further. Our levels of full homelessness duty acceptances are already amongst the lowest in the country and the impacts of the cuts to public services and the Government's Welfare Reforms are likely to create future pressures. Newcastle is the regional capital, has relatively high levels of deprivation and attracts inward migration; therefore some homelessness is to be expected. An illustration of this is the 25% of the city's Lower Super Output Areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in England<sup>10</sup>. This includes some wards where over half of children are living in poverty, as well as the city having higher than average proportions of households receiving social security benefits and wages that are lower than average both for the country and the region<sup>11</sup>.

Table 5 shows that the majority of households (82%) in this category are families; a significant number of these are headed by lone parents, who alone equated to almost half of full homelessness duty acceptances in 2012-13. Fewer single people are accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty, largely because of the legislative restrictions.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness> (table 770)

<sup>10</sup> English indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) 2010 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-indices-of-deprivation-2010>)

<sup>11</sup> 'Know your City: a profile of Newcastle's people' 2013

<b>Table 5: Households that are owed the full homelessness duty - household type</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Lone parent with dependent children	170 51%	120 52%	107 46%	97 48%	108 49%
Couple with dependent child	70 21%	49 21%	44 19%	36 18%	45 21%
Lone parent household member pregnant	31 9%	21 9%	13 6%	22 11%	22 10%
Single female 18+	9 3%	12 5%	18 8%	11 5%	17 8%
Single male 18+	7 2%	8 3%	25 11%	14 7%	13 6%
Other	9 3%	1 0.5%	7 3%	5 2%	8 4%
Childless couple household member pregnant	29 9%	15 6%	10 4%	14 7%	5 2%
Childless couple	9 3%	4 2%	6 3%	4 2%	2 1%
Single male 16/17	2 0.6%	3 1%	1 0.5%	1 0.5%	0 0%
Single female 16/17	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

Table 6 shows the main reasons recorded for why households in this group become homeless. The biggest single reason for homelessness among this group is loss of private rented accommodation, accounting for over one quarter of households who were owed the full homelessness duty in 2012-13. As a proportion of households owed the full homelessness duty, this has risen slightly since 2008 although the total figure has fallen. An increase in homelessness for this reason in 2012-13 may be indicative of the economic pressures affecting renters and landlords; information from HAC indicates that landlord mortgage default is an increasingly frequent reason for households being asked to leave private rented accommodation. It also reflects the disparate nature of the private rented sector with over 20,000 landlords who do not necessarily have a social remit; therefore it is difficult to develop prevention protocols with private landlords as we do with social landlords. We seek to limit risk by not placing vulnerable people with landlords on our Interventions List<sup>12</sup> (discussed in section 2.2.4) and by the PRS developing partnership arrangements. Another factor is the relatively low levels of dedicated floating support in the private rented sector, currently only 2 workers as stated earlier. Finally, households with high levels of need can be accommodated in the private rented sector e.g. people who are intentionally homeless and those who have been excluded from social housing. A challenge for the future will be to consider the allocation of support and to build resilience in the private rented sector.

The number of households accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty after being asked to leave by parents has fallen since 2011-12 – from 51 households in 2011-12 (25% of acceptances) to 31 in 2012-13 (14%). This reduction, combined with no full homelessness duty acceptances for under 18s in 2012-13, highlights the benefits of early work with families and young people at risk, in particular the work commissioned from YHN's Care and Support Service to meet the needs of young people and families through the Young People's Service and the Family Intervention Project (FIP).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/nhf-policies-protocols>

<b>Table 6: Households owed the full homelessness duty - main reasons for homelessness</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Loss of private rented	87 26%	53 22%	51 22%	40 20%	62 28%
Relatives/friends asked to leave	42 13%	20 8%	22 9%	27 13%	35 16%
Parents asked to leave	100 30%	61 25%	50 21%	51 25%	31 14%
Violent relationship breakdown	41 12%	38 16%	29 12%	23 11%	26 12%
Non violent relationship breakdown	19 6%	9 4%	15 6%	22 11%	22 10%
End of NASS accommodation	17 5%	26 11%	24 10%	9 4%	16 7%
Mortgage arrears	9 3%	8 3%	8 3%	8 4%	9 4%

\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

Table 7 shows that migrants, physical health problems and mental health problems are the main social needs of households that are owed the full homelessness duty. For many people support is needed during and after a stay in temporary accommodation and in most cases homelessness is a symptom of a range of problems rather than a causal factor.

The relatively small number of single people who are owed the full homelessness duty reflects the statutory duties to people with enduring mental and physical health problems and illustrates the opportunities for further partnership work to prevent homelessness amongst people with mental health issues. It also highlights the increased risk of homelessness amongst migrants. Migrants may find themselves at increased risk of homelessness due to language and knowledge barriers restricting access to affordable housing, as well as being disproportionately reliant on informal accommodation placements with family and friends, or tied accommodation, both of which may break down at short notice leaving the household without accommodation. 76% of (non-refugee) migrant households accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty in 2012-13 were homeless due to relationship breakdown, compared to 52% of all households owed the full homelessness duty. The relatively low levels of drug and alcohol problems reflect that in general these issues do not qualify for statutory support. It is important to recognise that the table below shows each need in isolation and does not reflect people with multiple support needs who are owed the full homelessness duty by the Council.

<b>Table 7: Households owed the full homelessness duty - social needs</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Person from abroad	66 20%	54 23%	57 22%	26 13%	50 24%
Physical health	55 16%	52 22%	67 26%	54 27%	50 24%
Mental health	52 15%	53 23%	65 25%	61 30%	49 23%
At risk of violence	56 16%	39 17%	35 14%	24 12%	31 15%
Offending	22 7%	21 9%	19 7%	26 13%	22 10%
Alcohol	6 2%	8 3%	9 4%	7 3%	6 3%
Drugs	2 0.6%	7 3%	7 3%	6 3%	5 2%

Table 8 shows that for those households accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty, re-housing by the Council still makes up the vast majority of outcomes (86%).

Demand for YHN accommodation is high; in February 2013 our housing register (waiting list) stood at 4,700<sup>13</sup>, although 648 lettings were made in the first three months of the year. With increased pressure on household finances due to rising costs and Welfare Reforms, demand for low-cost, secure housing is likely to increase, so we need to identify alternative housing options to respond to the challenges of the Welfare Reforms and to avoid lengthy stays in emergency accommodation and the high costs associated with this. The Localism Act 2011 presented Councils with increased opportunities to make use of the private rented sector for rehousing households who are owed the full homelessness duty, as duty can now be discharged to suitably secure tenancies in this sector. The Council has agreed that private rented accommodation can be used to discharge our homelessness duty<sup>14</sup>; the standard adopted for private rented accommodation in Newcastle is higher than that set by Government and includes hard wiring of smoke detection. To date, Newcastle has not used private rented accommodation to discharge our homelessness duty.

<b>Table 8: Households that are owed the full homelessness duty - outcomes</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Re-housed by authority	268 80%	189 83%	186 82%	145 83%	173 86%
Refused part 6 offer/no further contact	16 5%	12 5%	11 5%	11 6%	9 5%
Re-housed by Housing Association (HA)/Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	10 3%	8 4%	10 4%	3 2%	8 4%
Private rented sector with/without incentive	6 2%	12 5%	10 4%	3 2%	6 3%
Found own accommodation	9 3%	1 0.5%	5 2%	9 5%	3 2%
Failed to respond to contact	13 4%	2 1%	2 1%	2 1%	2 1%
Re-housed supported accommodation	0 0%	4 2%	4 2%	2 1%	0 0%

Our full homelessness duty acceptances have reached a plateau, which may indicate that we are already making best use of our existing resources, preventative tools and alternative housing options. However, there may be some further reduction to be achieved by improving relationships with adult and children's social care services with a view to earlier identification and intervention for households at risk of homelessness. We will work in partnership to develop a shared understanding of people's life courses, the causes of homelessness and opportunities to create resilience. We have seen this approach work in reducing the number of young people who are homeless, particularly with the 16+ Team and Youth Offending Team. Prevention options for this group include work with private landlords to prevent evictions and develop housing options, early intervention initiatives such as the FIP and mediation work with families to prevent breakdown in crisis. We will also develop the concept of Cherry Tree View, the Council's statutory emergency accommodation, acting as a "homelessness prevention hub" to create a more robust understanding of the causes of homelessness in priority need households and the opportunities to intervene.

<sup>13</sup> Housing Delivery Plan 2013-16 Evidence Paper

<sup>14</sup> "Our Pledge to Tenants: Defending social housing as a choice for single people and families", 2013: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy>

There has been a 40% cut in our 2013-14 direct Housing and Welfare Rights Services budget and since 2011 we have lost 7 staff from HAC, which has increased the pressure on staff who also report that cases are becoming more complex. However, we are committed to improving our services by adopting best practice models and to this end we have committed to the DCLG's homelessness Gold Standard. To reach Gold Standard status, Councils will need to undertake peer reviews and meet key commitments to:

- Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services;
- Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs;
- Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients;
- Adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative;
- Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support;
- Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords;
- Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme;
- Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs;
- Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation;
- Not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.

We believe that Newcastle meets the majority of these conditions and does more. However it may not be cost effective, given our housing market, to provide a private rented offer to all clients regardless of their needs or wishes when there is social housing available.

### **3.2.1 Challenges**

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- Maintaining current low full homelessness duty acceptances in the light of new challenges posed by the Government's austerity measures, including the financial challenges for households affected by Welfare Reform;
- Maintaining low full homelessness duty acceptances for families and young people through mediation and preventative work by YHN's specialist services;
- Developing further partnership work to prevent homelessness amongst at-risk groups, such as people with mental health issues and migrants;
- Working more closely with children's and health services to promote early intervention and to build resilience and thereby prevent homelessness in families;
- Identifying sustainable housing options in the private rented sector to avoid over-reliance on YHN;
- Improving the allocation of support and building resilience in the private rented sector;
- Establishing Cherry Tree View as a "homelessness prevention hub" for the city;
- Meeting the DCLG's homelessness Gold Standard.

### 3.3 People at risk of homelessness

This data reflects the needs of all other households receiving advice from HAC who have not been accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty. This also includes those households where HAC has prevented homelessness but does not include analysis of preventions by partner agencies; our IT capacity does not facilitate this. We think that the data presented is sufficiently representative to be indicative of trends and opportunities to prevent homelessness.

However it is reasonable to assume that the number of households in Newcastle who are at risk of homelessness is higher than the numbers who request assistance from the Council. Newcastle has relatively high levels of poverty and deprivation (see section 3.2); a 2013 report by Standard and Poor's<sup>15</sup> indicates that 4.5% of mortgages in the North East are in arrears, growth in employment in the northern regions has been slower than in the South, and a greater proportion of jobs created have been part-time, with full-time employment falling since 2009. In addition, unemployment, viewed as a strong predictor of mortgage arrears, was almost 11% in Newcastle in 2012-13<sup>16</sup>. Rent arrears in Newcastle have risen<sup>17</sup> since the introduction of the "bedroom tax" as part of the Government's Welfare Reforms, which has affected over 5,000 residents in Newcastle, all of whom may be considered to be at risk of homelessness if they fail to address the shortfall in their rent.

<b>Table 9: Households receiving HAC advice</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>Total households supported</b>	<b>5,002</b>	<b>4,823</b>	<b>4,067</b>	<b>6,569</b>	<b>5,964</b>
Non-casework advice	2,947 59%	2,363 49%	1,435 35%	4,475 68%	4,028 68%
Casework advice	2,055 41%	2,460 51%	2,632 65%	2,094 32%	1,936 32%

Table 9 shows that in 2012-13, HAC saw 5,964 households who were at risk of homelessness (in addition to the households who were owed the full homelessness duty, discussed in section 3.2 above). This is a 19% increase since 2008-9. The split between casework and non-casework advice is best understood in terms of the action required by the Homelessness Prevention Officer to address the issue: households requiring "one-off" advice or intervention are recorded as non-casework advice and households requiring additional work beyond the first presentation are recorded as casework advice. For those that receive casework advice from HAC, we record reasons for presentation and outcomes, which enables us to build a more detailed picture of this group. We know that we have failed to fully represent the value of the work at HAC, which is partly due to reduced capacity and the limitation of our IT systems. 2011-12 represents a blip in recording when we added in most telephone contacts; however we have stopped this as we do not have enough staff to fully record their activity whilst simultaneously supporting clients. The rest of the data in this section relates to the people receiving casework support, about whom we have more robust information.

Although the number of households receiving casework advice has fallen since our last Review, this represents better triaging of people whose situations are less complex. The volume of casework cannot represent the increasingly complex nature of some cases. This reduction should not therefore be understood as a fall in demand, but rather an

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.standardandpoors.com/products-services/RatingsDirect-Global-Credit-Portal/en/us>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038432095/report.aspx#tabempunemp>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/bedroom-tax-bites-housing-arrears-4283365>

indication of improvements in how we better manage people away from crisis and the success of prevention activities and low-level interventions such as the 4,028 households receiving non-casework or “one-off” advice in 2012-13. This is especially important given the reduced resources available for the HAC.

<b>Table 10: Households receiving casework advice - main reasons for presenting at HAC</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Relatives/friends asked to leave	774 18%	690 18%	604 18%	526 21%	441 23%
Parents asked to leave	422 10%	436 11%	282 9%	324 13%	260 13%
Loss of private rented	210 5%	245 6%	217 7%	267 10%	233 12%
Non violent relationship breakdown	224 5%	234 6%	236 7%	178 7%	170 9%
Evicted from hostel	214 5%	161 4%	142 4%	120 5%	153 8%
Violent relationship breakdown	144 3%	116 3%	135 4%	110 4%	121 6%
Mortgage arrears	93 2%	118 3%	122 2%	89 4%	41 2%
End of NASS accommodation	79 2%	112 3%	219 7%	41 2%	24 1%

Table 10 illustrates the main reasons for presenting at HAC; these reasons accounted for 75% of households receiving casework advice in 2012-13. There is a split between newly forming households (relationship breakdown with partner, friends or family) that represent 51% of households and the 451 households (23% of casework interventions) that have lost or are at risk of losing accommodation. This is not to say that the situation of 51% of households would be resolved simply by meeting their accommodation need. We do not have the capacity to statistically test correlations between individuals’ needs and histories to establish how many are homeless because of structural or individual factors. The view of the staff at HAC is that for the majority of the people presenting as homeless it is more related to individual factors, which again highlights the need to improve partnerships and the integration of care and support services. This is reflected in the fact that 9% of households receiving advice from HAC in 2012-13 had multiple presentations to the service within that year. Many of these clients are socially or multiply excluded and move between hostels and other institutions. Our challenge is to better understand who this affects, why and to work with commissioners and providers to develop more lasting solutions.

Also of note is the decline in households receiving casework advice due to leaving National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS) accommodation; this has decreased from a peak in 2010-11, which is due mainly to a change in contracted provision by the UK Borders Agency that has moved asylum seekers away from Newcastle.

The Council and YHN’s emphasis has been on improving the standards of local authority properties and preventing home loss. There has been relatively little increase in new affordable housing since our last Review; 463 new homes were completed in 2012-13, a delivery rate of 40% against identified need – and less than 15% of these may be affordable<sup>18</sup>. We work with the PRS to identify and secure suitable properties in the private rented sector, however there is an enduring preference for social housing among

<sup>18</sup> Housing Services Delivery Plan 2013-2017

people in this group, as with those who are accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty.

<b>Table 11: Households receiving casework advice - main outcomes</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Advice provided	947 22%	730 19%	1,181 36%	1,324 52%	716 34%
Re-housed to supported accommodation	575 13%	603 15%	495 15%	417 16%	511 25%
Re-housed by council	94 2%	96 2%	97 3%	109 4%	115 6%
No further contact	1,024 24%	577 15%	459 14%	228 9%	89 4%
Returned to last address	689 16%	1,044 26%	453 14%	129 5%	80 4%
Re-housed to private landlord	27 1%	82 2%	106 3%	54 2%	65 3%
Found own accommodation	40 1%	89 2%	74 2%	87 3%	52 3%
Moved in with friends and relatives	231 5%	208 5%	89 3%	20 0.8%	20 1%
Returned to parental home	30 1%	40 1%	40 1%	21 1%	18 1%

Table 11 shows the most common outcomes achieved for households receiving casework advice from the HAC in 2012-13. The single most common outcome was ‘advice provided’ which was the outcome for 34% of households. This includes providing information on housing options, such as information packs, and advice to enable people to resolve their own situation. One in four households were re-housed to supported accommodation, the most common accommodation for households securing accommodation via HAC. As part of our ongoing service development work we have identified more detailed outcome groupings which are now in use and will help to develop our response for this group in the future.

<b>Table 12: Homelessness preventions (NCC and partners)</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Total homelessness preventions	2,204	3,907	3,630	3,798	3,673

Table 12 shows the number of homelessness preventions achieved in Newcastle; this is based on the DCLG’s definition of the prevention of homelessness outcomes where positive action provided on a casework intervention basis has prevented or relieved homelessness and it is likely that the accommodation available to the applicant as a result of the intervention will be sustainable for a period of at least 6 months.<sup>19</sup> Heriot-Watt and Northumbria Universities’ research in 2011 concluded that prevention work in Newcastle was “highly effective”<sup>20</sup>.

The figures above capture the value of 10 strands of prevention activity across the Council and YHN. The main partners in this prevention activity are the YHN Advice and Support Workers, HAC, YHN Sustaining Tenancies Guidance, Active Inclusion Debt Advisors (these have been co-located in HAC from 2013) and the YHN Young People’s Service

<sup>19</sup> P1E Guidance: Homelessness Prevention and Relief:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-prevention-and-relief-p1e-guidance-and-returns-form>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sbe.hw.ac.uk/research/ihurer/institute-news.htm>

(which also has a presence at HAC), which together accounted for 81% of preventions in 2012-3. 21% of all preventions are a result of direct intervention by HAC, with the rest being achieved by other services, which is positive as people are being effectively supported before they require a response from HAC. Our prevention figures demonstrate that, using a holistic citywide approach to the prevention of homelessness, Newcastle has seen a positive increase of 40% on recorded preventions since the previous Review. We have seen a 3% reduction in homelessness preventions over the last year which is proportionally small relative to the level of public sector cuts. We believe that there is a direct correlation between preventing homelessness and reduced crisis interventions and bed and breakfast use.

Prevention options for people at risk of homelessness include support in applying for low-cost general needs housing and referrals to specialist agencies such as welfare rights officers, debt advice workers, employment support, victim support services, and agencies that can offer support with social needs including offending, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health. Other preventative options include negotiation with landlords to enable households to remain in their homes, family mediation, and supported accommodation for those with additional needs. The challenges for this group are to maintain our performance in preventing homelessness, identify affordable alternatives to local authority accommodation, particularly in the private rented sector, and develop preventative information for people who are at higher risk of homelessness due to low income and lack of viable employment opportunities. This last challenge is especially important in the context of the Government's Welfare Reforms and particularly the "bedroom tax".

To mitigate cuts to services and to increase prevention opportunities we need to extend our prevention network. We will work with Council colleagues in Revenues and Benefits to integrate Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs), which will also help to enhance the strategic use of these funds. We will also prioritise working with children's and adult social care and support provision.

### **3.3.1 Challenges**

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- Maintaining our current performance. Over the last 10 years our improved outcomes have been based on a better understanding of people's needs. To improve this further will require a more sophisticated understanding of the causes of homelessness, however this needs to be balanced against the transaction costs of collecting more data with fewer staff;
- Improving the integration of HAC IT systems;
- Maximising opportunities for early intervention by extending our partnerships to prevent homelessness and to intervene earlier to prevent crises;
- Maximising opportunities to build resilience, particularly in response to the Welfare Reforms, by integrating private rented sector and employment support;
- Maximising self help opportunities, including the website, to prevent people from being homeless in crisis;
- Continuing to work with YHN as part of the Sustaining Tenancies Guidance to maintain low numbers of evictions from YHN properties;
- Re-establish close working relationships with the main housing associations working in Newcastle;
- Working with commissioners and providers to develop more lasting solutions and to understand the needs and circumstances of the 9% of households in this group who have made repeat presentations to HAC.

### 3.4 People living with housing-related support

Housing-related support is commissioned by the Council and is divided into two groups:

- Supported accommodation;
- Floating support services.

Supported accommodation services predominantly provide accommodation for single people or childless couples who are homeless or at risk of homelessness but to whom the Council does not owe the full homelessness duty to accommodate. Floating support services provide visiting support for single people or couples who are vulnerable to homelessness. The main aim of all these services is to prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness through building resilience by supporting people to achieve their optimum level of independence. Services in this area are predominantly commissioned via the Supporting People funding stream.

Table 13: People living with housing-related support - units of support	Units of support
Supported accommodation	808
Floating support	2,000 (approx)

There are 46 supported accommodation services within Newcastle providing 808 bed spaces. Provision can be divided into 4 groups:

- **Emergency access accommodation**; commissioned to take people at the point of crisis. These are staffed 24 hours a day and often take people who may be unknown, challenging or chaotic. The higher levels of staffing means these risks can be managed more effectively.
- **Non-emergency access accommodation (homelessness/specialist)**; have waiting lists and fewer vacancies than the emergency housing services. These offer a range of support options, from single-site accommodation to dispersed flats with visiting support. These services are expected to be short-term, and are commissioned to provide support for up to 2 years.
- **Long-term supported accommodation**; as above, but are expected to support people for periods of up to 5 years.
- **Transitional tenancies**; independent tenancies offered by supported housing providers acting as a “sympathetic landlord” to people moving on from supported services, with help available to residents if necessary. These offer Assured Shorthold Tenancies with the aim of providing a supportive independent environment.

There are 22 floating support services within Newcastle providing approximately 2,000 units of support. The number of units of support is not static as some services are commissioned to provide support per hour which means that the number of people supported by the service may vary, depending on the intensity of support needed. Provision can be divided into 2 groups:

- **Resettlement support**; commissioned to support people moving into independent tenancies from an institution, or following an unsettled way of life.
- **Sustainment support**; commissioned to support people who are at risk of losing their independent tenancy and require support to avert the risk of homelessness.

Many floating support services provide a mix of both forms of support; there is also variation between services in terms of the number of contacts per week. All floating support services are expected to be short-term, providing support for a maximum of 2 years after which people are expected to manage their tenancy independently or move to a long-term support placement. We will first look at people living in supported housing before turning to those living in independent tenancies with floating support.

<b>Table 14: People living with housing-related support - reason for admission to supported accommodation</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Not known/not recorded/other			679 66%	281 24%	277 21%
Loss of existing accommodation			28 3%	228 19%	272 21%
Relationship breakdown (including family/friends)			63 6%	199 17%	253 19%
Moving from another hostel			185 18%	175 15%	209 16%
Discharge from institutions			29 3%	111 9%	135 10%
Crisis			50 5%	69 6%	107 8%

\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

Table 14 shows the main reasons for people being admitted to supported accommodation services. There has been an increase in the numbers of people accessing supported accommodation services, in line with the greater number of supported accommodation services being monitored by the local authority via the Gateway. In total these services offered 2,092 support placements and supported 1,198 people in 2012-13. 573 people had multiple placements within the year, with 72 people having 4 or more placements during that time. While some moves are positive (such as moves to greater independence, discussed below), the number of people who have multiple short-term placements indicates that many are failing to sustain supported housing, and illustrates the difficulty services have in working with these challenging people.

Recording of client information by referral agencies and commissioned providers remains a concern. In 2012-13 the reason for homelessness was not recorded for 21% of admits to supported accommodation, although this is an improvement from 66% in 2010-11. The most common reason for homelessness cited was loss of existing accommodation (loss of rented, tied, or supported accommodation) which accounted for 21% of admits, followed by relationship breakdown (which includes people being asked to leave by family or friends) which accounted for 19% of admits. There has been a two-fold increase of in the number of admits due to crisis (fleeing violence, disasters, emergency admits by HAC) and a two-fold increase in people admitted to supported services as a result of discharge from institutions, although this may be due to better recording rather than a systemic failure for these people. Our challenge is to increase the consistency of data recording, to help us better understand how many of the 135 discharged from institutions into supported housing are positive responses that prevent crisis and how many are negative moves that hinder people moving to independence.

<b>Table 15: People living with housing-related support - local connection of admits to supported accommodation</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>Total admits</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,172</b>	<b>1,311</b>
Admits with area of connection listed	1,208 98%	1,151 92%	658 64%	1,078 92%	1,120 85%
Admits with a non-Newcastle connection	142 12%	103 9%	50 8%	169 14%	73 6%

Historically, supported accommodation services admitted high numbers of people from outside the Newcastle area, often without support services in Newcastle, which made placements more difficult to sustain. This is related to the relatively low level of provision elsewhere in the region and Newcastle being the regional capital.

In 2004, 46% of people admitted to emergency and 42% of people admitted to non-emergency accommodation services did not have a connection to Newcastle; however as the table above shows, the local authority initiatives such as the introduction of the Gateway in Newcastle have helped to better manage the proportion of people with a connection to other areas accessing Newcastle accommodation services. This has been recognised by the Regional Homelessness Group and there have been attempts by other local authorities in the region to provide emergency accommodation solutions for people who are not owed the full homelessness duty, to better respond to needs in the respective areas. We do not have any data from the Regional Homelessness Group on the number of beds secured. In addition, we have a procedure for arranging cross-authority placements which allows statutory services to approve any requests for people moving into Newcastle from outside the area to access local supported accommodation services in advance of placement. Therefore, we know that the 73 admits to Gateway services with a non-Newcastle area of connection were approved by local support agencies in advance.

<b>Table 16: People living with housing-related support - admits to supported accommodation by social needs</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>Admits with Gateway assessments</b>			<b>677</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1,056</b>
% of all admits			65%	75%	81%
Offending			226 33%	348 40%	456 43%
Mental Health			110 16%	238 27%	299 28%
Drugs			138 20%	195 22%	267 25%
Alcohol			99 15%	178 20%	190 18%

The majority of people who were assessed via the Gateway prior to admit to supported accommodation had additional support needs; as table 16 shows, in 2012-13 43% were currently involved with offender services and 28% were receiving support for mental health issues. These figures relate only to people known to services at the point of assessment and may be an under-representation; 75% of all admits were identified as having an offending history and over 50% as having some kind of mental health problem. People whose needs were unconfirmed may have had historical issues, failed to meet the threshold for specialist support, not yet have attended an assessment for specialist support, been unable to access support services due to behaviour or an excluded lifestyle,

have had services withdrawn due to failure to engage, or alternatively people may not agree that they have support needs in that area. 25% of admits were accessing support for drug misuse and 18% for alcohol misuse, although again more clients were identified as having substance misuse issues than were accessing support, for the reasons above. There appears to be a strong correlation between unresolved drug and alcohol problems and repeat homelessness; drug and alcohol agencies frequently state that they cannot work with people who do not have secure accommodation, including living in supported accommodation. However, as a hostel resident a person bears all the responsibilities of independence, including paying rent. This often becomes a vicious cycle of despair. Breaking this cycle is one of the biggest steps towards achieving positive outcomes in health and wellbeing.

The people accessing supported accommodation resources have support needs beyond their homelessness and therefore successful placements will depend on engaging people with support services and developing their skills to enable them to live independently once the placement ends.

<b>Table 17: People living with housing-related support - outcomes from supported accommodation</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>Total discharges</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>1,217</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>1,317</b>
<b>Move to greater independence</b>					<b>572</b> <b>43%</b>
Another hostel/internal transfer	287 25%	359 30%	264 25%	300 26%	401 30%
No forwarding address	351 31%	266 22%	274 26%	204 18%	286 22%
Housed by family/friends	165 15%	236 19%	183 17%	247 21%	230 17%
Move on to independent tenancy	149 13%	234 19%	195 18%	253 22%	230 17%
Custody	44 4%	58 5%	73 7%	84 7%	82 6%

\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

Table 17 shows that only 17% of moves from supported accommodation were to an independent tenancy, a slight rise from our last Review but still a small proportion of all service outcomes. To reflect the fact that moving to independence is not (yet) a realistic prospect for some people, from 2012-13 onwards we have recorded moves to greater independence to demonstrate positive steps towards this goal. In 2012-13 43% of moves from supported accommodation were to greater independence, such as a service with less support or a planned placement with family or friends – though the most common destination was a move to another supported accommodation service (30% of departures). 22% of moves from supported accommodation were to no forwarding address, either as the result of people abandoning their property or being asked to leave the service – this is however a drop from 31% in 2008-09. As stated above, ‘churn’ or repeat, unsuccessful placements is a significant issue for this group and those leaving no forwarding address are often picked up by services (evidenced by the 111 households receiving HAC casework advice following eviction from a hostel) and re-admitted to alternative supported accommodation within a very short period.

<b>Table 18: People living with housing-related support - evictions from supported accommodation</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>Total discharges</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>1,217</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>1,317</b>
Evictions	307 27%	132 10%	147 14%	175 15%	227 17%

Table 18 illustrates evictions from supported accommodation services. However, there is much variation between services; the introduction of the Gateway has been successful in identifying people who are suitable for non-emergency services, however, this has had the unintended consequence of concentrating the most challenging people in emergency accommodation services, where evictions have risen from a low of 5% in 2010-11 to 25% in 2012-13. The primary reasons for eviction are unacceptable behaviour, including drug abuse and violence, and non-payment of rent. Key factors in people failing to pay rent are benefit sanctions and the lengthy appeal process, which means that people may build up substantial arrears before the issue is resolved. Many people experiencing this reduced income also have substance misuse problems and this can lead to acquisitive criminal activity and financial exploitation of vulnerable residents. Our challenge will be to work with Jobcentre Plus and providers to better understand the reasons for sanctioning and what we can do support people to avoid being sanctioned, and how to support those who have had sanctions applied.

The Preventing Evictions from Supported Housing protocol was introduced in January 2013 and outlines a common process for agreeing evictions with HAC. Just four evictions in the first quarter of 2013-14 were not agreed with HAC in advance, which indicates that the problem is not with our commissioned services failing to support people in the agreed way, but with challenging people who behave disruptively or destructively in a hostel environment. This highlights a need for a different service which is reflected in the Multiple Exclusion element of the Crisis Response workstream commissioning process.

In addition to reducing evictions, improving move-on from supported accommodation has been a priority; this has been further developed through the Supported Housing Move On Protocol, introduced in 2012. As part of this, providers meet monthly with housing services staff to discuss individuals, identify people who are suitable for resettlement floating support and get assistance with individual residents. We believe that there is a perception by providers that the Government's Welfare Reforms have created difficulties for people accessing affordable housing, especially one-bedroom accommodation, and that this is a barrier to move on. This is currently not borne out by the available evidence and we believe that the main barrier is around unmet support needs. However, securing move on accommodation is likely to be increasingly difficult due to the combined impact of the shortage of affordable single person accommodation and the impact of Welfare Reform reducing affordable options for many people. We will need to maximise the exempt status from the Shared Accommodation Rate of Local Housing Allowance for people who have spent time in homeless hostels. The Cyrenians have successfully used this to support 40 people into tenancies through their Housing First pilot.

Our challenge will be to find affordable housing solutions to avoid people becoming institutionalised or spending a long time in expensive accommodation funded to provide resettlement support. As of 31 March 2013 there were 168 people in supported accommodation (23%) who had stayed longer than their expected support period. Our challenge will be to better understand the purpose of this provision and its role in supporting people to independence. In 4 services, over 20% of residents have already stayed more than 5 years, and one person has so far spent 39 years in their current short-term placement.

Information available on floating support services is much less comprehensive as the majority only began using Gateway to manage referrals and record allocations during 2012-13. The information held by the Council is not comprehensive as it does not include all services and, even for those included, does not incorporate the whole year's data. However we can start to see trends and patterns emerging even in the limited information available. In 2012-13 the local authority were aware of 727 placements in floating support services, with 22 people having multiple floating support placements over the year. The vast majority of people's reason for needing support was unknown to the Council. Long-term support placements are also an issue for floating support services: as of 31 March 2013 there were 45 people (10%) known to the Council who had been in receipt of floating support for more than 2 years. In some services, 50% of people have already been receiving support for more than 5 years, and one person has so far received 18 years of floating support. A major challenge for us over the years ahead will be to develop our knowledge of and responses to this client group. This will include integrating services more fully with the Gateway to ensure reporting processes are as robust for floating support as those for accommodation-based support services.

### **3.4.1 Challenges**

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- We know that the Crisis Response workstream budget reductions will mean that there will be less resources and the requirement for enhanced collaboration to mitigate the impact of these cuts;
- Improving our information analysis on this client group to better differentiate multiple presentations that currently give a false picture of demand;
- Working with supported housing providers to create a culture of prevention and understanding of the causes of homelessness and targeting commissioned resources accordingly to maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness;
- Improving the numbers of people moving on to independence by supporting providers to develop pre-tenancy support packages around living skills such as budgeting and benefits, and identifying suitable options in the private rented sector;
- Providing long term solutions for people with on-going to support needs who are not able to move to independence;
- Where capital funding can be secured improving the buildings where services are provided from.
- Finding affordable move on options e.g. by building on the success of pilots like The Cyrenians' Housing First pilot;
- Reducing the number of people overstaying in accommodation and support;
- Reducing evictions from emergency access accommodation and evaluating short term options e.g. spot purchasing additional support where required and developing alternative supported accommodation options for people for whom hostel accommodation is unsuitable through the new Crisis Response workstream commissioning process;
- Consolidating data on people accessing floating support services, to improve our knowledge of this client group and enable us to develop better prevention options;
- Using the new commissioning through the Crisis Response workstream to improve our understanding, better prevent homelessness and refine information to identify prevention opportunities. For example, opportunities to prevent people who have no accommodation on release from prison becoming homeless by diverting them into supported accommodation or other suitable housing options;
- Using the new commissioning through the Crisis Response workstream to develop an offer for multiply excluded people for whom existing accommodation services are

not successful. The need for this is manifested in multiple unsuccessful placements ('churn'), high eviction rates and the numbers of people with identified support needs who are not known to or engaging with support services;

- Increasing the consistency of data recording to facilitate the better understanding of need and the effectiveness of our responses, in particular understanding how many of the 126 discharged from institutions into supported housing are positive responses that prevent crisis and how many are negative moves that hinder people moving to independence.;
- Understanding the role of supported accommodation in supporting people to independence;
- Working with Jobcentre Plus and providers to better understand the reasons for sanctioning and what we can do support people to avoid being sanctioned, and how to support those who have had sanctions applied.

### 3.5 Multiple exclusion and rough sleeping

This section focuses on two related areas; rough sleeping and the sub set of that group who are people who repeatedly sleep rough due to multiple exclusion. This is an area where Newcastle has been relatively effective, as recognised by the DCLG making us their 2009 Rough Sleeping Champions. However this is a relative success and we know that more has to be done.

#### 3.5.1 Rough sleeping

Most of our local knowledge of this group is based on the contacts through street outreach and the rough sleepers' Common Case Management Group (CCMG):

- 44 multiply excluded people have had 254 admissions to supported accommodation (emergency and non-emergency access services) since 2010;
- During 2012-13 the average number of rough sleepers per night was 8;
- The most likely outcome for this group is to be accommodated in supported housing. However, they then tend to be evicted or they abandon the accommodation, and the cycle repeats;
- All of the entrenched rough sleepers have multiple needs – mainly addictions followed by offending and mental health problems;
- The police estimate that 20% of crimes in the city centre are committed by this group;
- 91% of people accessing the Drug Intervention Programme have experience of rough sleeping.

However, the rough sleeping population in Newcastle is not a homogenous group and the reasons for rough sleeping, as well as the health and social needs of this group, are diverse and varied. The rough sleeping population in Newcastle can be better understood by dividing it into three groups:

- **Flow** – people who have had no previous records of rough sleeping;
- **Stock** – people who have slept rough the previous year as well as the year in question;
- **Returners** – people who have been seen sleeping rough previously, but not in the preceding year.

<b>Table 19: Rough sleeper groupings</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>Total sleeping rough presentations</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>250</b>
Stock	165 45%	167 46%	89 35%	124 50%
Flow	148 40%	164 45%	131 52%	115 46%
Return	54 15%	30 8%	32 13%	11 4%

The Stock group represents the most multiply excluded individuals in the city who continuously fail to make a permanent shift away from the streets. This group experience extended periods on the streets interspersed with short stays in emergency accommodation, prison or hospital as evidenced through the Gateway. The Gateway also shows that there is a high rate of evictions and abandonments from supported accommodation for this group of multiply excluded rough sleepers with an apparent 'churn' as highlighted in section 3.4.

<b>Table 20: Main reasons for rough sleeping</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Relationship breakdown	9 3%	22 6%	10 4%	39 16%
Unknown	65 18%	77 21%	44 18%	37 15%
Abandoned supported accommodation	47 13%	85 24%	13 5%	36 14%
Evicted from supported accommodation	106 29%	59 16%	40 16%	35 14%
Released from custody	76 21%	46 13%	26 10%	32 13%
Asked to leave by family/friends	34 9%	27 8%	50 20%	30 12%
Evicted from general needs accommodation	6 2%	6 2%	37 15%	19 8%
Abandoned general needs accommodation	10 3%	28 8%	29 12%	12 5%
No recourse to public funds	9 3%	7 2%	2 1%	9 4%
Hospital discharge	1 0.3%	2 1%	1 0.4%	1 0.4%
Left rehab	4 1%	2 1%	0 0%	0 0%

\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

It is positive that there is a downwards trend in the amount of people who sleep rough due to evictions from supported accommodation and prison release. The CCMG seeks to identify key individuals who have a history of rough sleeping and who are at risk of further exclusion. The reduction in evictions and unplanned prison release can be partly attributed to the joint multi-agency planning of the CCMG as well as the proactive support work for these people. This shows that this is predominantly a relatively contained group who are moving on a cycle around supported accommodation, prison and the street.

There are a high number of 'unknowns' because it can be difficult obtaining information from rough sleepers themselves, particularly those who are new to the city and where the only contact is at a street level. Individuals can be suspicious and reluctant to disclose personal information to outreach workers.

<b>Table 21: Rough sleepers - outcomes</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Supported accommodation secured	211 58%	215 60%	56 22%	84 34%
No further contact	99 27%	81 22%	91 36%	64 26%
Housed by family/friends	6 2%	15 4%	31 12%	32 13%
Refused all help offered				31 12%
Returned to area of connection	18 5%	19 5%	5 2%	13 5%
General needs accommodation secured	11 3%	12 3%	56 22%	12 5%
Custody	21 6%	15 4%	11 4%	9 4%
Hospital admission	0 0%	3 1%	1 0.4%	0 0%
Deceased	1 0.3%	1 0.3%	1 0.4%	0 0%
Rehab				0 0%

\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

The main accommodation related outcome for this group is access into supported accommodation (39%), however this can often be short lived. Due to the complex and multiple needs of adults experiencing multiple exclusion it is difficult to find a long term solution to their problems. The engagement by specialist drug and alcohol services with people who are both rough sleeping and living in emergency accommodation is limited, with many people still living chaotic, harmful and hazardous lifestyles.

In December 2012, Newcastle adopted the DCLG's No Second Night Out (NSNO) standard. The principles of the NSNO approach are to ensure that people who are new to the streets, i.e. the Flow group, don't have to spend a second night out by making a single suitable offer e.g. access into an emergency bed or reconnection with their area of origin. A key component of the NSNO approach is to encourage members of the public to report rough sleepers via the web or a dedicated telephone line managed at CTV. There are some issues with this approach in that the nuances in the definitions of rough sleepers and parallels with begging and street culture are not necessarily understood by the public. Since NSNO was launched, 57 out of 66 rough sleepers reported via this route were already known to services (or were begging rather than rough sleeping) and therefore whilst rough sleeping did not meet the NSNO criteria. Two people up to August 2013 have so far met the NSNO criteria; one of whom returned to family and friends and the other refused all offers of accommodation. This has confirmed that Newcastle's issue is not people who are new to the streets but a small, identifiable group of entrenched rough sleepers with multiple needs. The main challenges for this group are to continue our excellent outreach and case management work and to identify supported housing options beyond hostels for those who are unable or unwilling to access this provision.

### **3.5.2 Multiple exclusion**

For housing-related support purposes, we currently describe individuals who are multiply excluded as are those who:

- Have experienced 3 or more episodes of rough sleeping
- Have a substance misuse or and/or alcohol problem

- Have offending behaviour
- Have had multiple admissions (3 or more) into emergency accommodation
- Experience exclusion from mainstream and other specialist services e.g. health, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health services
- Have limited opportunities to move on to more independent accommodation

We have used this definition to agree who is to be supported through The Cyrenians' Housing First pilot.

However there is no one agreed definition of multiple exclusion and by its nature this is a complex area. The Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) <sup>21</sup> campaign estimates that nationally there are 60,000 adults who have multiple needs but do not have meaningful contact with services. In addition "Multiple exclusion homelessness" is defined by Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick in '*Multiple exclusion homelessness across the UK*' (2011) as:

"Experience of homelessness (including experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) *and* experience of one or more of the following other domains of 'deep social exclusion':"

- *institutional care* (prison, local authority care, mental health hospitals)
- *substance misuse* (drug, alcohol, solvent or gas misuse) or
- *participation in street culture activities* (begging, street drinking, or sex work)"

Our challenge will be to work through the Crisis Response workstream and with The Cyrenians led Big Lottery Funded Multiple and Complex Needs work to create a common understanding of who we are supporting here and how we will work differently.

Maintaining contact with people who are rough sleeping can be difficult and their chaotic lifestyle often results in haphazard support. This partly explains the high percentage of presentations where the outcome is 'no further contact'. The transient nature of this population also results in individuals leaving the City before a tangible outcome can be achieved. There has however been success for several people using a Housing First approach; in 2011 The Cyrenians secured £250,000 from the Homelessness Transitions Fund to develop a pilot to mitigate cuts to homeless services. This is a cooperative approach that has created a credible alternative option and an effective way of helping the multiply excluded; those who have been excluded from or don't engage with conventional homelessness, addiction and mental health services and, as a consequence, sleep rough, often engage in prolific offending and at worse die prematurely. The pilot has worked with 76 people aiming to find them independent accommodation in the private rented sector, making it the largest scheme of its kind in the UK. 40 multiply excluded people have so far been successfully accommodated via this route.

### 3.5.3 Challenges

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- Improving the consistency of our recording and common understanding of aims and definitions;
- Maintaining our coordinated approach to resolving rough sleeping and meeting the No Second Night Out commitment;

<sup>21</sup> [www.theMEAMapproach.org.uk](http://www.theMEAMapproach.org.uk).

- Ensuring there is continued and meaningful contact at a street level with dedicated outreach support;
- Formalising the case management framework and agreeing links with other safeguarding arrangements;
- Exploring intensive support methodologies e.g. multi-systemic therapy;
- Creating, through the Crisis Response workstream and with The Cyrenians led Big Lottery Funded Multiple and Complex Needs work, a common understanding of multiple exclusion and of how we will work differently to improve outcomes.

### 3.6 Newcastle's performance in comparison with other areas

Here we consider how trends in full homelessness duty acceptances in Newcastle compare to those of the other core cities in England, and to England as a whole, and how usage of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast compares to other core cities. 'Core Cities' are a self-selecting group of cities representing the 8 largest city economies outside London. Each has a large student population and may be regional capitals. The 8 Core Cities, together with their surrounding urban areas, are home to 16 million people, almost a third of the population of England. They generate 27% of England's wealth (more than London), are home to half of the country's leading research universities and contain 28% of highly skilled workers (graduate level or above). With regards to the comparisons with the other core cities it is important to bear in mind that it is the trends over time and percentages that are in the main comparable, rather than the absolute numbers, given the varying scale of these cities (with Birmingham the largest of the core cities, and Newcastle the smallest).

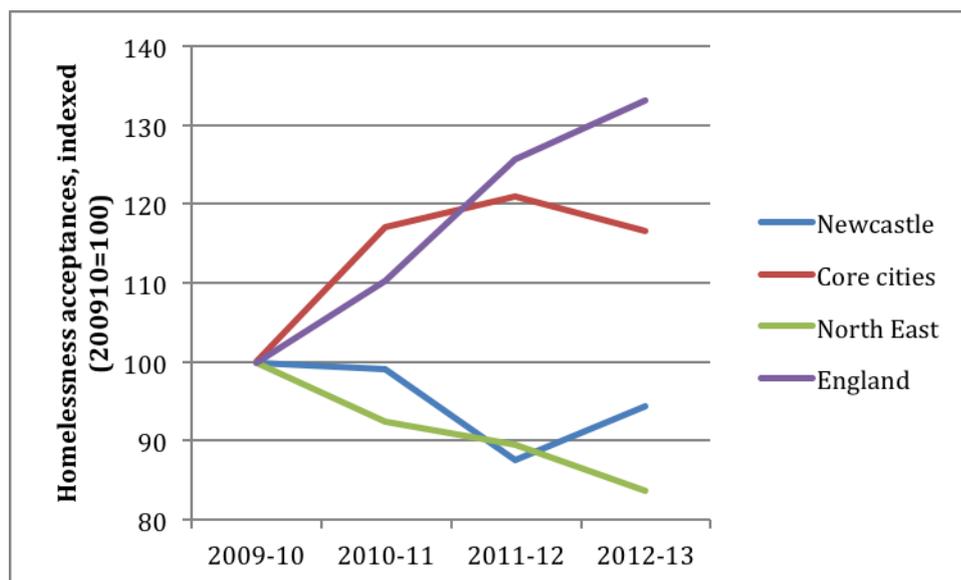
<b>Table 22: Households accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty - comparison with other core cities</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
Birmingham	3,371	4,207	3,929	3,957
Sheffield	946	1,070	1,383	1,218
Leeds	427	553	697	762
Manchester	482	643	580	533
Nottingham City	616	578	617	481
Bristol	285	214	299	324
<b>Newcastle</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>220</b>
Liverpool	233	218	268	187
North East	2,007	1,857	1,797	1,679
England	40,020	44,159	50,290	53,325

As table 22 indicates, this (gently) falling trend in households being accepted as being owed the full homelessness duty in Newcastle is out of step with patterns in England as a whole, where the overall number of acceptances has been rising steadily since 2009-10. It is likewise at variance with recent experience in most of the other core cities, where homelessness acceptances have generally been growing (with the exception of Liverpool and Nottingham, where there is also a broadly downward trajectory). The pattern in Newcastle is, however, consistent with the overall trend in the North East region, where homelessness acceptances have been falling over the past four years (the only region in England where this is the case<sup>22</sup>). The diagram below captures these trends graphically,

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/homelessnessmonitor.html>

demonstrating the divergent trend between Newcastle and the North East region on the one hand, and the rest of England and the core cities (taken as a whole) on the other.

**Figure 2: Homelessness acceptances 2009-10 to 2012-13 – indexed**



The zero recorded usage of bed and breakfast (B&B) in Newcastle, as shown in table 23, is encouraging, given the consensus around the unsuitability of this form of temporary accommodation, particularly for families with children. With respect to the other core cities, Nottingham and Liverpool have likewise recorded zero placements in B&B at the end of each of the last four financial years, and in most of the other core cities the use of B&B has declined very substantially, with only Birmingham still reporting any significant usage by March 2013 (and even here usage is only a third of what it was in March 2010).

	31-Mar-2010	31-Mar-2011	31-Mar-2012	31-Mar-2013
Birmingham	136	70	57	39
Bristol	13	1	5	4
Manchester	23	22	45	2
Sheffield	70	10	1	2
Leeds	0	0	11	0
Liverpool	0	0	0	0
Nottingham City	0	0	0	0
<b>Newcastle</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Turning now to total temporary accommodation placements, we can see from table 24 that Newcastle also compares well with the other benchmark core cities in this respect. The number of households who are placed in temporary accommodation has been lower in Newcastle than in all of the other core cities for three out of the last four financial year ends (albeit that it should be borne in mind that the varying sizes of these cities is not taken into account in these absolute numbers). Again, Liverpool and Nottingham are closest to Newcastle in performance, also with relatively small numbers of households in temporary accommodation. The number of households placed in temporary accommodation is considerably higher in the other core cities, this being especially so in Birmingham, and to a lesser extent in Manchester.

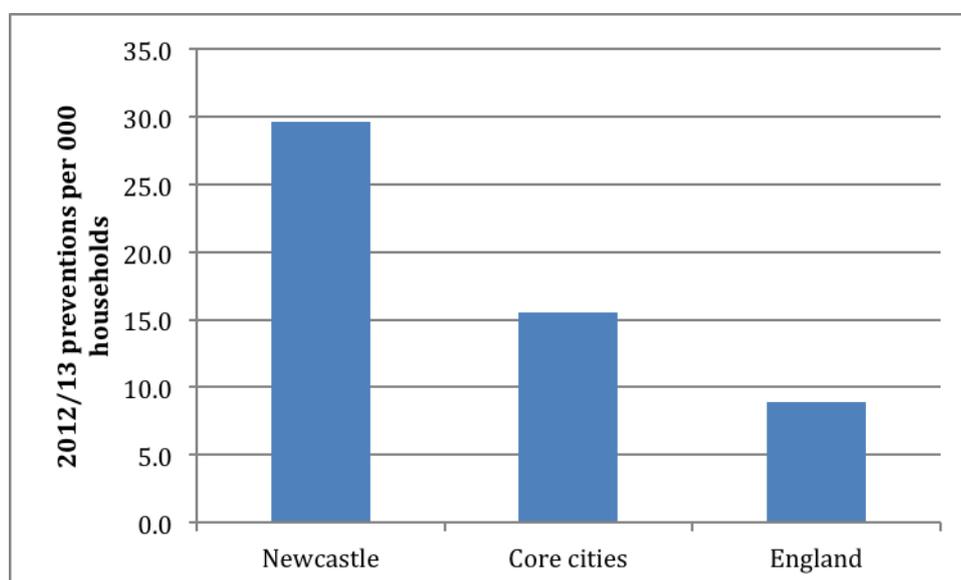
<b>Table 24: Total temporary accommodation placements - comparison with other core cities</b>	<b>31-Mar-2010</b>	<b>31-Mar-2011</b>	<b>31-Mar-2012</b>	<b>31-Mar-2013</b>
Birmingham	709	726	691	708
Manchester	265	276	371	286
Bristol	207	158	160	137
Sheffield	277	191	168	106
Leeds	59	115	132	48
<b>Newcastle</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>40</b>
Nottingham City	76	89	87	24
Liverpool	71	46	31	19

Reviewing homelessness prevention activity (table 25), Newcastle registers the second to highest rate of prevention activity of any of the core cities, bettered only by Nottingham. In addition to this, figure 3 below demonstrates that this rate of prevention activity is not only approximately double that of the core city average, but is more than three times the rate in England as a whole.

**Table 25: Homelessness preventions in 2012-13 – Newcastle and comparator cities**

	Helped to remain in existing accom	Helped to access new accom	Relieved through positive action	Total cases of prevention and relief	Household population (000s)	Preventions per 000 households
Nottingham	2,041	2,142	130	4,313	138	31.3
<b>Newcastle</b>	<b>1,776</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>3,673</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>29.6</b>
Manchester	4,182	1,044	119	5,345	217	24.6
Birmingham	3,514	3,682	131	7,327	420	17.4
Bristol	1,767	1,713	2	3,482	199	17.5
Leeds	1,643	1,261	137	3,041	359	8.5
Liverpool	309	933	46	1,288	198	6.5
Sheffield	458	203	229	890	242	3.7

**Figure 3: Rate of homelessness prevention – 2012-13 homelessness preventions per 1,000 households**



The notable feature to emerge from Newcastle's prevention activities is that these are much more heavily weighted towards 'homelessness relieved through positive action' than is the case any of the other core cities, with the exception of Sheffield where the overall rate of homelessness prevention activity is low. A reasonable interpretation of these overall statistical results would be that effective prevention practice in Newcastle is helping to achieve the low levels of full homelessness duty acceptances and temporary accommodation placements discussed above.

### **3.6.1 Challenges**

Newcastle's main challenges in this area are:

- Maintaining this relatively good performance in the context of the public sector and Welfare Reforms;
- Building the core city comparison into our quarterly NFNA process.

## 4. Conclusion – a summary of our challenges

This section summarises the challenges we have identified through this document and will form the basis of our Strategy and action plan. Our challenges are listed by subject below.

### **The policy, economic, demographic, housing market and Welfare Reform context:**

- Working with partners to embed the principles of the Wellbeing for Life Strategy into our partnerships and processes. In particular, our recording and commissioning needs to reflect the life course of the people supported;
- Further strengthening the coordination and integration of employment and homelessness services;
- Working with the FHU and PRS to ensure access to affordable sustainable private rented accommodation;
- Working with partners on the Welfare Reform Board to reduce the risks of people becoming homeless due to the Government's Welfare Reforms.

### **Newcastle's strategic approach to preventing homelessness:**

- Consolidating and extending our partnership approach to make the most of our limited resources in order to maintain our levels of homelessness prevention in the face of the cuts to services and to individuals' budgets. Part of our challenge will be to extend our NFNA review approach to all partners. To this end we will:
  - Publish a quarterly briefing on the key indicators and priorities. This will incorporate feedback and comment from partners;
  - Review the protocols and demonstrate the following:
    - what the protocol is for – who it serves and why;
    - what its value is – why we do it and who it helps;
    - how well we do it – what the standards are and who the national comparators are;
    - how many people are better off because of our help;
    - how it is decided how people get help;
    - how it contributes to preventing homelessness, maximising income, reducing debt, and securing employment;
  - Provide communication to partners (directories, websites, consultancy, briefings);
  - Review our shared action plan to improve outcomes;
- Improving data collection and sharing to both maximise officer capacity and to follow the life course of clients. This will then facilitate the analysis of more complex opportunities for the prevention of homelessness. At present our data collection processes are more suited to measuring demand rather than to identifying opportunities to better manage demand e.g. by better understanding both the reasons why people become homeless and those people who have existing support services we can more effectively target our resources to ensure people don't reach crisis point;
- Incorporating the Supporting People monitoring to create a single picture that also shows outcomes achieved by providers that includes: training and employment, reducing debt and compliance with statutory orders
- Developing more meaningful partnerships with health and social care partners;
- Better incorporating the involvement of clients and residents. The effective participation of people affected by homelessness in the development of future policy, practice and service delivery should be widely promoted and given practical effect in activities directed at tackling homelessness.

## **People who are owed the full homelessness duty:**

- Maintaining current low full homelessness duty acceptances in the light of new challenges posed by the Government's austerity measures, including the financial challenges for households affected by Welfare Reform;
- Maintaining low full homelessness duty acceptances for families and young people through mediation and preventative work by YHN's specialist services;
- Developing further partnership work to prevent homelessness amongst at-risk groups, such as people with mental health issues and migrants;
- Working more closely with children's and health services to promote early intervention and to build resilience and thereby prevent homelessness in families;
- Re-establish close working relationships with the main housing associations working in Newcastle;
- Identifying sustainable housing options in the private rented sector to avoid over-reliance on YHN;
- Improving the allocation of support and building resilience in the private rented sector;
- Establishing Cherry Tree View as a "homelessness prevention hub" for the city;
- Meeting the DCLG's homelessness Gold Standard.

## **People at risk of homelessness:**

- Maintaining our current performance. Over the last 10 years our improved outcomes have been based on a better understanding of people's needs. To improve this further will require a more sophisticated understanding of the causes of homelessness, however this needs to be balanced against the transaction costs of collecting more data with fewer staff;
- Improving the integration of HAC IT systems;
- Maximising opportunities for early intervention by extending our partnerships to prevent homelessness and to intervene earlier to prevent crises;
- Maximising opportunities to build resilience, particularly in response to the Welfare Reforms, by integrating private rented sector and employment support;
- Maximising self help opportunities, including the website, to prevent people from being homeless in crisis;
- Continuing to work with YHN as part of the Sustaining Tenancies Guidance to maintain low numbers of evictions from YHN properties;
- Working with commissioners and providers to develop more lasting solutions and to understand the needs and circumstances of the 9% of households in this group who have made repeat presentations to HAC.

## **People living with housing-related support:**

- Improving our information analysis on this client group to better differentiate multiple presentations that currently give a false picture of demand;
- We know that the Crisis Response workstream budget reductions will mean that there will be less resources and the requirement for enhanced collaboration to mitigate the impact of these cuts
- Working with supported housing providers to create a culture of prevention and understanding of the causes of homelessness and targeting commissioned resources accordingly to maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness;
- Improving the numbers of people moving on to independence by supporting providers to develop pre-tenancy support packages around living skills such as budgeting and benefits, and identifying suitable options in the private rented sector;

- Finding affordable move on options e.g. by building on the success of pilots like The Cyrenians' Housing First pilot;
- Reducing the number of people overstaying in accommodation and support;
- Reducing evictions from emergency access accommodation and evaluating short term options e.g. spot purchasing additional support where required and developing alternative supported accommodation options for people for whom hostel accommodation is unsuitable through the new Crisis Response workstream commissioning process;
- Providing long term solutions for people with on-going to support needs who are not able to move to independence;
- Where capital funding can be secured improving the buildings where services are provided from.
- Consolidating data on people accessing floating support services, to improve our knowledge of this client group and enable us to develop better prevention options;
- Using the new commissioning through the Crisis Response workstream to improve our understanding, better prevent homelessness and refine information to identify prevention opportunities. For example, opportunities to prevent people who have no accommodation on release from prison becoming homeless by diverting them into supported accommodation or other suitable housing options;
- Using the new commissioning through the Crisis Response workstream to develop an offer for multiply excluded people for whom existing accommodation services are not successful. The need for this is manifested in multiple unsuccessful placements ('churn'), high eviction rates and the numbers of people with identified support needs who are not known to or engaging with support services;
- Increasing the consistency of data recording to facilitate the better understanding of need and the effectiveness of our responses, in particular understanding how many of the 126 discharged from institutions into supported housing are positive responses that prevent crisis and how many are negative moves that hinder people moving to independence.;
- Understanding the role of supported accommodation in supporting people to independence;
- Working with Jobcentre Plus and providers to better understand the reasons for sanctioning and what we can do support people to avoid being sanctioned, and how to support those who have had sanctions applied.

### **Multiple exclusion and rough sleepers:**

- Improving the consistency of our recording and common understanding of aims and definitions;
- Maintaining our coordinated approach to resolving rough sleeping and meeting the No Second Night Out commitment;
- Ensuring there is continued and meaningful contact at a street level with dedicated outreach support;
- Formalising the case management framework and agreeing links with other safeguarding arrangements;
- Exploring intensive support methodologies e.g. multi-systemic therapy;
- Creating, through the Crisis Response workstream and with The Cyrenians led Big Lottery Funded Multiple and Complex Needs work, a common understanding of multiple exclusion and of how we will work differently to improve outcomes.

**Newcastle's performance in comparison with other areas:**

- Maintaining this relatively good performance in the context of the public sector and Welfare Reforms;
- Building the core city comparison into our quarterly NFNA process.

## 5. Next steps and consultation

The analysis and challenges identified in this review are a result of our interpretation of data from homelessness services and our own experience through service delivery and, as such, reflect a predominately internal debate about what it tells us. We held an initial wider consultation with the Active Inclusion Forum (6 September 2013) and with the Youth Independence Forum (20 September 2013) and we will be feeding back on these events and incorporating the issues raised in our subsequent Homelessness Strategy.

However, homelessness is a city wide issue that requires a city wide response and we would like to garner comment and feedback, including suggestions about current and future policy and practice and the challenges we have identified, from other agencies and individuals to help inform our Homelessness Strategy for 2014-19. We will therefore be arranging additional consultation events and opening an online consultation in order to reach the widest audience.

The questions we would like stakeholders to consider are:

- Do you agree with our analysis of homelessness in Newcastle?
- Is there anything you would like to add or change?
- Do you agree with our challenges?

Please email any comments you would wish to make on this draft review to [activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk) by **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013**

In addition we will be holding a consultation event for partners, providers and service users on the draft review on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November**, 9.30am at the City Library. If you are interested in attending this event or you have any queries, comments or questions about this review please contact the Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit at [activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk).