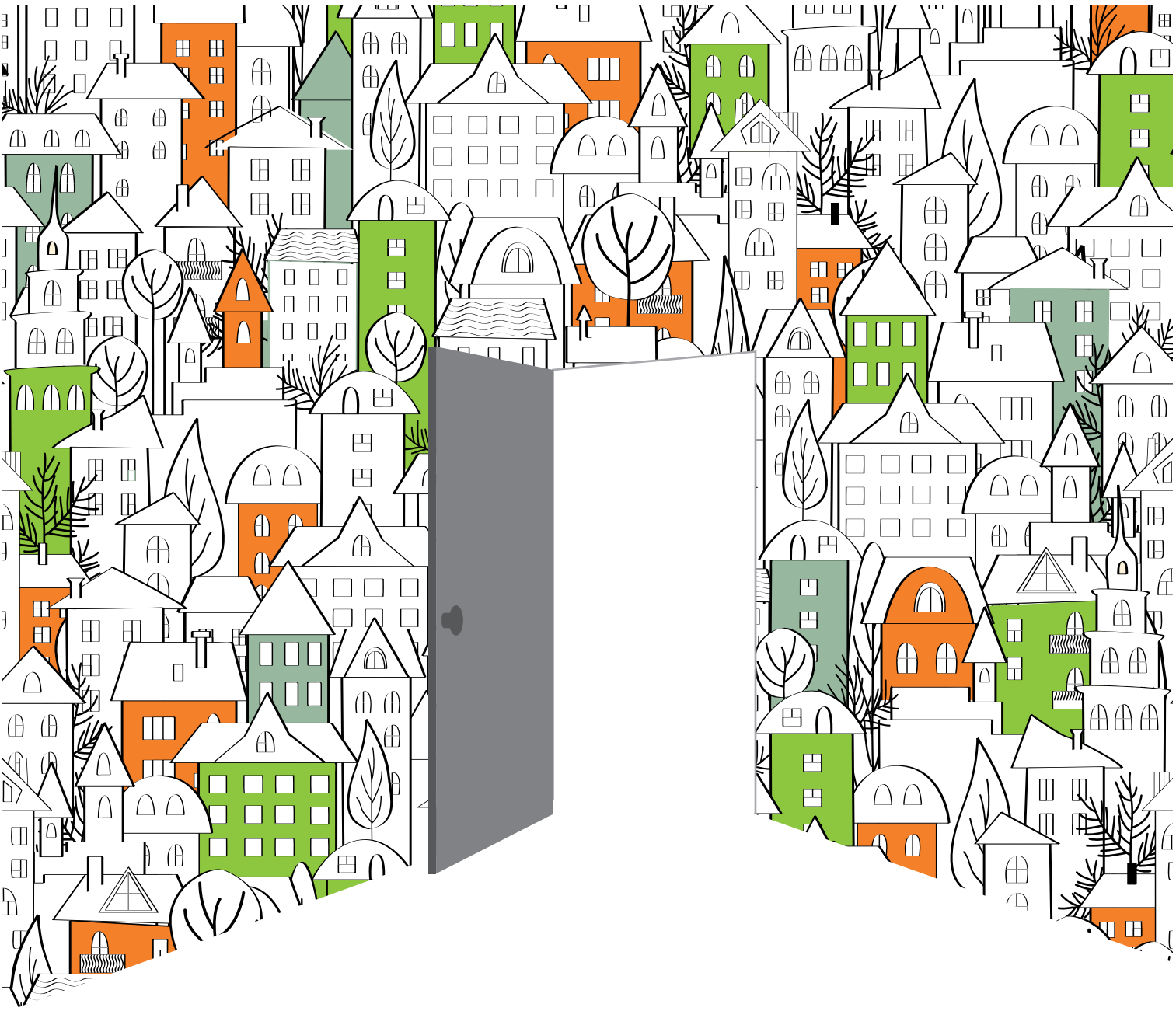
# Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019-2024



## SUMMARY VERSION

Nottingham City Council

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# Foreword

from Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage
**Councillor Jane Urquhart**

"I am pleased to introduce Nottingham's Homelessness Prevention Strategy, the first we have developed under the framework of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. In Nottingham, we have delivered the principles of homelessness prevention and relief for a number of years. However, this has become more challenging in recent years within a climate of increased austerity that has had far reaching implications including local authority funding cuts and the affordability of housing for our citizens. Demand for emergency accommodation and rough sleeping are two indicators of homelessness and both have risen to high levels over the last year.

Despite this we remain committed as a city to reducing all forms of homelessness by maximising opportunities through a cross-sector multi-agency approach to homelessness prevention. Our ambitious aims include a reduction in the number of rough sleepers in Nottingham and eliminating the use of unsuitable Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless households. This new Homelessness Prevention Strategy seeks to build on the strong partnerships and dedication shown across the public, voluntary, community, faith and private sectors and in doing so, coordinate a comprehensive approach to homelessness prevention that delivers sustainable outcomes for people in Nottingham."

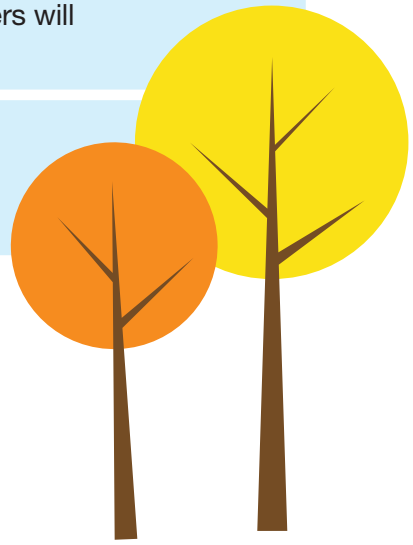
# Introduction

**Homelessness (in all its forms) has increased throughout the country over recent years following a sustained period of government austerity and in the context of a national housing crisis. The situation in Nottingham echoes the national trend with the number of households presenting in need rising over the last five years, with a further marked increase following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018. Locally, the introduction of Universal Credit Full Service in October 2018 will likely add further pressure to the city's homelessness services.**

The growing need has consequently led to additional demand for support services and supported accommodation solutions that were already operating at full capacity. This has resulted in an increased reliance upon Bed & Breakfast (B&B) for use as temporary accommodation and there are more people rough sleeping than ever before.

Partners across the city remain fully committed to preventing homelessness from happening where we can and when we cannot, making sure we can effectively respond to it. The Homelessness Prevention Strategy sets out how partners across Nottingham will work towards this. The strategy contains the following key components:

1. The positive **vision and aims** of the strategy
2. The **approach** we will take to deliver the vision and meet the aims
3. Four main **themes** containing our **priority areas of focus** and key areas of activity that will be responsive and proactive in meeting local needs.
4. Our governance structure and processes for sharing insight, monitoring and review to ensure that the strategy is appropriately implemented and remains relevant in responding to local need
5. A partnership **Homelessness Prevention Charter** setting out a cross-sector city commitment to a shared set of values. The Charter will be supported by specific pledges of support highlighting areas of activity partners will undertake to help meet the overarching vision.
6. Taking the actions identified through the Charter, **a combined multi-agency delivery plan** will be formulated annually with cross-sector responsibility for its implementation.



This is a summary document of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019-2024 and therefore some of the background, including local and national policy context, review of the last strategy and learning from people with Lived Experience is intentionally omitted. For full detail please refer to the full version of the strategy.

# Vision & Aims

**Partners in Nottingham believe that no one should have to sleep rough in our city and we are united in the shared vision for all families, single people and couples to have a place that they can call home.**

For this vision to be realised commitment from all sectors, both strategically and operationally and across all levels of authority, is required. Therefore, collectively the public sector, community groups, voluntary sector organisations, faith groups, businesses, developers and private sector landlords in Nottingham commit to working together to:

- **Identify people at risk of homelessness or in need of support**
- **Provide access to quality and appropriate support and/or housing options**
- **Help people to meet their housing needs in a way that is sustainable and long lasting**
- **Look for best practice initiatives from across the country and beyond to help us further develop our services and achieve our aims**

Through this strategy we aim to achieve the following evidenced aims:

- **A reduction in the number of households ever becoming homeless**
- **A reduction in the number of households who become homeless more than once**
- **A reduction in the number of households living in temporary accommodation**
- **A reduction in the number of rough sleepers**

# Approach

This strategy recognises that the causes of homelessness are wide-ranging and unique to each household, often involving many interconnecting factors and circumstances that stem beyond just housing. As such tackling the causes and providing solutions to homelessness should not be confined to the housing sector. **Preventing and tackling homelessness is considered everyone's business in Nottingham**, an ethos that this strategy has taken in identifying the partnerships, resources, delivery mechanisms and provision needed to maximise people's ability to achieve a positive future in a place they can call home.

Homelessness prevention in Nottingham focusses around the unique circumstances, needs, wants and ambitions of the individual or household. In Nottingham our approach is focussed on putting **citizens at the heart**. To effectively support individuals and households affected by homelessness we will:

1. **Ask questions about the current housing situation**
2. **Avoid or minimise repeat assessments**
3. **Incorporate 'I statements' in personalised support plans**
4. **Deliver services within Psychologically Informed Environments (PIEs)**
5. **Promote local public sector adoption of Opportunity Nottingham's "Facts About Me" sheet**
6. **Investigate the development of single records or use of a 'passport' or 'golden ticket' that allows sharing of personal information between services**
7. **Take the household's views, assets and ambitions into account when determining a course of action**

Services working together to respond to individualised support needs through coordinated interventions is the only way to prevent first time or recurring homelessness. By helping to avoid negative consequences of homelessness such as poor health, affected child development, unemployment, future demand for services is reduced.

## Partnership Working

Multi-agency partnership working is critical to the success of the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy and there are a number of different sectors who have a role in the coordinated implementation of this strategy.

Services working together to respond to individualised support needs through coordinated interventions are key to preventing first time or reoccurring homelessness. By helping to avoid negative consequences of homelessness such as poor health, affected child development and unemployment, future demand for services across the wider public sector is reduced.



## An individualised response

Insight tells us there are groups of people at greater risk of homelessness, including:

- Unemployment or low/irregular income households
- People with mental health issues
- Private rented sector tenants
- People with substance misuse or alcohol issues
- People with mulitiple and complex needs
- Domestic violence and abuse survivors
- Young people without education, employment or training
- New refugees
- Failed asylum seekers or those with no recourse to public funds
- Prison leavers & people with offending backgrounds

This list is long yet it is by no means inclusive of all 'types' of people who become homeless. This is because homelessness does not discriminate and therefore neither does Nottingham in our response.

Homelessness prevention in Nottingham builds a response around the unique circumstances, needs, wants and ambitions of the individual or household. Four **pathway principles** will guide delivery of individualised activity:




**To effectively support individuals and families affected by homelessness we will:**

1. Support people to recognise when, and how to seek and accept advice and support
2. Ensure there is no wrong front door in accessing pathways to advice and support
3. Train and upskill workers to identify risk and connect people with advice and support
4. Ask questions about the current housing situation
5. Avoid or minimise repeat assessments by linking assessments and support plans
6. Deliver services within Psychologically Informed Environments (PIEs)
7. Investigate the development of single records or use of a 'passport' that allows for sharing of personal information between services
8. Take the household's views, assets and ambitions into account when determining a course of action and incorporating 'I statements' in personalised support plans
9. Delivering a range of accommodation and support options
10. Ensuring specialist provision is available and accessible

# Priority Areas of focus

**Informed by Nottingham's 2017 local review of homelessness, this strategy contains a number of priority areas, which are categorised into four core themes as set out below.**

1

## Addressing the causes of homelessness

- Tackling social exclusion – identifying and addressing multiple and complex needs
- Responding to mental health needs and promoting positive wellbeing
- Helping to protect people from violence and abuse
- Promoting financial capability and independent living skills
- Supporting the provision of safe accommodation

2

## Homelessness Relief

- Working with tenants and landlords to reduce evictions from the Private Rented Sector
- Minimising unplanned exclusion from family or friends' homes
- Preventing eviction from social housing and supported accommodation
- Bridging the transition to accommodation when institutionalised support ends

3

## Homelessness Prevention

- Utilising the Private Rented Sector as a solution to homelessness
- Delivering housing solutions

4

## Tackling Rough sleeping

- Multi-agency approach to identifying and assessing people who are street homeless
- Providing appropriate support and accommodation and (if necessary) enforcement action.
- Wider sector involvement in tackling circumstances that can cause rough sleeping (e.g. unplanned hospital discharge, release from prison and migration to the city) to prevent it from happening or reoccurring.

Each priority area of focus (from page 12) identifies the issues and sets out the urgent focus, what we want to achieve and recommended key areas of action. The full version of this strategy also details steps that are already being taken to address the priority areas of focus.

# Strategy Delivery

A high level of stakeholder participation has fed into the development of this strategy. However, even more is required to turn this approach into the activity that delivers tangible outcomes. A full list of organisations who have a role in preventing or relieving homelessness in Nottingham is included in the appendices of the full strategy, highlighting the breadth of partners making a contribution to the delivery of this agenda locally.

The recommended areas of activity within each theme will be refined to inform the development of annual action plans. Activity will be identified by the organisations responsible for implementation.

As delivery of this strategy is progressed over the next five years it is of upmost importance that the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness are reflected and contribute to ongoing system and service development.

A range of resources from within the council and partner organisations are required to deliver this strategy:

## Housing

- Effective allocations and tenancy management of over 35,000 social rent properties in Nottingham
- Partnership working with landlords and owners in the private housing market to increase prevention and relief and deliver housing of a good standard
- Working with developers to ensure new housing meets the city's needs and with providers to explore new types
- Working with property owners to utilise empty homes or appropriate buildings for conversion to provide appropriate temporary, supported or accessible accommodation

## Health & Wellbeing

- Early identification of people in need of housing related support
- Joint assessments and support plans that address issues and prevent longer term reliance upon health services
- Co-designing and commissioning types of supported accommodation that meet health and wellbeing needs
- Involvement in process and system design to support effective hospital discharge of patients into housing
- Providing appropriate and accessible services for people with mental health and / or substance misuse issues and multiple and complex needs

## Adult Social Care

- Using expertise to assess the care, support and enablement needs of those who are homeless/at risk of homelessness
- Ensuring services are flexible and available for people with multiple and complex needs
- Co-designing and commissioning accommodation with support that helps meet health and wellbeing needs and reduces the need for residential care
- Supporting financial independence, including budgeting and bill prioritisation and access to banking services

## Children's Social Care

- Using expertise to ensure households on the edge of homelessness have their needs assessed and met and children are protected from the damaging impact of homelessness
- Supporting families not to exclude their children after the age of 16 into homelessness
- Ensuring young people in local authority care are prepared for independent living with appropriate support and accommodation options

## Criminal Justice

- Early identification of housing needs prior to release from prison including any associated support needs
- Supporting rough sleepers away from street homelessness
- Ensuring survivors of any kind of abuse are protected and safely housed

## Welfare, education and employment

- Information and support to prepare for the full implementation of Universal Credit (including budgeting advice, identifying priority payments and optimisation of household income)
- Educating young people in schools & colleges about housing and skills required to live independently
- Providing employment support for people at risk of homelessness due to insufficient income levels by ensuring appropriate pathways are available

## Community, voluntary and faith sector

- Early identification and signposting of people in need of support with housing issues
- Provision of advice and information on how to sustain housing
- Provision of accommodation and support to protect rough sleepers from extreme weather
- Sharing knowledge and insight from front line services including issues faced and interventions required
- Provision of housing related support services to prevent and help people recover from homelessness
- Advocating for local people and helping their voices be heard

# The Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Charter

Partners in Nottingham agreed that a Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Charter should accompany this Strategy. The Charter includes a series of values, to which all partners are signed up, solidifying the undertaking to work collaboratively in preventing, relieving and responding to homelessness.

The Charter requires partners to make their own strategic commitment to homelessness prevention by making one or more pledges. Each pledge will outline how that organisation or service area specifically intends to prioritise homelessness prevention and how they will continue to input and engage with the citywide partnership on an ongoing basis. Partners will also identify their own lead actions, which will be reviewed by the Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) and combined with core, multi-sector actions to form the comprehensive annual strategy action plan. To view the pledges visit the Nottingham City ouncil Homelessness Prevention Strategy webpages.



**The Charter is included in Appendix 1**



# Themes & Priorities

## Theme One | Addressing the causes of homelessness

Using local insight we have been able to identify several reoccurring trends in factors that can lead to a households losing their accommodation.

### Priority 1.1. Tackling social exclusion – identifying and addressing multiple and complex needs

The Big Lottery Fund Fulfilling Lives programme estimates there are around 60,000 individuals in England with multiple and complex needs; **people experiencing multiple disadvantage, requiring a person-centred, trauma-informed approach but who experience barriers and challenges in accessing essential services that would enhance their safety, wellbeing and quality of life**.

Our own data tells us that a person's support needs cannot be categorised by a single area of concern and often involve a complex mix of longstanding issues. We need to ensure our local system of support is flexible and inclusive enough to work for people with multiple and complex needs and prevent them from further social exclusion.

#### Urgent Focus

**Review the amount and type of accommodation currently available for people with multiple and complex needs who are currently rough sleeping or housed in B&B temporary accommodation**

#### What we want to achieve

- Protection from childhood and adult trauma, and resilience building for those who have had negative experiences
- Support & accommodation: a range that is flexible, person-centred, accessible and appropriately supported to maximise sustainable outcomes
- Assessment: a system that reduces the number of appointments and repetitive provision of information
- A reduction in repeat homelessness by increasing the number of people with complex needs with sustained accommodation and who are addressing their support needs

#### Recommended key areas of activity

- Consider expansion of complex needs case conferencing to ensure a multi-agency approach
- Regular reporting to Children & Adults Safeguarding Boards highlighting good practice and seeking appropriate support to prevent homelessness
- Explore shared assessment and support plan options between housing and social care, considering the role of support agencies in pre assessment
- Explore single routes of access for long and short term supported accommodation
- Consider collaborative design and commissioning of flexible accommodation and support services that are accessible and sufficient
- Seek to establish trauma-informed services or Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE)
- Understand long term effects of childhood trauma, considering additional interventions to protect children from it and helping those with negative experiences build resilience for later life
- Evidence contribution of housing related support to health & social care prevention agenda and show the need for clear and accessible local pathways to provision in supporting Better Care metrics
- Consider how to incentivise delivery outcomes within 'harder to manage' groups

## Priority 1.2. Responding to mental health needs and promoting positive wellbeing

**Local research conducted by Sheffield Hallam University** tells us that the proportion of homeless people with mental health issues is significant and the majority have mental health support needs prior to becoming homeless; revealing that largely mental health issues have not been caused by homelessness. It is therefore fair to conclude that untreated or unsupported mental health conditions can be a driver for homelessness. It is critical to ensure the city is doing all it can to prevent homelessness for people with mental health problems, and, where this is not possible, provide clear and effective pathways into suitable support and accommodation provision that are appropriate to meeting individual needs.

### Urgent Focus

**Effectively coordinate delivery of sufficient supply of supported accommodation for both people who are homeless and people with mental health living in residential care but in need of supported independent living.**

### What we want to achieve

- Fewer people with mental health support needs becoming homeless
- Accessibility to support & accommodation pathways for those who become homeless
- Reduction in emergency homeless accommodation provision following exit from hospital, residential care or supported accommodation

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Deliver a county-wide mental health strategy setting out equitable access to appropriate support and accommodation services
- Further build PIEs into local assessments and accommodation & support provision
- Review mental health services, including supported accommodation to ensure accessibility for people with support needs beyond mental health
- Consider expanding the range of roles supporting people with complex needs, or others at risk of homelessness, to navigate the mental healthcare system
- Deliver a joint holistic assessment of need involving Nottingham City Council's Adult Social Care and Housing Aid services and community sector support providers

## Priority 1.3. Helping to protect people from violence and abuse

Risk of homelessness can often seem unavoidable when escaping abusive situations such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery, human trafficking or honour-based violence, and the fear of homelessness can also be a deterrent to leaving dangerous situations. It is vital that out local strategies for homelessness prevention, violence against women and girls and modern slavery are connected, providing clear structures to appropriate specialist support, help survivors remain in their homes (only when appropriate) and move into alternative safe accommodation with minimal disruption.

### Urgent Focus

**Ensure local refuges adopt the Nottingham First approach to bedspaces giving first refusal to Housing Aid. Housing Aid to maximise take-up to accommodate local abuse survivors in an appropriate supportive environment.**

### What we want to achieve

- A range of flexible specialist support services accessible to survivors of all types of abuse
- Ability for services within all sectors to identify those at risk of all types of abuse and how to support them to safety
- Partners to connec with survivors and identify needs at an early stage, preventing homelessness where possible whilst protecting from harm.

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Ensure housing and housing related support professionals are trained in recognising and understanding the different forms of abuse, the associated pressures and required response
- Identify training packages to promote through local networks. Maximise joint training and shadowing opportunities
- Domestic abuse and modern slavery insight to be captured at quarterly homelessness forum – to be represented by the sector at strategic level
- Ensure specialist training is a requirement within service specifications
- Raise service user awareness of homeless organisations and ensure availability of information on pathways to support
- Include questions about exploitation in homelessness assessments
- Provide information to stakeholders clarifying local authority duties regarding actions it must take when abuse is identified and how it differs for those with No Recourse to Public Funds
- Local authority signposting provision for supporting local organisations with funding bids
- Use Nottingham Together to develop availability of free accommodation for modern slavery survivors displaced following enforcement action
- Ensure housing and support contribute to the development of the Nottingham Violence against Women & Girls Strategy
- Adoption of Nottingham City Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse guidance within accommodation and housing related support services
- Where safe to do so, ensure systems allow local survivors to seek local accommodation if they are in a refuge or temporary accommodation outside of the area
- Professional opinions of supporting agencies to be considered and utilised during the formation of Personalised Housing Plans
- Ensure sufficiency of refuge provision and maintain the 24 hour helpline as a key referral route
- Maintain specialist services for children in refuges and within families escaping abuse placed in temporary accommodation

## Priority 1.4. Promoting financial capability and independent living

The primary societal reason for homelessness is financial vulnerability caused by a low income level, which can impact on a household's ability to secure or sustain its accommodation. Over the last decade this has immixed with limited availability of affordable housing options, leading to additional difficulties in finding alternative accommodation. Welfare system changes in recent years have resulted in reduced benefit levels for many households. A decrease in availability of affordable social rented housing has led to a reliance upon Private Rented Sector (PRS) housing, where higher rents often cannot be covered by Local Housing Allowance (LHA) benefit levels. Additionally, there are many households with the financial means to pay for their housing but who lack the ability to manage their income, increasing their susceptibility to homelessness.

The introduction of Universal Credit places new responsibilities on households for budgeting over a monthly period; an additional pressure to households unaccustomed to this kind of money management.

### Urgent Focus

**Ensure Nottingham is delivering a coordinated plan that supports local people through the transition to Universal Credit Full Service, minimising the risk of rent arrears and subsequent threat of homelessness.**

### What we want to achieve

- Readdress the balance between financial vulnerability & financial capability
- Support Nottingham households with financial independency and income maximisation
- Increase the number of citizens that are financially stable through regular employment
- Minimise the number of households becoming homeless due to Universal Credit

### Recommended key areas of activity

- A planned approach to supporting PRS tenants onto Universal Credit
- Ensure local social housing providers collectively plan for Universal Credit, sharing the same tenant messages and utilising Notts Social Housing Forum to share learning and best practice to mitigate the impact
- Explore options for specialist employment support workers for households at risk of homelessness
- Explore the possibility of co-locating local DWP and Housing Aid staff.
- Utilise Legal Aid for early advice for those threatened with homelessness
- Introduce a Nottingham Together & Nottingham Credit Union scheme promoting financial inclusion of communities lacking access to bank accounts
- Complete Nottingham City Council Financial Vulnerability Strategic Commissioning Review, ensuring a sufficiency of services to deliver pre-crisis preventative support and advice
- A cross-sector approach to considering housing related support in helping deliver wider outcomes than homelessness prevention
- Monitor trends in numbers of households presenting to services at risk of homelessness due to unaffordable rents

## Priority 1.5. Supporting the provision of safe accommodation

The Private Rented Sector in Nottingham is rapidly growing; now accounting for around one third of all housing in Nottingham compared to around one fifth 15 years ago. The sector has become the only option for many households unable to buy their own property or access social housing. Currently the sector is far less regulated than social housing and as a result, standards in accommodation and property management are variable. Many good landlords operate in Nottingham providing a valuable source of accessible housing at a decent standard. However, there are other PRS landlords who do not adhere to their rights and responsibilities in appropriately supporting their tenants and providing a decent standard of accommodation. Such landlords put people's health, wellbeing and safety at risk while exposing them to an increased risk of homelessness.

### Urgent Focus

**Maximise contact opportunities through the implementation of Nottingham's Selective Licensing Scheme to: ensure all s21 notices issued after 1st August 2018 are valid; support tenant access to other services required to meet their needs; support PRS landlords to meet their responsibilities; utilise any PRS properties being sold.**

### What we want to achieve

Improvements in the quality and safety of more privately rented accommodation in Nottingham

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Develop a process for Housing Aid and all partners sourcing accommodation for vulnerable people to check PRS landlords & properties used to accommodate people who have been homeless
- Ensure partners and advice agencies actively engage in processes to report instances of poor conditions, harassment or unlawful eviction
- Ensure availability of resources for landlords to help them support tenants and improve tenancy management across the sector
- Provide sale and leasing options for landlords or owners of empty properties wishing to sell or reduce management of their property
- Support and encourage poorer landlords to change their property management behaviour through accreditation and licensing
- See also Priorities 2.1 and 3.1

# Theme Two | Homelessness Prevention – enabling people to stay where they are

The Private Rented Sector in Nottingham is rapidly growing; now accounting for around one third of all housing in Nottingham compared to around one fifth 15 years ago. The sector has become the only option for many households unable to buy their own property or access social housing. Currently the sector is far less regulated than social housing and as a result, standards in accommodation and property management are variable. Many good private landlords operate in Nottingham providing a valuable source of accessible housing at a decent standard. However, there are other landlords in the sector who do not adhere to their responsibility to appropriately support their tenants and provide a decent standard of accommodation. Such landlords put people's health, wellbeing and safety at risk while exposing them to an increased risk of homelessness.

## Priority 2.1. Working with tenants and landlords to reduce evictions from the Private Rented Sector

"In Nottingham the most common reason for homelessness is the ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the Private Rented Sector. In 2017, half of all households who approached the council for assistance due to homelessness came from the sector. Two recent research projects with local landlords reveal a mix of reasons landlords choose to evict including for personal or financial reasons (impacted by housing policy such as tax changes and licensing). However, the local surveys tell us that the majority of the time eviction is because of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, property damage or failure to adhere to the terms of the tenancy. This shows a clear requirement for more advice and support to be made available for both landlords and tenants in the Private Rented Sector in order to prevent homelessness from the sector.

### Urgent Focus

**Review the level of resource required to sufficiently address homelessness prevention from the Private Rented Sector**

### What we want to achieve

- Increased tenancy sustainment
- Landlords & tenants seeking support at an earlier stage to maximise the opportunity to resolve issues and prevent homelessness
- Landlords to inform Nottingham City Council when they intend to issue s21s, maximising time for the council to support households
- Build and sustain positive relationships between landlords, support services and the council, facilitated through improved communication, support & advice

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Expand landlord liaison functions and build relationships with landlords to understand their needs & concerns
- Nottingham City Council's Safer Housing and Nottingham Together to continue providing homelessness prevention advice in their liaison roles
- Broaden communications channels between the landlords, the city council and its partner advice & support services, including online information
- Enable/encourage tenants to access support and advice/training for life skills and budgeting to achieve income maximisation
- Further develop, promote and delivery the new landlords forum
- Consider further expansion of the Nottingham Private Rented Assistance Scheme to increase tenancy management functions
- Consider a standardised notification process for landlords to inform the council when they are issuing s21s
- Feasibility study of a reward system for good tenants & landlords to encourage longer tenancies
- Embed a process whereby landlords selling properties give the local authority (or its partners) first refusal
- Further develop services with responsibility for seeking options to resolve rent arrears and make the property more affordable
- Utilise licensing teams to promote tenancy sustainment with landlords
- Progress bid to government Private Rented Sector Access Scheme fund
- See also priority area 1.5 and 3.1

## Priority 2.2. Minimising unplanned exclusion from family homes

Parental exclusion or not being able to stay any longer with relatives or friends remains one of the primary reasons for homelessness in Nottingham. Particularly amongst young people or single people with multiple and complex needs who may have been homeless before. This is also the most common reason for homelessness crisis: where a household is made homeless immediately, thus requiring emergency accommodation.

### Urgent Focus

**Raise awareness of the 'homeless at home' option, managing expectations and enabling people to secure their own housing. Review the Care Leavers Protocol to ensure planned and timely moves for young people leaving care and consider the use of/need for young persons supported accommodation for complex care leavers and youth offenders**

### What we want to achieve

- A reduction in the number of people becoming homeless from family and friends' accommodation in an emergency through an increase in planned moves.

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Review previous delivery of mediation services and explore possibility of reintroducing an independent service
- Ensure young people's access to life skills and tenancy training in the Private Rented Sector has parity with those living in social housing
- Revisit options for closer working links with education facilities to raise awareness and understanding of homelessness
- Raise awareness of options and self-help services through information provision and communicationshappeni, including within families

## Priority 2.3. Preventing eviction from social housing and supported accommodation

It is extremely important to try to prevent evictions from social housing. Households failing to pay rent or behaving in an anti-social way in social housing, where rents are comparatively low and the landlords are supportive, are likely to find it extremely difficult to access or sustain alternative accommodation in the PRS. Equally, if someone has been assessed as requiring supported accommodation but loses a placement due to poor behaviour, it is unlikely they will be provided with an alternative option with the support they need.

### Urgent Focus

**An increasing number of households are at risk of eviction due to high levels of rent arrears. We need to investigate and seek to address the causes of these arrears to enable us to target earlier interventions.**

### What we want to achieve

- Maximise responsible tenant behaviour and working with tenants to take action to minimise evictions.

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Include local registered providers as partners under the Duty to Refer
- Further utilise Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to help prevent social housing evictions and ensure that households have dependency reduction
- Ensure access to budgeting, life skills & employment support for social housing tenants
- City-wide planning for Universal Credit, mitigating for rental income loss
- Consider use of Enhanced Housing Benefit for households requiring additional support for a specific issue over a fixed period and assess options for a pool of support workers to deliver this across organisations
- City Council monitoring of supported accommodation evictions, challenging decisions to evict over low level offences
- Housing Aid to liaise with Community Interest Companies evicting tenants to maximise nominations from Housing Aid in filling bedspaces, where the accommodation is appropriate and of good standard
- Consider extending the Eviction Prevention Protocol to supported accommodation, including specialist-supported accommodation for people with mental health conditions

## Priority 2.4. Bridging the transition to accommodation when institutionalised support ends

Many people experiencing sudden or a significant change in circumstance including discharge from hospita, prison release, leaving local authority care or withdrawal of Home Office support become homeless due to a lack of accommodation options.

The risk of homelessness for these groups should be one of the easiest to prevent as they involve people already known to services. However issues arise when: people are already homeless at hospital admission stage and their hospital stay is short (or only A&E treatment is provided); short custodial sentences are given, limiting time in which to arrange accommodation upon release; and, when new refugees lose the accommodation provided by the Home Office before accessing benefits, employment and other support due to poor coordination between government agencies.

### Urgent Focus

**Ensure local systems and processes are established and communicated to partners regarding the Duty to Refer**

### What we want to achieve

- Increase homelessness prevention from hospital (including mental health sections), local authority care, prison and youth offender institutions & when Home Office support is withdrawn
- Reduce the number of people becoming homeless after being supported by any of these institutions

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Commission 'through the gate' services that work with prisoners, meeting them on release and accompanying them to pre-arranged meetings to facilitate access to benefits, housing and other support
- Understand the challenges around A&E attendances and work together to find solutions
- Embed the hospital discharge protocol within the Discharge Policy for Greater Nottingham and ensure adoption by all local hospitals
- Cross-sector work to ensure appropriate provision of support for maximising accommodation sustainment and reducing risk of repeat hospital admission, detention under the Mental Health Act or reoffending
- Engage the Home Office and G4S at a local level, seeking commitment a policy of seamless and timely transition from NASS support to employment, welfare and housing for people granted refugee status.
- Encourage NASS to participate in local Duty to Refer processes
- Nottingham Multi-Agency Forum on Asylum Seekers and Refugees to work with the Nottingham Homelessness Voluntary Sector Forum to develop a process plan for supporting failed asylum seekers in appealing decisions and submitting new evidence or claims
- Voluntary, Faith and Community sector partners to promote their activities via City Council communication channels such as the Nottingham Nouse network
- Review the Care Leavers protocol to ensure sufficiency and variety of accommodation options, including supported accommodation and accommodation with support, with particular consideration of care leavers with complex needs not ready for independent living. Ensure the refreshed protocol clearly establishes the mechanisms to plan ending of placements.
- Develop a local prison leaver protocol which also ensures prisons for female offenders are fully involved in the development of pathways and specialist requirements for women / mothers are considered in rehousing decisions

# Theme Three | Homelessness relief (and response) – supporting people into alternative accommodation

**This theme is about ensuring that when homelessness cannot be prevented, households have adequate support and access to options allowing them to move with minimal disruption and able to sustain their resettlement**

## Priority 3.1. Utilising the Private Rented Sector as a solution to homelessness

Tenure profile in Nottingham has changed significantly over the last two decades resulting in an ever-increasing reliance on the Private Rented Sector as a solution to homelessness. A third of all households in Nottingham live in the sector (compared to less than a sixth in 2001). The change can be attributed to low house prices appealing to buy-to-let investors and steady market rents delivering a good yield for circumstantial or investment landlords.

The Private Rented Sector is a flexible tenure offering a wide range of accommodation in all areas of the city. However, it can be seen as less appealing than social housing because rent levels are often higher and there is generally less stability as tenants can be asked to move on without notice within two months at any time after their initial six or twelve month tenancy has expired. The Private Rented Sector is not always accessible to people who are dependent or reliant on welfare benefits as landlords can be selective about the 'market' they choose to target their accommodation. There can also be uncertainty about landlords' property and tenancy management style and approach to repairs and support.

The Private Rented Sector in Nottingham is fundamental as a housing solution to households at risk of homelessness. The contribution of many local landlords is significant and it is increasingly important that more landlords are provided with the information and support they require to unlock more property in the sector for people who need to move from their existing accommodation arrangements.

### Urgent Focus

**Nottingham City Council and partners must work with landlords to progress leasing/letting schemes to offer as an available PRS accommodation option. There is a need to ensure sufficient resource to identify and engage landlords and for the efficient facilitation of new tenancies.**

### What we want to achieve

- Access to more quality properties in the PRS that are affordable to sustain
- Households move seamlessly between properties with minimal disruption and without the need for emergency / temporary accommodation

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Positively promote good PRS landlords and decent properties to maximise sector appeal and ensure housing options messages are clear and consistent
- Use landlord forums to research landlord requirements and incentives necessary to make properties accessible to low income households
- Inform landlords on how they can support tenants and address issues and share positive examples of successful tenancies to reduce letting reticence
- Consider how to support the facilitation of a PRS tenants forum as a platform for tenants to collectively raise local and national sector issues
- Nottingham City Council to explore feasibility for introducing area patch manager type functions to the PRS, working with landlords and relevant sections towards early stage issue identification and levering of support.
- See also Priority Area 1.5 and 2.1

[1] Carried out by the British Research Establishment in 2016 under commission from Nottingham City Council

## Priority 3.2. Delivering housing solutions

Tenure profile in Nottingham has changed significantly over the past decade. The Right To Buy (RTB) social housing policy has been popular, incentivised by low house prices and large discounts. Since the scheme was reinvigorated in 2012, the council lost 1582 homes and has not received equivalent reparation from government to replace them on a one-for-one basis. This has led to a reduction in the overall level of social housing and created a greater dependence upon the growing Private Rented Sector for those who cannot or choose not to purchase their own homes.

This strategy promotes the continued development of proactive work with private sector landlords to further utilise the sector for people in housing need. As there is a growing shortage of housing that is accessible and affordable to low income households it is also necessary to explore other ways of bringing more social and affordable property forward.

### Urgent Focus

**Acceleration of the property acquisition plan utilising a variety of funding streams to buy properties for temporary or longer term use**

### What we want to achieve

- Increased delivery of a range of affordable housing options in Nottingham that are accessible for people with lower income levels.

### Recommended key areas of activity

- Maximise utilisation of Right to Buy receipts for acquisition of new property and fully explore opportunities arising from the lifting of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap
- Advance a coordinated and regular approach to discussions with developers and providers discussions about new supply and utilise any available government funding to ensure development is optimised according to need
- A single person housing need analysis exploring shared social housing options
- Consider potential empty commercial and residential property conversions
- Continued engagement with Community Interest Companies to maximise use of appropriate accommodation and progress implementation of the “Nottingham Way” which sets out expectations for the way in which Community Interest Companies provide supported accommodation
- Consider a single pathway to short term supported accommodation provision
- Review longer term supported accommodation provision to consider use its use for people with multiple and complex needs.
- Develop a sufficiency strategy projecting local need for supported housing and introduce mechanisms for coordination and oversight of new supply

# Theme Four | Tackling Rough sleeping

**This theme outlines the city's plans to support people away from street homelessness in Nottingham.**

Rough sleeping is the most visible and arguably the most damaging form of homelessness, significantly impacting upon a person's physical and mental health and dramatically reducing life expectancy. It is dangerous and isolating, bringing a heightened risk of harm and additional barriers to accessing services and accommodation.

The number of people rough sleeping has increased in most areas of the country over the past few years and more recently this has been echoed in Nottingham. Prior to 2015, the number of rough sleepers counted on any given night in Nottingham was rarely in double figures, however our official estimate submitted to government in November 2017 was 43, ranking Nottingham 56th highest of all local authority areas for rough sleepers per 1,000 households. Our most recent count, carried out in September 2018 found 44 rough sleepers in the city. Locally collected data reveals 568 different individuals were found rough sleeping in 2017; an increase of 23% from the previous year.

## Cold Weather:

Rough sleeping during winter is of particular concern due to the additional threat to health and wellbeing (and life) from cold weather conditions. Partners in Nottingham coordinate efforts to extend provision during the winter months and demand is growing. Between the winters of 2016/17 and 2017/18 the number of individual rough sleepers making use of the city's extended provision increased 77%. At its peak, 87 people were prevented from sleeping rough on a single night during winter 2017/18.

## Support Needs and Health:

Supporting people away from rough sleeping remains a strategic priority in Nottingham but there are challenges. The level, complexity and multitude of support needs amongst rough sleepers is significant. Local data tells us 34% have alcohol issues, 29% mental health, 22% substance misuse and 15% offending histories. Physical health of rough sleepers is also concerning with many rough sleepers being treated by Nottingham City Care Homeless Health Team for an array of health problems linked to, and worsened by, rough sleeping conditions.

It is likely that the majority of rough sleepers exhibit more than one support need however, cuts in services and pressure to reduce costs across the public sector have left gaps adding risks of these needs being unmet leading to the development of further support needs. Issues left untreated or unresolved lead to entrenchment for many rough sleepers, making them increasingly socially excluded and harder to engage.

**Recent research carried out by Nottingham Trent University on behalf of Opportunity Nottingham** evidences a number of barriers to engagement including ambivalence or disillusionment towards existing services. It also underlines the importance of adapting services to the unique needs of the individual and avoiding linear delivery systems with access thresholds, measures and expectations that people have to overcome to progress to the next stage of support.

## Origin:

One of the complex challenges in providing a preventative as well as comprehensive system of intervention is around the issue of local connection. Only around two in five rough sleepers in Nottingham are from the city with rough sleepers migrating to Nottingham from areas with less investment in services. This lack of investment presents issues in supporting reconnection back to areas of origin. However, it is recognised that there may be a number of reasons why it is not appropriate for some people to return to areas they have come from. The local faith, voluntary and community sector often build up trust and rapport in such cases and are essential in helping unpickissues.

Around 20% of rough sleepers in Nottingham are No Recourse to Public Funds foreign nationals who often face destitution due to limited options and support. Specific consideration is required to address this issue and once established clear information should be made available to outline the circumstances, roles and responsibilities among partners in supporting these individuals.

## Accommodation:

Local research shows one in six of the people found rough sleeping at night in Nottingham have accommodation available to them. There is also an increasing number of individuals with accommodation available to them that come into the city specifically to make income from begging. Whilst it is recognised that those begging could also have multiplicity of need, a clear distinction between begging and rough sleeping exists and partners will continue to work to educate the public and provide information to help people make informed choices about how to use their time and resources in supporting rough sleepers.

## Urgent Focus

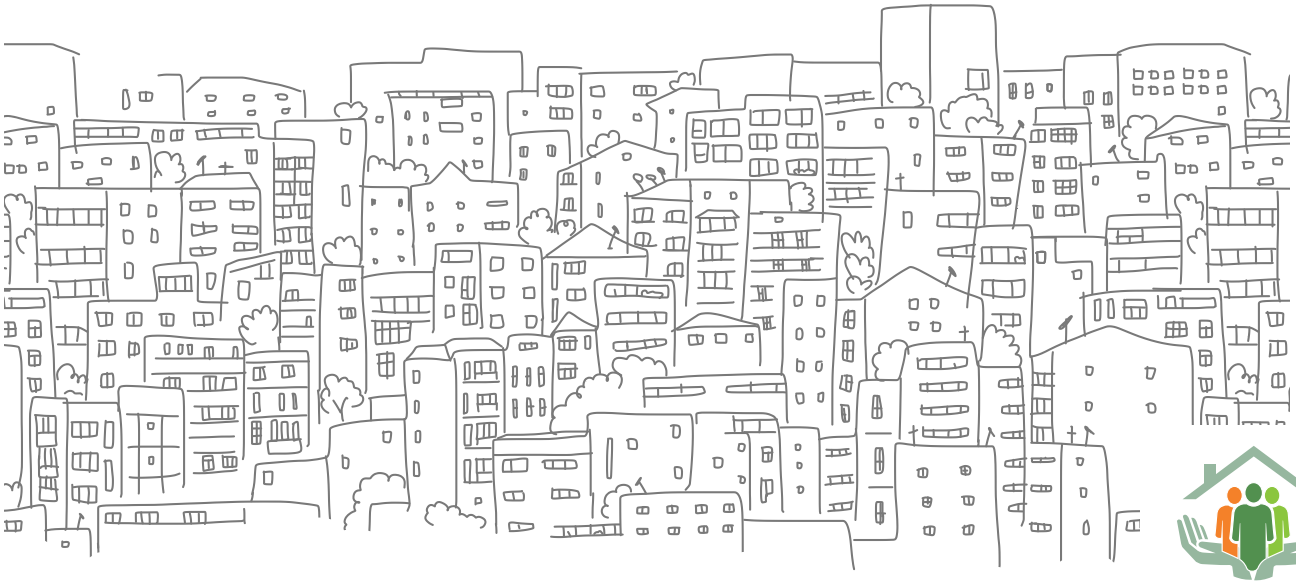
**Embed the new Rough Sleeper Initiative and monitor impact to inform the development of the Cold Weather Plan for 2018-19 to minimise the risk of harm caused by extreme weather in winter.**

## What we want to achieve

- Continued commitment that no one should need to sleep rough in Nottingham
- Swift identification & assessment utilising street outreach services
- A tenacious and persistent approach in attempts to engage and build trust with rough sleepers
- A mixed and flexible range of person-centred support and accommodation
- Longevity in response to deliver sustainable solutions and de-risk repeat homelessness
- Where appropriate, enforcement action to prohibit individuals from persistent begging for financial gain when accommodation is available to them

## Recommended key areas of activity

- Deliver commitments of new Rough Sleeper Initiative, backed by government funding awards for 2018/19 and 2019/20
- Maximise future funding opportunities from government and other funding bodies
- Review functions and membership of cross-sector, multi-agency partnership groups working to address rough sleeping to ensure effectiveness in meeting needs of rough sleepers. Ensure public sector representation at regular meetings, ensuring rough sleeping is not caused by ineffective release from prison or hospital
- Work with neighbouring Nottinghamshire councils to share responsibilities, encourage cooperation, coordination, consistency and continuity
- Enhance monitoring of data & insight, capturing factors beyond presenting support needs to facilitate targeted rough sleeper prevention action in addition to responding to rough sleeping
- Nottingham City Council and voluntary & faith sector to make connections with partners across other sectors to seek opportunities in helping ensure services are available and inclusive for people with multiple and complex needs
- Nottingham City Council to establish and review protocols with public bodies to ensure the Duty to Refer is applied appropriate and maximise partnership work.
- Establish pledges and actions from the sectors who need to be involved in tackling circumstances that can cause rough sleeping
- Nottingham Multi-Agency Forum on Asylum Seekers & Refugees and the Nottingham Homelessness Voluntary Sector Forum to review the city's policy and practice guidance for people with No Recourse to Public Funds and recommend opportunities for further partnership work
- Develop a full and inclusive Rough Sleeper Strategy led by Nottingham City Council working with the Rough Sleepers Task Force, Homelessness Voluntary Sector Forum, Cold Weather Plan Task Group and people with lived experience supported by Services for Empowerment & Advocacy and Opportunity Nottingham
- Progress Nottingham's Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding bid and maximise any further funding opportunities available through joint working



# Governance & Monitoring

**During the course of the previous strategy, there were changes to the structures of sector-wide governing partnerships (such as the Housing Strategic Partnership transforming into the Nottingham Nouse Network) and city council management structures which have led to a need to re-establish a defined reporting regime and governance structure around homelessness. The pace of change in policy areas and budget decisions impacting on homelessness has been so rapid over recent years that there is also an enhanced need for scrutiny, accountability and an accessible governance structure where impact and recommendations (informed by insight) can be considered and decisions taken to effect change when required.**

**A comprehensive communication plan will be implemented throughout the first six months of strategy Year 1 to continue to raise the profile of the strategy and embed it across and amongst all sectors.**

## Data Monitoring and Insight will comprise five main elements:

1. **Demand projection plan**
2. **Weekly task group monitoring**
3. **Commissioned service monitoring**
4. **Rough sleeper analysis**
5. **Annual data report**

An Annual Review of Homelessness will take place between October and November, led by Nottingham City Council Housing Strategy and informed by a summary of the weekly operational monitoring, commissioned service monitoring and rough sleeper analysis. There is also an expectation that local partners will provide data and insight to support the review. The projection plan will be reviewed in line with this, informed by monitoring and known impacting factors.

## Action Plan Monitoring & Review

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group is responsible for the overseeing the implementation of the action plan. The SIG will use a traffic light RAG rating to track progress and meeting agendas will allow for discussions to help overcome areas where there are barriers to progression. The action plan will be reviewed annually in autumn, led by the Homelessness Strategy Manager who will liaise with key representatives from each of the following sectors: housing; health and wellbeing; adult social care; children's social care; criminal justice and community protection; welfare, education & Employment; and community voluntary & faith.

The diagram below outlines the the homelessness partnership governance structure in Nottingham, which centres around the Multi-Agency Strategy Implementation Group




**Further details regarding the Multi-Agency Strategy Implementation Group can be found in the full draft strategy.**

## Appendix 1

# NOTTINGHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION CHARTER

## Our Vision

**Partners in Nottingham believe that no one should have to sleep rough in our city and we are united in the shared vision for all families, single people and couples to have a place that they can call home.**

Across the public, voluntary, faith and private sector, partners support a range of people in different ways.

Who is supported and how they are supported differs between organisations for a variety of reasons.

For example, Nottingham City Council is bound by legislative requirements and will prioritise facilitating access to accommodation in the city to people who have a local connection to Nottingham. Faith and voluntary sector organisations are not restricted in who they support but they may target their services at particular groups such as rough sleepers, survivors of domestic abuse or people with no recourse to public funds. Private sector landlords may only offer housing to the household type their business model can support.

For this vision to work we need buy-in from all sectors, both strategically and operationally and across all levels of authority. Therefore, collectively the public sector, community groups, voluntary sector organisations, faith groups, businesses, developers and private sector landlords in Nottingham commit to working together to:

- Identify people who are currently homeless, at risk of homelessness or in need of support
- Provide access to quality and appropriate support and/or housing option
- Help people to meet their housing needs in a way that is sustainable and long lasting
- Look for best practice initiatives from across the country and beyond to help us further develop our services and achieve our aims

# Values

| | |
|---|---|
| **Prevention** | Prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness is understood as a key priority. Addressing the reasons and causes of homelessness through early identification of need, effective assessment and appropriate intervention to build resilience and provide sustainable solutions, is the agreed approach |
| **Housing** | Everyone should have a suitable place in good condition that they can call home, where they feel safe and stable and are receiving any level of support they need to sustain their accommodation |
| **Protection** | People and communities should feel protected from the threat of discrimination, violence, abuse and other crimes |
| **Respect** | Individuals should be treated with respect and provided with a good standard of service. People should not be judged or have assumptions made about them and their wishes and aspirations should always be heard |
| **Understanding** | Partners should be conscious and considerate of the needs of the person. They should see each individual as a person not a problem and respond to them in a courteous and compassionate way |
| **Knowledge** | Partners should actively seek to enhance their learning about the work of other sectors and build understanding of how what they do impacts on others and vice versa |
| **Access** | Pathways to information, advice and support services should be clear and accessible for all regardless of disability, language, literacy and IT ability |
| **Opportunities** | People should have equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations through education, training, employment, volunteering, leisure and creative activities |
| **Listening** | People should always be listened to and involved in decisions that affect them. Insight from people with lived experience of homelessness should be used to shape and improve service design and delivery |
| **Inclusiveness** | Partners should coordinate efforts to ensure that a response is available for all people in need in Nottingham |
| **Communication** | There should be a good standard of communication that is delivered consistently across all services. Channels of communication between people and services should be effective and two-way |
| **Honesty** | Partners should be realistic with people to manage expectations and help them to understand what is going to happen |
| **Belief** | Partners should demonstrate that they have belief in people and commit to continuing working with them for as long as necessary to ensure that solutions are found and can be sustained |

# Taking Action

All organisations have a role to play in helping to prevent homelessness and equally it is the responsibility of all sectors to ensure that effective outcomes are provided for people who are homeless – to help them to recover and sustain living in accommodation as independently as possible.

If you wish to adopt the vision and values of the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Charter please complete the form below to pledge your commitment and outline the activity you intend to deliver or want to get more involved in.

Please put a cross in this box if you agree to having your pledge published on the webpages associated with the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Charter ☐

Please put a cross in this box if you agree to having your organisations logo displayed alongside our other partners on the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Charter ☐

[Organisation] recognises our responsibility in homelessness prevention and role in helping people to recover from homelessness

**We commit to** (insert pledge of support to the strategy)

.....

.....

.....

.....

**This will be achieved through the following activity:**

1. .....

   .....

2. .....

   .....

3. .....

   .....