

**Homelessness  
Commissioning  
Strategy:  
2022-2025**



**MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

## Vision and Objectives



### Vision and Objectives

The Homelessness Commissioning Strategy seeks to prevent and end homelessness through commissioning a range of services that meet the needs of people and enable long term independence. Our aim is to improve outcomes for some of the city's most vulnerable residents, and we will proactively respond to how inequalities impact people's lives and commission services to reduce the inequalities gap. Our approach to commissioning will be outcome focused and evidence-based, underpinned by a strong commitment to partnership and collaborative working.

The Strategy has four key objectives

1. Commission services that prevent and end homelessness and deliver better outcomes and better lives for people using them.
2. Increase and reshape the supply of supported housing and other homeless accommodation in Manchester to meet demand and need.
3. Improve move on from temporary and supported housing into independent accommodation that can be sustained.
4. Improve commissioning processes and continue to work collaboratively with partners and across services and embed the principles of co-production in commissioning practice.

## Background and Context



### Background and Context

Commissioning is recognised as a key enabler in tackling homelessness, not only for the diverse range of provision that it funds, but also for the partnerships it builds with a wide range of statutory and VCSE organisations. Developing and maintaining these partnerships is a central part of this strategy, built on the fundamental premise that working with our partners enables us to leverage in specialist knowledge, expertise and experience that would otherwise be lacking.

Homelessness commissioning has undergone a period of significant transformation and growth in recent years with the development of new integrated accommodation pathways and new service models, and the coordination and delivery of programmes such as A Bed Every Night and the Rough Sleeping Initiative. Taking the lead on many funding bids, Homelessness Commissioning has used additional income to grow and expand existing services, as well as to innovate and try out new service models to prevent and end homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Homelessness Commissioning Strategy recognises the importance of people with lived experience of homelessness as partners in designing and delivering commissioned services, to ensure that they fully reflect and meet the needs of those accessing them.

## Background and Context



The Homelessness Commissioning Strategy has been developed alongside ***A Place Called Home; Homelessness Transformation.***

***A Place Called Home*** recognises that we face considerable challenges, including rising demand for homelessness services, relatively low levels of homelessness prevention, and increasing numbers in temporary accommodation who are staying longer because of a lack of move-on options.

Manchester has achieved a significant reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in the city which we need to sustain. We have seen an increase in the complexity of people needing support and this has led to new specialist provision which we can build on and develop further.

The vision and objectives in the Homelessness Commissioning Strategy reflect and support the aims of ***A Place Called Home:***

- Significantly increase the prevention of homelessness
- Continue our progress to ending rough sleeping
- Considerably reduce the use of temporary accommodation
- Delivering Better Outcomes and Better Lives for people at risk or who are homeless

## Background and Context



The Homelessness Commissioning Strategy sits alongside the ***Enabling Independence Accommodation Strategy***, with a shared vision and common objectives to improve housing options to meet people's needs and better enable their independence.

The Homelessness Commissioning Strategy supports the aspirations of the Homelessness Strategy for the City:

- Making homelessness a rare occurrence: increasing prevention and earlier intervention at a neighbourhood level
- Making homelessness as brief as possible: improving temporary and supported accommodation to be a positive experience
- Making the experience of homelessness to be a one-off occurrence: increasing access to settled homes

The Homelessness Commissioning Strategy also reflects and contributes to a range of wider strategies and programmes including:

- Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- Central Government's Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy
- The Our Manchester Strategy 2016–2025
- Building Back Fairer Programme
- Manchester's Housing Strategy 2022 -2032
- Bringing Services Together for People and Places
- Anti-Poverty Strategy

## Commissioned Services



Homelessness Commissioning covers a broad range of activities, services, and providers.

**Housing Related Support:** Supported accommodation and resettlement and floating support for people who are homeless and need some short-term support.

**Programmes for People Sleeping Rough:** A Bed Every Night; the Rough Sleeping Initiative; the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme; Community Accommodation Service Tier 3; and Respite Rooms.

**Homelessness Prevention Services:** Young Person's Homelessness Prevention Service, and a range of services funded through the Homelessness Prevention Grant.

**Advice Services:** the City-wide Advice service (Citizens Advice Manchester, Shelter, and Cheetham hill Advice Centre); specialist advice provided by Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit

**Domestic Violence and Abuse Support Services:** six refuges; outreach services; New Burdens funded services; the Domestic Violence Helpline; specialist LGBT+ provision; and a range of other grant funded activities.

## Objective 1



### Objective 1

**Commission services that prevent and end homelessness and deliver Better Outcomes and Better Lives for people using them.**

Better Outcomes Better Lives (BOBL) is a whole systems approach aimed at delivering better outcomes and improving the lives of people and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. BOBL will form a central part of commissioning processes. This means:

- Developing service pathways that encompass whole systems thinking that brings together 'in-house' and commissioned services and focuses on the individual, not the service.
- Developing a joint commissioning approach and processes both within the Council and with other partners such as Greater Manchester Combined Authority to ensure a coordinated approach to service delivery that puts people at the centre.

BOBL will also provide a home for commissioning work focused on reviewing existing pathways and services and on exploring new models and approaches to delivering services. At the heart of this will be a focus on developing service models that deliver the best possible outcomes for people, including the most vulnerable, and services that actively reduce social and health inequalities.

## Objective 1



### *Key commitments*

- Review the Young People's Pathway, with a focus on improving earlier prevention, and improve access to suitable short term and longer-term accommodation.
- Develop a specialist pathway for women with complex support needs, from outreach to settled accommodation, co-produced with partners and people with lived experience.
- Review the services funded through Domestic Violence New Burdens funding, and ensure that all victims of domestic violence can access appropriate advice, support, and safe accommodation.
- Ensure that non-UK nationals and people with No Recourse to Public Funds have access to effective advice, support, and accommodation services.
- Deliver and monitor the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022/25 implementation plan.
- Work with Health colleagues to deliver the programme of housing support for people in drug and alcohol treatment 2022/25.
- Review the commissioned advice offer to ensure that it meets the needs of Manchester people, to include a focus on access and capacity.



## Objective 2



### Objective 2

**Increase and reshape the supply of supported housing and other homeless accommodation to meet demand and need. Ensure people are matched to the right service.**

In Manchester, demand for supported housing exceeds supply in all pathways made worse by slow move-on into settled accommodation. Whilst improving move-on will help, the Council needs access to more supported accommodation from good providers.

Taking an evidence based approach we can better understand the support needs of people needing short term supported housing, so that we can plan new provision and repurpose existing supported housing. We know that support needs have become more complex, and current services may not always be able to meet everyone's needs. Some people may not be able to live independently and require a longer term supported housing offer.

The Manchester Access and Support (MAS) Gateway is now established but access routes into supported housing need reviewing to ensure that we are prioritising the right people and that people are matched to the right services.

## Objective 2



### ***Key commitments***

- Evaluate the Morning Star, and commission further alternatives to Bed and Breakfast which provide good quality accommodation and deliver better outcomes.
- Alongside the Enabling Independence Accommodation Strategy (EIAS), identify existing and future supported housing supply and demand, and ensure that there is suitable supported accommodation available for those who need it.
- Support the commitment in the EIAS to develop a long term supported housing scheme for those people unable to retain their own independent tenancy.
- Review A Bed Every Night provision and put in place an improvement plan to reflect the recommendations in the independent evaluation.
- Review the MAS Gateway and access routes into housing related support. Consider its wider use for access to all temporary accommodation and resettlement/floating support services.
- Work with partners to deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme to drive up quality in the supported housing sector.

## Objective 3



### Objective 3

#### **Improve move on from temporary and supported housing into independent accommodation that can be sustained.**

Homelessness accommodation has increased considerably over recent years with new service models and pathways in place. However, move on remains a problem across all temporary accommodation and there are significant barrier to securing suitable accommodation for people to move on to.

Large numbers of households remain in temporary accommodation despite being ready for move-on, and the length of time people are staying in accommodation schemes has increased. This can have long term negative impacts on health and well-being, as well as education and employment prospects.

Resettlement support is vital to ensure that people can successfully move into independent accommodation, maintain their tenancies in the long term, thrive, and establish links in their local communities. This can significantly minimise the risk of repeat homelessness.

Resettlement and floating support services can also prevent homelessness by stepping in when people are at risk of losing their tenancy.

Resettlement and floating support services have expanded in recent years, and it is time to review them to ensure they are accessible, have sufficient capacity, and are delivering good outcomes for people.

## Objective 3



### ***Key commitments***

- Develop a Move On Strategy and plan which identifies and addresses the barriers to move-on and increases the rate of positive move-on from temporary and supported accommodation schemes.
- Review current resettlement and floating support provision and commission new and alternative services as needed.
- Work with our partners to successfully deliver the NSAP and RSAP programmes.
- Proactively look to secure additional move-on accommodation options through developing bids for government funded programmes and working with providers and partners to develop new provision.

## Objective 4



### Objective 4

**Improve commissioning processes and continue to work collaboratively with partners and across services and embed the principles of co-production in commissioning practice.**

A growth in commissioned services in recent years combined with the short term nature of much funding and the short lead times to set up services, has led to lots of disparate pockets of work and processes.

We will develop more consistent processes across commissioning, including performance monitoring and reporting which will help identify what's working well and highlight gaps and challenges. Developing an evidence-led approach will ensure that all commissioning work is proactive rather than reactive. This will be underpinned by research into 'what works' through looking at best practice and what is delivered successfully elsewhere.

We want to ensure that the way we procure services is transparent and robust, and that it is responsive and flexible and encourages collaboration between services and is inclusive of smaller VCSE organisations.

Co-production will continue to be a fundamental part of our commissioning practice, and we will explore how we can further embed this across all areas of commissioning.

## Objective 4



### *Key commitments*

- Undertake a review of procurement practice and methods so we can ensure flexibility and transparency across all contracts.
- Proactively identify opportunities for collaboration and joint commissioning of services.
- Review contract monitoring and review processes, including developing a core set of standards and processes and data and outcome capture that allows for accurate comparison across contracts.
- At each stage of the Commissioning process we will ensure that value for money assessments are undertaken to contain costs and deliver the best outcomes within existing resources.
- Further develop and embed the MAS Gateway to help deliver an effective referral system and tool for capturing data and outcomes, including equality and diversity information.
- Embed further our approach to co-production with partners and providers that ensures that the service user voice is at the heart of commissioning.

## Commissioning Principles



We will achieve our objectives by taking an approach to commissioning underpinned by the following principles:

### **People**

People are at the heart of the services that we commission. This means commissioning services that meet peoples' needs that focuses on individual rather than service outcomes.

### **Marketplace Diversity**

Commissioners recognise the importance of having a diverse provider marketplace made up of a range of both large agencies and smaller VCSE organisations. This safeguards specialist provision and ensures that services can meet a range of needs across the city.

### **Partnerships**

Working with partners is key to delivering high quality services and commissioners recognise that bringing in their specialisms, knowledge, and experiences of partners improves service delivery and the ability for services to respond collectively to changing demand and new priorities.

### **Co-Production**

Taking a co-production approach entails meaningful engagement from the start of the commissioning process, and involvement that prioritises tangible change and space for a range of voices and experiences.

### **Integration**

Services work best when they work together and delivering integrated pathways is a key part of Manchester's Homelessness Commissioning Strategy. Integrating services improves peoples' experiences of support and ensures that they do not 'fall through the gaps'.

## Coproduction



### Co-Production

Co-production in particular will form a key part of how we achieve the objectives set out in this strategy. We recognise both the importance of involving, partners, providers and people with lived experience in commissioning decisions as well as the expertise they bring. Co-production work will therefore ensure that the following takes place.

#### Early Involvement

People are involved from the beginning of commissioning or design processes to ensure that they have the greatest opportunity to shape services

#### Meaningful Input

People have input into areas where meaningful change can be achieved rather than involved in co-production for the sake of co-production.

#### Ongoing Involvement

Where people are involved in co-designing services, there is a commitment to involving them in ongoing monitoring and evaluation

#### Provider Co-Production

There is an expectation that commissioned providers will actively develop and embed co-production in their services.