

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023



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01

Introduction

Introduction

This is Islington Council's fourth homelessness strategy. It is generally accepted that there is a housing crisis in England. This crisis has been compounded by welfare reform changes and the reductions in housing benefit introduced by the Government which has increased the pressure on households' ability to manage their finances.

The Government has also introduced significant changes in homelessness law. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, with the mandatory provision of earlier prevention and relief regardless of whether a person is in priority need, has been hailed as the most significant changes to homelessness legislation for 40 years. Although Islington Council has been focusing on prevention for many years, the new law stipulates further responsibilities legal requirements for all local authorities in England.

In Islington, we remain committed to securing lifetime tenancies as this provides affordability and security for residents and sustainability for communities. We are also committed to building more affordable housing at social rent levels, including new council homes, rather than 80% market rent levels which are beyond the means of many residents who approach the council for housing assistance.

To achieve these aims, we have commitments and joint working arrangements across council departments; Housing, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Services, Residential Environmental Health, and Public Health.

02

Executive summary

Executive summary

Islington has seen a consistent reduction in homelessness acceptances over the last five years to 2017/18. In 2017/18, this was coupled with 514 successful preventions. We have also maintained a relatively low level of rough sleepers in comparison to our neighbouring boroughs through positive partnership working. However, we still receive almost 500 homeless applications a year as a consequence of the economic climate.

This strategy builds on collective experience and achievements to date and sets out how we intend to maintain solid foundations to support the further development of our capacity to meet the challenges we face within available resources.

This strategy sets out:

- our review of the current situation in Islington;
- our aims, priorities and objectives;
- the national and regional context;
- what homelessness in Islington looks like;
- how we will continue to prevent homelessness.

The strategy is supported by an Action Plan that sets out what we will do, who we will work with, and by when, to deliver our aim, approach and priorities. The Action Plan will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated to ensure delivery of the strategy.

03

Aim, approach and priorities

Aim, approach and priorities

Our aim:

To find innovative and practical ways to resolve and prevent homelessness, including rough sleeping, through the provision of accessible services to members of the borough's community who need assistance.

Our approach:

We will maximise the housing opportunities and advice available to all housing applicants, including those threatened with homelessness, despite the challenging financial climate, regardless of priority need. Our prevention service is available face to face, by telephone, online via <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/homelessness> and advice is available on our website so that people can self-serve. This means that a tailored service is available to customers, which assists them in having appropriate information or access to services that will help to prevent them becoming homeless.

However, there is an acknowledgement that with limited resources, we must focus prevention and support for those most at risk of homelessness, and to ensure that we meet our legal duties as a local authority. This means that the extent of the help will vary, depending on the level of need and the ability of the individual to self-help.

We aim to intervene early and rapidly to prevent homelessness because of the adverse effects it has on peoples' lives, including their health and wellbeing. We also recognise that people with poor health and wellbeing are more likely to be threatened with, or become, homeless. In recognition of this cycle, the development of this strategy has been overseen by Islington Council's Health and Wellbeing Board.

We will focus on keeping people in their existing accommodation, wherever it is practical and appropriate to do so.

We will maintain existing and set up new referral pathways with public bodies identified in the Homelessness Reduction Act for specific client groups, for example survivors of domestic violence and those discharged from hospital, which will include suitable accommodation and support.

To prevent more people from becoming homeless in the

first place, we will act in a proactive and integrated way with our statutory and voluntary sector partners to ensure our services are complementary, efficient and effective in adding value to improving people's lives.

We will aim to support residents to access and maintain stable accommodation by working closely with other statutory and non-statutory agencies to provide joined up housing, employment, skills training and education services. In pursuing this approach, we aim to increase and individuals' resilience to changes in their circumstance thereby preventing potential homelessness for those who may be struggling to manage their tenancies.

We will target limited funds to projects that meet the council's strategic objectives, provide value for money and monitor their outcomes by maximising and targeting funding through Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), Resident Support Scheme (RSS), and the Homelessness Frontline Prevention Fund to prevent households falling into debt and becoming homeless.

It is of importance to many households threatened with homelessness to remain in the area they have been living in, for example to access employment, support services, child care, or a combination of factors, in order to maintain their lives. Therefore, we aim to limit our use of temporary accommodation overall, whilst increasing our access to good quality, affordable temporary accommodation, which is located in, or as near to, the borough as possible, so that households that wish to stay in Islington can do so.

However, given that the demand for genuinely affordable housing outstrips the supply of affordable and suitable accommodation available to us as a local authority, we will also manage the expectations of potential applicants and partner organisations so that they are provided with a realistic picture of the chances of being housed or rehoused in the borough. In many cases, housing outside of Islington will be the only affordable option, and in these cases we will support households to try to find social housing outside of Islington.

Priorities

We have identified three key priorities for this strategy based on our current work and from consultation with our partners. These include:

1. Preventing homelessness through effective partnership working.
2. Focusing prevention and support for those most at risk of homelessness. The support will extend to the health and wellbeing of individuals, in addition to a place to live.
3. Working towards eliminating rough sleeping.

04

Strategic context

Strategic context

National

Between 2009/10 and 2016/17 the number of homelessness applications and acceptances rose every year. There were 56,620 homeless acceptances in the financial year 2017/18, down 4% from 59,090 in 2016/17¹, but still up by 19,000 cases from 2009/10. On 31 March 2018 the number of households in temporary accommodation stood at 79,880, up 3% from 77,220 on 31 March 2017. This represented an increase of 66% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010². People in temporary accommodation are frequently trapped for years in unstable, often overcrowded, accommodation because of a shortage of genuinely affordable homes and squeezed benefit levels.

Concurrently, the estimated number of rough sleepers in England has increased each year since 2010. The autumn 2010 estimated snapshot for a **single night** was 1,768 while the autumn 2017 total was more than two and a half times as high, at 4,751. The number of rough sleepers increased by 15% between 2016 and 2017³. This has been recognised by Government who have committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027.

The rise in homelessness has been attributed to the long-term failure of successive Governments to ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing. Other significant factors include;

- the increase in homelessness arising from the termination of assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector;
- the decrease in social housing as a proportion of all housing;
- Housing Benefit restrictions introduced since 2010 which, it is argued, have made it difficult for claimants to secure housing at rents which Housing Benefit will cover⁴.

To comply with existing homelessness laws, local authorities are being forced to place more people in temporary accommodation, which is estimated to have cost local authorities in England and Wales £2.6 billion in three years⁵. Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity, argue that in order to truly prevent homelessness, councils have to be able to find housing that low-income families are truly able to afford. In the long-term, building more genuinely affordable homes will help address this problem.

A significant change in homelessness legislation, The Homelessness Reduction Act, was introduced in England in April 2018. This has introduced a statutory requirement on councils to place greater emphasis on a universal prevention offer, and reduce the focus on priority need. The Government has predicted that nationally there will be an increase in caseloads for local authorities of approximately 26% each year, but that in the longer term, homelessness acceptances will fall by 30% by the end of the third year. It is expected that the new legislation will result in more households being eligible for assistance from local authorities, and in some cases they will be housed in expensive temporary accommodation in the private rented sector. The Government acknowledge that the additional duties require additional resources and have agreed to provide £72.7m nationally over three years. However, London Councils have estimated £77m will be needed each year for London alone.

The four year 1% rent reduction of social rents until 2020 has meant that local authorities have had less income than they previously expected, which has meant that it has been even more difficult for local authorities to build affordable new homes.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced new policies that could further reduce the availability of secure and affordable properties. These policies have yet to be enacted, but we will monitor and assess them should they be introduced, and this will inform future strategic direction.

In addition, through Welfare Reform, from November 2016 the total annual benefit cap was reduced to £20,000 (or £13,400 for single adults), and there are lower rates of housing benefit available for those under 35 years. In London the benefit cap was reduced to £23,000 (or £15,400 for single adults). Combined with freezes in Local Housing Allowance rates, this has meant that there are fewer existing homes available to provide settled or temporary accommodation for households in receipt of housing benefits. Our expectation is that welfare reform, including the roll-out of Universal Credit, will increase homelessness by limiting the ability of local authorities to access accommodation in the private rented sector, which is a key prevention measure. This is because capped households will be unable to pay their rental shortfall. At the same time, rents are predicted to continue to rise, meaning that the availability of genuinely affordable housing in the private rented sector will decrease ⁶.

Although temporary accommodation is more readily available at the Local Housing Allowance rates outside of Islington, as a result of the *Nzolameso v City of Westminster* judgment, local authorities have to demonstrate that they have tried to find suitable temporary accommodation in borough. Other housing case law, such as *Haile v London Borough of Waltham Forest*, and *Hotak v London Borough of Southwark*, has reduced local authorities' ability not to accept applicants as homeless. This could pose further challenges on our ability to delivery our statutory duties to those becoming homeless.

Between March 2016 and March 2017 and prior to the reduction in tax relief available to Buy to Let landlords (April 2017), private rented stock decreased by 46,000 ⁷. It was anticipated the reduction in tax relief would lead to

- an increase in landlords selling their properties or letting them as holiday lets rather than as long term tenancies;
- a further reduction in the availability of properties for rent in the private sector;
- an increase in average rents.

The United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in 2016, and 'Brexit' is scheduled for March 2019. Though details of 'Brexit' are yet to be concluded, they are likely to be wide ranging. In the context of housing, 'Brexit' may impact upon the state of the economy, the construction industry, and the assistance available to European Union nationals and their families who live in the UK.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721285/Statutory_Homelessness_and_Prevention_and_Relief_Statistical_Release_Jan_to_Mar_2018_-_REVISED.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2017>

⁴ <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7736/CBP-7736.pdf> p4

⁵ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/housing-shortage-forces-councils-spend-ps2-million-day-temporary-accommodation>

⁶ <http://www.rics.org/uk/news/news-insight/press-releases/rising-rents-and-benefits-cuts-pushing-vulnerable-tenants-out-of-private-housing-market/>

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710382/Dwelling_Stock_Estimates_2017_England.pdf

Regional

There were 15,500 homeless acceptances in London in 2017/18, down by 14% from 18,070 in 2016/17. These acceptances represented 27% of the England total. There were 54,540 households who had been placed in temporary accommodation by London local authorities. This equated to 68% of the total number of households in temporary accommodation in England. Of these, 19,670, 36%, were out of borough placements⁸.

The Mayor's London Housing Strategy⁹ sets out his vision for housing, and his policies and proposals to make it happen. He wants every Londoner to have access to a good quality home that meets their needs and at a price they can afford. One of the five priorities of the strategy is tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers.

The number of rough sleepers has increased in London for each of the last five years. In 2012/13 there were 6,437 rough sleepers, in 2017/18 there were 7,484 rough sleepers¹⁰ representing an increase of 16%.

To address the increase in rough sleepers, the Mayor of London launched a No Nights Sleeping Rough taskforce with prevention central to its approach. The taskforce is a partnership between City Hall, central Government, London's boroughs, homelessness charities and other agencies to tackle rough sleeping in the capital, in order to

- identify interventions that will contribute to tackling rough sleeping in the capital, building on and supporting existing work to do so
- where possible, implement the interventions identified, or
- where necessary, lobby for the interventions identified, and
- monitor the effectiveness of interventions in tackling rough sleeping.

Interventions supported and/or implemented by the taskforce will, broadly, focus on preventing people from rough sleeping and on preventing those who have ended up on the streets from becoming (more) entrenched there.

Local

Islington Council's vision and objectives are as follows:

Our vision:

We're determined to make Islington fairer. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

Our key corporate objectives for 2018 to 2022 are:

- **Homes** – Delivering decent and genuinely affordable homes for all
- **Jobs and money** – Delivering an inclusive economy, supporting people into work and helping them with the cost of living
- **Safety** – Creating a safe and cohesive borough for all
- **Children and young people** – Making Islington the best place for all young people to grow up
- **Place and environment** – Making Islington a welcoming and attractive borough and creating a healthier environment for all
- **Health and independence** – Ensuring our residents can lead healthy and independent lives
- **Well-run council** – Continuing to be a well-run council and making a difference despite reduced resources

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721285/Statutory_Homelessness_and_Prevention_and_Relief_Statistical_Release_Jan_to_Mar_2018_-_REVISED.pdf

⁹ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_lhs_london_housing_strategy.pdf

¹⁰ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

In addition to the national context outlined above, homelessness should be viewed in the context of government cuts to local authorities. The national government has cut our funding in half since 2010 forcing us to make some tough choices about the services we support.

In 2017/18, a total of 2,504 households came to Islington Council's Housing Aid Team seeking advice on housing. This resulted in 467 homeless applications. Of these, 225 were ultimately accepted as homeless.

Detailed data setting out the trends and direction of travel of homelessness in Islington are set out in Appendix 1.

We have a number of existing strategies and policies that relate to homelessness, in addition to this strategy noted below. The council has also worked with the Islington Homeless Forum and other partners to raise awareness of the changes and to seek feedback on the areas we need to focus on locally.

LBI Allocations Policy

We allocate points for council housing based on current circumstances, which includes being threatened with homelessness. However, only those with a high amount of points can bid for council housing. In 2017/18 we let 1,017 council/registered social landlord properties, which equates to only around 7% of the households on the housing register. In the last five years, there has been a 36% reduction in the number of council/registered social landlord properties that have been let.

Our allocations policy is also used to help alleviate hidden homelessness, and reduce the usage of temporary accommodation.

As of April 2018, there are approximately 14,000 applications from households on Islington housing register ("waiting list") in Islington.

This number has reduced from about 18,000 applications in 2017 because our rolling review of the housing register has removed approximately 4,000 applications from the register.

The reasons for the reduction include:

- people having moved away;
- no longer wanting to be on the list;
- or having passed away.

LBI Housing Strategy 2019-2024

We will prevent homelessness and support rough sleepers. We are committed to building 1,900 genuinely affordable homes between 2018 and 2022, including at least 681 new council homes.

LBI Temporary Accommodation Location Policy

We will, wherever possible, offer accommodation within the borough. If this is not possible, the council will offer accommodation as near as possible to the borough.

We will take account of relevant need factors when assessing the suitability of location of temporary accommodation.

LBI Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The link between poor housing conditions and poor health is addressed in the JHWS. Poor housing is a key determinant of health of children, young people and adults. The Public Health and Housing teams in Islington Council will continue working closely together on approaches to tackle this. The JHWS has an explicit commitment to ensuring health is a key feature of all housing strategies going forward.

Supported Accommodation Review

Some homeless households have support needs in addition to their accommodation needs, such as poor physical health, mental health problems, learning disabilities, and substance misuse. The review recommended an increase in capacity for supported accommodation as indicated by demand analysis for those with complex needs. This included commissioning a Housing First model to support the small cohort of people with multiple complex needs who find it difficult to engage with support.

05

Cross-boundary cooperation

Cross-boundary cooperation

We are committed to working with neighbouring boroughs to compare and review current housing need and homelessness practises, and identify opportunities for coordination and efficiencies wherever beneficial.

Our commitment to such practises is demonstrated through consistent participation at sub regional meetings, coordinated by the North London Housing Partnership, a strategic umbrella organisation that brings together housing and homelessness managers working within the following six North London local authorities; Islington, Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, and Westminster.

Sub regional boards that we attend are as follows:

- **Housing Needs Group:** monthly meetings whereby Homelessness Prevention and Housing Needs service heads and managers meet to share best practise, review services and discuss opportunities for coordination around homelessness and housing needs issues
- **Joint Rough Sleeper Leads Group:** quarterly meetings whereby the borough Rough Sleeper Commissioning leads, Community Safety and voluntary agency stakeholders (i.e. commissioned outreach team managers) meet to share knowledge, learning and best practise on rough sleeping matters, identify areas for coordination and joint working, and oversee sub regional rough sleeping projects
- **Supply and Policy Group** – quarterly meetings for Temporary Accommodation and Housing Policy managers to discuss and coordinate work plans.
- **Directors Board** – a quarterly meeting for Housing Directors from each borough to provide a strategic steer and oversight for sub regional working

Whilst each of the groupings identified above have their own action plans, the overarching aims and objectives within the terms of reference for each of these groups are as follows:

- To improve services through sharing knowledge and best practise across the sub region
- Create better services and efficiencies through joint working wherever possible
- Identify gaps in service provision across the sub region and work to ensure these are addressed
- Bid for funding opportunities to provide additional assistance for boroughs wherever possible
- Provide a governance structure to monitor sub-regional projects and ensure they are delivered effectively and within timescale and budget
- Develop a greater understanding of housing demand, needs and conditions across North and pan-London, and an understanding of how this impacts on wider strategic issues affecting Local Authorities

Examples of some of the work that has been delivered via sub regional working between the six boroughs are as follows:

Homelessness prevention trailblazer programme

The North London Housing Partnership was one of 28 projects nationally to be awarded funds as part of the Ministry of Homes Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) homelessness prevention trailblazer programme. The Early Homelessness Prevention Service launched in September 2017 and is due to end in March 2019. A team of Early Intervention Navigators have developed relationships with key agencies within the community, delivering homelessness prevention training and assisting agency professionals to identify people at risk of homelessness. They act as a single point of contact via referral pathways and carry out initial assessments within community based outreach surgeries.

In Islington, the trailblazer has focussed on preventing homelessness for those at risk as a result of Domestic Violence and Abuse by providing regular advice surgeries in Islington commissioned refuges and local women's advice agencies. Work has also been undertaken to engage private landlords and agents in the borough to identify and refer their tenants who may be at an early risk of losing their home so that appropriate interventions can take place before the household reaches crisis point.

Making Best use of Housing Stock

The NLHP have created, coordinated and monitored policies and agreements where sub regional discussions have informed a requirement for these. Examples of these include:

- The North London Domestic Violence Reciprocal (now assimilated within the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal run by Safer London)
- The North London Care Leavers Reciprocal
- The Four-borough Supported Accommodation Reciprocal
- The Nightly Paid Agreement - sub regional rates and review steering groups coordinated

Sub-regional Single Homeless Projects

The six boroughs making up the sub region have a strong track record in successfully applying for funding to deliver front line services for the six north London boroughs where service gaps have been identified. Since 2011, it has successfully applied for and received funding for ten homelessness projects, providing valuable services to assist and prevent single homelessness. As a result of these projects, over 1,000 people have been rehoused since 2012.

Lobbying central Government

The North London sub regional groups continue to provide a strong lobbying voice to help inform government thinking on a wide range of topics, via responses to government consultations, calls for evidence and commissioned pieces of work to present evidence behind lobbying stances.

Examples of these include:

- Homelessness Inquiry consultation
- Homelessness Reduction Bill call for evidence
- MHCLG Call for evidence of move-on services
- Temporary Accommodation Management Fee analysis
- Analysis of additional costs of the proposed Homelessness Reduction Bill to local authorities
- The draft Code of Guidance consultation

06

Consultation with partners, stakeholders and customers

Consultation with partners, stakeholders and customers

Homeless people often experience very poor health outcomes, both physical and mental, have highly complex health needs, and often face barriers to accessing health services which leads to their health deteriorating. Up to 80% of homeless people have mental health problems and the average age of death of those who die on the streets or while resident in homeless accommodation is just 47. There is a real lack of health services for homeless people, particularly those specialising in mental health or addiction problems. Homeless people are 13 times more likely to be a victim of violence, much of it perpetrated by the general public.

In addition, the Unhealthy State of Homelessness report, Homelink found that homeless people are heavy users of health services. A&E visits and hospital admissions per homeless person are four times higher than for the general public ¹¹, because the once treatable condition has become complex, chronic or life-threatening.

In recognition of the challenges and barriers faced by homeless people, Islington Council's Health and Wellbeing Board has overseen the development of this strategy.

The Islington Homeless Forum and front line staff in the Housing Needs Team have been consulted about the aims, priorities and objectives of this strategy. Further to this consultation we have included rough sleeping and the private rented sector in this version of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

¹¹ <http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/The%20unhealthy%20state%20of%20homelessness%20FINAL.pdf>

07

Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping

The number of people seen sleeping rough in Islington increased between 2012/13 and 2017/18. This is consistent with the situation in North London (Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Islington, Camden and Westminster) and London as a whole, where there has been a larger increase over the five year period, albeit with a decrease from the 2016/17 peak ¹².

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	% Change from 13/14 - 17/18
Islington	163	135	158	178	176	8%
North London total	3,195	3,667	4,015	4,005	3,499	10%
London total	6,508	7,581	8,096	8,108	7,484	15%

Despite the prevention and relief duties introduced in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, non-priority singles remain at particular risk of homelessness due to the limited options available to them that they can afford.

Rough sleeper initiatives

The government has committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027. As a local authority with high numbers of people sleeping rough, we have been provided with MHCLG funding to develop tailored local interventions to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets, as follows:

- further develop the Housing First scheme to house rough sleepers or former rough sleepers who need intensive tenancy support to ensure a successful transition to independent living;
- utilising the council's newly created street population co-ordinator role, responsible for co-ordinating partnership work to tackle the street population issues in Islington and to develop solutions and interventions to tackle street population groups- including supporting those with accommodation engaged in street begging and entrenched rough sleepers through the use of problem-solving, collaborative working with partners and the community, for example within the Stroud Green Rd and Finsbury Park area;
- extend our existing emergency accommodation offer to rough sleepers;
- increase our 'Move on' support for clients in supported accommodation to create capacity in our accommodation in order to house more rough sleepers;
- provide additional outreach provision via a Complex Needs Worker who will work with the entrenched living on the streets cohort;
- provide additional mental health input and support to hard to engage rough sleepers by conducting street based mental health assessments through EASL;
- provide additional support to No Recourse to Public Funds rough sleepers (see page 20 for more details).

¹² <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

North London Housing Partnership (NLHP)

Islington is a member of the North London Housing Partnership (NLHP). As part of the NLHP, Islington utilises the following services in relation to rough sleeping:

	Access to PRS/'Two-step' scheme	St Pauls Staging Post	Early Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Project
Target client group Must have a local connection to an NLHP borough.	Low support needs single homeless at risk of homelessness Must be able to maintain a tenancy within the private rented sector.	Low support needs single street homeless/ unsuitably housed urgently and requiring accommodation Must be deemed to be able to live within interim shared accommodation and maintain a tenancy within the PRS.	Non priority single homeless clients at risk/ threatened with homelessness 56 days plus
Organisation	Hope Worldwide	Hope Worldwide	NLHP
Sub regional target	135 clients per year/ 22 per NLHP borough	168 clients per year/ 18 per NLHP borough	650 preventions per year

The NLHP has a Rough Sleeper Action plan, see [Appendix 2, page 48](#).

08

The private rented sector

The private rented sector

Private sector housing in Islington now makes up 62% of all homes in the borough, with 31% of all homes being privately rented¹³. The sector performs a vital role in meeting housing need, and supports the Islington and central London economy, as people often chose to work near to where they live.

The private rented sector (PRS) can be seen as both a source of homelessness, but also as a potential resolution. This can be evidenced consistently as one in four homelessness acceptances in Islington are of households that have become homeless because of the loss of private rented sector accommodation.

The main challenge of providing access to the sector is financial; the average rent for a two bedroom property in the PRS in Islington increased by 20% between 2011 and 2017, whereas in the same period the wages in Islington increased by 4.8%¹⁴.

This has been compounded by Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates which were previously supposed to equate to the 30th percentile of the market. However, in reality they are closer to the 10th percentile¹⁵. Contextually, in 2017/18, the average rent for a two-bedroom property in Islington was £460/week, whereas the LHA rate for Inner North London was £302.

Private landlords are also increasingly less inclined to lease properties to councils or let to tenants at LHA rates as they have access to alternative tenants willing to pay higher rents¹⁶. This often results in landlords terminating tenancies of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefits, which results in those households being threatened with homelessness. Moreover, single claimants under 35 are only able to claim Housing Benefit at the Shared Accommodation Rate, which in Islington is less than half the rate for the average one-bedroom property.

The lower rate has meant that, nationally, two thirds of landlords are unwilling to let to single claimants under 35, as they perceive them as being difficult to manage and a financial risk.¹⁷

The disparity between typical market rents and those that fall below the LHA rate means that often properties that are affordable are substandard, for example having poor energy efficiency, damp or other hazards.

¹³ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/housing-tenure-borough>

¹⁴ <https://www.gmblondon.org.uk/news/rising-rent-in-london>

¹⁵ http://www.cih.org/news-article/display/vpathDCR/templatedata/cih/news-article/data/Help_with_housing_costs_isnt_aligning_with_rent_for_private_tenants_says_CIH

¹⁶ DCLG, Homelessness Roundtable, 4 December 2012

¹⁷ <https://research.rla.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SHU-Access-to-homes-for-under35s.pdf>

The problem of supply is likely to be exacerbated by the continued roll-out of Universal Credit, under which the Housing Benefit element is paid directly to the claimant rather than to the landlord. In addition, there is a delay of at least five weeks between an applicant becoming entitled to apply for Universal Credit and the first payment being received. Consequently, landlords are increasingly reluctant to accept benefits claimant as they perceive this as a commercial risk.

The length of tenancies in the PRS, which typically are for 12 months, despite campaigns to increase to three years, adds to the uncertainty of renting in the sector.

However, as there are insufficient numbers of homes becoming available for social rent, the PRS must be utilised, both as temporary and settled accommodation. To that end we work with landlords to:

- improve their professionalism through advice, assistance and education, through the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme;
- find suitable and affordable accommodation, rather than bed and breakfast accommodation, through lease agreements with private landlords;
- invest in energy efficiency and renewable technologies, to support vulnerable households facing fuel poverty in conjunction with the council's SHINE network.

The joint work with landlords noted above runs alongside activities conducted by the council's Residential Environmental Health team to raise standards of accommodation through licensing and other enforcement methods. Notably, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 gave local authorities new and increased powers to combat rogue landlords, such as Rent Repayment Orders, Banning Orders and Civil Penalties. Local Authorities can retain the income raised, to reinvest in the service.

09

Partnership in action

Partnership in action

Islington Council has a range of partners with whom it works to achieve its objectives of preventing and tackling homelessness, through sharing best practice and learning. We support partnerships with the voluntary sector to address support, education, employment and training needs. Some of these key partners that are noted below:

No Second Night Out - aims to ensure there is a rapid response to new rough sleepers, and that they are provided an offer that means they do not have to sleep out for a second night.

Street Link - a website that enables the public to alert local authorities about people sleeping rough in their area, which is and is run in partnership between Homeless Link and St Mungo's, a homelessness charity.

Islington Homeless Forum - this brings together the key statutory and voluntary agencies, to share best practice and help tackle homelessness on a strategic basis. The Forum meets at least three times a year.

Private Sector Landlords Forum - this brings together landlords in the borough to discuss and find out more about key issues. Details of the Landlords Forum can be found on the council's website at: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/landlords/landlords-forum>

Islington Housing Group - this brings together key registered providers of social housing in Islington to consider a wide range of strategic and operational housing issues including development of new homes and meeting housing needs.

Homefinder UK - a national housing scheme that helps households who want or need to move, to find a home that better matches their household size and personal and financial circumstances. This includes properties for social rent outside of London, where typically the rent will be lower than in Islington.

10

Key vulnerable groups

Key vulnerable groups

We have developed Housing Pathways for each customer group, by understanding the underlying factors that cause homelessness within particular vulnerable groups in the wider community. We work together with partners to prevent homelessness and improve the opportunities for those who are socially excluded, by linking up with services and programmes that could improve their economic and health and social outcomes.

The importance of partnership working here cannot be underestimated. There are a variety of different sized voluntary sector agencies in Islington. Some are large and structured, whilst others are sometimes informal and go “under the radar”. We will continue to work with these agencies and support them where we are able and it is appropriate to do so.

In many cases, the accommodation utilised to prevent homelessness will be Supported Accommodation. Supported Accommodation is “any housing scheme where housing, support and sometimes care services are provided to help people to live as independently as possible”¹⁸. It is an umbrella term applied to a wide range of accommodation, including homeless hostels, domestic abuse refuges and sheltered or extra care housing for older people. It also covers accommodation for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health problems and accommodation for people with an offending history.

Supported accommodation promotes social inclusion, plays a critical role in preventing ill health or the escalation of someone’s support needs and empowers individuals to achieve their potential. It improves people’s health and independence and helps ease the pressure on other services, such as the NHS, social care and the criminal justice system. It supports people to maintain contact with other services and engage with education, employment and training. Supported accommodation services play a key role in helping people to stay well and preventing them from attending A&E or being admitted to hospital.

We also provide Floating Support, which provides support for people living in general needs housing across all tenure types with daily living skills needed to live independently, manage their tenancies and support to access benefits and health services.

¹⁸ <https://www.homeless.org.uk/supported-housing-alliance>

The schemes listed below are separated by their primary customer group, but typically schemes work with complex need across the vulnerability groups. In addition to the schemes and number of bed spaces listed below we also have access to a further 233 bed spaces split across substance misuse and single homeless pathways.

1. Support for families, children and young people

Islington Council will work with its partners to challenge perceptions around homelessness especially for young people.

Linked to this, is the ability to undertake work that will tackle the main causes of homelessness and promote other options that help prevent homelessness. The main reason for the most recorded incidences of homelessness for 2013/14 to 2017/18 was because parents, family or friends were no longer willing to accommodate.

Our early help services reach out to families at risk of homelessness. A high proportion of families contact the services themselves and referrals also come from housing staff or other services.

- Bright Start provides a universal offer of support to families with children aged 0-5 years and targeting support at those who are most vulnerable.
- Families First provide a service to families with children aged 5-19 years with multiple needs from our most vulnerable groups (such as low income, minority ethnic communities, single parents, sick/disabled parents). Support is offered with parenting, behaviour management, help to sort out practical challenges like debt, rent arrears, or housing problems and pathways to employment.
- Islington Families Intensive Team (IFIT) provide intensive support to families who have had lower level early help with little impact. Families eligible for the service have multiple and complex needs. Problems facing families could be around education (such as non-school attendance), anti-social behaviour (where families' tenancies are at risk) or where there is a risk of family breakdown.
- We work with the Community Safety Partnership and others to provide young people who wish to escape gangs with a safe passage into housing.

2. Domestic abuse

Violent breakdown of relationship or other forms of abuse or harassment has been the third highest reason main reason for homelessness in each of the last five years, accounting for in roughly one in seven cases.

Our Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2017-2021¹⁹ sets out our partnership approach and redoubles our commitment to intervene as early as possible to support survivors, children and their families to stay safe, report crimes and rebuild their lives. The strategy includes actions specific to housing:

- evaluate and review the current housing options in the light of the huge decline in the availability of affordable housing the council faces;
- develop clear housing pathways and offer earlier support to identify realistic housing options; ensure the sanctuary scheme is one element of a package offering support and protection to clients experiencing domestic violence and abuse, who wish to remain in their homes;
- provide information around Reciprocal arrangements and action against perpetrators where tenancies are in their name;
- scope and review policies to see where VAWG cases can be picked up under the current legislation to support clients.

In addition to our VAWG strategy, Islington Council's Housing Department is seeking to obtain the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) accreditation for our domestic abuse services. By undertaking accreditation, we are sharing the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and the Government's mission to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse. DAHA Accreditation is the first step in delivering a consistent set of standards across housing providers in the UK.

¹⁹ <https://www.islington.gov.uk/~media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/adultcareservices/information/guidance/20162017/20170206vawgstrategy20172021.pdf>

3. Tackling BME homelessness

We have identified hard to reach BME groups in Islington, whose risk of homelessness may be exacerbated by not seeking early prevention advice and assistance. To militate against this risk, we hold monthly outreach housing advice surgeries at community centres and places of worship. For example, we currently provide homelessness general housing advice, to Bangladeshi, Chinese, and Eritrean community groups, and attend the Muslim Welfare House.

Alongside the practical support provided to BME groups, Public Health will undertake to establish an evidence base of approaches, failed preventions and explore the significant factors that lead to homelessness approaches to the council.

4. Mental health

Mental health is the third highest reason for a priority need acceptance. We have an established pathway for mental health discharges from hospital, which is outlined below. We need to better understand the underlying causes, as this information could enable effective measures to be developed to help with homelessness prevention and provide appropriate support for those with mental health problems who do experience or are threatened with homelessness.

5. Care leavers

Islington Council has a joint working protocol in place between Housing Needs, Homes and Communities and Independent Futures (our leaving care service) to ensure that all teams are aware of care leavers and any additional support can be put in place in order to prevent problems such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour arising in the first place. If a care leaver is still on the journey towards independence, we are able to assist by referring them to supported accommodation in the borough. Islington has 85 young people specific bed spaces in the borough. These are provided by One Housing, SHP and Family Mosaic, this includes an assessment centre of 12 bed spaces.

If a care leaver is over 18 and has additional support needs around mental health, substance misuse or offending behaviour we are also able to assist with supported accommodation across these pathways. We have three emergency bed spaces in the borough for young people who need to be placed temporarily pending a further assessment with social services.

Under the Southwark judgement Islington Council's Housing Needs team provides housing advice for any 16-17 year olds presenting as homeless. Our work here is in conjunction with the Children Services Contact Team and liaising with parents or carers. Islington Council also commissions a service with Stonewall totalling 17 bed spaces for young people who identify as LGBT+.

6. People leaving hospital

Mental health

Highgate Mental Health Centre to ensure that any inpatients that are homeless are assisted with accommodation. The partnership works with care coordinators and rehab and recovery teams within Camden and Islington NHS Trust to place suitable applicants into supported accommodation. Islington has 226 mental health specific bed spaces in the borough. We work closely with the homeless casework team to identify suitable voids for those people that are also in temporary accommodation with a mental health diagnosis. Any residents that are placed in temporary accommodation will be referred to floating support for additional support whilst in temporary accommodation.

Physical health

Islington Council funds SHP, a local charity which supports homeless and vulnerable people in London, to provide a hospital discharge service to Whittington Hospital and University College Hospital. This allows for early identification of any patients with an Islington connection that are homeless. Once identified we are able to assist either with housing advice and referrals to appropriate services, the homeless route or placing them into supported accommodation. In cases where the applicant requires adapted accommodation, the housing service works closely with social services departments in order to get occupational health assessments advising on the type of accommodation required.

7. Former members of the regular armed forces

Islington Council continues to have very few approaches from members of the armed forces in absolute terms and relative to national average. However, any approach from the former members would be assessed and supported on an individual basis. Disabled veterans are also assisted through the housing register allocation scheme. The supported accommodation units that the borough funds that can be accessed by anyone with support needs and could include a former member of the armed forces.

8. Persons released from prison or youth detention accommodation

Islington Council works closely with the London Community Rehabilitation Company, Youth Offending Services, Targeted Gangs Team and the National Probation Service to advise on housing options for those residents leaving prison or with offending histories. We provide telephone housing advice to prisons across the country for prisoners with a local connection to Islington Council, and run a housing advice surgery at the local probation office.

We have 84 offender specific bed spaces in the borough. The council is an active participant at Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings and Bronze Group meetings, as well as Domestic Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference meetings and the integrated offender management (IOM). The IOM brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies, including housing working together to prevent offending and homelessness.

9. People from outside of the UK without settled status

Islington Council supports families, adults with care needs and young people leaving care, who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). When their immigration status changes so that they become eligible, the support provided by social services or the NRPF team will end and the household will be referred to the Homelessness Prevention Team if they are resident in Islington or are accommodated elsewhere but have a local connection here.

In 2017/18, 66 households were supported by the NRPF team that is within the Housing Needs service. Though the numbers are relatively small, the transition needs to be smooth in order to safeguard the welfare of any children and to avoid disruption any care being provided to single adults.

The Housing Triage Team may be approached by other people who are ineligible for homelessness assistance, including some European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, people without any current immigration permission and people who have leave to remain with the NRPF condition. Whilst the prevention duty does not apply to people who are ineligible. However, the Code of Guidance requires local authorities to provide advice and information to everybody in their local area and to refer such applicants to appropriate support which they may be entitled to where relevant.

Islington Council's NRPF Team works in conjunction with adult and children's social services to ensure it delivers on its statutory duties to alleviate destitution for vulnerable adults and children. The Council also hosts the NRPF Network, an organisation that works nationally to support local authority best practice in this field and to identify and address local authority expenditure as a result of the NRPF condition.

The existence of the NRPF 'safety net' as an alternative welfare state provision to protect excluded groups and the resultant impact on service delivery and spend is widely recognised and is one of the Council's key corporate objectives for 2018-2022.

11

Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation

Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.

Our Temporary Accommodation Location Policy states that the council will take account of relevant need factors when assessing the suitability of location of temporary accommodation, including

- Affordability
- Location
- Children’s education
- Child care and other caring responsibilities
- Employment
- Health and support needs
- Cultural and religious requirements
- Children’s needs
- Risk
- Special circumstances

At the end of 2017/18 there were 743 households in temporary accommodation, down from 806 households at the end of 2016/17. The decrease in Islington of 14% is in stark comparison with the increase of 3% for England as a whole²⁰. This is a reflection of the successful approach we have taken to reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation.

The direct cost to Islington Council of providing homeless households with temporary accommodation for 2017/18 was £1.1m, which was a reduction of almost a third from the 2016/17 expenditure of £1.6m. Whilst, it should be noted that the Council received a flexible homelessness support grant of £2m for 2016/17, the grant is not guaranteed beyond 2019/20.

The Government anticipates that the Homelessness Reduction Act will result in acceptances falling nationally by 30% by the end of year 3. If a reduction in acceptances is achieved in Islington, then it is likely that the number of households in temporary accommodation will fall accordingly. However, the Act also gives local authorities increased duties to help and support homeless applicants, which may increase the number of households in temporary accommodation.

²⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721285/Statutory_Homelessness_and_Prevention_and_Relief_Statistical_Release_Jan_to_Mar_2018_-_REVISED.pdf

12

Resources

Resources

The funding streams the council use to support delivery of the strategy include:

Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Funding

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places new and additional legal obligations on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness. Funding has been agreed as follows:

Year	Amount
2017/18	£389,295
2018/19	£356,594
2019/20	£337,306

Temporary Accommodation Grant

In 2017 the government introduced the flexible homelessness support grant, which replaced the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee. The new grant forms part the government's focus on preventing people from becoming homeless. Islington's grant for 2018/19 it is £2,312,230 and for 2019/20 it is £2,141,442.

Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund

In 2018 the government awarded almost £30 million to fund initiatives to tackle rough sleeping. Islington's allocation was £265,987.

13

Delivering our objectives: what will we do?

Delivering our objectives: what will we do?

This strategy is for a five-year period, but it will need to be responsive to change. It will, therefore, be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure all actions and strategic aims remain relevant to the law, prevailing conditions and best practice in the homelessness and housing advice sector. An update on our progress will be taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis.

The objectives are separated between those which prevent and relieve homelessness, to mirror the Homelessness Reduction Act, in addition to strategic objectives.

APPENDIX

01

Islington Council homelessness and rough sleeping strategy Action plan

Action plan

Preventing homelessness

Objective 1:

Improve our prevention of service for customers.

1. **Be proactive in minimising statutory homelessness acceptances through our prevention work to enable people to either remain in their home or find alternative accommodation.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

2. **Review of our approach to Personalised Housing Plans.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Every six months

3. **Enhance our existing mediation service to reduce homelessness caused by family and friend exclusions, and private sector tenancy terminations.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual review

4. **Continue to provide support by enhancing skills and employment opportunities, through the council's iWork and partner organisations.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs,
iWork

When we will do it by/target date: Annual review

5. **Evaluate the Trailblazer pilot and consider implementation of recommendations with a view to mainstream the advice surgeries provided to commissioned refuges and local women's advice agencies working with those at risk as a result of domestic violence and abuse.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

6. **Produce advice and guidance to people with No Recourse to Public Funds, and disseminate to BME groups via the voluntary sector.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

No Recourse to Public Funds

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

Objective 2:

Work towards eliminating rough sleeping.

7. Further develop the Housing First scheme to house rough sleepers or former rough sleepers with high support needs.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs,
Strategy and Change

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

8. Utilise the council's newly created street population co-ordinator role to tackle the street population issues through the use of problem-solving, and collaborative working with partners and the community particularly in relation to the Stroud Green Rd and Finsbury Park areas.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs
Community Safety

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

9. Provide additional support to street population groups encompassing entrenched rough sleepers and those with accommodation but engaged in street begging via access to health services eg substance misuse services, physical health services and enhancing access to skills and employment services etc.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

10. Provide additional mental health input and support to hard to engage rough sleepers by conducting street based mental health assessments through EASL (Enabling Assessment Service London)

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

11. Increase provision of existing emergency accommodation for rough sleepers with medium/high support needs.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

12. Increase 'Move on' support for clients in supported/temporary accommodation.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

13. Provide additional wrap around support to those with No Recourse to Public Funds who feature in rough sleeper statistics to ensure they are able to exercise treaty rights and supported by other council services and voluntary sector services where appropriate.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

No Recourse to Public Funds

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

14. Review Staging Post referral criteria to increase acceptance rate for rough sleepers with low level support needs.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs,

iWork

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

15. Support No Second Night Out, working in Partnership with our commissioned outreach provider, St Mungos.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

16. Review the Contract with the commissioned outreach provider to consider the appropriate delivery mechanism which may include the provision of outreach services via an in-house service.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

17. Continue to work with MHCLG to identify and obtain funding to work towards eliminating rough sleeping.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

Objective 3:

Support the development of Housing Pathways for each customer group

18. Manage expectations of individuals and partner organisations by developing a campaign on raising awareness of the realities of homelessness and housing options.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

19. Review programme of housing advice outreach surgeries.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Quarterly

20. Become an accredited landlord for Domestic Abuse, which will include evaluating how the current services we provide meet the housing needs of domestic abuse victims

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Strategy,

Improvement and Partnerships,

Homes and Communities

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

Action plan

Relieving homelessness

Objective 4:

Increase the supply of secure, affordable homes to ensure sufficient supply of accommodation

21. Build at least 681 new general needs homes at social rent.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

New Build Team

When we will do it by/target date: 2022

22. Implement recommendations from the behavioural change research to help people to downsize in order to release existing social housing which can be let to overcrowded families.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

Objective 5:

Make better use of the private rented sector

23. Review the effectiveness of Islington Lettings with a view to increase the number of properties managed by the Council on behalf of private sector landlords.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

24. Support private sector tenants to help raise awareness of their rights, such as in relation to retaliatory evictions, and responsibilities, through the development of factsheets.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

25. Research areas in London and the South East that have a supply of accommodation that is affordable for under 35s.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

Objective 6:

Review how temporary accommodation is procured and provided

26. Reduce use of private sector temporary accommodation by

- **Purchasing at least 50 properties in and out of borough for temporary accommodation and where feasible to purchase additional properties if opportunities arise;**
- **Increasing reallocation of one-bedroom general needs properties to temporary accommodation.**

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Strategy,

Improvement and Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Late 2020 and Ongoing

27. Develop an offer for under 35s singles with low or no support needs.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

28. Review the council's need for, and use of, short stay temporary accommodation, including its reception centres.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

29. Explore alternative opportunities for provision of short term temporary accommodation, such as meanwhile sites in borough and properties earmarked for decant.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

Action plan

Other key objectives

Objective 7:

Work with Partners to ensure that the strategy is based on realistic assumptions

30. Arrange and host regular Islington Homeless Forum meetings to raise awareness with partners and share best practice.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Three times each year

31. Increase joint working with the police to establish a consistent approach to rough sleepers across the borough, and that the police are aware of the support that is available to rough sleepers.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Community Safety

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

Objective 8:

Ensure that the strategy meets challenges that are likely to arise during its lifetime

32. Manage relationships with partners who have a Duty to Refer.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Every six months

33. Implement programme to scrutinise quality of service provided to clients, and include front line staff and service users in annual review.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Strategy, Improvement and Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Annual review

34. Review impact of 'Brexit' and provide training in relation to NRPF.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

No Recourse to Public Funds

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

35. Review impact of Universal Credit on homelessness.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Strategy, Improvement and Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Quarterly review

36. Review and utilise our Resident Support Scheme (Discretionary Housing Payments) scheme.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Strategy, Improvement and Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Autumn 2019

Objective 9:

Improve our understanding of the connection between homelessness and health and wellbeing

37. Establish an evidence base of approaches and failed preventions to better understand the issues, such as ethnicity and gender.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Public Health

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

38. Explore available data on the connection between health, including mental health, and homelessness, including rough sleeping, including the factors that increase the risk of homelessness.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Public Health

When we will do it by/target date: Winter 2019

39. Undertake qualitative work to assess the impact on health and wellbeing of families in temporary accommodation.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Public Health

When we will do it by/target date: Summer 2019

40. Organise a Health and Wellbeing event for rough sleepers in known hotspots to promote the range of support services that are available.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Community Safety

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

Objective 10:

Improve standards in the private rented sector

41. Improve standards in the private rented sector by introducing property licencing schemes, starting in Finsbury Park.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Residential Environmental Health

When we will do it by/target date: Winter 2019

42. Implement and use civil penalties against rogue landlords, using Housing and Planning Act powers.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Residential Environmental Health

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

43. Bear down on poor practice by lettings agents by tackling unfair terms in private sector tenancies.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Trading Standards

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

44. Assess new HMO licence applications and renewals, to ensure that the correct type of occupancy agreement is used, and that the key terms are fair.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Trading Standards

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

45. Provide guidance for Landlords through the Landlords' Forum and Newsletter.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Annual Review

46. Review the Landlords' Charter.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

Objective 11:

Improve communications in relation to homelessness

47. Devise message for landlords to encourage lettings to households in receipt of Housing Benefits/ Universal Credit in the private sector.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Private Housing Partnerships

When we will do it by/target date: Spring 2019

48. Update messages for the public in relation to rough sleepers.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Community Safety

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

49. Update messages for the public to reduce stigma associated with homelessness.

Who will do it? (lead service or partner):

Housing Needs

When we will do it by/target date: Ongoing

APPENDIX

02

North London rough sleeper Action plan

NLRS Action plan

Objective 1:

Joint approach to rough sleeping issues across sub region

Aims/outcomes:

- Sharing knowledge, learning and best practise across boroughs
- Reviewing CHAIN and Street Count figures
- Identifying areas for coordination and joint working where appropriate
- Benchmarking services where required
- Discuss and update the group on pan-London and National initiatives, and ensure the sub regions perspectives and requirements are represented at a pan-London level

Timelines: Ongoing

Objective 2:

Seek funding sources for future sub regional projects

Aims/outcomes:

- To identify and disseminate funding opportunities as they arise to boroughs.
- To identify where funds are appropriate for use of sub-regional/cross-borough projects where appropriate

Timelines: Ongoing, North London Early Homelessness Prevention project: April 2017 – 19

North London Staging Post: April 2017 – 19

Objective 3:

Central and Eastern European and No Recourse to Public Funds rough sleeping / encampments

Aims/outcomes:

- To share learning on how to best assist and coordinate responses to transient rough sleepers crossing borough borders that have no recourse to public funds.
- To pilot an outreach project aimed at assisting Central and Eastern European national rough sleepers into regularised employment and low cost accommodation

Timelines: September 2017 – September 2019

Objective 4:

Emergency and Assessment bed provision

Aims/outcomes:

- To increase the capacity of outreach team's ability to refer to beds by ensuring the procedure is clear and user-friendly
- To ensure assessment beds are being used correctly and for the right target audience
- To ensure that assessment beds are the first port of call for new rough sleepers and prevent 'flow' into central London boroughs

Timelines: Ongoing

Objective 5:

Female rough sleeping

Aims/outcomes:

- To share best practise and learning around effectively working with female rough sleepers, and coordinate services where appropriate.
- To apply for funding grants for sub regional projects where identified.

Timelines: Ongoing

Objective 6:

Youth homelessness

Aims/outcomes:

- To share best practise and learning around youth homelessness prevention and services.
- To apply for funding grants for sub regional projects where identified.

Timelines: Ongoing

APPENDIX

03

Homelessness in Islington

Households seeking housing advice from the Housing Aid Team

A total of 2,504 households came to Islington Council’s Housing Aid Team seeking advice on housing in 2017/18. This represents a decrease of over a quarter from 2014/15, when there were 3,503 households seeking advice. Not all of these households were homeless. Many of these households may also have sought help from other agencies who help with housing options and advice, such as how to tackle debt, or claim benefits.

Not all visits to the Housing Aid Team result in a homeless application. The number of applications received in 2017/18 is 32% lower than 2016/17 and 49% lower than 2013/14. This demonstrates the continuing emphasis upon prevention work.

Although the proportion of acceptances in 2017/18 was slightly higher than in 2013/14, the actual number of acceptances significantly declined in the last year, further to a reasonably consistent number of acceptances in the previous four years.

However, due to recent case law and the likely impact of future welfare and housing reforms, we are anticipating a higher number of applications and acceptances for at least the next two years.

The single biggest category of decisions continues to be “Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need”. Over the five-year period, we have seen an increase in “Eligible, homeless but not in priority need” decisions and a reduction in the percentage of “Eligible but not homeless” decisions.

Table 1 Homeless applications, broken down by all applications, all acceptances, proportion accepted

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
All Applications	918	911	924	689	467
All Acceptances	403	396	375	364	225
Proportion accepted	44%	44%	41%	53%	48%

Table 2 Homeless decisions and acceptances, with decisions broken down by eligibility, priority need, homeless and intentionally homeless

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total Applications	918	911	924	689	467
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	44%	44%	41%	42%	48%
Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally homeless	4%	4%	4%	8%	6%
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	14%	17%	20%	31%	23%
Eligible but not homeless	34%	31%	29%	17%	20%
Ineligible	45%	4%	6%	2%	3%

Table 3 Homelessness preventions

	2016/17	2017/18
Preventions – All	669	514
Alternative Accommodation	77%	70%
Remain in Accommodation	23%	30%

Prevention of homelessness is achieved when the applicant is assisted to remain in accommodation or provided with alternative accommodation.

Table 4 Main reasons for homelessness acceptances, broken down by reason

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Year total	403	396	375	364	225
Parents, family or friends no longer willing to accommodate	41%	47%	47%	45%	47%
Loss of private rented sector accommodation	28%	29%	28%	30%	24%
Violent breakdown of relationship or other forms of abuse or harassment	14%	13%	16%	13%	12%
Other e.g. homeless in emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel, returned from abroad, left hospital	18%	11%	9%	12%	17%

Although nationally and in London the loss of private rented sector accommodation is now the main reason for homelessness²¹, in Islington “Parents, family or friends no longer willing to accommodate” remains the most common reason, and the percentage has grown over the last four years. We assume that the reasons why new and emerging households are unable to access alternative accommodation are due to affordability and lack of supply of social housing but will look at this in more detail to better understand this trend.

Table 5 Priority need category of accepted cases, broken down by category, including domestic abuse

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total	403	396	375	364	225
Dependent children	63%	63%	64%	69%	66%
Pregnant, no dependent children	11%	9%	14%	11%	12%
Vulnerable - mental health	14%	11%	11%	10%	12%
Vulnerable - physical disability	7%	11%	9%	8%	7%
Vulnerable - old age	1.8%	3.5%	1.6%	0.6%	1%
Having fled their home because of abuse/threat of abuse	1.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.6%	0%

Households need to fall within a recognised priority need category to be accepted as homeless. Having children within the family or expecting a child is significantly the most common category of priority need each year, making up 78% of all households accepted in 2017/18.

The proportion of applicants in each category has been broadly consistent for the last five years.

²¹ DCLG (2016), Statutory homelessness live tables Table 774: Reason for loss of last settled home.

Table 6 Profile of homeless households accepted, broken down by age, gender / lone parents / sexual orientation, and ethnicity

Homelessness applications - acceptances		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
		403	396	375	364	225
Age groups	Below 20 years of age	0.5%	3%	3%	1%	4%
	Aged 20 - 29	39%	31%	36%	39%	36%
	Aged 30 - 39	30%	34%	33%	31%	31%
	Aged 40 - 49	17%	18%	17%	18%	18%
	Aged 50 - 59	8%	7%	7%	6%	7%
	Aged 60 and above	5%	7%	4%	5%	5%
Gender	Female	70%	64%	73%	65%	67%
	Male	30%	35%	27%	34%	33%
	Transgender	0%	0.3%	0.3%	1%	0%
	Not known	0.2%	0.8%	0.3%	0%	
Lone parent?	Lone parents	53%	53%	57%	51%	54%
	others	47%	47%	43%	49%	46%
Sexual orientation (excluding not known)	Heterosexual	96%	98%	92%	89%	89%
	Lesbian	0.5%	0.8%	0.0%	1.6%	4.6%
	Gay	1.0%	0.8%	2.1%	1.6%	1.5%
	Bisexual	2.6%	0.8%	6.3%	8.1%	4.6%

Age: consistently two thirds of accepted cases are between 20 and 40. This is likely to be linked to the applicant having dependent children and less settled accommodation.

Gender: consistently around two thirds of accepted cases are female. This is likely to be linked to the applicant having dependent children, as single parents are more likely to be female than male.

Lone parent: consistently small majority of accepted cases who are lone parents. This is likely to be linked to Welfare Reform, as lone parents have been disproportionately affected by Welfare Reform.

Sexual orientation: The sexual orientation of accepted cases who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual was 11%, which is higher than the 3.3% of the total Islington residents who identify themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual²². There has been a significant increase in accepted cases who are bisexual, which may be a reflection of an increase in the overall United Kingdom population who identify themselves as bisexual²³.

²² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/subnationalsexualidentityestimates/uk2013to2015#sexual-identity-local-authorities>

²³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/datasets/sexualidentityuk>

Table 7 Homeless acceptances (excluding unknown) compared to the total Islington population by ethnicity, according to the 2011 Census.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Islington Total ²⁴
White	46%	37%	38%	44%	38%	68%
Black	37%	34%	36%	31%	36%	13%
Other	9%	17%	14%	9%	8%	3%
Mixed	5%	6%	7%	5%	8%	7%
Asian	4%	6%	5%	11%	10%	9%

People of White ethnicity are less likely to be accepted as homeless, relative to the overall White populations in Islington.

People of Black and Other (which includes Arabs and Latin Americans) ethnicity are more likely to be accepted as homeless, relative to the overall Black and Other populations in Islington.

People of Asian ethnicity have been less likely to be accepted as homeless, relative to the overall White population in Islington, but in the last two years there was a significant increase in people of Asian ethnicity being accepted as homeless.

There is a disproportionate amount of Black and Minority Ethnic homelessness acceptances relative to the LBI population.

Table 8 Households on waiting list

Number of households	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	17,860	19,196	20,733	18,033	14,469

The number of households on the housing list increased between 2013/14 and 2015/16, reflecting the increasing unaffordability of accommodation in Islington. Annual reviews carried out in 2016/17 and 2017/18 resulted in roughly 4,000 households being removed from the housing register each year as a result of not replying to a review letter.

²⁴ https://www.islington.gov.uk/~/_media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/publichealth/qualityandperformance/profiles/20132014/20131211ethnicitylanguageandcountryofbirth1

Table 9a Islington Council lettings

Year	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 bed	6 Bed	Total
2013/14	44	510	402	221	58	14	0	1249
2014/15	44	426	289	134	36	3	1	933
2015/16	41	386	293	144	14	10	0	888
2016/17	35	353	274	166	25	8	0	861
2017/18	39	382	256	138	19	2	0	836

Table 9b Housing Association lettings

Year	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 bed	6 Bed	Total
2013/14	15	118	143	49	19	1	0	345
2014/15	15	114	100	32	10	0	0	271
2015/16	12	127	92	42	10	1	0	284
2016/17	10	121	95	52	14	12	0	304
2017/18	9	93	59	19	1	0	0	181

Table 9c Combined Islington Council and Housing Association lettings

Year	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 bed	6 Bed	Total
2013/14	59	628	545	270	77	15	0	1594
2014/15	59	540	389	166	46	3	1	1204
2015/16	53	513	385	186	24	11	0	1172
2016/17	45	474	369	218	39	20	0	1165
2017/18	48	475	315	157	20	2	0	1017

There has been a 36% reduction in the number of lettings over the last five years.

Table 10 Sales of social rented properties through the Right to Buy

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Sales ²⁵	139	234	160	118	81	732

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-social-housing-sales>

Table 11 Supply of new affordable housing

Year	Social Rented	Shared Ownership	Supported Accommodation	Total
2013/14	120	218	36	374
2014/15	226	26	0	252
2015/16	104	93	0	197
2016/17	127	29	0	156
2017/18	113	12	0	125
Total	690	378	36	1,104

The number of council lettings decreased each year for five years. Each year the council's stock is reduced as a result of sales through the Right to Buy scheme. Over the last five years, more social rented properties have been sold through the Right to Buy than new social rented properties that have been built. This exacerbates the lack of affordable housing available in Islington, making it more difficult for us to provide suitable housing for those most in need.

Table 12 Earnings

Year	Median income full time income	Change from previous year
2012	£32,959	+1.2%
2013	£31,602	-4.1%
2014	£33,598	+6.3%
2015	£33,079	-1.5%
2016	£31,680	-4.2%
2017	£33,116	+4.5%

In 2017 the median wage for someone living in Islington was £33,116²⁶. Over the last six years the median wage has fluctuated, but has only increased by £157 compared with the 2012 median

Table 13 Housing costs in the private sector

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Mean private rented sector, two bedroom property	£1,913 ²⁷	£1,970 ²⁸	£2,050 ²⁹	£2,069 ³⁰	£1,991 ³¹

The rent for the average two bedroom property increased by 8% between 2013/14 and 2016/17, though fell by 4% in the last year.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Mean house price in Islington³²	£575,438	£669,869	£743,764	£754,514	£778,290

The price of the average property increased by 35% over a five-year period.

Islington is one of the least affordable boroughs in Britain, with an average house price more than 17 times the average wage in the borough. Nationally, the average house price is eight times the average wage.³³

Table 14 Households in temporary accommodation

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of households	1004	920	941	806	743

The number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced by 26% over a five-year period. The direction of travel in Islington contrasts with the national figure, indicating that the preventative approach we have already taken is working.

²⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofresidencebylocalauthorityshetable8>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-statistics>

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-statistics-may-2015>

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-statistics-may-2016>

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-april-2016-to-march-2017>

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-april-2017-to-march-2018>

³² <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/average-house-prices>

³³ <https://www.ybs.co.uk/media-centre/housing-availability.html>

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To find out more information please contact:

Anna Vincini

 Service Improvement Manager, Islington Council, 222 Upper Street, London N1 1RX

 020 7527 4138

 anna.vincini@islington.gov.uk

 www.islington.gov.uk/housing

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