

Public Document Pack



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Friday 2 August 2024

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

The **Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel** will meet in the at **10.00 am** on **Monday 12 August 2024**.

This meeting will be live webcast. To access the webcast please go to the Council's website at the time of the meeting and follow the instructions on the page.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Lawton".

Samantha Lawton

Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel members are:-

Member

Councillor Zarina Amin (Chair)

Councillor Bill Armer

Councillor Aziz Daji

Councillor Alison Munro

Councillor Harry McCarthy

Vacancy - Community_Alliance

Jonathan Milner (Co-Optee)

Chris Friend (Co-Optee)

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Membership of the Panel

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

2: Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1 - 12

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 25th March 2024.

3: Declaration of Interests

13 - 14

Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items.

4: Admission of the Public

Most agenda items take place in public. This only changes where there is a need to consider exempt information, as contained at Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. You will be informed at this point which items are to be recommended for exclusion and to be resolved by the Panel.

5: Deputations/Petitions

The Panel will receive any petitions and/or deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Members of the Public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

6: Public Question Time

To receive any public questions.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the period for the asking and answering of public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Any questions must be submitted in writing at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

7: Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029 & Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024 15 - 60

This paper seeks feedback from the Place Scrutiny Panel on the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029, and also seeks feedback on the refreshed Kirklees Council – Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation (TA) Placement Policy 2024.

Contact: Sarah Holmes, Housing Services Strategic Manager, Tel: 01484 221000

8: Approval of Damp, Mould & Condensation (DMC) Policy 61 - 90

This report provides information to support the approval and adoption of the Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC) Policy v1.4, in response to the Regulatory Notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing on 6 March 2024

Contact: Neil Hutchinson, Interim General Manager Assets, Homes and Neighbourhoods Tel: 01484 221000

Contact Officer: Jenny Bryce-Chan

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

GROWTH AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 25th March 2024

- Present: Councillor Shabir Pandor (Chair)
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Manisha Roma Kaushik
- In attendance: Cllr Moses Crook, Cabinet Member Housing and Highways
Cllr Graham Turner, Cabinet Member Finance and Regeneration
Edward Highfield, Service Director, Skills and Regeneration
Naz Parkar, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhood
Liz Jefferson, Strategic Partnership Lead
David Shepherd, Strategic Director for Growth and Regeneration
Sarah Holmes, Strategic Manager (Homelessness)
Michelle Anderson-Dore, Head of Partnerships
Robert Scott, Partnership Strategic Manager
- Observers: Cllr Elizabeth Smaje, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Sean Westerby, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager
- Apologies: Jonathan Milner (Co-Optee)
Chris Friend (Co-Optee)

- 1 Membership of the Panel**
Apologies were received from Jonathan Milner and Chris Friend.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
That the minutes of the meeting held on the 26 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.
- 3 Declaration of Interests**
No interests were declared.
- 4 Admission of the Public**
All agenda items were considered in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations of petitions were received.

6 Housing Growth Update

Cllr Graham Turner, Portfolio holder for Growth and Regeneration, introduced the item, advising that, there would be a presentation to the Panel, which would provide a progress update on the housing growth programme. He explained that the information aimed to show the positive aspects, and that officers should be thanked for delivering many positive projects, in very challenging times.

Liz Jefferson, Strategic Partnership Lead, referring to the presentation advised the Panel that the update would cover projects that span the following programmes:

- Strategic Allocations
- Accelerated Construction delivery
- Specialist and Supported Housing
- Affordable Housing
- Registered Providers programme
- Brokerage service
- Pipeline sites

The Panel was informed that in terms of important context, nothing that is delivered in housing growth is done in isolation, and is undertaken collaboratively working with many external and internal partners. For example, funding bodies, housing associations and consultants who support this work, as well as a wide range of teams across the Council. This partnership approach is at the heart of everything that is undertaken and is dependent on the resources of both internal and external teams to help deliver housing.

The Panel was provided with an outline of the following projects:

Dewsbury Riverside

The Panel was informed that the strategic site at Dewsbury Riverside, is the largest housing allocation in Kirklees and is a key site in the West Yorkshire Strategic place, partnership priorities and there are multiple landowners on this site. Key milestones achieved in the last year include:

- the new allotments have been finished and work is being undertaken with capital delivery, external partners AHR and Casey, and that site opened in May 2023
- Communities colleagues presented work on Dewsbury Riverside as an exemplar at Homes England national community engagement training in July
- In August 2023, planning permission was granted to create a main access road and deliver the first 350 homes
- Joint working with Homes England, has allowed the undertaking of due diligence, infrastructure costing viability work, master planning, a build to rent market assessment and master developer audit reports

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- In November 2023, Cabinet gave approval to enter into legal agreements with Homes England and Network Rail to undertake an appropriate procurement route for master developer
- Strategic highways work is ongoing to understand the cumulative impact on the highways network and legal advice has been commissioned to inform collaboration and equalisation principles and the appointment of a master developer

Bradley Park

The Panel was informed that the next strategic site is at Bradley Park. This is also a local plan housing allocation, mostly in Council ownership, and the overall allocation is 68 hectares. £800,000 of capital funding has been secured, which was approved by Cabinet to help progress the site.

Currently being undertaken is detailed highways work on the feasibility of delivering key junctions and discussions has commenced on strategic property acquisitions to help support that highways work. Procurement documents have been drafted and legal advice has been secured.

Ashbrow / Ash View Extra Care

The Panel was informed that in terms of Ash View, there will be a 50 bed Council Extra Care Scheme within a wider development of 111 mixed tenure units. Of those 111, 98 will be for market sale and 13 will be affordable homes. External works have been completed on the extra care scheme and there was a topping out ceremony in January 2024. Looking forward, it is expected that the Extra Care Scheme will be completed in September 2024. The fit out and staff training is to be delivered from October to January and for tenants to move in, in February 2025.

Soothill

The site at Soothill is another local plan housing allocation where there are a number of pre-development constraints caused by mining history on the site. A grant of £4.5m was secured from Homes England's Accelerated Construction Programme, which includes an obligation to deliver at pace and incorporate modern methods of construction. The contractors Keepmoat Homes will deliver 319 homes in total, 95 of which will be affordable homes.

In the last year, the achievements have been 86 plots under construction, 46 plots occupied, 65 affordable plots secured via section 106 agreement and an extra 30 plots have been transferred to housing associations in communities.

Kenmore Drive – Cleckheaton

An 80-bed Affordable Extra Care and Public Open Space, in partnership with Housing 21, is being delivered and this scheme is being supported by Homes England's affordable homes programme. In the last year there was a difficult

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start on site when the contractor became insolvent, however Housing 21 have successfully lined up a replacement, Robertson Construction.

A multidisciplinary team of council officers has worked with Housing Growth to deliver the project, including Public Rights of Way, Planning, Highways and Legal colleagues. A successful resident engagement event took place in December 2023 and a ground breaking ceremony was held in February 2024. The development is due to complete in March 2026.

Affordable Housing and Brokerage

In terms of what has been delivered with regard to affordable housing and brokerage, the Housing Growth Team is the first point of contact to advise planning colleagues and developers about the different affordable housing needs across Kirklees. Delivery is secured by s106 agreements as part of the planning process and work is also undertaken with registered providers of affordable homes such as housing associations who are assisted with advice and support. Work is also undertaken in partnership on projects such as the registered providers clusters programme, working with housing associations 13.

In June 2023, Cabinet approved a fee to cover legal and administrative costs associated with processing the sale of first homes, starter homes and discount market sale homes.

The Brokerage Programme aims to increase housing delivery on privately owned sites. The team have created a brokerage brochure of stalled development sites across the district and the team have also supported owners of stalled sites to apply for West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Brownfield Housing Fund. This includes Parkwood Mills and Plane Street where 39 affordable housing homes have been delivered by Unity Housing Association, have just started on site.

Fenay Lane – Almondbury

This is another Council housing allocation, and have used WYCA housing revenue funding to undertake due diligence on the site to inform the preferred disposal route. In November 2023, Cabinet gave approval to dispose of the site to a Homes England registered strategic partner via a competitive land sale. Since then, soft market testing has been undertaken and land sale process has begun to secure a development partner. Further WYCA funding has been secured to support the site disposal.

The Panel was provided with information which outlined the overall position on delivery and advised that there are 767 homes either on site or in various stages of the planning process, of which 445 are affordable homes. In addition, a further 1234 are actively being progressed, this is alongside 173 home secured through s106 agreements in 2023. There are 87 homes that the Council is supporting registered providers to deliver.

The Panel was shown a slide which highlighted the positive news coverage that the various developments had garnered in the last year.

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In response to the information presented, the Panel made comments and asked questions including some of the following:

- On the Bradley Park development, which has been talked about for many years, why has this development not made the same progress that has been made as the Dewsbury Riverside development? What is the major delay on that? Is it potentially a capacity issue in the team?
- The information presented mentioned detailed work being undertaken with highways, does this include Cooper Bridge because it would be good to get a progress update on where things are at, and if there are barriers what the Council is able to do to address any barriers.
- On the Ashbrow Scheme, which is positive, is it possible to give a timeline on when this work started to get an indication of the lapse of time.
- With regard to the affordable housing delivery particularly in respect of the use of language on affordable housing need across Kirklees, how is affordable housing need determined and how does it differ across Kirklees. It would also be interesting to know what the different types of affordable housing needs are across Kirklees and how the different areas across Kirklees are defined. This will enable local ward councillors to understand what the affordable housing need is across their ward.
- It is positive that work is being undertaken on the stalled sites, how many stalls sites are currently being dealt with?
- With regard to the Ashbrow site, are there any measures being put in place to combat the increase in anti-social behaviour?
- It is positive that there are a lot of affordable housing in the pipeline, but how many affordable housing is needed within this year for the strategic housing assessment, how many will be achieved, how many is needed for next year and how many are in the pipeline for next year and going forward?

Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Sarah Holmes, Strategic Manager, (Homelessness) provided the Panel with a brief update on the timeline for the refresh of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Panel was directed to the slide which outlined the flightpath that will be followed in refreshing the strategy.

Strategy to be refreshed by July 2024. Current flightpath:-

- Growth & Regen SLT 24th April – draft revised strategy
- Cabinet Portfolio Holder 24th May – draft revised strategy
- Executive Leadership Team – end of May
- Executive Board – mid-June
- Pre-decision Scrutiny – early July (provisional date)
- Cabinet – mid July (provisional date)

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The Panel was informed that it is a statutory duty for every local authority to have one of these strategies and the current strategy runs from 2018-2023 and will be expiring. Therefore, Cabinet will need to sign off the refreshed strategy in the summer 2024. The expectation is to bring the refreshed strategy to the Scrutiny Panel in early July, subject to confirming the dates. The aim is to engage with members during the refresh stage and an invite has been issued to all the political groups for individual sessions at group meetings.

The Panel raised concerns with the timeline for the strategy, as the aim to bring the revised strategy to a scrutiny panel meeting in early July and to Cabinet mid-July does not give sufficient time for any suggested changes made by the Panel to be incorporated. It is likely that the Cabinet papers will need to be published at the same time as it comes to scrutiny. Officers were asked to revisit the timeline to give sufficient time for pre-decision scrutiny and give enough time for any suggested amendments to be made before it goes to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Liz Jefferson and Cllr Graham Turner be thanked for providing an update on Housing Growth and
- b) That Sarah Homles be thanked for providing an update on the timeline for the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- c) That the timeline for the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy being presented to Scrutiny be revisited to give enough time for any suggested amendments to be made before it goes to Cabinet

7 Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel - Health & Safety Compliance in Residential Housing Stock: Detail of Progress And Next Steps

Cllr Moses Crook, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Highways, introduced the item, advising that the report provides an update on progress to date against the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel's health and safety compliance report and recommendations to Cabinet from December 2022. The report has been brought to both the Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board and to Cabinet in September and October 2023, with both agreeing to the officer recommendations going forward. Of the 17 recommendations made by the ad hoc panel:

- two are completed
- six are identified as continuous ongoing issues and are now included as part of best practice
- nine are assessed to be at 50% progress to completion or better

Cllr Crook informed the Panel that the improved recommendation is that, less frequent but regular reporting to the Building Safety Assurance Board is now needed in order to provide ongoing assurance since the change and good practice is now embedded. It is positive to have the alignment between the cross party Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board, officers and Cabinet especially in light of the regulators recent finding. The response needed requires working

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together constructively across the whole Council to drive improvement and to demonstrate and ensure safety of tenants is and remains collectively the highest priority.

Naz Parkar, Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhoods informed the Panel of some of the key achievements since the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel, took its recommendations to Cabinet in December 2022. For the last 12 months there has been focus ensuring that there is a system of safety, and a fire safety system matrix has been put in place, the recommendation from the ad hoc panel has now been completed. As part of that work, focus has been on the management plans for fire safety, asbestos, and lifts, with a review of where things were with gas safety and electricity checks as that is a well-managed risk within the Council.

In March 2024, Cabinet approved the Fire Safety Management Plan, and work is being undertaken to ensure that the process the policy relates to, is robust, particularly in the current context as part of the regulators notice to improve the way fire safety is managed.

There has been good progress ensuring that the processes and the data that falls out of those processes is currently being finalised before being embedded in the teams, ensuring there is training, communication and a good operation of that new management plan. The Asbestos Plan is ready, as is the lift plan which will need to go to Cabinet for approval.

With regard to the asset system implementation, work is currently being undertaken on implementing the housing management system which has been slightly delayed, and Cabinet approved the revised strategy for the delivery of that. That will be the master system for all the homes and neighbourhoods activity and holds unique reference points for all asset data. This needs to be implemented first before scoping out the requirements for the asset management system and that will follow straight after the implementation of the CX, which is the housing management and contact system.

In terms of data validation, the scrutiny panel did identify this as a key area of focus for the service, to ensure there would be integrity and accuracy in the reports put forward. In terms of the recommendations of the panel, the panel was keen to see a separation between the service doing their business reports and there being a second line of defence to check and scrutinise that the sources of data, methodology were appropriate and accurate so that the assurance mechanisms within the Council could have confidence in the reporting.

A great deal of work was undertaken on data validation post scrutiny, working with colleagues in IT and in Data and Intelligence to ensure that the current system that manages assets which is Asprey was collecting the data.

An external validation of the data was commissioned particularly on inspections and re-inspections because this was one of the weaknesses identified when transferring assets back into the Council. Savills came in and undertook a robust audit of how data is managed across each of the big six compliance areas and issued a clean bill

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of health with some anomalies which have now been remedied. There is now confidence in the data around inspections and re-inspections.

Work has commenced with the corporate Data and Insight Team to ensure that there is a robust data governance and management policy, to ensure that everyone is clear about how data is managed within Homes and Neighbourhoods.

The Panel was informed that one of the key issues in progressing some of the actions is capacity and in some pockets of the team capability. The structure and skills gaps have been reviewed and identified where those gaps are, the structure has been agreed and it has gone through the business case and challenge process and recruitment is being undertaken to that part of the structure.

It is important to stress that recruitment has been tried prior to this, however, the market is challenging for Building Safety type resources as everybody in the social housing sector is looking for that type of skill set. That has been intensified by the advent of the Building Safety Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman being much more emboldened now and the regulator of social housing having new powers, particularly over council housing stocks.

That structure is now being recruited to and also not relying on just permanent recruitment because there is a possibility of not been successful, as there has already been several attempts made to the market. Given the scale of work and the regulatory notice and the urgency and immediacy of some of the work, particularly around fire, recruiting interims has started which will give the chance to get the right capability and the right skill set in place.

A great deal of work has been undertaken around resident engagement, particularly around the most vulnerable residents and doing person centred fire risk assessments. There are 17 fire safety champions across the district who report into the Tenant Voice Panel and regular meetings are held to engage on issues.

Engagement broadly has been good, there is a dedicated team around fire safety to engage particularly around the high rise blocks and the 66 Storey blocks. There has been quite a lot of communication going out to councillors not as general communications, but where work is being undertaken in council wards, for example, the high rise or the six Storey blocks to enable them to understand what works will be done and they are then able to support residents in their role as councillors.

In response to the information presented, the Panel made comments and asked questions including some of the following:

- It has been a couple of years since the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel looked into this and it is concerning that a number of the recommendations from the panel are still in progress or at amber and that there are only a few of the recommendations that are marked as complete.
- The information presented suggests that the Building Assurance Board will not be looking at this as often, who then will be assuring, and where is the impetus to

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ensure that the recommendations reach a conclusion as many of the recommendations do fall into what is required for the Council to be compliant.

- Some of the items which have been reported as not complete, could easily be confirmed as complete as marking them as ongoing offers no start or end date and more information is needed. Officers should take this away and think about how the information is being presented because it is presenting a less positive picture than probably the reality is in some instances.

RESOLVED:

That Naz Parkar and Cllr Moses Crook be thanked for providing an update on recommendations from the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel, Health and Safety Compliance in Residential Housing Stock.

8 Complaints Handling in Homes and Neighbourhood

Cllr Crook introduced the item advising the Panel that the report provides an update on the position with respect to complaints handling performance within Homes and Neighbourhoods, as well as measured outcomes in terms of the tenant satisfaction measures. This is to align with the new requirements on complaints handling for social housing landlords and the updated Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, which was published on 8th February 2024, and requires statutory compliance by the 1st April 2024. Ahead of April, a review is needed to identify where the Council remains compliant with the change and work is needed to ensure ongoing compliance. Following implementation, regular self-assessment will be required, and the results will be published annually along with the tenant satisfaction measures.

From 1st April, the Ombudsman, has to monitor performance on complaints handling and compliance and homes and neighbourhoods could be inspected on the consumer standards at any time from then. Feedback from this Scrutiny Panel is very much welcomed to support ongoing improvement in tenant satisfaction.

This report also provides a contemporary update on complaints handling which shows that overall numbers are up on the previous period, however this forms part of a more complex picture with response times continuing to improve. The number of cases referred to the Ombudsman has also increased slightly, however remains low and with no severe maladministration findings. There is an opportunity to interrogate this data in detail to learn from trends and to improve both broader services, and complaints handling.

Michelle Anderson-Dore, Head of Partnerships informed the Panel that there is a new regulatory framework in relation to complaints handling, however, in terms of background from December 2020, all social landlords, including Kirklees Council, were mandated to undertake a self-assessment to measure performance in terms of complaints handling. That was against the original Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code.

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In 2022, also in line with the Complaints Handling code at the time a new complaints handling strategy was published and that was with support from the Housing Quality Network that included a new policy updated the compensation procedures to ensure it was fully in line with the code.

The latest version of the code becomes statutory from April 2024, and work is now ongoing to ensure that all mandatory requirements are met, which will align with the new inspection regimes which will follow from April, led by the Regulator for Social Housing.

The latest consultation that informed the new code was launched last September and concluded in February. Initially, during the consultation there were proposals around a joint code for local authorities which was joining the Housing Ombudsman Code and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Code. The government has moved away from a joint code and the focus is now on alignment where possible with both codes and that will be effective from 2026.

This will be useful for local authorities because it will support the Council's longer term aim to have one corporate approach in how complaints are handled in whatever aspect of local authority business.

As part of the new regulations, an annual self-assessment will be completed, and the first one will be submitted by June 2024, as part of the submission of the tenant satisfaction measures and this will be published and will be in the public domain from autumn. It is a measure that will ensure that there is consistency across the sector in how complaints are reported.

The complaints handling does form part of the new consumer standards, in particular the transparency, influence and accountability consumer standard, which is about the voice of the tenant and the opportunities and accessibility for tenants as customers to be able to tell their landlord how they are doing.

The Panel was referred to section 2.2.3 of the report which provided a summary of complaints handling performance for January to December 2023, and advised that there were 979 formal complaints which was a 100% increase on the previous year. The primary reasons for that is a lot more work is undertaken to make tenants aware of their ability to complain. The Ombudsman has also been doing its part in making tenants aware nationally, about complaints as a way of telling their landlord how they are performing.

The top three reasons for complaints in Kirklees during 2023 were:

- 1) 49% poor information supplied (no clarity on when works will be carried out)
- 2) 27% lack of communication (e.g failure to keep in contact)
- 3) 24% Further work required/repair not worked

Last year, despite a lot of good work, 60% of complaints were upheld, which means that there is still a lot more work that needs to be done to improve tenant satisfaction and drive up standards. Because if complaints have been upheld, that is saying the tenants are right.

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Last year the Housing Ombudsman made three maladministration determinations against the Council. There have been no severe maladministration which are the ones that have to be made public, and where there is a major hazard or risk of significant harm, negligence or incompetence.

Robert Scott, Partnership Strategic Manager, informed the Panel that over the last 18 months, from a complaints handling perspective, a great deal of work has been undertaken in Homes and Neighbourhoods to ensure compliance with the code. There is work that needs to be done to address the number of complaints that have been upheld and to improve services.

One of the key things since the code was introduced, is the need to move away from tackling the volumes of complaints to addressing why complaints are being made. In essence reducing the number of complaints in the first instance, and preventing the escalation to stage one, stage two and even to the Ombudsman and provide more clear timescales of when action is to be taken and prevent timescales drifting.

As the new code is introduced in April there will be a new suite of training for managers, investigating managers and staff to ensure they are aware of the requirements around the code and the policy and also in terms of learning from complaints.

The way information is gathered is also changing, from next week data gathering will be different to help to focus in on the themes of what people are complaining about. There is a need to align the approach with the 500 pinnacle properties as the Council is still the landlord, as any judgement will be against the Council as the landlord.

In response to the information presented, the Panel made comments and asked questions including some of the following:

- Is it possible to get information that shows the trends?
- In respect of the training that will be provided as the new code comes out, it was mentioned that the training would be with managers, what advice and training will be given to the frontline staff who are dealing with the tenants one-on-one.

RESOLVED:

That Michelle Anderson-Dore and Robert Scott be thanked for providing an update on complaints handling in Homes and Neighbourhoods.

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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

Name of Councillor

Item in which you have an interest	Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")	Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]	Brief description of your interest

Signed:

Dated:

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

(a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and

(b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.



Report title: Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029 & Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024

Meeting	Place Scrutiny Panel
Date	12 August 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Moses Crook Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing.
Key Decision	Yes Affects all wards
Eligible for Call In	Yes
<p>Purpose of Report</p> <p>This paper seeks feedback from the Place Scrutiny Panel on the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029, as set out in Appendix 1 and summarised in sections 1 and 2 of this report, which will be considered for approval at Cabinet on the 10th September 2024.</p> <p>This paper also seeks feedback on the refreshed Kirklees Council – Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation (TA) Placement Policy 2024, as set out in Appendix 2 and summarised in sections 1 and 2 of this report which will be considered for approval at Cabinet on 10th September 2024.</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Place Scrutiny Panel is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and comment on the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2024 – 2029 (Appendix 1). • Consider and comment on the draft Kirklees Council – Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, 2024 (Appendix 2). 	
<p>Reasons for Recommendations</p> <p>The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 will enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to formulate and publish such a strategy every five years.</p> <p>The Strategy will also provide a framework for service development, resource prioritisation and partnership support, and thereby enhance outcomes for Kirklees residents who are vulnerable to or facing homelessness.</p>	

Resource Implications:

The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets the strategic framework for the allocation of resources to homelessness and rough sleeping prevention. It also sets out how we will work with partners to make the best use of all available resources.

The Council has statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness, which give rise to direct resource implications. Over recent years, difficulties in sourcing sufficient housing options for homeless households against a backdrop of rising demand has resulted in a significant increase in costs to the Council particularly relating to much greater use of temporary accommodation. Indicative net costs for temporary accommodation in 2023/24 were up to £6.9 million, with hotel spend alone (gross) rising from £3.1 million in 2022 to £7.2 million in 2024 – although not all this spend relates to homelessness temporary accommodation placements.

The costs relating to delivering homelessness services and temporary accommodation are met through a variety of sources. Government grant(s) and partnership funding is utilised, but the majority of costs fall on the General Fund. The delivery of the priorities within the Strategy will therefore be crucial to the Council's aim to contain / reduce the growth in costs which has occurred over recent years.

Whilst the Strategy includes a commitment to looking for further funding to support homelessness prevention and support activities, it does not commit the local authority to provide or expand further funding to external partners. Partners have fed back that a stronger commitment from the local authority would help to ease uncertainty across the sector, and would enhance delivery of some of the priorities identified in the Strategy.

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Engagement has now taken place with all party groups, who have provided feedback on the proposed direction of travel of both the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy.

Public or private: Public Cabinet report

Has GDPR been considered? Yes. Consent documents for case stories have been filed and shared with the Communications Team for holding centrally. The names of all people featured in case stories have been anonymised.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Summary of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029, presented at Appendix 1

The Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 sets out the key issues around homelessness in Kirklees, the challenges we face, and the priorities that we aim to focus on over the next five years.

It is informed by local data and intelligence and aims to address changes at an operating level, including significant increases in the number of households in need of temporary accommodation at a time of on-going budget challenges.

In line with the Council's shared outcomes, the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focuses on achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children, providing high quality, joined-up and accessible services that safeguard children

adults from harm, and working collaboratively to support people to live in suitable and affordable homes in attractive places within a supportive community.

1.2 Summary of the Kirklees Council – Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024, presented at Appendix 2

The Kirklees Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy sets out how homeless households will be prioritised for temporary accommodation, both inside and outside of the district.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The refresh of the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy brings our cross-sector response to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Kirklees district up to date, so that we are able to focus activities where they are needed most.

The 2024 Strategy updates our vision for Kirklees; placing greater emphasis on the importance of partnership working to achieve our shared goals. And in response to feedback during engagement, we have developed four new key themes which better reflect our joint priorities. These are set out in more detail below.

Early identification of any threat of homelessness, targeted interventions and the provision of high-quality advice and assistance ensures people have the best chance of staying in their home.

Working collaboratively with key partners and other stakeholders in the sector – including people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping – a deep dive has taken place into what's working well, achievements since the publication of the last Strategy, areas that need to be addressed, as well as future challenges, opportunities, and threats.

Our vision is for Kirklees to be a place where we work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, where those most in need are able to access the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

We recognise that this vision can only be achieved by working with key partners and other stakeholders in the sector. Collaborative partnership working has also informed the objectives set out in this Strategy and helped to shape its four overarching priorities:

1. Strengthen partnership working to address homelessness and secure the right accommodation.
2. Rapid early help and intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring.
3. Access to long term, settled homes and temporary accommodation, which is safe, decent, accessible and affordable.
4. Tackle rough sleeping, to ensure that it is rare, brief, and not recurring.

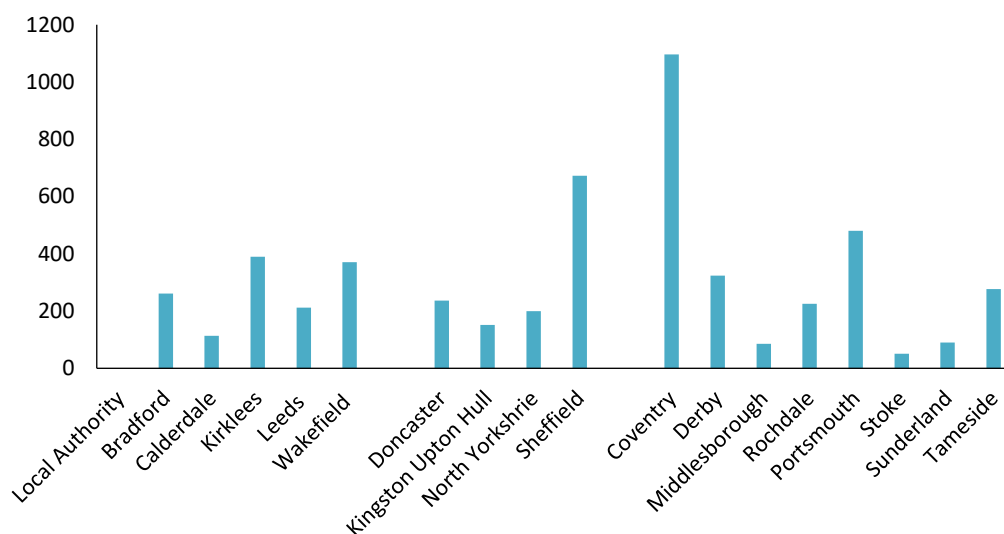
Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people by preventing homelessness and supporting rough sleepers off the street and into appropriate housing with the right level and type of support are key priorities for this Strategy. As is actively working to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation for prolonged periods.

Local authorities have a duty to accommodate homeless families or individuals who are assessed as meeting a 'priority need' criteria until they are able to secure long-term housing. These households are initially offered temporary accommodation, which

intended be a short-term option for people when there is no other accommodation available to them.

Many local authorities across the country are experiencing rises in demand for temporary accommodation. Year on year comparisons show a significant increase in temporary accommodation need across Kirklees over the last five years.

The graph below shows a comparator snapshot of the number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of December 2023, across a range of local authorities. The other local authorities in the graph are a mix of near neighbours, other authorities with similar statistical characteristics (according to LG Inform) and a selection of other Key Cities.



With a growth in the requirement to provide temporary accommodation, and lack of available suitable options to enable households to move on quickly, the length of stay in temporary accommodation in Kirklees is too long for many, and there has been a significant increase in the number of households who have had to be accommodated in bed and breakfast hotels. The average length of time a household spends in all forms of temporary accommodation can be up to 24 months, dependant on the household circumstances – this is both inappropriate for the household and expensive for the public purse.

All four of the priorities within this Strategy will directly or indirectly explore ways to reduce temporary accommodation usage whilst still ensuring that statutory duties are met. The Strategy sets out how we will aim to encourage partners to use a strengths-based approach with residents to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place; encourage those who find themselves in that predicament to present as early as possible rather than during immediate crisis and work to increase the accommodation options available to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

There is a need to work with partners including Registered Providers to increase the range and suitability of affordable social and private rented sector housing - exploring new ways to diversify accommodation and support. Accessing greater numbers of tenancies through Registered Providers and private landlords will bring about significant benefits for homeless households through diverting from or shortening stays in temporary accommodation.

Additional objectives have also been built into the strategy which focus specifically on Kirklees residents who have the greatest housing need to ensure we are prioritising those at their most vulnerable but also making best use of resources. This includes maintaining and expanding, where possible, dedicated pathways and/or housing priority for care leavers (in support of our corporate parenting duties), supporting ex-offenders who are homeless at the point of leaving prison, households who have been subject to domestic abuse, those serving or who are veterans of our armed forces and those at risk of rough sleeping.

The overall success of the Strategy will be measurable through a positive direction of travel in these areas:-

- More positive homeless prevention outcomes
- Greater use of private rented sector accommodation
- Less reliance on bed and breakfast for temporary accommodation
- Reduced length of stay in all types of temporary accommodation; and
- Reduction in rough sleeping

This Strategy refresh has been undertaken during a period of unprecedented demand for homelessness support, and against a backdrop of uncertainty about future national policy, funding, and economic conditions, all of which impact upon delivery of the strategy's priorities. The priorities and actions linked to the Strategy may therefore require more comprehensive review in a timeframe that is earlier than the full five years.

2.2 Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024

This document sets out Kirklees Council's Policy for how homeless households will be prioritised for temporary accommodation, both inside and outside of the district.

The policy covers both interim placements made under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996, while enquiries are made into a customer's homeless application and longer-term temporary accommodation placements for customers owed the main housing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Council prioritises customers who have the greatest need to be in or close to a particular location or need to move away from a particular location for safety reasons. Consideration will be given to the size of the household and the type of temporary accommodation available at the time.

The Policy sets out key principles, factors to be considered when making placements, along with how the Policy will be monitored and reviewed. The Policy confirms the Council's commitment to offering temporary accommodation within the Kirklees district, wherever possible, but acknowledges this is likely to depend on the availability of accommodation within Kirklees. Sourcing temporary accommodation within Kirklees rather than out of district is preferable both in terms of securing best value and also providing better customer outcomes.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

Working with people, partners and place

The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 29 will be centred on working with people affected by homelessness, enabling and empowering them to develop the skills, resilience and improvements in their health and wellbeing that they need to move on to a more settled, happy and stable situation.

Our priorities will primarily focus on those who are in the greatest housing need and will ensure a strengths-based approach is taken to work with people to achieve outcomes.

A collaborative approach has been taken in developing the Strategy. This means that the strategy is informed by a range of partners' perspectives and contributions. All of the objectives within the Strategy include actions which partners commit to developing and delivering, and the action planning and monitoring of the Strategy over the next five years will be undertaken through partnership collaboration.

The strategy recognises that Kirklees is a diverse community and that in addressing issues of homelessness and rough sleeping, a Place Based approach is needed. This includes consideration of people's local support networks, and where and how they access services.

The Strategy will highlight work taking place to ensure compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and help to reduce energy bills, which contributes to ensuring people can remain living in their homes sustainably.

Improving outcomes for children

For young people at risk of homelessness, there is a long-standing partnership approach between Housing and Children's Services which ensures that no young people are unduly at risk as a result of losing their home. Joint protocols and pathways have been developed and we have seen continued success with 16 -17-year-olds presenting as homeless, with most returning home safely.

The Strategy also highlights the significance of early help and intervention, and tailored support which is key in addressing the housing needs of care leavers. The joint housing pathway in place for Kirklees care leavers has been developed to support the Council's corporate parenting duties.

The Strategy highlights the positive work taking place with Children's Services, and support being provided to our young people to prevent them from becoming homeless. In addition, the strategy includes objectives to improve outcomes for homeless households with children, in relation to securing more appropriate temporary and move-on housing options.

3.2 Financial Implications

The demand pressures arising from homelessness and in particular use of temporary accommodation are significant.

Enhancing homelessness prevention options, securing more sustainable accommodation outcomes for residents, along with a reduction in B&B usage will have a direct positive impact on the Council's financial position.

Current spend on homelessness, in particular temporary accommodation, is inefficient and perpetuates a lower standard of service provision below what we expect.

The objectives within this Strategy aim to enhance homeless prevention, secure more sustainable and suitable housing outcomes, and thereby slow down further growth in temporary accommodation use and reduce the amount of time households need to stay in temporary accommodation.

3.3 Legal Implications

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their area and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years.

The Council's current Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy runs 2018 – 2023: [Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2023](#) and was approved by Full Council on 17 July 2019.

A Supreme Court judgement in 2015 (Nzolameso Vs Westminster City Council) introduced a requirement that all Local Authorities should have a policy for allocating temporary accommodation (TA) to homeless households. One of the key drivers for this requirement is for LAs to minimise making TA placements 'out of borough' as far as practicable. Every LA's TA Placement Policy should be 'approved by democratically accountable members of the Council' and be made 'publicly available'.

Kirklees previously included its TA Placement Policy embedded within the Housing Allocations Policy, however during the recent refresh of the Allocations Policy it was decided to instead treat a refreshed TA Placement Policy as a standalone document, as it does not relate to the allocation of long-term social housing. An internal review of the TA Placement Policy has therefore been undertaken to reflect the current pressures on TA and current practice, and the draft refreshed policy is attached.

3.8 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

An IIA has been undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy. The case I.D is IIA-602315164.

The key challenges outlined in the Strategy identify the main risks we face in relation to homelessness pressures, in particular rough sleeping, use of temporary accommodation and the landscape for housing demand and support services. These risks are incorporated in and reviewed regularly by the Housing Services risk register. In light of the severity and likelihood of some of these risks, they are also subject to review at Corporate Risk Panel. The development of the Strategy is considered to be one of the mitigants for these risks, as the Strategy is designed to be a long-term framework for prioritising objectives and actions which in turn will address some of the homelessness pressures once implemented effectively.

In terms of the Armed Forces Covenant, this Strategy reflects the Council's commitment in relation to additional priority within the Housing Allocations Policy for homeless armed forces personnel/veterans. The priorities within the Strategy, particularly early help and prevention, access to long term homes and tackling rough sleeping will ensure appropriate homelessness advice and support is available.

4. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with both Political and Officer Groups as well as the Portfolio Holder for Housing on both the Policy and the Strategy.

During engagement it was suggested that greater emphasis be placed on how the Strategy will address increasing demand for temporary accommodation, by securing more sustainable accommodation outcomes for residents, along with a reduction in B&B usage - enhancing our tenancy relations function, for example, to support this aim.

A request was also made for more information on the sources of funding to help tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, including grant funding and cost pressures on the general fund, and for more detailed evidence from the data review to be included in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Comments and feedback have been used to help further develop and enhance both documents and are also reflected in the priorities and objectives set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

5. Engagement

We have worked collaboratively across the sector to develop the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029; consulting extensively with partners, who have been instrumental in the process of developing the priorities and objectives in this Strategy and who will play a crucial role in its delivery.

In preparing this strategy and developing the priorities and objectives, we have engaged with a number of key stakeholders, including:

- Kirklees Homelessness Forum (KHF).
- Registered Providers.
- People with lived experience of homelessness.
- Kirklees Health Inclusion Group (KHIG).
- Colleagues from across the Council, including Homes and Neighbourhoods, Childrens and Adult Services.
- DLUHC specialist homelessness advisor.

6. Options

6.1 Options Considered

The Place Scrutiny Panel is asked to provide comments and feedback on the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2024 – 2029 and the Kirklees Council – Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024 which will be considered for approval at Cabinet on 10th September 2024.

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on all local housing authorities to formulate, agree and publish a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy at least every five years.

The Council's current [Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) was approved by Full Council in July 2019 and expires this year.

7 Next steps and timelines

It is proposed that approval is sought for the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Temporary Accommodation Policy at Cabinet, on 10th September 2024.

It is also proposed that the priorities set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be delivered through an action plan to be developed once the strategy is approved. The action plan will then be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that actions remain relevant and to capture any emerging issues, as well as policy and legislative change.

Action plan monitoring will include regular review of key performance indicators associated with homelessness and rough sleeping.

8 Contact officer

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9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

The current Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Council on 19th July 2019: [Item 10 1.pdf \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

10 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029
- Appendix 2 – Draft Kirklees Council – Housing Solutions Service Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024

11 Service Director responsible

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Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

A partnership approach

2024 - 2029

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this refresh of the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out how, working collaboratively with our partners, we will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping across the Kirklees district.

The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy supports both the shared outcomes for Kirklees, set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, as well as the delivery of priorities in our key partnership strategies, including the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Through the implementation of the Strategy we hope to increase prevention of homelessness, reduce rough sleeping and ensure that our residents have access to high quality, joined-up services and help, in the right place, at the right time.

It is well documented that homelessness services across the country are under pressure. A lack of affordable private rented properties, in addition to an acute shortage of social housing and a squeeze on household budgets as a result of rising prices, is leaving some households vulnerable to or facing homelessness.

In Kirklees we are seeing an increase, year on year, in the numbers of households at the point of crisis before approaching the Council for help with rehousing, resulting in a significant rise in temporary accommodation demand – something we must address as a priority action.

Despite the challenges and pressures the sector faces, we have seen a number of notable achievements over recent years which are acknowledged in this Strategy.

We are committed to driving forward, alongside partner organisations, the delivery of services that have a real impact on the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents.

Cllr Moses Crook, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing

Introduction

The Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024 – 2029 sets out the key issues around homelessness in Kirklees, the challenges we face and the priorities that we aim to focus on over the next five years. In Kirklees, we recognise that early identification of

any threat of homelessness, targeted interventions and the provision of high-quality advice and assistance ensures people have the best chance of staying in their home.

We also recognise that our vision for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping can only be achieved by working with key partners and other stakeholders in the sector – including the Kirklees Homelessness Forum, health colleagues and Registered Providers operating across the area.

Our vision is for Kirklees to be a place where we work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, where those most in need are able to access the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

This refresh of the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy brings our cross-sector response to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Kirklees district up to date, so that we are able to focus activities where they are needed most.

Collaborative partnership working has informed the refresh of this Strategy and helped to shape its four overarching priorities:

- Strengthen partnership working to address homelessness and secure the right accommodation
- Rapid early help and intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring
- Access to long term, settled homes and temporary accommodation, which is safe, decent, accessible, and affordable
- Tackle rough sleeping to ensure it is rare, brief and not recurring

The Strategy sets out some of the key achievements that have contributed to preventing homelessness, securing accommodation, providing support and resources, and minimising the risk of rough sleeping across our district since the last Strategy was published in July 2019.

And it highlights the increasing challenges and pressures we face in supporting some of our most vulnerable residents.

To support this Strategy refresh, and in line with government guidance, a review of homelessness and rough sleeping across the Kirklees district has taken place. In addition, a deep dive has taken place into what's working well, areas that need to be addressed, as well as future opportunities and threats.

The views of service users have also been central to shaping our priorities and objectives. Their lived experiences can be found in the case studies that run throughout this strategy.

Our shared approach aims to build on successful collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sectors, as well as the private rented sector.

Moving forward, this Strategy will support decision-making and the monitoring and delivery of priorities. It will help us to draw in resources behind the priorities and provide assurance that we are acting on homelessness and rough sleeping; maximising homelessness prevention and enabling access to appropriate advice and support when homelessness and rough sleeping does arise.

The priorities set out in this Strategy will be delivered through an action plan which will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that actions remain relevant and to capture any emerging issues, as well as policy and legislative change.

This Strategy refresh has been undertaken during a period of unprecedented demand for homelessness support, and against a backdrop of uncertainty about future national policy, funding, and economic conditions, all of which impact upon delivery of the strategy's priorities. The priorities and actions linked to the Strategy may therefore require more comprehensive review in a timeframe that is earlier than the full five years.

Background

There are a number of different definitions of the term 'homelessness'. Whilst it is often a term identified with people who are sleeping rough on the streets, this group of people only account for a very small proportion of all homeless households.

In this Strategy, the term 'homelessness' includes those who are staying temporarily with friends or family, sofa-surfing, staying in a hostel, squatting or at risk of violence in their home. It also includes those who are living in such unsuitable conditions it is unreasonable to occupy or those who have no legal right to occupy where they are living.

Homelessness affects many households, including those who have accommodation but are unable to continue to live there due to their individual circumstances, such as financial hardship, relationship breakdown or legally compliant repossession by a landlord.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Kirklees

Overview of current homelessness challenges

Housing insecurity and levels of homelessness are increasing right across the country, with Kirklees being no exception. This is compounded by the lack of availability of social housing as well as the availability and affordability of private rented sector accommodation.

- Local authorities and partners face increasing demand with fewer housing options available to help people in to. As of January 2024, there were over 18,400 households on the Housing Register across the Kirklees District (compared with 11,000 in 2018). The number of lettings per year by the Council, and through nominations to housing associations, is approximately 1,800.
- More people are presenting as homeless at the point of crisis, limiting the ability to explore preventative options.
- Many of those who present as homeless or in housing need have a range of complex vulnerabilities, which compound the difficulties faced in securing appropriate accommodation for them and also the specialist support they require.

- Year on year comparisons show a significant increase in temporary accommodation need across Kirklees. The rising demand for temporary accommodation has meant that there is not enough self-contained temporary accommodation available to meet that demand, leading to greater use of bed and breakfast hotels for temporary accommodation placements, which are unsuitable for many households.
- In Kirklees, we have seen more families with children presenting as homeless (or at risk of) and due to the reduction in longer-term housing options, this results in additional challenges in terms of the suitability of temporary accommodation. The number of families with children who are temporarily placed in Bed & Breakfast hotels is too high.
- The cost of temporary accommodation is placing significant financial pressures on the Council's budget.
- Welfare reform and cost of living increases have further impacted the ability of households on low incomes to find suitable, affordable accommodation.
- Right to Buy has exacerbated the challenges the Council faces, since the receipts are not sufficient to acquire or build new stock and hence the reduction in property numbers is not matched by the number the Council can afford to replace.
- Whilst the Government's decision to return Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (the maximum amounts of housing support claimants of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit can usually get for private rented homes of different sizes) to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April 2024 is welcome, disparities between median rent prices and LHA rates in the district has made private renting difficult and unaffordable for many low income households receiving benefits.
- The table below shows rental market data and demonstrates the disparity between market rents and LHA levels in the Kirklees district.

	Median monthly rental prices, October 2022 to September 2023 (£pcm)	Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate 2023/24 (£pcm)	LHA Shortfall (£pcm)
'Room'	370	245.5	124.50
1 Bed	495	369.5	125.50
2 Bed	595	450	145
3 Bed	725	550	175
4 Bed	995	705	290

- Rough sleeping in Kirklees is a big challenge. In line with national trends, the number of rough sleepers has increased over the last 18 months, despite the efforts of the dedicated rough sleeping team and partners. Most rough sleepers in Kirklees are males over age 25, and from the UK or Eastern Europe.

- As an asylum dispersal area, there will always be a number of former asylum seekers in Kirklees who find themselves homeless. Homeless presentations from refugees who receive positive asylum decisions in Kirklees have increased in line with Government decisions on asylum dispersal processing policies.
- There is significant uncertainty over future funding and viability for a range of public and third sector services which have a role to play in supporting homeless prevention and meeting people's housing and support needs. This presents a significant challenge to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping effectively.
- Moving into temporary accommodation can be extremely disruptive and unsettling for individuals and families. Without the right support, tenancies for those who were homeless can break down easily. Wraparound support is key to addressing this but the ability to provide this is diminishing.
- The need for essential repair works at key sites makes it necessary to move households out of their properties on a temporary or permanent basis - placing additional pressure on resources.

Overview of key homelessness and rough sleeping data

To support this refresh of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, a review of homelessness and rough sleeping across the Kirklees district has taken place, including:

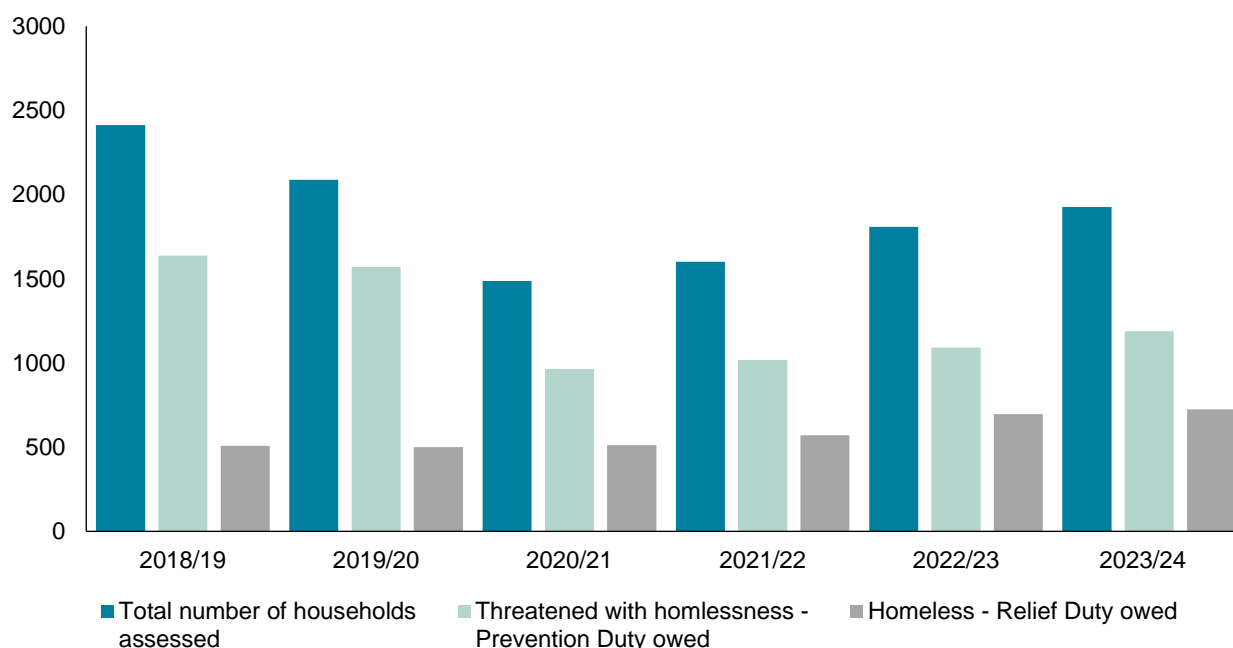
- Current homelessness trends
- Activities for preventing homelessness
- Activities for securing accommodation
- Activities for providing support
- Resources available to prevent and tackle homelessness

The top three reasons why households in Kirklees find themselves homeless are because they are asked to leave by family or friends, or after being subjected to domestic abuse, or because their private rented tenancy has ended. These top three reasons are common to most local authorities across the country.

Between April 2018 and September 2023, 10,286 homelessness assessments were undertaken by Kirklees Housing Solutions Service, triggered by people presenting to the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The number of assessments peaked in 2018/19, at 2,414 that year and then reduced during the years affected by the COVID pandemic. Figures started to increase in 2022/23, however, and in 2023/24 the number of homeless assessments was 1,926.

In 2022/23, the Council dealt with significantly more households at the 'relief' stage of homelessness (39%) i.e. when the household was already homeless, compared to 2018/19 when only 24% were at the relief stage. This indicates there has been a reduction in recent years in the ability to secure homeless prevention options.

Homelessness Assessments



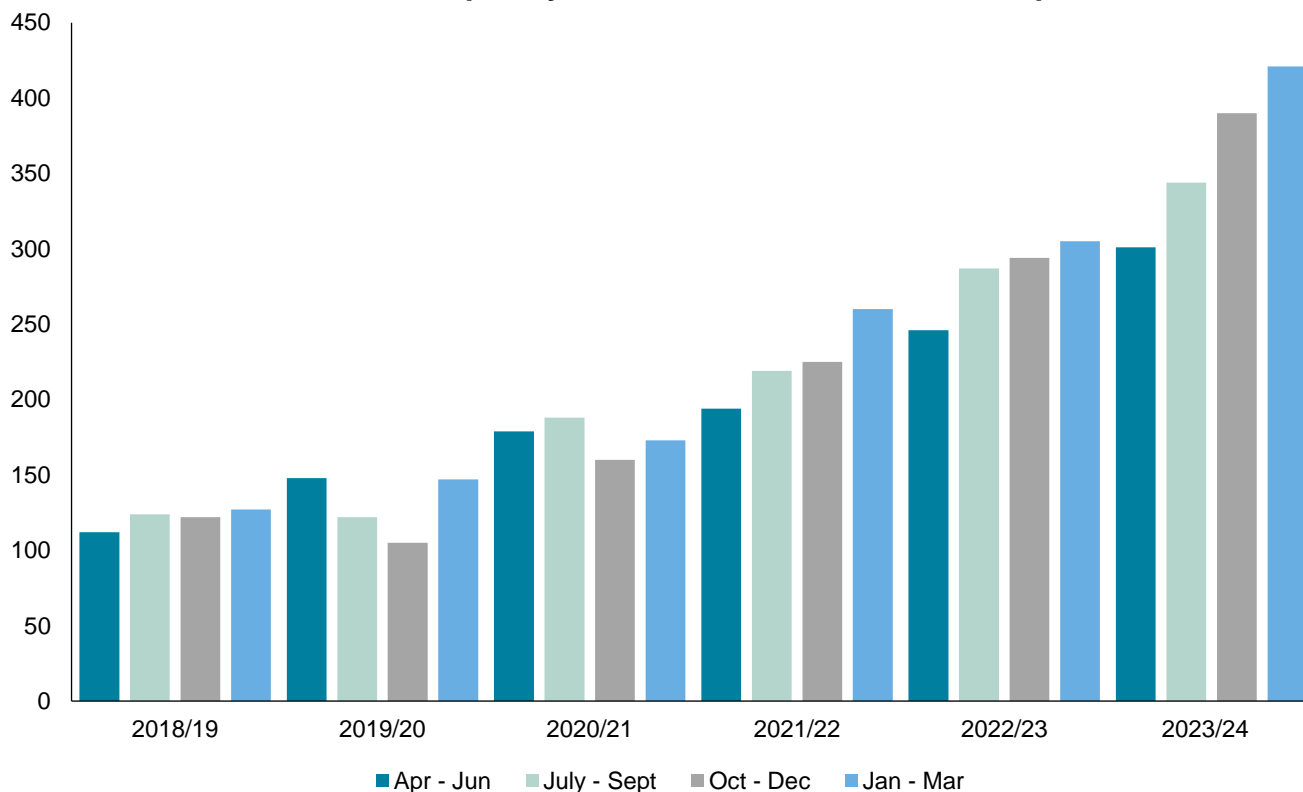
In recent years, when households have had their homelessness prevented, the majority of positive housing outcomes have been through securing a social rented tenancy. However, the number of those who have secured either a social rented tenancy or a private rented tenancy has reduced each year, which indicates growing pressures on availability of either social or private rented affordable housing options.

Positive accommodation outcomes for prevention cases	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Social rented sector	573	672	421	394	399
Private rented sector	184	257	159	127	153
Staying with family	132	115	41	27	47
Staying with friends	45	78	41	20	21
Owner-occupier	8	3	1	4	5
Other	20	6	7	6	18
Not known	6	10	4	5	7
Total	968	1141	674	583	650

The number of homeless households who have needed to be placed into temporary accommodation in Kirklees has risen very significantly since 2018/19, by at least 168%. This steep rise is indicative of the difficulties faced in sourcing affordable housing and is in line with national trends. Temporary accommodation placements rose from around 125 in 2018/19

(snapshot figures at the end of each quarter) to around 300 at the end of 2022/23. Figures have risen again during 2023/24, to over 400 at the end of each quarter.

Households in temporary accomodation at end of each quarter

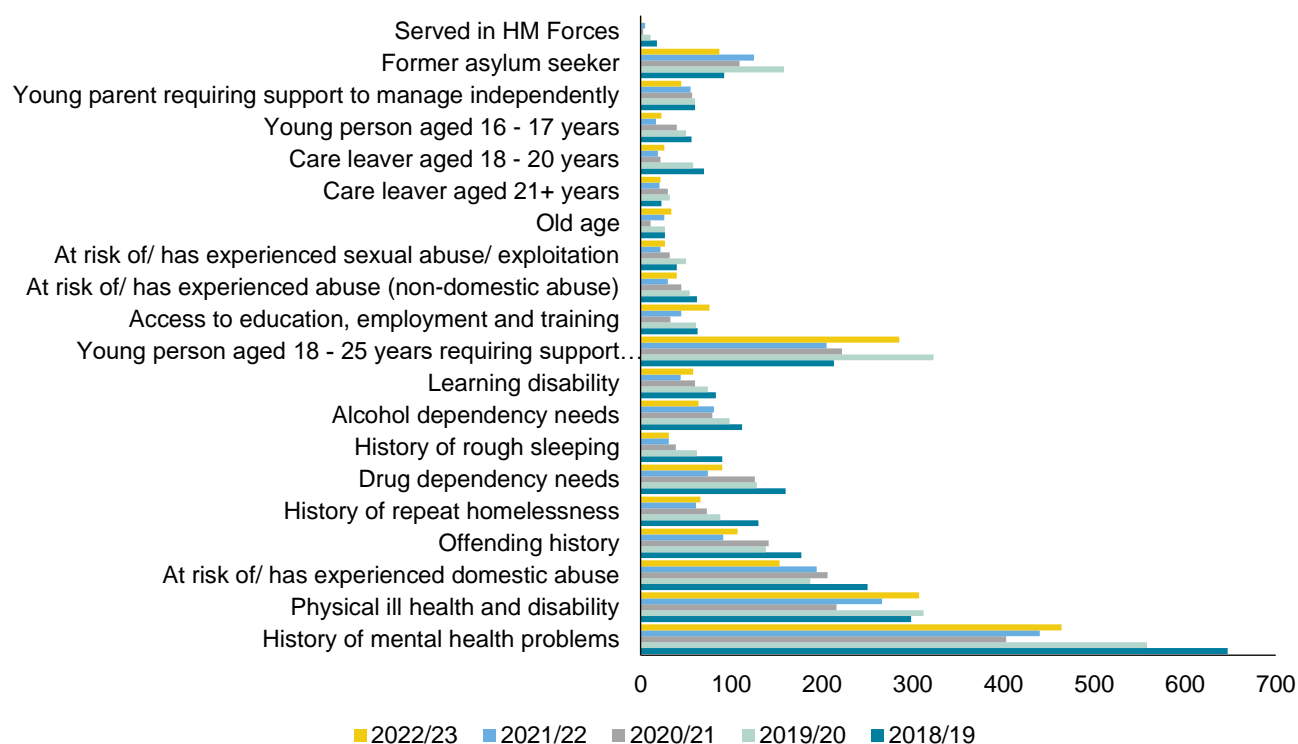


In Kirklees, over 30% of homeless households fall into the 25 – 34 age profile. The ethnicity profile of homeless households largely mirrors the overall profile of the Kirklees district. However Black African, Caribbean, and Black British residents account for 4.7% of homeless households, compared to just 2.3% of the overall population in Kirklees, indicating this is an at-risk group.

The review confirmed that many of Kirklees’ homeless households have vulnerabilities which give rise to support needs.

In 2022/23, 77% of homeless households had at least one identified support need, with the most common support need being mental health. Other prevalent support needs include physical ill health and disability, young people aged 18 - 24 requiring support to manage independently, domestic abuse, drug or alcohol dependency and offending history.

Support needs



Rough sleeping numbers across the Kirklees district peaked at 16 in 2019/20, in the one-night snapshot count which is reported annually to Government. Since then, numbers fell to 4 in 2021/22, then 3 in 2022/23. However, in more recent months figures have started to increase, with the last snapshot figure from November 2023 being 14, spread across the district.

Legal Context

All local authorities have a number of statutory duties in relation to homelessness and housing allocations. These duties are set out in legislation which includes the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

In addition, a number of prescribed public sector partners also have duties in relation to referring homelessness households to local authorities, as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

What are our duties toward homeless people?

The Council has a duty to provide information and advice about homelessness and a duty to investigate where we have reason to believe that someone is, or is threatened, with homelessness.

- Prevention duty - requires that local authorities take reasonable steps to try and prevent homelessness from occurring for anyone at risk or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.
- Relief duty - where a household is homeless and eligible, the Local Authority must work with them to relieve their homelessness (assist in securing suitable alternative accommodation) within 56 days.
- Interim duty to accommodate - where the applicant is homeless, eligible and in priority need, the Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation.
- Main housing duty – following the relief duty if someone is still homeless, eligible, has a priority need and is not intentionally homeless the Council has a duty to find them suitable accommodation.

Local Authorities can discharge the main duty through an offer of accommodation with the Council, or a Registered Provider, or with an offer of a private rented tenancy.

Further guidance which local authorities should adhere to in relation to homelessness is contained within the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. Not all homeless households will be owed the same duties in terms of the provision of emergency housing or an offer of long-term housing – a more detailed explanation of the different duties which are owed can be found here: [Homeless duty and eligibility criteria | Kirklees Council](#).

Local Picture

What we've achieved since the publication of the last Strategy

In addition to maintaining a productive homelessness service which fulfils its statutory duties, the Council and its partners continued to work collaboratively to enhance existing provision, deliver new initiatives, and strengthen positive working relationships.

At the time of the last strategy, several initiatives were in the development stages or newly created and have since become established and are achieving positive outcomes.

Housing allocations and housing options

A recent refresh of the Housing Allocations Policy determined how best to ensure that households with the greatest housing needs can access social housing, including those who are threatened with or experiencing homelessness. The refreshed policy is deemed good practice by sector-recognised experts and includes additional priority for care leavers, those in the armed forces/veterans and people fleeing domestic abuse. An open housing register has been retained alongside the refreshed policy to allow anyone wishing to join the register to be able to do so albeit the council's ability to rehouse all applicants is severely limited by the availability of suitable affordable housing options.

Following a need to further focus on accommodation options in the private rented sector, the Private Rented Partnership Team, established in 2022, is working with landlords to increase the

provision of private rented good quality, affordable accommodation available for long term tenancies for homeless households - assisting 85 households into private rented accommodation in its first two years to date.

An innovative pilot to use empty student accommodation increased the number of temporary accommodation units available to us, particularly self-contained accommodation for families. A considered approach has also been taken to using additional Council stock as temporary accommodation units, including re-profiling the number of family-sized temporary units available.

Currently we utilise 208 Council-owned units as temporary accommodation along with an additional 14 former student houses that we lease separately.

The Temporary Accommodation team (Housing Solutions Service) has access to 90 one-bed units, 83 two-bed units, 20 three-beds and 13 bedsits. At the student accommodation site being leased there are an additional 12 six-bed units and 2 larger properties that are used as Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). A further 34 larger self-contained apartments are also utilised on a nightly paid basis.

The additional leasing initiatives have helped minimise costly/unsuitable bed and breakfast placements.

The Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) team was established, via dedicated government funding. The team is working to ensure that supported housing in Kirklees is of a good quality, is meeting the needs of residents, and that Value for Money can be evidenced and monitored. The team is also working with other SHIP teams in West Yorkshire to ensure a consistent approach is applied for providers.

Preventative work continues operationally to ensure people can remain living independently and with as little intervention from homelessness pathways as possible. This includes our ongoing work around home adaptations including facilitating access to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) as well as working with private sector landlords to ensure they comply with any new legislation e.g. Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards to improve homes for tenants to support reductions in energy bills.

We are also focussing our efforts, across services, on tenancy sustainment - looking at the most effective ways to support households to remain and thrive in their tenancy once they secure a home, to ensure that homelessness does not arise. Joint work with early support teams and anti-social behaviour teams for example, is helping to prevent tenancy breakdowns, and a range of different partners undertake bespoke tenancy sustainment actions including Housing Solutions, Homes and Neighbourhoods, other Registered Providers (Housing Associations) Children's Services and housing support agencies.

People sleeping rough

The Council's Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Team is now well established. The team is working alongside homelessness partners and street outreach groups throughout the year to assist those at risk of sleeping rough. This includes facilitating access to emergency accommodation and support with addressing poor health and wellbeing, substance misuse and tenancy sustainment. The team includes a dedicated substance misuse worker and an Adult Social Worker, ensuring that complex vulnerabilities can be identified and supported in a holistic

way. A trauma-informed and personalised approach is taken to ensure the team build trust with the individual for the best possible outcomes.

Our strong voluntary sector continues to play an invaluable role in the provision of immediate relief to assist those in need, including via street outreach.

Excerpt from Patrick's Story

Patrick was asleep on one of the benches in St Peter's Gardens. He was in his 50s. He was invited to the Mission to get warm and to have some food. Patrick accepted happily and enjoyed a free breakfast in the Mission Café.

One of the Mission's advice officers assessed that the best course of action would be for Patrick to meet with one of the Council's RSI team which he did later that morning in a private room at the Mission. The RSI officer established that Patrick was homeless and sleeping rough after losing his job which came with accommodation included. The RSI team managed to find Patrick temporary accommodation in a Bed and Breakfast whilst he started making a claim for benefits and the Council established his eligibility for Housing within the Kirklees area.

Your voice matters so we will...continue to ensure Voluntary and Community Sector agencies remain key partners and continue to undertake and promote the significant value of outreach work.

Three properties have been acquired under the Government-funded Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and provide dedicated temporary accommodation for those sleeping rough (or at risk of) with additional wraparound support provided alongside by the RSI Team. The properties give individuals a stable foundation to help them become longer-term tenancy ready.

The Council successfully re-tendered the supported housing contract for the purpose-built homeless hostel in Huddersfield, ensuring a consistent and dedicated approach to hostel placements for single homeless people, including rough sleepers.

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) continues to be used appropriately and flexibly, ensuring that everyone who is given a bed through SWEP receives a visit by a housing officer the next morning to talk through options and discuss how they can get longer term help.

Vulnerable cohorts – specialist support

For young people at risk of homelessness, there is a long-standing partnership approach between Housing and Children's Services which ensures that no young people are unduly at risk as a result of losing their home. New joint protocols and pathways have been developed and we have seen continued success with 16 -17-year-olds presenting as homeless, with most returning home safely. Whilst a significant focus is on care leavers and those aged 16-17 where the Council has a statutory duty, the pathways incorporate support for all young people aged 16 to 24. Priority activities have been undertaken to maintain and expand appropriate support for young homeless people.

The Kirklees Welcomes Partnership is now well established – ensuring support is available at any stage of a household’s resettlement or migration journey. Within this partnership, the Refugee Resettlement Team in Housing Services, formed in 2022, works with and supports households on government-established refugee resettlement schemes as well as those who have received a positive decision to remain. Close links are in place with health, third sector and community language partners to best support these cohorts.

The support programmes for the main refugee schemes have achieved very positive rehousing and homeless prevention outcomes, particularly with Ukraine and Afghan cohorts. Also, we have maximised the funding opportunities under Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) made available for these groups.

Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership (KBOP) - developed in 2019 – is a collaborative partnership aiming to prevent homelessness and deliver better outcomes through working to empower people so they can overcome barriers to finding or sustaining suitable accommodation. The KBOP model of delivering floating support services has reached more than 6000 people over the last five years, helping to prevent homelessness and achieve a range of wider outcomes including better health, employment, and better resilience for many clients.

Excerpt from Darren’s Story

“My situation was different. I was one of the Windrush generation and I became redundant after 11 years in a job to find I had no status and no access to benefits, so I lost everything. I wasn’t supported by anybody until somebody at the social justice team at the benefits office put me in touch with citizens advice who contacted the home office. I can’t remember when I was referred into KBOP, but it was luck more than anything coherent that saved me. The lady at the job centre and my KBOP worker, Katie, have been amazing.”

Your voice matters so we will...continue to promote the importance of Duty to Refer and ensure support is provided in a person-centred way.

We have worked with relevant partners to establish a clear protocol for prison-leavers who are threatened with homelessness when their sentences are ending. There is now a clear route to undertaking homeless assessments and providing housing advice for prison leavers, at the earliest opportunity. We are supporting ex-offenders at risk of rough sleeping into private rented accommodation to reduce reoffending and homelessness, through the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme.

A partnership approach is also taken to tackling homelessness as a result of domestic abuse. Housing services play a key role in multi-agency responses to domestic abuse presentations, with appropriate emergency housing provided where necessary, either in specialist refuges or in other forms of temporary accommodation. One of the four key priorities in the [Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy](#) is supporting victims to maintain or access safe and stable housing, with housing and homelessness sector partners playing a key role in delivering against this priority.

Other homeless prevention support

The Council and its partners offer a range of cost-of-living support, including financial support and debt and budgeting advice, as well as support with the cost of food and help to keep homes warm and reduce energy bills.

There are also many resources available for those experiencing mental health problems or who need urgent help [Mental health support | Kirklees Council](#).

There are a number of charities and organisations operating across the district that help the homeless and those experiencing poverty. Some of the services provided by charities and third sector organisations include:

- cheap or free food
- laundry room
- washing facilities
- activities
- advice on finding accommodation and benefits
- access to medical treatment

The Council's [Local Welfare Provision team](#) run a non-cash scheme, which provides support like food parcels, furniture and debt advice.

The Pathways to Employment service co-ordinates training, education and job opportunities for people who have been homeless. They also run a range of courses for people to improve their skills.

Kirklees Employment and Skills are committed to developing life and work skills for all, enabling better employment opportunities for those who live in Kirklees. They are available to support residents in breaking down any barriers that they may face when moving into employment, progressing within their career, and developing skills.

The Employment Kirklees programme offers information and guidance for those looking to improve their job status, and helps by sourcing better work opportunities, and ensuring people have the skills needed to develop and thrive.

Strategic Vision and Priorities

Our vision is for Kirklees to be a place where we work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, where those most in need are able to access the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

We have identified four strategic priorities that will support us in driving our Strategy and achieving our vision:

- Strengthen partnership working to address homelessness and secure the right accommodation.
- Rapid early help and intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring.

- Access to long term homes and temporary accommodation which is safe, decent, accessible and affordable.
- Tackle rough sleeping to ensure it is rare, brief and not recurring.

In line with the Council's shared outcomes, set out in the Council Plan, this Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focuses on achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children, providing high quality, joined-up and accessible services that safeguard children and adults from harm, and working collaboratively to support people to live in suitable and affordable homes in attractive places within a supportive community.

Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people by preventing homelessness and supporting those who are homeless including rough sleepers off the street and into appropriate housing with the right level and type of support are key priorities in the overall strategy for housing in Kirklees. Delivery of the Kirklees Housing Strategy is one of the keys to preventing homelessness, by enabling housing growth, particularly of affordable housing, in order to meet population growth and demand across the district.

This Strategy also aligns with, and supports the delivery of our key partnership strategies, including the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Plan; by setting out how we will work with partners to enable access to the right care and support and make the best use of all available resources.

Priority 1: Strengthen partnership working to address homelessness and secure the right accommodation:

The needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness often stretch across different services, including housing, mental health and children's services, in addition to the voluntary and charity sectors.

The way we work collaboratively across services and agencies is fundamental in helping to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

Excerpt from Ebrahim's Story

"I am very grateful to have been placed in temporary accommodation following being in a war-torn country and experiencing being tortured. I had lost my family, lost my dream and lost my hopes! At times when I was sleeping rough, I felt that my life was no better than a dog's – at least a dog had a home...I hope that I shall now begin to feel human again and be able to give something back to others who need help as I once did."

Your voice matters so we will...promote the importance of having a proactive partnership approach to ensure timely assessments and support/ advice for people leaving asylum seeker accommodation.

Key to effective partnership working is communication, as well as the sharing of information and best practice, in order to learn from others working across the sector.

We acknowledge the vital role that existing relationships and ways of working play in addressing homelessness and securing accommodation for households across the Kirklees district.

However, during engagement, partners highlighted the need to go further, recognising that more can be done to improve and build on joint working practices.

Feedback from Mohammed and Paolo's Stories

Both Mohammed and Paolo received a positive decision to remain in the UK following their asylum seeker claim being assessed. They have fed back separately that increased communications would be useful between the Home Office commissioned accommodation provider and the Council including to help receive speedier advice before the accommodation notice expires. This was not only in relation to finding alternative accommodation but also in relation to being able to open a bank account to support their registration for Universal Credit.

Your voice matters so we will...continue to maintain and aim to improve all communications between partner agencies.

We will therefore take steps to enhance the way we work together; combining skills, resources, knowledge, and experience to provide the best support we can and help people achieve outcomes and overcome barriers to prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping.

Feedback from Jason and Paul's Story

Both Jason and Paul have experienced homelessness and slept on the streets. They are both in their 50s. Both gave feedback about shared accommodation as a housing option.

Jason's experience was mixed *"...you had your own room, communal kitchen, bathroom but because this was communal, there was someone who lived there who used to eat my food that I left in the fridge, so from there I moved in with my [family member] and fell off the scene with Kirklees Housing."*

When asked about gaps in support, Paul said *"Not expecting a grown man of 52 to be sharing or opting for student accommodation."*

Your voice matters so we will...aim to help people overcome barriers to using shared accommodation and continue to explore alternative housing options.

To address this priority, we will:

- Close the gap in knowledge around what partners are doing (day to day operations and pipeline work)
- Promote greater awareness among relevant staff, organisations and agencies of support and services available, including the Council's own Support Offer, to maximise referrals
- Develop approaches to improving information and data sharing to support informed decision-making and collaborative working
 - Improve the way information is shared between Housing Solutions and Registered Providers

- Examine supported housing evictions data to develop a district wide approach to eviction prevention
- Carry out a review of nomination agreements and systems, drawing on best practice examples from elsewhere
- Align approaches (with Registered Providers) to nominations and data submission
- Look to create more joined up messaging for the residents of Kirklees, including but not limited to those who are already customers
- Refresh key partnership forums – including the Homelessness Forum - to improve links between the Council, the voluntary sector, and Registered Providers
- Strengthen partner relationships with registered provider partners, to further build on their contribution to helping provide both long term and temporary accommodation for homeless households
- Introduce a mechanism to gain and share customer feedback to support continued learning and reflection
- Develop our understanding of supported housing needs and provision
- Continue to support the provision of a range of quality supported housing options across the Kirklees district
- Look for further funding to enhance the direct support options available to those living in supported housing
- Work with the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to create both a Supported Housing Charter and a Quality Assurance Framework to ensure partner provision best meets local needs
- Work with partners to enable access to services to improve education, training, and employment as well as access to support linked to increases in the cost of living.
- Agree a process with partners on how we can make better use of resources through joint funding applications where appropriate
- Embed joint housing pathways and protocols for target cohorts of vulnerable homeless households, ensuring that partners and customers understand their commitments

Priority 2: Rapid early help and intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring

The earlier people approach the Council and its partners for assistance, the more opportunity there is to prevent homelessness occurring.

The most effective way to avoid homelessness is to intervene before people's situations reach crisis, and to connect them to the right support when this is needed.

Where people continue to struggle before finally approaching the Council for help and advice, their housing situation can become more difficult to resolve and a sustainable, successful outcome is harder to achieve.

Excerpt from Christine's Story

"Options of housing are very limited, but it leads to other massive stresses. You need jobs, training, money, deposits. How is this all possible when someone is struggling to just survive daily."

Your voice matters so we will... continue, as a partnership, to work with people using a strengths-based approach and in a holistic way which considers all aspects affecting their housing options.

Kirklees Council's Housing Solutions Service is the front door to receiving housing advice and support for members of the public who are at risk of becoming homeless. The service provides universal housing advice, alongside homeless assessments and housing related support for some cohorts. The service also provides and manages temporary accommodation for those homeless household to whom the Council owes a duty to accommodate.

Early identification of problems, rapid early help, and early targeted interventions, as well as the provision of high-quality advice and assistance is essential if we are to ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home.

Excerpt from Steve's Story

When asked what could have been done earlier or better, Steve responded:
"People who listen to our problems and have the power to understand our problems so that they can better identify who is prioritised and qualified for more help."

Your voice matters so we will... promote the importance of having a proactive partnership approach to ensure timely assessments and that support/ advice is undertaken using a strengths-based and person-centred approach.

Promoting the services available to residents, building knowledge within communities, and ensuring information is easy to find and accessible to all, so that households know where to turn to and who to contact before they reach crisis point is also critical if we are to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place.

To address this priority, we will:

- Continue to ensure individuals receive rapid access to housing advice, targeted interventions, and tailored support, including those individuals with multiple and complex needs
- Continue to ensure that health needs of homeless households are met, through flexible service provision, outreach and identifying and addressing health inequalities
- Explore as a partnership what options are available where funded services can no longer continue at the same level or in the same format
- Continue to support people at risk of becoming homeless to stay in their existing home or make a planned move to alternative accommodation

- Encourage households to present at the earliest opportunity to reduce the pressures associated with crisis-based intervention and increase the opportunity to prevent homelessness from occurring
- Encourage all partners to commit to the Duty to Refer including partners outside the mandatory framework
- Encourage partners to use a strengths-based approach with all customers, enabling resources and targeted intervention for those who are most vulnerable and/or with multiple complex needs
- Focus further on the links between health and homelessness by helping to address housing issues which are impacting on tenants and putting them at risk of homelessness
- Raise awareness of support options available, including the role of the Housing Compliance Team and other partners in supporting landlord/tenant mediation and helping to prevent private rented evictions occurring.
- Look to secure resources to enhance our tenancy relations function, to further support both private sector landlords and tenants when approaches are made to the Council. All partners to link in with benefits advice, employment and training support and access to other local specialist support provision to enable individuals to develop resilience and thereby avoid homelessness
- For those in council tenancies, provide support 'on the ground' to help households to better integrate into communities, put roots down, and build informal support networks, introducing them, for example, to community groups and Tenant and Residents Associations
- Complete pre tenant checks to ensure tenancies are successful, sustainable, and supported
- Review the information available on the Council's website to ensure that it is clear and easily accessible
- Encourage partners to adopt consistent messaging and signposting as appropriate to the Council's website
- Continue to explore and pursue bids for government and other external funding for preventing homelessness initiatives
- Work with colleagues in public health and other partners on the 'Core 20+5' funded programme to provide income maximisation support
- Review how customers currently access services to ensure that our housing solutions service is genuinely accessible to all
- Continue to share best practice on homeless prevention with the regional partners including the West Yorkshire Local Authority Homelessness Forum and those working on the SHIP programme (supported housing)
- Maximise the creative use of incentives to encourage homeless prevention through maintaining existing living arrangements
- Continue to strengthen joint working to ensure prison leavers are given the appropriate advice well in advance of coming out of prison
- Continue our commitment to those experiencing domestic abuse as set out in statutory duties and the Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy. Ensuring we work together to create and maintain a range of housing options, choice, and information available
- Review and embed homelessness pathways for specific cohorts, including young people, mental health hospital discharge etc
- Review and implement best practice approaches to front-door homeless presentations, building on learning from peers and expert advisers

Priority 3: Access to long term homes and temporary accommodation which is safe, decent, accessible and affordable

Securing access to long term homes in either the social rented or private rented sector has become much more difficult over the last five years. As well as a reduction in successful social and private rented outcomes, those homeless households who could previously stay longer with family or friends are also now approximately 60% less likely to be accommodated – primarily due to the increase in the general cost of living and the pressure this is having on extended households.

Local authorities have a duty to accommodate homeless families or individuals who are assessed as meeting a 'priority need' criteria, until they are able to secure long-term housing. These households are initially offered temporary accommodation, which is intended to be a short-term option for people when there is no other accommodation available to them. In Kirklees, the types of temporary accommodation that is used includes self-contained council homes, bed and breakfast hotels, shared accommodation and supported housing managed by a range of partners.

With a growth in demand for temporary accommodation, and lack of available suitable options to enable households to move on quickly, the length of stay in temporary accommodation is too long for many, and there has been a significant increase in the number of households who have had to be accommodated in bed and breakfast hotels. The longer someone is homeless, the greater the risk of worsening physical and mental health problems. The average length of time a household spends in all forms of temporary accommodation can be up to 24 months, dependant on the household circumstances.

Excerpt from Adam's Story

"Considering my wife's condition, she was pregnant and had diabetes, so proper nutrition is very important. And every meal of eating fast food and not eating healthier and more nutritious foods, this will definitely increase the stimulation of diseases. In my opinion, staying in a hotel despite these problems was not the right thing to do and we should have moved into a temporary or council house sooner."

Your voice matters so we will... find the most suitable temporary accommodation available at the time based on household need. We will continue to aim to have people in temporary accommodation for as little time as possible by exploring all housing options open to them.

It is essential that we work to increase the accommodation options available to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This includes working alongside partners to increase the range and suitability of affordable social and private rented sector housing - exploring new ways to diversify accommodation and support.

Registered Providers of social housing have a key role to play here, by for example, aligning with the Council's Strategic Tenancy Policy, maximising the potential of nominations agreements by working with the Council to rehouse people on the Social Housing Register, and ensuring a flexible and affordable tenancy approach for residents.

The private rented sector also has a key part to play in meeting housing need, including for homeless households. The Council and its partners are working actively and positively with private landlords and letting agents in order to enhance and incentivise access to private rented tenancies.

Excerpt from Samantha's Story

"The Council need to be aware of the disparity between the price of private rental properties and the Local Housing Allowance. When you are on the lowest benefits then the gap between these amounts is not sustainable. Landlords seem to be able to charge whatever they want. The amount of people going after one property is ridiculous, they expect you to view it and then be told that it has already gone to someone else. The amount of people with bad credit scores also means that private renting is not an option, so where are these people supposed to live?"

Your voice matters so we will...continue to work directly with landlords to incentivise or facilitate the offer of a property to customers. We will also continue, as a partnership, to try and influence government policy affecting housing options.

Increasing the supply and suitability of temporary accommodation options, and endeavouring to use less bed and breakfast hotels must also be a key objective of this Strategy to ensure that homeless households access more suitable temporary accommodation, and to reduce the cost to the Council.

To address this priority, we will:

- Ensure that homelessness issues and demands are factored into strategic plans for increasing the supply of affordable housing in Kirklees
- Continue to develop ways of working with the private rented sector to ensure it plays its role in both preventing homelessness and rehoming households
- Ensure greater accountability in relation to nominations; working with Registered Providers to prioritise nominations from local authorities where households are homeless
- Reduce the length of time it takes to turn around empty council properties when they become vacant
- Explore how lettable void properties might enhance our temporary accommodation offer.
- Work towards maintaining an adequate supply of good quality, suitable temporary accommodation, including leasing and partner provision
- Work towards containing further growth in the number of households in temporary accommodation
- Minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, looking at best practice examples from elsewhere

- Improve the way we communicate and manage expectations by ensuring households understand that the Council has reduced duties to help if suitable accommodation is rejected
- Work with Registered Providers to secure more temporary accommodation and move-on support
- Explore options for the conversion of underused buildings into homes and bring empty homes back into use
- Continue to encourage those who are no longer in need of a larger property to consider a move - helping people right-size to free up valuable properties
- Continue work to prevent right to buy fraud by ensuring the Council's housing stock is only sold to those who legally qualify as well as actively investigating reports of abandonment, to prevent rent arrears and disrepair caused by unoccupied properties, ensuring that social housing stock is fully utilised
- Continue to review the sufficiency of, identify gaps in and where appropriate commission or encourage specialist housing e.g. supported accommodation for young people

Priority 4: Tackle rough sleeping to ensure it is rare, brief, and not recurring

Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute form of homelessness. The government defines rough sleeping as: sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments) and also people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes' which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes).

The Government committed to ending "the blight of rough sleeping in England" when it published the national Rough Sleeping Strategy in September 2022. The strategy included a £2bn investment over the next three years, including an expanded £500m Rough Sleeping Initiative.

During the COVID pandemic the 'Everyone In' initiative sought to ensure that anyone who was sleeping on the streets was immediately provided with safe and secure accommodation, this led to a reduction in rough sleeping during 2020 and 2021 and in Kirklees, number of rough sleepers found in the annual count had reduced to 3 in 2022. However, since then, in line with national trends, the numbers rose to 14 in the latest snapshot figures from Autumn 2023.

Prolonged periods of rough sleeping have a significant impact on someone's mental and physical health. The longer someone experiences rough sleeping for, the more likely it is they will develop additional mental and physical health needs, substance misuse issues and have contact with the criminal justice system.

Excerpts from Michael's Story

"I had nowhere to go and therefore started sleeping rough again. I didn't approach the Council this time but don't really know the reason for this. I thought I needed to get my head straight and having slept rough in the past I thought that this would be a way of getting myself together again, disconnecting from the stresses of responsibilities in everyday life. When I was in my tent, I didn't have anyone or anything else to worry about initially but that changes quickly ...[I] bought a tent, went near the canal, saw some bad things under the bridge, crime, people being taken advantage of, it has affected me mentally." ... "I needed to sort my head out and felt the best way to do that was by cutting myself off..."

Your voice matters so we will...continue to work in a person-centred and trauma-informed way, giving people space and time to engage and keeping them as safe as possible wherever they are.

In Kirklees, a range of partners provide holistic and person-centred support for rough sleepers, or anyone in danger of rough sleeping, to help them get the appropriate support to access accommodation and improve their lives.

The Council and our partners engage directly at an individual level with people who sleep rough. Our approach is proactive, personalised and tailored to the individual, their specific issues, circumstances, and experiences.

Excerpt from Jason's Story

"It was [Rough Sleeping Team officer] that first started engaging with me, he would come down and visit me when I was in tent, he'd come down in all weathers early in the morning and encouraged me to start looking at my options, as in temporary accommodation, sorting out my benefits, trying to help with health issues....I've been supported into a new property now and still receiving support from the council. Dealt with the same person all the way through we have a good relationship, he understands me and what I'm like, what help I need. He knows my needs and has got others involved to assist where needed too."

Your voice matters so we will...continue to build trusted relationships with people, working with them in a trauma-informed and individualised way.

We aim to reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough in Kirklees and ensure that rough sleeping is rare, brief, and not recurring.

To address this priority, we will:

- Continue to provide, alongside our partners, a range of advice, accommodation, and support services to people sleeping rough so they can move away from the streets and access and sustain long term, settled accommodation

- Continue to engage across partner agencies on rough sleeping cases, to ensure the multi-agency approach is maintained
- Continue to offer a wraparound support service for rough sleepers with a trauma-informed approach, whether on the streets or within accommodation
- Ensure that health needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping are met
- Explore options to maintain and expand dedicated rough sleeper accommodation units, operating on Housing First principles
- Build upon drug/alcohol and adult social care specialisms developed for rough sleeper client groups
- Embed a targeted prevention approach to prevent the flow of new rough sleepers on to the street
- Update the homelessness and rough sleeping directory and refresh and broaden out the Good Practice Guide for Street Outreach, with input from service users
- Continue to explore and pursue bids for government funding for rough sleeping initiatives
- Influence government policy to commit to the long-term funding of the Rough Sleeper Initiative.
- Continue to use and build upon trauma-informed and person-centred approaches for all interactions with individuals who are homeless and/or sleeping rough
- Develop links with the West Yorkshire Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Network

Action planning and measuring success

The priorities set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be delivered through an action plan, which will be developed alongside our partners, and monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to demonstrate the progress we are making, ensure that actions remain relevant, and to capture any emerging issues, as well as policy and legislative change.

Action plan monitoring will include regular review of key performance indicators associated with homelessness and rough sleeping.

The overall success of the Strategy will be measurable through a positive direction of travel in these areas:-

- More positive homelessness prevention outcomes
- Greater use of private rented sector accommodation
- Less reliance on bed and breakfast for temporary accommodation
- Reduced length of stay in all types of temporary accommodation
- Reduction in rough sleeping

Engagement

We have worked collaboratively across the sector to develop the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029; consulting extensively with partners, who have been instrumental in the process of developing the priorities and objectives in this Strategy and who will play a crucial role in its delivery.

In preparing this strategy and developing the priorities and objectives, we have engaged with a number of key stakeholders, including:

- Kirklees Homelessness Forum (KHF)
- Registered Providers
- People with lived experience of homelessness
- Kirklees Health Inclusion Group (KHIG)
- Colleagues from across the Council, including Homes and Neighbourhoods, Childrens and Adult Services
- DLUHC specialist homelessness advisor
- Elected Members, through attendance at both Party Group meetings and the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

A selection of partner agency highlights are below (all of whom are part of the Kirklees Homelessness Forum), outlining the work they undertake in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping.

Kirklees Housing Solutions Service

The service works collaboratively with partners to ensure intervention takes place as early as possible with households who are at risk of becoming homeless, to prevent homelessness wherever possible, achieve better outcomes for people, and avoid costly and crisis interventions. Bespoke homelessness support pathways are in place for vulnerable cohorts including:

- Rough Sleeping Initiative team
- Refugee Resettlement Team
- Young People & Support Team
- Temporary Accommodation team
- Hospital discharge cases (general and mental health)
 - Prison leavers

Fusion Housing

Fusion Housing is a registered charity working across Kirklees with a focus on reducing the impact of homelessness and food poverty through the provision of supported and temporary accommodation, legal housing and welfare benefits advice, employment support and a Food Bank service. Fusion Housing aims to ensure that individuals and families have access to suitable, affordable accommodation along with the skills needed to successfully manage and keep that accommodation, also helping them to overcome the barriers that can prevent them from achieving this. Most clients accessing their services are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Huddersfield Mission

Huddersfield Mission supports people experiencing poverty in Huddersfield and wider Kirklees. Their advice and support are available to all, but they are best known for their work with people experiencing significant poverty, homelessness, addiction, or poor mental health. They work with about 1000 different people every year and 30% of the customers are homeless or in some form of temporary accommodation

Over the last 2 years the Mission has significantly increased the practical support on offer. Additionally, they have expanded the range of health and wellbeing services they provide directly or in partnership with others. This includes free haircuts, health checkups, podiatry, wound clinic, health screening and testing (Hep C, HIV, TB etc). They also provide practical support through the provision of clothing, furniture grants, referrals for food parcels, sim cards, mobile phones, and utility vouchers.

Helping the Homeless (part of One Big Family)

Helping the Homeless have been working in Huddersfield for 7 years. They do street outreach on a Monday night offering food, drinks, hygiene items, underwear, and clothing to those who are both homeless and vulnerably housed. They work with the Rough Sleeping Initiative team to identify and assist people in need and offer ongoing support where needed once housed.

In the last couple of years they have seen the need to offer support to those who are in housing with food support, on occasion gas/electric top ups and also ongoing appointments. They do this to try and stop the revolving door of homelessness.

Together Housing

Together Housing is a registered provider of social housing and has 591 general needs properties across Kirklees plus a small number of supported housing schemes which are run in partnership with Horton Housing. The supported housing schemes contribute to homelessness prevention, giving residents stable and supportive accommodation until ready to move on and live independently. Tenancy sustainment is also key for the organisation. They have developed a pre-tenancy sustainability assessment involving their internal teams to ensure welfare benefits are in place alongside support and action plans where needed. A 'tenancy prediction model' is also used, assessing risk factors of a tenancy and the potential of it failing and learning from failed tenancies are also regularly reviewed. Together Housing has also signed up to commit to Duty to Refer even though this isn't a mandatory requirement.

Kirklees Council Public Health Team

Public Health focus on improving the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of individuals and communities living, working and studying in Kirklees. The Wider Determinants of Health specifically focus on Housing, Poverty, & Place (Healthy Urban Design/Active Travel etc). Recently secured external funding under the 'Core 20+5' Programme will commission four providers across Kirklees to increase their internal capacity to provide people with income maximisation support-which directly and indirectly can mitigate against homelessness and the causes including debt. Within this will be an additional 2.5 posts with specific homelessness/housing remits to support people to sustain their tenancies

Incommunities

Incommunities Group is one of the largest social housing providers in Yorkshire. The Incommunities Money Matters team can provide support and advice for customers on welfare benefits, income maximisation, budgeting, utilities, debt management, access to food parcels and opening a bank account. There are 3 main support routes for their customers: rent arrears, energy hardship and food hardship, with bespoke support provided through each of these routes.

Yorkshire Housing

Yorkshire Housing is a registered provider of social housing with circa 1850 properties in Kirklees across various tenures – the majority are social housing general needs homes. Customers are subject to an assessment which ensures the property suits their needs, in an attempt to avoid repeat homelessness. They also have a strategy and budget for sustainment, the aim of which is to ensure that the customer can remain in their property long term and to ensure the tenancy doesn't fail within the first 12 months

1. Summary	
1.1	This document sets out Kirklees Council’s policy for how homeless households will be prioritised for temporary accommodation, both inside and outside of the district. The policy covers both interim placements made under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 (HA96), while enquiries are made into a customer’s homeless application and longer-term temporary accommodation placements for customers owed the main housing duty under Section 193 of the HA96.
1.2	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Council prioritises customers who have the greatest need to be in or close to a particular location or need to move away from a particular location for safety reasons. Consideration will be given to the size and composition of the household and the type of temporary accommodation available at the time.

2. Introduction	
2.1	Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in their own area “so far as is reasonably practicable”. Statutory guidance requires local authorities “where possible” to try and secure accommodation as close as possible to where an applicant was previously living (HA96, Part vii, Section 208(1)), although local authorities are not constrained by the preference of the applicant. The average length of time a household spends in all forms of temporary accommodation can be up to 24 months, dependant on the household circumstances. Households may need to consider making alternative arrangements for education or employment during their stay in temporary accommodation before a longer-term solution can be provided.
2.2	The Council acknowledges that with a growth in homeless applications and acceptances, there are pressures on providing sufficient suitable accommodation in the district to households owed a statutory duty. The Council currently may use the following types of temporary accommodation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Managed accommodation – self-contained within our own stock ➤ Nightly paid accommodation, Bed and breakfast hotels, both inside and outside of the district ➤ Self-contained and shared (HMO) accommodation in partnership with private suppliers – either nightly paid or privately leased properties ➤ Commissioned and non-commissioned supported housing managed by third party providers.

3. Legal Framework	
3.1	This policy has been developed in accordance with the relevant sections of the following legal and statutory guidance material:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S188 Housing Act 1996 - Housing Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk) • S193 Housing Act 1996 - Housing Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk) • S208 Housing Act 1996 - Housing Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk) • Homeless (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012 - The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 (legislation.gov.uk) • Localism Act 2011 - Localism Act 2011 (legislation.gov.uk)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S11 Children Act 2004 - Children Act 2004 (legislation.gov.uk) • Equality Act 2010 - Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk) • Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006) - Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • Associated Case Law
<p>3.2</p>	<p>Supplementary guidance to the homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and the Homeless (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012 states the following:</p> <p><i>“Where it is not possible to secure accommodation within the district, and an authority has secured accommodation outside their district, the authority is required to take account of the distance of that accommodation from the district of the authority. Where accommodation which is otherwise suitable and affordable is available nearer to the authority’s district than the accommodation which it has secured, the accommodation which it has secured is unlikely to be suitable unless the authority has a justifiable reason or the applicant has expressed a preference.”</i></p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p><i>Nzolameso v Westminster City Council [2015]</i>– the Supreme Court Judgment included a set of requirements that local authorities need to consider when allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A requirement that local authorities need to explain their decisions as to the location of the properties offered. • Each local authority should have, and keep up to date, a policy for allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households. • The policy should reflect the authority’s statutory obligations under both the Housing Act 1996 and the Children’s Act 2004. • Where there is an anticipated shortfall of accommodation in the District, the policy should explain the factors to be taken into account when making decisions on where a household is placed.
<p>3.4</p>	<p><i>Birmingham City Council v Ali, Moran v Manchester City Council [2009]</i>, the court observed that <i>‘what is regarded as suitable for discharging the interim duty may be rather different from what is regarded as suitable for discharging the more open-ended duty in section 193(2).’</i> This confirms the Code of Guidance’s approach that, accommodation that would not be suitable in the long term may be suitable in the short term.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>In exercising these functions, the Authority will have due regard to S149 Equality Act 2010 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate any form of unlawful discrimination. • advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics. • adopt good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not.

4. Key Principles	
4.1	The Council will wherever possible offer temporary accommodation within the Kirklees district. However, this is likely to depend on availability of accommodation in Kirklees.
4.2	There are occasions when demand for temporary accommodation exceeds the number of available commissioned units, or there are other constraints in finding suitable commissioned accommodation. In these circumstances, if there is a duty to accommodate a household, the Council will as a last resort place a household in bed and breakfast/hotel/guesthouse accommodation until more suitable temporary accommodation becomes available.
4.3	Any accommodation provided to 16/17-year-old must be suitable. The Secretary of State considers that bed and breakfast is never suitable under any circumstances for this category of applicants.
4.4	The Council will take account of all relevant need factors when assessing the suitability of location for temporary accommodation. These factors are listed in Section 5 below.
4.5	When assessing the suitability of location for temporary accommodation, the Council will take account of need but will not always be able to accommodate the applicant's preference.
4.6	If it is not possible to provide temporary accommodation within the District, the Council will offer accommodation in another district, considering the distance of that accommodation from the Kirklees District. If this should prove necessary, the Council will endeavour to provide accommodation with good transport links.
4.7	Households who are accommodated under the Council's interim duty pursuant to Section 188 HA96 may initially be placed in emergency accommodation, including bed and breakfast and short-term shared or self-contained accommodation, while enquiries are carried out. This accommodation may be outside of the district. If the Council decides it has a duty to house a customer, the Council will move them to longer-term self-contained accommodation as soon as suitable accommodation becomes available.
4.8	Households placed into temporary accommodation will be responsible for paying the relevant costs associated with the accommodation they have been provided. This may include, rent, service charges, utility costs, council tax liability. If households require assistance to pay the rent costs, they are responsible for making a housing benefit claim if they are eligible. In cases where they do not qualify or the benefit does not meet the full cost, the household will be responsible for covering the costs.
4.9	Where the Council decides that households housed under Section 188 HA96 are not owed the main housing duty, they will be required to leave the accommodation. The household will be given reasonable notice dependant on the household's individual circumstances.
4.10	Households will be given one offer of interim or longer-term temporary accommodation, and they will be asked to accept it straight away. Households may also be expected to move from

	one temporary accommodation to another at short notice. There is no obligation on the Council to allow households to view the accommodation prior to accepting an offer. The individual circumstances of a household will be considered when making an offer of temporary accommodation.
4.11	If a household rejects an offer, they will be asked to provide their reasons for refusal. This applies to households to whom the Council has an interim duty to accommodate under Section 188 HA96 and those to whom the Council has accepted the main housing duty under Section 193 HA96. The Council will consider the reasons given and undertake further enquiries as necessary. If the Council accepts the reasons for refusal and agrees the offer is unsuitable, the offer will be withdrawn and a further offer will be made.
4.12	Where a household refuses suitable interim (Section 188 HA96) accommodation, which may include out of district placements and the reasons for refusal are not appropriate, no further accommodation will be offered. This would result in the Council's interim duty being discharged and the household will be required to make their own arrangements. There is no right of review against the suitability of accommodation offered to households under Section 188 HA96 (interim duty) although they can apply for judicial review through the courts. Households to whom the Council has accepted the main housing duty under Section 193 HA96, (S193 duty) have a right to request a review of the suitability of accommodation, pursuant to Section 202 HA96.
4.13	If a household is entitled to and exercises their right to a review of the Council's offer of temporary accommodation but did not move into the accommodation, they will only be accommodated during the review period in exceptional circumstances. This is a discretionary decision. Each case will be considered on an individual basis; considering the overall merits of the review request, any new information or evidence that may alter the original decision, the personal circumstances of the household and the potential impact of the loss of accommodation. Should the outcome of the review determine that the original offer was suitable, and the household did not move into the accommodation offered, the S193 duty will be discharged. If the household moved into the accommodation and requested a review but the outcome determined that the original offer was suitable, the S193 duty will remain. If discretion was granted and the household is accommodated in other accommodation or they are already in longer-term temporary accommodation, they will be required to vacate the property. This will be within 28 days of receiving the review decision letter and advised that no further assistance will be provided. Should the outcome determine that the original offer was unsuitable, then alternative temporary accommodation will be offered and the S193 duty will remain. This process is summarised in the diagram at Appendix A.
4.14	In circumstances when the customer has no right to a review, the interim duty will be discharged. If the customer is already resident in temporary accommodation, they will be required to vacate the property. Interim accommodation is usually provided under licences excluded from the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. Therefore, the Council will provide reasonable notice to the customer and do not need to apply for a possession order from the court. The customer will still be entitled to receive a decision on their homeless application and so the temporary accommodation duty could be reactivated if the main housing duty is later owed.
4.15	In accordance with the Homelessness Code of Guidance, customers in temporary accommodation under the interim duty (S188) are subject to the relief duty (Section 189B); this means that the Council should help customers to secure accommodation for themselves. In the event that the relief duty is ended following a customer refusing a final accommodation or Part 6 offer, and the customer requests a review as to the suitability of the accommodation offered, the

	section 188(1) duty will continue until a decision on the review has been notified to the customer.
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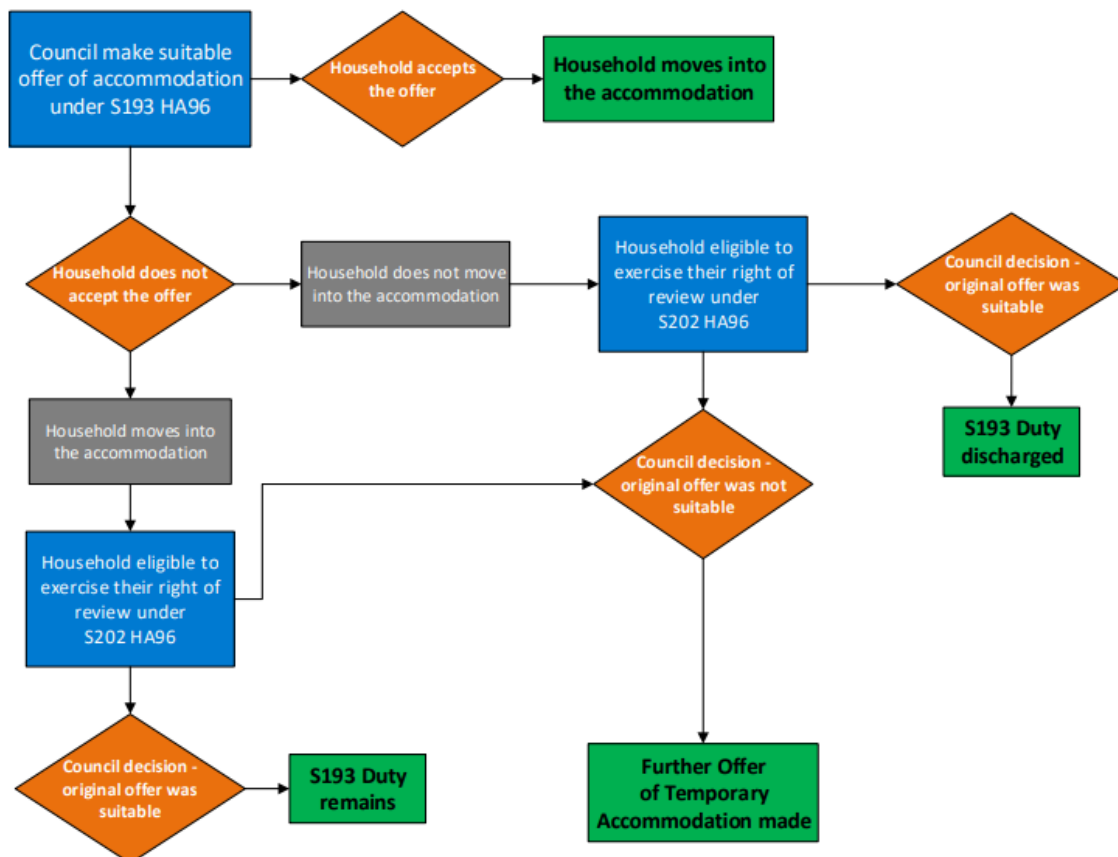
5. Factors to be considered when making placements	
5.1	<p><i>Children’s education</i></p> <p>Whilst the Council will have due regard to where children are attending school, attendance at local schools may not be considered a reason to refuse accommodation, although some priority may be given to special educational needs for in-district placements. Households have the option to contact the local education authority to discuss whether they are entitled to any assistance with transport costs.</p>
5.2	<p><i>Children’s needs</i></p> <p>In accordance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, we will consider the needs of all children in the household and any arrangements for safeguarding those needs. The key areas that will be considered are risks to health, safety, to enjoyment and achievement and economic wellbeing. Households with children at risk, on the Child Protection Register or significantly disadvantaged, will be prioritised for an offer of temporary accommodation within Kirklees district. In such cases Children’s Services will be consulted about making a temporary accommodation placement outside of the Kirklees district.</p>
5.3	<p><i>Health and support needs</i></p> <p>Households which contain person(s) suffering from a terminal illness or having a severe disability and receiving regular treatment under the care of a Kirklees hospital will be prioritised for an offer of temporary accommodation within the Kirklees district. Any other specialist medical or support needs can be considered, including any existing health or support services provided. The Council can also consider whether moving the client’s healthcare or support services would have a detrimental effect. Any need for accessible accommodation will be addressed.</p>
5.4	<p><i>Risk</i></p> <p>Where a household is perceived to be at risk from others, or where there is a history of risk to others, the extent, nature, likelihood and gravity of the risk will be assessed and taken into consideration. Consideration will always be given if a customer needs to be moved to a particular location or cannot remain in a particular location because of a risk to safety.</p>
5.5	<p><i>Transport links</i></p> <p>Where accommodation is sourced outside of the Kirklees district for temporary accommodation placements, the distance of the property from Kirklees together with services, amenities and transport links in the new area may be taken into account. The potential impact of the location on family members will be considered.</p>
5.6	<p><i>The temporary accommodation available in the district</i></p> <p>Temporary accommodation will be offered in the district if suitable accommodation is available. This will allow a customer to maintain any established links with services or social/support networks. However, there may be circumstances when there is a lack of suitable temporary accommodation or there are higher priority customers awaiting accommodation in the district and out of district temporary accommodation will be used to meet the Council’s duty.</p>

5.7	<p><i>Size and condition of the property</i> Temporary accommodation should provide adequate space and room standards for the customer and be fit to occupy. If self-contained accommodation is provided customers will typically be expected to use a living room as a bedroom. If there are any concerns raised regarding the condition of the temporary accommodation these will be raised with the accommodation provider to investigate and resolve. The quality of the decoration/furniture, the layout/type of accommodation, provision of parking and access to a garden are not ordinarily acceptable reasons for refusal. However, personal circumstances of the household can be considered.</p>
5.8	<p><i>Equality Act 2010</i> The Council will take into consideration circumstances covered by the Equality Act in relation to any specific needs of the customer or their household.</p>
5.9	<p><i>Any special circumstance</i> The Council can consider any other circumstances described by the customer when making an offer of suitable temporary accommodation.</p>

6. Monitoring and Review	
6.1	<p>The Council will keep records of what vacancies, or units are available and assess the best use of vacancies or units based on the needs of all households requiring accommodation.</p>
6.2	<p>A light-touch desktop review of this policy will be undertaken annually, considering patterns of demand for temporary accommodation and the availability of both commissioned and non-commissioned sources of temporary accommodation.</p>

Appendix A

Process for Suitable Accommodation Offer made under S193 HA96 (see para 4.13)



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REPORT TITLE: APPROVAL OF DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION (DMC) POLICY

Meeting	Scrutiny Panel
Date	12 August 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Moses Crook Deputy Leader, Transport and Housing
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	Yes Yes
Purpose of Report	
<p>This report provides information to support the approval and adoption of the Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC) Policy v1.4, in response to the Regulatory Notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing on 6 March 2024.</p>	
Recommendations	
<p>Approve and adopt the Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC) Policy v1.4 (Appendix A) and publish this on the Kirklees Council website.</p>	
Reasons for Recommendations	
<p>The Policy outlines that resident safety is a top priority and the actions the Council will be taking to manage and resolve Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC) in its social housing stock.</p> <p>By having the Policy Kirklees H&N can demonstrate to the Regulator of Social Housing how we will handle reports of DMC. This policy will meet regulatory requirements and show our commitment to maintaining high housing standards.</p> <p>This policy underpins the importance of the resident in their home, and has been designed to ensure engagement, transparency, accountability and to achieve positive outcomes for residents.</p> <p>This is part of the introduction of a new strategy for DMC. It removes the previous fragmented approach which did not effectively deal with current cases, did not identify the root causes and provided a poor service and experience for residents.</p> <p>This new approach and policy will provide a defined approach for the two key areas of DMC.</p>	
Reactive	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with new cases consistently • Prioritise and resolve existing open and older cases 	
Proactive	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify unknown cases (find our silence) • Prevention and reduction of future cases 	

The policy will ensure that Kirklees H&N handles all DMC cases in a consistent way with agreed timescales and clear communication with residents. This means every report will be dealt with thoroughly and fairly.

The policy will ensure that Kirklees H&N handles all DMC cases in a consistent way. This means every report will be dealt with thoroughly and fairly, with equal focus on dealing with the 'current' and also on the future state and prevention/ reduction of DMC.

This policy supports our broader effort of 'Finding our Silence' to systematically address and reduce DMC issues in our properties.

The new policy will help us work more efficiently by focusing on the most urgent DMC cases first. This ensures that we use our resources effectively and address the most serious issues promptly.

The policy will help residents, staff and stakeholders understand DMC better by improving how we communicate. It will clearly outline roles and responsibilities, set expectations, and increase accountability. This transparency will build trust and ensure residents know what to expect from us in managing DMC issues.

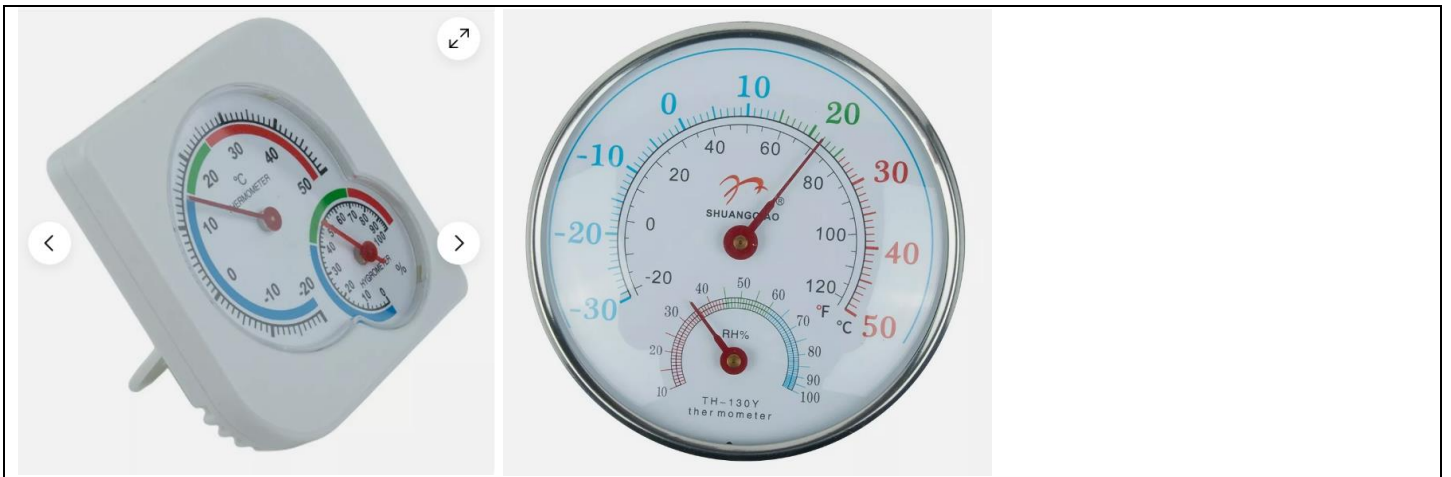
By implementing this policy, the Council will ensure compliance with the new Consumer Standards (in particular, the Building Safety and Quality standard) published by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), improve operational efficiency, and enhance communication with residents. This approach will prioritise resident safety and contribute to our efforts to manage Damp, Mould, and Condensation effectively.

Resource Implications

No additional employee resource has been identified at this stage, in relation to the approval of the DMC Policy document, however, once the supporting DMC procedures and processes have been created, the employee resourcing requirements will be better understood. The DMC Policy articulates a survey first approach to identify the root cause of the damp, mould and condensation reported at a property. Therefore, assets surveying teams have been 'pooled' under to prioritise damp surveys, until an accurate and consistent trend/profile can be forecasted (peaks and troughs) during the different seasonal periods of the year. Asset Surveyors will then be released to other workstreams e.g. stock condition surveys, tenant improvement requests etc. Once this forecast is known and DMC survey levels are at a sustainable level.

The DMC Policy states the requirement to provide residents a free analogue hygrometer (example below), upon the completion of a damp survey, which will help them monitor the relative humidity and temperature of a room, with visual gauges to prompt action. This will be provided along with advice by the Assets Surveyor in attendance, as well as information leaflets to help residents with damp, mould and condensation issues as well as tips on decoration following the completion of a mould treatment.

A budget of £25,000 (approx. £10 per unit) would be required to purchase an initial batch of 2,500 analogue hygrometer units. In May 2024, a request has been submitted to corporate procurement to support the purchase to try and achieve an improved cost per unit and evidence value for money (VFM) for the purchase.



Example Analogue Hygrometers

For 2024-25 a revenue budget of £2m has been allocated for Damp, Mould and Condensation and a capital budget of £1.744m has been set aside for building safety related works.

<p>Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name</p>	<p>Wednesday 5 June 2024 David Shepherd, Executive Director for Place</p>
<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p>	<p>To add in</p>
<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</p>	<p>To add in</p>

Electoral wards affected: All.

Ward councillors consulted: None.

Public or private: Private.

Has GDPR been considered? Yes.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the policy has been developed to articulate the Council’s approach to managing reports of DMC to ensure we comply with the regulatory agenda and the Regulatory Notice to improve that was served on the Council in March 2024 and is one of the key actions agreed with Regulator of Social Housing as part of the Improvement Plan.
- 1.2 To support the Policy, a procedure document, inclusive of no access processes and associated operational appendices will be developed to ensure staff have the appropriate guidance for implementation and embedding of the policy into business-as-usual operational activity.
- 1.3 This policy has been developed as part of a wider package of improvements to the service delivery in relation to DMC.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 The Council's approach to managing reports of DMC is not currently supported by a standalone DMC Policy. Previously all DMC requests were treated as 'responsive repairs' and hence the approach was detailed in the repairs policy. However, the Government's guidance on 'understanding and addressing the health of risks of damp and mould in the home', published on 7 September 2023, states:

"[housing providers should have]... clear processes in place to document, manage and act on reports of damp and mould and to identify common issues and trends in their housing stock"

- 2.2 The DMC Policy aligns with the guidance provided by government, and will be supported by a DMC Procedure, which provides more information regarding the internal operational processes to manage reports of damp, mould and condensation.
- 2.3 This policy has been developed as part of a package of wider improvements to service delivery in relation to DMC. The following information details some initiatives which have been, or are due to be, introduced and are not reliant on the DMC policy to be approved before implementation:

Learning and Development

- 2.4 An eLearning module regarding DMC was produced and shared with Homes and Neighbourhoods colleagues to complete. Online training has also been made available to residents.

New case management approach

- 2.5 In May 2024, a new case management & performance management system has been introduced which supports an improved approach to triaging requests and asset management. This allows each individual property to be monitored from start to completion of all works, track any tasks required, identify who is responsible and include target dates. This can be used for performance monitoring and future KPI's. Most importantly it will ensure that every DMC case will be resolved completely by addressing the root causes of the problem.

Survey first and identify root cause

- 2.6 This removes the focus of any 'blame' on residents for DMC in their homes. Instead, the focus is on a surveyor visiting a property upon receipt of a DMC issue reported to identify the root cause and identifying the necessary treatments, repairs and/or works to prevent the issue from reoccurring. New, consistent survey forms have been introduced and are populated by the surveyors during their visits. Once completed they scan their documents using Microsoft Lens on their smartphones and email the central DMC triage team with associated photos from their survey visit. The DMC triage team will then review the surveys, raise any treatments or repairs identified, and make referrals to where the resident requires additional support.

An example of the new surveyors report form can be found in **Appendix B**

Weekly damp survey allocation

- 2.7 There is weekly monitoring of the resource plan to confirm which surveyor will be working in each area of the Kirklees District. From this the case management tracker is reviewed for all available triaged damp orders which require surveying, and these are distributed to all available surveyors considering priority, days since reported, and locality, to ensure maximum productivity within a smaller geographical area. In addition, any live disrepairs are cross referenced and any properties with a live disrepair and outstanding DMC order are allocated to the same surveyor to ensure consistency with the resident, property, and associated circumstances.

Strengthening Capacity and Capability

- 2.8 The surveying resource in the Assets team has been 'pooled' to provide one larger multi-skilled team. This has increased the number of surveyors who are able to complete DMC surveys and allowed for improved prioritisation of workloads. There are also two agency surveyors who are supporting the DMC service, for an initial six-month period, to ensure surveys are reduced to a business-as-usual volume. In addition, a Business Support Officer (BSO) has been drafted into the team to support with the administrative tasks associated with the DMC service, and a recruitment campaign is underway for two additional BSO's to support with the current and expected levels of administration, in anticipation of the upcoming introduction of outbound letters at key DMC stages and post works resident satisfaction questionnaires. By July 2024, recruitment is expected to be finalised on the vacant Team Leader, Property Project Officer, Quality Liaison Officer, and Property Project Assistant posts, to support the DMC service.

Communication and engagement with residents

- 2.9 The new survey form includes a section for the resident to describe the issue and what they think the required solution is. This is captured by the surveyor at the DMC survey visit, and demonstrates our intention to engage, consult and listen to our residents regarding their issue. Residents are also provided verbal advice by the surveyor in attendance as well as information leaflets regarding DMC. The next steps are to introduce outbound letters to residents at key stages of the DMC process, which adhere to the proposed requirements in the consultation on Awaab's Law which has not yet been enacted. The draft letters have been shared with key stakeholders involved in the delivery of DMC services and will be effective from July 2024. Providing residents the analogue hygrometers mentioned above, with supporting instructions will also be introduced to support temperature and ventilation changes in a property.
- 2.10 An example of the new *resident acknowledgement letter* (following survey) can be found in **Appendix C**. This incorporates the key recommendations from the consultation for Awaab's law and demonstrates the importance of improved communication with residents. One important point to note is that each case will be allocated an individual officer/surveyor as their point of contact until the case is resolved. The resident will be notified of this in writing as part of this letter. This will ensure that residents are able to be kept informed regarding the progress of their case.

Reporting Framework and improved business intelligence

- 2.11 New performance dashboards have been introduced into the DMC service, from the information captured in the DMC case management tracker, which allow management to review numerous variables across demand, output, and surveyor performance. Below are examples from the new dashboard showing the levels of information and detail available for reporting
- 2.12 Measures in the dashboard align to recommendations stated in support of Awaab's Law e.g., 14d to respond to a report of damp. Trends can be easily identified, which include estates which have high volumes of reported DMC orders, which can be used to influence future capital planned programmes. In addition, a weekly Top 10 to Target framework was introduced in May 2024, to enable the council to prioritise on the oldest 10 DMC orders and identify any scheduled, or unscheduled visits, to the property, outside the DMC service which could be used to gain access and align resources e.g., outstanding repairs, gas services, electrical tests, planned works, disrepairs, and housing visits.

- 2.13 Also, new governance arrangements have been introduced with the Damp Management Action Group (DMAG) and will provide greater insight and ownership regarding the DMC service. The next steps include 'finding your silence' (the term the Housing Ombudsman uses for 'voices seldom heard'), by referencing all known Kirklees Council properties by using the various contact points the service has with tenants e.g. gas servicing, repairs, etc. This helps the service to identify where a DMC survey is required but the resident hasn't reported it.

Post Works Inspections

- 2.14 Upon the completion of any identified treatments and repairs at a property, a surveyor will complete a post works inspection at three month and six-month intervals to ensure that the works completed have been done so to the required standard, and to ensure that the identified root cause has been rectified and no further issues relating to DMC have occurred. Visiting a property in these timescales, will also allow a surveyor to visit in a different climate/season, which is also beneficial. In any instances where DMC issues are identified at the post works inspections, the required treatments and/or repairs will be raised and inspected at three month and six-month intervals thereafter. These will be implemented from August 2024.

DMC Procedure

- 2.15 A supporting operational procedure with processes will be developed to support colleagues regarding the delivery of DMC services, and act as a reference guide for current and future employees. This will also underpin the objectives set out in the DMC Policy and will be available by September 2024.

3. Implications for the Council

Council Plan

- 3.1 Not applicable.

Financial Implications

- 3.2 The current baseline capital plan provides for £249.3m (2024-25 - £39.4m) which includes £9.9m (2024-25 - £1.7m) for specific building safety works. The damp, mould and condensation revenue budget for 2024-25 has been increased to £2m to provide for all revenue funded works.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 Legislative, statutory, and regulatory requirements are stated within the DMC Policy and within scope of managing the service. The Policy has been written with consideration to Awaab's law but not specifically mentioned. This is due to the law not being enacted yet. The Policy does however refer to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 which is most likely the legislation that will be used to apply Awaab's law, under section 42.

Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

- 3.4 New DMC Policy IIA (Case ID: IIA-629410010) has been published - [Integrated Impact Assessments - IntegratedImpactAssessment \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#).

4. Consultation

4.1 Initial discussions regarding DMC have been held with the Tenant Led Panel and the feedback is incorporated in the policy and also in the development of the new procedure guides.

4.2 Internal consultation has taken place with key stakeholders. These include the staff within the service and other services involved in supporting the delivery of repairs and maintenance to DMC cases. The report has consulted with the following groups in 2024:

Homes and Neighbourhoods Senior Management Team 1st May

- Provide more information in the report for the 'reasons for recommendations.' More detail required to demonstrate the importance of why this policy is being introduced- **Status: complete**
- Financial approval provided for the funding of the Hygrometers. **Status: complete**

Growth & Regeneration Senior Leadership Team 5th June

- Include more information in the report regarding the whole package of improvements that are currently being implemented alongside the policy. **Status: complete**

Executive Leadership Team 25th June

- Request to include more focus on residents' safety in the policy. Status: Complete
- Check all legislation with Legal services: **Status ongoing- completion date 9th August**

Housing Portfolio briefing- 2nd July

- To provide supporting information – procedure guide in line with new policy & examples of letter templates / survey reports. **Status: complete**

Building Safety Assurance Board 9th July

- Include more detailed information around governance- include governance structure in the report. **Status: complete**

Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board 22nd July

- Question raised about the requirement for 3- & 6-month post-works checks. Requested that this be discussed at Executive Board. **Status: complete**
- Questions raised about the 'tone' of the sample letters to residents – It was agreed this would be discussed the following week at TLP. **Status: completed at TLP.**
- Board's view was that the three-year review date was too far away with the policy being new and things might change externally in respect of the Housing Ombudsman or Regulator of Social Housing with the policy being an area of focus. It was agreed the policy would be reviewed in twelve months' time, and then three yearly thereafter.
- Board approved the DMC Policy and recommended the report to Cabinet subject to a recommendation for Cabinet to receive the reviewed policy in twelve months' time.

Executive Board 29th July

- Discussion about the 3 & 6month post work checks. It was agreed that the 3-month could be a phone call or check-in with the resident rather than a survey and this would be based on the specific circumstances of that property (scale of work/ risk/ vulnerability). **Status: complete, agreed process for 3&6 months.**

Tenant & Leaseholder Panel 31st July

- Discussion with the panel and the comms team, agreed that the tone of the letters should be more collaborative and include resident and landlord responsibilities. Chelsea from Comms team is reviewing all letters and will update the panel with the requested changes. **Status ongoing, TLP to sign off letters –Deadline 31st August.**

5. Engagement

- 5.1 The DMC Policy will be published on the Kirklees Council website and will be part of the updated communications and information strategy.
- 5.2 Resident engagement will be arranged as part of the DMC process review. Homes and Neighbourhoods will formally engage with residents where actions arising from the Procedure and supporting processes result in changes to services.

6 Communication

- 6.1 There is an agreed communication strategy and plan for building safety and regulatory response of which DMC is an integral part. All communications will be managed as part of the wider strategy to ensure that all stakeholders are consulted, involved and informed as required.
- 6.2 There have been regular communication with residents regarding DMC and these will continue as any changes to policy or process are agreed.
- 6.3 A key objective of communication in relation to DMC is about 'finding your silence'. This policy and the associated communication are designed to ensure that all efforts are made for H&N to identify and act upon those areas.

7 Options

Options considered

- 7.1 Not applicable.

Reasons for recommended option

- 7.2 Homes and Neighbourhoods Senior Management Team reviewed the DMC Policy on Friday 24 May 2024 and recommended it be presented to Growth and Regeneration (now Place) Senior Leadership Team for approval.

8 Next steps and timelines

- 8.1 Purchase the 2,500 analogue hygrometers to support the DMC Policy. Prior to August 2024.
- 8.2 Creation of a DMC Procedure, inclusive of associated appendices used within the service and supporting process maps. Prior to August 2024.

9 Contact officer

Neil Hutchinson, Interim General Manager Assets
Homes and Neighbourhoods
Email: neil.hutchinson@kirklees.gov.uk

10 Background Papers and History of Decisions

- 10.1 Not applicable.

11 Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix A – Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) Policy v1.4, July 2024.

11.2 Appendix B – New Surveyors Report.

11.3 Appendix C – New Resident Acknowledgement Letter (following survey).

12 Service Director responsible

Naz Parkar for Homes and Neighbourhoods

Tel: 01484 221000 ext 75312

Email: naz.parkar@kirklees.gov.uk

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Kirklees Council

Homes and Neighbourhoods

Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) Policy

Author: Neil Hutchinson – General Manager Assets

Date: July 2024

Review Date: July 2027

Approving body: Homes and Neighbourhoods, Senior Management Team

Policy Approval Details

Approved by:	
Approval Date:	
Minute Number:	
Ref:	DMCMP/24 V4

Policy Amendment and Version Schedule

Doc Ref	Version	Version Date	Reviewed by	Version Updates Summary
DMCMP/24	4	July 2024	General Manager - Assets	Full Policy Review

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Purpose and Objectives

- 1.1 The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure that Kirklees Council is committed to putting resident's safety is at the core of service delivery. The policy will provide assurance that Kirklees Council will take appropriate action and provide a consistent approach to keeping residents safe when dealing with Damp, Mould & Condensation (DMC). It will ensure that every case will be dealt with thoroughly, fairly and with transparency.
- 1.2 This objective of this policy is to provide an approach to DMC which focuses on the residents as the single most important factor, rather than the buildings.
- 1.3 This policy will provide two key objectives
 1. The reactive approach to dealing with DMC is consistent and effective
 2. The proactive approach will help reduce and prevent future cases of DMC

This policy underpins Kirklees Council's commitment of '*Finding our Silence*' to systematically address current and reduce future cases of DMC issues residents' homes. This includes a proactive approach to identifying cases of DMC including those previously unreported cases.

The policy aims to remove the 'stigma' or negative perception of DMC in people's homes. This includes the removal of 'blame' or focus on 'lifestyle' as a root cause. It demonstrates that Kirklees Council is taking responsibility will work with residents on an individual basis to find solutions to each case of DMC specific to that home.

The policy has been developed to actively encourage residents to report issues of DMC at the earliest opportunity and is providing the training, information and equipment to do this. This policy is underpinned by a change in procedure which will create significantly easier and more effective reporting mechanisms for residents.

It provides a clear focus on identifying individual resident's specific circumstances and vulnerabilities, which will be considered when working to provide the most effective solutions to DMC in a particular home. This will ensure a bespoke response to each case of DMC based on the specific requirements of the residents.

The policy will put effective communication with residents at the core of the approach. All residents will be asked to tell us what the issues are and how they are affecting their lives. This will be built into the individual response and actions for each case of DMC. The focus of the policy is on the resident in their home, rather than the 'property'

Residents will be kept informed of the progress of their case of DMC through every stage of the process and be provided with accurate timescales for each action (e.g. survey, repairs, mould treatment). They will receive regular updates and all actions will be confirmed in writing to each resident so that they are fully aware of the current position or next actions. Any delays or changes will also be communicated as soon as they arise.

The introduction of follow-up surveys will ensure that residents are assured that their case of DMC has been resolved to their satisfaction and provide them with the assurance that all issues, including root cause, have been resolved.

This policy embeds a coordinated and holistic approach to service delivery, including looking at previous repairs, disrepairs or other works (e.g specialist/structural) carried out to the property.

This policy provides a clear focus on prevention and identification of root causes rather than just treating the symptoms of DMC. The use of existing data, mapping, trends and property type will be used to inform and develop planned programmes of work to help prevent new and repeat occurrences of DMC.

It will introduce a more strategic approach to prevention of DMC In residents' homes and put preventative measures in place- (insulation/ ventilation/ energy advice and support)

This policy will embed a proactive approach to preventing cases of DMC, putting greater emphasis on feedback from residents and 3rd party agencies to provide information to inform where issues could arise, and enable preventative measures to be put in place.

Kirklees Council (KC) is committed to ensuring the health and safety of our residents, staff, contractors, and others who may be affected by damp, mould, and condensation (DMC) in the homes that we manage. We will ensure that our residents live in homes that are safe, secure, warm, and free from issues hazardous to health and that the Council's assets are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould, and condensation.

- 1.2 Kirklees Council has developed this policy to address the management of mould, damp, and condensation in our homes. The policy outlines our responsibilities in relation to completing necessary surveys, identified repairs and remedial works, collecting, reviewing, and managing relevant data as well as how we aim to protect residents' safety and wellbeing and ensure they are provided with a high-quality, responsive customer experience which is tailored to support their individual needs.
- 1.3 The well-being and structural integrity of our residents' homes can be severely affected by the presence of damp, mould, and condensation. Kirklees Council is committed to

meeting the objectives outlined in this policy, as well as adhering to the supporting operational procedures.

- 1.4 We are committed to the equitable treatment of residents experiencing damp, mould, and condensation issues, by ensuring fairness and consistency when addressing concerns. Kirklees Council will consider the Equality Act 2010 and make appropriate provisions for those with disabilities or support needs when implementing this policy. Whenever anyone reports issues with damp, mould, or condensation, we will approach the situation with compassion and respect, refraining from assigning blame or assuming the root cause.
- 1.5 It will ensure that staff, our contractors, and others are aware of, understand, and are equipped with the necessary information to deliver the requirements of our procedures in respect of issues relating to damp, mould, and condensation.
- 1.6 It is the shared responsibility of tenants, staff, contractors, and other relevant stakeholders to make sure that incidents of damp and mould are reported and acted upon in a timely manner. It is also a priority of this Policy to ensure that our residents are made aware of and understand our approach to the management of damp, mould, and condensation, as well as their own responsibilities, in a collective effort to minimise damp and mould in Council homes.

This Policy will meet the following requirements:

- Ensure staff are appropriately trained and this policy and its supporting procedures are adopted and embedded into service delivery.
- Comply with the relevant and applicable statutory, regulatory, and legislative obligations.
- Provide clarity on our overall approach to damp, mould, and condensation.
- Ensure that we are delivering a consistent service to our residents, whilst considering the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure that residents have access to support, advice, and guidance on preventing, treating, and controlling damp, condensation, and mould as well as information on how to report issues to Kirklees Council.
- Treat anyone reporting damp and mould with respect and empathy and provide support where required.
- Respond effectively to individual reports of damp and mould, focusing on identifying the root cause and implementing the right solution.
- Communicate with our residents who are affected by this process to ensure they are fully aware of our procedures and protocols for taking timely and appropriate remedial action and how we will quickly respond if things go wrong.
- Set out our proactive approach to deal with wider issues around damp, mould and condensation.
- Provide assurance to our stakeholders that our approach to damp and mould is robust and effective.
- Focus on working in partnership by interacting with and listening to feedback from residents, staff, and contractors to help shape improved service delivery.
- Reviewing data to find our 'silence', where residents have not requested services from Kirklees Council, and therefore a proactive approach will be taken to visit such residencies.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy relates to all housing stock owned and/or managed by Kirklees Council.

2.2 This policy relates to all stakeholders, inclusive of residents, staff and contractors reporting instances of damp, mould, and condensation.

3. Statutory, Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

3.1 This policy supports Kirklees Council in complying with the following requirements:

- Defective Premises Act 1972 (Section 4)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Home Standard Regulator of Social Housing 2015
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Pre Action-Protocol for Housing Condition Claims England 2021
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024

4. Definitions

4.1 **Mould** is a fungus which spreads through spores which can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or moisture has formed on surfaces. Mould can often look like black, white, or green patches and when its undisturbed it can cause allergic reactions and irritations to people.

4.2 **Damp** is the presence of unwanted moisture in the structure of a building caused either by the intrusion of water from outside of the building or from internal elements such as leaks or caused by condensation within the structure. Damp can be caused by leaks from plumbing faults, failed appliances and poorly sealed baths and showers, as well as Rising Damp or Penetrating Damp.

4.3 **Rising Damp** is the movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building through capillary action and can occur if the damp proof course (DPC) of a property has failed.

4.4 **Penetrating Damp** is caused by water ingress into properties from the outside. Examples include defective mortar with gaps/holes, broken roof tiles, leaking gutters, blocked drain/gulley, or floods.

4.5 **Moisture** describes very small drops of water, either in the air or on a surface. Every day activities produce moisture in a property, such as:

- Bathing or showering.

- Drying clothes indoors.
- Cooking and boiling a kettle.
- Washing the dishes; and
- Breathing, which also has an impact.

For reference, the average two-person household emits around nine litres of water vapour/moisture each day, and that moisture must go somewhere to prevent condensation.

- 4.6 **Condensation** is the natural output of the process of moisture in the air meeting cold surfaces like tiles, walls, windows, and worktops, and turns water vapour into liquid, as water droplets. It happens all the time, especially when it's colder outside. When air gets colder, it cannot hold a lot of moisture, so droplets of water may appear near windows or doors, in the corner of rooms, behind cupboards or wardrobes, or on other cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. It mainly occurs during cold weather and its more likely to happen in homes with more people in them.
- 4.7 **Humidity** is a measure of how much water vapour is in the air and a hygrometer can help measure humidity. A relative humidity rating between 40% to 60% on a hygrometer is considered ideal. High levels of humidity is typically recognised when the environment is warm with excessive water vapour in the air.
- 4.8 **HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System)** is a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. There are 29 categories including the hazard of damp and mould.

5. The Council's responsibilities

- 5.1 The Cabinet and Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees Council retains the overall accountability for the provision and operation of this policy.
- 5.2 The Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhoods has the responsibility for the consistent implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- 5.3 The Head of Assets and Development is responsible for the delivery of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) surveys and for the collating and retention of property data including damp, mould and condensation.
- 5.4 The Service Manager Assets is responsible for appointing the contractor(s) (includes internal and external workers) to complete repairs and remedial works where building defects and failures have been identified by surveys, as well as the development of planned capital improvement programmes to eradicate the causes of damp and mould.
- 5.5 The General Manager Assets is responsible for resourcing and co-ordinating HHSRS property surveys, providing residents with hygrometers and information leaflets as well as raising the required repairs and remedial works.
- 5.6 The Head of Property Services is responsible for the delivery of repairs and maintenance services, including the application of mould treatments and the removal of building fabric issues creating damp, mould, and condensation hazards. They will utilise an internal workforce primarily, as well as a robust supply chain of third-party

contractors to complete works where specialisms and/or additional capacity is required.

- 5.7 The Service Manager Property Services is responsible for resourcing and co-ordinating the required repairs and maintenance services.
- 5.8 Under delegated authority it is the responsibility of all staff and those working on behalf of Kirklees Council to ensure their work is carried out in accordance with this policy and related procedures.

6. Governance

- 6.1 The day-to-day operational governance of damp and mould will be managed by the Damp and Mould Action Group. This group will report to the Service Managers Operational Group and then to the Asset Management & Building Safety Steering Group.
- 6.2 Performance reports will be provided to the Cabinet, Senior Management Team (SMT) and Homes and Neighbourhoods Investment Board (HNIB) Building Safety Assurance Board (BSAB) to monitor the service delivery of damp, mould, and condensation activities.
- 6.2 To measure and monitor the effectiveness of damp, mould, and condensation activities, and provide stakeholders assurance, our performance reports will include the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

Surveying

- Number of HHSRS hazards identified by severity.
- Number of surveys raised and appointed.
- Number of surveys completed.
- Average E2E (end to end, in days), reported to survey completed.
- Three month and six-month post works surveys raised and appointed.
- Three month and six-month post works surveys completed.
- % of Three month and six-month post works surveys completed.

Repairs and Remedial Works

- Number of work orders raised and appointed.
- Number of work orders completed.
- Average E2E (end to end, in days), orders raised to works completed.
- Customer satisfaction.

The frequency of submitting the performance reports will depend on the governance forum, as well as the time parameters required i.e., weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

- 6.3 Kirklees Council will ensure that budgets are used effectively and efficiently to manage damp, mould and condensation hazards whilst provide a value for money (VFM) service to residents.
- 6.4 Resident satisfaction surveys will be completed to analyse our resident's perspective of service delivery in relation to damp, mould, and condensation.

- 6.5 Staff and contractor feedback will be used to identify trends, common themes, and opportunities for improvement within service delivery.
- 6.6 Where relevant information is available, Kirklees Council will benchmark our performance against other social housing providers to review the effectiveness of this policy and supporting procedures.
- 6.7 The supporting procedural documents to this policy will provide greater detail, information and context for staff and contractors to deliver a robust and consistent damp, mould, and condensation service.

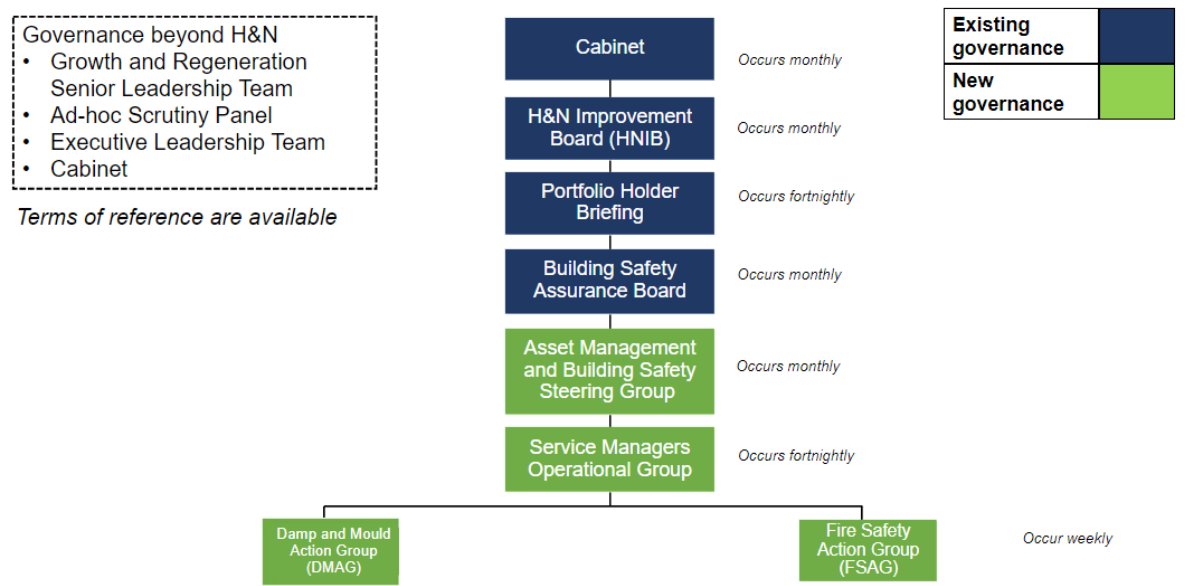
The DMC procedure will amplify the sequencing and delivery of the service, which includes the following elements:

- Reporting DMC.
- Prioritising DMC.
- Surveying DMC.
- Remedial Actions.
- Six-month post works visit.
- Recurring reports of DMC.
- Access.
- Complaints; and
- Asset Management.

6.8 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis; however, it may be reviewed earlier:

- If lessons learned and service feedback identifies changes which need to be adopted and embedded into service delivery; and
- There are changes to existing legislation, statutory or regulatory requirements, as well as the introduction of new requirements.

Below is the current governance arrangement structure



7. Reporting DMC

7.1 Anyone will be able to report damp, mould and condensation hazards using various methods:

- Phone - contact 01484 414800 (out of hours emergencies 01484 414850)
- Email – dmc@kirklees.gov.uk
- Online – [Report a repair](#)
- Face to face, with Homes and Neighbourhoods staff.

Residents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible to assist with the prioritisation of DMC activities.

8. Prioritising DMC

8.1 Staff will be trained to identify and triage the severity of the damp, mould and condensation hazards raised and be able to prioritise surveys effectively.

Residents' individual circumstances and vulnerabilities will be identified at the earliest possible stage and the information used to prioritise and order works accordingly

9. Surveying DMC

9.1 Surveys will be completed by competent staff, or suitably qualified independent surveyors, utilising the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to capture information to prioritise any required repairs and remedial works, as well as data to influence future planned capital improvement programmes.

9.2 Whilst at the property, upon the completion of the survey, we will ensure residents have access to:

- Guidance and information leaflets (without apportioning blame) on how to identify and reduce condensation to prevent the growth and spread of mould.
- A link to Kirklees Council's damp, mould and condensation webpage: [Damp, mould and condensation | Kirklees Council.](#)
- A free hygrometer, for the resident to measure and monitor the humidity in the property.
- A free moisture absorber and odour neutraliser to assist with any excess moisture and condensation in the property.

9.3 From the survey findings, the necessary treatments and work orders will be raised and commissioned to the relevant contractor(s), who will make access arrangements with the resident.

9.4 An outcome letter from the survey, detailing what was identified, any necessary works and the next steps will be sent to the resident. A copy of the survey and outcome letter will be stored in the appropriate repository on Kirklees Council systems.

9.5 A three month check with the resident and six-month follow-up visit will be arranged with residents who have reported damp, mould, and condensation hazards where repairs and remedial works have been completed. These will be carried out based on the scale of the original issue, risk and residents individual circumstances

10. Access and Decants

- 10.1 Kirklees Council, and its appointed contractors, will follow a robust and consistent access procedure to make reasonable attempts to access a property and carry out a survey, or repairs and remedial works.
- 10.2 All no access attempts will be recorded on Kirklees Council systems to provide evidence and adherence to procedural requirements.
- 10.3 Depending on the recommendations from the survey, the scale of works required, and the complexities associated with the property and resident, it may be identified that decanting the resident(s) would be a reasonable adjustment to eradicate the damp and mould hazard. Residents will be supported by Kirklees Council Homes and Neighbourhoods colleagues in these instances, who will adhere to the Council's [Housing Allocations Policy](#), which includes supporting information regarding decants.

11 Asset Management

- 11.1 Kirklees Council aims to identify and rectify the underlying causes of damp and mould, and will work with residents, staff and contractors to ensure that the fabric of its properties are free of defects and protected from deterioration and damage caused by damp, mould, and condensation.
- 11.2 Treatment, repairs and remedial works will be commissioned to suitable and competent contractor(s), who will ensure works are delivered safely and in accordance with this policy, other applicable policies and supporting procedures.
- 11.3 Data from completed DMC surveys, and stock condition surveys, will be collected and analysed to make evidence-based plans for future capital improvement programmes.
- 11.4 Should a property defect be identified through surveys that is either currently recurring or is likely to recur within other homes, works will be identified and carried out as a planned programme. This ensures a proactive approach to tackling defects that may result in damp, mould, or condensation in the future.

12 Complaints, Claims and Compliments

- 12.1 The Customer Experience Team handle all compliments and complaints associated to Homes and Neighbourhoods in relation to services provided to council residents and leaseholders. The team can be contacted using:
- Phone - contact 01484 414800.
 - Online – [Compliments and Complaints webpage](#)
- 12.2 The [Housing Ombudsman code](#) sets out good practice that allows Kirklees Council to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.

13 Related Policies and Procedures

- 13.1 This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the following internal and external documents.

Internal

- Damp, mould and condensation (DMC) procedure.
- Tenant's guide to DMC.
- Homes and Neighbourhoods Complaints policy and procedure.
- Homes and Neighbourhoods Safety, Health, and Environmental policy.
- Homes and Neighbourhoods Repairs and Maintenance policy.
- Homes and Neighbourhoods, No Access policy and procedure
- Asbestos Management policy and procedure; and
- Decant policy procedure.

External

- Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Gap Analysis
- Housing Ombudsman Special Report on Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

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Tenant:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

Job Number:	
Surveyor:	
Date of Survey:	
Time:	
External Temperature:	
Weather Conditions:	
Thermostat Temperature:	
Thermostat Setting / Heating Frequency:	
Number of occupants (inc. pets) at time of visit:	()

Room	Relative Humidity	Air Temp.	Dew Point	Wall Temp.	Floor Covering (Yes / No + type)	Window Covering (Yes / No + type)	Extraction / Ventilation (Yes / No + Pass / Fail)
Hallway							
Kitchen							
Dining Room							
Living Room							
Bathroom							
Bedroom 1							
Bedroom 2							
Bedroom 3							
Bedroom 4							

Tenants' description of the issues and expected resolution (include date and signature):

Signature:	Date:
-------------------	--------------

Surveyors' observations:

--

Root Cause Identified:

Root Cause Definition	✓ / ✗
Condensation:	
Penetrating Damp:	
Rising Damp:	
Leaks:	
Insulation (insufficient or missing):	

Advice given to tenant:

Referrals Required:

	✓ / ✗	Reason
Energy Advice:		
Money Advice:		
Digital Inclusion:		

Repairs required:

Trade	Band	Description	Asbestos?

Mould Treatment:

	2 Stage Ceiling	2 Stage Walls	Reseal	Stripping	Stripping Woodchip	4 Stage Ceiling	4 Stage Walls	Sempatap
Lounge								
Kitchen								
Dining Room								
WC								
Bathroom								
Bedroom 1								
Bedroom 2								

Bedroom 3								
Hallway								

PO Box 1720, Huddersfield, HD1 9EL

phone: 01484 414800
email: dmc@kirklees.gov.uk
web: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk>
Twitter: @KirkleesCouncil

Date: Thursday, 01 August 2024

[insert Resident Name]
[insert Street Address]
[insert Town]
[insert Postcode]

Our Reference: [insert CaseViewer Reference Number] / [insert JobRef]

Dear [insert Resident Name],

Acknowledgement of Reported Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC)

We can confirm receipt of your reported DMC issue on **[insert date reported]** and a case has been opened on our system, **[insert Job Reference]**.

Since you reported this to us, we have contacted you and triaged your initial report of DMC in preparation of a survey. An Assets Surveyor has been allocated to your case and will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient date and time to survey your home to identify the root cause of your DMC issue.

Please respond to any communications from our Assets Surveyor, who will be arranging access with you via phone or text message, and visits to your home.

Their contact details are:

Assets Surveyor Name; **[insert name]**
Assets Surveyor Phone; **[insert contact number]**
Assets Surveyor Email; **[insert email]**

Please note, to ensure that the DMC issue which you have reported can be surveyed at the earliest opportunity, access to your home is a priority.

Please be mindful, it is a condition of your tenancy that you must give our officers, agents, and contractors unobstructed access to inspect your home or do work on it if we have given you at least 24 hours' notice, in writing. Also, we do ask that you ensure the area(s) of your home which require inspecting are clear and accessible; doing so will help to ensure the survey is completed with minimal disruption.

If you would like to find out more information regarding our approach to damp, mould and condensation, you can visit our website www.kirklees.gov.uk and navigate to Menu > Housing and Homelessness > Council Housing > Safety and services > Damp, mould and condensation.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Cleaver', written over a horizontal line.

David Cleaver
Service Manager Assets