

South Hams & West Devon
**Joint Homelessness
Strategy**

2017/18
Action Plan



2017 - 2022

Working together







South Hams
District Council







West Devon
Borough
Council

Priority 1: Understanding the True Cost of Homelessness

-  Ensure there is a solid evidence base which informs, across all sectors, the true cost of homelessness in South Hams & West Devon.
-  Monitor the impact of welfare reform, to inform future strategic priorities
-  Recognise the continuing pressures on Council's budgets and how best to target resources in the most meaningful way, ensuring partnerships with other agencies demonstrate value for money.
-  Ensure access to good quality money advice, to help tackle poverty, poor quality housing and homelessness

| PI | Action | Measure | By When |
|------|--|--|------------|
| HSU1 | To evaluate the successes of Council-funded initiatives such as money advice, and social prescribing and the impact they have had on homeless prevention | Increase in homeless prevention | April 2018 |
| HSU2 | To investigate the feasibility of adopting Shelter's "Living Home Standard" to increase the quality of housing in South Hams & West Devon. | Increase in homeless prevention from households in unsuitable, defective accommodation, who would otherwise have become homeless | April 2018 |
| HSU3 | To develop quality information on areas of welfare reform, to ensure that people are aware of any potential impacts in advance and work with them to provide effective financial planning for managing their home. | Increased take up of discretionary housing payments, reduction in households becoming homeless due to lack of affordability. | April 2018 |
| HSU4 | To map existing partnerships within the Council and ensure focus is given, wherever relevant and possible, to activity around homeless prevention. Take all necessary measures to ensure value for money and avoidance of duplication. | Reduction in the number of households evicted from private rented accommodation Reduction in repeat service users | April 2018 |

Priority 2: Access to Services

-  Offer advice and assistance in a range of formats, so the customer can choose how they communicate with their Council
-  Ensure our most vulnerable customers are able to access advice services effectively
-  Work with partners to ensure that we are able to offer services at the time and place our customers need them most
-  Ensure we are readily and regularly consulting with our customers and stakeholders to make sure we get our services right.

| PI | Action | Measure | By When |
|------|---|--|--|
| HSS1 | By using the Council's new operating model, work with teams in the locality to best support vulnerable people in the access of services, local to them, but also in a setting in which they are comfortable and therefore more likely to engage | Increased early intervention and homeless prevention work | April 2018 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HSS2 | Roll out of the new online housing benefit claim form and use as an opportunity to better engage with our Landlords. | Reduction in homelessness, as a result of rent arrears or unaffordability. Increase in homeless prevention | April 2018 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HSS3 | Train our partner organisations to be able to act as a first point of contact, equipping them with the knowledge of effective referral routes into the Council, whilst building the trust and confidence of people needing help but choosing not to access it from the Council. | Increased homeless prevention. Reduction in Rough Sleeper estimated count | April 2018 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HSS4 | Re-establish a Homeless Forum in South Hams & West Devon to ensure a two-way conversation between ourselves and other organisations working with homeless people to prevent people "slipping through the net" | Reduction in the number of households evicted from private rented accommodation Reduction in repeat service users | Autumn 2017 and then bi-annually through the life of this strategy |

| PI | Action | Measure | By When |
|------|--|---|--|
| HSS5 | Re-establish a Landlords Forum in South Hams & West Devon to work with the sector to best meet the needs of their tenants, whilst also providing them with improved access to, and understanding of, Council-wide Services | Reduction in the number of households evicted from private rented accommodation | Winter 2017 and then bi-annually through the life of this strategy |
| HSS6 | Review all standard letters and leaflets to ensure we are using "Plain English" in all our information | Better understanding by the customer and a decrease in "failure demand" | Autumn 2017, reviewed annually. |
| HSS7 | Redesign the web content for Housing Options and Advice, in order to increase awareness & visibility, and direct customers who have the ability to "self-help" towards the best options for them | Reduction in homelessness and interventions required as people are able to resolve their own housing problems | Winter 2017 and throughout the life of this strategy |






Priority 3: Access to Housing

- ◆ Increase the supply, standard and options for people who face homelessness within our area
- ◆ Develop innovative options for our Rough Sleeper Community
- ◆ Continue the downward use of temporary accommodation for homeless households.

| PI | Action | Measure | By when |
|-----|--|--|---|
| HS1 | Review options for emergency and temporary housing, to ensure offers are tailored, wherever possible, to an individual's circumstance | Reduction in long term use of temporary accommodation | Autumn 2017 |
| HS2 | Introduce a Direct Lets scheme in West Devon for the management of privately rented properties, and expand the scheme in South Hams | Reduction in temporary accommodation | Autumn 2017 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HS3 | Investigate the feasibility of a tiny houses project, incorporating the "housing first" principal for entrenched rough sleepers in South Hams | Reduction in Rough Sleeper estimated count | Autumn 2017 |
| HS3 | Work with other providers to ensure individuals are given the best chances possible to succeed in their tenancies, by promoting tenant education. | Reduction in the number of households evicted from private rented accommodation Reduction in repeat service users | Spring 2018 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HS4 | Work with RP's and private sector landlords to promote shared housing as a tenure of choice, particularly in the under 35's | Reduction in homeless and rough sleeping in this demographic | Spring 2018 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HS5 | Develop a "crash pad" model for young single homeless people, to give them space, while working proactively to, wherever possible, return them home. | Reduction in numbers of young people accepted as homeless or being taken into care. Reduction in numbers of young people in temporary accommodation | Autumn 2017 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |

Priority 4: Health & Wellbeing

-  Work in partnership with our voluntary & statutory sectors to holistically address people's needs, as fully as possible.
-  Ensure that we adequately protect & safeguard the most vulnerable members of our community
-  Enable early access to help, to avoid crisis and tackle homelessness, at its root cause.

| PI | Action | Measure | By When |
|------|--|---|--|
| HSW1 | Develop a Council Vulnerable Customer Charter to ensure we embed the responsibility we have, toward our most vulnerable customers, throughout the Council. | Increase in early intervention homeless prevention | Autumn 2018 |
| HSW2 | Extend the scope of the existing Health & Wellbeing Panel to holistically address the housing needs of any individual, including those in need of a disabled facilities grant, or interventions around poor quality housing. Ensure we offer the best solution possible for those in housing need. | Increase in homeless prevention, including low level homeless approaches as a result of hospital discharge. Increased wellbeing of customer as a result of the most appropriate intervention. | Summer 2017 and ongoing through the life of this strategy |
| HSW3 | Work in partnership with schools, to help equip young people for adulthood by delivering housing advice in schools to Year 11 students. | Sustained low levels of youth homelessness | Autumn 2018 and ongoing through the life of this strategy. |
| HSW4 | To continue offering a No Second Night Out Service to people rough sleeping in our area | Reduction in new rough sleepers | Autumn 2017 and ongoing through the life of this strategy. |



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