

Rugby Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018



Foreword

I am pleased to be able to introduce the new Rugby Homelessness Strategy for 2015-2018, which has been developed through consultation with a variety of local individuals and organisations including the Rugby Homelessness Forum.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those that have taken the time to contribute to the development of the strategy, which shows a commitment to local partnership working to implement the priorities that will make a difference to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

The new Homelessness Strategy is prevention focused and as such a number of new innovative joint initiatives will be developed and implemented as part of the strategy's action plan. These will focus on helping households sustain their tenancies in the longer-term, addressing their housing issues, but also helping them to access employment, education, training and health services.



Cllr Leigh Hunt
Portfolio Holder for Sustainable and Inclusive Communities

Introduction

Rugby's Homelessness Strategy has been developed by the Rugby Homelessness Forum to take into account the needs of homelessness people and those threatened with homelessness over the next three years. It has had regard to the main causes of homelessness in the Borough in 2014/15 which were: loss of accommodation; termination of assured shorthold tenancy; parents no longer able to accommodate and non-violent relationship breakdown.

The action plan is outcome-focused and prioritises the prevention of homelessness, and in so doing concentrates on the key overarching priorities. Each of the priorities has a set of actions that will be implemented over the lifetime of the strategy and will be monitored to ensure that they are making a difference to the residents of the borough who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We hope that the strategy will have a positive impact on all people in Rugby including ex-service men and women, young people, those with a mental health problem or learning disability.

The three key priorities developed in consultation with the Homelessness Forum members are as follows:

1. Understanding Housing Need

This will enable the council and other organisations who work with people at risk of homelessness to provide evidence of need so resources can be focused in the most effective areas. The provision of evidence also helps when making funding bids.

2. Tenancy Sustainment

Sustaining tenancies can be problematic in particular for vulnerable groups and people who have not held a tenancy before. In recognition of this the Homelessness Forum wants to prioritise tenancy sustainment as a key prevention measure that will help people remain in their homes in the longer-term, preventing homelessness and associated issues such as longer-term debt, ill-health and security for children.

3. Increasing Private Sector Housing Options

The partners with the Homelessness Forum have noticed that there is a lack of affordable good-quality properties in the private rented sector for people to move into within the borough. This serves to restrict choice for people in housing need and as such this has been selected as an area that needs to be expanded.

Monitoring

The strategy action plan will be monitored by the lead organisation responsible for its implementation to ensure that the action and resulting outcomes are making a difference locally. The Homelessness Forum will be provided with quarterly updates at the Homelessness Forum meetings.

The actions will be refreshed during 2016 to make sure that they are still relevant to the needs of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the borough.

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Understanding housing need	Responsible Organisation	Timescales	Outcome Sought
Action: Collect and evaluate numbers accessing services in the borough who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	Rugby Borough Council and Homelessness Forum Members	Each quarter from October 2015	Understand housing need to target resources
Action: Carry out a review of existing local services e.g. housing, support, employment and advice	Homelessness Forum	Complete review December 2015	Develop an understanding of local services and identify what works well, identify gaps.
Action: Review effectiveness of revised Young Persons Protocol	To Be Agreed Warwickshire County Council	Annually	To ensure that the service provided to young homeless people and those at risk of homelessness meets their housing and support needs
Action: Review housing allocations policy	Rugby Borough Council	1 October 2015	Ensure that the policy meets the needs of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness
Action: Review the accessibility of the Housing Options service for vulnerable people in Rugby	Rugby Borough Council	Complete review December 2015	Ensure that the Housing Options service is accessible and valuable for vulnerable people in Rugby
Tenancy Sustainment	Responsible Organisation	Timescales	Outcome Sought
Action: Introduce a Tenancy Ready Pilot Scheme	Rugby Borough Council	Commence the pilot by 1 September 2015	Prevent homelessness by enabling tenants to sustain their tenancies in the longer-term including accessing employment, education and training.
Action: Working with Warwickshire County Council shape the revised Housing Related Support Service	Rugby Borough Council	31 April 2016	That services are responsive to the needs of vulnerable people who are or at risk of homelessness Identify gaps in services and make recommendations to improve services

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			Identify resources to complement existing resources
Action: Work with public health to develop joint approaches to assisting homeless and those at risk of homelessness	Rugby Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and the NHS	December 2015	Preventing hospitalisation and health interventions
Increase private rented sector options for people in housing need	Responsible Organisation	Timescales	Outcome Sought
Action Develop private-sector housing and support scheme for 16-25 year olds and adults with mental health issues	Rugby Borough Council	Project commences Summer 2015. Monitoring outcomes from 1 September 2015	Providing more accommodation and support for young people and adults with mental health issues. This will include accessing employment, education and training.
Action Work with local landlords to expand the use of private rented properties to meet local housing need	Rugby Borough Council	Monitor numbers of landlords and tenancies created each quarter from 1 October 2015	Increase housing options for people in the private rented sector to meet housing need
Action: Review the Private Rented Sector Bond Scheme	Rugby Borough Council	Complete 1 October 2015	To make the Bond Scheme more accessible for people in housing need