

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council Homelessness Strategy

2013 - 2018



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Foreword

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review in the Borough every 5 years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other statutory and voluntary organisations. This is our third strategy and builds upon the work of the first two carried out in 2003 and 2008.

We urge you to read the case studies in the Homelessness Review document, as these very powerfully bring home the impact on people's lives of homelessness, the risks that go with homelessness, and the impact it has on the ability of individuals to deal with problems when the lack of an affordable, secure and settled home hinders their pathway to recovery from trauma and distress.

This homelessness review has informed our Homeless Strategy for the next 5 years. We know that homelessness, and the risk of homelessness, blights lives. Without an affordable, settled and secure home it is very difficult to establish a sound basis on which to build a future. The impact on all generations is significant. Children who experience homelessness are disadvantaged in terms of their health, wellbeing and education. Young people are excluded from opportunities that are available to their peers, and at a higher risk of becoming victims and perpetrators of crime. Older homeless people experience poor health and social isolation.

We are proud of the work we have done to prevent homelessness, and address the needs of homeless people, but this strategy makes it clear that more needs to be done. Partnership working is the answer to achieving an end to homelessness in Sefton. We must work together to achieve this.

Ian Maher
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Tourism.

Acknowledgement and thanks

The Council would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and effort from colleagues, partners and the Chartered Institute of Housing in the compiling and delivery of the Homeless Review document and this Homelessness Strategy.

- Sefton Council (Strategic Housing, Housing Options Team, Drug Action Team, Supporting People, Looked After Children Service, Neighbourhoods)
- Sefton CVS
- Venus Project
- SWACA
- Light for Life
- Salvation Army (Bootle)
- DISC
- Riverside Housing Association
- Forum Housing Association
- One Vision Housing
- BOSCO Society
- CHART
- Whitechapel Centre
- Sefton CAB
- Private Sector landlords
- Service Users
- Chartered Institute of Housing (Domini Gunn, Lorraine Regan and Neil Morland)

Sefton MBC Strategic Priorities and Links

Below is a summary of the corporate priorities of the **Council**. This sets out the Council's approach and we need to ensure this Homeless Strategy supports its corporate priorities and 4 main objectives:

- 1. Together develop healthy & well supported communities wellbeing**
- 2. Together develop access to opportunities for all**
- 3. Together develop attractive & sustainable places & communities**
- 4. Together empowering and supporting residents**

The 6 Priority Themes emerging from this are; Economy, The Most Vulnerable, Health & Wellbeing, Reshaping the Council, Resilient Communities, and Environment

The **Health & Wellbeing Board's** Strategy, and elements that are contained within the Sefton Strategic Needs Analysis (SSNA), which specifically have a clear relationship with "housing", are:

SSNA Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives for Health and Wellbeing in Sefton are:

1. Ensure all children have a positive start in life
2. Support people early to prevent and treat avoidable illnesses and reduce inequalities in health
3. Support older people and those with long term conditions and disabilities to remain independent and in their own homes
4. Promote positive mental health and wellbeing
5. Seek to address the wider social, environmental and economic issues that contribute to poor health and wellbeing
6. Build capacity and resilience to empower and strengthen communities

SSNA Strategic Priorities for Health and Wellbeing

1. healthy and well supported communities
2. access to opportunities for all
3. attractive and sustainable place and communities
4. empowered and supported residents

Within this Homelessness Strategy, we must be aware that homelessness, poor and insecure housing will also negatively affect other more general “health” priorities.

It is apparent that much of the actions contained within this Strategy will have positive effect on these priorities and also the measured outcomes relating to established targets and financial performance. Each objective and priority has been individually numbered so that reference to them can be made within the Action Plan contained at the end of this Strategy.

We must also take account of how other housing related services (Private Sector Housing, Planning, Disabled Facility Grants, Environmental Protection etc) also effect the Homelessness Strategy, but also how those services impact on, or are impacted by, the priorities and objectives listed above. Poorly maintained and unimproved homes have a substantial impact on health & wellbeing of the occupants, particularly those defined as “vulnerable” (children and young people, older persons, disabled and ill persons).

Homelessness Strategy

This strategy sets out the future actions that will be taken in Sefton to tackle homelessness. The document has been developed from the review of homelessness in Sefton, carried out between November 2012 and June 2013. We strongly recommend that the Homelessness Review document is read in conjunction with this strategy. This strategy focuses on the recommendations from the review and translates them into a series of actions to be taken over the next five years.

This strategy will focus equally on tackling all forms of homelessness, including:

- Statutory homelessness
- Street homelessness
- Single homelessness
- Hidden homelessness

We have set out the principle objectives of our homelessness strategy. These have been adopted to address the identified priorities and to ensure that the Council's actions reflect the legal requirements of a homelessness strategy:

1. Reduce the levels of homelessness
2. Prioritise the prevention of homelessness
3. Ensure sufficient accommodation is available to tackle homelessness
4. Provide support, information, advice and assistance to tackle homelessness
5. Make available the required levels of resources for tackling homelessness

Consultation

Homelessness Review Consultation: The views from a variety of stakeholders were sought as part of this homelessness review; this included both service commissioners and service providers from the public, third and private sectors. A mixture of consultation opportunities were made available to stakeholders, including workshops, surveys and interviews.

The views from a broad range of service users were also sought as part of the homelessness review that informs this strategy. A series of interviews were held at a variety of locations throughout the borough including at services that offer community-based support as well as accommodation-based support. A workshop was also held with stakeholders to capture their ideas and opinions. Over 120 current and past service users took part in the consultation exercise.

Key stakeholders attended interviews to assist with the research for the review that informs this strategy. Stakeholders hold a substantial range of anecdotal evidence that compliments the statistical evidence that is collected and held by the local authority and other public bodies. The knowledge and skills from Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health in delivering our action plan, and achieving our goals for tackling homelessness, is essential in delivering the strategy action plan.

The results of the Homelessness Review consultation exercise have informed the Conclusions and Recommendations within the Review document which in turn has informed and influenced this Action Plan. The consultation results are contained within the Review document and within a separate document entitled "You Said, We Did". This second document has been shared with our partner agencies with the aim of providing a response to consultation participants and to confirm that their comments and concerns are valued and have been considered.

An annual consultation exercise will be held with service users where they can share their views on the help they received when homeless or threatened with homelessness as part of this on-going review.

SSNA Consultation & Engagement exercise: as part of the consultation and engagement exercise process for the “shadow” Health & Wellbeing Board a number of key findings relating to “housing” as it effects specific groups are listed below:

People with Learning Disabilities

People live at home with their family or in supported housing. They value the support from family and friends and the independence gained from living in supported housing and the support from staff. They do however:

- need more help to understand bills
- want more choice and involvement in decisions about housing
- need adaptations

Children in Care and Care Leavers

- Housing - good quality affordable housing is important as young people move into accommodation at a young age. Keeping tenancies is not always possible without support. Experience of poor quality housing which was damp.
- Community information and support - support financially for first-time/young parents with rent and childcare costs for young parents that are living alone or to enable young people to get their own home

Feedback from Parents/Carers

- Housing – concerns over private landlords (North Sefton)

Drug Action Team Service Users

- Housing – concern that people will be asked to move away from family and friends and the support mechanisms as they will be required to down-size. Housing for young people is also needed. Concern that there are too many empty homes and that more properties are needed for the homeless

Older People

- Housing – some older people want to downsize their properties to release equity or to help family members, but difficult to get appropriate properties

Sefton Carers' Centre – Users

- Housing – feel that too much of the area is designated 'green space', inhibiting housing developments, although current housing stock could be upgraded, instead of new housing being built. Housing conditions need to be more habitable

Staff and partners through visioning events

Priority - How to create the right environment (housing, jobs, amenities, transport) to attract and keep young families

Priority – Health and Wellbeing for Everyone

Priority- Develop high quality and affordable housing

Perceived gaps in the Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment as identified by our partners and our communities

- Physical and Environmental Preventative Services - including, affordable warmth and housing conditions (link between poor health and housing in poor physical condition and winter deaths in relation to fuel poverty)
- The quality of housing is an issue for young people in care and care leavers as this can and does impact on their wellbeing e.g. damp in properties.

Homelessness Strategy Governance

Delivery of the actions in this Homeless Strategy will require the involvement of a number of parties and partners. As a pre-requisite to this it will be important to establish appropriate governance arrangements. This needs to be an early action.

During the Homelessness Review exercise, and leading up to the production of this Strategy, a Homeless Forum has been established. All partners are keen that this Forum should continue to meet at an operational (day-to-day) level. There will however, also be the requirement for the outcomes of the Forum to influence and/or reflect the larger strategic outcomes of, for instance, the Council's broad commissioning priorities.

It is imperative that the forums include people with decision-making powers, commissioning responsibilities, and statutory responsibilities for tackling homelessness to ensure delivery of commitments and actions in this strategy.

The Council is currently establishing the overall structure of the Health & Wellbeing Board. Within the proposed structure of the Board, there is an Programmes Group (that is concerned with, amongst other things, Strategic level commissioning) and beneath that a layer, which will include 3 groups focussing on; Early Life (aged 0-19), Older People and the Wider Determinants of ill-health. It is within the Wider Determinants Group that it is felt the Homeless Forum would be best placed and represented to feed into the Programmes Group.

The Homeless Forum would also be a sub-group of the Sefton Housing Partnership.

Definition of homelessness

Homelessness to the general public may be synonymous with people sleeping rough. However the definition is much broader than that and perhaps might simply be viewed as someone who is without permanent or settled accommodation. As a result of legislation and the historical growth of the homelessness sector, the picture is not quite as simple. Homelessness is a complex issue and difficult to define, with many different types of homelessness ranging from 'sofa surfing' to rough sleeping.

The legal provisions for statutory homelessness are contained in the [1996 Housing Act](#), the [Homelessness Act 2002](#) and [The Homelessness \(Priority Need for Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2002](#). There is also a Code of Guidance which sets out how a local authority should interpret the legislation.

Local authorities have a range of duties to people who are homeless, and this always includes advice and assistance and often the provision of temporary accommodation. There is also an ongoing duty to some homeless people. The main housing duty is to accommodate those who are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

The primary aim of the homelessness strategy will be to ensure that everyone who is homeless, or at risk of homelessness, is able to access the best advice, information and assistance to help them find a solution.

Causes and impact of homelessness

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is a key test in determining whether homeless people without children are considered to have a priority need for housing under homelessness legislation. In homelessness terms, vulnerability means a person is more likely to suffer harm than the ordinary homeless person if they become homeless. To be accepted as vulnerable, the person needs to demonstrate that homelessness would have a greater detrimental impact on them than it would on an average homeless person.

Under Section 189 of the Housing Act 1996, a homeless person will have a priority need for re-housing if s/he is vulnerable as a result of:

- old age
- mental illness or learning disability (mental handicap) or physical disability
- having been looked after, accommodated or fostered and is aged 21 or more
- having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
- having been in custody or detention
- ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out
- or any other special reason.

Section 10.12 onwards of the [Homelessness Code of Guidance](#) gives local authorities guidance on the interpretation of vulnerability.

Issues such as property availability and affordability are key factors influencing levels of homelessness. Also, issues relating to allocations and housing management and policies need to ensure they are geared towards meeting needs of homeless people and overcoming barriers to settled accommodation.

Various opportunities, particularly around supportive interventions to prevent both anti-social behaviour and subsequent homelessness are critical to the success in our work to address and prevent homelessness. The Supporting People Strategy has been crucial in developing services for people who are homeless and has seen the development of innovative and flexible services to both prevent homelessness and to support those who are in need.

Impact of homelessness

Drug and alcohol research links homelessness and substance misuse. Drug users may need accommodation so they can receive treatment to help work to stabilise their condition. Research shows that offending behaviour can result in and be linked to, homelessness especially amongst single people. Domestic abuse is also a factor.

Research recognises the links between poor life chances, and educational outcomes, for young people and children who experience homelessness. There is a need for further initiatives focusing on young people and children, including those in the care system.

National research and guidance link poor health and homelessness. As a consequence it is essential that health, public health and social care strategies, and their priorities, form effective linkages with this strategy.

Context

Sefton has a poorer socio-economic demographic compared to the national average therefore homelessness is likely to remain an issue and perhaps be more of a concern than is it elsewhere in the country. The five Merseyside local authorities have successfully worked together to develop a sub-regional approach to ending rough sleeping.

There are big differences in the quality of life for those living in the most prosperous areas and those living in the poorest areas. Nearly one in four people have low incomes and poor living conditions. Most of these people live around Bootle and Litherland with a smaller concentration around Southport. These areas have high levels of long-term unemployment, low skill levels or skills which are no longer needed, experience higher crime rates, poorer housing and health problems.

Over 86% of homes in Sefton are privately owned, however, around 20% are in serious disrepair or do not meet the statutory fitness standard. Many are hard to heat. There is a need for more good quality housing to meet the projected increase in the numbers of households, and the Council is responsible for ensuring there is an adequate supply of land on which to build houses and associated high quality amenity spaces, as well as to grow businesses and create jobs. These issues will be addressed within the Council's emerging Local Plan.

Key Homelessness Review findings

Please read the Homelessness Review document for further detail, background statistical information and Consultation that contributed to these Findings.

Current and future likely levels of homelessness

- The level of statutory homelessness decisions in Sefton has reduced to a record low, but is now increasing again.
- Local authority inquiries into what duty they may owe to a homeless person is more likely to conclude that a person is not in priority need than elsewhere and less likely to result in a decision that someone is intentionally homeless.
- Friends or relatives being unwilling or unable to accommodate is the main reason for loss of settled accommodation. This is twice the rate locally than elsewhere
- The levels of rough sleeping are increasing, but are broadly equal to those found regionally and nationally.
- Men are much more likely to be homeless than women.
- The majority of single homeless people were accommodated in supported housing dispersed across the borough.
- The majority of single homeless people are unemployed job seekers, with many people wanting help to maximise income and yet very few people getting support to secure employment
- There is uncertainty as to the levels of hidden homelessness. This is consistent with other local authority areas.
- Future levels of homelessness are predicted to increase, although it is impossible to say by what extent.
- A number of factors are expected to increase the levels of homelessness, primarily the impact of central government legislative reforms to welfare benefits and economic factors.

Prevention of homelessness

- Successful homelessness prevention casework is increasing, in response to a sustained rise in the number of households experiencing housing problems.
- The majority of prevention successes are achieved by helping people to obtain alternative accommodation
- An effective partnership exists to prevent homelessness for victims of domestic abuse to allow them to remain in their homes through the installation of sanctuary scheme measures.
- The rate of prevention activity locally is much lower than elsewhere
- Undertaking home visits is not standard practice despite exclusions from friends being the main reason for loss of last settled home.
- Printed information materials are readily available across the local authority area to inform both service users and stakeholders about the range of advice and assistance available to tackle and prevent homelessness
- Successful interventions have been made to help homeowners at risk of repossession to keep their home

Securing accommodation

- The number of people accepted onto the housing register has fallen for the first time in several years.
- Supporting people to find accommodation in the private rented sector is the primary action taken by the Council's Housing Options Team to help people at risk of homelessness.
- Securing a home in social rented housing is the secondary action taken by the Council's Housing Options Team, to help people at risk of homelessness.

- Supported housing is the third main action taken to help people at risk of homelessness to obtain alternative housing and this provides them with targeted support to rebuild lives.
- Voluntary organisations have been the main provider of supported housing, followed by registered housing providers.
- There is an increase in the number of people being provided supported housing each year as a result of redesign of Supporting People programs.
- Low-cost home homeownership products are not used to help people at risk of homelessness to obtain alternative accommodation.

Providing support to homeless people

- There is a comprehensive range of community-based services for statutory homeless persons within the borough.
- There is also a diverse range of community-based services for street homeless people and single homeless persons, albeit that many are located in the neighbouring local authority, or elsewhere in Merseyside.
- The range of accommodation-based services is limited, particularly for women and people aged over 25 years of age.
- There is some excellent work being done to help homeless persons experiencing mental ill health.
- Service users are less likely to approach the local authority for assistance when they are threatened with homelessness.
- Many people sought assistance from friends or voluntary organisations before they sought help from the Council.

Progress Report

As result of implementing the second **Homelessness Strategy (2008-2013)** the following outcomes were achieved against the identified actions:

1. Through prevention reduce the number who present as homeless. The number of homeless presentations for the last full year preceding the completion of the 2008 strategy (2006-07) was 257 per annum and a reduction to 107 (2010-11) saw the number more than halved. However the number of presentations has increased in 2011-12 and 2012-13 (183) and is now over half of the 2006-07 figure.
2. Reduce the use of bed & breakfast for families. The number of households including dependent children and/or a pregnant woman as at snapshot dates of 31.11.2012 and 31.12.2012 was NIL. Only in extreme circumstances does the Council use this form of temporary accommodation for families, and in these cases the occupancy in B&B is for a minimal period and certainly less than the government set maximum of 6 weeks.
3. Reduce the incidence of youth homelessness and stop using bed & breakfast for 16/17 years olds by 2010. The outcome of the Southwark judgement has in effect meant that most homeless 16 and 17 year old children are now the responsibility of Children's Services. Therefore the homeless team deal with much fewer numbers than previously and the reduction has been "achieved" by the homeless people being referred to a more appropriate service.
4. Increase the provision of supported housing, good quality temporary housing and move on accommodation. This outcome has been achieved in terms of increasing the quantity of the supported housing provision by re-designating the access criteria of 350 former Category 1 accommodation units that were age restricted to allow access to any vulnerable adult aged 18 and over. We also improved the quality of some existing schemes such as Bosco House which was refurbished.

5. Develop the Housing Advice Service. The overall quantity and quality of advice services (statutory and VCF provided) has been developed and improved. The Council continues to support Light for Life's provision in Southport and has established a public facing Housing Advice Centre in Bootle.
6. Increase the number of homeless or potential homeless receiving education, training or entering into employment. There is no definitive data to suggest that this has happened although it is accepted that within supported housing schemes this is an indicator of successful support and/or move-on plans.
7. To ensure equal access to housing and services. We have continued to strive towards an inclusive service for all although we are mindful of the outcome of the current review consultation outcomes.

Resources

Funding for tackling homelessness predominantly derives from two sources, the local authority general fund and the national Homeless Prevention Grant programmes. The delivery of homelessness functions is a statutory duty therefore the Council must ensure that there is an annual budget for fulfilling these tasks. Since April 2011 Homeless Prevention Grant funding has been un-ring-fenced. To date the Council has continued to utilize this funding for its intended purpose.

National resources

Central government remains committed to tackling homelessness. Two strategies have been published to concentrate efforts to end rough sleeping and prevent homelessness. A series of initiatives have been supported by a significant investment of over £400m capital and revenue funding from 2011/12 – 2014/15.

The Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) has committed £1,353,418.00 nationally in preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping during 2011/12 - 2014/15. This money is both capital and revenue funding awarded in a grant allocation to each local authority and some third sector providers directly by the government and via executive governmental bodies and external organisations. The total allocation over the four-year period equates to £338,354.50 per year.

Local resources

The Council's total staff costs including on-costs for the housing advice and homelessness staff is £232,000 per annum (funded by the Council's General Fund). The net cost of providing the Lonsdale Road temporary accommodation is estimated at £89,000 per annum.

The local authority is entitled to award funding, or other resources such as seconding workers and providing material items, to third sector organisations for the purpose of tackling homelessness. From the annual Homelessness Prevention Grant received from the central government the Council allocates approximately 75% of the Grant to Light for Life to provide specific housing advice services in Southport, the remainder funds other homelessness prevention services and options.

In addition to the specific funding referred to above, the Council and its partners invest significant resources in services that have a direct, indirect and potential impact upon homelessness, including investment in housing related support (formerly Supporting People); substance misuse treatment/recovery services, and public health services. It is important to take a “whole-council” approach to the issue of homelessness and homelessness prevention, to ensure, so far as possible that these resources are deployed so as to advance the priorities of the Homelessness Strategy, or where there are budget reductions, at least understand and seek to mitigate any potential negative impacts on homelessness.

Sefton Council Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme (ELAS) became operational from 1 April 2013 and facilitates homeless people in the borough accessing emergency limited assistance with, for example, food, heating, lighting and travel.

Foodbanks are now open in South Sefton, Crosby and Southport with Central Sefton foodbank expected to be operational in September 2013. There are many referring agencies linked to the foodbanks.

Future Policy developments

When creating this 5 year Strategy the Council is mindful that the future is uncertain and that some elements of this Strategy and subsequent Action plan could require review and be subject to change. This Strategy needs to be able to respond to emerging new policy direction, for instance in both Children's and Adult's services major new Bill's are currently proceeding through parliament with expected implementation dates in early 2013/14 parliamentary year.

- **The Care Bill 2013** represents one of the most significant pieces of health legislation passed by the coalition Government, laying foundations for more integrated care in the community. The Bill has now completed its Committee Stage in the House of Lords.
- **The Children and Families Bill** contains provisions following the Green Paper Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (published 18 March 2012) and the follow up; Progress and Next Steps (published 15 May 2012). It will integrate planning arrangements for children and young adults (0-25 yrs) including housing.

Below is a list of other factors that will influence our delivery of the Strategy- the list is by no means exhaustive.

- Central government policy and financial allocations
- Sefton Council's response to continually reducing budgets and savings requirement
- Sefton Council's move towards a more enabling and commissioning local authority
- The review of future Housing Related Support (formerly the Supporting People program) services and commissioning
- The Council's future commissioning priorities including Health and Wellbeing
- The continuing impact of the Welfare Reform program

- The outcome of the review of Council's Borough wide Housing Strategy
- The Council's Local Plan

Homeless Strategy Action Plan

The Action Plan is drawn from recommendations in Sefton Council's Homelessness Review 2013. It is intended that these actions will need to be completed during the lifetime of this strategy from 2013 – 2018. The Action Plan will be supplemented with an annual Delivery Plan that will be reviewed and revised throughout the delivery of the strategy.

The Council is committed to continuing joint working with neighbouring local authorities across the Merseyside region. Efforts will be made to extend existing collaborations to end rough sleeping across the region.

The Council will also use its influence to promote joint working across the sub-region to extend efforts and alliances into renewed efforts to prevent homelessness.

By adopting this Homelessness Strategy the Council is making a commitment, with its partners, to achieve and replicate the ambitions made by central government to end rough sleeping and prevent homelessness locally in Sefton.

Tackling homelessness will need to form a key part of local plans for the social, economic and physical regeneration of Sefton. Efforts to tackle homelessness need to align with other strategies, not least the new Health and Wellbeing and Public Health Strategies.

Within the Action plan under the column titled "Aim" there is a cross-reference to the items listed in the "Strategic Priorities and Links" section earlier in this document. The relevant cross-reference will be italicised.

An attempt has been made to prioritise the actions using a “RAG” (red, amber, green) approach;

Red= action to be completed in Year 1

Amber= action to be completed in Year 2 or 3

Green= action to be completed in Year 4 or 5

For ease, the priority is indicated by text and colour within the appropriate column.

Please note that those organisations listed under the heading of “Key Agencies” are included on the basis of the position at August 2013; it is necessary to note that these organisations may change during the life of this Strategy, and any changes will be dealt with as part of the Annual Delivery Plan and Annual Homelessness Strategy Review cycle.

Governance Action Plan				
HSAP	Action	Aim	Priority	Key Agencies
1.	Establish the governance arrangements that will manage the Homeless Strategy and Action Plan for the life of the Strategy 2013-2018	To establish two distinct groups that will operate on a strategic and operational level to agree the Strategy Action plans and the Annual Delivery Plan. It is proposed that we retain the existing Homeless Forum at the Operational level, and at the Strategic level the Homeless Forum is represented on the Health & Well Being Board's 'Wider Determinants Group' and feeds into the 'Programmes Group'. To gain agreement and commitments from all to progress the priorities within the Strategy.	Year 1	Sefton Council; all partner agencies
2.	Ensure that representation is made within the Health & Wellbeing sub groups of Health & Wellbeing Board (Wider Determinant Group). The representative(s) will highlight the impact of homelessness, poor and insecure housing on	To improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people in Sefton. Homeless people experience significantly poorer health than the housed community. The social and economic impact of this is considerable for individuals, local communities and nationally. Through joint planning, funding, commissioning, targeting and delivery of services for homeless people the cost of the health related services should be reduced. This will enable	Year 1	Sefton Council; Service commissioners. Health & Wellbeing Board.

	communities in Sefton and to propose solutions to mitigate the impacts and cost.	the various health authorities to reduce cost and meet targets and outcomes.		
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Actions to reduce the levels of homelessness				
HSAP	Action	Aim	Priority	Key agencies
3.	Annual training updates on primary legislation and all new case law will be provided to all local authority officers employed to undertake inquiries as to the duty, if any, is owed to a homeless person.	To ensure the local authority is fully compliant with what the law and statutory guidance requires when administering homelessness duties	Year 1	Sefton Council; Light for Life; NHAS
4.	Work will be undertaken with minority communities to understand the reasons and risks of homelessness for specific groups.	To ensure the local authority homelessness services are accessible to all communities across the borough <i>SMBC Objective 2</i> <i>SSNA Objective 2</i>	Year 2-3	Sefton Council; Asylum Link; Irish Community Care; Refugee Action, The Pagoda Chinese Community Centre
5.	Review the operational practices for helping people threatened with homelessness due to domestic abuse or because a person is aged 16/17.	To explore why levels are comparatively lower than elsewhere, promote good practice and plug any gaps identified. Review and promote the outcomes achieved as a result of the Sanctuary Scheme and established domestic violence	Year 2-3	Sefton Council Housing; Sefton Council Children Services; SWACA; RASA; Merseyside Police; Sefton

		<p>support agencies in the Borough.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 1,2 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objective 1, 4, and 5</i></p>		<p>Supported Lodging Scheme; Forum HA; Venus; 408 Young Persons Advisory Service; Sefton Vulnerable Victims Advocacy Team</p>
6.	<p>Review and revise the current service offer for people sleeping rough</p>	<p>To identify and reduce levels of rough sleeping. If levels of rough sleeping continue to increase, more and different, local provision may be required than is currently available within the Borough.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 1,2,3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objective 5</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priority 1 and 3</i></p>	Year 1	<p>Sefton Council; Bosco; Forum Housing; The Basement; The Whitechapel Centre; Salvation Army; Light for Life</p>
7.	<p>Review the current initiatives and increase links with services that can help homeless people gain skills for work and secure employment</p>	<p>To support homeless people to access training and employment. People in employment are less likely to become homeless, increased levels income help to expand the range of housing options available to someone.</p> <p>Support homeless people to access training and employment by providing independent customer-focussed solutions.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objectives 1,2,3 and 4</i></p>	Year 2-3	<p>Sefton Council; JobCentre Plus; Sefton@work; Bootle Salvation Army. LEP LearnDirect Adult education</p>

		<i>SSNA Objectives 1,5 and 6</i> <i>SSNA Priorities 2 and 4</i>		colleges
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Actions to prevent homelessness				
HSAP	Action	Aim	Priority	Key Agencies
8.	Review the range of prevention tools deployed by the Council for priority and non-priority homeless applicants	<p>To ensure that prevention tools already in use are fit for purpose and that all the tools that could be used are established and available locally. The existing schemes and tools used for preventing homelessness need to be reviewed to ensure they are able to reduce the risks of homelessness for those households for whom the Council does not owe the main homelessness duty.</p> <p>Early intervention and a different approach to housing options may prevent homelessness (especially amongst single people) and the need for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Ensure that all statistical returns capture the prevention work undertaken by both statutory and non-statutory services.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objectives 1,2,3 and 4</i></p>	Year 1	Sefton Council; All partner agencies

		<p><i>SSNA Objectives 3 and 5</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priorities 1, 3 and 4</i></p>		
9.	Review the need for, and availability and cost of, qualified independent mediation services for people at risk of homelessness	<p>To take a proactive approach to help people at risk and threatened with homelessness to maintain their existing accommodation</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 3</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objective 5</i></p>	Year 4-5	Sefton Council; Housing support providers; Voluntary sector
10.	Re-introduce home visits to people identified as at risk of homelessness	To ensure early identification of people at risk of homelessness and help them to maintain their existing accommodation	Year 1	Sefton Council; Housing support providers; Voluntary sector
11.	Maintain and strengthen links with mortgage lenders and landlords to prevent repossessions and evictions	<p>To take action when the risk of losing a home is identified, and then negotiate with landlords and lenders to avoid eviction. Repossession action and eviction should be a last resort when someone is struggling to pay his or her housing costs.</p> <p>To help people threatened with homelessness to maintain their existing accommodation.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 2,3 and 4</i></p>	Year 2-3	Sefton Council Housing; Sefton Council Housing Benefits. Registered Providers. Accredited Private sector Landlords

		<i>SSNA Objective 3, 5 and 6</i>		
12.	Welfare rights and money advice services should form an integral part of the broad housing options services.	<p>To ensure increased co-operation between these money advice and welfare services to offer a comprehensive and effective service to clients.</p> <p>As a result of welfare reforms and economic policies more people will be at risk of homelessness due to money related matters.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 1,2,3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objective 1, 3 and 5</i></p>	Year 2-3	Sefton Council; Court Advice Service; Citizens Advice Bureau; Sefton Credit Union.

Actions to ensure that sufficient accommodation is available to tackle homelessness				
HSAP	Action	Aim	Priority	Key Agencies
13.	Support people who are homeless to obtain private rented sector (PRS) accommodation	<p>To broaden the range of housing options and reduce occurrences of repeat homelessness</p> <p>Use the PRS Landlord Accreditation Scheme to increase supply of PRS accommodation. Review the suite of incentives offered to PRS Accredited Landlords to encourage them to become accredited.</p> <p>Work with Accredited Landlords to introduce a Private Rented Sector Offer policy to improve access to the PR sector</p> <p><i>SMBC Objectives 1,2,3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objectives 1 and 5</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priority 3</i></p>	Year 1	Sefton Council; Money Advice Service; Private Landlords; Whitechapel Centre; Landlord Accreditation Scheme
14.	The Council will review the provision of all supported accommodation which will include those for single	To identify shortfalls and gaps in current service provision for women and single young people. Services for single homeless people need to be sensitive and relevant for the needs of, and reflect the demographics of, the homeless	Year 1	Sefton Council; Registered providers; Supported Housing providers.

	homeless women and young single homeless people	<p>population. Particular emphasis should be given to service users by age and gender.</p> <p>Reference should be made to Needs Analysis (Homeless Link and St. Andrews University data)</p> <p><i>SMBC Objectives 1,2,3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objective 1 and 5</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priorities 1, 2 and 4</i></p>		Commissioners
15.	Support Emmaus UK to establish a scheme within the Borough	<p>To support the establishment of an Emmaus UK Scheme within the Borough to provide additional accommodation for homeless people</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 1,2,3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objectives 5 and 6</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priorities 2, 3 and 4</i></p>	Year 2-3	Sefton Council; Emmaus UK; Riverside HA; HCA
16.	Consider implementing a central access gateway that controls the allocation of all supported housing and housing related support	<p>To ensure that those who need supported housing and housing related support services the most will be given priority to access them.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 1,2,3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objectives 5 and 6</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priorities 2 and 4</i></p>	Year 1	Sefton Council; Supported Housing providers. Floating support services. Service Commissioners.

17.	Establish a relationship between the Housing Options Team and the local HomeBuy agent.	To offer the widest possible range of housing options including access to low cost home ownership where this is appropriate. <i>SMBC Objective 3 and 4</i>	Year 2-3	Sefton Council; Plus Dane Group
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Actions to provide support, information, advice and assistance to tackle homelessness

HSAP	Action	Aim	Priority	Key Agencies
18.	Review the range of information materials (including on-line information) provided or available to customers	To establish comprehensive, consistent and accurate information for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. This will link to the Council's work around creating a Directory of Services.	Year 2-3	Sefton Council; all partner agencies
19.	Promote the work achieved locally under the homeless mentally ill initiative by CHART as good practice across all local health providers and commissioners. Identify opportunities to replicate the approach with other client groups (e.g. prison release, hospital discharge, complex needs) will be explored	To improve understanding of the health risks of homelessness and expand access to health care for all client groups. Homeless people experience significantly poorer health than the housed community. The social and economic impact of this is considerable for individuals, local communities and nationally. Through improved planning, commissioning, targeting and delivery of health services for homeless people the cost of accessing emergency services will be reduced. <i>SMBC Objective 1,2,3 and 4</i> <i>SSNA Objectives 2, 3,4 and 5</i> <i>SSNA Priorities 1 and 2</i>	Year 2-3	Sefton Council Health & Wellbeing Board. Clinical Commissioning Groups.

20.	Review and assess the current provision of tenancy support as part of any future commissioning exercise	<p>To provide timely and appropriate tenancy support in order to reduce tenancy failure for vulnerable people and support a planned move to an independent tenancy for those in temporary and supported housing where this is possible.</p> <p><i>SMBC Objective 2, 3 and 4</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Objectives 3, 4, 5 and 6</i></p> <p><i>SSNA Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4</i></p>	Year 1	<p>Sefton Council; Social Housing Providers; PRS landlords; Floating Support Services</p>
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Make available the required levels of resources for tackling homelessness				
HSAP	Action	Aim	Priority	Key Agencies
21.	Continue to ensure best value from the Council's investment in homelessness, homelessness prevention and other services that impact upon homelessness.	<p>To take a council-wide approach to commissioning, in-line with the Council's Corporate Commissioning Framework, so as to secure the most out of the total resources available within Sefton (including statutory, VCF, private sector and communities themselves) in order to improve outcomes for citizens in the most efficient, effective and sustainable way.</p> <p>By applying a commissioning approach to all services, whether externally or internally provided, to ensure that services are focused on addressing priorities, meeting need, delivering value for money and achieving positive outcomes</p>	Year 1	Sefton Council, Health & Wellbeing Board, Service providers
22.	Ensure that the Homelessness Strategy is reflected in all relevant thematic and service reviews undertaken within the Council, including the Review of Housing Related Support Commissioned Services and the	To ensure that all relevant thematic and service reviews undertaken within the Council have a sound understanding of the latest homelessness issues and priorities within Sefton and of the potential impact those reviews might have on homelessness and the delivery of the strategy.	Year 1	Sefton Council

	<p>Review of Sefton's Substance Misuse Treatment Services.</p>	<p>That commissioning priorities and decisions arising from thematic and service reviews recognise and, as far as possible, advance the priorities of the Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>That funding decisions arising from thematic and service reviews, with potential to impact upon homelessness, recognise and, as far as possible, advance the priorities of the Homelessness Strategy, or where there are budget reductions, at least seek to mitigate the potential impact on homelessness.</p>		
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