



Homelessness Strategy Action Plan
Final draft for consultation
2018-2022

Aims & Objectives

The Homelessness Strategy sets out the aim and objectives of Swansea Council and its partners to tackle homelessness over the next four years. This plan has been developed to provide the details of the actions that the Council and its partners will need to take to deliver these.

Homelessness Strategy Aim:

“The aim of Swansea’s Homelessness Strategy is to ensure every person has access to good quality advice, accommodation and support at the earliest possible opportunity in order to prevent homelessness”.

Homelessness Strategy Objectives:

- Objective 1: Ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery.**
- Objective 2: Prioritising early intervention and prevention of homelessness.**
- Objective 3: Ensuring suitable accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless.**
- Objective 4: Ensuring appropriate support is available for people who are or may become homeless.**
- Objective 5: Providing robust responses to support rough sleepers and end the need for people to sleep rough.**

Ref	Action required	Responsible officer	By When	Key activities	Outcome
Objective 1: Ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery.					
1.1	Introduce a co-productive approach with service users to develop the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness Charter Service standards for Housing Options Written standards for temporary accommodation used by the Council 	Operations Manager Community Housing	Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Steering Group using co-production principles Publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness Charter Housing Options Service Standards Temporary Accommodation Standards 	Principles of co-production are incorporated into the design and delivery of services to ensure that people with experience of homelessness are meaningfully involved in planning services.
1.2	Improve infrastructure to allow digital inclusion in Housing Options, Tenancy Support Unit and District Housing Offices	Senior Caseworker / Operations Manager East/West/ TSU Co-ordinator	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide WiFi access, phone charging points, and PC access 	Improve digital inclusion of homeless people.
1.3	Review use of Personal Housing Plans.	Housing Options Manager	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PHPs in place for all households accepted at risk of homelessness Written information provided for all households who approach service Feedback mechanism in place to monitor effectiveness 	Improve written information to all homelessness households.
1.4	Pro-actively promote Housing Options Services in social media and press.	Housing Options Manager	December. 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 press releases providing information on the Homelessness Service, reported in local press annually Increase use of social media to promote services Bi-annual survey to gauge levels of general public's understanding of homelessness & housing advice services 	Raise general public and professional awareness of homelessness, advice and support services in order to ensure a more widespread understanding of where people can go if faced with a housing issue.
1.5	Review Housing Options equalities monitoring systems	Casework Team Leader	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed consultation with equalities representative groups re. best use of equalities monitoring data. 	Ensure that homelessness and housing services are accessible to all.

		& TSU Co-ordinator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practice • Areas for improvement identified 	
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Objective 2: Prioritising early intervention and prevention of homelessness.					
2.1	Develop pre-eviction protocols with all housing providers and understand reasons for abandoned tenancies.	Operations Manager Community Housing / Supporting People Team	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols in place • Evictions accurately monitored across all forms of housing 	Number of evictions reduced.
2.2	Review the effectiveness of the hospital discharge protocol on an annual basis.	Operations Manager Community Housing	Annual – 1 st review completed by April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify & address any blockages in order to reduce delayed discharges • Active, on-going engagement with health, social services and ADAPT 	Robust Hospital discharge protocol in place.
2.3	Review the effectiveness of the Prisoner Pathway on an annual basis.	Operations Manager Community Housing	Annual – 1 st review completed by April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People budget to continue funding specific Homelessness Officer post to deal with applications from ex-offenders. • Increase use of technology to provide appropriate advice to those in custody • Reduce number of ex-offenders homeless on release (target to be agreed with Prison/Probation Service) 	Robust Prisoner Pathway in place
2.4	Ensure target is met for homelessness prevention.	Housing Options Manager	Annual reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of households successfully prevented from becoming homelessness to meet or exceed 67% 	Target met and reviewed annually.
2.5	Monitor use of Prevention fund to ensure it successfully contributes to sustainable tenancies.	Housing Options Manager	September 2019 (Annually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and evaluate success rate of tenancies obtained and/or supported by the prevention Fund, 	Homelessness Prevention Fund is used effectively and can demonstrate tenancy sustainment.

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2.6	Monitor reasons for loss of rented accommodation in order to better understand the drivers behind this cause of homelessness.	Casework Team leader	May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve understanding of impact of welfare reform on tenancy sustainability to inform work of financial inclusion steering group see action 2.12 On-going monitoring in place to fully understand and evaluate other reasons for loss of accommodation. 	Reduce number of evictions from private rented accommodation.
2.7	Review and improve information available on-line and in written format, taking into account the recommendations from the Wales Audit Office Report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making better use of the Council's website and social media Use the WAO checklist to identify options to improve how the Council manages demand for homeless service 	Housing Options Manager/ Senior Customer Services Officer	September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved, mobile friendly website in place WAO checklist completed and improvements identified to better manage demand Easier point on-line access for service users and professionals to refer to TSU and Housing Options 	Reduce demand on Homelessness Service by providing clear, comprehensive housing advice on line.
2.8	Agree criteria for mapping how many young people age 13-16 may be at high risk of homelessness	BAYS+ Partnership Manager	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria agreed. Agree with key stakeholders (eg Families First & Team Around the Family) what the "support offer" to this group will be 	Improve homelessness prevention services for young people.
2.9	Develop an education programme to increase knowledge of housing and homelessness issues in partnership with young people.	BAYS+ Partnership Manager	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VSG awarded to BAYS+ to develop Project & implement between October 2018 & October 2019 Evaluation of project completed 	Improve homelessness prevention services for young people.

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2.10	Develop consistent, accurate, shared local messages on availability and affordability of independent housing for young people in Swansea and identify the most effective communication channels for reaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people aged 14 and over • Parents/carers • Other professions working with young people with families 	BAYS+ Area Manager	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication materials developed, with young people (including consideration of alternatives methods e.g. technological solutions such as Apps, website, social media, animations) • Communication plan in place to promote agreed messages • Assessment of education programme completed (see 2.6) 	Simple clear housing advice available for parents/carers and young people.
2.11	Review mediation services that are available to assist with homelessness prevention.	Casework Team Leader / Housing Options Manager	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping exercise on existing mediation provision completed including: how they are accessed; availability; funding arrangements: and consider good practice elsewhere • Monitor outcomes of Voluntary Sector Grant Funded Mediation Project 	Increase homelessness prevention due to mediation.
2.12	Work with partners to address the increased need for advice on welfare benefits, income maximisation and debt.	Casework Team Leader / Adult, Prosperity & Wellbeing Manager/ TSU Co-ordinator	September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out assessment of current provision with Financial Inclusion Steering Group to identify best use of funds to increase provision • Continue to maximise use of Discretionary Housing Payments 	Increased availability of welfare benefits, income maximisation and debt advice.
2.13	Develop stronger links with Poverty & Prevention Service to ensure that homeless households have access to training, employment and education services.	Community Housing Operations Manager / Adult, Prosperity & Wellbeing Manager/ TSU Co-ordinator	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers to access services with service users and support providers. • Work with Workways+ to improve access. 	Homeless households become more economically active and resilient.

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2.14	Work with DWP, Housing Benefit & Poverty and Prevention Service to identify and advise households at risk of future homelessness due to the impact of Welfare Reform.	Adult, Prosperity & Wellbeing Manager / Casework Team Leader	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Options representative on Financial inclusion Steering Group Identification of communities most affected by welfare reform to target advice 	Improve early intervention and prevention for households affected by welfare reform.
2.15	Develop a Housing Training Programme to up-skill support workers (and other professionals) to enable them to provide basic housing advice and improve knowledge of homelessness legislation.	Housing Options Manager / Housing Training Officer	September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete pilot with Domestic Abuse Hub workers Assess feasibility of extending training to other organisations 	Reduce demand on Homelessness Service by ensuring a wider range of organisations can provide housing advice.
2.16	Explore ways to improve outcomes for homeless households with no local connection.	Operations Manager Community Housing	December 2020	<p>Liaise with neighbouring authorities to determine the feasibility of developing a regional group to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospital discharges Reciprocal arrangements Housing First Reconnection Temporary accommodation 	More regional focus and collaborative approach for those homeless households with no local connection.
2.17	Identify and prepare for the implications of the Immigration Act 2014 e.g. Right to Rent checks and Britain's exit from the EU.	Housing Solicitor	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor implementation date from Welsh Government. Identify relevant steps landlords are required to undertake to comply. 	Appropriate advice is in place for housing providers.

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Objective 3: Ensuring suitable accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless.					
3.1	Work with RSL partners to set out and agree expectations to identify how the social housing sector will work together to alleviate homelessness.	Landlord Services Manager	April 2021	Complete the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Nomination agreements Review Housing Management Arrangements for Supported Housing Review Move-On Strategy Development of Pre-Eviction Protocols 	Written agreement in place with all the major RSLs operating in Swansea committing to revised protocols.
3.2	Ensure B&B accommodation is only used for families in an emergency and that target of 6 days is not exceeded.	Housing Options Manager	Annual reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to ensure adequate levels of council-run temporary accommodation for families. 	Average time that families are in B&B not to exceed 6 days.
3.3	Prevent use of B&B for 16 & 17 year olds.	BAYS+ Partnership Manager	Annual reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the Homelessness Service and BAYS+ actively participate in the Supporting People Review of Young Persons Accommodation. 	B&B not used for 16 & 17 year olds.
3.4	Reduce the use and length of time spent in temporary accommodation for homeless households with complex needs (ie Mental Health issues & Learning Disabilities, substance misuse) spend in temporary accommodation.	Operations Manager Community Housing / Supporting People Team	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group established with Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Health & Substance Misuse 	Improve the outcomes for homeless households with complex needs (e.g. mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse).
3.5	Create a Housing Gateway Officer post.	Operations Manager Community Housing	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements made to Housing Gateway database Improved data collection, e.g. on evictions, abandonments, referrals etc. 	An effective single point of access for all supported accommodation.
3.6	Improve access to temporary supported accommodation for couples.	Casework Team leader / Supporting People Team	Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify barriers Discuss options with providers 	Homeless couples are able to access temporary supported accommodation.

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3.7	Reduce barriers for accessing temporary accommodation and supported temporary accommodation.	Housing Options Manager / Casework Team Leader	September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify barriers with stakeholders/service users Address key issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pets Storage of belonging Work/finance Review completed and recommendations agreed 	Temporary and supported accommodation is more accessible for all households.
3.8	Simplify access to refuge accommodation for households who are experiencing domestic abuse.	Operations Manager Community Housing / VAWDASV Co-ordinator	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with neighbouring authorities and providers to identify issues Develop common referral process 	"Tell it once" approach implemented for households accessing domestic abuse accommodation.
3.9	Review the provision of temporary supported accommodation for households with complex needs experiencing domestic abuse	VAWDASV Co-ordinator / Operations Manager Community Housing/ Supporting People Team	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review to consider: No of spaces available, void levels, waiting list, eviction levels 	Adequate provision of temporary supported accommodation for households with complex needs experiencing domestic abuse.
3.10	Review the Move-On Strategy.	Operations Manager Community Housing / Nominations Officer	Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenancy sustainment performance indicator agreed Review of Move-on Strategy completed with partners Consider options to adopt process for all temporary accommodation. 	Robust Move-On Strategy in place.
3.11	Increase the supply of suitable and affordable private rented properties.	PR Sector Access Team Manager / Team Leader - Housing and Public Health Division	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of 2 additional Environmental Health Officers to speed up Rent Smart Wales registration process and increase no. of inspections carried out. Information leaflet provided for PR landlords on support and advice that the Council can provide Develop closer links with PR landlords 	Increased supply of good quality, affordable private rented accommodation

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3.12	Consider feasibility of establishing social lettings agency for private sector properties.	PR Sector Access Team Manager / Housing Options Manager	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with PR Landlord Forum to identify barriers/issues • Improve "offer"/support to private landlord • Recommendation to be made on feasibility of Council run lettings agency. 	Increase the supply of good quality, affordable private rented properties.
3.13	Development of shared accommodation solutions for single households under 35.	Landlord Services Manager	September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess local need for shared housing for young people (under 25 and under 35) and inform More Homes Strategy and Local Housing Strategy. • Meet with RSLs/Council housing management to discuss development of shared social housing • Identify best practice • Consider and cost additional private landlord incentives 	Increased affordable housing options for people under the age of 35.
3.14	Review the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.	Landlord Services Manager	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Steering Group • Identify changes required by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Welfare Reform etc within 12 months • Complete review and revise policy 	New Allocation Policy in place.
Objective 4: Ensuring appropriate support is available for people who are or may become homeless.					
4.1	Improve access to substance misuse support services for homeless households.	Supporting People Team / Operations Manager Community Housing	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out consultation with service users and providers to identify issues • Work with Substance Misuse Area Planning Board to improve access to services • Improve links between Housing Options, TSU and Area Planning Board 	Reduction in the number of individuals whose tenancies fail or who are prevented from accessing supported accommodation due to lack of appropriate substance misuse support.

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4.2	Improve access to mental health support services for homeless households.	Supporting People Team / Operations Manager Community Housing	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out consultation with service users and providers to identify issues Work with Social Service's Mental Health Commissioning Board and Health to improve access to services 	Reduction in the number of individuals whose tenancies fail or who are prevented from accessing supported accommodation due to lack of appropriate mental health support.
4.3	Implement findings from Supporting People review of Tenancy Support Unit.	Tenancy Support Unit Co-ordinator	September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting People review of the service due in Autumn 2018 Revise referral and assessment forms 	Adopt enabling, strength-based approach to support.
4.4	Reduce Tenancy Support Unit waiting lists across all client groups.	Tenancy Support Unit Co-ordinator	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish reasons why households are supported over a year & consider ways to reduce this Increase the "support on demand" service 	Deliver a responsive, flexible tenancy support service to ensure that people receive the right level of support at the right time.
4.5	Strengthen and formalise the working relationships between Local Area Co-ordinators and Housing Options/Tenancy Support Unit.	LAC Implementation Manager / Housing Options Manager / TSU Manager	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish good working relationships with Local Area Co-ordinators Monitor no. of introductions to LAC service Monitor no. of referrals to Housing Options/TSU 	Reduce demand on homelessness services by providing alternative options to support households at risk of homelessness.
4.6	Raise awareness of provision in place to support men who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.	VAWDASV Co-ordinator / Housing Options Manager	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor level of need Map provision Ensure information is disseminated through a range of channels i.e. social media, website, information leaflet 	Sufficient provision in place for men experiencing domestic abuse.
4.7	Consult with BME stakeholders and service users to improve ways services are provided to households with language barriers and cultural differences.	Housing Options Manager / Senior Policy Officer	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with BME Stakeholders Identify service improvements Research best practice 	Provide a more accessible homelessness service.

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4.8	Develop housing advice leaflets specifically for refugees to provide targeted housing advice.	Housing Options Manager / Senior Customer Services Officer	September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with BME Stakeholders and service users to identify issues Leaflet produced and translated into identified languages Work with Home Office accommodation provider to ensure information is provided to asylum seekers at an early stage. 	Refugees have an improved understanding how to access housing.
4.9	Map the provision in place to assist and advise individuals who are ineligible for homelessness and housing assistance.	Operations Manager Community Housing / Migration, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Coordinator	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Social Services and the Asylum Seeker & Refugee Multi-Agency Forum to identify issues Existing provision mapped 	Clear understanding and improved signposting to resources available to assist non-eligible households.
4.10	Up-date and improve on-line Supported Housing Directory.	Supporting People Team	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement system to ensure information is regularly up-dated 	On-line directory up-dated and monitored which is promoted and accessible to all stakeholders.
4.11	Develop a training plan for housing and support providers.	Operations Manager Community Housing / Housing Training Officer	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key areas for training to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Domestic Abuse ➤ Mental health training ➤ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Psychologically-informed environments (PIE) ➤ Housing/Homelessness legislation ➤ Substance misuse awareness ➤ Households with No Recourse to Public Funds. ➤ Welfare Reform updates Training sources identified Training plan disseminated to relevant stakeholders. Training plan implemented for Housing Options staff. 	Housing and support providers receive appropriate training and are well resourced to provide appropriate advice according to the needs of individuals.

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4.12	Develop a Transitional Accommodations Officer Post	Housing Options Manager / TSU Co-coordinator	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link in with TSU to ensure smooth transition of support. Develop referral process to identify those households that require transitional service. Measures in place to sustain tenancies. 	Pre-tenancy and transitional support service operational.
4.13	Identify and monitor the number of repeat homelessness presentation and the number of repeat requests for support.	Housing Options Manager / TSU Co-coordinator	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review homelessness presentations and identify repeat cases during 2017/18 Review TSU support cases and identify repeat requests for support during 2017/18 	Reduce number of repeat homelessness presentation. Reduce number of repeat support cases.
Objective 5: Providing robust responses to support rough sleepers and end the need for people to sleep rough.					
5.1	Carry out a feasibility study to look at developing a holistic “solutions centre” for services for rough sleepers.	Landlord Services Manager	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility Study completed Options assessed Report to Cabinet Member 	Improve facilities for those who are vulnerably housed and sleeping rough.
5.2	Develop a Housing First approach to address the housing and support needs of homeless people and rough sleepers with the most complex needs.	Operations Manager Community Housing / Supporting People Team	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out tendering exercise Housing First Project in place to support approx. 15 people per annum 	Reduce levels of rough sleeping in Swansea.
5.3	Increase emergency bed provision and ensure support and advice is provided to rough sleepers within 48 hours.	Operations Manager Community Housing	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust Rough Sleeping Intervention Team in place and providing support 7 days a week Develop additional emergency bed space Improve link between and emergency bed space and supporting housing projects (Gateway Officer Post) 	Reduce levels of rough sleeping in Swansea.

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5.4	Develop a multi-agency approach to serious incidents involving rough sleepers and other vulnerable groups.	Operations Manager Community Housing	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on approach from relevant partners Lessons learnt and service improvements identified across all agencies/organisations 	Robust safety protocol in place for rough sleepers.
5.5	Carry out an annual review of the Cold Weather Plan.	Housing Options Manager	September 2019 (annually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review completed Relevant improvements identified and implemented 	Robust cold weather plan in place that offers appropriate protection for rough sleepers, and proactively helps them to access more suitable housing and support.
5.6	Develop information leaflet for general public and local authority Councillors on support available to assist rough sleepers.	Operations Manager Community Housing	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with partners Produce leaflet Promote and disseminate information 	Increase awareness of assistance available to rough sleepers.
5.7	Develop a monitoring system to record the support needs and housing history of rough sleepers in order to accurately inform future service provision.	Housing Options Manager / Casework Team Leader	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of (Welsh Government's) Street Homelessness Information Network (SHIN) Council rep. on national development group. 	Better information on the needs of rough sleepers available to identify effective interventions.
5.8	Work with HHA VGAP (Health of Homelessness and Vulnerable Groups Action Plan) to ensure implementation of Welsh Government's Health Standards for Homeless and Vulnerable Groups.	Senior Caseworker	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going homelessness/housing representation on HHA VGAP Group Support implementation of action plan recommendations 	Improve health outcomes for rough sleepers and other vulnerable groups.
5.9	Review with Social Services/ABMU the need for rough sleepers and vulnerable households to have better access to health including mental health services.	Operations Manager Community Housing	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with service users and providers Hold discussions with health and social services 	Increased access to health services

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5.10	Carry out local qualitative research with former rough sleepers to identify the key factors that helped them obtain and maintain permanent housing.	Operations Manager Community Housing	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with service users • Research report completed 	Better information in the needs of rough sleepers available to identify effective interventions.

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