

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**SAFER COMMUNITIES  
CABINET MEMBER**

**DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval to consult on the Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 and publish the final document following consultation.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy (the maximum period for such a strategy is five years). The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government require that we publish our strategy by no later than 31 December 2019.
- 2.2 A homelessness strategy has the following purposes;
- To prevent homelessness
  - To secure adequate accommodation for those who are or may become homeless
  - To ensure there is adequate support available for those who are or may become homeless; or have been homeless and now need support to prevent that happening again.
- 2.3 Before a strategy can be developed a review of Homelessness must be undertaken. The review should consider all the available information at a local, regional and national level and seek to identify emerging pressures through trend analysis and identify actions which can shape the subsequent action plan. Our Homelessness Review is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The Homelessness Review demonstrates the ongoing commitment of the council to effectively tackle homelessness. This includes the significant actions taken to these ends that have contributed to the levels of homelessness in North Lincolnshire continuing to be relatively low.
- 2.5 A Homelessness Strategy seeks to deliver high quality services across an area to those who are genuinely homeless or threatened with homelessness regardless of whether they are owed a statutory duty or not. It should be

developed and delivered in partnership across a range of statutory and voluntary partners, focusing particularly on early intervention and prevention.

- 2.6 Since our last strategy was developed and published, there have been significant legislative and social changes at a national and local level. These have impacted on homelessness and our response to it.
- 2.7 In 2018 the Government published its own rough sleeping strategy and is now expecting Local Authorities to introduce their own strategies to support and deliver the Government target of reducing rough sleeping by 50% by 2022 and eradicate it completely by 2027. It is therefore appropriate to rename the strategy, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, particularly given that our number one priority is the elimination of rough sleeping.
- 2.8 Discussions with our partners at the Homelessness Forum in September have helped to shape our shared priorities and develop the strategy which sets out a clear, proactive approach to preventing homelessness in our area. This prevention applies across all tenures, ages and regardless of our statutory or non-statutory duties.
- 2.9 The principles that sit at the centre of our strategy reflect the council outcomes of Safe, Well, Prosperous and Connected. It also reflects our values and those of our partners, to ensure that everyone has a safe home to live in, where they feel safe, are safe and can remain living independently for as long as possible.
- 2.10 Linked to the strategy will be a robust action plan with short, medium and longer term outcomes, which identifies the respective responsibility for delivery across both the council and its partners.
- 2.11 Due to the importance of this strategic document to all services within the council and our partners we propose that it should include a forward from both the Cabinet Member and a representative of one of our partner agencies. A draft text is included within the Strategy for the Cabinet Member to consider.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The recommendation is to approve the Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy contained at Appendix 2 for consultation and subsequent publication.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Adopting the recommendation ensures that we meet the statutory deadline for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of 31 December 2019. It will also ensure we are compliant with duties set out in the Homelessness Act 2002 and the requirement to have a Homelessness Strategy.
- 4.2 The new strategy sets out six priorities for the council and our partners going forward to help prevent homelessness in the future. The main priority area is around eliminating rough sleeping.

4.3 The adoption of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will build on our success to date of engaging in a single conversation and adopting a shared approach to this issue across both the council and our partners in order to prevent homelessness. It will enable us to strengthen our recent achievement of developing housing pathways for all client groups, including appropriate accommodation and support. This strategy will support the development of a proactive approach to homelessness and provide an annual review process to feedback on our success and achievements with reference to any emerging issues to ensure we can respond in a dynamic way.

## **5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

5.1 There are no direct resource implications resulting from the strategy given that the actions it contains are currently already undertaken. The transfer of the Housing Related Support service into the council in September 2019 has also provided an opportunity to develop effective pathways, including suitable accommodation and support for all client groups.

## **6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 Entrenched rough sleepers are vulnerable and occasionally involved in begging. It is therefore essential that we do all that we can to end homelessness and ensure that no one has to sleep on the streets and beg. This strategy will have a positive impact on crime and visual amenity particularly within the town centre.

6.2 The strategy sets out a positive proactive approach to preventing homelessness regardless of the client group and regardless of whether there is a statutory duty or not. It therefore meets equality issues.

6.3 The strategy reflects the Council's priorities as set out in the Council Plan, particularly in relation to Safe and Well and assisting communities to flourish.

## **7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 An initial Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed for the new strategy with only positive outcomes identified. Consequently, there is no need to do a full IIA.

## **8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 We have discussed the six key priorities within the strategy with our partners via the Homelessness Forum and taken on board their comments. In particular, partners wanted an emphasis on affordability issues, for people looking for accommodation and for those already in accommodation.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the following:-

9.1.1 Consult on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 (Appendix 2) including publishing a copy on the council website.

9.1.2 That the Director of Operations approves the final Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024 following consultation.

9.1.3 The Cabinet Member approves the foreword for inclusion within the published strategy.

DIRECTOR: OPERATIONS

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North Lincolnshire  
DN15 6LN

Author: Liz Webster  
Date: December 2019

**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: N/A**

SAFE | WELL | PROSPEROUS | CONNECTED

# Homeless Review

April to March 2018/19

**North  
Lincolnshire  
Council**

[www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

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# Section One – Introduction

## Review of Our Performance

This Homelessness Review provides an assessment of:

- The nature and extent of homelessness in North Lincolnshire
- Who is most affected by homelessness and its causes and impacts
- Activities to prevent and respond to homelessness and to support those at risk
- The available resources
- The legal framework and national and regional policy

- Future levels of homelessness and the challenges/priorities ahead

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to prepare and update a homelessness strategy.

Before developing a homelessness strategy, councils are required to complete a review of homelessness in their area covering the issues outlined above.

To develop this review, data from a range of external sources and council records have been used, which are referenced throughout and officers across the council and from partner agencies have contributed to it.



## Why invest?

Estimated costs of rough sleeping to the public purse is between

**£14,300**  
AND **£21,200**  
PER PERSON PER YEAR



**THIS IS**  
**3 TO 4 TIMES**  
THE AVERAGE COST OF  
**£4,600**

TO PUBLIC SERVICES OF AN AVERAGE ADULT

Source: *Hard Edges* report, 2015

## The causes of homelessness and rough sleeping

Structural factors include:

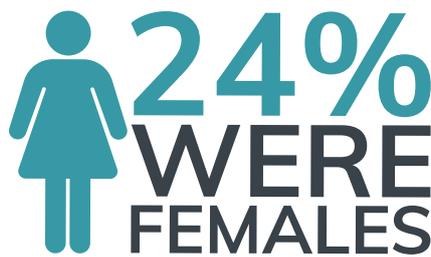
- Poverty
- Inequality
- Housing supply and affordability
- Unemployment or insecure employment
- Access to social security

Individual factors include:

- Poor physical health
- Mental health problems
- Experience of violence, abuse and neglect
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Relationship breakdown
- Experience of care or prison
- Bereavement
- Refugees



# North Lincolnshire's supported Rough Sleepers

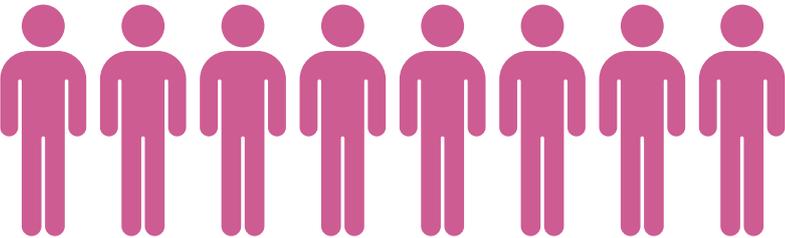


# United Kingdom's supported Rough Sleepers

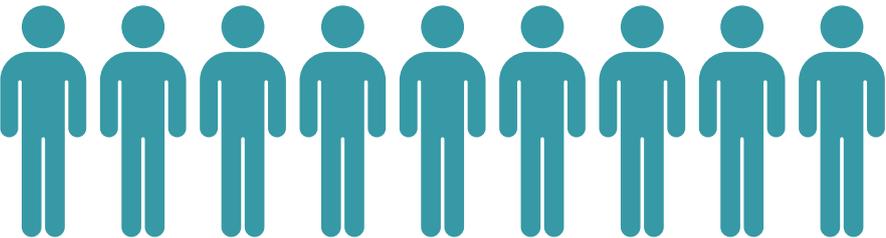


# The Rough Sleeper Counts for Humberside 2018-2019 are as below:

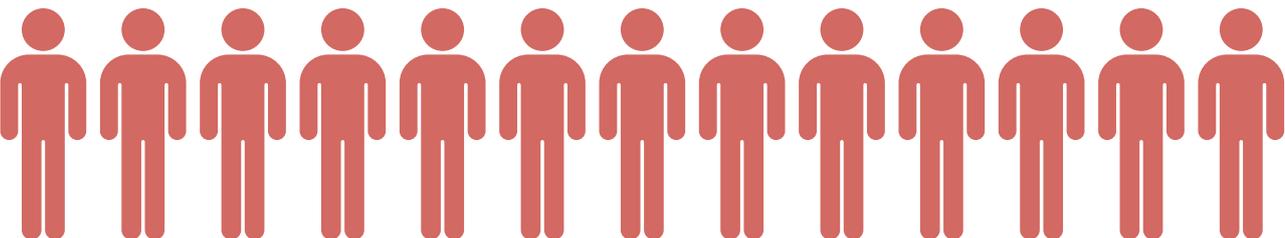
East Riding:



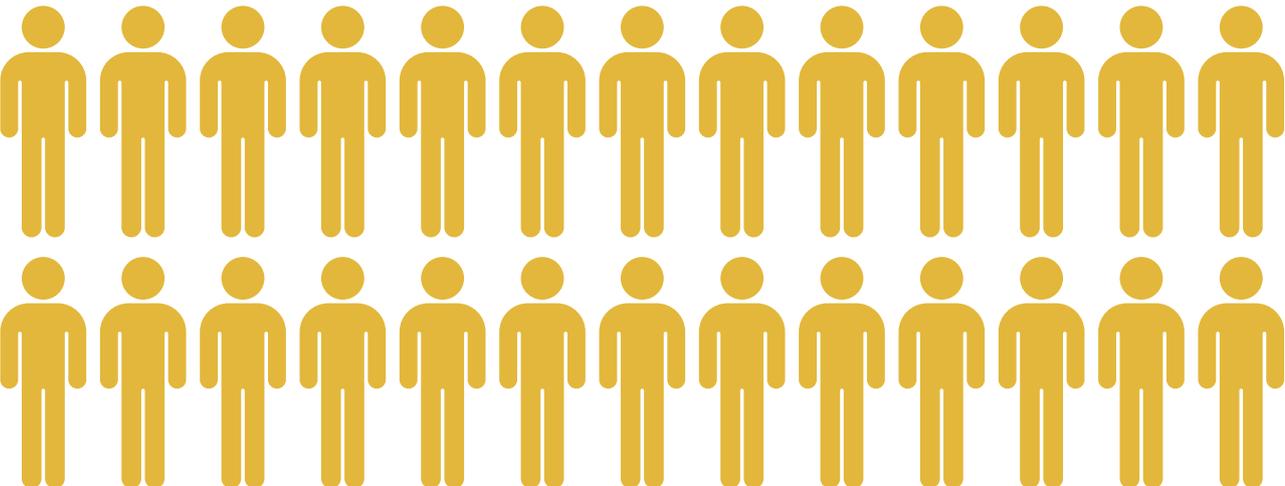
North Lincs:



North East Lincs:



Kingston Upon Hull:



# Section Two - An overview of the council's ambitions and its legal duties towards Homeless households

## One Council Vision

North Lincolnshire Council has high aspirations, as a Council we want to lead North Lincolnshire in being the **Best Place** by being the **Best Council**.

We are driven by our four key outcomes that the residents of North Lincolnshire are:

- Safe
- Well
- Connected
- Prosperous

The Council is committed to building upon its success of working together with partners to provide advice, support, and help to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

The Council Plan sets out the following outcomes and priorities for our area:

**Council Plan 2018/19**

For 2018/19 our priorities are...

- Growing the economy
- Keeping people safe and well
- Enabling communities to flourish

**Our values...**

- Equality of opportunity
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Self-responsibility

**Outcomes for North Lincolnshire**

Safe	Well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safer roads</li><li>• Safer people</li><li>• Safer communities</li><li>• Safer environments</li><li>• Safer spaces</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cleaner and greener spaces</li><li>• Good health and wellbeing</li><li>• Quality housing</li><li>• Vibrant leisure and culture</li><li>• Improved quality of life</li></ul>
Prosperous	Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More jobs, better paid jobs</li><li>• Improved skills</li><li>• Excellent education</li><li>• Thriving businesses</li><li>• Accessible childcare</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessible transport</li><li>• Flourishing communities</li><li>• Superfast digital connectivity</li><li>• Better roads and rail</li><li>• Strong sense of pride and belonging</li></ul>

**Our Ambition**

- #BestPlace  
live • work • visit • invest
- #BestCouncil  
sustainable • commercial • progressive • enabling

**This is in line with our work to prevent and respond to homelessness contributes to the priority of keeping people safe and well:**

**Why is it important?**

- √ The safety and wellbeing of residents is our primary purpose
- √ To achieve a better quality of life for residents
- √ So people can live longer in their own homes

**Taking action – we will:**

- √ Continue to work hard to keep people safe
- √ Lead partnership working across North Lincolnshire to promote wellbeing and improve health outcomes for everyone
- √ Prioritise the most vulnerable

**And also in line with our work to prevent and respond to homelessness contributes to the priority of enabling communities to flourish:**

**Why is it important?**

- √ Strong communities create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live, get on well together and support each other
- √ So people experience improved wellbeing

**Taking action – we will:**

- √ Design services that enable you to have more choice and control in how you interact with us
- √ Enable our communities to become more involved in community life
- √ Engage in new conversations about the things that matter most to you

As a council, our Organisational Development and our culture means that we are organised around people and place, with integrated functions, both internally and with partners, to deliver once and deliver well.

We look to manage demands, ensuring the right people get the right support at the right time and we enable people and communities to do things for themselves and have choice and control over their lives.

## The role of the council

is to work with you and our partners to:



# Section 3: Definitions of homelessness – national legislation/ strategies

## Defining homelessness

Homelessness can take many forms:

**Rough sleeping:** this is the most visible form of homelessness and includes people bedding down on the streets. Its causes are complex. As a consequence, it requires a unique, client centred approach to tackle it.

**Statutory homelessness:** this is where people or households have approached the local authority as they are either threatened with homelessness or are actually homeless.

**Hidden homeless:** these people and households are generally not included in official statistics as they may be staying with friends and family on a temporary basis, sleeping on their sofa for example. They may also be living in housing which should not be occupied for health and safety reasons.

## Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Government Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 fundamentally changed councils' legal duties towards homeless households, which are summarised below:

- Certain public bodies, which includes social services authorities, have a **duty to refer** any users of their services who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to the relevant service within the council. (HRA 2017)
- **A duty to assess homeless applications and agree a personal housing plan** with anyone that is eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness. The plan should set out the actions both the applicant and the council will take, to help address their homelessness. (HRA 2017)
- **A duty to prevent homelessness** when someone is threatened with it within 56 days. This applies to anyone who is eligible for assistance, regardless of whether they have a 'priority need' (see below for more information on priority need), found to be intentionally homeless or has a local connection to the area. The duty usually continues for 56 days, unless it is brought to an end by suitable accommodation becoming available for the person or household or they actually become homeless. (HRA 2017)
- **A duty to provide free advisory services** to anyone in the local area about a range of housing options, such as preventing homelessness and securing accommodation when homeless. These services should be designed to meet the needs of people using them. (HRA 2017)



- **A duty to relieve homelessness** when it could not be prevented, through the local authority taking reasonable steps to help an applicant secure suitable accommodation. This duty lasts for 56 days and it can generally only be brought to an end during this period if suitable accommodation is found which is available for at least six months. It applies to anyone with a local connection which is defined in law. If the local authority has reason to believe a homeless applicant may be eligible for assistance and they also have a 'priority need', then they must be offered interim or temporary accommodation at this stage. (HRA 2017, Housing Act 1996)
- **A duty to provide housing** if homelessness could not be successfully prevented or relieved. This is known as the 'main housing duty' and is only owed to applicants who are eligible, have a 'priority need' for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally. Only certain people are considered to be in 'priority need', such as those who are pregnant, have children or are vulnerable in some way, such as because they are elderly, have a mental or physical illness or disability, have been in prison or care, are a young person or have become homeless due to domestic abuse. This duty is generally only brought to an end by the offer of a 'suitable' home, which is defined as social rented housing provided by a council or into the private rented sector.
- Alongside this is also a duty to **provide interim or temporary accommodation**, if more permanent accommodation is not available immediately. All accommodation offered to homeless households must be 'suitable' and statutory guidance and secondary legislation sets out what this means and the factors that have to be considered when making an offer. For example, it is unlawful for households with children to be offered emergency non self-contained accommodation (a bed and breakfast hotel for example) for more than six weeks. (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002, Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) order 1996). The property should also be safe and free from hazards and enable households to increase their life chances.

# Government Rough Sleeping Strategy

In August 2018, the Government announced the new Rough Sleeping Strategy. The aim of this 9-year strategy is not just to reduce rough sleeping but to eradicate it by the year 2027.

The strategy follows on from an overhaul of homeless legislation introduced in April 2018 with the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Housing Advice Team is fully compliant with the new legislation that has led to changes within our service delivery and this document provides further guidance on the direction we will be taking.

The strategy builds on the legislation in putting prevention at the heart of homelessness services focussing on three main areas: Prevention, Intervention and Recovery.

The new Strategy reinforces the work already being under taken by the Housing Advice Team. We already have an instilled focus on prevention work following on from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 17).

In 2018, the annual rough sleeper count recorded 9 rough sleepers within North Lincolnshire. The count takes place every year between October and November. Since 2015, we have seen an annual increase in rough sleeping. People become homeless for a whole range of complex and overlapping reasons. Solving rough sleeping is more than finding a home. The reasons for homelessness are many but include relationship break down, substance misuse, mental health and leaving an institution, such as prison. The Government's new strategy recognises this and tries to address some of these important issues.

In 2017, the Housing Advice Team recognised that a new approach was needed in tackling rough sleeping and we were successful in becoming a Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) area. Since adopting this innovative approach, which promotes a proactive, client centred support programme through our MEAM co-ordinator, we have been making a vital difference to those who are entrenched rough sleeping.

During the first year of MEAM, we worked with 10 rough sleepers with multiple needs. All 10 have been rehoused and we provide the support around them using a housing first approach. On average, an individual will be supported by MEAM for between 2 and 4 years, so it is still early days but the results so far are very promising.

The rough sleeper count for North Lincolnshire (taken at the end of October 2018) has given us a 10 rough sleepers, which is an increase from the year before but in line with the national trend.

North Lincolnshire's Homelessness Strategy ran until 2018. The new Homeless Strategy will be implemented by the 31st December 2019 and will reflect the priorities, outlined in the Government strategy as well as those at a local level and of importance to North Lincolnshire Council and its partners.





## Section 4: Homelessness in North Lincolnshire

Prior to implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, we were operating a service that already fulfilled the main legislative requirements and has always focussed on preventing homelessness.

The HRA provided an even greater focus on that work, resulting in a decrease in homeless acceptances and improved service delivery with the introduction of Personal Housing Plan's (PHPs). This ensures that service users are enabled to improve their own housing situation by being clear on the respective roles and responsibilities of them as individuals and the local authority.

Our Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 set out five strategic aims which have contributed during this period to delivering changes to the homeless provision in North Lincolnshire:

**Aim 1.** Prevent homelessness whenever possible, regardless of entitlement under the homeless legislation.

**Aim 2.** Offer a range of solutions whenever possible when homelessness cannot be prevented.

**Aim 3.** Ensure support mechanisms are in place to sustain accommodation and prevent repeat homelessness.

**Aim 4.** Enhance multi-agency working, using and focusing the enthusiasm and resources which exist.

**Aim 5.** Identify trends and gaps as soon as they occur, devise and implement solutions – a forward looking pro-active service.

In a number of different ways, we have seen action on 100% of the aims included in our strategy. The relative degree to which work has been completed on the individual aims is less easy to quantify due to our culture of continual improvement.

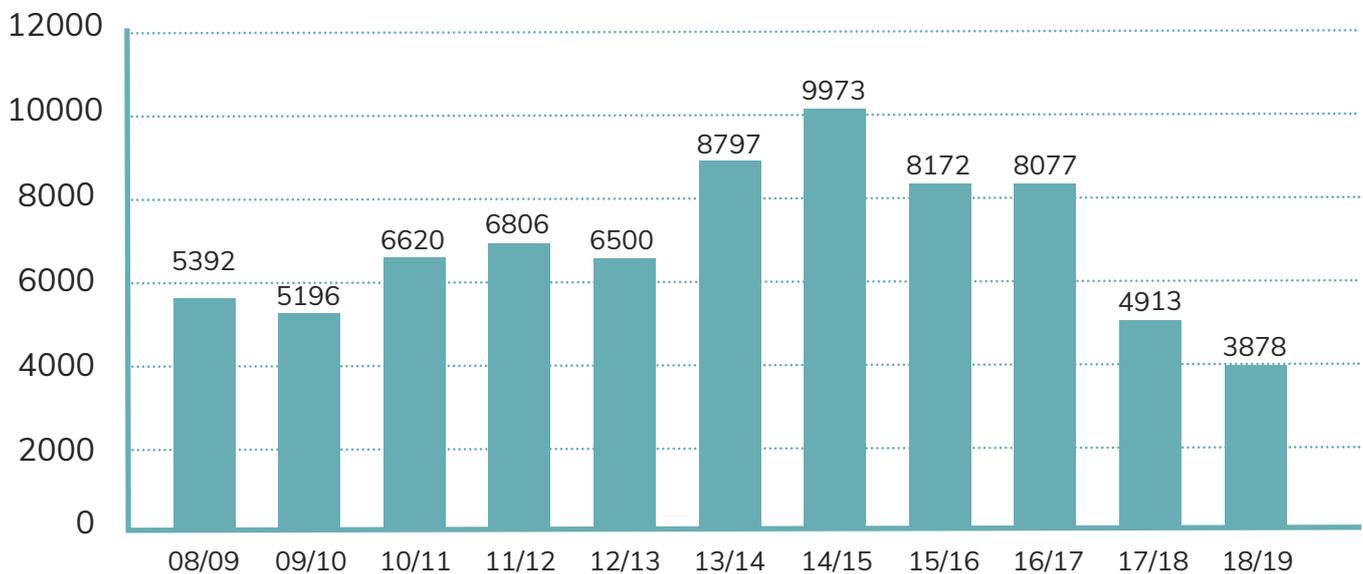
Important completed actions include:

- The delivery of the Housing Related Support Contract “in-house” to sit alongside the Housing Advice Team.
- Bringing the BME support worker back in-house to work as part of the Housing Advice Team.
- The creation of an Assertive Outreach Worker post – initially using Government funding but sustaining that post using allocated flexible homelessness grant.
- Provision of night time accommodation for six rough sleepers delivered at Anvil House.
- The launch of the MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) Initiative as an approach adopted in North Lincolnshire supported by a permanent Assertive Outreach Worker.
- Improved multi-agency working around homelessness issues.
- The delivery of First Stop (Single Access Point for supported accommodation) within Housing.
- The initial conversation and steps taken to undertake a Health Needs Assessment for Rough Sleepers in conjunction with Public Health.
- The creation of the ONGO eviction Panels to provide early intervention to those residents with rent arrears. Shortlisted for the final of the Homeless Link Awards 2018.
- Work of the Team recognised as Good Practice through National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS).
- Implementation of new working practices within Housing to support both the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 and the Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- Successful bids for both the Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund and the Rapid Rehousing Pathways Funds.
- The development of a Private Leasing Scheme to initiate the build up temporary accommodation stock to further reduce the use of B&B provision.
- Work alongside voluntary organisations to provide services for rough sleepers and the Homeless, including the Forge and the New Life Church. Particularly in relation to our severe weather protocol.
- The adoption of the MEAM approach by the Community Safety Partnership, giving it a strategic lead and over view, along with a partnership over view for its delivery.
- Joining the Yorkshire and Humber “Breathing Space” initiative to help home owners facing repossession.
- The start of initial conversations with Children Services to give support and advice to those leaving care or in need of housing support. This has included the creation of a Young Person’s Champion within Housing Advice and Support.



# Households approaching the Council for help

Figure 1.1: Number of contacts to Housing Advice



With the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act we are seeing less contact to our Housing Advice Team, but those contacts are far more targeted with the completion of Personal Housing Plans under duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. North Lincolnshire has also invested in an Enhanced Housing Option system which is part of the Home Choice Lincs online system, our choice based lettings website, run in partnership with North East Lincolnshire and the social landlords that operate across the two areas. This additional tool enables more individuals to find the advice they need online, without recourse to face to face chat.

Since June 2018 our data submissions to Government have been via H-CLIC and their on line Delta system. We don't therefore have a full data set as yet for 2018/19 but are expecting up to date publication of the data set any time soon. Early indications on figures for 2018/19, however, indicate North Lincolnshire will see a lower rate of homeless acceptances (as is predicted for England as a whole) due to changes initiated by the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The last verified data on homeless acceptances puts North Lincolnshire above our sub-regional neighbours.

Across North Lincolnshire the levels of homeless acceptances have always been historically low, but even more so since the new legislation due to further layers of intervention, prevention and relief stages, with a recorded rate of 1.88 homeless acceptances per 1,000 households in 2017/18 compared to 2.41 for England as a whole. Traditionally, the rate within North Lincolnshire has always been below that for England as a whole.



**Table 1.1: Number of homeless per 1,000 households in North Lincolnshire**

	Homeless households in priority need (rate per 1,000 households)							
	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
North Lincolnshire	1.29	0.85	0.6	1.11	0.47	1.36	1.88	0.11
East Riding of Yorkshire	3.24	2.36	2.24	1.97	1.75	1.82	1.83	0.15
North East Lincolnshire	2.28	2.52	1.67	1.48	1.25	1.47	1.15	0.23
England	2.31	2.37	2.32	2.4	2.52	2.54	2.41	0.55

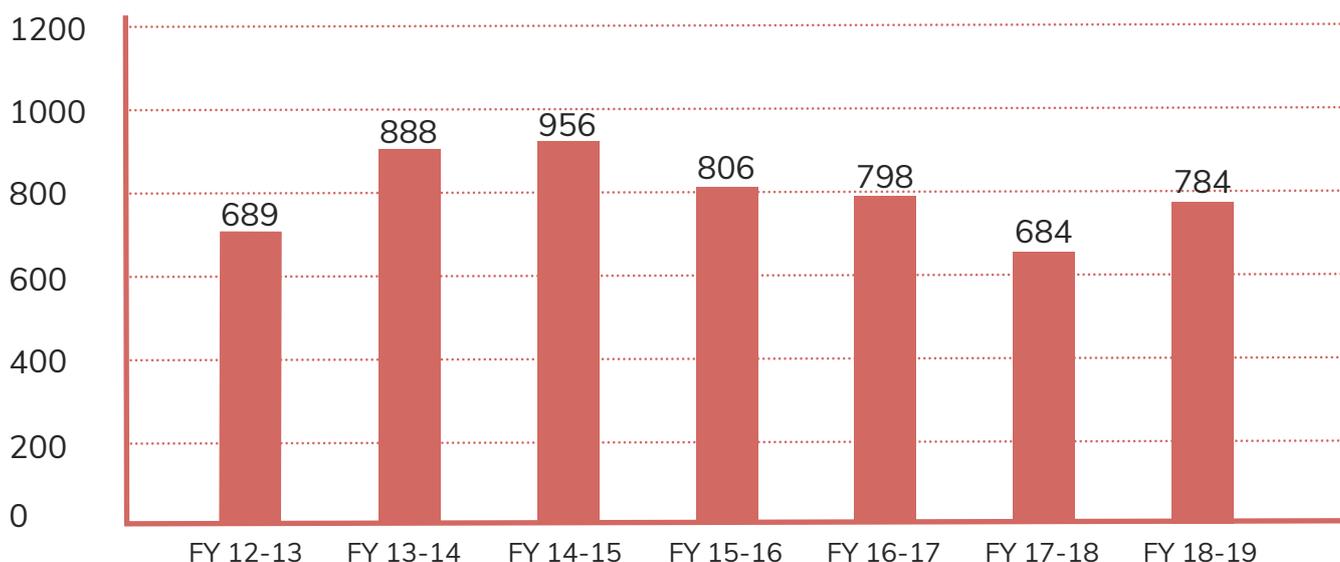
Source: GOV.UK

The focus on the prevention of homelessness has been a significant contributing factor to the comparatively lower levels of acceptances in the area. The reasons for homelessness acceptances are varied and with acceptance levels being relatively low it is hard to say definitively that there is an upward trend in any particular category.

Having dependent children remains a very common reason why people are accepted homeless and in priority need. One of the main causes of people becoming homeless is eviction by parents, friends or relatives together with loss of tenancy through private landlords.



Figure 1.2: Cases where positive action prevented or relieved homelessness



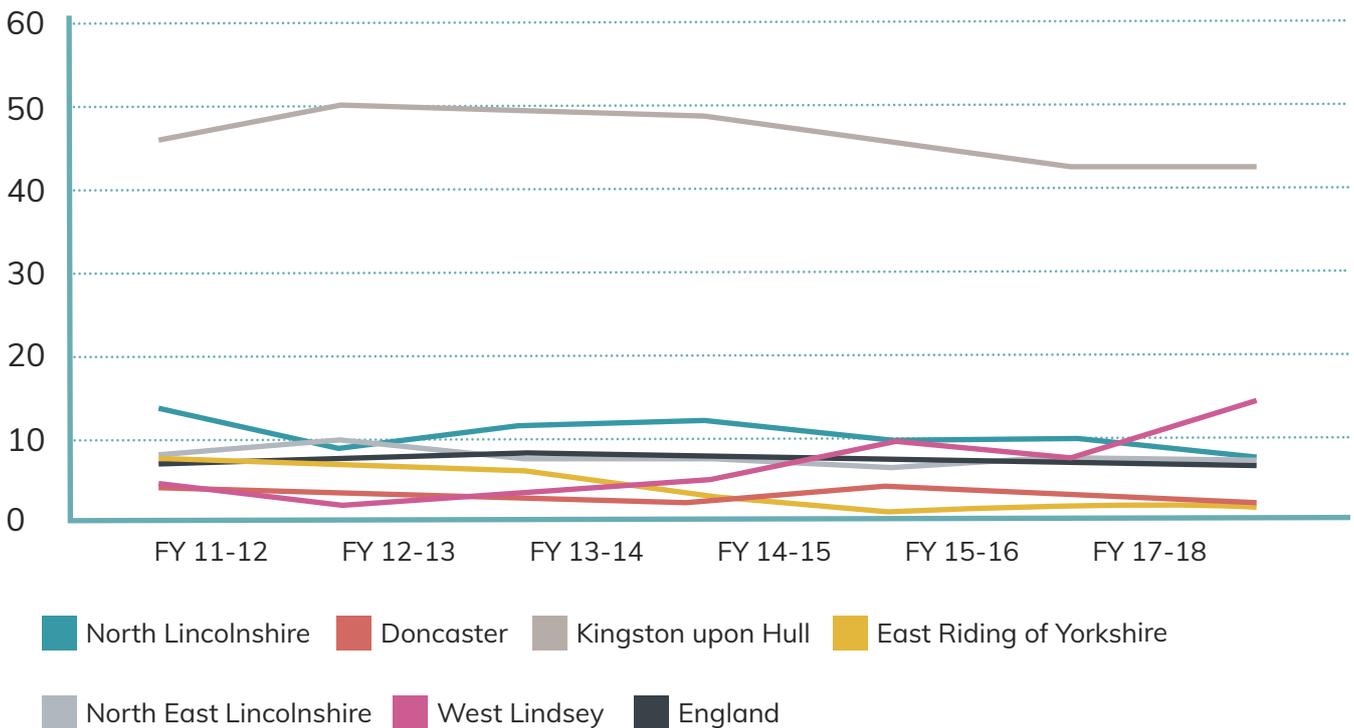
Source: GOV.UK

Figure 1.2 demonstrates the consistently high numbers of people over the past 7 years who were prevented from becoming homeless in North Lincolnshire due to positive action being undertaken. (NB the

data collection in the past has shown some double counting, hence there appears to be a year on year reduction in prevention work but overall the level of preventions as a % of the overall support given has increased).

**Figure 1.3: Cases where positive action prevented or relieved homelessness (rate per 1,000 households)**

Source: GOV.UK



Compared to neighbouring authorities (aside from Kingston upon Hull and West Lindsey) and England as a whole, North Lincolnshire has the highest rate of homelessness prevention or relief and has performed consistently well over this 7 year period. In 2018/19 we have seen a slight increase in preventions up to 784 up from 679 in 2017/18.

The comparable data across local authorities is not as easy to ascertain at this moment in time due to the “experimental” nature of the Governments new H-CLIC data collection system but MHCLG have anticipated an increase across the board in terms of prevention due to the new agenda set by the HRA17

**Homelessness prevention tools**

There are a wide range of tools to help prevent homelessness. The most effective over the past five years have included:

- Social Housing panel meetings
- Crisis intervention
- Landlord/ tenant negotiation

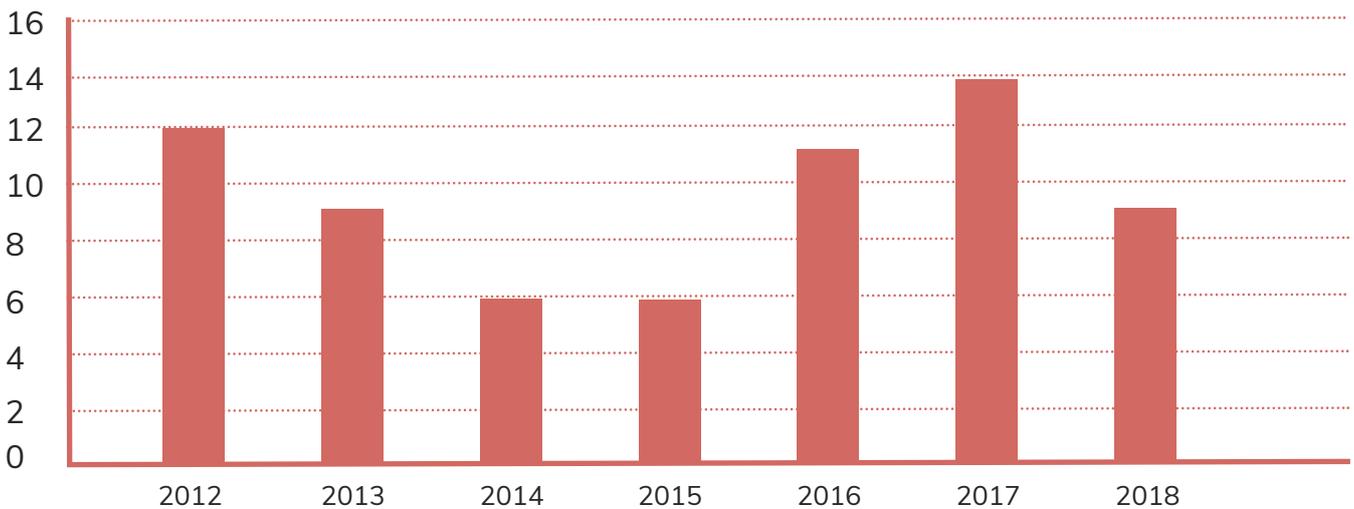
- Family mediation/ conciliation
- Making Every Adult Matter Approach

**Rough Sleepers**

Each year a Rough Sleeper Count or estimate is undertaken in North Lincolnshire. The last physical street count took place in 2011. From 2012 onwards the council has co-ordinated with partners to produce an estimate of rough sleeper numbers every autumn. Figure 9.14 shows that the estimated number of rough sleepers has fluctuated but between 2012 and 2015 the numbers were halved.

Since then, due to a number of factors, this figure was expected to rise which proved correct. Further intervention from Central Government in 2018 came with the launch of the Rough Sleepers Strategy. Its aim was for local authorities to reduce the number of those rough sleeping by half by 2020 and eradicate it by 2027. North Lincolnshire is implementing a number of policies following the publication of this strategy to ensure that these targets are met and so far we have seen a decline.

Figure 1.4: Rough sleeping counts and estimates



Source: GOV.UK

Compared with other authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region, North Lincolnshire rough sleeper count has put us fourth in terms of the rate of rough sleepers, surprisingly higher than the large cities of Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford as a rate per 1,000 households.

Consequently, we made a successful bid for grant funding under the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund. This has enabled the authority to employ further capacity to provide additional outreach services to those who are street homeless. In 2016, we received funding for an Assertive Outreach Worker, following the launch of the Government's No Second Night Out campaign.

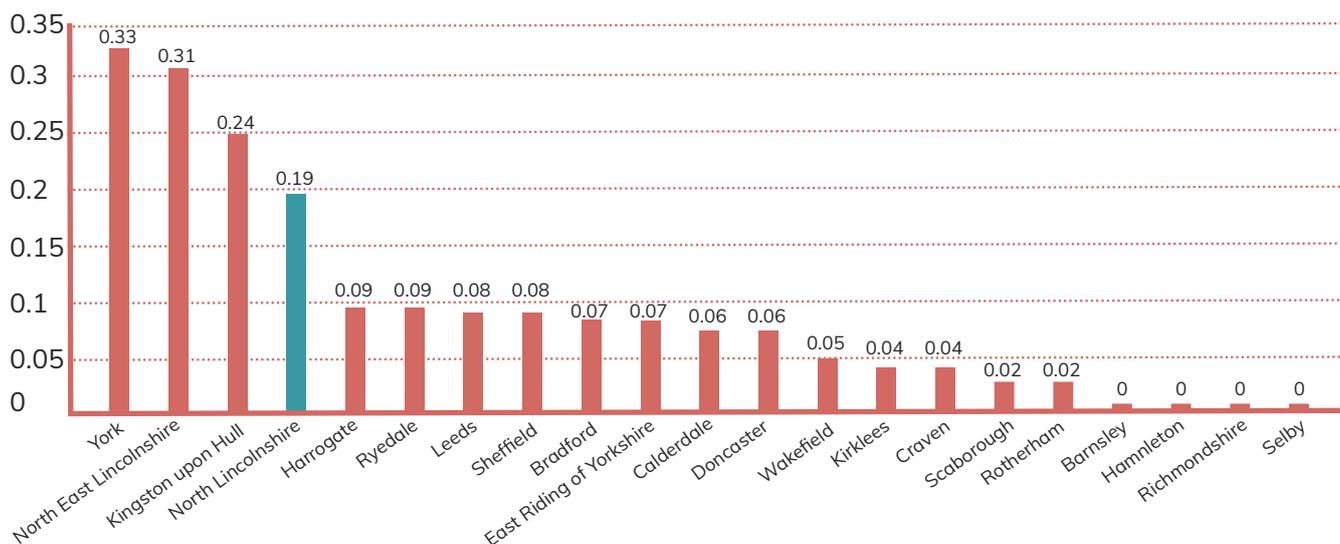
The work of our Assertive Outreach Worker and the engagement that has been achieved with partner agencies, the voluntary sector and rough sleepers has proved effective in addressing rough sleeping. Homelessness is not inevitable and we know it can be ended permanently, but with the increasingly complex nature of many of our rough sleepers, it was recognised that we needed to do more, hence our application to and adoption of the MEAM approach. Our Assertive Outreach Worker is now our MEAM champion and she continues to lead on homelessness issues across all services.

At the end of 2017, we adopted the Making Every Adult Matter Approach as a way of engaging and supporting the multiple disadvantaged. This approach has seen success in firstly housing hard to house clients with a Tenancy First approach and then co-ordinating support around individuals to ensure they sustain this accommodation.

The MEAM partnership, currently has MEAM champions across 23 partner agencies which allows for a diverse and flexible response.



**Figure 1.5: Yorkshire and the Humber Area Rough Sleeper Count 2017  
(rate per 1,000 households)**

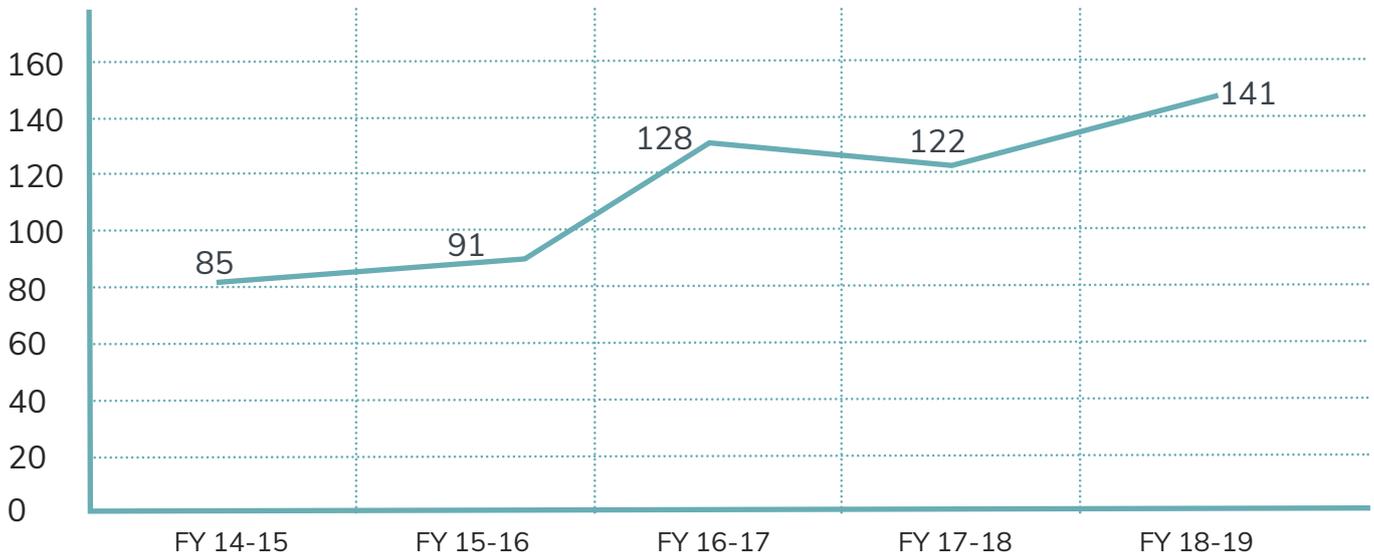


Source: GOV UK- Rough sleeping in England autumn 2017 viewed on 28 January 2019

# Temporary Accommodation

Figure 9.18 shows the number of households placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation between 2014/ 2015 and 2018/19. Throughout 2018/19 there was an average of 29 days spent by households in temporary accommodation, this is an increase from 17 days in 2017/18.

**Figure 1.6: Number of households in Bed and Breakfast**

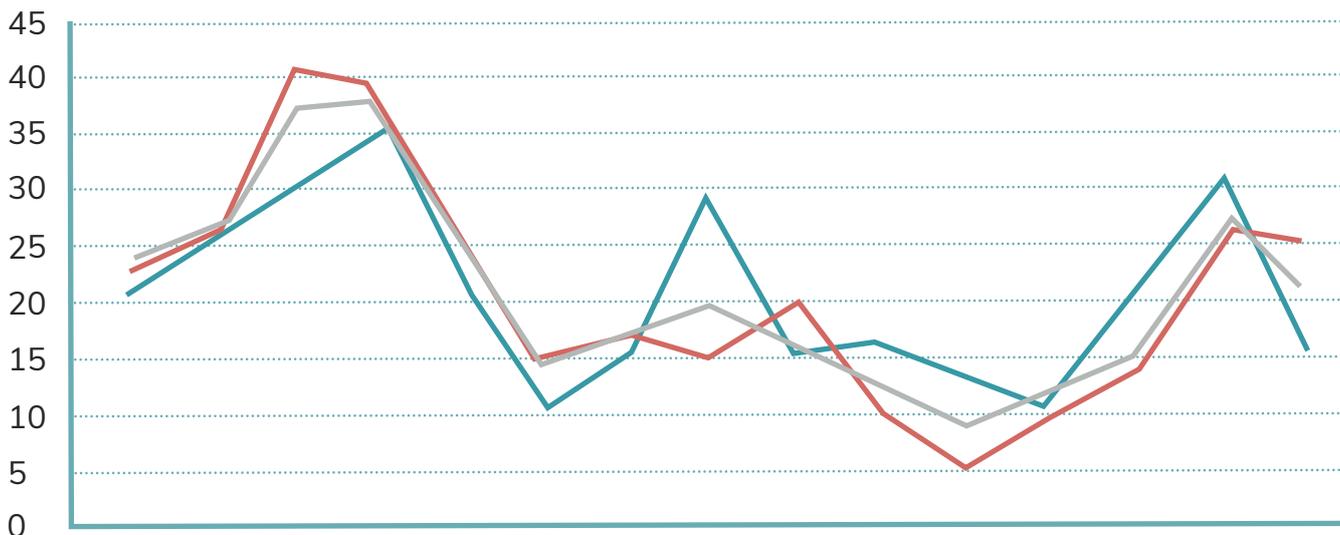


Source: North Lincolnshire Council

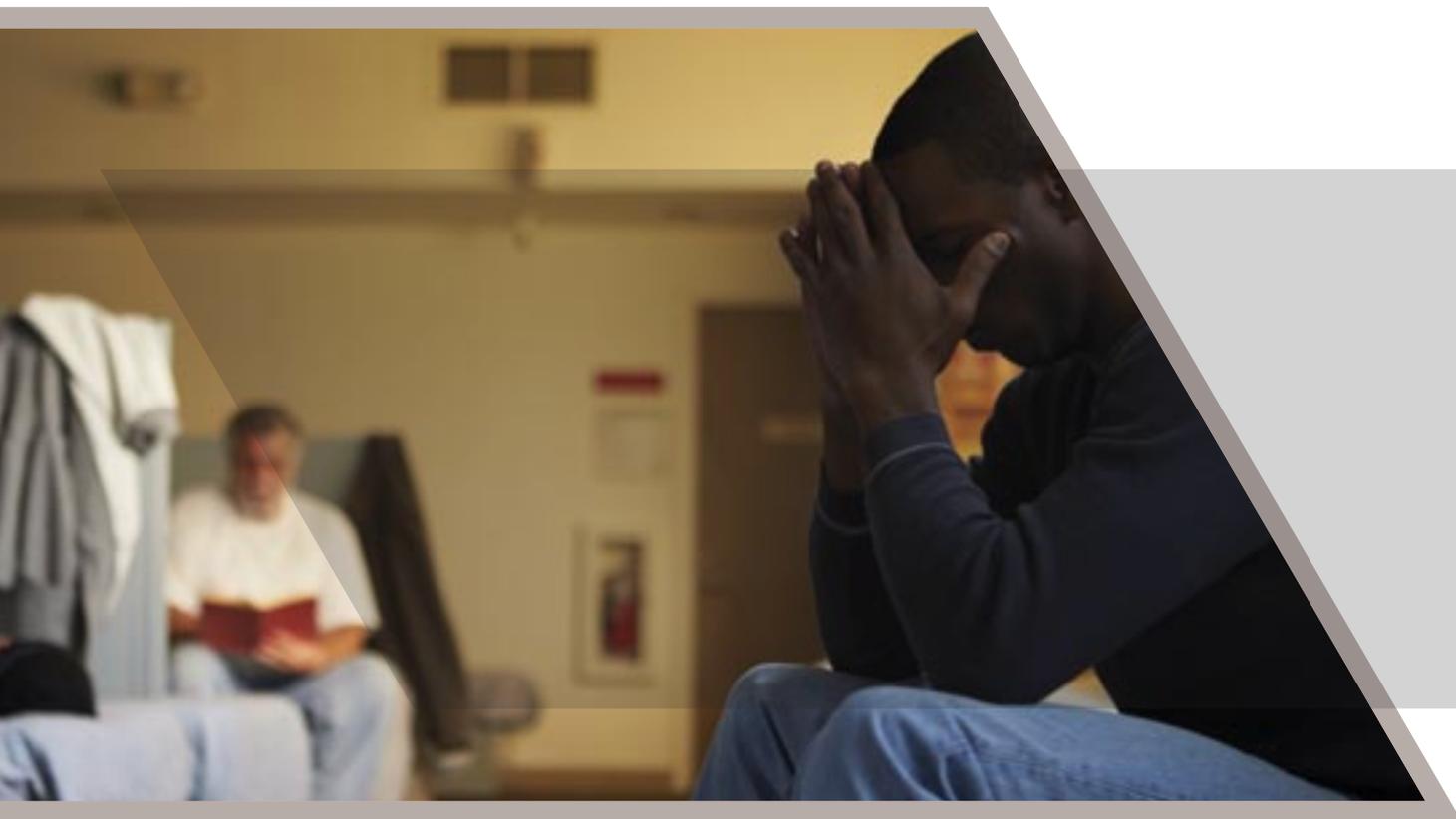
Since 2017/18, we have seen a swift and sudden increase in the average number of nights spent in B & B accommodation for all households, both single and families. This is due to a variety of factors, including the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act that increases the amount of time a household may be legally entitled to stay in temporary accommodation from 28 to 56 days, but also widens the flexibility to open this provision to a far greater number of people in need. Other contributors include Social Landlords now requiring prospective tenants to pass affordability checks to secure tenancies, closely linking to wider debt issues that need to be addressed and the removal in 2014 of the link between Local Housing Allowance and the lower quartile of rents.

During 2018/19, we have worked hard at trying to keep our use of B&B to an absolute minimum, something encouraged by MHCLG, but to do so using a one council approach, requires a wide range of provision for all kinds of vulnerable client groups. This has led to us starting to develop a council wide accommodation strategy.

Figure 1.7: Average nights spent in Bed and Breakfast



Source: North Lincolnshire Council



# People with complex and high support needs

Many of those who are rough sleeping or present as homeless to the Housing Advice and Support Service have very complex and/ or high support needs which impact on the authority's ability to meet their housing needs. This group includes ex-offenders, substance misusers, and those who are deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless due to anti-social behaviour (ASB). The authority offers advice and assistance and works hard to prevent homelessness, but in many cases these people are not accepted as statutory homeless and the authority is not obliged to rehouse them. This Hard to House group are the subject of Multi-Agency working to try to assist them. These often chaotic clients are frequent flyers at A & E and also take up considerable police, probation, and service time. It is in the public interest to help these people to turn their lives around. Homelessness drains resources from across the entire public sector, damages communities and undermines the progress we continue to make by wasting the potential contribution that could otherwise be made by those who find themselves homeless.

When entering treatment for substance misuse half of all drug clients are unemployed/economically inactive, and another quarter are long-term sick or disabled. The length of time clients have been on benefits is also higher than the national average.

The Safer Neighbourhoods element of the North Lincolnshire Strategic Assessment 2016 highlighted that;

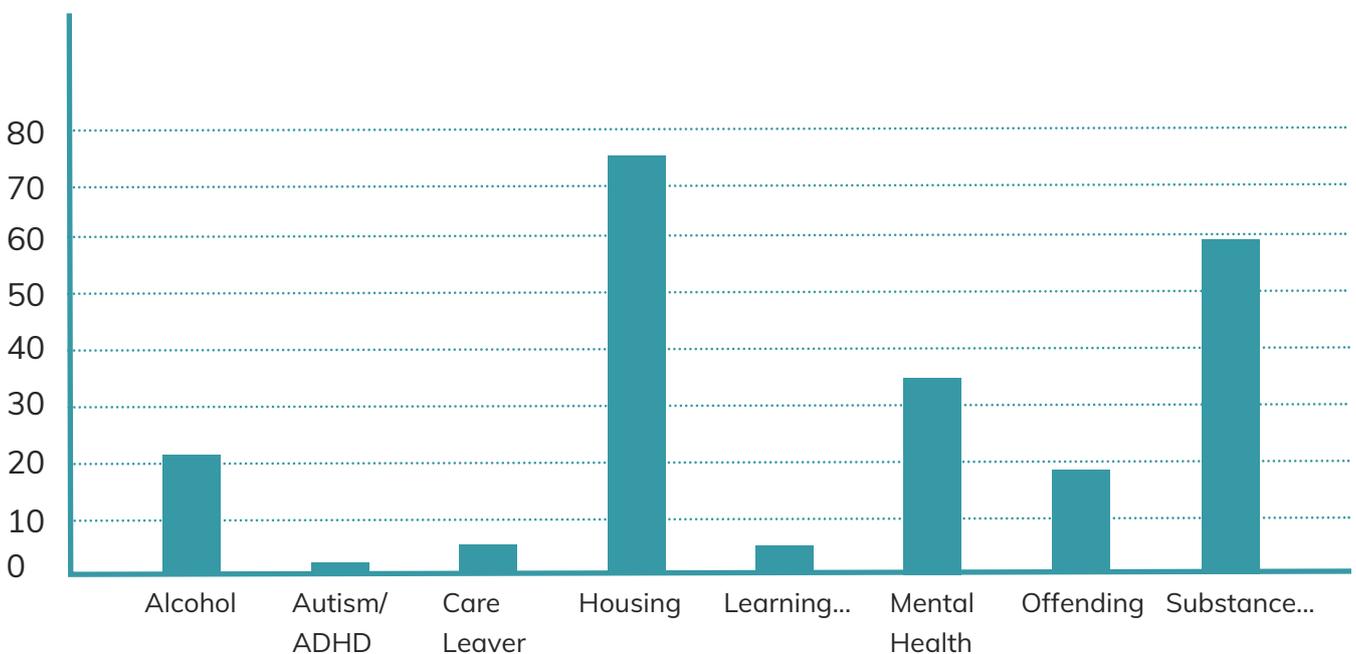
'Although the rate of homelessness in North Lincolnshire is comparatively low, safe and secure housing has been identified as a major local concern, particularly for those with complex needs or those within the criminal justice system. Local service providers should engage with housing and homelessness agencies to ensure that a client's housing needs are met as best as possible. Adults successfully completing treatment no longer reporting a housing need are 100%'

In recognition of the difficulties in housing this group, and to give people the opportunity to change their lives, the council supported the development of 'A Place of Change' a 24-hour, supported housing scheme. In order to be considered for rehousing in Anvil House clients must be ready, willing, and wanting to turn their lives around. Anvil House is not direct access accommodation, but does provide some support services and access to a shower and washing facilities for those who are sleeping rough.

Figure 1.8 shows the numbers of clients by primary support need referred to specialist supported housing for the period 2017-2018. This includes those referred to Anvil House.



Figure 1.8: Support Needs Identified at Supported Housing Referral Stage 2017 - 2018



Source: NLC First Stop Service

As shown in table 1.2, the total number of clients referred to specialist supported accommodation was 224, however, only 92 of these referrals resulted in clients being

re-housed. The table below shows the various outcomes of these referrals, and gives an indication of the complexity of this client group.

**Table 1.2: Supported Housing Referral Outcomes for 2017 – 2018**

<b>Total Referrals</b>	<b>224</b>
Accepted and moved in	92
Accepted but did not move in	18
Too high risk	9
Support needs too low	12
Failed to engage	34
Recalled to prison	11
Still in prison	8
Withdrew application	19
On waiting list (at year end)	21

Source: NLC First Stop Service

The authority funds a Community Housing Related Support Service (CHRS) which not only provides support to some of the specialist accommodation based schemes, but also floating support to those in all other tenures and also to those of no fixed address (NFA).

As highlighted in this section of the assessment, there is still a gap with suitable, tailored temporary and longer term accommodation for individuals with specific support needs.

The Homelessness Forum continues to identify that a wider range of suitable temporary and longer term accommodation is required, particularly for this group with more chaotic lifestyles.



# Home Choice Lincs – Choice Based Lettings System

The **choice-based lettings scheme (CBL)** basically gives people the chance to choose which council house or housing association accommodation they want. It works on a bidding principle as and when properties become available.

We have a partnership CBL scheme with North East Lincolnshire and the Registered Social Landlords within our areas. The scheme is called Home Choice Lincs (HCL). There is a Board which over sees the running of the scheme and a Policy and Operations working group which look at issues when tasked by the board to do so. HCL has been in operation since November 2010.

The Board meets quarterly to consider the performance of the scheme and its effectiveness. The following graphs are taken from the performance review.

The following graphs have been taken from the end of year performance review for 2018/2019.

Figure 1.9 shows the number of active applications for housing based on the banding each household is give, Band 1 is urgent/in greatest need of re-housing and Band 4 is the least urgent. Generally those households in Band 4 would not expect to be offered a property unless they accept something in the less popular after areas of North Lincolnshire.

Band 1 – a total of 62 active households (42 general needs and 20 transfer applications).  
 Band 2 – a total of 143 active households (50 general needs and 93 transfers),  
 Band 3 – a total of 642 active households (557 general needs and 85 transfers)  
 Band 4 – 2401 active households (1737 general needs and 664 transfers).

**Figure 1.9: Total active on register as of 31/03/2019**

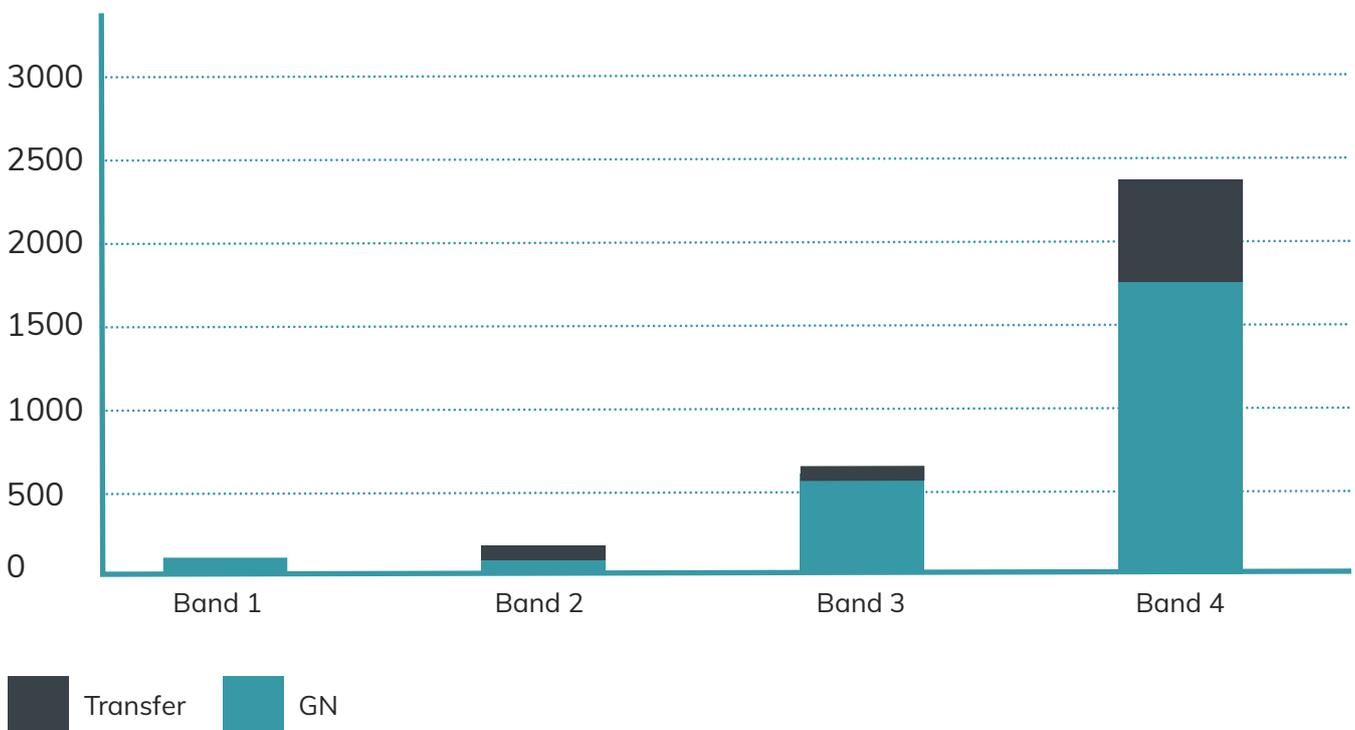


Figure 1.10 below shows the number of active applications by household type. Older adult, followed by single adult and lone parent are the 3 largest household types looking for alternative accommodation.

**Figure 1.10: Active Applicants by Household Type.**

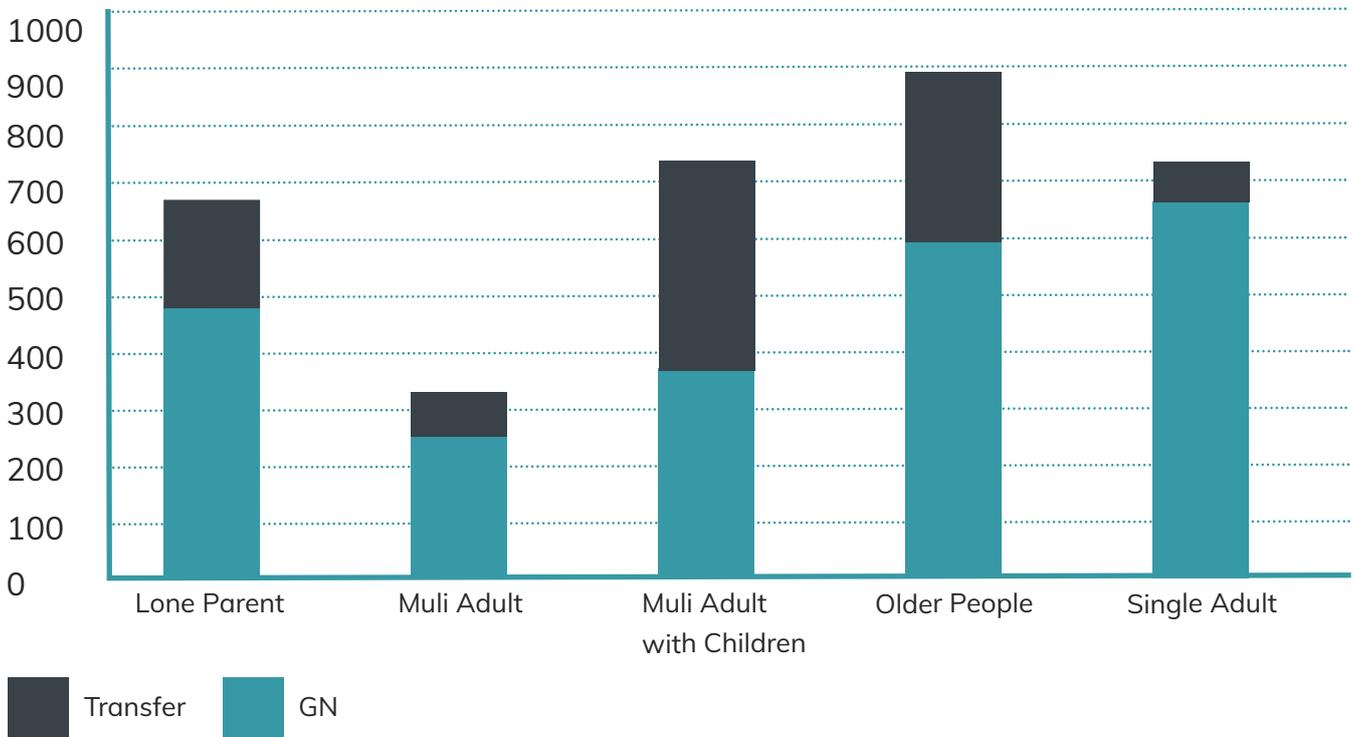


Figure 1.11 shows the number of applications received per quarter with 3,095 received during the financial year 2018/19.

**Figure 1.11: Number of applicants received during 2018/19**

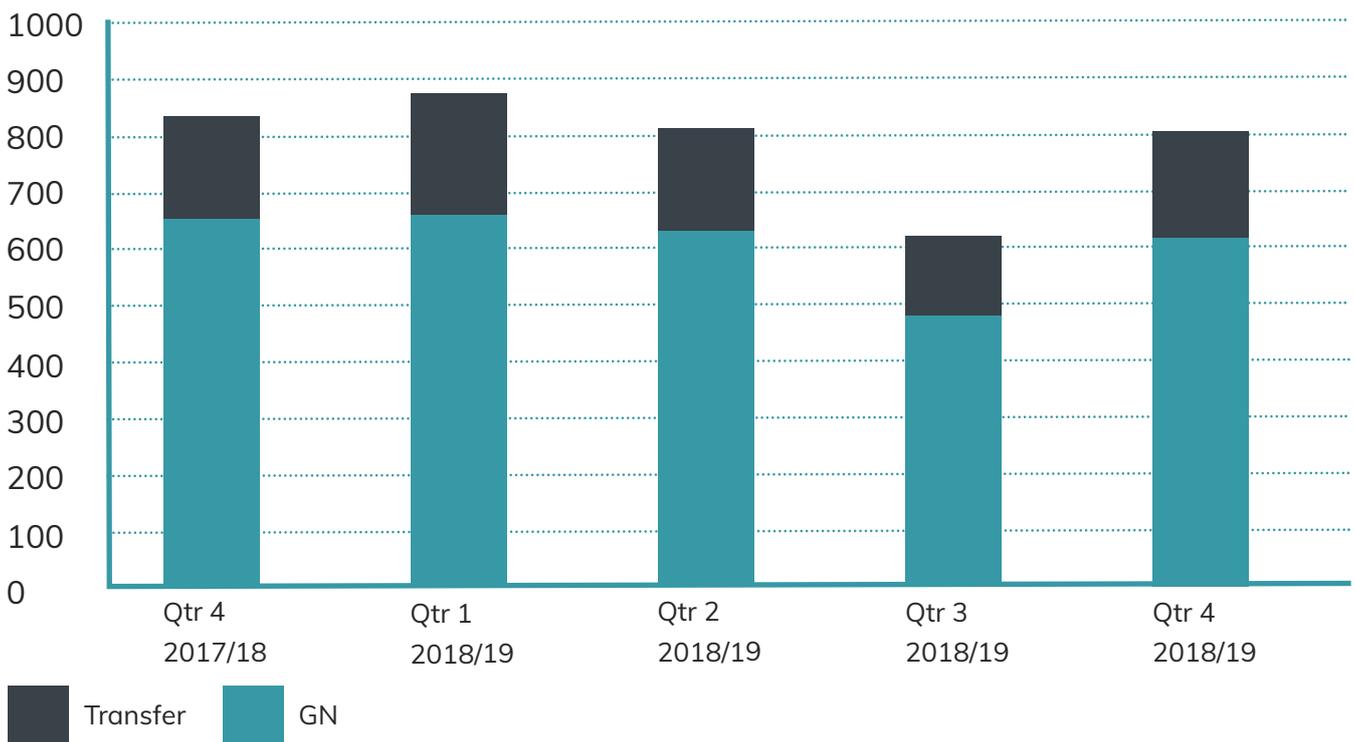


Figure 1.12 gives the number of applications received during the year from veterans. Generally, any one coming out of the Armed Forces will be in priority in if homeless, hence the fact that most have been given band one or two.

**Figure 1.12: Number of applicants from veterans received during 2018/19**

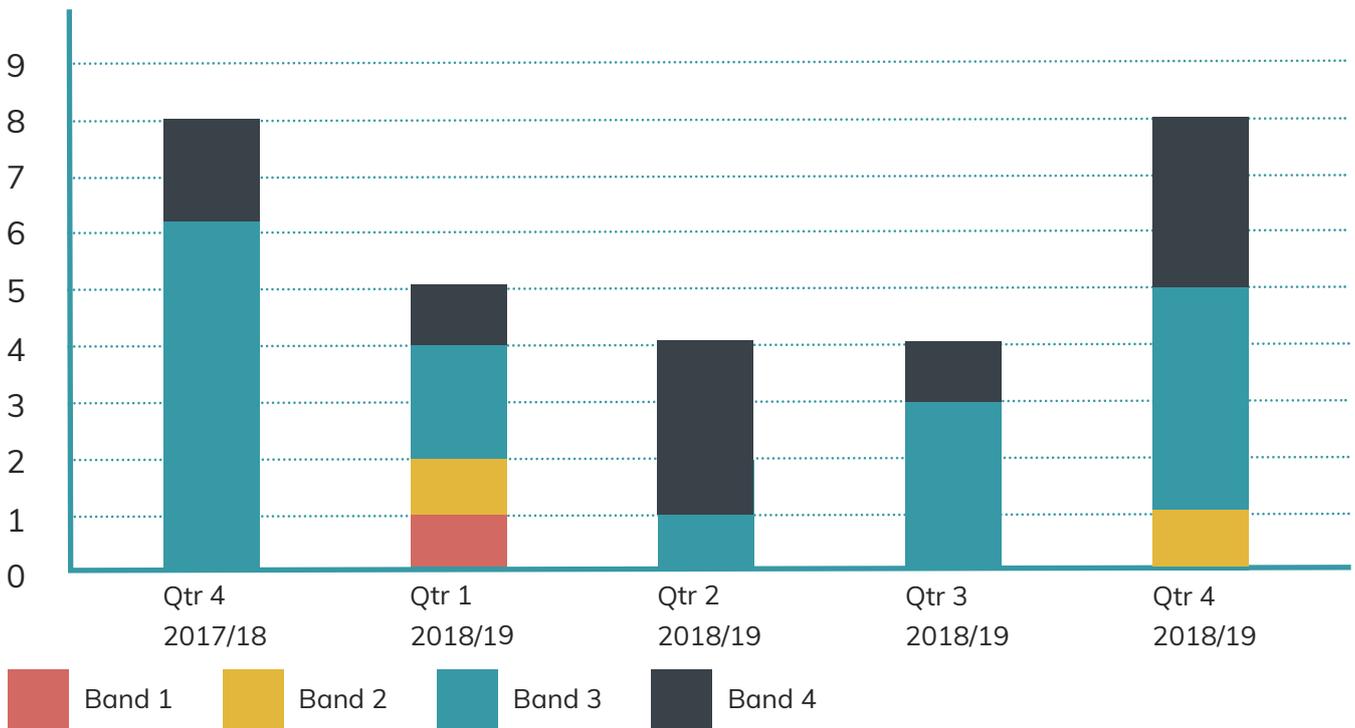
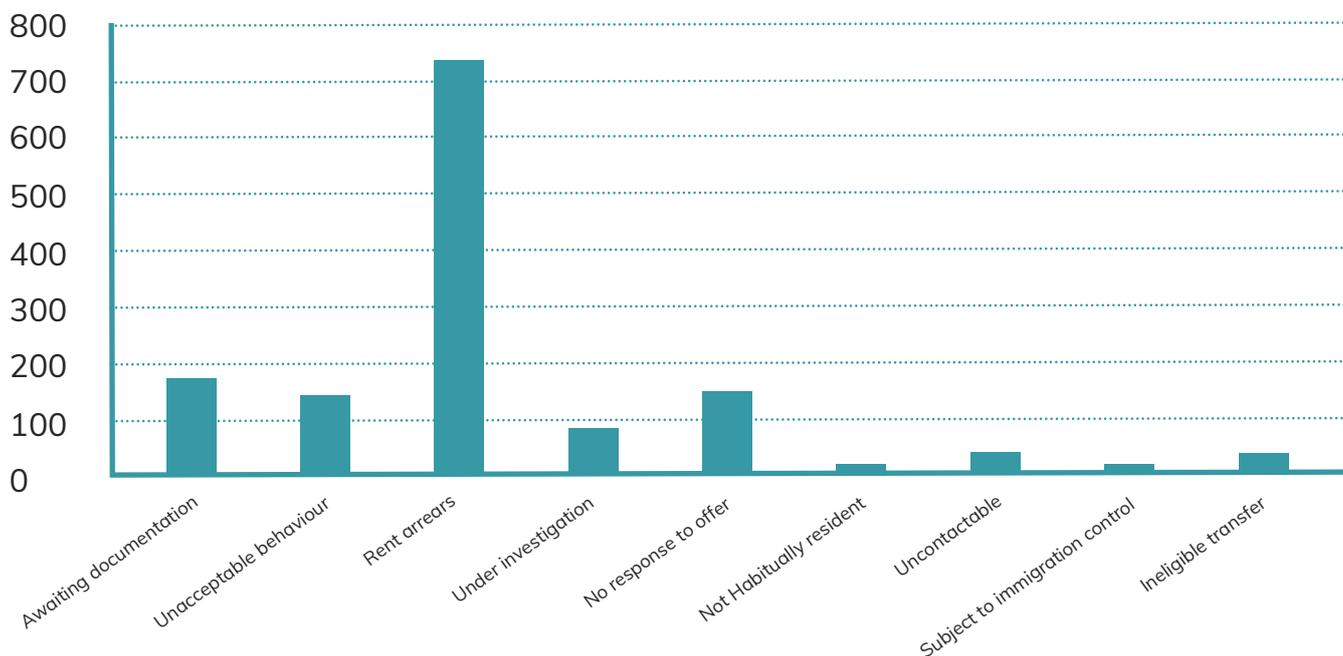


Figure 1.13 shows the number of applicants that have been suspended from actively bidding on properties because of contraventions of the Home Choice Lincs policy. The top 3 reasons for suspension are:

- Rent arrears from a previous tenancy or their current one.
- Awaiting documentation – so the applicant has been asked to provide addition information and have not done so yet.
- Unacceptable behaviour.

You can also be suspended for failing to respond to the offer of a property or being uncontactable.

**Figure 1.13: Total Number suspended and reasons for suspension as of the 31/03/2019**



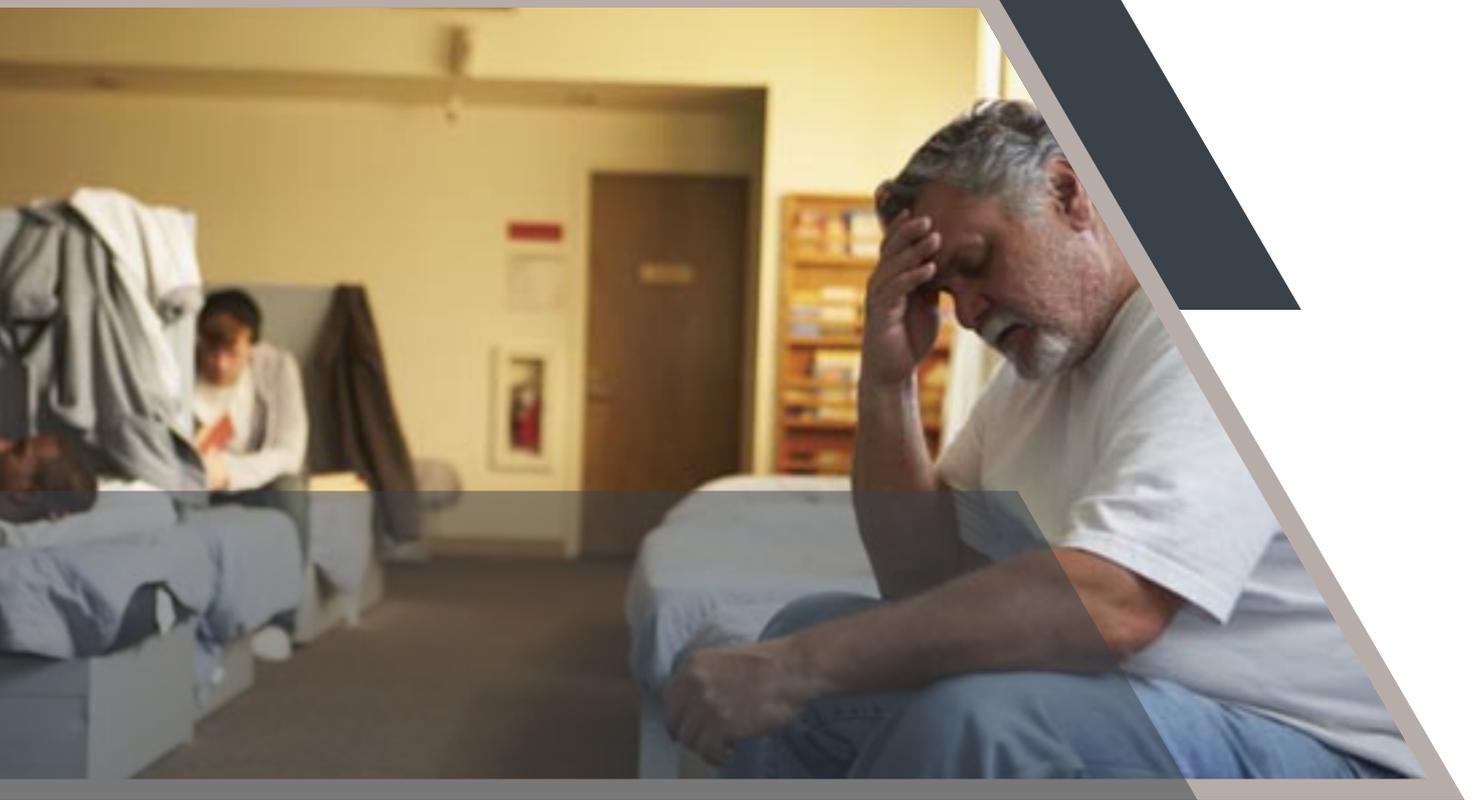
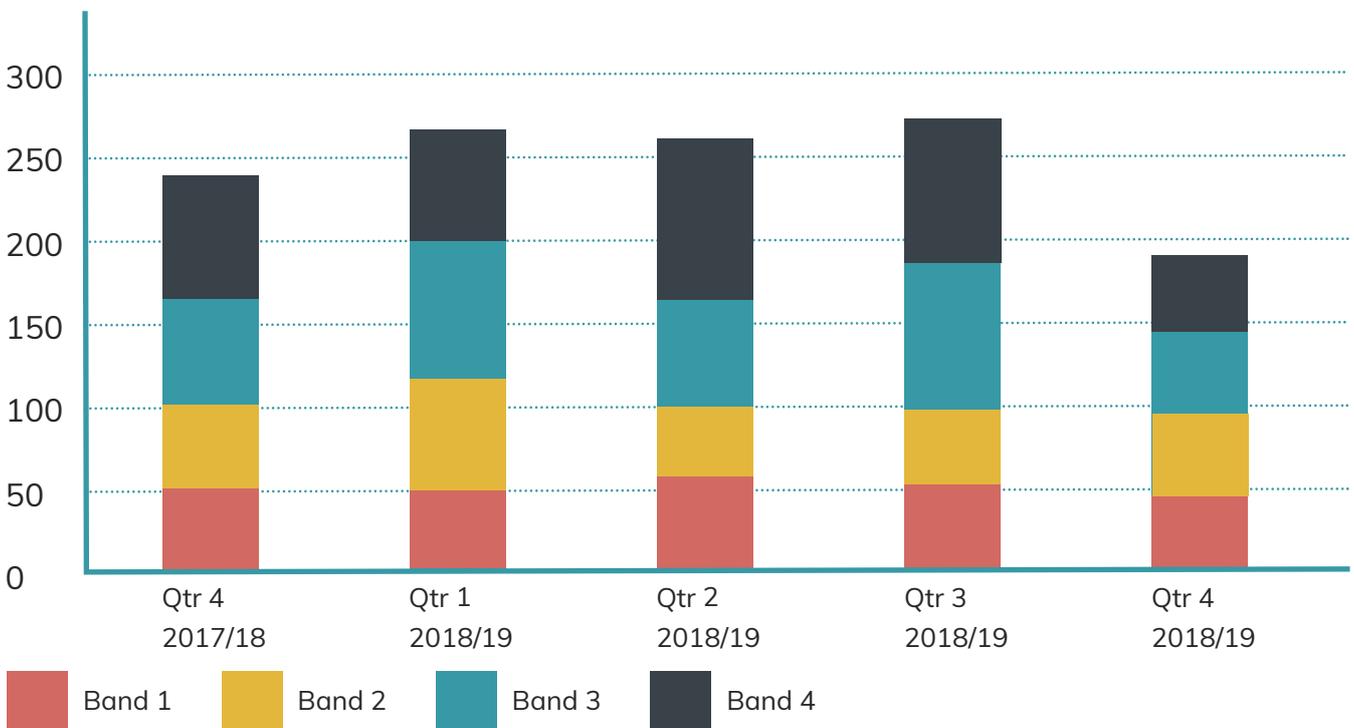


Figure 1.14: Total housed during 2018/19



During 2018/19, 990 households were rehoused off the waiting list by ONGO.

# In Year Service Improvements:

A number of significant service improvements were achieved in 2018/19.

Throughout 2018/19 we have further developed our MEAM approach which now flexibly works with 23 partners to achieve improved outcomes for the multiple disadvantaged clients that access services across our respective areas.

There are currently 18 clients being supported in their own home on the MEAM approach and we have recently introduced the “Outcome Star” assessment to help set goals around their engagement and support.

The Severe Weather provision has been developed into an all-round year provision with the capacity to accommodate 6 individuals a night who would otherwise find themselves sleeping rough.

Throughout 2018/19 significant work has continued both internally and with partner agencies to improve the direct service to service users and the overall provision, in particular:

- Work has started on the Health Needs Assessment that will focus on Rough Sleepers and identify barriers to healthcare for this client group.
- Work has started on forging stronger links with the Children Services to look at accommodation pathways for care leavers and other vulnerable groups.

- Approval to employ two Assistant Assertive Outreach Workers to meet demands for support to further reduce rough sleeper numbers.
- Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach to be further developed to underpin the work of the Housing Support Team that has now been brought in-house.
- Developing the use of Outcome Star Framework to monitor and map support of individuals supported by the service.
- Development in acquiring further temporary accommodation properties working alongside the PRS to provide quality and suitable accommodation to move away from B&B use.
- The successful implementation of changes to the service in adapting to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
- Service Level Agreements in development with partner agencies to assist in transitions and enabling early intervention in homelessness situations.
- The development of a co-production model in conjunction with the MEAM approach to enable service users to shape further services, be more actively involved in decision.

# Forthcoming projects and priorities for 2019/2020.

The following work is identified in the Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 or in the forthcoming Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024:

- To adopt the 2019-2024 Homeless Strategy (Appendix A).
- To further develop services to meet statutory duties under Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
- To continue to work and develop under the MEAM approach, further developing resources available to clients.
- To develop an outreach team together with Mental Health support to support those sleeping rough.
- To develop skills around trauma based mental health.
- To complete and action findings identified in the Health Needs Assessment targeted at rough sleepers.
- To reduce rough sleeping in North Lincolnshire.
- To review the service in line with new strategic aims and the delivery of the new Housing Related Support service.
- To explore new models of accommodation, with particular emphasis on the Private Rented Sector.
- To reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- Agree targets for the next 5 years to align with the new Homelessness Strategy.

## Review

We will publish an annual report and review of our performance for the last financial year on the council's website in the first quarter of each new financial year. As necessary, the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be updated in line with new trends and changing priorities as determined by the review.

SAFE | WELL | PROSPEROUS | CONNECTED

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2019 - 2024

**North  
Lincolnshire  
Council**

[www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

# Foreword

## Welcome to the North Lincolnshire Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2019 – 2024.

This revised Strategy has been coproduced with a wide range of people and organisations and I thank them for their assistance.

Anyone, at any age can become homeless for many reasons but it should never be seen as inevitable. It is, however, very harmful for those living with it and their families; for communities; and for society more generally. As 'One Council', we are committed to keeping people safe and well and enabling communities to flourish.

**The council, through this strategy, is committing to building upon its success of working together with partners to help to prevent homelessness wherever possible.**

Ending homelessness doesn't mean that no-one will ever lose their home again, but we want to make sure that everyone facing homelessness gets the help they need quickly. It means making sure we all have a safe place to live, and together doing everything we can to stop people from losing their homes in the first place.

Thank you to all those who contributed to developing this new strategy and to everyone who works with us every day to help deliver the services that contribute to tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

There is no place for homelessness in North Lincolnshire and I look forward to working with partners over the life of this strategy and beyond to ensure that homelessness can become a thing of the past.

**Cllr John Davison – Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**



# Signatories to the Strategy

The following agencies are committed to delivering the strategy and are members of our Homelessness Forum and Making Every Adult Matter champions:

**Health watch**

**Addaction**

**Community RC**

**North Lincolnshire Health watch**

**ONGO Homes**

**The Forge Project**

**Addaction**

**Sanctuary Housing**

**Framework Housing Association**

**The New Life Church**

**Police & Crime Commissioner**

**Clinical Commissioning Team**

**Home Group**

**Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber  
NHS Foundation Trust**

**The Blue Door**

**The Department of Work & Pensions**

**Humberside Police**

**Humberside Fire and Rescue Service**

**Community Rehabilitation Company**

**North Lincolnshire Council Commissioning  
Team**

**North Lincolnshire Council Housing  
Related Support Service**

**North Lincolnshire Council Adult Services**

# Summary

This strategy builds on achievements delivered through previous homelessness strategies. It sets out a new approach to ensure we fully understand homelessness, not just as a social issue to be viewed in isolation but where the individual and their environments are at the centre of that understanding.

The strategy shows how we will tackle the complex causes of homelessness by focusing on prevention and early intervention tailored specifically around the intelligence we have of our own local area. Nationally homelessness has increased significantly, and rough sleeping remains the most visible manifestation of homelessness, consequently it is a high priority for everyone. This strategy aims to bring together a shared approach to prevention and early intervention across a wide spectrum of partner agencies in ensuring that prevention is “everyone’s business” and there is a joined up way of working which tackles the issues in the most effective way.

We recognise that preventing homelessness is far more cost effective for individuals, communities and services than dealing with the consequences of it and the resultant trauma.

This strategy highlights that we are striving for better outcomes for all through the support that is on offer.

The aims of this strategy align both with North Lincolnshire Council Plan which is set out below but also builds on the Government’s own Rough Sleeping Strategy to put an end to rough sleeping by 2027.

The strategy has been written to incorporate the significant changes following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which dramatically changed the statutory landscape within homelessness to provide better services for all. This legislation has introduced changes to both the duties and prescribed processes used by local housing authorities in managing homelessness and assisting those who may become homeless. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Homelessness Review Document 2018, which is at Appendix 1.

Through this strategy we will increase our efforts to make prevention and early intervention the backbone of our approach and commit to the annual review of an Action Plan (Appendix 2) to underpin this strategy. This will ensure that we are accountable in fulfilling our strategic aims and priorities in delivering services to those in North Lincolnshire.

## Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024

**For 2019-2024 our priorities are...**

- Greater understanding of rough sleeping population
- Early intervention to prevent homelessness
- Appropriate and suitable accommodation for those who are homeless
- Targeting support on tenancy related issues
- Maintaining and developing partnership working
- Improving Health, well-being and resilience of our communities

**Our values...**

Equality of opportunity

Excellence

Integrity

Self-responsibility

### Ambition

#BestPlace for our residents

#BestCouncil we can be

Goal: sustainable • commercial • enabling • progressive

### Outcomes for North Lincolnshire

<div style="background-color: #00838f; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Safe</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safer homes</li> <li>Safer people</li> <li>Safer environments</li> <li>Safer spaces</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: #00838f; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Well</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality housing</li> <li>Improved quality of life</li> <li>Good health and well-being</li> <li>Healthy long lasting tenancies</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: #00838f; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Prosperous</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved skills</li> <li>Access to training and volunteering opportunities</li> <li>Raising housing aspirations</li> <li>Maximisation of income through support</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: #00838f; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Connected</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flourishing communities</li> <li>Enhanced universal digital offer</li> <li>Strong sense of pride and belonging</li> <li>Gateway to Supported Housing &amp; Support</li> </ul>

The Council is committed to building upon its success of working together with partners to provide advice, support, and help to prevent homelessness wherever possible. This links to the council priorities in the following ways.

### **Keeping people safe and well:**

#### **Why is it important?**

- √ The safety and wellbeing of residents is our primary purpose
- √ To achieve a better quality of life for residents
- √ So people can live longer in their own homes

#### **Taking action – we will:**

- √ Continue to work hard to keep people safe
- √ Lead partnership working across North Lincolnshire to promote wellbeing and improve health outcomes for everyone
- √ Prioritise the most vulnerable

### **Enabling communities to flourish:**

#### **Why is it important?**

- √ Strong communities create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live, get on well together and support each other
- √ So people experience improved wellbeing

### **Taking action – we will:**

- √ Design services that enable more choice and control in how you interact with us
- √ Enable our communities to become more involved in community life
- √ Engage in new conversations about the things that matter most to you.

As a council, our Organisational Development and our culture means that we are organised around people and place, with integrated functions, both internally and with partners, to deliver once and deliver well.

We look to manage demands, ensuring the right people get the right support at the right time and we enable people and communities to do things for themselves and have choice and control over their lives.

## Why invest?

Estimated costs of rough sleeping to the public purse is between

**£14,300**  
AND **£21,200**  
PER PERSON PER YEAR



**THIS IS**  
**3 TO 4 TIMES**  
THE AVERAGE COST OF  
**£4,600**

TO PUBLIC SERVICES OF AN AVERAGE ADULT

Source: *Hard Edges* report, 2015

## The causes of homelessness and rough sleeping

Structural factors include:

- Poverty
- Inequality
- Housing supply and affordability
- Unemployment or insecure employment
- Access to social security

Individual factors include:

- Poor physical health
- Mental health problems
- Experience of violence, abuse and neglect
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Relationship breakdown
- Experience of care or prison
- Bereavement
- Refugees



# Key points from the Homeless Review Document 2019

The Homeless Review carried out in 2019 provides an evidence base using data and intelligence.

- Homeless can take many forms and when defining homelessness it is important that we all use a shared and agreed definition.
- Contacts with Housing Services are being more targeted with the introduction of Personal Housing Plan's and this changes the nature of the interaction between services and individual's.
- Services are focussing on enabling individuals through a wide range of mediums, including the use of digital technology, Personal Housing Plans and Outcome Star support plans.
- Traditionally homeless acceptances in North Lincolnshire have been low. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 these have reduced further with greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention.
- The level of preventions have increased from 17/18 in line with the new prevention agenda, with a higher proportion of contacts resulting in positive action.
- In line with the national picture, rough sleeping figures increased in North Lincolnshire up to 2017. Since then we have seen a reduction, bucking the national trend, due to the use of innovative approaches. However, the figure for 2019 sees the number increase.
- The numbers of individuals placed in bed and breakfast accommodation has increased since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Greater numbers of single homeless being placed in emergency accommodation irrespective of whether they are priority need.
- Referrals into the First Stop service show that of those being referred, homelessness, substance misuse and mental health are the top three identified support needs.
- There are stark physical and mental health inequalities experienced by many people who present as homeless.
- Through experience with the MEAM approach there is a recognition that improvements in joined up multi agency working across services improves outcomes for our clients. We have a shared responsibility to support vulnerable clients, particularly at transitional points and as early as possible in the process.
- Sharing and tagging of records between agencies may help facilitate a more integrated approach and there is also a need to consider the health needs of all members of a household presenting as homeless.
- For clients with more complex needs, input from all services need to be sustained over time. The potential for an intensive case management support model, such as Housing First, could be considered for the small cohort of clients who have high needs and have difficulty maintaining a tenancy.



## Consultation

Our priorities in this strategy have been shaped around conversations and engagement with our partners, both internal and external, to the council. We took account of the local and national context and emerging trends and issues by working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The strategy needs to be a “living” document sensitive to changing trends and needs, therefore engagement also needs to be dynamic in nature.

Consequently, whilst we will consult on the final draft of the policy once approved, we will also review it annually to ensure that it still reflects our agreed and shared priorities and outcomes around Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

# Strategic aims and priorities:

## Priority one:

Greater understanding of the causes of rough sleeping with year on year reductions of the number sleeping rough in North Lincolnshire. No-one sleeping rough by 2027.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government has announced a national target to reduce rough sleeping by half by 2022 and to eliminate it altogether by 2027. North Lincolnshire saw an increase in rough sleeping leading up to 2017. Since then our rough sleeper count has indicated a decline. We are now exploring additional ways of addressing this issue.

Rough sleepers are some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents. Many have experienced some form of trauma in their life, often occurring in childhood. So whilst living on the street is often seen as a “choice”, in reality it is a lot more complicated than that. We need to do all that we can to protect them. Nationally, the life expectancy of a rough sleeper is 44 for men and 42 for woman years of age and the longer a person sleeps on the streets, the greater the deterioration in their mental and physical health.

## Average age of death:

Average age of death of people who experience homelessness was:

In comparison, in the general population the average age at death was:



Source: Office for National Statistics (2018) - figures for deaths registered in England and Wales, 2013 to 2017

## Conducting quarterly Rough Sleeper Counts

Rough Sleeping remains the most visible and damaging manifestation of homelessness.

In August 2018, the Government announced the new Rough Sleeping Strategy. The aim of this 9-year strategy is not just to reduce rough sleeping but to eradicate it by the year 2027.

Progress against the target is measured by a single night's street count in areas where there is a known, or suspected, rough sleeping problem. Counts and estimates have taken place in most local authority areas since 1997.

The results have helped establish illustrative annual estimates of people sleeping rough across England.

Since 1997, Councils have been encouraged to develop local strategies to address rough sleeping, particularly where there is a significant problem (more than 10 rough sleepers identified). The annual count helps inform the continuing development of such strategies, measures their success and identifies gaps in services.

In order to ensure a more informed measure throughout the year, we are committed to conducting quarterly counts to ensure we are ahead of the curve in being able to have a clear up-to-date picture of our rough sleeper population.

## Increase resource into Assertive Outreach provision

The most successful programmes for this client group are person-centred support and interventions that are tailored around them and work at their pace. Hence the success of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) programme.

North Lincolnshire currently has an assertive outreach worker to support and engage with those individuals sleeping rough. We will build on Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Re-housing Funding through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to add further capacity to our outreach services. We will explore the options for sustainability of this resource, with the intention of embedding it into the mainstream work of the Housing Advice and Support Service to ensure that provision continues in the longer term.

North Lincolnshire Council will ensure that we have the necessary resources to work with complex rough sleepers and the single homeless to help secure and retain more individuals in accommodation.

## **Commitment to severe weather winter provisions**

As a local authority, North Lincolnshire Council aims to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and provided for during the cold winter season. Extreme cold temperatures for extended spells can threaten the safety and wellbeing of some people living in the borough. There is a humanitarian obligation on all local authorities to do all they can to prevent deaths on the streets caused by winter weather.

During periods of extreme cold weather, the council operates a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), which was previously triggered when night-time temperatures were predicted to be freezing on any given night. We have committed to review this procedure annually and make continual improvements to ensure that the SWEP provision moving forward should be continuously activated from November through to March. By doing so we eliminate any confusion around whether SWEP has been activated or not, we do not need to worry if temperatures drop suddenly out of normal working hours and that provision was available throughout this period without the need for a subjective assessment that often caused ambiguity.

## **MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter)**

Making Every Adult Matter is the cornerstone of the support offered by the Housing Advice and Support Service to the most chaotic clients with the most complex needs. The MEAM approach is designed to help local areas deliver better and more coordinated services for people with multiple needs, using a person centred approach. MEAM is currently being used by partnerships of statutory and voluntary agencies in 15 local areas across England.

MEAM will ensure that the Housing Advice and Support Service will be able target those complex cases to prevent re-entry into the service on a cycle which has yet to be broken. North Lincolnshire is now a designated MEAM area and we have a MEAM coordinator embedded within the Housing Advice and Support Service.

MEAM Approach areas consider seven key principles, which they adapt to local needs and circumstances. They will provide hands-on support to the local partnerships as part of this process. North Lincolnshire continues to commit to this as the approach to supporting those with multiple disadvantage and will further develop the approach as a one council way of working across a number of service areas. Since 2019, using the MEAM approach, we have managed to secure housing for 49 complex and vulnerable individuals who would otherwise have been homeless.

## **Housing First**

Housing First is an international model, providing accommodation and intensive support to homeless people with complex needs.

North Lincolnshire has not formally adopted the model but has indirectly piloted the model with MEAM clients in that the flexibility this approach provides enable us to work effectively with agencies to provide longer term, ongoing support which is tailored around the individual within their own accommodation rather than in a traditional supported accommodation setting. This has the advantages of creating sustainability within longer term accommodation and builds resilience within a community setting.

A key focus will be to further embed this approach to a greater number of MEAM clients and to continue building on the commitments made by partners to provide the appropriate support and flexible approach that is required.

The MEAM approach will undergo continual improvement. The Outcome Star will provide both an aid to support workers as well as service users in order to recognise and identify areas to target whilst allowing a tailored approach and for milestones to be celebrated and recognised in an individual's journey.



## **Out of hours/ flexible services**

Traditional services have operated with the standardised working hours of the Local Authority. It has been identified that the complexity and chaotic natures of the lives of those we try to support don't necessarily fit into these times.

The future of support services will be developed ensuring that the right support is reaching those who need it, when they need it. At the same time we have identified a key area of support to also help our communities with particular emphasis on the night-time economy and rough sleeping.

## **Priority two:**

### **Earlier interventions to prevent homelessness**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a statutory duty on preventing homelessness. Ensuring timely and accessible housing advice and information is critical to helping people make planned housing moves and avoid a housing crisis. As part of the legislation, a Personal Housing Plan is required. This is an important document which will assist us in moving away from a transactional relationship with those in housing need towards a more relational approach. This will allow individuals to take more of an active role in finding a solution to their housing issues and providing a dynamic "living" document that is a helpful guide and support to all those finding themselves at risk.

We will continue to develop our Housing Advice and Support Service to ensure it is used proactively to avoid housing crisis. We will ensure that we develop these services in conjunction with internal and external partners which will involve consultation on the definition of Housing Related Support and what this means to stakeholders across North Lincolnshire.

Whilst North Lincolnshire has been successful in recent years in preventing homelessness more clients with complex and entrenched needs are seeking advice and support. Our Services will remain flexible and responsive so we can adjust to the changing needs of our service users and emerging trends. This proactive approach will continue to allow us to target those in most need to avoid crisis. By offering a more targeted service, we aim to ensure a long term solution and reducing the number of re-referrals to service.

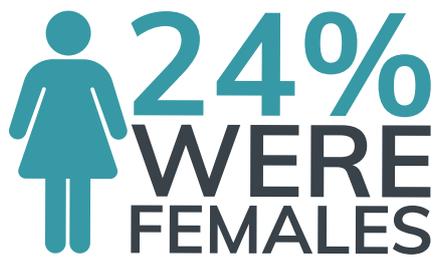
We will continue to develop our information through digital channels to promote how to access the help and assistance we offer not only to agencies but the public regardless of tenure.

Data indicates that the main reasons for being at risk of homelessness, is relationship breakdowns and tenancies being ended. We will continue to ensure that advice and prevention tools are relevant to tackling these main causes of homelessness. Using the data we have, we intend to try to ensure that advice is given when homelessness can still be prevented rather than having to provide relief. We are also aware that national Government policy impacts on this area significantly, e.g. the review of Section 21 notice seeking possession and the link between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the thirtieth percentile.

We will continue to identify specific triggers, risk factors and causes of homelessness at different points in people's lives developing a range of interventions specifically targeted at addressing these.

In order to specifically target these triggers and risk factors we will undertake a Homeless journey mapping exercise with the view to improve understanding of need and to demonstrate "what works" whilst providing efficient and effective services.

# North Lincolnshire's supported Rough Sleepers



# United Kingdom's supported Rough Sleepers



## Priority three:

### **Provision of a wide range of appropriate, suitable accommodation for people who are homeless**

In North Lincolnshire we recognise the importance in the availability of suitable accommodation in the social, private and supported housing sectors. Key areas include the provision of suitable "move-on" accommodation and the affordability of those households trying to access housing.

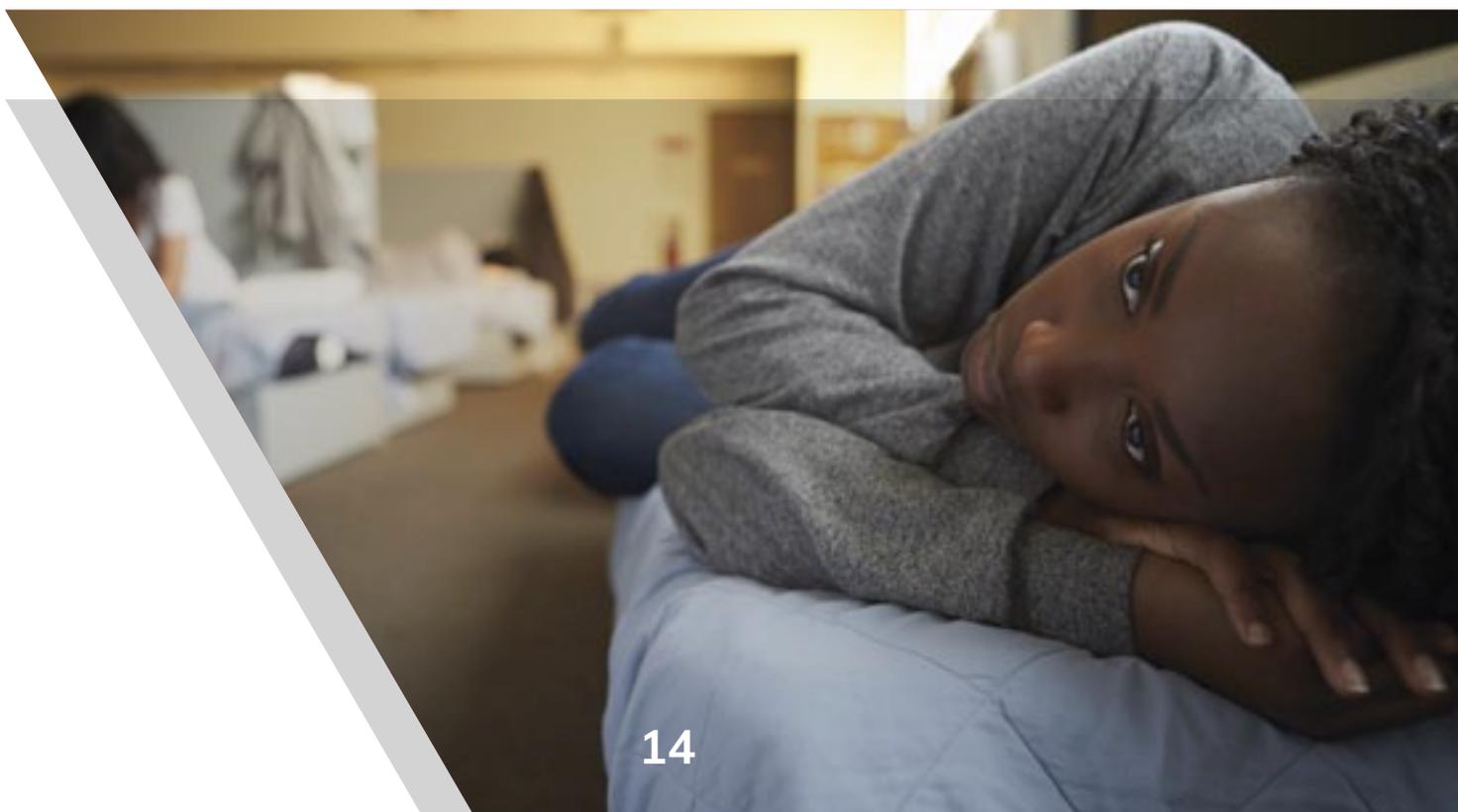
We will work with private landlords, developers and Registered Social Landlords to increase suitable housing supply for vulnerable households and those on low incomes.

With Private landlords we will continue to build on the introduction of our Private Leasing Scheme and existing relationships to provide better access to this sector for all our service users.

We will continue to make best use of the available housing stock and consider alternative uses and tenancies including shared accommodation and flexible tenancies.

There remains a commitment with the homeless services not to place any young person age 16/17 in bed and breakfast accommodation or place any families in such accommodation except in an absolute emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks. We were congratulated by the MHCLG in September 2019 for managing to avoid using this type of temporary accommodation for this client group.

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act we have seen an increase in the amount spent on Bed & Breakfast accommodation. This is as part of our commitment to offer emergency accommodation to those who find themselves homeless but not in priority need. We are committed to reducing spend on such accommodation across all service areas within the council, through searching and procuring alternative types of accommodation for those households which would be more suitable and appropriate as a part of our wider Council ambition.



# Priority four:

## Providing targeted support focussing on tenancy related issues

A decision was taken at the end of 2019 following consultation to approve the transfer of Housing Related Support (HRS) services back in-house. The service will operate as part of the existing Housing Advice Team within the Waste, Fleet and Public Protection service area in Operations. These services play a significant preventative role in ensuring the council meets its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The HRS service seeks to provide targeted help to those people who may be at risk of not being able to sustain independent living. The focus of the service is to enable clients to find solutions to resolve the issues and underlying factors that risk the security of their tenure.

Our Housing support service provides assistance to enable individuals to secure and maintain independent living in quality housing.

Housing support services are those that help such vulnerable groups both acquire and then maintain a quality home. A range of interventions may help achieve this and a range of agencies, both internally and externally, will contribute to differing aspects of the support on offer.

Help and assistance will be delivered in such a way that it encourages the individual or household's independence rather than continuing dependence. Our aim is to help our service users live independently within their community and achieve the outcomes of safe, well and connected. By avoiding dependence, we can ensure interventions are time-limited and focussed on specific assistance required to achieve the outcome agreed within an individual's support plan. This can include one-off advice or similar help. The need for assistance may well repeat itself, and we need to be ready to provide additional support as and when it is required, or in a limited number of cases it may be ongoing.

## Quality homes

We define quality housing as a home that will keep people safe, well, connected to their communities and affordable. A quality home is considered important because this is one of the foundations upon which health and wellbeing are based. Having such a home gives the best opportunity to people to be able to manage their long-term health conditions, overcome short-term breakdowns in their health, develop and maintain healthy family relationships, overcome addiction, refrain from offending, and contribute positively to their community to enable it to flourish.

Having a quality home is a basic human right and makes a significant contribution to public health objectives. Without somewhere to stay that is safe, warm and healthy, a person can't hope to engage successfully with training, education, employment and development of skills, and be a fully integrated member of society.

## Provide access to wider services which link into areas such as employment, training and volunteering

The delivery of such assistance will be through the use of our MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) and tenancy coaching approaches which specifically focus on flexibility of the approach taken by services and the co-ordination of a comprehensive package to address any issues which may impact on an individual's housing. Having a home is just one element of ensuring wellbeing that is intimately linked to others including health, family and community relationships and employment/engagement. Housing Support Services inevitably therefore sometimes need to address these issues as well. In particular the ability to pay for accommodation is central to the capacity to acquire and maintain a home, and therefore assistance to obtain appropriate benefits, resolve debts, actively budget and in particular find appropriate employment are inevitably likely to be key elements in any programme of housing support.

# Priority five:

## Maintaining and developing partnership working

The successful delivery of this strategy is dependent on co-operation and joint working with internal departments, statutory bodies, voluntary sector agencies, and faith and community groups.

There are a number of forums within North Lincolnshire that facilitate this such as the MEAM coalition and the creation of MEAM Champions. With rising public concern about homelessness and rough sleeping we will use this forum as a way of encouraging others to be involved through the creation of a Homeless Charter.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces a new duty on statutory authorities to refer anyone who is known to be homeless (with consent) and will enable planned moves from hospital or prison.

Central to effective joint working will be workable pathways for specific client groups, such as those leaving prison, hospital or domestic violence/ care leavers. We will work together collectively to ensure that all agencies work towards and operate in the spirit of the Homelessness Reduction Act and particularly the Duty to Refer for statutory bodies were intended.

We will build closer working relationships between the Council and registered social landlords to ensure earlier intervention and support. We will establish formal systems to better monitor and understand failed tenancies and abandonments. This work would build on the Panel meetings we have established to tackle rent arrears in RSL's. We will look at formalising joint protocols and pathways between Housing Services and other statutory bodies to ensure consistency of approach and clear identification of duties. This communication and creation of a more formalised approach will ensure that we are all working to a shared definition of homelessness and further clarity on terminology used by internal departments, statutory bodies, voluntary sector agencies, and faith and community groups.

We will work in a collaborative way across North Lincolnshire so that housing advice and information is consistent and linked up. We will refer vulnerable clients into relevant support services at the earliest opportunity and look at the creation of a comprehensive training programme provided by Housing services which is available to volunteers, peer mentors and those working with people that are homeless.

# Priority six:

## Improving health, well-being and resilience of our communities.

As part of “Intervention”, the Government announced that it would aim to address the health needs of rough sleepers and those facing homelessness.

The NHS has already embarked on major transformations within mental health services under the Mental Health Five Year Forward View looking at increasing the number of patients being treated and increasing their workforce in this field. The Strategy highlights the importance of targeted health support for those on the streets now and makes references to models of integrated care where health professionals, in particular those with mental health specialisms, work hand in hand with homeless outreach teams to identify those in need of support.

### Provide an enhanced Housing Options Service

With a new targeted approach being taken by the Housing Advice and Support Service as a whole it has been considered that the Team offer a universal service, with access for all clients on a digital platform. With a bespoke system we are able to concentrate our resources on the more complex and vulnerable but still provide free access for all housing advice, allowing those who can help themselves to do so.

The Supported Accommodation Gateway is to be built in conjunction with FirstStop which sits within the Housing Advice and Support Service. It has been identified that a more systematic way of allocating referrals is required to make the best possible use of the resources on offer within North Lincolnshire in terms of supported accommodation and support provided to individuals in their own homes.

Both the Enhanced Housing Options and Gateway systems have been commissioned and we are currently involved with creating content that we feel will best service the needs of our clients.

The Enhanced Housing Options will ultimately be available online and clients will be directed to access this service as a triage mechanism before being contacted by officers and invited to appointments.

The system will identify those who have inputted data which we would consider a priority and these will be contacted and invited to speak to us regarding their situation, ensuring that those cases are not overlooked with the changes taking place.

The Enhanced Housing Options should result in a reduction in contacts to the Housing Advice team and allow advice workers to concentrate their time on more complex cases which require more input to reach a level of enablement. This together with a more robust triage offer, with advice available at the point of contact will further build around these principles and ensure we target our support and advice, providing specialist interventions to those most in need.

### Conduct a Health Needs Assessment

Health inequality features heavily in the Government’s strategy. We recognise the need to develop a long-term plan, with partners in public health, CCG and NLaG to look at reducing health inequalities, including the different life expectancies of people who are rough sleeping. The long-term plan will look at setting out the barriers to accessing health services to this client group and look how we can reduce inequalities and build this into each programme.

We have already started this process by conducting, together with Public Health, a Homeless Health Needs Assessment identifying the specific health needs of our rough sleeper population. We will then build on this further to develop a Health Needs Toolkit to tackle the barriers faced by this cohort in accessing primary and secondary healthcare.

## Develop a Supported Housing Gateway

The First Stop service sits at the heart of the Housing Advice Team, the gateway to all supported accommodation providers in North Lincolnshire including the Floating Support.

Being at the heart of housing support services allows the service to be influential on the placement and securing of support from appropriate providers. The Housing Advice and Support Service / First Stop lead the Allocation Panel meetings which decide all cases placed in those services.

We have plans to improve the efficiency of this referral gateway with a new targeted approach being taken by the service as a whole. Our digital platform will allow us to deliver a universal service, along with the training of hub staff to answer routine enquiries, so we can then concentrate our resources on the more complex and vulnerable but ensuring there is a basic universal offer available across all platforms and outlets from where advice may be sort. In so doing, we will hope to ensure that those who can help themselves do so.

As One Council, there is recognition that the services we offer should be available across all client groups. First Stop provides us with that single point of access into Housing Related Support Services and ensures that the right help is given at the right time and by the right people. It also gives us an unrivalled ability to be able to monitor progress for all clients receiving assistance. The gateway or single point of access has also been identified as providing a more systematic way of allocating referrals to make the best possible use of the resources on offer within North Lincolnshire in terms of housing related support.

## Trauma/ Psychological led environment approach

The people we work with are often vulnerable and socially excluded. Many have experienced adversity or trauma, and as a result may have complex psychological and emotional needs. This can lead to difficulties interacting with people and engaging with services. It's important that we recognise and address this when working with clients.

To embed this understanding across all aspects of our work, we will explore the use of an approach known as Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE). We would apply PIE in five key areas: relationships, staff training and support, the physical environment, our psychological framework, and evaluation. Any potential model of PIE would be based upon consultation with both those we support and health partner agencies, making it an approach which has been tailored to our services.

Through supporting individuals using the MEAM approach it has become apparent for the need to be able to express the complex issues underpinning and maintaining homelessness as an interaction between individuals and their environment and to move away from, and develop our thinking in terms of the problems faced by those who are homeless as either purely at a social level or at an individual level.





## Maintain and develop partnership working and strategic direction

The successful delivery of this strategy is dependent on co-operation and joint working with internal departments, statutory bodies, voluntary sector agencies, and faith and community groups.

There are a number of ways that we can facilitate such working, such as the Homeless Forum, but we acknowledge that with rising public concern about homelessness and rough sleeping we need to encourage this more and involve others.

One of such ways is to look at a comprehensive training available to volunteers and those working with people that are homeless. This will also help disseminate good practise in this area.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces a new duty on statutory authorities to refer anyone who is known to be homeless (with consent) and will hopefully enable planned moves from hospital or prison rather than last minute homeless presentations.

The Homeless Forum will continue to meet and they can help review this strategy, under the strategic leadership of the Council.

This approach has served us well in the past, ensuring effective partnership working across a diverse range of services with good links into relevant client groups.

Central to this close working partnerships is the development of shared and workable pathways for different client groups, such as care leavers, those fleeing domestic abuse etc.

We must ensure that all agencies understand and adhere to the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act and particularly the Duty to Refer for statutory bodies. And ensure these are fully reflected with websites and information to customers.

There is a need to ensure closer working relationships between the council and registered social landlords to ensure earlier intervention and support. We must establish formal systems to better monitor and understand failed tenancies and abandonments.

We must ensure information sharing agreements and consent forms are General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliant.

A particular focus for the future is the Homeless Health Needs Assessment which will help us to gain a deeper understanding of how early homelessness prevention results in much better outcomes for people and significant financial savings for health and other budgets further down the line.

We will work in a collaborative way across North Lincolnshire so that housing advice and information is consistent and linked up.

We will refer vulnerable clients into relevant support services at the earliest opportunity.

# Action Plan



The commitments outlined above are set out more fully in the strategy action plan that can be viewed or downloaded from [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

## **Making sure we deliver:**

The Homelessness Forum will meet at least annually to review progress against the action plan and ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs. We will publish an annual report on the council's website in the first quarter of each new financial year.

