

Active Inclusion Newcastle

Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Briefing Q1 2014-15

We want all partners in the city to play a part in preventing homelessness. Our quarterly briefings help to build consensus and a cooperative approach by providing information on:

- **data and narrative that tell us about what works and the causes of homelessness**
- **the perceptions of clients, partners and workers on this data**
- **the outcomes for people supported by homelessness services**
- **new initiatives, policy and legislative changes**

This will help to us to work together to consider how to:

- **make the most of our resources to prevent homelessness and to respond to crisis**
- **build on what is working well to identify and meet our challenges**
- **create opportunities to intervene earlier, build resilience and prevent homelessness**
- **revise the City's statutory Homelessness Strategy action plan**

The emphasis of our Homelessness Strategy is on maximising the value of our resources to prevent homelessness. To aid analysis we have created 4 groupings of homelessness:

- **people owed the full homelessness duty**
- **people living with housing support**
- **people at risk of homelessness**
- **multiple exclusion and rough sleepers**

We recognise that these groupings have limitations and that people may not exactly fit the definitions but differentiating between the risks of homelessness helps to develop realistic options that include the wider aspects of social and financial inclusion, health and wellbeing. We have found that homelessness is best prevented through coordinated support that provides consistent information, advice and support that enables people to secure:

- **an income**
- **financial inclusion**
- **somewhere to live**
- **employment opportunities**

Our primary challenge is to maintain high levels of homelessness prevention in the face of the largest public sector and welfare cuts in 60 years. We will work with partners to innovate, reduce duplication, increase prevention and provide more effective responses to individuals. More information can be found in the Newcastle Homelessness Strategy 2014-19 which is on our website at <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice-and-homelessness/information-for-professionals>

Headlines

- New contracts in place for supported housing – a great collaborative effort has resulted in there being a better range of options in Newcastle and we managed the closure of the Salvation Army (City Road) without anyone becoming homeless
 - The Council were very positive in their support for the 2014-19 Homelessness Strategy and noted the good work done by partners in the sector.
 - We continue to have no B&B use and no one is homeless in Newcastle because of a simple lack of accommodation.
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1. People who are owed the full homelessness duty

1a. Table 1 - household types and social needs.

Total households	2013- 14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Households owed the full duty	165	43	44			
Household type (top 3)						
Lone parent with dependent children	93	31	26			
Couple with dependent children	34	4	4			
Single person household 18+	31	7	12			
Social needs						
Physical health	45	16	13			
Persons from abroad	37	4	3			
Mental health	44	13	12			
Offending	19	8	6			

Table 1 shows the numbers and household types for all those clients the Council owed the full homeless duty to. The numbers of people who fall in to this category is inevitably limited by the statutory definition of the full duty, which means that the households in this category are predominantly those with dependent children or who are acutely vulnerable in some way.

1b. Table 2- causes of homelessness and outcomes

Causes of homelessness (top 3)	2013- 14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Loss of private rented	36	12	11			
Relatives / friends asked to leave	18	2	7			
Parents asked to leave	28	4	5			
Outcomes (top 3)						
Re-housed by YHN	146	32	30			
Re-housed by housing assoc	9	3	1			
Re-housed by private rented	3	0	0			

The main causes of homelessness are the loss of accommodation with families and friends or of private rented accommodation and the vast majority of households owed the full duty are re-housed by YHN. Those owed the statutory duty under homeless can be offered accommodation in the private rented sector but only if certain relatively strict conditions are met and Newcastle has never discharged its statutory duty in to the private rented sector because in the main people have chosen the security of social housing with YHN.

We will continue to work with partners such as Shelter to ensure that we are providing a service responsive to the needs of people at risk of homelessness. There is recognition from Shelter of the good work carried out by partners in Newcastle to prevent homelessness and an agreement on our strategic approach. There is though more that that we can do for people whose needs are complex and require a solution that is wider than just housing need.

1c. Table 3 - statutory use of temporary accommodation

Statutory temporary accommodation	2013- 14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cherry Tree View	171	36	38			
Other accommodation	141	43	33			
Domestic violence refuges	20	3	5			

The use of statutory accommodation remains under control and we haven't come close to having to use B&B for either families or singles. In this table other accommodation refers to our commissioned supported housing and we can see from these figures how valuable a resource these services are in assisting the authority to meet its statutory duties and in helping to resolve homelessness in Newcastle.

1d. Main challenges

Presentations from private rented

Households presenting from private rented accommodation remains relatively high within this group and presents us with a particular challenge. We have reviewed past presentations from private rented and it has become apparent that the majority of presentations are the result of a correctly given notice to quit by a landlord who in a majority of cases wishes to either return to the property themselves or to sell the property. There are approximately 10,000 private landlords in the city and in such a disparate market it is difficult to develop a consistent approach to homelessness prevention in this area and to intervene early. Our challenge is to find ways of linking in to those services already working with households living in private rented accommodation, such as Children's Social Care and helping them to know how and when they should contact us if they have concerns about families living in private rented accommodation

Greater understanding of complex high risk cases

As we get better at diverting households with families from crisis presentations at Housing Advice Centre (HAC) the focus turns to a number of individuals who present with high levels of complex needs that can include homelessness but where the root cause is mental health or addiction related problems. Our challenge is to find a way of working with partners to engage these people so that not only is their housing need met but also their wider and more complex support needs.

1e What are we doing?

The numbers of people becoming statutorily homeless has reached a plateau and those presenting in these circumstances generally have faced unpreventable crises.

However we will continue to try to better understand the reasons behind why people present and to ensure that we are not missing additional chances for homelessness prevention we have taken the opportunity, whilst acceptance numbers are so low, to review each individual case where we accepted a statutory duty. By doing this we are confident that a) the decision made was the correct one and that b) for the majority of those cases accepted the household faced a moment of crisis where the intervention of HAC was required in order to relieve their homelessness and there was no earlier prevention opportunity.

As we noted in the last Homelessness Prevention briefing, through the Private Rented Sector Group we are now looking in more detail at all those households for whom we owe a duty under homelessness legislation where their last known address was a private rented tenancy. Each case is reviewed individually to ensure all that all steps were taken to try and assist the household to remain in their accommodation, but the nature of private rented tenancy agreements and the landlord's right to serve a no fault notice means that inevitably there will be cases where a presentation at HAC is unavoidable.

Since our last update we have been working closely with all those who receive referrals from the hospitals for patients with a housing issue and introduced a system whereby we confirm the status of all referrals in real time. Our aim in this is to ensure that there is consistency of advice and that referral mechanisms and lines of communication between all

parties involved are clear and that we make the best use of our common resources and identify the need for new solutions where services do not meet needs.

2. People at risk of homelessness

2a. Table 4 – people at risk of homelessness receiving casework interventions at HAC

People at risk of homelessness	2013-14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
HAC Casework	2,209	663	587			
Household type (top3)						
Single male 18+	1,210	365	315			
Household with dependent children	470	141	133			
Single female 18+	350	100	104			
Social needs (top 3)						
Offending	833	244	192			
Mental health	700	226	186			
Physical health	570	172	166			

There were fewer casework presentations at the HAC this quarter compared to the previous but it is line in with the numbers presenting in Q1 in previous years. Our analysis of this is that it reflects a seasonal trend and in real terms there has been no drop overall in the demand for the service. Over a comparable period Shelter saw 41 people who were believed to be at risk of homelessness but not in priority need and again the largest client group were single people (mainly men) for whom there was no additional vulnerability.

2b. Table 5 - causes of homelessness and outcomes for people at risk of homelessness

Reasons for presenting (top 3)	2013-14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Relatives/ friends asked to leave	367	111	28			
Parents asked to leave	278	78	20			
Loss of private rented	364	91	209			
Outcomes						
Advice – remained in accommodation	358	167	177			
Rehoused to supported housing	373	158	111			
Rehoused to YHN	176	67	63			
Rehoused to private rented	103	17	2			

The large rise in people leaving private rented accommodation and presenting to HAC is a cause for concern, it should be noted however that these figures represent those people who presented to HAC for casework assistance and the numbers may not in reality reflect the numbers of people who had to leave that accommodation. As this number is so high in comparison to previous quarters we have extended the review of people presenting from private rented, to include this client group and not just those for whom we accept a statutory duty. We will feedback to you next quarter on any issues that this raises. Discussions with those attending the last User and Carer Forum highlighted their concerns about the cost and relative insecurity (when compared to social housing) of private renting and a number of people expressed the view that they would far rather wait for availability of a Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) property, mainly as there was no need for a deposit but also importantly it was felt that for more vulnerable tenants that YHN was viewed as being a far more supportive landlord should the tenant relapse or face difficulties in managing their tenancy.

Indeed the largest group of people presenting to Shelter (15) who were in the risk of homelessness group were those living in private rented accommodation.

The majority of those who sought casework assistance who were rehoused were rehoused in to supported accommodation, this reflects again the importance of the sector in preventing homelessness and demonstrates the support needs of many of those who approach HAC for casework assistance and for whom an independent tenancy is not the appropriate outcome.

Again there are very low levels of people being rehoused in to private rented accommodation from this group of people and that where an independent tenancy is the appropriate outcome availability within in YHN is almost always the preferred option.

2c. Table 6 - Homelessness prevention activity

Homelessness Prevention Activity	2013-14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Homeless preventions	4,529	1,139	1,098			
Prevention Activities (top 3)						
YHN Advice and Support	1,567	419	397			
HAC	1,442	403	397			
Commissioned services via Gateway	428	101	137			
Use of DHP						
DHP awards	286	27	33			
Social Housing Evictions	474					
YHN evictions	97	29	13			

As with previous quarters the majority of our successful homelessness preventions come from an interaction with either the HAC or the YHN Advice and Support Workers. The value of the interventions of the latter can be seen in the low numbers of YHN evictions. In the context of welfare reform the low levels of evictions is to be particularly commended.

Whilst Newcastle continues to perform well on homelessness prevention the majority of the preventions we include here are those from the HAC and YHN and we are aware that there are other agencies in the city carrying out work that helps to prevent homelessness and we are keen to include this valuable contribution in our review in future.

2d. Main challenges:

To get more partners involved to identify the risk of homelessness.

Work with Shelter, YHN and supported housing providers to ensure that where people are rehoused to supported housing that that is the best offer available to them and that they are supported to move on from there.

2e. What are we doing?

Local Support Services Framework

In order to prepare for Universal Credit, in whatever form it may take, we are through the development of Newcastle Support Services Framework progressing, or starting a number of activities. These are activities that Newcastle have prioritised which will help us to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit and will provide a good foundation, but they are not reliant on the timeline for Universal Credit or on receiving further details from the DWP. A paper on this approach will be taken to the City Council’s cabinet on 24th September.

Development of partnership working

We will continue to work with other Tyne and Wear authorities and we will be speaking to them about the partnerships they have developed on prevention and will look to see whether these are things that we can develop in Newcastle. If you think that the work that you do to help prevent homelessness should be included or reflected in our future reviews please contact activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk to discuss how best this could be done.

3. People living with housing related support

3a. Table 7- number of admits, reason for admission and social needs

Housing Related Support	2013-14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total admits	1,565	394	396			
Reason for admission						
Not recorded / not known	309	80	78			
Lost existing accommodation	226	77	57			
Relationship breakdown	411	86	80			
Social needs						
Offending	444	91	78			
Drugs	223	52	43			
Mental health	198	54	45			

The numbers in this quarter are consistent with previous quarters. There are a number of people with no reason recorded or not known and this remains a concern. Supported housing is an expensive resource and in order to help demonstrate value we need to be able to show the reasons given for admission. We will be working with providers and referral agencies to overcome both these issues.

3b. Table 8- snapshot of move on assessments completed by end of each quarter

Move on assessments	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of 'red'	96	86			
Number of 'amber'	315	255			
Number of 'green'	109	118			

The figures given above are a snapshot of the number of current move on assessments completed via Gateway at the end of the quarter. We know from feedback on the monthly move on meetings that we hold that we need to take a fresh look at this process and how best we can support and encourage providers to continue the work they already do in helping to prepare people for independence.

3c. Table 9 - outcomes for people leaving supported housing

Move-on destinations	2013-14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No forwarding address	486	123	110			
Another hostel	418	109	152			
Independent tenancy	270	70	75			
YHN	99	29	31			
Private rented	81	25	29			

Housing association	20	16	10			
Evicted	391	96	95			
Evictions not notified to HAC	11	13	23			

There was a slight rise this quarter in the numbers of people who moved between hostels but we don't feel that this is a cause for concern in this quarter. These figures will reflect some of the impact felt from the closure of the Salvation Army City Road hostel. A large number of residents of that provision were moved in advance of the closure to alternative provision in the city. A demonstration of successful partnership working between the Council, YHN, supported housing providers and the staff from City Road that ensured that all the residents of this provision were moved to alternative suitable accommodation and that nobody was made homeless as a result of the closure.

The levels of evictions from supported housing remain high and reflect the increasingly challenging client group that providers are being asked to deal with, with in the main the behaviour of people being the main reason that people are asked to leave. Some of those attending the User and Carer Forum felt that drug and alcohol misuse was a strong contributing factor and wondered if there were fewer evictions from provision that had specialist workers on site. The forum members were keen to offer their knowledge and support to providers and service users in accessing assistance in the future

3d. Main challenges

Evictions

The levels of evictions from all forms of supported housing remains too high, the vast majority of these were from crisis accommodation, of the 96 evictions, 73 were from the 3 largest crisis accommodation providers and the main reasons given for these was for violence to other residents or staff or disruptive behaviour. It is perhaps not surprising that it is the crisis accommodation that is the main housing option for what is an incredibly difficult and complex client group to manage. Of the other evictions a third were for rent arrears and we need to look in more detail as to whether this as a result of can't pay (perhaps as result of welfare reform / sanctions) or won't pay. As we have noted previously in section 1, dealing with this relatively small group of highly complex and difficult to manage clients is one of our main challenges as a city and we acknowledge the work of the supported housing sector in managing a client group with multiple needs that extend just beyond requiring housing. .

Move on

We need to look at how best we can help clients make the move to sustainable independence, the Supported Housing Move On Protocol has been in place for two years and we need to look at how it operates in light of changes both to supported accommodation and to YHN. Over the next few months we will be reviewing how the current process works and what changes we can make to ensure the process is effective as possible.

3e. What are we doing?

Asset Based Training

We will be offering an introduction on Asset Based Training to all the contract managers in November. The Getting to Grips with Asset based Practice will build people's appreciation of the distinctions between deficit and asset based practice with the aim of building on the good work in the city and make asset based practice a greater part of the way we work.

Sanctions

We are working with Jobcentre Plus to deliver quarterly sanctions briefings. On average 469 adverse sanction decisions are made in Newcastle each month. This can have a devastating impact on households and result in benefits being reduced or stopped, increasing levels of poverty and difficulty for people in being able to pay their contribution in supported housing. On September 8th we will be holding a workshop for organisations to find out about why sanctions are applied, how we can prevent them from happening and to answer questions. The intention is that we will hold these sessions on a quarterly basis. The workshop is free to attend, but places must be pre-booked in advance. To book a place, or to find out more information about the workshop in September please contact: Clare Fish, Active Inclusion Officer (clare.fish@newcastle.gov.uk)

4. Multiple exclusion and rough sleeping

4a. Table 10- Numbers of rough sleepers

	2013- 14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Average per night	5	5	4			
Individuals	182	61	61			
Stock	79	22	20			
Flow	72	24	28			
Returner	31	15	13			
NSNO eligible	24	8	13			
NSNO – not eligible	14	8	10			
NSNO - unconfirmed	34	8	5			

From the figures in Table 10 above we can see that the main issue we face regarding rough sleeping is the numbers of people who fall in to the 'stock' category that is those people found rough sleeping this year and in previous years, i.e. these are the people who are the most excluded and who are on the almost continuous cycle of hostel placement, prison, hospital and rough sleeping. In relation to No Second Night Out it is worth explaining the background to the figures, the not eligible figure refers to those who may meet the initial definition of NSNO (ie are found sleeping out) but are ineligible for a reason, these include those people where accommodation available to them which is suitable for them to occupy but also includes those people who are known to sleep rough in other regional local authority areas but are new to Newcastle. The NSNO unconfirmed refers to those people who may be owed an offer under NSNO but where further contact failed and we were unable to confirm whether they were eligible. All those who were NSNO eligible were made an offer of suitable accommodation in order to resolve their homelessness.

4b. Table 11- reasons for rough sleeping and outcomes

Reasons for rough sleeping	2013- 14	Q4 13-14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Relationship breakdown	14	6	1			
Unknown	58	14	30			
Abandoned / evicted from supported accomm'	81	30	26			

Outcomes						
Accommodation secured	67	18	17			
No further contact /disappeared	52	6	31			
Housed by family/friends	2	0	-			
Returned to existing accomm'	18	4	6			

It is understandable that for the majority moving to supported housing is the main outcome, though the high proportion of people disappearing is as always of concern. However this reflects the complicated and transient nature of some of this client group. The needs of this group are reflected in multiple exclusion having its own strand within the recent Crisis Response commissioning workstream. Our Homelessness Strategy stresses that we need to work to ensure there is meaningful and consistent contact at street level to help ensure that there is a more positive outcome for people sleeping rough.

4c. Main challenges

Given the nature of the client group it is not surprising that the numbers of the no further contact / disappeared is high, but we need to find ways to engage with people past that initial first contact.

We know that for this client group the individuals concerned require more than a housing based response. And that we need to develop interventions that bring together partners from health, social care and drug treatment, amongst others.

4d. What are we doing?

Street outreach

Under the new contract street outreach is available 7 days a week and this allows for a flexible response to a transient client group and allows the street outreach workers to link with the Peoples Kitchen who are offering a service at weekends.

Housing First

Continued development of Housing First for people for whom hostel or shared accommodation is not suitable and who require support to maintain a tenancy.

Health and homelessness

We are looking with NHS North of England Commissioning Support at ways we can better capture information about those who are homeless and the health services they access and where. We would hope to be able to present data in our next briefing that captures in which areas we could do more to support people to help them access health care and housing assistance and what services people are already using. We will therefore also be working with our partners in health to identify and map the health and homelessness resources in the city and Identify obstacles to improve engagement with people with chronic addictions

6. Issues to consider

- a) The spike in the numbers of people presenting from private rented accommodation who feel they are at risk of homelessness. How can we reduce the risk of homelessness for people living in private rented accommodation?
- b) Evictions from supported housing, the majority are for violence or disruptive behaviour but a third are for rent arrears. Is this that people won't pay or is that they can't pay? What can we do to reduce evictions?
- c) Multiple Exclusion, what can we do about the people presenting for whom we struggle to engage with past the initial contact?
- d) How do we consolidate good performance and reflect this better in the recording. Where there are gaps in recording it weakens our understanding of homelessness in the city and therefore our ability to support people at risk.

7. How to get involved.

The issues raised in this draft briefing will be discussed at the Homelessness Prevention Forum on Wednesday 3rd September and with the Youth Independence Forum on Thursday 4th September and feedback and comments from these two events will then be incorporated in to the final document which will be presented to Councillors and published on our website. If you are unable to attend either of the forums but you would want to comment on this review you can send any comments to activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk . The deadline for sending any comments is Friday 12th September.

Please feel free to discuss the issues raised in this briefing with your residents and services users at whatever forums you have and staff from the AIU would be happy to attend team meetings / service user groups you have if there are any specific issues that people would like to raise or discuss in more detail. You can contact Sarah Blakey (Active Inclusion Officer) on 0191 277 1733 or email activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk to arrange this.

You can comment on the Homelessness Strategy action plan and our progress towards the actions and on the protocols and procedures we have developed with partners to tackle homelessness at any time by contacting sarah.blakey@newcastle.gov.uk and copies of the action plan and the protocols and our governance arrangements can be found at <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice-and-homelessness/information-for-professionals>