

Temporary Accommodation Action Plan

Action Plan 2021-2022

Our temporary accommodation (TA) is currently sourced from a range of providers, including those on a spot purchase basis. Previous arrangements with Mears Plexus as a registered provider, also ended this summer as they have exited the market. As a result, there is a significant reliance on tourist-based accommodation (B&B's, Hotels) which is not a suitable option for families with children, clients with complex and multiple needs or 16-17yr olds. The reliance on this sector of the market for temporary accommodation also means that we are subject to significant seasonal fluctuations in cost and availability. This year has been exceptionally challenging due to the increased demand for holiday accommodation.

The consequences of this increase in cost, lack of availability and increase in demand, have impacted on budgets, but also on the operational running of the Housing Options Team and welfare of those that we aim to assist. A full review of TA has therefore been undertaken resulting in this action plan.

Aim

To ensure that there is sufficient and suitable temporary accommodation provision in Torbay, that is cost effective and meets the needs of all.

To achieve this, there needs to be a model of delivery that has a change in emphasis away from an emergency response to one of support and homelessness prevention. The following plan outlines the actions specifically related to ensuring the model of temporary accommodation is sufficient. It does not replace the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. A review of this documents action plan will be completed by March 2022 so that it meets the current needs of Torbay and reflects the prevention activity that is codesigned with our partners.

Priority One – Developing a service that is focussed on preventing homelessness

Headline Action	Detailed Actions	Responsible Officer	Update/ Target Date
Maximise and improve access to Housing Options Service. Shifting emphasis for early prevention.	Review operational panels to ensure that membership and inter agency functionality is achieving the best outcome for clients.	Tara Harris Sharon O'Reilly	April 2022
	Recruit Partnership link Co-Ordinator – To act as a single point of contact for partners to facilitate access to Housing Options and therefore joint working and assistance for people.	Lianne Hancock	Post currently out to advert.
	Kick Start Placements – Additional capacity to assist with Devon Home Choice (DHC) and act as development opportunity for housing apprentice. Enabling better access allowing informed decision to be made by clients.	Nick Holland	Applications currently being submitted - Start December 2021
	Introduction of a 24/7 digital service improving the way in which Members of the Public can access the Housing Option Service.	Lianne Hancock	Locata portal being developed April 2022
	Introduction of a 24/7 digital service improving the way in which Professionals can access the Housing Option Service and make referrals for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Lianne Hancock	April 2022
Establish an active and co-ordinated Homelessness Prevention Network	Creation of Prevention Officer to work across all agencies, especially the voluntary sector to develop and implement a homeless prevention network.	Lianne Hancock	Post currently out to advert. Start date Nov 2021

across Torbay that has easy access to Housing Options	Codesign prevention network and utilise funding steam to assist voluntary sector in establishing the infrastructure required.	Prevention Officer	Nov 20 – April 21
Specialist support to assist those fleeing domestic abuse	Specialised Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDVA) to be embedded in Housing Options to assess applications and assist with accommodation, support, and move on.	Shirley Beauchamp	November 2021
Focused support across Housing Options and Children’s Service’s to ensure that families and 16/17yrs are supported in an integrated way.	Housing Options Officer embed in Children’s Services dedicated to working with families that cut across services to enable a holistic approach to be undertaken and a coordinated action plan for delivery.	Lianne Hancock Sean Evans	Completed
	Develop a robust system to collect, share and monitor your local data on homeless 16/17s and care leavers together across both Housing and Children Services, to ensure accurate recording and understanding of volume to inform service provision and planning.	Sean Evans Lianne Hancock	February 2022
	Ensure the website references homelessness information across Housing, Children, Early Help and Leaving Care Services including easily accessible information and practical ways for young people and families to access information on homelessness support.	Sean Evans Lianne Hancock	February 2022

	Consult with young people who have experienced homelessness, including those who have slept rough, or have been supported during Covid-19, to identify service gaps and future earlier intervention opportunities.	Sean Evans	March 2022
	Build upon our approach to develop a pathway for young people leaving custody and map the service against a good practice framework. St Basils have developed a Youth Justice Pathway which specifically focuses on innovation re: prevention, accommodation, and support for young people.	John Ralph	March 2022
Financial assistance to enable people to self-help and prevent homelessness	Use of Welfare Support, Discretionary Housing Support and Housing Options Fund to prevent loss of tenancy. Ensuring services are promoted and accessible. Review of provision to ensure accurate recording and understanding of volume to inform service provision and planning.	Alison Whittaker Lianne Hancock	Completed – Review ongoing.

Priority 2: Access to appropriate temporary accommodation that meets the needs of residents

Headline Action	Detailed Actions	Responsible Officer	Update/ Target Date
Access to suitable TA meets the needs of clients	Undertake TA needs assessments including understanding of specialist accommodation.	Tara Harris	Completed
	That sufficient stable interim TA is in place to meet demand. That is cost effective and allows the service to stabilise and reduce the impact on individuals wellbeing reducing the need for out of area placements.	Tara Harris Lianne Hancock	Completed
	Undertake a review of benefit subsidies to inform procurement process enabling the most cost effective model of delivery to be undertaken.	Tara Harris Alison Whittaker	December 2020
	Develop and implement procurement strategy.	Tara Harris Jude Pinder Lianne Hancock	Timetable in place and on track for implementation April 2022
	Review of TA provided for 16-17yrs and implement sufficient accommodation so that B&B accommodation is never used.	Sean Evans Tina Tozer	April 2022
	Develop supported accommodation model for specialist TA placements.	Tara Harris Adam Russel	April 2022

	Review of hostel provision and level of complexity that is being managed by the service.	Tara Harris	January 2022
	7 additional properties in place to support those feeling domestic abuse.	Shirley Beauchamp	Completed – go live Nov 21
	Consult with those that access TA to identify service gaps and future earlier intervention opportunities.	Lisa Russel	April 2022
	Implement Night Stop model in Torbay to provide short term emergency accommodation options for 16-25yrs	Tina Tozer Sean Evans	Host families currently being sought
Reduce the time that is spent in TA	Resettlement workers to work with households in TA to ensure they have registered on DHC, carry out searches and arrange viewings for properties, income maximisation and ensuring support needs are identified and met.	Lisa Russel	In place and funding secured for 22/23
	Increase resources in Housing Options to enable effective case management and that timely and appropriate decisions are made.	Lianne Hancock	In place and funding secured for 22/23

Priority 3: Affordable homes and support is in place to enable move on from temporary accommodation

Headline Action	Detailed Actions	Responsible Officer	Target Date
Improve the access to affordable accommodation	Research HRA rates against local rents to establish evidence base to influence payments. Lobby VOA and Government to increase LHA to address affordability of accommodation.	Tara Harris	January 2022
	Work with RP's in Torbay to undertake an underoccupancy assessment to improve access to family homes through Devon Home Choice and develop a strategy to release this capacity.	Tara Harris Strategic Housing Board Partners	April 2022
	Review Housing First sustainability	Tara Harris	February 2022
	Consider Housing + model (Accommodation and support that bridges the gap between those in in need of social due to vulnerability but are assessed as not having a care act requirement but may require some level of social support to maintain independent living). Undertake a cost benefit assessment of where low level housing plus type of intervention may result in higher systemic cost saving compared to if we do not intervene.	Tara Harris Adam Russel	TBC
	Develop a strategic action with the Housing Board to improve the amount of affordable Housing in Torbay.	Kevin Mowat Joanne Williams	TBC
	Improve relationship with the private rented sector (PRS) to increase accessibility to accommodation. Facilitated through PRS officer.	Lianne Hancock	Ongoing

	Maximise all funding opportunities to build upon Next Steps Accommodation model for those that are or are at risk of rough sleeping. Increase number of units of accommodation from 14 to 24 by September 2022.	Tara Harris	Funding obtained for additional 2 units. September 2022
	Produce an Empty Homes Strategy and action plan	Tara Harris David Edmondson	April 2022
Problem Solving to improve accessibility to accommodation options for those feeling DA	Formation of DA operational partnership – comprising of housing, legal and financial assistance to navigate pathways and complex issues.	Shirley Beauchamp	April 2022