

WEST KENT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2011-2016 - DRAFT ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE: 1. Maximise homelessness prevention through an enhanced Housing Options service

By 2016, our goal is to develop a highly effective, personalised housing options service that empowers customers to make the best choices for themselves

Objective	Actions	Resource Implications	Time scale	Lead & Key partners	Milestones
To ensure that we fully understand and analyse emerging trends in homelessness and that changing demands on the service are understood and planned for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake joint surveys and data analysis (Kent-wide and sub-regionally) including a Rough Sleeper count and single homeless survey (part of Kent-wide survey) and sharing of data collated by Supporting People as parts of needs analysis 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop format for collection of data on non-priority homeless 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and use feedback from customers using the service 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make links with London Boroughs to address the potential increase in homelessness resulting from displacement of families from London 				
To ensure that the impacts of cuts to support and other services are understood and prioritise resources accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor changes in legislation and analyse impacts on West Kent 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with Supporting People through the Commissioning body to minimise the impact of savings to be made 				
To hone our 'prevention toolkit', ensuring that we are maximising the options that are available and making best use of available techniques and resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive toolkit of options 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve mediation and conciliation services for young people facing eviction from the family home by offering home visits in x% of cases 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for the three teams to share best practice more effectively and develop the skill sets within the Housing Options Teams 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make best use of Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt properties 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve relations with agencies, HB departments and landlords 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise the use of court desks to advise/assist in possession cases 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that Floating Support is available to vulnerable people at risk of homelessness 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enforce procedure of advance notice of RSL evictions 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise the use of Supporting People funding by prioritising funding as identified in the Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-15 				
To maximise the availability of accommodation for people threatened with homelessness, both in the social and private rented sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify a partner to take forward direct access 'crash pad' facility to manage crisis homelessness and allow 'cooling off' space for young people 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide clear and timely information to people threatened with homelessness so that they are fully aware of their options and can make realistic choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop information and advice (website/leaflets/social media) aimed at young people facing homelessness (NOTE: JPPB produced these) 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate the success of Porchlight's county-wide education project to raise awareness in schools of the realities of homelessness and the housing market 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				
To build on the HERO project, develop more holistic approaches to prevention that tackle the underlying causes of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage local employment for low-paid workers so that young people are able to stay in the districts for work 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend the HERO model to offer advice on jobs and skills 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				

STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO: MAXIMISING RESOURCES ACROSS WEST KENT (BECOMING MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE)

By 2016, our goal is to deliver a more effective service using less resources

Objective	Actions	Resource Implications	Time scale	Lead & Key partners	Milestones
To think radically and identify opportunities to share resources, services and expertise across the three authorities, and more widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify options for sharing or merging services, managers or teams across the three authorities (or more widely) 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify options for developing shared procedures and practice (e.g....) 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore opportunities for joint procurement of services (e.g. mediation) 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish regular 'good practice' sessions between the Housing Options Teams in order to share best practice and identify duplication/gaps in services 				
To review existing processes and procedures and remove any duplication or waste, in conjunction with partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a common/shared rent deposit scheme 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve cross-borough reciprocal arrangements for temporary accommodation for urgent cases 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve referral processes between authorities including... 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that HB/LHA payment processes are effective and payment prompt, particularly to private sector 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a standardised customer satisfaction surveys across the three authorities 				
To maximise the external resources available to tackle homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise the availability of benefits through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ early notification of changes to individuals' circumstances; ○ access to a specialist Benefits Advisor to act as champion for residents; ○ having effective procedures in place to maximise Discretionary Housing Payments. 				

To decide on establishing a shared Housing Register across Kent by April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a common assessment framework across Kent 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore including private sector properties in CBL and councils managing private rented stock on behalf of landlords 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise the use of new technology by ... to... 				
To make the best use of existing housing stock, in partnership with housing associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an Under occupation Strategy with RSL partners based on DCLG revised policy on under occupation 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring back into use stock currently empty or in disrepair 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				

STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE: WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH PRIVATE SECTOR LANDLORDS					
<i>By 2016, our goal is to understand and overcome the barriers to increased private sector lettings</i>					
Objective	Actions	Resource Implications	Time scale	Lead & Key partners	Milestones
To work with private sector landlords in order to understand their priorities, perceived barriers to letting to tenants on benefits and to develop a 'win-win' culture that offers reassurance to both parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a Task Team with private sector landlords in order to understand their priorities, understand and overcome barriers and develop a 'win-win' approach 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a WK 'offer' to private landlords 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and promote the West Kent Private Landlord Forum 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore concept of LA-run Lettings Agency that offers pool of accredited tenants at reduced fees 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a Landlord Information Pack 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a common/shared rent deposit scheme between the three authorities 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve sign up and payments processes by overcoming problems with HB/LHA payments, obtaining authorisation to discuss claims at sign up and offering credit checks shared with landlords 				
To develop a Tenant Accreditation scheme in conjunction with service users and partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a Tenant Accreditation schemes for new tenants 				
To develop a Tenancy Sustainment programme that will enable vulnerable residents maintain their tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a Tenancy Sustainment Resource to support tenants sustain their private sector letting 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where tenancies in the private sector are at risk, link tenants to floating support services 				
To develop an effective common rent deposit/rent in advance scheme across the three authorities that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				

has the flexibility to address the needs of non-priority as well as priority homeless where resources permit					
To work with landlords to improve property standards in private sector through the Accreditation Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend the SDC/TWBC Landlord Accreditation Scheme to... 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore ways to improve energy efficiency in private sector lettings 				

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR: CREATING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS					
<i>By 2016, our goal is to strengthen existing partnerships, maximising synergies to meet the needs of homeless people</i>					
Objective	Actions	Resource Implications	Time scale	Lead & Key partners	Milestones
To undertake a mapping exercise of homelessness organisations and services across West Kent, creating a shared, updatable resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any service mapping already underway 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission a partner to undertake joint service mapping to identify role, client group(s), expertise and resources among all agencies working in homelessness in West Kent 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify duplication, or gaps, between services and providers 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold this information on a shared database and agree mechanisms for maintaining and updating the data 				
To review roles and responsibilities for specific aspects of service delivery in order to make best use of limited resources and increase accountability for delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify and formalise relationships and roles of individual agencies so that the most appropriate agencies are delivering services in the most appropriate way at the 'front line'. 				
To work more closely with RSL partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve partnership working around hard-to-house tenants with drug/alcohol/arrears by agreeing a protocol for these client groups 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more robust arrears protocols with early intervention to prevent homelessness 				
To improve links with public sector bodies and ensure that existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enforce and monitor existing Kent-wide protocols (e.g. mental health discharge, care leavers and prison discharge) 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships with Health including the 				

protocols are working effectively and in the interests of customers	Swanley, Dartford and Gravesham Pathfinder				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve joint working with Housing Benefit teams 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve joint working with Job Centre Plus in order to maximise the use of existing 'back to work' schemes 				
Increase the effectiveness and accountability of the Homelessness Strategy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend JARS Panels in SDC and T&MBC to cover rough sleepers 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ review the operation of HSG, increasing its accountability for delivery of the strategy 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishing themed sub-groups with responsibility for delivering strategic priorities 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ undertaking shared training and sharing of good practice 				

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FIVE: MEETING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

By 2016, our goal is to understand and meet the needs of the diverse range of groups affected by homelessness

Objective	Actions	Resource Implications	Time scale	Lead & Key partners	Milestones
To gain deeper insight into the customer experience to help us to achieve personalisation in service delivery to fully address equality and diversity matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				
To understand and meet the needs of young and vulnerable homeless people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ using the Kent-wide Young Homeless Persons' Protocol, ensure we work effectively with Children's Services departments to assist homeless 16/17 year olds 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify a partner to develop a direct access 'crash pad' facility to manage crisis homelessness and allow 'cooling off' space for young people 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ signpost young people to literacy and numeracy classes where appropriate 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that effective schools programmes are introduced in all three local authorities 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support young families in accessing tenancy sustainment courses 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support the commissioning of supported accommodation for young people in Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				
To understand and meet the needs of people experiencing domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ extend the use of, and promote, the Sanctuary scheme to allow people experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their home 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support the commissioning of refuges in Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ following on from the successful MARAC training in 				

	2010, ensure that staff receive on-going training on domestic abuse				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue joint working with other agencies such as the Police through, for example, MARAC meetings 				
To understand and meet the needs of homeless people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase provision of disabled adapted properties when new housing developments are at planning stages 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify funding for adaptations including funding for adaptations for hospital discharge cases 				
To understand and meet the needs of people with complex needs, including mental health and substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek advice from health services and other specialists about the specific needs of this group and how best to engage with them 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide training for staff or access to expertise on managing challenging behaviour 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work more closely with adult Social Services and KDAAT to identify Social Services funded accommodation so we can more effectively sign post 				
To understand and meet the needs of the Gypsy & Traveller community					
	provide training for staff on needs of this group				
To understand and meet the needs of older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide training for staff on the risks of financial and domestic abuse among older people 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop an under occupation strategy with partner housing associations that incentivises older people living in homes too large for their needs to move to smaller properties 				
To understand and meet the needs of rough sleepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where there is an identified need, give consideration where possible to more centrally located accommodation or the use of communal areas in hostels to avoid the need for rough sleepers to be located out of area 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify how outreach services could house, and provide support, individuals in temporary accommodation 				

To understand and meet the needs of ex-offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use the Offender Protocol to prevent homelessness 				
To involve service users in shaping services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop an approach to involvement that seeks to develop an "equal partnership" approach with service users 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish a group made up primarily of service users with the authority to influence how things are done 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ seek their views on future projects and when evaluating the front line service to customers 				

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