

# Cardiff Homelessness Strategy [Draft] 2018—2022



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# Foreword



**Councillor Lynda Thorne**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities**

I am pleased to share with you Cardiff's Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022. The strategy recognises and builds on the considerable work that is already taking place to prevent and address homelessness across Cardiff, but I acknowledge that there is still more to do.

The strategy has been developed in a time of challenges. Economic austerity and welfare reform have impacted on many households' budgets and, coupled with high housing costs in Cardiff, have led to increased demand for homelessness services. This additional demand, together with reductions in public spending, has placed considerable pressures on both the statutory and voluntary sectors. In response, this document outlines the co-ordinated approach required to tackling and preventing homelessness in our city over the next four years.

A number of different factors can contribute towards people becoming homeless. These include personal issues such as debts; poor physical and mental health; relationship breakdown; having been in care, the armed forces or prison, and wider

socio-economic factors such as poverty and a lack of affordable housing.

It is also well documented that a lack of stable housing can in itself impact on an individual's physical health, mental health and wellbeing, making it harder to find a job and maintain relationships. The longer someone is in this situation, the more at risk they are of developing complex or multiple issues.

As well as individual impacts, homelessness has wider implications for Cardiff as a whole, ultimately affecting levels of inequality; social exclusion; community cohesion and economic prosperity. It is my personal belief, shared by the rest of the Cabinet, that good quality housing advice and assistance is a fundamental element in supporting vulnerable people to address their problems and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Along with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors, I am committed to addressing both the causes and impacts of homelessness and continuing to bring about effective change. To that end, this strategy aims to ensure that all homeless and vulnerably-housed households in Cardiff receive appropriate and timely help and support.

*Councillor Lynda Thorne*

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.



# Introduction

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to carry out local homelessness reviews and formulate and adopt homelessness strategies based on the results. Key objectives are the prevention of homelessness, securing suitable accommodation and providing adequate support.

This Cardiff Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 responds to a comprehensive review of homelessness in Cardiff undertaken during 2018. The review explored the range of issues faced by households threatened with or experiencing homelessness and the adequacy of service response received, in order to identify any gaps in provision. Alongside examination of key data, the views and opinions of partners and service users were considered.

The resultant strategy sets the strategic direction for homelessness services in Cardiff and identifies the key priorities for the Council and its partners. It complements and runs alongside the Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020 and the Cardiff Housing Strategy 2016 - 2021.

## Cardiff Homelessness Strategy 2018—2022



## Cardiff Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022

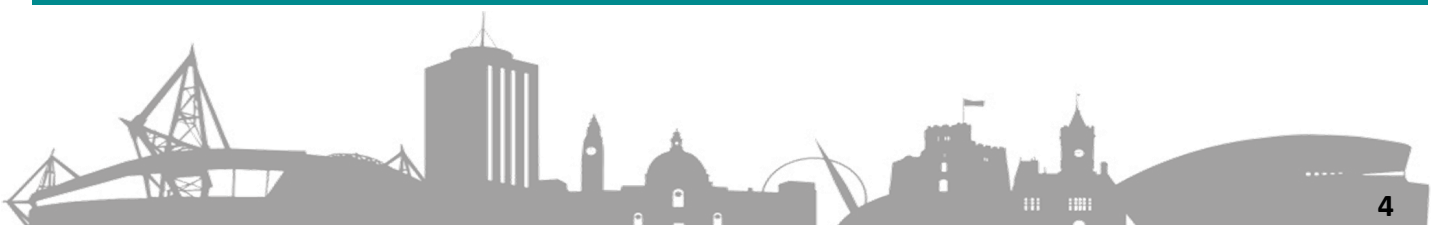
The Homelessness Strategy for Cardiff sets out how the Council and its partners will deliver homelessness services across the city.

### The vision:

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

**will be realised through the following key aims:**

- 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



## 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 revisions to the Allocation Scheme are necessary to address this.



# Key Findings

## 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. A review of the pathway is required to ensure these clients receive help prior to losing their accommodation.

Prison leavers account for a significant number of people accessing homelessness services. There is **limited opportunity for prevention with the majority of prisoners**. A review of the pathway for these households is required to assess if there is 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 **8,000 households** on the waiting list and approximately **400 new applicants** join 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.

## 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.







# Summary of Commitments

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**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 tailored to individual need.
-  Offer prevention appointments in the client's 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.
-  Deliver 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 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 that 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 issues are 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 reasons for 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.

# Implementing the Strategy

In order to improve existing services and address any gaps in provision, the strategy sets out a number of ambitious activities to be undertaken over the next four years. These are listed as 'We Will' commitments throughout the document and will inform an accompanying action plan. Implementation will be continually monitored and a report on progress published each year.

Partnership working will be integral to taking forward this strategy. This will include collaboration between Housing and Social Care within the Council, and with other key partners including third sector agencies, the Police, Health, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private landlords.

## Funding

A number of funding sources will be used to support the commitments made in this strategy. Additional funding for homelessness made available by Welsh Government in 2018/19 is being used to increase resources for advice and prevention work, whilst the Supporting People Programme Grant and Homeless Prevention Grant are used primarily to fund third sector housing and homelessness support services, such as homeless hostels, domestic abuse refuges and floating support in the client's own home. Cardiff is also proactive in bidding for ad hoc grants to fund additional services.



# National Policy Context

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Essentials



## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Public bodies are required to consider the long-term well-being of the population and to work sustainably to prevent persistent problems such as poverty and health inequalities.

The Act encourages organisations to work together to prevent problems occurring or getting worse and establishes seven national well-being goals:- preventing and tackling homelessness has a key role to play in addressing a number of these, including achieving a more equal Wales; a healthier Wales; a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

## The Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales 2009-2019

The Welsh Government's *Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales 2009-2019*, identifies five key objectives that have helped to shape this strategy:

- Preventing homelessness wherever possible
- Working across organisational boundaries
- Placing the service user at the centre of service delivery
- Ensuring social inclusion and equality of access to services
- Making the best use of resources.

## Other Relevant Plans and Legislation

Other plans considered as part of the development of the strategy include:

- *National Housing Strategy 2010 – 'Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales'* - sets out the challenges in meeting Wales' housing requirements, the priorities and the actions that will be taken.
- *Welfare Reform Act 2012* - lays out the UK Government's proposals for reforming the welfare system to improve work incentives, simplify benefits, address fairness and tackle administrative complexity.
- *Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014* - provides a legal framework for improving the well-being of people (adults and children) who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.
- *Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016* - aims to make it simpler and easier to rent a home, replacing various and complex pieces of existing legislation with one clear legal framework.
- *Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2018-20* - reflects the concern of the Welsh Government and its partners at the recent rise in rough sleeping and the priority given to reversing this.
- *Supporting People Programme Practice Guidance 2018* - issued by the Welsh Government in connection with the Supporting People Programme Grant.



## Housing (Wales) Act 2014

The *Housing (Wales) Act 2014* introduced a fundamental reform to homelessness law, the main objective being to ensure people who are homeless or facing homelessness receive help as early as possible.

The legislation introduced a new, inclusive system designed to help everyone at risk from homelessness, not just those in priority groups. It places a stronger duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness (within 56 days) and allows them to use suitable accommodation in the private sector.



The purpose of the legislation is to achieve:

- fewer households experiencing the trauma of homelessness.
- increased help, advice and information for households who received limited assistance under the previous legislation.
- more focus on the service user, helping them to address the causes of homelessness and make informed decisions on finding solutions to their housing problem.
- better, more targeted, prevention work.
- more effective use of the private rented sector as a solution to homelessness.
- a stronger emphasis on co-operation and multi-agency working.
- greater protection provided for children in households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as well as additional help for children leaving care.





## Definition of Homelessness

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the legal definition of homelessness. As recommended by the Welsh Government, for the purpose of this strategy the following broader definition of homelessness has been used:

***'Where a person lacks accommodation or where their tenure is not secure'.***

**This includes:**

- **Sleeping rough;**
- **Living in insecure/temporary housing (excluding assured/assured short-hold tenants);**
- **Living in short term hostels, night shelters, direct access hostels;**
- **Living in bed and breakfasts;**
- **Moving frequently between relatives/friends;**
- **Being unable to remain in or return to housing due to poor housing conditions; overcrowding; unaffordability; domestic abuse; harassment; mental; physical and/or sexual abuse;**
- **Accommodation not meeting the needs of people with physical or learning disabilities, sensory impairments or mental health conditions;**
- **Being threatened with losing their home and without suitable alternative accommodation for any reason, e.g. domestic abuse;**
- **Leaving hospitals, police custody, prisons, the armed forces and other institutions without a home to go to;**
- **Being required to leave by family or friends or due to relationship breakdown;**
- **Within 56 days of the end of tenancy, facing possession proceedings or threat of eviction.**

### Duty to Provide Advice and Assistance

The Council has a duty to provide housing advice and assistance to anyone seeking it. This may include outlining the various accommodation options available, as well as support to access relevant benefits.

### Duty to Prevent Homelessness

The Council is required to work with eligible clients to try and prevent homelessness or secure alternative accommodation. This may include facilitating mediation with family members or addressing issues such as rent arrears.

### Interim Duty to Secure Accommodation

The Council has an immediate duty to ensure suitable accommodation is available when they have reason to believe a client may be eligible for assistance, may be homeless and may have a **priority need**. This will be pending the completion of its enquiries.



### PRIORITY NEED

The following clients have a priority need for accommodation under the relevant duties:-

- pregnant women;
- people responsible for dependent children;
- victims of domestic abuse;
- young people aged 16-17 or leaving local authority care;
- armed forces personnel;
- vulnerable as a result of time in prison or another reason such as mental health issues, age or rough sleeping.

### Duty to Help to Secure Accommodation

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, the Council must assist all eligible households to find suitable alternative accommodation. This may include assisting access into the private rented sector, or supported housing for those deemed vulnerable, as defined by the legislation.

### Duty to Secure Accommodation

Where alternative accommodation has not been found under the previous duties, most single people without dependents would fail to qualify under this duty, unless they were deemed vulnerable and in priority need. While the Council has no duty to provide it, Cardiff has a range of accommodation for single people with no priority need.



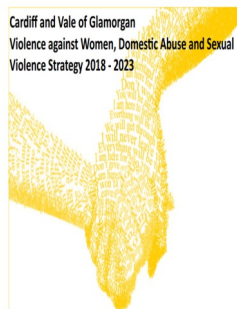
# Local Policy Context



## Cardiff Well-being Plan 2018 - 2023

The Cardiff Well-being Plan sets out the priorities for action across the public sector in Cardiff for the next five years, structured around the following Well-being Objectives:

1. **A capital city that works for Wales**
2. **Cardiff grows in a resilient way**
3. **Safe, confident and empowered communities**
4. **Cardiff is a great place to grow up**
5. **Supporting people out of poverty**
6. **Cardiff is a great place to grow older**
7. **Modernising and integrating our public services.**



## Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023

This regional strategy sets out how all partners will shape and deliver responses to all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the region.

The vision is that 'people who live, work, study in and visit Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have the opportunity to live positive, independent lives without being affected by violence and abuse'. The strategy aims to address the prevention, protection and support of victims and also the efforts required to pursue those responsible.

CAPITAL  
AMBITION  
OUR COMMITMENTS FOR CARDIFF



Cardiff Council  
Cardiff Capital Ambition

## Corporate Plan 2018-21 'Delivering Capital Ambition'

Cardiff Council's 'Capital Ambition' policy programme sets out four key priorities for the city:

- **Working for Cardiff:** Making sure that all citizens can contribute to, and benefit from, the city's success.
- **Working for Wales:** A successful Wales needs a successful capital city.
- **Working for the Future:** Managing the city's growth in a sustainable way.
- **Working for Public Services:** Making sure public services are delivered efficiently, effectively and sustainably in the face of the rising demand and reducing budgets.

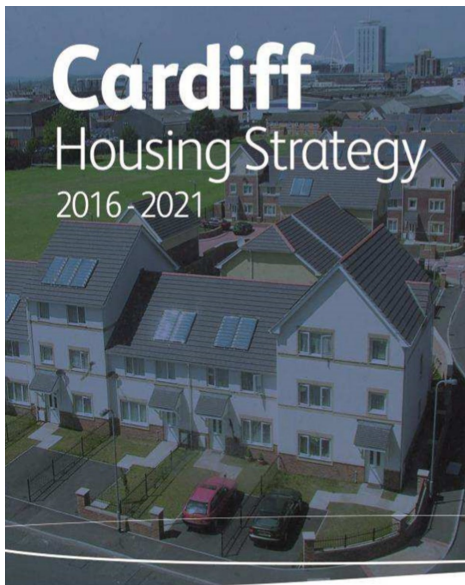
Increasing the supply of genuinely affordable housing is at the heart of the Administration's approach to reducing costs for those in poverty, tackling homelessness and destitution, and to creating 'inclusive growth'. Commitments include:

- **building 1,000 new Council homes** by 2022 through the Cardiff Living Scheme and taking forward other innovative housing initiatives.
- increasing the delivery of new houses to meet housing need through the development of Local Development Plan strategic sites including **6,500 new affordable homes by 2026**.

Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2018-21 details how these priorities will be achieved, with their delivery structured around the Well-being Objectives set out in the Cardiff Well-being Plan.



# Local Policy Context



## Cardiff Housing Strategy 2016-2021

The overarching vision for the Cardiff Housing Strategy is ***‘to deliver the best housing outcomes for the people of Cardiff, working together with partners to ensure that all citizens can access high quality, affordable and sustainable homes’.***

This vision will be realised through achieving the following key aims:

- to develop a full understanding of housing need in the city;
- to take a coordinated and evidence based approach to developing and improving homes in Cardiff;
- to ensure that the housing needs of the most vulnerable are met;
- to improve neighbourhoods and help build stronger communities.



## Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020

Cardiff’s Rough Sleeper Strategy outlines how people sleeping rough can receive appropriate and accessible support, advice and homelessness assistance. The vision ***‘to work towards ending rough sleeping in Cardiff’*** is underpinned by the following key aims:

- to work to understand the causes of rough sleeping;
- to work with partners to ensure support is directed towards ending and not reinforcing rough sleeping;
- to ensure early intervention to prevent rough sleepers becoming entrenched;
- to develop a range of accommodation and support solutions tailored to individual needs.





# The Homelessness Review

## Cardiff Homelessness Review 2018

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local housing authorities to periodically carry out a homelessness review for their area and develop a homelessness strategy based on the findings.

Cardiff's Homelessness Review 2018 includes a detailed analysis of data collected by the Housing Options Service concerning levels and causes of homelessness in Cardiff, together with an overview of the services in place to help those in need. It focuses on the key themes of preventing homelessness, securing accommodation and providing support.

## Partner and Client Input

The review was undertaken by officers within the Council's People and Communities directorate, with the input of both internal and external partners to ensure that priorities are fully understood.

A consultation exercise was conducted with stakeholders in April 2018, seeking their comments on the homeless services in Cardiff. Partners were also asked to feed back on sections of the review as they were drafted.

People who have directly accessed homelessness services were also consulted on their views, via a client survey. Working in partnership with the Cardiff Research Centre, a questionnaire was developed covering advice; support for those threatened with homelessness; support for those who were or are homeless; and demographic information.

Paper-based and on-line versions of the survey were developed. The survey was posted to clients who had used the Housing Options Service within the last year. Those currently using the service and attending appointments in the Hubs or the Housing Options Centre were taken through the online survey. Partner organisations working with homeless people within supported accommodation were also asked to assist their clients to complete the survey. Promotion to targeted audiences was undertaken via the Council's social media channels. The survey was live between 30th August and 12th October 2018 and a total of 465 responses were received.

The findings from the data analysis, partner consultation and client survey provide the evidence base upon which this homelessness strategy has been developed.



Housing Options Centre



# Homelessness Services in Cardiff

## Housing Options Centre and Specialist Services



### Triage & Frontline Assessment

Triage work with clients at reception to resolve their housing problem. The triage officer will assess whether the client needs:

- advice and assistance only
- an appointment with a homeless case officer
- immediate emergency accommodation

Frontline Assessment is undertaken by a homeless case officer. The case officers assess the case and make legal decisions under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

They work with the client to help alleviate their housing issue, creating a personal housing plan with reasonable steps for the Council and the client to take. The plan is tailored to the clients' needs.



### Prevention & Private Rented Sector Team

The Prevention Team assists clients to remain in their homes by a range of assistance such as:

- Rent rescue
- Mediation
- Help to find alternative accommodation
- Support to find accommodation in the private sector

The Private Rented Sector Team work with landlords offering:

- A tenant finding and matching service and accompanied viewings
- Property inspection, inventory and Health and Safety Rating System checks
- Dedicated Account Management offering support, mediation and advice for landlord and tenant
- Dedicated fast-tracked Housing Benefit service and direct payments



### Housing Support Workers

The Housing Support Worker project helps vulnerable homeless clients with support needs or complex health needs who are either threatened with homelessness or living in Leased Temporary Accommodation.

They help to prevent homelessness by:

- Mediating with existing landlords
- Assisting with debt or budgeting issues
- Helping to find other suitable accommodation
- Resettling clients in Temporary Accommodation into private rented accommodation



### Debt & Housing Team

The Debt and Housing Team provide specialist advice to anyone who may be experiencing difficulties with their rent or mortgage and undertake a variety of prevention including:

- Income maximisation
- Debt and budgeting advice
- Negotiating with mortgage companies and solicitors
- Liaising with Housing Associations and Cardiff Council regarding repayment plans for rent arrears
- Assisting Private Tenants who are threatened with homelessness due to landlord repossession or dispute with landlord
- Advocacy at court for homeowners and Housing Association tenants



### Temporary Accommodation Team

Assists clients with emergency and temporary accommodation. The team is the single point of entry into:

- Single Persons Gateway
- Family Gateway
- Young Persons Gateway

The team provides suitable accommodation dependant on the clients' needs and provides advice on move-on options and permanent housing solutions.



### RISE Cardiff

24/7 service provided by Women's Aid in partnership with Bawso and Llamau, for victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

A team of advocates deliver a triage service to assess victim needs for support including:

- Safety advice
- Assistance with the provision of security measures in the home
- Access into a range of crisis/emergency accommodation
- Specialist housing and legal advice
- Specialist children and young people's support
- Joint working with South Wales Police to address domestic abuse issues including joint visits and a review of the pathway for Police Protection Notices (PPNs)
- Benefit and welfare information
- Health services and support for complex needs
- Access into a range of therapeutic interventions, group work and self-help programmes



### The Basement

The Basement, located in Charles Street, is a collaboration between the Council's Children's Services and Homeless Services and third sector support from Llamau.

It provides free confidential advice to young people aged 16 - 25 who are homeless or facing homelessness, including:

- Housing and welfare advice
- Homeless assessments
- Family mediation with the aim of preventing homelessness
- Assistance establishing suitable housing and support solutions

# Services for Rough Sleepers



**The  
Wallich  
Services**

## Rough Sleeper Intervention Team

This service operated by The Wallich in partnership with the Council's Homeless Outreach team, is more commonly known as the 'Breakfast Run'. Staff go out each morning to engage with rough sleepers through the provision of breakfast and other welfare items.

## Cardiff Solutions Service

Based at the Wallich's Night Shelter, Cardiff Solutions Service provides an alternative drop in facility for rough sleepers not accessing other services.



HUGGARD, Helping  
The Homeless  
**Huggard  
Day  
Centre**

Huggard's Day Centre provides essential facilities for homeless people creating the opportunity to engage with them in a warm friendly atmosphere, to help break their cycle of homelessness.

### Services Include:

- Free and low-cost meals
- Free clothing, laundry and personal hygiene facilities
- A care of address
- Providing a range of welfare checks
- Activity sessions
- Advocacy Service
- Substance misuse service and needle exchange



**Homeless  
Outreach & City  
Centre Team**

The Council's Homeless Outreach and City Centre Team engage with people who are currently, at risk of becoming, rough sleepers.

The team works alongside other outreach agencies to:

- Provide assistance to access accommodation
- Provide access to other services such as health and social care
- Complete statutory homeless assessments providing clients with access to homelessness services
- Social Worker and Homeless Nurse
- Various visiting clinics and health services



**Bus Project**

Delivered by the Salvation Army Sunday to Thursday evenings every week. The Service provides:

- Food
- Access to advice
- Advocacy
- Medical support
- Access to accommodation



**Reconnection  
Service**

The Reconnection Service delivered by the Salvation Army supports individuals with no local connection to return to their home authority in a managed way, or to achieve another positive accommodation outcome.

Accommodation may be provided for an individual with no local connection either for one night or temporarily via a waiver to access specialist provision only provided in Cardiff, or because of overwhelming vulnerability, health or social care grounds.



# Hubs, Advice and Support Services



Based at Central Hub with outreach teams across city Hubs, foodbanks and Job Centre Plus.

The team provide:

- Advice and assistance with arrears of rent, council tax or utility bills
- Budgeting help
- Identifying and applying for relevant benefits, grants and discounts
- Accessing fuel poverty schemes.
- Help opening a bank account
- Foodbank vouchers



The Cardiff Advice Service is provided by Citizens Advice and Speakeasy. They are funded by the council to provide independent, confidential and impartial advice on many issues including:

- Welfare benefits
- Debt/housing
- Family relationships
- Employment law
- Immigration
- Discrimination
- Consumer issues



The Into Work Service provides free drop-in sessions in locations across Cardiff for residents looking for work or to upskill.

Help provided includes:

- Assistance with CV writing, job applications, forms and covering letters
- Searching for jobs and setting up a Universal Job Match account
- Digital Support for Universal Credit
- Skills Training



Floating Support provides 2298 units of housing related support to vulnerable people across all tenancy types at risk of homelessness. Support includes:

- Budgeting
- Tenancy issues
- Advocacy
- Managing money / Debt Advice
- Access to training and employment
- Developing independent living skills



The Landlord Liaison team, based within the Cardiff Council's Benefits section provide advice and support to private landlords, working with them to encourage renting of properties to benefit claimants.

Their work includes:

- Basic housing advice
- Basic Council Tax advice
- Referrals into Council services and specialist organisations
- Preventing unnecessary evictions
- Universal Credit advice
- Safeguarding & Direct Payments



Home finder workshops help and assist homeless clients, and those seeking housing to look for accommodation in the private rented sector in Cardiff and its surrounding areas.

They operate at all city Hubs and also from other locations in the near future.



- Provides housing advice
- Assists applicants joining the Cardiff Housing Waiting List
- Assists clients with reviews of homeless action plans
- Referrals to other housing and partner services

# Our Partners Said...

There was considerable consensus on the issues raised by our partners, and their comments mirror the findings of the data review. A summary of these is set out below:

**Welfare Reform** – Universal Credit, Benefit Cap, in work poverty and zero hours contracts were all cited as reasons for the rise in homelessness.

**Difficulty Accessing the Private Rented Sector** – high rent levels in Cardiff and the amount of student accommodation together with new legislation such as Rent Smart Wales were of concern along with a lack of single person housing and need for guarantors. There is a perceived need to speed up the bond application process to help people find private rented accommodation.

**Family and Relationship Breakdown** including domestic violence were also considered significant causes of homelessness. Bereavement was also considered a key cause of homelessness.

**Personal Behaviours and Challenges** – it was recognised by all partners that personal issues were a key cause of homelessness: this included mental health, learning disabilities and substance dependency. These issues made it difficult for clients to navigate the homelessness pathway. Offending behaviour was also an issue and move on for these clients was particularly challenging.

**Services for High Needs and Chaotic clients** – many partners recognised the increasing complexity of clients, resulting in a high number of evictions from hostels. A need for more join up with health services was seen as important. Concerns were also raised about vulnerable clients and the risk of cuckooing and other exploitation.

**Lack of Move On Options/Support** – lack of move on accommodation and particularly appropriate secondary supported accommodation were seen as a key issue as was adequate support into independent living.

**Begging and Street Culture** were issues that partners considered were keeping people on the streets.

**The Housing Options Centre** services were highly regarded by some partners. The location of the building and long waits for service were seen as challenges. The need for a more person centred and trauma informed approach was seen as key to improving outcomes.

**The Hubs** – the advice in the Hubs was appreciated including Into Work Advice. Several partners thought more local housing and homelessness services would be ideal as this would increase accessibility and visibility of service. Training of staff was seen as key to the success of this.

**Prevention Services** – the need for more proactive prevention work was recognised by most partners. More financial assistance for those who did not need supported accommodation, increased rent rescue at an earlier stage and longer periods of floating support were highlighted.

**Funding** - innovation grants and projects were seen as good practice by some partners. Others raised concerns about the lack of certainty in funding arrangements.

# 2018 Homelessness Survey

## Advice

89%

Were satisfied with the advice received overall.

68%

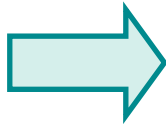


Rated advice received from the Council and its partners as **EXCELLENT** or **GOOD**

## Threatened with Homelessness



Clients threatened with homelessness who received help from the Council



96%

were satisfied with the help they received from the Council

## Homeless

71% Offered Temporary Accommodation

86%

Satisfied with their Temporary Accommodation



83%



Happy with the help they received from the Council in finding permanent accommodation



# Client Comments Homelessness Survey

*"I was in an awful situation, the Council helped me and my family. I'll always appreciate it."*

*"I think the advice is marvellous. It was great for me!"*

*"I have a job and it would have been helpful to have a pre-arranged appointment so I could plan around work."*

*"The Housing Outreach team connect with people to help allay fears."*

*"I felt the process was lengthy but it improved and ran more smoothly when I was seen by the case officer."*

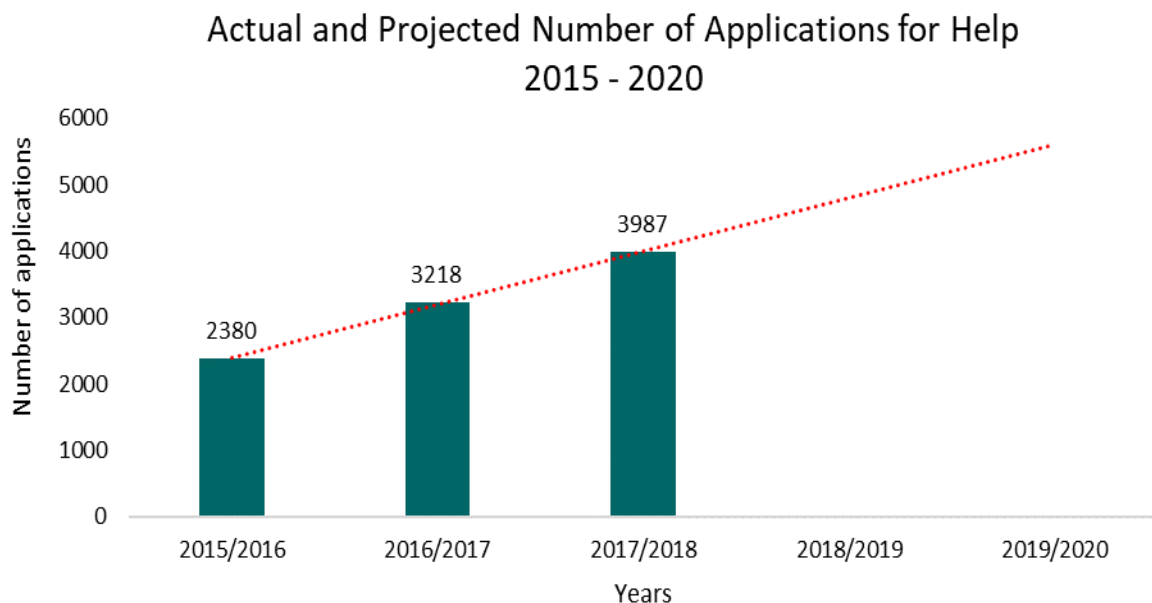
*"Having the same housing officer throughout the process would be better."*

*"Make the services more widely advertised. Didn't know where the help was available."*

*"It was difficult to get in touch at times. Regular updates during the process would be helpful."*

*"Give access to application forms and advice at the Hubs as there are long wait times in Housing Options Centre."*

# Demand for Services



## Applications for Help

Cardiff Council has seen an increase of 68% in applications for help over the period April 2015 to March 2018. If demand increases in line with previous years, the Council could expect to receive almost 6,000 applications a year by 2019/20.

The number of applicants who were found to be threatened with homelessness increased from 762 to 1,544 (103%) over the period, whilst those found to be homeless rose from 1,274 to 1,976 (55%) and the number found to be homeless and in priority need rose from 571 to 669 (17%).

## Demand for Advice Services

Numbers seeking housing-related advice within the Community Hubs has increased by 23%, from 14,707 to 18,103 for the period April 2015 to March 2018.

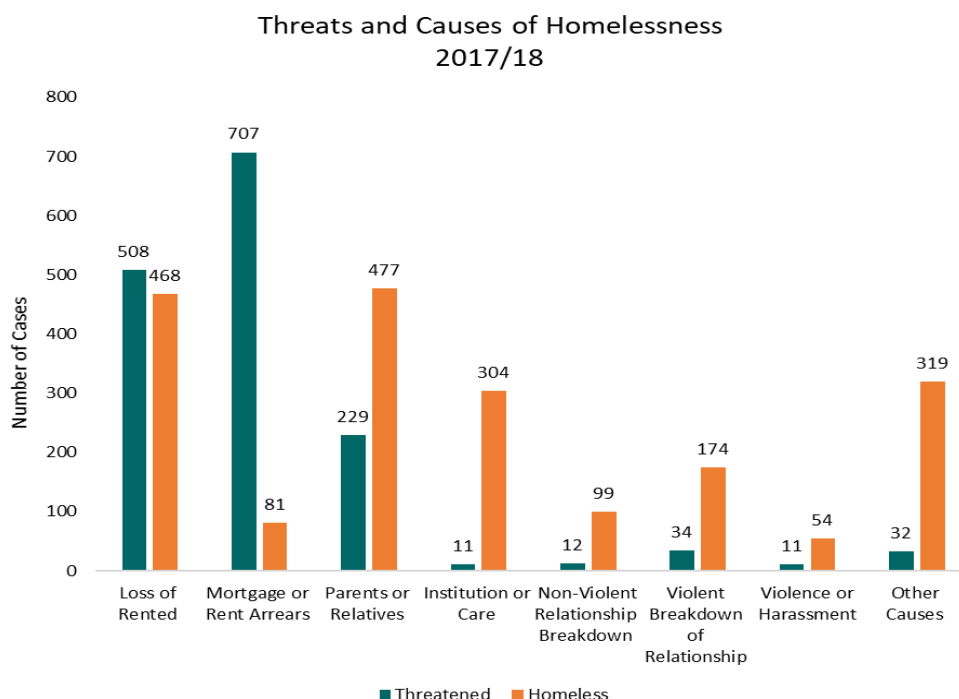
There are also high numbers of people attending the Housing Options Centre. In 2017/18, 11,154 customers were recorded.

## Implications of Increasing Demand

If projected increases in current trends continue there is a risk that services will not be able to keep pace with demand. Cardiff has recognised the need to invest in more early intervention to address increasing homelessness. In 2018/19 additional funding has been made available for homelessness services and will be focussed on advice and prevention work. Partners have raised concerns about the stability and continuation of funding.



# Causes of Homelessness in Cardiff



In 2017/18 the chief cause of the threat of homelessness was mortgage or rent arrears with 707 cases recorded, a 247% increase on the previous year. In part this increase is due to better recording of cases, however it also reflects the pressures of welfare reform.

Parents, relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate became the biggest cause of homelessness with 477 cases recorded. Loss of Rented or Tied Accommodation was also a significant causes of homelessness in 2017/18. This includes those leaving National Asylum Seekers Service accommodation, but there is also evidence that landlords are leaving the rental market.

## Client Views

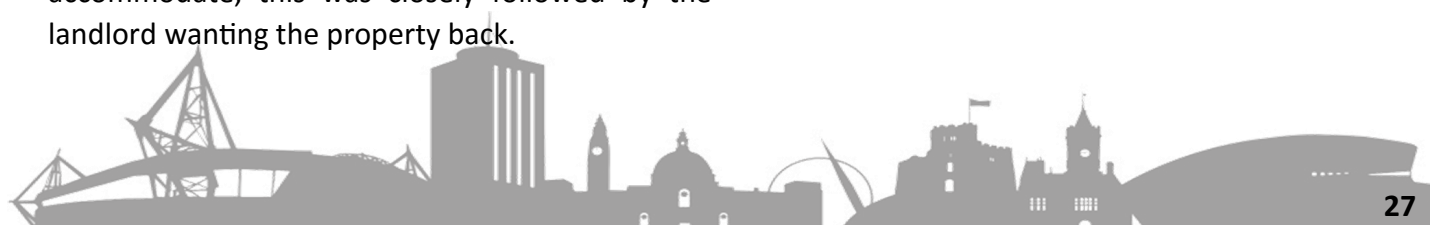
The client survey identified similar trends. The most common reason given for the cause of homelessness by respondents was that parents or relatives were no longer willing or able to accommodate, this was closely followed by the landlord wanting the property back.

However, this information only tells part of the picture. The causes of homelessness are complex and multi-faceted. Individual circumstances such as health concerns and substance misuse can often interplay with wider social issues such as welfare reform, resulting in a person losing their home.

When asked about personal issues in the client survey, a third of respondents indicated that mental health issues had contributed to their housing situation.

## Partner Consultation

Partners were asked for any comments they had about the causes of homelessness in Cardiff and any trends they had identified. They confirmed that welfare reform and problems with the private rented sector were key issues. Partners also cited personal issues such as mental health and substance dependency as being key issues.



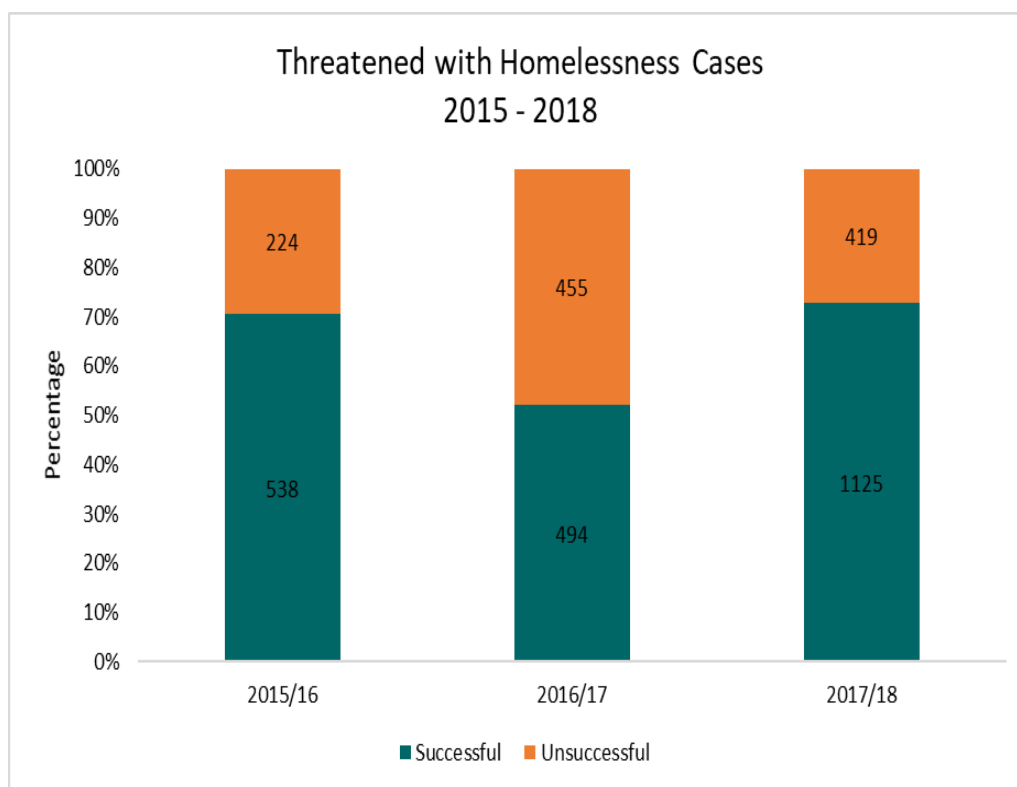
# Early Intervention

Cardiff Council is committed to providing a holistic housing service in which help is readily available and not only provided at the point of crisis. A joined up, person-centred service is integral to delivering the best outcomes for clients. Any underlying issues that may be contributing or will contribute in future to a person's housing situation are considered.

Early intervention has been identified as key to successfully tackling homelessness and it is therefore vital that people are aware of the services and help available.

In 2017/18, 73% of all cases where a duty to help prevent was accepted were successfully prevented. This represents a 40% improvement on the previous year.

Early intervention and advice have produced successful outcomes where clients have engaged with the service, however in many cases there was not an opportunity to work with clients before they became homeless.



## ACTION

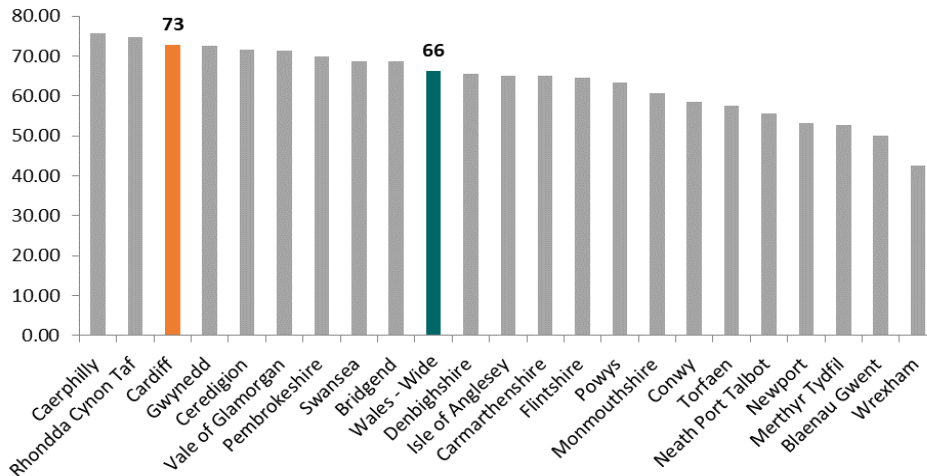


**Further develop the Prevention Service, offering a wide range of interventions tailored to individual need.**



# Early Intervention

**Percentage Successfully Prevented by Welsh Local Authority 2017/18**

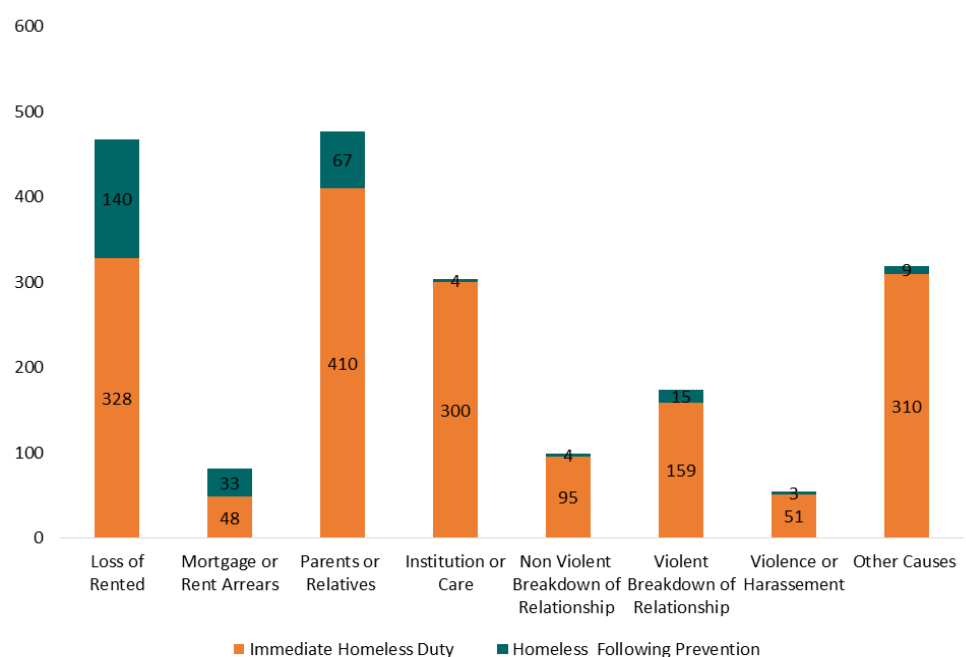


Across Wales as a whole, the successful prevention rate was 66.4%, Cardiff's result was third highest with a prevention rate of 72.9%.

Cardiff helped more clients (1,544) with prevention services than any other authority in Wales, 17% of all outcomes Wales-wide.

The adjacent graph shows the causes of homelessness in 2017/18 broken down by clients who were immediately homeless compared with those who were homeless following unsuccessful prevention work.

**Homeless Cases 2017/18**



For the majority of clients that became homeless in 2017/18, there had not been an opportunity for prevention work.

For certain groups, such as victims of domestic abuse, assistance is understandably not accessed until the point

of crisis. For others better awareness of services could have prevented homelessness. Prevention was also difficult for ex-prisoners and refugees. These are explored later in the strategy. There is a need to better advertise the services available to those to whom early intervention could assist.






# Early Intervention

High demand for services has led to increased waiting times at the Housing Options Centre. Using average figures from March 2018, the total amount of time that a client may spend in the Housing Options Centre, from making a presentation at reception to leaving their general interview, is over three hours. Greater use of the Hubs for housing advice could reduce waiting times at the Housing Options Centre and help improve customer satisfaction.

## Partner Comments

Partners have cited long waiting times and the location of the Housing Options Centre as causes for concern, and welcome the use of the Community Hubs to assist in homelessness prevention.

ACTION		<b>Develop an in-house specialist housing and homelessness advice service and offer digital access through Skype and online webchat.</b>
		<b>Provide housing and homelessness advice across the city through the Community Hubs.</b>
		<b>Offer prevention appointments in the client's own home or in Community Hubs.</b>
<b>We Will:</b> <b>Build on the success of current prevention work by developing more focused and targeted prevention services.</b>		

## Case Study

Miss S lived in private rented accommodation and had been served a notice for rent arrears. She was unable to present to the Housing Options Centre in person due to mental health issues.

A home visit was arranged and a case officer reassured Miss S that they would liaise with the letting agent on her behalf and would assist in mediating her housing problem. A financial statement was completed and although Miss S was receiving her full benefit entitlement there was little flexibility in her budget. This gave her a permanent feeling of fear and anxiety over losing her tenancy.

Miss S was provided with budgeting advice, including how to ensure that she was paying bills in full and on time. This helped alleviate her stress and anxiety. The case officer contacted Miss S's letting agent who advised that the landlord was open to saving the tenancy if the rent arrears were resolved.

The agent and landlord were advised the Council could assist Miss S with the Rent Rescue Scheme and provide ongoing tenant support.

Following an affordability assessment, negotiations were carried out and the landlord agreed to cease any legal action and issue a new tenancy agreement. More importantly, the landlord agreed to reduce Miss S's monthly rent.

Miss S was delighted that her tenancy could be saved. She currently has no rent arrears and a more affordable tenancy.



# Key Issues

## Financial Issues

The impact of welfare reform including the implementation of Universal Credit, along with in-work poverty and zero hour contracts are leading to more people experiencing financial difficulties in Cardiff. In an increasing number of cases this is impacting on their ability to pay their rent. Benefit changes may continue to impact on homeless services particularly as benefits become more conditional and complex.

For the period April 2015 to March 2018 Cardiff Council has seen a 762% increase in the number of clients experiencing difficulties with paying their rent or mortgage. The number of cases rose from 82 in 2015/16 to 707 in 2017/18. This is in part due to better recording of cases.

Although there has been a significant increase in demand for the service due to financial issues, **Cardiff Council has achieved great success in this area with 93% of all clients who engaged with services prevented from becoming homeless in 2017/18.** Early intervention has been identified as key to this success.

### Private Sector Rent Arrears

The largest group affected by rent arrears are those renting in the private sector. Various measures are used to prevent these clients from becoming homeless. This includes:

#### Safeguard Scheme

Tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit may be at threat of homelessness by mismanagement of their finances, leading to missed rental payments. In such cases making housing benefit payments directly to a tenant may not always be in their best

### Rent Rescue

Rent Rescue can be paid to priority need clients who have accrued rent arrears in social housing tenancies or private accommodation which threatens their tenancy.

Overall Rent Rescue awards for the period April 2015 to March 2018 increased by 25%. While most awards are made to those in private rented accommodation there was a significant increase in awards made to social housing tenants, from 6 to 78.

interest, so Cardiff Council has developed a Safeguard Scheme to protect them. Under the scheme housing benefit can be paid directly to a landlord.

Direct payments can also be made to a landlord under Universal Credit. Awareness of this service should be promoted further to ensure private landlords are aware.

### Discretionary Housing Payments

Financial support provided through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit in the private rented sector is restricted to the Local Housing Allowance rate and may not cover all of a client's rent. If they are unable to afford the shortfall they can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment via the Council's Benefit Service.



# Key Issues

## Social Housing Rent Arrears

In 2017/18, 150 clients residing in social housing were threatened with homelessness due to rent arrears. With changes to welfare benefits many social landlords are changing the way they manage rent arrears. It has been identified that early intervention in this area is essential as small amounts of arrears may not be regarded as problematic, but they can soon escalate.

Improved partnership working between the Council's Housing Finance Service and the Housing Options Service has ensured that all cases where there is a threat of homelessness due to rent arrears are referred early and before the point of crisis. This early intervention is producing successful outcomes. In 2017/18 all clients who were at risk of homelessness through social rent arrears, and engaged with the Housing Options Service, were prevented from becoming homeless.

## Mortgage Arrears

If a client is having difficulty paying their mortgage, their lender will notify the Housing Options Service directly so that prevention work can take place. Staff within the Debt and Housing team are fully trained in liaising with mortgage companies and solicitors regarding hardship options, term extensions, payment arrangements and assisting clients in court action.

In 2017/18, 76% of clients who presented to the service with mortgage arrears were prevented from becoming homeless.

## Case Study

Mrs D presented at the Housing Options Centre due to mortgage arrears which had accrued following the death of her husband. Mrs D advised of severe mental health issues and also some physical health problems. She was reliant on an income of Income Support, Carer's Allowance (as she cared for her elderly mother) and Disability Living Allowance.

Mrs D had a very low mortgage balance, however the term of her mortgage had expired and therefore the full amount was due immediately. As she had not been able to pay this amount, a court hearing for possession had been listed. Through advance negotiations with the lender the Debt and Housing team were able to get a 56 day adjournment of the court proceedings agreed, to enable Mrs D to consider her options.

The Debt and Housing Team referred Mrs D to an independent financial adviser and it transpired that Mrs D had a private pension she was able to draw upon which would be sufficient to clear the arrears in full.

At the court hearing the Debt and Housing team represented Mrs D and gained a further adjournment of 28 days from the Judge, as this was opposed by the lender. This allowed Mrs D to have enough time to release the proceeds from her pension to repay the mortgage balance in full and possession action was ended.



# Key Issues

## Family Breakdown

Cardiff has experienced a significant increase in clients losing accommodation provided by parents, relatives or friends. In 2017/18 this became the biggest cause of homelessness. This category includes those clients who are 'sofa-surfing'. This means that they are staying temporarily with friends and relatives while attempting to find permanent accommodation.

## Young People

Many of those who present are young people who have experienced a breakdown in relationship with their parents. Often family life has become difficult, and in some cases it may not be safe for the young person to remain at home.

Young people can be assisted by the Young Persons Gateway, a single point of access delivered in partnership between Children's Services, homeless services and Llamau. This includes a housing information and assistance service, Homeless and Children's Services assessment of statutory duties, a mediation service and support needs assessment.

## Young Persons Mediation

Mediation can be an effective tool in preventing homelessness. Mediators work with young people and their families to identify and resolve the issues causing conflict within the family home. Where this is not possible or appropriate, homelessness assessments are undertaken and advice given to establish suitable housing and support solutions.

Whilst the overall number of young people accessing services via Llamau increased by 13% for the period April 2015 to March 2018, the number accessing mediation services declined by 41%.



## City Centre Youth Hub (One Stop Shop)

The Council has recently agreed to establish and run a Youth Hub from which Children's Services, Housing and Youth Services will be co-located, providing a single 'front door' for young people seeking information, advice and assistance.

**ACTION**



**Further develop services for young people through the proposed new City Centre Youth Hub.**





# Key Issues

## Respite Mediation

In November 2017 a pilot Respite Mediation project was set up at Northlands young persons hostel, to trial supporting young people threatened with being asked to leave the family home with a period of respite accommodation, along with intense family mediation. This intervention aims to enable the young person to return home rather than enter the homelessness system.

A respite room provides a young person with a place to stay for up to 28 days away from their family, giving them much needed breathing space. During this time intense support and mediation is provided to both the young person and their family to enable them to work through their differences towards resolution.

Since January 2018, 80% of clients who have used the facility have returned to their family home.



Northlands Young Persons Hostel

## Case Study

A young male was experiencing difficulty at home and risked being asked to leave.

He moved into the respite room at Northlands and intense mediation began between him and his mother. The mediators spent time building rapport and trust and the sessions became constructive, with both the young person and his mother being supported to convey their feelings with a view to restoring their relationship. Mediation sessions took place twice a week and the relationship slowly began to improve.

After a few weeks the young person began going back to the family home for meals. This strengthened his relationship not only with his mother but also with his siblings, which had been a cause of some of the previous conflict. Gradually the visits home progressed to overnight stays which also went well.

The young person successfully returned home but mediators continued to stay in contact as the newly reunited family adapted to living together again. A few more mediation sessions took place at the family home to ensure the return went smoothly and the family continued to feel supported at a crucial time.

Both parties reported feeling much happier and more able to communicate with each other to prevent conflict from building up in the future.



# Key Issues

## Family Mediation

Mediation may also be appropriate in cases where families are overcrowded, particularly where clients have small children or are pregnant and living at home with their parents. Prevention can be difficult in these circumstances as clients often present with an immediate notice to leave the property, which means that they must be placed in temporary accommodation.


**ACTION**



**Provide timely, easy to access mediation interventions for families, landlords and tenants.**

There is a concern that amendments to the Cardiff Housing Allocation Scheme in 2015, including changes to priority status on the housing waiting list, may be encouraging homeless presentations from clients living with relatives or friends. The Council will therefore consider giving additional priority to housing applicants on the waiting list living with friends or relatives in overcrowded or other exceptional housing circumstances.

**ACTION**



**Provide additional priority to housing applicants living with friends or relatives living in overcrowded or other exceptional housing circumstances.**

## The Triage and Visiting Officer Service

In response to the volume of notices issued by parents, relatives or friends, a new mediation initiative has been trialled by the Housing Options Service.

During a home visit with the parents present, mediation is offered alongside housing advice, including information on the Cardiff Housing Waiting List and the private rented sector. If a client can remain at their parents' property in the short term, while alternative accommodation is sourced, this relieves pressure on the temporary accommodation service.

During the period January to June 2018, 73% of all clients who engaged with the new trial were prevented from entering temporary accommodation.

## We Will:

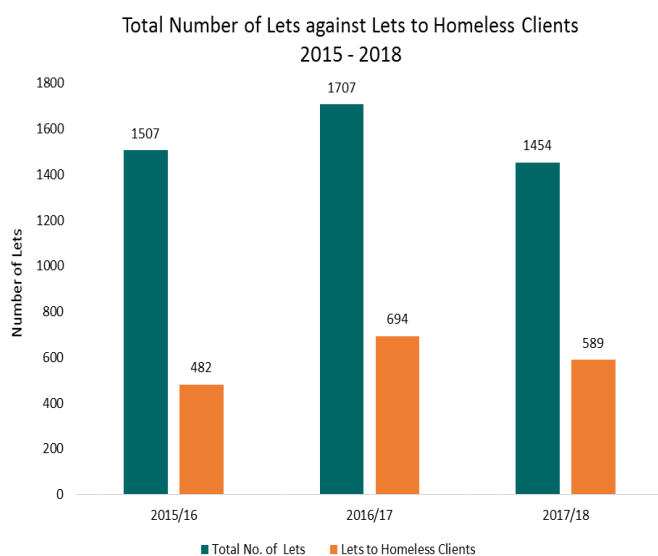
**Review the success of the revised Housing Allocation Scheme to ensure that the needs of homeless and other vulnerable people are met.**



# Social Housing

The Council and partner Housing Associations have in total almost 26,000 units of accommodation, and all use the same Cardiff Housing Waiting List and Allocation Scheme to let their properties.

The Scheme ensures that those with the greatest housing need are helped first, that applicants have a choice about where they want to live, and that they are offered properties that suit their needs.



There are 7,891 households on the Cardiff Housing Waiting List (as at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018), and approximately 400 new applicants join the list each month. There is a need to balance the allocation of properties between homeless applicants and general waiting list applicants many of whom have very significant housing needs. A target of 40% has been set for lets to homeless households. General lets exclude retirement and other specialist accommodation.

All social landlords in Cardiff are committed to housing homeless households and regularly exceed the set target. In 2017/18 they made 51% of general lets and 41% of all lets to homeless applicants.



Unfortunately, due to the overall low level of social housing lets the average waiting time for homeless clients increased from 290 days to 338 days during 2017/18.

The number of lets fluctuates year on year and is influenced by various factors such as the number of tenants who move on and the number of new build schemes that become ready for let in the year.

The Council has plans in place to build 1,000 new council homes by 2022, with further plans to build 1,000 additional homes in the longer term. Partner Housing Associations plan to build at least 1,000 units over the same period.

It is clear that despite this ambitious build programme, supply will still not meet demand. It will therefore be essential to maximise the use of the private rented sector to address the needs of homeless households.



# The Private Rented Sector

## Loss of Private Rented Accommodation (other than rent arrears)

The loss of rented accommodation, particularly for those in the private rented sector, is one of the main causes of homelessness in Cardiff.

To address the issue, staff within the Prevention team routinely work with private landlords to help clients remain in their homes, or to assist clients to source alternative accommodation in the private rented sector.

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 gave local authorities the power to discharge homeless duty through the private rented sector, it is therefore important that the Council routinely works with the sector and establishes good relationships with agents and private landlords.

There is a high degree of successful prevention work in this area - **in 2017/18 78% of all those clients who presented to the service at risk of losing this type of accommodation remained in their homes or moved to new secure accommodation in the private rented sector.** However, the loss of rented accommodation remains an issue as many clients do not approach the service until the accommodation has already been lost.

An investigation into why so many clients are losing their rented accommodation revealed that one of the key factors is landlords withdrawing their properties from the rental market in Cardiff and putting them up for sale. Evidence suggests this is, in part, due to wider legislative and tax relief changes.

### ACTION



**Develop a specialist Private Rented Sector team, providing high quality advice and support to landlords.**

For those clients who approach the service for assistance when threatened with the loss of their rented accommodation, the Council can assist by various means including mediating with their landlord if the issue is concerning repairs or rental payments, enabling the provision of floating support to assist a client maintain a tenancy, or by helping to source alternative private rented accommodation.

### The Private Rented Market in Cardiff

In 2015, the Council commissioned a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) to understand the nature and level of housing demand and need within Cardiff. The LHMA found that the average private rent per month in Cardiff was £559 for a 1 bedroom property, £689 for 2 bedrooms and £857 for 3 bedrooms. This compares to Local Housing Allowance rates of £414.24 (1 bedroom), £507.68 (2 bedrooms) and £600.00 (3 bedrooms).

The 2011 Census data shows that the owner-occupier market has reduced since 2001 from 69.2% to 59.2% of the city. Private renting has almost doubled from 11.1% to 21.9%. The private rented sector is now larger than the social sector, which has remained at around 17%.





# The Private Rented Sector

## Relieving Homelessness through the Private Rented Sector

As well as assisting those clients who lose such accommodation, the private rented sector is an important potential source of accommodation for other homeless clients.

In 2017/18 a significant number of clients had their homelessness relieved under the duty to help secure by obtaining accommodation in the private rented sector. This points encouragingly to successful joint working with private sector landlords when a client is under the help to secure duty.

Far fewer had their full homeless duty discharged by accepting a private sector offer, suggesting clients are not being assisted to source private rented accommodation once a full duty has been accepted and they are in temporary accommodation.

## Rent Smart Wales

To improve standards and management practice in the private rented sector, the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 requires any landlord who has a rental property in Wales to register with Rent Smart Wales.

Rent Smart Wales ensures that landlords and agents who carry out letting and management tasks are well trained to deliver better managed properties in the private sector.

Partners have raised concerns that this may be deterring landlords from renting properties and causing some to leave the rental market.



## Barriers to Accessing the Private Rented Sector

Barriers to accessing the Private Rented Sector include:

- **High rent levels in Cardiff**
- **Local Housing Allowance level has not risen in line with private rents, it will remain frozen at the 2016 level until 2020**
- **Reluctance of landlords to let to benefit claimants**
- **Requirement by some letting agents to provide agency fees and guarantors**

## ACTION



**Deliver Private Rented Sector training to prospective tenants to maximise the chance of a successful tenancy.**





## Financial Incentives

Another barrier to finding alternative accommodation in the private rented sector is the requirement for bonds and rent in advance. The Council funds a number of schemes that provide financial assistance to enable access to the private rented sector.

**Housing Options Bond Scheme** - Bonds and/or rent in advance are provided to eligible applicants with a priority need for housing. They can be used to both prevent and relieve homelessness.

The number of rent in advance payments provided through the Housing Options Scheme has increased by 154% over the period 2015 – 2018, whilst the number of bonds provided through these means has increased by 259%.

**Huggard Bond Board** - Bonds are provided to clients, who are not assessed as priority need, through the provision of a rent deposit guarantee to landlords.

There has been a decline in the number of bonds provided through the Huggard Bond Board over the period 2015 – 2018.

**Hostel and Supported Accommodation Bond Schemes** - These help clients who are ready to move into settled accommodation in the private rented sector. Schemes are currently being provided at the YMCA, Oakhouse and the Wallich and these have been very successful.

**Reconnection Service** - The Salvation Army Reconnection Service will assist clients with no local connection who are unable to return home into private sector accommodation in Cardiff. They have funding to pay bonds and rent in advance to eligible clients.

### ACTION



Review the range of incentives given to private landlords to meet the changes within the Private Rented Sector.

### ACTION



Review the current bond schemes ensuring that these meet the needs of all clients, are sustainable and fit for purpose.

### ***We Will:***

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



# Temporary and Supported Accommodation

The Council provides a wide range of temporary accommodation to homeless clients. This is grouped into four types of accommodation controlled through Accommodation and Support Gateways.

Although the Gateways are roughly grouped by demographic (for example young people), they do not have strict referral criteria and clients are placed in the accommodation that best suits their particular needs. For example, some single people may be placed within the Family Gateway leased accommodation if this best meets their requirements.



## Single Persons Gateway

The Single Persons Gateway was created in 2015 to ensure that supported accommodation provision would only be accessed by those that are most in need, and to control the numbers being placed in accommodation without a local connection.

- Single point of access pathway into a range of supported accommodation for single people and couples.
- Single homeless people can access the Single Persons Gateway without a priority need, and the level of accommodation provided will be dependent on the client's vulnerability.
- The majority of Gateway accommodation is used as temporary housing for homeless clients until suitable permanent accommodation is sourced. Some clients will remain in Single Persons Gateway for a longer time while their support needs are addressed, and a small number of clients may remain in certain projects on a more permanent basis due to their needs.
- There are various specialist pathways into the Single Persons Gateway, to ensure ease of access for vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers or those leaving prison.

## Emergency Accommodation

71 Units

- Floorspace
- Pods
- Emergency Beds
- The Nightshelter

## Hostels

232 Units

## Supported Accommodation

256 Units



## Young Persons Gateway

The Council launched the Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway in 2015 to manage supported accommodation for young people in Cardiff. It gives young people equal access to accommodation regardless of the legislation under which they are owed a duty.

The pooling of accommodation resources broadens the choice of accommodation for young people, allowing them to be placed appropriate to their needs. The choices are:-

- Hostel accommodation - providing a high to medium level of support
- Smaller 24 hour supported accommodation
- Low-level supported accommodation projects - providing low-level support, often on a visiting basis, to young people in the community
- Supported Lodgings - providing a 'family' environment for the young person

## Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway

Once young people are ready to move on from their accommodation within the Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway, those in need of further support are provided with tenancy training to equip them to successfully manage a tenancy in the future. This provides a consistent, sustainable pathway out of supported accommodation.

**Hostels, Emergency and Low Level  
Supported Accommodation**

**103 Units**

**Intensive Supported Accommodation**

**45 Units**

Referrals in to the Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway come from the Young Persons Gateway, a single point of entry service for young people in housing need. The service :-

- Is a collaboration between the Council's Children's Services and homeless services
- Is based in the Young Persons Gateway offices in Charles Street
- Llamau provides support services, advice and mediation for young people and their families
- Accepts referrals for homeless young people in priority need, aged 16-21
- Young people not in priority need aged 18-21 can access this Gateway via a vulnerability waiver; otherwise they will be referred into the Single Persons Gateway.



The Family Gateway provides accommodation predominantly for homeless families in priority need. It offers a range of accommodation dependant on accommodation and support needs.

**Hostels and Supported Accommodation**  
124 Units

**Leased Properties**  
343 Units

Family hostels provide 24 hour support to homeless families with support needs while leased accommodation without support is scattered throughout Cardiff in the community.

As with other Gateways, some of this accommodation is used for clients who do not fall into the demographic of the Gateway. For example, some single people, couples or young people who are particularly vulnerable.



The Gender Specific Gateway delivered by RISE Cardiff was developed to ensure that those experiencing any violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence can access the service best suited to their needs.

The service is a single route into services offering a 24/7 one stop shop for these clients to access:

- Advice and support
- Safety planning
- Referrals to other agencies

Clients can self-refer, be referred by Housing Options Service or Cardiff Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who co-ordinate referrals from Police, Social Services and MARAC.

#### Accommodation-based Support

- Crisis/Refuge
- Move-on
- No Recourse to Public Funds cases
- Supported Accommodation
- Intake and Assessment
- Management of Gateway system

#### Community-based Support

- Tenancy Rescue
- Self-Help Programmes
- Specialist Flying Start Team
- Community Engagement
- Tenancy Support
- Therapy/Counselling
- Specialist Children IPAs
- Training/Change that lasts

**High Support Crisis/Refuge**  
31 Units

**Medium Support Crisis/Refuge**  
12 Units

**Supported Housing**  
12 Units

# Temporary and Supported Accommodation



If there is 'reason to believe' that a client is homeless and in priority need, then the Council owes a duty to provide interim accommodation under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Interim accommodation may be provided through any of the four Accommodation and Support Gateways.

However, as part of the reasonable steps to help to secure accommodation, Cardiff Council uses a significant amount of temporary and supported accommodation to successfully relieve the homelessness of single people without a priority need.

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.

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.

## Single Persons Accommodation & Support Gateway

Single Persons Gateway data is continually monitored. In 2017/18 1,409 people used the service, however 3,208 placements were made, demonstrating that many individuals are placed within the service more than once in a year. This may be due in part to moving between different types of accommodation within the Gateway, however improved monitoring has shown that a high number of clients are abandoning or being evicted from accommodation and re-entering at a later date. 51 clients have been housed more than 20 times since the Gateway was launched in 2015 and the number of negative moves out of the Gateway far exceeds positive move on. There has been some improvement in the number of positive moves during 2017/18 however negative moves out of single persons accommodation remains an issue of concern and this is explored further in the Rough Sleeping section of this strategy.

There is a range of support in place to help people move on from the Single Persons Gateway once they are ready. The traditional pathway is to progress people from placements in emergency accommodation, through to frontline hostels and if needed into secondary supported accommodation, and finally into independent living in permanent accommodation.

As part of the planned changes to the Cardiff Housing Allocation Scheme, a more robust strategy for clients ready to move on from hostel or supported accommodation will be developed. Clients will be required to pick at least four higher availability areas to increase the chance of an appropriate social housing offer becoming available within a reasonable time.





# Temporary and Supported Accommodation

## Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway

The Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway provides young people with appropriate supported accommodation or supported lodgings, where they can stay until they are ready for independent living. During 2017/18, 226 unique people presented to the service leading to 420 placements. This includes individuals accessing accommodation multiple times within the same year.

There has been a significant increase in the number of young people positively moving on from the Gateway, 125 in 2017/18 compared to 104 in 2016/17. Most positive moves were into social housing at 64, an increase from 33 in 2016/17. Returns home were also high, increasing from 32 to 43, demonstrating the success of family mediation taking place in some accommodation. Moves into the private rented sector remained low.

Negative moves while lower than in the Single Persons Gateway were still disappointingly high at 88, an increase from 68 in the previous year. There is a need to review the supported accommodation provision for young people with complex needs.

Accommodation for young people is due to be recommissioned over the coming year. Achieving positive move on for young people is a key target for the new service and reasons for negative move on will be monitored carefully.

**ACTION**



**Review accommodation available for young people with complex needs.**

## Training Tenancy Scheme

The training tenancies scheme helps young people who are ready to move from supported accommodation to independent living, but require support to manage their tenancy. The scheme is available to young people who are involved with Children's Services and those who have been accepted as homeless through the Young Persons Accommodation and Support Gateway.

The young person is invited to attend a training session covering information about the housing waiting list, terms and conditions of a tenancy agreement, tenant and landlord responsibilities, and how to pay their utility bills. If they successfully complete the training they are placed in a priority band of the Cardiff Housing Waiting List. When a suitable offer of accommodation becomes available the young person is signed as an introductory tenant. Llamau provide support to the young person for at least the first 12 weeks, but this can be extended for up to 6 months.

If the young person is not able to manage the tenancy they can be assisted to move back into supported accommodation.

Since the scheme began in March 2016, 102 people have successfully completed the tenancy training, 98 of which are currently maintaining social tenancies.



# Temporary and Supported Accommodation

## Family Gateway

Most homeless families are housed in leased accommodation within the community with some housed in family hostels. 497 households were placed in accommodation during 2017/18, a decrease from 641 in 2016/17.

The vast majority of clients move on into social housing (364 households in 2017/18). While there has been an increase of almost 30% in clients being assisted into accommodation in the private rented sector, the actual numbers remain relatively low at 85 households.

Families stayed longer in leased accommodation and family hostels during 2017/18 due to slower move on into permanent accommodation caused by a reduced number of social housing lets.



Greenfarm Family Hostel

Families needing more support are housed in one of two family hostels, where they can receive additional assistance including parenting support.

## Housing Support Worker Project

The aim of the Housing Support Worker project is to provide person-centred support to clients living in leased temporary accommodation, who need assistance to move on to permanent accommodation. Based on motivational interviewing techniques, the project empowers clients to move on independently from leased temporary accommodation, mainly into the private rented sector, rather than wait for social housing. Due to its success, the project was expanded in April 2018 to also assist clients threatened with homelessness. The project now assists vulnerable clients with high support needs to complete their reasonable steps to help prevent their homelessness, and keep engaged with all relevant services.

Between April 2018 and August 2018 the project supported 61 clients in leased accommodation and 34 with a prevention duty. Of the cases where support was finalised, 54% secured private rented sector accommodation.

ACTION



Improve the services to clients living in temporary accommodation to help them to source their own accommodation.



# Temporary and Supported Accommodation

## Gender Specific Gateway

The Gender Specific Accommodation and Support Gateway is managed by the RISE service as part of a comprehensive service combatting violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Some clients who enter the Gateway do so on a temporary basis to allow for target hardening measures to be installed where required. Other clients may require placement in safe crisis/refuge accommodation with on-going support.

688 clients approached the Gender Specific Gateway in 2017/18. 238 were placed in accommodation and 308 received support to stay at home. 142 clients were sign-posted out of Cardiff or to the Single Persons Gateway. Pressures on refuge accommodation do mean that not all those who need it can be placed and increased move on is needed to free up this accommodation.

Once ready to move on to independent living the private rented sector has been an important resource with a significant number of clients being assisted to access this type of accommodation.

## Case Study

'A' had fled her home due to domestic abuse and there were great concerns for her safety. Following assessments with the R.I.S.E Duty team, she was assessed as high risk and accessed a refuge. 'A' didn't have any form of financial or personal independence, her confidence and belief in herself was extremely low. She was supported in setting up a new bank account, accessing benefits, applying for housing, accessing legal support and liaising with the police. She was also provided with support sessions around confidence building and self-esteem.

'A' has recently moved to another refuge space, which allows her to live more independently, whilst continuing to have support sessions. She is now financially independent and is confident attending appointments by herself.

'A' is also attending legal appointments independently and has an overall positive outlook on life. Additionally, she is excited at the prospect of moving on from the refuge and having her own home.

**ACTION**



**Explore giving further priority on the waiting list for vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers or those ready to move on from hostels.**

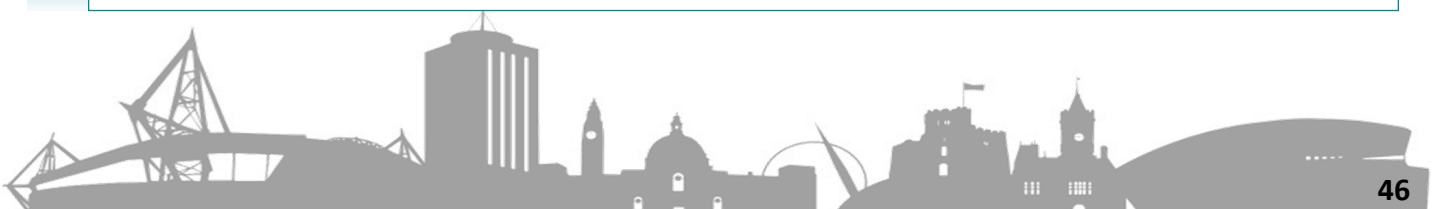
**ACTION**



**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.**

### ***We Will:***

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



# Specialist Pathways

**In addition to the main accommodation gateways, there are other pathways that support homeless clients with specific needs.**

## Refugees

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) provides support and accommodation to asylum seekers whilst their applications are being considered. Once leave to remain or refugee status is granted by the Home Office then the accommodation provided by NASS is withdrawn. For the purpose of the homelessness review, a sample of 264 threatened and actual homeless cases, recorded in the Loss of Rented Accommodation category in 2017/18, were examined. Of the sample, 66 (25%) were clients who had lost accommodation provided by NASS.

Clients are normally given 28 days from the date of the asylum decision to vacate the accommodation provided by NASS and can if they wish, present to the Welsh Refugee Council any time up to the 28<sup>th</sup> day. There is however, no requirement for them to engage with the service and often opportunities for prevention work are limited.

Improved communication between the Council and the NASS accommodation providers is required to ensure clients receive help prior to losing their accommodation.

## Prison Leavers

Prison leavers account for a significant number of people accessing homelessness services. In 2017/18, 256 prison leavers presented to the service as homeless. In 2015 the Welsh Government introduced the Prisoner Pathway, the aim of which is to support people leaving

custody to prevent them from becoming homeless, thereby improving their resettlement into society and reducing their risk of reoffending. The planning should begin as soon as they enter prison, with a Resettlement Officer supporting the prisoner with any housing issues they may have. This may include liaison with statutory agencies to maintain Housing Benefit claims during the sentence or with private landlords regarding arrears.

12 weeks prior to release, the Resettlement Officer should undertake a further assessment of the prisoner's housing need, which may include making a referral to the Council so that a decision can be made whether the prisoner is owed a duty under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Unfortunately the Prisoner Pathway is not currently working as anticipated. In 2017/18 a high proportion of those prisoners referred to the Housing Options Service by the prison did not present or receive a full homelessness assessment. This demonstrates that there are currently difficulties in encouraging prisoners to engage with the pathway. Concerns have also been raised about veterans with offending behaviour and their ability to access housing.

A review of the Prisoner Pathway is required to assess if there is an opportunity for improved prevention work with those leaving prison.

**It has been agreed that representatives from HM Prisons and Probation Services will join the multi-agency team in the Housing Options Centre to help review and improve the pathway for those involved in the criminal justice system.**





# Specialist Pathways


## Female Prison Leavers

It has been identified that female prisoners leaving Eastwood Park prison often do not present to the Housing Options Service on release from prison. In some cases this results in clients continuing the cycle of homelessness, prison and street working.

A new procedure has been developed by the Housing Options Service jointly with Safer Wales; the Community Rehabilitation Company; Probation Services; Pobl and the Department for Work and Pensions to try to break this pattern and increase the number of clients who move on to live independently.

Referrals are made to the Housing Options Service 12 weeks prior to release, the client's homeless application will then begin to be assessed. The Council will be notified of the day of release approximately two weeks beforehand and will then begin the process to find a suitable placement based on the information provided so that accommodation is in place on the day of release.

**ACTION**



**Review the prisoner pathway and build on the success of the vulnerable women's prisoner pathway.**



University Hospital of Wales

Housing Resettlement Officers help clients with both physical and mental health issues, they work in the hospitals to identify accommodation needs so that these can be addressed at an early stage. This helps to reduce time in hospital.

There are often cases where a patient is unable to return home as their existing property is no longer suitable for them to live in independently, others may require adaptations to their home or may have been homeless on admission to hospital. The Housing Resettlement Officer will support the patient in making an application to the Cardiff Housing Waiting List, or looking for appropriate private accommodation, ensuring that any accommodation is appropriate to their needs. If required, a referral is made directly to the Housing Options Service and a homelessness assessment is undertaken.

The Council also has six adapted Step Down properties for people requiring alternative short term accommodation to assist with hospital discharge, this includes where the requirement for adaptation has prevented the patient going home.

### ***We Will:***

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

## Hospital Discharge

To support the prevention and relief of homelessness, the Council's Housing Options Service, Independent Living Service, Social Services and the Health Board work in partnership to provide a variety of solutions that have a positive effect on delayed transfers of care and patient flow in hospitals.





# Support for Vulnerable People

## Support for Vulnerable People

Supporting People funded services provide housing-related support to clients who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. They help vulnerable people address individual or multiple problems such as debt; employment; tenancy management; substance misuse; domestic abuse and mental health issues. Services are commissioned by the Council and delivered, in the main, by third sector organisations. The type of support provided can be broken down into two categories:

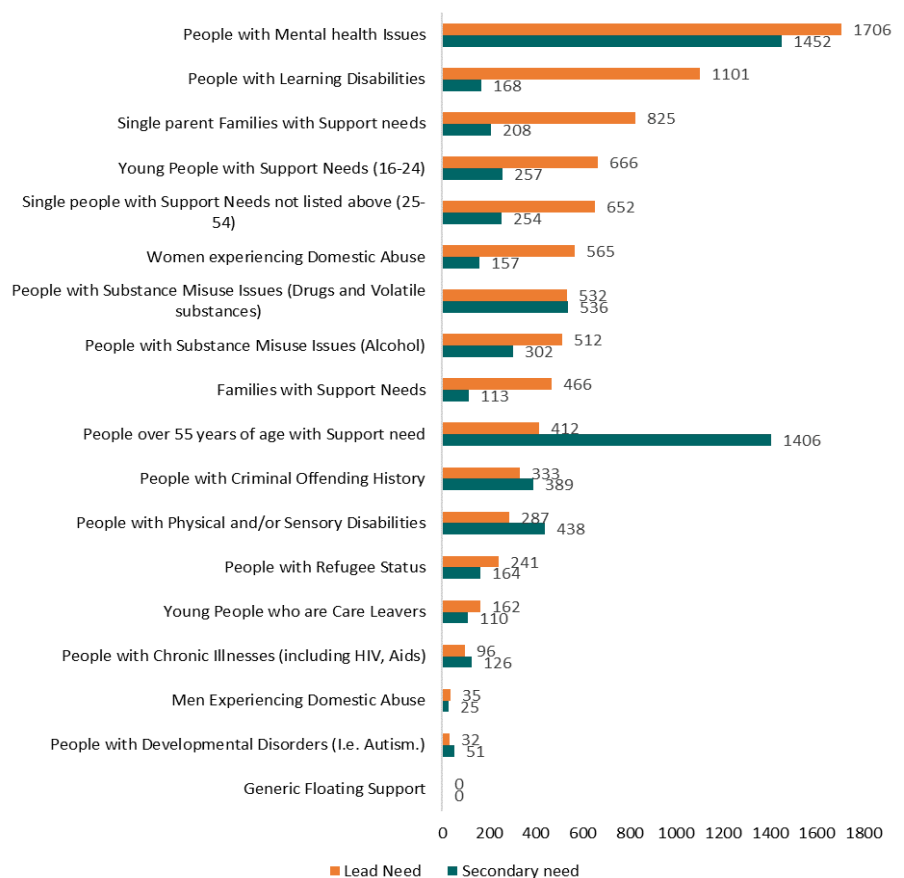
**Generic Floating Support:-** provided in the client's own home, to help prevent them from becoming homeless and to maintain their tenancy. Specialist Floating Support Schemes have also been commissioned aimed at resettling individuals with more complex needs such as mental health.

**Accommodation Based Support Projects:-** controlled through the Gateways, support is provided on-site at hostels, domestic abuse refuges and in supported accommodation for clients with specific needs such as substance abuse, chronic illness and mental health issues.

The lead and secondary needs of all clients who received support during 2017/18 are shown below:

- Mental health issues were the greatest lead and secondary need for all supported clients during 2017/18. 1,706 clients had mental health recorded as a lead need and 1,452 as a secondary need.
- Learning disabilities was the second largest lead need at 1,101 clients.
- Misuse of substances generated significant support needs. In total 1,882 clients had misuse of either drugs or alcohol as a lead or secondary need.

Lead and Secondary Needs of Supported Clients 2017/18



# Support for Vulnerable People

## Floating Support

Generic floating support was recommissioned from April 2017, to increase focus on homeless prevention. The support is provided by two organisations, Pobl and the Salvation Army and the type of support provided includes help with claiming benefits and accessing appropriate health services as well as liaising with landlords regarding rent arrears and other tenancy issues.

In 2017/18 generic floating support was provided to a total of 1,932 clients. 695 generic floating support clients had a lead need of mental health issues recorded. 409 clients had mental health as a secondary need. In 80% of cases the support ended in a planned way, when this was not the case the main reason was non-engagement by the client. 70% of all clients had their support needs met.

The generic floating support service is designed to deliver shorter interventions but can be extended if needed to resolve more complex issues – in 2017/18 42% of individuals completed support within the anticipated 3 months. The remaining 58% had support extended for a longer period. Concerns were raised by partners about the short term nature of support, but as demonstrated, this is extended on a case by case basis as required by the client.

### ACTION



**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.**

## Case Study

Ms P was a single parent referred to floating support after her Employment Support Allowance (ESA) was stopped as she had missed a medical assessment due to ongoing mental health issues. Subsequently her Housing Benefit ceased, putting her tenancy at risk as she was unable to pay the rent.

The floating support worker assisted Ms P to submit a mandatory reconsideration of her ESA but unfortunately this was declined and the case had to go to tribunal. Ms P was supported through the tribunal and her ESA was eventually reinstated. The support worker also helped Ms P to make a new application for Universal Credit and housing costs were awarded to cover the rent going forward.

Before being referred to floating support, Ms P had accrued rent arrears and the landlord had served a valid eviction notice, putting even more strain on her mental health. Floating Support liaised with the Housing Options Service resulting in a Rent Rescue award of approximately £1,000 for the arrears. As Ms P had been a long term tenant and there had not been any issues before this the landlord agreed to withdraw the eviction notice and extend the tenancy for 12 months.

Finally, Ms P was assisted to seek ongoing support from Community Mental Health teams for her bi-polar, depression and anxiety.



# Support for Vulnerable People

## Mental Health

It is recognised that there has been a significant increase in clients presenting to the homeless service in Cardiff with mental health issues.

### Priority Need Assessments

The number of clients found in priority need and vulnerable due to mental illness, learning difficulties or disabilities increased by 214% for the period April 2015 to March 2018. Although this is a significant increase the total number of clients in this group is relatively low (66 in 2017/18) considering the increase seen in other parts of the service. A review of how mental health issues are identified during the initial homelessness assessment is required to ensure all needs of the client are being met.



### Support Needs

As detailed previously, mental health issues were identified as the greatest lead and secondary need for all clients being supported in accommodation based projects or receiving floating support in 2017/18. Mental health issues have also been cited by partners as one of the main underlying causes of homelessness. A third of those who completed the client survey advised that mental health issues had contributed to their housing situation.

## Housing Resettlement

A Housing Resettlement Officer specifically dealing with clients with mental health issues was introduced in September 2014 to improve patient flow and reduce time spent in hospital by resolving housing and homelessness issues within secondary mental health inpatient stays.

Examples of the support and assistance provided include:

- **Prevention of abatement process/evictions**
- **Homelessness prevention**
- **Supported accommodation applications**
- **Hospital discharge scheme application**
- **Tenancy support referrals**
- **Anti-Social behaviour and police liaison**
- **Partnership working between Cardiff Housing, Social Services and NHS staff**

Referrals are received from all mental health departments. Since January 2018, the Housing Resettlement Officer has worked with approximately 100 mental health inpatients and has a current open caseload of 25 clients.

## Veterans

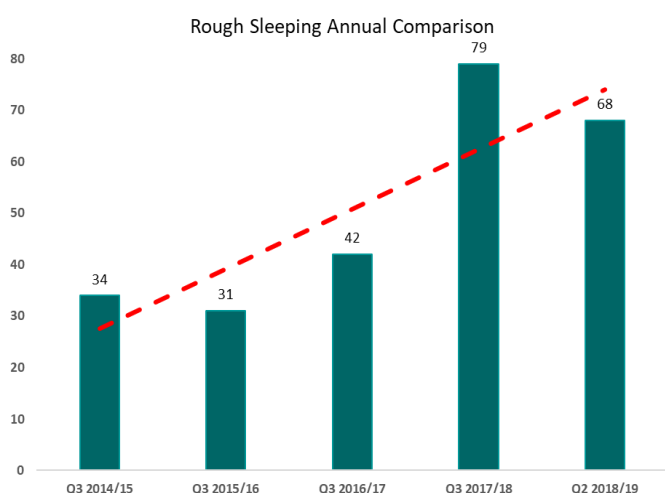
The Council is a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant. Homeless assessment and outreach processes have been developed to identify those who present from the Armed Forces and ensure they are signposted to appropriate support.



# Rough Sleeping

## Rough Sleeping

The Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020 was developed in response to the pressing issue of rough sleeping in the city. Cardiff, in line with the rest of Wales, has experienced an upward trend in rough sleeping in recent years. Since the introduction of the Strategy in 2017, numbers of rough sleepers in Cardiff have stabilised but remain an issue.



These reductions may be in part due to successful work by the Reconnection Service, with an 88% engagement rate over the period 2015-2018 and 74% of clients achieving a positive accommodation outcome. For particularly vulnerable clients with no local connection, Cardiff can grant a waiver allowing the person into services. Of the total 31 waiver requests made, 51% were accepted indefinitely, 39% were accepted temporarily and 10% were rejected.

## Extension of Homeless Outreach Service

The Council's Homeless Outreach Team has been expanded and its operating hours extended. All staff are fully trained in completing statutory homelessness assessments, and able to make decisions on priority need. Health and support requirements are also considered, ensuring onward referral into suitable services.

## Emergency Accommodation Initiatives

A range of emergency accommodation initiatives have been put in place including direct access to bed spaces for clients identified by the Outreach team and improved support for those accessing emergency provision, the aim being to assist more rough sleepers into accommodation and create sustainable placements. Development of additional and improved emergency accommodation is planned, including further individual pods in Ty Tresillian and Huggard hostels and an extension to the Wallich Nightshelter.

## Local Connection

Rough Sleeper Local Connection Breakdown (as at 31.09.18)	
Cardiff	77%
Other Welsh Local Authorities	4%
England	3%
EEA	1%
Other	16%

Around three quarters of rough sleepers have a local connection to Cardiff for housing purposes. There has been a slight decline in those with no local connection overall (including out of county cases). The number of European Economic Area (EEA) nationals sleeping rough in Cardiff has also decreased, to very low levels.

ACTION



**Deliver additional and improved emergency accommodation.**



# Rough Sleeping

## Innovative Projects

A number of innovative projects have been developed by the Council and partners to address identified gaps in provision and meet specific needs:

**Housing First Pilot** - offering direct placements into Council, Housing Association and private tenancies with intensive wrap-around support. As at June 2018, five clients were settled in accommodation, maintaining over 100 weeks of tenancies in total.

**Compass Project** - self - contained accommodation that offers intensive, specialist support to people with multiple complex needs. Fifteen rough sleepers were supported in 2017, all of whom moved on to frontline services. As at June 2018, a further four individuals were being supported within the project.

**Ty Tarian** - specialist accommodation and support for women with high support needs and at risk of exploitation. As at June 2018 the five clients had maintained a total of 82 weeks of accommodation.

**Cardiff Solutions Services** - an alternative drop-in facility for rough sleepers not accessing other services. During April-June 2018, 558 contacts were made and 160 individuals supported, 26 of whom requested and secured accommodation.

**Rough Sleeper Project** - based on Housing First principles, providing direct referral into self-contained accommodation for chronic rough sleepers who have previously failed to engage or sustain other provision. As at June 2018, all 15 clients were engaging well with staff and 7 had maintained placements for longer than a year.

## Case Study

Mr D had been known to the Outreach service for several years. Heavy drug use meant that he was difficult to place and any time spent in hostels was brief. He had a very aggressive nature and lost his temper quickly, creating barriers to accessing accommodation. He was frequently banned from day services due to his aggression.

Mr D had been placed in emergency or hostel accommodation 26 times within a 4 year period with 14 evictions, removals or no shows and slept rough for long periods of time.

He was referred to the Housing First scheme, run by the Salvation Army, which aims to provide intensive and holistic support to people with complex needs. Mr D was offered accommodation which he accepted. He is still in residence and successfully maintaining a tenancy.

ACTION



**Review the success of the Housing First and other innovative housing pilots.**





# Rough Sleeping

## Complex Needs

A high number of Cardiff's rough sleepers have complex needs resulting from negative life experiences and/or personal lifestyle choices such as substance misuse or criminal behaviour. Monitoring identifies that typically around half have lead support needs relating to substance misuse; a quarter to mental health and almost a quarter to alcohol.

Rough Sleeper Lead Support Needs (as at 31.09.18)	
Substance Misuse	51%
Mental Health	25%
Alcohol	24%

Many of these clients will have co-existing issues, which can often contribute to a harmful cycle of multiple exclusions from services and movement between rough sleeping, hostels, prison or hospital.

The issue of repeat evictions, abandonments and placement breakdowns is clearly shown in the Single Persons Gateway monitoring, with some clients placed more than 20 times since 2015. While 204 rough sleepers were assisted into accommodation during 2017/18, some of these will be repeat individuals, moving off and back onto the streets several times. Some who are housed continue to sleep rough on occasion and may continue to beg during the day.

One of the key issues partners identified as a barrier to accommodating rough sleepers is the lucrative nature of street begging activity. The Council and South Wales Police have worked in partnership to create a Begging Pathway, adopting

a proportionate and measured approach to using enforcement powers against all types of begging activity. The pathway aims to engage with rough sleepers and discourage them away from begging and other anti-social behaviour, by signposting to diversionary activities and specialist substance misuse services where needed. The Police acknowledge the need for early intervention and the importance of not criminalising vulnerable people.

### ACE's

Many clients have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences and this can result in substance misuse and chaotic behaviour.

The Council and it's partner are committed to the ACES's agenda and using a trauma informed approach.

There is concern about how well existing services are meeting the needs of these complex clients as demonstrated by the number of evictions from supported accommodation within the Single Persons Gateway. Eviction rates from the last year as a percentage of placements range from 3% to 39%.

The majority of evictions took place because of aggressive behaviour and damage to property but people were also evicted due to non compliance/ engagement with support, arrears, and using substances.

The performance of individual providers has been looked into as part of the review and will be taken forward as part of the strategy's action plan.



# Rough Sleeping

## Addressing the 'Revolving Door' of Homelessness

In response to this 'revolving door of homelessness', the Council has introduced a pilot **Homeless Advocacy Programme** providing continuity of support both on and off the streets. Advocates work with individuals in a trauma informed way to identify reasons and triggers for eviction from or abandonment of accommodation, with the aim of sustaining placements or supporting positive moves.

The Outreach team are also working more closely with the Housing Options Service to identify the type of accommodation that would be best for individual rough sleepers.

ACTION



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.

ACTION



Work to reduce evictions from and abandonment of supported housing provision .

## Case Study

Ms B was referred to the Homeless Advocacy Programme from a frontline hostel as she was at risk of eviction due to non-compliance, rent arrears and disengagement from support.

Ms B had substance misuse issues funded through street sex working at night. The support worker adjusted their working hours to engage with Ms B at a time suitable to her and a number of successful actions were taken.

Firstly she was assisted to seek appropriate support for her sexual health. It was then established that the hostel would not allow her to remain there due to her lack of engagement, even if a payment plan was established for her arrears. After approaching several providers, an agreement was negotiated with one despite her having previous arrears with them. This hostel was a better fit for Ms B's lifestyle with 24/7 staffing who would be able to engage with her in her chosen hours.

Unfortunately, before Ms B was transferred into the new hostel she attended a court hearing and was given a custodial sentence. Throughout her period of support Ms B developed trust in the support worker and other professionals due to the positive outcomes achieved and may be more likely to engage with support in the future.

## Multi-disciplinary City Centre Team

In addition, to better address complex needs, **the multi-disciplinary city centre team** will be expanded to include dedicated substance misuse and mental health workers; an additional homeless nurse and counselling service. Support staff will also be trained in providing trauma-informed services.

Funding for the multi-agency team is temporary at present. There is a need for all partners to be clear in their commitment to improved services for vulnerable and chaotic people.



# Rough Sleeping

## Research and Good Practice

While much work has been done to address rough sleeping, the problem persists. A research project will therefore be commissioned to better understand whether services are meeting needs, review good practice and identify any remaining gaps in provision.

One such example of good practice is Leicester's day centre 'The Y Project', which co-locates homelessness services with medical services such as on-site mental health workers, GP's and a year round health programme. This model will be considered when further developing Cardiff's multi-disciplinary team.

## Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020



## Partnership Arrangements

A stronger multi-agency approach to helping vulnerable and chaotic individuals is required and there is a recognised need to strengthen partnership working going forward.

ACTION



**Commission a research project to review the effectiveness of services for rough sleepers and any opportunities for improvement.**

ACTION



**Review and further strengthen partnership arrangements to ensure there is a clear multi-agency approach to helping vulnerable and chaotic individuals.**

**We Will:**

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



# Equalities

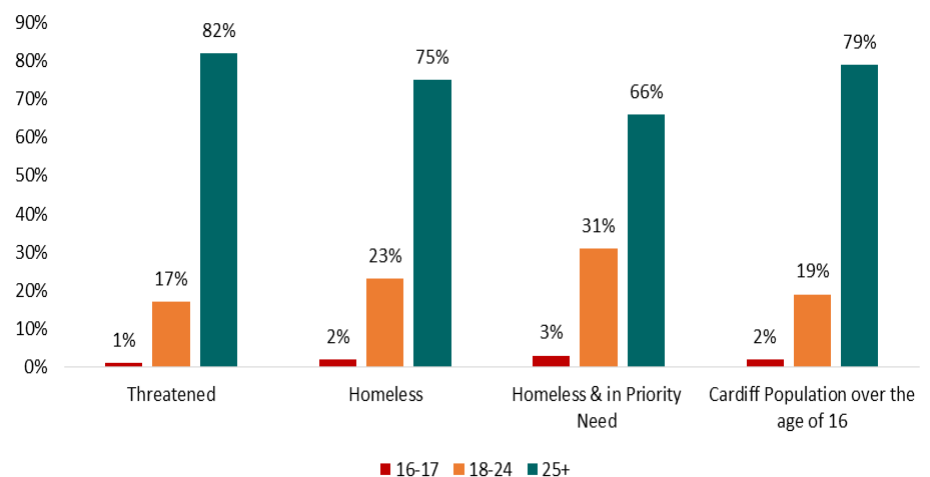
Effective equalities monitoring is an important tool that can be used to inform future provision of homelessness services.

## Age

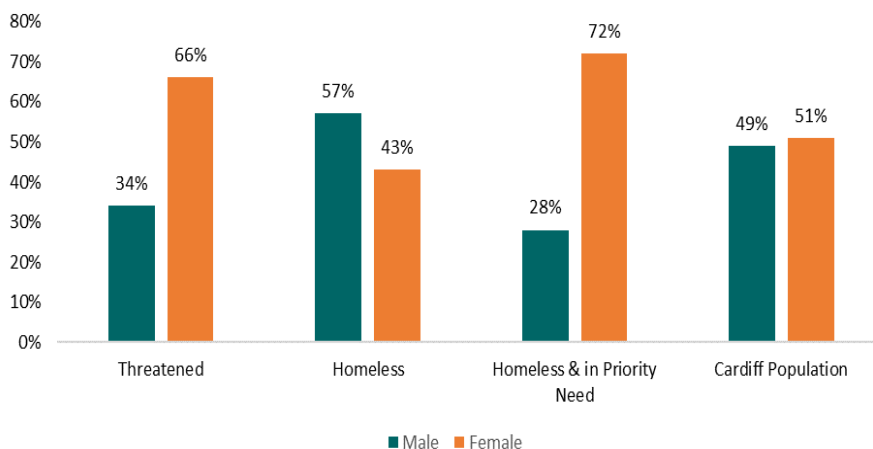
The age of clients accessing homelessness services broadly fits the pattern of Cardiff as a whole, however whereas only 21% of the Cardiff population are between the ages of 16 and 24, the figure for homeless clients is slightly higher at 25%. For those clients in priority need for accommodation, the figure rises to 34%.

Not all young people assisted with homelessness are recorded in the graph as many enter the service through Children's Services.

Main Homeless Duties by Age  
2017/18  
(percentage)



Main Homeless Duties by Gender  
2017/18  
(percentage)



## Gender

In 2017/18, 66% of applicants threatened with homelessness were female. 57% of homeless applicants were male. However, there was a significantly higher proportion of females who were homeless and in priority need (72%). This compares with a Cardiff-wide gender split of 51% females to 49% males. This is distorted however by the administrative practice of always recording the female applicant of a couple as the main applicant.



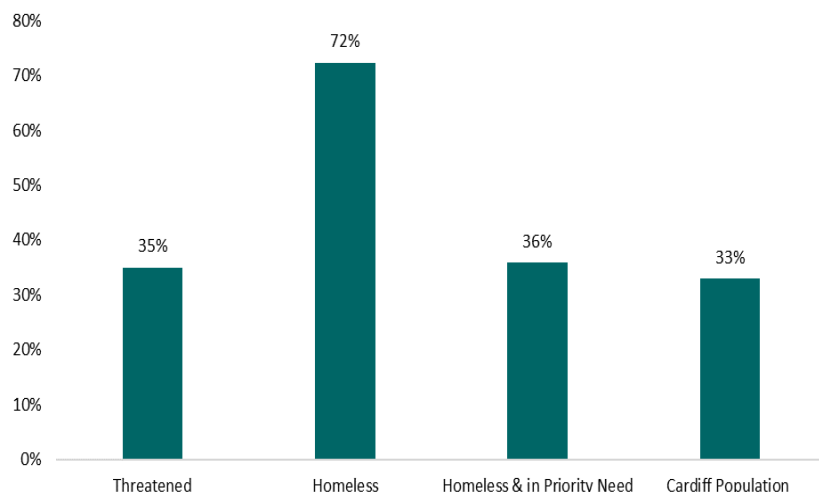
# Equalities

## Household Type

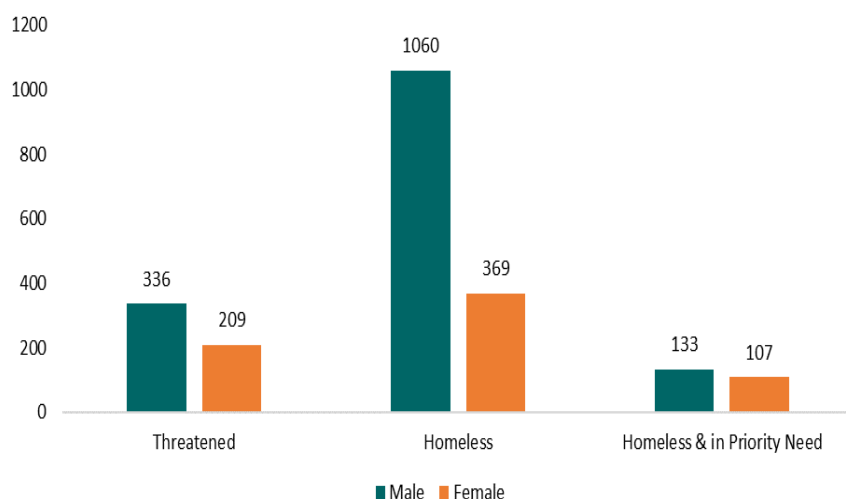
In 2017/18, of the 1,544 clients who were threatened with homelessness, 545 (35%) were single people. Of the 1,976 clients found to be homeless, 1,429 (72%) were single people. This figure is significantly higher than the overall number of single person households in Cardiff (taken from the 2011 census).

Of the 669 homeless and in priority need clients 240 (36%) were single people.

Main Homeless Duties  
Single Person Households  
2017/18  
(percentage)



Single Person Households by Gender  
2017/18



Of those clients in single person households and threatened with homelessness, 336 (62%) were male. For those clients who became homeless, 1,060 (74%) were male and for those homeless and in priority need, 133 (55%) were male. This is a significant difference and needs further exploration.





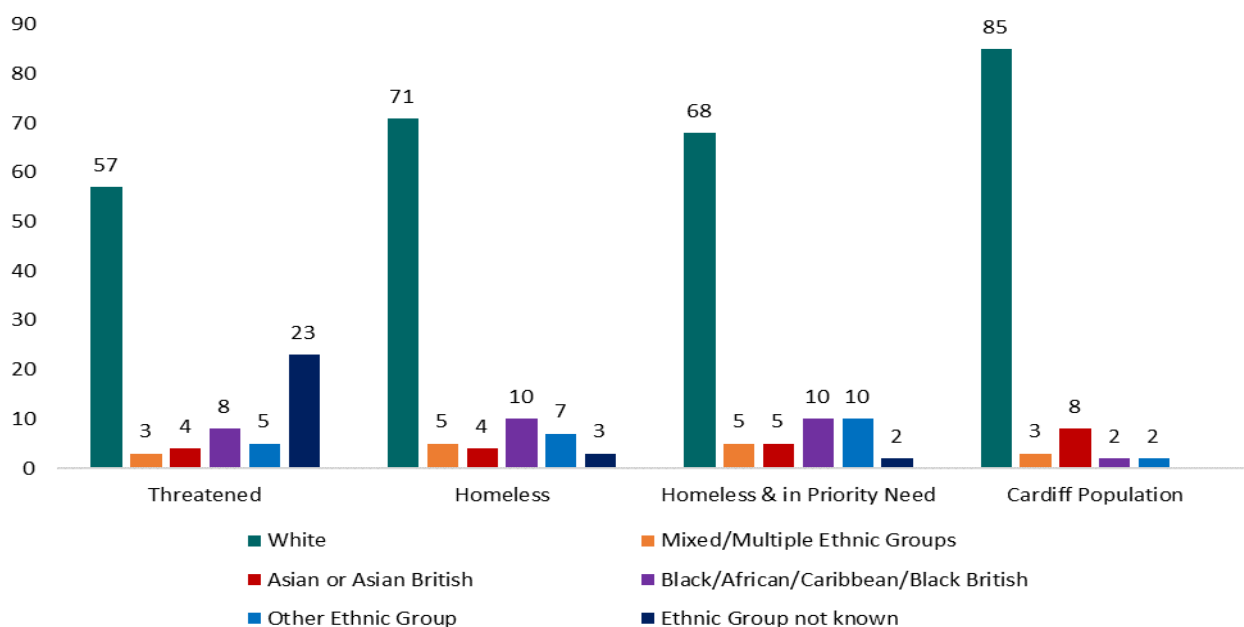
# Equalities

## Ethnicity

The ethnicity of clients accessing homelessness services broadly follows the pattern of the city, however one point of note is that although Black/African/Caribbean/Black British people account for 2% of the Cardiff population, they account for 10% of homeless clients. The reason for this difference requires further investigation.

The high number of clients whose ethnicity was not known is due to data coming from sources other than the Housing Options Service, with different monitoring systems in place.

Main Homeless Duties by Ethnicity  
2017/18



### ACTION



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

### We Will:

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



# Equalities

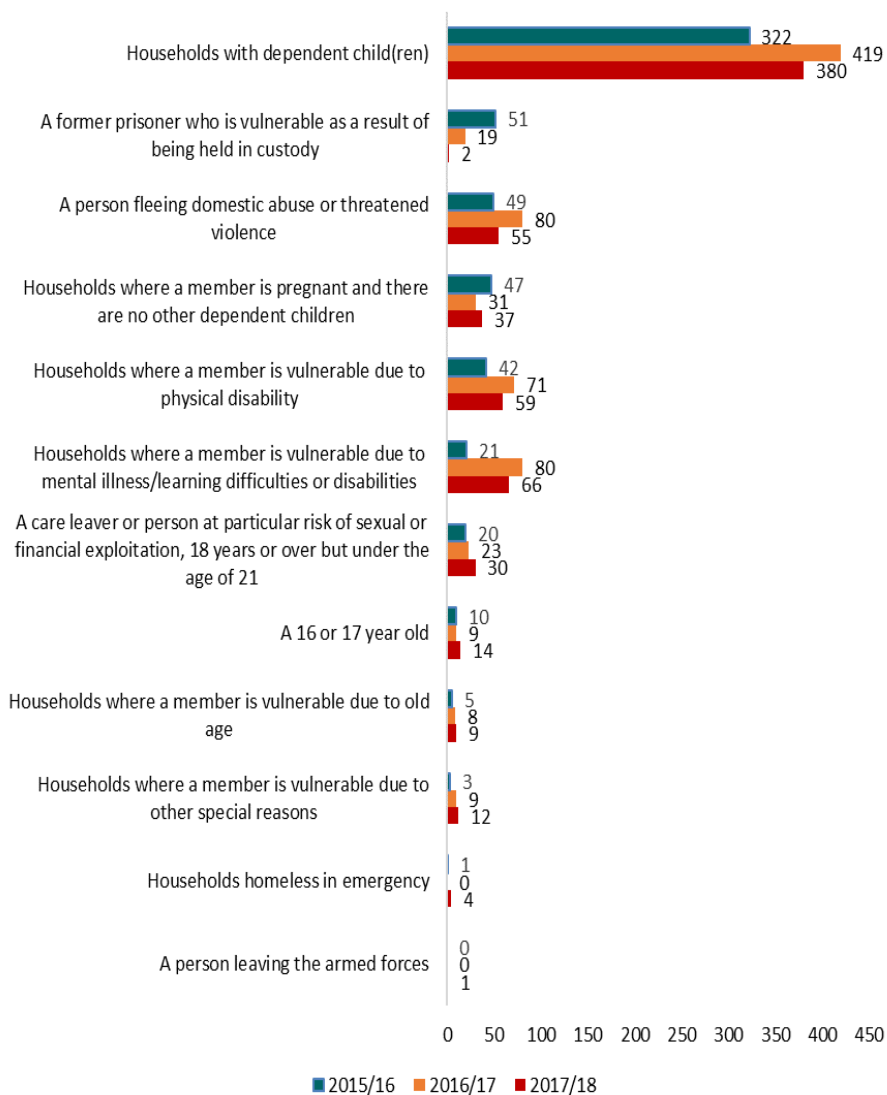
## Priority Need and Disability

The 2011 Census indicates that 18% of the Cardiff population have a long term limiting illness. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 ensures that these clients will be treated as priority need should they find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Legislation states 'a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside' can be considered in priority need for housing.

Between 2015/16 and 2017/18 those clients found in priority need as they are vulnerable due to a physical disability increased by over 40%. Despite this rise, the increase in actual numbers is relatively low considering the percentage of people who are disabled within the population as a whole. (59 clients or 9% of Priority Need Clients in 2017/18).

Priority Need Categories  
2015 - 2018



## Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities.

There has been an increase of 214% in the number of clients being found in priority need as they are vulnerable due to mental illness, learning difficulties or disabilities for the period April 2015 to March 2018. Due to this large increase and the number of clients with identified support needs of mental health, this has been noted as a key finding and is explored further in the Support for Vulnerable People chapter of the strategy.



## Next Steps

The 'We Will' objectives found throughout this strategy will form the basis of a four-year action plan, to be developed with partners. The action plan will provide details of the key activities to be carried out and identify clear outcomes, along with lead responsible officers and/or organisations. Implementation will be closely monitored and the action plan reviewed and updated as necessary. The Council cannot deliver the strategy in isolation and partnership working will be essential to ensure that the best outcomes and solutions can be reached.

Each of the 'We Will' objectives and related actions are listed in our Summary of Commitments and accompanying 'strategy on a page' document.

