

Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2013 - 2018

Strategic Theme One: Prevent Homelessness through early intervention and targeted Housing Advice, including mitigating the impact of welfare reform, so that the risk of homelessness is reduced

	Actions	Target Actions	Outcomes	Key Agency & Partners	Resources	Comments
1.	Maintain good quality housing options advice, casework and other interventions through the Council's Housing Options Team	Years 1-5 – Ongoing training of staff and monitoring of outcomes and number of preventions.	Prevention of homelessness Low numbers in temporary accommodation	East Herts Council	Staff time and training	Maintain successful housing options approach Understanding peoples needs Value for Money
2.	Continue to fund the Schools Intervention Project run by Herts Homeless Group. Currently project run on a year by year agreement.	Years 1 – Monitor number of presentations to schools completed and feedback from Schools	Prevention of homelessness among young people. Awareness of the reality and impact of homeless for young people.	East Herts Council Herts Young Homeless	£5,000 annually	Preventing homelessness amongst young people Partnership working

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3.	Monitor Impact of Welfare Reform Changes	Years 1-5 – Monitor whether the welfare reform changes result in an increase in rent arrears/ homelessness and review whether able to prevent homelessness e.g. discretionary housing payments, transfers and Homeswapper	Clear picture of impact of the welfare changes Ability to target resources such as discretionary housing payments, welfare benefit advice, downsizing advice, vacant housing association homes to those most in need.	East Herts Council, RPs, CAB	Staff time, Discretionary Housing Payments	
4.	Continue to use the homelessness budget flexibly to help prevent homelessness e.g. spend to save payments, paying rent in advance, payments for landlord fees etc	Years 1-5 – Monitor the homelessness budget to ensure that it is spent in the areas that deliver most value for money and meets the Council's statutory homelessness duties	Prevention of homelessness and minimising the upheaval of moving for customers	East Herts Council	East Herts Homeless Budget Government Homeless prevention grant	Value for Money Contributes towards Gold Standard priorities of not placing 16-17 year olds in B&B and not placing families in B&B longer than 6 weeks

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Strategic Theme Two: Increase the role of the private rented sector for those in housing need, with better sustained tenancies

	Actions	Target Actions	Outcomes	Key Agency & Partners	Resources	Comments
5.	Enhance East Herts' Rent deposit scheme for landlords	Years 1-5 – Develop the role with the credit union, Herts Savers and liaise with landlords to promote the Council's rent deposit scheme.	More landlords offering to accept referrals of customers from the Council Maintaining low temporary accommodation numbers	East Herts Council Herts Savers Private landlords/letting agents	Staff time Fee to Herts Savers depending on number of successful placements	Value for Money – spend to save approach
6.	Develop and agree a policy to use of additional powers from the Localism Act 2011 to discharge homelessness duties in the private sector where appropriate	Year 1 - Develop Policy Year 1 - Amend procedures and paperwork and review outcome of cases assisted in this way Year 2- 5 - Monitor and review outcomes	Strengthens prevention approach. Helps when negotiating with potentially homeless clients who see homelessness as a route to social housing Helps keep numbers in temporary accommodation to a minimum	East Herts Council Private landlords/letting agents	Staff time and costs of deposit, rent in advance etc	Builds on success of homeless prevention approach

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7.	Maintain the housing support service provided to vulnerable people by the Housing Options Support Officer	Year 1-5 - Ongoing support to clients placed in private sector accommodation and homeless prevention units and providing specialist housing options advice to vulnerable customers approaching the Council as homeless.	Targeted advice and support to vulnerable clients Reduction in repeat homelessness	East Herts Council	Staff time.	Prevents repeat homelessness

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Strategic Theme Three: Increase the supply of appropriate, good quality affordable housing including the provision of supported accommodation.

	Actions	Target Actions	Outcomes	Key Agency & Partners	Resources	Comments
8.	Support and enable development of more affordable and supported housing developed by housing associations	<p>Year 1-2 - Contribute to the production of a Housing Needs Survey (action in the Housing Strategy)</p> <p>Year 1- 5 - Work with Housing Associations Developers and Homes and Communities Agency to maximise opportunities for new affordable homes in of the right size and location</p> <p>Year 1 – 5 - Ongoing liaison with agencies / housing associations in regard to addressing gaps in provision for special needs groups – e.g. learning disabilities, complex needs, mental health etc</p>	<p>Better knowledge of the type, size and location of affordable housing needed across the District</p> <p>Provision of more affordable housing</p>	<p>East Herts Council</p> <p>Housing Associations</p> <p>Town and Parish Council's</p> <p>Homes and Communities Agency</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council</p> <p>Private landlords/letting agents</p>	<p>Housing needs Survey approx £40,000</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Funding from HCA and private lending to housing associations</p> <p>Commuted sums</p>	Value for Money – spend to save approach

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9.	Maximise use of existing stock by addressing under occupation	<p>Year 1 - Continue to discuss and identify with Housing Associations measures that will further reduce under occupation</p> <p>Years 2-5 - Monitor registered providers introduction of flexible tenancies in their housing stock</p>	<p>Increased number of family sized properties available to let</p> <p>Older tenants moved to accommodation more suitable to their needs meaning less expenditure on disabled adaptations</p> <p>Ability to require tenants to move to smaller accommodation or to make their own accommodation arrangements at end of flexible tenancy if their circumstances have significantly changed</p>	<p>East Herts Council</p> <p>Registered Providers</p>	Staff time	<p>Maximise use of stock</p> <p>Affordable Housing</p> <p>Value for Money</p>

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Strategic Theme Four: Continue to develop and strengthen partnership working to maximise the benefits to homeless households

	Actions	Target Actions	Outcomes	Key Agency & Partners	Resources	Comments
10.	Maintain Housing Service representation and participation at multi agency meetings e.g. Herts Heads of Housing and Homeless Managers Meetings, CBL meetings, Herts County Council Supporting People MARAC, MAPPA, Social Services case conferences, Housing Association Forum.	Year 1 – 5 -Ongoing and sustained attendance by the most appropriate officers.	<p>Raised awareness of housing best practice elsewhere in the County</p> <p>Economies of scale on jointly commissioned projects / initiatives</p> <p>Information sharing</p> <p>Prevention of Homelessness and effective joint working</p>	<p>East Herts Council</p> <p>Hertfordshire Supporting People</p> <p>Hertfordshire Boroughs/Districts</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council</p> <p>Housing Associations</p>	Staff time	<p>Prevention of Homelessness</p> <p>Value for Money</p> <p>Partnership working</p>

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11.	Continue to provide funding to East Herts CAB for the provision of specialist Debt Advice from within the Housing Options service through a three year Service Level Agreement.	Year 1- 3 Regular monitoring of service level agreement	Independent advice in regard to housing, welfare benefits and Debt Advice etc	East Herts Council Registered Provide East Herts CAB	£17,500 per annum	Value for Money spend to save
12.	With other Hertfordshire Borough & District Councils agree revised 16-17 year old protocol with Herts Social Services.	Year 1 – agree revised protocol Years 1-5 – Monitor effectiveness of the joint protocol	Prevention of homelessness for 16-17 year olds Effective joint working	East Herts Council Hertfordshire County Council All Councils/Boroughs in Hertfordshire	Staff time	Prevention of homelessness in 16/17 year olds. Establishes and clarifies responsibilities between Districts and County.