



South Ribble Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

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Foreword

South Ribble Borough Council are pleased to introduce this new Strategy for the Prevention of Homelessness and Rough sleeping in the borough which sets out our priorities over the next five years.

This is not the first strategy produced by the Council however it is the first to consider the effect of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018.

Housing and the homes that we live in play a key role in our lives and have a direct impact on our health and wellbeing and as such reducing homelessness is a key priority for the Council. Homelessness is not just manifested by rough sleeping, although this is homelessness in its most visible and distressing form. Homelessness is a complex issue and its causes are wide and varied requiring a joined-up approach with partner organisations in order to ensure that accessible accommodation is provided and support needs are met.

The strategy has been formulated following a review of homelessness in the Borough which involved extensive consultation with stakeholders and partners. The results of the review can be found at appendix A.

The Council is proud of the partnerships it has developed locally, with our neighbouring districts and also with key stakeholders across Lancashire. Through working together with the common goal of preventing homelessness and providing good quality accommodation to those who require it, the Council and its partners shall ensure that the number of homeless households within the Borough are minimised and those who become homeless receive good quality accommodation and support tailored to their needs.

This is the essence of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which will seek to continuously improve all that we do, adapt to new challenges and changing circumstances and work in an innovative and effective manner with partners to address the causes of homelessness as well as providing high quality services to those who become homeless.

Cllr Mick Titherington

Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Leisure



Executive Summary

The Homelessness Strategy is underpinned by the Homelessness Act 2002 which requires every local authority to carry out a review of homelessness every 5 years and publish a strategy based on the results of the review. This strategy is based on the findings of the homelessness review which is attached at Appendix 1.

The review of homelessness has highlighted the following 3 main reasons for people presenting as homeless to the Council:

- Family and friends no longer willing to accommodate
- Ending of Assured shorthold tenancies
- Domestic Abuse

The main reasons for presentations locally reflect the regional and national picture. In order to address these priorities, the review identified a range of support needs and interventions in relation to domestic abuse, mental health, young people and physical health conditions which if tackled could have a positive impact on the number of homeless presentations to the Council.

South Ribble has few rough sleepers – normally between 2 and 3 rough sleepers are reported at the annual count undertaken through a snapshot on a single given night in the year. Where the council identifies verifiable rough sleepers, it has procedures in place to accommodate them where necessary.

Presentations from single people have increased and together single males and females make up the biggest group presenting as homeless to the Council, followed by lone females with children. The main reason for a household having priority need is dependent children and it is likely that this trend will continue.

Benchmarking from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has indicated that South Ribble is achieving a good split of prevention and relief duties i.e. more prevention duties are accepted than relief duties and that the prevention work which is undertaken is positive. The percentage of cases relieved, however, are lower as a percentage of presentations and the snapshot indicates that the biggest group of people who disengage with the service are single people under 35, perhaps due to a lack of affordable options.

South Ribble as a Borough has a population comprising 79% home ownership – either outright or with a mortgage, 10.5% social rented stock and 9.3% private rented housing. There is a lack of shared housing and affordability is an issue for the under 35's, particularly those under 25 and also larger households on benefits.

Social Housing lets have decreased slightly over the last 4 years and at time of writing the waiting list consisted of 1069 households. The greatest demand is for 1 bedroomed accommodation and 1 and 2 bedroomed properties attract the most expressions of interest and have the longest waiting time. Affordability and the requirement for guarantors in the private sector are proving to be a barrier particularly for younger people.

People who are unemployed are the largest group presenting as homeless followed by those who are not seeking work for various reasons.

Within South Ribble 96% of all households presenting as homeless are UK nationals and the vast majority are recorded as White British reflecting the ethnic diversity of the borough.

The consultation undertaken during the homelessness review highlighted a number of services that exist to prevent homelessness however challenges and improvements to the way services are delivered were also identified which can be summarised as follows:

Challenges

- **Cuts in funding for services provided by partners** – Supporting People Services including Floating Support and Accommodation Based Services, Lancashire Wellbeing Service, Youth Services
- **Impact of welfare benefit changes-** including sanctions, affordability if deductions are made or advances being paid back, length of time to process claims and money not being paid direct to landlords
- **Waiting lists for services and Dis engagement because of processes** – mental health, dual diagnosis, lack of support for chaotic lifestyles, lack of support in general
- **Lack of suitable accommodation** – particularly for young people following changes to supported housing, lack of shared housing, 1-bedroom housing, housing for complex needs, those with an offending background, and affordability in general
- **Issues with joint protocol arrangements**

Improvements / Changes identified

- A need for safe places to go and intermediary accommodation with different packages of support brought in
- HRA has increased involvement of housing officers but has not increased the actual housing options available
- Increased Support
- Better communication and partnership working
- Co-location of mental health services in other areas seen as a positive

National context

The following national policies guide and shape the delivery of local homelessness services:

- **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** – came into force in April 2018 and has specified new ways of working to assist homeless households
- **National Rough Sleeping strategy** – The Government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027
- **Welfare Reform Act 2012** – includes the introduction of Universal Credit

Links to Local Strategic Documents

Corporate Plan

The Council's new Corporate Plan 2019-23 has recently been published setting out the Council's vision and corporate priorities for the next 4 years. The housing and homelessness priorities within the Corporate Plan are as follows:

- Reduce the number of homeless through developing a health and prevention focused approach
- Seek to deliver different models to provide quality homes that people can afford to live in whether they choose home ownership or rental accommodation
- Identify actions to take forward from the 'Private Sector Stock Condition Survey'
- Work with partners and developers to manage the rate of delivery of new homes and commercial floor space by unlocking City Deal sites prioritising infrastructure development

South Ribble Housing Strategy

is currently being reviewed and will focus on

- Quality Homes
- Housing delivery
- Health and wellbeing
- Homelessness

South Ribble Strategic Priorities for Homelessness

The new strategy and action plan will seek to address the issues identified by the review and the success of the new strategy will be measured using the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- Increasing the number of preventions/reliefs achieved by 5% over the year - base line 284
- Ensuring that statutory presentations reduce by 5% over the year – base line 66

0% increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation – base line 5 in a year and no more than 4 weeks in bed and breakfast for families

There are four overarching strategic priorities which shall inform and focus the council's approach to preventing homelessness during the lifetime of the Strategy. They are:

Vision	Reduce the number of homeless through developing a health and prevention focused approach	
Priorities	Reduce homelessness by increasing prevention	Working with landlords and suppliers of accommodation to enhance the housing offer available for temporary and longer-term options including intermediary and permanent housing
	Improve health and wellbeing for all homeless applicants through effective and timely referral systems between services	Ensure that levels of rough sleeping remain low

An action plan to support these priorities will be drawn up and reported on annually to Extended Leadership Team

Resources available to prevent homelessness

Accommodation based services including supporting people and big lottery funded services	Voluntary and third sector partner services
Prevention activities using homelessness grant via MHCLG	Other funding including funding for Domestic Abuse and Cold Weather fund for rough sleepers
Registered provider housing via SelectMove	South Ribble Housing Needs Team and access to temporary accommodation
Portals and pathways to make duty to refer referrals in to the housing Needs Team	Discretionary Housing Payments and Housing Benefit
Private rented sector	DWP

PRIORITY 1

REDUCE HOMELESSNESS BY INCREASING PREVENTION

ACTION(S) What we will do	RESOURCES (Funding/Staff etc...)	TIMESCALES	OUTCOMES / MEASURES OF SUCCESS
Monitor, Learn from and Act on the implementation of the Homelessness reduction Act	South Ribble Borough Council Housing Needs team	Up to 2025	<p>50% Reduction in number of cases where contact is lost. Baseline 20% of presentations</p> <p>Increased preventions / reliefs by 5%)on the baseline of 284 per year</p> <p>Reduction in number of main duty decisions by 5% on the baseline 66 per year</p>
Ensure that the information on the website is relevant and up to date	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Up to 2025- Review website at 6 monthly intervals or when there is a change in legislation and service provided	Up to date information available for the public
Identify good practise around successful initiatives in the early identification of people at risk of homelessness. Develop options to introduce	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Produce an action plan by December 2020	<p>Increased preventions / reliefs by 5%on the baseline of 284 per year</p> <p>Reduction in number of main duty decisions by 5% on the baseline 66 per year</p>

Develop training on homelessness for partner agencies	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Develop training and commence delivery by December 2020	Deliver 4 at least sessions over the course of 2021 Increase early referrals with referral being no later than 5 days after first contact Increase the number of successful preventions by 5%
Involve customers in the design of service delivery	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	March 2021	Customer insight and intelligence to be developed through customer satisfaction survey and used to shape services.
Review early intervention activities with Registered providers	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Carry out a review of notifications and outcomes by December 2020	Appropriate and timely referrals received and acted upon and a reduction in the number of homelessness referrals received?
Evaluate and commission initiatives funded via homelessness grant to prevent homelessness	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer Homelessness grant funding Procurement, legal and finance	Evaluate by end of March 2020 and consider options to re-commission	Services evaluated and re-commissioned as required
Develop / maintain working relationships with DWP representatives	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Up to 2025	Representation at forums to be in place and maintained to encourage 2 way communication
Keep existing protocols with Childrens Social care, hospitals and prisons under review and develop new ones with other services as appropriate	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Up to 2025	Protocols are current and understood by all participants – and early referrals are increased with no more than 5 days elapsing between first contact and referral

PRIORITY 2

ENHANCE THE HOUSING OFFER AVAILABLE FOR TEMPORARY AND LONGER TERM OPTIONS

ACTION(S) What we will do	RESOURCES (Funding/Staff etc...)	TIMESCALES	OUTCOMES / MEASURES OF SUCCESS
Review the allocation and procurement of temporary accommodation policies and procedures	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Allocation and procurement policies to be reviewed September 2020 and annually thereafter Service level agreements for temporary accommodation updated annually	Policies and procedures up to date - Efficient use of temporary accommodation which meets the needs of clients and provides value for money to the council
Evaluate and re commission as appropriate temporary accommodation	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer Joint with Preston City Council	By June 2021	Evaluation and commissioning exercise undertaken by June 2021 and good quality value for money accommodation commissioned
Work with Central Lancashire Authorities and the Lancashire County Council on accommodation for people with complex needs	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer LCC Central Lancashire Authorities	By June 2021	Provision of sufficient accommodation which is available as required for customers requiring support for complex needs
Work with private landlords to promote the private rented sector as a viable option including for those aged under 35	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer Private landlords	6 monthly review reports to be undertaken from June 2020 up to 2025	Increased access to the private rented sector and more landlords engaging with the service
Work with the Select Move partnership to monitor the implementation of the common allocations policy	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Attend bi- monthly steering group meetings Monitor the implementation of the policy quarterly	Sufficient priority given to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Ensure adequate support for offenders and ex- offenders	Senior Housing Officer Probation, Prisons ,Shelter	Continue to monitor the Lancashire prison protocol under review and engage with the Lancashire reducing reoffending board and other key stakeholders such as MAPPA to 2025	Timely referrals for those with an offending background are received. Options for accommodation and support for ex-offenders are reviewed and enhanced.
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PRIORITY 3

IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ACTION(S) What we will do	RESOURCES (Funding/Staff etc...)	TIMESCALES	OUTCOMES / MEASURES OF SUCCESS
Establish joint ways of working to assist homeless households with mental health problems	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer Mental Health providers	Joint information sharing event (with whom?) to be held by December 2020 Mapping of provision to be undertaken by December 2020 Joint working pathways to be agreed by December 2020	Better understanding and referral processes between services
Utilise referent? to ensure that referrals are made to services that can assist homeless households to improve their health and wellbeing	South Ribble Housing Needs Team	On going to 2025	Use of Refernet by officers maximised to facilitate referrals
Utilise the South Ribble Early Intervention Team (SRIT) to access services and support for homeless households	South Ribble Housing Needs Team SRIT team	On going to 2025	Access)to early support and intervention for homeless households is increased and is timely

PRIORITY 4

ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT LEVELS OF ROUGH SLEEPING IN THE BOROUGH REMAIN LOW

ACTION(S) What we will do	RESOURCES (Funding/Staff etc...)	TIMESCALES	OUTCOMES / MEASURES OF SUCCESS
Ensure that the information on the website is relevant and up to date including our response to rough sleeping	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer	Review the website by June 2020 and every 6 months thereafter	Improved information and advice available for the public and other agencies.
Maintain outreach to all sightings of rough sleepers	South Ribble Housing Needs Team	Ongoing to 2025	Contact made with customers reported to be sleeping rough and support plan provided
Work with neighbouring authorities to enhance the offer for rough sleepers	Housing Options Team Leader / Senior Housing Officer Preston City council Chorley Council	Meeting to be arranged by June 2020	Improved access to support , bedspaces and intervention for rough sleepers