Sefton Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 Action Plan	

Document Change History

Revision	Date	Status	Change(s)	Author(s)
0.1	04/07/2018	Draft	First Draft	Allan Glennon
0.2	12/11/2018	Draft	Strategy No. 2.2, RAG rating & Who column added	Graham Parry
0.3	17/01/2019	Draft	Layout altered and LCR CA section added (section 6)	Graham Parry

Review

This document has been agreed by the following:

Service Manager, Housing and Investment services

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Project and work-stream aims & objectives

The focus of this project is about putting a series of measures in place in order to improve how homelessness is tackled in Sefton. The principle guidelines to do this are taken from Sefton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2018-2023 (adopted January 2019).

Background

With many public services facing budgetary reductions it is more important now than ever that we make the most of the services that we provide. There are numerous distinct services that focus on supporting people who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless that are delivered by the Council, by services commissioned by the Council or through the work of our partners.



The Council has begun to implement a new Locality Working Model that will see a range of Council services come together and work more closely to support people earlier to meet their needs sooner. However, this new model can only be successful with the support of our partners. Working in partnership not only increases the chances of achieving better outcomes for people but can also help limit strains on resources and reduce duplication.

Increasing access to good housing and reducing homelessness are key elements of measuring the success of the Locality Working Model. This, along with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (April 2018), presents an opportunity to review the service offer to ensure we are achieving the best possible outcomes for our clients.

The scope of our approach includes:

- Measuring the current and future likely levels of homelessness
- Resource activities to tackle homelessness
- Preventing homelessness
- Securing accommodation for people who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness
- Supporting people who are, or have been homeless (including those sleeping rough)

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Act came into effect in April 2018, and includes several changes to the way that people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are supported. Some of the key changes include:

- Improving the advice and information available about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness
- Extending the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 days to 56 days
- Introducing new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible people, regardless
 of priority need, intentionality (and local connection)
- Introducing assessments and personalised housing plans, setting out the actions housing authorities and individuals will take to secure accommodation
- Encouraging public bodies to work together to prevent and relieve homelessness through a duty to refer

In order for Sefton, not only to comply, but to make the new Act work for our residents we will need to ensure that there is effective communication regarding the changes to the Act, culture change to improve the quality of assessments and plans and more joined up working with partners. This will ensure that we achieve better, sustained outcomes for our clients.



The Approach to Delivering Agreed Change & Approved Outcomes.

Items in italics are extracted from the Sefton Homeless Strategy 2018-2023.

Strategy No.	What does success look like? (objective)	What will we look at? (Scope – work package)	What will we deliver or produce to ensure success - (product)	Who	Timeframe	Current Outcome Assessment
1. M	leasuring the current and future	likely levels of homelessness				
1.1	Publish an annual report explaining the current levels of homelessness, to aid elected councillor and chief officer decision making	Carry out an in-depth analysis of data collected by the Homelessness Case Level Information Classification monitoring system (H-CLIC).	Completed May 2019 and approved by Cabinet Member 6.6.19. Shared with partners and published online. Request to send to Overview & Scrutiny as an example of good practice. Next Annual Report to be prepared in May 2020.	Local Housing Authority	June 2019	
1.2	Commission an external audit of Sefton Council's Homelessness Service to ensure it represents best value, is efficient in the administration of statutory duties and offers quality advice and assistance. This could be carried after the Council's new Localities service arrangements have become operational for a reasonable period	Arrange for inspection against the following themes: 1) Accessibility 2) Diversity 3) Homelessness prevention, housing advice and options 4) Homelessness applications 5) Temporary accommodation 6) Resources		Local Housing Authority	June 2020	



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1.3	Introduce a homelessness impact assessment to be carried-out on all policies adopted by public authorities in Sefton, to ensure all local plans actively contribute to the reduction of homelessness	Adapt current practices for carrying out equalities impact assessment, to focus on key causes of homelessness, (i) child poverty, (ii) labour market factors, (iii) housing market factors		Local Housing Authority, Children Services, Public Authorities	June 2021	
1.4	Improved system of evidencing the outcomes and results from homelessness prevention activities	Introduce a new IT system to capture prevention outcomes accomplished by public authorities and voluntary organisations (publish in the annual report – see 1.1)	Jigsaw IT system now in place. Use of data captured in this system. Annual report shows levels of prevention work carried out by HOT (see 1.1)	Local Housing Authority, Public Authorities, Voluntary Organisations	June 2022	
2. R 2.1	esource activities to tackle hom Make best use of national and local government funding for tackling homelessness, to drive-up quality, value and effectiveness of outcomes in tackling homelessness	elessness Establish a joint commissioning arrangement for funding for activities to tackle homelessness by pooling commissioning budgets, merge contracts, and align tendering of service provision, and jointly appraise service delivery. (EIP1 Acute wrap around review)	EIP Acute wrap around review has begun. Recommissioning of homeless related services with public health. (March 2020) £262m of new funding to expand drug and alcohol treatment for people experiencing rough sleeping or at risk of experiencing rough sleeping to be allocated to local authorities through Public Health England over the next 4 years.	Local Housing Authority, Social Services, Children Services, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership	March 2019	



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2.2	Make best use of external funding opportunities	Make bids for external funding opportunities for the delivery of activities to tackle homelessness	Submission of funding bids, including: PRS Access Fund applied for Nov 18; Cold Weather Shelter funding secured for winter 18-19; Trailblazer EIP funding secured for 3 posts Jan 2019; New Burdens funding secured for 2 posts 2018-20; Rough Sleeper Initiative funding 19/20 application made Jan 2019 Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding application successful - June 2019 LGA Housing Advisors Programme bid made Sept 19 - unsuccessful Cold Weather Fund 2019 application made – Oct 2019 – successful and expanded the Sit-Up provision at Leyland Road during the winter months Feb 2020 – RSI funding 2020/21 bid successful to continue RSI & RRP funded work and expand with Somewhere Safe to Stay with a Housing Options Worker onsite; Psychology service, and, third female Navigator.	Local Housing Authority	March 2019	
2.3	Ensure adequate staffing levels to administer statutory homelessness duties	Maintain dedicated homeless officers and current number of employees contracted to administer homelessness duties and ensure management supervision of homelessness officers are the responsibility of one person once the team are deployed to work in Localities.	Localities restructure includes dedicated Housing Options staff and team Trailblazer EIP funding secured for 3 additional temp posts in 2019; New Burdens funding secured for 2 temp posts;	Local Housing Authority	October 2018 March 2019 additional posts	



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		Review the remit of Council's own temporary accommodation support posts, to focus on providing floating support to occupants of temporary accommodation.	Alternative arrangements being developed for consideration by Housing Options Manager.	Local Housing Authority	March 2019	
		Establish an additional post to co- ordinate overseeing the homelessness strategy, and all associated funding, which can also incorporate responsibilities for having oversight of the housing allocations policy and tenancy strategy.	Housing Strategy & Commissioning Officer in post September 2018	Local Housing Authority	September 2018	
2.4	Update IT hardware to allow more agile working	Provide homelessness officers with tablet devices so that the homelessness service can be taken to key locations where other public authorities or voluntary organisations provide services to those who are likely to be at risk of homelessness	Laptops now provided to enable agile working. Visits made and use of Hubs across borough in order to expand service across the borough.	Local Housing Authority	October 2018	
2.5	Carry out an annual consultation exercise with people who have experienced homelessness to ensure their knowledge helps to shape policy and practice	Undertake annual engagement with service users, to find out what works well and what could work better.	Put in place a network of lived experience service users. Consultation to be undertaken in conjunction with EIP Acute wrap-around to help inform future commissioning LCR Lived Experience Lead invited to Providers Forum and request from Providers for volunteers with lived experience.	Local Housing Authority, Social Services, Children Services, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership, Social Landlords, Others	June 2019	



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			Training package put into place in order to prepare the LE Group members to carry out consultation with people living in hostels.			
		Involve people with experience of homelessness, in the design, commissioning and contract management of homelessness services	Put in place a network of lived experience service users. To be undertaken in conjunction with EIP Acute wrap-around to help inform future commissioning LCR Lived Experience Lead invited to Providers Forum and request from Providers for volunteers with lived experience	Local Housing Authority, Social Services, Children Services, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership, Social Landlords, Others	September 2019	
2.6	Harness stakeholder enthusiasm and resources for tackling homelessness	Review membership of the existing Homelessness Forum and its Terms Of Reference to share good practice and have oversight of progress being made on delivering the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	Range of agencies/partners now invited to future forums (Lived Experience, Housing Options, Shelter, Public Health, Crisis, DWP, LCR colleagues, H/Ben). Guest speakers to be invited to help improve results/performance. Clinical Outreach Workers to be invited to the Forum. Homelessness Strategy Action Plan now reviewed at each meeting. HSBC invited to the Forum to inform of their new way of working in order to allow homeless people to open a bank account, with no ID, using just a letter of support from their support organisation. HSBC's	Local Housing Authority, Social Services, Children Services, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership, Social Landlords, Others	June 2019	



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		Coordination of volunteering opportunities from organisations and members of the public to help tackle homelessness and support individuals	Opportunities of assistance to address this issue are signposted to existing services to help support them in-line with Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy objectives – Mike Howlett Volunteering Coordinator CVS invited to Provider Forum August 2019	Local Housing Authority, Commissioned partners, Sefton CVS, Others	April 2019	
3. P	reventing Homelessness					
3.1	Prepare for commencement of the Duty to Refer	Introduce a standard mechanism to receive referrals of homelessness cases from public authorities	ALERT JIGSAW system enabled, email account set-up, website updated, advice offered to partners	Local Housing Authority, Public Authorities	September 2018	
3.2	Increase the range of early homelessness prevention activities	Review existing pathway with criminal justice agencies to prevent offenders becoming homeless following release from secure estates	Council information leaflets reviewed and cross-checked with relevant internal departments and external agencies https://www.sefton.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice.aspx Review of pathway due to begin Aug 2019 on a region wide basis with Knowsley taking the lead (HOTs and Probation/CRCs involved). In September, the LCR Homelessness Group met with Probation to start initial discussions about developing a regional pathway for prison leavers. Each LA provided an overview of their current local arrangements and the consensus is that	Local Housing Authority, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, Community Safety Partnership	December 2019	



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			this could be improved and should be consistent across all authorities. Some suggestions for a new way of working were put forward and it was agreed that these would be considered and discussed at a subsequent meeting scheduled for November 2019.			
		Review existing protocols for people leaving care against those put in place by other local authorities and Barnardo's	Council information leaflets reviewed and cross-checked with relevant internal departments and external agencies https://www.sefton.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice.aspx Meetings with Children Services have taken place November 2018 and April 2019 to strengthen pathway, including a Care Leavers SPOC within Housing Options; training on corporate parenting for Housing Options; options to utilise Trailblazer posts in terms of care leavers and reviewing whether existing Bond Schemes could be provided for care leavers and opportunities to use Homeless Prevention Fund in order to access accommodation. Region-wide MOU developed in order to deliver a protocol for young people (16 &17) to be able to access social housing	Local Housing Authority, Children Services, Voluntary Organisations	December 2019	



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		Review the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure the prevention of homelessness is suitably reflected in the document	Council information leaflets reviewed and cross-checked with relevant internal departments and external agencies https://www.sefton.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice.aspx Veterans in Sefton (ViS) linked into Emmaus with visit to establish links and start building relationship in order to nominate ViS clients into Emmaus (July 19)	Local Housing Authority, Public Authorities, Voluntary Organisations	December 2019	
		Review the existing arrangements to prevent patients from becoming homeless when leaving hospital, against guidance promoted by Department of Health	Visit to Sefton's Hospital Discharge Team to take them through Duty to Refer process and discuss possible placement of Housing Options staff (Trailblazer staff) into their team. Council information leaflets reviewed and cross-checked with relevant internal departments and external agencies https://www.sefton.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice.aspx	Local Housing Authority, NHS Trusts, Adult Social Care	December 2019	
		Publicise the outcomes being achieved with victims of domestic abuse and how this is helping to prevent homelessness	(link with 1.1) Details of Target Hardening initiatives and subsequent savings by preventing homelessness included within 2018/19 Annual Report Potential links to a region-wide funding bid made for Whole Housing support, which would introduce one-year ongoing support and access to expertise from Consortium partners around the issue of Domestic Abuse.	Local Housing Authority, Community Safety Partnership	June 2019	



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		Agree a range of collaborative activities that can both prevent social care needs arising and homelessness occurring.	Children's social care services could provide, for example, future projections of young people leaving care who are likely to require accommodation and support, families provided with accommodation who are ineligible for assistance (some of which might become eligible), and the numbers of safeguarding alerts involving domestic abuse, poor housing conditions or other factors that might indicate a need for homelessness assistance.	Local Housing Authority, Children Services Authority	June 2019	
		Develop a range of activities to prevent homelessness for people who have poor health outcomes, especially people who misuse alcohol and/or drugs and have mental ill health	RSI 2019/20 funding bid approved to provide 8 complex needs beds & 2 drug & alcohol support workers. Clinical Outreach Worker funded via RSI 2019/20 for a year. 2-month trial in Feb/March 2019 has shown positive progress with clients. New RSI funded dedicated psychology service due to begin April 2020 for people within the hostels	Local Housing Authority, Children Services Authority, Public Health, NHS Trusts	April 2019	
3.3	Improve the range of pre-crisis homelessness prevention activities	Introduce initiatives that help people to remain in existing accommodation, specifically	Trailblazer EIP Staff Posts, funding approved by LCR and appointments in March/April 2019	Local Housing Authority	April 2019	



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		Update housing advice information on homelessness prevention, securing accommodation when homeless, rights when homeless, help available when homelessness, and how to access it.	Housing Options Service leaflets to be developed. Web site updated	Local Housing Authority, Children Services, Social Services Authority, Housing Benefit administrators, Voluntary organisations, Social Landlords	December 2018	
3.4	Carryout case file audit of homelessness cases to learn what more could be done to prevent homelessness and ensure adherence to public law	Check rationality, legality and adherence to public law procedural requirements	NPSS commissioned to deliver case file reviews on Housing Options staff, and subsequent training package to ensure compliance with HRA to be delivered in January 2019. Case file audit exercise carried out in 2018 and is being repeated in Summer 2020.	Local Housing Authority	January 2019	
4. S	ecuring accommodation for peo	pple who are homeless or are thre	atened with homelessness			
4.1	Undertake a strategic review of the Council's own temporary accommodation to ensure the provision is suitable	Implement new polices for procuring and allocating temporary accommodation, which instead of concentrating the provision in one location, instead disperse it across the local authority area, (i) in a suitable mixture of locations with, (ii) suitable property types, (iii) which	Dispersed accommodation across the borough which allows homeless people to remain within the area they are currently based so as to maintain their support networks. Two-year pilot of dispersed accommodation currently being developed to begin in Oct 2019.	Local Housing Authority, Housing Benefit administrators, Social Landlords, Private Landlords	December 2021	



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		have suitable numbers of bedrooms, (iv) considering reasonable charges plus rules of claiming help with housing costs				
4.2	Review how homelessness is relieved	Ensure there is a comprehensive range of initiatives to relieve homelessness, to be able to discharge s.189(b)(2) duty.		Local Housing Authority, Voluntary organisations, Social Landlords, Others	December 2022	
4.3	Increase engagement with private landlords	Review the arrangements for and promotion of the landlord forum	Tenancy Sustainment Workers liaising successfully with private landlords to accept people leaving hostel accommodation as part of the Rapid Rehousing Pathway project (MHCLG funded). Region-wide Landlord Forum publicised to partners in June 19.	Local Housing Authority, Sefton Supported Housing Group	December 2019	
		Widely promote the existing landlord accreditation scheme and Licensing schemes	Carry out jointly with Sefton's Housing Standards Team March 2019 - Promotion of Sefton's accreditation and licensing scheme at a regional event in Liverpool	Local Housing Authority	March 2020	



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		Provide support for some suitable empty homes to be put back into use for homeless households	Take advantage of available properties across the borough that could be brought into use specifically for homeless people. RSL property now used by a commissioned provider to use for a 3-bedroom for long-term temporary accommodation (June 2019)	Local Housing Authority	September 2021	
4.4	Review arrangements for administering public law duties to allocate housing accommodation	Commission an independent review of (i) the cost, (ii) efficiency, and (iii) legality of current arrangements for (a) the housing register (b) housing allocation policy and (c) offering choice	Through LCR, Sefton has led on developing a brief to commission a review of the current allocations policy. Review should be carried out over 2019. Consultant now appointed July 2019 and review started.	Local Housing Authority, Local Authority members of Property Pool Plus, Social Landlord members of Property Pool Plus, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	December 2019	
4.5	Better demonstrate the impact of social landlords on tackling homelessness	Introduce a peer led benchmarking scheme for social landlords to evidence that activity against the following themes: 1) Board member commitment to tackling homelessness, and evidence of spend to tackle homelessness 2) Prevention of evictions due to rent arrears 3) Actions for tackling homelessness featuring in organisational strategy	Deliver as part of the PPP Contracts Board. CA Lived Experience group engaged to review PPP. Asking RSLs to do more to prevent homelessness; Commitment to Refer; trial to get rid of week's upfront rent for homeless clients. PPP Policy currently under review (Oct 2019-June 2020), which could see a refocussing of assistance for homeless clients. Possible development of a Homelessness Charter as part of this.	Social Landlords	December 2023	



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		 4) Involvement of tenants in activities to prevent homelessness 5) Prioritisation of homeless applicants when letting homes 6) Prevention of homelessness due to anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance 	Dispersed accommodation two-year pilot with Riverside Housing to begin Dec 2019 across the borough which allows homeless people to remain within the area they are currently based so as to maintain their support networks.			
	upporting people who are, or ha					
5.1	Integrate the Homelessness Service into locality centres to foster better joint working with other public authorities, especially children and adult social care services.	Relocate the housing options team across the three locality centres. Ensure the team retain a dedicated manager and a specific identity, to mitigate claims of judicial review being made against the local authority	Housing Options now permanently moved into new South Hub and in process of being based in Central and North Hubs when building works complete. Dedicated team retained.	Local Housing Authority, Children Services, Social Services Authority,	October 2018	
5.2	Recommission housing support services for single people, including rough sleepers, who are homeless to be more housing-led.	Recommission all housing support services possibly into a single contract, incorporating accommodation-based support and floating support.	In process of being looked at as part of the EIP Acute Wraparound review. Two-year Contract Extension on all homeless contracts looking to be approved by Cabinet Dec 2019.	Local Housing Authority, Social Services Authority, Voluntary organisations,	March 2022	
		Recommission accommodation- based and floating support majority services to be delivered using Housing First methods and operated by a consortium of service providers. Ensure a small amount of accommodation-based support is available for people facing a housing	Discussions with LCR CA regarding Housing First ongoing but largely LCR led at present (see 6.1 below) Enhanced Sit-Up service provision (based in Southport) for Rough Sleepers. External funding (MHCLG) currently being used to deliver complex needs beds within hostel accommodation alongside a	Local Housing Authority, Social Services Authority, Voluntary organisations,	March 2022	



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		emergency (e.g. Bosco House and/or Lodge), plus further amount for people who have acute/enduring needs, plus supported lodgings of people who have low support needs.	Merseycare Clinical Outreach Worker and Navigators service to direct people into services. Two-year Contract Extension on all homeless contracts approved by Cabinet Dec 2019.			
		Introduce a regime for monitoring the quality of housing support services, paying attention to qualitative aspects of service delivery	New Mainstay quarterly reports now commissioned by YMCA to provide better performance management and all Homeless Providers asked to submit Case Studies in January 2019.	Local Housing Authority	March 2019	
5.3	Re-design and commission a single multi-disciplinary outreach service to help Rough Sleepers who are street homelessness, which focuses on getting people off the streets.	As part of the Council pursuing its acute wrap around service ambitions, bring together a team of workers who have specialist knowledge or skills in homelessness law and housing advice, mental illness, substance dependency, offending behaviour and sexual health. Specify the team focus on 1) Rapid assessment of needs 2) Rapid rehousing 3) Facilitation of an Individual Budget 4) Access to peer mentoring	Two-year Contract Extension on all homeless contracts looking to be approved by Cabinet Dec 2019. Revised services which include coordinated service provision between Homeless service providers and Health service providers to support rough sleepers Enhanced Sit-Up service provision (based in Southport) for Rough Sleepers. External funding (MHCLG) currently being used to deliver complex needs beds within hostel accommodation alongside a Merseycare Clinical Outreach Worker and Navigators service to direct people into	Local Housing Authority, Social Services, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership, National Probation Service, Voluntary Organisations	March 2022	
			services. Navigators use Personalised Budgets in order to help clients access facilities and			



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			services in order to help facilitate their recovery & rehousing. Support development of Housing First initiative. (See point 6.1 below) and link in with LCR's commissioned Assertive Outreach Service to complement existing provision.			
		Develop a local plan for combating anti-social 'street' behaviours	Co-ordinated plan agreed with partner agencies No drinking PSPO is now in place for Southport, Bootle, Waterloo/Crosby https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/crime-and-emergencies/anti-social-behaviour.aspx Rough Sleeper numbers currently at 1 individual (March 2020) and Somewhere Safe to Stay going live April 2020, which will enhance Southport's Sit-Up so that people have somewhere to stay during the daytime.	Local Housing Authority, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership	June 2021	
5.4	Commission specific information, advice and assistance for people experiencing hidden homelessness	Develop a series of prevention, relief and support initiatives that will benefit people who otherwise would remain in unsupported temporary accommodation	Get a better understanding of all types of hidden homelessness to then begin commission a new service.	Local Housing Authority, Children Services	March 2022	



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6. C	│ ollaborative work with Liverpoo	│ I City Region Combined Authority	,			
6.1	Delivery of Housing First in Sefton, as part of the LCR Housing First pilot across the City Region.	LCR CA leading the development and implementation of a LCR Housing First Initiative. Develop close working relationships with LCR CA to help deliver the Housing First pilot within Sefton.	Active engagement with CA, including regular meetings attended as part of Homeless Working Group and the new Housing First Steering Group meetings. Housing First event delivered April 2019 to partner agencies. Complex Needs Panel due to be reestablished by HOT in order to create a referral pathway into Housing First for partners/organisations.	Liverpool City Region CA led, Local Housing Authority	December 2018 & ongoing	
		CA Commission accommodation and support services separately across the LCR for the delivery of Housing First.	Updates on progress from LCR to be provided to Cabinet Member regularly.	Liverpool City Region CA	April 2019	
		CA to carry out an options appraisal for creating a social lettings agency and/or a private sector leasing scheme (as part of the programme to roll-out Housing First across the City Region).	Ensure supply of suitable properties for Housing First clients, and management of those properties	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority led, Registered Providers, private landlords	June 2021	



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6.2	Delivery of Homeless Trailblazer Initiative in Sefton, as part of the LCR CA initiative across the City Region.	LCR CA will agree homeless prevention initiatives and services with LCR LAs. CA to provide funding and monitor prevention performance	3 EIP Trailblazer staff Posts funding approved by LCR. Grant letter issued by CA and received	Liverpool City Region CA	January 2019	
		Sefton Council to implement homeless prevention initiative, and recruit staff for this activity.	Appointment of EIP Trailblazer posts which have been funded by LCR Trailblazer	Local Housing Authority	April 2019	
		CA to Commission Rough Sleeper Outreach Services in collaboration with LAs and existing outreach service providers	Sefton to support CA in process to Commission of appropriately focussed outreach services to complement existing outreach services that will help form a pathway into Housing First accommodation. Support development of Housing First initiative and link in with LCR's commissioned Assertive Outreach Service to complement existing provision.	Liverpool City Region CA led, supported by LA, Public Health, existing service providers	April 2019	

