



Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy for Croydon 2019-22

## Foreword: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration<sup>1</sup>

We have set out our ambitions for Croydon over the next two years, and key amongst them is creating a borough that is a place to call home. We have worked hard to make this true for as many people in Croydon as possible by: setting up Brick by Brick to deliver more than 2,000 homes in Croydon, including affordable rent and shared ownership. We have set up the boroughs first Landlord Licensing Scheme to protect private tenants; brought 379 empty homes back into use; created the Gateway Service; securing £1.4m in government funding to tackle rough sleeping; and introduced Choice Based Lettings.

We believe a place to call home is a fundamental right, but for many an affordable, safe and secure home is beyond their reach.

It is clear that the supply of new homes does not meet demand, and that consequently house prices and rents are too high. Failure to invest in social housing means that there are not enough affordable homes and the effects of austerity and welfare reform have led to increased poverty and homelessness.

We have around 2000 families and individuals who have been made homeless living in temporary housing, whose lives have been put on hold. There are around 15 people sleeping rough on Croydon's streets every night, and we know that this is unacceptable in the UK today. Croydon is developing a partnership with Crisis to show that,

with the right reforms and proper investment, homelessness can be brought to an end in Croydon in 10 years.

This is a short term strategy that will lay the foundations for our future 10 year ambitions that we will develop with Crisis. It sets out our priorities for preventing homelessness over the next three years (2019-2022) to make a real change in Croydon. Over the next three years we will:

- Build 2,000 homes for Croydon residents
- Extend the Landlord Licensing Scheme after the first 5 years
- Buy 250 homes for families in need to be let at truly affordable rents
- Develop a strategic partnership with Crisis to develop our 10 year strategy to end homelessness
- Continue with our Housing First approach to get our most vulnerable rough sleepers off the streets
- Build on our Social Lettings Agency pilot in order to both encourage good landlords and to sustain tenancies.

**Cllr Alison Butler**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Homes and Gateway Services**



<sup>1</sup> [https://issuu.com/martinhuxley/docs/croydon\\_manifesto\\_-\\_full\\_version\\_pa](https://issuu.com/martinhuxley/docs/croydon_manifesto_-_full_version_pa)

### Alignment to our other strategies and plans

Local authorities are required to publish a homelessness prevention strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002. A new strategy should be published every five years. Local authorities are required to engage with public and local authorities, voluntary organisations and other people and organisations considered appropriate when adopting or modifying their homelessness strategy.

When developing a new homelessness strategy, the local authority should carry out a review of homelessness in its district. The purpose of the review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the services currently being provided. We carried out a review in the autumn of 2018, and a summary of the findings is provided in the next section of the strategy.

There is also a requirement (under the Localism Act) to make sure the Council's existing Tenancy Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy do not contradict any new Homelessness Strategy. Our new Homelessness Strategy has been designed to align with our current Housing Allocations scheme, and our intention to amend our Tenancy Strategy to reinstate the use of lifetime secure tenancies for council homes.

The strategy has also been developed to align with and support Croydon's wider strategies and plans, including Croydon's Community Strategy which is the overarching strategy for the borough, Ambitious for Croydon and our Corporate Plan.

### Delivery and partnerships

#### Early intervention and prevention

A theme running through this strategy is a desire to explore how we can do things differently, gain a better understanding of the factors that put people at risk of homelessness, and intervene as early as possible.

We have also embedded an early intervention, preventative and collaborative approach throughout this strategy to ensure our services are in line with the supportive, enabling and advisory model set out in Croydon's Corporate Plan.



### **Evidence based and locally designed**

Fundamental to this early intervention approach is using evidence to target services to the localities where they are needed most. Equally as important is working with local organisations ('assets') that our residents trust to ensure there is ready 'take-up' of the services offered, and no stigma about hand-outs or charity. The focus of these services is to enable residents to sustain their accommodation, employment, maintain their caring responsibilities, and provide a reasonable family life.

### **Co-designed services**

Public services are often designed and commissioned in a way that meets the bureaucratic needs of organisations, and not the people that use them. Very often, these services can be improved by asking for the input of people with experience of the kinds of disadvantage that led them to require the service in the first place – often called co-design. We will make sure our residents influence the design and delivery of our services, that they are focused on what needs to be achieved, and that they build trust and positive relationships between our residents and our local services.

### **Collaborative governance**

We need to work together effectively to prevent homelessness in Croydon. The economic and housing market factors that contribute to homelessness, place a strain on family and other relationships, and act on individual issues (in many cases multiple and complex issues including mental and physical health and addiction. Strained relationships are more vulnerable to crisis and breakdown, and for

many to the loss of accommodation. There is also the issue of domestic violence, families being hostile to LGBT members of the family as well as the additional vulnerability of people who are care leavers.

We want to make sure that rather than services being delivered from 'siloes', they are delivered through a collaborative multi-agency approach with different partnerships championing and driving forward specific aspects of the strategy. Croydon's Health and Wellbeing Board will take the lead on the many health related impacts of homelessness that are within its existing strategic priorities. The Health and Wellbeing Board will receive a report on a regular basis reporting on progress and have the opportunity to be involved in an evolving homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

We will explore developing a homelessness reduction board, to bolster local accountability arrangements. Croydon has excellent examples of collaborative working and integrated approaches, but the local delivery landscape is complex, with a number of agencies and bodies with different priorities and funding constraints operating under a variety of accountability arrangements.



## Key statistics 2017/2018(infographic)

<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Market factors</b>	<b>Impacts</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Croydon has 2 <sup>nd</sup> largest borough population in London	Croydon has only 12 <sup>th</sup> largest council housing stock in London	Croydon makes on average 2,000 homeless decisions every year.	2,400 households prevented from becoming homeless
2,164 new households forming per year over next 20 years	1,368 additional dwellings per year on average have been added to the overall housing stock over last 10 years	In 2017/18 Croydon prevented 2,155 families and individuals from becoming homeless.	15,000 people have received budgeting support
Croydon has youngest population in London	Average house prices are over 10 times average salaries in Croydon	2005 homeless households	4,700 people improved digital skills
Croydon has 41 LSOAs in the 20% most deprived areas in England	Average rents between £80 and £223 per month higher than LHA rates	31 People sleep rough in Croydon on a typical night (2017)	33 volunteers from LBC and external and 4 outreach workers completed Statutory rough Sleeping count from midnight – 5am
1 in 5 households living in poverty (DWP)	(ASHE) 2017 shows median earnings for people working full time living in Croydon IS £33,821	5,052 households are registered on Croydon's Housing Waiting List	Cost of emergency accommodation reduced by £2m

## Key statistics 2018/2019(latest figures post statutory review)

<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Market factors</b>	<b>Impacts</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
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2,164 new households forming per year over next 20 years	1,368 additional dwellings per year on average have been added to the overall housing stock over last 10 years	In 2018/19 Croydon prevented 3049 families and individuals from becoming homeless.	14,685 people have received budgeting support
Croydon has youngest population in London	Average house prices are over 10 times average salaries in Croydon	3100 homeless households	4,900 people improved digital skills
Croydon has 41 LSOAs in the 20% most deprived areas in England	Average rents between £80 and £223 per month higher than LHA rates	15 People sleep rough in Croydon on a typical night (2018)	35 volunteers from LBC and external and 5 outreach workers completed Statutory rough Sleeping count from midnight – 4am
1 in 5 households living in poverty (DWP)	(ASHE) 2017 shows median earnings for people working full time living in Croydon IS £33,821	5,871 households are registered on Croydon's Housing Waiting List	Cost of emergency accommodation reduced by £2m

## How do we define homelessness

### Defining homelessness

In drafting this strategy, a number of reports have been particularly informative and helpful. The first being The Homelessness Monitor commissioned and funded by Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>2</sup>. The other is the UK Housing Review published by the Chartered Institute of Housing<sup>3</sup>. Both reports have helped shape our recent homelessness review and suggested areas of investigation. We have deliberately used a wide definition of homelessness similar to that used in the Homelessness Monitor which includes:

- People sleeping rough
- Single homeless people living in shelters, hostels, and supported accommodation
- Statutory homeless households
- People that can be described as "hidden homelessness" (i.e. people who are squatting, living in severely overcrowded accommodation and concealed households).

### Core homelessness

Crisis have also produced a definition of what it means by “ending [core] homelessness” in its plan “Everybody in – How to end Homelessness in Great Britain”<sup>4</sup> which will also help shape the priorities to be set out in our new strategy. The definition of ending homelessness is:

- No one sleeping rough
- No one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation, such as tents, squats and non-residential buildings
- No one living in emergency accommodation such as shelters and hostels without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation
- No one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as a prison or the care system
- Everyone at immediate risk of homelessness gets the help that prevents it happening

Another related issue this strategy seeks to address is the availability of suitable emergency accommodation, or settled accommodation for residents once they have completed a period of treatment, care, or a residential stay in supported accommodation or an institution (such as a prison or hospital). We want to prevent vital health and care being blocked’ for the want of effective, coordinated ‘move-on provision

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukhousingreview.org.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/the-plan-to-end-homelessness-full-version/executive-summary/>

## Our Homelessness Review findings

### Levels of homelessness

Our homelessness review has provided a wealth of information about levels of homelessness, and where they might be over the next 5 years. In summary the key issues points of the review are:

**Homelessness demand:** the number of people approaching the council for assistance has been consistently at around 4,000, and more approach local advice services and community groups looking for help. In the last couple of years, however, we have changed our approach and put more resources into preventing homelessness, helping more than 2,000 people at risk of losing their homes in 2017/18 and 2,100 in 2018/2019. We need to work more closely together to identify households that are starting to experience problems, before they deteriorate into crisis

**Causes of homelessness:** losing a private rented tenancy is the most common cause of homeless (and has been for a number of years), followed by someone's parents or relatives not being able to continue to accommodate them, and domestic violence.

**Temporary accommodation:** The Council has reduced the number of people housed in temporary accommodation, and significantly those in housed emergency accommodation), however, there are still over 3,000 homeless children living in temporary accommodation in Croydon and there is much more to do.

**Rough sleeping:** In 2018/19, we were aware of 274 people sleeping rough in Croydon, of which only 27 had returned to the streets having slept rough previously. The annual statutory count identified that we had 15 people sleeping rough in Croydon on a typical night (November 2018).

### Underlying drivers of homelessness

The underlying factors driving homelessness and rough sleeping include:

**Poverty:** Croydon residents earn less, and are employed in less well paid occupations than other parts of London<sup>5</sup>. Welfare reform has reduced the support families and individuals receive to meet their housing and other vital needs. Residents experiencing financial difficulties in and out of work has been increasing leading to additional demands being placed on foodbanks. Local Housing allowance has fallen far behind market rents. Universal Credit and other welfare reforms are associated with homelessness and poverty, and it hampers finding sustainable solutions. London's share of Discretionary Housing Payment has reduced<sup>6</sup>. Young people are significantly disadvantaged by welfare reform and housing benefit provision.

**The housing supply crisis:** Croydon's population is the largest in London and is growing. A growing population increases housing demand and need. There will be nearly 2,500 new households forming in the borough each year over the next 20 years. The draft London Plan expects Croydon to meet an annual housing target of more than 2,900 new homes per year. Housing supply will need to double to keep up with demand. The failure to build in sufficient

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<sup>5</sup> Further details in the review and ASHE, NOMIS data, IMD 2015

<sup>6</sup> See Joseph Rowntree Foundation



volumes over the past 30 years has led to an overall shortage of housing, including affordable housing in Croydon.

**Housing affordability:** Average house prices are over 10 times average incomes. Changes to and freezing housing benefit rates until 2020, and the introduction of Universal Credit have made it harder for people to afford private rented homes even with benefit help. Young people are particularly disadvantaged.

**Austerity:** Deficit reduction and the government's austerity policies have had an impact on public services generally, and in particular on the community services that help prevent homelessness. In particular this has affected housing support, hostels, specialist provision including mental health and drug and alcohol services, floating support.

**Multiple needs:** Increasingly complex needs presented by vulnerable people accessing housing support. Most support providers tell us that they are catering to people with more complex and multiple needs than previously.

**EEA and other migrants:** The complex rules affecting non UK nationals that are homeless or sleeping rough, and the limits to how public services can assist. Over 60% of the increase in rough sleeping in London is from non UK nationals. Since 2014 this group have limited access to public services including benefits and housing and many EEA/other migrants have multiple needs further adding to the complexity of finding solutions for this group.

## **A profile of homelessness**

Unsurprisingly homelessness is most likely to affect those individuals and families that are in low paid, insecure employment, or are out of work, or who struggle to secure employment due to caring/parental responsibilities. It also affects those whose vulnerabilities make it difficult/impossible for them to provide for themselves through market employment and housing. The key points are:

- **Gender:** More than 6 out of ten of homeless applicants are single females
- **Children:** More than 8 out of ten households applying as homeless have dependent children
- **Age:** Homeless households also tend to be younger than the general population, with more than half of applicants being aged between 25 and 44
- **Ethnicity:** Black households tend to be overrepresented among homeless households. In Croydon, 46% of homeless households are of Black ethnic background (compared to 20.2% of the general population on census day 2011)
- **Rough sleepers gender/age:** In contrast rough sleepers tend to be male (more than 7 out of 10), but again younger than the general population
- **Additional needs:** The majority of rough sleepers (6 out of 10) have additional needs (including substance misuse or mental health problems)
- **Institutional history:** More than half of rough sleepers have an institutional history, having spent time in care, prison or in the armed forces)

## National and regional homelessness policy

The government published its national Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018 which aims to end rough sleeping entirely by 2027. The Homelessness Reduction Act also came into force 01/04/2018, and introduced two new duties - the Prevention duty and the Relief duty - to the existing homelessness legislation further raising the Homelessness agenda.

The Government pledged to allocate £100m by 2027 to deliver initiatives that will help to stop people becoming homeless, provide rapid rehousing, and provide support to help people find work and live independently. Croydon secured funding from the Homelessness 'Trailblazers' Prevention Programme, the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund and Rapid Rehousing Pathway.

Using this funding we have prevented people from becoming homeless through developing targeted approaches and reduced rough sleeping in Croydon. Croydon will continue to prevent residents from becoming homeless using targeted early intervention and prevention techniques. It will develop a 24/7 direct access hub for rough sleepers in the borough, and support CRZero to achieve its aim of ending entrenched rough sleeping.

**In London** the Mayor has set out a range of 'asks' of central government to expand and improve the currently inadequate provision to tackle rough sleeping in the capital effectively. These include additional resources for improved outreach, monitoring and recording through CHAIN, accommodation and support services.

**Crisis** recently published a long term plan to end homelessness in Great Britain. It sets out the costs and policy changes required to achieve this outcome. They advocate a swift process for identifying people sleeping rough, and providing short-term help for those that can be moved into secure decent housing (such as assistance with a deposit and rent in advance) and longer-term support for more vulnerable people with complex needs through approaches such as Housing First. The plan also makes a number of policy recommendations including: calling for over 100,000 new social homes per year; imposing a wider duty on public bodies across Great Britain to prevent homelessness (not just refer); and, enabling everyone to access help and abolishing 'priority need' in England and Wales. Croydon will over the next year partner with Crisis to drive forward a joint plan to end core homelessness.

## **What do we want to achieve?**

We want to end core homelessness in Croydon by 2029

## **What we are going to do:**

We will make a commitment to end homelessness

- The Council will actively support the ending of homelessness and rough sleeping and lobby to maintain appropriate levels of funding
- The Council will support the Mayor and others in their calls for additional funding for prevention, accommodation and support services in London
- The Council will partner with Crisis to deliver a long-term plan to end core homelessness in Croydon

## **Key measures of success**

- Reduced numbers of people sleeping rough in Croydon
- Reduced numbers of people living in shelters, hostels and emergency accommodation

## Engagement and early intervention

### What do we want to achieve

We want more people to know about, use and look to Croydon's public and voluntary sector services to help them avoid crisis.

### What is happening now?

We know that people's journeys into homelessness are different, and that they provide different opportunities to intervene. Public and voluntary sector services collect a lot of data, and know a lot about individuals and families that could be at risk of homelessness (e.g. the Council, DWP, advice services, and the voluntary sector).

However, at the moment these different services operate in isolation, are often unaware of the work others are engaged in, duplicate each other, and fail to coordinate and target services to those that need it most. The council also commissions housing advice and mediation services to help prevent homelessness and resolve issues before they reach crisis.

**Gateway and Welfare:** The welfare reforms introduced in 2013, and the roll-out of Universal Credit forced Croydon to adopt a different approach to assist the 16,000 residents affected. Our Gateway and Welfare service is designed to respond to whole family needs including income, employment, skills/training and housing needs. It enables families and individuals to find sustainable solutions, collaborates across services to avoid duplication, and supports residents to take control and overcome the challenges they face.

It uses business intelligence to target areas with high levels of debt, Universal Credit claimants and deprivation, identifies areas isolated from the Town Centre, and provides services that respond to specific local needs.

A key part of Gateway's prevention approach is providing opportunities to access employment. Croydon has incredible potential for growth given its location and connectivity. We need to ensure our local working population possesses the required skills and qualifications that employers in higher value sectors require. Delivering our plans for growth and regeneration are therefore a key part of our Homeless Prevention Strategy, as are encouraging small businesses and social enterprises, and harnessing the potential of public sector commissioning to deliver social value.

#### Gateway Achievements – 2018/2019

**Helped more than 2,400 families avoid homelessness**

**Given budgeting support to over 14,900 people**

**Supported over 4,700 people on Universal Credit to improve their digital skills**

**Seen a 15% reduction in the number of people applying as homeless**

**Cut the cost of giving people emergency accommodation by £2m**

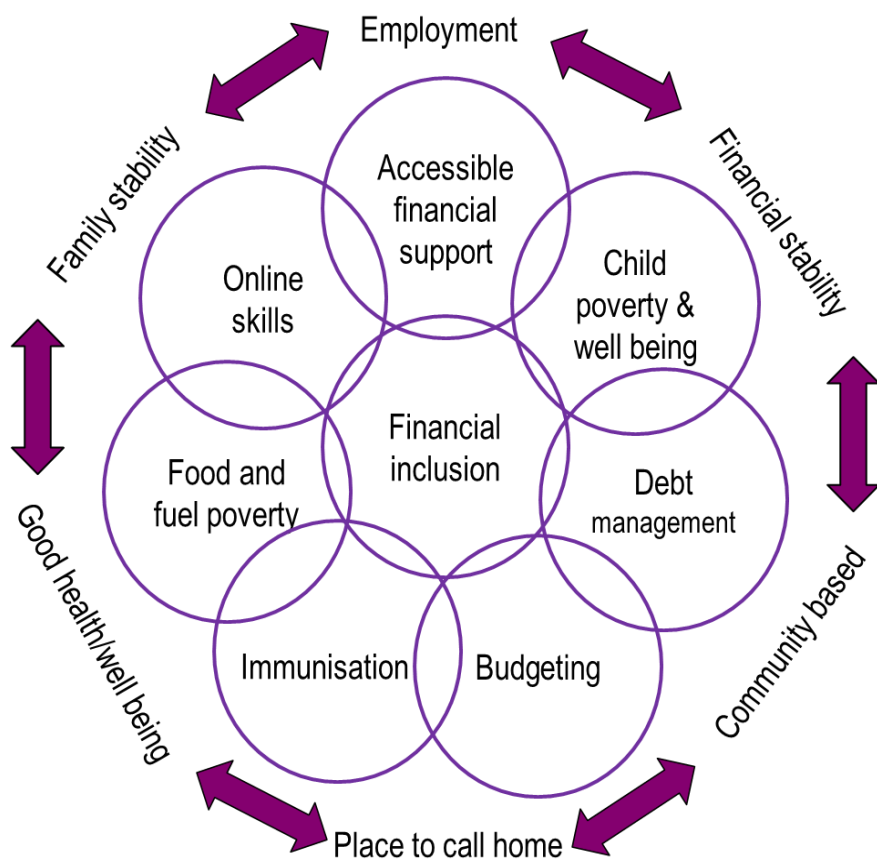
**Increased the homeless prevention rate from 25% to 58%**

**Reduced the numbers in emergency accommodation from 824 to 667**

**Supported 587 residents into employment.**

**Gateway Phase 1 is saving the Council £2.5m per year**

## Gateway and Welfare services – joint working



## Gateway and Welfare

Gateway used data to identify those residents most at risk of homelessness so that intervention can be specific and targeted to individual needs. A single woman was registered onto Community Connect Food Stop after being contacted as part of the targeted intervention work and immediately began working closely with her Gateway Officer. She had had Council Tax arrears of £3,112.68 and had a total of £1,525.55 in rent arrears. She had a direct payment from her universal credit for her rent plus an additional £50.45 each month to pay towards the rent arrears set up on her rent account. However this meant that ultimately she was left with just £140 per month to cover all other bills and food shopping. A Discretionary Housing Payment was paid to support with the rent arrears and the monthly rent shortfall. She was also referred to the Food Stop at Parchmore Methodist Church, (the church is working in partnership with Croydon Council to deliver community solutions), which is helping to reduce her food shopping bills. She was also supported to make an affordable agreement with debt collectors for her council tax. In addition, her Gateway Officer has supported her with non-dependents on her Council Tax Support (CTS) claim. As there were no income details noted for Miss X on the system, this meant that a full non-dependent deduction was being taken from her entitlement and this has helped to reduce the Council Tax arrears.

## What we are going to do:

We need to provide support earlier and to do that we need to be working in communities, delivering trusted services, based on local evidence and intelligence.

Our Gateway approach has shown that early identification intervention to help people stabilise their situation, and wrap-around holistic support works. Our approach will continue to focus on stabilising people's housing, employment and caring arrangements. We also know that the Gateway principles and approach are effective, and can be applied more widely across different services and localities. We are therefore going to:

- Build coordinated early identification networks and effective referral services that work well together. These will be linked to our existing commissioned independent preventative services – e.g. housing advice and community mediation services
- Develop more locally delivered, evidence based services, tailored to local need, and delivered with/by community assets by extending the Gateway approach into new localities through our new Community Connect/Food Stop projects building on the success of the existing Fieldway, New Addington Food Stop. Initially targeting Thornton Heath, Monks Hill and Coulsdon
- Provide regular training and information sharing sessions for commissioned and voluntary groups providing services to



**Community Connect**



people in need, to build capacity, develop collaboration, commitment to shared priorities

- Extend the holistic Gateway approach to all new adult social care customers approaching the council – increasing independence and resilience



- Develop a co-designed monitoring and evaluation framework to produce evidence of the effectiveness of our activity to reduce poverty, increase resilience, and improve skills and employability
- Increase local employment with employers working closely with prevention services. We will also enable our residents to make the most of the opportunities that arise from the borough's regeneration by ensuring Gateway & Welfare employment Public Sector delivering social value Small Business Commission SEEK project

## Key measures of success

- Tenancies sustained
- Increased local employment
- Decreased reliance on benefits
- Decreased debt
- Reduced expenditure on food
- Reduced childhood obesity
- Reduced social isolation
- Increased overall health and wellbeing for all residents
- Increased digital skills

## Homelessness prevention

### What do we want to achieve

A high quality, efficient prevention service

A high proportion of homeless prevention outcomes

Shorter stays in temporary accommodation

We want to end core homelessness in Croydon by 2029

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, and introduced two new duties - the Prevention duty and the Relief duty - to the existing homelessness legislation (HA 1996, part 7). The key measures in the act are an extension of the period 'threatened with homeless' from 28 to 56 days and a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applications threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need. It also requires a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need. Along with this 'a duty to refer' came into effect where public services will need to notify a local authority if they came into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

### What is happening now?

Despite an increasing focus on early intervention and prevention, a significant number of people apply to the council as homeless, over 2,000 per year on average over the past 10 years. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act presentations are now running at over 3,000 p.a. In spite of the high levels of presentations to the council the numbers of households who we owe a full housing duty has remained at between 600- 900 over the last 5 years.

**Prevention and intervention:** The council's approach to prevention focuses in the first instance on resolving the threat of homelessness including negotiating with landlords, engaging tenancy relations in the case of potential illegal eviction, and family mediation (including that provided for young people through a commissioned service). Where prevention is not possible the Relief Team work on an accommodation plan with the applicant, and on other issues such as debts or budgeting, finding employment, or signposting to other services. The Interventions Team follows this work up with families in emergency accommodation holding 'finding a home' events and providing support and encouragement to find alternative accommodation. One of the main barriers to effective prevention and relief is an insufficient supply of accommodation available within current benefit rates. As a result families are spending extended periods living in temporary accommodation.

**Single homeless service (SHS):** The SHS assesses single homeless applications and provides access to supported accommodation. It works with people recovering from mental ill health, care leavers, ex-offenders (some of whom are under MAPPA and / or Jigsaw) people addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, people affected by welfare benefits reform, young people at risk, people escaping domestic abuse, refugees, people with a physical disability, people with a learning disability and many residents who have a combination of these needs. There is a limited portfolio of supported accommodation and the number of people with multiple and complex needs accessing the SHS is increasing. Affordable move-on accommodation is also limited. SHS also works closely with the street outreach team to identify rough sleepers, access accommodation as quickly as possible and prevent a return to sleeping rough.

## Homelessness prevention-in action

***A single woman who had been in care in the North of England came to London for work. She found a property but fell into arrears when the company she worked for did not pay her salary. She took them to an employment tribunal, but her landlord had already started eviction proceedings. A prevention officer intervened as she had a possession hearing scheduled the following week. Through negotiations with the landlord he agreed that if the arrears were reduced to below 2 months' rent he would ask for a suspended order rather than an outright order. A discretionary housing payment of £1000 was paid and she took out a loan with the credit union for £2500 which was sufficient to halt proceedings. She has agreed an additional amount on her monthly rent to clear the rest of the arrears. She is now working as a supervising social worker, is on a local residents group and has used some lottery money to create a fund with the credit union for local residents to draw on.***



## What are we going to do?

We want to continue to shift our approach to a more proactive, preventative approach, and ensure that families and individuals approaching for housing advice or at risk of homelessness understand the support we can provide to help them find alternative accommodation quickly.

- Promote our housing advice and options services, and ensure that vulnerable people are supported to access our online housing advice resources
- Continue to refine and communicate our '*Your Home Your Move*' messages to encourage homeless households to actively engage in finding alternative accommodation
- Review our protocols with Public Authorities (prisons, probation, health, SLaM) to ensure effective joint working with a focus on preventing homelessness crises
- Ensure people applying as homeless spend as short a time as possible in Emergency or Temporary Accommodation
- Develop effective preventative approaches to tackle the main causes of homelessness:
  - Eviction from private rented sector (PRS) accommodation
  - Exclusion by parents, relatives and friends
  - Domestic violence
- All families/individuals in emergency or temporary accommodation have a realistic plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation
- Develop our Social Lettings Agency ; Croydon Lettings to continue to broker accommodation solutions that aligns with prevention and the escalation of crisis and need for statutory services

## Key measures of success

- Number of homelessness preventions acceptances
- Families spend minimum period in bed and breakfast style accommodation
- Minimum expenditure on emergency accommodation
- Emergency or temporary accommodation has adequate facilities for enabling people to work, do homework, cook, live a healthy lifestyle
- Embedding the Social Lettings Agency from a pilot to a full service; reducing the number of households entering into statutory services

## Sustainable accommodation

### What do we want to achieve

Housing targets are met

New homes meet the needs of our communities

We have an effective long-term temporary accommodation plan

Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households and to provide move-on from supported accommodation

### What happens now?

Our review shows that homelessness in Croydon is exacerbated by the lack of supply and access to suitable, settled accommodation. Resolving structural housing market factors that impact homelessness requires a focus on housing delivery, including the delivery of truly affordable housing. Croydon has a growing population and housing supply will need to at least double to keep pace. We will ensure there is an alignment with the homelessness strategy and the housing strategy in order to achieve an effective long-term temporary accommodation plan

Lack of supply in turn leads to increasing housing prices and rents, and welfare reform makes it nearly impossible for those in poverty or on low incomes to access sustainable housing in the current market. It also impacts move-on options people that are ready for independence are effectively trapped in supported accommodation, potentially blocking others in the system from moving on and getting the help they need.

Improving the quality and standards of private rented accommodation contributes to tackling homelessness, and helps reduce the poor housing conditions that affect health and may have long-term implications for income and employment. Croydon set up a borough-wide landlord licensing scheme in 2015 which protects private sector tenants and drives up standards.

Croydon has a smaller social housing stock than many other London boroughs, and consequently relies on private landlords to provide accommodation for homeless households both as temporary accommodation and as a discharge of the homelessness duty. We have a short-term supported housing portfolio of around 500 units, with floating support also provided to vulnerable people in hostels or in emergency accommodation. There are more than 2,000 households in temporary accommodation (including 3,000 children), and the Council has worked hard to reduce the number in B&B style emergency accommodation in recent years with significant success. Homeless families and single homeless, however, still spend too long 'living in limbo' in temporary accommodation and our focus will be on reducing the average length of stay.

The council offers a range of offers to private landlords and accommodation providers to supply accommodation for homeless households. Empty homes brought back into use with the financial

assistance of the council are used as supply for meeting housing need. A significant proportion of council and housing association homes are allocated to homeless households via Croydon's housing allocations scheme.

### **What we will do**

To drive forward housing delivery - we will:

- Ensure developers recognise Croydon as a borough with an easy to navigate planning framework and an effective proactive enabling function
- Support residential and economic growth with the required infrastructure
- We will deliver 2,000 truly affordable homes through the Brick by Brick housing programme
- We will bring 100 empty homes back into use
- Further develop our Social Lettings Agency; Croydon Lettings

To reduce the use of bed and breakfast style emergency accommodation, and rationalise our temporary accommodation portfolio – we will:

- Produce an accurate up to date forecast of our need for emergency and temporary accommodation
- Develop a long-term emergency and temporary accommodation plan – based on future need, minimising use of emergency accommodation (particularly bed and breakfast style accommodation with shared facilities for 16/17 year olds and families with children)
- Improve offer to large-scale housing providers and smaller private sector landlords and develop an efficient accommodation

procurement framework to provide move on accommodation required to discharge our housing duty

- Purchase homes and acquire long term interest in accommodation to provide long-term portfolio of affordable accommodation for households in need
- Explore use of modular housing to increase accommodation supply
- Ensure sufficient supply of accommodation for specific groups – over 65 year old people with complex needs, women with complex needs, young people (Crash Pad), former rough sleepers with chronic and severe ill-health.

### **Key measures of success**

- Housing supply figures
- Empty homes brought back into use
- Prevention supply achieved
- Number of households in emergency accommodation
- Emergency accommodation expenditure

## **Support outcomes**

### **What do we want to achieve**

- Aligned messages and approach to independence and resilience
- Localised support services based on local need
- Volunteers enabled to devote time/energy to meet need in their local area

### **What happens now?**

Croydon is developing a robust housing strategy and action plan that will align with the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

Croydon is fortunate to have wide ranging and active voluntary and community organisations providing support and advice to our residents that helps to build community resilience. The faith sector in particular provides support to homeless households and residents in need through day services, food and companionship, and a night shelter. Croydon also has health services dedicated to supporting rough sleepers and homeless households including the Homeless Health Team at the Rainbow Centre, and NHS walk-in services.

The Crisis Skylight Centre located in Surrey Street provides a wide range of support services including helping rough sleepers, housing coaching, renting ready, tenancy training and much more.

The Family Justice Centre (FJC) is a multi-agency co-located service (in Park Lane, Croydon) which offers support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and their children. The FJC works closely with the Council's Housing Needs and Assessments Service where cases involve victims threatened with homelessness or needing to move to safe accommodation urgently.

Poor quality and inappropriate housing impacts health services in different ways including repeat visits to the family doctor or Accident and Emergency department, or delays in discharge from hospital due a lack of safe, suitable accommodation to return to. The Council's Staying Put Team service and Major Adaptations Unit provides support to help people remain independent who would otherwise need to move home.

The support services available in Croydon, however, are oversubscribed and insufficient for current levels of need.

Funding for the SLaM START mental health outreach to rough sleepers expires in 2020, and is only funded on a skeletal basis. There is no outreach primary health care provision meaning that some of the most vulnerable street homeless individuals do not access primary care or dentistry. Some former rough sleepers in hostels have chronic, severe physical and mental health needs that are challenging to provide for and are not accessing mental, primary and personal care services due to lack of specialist provision.

### What we will do

- Undertake a Health Needs Assessment and mapping exercise in order to review the adequacy of health services to homeless households including access to:
  - Primary care provision, walk-in and emergency services for the most vulnerable
  - Mental health services
  - Dentistry
- Continue to support residents to remain independent through the Staying Put adaptations service
- Ensure our temporary accommodation provides the facilities and opportunities to live a healthy active lifestyle even in the most difficult circumstances
- Continue to provide tenancy sustainment services to prevent homelessness  
Support delivery of housing related support to individuals with complex needs through Psychologically Informed Support (PIE)

### Key measures of success

- Improved access mental, primary and dental health services for rough sleepers with complex needs
- Networked voluntary and community sector services Tenancy sustainment

### Rough sleeping

#### What do we want to achieve

We want to end entrenched rough sleeping

***Single Man has multiple and complex needs and a long history of rough sleeping, he was identified as a suitable candidate for the Housing First initiative to help alleviate issues associated with entrenched rough sleeping. He has been supported with signing a tenancy via Croydon Council as a part of the Housing First project.***

***To promote engagement with services and to enable communication, he has been provided with a mobile phone, which is used to contact him when home visits are not required, and equally, he is being actively encouraged to maintain regular contacts his key worker.***

***To address his substance misuse, he has been referred to a local drug service and is being accompanied to regular appointments with healthcare professionals. He is now in the process of addressing his drug addiction and has been supported with accessing appropriate medication***

## **Rough sleeping our efforts in action: from rough sleeper to having a place to call home**

Croydon has a significant rough sleeping problem with 274 people recorded as sleeping rough in 2018/19, of which around 50 were effectively living on the streets. Bi-monthly counts conducted by our rough sleeping outreach team find a fluctuating figure of between 15 to 35 rough sleepers on any night. Within that number there are a group of destitute European Economic Area (EEA) migrants that cannot claim benefits, and survive hand-to-mouth with the support of local day services.

Rough sleeping has been increasing in outer London as a result of the housing crisis and a lack of affordable housing. Private rented homes are increasingly expensive and insecure, and welfare reform and in particular, benefit sanctions have had a significant impact on vulnerable people. Austerity has reduced the preventative services that would have kept many off the streets, and it has raised the threshold for eligibility for other services (including mental health and substance misuse services). Homelessness prevention funding is allocated on out of date patterns of need, restricting the ability of outer London boroughs to respond effectively.

Croydon is fortunate to have many residents who volunteer for services for rough sleepers and people in need including a floating winter shelter provided by local churches (Croydon Churches Floating Shelter). In the winter of 2018 local premiership football team Crystal Palace agreed to help provide severe weather shelter, converting a lounge into a space that could accommodate up to 12 rough sleepers in need of shelter, this was operated by volunteers and outreach staff. We commission an outreach and resettlement service, Croydon Reach. Crisis located one of its Skylight Centres in Croydon a few years ago, delivering vital services to help people off

the streets and into accommodation and employment. The Council aims to operate an 'in for good' policy, providing accommodation on a discretionary basis, and has also worked with providers, assisted by the CR Zero campaign to remove barriers to rough sleepers accessing, and remaining in supported accommodation. Our hostel providers have changed their policy regarding using alcohol, accepting dogs, and are to be flexible around couples. We have secured funding for specialist rough sleeping navigators through the Rapid Rehousing Fund, who provide an intensive focus on finding pathways for rough sleepers with complex needs.

While this is more comprehensive provision than many other boroughs, the need in Croydon is demonstrably higher than other outer London boroughs there are still significant gaps in provision including the frequency and coverage of outreach, sustained funding for mental health outreach, access to primary healthcare and dentistry, immediately available safe emergency accommodation, services for entrenched rough sleepers with multiple needs, resources to engage entrenched EEA migrants with complex needs. Providers report that there are increasing numbers of rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs.

### **What we are going to do:**

The Council was recently very successful in securing Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding to enhance service provision. This funding, the CR Zero partnership and our partnership with Crisis to end core homelessness in Croydon provides the framework for tackling rough sleeping over the next two to three years.

We will:

- Develop our Rough Sleepers Alliance to create a network bringing together all service providers, faith groups, and people with lived experience to support new organisations, share good practice, work through issues and improve services.
- Explore the opportunities to develop a Homelessness Reduction Board to enhance accountability of all partners
- Support the work of CRZero to end chronic rough sleeping
- Continue to commission a rough sleeping outreach service
- Provide an effective No First Night Out approach through a 24/7 crash space and rough sleeper assessment centre, providing a swift person-centred solutions for individual rough sleepers
- Maintain Housing First opportunities
- Develop rapid rehousing pathways
- Relieve homelessness amongst EEA and other migrants nationals who are unable to access benefits
- Work with Police, council anti-social behaviour teams, and local businesses to support rough sleepers and reduce the anti-social behaviour associated with some rough sleepers and sleeping sites, participating in forums and implementing targeted approaches.

### **Key measures of success**

- No one living on the street / reduced numbers living on the street
- An accurate picture of rough sleeping based on detailed individual case data

### **Young people**

#### **What do we want to achieve**

We want to end youth homelessness in Croydon

#### **What is happening now?**

Homeless acceptances of young people over the past ten years has been quite low - the Council has accepted on average 3 applicants aged 16 or 17 per year, and only 4 per year applicants that has formerly been in care. The number of young people accessing housing advice services at the Turnaround Centre Drop in Zone, however, is quite high (544 in 17/18), and research shows young people will often sofa surf with family or friends before they access support.

Our services have a strong focus on prevention with Croydon Children's Services working with young people and parents to prevent family breakdown to support young people to remain at home. They take also the lead in applications from 16/17 year olds. The commissioned Drop in Zone service for single 16-21 year olds provides mediation, family therapy, and works with the Youth Offending Service, and Probation. The councils' Leaving Care Team holds a 2 weekly accommodation panel to identify and plan for suitable accommodation for care leavers after age 17 ½ and following the introduction of the Children and Social Work Act, and a Croydon Local Offer has been developed.

There is also a variety of provision of accommodation and support for young people, including; assessment centre and supported accommodation, short and longer term supported lodgings, and shared accommodation with visiting support. The Single Homelessness Service provides a dedicated officer to work with complex need young people who are ready to move on.

Our review and engagement found that there has been an increase in the level of complex needs young people needing accommodation and housing support, particularly those age over 18. Also, there is insufficient supported and suitable emergency accommodation for homeless young people, resulting in the use of bed and breakfast style emergency accommodation.

#### **What we are going to do:**

There are a number of ways we can improve services for young people, increase prevention, and eliminate the use of unsuitable accommodation (B&B in particular) altogether. In order to achieve this we will:

- Review, and relaunch the Croydon Youth homelessness joint protocol ensuring housing and children's services work effectively together to provide the housing options and support young people and care leavers need

- Improve online housing advice and information (co-designed with young people)
- Developing a youth homeless prevention peer education programme
- Create a single integrated YP gateway (with social work support)
- End the use of B&B accommodation and create an alternative Croydon 'crash pad'
- Introduce home visits to all young people who approach as homeless aged 16-24
- Identify a menu of move on options, including effective assessment process
- Work with landlords to increase their confidence in accommodating young people
- Develop a young persons 'tenancy ready' programme
- Identify young people at risk of tenancy failure through eviction or abandonment,
- Explore different accommodation models, such as peer landlord schemes and shared housing with floating support.

#### **Key measures of success**

- Number of young people accommodated in B&B
- Number of young people accepted as homeless

## Action Plan

The Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services oversees the direction and delivery of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and associated services.

Outcome	Aim	Key Actions	Milestones	Owner
Taking the Gateway approach out into the community	Early intervention and prevention to stabilise households in crisis and prevent homelessness with a holistic approach for our most vulnerable residents through Access Croydon, Contact Centre and localities	<p>Deliver and roll out Community Connect/Food Stop - Community Hub model run by the community for the community delivering services that are responsive to the specific needs of residents</p> <p>Development of the Homelessness Reduction Board to discuss sustainable long term solutions</p>	30/9/2020	Director of Gateway Services
Homelessness prevention	<p>Supporting residents to sustain their tenancies</p> <p>Develop the Social Lettings Agency to become a full service aligned to prevention and the prevention of the escalation of crisis and need for statutory services</p>	Intensive support activity to sustain participation and find long lasting solutions	30/9/2021	Director of Gateway Services
Networked community, voluntary and faith sectors	Community Connect Alliance of organisations - multi-agency 'Alliance' approach empowers the local community, builds on existing relationships and forges new connections with stakeholders to strengthen and improve outcomes for local people	<p>Partnership working across the community, voluntary, faith, private and public sectors to strengthen and improve outcomes for local people.</p> <p>Maintain and support the Community Connect Alliance</p>	Ongoing	Director of Gateway Services



## Homelessness Prevention

Outcome	Aim	Key Actions	Milestones	Owner
A high proportion of homelessness prevention outcomes	Fewer homeless households in emergency accommodation	Promote our housing options and advice services	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
	Fewer households in emergency accommodation	Review our protocols with Public Authorities (prisons, probation, health, (SLaM) to ensure effective joint working with a focus on preventing homelessness crises	Ongoing	Director of Gateway Services/ Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
	Fewer households in emergency accommodation	Review our preventative approaches to tackle the main causes of homelessness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eviction from PRS accommodation</li> <li>• Exclusion by parents, relatives and friends</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Director of Gateway/ Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
Shorter stays in temporary accommodation	Homeless families in temporary accommodation actively engage in finding alternative accommodation	Refine and communicate 'Your Home Your Move' messages	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
	Homeless families in temporary accommodation actively engage in finding alternative accommodation	All families/individuals in EA/TA have a realistic plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation	30/12/2020	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions

## Sustainable Accommodation

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Prevention supply achieved	Ensure developers recognise Croydon as a borough with an easy to navigate planning framework and an effective proactive enabling function	Support residential and economic growth with the required infrastructure	30/12/2020	Director of Planning Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
New homes meet the needs of our communities	Ensure housing targets are met	Deliver 2,000 truly affordable homes through the Brick by Brick housing programme	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households	Ensure housing targets are met	We will bring 100 empty homes back into use	31/12/2022	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
We have an effective long term TA plan	Produce an accurate up to date forecast of our need for EA/TA	Develop a long-term EA/TA plan – based on future need, minimising use of EA (particularly B&B with shared facilities for 16/17 year olds and families with children)	31/12/2021	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households and to provide move-on from supported accommodation	Improve offer to and large-scale housing providers and smaller private sector landlords and develop an efficient accommodation procurement framework to provide move on accommodation required to discharge our housing duty	Develop separate offers for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale housing providers</li> <li>• Smaller private sector landlords</li> </ul>	31/12/2022	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
		Delivery of a new procurement framework	30/3/2021	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
		Purchase homes and acquire long term interest in accommodation to provide long-term portfolio of affordable accommodation for households in need	30/3/2022	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
		Ensure sufficient supply of accommodation for specific groups – over 65s with complex needs, women with complex needs, young people (Crash Pad), former rough sleepers with chronic and severe ill-health.	31/12/2022	Director of Gateway Services/ Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions/ Commissioning and Improvement

## Support Outcomes

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Localised support services based on local need	Improved access mental, primary and dental health services for rough sleepers with complex needs	Undertake a Health Needs Assessment and mapping exercise in order to review the adequacy of health services to homeless households including access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care provision, walk-in and emergency services for the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Dentistry</li> </ul>	30/12/2020	Director of Public Health
Tenancy sustainment	Psychologically Informed Environments	Delivery of housing related support to individuals with complex needs through Psychologically Informed Support (PIE).	30/12/2021	Director of Gateway Services
Aligned messages and approach to independence and resilience	Volunteers enabled to devote time/energy to meet need in their local area	Alliance of community and voluntary services creating good practice networks, aligned aims and opportunities for volunteers	Ongoing /annual review	Director of Gateway Services
Networked voluntary and community sector services	Localised support services based on local need	Ensure links between residents in temporary accommodation, voluntary, community services and social prescribing networks	Ongoing/annual review	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions

## Rough Sleepers

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Owner</b>
An end to entrenched rough sleeping An end to entrenched rough sleeping	An alliance of voluntary and community sector services with a shared goal	Maintain and support the Rough Sleepers Alliance	30/06/2020	Director of Gateway Services
	Work with CR Zero 2020 to establish an innovation fund for rough sleeping services	Relieve homelessness amongst EEA and other migrants nationals who are unable to access benefits	31/03/2021	Director of Gateway Services
An end to entrenched rough sleeping	Provide an effective No First Night Out approach to tackling rough sleeping early	Deliver and monitor outcomes of our Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub - a 24/7 crash space and rough sleeper assessment centre to ensure swift person-centred solutions for individual rough sleepers	1/11/2019	Director of Gateway Services
	Provide an effective Housing First service	Implement Housing First and accommodate 20 entrenched rough sleepers through Housing First intervention and support	31/03/2020	Director of Gateway Services
	Entrenched rough sleepers are given the support they need to leave the streets	Work with Police, council anti-social behaviour teams, and local businesses to support rough sleepers and reduce the anti-social behaviour associated with some rough sleepers and sleeping sites, participating in forums and implementing targeted approaches.	31/09/2020	Director of Gateway Services

## Young People

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Owner</b>
End youth homelessness in Croydon	Increased homelessness prevention outcomes for young people	Review, and relaunch the Croydon Youth homelessness joint protocol ensuring housing and children's services work effectively together to provide the housing options and support young people and care leavers need	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Develop a single integrated gateway for 16 and 17 year olds	31/12/2019	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Identify young people at risk of tenancy failure through eviction or abandonment	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Introduce home visits for all 16-24 year olds who approach as homeless	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Deliver improved online housing advice and information (co-designed with young people)	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Develop a youth homelessness prevention peer education programme	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households and to provide move-on from supported accommodation	End the use of B&B accommodation for young people	Create 'crash pad' accommodation.	Ongoing	Director of Gateway and Welfare
	Increased supply of PRS move on accommodation	Work with landlords to increase their confidence in accommodating young people	30/10/2020	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
		Research different accommodation models, such as peer landlord schemes and shared housing with floating support and create a delivery plan	31/12/2021	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
	Increased supply of PRS move on accommodation	Develop a young person's tenancy ready programme	31/12/2022	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions