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# What is homelessness?

Homelessness takes many forms. It is more than simply people who are sleeping rough, who make up a small proportion of the total number of those who are homeless. Homelessness can be:

- Statutory homeless households in priority need in temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast
- Single homeless living in supported housing or in a hostel
- 'Hidden homeless', in insecure arrangements with friends or others, known as 'sofa surfing'.
- Households in fear of losing their home, or on the verge of actually losing their home
- Rough sleeping



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# Homelessness in Cheshire East

**Cheshire East Council**

The 2017 Review of homelessness in Cheshire East found:

- Some areas of concern, especially concerning gaps in service and lack of multi-agency working for some categories of clients
- Issues around young people / young adults (especially those who are single), and those who have complex needs, including chaotic behaviour
- People leaving mental health care with no home is an increasing problem, (with work being done to deliver improvements), as is the link between homelessness and substance misuse issues
- Access to the private rented sector is a challenge but some improvements have been seen. Different options are currently being considered
- The consultation events held as part of the Review process demonstrated that there is a real commitment from agencies and providers in Cheshire East to achieve positive outcomes for people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness.



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## Homelessness Strategy Review

Many people approach us for advice and assistance. There were almost 4,000 over the last 3 years:

Financial Year	Office presented at	Office presented at		
	Crewe	Macclesfield	Total	% Change
2014/2015	657	511	1,168	-
2015/2016	780	548	1,328	+13.7%
2016/2017	756	588	1,344	+ 1.2% increase
Total	2,193	1,647	3,840	-



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## Homelessness Strategy Review

Some households are homeless and need accommodating.

The number of households accepted as homeless has gone up by 31% between 2015 and 2016, with the main causes of homelessness over the last 3 years:

Year	In priority need and unintentionally homeless	Main causes of homelessness:			Total
		Asked to leave by family or friends	Domestic abuse	End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	
2014	114	48	23	7	78
2015	84	24	18	9	51
2016	110	44	22	12	78
Total	308	116 (37.6%)	63 (20.4%)	28 (9%)	207 (67.2%)



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## Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible face of homelessness.

- The number of rough sleepers is continuously monitored, through information from partners, who also provide an estimate or count of rough sleeping on one night each year chosen between 1st October and 30th November. This is a snapshot on a single night, and not an assessment of the total number of rough sleepers over the whole year.
- Cheshire East has typically had low levels of rough sleeping. The Homelessness Strategy has a priority to ensure that residents do not have to sleep rough, and a number of interventions are currently being planned.
- The DCLG is planning to release the 2017 data for rough sleeping in late January 2018.
- Rough sleeping is being addressed through a preventative approach, using a number of things, such as the Upstream project, and a Hard to House panel will be looking at helping entrenched rough sleepers with accommodation, benefits, and employment issues.



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### Prevention and Relief

Prevention Duty

- Cheshire East must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any at risk eligible applicant, regardless of priority need
- This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live

Relief Duty

- Cheshire East must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation
- Help could be, for example, providing a bond guarantee, funding a rent deposit or working with a private landlord to make properties available

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### Prevention and Relief

The number of successful homelessness preventions in Cheshire East has increased year on year, with 2,261 households assisted between 2014 and 2016.

Over this time, 1,813 (82%) households were assisted to find alternative accommodation.

As well as homeless prevention, homelessness can be relieved. Total cases of prevention and relief in 2016 increased from 577 in 2014 to 878 (an increase of 52%).

Year	Able to remain in existing home	Assisted to obtain alternative accommodation	Homelessness Relieved
2014	135	436	16
2015	122	663	21
2016	128	714	36

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### Prevention and Relief

A priority for the new Homelessness Strategy will be to explore new ways to help more households to remain in their own home.

This will be done by:

- Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Mitigating the impact of welfare reform.
- Assisting those facing homelessness from the social rented sector and private rented sector.
- Reducing the number of households evicted from owner-occupied properties.
- Targeted property adaptations to enable people to remain where they are.
- Working with partners to enable households to access education, training, and employment.

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### How do we compare in 2016-2017?



	Able to remain in home	Assisted into alternative accommodation	Total	Number per 1,000 households	Total Prevention and Relief
Cheshire East	150	668	818	4.97	867
North Somerset	138	470	608	6.53	633
Wiltshire	107	689	796	3.86	796
East Riding of Yorkshire	153	5	158	1.07	182
CW & C	1,281	968	2,249	15.58	2,258
Warrington	275	398	673	7.50	732



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### Questions?



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### Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 (HRA)



The HRA places a strong focus on early prevention work and the lifetime of the new Homelessness Strategy will see the HRA introduced then fully embedded in Cheshire East practices.

It is imperative that our focus remains on early identification of, and intervention with, individuals whose accommodation is not settled, as this will result in significantly improved outcomes for those affected.



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### The Homelessness Reduction Act 2018



The HRA will be implemented on the 3rd April 2018, with the public body Duty to Refer being deferred until October 2018.

There are new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness.

The categories of people eligible for Council support has been expanded, in a move away from the current focus on 'priority housing lists' based on applicants' vulnerabilities, and moving Cheshire East priorities from 'crisis management' to a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness.

The HRA requires:

- free homelessness advice and information services to be provided to all residents AND
- Provision of advice designed with certain vulnerable groups in mind:
- Care leavers, former armed forces, people leaving custody, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital and people with mental health issues



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### Homelessness Reduction Act

Advice must include:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Securing accommodation when homeless
- Help available to people threatened with, or homeless
- How to access the available help



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### Homelessness Reduction Act

The HRA lengthens the period during which someone might be threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days.

Personalised housing plans

- We must carry out an assessment of the circumstances and needs of all eligible applicants who are homeless, or threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days.
- The assessment has to be shared with the applicant
- A Personalised Housing Plan will be drawn up which sets out the 'reasonable steps' the authority and the applicant will take (and other agencies/people as appropriate)
- 'Reasonable steps' should be tailored to the individual and the plan should be realistic



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- Front line staff
- Advocates
- Elected Members & MPs
- Customers

- Training and awareness (Elected Members' training on the 30<sup>th</sup> January)
- Strong Leadership
- Getting Officers and Managers on board NOW
- Recruiting additional staff
- New strategic documents to help deliver change:



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1. Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless
2. Help people who are homeless to secure appropriate affordable accommodation
3. Provide interventions so no-one has to sleep rough in Cheshire East
4. Ensure adequate support is in place to help people maintain and sustain accommodation

- Consultation closed – Adoption March 2018
- Homelessness Strategy Steering Group – Multi Agency approach to tackling Homelessness



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- Ensure that the Policy is HRA compliant
- respond to customers' comments
- respond to Elected Members' comments
- tackles under-occupation to make best use of our housing stock

A review of Homechoice and IT improvements have recently been carried out making Homechoice more efficient and user - friendly.



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Questions?



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