

## **Westminster City Council Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 24 Action Plan**

*Year 1: Until – March 2020, Year 2: April 2020 – March 2021, Year 3: April 2021 – March 22, Year 4: April 2022 – March 2023, Year 5: April 2023 – March 24*

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Further detail</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Others involved</b>
<b>1. Reach more people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage, by building a network of prevention and support, working with partners and communities</b>						
1.1	Co-produce a 'Homelessness Prevention Charter'	Complete Charter	Year 3	Spring 2021	Homelessness Partnership Board	Range of stakeholders
1.2	Implement a rolling programme of training and awareness raising	Community lead to build up contacts and identify opportunities	Year 2	Summer 2020	WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service	Range of stakeholders, i.e. community, faith and voluntary groups and registered providers
		Develop training plan	Year 2	Autumn 2020	As above	
		Start training and set annual training targets	Year 3 & Ongoing	Ongoing	WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service	
1.3	Recruit Community Champions and train them to offer support and information to residents	Investigate funding opportunities and expanding the council's health focused Community Champions Scheme	Year 1	Spring 2020	WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service/Public Health	Community Champions currently in post
1.4	Continue to develop referral routes to housing services, for those working with people at risk of homelessness	Investigate providing Housing advice from GP surgeries	Year 1	Winter 2019	Housing Solutions Service (Shelter)	Public Health
		Review all referral routes	Year 3	Spring 2021	WCC Housing Team	Range of stakeholders

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<b>2. Make our services more visible through targeted information campaigns</b>						
2.1	<i>Use a range of channels of communication to increase the visibility of our services</i>	<i>Start poster and leaflet campaign</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>WCC Communications and Engagement Team</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service</i>
		<i>Improve housing information on the website</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Summer 2020</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team/Communications and Engagement Team</i>	
		<i>Publicise success stories</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Communications and Engagement Team</i>	
<b>3. Proactively offer personalised support to those at risk of homelessness where possible, from helping them negotiate with their landlord to offering employment and skills training so they can increase their income</b>						
3.1	<i>Use data to introduce new ways of flagging those at risk of homelessness</i>	<i>Pilot approach using Council Tax data</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service</i>	<i>WCC Strategy &amp; Intelligence Team</i>
		<i>Evaluate results of Pilot</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Autumn 2020</i>	<i>As above</i>	
3.2	<i>Look for ways to continue and grow the early intervention approach</i>	<i>Review how the learning from the Trailblazer Early Intervention Service can be embedded into service provision</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Spring 2021</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service</i>
<b>4. Do more to identify and address the main causes of homelessness in Westminster and also the wider causes, through research and outreach</b>						
4.1	<i>Address homelessness from the social sector:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Research overcrowded families living in our council housing, to better understand them and their needs</i></li> </ul>	<i>Run estate based pilot and consider the results before rolling out more widely</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Winter 2020</i>	<i>WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service</i>	<i>Overcrowded families/ Strategy and Intelligence Team</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use communication channels to help grown-up family members living in overcrowded council housing understand the housing options available to them</li> </ul>	As above	As above	As above	WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service	WCC Communications and Engagement Team
4.2	<p>Address homelessness from the private rented sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early alert pilot with landlords or lettings agents to help identify tenants at risk. Ensure they know about employment support for tenants</li> <li>Continue to use our powers to intervene when tenants are threatened with unlawful or retaliatory eviction</li> </ul>	<p>Pilot to start</p> <p>Take legal action where necessary/Serve Improvement Notices</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Spring 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Solutions Service (Shelter)</p> <p>WCC Environmental Health Team</p>	<p>Private landlords/lettings agents/private tenants</p>

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4.3	<p>Address homelessness due to relationship breakdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand if there is role for the council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training for housing staff on Reducing Parental Conflict</li> <li>Complete or commission research</li> </ul>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 2</p>	<p>Winter 2019/20</p> <p>Autumn 2020</p>	<p>WCC Children's Services</p> <p>WCC Housing Team</p>	<p>Housing Solutions Service/Early Intervention Trailblazer Service</p> <p>WCC Strategy and Intelligence Team/WCC Children's Services</p>
4.4	<p>Address the wider causes of homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot with MyBnk, providing training to 18-25 year olds, at risk of homelessness</li> <li>Run awareness sessions about preventing homelessness in schools and youth centres</li> <li>Look at ways to better support residents to manage their finances and raise their incomes</li> </ul>	<p>Complete Pilot</p> <p>Evaluate pilot and make recommendations</p> <p>Start sessions</p> <p>Pilot any new approaches on one or two estates</p> <p>Seek resources for a service for people with low level mental health problems</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>Year 4</p> <p>Year 2 &amp; Ongoing</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Winter 2021</p> <p>Spring 2022</p> <p>Autumn 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service/ WCC Housing Team</p> <p>Housing Solutions Service (Shelter)</p> <p>WCC Economy and &amp; Regeneration Team/WCC Housing Team</p> <p>WCC Housing Team</p>	<p>MyBnk/Young people at risk Children's Services/ WCC Strategy &amp; Intelligence Team</p> <p>Westminster Youth Council/WCC Children's Services</p> <p>WCC Policy and projects</p> <p>WCC Public Health/Mental Health Partnership</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure awareness of employment support</li> </ul>	Let social landlords know about employment support for tenants and ensure employment coaches can identify and refer those at risk of homelessness	Year 1	Ongoing	WCC Housing Team/Economy Team	Westminster Housing Association Chief Executives Forum
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Personal Housing Plans</li> </ul>	Ensure they address the wider causes of homelessness, where appropriate	Year 1	Spring 2020	WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service	WCC Children's Services/Adult Social Care and Public Health/ Welfare Reform Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support vulnerable households moving onto Universal Credit</li> </ul>	Work with DWP to understand their timetable and package of support and ensure everyone across the council is aware of it	To coincide with rollout	To coincide with rollout	WCC Policy and Projects Team/Benefits Policy Team	
<b>5. Make our housing services more transparent, accountable and accessible</b>						
5.1	Set up a Homelessness Partnership Board	Establish Board	Year 2 and Ongoing	Summer 2020 & Ongoing	WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service	Range of stakeholders including homeless households
5.2	Improve our homelessness service by seeking the views of service users and stakeholders	Establish Service Improvement Group and run quarterly meetings	Year 1	Summer 2019 & Ongoing	WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service	Service users/ Other boroughs
		Develop service user 'Expert Panel' to be the point of contact for key changes	Year 2	Summer 2020	As above	Service users

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		<i>Commission agency to conduct Mystery Shopping and seek opportunities for cross borough working</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service (Shelter)</i>	
		<i>Incorporate exit interviews</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Winter 2023</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service</i>	<i>Service users</i>
5.3	<p><i>Become more person centred by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Becoming Accredited by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance</i></li> <li><i>Applying the learning from the Making Every Adult Matter pilot and rolling it out</i></li> <li><i>Train front line housing staff on trauma informed working</i></li> <li><i>Train front line housing staff on</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Accreditation achieved</i></p> <p><i>Complete Pilot Evaluate learning</i></p> <p><i>Complete training</i></p> <p><i>Complete training</i></p>	<p><i>Year 2</i></p> <p><i>Year 2</i></p> <p><i>Year 2</i></p> <p><i>Year 2</i></p>	<p><i>Summer 2020</i></p> <p><i>Winter 2021</i></p> <p><i>Spring 2020</i></p> <p><i>Spring 2020</i></p>	<p><i>Housing Solutions Service</i></p> <p><i>WCC Children’s Services/Housing Team</i></p> <p><i>WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service</i></p> <p><i>WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service</i></p>	<p><i>Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance</i></p> <p><i>Housing Solutions Service</i></p> <p><i>WCC Public Health</i></p> <p><i>WCC Public Health</i></p>

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	<p><i>Making Every Contact Count</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Look at ways to improve our response when households have mental health problems</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Raise awareness of OneYou website which gives information about services</i></p> <p><i>Investigate Mental Health First Aid training for housing staff</i></p>	<p><i>Year 1</i></p> <p><i>Year 1</i></p>	<p><i>Autumn 2019</i></p> <p><i>Winter 2019</i></p>	<p><i>As above</i></p> <p><i>WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service</i></p>	<p><i>As above</i></p> <p><i>WCC Mental Health Partnership/ WCC Public Health</i></p>
5.4	<i>Improve digital access to the Housing Solutions Service</i>	<i>Complete review of current service and involve service users</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Summer 2020</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service/ Customer and Digital Standards Board/service users</i>
<b>6. Better communicate what we can and can't offer</b>						
6.1	<i>Communications campaign about our services and what people can expect from them</i>	<p><i>Develop a Communications Plan, test with service users</i></p> <p><i>Roll out to start</i></p>	<p><i>Year 1</i></p> <p><i>Year 2 and Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>Winter 2019/20</i></p> <p><i>Spring 2020</i></p>	<i>WCC Communications and Engagement Team</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team/ Housing Solutions Service</i>
<b>7. Ensure a range of accommodation is available for the homeless households that we have a housing duty towards, when homelessness cannot be prevented</b>						
7.1	<i>Set new affordable housing target when needed and ensure intermediate housing is affordable to a range of households</i>	<p><i>Review past delivery and set new target (current target expires in 2023)</i></p> <p><i>Set affordability thresholds in the Supplementary Planning</i></p>	<p><i>Years 4 &amp; 5</i></p> <p><i>Year 2</i></p>	<p><i>Spring 2023</i></p> <p><i>Winter 2020</i></p>	<p><i>WCC Development Team</i></p> <p><i>WCC Policy and Projects Team</i></p>	<p><i>Registered providers</i></p> <p><i>WCC Housing Team</i></p>

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	<i>Review the Allocation Scheme</i>	<i>Document for the City Plan 2019 – 40</i>  <i>Consider support to under occupiers and how the scheme works for all households in need</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>To start Winter 2019/20</i>	<i>WCC Policy and Projects Team</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service/Children’s and Adult Services</i>
7.2	<i>Ensure sufficient private rented housing for homeless households and look for innovative ways to increase supply</i>	<i>Update annual Action Plan</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service</i>
		<i>Develop Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan, firstly piloting new initiatives</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Summer 2020</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service</i>
7.3	<i>Increase settled private rented accommodation</i>	<i>Review targets as part of Homelessness Delivery Plan</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>March 2020</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service</i>
	<i>Explain why these private rented sector offers are generally outside of Westminster</i>	<i>Part of campaign in 6.1</i>	<i>Year 2 and ongoing</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>WCC Communications and Engagement Team</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team/Housing Solutions Service</i>
	<i>Look at ways to give customers more choice over the location of these offers</i>	<i>Work with temporary accommodation households to understand their needs</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Spring 2021</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service (RMG)</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>
		<i>Establish website to market available properties</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service (RMG)</i>	



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		<i>Investigate recruiting Community Connectors to help people settle, using a 'peer mentoring model' with households that have successfully moved to other areas</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service (Shelter)</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team/ former homeless households</i>
<b>8. Review how people access supported housing and ensure our supported housing meets needs, now, and in the future</b>						
<i>8.1</i>	<i>Develop an on line referral system</i>	<i>Procure system</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Winter 2019</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>WCC IT Team</i>
		<i>New system goes live</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>		
<i>8.2</i>	<i>Work with specialist providers to ensure dedicated support for survivors of domestic abuse</i>	<i>Re-procure refuges</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Winter 2019</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Refuge</i>
<i>8.3</i>	<i>Review the needs of young people to ensure suitable accommodation for different needs</i>	<i>Complete needs analysis and re-procure services where appropriate</i>	<i>Years 1 – 2</i>	<i>Spring 2020 - 21</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>WCC Children's Services/ Young adults/homelessness sector</i>
		<i>New services to begin</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Spring 2021</i>		
<i>8.4</i>	<i>Review sheltered housing commissioned from registered providers</i>	<i>Complete review</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Spring 2020</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Registered providers/ WCC Adult Social Care</i>
<i>8.5</i>	<i>Re-procure offender services, considering how we can better meet the needs of young offenders and reduce reoffending</i>	<i>Complete re-procurement and new contract to start Contract start</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Summer 2020</i>	<i>WCC Housing Team</i>	<i>Housing Solutions Service Homelessness sector</i>

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<b>9. Become a leader in the field of homelessness prevention proposing solutions and bringing key decision makers together to share information and ideas</b>						
9.1	<i>Share the learning from the Early Intervention Trailblazer Service with Government, other councils etc and encourage them to share best practice with us</i>	<i>Hold workshop</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Autumn 2020</i>	<i>WCC Early Intervention Trailblazer Service</i>	<i>London boroughs  Groups working with homeless households</i>
9.2	<i>Review the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan to ensure they are up to date and still relevant</i>	<i>After one year of implementation</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Spring 2021</i>	<i>WCC Policy and Projects Team/Housing Team</i>	
<b>10. Make the case for homelessness services and prevention work to be fully funded, by leading the discussion with Government and others on how the welfare system can work better for low income residents in central London, while also utilising every other funding source available to us</b>						
10.1	<i>Highlight problems with the existing benefits system and proposing solutions to Government where appropriate</i>	<i>Use a range of methods such as consultation responses, briefings for Ministers and letters</i>	<i>Year 1 &amp; Ongoing</i>	<i>Autumn 2019 &amp; Ongoing</i>	<i>WCC Policy and Projects Team</i>	<i>Lead members  WCC Welfare Reform Group</i>
10.2	<i>Cultivate a positive, constructive and wide-ranging conversation with the Treasury on how we finance local government and come up with a sustainable model</i>	<i>As above</i>	<i>Year 1 &amp; Ongoing</i>	<i>Autumn 2019 &amp; Ongoing</i>	<i>WCC Policy and Projects Team</i>	<i>Lead members</i>

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10.3	<i>Look for all opportunities to seek external funding for homelessness projects</i>	<i>Utilise all opportunities</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>WCC Housing/Economy and Regeneration Teams</i>	<i>WCC Policy and Projects Team</i>