

Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019

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Executive summary

Our Homelessness Strategy for 2016-19 describes how the Council intends to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It identifies the challenges we face as a Council and focuses on ensuring the delivery of homelessness services over the next three years in the context of challenging welfare and tenancy reforms and funding cuts.

Our three strategic aims for our Homelessness Strategy 2016-19 are:

- Priority 1: Reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough
- Priority 2: Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services
- Priority 3: Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary and permanent accommodation

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Foreword

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1. Introduction

Kettering Borough Council's Homelessness Review, available separately, provides the evidence base for the Homelessness Strategy.

The Homelessness Review was completed in December 2015 and provides a comprehensive understanding of homelessness in the Borough. It identifies the key issues and gaps in service provision that are currently in evidence. The Homelessness Review should be read in conjunction with this document.

Building on the evidence of the review, the purpose of this strategy is to assess the scale of the challenge facing us, the level of resources available to meet the challenge, and to provide a clear framework for future action.

The Homelessness Strategy sets out our vision for homelessness in Kettering borough over the next three years. The vision links directly to our Sustainable Community Strategy and our Housing Strategy. The Strategy sets out the challenges and opportunities which Kettering faces in relation to homelessness, and the responses which we have developed in consultation with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Defining homelessness

Homelessness is often narrowly thought to include only those households sleeping rough or in emergency accommodation – the 'visible' signs of homelessness which can be seen every day in most towns and cities. In the UK, policy makers adopt a much wider definition of homelessness to include those living in temporary accommodation or hostels, women's refuges and bed and breakfast hotels, or staying temporarily with friends and relatives because they have no home of their own. It also includes people living in accommodation which they have no legal right to occupy and those whose accommodation is so substandard or dangerous (for example, because of a threat of violence) that it is not reasonable to expect them to stay there.

2. Successes since our last strategy

Despite an economic recession and the start of the Government's welfare reform measures, homelessness remained stable during 2009/10 to 2014/15; this will in part be due to the effective administration of new social housing lettings in the Borough through Keyways, a booming private rental market, and a successful development programme of new affordable housing.

Since the publication of Kettering Borough Council's third Homelessness Strategy, in 2012, there have been significant successes in the delivery of homelessness services. The main achievements of the last Homelessness Strategy are summarised below under its priorities; demonstrating the innovative work which is being undertaken locally to assist households who are threatened with homelessness.

1. Reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough

- There has been a significant improvement in the time taken to process Keyways applications; processing times have reduced from 28 days in April 2015 to 12 days in March 2016.
- During 2014/15, 24 tenants were helped to downsize to more suitable accommodation through the Council's 'HomeMove' service. A further 13 tenants requiring adaptations to their homes were supported to move to more suitable accommodation through our 'Enhanced HomeMove' service - saving the Council approximately £27,600 in disabled adaptations.
- Our innovative approach of offering housing options assessments to tenants requesting adaptations, was recognised as good practice by the Chartered Institute of Housing in 'How to...make effective use of adapted properties' (CIH, 2014).
- During 2012 we joined the Stepping Stones Project which seeks to address bed blocking in local hospitals and in the specialist care centres by providing temporary accommodation for those who are unable to return home. Since July 2012 our property has saved the NHS over £145,000 in hospital bed days.
- New Introductory Tenancy procedures have been implemented which focus on offering greater support to Kettering Borough Council tenants through the first 12 months of their tenancy. As part of this work, new six-week financial assessments have been introduced, 61 of which were completed between November 2014 and March 2015.
- In July 2014 the Council's Housing Income Team introduced pre-court interviews, the purpose of which is to prevent court action through the early establishment of repayment agreements with tenants. Since March 2015, 33 pre-court interviews have been completed – resulting in a fall in arrears of £11,060.30 across 27 rent accounts.

2. Provide appropriate support services for vulnerable people

- The seventh LifePlan Awards ceremony was held in December 2015, which celebrates customers who have achieved personal success through support from the Council's LifePlan service. LifePlan supports customers into education, employment and training.
- The Council's LifePlan service offers 'Practical Housing Units' to tenants. These are training workbooks that focus on the basic skills and knowledge that underpin a person's ability to sustain a tenancy. Over the last two years we have helped 73 customers to complete 174 separate modules.
- During 2014/15 Kettering Borough Council's Tenancy Support Workers supported 174 tenants to maintain their tenancies. The majority of tenants required help for rent arrears, debt management and claiming benefits.
- The Council's LifePlan service has launched 'Your Courses' which is a programme of free courses on offer to tenants and residents. The courses include first aid and DIY. Since October 2013 192 places have been filled on LifePlan courses.
- Accommodation Concern leases a shared property from the Council which they let to vulnerable single people – intensive support is provided to the tenants to prepare them for move-on.
- We have had success through our tenant passport scheme in helping those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Six customers have secured tenant passports and then subsequently secured tenancies. In total there have been 15 successful applications for tenant passports.

3. Reduce and prevent homelessness amongst non-statutorily homeless households (including rough sleepers)

- In 2015 in partnership with Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire Council, we successfully secured funding for two years from the Department for Communities and Local Government from their 'help for single homeless' programme. The funding has enabled us to develop a Turning Point Transitions project to prevent homelessness amongst single non-priority homeless people with complex needs. The project aims to support customers through the transition from institutions to independent living through effective partnerships, timely preparation of appropriate accommodation, and the provision of housing related support.
- In 2013 a training house project for an entrenched rough sleeper was piloted which resulted in the successful move on of the resident into settled accommodation.

4. Increase the supply of permanent accommodation for homeless households

- In 2013/14 and 2014/15 we delivered 223 new affordable homes in the Borough.

- In October 2014 we held a Keyways event which was attended by 50 households. As a result of the event, 27 Keyways applications were made active – which represented a 6 per cent increase in active Keyways applicants. The event also resulted in a 322 per cent increase in Keyways bids.
- In 2014 an additional 7 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers were completed at The Laurels in Desborough.
- We have worked with the County Council Drug and Alcohol Team, the Department of Health and Orbit Housing to develop 5 specialist units of accommodation for people recovering from alcohol and/or drug misuse as part of the PHaSE project.

5. Provide suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households

- In October 2015, a single-persons hostel managed by Home Group on behalf of the Council, was opened in Kettering. ‘Wellington House’ provides 16 rooms and five flats for temporary accommodation for homeless households and has greatly reduced the Council’s reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation. Residents of the hostel are supported to develop the skills and knowledge they need to manage successful tenancies through the Council’s LifePlan Service.
- In 2013 a young persons’ tenancy training flat project was piloted in partnership with Accommodation Concern and Home Group. Young people were supported by Accommodation Concern’s tenancy support service and the Council’s LifePlan Service, to learn the skills they need to manage their tenancies. As a result of the successful project, nine young people went on to secure independent tenancies.

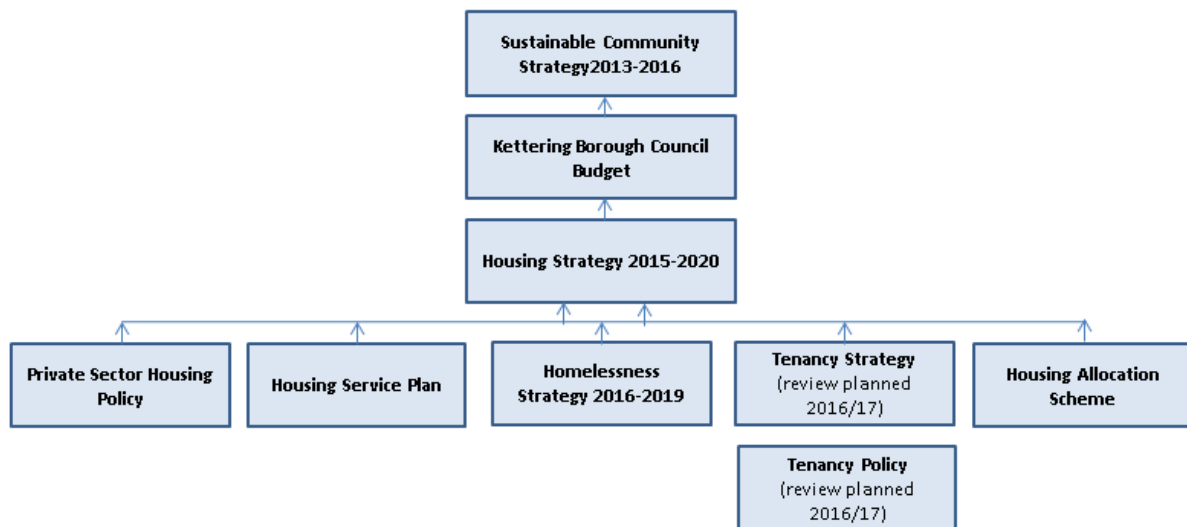
The Homelessness Strategy for 2016-19 will build on the successes of the previous strategy.

3. Strategic context

The Homelessness Strategy 2016/19 forms part of a hierarchy of plans and strategies developed by Kettering Borough Council, which seek to transform national strategies and objectives into real improvements in local people’s lives and the way housing is allocated and managed. These include a Sustainable Community Strategy, Housing Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Private Sector Housing Policy, Housing Allocation Scheme and Housing Service Plan (figure 1).

The plans and strategies of our partners will influence our work and therefore must be considered when developing our strategies and plans. Such plans include the Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

Figure 1: Strategic Framework



“The best place in England to grow” is the vision for the Borough which is set out within the overarching Sustainable Community Strategy 2013-16. Flowing from this is Kettering Borough Council’s Housing Strategy 2015-2020, which describes how the Council intends to meet the housing need and aspirations of residents. The three strategic aims of the Housing Strategy are:

1. Increasing housing supply across all tenures

- Ensuring an increasing supply of good quality new homes of all tenures to support growth
- Increase the supply of affordable homes, including a proportion of smaller one and two bedroom homes to meet the needs of current and future communities
- Unlock the potential of empty homes
- Make best use of existing housing stock

2. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes

- Ensure decent, safe and healthy homes in the private sector
- Support a thriving private rented sector
- Reduce fuel poverty
- Improve the condition and energy efficiency of the Council’s housing stock
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across our estates

3. Helping people to live independently

- Prevent homelessness wherever possible through high quality advice and assistance

- Work with those most affected by welfare reform to mitigate the negative impact it has had on their lives
- Ensure that accommodation and services provided for elderly people remains relevant and responsive to their needs
- Improving the range of housing options and support for vulnerable people

The Homelessness Strategy will support the delivery of the Housing Strategy's strategic aims.

Alongside the Homelessness Strategy sits the Tenancy Strategy. The Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy, which must be considered when formulating a Homelessness Strategy.

The Tenancy Strategy provides guidance for both the Council and registered providers when granting and renewing social tenancies across the Borough. New flexible and fixed-term tenancies for households moving into social housing were introduced by the Localism Act. Until this point, social landlords had only been able to issue lifetime or secure tenancies. The Strategy states that when providers of affordable housing in Kettering Borough choose to use fixed-term tenancies for new lettings, they should use five years as a minimum term.

The Council has been issuing fixed-term tenancies for the majority of new social tenancies since April 2012. There is no available data which tells us the number of local registered providers using fixed-term tenancies in new lettings; however nationally, the vast majority of properties are still let using secure or assured tenancies¹.

There has been a recent Government announcement on the use of 'lifetime tenancies' for social housing. A section in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 will mean that local authorities can only issue new tenancies of between 2 and 10 years, apart from in very limited circumstances. This marks the end of lifetime tenancies and the option for local authorities to choose the types of tenancies they issue. Although the amendment relates specifically to council tenants, registered providers will have discretion to issue fixed term tenancies also. However these would be introduced through changes to regulation, rather than legislation. The current Tenancy Strategy will therefore be reviewed once tenancy reform proposals are clearer.

The implications of the ending of lifetime tenancies for the Homelessness Strategy include:

- Registered providers are required to offer reasonable advice and assistance to tenants whose fixed-term tenancy is not to be renewed to help them find alternative accommodation. The Council will need to work closely with registered providers to

¹ 'What you need to know about the take up of fixed-term tenancies and affordable rent', Chartered Institute of Housing (2015)

agree how the end of fixed-term tenancies will be consistently managed in the borough.

- Responses will need to be put in place to help prevent homelessness from tenants whose fixed-term tenancy is not being renewed.

The Housing Allocation Scheme and the Homelessness Strategy

In January 2009 Kettering Borough Council launched Kettering Keyways, its choice based lettings system for allocating social homes. The boroughs of Corby and Wellingborough joined the scheme in November 2010 at which point Kettering Keyways was rebranded as “Keyways” to reflect the wider partnership it covers. The majority of social lettings in North Northamptonshire are managed through Keyways.

Underpinning the Keyways system is the allocation scheme, which sets out how we prioritise housing applicants for vacant properties in our Borough. The Allocation Scheme is an important tool to reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough and support residents in housing need: it ensures that the social housing stock in the Borough is allocated on fair and reasonable grounds to those people who need it the most.

In response to The Localism Act 2011 – which was an important piece of legislation in respect of allocations - radical changes were made to the Keyways scheme in 2013. These included:

- **No housing need:** Applicants who had no identified housing need were no longer accepted onto Keyways. At the time of implementation 42 per cent of all live applications had been placed in the lowest priority band (Band D) because they were adequately housed. Due to the levels of demand on the waiting list, these applicants had no realistic chance of being housed unless they were seeking sheltered accommodation. Removing these applicants from the waiting list enabled us to better manage the expectations of people on our waiting list and reduced administrative resources on people who were unlikely to get housed.
- **Local homes for local people:** Applications from households who did not live in the Borough were no longer accepted onto the scheme, unless they had a clear local connection to the area (such as close family). This change ensured local homes were let to local people in need.
- **Downsizers;** Greater priority was given to existing social housing tenants who wished to downsize, particularly those who were willing to free up family housing with two bedrooms or more and have a medical need. In addition, those occupying properties with disabled adaptations, which were no longer needed, were given greater priority to transfer. This ensured a better use of our existing social housing stock.

- **Discharging homelessness duty into the private rented sector;** Those households to whom the Council has accepted a full duty as statutorily homeless could receive an offer of privately rented housing – prior to this change they would only receive an offer of social housing.
- **New income and asset caps;** Income and asset caps were introduced so that those who have the financial means to resolve their housing needs themselves within the local housing market were no longer accepted onto Keyways.
- **Stricter qualifying criteria:** the groups of applicants who do not qualify to join the register was extended to those who have all types of housing related debt, perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, and those who have behaved in an unacceptable way towards officers or property of the Council or partner landlord.
- **Priority for members of the armed forces:** A new priority for current and former members of the armed forces was introduced, so that those who have a reasonable preference and an urgent need for housing will be placed in the highest band (Band A).

The above changes have resulted in a much more efficient allocation scheme which gives priority to households in the greatest housing need in the Borough.

The Keyways housing allocation scheme is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet its objectives. The 2016 review which was approved by the Council's Executive in May 2016 sought to address the shortcomings of the previous scheme, and respond to the changing policy climate and housing market that we are now working in. As a result the following changes were incorporated into the Scheme:

- **Existing social tenants: circumstances where an application may not be accepted:** – There may be some circumstances in which the council can refuse an application on the grounds that an applicant's housing need can be better met in their current accommodation. An example is a council tenant requiring specialist adapted accommodation that is in short supply, and where it is viable to further adapt their current property in order to meet their medical needs. This will avoid applicants waiting on our housing register, for a property which is unlikely to become available, and which is likely to be direct let outside of the bidding process when it does become available.
- **People with no local connection to Kettering Borough (residency):** – the local connection criteria for residency also requires a current residence in Kettering Borough at the point of application and nomination, in addition to the current requirement for 3 out of the last 5 years residency. This will avoid qualifying applicant's resident out of the borough 'losing' their local connection prior to an offer of accommodation.

- **People with no local connection to Kettering Borough (employment):** – the Coalition Government’s Right to Move scheme (regulations made in March 2015 Statutory Instrument 2015/967) prevents local authorities applying a local connection test that could disadvantage tenants who need to move across local authority boundaries for employment reasons. In line with the regulations, applicants without an established local connection but who need to move to take up, or continue employment, and who need to move to avoid hardship, will qualify for our housing register.
- **People with no local connection to Kettering Borough (special circumstances):** – households accepted by Kettering Borough Council as statutory homeless will be awarded a local connection under special circumstances if they fail to establish a local connection to our housing register through residence, employment or family associations. The local connection criteria defined in Homelessness statute, differ to those criteria in our Keyways Housing Allocation scheme e.g. a homeless applicant can establish a local connection through residency for the purposes of homelessness through 6 out of the last 12 months residency. This change will enable us to discharge our rehousing duties to statutory homeless and reduce time in temporary accommodation at a time when private rents are increasingly inaccessible for our customers.
- **People who behave in an unacceptable way (housing related debt):** – The amount of housing related debt an applicant can owe before failing to qualify for Keyways is increased. Applicants in an urgent housing need will be considered if they have rent arrears or rechargeable repairs cumulatively totalling up to £500, in addition to other housing related debt, also up to £500. This will prevent applicants suffering financial hardship, maybe as a result of welfare reform, from being unable to access more suitable and affordable accommodation via Keyways.
- **Band A Severe Overcrowding:** – A new Band A criteria called Severe Overcrowding has been introduced for all tenures. Our previous Band A criteria Category 1 hazard covered serious overcrowding but only for private and Housing Association tenants. This amendment ensures that severely overcrowded council tenants can be awarded an equivalent priority to move to larger accommodation.
- **Band B End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy requiring family accommodation:** - All private rented tenants that receive notice through no fault of their own are currently awarded a Band C priority. A new criterion is inserted within Band B for those that require family accommodation only. Such households are likely to be owed a full statutory homeless duty by Kettering Borough Council – this is the most common cause of homelessness locally. This change would increase the chances of homelessness being prevented through an offer of social housing prior to them requiring crisis homeless assistance.
- **Band B Right to Move:** – A new Band B criteria is inserted in Band B to satisfy our statutory obligations under the Right to Move Statutory Instrument to award

reasonable preference under the hardship criteria to tenants seeking to transfer who need to move to be closer to work or to take up an offer of work.

- **Band D Low Need for additional space:** - This Band D criteria for applicants that are not overcrowded but whom would benefit from additional space, is removed. The housing market has changed significantly since this criteria being introduced at a time of lower demand for family accommodation following the introduction of the Spare Room Subsidy. There has been a significant increase in demand for accommodation from applicants in urgent housing need, particularly family houses, and applicants in this band will rarely be successful in receiving an offer of accommodation.
- **Direct Offers:** – applicants requiring 3 bedrooms but without dependents currently receive a lower preference for 3 bed family houses. The high demand for this type of accommodation means that they are unlikely to receive an offer. We will now make a direct offer of 3 bed flats / maisonettes to such household types when they become available.
- **Parlour Type Houses:** – due to a shortage of four bedroom accommodation, we will now allocate parlour type houses (defined as houses with three bedrooms and two reception rooms) to larger households requiring a minimum of 6 bedspaces. Currently households requiring 5 bedspaces are also eligible to be considered however most standard 3 bed houses accommodate 5 people in two double rooms and one single room meaning that these applicants already have sufficient housing options.
- **Appendix A: Allocation Preference Orders:** - We have included a new appendix A to the Housing Allocation Scheme which details our Allocation Preference Orders for each property type. It is hoped that applicants will find this tool useful for better understanding how we allocate each property type, and which criteria override others. It enables us to be more transparent in how we allocate a finite resource in high demand, and allows applicants to make informed choices regarding their bidding decisions.
- **Appendix B: Property Eligibility Matrix:** – Some changes to the way that we allocate two bedroom flats are proposed. Firstly it is proposed that single applicants, childless couples and households needing two bedrooms but without dependents will no longer be eligible to bid for two bed flats with a garden. Currently these household types are eligible to bid but receive a reduced preference for this family accommodation. Due to an increased demand for family accommodation, such properties will be reserved solely for families. Applicants requiring two bedrooms will receive preference for two bedroom flats without a garden, over and above those requiring one bedroom.
- **Appendix B: Property Eligibility Matrix:** – Households with one dependent child will no longer be eligible to bid for three bedroom houses. Such applicants currently receive a reduced preference for this accommodation type, and this was introduced at a period of lower demand for 3 bedroom houses.

4. Homelessness Strategy: the legal context

The homelessness legislation (Part VII of the Housing Act 1996) provides a statutory basis for local authorities to tackle homelessness. In 2002, the Government reinforced the homelessness legislation through the Homelessness Act 2002. The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced the requirement for local authorities to carry out, from time to time, a review or assessment of homelessness in their area and to develop a homelessness strategy. The Act specifically requires that strategies must address three key issues:

- The prevention of homelessness
- The provision of accommodation for those who do become homeless
- The provision of support to those who have been homeless to ensure that they do not become homeless again.

Local authorities must have regard to the strategy in the discharge of any duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. The strategy must also deal with all homelessness in the authority's district - not just where there is a statutory homelessness duty.

5. The national context

Since the election of the coalition government in 2010 we have seen significant welfare and housing reforms which have contributed to a rise in the levels of homelessness nationally.

The most significant change was the introduction of the bedroom rate restriction in April 2013. The impact of this policy has been somewhat mitigated by the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) which is a fund paid by the Government to local authorities to help people receiving Housing Benefit (or the housing costs element of Universal Credit) with their housing costs. The Government has announced that DHPs will continue over the next five years however there are concerns that a bigger burden will be placed on this limited resource as a greater numbers of claimants will suffer hardship as proposed welfare reform measures start to take effect. Also DHPs are supposed to be a short term measure.

In May 2015 the Conservatives were elected as a majority Government and have announced significant changes to housing, welfare and planning policy. We are currently in a period of uncertainty as we await the detail of many of the recent announcements in the form of regulation and guidance. The Government has however, made it clear that the focus for the next five years will be on increasing the number of homes built for sale (rather than social and affordable rent) and a continuation of stringent welfare and tenancy reform.

The Government's welfare and tenancy reforms include:

- Housing benefit (and Universal Credit housing payments) in the social housing sector will be capped at local housing allowance rates for new tenants
- A four-year freeze on working age benefits
- Local Housing Allowance caps frozen for four years
- Reducing the overall cap on benefits to £20,000 per annum
- Ending automatic entitlement to Universal Credit Housing Costs for people under 21
- Changes to the way the management of temporary accommodation is funded.

The June EU referendum outcome in favour of 'Brexit' brings with it general economic uncertainty and we expect there will be significant impacts to consider such as the housing market, public spending and likelihood of increasing homelessness. This will only become clearer in due course.

The table below summaries some of the main tenancy and welfare reforms that we know to date and briefly assesses their implications for homelessness in the Borough.

Table 1: Welfare and tenancy reforms and their potential impact on homelessness

Policy change	Potential impact on homelessness	Implementation date (where known)
'Pay to stay': tenants in social housing who earn more than £31,000 per year outside of London will be expected to pay market rents, or near market rents	Implications for the affordability of social rented homes as tenants face higher rents. In December 2015 it was announced that the policy would be optional for housing associations in light of the government drive to 'deregulate' the sector.	Further details are included in the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
Ending automatic entitlement to Universal Credit Housing Costs (not Housing Benefit) for those aged under 21	Potential rise in homelessness among people under the age of 21 who are unable to afford their accommodation. Likely to lead to an increase in homeless applications from young people. There is a proposed exemption for those who have been homeless, although this has not been confirmed.	April 2017
Household benefit cap reduced to £20,000 for those living outside London– with lower figures for single people (£384 per week for families or a lower rate of £296 per week for singles)	For households subject to the benefit cap, there are concerns that any household with more than two children will find social, affordable or private rent unaffordable.	Autumn 2016
Four year freeze on working age benefits, including tax credits and local Housing Allowance (LHA)	Private rents have increased locally, if this trend continues the four year freeze on LHA rates will exacerbate the ability of LHA claimants to access affordable accommodation. If private rents continue to rise, there will be a fall in the number of available properties which are affordable for LHA claimants. LHA claimants will be effectively priced out of the market. This is likely to lead to an increase in households approaching the Council as homelessness due to affordability issues.	From April 2016
Universal credit, due to be introduced between 2013 & 2017, will see a selection of different	Payments including housing credits (the replacement for Housing Benefit) will be paid in most cases direct to the	Phased introduction

Policy change	Potential impact on homelessness	Implementation date (where known)
benefits abolished and replaced by one single award called Universal Credit	<p>customers, this includes council and housing association tenants whose housing benefit currently goes to their landlord.</p> <p>There is a huge concern amongst providers of social housing about the ability of vulnerable people to manage their Universal Credit. Landlords are concerned that rent arrears will increase as people are required to pay their rent direct to their landlord.</p>	in Kettering borough which began June 2015
The extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. This policy will be funded by the forced sale of high-value Council properties	<p>This will result in the depletion of social housing stock locally and further reduce the number of affordable rented homes available to those in need.</p> <p>It is intended that housing associations will be allowed to keep the receipts of any sales to reinvest in affordable housing. This could include any type of affordable home i.e. shared ownership or discounted sale so will not necessarily be like-for-like replacement and the replacement will not be required in the area the property was sold.</p>	Further details are included in the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
Fixed-term tenancies: through new legislation the Government will only permit local authorities to issue new tenancies of 2-5 years, except in very limited circumstances. This policy marks the end of lifetime tenancies. Although the amendment relates specifically to council tenants, it is likely that the government will introduce similar measures for housing association tenants	We have already introduced flexible tenancies in Kettering for the majority of our new lettings however if this policy is extended to housing association tenants we could see a greater number of tenants whose tenancy is not renewed at the end of the fixed-term. The Homelessness Strategy will therefore need to reduce and prevent homelessness from tenants whose fixed-term tenancy is not being renewed.	Unknown – included within the Housing and Planning Act 2016
Housing benefit (and Universal Credit housing payments) will be capped for new tenants in the social housing sector to local housing allowance rates	<p>This policy will have major implications for single tenants under the age of 35 as they will only be entitled to housing benefit at the shared accommodation rate. With the shared accommodation rate, the maximum housing benefit they can get is the rate for renting a single room in a shared house. This applies even if they rent a self-contained flat.</p> <p>This will make it very difficult for single people under 35 to find a home that they can afford. Young people moving into one-bed social housing after 1 April 2016 will be particularly vulnerable.</p> <p>Supported housing may be particularly affected if it is subject to this welfare reform measure. Because of additional costs (such as staffing) supported housing, including schemes directed at previously homeless households, is particularly vulnerable to such cuts in income. Nationally, many services are predicting significant shortfalls between their current rent levels and the amount they will receive under LHA. If supported housing services are withdrawn, vulnerable people will inevitably end up homeless.</p> <p>Since the policy announcement, a planned supported housing scheme in the Borough has been put on hold by a registered provider concerned about the future financial viability of the scheme.</p> <p>On the 1st March 2016 the Government announced a 12 month delay on its proposals to bring supported housing rents</p>	This policy will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with Housing Benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onwards

Policy change	Potential impact on homelessness	Implementation date (where known)
	in line with Local Housing Allowance.	
Changes to the way the management of temporary accommodation is funded. The management fee currently paid by the DWP to local authorities on a per household basis will end from 2017-18 and instead an upfront fund will be established.	The detail of this policy is not known but there is concern that this could significantly impact the financial viability of the Council's private sector leased scheme and therefore our ability to provide this type of temporary accommodation to homeless households.	Management fee will end 2017-18
Reduction in grant for rented housing: despite the doubling of funding for new affordable homes it will be refocused so that most of the funding will be spent supporting new homes for low cost home ownership, rather than to rent.	<p>With the funding for affordable rented homes only committed until 2018, it is clear that there will be little, if any, funding available for registered providers to supply rented housing.</p> <p>Developers and housing associations are already requesting changes to the agreed tenure mixes on sites as the effect of the rent reduction, reduced grant and the Government's push towards homeownership mean that they need to build more low-cost homeownership products to cross-subsidise the rented homes.</p>	The Homes and Communities Agency 2015-18 programme closed for all bids for rented homes in November 2015. The HCA's Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 to 2021 focuses on home ownership
Localised Council Tax Support: Financial assistance with paying Council Tax called Council Tax Benefit was abolished in April 2013 when a Localised Council Tax Support was introduced. The Government wanted Councils to develop schemes based on local priorities which provided an incentive to work for people of working age.	<p>In Kettering borough, the introduction of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) initially led to a reduction of at least 15% in the amount of support customers of working age received towards their council tax; however with Central Government funding for the scheme decreasing year-on-year further changes will come into effect from 1st April 2016.</p> <p>The revised scheme will see the minimum amount that a customer has to pay increasing to 45%, meaning that all working age customers will have to pay more Council Tax. These changes are likely to compound affordability problems for the most vulnerable in our community.</p>	April 2016

As many of the reforms outlined above will affect affordability of accommodation we are likely to see homelessness rise as households try to cope with reduced benefits and have more responsibility for managing the income they receive from benefits. We anticipate that an even greater number of households will be unable to access suitable accommodation at a price they can afford in both the private and social rented sectors.

Prevention and support services will be increasingly important to help households impacted by the reforms. The Government's commitment to maintain the Homelessness Prevention Grant (discussed in chapter 13), which helps councils maintain their homelessness prevention services, is welcomed. However to tackle the predicted scale of homelessness in the coming years, much greater levels of resources will be required.

6. Partnership working

Homelessness services are typically delivered by the Council in partnership with a number of other stakeholders. These include statutory agencies, social housing providers, hostel providers, charities, churches and other faith groups. It is recognised that the voluntary and charitable sectors undertake crucial work in both alleviating homelessness and supporting households affected by homelessness. Our partners have demonstrated resourcefulness and resilience in the wake of the cuts to public spending, which has seen many of their services affected; they have developed innovative new ways to fund and deliver services to vulnerable residents.

The Kettering Homeless Action Forum Partnership was launched in May 2016 to ensure a joined up multi-agency response to increasing levels of homelessness in a climate of significant changes. The Partnership will be responsible for monitoring and delivering the actions contained within this Strategy.

Appendix B of the Homelessness Review 2015 lists the services which currently exist in Kettering borough for homeless households – including those provided by partner organisations. Examples of services and projects delivered by partners include:

- ‘Pennels’ a seven-bedroom accommodation project provided by Kettering Mind for adults who have or are recovering from mental ill-health and wish to work towards independent living. The project has been funded by the charity and residential places will be funded through Individual Packages of Care provided by local NHS and social care commissioning groups.
- Accommodation Concern’s ‘Pioneer Project’ - a three bedroomed shared house leased from Kettering Borough Council for vulnerable single people. Residents are supported by Accommodation Concern to develop tenancy skills and sustain their tenancies.
- Kettering Futures Partnership² – the aim of which is to give the best opportunities/advice to the people who live in Kettering borough. The Kettering Futures Partnership website (www.kettering.gov.uk/kfp) is a one-stop-shop to help partners identify the services available in the Borough to support their vulnerable clients. It provides information and resources in numerous areas such as; housing, income and debt advice, supporting families, and drug and alcohol support.
- A Thursday-night soup kitchen in the parish rooms of St Peters and St Paul, funded by charitable donations.

The Council is also involved in numerous partnership forums and projects which can help support vulnerable households and improve the delivery of services locally. These include:

² Further information on KFP available at www.kettering.gov.uk/kfpmembership

- Multi Agency Public Protection Agreement
- Kettering Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
- Northamptonshire Inter Personal Violence Forum
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Early Help Assessments
- Northamptonshire Chief Housing Officers Group

7. Summary of the Homelessness Review 2015

The Homelessness Review 2015 provides the evidence base for the Strategy. The review seeks to understand the trends in homelessness and the structural context of homelessness within Kettering borough.

The causes of homelessness are complex and are impacted by the relationship between private rent, social rent, and home ownership opportunities within the local housing market.

The rise in the number of private rented properties in the borough has increased the housing options for local households including those at risk of homelessness. Our recent analysis of the private rented sector however has shown that the sector is becoming increasingly unaffordable for many of the households that are approaching us for assistance with housing.

For households in receipt of local housing allowance (the housing benefit paid to private tenants) there are few privately rented homes available at this rate; meaning households will need to fund the difference between the local housing allowance rate and the rental charge themselves. As part of the Government's welfare reforms, local housing allowance is frozen for four years, so as private rents continue to rise, access to privately rented accommodation for lower income households is likely to remain poor and the affordability gap is set to widen.

While the increase in the number of privately rented homes has been positive, the insecure nature of many private sector tenancies means that the ending of a private tenancy has become the major cause of homelessness locally. Exactly what underlies this pattern is difficult to state with certainty, as landlords are not required to give reasons for terminating tenancies. It is however likely to be a combination of factors – including welfare reform measures which have led private landlords to become increasingly risk averse in accommodating homeless households; a booming private rental market meaning that

landlords can charge increasingly higher rents; and record high house prices and changes to tax allowance rules which may encourage landlords to sell their investment properties.

Average house prices in the borough are lower than national and regional averages making the borough an attractive place for purchasers living outside of the area, or investment buyers. However with the average price of a property in Kettering reaching an all-time high of £166,257, an ever increasing number of local households cannot afford to buy their own home.

Despite an economic recession and the start of the Government's welfare reform measures, homelessness fell in 2009/10 and remained stable until 2014/15; this will in part be due to the effective management of new social lettings through Keyways, the booming private rental market, and a successful development programme of new affordable housing.

More recent analyses however have shown a concerning picture of rising homelessness: between May and October 2015 homeless applications rose each month and in October we took the highest number of homeless applications in one month for over seven years. As a result, we are also accommodating an increasing number of households in temporary accommodation until permanent settled accommodation can be found for them.

In May 2015 a new Government was elected, following which significant changes were made to planning and housing policy. It is clear that the focus for the next five years will be on increasing the number of homes built for sale and there will be little, if any, funding available for registered providers to build rented housing. Policies such as the extension of the right to buy to housing association tenants will further reduce the number of affordable rented homes available to those in need.

Looking forward, it is anticipated that homelessness within the borough is set to rise as welfare reform measures impact residents further; access to affordable private rented accommodation continues to worsen; local public services face further cuts; and the number of new affordable homes being built in Kettering declines.

8. Homelessness Review – Key Facts

The key findings from the Homelessness Review 2015 are:

Homelessness levels	Following a long-period of stability, homelessness is now rising in the Borough. Between May 2015 and December 2015 there was a month-on-month increase in homeless applications. The Council received 26 homeless applications in October 2015 which was the highest number of applications in one month for over seven years.
Household type of homeless households	Over the last three years the majority of households accepted as homeless by the Council have been one person households. In contrast to this finding, we have seen a recent trend of rising homelessness from families.
Causes of homelessness locally	The most common causes of homelessness for households accepted as homeless during 2014/15 were; loss of tied or rented accommodation (including the termination of assured shorthold tenancy), violent breakdown of relationship, left an institution or local authority care, and other reason.
Age profile of homeless	The age profile of applicant's accepted as homeless in Kettering is broadly similar to national trends. In 2014/15 just over a quarter of acceptances were aged 16-24 (26 per cent) while almost half of applicants were aged 25-44 (48 per cent).
Household with a 'priority need' for accommodation	During 2014/15 41 per cent of acceptances were in priority need because of dependent children or a pregnant woman: this was much lower than the national figure of 74 per cent (table 5). More recent analyses however have shown a change in this trend. Of those households accepted as statutory homeless between April-Sept 2015, nearly 79 per cent were households with dependent children, or a member of the household pregnant– this is now in line with national trends.
Homelessness preventions	During 2014/15 140 households had their homelessness prevented by the Council– a drop of 60 per cent from the previous year. This will largely be due to the increasing difficulty of low income households to access the private rented sector.
Homelessness prevention measures	During 2014/15 the most common measures to help households <i>remain</i> in their existing home were conciliation including home visits, resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector, and negotiation to ensure someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector. The most common activities to assist household to <i>find</i> alternative accommodation were to help them find Council or housing association properties, and to assist households into the private rented sector.
Households accommodated in temporary accommodation	As at 25 th November 2015 we were accommodating 39 households in temporary accommodation – an increase of 63 per cent in just two months (from 24 at the end of September).
Rough Sleepers	On a single night in November 2015 it was estimated that there were 5 people sleeping rough in the borough.
Social housing demand	Between 1 st April and 1 st December 2015, the housing register rose by 38 per cent from 445 to 612 households. As welfare reform measures impact resident's further, and access to affordable accommodation in the private rented sectors becomes increasingly difficult; we expect this rise in households on Keyways to continue.
New social tenancies	Between April 2014 and March 2015 there were 447 new social tenancies in the Borough (excluding transfers and exchanges) of which almost half (47 %) were Council lets.
Private rented market	The private rental market in Kettering is booming. Private lets have increased from 7 per cent of the local housing market in 2001 to more than 15 per cent in 2011.
Local Housing Allowance Rates	Private rents in Kettering are on average 30 per cent higher than Local Housing Allowance rates (housing benefit paid to people living in privately rented accommodation) making access to privately rented accommodation difficult for people on low incomes.
Household income	In 2015, the mean average gross household income was £36,430 per annum, which was just 0.1 per cent above the national average (CACI). The median income is £29,343 per annum.
Working age benefits claimants	When compared to regional and national figures, Kettering has slightly lower numbers of residents claiming working age benefit; in February 2015 11.4 per cent of the working age population were claiming an out of work benefit, compared with 12.5 per cent nationally.
Unemployment rates	Of the Kettering population aged 16-64, 1.8 per cent were claiming JSA, compared to 2.0 per cent nationally.
House prices	The overall average house price in Kettering is £166,257 (Rightmove). House prices remain

	significantly below the UK and East Midlands averages – making the borough an attractive place for investment buyers or purchasers living outside of the area.
Landlord possession claims	In line with national trends, landlord possession claims in Kettering have been falling. In 2014 there were 197 landlord possession claims (social, private and accelerated) in Kettering a fall of 19 per cent from the previous year (244). Possession claims may be falling as social landlords are focusing on the prevention of arrears.

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9. Homelessness Strategy Priorities 2016-2019

Each of our three Homelessness Strategy priorities is discussed in detail on the following pages. Under each priority are a number of key challenges which have been identified through our Homelessness Review and discussions with partners. Proposed actions to overcome these challenges are identified which form the targets listed in our action plans in Chapter 16.

Homelessness Strategy Priorities 2016/19

Priority 1 Reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough

We aim to:

- a) Prevent homelessness, whenever possible, through timely housing options advice and support
- b) Focus homelessness prevention activity on tackling the common causes of homelessness locally
- c) Mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare and housing reforms on our residents
- d) Develop and maintain effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce and prevent homelessness
- e) Support residents to maintain successful tenancies through training and support

Priority 2 Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services

We aim to:

- a) Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services through developing and maintaining effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies
- b) Develop housing pathways with each key client group that include appropriate accommodation and support (young people, mental health, criminal justice, domestic abuse, non-statutorily homeless, rough sleepers, learning disabilities, physical disabilities)
- c) Ensure homeless households can access appropriate education, employment and training services

Priority 3 Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary and permanent accommodation

We aim to:

- a) Enable homeless households to access permanent accommodation in the private rented sector
- b) Enable homeless households to access permanent accommodation in the social rented sector
- c) Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary accommodation, minimising the use of bed and breakfast accommodation

10. Priority 1: Reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough

a) Prevent homelessness, whenever possible, through timely housing options advice and support

The best way to tackle homelessness is by preventing it whenever possible through high quality advice and assistance. The Council's Housing Options service provides a free housing advice service for residents of the Borough. The service was launched in 2006 and brought about significant change in how homelessness was managed in the Borough. The new approach moved away from the traditional way of dealing with people in a crisis and focused on proactively preventing homelessness. This resulted in improved outcomes for households affected by homelessness.

As homelessness is set to increase during the life of this Strategy, the challenge will be to meet the increasing demand from residents for housing advice and support provided by the Council and our partners.

Traditionally, the Council's housing advice service is provided at the Council offices; we know however that outreach housing advice can be highly beneficial for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness leaving institutions such as prison or hospitals. Early notification of a patient's discharge from hospital or a prisoner's release ensures the housing options team has the opportunity to find a housing solution which prevents them from presenting at the Council in a crisis. Access to suitable accommodation can significantly improve the wellbeing of clients leaving institutions and prevent re-admission or reoffending.

As part of our Turning Point project, our Transitions Officer is able to provide housing options advice to single homeless patients in a local mental health ward. Working with partners in mental health services our Transitions Officer develops a pathway for the person which addresses their accommodation, health, education and training needs. This approach has been successful in ensuring patients have suitable accommodation upon their release and has prevented re-admission into hospital.

Following the success of our outreach work we plan to develop more links with partners in order to prevent homelessness through timely housing options advice.

Proposed actions

- Keep under review the levels of resource available to enable local residents to access timely housing options advice

- Through outreach housing options appointments, offer timely housing advice to residents leaving the criminal justice system and acute and community hospitals

b) Focus homelessness prevention activity on tackling the common causes of homelessness locally

During 2014/15 140 households had their homelessness prevented by the Council– a drop of 60 per cent from the previous year. This fall in homelessness prevention activity is thought to be caused by a number of reasons, including the difficulty faced by the housing options team to find affordable accommodation in the private rented sector for low income households. The challenge during the life of this strategy is to increase the numbers of households who have had their homelessness successfully prevented.

The Housing Options team and our partners use a range of methods to prevent homelessness locally, which are summarised in the table below.

Table 2: Current homelessness prevention methods

Prevention method	Organisation providing service
Housing advice	KBC's Housing Options Team
Keyways Choice Based System for allocating social housing	KBC in partnership with registered providers or social housing
Tenancy support service	KBC's Supported Housing Team
Housing advice	Accommodation Concern (funded by a KBC voluntary sector service level agreement)
Introductory tenancy management	KBC's Housing Management & Housing Income Teams
Turning point (transitions) project	KBC (funded by Department for Communities and Local Government)
Court visits	KBC's Housing Options Team
Spend to save budget	KBC's Housing Options Team
Sanctuary scheme	KBC's Housing Options Team
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)	KBC's Housing Benefit Team

The prevention methods above have been developed in response to the common causes of homelessness; however as trends in homelessness change, we need to ensure we regularly review our prevention toolkit to respond to the needs of our community.

Homelessness due to the ending of a private sector tenancy is a significant cause of homelessness locally. We therefore need to review our prevention toolkit to prevent homelessness from the private sector whenever possible. This may include projects to offer tenancy support to tenants whose private tenancy is failing; or the development of a pre- eviction protocol with private landlords in the Borough

Proposed actions:

- Review our homelessness prevention toolkit to take account of emerging trends in homelessness
- Develop a range of prevention measures and policies to prevent homelessness due to the ending of a private sector tenancy
- Develop a range of prevention measures to prevent homelessness due to the ending

- of a private sector tenancy
- Establish a private rented sector offer to landlords to prevent homelessness through assessing private rented sector tenancies
- Annually review our Housing Allocation scheme to ensure it supports homelessness prevention
- Help new Council tenants sustain their tenancies, therefore preventing homelessness, by putting in place the support they require during the first year of their tenancy

c) Mitigate the impact of the Government’s welfare and housing reforms on our residents

As discussed in detail in chapter 6, the Government’s welfare and housing reforms will have an unprecedented impact on our residents during the life of the Homelessness Strategy.

To prevent homelessness among effected households we plan to mitigate the impact of these reforms through education, tenancy support and budgeting assistance. We will also need to look at new ways of supporting households who may be affected by the changes such as; young people aged under 21 affected by the ending of the automatic entitlement to housing benefit, and single people aged under 35 affected by the introduction of local housing allowance rates into the social sector.

Proposed actions:

- Develop appropriate responses to welfare and housing reforms which are aimed at mitigating the impact on our residents and preventing homelessness
- In partnership with local registered providers develop collaborative responses to welfare and housing reforms which are focused on improving outcomes for social housing tenants.
- Work closely with the Council’s debt and money advice colleagues to ensure a joined up approach to homeless prevention for households across all tenures.
- Explore the viability of shared social housing for under 35’s
- Through the Council’s Tenancy Support and Housing Income teams, support households affected by welfare and housing reforms to sustain their tenancies

d) Develop and maintain effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce and prevent homelessness

Over the years, the Council has developed many effective partnerships to support the prevention of homelessness locally – some of which are detailed in chapter 7. We recognise that partnerships are vital to appropriately respond to the housing and support needs of local homeless people and we will continue to develop new partnerships during the life of

this strategy.

We have begun working on an innovative new partnership with local health providers - Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (KGH) and Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT). The objective of the partnership is to integrate health and housing locally to utilise public resources effectively and ultimately improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. As part of this project we plan to improve discharge planning for acute and community-based hospital patients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

In this time of limited resources we also see the importance of working with other local authorities in the area to tackle homelessness. Turning Point is a partnership between Kettering Borough Council, Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire District Council funded by DCLG through Homeless Link. The project received £181,300 funding with a further contribution from each local authority totalling £35,000.

The aim of the project is to house and support non priority single homeless people to whom the Local Authority has no statutory duty towards. The long term plan is that this becomes a self-funded project with no cost to each local authority.

The Council's Homelessness Prevention Partnership is a forum for partner's involved in homelessness in the borough. The partnership has not met for a couple of years however, in recognition of the importance of the forum to support effective partnership working, a re-launch is planned during 2016.

Proposed actions:

- Re-launch the Borough's Homelessness Prevention Partnership for statutory and voluntary agencies in the Borough.
- Continue to support and develop effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce and prevent homelessness.
- Working with colleagues in the health sector to prevent homelessness and promote timely discharge into suitable accommodation among patients leaving acute and community hospitals.
- Work to improve outcomes for families by supporting partnerships such as Early Help Assessments and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Explore the opportunity to set up a 'hub' at Wellington House which will act as a single point of contact for vulnerable customers to access services specific for their needs such as drug and alcohol, and mental health.

e) Support residents to maintain successful tenancies through training and support

Through the promotion of tenancy sustainment the Council's Tenancy Support service helps prevent homelessness among Council tenants. Two tenancy support advisors are employed

by the Council to provide help and advice in areas such as setting up and managing utilities, benefits, budgeting and debt.

Since the last Homelessness Strategy, Accommodation Concern's cross-tenure tenancy support service, funded by Northamptonshire County Council's Prevention Service, has been cut. This has meant there is no directly funded tenancy support service in the Borough for tenants living in privately rented accommodation. There continues to be a limited level of support provided through Accommodation Concern's Holistic Advice and Resettlement Workers. Given that one of the biggest causes of homelessness locally is the ending of private sector tenancies it is concerning that there is no tenancy support for this group of tenants. With our partners, we urgently need to explore external funding opportunities to develop a tenancy support service for residents living in private rented accommodation.

Tenants can also be supported to maintain successful tenancies through tenancy training which helps tenants develop the necessary skills to maintain a successful tenancy. The Council's LifePlan service offers 'Practical Housing Units' to tenants. These are training workbooks that focus on the basic skills knowledge and understanding that underpin a person's ability to sustain a tenancy. The Council will continue to support residents to develop their skills through Practical Housing Units.

Proposed actions:

- Explore potential external funding opportunities to develop a tenancy support service for residents living in private rented accommodation in the Borough.
- The Council's LifePlan Service will support residents to develop the skills needed to maintain successful tenancies through Practical Housing Units (including through Transitions).
- Housing Options team to work closely with Kettering Borough Training and Talent Match to refer potentially eligible housing options customers for training opportunities.

11. Priority 2: Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services

a) Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services through developing and maintaining effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies

The needs of many homeless people cannot be met by solely providing a home for them to live in. Research has shown that homeless people often have support needs which need addressing to help prevent their homelessness or sustain their tenancies such as; drug and

alcohol problems, domestic violence, mental ill health, debt and unemployment. Any strategy to reduce and prevent homelessness must therefore ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services.

Appropriate support can be provided in residential-based settings known as supported housing schemes. These schemes can be delivered by a range of providers including; social housing landlords, charities, voluntary sector providers and local authorities.

As a result of the County Council's supported housing budget cuts (following the national removal of the Supporting People budget ring-fence in 2009), there are now much fewer supported housing bed places available locally for vulnerable people with complex needs. The closure of hostels at Carrington Street, Broadway, and the YMCA resulted in a loss of accommodation and support for 34 vulnerable people in the borough. There have also been cuts in residential based mental health services.

Providers of supported housing can deliver schemes which don't rely on supported housing budgets and which instead use the Housing Benefit subsidy system.

Rents in supported housing tend to be at a higher level than other rental accommodation (either social rented or private rented) as there are additional costs involved in running these services and in ensuring the vulnerable tenants are safe and secure. In recognition of these higher costs, supported housing is able to secure Housing Benefit rates at a higher level than for other social and/or private rented properties in the same area. This is because supported housing sits in a particular category of Housing Benefit known as "Specified Accommodation". Rents in this accommodation are not currently capped by Local Housing Allowance.

The Council's Transitions Turning Point project provides accommodation for single vulnerable people in a shared house. A project worker, funded by the higher level Housing Benefit subsidy, supports residents to sustain their tenancy and develop tenancy skills.

The Autumn Statement announced plans to cap Housing Benefit to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate in the social sector. This would mean supported housing – like that provided for the Transitions project - would only be able to receive rental income at the LHA rate. Projections show this would threaten the viability of the majority of supported accommodation in England. If this happens, the accommodation provided for vulnerable people as part of our Transitions Turning Point will be financially unviable.

The outcome of the policy will impact our ability to work with partners to provide supported accommodation for vulnerable people. Since the policy announcement, a planned supported housing scheme for people with learning and physical disabilities has been put on hold by a registered provider concerned about the future financial viability of the scheme.

Supported housing brings a range of savings to other areas of public spending; if the funding is lost we can expect greater pressures on the NHS, social care, and the criminal justice system.

If the number of supported housing bed spaces reduces even further then a greater number of people requiring support will be living in general needs accommodation - putting them at

risk of homelessness if their support needs are not met. Floating support services – where a service is provided to someone in their own home - can help plug the gap between residential based support and general needs accommodation. To help sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness, it is critical providers of floating support services are working with housing providers to both identify people in need of support and to deliver the services in a timely manner.

Proposed actions:

- Re-model the financial viability of the of the Transitions Turning Point accommodation in light of the proposal to cap social housing rents to the Local Housing Allowance rate
- Review the Transitions project to inform service improvement through a review of associated policies and procedures
- Work with providers of floating support services (such as mental health services) to investigate what currently exists and ensure social housing tenants can access timely support

b) Develop housing pathways with each key client group that include appropriate accommodation and support (young people, mental health, criminal justice, domestic abuse, non-statutorily homeless, rough sleepers, learning disabilities, physical disabilities)

Young people

There is longstanding evidence that young people face disproportionate risks of homelessness; in 2014/15 just over a quarter of households accepted by the Council as homeless were aged 16-24 years old, this is in-line with national trends.

We are concerned that the removal of Housing Benefit entitlement from 18-21 year olds from April 2017 (subject to specific exemptions) will lead to a significant rise in youth homelessness.

Moreover, the Autumn Statement announcement that Housing Benefit for new tenants in the social housing sector will be capped to Local Housing Allowance rates will impact especially on young people as they will become subject to the much lower 'Shared Accommodation Rate' in both rental sectors.

These welfare reforms are also occurring within a broader context of budget cuts that have led to reductions in targeted services for young people and families, including family support and education, and training and employment programmes.

Proposed actions:

- Develop the existing multi-agency approach to youth homelessness and review our joint working protocol with Children and Young Persons Services at the County

Council to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless and those leaving care receive appropriate support and can access suitable accommodation when needed

- Undertake homelessness preventative work in schools and colleges.

Mental ill health

Mental ill health is both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. It is widely acknowledged that there are higher rates of mental health problems in the homeless population than in the population as a whole. The onset of mental illness can trigger, or be part of, a series of events that can lead to homelessness.

Compared to national figures, in 2014/15 Kettering has higher rates of homelessness from households with a priority need due to mental health disability (26% compared with 8%). Although more recent analyses have seen this trend fall more in line with national trends, it is likely that cuts in local mental health services; such as the respite care service at Meadhurst and supported accommodation at the Headlands, has resulted in a greater number of people, who would have otherwise been supported by these services, approaching the Council as homeless.

Access to accommodation for people with mental illness and disorders can be challenging as many people may have been unable to access or sustain accommodation as a result of their complex needs.

With specialist supported accommodation closing in the Borough the options available to people with a mental health diagnosis are poor. We recognise that many people with mental ill health will live in general needs properties we therefore rely on partners providing support to people with a mental health diagnosis to help them remain in their homes.

Proposed actions:

- Work in partnership with mental health service providers to address the gap in supported accommodation and emergency accommodation for service users with mental health diagnoses in the Borough.
- Work with mental health partners to develop a 'hub' for vulnerable clients to access support services at Wellington House.
- Develop a directory of housing services for partners working with people with mental illness.
- Work in partnership with mental health service providers to provide appropriate support to enable people with mental health diagnosis to live independently in their own homes.
- Work in partnership with local mental health community hospitals to ensure clients ready for discharge have a planned move from the hospital or community ward.

Criminal justice

Work to integrate offenders back into communities and society is critical to reduce re-offending. We recognise the importance of working with partners in the criminal justice system to overcome an offenders housing need - which can often be a major barrier faced by ex-offenders.

Early notification of a prisoners release or an offender's increased housing need ensures the housing options team has the opportunity to find a housing solution which prevents them from presenting at the Council in a crisis.

Proposed actions:

- Work with partners in the criminal justice system to review the Council's approach to assist clients leaving prison or under probation supervision.
- Develop a directory of housing services for partners working with people leaving the criminal justice system

Domestic abuse

Relationship breakdown due to violence is a significant cause of homelessness locally. During 2014/15 the Council accepted nine households as homeless as a result of a violent breakdown of relationship involving partner or an associated person (this accounted for 17 per cent of all cases).

The Council has developed services to assist domestic abuse victims across all tenures, which includes a Sanctuary scheme which provides security measures so victims feel safe in their homes. The Council also undertakes target hardening measures to the homes of high-risk domestic abuse victims in Council properties and the victims of crime in all tenures. Neighbourhood Managers and the Housing Options team have been trained to use domestic abuse risk assessment forms (DASH) to identify people at risk and make referrals at the appropriate level into MARAC, Sunflower Centre and Victims Voice.

Our Anti-Social Behaviour manager chairs the Borough-wide MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) meeting which is attended by a member of the Neighbourhood Management team and Housing Options. High-risk domestic abuse cases are discussed at these meetings and actions tasked to the appropriate services to ensure the victim is safeguarded and the perpetrator is dealt with appropriately.

We recognise however that we must continue to ensure responses evolve in the Borough to help victims of domestic abuse, particularly in more complex issues such as harassment and honor based violence.

Proposed actions:

- Continue to support the Borough-wide MARAC meeting to contribute effectively towards the assistance of high-risk victims.
- Neighbourhood Managers and the Housing Options team to continue to use the domestic abuse risk assessment forms (DASH) to identify people at risk and make appropriate referrals to partner agencies.
- Review the Council's protocol on the management of Council tenants who are victims of all interpersonal violence including domestic abuse.
- Continue to fund target hardening measures to the homes of high-risk domestic abuse victims living in Council accommodation and victims of crime across all tenures.
- Continue to fund the County Inter Personal Violence funding pool which supports services for domestic abuse victims across Northamptonshire.

Non-statutorily homeless

Within the terms of the homelessness legislation 'non-statutorily' homelessness is either where households or individuals are not found to be eligible; do not fall within the definition of priority need; who are deemed to be 'intentionally homeless'; or have not gone through the legal application for housing.

Individuals and families who fall outside of the definition of statutory homelessness include single people and couples who have no dependent children and do not fall into the statutory definition of vulnerable; and families with older children who are no longer dependent.

Through a voluntary sector service level agreement, the Council commissions Accommodation Concern to provide a housing advice service for non-priority homeless households (this is in addition to the Council's housing options service). The existing SLA we have with the voluntary sector will end in April 2017. The Council is currently consulting on the plans for these contracts beyond 2017. The SLA provides a vital additional resource to support non-statutorily homeless households in the Borough.

Proposed actions:

- Ensure services are available in the Borough to support non-statutorily homeless households

Rough sleepers

Since 2011 Kettering has carried out estimates of rough sleeping based on local knowledge. The most recent estimate, undertaken in November 2015, judged that there were 5 people sleeping rough in the borough.

Due to funding cuts a couple of successful projects have ended in recent years:

- In April 2012 the Council launched a rough sleeper tenancy training house pilot to provide accommodation for a rough sleeper transitioning to independent living. Transitional accommodation enables rough sleepers to prove to a landlord they are tenancy ready.

One person with experience of street homelessness received intensive tenancy support while living in a flat located in the Town Centre which was leased by the Council from a private landlord. While in the flat the resident was given the opportunity to develop the skills they needed to live independently. Intensive support was provided by Accommodation Concern's Tenancy Support Service and the Council's LifePlan services' Practical Housing Units assisted residents with all manner of issues including setting up utilities, living on a budget and managing relations with neighbours. The resident successfully moved on into permanent accommodation.

- Accommodation Concern's Street Outreach Worker was funded with funding from CRISIS and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The street outreach worker aimed supported rough sleepers so they can reconnect into settled accommodation.

What have we learnt from the successful street outreach and rough sleeper training house pilot projects...transitional accommodation can be successful in helping rough sleepers

Proposed actions

- Through our Turning Point Transitions project and our partners, we will help rough sleepers in the Borough into accommodation and reduce incidences of rough sleeping
- Conduct a rough sleeper count during 2016/17
- Investigate options for our Severe Weather Emergency Provision

Physical and learning disability

The Keyways Allocation scheme gives priority to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness because of a physical disability, mentally ill health and/or old age. It supports people:

- who cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation centres because they have no accommodation, or their current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to their health and they are unable to continue to live there

- with illnesses so severely affected by their current accommodation that they are unable to continue to live there

Some people may be able to remain in their existing homes with some adaptations - such as stair lifts and level access showers. Adaptations are a highly effective use of public money: they keep people out of hospital, reduce the strain on carers, and improve the dignity of people with a disability.

The Council funds disabled adaptations in two ways; adaptations in Council properties are funded through the Housing Revenue Account while adaptations in private and housing association properties are funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) provided by the Government.

Following an announcement in the spending review our allocation for DFG has increased from £281,000 in 2014/15 to £505,000 in 2016/17. This increase in grant is welcomed and will go some way to help clear the backlog of cases which currently exists.

Proposed actions:

- Analyse the data on Council properties with adaptations and use the findings from this to review how social housing allocations are made to people requiring aids and adaptations.
- Offer financial and practical support to Council tenants with a physical disability or mobility issues to downsize to accommodation more suitable for their needs through our Enhanced HomeMove service.
- Continue to offer residents who apply for a disabled adaptation to their home the opportunity to explore a range of housing solutions including moving to accommodation which better suits their needs.
- Explore how we can offer a greater range of aids and adaptations to Council properties to help people remain independent for longer.
- With the support of partner organisations, we will create options for people with learning disabilities to live in the community including those currently in hospital.
- Use the data on demand to inform property specification on new developments including developing Lifetime homes standard and wheelchair adapted properties.

Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers can be homeless for a number of reasons for example if they have accommodation that is unreasonable to continue to occupy. They can also be homeless if they own a caravan or mobile home but have no place where it can legally be parked in order to provide accommodation.

Through Keyways analysis we have established that in the past five financial years 1/4/11-30/3/16, we have had homeless applications from 14 households that have recorded themselves at Irish Travellers or Romany Gypsies (7 Irish Travellers and 7 Romany Gypsies).

Overall gypsy and traveller applications amount to 2.2% of all homeless decisions in this 5 year period.

Proposed actions:

- Work with partners to identify additional support needs of this group e.g. illiteracy and identify ways to help support those needs
- Explore training options for Housing Options Advisors on diversity so they can better understand cultural barriers etc. and be better equipped to understand and assist this group
- Through the Countywide Traveller Unit representation on the Kettering Homelessness Partnership, enable the effective collection of data, intelligence and information so we better understand the needs of gypsies and travellers accessing services, with particular focus on housing needs.

Armed Forces Personnel

Little is known about homelessness amongst the armed forces. National research suggests those leaving the armed forces face a number of challenges which may trigger homelessness including common mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, stress, physical limitations; financial hardship including a lack of employment and difficulties accessing benefits; and social problems including loneliness, adjusting to civilian life, social isolation and difficulties with new or existing relationships.

Often applicants who have served in the armed forces derive their priority need from other criteria e.g. vulnerable due to physical/mental health or household with dependent children therefore it is difficult to monitor this through keyways.

Our Keyways Allocation Scheme has been framed in line with central government's Military Covenant and associated Guidance for Local Housing Authorities on Allocating Accommodation for this group. This gives additional preference to veterans in housing need, and overrides our usual local connection criteria (rules apply).

Proposed actions:

- Positively engage with the Royal British Legion to better establish the housing needs of this group and tailor services accordingly
- Promote the services of the Royal British Legion Outreach service to frontline officers and through the Kettering Homelessness Partnership

- Improve information on the Council's website for Armed Forces personnel with housing issues.
- Continue to promote housing discussions through the countywide Armed Forces Community Covenant group

c) Ensure homeless households can access appropriate education, employment and training services

Lack of work can be a major cause and consequence of homelessness, eroding skills and self-esteem and acting as a practical obstacle to finding and keeping a home. Training and education can give homeless people the skills and confidence required to get them back on track and help them prepare for, find and keep jobs.

Since 2009, the Housing Service has been assisting vulnerable residents into employment, training and volunteering opportunities in the Borough through its LifePlan Service. Our LifePlan Advisor works with people on a one-to-one basis to build their skills and confidence to enable them to realise their potential.

Within Kettering Borough Council there is also an independent service unit called Kettering Borough Training (KBT) which delivers Study Programmes and Apprenticeships. The unit supports the development of local businesses and young people in the community by providing high quality training, support and guidance.

Proposed actions:

- Support Council tenants into employment, training and education through the Council's LifePlan service.
- Support young people into training through Kettering Borough Training.

12. Priority 3: Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary and permanent accommodation

a) Enable homeless households to access permanent accommodation in the private rented sector

As the demand for permanent accommodation for those in housing need cannot be met through social housing supply alone, the private rented sector will need to play a greater role in accommodating vulnerable households. Despite the rise in the number of privately rented properties in the borough in recent years, numerous welfare reforms have worsened access to the sector for low income households. One such example is the introduction of the shared accommodation rate for under 35s seeking accommodation in the private rented sector, which has meant many young people can only hope to access a room in a shared house.

The capacity of the private rented sector to house those who are homeless and/or on low incomes is heavily dependent on Housing Benefit arrangements. In Kettering borough the Local Housing Allowance (the housing benefit rates paid to private tenants) is set well below local market rent levels, resulting in a shortage of supply of privately rented homes available at this rate. This impacts the affordability of accommodation as households need to fund the difference between the local housing allowance rate and the rental charge themselves. Analysis conducted in late 2015 showed that room rental charges available were 65% higher than the shared accommodate rate. Other property types are around 30% more to rent than the local housing allowance rate available currently. Furthermore, Local Housing Allowance has been frozen for four years, so as private rents continue to rise, access to privately rented accommodation for lower income households is likely to remain poor and the affordability gap is set to widen.

It is imperative that during the life of this strategy the Council and its partners focus resources to enable vulnerable clients to access decent and safe accommodation in the private rented sector.

Proposed actions:

- Develop initiatives which assist young people to access accommodation in the private rented sector such as shared houses with support
- Review the current landlord improvement grant and minor works grant policies to improve the take-up of these initiatives by private landlords
- Review the council's homeless prevention policy relating to Private Rented Sector access
- Investigate the feasibility of advertising rooms in shared houses on Keyways
- Hold a Landlord Information event with our partners to improve access to private rents for our customers, and promote the council's services

b) Enable homeless households to access permanent accommodation in the social rented sector

Over the last few years more and more housing associations have looked to allocate directly to their own properties as opposed to accepting nominations from local authorities through their allocation schemes. Concerns over welfare cuts among 'business' orientated housing associations has prompted growing resistance to accommodating low income benefit-dependent households.

Furthermore, recent policy developments to de-regulate registered providers in the context of both the voluntary Right to Buy deal and the Office for National Statistics reclassification, may well involve weakening our nomination rights to housing association properties, thus compounding difficulties in discharging statutory homelessness duties.

The Comprehensive Spending Review and Autumn Statement on 25th November 2015 cemented the Government's plans to increase homeownership when the Chancellor announced over £6bn of funding for low-cost or discounted homeownership properties. With the funding for affordable rented homes only committed until 2018, it is clear that there will be little, if any, funding available for registered providers to supply rented housing.

The challenge during the life of this strategy will be to keep working with registered providers to maintain the supply of rented homes available to let to those in housing need.

Proposed actions:

- Meet with all our registered provider partners to understand the impact of the Government imposed rent reductions on their business plans and development programmes.
- Review the nomination agreements we have with our registered provider partners to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- Explore ways to continue to deliver affordable rented accommodation with our registered provider partners.

c) Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary accommodation, minimising the use of bed and breakfast accommodation

The Council manages a small portfolio of Council stock and properties leased from private landlords as temporary accommodation for homeless households. There is no direct access accommodation available out of hours, so bed and breakfast accommodation is our only option for emergencies.

Reducing emergency placements of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation is a key priority for the Council. At a time when resources are scarce it is imperative that expenditure on bed and breakfast is kept to a minimum.

In the Autumn Statement in November 2015 an important announcement was made about the funding of temporary accommodation for homeless people. In the future it will be funded via an upfront allocation given to councils rather than an additional 'management fee' recouped through Housing Benefit. This policy change may have implications for the financial viability of our existing private sector leased scheme.

Proposed action -

- Assess the financial viability of the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio in light of the changes to the funding of temporary accommodation announced in the Autumn Statement.
- Review the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio so that it meets the needs of homeless households and minimises the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Review access requirements to Oasis House, which is a County-wide temporary accommodation resource, to ensure Kettering residents can benefit from the scheme.
- Undertake regular service review meetings with Wellington House to ensure the efficient move-on of residents through the scheme.
- Ensure our temporary accommodation is managed effectively through a review of the existing service and associated policies and processes.

13. Resources

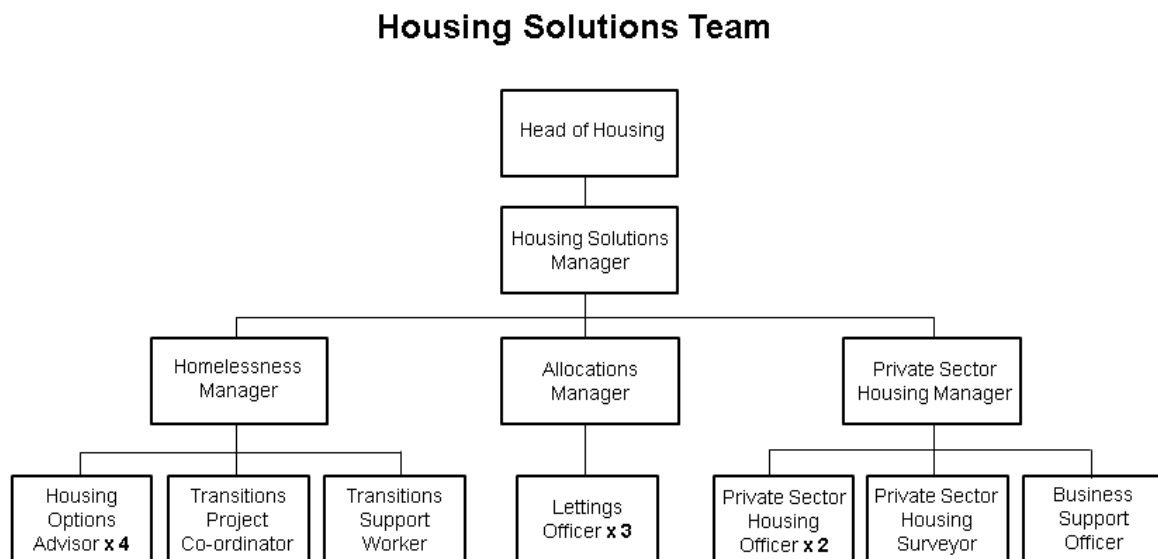
This chapter details the main housing-related resources available to tackle homelessness in Kettering.

Local Authority resources

The Housing Solutions team is responsible for homelessness, allocations and private sector housing. Within Housing Solutions the Housing Options team is responsible for homelessness prevention case work; receiving and administering homeless applications; supporting applicants living in temporary accommodation; and ensuring applicants are placed in suitable permanent accommodation.

The Homelessness and Allocations teams consists two managers, four housing options advisers, three lettings officers, a transitions project coordinator and a transitions support worker (figure 3). In the wider Housing Service there are two Tenancy Support Advisors who support the work of the Housing Options team through the prevention of homelessness among Council tenants.

Figure 3: Housing Solutions team structure



The Council's overall expenditure on temporary accommodation for households threatened with homelessness during 2015/16 was £168,066.

Homelessness Prevention Grant

The Housing Options team assist homeless households to maintain their current accommodation or obtain alternative accommodation through a variety of homelessness prevention measures. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has allocated the Council a total of £334,693 in the last 3 years for homeless prevention initiatives (table 3).

In December 2015 DCLG announced that the Homelessness Prevention Grant will be protected until 2020 through the provisional local government finance settlement. The provisional allocation for Kettering is £111,000 annually.

Table 3: Homelessness Prevention Grant awarded 2014/15 to 2015/16 and planned 2016/17 to 2019/20

Grant	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 to 2019/20
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£113,000	£110,714	£111,000

The Homelessness Prevention grant is used flexibly to support the work of the Housing Options team, which includes: funding additional staffing resource, temporary accommodation, initiatives to assist access to the private rented sector, a spend to save prevention fund for Housing Options Advisors, and a Sanctuary Scheme for victims of domestic abuse.

During 2014/15 and 2015/16 the Council was also awarded a grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government's 'Single Homeless fund' to deliver the Transitions Turning Point project. Turning Point is a partnership between Kettering Borough Council, Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire District Council funded by DCLG through Homeless Link. The project received £181,300 funding with a further contribution from each local authority totalling £35,000.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The Government has announced the Discretionary Housing Payment allocation for 2016/17 which, for Kettering, will be £139,332: an increase of 22 per cent from the previous year (table 4). The government contribution to DHP is calculated based on the impact of policies such as Local Housing Allowance Caps, the removal of the spare room subsidy and the overall household benefit cap. The Council spent £110,030 of its Discretionary Housing Payment from a budget of £113,975.

To support local authorities to manage the impact of welfare reform measures the Government has pledged to fund Discretionary Housing Payments for the next five years. There is concern that the announcement in the Autumn Statement to extend Local Housing Allowance Rates into the social sector is likely to add further pressure on this resource- Discretionary Housing Payments may not therefore be sufficient to compensate for this loss.

During April 2015 to February 2016 DHP supported:

- 133 households because of the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy
- 84 households because of the Local Housing Allowance restrictions
- 50 households for other reasons

Table 4: Kettering Borough Council’s Discretionary Housing Payments allocations 2014/15 to 2016/17

Financial year	Allocation
2016/17	£139,332
2015/16	£113,975
2014/15	£138,353

Voluntary Sector Commissioning

Kettering Borough Council commissions voluntary sector organisations to provide a range of services in the Borough, some of which are related to homelessness - these are listed in table 5 with the amount of grant they received.

Table 5: Kettering Borough Council’s grants to voluntary sector organisations to provide services which support homeless households 2013-2016

Service	Organisation	Four year allocation
Debt & Money Advice service	Citizens Advice Bureau	£280,000
Housing Options Service	Accommodation Concern	£120,000
Furniture recycling project	KCU (Kettering Community Unit)	£80,000

In 2013 Accommodation Concern was awarded a four-year contract to deliver a housing options service for non-priority homeless households. The purpose of the contract is to:

- Provide timely housing options advice and prevent homelessness amongst non-priority and intentionally homeless households
- To secure decent and safe accommodation for households in the private rented sector and work in partnership with the Council to increase the supply of housing in the private rented sector suitable for single people
- Make appropriate referrals to specialist Tenancy Support agencies to ensure households are supported to maintain successful tenancies and reduce the likelihood of repeat homelessness

The debt and money advice service is provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau. In May 2012 the service relocated to the Council's Municipal offices. The CAB facilities are independent to the Borough Council's and include a reception, interview rooms and office space. The CAB is open for drop-in and appointments Monday-Friday.

The furniture recycling project, delivered by KCU provides access to affordable, good quality furniture for residents of the Borough.

In addition to the voluntary sector grants, the Council supports the Northamptonshire Inter Personal Violence pooled funding. Interpersonal violence includes child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, honour based violence, female genital mutilation, sexual violence, stalking, rape, sex working, harassment and trafficking. This pooled funding supports initiatives which offer support to high-risk domestic abuse victims in the Borough.

14. Consultation

Key partners were interviewed during 2015 to understand some of the main issues and challenges, these then fed into homelessness review and subsequently this Homelessness Strategy.

The draft Homelessness Strategy public consultation ran for 6 weeks from 25th April to 3rd June 2016. The Strategy was published on our website and also sent to key stakeholder partners for comment. We received a handful of comments back from partners which have been taken on board.

Officers of the Council have inputted into the Strategy prior to and during the consultation.

The Kettering Homelessness Action Partnership was established in May 2016 to ensure a joined up multi agency response to increasing levels of homelessness in a climate of significant changes to housing and welfare policies, and fast paced changes to the housing market. Both the Homelessness Review and the draft Homelessness Strategy were presented at the inaugural meeting of this group on the 26th May. Input was sought from all key partners in attendance.

The Kettering Homelessness Action Partnership agreed that it would provide the forum for contributing to and monitoring the Homelessness Strategy action plan. The group would also act as the sub-group for Kettering Futures Partnership, with key issues and priorities feeding back to the KFP Board.

As a result of the consultation some changes have been made to the Strategy since the consultation closed.

- Changes to the National Context section have been made following the Housing and Planning Act receiving royal assent in May 2016.
- End of financial year updates have been accounted for, for some of the stats.
- Additional priority groups – Gypsies and Travellers and Armed Forces personnel – have been added into section 12.
- Some additional successes have been added in to section 2 and this area re-formatted.

15. Comments

We welcome any comments or queries about this document, please send them to:

Housing Strategy and Development

Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
NN15 7QX

Email: housingstrategy@kettering.gov.uk

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16. Action plan and governance

The pages which follow contain the action plans for this Strategy. The Action Plans will be regularly monitored by the multi-agency Homelessness Prevention Partnership to ensure we remain on target to deliver the Strategy.

The plans will be reviewed annually so they are responsive to emerging needs.

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HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2016-29

ACTION PLAN

(Draft June 2016)

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Key Partners	Timescale
Priority 1 Reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough	1a) Prevent homelessness, whenever possible, through timely housing options advice and support	Keep under review the levels of resource available to enable local residents to access timely housing options advice	Housing Solutions Manager		Ongoing
		Through outreach housing options appointments, offer timely housing advice to residents leaving the criminal justice system and acute and community hospitals	Homelessness Manager	Health Criminal Justice	Ongoing
	1b) Focus homelessness prevention activity on tackling the common causes of homelessness locally	Review our homelessness prevention toolkit to take account of emerging trends in homelessness	Housing Solutions Manager		October 2016 and ongoing
		Develop a range of prevention measures and policies to prevent homelessness due to the ending of a private sector tenancy	Housing Solutions Manager		October 2016
		Establish a private rented sector offer to landlords to prevent homelessness through assessing private rented sector tenancies	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager Private Sector Housing Manager	Private Landlords	November 2016
		Annually review our Housing Allocation scheme to ensure it supports homelessness prevention	Housing Solutions Manager Allocations Manager	Registered Providers	June 2016 and annually thereafter
		Help new Council tenants sustain their tenancies, therefore preventing homelessness, by putting in place the support they require during the first year of their tenancy	Tenancy Services Manager		TBC
	1c) Mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare and housing reforms on our residents	Develop appropriate responses to welfare and housing reforms which are aimed at mitigating the impact on our residents and preventing homelessness	Housing Solutions Manager		Ongoing
		In partnership with local registered		Social Landlords	

		providers develop collaborative responses to welfare and housing reforms which are focused on improving outcomes for social housing tenants.		Forum	
		Work closely with the Council's debt and money advice colleagues to ensure a joined up approach to homeless prevention for households across all tenures.	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager		July 2016
		Explore the viability of shared social housing for U35's	Housing Solutions Manager		Prior to December 2017
		Through the Council's Tenancy Support and Housing Income teams, support households affected by welfare and housing reforms to sustain their tenancies	Tenancy Services Manager		
	1d) Develop and maintain effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce and prevent homelessness	Re-launch the Borough's Homelessness Prevention Partnership for statutory and voluntary agencies in the Borough.	Housing Solutions Manager	Various TBC	June 2016
		Continue to support and develop effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce and prevent homelessness.	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager	Various TBC	Ongoing
		Working with colleagues in the health sector to prevent homelessness and promote timely discharge into suitable accommodation among patients leaving acute and community hospitals.	Housing Policy and Performance Manager Homelessness Manager	Health	
		Work to improve outcomes for families by supporting partnerships such as Early Help Assessments and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).	Homelessness Manager	Various TBC	Ongoing
		Explore the opportunity to set up a	Housing Solutions	Various TBC	August 2016

		'hub' at Wellington House which will act as a single point of contact for vulnerable customers to access services specific for their needs such as drug and alcohol, and mental health.	Manager Homelessness Manager		
	1e) Support residents to maintain successful tenancies through training and support	Explore potential external funding opportunities to develop a tenancy support service for residents living in private rented accommodation in the Borough.	Housing Solutions Manager		October 2016
		The Council's LifePlan Service will support residents to develop the skills needed to maintain successful tenancies through Practical Housing Units.	Supported Housing Manager		Ongoing
		Housing Options team to work closely with Kettering Borough Training and Talent Match to refer potentially eligible housing options customers for training opportunities.	Homelessness Manager	KBT Talent Match	Ongoing
Priority 2 Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services	2a) Ensure homeless households can access appropriate support services through developing and maintaining effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies	Re-model the financial viability of the of the Transitions Turning Point accommodation in light of the proposal to cap social housing rents to the Local Housing Allowance rate	Housing Solutions Manager	Local Authority Partners	December 2016
		Review the Transitions project to inform service improvement through a review of associated policies and procedures	Housing Solutions Manager		June 2016
		Work with providers of floating support services (such as mental health services) to investigate what currently exists and ensure social housing tenants can access timely support	Housing Solutions Manager	Various TBC	Ongoing
	2b) Develop housing pathways with each key	Develop the existing multi-agency approach to youth homelessness	Housing Solutions Manager	Various TBC	July 2016

<p>client group that include appropriate accommodation and support (young people, mental health, criminal justice, domestic abuse, non-statutorily homeless, rough sleepers, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, gypsies and travellers, armed forces personnel)</p>	<p>and review our joint working protocol with Children and Young Persons Services at the County Council to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless and those leaving care receive appropriate support and can access suitable accommodation when needed</p>			
	<p>Undertake homelessness preventative work in schools and colleges</p>	Housing Solutions Manager	Education	2017/18 -
	<p>Work in partnership with mental health service providers to address the gap in supported accommodation and emergency accommodation for service users with mental health diagnoses in the Borough.</p>	Housing Solutions Manager	Health	Ongoing
	<p>Work with mental health partners to develop a 'hub' for vulnerable clients to access support services at Wellington House.</p>	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager	Health	August 2016
	<p>Develop a directory of housing services for partners working with people with mental illness.</p>	Housing Solutions Manager	TBC	TBC
	<p>Work in partnership with mental health service providers to provide appropriate support to enable people with mental health diagnosis to live independently in their own homes.</p>	TBC	TBC	
	<p>Work in partnership with local mental health community hospitals to ensure clients ready for discharge have a planned move from the hospital or community ward.</p>	Housing Solutions Manager	Health	May 2017 (end of Transitions funding)
	<p>Work with partners in the criminal justice system to review the</p>	Housing Solutions Manager	Criminal Justice	May 2017 (as above)

		Council's approach to assist clients leaving prison or under probation supervision.	Homelessness Manager		
		Develop a directory of housing services for partners working with people leaving the criminal justice system	Housing Solutions Manager	TBC	TBC
		Continue to support the Borough-wide MARAC meeting to contribute effectively towards the assistance of high-risk victims.	Housing Manager (ASB) Homelessness Manager	TBC	Ongoing
		Continue to fund the County Inter Personal Violence funding pool which supports services for domestic abuse victims across Northamptonshire.	Housing Manager (ASB)	TBC	
		Ensure services are available in the Borough to support non-statutorily homeless households	Housing Solutions Manager	TBC	Ongoing
		Through our Turning Point Transitions project and our partners, we will help rough sleepers in the Borough into accommodation and reduce incidences of rough sleeping	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager	TBC	Ongoing
		Conduct a rough sleeper count during 2016/17	Housing Solutions Manager	TBC	November 2016
		Investigate options for our Severe Weather Emergency Provision	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Strategy	TBC	October 2016, and annually
		Analyse the data on Council properties with adaptations and use the findings from this to review how social housing allocations are made to people requiring aids and adaptations.	Housing Solutions Manager Allocations Manager		December 2016
		Offer financial and practical support to Council tenants with a physical disability or mobility issues to downsize to	HomeMove Advisor		Ongoing

		accommodation more suitable for their needs through our Enhanced HomeMove service.			
		Continue to offer residents who apply for a disabled adaptation to their home the opportunity to explore a range of housing solutions including moving to accommodation which better suits their needs.	Private Sector Housing Manager		Ongoing
		Explore how we can offer a greater range of aids and adaptations to Council properties to help people remain independent for longer.	Tenancy Services Manager?		TBC
		With the support of partner organisations, we will create options for people with learning disabilities to live in the community including those currently in hospital.	Housing Solutions Manager	TBC	2017/18
		Use the data on demand to inform property specification on new developments including developing Lifetime homes standard and wheelchair adapted properties.	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Registered Providers, Developers	Ongoing
		Work with partners to identify additional support needs of this group e.g. illiteracy and identify ways to help support those needs	Housing Solutions Manager	Countywide Travellers Unit	Ongoing
		Explore training options for Housing Options Advisors on diversity so they can better understand cultural barriers etc. and be better equipped to understand and assist this group	Housing Solutions Manager		2016/17
		Through the Countywide Traveller Unit representation on the Kettering Homelessness Partnership, enable the effective	Housing Solutions Manager	Countywide Travellers Unit,	Ongoing

		collection of data, intelligence and information so we better understand the needs of gypsies and travellers accessing services, with particular focus on housing needs.			
		Positively engage with the Royal British Legion to better establish the housing needs of this group and tailor services accordingly	Housing Solutions Manager	Royal Legion	British Ongoing
		Promote the services of the Royal British Legion Outreach service to frontline officers and through the Kettering Homelessness Partnership	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager	Royal Legion	British Ongoing
		Improve information on the Council's website for Armed Forces personnel with housing issues.	Housing Solutions Manager		Ongoing
		Continue to promote housing discussions through the countywide Armed Forces Community Covenant group	Housing Solutions Manager Community Partnerships Manager		Ongoing
	2c) Ensure homeless households can access appropriate education, employment and training services	Support Council tenants into employment, training and education through the Council's LifePlan service	Supported Housing Manager		Ongoing
		Support young people into training through Kettering Borough Training.	Supported Housing Manager	KBT	Ongoing
Priority 3 Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary and permanent accommodation.	3a) Enable homeless households to access permanent accommodation in the private rented sector	Develop initiatives which assist young people to access accommodation in the private rented sector such as shared houses with support	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager		December 2017
		Review the current landlord improvement grant and minor works grant policies to improve the take-up of these initiatives by	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager		July 2016

		private landlords			
		Review the council's homeless prevention policy relating to Private Rented Sector access	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager Private Sector Housing Manager		September 2016
		Investigate the feasibility of advertising rooms in shared houses on Keyways	Housing Solutions Manager Allocations Manager		December 2017
		Hold a Landlord Information event with our partners to improve access to private rents for our customers, and promote the council's services	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager Private Sector Housing Manager	Various TBC	December 2016
	3b) Enable homeless households to access permanent accommodation in the social rented sector	Meet with all our registered provider partners to understand the impact of the Government imposed rent reductions on their business plans and development programmes.	Housing Solutions Manager Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Registered Providers	September 2016
		Review the nomination agreements we have with our registered provider partners to ensure they are fit for purpose.	Housing Solutions Manager Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Registered Providers	December 2016
		Explore ways to continue to deliver affordable rented accommodation with our registered provider partners.	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Registered Providers	
	3c) Ensure homeless households can access suitable temporary accommodation, minimising the use of bed and breakfast accommodation	Assess the financial viability of the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio in light of the changes to the funding of temporary accommodation announced in the Autumn Statement.	Housing Solutions Manager		TBC when details are announced
		Review the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio so that it meets the needs of homeless households and minimises the use of bed and breakfast	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager		Ongoing

		accommodation			
		Review access requirements to Oasis House, which is a County-wide temporary accommodation resource, to ensure Kettering residents can benefit from the scheme.	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager		June 2016
		Undertake regular service review meetings with Wellington House to ensure the efficient move-on of residents through the scheme.	Housing Solutions Manager Homelessness Manager	Home Group	Ongoing quarterly
		Ensure our temporary accommodation is managed effectively through a review of the existing service and associated policies and processes.	Housing Solutions Manager		July 2016

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