

HOMELESS STRATEGY 2018 - 2023



Foreword

Dumfries and Galloway Council welcomes the Homeless Strategy 2018-2023 which sets out our priorities for tackling homelessness. This strategy makes a significant contribution to our Council's priority to 'protect our most vulnerable people'.



The strategy builds on the Homeless improvement plan which has been in place since 2015 following a review and engagement with the Scottish Housing Regulator. The strategy acknowledges the improvements that the service has already achieved. Our Council is committed to the continuous development of a high quality, outcome focused Housing Options and Homeless Service. We have already made significant investments in staffing resources and procurement of a new IT system to support the work set out in this strategy.

Housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of our local communities and every resident in Dumfries and Galloway has a stake in this Strategy. The preparation of the Strategy has involved proactive engagement with a wide range of partners, stakeholders and service users. A Homeless Forum with these partners has been established to ensure an ongoing commitment to the Strategy outcomes.

This Homeless Strategy takes a fresh, pro-active and collaborative approach in tackling homelessness in Dumfries and Galloway. We are looking at new ideas and innovations, and importantly, listening and engaging with our partners and service users to create a service which is effective and transformational. No organisation can tackle homelessness on its own: partnership working is our priority if we are to make a

real difference to the quality of life of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness and related issues.

The Homeless Strategy has been developed around four main themes which we believe to be key to developing the service– these themes are supported by outcomes and actions which will be closely monitored and regularly reviewed.

We have worked closely with our community planning partners who are members of our multi-agency Homeless Forum. The Forum meets regularly and the Homeless Strategy has been informed by input from, and honest and open discussion with, a wide range of professionals, stakeholders and organisations and services working directly and indirectly with vulnerable individuals.

Extensive consultation has been carried out involving the third sector, current and former homeless people, together with their immediate support providers. This extensive and collaborative working with our partners has clearly identified and evidenced how we can work together, pool resources and knowledge to achieve the objectives and outcomes presented in this comprehensive Homeless Strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Ferguson', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Andy Ferguson

Chair of the Communities Committee – Dumfries and Galloway Council

April 2018



1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Dumfries and Galloway Homeless Strategy 2018-2023 has been developed with strategic partners as part of the wider Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023, as required under section 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The new Homeless Strategy builds on the earlier Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016 which incorporated the Homeless and Housing Support duties.

1.2 This Strategy has been developed in consultation with the multi-agency Strategic Homeless Forum, and also with other partners, stakeholders, staff and service users.

1.3 The Homeless Strategy contributes to the Council's Priority to "protect our most vulnerable people". Community Planning partners share the vision within the Homeless Strategy of "Working together to prevent the causes of homelessness and where we are unable to prevent its occurrence, working together to provide the best outcomes for those who are homeless or at threat of homelessness".

1.4 The Dumfries and Galloway Homeless Strategy 2018-2023 will work towards this vision under four themes:

1. Access to the Housing Options and Homeless Service
2. Homeless Prevention
3. Temporary Accommodation
4. Service User Outcomes

2. National Policy and Legislative Context

2.1 The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2001** placed a statutory duty on local authorities to assess the extent of homelessness in the area and prepare a strategy for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. Following Scottish Government guidance issued in 2008, these duties were to be incorporated as part of the Local Housing Strategy.

2.2 The **Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003** amended the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to abolish the 'priority need' test in assessing homelessness duty, which in a subsequent determination by Scottish Ministers was to be achieved by 31 December 2012. This change significantly increased the rights of people who experience homelessness, including access to temporary and settled accommodation.

2.3 The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2010** introduced a requirement for local authorities to undertake a support needs assessment for all households found to be both unintentionally homeless and where there is reason to believe the household may have housing support needs.

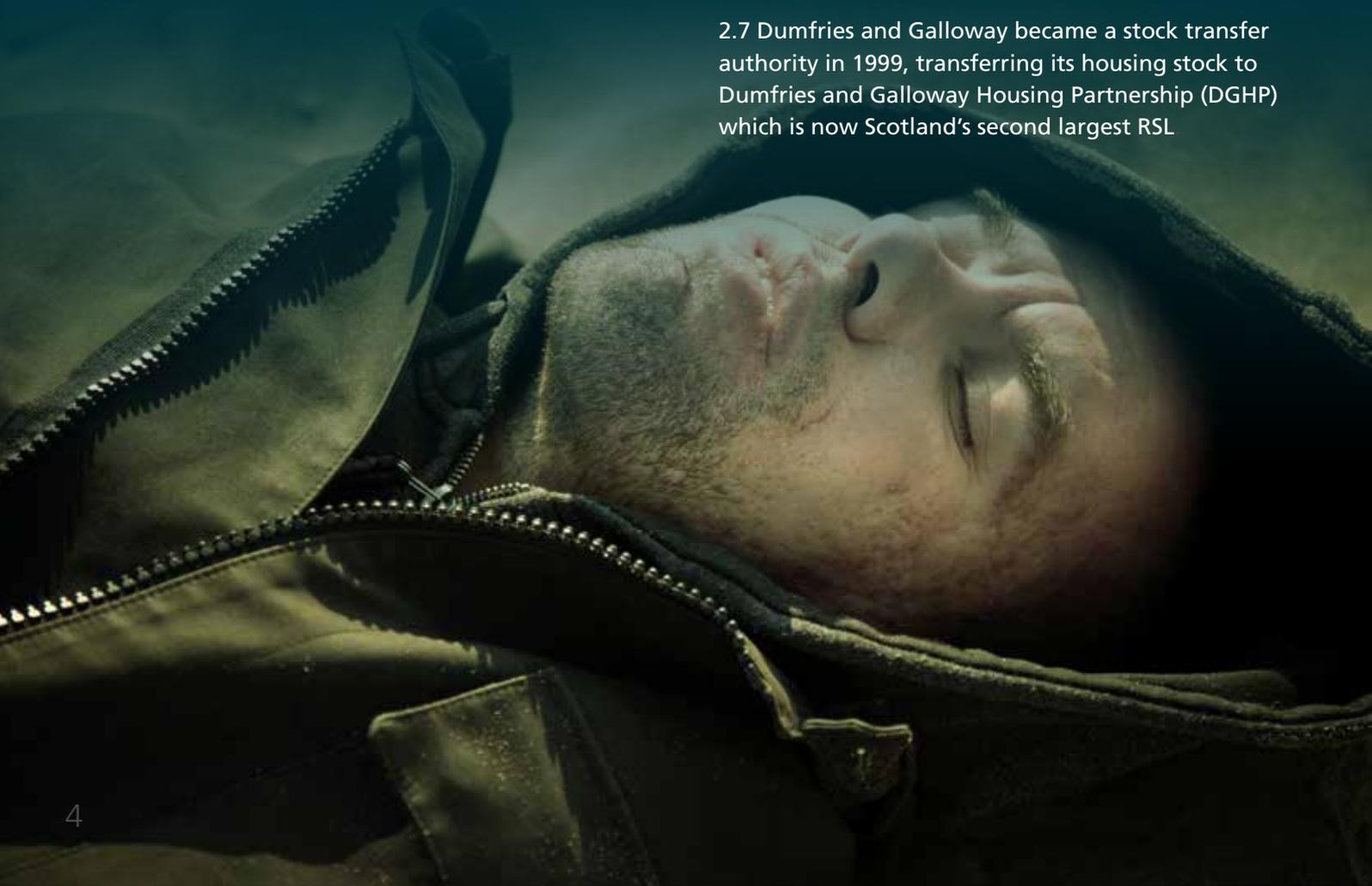
2.4 The **Scottish Housing Charter** was introduced in April 2012 and aims to improve the quality and value of services provided by registered social landlords (RSL's) and support the Scottish Governments aim to create a safer stronger Scotland.

2.5 **Homelessness and Health** – Homelessness is a public health issue. The Scottish Public Health Network Report, 'Restoring the Public Health response to Homelessness in Scotland' (May 2015) concluded "homelessness is both a consequence and a cause of poverty, social and health inequality". "The relationship between poor health (physical, mental or both) and homelessness is recognised as two-way, being both a significant contributory factor which can lead to a person becoming homeless, but is also in many cases, a 'late marker' of severe and complex disadvantage".

2.6 The Scottish Government's '**Ending Homelessness Together**' fund was announced in September 2017. £50 million has been identified to support the commitment to fund homelessness prevention initiatives over five years to:

- Eradicate rough sleeping for good
- Transform Temporary Accommodation
- Bring about an end to Homelessness in Scotland

2.7 Dumfries and Galloway became a stock transfer authority in 1999, transferring its housing stock to Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP) which is now Scotland's second largest RSL



3. Local Context

3.1 The prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness contributes to one of the Council's 4 main priorities "protect our most vulnerable people". There are a number of local and national strategies that also support this priority and will work in partnership with the Homeless Strategy.

3.2 The Homeless Strategy has been developed as a stand-alone document in response to an independent review of the Housing Options and Homeless Service in 2015. The recommendations from this review have been developed and included in the new Strategy to improve the local delivery of these services in Dumfries and Galloway.

3.3 In the development of this Strategy, consideration has been given to the Council's financial position and the reducing local government funding. Actions in the Strategy will require a full partnership commitment to ensure a customer centred approach is taken in the most cost effective and efficient way.





4. Theme 1 - Access to Housing Options and Homeless Services

4.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator states: “Homeless people should get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed”.

4.2 Dumfries and Galloway Council is a large rural authority and the Housing Options and Homeless service is administered within the Communities Directorate, in Customer Services. Staff are based in Council Offices within the four main settlements of Annan, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright and Stranraer. Our commitment is to ‘ensure customers have equal and open access to the Housing Options and Homeless service across the Region’.

4.3 The current service delivery offers contact in the following methods:

- Customer Office visit (face to face) – Dumfries, Annan, Kirkcudbright or Stranraer (Monday-Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm)
- Customer telephone call – Mon-Fri 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Customer Email – 24/7 access, however responded to Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Out of Hours contact - Out of Hours contact centre with access to emergency accommodation
- A referral from a third party

4.4 The majority of contact and information channels are currently within the standard office hours. All offices have private interview facilities and have arrangements to assist those with sight, hearing or speech difficulties. The service also uses the Councils translation services for those service users whose first language is not English. The Council website contains some information and advice on Homelessness and will be developed further. Service Users highlighted the lack of relevant and up-to-date information available through various communication channels.

Action Points 1 and 2.

4.5 Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to Customer Excellence and has developed Homeless Customer Standards which include:

- Providing free advice, information and assistance to find somewhere for you to live
- Treating customers with consideration and respect the confidentiality of their situation
- Not discriminating on the grounds of race, colour, gender, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation
- Same sex interview where possible
- Same day appointment with a trained officer if contacted within office hours
- An appointment within 1 working day of making contact where someone is threatened with homelessness within 2 months
- An appointment within 5 working days of making contact if not threatened with Homelessness within 2 months. Action Point 3

4.6 Homeless service users have highlighted the need for more affordable and consistent communications. Positive feedback was received on customer service from Homeless Officers and continued engagement while in temporary accommodation.

4.7 There were 975 approaches to the Homeless Service recorded for the period 2016-2017 in PREVENT1 resulting in 820 Homeless applications being taken.

4.8. Table 1 details the number of interviews arranged at each Office and the percentage of service users seen within the Service Standards targets for the period September 2016 – September 2017.

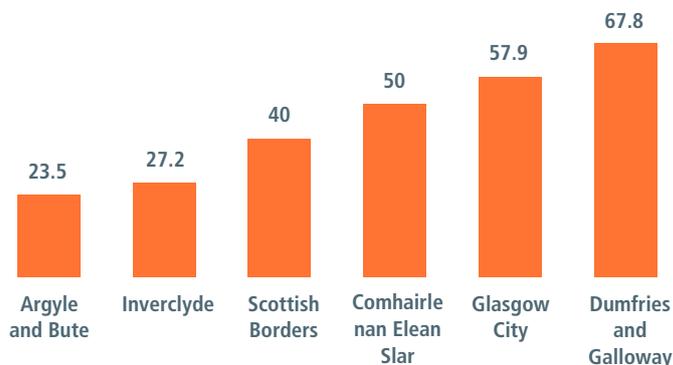
Table 1. Homeless Interviews carried out by Homeless Office location/Officer September 2016-September 2017

Area Office	Presentations	% Seen within time	Receiving Presentations from areas: (not exhaustive)
Annan	152	65%	Annan, Ecclefechan, Lockerbie, Lochmaben, Moffat, Eastriggs, Beattock, Springfield
Dumfries	431	73.5%	Dumfries, Dalbeattie, Sanquhar, Thornhill, Castle Douglas, Kelloholm, Newton Stewart, Lochmaben,
Kirkcudbright	47	58%	Castle Douglas, Gatehouse, Newton Stewart, Dalbeattie, New Galloway, Kirkcudbright
Stranraer	225	73%	Newton Stewart, Wigtown, Port Patrick, Garlieston, Kirkcolm, Whithorn, Sandhead, Minnigaff, Girvan, Drummore

4.9 Service users have indicated a desire for a more proactive approach being taken to sharing information and partnership working - for both the Homeless Service and third sector to improve the service users 'homeless journey'. **Action Point 4**

4.10 In 2016-2017 975 Housing Options approaches to the local authority were recorded in the PREVENT1 return to the Scottish Government. There were a number of Section 11 notifications (where Landlords start notice of proceedings) that were not recorded. We have made a change to the way we record prevention and housing options advice which, we believe will allow us in-depth analysis of our housing options work. From the reported data, 67.8% of presentations went on to make a full Homeless Application. This is significantly higher than other stock transfer authorities as detailed in Chart 1. This suggests that prevention work is currently only being started where someone is already at threat of Homelessness. Action Point 5

Chart 1. Percentage of presentations that went on to make a Homeless Application – a comparison with other Stock Transfer Authorities.



4.11 There has been increased Homeless applications from individuals and/or members of their homeless household with one or more vulnerability or complex needs. Based on needs identified at the point of application, the following support needs were recorded:

Diagram 1 illustrates the catchment of customers attending the 4 main offices

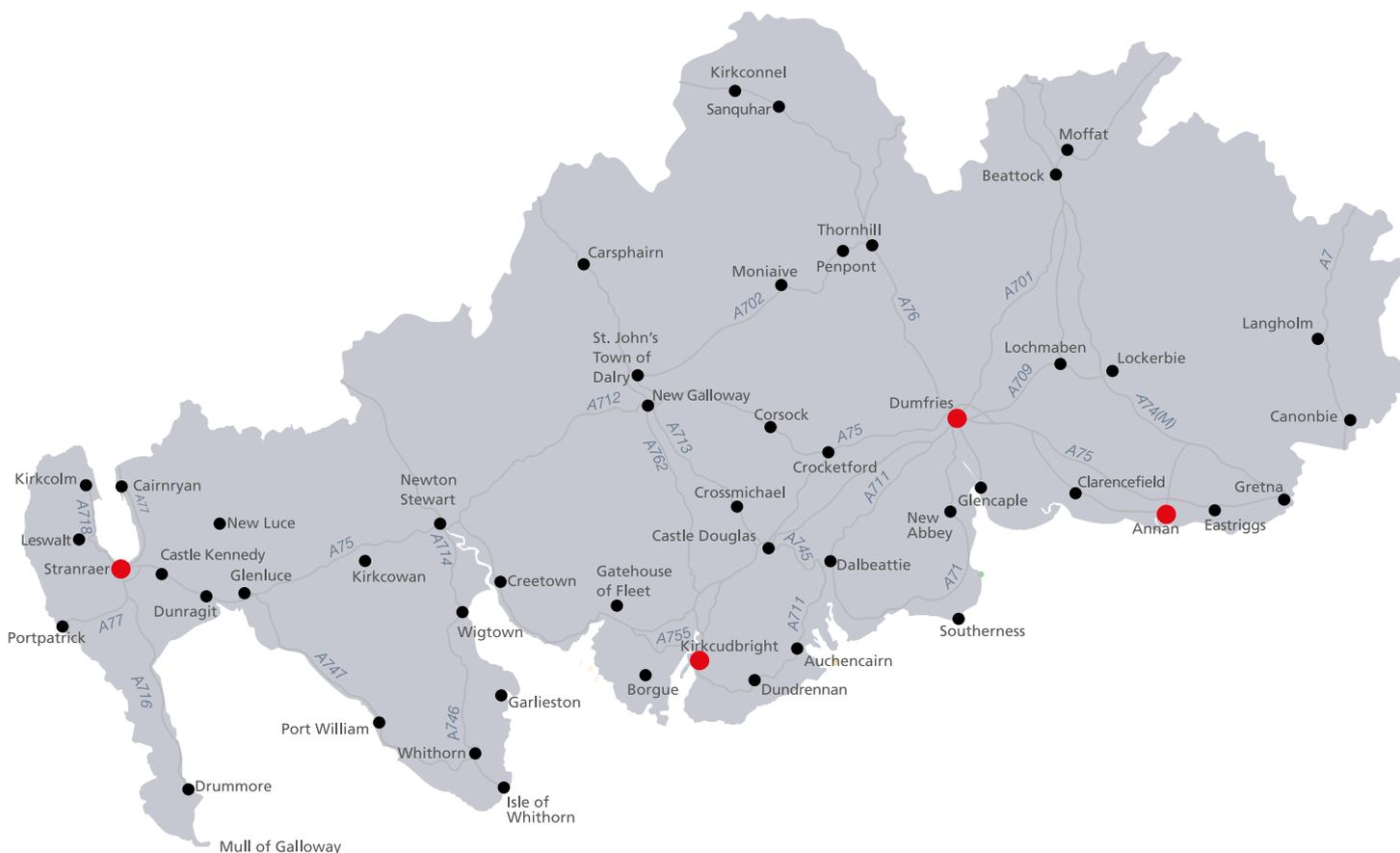


Table 2. Support needs identified (HL1 16/17) not exhaustive

Support Need Identified	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Mental Health/ Learning Disability	154	133	162	260
Psychical Disability/ Chronic Illness/ Medical Condition	97	62	86	111
Drug or Alcohol Dependency	163	122	137	182
Total	414	317	385	553

4.12 Vulnerabilities can include a wide variety of health issues. Mental Health, Physical Health and Addictions were recorded as the most presenting needs when assessing homeless cases. The service will need to work with strategic partners to establish best practice for working with ‘at risk’ groups to ensure the best possible outcome for the person. As well as vulnerable groups it is important the service is accessible by minority groups including, transgender, LGBT, and ethnic groups.

4.13 An individual who is multiple excluded can be defined as someone with severe vulnerabilities and complex needs who are multiple excluded from society – whether this is from accessing services due to restrictions in place or lack of engagement on the service user’s part. Regardless of the reason for being multiple excluded, the individual is most likely to be very vulnerable and frequently known to the Homeless Services, as well as other public services, emergency services and third sector organisations.

4.14 The increasing number of presentations from complex needs service users is a significant challenge for the Housing Options and Homeless Service and partners. Service users who present with a range of needs, from autism, personality disorders, drug and alcohol addictions and physical disabilities, require

staff to have the skills and knowledge to assist individuals in a caring and empathic manner. **Action Point 6**

Quote from a Service User

“They did try their best – personal circumstances and mental health affects daily living. A better understanding of mental health might help”

4.15 For those with complex needs, homelessness is often a symptom of an underlying issue and a partnership approach is required to resolve the client’s full needs not simply their immediate housing need. Partners and homeless stakeholders include current housing support providers, other council resources, RSLs, the third sector and national and regional homeless charities. It is important to make sure the Housing Options and Homeless Service holds up to date information on which partner networks have a presence both in the wider community and nation-wide to offer joint support when working collaboratively to tackle homelessness. Research and planning with our partners is essential to ensure services are not only in place to provide appropriate housing, but also working in partnership to ensure the support required to maintain it is also in place. The case study below illustrates where a joint approach resulted in a successful outcome. The learning point from this case was that where complex needs are assessed early, a clear process should be in place for a partnership approach to identify a solution. **Action Point 7**

4.16 The Case Study below illustrates a circumstance where a joint approach has had a successful outcome. This case demonstrated that where complex needs are assessed early, a joint approach identified a solution.



Case Study

Mr A presented as homeless in June 2016 after being evicted from his tenancy on the grounds of anti-social behaviour. Community Justice had highlighted there was a serious risk of harm in terms of pattern, nature and a serious likelihood of imminence. Mr A had a history of verbal and physical assault and asserted his sense of control through verbal and physical violence. Due to the risks he could only be seen if two workers were present. At his time of presentation Mr A was not engaging with any support service.

Mr A previously had a history of homelessness and since 2003 had presented 7 times to the Homeless section. His last tenancy with an RSL had lasted 3 years. A homeless decision of unintentional was made and Mr A was provided Temporary accommodation.

At his time of presentation in June 2016 he had a number of Criminal Justice orders in place, however these expired in August 2016 and from that time there was no involvement with Community Justice. Mr A did not meet the criteria for adult supported accommodation within Social Work; therefore the only route to discharge the homeless duty was a section 5 referral back to mainstream social housing. From the initial assessment there had been several failed attempts to engage with Housing Support providers due to the verbal threats.

After a year in temporary accommodation and a number of failed attempts to secure permanent accommodation a case conference was held with key partners including RSLs and Health and Social Care colleagues to discuss how to progress this case. A renewed attempt with Housing Support was agreed and would be supplemented with a self-directed support assessment to enhance the support package. Specific providers were engaged who were briefed on the requirements of the case. Within these organisations it was important to ensure not just the correct support package but also the correct worker was selected.

This was agreed and put in place, Mr A responded positively to the new support workers, who were able to develop an improved relationship. Following a period with this support a suitable tenancy was negotiated with an RSL. To facilitate the move additional financial support was required at the start of the tenancy; assistance from the support agencies meant Mr A could access funds from both Discretionary Housing Payments and Scottish Welfare Fund to aid his move to permanent accommodation. Following his successful move support remains in place to provide assistance with maintaining this tenancy. This case will continue to be monitored by the Housing Options team to ensure the support is in place to Mr A to sustain his tenancy.

4.17 Dumfries and Galloway Council offers an out of hours service, which until March 2018 was based within Glasgow Emergency Social Work Service. This service is currently under review and the new out of hours service will be delivered by Social Work Services in Dumfries and Galloway from April 2018. There is a continued commitment to provide Homeless advice through this service. The ongoing development of the new out of hour's service includes the needs of the Housing Options and Homeless services who are part of the review board project team.

4.18 There have been 57 out of hours contacts which were referred to the Homeless Service between April 2017 to April 2018. Of these, 8 cases involved children and 13 who were offered accommodation and turned it down.

4.19 Of the 57 presentations to the out of hours service, 27 were refused accommodation. Reasons for refusals include; unable to contact the service user; service user found accommodation elsewhere; decision not to offer accommodation to individual (eligibility reasons); no answer from emergency accommodation (guest house); no disabled access available for wheelchair users; and banned from guest house due to previous behaviour. During consultations, service users felt that the out of hours provision had limited information. A review of how out of hours calls for Housing Advice are supported and the availability of temporary accommodation will be undertaken to address this. **Action Point 8**

Theme 1 Outcome: Provide a consistent and accessible service across the region	
Actions	
Action Point 1	Review and update contact methods including Housing Options self-service portal, phone interviews, and home visits for Service Users
Action Point 2	Review current Housing Options and Homeless Service information held online and in other formats to ensure Service User needs are met
Action Point 3	Ensure customers are given appointments:- The same day where 'roofless' Within 1 day where they are at threat of Homelessness Within 5 days where no threat of Homelessness
Action Point 4	Review resources available internally and externally across the region to ensure homeless service user needs are met
Action Point 5	Improve the recording of Housing Options and ensure all intervention work is being reported to the Scottish Government through PREVENT1
Action Point 6	Ensure appropriate training and support are in place for all staff and shared with partners where appropriate
Action Point 7	Develop a structured partnership approach across health and social care and third sector (including charities) to ensure need is identified as early as possible and there is clear ownership to achieve positive outcomes for service users
Action Point 8	Review provision of out of hours provision for homelessness including the potential for a wider partnership approach to this delivery



5. Theme 2 – Homeless Prevention

5.1 Each local authority has a statutory duty under section 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to provide advice about homelessness or preventing homelessness, and to signpost people to services that may assist with the prevention of Homelessness.

5.2 The Scottish Government produced new Housing Options guidance in March 2016 for all local authorities. The new guidance contains 13 principles which underpin a holistic approach to supporting those who are homeless or at threat of homelessness. The Council is continuing to work in partnership with the Ayrshire Housing HUB to develop a Housing Options toolkit and training plan for staff. It is recognised that wider knowledge of Housing Options is required with key partners i.e. Housing Support providers, schools, health and social care providers.

Action Point 1

5.3 Housing Options advice provided to service users is recorded on PREVENT1 and reported to the Scottish Government. The table below details the number of approaches recorded in PREVENT1 for Dumfries and Galloway in 2016/17.

Table 3 – PREVENT 1 approaches

Table 1	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
PREVENT 1 Approaches	891	859	975

5.4 Service Users have highlighted that Housing Options needs to be better defined, as many individuals were unsure what Housing Options meant and what the benefits were of approaching the Service to discuss their housing needs.

5.5 There has been an ongoing increase in demand for Housing Options advice over the past three years. The increase clearly demonstrates the need for a reshape of service delivery to ensure sufficient focus is placed on Homeless Prevention and Housing Options. There is a need to work with Landlord partners to ensure early prevention work is undertaken prior to starting eviction processes. Early prevention work will not remove the right of people who are at threat of homelessness within two months making a homeless application. **Action Point 2**

5.6 Of the 975 PREVENT1 contacts, 67.8% went on to make a Homeless application. This is significantly higher than the national average of 44.4% for 2016/17. Only 8.3% of applicants remained in their current home following on from prevention work, compared to a national average of 21.8%. While comparisons with national averages on PREVENT1 should be treated with caution due to the national variance of recording, there is still a question about the difference in results. It is clear from the current figures that prevention work with service users mainly starts where there is an imminent threat of homelessness. An action of this Strategy will be to improve prevention by 'upstreaming' Housing Options and intervening before the threat of homelessness within two months. Action Point 3

5.7 During consultation, advocacy and awareness for both service users and support providers (third sector) were noted as central themes when exploring homeless prevention. Creating links between partners/support providers to provide service users (especially those with complex needs) with a 'trusted

person' to act on their behalf was suggested as an option to remove barriers and encourage consistent engagement.

5.8 Partnership working is a significant factor in both prevention and outcomes for service users. Homelessness in Dumfries and Galloway is largely not down to a lack of housing. Homelessness is often a symptom of health or social issues and therefore a sustainable and longer term solution will require partners from Health and Social Care, Employability, Housing Support, Third Sector advice agencies, RSLs and Education to work together on a prevention agenda. To aid this work a Strategic Homeless Forum has been established (July 2017) to look at cross sector strategic issues. This work will continue to review and resolve issues that affect Homelessness. Action Point 4

5.9 The current national trend for homelessness is a reducing picture and this was also reflected in Dumfries and Galloway until 2016/17. Table 4 details the number of applications locally.

Table 4 – HL1 Homeless applications

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Applications	953	918	635	668	820

Table 5 – HL1 Homeless applications by Banded Age

Applications	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
16-17	46	44	25	33	37
18-25	347	313	206	201	235
% of Total	41.2%	38.9%	36.4%	35%	33.2%

5.10 A reducing application trend was evident in Dumfries and Galloway up to 2014/15 however this was reversed in 2015/16. This change was mainly due to a review of internal procedures which resulted in more applications being taken to reflect the need for an application where there was a threat of homelessness and not just roofless cases. While there has been a general decrease in the number of young people presenting as homeless as an overall percentage of presentations, they still account for one third of the overall cases.

5.11 Dumfries and Galloway continues to be above the national average for repeat homelessness, 11.9% in 2016/17 compared to a Scottish average of 6.7%. Further work needs to be undertaken to understand the underlying reasons for repeat homelessness and what mitigations can be put in place. For service users who are at risk of not sustaining tenancies this means that more should be done to support them to sustain their tenancies. **Action Point 5**

5.12 There are a wide range of reasons for homeless presentations and the most common are as follows:-

- Breakdown of family relationships – 44%
- End of tenancy or home ownership – 40%
- Discharge from Prison/Hospital/Leaving care – 8%
- Long term homeless or sofa surfing – 3%

5.13 The largest number of presentations comes from family or relationship breakdowns; the service does not currently use mediation services. Use of mediation services is an option used by many authorities and therefore an action of this policy is to review the potential effectiveness of this in preventing homeless Action Point 6. The second main reason is where tenancies or occupations end due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. Action Points 1 and 2 will focus on partnership working to provide assistance and signposting earlier in the process to help ensure financial, welfare or housing support is in place.

5.14 During 2017/2018, 59.9% of all homeless presentations were from males – this Strategy highlights the need to further analyse the reasons why most homeless presentations and repeat applications are made by single males aged 18-35 and look at housing options for this specific group.

5.15 Significant progress has been made ensuring those leaving the care system are supported to find permanent accommodation and not referred to the Housing Options and Homeless Service. This work will continue to be developed. While there are comprehensive processes in place for those leaving care, 20% of homeless presentations in 2016/17 came from people who were care experienced in the past five years. This Strategy highlights the need for further prevention work to support care leavers in their permanent accommodation and create stronger links with Children and Young Persons Services to have a partnership approach. 2018 is the year of the Young Person in Scotland and this strategy recognises the importance of young people and their right to thrive and have all opportunities available to them. The Housing Options and Homeless Service needs to engage with young people better, not only to those who have been affected by homelessness in the past but to educate young people on housing issues.

5.16 The Homeless Service Improvement Plan has previously identified the need to develop a Prison Discharge and Hospital Discharge housing protocol. The Scottish Prison Service launched SHORE (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone) in 2017, which included a commitment to finding Housing solutions for those leaving prison. The Homeless Prison Discharge protocol will be developed to compliment SHORE and review the Housing Options for prisoners at the start of sentences as well as planning for release.

Chart 2: Prison, Hospital and Children’s Local Authority Care Discharges to Homeless – Applications Received 2016/2017

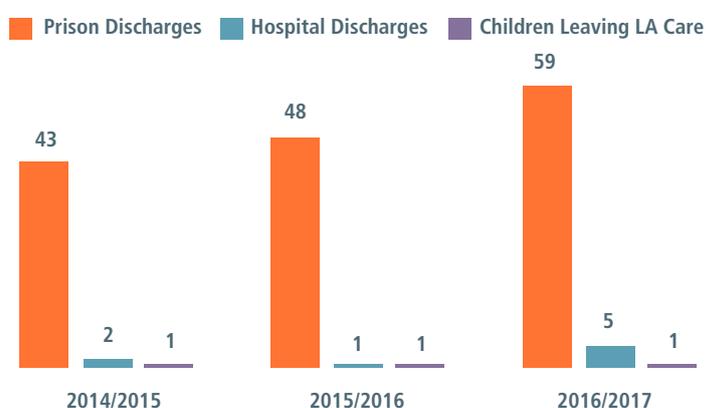
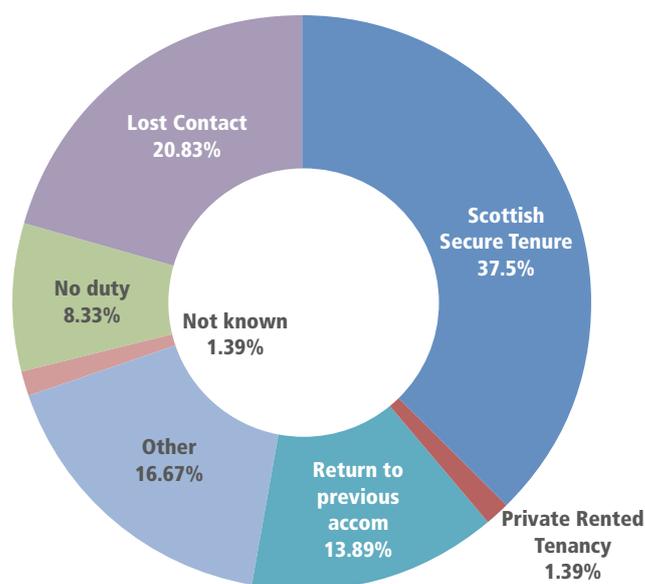


Chart 3: Prison Discharge Homeless Cases (%) – Outcomes 2016/2017



5.17 The Housing Options and Homeless Service receives homeless applications from MAPPA clients (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements). Homeless Officers work closely with the Offending Management Unit within Police Scotland to carry out environmental risk assessments when housing MAPPA clients. Continued partnership working with the South West Scotland MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group, Police Scotland and Scottish Prison Services will ensure MAPPA clients are housed and monitored appropriately within communities.

5.18 The Hospital Discharge Housing protocol will also be developed in partnership with Health and Social care partners and emergency hospital services. **Action Point 7**

Theme 2 Outcome: Introduce a new Housing Options approach with partners focusing on early prevention

Theme 2 Outcome: Introduce a new Housing Options approach with partners focusing on early prevention	
Actions	
Action Point 1	Implement a Housing Options framework in line with the Scottish Government guidance and in partnership with stakeholders to provide a standardised approach for key partners in Dumfries and Galloway
Action Point 2	Review the delivery model of Housing Options to ensure resources are adequately dedicated to prevention work across the partnership
Action Point 3	Review awareness of the Housing Options services available and work with partners to promote this to potential service users at an early stage.
Action Point 4	Continue to develop the work of the Strategic Homeless Forum to assist in shaping Housing Options and Homeless Services. Reviewing membership on a regular basis to ensure key stakeholders are represented.
Action Point 5	Review the causes of repeat homelessness and develop actions to address the underlying issues.
Action Point 6	Review the need for and potential effectiveness of mediation services
Action Point 7	Develop protocols which address the needs of particular groups including Young People, Prisoners, and Hospital discharge and leaving care.



6. Theme 3 - Temporary Accommodation

6.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 requires local authorities to provide temporary accommodation to all homeless applicants whilst their homeless application is being assessed. The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for all individuals presenting as homeless or those threatened with homelessness. Unintentional homeless cases will be supported into permanent accommodation and those found intentionally homeless will be assisted to find alternative accommodation.

6.2 The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014, which requires local authorities to ensure that homeless households with children and pregnant women are not placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation unless exceptional circumstances apply. To ensure the local authority complies with its statutory duty, a 3 year Temporary Accommodation Policy will be developed from 2018. **Action Point 1**

6.3 The Temporary Accommodation Policy will have 4 strategic aims:-

- Provision of a wide range of temporary accommodation options for clients across Dumfries and Galloway which meets the needs of homeless households;
- That temporary accommodation is of an appropriate standard and quality to meet the needs of homeless households;
- Effective management of temporary accommodation, which reflects service users views and ensures Best Value for Dumfries and Galloway Council;
- The appropriate information, support and contact is provided to homeless households in temporary accommodation

6.4 As a stock transfer authority, Dumfries and Galloway Council does not own housing stock, therefore the Temporary Accommodation stock needs to be procured. The current provision is as follows:

- Leased from RSLs - 73 properties
- Leased from Private - 72 properties
- Local Authority Hostel, managed by a third party – 1 property
- Accommodation, purchased on a 'spot-purchase' basis – 60 spaces
- Accommodation with Support procured from Housing Support funding– 77 spaces
- Refuge Accommodation procured from Housing Support funding – 16 spaces

6.5 Much of the current provision has been in place for over ten years which falls short of guidance recommendation to rotate temporary accommodation on a planned basis. Feedback during consultation was some accommodation standards could be improved:

Quote from a Service User

“Cold – nice enough flat but freezing, often stayed with a friend to keep warm. Had a portable radiator from my support provider to keep warm” (Service User with Housing Support in Place).

This information supports the need to review the current accommodation and to factor in issues such as: cost, heating, insulation, security, furnishings and general living conditions.

6.6 As part of the new Temporary Accommodation Plan the service will implement a programme of rotation and more innovative ways of introducing new properties into the available stock for Homeless clients. Part of the new approach will include the potential to convert some temporary accommodation to permanent homes for service users where it is deemed appropriate.

Quote from a Service User

“If I could afford it, at the time, I would have stayed longer if I’m honest, I could have kept it but I was given somewhere else and that was fine but I got settled in and everything. (In temporary accommodation).

6.7 There has been an ongoing reduction in the number of people requiring temporary accommodation. The reduced numbers have led to several leases being terminated therefore reducing the overall stock and associated costs. Detailed below is the average number of service users recorded in temporary accommodation over the past four years.

Table 5 HL3- no of service users in Temporary Accommodation

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Average no of service users	274	265	239	214

A number of temporary accommodation leases have been in place for a significant period of time and need to be reviewed. There has been an ad hoc process of terminating temporary accommodation leases for the past few years, however a full review of the stock, including demand and needs assessment, and a costs analysis will be undertaken. **Action Point 2**

6.8 A significant portion of the costs of providing temporary accommodation is met through Housing Benefit and the associated subsidy arrangements. However the ongoing changes due to Welfare Reform continue to impact on these costs. Any future procurement will take account of the changing funding arrangements for temporary and supported accommodation. This will ensure the cost to the local authority is minimised. **Action Point 3**

6.9 Service Users have indicated that time spent in certain types of temporary accommodation has been beneficial in assisting them to move to and sustain permanent accommodation.

Quote from a Service User

“I needed that time to get a grip of everything; I could’ve done with longer if I’m honest”

While it is a key aim to minimise the length of time spent in temporary accommodation, it is important to assess the client’s needs and tailor placements to enhance the prospect of successful permanent

housing allocations which are sustainable. In 2016 service users in Dumfries and Galloway spent an average of 109 days in temporary accommodation; the Scottish national average is 97 days. **Action Point 4**

6.10 One of the barriers identified to accessing temporary accommodation, was the cost where a service user is not eligible for Housing Benefit. Service users who were working during their time in temporary accommodation stated that the costs were unmanageable and they were left with little disposable income after paying rent, service charges and higher heating costs. The review of temporary accommodation includes the funding model and will explore the potential and affordability of reducing the current charges. **Action Point 5**

6.11 Feedback from service users has highlighted areas for concern including stigmatisation, and anti-social behaviour. The Temporary Accommodation Policy will include the development of quality standards. The commitment is to provide good quality, affordable accommodation for service users to ensure they are treated with dignity and respect. Allocation of temporary accommodation will meet the health and safety needs of service users. Links will be formalised with Police Scotland, Criminal Justice, and Anti-Social Behaviour teams to address and deal with any issues that arise.

6.12 The temporary accommodation policy will take into account the demand from groups such as MAPPAs clients, clients with disabilities or chronic health needs and ensure the temporary accommodation stock is in place to meet their needs. Dumfries and Galloway is a large rural area which presents significant challenges in providing temporary accommodation across the region which meets the needs of everyone. The review of Temporary Accommodation will assess the trends in demand to allow the re-procurement of accommodation in those areas where current or future demand is predicted. This will allow the service to be as flexible as possible in finding temporary accommodation as close as possible to the place of choice of the service users.

Temporary Accommodation Key Outcome and Actions

Theme 3 Outcome: Provide good quality affordable accommodation	
Actions	
Action Point 1	Develop a 3 year Temporary Accommodation Policy including Temporary Accommodation Standards
Action Point 2	Re-procurement of Temporary Accommodation following completion of analysis of the current provision and Homeless service demands
Action Point 3	Review the impact of Welfare Reform on the costs of procuring temporary accommodation
Action Point 4	Work with partners to identify housing outcomes to reduce the length of time in temporary accommodation, and taking account of customer needs
Action Point 5	Review of current temporary accommodation charging models to assess the financial affordability of reducing the levels of rent charged to service users.



7. Theme 4 – Service User Outcomes

7.1 Positive Service User outcomes are at the heart of the Housing Options and Homeless Service. To reinforce this, service standards have been introduced which provide clear guidance on the level of service that partners and service users can expect. The standards cover clear and transparent decision-making, thorough and quick assessments, providing support and assisting people to find the correct housing solutions.

7.2 In 2016/17, 820 Homeless applications were made and 91.4% were assessed within four weeks: this is a significant improvement from 73.7% in 2015/16 and 68% in 2014/15. As assessments rely on the provision of information from service users it is accepted that a 100% target is likely to be unachievable. The Service will aim to achieve 95% of all assessments made in 28 days or earlier where possible. The national Scottish average in 2016/17 was 87.8%, therefore the Service is currently operating at above the national average.

7.3 To ensure the Service continues to improve, a programme of continuous review and development is now in place. This will involve reviewing all procedures and practices to develop a customer focused approach. The Service will ensure it understands and maps positive destinations for service users. One of the processes to be reviewed will be the appeals process to ensure targets are being met and changes are being made to reduce the overall number of appeals being received. The Service aims to make the correct decision in the first instance, by ensuring all information needed is gathered as the initial contact. **Action Point 1.**

7.4 The implementation of a new Homeless IT System will assist with the redevelopment of procedures and processes. The current multiple systems are inefficient and do not have easy access to performance information, the new IT system will reduce the level of manual intervention and provide better information to inform service changes and support homeless staff to deliver the service. **Action Point 2.**

7.5 The Common Housing Register (CHR) assists in Homeless clients obtaining permanent housing. Until October 2017 the local CHR consisted of four Registered Social Landlords, Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP), Loreburn Housing Association, Home Group (Scotland) and Irvine Housing Association. From October 2017, Loreburn is no longer a full member of the CHR and new partners Cunninghame Housing Association has joined. Cunninghame is currently in the process of planning and developing new housing in Dumfries and Galloway.

Table 6. RSLs and Number of Properties

Registered Social Landlord	Number of Properties	Planned build over 5 years*
DGHP	10,300	401
Loreburn Housing Association	2,500	307
Irvine Housing Association	393	0
Home Group (Scotland)	568	0
Cunninghame Housing Association	0	528

*Information as at 31st March 2018 from the Strategic Housing Investment Plan

7.6 From October 2017, Loreburn Housing Association properties are let via 'Choice Based Lettings'. The Housing Options and Homeless Service will work closely with Loreburn and continue to develop positive outcomes for service users through Choice Based Lettings.

7.7 The CHR partnership has resulted in 31% of all lets made available going to Homeless clients in 2016/17 which was an improvement from 2015/16 at 23%. From 2017/18 onwards the target has been increased to 40%, this target is also accepted by Loreburn Housing Association through Choice Based Lettings.

Action Point 3.

7.8 It is recognised that there are a number of service users who are affected by serious vulnerabilities such as mental health, drug and alcohol addictions and those multiple excluded from accessing services. For some of these clients, a tenancy in mainstream housing is often not the most appropriate solution. The Homeless service works jointly with the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board and the Adult Supported Accommodation Residential Placement Panel for some clients housing need. However there remain a number of clients whose needs are not met by the current available housing models in Dumfries and Galloway

7.9 There are a number of projects nationally that are developing options for people with particular needs. Housing First is a current model which has been adopted by a number of local authorities in Scotland and offers permanent accommodation to individuals in chronic need without requiring them to go through the formal homelessness system waiting lists, hostels and temporary accommodation. Under Housing First there is no requirement for the homeless person to be "housing ready" or to have addressed their addiction problems before moving into a permanent home and sustaining it. Health and addiction issues are addressed after housing has been secured, and intensive, open ended support is provided to help the person to maintain their tenancy. Alternative housing models including Housing First will be explored as a potential option for Dumfries and Galloway. **Action Point 4.**

7.10 The ongoing Welfare Reform changes have been a focal point for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Welfare Reform can be one of the most significant factors for individuals falling into rent arrears and subsequently losing tenancies due to financial difficulties.

7.11 The service will continue to work in partnership with both internal and external agencies to mitigate the impacts of Welfare Reform. This mitigation work includes working with the Welfare Support team to maximise the use of the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent homelessness or to assist clients settle into new accommodation. A joint approach by this team and

the Housing Options and Homeless service will ensure there is a collaborative approach to tackling Homeless prevention by the Council. **Action Point 5.**

7.12 There is a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance (Housing Support), and it is clear that the timing of this is crucial to ensure the needs of service users are met. The Strategy recognises that early intervention and Housing Support is crucial to reduce homelessness. However the application of Housing Support is also crucial to ensuring someone settles into their tenancy, enabling them to sustain a permanent home.

Quote from a Service User

“The Council needs to support people after they get a house. Not enough understanding of mental health, it takes a priority. My mind set was not good; a follow up or something afterwards would help to make sure it’s going to plan”.

Service users have emphasised the need for continued housing support to help them sustain tenancies and to assist in changing behaviours long term (for example debt/money management, life skills and paying bills).

7.13 The commitment is therefore to work with Housing Support providers to ensure support for clients who move to permanent accommodation continues to help them maintain tenancies. This will include post-tenancy checks to ensure they continue to manage in their tenancy for up to 12 months or beyond if needed.

7.14 A partnership approach is vital to ensure the correct support choices for individuals. Joint working with Social Work Services will ensure those clients who need more enhanced support are assisted in accessing self-directed support. **Action Point 6.**

7.15 Individuals with lived experiences, of the Housing Options and Homeless Service, are invaluable to help shape service delivery. A priority within the Homeless Strategy is to be open, accessible and responsive to service users and the wider public. Service users have

indicated that they are eager to continue to assist with the shaping of service delivery. Service users want to share feedback on their lived experiences of homelessness overall and assist in removing barriers and ‘branding/stereotyping’ homeless individuals. Engagement with service users will be integral to the ongoing development of policies and strategies.

Quote from a Service User

“The size of the town (Dumfries), you don’t see it (homelessness). In the media and news, for those who are homeless in society, they are still seen as the dregs of society, spongers, wasters, whatever you want to say. I never, not ever, thought I would go that way (become homeless) sleep rough and everything on top of that. Me and my family experienced it, we went through it together and we know it could happen to anyone. It shouldn’t matter where you come from, you shouldn’t be put to the side because you’ve been in a bad way. I got help so if I can get to that stage then anyone can...I can’t thank them enough”.

7.16 A Homeless Customer Engagement Plan is now in place to ensure that feedback from those who access the service can shape future delivery. New customer satisfaction surveys are in place to gather information from service users. The information obtained from this will be presented regularly to the Homeless Forum to highlight any areas where improvement is needed, whilst continuing to keep channels of communication open with current and past homeless service users.

Action Point 7.

7.17 The current customer satisfaction levels reported through the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) is that 91% are satisfied with temporary accommodation. The new customer surveys will widen the feedback and breakdown areas to cover access to the service, outcomes, and temporary accommodation.

Theme 4 – Outcome: Ensuring excellence in customer service is at the centre of everything we do

Actions	
Action Point 1	A review of Housing Options and Homeless Service internal policies and procedures to ensure assessment, application and appeal targets are being met.
Action Point 2	Implementing a new IT system to support housing options information and homeless application processing, supporting performance management and reporting to allow service improvements to be monitored and evidenced.
Action Point 3	Ensure partnership with RSL's to monitor and continually review the allocation percentage to Homeless clients reflects service demand.
Action Point 4	Review Housing models that would meet the need of Homeless service users with particular needs, including Housing First.
Action Point 5	Develop processes to maximise the use of available funding to support positive outcomes for service users Continue to work closely with Council services and external partners to maximise the use of discretionary funds.
Action Point 6	Review Housing Support currently being delivered and make assessments on what is required to ensure prevention of homelessness and sustainment of tenancies.
Action Point 7	The development of a Customer Engagement Plan to ensure the service is interactive and inclusive with customer engagement to address areas of improvement and keeping channels of communication open and clear.

Summary Action Plan

Theme 1 Access to Housing Options and Homeless Services - Provide a consistent and accessible service across the region				
Action Point	Actions / Milestones	Responsible Service /Officer	Performance Outcome	Due date
1. Review and update contact methods including Housing Options self-service portal, phone interviews, and home visits for Service Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and develop new communication methods and formats i.e. text, online chat, large print, languages, easy read etc. Develop Customer Service initial contact scripts to record details of Homeless service contacts and signposting information for general enquires. 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Options and Homeless Service Communication Plan Contact scripts developed for recording and signposting (Homeless Staff, CSCs and other front line Council staff) 	31 Mar 2019
		Customer Services		31 Mar 2019
2. Review current Housing Options and Homeless Service information held online and in other formats to ensure Service User needs are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create information pack for partners, containing Housing Options advice and signposting information Add Frequently Asked Questions to website Ensure information displayed and on websites is reviewed on a regular basis Include with Customer Survey Questionnaires online. Report outcomes from customer feedback 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Pack content to be agreed at Homeless Forum/ Housing Options Sub Group, including alternative formats Website holds up to date information and FAQ's on live website – monitoring and review dates agreed Customer surveys monitored and feedback published online 	31 Mar 2019
		Communications		31 Mar 2019
		Communications		31 Mar 2020
		Housing Options and Homeless Service		
3. Ensure customers are given appointments:- The same day where 'roofless' Within 1 day where they are at threat of Homelessness Within 5 days where no threat of Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise Service Standards and appointment times Management of performance data from new IT system to monitor timescales on appointments 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Standards compiled, publicised and displayed as widely as possible. Performance data produced and monitored 	30 Jun 2018
		Housing Options and Homeless Service		31 Mar 2019

<p>4. Review resources available internally and externally across the region to ensure homeless service user needs are met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless staffing restructure • Explore options for Housing Options and Homeless service surgeries outwit the existing 4 mains offices • Availability of staff in more remote areas and home visits 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Housing Options and Homeless Service Organisational structure in place. • Information available to support or oppose initiative to offer homeless surgeries and home visiting 	<p>31 May 2018</p> <p>31 Oct 2019</p> <p>31 Mar 2019</p>
<p>5. Improve the recording of Housing Options and ensure all intervention work is being reported to the Scottish Government through PREVENT1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop online Housing Options module in the new Homeless system • Develop new Housing Options Framework to include partners and improve recording on all intervention work 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p> <p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Options service available on council website publicly • Housing Options Framework has been written and agreed with homeless partners – outline has been shared and training delivered to staff and partners 	<p>31 Oct 219</p> <p>31 Dec 2018</p>
<p>6. Ensure appropriate training and support is in place for all staff and shared with partners where appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training needs analysis for internal staff and partners to identify skills and knowledge gaps. • Redeveloped procedures shared with key partners and other council departments (where necessary) to increase knowledge of processes and practices. Involve staff and partners with service developments 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p> <p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training arranged and successfully completed to all staff and relevant partners • Partners communicated on new/amended policies and procedures • Staff and partners involved with all developments and subsequent questions answered as required 	<p>31 Mar 2020</p> <p>31 Mar 2020</p> <p>31 Mar 2020</p>
<p>7. Develop a structured partnership approach across health and social care and 3rd Sector to ensure need is identified as early as possible, and there is clear ownership to achieve positive outcomes for service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance existing and develop new clear referral pathways with partners • Develop a multi-agency process for dealing with complex exceptional cases 	<p>Health and Social Care Integrated Joint Board</p> <p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner pathways have been established and communicated • Multi-agency process and/ or team outlined for future complex homeless cases who cross services/organisations 	<p>31 Mar 2023</p> <p>31 Mar 2021</p>
<p>8. Review provision of out of hours for homelessness including the potential for a wider partnership approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include review of accommodation available for out of hours • Review partnership approach to out of hours support to access accommodation 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p> <p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of Hours policy and procedure in place and staff fully trained • Partnership approach to out of hours emergency accommodation has been agreed or declined 	<p>31 Mar 2021</p> <p>31 Mar 2021</p>

Theme 2 Homeless Prevention				
Action Point	Actions / Milestones	Responsible Service /Officer	Performance Measure	Due date
1. Implementation of a Housing Options framework in line with the Scottish Government guidance and in partnership with stakeholders to provide a standardised approach for key partners in Dumfries and Galloway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Options framework agreed by Homeless Forum and Housing Options – Sub Group Agreed framework delivered and publicised in key community areas i.e. schools, community GP's and Housing Support providers etc. 	Homeless Forum/ Housing Options - Sub Group Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of agreed framework Distribution of framework and documentation to key partners 	31 Mar 2019 31 Mar 2020
2. Review the delivery model of Housing Options to ensure resources are adequately dedicated to prevention work across the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early intervention with Section 11 cases Early notification and intervention on ASP cases. Develop an early notification process for intervention where tenancies are at threat 	Housing Options and Homeless Service Social Work Services Registered Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance monitoring through PREVENT1 and internal reporting tools Recording and monitoring of outcomes from early interventions 	31 Mar 2020 31 Mar 2021
3. Review awareness of the Housing Options services available and work with partners to promote this to potential service users at an early stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review awareness of Housing Options with particular groups: i.e. young people, minority groups etc. Publicise Housing Options (online, publications, leaflets act) to provide a clear overview of what Housing Options 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued attendance at various cross-service and partner groups Service users have a clear understanding of Housing Options (for example: evidenced in exit surveys) 	31 Mar 2023 31 Mar 2023

4. Continue to develop the work of the Strategic Homeless Forum to assist in shaping Housing Options and Homeless Services. Reviewing membership on a regular basis to ensure key stakeholders are represented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of membership and forum • Increase circulation of minutes from meetings to all partners • Have topical speakers for future forum 'topics' 	Homeless Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Forum continues with all relevant stakeholders included • Staff and other stakeholders better informed of discussions occurring at the Homeless Forum • Homeless Forum attendance continues to be full and topical subjects discussed from relevant organisations 	31 Mar 2019
		Housing Options and Homeless Service		31 Mar 2019
				31 Mar 2019
5. Review the causes of repeat homelessness and develop actions to address the underlying issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the underlying reasons for repeat homelessness. • Review Housing Support services to target service users at risk of not maintaining new tenancies 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher levels of tenancy sustainment • Improved understanding of the causes of repeat homeless • Repeat Homeless in Dumfries and Galloway reduced to below the national average 	31 Mar 2020
		Housing Support Providers		31 Oct 2018 31 Mar 2019
6. Review the need for and potential effectiveness of mediation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research other Local Authorities use of mediation: successes/ failings • Organise staff training from Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women (awareness when to use mediation service and when is not an option) 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking of other similar LA's to weigh positives and negatives of mediation use – to support future exploration of the methodology and services available • Homeless Operational staff trained on DAVAW (Domestic Violence Against Women) 	31 Mar 2020 31 Mar 2019
7. Develop protocols which address the needs of particular groups including young people, prisoners, hospital discharge and leaving care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison Discharge Protocol: • Develop the standards set out in 'SHORE' in the Prison Discharge protocol • Linking South West Scotland MAPPAs Strategic Oversight Group objectives with the developed protocol • Engagement with Police Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway Local Policing Plan 2017-2020) and the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison Discharge protocol developed which sets out processes for sustainable housing options prior to imprisonment and on release • Links with MAPPAs objectives • Improved links with Police Scotland (Dumfries), Scottish Prison Service and the Courts 	31 Mar 2019
				31 Mar 2019
				31 Mar 2020

7. Cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospital Discharge Protocol: Joint approach with Health and Social Care professionals 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p> <p>Health and Social Care Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in presentations to Homeless from hospital discharges 	31 Mar 2020
7.Cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care experienced and Young Persons Protocol: Work with CYPLL partners to develop Housing Options and Homeless processes specifically for young people and those who are care experienced 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p> <p>CYPLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the main causes of homelessness for young people Reduce the number of Homeless presentations from under 25 year olds 	<p>31 Mar 2020</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>

Theme 3 Temporary Accommodation				
Action Point	Actions / Milestones	Responsible Service /Officer	Performance Measure	Due date
1. Develop a 3 year Temporary Accommodation Policy including Temporary Accommodation Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of temporary accommodation – furnished/unfurnished/disabled needs/family units/ range supported accommodation needs Includes and meets location needs of clients Review of costs Service Standards in line with Shelter Scotland Health and safety needs of service users/ environmental scan 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	Temporary accommodation review complete	30 Jun 2018
			Service User Needs Assessment carried out	30 Jun 2018
			Cost analysis complete and new cost proposals produced	30 Jun 2018
			Service Standards agreed and shared	31 Oct 2018
			Environmental scan and health and safety assessment complete	31 Oct 2018
2. Re-procurement of Temporary Accommodation following completion of the analysis of the current provision and Homeless service demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope new temporary accommodation requirements Work with procurement to develop new specifications Tender for new accommodation Work with existing providers to develop options Award new contracts 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	Current contracts ended	31 Mar 2019
			New contracts awarded	01 Apr 2019
3. Review the impact of Welfare Reform on the costs of procuring temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for clients on benefits and in work Review of service charges 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	Service Charge and Rental	31 Oct 2018
			Cost analysis carried out	
4. Work with partners to identify housing outcomes to reduce the length of time in temporary accommodation, and taking account of customer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review ASARPP access and referral arrangements Monitoring of CHR and CBL allocations Explore other RSL options to discharge homeless duty Set target annually of improving on Scottish average. 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	Monitor length of time in temporary accommodation	Ongoing
			Review of percentage of allocations to Homeless clients	Annual
			Allocation monitoring	Ongoing
			Monitor of all 'discharge of duty' options	Ongoing
5. Review of current temporary accommodation charging models to assess the financial affordability of reducing the levels of rent charged to service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking of other local authorities Develop a cost model 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	Benchmarking and findings reviewed	30 Jul 2018
			Cost model developed	

Theme 4		Service User Outcomes		
Action Point	Actions / Milestones	Responsible person / service	• Performance Measure	Due date
1. A review of Housing Options and Homeless Service internal policies and procedures to ensure assessment, application and appeal targets are being met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required procedures detailed and reviewed with the implementation of new IT and system Appeals Procedure detailed Key performance indicators highlighted and linked to staff performance monitoring 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of new IT processes New appeals procedure detailed and recording measures in place Service indicators recorded and staff 1-2-1's detail performance information at an individual level 	30 Nov 2018 30 Nov 2018 31 Mar 2019
2. Implementing a new IT system to support housing options information and homeless application processing, supporting performance management and reporting to allow service improvements to be monitored and evidenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New system configuration User end testing of configuration Live deployment and staff/user training Live system Decommissioning of legacy systems 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live operation of new system Access to legacy systems 	30 Nov 2018
3. Ensure partnership with RSL's to monitor and continually review the allocation percentage to Homeless clients reflects service demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of % allocation targets Engage with Loreburn Housing Association to monitor effect of Choice Based Lettings 	Housing Options and Homeless Service Common Housing Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of allocations to homelessness 	30 Jun 2018
4. Review Housing models that would meet the need of Homeless service users with particular needs, including Housing First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review commissioning and partnership approach Include benchmarking Explore alternative Housing models Review of Supported Accommodation needs 	Housing Options and Homeless Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes of reviews presented to elected members for decision Partnership approach to developing housing models Alternative models developed and delivered 	31 Mar 2019 31 Mar 2020 31 Mar 2023

<p>5. Develop processes to maximise the use of available funding to support positive outcomes for service users. Continue to work closely with Council Services and external partners to maximise the use of discretionary funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dumfries Customer hub development with key partners • Closer working with Welfare support – access to DHP / SWF / HB • Develop CSC closer working for initial contacts • Community resilience – work with ward officers on awareness of housing options and homelessness 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p> <p>Financial Well-being and Revenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Hub progressed • Closer working links developed and joint review meetings • Closer CSC Ties established and review meetings set • Links set up with community resilience ward workers 	<p>31 Mar 2019</p> <p>31 Mar 2019</p> <p>31 Mar 2019</p> <p>31 Mar 2020</p>
<p>6. Review Housing Support currently being delivered and make assessments on what is required to ensure prevention of homelessness and sustainment of tenancies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Housing Support once clients leave temp accommodation • Monitoring outcome based / measuring hard and soft outcomes for service users 	<p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased tenancy sustainment levels and reduction of repeat homelessness • Outcome monitoring in place 	<p>31 Mar 2020</p> <p>31 Mar 2021</p>
<p>7. The development of a Customer Engagement Strategy to ensure the service is interactive and inclusive with customer engagement to address areas of improvement and keeping channels of communication open and clear</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a minimum of services user survey returns and ensure feedback on engagement– you said / we did • Commitment to work with CYPLL and focus on prevention work for young people • Commitment to work with established service user groups and our partners to access service users and “at risk” groups • Publication of service user survey outcomes annually / and action plan to address issues 	<p>Homeless Forum members and partners</p> <p>Housing Options and Homeless Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Survey uptake and survey analysis reported in the ARC • The Customer Engagement Plan ‘Actions’ will be agreed and reviewed • Review of the Customer Engagement Plan 	<p>31 Mar 2018</p> <p>31 Mar 2019</p> <p>31 Mar 2020</p>

Glossary of Terms

Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategy 2017-2020

Setting out the outcomes and targets across treatments and recovery focused services in Dumfries and Galloway

Annual Return of the Charter (ARC)

A Landlord's year's report, sent to the Scottish Housing Regulator showing performance, standards and outcomes

Anti-Poverty Strategy 2015-2020

Sets out Dumfries and Galloway Council's objectives in tackling poverty

Choice-based letting (Loreburn Housing Association)

Allowing customers to bid for available properties themselves rather than waiting to be offered a tenancy by an RSL

Common Housing Register (CHR)

The common housing register for Dumfries and Galloway is 'Homes4D&G' encompassing DGHP, Irvine Housing Association, Home Group (Scotland) Ltd and Cunninghame Housing Association (as of September 2017)

Council Plan 2017-2022

Dumfries and Galloway Council's five year plan which sets out its Vision, the 4 key 'Priorities' and Commitments.

Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2018

Setting out local priorities, themes and strategic partners when addressing Community Justice Outcomes

Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2016-2019

The set out cases for change, key challenges, priority areas of focus and Integration Joint Board commitments for health and social care services

Housing First

A recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed

Housing Need

The need for housing of the right size and type to meet the requirements of a single person or a group of people, including the needs of disabled or older people

Housing Options

A free and accessible advice and information service delivered by the local authority, consisting of: homelessness and the prevention of homelessness and any services which may assist a homeless person or assist in the prevention of homelessness

Housing Support

Externally commissioned services to assist, advise and engage people in relation to the Housing Support Duty

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00423606.pdf>

Local Housing Strategy (LHS)

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is a local authority's strategic plan for housing in its area

PREVENT1

Statistics reporting on the impact of housing options work submitted to the Scottish Government

Section 5 referral

A RSL's duty to give due priority of housing to homelessness individuals when allocating permanent accommodation

Section 11

The notification to the local authority that Landlords must give when they raise proceedings for possession of a tenancy (eviction proceedings)

Strategic Homeless Forum

Multi-agency partnership of services and organisations who can assist in tackling homelessness

Stock Transfer

The transfer of council owned housing stock to Registered Social Landlord(s)

Abbreviations

ASARPP

Adult Supported Accommodation and Residential Placement Panel

CBL

Choice-based lettings (Loreburn Housing Association)

COSLA

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

CSC

Customer Service Centre (Dumfries and Galloway Council)

CYPLL

Children Young People and Life-long learning (D&G Council)

DHP

Discretionary Housing Payment

HB

Housing Benefit

LA

Local Authority

LDP

Local Development Plan

LHS

Local Housing Strategy

LOIP

Local Outcome Improvement Plan

RSL

Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association)

SHORE

Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (Prisons)

SHIP

Strategic Housing Investment Plan

SHR

Scottish Housing Regulator

SWF

Scottish Welfare Fund

Monitoring and Review

The Homeless Strategy Action Plan will be monitored through the Councils Performance Management framework and be subject to performance reports to the Communities Committee. .

If you wish for further information on this strategy and homelessness in Dumfries and Galloway, or wish to comment - please contact the Homeless Housing Options and Homeless Service: contact@dumgal.gov.uk

If you would like some help understanding this document or need it in another format please contact 030 33 33 3000

For further information please contact us at:

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Housing Options and Homeless Service

Queensberry Square

Dumfries

DG1 1BF

Telephone: 030 33 33 3000

Offices are open: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Website: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15280/Help-for-homeless-people>

**If you would like some help understanding this or need it
in another format please contact 030 33 33 3000**