

APPENDIX A

**Please note the following message from
Councillor Tom Shaw**

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2016 to 2021 will remain in place while we develop a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy in the summer of 2024.

Homelessness Prevention Strategy: 2016 – 2021

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Luton

Foreword

The key to tackling homelessness is preventing homelessness in the first place. Since the first Homelessness Strategy was produced in 2003 significant progress has been made in the quality of temporary accommodation provision and homelessness service. Success has been due, in no small measure, to the numerous examples of joint working involving our statutory, private and voluntary sector partners. Despite these efforts homelessness has been increasing both locally and nationally over the last five years.

The housing crisis that has affected London and the south east of England is now here in Luton. £10million has been spent over the past five years providing bed and breakfast emergency housing. The cost of homelessness, and in particular the provision of temporary accommodation, impacts all Luton residents as it diverts spend from other essential Council services. In addition our social housing stock is at an all-time low as our rate of replacement does not match the levels of stock being lost through the Right-to-Buy. Rough sleeping is at its highest ever in Luton and evidence confirms that this in turn leads to a deterioration in mental and physical health, often linked to weather conditions, sleep deprivation, addiction, depression and anxiety and poor general access to health and social care.

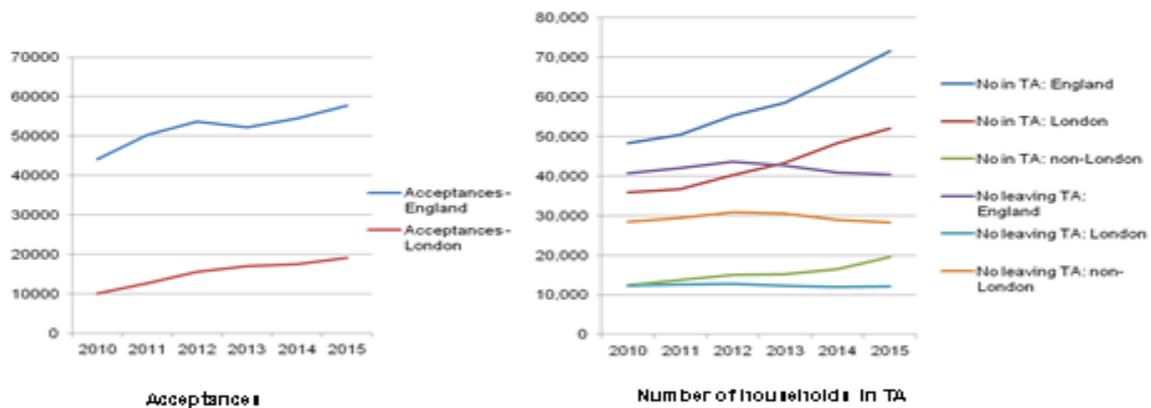
The effects of homelessness can extend beyond the devastating loss of accommodation and impact individuals for years. We recognise it is often complex issues that hinder financial, education, social wellbeing and create health inequality, and no single organisation or agency can address these issues in isolation. Luton Clinical Commissioning Group also recognises that lasting change in people's health can be brought about by addressing the 'root causes' of poor health; the trigger events which destabilise people and lead to an adverse change in their well-being, rather than just focusing on the visible causes of illness (such as smoking or obesity).

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2016-2021 is the first shared homelessness strategy for Luton Council and Luton Clinical Commissioning Group and will be aligned to the local sustainable transformational plans (STPs). The need to respond to homelessness in a multi-agency coordinated way is now much greater, with every partner contributing their expertise and resources to deliver the aims of the strategy. We intend to support our residents as early as possible to ensure they are enabled to help themselves in finding appropriate solutions to prevent homelessness and that the crucial support from families and friends should mean no-one finds themselves homeless before securing a new home or the services required to enable an improvement in health, wellbeing and informed decision making. We need everyone to plan for their future housing need.

Local authorities up and down the country are facing increasing pressure as the number of homeless households rises. Public Health England reports that the Health Service appears to be struggling to cope, as the number of deaths among mental health patients has risen by 21% over the last 3 years alone. The deterioration in mental health and homelessness are inextricably linked. Through a strong partnership approach we will increase our ability to respond to the challenges we face here in Luton. The ongoing changes within Welfare Reform coupled with the ever increasing housing costs continue to stretch households and particular those on a low income. This situation has dramatically increased the pressure on Luton as we deal with an ever rising number of households who are unfortunately finding themselves homeless and sometimes experiencing deterioration in health.

Context (1) – increasing pressure on local authorities

LAs are facing increasing pressure - numbers of acceptances are rising, and the number of households in TA is rising faster.



(Source: DCLG summer 2016 informal consultation)

Context (2) - the effects of homelessness on health

Widespread ill health

- 73% of homeless people reported physical health problems. 41% said this was a long term problem.
- 80% of respondents reported some form of mental health issue, 45% had been diagnosed with a mental health issue.
- 39% said they take drugs or are recovering from a drug problem, while 27% have or are recovering from an alcohol problem.
- 35% had been to A&E and 26% had been admitted to hospital over the past six months.

(Source: Homeless Link 2015 – London wide rough sleeper investigation)

“Together we are committed to improving and protecting the health, wellbeing, housing and life opportunities outcomes for the people of Luton.”

Councillor Tom Shaw
Portfolio Holder for Housing
Luton Council

Dr Anthea Robinson
Clinical Board Director
Clinical Commissioning Committee

Introduction

This new five-year strategy sets out Luton Council and the Luton Clinical Commissioning Group's (LCCG) joint aim to reduce levels of homelessness and the human cost of homelessness across the borough. It details how we will provide effective early intervention actions; and where that is not possible, to prevent homelessness by accessing a range of housing services, support and other opportunities to help people affected by homelessness to rebuild their lives. It also supports three key priorities in Luton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in particular: children and young people having a healthy start in life, reduced health inequalities and enabled healthier and more independent adults. The strategy builds on the work achieved since we produced our last homelessness strategy in 2008. It will be closely monitored through our Health and Wellbeing Board and Executive.

This new strategy has been shaped by current and anticipated national policy, good practice and our commitment to delivering a holistic approach towards solving homelessness which we recognise is a symptom of issues such as poverty, low education attainment, poor health, mental illness and relationship breakdown, underpinned by low resilience or personal stability, resulting in reduced opportunity to take personal responsibility for resolving housing issues. It is important that our efforts to reduce homelessness are part of a bigger picture, which includes tackling the causes of social and economic exclusion and improving access to health and social care services. To achieve this in the current economic climate requires greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention through multi-agency working including sharing of resources and continuously looking for creative and innovative solutions. The reduction in homelessness will require a coordinated whole Council response and effective engagement with our partners across Luton. Luton Clinical Commissioning Group is committed to working with Luton Council, partners and stakeholders to prevent people in crisis from becoming homeless and to ensure those who are homeless can access services to manage and improve their mental and physical well-being; including facilitating their integration back into the local community and their recovery.

We intend to change the perception that only the Council has the answers to solving homelessness. The number of households becoming homeless particularly as a result of exclusion by family or friends is pronounced. We are challenging ourselves through this strategy to change customer practice in automated reliance upon the Council to solve the crisis and support positive outcomes for families, through informed self-help. We also do not accept that rough sleeping is a valid life-style choice. At the last estimated count in November 2015 53 people were rough sleeping in Luton. The impact of rough sleeping on communities is significant and we will therefore be assertive in offering opportunities and support to people to enable them to access and retain housing and employment

We began working on this strategy by consulting with partners, the voluntary sector and customers. The outcomes from our consultation have informed the development of this strategy and action plan. And the outcomes we pledge to deliver through this strategy have also been greatly influenced by our Investment Framework which will enable all Luton residents to benefit from improved health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Our Luton Investment Framework clearly defines the opportunities that exist in Luton and will be delivered by 2025:

- a Luton-based skills academy and ten new large businesses
- 15,000 new jobs, 5,700 new homes and two new schools

- £100 million investment in the voluntary and community sector
- 5,000 families supported in parenting Luton's youngest children an upskilled, local workforce
- increased business rates revenue from growth in businesses
- improved connectivity by road, rail and air.

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy will:

- explain the context and issue
- map out the pathways into homelessness
- focus on earlier intervention and prevention to empower self-help and reduce demand and health inequality and improve wellbeing
- focus on moving people through the system more efficiently
- focus on the need to move people into sustainable accommodation
- focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing
- focus on making the best use of our limited housing stock including a robust approach to dealing with fraudulent property rental.
- And focus on how we will ensure Luton residents are enabled to benefit from the opportunities created through our Investment Framework

It is our firm intention to reduce homelessness, eliminate the use bed and breakfast and tackle living on the streets (rough sleeping). We have set ourselves ambitious targets but recognise we must continuously evolve if we are to ensure that Luton is proud, innovative and ambitious. We will review our strategy once the full details of the Homelessness Reduction Bill currently being considered by parliament are fully known and the impact of these legislative changes and emerging changes are identified.

There are of course many causes of homelessness. The Communities and Local Government Committee's August 2016 report relays that the causes of homelessness can be divided into structural or societal and those that are individual or personal. Both may contribute in individual cases as personal problems can often be exacerbated by the structural challenges of the housing system. Jon Sparkes from Crisis argued:

The structural reasons are around not being able to afford a property to live in, for whatever reason: the price of the property, level and reliability of income, and level of benefits versus rental on properties, so big structural reasons. Then there are the personal reasons that we are probably more familiar with, such as relationship breakdown, addiction and mental health issues, and then the very predictable reasons for people who leave the care system or who leave the prison system. There are probably some typical groups there, but they merge in to each other a lot'.

In Luton a key personal reason causing homelessness is eviction by family and friends forcing the provision of unsuitable temporary accommodation often out of the borough, away from key support networks. Effective intervention requires a range of solutions that are not just about providing accommodation. Investment in services that prevent homelessness has benefits for the health and wellbeing of our residents, and the prospects of our children and young people.

Targeting the root causes of homelessness and finding ways to address those causes will support individuals and households to make informed decisions and exercise choice to secure positive life outcomes and deal with their housing need. This means going beyond

the quality provision of timely, realistic and practical advice to early interventions at a point in time before an imminent crisis i.e. prevention.

We will ensure local services, including those delivered directly by Luton Council and Luton CCG are designed to proactively identify opportunities to support residents at the earliest possible stage in order to prevent individuals and families becoming homeless. As part of this Luton Council will ensure that constructive and positive learning from the pilot prevention service, which has been developed within the homelessness service, is fully embedded into our mainstream response. Furthermore we will continue to develop and enhance this service to identify and address a wider range of presenting issues and needs by exploring individual life management around debt, benefits, health conditions etc., which without intervention, can increase the likelihood of individuals becoming homeless.

To achieve this it is pivotal that we continue to further integrate the provision of information advice and guidance not just within the Council and LCCG but across our partners in Luton to ensure that our residents can access relevant and high quality support at the earliest opportunity without having to navigate a range of providers and access criteria. By extending our existing approach to partnership working (Luton Access) to include a planned referral system and co-ordinated casework models, we can be confident in the delivery of effective services, while reducing risk of duplication and gaps in provision. Critical to achieving this will require that all parts of the council, health services and partner organisations understand their role in preventing homelessness and work together to integrate their services so that the resources across the system are put in the right places and neither duplicate nor create gaps. Recognising that homelessness is a symptom not a cause necessitates a joint commitment to deliver the outcomes of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

Pro-active and early intervention that is integrated across the system (Luton Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, statutory groups and voluntary sector), based on a well understood knowledge of the local triggers of homelessness, will have more impact than traditional reactive and singular responses to homelessness. The interventions will be based on the following model:

1. **Primary Prevention** – done at the level of the whole population to minimise the likelihood of homelessness. Improving income and money management, maximising access to benefits, maximising health and wellbeing, preventing tobacco/nicotine, drug and alcohol addiction, employment protection, skills and career development, poverty reduction, life skills, financial skills, housing pathway planning, mediation and conflict resolution.
2. **Secondary Prevention** – targets individuals or groups at risk of homelessness (e.g. those with an institutional care background), or in crisis situations which are likely to lead to homelessness in the near future (such as eviction, loss of employment, serious health deterioration impacting normal daily function or relationship breakdown)
3. **Tertiary Prevention** – intervention once a problem arises to stop it getting worse - 'harm reduction' measures so that homelessness is ended as quickly as possible and minimising 'repeat homelessness'. Also extends to the impacts of homelessness being addressed.

The prevention measures will be coordinated across the partnership system (LBC, LCCG and VCS). A personal housing action plan will be developed for each household in the secondary and tertiary category that will set out the action they need to take and the council

and its partners will take to prevent homelessness. A range of interventions will be available to include but not limited to:

Primary prevention

- Welfare benefits advice
- Domestic violence support
- Tobacco/nicotine, drug and alcohol usage and addiction
- Community resilience
- Debt advice and counselling
- Training in financial management skills from school age up, care planning and support
- ACE/flying start
- Educational attainment support
- Skills and Career development
- Life transitions & bereavement support, existing institutions
- Purchase of duplicate identity documents

Secondary prevention

- Assessment of needs of those identified at risk of homelessness through a new customer diagnostic which also considers the impact on health
- Implementation of a consistent support package for individuals, delivered across the partnership system (by LBC, LCCG and Voluntary and Community Sector - VCS) that can range from light touch to case work coordination and that can include elements or all of the following:
 - Enhanced housing and debt advice, counselling and support – aimed at helping households to gain access to, or to retain private or social rented tenancies.
 - Rent deposit – to facilitate access to private rented tenancies.
 - Access to social housing through the housing register.
 - Access to mobility schemes so that households who wish to can access affordable social housing in other parts of the country.
 - Family mediation – in order to prevent eviction from the parental home with support packages if required.
 - Appropriate tobacco/nicotine, drug and alcohol counselling and support service provision.
 - Domestic violence victim support – this includes a range of interventions such as the existing ‘sanctuary schemes’, supporting planned moves, crisis intervention services and resettlement support.
 - Tenancy sustainment – support to help vulnerable tenants to retain their tenancies.
 - Mortgage arrears assistance where the cause is temporary and unavoidable, and where payments can be sustained
 - Support to access affordable housing schemes such as Shared Equity, Help to Buy and Starter Home
 - Stronger Families referrals for all families with children at risk of eviction to receive support to address the underlying concerns and causes threatening housing
 - Employment and skills training including where no recourse to public funds

Tertiary prevention

- Prevention from eviction including liaison and brokering with landlords.
- Access to social housing and private rented housing.
- Access to supported housing for vulnerable people.

It is important to recognise that prevention does not end once a statutory investigation is underway. The housing officers managing temporary accommodation and caseworkers working across the partnership system will continue to proactively work with residents in implementing prevention initiatives. We will collectively develop the skills and capabilities of staff across the partnership, underpinned by consistent systems and processes across the partnership system so that the assessment need, referring to appropriate support, providing the support and tracking progress is a streamlined pathway for all. Losing a home can have a devastating effect on a household and can involve vulnerable people, including children, moving away from support networks, friends and schools. It can also mean having to spend an extensive amount of time in temporary accommodation and increase the demand upon housing allocations through our choice based lettings scheme. The impacts of homelessness need to be managed and it is recognised that sometimes these conditions are long term.

We currently administer our homeless prevention and relief fund on the front-line providing payments incentives to landlords to enable them to remain in their existing accommodation or access alternate housing; delivering savings to the temporary accommodation budget. Over 700 households have been assisted through the rent deposit scheme over the past five years. Flexibility is encouraged and recommendations are delegated to empower housing prevention advisers to identify solutions and prevent homelessness through creative remedies. More recently there has been an increased use of this fund and discretionary housing grant to enable more people to remain in their existing accommodation.

It is essential that we continue to encourage flexible and imaginative cost effective solutions for all households, including non-priority households threatened with homelessness. Proactive spend to save is a key way to enable households to sustain independent appropriate living arrangements. We will consider and develop further ways to use homeless prevention funding to seek to provide solutions to impending homeless households as part of our secondary and tertiary prevention responses.

We also recognise the need for substantial improvement in our relationships with landlords, improved service coordination and support to tenants. We must therefore further develop the Homelessness Services to provide more specialised housing support. The loss of private rented accommodation is the highest causes of homelessness within the borough and therefore improved relationships with the private rented sector and sustainment of these properties is a high priority for this strategy.

We can also see the potential and are interested in working with social investors to secure affordable accommodation for the future. Our Housing Investment Strategy will set out how we will deliver this.

Promoting good management standards and quality within the private rented sector through landlord liaison is a priority. We will:

- **Ensure promotion of landlord accreditation and law updates and good after care support for both private sector tenants and landlords**
- **Complete the implementation of the House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing scheme**
- **Implement a private sector selective private sector licensing scheme within the next year.**

The action plan (appendix 1) sets out how we will deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy.

Review of homelessness services

We have carried out a review of the homelessness services we have provided over the past five years, which shows the top four reasons for homelessness, confirms that Luton is experiencing the highest levels of rough sleeping in the East of England, that more people are approaching the Council particularly as a result of a breakdown in family and friend relationships, less people are moving out of temporary accommodation and out of the system. In 2014/15 Luton had the 19th highest level of statutory homeless in England and the 23rd highest level of households in temporary accommodation. The demand for assistance has not reduced, with an average of 350 households per month last year seeking a face to face housing service through our Customer Services Team. From April 2016 to July 2016 the service has already seen over 4,000 households face to face, an average of 1,000 households per month.

Luton was one of only six local authorities in the country not to be on the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) Gold Standard, but we are determined to improve front line housing option services, so one of our key priorities is to achieve Gold Standard. This standard represents confirmation that we have highly comprehensive prevention services in place for all clients, both the statutory and non-statutory homeless. The Council has embedded the standards within this strategy which cuts across all homelessness provision. Luton has now joined a 'diagnostic peer review group' with 4 other local authorities (Watford, North Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Three Rivers). Each authority will undergo a diagnostic peer review in order to achieve the 60% qualification threshold for eligibility, which is measured against 10 'local challenges' set out in the standard. Luton is set to be reviewed in February 2017. Once the 60% threshold is achieved Luton will focus on implementing the required improvements to enable application for the Gold Standard. Only 25% of local authorities have completed a review so far (September 2016). Only two local authorities have so far achieved the Gold Standard but Luton is determined to be among the best achievers.

The strategy will be delivered through the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Action Plan which is shown in Appendix 1 and managed, in part, through a new Homelessness Prevention Forum that will have representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector agencies across Luton.

Vision for Luton

This strategy has been developed and informed by the results of the homelessness review (attached as appendix 2) and is therefore designed to address the specific homelessness issues in Luton. The action plan will focus on these issues and will seek to provide solutions

to them. The strategy also takes into account national policies and emerging future policies and issues. The response to these key issues will form the basis for the homelessness prevention strategy.

Those key issues are:

1. Impact of pressure from the London housing market has resulted in rising property prices and rents and means that households on low incomes or benefits are unable to afford the rising cost of housing in Luton without the support of the Council.
2. The reduction in welfare benefits, particularly the freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates, means that households on full and sometimes partial benefits are not able to find private rented accommodation in the town.
3. Demand for one-bedroom social housing has increased but benefit is now restricted to room-only qualification for under 35s'.
4. The availability of affordable private rented accommodation is limited and the Council is securing inappropriate temporary accommodation to accommodate households, including those with no recourse to public funds.
5. There are large cohorts of single vulnerable adults rough sleeping who require both accommodation and support through an established pathway.
6. There are significant long term health and social impacts of homelessness that have wide costs for individuals, families and the public services in the borough.
7. The Council's approach to homelessness prevention has not kept pace with the changing housing market.
8. The rising demand for housing has outstripped the supply of new social housing and we are not moving people out of temporary accommodation quickly enough.

Luton's Corporate Plan sets out a vision for Luton and everyone who visits or lives and works in Luton enabling Luton to be proud, vibrant, ambitious and innovative. Together with our partners, we will:

- *Deliver high quality services to improve the life opportunities for our people*
- *Build economic growth and prosperity*
- *Enhance skills and education*
- *Improve health and wellbeing*
- *Develop quality homes and infrastructure*
- *Support safe, strong and cohesive communities*
- *Provide integrated, efficient and digital service delivery*
 - striving for a 'One Luton' approach.

Homelessness and poor quality housing do not fit with the vision for the future of Luton and as part of this strategy we will therefore work to eliminate it. The table below shows the modelled outputs for housing mix need in Luton over the plan period based on the objectively assessed housing need of 17,800 net additional dwellings which includes a need for 7,200 affordable dwellings.

Dwelling Mix 2011 - 2031

	Dwellings	%
Market Housing	10,600	59.5%
Affordable housing/affordable rent	7,200	40.5%
All dwellings	17,800	100.0%

In July 2016 there were almost 11,500 people on the Council's Housing Register awaiting social housing, which includes households in need of a transfer. Access to social housing is not going to be the route for solving homelessness and therefore this strategy is based on finding alternative solutions including enabling sustainable access to other housing sectors.

The impact of homelessness

Many people experiencing homelessness have suffered distressing experiences such as loss of long term settled accommodation because:

- the landlord is seeking greater rent levels, unaffordable to the existing household or choosing to sell
- a breakdown in family and friend relationships means the occupation is brought to an end often with little notice

Some of the effects of homelessness are disempowerment, isolation and poverty, lower educational attainment and health deterioration symptomatic of a high percentage of our Luton residents.

- Disempowerment in particular occurs where people lose the ability to secure accommodation of their choice and having to spend time in unsuitable temporary accommodation.
- Isolation from support networks, health, education and cultural links
- Poverty prevalent amongst housing benefit claimants who have been impacted by the numerous benefit reforms e.g. Benefit Cap, Spare Room Subsidy, obliging more families to meet rent shortfalls. 60% of homeless people have low levels of educational attainment rendering over 80% of job vacancies beyond reach (Crisis research).
- Evidence also suggests that children subject to homelessness also experience lower academic achievement
- People who live in temporary accommodation for more than a year reported more health problems and greater use of health services. For those who are sleeping rough this position is greatly exacerbated with evidence of a significant deterioration in health after just 3 months (Shelter survey)

In Luton we have over 1,200 households living in temporary accommodation for up to 9 years of which 88% are in receipt of benefits. Our most recent rough sleepers estimate in October 2015 showed an almost 40% increase in the number of rough sleepers - 53 people were rough sleeping – against the previous year of 33 and just 2 people in 2010. We know the scale of homelessness is greater than that captured in the statistics because most people squat, 'sofa surf', stay with family and friends or anywhere else they can find temporary shelter for as long as possible (Centre for Regional, Economic and Social

Research study commissioned by Crisis 2011). The Luton Health Needs Audit conducted August 2016 of 40 single homeless who have or are experiencing homelessness confirms:

Mental health is the primary health issue for single homeless people in Luton with 66% acknowledging they have some or extreme levels of anxiety/depression (Please see appendix 12 for the full health needs audit outcomes)

Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Vision

Through early intervention and prevention and proactive creative solutions we expect to halve the levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in Luton and reduce the financial, social and economic costs of homelessness over the next five years.

The focus of our strategy is based on six strategic objectives to prevent homelessness and its associated risks with our target to reduce the number of households in bed and breakfast to zero, halve the number of families living in temporary accommodation and halve the number of people sleeping rough.

1. Deliver effective early intervention and prevention with a focus on education, employment, health and wellbeing.
2. Prevent homelessness through delivery of rapid and effective assessment.
3. Use only the most appropriate temporary accommodation to prevent further social and economic deterioration.
4. Manage demand by ensuring that we address over expectation and make the best use of our social housing stock
5. Increase access to and the supply of affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness.
6. Prevent homelessness by supporting single homeless and reduce rough sleeping by half.

Objective 1. Deliver effective early intervention and prevention with a focus on education, employment, health and wellbeing.

In partnership and through our commissioning approach we will continue to tackle social, economic and health inequalities, as identified through local research, targeting help towards those families and communities most in need from before birth to old age.

Through communications campaigns we will make sure:

- all staff and residents are made aware of the Council's housing options service and
- they understand and own the drive towards personal responsibility for suitable solutions outside of social housing; informed self-help must be the way forward
- it is made clear homelessness is not a route to social housing
- residents are aware of the support services across the town available specific to their needs
- the resident/applicant is aware of the options Luton Council can offer and those that cannot be delivered

- outreach including through partners such as Luton Access enables early financial assessment and diagnostic work with landlords and licensees

Through clear messages we will change assumptions and empower improved decision-making on the part of Luton residents in relation to their future housing needs.

Objective 2. Prevent homelessness through the delivery of rapid and effective assessment.

We will continuously strive to improve the delivery of homelessness services. Key to this is the timely assessment of homeless applications including provision of relevant inclusive partnership support that helps avert the need for the specific provision of temporary accommodation. We recognise the impact of homelessness on all affected households and the acute levels of stress and anxiety that can only be exacerbated by an inefficient and ineffective homeless assessment process. Poor assessments and poor decision making means people stay in inappropriate accommodation longer with severe financial implications for the household and the council.

We want to ensure vulnerable adults threatened with impending homelessness receive the following:

- a Gold Standard homelessness assessment, information and advice service (National Practitioner Support Service NPSS)
- a referral process across the partnership system that provides appropriate advice and guidance targeted at the individual/household, and a tracking system so that progress can be monitored
- access to up to date information and advice online
- the benefit of advanced interviewing techniques to produce the information needed to carry out an assessment
- quick and efficient medical assessments that are only used when required.
- mediation to resolve the threat of exclusion

For those placed in temporary accommodation we will:

- improve our investigations and outcomes decisions without compromising investigation quality to empower timely and independent solutions regarding their housing options
- move families on to settled accommodation as soon as possible and free up that temporary accommodation.
- provide families with targeted support to ensure that the fundamental causes of homelessness are tackled and the individuals and households concerned are given the tools to free themselves from their homelessness (domestic violence, relationship breakdown, low pay, poor skills, unemployment, poor health etc.)

We will invest in staff and the Homelessness Service; we will also invest in the technological infrastructure to support their day to day activities in order to deliver a first class service.

Objective 3. Use only the most appropriate temporary accommodation to prevent further social and economic deterioration.

Our temporary housing stock is currently around 1,400, predominantly family units and a small proportion is outside the borough of Luton.

The Council is facing significant challenges in securing additional accommodation at affordable rates. The government is proposing to remove the temporary accommodation management allowance which will bring down the maximum rent we can recover to the local housing allowance (LHA) level, despite the fact that landlords are asking for rents greater than the LHA level. This will further exacerbate the financial crisis for low income households and further challenge the Council, LCCG and its partners to manage the escalating cost of homelessness and its causes. It is important therefore that temporary accommodation should be utilised as a last resort, once all prevention options have been explored. It is also important that the supply of settled accommodation is increased.

Families are currently in temporary accommodation for up to nine years and they are not moving on which means a 'silting up' of provision for new presenting households. We recognise this is not an efficient use of an increasingly scarce resource and is not an ideal solution for the families involved. This lack of move on is partly the result of the impact of the allocation policy that has resulted in fewer households from temporary accommodation being housed in social housing than had been the case previously. More detailed analysis is needed however before any firm conclusions can be reached.

Right-to-Buy home losses together with a limited ability to re-provide affordable accommodation within Luton means that we must review our approach to assisting households to respond independently in securing accommodation. We must also be clear and realistic in our messages to applicants and partners about the Council's ability to provide solutions to all applicants.

A key challenge is ensuring households (including intentionally homeless families) are supported to successfully transition to secure, long term, suitable and affordable housing through appropriate information provision and financial support.

We will:

- Create a single point of contact for commissioning temporary accommodation and other private sector accommodation, including the Council's social lettings agency, Luton Lets. This will enable us to negotiate effectively with property owners and agents.
- Develop a supply and demand model to inform the commissioning of temporary accommodation.
- Develop a suite of products that will encourage property owners and agents to see the Council as a partner of choice. These will include:
 - Private Sector Leasing;
 - Nightly booked accommodation;
 - Private Sector Options – rent deposit for housing a family prevented from becoming homeless; improvement grant for works to a property if it is let to a Council nominee or leased to the Council;
 - Hostel/HMO development.
- Manage the letting process for temporary accommodation and making sure that the best use is made of the available stock.

Objective 4. Manage demand by ensuring that we address over expectation and make the best use of our social housing stock

In recognition that affordable housing opportunities are limited within Luton we must find innovative ways of improving accommodation options and making the best use of our decreasing social rented stock, whilst increasing access to suitable living arrangements. Bed and Breakfast costs are overstressing our finances and this is a wholly unsuitable option for families. We will:

- provide appropriate support to overcrowded families in social housing to enable them to live in their home without it affecting their health and educational achievement
- review the housing allocation policy so that it supports the homelessness prevention strategy by restricting access to newly-arrived households and providing incentives to households who have avoided homelessness
- Commit to reducing the total number of households residing in temporary accommodation by 100 per year
- extend our incentivised offer to under occupiers cross sector to release housing for families
- Improve the re-let times for empty homes to maximise availability for unmet housing need
- Introduce a portable discount scheme to support the opportunity to move

Objective 5. Increase access to and the supply of affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness

We will develop and implement a procurement strategy to include a partnership framework to achieve optimal value for money for customers requiring affordable rented accommodation; ensure consistency in approach and that staff have sufficient skills and training to undertake effective procurement activity. We will:

- support the bids of our partner voluntary and community sector providers and make contact with potential social investors in developing new accommodation and service delivery models for homeless households, unemployed and extended overcrowded families
- increase the levels of mobility for existing social housing tenants particularly under-occupiers
- provide additional options for existing tenants and households in temporary accommodation to access social housing in other parts of the country through HomefinderUK and provide a support package to help them move.
- develop new social housing through the Council's own housing company, Foxhall Homes, through the in-house development programme and through our housing association partners.
- increase the number of individual units managed through Luton Lets, our social lettings agent.
- make sure that our housing association partners are playing their role in supplying nominations to the Council.

Objective 6. Prevent homelessness by supporting single homeless people and reduce rough sleeping by half.

Luton actively seeks to tackle rough sleeping and had developed a No Second Night Out (NSNO) pathway in partnership which supports the Government's vision of eliminating rough

sleeping. Despite these interventions however, an increasing number of single people are rough sleeping and in turn the levels of mental health deterioration is increasing.

With the changes in legislation reducing the rights of single persons (under 35s) to room rate LHA for housing benefit, the challenge now is to access adequate provision of multi-occupation accommodation for this age group.

A priority will therefore be to:

- identify good quality Housing in Multi Occupation (HMOs) within Luton and its surrounding areas
- complete a high intensity enforcement programme to bring HMO properties up to standard together with the implementation of additional licensing arrangements
- support the voluntary sector to develop an assertive outreach team to support rough sleepers into settled housing
- develop pathways and accommodation options for rough sleepers and those at risk
- develop joint working protocols for specific groups at risk – those with mental health problems, ex-service personnel, care leavers, substance abusers, ex-offenders
- provide floating support scheme for vulnerable adults living in the community to maintain their independence and sustain their tenancies
- provide a befriending scheme to reduce levels of social isolation
- develop lodgings scheme for single homeless people including those with no recourse to public funds.

Rough sleepers as a group are a very small minority of the much larger group of non-priority homeless people. Our statistical data has captured the predominant age range of this group as 35 to 50 years.

The predominant group are mostly single homeless people described as 'sofa surfers'. This group is hidden from our estimation of the scale of homelessness and their numbers therefore remain an unknown quantity. Undoubtedly sofa surfers will also experience deterioration in health and well-being and sometimes become 'revolving door' cases for homeless advice, but most commonly this group are less likely to seek help from us. We will provide housing advice and support and establish relationships. As part of the shared responsibility for homeless resolution, in addition to our statutory and voluntary sector partners, all parts of the council will need to engage in the identification, reporting and signposting of those affected to the most appropriate service to enable early intervention and prevention.

Processes and systems will be implemented to enable the effective implementation of solutions, to include dealing with non-priority households which ensure they can secure and sustain long term accommodation. Everyone who approaches as homeless will be recorded so that we gain a more accurate picture of the scale of the problem and to guide our decision making and inform practice.

Future Impacts on the Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Since 2010 significant reform of the welfare system has reduced household income for low income and homeless households. Further cuts are planned. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will cease the payment of the Temporary Accommodation Management

Fee on 31st March 2017. New funding arrangements from DCLG will be in place from 1st April 2017.

- Currently DWP pay local authorities a management fee (in arrears) for each placement of a homeless household in temporary accommodation of £40pw if the placing local authority is in London, £60pw if elsewhere. This fee will end on 31st March 2017, to be replaced by new funding arrangements from DCLG. The new arrangements are not intended to replicate the existing system, but to provide up front funding to give local authorities the flexibility they need to better manage homelessness pressures. The allocation per local authority has not so far been advised.
- Bed & Breakfast accommodation, not self-contained accommodation held on license, will be part of these changes.
- Accommodation (including hostels) from the local authority's (LA) own stock

The funding for England is as follows

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (indicative)
Funding	£196m	£206m	£215m	£226m

- Temporary Accommodation Management Fee funding is the largest dedicated government funding stream for LAs for homelessness (£617m over the next three years compared to £238m in Homelessness Prevention grant)
- It is a reactive funding stream, paid only to help meet the cost of Temporary Accommodation that has been used during the year
- It does not take into account the different costs of providing services in different areas.
- It cannot be used flexibly to resource councils' homelessness strategies and support their goals to increase homelessness prevention.

The change to the temporary accommodation management fee, paid to landlords for managing the properties used as temporary accommodation acquired through private sector landlords, will be introduced in April 2017. Whilst this will dramatically alter the financial landscape for local authorities, it is still not known what the impact will be on the Council; and therefore the strategy will be reviewed once the settlement is known. The same is also true for the new legislation on the statutory duty for local authorities through the Homelessness Reduction Bill.

The action plan within this strategy makes reference to the reduction in single homelessness and rough sleeping (sleeping on the streets). The reduction in single homelessness is due to be affected significantly by the Homelessness Reduction Bill, which is discussed further in this strategy, and further consultation is needed on the coordinated response to rough sleeping before a clear strategy can be developed. The Council has carried out consultation with the voluntary sector prior to the final strategy being agreed in October and will consult further once the bill becomes an act.

The table below details the top four reasons for homelessness in Luton for cases where a duty has been accepted over the past five years.

Year	Relative or Friend Exclusion	Parental Exclusion	Loss of assured shorthold tenancy	Violence/Anti-Social Behaviour/ Harassment	Other reasons for acceptance	Total accepted
2011/12	133	115	90	71	109	518
2012/13	109	104	102	65	137	517
2013/14	104	106	100	77	170	557
2014/15	83	71	103	42	111	410
2015/16	48	53	94	25	66	286

While there has been a significant drop in the overall number of homelessness acceptances over the last 5 years, the loss of assured shorthold tenancies has become the most significant singular cause of homelessness (17% rising to 33%), with landlords opting to sell or seeking greatly inflated rates which they have determined would be contested or unaffordable to existing households. The reduction in acceptances is directly related to more rigorous arrangements in assessing medical condition as it relates to homelessness vulnerability in line with legislative requirements and also improved casework investigation. As already outlined this however has not reduced the demand for a prevention service which in turn has improved working practices to ensure everyone receives a homelessness prevention interview. We have addressed the increased demand by restructuring the front line service delivery model to include a pilot dedicated prevention service which we intend to mainstream. Parental, family and friend evictions remain a prevalent cause of homelessness. Of note is violence/anti-social behaviour/harassment is decreasing as a cause of homelessness partly attributable to the support services currently in place to prevent the displacement of affected families such as Early Help services.

Luton Clinical Commissioning Group commissions the Luton Wellbeing Service, which takes self-referrals for people experiencing depression and anxiety resulting from relationship issues. Primary Care Link Workers and Social Navigators based in GP surgeries can help refer people with behavioural issues to services which will help them reflect on their behaviour teaching coping strategies or referring to therapeutic activities. We intend to extend this referral service to every surgery within Luton.

Legislation changes – The Welsh Model Homelessness Reduction Bill Oct 2016

- The Housing Act 1996 was the governing legislation for Wales until it was superseded by Part 2 of the Housing Wales Act 2014. The majority of the homelessness provisions came into force in April 2015. It was introduced fundamentally to address two weaknesses in the existing legislation 1996, 1) unlawful 'gatekeeping' 2) no meaningful assistance was made available to single homeless people.

The key change is that the Wales Act 2014 introduces stronger prevention and relief duty for eligible households regardless of priority need status. The extension of the definition of threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days giving local authorities a more realistic time frame to carry out prevention work. The legislation is specific about the steps LAs should take or at least explicitly consider, to demonstrate they have helped relieved or prevented homelessness, making it possible for applicants to challenge a local authority that is insufficiently pro-active.

Further there is an expectation that anyone in their area is provided with information regardless of whether they are homeless or threatened with homelessness and including where an individual is ineligible for housing support e.g. not habitually resident.

Crisis/New Policy Institute report (How Many, How Much 2003) Estimated hidden homeless to be between 310,000 – 380,000 nationally. This report is now 13 years old and figures will have increased substantially since those three quarters for what are known as *concealed households*.

The Homelessness Reduction Bill 2016/17 proposes to roll out the Welsh model in England. Its second reading stage is scheduled for 28th October 2016.

Summary

This strategy will be delivered through the Action Plan attached as appendix 1. It will be managed by the Housing senior management team and monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Luton Clinical Commissioning Committee through regularly progress reporting and annual review using a Homelessness and Housing barometer and detailed key performance indicators. Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also receive annual reports. To support the assurance of robust partnership working this action plan and related key performance indicators will also be monitored through the Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum, chaired by the Council.

APPENDIX 1

Homelessness Prevention Action

Plan

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
OBJECTIVE 1 – Objective 1. Deliver effective early intervention and prevention with a focus on education, employment, health and wellbeing.					
<p>PREVENTION (PRIMARY SUPPORT) Integrated provision of Information, Advice and Guidance across debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment and health and wellbeing (primary and secondary care).</p> <p>Specifically, service integration with Luton Access , Stronger Families, Flying Start, Children’s Centres, Family Workers, Social Prescription, social care IAG, health and wellbeing, and employment IAG</p>	Nikki Middleton	From Jan 2017 onwards	Dedicated Homeless Prevention Team (HPT) (new, funding TBC) Luton Access (existing) HPT integrated with; benefits assessors, JCP work coach (existing) and welfare reform coordinators (new)	Reduction in presentations for early help from people who have lived in Luton for more than 2 years (not recently re located) - by Jan 2018 All prevention IAG services (including all homeless provision) catalogued and integrated into Luton Access. No duplication of provision. Single self-help, assessment, referral and casework management process. –by June 2017 Customers feel more empowered i.e. they understand what they need to do and the system and how it works and they are able to take advantage of this in order to regain housing stability – baseline in Jan 2017 Measure of effectiveness of self-serve and self-help i.e. online IAG is proven to have enabled universal customers to reduce their potential housing instability – baseline Jan 2017 An effective referral process	6 Monthly

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
				that; appropriately refers, ensures those most in need are accelerated to high intensity support and that the system for referrals is understood and well used by all key partners. – baseline Jan 2017	
Consistent and clear targeted and general communication of key messages including early help provision available	Nikki Middleton	November 2016 & ongoing	Outreach (new, part of HPT)	Development of clear consistent messages in all communications - including Luton Access and Council website, partners websites, leaflets and posters and all communications campaigns Increase knowledge of staff and partners in key messages and about referral process	6 Monthly
Understanding, monitoring and evaluating 1. Structural factors that impact on homelessness - changes in economic activity housing supply, welfare policy, poverty and longer term economic development effects. Understanding monitoring and evaluating 2. Individual factors that impact on homelessness - poor mental and physical health, drug and alcohol issues, debt issues, experience of	Jayne Robinson & Sue Nelson	November 2016 (scope defined) and then ongoing	Business Intelligence (BI)(existing)	BI working via the Welfare reform Board to develop a multi-agency data collection, integration and analysis framework. Understanding of the inter-related factors that drive demand to be reflected in a Demand Reduction plan. Integrated whole systems BI to support demand reduction activity as part of Luton Access and business case activity for Luton Access	Quarterly

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
being in care etc..... 3 Understanding, monitoring and evaluating the relationship between 1 and 2 as they impact on demand to include those who have not presented to LBC services and those who do present (to understand failure demand).					
EARLY HELP (SECONDARY SUPPORT) Integrated Early Intervention to reduce the numbers of people that are at risk of homelessness becoming homeless. Led by new prevention team in LBC that integrates assessment, referral and casework with other LBC services (e.g. drug and alcohol, stronger families, flying start, private sector housing) as well as primary and secondary health services, JCP and Luton Access.	Nikki Middleton	Jan 2017	Dedicated Homeless Prevention Team (HPT) (new, funding TBC) Luton Access (existing) HPT integrated with; benefits assessors, JCP work coach (existing) and welfare reform coordinators (new)	Increase in the number of homelessness preventions, with cases tracked over 6, 12, 18 and 24 months to ensure long term success Reduction in households accepted as homeless and the number in temporary accommodation Increase in the number of households supported into social housing in other localities. 10 % reduction in the numbers in temporary accommodation per year	6 Monthly
Reduce levels of fuel poverty in the private rented sector through initiatives such as	Dave Stevenson	Ongoing	Existing	Ensure continuity of occupation for fuel poverty affected households	Quarterly

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
insulation, new boilers					
Establish court surgery intervention service alongside Luton Access Partners, to assist homeowners and tenants at risk of possession	Darren Alexander	December 2016	Existing	Reduction in Private Rented Sector evictions	Quarterly
Early Help Social Impact Bond that increases stability amongst individuals at early help, resulting in avoidance of crisis including homelessness, debt and housing related debt	Sue Nelson	April 2017 – March 2020	New – subject to social investment and big lottery funding	700 people helped to be more stable, with reduced homelessness, debt and unemployment risk. Successful evaluation of the new intervention providing evidence for embedding stability based early intervention activity into commissioning	6 monthly
Targeted employment and skills projects; European Social Fund employment project (Seamless) and Community Led Local Development project (CLLD)	Sue Nelson & Paul Adams	2017 - 2020	New - subject to successful ESF bid	Workless into work and training– targets over 3 years as expressed in the bids Unemployed into work and training – targets over 3 years as expressed in the bids	6 monthly
Track and maximise take up of employment and skills strategy actions for people at risk of or already homeless	Paul Adams	September 2016 and ongoing	New and Existing	Evidence that people at risk of homelessness or already homeless have benefitted from skills development and employment actions.	6 monthly

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
				Evidence that strategy refresh integrates the learning from targeting this group	
<p>UNDERSTANDING IMPACT & ADAPTING POLICY AND COMMISSIONING</p> <p>Evaluating the impact of what works/doesn't work for different customer groups. From this design and develop evidence base policy and strategy across all linked service areas (homelessness, debt, skills and employability, anti-poverty and social mobility, customer services/prevention)</p>	Sue Nelson as part of a new R&D sub group attached to the Welfare Reform Board , and linked to homeless prevention network	April 2017 – March 2020	New – subject to successful bid for Bid for RCT.	Evidence based policy, based on a 'gold standard' research method, and strategy based on impact or effectiveness in all linked service areas, including social, fiscal and economic costs and benefits.	
<p>Improve understanding of health causes and effects as regards single homeless</p> <p>Understanding the causal pathways for health related homelessness as part of qualitative work 'nested' within the RCT. By ensuring that quantitative work for the RCT also provides data on health related homelessness cause and effect</p>	Stephen Gunther & Sue Nelson	April 2017 RCT start	Combination of existing internal resources (PH) and external funding for RCT	Evidence of linked factors of association and causation that drive cost/ quality. Objectives and outcomes for service transformation based on an understanding of cause and effect.	
Understanding the link between	Sue Nelson	April 2017 – March	Via the funding	Effective, integrated commissioning based on	

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
individual stability/ vulnerability and homelessness to inform the commissioning of prevention and early intervention		2020	being sought for a Randomised Control Trial (see above)	evidence of the factors of association and causation that drive cost/ quality. Objectives and outcomes for service transformation based on an understanding of cause and effect.	
Explore the possibility of further DCLG homeless prevention funding	Patrick Odling-Smee	Ongoing	Existing	Funding increased by at least 25% against previous provision	Quarterly
OBJECTIVE 2 – Objective 2. Prevent homelessness through the delivery of rapid and effective assessment.					
Reduce the amount of time spent in temporary accommodation without a homelessness determination.	Darren Alexander	Ongoing	Existing	Reduce average time taken to make decision to 30 days	Monthly
Increase resources within the housing options service including mainstreaming the pilot prevention service that has been developed within the homelessness service	Sue Nelson/Patrick Odling-Smee	December 2016	To be identified	Robust prevention service in place delivering enhanced levels of homeless prevention. Rapid robust investigations achieved within 30 days.	Annual
Gain Gold Standard Award	Darren Alexander	March 2018	Existing	Please see appendix 6 for full list of outcomes + Reduce number of homeless applications taken Decrease the number of households placed in temporary accommodation. Commissioned mediation service used in all family conflict cases where eviction	Annual

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
				risk identified.	
Provide housing law and practice, interview techniques and other specialist training for housing options staff	Darren Alexander	Ongoing	Existing	Decreased number of applications taken. Reduced complaint levels and improved customer satisfaction.	Quarterly
Commission & implement online self-assessment and diagnostic tool to provide information, advice and guidance.	Sue Nelson/Darren Alexander	April 2017	To be identified	Households empowered to self-resolve/prevent housing issues without requiring a face to face meeting. Households requiring support enabled to access the council by appointment.	Quarterly
Produce Service Level Agreement with Children's Services to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation provision.	Darren Alexander/ Ian Cartmell	January 2017	Existing	Reduced out of borough emergency accommodation family placements. Transportation costs reduced.	Annual
OBJECTIVE 3 – Objective 3. Use only the most appropriate temporary accommodation to prevent further social and economic deterioration.					
Restructure the housing service with Housing Needs Manager and TA Commissioning Manager to create a single point of contact	Patrick Odling-Smee	February 2017	To be identified	Coordinated commissioning and procurement of TA and PRS accommodation. Reduced cost.	April 2017
Develop a TA procurement and marketing strategy for the Allocations Service to adequately support the accommodation	Darren Alexander	January 2017	Additional resources to be identified	Systematic offer of vacant accommodation for homeless households in place	

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
of homeless households					
Align GHO resources to focus on TA households. Support households in temporary accommodation to make informed decisions on realistic options.	Ian Cartmell	October 2016	Existing	Established programme of periodic review of household need to include home visits to enable a timely response to a change in housing and support needs. Targeted skills and employment training for unemployed for low income households. Measurable number of unemployed households in employment, volunteering, apprenticeships Increase turnover of available temporary accommodation.	Quarterly
Produce a directory of services for homeless households.	Darren Alexander/Sue Nelson	December 2016	Existing	Information, advice and guidance enable self-help to access appropriate services.	Immediate and ongoing
Review contracts with existing letting agent to increase provision of assured shorthold tenancies.	Ian Cartmell	December 2016	Existing	Licensee households enabled to convert to tenants within existing occupied accommodation	Quarterly
Establish temporary accommodation placed households are on the housing register.	Ian Cartmell	January 2017	Existing	Housing TA Officer able to ensure a permanent housing pathway in place for each household	Quarterly
Introduce option to under occupying older person households to move into Sheltered Housing and let	Nick Ellender	February 2017	Existing	Increase number of households securing settled accommodation. Reduce social isolation	Annual

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
their property through the Council's Social Lettings Agency					
Introduce selective licensing scheme for PRS in Luton	Dave Stevenson	December 2017	Existing	Improved conditions in the PRS.	Annual
Introduce incentives which enable families to access support networks in more affordable areas.	Darren Alexander	December 2016	Existing	Increase turnover in temporary accommodation. Increase number of households securing settled accommodation	Quarterly
OBJECTIVE 4 – Manage demand by ensuring that we address over expectation and make the best use of our social housing stock					
Develop Council-owned and managed reception centres for homeless households	Tim Keogh/Patrick Odling-Smee	December 2016 Sept 2018	Existing	Rutland Hall reception centre in use Wigmore Hall reception centre in use	Quarterly
Review the Allocations Policy to support the prevention of homelessness.	Mark Willis	June 2017	Existing	De-incentivise temporary accommodation provision priority for social housing. Reduce priority where adequately housed Incentivise intermediate prevention for 'homeless at home'. Reduce parental evictions Review whether applicants without an identified housing need should be excluded from the Waiting List Review criteria for bedsit and one bed qualification Review qualification timescale for local connection	Annual

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
Review all actions and tasks within the void property process to ensure that properties are made available for re-letting in the shortest possible timeframe.	Mark Willis	April 2017	Existing	Targets will be set for each sub-task and these will be informed by a process of benchmarking with other social landlords Targets for 2016/2017:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Void turnaround (general needs) – 20 days • Income loss – 0.61% 	Quarterly
Introduce a Portable Discount Scheme	Patrick Odling-Smee	April 2017	Existing	Increase availability of social housing for families in housing need through the scheme	Annual
Update succession rights procedure to comply with the Housing and Planning Act 2016	Ian Cartmell	April 2017	Existing	Increase availability of social housing for families in housing need	Annual
Progress counter-fraud initiatives to recover property gained/occupied by deception	Ian Cartmell	April 2017	Existing	Identified perpetrators of fraud and regain property	Quarterly
OBJECTIVE 5 - Increase access to and the supply of affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness					
Implement and monitor a new Tenancy Strategy	Patrick Odling-Smee	April 2017	Existing	Clear common understanding of registered social landlord partners tenancy types and terms is in place	Annual
Introduce a lodgings scheme for single people	Ian Cartmell / Dave Stevenso	April 2017	Existing	Increase housing options for single people under 35 years	Quarterly

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
	n/ Darren Alexande r				
Identify a homelessness champion to work with registered social landlords	Darren Alexande r	Novemb er 2016	Existing	Measure good practice in eviction avoidance	Annual
Increase the supply of affordable private sector provision managed by our social lettings agency	Jeremy Sandilan ds	Ongoing	Existing	Per quarter 15 additional acquired properties in the management of Luton Lets	Monthl y
Acquire existing housing to accommodate homeless families	Patrick Odling-Smee	Ongoing	Existing	Increased affordable social housing provision Increased buy-back of previously owned Council housing	Monthl y
Build and reconfigure more accommodation on existing Council-owned sites	Tim Keogh/M ark Humphri es	Ongoing	Existing	227 new affordable rented homes developed by 2021	Annual
Implement Cashless Bond Schemes	Darren Alexande r	January 2017	Existing	Maximise number of households securing/retaining private sector accommodation within existing budget provision	Monthl y
Reduce homeless applications and placements through spend to save practice	Darren Alexande r	Ongoing	Existing	Staff routinely making recommendations which prevent the need for a homeless application and resolves the housing crisis.	Monthl y
Explore the provision of an after care service where	Darren Alexande r/Mike	April 2017	To be identified	Reduce the number of evictions from Assured Shorthold Tenancies and	Six-monthl y

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
households placed in the private sector	Dolan			licences through landlord and tenant engagement	
Establish landlord forum to engage positively with landlords and agents	Darren Alexander/Dave Stevenson	December 2016	Existing	Increase the numbers of accredited landlords and numbers collaborating with the Council.	Monthly
OBJECTIVE 6 - Objective 6. Prevent homelessness by supporting single homeless and reduce rough sleeping by half.					
Commission data sharing system to enable agencies access to key customer information to support effective partner intervention	Mike Dolan/Darren Alexander	March 2017	Existing	Voluntary and statutory sector partners enabled to access verified data through a secure system and target appropriate support. Provide 'one stop' information pack Capita system access extended	
Critically review all referral systems and move on arrangements	Darren Alexander	June 2017	Existing	Ensure regular supply and access to supported accommodation	Annual
Continue Rogue Landlord enforcement programme to bring HMOs' up to standard and implement additional licensing arrangements	Dave Stevenson	April 2018	Existing	Improve number of properties of a good standard and quality of HMO within Luton	Annual
Work with the university to identify HMOs as an option for single homeless	Dave Stevenson	January 2017	Existing	Source additional accessible shared accommodation	Annual
Review and tender severe weather provision funding	Mike Dolan & Patrick Odling-Smee	November 2016	Existing	Reduce the level of rough sleeping during severe weather	Annual

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
Review effectiveness of GP service provision delivered through NOAH for street homeless	Nicky Poulain	April 2017	Existing	Inform future service delivery	Annual
Develop and deliver an enhanced provision which enables people with No Fixed Abode to access GP services	Nicky Poulain	December 2017	Existing	Enable registration, improved health-check provision, reduced street homelessness Review existing provision	Annual
Ensure the provision of floating support for customers with additional needs	Ian Cartmell	Ongoing	Existing	Vulnerable households supported to sustain accommodation	Quarterly
Implement an assertive outreach, re-connection and winter shelter for rough sleepers	Nicky Poulain/ Patrick Odling-Smee/ Mike Dolan	Sept 2017	Existing	Reduce the number of rough sleepers Enable NRTPF individuals to reconnect with country of previous residence Enabled access to health care services	Annual
Review the Mental Health Street Triage Pilot	Police Service/ Stephen Gunther/ Nicky Poulain	April 2017	To be identified	Ensure appropriate pathways are in place to address mental health for street homeless and addressing street homelessness is included as a patient benefit Reduction in the number of rough sleepers/street homeless. Prevention of street homelessness resulting from mental	Annual
Assess potential for offering dedicated physical and mental health clinics	Dr Anthea Robinson / Steve Malusky/	April 2017	To be identified	To ensure physical and mental health needs of rough sleepers are identified and addressed. Rough sleepers signed up to local town	

Action to support corporate objective	By whom	By when	Resources	Outcomes	Review Time scales
	Paul Lindars			centre GP practice for ongoing needs to access services and prevent A&E attendance and hospital admissions and liaison with Drug and Alcohol services and social care	
3 rd sector partners trained in techniques to avoid experience of rejection and isolation- (Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE).	Mike Dolan/Darren Alexander	April 2017	Within existing	Practices in place to deal with high level emotional trauma that precedes and accompanies becoming homeless in place	Annual
Review Hospital Discharge Protocol to include general discharge	Darren Alexander/ELFT/PT	June 2017	Within Existing	Reduce number of unplanned discharges of single homeless.	Annual

APPENDIX 2

Review of homelessness in Luton

NON-SINGLE APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS HOMELESS BY AGE

Year/Age	Under 18	18-20	21-24	25-34	35-50	51-59	60+	Age not recorded	Total family acceptances
2011/12	1	1	44	189	143	30	5	0	413
2012/13	0	2	62	183	135	20	6	4	412
2013/14	3	14	63	170	173	24	9	10	466
2014/15	3	18	41	145	136	13	6	3	365
2015/16	0	12	33	103	83	8	3	5	247
Total	7	47	243	790	670	95	29	22	1903

NB Decreased number of acceptances as a result of improved casework management in particular around vulnerability and medical assessments in response to legislative changes. The average age of acceptance is 35 years. This is in keeping with the population Census 2011 which confirmed the average age of the Luton population as 35 years.

NON-SINGLE APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS HOMELESS BY ETHNICITY

Year	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese	Other	No ethnicity recorded	Total – Financial year
2011/12	163	80	104	21	2	42	1	413
2012/13	162	75	111	12	0	46	6	412
2013/14	180	87	106	25	1	59	8	466
2014/15	121	74	108	11	1	45	5	365
2015/16	69	54	72	10	0	35	7	247
Total	695	370	501	79	4	227	27	1903

Whilst the largest number of acceptances within the BME groups is Asian it is actually the Black population which is over-represented. Further detail on this trends can be found in the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) which accompanies this strategy. For the white population the acceptance rate is broadly similar to the ethnic trend within Luton.

SINGLE APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS HOMELESS BY AGE

Year/Age	18-20	21-24	25-34	35-50	51-59	60+	No age recorded	Total single acceptances
2011/12	0	9	35	37	12	12	0	105
2012/13	0	23	23	34	18	6	1	105
2013/14	1	18	22	26	8	14	2	91
2014/15	6	4	11	15	6	3	0	45
2015/16	4	8	9	7	7	4	0	39
Total	11	62	100	119	51	39	3	385

NB Decreased number of acceptances as a result of improved casework management in particular around vulnerability and medical assessments

The most common occurring age for single homeless people is in the 35-50 range but this is closely followed by the 25-34 age range which gives clear indication that one third of those accepted as homeless will only qualify for room rate. This strengthens our intention to ensure the provision of a lodgings schemes as a suitable housing solution for this group.

SINGLE APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS HOMELESS BY ETHNICITY

Year	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese	Other	No ethnicity recorded	Total – Financial year
2011/12	58	19	15	5	0	7	1	104
2012/13	66	14	18	2	0	4	1	105
2013/14	56	10	10	4	1	7	3	91
2014/15	26	7	7	2	0	2	1	44
2015/16	26	3	6	1	0	3	0	39
Total	232	53	56	14	1	23	6	385

Again these outcomes confirm that the black population is over-represented and the action plan within this strategy seeks to target single vulnerable at the earliest opportunity. Again further details on these trends can be found within the IIA which accompanies this strategy.

REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION IN ACCEPTED CASES

FINANCIAL YEAR	HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	DEPOSIT NEEDED	EMERGENCY	FRIEND / RELATIVE EVICTION	HEALTH / MEDICAL REASON	LOSS OF AST	LOSS OF INCOME	MORTGAGE ARREARS	OTHER	PARENTAL EVICTION	PRISON	REFUGEE / ASYLUM SEEKER	RENT ARREARS	SLEEPING ROUGH	VIOLENCE / ASB / HARASSMENT	REASON NOT RECORDED	TOTAL - FINANCIAL YEAR
2011/12	Couple	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	6
	Family	0	0	37	2	34	1	3	12	43	0	0	2	0	0	5	140
	Single	0	1	31	5	9	1	0	11	19	4	0	1	3	9	2	105
	Single P	0	1	62	1	47	1	6	11	52	0	7	12	0	60	1	267
	Sub-Total	0	2	133	8	90	3	9	34	115	4	7	15	3	71	8	518
2012/13	Couple	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	7
	Family	0	0	32	3	35	5	1	15	29	0	0	3	0	5	1	131
	Single	0	0	32	1	9	7	0	5	16	5	0	3	1	12	0	105
	Single P	0	1	45	5	59	1	1	23	58	0	3	10	0	48	0	274
	Sub-Total	0	1	109	27	102	6	2	44	104	5	3	18	1	65	3	517
2013/14	Couple	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	9
	Family	0	0	24	2	47	4	5	13	40	0	2	7	0	7	8	160
	Single	0	1	18	1	9	3	0	8	12	1	0	2	3	10	5	91
	Single P	0	1	59	2	42	6	1	27	53	0	2	13	0	60	11	297
	Sub-Total	0	2	104	6	95	13	5	49	116	1	2	22	3	77	25	557

	Sub-Total	0	2	10	1	10	1	1	10	1	1	4	17	22	3	77	25	55
				4	9	0	3	5	49	6	1	4	17	22	3	77	25	7
2014/15	Couple	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Family	0	0	20	2	47	4	2	7	25	0	0	1	6	1	3	1	11
	Single	0	0	13	5	2	0	0	6	7	1	0	4	0	1	5	1	45
	Single P	0	2	48	3	54	4	3	23	38	0	9	9	9	0	34	5	24
	Sub-Total	0	2	83	0	10	3	8	5	38	71	1	9	14	15	2	42	7
2015/16	Couple	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Family	0	2	14	0	38	1	1	4	23	0	1	2	1	0	2	1	90
	Single	0	0	9	3	5	0	0	3	4	1	0	3	1	2	7	1	39
	Single P	0	0	24	0	50	0	2	14	25	0	7	9	4	0	16	1	15
	Sub-Total	0	2	48	3	94	1	4	22	53	1	8	14	6	2	25	3	28
Total - All Years	0	9	47	6	48	3	4	18	44	1	31	78	76	11	28	46	22	
				7	7	9	1	5	7	9	2	31	78	76	11	28	46	88

There have been some variances in the number of acceptances within the main homelessness categories over the years, due to both levels of homelessness approaches and other mitigating factors

People approaching the Council for assistance due to exclusion from 'family and friends' and parental evictions continues to constitute the major causes of homelessness in Luton. Although the presenting reason for homelessness is that the family have been excluded from the home where they have been living, these households will have a variety of histories or routes into homelessness and some may have been living with a family member or with friends for a relatively short period of time after becoming homeless from a previous address.

Whilst the annual number of acceptances as homeless due to end of assured shorthold tenancy between 2011 and 2016 has remained fairly similar, it has become the singularly greatest cause of homelessness, reflecting the changes in the private sector market. Many landlords report that they intend to sell their properties rather than let them, whilst others are wishing to let to professional people and are evicting residents reliant on increasingly limited housing benefit levels.

Overall figures reveal that very few of those accepted as homeless have lost tenancies due to rent arrears, and an even smaller number are homeless as a result of repossession due to mortgage arrears. The following table detailing reasons for homelessness for all applicants seen over the 5 year period confirms the trends outlined.

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS FOR ALL APPLICANTS

GROUPED REASON	REASON	TOTAL
Deposit Needed	Deposit Needed to Secure Accommodation	30
Emergency	Emergencies - Civil Unrest	2
	Emergencies - EHO - Closing Order	2
	Emergencies - Fire	23
	Emergencies - Flood	11
	Emergencies - Returning From Abroad	4
Friend / Relative Eviction	Friend Evicting	632
	Relative Evicting	591
Health / Medical Reason	Left Institution - Care/Supported living	59
	Left Institution - Hospital	49
	Mortgage Arrears - Medical	3
	Mortgage Arrears - Health	13
	Other Loss - Unsuitable - Medical	22
	Rent Arrears Private -Hospital Admission	0
Loss of AST	Loss of AST - Damage to Property	8
	Loss of AST - Disrepair	35
	Loss of AST - Other Reasons - State	235
	Loss of AST- End of Contract	736
Loss of Income	Mortgage Arrears - Loss of Benefits	1
	Mortgage Arrears - Loss of Employment	39
	Other Loss - Unreasonable-Affordability	8
	Rent Arrears HA - Loss of Employment	1
	Rent Arrears HA - Loss of Income Other	16
	Rent Arrears L/A - Loss of Employment	6

GROUPED REASON	REASON	TOTAL
	Rent Arrears L/A - Loss of Income Other	9
	Rent Arrears Private - Loss Employment	9
	Rent Arrears Private - Loss Income Other	21
Mortgage Arrears	Mortgage Arrears - Other	93
Other	Multiple Problems	4
	Other - State	236
	Other Loss - Demolition	1
	Other Loss - Illegal Eviction	45
	Other Loss - L/L Wants Property-Own Use	55
	Other Loss - Loss of Tied/ Service	7
	Other Loss - NLN Supported Accommodation	28
	Other Loss - Overcrowding	27
	Other Loss - Unfit - EH Involved	18
	Other Loss - Unreasonable - Other	44
	Other Loss - Unsuitable - Condition	30
	REVIEW - DOD T/A Terminated	3
	Split Household	3
Parental Eviction	Parental Eviction	917
Prison	Left Institution - Prison	56
	Rent Arrears HA - Prison Sentence	1
	Rent Arrears L/A - Prison Sentence	1
	Unable to Remain - Bail Conditions	2
Refugee/Asylum Seeker	Refugee/Asylum Seeker - Determined	45
	Refugee/Asylum Seeker - Undetermined	1
Relationship Breakdown - Non Violent	Relationship Breakdown - Non Violent	195
Rent Arrears	Loss of AST - Rent Arrears	56

GROUPED REASON	REASON	TOTAL
	Rent Arrears HA - Client Based	15
	Rent Arrears HA - HB Based	22
	Rent Arrears HA - Other	20
	Rent Arrears L/A - Clients Based	38
	Rent Arrears L/A - HB Based	23
	Rent Arrears L/A - Loss of Eligibility	1
	Rent Arrears L/A - Other - State	18
	Rent Arrears Private - Client Based	77
	Rent Arrears Private - HB Based	42
	Rent Arrears Private - Other	59
	Rent Arrears Private-Loss of Eligibility	2
Sleeping Rough	Sleeping Rough	76
Violence / ASB / Harassment	Emergencies - Violence - Family	35
	Emergencies - Violence - Other	55
	Loss of AST - Anti Social Behaviour	5
	Other Loss - Harassment - From Landlord	18
	Other Loss - Harassment - Other	64
	Other Loss - Harassment - Racial	3
	Other Loss - Anti Social Behaviour	114
	Relationship breakdown - Violent	578
	Unable to Remain - CC Ouster Injunction	1
Total		6198

NO. OF INTENTIONALLY HOMELESS DECISIONS AND THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL DECISIONS BY YEAR, FAMILIES AND SINGLES SEPARATED

Financial Year	Household Composition	Intentionally Homeless	All Decisions	% of all decisions*
2011/12	Couple	0	21	0
	Family	9	204	4.4
	Single	3	315	1.0
	Single P	11	468	2.4
	Sub-Total	23	1008	2.3
2012/13	Couple	0	22	0
	Family	11	277	4.0
	Single	7	401	1.7
	Single P	13	545	2.4
	Sub -Total	31	1245	2.5
2013/14	Couple	1	31	3.2
	Family	30	363	8.3
	Single	16	351	4.6
	Single P	44	644	6.8
	Sub-Total	91	1389	6.6
2014/15	Couple	1	32	3.1
	Family	25	302	8.3
	Single	8	247	3.2
	Single P	28	538	5.2
	Sub-Total	62	1119	5.5
2015/16	Couple	1	42	2.4
	Family	32	348	9.2
	Single	13	419	3.1
	Single P	49	565	8.7
	Sub-Total	95	1374	6.9
Total - All Years		302	6135*	4.9

*63 decisions outstanding carried into following year of which 14 were singles.

These outcomes confirm that the number of intentional decision has increased over the years and in particular the last two years which supports the statistics detailed earlier in this report around levels of acceptances decreasing.

PRESENTING HOUSEHOLDS IN EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Financial Year*	Household Composition	£0-10K	£10-20K	£20-30k+	Total in work
2011/12	Couple	2	2	1	5
	Family	40	46	15	101
	Single	21	11	1	33
	Single Parent	67	43	8	118
	Sub-Total	130	102	25	257
2012/13	Couple	3	0	1	4
	Family	41	63	16	120
	Single	18	9	2	29
	Single Parent	62	53	8	123
	Sub-Total	124	125	27	276
2013/14	Couple	2	5	2	9
	Family	44	89	18	151
	Single	23	15	3	41
	Single Parent	64	75	7	146
	Sub-Total	133	184	30	347
2014/15	Couple	5	5	1	11
	Family	58	65	13	136
	Single	19	10	1	30
	Single Parent	70	75	13	158
	Sub-Total	152	155	28	335
2015/16	Couple	7	7	2	16
	Family	82	113	30	225
	Single	62	25	8	95
	Single Parent	116	89	11	216
	Sub-Total	267	234	51	552
Total - All Years		806	800	161	1767

Over the 5 year period:

28.5% of all applicants in employment

46% of all applicants in employment were earning less than £10k per annum

45% of all applicants in employment were earning more than £10k but less than £20k per annum

9% of all applicants in employment were earning more than £20k per annum

An increasing number of single parent families are earning between £10k & £20k

An increasing number of family and single parent families are gaining employment

A significant increase in the number of single persons approaching the Council seeking assistance who are in employment

Benefits in payment by year and family composition																					
FINANCIAL YEAR	HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	ATTENDANCE	CARERS ALLOWANCE	CHILD BENEFIT	CHILD TAX	DISABILITY LIVING	EMPLOYMENT	INCAPACITY	INCOME SUPPORT	INVALIDITY	JSA -	JSA - NON	MATERNITY	NONE	OTHER	RETIREMENT	STATUTORY SICK	WAR PENSIONS	WORKING	WORKING TAX	TOTAL - FINANCIAL
2011/12	Couple	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	5	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	1	16
	Family	0	0	31	3	4	7	2	28	0	16	46	6	13	1	1	0	0	57	8	223
	Single	0	0	1	0	27	43	23	14	1	38	78	0	24	5	14	0	0	19	0	287
	Single Parent	0	0	57	18	7	12	5	21	0	24	30	8	25	5	0	1	0	56	10	469
	Sub-Total	0	0	89	21	39	64	30	253	1	79	159	14	63	11	17	2	0	134	19	995
2012/13	Couple	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	5	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	1	15
	Family	0	0	31	4	4	9	1	25	0	19	39	2	10	1	1	0	0	85	9	240
	Single	1	0	2	0	28	60	19	18	2	22	94	0	21	3	9	1	0	19	1	300
	Single Parent	0	0	62	4	8	14	1	159	1	19	52	11	34	2	2	0	0	70	7	446
	Sub-Total	1	0	95	8	40	85	21	203	3	60	190	13	67	6	14	1	0	176	18	1001
2013/14	Couple	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	3	3	0	2	0	5	1	0	6	0	26
	Family	0	0	26	3	2	16	1	30	0	20	26	5	15	2	1	0	0	116	4	267
	Single	0	0	1	0	18	87	1	8	0	24	51	0	13	5	8	0	1	29	0	24

Benefits in payment by year and family composition																					
FINANCIAL YEAR	HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	ATTENDANCE	CARERS ALLOWANCE	CHILD BENEFITS	CHILD TAX	DISABILITY LIVING	EMPLOYMENT	INCAPACITY	INCOME SUPPORT	INVALIDITY	JSA -	JSA - NON	MATERNITY	NONE	OTHER	RETIREMENT	STATUTORY SICK	WAR PENSIONS	WORKING	WORKING TAX	TOTAL - FINANCIAL
	Single Parent	1	3	52	14	7	22	0	152	0	19	56	11	27	2	0	1	0	104	4	475
	Sub-Total	1	3	79	17	29	129	2	190	0	66	136	16	57	9	14	2	1	255	8	1014
2014/15	Couple	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	4	0	4	0	2	0	0	9	0	26
	Family	0	0	27	5	3	18	0	18	0	11	27	2	10	5	2	0	0	106	2	236
	Single	0	0	1	0	9	72	0	10	0	7	27	0	21	0	3	0	0	18	1	169
	Single Parent	0	4	69	18	8	26	1	112	0	13	30	7	28	1	1	0	0	104	3	435
	Sub-Total	0	6	97	23	21	117	1	140	0	34	88	9	63	16	8	0	0	237	6	866
2015/16	Couple	0	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	1	4	0	0	11	1	32
	Family	0	2	74	6	1	28	0	17	0	6	27	2	14	1	1	0	0	156	0	335
	Single	0	1	2	0	18	142	0	9	0	14	55	0	58	8	1	0	0	49	3	369
	Single Parent	0	0	137	11	3	35	0	114	0	10	27	7	39	5	2	0	0	123	2	515
	Sub-Total	0	4	213	17	22	113	0	140	0	30	111	9	15	15	17	0	0	339	6	1251

Benefits in payment by year and family composition																					
FINANCIAL YEAR	HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	ATTENDANCE	CARERS ALLOWANCE	CHILD BENEFITS	CHILD TAX	DISABILITY LIVING	EMPLOYMENT	INCAPACITY	INCOME SUPPORT	INVALIDITY	JSA -	JSA - NON	MATERNITY	NONE	OTHER	RETIREMENT	STATUTORY SICK	WAR PENSIONS	WORKING	WORKING TAX	TOTAL - FINANCIAL
Total - All Years		2	13	573	86	151	608	54	926	4	269	684	61	365	57	70	5	1	1141	57	5127

Again these statistics support the position that an increasing number of those approaching seeking housing assistance are in employment whilst those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Disability Living Allowance are decreasing. The action plan includes actions to enable increased choice in employment and in particular the opportunity to increase employment income levels.

Count of household structure for presenting homeless cases 2011- 2016

Household Composition	APP TYPE CODE	Total
Couple	MM	6
	MW	135
	WW	7
Couple Total		148
Family	MW+1	445
	MW+2	359
	MW+3	262
	MW+4	109
	MW+5	48
	MW+6	21
	MW+7	8
	MW+P	97
	MW7+	7
	W+P	183
	WW+1	2
	WW+2	4
	WW+3	2
	WW+5	1
Family Total		1548
Single	M	1091

Count of household structure for presenting homeless cases 2011- 2016

	W	656
Single Total		1747
Single Parent	M+1	117
	M+2	43
	M+3	18
	M+4	3
	M+5	2
	M+7+	1
	W+1	1275
	W+2	721
	W+3	359
	W+4	129
	W+5	56
	W+6	14
	W+7	8
	W+7+	5
Single Parent Total		2751
(Blank)		4
(Blank) Total		4
Grand Total		6198

The Integrated Impact Assessment which accompanies this strategy details further information on these statistics and the action plan contains actions to support positive outcomes for families with children and prevent the disadvantages which accompany homelessness.

NUMBER OF APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS AND RESULTS

Year	Review – upheld original decision	Review – agreed duty accepted	Total
2011/12	7	0	7
2012/13	9	0	9
2013/14	11	2	13
2014/15	0	0	0
2015/16	0	0	0
Total Appeals	27	2	29

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons

The Council recognises that whilst sexuality does not qualify a person as 'in priority need' it is acknowledged that it can be a hidden cause of homelessness. We are working to capture more data on this area and will work with the voluntary sector and appropriate charities to examine how best to improve identification this vulnerable group in the first instance. Further information is contained within the IIA which accompanies this strategy.

People without recourse to public funds

People with no recourse to public funds (NRTPF) are deemed to be destitute persons from abroad subject to immigration controls which prevent them from accessing public funds, welfare entitlement and public housing. NRTPF persons include:

- Those entering the UK illegally and are unknown to the authorities
- Those entering the UK and overstayed on a student, spousal or visitor visa
- Those with limited leave to remain on condition that cannot claim public funds
- Failed asylum seekers
- Citizens of the Economic Area subject to restrictions

The Council has a duty under the law to assist and advice NRTPF households in finding suitable solutions out of their destitution and in limited circumstances can offer accommodation and care services or financial support, particularly where children are concerned.

Since 2011 the number of cases has escalated and at April 2016 55 families with children of NRTPF families were subject to section 17 assessments. The total cost for this period to the Council is £3,180,412 which is an average £636,082 per annum. Although Children's Services have worked to reduce the temporary accommodation cost, there is a requirement to home and support families during the lengthy assessment process which can average up to 30 months.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Disproportionate Black households present as homeless against the overall population
- Increasing percentage of households in employment becoming homeless (27% over past two years) and of these 12% are not in receipt of any benefit
- Increased proportion of Assured Shorthold Tenancies ended predominantly because the landlord wanted the property back for personal use, sale or to levy higher rent charge
- Single parents remain the singularly largest group presenting as homeless
- Single parents and families presenting as homeless are aged predominantly 25+ which demonstrates parents have retained families including grandchildren at home for longer periods of time until the overcrowding becomes unsustainable
- Just 3% of households making an application for housing had earnings above £20k over the past five years
- Significant reduction in the number of cases accepted as homeless due to rent and mortgage arrears

Further information can be found on the outcomes within the IIA which accompanies this strategy.

APPENDIX 3 National Context

The Luton Council and Clinical Commissioning Group Homelessness Prevention Strategy is developed in the context of national policy and legislative developments, as well as identified local needs.

A number of policy documents and legislative changes have been introduced since the formulation of the last homelessness strategy and will continue to influence the response to current and future homelessness within Luton.

1. Making Every Contact Counts

The DCLG passed £400m of funding for preventing homelessness to local authorities and voluntary sector partners during the spending review period which followed the production of the Every Contact Counts report; this followed the Ministerial Working Group findings over this Spending Review period. Of this sum Luton received just £166k per year compared to boroughs with a similar tenure mix that received sums ranging from £400k to £8m per year. No single voluntary sector organisation, government agency, local authority or central government department can prevent homelessness alone but working together we can make a big impact.

The report sets out the Government's approach 'To tackle the complex causes of homelessness focusing on prevention and early intervention and on locally designed integrated services that step in when things go wrong, to give people another chance.' This steers local authorities and partners to adopt a cross-cutting approach, promoting joint working across services and partners which prevent homelessness for households in their locality.

The 'Making Every Contact Count' report contains five Government commitments:

- Tackling troubled childhoods and adolescence
- Improving health
- Reducing Involvement in crime
- Improving access to financial advice, skills and employment services
- Pioneering innovative social funding mechanisms for homelessness.

The report also includes ten local challenges for local authorities to meet as necessary, to achieve the highest homelessness service standards (*these 10 challenges are detailed in Appendix 6:*).

The challenges have been adopted and developed into a framework by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS), who support local authorities to deliver improved housing options services. The NPSS have developed the framework for the Gold Standard, which is a 10 step continuous improvement approach that begins with a pledge from local authorities aspiring to strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard. An application for Gold Standard allows Housing Options Services to robustly review their services through quality assurance and benchmarking processes.

2. No Second Night Out

A strategy for rough sleeping was set out by a Ministerial working group in a 'Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide', published in July 2011. No Second Night Out (NSNO) has five standards:

1. New rough sleepers can be identified and helped off the streets immediately
2. The public can alert services if they see anyone sleeping rough so they get help
3. Rough sleepers can go to a place of safety, where their needs can be assessed and they can get help
4. Rough sleepers are able to get emergency accommodation and other services they need
5. Rough sleepers from outside their area can be reconnected with their community.

Luton Council actively seeks to tackle rough sleeping and has developed a NSNO pathway in partnership which supports the Government's vision.

- March 2012: £20 million funding provided for Local Authorities via Sub-Regional Homelessness Funding. In 2012 Bedfordshire received £200,000 from this fund, which went to Bedford Borough Council to administer. The Bedfordshire NSNO Partnership was formed, tasked with rolling out NSNO across Bedfordshire.
- £20 million funding for Voluntary Community Services organisations, administered by Homeless Link as Homelessness Transition Fund (HTF) between 2011 – 2014.
- Polish British Integration Centre (PBIC) 2013 contracted to support 10 known homeless or those facing homelessness over a 12 month period to a satisfactory

conclusion. The project actually supported 39 homeless individuals plus family and friends.

- NOAH were successful in Round 1 of the Homeless Transition Fund, being awarded £250,000 to work with entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs in Luton until December 2014: <http://www.noahenterprise.org/noah-enterprise-awarded-250000-by-the-government-to-help-reduce-rough-sleeping-in-luton/> and a case study of NOAH's work: <http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/20140211%20NSNO%20England%20Wide%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>
- Under Round 3 of the Homeless Transition Fund, NOAH was awarded £183,799 July 2013-Dec 2014, for street outreach in Bedford and Central Beds (3 outreach workers). This meant NOAH then had coverage over the whole of Beds and was therefore enabled to deal with transient rough sleepers consistently.

3. DCLG Help for Single Homeless Fund

Dec 2014: Bedford, Central Beds and Luton were awarded £331,252 to provide mentors across the whole NSNO Partnership area. Funding ended July 2016:

- Over the course of the Luton project, NOAH received 124 referrals which contrasts with a 3 year project target of 90 and an official rough sleeper count in 2014 of 33
- Of the 124 there were 26 people supported to access emergency accommodation, 47 people directly placed into sustainable accommodation (private rented or supported) by the outreach team, 10 were reconnected to their home area, 31 extremely vulnerable people were on the verge of losing their tenancy saved in keeping them, 6 resolved their own situation/disengaged and 4 were still being supported at the end of the project.
- 19 EEA Nationals were supported in Luton during course of HTF project
- Successful Reconnections = 10 in Luton (mainly EEA Nationals)

Based on the average cost across all public services and economic damage of 1 rough sleepers for one year (Source: Homeless Link 2015) then the reconnections alone generate a cost saving of £240,000 to the public purse in Luton.

Alternate community funding arrangements are now in place for the continuation of this service provision.

4. StreetLink

Launched Dec 2012 to support NSNO, StreetLink aims to offer the public a means to act when they see someone sleeping rough, and is the first step someone can take to ensure rough sleepers are connected to the local services and support available to them.

<http://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

Luton has provided every front line agile working Council staff member with the Streetlink App to enable reporting. All reports of sighted rough sleepers are directed to NOAH and our website similarly provides advice and direction.

5. Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)

The focus of this service is to provide a warm and safe environment for those who are at risk and vulnerable due to being a rough sleeper. The service will be activated when the weather temperature drops below 0 degrees for 3 consecutive nights and will continue until the night time temperature rises above 0 degrees and the trigger is no longer met.

- LBC have engaged the services of Noah Enterprise to deliver this service for the past eight years

There have been significant successes in supporting people into tenancies within the private sector and in securing full time employment. In particular those who choose to continue to rough sleep have maintained their connection to Noah and its associated services.

6. Department of Health Hospital Discharge Fund £10m

Penrose Synergy was awarded some short term funding for a hospital discharge project in 2013 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ten-million-pound-cash-boost-to-improve-the-health-of-homeless-people>

LBC then directly contracted with Penrose Steps Service to cater for the needs of all hospital discharge patients with a housing related need. In addition a Mental Health Floating Support service is now in place to support individuals after discharge.

7. Welfare Reform Act 2012 (now in addition Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016)

Welfare Reform has affected access to housing, within Luton. The WRWA 2016 includes many of the changes announced in the 2015 Summer Budget and some that were in the conservative Party manifesto for the 2015 general election. The most significant implications for housing and homelessness include:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reductions including total LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents
- The Total Benefit Cap limiting maximum benefits that a family can receive from £500 to £384.62 per week, with the continuation of benefit removed from housing benefit payment towards rent
- Spare Room Subsidy (popularly known as 'Bedroom Tax') reducing housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under occupying their homes
- The Single Accommodation Rate limit (LHA) applied to young people over 21 and up to the age of 34
- Transfer of responsibility for Social Fund payments to local authorities and to Council budgets
- Disability Benefit changes and the replacement of Council Tax Benefit with local Council Tax support, reducing benefit income to a wide range of working age adults
- Introduction of the Universal Credit to provide a single stream-lined benefit paid to residents directly rather than to their landlords.
- Tougher loss of benefit regulation introduced
- Jobseekers (including those returning from living and working abroad) unable to access income related JSA until they had been living in the UK for 3 months.
- Removal of access to Housing Benefit for EEA workers even if they are in receipt of income based JSA
- Waiting days extended from 3-7 days for new ESA and JSA claims
- Child Benefit frozen for the next four years
- LHA frozen for the next four years
- Tax credits and many social security benefits frozen for four years
- Limits the amount of child tax credit (CTC) for families who become responsible for a child born on or after 6th April 2017
- Limits the child element of Universal Credit to a maximum of two children and removes the higher rate of the child element for the first or only child
- Removes the work-related activity component in Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and the limited capability for work element in Universal Credit
- Changes conditionality in Universal Credit for people who are responsible carers for children

The key intention of these changes to:

- Make work pay
- Freeze benefit rates
- Cap some benefits
- Localisation of the social fund
- Apply stricter sanctions
- Reduce the value of working-age benefits for people who are on low incomes

And yet to come:

- April 2017, 18-21 years old will be exempt from claiming for help with housing costs unless they are vulnerable. DWP have yet to announce the definition of vulnerable for this purpose, nor is known if this will extend to applicants living in temporary accommodation.
- April 2017, temporary accommodation subsidy to become a grant administered by local authorities. Further rules or requirements are not yet known.
- April 2018, housing benefit claims for social housing tenants will be capped at LHA rate. This will include temporary accommodation. Single applicants living in temporary accommodation will only be entitled to receive the shared room rate. The key risk is the disparity between the LHA rate and the rate charged by landlords (see appendix 8 for comparable rates).

This strategy includes actions focused on minimising the risks arising from these changes.

8. Legal Aid Changes

In April 2013 the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishments Act 2012 was introduced on 1st April 2013. The main aim of the act was to reduce the legal aid bill by £350m a year in England and Wales. The Act removed funding for a number of areas of civil law including some debt, housing and benefit issues. Legal aid is still only available for debt and housing matters where someone's home is at immediate risk. It is understood that the East of England has lost approximately £3.3m worth of legal aid funding per year for social welfare advice. There are also issues around people who fall outside the qualifying criteria for legal aid and may either be earning too much but are unable to fund the costs of professional representation in court. Nationally it has been reported that there has been increasing evidence of individual representing themselves leading to delays in court business overall. We will introduce court surgeries to support those households facing court action.

9. The Health and Social Care Act 2012

This Act introduced some of the biggest changes to the NHS since its introduction in 1948. The main focuses of the changes were around:

- Structure Accountabilities
- Funding arrangements
- Working arrangements

This led to:

- The Secretary of State no longer having a duty to provide health services through the NHS
- Strategic Health Authorities being abolished and replaced by a National Commissioning Board and a new body called Public Health England

- Primary Care Trusts were abolished and replaced by:

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that are now responsible for commissioning most health services

Local Authorities (Councils) taking a larger role in public health promotion requiring each local authority to undertake a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) before April 2013 and creating Health and Wellbeing Boards.

At a local level this led to the creation of a Luton Health and Wellbeing Board including Members, senior officers, LCCG, Healthwatch Luton, NHS England and Community Safety Executive; with observers from Luton Council, Luton & Dunstable hospital, East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT), Customer & Corporate Services (CCS), Mental Health and Public Protection and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The transferred public health and health improvement functions from the Primary Care Trust mean this board now:

- assesses the needs of the local population and lead the Statutory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- promotes integration and partnership across areas including through promoting joined up commissioning plans across the NHS, Social Care and Public Health by ensuring a co-ordinated approach
- supports strategic planning and joint commissioning and publish a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- contributes to the developments of Health and Wellbeing services in Luton which may arise as a result of changes in Government policy and relevant legislation
- responds and contributes to developments in wider partnership arrangements through the Luton Forum in addition to the groups that contribute to health and wellbeing
- works with the Scrutiny Health and Social Care Review Group to ensure that appropriate issues are considered by Scrutiny and reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Going forward the Health and Wellbeing Board will annually review the progress of this strategy

This major change saw 53% of the NHS Bedfordshire budget transfer to the Luton CCG who will spend the majority of NHS funding for their local resident on health related services such as GP, dentists, mental health services, pharmacists, ophthalmology and research into the causes of illness. The expectation of the Luton HWBB is to require the LCCGs to cooperate with the Board, and write commissioning plans which take account of the evidence of the JSNA and the priorities of the Luton Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

10. Care Act 2014

An Act to make provision to reform the law relating to care and support for adults and the law relating to support for carers; to make provision about safeguarding adults from abuse or neglect; to make provision about care standards; and to promote individual wellbeing. This has informed an improved working relationship between Adult Social Care and Housing, housing officers trained in mental capacity assessments and a Joint Service Solution Protocol is now in place.

11. Incentivising Right to Buy

In October 2011, the Coalition government announced that they wanted to “Raise Right to Buy discounts which will make the scheme attractive again and rejuvenate the housing stock”. Since this announcement in April 2012 the government increased the maximum cap on the discount to £70k. Since April 2015 this maximum cap is raised on an annual basis by CPI and this has seen many more properties sold in Luton with sale numbers continuing to rise (226 sold between April 2012 & March 2016).

12. The Mortgage Rescue Scheme and Help to Buy

Designed to support vulnerable owner-occupiers at risk of repossession to remain in the home. The government brought this scheme to an end in April 2014. (In addition, as

previously stated the annual reduction in the legal aid bill by £350m per annum means that aid is only available in circumstances where the loss of a home is imminent). However since bank interest rates have stayed at 0.5% for more than five years Luton has seen a significant reduction in the number of at risk owner-occupiers. Since its inception in 2009 there have been a very limited number of successful mortgage rescues in Luton up to 2014. The employment of negotiation practice with lenders has restricted the need for this fund. There are currently a total of 1,256 applicants who are on the Help to Buy Register who would like to live in Luton, of these:

- A total of 561 applicants live in Luton (45%)
- A further 373 applicants work in Luton (30%)
- Average Savings of applicants are £11,863
- Average Income of applicants are £30,140
- 620 (49%) of applicants live in the Private Rented Sector
- 455 (36%) Live with family / friends
- 59 (5%) live in Housing Association accommodation
- 23 (2%) live in Council properties

We have in addition put in place arrangements with the Help to Buy agency which focus on early homelessness prevention in relationship breakdown cases involving children, overcrowding or medical factors. Since 2014 six households have received assistance through this arrangement of which four were due to relationship breakdown.

13. Interest only mortgages

Predominantly in the 80s and 90s homeowners took out interest only mortgages. There is some concern that some will experience difficulty in repaying the capital element of their mortgage when their mortgage matures. The Financial Conduct Authority estimates around 260,000 home owners whose mortgage matures before 2020 do not have a strategy in place to repay their mortgage at the end of their term.

There is some evidence of customer awareness of this challenge and several households have confirmed their intention to downsize. Nonetheless we are looking more closely at risk which will help to build a robust action plan for the customer.

14. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

DHP has been in use since 2001 to help low-income households who qualify for Housing Benefit or the housing cost element of Universal Credit, rent their homes meet their housing costs (in the short term). Since the advent of the Welfare reform Act 2012 the use has altered to mitigation of the effects of Welfare Reform. In particular rent entitlement has been affected and the ability to buy food and pay utility bills impacted. At April 2016 there are still 269 households within Luton affected by the spare room subsidy.

The risk in terms of homelessness in Luton for the future is that if there are further cuts to the DHP budget, alongside the lack of affordable housing, will mean more people will be unable to afford the cost of living in Luton.

15. The Localism Act 2011

The Act introduced significant changes to the Housing Act 1996. The stated policy objective is to enable local authorities to better manage housing demand and access to housing within the context of local circumstances.

The key changes introduced by the Localism Act include:

- Local authorities are given the power to end their homelessness duty with an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector

- Social housing tenure reform to allow social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies with limited security of tenure
- The requirement for local authorities to set out their approach and response in a Tenancy Strategy
- Social Housing allocation reform which allows local authorities to set allocation policies appropriate to the local area.

The Government introduced the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 as a guidance to respond to concerns about the standards of accommodation that may be used by local authorities as temporary accommodation, and to end the homelessness duty. The statutory guidance includes requirements about the quality of accommodation and of landlords, as well as the suitability of the location for a household's needs and circumstances.

16. The Housing and Planning Act 2016

- Intends to restrict succession rights to spouses, civil partners and those who live together irrespective of when the tenancy was entered into. Also proposes to limit the succeeded tenancy to a fixed term.
- Tenancies for life will be phased out with the introduction of Fixed Term tenancies.
- Pay to Stay – making high rents compulsory to households with income above a certain level. However an interim decision has been reached which permits registered social landlords the discretion in application.
- Requires local authorities to promote the supply of Starter Homes, including the preparation of local plans to ensure a 20% reduced cost available to enable new homeowner entry.
- Right to Buy extended to private registered providers of social housing tenants at the discretion of that landlord.
- Prescribes a duty on local authorities to consider selling vacant higher value housing.

On 30 June 2016 the DCLG published a release providing information on the number of households that reported being unintentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness) to their local authority and were offered housing assistance. Local authorities accepted 14,780 households as being statutorily homeless between 1 January and 31 March 2016, up 2% on the previous quarter and 9% on the same quarter of last year. The total number of households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2016 was 71,540, up 11% on a year earlier, and up 49% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010.

Much of the overall direction is about social change and supporting those in the greatest difficulties: prisoners, young people leaving care, looked-after children, the digitally excluded. But the proposals do not sit well with the government's economic programme of austerity and public sector cuts. The housing and health sector faces more challenges in the years ahead to balance its aspiration to support those disadvantaged in society and improve their 'life chances' while responding to the continuing demands for cutting costs.

Although homelessness legislation has not been announced, the government is likely to bring forward proposals within the next year or two particular with the intended exit from the EU. Local authorities and landlords should review their approaches in readiness for a wider duty on local authorities to assist those threatened with homelessness. **(The Queen's Speech – Janis Bright & Tim Brown 2016)**

APPENDIX 4

Local Context

The Homelessness Act (2002) places a statutory duty on each local authority to carry out a review of homelessness and to develop a new Homelessness Strategy every five years.

The **Homelessness Review** provides a comprehensive assessment of:

- The levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the borough

- Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people, and provide support to people who are or may become homeless
- Resources available to carry out these activities.

Government has supplemented this legislation through the Housing and Planning Act 2016, evolving guidance and a number of other policy initiatives. In addition, case law has been a strong influencing factor.

The **Homelessness Strategy** must set out how the Council will prevent homelessness and provide support to people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless during the coming five years.

Homelessness is a term that is used to describe various situations of housing need, and it is important to be clear about the different circumstances in which people are considered to be homeless. To summarise:

Statutory homelessness refers to those people who have made a homeless application and have met the criteria in legislation (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002) to be accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance (according to immigration status), homeless and in **priority need**. This includes families, pregnant women and single people who are particularly vulnerable. A household may be accepted as 'homeless' because they are going to be evicted or are living in accommodation so unsuitable that it is not 'reasonable' for them to remain there. The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to statutory homeless households.

Non-statutory/non-priority homeless people are primarily single people/childless couples who are not assessed as being in 'priority need' and are only entitled to 'advice and assistance' if homeless. These residents are offered advice about looking for private rented accommodation, accommodation agency lists, assistance to apply for rent in advance from the Homeless Prevention Fund. Some non-priority homeless people are offered supported housing or access to the shared housing scheme managed through the YMCA.

Rough sleepers are people who are literally roofless and are bedded down on the streets, parks or other places where they may or may not be seen by the public. This group are a tiny minority of the much larger group of non-priority homeless people, as most single homeless people are 'sofa surfing' and are described as the 'hidden homeless' because we have no means to calculate their numbers. Housing legislation does not set out specific statutory duties to people sleeping rough, but there is a strong policy and funding focus on this group particularly in Luton where the numbers sleeping rough are growing.

Luton first produced its first Homelessness Strategy in 2003 and continues to review homelessness, responding to any identified needs or gaps within local homelessness service provision and wider factors which may be of significant impact.

The last Homelessness Strategy was published in 2008 and the key objectives of this were:

- Prevent homelessness in an authority's area
- Support people when they are vulnerable
- Tackling wider causes and symptoms
- Sustaining reductions in rough sleeping
- Providing more settled homes and
- Developing choice based approaches

Over the years there has been considerable progress to develop timely and relevant services which are aimed at preventing homelessness and providing realistic solutions to those in housing need going forward

The Single Homelessness Person Strategy Partnership Forum, launched in April 2012, continues to be a culmination of partners, statutory agencies and housing services working together to tackle homelessness. It has recently reviewed and updated its terms of reference to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The Forum has been integral and supportive to the undertaking of this review, providing challenging and positive feedback to inform the review and the new Homelessness Forum strategy and action plan.

APPENDIX 5

The links to other strategies and reports

The Housing Strategy 2015-2020 sets out the strategic objectives for addressing housing need and improving housing conditions over the next five years. The approach is strategic and therefore provides a broad overview of the housing issues, challenges and solutions. It has been developed in the context of considerable changes to the political and financial environment which will have a significant impact on how LBC deliver housing, health and well-being related services as well as on communities themselves.

Social Mobility and Anti-Poverty Strategy 2016-2020 – ensures a joined up approach across the Council to support individuals and families who are facing difficulties and are in crisis. It also focuses on ensuring we have a strong preventative approach to support people at the earliest opportunity. This work is placed under four key headings: Education Health and Family, Employment and Adult Skills, Advice Guidance and Financial Inclusion, Housing and Neighbourhoods

Affordable Housing Viability Study Report 2013 identifies an appropriate Affordable Housing Target threshold and percentage contribution based on the future population and households forecast in the Borough over the period of the Local Plan being prepared (2011-31).

<http://www.luton.gov.uk/Environment/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Planning/LOCAL%20AND%20REGIONAL%20PLANNING/Affordable%20Housing%20Viability%20Study%20April%202013.pdf>

Private Sector Renewal Strategy (PSRS) draws together information from 15 years of housing condition surveys and the current legislative framework set against the corporate objectives, to identify a series of priorities that will assist in making a difference to the condition of housing within Luton and the quality of life of local people.

<http://www.luton.gov.uk/Housing/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Luton%20Private%20Sector%20Renewal%20Strategy%20-%202010-2013.pdf>

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010 an independent assessment to determine the overall housing requirement up to 2021 in the areas of:

- Affordable Housing Targets
- Housing for Older Persons
- Existing Occupiers and their Homes

<http://www.luton.gov.uk/Housing/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Housing/Housing%20development%20and%20strategy/Strategic%20Housing%20Market%20Assessment%20Executive%20Summary%20A4.pdf>

The Empty Homes Strategy is an integral part of the overarching Housing Strategy for Luton and contributes to the provision of new affordable homes for local residents.

<http://www.luton.gov.uk/Housing/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Appendix%20A%20-%20New%20Empty%20Homes%20Strategy.pdf>

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019. Health and Wellbeing Boards were created to improve the key health and wellbeing issues in an area: those issues that can only be resolved by partners working together to a common goal. Luton's Health and Wellbeing Board has decided that the major focus for the next three years should be homelessness and housing.

http://www.luton.gov.uk/Health_and_social_care/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Health%20and%20wellbeing%20strategy.pdf

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2016-2020. Domestic Violence is a significant cause of homelessness. It is however more complex than the presenting housing issue and typically

requires multi agency support to address. There is therefore a need to ensure specialist services are fully integrated into housing processes and work alongside housing officers to ensure victims and their children receive the full range of support available to them. This includes enabling victims and their children can remain in their own homes wherever it is possible to do so safely.

Refuge provision is available in Luton for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Currently there are four refuges providing a total of 19 bed spaces. There is no provision locally for male victims but where male victims require refuge, LBC will support them to access this provision out of county. While this may appear inequitable, the reality is that demand for refuge spaces for women drastically exceeds availability and around just one woman in seven that requests this provision can be accommodated in a local refuge (Women's Aid).

LBC will continue working with statutory and voluntary partners, in particular Bedfordshire Police and the Luton Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service, to ensure that agencies utilise the full range of powers available to them including Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) to hold perpetrators accountable and protect victims.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2015 is a way local authorities', the NHS and other public sector partners work together to understand the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the local population and to identify future priorities.

http://www.luton.gov.uk/Community_and_living/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/JSNA/Executive%20Summary.pdf

Housing Investment Strategy 2016. There is opportunity for all Councils to engage in housing activity which can raise and support finance to build and hold homes themselves and with other partners. In this way, Councils are both borrowers and financial providers to the housing finance market. The Council is in the process of developing and implementing a housing investment strategy that will set targets for delivering affordable, market rented and markets sale properties across the town in the next 5 years.

Allocations Policy 2013. The **Housing Act 1996** requires that all housing authorities must have an Allocation Scheme which will determine priorities, and the procedures to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation. These terms will be applied to allocations of both the Authority's own housing stock, and to nominations made for vacancies of units accommodation which are owned and managed by Registered Providers ("Housing Associations") over which the Authority holds nomination rights.

Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996 requires that certain categories of applicants are given "reasonable preference" in the housing authority's allocation scheme. These are:

- People that are Homeless
- People owed certain Homelessness duties
- People living in unsatisfactory housing conditions (including insanitary or overcrowded housing)
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds
- People who need to move to avoid hardship or harm to themselves or others

In July 2016 there were almost 11,500 people on the Housing Register. Our Allocations Policy categorises priority based on 4 bandings where Band 1 is the highest priority need. Residing in the private sector is currently treated as 'a qualifying need'. This enables a reasonable 'preference award' which then adds weight to an application, even where a household is adequately housed and would not fall under the government's "Reasonable Preference" (RP) categories. Band 4 broadly contains two streams of applicants: those households 'desiring' social housing but having no priority for rehousing and those households who may be eligible for RP but have had any rehousing priority they may be

entitled to demoted due to their behaviour or conduct of their current tenancy. The table below reflects the housing need within Luton excluding those with No Reasonable Preference (NRP):

Numbers on the Housing Register July 2016

Bedroom requirement	Total on Register	Band 3 with NRP	Band 4 with NRP	Net Housing Need	% Net Housing Need
4+	545	78	31	436	8%
3	2383	787	238	1358	24%
2	4490	1559	489	2442	44%
1	4009	1822	854	1333	24%
Totals	11,427	4246	1612	5569	100%

The Localism Act 2011 gave Local Authorities a various new powers and more flexibility in relation to the allocation of housing. These included:

- The ability to end the Council's duty towards homeless applicants with an offer of private rented accommodation
- The ability to operate "closed" housing registers (currently almost everybody that applies to the Council for housing, regardless of their individual circumstances, is entitled to join the housing register)

Skills and Employability Strategy 2016 – 2010 Luton is committed to the development of a skilled workforce, creating better opportunities for its residents and supporting a vibrant and thriving business economy. The Council's all-age Skills and Employability Strategy gives a strong partnership platform to work with employers, training providers and education settings to create a culture of learning, aspiration and high achievement that provides the skills employers are seeking and which will support the goal of sustained growth in Luton's economy. Much work had already been done to develop and delivery projects to help people move close to the labour market and into sustainable jobs, but more needs to be done. Joining up services across the Council to work collaboratively on innovative approaches to assist people who are currently unemployed is key to achieving the Council's strategic priorities of building economic growth and prosperity, enhancing skills and improving public health. A Skills Programme is being developed which aims to coordinate the various projects and initiatives, including linking with the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

Draft Investment Framework - presents a clear and coherent plan to the local community, partners and potential investors, and focuses attention on ensuring everything that we do is aimed at improving health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Tenancy Strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to help shape the tenancy policies of local landlords operating within Luton especially to the extent on which they make use of Fixed Term Tenancies. It covers:

- The kinds of tenancies they grant,
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- Where they grant tenancies for a certain term, the lengths of the terms, and
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

Whilst landlords are not obliged to comply with the strategy they must have regard to it.

APPENDIX 6

The Gold Standard Challenge

The Ten Local Challenges cover both priority and non-priority groups and this strategy sets out how the Council, working with its partners, will work to meet the needs of households across all these groups. The six key objectives push the service to meet the Ten Local Challenges, and this has been detailed in Appendix 1 'The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan'.

1. To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
4. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
7. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. To have a homelessness prevention strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
9. To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks

APPENDIX 7

Achievements since the last produced strategy

Since the publication of the last strategy some of the areas of achievement have been:

- Ensured that no 16 and 17 year old singles are placed in Bed & Breakfast
- Housing Options staff received annual refresher training on tenure and homelessness as well as attending regular training on the full range of housing related law
- Increased prevention and relief enabling choice and independence through 726 households benefitting from rent deposits and rent in advance - 2011 to 2015
- Financially supported 19 bed spaces at Luton Women's Aid – over 70 families assisted in the last year alone
- Provided support via the HOMESAFE in conjunction with Luton DV unit and the Bobby Van scheme
- Funded an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)
- Continued to develop multi-agency work with MARAC with a specialist database and skills set in place to address and support successful outcomes for DV victims
- Redrafted our licence agreements to include a statement on domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour
- Implemented agreed protocol with Probation and other agencies for ex-offenders
- Ensured representation at MAPPA meetings to assist in the coordination and management of offenders and those presenting a risk to the community
- Provided safeguarding training for all staff front line staff
- Continue to financially support outreach work by NOAH and the provision of a day centre for street homeless resulting in 124 individual being supported to sustain at risk accommodation, gain accommodation or reconnected to EEA countries in the past two years

- Delivered support to homeless households in temporary accommodation and carried out needs assessments to enable access to floating support in all cases where support needs identified
- Funded independent universal floating support and integrated offender management services through Penrose which in the past two years delivered support to over 2500 individuals with positive outcomes in 85% of all cases.
- Introduced a mental health street triage pilot delivered by the police, ambulance service and mental health practitioners to reduce the number of patients being inappropriately detained in police custody, reduce assessment times and ensure early diversion to the most appropriate care and support
- Implemented an inspection regime for Bed & Breakfast to ensure good standards in service provision, check health and safety of residents and the accommodation
- Supported all households affected by the Benefit Cap to make informed decisions to secure future affordable accommodation
- Supported bids by our partner voluntary sector and secured DCLG funding for No Second Night Out provision
- Implemented an evictions protocol with our partner voluntary sector to ensure a fair, consistent approach where eviction proves necessary
- Improved monitoring and allocation processes of temporary accommodation to ensure best use of contracted stock
- Maximised use of our own stock to provide additional temporary accommodation for homeless households
- Incentivised downsizing from Council owned stock to free up family accommodation
- Developed our first Council owned supported hostel for families
- Brought 138 empty properties back into use
- Funded severe weather provision
- Issued food bank vouchers and contributed by running a food collection service
- Through the Stronger Families programme since January 2015, 1104 families have been supported of which 67% have achieved positive outcomes across a range of complexities including: crime and anti-social behaviour, school attendance, health issues, worklessness, debt and financial exclusion, domestic violence and abuse and children who need help
- Provided over 300 apprenticeships within the Council alone of which 94% gained paid employment and recruited 186 volunteers
- Supported over 100 households to downsize freeing up larger family accommodation and reducing rental costs and debt to households affected by the benefit cap whilst simultaneously relieving overcrowding
- Increased the number of accredited landlords offering quality homes to 43 in total
- Drawn up a Luton Safeguarding Adults Board information sharing protocol with Luton Clinical Commissioning Group ; Bedfordshire Police; Luton & Dunstable Hospital; East London Foundation Trust ; Eastern Region Ambulance Service; Cambridge Community Services

APPENDIX 8

Accommodation price increase in Luton

The following information and table confirm the changing rental cost of private rented accommodation within Luton. Price continues to outstrip the local housing allowance rate making the cost of private renting increasingly unaffordable for low income households. However, with the imminent implementation of the Benefit Cap from November 2016 the impact will also be felt by some families occupying both Council and Registered Provider accommodation. Work has been ongoing by the DWP nationally to support those identified into work, training and with money management. Specifically 2016 average monthly rent levels for:

Accommodation	Local Housing Allowance rates	Average Private Rentals	Difference	Average Council Housing Rentals
Shared Rooms	£270.57	£365	£94.43	n/a
Bedsits	£484.60	£475	£9.60	£350.35
One beds	£484.60	£610	£125.40	£401.96
Two beds	£617.24	£750	£132.76	£400.88
Three beds	£735.28	£925	£189.72	£428.61
Four + beds	£886.12	£1250	£363.88	£474.67

The following information and table confirm the changing average purchase cost of accommodation within Luton. The price increase for 2016 was the 3rd highest nationally.

Year	Luton	Luton yearly average % change	England & Wales	England & Wales yearly average % change
2011	£124,245	-5.4	£159,457	-1.6
2012	£125,607	1.1	£158,444	-0.6
2013	£124,263	-1.1	£160,011	1
2014	£133,719	7.6	£170,764	6.7
2015	£146,029	1.2	179,469	5.1
2016	£169,184	17	190,275	6.1

APPENDIX 9

APRIL 2016 SUMMARY: SOCIAL SECTOR SIZE CRITERIA AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS IN LUTON

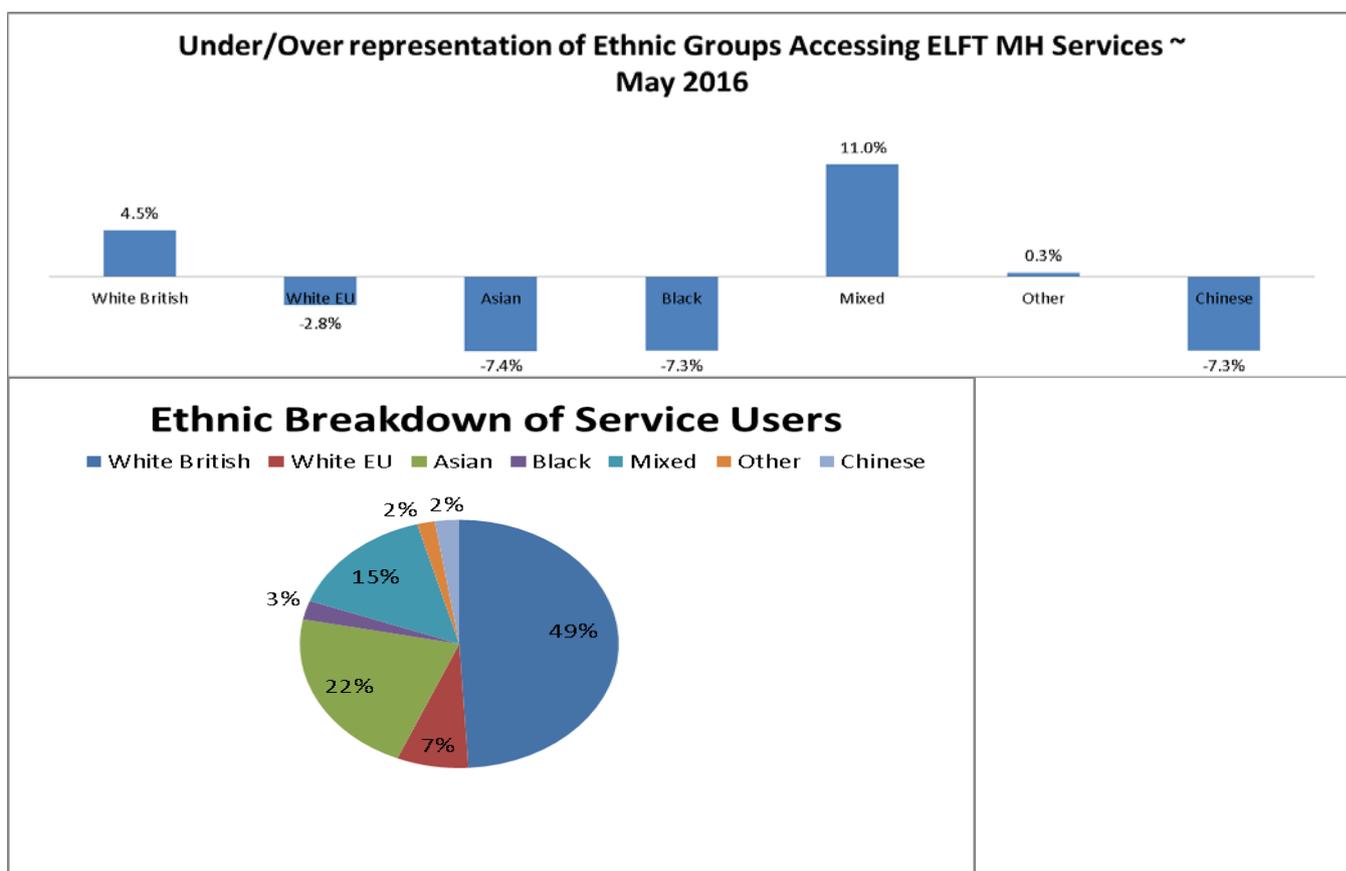
One Bedroom 14 %	Number of Claims	Total Reduction	Average Weekly Reduction
No Children	472	£ 7,408.87	£ 15.70
1 Child	92	£ 1,551.57	£ 16.86
2 Children	56	£ 991.19	£ 17.70
3 Children	8	£ 150.91	£ 18.86
> 3 Children	8	£ 147.89	£ 18.49
Totals	636	£ 10,250.43	£ 16.12
Two Bedroom 25 %	Number of Claims	Total Reduction	Average Weekly Reduction
No Children	147	£ 4,095.66	£ 27.86
1 Child	6	£ 190.59	£ 31.77
2 Children	2	£ 68.24	£ 34.12
> 3 Children	2	£ 71.34	£ 35.67

Totals	157	£ 4,425.83	£ 28.19
Overall Totals	793	£ 14,676.26	£ 18.51

BENEFIT CAP AFFECTED HOUSING BENEFIT CLAIMANTS IN LUTON- APRIL 2016

	Number of Claims	Total Weekly Loss	Average Weekly Loss
Totals	319	£ 11,507.75	£ 36.07

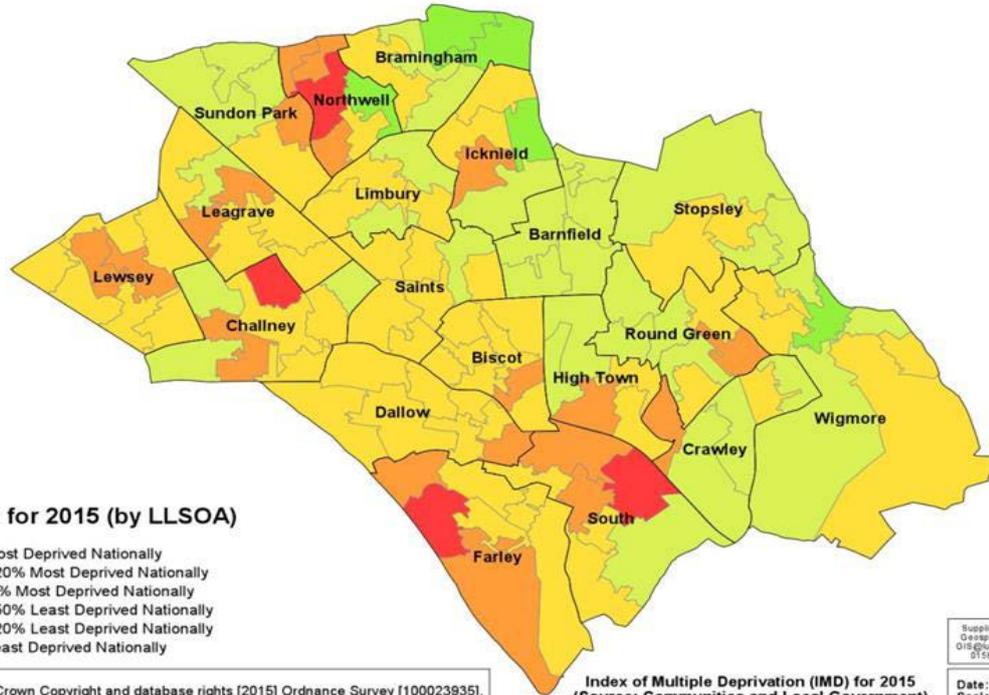
APPENDIX 10 CUSTOMERS ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BY ETHNICITY



(Please see the IIA for further information on these statistics)

APPENDIX 11 Details the levels of health deprivation and disability within Luton

Health Deprivation and Disability 2015



IMD Rank for 2015 (by LLSOA)

- Top 10% Most Deprived Nationally
- Top 10% - 20% Most Deprived Nationally
- Top 20 - 50% Most Deprived Nationally
- Top 20% - 50% Least Deprived Nationally
- Top 10% - 20% Least Deprived Nationally
- Top 10% Least Deprived Nationally



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Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2015
(Source: Communities and Local Government)



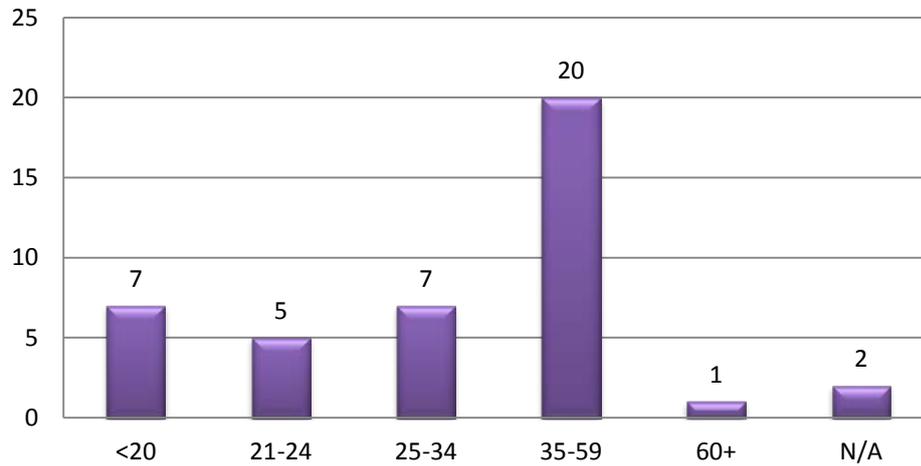
Supplied by the Research & Geospatial Information Team
GIS@luton.gov.uk (-LBC GIS)
01582 547467 / 546366

Date: 27 : 11 : 2015
Scale = 1:50000 @ A4

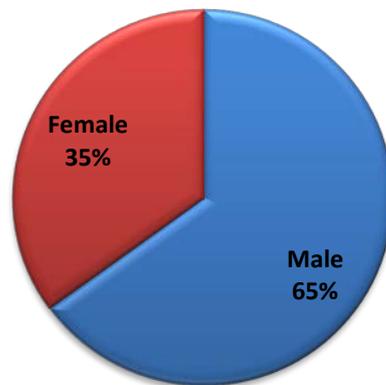
APPENDIX 12

Health Needs Audit of single homeless people conducted August 2016

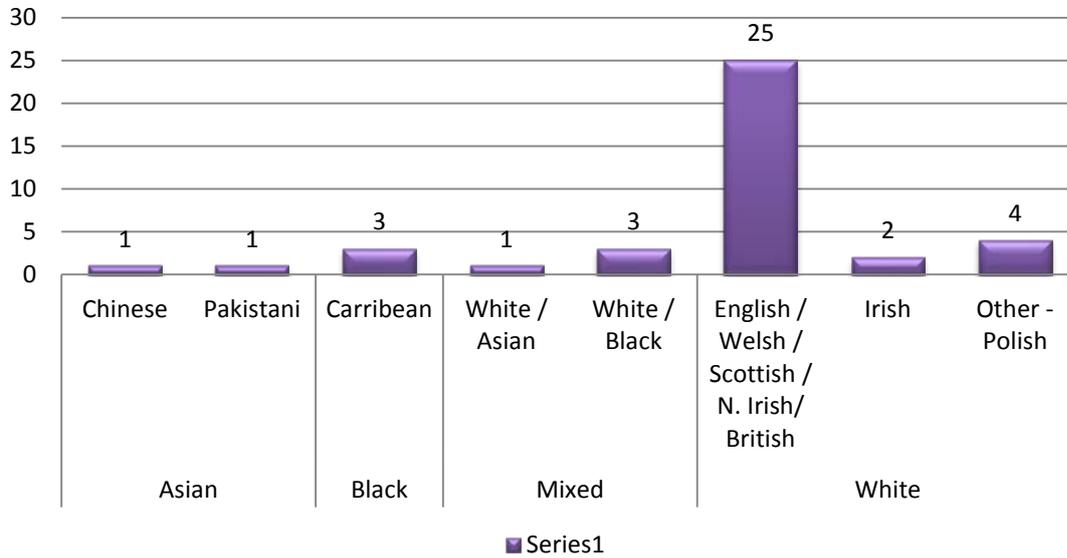
Age



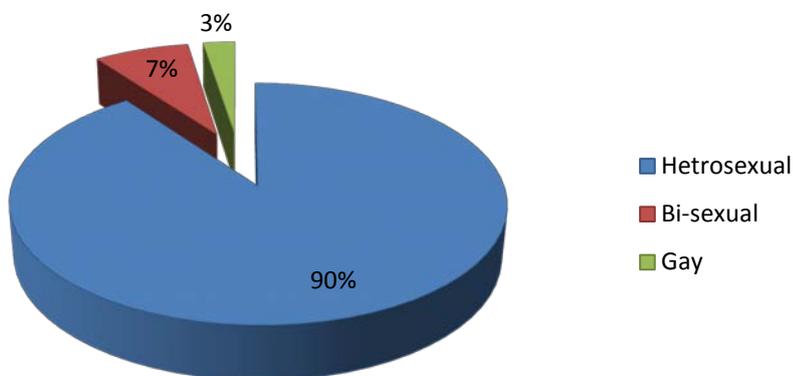
Gender

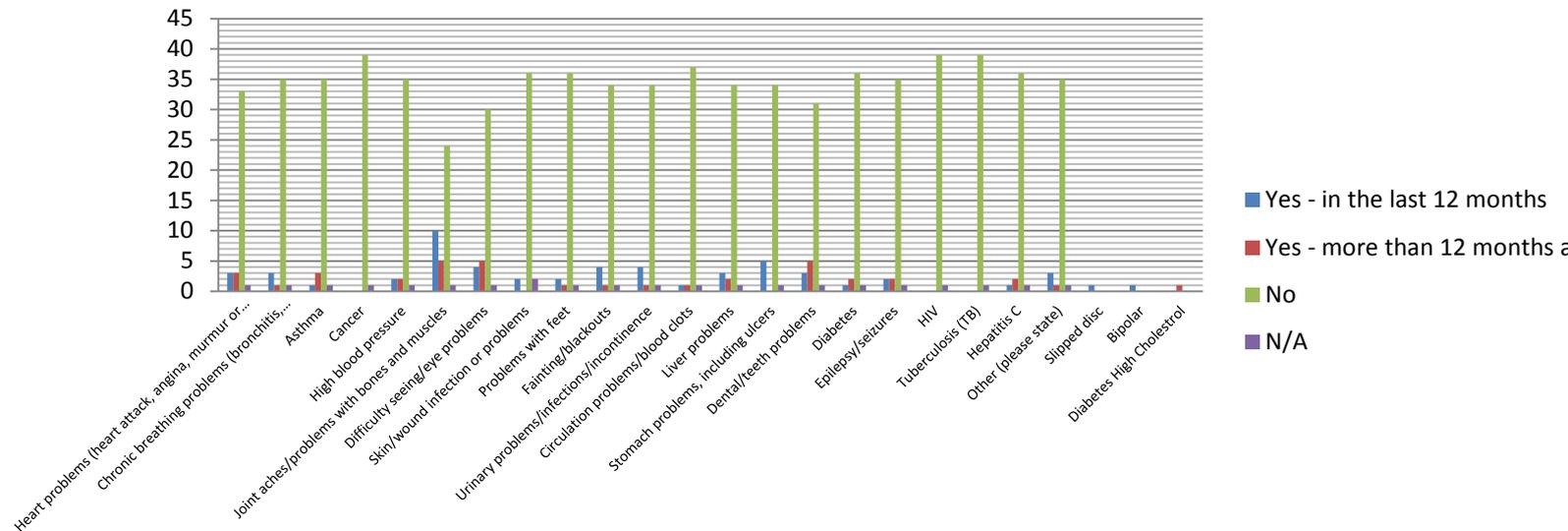


Ethnicity

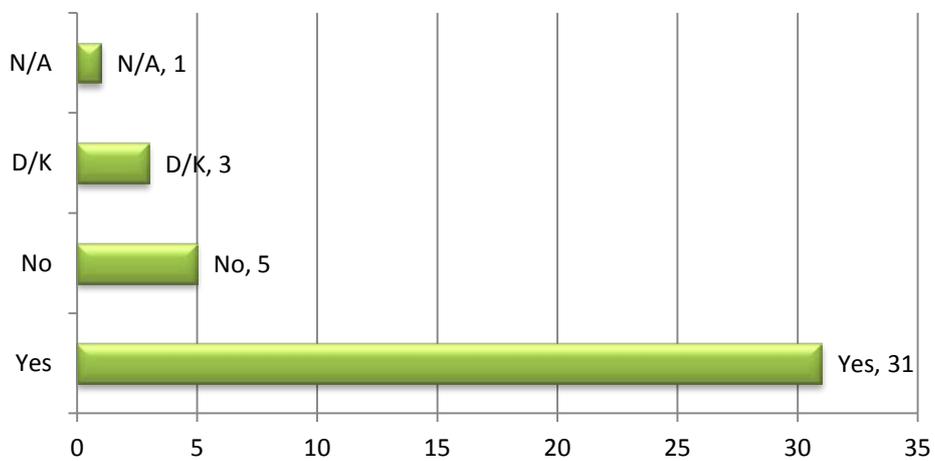


Sexuality

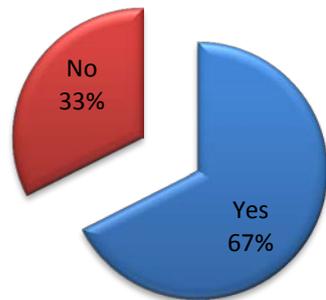




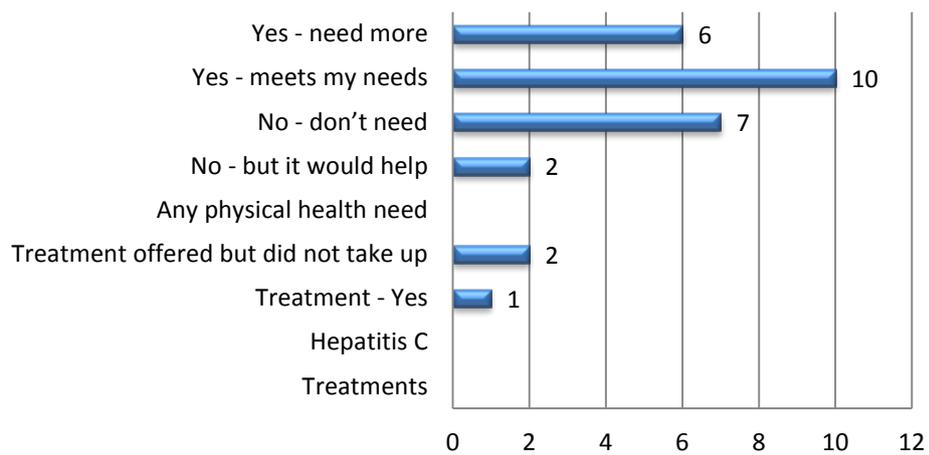
Recourse to Public Funds



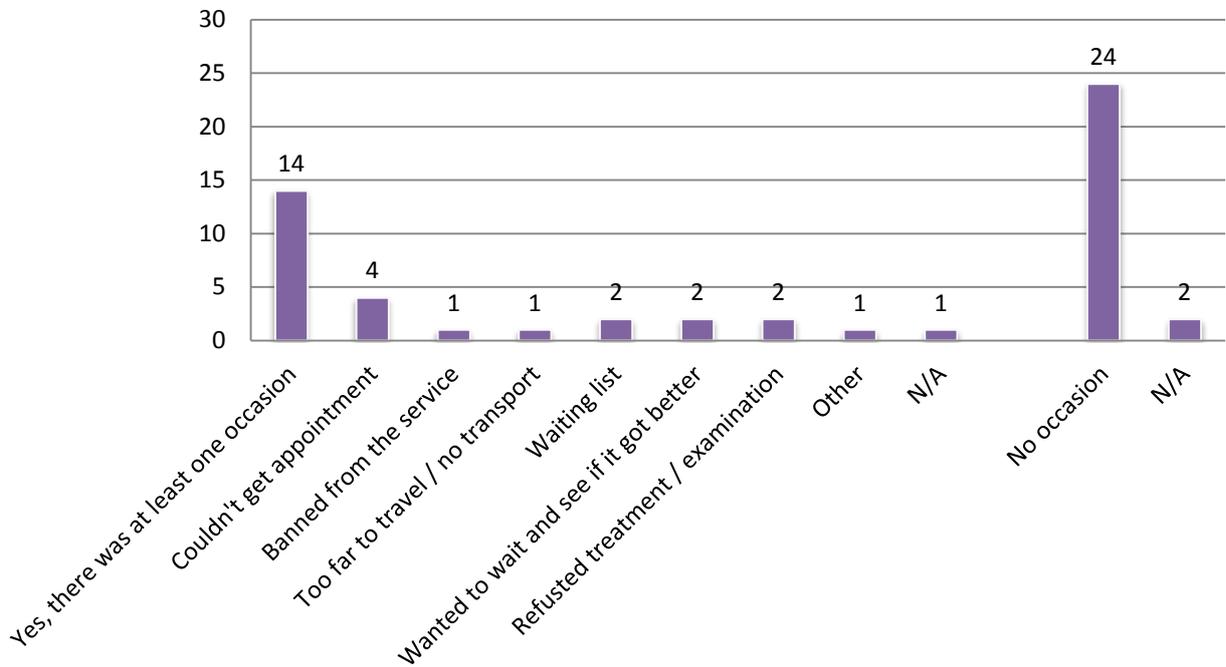
Long standing illness, disability or infirmaty



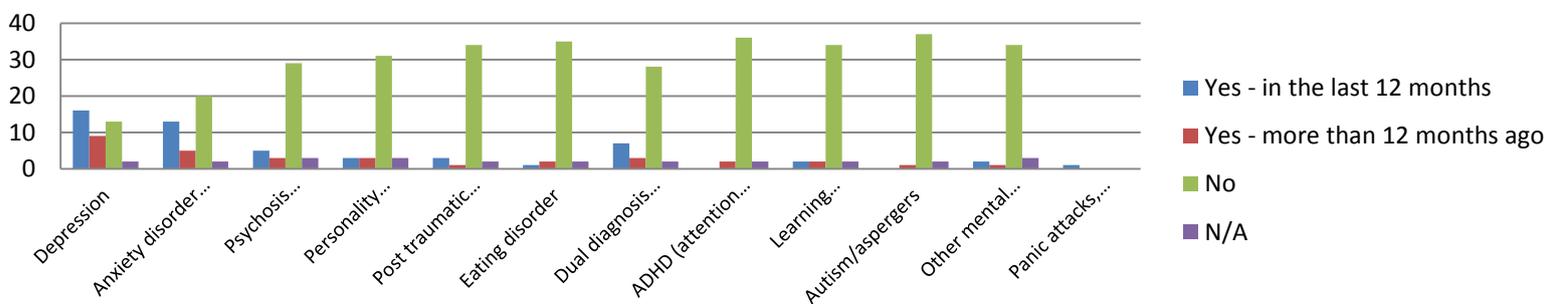
Treatments



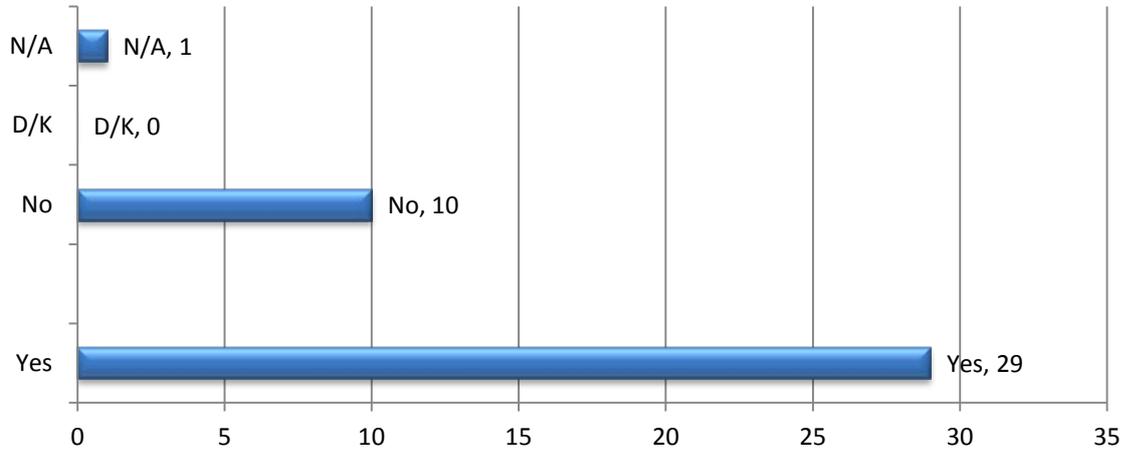
Required treatment but not received



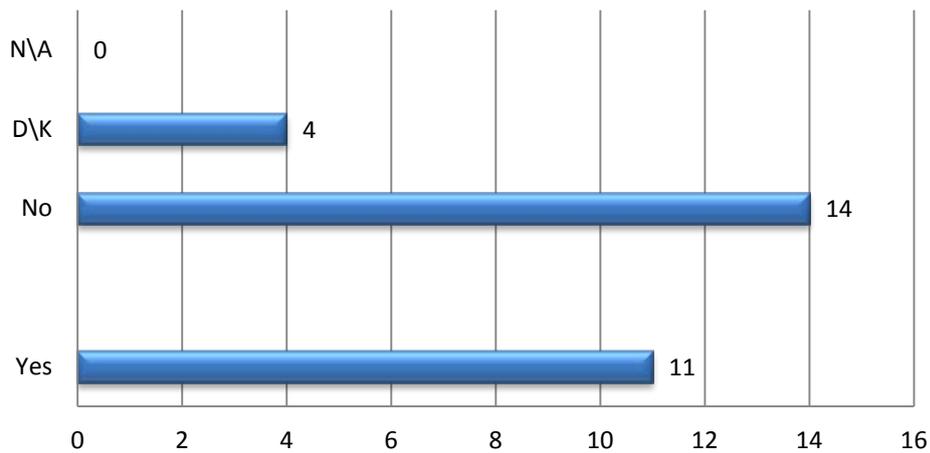
Mental Health or Behavioural Condition



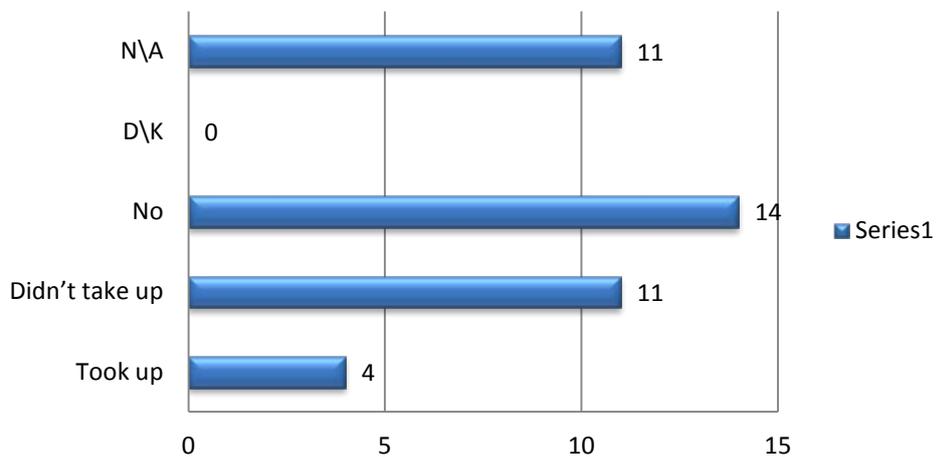
Smokes- Cigarettes, Cigars or Pipe

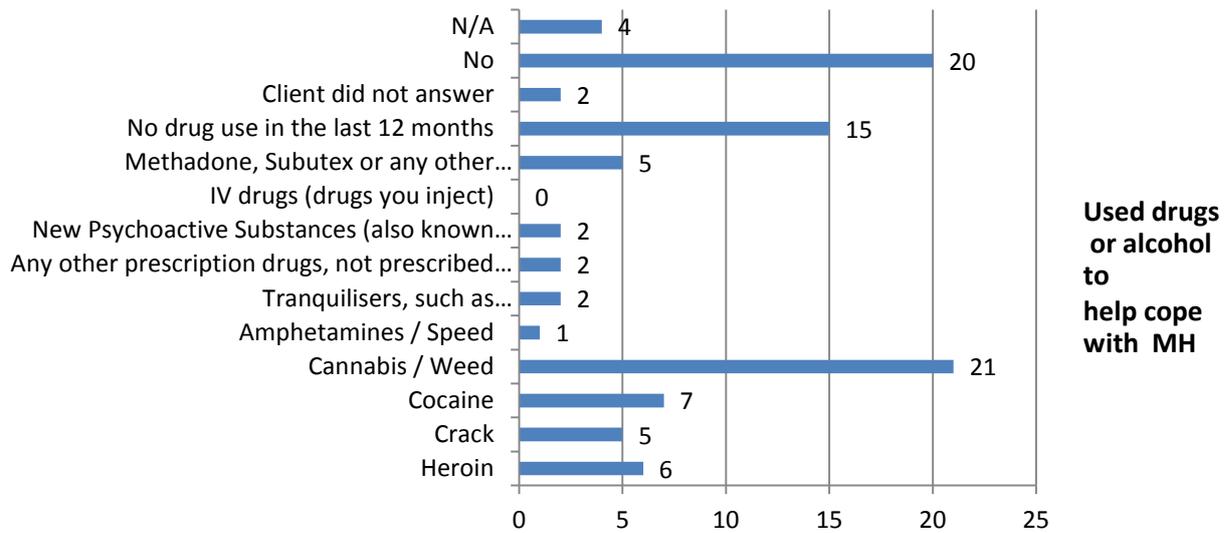


Would like to give up



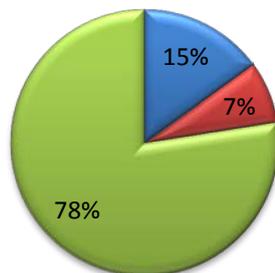
Offered Help



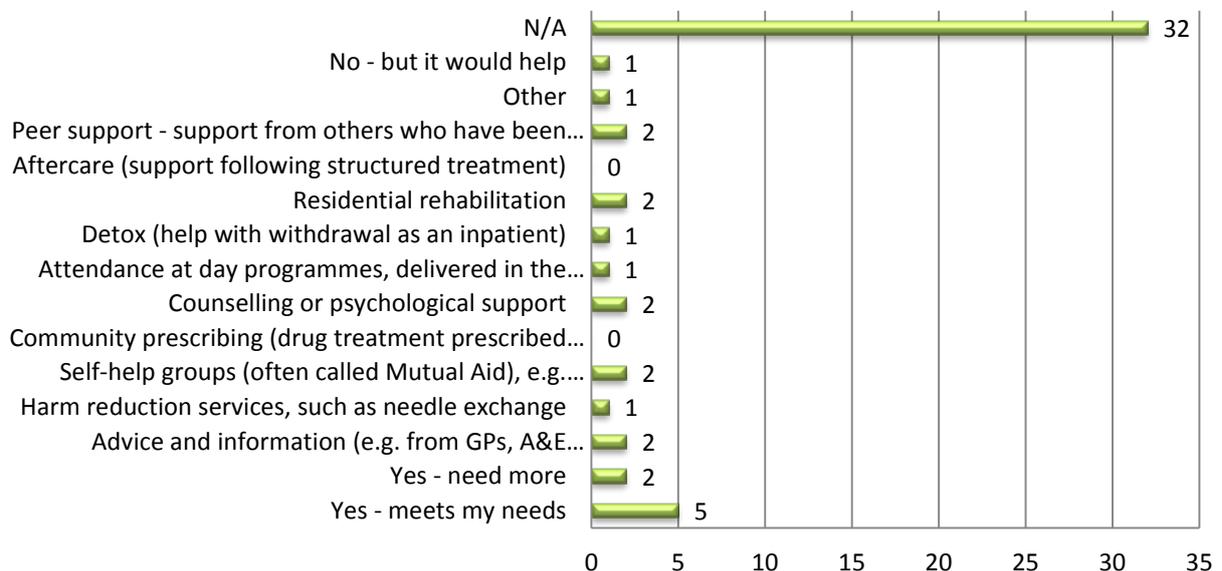


Have or are recovering from a drug problem

■ Yes, in recovery
 ■ Yes I have a problem
 ■ No



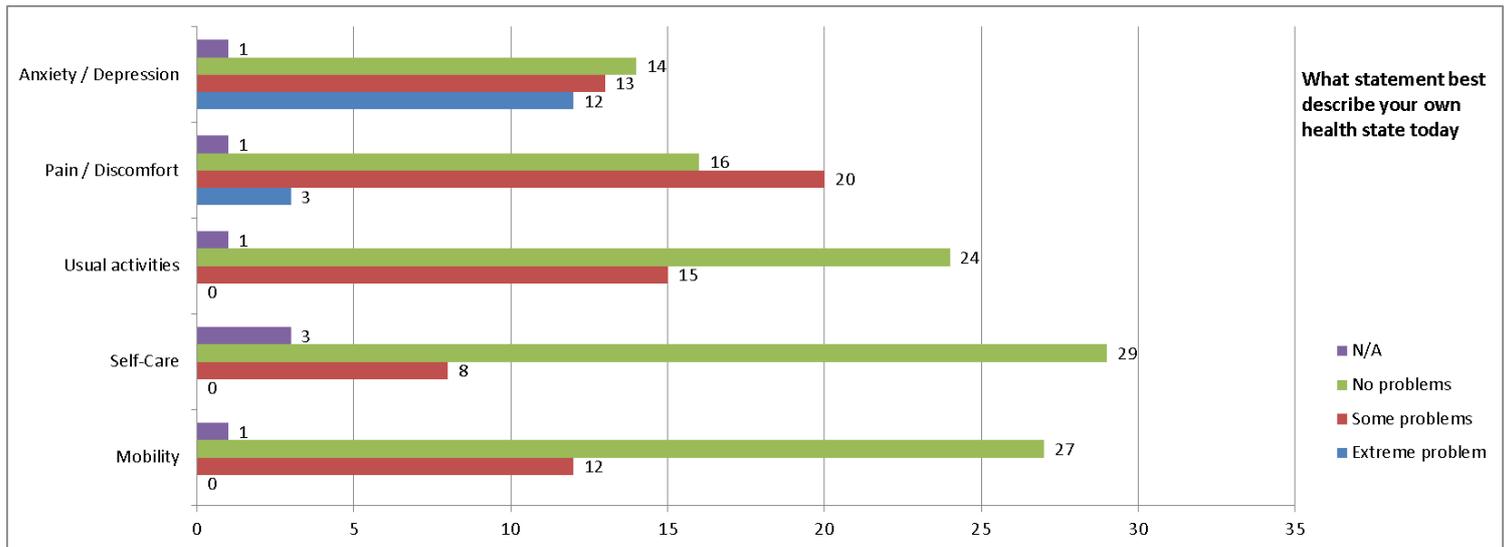
Receiving support\help with drug problem



How often have you had an alcoholic drink during the last 12 months?	
Almost every day	4
5-6 days per week	1
3-4 per week	1
1-2 per week	8
1-2 per month	3
Once every couple of months	6
1-2 per year	2
Not at all	13
N/A	2
23. How many units do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	
Under 5	11
5 to 10	5
10 to 20	7
20 to 30	2
Over 30	2
N/A	13
24. Do you have or are you recovering from an alcohol problem?	
Yes - currently in recovery	2
Yes - have alcohol problem	6
No	30
N/A	2
24a. Are you receiving support / treatment to help with alcohol problem?	
Yes - meets my needs	2
Advice and information (e.g. from GPs, A&E departments)	1
Self-help groups, e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous	1
Community prescribing (drug treatment prescribed as part of a care plan)	2
Counselling or psychological support	2
Attendance at day programmes, delivered in the community	0
Detox (help with withdrawal as an inpatient)	1
Residential rehabilitation	2
Aftercare (support following structured treatment)	0
Peer support - support from others who have been through a similar experience	0
Other	0
No - but it would help	3
N/A	35

25. Are you registered with these services in your local area?	Yes	No
	Are you registered with these services in your local area?	
	yes	no
GP or homeless healthcare service	32	8
Dentist	25	15
Refused above in last 12 months	0	40

Have you used the following in the last 12 months?	3+ times	3 times	Twice	Once	None	N/A
GP or homeless healthcare service	18	2	5	7	6	2
A&E	6	1	2	9	21	1
Ambulance	1	1	3	5	28	2
Admitted to hospital	3	2	2	9	23	1
Reason	A&E	Ambulance	Hospital			
Accident	3	1	2			
Mental health problem / condition	5	4	5			
Physical health problem / condition	5	2	1			
Alcohol use	1	0	0			
Drug use	1	0	0			
Self-harm / suicide	2	2	2			
Other violent incident or assault	2	1	1			
N/A	21	30	29			
	Yes	No	Can't remember	N/A		
Did staff ask if you had somewhere suitable to go when you were discharged?	11	3	1	25		
After being discharged, were you readmitted within 30 days?	2	10	1	27		
27c. When you were discharged from hospital, where did you go?	Accommodation suitable for my needs	Accommodation NOT suitable for my needs	Street	N/A		
	7	5	1	27		



APPENDIX 13

Consultation

Consultation and involvement of customers and stakeholders is a key element of the Review. To inform the Review we:-

- Facilitated a Health Needs Audit questionnaire with single homeless in partnership with voluntary and 3rd sector partners
- Surveyed 86 households/individuals that had received assistance, support, advice through our homeless prevention service, including with the support of partnering agencies those placed in hostels and in temporary accommodation procured by the Council.
- Surveyed all households placed in Bed & Breakfast. Residents were asked about their cooking, eating and food storage facilities, and how they provided for meals for themselves and their children. The survey also explored potential initiatives such as a community café and whether this could be a support to families in temporary accommodation. Response rate 28%.
- Conducted an online consultation through website and as notified to interested parties
- Consulted Registered Providers operating within Luton
- Consulted Council Members, Police, the National Practitioner Support Service, Luton Clinical Commissioning Committee, Scrutiny Health and Social Care Review Group, Overview and Scrutiny Board, Health and Wellbeing Board
- Consulted frontline housing staff

APPENDIX 14

Partners List

Single Homelessness Strategy Partnership

Name	Organisation
Alison Harding	Probation
Andrew Nuttall	Catch22
David Collins	YOT
Antony Miller	Social Interest Group
Audrey Lewis	Mary Seacole

Carole Herries	EELGA
Christine Spooner Peter Smith	Homeless link
Claire Walker	LAMP
Darren Kelso	Penrose Synergy
Emmeline Irvine	Penrose Synergy
Eunice Mauchaza	Luton Community Homes
Gail Dearing	ELFT
Gill Arukpe	Penrose Synergy
Gillian Sharp	Luton Law Centre
Hayley Murphy	Athena Support
Helen Tamattiris	George London Homes
Jane Foster	Luton Community Lettings
John Archer	LAMP
Kevin Porter	Signposts
Lee-Anne Farach	LBC -Children Services
Lynda Rees	Luton Community Homes
Nick Clements	YMCA
Nicky Poulain	Luton CCG
Patricia Medford	Penrose Synergy
Paul Hunt	YMCA
Paul McDonald	LAMP
Paul Prosser	NOAH
Phyl Rainey	Signposts
Richard Angol	Actaround
Tim Archbold	Signposts
Tom Keating	LBC 16+ Team
Vicki Harnaman	Omega Lettings
Yvonne Jackson	LBC Drug & Alcohol

Luton Housing Partnership Meeting

<u>Names</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Adey Badmos	Paradigm Housing
Janice Taylor, Area Manager for the Milton Keynes Office	Stonewater
Lindsay Bates (Allocations Manager for the East & North Division	Stonewater
Alikem Brese	Granta
Alison Laing	Paradigm
Andrew Hardy	BPHA
Ansonia Burgess	BPHA
Barbara Baldwin	Orbit Housing Group
Dalia El-Saleh	BPHA
Darren Fancourt	Home Group

Darren Kelso	Penrose Synergy
David Lakin	Grand Union Housing Group
Emmeline Irvine	Penrose Synergy
Gavin Cansfield	North Hertfordshire Homes
Geraldine Ryan	BPHA
George Edkins	Hightown
George Parkinson	BPHA
Jane Foster	Jane Foster
John Welch	Howard-Cottage
Julia Hales	Paradigm
Catriona Simons - CEO	Guinness
Lynda Rees	Luton Community Housing
Mark Grimwood	Circle Anglia
Michael Moses	Luton Community Housing
Mohammed Haque	Catalyst
Neil Brooks	North Hertfordshire Homes
Orla Mead	Catalyst
Peter Merchant	BPHA
Phil Griffiths	Affinity Sutton
Rosemary McCabe	BPHA
Simone Marsberg	Aldwyck
Susan Cooper	Raglan HA
	Chiltern Homes

APPENDIX 15 Consultation Plan

Date	Event	Action
01/09/2016	Luton Council Policy Group/Members workshop	Approve Draft of Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan for Consultation.
02/09/2016 – 3/10/2016	Stakeholder Consultation	Draft on website for comments. Consult Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum. Conduct survey with households who seek help from our service and households we place in temporary accommodation. Consult registered providers.
15/09/2016	Health and Wellbeing Board	Consultation
27/09/2016	Overview & Scrutiny Board	For comments.
28/09/2016	LCC Committee	Draft for consultation and sign off
03/10/2016	Complete Review	Collate responses and feedback from consultation, analyse and adjust the strategy.
05/10/2016	Scrutiny – Health and Social Care Review Group	Final draft for comments
17/10/2016	Executive	Final approval