



Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Development

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Housing Scrutiny Committee	23 April 2019	All

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SUBJECT: Housing Scrutiny Review of services for vulnerable people – Executive Member response – 12-month update on recommendations

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 On 4th January 2018, the Executive agreed a report from the Housing Scrutiny Committee about their review of housing service provided to vulnerable residents. The report highlighted 14 recommendations to improve housing services to vulnerable residents.
- 1.2 This report updates the Housing Scrutiny Committee on work carried out by Housing Services to meet the recommendations of the original scrutiny report and outlines future work to improve services to vulnerable residents.

2. Background

- 2.1 In September 2016, the Housing Scrutiny Committee started a review looking at the effectiveness of the housing services provided to vulnerable people.
- 2.2 The main objectives of the review were:

- To identify and assess the housing options and additional housing services available to vulnerable people
- To confirm that the council's services are accessible to vulnerable people
- To assess how vulnerable people and their particular needs are identified by Housing Services.

3. 12-month update on Recommendations

Recommendation	Response to Recommendations	What we have done over the past 12 months and future plans
<p>Recommendation 1 - Housing Services should clarify their definitions of vulnerability and disability, and how these relate to each other.</p>	<p>The review highlighted that Housing Services should strive to know more about their residents and in terms of disability and vulnerability. Currently, disability and health conditions are categorised on iWorld (the housing management database) and staff can view these details when accessing resident records. The existing categories are being reviewed with a view to making them more meaningful.</p> <p>More importantly, it is planned to add additional information to the database that will show what service adjustments staff need to make to meet the needs of the resident as a result of their disability or vulnerability (e.g. wait longer at someone's door for an answer or make contact with resident through carer or support worker). This may entail some specific development to the iWorld database.</p>	<p>Work is currently underway to understand how we define vulnerability; particularly from a strength-based approach. Not all disabled people are vulnerable, and not all vulnerable people are disabled and we are keen to make this distinction. People can move in and out of vulnerability depending on their circumstances. Underlying disability or vulnerability needs to be understood in the context of the surrounding environment and situations that can affect a person's ability to cope. Due to this, we are working towards clearer definitions and recording methods that reflect this reality. The way Housing Services has historically recorded information about disability/vulnerability has been very rigid and has not taken account of how residents' needs can change over time or what service adjustments we can make to ensure that all residents receive the best possible service.</p> <p>The Homes and Communities Division is looking to implement strength-based practice, that recognises the challenges and vulnerabilities of residents alongside the strengths, resilience and support networks residents have to mitigate need.</p> <p>To kick off this process off we are currently appraising disability/vulnerability information held on iWorld (the Housing Management IT system). At present, there are approximately 3000 tenants who are recorded as being "vulnerable" at some point; but there is sometimes no other information held against them to denote their level or type vulnerability, or if they still have a vulnerability.</p> <p>We will investigate the feasibility of reviewing this information with a view to amending anything which is incorrect or no longer relevant.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 1 (cont)</p>		<p>We appreciate that more work is required to make the information we hold more meaningful and fully implement a system that records vulnerability in a useful way.</p> <p>Benchmarking has been carried out with other local authorities to try and identify good practice on gathering information about resident vulnerabilities. This has shown that most of the other councils contacted record this information in a similar way to Islington and have faced the same challenges in changing the way they gather and use information of this type.</p> <p>Housing staff held a ‘Vulnerability Task and Finish’ in October 2018 group comprised of officers from across the council and a wider partnership has been convened to develop this work further. This group will look to devise a resilience/vulnerability matrix that considers possible vulnerabilities, including disability alongside adversity and environmental factors that can affect a resident’s life and impact on their well-being. This will help us measure vulnerability and allow us to respond in a more systematic way (see update to Recommendation 8).</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 - Housing Services should further publicise the shortage of council housing in order to set realistic expectations of what residents may be able to successfully bid for. It is recommended that anonymised case studies are used where appropriate to illustrate the shortage of housing and to help disabled and vulnerable people choose the ‘best available option’</p>	<p>It is generally recognised that there is shortage of general needs social housing that allows vulnerable and disabled people to live independently. Whilst the council does publicise information on the availability of housing and the number of points needed to successfully bid for housing, we intend to strengthen publicity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making information on the shortage of housing more prominent on the council’s website • Add GIS (interactive) maps to the council’s website to show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The distribution of council properties by bedroom size and split by ward ➤ Distribution of council owned wheelchair and adapted properties 	<p>GIS maps that illustrate the following information will soon be available on the council’s website to show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution of council properties by bedroom size and split by ward • Distribution of council owned wheelchair and adapted properties • The number of council owned lifetime homes <p>The maps will show information in a straightforward and understandable way to help staff discuss housing options with their customers.</p> <p>In addition, there is prominent and regularly updated information on the council’s website about homelessness and the lack of available housing compared with demand. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Housing are much more</p>

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Recommendation 2 (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The number of council owned lifetime homes 	<p>focused on preventing homelessness and there is clear and up to date information about this on the website. (see links below)</p> <p>https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/homelessness</p> <p>https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/council-housing</p> <p>There is also information on the council’s website that gives information on the number of points needed to eligible to bid for properties (this is also available as a leaflet) and a link to a central government website that compiles the number of empty properties and lettings made by the council in the previous year (see links below)</p> <p>Points for bidding</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data</p> <p>We have, as yet, not used anonymised case studies to help explain the pressures on the supplies of housing in the borough, but housing need in terms of disability and vulnerability is fully assessed as part of the housing application and transfer process.</p>
Recommendation 3 - That the information on housing services for vulnerable people be reviewed to provide a comprehensive resource, setting out the services provided by the council, eligibility criteria, any limits to that support, and advice on how to access services that the council does not provide. This should be provided in a	<p>Information about the services available for vulnerable people is already available on various parts of the council’s website.</p> <p>We will look to improving this information by creating a disability housing page that will pull information together from other parts of the council’s website and include links to other internal and external organisations that support people with vulnerabilities and disabilities. We will also make this information available in other formats, as required</p>	<p>Information about the services available for vulnerable people is already available on various parts of the council’s website. Information on the website is reviewed at regular intervals and kept up to date. We try not to duplicate information across the website, especially where it is applicable to more than one service area. The council reviewed the accessibility of its web pages in 2017 and the council strives to ensure that its on-line services are available to all residents. The council has recently reviewed the accessibility of its web pages and there is now a dedicated accessibility section on the website – (see link below):</p> <p>https://www.islington.gov.uk/accessibility</p>

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<p>range of accessible formats, as required by legislation</p>		<p>The council also has an online directory which brings together all the contact information for services to support residents of the borough. There is a Housing Support and Services section in the directory that lists five pages of information and support organisations in the borough available to residents - (see link below):</p> <p>Finding Support - Islington Directory</p> <p>Housing Services are currently applying for accreditation for their domestic abuse services from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). Housing recognises disability, frailty, substance and alcohol dependency and mental health issues all raise the risk that someone will experience domestic abuse. This may come from someone living in their household or from a partner.</p> <p>According to research, disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women. The abuse they experience is likely to continue for a longer time and their injuries also tend to be more serious. Disabled men are also at higher risk of domestic abuse.</p> <p>It is harder for disabled people to defend themselves, get help and get away from the abuse. When one person in a relationship or household is disabled it is easier for the abuser to get away with the abuse.</p> <p>Ill health or a disability may prevent a person leaving their abusive situation if they depend on their abuser's help and support with care. They may fear being placed in institutional accommodation or becoming isolated in the home. Their disability may make it difficult for them to reach out to sources of support, especially if their disability affects their ability to speak or communicate. Housing will ensure that it develops a system for dealing with domestic abuse that benefits all residents and recognises the specific challenges disabled and vulnerable residents can face as survivors of domestic abuse. We are due to be accredited by DAHA in spring 2019.</p>

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Recommendation 3 (cont)		As of December 2018, Housing are reviewing all their pages and information held on the council's website and will create a specific disability page, or section, which we intend to be in place by April 2019. We will also be creating a Domestic Abuse page for the housing part of the website that will set out our pledge to support survivors of abuse. We will continue to provide hard copy information in a variety of formats on request.
<p>Recommendation 4 - Key online customer processes be reviewed to identify and close gaps in accessibility. All housing transactions should be able to be carried out without use of a telephone or having to visit council offices; the introduction of a web chat function would be welcomed. However, it should also be recognised that exclusively online services are not accessible to all.</p>	<p>The council strives to ensure that its on-line services are available to all residents. The council has recently reviewed the accessibility of its web pages and there is now a dedicated accessibility section on the website, which includes BSL videos about key services (e.g. housing benefit appeals and choice based lettings). There is also a "BSL Live" function that allows BSL users to communicate in real time with the council. The council's website also provides information on various methods people can use to make accessing information easier, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the size of text on web pages • Magnifying the screen • Making IT devices to talk to users <p>Housing Services will involve the Disability Housing Panel when reviewing or investigating the feasibility of moving more housing services on-line and will investigate the feasibility of providing a web-chat function for some services.</p> <p>Housing will also consider setting up more e-forms for service requests and will promote the use of existing e-forms more widely.</p>	<p>Housing is working towards enabling digital self-serve for council tenants and leaseholders. This will mean that those who can access the internet will benefit from access to online rent and service charge account management, along with the ability to access other housing management services online. Residents will be empowered to manage their accounts at times suitable to them. We are planning for this to go live, on a phased basis, during the second half of 2019.</p> <p>All tenants are currently able to report non-emergency repairs on-line and improvements in IT enabling tenants to change appointments for repairs they have raised on-line was launched in 2018.</p> <p>In the past 12 months we have looked at all housing management processes and procedures where tenants need to make an application to Housing for permission to do something (e.g. apply for satellite dish or take in a lodger) to see if these processes can be automated and moved fully on-line. This will take some time but we are working with the council's Digital Services Team to progress this.</p> <p>The Homes and Communities Division has proposed the implementation of an additional module to the Housing Management IT System. This module would create a housing customer portal, which would connect to My eAccount bringing additional on-line benefits for council residents. Residents would be able to make requests, see selected information, see rent balances, set preferred communications methodology and provide any information they wanted to share about</p>

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Recommendation 4 (cont)		<p>vulnerabilities/disabilities or changes in their circumstances. There is a cost to buying this module and Housing have prepared a business case for this. This module will link into other IT systems in other parts of Housing.</p> <p>We have investigated implementing web-chat for the housing repairs service. Islington Digital Services have advised that the development of web chat should form part of the wider Islington 2020 project. It is anticipated that including web chat within this corporate solution will ensure that web chat will be available to all residents across a number of different council services. Web chat will be particularly helpful for residents who are deaf or hard of hearing.</p> <p>While we recognise the benefits of on-line services for a lot of residents, we will still offer a more traditional service to those who would face barriers to taking up on-line services. This is to ensure services remain available to everyone who needs them.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 - The council should review its information governance responsibilities and data sharing agreements to ensure that the support needs of residents are known to the services that need this information. It is important that housing services and contractors can access residents' data securely to enable them to provide high quality services to vulnerable people.</p>	<p>Housing Services will work with other sections in the council to identify ways of sharing information more effectively in a way that will be of benefit to residents with disabilities or vulnerabilities.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that residents who tell Housing Services about their disability or vulnerability feel frustrated if they have to repeat this information to other sections in the council, but staff have to follow data protection guidelines when sharing information and will need to take account of more stringent data sharing requirements with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, which comes into force in May 2018</p>	<p>Improved information sharing agreements between Housing and Adult Social Services and Housing and Camden and Islington Mental Health Services have been agreed in the past year. These meet GDPR compliance but also improve how we share data for the benefit of residents. These agreements are much clearer about when staff can share information and what level of information can be shared. This will allow the flow of information between services to be easier, but staff are also aware that information should be shared on a "need to know" basis and there must be a legitimate reason for sharing the information that will allow us to provide a better service to a resident. Data sharing agreements have been reached with a number of the council's support partners. We will continue to expand these agreements to ensure they cover all areas where we share resident information.</p> <p>In terms of sharing resident data more widely across services, this will only likely be achieved through some sort of digital solution. Public Health are working on combining data sets from across the council but this is still very much in the development stage. If this is</p>

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Recommendation 5 (cont)		<p>achieved, it is likely that combined data would only available at a geographic area (e.g. by ward), rather than broken down to individual level. However, this would allow us to measure need in different areas and target services appropriately.</p> <p>We share resident information with contractors who are carrying out works on estates. This is done securely and in line with data protection requirements. Contractors are made aware of how we expect them to store of and use resident data.</p> <p>Our response to Recommendation 12 of this report gives more detail on how we work with our contractors and the standards we expect of them.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 - Consideration be given to how the voices of vulnerable people can be heard earlier in decision-making processes on procurement, commissioning and designing services; and how vulnerable people can be further involved in service monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p>Housing Services are working with the Housing Disability Panel to ensure that future panel meetings are more structured so that panel members have more opportunity to get involved in the design of services and give better feedback on existing services.</p> <p>Some future meetings will focus on co-production where we invite panel members to get involved in designing services at the design, concept or proposal stage. Other meetings will give panel members the opportunity to scrutinise and evaluate existing services and give recommendations for improvement.</p>	<p>Housing have provided a small amount of extra funding to the Housing Disability Panel (HDP) to pilot working in a different way with residents to help them improve services by co-design. The HDP ran an event on the Marquess Estate to find out the experiences of disabled residents living there and will be gathering the views of disabled residents' experiences of the housing repairs service in 2019. Feedback from these events will be used to inform and improve the services to residents.</p> <p>Homes and Communities are currently undergoing a process of transformation to deliver the ambitions set out in its 3-year service plan. As part of this, opportunities for co-production and co-design of the new service model with residents will be explored.</p> <p>Homes and Communities priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being proactive and person centred – Building strong, meaningful, and person centred relationships with residents, enabling staff to intervene early, appropriately and effectively to support residents to achieve improved outcomes in the areas of jobs, money, health and well-being and belonging • Working in Partnership – Working effectively in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and statutory services to enable residents to navigate, access and engage with and

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Recommendation 6 (cont)		<p>benefit from the full range of services and support that enables residents to thrive connect and give</p> <p>In October, we held a successful focus group with residents in preparation for the procurement of two major works contracts. The focus group was made up of a variety of residents, including those with disabilities. The focus group concentrated on the customer care elements of the procurement (e.g. how the new capital programme delivery contractors would meet the needs of residents while they are on site and take account of vulnerabilities and disabilities). The feedback from the focus groups will be used to help develop the specification for the new contractors to follow and also to set questions that contractors will be asked when they tender for the new contracts. The answers given by the chosen contractors will then form part of their contract with the council.</p> <p>We will be running a resident focus group on Universal Credit in early 2019 and the HDP will receive their own separate presentation on Universal Credit early in January 2019.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 - Housing Services should review how staff are trained, kept up to date, and access information on how to best support tenants with additional needs. This review should be in conjunction with service users, to identify knowledge and skills gaps and agree how these should be resolved. Staff need to understand how additional needs will have a practical impact on their work and their interactions with residents</p>	<p>Housing Services will review how staff are trained to support residents with additional needs. A training needs analysis will be carried out to assess the various skill sets needed for different job roles and we will look to embed the necessary training in induction for new staff and annual appraisal of existing staff.</p>	<p>The Homes and Communities Division are currently reviewing staff skills and training needs to ensure appropriate levels of support are offered, along with awareness of differing needs.</p> <p>This review will help redesign the staff induction process, the commissioning of training through the development of a skills gap analysis and the re-evaluation of job descriptions and person specifications. The review has also formed the development of a framework to identify both technical skills and competencies for job roles to ensure we have an upskilled workforce who are specialists in dealing with service users of all needs.</p> <p>A co-production training session took place for some Homes and Communities and Housing Needs and Strategy staff in October. Staff have also attended “Unconscious Bias” training to help avoid making judgments about people based on appearance and culture etc. and help them take a fairer and more equitable approach to work.</p>

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		<p>Housing Property Services staff (repair operatives, office based staff and representatives from a number of the contractors) have attended a variety of different training courses over the last 3 years to increase their knowledge and understanding of disability and vulnerability issues. This includes awareness training on Diversity, Mental Health, Deafness and BSL, Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding. In addition, front line staff have attended Customer Care training.</p> <p>There is further disability/vulnerability training planned for this division in the coming year.</p> <p>All Housing Needs and Strategy staff have completed an on-line Equality, Inclusion and Diversity training course and this will be rolled out to all staff in Housing in February 2019.</p> <p>All staff are now required to complete an on-line Domestic Abuse training course which was rolled out in January 2019.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 - A comprehensive needs matrix should be developed to enable housing services to record the needs of vulnerable and disabled people in greater detail. This will help to ensure that staff have the right resources and are aware of how they need to adapt their services for those with additional needs</p>	<p>This will be addressed as part of the response to recommendations 1 and 7. We will review and clarify our definitions of vulnerability and disability to help staff know what service adjustments they should make to improve and tailor service delivery more effectively to different individuals and groups. Through better staff training we will help staff more fully understand the needs of different groups and enable them to take a more empathetic and understanding approach to all residents.</p>	<p>Housing is developing a “resilience” matrix. We are using the term “resilience” as “vulnerability” can be seen as a negative term and it is hard to come up with one definition of vulnerability that covers the various needs of a wide resident base. We recognise that vulnerability can be fluid and people can move in and out of vulnerability depending on their circumstances and multiple external factors. We recognise that crises and life changing events (e.g. bereavement, losing a job) can mean that people may need extra support. Examples of this could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent who normally copes well becoming vulnerable due to losing their job and falling into debt and rent arrears and becoming isolated • A person who becomes disabled and finds themselves living in unsuitable accommodation • A person with mental health issues who suffers a bereavement or harassment that pushes them into a crisis situation

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Recommendation 8 (contd)		<p>We recognise that vulnerability is not static and the matrix will help us recognise potential crisis situations or life events can affect individual's ability to cope and target services and resources more effectively. The matrix will take more time to develop fully but we are planning to have this in place during 2019.</p> <p>The council's Children's Services currently use resilience matrixes in their services as do many other organisations (e.g. Age UK), so there is existing good practice available to learn from and build on.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 - When moving into a council property, disabled and vulnerable tenants should be consulted on the repairs and adaptations that are required to the property. The works to be carried out should be confirmed in writing with indicative timescales to ensure that both the council and the tenant have mutually agreed expectations</p>	<p>Disabled and vulnerable people are given extra support when bidding and viewing council properties, where required. Where possible adaptations to properties are carried out in advance of a new tenant moving in and timescales for this are negotiated with tenants. On occasion, minor adaptations may be carried out shortly after a tenant moves in but this should not disadvantage the tenant.</p> <p>Housing Services will work with Occupation Therapy services to tighten up this process to help ensure that tenants understand how the adaptations process works and will publish information on the council's website to help manage expectations.</p>	<p>There are already established processes for consulting with disabled/vulnerable residents about adaptations to their home, before they move in.</p> <p>As part of the service transformation work underway in the Homes and Communities division, Task and Finish groups have been established to review the current processes around managing void properties. The next group meeting will take place in January 2019. This will include reviewing the information given to new tenants at sign up (the "welcome pack"), with a view to ensuring new tenants with additional needs receive the right help from the start of their tenancy and before they move into their new home. We intend to co-produce the new welcome pack and processes with people who have recently moved in to their homes. The HDP have already been asked to provide feedback on the revised "welcome pack"</p> <p>Housing's adaptations policy and procedure was also reviewed in 2018 to tighten up the process for ordering and installing adaptations and prospective tenants are routinely consulted about adaptations needed to their new property before moving in. Disabled and vulnerable people are also given extra support when bidding for vacant properties where required, and are also given extra assistance when viewing empty properties</p> <p>For some time, Housing have offered carpets to new tenants when they move into their new home. In the past year we have offered alternative floor coverings to tenants moving into wheelchair</p>

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Recommendation 9 (cont)		adapted flats, to help them safely settle into their new homes more quickly.
<p>Recommendation 10 - Housing services should publish the standards which they seek to meet when communicating and engaging with disabled and vulnerable people, and should consider reviewing service standards and feedback mechanisms with service users</p>	<p>As mentioned under recommendation 6 the Housing Disability Panel will be more involved in helping Housing Services work more effectively with vulnerable and disabled people. We will ask for the panels feedback on existing service standards and review them in light of the panel's comments. We will then publish any revised service standards on the council's website.</p> <p>The recommendations from the current scrutiny review of housing communications will also help with the design of any revised service standards.</p>	<p>There is internal guidance for staff (The Communications Toolkit) published on the council's intranet that sets out guidance for providing information in a variety of formats. As mentioned earlier in this report, we will be exploring additional opportunities to co-produce and co-design elements of services with residents as part of the Homes and Communities transformation work currently underway.</p> <p>Housing receives regular feedback from the HDP, Leasehold Reference Group and Housing Management and Repairs Reference Group.</p> <p>We will be reviewing our resident engagement structures in 2019 in light of the recommendations of the Social Housing Green Paper published in August 2018.</p> <p>The Recommendations from the recent scrutiny review of housing communications will also help with the design of any revised service standards for all residents.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 - In order to develop the relationship between the council and local communities, consideration should be given to making the Housing Operations service more 'holistic', whereby a greater range of services are provided to residents on a more local basis</p>	<p>The Homes and Communities division (formerly Housing Operations) aims to provide an enhanced housing management service to residents. This will be done by getting to know residents better by gathering improved information on their health and support needs and helping improve their health and wellbeing, resilience and also helping them to better manage their finances and find employment.</p> <p>The Homes and Communities service will also work more closely with residents on the co-design of their future services. The Housing Disability Panel have already had opportunities to provide input into the new service and will have further involvement as the new service is developed and implemented</p>	<p>The recently published Homes and Communities three-year service plan is structured around four key themes; Jobs and Money, Health & Wellbeing, Belonging and Interventions, and is underpinned by a recognition that our services must be more person-centred, holistic and appropriately targeted. The</p> <p>Homes and Communities is seeking to strengthen the services ability to improve outcomes for residents, using a landlord relationship to initiate person-centred conversations and interventions that link residents to the range of support services available in the borough.</p> <p>The Communities Team (in Homes and Communities) manages the council's relationship with Islington's voluntary and community sector, including advice services, community hubs, frontline</p>

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Recommendation 11 (cont)		<p>services, community centre committees, Tenants and Residents Associations and community groups. These services, particularly community hubs and community centres are being supported to deliver holistic programmes that are promoted and communicated to residents. The Communities Team has supported the development of community centres, strengthening their offer for residents through partnerships with council services and the wider Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). Islington's Advice Services have developed an outreach model, enabling residents to access advice services on a more local basis. Information about these services is publicised to residents through a variety of formats including electronic notice boards and face-to-face communication.</p> <p>An integrated advice offer has been established for tenants facing financial difficulty and rent arrears enabling them to access housing, welfare benefit and debt advice services from Islington Law Centre and Citizens' Advice Islington. Work is underway to develop this approach to expand the direct offer of support services to residents facing financial challenges or experiencing poor health outcomes.</p> <p>Homes and Communities have delivered a locality-focused pilot in Tollington, bringing key partners together to improve the range and quality of community services delivered in the ward. The pilot has resulted in increased provision of services and activities at the Brickworks Community centre; the development of a Big Lottery funded place-based social action initiative; outreach and door knocking from Homes and Communities to promote health checks; increased communication and provision of Electronic Notice Boards across estates; partnership work with the Clinical Commissioning Group, local Housing Associations, and the VCS including pooled funding. This initiative will be evaluated in January 2019 and the lessons learned used to inform the Homes and Communities service offer in other areas of the borough.</p>
Recommendation 12 - Housing Services should set	As part of the procurement process for any new contract at Islington, tenderers are required to	In order to help support existing contractors to better meet the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents, a guidance pack has

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<p>clear expectations for contractors about working with disabled and vulnerable residents; this should include standards for staff training and accessibility. Compliance should be enforceable and regularly monitored to ensure that contractors are compliant with relevant disability legislation and that they are responsive to the needs of vulnerable and disabled people. Housing contractors should also be required to report any welfare concerns they have to the Housing Service</p>	<p>declare if they have in past 3 years had any complaint upheld against them by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on grounds of unlawful discrimination. Tenders may be rejected as non-compliant if a complaint has been upheld and the council is not satisfied that sufficient measures have been put in place to prevent similar unlawful discrimination reoccurring. In addition, all tenderers are required, as part of their tender submission, to sign up to support the Islington Charter for Fairness and Equality. As part of the tender process, contractors' submissions are partially assessed on how they propose, through the delivery of the contract, to promote equality and diversity issues and ensure their service offer meets the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents. These commitments form part of the contract the contractor has with the council. In addition, standard terms within the council contract require the contractor not to unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of the law and any related regulations, including within the Equality Act 2010 or similar.</p> <p>The contractor's performance against these commitments is monitored through the regular contract monitoring meetings during the term of their contract.</p> <p>To support existing contractors to better meet the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents a guidance pack will be produced by Housing Services. The pack will be formally issued to contractors during a contract monitoring meeting and use of the pack will be a contractual requirement. The pack will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>now been produced by Housing Property Services. This pack is formally issued to contractors during contract monitoring meetings and use of the pack is a contractual requirement. The pack includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of revised services standards covering best practice on communicating with vulnerable or disabled residents. • Details of the council's minimum expectations with regard to contractor staff training on the issues of disability and vulnerability and how services delivered by the contractor should take account of different needs. Where contractors are unable to deliver such training the council will offer places on courses it delivers to its own staff. • A reminder for the contractors of the process they must follow to report back to the council any concerns they have about a resident or a member of their household related to unmet needs and additional support required as a result of disability or vulnerability or safeguarding. • Additional information is included setting out expectations and services available related to interpretation and translation and Make Every Contact Count (MECC) <p>This pack will continue to be revised and improved as other recommendations from this scrutiny review are completed.</p> <p>As mentioned in the update to recommendation 6 of this report, residents have now been involved in setting the questions for tenderers for capital works contracts to help ensure that contractors take account of the needs of all residents when carrying out works to properties.</p>

Recommendation	Response to Recommendations	What we have done over the past 12 months and future plans
Recommendation 12 (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of any revised services standards covering best practice on communicating with vulnerable or disabled residents. • Details of the council's minimum expectations with regard to contractor staff training on the issues of disability and vulnerability and how services delivered by the contractor should take account of different needs. Where contractors are unable to deliver such training the council will offer places on courses it delivers to its own staff. • Details of the process that contractors must to follow to report back to the council any concerns they have about a resident or a member of their household related to unmet needs and additional support required as a result of disability or vulnerability or safeguarding. • Additional information will be included setting out expectations and services available related to interpretation and translation and Make Every Contact Count (MECC). 	
<p>Recommendation 13 - Liaison between housing, social services and NHS services be reviewed in regards to hospital discharge arrangements; to ensure that reception centres and other relevant housing services are aware of care needs and that disabled and vulnerable people are fully supported</p>	<p>Due the shortage of temporary accommodation, it can sometime be difficult to source suitable accommodation when a homeless person is being discharged from hospital at very short notice. Equally, when an existing council tenant is discharged from hospital at short notice, there may only be a very limited time to get necessary adaptations made to their property before they return home.</p> <p>Housing Services are working closely with Adult Social Services and NHS services to ensure hospital discharges are managed as effectively as possible. Where a homeless person is being discharged from hospital, there is a dedicated</p>	<p>We continue to review how we work with social services and NHS services to see how we can tighten up this process, particularly in relation to disabled and vulnerable residents. We are continuing to work with NHS services to see if it is feasible for the hospitals to inform Housing at the point of admission (rather than discharge) if a patient is a council tenant or homeless to give Housing Services more time to find suitable housing for them.</p> <p>Housing already have a good, established system in place for dealing with hospital discharge for both existing council tenants and homeless people and we are now working with the Single Homeless Project (SHP) to facilitate a smoother hospital discharge process. However, we realise that there are still stresses on hospital discharge and we are still working closely with Adult Social Services and Health Services to improve this process</p>

Recommendation	Response to Recommendations	What we have done over the past 12 months and future plans
<p>Recommendation 13 (cont)</p>	<p>manager in the council’s Homelessness Assessment Team for the hospital to contact before discharge. Where an existing council tenant is being discharge from hospital, there is also a dedicated manager in one of the Area Housing Offices for the hospital to contact before discharge.</p> <p>We will review how we work with social services and NHS services to see how we can tighten up this process, particularly in relation to disabled and vulnerable residents. One improvement that is currently being explored is seeing if it is feasible for the hospitals to inform housing at the point of admission (rather than discharge) if a patient is a council tenant or homeless to give Housing Services more time to find suitable housing for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council tenants – There is a nominated manager in Housing who is first point of contact for discharge of tenants. This manager works with the hospital discharge coordinators and clinical practitioners to facilitate a smooth discharge to ensure that the tenant’s property is ready for their return (e.g. arranging special cleanse of property and liaising with the repairs service over repairs and adaptations). If a person is being discharged from Whittington Hospital, University College Hospital, St Pancras Hospital or Highgate Mental Health Centre; the hospital should contact a designated office from the Single Homeless Project (SHP) “Home from Hospital” service. They will also liaise with Housing to help ensure that the transition from hospital to home is carried out as effectively. Housing continues to work with NHS services to ensure that they are notified of tenants due to be reduced from hospital as early as possible. • Homeless persons or those threatened with homelessness – If a person is being discharged from Whittington Hospital, University College Hospital, St Pancras Hospital or Highgate Mental Health Centre; the hospital should contact a designated office from the Single Homeless Project (SHP) “Home from Hospital” service. SHP will refer the person to the Housing Needs Triage Team who will do an initial assessment of their housing needs. If someone is being discharged from another hospital (from those listed above, they can make a referral to the council via the ALERT on-line portal) <p>A procedure and communication guidelines have now been agreed between Housing Services and Whittington Hospital for discharge of homeless persons or those threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>One issue we are currently working on is how to deal with homeless people who are discharged from hospital but do not have proof of Islington residence or proper identification (passport or birth certificate). SHP are working with hospitals to help ensure that they flag this with patients as early as possible before they are</p>

Recommendation	Response to Recommendations	What we have done over the past 12 months and future plans
Recommendation 13 (cont)		discharged. SHP will also help people source these documents or copies if they are not readily available.
<p>Recommendation 14 - Service user groups should be invited to participate in the forthcoming review of the Council's housing management services, and other service reviews as appropriate.</p>	<p>As mentioned under sections 4.6 and 4.11 of this report, we intend to involve the Housing Disability Panel in the future working arrangements of the Homes and Communities Service. Housing Services also have three other established resident groups that get involved in the design of services and give feedback on, and scrutinise, existing services, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Service Review Group • Leasehold Reference Group • Housing Management and Repairs Reference Group. 	<p>As mentioned in earlier parts of this report, Homes and Communities are looking to involve residents much more in the co-design of services in the coming year. As well as relying on existing residents' groups for feedback and input into service design we will be reaching out more widely to other groups to get a wider view on how we are doing and how we can improve our working practices. We are looking to hold discussion groups with residents who are "experts by experience" - these are residents who have experience of using specific housing services. The first of these focus groups will be with residents who have experienced domestic abuse.</p> <p>Service Ambassadors in the Homes and Communities Division have worked with residents on a number of issues (e.g. social isolation) in the past year and have met with residents, partners and external agencies. Activities have included door-knocking on estates to find out what residents think of services and visits to tenants over aged 75.</p> <p>The next phase of the Service Ambassador programme will be focusing on our rent collection services from both a procedural perspective and residents' needs. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how our income recovery services, the wider Homes and Communities teams and teams across the council can take advantage of contacts, share information in a joined approach to help residents; identifying any barriers that might prevent this and identifying solutions. • Understanding the reasons residents fall into rent arrears with a focus on how active intervention at an early stage can prevent evictions <p>Housing will also continue to involve residents in service design through our existing resident feedback groups.</p>

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

Whilst the report proposes the implementation of a number of improvements and changes to current working practices, relationships and procedures within Housing, across the Council and with external partners. It is not anticipated that any of these changes in ways of working will require additional funding.

4.2 Legal Implications

The council is under a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals identified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of s149(1) of the Equality Act:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The council is also under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the delivery of its housing services to ensure that disabled and vulnerable people can use the services and can communicate and engage with the Homes and Communities division.

Consideration of the council's equalities responsibilities is evidenced in the responses to the recommendations made by the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

4.3 Environmental Implications

There are no significant environmental implications related to the recommendations outlined in this report, although making information for residents available in a variety of formats, as well as on-line, may involve the printing of leaflets

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

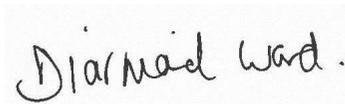
A Resident Impact Assessment (RIA) has not been completed at this stage. Where the proposals in the report may have equalities implications for residents, RIAs will be undertaken. For example, an RIA would be completed as part of consideration of moving more services on-line.

Appendices: N/A

Background papers: N/A

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diarmaid Ward." The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Executive Member for Housing and Development

Date: 15 April 2019

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