

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2023

Subject: An update report on the Homelessness Service

Report of: Director of Housing Operations

Summary

The following report is an update on the Homelessness Service and the improvement and transformation that is happening across the service in an increasingly challenging social and economic context. The Council's Homelessness Transformation Programme (A Place Called Home) is focussed on

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

Recommendations

Members are invited to consider and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Good quality and affordable homes reduce carbon emissions.
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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The housing disadvantages suffered by some individuals or groups were comprehensively evidenced in the Marmot Report 'Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives'. It has since been acknowledged that housing inequality in Manchester is directly related to the disadvantages suffered by some individuals or groups because of their characteristics.

The work of the Homeless Service in helping people retain their existing accommodation or find alternatives that are affordable to them meets our public sector equality duty and broader equality commitments.

The people sleeping rough in our city are the most vulnerable and marginalised cohort of people in the city and helping them to find dignified and supportive accommodation meets our moral and statutory duty.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Having good quality accommodation will help people to thrive. Reducing the number of people who are homeless or placing them in appropriate accommodation with help to access employment and learning opportunities will contribute to Manchester becoming a thriving and sustainable city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Having accommodation that people can access, in areas where they have a support network to help them, and their children, into education or employment will help grow talent in the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Having good quality accommodation in our communities improves the environment people live in and helps them to make a positive contribution.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Ensuring properties are a good quality and high standard will reduce the need to heat properties and therefore reduce energy waste.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Housing infrastructure is central to Manchester's inclusive growth ambitions

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Contact Officers:

Name: Dave Ashmore
 Position: Director of Housing Operations
 Telephone: 07971 384 348
 E-mail: david.ashmore@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Rob McCartney
 Position: Assistant Director for Homelessness
 Telephone: 07854037373
 E-mail: Rob.McCartney@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Nicola Rea
Position: Strategic Lead for Homelessness
Telephone: 07940795195
E-mail: nicola.rea@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

The Manchester Homeless Strategy:

https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/5665/homelessness_strategy

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee - 2nd December 2020 - Update on Homelessness in the City of Manchester

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 21st June 2022 – Homelessness Update

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – February 2022 – Homelessness Update

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 11th October 2022 – Homelessness

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide scrutiny with a detailed update on the Council's Homelessness Transformation Programme 'A Place Called Home' and the corresponding service improvement activity to achieve the four main priorities, which are to:

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

The Council's Housing Strategy also clearly sets out the ambitions to work towards ending homelessness and provide affordable housing for all. To oversee the delivery of the Homelessness Transformation Programme the following internal governance is in place.

- Exec Members Group led by Deputy Leader, Cllr Joanna Midgley, Cllr Gavin White and Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director Neighbourhoods
- Council's Housing Board, chaired by Rebecca Heron, Strategic Director Growth & Development
- Homelessness Transformation Steering Group, comprising of senior officers from across Adults, Childrens, Finance, Revs & Bens, Strategic Housing,

In addition, the homelessness services is inextricably linked to the Council's Making Manchester Fairer programme through the Housing and Homes workstream, which focuses on reducing inequalities through preventing homelessness.

From an external relationship perspective the council has long established partnerships where the deliverables of the transformation programme are shared across multiple agencies. For example, the City Wide, Manchester Homelessness Partnership, GMCA and the Manchester Housing Providers Partnership Homelessness Group.

1.2 Since the previous homelessness report to Scrutiny committee in October 2022, the cost-of-living crisis has continued to intensify, with the UK likely to enter recession in 2023. The cumulative impact of austerity, covid, inflation and now the cost-of-living crisis undoubtedly puts more strain on the country's housing market and by extension on local residents' ability to meet rapidly rising food, energy and rental costs.

1.3 In terms of the Council's statutory obligations in relation to homelessness, the primary legislation on homelessness is Part VII 1996 Housing Act. The Act was

amended by the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) which was implemented in April 2018. The principal homelessness duties owed by LAs are as follows:

- To open a homeless application if a person is believed to be eligible for assistance, homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- A duty to prevent homelessness if an eligible person is believed to be at risk of homelessness.
- A duty to relieve homelessness if an eligible person is believed to be homeless.
- A duty to secure suitable temporary accommodation pending the relief duty (and potentially main duty inquiries) being applied if the person is believed to be in priority need.
- If homelessness cannot be relieved then duty to carry out inquiries to establish whether a person is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. If so then the person is owed the main duty which is for an LA to secure suitable temporary accommodation pending an offer of suitable longer-term accommodation.

1.4 The homeless duties are sequential: a person can be owed the prevention duty (if they are at risk of homelessness), the relief duty (if homelessness cannot be prevented) and the main duty if homelessness cannot be relieved.

1.5 The prevention and relief duties can be ended by the Local Authority helping to secure 'settled accommodation' which must be assessed to be available for at least 6 months. The main duty can be ended through the offer of a suitable social housing tenancy or a private rented tenancy with a minimum fixed term of 12 months. A Local Authority must reinstate the main duty if a person loses the 'duty discharge' private rented tenancy within a two-year period and is assessed to be unintentionally homeless

1.6 The prevention, relief and main duties are underpinned by the duty on Local Authorities to develop a Personal Housing Plan for each homeless applicant setting out action to be taken to prevent or relieve homelessness.

2.0 Data

2.1 The key metrics relating to homelessness are set out below and relate to the level of demand and need in the city and how we are responding to prevent, alleviate as well as end homelessness.

- Number of homeless applications activated
- Number of applications opened at the prevention duty and relief duty stages
- Settled accommodation outcomes achieved at prevention duty discharge
- Settled accommodation outcomes achieved at relief duty discharge
- Number of homeless applications progressing to the main duty stage

- Number of households in TA
- Number of families in B&B
- Number of families in B&B exceeding 6 weeks

2.2 Homeless Applications

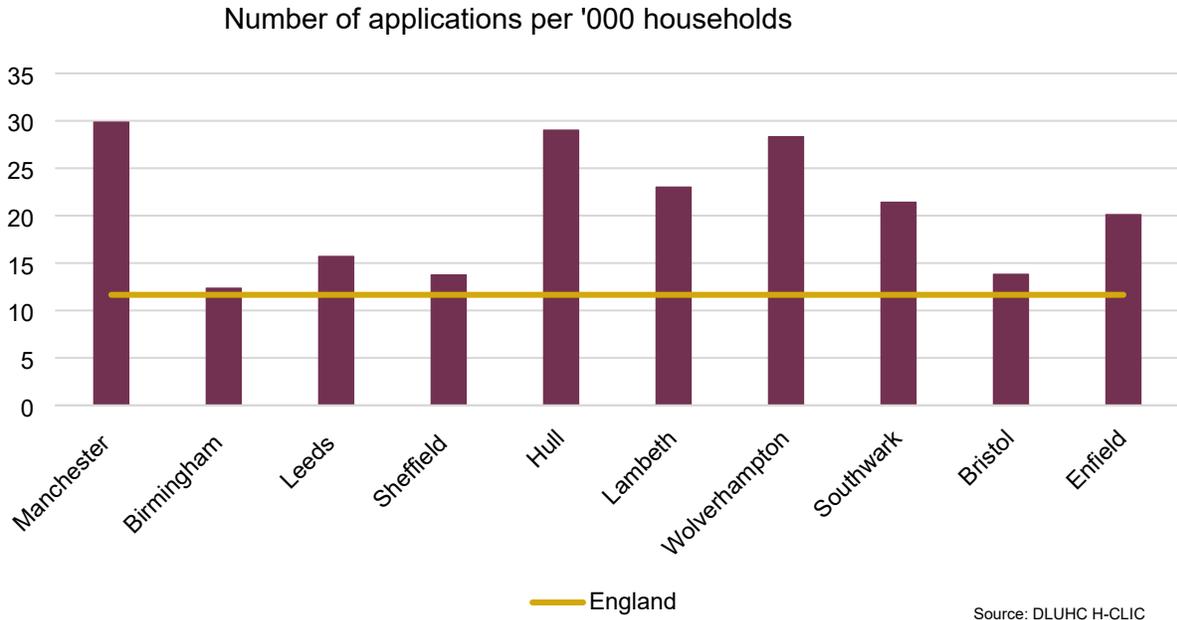
2.3 Manchester opened the highest number of homeless applications out of any Local Authority in England in 2021/22 with 6,525 applications opened. The ten Local Authorities with the highest number of applications opened were as follows:

Local Authority	Number of Homeless Applications
Manchester	6,525
Birmingham	5,301
Leeds	5,262
Sheffield	3,403
Hull	3,299
Lambeth	3,214
Wolverhampton	3,068
Southwark	2,904
Bristol	2,741
Enfield	2,636

2.4 Manchester's homeless applications for the last four full financial years are as follows:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Homeless Applications	4,238	5,199	5,777	6,525

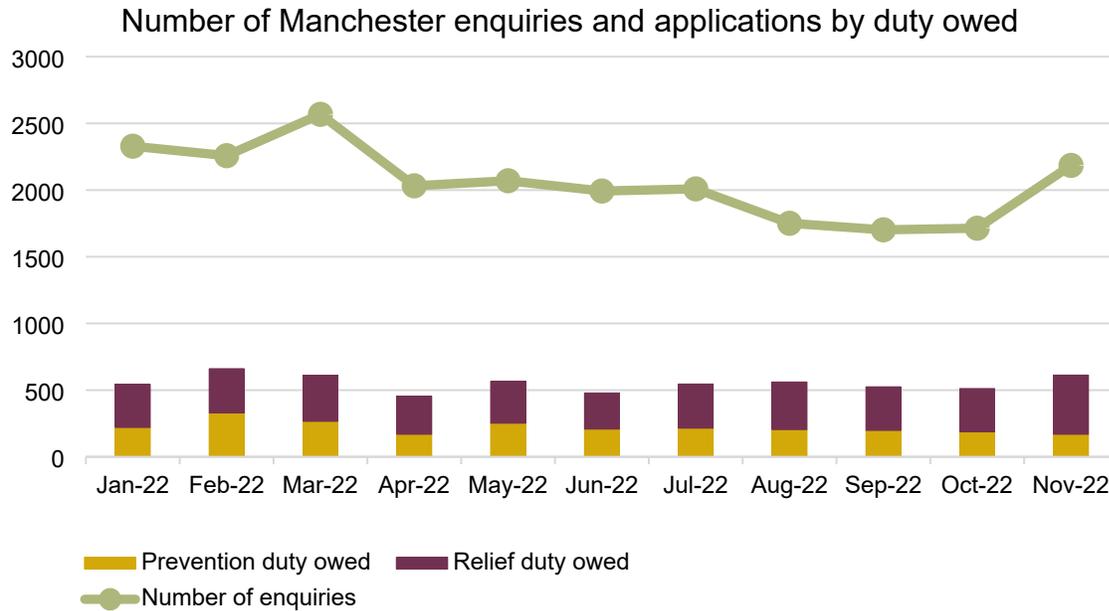
2.5 The number of homeless applications opened by Manchester increased by 54% between 2018/19 and 2021/22. Manchester opened 23% more homeless applications than Birmingham, 24% more than Leeds and 92% more than Sheffield. Birmingham and Leeds are useful comparators to Manchester.



2.6 Applications Opened at the Prevention and Relief Duty Stages

	Total Apps	Prevention Duty	% Prevention Duty	Relief Duty	% Relief Duty
Manchester	6,525	2,648	40%	3,877	60%
Birmingham	5,301	1,518	29%	3,783	71%
Leeds	5,262	3,618	69%	1,644	31%
England	278,110	133,450	48%	144,670	52%

2.7 Manchester opened, as a % of applications, fewer homeless applications at the prevention duty (when people are at risk of homelessness and no temporary accommodation duty owed) stage than the national average and substantially less than Leeds. The data on settled accommodation outcomes achieved will highlight the link between early intervention and more positive outcomes achieved.



2.8 Settled Accommodation Outcomes Achieved at Prevention Duty Discharge:

	Total Prevention Duty Discharges	Number of Settled Accommodation Outcomes	% Settled Accommodation Outcomes
Manchester	2,326	728	31%
Birmingham	1,202	523	43%
Leeds	3,466	2,920	84%
England	122,290	68,810	56%

2.9 A prevention settled accommodation outcome could be either help to stay in existing home or a planned move to alternative accommodation. Manchester's settled accommodation outcomes were 25% below the national average.

2.10 Settled Accommodation Outcomes Achieved at Relief Duty Discharge

	Total Relief Duty Discharges	Number of Settled Accommodation Outcomes	% Settled Accommodation Outcomes
Manchester	4,570	706	15%
Birmingham	3,945	941	24%
Leeds	1,677	875	52%
England	160,900	62,860	39%

- 2.11 Manchester's performance on settled accommodation outcomes at relief duty discharge is 24% lower than the national average.
- 2.12 Nationally 56% of prevention duty discharges result in a settled accommodation whereas the figure for relief duty discharges is 39%. This highlights the importance of maximising the number of applications opened at the prevention duty stage.

2.13 Main Duty Decisions

	Main Duty Decisions	Prevention and Relief Duty Applications	% of Main Duty Decisions to Prevention/Relief Duty Applications
Manchester	2,790	6,525	43%
Birmingham	2,513	5,301	47%
Leeds	151	5,262	3%
England	62,070	278,110	22%

- 2.14 The table highlights that more homeless applications progress to the main duty stage in Manchester compared to the national average because of performance relating to settled accommodation outcomes achieved at the prevention and relief duty discharge stages. This also applies to temporary accommodation placements. The number of placements in temporary accommodation for the three Local Authorities on 30 June 2022 (latest published data) is as follows:

	Manchester	Birmingham	Leeds
Number of households in TA	2,879	3,958	93
Number of households per 1,000 households in TA	13.18	9.23	0.28

- 2.15 Manchester's performance of 13.18 households per 1,000 households was the 14th highest in the country. The London Borough of Newham was highest at 48.85 households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households. Twelve of the thirteen Local Authorities with higher placements than Manchester (using the per 1,000 household's metric) are London boroughs with the other being Luton. Critically, this report sets out proposals including changes to the allocations policy that have been informed by practice applied at the London Borough of Camden. London Borough of Camden placed 4.66 households per 1,000 households in temporary accommodation on 30 June 2022. Manchester would have 1,018 households in temporary accommodation if its temporary accommodation number per 1,000 households matched that of the London Borough of Camden.
- 2.16 Manchester Temporary Accommodation numbers at the end of each quarter:

	31 Dec 20	31 Mar 21	30 June 21	30 Sept 21	31 Dec 21	31 Mar 22	30 June 22	30 Sep 22	21 Dec 22
Number of households in TA	2428	2537	2624	2627	2705	2793	2879	2996	3189

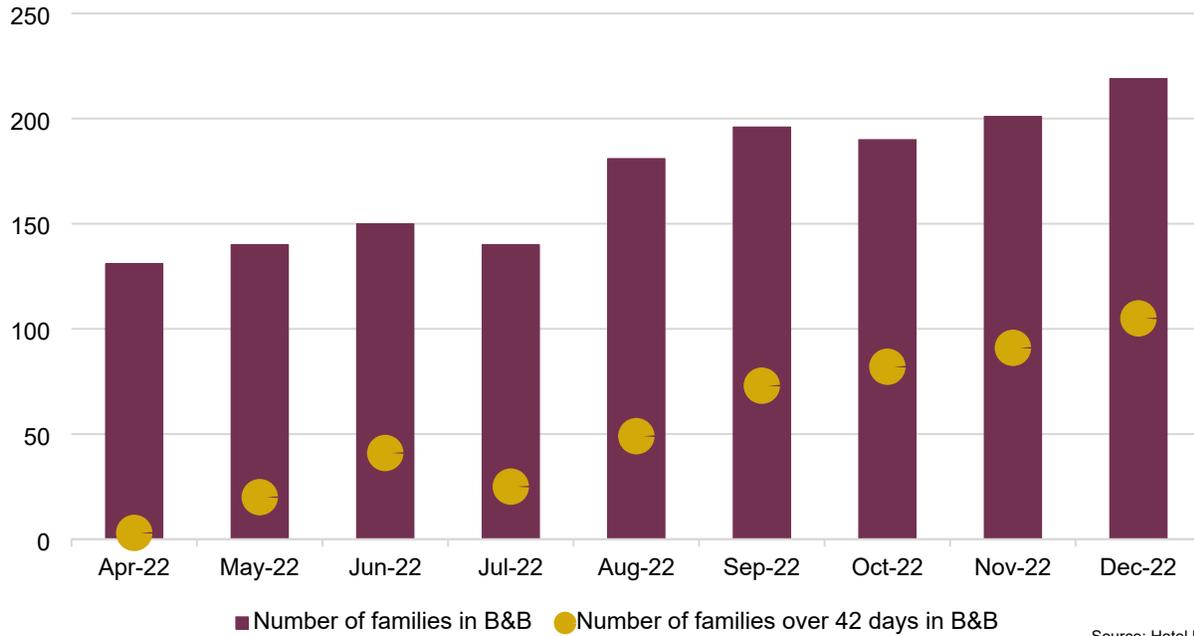
2.17 The October to December 2022 increase in temporary accommodation numbers is primarily a result of bringing more rough sleepers into accommodation under a temporary accommodation duty.

2.18 Bed and Breakfast Placements for Families:

2.19 A bed and breakfast placement for families can never be suitable, can only be used in exceptional circumstances and then for no longer than 6 weeks. A condition of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funded Homeless Prevention Grant (Manchester 22/23 allocation £3,285,784) is that a Local Authority with more than 5 families in bed and breakfast for longer than 6 weeks submits a Bed and Breakfast Elimination Plan to government. The Council has submitted its plan to DLUHC setting a target to eliminate 6-week plus placements by the end of June 2023 and to have no more than 10 families placed in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of 2023 with no families placed for longer than 6 weeks. This is an ambitious target that will need to be delivered within the context of the cost-of-living challenge, rising rent costs and increasing homeless applications. The plan is framed around three priorities:

- Maximising homeless prevention,
- Maximising move-on
- Finding alternative supplies of temporary accommodation.

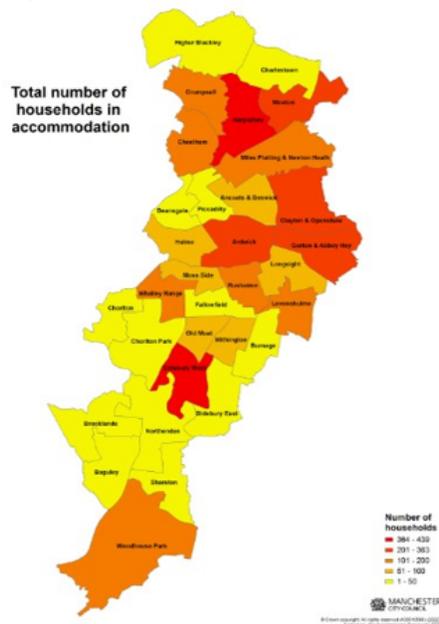
One night snapshot of Families in B&B per month



2.20 Monthly bookings in and out of B&Bs for families

	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Booking In	106	131	114	104	144	123	119	108
Booking Out	94	114	98	113	107	123	108	96
Net moves	12	17	16	-9	37	0	11	12

2.21 From a geographic perspective the diagram below sets out the broad location of temporary accommodation across the city



3.0 Homelessness Transformation

3.1 The Council has developed a transformation plan, a Place Called Home, to address homeless related challenges with the plan being framed around four key priorities:

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

3.2 A short to medium term service improvement plan has been developed and is appended to this report.

4.0 Homeless Prevention

4.1 The definition of a homeless prevention is that a person, at risk of losing their home, is assisted to either stay in their existing home or to make a planned move to alternative accommodation with the assumption that the housing option is available for a minimum of 6 months.

4.2 The platform for successful homeless prevention is being able to help people as early as possible in their homeless situation. A focus has therefore been placed on *significantly improving access* at the earliest opportunity for residents to the Council's Housing Solutions service.

4.3 The focus on improving access is centred on telephony, face to face and digital, with telephony being the preferred method for residents. The changes outlined below significantly increase our capacity to engage with residents much earlier and are a key feature of our new ways of working.

4.4 Telephone Access:

4.5 Since the beginning of the Covid crisis the main route into the Housing Solutions service has been through telephone access comprising around 90% of contacts. As at the end of October 2022 the Housing Solutions service had 3 Housing Solutions Officers answering the telephone during the standard working day. An additional 3 full time equivalent officers have now been placed on telephone contact duty and performance has improved to 75% of calls answered (507 out of 667 calls) with an average waiting time of less than 8 minutes. A target has been set that by the end of March 2023 a minimum of 85% of calls are answered with a waiting time of no more than 10 minutes.

4.6 Homeless Application Interviews:

4.7 The Housing Solutions Service, in partnership with Customer Services, has restarted booked face-to-face assessments at the Town Hall Extension with up to five interview rooms available at any time during the standard working day. These are by appointment only.

4.8 In addition to the Town Hall location, the locality hub at Moss Side is also providing one face-to-face interview service at any time during the working day and the same offer will be made at the Harpurhey and Gorton hubs when they open. Further face-to-face services are being provided at the Centrepoint young person's service (2 at any given time), in hospital, at court and some provision at homeless day centres.

4.9 The target, combining face-to-face and telephone based, is to carry out a minimum of 1,000 homeless application interviews per month or 12,000 per year. The aim is to carry out 13,050 assessment interviews per year which would equate to an average of 2 interviews per homeless applicant based on having 6,525 homeless applications in 21/22. A further target has been set that the service would offer an interview slot within 2 working days of the initial contact being made by the person.

4.10 Digital:

4.11 In addition to the significant changes in practice for face to face and telephony services, officers are working with the Council's ICT to review our digital capabilities as part of the Council's Future Shape programme, as digital access is key. However, the immediate focus is to enable the conversations with residents around prevention and alternative accommodation at the earliest opportunity.

4.12 Homeless Application Case Checks:

4.13 The Housing Solutions Service introduced, in December 2022, a programme of manager case checks on live homeless applications to ensure that cases are being progressed appropriately, Housing Solutions Officers have the necessary support with cases, homeless prevention and relief options are being identified with the ultimate result being temporary accommodation placements not needing to be made. The aim, from January 2023 onwards, is to carry out 300 case checks per week. The service, based on 6,525 per year, receives around new 125 homeless applications per week. The Housing Solutions service currently has approximately 1850 live homeless applications. The target will ensure that by the end of March 2023 the Housing Solutions Service has the necessary understanding of case detail.

4.14 'Invest to Save':

4.15 The average gross cost of a bed and breakfast placement for a family is £194 per night which equates to £924 per week or £48,180 per year. This detail is being conveyed to all Homeless Service officers to ensure that everyone has a firm

understanding of the cost implication for the Council. A priority action is to embed a culture of 'invest to save' in the Homeless Service whereby opportunities to use funding to prevent homelessness are identified and a comparison is being made with the cost of a bed and breakfast or other temporary accommodation placement. The Council has received £529k additional Homeless Prevention Grant (in addition to the core allocation of £3,285,784) in 22/23 which must be spent by the end of March 2023. The £529k allocation is being used as a Homeless Prevention Fund. Work is being carried out to calculate the value of homeless prevention funding required in 23/24 with the assumption being that this would facilitate substantial reductions in bed and breakfast use.

Case Study Example

Mrs X has rent arrears of £1000. Her landlord wants her to leave the property before the arrears increase. The Housing Solutions Service negotiate with her landlord that they will pay off the arrears and refer Mrs X to a support agency for advice around budgeting in return for a new 12-month tenancy.

This is a better solution for Mrs X as she can keep her children in the local school and her local networks; for the Landlord as the arrears are paid off and they do not have a property that they need to advertise and turn around; and for the Council as paying the arrears is cheaper than putting Mrs X in temporary accommodation.

4.16 Allocations Policy:

4.17 The principal purpose of an allocations scheme is to set out the framework by which available social housing will be let to housing applicants including the 'reasonable preference' (priority) for re-housing afforded to specific groups of housing applicants including homeless people. The current Manchester Allocations Policy awards the following priority banding to homeless people based on their homeless duty status:

- Prevention Duty – Band 3
- Relief Duty – Band 2
- Main Duty – Band 2

4.18 The Homeless Service and Council's Housing Board is strongly of the view that the current framing of the Allocations Policy does not encourage residents in approaching early in their homeless situation given that a lower level of priority is awarded at the prevention duty stage. It is notable that the Leeds Allocations Policy awards the same level of priority for re-housing to applicants owed the prevention, relief and main duty and this is a contributory factor to people presenting early (at the prevention duty stage) and low temporary accommodation numbers.

4.19 Manchester is taking proactive steps to address the current position whereby admission to bed and breakfast/other temporary accommodation is the principal

route by which people can address their homeless situation. A key action is to better use the private rented sector as an interim housing option that homeless applicants can use pending re-housing by a social landlord. This is practice adopted in Leeds and Camden whereby homeless applicants who accept a private rented tenancy do not lose their priority status for social re-housing. At present, the Manchester Allocations Policy does not permit this practice; as a private rented tenancy can only be secured for applicants owed the main duty with this duty not being ended through the offer of the private rented tenancy so that the person still has a Band 2 for social re-housing.

- 4.20 To directly address this key issue a report was submitted to the Housing Access Board in December 2022 proposing the following:
- Applicants owed the prevention duty will be awarded Band 2 status for re-housing – the same award made to applicants owed the relief and main duties
 - Applicants owed the prevention or relief duty who accept a private rented tenancy will not lose their Band 2 status
- 4.21 The Housing Access Board representatives agreed in principle to these proposals and the Strategic Housing Service is writing to every locally operating Registered Provider to advise on the proposals.
- 4.22 The Homeless Service and Council’s Housing Board is strongly of the view that the proposals will not result in a substantial increase in the number of housing applicants owed Band 2 for re-housing on the basis of the short-term sequential nature of the homeless duties. A person awarded Band 2 status on the basis of being owed the prevention duty would invariably have secured the Band 2 status at the relief duty but most importantly when they had been placed in temporary accommodation. Waiting times for social housing are longer in Camden than in Manchester. On 30th June 2022 Camden had 4.66 households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households with Manchester’s figure being 13.18.

5.0 Main Causes of Homelessness

- 5.1 It is standard national practice to target homeless prevention investment against the main causes of homelessness. The breakdown of the 6,525 homeless applications in 21/22 by homeless reason is as follows:

Homeless Reason	Number of Applications
Family or Friend Eviction	1926
Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	1262
Domestic Abuse	869
Other	574
Relationship Breakdown Partner (No Violence)	459
Loss of Social Housing	325

Loss of Supported Housing	290
Other Violence	288
Leaving Asylum Accommodation	190
Leaving Institution	169
Other loss of Private Rented Sector	173
Total	6,525

5.2 Three causes of homelessness (family/friend eviction, loss of AST and domestic abuse) account for 62% of all homeless applications. This increases to 76% if combine family/friend eviction with relationship breakdown with partner, domestic abuse with other violence and loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) with loss of other Private Rented Sector (PRS).

5.3 Key homeless prevention action is being targeted against the main causes of homelessness.

5.4 Family/Friend Eviction:

5.5 The key action relating to family/friend eviction is negotiating for people to remain in the home either on a long-term or interim basis. Applications are now being opened at the relief duty stage on the basis that a person is believed to be homeless because they have no legal interest in the accommodation they are occupying, have no security of tenure and have no rights relating to notice period to leave. A key part of the negotiating offer will be the award of Band 2 status for re-housing. One of the principal options will be to negotiate a temporary stay to afford the service/applicant enough time to secure an alternative private rented tenancy with the Homeless Prevention Fund being used to cover set-up costs. Applicants owed the main duty can retain this status/accompanying Band 2 award if they accept a private rented tenancy. This would mean the tenancy cannot be set up until the 56-day relief duty period has elapsed which highlights one of the issues with the framing of the current Allocations Policy and the benefits of the proposed changes. The Homeless Prevention Fund can also be used to cover 'cost of living' pressures/other interventions that have led to a person being asked to leave. For example, the Homeless Prevention Fund was used to cover the cost of a bed purchase which was required for a mother to be able to re-accommodate her adult son.

Case Study Example

Miss Q lives at home with her mum and 2 siblings. Miss Q becomes pregnant, and her mum asks her to leave as there is not the space for a baby, and she is not happy with her daughter being pregnant. The Housing Solutions officer mediates with Miss Q's mum and it is agreed that Miss Q can live there for 6 months until the baby is born. Miss Q is immediately put in Band 2 on Manchester Move and referred to the private rented sector team who try and source an alternative property for Miss Q to move into in 6 months time and still

retain her Band 2 priority. This is a better outcome for Miss Q as she did not have to go into B&B or temporary accommodation.

5.6 Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy:

- 5.7 The Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) expressly stipulates that a person served a section 21 (1988 Housing Act) notice is at risk of homelessness if the notice will expire within 56 days. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that Local Authorities are proactive in helping people before they are evicted from their tenancy through a bailiff warrant. After assessing current practice, a revised approach has been put in place for Housing Solutions Officers to make an assessment as to whether there are 'realistic prospects for preserving a tenancy' because the landlord has agreed that the tenant can remain in the property on a long-term basis. Continued residence on the basis of a delay in court action will not meet the definition.
- 5.8 If there are 'realistic prospects of preserving the tenancy' then the homeless application will be opened and maintained at the prevention duty stage. Key action may include using the Homeless Prevention Fund to cover common issues such as rent arrears or rental increase. The Council will seek, as a condition of the funding intervention, the awarding by the landlord of a new tenancy potentially with a 12-month fixed period.
- 5.9 If there are no 'realistic prospects of preserving the tenancy' then the homeless application will be opened or progressed to the relief duty stage. The current Allocations Policy permits a Band 2 award for social re-housing to be made. The most common action will be for a Housing Solutions Officer to negotiate with the landlord to delay the eviction process to afford the service/applicant enough time to secure an alternative private rented tenancy with the Homeless Prevention Fund being used to cover set-up costs. Applicants owed the main duty can retain this status/accompanying Band 2 award if they accept a private rented tenancy. This would mean the tenancy cannot be set up until the 56-day relief duty period has elapsed which highlights one of the issues with the framing of the current Allocations Policy and the benefits of the proposed changes.
- 5.10 The Housing Solutions had 493 live homeless applications open on 7 December with a homeless reason of 'loss of AST'. These cases are all being checked by service managers as part of the first stage of the case checks work.

Case Study Example

Mr Y has been served a section 21 notice. The Housing Solutions Officer tries to preserve the tenancy but is unable to. They negotiate with the landlord to try and delay the eviction. The Housing Solutions officer puts Mr Y in Band 2 on Manchester Move. Mr Y manages to use the time to find an alternative private rented sector property, with the prevention fund paying for the deposit and first month's rent. He remains on Band 2 and lives in the private rented sector

property until he gets a social house offer. This is a better outcome for Mr Y as he has the opportunity to source accommodation that he would like to live in, in an area he would like to live in, whilst maintaining his homeless priority.

5.11 Domestic Abuse:

5.12 22% (195 out of 869 applications) with domestic abuse as the reason for homelessness were opened at the prevention duty stage with the applicant looking to remain in their current home. The comparable position in Leeds was that 68% of homeless applications with domestic abuse as the reason for homelessness were opened at the prevention duty (594 out of 871 applications) because the applicant expressed a preference to stay in their existing home if that was an option. A review of the homeless service offer to people who experience domestic abuse is currently being carried out. A focus is being placed on making a concurrent service offer to people whereby they are offered options such as a Sanctuary installation to create a 'safer' current living environment and a priority award (alongside a commitment to secure suitable temporary accommodation) so that the person also has the option of re-housing.

6.0 **Rough Sleeping**

6.1 A person is defined as a rough sleeper if they are bedded down/or about to bed down in the open air or in a place not designed/functioning as a place for residential living such as a car or a derelict building.

6.2 All Local Authorities are required to carry out either a count or an informed snapshot of rough sleeping numbers on a single night between October and November. The figure to be submitted has to be verified by an independent organisation (Homeless Link) commissioned by government. The annual count figure for Manchester by year are:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (unpublished)
Count Number	123	91	68	48	58

6.3 The count figures demonstrate significant progress has been made since 2018 but the figure is beginning to increase.

6.4 The Council is working closely with a number of external partners to get a collective position on the number of people who are sleeping rough continuously, those who do so intermittently as part of a wider transient lifestyle and those who are at significant risk of street sleeping. Preventing people starting to sleep rough is an emerging priority work area and there are no current agreed criteria in place for assessing the risk of a person starting to sleep rough. Council officers are going to work with external partners on establishing agreed criteria for making 'at

risk of rough sleeping' assessments and this work will also be informed by comparable work being carried out in London.

- 6.5 An identified gap in service provision for people who sleep rough has been the limited 'off the street' emergency accommodation offer to people who sleep on the streets. Essentially whereby a person found sleeping rough, at whatever time of day/night, can be secured accommodation on an immediate basis. Such a service is vital so that an offer can be made when a person feels ready to take accommodation and to foster trust/engagement between the Council's outreach services and people who sleep rough. The 'A Bed Every Night' (ABEN) services in Manchester do not currently provide an 'off the street' offer and work on a referral/waiting list for admission basis. Since the beginning of November 2022, the Council has funded 66 'off the street' accommodation units at the Etrop hotel which is close to the airport. A range of Council and external support services who work with people who sleep rough are based at the Etrop. From January 2023 the Urban Village health service will provide a service at Etrop. The Etrop service is funded until the end of March 2023. A priority for January will be to identify how an ongoing 'off the street' service can be provided.
- 6.6 The Homeless Service is working to ensure that all people who street sleep have a live homeless application so that an assessment of housing need is carried out, to confirm the duties owed by the Local Authority to the person and so that the accommodation secured for the person is made under a legal accommodation duty. Approximately 130 rough sleepers have been placed in emergency accommodation since the beginning of November 2022 and the vast majority of these are being accommodated under a temporary accommodation duty and therefore are included within the temporary accommodation reporting number.

7.0 Rough Sleeping Initiative

- 7.1 Manchester has successfully bid for funding through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) since 2018 and has received £7.8 million for the period 2022 - 2025. This funding will continue to support a range of existing accommodation and support services, as well as increase access to the private rented sector for people who are ready for their own tenancy with resettlement support. The funding is also being used to expand specialist provision for young people and for women with complex needs.
- 7.2 Young People's pathway: RSI funding from April 2022 has expanded the existing Centrepont Outreach service for young people, and between July and December this service had worked with 174 young people either sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping. The funding has also provided an additional 8 units of short-term accommodation for young people in the city, with some dedicated resource to enable quick move-on, including into the private rented sector.
- 7.3 Complex Women's pathway: the pathway for women with a history of sleeping rough and complex support needs has been greatly enhanced using a

combination of RSI, Respite Rooms, and Domestic Violence and Abuse New Burdens funding. A new accommodation scheme, Peony Project, was launched in July 2022. Commissioned jointly with Salford City Council, Peony Project provides 9 self-contained units with five of these ring-fenced for Manchester women. Additional support is provided on-site by Manchester Women's Aid and Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) using the successful Respite Rooms approach, and Change, Grow, Live ((CGL) commissioned drug and alcohol service) also provide a weekly drop-in session at the Project. This multi-agency approach will deliver better outcomes for women referred into the Project as well as reduce the costs of repeat homelessness often associated with this cohort.

8.0 A Bed Every Night (ABEN)

8.1 There are currently 8 ABEN accommodation schemes in Manchester providing 174 short term bed spaces every night for people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. Included in this is a women only scheme and a scheme for the LGBT+ community. There are also two schemes for non-UK nationals and people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The ABEN schemes are funded in 2022/23 as follows:

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA): 88 bed spaces - £1,628,000
- Greater Manchester Mayor's Charity: 30 NRPF bed spaces - £396,00
- Manchester City Council: 56 bed spaces - £779,586

8.2 GMCA has indicated that funding for ABEN will continue until March 2025, although at a reduced rate in 2023/24 and further reduced in 2024/25. A review of ABEN services is currently being undertaken, both to address future budget constraints and to ensure that the schemes support the objectives in the Council's Ending Rough Sleeping plan. Key to this is ensuring that ABEN provides an immediate "off the street" emergency accommodation offer to people sleeping rough.

8.3 The Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) is a government funded capital and revenue programme to deliver medium-term (generally two to three-year tenancies) homes for people who sleep rough. Properties will be let to a succession of people who have slept on the streets over a 30-year period. Bids needed to be made by Manchester City Council, or the GMCA, as the strategic lead for homelessness in partnership with a Registered Provider that would part fund and manage the properties. Manchester City Council has bid for schemes which are to be managed as part of the wider council housing management pool. The Manchester bids have involved the purchase and repair of private sector housing to be integrated into the social landlord's stock base or the modernisation of existing moribund social housing stock that could not be let in its current form. Properties, given they are time-limited, are let on assured shorthold tenancies by local housing associations and non-secure tenancies by the Council. Tenants are

awarded priority on Manchester Move to help secure a 'lifetime' social housing tenancy. All tenants receive a housing support service. The Council secured funding for 159 properties and have been/will be allocated 61 properties from the GMCA allocation. To date around 100 properties have been let and it is hoped that the remaining properties will become available in 2023. Properties must be ready by the end of March 2024.

- 8.4 The Supported Housing Accommodation (SHAP) was launched in December 2022 and will complement RSAP provision in that it will fund capital and revenue schemes for supported housing schemes for people who sleep rough whose support needs are higher than that which would enable them to sustain an RSAP tenancy. Local services that work with people who sleep rough will hopefully play an important role in developing bids and delivering services. A standard condition of securing capital funding is that the scheme is managed by a Registered Provider. Part of the initial work on SHAP is partnering local services for people who sleep rough with Registered Providers. Manchester's RSAP bids involved the use of existing housing. There is the opportunity to develop new build, including modular build, schemes through SHAP. A Council contribution could be the provision of land. SHAP schemes need to be submitted to government in 2023/24 and delivered by the end of 2024/25. SHAP will deliver 2100 units of supported housing across England. The provisional target is to deliver 100 units in Manchester.

9.0 Move-on from Temporary Accommodation

- 9.1 A number of the Manchester Registered Providers have agreed to make an additional 90 lets to families who are long-term resident in dispersed temporary accommodation with the focus being on those who have housing applications registered from before January 2020. The applicants will have their housing application priority status placed in Band 1 for re-housing and backdated to the date of move-in to temporary accommodation. The Allocations Policy Band 1 provision of 'management discretion' will be triggered to facilitate these priority awards. Applicants will be able to bid for available properties through choice-based lettings to ensure that families have a high level of choice in determining where they want to live. It is envisaged that the lettings will be made between January and June 2023. The released dispersed temporary accommodation units will be made available for families who are currently or would otherwise be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. The success of the scheme heavily depends on the Homeless Service better preventing homelessness so that fewer new people require temporary accommodation.
- 9.2 The GMCA has secured £3.9m, to be drawn down in 2023/24, to deliver a capital leasing scheme providing longer-term tenancies to homeless families as move-on from temporary accommodation. The scheme will deliver 200 homes which will be sourced from private landlords and managed by local Registered Providers. The properties will be let on assured shorthold tenancies. The capital grant is intended to cover the net cost of the provision. It is assumed that Manchester will

be allocated 100 of the 200 properties. Further work on scheme detail will be carried out from January 2023.

10.0 Alternative Temporary Accommodation to B&B

10.1 The Homeless Service is working with private providers in the city to deliver a leasing scheme for 200 units of self-contained dispersed accommodation that will be used as an alternative to bed and breakfast placements. The ask to providers is to deliver 120 two-bed, 60 three-bed and 20 four-bed properties. The term of the initial lease arrangement will be five years. The providers will be offered guaranteed rental payments and provision to cover repair and furniture costs. The ask to providers is to deliver 200 properties by the end of March 2022 although this is recognised as being an extremely demanding target. Providers have identified 21 properties as of 21st December 2022. It is forecast that the initiative will cost the Council £7.9m over the five-year term and save approximately £34m over the five-year period. This is based on a current net cost of one bed and breakfast placement of £819 per week once housing benefit deducted. The success of the scheme heavily depends on the Homeless Service better preventing homelessness so that fewer new people require temporary accommodation.

11.0 Commissioned Supported Housing

11.1 Manchester's housing related support (HRS) services have been commissioned to provide accommodation with support that helps people move away from homelessness and prepare for independent living. The support is commissioned to be delivered on short term basis, supporting individuals in the schemes to develop resilience and recovery and practical life skills. When individuals have received the support they require and are ready to live independently the expectation is that they will move on to new accommodation at that point.

11.2 Four distinct housing related support pathways have been commissioned for adults, young people, people with complex needs and a history of rough sleeping and a pathway offering harm reduction and abstinence support for people with drug and alcohol support needs. Each pathway has a dedicated resettlement and floating support service.

11.3 Housing related support providers are required to return outcomes on a quarterly basis, covering both pathway wide outcomes as well as individual outcomes for all residents in the schemes. One element of the quarterly outcomes requires providers to confirm which residents are ready to move on. For each of the people who are ready to move on, the provider also details any barriers in place to move on, as well as the type of accommodation required.

11.4 From the quarterly outcomes we know that most of the residents in our housing related support accommodation schemes are ready to move on. At the end of

quarter 2 in 2022/23 the percentage of people ready to move on within each pathway was:

Pathway	Number of spaces	Number Ready to Move On	Percentage of total ready to move
Adults (Connect Manchester)	163	140	85%
Young Persons (Manchester Young Futures)	190	132*	69%*
Complex needs (Rough Sleeper)	59	30**	51%**
Drug & Alcohol (Harm reduction & abstinence support)	63	25*	40%*

Source: MAS Gateway. *Some data missing. **Q1 data

11.5 327 of the 465 people in supported housing have been assessed as 'ready to move-on'. Improving move-on from commissioned services is a key priority for the Homeless Service to ensure that there is a better functioning housing pathway:

- The Registered Providers want to let properties to people who are tenancy ready
- People who have been assessed as ready to move on from supported housing meet the definition of being tenancy ready
- Improving the success rate for people who are ready to move-on from supported housing will enable more effective use of accommodation and allow greater use by people, including rough sleepers and those placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, who require support.

11.6 The Manchester Allocations Policy awards Band 2 status for people who are ready to move-on from supported housing. The interpretation of this provision is that an award is made when the person is 'ready to move-on'. Waiting times for social housing means that it will be approximately two years before a person can move-on from supported housing after they are ready to move-on. This results in the bed blocking position. People in supported housing do not routinely have a homeless application. If they did then they would be owed the relief duty, with accompanying Band 2 award, from the date of admission. The Council needs to ensure there is equity in treatment for homeless applicants and those in supported housing. One option would be to backdate the Band 2 award, once a person is ready to move-on from supported housing, to the date of admission. Consideration will also be given to facilitating move-on to the private rented sector, with floating support, with a retained Band 2 award. Homeless applicants, owed the main duty, can accept a private rented offer and retain their Band 2

status and it is proposed that this option is extended to those owed the prevention or relief duties.

12.0 Dispersed Temporary Accommodation Contract Uplift

- 12.1 Where temporary accommodation is required the provision of dispersed temporary accommodation delivers a more affordable and suitable accommodation model than the use of B&B emergency hotel provision. Hotel accommodation for one family costs the Council on average £924 per week. There are currently (December 2022) over 200 families in B&B type accommodation in housing need. Over 90 have been in this accommodation in excess of 42 days, this means the Council is in breach of its statutory responsibility in this regard. This type of accommodation fails to provide the full facilities that a self-contained unit of accommodation can and providing support to household in hotels the Council does not manage is extremely challenging.
- 12.2 Supporting the elimination of B&B usage for families relies upon a steady supply of dispersed temporary accommodation from the 19 accommodation providers on the temporary accommodation (TC 504) framework agreement. Cost-of-living implications, mortgage rate rises, escalating property maintenance and material costs are resulting in accommodation providers struggling to procure enough temporary accommodation to meet current needs based on existing rental rates.

The rates the Council pays are no longer in step with the buoyant rental market. A table showing the average rents in comparison to the local housing allowance is in Appendix 3. A small rental uplift agreed in November 2021, paid for newly sourced 2 bed properties only within Manchester, failed to increase property flow. Faced with increasing costs accommodation providers have informed the service many of the small individual landlords they work with are withdrawing existing properties from the contract and they cannot procure new accommodation for our needs. The table below shows the number of properties, an 872% increase from the previous year, being withdrawn from the scheme due to the challenging market conditions.

Properties removed from the dispersed scheme	2021	2022
Jan	2	8
Feb	0	18
Mar	0	3
Apr	0	3
May	0	11
June	0	14
July	4	29
Aug	4	49

Sept	2	12
Oct	2	19
Nov	4	9
Dec	0	
Total	18	175

12.3 Whilst officers are progressing the prevention work outlined above, which should result in an overall reduction in the amount of temporary accommodation, it is essential that a rental uplift on temporary accommodation is secured to sustain existing temporary accommodation currently and support the flow of new stock required to reduce B&B numbers. A key decision request has been submitted on this matter for January 2023.

13.0 Improving Property Standards and Inspections

13.1 The Homeless Service is working hard to ensure that properties used as temporary accommodation are free from damp, mould and disrepair issues. All dispersed temporary accommodation properties are inspected by the Homelessness Inspection Team ensuring compliance with the Housing Health & Safety Rating Standard (HHSRS) prior to let.

13.2 In emergency accommodation (B&B), any issues of damp or disrepair are picked up by the services' Inspections Team. These issues may be picked up by the regular inspection regime that is in place, or through complaints from residents. Any complaints are taken very seriously, and staff will inspect to ascertain concerns. If there are issues of disrepair/damp or mould then people will be moved out of the affected rooms, and placed elsewhere in the B&B, or in a different accommodation site. The issue is subsequently addressed with the landlord to be rectified.

13.3 Significant work has been undertaken over the past year to improve standards in temporary accommodation by a newly created Housing Management and Inspections Team. The team has been increased by 4 additional staff (16 in total). Service improvement includes:

- A revised training package undertaken by inspectors in damp and mould assessment and management
- All staff within the wider team are trained to HHSRS inspection standards and able to spot category hazards effectively in temporary accommodation housing stock including damp and mould issues
- An improved collaborative approach working with all accommodation providers and escalation routes for damp, mould and disrepair to ensure a prompt response for residents
- Improved contract monitoring of requested repairs to ensure that all repairs are completed in a timely fashion as stipulated, and to the correct standard (HHSRS compliant)

- As families move into dispersed temporary accommodation a conversation takes place with both their support worker and housing management officer jointly around the prevention of condensation, damp and mould in a property. Tips and guidance are provided.
- A mailout to all residents living in dispersed temporary accommodation (1981 households) of a letter and leaflet providing advice and guidance on condensation prevention and damp and mould recognition and elimination has just taken place. This includes signposting to energy and money saving advice.

14.0 Floating Support Prototype – a new way of working to deliver better outcomes, better lives.

- 14.1 It has been acknowledged that newly placed households in dispersed temporary accommodation are at a greater risk of becoming a failing tenancy resulting from a delay in the service's ability to allocate a named face to face support worker at the outset of a tenancy. Currently, each support worker in the Floating Support Service is carrying a caseload of 45 dispersed temporary accommodation cases each. This ratio of visiting support provision is insufficient for those in housing need and must change. To deliver a better outcome for families, caseloads need to be reduced to an average 1 to 20 ratio model. The elimination of the use of B&B accommodation and subsequent reduction in budget pressure will enable the service to reinvest in sufficient staffing resources to fund the right level of support required in different settings to better meet housing needs.
- 14.2 The Floating Support Service began a 6-month prototype to trial the impact of allocating support at the commencement of a tenancy and reducing caseload numbers. The delivery of this intensive wraparound support offer began in October 2022. Each prototype support worker is allocated cases at the point a household moves into dispersed temporary accommodation. They will hold a maximum of 20 cases each to ensure quality time for an improved offer to clients.
- 14.3 At the end of the 3-month period, each case will be reviewed by the support worker and manager. They will assess whether the case is then regarded as a high or low need case. This will determine the type of support required going forward.
- 14.4 During the three months the prototype has been operating, support workers have identified multiple benefits to the new model and actioned many issues that the existing support model would not have picked up quickly. Some examples have been: Improved support for all families; addressing unclaimed child benefit; speedier assistance with school admissions; rent arrears prevention work; improved tenancy management; prompt discovery of property abandonment; subsequent improved ability to relet to other homeless families, thereby reducing the time spent in a B&B accommodation; improved ability to manage tenant expectations.

14.5 The prototype continues until March 2023 and the findings will inform the delivery model to be implemented.

15.0 BEAM

15.1 The Floating Support Service is currently working in partnership with BEAM, an externally commissioned service focusing on families who have recently been placed into dispersed temporary accommodation and who, with a crowd funding model of support, could return to employment and move on from temporary accommodation.

15.2 To date 36 families have been referred into BEAM, of which 26 have been contacted for an appointment with case workers and 6 appointments made for the new year.

15.3 Each family is allocated a support worker from BEAM, who works with the family throughout their journey into employment and securing a suitable, affordable home within the private rented sector. Financial barriers are addressed and removed such as access to training, childcare costs, deposits and rent support via crowd funding donations, empowering homeless families into employment.

16.0 Young Persons Pathway

16.1 Collaborative working with colleagues in children's services is continuing to help to shape and develop the young person's pathway. An action plan has been developed to guide and deliver the progress of the young person's pathway across homelessness and children's services. A key action in the plan is to develop a joint housing protocol for care leavers, which will help children's services, homelessness services and key partners ensure that the accommodation and support needs of all young people who are leaving care are met, and that homelessness is prevented where a risk of homelessness is identified. The protocol confirms our commitments as corporate parents and sets out how this commitment will be delivered in practice.

16.2 The joint housing protocol has been developed by officers in children's services leaving care team and homelessness colleagues. The protocol has also been co-produced with input from care leaver and young people currently receiving support within the young person's pathway, as well as key partners who provide accommodation and support for young people in Manchester. An engagement event was held in November 2022 where young people and partner organisations were invited to attend and give feedback on the joint housing protocol and services within the young person's pathway. Feedback from the event is currently being incorporated into the draft joint housing protocol and, once completed the final version will be delivered for approval.

17.0 Centrepont Housing Solutions Service for Young People

- 17.1 The front door for Manchester's housing solutions service for young people aged 18-25 years old is delivered from the Centrepoint hub at Oldham Street in the city centre. The Council's housing solutions officers are based at the Centrepoint hub and work closely with Centrepoint officers to deliver a specialist service for young people and meet the duties to prevent and relieve homelessness under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA).
- 17.2 The Council will be working with Centrepoint to put in place, where applicable, homeless prevention practice set out earlier in the report and to measure service performance using the performance metrics set out in the report introduction.
- 17.3 Alongside the work to meet homelessness prevention and relief duty work the Centrepoint services also deliver a flexible support for young people outside of the legal duties, where possible. The hub hosts a telephone advice line for young people, a rent deposit scheme, an independent living skills programme and delivers training opportunities and employment support. A health service with specialist mental health workers is also delivered from the Manchester Hub, along with the commissioned floating support and resettlement service that supports young people who are moving on to independence from the housing related support young person's accommodation schemes, as well supporting young people who are at risk of homelessness within their own homes.

18.0 Greater Manchester Young People's Prevention Pathfinder

- 18.1 After an initial pilot in three local authority areas, including Manchester, the Greater Manchester Young Peoples Prevention Pathfinder now operates in all 10 boroughs in the region. The regional programme is managed by Greater Manchester Better Outcomes Partnership (GMBOP), with delivery within Manchester from DePaul UK. MCC Housing Solutions and Centrepoint teams are linked into the pathfinder team in Manchester and help to identify young people who would benefit from early-stage support that the programme offers. As of start December 2022 a total of 201 young people in Manchester had been accepted onto the pathfinder programme. Work is continuing via the programme steering group, GMBOP and GMCA to learn from activity and outcomes in the pathfinder to date and strengthen its ability to offer earlier preventative help.

19.0 Domestic Abuse Commissioning

- 19.1 The domestic violence and abuse new burdens funding in 21/22 has enabled additional investment in specialist support services for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse, and the ambition is to provide a coordinated Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Pathway in Manchester. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has just confirmed that this funding will continue until March 2025.
- 19.2 As well as providing additional staff in the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) service, the funding has been used to deliver new services including:

- The Connect service, run by the Pankhurst Trust Manchester Women's Aid (PTMWA), and based in the Early Help Hubs, this continues to work at the earliest stage to prevent Domestic Abuse from escalating, and they report that 80% of their clients have been supported to remain in their own homes and are managing their tenancies.
- The Reach service, also run by PTMWA and delivered to singles and families living in dispersed accommodation, this includes housing related support, alongside specialist domestic abuse support and interventions. In the first two quarters of this year (up until September) they had supported 164 people to maintain a tenancy and helped to find emergency accommodation or a place in refuge for 28. Delivering this service is in line with our statutory duty to deliver support in safe accommodation to victims and this service also alleviates pressure on resources within the established Homelessness Floating Support Team.

19.3 As part of a large grants programme that has just been delivered, with support from Elected Members, refuges have been given money to support the move on of their residents. Smaller organisations that serve their local communities have also received funding to offer practical and emotional support to victims to help them stay safe. This can include paying for emergency accommodation and buying items of furniture/ white goods, connecting residents up to Wi-Fi as well as attending Groupwork sessions in their home language such as Polish or BSL (British Sign Language).

20.0 Homelessness Strategy Review

20.1 Manchester's existing homelessness strategy covers the period 2018-2023. The Council intends to work with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership to develop a new homelessness strategy for the city for 2024. Prior to developing a new strategy, the Council is required to undertake a review of homelessness in the city and then publish the results of the review. The Homelessness Act 2002 s.2(1) sets out what should be covered within a homelessness review; this should include the levels, and likely future levels of homelessness in the city, the activities that are carried out to prevent homelessness and to secure accommodation for households that experience homelessness, as well as the provision of support for households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The review should also consider the resources that are available to the authority and partners to deliver these activities. The findings of the review will then help to inform the development of Manchester's new homelessness strategy.

20.2 The document will be reviewed, updated and signed off by the Manchester Homelessness Partnership Strategy Scrutiny Group in early 2023

21.0 Conclusion

- 21.1 Homelessness for any period of time can have a devastating impact on individuals and families and the council is absolutely committed in its mission to prevent homelessness in all its forms and to ensure residents have A Place to Call Home.
- 21.2 The Transformation programme continues to operate in a challenging context, with the cumulative impact of austerity, covid and the cost of living crisis continuing to adversely impact the housing market and exacerbate hardship for local communities, more often those with the least resources.
- 21.3 That said, the transformation programme's focus on prevention, increased access to tailored support and increasing the availability of both temporary and affordable housing as outlined in the report and the council's housing strategy, will have a positive impact in our aim to tackle homelessness head on and of course support residents to maintain or find a place to call home.