

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2022 and Housing Allocation Policy

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The Homelessness Reduction Act

Shifts local authority approach to homelessness from less crisis intervention to more prevention, ensuring more people are entitled to help

Background

- **Housing Act 1996 Part 7** remains the primary legislation
- **Prior to April 2018** the principal duty was to secure accommodation for applicants who were eligible, homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days and who had a 'priority need' for housing and were homeless unintentionally
- **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** amended the 1996 Act, introducing new statutory duties to act to **prevent and relieve** homelessness for all eligible applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness **within 56 days**

Before 3 April 2018

- **Single people** with no clear priority need were entitled to 'advice and assistance', but their needs were often not assessed
- **Prevention activity** was 'good practice', but not compulsory – crisis response at the point of homelessness was commonplace
- **The process** involved an application, officers undertaking inquiries, assessing an applicant against the statutory tests and making a decision, without needing to involve the applicant in finding possible solutions

Now

- **All eligible applicants** have a full assessment of their housing and support needs.
- Local connection, intentionality and priority need are not a barrier to accessing support.
- **Applicants and authorities work together** to prevent or relieve homelessness.

The Homelessness Reduction Act

The Act placed a number of new duties on local housing authorities

Expanded advice and information duty: Available to all residents regardless of eligibility. Advice must be designed to meet the needs of particular groups: care leavers, former members of the armed forces, people leaving custody, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital and people with mental health issues.

Prevention duty : Owed to all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days irrespective of 'local connection', 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'. Includes tenants served with a valid Section 21 notice (no fault eviction) which expires within 56 days.

Relief duty : Owed to people who are actually homeless and lasts for 56 days, irrespective of 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'. The local authority may refer to another authority if the applicant has no local connection to their authority

Homelessness Reduction Act – DUTY TO REFER

The duty applies to:

- Prisons and youth offender institutions;
- Secure training centres and Secure colleges;
- Youth offending teams;
- Probation services (including community rehabilitation companies);
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Social service authorities;
- Emergency departments and Urgent treatment centres;
- Hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care;
- Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces.

Consent is needed prior to a referral being made.

It will help ensure that people who face the threat of homelessness are identified earlier through their contacts with public authorities and get referred for help

Preparation for the Act

- Structure changes
- Allocation Policy Review
- Personal Housing Plans developed
- Upgraded ICT Systems
- New Homelessness Contact Card
- Extensive training
- Implemented the Homelessness Code of Guidance

The Impact

- Same picture nationally
- Temporary accommodation target 32 – 39 currently plus hotels
- As of 12/10/2018 = case load increased from 132 in April 2018 to 354 cases
 - 54 in intervention stage
 - 149 prevention stage
 - 143 relief stage
 - 8 Main Duty stage

Rough Sleeping

- Official numbers are low
- The Count
- Reporting a rough sleeper
- Framework 0800 0665358

The New Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy

- Homelessness Act 2002 (2003-2008)
- Five yearly since
- Currently reviewing 2014 -2018
- New strategy 2019 – 2023
- Review annually

Achievements

- 7 Priorities - all actions met

Examples

- 16/17 Year old protocol implemented
- Sub Regional Funding attained for Rough Sleepers
- Restructure of Housing Options service
- Reviewed provision of temporary accommodation

Consultation

- Improving Places Select Commission
- Side by Side Homelessness Forum
- Rotherham Show
- Staff

The New Strategy

7 key priorities

- Supporting People with Complex Needs
- Rapid Housing - getting everyone housed quicker
- Preventing and supporting young people from becoming homeless
- Ending rough sleeping
- Preventing homelessness to reduce the impact on health
- Reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation
- Sustaining Tenancies

Timetable

**July 2018 –
October 2018**
Consultation
period

**November
2018**
First Draft

January 2019
Final Draft

February 2019
Cabinet for
approval

March 2019
Publish new
strategy

Amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy

Overview of the Housing Register

Band 1	246
Band 2	1,668
Band 3	1,783
Band 4	1,755
Transfers	1,336
Total	6,788

Overview of the Housing Register

Band 2 Reason	Number of applications
Statutory Homeless	19
Medical priority	1,280
Statutory overcrowded	19
Not ready for independent living held in suspension	147
Leaving supported housing ready to live independently	67
Requiring extra care housing	5
Offender, not a high risk to the community	4
Applicants living in private rented who cannot afford the rent but are employed	24
Victim of domestic violence	96
Looked after child ready to live independently	7
TOTAL	1668

The 5 recommendations

- 1) The current banding related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher band following a full homelessness assessment
- 2) Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)
- 3) Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.
- 4) Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.
- 5) A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

Recommendation 1

The current banding related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher banding following a full homelessness assessment.

Rational

- Legislative changes which aim to prevent homelessness earlier
- The Allocation Policy must adhere to a legal framework outlined in Part VI and Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act
- Meeting demand

The Demand

Homelessness category	Total number of applications in each Band	Number of homelessness applications	Percentage of homelessness applications as a percentage of the total in that Band
Band 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless households who are both homeless and also have a medical need 	246	61	24.80%
Band 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentionally homeless households who are in priority need 	1668	19	1.14%
Band 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentionally homeless but not in priority need 	1783	280	15.70%
Band 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatened with homelessness awaiting assessment 	1755	217	12.36%
TOTAL	5452	577	10.58%

The proposed policy

- Applicants in priority need who actually become homeless and a relief duty is owed or when a full housing duty is owed are placed into Band 1.
- Applicants in priority need who are faced with homelessness and a prevention duty is owed are placed into Band 2.
- Non-priority homeless applicants, who are owed a prevention or relief duty, be placed into Band 3.
- Applicants awaiting a homelessness assessment are placed into Band 3

Recommendation 2

Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

The Rational

- Current policy confusing
- Impacts on waiting time for applicants who have been assessed for a bungalow

Recommendation 2

Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

The Rational

- Current policy confusing
- Impacts on waiting time for applicants who have been assessed for a bungalow

Recommendation 2

Current Policy

- Tenants under occupying a 4 bedroom house can move to a 2 bedroom house.
- Tenants who are affected by the bedroom tax can move to any type of property with 1 less bedroom.
- Tenants who are not affected financially can only move to a flat or a bungalow.

Recommendation 2

New Proposed Policy

- Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

Recommendation 3

Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.

Rational

- Reduce waiting time for applicants in urgent housing need
- Table 3.4.2 – shows typical waiting times

Recommendation 3

New proposed policy

	Old Quota	Proposed New Quota
Band 2	50 %	60%
Band 3	40%	30%
Transfer Band	10%	10%

Recommendation 4

Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.

Rational

- To ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendation 4

The current policy:

- Council or Housing Association single tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child
- Living with parents or in private rented accommodation.

Recommendation 4

New proposed policy

Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.

Recommendation 5

A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

Rational

- To ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendation 5

Current Policy

- Lived for the last 3 years in Rotherham through their own choice.
- Currently employed in Rotherham and have been for the last 3 years
- Have direct family who live in Rotherham and they have done so for the last three years. Direct family members include spouses, civil partners, parents, sons, daughters, brother and sisters.

Recommendation 5

Proposed new policy

- Add grandparents as a direct family members.

There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

Any questions?