



Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022

The Cardiff Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 responds to a comprehensive review of homelessness in Cardiff undertaken during 2018. This page outlines the Key Findings of the review. Our subsequent plans are overleaf.

Vision and Key Aims

‘to work with our partners to prevent homelessness, providing the right support at the right time to meet the housing needs of our citizens’

- Provide high quality housing advice services across the city, helping all citizens to find the right housing solution for them
- Take early action to help prevent homelessness
- Provide good quality temporary housing, continuing to avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Work with both private and social landlords to ensure that a range of good quality permanent housing solutions are available
- To ensure appropriate support is available for our more vulnerable citizens
- To work in partnership with statutory and third sector agencies to ensure a joined up service for clients

KEY FINDINGS OF THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

INCREASING DEMAND

Demand for services has increased significantly. Applications for help have increased by **68%** since April 2015. Households threatened with homelessness have increased by **103%**.

EARLY INTERVENTION

During 2017/18 Cardiff prevented **73%** of households from becoming homeless where help was sought at an early stage. This was the third highest result in Wales. However, many households do not seek help prior to becoming homeless and there is a need to increase accessibility and availability of services so that more people access assistance at an early stage.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Mortgage and Rent arrears was the **chief cause of the threat of homelessness** in 2017/18 with **707** cases, a **247%** increase on the previous year. Wider social issues such as the impact of welfare reform are contributing to a significant increase in the number of people experiencing financial difficulties leading to rent arrears.

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

Loss of rented or tied accommodation, other than through rent arrears is also a **major cause of homelessness** in Cardiff. Evidence suggests that landlords are selling their properties and leaving the private rental market. High levels of rent in Cardiff, and the reluctance of landlords to let to benefit claimants have been identified as barriers to effectively using this resource. There is a need to better support landlords and increase incentives for them to house homeless applicants.

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

There has been an **81%** increase in clients losing accommodation provided by parents, relatives or friends from April 2015 to March 2018. This became the **biggest cause of homelessness** in Cardiff in 2017/18. There is a need to build on the current family mediation arrangements. There are also concerns that changes to the Cardiff Housing Allocation Scheme in 2015, which affected the priority status of applicants living at home, are contributing to the **increase in those presenting with parental notices** and changes to the Allocation Scheme are necessary to address this.

EQUALITIES

A **high proportion of single young men** and those from **certain ethnic backgrounds** are becoming homeless and reasons for this need to be explored.

SPECIALIST PATHWAYS

There are a high number of households in Cardiff needing to move on from **accommodation provided by the National Asylum Support Services** following a decision on their case.

There is also **limited opportunity for prevention with the majority of prisoners**. A review of the pathway for these households is required to assess if there scope for improved prevention work.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

Many clients have complex issues resulting from **Adverse Childhood Experiences**, leading to issues such as mental health and substance dependency. Often these clients can struggle to maintain any form of accommodation resulting in a **revolving door of homelessness**. A **person-centred, trauma informed approach is needed with multi-agency input**, to address the underlying causes of homelessness.

RELIEVING HOMELESSNESS

Cardiff has a wide range of high quality temporary and supported housing and has **successfully avoided the use of bed and breakfast** accommodation since January 2006. However, the number of clients entering temporary accommodation has increased while the number moving on to permanent accommodation has decreased in recent years. This has resulted in longer periods spent in temporary provision. There is a need to improve move-on options to prevent long stays in temporary accommodation.

SOCIAL HOUSING

There are almost **8000 households** on the waiting list and approximately **400 new applicants** each month. Demand for social housing cannot be met by the current supply despite ambitious new build plans. The Private Rented Sector is essential in addressing the needs of homeless households.



CLIENT SURVEY

86%

Satisfied with their Temporary Accommodation

89%

Satisfied with the advice received overall.

93%

Satisfied with the help they received by the Council when threatened with homelessness

Summary of Commitments

1

Extend and improve housing advice and better publicise the services available to help prevent homelessness.

- Develop an in-house specialist housing and homelessness advice service.
- Provide housing and homelessness advice across the city through the Community Hubs.
- Publicise advice services available to the public, as well as statutory and third-sector partners.
- Offer digital access to homeless services, through the website, Skype and on-line web chat.

2

Build on the success of current prevention work by developing more focused and targeted prevention services.

- Further develop the Prevention Service, offering a wide range of interventions.
- Offer prevention appointments in the clients own home or in Community Hubs.
- Provide timely, easy to access mediation interventions for families, landlords and tenants.
- Ensure those who have complex needs are assisted to engage with support as early as possible, building on the success of schemes such as the Housing Support Worker Service and by advertising the availability of Floating Support.

3

Improve the support available to private landlords to ensure homeless families have access to good quality private sector accommodation.

- Develop a specialist Private Rented Sector team, providing high quality advice and support to landlords.
- Develop Private Rented Sector training to prospective tenants to maximise the chance of a successful tenancy.
- Review the range of incentives given to private landlords to meet the changes within the Private Rented Sector.
- Review the current bond schemes ensuring that these meet the needs of all clients, are sustainable and fit for purpose.

4

Review specialist pathways into services to ensure they are working effectively .

- Review the success of the prisoner pathway and build on the success of the vulnerable women's prisoner pathway.
- Further develop services for young people through the proposed new City Centre Youth Hub.
- Review accommodation available for young people with complex needs.

5

Review the success of the revised Housing Allocation Scheme to ensure the needs of homeless and other vulnerable people are met.

- Provide additional priority to housing applicants living with friends or relatives in overcrowded or other exceptional housing circumstances.
- Explore giving further priority on the waiting list for vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers or those ready to move-on from hostels.

6

Improve services to the most vulnerable by addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

- The Public Service Board to work as a partnership to build on the multi-agency city centre team - to include substance misuse, probation and mental health services.
- Deliver additional and improved emergency accommodation.
- Work to reduce evictions from and abandonment of supported housing provision
- Review the success of the Housing First and other innovative housing pilots.
- Review and further strengthen partnership arrangements to ensure there is a clear multi-agency approach to vulnerable and chaotic individuals.
- Commission a research project to review the effectiveness of services for rough sleepers and any opportunities for improvement.
- Review how mental health is identified during homeless assessments and ensure support needs are being met.

7

To reduce the time spent in all forms of temporary and hostel accommodation by increasing move on options.

- Ensure all housing providers are aware of and use the bond / rent in advance schemes available and promote the use of the private rented sector.
- Improve the services to clients living in temporary accommodation to help them to source their own accommodation.

8

Explore the differential impact of homelessness on some groups, in particular younger men and those from certain ethnic backgrounds.

- Carry out further data analysis and test findings by consultation with clients.