



# Homelessness prevention and rough sleeping strategy

2022-2027

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# Foreword

Welcome to our new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which sets out our vision and plans for the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping in Allerdale.

The causes of homelessness and its effects are complex and intertwined, and inevitably there are no simple solutions. It is not just about buildings and beds - it is about the many social problems that may affect people's lives, such as health, income, family breakdown; and things can go wrong for any one of us at any time. One of the worst crises of all is to be without a home and we recognise the serious impact homelessness has on people's lives.

This Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to meeting the challenges that tackling homelessness presents. We know that homelessness is not an issue that can be tackled by the Council alone, but that effective partnerships are required across the public, private and charitable sectors to ensure that the right advice and support is available when it is needed.

A perfect example of a successful joint approach is a recent successful bid to the government in partnership with Home Group that has enabled us to provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers across Allerdale in 12 high quality "move on" homes. Clients will be able to live in these homes for up to two years with the benefit of wrap around support to help them achieve their goals in independent living. This scheme will help to make a real difference to people's lives and is so much more than just a room and a bed.

Much has already been achieved, but we have much more to do. I am very conscious of and grateful for the hard work that has been done and continues to be done by council staff, and our statutory and voluntary partners.

I am particularly proud of the hard work and dedication that our team have shown over the past two years in rising to the challenges that the pandemic presented and in continuing to make improvements to the service and help people in crisis. The Council has fully embraced the principles of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in its service delivery with access to advice and assistance for all who approach. We welcome other national initiatives, such as the drive to end rough sleeping and will play our part in tackling this issue locally.

I am grateful to everyone who took the time to contribute to the development of this strategy. Delivering the strategy will not be without its challenges – economic uncertainties and the rising cost of living are already putting increasing pressure on households - but I look forward to working together with all our partners to find solutions and tackle homelessness in Allerdale together.

**Councillor Marion Fitzgerald**

Portfolio Holder for Policy, Governance and People Resources

# Executive summary

Homelessness, and in particular rough sleeping, is increasing nationally. Although in Allerdale we are not seeing significant increases in the numbers of people contacting us who are at risk of homelessness or are already homeless, we are seeing more people who have complex support needs such as mental health, drug and alcohol issues. We also know we have 'hidden homelessness' in our area where people may be staying with family and friends, but are essentially 'roofless' and at risk of having to sleep rough.

Prevention of homelessness is very much at the forefront of national initiatives and policies to improve peoples' lives and Allerdale Borough Council is equally committed to this – preventing homelessness is one of the objectives in our Council Strategy 2020-2030.

This Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to meeting the challenges that tackling homelessness presents. We know that homelessness is not an issue that can be tackled by the Council alone, but in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations. The Strategy fully recognises the important role, skills and expertise that other partners and stakeholders have in delivering sensitive and tailored solutions to one of the most complex issues within our communities.

The Strategy details how the Council and its partners can seek to optimise opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness including rough sleeping throughout the district to provide the right accommodation and support for those facing homelessness and builds on the achievements made in the last few years.

## Developing the strategy

The strategy responds to the changing environment in which homelessness and rough sleeping support services are now delivered and has been shaped by national policy, a review of data, current services and resources, and engagement with partners, stakeholders, and service users. A peer review by the Local Government Association has also helped us to identify areas for improvement to build into the strategy. This has helped us to target our actions to focus on the needs of our area.

This strategy has been developed in the context of local government reorganisation in Cumbria. From April 2023 two new unitary councils will be responsible for district and county council services across Cumbria, The Allerdale area will become part of the new Cumberland Council along with Carlisle and Copeland. The Cumbrian local authorities already have a good track record of collaborating on strategic approaches to housing and homelessness, successfully securing funding and delivering together. The priorities identified within this strategy align closely with those in both the Copeland and Carlisle homelessness strategies meaning that we are already moving in the same direction.

## Strategic priorities

- Reduce levels of hidden homelessness and rough sleeping
- Prioritise prevention
- Make sure there is appropriate support in place
- Make sure there are suitable accommodation options available

# Context

## Definition of homelessness

A common perception of homelessness is a single person seen sleeping rough on the streets. But homelessness is a more complex issue affecting families, couples and single people. People are defined as homeless if they have nowhere to stay and are living on the streets, but people can also be homeless even if they have a roof over their heads.

*“Rough sleeping is just the tip of the iceberg. For every two people who are sleeping rough on the streets, there are 98 who are homeless but hidden from view”* LGiU Homelessness Commission 2019.

People experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness will include those sleeping rough, sofa surfing or living in hostels, night shelters or unsuitable temporary accommodation. Those in insecure or poor housing at risk of homelessness will include those with notice to quit who cannot afford to rent anywhere else, those in suitable but temporary accommodation, those in refuges and those about to be discharged from prison or hospital with nowhere to live permanently.

## Causes of homelessness

Homelessness can occur for a wide variety of reasons. Some might be local economic factors (e.g. low wages, high housing and cost of living costs) or national Government policy changes (e.g. changes to Universal Credit), others will be related to the personal circumstances of the individual or household, their health, life history (for example, leaving an institution or care) or the income they receive. Common reasons why households feel threatened with homelessness and seek support include family or relationship breakdown, losing a job, being faced with eviction, or fleeing domestic abuse.

It can very often be a combination of many of these factors that leads to someone needing support and assistance to resolve their situation.

## Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a huge challenge to the sector nationally and locally.

In March 2020, the Minister for Local Government and Homelessness wrote to local authorities asking them to urgently accommodate all rough sleepers and focus on the provision of adequate facilities to enable people to adhere to the guidance on hygiene or isolation, including for those who were at risk of sleeping rough. This was known as the ‘Everyone in’ approach.

This was followed in May 2020 with a request from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing that when arranging move-on accommodation for people sleeping rough, local authorities provide short-term accommodation whilst looking for long term options. The impact of this being an increased number of individuals with complex needs requiring accommodating in the short and longer term by the Council.

We had to refocus and respond immediately to these requests recognising the difficulties associated with vulnerable people with health issues in shared accommodation provision. This was hugely challenging for the team, but we are very proud of the way we were able to successfully cope with this challenge whilst keeping the vital housing options service accessible 24 hours a day.

## National strategic context

There are two key pieces of national policy that apply to homelessness and rough sleeping: the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Current homelessness legislation is contained within the 1996 Housing Act, the 2002 Homelessness Act and the **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018 represented the biggest changes to homelessness legislation in 40 years. The Act placed considerable additional duties on local authorities and provides significant changes to the rights of homeless people in England as it adds two new duties to the original statutory rehousing duty – that is the duty to **prevent** homelessness and the duty to **relieve** homelessness.

Prevention is about preventing the applicant from losing their home, relief is helping the applicant find somewhere else to live.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 amends Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and contains 13 clauses which amend many of the existing duties and introduces a number of new duties, including:

- An extension of the period a household is 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need
- Requiring households to agree a Personal Housing Plan
- A new 'duty to refer' - public services will need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

Full details of changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 can be found in [factsheets](#) produced by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The national **Rough Sleeper Strategy** was published in August 2018 in response to growing numbers of rough sleepers and sets out the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. The strategy called on central and local government as well as businesses, communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together in new ways. The strategy was backed by £100 million funding and marked the beginning of the government's ambition to ensure no one has to sleep rough again.

There are a number of other national policy documents and measures that are relevant when considering homelessness and rough sleeping including:

- Welfare reform - Changes to the benefit system over a number of years including: the introduction of Universal Credit; housing-related benefit restrictions for under 35s; housing-related benefit restrictions relating to under occupation of properties (the 'bedroom tax'). It has been acknowledged that there have been unintended consequences from the various measures introduced through welfare reform. As a result, in many parts of the country, Universal Credit is failing to support people to afford even the cheapest rents.

- Reductions in public funding – The Government has consistently reduced public spending for the last ten years as part of its ‘austerity’ measures.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 - this requires local authorities to publish a ‘local offer’ for care leavers up to age 25. This includes services related to health and wellbeing, relationships, education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society.
- The Care Act - A fundamental component of the Care Act is the ‘suitability of accommodation’ in meeting the at home care and support needs of older and vulnerable people.
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - The Domestic Abuse Act places duties on local authorities to assess the need for abuse support locally and produce a strategy.
- Housing policy - The Government’s White Paper ‘Fixing our broken housing market’ acknowledges the scale of the problem in providing a range of housing that meets a cross-section of need including affordable housing for those on low incomes. The Government have also acknowledged that the amount of social housing available has been reduced as a result of the Right to Buy.

## Local strategic context

This strategy links to a number of other strategies including:

- Allerdale Borough Council Strategy 2020-2030 - has a strategic objective of ‘Preventing and reducing homelessness’. Service plans across the organisation will play their part in helping to reduce impact on homelessness and rough sleeping, particularly the service plan for Housing Options.
- Cumbria Housing Statement 2020 – sets out a priority of ‘Supporting independent living and helping people achieve healthier, happier lives’.
- Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy – the strategy aims to tackle the wider determinants of health, of which housing plays a key role. The Implementation Plan aims to ensure high quality and safe housing with appropriate support for the most vulnerable and those in poverty to ensure everyone can reach their potential.
- The Allerdale Local Plan includes policies to increase the number of homes in Allerdale and also has policies in place to ensure new housing meets local needs, meaning more affordable and accessible homes and homes that will meet the needs of an ageing population.

# Homelessness in Allerdale

## Local Context

The population of Allerdale is approximately 97,831 and is projected to increase slightly to 99,139 by 2043. In line with the rest of the country, Allerdale has an ageing population, but the population in Allerdale is 'ageing' at a faster rate than the population nationally. The proportion of people aged 65 or more in Allerdale is predicted to rise by almost 25% by 2043.

Average household income in Allerdale is below the county and national averages and there are seven areas in the 10% most deprived in England for overall deprivation. Around 13% of children are living in low income families and 14% of households in Allerdale experience fuel poverty, although there is wide variation across the district.

Levels of home ownership for the district are slightly above the national average, although there are much lower levels in Workington and Maryport which also see the highest rates of social rented properties. The proportion of social rented properties are also higher than the national average. The median cost of a dwelling is 5.5 times the median household income, meaning there is a shortage of affordable housing to buy. The areas facing particularly marked affordability issues are Keswick and Cockermouth. The private rented sector in Allerdale is smaller than in many other areas. Housing affordability is therefore a real concern in Allerdale and the current housing stock profile can limit the ability of many lower income local households to meet their housing need.

## Homelessness review findings



- Between April 2020 and March 2021, 329 households were assessed and identified as being owed a specific duty. This represented a slight increase on the previous year, but overall numbers have remained relatively steady since April 2018.



- The main reasons given for homelessness in Allerdale are: private rented tenancies ending, family/friends no longer willing to accommodate, relationship breakdown and domestic abuse.
- In terms of the age of the applicant accepted as being owed a specific duty, the highest proportion were in the 25 to 34 age range.
- Around a third of households owed a prevention duty (to prevent the applicant from losing their home) in 2020/21 contained single people, and just over half contained dependent children. Whereas nearly 70% of those owed a relief duty (to help the applicant find somewhere to live) were single person households.
- During 2018/19 and 2019/20 about half of applications came from households before they became homeless (prevention), but in 2020/21 this dropped to around 30% as a result of a halt on evictions and the 'Everyone in' approach during the height of the pandemic.
- 37% of those accepted as being owed a specific duty in 2020/21 were assessed as rough sleeping or were of no fixed abode at the time of their application.
- More of those presenting have complex, multiple support needs. The total number of support needs identified doubled between 2018/19 and 2019/20, and increased by a further 60% in 2020/21.
- The main support needs identified are mental health issues, physical ill health, an offending history, and repeat homelessness. Drug and alcohol dependency are also common issues seen.
- Domestic abuse cases have risen substantially since 2018/19.
- Allerdale's reported rough sleeping statistics are low compared with other areas of the country, but there are issues with 'hidden homelessness' as the number of those presenting with rough sleeping support needs far outnumber those recorded on the day of the rough sleeper counts.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation increased rapidly from 8 in February 2020 to 40 households in May 2020 in response to the 'Everyone in' campaign. This meant a short term increase in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

## Challenges, barriers and opportunities

A number of challenges and barriers have been identified through our review of homelessness and in particular through engagement sessions in the development of this Strategy including:

- Improving information available so that anyone at risk of homelessness knows how to access the advice and support they need
- Ensuring that there is 'no wrong door' and that there are no barriers to referring those at risk of homelessness
- The complexity of some homeless individuals and families' needs
- The availability of suitable and affordable accommodation within the local housing market
- A lack of floating support or supported accommodation projects in the district

- Although there are positive examples of effective joint working initiatives there is sometimes limited co-ordination between services
- Sharing information about homeless individuals and families
- The geographical and rural nature of Allerdale in terms of accessing services
- Successful securing of funding for initiatives, but the short-term nature of funding is an issue for the council and other organisations

Engagement with stakeholders also identified opportunities for better working including:

- Co-ordinating through meetings and forums to facilitate better partnership working and improved information sharing
- Providing opportunities for learning from each other's experiences, share training and develop mutual trust
- Providing better information and sign posting for residents and partner agencies
- Looking for opportunities to work together to access funding
- Exploring options around the use of volunteers to strengthen support services

# Achievements

The following list highlights just some of the actions that have been delivered over recent years to support homeless households and individuals:

- Worked collaboratively with other Cumbrian councils to secure funding from central government to expand the service offer to include much needed support staff including a Rapid Rehousing Pathways Officer, a Rough Sleeper Coordinator and a Private Rented Sector Officer.
- Launched the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Scheme in partnership with Home Group which provides 12 accommodation units for those with medium to high level support needs.
- Secured funding for a Crisis and Prevention Support Officer to help victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation at risk of homelessness.
- Successfully implemented the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Invited the Local Government Association to conduct a Peer Review of our service to help us identify areas for improvement.
- Undertook an internal restructure to help improve delivery of the Housing Options Service.
- Increased temporary accommodation units to meet service demand, including converting two council-owned buildings.
- Worked in partnership to develop a new Cumbria Choice Allocation Policy to ensure we can discharge our duties under the Housing Act and prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Improved joint working practices with our key partners including the introduction of task and finish working groups with key actions and objectives.
- Housing Options staff are now embedded within the Allerdale Local Focus Hub which brings together over 20 statutory and voluntary sector partners who work together to problem solve, with a particular focus on anti-social behaviour and community safety.
- Successfully responded to the 'Everyone in' campaign to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic.
- Secured additional funding, including National Lottery, Rough Sleeping Initiative, Domestic Abuse funding and COMF monies to assist with accommodation during the pandemic.
- Introduction of regular contact with representatives from DLUHC to ensure best practice.

# Principles

It became clear whilst developing this strategy that there were a number of recurring themes that were important to any approach to addressing homelessness. These have been adopted as a set of two main principles that should run throughout the strategy and be embedded as 'business as usual':

## Person-centred approaches

The focus is on the person rather than on processes. Every situation is different and each person/household facing homelessness or already homeless will have their own background, reasons and needs. There should be 'no wrong door' so people can access the support they need at the time they need it and should only 'tell their story once'. Listening to those with lived experience is an important part of this.

## Working together (partnership approach)

No single agency can effectively prevent and reduce homelessness. Only through collaborative and joined-up working can we really meet the needs of our communities and hope to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping. Effective joint working will ensure that any funding available can be maximised in terms of its effectiveness – which is particularly important given the short-term nature of current funding initiatives.

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Partnership working remains at the core of our strategic approach and multi-agency approaches will be key to achieving many of our objectives. We actively participate in many partnership approaches and forums all of which contribute to the homeless agenda, but we will always consider ways to improve relationships and approaches.

### Current partnership arrangements include:

**Cumbria Homelessness Forum** – set up to allow the sharing of best practice and knowledge between the six district councils in Cumbria. This has led to successful joint procurement and collaboration on funding bids.

**Allerdale Local Focus Hub** – this is a multi-agency approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour. Housing Options officers regularly attend MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings to discuss high level domestic abuse cases; and MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) meetings to discuss high level cases for those leaving prison. This multi-agency approach provides a deeper understanding of the issues facing some clients and means there can be early intervention for those who may have more complex housing needs.

**Joint protocols** – we have protocols in place across the county setting out how partners will work together to prevent/relieve homelessness for particular groups. This includes the Joint Protocol for Homeless 16-17 year olds and a West Cumbria Hospital Discharge Protocol. We are working with partners to put a formal protocol in place covering those being discharged from custody.

**West Cumbria Domestic Abuse Partnership** – this partnership exists to address and meet the specialist accommodation-based support needs of victims and children experiencing or at risk of homelessness as a direct result of domestic abuse.

The Housing Options team also work closely with partners such as the police, social services, health services, the probation team and other agencies and third sector organisations to make sure that people can access the right help and advice to give them a greater chance of maintaining tenancies and keeping their homes.



# Priority 1: Reduce levels of hidden homelessness and rough sleeping

Allerdale's reported rough sleeping statistics are low compared with other areas of the country, but the number of those presenting with rough sleeping support needs far outnumber those recorded on the day of the rough sleeper counts. In 2020/21 37% of those accepted as being owed a specific duty were assessed as rough sleeping or were of no fixed abode at the time of their application

So, whilst the formal counts may indicate that rough sleeping is not a particular issue in our area the reality is that rough sleeping in the district can be hidden with people sleeping in their vehicles or in isolated locations rather than in obvious locations on town streets. We also know we have an issue with 'hidden homelessness' – often referred to as 'sofa surfing', people sleeping at friends or families homes, but without a home of their own.

Tackling this issue requires a close and co-ordinated multi-agency response to ensure that anyone sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough in the Allerdale area is aware of the services available and is able to access the necessary support to help them off the streets and to address the problems that led to them becoming homeless. We already have two externally funded roles specifically to identify rough sleepers, engage them with services and support them for a further 6 months in general needs accommodation once they are ready for move on. This engagement also provides us with valuable insight into the lived experiences of those clients. We will be applying for further funding to ensure that these roles can continue.

The **Rough Sleeper Coordinator** is funded through the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative and is a key role. The Co-ordinator engages directly with those who have slept rough for a long time and those identified as at high risk of rough sleeping to offer the services of the homeless team and outline the options available. The **Rapid Rehousing Officer** (also government funded) provide ongoing support so that tenancies can be acquired and maintained.

We are seeing some good results through these posts, demonstrating the impact that resourcing more than just crisis accommodation can have.

## Actions:

1. Deliver our identified rough sleeping actions to meet the DLUHC Rough Sleeping Strategy target of ending rough sleeping by 2027.
2. Review existing support arrangements and move on options, with the introduction of a 'Housing First' style service model of supported accommodation.
3. Develop a co-ordinated approach with partners through our Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator to ensure early intervention and appropriate support.

## Priority 2: Prioritise prevention

Homelessness prevention is about tackling issues before they become a crisis that could lead to a person losing their home. Our view is that we cannot effectively prevent homelessness without going above and beyond our statutory duties, helping to tackle the causes of homelessness and help people change their lives rather than just put a roof over their heads.

For some time our approach has been to offer support to those that fall outside of our statutory duties where we can, but we want to ensure that this is embedded as core practice. This includes a focus on working with those who may not be considered a 'priority need' or 'intentionally homeless' as early support is one of the ways that we can help to prevent people from becoming homeless at a later date.

The Duty to Refer is important here – this places a duty on certain statutory authorities to refer anyone who is known to be homeless to the housing authority (with consent) including the Department of Work and Pensions and the Prison Service. These referrals mean that we can work with clients from an earlier stage in close co-operation with our partners.

*“The most successful approaches to prevention are those that start as early as possible to identify people at risk of homelessness.”*

Everybody in: How to end homelessness in Great Britain, Crisis 2018

### Actions:

1. Strengthen ongoing work with external partners including delivery of training, on the statutory Duty to Refer, which enables earlier identification of homelessness.
2. Further develop upstream prevention activities such as signposting to financial support and advice, mediation with landlords through the Private Rented Sector Officer.
3. Monitor available data on those at risk of eviction and proactively provide information and advice to those households (including information from RPs about potential evictions, Rapid Rehousing and Private Sector Officer)
4. Put in place and regularly review joint protocols with partners, for example around those leaving custody.
5. Support those who have previously been homeless into long term suitable accommodation to ensure the cycle of the revolving door of homelessness ends (e.g. benefits advice or working with landlords).

## Priority 3: Make sure there is appropriate support in place

Very often tackling homelessness is not just about putting a roof over someone's head, but it's about those wrap around services that support a person or household. Ensuring that the appropriate support is available for those who are homeless is vital if we are to prevent them from becoming homeless again in the future. Partnership working is essential here.

In Allerdale more of those presenting as homeless have complex, multiple support needs and we have seen the proportion increase year on year over the past three years. The main support needs identified are mental health issues, physical ill health and an offending history. Drug and alcohol dependency are also very common issues.

Domestic abuse is an increasingly significant issue in Allerdale and we have seen domestic abuse cases rise substantially since 2018/19. Our Crisis and Prevention Support Officer (additional government funding) helps to raise awareness of the help available and support victims of domestic abuse, and we have a strong multi-agency approach established through the Local Focus Hub.

We have a good track record in recent years of securing additional funding to provide discretionary wrap around services supporting our statutory offer, but much of this funding is short term in nature which does present challenges for longer term planning.

### Actions:

1. Provide safe and supported accommodation for those experiencing domestic abuse, in line with the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021
2. Work with our Social Care Partners in an accountable and collaborative way to achieve successful outcomes for young people
3. Provide appropriate support for those with multiple complex needs, including mental health, those who have experience with the criminal justice system, those with substance misuse issues and those with a history of entrenched rough sleeping by utilising the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project.
4. Actively seek out funding opportunities to ensure the continuation of support, including the Rapid Rehousing Pathway Scheme, the Rough Sleeper Coordinator, Private Rented Sector Officer and the Domestic Abuse Support Officer.
5. Ensuring the voices of service users are heard by ensuring active reflection on those that have been through the service to provide feedback, with the work of the Rapid Rehousing Pathway Officer.



# Priority 4: Make sure there are suitable accommodation options available

This is about providing accommodation of the right type and in the right places to ensure that people are safe, that they can sustain their tenancies and rebuild their lives and are more resilient to any potential future crises.

Suitable temporary accommodation is important to be able to offer an immediate safe place for homeless households. The Council currently has 10 temporary accommodation units, two of which are adapted with additional security measures for victims of domestic abuse. During the pandemic to respond to the 'Everyone in' campaign we have had to rely on some bed and breakfast accommodation on a temporary basis to cope with a sudden sharp increase in numbers, but bed and breakfast is obviously not a preferred choice of temporary accommodation.

## Rough Sleeping Accommodation Project

A recent successful bid to the government in partnership with Home Group has enabled us to provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers across Allerdale in 12 high quality "move on" homes for clients. Clients will be able to live in these homes for up to two years with the benefit of wrap around support to help them achieve their goals in independent living. The key objective is that our clients will be able to access social housing and assured tenancies using Home Group's pathway. The scheme went live in December 2021.

We work closely with local Registered Providers (housing associations) to help households retain or acquire suitable accommodation. The Cumbrian local authorities and the majority of the Registered Providers have an established partnership to provide a Choice Based Lettings System across the county called Cumbria Choice. The partnership has adopted a shared allocations policy and this is the means by which social housing property is let in all the districts. Through this system the Housing Options team can support applications to ensure households can be rehoused as soon as possible.

Additional government funding has been secured for a Private Rented Sector Officer (shared with Copeland Council) to try to identify and engage with landlords in the area and look at incentive options such as the 'help to rent' scheme.

## Actions:

1. Use performance monitoring to estimate future housing demand by utilising current and previous data to ensure a sufficient supply of temporary accommodation and limit the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
2. Strengthen relationships with private sector landlords to ensure we have access to alternative housing solutions, including shared accommodation options for young people, enabling a referral process for those at risk of eviction, and improving quality of stock through our Private Sector team.
3. Work with our Registered Providers to ensure the allocations scheme reflects local priorities and reasonable preference is given to discharge our prevention and relief duties.

## Delivering and monitoring the strategy

In developing this strategy, we are striving to be aspirational, but also realistic in our ambition.

There are a number of factors that may impact on delivery over the coming years. The short term nature of many of the government's funding streams to provide additional support services for those facing homelessness is an issue that makes longer term planning more challenging. We have been successful in securing funding in partnership with other councils and agencies over recent years and plan to continue a collaborative approach to seeking funding.

The rising costs of living currently being seen nationally driven to a large extent by rapidly increasing fuel bills are a cause for concern. We will monitor the impacts of these and adapt our actions accordingly.

A detailed delivery plan, setting out what actions and projects we will be undertaking will be developed as a separate document.