

## Appendix 1

### Homelessness Review of New Arrangements

#### 1. Introduction

The number of homeless individuals resorting to rough sleeping is unfortunately increasing. In line with this so has our services and support to try and tackle this complex issue. The service has been successful in bidding for funding allowing us to increase our support available and to demonstrate results. These services and support activities are detailed in this review.

The figures for rough sleeping in the borough in 2023 are set out below. Further figures are shown in confidential appendix 2. These are still classed as confidential as they are from government statistics not yet cleared for release.

2023	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
Single Night	4	5	3	5	9	9	6
Monthly	12	13	9	11	17	12	18

#### 2. Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Funding

This is funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) as part of the government's programme to tackle rough sleeping. The Council has been successful in applying for funding for 3 years July 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, this has allowed us to create a support pathway of reactive work, preventative interventions and focus on recovery. The following roles and commissioned services are being funded by RSI.

##### 2.1 Reactive - Rough Sleeper Navigator

This role commenced on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and focuses on reactive work. This role assists rough sleepers to access and engage in services; offering advice and support on all options; advocating and negotiating on behalf of customers; and working closely with other agencies externally & internally in order to provide options, prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping.

##### 2.2 Preventative - Tenancy Sustainment Officer

This role commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and is part of our preventative work. The role is to help rough sleepers attain and maintain accommodation. This includes; actions to prevent evictions from temporary and supported accommodation (one of the key reasons for repeat rough sleeping); actions to support moving on from temporary and supported accommodation; building individual relationships to identify what type of accommodation in what location is suitable; ensuring practical aspects of moving are completed; negotiating with landlords to prevent any landlord tenant concerns / rent arrears.

##### 2.3 Recovery - Part time Rough Sleeper Support Officer

This role commenced on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and is part of the recovery work. Working with rough sleepers in temporary accommodation / newly into a tenancy looking for support to develop and maintain their new life. Including diversionary activities, education, sport, practical activities, volunteering, peer support programmes and developing work opportunities. The role has a personalised budget to help smooth the way into activities or essentials to compliment activities i.e. work clothes, bus pass, memberships, interview expenses, uniform.

## **2.4 Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator**

This role is jointly commissioned with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The role seeks out innovative solutions and interventions where barriers and blockages occur in the system. Through the use of problem solving with a range of partner agencies, voluntary sector, community groups businesses and residents.

## **2.5 Homeless Healthcare worker – GP Federation: role commenced 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

This role is jointly commissioned with Stoke-on-Trent City Council via Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board ICB and commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. The role provides frontline healthcare to rough sleepers, a cohort who don't usually engage with preventative health or attend appointments. Also developing relationships to encourage further health engagement including with mental health and addiction services.

## **3 Homelessness Prevention Grant**

This is funding from Government to support our homelessness prevention activities, this is also a key funding source for our Newcastle Housing Advice service supporting non rough sleeping homelessness. This funding also supports the following work.

### **3.1 Brighter Futures**

Brighter Futures are jointly commissioned with Stoke City Council. They are our rough sleepers outreach team and carry out outreach 365 days of the year, providing support and monthly data that we report to DLUHC. This service is usually the first point of contact for rough sleepers, they will assess immediate needs, verify they are in fact rough sleeping and signpost onwards for services.

### **3.2 Housing Outreach Advisor under Newcastle Housing Advice**

This person will be working closely with our Navigator and Discharge Officer to support our verified rough sleeper cohort into accommodation. They will oversee the housing applications and referrals for our rough sleepers and seeing them through their journey from the streets into settled accommodation.

## **4 Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF): 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023-31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

The service had an opportunity to bid for Shared Property Fund money and were successful in two additional posts to focus on two areas of increasing need; mental health and prison / hospital discharges.

### **4.1 Discharge Officer**

This role will oversee discharge/release plans from prisons/hospitals for those with a Newcastle-under-Lyme connection and no fixed address. They will ensure plans are in place and seek accommodation for individuals prior to their discharge/release to prevent any being released onto the streets and help reduce our rough sleeper figures.

### **4.2 Mental Health Liaison Worker**

This role will work with our rough sleeper cohort and those in accommodation to support them with their mental health and ensure they are receiving the right support and medication to support with their recovery.

## 5 Support Activities

### 5.1 NUL Multi Agency Homelessness Hub – Thursdays

A need was identified for a one stop shop where individuals can meet to access support from various agencies, which negates the need for appointments, a barrier which often hinders engagement. As a result we have set up a Hub, which started 1st September 2022. It runs 9am-12pm. The first hour is where partners meet to problem solve complex cases, discuss hotspot locations and share partner updates and as of 10am the Hub is open for service users to get food, advice and support. On first opening we had 10 service users and 22 partner agencies such as; DWP, Concrete, Brighter Futures, Homeless health, mental health, probation, CAB and various housing associations. This has grown and developed and we now have over 25 service users and over 25 agencies turn up on a weekly basis. We have had some great success stories of supporting individuals, fast tracking them in services and preventing/reducing rough sleeping in the area. See statistics below:



### 5.2 NUL Multi Agency Homelessness Hub – Tuesdays

We launched a Tuesday Hub on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 9am-11am, due to the popularity and need for a drop in service in the area. This gives service users an opportunity to access food and support and will be invaluable during the winter months.

## 6 Temporary Accommodation

Under housing and homelessness legislation, the Council has duties to provide interim (or temporary) accommodation to certain households who present as homeless and are considered to be in priority need. In the majority of cases, this is when a household presenting as homeless states that they do not have access to housing and therefore they are placed in temporary accommodation whilst the Council investigates their application.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 widened the Council's duties and means that applicants under a Relief Duty may also be eligible for interim accommodation if required. Subsequently the Council's use of temporary accommodation, both in terms of frequency and expenditure has increased significantly.

In addition to households applying to the Council for accommodation under homelessness legislation, other households can require temporary accommodation. This includes people who are rough sleeping, people who require emergency accommodation due to (risk of) fire or flood etc.

Temporary accommodation is an umbrella term and includes supported housing (both social and private rented), hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation.

The use of bed and breakfast accommodation as temporary accommodation is not only expensive but is considered unsuitable as it is not designed for residential use.

Following a formal Review of Temporary Accommodation in 2020 and a comprehensive market testing and intelligence gathering exercise, a Temporary Accommodation Policy for the Borough was created and approved by Cabinet in January 2021. This outlines the Council's approach in seeking to create alternative options for homeless households, to ensure that the use of temporary accommodation is suitable, cost-effective and meets local needs. An updated Policy will be presented to Cabinet later in 2023.

The Temporary Accommodation Review highlighted that options for temporary accommodation in the Borough are extremely limited because the Council has no accommodation of its own and relies on other arrangements with local providers which can be costly.

## **7 Temporary Accommodation Pathway**

As a result of these findings and to seek to reduce expenditure for the Council, a Temporary accommodation pathway was created in conjunction with Aspire.

**Bronze** - four 2 bed family units that Newcastle Housing Advice can place families that present at any time of the day or night. This has been increased to 5 due to the demand of larger families presenting to NHA. This model is funded through monthly charges to the Council.

**Silver** – 10 single units with low level support that Newcastle Housing Advice can discharge duty to. This means we have suitably housed and can end our duty. We have now added two 3 bed family properties to this model due to the high presentations of large families. This model is funded through housing benefit and not at a cost to the council.

**Gold - Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP)** - additional funding was applied for in conjunction with Aspire to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This has created 6 single units with full time support, which would encourage further engagement, as part of a pathway approach towards individual recovery, positive activity and working towards more sustainable and permanent housing options for individuals, who would otherwise face exclusion from general needs accommodation.

### **7.1 Accommodation for rough sleepers**

We know from our partnership working and consultation with customers who are rough sleeping, they are often reluctant to accept hostels out of area, individuals would prefer to sleep rough in the town centre then move out of area. We are also limited to where we can send individuals with complex needs as most out of area hostels/supported accommodation has a local connection requirement and our Newcastle service users do not meet that threshold.

### **7.1.1 Homeless Accommodation Hub**

One of our biggest needs in the area therefore is for a 24/7 supported accommodation hub to compliment and plug the gaps in the accommodation pathway. This would be a step towards longevity / sustainability and therefore assists the Council to address the needs identified specifically for customers with more complex and challenging needs, which could otherwise not be met and then who would not otherwise engage, remain rough sleeping, which will impact our rough sleeper figures and town centre ASB issues. The service has been successful in bidding for Shared Prosperity Funds to develop a homeless accommodation hub, this project is in its infancy with a report being submitted to Cabinet on September 19<sup>th</sup> 2023 to gain permissions to proceed with procuring a location for it.

### **7.1.1 Night Shelter-Severe Weather Emergency Protocol**

Since 2011, Public Health England have produced an annual Severe Weather Plan which includes recommendations for local authorities and partners to take action to avoid and raise awareness of the adverse health effects of cold weather on the local population.

Within this national plan, Public Health England identify homeless people (especially rough sleepers) as one of the four population groups most at risk of excess winter deaths:

“Homeless people / street sleepers are vulnerable to the cold due to exposure to outdoor temperatures, and other factors which increase vulnerability to cold such as social isolation, smoking, substance dependencies, mental illness and chronic and respiratory diseases which are more prevalent in this population”

Despite this, there is no additional statutory duty on public authorities to provide shelter, even when weather conditions are life-threatening. However, there is a humanitarian obligation on local authorities and partner agencies to try to prevent death on the streets. Most areas fulfil this moral responsibility through the production of a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

In Newcastle-under-Lyme, the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol has been developed with partners at Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Brighter Futures, who deliver the Council's Rough Sleeper Team service as an emergency response for people sleeping rough and support to engage with services.

The SWEP provision does not apply to those who may have other forms of accommodation available to them, but who chose not to stay/live in it. It is for those who would genuinely be sleeping rough were the SWEP provision not in place. For the purposes of this protocol, available accommodation must be safe for the individuals to live in without risk of harm.

In 2020, during the Covid Pandemic and most B&B's closing, we utilised a council building to run over the winter period (1<sup>st</sup> Nov-31<sup>st</sup> March) on an ad-hoc basis when SWEP was activated to ensure our obligations were met to safeguard those at risk of rough sleeping in the cold months. This has been running successfully at St George's Chambers on Merrial Street since then.

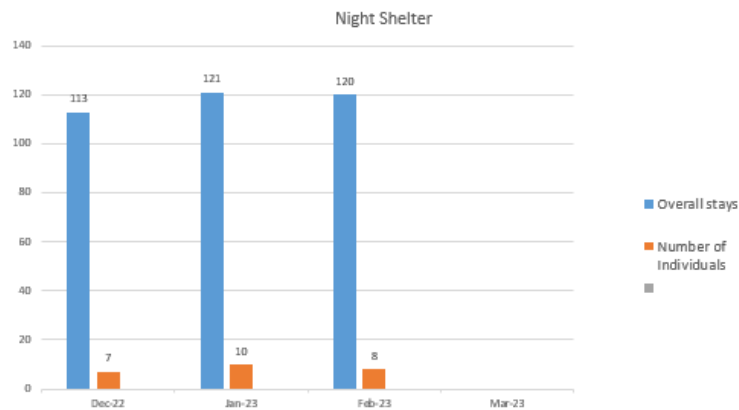
We had wanted to run this as a night shelter over the winter months, but due to cost implications, it was not feasible to do so.

In 2022, after carrying an expression of interest exercise, we were fortunate enough to be approached by Veterans Connect (now known as Connect 2 Combat Homelessness C2CH) opened up a 7 bed night shelter over the winter period (1<sup>st</sup> Nov-31<sup>st</sup> March) to support our rough sleepers to access accommodation during the coldest months and engage with support so that appropriate accommodation can be sought after March.

We have had some great success with this provision and were able to work with and engage our most entrenched sleepers and move them on into suitable accommodation. See data below;



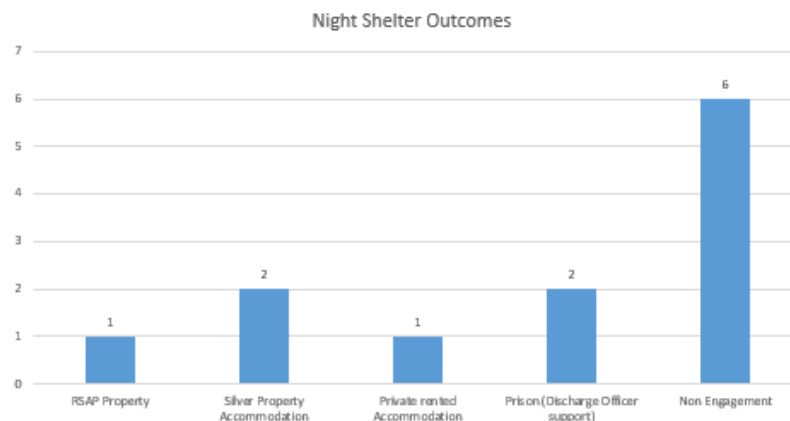
## Night Shelter December 2022 – March 2023



UNCLASSIFIED



## Night Shelter Outcomes December 2022 – March 2023



UNCLASSIFIED

### 7.1.2 Connect 2 Combat Homelessness (C2CH) charity

Since 2022, we have made strong links with C2CH charity and they work closely with us to support our homeless and those vulnerable in our community. They conduct outreach every Monday morning with our homeless healthcare worker. They have purchased a van and will

be adding showers to it, so we can have a mobile shower unit outside the hub, which we have needed for some time.

### 7.1.3 Night Shelter Transformation Fund - Purpose

The Rough Sleeping Strategy (published in September 2022) committed to a 3-year Night Shelter Transformation Fund to support the faith and community sector to embed single-room provision as standard for individuals experiencing rough sleeping and continue to move away from communal sleeping arrangements.

The fund also supports the sector to diversify its services and develop non-residential support, working in partnership with local authorities to ensure that services funded by the Night Shelter Transformation Fund help to fill gaps in local provision for people experiencing rough sleeping.

The programme will aim to provide funding for organisations in areas with the greatest need, and for organisations providing specialist services for at risk groups where gaps in provision have been identified locally.

The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will prioritise funding for organisations working in areas with higher numbers of people experiencing rough sleeping and the greatest need for services funded through the Night Shelter Transformation Fund.

C2CH have been working on a bid from the Transformation Fund to support us to create a supported 6 bed self-contained units that are open 365 days that will help us reduce the need for B&B use, which is not appropriate for our vulnerable individuals with complex needs.

## 8 Newcastle Housing Advice

Rough sleeping is not the only form of homelessness, increasing number of homeless tonight presentations are being dealt with by Newcastle housing advice. This includes people who are sofa surfing, relationship / family breakdowns, incidents in the home and eviction of individuals and families from private rented sector or social tenancies. The tables below show numbers being dealt with. Where there are no other housing options and there is priority need individuals and families may be placed into temporary accommodation while the service works with them to find accommodation options. Where possible this is the silver properties identified above but is also bed and breakfast accommodation.

Data below from Newcastle Housing Advice on people presenting as homeless tonight, which are dealt with as an emergency and numbers presenting to the out of hours serviced operated by the team on a duty rota.

2022/23	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	total
Homeless tonight presentations	24	29	25	45	62	48	38	29	21	38	34	51	444
Out of hours homeless presentations	6	12	6	12	13	16	15	2	18	30	12	19	171

2023/34	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	total
Homeless tonight presentations	48	35	35	40		

Out of hours homeless presentations	18	19	19	23		
---	----	----	----	----	--	--