

Ending Homelessness Together Homeless To Home

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Draft Strategic Action Plan for
Temporary Accommodation **2022-27**



Housing
Executive



Ending Homelessness Together

Homeless

To

Home

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Introduction

This Action Plan was developed in consultation with key stakeholders as part of the Housing Executive's Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation project which was conducted with the goal of assessing how effectively the current temporary accommodation portfolio meets the needs of homeless customers.

The vision of the Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 is 'Ending Homelessness Together' and the aim is that 'Wherever possible homelessness should be prevented, if homelessness cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurring'. The second objective of the Strategy is to effectively address homelessness by ensuring customers receive accommodation and support at the point of need. Delivery of this action plan to transform temporary accommodation will directly support the achievement of this key objective of the strategy.

Homelessness, and the associated requirement for temporary accommodation, is an outworking of economic, social, health, housing and educational inequalities and problems. As such, factors which increase these inequalities and problems drive homelessness demand upwards, and factors which address problems in these areas are those which help resolve homelessness. It is within this broader moving system that the Housing Executive plans and delivers its homelessness response.

The Housing Executive's strategic programmes on homelessness are concerned with long term resolution of homelessness for individuals. As with the pandemic response, it is necessary to invest now to save in the medium and longer term. Investment in the actions identified in this plan will help suppress and manage demand to the extent possible, to benefit individuals and communities, and ensure value for money. The extent to which this will impact on the overall homelessness picture depends largely, however, on how effectively the broader economic and social issues are addressed.

Purpose

Customers should be provided with good quality housing and support, when they need it, and shaped around them. This is the purpose towards which housing and homeless service providers work. The evidence is clear that the needs of homeless customers have been changing; today's homelessness issues are much different to those of 10 years ago, with customers presenting with increasingly complex health and support needs. Many of our homeless services were designed in a different social and economic context. Reflecting on this changing environment, this plan aims to set out how we will transform our temporary accommodation responses over the next five years to achieve the following four ambitions:

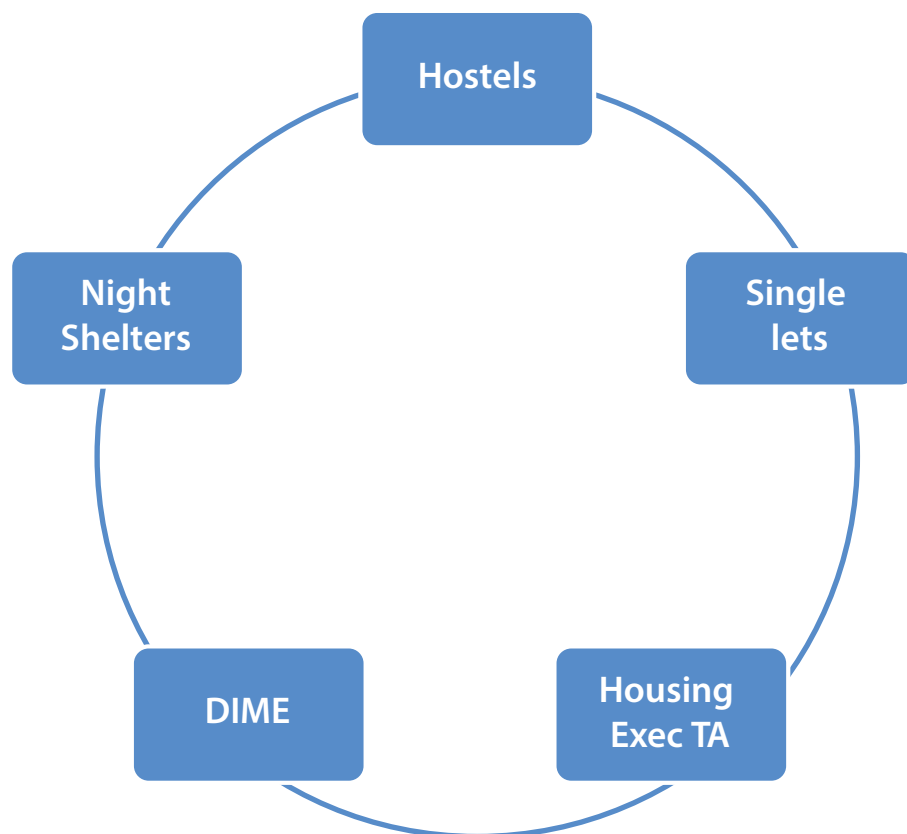
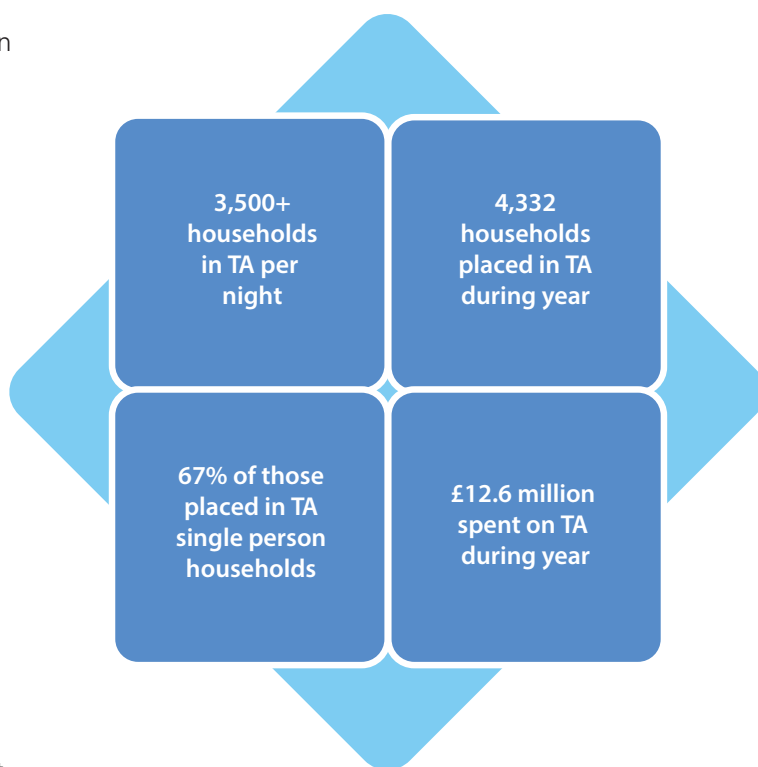


Defining temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation (TA) is provided to households who are legally homeless, until a more permanent housing solution can be secured. It is also provided to households whose homelessness application is undergoing assessment and who are believed to be homeless and in priority need. The Housing Executive is responsible for delivering the statutory homeless accommodation duties, and works with a range of temporary accommodation providers in the private and voluntary sectors to do so.

There are five main types of temporary accommodation in operation at present. Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic the homelessness system was already under pressure with increasing numbers of households placed in hotel/B&B accommodation. In the last year approximately 550 additional private sector single lets were acquired to meet the increased demands stemming from the pandemic impacts; this type of accommodation now makes up the largest share of the portfolio (51%), with voluntary sector hostels also comprising a significant share (38%). There is a small supply of Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency (DIME) accommodation, Housing Executive properties and Night Shelter beds. As a last resort, in order to meet our statutory accommodation duties, placements may be made in hotel or B&B accommodation. This is for as short a period as possible for a number of reasons; it is generally not suitable for long term stays, it is costly, and its primary purpose is within a hospitality context.

Key statistics from 2020/21



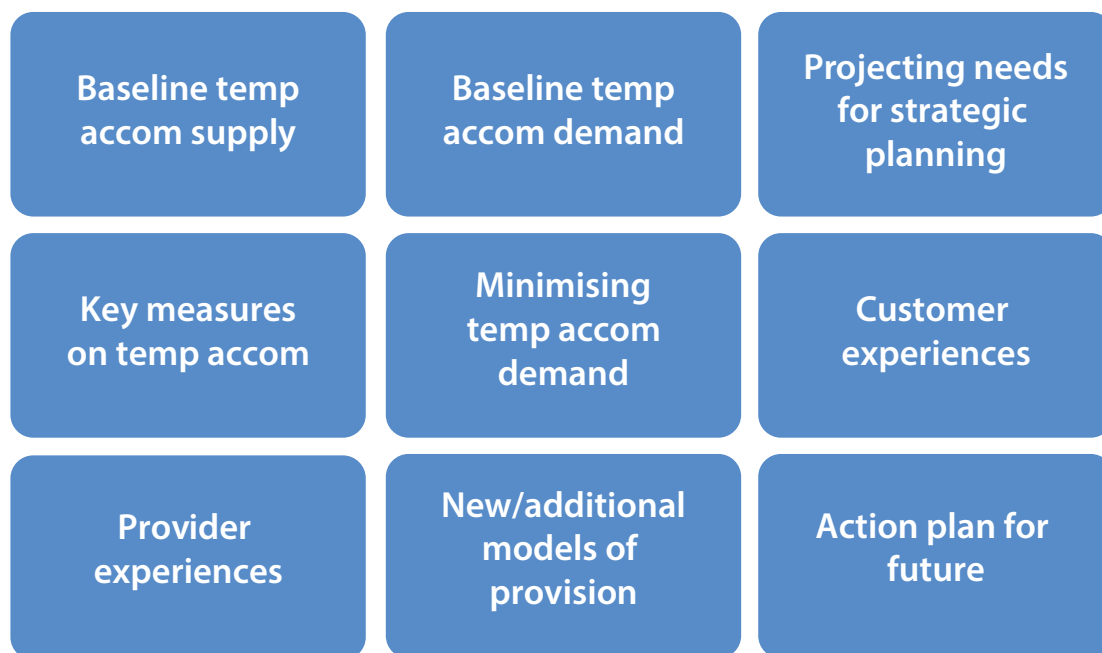
Details of these different types of temporary accommodation are provided in the following chart.

Types of temporary accommodation

Hostels (c 1,377 units)	Single lets (c. 1868 units)	Housing Executive temporary accommodation (c.283 units)	Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency Accommodation (DIME, 107 units)	Night Shelters (26 units)
<p>Hostels in Northern Ireland come in a range of types and sizes with significant variation in the levels of support provided. They are funded by Supporting People and managed largely by voluntary sector providers. Some offer generic provision, others are specialist services for particular client groups. Some offer self-contained units of accommodation, some single en-suite rooms, others single rooms with shared bathrooms, and others shared rooms. Some provide meals, some do not, and service charges vary across providers and schemes. Referrals into these schemes are via several routes, not just the Housing Executive, and therefore not all occupants are statutorily homeless applicants.</p>	<p>Single lets are furnished private sector dwellings managed by landlords or managing agents to accommodate homeless households on a temporary basis. Referrals are from the Housing Executive alone. These properties are dispersed geographically and pre-pandemic tended to be utilised for families or couples with low support needs, with single person households more likely to be accommodated within hostels. Floating support was provided to some households in single lets but this was not commonplace. However, during the pandemic, the single let portfolio was expanded by more than one third to meet increased needs, and many of these dwellings have been occupied by singles; wraparound support has been provided where possible and necessary.</p>	<p>The Housing Executive provides some furnished temporary accommodation across Northern Ireland. These are a mix of dispersed properties, blocks of flats or terraces, and purpose built hostels, mostly managed by the Housing Executive, with a small number managed by voluntary sector providers. One hundred of these units are recent additions which were void properties furnished as part of the COVID-19 homelessness response. The others are long term temporary accommodation units, mainly for families and with support provided to varying degrees, funded by Supporting People. Referrals are from the Housing Executive alone.</p>	<p>This is a scheme of 107 units currently which are leased by the Housing Executive and where the provider is employed under a contract to act as the Housing Executive’s managing agent and support provider. The service is jointly funded by homelessness and Supporting People. All of the properties are currently in Belfast. This provision caters for customers with intensive support needs and high risk behaviours. The units are dispersed across multiple sites within Belfast.</p>	<p>Funded by Supporting People, these services are emergency crisis accommodation intended for short term use by those with no other accommodation options. Snapshot exercises reported in the Campbell Tickell report on temporary accommodation note repeat usage of Night Shelter beds for particular homeless cohorts who were unable to secure move-on accommodation elsewhere. In response to the public health crisis, Night Shelters were locked down and have since been operating more like ‘ordinary’ hostels.</p>

Strategic context

As an action of the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22, the Housing Executive initiated the Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation in January 2019 with the goal of assessing how effectively the current temporary accommodation portfolio meets the needs of homeless customers and culminating with an action plan for temporary accommodation. Nine objectives were identified for the project to understand the following aspects:



As part of this project, Campbell Tickell were commissioned to complete research to provide a baseline picture of temporary accommodation provision in Northern Ireland. The final research was published in January 2021 and summarises the pre-COVID position as follows:

New homeless presentations remained largely steady over 5 year period

Total numbers of FDA applicants on waiting list was increasing year on year

Top reasons for homelessness remained consistent (accommodation not reasonable, sharing breakdown and loss of rented accommodation)

Proportion of homeless acceptances was increasing (67% in 2019/20) reflecting the increasing complexity of client needs

Demand for emergency accommodation was outstripping supply (reflected in the increasing use of hotel/B&B accommodation)

Around 70% of those leaving temporary accommodation move on to permanent social housing

There was a mismatch in temporary accommodation supply and demand both in terms of locations and client support needs; there were clients in supported accommodation who no longer needed support, whilst others with support needs were in unsupported accommodation. This includes the placement of some individuals with the most complex support needs into hotels/B&Bs due to a shortage of accommodation for this cohort.

Move on accommodation was identified as a significant blockage within the system

There are increasingly complex support needs associated with homelessness presentations with mental health and addictions the most prevalent

In addition to the Campbell Tickell research, the review included customer and provider surveys, and research on best practice initiatives internationally. Work was also undertaken to develop a number of pilot projects to test additional models of temporary accommodation including shared tenancies for young people, community hosting (paused due to pandemic), use of dispersed Housing Executive voids for temporary accommodation, a modular housing scheme (under development), and alternative models of emergency accommodation for families with children to negate the need for children to be accommodated in hotels or B&Bs.

A Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) for Supporting People was commissioned and completed in late 2020. On homelessness it notes the following key points:

- Currently housing support need is 28% higher than supply
- Need is likely to increase; it is projected that in 3 years this gap will increase to a 30-42% shortfall
- Needs are more complex and multi-faceted now and this is likely to continue in the future;
- Increased need in the future will place significant pressure on services which have already pressure points throughout the year; and
- There is a need to adapt services to meet this needs based on stakeholder feedback (a mix of updating, remodelling services and adding floating support

A person can present and need support across a number of areas at the same time. This illustrates the 'critical adjacency and interdependency' of housing support to other service provisions.



(Source: Supporting People: Strategic Needs Assessment report Nov 2020)



Strategic context

The Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation project was paused during most of 2020 to implement the COVID-19 homelessness emergency response but the review element has now been completed and its findings, along with lessons from the pandemic, have informed the development of this plan.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on the homelessness system as recorded in our Reset Plan, 'The Way Home'. Its main impacts on the homelessness system can be summarised as follows:

Homelessness presentations have reduced by around 5% in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20

Breakdown of sharing overtook accommodation not reasonable as the top reason for homelessness

Temporary accommodation demand increased dramatically (placements increased by 115%), particularly among single households

Throughput from temporary accommodation has been reduced due to fewer social housing allocations during the pandemic

Young people have been particularly impacted, especially in Belfast where the number of placements quadrupled in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20

The 'Everyone In' approach was adopted to accommodate persons from abroad (PFA) with no recourse to housing assistance

Hostel capacity reduced to allow for Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance around social distancing and self-isolation

Night Shelters were adapted to operate as 'ordinary' hostels in the interests of public health concerns


An additional 650 units of temporary accommodation has been acquired to meet the demand

The number of households in non-standard accommodation each night has doubled when compared with pre-pandemic levels.

Many lessons have been learned during the pandemic as we worked collaboratively to keep our customers safe; these are detailed within the Reset Plan. Events of the past year have shone a spotlight on both the strengths and weaknesses of our current system. This action plan aims to build on the collaborative approach developed during the public health crisis, and ensure the speed and flexibility demonstrated in the emergency response can be built upon and maintained going forward. The proposed direction and actions are informed by the pandemic experience as well as evidence gathered as part of the strategic review project.



Based on findings from the strategic review, the below chart summarises the key strengths and weaknesses of the current temporary accommodation portfolio and the approach to utilising it. Over the next five years we will seek to build on the strengths, and take action to address the weaknesses, in our current system.

 <p>Dedicated and skilled staff across sector</p> <p>Strong customer focus</p> <p>Availability of a continuum of temporary accommodation in terms of levels of support offered and specialist services</p> <p>Comparatively low levels of rough sleeping</p> <p>High quality of support provided to customers</p> <p>Strong collaborative approach</p> <p>High proportion of dispersed properties - 'normal housing in normal communities'</p> <p>Flexibility within system to respond to emergencies (e.g. pandemic)</p> <p>Availability of data to inform decision making</p> <p>Appetite for innovation and continuous improvement</p> <p>Increased funding to homelessness budget in recent years</p>	<p>Often crisis driven</p> <p>Repeat homelessness and multiple placements</p> <p>Shortage of supply - increasing use of hotel/B&B (especially for those with complex support needs)</p> <p>Mismatch between customer needs and current placement</p> <p>Bottle necks due to lack of move on options</p> <p>Limited and inconsistent case management protocols/processes and practice</p> <p>Risks associated with single let portfolio due to lack of contractual arrangements</p> <p>Challenges with large scale congregate settings</p> <p>Increasing problems with exclusions and barring</p> <p>Shortage of accommodation which is accessible on 24/7 basis</p> <p>Lack of capacity for rapid rehousing</p> <p>Length of stay in TA increasing pre-pandemic</p> <p>Placements driven by availability rather than appropriateness</p> <p>'Staircase model' the norm</p> <p>Short term funding makes it difficult to make long term plans/commitments</p>
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A number of strengths were identified through the Review, including the fact that staff work collaboratively across the sector provide a high quality of housing management and support services to customers. Providers highlighted challenges retaining staff due to unfavourable pay and conditions as a result of a Supporting People funding freeze for a number of years, and short term 'in year' funding commitments for new projects such as prevention initiatives or new models of temporary accommodation makes it difficult to recruit new staff to deliver innovation or develop services.

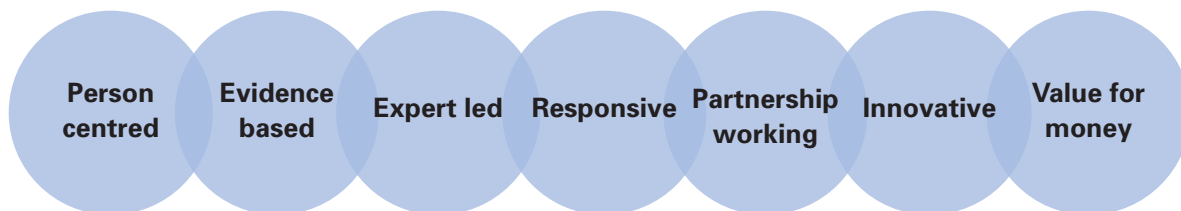
The Review found that generally the physical standards of the current temporary accommodation portfolio, in terms of condition, is very good. An absence of clearly defined standards, however, was noted.

Whilst it is clear that high quality support is delivered to homeless customers, the findings of the Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation chime with a growing international consensus on the challenges associated with large scale congregate hostel accommodation. Whilst acknowledging the high quality of support currently provided within hostels, feedback from both providers and customers has raised fundamental questions about the future role of this type of accommodation in effectively breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Already evident pre-pandemic, the ongoing public health crisis has shone a spotlight on the limitations of this form of provision. Difficulties include conflict, anti-social behaviour and substance abuse. There also tend to be higher rates of refusals and exclusions, as well as under-occupancy and a risk of customers becoming institutionalised. These are not aspects which can be managed or designed out; they are due to the intrinsic nature of large congregate settings. The physical constraints of these forms of provision can detract from the otherwise positive service offered to customers. To optimise the impact of housing and health supports, it is important to provide them in an environment which is conducive to stability and personal growth. Prioritising delivery of 'normal housing within normal communities' with support tailored to individual needs is the aspiration of most of our customers. It is, therefore, a key aspiration of this plan.

Planning principles

The same principles which underpin the Homelessness Strategy apply to this Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation. These are detailed within the Strategy.



Timeframe of plan

This Action Plan is aligned with the Homelessness Strategy and as such covers the period 2022-27. The pandemic has highlighted how broader economic, health and social factors can impact on the homelessness system in an unpredictable way. Therefore it is essential that the plan is subject to continual review based on ongoing analysis of data and trends. It sets out the ambitions we are aiming to achieve over the next five years; year 1 actions are identified. It is proposed that actions will be reviewed routinely and formally towards the end of the year. The following year plan will then be developed based on progress and lessons in year 1, as well as taking account of the up-to-date broader influencing factors.

Funding

The delivery of this Action Plan will require significant funding.

The Department for Communities have already committed significant additional funding in the last 2 years both directly to the Housing Executive's homeless budget and more broadly to the Supporting People programme in Northern Ireland in order to deliver our homelessness response to COVID-19 while in tandem continuing to deliver our statutory services, including temporary accommodation provision.

Expenditure on temporary accommodation provision and associated support has necessarily increased since March 2020 in line with the increased demand as a result of the pandemic and in order to meet our statutory duties.

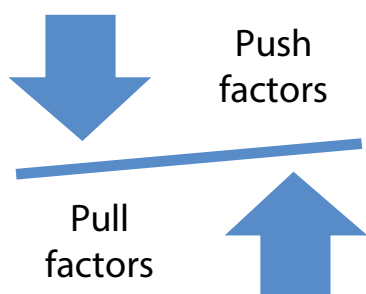
The Housing Executive produced its COVID-19 Reset Plan in 2020 which outlines our key aims in seeking to address and mitigate some of the long lasting impacts of COVID-19. One of these key themes is to ensure there is adequate supply of accommodation, which is also reflected in this Action Plan. In seeking to deliver this Action Plan we will also be continuing to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 in respect of temporary accommodation requirements, the legacy impacts of which are significant and long lasting.

As outlined in the Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027 the Housing Executive works with the Department for Communities to produce Homeless funding projections on an annual basis. These reflect the many factors which impact on homelessness in Northern Ireland and the demand for services, not least of which is the continued heightened demand for services as a result of COVID-19. The funding projections have also included the requirement for the development of new initiatives such as those included in this Action Plan for temporary accommodation.

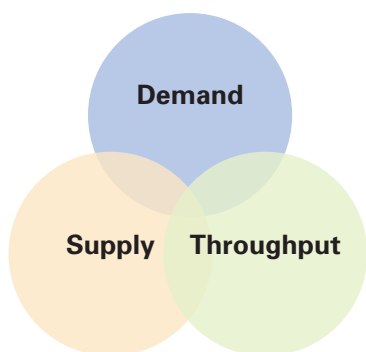
The Housing Executive will work to develop business cases for the actions identified in the Action Plan in order to ensure that any funding secured is put to use in a way that delivers the maximum value. The Housing Executive will also, with our partners, look to develop new funding opportunities. As detailed in our Strategy we want to maximize available opportunities and be in a position to identify and apply for funding in order to deliver on our commitments in this Action Plan and the new Strategy. We will also seek to support and develop capacity of those delivering homeless services to access alternative funding streams.

Projecting needs

As noted in the Introduction, a range of influencing factors continuously impact on the homelessness system – in positive and negative ways. This means that long term projection of needs in relation to homelessness and temporary accommodation is difficult, if not futile. No projections would have anticipated the current public health crisis and its impact on our customers, for example. However, throughout the pandemic we have developed our approach to short term projection of need in order to plan and deliver solutions.



The methodology involves routinely analysing data and trend information in relation to customer needs (demand), the performance of the accommodation portfolio (supply), and throughput from temporary accommodation to permanent housing. Along with this analysis, it is important to carry out a sensitivity check by examining the relevant influencing factors, as they relate to each of the three demand, supply and throughput elements. These can be considered 'pull' and 'push' factors which pull demand/supply into, or push it out of the system respectively. Some of these factors are set out on the following page.



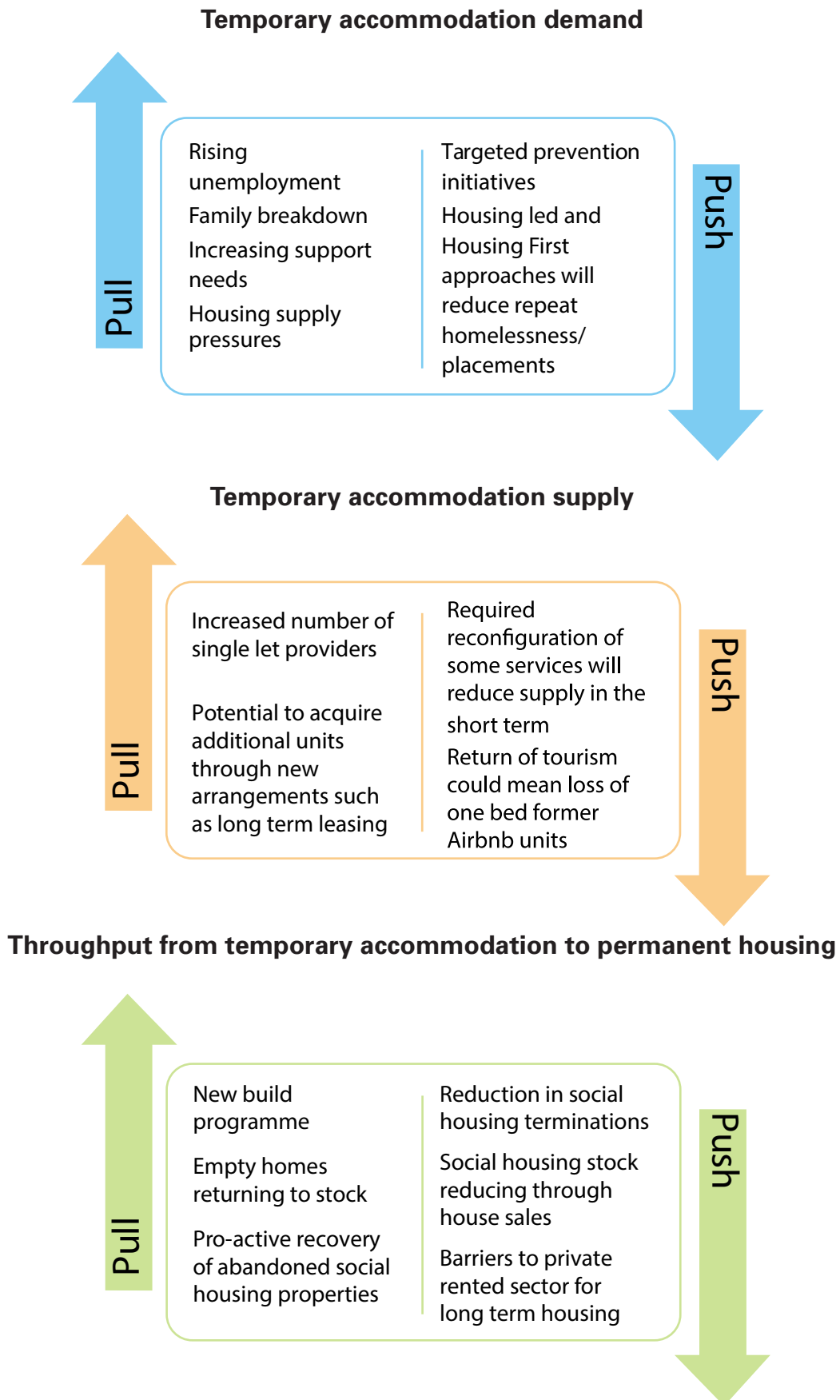
Assumptions about temporary accommodation needs, 2022-2017

The COVID-19 homelessness response remains active and ongoing. The full extent of the longer term impacts of the pandemic remain to be seen; the Housing Executive expects that the impacts will be significant and long lasting. A study produced by the British Academy on behalf of the Government Office for Science in England stated that “With the advent of vaccines and the imminent ending of lockdowns, we might think that the impact of COVID-19 is coming to an end. This would be wrong. We are in a COVID decade: the social, economic and cultural effects of the pandemic will cast a long shadow into the future – perhaps longer than a decade – and the sooner we begin to understand, the better placed we will be to address them.”

The Housing Executive produced its Reset Plan in autumn 2020 which outlined our key aims in seeking to address and mitigate some of the long lasting COVID-19 impacts.

Some of the broader societal impacts which will impact on the homelessness system are predicted to be generational. For example, the impacts on mental health. Studies such as that of The Royal Institute of Psychiatrists’ have reported that “43% of psychiatrists have seen an increase in urgent and emergency cases following the COVID-19 lockdown”, whilst at the same time, “45% of psychiatrists have seen a fall in their most routine appointments, leading to fears of a ‘tsunami’ of mental illness after the pandemic” (Royal College of Psychiatrists, Press Release, May 2020). It is also anticipated that COVID-19 impacts may be compounded when some of the measures introduced by government, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough scheme) and protection for private renters (Private Tenancies (Coronavirus Modifications) (Northern Ireland) Act 2020), are removed or reduced over the coming months.

Factors influencing temporary accommodation demand, supply and throughput



Projected needs

Demand for temporary accommodation will remain higher than pre-pandemic levels and will outstrip supply. It will be necessary to try to secure the additional units acquired during the pandemic response on a longer term basis.

The requirement to use hotel/B&B accommodation will remain elevated unless **there is increased provision for those with complex support needs** who are continuously excluded from existing services because of the high level of assessed needs and risks.

Single person households will remain the largest cohort presenting for temporary accommodation, and also with the greatest support needs. There is a need to increase the supply of accommodation and support for this client group.

Young people who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, will continue to need accommodation and support. New models are required as, based on levels of repeat placements, the current offer is inadequate.

Belfast and Derry/Londonderry will continue to have the highest gap between supply and demand. Other areas of pressure will be Mid & East Antrim, South Antrim, South Down and South Areas. Other locations should be monitored. There are particular gaps in supply to accommodate those with convictions for arson or sex offences, and polysubstance abuse. There is a need for additional provision to meet these gaps.

Levels of support needs will continue to grow, particularly related to mental health and addictions, issues which have worsened during the pandemic due to an inability to access or deliver sufficient supports. Multi-disciplinary support services will be required to effectively meet these needs.

There will be increased demand from those losing private rented accommodation. Initiatives to prevent homelessness through direct financial assistance, advice or mediation should be prioritized.

It is anticipated that there will be increased demand from victims of domestic abuse. Remodeling of services for this client group should be considered.



What will success look like?



Building success

In order to develop our action plan, we have begun by defining what success will look like. The plan has been built by working backwards from these four ambitions.

The indicators of success in these four areas are broken down further in the following sections as well as Year 1 actions.

The 'enablers' required for delivery are also described.



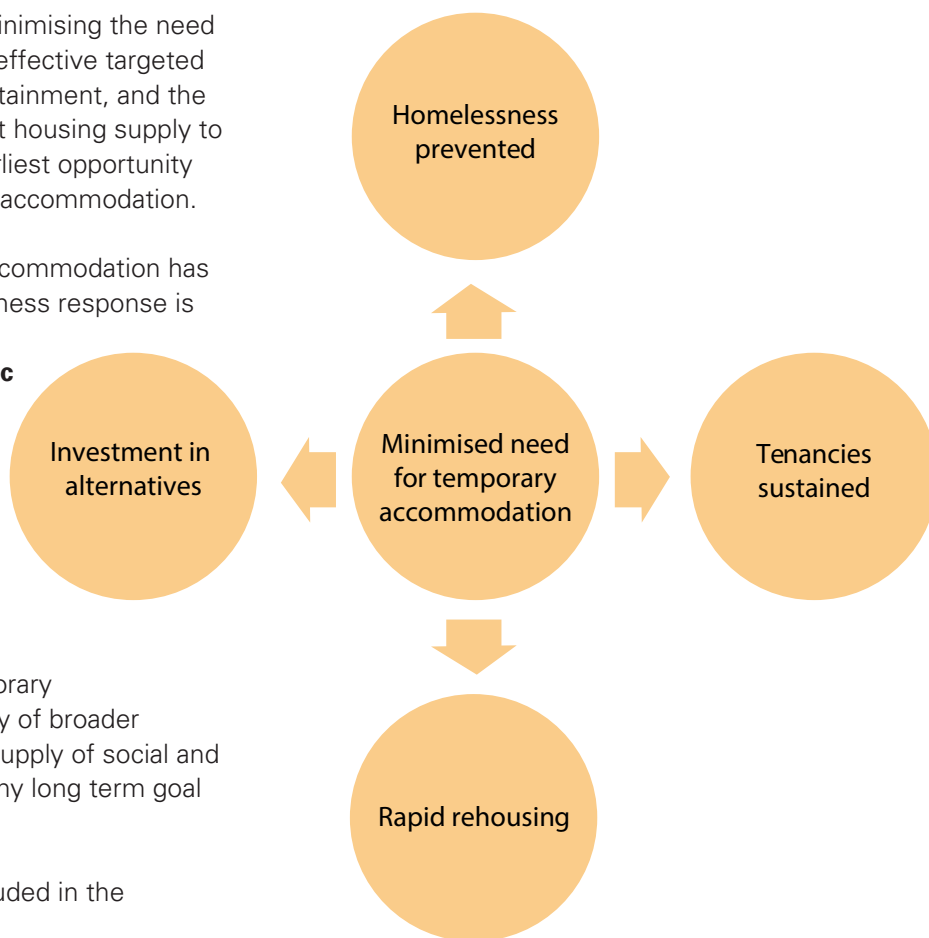
Minimised need for temporary accommodation

There are two main work strands to minimising the need for temporary accommodation; one is effective targeted homelessness prevention/tenancy sustainment, and the other is improved access to permanent housing supply to enable permanent rehousing at the earliest opportunity and minimise time spent in temporary accommodation.

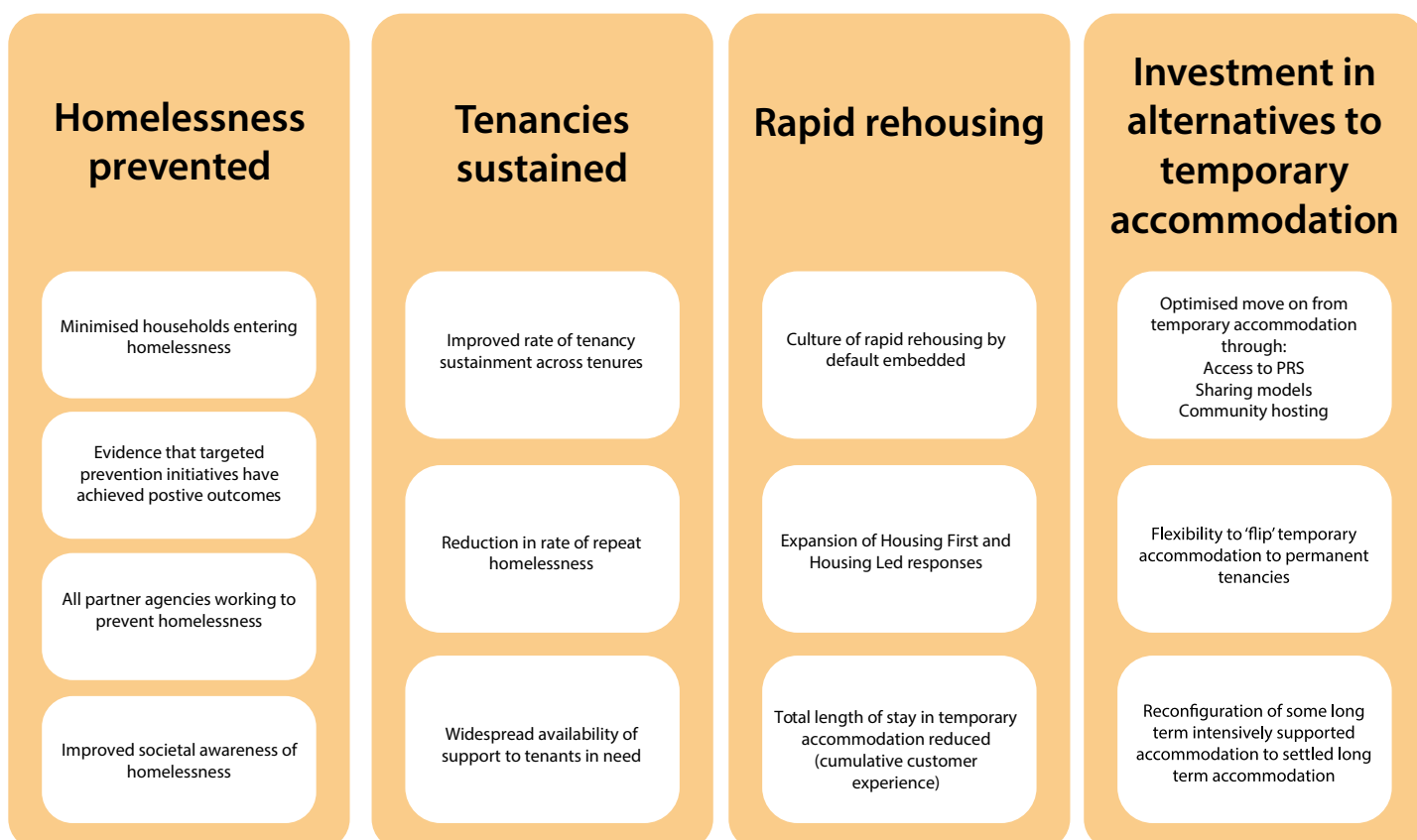
The Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation has noted that often the current homelessness response is crisis led, with a need to provide temporary accommodation. A **systemic and cultural shift towards homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing** is required. Evidence is clear that longer term housing and health outcomes are improved by minimising time in temporary accommodation.

Ambitions to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation depend on the delivery of broader housing supply options. An adequate supply of social and affordable housing is fundamental to any long term goal to end homelessness.

Further detail on our aspirations is included in the following chart.



Criteria for success - Minimised need for temporary accommodation



Minimising need for temporary accommodation in the first place

To do this we will shift our focus to pro-active homelessness prevention, tenancy sustainment and rapid re-housing, and away from reactive crisis responses which often default to the provision of temporary accommodation.

Year 1 Actions

Deliver public awareness campaign to shift mind-sets towards, and raise awareness of homelessness prevention.

Work towards the development of protocols for partner public services to ensure effective homelessness prevention pathways are in place.

Target homelessness prevention initiatives to those at most risk, such as young people, including former care leavers, victims of domestic abuse, those with offending histories, and families with intergenerational repeat homelessness. Prioritise funding to those projects with best proven outcomes.

Work with health partners to develop and deliver mental health support initiatives aimed at homelessness prevention.

Evaluate interventions to support access to and sustainment of tenancies in the private rented sector, including the impact of work carried out by Financial Inclusion Officers.

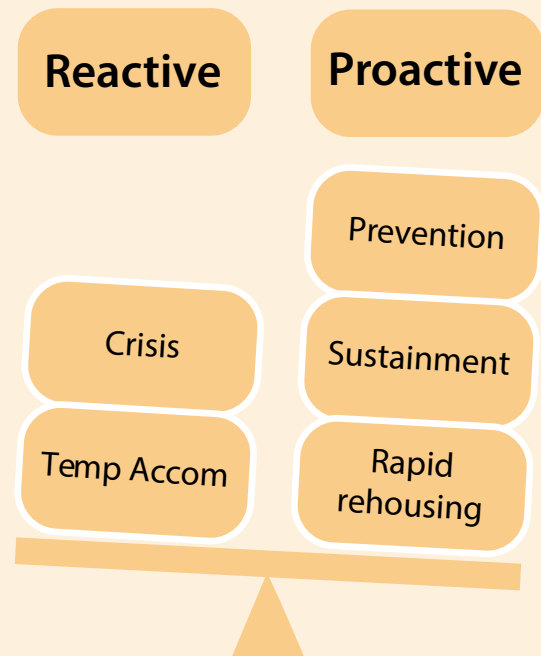
Establish forum for engagement with housing associations and private landlords to raise awareness, improve understanding and maximise their potential to better meet the needs of homeless households.

Develop measures to understand impact of homelessness prevention interventions and time taken for homeless households to achieve permanent housing solution. Replace current 'length of stay' measure which measures each placement by placement type, with a more meaningful measure which reports the cumulative customer experience in temporary accommodation.

Continue to build Housing First services across Northern Ireland by offering Housing Executive Housing First tenancies.

Explore 'flipping' of temporary accommodation to permanent housing.

Develop business case for delivery of a medium/long term community hosting model as alternative to temporary accommodation (i.e. as suitable medium/long term housing option).



Customer receives appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need

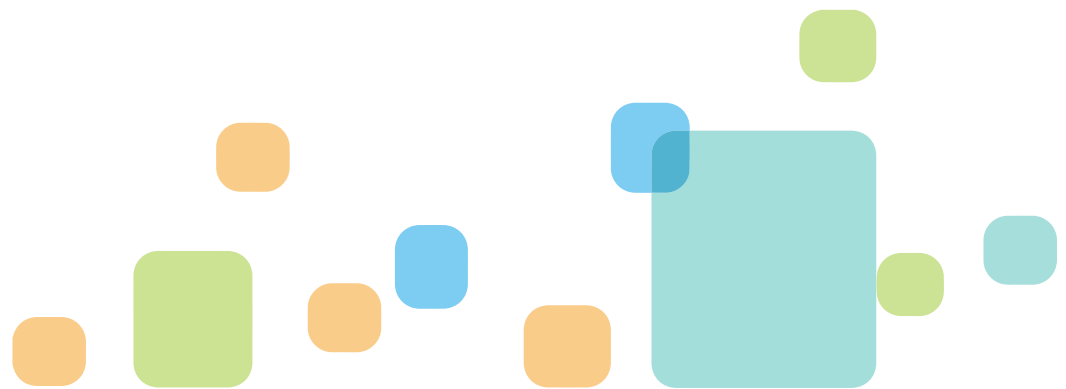
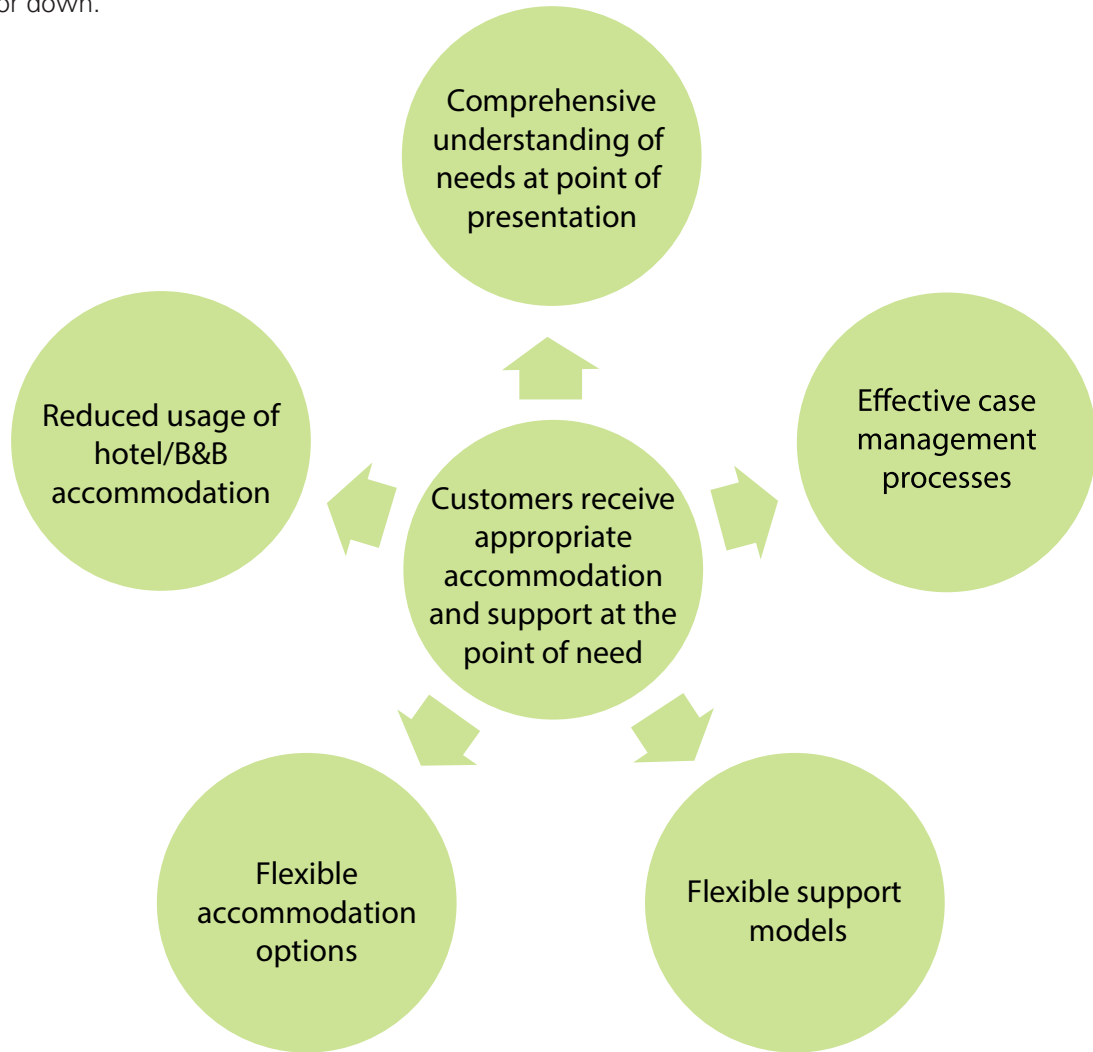
Success will be when we fully understand our customers' needs, and are able to meet both their accommodation and support needs at the point of need. Ideally this should be **'normal housing within normal communities' with support tailored to individual needs.**

Where possible, when support needs change, the customer should not be required to move accommodation; rather support provision should be adjusted up or down.

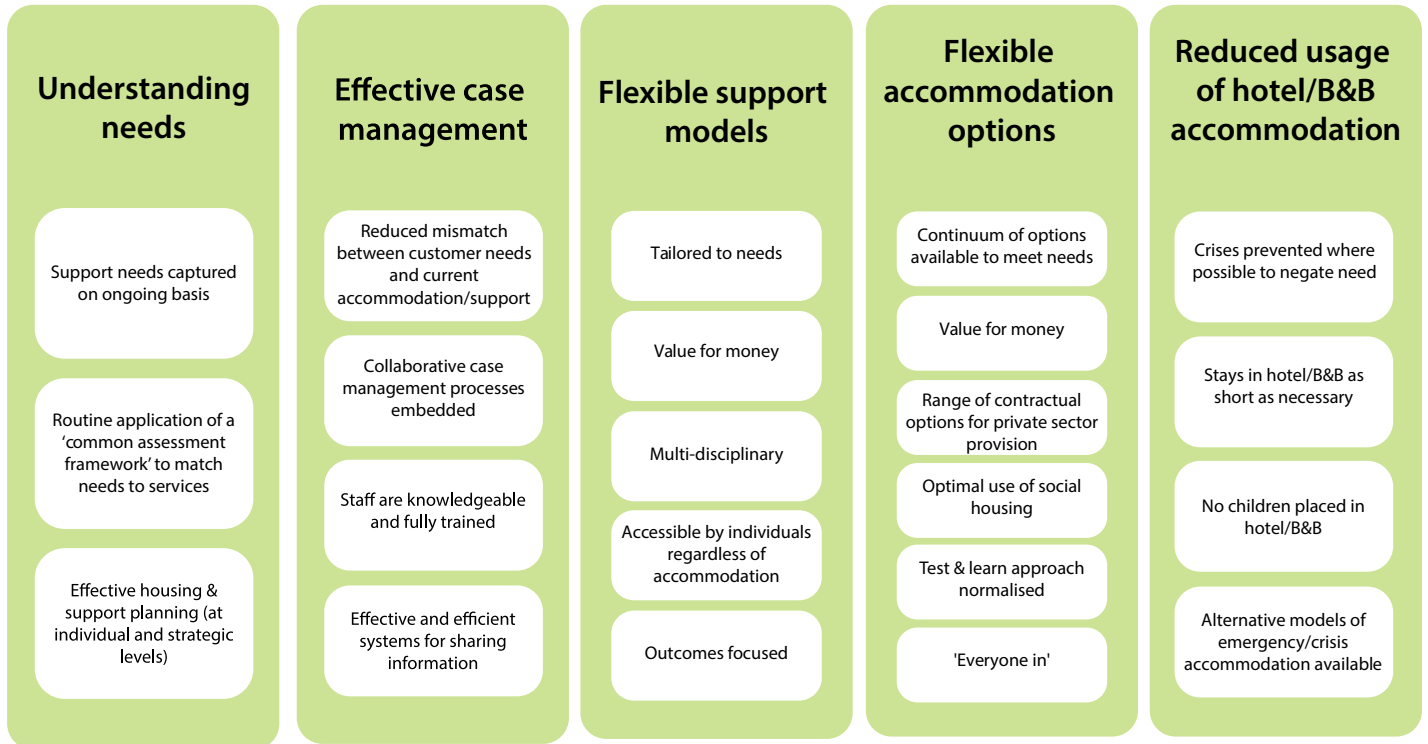
Within the continuum of options there may be a need for **congregate type accommodation** for certain client groups. This should be **small scale and high quality- ideally self-contained units of accommodation.**

Usage of hotel/B&B should be minimal, with stays as short as necessary.

Further detail is included in the following chart.



**Criteria for success -
Customer receives appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need**



We will provide our customers with appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need

To do this we will transform and grow our current temporary accommodation and support models to ensure they are flexible and meet the needs of today's homeless population.

Year 1 Actions

Continue to embed Common Assessment Framework as main tool to assess and record needs on an ongoing basis.

Develop local homelessness action plans based on analysis of local supply and demand issues; to include plans for prevention, rapid re-housing, and temporary accommodation and support provision.

Maximise the capacity of temporary accommodation portfolio by ensuring effective case management and void management practices; introduce routine reporting of occupancy across temporary accommodation types.

Commence redesign of Housing Executive-owned temporary accommodation (283 hostels and dispersed units). There is a need to retain the level of units currently designated as temporary accommodation, but in order to support rapid rehousing approach no further units should be converted for temporary use.

Increase provision of dispersed self-contained accommodation units for singles with wraparound support as required.

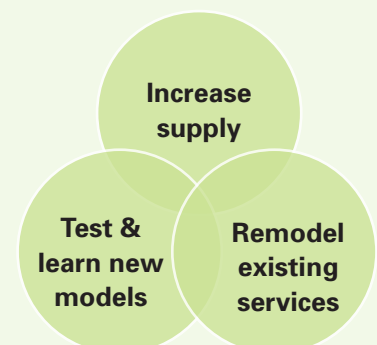
Complete evaluation of 'emergency accommodation for families' pilot and use findings to take forward longer term response to ensure children are not housed in hotel/B&Bs.

Continue roll out of Shared Tenancies for young people.

Test new models of emergency accommodation for young people, to cater for the full continuum of support needs.



Local Plan



A sustainable supply of good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well-managed

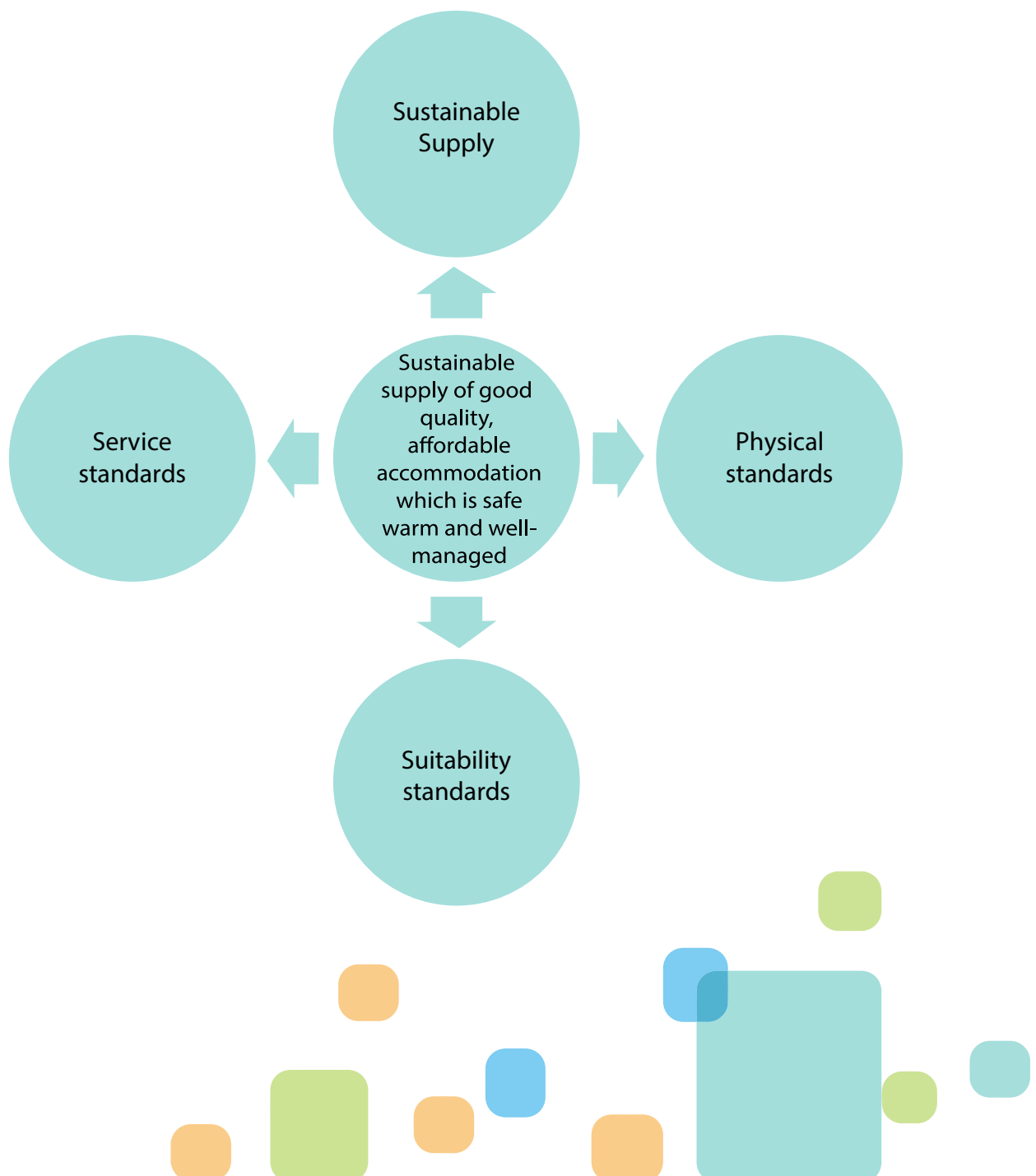
A key indicator of success for the Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation will be the delivery of a sustainable supply of good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well managed. It is important that this accommodation matches identified and changing need across all Housing Executive Areas. The delivery of this will be achieved through strategic partnerships with a range of accommodation providers and landlords.

Work undertaken as part of the Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation indicates that largely the current portfolio of accommodation is of a good standard; customers have generally noted satisfaction with the

physical standards of their accommodation as well as the associated support and management services provided.

The Campbell Tickell report, as well as some stakeholder feedback, has, however, recommended **specific standards should be developed for temporary accommodation**. It is intended that these will be developed collaboratively.

The following chart sets out some of the factors which should be considered in the development of agreed standards. The focus should be on ensuring **value for money** for the public purse and **meeting the needs of customers**.



Criteria for success - A sustainable supply of good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well-managed

Sustainable supply	Physical standards	Suitability standards	Service standards
Strategic partnerships in place with a range of accommodation providers	Safe and secure	Affordable	flexible and person-centred
A combination of short and long term leasing agreements in place with providers	Accessible by those with disabilities	Accommodation is of appropriate size and type to meet households' needs	Value for money
Safeguarded supply	Clean	Located within reasonable distance of transport links, workplace, schools/ colleges access to services	Psychologically informed services
Affordable and value for money	Warm	Increased provision of self-contained accommodation	Conditions of occupancy clearly communicated
Assured quality standards	Psychologically informed environments	No shared rooms	Appropriate levels of staff who are well trained and knowledgeable
Flexibility to match provision to identified need	Adequate access to cooking facilities	Congregate settings are small scale specialist services	Repairs and housing management issues resolved in timely manner
	Adequate access to washing facilities		
	Adequate provision of furniture and household items		

We will provide a sustainable supply of good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well managed.

To do this we will work towards the provision of temporary accommodation which is self-contained and in psychologically informed environments.

Year 1 Actions

Commence the development of strategic partnerships with a range of accommodation providers to deliver a sustainable supply of temporary accommodation to match identified need.

Commence the development of a value for money framework for temporary accommodation.

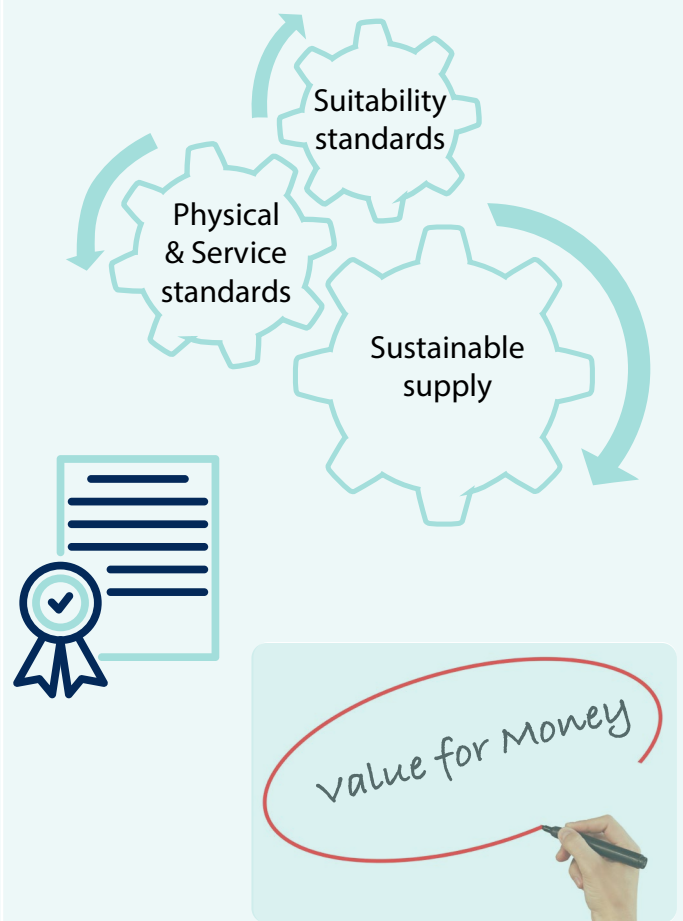
Introduce new contractual arrangements for private sector temporary accommodation, such as short and long term leasing models. Ideally a range of options will allow us to balance risk and flexibility.

Explore potential for Housing Executive to purchase properties for temporary accommodation.

Commission work with customers and providers to agree standards for temporary accommodation. This should include physical standards, suitability standards and service standards for all types of temporary accommodation.

Commence the reconfiguration of accommodation based services with shared rooms.

Work with providers and Supporting People on a remodelling programme for large scale congregate hostels.

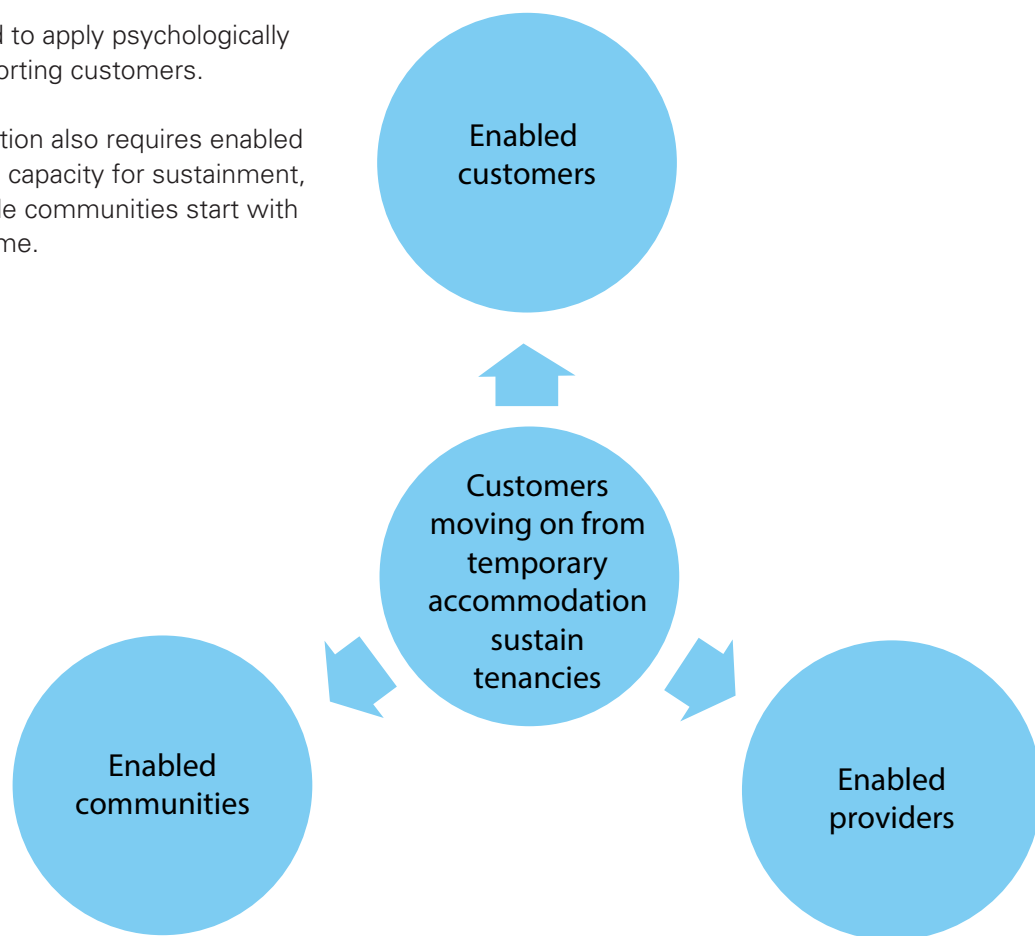


Customers moving on from temporary accommodation sustain their tenancies

A key ambition is to achieve a system in which customers who move on from temporary accommodation to permanent tenancies succeed in those tenancies. During their time in temporary accommodation they should be supported to develop skills for independent living. The transition to permanent housing can be challenging for those exiting homelessness; if support is withdrawn at this critical stage it can be very detrimental. Support should continue to remain available to customers at this key juncture in order to prevent repeat homelessness.

Staff will need to be equipped to apply psychologically informed approaches to supporting customers.

The achievement of this ambition also requires enabled communities with a heart and capacity for sustainment, who recognise that sustainable communities start with sustaining one tenancy at a time.



**Criteria for success –
Customers moving on from temporary accommodation sustain tenancies**

Enabled customers

Reduced levels of repeat homelessness

Customers with skills for independent living

Continued availability of support as required in long term housing

Enabled staff

Flexible, empowered and responsive staff

Knowledgeable and well trained frontline staff

Staff apply psychologically informed approaches

Enabled communities

Widespread availability of community based supports

Expansion of community volunteering programmes

Local ownership of outcomes within local action plans to end homelessness

When customers move on from temporary accommodation to permanent tenancies, they sustain their tenancies.

To achieve this we will work with communities and providers to help support customers to develop skills for independent living so that they can sustain tenancies and break cycles of repeat homelessness.

Year 1 Actions

Test flexible support models both within temporary accommodation and once customer has moved to permanent housing option to support.

Expand provision of Housing First.

Develop projects to build community capacity to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies.

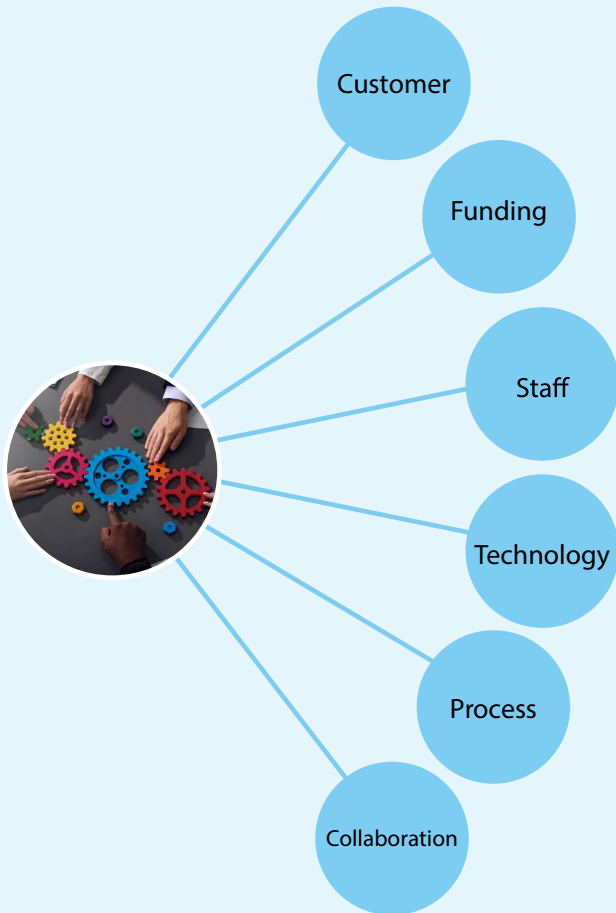
Help promote community volunteering programmes aimed at supporting independent living and tenancy sustainment.

Develop local homelessness action plans based on analysis of local supply and demand issues; to include plans for prevention, rapid re-housing, and temporary accommodation and support provision.

Mainstream the collaborative case management approach developed through the Belfast Complex Lives project, subject to successful evaluation of pilot project.



Enablers



In order to achieve success we will continually review the external and internal influencing factors impacting on the homelessness system. Our primary focus will be to meet the changing needs of our customers within a changing operating environment.

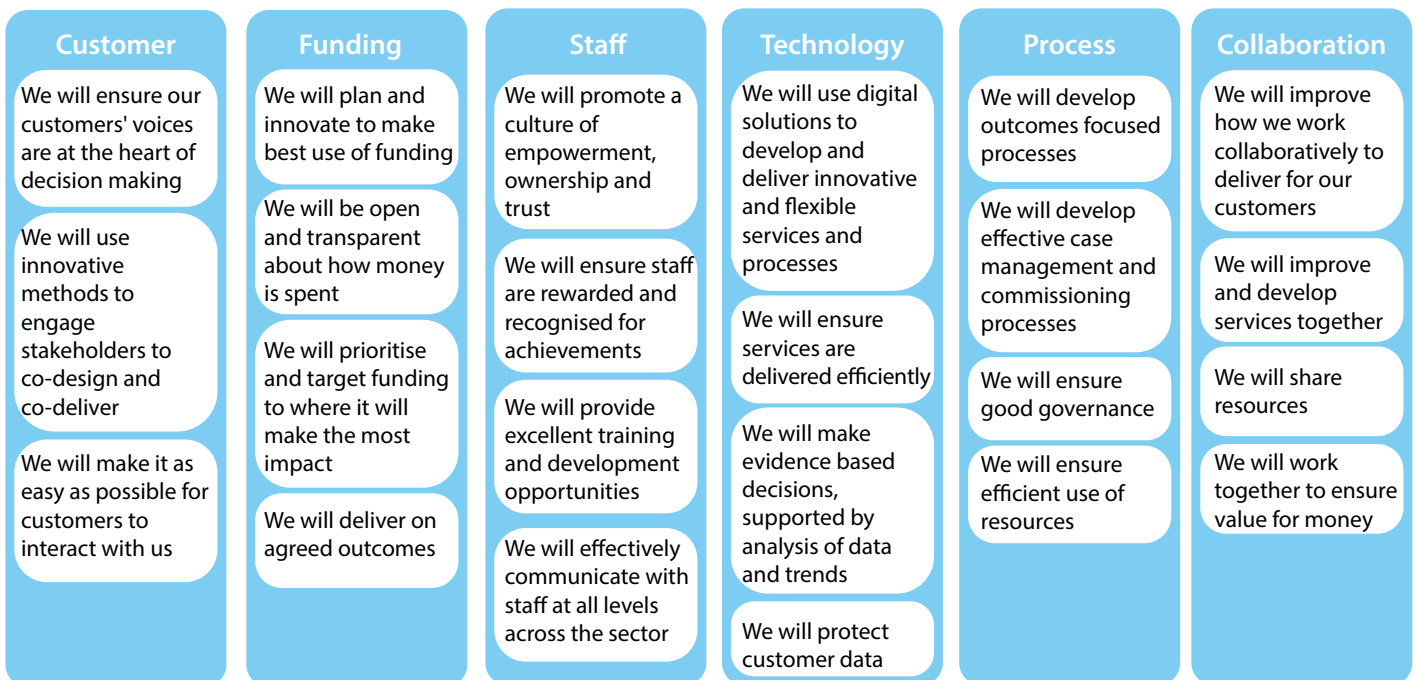


To achieve this we will invest in, and enhance, the skills and knowledge of staff across the sector, our tools, technology and resources, and our culture. By investing in the development of our 'enablers' we will become a responsive, transformative, forward-looking sector which values working together in order to work smarter and better.

We have identified six strategic enablers which will support us to achieve the ambitions described in this plan.

Nurturing our strategic enablers

As noted earlier, this will be an iterative plan, which will evolve based on experiential evidence, emerging pressures and priorities. It is our intention to work towards the defined success criteria outlined in this document by developing the 'enablers' and pulling all levers available to us in relation to housing supply.



Supporting and developing our enablers

In order to optimise success we will continually look for ways to build our enablers. Work has commenced on many of the below aspects building on actions initiated throughout the COVID-19 homelessness response and set out in the Reset Plan.

Implement revised framework for hearing our customer voices and ensuring they are at the heart of service design and delivery.

Ensure effective commissioning structures are in place to prioritise funding.

Commence rolling training programme for staff across the sector to equip staff to deliver psychologically informed responses (based on training needs assessment conducted 2021/22).

Consider opportunities for staff interchange programmes and co-location of services.

Continue to develop specification for digital solutions to support implementation of common assessment framework, provision of bed availability information, producing meaningful measures and data analysis. Routinely communicate performance, budgetary, and trend information to stakeholders in user friendly formats.

Actively embed culture of innovation, empowerment, ownership and trust across homelessness services.

Complete research to understand the impact of homelessness and temporary accommodation stays on children.

Develop value for money framework.

Mainstream the collaborative case management approach developed through the Belfast Complex Lives project, subject to successful evaluation of pilot project.



Ending Homelessness Together

Draft Homelessness Strategy 2022-27



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