



**NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Castle House  
Great North Road  
Newark  
NG24 1BY*

*Tel: 01636 650000*

[www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

**Friday, 1 March 2019**

**Chairman: Councillor B Laughton  
Vice-Chairman: Councillor T Wendels**

**Members of the Committee:**

**Councillor Mrs B Brooks  
Councillor Mrs C Brooks  
Councillor Mrs I Brown  
Councillor M Buttery  
Councillor Mrs S Michael  
Councillor N Mison  
Councillor N Mitchell  
Councillor Mrs P Rainbow  
Councillor Mrs S Saddington  
Councillor Mrs S Soar**

**Substitute Members:**

**Councillor B Crowe  
Councillor Mrs G Dawn  
Councillor T Roberts  
Councillor D Staples  
Councillor D Thompson**

**MEETING: Homes & Communities Committee**  
**DATE: Monday, 11 March 2019 at 6.00 pm**  
**VENUE: Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road,  
Newark, Notts NG24 1BY**

**You are hereby requested to attend the above Meeting to be held at the time/place  
and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the  
business on the Agenda as overleaf.**

If you have any queries please contact Helen Brandham on  
helen.brandham@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk 01636 655248.



## AGENDA

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2. Declarations of Interest by Members and Officers and as to the Party Whip	
3. Declaration of any Intention to Record the Meeting	
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11. Exclusion of the Press and Public	None

To consider resolving that, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 14 January 2019 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor B Laughton (Chairman)  
Councillor T Wendels (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor Mrs C Brooks, Councillor Mrs I Brown, Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor N Mison, Councillor N Mitchell and Councillor Mrs P Rainbow

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor P Duncan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor M Buttery (Committee Member), Councillor Mrs S Saddington (Committee Member) and Councillor Mrs S Soar (Committee Member)

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

40 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED that there would be an audio recording of the meeting undertaken by the Council.

41 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2018

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 GLADSTONE HOUSE - EXTRA CARE SCHEME UPDATE

The Committee considered the joint report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) (NSDC) and the Director – Newark and Sherwood Homes which sought to provide Members with a review of the operation of the Gladstone House Extra Care Scheme since it opened in April 2018.

The report set out the background to the decision to build and provide the facility and how the scheme was run. It provided information as to the Co-Operation Agreement between the District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and that Newark and Sherwood Homes provided the housing management and repairs service to all the units. Paragraph 3 of the report provided the Committee with information as to the operation; utilisation; community facilities and costs at the facility.

The Group Manager – Strategic Commissioning (NCC) was in attendance at the meeting and advised Members as to the County's role at the facility. She advised that not all of the 40 units that the County had nomination rights to were occupied. Some

of the tenants initially placed at the facility had complex needs and unfortunately it had not been possible for those needs to be met. Subsequently the placement criteria had been amended and it was now believed that an appropriate mix of tenants were in residence. This, in turn, had led to a significant reduction in the needs that warranted assistance from the facility's staff. The Group Manager also confirmed that a review of costs would be undertaken following the facility having been operational for a full 12 months. In response to a query raised about the availability of apartments used as assessment units for patients being discharged from hospital, the Group Manager confirmed that the County had 8 such units available at the facility.

A Member raised concerns about the cost of providing some of the community facilities at Gladstone House, i.e. the café and beauty therapy services, and the discrepancy between the costs originally estimated and the actual income being received for these services. In response, the Director (NSH) advised that the costs were being kept under review.

In considering the County Council's number of voids Members queried what initiatives were being formulated to improve on this. The Group Manager advised that the changes already made to the placement criteria was making a positive difference in reducing the number of voids, but also that a 'culture change' was needed to persuade older people to consider a move to supported accommodation earlier, in preparation for when they required it, rather than waiting until a crisis arose that required their immediate rehousing. She explained that there was much evidence to demonstrate that this approach was key to helping people to sustain independent living in their own homes longer, before needing residential care.

In summing up, the Chairman commented that the Committee were fully supportive of the facility and would continue its role as a 'critical friend' in order to assist with its continued success.

AGREED (unanimously) that the information provided as part of the operational review of Gladstone House be noted.

#### 43 HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Financial Services in relation to the budget and scales of fees and charges for those areas falling under the remit of the Homes & Communities Committee for 2019/2020.

The report set out that the budget and medium term financial plan had been developed to reflect, in financial form, the corporate priorities of the Council. Paragraph 3.0 of the report provided the Committee with the major variances between the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 budgets. These included: Housing Options; Strategic Housing; ICT; Payment & Receipts; Customer Services; Licensing Administration; Community Safety, ASB, Domestic Violence & Emergency Planning; CCTV; Energy & Home Support; and Grants & Concessions. The level of fees and charges were contained within Appendix C to the report.

In considering the report Members asked a number of questions about specific entries in the Committee's budget. These were in relation to the Community Hub Services provided at the Southwell Library; Housing Options; and ICT. The Director – Governance & Organisational Development and Business Manager provided Members with the information requested.

The Deputy Leader of the Council stated that the revised way of budget reporting was to be welcomed as it simplified the process and removed any uncertainty. Members agreed that they would wish to have sight of budget reports earlier in the Committee cycle and that they should be included on the Committee's Forward Plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the final Committee budget shown at Appendix A to the report be recommended to the Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting to be held on 21 February 2019 for inclusion in the overall Council budget; and
- (b) the scale of fees and charges as shown at Appendix C to the report be recommended to the Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting to be held on 21 February 2019 and Council on 7 March 2019.

#### 44 FIRE SAFETY - JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought to advise Members of the changes to Fire Safety Regulation and Enforcement as introduced by the Nottinghamshire Housing Authorities and Nottingham Fire & Rescue Services (NFRS) Joint Working Agreement. The report sought the approval of Members to adopt the enforcement strategy.

The report set out that the sometimes complex enforcement of the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 placed on both Local Housing Authorities and Fire & Rescue Authorities had prompted the establishment of a joint working party which had been tasked with exploring opportunities to revise existing working practices. This had led to the development of the Nottinghamshire Joint Working Agreement, the purpose of which was to deliver Safer Communities by the adoption of a robust, effective and consistent approach to the regulation of fire safety across Nottinghamshire. Paragraph 3.0 of the report advised the Committee of the proposals for consideration.

In considering the report a Member sought clarification on which authority had responsibility for Housing In Multiple Occupation (HIMO), specifically 5 storeys and below. The Assistant Business Manager – Environmental Health advised that the Local Housing Authority would take the lead with mandatory consultation with the Nottingham Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS). This was to ensure a single point of contact.

Members noted that paragraph 2.4 of the report referred to an innovative trial of a national data sharing case management system (ECINS) and queried whether the findings of the trial could be reported back to Committee. The Assistant Business Manager confirmed that the results would be shared with the Committee.

Members raised concerns about residents of HIMOs being able to evacuate their building should there be a fire as was the case in the Grenfell fire in 2017. It was noted that issues of these type would be raised with the NFRS. The Assistant Business Manager confirmed that one of the first stages of the agreement would be to launch the agreement at a strategic and officer level to give confidence in its effectiveness. She also confirmed that the ECINS was fundamental to its success.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the adoption of the Joint Working Agreement for Nottinghamshire Housing Authorities and Nottingham Fire & Rescue Services be approved;
- (b) the trial of the ECINS database for cases relating to vulnerable people at risk of fires within their home be supported; and
- (c) the data sharing agreement to facilitate the sharing and processing of information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations be approved.

#### 45 NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES - ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought Members’ approval for the adoption of the Annual Delivery Plan with Newark and Sherwood Homes (the Company) for the financial year covering 2019/2020.

The report set out that the Management Agreement was the overarching legal agreement between the Council and the Company and that one of its requirements was that an Annual Delivery Plan was formulated and agreed. The Delivery Plan detailed the main activities, standards or targets of the Company’s operations for each financial year set against the Council’s strategic priorities, its housing vision and outcomes and the need to sustain a viable Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The final draft Delivery Plan for 2019/2020 was attached as Appendix A to the report and had been approved by its Board for submission to the Council for its consideration. In presenting the report the Director suggested that Members may wish to consider two further topics for inclusion in the list of main activities, these being: procurement (jointly with the Council if appropriate); and the review of temporary accommodation, a report on which was due to be presented to Committee in March 2019).

In considering the report a Member suggested that he would wish to see inclusion of how Newark & Sherwood District Council and Newark and Sherwood Homes would respond to severe weather conditions, citing the issues that residents of De Lacy Court had experienced the previous year. In response, other Members advised that

Nottinghamshire County Council had a register of vulnerable areas where a team of operatives could be deployed in such circumstances to assist with the clearing of the highway. It was also noted that some County Councillors had used their individually allocated fund to purchase grit bins for residents in such areas.

A Member raised the issue of current vacant units at the Seven Hills Sheltered Accommodation and whether this was due to them not being fit for purpose. The Director confirmed that the 13 units had been previously decommissioned as they had not been required. However, circumstances had now changed and these would be referred to in the aforementioned temporary accommodation report coming to Committee in March 2019.

AGREED (with 8 votes for and 1 abstention) that the 2019/2020 draft Annual Delivery Plan for the Council's housing company, Newark and Sherwood Homes, be approved for implementation, subject to the inclusion of Procurement and Review of Temporary Accommodation in the main activities.

#### 46 PUBLIC SPACE CCTV UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought to provide Members with an update on the current and future issues facing the public space CCTV system within the District.

The report provided details of relevant legislation; governance; assets held; stakeholders involvement; performance; finances; and the future risks and opportunities with the proposals for Edwinstowe and Winthorpe Road being listed in paragraph 3.0 of the report.

In considering the report Members noted that there were only currently 4 re-deployable cameras available and queried whether this was sufficient. In response the Business Manager advised that their primary use was to deter anti-social behaviour (ASB). If incidents of ASB were identified in a specific area the cameras were installed for a period of 6 months. There were cost implications for their use in relation to installation and the transfer of the data.

The report referred to the proposals for the installation of a camera in Edwinstowe following receipt of a petition handed into the Council in October 2018. The Local Ward Member, also a Member of the Committee, advised that the Parish Council was working with local businesses and the Police in the area most affected. However, she noted that it was difficult to measure what type of ASB the installation of a camera would deter.

The Deputy Leader of the Council stated that partnership working with Nottinghamshire County Council had resulted in the cost of installing mounting columns being reduced. Whilst still expensive, the cost was considerably lower than previously. He advised that the Leader of the Council was keen that the use of CCTV would further enhance the Council's Cleaner, Safer, Greener Strategy. He added that specific cameras were being purchased that enabled vehicle number plate recognition



and suggested that, if possible, Members would benefit from a visit to the CCTV control room, adding that this would enable them to see first-hand how the system worked. They would then be well placed to inform their constituents on the functions and capabilities of the service.

In considering whether the use of CCTV acted as a deterrent, a Member of the Committee confirmed, that in her opinion, it did have that affect. A camera had been removed from Winthorpe Road, since which there had been an increase in crime.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the current situation with CCTV provision in the District as set out in the report be noted;
- (b) in relation to the provision of CCTV in Edwinstowe, a fixed CCTV camera, viewed directly from the Control Room, should be installed as detailed in option (a) of 3.7 of the report; and
- (c) a response on the preferred approach to CCTV provision be considered for the Winthorpe Road area once the petition had been completed and received by the Council.

#### 47 ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought to inform the Members of a feasibility study currently being undertaken to determine the viability of a programme of works to attract funding to support new gas connections and first time central heating systems to approximately 100 fuel poor private sector dwellings within the District.

The report set out who were the main organisations involved in the study, these being: Affordable Warmth Solutions, Cadent (Gas Network Operator), local authorities and energy companies and the obligations on each of them. Paragraphs 3.0 and 4.0 of the report set out respectively the proposal and implications for the Council with the risks being identified in paragraph 5.0.

In considering the report the Members agreed that it was extremely positive and that they would wish to see other areas identified that may also benefit from the funding, if possible.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) should the feasibility study prove viable, the Council's involvement in the scheme be supported; and
- (c) the intention to submit a Warm Homes Fund bid be supported.

48 ROUGH SLEEPER ESTIMATE 2018

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought to inform Members of the 2018 Annual Rough Sleeper Estimate as requested by the Ministry for Housing Communities & Local Government for the District. The report also sought to update Members on the current funding opportunities linked to the Government’s Rough Sleeper Strategy published in August 2018.

The report set out that the Council had chosen to carry out an evidence based estimate on 12 November 2018 with the methodology for this being set out in paragraph 2.6 together with a note of the other organisations who had supported the Council. It was reported that a total of five rough sleepers had been identified which was in line with previous years.

In considering the report Members asked which areas of the District the five individuals had been identified in. They were advised that the majority were located in Newark but that Officers were aware of individuals in the Clipstone area. The Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations advised that Officers were aware that those identified did travel between local authority areas but that the five were mostly located in the District.

Members agreed that the relatively low number of rough sleepers for the area was due to the intervention work undertaken by Officers of the Council who were to be congratulated for their efforts.

AGREED (unanimously) that support be given to the Council’s proactive approach of bidding for funds announced through the various funding streams linked to the Government’s Rough Sleepers Strategy, with financial contributions being made from the Council’s Homelessness Prevention Fund Reserve.

49 HOMELESS REVIEW FINDINGS

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought to inform Members as to the current review of homelessness in the District and to outline the initial themes emerging from the review that would shape the new Homelessness Strategy 2019/2023.

The report set out that the Homelessness Act 2002 required local authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and to produce a Homelessness Strategy which set out how homelessness would be tackled in each area. It was noted that the current review would be undertaken jointly with Mansfield and Ashfield District Councils. Paragraph 3.0 of the report set out the methodology for the review with the key themes being set out in paragraph 3.3.

In considering the report a Member queried whether the decommissioned units at Seven Hills would become available again in the future. In response, the Committee were advised that that specific issue would be included in the report to the March meeting of the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that the emerging themes from the Homelessness Review and how it would shape the new Homelessness Strategy 2019/2023 be noted.

50 CUSTOMER COMMENTS UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Communities & Environment (formerly Director – Customers) which sought to inform Members of the type of customer comments received by the Council.

The report provided a brief outline of the Customer Feedback procedure and gave details on different type of comments. Paragraph 3.0 of the report set out the three stage complaints procedure and gave a summary of the numbers and service areas that comments had been received about between 1 April and 30 November 2018.

In considering the report Members agreed that the low number of customer comments received reflected well on the Council and its performance. Members queried whether it was possible to benchmark the statistics against other comparable local authorities. The Business Manager – Customer Services & Communications advised that this was difficult as each local authority had a different methodology of logging comments received.

It was noted that the business unit for which the majority of comments were received was Waste Management. Members agreed that residents needed more information as to what was and was not acceptable when it came to recycling their household waste.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

51 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE - VIOLENT INCIDENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Governance & Organisational Development (formerly Director – Safety) which sought to inform Members as to the number of violent and potentially violent incidents affecting the Council and its partners' staff.

Paragraph 3.0 of the report provided a table showing a breakdown of the incidents recorded at Castle House between February and November 2018. It also advised that a sign was now displayed in the reception area advising visitors that aggressive behaviour towards staff was not acceptable. It was also reported that the reception area at Castle House was comprehensively covered by both internal and external CCTV which had proved useful in establishing circumstances after allegations had been disputed by those accused of acting in a violent or aggressive manner.

In considering the report Members queried what, if any, was the follow on action should any visitor warrant an intervention by the Customer Care Officers (CCO). The Business Manager – Customer Services & Communications advised that the CCOs dealt with the security of the building and that the majority of their costs were met by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP). The Council had a zero tolerance to drugs and alcohol but the partner organisations dealt daily with individuals who had

chaotic lives. If an incident occurred the CCO would then make a decision on whether service provision would be withdrawn. It was reported that only two individuals had been banned from the premises since it had opened and that this had been due to their aggressive behaviour towards the Council's partner organisations.

The Business Manager – Community Safety advised that Officers of the Council had visited an individual's home address, with the Police, to deliver a letter advising that their behaviour was unacceptable. The Deputy Leader of the Council noted that the Council had a corporate responsibility to ensure that staff were safe from harm. The Director reassured Members that the safety of staff was taken extremely seriously and that any individuals who displayed aggression would be entered into the Council's 'At Risk' Register. She added that should the incident be serious enough to warrant a ban from the premises, the individual in question was given information as to how they could continue to access services e.g. via telephone.

AGREED (unanimously) that the contents of the report be noted.

52 FORWARD PLAN (FEBRUARY 2019 TO JANUARY 2020)

AGREED that the following addition be made to the Forward Plan for the Homes & Communities Committee between 1 February 2019 and 30 January 2020:

September 2019 – Update on Fire Safety Joint Working Agreement

53 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

None

Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

Chairman

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

### SHERWOOD & NEWARK CITIZENS ADVICE – ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-18

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform Members that Sherwood & Newark Citizens Advice (SNCA) have largely achieved the performance targets in respect of core advice service provision and the debt/homeless prevention service to residents in the district for the financial year 2017-18, as set out in the agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and SNCA.

#### **2.0 Core Advice Service**

2.1 In broad terms, under the agreed SLA for 2017-18, SNCA agreed:

- To provide support to all sections of the community within the Newark & Sherwood District who require it;
- Operate its core advice services from its offices on Forest Road, Ollerton (three days a week) and Castle House, Newark (two days a week) with effect from September 2017 under the agreed lease arrangements with NSDC;
- Maintain and continue to develop the outreach in the districts rural communities;
- To supply appropriate administration support where necessary, training and line management support to its staff and volunteers.

2.2 The core advice service relates to the drop in information and advice services that SNCA offers through face-to-face, phone, email and online services via [adviceguide.org.uk](http://adviceguide.org.uk), which are validated by the Advice Quality Standard.

2.3 Clients are greeted with a reception service at both offices in the district followed by a Gateway Assessment. This involves identifying client's issues and course of action required, which may be immediate generalist advice or a referral to internal or external specialist services.

2.4 The SLA requires SNCA to produce a comprehensive annual report to evidence the impact of the core advice service locally, supporting the Council's strategic priorities, which is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.5 The nominated SLA Managers for the Council and SNCA meet quarterly to review agreed performance outturns, which are provided below for 2017/18:

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
Number of clients seen per year	5,000	4,556
Number of clients seen per year – Sherwood	Data Only	1,802
Number of clients seen per year – Newark	Data Only	2,074
Number of clients seen per year – Other	Data Only	680
Number of contacts (captures repeat/re-occurring)	Data Only	9,693
Number of problems dealt with per year	16,000	16,762

The top five/six advice needs - the number of new social policy issues recorded for each category	Data Only	
Debt		6,694
Welfare Benefits		3,313
Housing		477
Employment		507
Financial Products		3,099
Fuel Poverty (10% of income)		107
Income Maximisation per year (Benefit Claims)	£2,000,000.00	£2,489,922
Debt Handled per year	£10,000,000.00	£6,277,065
Number of volunteers recruited and trained per year	8	13
Average of hours worked by volunteers	Data Only	14,000
Value	Data Only	£200,000
Case studies	4	4
Training session for front facing staff of the Council, such as but not limited to, Customer Services	1	1

2.6 Although Citizens Advice have not met the target of 5000 clients seen per year, the level of complexity of cases requiring multiple issues to be dealt with continues to increase.

2.7 SNCA continues to excel at maximising clients income by ensuring full entitlement to benefits is explored and claimed. The level of debt handled has reduced from the previous year of £7,327,014 to £6,277,065 suggesting that the successful interventions that have been put in place through the debt project is having a positive impact for the residents of Newark & Sherwood.

### 3.0 **Debt Advice Service**

3.1 In broad terms, the SNCA agrees:

- To provide a community based debt and income maximisation service to support customers and potential customers of NSDC's Housing Options Service and tenants of NSH.
- Deliver the service through appropriately qualified employees and/ or volunteers who meet the requirements of the Legal Aid Agency Specialist Quality Mark.
- To deliver the service from the CAB offices on Forest Road, Ollerton, Keepers Cottage, Newark and offices of NSDC, NSH and other partners, subject to agreement between NSDC, NSH and SNCA.
- Priority referrals will come directly from NSDC's Housing Options Service, NSH or self-referrals from individuals approaching directly for assistance who can be identified as households who may become homeless as a result of rent or mortgage arrears.
- Referrals may also be taken from other support agencies, such as Framework HA, Sure Start etc.
- To promote the service in the local media, community locations and through other appropriate outlets include digital media.
- Provide training and awareness raising sessions to staff of NSDC and NSH, which advise staff how to address tenants' debt issues and encourage referrals to the project by staff of NSDC and Newark and Sherwood Homes.

- Provide awareness raising events with communities and other agencies to encourage referrals to the project
- Provide guidance and support to NSDC and NSH staff in relation to dealing with debt issues.

3.2 The provision of a specialist debt service is additional to the core generalist service. SNCA have a trained caseworker team to deliver specialist welfare benefits and debt advice. Specialist debt advisers can talk through the options available to people based on their situation; help people to prioritise debts to make sure that the most urgent issues are dealt with promptly; help people to budget accurately to work out how much they can afford to pay and negotiate with creditors. This service is available Monday through to Friday across the Newark & Sherwood District.

3.3 The nominated SLA Managers for the Council and SNCA meet quarterly to review agreed performance outturns, which are provided below for 2017/18:

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
Total Number of referrals By: Referring organisation (priority to be given to those from NSDC & NSH) Location	270	612  <i>Awaiting figures from SNCA</i>
Number of repeat contacts (within 3 month period)	Data Only	5
DNA Appointments	Data Only	141
Total number of individuals assisted By: Budget Advice Debt Casework	200	143
Tenure By: Social – NSH Social – other RP Private Owner Occupier	Data Only	  131 46 126 32
Number of homeless preventions (sustainable for 6 months)	125	124
Of the above, number of potential NSH evictions prevented	30	50
Total number of NSH individuals assisted By: Income Maximisation Advice For: Introductory Tenancies Secure Tenancies	Data Only	   103
Total number of NSH individuals assisted holding Introductory Tenancies	Data Only	11
% of the above introductory tenancies sustained and successfully rolled over to secure tenancies without arrears due to CAB intervention.	Annual – 100% (NSH required to provide data)	0

Total value of rent arrears managed: By: NSH Other RP's Private	£75,000	132,240
Total value of mortgage arrears managed	£100,000	291,194
Total value of other debts managed, such as Energy and Utility arrears and other debt managed	Data Only	480,372
Training and Awareness raising sessions	4	3
Investigate the development of a money mentoring scheme in the District.		<i>Awaiting update from SNCA</i>
To work towards identifying the positive financial and health impact/outcomes on clients assisted by the scheme.		<i>Awaiting update from SNCA</i>

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 SNCA provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications – Fin 18-19/4445**

5.1 Full Council approved the grant for SNCA of £68,330 for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018 for the Core Advice service (which included a 10% retention figure linked to delivery of agreed performance outturn targets).

5.2 Based on the delivery of its performance targets in respect of core advice service provision to residents in the district for the financial year 2017-18, the grant funding, including the 10% retention, was paid to SNCA. Continued grant funding of £68,330 for 2018/19 was included in the budget approved by full Council on 8 March 2018.

5.3 The Debt Advice Service is jointly funded from the District Council's Homelessness Prevention Grant (contributing 50% £25,000) and Newark and Sherwood Homes (contributing 50% £25,000).

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee note the contents of the report, particularly the performance outturns and annual report regarding the provision of core and debt advice service provision to residents in the district provided by Sherwood & Newark Citizens Advice.**

Background Papers - Nil

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on extension 5545.

Matt Finch  
Director – Communities & Environment



# Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark

Annual Review  
2017-18

A local service, working with  
local people, for the benefit of  
the Newark & Sherwood  
Community





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<b>Contact details</b>	<b>18</b>



# Chairman's Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2018

Demand for our services continues to grow, whilst our unrestricted income sources continue to be squeezed, Nottinghamshire County Council being the latest organisation to substantially reduce their funding for all the county's bureaux in the coming year.

However we must thank all our funders for their continued support through these difficult times.

Our wonderful CAS&N staff and team of 46 dedicated volunteers made 9,693 client contacts in the year, covering 4,556 individual clients and 16,762 advice cases. Debt and financial services advice still make up 57% of our workload and we also have a number of specifically funded projects such as Homeless Prevention and Energy Best Deal.

Detailed and prolonged talks on a possible merger with, initially Mansfield and Bassetlaw, but eventually only Bassetlaw bureaux took up a large part of 2017 ending in January this year without success. However this situation was very quickly followed by a more ambitious proposal to explore the possibility of a countywide merger including all six Nottinghamshire charities. Talks on which whilst being at a very early stage, have seen some significant work on 'information gathering' already done.

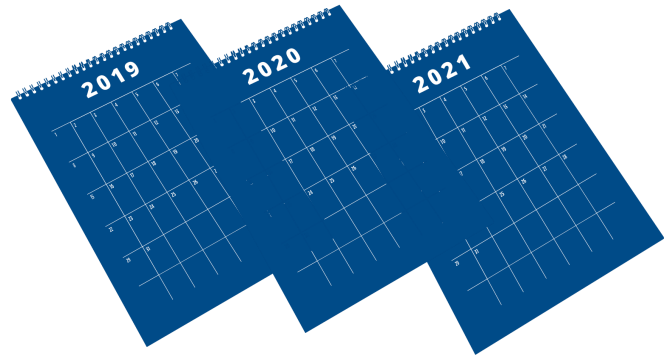
The year saw our Newark office's successful move into the new N&SDC building at Castle House which has proved a major convenience for our clients, and provided an improved working environment for our staff and volunteers.

As this is my last Chair's Report, *I will be leaving the board at this year's AGM*, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow trustees, plus all our staff and volunteers for their support over the last four years ... but particularly to thank our Chief Officer Jackie for her help and guidance, and thanks to Jane without who's admin support my job would have been much harder. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with you all.

**Geoff Gadie** *Chair of Trustees*

# Our Strategy

**Our Current strategy, which covers the period 2018 - 2021, has 8 key goals.**



1. Sustain our core and debt advice service
2. Increase the capacity of telephone services
3. Develop the strengths and skills of all our staff
4. Offer value for money along with broadening our funding base to secure the Service's future
5. Promote the service
6. Exert influence over local and national policies and practices
7. Partnership working
8. To put equality at the heart of everything that we do

## Advice on everything.....

**One of our greatest strengths as a service is the flexibility to deal with most issues that come through our door.**

There is significant value to society in ensuring everyone has access to free and independent advice, about any issue at any time.

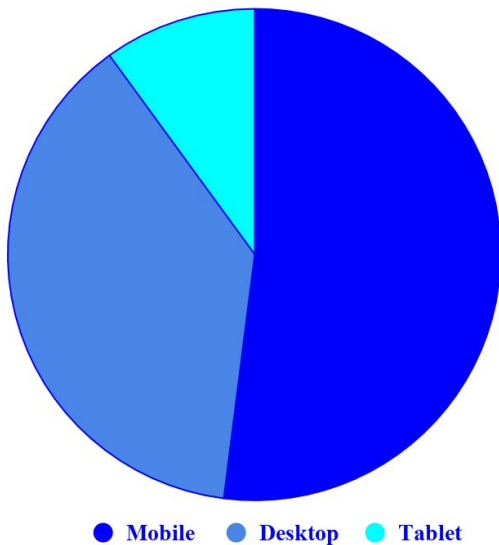


Looking ahead we're taking forward conversations across the service to help shape our business model for the years to come. We're focusing on finding ways to ensure we offer truly multi-channel, seamless service to clients.

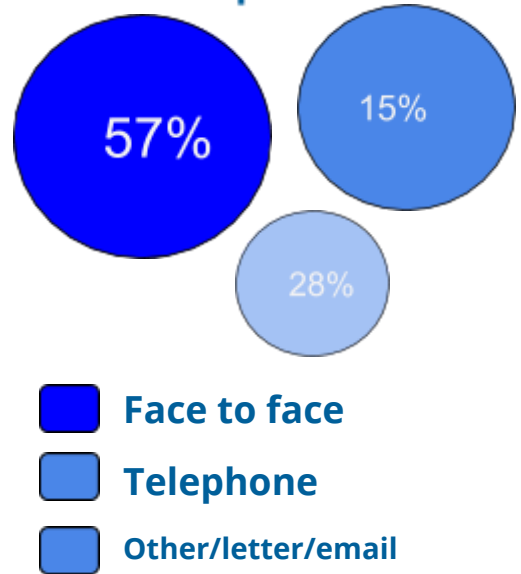
The problems our clients face are complex and the advice we give must be accurate. We are independently assessed by the Advice Service Alliance and are proud to hold the **Advice Quality Standard Mark**. We have also been additionally credited for Advice with Casework for debt, essential for our specialist work.

# How we help

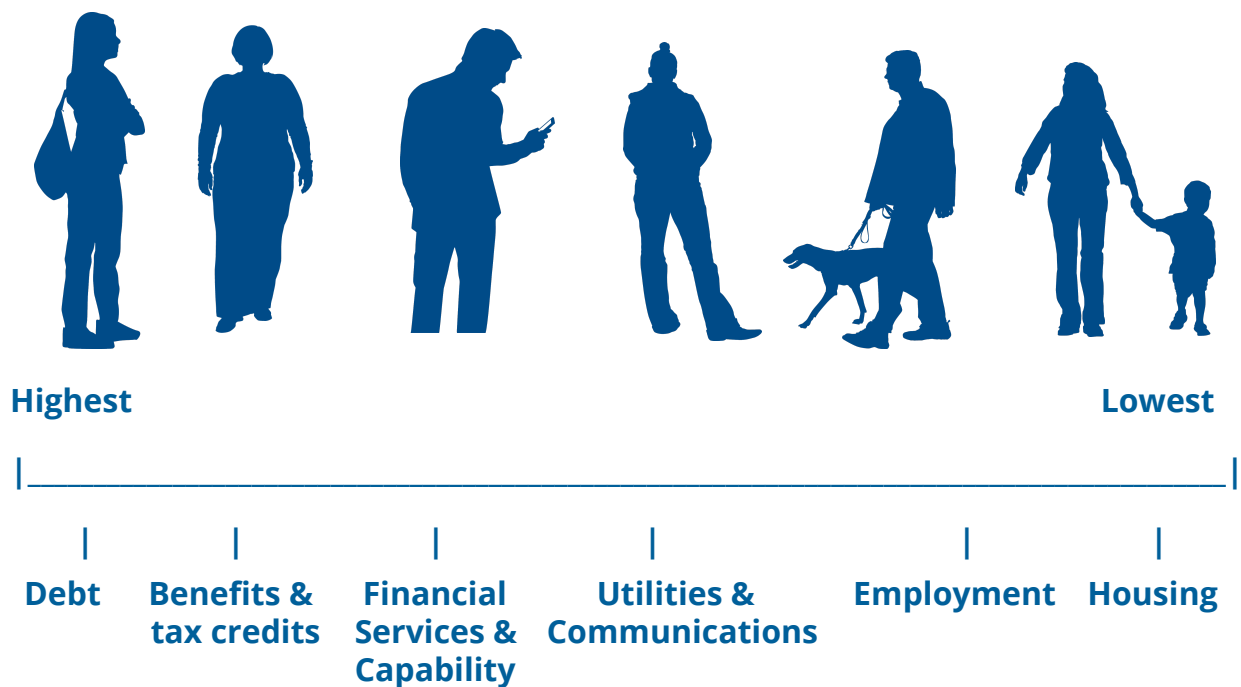
Each year our service helps thousands of people through advice on our website



We gave advice directly - whether face to face or on the phone



The **top 6 issues** people came to us about were:



## Our Impact - Key Statistics for 2017/18





### Who we helped

 <b>4,556</b> Clients	 <b>9,693</b> Client contacts	 <b>16,762</b> Advice issues people sought our help with
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### How we did this

 <b>46 Volunteers (+ 6 trustees)</b>	 <b>14,000 volunteer hours</b>	 Worth an estimated <b>£200,000</b> to the local Community
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## The difference we make

 <p><b>4 in 5</b> Clients said advice improved their lives, including reducing stress and improving finances</p>	<p><b>£</b> <b>£2.7 million</b> Worth of direct income gained for clients</p>	 <p><b>£1.4 million</b> Debts written off and reimbursements</p>	<p><b>£</b> <b>£6.3 million</b> Of new debt was handled on behalf of clients</p>
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## Value to the people we help

Advice area 	Number of clients 	Advice issues raised 
Debt	781	6,694
Benefit & tax credit clients	1,271	3,313
Financial services & capability	493	3,099
Utilities & Communications	296	711
Employment	289	507
Housing	256	477

## Our value to wider society - For every £1 invested in Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark we generated:

<p><b>£2.71</b></p> <p><b>In fiscal benefits</b>  <b>Savings to government</b>  <b>Reduction in health</b>  <b>service</b>  <b>demand, homelessness</b>  <b>services, and</b>  <b>out-of-work</b>  <b>benefits for our clients</b>  <b>and</b>  <b>volunteers .</b>  <b>Total: £748.003*</b></p>	<p><b>£14.71</b></p> <p><b>In public value</b>  <b>Wider economic</b>  <b>and social</b>  <b>benefits</b>  <b>Improvements in</b>  <b>participation</b>  <b>and productivity</b>  <b>for clients</b>  <b>and volunteers.</b>  <b>Total: £4,064,594*</b></p>	<p><b>£17.87</b></p> <p><b>In benefits to individuals</b>  <b>Value to our clients</b>  <b>Income gained through</b>  <b>benefits gained, debts</b>  <b>written</b>  <b>off and consumer problems</b>  <b>resolved.</b>  <b>Total: £4,936,874*</b></p>
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Our value to:

**Newark & Sherwood District Council** - by helping to prevent 124 potential cases of homelessness and evictions:-

£372,000\*\* (or a return of £7.44 on every £1 invested in us).

**NHS** - by reducing use of mental health and GP services, and keeping people in work:- £150,039\*

**Wider economic and social benefits** - by helping clients wellbeing (emotional wellbeing & positive functioning):- £1,214,782

\*These figures are taken from a Treasury-approved national methodology applied locally. This uses a tool produced by New Economy alongside Citizens Advice management information and impact research.

\*\* based on £3,000 per homeless application



## Clients Stories



### How we help clients - Housing

Teresa had escaped from a violent relationship in another part of the UK, but was struggling to afford accommodation. Citizens Advice explained her options (housing, benefits, banking, etc) and helped her select the best solution.

#### What we did

With our help, she was able to claim Universal Credit and, with a loan from a friend, she paid a deposit on housing. We helped further by providing food vouchers, so she could eat until her benefits were paid.



### How we help clients - Energy

Alice and John were referred to our Living well for Less project by a partner organisation. Both were older people and suffering from multiple long term health conditions. They had already received a grant to help with heating their home but struggled to make ends meet. With help from family, they had made previous claims for benefits but these had been unsuccessful.

#### What we did

When we reviewed their income and outgoings, we discovered that they were not receiving all that they were entitled to. By guiding them through benefits applications and helping them to reduce bills, we were able to make them £9,200 a year better off - much needed support for them to continue to live together independently.



## How we help clients - benefits

"Phil" had recently attended an Employment Support Allowance assessment which was rejected. He put in a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) request which was also turned down. Phil had a serious heart condition and had had a heart attack 10 years ago. He also had very limited sight and asthma. Despite a doctor's letter stating that the client, in his medical opinion, was not fit to hold down a job, this did not change the assessment decision.

Phil signed on for Job Seekers Allowance and was awarded £105.65 per week, which included a £32.55 premium because of his disability. He also received the Care Component of Daily Living Allowance (£22 per week).

### What we did

Citizen's Advice agreed to help Phil with an appeal on the grounds of mobility, reach and getting around safely. The appeal was upheld and the client was awarded a further £73.10 per week (£3,801.2 per year).



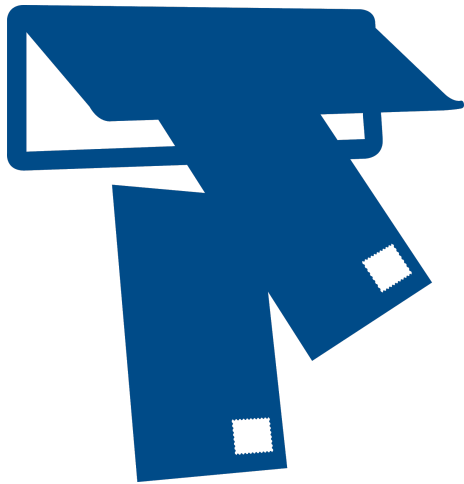
## How we help clients - benefits

'Elsie' was claiming £58 per week Daily Living Allowance (DLA) (High rate mobility, no care component) and was being transferred to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). She was only awarded 'Standard Rate' mobility of £22 per week and had asked a friend to help her write a mandatory reconsideration request. The PIP assessor visited her at home, but the decision remained unchanged, so Elsie came to Citizen's Advice Sherwood and Newark to ask if she had grounds to appeal and if so whether we could help.

### What we did

After discussing her circumstances, Elsie felt it was worth appealing on the various grounds. We wrote an appeal on Elsie's behalf. Following a tribunal hearing the DWP decision was overturned and Elsie was awarded Standard Rate daily living of £57.30 per week and Enhanced Rate mobility of £59.75 per week. She also received 18 months of back pay, amounting to £6617.40.

## Client feedback

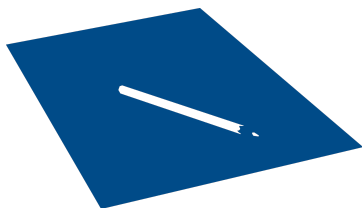


It is always greatly appreciated when clients take the time to let us know the outcome of the advice and support we have provided them with, and when they value the service they have received.

Over the year our volunteers have received numerous cards, messages, biscuits, chocolates, etc in recognition of their work. Below are just a very small sample of the messages:



“We wanted to thank you for the help and support given at the time when we weren't sure which direction we were heading. Following advice from you and Shelter, we told the landlady that we didn't have to sign a new contract as we had statutory rights of tenure but in the meantime we carried on looking for alternative accommodation. We are now in a NCHA new build flat and look back on the last 7 months and really appreciate having had you and the CAB to turn to - Many thanks - Feeling Lucky”

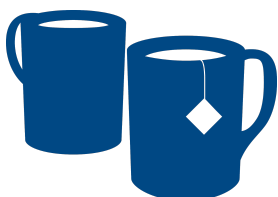


“Remembering your kindness with warmth and gratitude. Just to say a big thank you for helping complete the forms”



“Thank you for your help. You do a great job”

“I feel so much more relieved when I leave, A Big Thank you to the adviser's approach which was very relaxed and helpful, I have seen them before and every time it's been very good”



“Thank you for all your help and understanding”



## Research and Campaigns

### Universal Credit

In 2017/18 Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark was instrumental in influencing government to make changes on Universal Credit through the evidence we provided to national Citizens Advice and through writing to our MPs. The evidence provided by local Citizens Advice across the country led to a number of changes including the abolishment of the 7 day wait, changing the helpline to a free service and better access to emergency advance payments.



131 evidence forms submitted 2017/18

## Awareness Campaign

We also run awareness campaigns and education programmes to help inform people of their rights and to create a community of informed, confident consumers. Two such campaigns we've taken part in the last year:

Big Energy Savings Week	Scams Awareness Month
Helping people know how to check tariffs, switch suppliers where needed, and make their homes more energy efficient and cutting energy bills.	We work with Trading Standards to help people avoid being ripped off by dishonest traders and scammers.

## Our Volunteers

Our frontline services are largely delivered by our 46 strong team of volunteers who undergo a rigorous programme of training in order to meet the Advice Quality Standard accreditation. This, together with peer support and the support of management means

- Clients can be assured of a high standard of advice and support
- Volunteers gain valuable skills that can be carried into other areas of their lives.
- Volunteers feel more engaged with their community

In 2017/18 we took on 13 additional Volunteers and 3 receptionists. Our service would not be possible without the commitment of our volunteers and we are grateful for their dedication and enthusiasm, not only in the service they provide but also in the links they create to the wider community, through their other activities.

This also goes for our trustees. The combined skills and experience of our six-strong board ensures the good governance, strategic development and independence of our organisation.

## What it means to volunteer

Words from a valued volunteer -



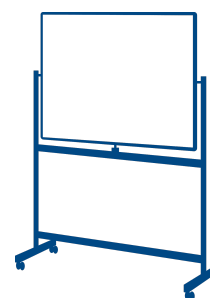
“My top 10 volunteer experiences”:

1. Making a difference in my local community
2. Working with a diverse team of wonderful people
3. Getting out of my 'goldfish bowl' to meet a cross section of the population
4. Providing human contact with a smile in an age of call centres and being put on hold
5. Challenging my brain power in different directions out of the comfort zone
6. Biscuits! Often chocolate or other goodies.
7. Seeing a client arrive in the depths of despair and leave feeling more positive and even smiling
8. Seeing change and working with change
9. Great exercise - sixty stairs in Council building to see a client or the supervisor each time
10. Never knowing what is going to happen next

## Partnership & Projects

<b>Newark &amp; Sherwood District Council</b>	Homeless prevention Project	<b>We helped 124 people to remain in their homes.</b>
<b>Free Face to Face debt advice Project - Money Advice Service</b>	This free face to face debt project is a government initiative to tackle debt and financial exclusion.	<b>Nearly 600 people benefit from this specialist service.</b>
<b>Energy Best Deal Extra Project</b>	Tackle fuel poverty through our energy work, helping consumers in our community to secure better energy deals, and those struggling with unresolved complaints to achieve a fair resolution. One to one sessions with a qualified generalist adviser focused on tailored energy advice and education so that participants could apply what they had learned in future years.	<b>We saved people £31,048 through our energy project.</b>
<b>Living well for Less project</b>	This financial capability project enabled participants to take part in a review to identify achievable savings and any shortfalls in income they were entitled to.	<b>100 local households benefited by making savings on their household budgets, making them upto £500 a year better off.</b>
<b>Train to help others - Coalfield Regeneration Trust</b>	This gave people the opportunity to gain new skills through volunteering	<b>13 new volunteers</b>

<p><b>Ollerton &amp; Newark Foodbanks partnership</b></p>	<p>We can provide our clients in emergency need with foodbags donated by The Ollerton and Newark Food Banks and refer them for ongoing support. We also provide vouchers to food banks in other areas when necessary</p>	<p><b>259 referrals were made to help feed people in Newark &amp; Sherwood</b></p>
<p><b>Local Solicitors Partnerships</b></p>	<p>A rota of local solicitors continue to generously give their time and expertise to support our drop in sessions on. They offer a variety of specialisms and the free 30 minute appointments they provide allow clients to get a more specialist legal perspective on their issue when required.</p>	<p><b>66 Sessions offering 180 Appointments</b></p>
<p><b>Pensionwise Partnership</b></p>	<p>Free and impartial government guidance about your defined contribution pension options</p>	<p><b>271 people accessed an appointment across the District</b></p>
<p><b>Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire Partnership</b></p>	<p>Drop In advice and advocacy service for Gypsies and Travellers living across the District</p>	<p><b>238 individuals helped by this partner service.</b></p>





## Information assurance

The trustee board has approved a new information assurance strategy, having identified the risk presented by the significant amounts of client data held by the service.

An information assurance management team exists to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all our sensitive data assets is maintained to a level which is consistent with the requirements of our clients, our funders and our strategic partners.

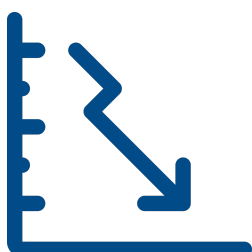
The service aims to achieve an appropriate level of compliance to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).



## Financial Review

During the year ended 31 March 2018, income increased by 7.2% whilst expenditure was 4.6% higher compared with the previous year.

Funding comes from a variety of organisations including Newark & Sherwood District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. Our sincere thanks to all our supporters, acknowledged below, who enable us to continue to provide services to local residents including help with debt management, Energy advice and a variety of problems.

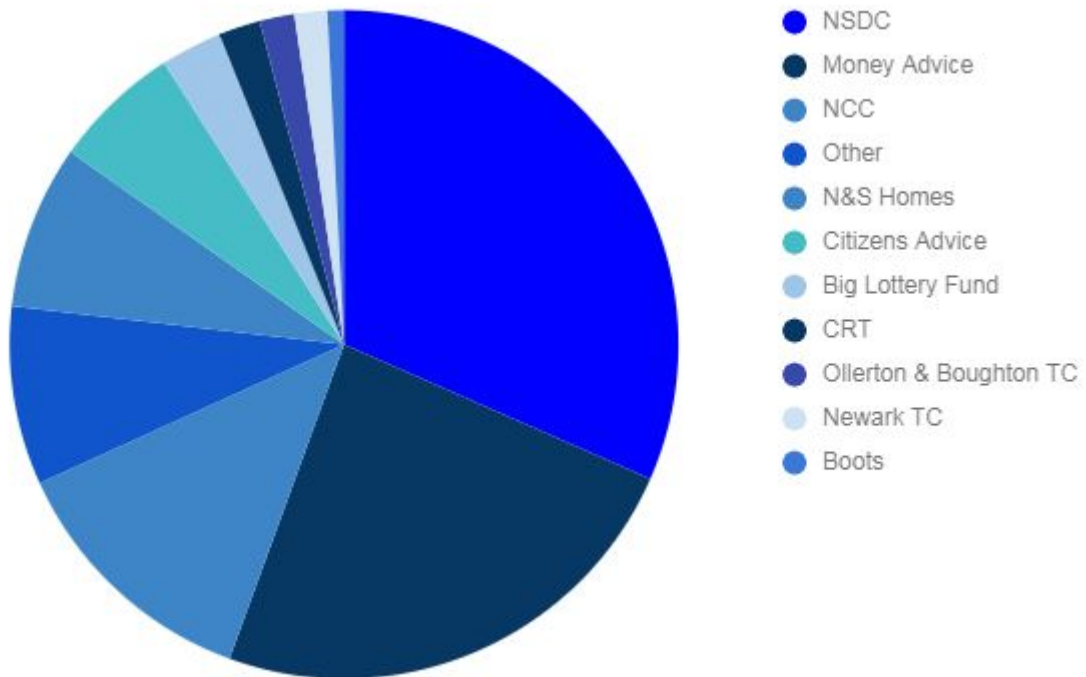


Increased funding continues to be sought, to cover our fixed core costs and special projects, and thus ensuring that the provision of as many services as possible continues.

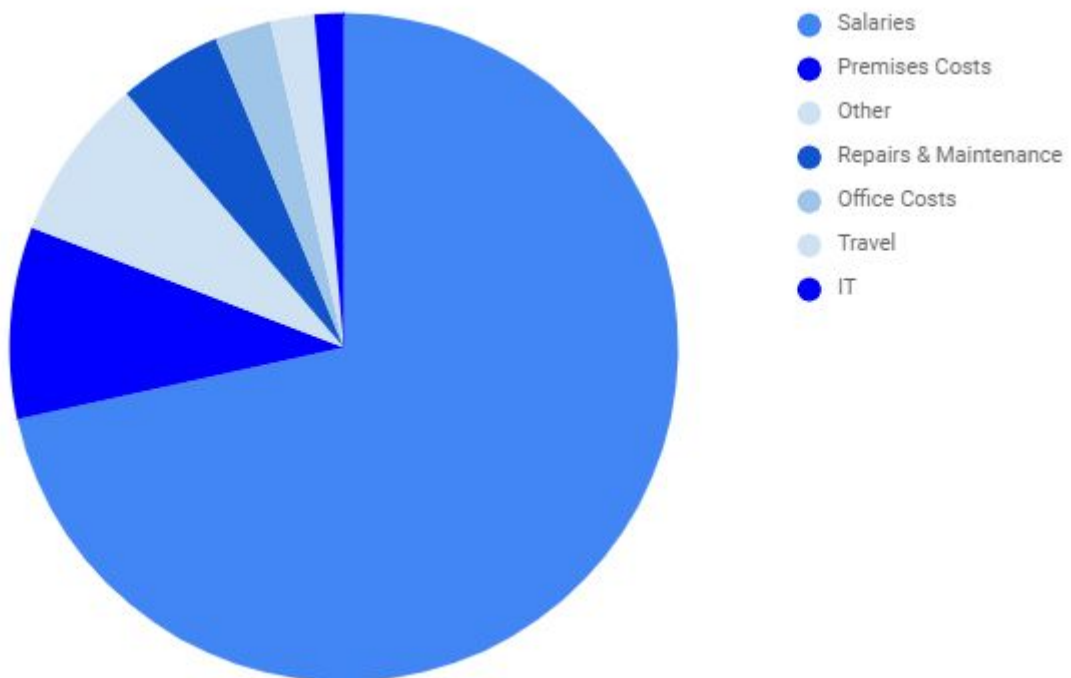
On request, a copy of our statutory accounts can be made available from our Chief Officer



## Income 2017 2018



## Expenditure 2017 2018



# Thank you to our Supporters



**Core Service  
(Drop in & telephone)**



**Free Face to Face  
Debt Advice Project**



**Energy Best deal  
Extra project**



**Welfare Benefits  
Project**



**Train to help  
others project**



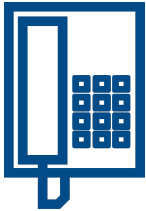
**Live well for  
less project**



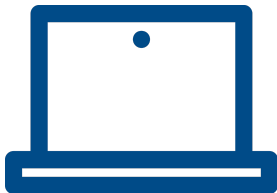
**Community debt & homeless  
prevention project**



## Ways to contact us



Telephone: 01623 861769



email:

[jackieinsley@sn-ca.org.uk](mailto:jackieinsley@sn-ca.org.uk)

[janehall@sn-ca.org.uk](mailto:janehall@sn-ca.org.uk)



Advice Line: 0344 411 1444



5 Forest Court, New Ollerton NG22 9PI  
Castle House, Great North Road, Newark NG24  
1BY



[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

# Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.

We help people overcome their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.



**[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)**

Published November 2018

Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark is an operating name of Sherwood & Newark Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark

Registered charity number 1112930.

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – PROJECT UPDATE

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update Members on work being progressed to ensure the Council has appropriate temporary accommodation (TA) available to discharge its statutory homeless duties, to meet current and anticipated future demand and determine the long term use of a strategic site, which is allocated for residential development and includes the Seven Hills homeless hostel.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). A number of households are also placed in TA under an 'interim duty' pending completion of inquiries into a statutory homeless application and remain in TA until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.

2.2 Homeless figures continue to rise nationally and locally. On 3 April 2018 the assessment of statutory homeless changed with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Between 3 April and 30 June 2018 58,660 households were owed this new statutory duty. Of these 33,330 households were owed a new prevention duty, 25,330 households were owed a new relief duty and local authorities accepted 6,670 households as being owed a main homelessness duty. On 30 June 2018 the number of households in temporary accommodation nationally was 82,310, up 5% from 78,540 on the same period in 2017, and up 71% on the low of 48,010 in December 2010.

2.3 In Newark and Sherwood 97 households were placed in council owned TA during 2017/18, which is an increase on the 94 households in 2016/17; yet not quite at the 102 households accommodated during in 2014/15. **Appendix A** provides further information regarding homeless levels in Newark and Sherwood for the past four years and changes regarding household size.

2.4 Despite the continued increase use of B&B usage nationally, NSDC has not found it necessary to place any households in B&B for a number of years due to its proactive preventative approach and having TA available in the District to discharge its statutory obligations. However, Members will be aware from a previous report on the local impact of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 that three placements in B&B have been required so far in 2018/2019 and our TA usage is up an average of 21% over the first three quarters.

2.5 The Councils TA offer was commended as good practice in the National Practitioner Support Service Gold Standard Challenge Peer Review of the Housing Options Service. The Council was awarded bronze status as a result of the peer review and subsequent application to a local challenge regarding its corporate commitment to homelessness prevention in June 2017.

### **3.0 Current Provision**

- 3.1 NSDC has two council owned purpose built TA complexes in its ownership at Seven Hills in Newark (currently 16 units) and Wellow Green in Ollerton (10 units) which are both managed by the Council. Repairs, maintenance, rent collection and asset management are delegated functions, carried out by Newark and Sherwood Homes on the Council's behalf under the terms of its Management Agreement.
- 3.2 In addition to this, the Council has access to two further one bedroom flats at Pelham Mews in Newark which are owned and managed by Framework Housing Association. The Council has rights to nominate occupiers to these flats in accordance with the Statement of Joint Working, which accompanies the deed.

#### Seven Hills

- 3.3 Seven Hills was constructed in 1991 and originally comprised of 29 units of accommodation. However, units 17-28 were decommissioned in 2004 due to successful homelessness prevention. These decommissioned units have not received the same improvement works that units 1-16 have (detailed below) and are currently uninhabitable.
- 3.4 In 2010/2011, Seven Hills benefitted from capital improvements works of £112,443 which included installing gas to the site and subsequently providing each of the 16 bedsit units with a self-controlled gas central heating and hot water system, new fire resistant front door and internal doors, replacement double glazed windows and new kitchens and bathrooms. This work brought the units back in line with the Health and Safety Hazard Rating Standard although not up to the standard of Decent Homes (as this standard is not required to be met for TA provision).
- 3.5 Again, in 2016/17 additional capital investment of £68,629 was used to install new kitchens and bathrooms and a decoration of rooms throughout.
- 3.6 However, the provision at Seven Hills is not considered fit for purpose for the future. The majority of homeless households contain dependent children and there are an increasing number of households with an additional adult family member such as grandparent carers, older dependent children or older siblings over the aged of 18. These households types immediately overcrowd the single bedsit style units and for some households can create safeguarding concerns were family members are sharing sleeping space without any privacy. There is also a lack of adequate storage facilities in each of the properties.

#### Wellow Green

- 3.8 Built in the late eighties, Wellow Green is made up of 10 units of 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalow style accommodation. Wellow Green is an off gas site, with the gas mains over 300 meters away.
- 3.9 Capital investment of £92,327 was agreed in 2014/15 to rewire as necessary to meet existing safety standards and support the installation of an electrical heating system with controllable heating in all rooms; installation of mechanical extract fan above the cooker area; a humidistat ventilation fan in the bathrooms; increased thickness of insulation within the roof space to 285mm; replace existing single glazed window with appropriate Euro Cell double glazed unit and replace internal fire safety doors. This work, as with the works at Seven Hills was to ensure the accommodation was in line with the requirements of the HHSRS.

- 3.10 However, following concerns raised by residents that they are paying too much for their electricity since the capital works were undertaken a review was undertaken in 2015/16 to consider what tenants were paying for fuel and if affordable warmth was achievable.
- 3.11 The review found that the anticipated daily cost of heating each unit (based on an 8 hour heating regime using the current electric system) and providing one daily tank full of hot water is approximately £7.80per day - this equates to £54.67 per week. Residents are generally on very low incomes (most are in receipt of benefits) and the transition to TA comes at a very vulnerable time in their lives. In order to support residents with these high fuel costs during the winter months a winter fuel allowance is provided to tenants to enable them to achieve adequate comfort levels within their accommodation and prevent detrimental effects on their long-term health and wellbeing.

#### **4.0 Options for consideration**

##### Re-configuration

- 4.1 Various options have been considered over recent years to ensure the Council has suitable TA available to meet demand.
- 4.2 Back in 2007 Cabinet approved a recommendation to demolish the hostel at Seven Hills and redevelop the site. However, financial restrictions meant this was not pursued.
- 4.3 A previous options appraisals reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) concluded in retaining current provision, ensuring it remained fit for purpose through capital investment.
- 4.4 With this in mind, Newark and Sherwood Homes were asked to produce a business case to reconfigure the provision at Seven Hills to meet current and anticipated need – see **Appendix B**.
- 4.5 This proposes that the Council invest in its TA assets and carry out remodelling works to provide 11 x bedsits (including the on call unit) and 9 x larger 2 roomed units (one of which to be fully DDA compliant) at Seven Hills; consider a change the use of the ex-wardens house and install small measures to address some of the energy efficiency issues at Wellow Green.
- 4.6 This proposal would require additional capital investment of **£328,728.39** which has a positive pay- back period compared to other similar property re-configuration on general needs housing contained within the HRA. In considering this proposal, CMT recommended that redevelopment opportunities should be re-visited.

##### Redevelopment

- 4.7 The Seven Hills hostel and land surrounding it (in the Council's and Severn Trent's ownership) is also an allocated site in the Council's 'Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document' for residential development providing around 86 dwellings - Policy NUA/Ho/2 Newark Urban Area - Housing Site 2.

4.8 In addition to this, there are linkages/opportunities presented through the work being undertaken on the Bridge Ward Estate Regeneration programme by the consultant Campbell Tickell.

4.9 Given that the current provision at Seven Hills is considered asset and land hungry soundings were sought from both Members and CMT in July 2018 which confirmed there was an appetite to make best use of strategic site at Quibell's Lane and consider re-providing new fit for purpose temporary accommodation. There was also an interest in exploring Modern Methods of Construction for the whole site and agreement that affordable warmth options for Wellow Green should be investigated.

## **5.0 Project Update**

5.1 Since July 2018 the Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations developed a project initiation document (PID), assembled and led a project team that has:

- Held positive conversations with Homes England with regards potential funding options
- Held positive conversations with MHLG regarding Move On Fund opportunities
- Explored opportunities regarding the OPE transformation/housing programme – Phase 7 bid
- Carried out various financial modelling work
- Undertaken/commissioned various site assessments/ survey work / valuations – which informed the Councils decision not to progress negotiations to purchase the adjacent Seven Trent land, which changed the scope of the project (an exempt report on this was approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 24 January 2019).
- Sought informal planning advice
- Open a dialog with Modern Methods of Construction companies
- Submitted a bid to the LGA Housing Advisor Fund which was successful, securing 20 days consultancy support from Neil Moorland Consultants Ltd – initial scoping meeting has been held and a project plan is currently being developed to ensure best use is made of this resource.
- Commissioned HTA to undertake a feasibility study / design for a new hostel to be re-provided on site and to incorporate a potential residential scheme that contains additional affordable housing – completion date is early March.
- Commissioned Notts City Councils Energy Advice Team to undertake feasibility study to improve the energy efficiency of Wellow Green, considering the use of renewable technology (overseen by the Council's Asset Management team) – completion date to be agreed.
- Visit to a newly purpose built family homeless accommodation at Cherry Tree View, Newcastle (11 March 2019).

5.2 It is proposed that a further report be presented to Homes & Communities Committee in June 2019 to present the findings from the feasibility study for Members comments, which will inform the next steps for this project.

## **6.0 Equalities Implications**

6.1 Equalities implications will be considered and incorporated into the project plan.



## **7.0 Financial Implications FIN18-19/7334**

7.1 The table below provides general fund income and expenditure for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 for managing two hostels in the Council's ownership, which has become self-financing in revenue terms with the introduction of service charges and increased occupancy levels

	Code	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Housing Rents Gross	93301	-46,769.05	-60,214.52	-49,019
Service Charges	93316	-25,354.88	-24,583.68	0
Recharge Third Party	49363	35,628.85	46,056.94	54,787.49

7.2 The funds for a new temporary accommodation hostel have been incorporated into the Councils' Capital Programme, with £1m funding in 2019/20 and a further £2m in 2020/21. This funding was recommended for approval by P & F Committee, and should be approved by Full Council on 7 March 2019.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members consider the contents of this report and afford support for the project team to continue its work to ensure the Council has appropriate temporary accommodation provision, which includes appraising opportunities for re-development on the Seven Hills site with a purpose built temporary accommodation facility and feasibility work to consider possible capital investment at Wellow Green.**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

**To ensure this project progresses with Member support to enable the Council to provide appropriate temporary accommodation to discharge its statutory homeless duties.**

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on Ext 5545

Karen White  
Director – Governance & Organisational Development

**Homelessness Levels in Newark & Sherwood**

The table below shows detail on statutory applications, assessments, acceptances and the use of temporary accommodation over the last three years.

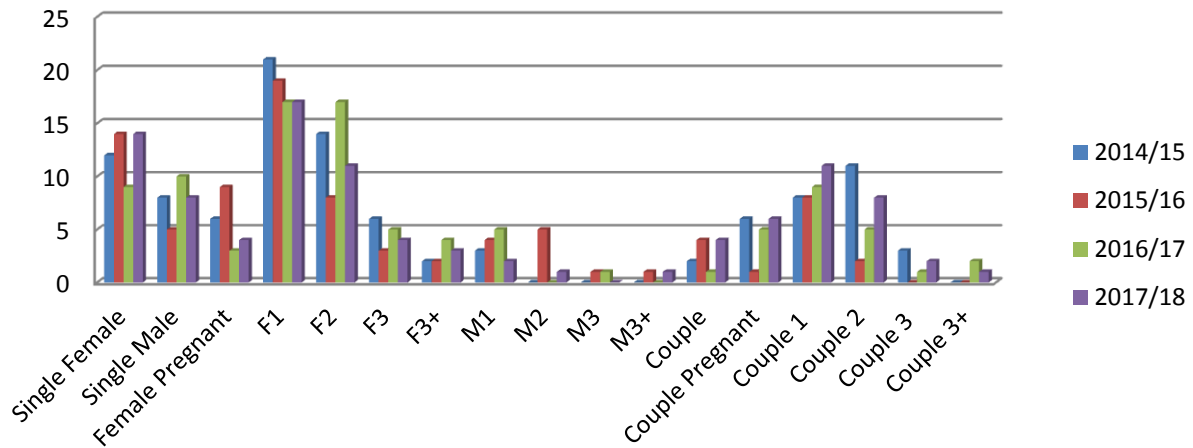
	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Approaches	1000	831	791	925
Contacts Triaged by Customer Services	755	856	978	1286
Homeless preventions	114 (Average 28 per quarter)	189 (Average 47 per quarter)	184 (Average 46 per quarter)	88 (Average 22 per quarter)
Statutory homeless applications	139 (Average 35 per quarter)	129 (Average 32 per quarter)	127 (Average 32 per quarter)	125 (Average of 31.25 per quarter)
Household accepted as being owed a main housing duty	121 (Average 30 per quarter)	94 (Average 23 per quarter)	97 (Average 24 per quarter)	89 (Average of 22.25 per quarter)
Households in temporary accommodation	102 (Average 25 per quarter)	86 (Average 21 per quarter)	94 (Average 24 per quarter)	97 (Average 24.25 per quarter)
Length of stay (average)	10.67 weeks	11.20 weeks	11.53 weeks	9.59 weeks

**Changes in Household Make-up**

Whilst the number of households in temporary accommodation has remained fairly consistent over the last three years, we have seen a significant increase in the complexity of cases, increases to the length of stay due to suitable accommodation not being available or higher support needs being prevalent (these increases become concealed in the average calculation) and an increase in household size and make-up.

The main household type is a single parent (generally female) with one child, which has remained consistent for the last three years. However, single parent families (both male and female) with two or more children have risen significantly (see chart below) suggesting that single units of accommodation are no longer appropriate and that larger units of temporary accommodation are now required.

## Household make-up in Temporary Accommodation



There have been further changes in household make-up, more significantly in 2016/17 than in previous years, that is not obvious from the usual figures recorded. Of the 94 households accommodated in 2016/17 there were 8 which contained dependent children with additional adult members such as grandparent carers, older dependent children or older siblings over the aged of 18. This has remained a feature in 2017/18 with 9 of the 97 households placed in temporary accommodation having a similar household make-up. Over the same four year period there has also remained a steady number of applications from single person households.

These households types immediately overcrowd single units whether at Wellow Green or Seven Hills and for some households can create safeguarding concerns were family members are sharing sleeping space without any privacy. To address this, we have on occasion offered two units of accommodation. However, this is not always possible either because of limited availability or leaving children unsupervised in accommodation separate from their parents/carers.

**APPENDIX B – Proposed remodelled units 11-20**



Asset and Development Services  
 1000 Lakeshore Blvd. Unit 1000, Aurora, ON L4R 1A9  
 Tel: 905.709.1000 Fax: 905.709.1001  
 www.newarksh.com

PROPOSED PROJECTS & PHASES	
Proposed Site Layout	4453
Scale	1:250
As of	25 AUG 11



## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

### HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2019 - 2024

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019 – 2024 for approval and outline its key themes which were informed by the homelessness review (the findings of which were previously reported to this Committee on 14 January 2019).

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and to produce a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how homelessness will be tackled in each area.
- 2.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council produced its first Homelessness Strategy in 2003 and subsequent strategies in 2008 and 2013. The partnership strategies have been used to drive forward a whole range of service improvements.
- 2.3 Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood District Councils successfully jointly commissioned a homelessness review and individual strategies in 2013 and therefore agreed to jointly commission a review and strategy covering the period 2019 – 2024 for Mid Notts (including Ashfield, because Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils became a shared service in 2015).
- 2.4 Historically, strategies have been based on comprehensive reviews of homelessness, in line with the Homelessness Act 2002 and associated guidance and best practice. This is still the case for this review and strategy but it will also need to consider the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.5 The review is required to set out the current and likely future levels of homelessness through the collation of available data, information and evidence; to measure the extent and nature of homelessness across the three areas and to highlight the potential response to homelessness individually, collectively and countywide, where appropriate.
- 2.6 An additional review is also planned to identify gaps in current provision and to take account of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the resulting implications this may bring following its commencement on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018.

#### **3.0 Key themes**

- 3.1 The new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019 – 2024 is attached at **Appendix A**. A number of key themes are included within the strategy and will become the basis for the action plan as detailed below:

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Reduce the Impact of Poverty on Homelessness	To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homeless households through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
Respond to the Shortage of Social Housing	To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by homeless households/at risk households
Supported Housing and Housing Related Support	To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support
Work with the Private Rented Sector (PRS)	To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by homeless households/at risk households
Address the Causes and Consequences of Homelessness	To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
Reduce the Negative Impact of Homelessness on the Community (Inc. Rough Sleeping)	To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to tackle and prevent homelessness
Improve Customer Services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by NSDC Housing Options and partners
Improve the data available to all relevant agencies	Services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated

3.2 The strategy and development of a live action plan will be created collaboratively with partners and led by the Council's Homelessness Strategy Officer. Governance will be through the joint Homeless Interagency Forum between Newark & Sherwood, Ashfield and Mansfield DC.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 No equality implications have been identified through the completion of a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The total cost of the homelessness review and subsequent strategy is £53,075 and is split equally for payment between the three authorities. The total cost to Newark & Sherwood District Council is £17,692 which has been funded from the Homelessness Reserve.

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- (b) the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019-2024 be approved.**

#### Background Papers

Newark and Sherwood Homelessness Review 2018

For further information please contact Cheska Asman, Homelessness Strategy & Safeguarding Officer on 5643 or Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on ext 5545.

Matthew Finch  
Director - Communities & Environment

# Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019 - 2024

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Preventing homelessness is  
everyone's business





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## NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL - HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2019-2024

### FOREWORD

We are pleased to introduce our new District Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 and would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the comprehensive Homelessness Review which has informed this strategy.

This is the Council's fourth Homelessness Strategy, our last strategy covered the period 2013-2018 and was extremely successful in its delivery. However, there are still challenging times ahead, particularly with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (the biggest change in homelessness legislation for many years) in addition to the Government's pledge to end rough sleeping by 2027.



The complex issues around homelessness affect us all and are of great importance to me and the Council. Preventing homelessness has been at the core of our service for many years and remains a priority. We have already remodelled features of our service to allow us to respond effectively to the new legislation.

We look forward to continuing our work with partners to deliver the priorities of this strategy given that their contributions are vital and are greatly appreciated. We are particularly keen to ensure that this strategy and action plan remains a live document that's monitored and reviewed by the Councils Homeless Inter-agency Forum.

A second homelessness review is already planned later in 2019 to fully assess the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils.

*Councillor Bruce Laughton*  
*Chairman – Homes & Communities Committee*

### INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Newark & Sherwood District Council decided to carry out a Homelessness Review and develop a local Homelessness Strategy, under the terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The review and strategy follow on from the council's existing strategy document that covered the period 2013-2018.

The review was commissioned in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils. Homeless Link were engaged to carry it out. Homeless Link was also commissioned to help the councils to produce their local homelessness strategies. This strategy sets out Newark & Sherwood District Council's response to the joint homelessness review which can be found at [link](#).

## VISION AND AIMS

It is Newark & Sherwood District Council's vision that the population should be living in, or can access, homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that homelessness affects the smallest possible number of residents and where it does; there is help available to quickly resolve their situation so that it does not happen again.

This Strategy identifies a number of priority areas and actions that need to be taken to ensure this vision is achieved.

The aims of this Strategy are to:

- Prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless
- Ensure that if anyone has to sleep rough, it is brief and does not happen again
- Help as many residents as possible to move seamlessly from one home to another without the need for emergency or temporary accommodation
- Provide a good quality service that customers are highly satisfied with.

The objectives of this Strategy are:

- To improve financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness, through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
- To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies
- To deliver additional supported housing and housing related support as required
- To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies
- To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met, in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
- To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness
- To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Housing Options
- To ensure services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The Council recognises that it cannot achieve this vision on its own and a central theme to this Strategy is partnership working.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Newark & Sherwood District Council would like to thank all the service users, providers and practitioners from across all sectors, who contributed to the Homelessness Review and the development of this strategy.

## **THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW**

The Homelessness Review that underpins this strategy followed the methodology set out below:

- A call for evidence, aimed at harnessing the intelligence of local providers, local authority officers and commissioners, across the housing, welfare benefits, social care, criminal justice, health and community safety sectors, through semi-structured interviews
- Quantitative analysis, using an existing modelling tool which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for modelling of the housing and support solutions required by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Mapping of the current supply of commissioned and non-commissioned services, to enable comparison against the estimations of need produced by the quantitative analysis
- A survey of support needs, completed by providers, covering an extensive sample of accommodation based services, in order to gain a deeper understanding of service users' characteristics, pathways, support needs, engagement with services and move-on requirements
- Service user engagement through interview, focus groups and surveys
- A particular focus on the Private Rented Sector, by embedding the topic in all of the above and engaging with an industry body for lettings and management agents with members in the area

A Project Steering Board comprising representatives from the three councils involved oversaw the review. Regular presentations were made to (and discussions held with) the Joint Homelessness Interagency Forum during the course of the project.

The review also included a desk top study, looking at current national, regional and local policy. The national and regional policy context is set out in the review document. The local Newark & Sherwood policy context is set out below.

## **THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

### **Newark & Sherwood District Council's Strategic Priorities 2016-2020**

Preventing and reducing homelessness is of the utmost importance to Newark & Sherwood, as demonstrated by many of the aims and objectives set out in the Council's strategic priorities. These include:

- Provision and support of housing that meets the existing and emerging needs
- Maintenance of the high standard of the local housing stock
- Ensuring growth in the supply of housing across the district, having regard to the mix, type and density required

Specifically, the Council plan to:

- Develop or acquire more affordable housing
- Make maximum use of section 106 contributions, with the aim of securing 30% on all new housing development proposals and allocated housing sites
- Implement the Council's HRA development programme and work with Registered Providers to deliver 100% affordable housing schemes in the district.
- Reduce the number of empty homes
- Increase scope and choice, by recognising different models and definitions of affordable housing
- Develop a mixed provision of affordable homes, which includes starter homes serving the needs of younger people, families with young children and homes for older people
- Increase the availability of supported housing
- Establish a development company to act as a vehicle for new housing developments
- Develop lettings policies to maximise support for local people.

The Council recognises that delivering affordable housing will be a major contributor to reducing homelessness. So, these aims and objectives are reflected in the Local Housing Strategy. This aims to identify and address the unique challenges for the district of Newark and Sherwood. Its priorities are to:

- Deliver an increased supply and choice of affordable housing to meet local need and manage the impact of housing growth, to ensure there is a positive impact on both urban and rural communities
- Take action to improve the condition of existing homes, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty along with raising standards of maintenance and management for the benefit of local residents
- Meet the local housing related needs of diverse communities through partnership working and targeted housing service provision.
- Enable the new housing required by the East Midlands Regional Plan and Newark New Growth Point initiative to be delivered, to secure the promotion of sustainable communities as part of a balanced approach to the future economy of Newark and Sherwood.

These aims and objectives are echoed in this Homelessness Strategy, which focusses on both prevention of homelessness - and on helping people who have nevertheless become homeless to find and sustain settled accommodation.

## **HOMELESSNESS IN NEWARK & SHERWOOD**

### **Progress since the 2013-2018 Strategy**

Since the last strategy was written, the Council has:

- successfully implemented a private rented sector access scheme, with both landlord and tenant support
- Effectively implemented the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 requirements, including the creation of new posts to ensure tenancy support and sustainment
- Ensured older people have access to housing support, to ensure suitable housing is maintained through the creation of an older person's worker
- Commissioned Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice to deliver a debt service
- Enhanced partnership working between a range of agencies, including police, probation, DWP, social care, health, substance misuse, community, voluntary and faith groups
- Supported the creation of a complex needs worker, funding by the Community Safety Partnership to work and assist entrenched rough sleepers with issues such as substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse
- Secured funding for a countywide Street Outreach Service for rough sleepers, delivered by Framework

These achievements provide a firm basis for our 2019-2024 strategy, which will be informed by the findings of the 2018 review.

### **Key Findings from the 2018 Homelessness Review**

The Homelessness Review found that in 2017/18:

- Newark & Sherwood had recorded 88 statutorily homeless people. This was less than half of the number in neighbouring Mansfield
- Of these, 26% were aged 16-24
- Newark & Sherwood had the lowest number of homeless people (1.7) per 1,000 of the population of the three districts included in the review
- This number of homeless people per 1,000 of the population was much lower than the average for the East Midlands (2.29) and England (2.41)
- Historically, Newark and Sherwood had a rising number of statutorily homeless people up to 2013/14, when numbers over all started to decline.

### ***Reasons for Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness***

As regards causes of homelessness, the picture in 2018/19 (based on data from the new H-CLIC recording system that, from April 2018 has underpinned implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) was as follows:

Cause	Homeless people	People threatened with homelessness
Loss of Tenancy or Mortgage Repossession	44	59
Family or friends no longer able to accommodate	33	16
Relationship break-up (non-violent)	38	13
Domestic abuse	18	9
Other	34	7
Not Known	0	2
Total	167	106

This and other relevant data was used in the quantitative analysis that formed part of the review. The analysis used an existing modelling tool, which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for assessing the balance of housing and support solutions required. The analysis suggested that the following approximate levels of service provision would be required going forward.

Type of Service Required 2019-20	Newark & Sherwood
Prevention of homelessness through advice, assistance and mediation etc.	45
Tenancy sustainment / resettlement support	62
Access to alternative affordable accommodation	274
Housing First level support	10
Crisis Accommodation	33
Supported Housing	43
Refuge Accommodation	3

## THEMES AND PRIORITIES

In response to the above and to the other recommendations set out in the review, the council intend to work with partners to implement the following high level action plan. This action plan will be developed further, through the interagency forum or additional governance mechanisms as required. Timescales and partners will be identified as the plan is implemented over the five year period.

### Measuring success:

- Increased rates of prevention of homelessness by Newark & Sherwood and partners
- Reduced number of households seeking advice and assistance from Newark & Sherwood Housing Options?
- Reduced use of Newark & Sherwood temporary accommodation
- High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Newark & Sherwood Housing Options and partners
- Any rough sleeping is brief and non-recurrent

### Theme 1 - Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Homelessness

**Objective – To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homeless households through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system**

What we will do:

- Research how households at risk of homelessness can be proactively supported by NSDC and partners to improve their financial resilience to mitigate against adverse events that may cause homelessness (ending of a tenancy, relationship breakdown, bereavement, redundancy, large unexpected costs, etc) Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

- Review the accessibility and take up of advice on money, debts and benefits provided by NSDC and partners by households at risk of homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify opportunities to integrate local welfare benefits services (such as NSDC C Housing Benefit, DWP, Citizens Advice) with the NSDC Housing Options team to proactively support households at risk of homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to develop sustainable pathways out of homelessness that minimise the levels of poverty experienced. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the prevention of homelessness by local welfare benefits services
- Monitor the amount of DHP spent on the prevention of homelessness
- Monitor the referrals made to Housing Options by DWP and other local welfare benefit partners
- Review case studies of the customer experience of the local welfare benefits services
- Continue to support and monitor the debt service awarded to Citizens Advice

## **Theme 2 - Responding to the Shortage of Social Housing**

***Objective – To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by homeless households/at risk households***

What we will do:

- Deliver the relevant NSDC core strategy objectives
- Work with social housing partners to deliver the required additional tenancy sustainment support, using external funding where available
- Research the underlying causes of tenancy failure in social housing. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify the barriers to homeless households accessing social housing. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to reduce the number of evictions from social housing

How we will measure success:

- Number of additional social homes delivered
- Additional tenancy sustainment support delivered
- External funding secured
- Number of social housing evictions
- Number of households rehoused in social housing



### **Theme 3 - Supported Housing and Housing Related Support**

***Objective – To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support***

What we will do:

- Work with partners to deliver the required additional supported housing using external funding where available
- Work with partners to deliver the additional required housing related support using external funding where available
- Identify the barriers to sustainable move on from supported housing. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify barriers to accessing supported housing by those households who need it. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct an annual review of support needs of supported housing residents and evaluate if these needs are appropriately met
- Create a governance structure that includes oversight of all supported housing and housing related support

How we will measure success:

- Number of additional supported housing schemes delivered
- Additional housing related support delivered
- External funding secured
- Average length of stay in supported housing
- Tenancy sustainment rates in move on accommodation
- Number of households refused supported housing
- Monitor trends in support needs

### **Theme 4 - Working with the Private Rented Sector (PRS)**

***Objective – To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by homeless households/at risk households***

What we will do:

- Work with partners and PRS landlords to remove the barriers to homeless households accessing the PRS, from, establishing any required products and services (subject to resource availability) using external funding where available
- Secure funding to introduce the Call Before You Serve scheme in the district
- Research the underlying causes of loss of a PRS tenancy. Make recommendations to address these causes to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of homeless households accessing the PRS
- Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from the PRS

## **Theme 5 - Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Homelessness**

***Objective – To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs***

What we will do:

- deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support – see Theme 3
- Work with partners to ensure robust pathways to prevent homelessness upon discharge from an institution. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify the barriers to homeless households accessing specialist support and treatment. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify options to prevent the underlying causes of homelessness in the next generation (schools programme, family mediation/support, peer support, education/employment/training, perpetrator programmes, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify how households at risk of homelessness as a result of their support needs can be identified and proactively assisted as early as possible. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to provide joined up support to households with multiple and complex needs at risk of homelessness. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Contribute to the development of Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Homelessness Strategy in 2020

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from institutions
- Monitor the number of households seeking housing advice and assistance following institutional discharge
- Monitor the support needs of homeless households and the services they are accessing
- Monitor the preventative programmes delivered and outcomes realised
- Monitor the prevention of homelessness for those with support needs

## **Theme 6 - Reducing the Impact of Homelessness on the Community**

***Objective – To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness***

What we will do:

- Ensure any rough sleeping is brief and non-recurrent
- Minimise and manage the negative impacts of street activity by rough sleepers, supported housing residents and others
- Work with partners to ensure the welfare needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping are met (winter shelter, breakfast club, soup kitchen, outreach nurse, day centres, public support, community safety, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group

- Establish a Homeless Reduction Board as required by the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Create a community homeless prevention charter and encourage partners, public, businesses, etc to pledge to do their bit to end homelessness

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of rough sleepers
- Monitor street activity
- Monitor the welfare needs of rough sleepers and the services they are accessing
- Monitor the prevention charter pledges and outcomes

**Theme 7 - Improving Customer Services for People who are Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness**  
***Objective – High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by NSDC Housing Options and partners***

What we will do:

- Regularly gather customer feedback and utilise this to continuously improve the service and its integration with our services. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Research customer journeys into homelessness to identify early opportunities to prevent their homelessness and any barriers to doing so. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct a 6/12 month review of the Duty to Refer operation and identify opportunities to enhance its contribution to preventing homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct an annual review of NSDC staff and partner training needs, arrange required training. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Tailored pathways – Work with partners to ensure there are clear pathways to resolving a household’s homelessness for the key causes of homelessness, integrating services wherever possible (end of AST, fleeing violence, friends/family exclusion, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Customer satisfaction rates
- Homeless prevention rates
- Duty to Refer numbers and outcomes
- Monitor the number of pathways developed and the outcomes
- Training courses delivered
- Monitor the number of people with lived experience involved in the design and delivery of homelessness

## **Theme 8 – Improving the data available to relevant agencies**

*Objective – Services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated*

What we will do:

- Work with partners to develop a governance structure to oversee the delivery of this strategy
- The governance structure will agree the monitoring and outcomes data to be reported to them
- The governance structure will be responsible for identifying good performance and areas for improvement, ensuring any required remedial action is taken as appropriate
- The governance structure will regularly share the monitoring and outcomes data with all relevant partners

How we will measure success:

- Good practice examples identified
- Remedial action taken against poor performance
- Use of data in service design and decision making
- High/improving performance

### **FUTURE REVIEW**

Newark & Sherwood District Council (in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils) have also asked Homeless Link to carry out a progress review later in 2019, in order to more fully assess the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This legislation came into force on 1 April 2018 and was in the process of being implemented when the Homelessness Review was carried out. The findings of this further review will be made available in due course.

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

### ALLOCATION POLICY AMENDMENTS INCORPORATING THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

#### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report proposes changes to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme to ensure the housing elements of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers (approved by Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2019 and attached at **Appendix A**) can be delivered in Newark & Sherwood.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 Members will be aware from the report presented to Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2019 that there are approximately 70,000 children in care in England at any one time. Many of these young people when they leave care face serious disadvantage in their lives, compared to their peers. While most young people continue to rely on their families long after they are 18, young people leaving care often do so without the support of a loving family. This is the context for Section 2 of the Children & Social Care Act 2017 which requires each local authority (including District Councils) to publish a Local Offer for its care leavers (18 – 25 years). It should provide information about all the services and support, statutory and discretionary that is available to them from each local authority.

2.2 The Local Offer should include details of local authority services and support that could help care leavers' transition to adulthood and independent living in relation to health and well-being, positive relationships, education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society.

2.3 Through the Nottinghamshire Local Authorities Chief Executives' Group, the County Council and Borough/District Councils agreed to create one joint single Care Leaver Offer for Nottinghamshire.

2.4 Various work streams were agreed and have been led by appropriate senior officers from the County and District Councils with Newark & Sherwood's Chief Executive providing the link with, and lead from, Nottinghamshire Chief Executives.

2.5 The current number of care leavers in Nottinghamshire (as at 9 January 2019) is provided below by borough/district areas:

	18-20 years	20years +
Ashfield	41	55
Bassetlaw	33	41
Broxtowe	4	9
Gedling	14	20
Mansfield	44	57
<b>Newark &amp; Sherwood</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>
Rushcliffe	15	24

### **3.0 Contributions from Borough/District Councils in Respect of the Housing Element**

- 3.1 The Borough/District Councils' Chief Executives have expressed 'in principle' support for a number of proposals subject to the relevant approvals of their respective Councils. Set out below is the housing element of the Local Offer that Borough/District Councils will be required to implement.
- 3.2 Borough/District Councils have been working together to secure a consistent offer that gives priority to care leavers within their Housing Allocation Schemes, together with a commitment to help care leavers secure accommodation as quickly as possible (ideally within 8 weeks). However, if emergency accommodation is required, it is proposed that the statutory homelessness process would be triggered and homeless accommodation utilised, as a last resort.
- 3.3 The proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme support priority being given to care leavers to enable them to access longer term housing solutions in a consistent manner across the county. Newark and Sherwood have historically awarded priority to care leavers in our Allocations Scheme and therefore these changes are considered minor amendments to the existing scheme and do not require formal consultation.
- 3.4 The amendments include providing improved banding status if the care leaver has not been able to secure alternative accommodation in the 8 week period and also identifies where, in urgent circumstances, the statutory homeless process is to be triggered.
- 3.5 The document attached at **Appendix B** contains the draft proposed amends which are currently being finalised by the Borough/District Councils housing leads. The housing leads need to ensure that the final wording remains compliant with the law and enables consistent delivery to Nottinghamshire care leavers. It is therefore proposed that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Communities and Environment to approve the final amends to the Councils Housing Allocation Scheme.

### **4.0 Governance**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council together with Newark and Sherwood Homes (via the cross Council/Company Allocations Project Team) monitor the impact of these proposed amends and include information on this in the annual Allocation Scheme update, presented to this committee.

### **5.0 Financial Implications - FIN18-19/8305**

- 5.1 The costs associated with the proposed Local Offer for Care Leavers and amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme are contained within the Council's allocated revenue budgets.

### **6.0 Equalities/Implications for Service Users**

- 6.1 The Local Offer for Care Leavers and proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme has significant and positive benefits for services users, namely the County's care leavers, who are some of the most vulnerable residents in the County. This new Offer provides a comprehensive guide to all the services and support care leavers are already entitled to, as well as new entitlements that, together, will have a substantial impact on their lives.

**7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

- (a) Members approve, in principle, the proposed amends to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme to facilitate priority being given to care leavers in line with the Nottinghamshire Care Leaver offer; and**
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Director - Communities & Environment, to approve the final detail of these amends.**

**Reason for Recommendations**

**To fulfil statutory Corporate Parenting duties, improve lifetime outcomes for Nottinghamshire's care leavers and to ensure the Councils Housing Allocations Scheme remains compliant with the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.**

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

Children and Social Care Act 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

Local offer guidance: Guidance for local authorities (February 2018)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance)

For further information on the content of this report please contact Leanne Monger - Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on ext. 5545.

John Robinson  
Chief Executive

## **POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**21 FEBRUARY 2019**

### **APPROVAL OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS**

#### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the District/Borough Council elements contained within the proposed Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers, attached as **Appendix A**, which is recommended for approval.

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 There are approximately 70,000 children in care in England at any one time. Many of these young people when they leave care face serious disadvantage in their lives, compared to their peers. While most young people continue to rely on their families long after they are 18, young people leaving care often do so without the support of a loving family. This is the context for Section 2 of the Children & Social Care Act 2017 which requires each local authority (including District Councils) to publish a Local Offer for its care leavers (18 – 25 years). It should provide information about all the services and support, statutory and discretionary that is available to them from each local authority.
- 2.2 The Local Offer should include details of local authority services and support that could help care leavers' transition to adulthood and independent living in relation to health and well-being, positive relationships, education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society.
- 2.3 Through the Nottinghamshire Local Authorities Chief Executives' Group, the County Council and District/Borough Councils agreed to create one joint single Care Leaver Offer for Nottinghamshire.
- 2.4 Representatives from the County Council, district/borough councils', other public sector services, voluntary organisations and key stakeholders including ex and current care leavers, have all been involved in developing the draft Local Offer. In addition, a Business Breakfast, hosted by Sir John Peece, has been organised for March to engage local businesses in the offer with particular emphasis on the employment and training aspect.
- 2.5 Various work streams were agreed and have been led by appropriate senior officers from the County and District Councils with Newark & Sherwood's Chief Executive providing the link with, and lead from, Nottinghamshire Chief Executives.

#### **3.0 Contributions from Borough/District Councils**

- 3.1 The Borough/District Councils' Chief Executives have expressed 'in principle' support for a number of proposals subject to the relevant approvals of their respective Councils. Set out below are those elements of the offer that are of particular relevance to Borough/District Councils.



### 3.2 Employment, Skills and Apprenticeships

- ❖ A number of Care Leavers are already employed in various apprenticeships by Nottinghamshire local authorities. It is the intention to more actively signpost care leavers to apprenticeships made available by Borough/District Councils and wherever possible, to prioritise care leavers for local authority apprenticeships, for example, guaranteeing care leavers an interview if they meet essential criteria. Ideally, individual Borough/District councils are encouraged to identify and support a specific number of care leaver apprentices per year, paid at the age-related national minimum wage and supported with a care leaver apprentice coaching and support programme, recognising the specific vulnerabilities and extra support that care leavers may need to apply for and succeed in these roles.

### 3.3 Housing

- ❖ Borough/District Councils' have been working together to secure a consistent offer that gives priority to care leavers within Housing Allocation Schemes, together with a commitment to help care leavers secure accommodation as quickly as possible (ideally within 8 weeks). However, if emergency accommodation is required, it is proposed that the statutory homelessness process would be triggered and homeless accommodation utilised, as a last resort.

### 3.4 Physical and Mental Health

- ❖ Across the County, some Borough/Districts offer free use and/or concessions for leisure facilities whereas others do not. In recognising the health and wider well-being benefits of physical activity, it is proposed that all Borough/District Councils consider providing free membership of their leisure centres to Care Leavers.

3.5 In addition to the above, all Nottinghamshire Borough/District Councils have previously agreed to exempt care leavers from council tax up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday as part of the development of this Local Offer. It is understood that Nottinghamshire is the first two-tier area to make this commitment but a number of others are now following, including Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

3.6 At the time of preparing this report, the draft Local Offer is scheduled to be submitted for approval to Nottinghamshire County Council's Children & Young People's Committee on 11 February 2019 and to each respective Borough/District Council Cabinet and/or Committees in February/March 2019.

3.7 The current number of care leavers in Nottinghamshire (as at 9 January 2019) is provided below by district/borough areas:

	18-20 years	20years +
Ashfield	41	55
Bassetlaw	33	41
Broxtowe	4	9
Gedling	14	20
Mansfield	44	57
Newark & Sherwood	33	24
Rushcliffe	15	24

#### **4.0 Other Partnership Activities**

- 4.1 As mentioned above, a Business Breakfast will take place on Thursday, 7 March 2019, hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire. He will outline the Local Offer to business leaders from across Nottinghamshire and invite them to pledge their support to increase employment opportunities for care leavers.
- 4.2 Children's Services Directors from across D2N2 are discussing the development of a joint offer across the region, which has been promoted by the Care Leaver Ambassador who is also advocating for a stronger national offer for care leavers to be developed centrally by government.
- 4.3 Though positive progress is being made around the Care Leaver agenda, the objective of course has to be to reduce the number of children in care and better support those currently in care. Historically, in two tier areas, this has tended to be solely the domain of Children's Social Care but there are clearly opportunities for Borough and District Councils to make a more active contribution, supporting and incentivising fostering and adoption for example.

#### **5.0 Communicating the Local Offer**

- 5.1 Nottinghamshire County Council's Communications Team is co-ordinating a multi-channel media launch of the Local Offer from 4 March and will liaise with Borough/District Councils and other partners for this activity. This includes a conference for local authority officers and relevant practitioners delivering services and support across the 6 themes of the Local Offer (Summer 2019). The conference will inform them of the Offer as it relates to their service, raise awareness of how to adapt their practice to deliver an effective service for care leavers and to promote other areas of the Offer to the care leavers they support.
- 5.2 Subject to approval, the Local Offer will be available to all care leavers through their social worker or personal adviser, in a format that is appealing and accessible to young people. It will also be available on a dedicated area of 'Notts Help Yourself' ([www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk)) and on a mobile App. The use of IT platforms means that the current Offer will be updated as soon as new services and support become available from partners. The design of all formats will be informed by the feedback gained from consultation with care leavers on the Local Offer that was undertaken between 10 and 21 December 2018.

#### **6.0 Governance**

- 6.1 It is proposed that Nottinghamshire's Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL) Strategic Partnership Board be the body accountable for the performance management and continuous improvement of the Offer.

#### **7.0 Other Options Considered**

- 7.1 That each local authority in Nottinghamshire develops and produces its own Local Offer for Care Leavers.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 The costs associated with the proposed Local Offer for Care Leavers are contained within the Council's allocated revenue budgets and the County Council's existing Children's Social Care, Communications and HR budgets.

## **9.0 Equalities/Implications for Service Users**

9.1 The proposed Local Offer for Care Leavers has significant and positive benefits for services users, namely the County's care leavers, who are some of the most vulnerable residents in the County. This new Offer provides a comprehensive guide to all the services and support care leavers are already entitled to, as well as new entitlements that, together, will have a substantial impact on their lives.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

- (a) Members express their commitment to, and support for, the proposed Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers and refer approval of the various Borough/District Council elements to the relevant committees; and**
- (b) future consideration be given to how Borough/District Councils might work with Nottinghamshire County Council to support Looked After Children and those at risk/vulnerable of becoming so.**

## **Reason for Recommendations**

**To fulfil statutory Corporate Parenting duties, improve lifetime outcomes for Nottinghamshire's care leavers and to reduce lifetime local and national spend on care leavers.**

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Children and Social Care Act 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

Local offer guidance: Guidance for local authorities (February 2018)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance)

For further information on the content of this report please contact Leanne Monger - Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on ext. 5545.

John Robinson  
Chief Executive

## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS**

Leaving care is a big thing in your life, and without the right support it can be difficult and stressful. Even though you are leaving care, or have left care, as your corporate parents, we still care about you and want to support you to have the chances and successes in life that other young adults have.

The Local Offer for Care Leavers tells you about the “offer” of services and support that is available to you as a care leaver in Nottinghamshire. We know that it is a big step when you move out of care and start living on your own or with others. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help.

Local care leavers have helped us to create this offer. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services and support we offer are what you need and improved on an ongoing basis.

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## **QUICK READ GUIDE**

The guide has been split into the following main sections:

**What does the local offer mean for me?** *pages 3 to 5* - including checking your eligibility for this offer, the role of a personal adviser, your pathway plan and your rights overview – I will add page numbers to this and the following

- 1) **Setting up your own home and helping you stay there:** *pages 6 to 8* - preparation for getting your own place and support to do this.
- 2) **Looking after your money:** *pages 9 to 11* - how to obtain financial support and manage your money effectively
- 3) **Keeping healthy and happy:** *Pages 12 to 13* - advice on how to seek emotional, physical and mental health services
- 4) **Education, training, skills and work:** *pages 14 to 18* - guidance and information about job options improving your skills and knowledge plus financial support to do this,
- 5) **Family and relationships:** *pages 19 to 20* – support on how to achieve and maintain healthy relationships with family and friends
- 6) **Finding things to do and feeling part of where you live:** *pages 21 to 22* – ways to spend your free time, including volunteering, how to help improve services for care leavers, and to get important documents together

**What's happening next?** *page 23* - plans to improve the offer and how you can get involved, how to keep up to date with new support and services, and the Care Leaver Covenant

**Additional information:** *pages 24 to 36*

- 1) **Extra information for your health and well-being:** *pages 24 to 28* – description of physical and mental health and well-being services, including contact information
- 2) **Extra information on helping you into work, training and education:** *pages 29 to 31* – additional organisations and opportunities that may be of interest
- 3) **What's on offer in your local area:** *page 32* – including discounted leisure facilities, community involvement and volunteering
- 4) **More information about your Pathway Plan:** *page 33*
- 5) **Corporate Parenting Principles:** *page 33*
- 6) **Useful contacts, resources & further support:** *pages 34 to 36*

### **WHAT DOES THE LOCAL OFFER MEAN FOR ME?**

To be able to get the support and services available in this Offer, you must have been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) which began after age 14 and included some time after your 16th birthday. If you were looked after on or after your 16th birthday but for less than 13 weeks you may still qualify for some support.

If you're not sure whether the Offer applies to you, ask your social worker or personal adviser whether it does.

If you don't have a social worker or personal adviser, get in touch with the Leaving Care Team and they will be able to let you know whether it applies to you.

If you've had a personal adviser in the past and would like some support from the Leaving Care Team again, please get back in touch.

You can contact Nottinghamshire's Leaving Care Team by telephone or email:  
Bassetlaw, Newark Mansfield: 01158041236 or [LeavingCareDuty@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:LeavingCareDuty@nottsc.gov.uk)  
Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe: 01158546318 or [LeavingCare.South@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:LeavingCare.South@nottsc.gov.uk)

Support from personal advisers is centred on your individual needs and aspirations and can continue until you are 25 years old, but you may decide you no longer need support before then.

Everything that is available to care leavers in this Offer is available online at [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk). You can email [quality.improvementgroup@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:quality.improvementgroup@nottsc.gov.uk) to request more copies.

If you have one, your social worker or personal adviser will talk with you about the information in the Offer.

If there is anything in this guide that you don't understand or you want to learn more about, speak to your social worker or personal adviser, or get in touch with the Leaving Care Team by email or telephone via the contact detail provided above or on page 34.

If you identify as a former unaccompanied asylum seeking child or are awaiting leave status from the Home Office, there may be some elements of this Offer that you are not entitled to. Please discuss this with your personal adviser.

#### Your rights checklist

By law you are entitled to the following

- ✓ Involvement in decisions for your life.
- ✓ Access to personal adviser support and advice until your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday
- ✓ A Pathway Plan detailing the journey to your future.
- ✓ To request access to any information we may hold about you.
- ✓ Be listened to and supported in where you decide to live.
- ✓ To obtain your consent if we wish to share your information with other parties.

#### Our vision and ambition for you as your corporate parents

We are Nottinghamshire's Looked after Children (LAC) and Care Leavers Strategic Partnership (the partnership). Nottinghamshire County Council, and now the 7 district councils of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe, are your statutory corporate parents.

This means we must provide you with certain support and services by law. However, we provide these things and more because we know it is the right thing to do to help you get on in life. Our other partners who provide services and support for you include housing providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and the police who also take on this role because they know it is the right thing to do.

**We all want you to have every opportunity and the support you need to be the best you can possibly be.**

We will give you strong roots of stability, love, encouragement, positive relationships and healing from past harm. We will give you wings of resilience, ambition, aspirational goals and practical and emotional support into successful adulthood.

Our ambitions for you as corporate parents mean that you will:

- be safe and feel safe
- experience good physical, emotional and mental health & wellbeing
- fulfil your potential
- make a positive contribution to your community
- successfully move to adulthood
- achieve employment and economic independence

Nottinghamshire County Council supports the national Care Leavers' Charter which means we promise to:

- respect and honour your identity
- believe in you
- listen to you
- inform you
- support you
- find you a home
- be a lifelong champion.

The full charter can be found online [here](#):

#### Personal advisers

It is your right by law to have a personal adviser (PA) and Nottinghamshire County Council will provide you with one from the age of 18 until you are aged 21. You also have the right to support and advice from a personal adviser up to your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday if you need it.

The role of a personal adviser is to help you prepare for independent living and to support you as you prepare to leave care and after you leave care, depending on your circumstances. Personal advisers are also here to support you to overcome any difficulties that you may be experiencing. Personal advisers are responsible for helping you to create your own Pathway Plan, keeping it relevant to your circumstances and most importantly supporting you to achieve the goals you set out for yourself in it

The amount of support that you receive from your personal adviser will depend on what you want and your circumstances.

The Leaving Care Team will consider with you what extra support you may need. You might, for example, need extra support because:

- you are homeless
- you have special educational needs or a disability
- you are not in employment, education or training
- you are a former unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear
- you are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system;
- you are a young parent or
- you are going through a difficult time in your personal life.

#### How to get a personal adviser

If you've had a personal adviser in the past and not been in touch for a while, don't worry. If you're under 25, we can still help. Get in touch on 0115 804 1236 for Bassetlaw, Newark & Mansfield or 0115 854 6318 Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

We will try to make contact with you by letter once a year, so if you do hear from us in this way and would like some help, please do get in touch.

#### Your Pathway Plan

You will create your own Pathway Plan, with support from your social worker, when you are about 16. It sets out what you want to achieve when you leave care. Your social worker will work with you to set out your needs, views and future goals, and identify exactly what support you will receive from us. It will also set out who will help you in this journey.

You will look at your Pathway Plan again every six months, with the help of your social worker until you are 18. This is to make sure that it still reflects your needs. When you leave care at 18, you and your PA will have another good look at your Pathway Plan to check it still makes sense for what you want to achieve once you have left care. You will be able to review your Plan every 6 months.

You can find out more about Pathway Plans on [page 33](#)

#### Your right to be heard

An Independent Advocate can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They are separate from Children's Services and in Nottinghamshire are provided by a charity called the Children's Society. If you would like an Independent Advocate call Freephone 0808 901 9488 or email [advocacy@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@childrenssociety.org.uk) or ask your personal adviser to help you get one.

#### If you have a disability or special educational needs

If you have special educational needs and/or disabilities there is a specific 'Local Offer' that describes the help you can expect in your local area. Further information is available on the Notts Help Yourself website – click on the SEND Local Offer tile – [www.Nottshelpyourself.com](http://www.Nottshelpyourself.com)

#### If you are an unaccompanied asylum seeker

We will make sure that you have the support you need and that this is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

#### If you are under a period of probation supervision

Your probation worker will make contact with your PA and we will work together to make sure you get the support you need to help you complete your court order.



## **SETTING UP YOUR OWN HOME AND HELPING YOU STAY THERE**

We know that finding accommodation is really difficult. Our aim is to support you to live independently in accommodation that meets your needs, is stable and affordable, and makes you feel safe. Where you live when you leave care will depend on your individual circumstances and needs. There are many living options available to you and your personal adviser will support you to decide which option suits you best.

We will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18. If you decide to leave care before turning 18 years old, we must make sure that you have somewhere suitable to live.

You and your personal adviser will make sure that the support that you require when you leave care and the accommodation that you choose is included your Pathway Plan.

If you do not have a personal adviser and would like their help with your current accommodation circumstances please contact the Leaving Care Team 0115 804 1236 for Bassetlaw, Newark & Mansfield or 0115 854 6318 Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

### We will help you find a home that's right for you

Our commitment to you to help you find the right place, one that you can call home. Some care leavers live in individual flats or houses, totally independently and don't need much support from their personal adviser. Others may require more support to live independently. The Leaving Care Service offers different levels of support depending on your individual needs.

Your personal adviser or social worker will help you find out about all types of housing that provide support services and will show you the options that are available to you.

### We can help you stay with your foster family if that's what you want

If you would like to carry on living with your current foster carer(s) after your 18th birthday we will help you to do this under what is called a "Saying Put" arrangement. You can do this until you are 21.

If you are still at college, 6th form or on certain training courses such as an apprenticeship when you turn 18 you can "stay put" at your foster placement until the end of the summer term after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is to help make sure your course is not disrupted by you leaving care.

Talk to your social worker, foster carer(s) and/or personal adviser if you would like to do either of these. You can find out more about our "Staying Put Policy" here: [http://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_staying\\_put.html](http://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staying_put.html)

### We'll help you find a place to live

#### Supported Housing

When you move on from foster or residential care you are likely to move into Supported Accommodation. There are supported accommodation services throughout Nottinghamshire for young people aged 16-21. Some settings have staff on site 24 hours a day to help you if needed, and others have support staff that visit you in a self-contained property or a house that you would share with one other or possibly two other people.

Support staff will help you learn how to budget your money so you can pay your bills, help you understand what managing a tenancy is like, and will support you to access opportunities such as volunteering, training or education. They will also support you to grow more confident and resilient,

and as your independence grows the support you receive will reduce. If you have your own child we can also provide supported accommodation for you and your child.

We will also help you to find housing in an emergency or crisis, and we will work together to make a plan for your longer term housing.

### Independent living

If you are ready to move into your own flat and live independently, there are a number of options for you, including “private rented” accommodation, housing associations and “social housing” managed by your local district council (that’s us!). Most council houses have been transferred to housing associations and is now called social housing. For example, Gedling Borough Council housing is now managed by Jigsaw Homes.

Private rented accommodation means renting your home from someone who owns a property. They could be an individual who owns one place or a company who owns lots of properties, for example. We will help you with this by providing you with advice and guidance so you understand exactly what a tenancy is and your rights and responsibilities when renting a house in the private sector, so you get the best possible start in your new home.

We work with housing providers to help you prepare for getting your own place. This includes offering you short courses on how to how to manage a tenancy. You can learn about the different types of housing available, including how to buy your own home, household bills, how to pay them and how they affect your credit score. Some of these are accredited and will help you when you apply for housing. Talk to your personal adviser to find out more.

### You don’t have to pay council tax until you are 25

To help you with your bills, we have introduced a Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which means that once you have applied for your Council Tax Discount you will not have to pay any Council Tax until your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. If you need any help to apply for this, please talk to your personal adviser.

### We will give you priority on Nottinghamshire local authority housing waiting lists

We (Nottinghamshire’s 7 district councils – see below) have agreed that care leavers are a priority on our waiting lists for social housing. When you apply for local authority housing in a planned way we will make you a high priority applicant so that you are offered a property quickly, ideally within 8 weeks. If you come to us for re-housing in an emergency we would only take a homeless application from you as a last resort.

As a Nottinghamshire care leaver you will be able to move anywhere within the county – this covers Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe. So give some thought to where you would like your first independent home to be. For example, would it make sense to be close to college, work and/or friends?

### We’ll support you when applying to the district council for social housing

When you apply for a home with us (through one of the 7 district councils) you can choose whether you would like live on your own or to live in a shared house. If you want to live on your own, we will support you through the process of bidding for properties and provide the additional funding required to make this happen. This is called Discretionary Housing Benefit.

### In certain circumstances we will pay your deposit and act as guarantor

Many landlords require the payment of a deposit when you take up a tenancy. They also often ask for someone to act as a guarantor. When you reach 18, if appropriate and as part of your Pathway Plan, if your landlord requires a guarantor or deposit then we can support you with this.

We will help you move into and furnish you home so you can make it your own

To help you live independently in accommodation that is stable and affordable, we will offer practical and financial support which you can find out more about in the Looking After Your Money section of this guide on [page 9](#). Some social and supported housing providers offer their tenants support to help with the practical side of things, so talk to your personal adviser if this is something you are interested in.

We will help you keep on top of your bills and rent

We understand that looking after your own home and knowing what you have to do as part of your tenancy contract can be hard. We want you to succeed and stay in your home. We will offer advice and support to help you do this by helping you to settle into your new home. We can give you advice about holding down a tenancy, paying your rent and bills, making sure you are applying for all the benefits you are entitled to and helping you learn to budget/manage your money. We can arrange for your housing benefit and/or rent to be paid directly to your landlord, if this would help managing your money.

We understand that paying bills can take some time to get used to and things go wrong sometimes. If this happens to you, please get in touch with our housing officers or your personal adviser as soon as possible so we can work together to put things right.

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## **LOOKING AFTER YOUR MONEY**

As you leave care, and move into adulthood, we will support you to become a financially independent adult. We offer a range of practical support and advice, as well as direct financial support to help you make a successful shift from care to independence.

### Help to keep to a budget

It's really important that you know how much money you have and to plan for the essential things you have to pay for. Organisations like Citizen's Advice can help you with this. Your personal adviser can also help you with this, including support for budget planning, prioritising payments and opening a bank account.

### Help to claim benefits

We will support you to make contact with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to make sure you are accessing the benefits available to you if you are on a low income. Personal advisers are your personal link to the DWP, if you want or need one. They can help you to set up your benefits and act on your behalf if you're having problems with your benefit claims. Your PA can support you to do this 4 weeks before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to ensure there are minimal delays in you receiving your benefits. They can also help you to get hold of your National Insurance number if you don't have one or don't remember it. Don't forget to give your consent for your PA to act on your behalf with the DWP at your Leaving Care Interview.

You can also check out whether there is any financial support available to you using this [website](#)

### We'll be there to help in an emergency

We understand that managing money when you first leave care isn't easy and that sometimes things go wrong. If this happens to you, please get in touch with your personal adviser as soon as you can and we will help you to sort things out. This can include providing additional financial support if you need it. For example, if your first benefit payment is delayed or if you have a gap between your last benefit payment and your first payday.

### Supporting you to set up your first home

If you choose to live independently, with your own tenancy, we will support you financially in a number of ways. We will give you a Home Establishment Grant. This can help to pay for things such as your first year's contents insurance, furniture and a TV.

We'll also help to pay for your actual move, so things like a removal van, furniture storage and boxes. Sometimes we can help to top up your electricity or gas meters when you first move in and perhaps pay for your first month's rent and deposit (if private renting is right for you). Your personal adviser will help you with all of this, as well as looking into any grants, discounts or other sources of funding that may be available to you in your particular circumstances. For example, on household bills such as water - you could be entitled to up to 90% reduction on your water bill with Severn Trent. This scheme will also help you clear any debts you have with Severn Trent. Talk to your personal adviser about this, go to [www.ccwater.org.uk/households/help-with-my-bills/severn-trent-water-big-difference/](http://www.ccwater.org.uk/households/help-with-my-bills/severn-trent-water-big-difference/) or call 0800 917 6901 to find out more.

If you are aged 16 or 17 and living in a supported or semi-independent home, we will provide you with a regular allowance to meet your needs.

### Your Child Trust Fund and Junior ISA

You will have a Child Trust Fund or Junior ISA bank account from when you were in care. It is made up of money paid in by the government and sometimes Nottinghamshire County Council and/or your carers over the course of your time in care. You can access it when you turn 18. You can choose to leave it where it is, take it out or transfer it to another bank account. Your social worker or PA will be able to tell you more about your account, including where the savings have come from, and help you to fill in the form when it arrives (this may be before or after you leave care).

### Supporting you at university.

We will support you financially whilst you are at university or in higher education. We will contribute £3465 per year towards your fees (you will be expected to use the student loan and maintenance loan to cover the rest). We will pay for your accommodation all year round and provide you with a grant of £2000. We will also help you to apply to any care leaver grants or bursaries that may be available to you at your university.

### Supporting you at college or other education programmes

We will support you to access the financial support you are entitled to if you are at school or college. This may depend on your age, type of course and other circumstances.

We will provide you with the following financial support for your course until you are 21, or over 21, or until the end of your programme of education or training as long as it is in your Pathway Plan

- Registration and Examination fees
- Textbooks and software specified as essential
- Activities essential to meet course requirements
- Public transport between home and place of learning
- Transport to open days and interviews
- Specific clothing, including clothes for interview and essential equipment relating to the course

If you are 20 or over, they can also help you to access other sources of funding to support you into education and training.

If you are 18/19 and in full-time education you may be entitled to the 16 to 19 bursary fund. This can be up to £1200 per year. Care leavers are a priority group for this funding. <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>.

### Extra help for young parents.

If you are under 20 at the start of your college course, you may be entitled to help with childcare costs while you study under the Care to Learn scheme. You can get up to £160 a week. [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

If you have children under 5 you may get help with the cost of childcare. See [page 17](#) for more information

### Help towards health costs

If you are on a low income, you shouldn't have to pay for healthcare costs such as prescriptions, dental care or glasses. If you do need help to pay for healthcare costs, please talk to your personal adviser as we may be able to help.

Other financial support

We will always look at other ways of supporting you financially in ways that fit your individual circumstances, such as providing you with a phone card to call relatives that live outside of the UK. We'll also help you access other sources of funding. Please speak to your personal adviser if you need help with something important to you that you are struggling to pay for.

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## **KEEPING HEALTHY AND HAPPY**

Looking after yourself is really important and we want to give you all the support you need to be as physically, mentally and emotionally healthy as possible. We recognise that everyone is different and will have a wide range of health and well-being needs. Therefore, we will support you to access the health and well-being services and activities that are right for you. When you leave care:

### We'll support you to look after your health and wellbeing.

Your personal adviser can support you with anything to do with your health and well-being. They'll also have information about the health professionals who already support you. On leaving care you will now receive the same health services as any other adult, this includes a GP.

If you have an additional health condition and regularly see a health specialist, that worker will support you to make sure you have your needs met by adult health services when you turn 18.

If you're having support from CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services), your worker will support you to access adult mental health services, if you need them.

### We'll give you information about your health needs, and health history.

When you leave care, if Nottinghamshire is the council that had responsibility for you when you were in care, we'll give you a summary of your health needs and your medical history in a document called your "Important Health Information". If a different authority had responsibility for you when you were in care, they will give you this information.

The information from your last annual health assessment and your Leaving Care Review will feed into your Pathway Plan. This will include what you need to look after your physical, mental and emotional health after you've left care. This is to make sure you get the support you need.

### We'll give you information about local health services and support

There is a range of health services and support available to help you. Go to [pages 24](#) and you will find a description all the types of physical and mental health and well-being services available, as well as the information on how to contact them if you need to. Your personal adviser can help you to do this if you need them to.

### Help to pay for healthcare charges

If you are under 19 and in full-time education, on a low income, receiving benefits, a lone parent, sick and/or disabled it is likely that you won't have to pay many NHS charges such as for medication or dental treatment. You may have to apply for discounts or exemptions from charges through the NHS Low Income Scheme [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme). In some cases we may be able to help you by paying for additional charges that aren't covered by exemptions. Ask your personal adviser for more information on this or look at [page 24](#)

### Support for your emotional and mental health:

It is normal to experience changes in your mood and behaviour, particularly at times of stress and emotional upset. If these changes continue to affect you there is a range of services that can help. Look on [page 26](#) for a full list. If you're not sure what service you need or would like some help to access them, ask your personal adviser for advice.

### Free access to council-run leisure centres

If you like to exercise to improve your physical and mental well-being, you might be interested to hear that all 7 district councils now provide free access to their leisure centres for care leavers. You will be able to use their gyms, swimming pools, go to their fitness classes, join sports clubs and get

involved in other activities they have available at any time of day. All for free! To find out how to sign up in your district go to [page 32](#)

#### Other support available

If you'd like them to, your personal adviser can also support you to

- register with a local doctor (GP), dentist and other health services (such as an optician) when you move home
- attend hospital, GP or other health appointments
- access drug and alcohol support
- register for a C-Card (for access to free contraception)

#### If you have a disability

If you have a disability your social worker will start to work with you, usually from around the age of 16, (it can be later) to look at what might be the best housing options for you when you leave care. They may get in touch with the Transition Team within our adult social care service and, if needed, the relevant health services, to make sure you have all the support you need to keep you healthy, happy and safe after you turn 18. If appropriate, you will be introduced to a new worker, from the Transitions Team, who will support you from 18 and will work out if you can get on-going support from Adult Social Care. If you do need on-going support from Adult Social Care you will have a financial assessment and you may have to pay towards this support. You are also entitled to the Offer detailed in this document, including support to claim for benefits, which you can find more information on in Looking After Your Money on page 9.

If you do not need support from Adult Social Care at this time but may need it at a later point in your life, you can telephone Nottinghamshire County Council Customer Services Centre on 0300 500 80 80 for advice and guidance. They will guide you and signpost you to the most appropriate service. You can also look at [Notts Help Yourself](#) which contains lots of information about different types of support you can access as an adult.



## **EDUCATION, TRAINING, SKILLS AND WORK**

As your corporate parents, we believe in you and will support you to fulfil your potential. We aim to give you the support that any parent would give their own children to get an apprenticeship, go to college or university and/or to get the job they want. We will help you to gain the skills and qualifications you need and help you to be ready for work when the right job comes along.

Together, we will work with you to offer work place opportunities, including work taster sessions, work experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities. These will be flexible and tailored to your needs so you can understand what it is you want to do in your working life.

We understand that you may not be ready to pursue your ambitions when you leave care (you might be a parent, have additional learning needs, be a young offender or just have a lot of other things to think about) so we will provide support until you are 25 so you can choose when the time is right for you.

We will provide support to make sure you receive any additional help you require if you have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes taking into account the support you require which has been identified in your Education, Health and Care Plan if you have one until age 25.

### Extra support for care leavers

When you do decide to explore your ideas in this area, as a care leaver entering education and/or training between 18 and 25, there is a range of education, training and job options available, with additional support available to you. If you let your college, university or training provider know you are a care leaver they will give you extra help. We understand doing this may not be easy for you, so do ask your personal adviser if you would like some help with this. Otherwise you could ask for a private conversation with your tutor. Some places give you the option to tell them on the application form. Remember they are all there to help and support you.

### Specialists available to help you every step of the way

As well as having a personal adviser, the Leaving Care Team will put you in touch with your own achievement adviser. They will help you to work out what your education, training and/or employment goals are and build your confidence and skills towards getting the job you want. They will get to know what you would like to achieve, help you identify what skills you need to get ready for work (these are called employability skills), and also what skills, training or qualifications you need for the job.

If you need extra specialist support, your achievement adviser will find this for you. For example you may need one- to-one employability mentoring support. This will all be done in a way that suits your situation and needs, and your adviser will help you move into work when you are ready. You will agree this together as part of your Pathway Plan.

Your Achievement Adviser can help you from the age of 18 to 21, or until you've finished your college or university course if you are still studying after you are 21.

### Jobs advice and guidance

We will help you to get careers information and advice – this can be either through your achievement adviser, college, university, higher education setting or a specialised Information and guidance provider, for example Futures - [www.the-futures-group.com/futures-for-you.html](http://www.the-futures-group.com/futures-for-you.html) .

### Getting ready for work and/or study

We will support you to learn new skills and gain the experience and knowledge required to get the job you'd like. Your achievement adviser will talk to you about the best way for you to do this and help you find ways to achieve your goals.

Some of the skills you need can be as simple as gaining confidence, learning to make good decisions, working as part of a team, knowing how to solve problems or learning to use a computer. You might do this through a short course, a workshop, work experience, a work placement, longer term college or university course.

Supported housing providers also help you build up your skills ready for work through volunteering and short courses. For example, these might include confidence workshops, taking part in staff interviews, accredited training such as City and Guilds and apprenticeships. If you are interested in any of these, speak to your key worker where you live.

There are many organisations that offer programmes and courses to get people ready for work. Some of these are particularly helpful for care leavers. These include Futures, the Princes Trust and the Inspire and Achieve Foundation. Find out more on page...

#### Help with Job Centre and DWP requirements and appointments

We understand that applying for help at or attending Job Centre appointments and going to things like training, work experience or interviews can be scary— so your achievement adviser can come with you if you wish.

To make things as easy as possible for you we have made arrangements with the Job Centre and DWP. They have a special point of contact for care leavers at every Job Centre. If they know you are a care leaver they will be more understanding and give you extra help if you need it. They will also allow your achievement adviser to act on your behalf and your PA can also help you make the most of the support the DWP offer. For example, finding the right courses and activities to help you get into work, preparing for appointments and sorting this out when things get stressful.

Your achievement adviser can also:

- make sure you are getting all the benefits you're entitled to and always make sure you're better off in work, otherwise we will provide a top-up payment
- help you develop your employability skills such as job seeking skills, completing job applications, writing CVs, interview skills (this might be with another organisation)
- help you identify any emotional well-being courses available at the Job Centre to help you get ready for training and/or work
- make sure our support does not disrupt any health related out of work benefits you receive
- look in to discounts on travel to work that may be available from the Job Centre
- provide financial support to if you need it between the end of your benefits and your first pay day or between jobs
- help you update your claims if you are working part-time.

#### Work experience

We will provide you with work experiences to help you decide what job you're interested in. It's a great way to decide on the career you want and whether you are ready for work. It can also help

- you to decide if you like a job before you apply for it or a college course
- you to stand out from the crowd on a job application or in an interview and
- provide you with a reference once you get your job offer.

We can provide “tasters” of just an hour, half a day or two, or a longer placement of a couple of weeks. Your achievement adviser and work coach have a huge list of companies and organisations with a range of opportunities so let them know if this is something you would like to try. Your achievement adviser will help you prepare for the experience and the practicalities like traveling to and from the workplace.

### Apprenticeships

We will encourage and help you to secure an Apprenticeship if this is what you want. An apprenticeship is a job combined with a skills development and training programme relevant to the job role. Apprenticeships are available from GCSE Level 2 (GCSE or Equivalent) up to Level 7 (Postgraduate Level). There are a wide range of apprenticeships available in most professions and these are advertised on the National Apprenticeship Service (see link below).

As a care leaver you are entitled to a £1000 bursary from your training provider that will be paid to you within the first 3 months of you starting your apprenticeship.

If you are interested in becoming an apprentice your achievement adviser can help you. You can find out more [here](#)

### Care Leaver apprenticeships in Nottinghamshire

We are committed to increasing the number of care leaver apprenticeships available to you within the partnership and in businesses across Nottinghamshire. We hire apprentices and we offer some dedicated care leaver apprenticeships (at Nottinghamshire County Council and at Newark and Sherwood District Council). Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) will guarantee all care leavers an interview if you apply for an apprenticeship vacancy and meet all the essential requirements.

We also offer a coaching programme to our apprentices and full support to enable you to successfully complete the apprenticeship training and assessment. NCC are also committed to topping up care leaver apprentice salaries to the National Living Wage to make it affordable for you to work as an apprentice with us. You can search for apprenticeship opportunities across the partnership on [page 29](#).

### Thinking of going to college?

We will encourage and help you to go to college if this is what you want. We will give you extra help and individual guidance via your achievement adviser to make sure you are supported to choose the right course and to do well in college. Many local colleges provide extra support to care leavers as they also want you to succeed and achieve your potential.

Your achievement adviser knows the key people at all the local colleges so they can help you with everything you need, from choosing the right course, to helping with your application, preparing for an interview, helping to apply for any benefits you may be entitled to whilst you're in education or training, and helping you to attend college once you start.

We understand that sometimes it is hard to go on your own to enrol so Nottingham College is offering you the chance to enrol at a different time if you want to. Nottingham College will also provide you with the following:

- Access to an Achievement Coach, wellbeing support and health advice
- Support through the college and your achievement adviser to support your attendance
- A named person to support you to get an appropriate work placement or work experience
- Support to visit their various college sites if you just want to find out more.

City College, Nottingham provides dedicated support to students are care leavers, including those on apprenticeships.

Newark College has a service for care leavers whereby they will inform you via your Progress Tutorials of Apprenticeships, work experience and training opportunities available following a discussion about your career aspirations. If you are interested, you will be offered additional support with the application and interview preparation from the Designated Teacher and Progress Coaches.

Look at [page 30](#) for information on other colleges that are easily accessible for Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire.

#### Thinking of going to university?

We will encourage and help you to go to university if this is right for you. This includes support towards tuition fees and maintenance loans, travel costs at the start and end of term and making sure you have somewhere to live during the holidays – this may be with your foster carer, in your own accommodation or in supported accommodation. If you are at a residential college or university away from Nottinghamshire, we will help you to get yourself and your belongings to and from college/university at the beginning and end of terms if needed. You will work with you PA so that your Pathway Plan includes your accommodation arrangements, including financial arrangements during term time, short vacations and the long summer vacation.

Some of you may have secured your entry qualifications to attend university, but even if you have not, all universities are happy to talk to you about the options available. Your achievement adviser will support you every step of the way, from considering which course and universities might be right for you, to making your application, to helping you move in and then supporting you along the way once you have started your course, and over holiday time too.

Many universities provide additional support to care leavers, so it's always worth searching the websites or contacting the student support service of the ones you're interested in to find out what they offer. If you feel comfortable you can let them know you were in care once you start so you can get the extra help you may need. Your achievement adviser can help you with all of this.

A number of organisations provide care leavers with information to support you going to university, including finance, support and settling in. These include UCAS and Propel.

[www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-support-care-leavers](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-support-care-leavers)

[www.propel.org.uk](http://www.propel.org.uk)

Locally, Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and the University of Nottingham (UoN) will give you lots of information about how they can help you before you apply to them as part of the Growing Lives Programme.

Both universities offer lots of other support to help you settle in and succeed at university. For an overview visit

NTU - [www4.ntu.ac.uk/student\\_services/individual\\_support/care\\_leavers/been\\_in\\_care/index.html](http://www4.ntu.ac.uk/student_services/individual_support/care_leavers/been_in_care/index.html)

UoN - [www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/services/care-leavers.aspx](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/services/care-leavers.aspx)

And you can find more details on [page 30](#)

#### Help with the cost of childcare

If you have children under the age of 5, you may be eligible for free childcare. Using childcare can help you get some time out, help you access training or get a job, and it will also help your child to grow and develop and be ready for school.

Families often struggle with the cost of childcare because they are not aware that there is support out there to help them, or they believe that they will not be eligible to receive any assistance. But there are lots of ways to get help with costs. We can also help you find the right childcare for you and your child.

To find out more about childcare and what funding is available, please go to the Childcare tile on the Notts Help Yourself homepage [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk)

If you would like further information and advice and would like to speak to one of our advisers please telephone our advice line on 0300 500 80 80

Extra help for Young Parents – if you are under the age of 20 and in school or college you can receive £160 per week to help with your childcare costs and travel to and from the childcare provision. You can find out more here [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn) and under the Childcare tile on Notts Help Yourself [www.nottshelpyourself.com](http://www.nottshelpyourself.com)

## **FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

We realise how important positive and supportive relationships with family, friends and others can be to living a happy, safe and successful life. So we will support you to have a strong and safe support network around you.

### Creating a strong and safe support network

If you want to, your personal adviser can advise and support you to get in touch with people who are special to you or who cared for you in the past. They can also support you to re-connect with family in cases where it will be a positive step for you. They can help you to develop healthy relationships with friends and family and help you keep safe. Go to page 4 to find out how to get a PA if you haven't already got one.

### Understanding your life history

If and when you want to we will help you to understand your time in care and your life history, including your case files. This can include support to trace your family if needed and support to access extra emotional support if you need it as we understand this can be a challenging time. Speak to your personal adviser if you would like to look at this.

### Independent Advocates – supporting your rights as a care leaver

You have the right to have support from an Independent Advocate who can help you to be involved in all the decisions about when you leave care and your plans for leaving care. They inform you of your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They can help you if you're not happy with the decisions your PA make about the support given to you by the Leaving Care Team. Independent Advocates don't work for social services or the Council, they are completely separate from them, and work for a different organisation. If you would like an Independent Advocate call Freephone 0808 901 9488, email [advocacy@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@childrenssociety.org.uk) or ask your personal adviser to help you get one.

### Personal relationship support

If you find yourself in relationships that you feel are difficult, that are making you unhappy and/or aren't good for you, your personal adviser can offer support. For example, they can help with domestic abuse and sexual exploitation issues to make sure you feel safe and stay safe.

Your personal adviser will always respect your own gender and sexual identity. They can help you access services that offer support with your sexual and gender identity needs.

Your personal adviser will give you advice and help you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver.

### If you are a parent

Your personal adviser can help you find support if you are pregnant or have a young child. Children's Centres are great places to find things like parenting groups and other support for young families with children under 5. For more information please see: <https://nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/ccs>

If your child is over 5, then the Family Service may be able to help you with parenting support. To ask for help from the Family Service you, or a professional working with you, should get in touch with the Early Help Unit on 0115 8041248 or [early.help@nottscg.gov.uk](mailto:early.help@nottscg.gov.uk)

The Parent/Carer Zone on Notts Help Yourself [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk) provides useful information to parents and parents-to-be.

If you are a first-time teenage mum-to-be, you may also be able to access support through the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP), which is a home visiting service providing on-going support to first-time teenage mothers and their babies (plus fathers and other family members, with mum's permission). For more information go to [www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/family-nurse-partnership](http://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/family-nurse-partnership) . Please ask your Personal Adviser how to do this because it will be different if you want some extra support.

The Healthy Families Teams are also there to support you with your child's development and health needs. For more information please see: <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/healthy-family-teams>

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## **FINDING THINGS TO DO AND FEELING PART OF WHERE YOU LIVE**

We want you to feel part of the community you live in and wider society. We'll support you to have the opportunities that other young people do, to feel part of your community, wherever and whatever that is, and help you to make a positive contribution in the way you'd like to.

We will also celebrate important life events and faith and cultural events with you. For example, we will help you celebrate your birthday and get in touch at Christmas to make sure you are spending it in the way you want to. We will also help you to maintain and/or explore your faith and ethnicity networks.

### Having a say

If you'd like to get involved in improving and designing the services and support for children in care and those leaving care, you can join Nottinghamshire's care leavers group - "No Labels". We want to hear your views on how to make things better for children in care and care leavers like you.

Some care leavers have had life-changing experiences after getting involved in No Labels. They have found that their self-esteem, confidence and skills have grown a lot. This has helped them to make new friends, travel, to make a positive difference for children in care and to find a good job. This could be you! Talk to your personal adviser if you'd like to get involved, or contact Emma Betteridge on 01623 626972 or [emma.betteridge@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:emma.betteridge@nottsc.gov.uk)

If you want to get your voice heard on a national level, then you might want to vote in national elections and to do that you need to enrol on the Electoral Register. This also makes it easier to do other things such as applying for housing, your passport or a bank account.

### Getting all your important documents together

To live a fully independent life you need to make sure you have all your essential citizenship identity documents. We will help you to do this and pay for any fees. These include your birth certificate, passport, national insurance number, young person's citizen cards and deed poll to change your name, if you choose to. This also includes making sure you have a bank account. Let your personal adviser know when you'd like to do this.

### Having fun, trying new things and meeting new people

Like other people, you might want to find time to relax and enjoy yourself and meet new people from time to time and we'll help you with this if this is what you want to do.

If you fancy an adventure, **we will take you on a free annual residential or day trip** to one of our outdoor and environmental centres in the Peak District and around Nottinghamshire. If you want to organise your own trips, they offer unique and affordable opportunities, covering a wide range of outdoor adventures and environmental activities. You can find out more here <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/outdoor-and-environmental-education/outdoor-education/about>

If you live in supported housing, there will be a range of leisure activities available for you to get involved in such as sports, fitness and adventure activities, day trips, art and craft, nature and gardening clubs and user forums. There will also be opportunities for you to get into volunteering. Talk to your housing support or key worker or personal adviser if you'd like to get involved.

If you like to exercise with your family and friends, you might be interested to hear that all 7 district councils now provide free access to their leisure centres for care leavers. You will be able to use their gyms, swimming pools, go to their fitness classes, join sports clubs and get involved in other



activities they have available at any time of day. All for free! To find out how to sign up in your district go to [page 32](#).

Nottinghamshire Youth Service offers high quality positive social educational activities across the county to care leavers until your 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. They can support you to develop your confidence, knowledge, skills and experience in a safe and enjoyable way! To find out more call their Participation Team on 01623 626972.

Through Notts Help Yourself, [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk) you can find out about all the groups and activities taking place in your area. Your personal adviser can help you with this and provide information on other groups and clubs you may wish to join. They may be able to help you with the cost of these and other leisure activities. Until you are 19 your Platinum Card will get you into Nottinghamshire County Council youth clubs and activities for free.

### Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to get out of the house, to try new things, build your confidence and skills, not only for your self-esteem, but to help you get into work. New skills gained like communication, team work and decision making can really make you stand out from the crowd when applying for a college or university course and a job. Volunteering can also make you feel pretty good and of course you will make a positive difference to your local or wider community.

One way of getting into volunteering is through the Duke of Edinburgh Award, as it's one of the 4 sections in this adventurous scheme where you get to experience a range of new activities and challenges, as well as learn new skills and sometimes travel to new places with other young people. **In Nottinghamshire it's completely free for care leavers.** Find out more and register here <https://www.dofe.org/> or contact the Nottinghamshire County Duke of Edinburgh Award Office on 01623 556 110 or [DukeofEdinburgh@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:DukeofEdinburgh@nottsc.gov.uk). As your personal adviser to help you with this if you need it. They can also tell you about other awards, schemes and competitions you can enter.

If you are interested in other volunteering opportunities contact your local CVS (Community and Voluntary Service). Look in the district council information section at the end of the document) or take a look at these websites – [www.Do-it.org](http://www.Do-it.org), [www.vinspired.org.uk](http://www.vinspired.org.uk) and [www.volunteerics.org](http://www.volunteerics.org).

### If you are a parent

You can find out about different activities for children and families across Nottinghamshire, such as toddler groups and children's library sessions by looking on Notts Help Yourself – under the Things to do in the Community tile at [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk)

### **WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT?**

We will be increasing and improving on the services and support we have told you about in this offer to make sure we are doing all we can to help be the best you can be.

We will continue to work with care leavers across the county to make this offer even better, so you have the best opportunities to achieve your potential.

To keep up to date with what the new offers are, keep an eye out on the Care Leaver Local Offer tile on Notts Help Yourself ([www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk)) as we will post them all on there as they become available. We will launch a Local Offer app so you will find the entire offer on there as well as update - wherever you are, even when you are without a signal or out of data.

We are thinking big with our offer – working with councils across Nottingham, Derby, Derbyshire, the East Midlands and the rest of the country to make sure you and other care leavers can expect the same services and support wherever you live, work or visit.

If you would like to get involved in helping to make this offer bigger and better for all care leavers, we'd love to have you on board. Let your personal adviser know or get in touch with Emma Betteridge on 01623 626972 or [emma.betteridge@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:emma.betteridge@nottsc.gov.uk)

#### The Care Leaver Covenant

Every council area must create an offer of what's its providing to help care leavers. Alongside this, there is the national Care Leaver Covenant where businesses, charities and other government organisations can pledge their services, support and opportunities to help you move on from care and towards a successful and independent life of your own. These include apprenticeships, work experience and free or discounted goods and services. You can find out more here [www.gov.uk/government/collections/care-leaver-covenant--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/care-leaver-covenant--2) and here <https://mycovenant.org.uk/>

## REFERENCE SECTION

### Additional information to help you keep physically healthy

#### **Doctors**

You may have met or will meet different kinds of doctors during your life. For example, your local doctor, also known as GPs, who look after the health of people living in their local area, and deal with a whole range of health problems; consultants, who are specialists in certain areas of illness such as allergies, eyesight, mental health; and doctors who work in Accident and Emergency.

To find a doctor (GP) near to where you live, go to NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and click “Find a GP”. Once you have found a doctors surgery near to where you live, visit them and ask to register. You’ll need your NHS number (which can be found on your important health information), some ID, and the name and address of your last doctor/GP (this can also be found on your Important Health Information document). **They may not know that you are a care leaver, so it would be useful to tell them.** Your personal adviser can help you register with a GP.

If you need medicines you’re given a prescription from the doctor to take to a pharmacy. You may not have to pay for prescriptions if you are a student, or on benefits. You would need to complete an “exemption form”, and your doctor’s (GP) surgery or pharmacy will be able to help you with this. Your personal adviser can also help you with this. Otherwise, you will have to pay to collect the medicine you’ve been prescribed.

#### **Pharmacy:**

Pharmacies are trained to help with many common health problems and minor injuries, including coughs and colds, aches and pains and skin rashes. They can give advice and ‘over the counter’ medicines or treatments, which you pay for. If you are given a prescription for medication by the doctor, you can take this to any pharmacy and they will dispense (supply) your medication. You can find a pharmacy near to where you live, by going to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

#### **NHS 111**

NHS 111 is a 24/7 confidential telephone helpline that can help you with concerns about your health. You can find out more here: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111/>.

If you need health care outside of normal working hours (which are Monday to Friday daytimes) you should dial 111 to contact your local NHS Out of Hours health service. The staff at 111 will help you get the care you need. If you need help now, but it’s not an emergency, call 111. If it’s an emergency, always call 999.

#### **Dentist:**

To find a dentist near to where you live, go onto NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and click “Find a dentist”. Phone or visit the dentist you have chosen and ask to register as an NHS patient. Under the NHS, you might have to pay for some check-ups and treatments. If you’re not sure, your personal adviser will be able to help you.

#### **Opticians:**

You can go to a local, high street optician and have an NHS eye test. They are free up to the age of 19 if you are in full time education. After that, you may have to pay for sight tests and glasses, if you need them. Ask your personal adviser, as they will be able to help you with this and looking into whether you are entitled to any help with dentist and opticians charges. You may have to apply for

discounts or exemptions from charges through the NHS Low Income Scheme.  
[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme)

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### **Additional information to help with your emotional and mental health:**

#### **Psychological therapy services:**

Psychological therapy services offer assessment and treatment for emotional health and wellbeing, and are often known as talking therapies. You can refer yourself directly to a psychological therapy service for concerns like stress, anxiety, depression, OCD, trauma and phobias.

In Nottinghamshire there are three different services, and you can access any one of them:

- **Let's Talk Wellbeing**  
Call **0115 956 0888** or visit <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/nottingham-city-and-county->
- **Trent PTS**  
Call 0115 896 3160 or visit <https://www.trentpts.co.uk/>
- **Insight Healthcare**  
Call 0300 555 5582 or visit <https://www.insighthealthcare.org/our-services/talking-therapies/find-a-service/nottinghamshire/>

#### **Kooth counselling:**

Kooth.com is an online counselling service for young people aged up to 25. It is a safe, confidential and non-stigmatised way for you receive free counselling, advice and support on-line from fully trained and qualified counsellors. Go to [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) to find out more.

#### **GP:**

Your GP will offer advice and support around your mental health. They can also help identify if you need help from specialist adult mental health services, and support you to access these.

#### **You Know Your Mind:**

'You Know Your Mind' is a project that seeks to give you more choice and control over how you can improve your mental health - in recognition that only *you* will know what works for you. Your Personal Adviser can discuss this option with you and can refer you into the project on your behalf.

## **Voluntary and Community Sector-run mental and emotional health services and support**

### **We R Here:**

Offer free counselling and support for anyone who has experienced a traumatic life experience. They also run self-esteem courses and practical support in times of crisis. You can call them on 0115 920 6241 or 07891 306 972 or visit their website. Or you could ask your personal adviser or other worker to contact them for you [www.werehere.org.uk](http://www.werehere.org.uk)

## **Information to help you have a healthy lifestyle**

### **Contraception and sexual health:**

Using the right contraception helps you avoid unplanned pregnancies. You should talk to a health worker about contraception, you can get advice and contraception from your Doctors (GP), your local sexual health service, and some pharmacies (visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) to check). Contraception is free on the NHS.

### *C-Card:*

The C Card scheme is a free condom and sexual health advice service for young people aged up to 25. It allows young people to gain access to condoms, lubricants and advice on sex, STI's and relationships. You can access the service via [www.ccardnottinghamshire.co.uk](http://www.ccardnottinghamshire.co.uk).

### *Sexual health services:*

Looking after your sexual health is important. Nottinghamshire sexual health services are open access, free, and confidential. In Nottinghamshire, your local sexual health service depends on where you live, you can find out more about each service and how to access it via their website or by calling the service.

- **If you live in north Nottinghamshire (Bassetlaw)**  
Tri Health Bassetlaw <http://bassetlawtrihealth.dbh.nhs.uk>  
Tel: 01909 506418
- **If you live in Mid Nottinghamshire (Mansfield, Ashfield, Newark and Sherwood)**  
My Sexual Health <http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk/index.php/my-sexual-health>  
Tel: 01623672260
- **If you live in south Nottinghamshire (Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe) and Nottingham City**  
NUH Sexual Health [www.nuh.nhs.uk](http://www.nuh.nhs.uk)  
Tel: 0115 9627627

### **Smoking:**

Stopping smoking gives you better health for life. For support to stop smoking contact Smoke free life by texting QUIT to 66777 or by phoning 0800 2465343 or 0115 772 2515.

### **Healthy eating and healthy weight:**

Part of staying healthy is eating a healthy diet, getting enough exercise and being a healthy weight. If you have concerns about your weight you can get support from Change Point Nottinghamshire by calling 0333 005 0092 or visiting <http://www.everyonehealth.co.uk/nottinghamshire-county-council/>.

**Drugs:**

Taking drugs can have serious consequences, and their effects vary from person to person. If you are worried about drug use, get support from New Directions Nottinghamshire. You can call them on 0115 896 0798 or email them on [notts@cgl.org.uk](mailto:notts@cgl.org.uk). Find out more here <https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cgl-new-directions-nottinghamshire-newark-mansfield-workshop-hucknall-broxtowe-rushcliffe>. You can also find out more information from Frank [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

**Alcohol:**

If you are worried about drinking, get support from New Directions Nottinghamshire. You can call them 0115 896 0798 or email them on [notts@cgl.org.uk](mailto:notts@cgl.org.uk). Find out more here <https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cgl-new-directions-nottinghamshire-newark-mansfield-workshop-hucknall-broxtowe-rushcliffe>. You can also find out more information about drinking alcohol, including how to drink responsibly, here: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>.

**NHS Choices**

NHS Choices is a website aimed at everyone. By searching NHS choices you can find information on everything from the common cold and sickness to symptoms of sexually transmitted infections, information about contraception, and help to identify the symptoms of depression.

**Health for Teens**

A health for teens website in Nottinghamshire provides information on health and wellbeing for teenagers including sexual health, sexuality, relationships, drugs & alcohol, feelings & lifestyle. You may find some of the information useful [www.healthforteens.co.uk](http://www.healthforteens.co.uk).

## **Education, training, skills and employment organisations, opportunities and information**

Search for apprenticeships and other job opportunities across the partnership

Ashfield District Council - <https://www.ashfield.gov.uk/your-council/jobs-and-careers/jobs-and-careers/>

Bassetlaw District Council - <http://www.bassetlawjobs.co.uk/latestjobs/>

Broxtowe Borough Council - <https://www.broxtowe.gov.uk/for-you/jobs/>

Futures - <https://www.futuresforbusiness.com/vacancies/>

Gedling Borough Council - <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/jobs/>

Mansfield District Council - <http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/article/5700/Jobs-and-careers>

Newark and Sherwood District Council - <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/jobsandcareers/>

Nottinghamshire County Council - [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jobs-and-working/working-for-us/apprenticeships-at-the-council](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jobs-and-working/working-for-us/apprenticeships-at-the-council)

Rushcliffe District Council - <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/jobs/>

Futures offers a range of advice, support and guidance to help you get into work. These include careers guidance, skills training, employability, work experience and apprenticeships

[www.the-futures-group.com/futures-for-you.html](http://www.the-futures-group.com/futures-for-you.html)

### Building Better Opportunities Programme

*The Towards Work Programme* gives you personalised support to help you get ready for work, education or training and help you stay there by working with you to deal with some of the things that might be stopping you doing that at the moment. They will help you feel more confident and ready to look for the right opportunities for you. They'll also provide you with a personal budget to help you on your way into work. This can help with things like childcare, work equipment, training and bus passes.

For more information go to [www.towardswork.org.uk](http://www.towardswork.org.uk) or refer yourself at <https://www.towardswork.org.uk/make-a-referral/> (put Nottinghamshire County Council Leaving Care as the organisation).

*Money Sorted* will help if you are not in work and would like support to help you feel more in control of your finances. You will learn skills and knowledge to better manage your money and to give you confidence with money issues. The aim is help you to cope better with budgeting and avoid getting into debt in the future. You will have the chance to take short courses on money issues. You can do this programme if you are not in paid employment. This includes if you've not been in work for or claiming work-related benefits, for example, you might be looking after a child or caring for someone else. Email [info@moneysortedind2n2.org](mailto:info@moneysortedind2n2.org) to find out and get started.

Please note that you can only do one of the two above Building Better Opportunities Programmes. If you are unsure what this means for you, talk to your personal adviser for advice.



### Further Education Colleges within easy access to Nottinghamshire care leavers

- Vision West Notts College, Mansfield – [www.wnc.ac.uk](http://www.wnc.ac.uk) -0808 100 3626
- Nottingham College - [www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk](http://www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk) - 0115 910 0100
- Derby College – [www.derby-college.ac.uk](http://www.derby-college.ac.uk) - 0800 028 0289
- North Notts College, Worksop [www.nnc.ac.uk](http://www.nnc.ac.uk) - 01909 504504
- Portland College, Mansfield – [www.portland.ac.uk](http://www.portland.ac.uk)
- 
- Newark College- [www.lincolncollege.ac.uk/our-colleges/newark-college](http://www.lincolncollege.ac.uk/our-colleges/newark-college) - 01636 680680
- City College, Nottingham - [citycollegenottingham.com](http://citycollegenottingham.com) - 0115 910 1455

### Extra support for care leavers from Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham

#### NTU offers

- campus visits for you before you arrive and/or additional welcome activities if you want to go to them
- if you've had an offer, NTU will contact you over the summer before you start and again after clearing to let you know the support available to you as a care leaver and encourage you to apply for ...
- a bursary for financial support of £500
- a dedicated support officer to help you settle in during the first term and then on an ongoing basis while you are at University
- money advisers to help you apply for all you are entitled to and work out a budget to suit your needs and interests.
- a guaranteed offer of University-allocated accommodation if you have accepted a place at Nottingham Trent University as your first choice - accommodation in halls is available throughout the summer vacation too
- a personal health and wellbeing welcome pack
- help accessing all support services
- As part of the NTU Navigate Programme, NTU provides opportunities for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people to find out more about the UK higher education system, as well as English-language support at evening classes and an annual summer school.

Your achievement adviser has a direct link with a key contact at the university to make sure you get all the support you need in applying and to succeed when you get there.

If you'd like to speak to someone at NTU about going the university you can contact [lucy.judd@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.judd@ntu.ac.uk) (before you apply and about NTU Navigate Programme) and [kathryn.frith@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:kathryn.frith@ntu.ac.uk) after you've applied, including any point during your time at NTU.

#### The University of Nottingham offers care leavers the following:

- Special consideration in the admissions process. This means that you are more likely to get an offer and if you do we may as for slightly lower grades from you
- Additional financial support. The Nottingham Potential Bursary is available to most students who have been living in the care of a local authority for over 3 months. We can also ensure you receive all the other grants and bursaries you may be entitled to
- Access to 365-day university accommodation and support in finding the best accommodation for you
- An informal pre-entry meeting with a member of the University's Financial Support Team to explain the financial support available to you. At the meeting we can also give you information about accommodation and anything else that you need help with to set things up for the start of your studies. You can bring someone along with you.

- Additional welcome activities when you arrive in September
- Ongoing support throughout your course from our Care Leavers' Mentor

#### Interested in a job to help adults with health and social care needs?

If you are interested in working in adult social care, Nottinghamshire County Council offers anybody over the age of 16 the opportunity to take part in an accreditation scheme to become a personal assistant. Personal assistants (PAs) are employed to help people who need social care and health or health care support, either because of their age or disability, to enable them to live as independently as possible in their home. "Support with Confidence" is a council-run scheme for people who want to work, or are currently working as a personal assistant. By joining the scheme you will be accredited, on our register and listed on the Nottinghamshire Help Yourself website as available to work as a PA. You can find out more about the role and the Support with Confidence scheme here [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/working/personal-assistants/support-with-confidence](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/working/personal-assistants/support-with-confidence) If you would like to go ahead, talk to your personal adviser who can support you in this.

#### The Job Centre and Department of Work & Pensions

This organisation offers a range of support and activities to help you get ready for and find work. These include job search, CV writing, completing job applications, preparing for interviews, telling you about job fairs, finding your work experience and getting you on courses at all levels including apprenticeships, such as life skills, IT skills, business administration, childcare, warehousing and construction.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

#### The Princes Trust

If you live in **Nottingham or Nottinghamshire** join Team, The Princes Trust's free 12-week personal development programme, which is offered in Beeston, Basford, Mansfield, Sutton in Ashfield or Worksop, for the chance to gain new skills, take a qualification and meet new people. Three out of four people on Team go on to work or college courses within three months.

They also run a week-long programme called **Get Started** which is focused on one theme such as sport, robots, web design, nail art, racing cars. There's another called **Get Into** that is 4-6 weeks long based with an employer where you get work experience and training and can lead to paid employment. Examples are the NHS, logistics, retail, catering and hospitality and customer service. The Prince's Trust can help with food and cover travel expenses.

If you're interested in setting up your own business the Prince's Trust run a programme called **Enterprise** for 18 to 30 year olds who want to go self-employed. It includes mentoring, one to one support and is also available as an online programme.

To find out more and/or apply for any of these programmes go to [www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people) or phone their Nottingham Office 0115 8456495. The Prince's Trust publish all opportunities on Nottingham Jobs ([www.nottinghamjobs.com](http://www.nottinghamjobs.com)) and also at the Job Centre (see link above). You can also follow them on Facebook and Twitter.

#### Inspire & Achieve Foundation

If you live in Mansfield, your personal adviser can put you in touch with this organisation for extra specialist one to one support to help you get ready for training and/or work. Your mentor will help you with things like your CV, application forms, finding an apprenticeship and helping you prepare for an interview

[Notts Help Yourself - Work & Volunteering Zone](#) – click this tile for information on organisations that can help support you back into work, or to volunteer. [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk)

## **WHAT'S ON OFFER IN YOUR LOCAL AREA**

### **Let's Live Well in Rushcliffe**

If you live in Rushcliffe, this programme will help you to connect to local groups, activities and places to help you improve your wellbeing. You will also be supported by a Health Coach who will discuss an action plan that focuses on what matters to you. Contact 07909 890 699, email [LLWiR@nottshc.nhs.uk](mailto:LLWiR@nottshc.nhs.uk) or you can ask your GP or personal adviser to refer you.

### **Volunteering opportunities and community projects**

Ashfield Voluntary Action - Ashfield Voluntary Action, Portland St, Kirkby in Ashfield NG17 7AE - 01623 555551 - [www.ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk](http://www.ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk)

Bassetlaw CVS - The Old Abbey School Priorswell Road, Worksop S80 2BU - 01909 476118 – [www.bcvs.org.uk](http://www.bcvs.org.uk)

Voluntary Action Broxtowe - Oban House, 8 Chilwell Rd, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1EJ - 0115 917 8080 – [www.vabroxtowe.org.uk](http://www.vabroxtowe.org.uk)

Mansfield CVS - Community House, 36 Wood St, Mansfield NG18 1QA - 01623 392444 – [www.mansfieldcvs.org](http://www.mansfieldcvs.org)

Newark & Sherwood CVS - Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 1BY - 01636 679539 – [nandscvs.org](http://nandscvs.org)

Rushcliffe CVS - The Pump House, Abbey Rd, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5NE- 0115 969 9060- [rushcliffecvs.org.uk](http://rushcliffecvs.org.uk)

### **Practical help with your home**

Mansfield- If you live in housing provided by Mansfield District Council, they will provide you with tenancy support. You can register for this when you first take on your tenancy or ask for it at any time. You can ask your personal adviser to help you do this

### **How to sign up for free use of council-owned leisure centres**

At the moment, this section contains information provided by districts who have current leisure offer for care leavers . Once there is a single joint offer from all districts I will remove the individual offers and give details of the single joint offer, including details of how care leavers can register for it in their district.

Mansfield District Council-run leisure facilities offer discounts if you are on some types of benefits. Visit [https://www.mansfieldleisure.com/oak\\_tree/MEM\\_Centre](https://www.mansfieldleisure.com/oak_tree/MEM_Centre) to find out more

Rushcliffe Borough Council – For care leavers looking to become physically active and socialise with friends, Lex Leisure are offering free swimming in all four of their leisure centres; Rushcliffe Arena in West Bridgford, Bingham Leisure Centre, Keyworth Leisure Centre and Cotgrave Leisure Centre. To access this please email: Alex Julian – Health Development Officer [ajulian@rushcliffe.gov.uk](mailto:ajulian@rushcliffe.gov.uk)

### **More information about your Pathway Plan**

Your Pathway Plan covers things like your:

- Goals and aspirations around education, training and/or getting a job
- Where you want to live and in what type of accommodation
- Financial support you need to cover your accommodation and bills – this includes support to help you manage your money
- Any physical, mental and emotional health and well-being needs you have and how you will be helped with them
- any contact you may have with your foster carers, parents, wider family and friends, and how they and other people you know might be able to help you to live more independently

You and your PA will review your Pathway Plan every 6 months and this will happen until at least you are 21, sometime until you are 25 depending on your circumstances.

Your expenses (travel and refreshments) in attending your review will be paid for by Nottinghamshire County Council. There will be some circumstances where you will always need to update your Pathway Plan before the regular 6 months. For example, moving into some types of accommodation.

### **Corporate Parenting Principles**

All departments within a local authority are required to recognise their role as corporate parents which covers the following principles:-

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe

and is summarised in the following quotation

“It asks local and central government to up their game as corporate parents, using the level of support that we expect a reasonable parent to provide for their child as a benchmark for how they should approach their role”.

### **Ministerial Foreword**

#### **Keep On Caring**

#### **Supporting Young People from Care to Independence**

**July 2016**

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Useful Contacts, Resources & Further Support – [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk) provides up-to-date information on many of the organisations below

Organisation/Service/Resource	Description	Contact info.
Leaving Care Service/Personal advisers	Contact the Leaving Care Service directly	Telephone: 01158041236 or <a href="mailto:LeavingCareDuty@nottsc.gov.uk">LeavingCareDuty@nottsc.gov.uk</a> (Bassetlaw, Newark, Mansfield); 01158546318 or <a href="mailto:LeavingCare.South@nottsc.gov.uk">LeavingCare.South@nottsc.gov.uk</a> (Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe)
Complaints	We want to hear your views about our services, good or bad. What you tell us helps us improve services and plan for the future.	Telephone: 0300 500 80 80 Website: <a href="http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/contact-and-complaints/complaints/make-a-complaint-comment-or-compliment">http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/contact-and-complaints/complaints/make-a-complaint-comment-or-compliment</a>
Samaritans	We offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever’s getting to you. You don’t have to be suicidal. A free and confidential service, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year	Free phone: 116 123 Website: <a href="http://Samaritans.org">Samaritans.org</a>
Change, Grow, Live & “New Directions”	Change, Grow, Live run New Directions, a free and confidential drug and alcohol service open to anyone over the age of 18 living in Nottinghamshire. They also provide other services including health and wellbeing, mental health, domestic abuse and homelessness	Telephone: 0115 896 0798 <a href="http://www.changegrowlive.org">www.changegrowlive.org</a> Website: <a href="https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cgl-new-directions-nottinghamshire-newark-mansfield-worksop-hucknall-broxtowe-rushcliffe">https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cgl-new-directions-nottinghamshire-newark-mansfield-worksop-hucknall-broxtowe-rushcliffe</a>
Citizens Advice Bureau	The Citizens Advice Bureau helps people to resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice and influencing policy makers. Some branches can provide legal advice on immigration and asylum cases.	Telephone: 0300 330 5457 Website: <a href="https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/">https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/</a>
Catch 22	Catch 22 works with young people who are in or leaving custody, involved in or on the fringes of crime, out of work, struggling at school, homeless or facing young parenthood without the safety net of a supportive family. Catch 22 offer practical support services which are flexible, highly personalised and often intensive.	Website: <a href="http://www.catch-22.org.uk">www.catch-22.org.uk</a>
Young Minds	Young Minds is committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.	Website: <a href="https://youngminds.org.uk/">https://youngminds.org.uk/</a>

Missing People	Missing People is a free phone confidential service for anyone who has run away from home or care, or been forced to leave home.	Telephone: 11600 Website: <a href="https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/">https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/</a>
The Howard League	Free, independent and confidential advice, assistance and representation on a wide range of issues to young people under 21 years old in custody.	Telephone: 0808 801 0308 Website: <a href="https://howardleague.org/">https://howardleague.org/</a>
Community Legal Advice	Community Legal Advice (CLA) is a free and confidential advice service in England and Wales paid for by legal aid. If you are living on a low income or benefits, you may be eligible for free specialist advice from legal advisers on issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debt, if your home is at risk</li> <li>• Housing, if you're homeless or at risk of being evicted</li> <li>• Domestic abuse</li> <li>• Separating from an abusive partner, when you're making arrangements for children or sorting out money and property</li> <li>• Special education needs</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> </ul>	Telephone: 0345 345 4 345 Website: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice">https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice</a>
The Care Leavers' Association	The Care Leavers' Association provides advice and information about leaving care and your rights and entitlements	Telephone: 0161 236 5665 Website: <a href="http://www.careleavers.com/what-we-do/young-peoples-project/leavingcare/">http://www.careleavers.com/what-we-do/young-peoples-project/leavingcare/</a>
ChildLine	ChildLine is a free national 24 hour telephone help line for any child in trouble or danger. It is a confidential counselling service which offers information and help to children and young people	Telephone: 0800 1111 Website: <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>
National Youth Advocacy Service	The National Youth Advocacy Service is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services. NYAS offer information, advocacy, legal representation and advice to children and young people up to the age of 25 through a network of advocates	Telephone: 0808 808 1001 Website: <a href="https://www.nyas.net/">https://www.nyas.net/</a>
Refugee Council	The Refugee Council is one of the leading charities in the UK working directly with refugees, and supporting them to rebuild their lives.	Website: <a href="https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk">https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk</a>
Become	Become's mission is to provide help, support and advice to children in care and young care leavers so that they can take	Telephone: 0800 023 2033 Website: <a href="http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/">http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/</a>

	control of their lives and unleash their potential	
Buttle UK	Buttle UK's mission is the maintenance, education and advancement in life of children and young people who through poverty and family circumstances are in need of, and will benefit significantly from, Buttle UK's support.	Website: <a href="https://www.buttleuk.org/">https://www.buttleuk.org/</a>
Nottinghamshire County Council LAC & Care Leavers Partnership & Strategy	This partnership is responsible for ensuring the best possible outcomes for all looked after children and care leavers in Nottinghamshire. Their strategy sets out how their shared vision and plan on how they will do this. They are responsible for creating and improving the Local Offer for Care Leavers	<a href="http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/130637/looked-after-childrencareleaversstrategy.pdf">http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/130637/looked-after-childrencareleaversstrategy.pdf</a>
Department for Work & Pensions	Information on finding jobs and accessing benefits.	Website: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions</a>
Ofsted	The national regulator that ensures local authorities are delivering the best possible outcomes for children in care and care leavers. You can view reports of how Nottinghamshire County Council performs when delivering services for looked after children and care leavers	Nottinghamshire reports: <a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/nottinghamshire">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/nottinghamshire</a>
Department for Education	Information from the Department of Education about your rights as a care leaver	Website: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/leaving-foster-or-local-authority-care">https://www.gov.uk/leaving-foster-or-local-authority-care</a>
The Rees Foundation	Supports care leavers and care experienced individuals across the UK. They champion services, projects and interventions with and for care experienced people. They empower and inspire others to effect social change and to improve support, policy, practice and interventions	Website: <a href="http://www.reesfoundation.org">www.reesfoundation.org</a>
The Rees Care Leavers' Foundation	Offer small grants to care leavers aged 18 to 29	Website: <a href="http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org">www.thecareleaversfoundation.org</a>
British Red Cross International Family Tracing Service	Helping you trace your family abroad	Donna Boulton <a href="mailto:DBoulton@redcross.org.uk">DBoulton@redcross.org.uk</a> 01158 505942



Proposed additions to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme to incorporate ensure the housing elements of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers

### **Leaving a settled placement**

Any NCC care leaver exiting any settled placement will initially receive band two status on their housing application.

After an 8 week period the banding will be upgraded to band one status. In order to secure an offer of accommodation the applicant will need to have submitted a positive ready to move (R2M) to support their application. Until such time as this is received applicants placing bids for available accommodation will have their application overlooked as they will not be considered ready to sustain a tenancy.

However, for complex cases that may never reach a R2M positive status a multi-agency meeting will be convened to draw up an appropriate support plan to enable move on from the settled placement. This plan will identify pathways of support to assist the young person to live independently.

Settled placements include but are not limited to a supported housing placement, foster placement, care placement or any other form of accommodation sourced by NCC to accommodate the young person owed duties by them.

In circumstances where the placement does not use the R2M documentation NCC Support Planners will complete this assessment with the young person to ensure consistency and that where necessary, the correct support is provided.

### **Dates/bandings**

To ensure consistency, applications from care leavers will follow the same date/banding processes as those set out in the existing Housing Allocation Scheme. That is, an application is likely to have two dates – its application date and its banding date. These may be the same date if the banding has not been amended since the original application date. In some instances however where the band has been amended the banding date is likely to be a more recent date reflecting the date in which the new banding was applied.

### **In an emergency**

When a care leaver is approaching the local housing authority in an emergency it is likely that an application for assistance under the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will be necessary.

Section 189 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended provides that the following categories of applicant have a priority need for accommodation:

- (e) a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student');

(f) a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')

If a care leaver is still an open case to NCC either as a person under 21 or in their extended duty category 22-25 years of age it is likely that they will be considered vulnerable under the above section and would therefore be provided with temporary accommodation, meeting any corporate parenting duties.

Once in temporary accommodation assessments would be made to establish whether moving to a supported housing project would be more appropriate. If this is appropriate then the individual should be transferred at the earliest opportunity. If supported accommodation is not appropriate then longer term housing solutions will be sourced which may include any of the works required in the 'Leaving a settled placement' section.

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

### NATIONAL REVIEW OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update Members of the findings of the national review of Disabled Facilities Grants.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 In early 2018 The Department of Health & Social Care appointed the University of West of England to carry out an independent review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in England. The University worked with Foundations, the Building Research Establishment, Ferret Information System and an experienced Occupational Therapist to look at both the operation of the grant and the wider delivery of home adaptations to support the independence of disabled people living in their own homes

2.2 Despite increases to the annual DFG budget, demand for adaptations has always outstripped supply and this is set to continue as the population ages. The review sought to ensure that home adaptation policy remains fit for purpose and that funds are being allocated as effectively as possible.

2.3 A series of consultation workshops were held during March in London, Leeds and Wolverhampton to debate the issues and draw conclusions for the final report.

2.4 The review reported back in June 2018 with evidence-based recommendations on how the grant could operate in the future. A copy of the Review (in summary) is attached as **Appendix One**.

#### **3.0 The National Review**

3.1 This Review looks at how the DFG currently operates and makes evidenced based and practical recommendations for how it should change in the future. The review is split into discreet sections and gives recommendations on each of these issues. This report identifies the main issues raised in each chapter and offers some narrative to give the national recommendations some local context.

#### **3.2 Challenges Identified**

The aim of the review was twofold.

- (1) support more people of all ages to live in suitable housing so they can stay independent for longer;
- (2) make the case for more joined up action across housing, health and social care.

3.3 The review was looking at a national picture and identifies a number of challenges inherent in the current DFG system. Having reviewed the challenges identified the Business Manager responsible for delivering the DFG programme in Newark & Sherwood does not believe that they accurately reflect the local picture of service delivery. For example, one of the challenges identified is:

*The increase in central government resources has not yet resulted in more people being helped due to reduced financial input from local authorities, lack of revenue funding, more complex cases and higher cost of work*

The spend on DFGs in 2018/19 is likely to be close to £700,000. This has increased over the past few years and is way above the figures that were being spent as little as four years ago.

### 3.4 Joining It Up Strategically

The report finds that the responsibility of providing care to enable independent living (in both single tier and two tier areas) can be disjointed and not have the same strategic objectives.

3.5 IT makes a number of recommendations to address this problem. The two worthy of most note are set out below.

- A Housing and Health Partnership Board in each area as a requirement of DFG funding with representatives from housing, health and social care.
- Housing and Health Partnership Boards to have a similar structure to Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.
- A single adaptations policy based on the needs of the locality, reviewed annually and signed off by the Health & Wellbeing Board.

3.6 Following the introduction of the Better Care Fund, a Programme Board was established (chaired by the County Council) to oversee the DFG delivery across the county and to have oversight on other social care projects. Each local authority is represented on the BCF programme Board along with representatives from Clinical Commissioning Groups and Adult Health and Social Care. Whilst co-ordination across the various sectors could be improved the creation of a further group to oversee DFG delivery appears burdensome and unnecessary.

3.7 Each local authority has adopted its own policy in relation to DFG and this is based on local demand and circumstances. Efforts have been made, where possible, to provide a consistent approach within the Policies but each authority will require a policy that delivers the needs and requirements of its local residents within the budget that it has for this service.

### 3.8 Joining It Up Operationally

The review finds that at an operational level *'Existing DFG systems are usually a two-part process, starting with an assessment by social care services and then a grant application to housing. For customers this can mean a long and difficult journey involving delay and frustration.'*

- 3.9 The two tier system of local government does make the customer journey more difficult, however, much work has been done at both a county level and a district level to address these problems. The Authority has already put in place integrated approach to housing and health to assist independent living and is currently working well within Newark and Sherwood.
- 3.10 The review recommends that a major transformation in how services are delivered needs to be considered. A number of models that are operating around the county are highlighted. It is suggested that this transformation can be funded by top slicing the DFG budget. It should be remembered that the DFG is capital fund and therefore careful consideration will need to be given to the use of capital funds for transformational projects.
- 3.11 Distribution Formula
- The single recommendation in this part of the review is that a new formula for the allocation of funds needs to be developed. Any new formula will need to ensure that there is managed transition to take account of any significant changes in the funding being provided.
- 3.12 Updating The Regulations
- All grant(s) application(s) for adults are subject to national means test. The current test is linked to eligibility to some existing benefits. The Review highlights a number of options for modernising the current means test. It also recognises that any change will give rise to winners and losers and so will need careful consideration.
- 3.13 The current upper limit for a mandatory grant is £30,000. It was anticipated that the review would recognise that this upper limit is now outdated and requires an uplift. However, the Review suggests that this upper limit is only an issue in a small number of cases across the country and that it should only be increased by inflation. The local position is at odds with this conclusion. There are an increasing number of schemes that are exceeding this upper limit and Members will recall that the Newark & Sherwood DFG policy on the award of discretionary funding was amended in 2018 to take account of this fact. It is disappointing that the Review did not recommend a substantial increase in the maximum mandatory grant.
- 3.14 This part of the Review also recommends that the means test is removed for grants relating to stair lifts and palliative care schemes. Whilst there is merit in this it could decrease the number of grants given as there would be no contribution in an increased number of cases.
- 3.15 Developing A Market
- This section of the Review focuses on the availability of advice and information provided to clients and the quality of the work provided during the adaptation process.
- 3.16 Local evidence would suggest that in Newark and Sherwood the quality of information provided to clients that are within the grants system is of good quality and readily available. The DFG process within Newark and Sherwood does provide an opportunity for clients to receive help via the Agency Service that officers deliver. This helps clients choose a contractor, moderate the costs and arrange start dates.

3.17 The use of Assistive Technology is also discussed in the part of the Review. The recommendation is that every DFG should provide, as a matter of course, a smart home starter kit. Whilst there is no doubt that Assistive Technology can be a useful tool the assertion that it is a useful tool in every DFG case is questionable.

### 3.18 Tenure Issues

There are no specific recommendations in this section of the report other than to highlight that DFG provision across all tenures is not equitable and requires further review.

### 3.19 Common Parts

The potential to use of DFGs to provide adaptations to common parts is limited and the Review recommends that further work on this is required once parts of the Equalities Act are implemented.

### 3.20 Measuring Outcomes

The recommendation is:

*Use of NHS number on all files, data sharing protocols, aligned IT systems and improved local and national reporting.*

3.21 This could prove a real challenge as it is hard to envisage that this could be delivered in any meaningful timescale. However, the Nottinghamshire authorities have begun work on aligning performance indicators and looking at joint protocol for DFG's.

### 3.22 Implications for Newark & Sherwood

The review of the DFG system was requested by the Department of Health and Social Care. There has so far been no formal government response to the published report.

3.23 Whilst some parts of the report provide some recommendations that should be welcomed it does not appear to reflect the concerns that were raised by practitioners at the consultation meetings

3.24 The Better Care Programme Board have yet to consider the Review. However, work on delivering a coherent joined up adaptations serve across the county continues to progress at both local and county level.

## 4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report. However, if the Review leads to changes in local or national policy the implications of these changes will need to be assessed.

## 5.0 Financial Implications – Fin

5.1 Some of the Review recommendations make reference to the use of the DFG allocation. If the review leads to changes in local or national policy the implications of these changes on the budget will need to be assessed.

## 6.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

**Members are asked to note the recommendations of the National Review of Disabled Facilities Grants**

### Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Alan Batty - Business Manager on extension 5467.

Matt Finch  
Director – Communities & Environment

# Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Other Adaptations: External Review



Nov  
2018

## Summary

Sheila Mackintosh, Paul Smith, Helen Garrett, Maggie Davidson, Gareth Morgan, and Rachel Russell



Foundations

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Ferret Information Systems



## Introduction

In 2019 the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) will be 30 years old. Originally, it was one of several housing grants available to fund repairs, improvements and adaptations. All the other grants have now gone, and the DFG is part of the Better Care Fund; a pooled budget seeking to integrate health, social care and, through the DFG, housing services.

This Review looks at how the DFG currently operates and makes evidenced based and practical recommendations for how it should change in the future. The aim is to (1) support more people of all ages to live in suitable housing so they can stay independent for longer; and (2) make the case for more joined up action across housing, health and social care.

Home is central to everyone's lives, but is particularly important for disabled and older people, as it is where they spend most of their time. Increasing numbers are living alone, especially in later life. Ability to get in and out of the home, move around inside, access the bathroom, receive friends, cook and go to bed has a significant effect on people's dignity, autonomy and wellbeing.

The majority of disabled people are living in ordinary housing but only 7% of homes in England have basic accessibility features such as downstairs toilets and level access. Three quarters of deaths relating to falls happen in the home, and falls represent 10-25% of ambulance call-outs to older adults. Once admitted in an emergency, older people use more bed days than other people (65%) and falls often precipitate a move into residential care.

The DFG is often seen as simply providing level access showers, stair lifts and ramps. This review proposes a fresh approach that is all-encompassing and creates a home environment that enables disabled people to live a full life. Districts and counties, housing and social care, occupational therapists and grants officers will need to work together to establish person-centred services that meet a disabled person's needs in a more preventative, holistic and timely way.

## How the DFG is used now

Government investment in the DFG has more than doubled over recent years. However, local authorities have reduced the amount of additional funding that they contribute. This has meant the number of homes being adapted has not significantly increased (although numbers for 2017/18 are not yet available).

Nearly two-thirds of DFG applications are for older people, just over a quarter for working age adults and a small but growing minority for disabled children and young people.







Nearly 60% of applications are made by owner-occupiers, not surprisingly as most older people own their own home. A third of applications are made by tenants of housing associations, with only 8% from private tenants, although the numbers of disabled tenants are now similar in each tenure. This highlights a clear disparity between the ability of disabled private and social tenants to adapt their home, a situation which is particularly acute in London. Adaptations for council house tenants are funded entirely separately, not through the DFG.



Nearly 9 out of every 10 applications relate to physical disabilities and 90% of adaptations provided are either level access showers, stair lifts or ramps. The average cost is around £9,000 but most work is under £5,000. This varies by region, with the highest costs in London and the lowest in the North East. Of the people who are assessed as needing an adaptation, around a third drop out along the way, usually due to financial reasons.



					
Showers	Straight stairlift	Curved stairlift	Ramp	Extn	Other
55%	15%	10%	10%	3%	7%
Average cost £4,755	£2,358	£4,495	£3,928	£31,939	N/A

## The challenges

The initial brief for this project, previous reports, and new evidence about the current situation collected as part of this review, identified several challenges with the DFG:

- The increase in central government resources has not yet resulted in more people being helped due to reduced financial input from local authorities, lack of revenue funding, more complex cases and higher cost of work.
- Fear of triggering demand that cannot be met means that there is still little analysis of local needs and minimal advertising of the DFG. This makes it very hard for people to find out about the help available, particularly home owners and private tenants.
- The delivery process is often slow and cumbersome, with numerous handovers.
- The complexity of the DFG delivery system makes it hard for other professionals to understand it and reduces opportunities for preventative action.
- Restrictive upper limits on the cost of work and lack of contributions from health and social care can sometimes result in solutions that are not effective.
- Too many people drop out of the process, often because they must contribute to the cost.
- There is tenure inequity with a high proportion of grants going to registered providers when disabled people are increasingly in the private rented sector. The council stock remains outside the DFG which makes strategic planning more difficult.
- Reporting on outcomes is hindered by the heterogeneity of cases, staff time constraints and lack of data sharing, and this makes it hard to argue for additional resources.
- The Better Care Fund (BCF) and Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB) could play a more strategic role but need to be focused on housing, not just on health and care outcomes.

- There has been a loss of information and advice services for people ineligible for the DFG.
- Changing expectations, new materials and advances in information technology mean the DFG needs to evolve if it is to remain relevant for the next decade and beyond.
- The challenge is to join up the process and shift the thinking from ‘welfare’ to ‘investment’ so that decisions are taken, not at crisis point, but in a more preventative way that is based on the long-term health and wellbeing of disabled people and their families.

## Joining it up - strategically

Up and down the country there are many dedicated professionals doing their best for disabled people but struggling with processes and systems that are not fit for purpose. One of the main problems is that responsibility for the customer pathway is often split between different organisations and departments that have separate objectives and budgets. Where services work best, there is a joint commitment at a senior and strategic level between housing and social care; districts and counties. We call this the “Goldilocks Approach” because it brings together the knowledge, skills and funding required to deliver a person-centred approach that is ‘just right’.

Previous reviews and guidance have suggested that this is the way forward, but across much of the country it has not happened. We recommend that Government make it a condition of funding that Housing and Health Partnership Boards are set up (linked to existing Health and Wellbeing Boards) with responsibility for the strategic oversight and planning to meet the housing needs of disabled and older people in their locality.

This should be underlined by a new name for the grant that is up to date and easily recognisable. Services need to appeal to people of all ages including: families with disabled children, younger disabled people and the ‘baby boom’ generation who do not want to be treated as ‘old’.

## Recommendations:

- A Housing and Health Partnership Board in each area as a requirement of DFG funding with representatives from housing, health and social care.
- Each Better Care Fund/Health & Wellbeing Board to report separately on DFG funding and on a new metric ‘the number of people helped to remain independent at home’.

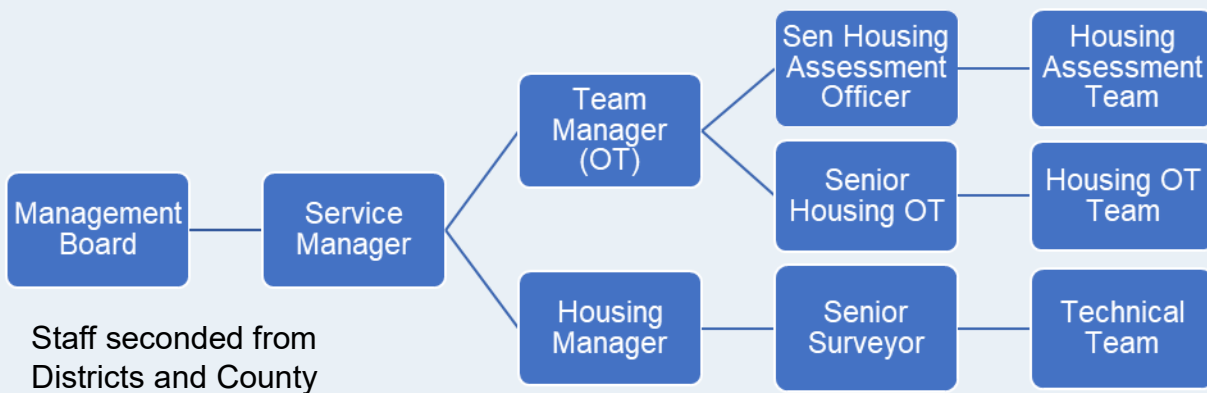
- Housing and Health Partnership Boards to have a similar structure to Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards.
- The DFG and Integrated Community Equipment (ICES) budgets to both be in the Better Care Fund (or its successor) to join up DFG services with equipment provision and minor adaptations.
- A single adaptations policy based on the needs of the locality, reviewed annually and signed off by the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- We need a new name for the grant, the services that provide it and the national advice organisation. That name needs to be used consistently across the country. Disabled and older people, and other professionals, need greater awareness that the grant is available.

### Joining it up - operationally

Existing DFG systems are usually a two-part process, starting with an assessment by social care services and then a grant application to housing. For customers this can mean a long and difficult journey involving delay and frustration.

#### HEART - The Home Environment Assessment & Response Team in Warwickshire

The new integrated service was originally set-up as a pilot in one of the districts, but it is now operating county-wide. Staff have been seconded from district and county authorities into two teams, one operating in the south and one in the north of the county, each with a similar structure.



The process is now 22 steps rather than 220, with the number dropping out reduced from 35% to just 3%. A single access point means enquiries and referrals come directly into the service and can be routed to staff with the right skills. Time from first enquiry to completion has reduced significantly and benchmarking shows faster completion times than comparable authorities.

There is a growing number of integrated teams that do things differently. They bring together occupational therapists and housing staff into a single team; they have one point of contact throughout the process and they provide equipment, minor adaptations, telecare, housing options and support to move as well as the major adaptations funded by the DFG.

It's not just about structures and systems, there's a need for better guidance on what provision is necessary and appropriate and a more collaborative approach to decision making. A set of guiding principles for assessment should be adopted.

Nine guiding principles for installing adaptations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need to retain (or restore) dignity</li><li>• Need to have values recognised</li><li>• Need for relief from pain, discomfort and danger</li><li>• Need to minimise barriers to independence</li><li>• Need for some element of choice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need for good communication as part of giving choice</li><li>• Need for light</li><li>• Needs of children: to provide for growth and change; need for space</li><li>• Needs of other family members and of the family as a whole</li></ul>

When you're working hard to meet the demand for adaptations it is difficult to commit time to redesigning how services are delivered. This requires transformation funding and using just 1% of the DFG budget will make a significant difference to help integrate services across the country.

### Recommendations:

- Integrated teams are essential in all areas to simplify and speed up customer journeys.
- Better analysis of local need to develop preventative strategies and determine levels of revenue and capital funding.
- Single point of access with 'good conversations' at the start and people routed down appropriate pathways.
- Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) policies have been developed in around half of local authorities and need to be adopted in all areas to provide more flexible use of the grant.

- New decision-making tools to help staff collaborate more effectively and use of 3D design and design centres to communicate better with customers.
- Better partnerships with health and care to ensure that ways of ‘Making Every Contact Count’ work more effectively so people are referred earlier, not at crisis point.
- Transformation funding equivalent to 1% of the DFG budget to enable change to happen across the country.

## Distribution Formula

With a growing national programme, it is important to have a distribution formula for DFG funding that is based on readily available data as well as being transparent, intuitive and fair. The current approach is based on a confusing mix of methodologies and historical allocations.

We suggest a new formula based on the number of people with a disability, income (from benefits data), tenure split (from MHCLG data) and regional building costs. Further sensitivity analysis is required to consider the impact across regions and all local authorities.

Adopting any objective formula will inevitably lead to ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ which could be mitigated by implementing the transition over a number of years.

### Recommendation:

- That a new allocation formula is established for the next Comprehensive Spending Review and applied incrementally over the implementation period.

## Updating the Regulations

### The means test

The existing means test is based on the eligibility test for Housing Benefit and was designed to target funding on ‘needy’ households. It has long been criticized for being complicated, unfair and, in recent years, out of date. There is an opportunity to adopt a version of the test used to assess entitlement for social care. There would be advantages in aligning the social care and DFG means tests, as having two different tests is extremely confusing. It would also address issues of unfairness in the present test by ignoring earned income and actual housing costs.

Aligning DFG and social care eligibility also creates the potential for spend on home adaptations to be considered as part of the proposed 'care cap'. This is the maximum amount someone must pay towards their care before a local authority takes responsibility. If it encouraged more people to invest in home adaptations and improve their independence, it would be good for the person's own health and wellbeing and it would potentially reduce domiciliary or residential care costs.

However, aligning the two tests is not straightforward. It could make it more complex, reduce the number who could be passported, and introduce local variation. The alternative option is to update the existing test by: re-establishing the link to Housing Benefit; a new formula for housing costs based on Local Housing Allowance; and updating the passporting benefits.

The option selected will largely depend upon the changes to social care finance in the 2018 Social Care Green Paper. Regardless of which test is used, there is a case for exempting applications for stair lifts and palliative care from means testing entirely due to the savings in health costs associated with preventing falls on stairs and by enabling end of life care at home.

### **The upper limit**

Most local authorities only deal with a handful of large and complex adaptations every year (where the cost of fully meeting the needs of the disabled person exceeds the current limit of £30,000). Though small in number, the time taken to support these cases and find the extra funding can be considerable.

We recommend that the current £30,000 limit be increased in line with inflation, but also recognise that the significant variation in building costs across the country should be factored in. The benefit of proper professional support in successfully delivering these difficult building projects should also be recognised.

But simply increasing the upper limit isn't enough. There will always be cases that cost more, but which will also deliver better outcomes and return on investment than the DFG alone could be expected to provide. It is crucial that health and social care recognise their responsibilities and jointly fund and develop the best solutions. There is also scope to use personal budgets to provide more tailored solutions.



There is also a need to rectify anomalies in VAT which is charged on ground floor extensions containing bedrooms and kitchens but not on bathrooms.

## Services and charges

The DFG is currently used to pay for adaptations to an existing home, often with little consideration about whether a move to a more suitable property would lead to a better outcome. Providing support with the expense of moving can be cost effective and should be included within the list of services and charges that the DFG can support.

## Recommendations:

- Subject to what is included in the Social Care Green Paper - the DFG means test aligned with that for social care eligibility, but if not, the existing test of resources updated.
- Stair lifts and palliative care cases removed from means testing entirely.
- That the maximum amount of the DFG is raised in line with inflation, with a regional weighting based on building costs and an amount for professional fees.
- That risk-share funds are set up to deal with uneven demand for grants, and that very expensive adaptations are jointly funded by housing, health and social care.
- That the VAT rules are revisited for major adaptations.
- That the guidance is fully revised to reflect new integrated services, the expectations for local authorities and the rights of the disabled person.
- That the Services and Charges Order list is updated to include support with moving.

## Developing a Market

As with most of the UK construction industry, the provision of home adaptations is fragmented and has low levels of standardisation. Schedules of rates and frameworks agreements are not used in most local authority areas despite being recommended in official guidance since 2006.

However, there are pockets of good practice that could be readily adopted more widely; including an online schedule of rates that provides instant costings from local builders, 'flat-pack' home

extension kits that cut construction times by months and stair lift recycling schemes that reduce costs and speed up installation. We need better adaptation designs that are not stigmatising.

There is potential to use the annual £0.5bn in the DFG to develop the wider market for consumers looking to adapt their home based on price benchmarking and developing common standards. For instance, by using a national accreditation scheme for builders similar to the Certified Ageing in Place Specialists that operates in North America.

## Consumer technology

Technology has always been part of the DFG, such as stair lifts and hoists. Other specialist 'assistive technology' has developed a reputation for failing to deliver on its promises, but with the rise in smart home technology there is a growing range of low cost solutions that are available on the high street.

Local authorities are starting to use kit like the Amazon Echo to help with medication reminders, remotely control lights and heating, and detect falls. This has clear potential to keep people independent and outside of social care systems. It also forms part of the UK Industrial Strategy to become a world leader in systems that support an ageing population. Making a smart home starter kit part of every DFG application would significantly drive adoption and generate evidence, data and learning in this area.

The majority of disabled people will not be eligible for a DFG or would prefer to organise work themselves, but it is hard for people to get reliable information on home adaptations from retail suppliers. There is an important role for local authorities and home improvement agencies to provide information, advice and low-cost handyperson services.

## Recommendations

- A further five-year funding programme for the DFG to improve certainty and enable local authorities to invest in better procurement.
- A national accreditation scheme for builders and tradespeople.
- A smart home starter kit as part of every DFG application.

- Local authorities and home improvement agencies to provide advice, information, and handyman services for people outside the DFG.
- Further research on what people do outside the DFG to encourage more ‘future-proofing’.

## Tenure Issues

In legislation the DFG is supposed to be tenure neutral. However, in practice, access to funding and the level of service someone receives are strongly affected by tenure. Private tenants are often denied adaptations by landlords who don’t want disabled equipment fitted into their property. Lack of security of tenure can also be a barrier.

For housing association tenants, it is not clear to what extent their landlord should take responsibility for adaptations which can often lead to permission being withheld or disagreements about funding. Council tenants have the right to apply for grant, but funding must come from the Housing Revenue Account rather than the DFG. This needs further review.

## Common Parts

When enacted, Section 36 of the Equality Act 2010 will enable disabled people to make requests for adaptations to the common parts of residential properties (such as entranceways, hallways and stairwells) which cannot be unreasonably denied.

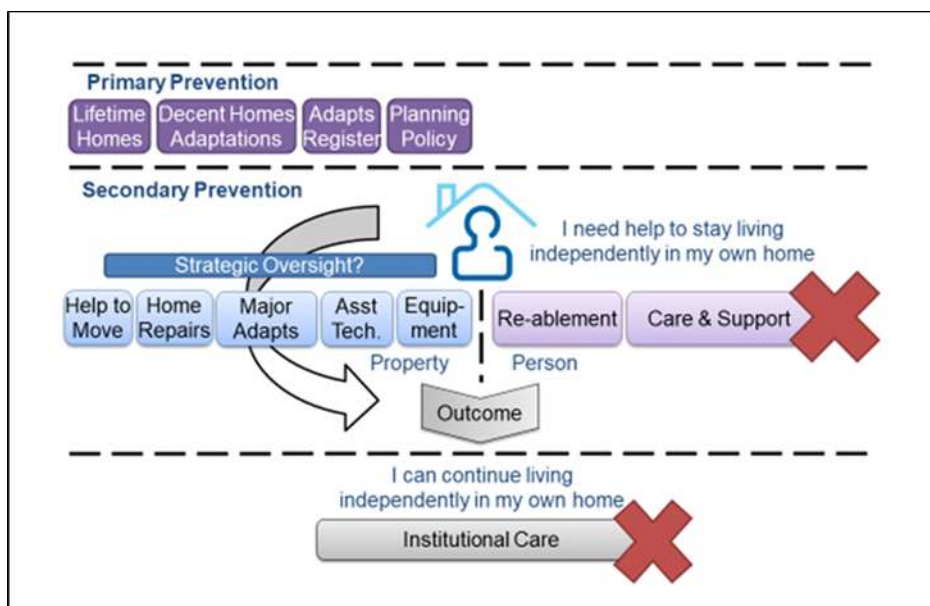
Very few DFGs are currently approved for adaptations to common parts which makes it difficult to predict the impact of Section 36. This means that a local strategic approach is likely to be more effective than relying on DFG applications.

## Recommendations:

- Further work is needed on tenure issues, including the feasibility of a national adaptations protocol for registered providers.
- More research is also needed on ways to engage with private sector landlords and deliver adaptations more effectively in the private rented stock.
- Works to common parts should be dealt with by the local Housing and Health Partnership Board rather than in a one-off piecemeal manner using the DFG.

## Measuring outcomes

The aim of adaptations is to restore the use of the home so that people can regain or retain their independence and carry on living in the community. The DFG is being used in more creative ways in partnership with health and care colleagues, for example, to improve the lighting for someone with a visual impairment, to redesign a bathroom for someone with dementia or make a home safe and warm for someone returning from hospital after a fall. Having an integrated team gives an opportunity to co-ordinate the response and better tailor it to the person's needs.



The challenge is to measure outcomes effectively to demonstrate the transformation that can occur in people's lives when they feel in control of their home environment. Robust research is beginning to show that adaptations improve physical and mental wellbeing and reduce the fear of falling. Better local and national data on outcomes is required to demonstrate the substantial savings in health and care costs that can be generated by improving the home.

## Recommendations:

- Use of NHS number on all files, data sharing protocols, aligned IT systems and improved local and national reporting.

**Forward Plan of Homes & Communities Committee Decisions from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**

This document records some of the items that will be submitted to the Homes & Communities Committee over the course of the next twelve months.

These committee meetings are open to the press and public.

Agenda papers for Homes & Communities Committee meetings are published on the Council's website 5 days before the meeting <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/agendas/>. Any items marked confidential or exempt will not be available for public inspection.

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Subject for Decision and Brief Description</b>	<b>Contact Officer Details</b>
10 June 2019	Attendance by Inspector Heather Sutton Police – Community Safety & Policing in District	<a href="mailto:ben.adams@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">ben.adams@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Update on Flood Defence Schemes	<a href="mailto:ben.adams@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">ben.adams@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Syrian Resettlement Update & Post 2020	<a href="mailto:leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Refresh of the District Wide Housing Need Study	<a href="mailto:rob.main@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">rob.main@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	CCTV Annual Update	<a href="mailto:ben.adams@newarksherwooddc.gov.uk">ben.adams@newarksherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Housing Allocations Scheme – Annual Review	<a href="mailto:leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Safeguarding – Annual Update	<a href="mailto:leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Better Care Fund (Disabled Facilities Grant) – Annual Update	<a href="mailto:alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Home Energy Conservation Report Bi-Annual Report	<a href="mailto:leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">leanne.monger@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:helen.richmond@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">helen.richmond@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Annual Affordable Housing Delivery and HRA 5 Year Build Programme – Update	<a href="mailto:rob.main@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">rob.main@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
10 June 2019	Reconstitution of Working Parties & Task & Finish Groups	<a href="mailto:helen.brandham@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">helen.brandham@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
16 September 2019	Update on Fire Safety Joint Working Agreement	<a href="mailto:sheridan.stock@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">sheridan.stock@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
25 November 2019	N&SH Annual Performance Review & Tenants Panel Report	<a href="mailto:rob.main@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">rob.main@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>