

Housing Services Delivery Plan

Overview of Housing Services

The Housing Options team comprises 1 Principal Housing Officer, 3 full time Options Officers and a full time Housing Assistant. The remit of the team is to deliver the Council's housing advice and homelessness service with the emphasis on preventing homelessness.

The service is also responsible for fulfilling the Council's legal obligation to assist homeless persons, investigate the individual reasons for homelessness and advise the client accordingly and provide temporary accommodation where applicable.

In addition to the above the team is responsible for ensuring illegal evictions and harassment within the district are eradicated, providing a Landlord Resolution Service and Landlord Forum, liaising with partner housing providers, referring Clients to the homeless hostels. They are also the conduit for the Rent Deposit Scheme, Young Persons Project, Private Sector Leasing Scheme, Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Housing Register and Allocations of social housing.

We are regulated by Government and have to have regard of numerous Housing Acts as well as the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2016 and the Council's corporate aims of:

- maintaining sound finances by investing wisely, maximising income and providing effective and efficient services, and,
- when delivering our services our customers are at the heart of everything we do

The cost to run the service totals £488,336 per annum. This amount includes staffing costs, homelessness prevention initiatives, deposits for private sector accommodation and staff training. It also funds temporary accommodation for homelessness emergencies alongside hostel charges and voids and removal and storage costs.

Since January 2014 we have increased our income stream by passing the full cost for bed and breakfast and removal and storage onto the client. We have also introduced a Policy that recoups any costs we incur when providing a deposit from clients. It is anticipated that this will generate income of approx £50,000 per annum for the Council.

Forward Planning for Councillors

Proposed date of decision	Item	Service Area	Service Delivery Champion	Committee
April 2015	Agree amendments to Homelessness Strategy	Housing	Clr Rouse	May 2015

Strategy Map



Measuring Performance

Maximise Income & TA Reduction Performance Measure	Target	Actual
100% Homeless decisions made within 33 days	100%	
No families in B&B unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks	0	
Hostel Void charge reduction via subletting to neighbouring LA's	94%	
Recharging policy for B&B, storage, removals and deposits	100%	

Ensuring People Feel Safe In Their Community Performance Measure	Target	Actual
Deliver target hardening packages to households at high risk of domestic abuse within 5 working days	5 Working Days	
Achieve 95% attendance rate at MARAC, MAPPA and Anti Social Behaviour Steering Group meetings	95%	

Educate, Support & Secure Housing for Young People – Tomorrow's Future		
16/17 Yr Old Protocol – Joint assessment with CYPSC within 10 working days	10 working days	
Homelessness awareness education programme disseminated in 4 secondary schools across East Cambs.	100%	

Preventing Homelessness Performance Measure	Target	Actual
Preventing at least 264 households from becoming homeless per year	66 per quarter	
Landlord forum delivered 6 monthly	6 monthly	
Rough Sleeper Count	Yearly	
Single Person Home-Finder Service for prevention of homelessness	75%	
Using floating support to prevent homelessness	15 per quarter	

Staff Performance Measure	Target	Actual
Ensure all Officers attend all mandatory council training courses in policy and procedures for child safeguarding, equality and diversity & health and safety etc.	100%	
100% appraisals completed on time	100%	
Service awareness briefings for Member Champion	100%	

Continually Adapting the Service to Meet the Needs of the Customer	Target	Actual
Conduct customer satisfaction surveys completed and acted upon	50%	
Undertake demands analysis to determine future drop in surgeries	April 2015	
Carry out home visits to customers who need them	100%	
Review homelessness strategy annually ensuring customers receive the best service possible	April 2015	

Name	100% Homeless decisions made within 33 working days
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	To keep waiting times to a minimum and to reduce the time needed in temporary/interim accommodation. Maintaining a constant throughput in the hostels.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To make timely enquiries and decisions on all homeless applications
Source of Data	Locata
Frequency	Daily
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Hostel rooms occupied for longer than necessary therefore creating issues with new applicants and potential lack of spaces, could then result in use of B&B and 'knock on' financial implications. If the application is to be accepted then the waiting time for long term housing will be delayed creating a bottleneck effect on the housing register.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start enquiries on homeless applications on the day of approach. 2. If any inconsistencies with the application, make an emergency appointment to discuss with the applicant. 3. Give deadlines for information to be supplied by the applicant, if not supplied within this time decision to be made on information already gathered. 4. Timely minded to interviews 5. Decision made, signed off by principal housing officer and decision letter written within the 33 day guidelines.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	

Name	No families in B&B unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To avoid the use of B&B accommodation where possible unless in an absolute emergency and there is no other accommodation available to the client.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Focus on homeless prevention and early intervention to assist families into alternative accommodation before crisis point. Therefore reducing the numbers needing temporary accommodation.
Source of Data	Locata
Frequency	Daily
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Judicial review, Fines imposed from Government for acting unlawfully.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make timely appointments for clients who are threatened with homelessness 2. Deal with emergency situations on the day of approach 3. Negotiations with landlords/ agencies / family members to prevent evictions 4. Make proper use of hostel accommodation 5. Make timely homelessness decisions (within 33 working days) 6. Monitor and actively encourage bidding to ensure best outcome.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance Report
Notes	

Name	Hostel void charge reduction and subletting of unused hostels
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	To ensure maximum hostel residence to avoid void charges
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Actively filling empty hostel rooms to avoid void charges by allowing other LA's to use them for their own TA. Subletting whole hostels that are not required for use by ECDC to other LA's on a 6 monthly basis to avoid high void charges.
Source of Data	Agresso
Frequence	As and when required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	If not filled – high void charge to the Council.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify hostel rooms that are likely or have become void. 2. Ascertain from hostel manager room ready date 3. Alert housing options team to void and if no homeless families from ECDC waiting alert other LA's 4. HOO Liaise with hostel manager and partnering LA to arrange booking in date 5. Hostel manager books in and liaises with managing LA for risk assessment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully empty hostel available for subletting. • HOO draw up agreement for full nomination rights to void hostel – 6 month term • Subletting LA to liaise directly with hostel manager for all nominations. • ECDC charged directly for all voids for the quarter – ECDC invoice subletting LA for hostel void charges for their sublet hostel. • Each party has right to end the agreement as per the contract.
Feedback	
Notes	Hostel rooms left void will cost the hosing department aprox £10000 per Q. Letting out rooms to other LA's will reduce this considerably. Subletting the hostel in its entirety eliminates void costs for that hostel altogether for ECDC.

Name	100% Recharging policy
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers and Income Recovery Officer
Purpose	To maximise the Council's income by recharging homeless clients for B&B and removal and storage costs which the Council has incurred
Links	Homelessness Strategy 2013 -2016, Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome
Formula	To recharge the client at 100% of the costs incurred by the council
Source of Data	Agresso
Frequency	Daily or as required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Loss of income for the Council
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and Housing Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Affordability calculation completed between HOO and client to determine weekly repayment. 2. Repayment agreement signed by client. 3. Copy of agreement and repayment plan sent to finance. 4. IRO monitors payments received. 5. Client contacted if payments stop or not paid in full. 6. IRO sends request to legal to commence court action of client fails to pay.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance Report, monthly budget statement
Notes	

Name	Deliver target hardening packages to households at high risk of domestic abuse within 5 working days
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	To allow certain domestic abuse applicants to remain in their current property and to be safe in the knowledge that their property is secure.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	When an applicant approaches the HOO suffering from domestic abuse and a risk to the client and their family is identified it may be possible to refer for target hardening depending on the property in which they reside and the owner of that property. If the landlord is in agreement or the client is a home owner then the referral will be done for the target hardening within 5 working days to minimise the ongoing risk to the client and their family.
Source of Data	CAADA, MARAC
Frequency	As and when required
Target	5 working days
Rewards/Penalties	Accessing this scheme will allow the HOO to prevent homelessness by making safe the clients existing property and negating the need to move the family. This is ideal in cases where the perpetrator has vacated the property but still poses a threat or where they are in custody and/or have bail conditions or restraining orders. Without this option the family would either have to move to refuge or be re-housed by the Authority.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk identified 2. Property suitable for target hardening? Or landlord in agreement for works to be done? 3. If yes, referral for inspection and assessment for works needed. 4. Workmen attend property on agreed date and time to assess what works would suit the house and the situation. 5. Permission given for workmen to carry out what is needed up to the cost of £1000 if works are likely to exceed this the permission is to be sought from Jo Brooks. 6. If all ok, work completed that day if possible.
Feedback	Quarterly performance report
Notes	

Name	Attend MARAC, MAPPA and anti social behaviour steering group meetings.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To attend meetings and conferences for MARAC, MAPPA and ASB Steering Group to make sure that the HOT are aware of any impending homelessness relating to domestic violence/abuse, crime and disorder or anti social behaviour to be able to prevent homelessness where possible or move victims as a priority with the backing of partner agencies.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome, Safer Partnership Agreement
Formula	Attend meetings regularly to aid in homeless prevention and safeguarding of vulnerable residents of ECDC.
Source of Data	MODUS, ECINS
Frequency	As required
Target	95%
Rewards/Penalties	Without attendance at these groups the HOT would not be aware of potential issues surrounding vulnerable victims / criminal behaviour / risks to staff or the community and would therefore increase the possibility of emergency approaches to the housing department. With prior knowledge of the above the HOT can assess the situation, outreach where necessary, minimise risk and prevent homelessness where possible. Also prevention of serious offences, serious harm or even death of a vulnerable person.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	Attend meetings and feed back to the team. Update policies and procedures to incorporate new legislation and caselaw. Analyze information to determine future need.
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	16/17 Yr old protocol – joint assessment with CYPSC within 10 working days.
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	To avoid homelessness in 16/17 year olds
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Focus on early intervention to assist the 16/17 year olds threatened homelessness into suitable accommodation before crisis point.
Source of Data	Locata
Frequency	Weekly
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 16/17 year old approaches East Cams 2. Ring family to mediate and try and resolve differences 3. If cannot mediate with family provide temporary accommodation 4. Social Care referral on day of approach 5. Joint assessment with social care to assess needs 6. If social care recognise as a child in need they will take over responsibility 7. If Social Care see it's a housing issue and no other support needed East Cams will provide temporary accommodation 8. Supported accommodation referrals to the young people's project
Feedback	Quarterly performance report
Notes	

Name	Homelessness awareness education programme disseminated in 4 secondary schools across ECDC area.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	Provide homeless awareness education programme to young people still at school, covering all senior schools in the east cambs area
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Providing support to motivate young people to achieve education, training or employment and support to maintain relationships with parents. Advise on the benefits of staying at home until planned move on can be achieved.
Source of Data	Housing Options Officers
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Educating the youth of today will benefit for the future, will be able to sustain a tenancy long term and avoid homelessness in the future.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	Visits to all schools in East Cambs area and give talks to students 15yrs +
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Ely young people's project.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	Provide Support and move on accommodation for young people aged 16-24 who are homeless or threatened with homelessness via a planned move into supported accommodation provided by Cambridge Housing Society
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Providing support to motivate clients to achieve education, training or employment, support to maintain their own tenancies via a multi agency approach
Source of Data	Housing Options Officers
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Educating the youth of today will benefit for the future, will be able to sustain a tenancy long term and avoid homelessness in the future.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	Clients identified suitable and in need will be referred to the project via either housing options officers or any of the agencies involved, a support plan specific to the young person will be devised and worked on over a period of 2 years or until such time all agencies involved feel they can maintain their own tenancy with minimal support via East Cambs Floating Support Service.
Feedback	
Notes	The Effectiveness of this project will be governed by how many successful move on's we have

Name	Soham Young parent's project
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	Providing specialist supported accommodation for young families and parents to prevent homelessness. With emphasis on support from a multi agency approach to combat revolving door syndrome and benefit culture.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Providing support to motivate clients to achieve education, training or employment, support to maintain their own tenancies and support in providing for children and safeguarding them.
Source of Data	Housing Options Officers
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Educating the youth of today will benefit for the future, less pressure as young parents and families will be able to sustain a tenancy long term and avoid homelessness in the future.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	Clients identified suitable and in need will be referred to the project via either housing options officers or any of the agencies involved, a support plan specific to the parent or parents will be devised and worked on over a period of 6-9 months until such time all agencies involved feel they can maintain their own tenancy with minimal support via East Cambs Floating Support Service.
Feedback	
Notes	The Effectiveness of this project will be governed by how many successful move on's we have

Name	Preventing at least 264 households from becoming homeless per year.
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	To ensure that the focus of the HOT is to prevent homelessness where possible.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Where possible act quickly to prevent the client from losing their home or to find alternative accommodation before they become homeless. Using existing prevention methods and to explore new options and new sources of financial assistance.
Source of Data	P1E's and quarterly performance report
Frequency	66 per quarter
Target	264 per year
Rewards/Penalties	The fewer preventions we do results in an increase in the number of homeless applications we take. This in turn would increase the amount of temporary accommodation needed and could have a substantial effect on the budget because we would have to use B&B. This would also slow down the rate at which people would be housed as the number of acceptances would increase.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See client as soon as possible to give options and advice 2. Explore possibility of keeping client in own home, resolve benefit issues / negotiate with landlord / small prevention payments 3. Where the above is not an option, explore alternative arrangements / private renting / prevention banding on home-link 4. Access the rent deposit scheme 5. Benefit entitlement checks 6. Experian checks 7. HOO explains processes to potential landlords to try and persuade to accept benefits / incentives etc. 8. HOO to liaise between landlord and tenant and offer floating support to secure tenancy (for example)
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	Only if all prevention options have been explored and have failed will a homeless application be taken and temporary accommodation offered.

Name	The use of discretionary housing payments.
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	To make best use of the DHP pot spending as much as possible to prevent homelessness and to ensure an adequate DHP allowance in the next financial year.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To make use of DHP for HB shortfall / deposits / rent in advance and agency fees
Source of Data	Anglia Revenues Partnership
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	DHP money can be used to bridge gaps that our own schemes do not cover or where intentionality decisions create a smaller deposit allowance. Without the use of DHP the numbers of homeless preventions may drop. If the DHP pot is not accessed the result would be a smaller DHP budget for the following financial year.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer, Anglia Revenues Partnership and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During housing options interview establish if the reason for homelessness could be diverted with financial assistance, i.e. by paying HB shortfall. 2. If client has to leave their existing accommodation but cannot afford to pay rent in advance and fees to secure a private rented accommodation, HOO to liaise with ARP to ascertain the likelihood of being accepted for a payment through DHP. 3. If yes then HOO to liaise with landlord of new property to get confirmation that the property will be viable for the applicant 4. Housing benefit calculations to be completed to ascertain affordability 5. If viable then HOO to complete HB form for new property, DHP application form and safeguarding form 6. ARP to liaise with landlord to make one off payment 7. HOO to arrange deposit via in house rent deposit scheme if applicable, if not applicable to client, explore possibility of DHP paying this also.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	

Name	Landlord forum delivered 6 monthly.
Owner	Jo Brooks / Karen Freya
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To educate and increase awareness for local landlords and offer the landlord resolution service to all. To promote improvement grants and loans. Hazard awareness and standards for privately renting.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To promote services available to landlords in the local community and establish new working relationships to enhance the prevention options available to the Authority. The resolution service will offer landlords free legal advice on tenancy's, floating support, assistance with housing benefit arrangements or home improvement advice and assistance.
Source of Data	Attendance data taken at forum
Frequency	6 monthly
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Without building new relationships with local landlords the possibilities open to the housing options department would be limited and homeless prevention statistics would suffer as a result. By enhancing the service available to landlords more properties become available for use in preventing homelessness and where possible for discharging homelessness duty.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree date for forum 2. Agree theme for forum i.e. landlord resolution service or grants and loans. 3. Invite known landlords and agencies 4. Arrange speakers 5. Produce handouts (landlord information packs) 6. Advertise forum to wider community to attract landlords unknown to the authority. 7. On day of forum, monitor attendance and take details of each landlord so that new landlords are invited to further forums. 8. Ask for feedback for improvement in the future.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	

Name	Annual rough sleeper count.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To gauge the number of rough sleepers in the ECDC area by way of a rough sleeper count with other partner agencies.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To count the number of rough sleepers in the ECDC area in order to be able to forward plan, provide outreach services and prevent homelessness where possible.
Source of Data	Data collected from external agencies; ECDC staff, Police, Housing associations, Churches, Support workers, Doctors surgeries, Hostel managers etc
Frequency	Yearly
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	If the housing options team are aware of the number of rough sleepers and are made aware of their location and possible contact details, efforts can be made to undertake some outreach work to try to rectify the individuals housing situation and wherever possible prevent homelessness. The data also flags up if there is need for night shelter accommodation and if so where and how much is needed.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree with neighbouring authorities a date and time for the count. 2. Carry out the count with other partner agencies 3. Verify count information 4. Submit to DCLG for validation
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Numbers of single households accommodated via the single person home-finder service.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers, Joanne Davis
Purpose	To provide accommodation for single non priority clients in shared properties, quickly and affordably with ongoing tenancy support.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Source of Data	Locata
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Increase in street homelessness, 'knock on' effect in ASB, crime and disorder and substance misuse on the streets of the local area.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks, the Housing Options Team and Joanne Davis
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HOO meet with the individual 2. Housing benefit calculation completed 3. Referral to the SPHFS completed and e-mailed to JD 4. Client chooses preferred areas to be housed into 5. Details of night shelters or other available options to be given to cover interim assessment period 6. JD contact client and arrange to meet to carry out assessment. 7. JD sources viable property and negotiates terms and cost. 8. JD Liaise with IRO to arrange deposit payment. 9. JD to keep in contact with tenant and landlord to facilitate tenancy sustainment.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	The effectiveness of the SPHFS will be governed by how many properties are made available to the service.

Name	Floating support to prevent homelessness
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers, Samantha Vaughan
Purpose	To provide support to clients to help maintain their tenancies, assist in the prevention of homelessness via mediation with landlords and tenants, multi agency working and assisting with debt management, employment, benefits and other entitlements.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Providing a support worker to assist with motivating clients to achieve their goals in order to either prevent homelessness or find and maintain more affordable housing. With emphasis on income maximisation, tenant and landlord mediation, supporting vulnerable clients and benefit entitlement / budgeting.
Source of Data	Floating Support Officer (Samantha Vaughan)
Frequency	As required
Target	15 per quarter
Rewards/Penalties	Having a support worker maximises the client's chances of sustaining an existing tenancy therefore preventing homelessness. Or supporting homeless clients to access benefits, bid on properties and/or locate a property in the private rented sector. Assistance in setting up in that property will be provided to make sure that the client budgets and sustains their tenancy therefore avoiding homelessness in the future.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks, Samantha Vaughan and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	Clients who are identified as in need of support will be discussed with the FSO and referred for an assessment of their needs. The FSO will then meet with the client to discuss options and plan a course of action. The FSO will then maintain contact with the client until agreed outcomes have been achieved.
Feedback	
Notes	The service costs £20k per annum. That provides 15 hours of floating support per week. We need to monitor waiting times to access the service to determine whether any mileage in bringing the scheme in house which would provide better value for money.

Name	Homeless Prevention Initiative, direct referrals and joint Social Care assessments for the over 55's
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To avoid homelessness in the over 55's by implementing a protocol for direct referrals to sheltered care schemes and joint social care assessments
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Focus on early intervention to assist the over 55's threatened homelessness with care needs into suitable sheltered/dispersed/extra care accommodation before crisis point.
Source of Data	Locata
Frequency	Weekly
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over 55 approaches or make an appointment for a timely home visit if client cannot travel to the office 2. Contact sheltered care schemes to source available properties 3. Social care referral on day of approach or home visit 4. Joint assessment with social care 5. Decide with social care on urgency of case 6. Attend allocations panels at sheltered schemes
Feedback	Quarterly performance report
Notes	If no social care need speak to sanctuary about hard to let sheltered properties if there is an immediate threat of eviction. Help client set up on home-link and assist with bidding. Help source accommodation in the private rented sector.

Name	Securing joint working protocol with Hospitals, mental health institutions and related agencies for the discharge of patients.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers, Hospitals, Mental Health institutions, Adult Social Care, Addaction, Inclusion, CMHT, EC Floating Support and Home-finder Service.
Purpose	To establish a joint working protocol for the safe and timely discharge of patients that have local connection to ECDC area. To minimise the risk of street homelessness for potentially vulnerable people or those whose medical condition is not severe enough to establish priority need yet still require support and assistance.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To establish a robust protocol and strong joint working relationship with Hospitals, Mental Health Institutions and other related agencies to prevent homelessness of patients upon discharge.
Source of Data	East Cambs Home Finder Service, Locata, P1E's and quarterly performance reports
Frequency	As soon as possible
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	By setting up a protocol for hospital/institution discharge, numbers of street homeless with potential/existing (mental) health issues should decrease and by facilitating the correct support there will be less chance of the client relapsing and will stop the revolving door effect.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify agencies that should be involved in the release process (Housing Options, Hospital discharge team, mental health institutions (Fulbourne), Adult Social Care, Addaction, Inclusion, CMHT, Home-finder Service and EC Floating Support for example). 2. Arrange meeting with partner agencies to discuss joint working protocol – agreed vision of ideal working practises. 3. Agree notification periods and time frames for referrals etc. 4. Meet to discuss and finalise ideals. 5. Draft protocol and make ready for consultation. 6. Protocol signed off. 7. Distribute to all partner agencies and finalise a date for the protocol to become active.
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Prevention of Homelessness for patients being discharged from hospital/mental health institution.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers, Hospital/Institution discharge team, Adult Social Care, Addaction, Inclusion, EC Floating Support and Home-finder Service.
Purpose	Working in accordance with the joint working protocol with partner agencies, to prevent patients becoming street homeless upon discharge. Establishing support needs and making timely referrals to coincide with the end of the client's stay in hospital/Institution.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To ensure that the joint working protocol is adhered to, making sure that patients due to be discharged have had all necessary referrals to partner agencies and that all options are explored in good time to achieve the best outcome. Ideally sourcing accommodation before the discharge date for a smooth transaction. Preventing street homelessness of potentially vulnerable clients.
Source of Data	Home-finder service, Locata, P1E's
Frequency	As and when required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	By establishing housing options early, making timely referrals and working closely with all agencies concerned in the discharge of a patient. Sourcing accommodation early will provide a smooth transaction for the client back into the community and prevent street homelessness. With support and assistance the chances of sustaining a tenancy long term will be greatly improved preventing relapse and further hospitalisation.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hospital/institution/Client makes contact with HOO within the time frame set out in the joint working protocol (2 weeks before due to leave for example) 2. HOO to assess likely vulnerability of client/potential priority need taking into account current medical/mental health issues and future diagnosis. 3. Inform all relevant partner agencies and make necessary referrals at time of contact from client/hospital/institution in accordance with protocol. 4. If no reason to believe there is a priority need for homelessness then referrals made to SHS or Home-finder service to source room rent/flat in time for discharge. 5. If there is potentially a priority need HOO to arrange a visit to meet the client and take details and advise on options. 6. Complete benefit calculations and income and expenditure. Look at deposit loans and alternative funding for fees and rent in advance. 7. HOO to facilitate home-link application / homeless application / temporary accommodation on release if priority need confirmed.
Feedback	
Notes	It is imperative that HOO makes regular contact with agencies involved in each case to ensure that all people concerned are organised and working with the same deadlines, bringing together all support in a timely and efficient manner.

Name	Securing joint working protocol with Prisons and related agencies for the release of prisoners.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers, Prisons, Police/ASB team, Adult Social Care, Addaction, Inclusion, CMHT, EC Floating Support and Home-finder Service.
Purpose	To establish a joint working protocol for the safe and timely release of prisoners that have local connection to ECDC area to minimise the risk of street homelessness upon release.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To establish a robust protocol and strong joint working relationship with prisons and other related agencies to prevent homelessness of ex offenders upon release.
Source of Data	East Cambs Home Finder Service, Locata, P1E's and quarterly performance reports
Frequency	As soon as possible
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	By setting up a protocol for prison release, numbers of street homeless ex offenders should decrease and by facilitating the correct support there will be less chance of the client reoffending and will stop the revolving door effect.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify agencies that should be involved in the release process (Housing Options, Prison accommodations officer, Adult Social Care, Addaction, Inclusion, CMHT, Home-finder Service and EC Floating Support for example). 2. Arrange meeting with partner agencies to discuss joint working protocol – agreed vision of ideal working practises. 3. Agree notification periods and time frames for referrals etc. 4. Meet to discuss and finalise ideals. 5. Draft protocol and make ready for consultation. 6. Protocol signed off. 7. Distribute to all partner agencies and finalise a date for the protocol to become active.
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Prevention of Homelessness for ex-offenders being released from Prison
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers, Prison Accommodations Officer, Police/ASB team, Adult Social Care, Addaction, Inclusion, EC Floating Support and Home-finder Service.
Purpose	Working in accordance with the joint working protocol with partner agencies, to prevent prisoners becoming street homeless upon release. Establishing support needs and making timely referrals to coincide with the end of the client's sentence.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To ensure that the joint working protocol is adhered to, making sure that prisoners due for release have had all necessary referrals to partner agencies and that all options are explored in good time to achieve the best outcome. Ideally sourcing accommodation before release date for a smooth transaction. Preventing street homelessness and reoffending/ASB.
Source of Data	Home-finder service, Locata, P1E's
Frequence	As and when required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	By establishing housing options early, making timely referrals and working closely with all agencies concerned in the release of a prisoner, there is less chance of that person reoffending or causing ASB. Sourcing accommodation early will provide a smooth transaction for the client back in the society and prevent street homelessness. With support and assistance the chances of sustaining a tenancy long term will be greatly improved stopping the revolving door back into prisons.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prison/Client makes contact with HOO within the time frame set out in the joint working protocol (2 weeks before release for example) 2. HOO to assess likely vulnerability of client/potential priority need. 3. Inform all relevant partner agencies and make necessary referrals at time of contact from client/prison in accordance with protocol. 4. If no reason to believe there is a priority need for homelessness then referrals made to SHS or Home-finder service to source room rent/flat in time for release. 5. If there is potentially a priority need HOO to arrange a visit to meet the client and take details and advise on options. 6. Complete benefit calculations and projected income and expenditure. Look at deposit loans and alternative funding for fees and rent in advance. 7. HOO to facilitate home-link application / homeless application / temporary accommodation on release if priority need confirmed.
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Ensure all officers attend all mandatory council training courses in policy and procedures for child safeguarding, equality and diversity & health and safety.
Owner	Housing Options Officers
Co owners	Jo Brooks
Purpose	Keep vulnerable members of the community safe from harm and to ensure that all council policies and procedures are adhered to thus providing a safe and happy working environment.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	All Housing Options officers are able to refer to MARAC or social care effectively to ensure that all options are given and that the situation is dealt with quickly, lawfully and in the best interest of the client. Making sure that that the safety and wellbeing of employees/colleagues is of utmost importance.
Source of Data	CAADA, MARAC, Locata, HR.
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Possibility of death or serious harm to the client and or family of the client, prosecution, Government fines.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be able to refer to relevant third parties such as MARAC/Social Care. 2. Ensure 100% attendance at all in house training programmes.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	

Name	100% appraisals completed on time.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To ensure that all staff appraisals be completed annually and within the time frame set by HR.
Links	HR Policy and Procedure
Formula	To arrange in and complete all staff appraisals within time frame set by HR ensuring that all staff have enough time to complete their comments and for Principal Housing Officer to complete appraisal and agree with staff member before signing. Identify training needs. Opportunity to discuss what has gone well and what needs improving and aspirations for the future.
Source of Data	HR, Principal Housing Officer and Staff member
Frequency	Yearly
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Staff will be unaware of their progress throughout the year, would not know what areas to improve upon therefore not providing the best service possible to the clients. Effect on staff morale.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and HR
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time frame set by HR 2. Principal Housing Officer to book appraisals with staff 3. PHO to issue staff with paperwork to complete (giving enough time in which to do so) 4. HOO to complete appraisee's comments and return to PHO 5. Appraisal conducted by PHO and PHO comments to be added to paperwork 6. Completed paperwork to be passed to HOO for review and final signature. 7. Completed appraisals to be sent to HR.
Feedback	1:1, mid term appraisal
Notes	Any discussion at appraisals should not come as a surprise; issues that arise regarding performance should be dealt with in a timely manner

Name	Service awareness briefings for service delivery champion.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To update Service Delivery champions with progress within the housing team, how the service is being operated and budgetary updates. Service Delivery Champion to act as critical friend.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To include Service Delivery Champions in all aspects of the running of the housing options department to promote transparency and good partnership working. Members will be able to understand the everyday running of the department and will be able to offer assistance where required.
Source of Data	Regular feedback from Members and CE.
Frequency	As required
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Members need to have an awareness of the service in order for it to move forward. They will act as a critical friend to the service and their role is to understand the complexities of housing options and homelessness, see how changes will benefit the effectiveness of the team and the service it provides to the community and report to the Council on their activities and respond to questions and enquiries.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Member Champion 2. SHO to invite those members to regular meetings 3. Invite Members to shadow the team if they wish 4. Invite members to attend HOT meetings 5. Include Members in the distribution of quarterly performance reports.
Feedback	Quarterly Performance report
Notes	

Name	Customer satisfaction surveys completed and acted upon.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To allow the team to evaluate their performance as housing options officers
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To make customers aware of the online customer satisfaction survey and collate and analyse the data quarterly
Source of Data	Website / IT
Frequency	Quarterly
Target	80%
Rewards/Penalties	The information gathered in the customer satisfaction surveys will highlight areas of the service that have either proven to be useful or areas that need improvement therefore creating foundations on which to build a better service all round. Any specific issues raised can be dealt with or further training provided to make sure that a high quality service is provided.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PHO to pick clients at random to invite them to take part in the survey – these will be in addition to those who take the survey directly from the website 2. Every quarter collect the data from the IT department 3. Look at the areas that need improvement and roll out training where appropriate or discuss the issues at HOT meetings. 4. Collectively decide how to use this data to create a superior service for the community of ECDC. 5. Each quarter compare figures and comments to gauge whether the initiatives introduced have improved the outcome of customer satisfaction survey. If not the HOT will discuss way to improve or solve the issues raised
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Undertake demands analysis to determine future drop in surgeries.
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To assess the numbers of drop in enquiries made to gauge how many sessions are required to provide the best housing service possible for the community at the earliest opportunity and at a time that suits the customer..
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Via customer services evaluate the number of people attending the housing drop ins and adjust the amount according to demand (currently 3 mornings per week plus one monthly DV specific drop in)
Source of Data	CRM
Frequency	By April 2015
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	The data will indicate how effective the drop in sessions are and will flag up if there is a need for further sessions to ensure that the best possible service is provided. This also enables clients to come in sooner rather than having to wait for an appointment when the HOO is free.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<p>Every quarter data will be collected from customer services to show how many people have utilised to drop in sessions, how many phone calls and website requests the team has received and at what time of the day, this will be compared to the previous quarter and appropriate actions will be taken to reflect this.</p> <p>We also provide a monthly drop in surgery at the food bank. This has proven to be successful but needs to be monitored to ensure we are giving the right advice to the right audience at the right time.</p>
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Carry out home visits to customers who need them
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To ensure that all households that cannot attend a meeting or would benefit from a home visit are seen in their own home as soon as possible.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	Conduct home visits where necessary and as soon as possible.
Source of Data	
Frequency	When needed
Target	100%
Rewards/Penalties	Households that are unable to attend meetings at the council offices will still be seen and options given within a reasonable time frame in the clients own home.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	If a client expresses a wish that a home visit be conducted the housing options team will arrange where possible to visit the client in their own home to deliver options and advice. This will be equally beneficial to the housing options team if the situation concerns the condition of the property/overcrowding etc.
Feedback	
Notes	

Name	Review homelessness strategy annually ensuring customers receive the best service possible
Owner	Jo Brooks
Co owners	Housing Options Officers
Purpose	To evaluate the effectiveness of the Homelessness Strategy and make changes where necessary to ensure that the best service is being delivered to our customers.
Links	Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and Corporate Strategic Finance Outcome.
Formula	To evaluate the Homelessness Strategy to ensure that it is up to date and relevant.
Source of Data	P1E's, Housing budget reports and customer feedback
Frequency	Annually
Target	April 2015
Rewards/Penalties	Focus will remain on homeless prevention. But improvements can be made as any issues are brought to light making sure that the housing team provides an outstanding service for the community.
Who measures?	Principal Housing Officer and Assistant Director
Who acts on the data?	Jo Brooks and the Housing Options Team
What will be done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will be analysed to ensure that the existing directives are still effective. • Team meeting to discuss solutions to problems highlighted and new initiatives agreed upon • Changes to be taken to committee to be agreed • Final draft completed and changes implemented throughout the Housing Options Service
Feedback	
Notes	