

Appendix 4: Southwark Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2018-22

All actions will be led by Project & Change Management team in Housing solutions.

Priority One: Homelessness prevention.

We will deliver a leading prevention service through the early adopter trailblazer project in preparation of meeting the aims and intentions of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1.1	Meet all the aims set out in the trailblazer prevention delivery plan.	Follow the latest version of the detailed Southwark Prevention Trailblazer delivery plan and meet all of the specific targets.	Overall timeframe of November 2018. Dates set for each item on the project. COMPLETE.
1.2	Eliminate usage of shared B&Bs for homeless families and under 18s.	Achieve the NPSS gold challenge	October 2019. COMPLETE. Achieved objective in timeframe.
1.3	Ensuring our service is assessed with transparency, by being reviewed by an independent advocacy body.	Shelter to continue annual review of our homelessness service.	Annual review with quarterly updates published online. Reviews are being published online. Quarterly updates need publishing.
1.4	Ensure the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is used effectively to reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation.	Produce and deliver a report on how effectively the FHSP funding has been utilised.	April 2019. Grant funding received for 19/20 – report to be developed.
1.5	Contribute to the national approach of homelessness reduction by evaluating the impact of the prevention trailblazer in Southwark.	Sharing our findings with DCLG, our peers and partners at events, forums and meetings.	Ongoing through to end of 2018. Southwark have been involved in delivering a number of national presentations and supporting MPs with providing evidence of impact in

			Parliamentary debates on homelessness and rough sleeping.
1.6	Develop improved understanding of why some BME communities are disproportionately represented within homelessness services together with the development of appropriate early intervention and prevention measures to address this over representation.	<p>Improve our customer insight through focus group involvement and improved data collection.</p> <p>Develop appropriate early intervention and prevention measures to address this over representation.</p>	<p>Focus groups held beginning in early 2018 and new prevention measures assessed and implemented by March 2019. COMPLETE (and ongoing). Feedback incorporated into service Action Plan.</p> <p>H-CLIC data will provide far greater data quality for BME impact analysis. This will be assessed and analysed during the annual reviews.</p>
1.7	Ensure we are compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 when it comes in to force in April 2018.	<p>Review the final version of the Code of Guidance and update our working practices and strategy where necessary.</p> <p>Staff to continue to attend training on the HRA17 when the opportunities arise.</p>	<p>Complete. The NPSS (National Practitioner Support Service) has launched an online self-assessment for HRA compliance with free training launching in September 2019. Southwark aims to complete this self-assessment successfully by 2020.</p> <p>Staff attended London Training Academy courses as well as Shelter and Andy Gale consultancy training. COMPLETE (and ongoing)</p>
1.8	Social services and homelessness working together in partnership to provide an increasingly effective service.	Longer term the council is developing plans to co-locate homelessness and social services at a new central site in the borough. These plans will build on the good foundations that the services have developed together and reflect a one-council mind set where all services are	Anticipated new site will be occupied by services by late 2019, early 2020. Regular meetings being held to confirm designs, latest target date is 2021, formal planning approval not yet received.

		working closely together to produce the best outcomes.	
1.9	Homeless prevention pathways and advice for all cohorts.	Develop homelessness LGBT online advice and review advice and accessibility for physical disability cohort.	LGBT and physical disability online advice published by November 2018. COMPLETE. HYP Southwark: LGBTQ+ Inclusivity training delivered to Housing Solutions 2019.
1.10	Ensure the council works cohesively to resolve and prevent homelessness.	Expanding on the work initiated from the TA Board, continue to hold frequent strategic cross-departmental meetings. Multi-agency workshops to address anti-social behaviour by improving understanding of emerging issues and finding solutions to address these.	Meetings to be held on a monthly basis. Workshops to commence from April 2018.
1.11	Tackle youth homelessness	Co-ordination of related programmes under the over-arching 16+ project. In particular, the 16+ Programme, the Care Leavers Partnership Programme and the 16+ Housing Strategy.	Ongoing cross-departmental monthly meetings have commenced and are ongoing.
1.12	Managers to demonstrate leadership and represent the <i>Southwark Ways of Working</i> to provide an excellent customer-centred approach to tackling homelessness.	Aiming for all Housing Solutions management to complete training for a recognised leadership qualification. Officers will also be encouraged to complete the training. The homelessness service will generally encourage staff to take relevant developmental and skills training at every opportunity.	All leaders and managers in Housing Solutions to have commenced a qualification by September 2019. COMPLETE. Further training now being undertaken by managers in Housing Solutions in a course designed by Art of Work as part of a corporate approach to leadership development.

Priority Two: Tackle rough sleeping.

We will use the Rough Sleeping Prevention Trailblazer funding to continue to make even more progress at tackling rough sleeping in Southwark.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
2.1	Aim to eliminate rough sleeping in the borough in collaboration with partner agencies St Mungo's and No Second Night Out.	Introduce Housing First and No First Night Out models.	By 2020. COMPLETE (and ongoing). Housing Solutions is operating both schemes successfully. 24 NFNO preventions achieved in the first 4 months of 2019/20 and 15 households tenancies successfully sustained through Housing First.
2.2	Aim to eliminate rough sleeping in the borough.	Work with our partner St Mungo's to help those from outside the UK to access available services, accommodation and legal advice or supported reconnection to their country of origin.	Ongoing basis.
2.3	Meet all the aims set out in the trailblazer rough sleeper action plan	Follow the latest version of the detailed Rough sleeping prevention trailblazer pilot action plan and meet all of the specific targets.	By December 2019. COMPLETE.
2.4	Improve our signposting, information and advice for rough sleepers.	Invite partner organisations to provide presentations on their work at the Southwark Homelessness Forum and task and finish groups to facilitate signposting.	Ongoing basis.
2.5	Continue to support the rough sleeping prevention and outreach work of agencies and partners.	Through the commissioning process provide best value to the borough.	Ongoing basis. Southwark Works contracts successfully recommissioned through the formal processes.
2.6	Act as a leading good practice borough	Monitor progress of the Rough Sleeping	During the duration of the Rough

	on eliminating rough sleeping.	Advisory Panel, look for opportunities to contribute to national policy and implement good practice following advice from the panel.	Sleeping Advisory Panel.
2.7	Improve the knowledge of the latest homelessness legislation for partnership agencies to assist tackling and preventing rough sleeping.	Expand access to the Housing and Social Care Partnership Board to include Public Health. Identify gaps in services that require more training on the new homelessness legislation and deliver the training to key personnel for dissemination.	Achieve by December 2018. Achieve by February 2019. Call centre and out of hours staff received training. Weekly tenancy workshops are now taking place. Councillors and local MPs have also received training.
2.8	Meet all the aims of the Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant bid	Develop a project plan for the Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant bid and meet all of the specific targets.	Project plan in place by October 2018 COMPLETE. Southwark successfully awarded £615,000 in 2018/19 and £597,500 in 2019/20.
2.9	Feedback during the public engagement period from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) suggested that given the complexity of the issue about people with mental health and substance use issues sleeping rough, it would be beneficial for DAAT to meet with Housing Solutions to explore if there is more that can be done to ensure this cohort are getting their needs met.	Arrange initial meeting with DAAT and Housing Solutions. Identify service and information gaps and develop action plan to deliver possible improvements.	Arrange initial meeting by February 2019. Completed October 2018. DAAT introduced to Duty to Refer arrangements. CGL + HYP (healthy young people) - attended Housing Solutions service meeting on 28th of November 2018. Meetings to promote joint working and hold services to account to be held on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific cases between DAAT (Iain Gray), Housing Solutions (Ian Swift), Mental Health (Jane Williamson).

Priority Three: Vulnerability and Health.

We will ensure our services remain accessible to the most vulnerable households and can support those who need it most, such as those affected by domestic abuse.

We aim to increase the resilience of households and communities, equip them with the necessary skills to prevent crises, such as homelessness, before they occur.

We will end the use of nightly rate (bed and breakfast style) temporary accommodation with shared facilities for homeless families.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
3.1	We aim to improve our digital platforms so that most households choose this out of preference for their convenience which also assists us with managing a growing demand.	Develop digital platforms for housing solutions, improved information on web pages, further integration for homelessness applications, online Personal Housing Plans and exploring other digital possibilities.	March 2020. On target. Redevelopment of online Housing application form underway. Anticipated online homelessness application for late 2019. Web pages expanded throughout 2019. New You Said We Did online form launched in 2019.
3.2	Ensure digital inclusion requirements of customers continue to be taken into account.	We will continue to provide a full range of ways to approach and access the services.	Ongoing. September 2019 – new survey developed to conduct at Homesearch Centre to gain feedback on digital access with our main customer group.
3.3	Target mental health as a priority area for homelessness prevention.	Housing Solutions will work cross-departmentally by formalising and extending multi-agency meetings with increased regularity.	By March 2018 and periodically thereafter. Southwark Council's Public Health and Housing Solutions services have been working jointly on the creation of a Homelessness, Health and Wellbeing Working Group.

		<p>Housing Solutions will work with Public Health and Adult Social Services to provide resilience and wellbeing training for staff and partners.</p> <p>We will develop champions to further embed mental health, wellbeing and resilience into the culture of our homelessness services.</p>	<p>The group has developed plans for a task-finish group over one year every month.</p> <p>Officers from Housing Solutions have signed up to complete Mental Health First Aider training.</p> <p>See above.</p>
3.4	Ensure pathways for people to move out of supported housing are identified.	Work with supported housing providers, private and social landlords.	<p>Ongoing. Beam initiative launched in August 2019 has identified households in Supported Accommodation who are candidates for crowd-funded training courses to gain skilled employment and move into private rented accommodation.</p> <p>Southwark Council established a Mental Health Move on Strategy group in May 2019, which has been attended cross-departmentally. This has challenged accountability and helped remap service provision and pathways.</p>
3.5	Assess the impact of the policies upon people threatened by or actually homeless.	Refresh the housing allocations scheme and review regularly.	<p>Every two years with refreshed scheme published in 2018.</p> <p>Consultation currently taking place (September 2019) on a revised scheme which is currently at a final</p>

			stage of drafting.
3.6	Ensure the Hospital Discharge Protocol meets the needs of the individual and agencies as it is working across all hospital areas.	Review the Hospital Discharge Protocol	By February 2019. New protocol agreed in September 2019.
3.7	Target of zero homeless families in shared nightly rate temporary accommodation. Reduce the usage of self-contained nightly rate accommodation.	Developing other supplies of temporary and permanent accommodation. Work with a micro focus to avoid nightly rate placements and end them quickly when they occur.	From September 2018 onwards. Complete. Target to reduce to zero by January 2021. Progress has seen total drop from 1,196 on 1 June 2019 to 1,021 on 30 August 2019. A weekly report for the Strategic Director has been established.
3.8	Address areas for service improvement.	Continue to monitor customer satisfaction and equalities data and collect feedback.	Annual review of equalities and satisfaction data.
3.9	Ensure services are in place to assist prisoners as soon as they have said they have no fixed abode (NFA) to prevent homelessness when released.	We will review our Service Level Agreements and partnership working to assess any areas of weakness and look to address this.	By March 2019. Duty to Refer has helped. Housing Solutions has a lead officer to deal with prison referrals.
3.10	Raise awareness about the housing options and the reality and risks of homelessness.	Assess current outreach work by partners in the borough. Develop and confirm Southwark's involvement with the aim to raise awareness within secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges on the realities of homelessness.	Assessments to be completed by June 2020. Decision and approach confirmed August 2020. Active involvement with outreach work to commence late 2020. Southwark is exploring a partnership funding bid that can help deliver this

			as part of an extended outreach provision in late 2019 / 2020.
3.11	Provide a sensitive and high quality service to domestic abuse survivors.	Review the findings from the domestic abuse mystery shopping exercise from 2017 and produce an action plan to provide the best possible service in one of our most sensitive areas of work. We also plan to conduct a further mystery shopping exercise to reassess our performance.	<p>Review findings and produce an action plan by December 2018. COMPLETE.</p> <p>Conduct follow up exercise in late 2018 or early 2019 in conjunction with partner's timetables. This work has been superseded for now by the partnership work and training in place with Solace Women's Aid.</p> <p>In 2019 Southwark's housing Solutions successfully achieved Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and White Ribbon accreditations.</p>
3.12	Sensitively resolve and assist with domestic abuse cases with specialist knowledge and liaise between council services.	Develop a domestic abuse specialist based in the Integrated Homelessness Team with an understanding of mental health, social services and homelessness.	September 2018. COMPLETE.
3.13	Reducing the impacts on victims of domestic abuse. Increase the numbers of domestic abuse survivors able to stay in their own home, where safe to do so.	Raise awareness and identify training opportunities across the Council, in particular with Housing Case Workers and Resident Services Officers. To identify signs of domestic abuse, carry out risk assessments and available options for potential victims including sanctuary schemes and legal remedies such as how to obtain injunctions and Non Molestation Orders.	<p>Identify appropriate channels to convey options - September 2018.</p> <p>Training or information provided from December 2018.</p> <p>2018/19. Communities:182 victims of domestic abuse referred to our Sanctuary scheme (enabling them to stay safe in their own home while the perpetrator has to move</p>

			out)
3.14	The Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) clients go through expensive residential substance use treatment options often do not have suitable housing to return to. These would be small numbers annually, but it represents a gap in service provision that could be better provided for.	Set up meeting between Housing Solutions and the DAAT to clarify and develop, if necessary, joined up working agreements. Tie in item with 2.9.	Arrange initial meeting by February 2019. Confirm new arrangements by June 2019. Complete, see 2.9

Priority Four: Responding to the local housing market.

We will respond to the challenging local housing market conditions by working collaboratively with, and offering advice and support to, households and landlords to develop suitable private rented sector offers for all client groups.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
4.1	Ensure our policies remain relevant to ongoing homelessness and housing context.	Review procurement and placements policies.	Annual review with an ongoing commitment to update as necessary.
4.2	Assisting households to secure settled accommodation.	Explore the best options for utilising the Private Rented Sector with the incentives of longer term tenancies. Promote the private rented sector as a viable housing option.	Ongoing. Procurement has been introduced into the triage process to give advice at an early stage in the process. Partnership with Help 2 Rent launched in Summer 2019 to provide digital hubs for households to search for affordable properties online. Southwark awarded £368,000 for successful funding bid to develop a transition insurance product to help

			households secure accommodation without the need to raise a deposit.
4.3	Identify solutions for reducing usage of temporary accommodation, in particular nightly rate and hostel.	<p>Consider adopting powers under the Localism Act for implementing a policy and procedure for discharging duty into the private rented sector where appropriate.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of developing new accommodation supply through investment funding and setting up joint ventures.</p>	<p>November 2018 to develop a report for senior management and political consideration. Complete. New policy implemented in July 2019.</p> <p>January 2019 to develop a report and scope out recommendations and next steps. So far some supply ventures have been explored but were deemed not financially viable.</p>
4.4	Ensure the new resettlement service is functioning effectively and supporting households in the private rented sector.	Review the resettlement service and seek feedback from households placed outside of Southwark as a last resort where no accommodation could be secured in borough.	March 2019, once resettlement service has been established and outcomes can be assessed.
4.5	Ensure we have a clear and transparent process for prioritising households for temporary and permanent accommodation acquired by the Procurement team.	Procurement team to develop and agree with all referring teams on a prioritisation process.	Process in place by December 2018.
4.6	Identify efficiency savings in accommodation procurement.	<p>Work together to maximise the market power of councils to procure accommodation at a reasonable price.</p> <p>Working with London Ventures to develop a</p>	<p>Ongoing, timetable led by London Ventures. Southwark Council has signed up to joint venture known as Capital Letters.</p> <p>Additionally, a partnership with Help 2</p>

		property listing platform solution.	Rent launched in Summer 2019 to provide digital hubs for households to search for affordable properties online.
4.7	Identify ways of maintaining tenancies.	Begin monitor tenancy sustainment where we have placed households into the private rented sector and use the data to revise our policies accordingly.	September 2018 – conduct research, develop report and identify issues. Follow up plan developed, as required. Repeat annually.
4.8	Maximise the number of empty homes brought back into usage to provide more accommodation supply in the borough.	Refresh the Empty Homes Policy with the aim of improving the packages on offer to encourage more landlords to bring empty properties back into use. Work to identify and make best use of empty homes where possible, such as using empty homes for temporary accommodation.	Policy to be produced in 2018. This work forms part of the overall council strategy review which is currently being undertaken and due for completion in 2019 Ongoing.
4.9	Increase the profile of the Private Rented Sector Procurement Team to attract new business.	Expand how we access the landlord market by attending local property auctions, investment shows and developing online and media content.	In 2018 – aim to begin attending external events. Summer 2019 – Online media content commenced.
4.10	Look to improve the quality and value for money of the temporary accommodation provided for no recourse to public funds (NRPF) households.	Get a clearer picture of the cost and type of accommodation used for housing NRPF households and agree moves to better quality and better value for money temporary accommodation.	Complete reconciliation of data by March 2019. Identify and prioritise cases for moves by May 2019. COMPLETE.

4.11	Addressing the regional chronic housing shortage with a joined up approach.	<p>Work in partnership with London Ventures to explore and develop initiatives for London-wide procurement of temporary accommodation and private sector rental accommodation.</p> <p>Develop accessible online platforms, specifically for homeless households to assist self-serve property finding, empowering households to resolve their own homelessness and improving service efficiency.</p>	<p>2018 onwards. (See 4.6)</p> <p>(see 4.6)</p>
4.12	Overcome obstacles preventing households from resolving the threat of homelessness where they are unable to afford a deposit to secure a private rental property.	<p>Work in partnership with London Ventures to develop a transition insurance product. Transition Insurance is being considered as an alternative to a rent deposit for some households. The challenge is to develop a product that appeals to landlords, tenants and local authorities assisting in homelessness prevention.</p>	<p>Finalise by October 2018 and introduce into our service by November 2018.</p> <p>Southwark awarded £368,000 for successful funding bid to develop a transition insurance product to help households secure accommodation without the need to raise a deposit.</p> <p>The product will be delivered through the Help 2 Rent online service portal as a package when tenancies are confirmed.</p>

Priority Five: Responding to the Welfare Reforms.

We will work closely in partnership with support agencies and local services to offer solutions that ensure households are able to maintain tenancies and their homes sustainably.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
5.1	Support proposals which could alleviate homelessness and oppose those that may have unintended consequences which may increase the risk of homelessness.	Contribute to consultations on national policy relating to homelessness, including collaborating with partners and regional bodies. Disseminate trailblazer findings.	Ongoing. In 2019: Attended Institute of Housing national conference as part of an expert panel to review HRA one year on along with Local Government Association conference, representing Housing Solutions and speak about our innovations, partnerships and collocations. Presentations also made at Shelter, NHAS events and NPSS annual conference. The Council continues to attend National and local task and finish groups to represent views and lobby for change.
5.2	Assisting households affected by the Welfare Reforms.	Continue to hold Welfare Reform Events. We will identify households who are likely to become affected by, or are already affected by, Welfare Reform and conduct outreach work to find the best solutions for each case.	Bi-annual events.
5.3	Help tenants cope with housing costs.	Ensure 100% of DHP is spent and managed throughout the year. This is achieved by having a fair and clear policy on how the fund is spent.	Monthly monitoring of spend. Policy in place, monitoring ongoing.
5.4	Disseminate information from the council to landlords and share good practice.	Continue to hold the Landlords Forum.	Bi-annual events. Ongoing. Forums held in September 2018 and April 2019.
5.5	Keep landlords engaged with the	Send regular e-bulletins to landlords and	Twice yearly in tandem with bi-annual

	benefits of working in partnership with the council and improving the conditions of their tenancies and properties.	agents on our circulation list.	landlord events. Two bulletins issued in 2018/19 to seek feedback on transitional insurance product, promote our next landlord forum and highlight the consultation underway for the landlord gold standard scheme.
5.6	Identify households affected by welfare reform and provide targeted support and advice.	Work with agencies, such as the Job Centre Plus, to help with budgeting and finding alternative solutions to housing needs (for example, providing a deposit so that households can move into a more affordable property, finding employment, downsizing through Smart Move or Mutual Exchange schemes).	Ongoing. Southwark Housing Solutions now co-locates at the JCP to provide this service. Southwark's Temporary Accommodation team now provides a weekly tenancy workshop from the Homeseach Centre covering budgeting and tenancy management.
5.7	Help homeless people to raise their aspirations and help them to access employment, education and training.	Ensure that homeless services work with agencies such as Southwark Works to actively engage with homeless people.	Ongoing. Southwark has agreed a partnership with Beam commencing August 2019 to launch an innovative approach to helping homeless people get the training they need to access skilled jobs. Beam crowdfunds employment training for individual homeless people through its website. Southwark will provide 50 households as part of an initial pilot. Thames Reach successfully commissioned for the new homelessness lot of Southwark Works contracts. Regular meetings arranged

			and plans developed to allow Thames Reach to co-locate at the Homesearch Centre and build on a close working relationship with Southwark.
5.8	Minimise the number of avoidable rent arrears evictions in the borough.	Manage the Rent Arrears Fund, which provides a maximum payment of £500 to stop landlords evicting tenants because of rent arrears.	Ongoing. Southwark continues to effectively manage the Rent Arrears Fund (RAF). From April to August 2019 the fund helped achieve 19 homelessness preventions, with a spend of 24% of the annual RAF budget.
5.9	Develop partnerships to help support the work of Housing Solutions.	Develop a comprehensive record of current agencies and support services locally and identify agencies to develop working arrangements with.	Comprehensive record produced by December 2018 and new arrangements agreed by June 2019. Southwark is exploring a funding bid that can help deliver this as part of assessing and strengthening partnership working in late 2019 / 2020.
5.10	Agree priority assistance with our partners for homeless households, including those threatened with homelessness.	Assess current Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and develop new ones with our partners.	New arrangements in place by Winter 2019. New contract arrangements being prepared with temporary accommodation providers. This is yet to be implemented as of Sept 2019.
5.11	Ensure an effective process is in place for the new 'duty to refer' set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act.	Engage with public bodies and local agencies to develop local protocols and referral arrangements.	New process in place by April 2018 (the commencement of the Act). Review and complete any refinements by October 2018 (the implementation date for DtR). Promotion and publicity for DtR has

			gone well. Officers identified to administrate the referral process and form is accessible online. 670 referrals received online between October 2018 and August 2019. Ongoing promotion and engagement required and planned to encourage non-statutory agencies to utilise the referral system, such as GPs.
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