

**Housing**  
Executive

HOMELESSNESS  
STRATEGY FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND  
2017-22

# **Ending Homelessness Together**



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## Introduction by the Chairman and Chief Executive

The Housing (NI) Order 1988 (as amended) identifies the Housing Executive as the organisation with responsibility for responding to homelessness in Northern Ireland. We have come a long way since the publication of the first Homelessness Strategy in 2002.

We have grown in our understanding of the complex issues impacting upon homelessness and, with our partners, continually strive to develop appropriate responses. At this point we would like to acknowledge the support of our colleagues across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors in delivering the aims of the Homelessness Strategy 2012-17. 'Ending Homelessness Together – the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2017-22' seeks to build upon the work of the previous Strategies while promoting innovative responses to tackle ongoing and new challenges.

Money problems, family breakdowns, mental and physical health issues, civil unrest, violent or sexual abuse can all contribute to individuals, families or any group of people that normally live together, becoming homeless. The impact of homelessness on a household can be devastating and long lasting as well as extremely costly to the public purse. There are many opportunities for a range of agencies through the provision of advice, assistance and support to intervene at early stages and stop a household reaching the point of crisis. Homelessness prevention, therefore, remains at the core of this strategy as it has done previously.

The Programme for Government (2016-21) is currently in draft form. The outcomes-based approach being taken in developing the new Programme is markedly different to that used previously. This Homelessness Strategy will take into consideration the finalised PfG and associated Delivery Plans linked to the indicators once these have been completed. In an aspiration to align this Strategy with the emerging PfG, our staff have adopted an outcomes based approach.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to those organisations, services users and our own staff within the Housing Executive who took the time to work with us in the development of this Strategy. Their input was invaluable and, we hope, has resulted in a Strategy which will see an end to homelessness for many households, the prevention of homelessness for many more, and which will lead to new and innovative partnerships and collaborations going forward.

In addition to those who worked with us in the development of this Strategy we also wish to thank those individuals and organisations who submitted consultation responses.

Throughout the document we have indicated some key milestones, measures and outcomes. Following approval of the Strategy an implementation plan will be produced laying out a work programme over the next five years to achieve these.

The task ahead will not be easy. Increasing pressure on budgets in all sectors, changes due to Welfare Reform and uncertainty around the impact of leaving the EU are just some of the challenges that will have to be addressed. We remain confident, however, that along with our partners across all sectors we will work together to face those challenges.

Professor Peter Roberts, Interim Chair

Clark Bailie, Chief Executive

## Consultation Overview

The draft Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 was published in December 2016. It was sent to a variety of consultees as well as being available on the Housing Executive's website. The Strategy aims to promote working together with statutory partners, government departments and our stakeholders throughout the sector whilst promoting homelessness prevention as a key objective.

The consultation ran from 8th December 2016 to 8th February 2017. The Housing Executive is grateful to the Council for the Homeless NI for organising a consultation workshop as part of their annual conference which took place on 9th December 2016. A total of 39 written responses were received and as part of the consultation response template a series of questions were asked on the vision statement, objectives and actions. 22 of the 39 responses directly answered whether they agreed with the vision statement, objectives and actions with a summary of these responses provided below:

- 95% of respondents agreed with the vision statement of this Strategy;
- 91% of respondents agreed that preventing homelessness should be the primary objective of this Strategy;
- 95% of respondents agreed with the actions in the Strategy aimed at preventing homelessness;
- 91% of respondents agreed with the person centred and housing solution approach as detailed in the Strategy;
- 86% of respondents agreed with the actions outlined in the Strategy aimed at finding person centred solutions and ensuring the right support services are in place to support this;
- 95% of respondents agreed that a multi-agency approach is required to find appropriate housing and support solutions for homeless clients;
- 91% of respondents agreed that further work is required to understand and address chronic homelessness and rough sleeping;
- 82% of respondents agreed with the actions outlined in the Strategy to address chronic homelessness;
- 95% of respondents agreed with the inter-departmental and local approaches to overseeing and delivering the Strategy as outlined in the document;
- 91% of respondents agreed with the actions outlined to oversee and deliver the Strategy;
- 91% of respondents agreed that improved cooperation/data sharing between agencies and better quality data will improve service planning and provision;
- 91% of respondents agreed with the actions outlined in the Strategy aimed at ensuring adequate analysis of existing and emerging need.

The Housing Executive will provide a consultation response on the Housing Executive website.

# Vision, Outcomes, Aims and Objectives

## VISION

Ending  
Homelessness  
Together

## DRAFT PFG OUTCOMES

We care for  
others and  
help those  
in need

## STRATEGY OUTCOMES

We have support that prevents  
us from becoming homeless

We live in suitable homes

We have the support we require  
to access and/or sustain a home

## AIMS

- This Strategy aims to prevent homelessness.
- This Strategy aims to ensure that households experiencing homelessness are supported to find suitable accommodation and support solutions as quickly as possible.
- This Strategy aims to ensure a cross departmental and inter agency approach to ending homelessness.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To prioritise homelessness prevention.
2. To secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households.
3. To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland.
4. To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver this strategy.
5. To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the ongoing development of appropriate services.

# Chapter 1

## Homelessness in Northern Ireland: Defining the Problem

### 1.0 What is homelessness?

For individual households, homelessness has many causes such as relationship breakdowns, financial issues, accommodation becoming unsuitable as people age, or people with a disability finding that their current accommodation is no longer suitable for their needs. While rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and will be perceived by many as representative of homelessness generally, it in fact represents one of the smallest percentages of homelessness.

The Homelessness Monitor produced by Crisis states that: “Theoretical, historical and international perspectives all indicate that the causation of homelessness is complex, with no single ‘trigger’ that is either ‘necessary’ or ‘sufficient’ for it to occur. Individual, interpersonal and structural factors all play a role - and interact with each other - and the balance of causes differs over time, across countries, and between demographic groups. With respect to the main structural factors, housing market trends and policies appear to have the most direct impact on levels of homelessness”.<sup>1</sup>

The European Conference on Homelessness<sup>2</sup> identified and categorised homeless populations as follows:

- Transitional homelessness - households that enter the process, are assessed and rehoused and do not return to homelessness;
- Episodic or repeat homelessness - brought about by ongoing changes in circumstances and events;
- Chronic homelessness - long term users of emergency services, in particular rough sleepers.

Households falling into these categories will require different responses and different levels of support to find sustainable long term housing solutions. A household is defined as a single person or any group of people including couples, families or adults that would normally reside together. This Strategy recognises homelessness in all its forms and seeks to provide appropriate responses shaped around the individual and family.

### 1.1 Types of Homelessness in Northern Ireland

#### 1.1.1 Statutory Definition of Homelessness

In Northern Ireland the Housing (NI) Order 1988 (as amended) identifies the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as the agency tasked with responding to homelessness. The Order places a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to provide interim and/or permanent accommodation for certain homeless households, dependent upon investigations and assessment of their circumstances.

In order to be “accepted” as statutorily homeless, a household must meet the four tests of:

- Eligibility
- Homelessness
- Priority Need
- Intentionality

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1. *The Homelessness Monitor: Northern Ireland, Crisis (2013)*

[http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/HomelessnessMonitor\\_NorthernIreland\\_web.pdf](http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/HomelessnessMonitor_NorthernIreland_web.pdf)

2. *Homelessness and Housing Policies in Europe: Lessons from Research, FEANTSA (the European Federation of Organisations Working with the Homeless) (2010)*

[http://www.feantsaresearch.org/IMG/pdf/fea\\_020-10\\_en\\_final.pdf](http://www.feantsaresearch.org/IMG/pdf/fea_020-10_en_final.pdf)

Any household that meets these four tests will be accepted as a “Full Duty Applicant” and will be owed a full housing duty. The full housing duty includes ensuring that accommodation is made available for the household as well as the provision of temporary accommodation where necessary and assistance with the protection of the household’s belongings.

### 1.1.2 Other Homelessness - Non FDA

Households that fail to meet all four statutory tests may still be homeless, but not owed a full housing duty under the legislation. The Housing Executive has a duty to ensure that advice about homelessness, and the prevention of homelessness, is available free of charge to any person in Northern Ireland.

Research produced by Crisis has demonstrated the devastating and long term impact homelessness can have on a household; therefore it is important that any homelessness strategy not only makes adequate provision for dealing with statutorily defined FDA, but also ensures the provision of appropriate support services to assist all homeless households to find and sustain long term housing solutions.

### 1.1.3 Hidden Homelessness

Hidden homelessness includes people living in a range of circumstances, for example, households that may be staying with friends or sharing with family because they have no accommodation of their own. Those households may be unknown to the Housing Executive. Under the previous Homelessness Strategy in 2013 a report entitled ‘Measuring Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in Northern Ireland: A test of the ETHOS typology<sup>3</sup>’ looked at the measurement of homelessness in Northern Ireland and the potential for identifying hidden homelessness

It concluded that “There were some limitations in the available data on mobile populations that had only intermittent or no contact with services. This includes people sleeping rough, people who are squatting and households that are in situations of concealed or hidden homelessness, such as sofa surfing. However, these populations are inherently difficult to count and no country or region has entirely robust or complete data on these groups.”

It stated that “Data on homelessness and housing exclusion in Northern Ireland are relatively extensive and high in quality. There is a better understanding of the nature and extent of these social problems in Northern Ireland than in many other European countries or regions.”

The Homelessness Monitor NI 2013, meanwhile, estimated that the potential for concealed households (households that are sharing accommodation) in Northern Ireland was 16.8% of all households. The Homelessness Monitor 2016<sup>4</sup> reported that ‘there has been a small fall of 1.6 percentage points in the total share of households containing potential concealed household units.’ With regards to concealed households this report notes that ‘Not everyone living in these situations will be homeless, but these phenomena are indicative of the kinds of housing pressures that may be associated with hidden homelessness.’

It is necessary to ensure that these “hidden households” are provided with the means to access the housing and support services they may require. A communication strategy (see objective 1) will be produced that will seek to reduce instances of hidden homelessness and agencies will work together at a local level to address any change in homeless presentations as a result.

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3. *Measuring Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in Northern Ireland*  
A test of the ETHOS typology, University of York (2013)[http://www.nihe.gov.uk/measuring\\_homelessness\\_and\\_housing\\_exclusion\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/measuring_homelessness_and_housing_exclusion_in_northern_ireland.pdf)

4. *The Homelessness Monitor: Northern Ireland*, Crisis (2016) [http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/NI%20Homelessness%20Monitor%20FINAL\\_FOR\\_www.pdf](http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/NI%20Homelessness%20Monitor%20FINAL_FOR_www.pdf)

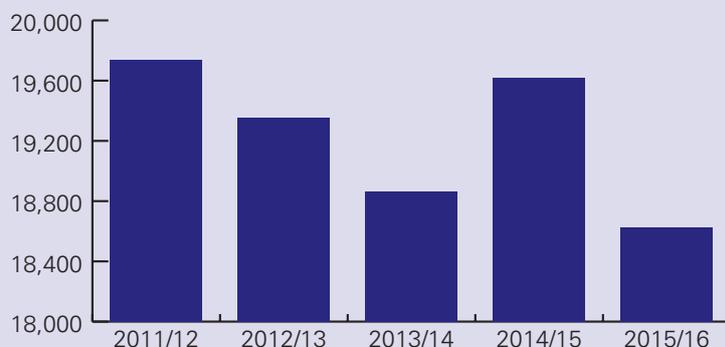
Furthermore, it is anticipated that improvements in data gathering and sharing through the lifetime of this strategy (see Objective 5) will provide the Housing Executive with more robust data on the potential for hidden homelessness in Northern Ireland, allowing for more accurate quantifying of the issue. This data can then be used to inform policy and service provision going forward.

## 1.2 What does Homelessness look like in Northern Ireland?

Between 18,000 and 20,000 households presented<sup>5</sup> as homeless to the Housing Executive on an annual basis throughout the period of the last strategy. Appendix 1 gives full details of homeless presentations and acceptances, including reasons for homelessness and the household composition.

Prior to the commencement of the last Strategy, homeless presentations in year 2011/12 were 19,737. At the end of year 2015/16, 18,628 households presented as homeless to the Housing Executive. This represents an overall drop of circa 5.6% in homeless presentations through the lifetime of the previous Strategy.

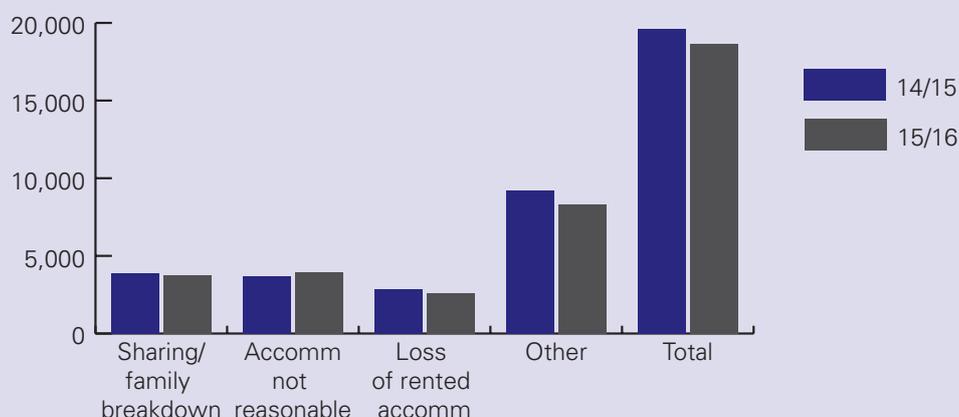
### Annual Homeless Presentations (Households)



Further information on these figures can be found in the Appendix 1 of this document.

Family/Sharing Breakdown (20 - 22% of presentations per annum), Accommodation Not Reasonable (20 - 22% per annum) and Loss of Rented Accommodation (circa 13% on average) represent the top three reasons why households present as homeless.

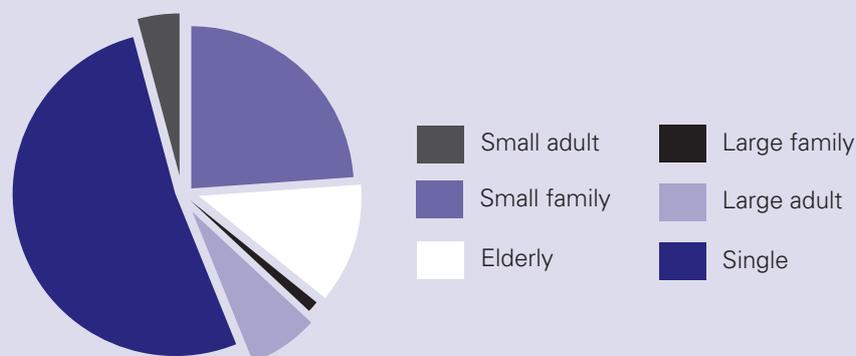
### Presentation Reasons



5. When referring to 'presented' or homelessness 'presentations' the number of applicants (individuals or households) who have applied to the Housing Executive for a homelessness assessment is being referred to. It is important to note that not all households who present as homeless will be accepted as statutorily homeless as per section 1.1.1.

Single person households are the biggest group of homeless presenters in Northern Ireland. For the past four years they have remained consistently at around 50% of all presenters, with single males being the largest proportion. Families represent the next biggest category at circa 30%, followed by pensioner households at circa 12%. Couples and large and small adult households make up the remainder of presenting households.

### Presentations by Households 15/16



Acceptances of households as statutorily homeless and awarded Full Duty Applicant (FDA) status over the years have averaged between 48 and 53%, rising in 2015/16 to a high of 60% of all presenters. While overall presentations have dropped, acceptances have increased. An ageing population coupled with increasing numbers of clients with complex needs such as mental health problems, addictions etc. means that more households are meeting the “priority need” test than previously. Further analysis and discussion on issues behind this trend is referenced in section 1.2.1.

While the percentage of households presenting with reasons Family/Sharing Breakdown and Accommodation Not Reasonable remains close year on year (see Table 3 in Appendix 1), there is a greater divergence when it comes to acceptances, with Accommodation Not Reasonable being the top reason for acceptances at an average of 28% and Family/Sharing Breakdown representing on average 18% of acceptances.

#### 1.2.1 Accommodation Not Reasonable - Top Reason for Statutory Homeless Acceptances

The top reason for statutory acceptances is “Accommodation Not Reasonable”. Accommodation can be unreasonable for a number of reasons, for example, affordability, property unfitness levels, unsuitability for the needs of the household, severe overcrowding etc.

Overall, 3,922 households presented as homeless due to Accommodation Not Reasonable and of these, 3,413 were accepted (85%) as statutorily homeless.

This category is made up of elderly and non-elderly households. Most elderly households were accepted on the grounds of ill-health or disability. What was less anticipated was that 60% of non-elderly households, presenting due to accommodation not reasonable, were also accepted. Of these non-elderly households, the Housing Executive looked at a significant sample (880) of individual cases and the reasons that they were accepted in this category during 2015/16. Of these households, 78% were accepted due to health conditions/mental health or disability.

Taken together this reinforces the conclusion that an ageing population and instances of complex needs such as disability, mental health problems and addictions etc. are factors in the increasing numbers of households meeting the criteria for FDA.

### 1.3 Waiting List

Once households have been assessed, they will be placed on the social housing waiting list if an immediate solution cannot be found. Table 7 within the Appendix 1 shows the numbers on the waiting list, allocations and new build starts per annum.

# Chapter 2

## Strategic Context

### 2.0 Northern Ireland Context

#### 2.1 Programme For Government 2016-21

The Draft Programme for Government 2016-21<sup>6</sup> sets the direction for the Northern Ireland Executive for the next five years and adopts a framework of wellbeing outcomes which expresses the ambitions of the Executive for everyone in society. Collaboration and partnership across organisations and across sectors is described as an ‘essential component of success’. The key elements of this approach are:

- A focus on outcomes with which people can identify such as living longer and being healthier;
- Indicators to show the changes to be brought about;
- A focus on shifting what happens in lives rather than how things are delivered;
- A focus on impact rather than amount of money spent or number of programmes introduced;
- An opportunity for cross sectoral working.

This approach is reflected in this Strategy, with outcomes and indicators aligned to those within the draft Programme for Government.

#### 2.2 The Housing Strategy - Facing the Future

‘Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland’ contains a number of action points which also impact on the Homelessness Strategy. While the Housing Strategy runs from 2012-17 and is not concurrent with this Strategy a number of the actions arising are still relevant in the context of this Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 and these are outlined below.

##### 2.2.1 Delivery of New Housing

Key to ending homelessness is the adequate provision of good quality, affordable housing in Northern Ireland across all tenures. ‘Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland’ published by the Department for Communities, sets out its vision “To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access good quality housing at a reasonable cost”<sup>7</sup>. The Housing Strategy works to increase the supply of new housing to meet future need.

##### 2.2.2 Social Housing Reform Programme

The Social Housing Reform Programme is the ‘first major review of social housing’ which aims ‘to make sure the existing delivery structures, including the Housing Executive, housing associations and the Department, are as effective as they can be.’<sup>8</sup> The Social Housing Reform Programme may bring changes to the structures that deliver housing in Northern Ireland. An assumption of the programme, however, is that there will be no impact on the scope of services provided by the current structures, therefore no impact is anticipated.

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6. Draft Programme for Government, NI Executive (2016)

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/publications/programme-government-consultation>

7. Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland, Department for Communities (2015)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/facing-the-future-housing-strategy.pdf>

8. Social Housing Reform Programme, Department for Communities (2017) <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing/social-housing-reform-programme>

### 2.2.3 Supporting People Review

Supporting People funds a range of housing related support services for vulnerable people to improve their quality of life and attain independence. These services can be provided in their own homes or in hostels, sheltered housing or other specialised supported housing.

The Department for Communities led a review of the Supporting People programme which was published in November 2015. This review recognised that whilst the Supporting People programme had achieved its aims and objectives there is an opportunity for continuous improvement and ensuring effective and efficient delivery of the programme.

The review recommended the introduction of a new strategic, intelligence-led approach to needs assessment and competitive selection, both of which could shape how services funded by Supporting People are commissioned in the future. New mechanisms for data collation to inform the Needs Analysis will be necessary and will require a high degree of inter-agency cooperation which is reflected in actions under Strategic Objective 5.

The review recommendations will be implemented over a three year period which commenced in April 2016. The Housing Executive has responsibility for 8 of the 13 recommendations which relate primarily to needs assessment, commissioning, tariffs and selection as well as development of floating support services. The Department for Communities has responsibility for the remainder of the recommendations.

### 2.2.4 Fundamental Review of Allocations

The 'Housing Strategy' committed to a fundamental review of the allocation of social housing in Northern Ireland which is being led by the Department for Communities. Independent research by the Universities of Ulster and Cambridge was published for public comment and Departmental proposals are now being prepared which will be issued at a future date for public consultation.

### 2.2.5 Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act for Northern Ireland was passed in 2015 and a range of mitigation measures are in place in Northern Ireland and will remain in place until March 2020. At this stage it is not possible to predict the impact of this on homelessness services. Looking to England, Crisis asked respondents to the 2015 Local Authority (LA) survey, to reflect on whether 2010-2015 welfare reforms had impacted on the level of homelessness in their area. "In all, two-thirds (67%) of LAs in England reported that these changes had increased homelessness in their area, with no LAs anywhere in the country reporting that homelessness had decreased as result of welfare reform." While this is indicative of the possible impact of Welfare Reform on homelessness, the mitigation measures in NI differ and therefore, outcomes need to be viewed in that context.

The Housing Executive has set up a Welfare Reform Project Team to analyse the impact and plan for the future. Representatives from the Housing Executive's Homelessness Policy and Strategy Unit are represented on this working group. We will continue to liaise with the Department on the mitigation scheme proposals and will advise and support tenants in both social and private sectors that are likely to be impacted by the proposed changes.

Additionally the Housing Executive's Financial Inclusion Strategy<sup>9</sup> aims to help our customers understand and respond to welfare benefit reforms, maximise their money and increase access to the right financial help to assist them to maintain and sustain their tenancy. Housing Advisors will strive to assist all those who present on grounds of affordability, regardless of tenure, and ensure that appropriate advice and assistance is provided. They will also seek to provide advice and assistance that will help avoid housing related debt and reduce the chances of households having to either end their tenancy or present as homeless.

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9. NIHE Financial Inclusion Strategy 2016-19 (2016) [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/financial\\_inclusion\\_strategy\\_2016-19.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/financial_inclusion_strategy_2016-19.pdf)

## 2.3 United Kingdom Context

This Strategy will follow the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-17 in complying with the UK Government's commitment, developed following legislation in 2002<sup>10</sup>, to tackle homelessness by working in partnership with the voluntary sector, government departments and other housing providers.

Since the publication of the Housing Executive's last Strategy, guidance from Central Government has seen the publication of two reports that have been considered as part of this Strategy: 'Making every contact count'<sup>11</sup> published in August 2012 and 'Addressing complex needs'<sup>12</sup> published in March 2015. Both contain aims this Strategy seeks to promote.

This Strategy endorses the aims of 'Making every contact count' by engaging with relevant partners to tackle homelessness together. Further detail on this paper can be found in chapter 4 of this document where pre-crisis intervention is discussed. 'Addressing complex needs- Improving services for vulnerable homeless people' discusses homelessness prevention and cites high numbers of people 'struggling with severe and overlapping mental health, offending or substance misuse problems' (or a combination of these) each year. It emphasises the need for a multi-agency approach to tackling homelessness, reflective of the vision of this Strategy.

The United Kingdom is also a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>13</sup> which refers to the importance of adequate housing. The UN has noted<sup>14</sup> that 'the experience of homelessness around the world is not fully captured without a richer definition that goes beyond reference to deprivation of physical shelter.' This is reflected in section 4.2.1 and 4.3.1 where it is noted that homelessness will not be solved by the provision of a property in isolation. This Strategy is reflective, particularly in Objective 3, of the additional needs that are relevant to the definition of homelessness and the Strategy as a whole is reflective of the many strands of support that can be provided to households which are homeless.

## 2.4 The European Dimension

This Strategy has been developed in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>15</sup> which has identified homelessness as a severe form of poverty and deprivation. Communication<sup>16</sup> associated with the Europe 2020 Strategy has noted that, at national level, member states must define and implement measures for those groups such as the homeless who are at particular risk of poverty. This Strategy will place an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness to recognise the difficulty it brings to individuals and families.

The European Pillar of Social Rights, which was launched for consultation in March 2016, notes the importance of housing as a precondition to participation in society and access to a job. This document emphasises the need for cross-departmental working and notes the European Pillar of Social Rights aim that 'Shelter shall be provided to those that are homeless, and shall be linked up

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10. Homelessness Act 2002, HM Government, (2002) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/7/contents>

11. Making Every Contact Count, Department For Communities and Local Government (2012) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417230/150325\\_Addressing\\_Complex\\_Needs\\_-\\_final\\_publication\\_amended.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417230/150325_Addressing_Complex_Needs_-_final_publication_amended.pdf)

12. Addressing Complex Needs – Improving Services for Vulnerable People, Department for Communities and Local Government (2015) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417230/150325\\_Addressing\\_Complex\\_Needs\\_-\\_final\\_publication\\_amended.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417230/150325_Addressing_Complex_Needs_-_final_publication_amended.pdf)

13. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, United Nations (1996) <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

14. Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, United Nations (2015) <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/294/52/PDF/G1529452.pdf?OpenElement>

15. Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, European Commission (2010) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

16. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Confronting Homelessness in the European Union Accompanying the document COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion - including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020, European Commission (2013) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52013SC0042&from=EN>

to other social services in order to promote social integration.’<sup>17</sup>

A referendum took place on 23rd June 2016 whereby the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. It will be necessary to monitor what impact, if any, this may have on homelessness in Northern Ireland and for this Strategy to respond in a necessary manner.

## **2.5 Other Relevant Policies and Strategies**

There are a range of other Housing Executive Policies and Strategies that have the potential to impact on Homelessness delivery. Therefore, the work of a Housing Executive Internal Steering Group (representing a range of departments within the Housing Executive) ensured that the development of this strategy took cognisance of other relevant policies and strategies including Community Development, Community Safety, Rural, Equality etc. Also involved were staff from Housing Analytics Section who carry out housing need assessments to inform the Social Housing Development Programme, staff from Supporting People and those working on the redesign of frontline Housing Executive Housing Solutions and Support services.

### **Programme for Government**

The Programme for Government (2016-21) is currently in draft format. The outcomes-based approach being taken in developing the new Programme for Government (PfG) is markedly different to that used previously. This Homelessness Strategy will take into consideration the finalised PfG and associated Delivery Plans linked to the indicators once these have been completed. In an aspiration to align this Strategy with the emerging PfG, the Strategy has adopted an outcomes based approach.

The link for the relevant action plan within the draft Programme for Government can be found on the website for the Northern Ireland Executive.

### **Homelessness as a cross-cutting issue<sup>18</sup>**

It has been recognised that homelessness is a cross-cutting issue and that tackling homelessness requires collaboration across Government and between statutory and third sector organisations.

The Department for Communities (DfC) has noted that the overarching request from voluntary and community organisations involved in the delivery of homelessness services has focused on the request for a re-energised commitment from Government Departments and statutory agencies to see homelessness as a cross-cutting issue and to improve the level of joint working across Government to address it.

In light of this, DfC is leading on work to identify what else can be done collaboratively across Government to tackle homelessness. In taking this work forward, DfC has adopted a co-production approach and is working with Government departments, statutory partners, homelessness service providers and service users to develop an inter-departmental homelessness action plan to complement the Housing Executive’s new Homelessness Strategy, and to contribute to improving the lives of vulnerable people in our society.

Given that the Housing Executive led action plan in Chapter 5 is focused on accommodation issues, the focus of the inter-departmental action plan will be on addressing gaps in those non-accommodation services that have the most impact, or have the potential to more positively impact, on the lives and life chances of homeless people and those most at risk of homelessness.

The action plan will evolve over the lifetime of the new Homelessness Strategy, with the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group, chaired by DfC, assuming responsibility for monitoring delivery of the action plan.

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17. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights (2016) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2016%3A127%3AFIN>

18. Programme for Government Delivery Plan: Indicators 8 and 48, Northern Ireland Executive (2016) <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/newnigov/dp-number-of-households-in-housing-stress.PDF>

## Chapter 3

# Evaluation of the Homelessness Strategy 2012-17

### 3.0 Strategy Evaluation

An independent evaluation<sup>19</sup> of the progress to date on the Homelessness Strategy 2012-2017 was commissioned to inform the development of the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22. The evaluation was concluded in November 2016 and the final report which was finalised in January 2017 highlighted the key successes and challenges of the existing strategy.

### 3.1 The Right Strategy

The report concludes that there was broad agreement across the homelessness sector that the key themes of the 2012/17 Strategy of homelessness prevention, better coordination between agencies, removing the need to sleep rough and reducing temporary accommodation use were the right ones and the sector was positive that the strategy was sound in its approach when it was first published.

In all, there were 38 Actions in the Strategy and it was agreed that these were the right actions and the ideas behind the Strategy were widely praised across the homelessness sector. In 2014 the Strategy was reprioritised to focus on homelessness prevention. This too had received broad support across the sector, however some reported that this had taken the impetus out of the pursuit of the original 38 actions. The full evaluation report has provided an overview on progress against each of the 38 actions to November 2016 and a table summarising this can be found in Appendix 4 of this document.

All in all, the findings conclude that 'In pursuing prevention, service coordination and innovation, in areas such as Housing First, the Strategy was widely perceived as moving homelessness in the right directions. There have been some positive developments in preventing and reducing homelessness in Northern Ireland, achievements that have been delivered by most of the agencies, public, voluntary and charitable, that seek to tackle homelessness.' The report did, however, note that 'progress in delivering the Strategy had not always been rapid, including the development of preventative services.'

### 3.2 Coordination

The evaluation report found that respondents felt that the Inter-agency working groups (under both the original and the reprioritised strategy) designed to deliver the strategy had not always met with sufficient frequency, nor had the right members with sufficient seniority to make decisions. It also highlighted the absence of a single, coordinating authority or someone in an executive position who could require the public, voluntary and charitable sectors to work together, as being a drawback to delivery.

### 3.3 Achievements and Challenges

Following data analysis and discussions with service users, service providers and statutory and voluntary agencies, findings conclude that:

- There is a good commitment to providing high quality advice service including the development of the Community Housing Advice Partnership, however, it was also felt that better monitoring

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19. The Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017 An Evaluation, Fiona Boyle and Nicholas Pleace (2017) [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness\\_strategy\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness_strategy_evaluation.pdf)

of advice agencies would help ensure the quality of advice. Roll out of Housing Solutions and Support teams would further improve access to comprehensive housing and homelessness advice. There is evidence of enhanced service coordination - but there remain issues in delivering effective coordination, eg, long term and recurrent homeless people with complex needs were not always receiving a joined up service. However, a pilot housing-led approach was demonstrating good results in the rehousing and sustaining of clients with complex needs. The introduction of the pilot Housing Solutions and Support Model within the Housing Executive has resulted in improved outcomes for some homeless clients but there were also some clients who felt that they were not given enough direction on their rights under the Homelessness Legislation. However, improved working relationships between agencies and quicker response times were also cited.

- The supply of affordable housing across NI was repeatedly highlighted as a structural constraint in reducing homelessness;
- There were concerns also about the use of the private rented sector with calls for better standards and the need to address affordability issues.
- Some service users had very positive experiences in homeless longer-term accommodation services, however others reported following a path between a succession of very short term services, evidencing a lack of continuity and security;
- Some service providers reported that contractual arrangements made it difficult to pool resources, creating some logistical challenges in supporting homeless people with more complex needs. The average time spent in temporary accommodation exceeded target reducing from 46 to 37 weeks at the time of the evaluation.
- There was evidence of improved service delivery to a range of vulnerable clients including ex-offenders, development of Local Action Plans within the Housing Executive to assist rural homelessness service delivery, young people through enhanced partnership working arrangements, victims of domestic violence through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process and development of joint working protocols.
- While it was acknowledged that Interagency working had improved through the life of the strategy, respondents repeatedly referred to seeking opportunities to further improve service provision through a multi-agency approach

### **3.5 Summary of Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made and all have been accepted and taken forward in this Strategy:

- To continue to maintain the focus on prevention as in other jurisdictions;
- Setting simpler measures and clear indicators to give the strategy a clear focus - accepted in line with outcomes based approach. Data Sharing is key also;
- Clear leadership structure;
- Maintain momentum of introducing Housing Options Approach and better collaborative working;
- Accept the need for change in service delivery models in view of changing environment.

## Chapter 4

### Vision, Aims and Objectives

#### 4.0 An Inclusive and Integrated Strategy

The range of difference in households presenting as homeless can be significant - young people, elderly people, simple and complex cases, disability, linguistic and cultural barriers, religious and sectarian considerations, sexual orientation, gender including transgender etc. It is therefore essential that services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals to appropriately take into account those differences. Equality issues are central to this strategy and will also be central to monitoring the delivery of the Strategy.

#### Vision

Ending Homelessness Together

#### Aims

- This Strategy aims to prevent homelessness.
- This Strategy aims to ensure that households experiencing homelessness are supported to find suitable accommodation and support solutions as quickly as possible.
- This Strategy aims to ensure a cross departmental and inter agency approach to ending homelessness.

#### Objectives

1. To prioritise homelessness prevention.
2. To secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households.
3. To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland.
4. To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver this strategy.
5. To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the ongoing development of appropriate services.

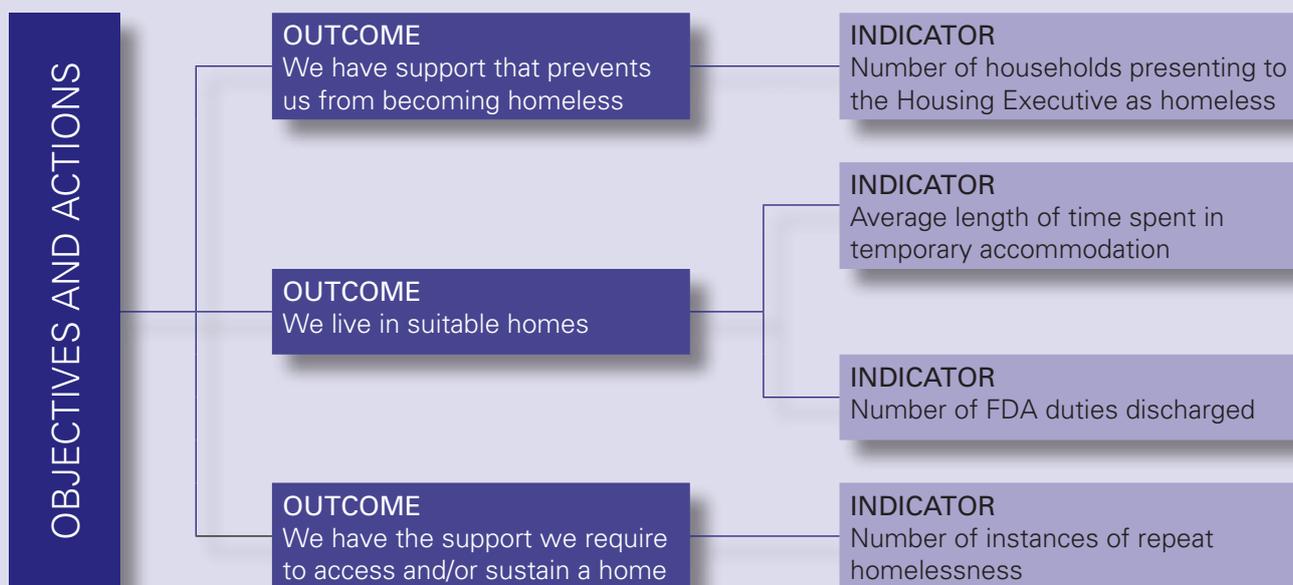
#### 4.0.1 An Outcomes Based Approach

This Strategy will aim to support outcome 8 of the draft Programme for Government which states that we care for others and we help those in need. In line with outcomes based accountability this Strategy has three outcomes that will aim to make an impact upon the lives of those who may be affected by homelessness. These outcomes will have indicators that will quantify progress over the lifetime of the Strategy. Crucial to achieving these outcomes will be the cooperation and partnership with statutory and voluntary partners that is at the heart of this Strategy.

It is also important to note that additional indicators reflective of the extension of the Housing Executive's Housing Solutions and Support Teams across Northern Ireland will be added to the annual progress reports which will be produced as part of this Strategy as they become available.

In addition to the actions within this Strategy attributed to the Housing Executive, the work referred to in the DfC led inter-departmental action plan on page 13 and further discussed on objective 4 will be crucial to ensuring that the Strategy has a positive impact on the lives and life chances of homeless people and those most at risk of homelessness.

The diagram below illustrates, within the five objectives of the Strategy, there are actions that will contribute to successfully achieving these outcomes. A further indicator on prevention will be added following improvements to data gathering measurements.



## 4.0.2 Action Planning

### Inter-Departmental Action Plan

As referenced in Chapter 2 the DfC is working with Government departments, statutory partners, homelessness service providers and service users to develop an inter-departmental homelessness action plan to complement the Housing Executive's new Homelessness Strategy, and to contribute to improving the lives of vulnerable people in our society.

### Housing Executive Led Action Plan

It is necessary to note that the Housing Executive led action plan for objectives 1 to 5 in this Strategy are representative of high level actions that will be supported by additional activities which are reactive of circumstances at any given stage over the five years of this Strategy. Any subsequent issues that we and our partners address will be guided by the various groups outlined in objective 4 and any additional work beyond the actions cited in this Strategy will be reflected in the annual progress report within objective 5.

### Local Action Plans

The development of Local Action Plans aligned to Housing Executive area offices, which address the specific issues and needs of local communities in all their diversity will be an essential element in the delivery of the Vision of this Strategy. The Housing Executive has sole responsibility for assessing applications for homeless assistance and awarding homelessness status and this duty will be carried out by Housing Solutions and Support Teams which are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. In leading this Strategy the Housing Executive will seek to forge relationships with statutory, voluntary and community sector colleagues at regional and local level. Local Action Plans will address the specific homelessness issues within their locality and will be flexible and sensitive to change throughout the life of the Strategy.

## 4.1 Objective 1: To prioritise homelessness prevention

Homelessness can have a catastrophic effect on a household with far reaching and long term implications for health and wellbeing. Crisis, along with University of York<sup>20</sup> and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)<sup>21</sup>, produced research that demonstrates how failing

20. At what cost? An estimation of the financial costs of single homelessness in the UK, Crisis & University of York (2015) <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/2015/CostsofHomelessness.pdf>

21. Evidence Review Of The Costs Of Homelessness, Department for Communities & Local Government (2012) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7596/2200485.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7596/2200485.pdf)

to prevent homelessness costs the public purse thousands of pounds more per individual than would be the case were timely interventions to take place.

There are three main areas of prevention work on which this strategy intends to focus:

- Pre-crisis Intervention which involves the identification of key indicators that can lead to homelessness. The potential for homelessness can then be identified and addressed before the household is in crisis. The vision of 'Ending Homelessness Together' is particularly relevant to early intervention as a wide range of agencies and organisations, many of whom are outside the housing and homeless sector, will all have a part to play in the pre-crisis intervention that will help prevent homelessness. An example of an early intervention might, for instance, include colleagues in Health identifying an individual who is presenting with health issues that may suggest homelessness is an issue and recommending they seek appropriate advice and assistance.
- Early Intervention that involves a comprehensive assessment of all clients' needs when they request assistance, pulling upon the necessary support to prevent homelessness where possible.
- The development of a homelessness communication strategy to ensure that households approaching crisis know where to go for help; that agencies and professionals working with households are able to identify homeless indicators and take appropriate action; and good quality advice and assistance is available to clients by whatever means they choose to make contact.

#### 4.1.1 Pre-Crisis Intervention

'Making every contact count'<sup>22</sup> is a Government report which looks at how services can be managed in a way that prevents all households, regardless of whether they are families, couples, or single people, from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness. The report recommends local agencies make sure that every contact with vulnerable individuals and families really counts. The report notes how:

*'For many people, becoming homeless is not the beginning of their problems; it comes at the end of a long line of crises, a long line of interactions with public and voluntary sector services, a long line of missed opportunities. We must change that.'*

To "make every contact count" each agency that may encounter vulnerable households at risk of homelessness should have frontline staff trained to understand homelessness and how they can intervene to assist in its prevention.

#### 4.1.2 Early Intervention

In 2014, the Housing Executive reprioritised the Homelessness Strategy 2012-17 to place prevention at the core of service delivery. One of the key objectives was to develop a Housing Options Model.

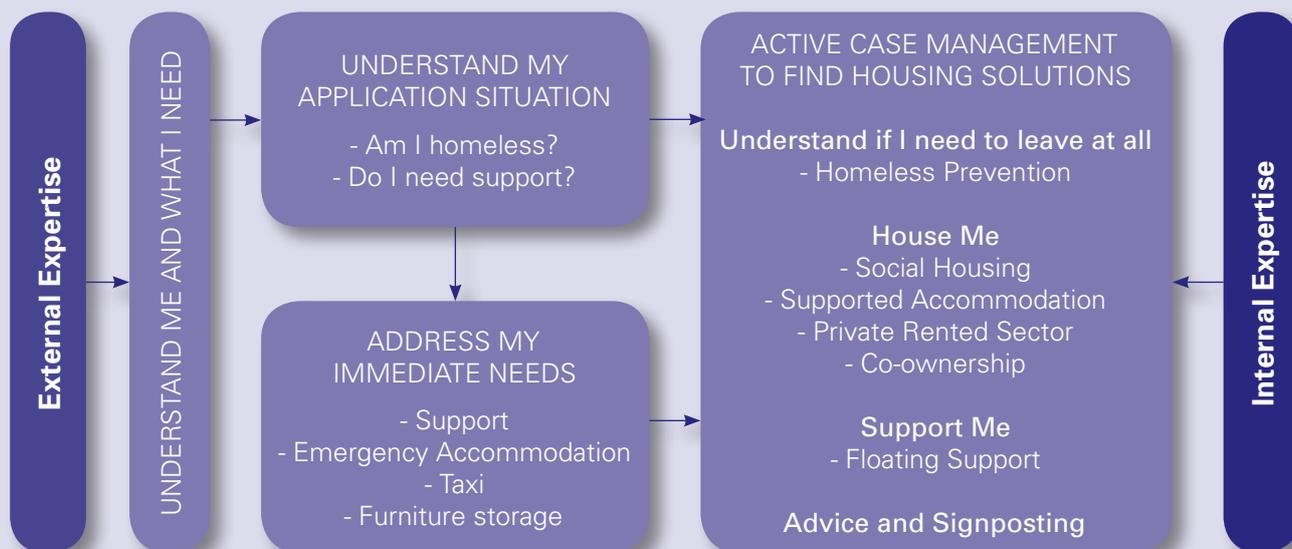
In response to this the Housing Executive undertook a major review of front line service delivery and as a result developed a Housing Solutions and Support model. The aim is to provide person centred services which are tailored to meet the needs of individual customers and support them to achieve sustainable housing solutions. Highly trained staff will have realistic discussions with customers to prevent homelessness where possible, pulling upon the necessary support from other agencies to support clients.

The diagram opposite illustrates how the new Housing Solutions and Support model operates.

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22. *Making Every Contact Count*, Department for Communities & Local Government (2012) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7597/2200459.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7597/2200459.pdf)

## Housing Solutions and Support Team



As Housing Solutions and Support is implemented across Northern Ireland this approach will play a crucial role in the prevention agenda at the forefront of this Strategy. In delivering this approach - expanded as Housing Solutions and Support Teams in the Housing Executive and in line with our statutory duty - it will be crucial that all agencies with a role to play work together to achieve the goal of preventing homelessness. Substantial work is already underway within established Housing Solutions and Support Teams to develop better links externally and this work will be carried on across the whole of Northern Ireland as this approach is rolled in across the Housing Executive throughout 2017. While the Housing Executive has a statutory duty to assess homelessness staff will often refer households on to support that is specialist and impartial which will complement the advice and assistance offered by Housing Executive, and other statutory agencies. This again supports the vision of 'Ending Homelessness Together'.

This Strategy will ensure that good quality information, designed to help households approaching or experiencing homelessness, is available across all partner agencies in a range of formats and accessible to all.

### 4.1.3 Working Together

An Interdepartmental Action Plan to be brought forward by Department for Communities will outline how Government Departments, e.g. Health and Justice, can work together to address the non-accommodation issues linked to homelessness.

In addition to work carried out by the Housing Executive and other public organisations, this Strategy acknowledges the valuable contribution made by many organisations across the sector in the prevention of homelessness. There is a wide range of organisations which offer advice and services complementary to the statutory role played by the Housing Executive. To achieve the actions outlined in chapter 5 it is vital that the work of all organisations who engage with households before, during and after their interactions with the Housing Executive is acknowledged and supported.

The vision statement of this Strategy is Ending Homelessness Together and each agency has a key role to play in achieving the objectives of this Strategy. The combination of these efforts will play a vital role in the prevention of homelessness.

## **4.2 Objective 2: To find sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households**

Despite the best efforts of many agencies involved in prevention work, a proportion of households will still find themselves homeless for a variety of reasons. Given the often high levels of vulnerability of clients who find themselves in this situation, it is essential that any solution is individually tailored to ensure successful tenancy sustainment in the longer term.

### **4.2.1 Finding the Right Solution**

Every household is unique and, for many households, a roof over their head is only one aspect of a solution that will allow them to live independently in a home of their own that they can afford. Additional support and assistance can often be required. Households with health or disability problems may require input from Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure their home is suitable for their needs in the form of an adaptation<sup>23</sup> or the provision of vital equipment. Other households may require help in learning the necessary skills to manage budgets and debt, services often provided by Supporting People services. Ongoing help with mental health or addiction issues may be required from qualified medical staff. Coordinating support across all of these agencies to provide a household with the support they need to maintain a home presents an ongoing challenge for all agencies involved.

### **4.2.2 Housing Solutions and Support Teams**

The Housing Executive has developed "Housing Solutions and Support Teams (HSST)" to assist any household that is homeless or that approaches the Housing Executive or other partner agency with a housing problem. This approach is key to finding the right solution for a household, first time.

It is essential to note that the statutory duty placed upon the Housing Executive to assess any household that may be homeless or threatened with homelessness will always be applied. Implementation of a Housing Solutions and Support approach will not impact on the rights of a household under the law, but will run in tandem with any necessary homelessness assessment.

The approach is currently operational in Belfast, Causeway and South Down. Initial feedback from both staff working as part of the Housing Solutions and Support Teams and from customers is positive. By March 2016, over 10,000 customers had been provided with Housing Solutions and Support. Some outcomes to date include over 10% of customers were helped to sustain their tenancy, 37% were rehoused in the social housing sector and over 13% were supported to access the private rented sector.

The success of this approach is, however, entirely dependent upon the right services being available in the right place and at the right time to meet the needs of the household in order to succeed in creating a sustainable accommodation solution. Otherwise there is a danger of individuals and families falling into a cycle of repeat homelessness. Housing Solutions and Support Teams will continue to link externally with partners as this approach is rolled in across Housing Executive offices throughout Northern Ireland.

### **4.2.3 Housing Support through Supporting People**

The Housing Executive delivers the Supporting People programme which currently supports<sup>24</sup> 90 accredited organisations (which includes a wide range of charitable organisations, housing associations, health trusts and the Housing Executive) to provide housing support to vulnerable people. The support helps the service users to maintain their independence and can either be

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23. DSD/DHSSPS Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services: Final Report and Action Plan, NIHE (2016) [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing\\_adaptations\\_review\\_final\\_report\\_2016.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_adaptations_review_final_report_2016.pdf)

24. Further information on financial provision can be found in Table 12 of this document.

provided as part of an accommodation service or made available to people in their own homes through floating support services. The programme is delivered through more than 800 services which provide support for up to 19,000 service users at any time. These services are designed to address the specific needs of different groups of vulnerable people and are aligned to the Housing Executive's statutory responsibility for homelessness. Spending on Homelessness Services accounts for 38% of the programme grant and delivers 22% of the Supporting People support units. Services provide support to single homeless people, homeless families, people at risk of homelessness due to addictions and people facing homelessness due to domestic violence.

Going forward there will need to be a strong alignment between the Homelessness Strategy and the Supporting People programme to ensure effective, strategic targeting of Supporting People resources, aligned to the objectives of the Strategy.

#### 4.2.4 Other Housing Options

While it has been custom and practice in Northern Ireland to date to discharge statutory homeless duty by providing accommodation in the social housing sector, the legislation does allow for the Homelessness duty to be discharged in the private sector also. In the Housing Strategy "Facing the Future" the Department committed to lead a fundamental review of the allocation of social housing in Northern Ireland which included being able to meet this duty to homeless applicants on a tenure-neutral basis.

#### 4.2.5 Temporary Accommodation

For some Full Duty Applicant Households, an immediate permanent housing solution may not be available. In such circumstances, the Housing Executive will seek to discharge its duty in stages, via temporary accommodation placements where necessary. Currently a range of temporary accommodation solutions are available and include:

- Housing Executive hostels;
- Voluntary Sector hostels;
- Single Lets (houses/flats etc. made available under licence agreement to households on a short term basis);
- Dispersed Intensively Managed Accommodation (DIME) - for individuals with complex issues and potential behavioural issues which require higher levels of management and support;
- Short-term B&B or similar - these will be used only in exceptional circumstances and for as short a duration as possible.

Households are placed in temporary accommodation appropriate to their circumstances and with the necessary level of support. Households' support needs will range from none, through low to high and these support needs can be met either within their accommodation placement, eg supported housing/voluntary sector hostels for young people (including jointly commissioned services) or for people with a learning disability; refuge hostels for victims of domestic violence etc; or for example, by floating support in a private single let where support needs are low.

The Homelessness Strategy 2012-17 acknowledged the need for a review of temporary accommodation provision to ensure strategic relevance and cost effectiveness. An Evaluation of Accommodation-based Services (RSM McClure Watters, 2015) <sup>25</sup> was carried out. However, the full strategic review was put on hold due to the redesign of Housing Executive frontline services as it was considered important to defer any further review allowing for the analysis of any implications, arising from redesign of front-line services on temporary accommodation.

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25. *An Evaluation Of Accommodation Based Services Funded by Supporting People, RSM McClure Watters (2015)* [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/evaluation\\_of\\_accommodation\\_based\\_support.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/evaluation_of_accommodation_based_support.pdf)

This was instigated to improve performance and customer satisfaction. It was felt that it would be timely to defer any further review of temporary accommodation pending the outcome of redesign allowing for analysis of any implications for the provision of temporary accommodation.

Appendix 4 has listed this as an incomplete action in the independent evaluation and this action has been brought forward to the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 to look strategically at the provision of temporary accommodation with a view to providing the right mix of accommodation for the needs of clients, in an affordable way.

### **4.3 Objective 3: To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland**

Chronic Homelessness can often manifest itself as rough sleeping or other street activity and is perhaps the most severe and visible form of homelessness. This client group tends to have extremely complex needs making it difficult for them to sustain tenancies causing frequent, repeat cycles of homelessness and typically intermittent engagement with services and periods of non-engagement.

In seeking to define chronic homelessness this Strategy will use the definition from a Crisis report<sup>26</sup> from 2010 which defined those chronically homeless as 'a group of individuals with very pronounced and complex support needs who found it difficult to exit from homelessness.'

It should be noted however that chronic homelessness may manifest itself in many different ways, one of which is rough sleeping. In the consultation for the draft Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 it became evident that while streets in rural areas may not evidence rough sleeping, chronic homelessness may be evidenced with individuals/households being homeless for a sustained period of time, regularly requiring temporary accommodation or repeatedly presenting as homeless. It is anticipated that the work of the Local Area Groups in objective four will ensure that chronic homelessness within given localities is identified with an appropriate course of action pursued that will complement the actions within this objective.

While not addressed as a specific action this Strategy will seek to learn from the experiences of neighbouring jurisdictions with regards to rough sleeping. The flexible nature of this Strategy will ensure that appropriate actions or lessons from elsewhere can be considered in the Northern Ireland context.

#### **4.3.1 Positive Work**

Throughout the previous Strategy many positive steps were taken in the development of services including multi-agency working to address rough sleeping within the two main cities, Belfast and Londonderry/Derry.

A Belfast Street Needs Audit was carried out by DePaul and the Welcome Organisation on behalf of the Housing Executive in 2015 over a 12 week period between the hours of 10pm and 8am.

The purpose of the Street Needs Audit was to:

- Establish how many people were sleeping rough in Belfast City Centre;
- Engage with individuals to assess their accommodation needs;
- Assist individuals to return to their accommodation including referral to the most appropriate support services;
- Identify any barriers to service entry;
- Inform the future reconfiguration of homelessness services including assessing the adequacy of crisis and outreach services and informing commissioning priorities.

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26. 'A Review of Single Homelessness in the UK 2000 – 2010 Anwen Jones and Nicholas Pleace', Crisis (2010) [http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/ReviewOfSingleHomelessness\\_Final.pdf](http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/ReviewOfSingleHomelessness_Final.pdf)

The Audit identified that an average of 6 people per night were rough sleeping in Belfast. In terms of all types of recorded street activity, street drinking represented the largest proportion of street activity at 39%, rough sleeping 35%, begging 14% and “unable to ascertain” was 12%. As the Audit was carried out between the hours of 10pm and 8am it does not represent daytime street activity.<sup>27</sup>

Informed by the Street Needs Audit, an Inter-Ministerial Action Plan for Belfast, developed and endorsed by the NI Executive, outlined a range of cross departmental actions. Some of the key achievements of the Action Plan were:

- Work was undertaken to realign existing services to better meet the needs of clients to provide the kind of hostel beds and support needed;
- Outreach service hours were increased;
- A cross departmental awareness campaign was undertaken along with other Interdepartmental initiatives.

A previous strategic review of rough sleeping and service provision was also undertaken in Londonderry/Derry. This showed that while homelessness issues were addressed for many of the clients encountered, evidence showed that others would remain on the street even though bed spaces were available within the city, highlighting the fact that chronic homelessness cannot be solved by the provision of a bed and a roof alone. Mental health and addiction problems can lead clients to disengage with services and must be further understood and addressed if rough sleeping is to be eliminated. This Strategy will, therefore, maintain a special focus on this client group. This resulted in the realignment of some services to ensure an appropriate continuum of services to best meet the needs of this client group in the city.

#### 4.3.2 Finding Solutions

The “Housing First”<sup>28</sup> NI pathway model first developed during the previous Strategy took chronic homeless households straight to permanent housing with wrap around support. This strategy intends to develop this approach, examine the potential for other types of housing led pathway models and examine existing outreach models that provide services to rough sleepers as part of Rough Sleeping Action Plans.

#### 4.3.3 Broader Scope

While this Strategy will continue to maintain the focus on Belfast and Londonderry/Derry where the majority of rough sleeping occurs, there will also be a focus on the development of mechanisms to understand chronic homelessness outside of the two main cities to ensure the development of appropriate services as necessary through Local Action Plans.

#### 4.3.4 No Recourse to Public Funds

There is a cohort of individuals who may end up sleeping rough as they may be ineligible for benefits or services in the UK.

Social landlords must ensure legislative criteria are applied when allocating accommodation or providing homelessness assistance to persons from abroad, including those persons whom it has been established have no recourse to public funds. No recourse to public funds covers those persons who are subject to immigration control and also persons from abroad who, while EEA Nationals do not have a right to reside. With regards to the Housing Executive this is set out in Article 7a of The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and Article 22A of The Housing (Northern

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27. *Belfast Street Needs Audit, Northern Ireland Housing Executive The Welcome Organisation and Depaul Belfast City Centre Management (2016)* [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/belfast\\_street\\_needs\\_audit.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/belfast_street_needs_audit.pdf)

28. *THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HOUSING FIRST SUPPORT SERVICE PILOTED BY DEPAUL IN BELFAST, FUNDED BY SUPPORTING PEOPLE: AN SROI EVALUATION, North Harbour Consulting (2016)* [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing\\_first\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_first_evaluation.pdf)

Ireland) Order 1981. Housing Associations have an obligation to adhere to this under Rule 9A of the statutory Housing Selection Scheme.

Persons subject to immigration control and other persons from abroad are entitled to free advice in relation to homelessness and the prevention of homelessness. Article 6(D)1 of the Housing (Amendment) Act (NI) 2010 provides for free advice to be available to all persons and may include referring the applicant to other support agencies. There is also a duty to provide homeless applicants with advice and assistance under The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 prescribed in The Homeless Persons Advice and Assistance Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Where an applicant is ineligible but they are destitute and have a pre-existing care need [a pre-existing care need - should be similar to the priority need categories outlined in Article 5 of the '88 Order], they may be referred to Social Services under the Health & Personal Services (NI) Order 1972. In the same way, the Health and Social Care Trusts have a duty under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 to provide services for persons under 18 who are children in need. Therefore, a referral will be made to the relevant Health and Social Care Trust in such instances.

Improved data gathering within frontline services (Objective 5) will assist in providing an evidence base on the extent of this issue to inform future policy decisions.

#### **4.4 Objective 4: To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver this strategy**

##### **4.4.1 Delivery and Accountability**

###### **Homelessness Strategy Steering Group (HSSG)**

The Vision of this Strategy reflects the understanding that homelessness is about more than bricks and mortar and cannot be tackled in isolation by one agency. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group (HSSG) will be an inter-departmental, multi-agency group tasked with ensuring the strategic delivery of the Strategy. Whilst the Housing Executive has a legislative requirement to formulate and publish the Strategy, the vision of this Strategy reflects the understanding that homelessness is about more than bricks and mortar and cannot be tackled in isolation by one agency. Chaired by the Department for Communities the HSSG will ensure strategic direction and accountability for the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 is shared across all relevant agencies. The HSSG will meet on a six monthly basis.

###### **Central Homelessness Forum (CHF)**

The Central Homelessness Forum will bring together expertise in homelessness at a regional level. This group will monitor the delivery of both the annual implementation plans aligned to the Strategy and Local Area Action Plans. It will be reported to by the Local Area Groups on a quarterly basis. This group will ensure effective evaluation of the Strategy is carried out and that the delivery structures are in place and carrying out their assigned tasks.

###### **Local Area Groups**

The Local Area Groups are tasked with ensuring that the objectives of the Strategy are delivered at local level. These groups will be aligned to Housing Executive area offices. They will report regularly to the CHF on progress against their Local Area Action Plans.

###### **Service User Forum**

A Service User Forum will ensure that the views of those who are homeless or have experience of homelessness are clearly understood and reflected in the delivery of the Strategy.

The relationship in the delivery and accountability mechanisms is illustrated in the diagram opposite.



#### 4.4.2 Urban - Rural

From urban hubs and commuter towns, to coastal communities and from farming communities to thriving rural villages<sup>29</sup> and ribbon developments, the people of Northern Ireland live in a wide range of diverse communities and their needs will vary greatly. One solution will not fit all, nor can one overarching Strategy take account of every circumstance. Therefore the development of Local Action Plans which address the specific issues and needs of local communities in all their diversity are an essential element in the delivery of the vision of this Strategy.

### 4.5 Objective 5: To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the development of appropriate services

#### 4.5.1 Informing the Strategy

Essential to the success of the Strategy is robust evidence base to ensure that the right action is taken at the right time.

The development of the “Housing Solutions and Support Teams” and the holistic approach to the identification of both housing and support needs of households at first point of contact has provided the opportunity to gather much more detailed information at a very local level which will be used on both an area and regional basis.

A key focus of this Strategy is to enhance the links between the Homelessness Strategy and Supporting People (SP) and to feed data directly to the SP Needs Analysis to inform commissioning, decommissioning or realignment of services in response to emerging or changing need.

#### 4.5.2 Equality/Rural

All partners will work together to identify appropriate measures which will ensure and demonstrate an equitable service is provided to all clients irrespective of their difference or circumstance and will continue to monitor our performance per our obligations under the Equality Legislation. We will also monitor our performance in keeping with the Housing Executive’s Rural Strategy and the requirements under the legislation.

#### 4.5.3 Data Sharing

We will assist our partners with the provision of data to inform complementary strategies and seek to access information from partner agencies to better understand issues and improve our services. In the implementation of this Strategy we will seek to improve data gathering by working with partners, including direct access services and front line advice agencies, to ensure all relevant data are captured.

29. Sustainable Rural Communities Rural Strategy & Action Plan 2016 – 2020, NIHE (2016) [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/rural\\_action\\_plan\\_2016\\_2020.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/rural_action_plan_2016_2020.pdf)

## Chapter 5

### Housing Executive Led Action Plan

#### 5.0 Introduction

The action plan below is representative of actions that are led by the Housing Executive and have therefore focused on accommodation issues. As outlined in Chapter 2, the Department for Communities will be producing an action plan that will focus on addressing gaps in those non-accommodation issues which is reflective of homelessness as a cross-cutting issue. The two plans will complement each other through the life of the Strategy. It should be noted that a number of actions under objective 4 will be led by the Department for Communities.

#### 5.1 Objective 1 To prioritise homelessness prevention

Action	Short term (year one)	Medium Term (year 2/3)	Long Term (year 4/5)
1. Identify pre crisis "homeless indicators" and commission training package for relevant key front line workers	Establishment of Inter-agency Steering Group to identify triggers	Development and delivery of Training Package	Evaluation and impact Assessment
2. Implement a Housing Solutions and Support approach for homeless prevention	Roll in of highly trained Housing Solutions and Support Teams within Housing Executive Offices across NI	Define Prevention Interventions and establish measurements and reporting mechanisms	Ongoing monitoring and reporting of homeless prevention
3. Develop effective communication strategy to ensure households approaching crisis can access the right support quickly	Inter-agency communication Strategy in place	Ensure high quality advice available across all partner websites	Development of Homelessness Awareness Training Package for Public Representatives and general public

## 5.2 Objective 2

### To secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households

Action	Short term (year one)	Medium Term (year 2/3)	Long Term (year 4/5)
1. Support homeless clients through to sustainable accommodation solution with appropriate support using suitable housing led pathway models	Establish Common Assessment Methodology (within the Housing Executive) to identify clients' housing and support needs which will ensure customers get a "one time" comprehensive assessment of all their needs at first point of contact. It should be noted that there is already a common assessment in place for housing needs and the methodology for this action refers to complementing this with an assessment for support needs	Provide adequate training and support tools to front line staff eg, online service directories/ joint working protocols/guidance manual	Continue monitoring and updating support tools and guidance for frontline staff as new issues emerge
2. Carry out strategic review of temporary accommodation and support needs of homeless clients	Carry out analysis of Temporary Accommodation usage and provision by Local Office including location, quality, cost effectiveness and strategic relevance	Review temporary accommodation and link to Supporting People review	Develop Temporary Accommodation Provision Strategy
3. Continue to assist clients in accessing the Private Rented Sector	Evaluate the current Private Rented Sector Access Scheme	Ensure ongoing support for clients to access the private rented sector based on evaluation of current scheme and learning from Housing Solutions and Support Teams	Continue monitoring effectiveness to ensure access to PRS

## 5.3 Objective 3

### To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland

Action	Short term (year one)	Medium Term (year 2/3)	Long Term (year 4/5)
1. Review and implement Belfast and L'Derry Rough Sleepers Strategy	Review to be undertaken in both cities	Revised Rough Sleepers Action Strategy implemented and action plan developed	Ongoing monitor and review
2. Identify chronic homeless need outside Belfast and L'Derry and devise appropriate action plan to tackle any issues	Establish and implement methodology to identify chronic homelessness	Work through Local Area Groups to develop and Implement Interagency Action Plan if appropriate	Ongoing monitor and review
3. Ensure appropriate Housing Models for chronic homeless clients	Examine the potential for other Housing Led Pathway Models for chronic homeless clients (subject to available funding)	Dependent on the findings extend the housing led model	Ongoing monitor and review

## 5.4 Objective 4

### To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver this strategy

Action	Short term (year one)	Medium Term (year 2/3)	Long Term (year 4/5)
1. Department for Communities will engage with other relevant Government Departments to identify specific areas requiring Interdepartmental cooperation and will develop appropriate Homelessness Action Plan	Inter-departmental workshops to identify relevant actions. Produce and implement Interdepartmental Action Plan	Ongoing monitoring and review	Ongoing monitoring and review
2. Interdepartmental Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will oversee implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and the Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan	Establish reporting mechanisms	Ongoing monitoring	Ongoing monitoring
3. Establish Local Inter-agency Homelessness Strategy Implementation Groups	Identify relevant stakeholders and establish Terms of Reference	Produce and implement Local Area Action Plan	Ongoing monitor and review
4. Establish Service User Forum	Liaise with sector representatives to identify relevant members and establish Terms of Reference	Ongoing monitoring	Ongoing monitoring

## 5.5 Objective 5

### To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the development of appropriate services

Action	Short term (year one)	Medium Term (year 2/3)	Long Term (year 4/5)
1. Ensure that the Supporting People Programme is provided with robust data to inform strategic planning of services	Establish new measurements and reports for homelessness including urban/rural breakdowns and equality measures	Establish data analytic "dashboard"	Identify relevant partner agency data sets and establish data sharing protocols
2. Review the Housing Solutions and Support Approach	Roll in Housing Solutions and Support Teams across NI	Commission independent Review of effectiveness of Housing Solutions and Support Approach in finding housing solutions	Implement recommendations as appropriate
3. Monitor emerging issues and develop appropriate strategies as necessary	Annual	Annual	Annual
4. Examine homeless trends and develop new measures	Annual	Review	Review
5. Produce an annual report outlining progress on the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22	Annual	Annual	Annual

# Appendices

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# Appendix 1 - Statistical Analysis

**Table 1 - Presenters by reason**

Reason	Sharing breakdown/family dispute		Marital/relationship breakdown		Domestic violence		Loss of rented accomm		No accomm in NI		Intimidation		Accomm not reasonable		Release from hospital/prison/other institution		Fire/flood other emergency		Mortgage default		Bomb/fire damage civil disturbance		'Nhood harassment		Other reason		No Data		Total				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	
	3,733	3,549	3,891	3,671	1,921	1,789	1,849	1,531	855	2,617	1,513	1,212	584	3,069	415	415	81	509	37	1,140	732	2,148	19,354	1,140	1,142	1,516	1,357	638	1,652	18,862	1,097	19,621	18,628

**Table 2 - Presenters by household**

Household Type	Single males				Single females				Couples		Families		Pensioner Households		Undefined		Total					
	16-17 yrs	18-25 yrs	26-59 yrs	Total	16-17 yrs	18-25 yrs	26-59 yrs	Total														
2012-2013	196	2,122	4,650	6,968	218	1,653	1,789	3,660	830	6,019	1,875	2	19,354	1,968	0	18,862	6,194	0	19,621	2,234	0	18,628
2013-2014	162	2,027	4,588	6,777	179	1,408	1,792	3,379	868	5,870	1,968	0	18,862	1,968	0	18,862	6,194	0	19,621	2,234	0	18,628
2014-2015	185	2,013	4,663	6,861	176	1,436	1,934	3,546	874	6,194	2,146	0	19,621	2,146	0	19,621	6,194	0	19,621	2,234	0	18,628
2015-2016	139	1,868	4,336	6,343	160	1,388	1,822	3,370	794	5,887	2,234	0	18,628	2,234	0	18,628	5,887	0	18,628	2,234	0	18,628

**Table 3 - Top Three Reasons (presenter)**

	Presenters Top 3 Reasons		
	Accomm Not Reasonable	Family/Sharing Breakdown	Loss of Rented Accom
2012/13	15.80%	19.30%	13.50%
2013/14	16.80%	18.80%	13.60%
2014/15	18.70%	19.80%	14.40%
2015/16	21.00%	19.70%	13.30%

**Table 4 - Acceptances by Reason**

Reason	Sharing breakdown/family dispute		Marital/relationship breakdown		Domestic violence		Loss of rented accomm		No accomm in NI		Intimidation		Accomm not reasonable		Release from hospital/prison/other institution		Fire/flood other emergency		Mortgage default		Bomb/fire damage civil disturbance		N'hood harassment		Other reason		Total	
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	1,783	1,673	1,912	2,084	794	754	778	706	720	1,299	620	411	2,556	244	57	252	25	723	394	9,878								

**Table 5 - Acceptances by Household**

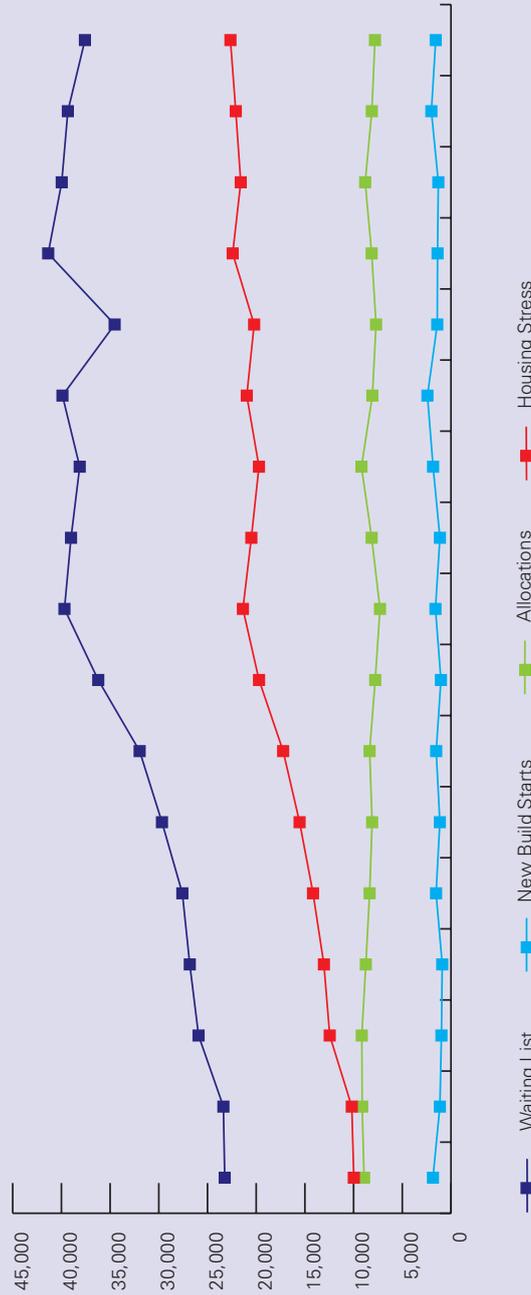
Household Type	Single males				Single females				Couples		Families		Pensioner Households		Undefined		Total
	16-17 yrs		26-59 yrs		16-17 yrs		26-59 yrs		Total		Total		Total		Total		
	16-17 yrs	26-59 yrs	Total	16-17 yrs	26-59 yrs	Total	18-25 yrs	26-59 yrs	Total	1852	1719	1972	2033	402	395	469	
2012-2013	95	608	1714	2417	113	765	974	1852	402	3746	1459	2	9878				
2013-2014	77	594	1718	2389	94	666	959	1719	395	3645	1499	2	9649				
2014-2015	89	650	1953	2692	100	738	1134	1972	469	4182	1701	0	11016				
2015-2016	72	716	1984	2772	94	775	1164	2033	469	4100	1828	0	11202				

**Table 6 - Top Three Reasons (acceptance)**

	Presenters Top 3 Reasons		
	Accomm Not Reasonable	Family/Sharing Breakdown	Loss of Rented Accom
2012/13	25.80%	18.00%	13.00%
2013/14	28.80%	17.30%	13.50%
2014/15	28.30%	17.30%	13.40%
2015/16	30.40%	18.60%	13.00%

**Table 7: Waiting List, Allocations and New Build Starts**

	March																
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Housing Stress	9,978	10,186	12,449	13,047	14,165	15,543	17,233	19,708	21,364	20,499	19,716	20,967	20,211	22,414	21,586	22,097	22,645
Allocations	8,922	9,115	9,158	8,745	8,356	8,095	8,355	7,780	7,289	8,144	9,192	8,071	7,693	8,145	8,809	8,129	7,805
New Build Starts	1,851	1,142	980	898	1,532	1,143	1,519	1,032	1,595	1,136	1,838	2,418	1,411	1,379	1,299	2,013	1,568
Waiting List	23,234	23,368	25,917	26,819	27,581	29,674	31,967	36,217	39,688	39,013	38,120	39,891	34,533	41,356	39,967	39,338	37,586



## Appendix 2 - Temporary Accommodation

**Table 8: Supported Accommodation Services**

		Accommodation Services		Floating Support Services		Total
		No of Services	No of Units	No of Services	No of Units	
North	Young Homeless	7	111	1	40	51 Services 1,492 Units
	Domestic Violence	6	57	3	348	
	Single Homeless	13	208	2	454	
	Homeless Families	12	94	2	80	
	Addictions	3	50	1	40	
	Generic	1	10	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>962</b>	
South	Young Homeless	5	45	7	369	54 Services 1,832 Units
	Domestic Violence	6	48	5	395	
	Single Homeless	11	206	2	160	
	Homeless Families	5	28	5	426	
	Addictions	3	73	2	18	
	Generic	0	0	3	64	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,432</b>	
Belfast	Young Homeless	5	76	2	81	52 Services 2,209 Units
	Domestic Violence	2	33	1	420	
	Single Homeless	15	387	4	487	
	Homeless Families	10	201	0	0	
	Addictions	5	115	2	91	
	Offenders	4	89	2	229	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,308</b>	

**Table 9: Additional Temporary Accommodation**

Housing Executive Hostels	Number of Services	Number of Units
	18	151
Single Lets July 2016	Cira 1,141	

Single lets are acquired as necessary and the number in use at any point in time may vary. Additionally the Housing Executive has the discretion to use B&B or Hotel accommodation in exceptional circumstances and for short durations in response to crisis.

**Table 10: Placements in Temporary Accommodation**

	2012-13	2013 Apr - Aug	Sep - Mar 2014	2014-15	15/16
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2911</b>	1209	1780	2817	2890
			*2989		

\* Data for temporary accommodation was migrated from the TAABBS computer system to HMS computer system mid-year 2013/14 - data is therefore taken from both systems.

**Table 11: Average Length of Stay in Temporary Accommodation 2015/16**

Private Single Lets	Leased Property	Voluntary Sector Hostels	Housing Executive Hostels	Non Standard B&B Hostels	All Sectors
52.6 weeks	14.4 weeks	38 weeks	22.4 weeks	4.6 weeks	37.7 weeks

## Appendix 3 - Financial Investment

**Table 12: Financial Investment in Homelessness**

	Temporary Accommodation	Homelessness Services	Voluntary Sector Funding	Supporting People	Leased Properties	Private Rental Sector Access Scheme	Total
	Top Up and Supporting People Costs	Furniture Storage and Taxi	Homelessness Services	Floating Support for homelessness projects and schemes	Private Sector emergency accom	Facilitate creation and sustainment of private sector tenancies	
2011/12	21.8m	1.2m	1.8m	4.2m	955k		<b>30m</b>
2012/13	22.7m	1.1m	2.0m	4.5m	956k		<b>31.3m</b>
2013/14	22.9m	1.1m	2.7m	5.5m	956k		<b>33.2m</b>
2014/15	25m	1.3m	2.1m	6.4m	956k	114k	<b>35.9m</b>
2015/16	24.3m	1.4m	2.2m	6.4m	956k	360k	<b>35.6m</b>

## Appendix 4 - Progress towards the 38 actions of the 2012-17 Homelessness Strategy

Action no.	Action summary	Progress (November 2016)
1	Collect and analyse data for all ETHOS homelessness categories	Completed
2	Measure the extent of hidden homelessness by 2012/13	Partially completed
3	Prevent repeat homelessness through multi-agency intervention	Completed
4	Produce a framework to provide holistic assessment	In progress
5	Provide a comprehensive housing and homelessness advice service	Completed
6	Provide pre-release housing advice to all prisoners	Completed
7	Enhance partnership working for young people leaving justice system	Completed
8	Introduce Tenancy Support Assessments	Completed
9	Develop peer support networks for NIHE tenants	Completed
10	Develop referral to floating support for vulnerable individuals in the PRS	Completed
11	Examine family mediation/intervention programmes	Completed
12	Enable homeless people to move on from temporary accommodation	In progress
13	Review temporary accommodation	Incomplete
14	Examine the Housing-Led Model (Housing First)	Completed
15	Reduce the average time in temporary accommodation to 40 weeks	Completed
16	Examine how welfare reform impacts on homelessness	Completed
17	Introduce a Private Rented Sector Access Scheme	Completed
18	Evaluate services/data sharing for alcohol addiction (rough sleepers)	Partially completed
19	Agree service changes for effective interventions (rough sleepers)	In progress
20	Consider a Housing-Led Model (rough sleepers)	Completed
21	Produce a new Belfast Rough Sleepers Strategy	Completed
22	Develop a mechanism for referral to addiction services (rough sleepers)	In progress
23	Continue to support the Domestic Violence Helpline	Completed
24	Support the MARAC process	Completed
25	Roll out the Sanctuary Scheme (domestic violence)	Completed
26	Review refuge provision (domestic violence)	Completed
27	Multi-agency contributions to sexual/violent offender release	Completed
28	Case management for sexual/violent offenders	Completed
29	Develop appropriate accommodation for high risk offenders	Completed
30	Assess the need for bespoke women offender accommodation	Completed
31	Assist the PBNI in the implementation of accommodation strategy	Completed
32	Identify the specific service needs of homeless BME groups	Completed
33	Produce Homeless Action Plans for rural communities	Completed
34	Measure the extent of rural homelessness	Completed
35	Relevant agencies to collaborate on youth homelessness	Completed
36	Review prevention programmes in respect of youth homelessness	Completed
37	Review existing joint working for young homeless people	Completed
38	Promote clear and flexible pathways to independence for young people	Completed

## Appendix 5 - List of Respondents to the Homelessness Strategy consultation process

On the 8th December 2016, the draft Homelessness Strategy was launched at the Council for the Homeless NI annual conference which took place during Homelessness Awareness Week. A workshop was held and responses from the workshop were compiled and collated by the Council for the Homeless NI on behalf of the Housing Executive. In addition to the collective response, we had additional responses from the following organisations:

- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Choice Housing
- Chartered Institute of Housing
- Children's Law Centre
- Church of Ireland
- Citizens Advice Northern Ireland
- Council for the Homeless NI
- Disability Action
- East Belfast Mission
- Extern
- Green Party in Northern Ireland
- Helm Housing
- Housing Rights
- Mulholland After Care Services
- NIACRO
- NIPSA
- Northern Ireland Housing Council
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association
- Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership
- North West Methodist Mission
- Parenting NI
- Participation and the Practice of Rights
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Public Health Agency Northern Ireland
- Salvation Army
- Shelter NI
- Simon Community
- Social Care and Children's Directorate, Health and Social Care Board
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust
- Start 360
- Supporting Communities/Central Housing Forum
- The Cedar Foundation
- The Northern Ireland Institute for the Disabled/Utility Street Hostel
- Ulster Unionist Party
- VOYPIC
- Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland
- A further response was received on behalf of an individual

In addition to the written consultation responses, Housing Executive staff delivered presentations to 12 groups in the development and consultation of this Strategy. These groups included sectoral representatives, a disability group, youth providers and rural representatives.



# Housing Executive

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