



Homelessness in Cheshire East

Scrutiny Committee January 2018





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





Homelessness in Cheshire East

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.





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



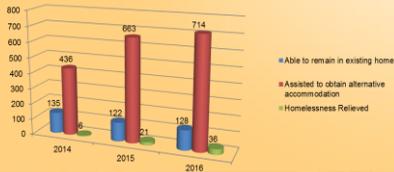


Prevention and Relief

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%).





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.



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



Questions?



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.





A different way of doing things

A cultural change for everyone is needed to deliver the HRA, including:

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

This cultural change may be achieved through:

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





Homelessness Strategy

A new Homelessness Strategy for 2018 - 2021 has been produced. It has used information on current and emerging issues, as identified in the Homelessness Strategy Review, to identify new priorities.

The Homelessness Strategy's 4 priorities are:

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





CE Allocations Policy

The CE Allocations Policy is being reviewed.

The Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate social housing. With approximately 6,500 registered for housing and only an average of 1,300 properties available annually it is vital the policy strikes the balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need.

The Policy is being reviewed to:

- 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.





Questions?

