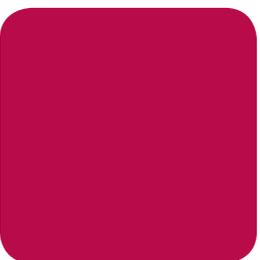
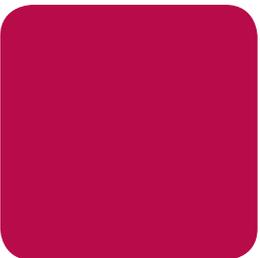


# Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20



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The Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20 has been produced by Carlisle City Council with the support of the following organisations: Age UK; Barnardo's; Carlisle and District Credit Union; Carlisle Food Bank; Carlisle Key; Carlisle YMCA; CASS (Cumbria Action for Social Support); Children and Family Support Services (Cumbria County Council); Churches Together; Citizens Advice Bureau; Community Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; Cumbria Constabulary; Cumbria Law Centre; Cumbria Supporting People (Cumbria County Council); Homeless Link; Impact Housing Association; Inspira; Job Centre Plus / DWP; NACRO; Riverside Housing Association; Salvation Army; Sustainable Carlisle; Two Castles Housing Association; Unity and Youth Offending Service.

## Foreword



Homelessness is a complex issue with multiple causes requiring flexible solutions.

To achieve the best possible results for our citizens and our district we recognise that it is essential that all partners across different sectors and departments understand their important contribution and the cyclical benefits of joined up collaborative homelessness prevention and intervention to support the most vulnerable and those at risk.

The 2015-20 strategy builds on the strengths of the previous strategy and contributes towards the strategic objectives within Carlisle City Council's corporate plan. In particular, to work effectively with partners and to address Carlisle's current and future housing needs and achieve the vision 'to promote Carlisle as a prosperous city, one in which we can all be proud'.

The strategy also incorporates and complements other local and national strategic plans and strategies in order to enhance partnership approaches and deliver joint priorities, preventative activities focused on addressing the root causes of homelessness through a collective commitment for Carlisle.

Carlisle City Council has worked closely with key local stakeholders throughout the development of the shared priorities and key actions included within this strategy to ensure that the vision and goals reflect the needs of all within the district; to ensure that ownership, responsibility and accountability is shared.

**Carlisle City Cllr Heather Bradley**

**Portfolio holder for Economy, Enterprise and Housing**

## Introduction



Carlisle's Interagency Homelessness Strategy 2015-20 outlines how Carlisle City Council and its key partners aim to tackle homelessness over the next five years, by building on our existing successful partnerships and service provision and by developing new and improved ways of working so that we can effectively assist anyone who is threatened by or is experiencing homelessness in Carlisle.

This strategy will set the agenda, enabling us to continue to meet the needs of people in Carlisle and to eliminate the threat of homelessness from their lives. Carlisle Interagency Homelessness Strategy 2015-20 includes:

- The homelessness challenges facing Carlisle;
- What the influences are on the Interagency Homelessness Strategy;
- How we plan to achieve the Gold Standard;
- How we developed the strategy; and
- How we will deliver the strategy.

Our strategy for tackling homelessness remains constant in its approach. Improving access to housing, supporting vulnerable people and minimising rough sleeping continue to be our priorities, but with greater emphasis on developing clear pathways, improving outcomes and increasing effective preventative interventions.

The strategy underpins Carlisle City Council's strategic aims to meet Carlisle's housing needs and builds on the success of the previous strategy.

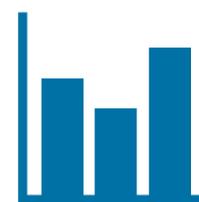
## Achievements so far



All key priorities outlined within Carlisle's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 were achieved and include:

Key priority area:	Objectives achieved:
Reduce temporary accommodation by 50% in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TA target met by 2010 through the utilisation of the hostels as a preventative placement to households where no duty is owed under the Housing Act 1996.</li> <li>• A four-time (308%) increase in homeless prevention cases from 2008-2013.</li> </ul>
Stop placing 16/17 year olds in bed and breakfast by 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Bed and Breakfast placements utilised.</li> <li>• Increased partnership working with Children's Services and 16/17 year old Homelessness Co-ordinator.</li> <li>• Implemented joint assessments with Children's Services as part of the development of the initial joint protocol.</li> </ul>
Prevent and reduce further rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented the provision of emergency accommodation arrangements for severe weather (SWEP).</li> <li>• Commitment to NSNO County wide.</li> <li>• Introduction of Street Link.</li> <li>• Conducted an official Rough Sleepers count in 2011.</li> <li>• Assisted 118 households through the homelessness prevention grant from 2012 to date with rent in advance/deposits.</li> <li>• Adopted a 'Places of change' approach throughout services.</li> </ul>

## Homelessness in Carlisle: key findings



The 2014 homelessness review, evidence, trends analysis and findings plus local research into multiple exclusion homelessness contain full details which formed the conclusions of the review; available at [www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)

As part of the review process in line with best practice, Carlisle City Council examined the last six years homelessness demographic data, correlating this with information from local social services as to the current and likely future members of social services client groups who are likely to be homeless or at risk of homelessness. For example young people in need, care leavers and those with community care needs.

Trend patterns, current and future demands were determined, including housing and support resources and availability, ensuring that the future strategic priorities set are based on realistic assumptions as to how they will be delivered in practice and collectively owned by all stakeholders within the district.

### The main findings included:

- 1,200 people consistently approaching for housing advice for each of the last six years;
- The number of Homelessness acceptances (full duty) reduced by 68% from 206 to 65 between 08/09 and 13/14 (which is comparably favourable with the national average);
- Proportionally the figures of priority need homelessness decisions have remained fairly constant over the last six years with the largest group being those with dependent children/pregnant (34%), the next largest groups being those with mental health problems (22%) and those suffering domestic violence (8%);
- The causes of homelessness remained proportionally similar with relationship breakdown (29%) and loss of rented accommodation (22%) being the most common causes;
- Over the last six years the focus on homelessness prevention within the district has demonstrated an increase of 323% from 97 households successfully assisted to 410. This focus on prevention within homelessness services has successfully brought the City Council in line with the national statistical average;
- An average of 35% of all homelessness presentations are from young people aged between 16 and 25;

- The most recent official rough sleepers count was carried out on 14th November 2014 during the hours of 2am-4am; where 45 areas were identified and searched through local intelligence gathered from a variety of local sources including Cumbria Police, The Salvation Army, Churches Together, Carlisle Key, CASS, and Unity. The count was verified by the North East and Cumbria Manager for Homeless Link who accompanied one of the search teams on the night. No rough sleepers were found in any of the locations; furthermore there was no evidence observed to indicate any recent rough sleeping activity.

In addition, an audit of repeat presentations, applications and of those residents in emergency temporary accommodation for long periods of time over the past six years was reviewed identifying 29 people annually as experiencing multiple exclusion. 1:1 interviews were then conducted with 10 sample cases over a two month period as part of an in-depth local study in to Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) within the district (the full report will be available on-line with the publication of the strategy).

**The main findings of the sample highlighted that:**

- 80% had experienced institutional care, with prison or young offenders being the most commonly experienced (75%) particularly within the male sample (83%);
- 38% experienced having a period in local authority care, and all reported being removed from home as a result of violence or abuse;
- 90% had substance misuse issues; with 78% reporting using hard drugs (heroin, crack and cocaine), with the youngest median age of first experiencing this within the female sample as age 14 - significantly the same median age as first injecting drugs within the female sample (17 in the male sample);
- 70% had participated in street culture activities; and 60% reported experiencing all key indicators associated with MEH;
- 80% had children (including those who do not live with them 75% female, 83% male);
- 60% reported having slept rough at some point (the median age of females first experiencing this being aged 16, males aged 19);
- 60% reported survival shoplifting (83% of male sample); with alcohol being the recorded as stolen the most; with drugs reported as being bought the most with the money made from selling stolen items;
- 25% of females reported experiencing having sex or performing a sex act in exchange for somewhere to stay; with a median age of first experiencing this of 12 years (significantly the same respondents reported experiencing sexual abuse as a child and an adult);

- 90% reported having mental health issues, with 80% receiving medication for this
- 40% reported having attempted suicide an average of four times;
- 75% of the female sample reported regular episodes of self-harming behaviour (cutting; burning; punching; head-banging);
- Official homelessness presentations were reported as occurring at the end of the multiple exclusion journey - most significantly within the female sample at a median age of 22 years;
- The estimated average cost to local public services within Carlisle based on the average persons experiential findings and DCLG's cost unit calculator (2014) is £60,036 per person; totalling estimated cost of £1.7million annually.

## The bigger picture: where homeless prevention sits

### National Policy and our local response



As part of the review relevant strategic documents have been reviewed and key actions incorporated to ensure the effectiveness and success of resources and appropriate partnerships.

The Government's Housing Strategy: 'Laying the foundations: a housing strategy for England' acknowledged the current key challenges posed by tackling homelessness, through issues such as the recession, welfare reform and rough sleeping - highlighting the importance of homelessness prevention.

The Government's report: 'Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness' encourages better cross-service working between councils, charities, health services and the police to focus on earlier support for people likely to become homeless and includes five commitments:

- Tackling troubled childhoods and adolescence;
- Improving health;
- Reducing involvement in crime;
- Improving access to financial advice, skills and employment services; and
- Pioneering innovative social funding mechanisms for homelessness.

## The Gold Standard

The report also set out 10 'local challenges' for local authorities which if addressed will lead to local homelessness services meeting the best or Gold Standards; these challenges have been incorporated and addressed in this strategy and action plan:

### Local challenges:

- 1** Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services.
- 2** Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.
- 3** Offer a 'housing options' prevention service, including written advice to all clients.
- 4** Adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative.
- 5** Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support.
- 6** Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups; including advice and support to both clients and landlords.
- 7** Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- 8** Have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs.
- 9** Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 10** Not to place any families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks.

## No Second Night Out

The Government outlined its 'Vision to end Rough Sleeping in the No Second Night Out'. This recognised that in order to successfully deal with rough sleeping a gold standard approach to rough sleeping services that meet the 'No Second Night Out' principles will need to be adopted and owned collectively locally to ensure that:

- New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall in to a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle;
- Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough;
- Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options;
- They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare if needed; and
- If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends.

# Where we want to be: our challenge, vision and priorities



Our homelessness challenge is to make sure that there is enough support and accommodation options available of the right type, in the right places, and of good quality which people can afford to live in.

## **Our collective vision for homelessness is:**

“We will take every opportunity to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity, providing a response which means that rough sleeping is not an option.”

We are strongly committed to our vision, and we are realistic about the challenges that we face in trying to achieve this. We know that we will not be able to solve all of the issues overnight, but we can make sure that as a partnership we move towards achieving our vision over the five year lifetime of the strategy. The strategy identifies four key priorities and associated outcomes which when measured, will show we are making a difference.

## **We will work with our partners to:**

### **1. Deliver Appropriate Flexible Accommodation and Support Pathways through:**

- a. Developing, implementing and embedding effective multi-agency personalised support and housing services which allow flexibility and mobility; and
- b. Improving access to local community services for Gypsy and Travellers.

#### **To get there together we will:**

- Monitor the number of referrals and outcomes to the Central Access Point;
- Review the Making Every Adult Matter model and consider its potential in Carlisle;
- Review local supported accommodation access barriers and exclusions; promoting a culture of crisis intervention across agencies to prevent homelessness;
- Embed a collective commitment to improve the transparency of decision making and challenge through multi-agency approaches, escalation and conflict resolution;
- Develop and promote a collaborative local directory of services to aid prevention of homelessness; and
- Review collaborative responses to assessing initial needs, safeguarding and welfare of unauthorised roadside encampments.

### **2. Address Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) and Rough Sleeping through:**

- a. Strategic multi-agency approach to homelessness prevention and intervention for those who are at risk of MEH and rough sleeping in line with the Making Every Adult Matter framework.

#### **To get there together we will:**

- Implement a Local Strategic Interagency agreement and collaborative commitment;
- Have an effective reconnection policy in place;
- Focus work to safeguard young females at risk of invisible forms of homelessness and rough sleeping; and
- Complete a co-ordinated health assessment and street needs audit.

### **3. Increasing and improving positive outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness through:**

- a. Developing, implementing and monitoring the revised and updated 16-17 year old joint protocol;
- b. Promoting a co-ordinated response to meeting the diverse needs and wishes of young people, through the development of local youth accommodation pathways with access routes to a range of appropriate and integrated tailored support and accommodation options; and
- c. Developing and supporting a range of collaborative local opportunities and options for young people to participate in education, training and employment to promote economic independence and develop key skills.

#### **To get there together we will:**

- Embed a Place of Change commitment across all agencies involved in supporting people experiencing homelessness;
- Develop and implement a Local Commitment focused on 16-17 and 16-21 year olds with identified mechanisms for review;
- Actively promote Nightstop within Carlisle;
- Develop operational social media information and webpages in consultation with young people who have experienced homelessness;
- Promote and increase the use of housing references for under 18's including guarantors; access to Choice Based Lettings for care leavers; and references given for those in temporary accommodation;
- Increase the use of Early Help Assessments for 16-17 year olds who are identified as at risk;
- Monitor the number of young people identified/referred for assistance as part of a preventative approach; and
- Increase participation reported from targeted marginalised youth groups and projects.

## 4. The Prevention of Homelessness through:

- a. Meeting the Gold Standard challenge standards and striving for continuous improvement in frontline services;
- b. Co-ordinating outreach work with local schools to identify young people/families at risk of homelessness (enabling effective support and advice to be targeted at an early stage);
- c. Reviewing, developing, implementing and monitoring all early warning systems, partnerships and discharge policies from all institutional care facilities including hospitals;
- d. Ensuring a joined up approach to supporting households affected by welfare reform changes; and
- e. Monitoring the effectiveness and usage of discretionary housing payments.

### To get there together we will:

- Give a copy of written advice to all clients assisted through the homelessness prevention services (and children and family services for care leavers);
- Embed and promote the No Second Night Out standards;
- Develop a suitable, safe and good standard private rented sector offer, with a focus on single people at risk of repeat homelessness including advice and support to both clients and landlords;
- Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions through embedding the pre-action protocol and utilising prevention toolkit and actions on a case by case basis
- Not place 16-17 year olds and families in B&B;
- Review the effectiveness of all existing discharge policies and protocols, identifying gaps, barriers including hospital discharges;
- Offer home visits and mediation services;
- Ensure that all early warning systems are in place and are effective;
- Conduct an audit of move on outcomes for vulnerable older adults following hospital discharges;
- Ensure a joined up approach to households affected by welfare reform changes; and
- Monitor the effectiveness and usage of discretionary housing payments.

## Delivering our strategy



All of the partners within the implementation group have signed a local strategic commitment and terms of reference governing the life of the strategy.

The group will review the Interagency Homelessness Strategy on an annual basis and will monitor the actions and measures set out in the delivery plan on a quarterly and annual basis. Reporting to Carlisle City Council, the implementation group will have overall responsibility for the delivery of the Strategy. The implementation group will need to respond to the challenge to lead and drive Carlisle to ensure there are the structures, skills, effective commissioning decisions and strategic partnerships in place to deliver against the key priorities over the next five years.

Via the national Gold Standard Framework, Carlisle City Council has made a pledge and a corporate commitment to tackle and prevent homelessness across all city council services.

Carlisle City Council will facilitate a quarterly homelessness implementation group forum that will consider reports from operational groups responsible for the development and implementation of the actions identified within the Homelessness Strategy Action plan.

We will review the detailed action plan each year setting out our targets, key projects and activities, and how we measure progress. Delivery against the plan will be reported to members and partners and an annual update will be available on [www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)

The overall Interagency Homelessness Strategy action plan will be continually developed and reviewed in partnership with colleagues and in line with the priorities outlined above to ensure it successfully meets the needs of all vulnerable people in Carlisle over the lifetime of the strategy.

# Glossary of terms and acronyms



**ASB** Anti-social behaviour.

**CAP** Central Access Point is the central referral and assessment point for access to support for those people who require short term accommodation or floating support (managed through Cumbria County Council).

**CBL** Choice Based Lettings is a needs based system for allocating social housing in Cumbria.

**DCLG** Department of Communities and Local Government.

**DH** Discretionary Housing Payment is a short term payment available to help cover some housing costs including a rent shortfall.

**EHA** Early Help Assessment is the support that can be provided for a child, young person or family who may have additional needs that cannot be met by universal provision and where there is perceived to be no risk of significant harm.

**Gypsy and Traveller protocol** Joint working protocol between the district councils, Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Police that sets out how these organisations will work together when Gypsy and Travellers move on to land they do not own and do not have permission from the owners.

**Health Needs Audit** This is a good practice way of gathering information about the health of people who are homeless in the local area, to determine need and gaps (supported by Homeless Link).

**Housing Related Floating Support** Supporting People funded support services.

**Local Commitment /Joint Protocol** Joint working protocol and guidance for staff within Children and Family and Homeless Services working with 16/17 year olds.

**Local Strategic Agreement** Partnership agreement and terms of reference for the Carlisle Homelessness Implementation Group.

**MEAM** Making Every Adult Matter is an approach to service delivery focused on a coordinated response to effectively assisting and supporting people with multiple needs and exclusions.

**Mediation** Mediation services are offered to attempt to resolve conflict/ disputes in particular to resolve domestic relation disputes in order to prevent homelessness.

**MEH** Multiple Exclusion Homelessness is a description of people with complex needs who experience an overlap between homelessness, mental health problems, drug and alcohol dependency, street activities like begging, sex work or shoplifting, and experience of institutions such as prisons.

**Nightstop** Nightstop offer community based overnight accommodation for young people (16-25 years old) experiencing homelessness in the homes of trained and approved host volunteers.

**NSNO** No Second Night Out is a national and local focus on helping those people who find themselves rough sleeping ensuring there is a rapid response to new rough sleepers and a service offer to ensure that they do not have to sleep out for a second night.

**Place of Change** The Places of Change approach aims to improve the services available to rough sleepers and single people experiencing homelessness, to help them make the transition in to a settled home, training or employment.

**Pre-action Protocol** The notification (from the lender) of commencement of proceedings in mortgage repossession cases.

**Preventative Toolkit** Making Every Contact Count, DCLG 2012.

**Rough Sleepers** The definition of rough sleeper is 'people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on / in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or bashes.' Evaluating the extent of Rough Sleeping DCLG 2010.

**Street Needs Audit** To gather information about the extent and nature of street activity in Carlisle i.e. begging, street drinking, rough sleeping, big issue vending, drug related activity, busking, engaging in an activity likely to cause a nuisance or intimidate the general public.

**Street Link** Part of the Government's initiative to end rough sleeping, Street Link enables any member of the public or the person experiencing rough sleeping to report this in England. Street Link contacts the local authority to alert them to the person or area identified so they can help connect the person to local services and support.

**SWEP** The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is a local response to severe and winter provision in Carlisle to help prevent deaths on the streets to any rough sleepers caused by weather; this includes the cold where the weather is predicted to drop below 0 degrees for three days or more, but also extremes such as wind and rain.

**TA** Temporary Accommodation.

**UC** Universal Credit.

**Youth Panel** Multi-agency panel chaired by Children and Family Services to discuss any young person at risk of homelessness.

## How to contact us



The Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20 has been produced by Carlisle City Council.

If you would like to get involved, give us feedback or find out more, please get in touch:

- By visiting our website: **[www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)**
- By phone: **01228 817217 and 01228 817169**
- By email: **[housing@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:housing@carlisle.gov.uk)**
- By writing to us:  
**Homeless Services,  
Carlisle City Council,  
Civic Centre,  
Carlisle, CA3 8QG**

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