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**AGENDA FOR THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are summoned to on, **13 May 2024 at 7.30 pm.**

Enquiries to : Ola Adeoye  
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Despatched : 3 May 2024

Membership

Councillor Jason Jackson (Chair)  
Councillor Ilkay Cinko-Oner (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Phil Graham  
Councillor Valerie Bossman-Quarshie  
Councillor Michael O'Sullivan  
Councillor Mick Gilgunn  
Councillor Gulcin Ozdemir  
Councillor Ernestas Jegorovas-Armstrong  
Dean Donaghey (Resident Observer) (Co-Optee)  
Rose Marie McDonald (Resident Observer) (Co-Optee)

Substitute Members

Councillor Jilani Chowdhury  
Councillor Ben Mackmurdie  
Councillor Heather Staff  
Councillor Rosaline Ogunro  
Councillor Caroline Russell  
Councillor Marian Spall

**Quorum is 4 Councillors**



**A. Formal Matters**

**Page**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declaration of Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\*** in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may **choose** to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a **personal** interest in an item of business **and** you intend to speak or vote on the item you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you **may** participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

- \*(a) **Employment, etc** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to **all** members present at the meeting.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting
5. Chair's Report
6. External Attendees (if any)

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7. Order of Business
8. Public Questions

For members of the public to ask questions relating to any subject on the meeting agenda under Procedure Rule 70.5. Alternatively, the Chair may opt to accept questions from the public during the discussion on each agenda item.

<b>B. Items for Decision/Discussion</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Main Scrutiny Review 2023/24 - New Homes Build in Islington - To agree Final Report and Recommendations - To Follow	
2. Islington Broadband - Update on Programme Delivery	5 - 8
3. Homlessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	9 - 42

**C. Urgent non-exempt items (if any)**

Any non- exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgent by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

**D. Exclusion of press and public**

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, any of them are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution and, if so, whether to exclude the press and public during discussion thereof.

<b>E. Confidential/exempt items</b>	<b>Page</b>
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**F. Urgent exempt items (if any)**

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee will be on 25 June  
**2024WEBCASTING NOTICE**

This meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt

items, and the footage will be on the website for 6 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you participate in the meeting you will be deemed by the Council to have consented to being filmed. By entering the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area, overlooking the Chamber.

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London Borough of Islington

## **Housing Scrutiny Committee - 30 April 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 30 April 2024 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**      **Councillors:**      Jackson (Chair), Bossman-Quarshie, Ozdemir and Jegorovas-Armstrong

### **Councillor Jason Jackson in the Chair**

**42**      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillors Cinko-Oner, Graham and Gilgunn.

**43**      **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

**44**      **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**45**      **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - TO FOLLOW (Item 4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**46**      **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

None

**47**      **EXTERNAL ATTENDEES (IF ANY) (Item 6)**

The Chair informed the meeting that as part of the review, Committee would invite residents and volunteers of the TRA of both Parkview Estate and Hathersage to share their experiences on New Homes Build – see B1below

**48**      **ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 7)**

The order of business would be B2 and B1.

**49**      **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 8)**

In response to a question from a member of public who is a tenant of Hyde Housing who raised concerns about damp and mould and its detrimental impact on her well-being and health, the Executive Member Cllr O'Halloran stated that although RSL's( Registered Social Landlords) are independent of Council she will take the resident's details with her after the meeting.

**50**      **MAIN SCRUTINY REVIEW 2023/24 - NEW HOMES BUILD IN ISLINGTON - DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS - TO FOLLOW (Item B1)**

## Housing Scrutiny Committee - 30 April 2024

Chair informed the meeting that prior to consideration of the draft recommendations, residents and TRA representatives from Parkview Estate and Hathersage Estate will be making representations of their experience of the New build Homes in Islington.

- Some of the issues are that schemes have resulted in immense disruption to their daily lives; loss of open spaces and play areas for children for over 10years; lack of leadership from council officers and importantly no communication on future plans for areas that have remained fenced off.
- In response, the Acting Director informed that previously there was a scheme and team worked with TRA but unfortunately it was not possible to get it work, that going all efforts will be made to repair the relationship with the TRA which is reflected in one of the recommendations being considered later in the meeting.
- On whether the scheme at Hathersage would still be going ahead, Officer advised that although he could not commit to any scheme officers are working on bringing back the communal spaces/play areas.
- Meeting was informed that going forward all attempts should be made to reinstate the communal open fields/play areas which had been fenced off and lots more work need to be done in terms of communication as it is obvious that residents were communicating with officers but were left in limbo.
- Executive Member, Finance, Performance and Planning reiterated his commitment to scheduling a meeting with Hathersage TRA , apologised that he had visited other new schemes in the borough besides Hathersage, all attempts will be made to address their concerns.
- Another resident said despite their willingness tenants on the onset , trust and respect to the council has been lost, that tenants are subject to cyclical works and capital works.
- Another resident of Parkview reiterated her concerns about lack of consultation, that as a disabled person she experienced accessibility around the estate, no notice of announcement of diversions and importantly the contract liaison officer has been ineffective. Members were reminded that this project should have been a textbook example for resident engagement but unfortunately fell short.
- In response, the Acting Director noted inconveniences the planned schemes had caused and the catalogue of issues raised by the residents. The Officer reiterated that the Council have completed some successful schemes, that going forward Council will look to keep residents updated at every stage of the building process.
- It was noted that in light of the concerns raised by residents, it was suggested that maybe a check list was required which allows officers to work through bit by bit so that everyone has a clear understanding of where things are, a clear path of how to move forward.
- Chair thanked residents and TRA representatives, apologising for the inconveniences it has caused, the disruption to their lives, noting that this is an issue that has come to the attention of this committee and that having now heard from residents, members will now be able to hold officers to account.
- Another resident informed the meeting that her autistic child suffered an injury despite having raised issues of safety earlier to council officers, that residents have not gone to the press , stating that in one particular instance was advised not to make a complaint , that having sent an email to Executive Member he had not responded, that as council tenants who pay their rent, this was not good at all.
- Councillor Kay reiterated her concerns that after last meeting there was a request for survey plans and that up to date this is not forthcoming, that in her ward only 1 social housing has built and it is noticeable that Council is not building 3-4 bedroom houses which is supposed to address overcrowding.
- In response to a question raised by Noel of Parkview TRA on the timeline when the reasons for the abandoned schemes which the Corporate Director had suggested

will be shared with the Committee, the Chair indicated that he would look into and respond back to him personally.

- Chair thanked the residents notifying meeting that as members consider the draft recommendations, the additional evidence from the residents will be incorporated, the following issues were highlighted with regards to some of the recommendations:

**Recommendation 1**

Committee agreed for it to be reworded as this is not within the Executive's function but the Chief Executive. It was agreed by the Committee for the wording to be delegated to the Chair and Officer. Amended recommendation be circulated ahead of the next meeting on 13 May 2024.

**Recommendation 2**

Executive to review alternative funding and delivery models. Meeting was advised that this was evidence from a company called .Be First (Barking and Dagenham). Member had reservations as this could create issues around accountability especially in light of complaints by resident's of lack of engagement.

**Recommendation 3 – Resident Engagement**

Assistant Director informed meeting that from evidence it appears the concern is the over reliance or expectation of contractors to do more on liaising with residents instead of council officers. Committee were advised against the need to recruit external consultants that this is primarily a culture issue within council, that this could be addressed with the sufficient capacity and skills of the inhouse staff which will result in savings and addresses accountability concerns.

**Recommendation 6**

A member suggested that officers look into schemes being built in Barnet where delivery of homes is quick, ie pre-fab accommodation.

**Recommendation 7**

Member suggested the rewording of the recommendation to put some emphasis on low energy use, that council needs to move away from boilers. Another suggestion that Council recycle building materials from abandoned schemes or when buildings are demolished.

**Recommendation 8**

Viability issues around supporting Islington residents to buy some of the private homes built by Council at discounted rates who would not necessarily be eligible for social housing but never the less cannot afford to buy in the borough. The aim is to incentivise Islington residents to stay and own homes.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the draft recommendations is agreed subject to the rewording of recommendation 1 and 7.
2. That the wording of the recommendations be delegated to the Chair and Officers.
3. Amended recommendations be circulated ahead of the meeting on 13 May 2024

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**HOUSING PERFORMANCE ANNUAL REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE MEMBER**  
**(Item B2)**

Meeting was reminded that report was deferred from previous meeting, that both Executive Member and Acting Corporate Director were available to respond to questions. The following points were noted:

- Meeting was informed that formal notification had been received from the Housing Ombudsman that it had discharged its monitoring period as it was satisfied that Council had undertaken a number of actions that it had recommended.
- On the issue of removal of car parking spaces and conversion of garages, the Acting Director acknowledged Council's commitment to reducing car spaces and where garages are lent out it is under licence.
- Service has installed over one hundred remote sensors related to damp and mould to help residents and alert the council to any of the issues. On the low take up by residents, Acting Corporate Director stated that more communications is required to promote the benefits and to allay any concerns as remote sensors are of low energy use. Meeting was informed that this is presently being piloted.
- Meeting was advised that a pre maintenance team is in place to address damp and mould for example, the Council is embarking on its roofing programme, reinstated its guttering service which had paused and communication on the website around damp and mould for residents has been refreshed. It was noted that investment spent per dwelling has gone up , that over the last 2 years £2.7m investment has been spent and permanent staff have been recruited.

On the 350/per day fire call out especially around communal area, meeting was advised that details will be provided to committee members.

- On issues of damp and mould experienced by RSL's tenants, meeting was advised that Council has a partnership agreement with all of them, that RSL's experience the same issues at the Council, however Council officers, Executive Member meet regularly to share best practices.
- With regards to private tenants, meeting was advised that Council has a licensing scheme in the borough which requires private landlords to register and that environmental officers are there to address any reported issues.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Housing Performance Annual Report be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm

**CHAIR**



## Islington Broadband

### Update on programme delivery

As at May 2024, the estate broadband programme has been ongoing for over a year since commencing in January 2023. It has been gathering pace over the past few months and we continue to work with each of the providers to reach our goal of delivering fibre broadband to 90% of council homes across the borough by the end of the programme in 2025. Some highlights include:

- Over 50 blocks across the borough now cabled and live with residents able to connect to services
- Hyperoptic have live connections in over 10,000 council-owned homes as part of this project and a total of 20,790 homes live across the whole borough.
- Community Fibre have live connections in over 4,360 properties as part of this project and a total of 15,122 homes live across the whole borough.
- GNetwork did not start cabling our blocks until January 2024 but now have live connections in over 1620 council owned homes and a total of 4219 live across the whole borough.
- In addition to Peregrine House and Popham, further community centres at Chestnuts, Highbury Grange, Hargrave Hall and Kings Square all now have live free connections.
- The IMAX team have started to promote the providers' low cost (social tariff) options to their clients and we have received feedback that residents have been taking these up.

### Comparison with neighbouring Boroughs

All London boroughs now have current estate broadband programmes underway and are working through wayleave agreements with a range of providers. The borough programmes are being delivered to different timeframes and through varying local models. For example, Southwark commenced their programme with Hyperoptic and Community Fibre in 2018 (delivering 41,000 connections) and now have a subsequent programme with BT Openreach which ends in 2024; Hackney commenced their programme in 2021.

The most comprehensive broadband connectivity information publicly available is collected and published by Ofcom. Collated by Connected London, the total (estate-based local authority programmes and all other connections) comparative broadband coverage is presented in a mapping tool<sup>1</sup>. Table 1 shows the fibre broadband data for Islington compared to the London average and neighbouring boroughs. Also to note is that the tool uses the latest Ofcom data from September 2023 and therefore does not reflect a completely up to date picture.

**Table 1:** Broadband coverage by Borough (% premises connected, September 2023)

<b>Borough</b>	<b>Full-fibre coverage (% premises)</b>
London average	58%
<b>Islington</b>	<b>55%</b>
Camden	58%
Hackney	63%
Tower Hamlets	70%
Southwark	69%
Lambeth	64%

To inform our programme delivery, the team continue to share peer-to-peer learning with Centre London Forward (GLA) and our established contacts in other boroughs.

### **G-Network**

G-Network have completed a number of installations with live connections now available to residents on Ringcross, Mersey, Percival, Lorraine, Bemerton and Popham estates. Cedar Court, Fieldview Court and John Kennedy Court.

### **Community Fibre**

Community Fibre have chosen to pause all installation works across London. They will have completed all their programmed installation works in Islington by the end of April and the delivery team are now working with the other providers to take forward the survey packs already agreed.

Estate blocks already cabled with live connections available as at April 2024 are Spriggs & Barratt House, Kestrel House, Peregrine House, Gambier House, Poynder Court, Halton Mansions, Hornsey Rise Estate, Manchester Mansions, Redwood Court, Tansley Close, Bowerman Court, Hornsey Lane Estate, Jacobin Lodge, Shaw Court, Hillside Estate, Daren Court, Wakelin House, Tufnell Park Estate, Coleman Mansions, Margaret Bondfield House, Moelwyn Hughes Court, Hillrise Mansions, Wilfred Feinburgh Court, Pleasant Place Estate, Tyndale Mansions, Loraine Mansions, Pollard Close, Girdlestone Estate and New Orleans Estate.

We are hopeful that Community Fibre will recommence installations in the future.

### **Hyperoptic**

We continue to work with Hyperoptic who have excelled in delivering the programme. They continue to receive support from the delivery team through a well-established good working relationship.

Estates now cabled by Hyperoptic with live connections available include: Kings Square, Pleydell, Whitbread, Cumming, Stafford Cripps, The Triangle, Wenlake TMO, Redbrick, Blackstock TMO, Highbury Quadrant, Mayville, Taverner Square TMO, Park View, Spring Gardens, Crouch Hall Court and Bennett Court.

## **BT Openreach**

We have completed wayleave negotiations with BT Openreach and are expect that the wayleave document will be signed imminently. In the meantime, the delivery team have carried out several pre-mobilisation meetings and site visits so that we are ready to immediately start.

## **Information for residents**

The [Broadband | Islington Council](#) webpage provides information about the programme and includes links to the providers' pages where residents can check whether live connections are available to them. The delivery team can be contacted by email: [islingtonbroadband@islington.gov.uk](mailto:islingtonbroadband@islington.gov.uk).

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<sup>i</sup> [London Connectivity](#)

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# Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

## Background

Housing Operations have developed a new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Appendix 1) to replace our current strategy which ended in 2023. It sets out how we meet our statutory duties and work together with our partners and colleagues across departments to prevent homelessness and eliminate rough sleeping in Islington.

## Our priorities

Four draft priorities have been identified to deliver our aim to meet current and emerging needs in Islington and our work is aligned with and supports the overarching aims of the council in delivering Mission 3: A safe place to call home.

Our priorities are based on our current and programmed work to prevent and relieve homelessness in Islington, they are aligned with the council's commitment to promote fairness and equality and with our Housing Strategy and Allocation Scheme.

Priority 1: Prevent and relieve homelessness through early and tailored intervention

Homelessness is not inevitable and it can be prevented. We work to provide early help for those at risk of homeless and we believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to a safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life.

Priority 2: Eliminate rough sleeping and help people into settled housing

We work side-by-side and holistically with our council colleagues and partners to eliminate rough sleeping; we work to the values set out in our Homelessness Charter with the aim to reach Functional Zero.

Priority 3: Improve housing options available to meet the needs of our residents

We aim to providing every individual accessing our services with a realistic, sustainable good quality housing option where people can feel safe, maintain contact with their family and friends and which support their life choices

Priority 4: Providing accommodation and resettlement services to refugees and migrants

Islington Council became an accredited Borough of Sanctuary in 2023. We work ambitiously with our partners to make Islington is a place of welcome, safety & success for all and to integrate new communities, build social cohesion and eradicate poverty.

The work already underway and planned for us to deliver each priority is set out in a series of associated objectives in the accompanying Action Plan (Appendix 2) and our progress will be monitored against these objectives.

## Next steps

The draft strategy and action plan are due for presentation to CMT later this month after which we will engage in a formal consultation for 6 weeks. Upon completion of this exercise and collation of feedback received, the final drafts will be submitted for Executive approval prior to implementation.

# Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-

## Our Mission

Islington Council's commitment is to ensure that by 2030, everyone in Islington has a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home.

We are committed to eliminating rough sleeping and preventing homelessness by providing every individual with a realistic, good quality housing option. Homes and Neighbourhoods contribute to this mission through their work to end homelessness by uniting people, organisations and businesses with one shared vision set out in our Homelessness Charter:

*"We believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to: A safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life. Safety from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and the full protection of the law"*

## Introduction

This is Islington's fifth Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It sets out how we work with a shared purpose to prevent and relieve homelessness and work to eliminate rough sleeping in the borough. It has been produced in consultation with our partners and colleagues and it is informed by the wider landscape of best practice and regulation.

## The Strategic context

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the lifetime of our previous two strategies<sup>1</sup>, the housing crisis has worsened. Due to the impact of systemic pressures across factors that affect the housing situation for individuals and households, residents of Islington are facing housing pressures not seen for two decades.

Councils across London are experiencing severe and escalating pressures on their resources at the same time that greatly more individuals are coming forward to use their housing needs services. In Islington we have experienced a 20% increase in homeless applications over the last 12 months in comparison to the previous 12 months. Numerous research reports published over the past few years demonstrate the unaffordability of housing across the United Kingdom through rising rents, lack of supply and changing housing policy. Housing Needs Directors from across London are reporting to the All-Party Parliamentary Group every month that the homelessness and temporary accommodation situation is deteriorating and the most recent

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.islington.gov.uk/~/\\_media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/housing/businessplanning/strategies/20202021/20210203homelessnessandroughsleepingstrategy2019231.pdf](https://www.islington.gov.uk/~/_media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/housing/businessplanning/strategies/20202021/20210203homelessnessandroughsleepingstrategy2019231.pdf)

research from the Kerslake Commission<sup>2</sup> reports that rises are stemming from affordable housing shortages, a lack of statutory support services, and the cost-of-living crisis.

Despite the council's commitment to build genuinely affordable homes, affordable housing is in short supply in the borough. Across the country a quarter of private and social renters<sup>3</sup> reported finding it either fairly or very difficult to afford their rent and around 6% of owner-occupiers with mortgages said they found it fairly or very difficult to keep up with mortgage payments. Temporary accommodation both supply and demand is also in crisis with London Councils estimating that one in 50 Londoners are currently housed in temporary accommodation.

The ongoing impact of welfare reform is another factor affecting housing affordability in the borough and across London and severe homelessness pressures have been compounded by the rapid increase in the cost of essential goods in recent months. Londoners living in private rented accommodation currently spend almost 40% of their income on rent. This added financial pressure on low-income households and drop in disposable income will make rent further unaffordable and place them at risk of homelessness.

Islington's annual streetcount carried out in November 2023 met 16 people rough sleeping in the borough on one night. Whilst this figure is comparatively lower than other central London boroughs, outreach teams continue to meet people new to the streets, which continues to make up almost half of those met rough sleeping each month. Between April 2022 – March 2023, Islington's outreach team met and supported 337 individuals who were rough sleeping away from the streets.<sup>4</sup>

The UK is also seeing the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine which has led to the creation of the Homes for Ukraine and the Ukraine Family schemes, designed to accommodate Ukrainian nationals fleeing their country. The minimum six month placements are now ending with many sponsors not intending to maintain the current arrangements. Home Office policy towards ending hotel accommodation after refugee status is granted has also led to increased rough sleeping for refugee and asylum seekers.

## How we work

Our work across Homes and Neighbourhoods is underpinned by the council's CARE values and the working practices and principles set out in our Charters including our Homelessness Charter and Private Sector Charter. It will be implemented through the accompanying Action Plan.

Islington has signed up to the London Mayor's Charter to end rough sleeping<sup>5</sup>, released in December 2023. This further strengthens the Council's commitment to work in partnership to end rough sleeping and intervene early through our prevention work, to ensure we can do all we can to prevent someone spending a first night on the street.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/2023-report-turning-the-tide>

<sup>3</sup> English Housing Survey 2020/21, DHLUC

<sup>4</sup> [Islington 2022-23.pdf](https://www.islington.gov.uk/media/123456/Islington_2022-23.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.endroughsleepinglondon.org.uk>



## Early intervention

Understanding the adverse effects caused by homelessness we encourage all housing applicants in housing need to approach our services early so we can find solutions to their housing circumstances.

We work to ensure an efficient and appropriate customer journey for the people we work with by deliver our services with a Rapid Rehousing Focus which streamlines communication between officer and customer and aims to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact

We keep people in existing accommodation wherever practical through mediation and provide a prevention service to all applicants regardless of priority need and including those threatened with homelessness. And our commissioned floating support services provide support to people at risk of homelessness due to unmet support needs.

We manage relationships with partners who have a Duty to Refer and Duty to Prevent through established meetings with the public bodies with the duty to refer including DWP, local hospitals, the probation and prison service and job centre and we now receive regular referrals from these bodies through developed processes.

## Person-centred, trauma-informed, holistic

We aim to end rough sleeping in Islington by working holistically, in collaboration with our partner agencies and jointly across council departments and the subregion. We work with statutory services as well as community, faith and grassroots groups, to ensure that people have access to the support they need, as well as social activities where meaningful connections can develop. We see beyond immediate housing need by supporting individuals with their health and wellbeing, substance use, employability and personal safety.

We put the person at the heart of our approach across services. We work in a trauma-informed way to ensure that people with lived experience of homelessness, including rough sleeping receive integrated, holistic support. Our approach to rough sleeping is compassionate and supportive, with a focus on the strengths and aspirations of individuals, as well as any support needs they may need help with.

Over the past 5 years, Islington Council has successfully applied for and received significant investment from Central Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding (Department of Levelling up, Homes and Communities). This additional funding, which runs until March 2025 has allowed the council to create a truly multi-disciplinary team that offers a holistic approach to rough sleepers. With a strong focus on outreach, the service meets the person where they are at, breaking down barriers to ensure that the right type of support is available, at the time it is needed. This support is made up of commissioned services, as well as internal council services, who work closely together to ensure co-ordinated support is offered, which is strengths based and identifies a route away from the street. Services include but are not limited to: an assertive

## Achieving DAHA across our housing service

We recognise that domestic abuse devastates lives and are working to put a stop to it amongst our residents, residents and employees. The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) is the gold standard for housing providers in tackling domestic abuse and keeping our residents safe and feeling safe is a priority for the council.

We achieved accreditation in 2021 for our tenancy teams and expanded this to encompass all of our housing services in December 2023. The importance of delivering the right response, the first time, cannot be underestimated. If actioned in a safe and supportive way, this can lead to a survivor, and their children living a life free from abuse, without detriment to their health, and where they may achieve their educational goals and life aspirations. Our view is that this, in turn, will contribute to creating connected and thriving communities, free from fear and violence and resulting in a safe space in which to live:

- over 70 domestic abuse champions recruited across housing who are responsible for cascading resources, information, learning and good practice to colleagues across the council
- work with our specialist domestic abuse partner Solace Women's Aid to provide enhanced training to assist with identifying and responding safely and effectively to domestic abuse
- our women's complex needs outreach worker works with women experiencing homelessness and multiple-disadvantage, who are also affected by domestic abuse
- we are training our staff to understand the intersectional issues that affect the experiences of our residents to provide better outcomes, with a particular focus on survivors of domestic abuse.
- developed a robust High Risk Moves Policy to support staff who respond to domestic abuse survivors who may have to move as a result of abuse
- our Home Shelter scheme to allow survivors to remain in their homes.
- Work well within the Islington VAWG strategy and embed a trauma-informed approach in our work and develop perpetrator policy and procedures that are aligned with current Government guidance and VAWG policies; embed policies and procedures across to new staff across the dept and develop induction pack for new starters.
- Improve joint working with ASC and Children's, "by and for" partners and Housing Associations

outreach team, physical health outreach nurse, mental health social worker, psychologist, peer support workers and complex needs navigators, who can offer intensive support as needed.

We work collaboratively with community safety colleagues and the police to identify vulnerable residents at risk of cuckooing, who as a result are at risk of homelessness, to offer intensive support and ensure the resident can remain safely in their home,

## Empowering individuals and communities

We provide support to access skills and employment opportunities by signposting to those at risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless to IMAX and make referrals to

floating support. We fund SHP to run a peer support service for those with lived experience of homelessness and use trainee roles in our housing teams.

Islington is currently working with Crisis to pilot Built for Zero, a community-led response to ending homelessness, using real-time data to target resources and improve services and remove barriers where needed. Islington, along with Brent are the first Council's to Pilot this approach in London and the UK. As part of this approach, representatives with lived experience are invited to join the senior executive board, to support the direction of travel based on their profound knowledge of homelessness.

Our Independent Housing, Intensive support (IHIS) scheme, seeks to empower individuals by offering a social housing tenancy, with intensive wrap-around support to people with a history of rough sleeping. This provides a stable home, with ongoing support, which allows individuals to 'put down roots' and make a home. This programme is built on Housing First Principles and has recently received additional external funding to expand our current provision of 60 one-bedroom properties. This expansion will offer another 20 homes for people with a history of rough sleeping, as well as 20 homes for care experienced Young People at risk of homelessness.

## Improving health outcomes

We want to address health inequalities - Homeless people often experience very poor health outcomes and have highly complex health needs alongside facing barriers to accessing health services which leads to further deterioration in their health.

Our previous strategy sought to understanding of the connection between homelessness and health and wellbeing and we are building on the successes achieved through the *"Everyone In"* programme during the pandemic by continuing to provide a range of accommodation options, best suited to people's needs when met rough sleeping. We know that the health inequalities for people experiencing homelessness are increasing and we work to provide people with support that they need to recover and remain well.

We maintain good links with Islington's Public Health team to encourage more effective connections with frontline health services, looking for opportunities to improve access to preventative care, including but not limited to screening, vaccination, and GP registration. Health services work to ensure drug and alcohol treatment services are genuinely accessible for people experiencing homelessness, and support the work delivered under the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant.

Many people sleeping rough may be experiencing a range of complex and overlapping needs. We build trusting relationships and involving people with lived experience in our outreach. Our complex needs navigators work with verified rough sleepers and support people with complex needs who are in temporary accommodation who have been struggling to sustain their tenancies or experienced repeated cycles of homelessness. The team provide early and structured interventions to prevent evictions and minimise the risk of rough sleeping.

Complex case work in practice: highlighting the complexities of homelessness, the impact of supportive models and the ongoing need for tailored interventions

We have worked over a sustained period of time with a couple who have a history of entrenched rough sleeping across London with domestic abuse and drug misuse present. The couple's dependency issues have made separate housing placements challenging.

Support over years has included outreach from the complex needs case workers including through pregnancy, drug dependency.

The couple of have spent periods disengaged from services but are now successfully housed in a supported housing project in a shared flat but with separate rooms and tenancies. They have been engaging well with support staff, working on individual and joint improvements.

Drug and Alcohol Community of Practice

In recognising the considerable impact of drug and alcohol use on the health and wellbeing of Islington's residents, especially the association of significant health inequalities this leads to for socially excluded groups, public health and support providers came together to establish a Drug and Alcohol Community of Practice in Late December 2023. It is open to any Islington Partner to whom this area is relevant and seeks to:

- Enhance working relationships across agencies by offering an open forum for agencies to share service updates, concerns, or emerging trends
- Improve referral pathways and access to treatment including harm reduction initiatives
- Share areas of good practice and relevant learning
- Develop a local priority plan setting out key actions such as overdose prevention to drive improvements within the borough
- Highlight training needs across the partnership.

We commission a physical health outreach nurse who offers district nursing through outreach, meeting the needs of those rough sleeping, as well as providing in-reach clinics into supported accommodation and day centres. This service is vital in meeting immediate health needs, as well as providing a link for individuals with primary healthcare. Islington's Integrated Care Board also fund a health inequalities project for people experiencing homelessness, which offers flexible GP provision for people with complex health needs, which includes GP visits to supported accommodation schemes.

## Accessing our services

### Access to services

Across our housing services, we want to ensure that our residents have access to information, advice, and support that they need. We want our residents to be able to access the right service(s) at the right time and recognise the importance of a diverse range of access routes that reflect diverse needs differing needs.

### Targeting our resources

In order to meet our legal duties as a local authority at a time of high demand, we must target our resources depending on the level of need and the ability of individuals to self-help. We provide detailed signposting information for residents in housing need on our website and we provide in person appointments for individuals who may need more support.

### Making best use of our housing stock

We proactively make the best use of our existing housing through our mobility scheme which promotes opportunity for people under-occupying their homes.

We carry out audits on our stock and work to recover properties and unlawful profits subject to tenancy fraud and our housing investigations team are working with housing association partners to take on their tenancy fraud investigations in return for nomination rights.

### Funding our homeless and rough sleeping services

Funding for our homeless services remain under great pressure. We continue to explore capital and revenue grant funding stream opportunities for rough sleepers to compliment and enhance our existing services.

#### Funding in highlight

**Housing acquisition** - we have secured funding to purchase 410 Ex Right to Buy properties which is £1 in every £5 the Government invested nationally with this programme. Over the past five years we have used retained RTB receipts and GLA grant to contribute to the cost of acquisition of 410 ex-RTB properties. This represents a total investment of nearly £113m to provide good quality, in-borough temporary accommodation for rough sleepers, homeless families in Islington and families relocated to the UK through the Afghanistan humanitarian programme.

**Rough Sleeping Initiative** - we have obtained £8.1 million to fund important homeless services. This funding is the 5th highest for any council in England.

**SHAP funding allocations** – in 2023 we received the largest Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) funding for a single council in England. This funding SHAP funds homes and support services for people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping

rough. The successful bids will provide supported housing, Housing First and housing-led accommodation for two target groups: adults experiencing multiple disadvantage who may have a history of rough sleeping and require high levels of support, and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping.

## Strategic partnerships, strong leadership and accountability

Our leadership team supports the delivery of the strategy. It is committed to working with vulnerable residents who may be experiencing multi-disadvantage and struggle to access mainstream services. We chair the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Forum which consists of 80 partner organisations. The work of the NRPF team has recently been recognised by becoming an Accredited Borough of Sanctuary.

The strategy is owned by the Homes and Neighbourhoods Department. The council's Housing Scrutiny Committee oversee the delivery of our services. It is delivered in partnership with local agencies and the police as well as by colleagues across the council from departments including Community Safety, Adult Social Care, Residential Environmental Health, VAWG team and public health.

### Strategic context

Local strategies and policies: Our strategy is underpinned by local strategies including Islington Together 2030 Plan<sup>6</sup> that determines the council's priorities, Housing Strategy that sets out the council's priorities for housing in the borough, Tenancy Strategy and Allocation Scheme which determine the priorities and define the procedures for the allocation of social housing in Islington and governs the operation of Islington Council's Housing Register ensure that social housing is allocated fairly and to those in the greatest housing need:

- Challenging Inequality Strategy – to create a fairer, more equal Islington
- Fairer Together – a strategy for early intervention and prevention in Islington
- Carers Strategy
- Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy
- Islington Welcomes<sup>7</sup>

Our strategy complies with legislation and national and local policies and codes of guidance including:

- Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.islington.gov.uk/-/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/communications/businessplanning/strategies/20232024/islington-together-2030-plan-accessible-version.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.islington.gov.uk/advice/islington-welcomes>

- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (MHCLG, 2018)
- 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- North London Domestic Violence protocol and Pan London Domestic Violence Protocol
- Health and Care Act 2022

And best practice in this area of work including DAHA accreditation, NICE guidelines, Guidance relating to Damp and mould

National policies including Ending Rough Sleeping For Good and the Mayor's strategy

### Housing Association Partnership Agreement

We have an agreement with the 47 housing associations who manage properties in Islington and how we work with them in partnership to address the challenges our residents face including with the cost of living crisis, how we support our young people may need a different response due to their past trauma, employment opportunities, and supporting residents who are in rent arrears or at risk of eviction and making all attempts to resolve situations. People in housing need, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless can quickly access social housing or other affordable housing options so they can retain their place in Islington and no one will need to sleep rough in the borough.

## Cross-boundary cooperation

We work with neighbouring boroughs to meet housing need and identify opportunities for coordination and efficiencies wherever beneficial. We work across 6 boroughs through the North London Housing Partnership to provide targeted early homeless prevention support and we have reciprocal arrangements in place to support individuals fleeing domestic abuse and Across the subregion, the North London Rough Sleeping Multi-Disciplinary Hub accepts referrals from across 6 participating boroughs and intervenes to provide move-on solutions and NLHP Vulnerable Women's Accommodation Service works with clients over a 5 month period to assist move-on.

We have delivered the NRPF Network since 2006. The Network improves local authority implementation of statutory duties for NRPF families, children and adults and we work within the

North London HP Domestic Abuse Reciprocal Agreement to promote housing options for survivors of domestic abuse.

## Our priorities

Our four priorities for this strategy are based on our current and programmed work to prevent and relieve homelessness in Islington is aligned with the council's commitment to promote fairness and equality. They are aligned with our Housing Strategy and our Allocation Scheme.

### Our four priorities – with icons depicted graphically

Priority 1: Prevent and relieve homelessness through early and tailored intervention

Homelessness is not inevitable and it can be prevented. We work to provide early help for those at risk of homeless and we believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to a safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life.

Priority 2: Eliminate rough sleeping and help people into settled housing

We work side-by-side and holistically with our council colleagues and partners to eliminate rough sleeping; we work to the values set out in our Homelessness Charter with the aim to reach Functional Zero.

Priority 3: Improve housing options available to meet the needs of our residents

We aim to providing every individual accessing our services with a realistic, sustainable good quality housing option where people can feel safe, maintain contact with their family and friends and which support their life choices

Priority 4: Providing accommodation and resettlement services to refugees and migrants

Islington Council became an accredited Borough of Sanctuary in 2023. We work ambitiously with our partners to make Islington is a place of welcome, safety and success for all and to integrate new communities, build social cohesion and eradicate poverty.

### Challenging inequality – supporting our Council-wide programme for a more Equal Islington

The promotion of diversity, equality and anti-discriminatory practices is implied across all our work to address inequality in Islington: it influences our investment decisions, action plans flowing from the strategies and produce positive action plans to address any inequality identified. .

We undertake equality audits annually for lettings of affordable housing, homeless approaches and homeless decisions Produce and publish an Annual Lettings setting annual targets for property types across Priority points and monitor Housing Allocations Scheme to



ensure that our allocations reflect the housing need. Work to establish an evidence base of approaches and failed preventions to better understand the issues, such as ethnicity and

Providing a truly inclusive and accessible service to meet the needs of survivors of domestic abuse through intersectional practice, Local authorities and housing providers have a responsibility to understand intersectionality, to recognise the discriminatory barriers presented within their own services and develop policies and practice that breaks down these barriers to create a service accessible to all survivors, particularly those from Black and minoritized communities

Deliver a customer-focused service and make sure with experience of homelessness have a voice and are involved in determining the solutions to their own issues, and homelessness in general

Promote Islington values through events, social engagement and community outreach work including proactive outreach and early stage prevention services at a range of faith and community based locations at surgeries for specific communities including minoritized groups at locations such as Children's Centres

## Priority 1: Preventing and relieving homelessness through tailored early intervention

Homelessness is not inevitable and it can be prevented. We provide early help for those at risk of homeless and we believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to a safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life; safety from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and the full protection of the law.

### The Challenge

Since our previous strategy and over the course of the covid pandemic we saw a consistent reduction of homelessness. However, we are presently facing an increase in homelessness presentations, an increase in people living on the streets of Islington and also an increase in people seeking to join the council's housing register. Although we are building the most new council homes in Islington for 30 years, there is far more demand than supply, and in Islington we are experiencing the lowest number of lettings in council and housing association properties with currently over 15,000 households on our housing register waiting to access social housing. Only a small proportion of our properties become vacant for letting every year. Last year we let only 1,119 properties, housing around 7% of those 15,000 households. Less than half of these properties had more than one bedroom.

**Housing insecurity for private renters:** The median borough rent for a 2 bedroom property is £2046 which is higher than the London median of £1500. Only 23 out of 1710 two-bed homes were affordable to rent on the current housing benefit rates in Islington<sup>8</sup>. The average benefit

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<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2022

allowance in Islington would need to increase by £560 a month for someone to afford the cheapest 30% of homes in the borough and although the uplift in the allowance from April 2024 will mitigate housing insecurity to some extent, the government intends to re-freeze the LHA in

#### Reasons for individuals approaching our service

**Family and friends exclusions** – the common cause of homelessness over this time has been that parents, friends or relatives are no longer willing to accommodate the individual or household in question

Domestic abuse - increased significantly since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which introduced automatic priority need for those who have been made homeless for this reason and to the measures that we have taken locally to support survivors.

**Domestic abuse:** ONS figures show that offences flagged as domestic abuse by police in the period March – June 2020 increased by 7% compared to the same period in 2019. Nationally 90% of VAWG Services saw an increase in demand for services since the Covid-19 pandemic. In Islington, reported domestic abuse offences rose by 4.2% in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20. The additional council investment in April 2020 meant that council funded VAWG services increased their capacity to support survivors by 56% in 2020-21. The council's Housing Intensive team also saw an increase in domestic abuse reported during the same period, Survivors of domestic abuse will experience overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantaged based on the combination of these identities and experiences, which presents significant barriers to accessing support.

**Temporary accommodation is not temporary:** the availability of temporary accommodation to relieve homelessness continues to place increasing pressures for all authorities: London has the most severe temporary accommodation pressures in the country, accounting for two-thirds of England's total numbers (59,160 households). The number of homeless London households living in Temporary is at near-record levels – figures that have not been experienced since 2005, when numbers peaked at 63,800 households. A recent survey by London Councils has found that between September 2022 and April 2023, 15 boroughs reported receiving a notice to quit, a legal document requesting the return of a property, from landlords for 3,531 properties in use as temporary accommodation.

## Our work

We aim to provide early prevention upstream activity to address homelessness and provide sustainable housing solutions to meet the needs of homeless households.

**Providing mediation and incentives to prevent homelessness:** we take early interventions to prevent people becoming homeless through mediation and incentive payments to their landlords to enable individuals to remain in their current homes. We mediate to prevent family or friend exclusions, developing staff training and provision of a dedicated officer supporting applicants with their housing via the NGS scheme to negotiate or delay the applicant's threat of homelessness

**Supporting individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse:** we aim to deliver best in class support to individuals and families fleeing domestic abuse. We work in partnership with Islington's Solace's Senior Housing IDVA who is co-located with housing officers. We recognise that survivors' experiences of domestic abuse are in part defined by their race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other intersecting needs and characteristics. Our officers will receive ongoing training to understand the intersectional needs and experiences of disadvantage and discrimination.

**Home Shelter:** Survivors of domestic abuse often have to leave their homes because of the risk of repeat incidents of abuse. Our Home Shelter scheme offers an alternative to homelessness helping survivors live safely in their council homes. It is a multi-agency victim centred initiative and referrals are received from different agencies and services. By adding extra security measures to make the homes of survivors more secure, our scheme has been evidenced to successfully allow domestic abuse survivors to remain in their homes instead of having to move or be placed into temporary accommodation. Families who are affected by domestic abuse may have to spend long periods in temporary accommodation until they can access more settled accommodation. The move to new settled accommodation can also be disruptive, expensive, potentially forcing another change of school and health services, as well as a move away from support networks

**Supporting individuals leaving institutions:** we work to provide specialist support for individuals leaving institutions in Islington.

- our housing officers are co-located with probation colleagues and our specialist triage officer works with individuals released from prison or youth detention accommodation.
- Former members of the regular armed services are prioritised in our allocation policy and we are signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- We have a single point of contact in the housing service for hospital discharges.
- **Young people leaving care and address youth homelessness** – our House project for care leavers to provide peer support whilst developing their life skills and the Shared Lives programme and over the opportunity to be supported in a family environment and help them to develop skills and meaningful friendships that enable them to live life to the full. We are purchasing 20 x 1 bedroom Ex Right to Buy properties for people leaving looked after care and we work with Abianda to support young survivors of domestic abuse who are not eligible for re-housing.

**Addressing hidden homelessness:** we work jointly with Community Safety team and Police to support people at risk of cuckooing and hidden homelessness. We work collaboratively to offer intensive support to ensure that the resident can remain safe in their home and take enforcement action against perpetrators.

Islington participated in the annual Women's census run by London Councils in 2023 and we recognise that women's homelessness differs from men in that women tend to be more hidden. As a result Islington, along with a number of other boroughs has signed up to pilot a 'gender informed outreach approach' in order to meet the needs of vulnerable women experiencing homelessness.

**Supporting LGBTQ+ individuals:** with an awareness that LGBTQ+ individuals are a group of residents who are disproportionately affected by homelessness, we have achieved an enhanced Stonewall accreditation and signed up to Stonewall's HouseProud Pledge and have an ongoing programme of awareness training for staff.

#### Joint working: Supporting council residents into safe accommodation

Our Specialist Support Team support council residents in temporary accommodation who have fled their home due to violence, including households at risk of domestic abuse, gang-related & serious youth violence and vulnerable adults who have been victims of cuckooing. In 2022, assisted 35 households into new, safe housing. Of this over half were families (63%) requiring a 2-bedroom sized property or larger, and in light of the severe shortage of family-sized housing across the city this is a real achievement for the vulnerable families needing a safe place to live

## Priority 2: Eliminating rough sleeping and help people into settled housing

We work side-by-side and holistically across the council and with our statutory and community partners to eliminate rough sleeping; We work to the values set out in our Homelessness Charter with the aim to reach Functional Zero.

### The Challenge

One person sleeping rough is one person too many. Rough sleeping is the most acute form of homelessness and our prevention work focuses on avoiding this happening by providing early and person-centred interventions. The average of death for people sleeping rough or living in emergency accommodation just 46 for men and 41 for women. Our rough sleeper response will continue to embed a person centred, compassionate response, drawing on people's strengths to move them away from the streets.

We ensure all rough sleepers including the T1000 cohort have a personalised route away from the streets and are committed to ensuring everyone we have rehoused over the past 2 years does not return to the streets. This needs investment and solid longer term housing options in order to make this a reality.

Islington is committed to finding a solution to all people with restricted eligibility that have been supported under "everyone in 2020".

### Our work

We work within a blended team approach comprising health practitioners to work to support people with neglected, complex health needs, navigators, outreach workers, substance misuse

services and employment support and our outreach officers and Park Guard contractors are aware of and well-connected to the substance misuse services available in Islington and are aware of the opportunity to offer joint outreach and patrol activities.

We work in close partnership with Adult Social Care, Commissioning and Health, to ensure a needs-led, holistic approach is delivered.

Over the past 5 years, Islington Council has successfully applied for and received significant investment from Central Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative Funding (Department of Levelling up, Homes and Communities). This additional funding, which runs until March 2025 has allowed the council to create a truly multi-disciplinary team that offers a holistic approach to rough sleepers. With a strong focus on outreach, the service meets the person where they are at, breaking down barriers to ensure that the right type of support is available, at the time it is needed.

This support is made up of commissioned services, as well as internal Council services, who work closely together to ensure co-ordinated support is offered, which is strengths based and identifies a route away from the street. Services include but are not limited to: an assertive outreach team, physical health outreach nurse, mental health social worker, psychologist, peer support workers and complex needs navigators, who can offer intensive support as needed.

#### Using Built for Zero to tackle rough sleeping in Islington

We are committed to achieving the milestone of Functional Zero to measurably solve homelessness in Islington. By working with Crisis, we are using developing models and data to inform our services and work by providing rapid rehousing to existing homeless people, or by identifying people at acute risk and preventing their homelessness. Through this initiative we track the journey of rough sleepers on a weekly basis, review outcomes and put in place wrap around support to the point of permanent housing.

**Focusing not only on housing outcomes:** Our approach to tackling rough sleeping is a person-centred, compassionate response, drawing on people's strengths to move them away from the streets. We focus not solely on housing outcomes but also use peer coaches to develop beyond immediate need and to support individuals with their health and wellbeing, substance use, employability and personal safety.

Our approach to people with restricted eligibility is sensitive and thorough ensuring everyone's needs are assessed and immigration advice is sourced.

## Supported housing

Supported housing schemes provide accommodation for vulnerable people by providing a safe, and supportive environment, with onsite and/or visiting support which aims to help individuals to overcome or manage any vulnerabilities or support needs they have.

In Islington we work to provide support services to ensure that individuals, whatever their circumstances or past experiences, can live happier and more stable lives. We are seeing increasing levels of need and complexity as people are impacted by social circumstances including poverty and poor mental and/or physical health.

The council commissions a range of supported housing schemes, which offer bespoke support for people who require Housing Related Support. There are different Pathways, offering differing levels of support from low to high and offer specialist support to meet the needs of specific groups including, but not limited to:

- Young People aged 18-24 years old
- People with mental health Support Needs
- Ex-Offenders
- People with complex and multiple needs
- Women experiencing Homelessness
- Housing First and Independent Housing Intensive Support Scheme

These schemes ensure that bespoke support, tailored to specific needs is available and supports individuals to achieve stability, offering a stepping stone onto independent accommodation. These schemes are run by specialist providers, who have demonstrable expertise in these areas.

**Proactive outreach services:** we operate homeless outreach services in partnership with community groups and partners to provide proactive outreach and somewhere safe to go for rough sleepers and we work with local organisations to offer drop-in facilities shelters and supported accommodation and provide intensive support to encourage rough sleepers in Islington to engage with other services to move away from the streets permanently.

**In-borough sustained independent living for vulnerable residents:** our Stacey Street houses former rough sleepers and through this provision of sustainable accommodation allows individuals to recover from rough sleeping and move on with their lives.

**Working across the subregion as part of the North London Housing Partnership** – the Early Homelessness Prevention Service is an award winning service that provides a 64 bed sleeping hub for rough sleepers and provide specialist immigration advice to NUKN/NRPF clients.

## Priority 3: Improving housing options available to meet the needs of residents

We aim to providing every individual accessing our services with a realistic, sustainable good quality housing option. We provide information about the number and types of homes, and current vacancy rates, to help customers to make an informed choice. Our new allocation scheme is due for implementation in 2024 and will contribute to a more equal Islington.

### The Challenge

Although we continue to build genuinely affordable homes for local people including lifetime homes however despite continuing to build homes the council has very limited capacity to rehouse those unable to remain in their existing housing into social housing.

### Our work

#### Building new genuinely affordable homes

Islington is continuing to build new genuinely affordable homes as part of the council's commitment to deliver 750 new council homes.

The new homes we build enhance the choice, affordability, quality and variety of housing available in neighbourhoods, and are accompanied by social and other infrastructure residents need and the existing community to thrive, including schools, health facilities and green spaces. The quality and design of new homes means we can better match the housing supply to the future housing needs and incomes of all of Islington's residents.

We work across the subregion through services commissioned through the North London Housing Partnership including Land for Council Homes programme dedicated project co-ordination team working on progressing rooftop developments across each of the six boroughs within the NLHP.

**Working to drive up standards in the private rented sector** - the private rental sector in Islington performs a vital role in meeting housing need in the borough. We work to improve housing conditions and management for residents living in privately rented accommodation and our Private Sector Charter sets out our expectations on how the sector should operate. Our website provides information for residents to report poor conditions and take the steps that they can take to make the landlord carry out the needed work.

We proactively tackle damp and mould in the sector and conduct quarterly Private Landlord Forums to improve our partnership work with private landlords to prevent homelessness and improve the quality of the management of the management of private rented accommodatn in

the borough. We tackle rogue landlords in the borough through joint working with children's services, residential environmental health and private sector housing partnerships.

Property licensing helps us to regulate the condition and management of private rented properties in the borough. We license properties to improve property standards and management, help address anti-social behaviour and to protect our residents from rogue landlords. We may take enforcement action either by way of instigating criminal prosecution proceedings or considering imposing fines of up to £30,000. The scheme will be extended into two further wards in April 2024.

**Our approach to providing temporary accommodation** – we have a programme acquiring our own in-house stock. By using available government funding, we can use these properties for general temporary accommodation as well as those with resettlement status, refugee, care experienced people and rough sleepers, households.

This has allowed the council to house families, who were often housed outside of the borough, close to their support networks, council services and schools. The programme uses borrowing and receipts from right to buy sales that we would have had to hand back to the government with interest if they were not used.

We work to resolve housing issues for residents in temporary accommodation as quickly as possible and to reduce the number of households in nightly paid temporary accommodation and work to eliminate the usage of shared B&Bs for homeless families and single people.

**Making best use of council housing:** our housing mobility team provide intensive support for under-occupying residents to move out of larger homes that no longer suit their needs into smaller homes by accompanying movers on viewings and covering their moving costs. People who have used our downsizing service have been very happy with their new homes and have told us that their moves are "life changing". Our fraud team work to recover homes for deserving residents and to maximise the recovery of unlawful profits.

**Housing for local people:** we maintain our new generation and local lettings schemes to support next generation of Islington residents gain access to a council home in their area.

## Priority 4: Providing accommodation and resettlement services to refugees and migrants

Islington Council became an accredited Borough of Sanctuary in 2023. We work to make Islington a place of welcome and sanctuary and work to end destitution through the delivery of targeted refugee and migrant accommodation responses. We work to remove barriers to accessing services whilst building more resilient communities to help prevent destitution and ensure that the council focuses on workable solutions for people in need.



## The Challenge

Islington has resettled the largest number of evacuees from Afghanistan of all London Boroughs, the department has now bid for government funding to increase provision of affordable accommodation for refugees. 35 Afghan Households are accommodated, 150 hosting arrangements for Ukraine Refugees are in place, the humanitarian response continues

National immigration policy can exclude people from services which is in conflict with Islington as a place that welcomes everyone and recognises and values the contribution of refugees, migrants and those seeking sanctuary.

## Our work

Our No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) team provides services for households from Afghanistan and Ukraine and leads nationally on best practice for the 17,000 people living in the Home Office hotels across London. We provide continued support for Ukrainian refugees and hosts in their hosting arrangements are in place for Ukraine nationals and other refugees or migrants to ensure that basic housing standards are being met, that people being hosted are not being exploited, and that Hosts receive the support from the council they need to make such arrangements work well.

We are developing a refugee and migrant strategy building successful partnerships with VCS organisations and removing barriers for refugees and migrants accessing services through development of a refugee and migrant strategy.

**We have hosted the NRPF Network** since 2006 which works to address the negative impact of the 'no recourse to public funds' condition that gives rise to increased homelessness and destitution. It challenges policies that increase poverty and informs practitioners in the application of important 'safety net' duties to alleviate migrant destitution. It also continues its programme of training, including through delivery of DHSC, LGA and Home Office webinars on supporting hospital discharge and survivors of domestic abuse.

**People recently granted settled status** – we have resources in place to prevent refugees becoming homeless due to a sharp rise in approaches from people granted refugee status. Housing Needs' Rapid Response team is made up of dedicated officers in Solutions working to find affordable accommodation in very short timeframes. Active outreach and innovative approaches to finding properties helps avoid an increase in rough sleeping. We have written a housing guide for refugees granted refugee status and in-person surgeries are ensuring good awareness of housing options and challenges.

NRPF Connect – we have evidenced a collective £77.6 million per annum spent on social care support across 82 local authorities using the NRPF Connect database and are working with local government associations to advocate for the policy and funding changes necessary to reduce these pressures.

## Delivering our strategy

## Ongoing monitoring

This strategy will be delivered by through the four Priorities and the accompanying Objectives and Actions we have identified and set out in detail in our Action Plan. This will be monitored and a midway update will be published. It will be overseen by Housing Scrutiny Committee and will be adapted to meet the further challenges that are likely to arise during its lifetime.

## Improving our services through resident engagement

Our residents' voices are important, and we will engage with and be accountable to them in the way we manage their homes and estates. We use a range of resident engagement activities and structures to empower our residents and make sure that their voices are heard by our services including:

- Community drop-ins
- Tenant Satisfaction survey and survey and transactional surveys
- Consultations and focus groups
- Housing Scrutiny Committee.
- Support community development actions through TRA and Community Centres within Fairer Together.
- Establish a Tenant Council to hold the service to account
- Establish a Leaseholder council to hold the service to account.

Give the council a face and create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life. We are continuously reviewing our services using our menu of resident engagement:

- Our improvement programme scrutinises the quality of service we provide to our customers and we seek feedback from our frontline officers and our customers in annual review.
- Our critical friend Shelter conducts mystery shopping to assess the quality of our homeless services
- our rolling STAR survey measures our customer satisfaction with overall services as we strive for improvement
- we use focus groups to ascertain the quality of housing needs services provided and satisfaction levels of residents who use our services and implement service improvements identified through resident feedback
- Carry out regular audits on domestic abuse casework to ensure that our processes are followed and record keeping is consistent

## Responding to the changes affecting the sector

### **Legislation**

We will respond to any guidance issued by government including the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 the Social Housing Regulation Act which sets expectations that the perspectives of council residents which we have extended these principles to our residents in temporary accommodation.

We anticipate the Renters Reform Bill when issued by the government which will remove the use of fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies by both private sector and social landlords.

### **Funding**

We rely on the Homelessness Prevention Grant provided by government to deliver our services. Although the current allocation for 23-25 was slightly increased from those of previous years we are providing our services in a context of overall financial pressures as a result of government policy such as rent reduction and ongoing funding cuts to council services. Additionally, reductions in DHP (28% in 2022/23) further constrains our our ability to provide and plan sustainable services is DHP funding.

We ask government to provide councils with greater long term certainty over grant funding which would enable us to achieve better value for money through more efficient localised financial planning. Our current Rough Sleeping Initiative funding runs until 2025, if no further funding is made available beyond this, current interventions funded by this grant will end, and this will have a negative impact on our ability to meet the needs of those rough sleeping.

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## Priority 1: Prevent and relieve homelessness through early and tailored intervention

Homelessness is not inevitable and it can be prevented. We work to provide early help for those at risk of homeless and we believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to a safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life.

Objective	Actions	Delivery timeframe	Lead department (s)
Proactively minimise homelessness through a prevention approach to service delivery	1. Complete restructure of housing service to provide greater resource into prevention to ensure an efficient, professional and appropriate customer journey through a customer-focused, person-centred service	Q4 2024	Housing needs
	2. Implement new Allocations Scheme	Q2 2024	Housing needs
	3. Manage expectations of individuals, partner organisations and stakeholders by through raising awareness of the realities of homelessness and housing options across tenures and continued work with communications colleagues to develop clear messaging for customers and the community	Ongoing	Across council departments
Provide DAHA accredited services for individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse and work to eliminate domestic abuse in the borough	4. Implement DAHA sustainability plan to improve services for domestic abuse survivors, and perpetrators including seeking feedback from customers and their advocates	Commenced Q1 2024	Housing needs and Housing partnerships
	5. Build on the Coordinated Community Response with collaborating agencies to eliminate domestic abuse across our borough	Commenced Q1 2024	Housing needs and Housing partnerships
	6. Operate safety-led case management and survivor led support to enable domestic abuse survivors to have autonomy over their customer journey and provide them with maximum choice and options	Ongoing	Housing needs and Housing partnerships
	7. Train staff to embed understanding of the experiences of disadvantage and discrimination and to practice intersectional and anti-racist working	Ongoing	Housing needs and Housing partnerships

Ensure residents with more complex needs receive appropriate support to stay safe and well in their homes	8. Use Complex Needs Navigators to support individuals in temporary accommodation who are struggling to sustain their tenancies	Ongoing	Housing needs and Community safety
	9. Jointly work with Community Safety team and Police to support individuals at risk of cuckooing and hidden homeless and establish a consistent approach with rough sleepers	Ongoing	Housing needs and Community safety
	10. Commence 'gender informed outreach approach' pilot meet the needs of vulnerable women experiencing homelessness	Commenced in Q1 2024	Community safety
	11. Work in partnership with Adult Social Care and health partners to improve approach to hoarding cases	Ongoing	Housing partnerships
Support care experienced young individuals at risk of homelessness and address youth homelessness	12. Purchase 20 x 1 bedroom Ex Right to Buy properties for young individuals leaving looked after care through expanded Housing Intensive Support Scheme (IHIS)	Q1/2025	Housing Strategic Business Planning and Investment
	13. Continue mediation for family or friend exclusions, developing staff training and provision of a dedicated officer supporting applicants with their housing via the NGS scheme to negotiate or delay the applicant's threat of homelessness housing solutions case work	Ongoing	Housing needs
	14. Support young individuals leaving care through our House Project and Shared Lives programme which provide supported for young individuals in a family environment, helping them to develop skills and meaningful friendships that enable them to live life to the full	Ongoing	Housing needs
Work with our partners and across the subregion to provide housing options and specialist advice	15. Build on Stonewall accreditation to better support LGBTQ+ individuals approaching our services. Achieve Pledge Pioneer status.	Q4 2024	Housing needs and housing partnerships
	16. Offer housing options to former members of the armed forces through our allocation policy	Ongoing	Housing needs

	17. Review housing policies and procedures to identify opportunities to recognise and support the specific housing needs of carers		Housing Strategic Business Planning and Investment
	18. Work across the subregion through NHLP commissioned services including early prevention services and specialist immigration advice	Ongoing	North London Housing Partnership
	19. Work within the Land for Council Homes programme dedicated project co-ordination team working on progressing rooftop developments across each of the six boroughs	Ongoing	North London Housing Partnership
Provide support to access skills and employment opportunities	20. Provide signposting to those at risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless to IMAX and make referrals to floating support	Ongoing	Housing needs and housing partnerships
	21. Utilise available funding to provide support to residents.	Ongoing	Housing needs and housing partnerships
Work jointly with our statutory and community partners and stakeholders to foster better accountability and prevent homelessness and improve outcomes for residents	22. Ensure referrals are received at an early stage from third sector providers and voluntary and community sector organisation through our portal and foster accountability from partner agencies and other specialisms	Ongoing	Housing needs
	23. Outreach officers work closely with internal and external counterparts such as Residential Environmental Health and private landlords	Ongoing	Housing needs and Residential Environmental Health
	24. Ensure that council, police and housing providers are held to account in relation to crime and antisocial behaviour and jointly work across Community Safety, Neighbourhood Services and Tenancy Services to improve safety, sustain tenancies and provide support for council tenants	Ongoing	Across Homes and Neighbourhoods and with housing providers
Improve our data accuracy and evidence base to improve efficiency and ensure that our services meet housing need	25. Embed MRI system to enable accurate HCLIC submissions to DHLUC	From Q1 2024	Housing needs
	26. Improve accuracy of case notes to ensure safety-led case management	Ongoing	Housing needs and housing

			partnerships
	27. Carry out analysis on where applicants are located geographically as a way of targeting our service	Annually and ongoing	Public health
	28. Produce and publish an Annual Lettings setting annual targets for property types across Priority points and monitor Housing Allocations Scheme to ensure that our allocations reflect housing need	Annually	Public health
	29. Conduct customer and partner surveys to measure service improvement.	Periodically	Across Homes and Neighbourhoods
Empower our residents and provide the mechanisms for them to hold us to account	30. Launch our Resident Engagement Strategy and continue deliver a range of resident engagement activities and structures across the department to empower our residents and make sure that diverse voices are heard	Q3 2024	Across Homes and Neighbourhoods
	31. Improve our partnership work with TRAs by rolling out TRA network Forum where there will be thematic meetings and networking with key council colleagues and launch training programme.	Q2 2024	Community Development

## Priority 2: Eliminate rough sleeping and help individuals into settled housing

We work side-by-side and holistically with our council colleagues and partners to eliminate rough sleeping; we work to the values set out in our Homelessness Charter with the aim to reach Functional Zero.

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Lead department (s)
Ensure services are in place to ensure no one leaves an institution and sleeps on the streets of Islington	32. Recruit a prison release coordinator based in the triage team to be a single point of contact	Q4 2024	Housing needs
	33. Co-locate housing officers with probation colleagues to enable joint working to minimise long term offenders becoming homeless in the community	Ongoing	Housing needs



	34. Attend meetings with London-wide offender homeless prevention group to develop best practice and innovative ways of tackling homelessness in this client group and attend MAPPA level 3 to prevent high risk offenders becoming homeless	Ongoing	Across Homes and Neighbourhoods
	35. Update hospital discharge protocol with all health partners and recruit a hospital discharge coordinator to be based in the triage team as a single point of contact	Q4 2024	Housing needs
Improve health outcomes for rough sleepers	36. Use a blended team approach to address neglected complex needs and ensure outreach officers and Park Guard contractors are aware of and well-connected to the substance misuse services available in Islington and are aware of the opportunity to offer joint outreach through patrol activities	Ongoing	Housing needs and Community Safety
	37. Work within the Drug and Alcohol Community of Practice to enhance working relationships across agencies	From Q1 2024	Across council departments and partner agencies
	38. Identify where domestic abuse is a factor for rough sleepers and provide interventions	Ongoing	Housing needs
	39. Meet immediate health needs of rough sleepers through commissioned physical health outreach nurse and provide in-reach clinics in supported accommodation and day centres	Ongoing	Housing needs
	40. Fund health inequalities project for individuals experiencing homelessness including flexible GP provision through Islington's Integrated Care Board	Ongoing	Integrated Care Board
Operate homeless outreach services in partnership with community groups and partners to provide proactive outreach and somewhere safe to go for rough sleepers	41. Use RSI funding to deliver a multidisciplinary team that offers holistic support to rough sleepers	Until Q1 2025	Housing needs
	42. Deliver outreach jointly with commissioned services and across council departments to ensure a route away from the street.	Until Q1 2025	Housing needs
	43. Park Guard contractors carry out initial assessments and ensure that the Police are aware of available support	Ongoing	Housing needs, Park Guard and the Police

	44. Organise health and wellbeing events for rough sleepers in known hotspots to promote the range of support services that are available and continue to work collaboratively with Health Partners	Periodically	Housing needs
Provide secure supported housing to house rough sleepers or former rough sleepers with high support needs	45. Expand our Independent Housing, Intensive support (IHIS) scheme to offer a further 20 homes for individuals with a history of rough sleeping	Q4 2024	Housing needs
	46. Move individuals into permanent or longer-term accommodation either from temporary accommodation or supported accommodation	Ongoing	Housing needs
Maximise available funding available to the council and partners and across the subregion	47. Apply for funding as it becomes available to local authorities and continue to explore capital and revenue grant funding stream opportunities for rough sleepers to complement existing services	Ongoing	Housing Strategic Business Planning and Investment

### Priority 3: Improve housing options available to meet the needs of our residents

We aim to providing every individual accessing our services with a realistic, sustainable good quality housing option where individuals can feel safe, maintain contact with their family and friends and which support their life choices

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Lead department (s)
Provide good quality genuinely affordable housing options for the residents of Islington	48. Build 750 new genuinely affordable homes with first choice for local individuals	By 2027	Community wealthbuilding
	49. Complete purchase of 410 properties to be used to house former rough sleepers, care experience young adults and settling Afghan and Ukrainian families and homeless households	Q1 2024	Housing business planning and investment
Resolve housing issues for tenants in temporary accommodation as quickly as possible and aim for a substantial reduction in the number of homeless households living in private sector	50. Reduce the number of households in nightly paid temporary accommodation and work to eliminate the usage of shared B&Bs for homeless families and single individuals	Ongoing	Housing needs
	51. Roll out a new temporary accommodation procurement	Q2/3 2024	Housing needs

accommodation	framework to improve the service and reduce use of hotels		
	52. Set up surgeries for individuals in temporary accommodation	Q2/3 2024	Housing needs
	53. Use our Reception Centres and in-house TA acquired through buy-back scheme alongside private sector solutions for homeless families in need of temporary accommodation	Ongoing	Housing needs
Improve housing conditions and management for tenants living in private rented sector	54. Extend property licensing scheme for all privately rented properties in two more wards	Q4 2024	Residential Environmental Health
	55. Tackle rogue landlords in the borough through joint working with children's services, residential environmental health and private sector housing partnerships	Ongoing	Residential Environmental Health
	56. Take a proactive approach to tackling damp and mould in the private sector	Ongoing	Residential Environmental Health
	57. Invest in energy efficiency and renewable technologies, to support vulnerable households facing fuel poverty in conjunction with the council's SHINE network	Ongoing	Across council departments and with SHINE
Provide support for residents to live independently	58. Use Complex Needs Navigators to support customers across tenures to sustain tenancies	Ongoing	Across Homes and Neighbourhoods
	59. Use Disabled Facilities Grants to fund major works adaptations for vulnerable residents to enable them to stay in their homes	Ongoing	Housing needs and Occupational Health
Promote opportunities for individuals under-occupying their homes and provide housing options for moves to make the best use of our housing and available housing in the borough	60. Improve customer journey for downsizers to tackle overcrowding and increase the number of moves from larger properties	Q4 2024	Housing needs
	61. Recover 50 council properties subject to tenancy fraud and maximise recovery of unlawful profits	Q1 2025	Housing investigations
	62. Develop tenancy fraud offer to our Housing Association partners	Q1 2025	Housing investigations

	63. Identify empty properties and levy council tax premium on properties left empty for two years or longer	Ongoing	Council Tax
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## Priority 4: Providing accommodation and resettlement services to refugees and migrants

Islington Council became an accredited Borough of Sanctuary in 2023; We will work ambitiously with our partners to make Islington is a place of welcome, safety and success for all and to integrate new communities, build social cohesion and eradicate poverty.

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Lead department
Eliminate destitution and homelessness in Islington through both statutory and non-statutory targeted approaches	64. Establish a 3 year City of Sanctuary strategy and continue to remove barriers for refugees and migrants accessing services through development of a refugee and migrant strategy	2024-2027	NRPF
	65. Evidence the principles of welcome, sanctuary and solidarity in the delivery of specialist housing and casework responses for refugees and migrants, including through the delivery of services with council departments and community partners	Ongoing	NRPF
	66. Manage the council's statutory 'safety net' response to individuals with NRPF and work proactively to resolve cases when we provide accommodation and subsistence support	Ongoing	NRPF
Support resettled refugees to make the best start in their lives and reach their full potential	67. Manage buy-back properties, to successfully deliver the humanitarian housing response and to secure an affordable housing legacy	Ongoing	NRPF
	68. Monitor hosting arrangements in place for Ukrainian nationals and other refugees or migrants to ensure that basic housing standards are being met, that individuals being hosted are not exploited and that hosts receive the support they need	Ongoing	NRPF
	69. Provide continued support 750 single male asylum seekers housed in Home Office hotels in Islington. Ensure the safety and	Ongoing	NRPF

	wellbeing of asylum seekers accommodated by the Home Office in Islington through an Islington-wide partnership response		
	70. Deliver a web-based casework system to enable better oversight of our integration successes and outcomes	Q1 2025	NRPF
Be a model of good practice, to demonstrate that systems can work in support of all vulnerable individuals and challenge racism and inequality	71. Deliver events and social engagement and community-based activities to promote Islington values of welcome and solidarity	Ongoing	NRPF
	72. Use grant funding to mitigate additional burdens on existing services, to increase capacity of organisations to meet the needs of new and existing communities	Ongoing	NRPF
	73. Deliver NRPF Network services to improve local authority implementation of statutory 'safety net' responsibilities for NRPF families, children and adults to alleviate migrant destitution, including through the delivering of commissioned-based training and delivery of webinars in partnership with DHSC, LGA and the Home Office	Ongoing	NRPF
	74. Having evidenced a collective £77.6 million per annum spent on social care support across 82 local authorities using the NRPF Connect database, work with local government associations to advocate for the policy and funding changes necessary to reduce pressures	Ongoing	NRPF
	75. Operate NRPF Connect database in partnership with the Home Office and communicate benefits of the service to councils	Ongoing	NRPF
	76. Share knowledge and best practice across boroughs through NHLP and work across the subregion to ensure that services are in place to find a route out of destitution for individuals with NRPF, with particular attention to the availability of specialist immigration advice to address immigration matters with the Home Office	Ongoing	NRPF and North London Housing Partnership

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