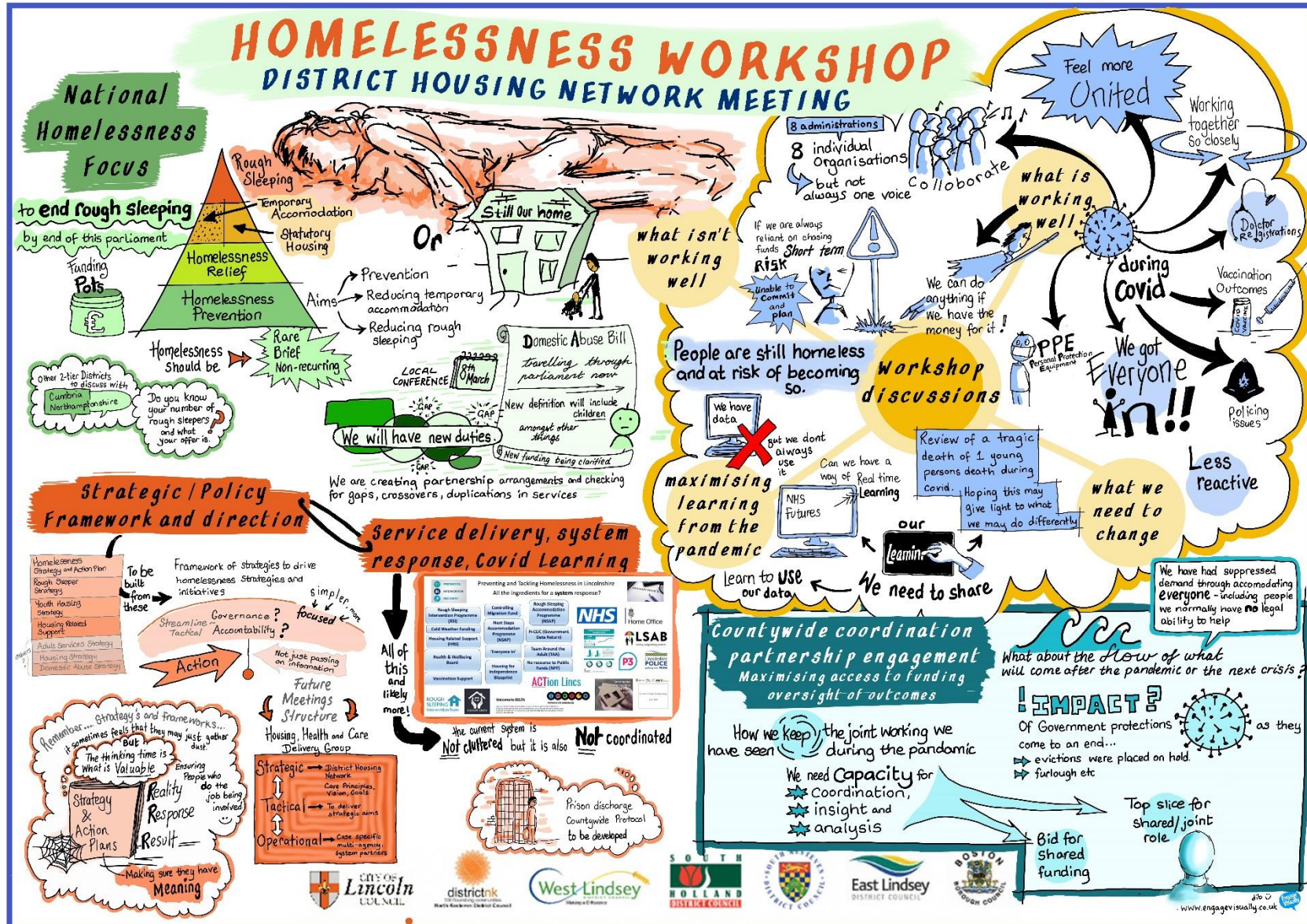


Review of the Lincolnshire Homeless Strategy 2017-2021



Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all Local Authorities carry out a review of homelessness in their areas, formulate and publish a strategy based on the findings of this review, keep this strategy under review and consult with other local or public authorities and voluntary organisations before modifying or adopting a strategy.

Under section 2(1) of the 2002 Homelessness Act a homelessness review means a review by the local housing authority of:

- a) The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in their district;
- b) The activities which are carried out for any of the following purposes (or which contribute to achieving any of them):
 - i) Preventing homelessness in the housing authority's district;
 - ii) Securing accommodation that is or will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless; and
 - iii) Providing support for people in the district: – who are or may become homeless; or – who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- c) The resources available to the housing authority, the social services authority for the district, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for the activities outlined in (b) above.

The Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy published in November 2017 is a joint strategy across the seven councils (Boston, East Lindsey, Lincoln, North Kesteven, South Holland, South Kesteven and West Lindsey.) By having a joint strategy, we could work in partnership to achieve our priorities and pool resources for Countywide projects.

This Homelessness Strategy Review provides a snapshot of the people who have approached us for help during the lifespan of the Strategy. It considers what we have achieved, the pathways and partnerships that we have in place and feedback from our stakeholders. This will inform our priorities and objectives for the new Homelessness Strategy.

We can evidence progress statistically using H-CLiC return data, but we also have qualitative data that was collated through a stakeholder survey. In partnership a lot has been achieved over the last 5 years including:

- The Countywide introduction of the Duty to Refer including the production of the Lincolnshire Prison protocol.

- The response to Covid-19 Everyone In and Protect and Vaccinate Government initiatives to ensure Rough Sleepers were protected across the County, a total of 215 individuals were accommodated and 78 facilitated to receive vaccinations.
- A decrease in Rough Sleeping by over 50% over the last 2 years.
- A successful bid for Government funding for 3 Rough Sleeper Initiative Projects that are working well across the County.
- Implemented the Housing Reduction Act preventing over 10,000 households becoming homeless over the last 5 years across the County.
- Delivered the ACTion Lincs project to provide long term life changing support for an identified group of vulnerable and complex need rough sleepers, across the county using Housing First principles.

National picture

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) places new duties on local authorities to help prevent and relieve homelessness. It is designed to provide support for anyone threatened with homelessness.

Key measures include:

- **Extending the period** during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days.
- **A new duty to prevent homelessness** for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.
- **A new duty to relieve homelessness** for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice.
- **A new duty on public services to notify** a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Everyone In initiative prompted by the pandemic accommodated over 37,000 individuals experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping between March 2020 and January 2021. This early response is calculated to have prevented substantial numbers of COVID-19 infections, hospitalisations, and deaths among the target cohort. Substantial reductions in rough sleeping of 37% and radically reduced reliance on the use of night shelters were also achieved as a result. The pandemic response also improved joint working between the homelessness and health sectors.

The Protect and Vaccinate initiative prompted by the Plan B restrictions gave £24.9m to support all local authorities across England to find appropriate accommodation for people sleeping rough and boosting vaccination rates across this vulnerable population. A further £3.2m was

made available to encourage the uptake of vaccination amongst people sleeping rough and others at risk in the single homeless cohort. The numbers that were accommodated and vaccinated across the County can be seen below.

Pathways and Partnerships

Working in partnership as 7 Councils along with Lincolnshire County Council, Housing Providers, Probation service, Voluntary sector and health professionals, has allowed the prevention of homelessness, provision of accommodation and support for those sleeping rough or at risk of becoming homeless as well as support to sustain tenancies to be achieved across the county.

Voluntary and Community Sector

The voluntary sector plays a vital role in supporting Rough Sleepers across the County as well as supporting those that could be at risk of homelessness through the provision of support, accommodation, day centers, food and clothing provisions, showers and food banks. In severe weather the sector provides accommodation and provisions, to ensure rough sleepers are not at risk of harm during the hottest and coldest days.

Many charitable organisations across the County provide specific support for those experiencing a crisis or mental health issue that could be related to their housing situation, or could lead to them being threatened with homelessness. The district councils work closely with the sector to refer individuals to access support and respond to those signposted to them for advice on their housing situation.

Housing Related Support

Housing Related Support is commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council and delivered by the Lincolnshire Housing Related Support Partnership led by Framework Housing.

Lincolnshire Housing Related Support Partnership deliver short term Housing Related Support interventions to vulnerable people who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness with the aim of improving their health and wellbeing and enabling them to sustain their own tenancy and live independently.

The service is targeted at the most vulnerable and eligibility is assessed through a triage form with a minimum threshold to access support. The triage form includes questions regarding physical health, mental health, risk to self and others, substance misuse and support network.

Support is tailored to individual needs and delivered by either floating support or accommodation-based support depending on the service user's housing circumstances and needs. The accommodation for accommodation-based support is supplied by the provider and includes self-contained units in hostel accommodation and dispersed 2 and 3 bed houses.

Only District council Housing Teams can make referrals to Housing Related Support. Other agencies wishing to refer an individual to Housing Related Support must notify the relevant District Council Housing team that they are aware of someone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness (this may be part of their duty to refer) and the Housing Team will refer to HRS as appropriate.

The Operational Effectiveness Operational Group meets regularly to review capacity, voids, referrals, share information and to discuss issues to ensure the service can respond effectively to service users needs.

Rough Sleepers Initiatives (RSI's)

There are 3 Rough Sleeping Initiatives covering all of Lincolnshire mainly funded by Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), working to relieve and prevent rough sleeping. One RSI covers Lincoln, the second East Lindsey and Boston and the third Change 4 Lincs covers West Lindsey, South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland hosted by South Kesteven. All have a designated team that works closely with their areas district council but also across the county as often rough sleeper migrate to other districts.

The service targets those not in priority need that would not have qualified for assistance before the introduction of the Initiative. The aim is to identify and help new and existing rough sleepers to get off the streets, or out of unsuitable accommodation as soon as possible, alongside helping longer-term rough sleepers by providing a chance to escape homelessness.

Outreach services provide help and advice to those who are rough sleeping and homeless and to those who may be at risk of becoming homeless through:

- Referrals to partner agencies or support groups
- Providing details of faith groups and charities
- Help completing housing applications
- Help and advice to find accommodation
- Wellbeing and physical health support
- Help to prevent you becoming homeless
- Assistance in finding private rented accommodation

Through the creation of person centred holistic support plans to address barriers and build skills individuals can work towards independent living.

Care Leavers and Young People

Under a contract agreement Nacro Lincolnshire provide supported accommodation that can be accessed by homeless young people aged 16-17 and for care leaver up to 21 years. The service supports around 70 young people at any one time helping to prevent homelessness, and supporting the councils with more complex care leaver cases. They offer long term support to young people who the district councils may struggle to support and to aid a smooth transition into accommodation..

Youth Homelessness and Care Leavers protocol sets out the working arrangements for Nacro, the district councils and Children's Services to support young people and care leavers who are in need of advice and assistance. The aim to support these young people to live semi-independently.

Prison Leavers

The Lincolnshire Prison Release Protocol is an agreement between all Lincolnshire Housing Authorities, the prison and probation service. The aims of the protocol are to contribute towards the Government's aims of ensuring that at least 90% of people are in accommodation upon release from prison and that at least 80% of people are in settled accommodation either three months after their release or upon receipt of a community sentence. Through our Duty to Refer prison leavers with no secured accommodation at the time of release are referred to enable a personal housing plan, to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Domestic Abuse

In partnership with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) support and accommodation is available for all those impacted by Domestic Abuse. Refuge accommodation and dispersed units are available for those fleeing domestic abuse. Providing refuge accommodation has recently become statutory responsibility with attached funding, however, this provision has been available in Lincolnshire for many years. The dispersed units can be accessed by males experience domestic abuse and also those with larger families/families with older male children who could not previously be supported by the refuge accommodation.

Vulnerable Adults

Multi-agency panels and neighbourhood teams have been established across each district to enable a joint approach to addressing the needs

and risks of vulnerable and or complex individuals that have led to their homelessness or risk of homelessness. Where they are unable to remain in their homes and who are at risk of homelessness, the panel/team consider housing options in conjunction with identifying and managing risks.

The Panels/teams are represented by a range of service providers including housing providers, mental health, substance misuse, prison, Fire and Rescue service, housing benefit, Lincs Police and Adult Care. The model has been successfully providing more holistic and sustainable housing solutions for vulnerable customers.

Team Around the Adult (TAA)

The Team Around the Adult pilot launched in February 2021 will support the approach offered through the Vulnerable adults panel and neighborhood teams and work with the particularly complex cases. Usually this is where a more creative approach is required to reach out to people in the community and 'go to them', particularly if they do not wish to engage with services.

The TAA process is overseen by an appointed coordinator, it will involve the appointment of a Lead Professional who will usually be the key worker, to engage with the individual, promote multi-agency working and utilise a shared IT system.

By having a creative multi agency approach towards working with complex cases, the aim is to achieve change where more traditional engagement and intervention methods have not been as successful as anticipated, or change may not have been maintained.

Non-commissioned accommodation

Each Council needs to have access to a number of accommodation options to utilise for those that are eligible. Partnerships have been created to enable all Councils to have their own temporary accommodation either through homeless units owned by the council or a contracted provider.

Move-on accommodation can also be accessed through Framework and its contracted providers. Private landlords also play a vital role in facilitating access to accommodation and Private Sector Leasing is used to supplement the supply of temporary and move on accommodation.

Government funded schemes such as Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme and Next Steps Accommodation, has provided the ability to increase the provision of temporary accommodation across the County, reducing the need for B&B use. However B&B's are still used regularly as the need for suitable accommodation outweighs the supply.

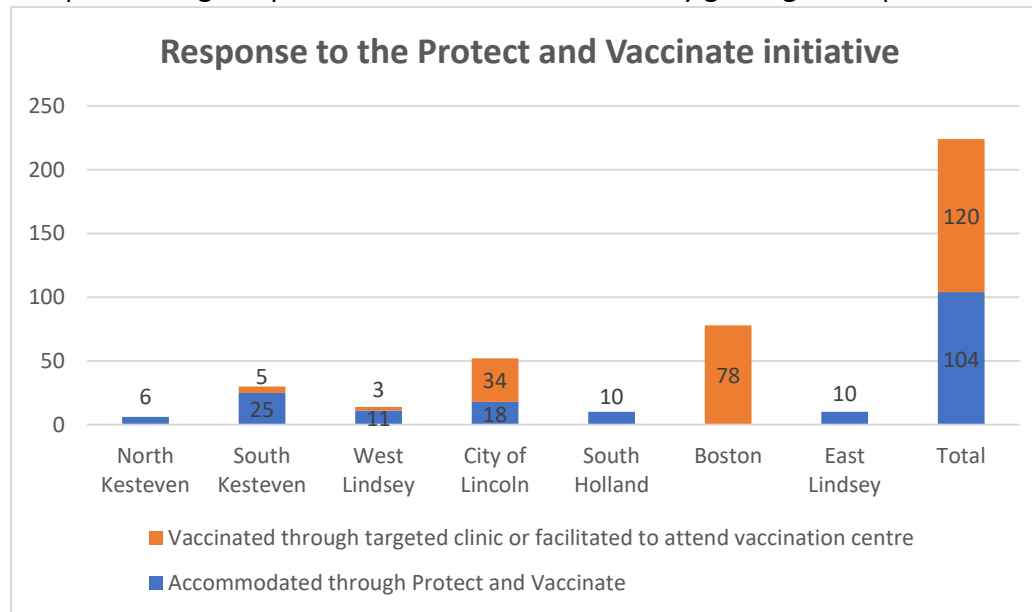
There are hostels in Lincoln, Boston and Mablethorpe providing provision and services for rough sleepers and other charitable organisations that offer accommodation for specific groups.

Drug and Alcohol Substance Misuse Service

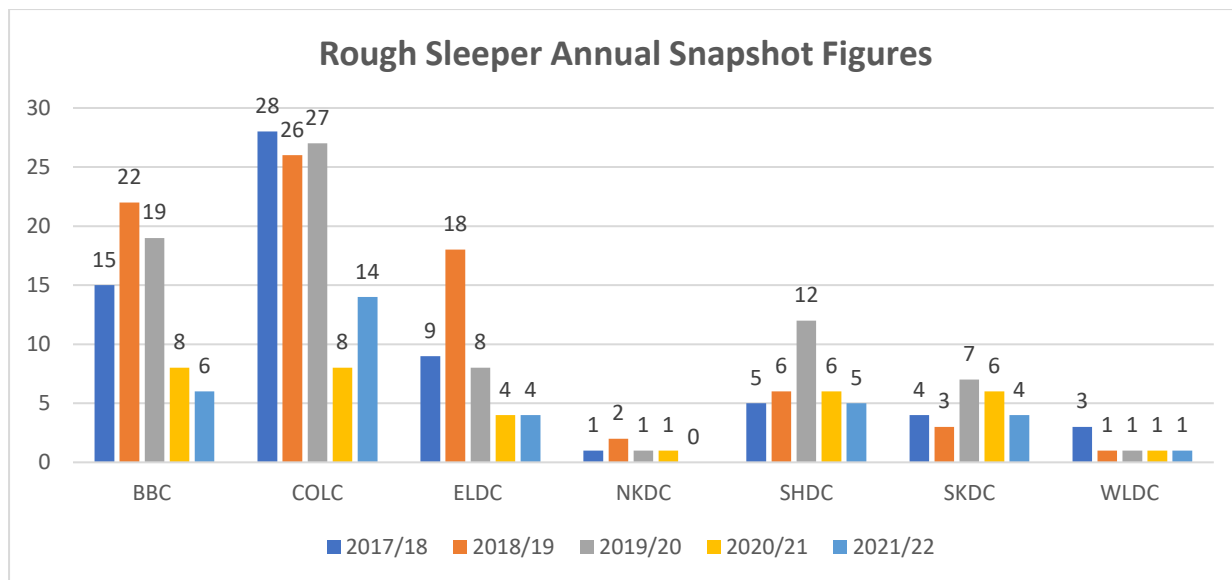
LCC a drug and alcohol substance misuse service and it is widely known that many rough sleepers are substance users. A successful bid has been awarded for the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol Grant (RSDATG), this is funded by DLUHC the same as the other RSI initiatives but enables us to place specialist substance misuse and peer support workers with outreach teams and in housing support services. The investment is until March 2024 and provides a total of 13 additional workers across Lincoln, East Lindsey and Boston. The initiative also provides a wraparound worker at HMP Lincolns departure lounge

County snapshot of Statistics

The figures reflect the changes seen in the last 5 years which the introduction of the prevention duty and initiatives to accommodate Rough Sleepers. The numbers of Rough Sleepers have reduced by over 50% over the last 2 years showing the success of engaging with those Rough Sleepers during the pandemic which has led to many gaining more permanent accommodation.



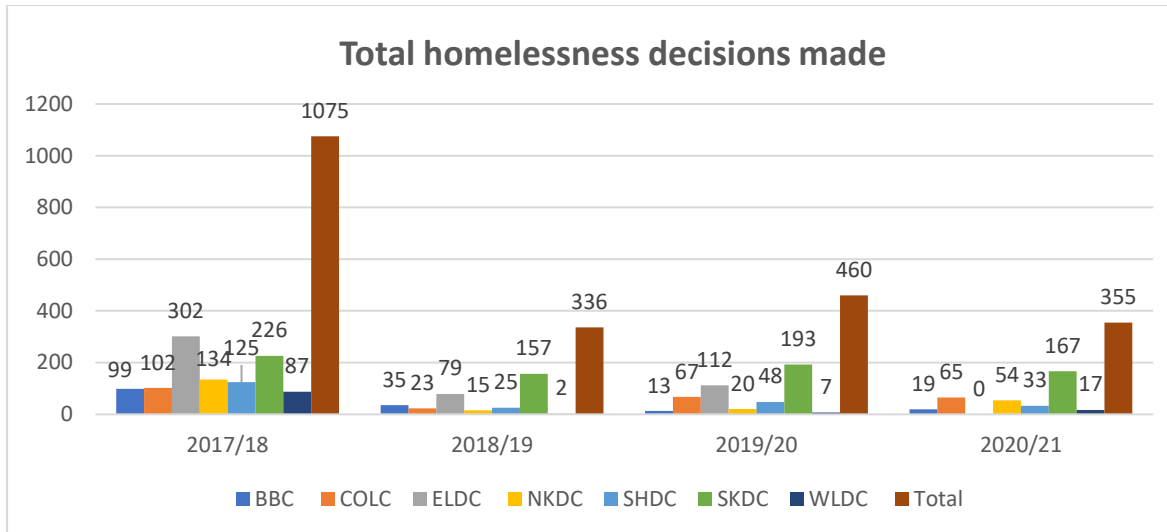
The response to the Protect and Vaccinate initiative was a big achievement for all partners across the County. Councils along with Health Professionals, Housing Providers and voluntary sector organisations formed a partnership approach to identify, accommodate 104 individuals, and facilitate vaccinations at pop up clinics in rough sleeper settings, of at least 120 Rough Sleepers to protect them during the second wave of the pandemic.



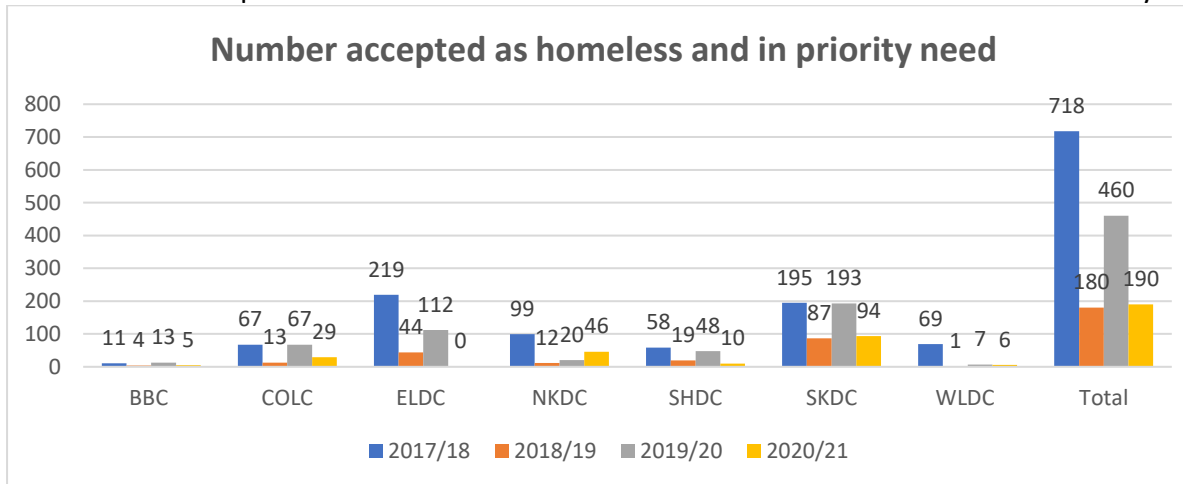
The number of rough sleepers has decreased by over 50% since 2019 showing the success of the initiatives to engage with individuals and to access more permanent accommodation and support.

Rough Sleeper projections

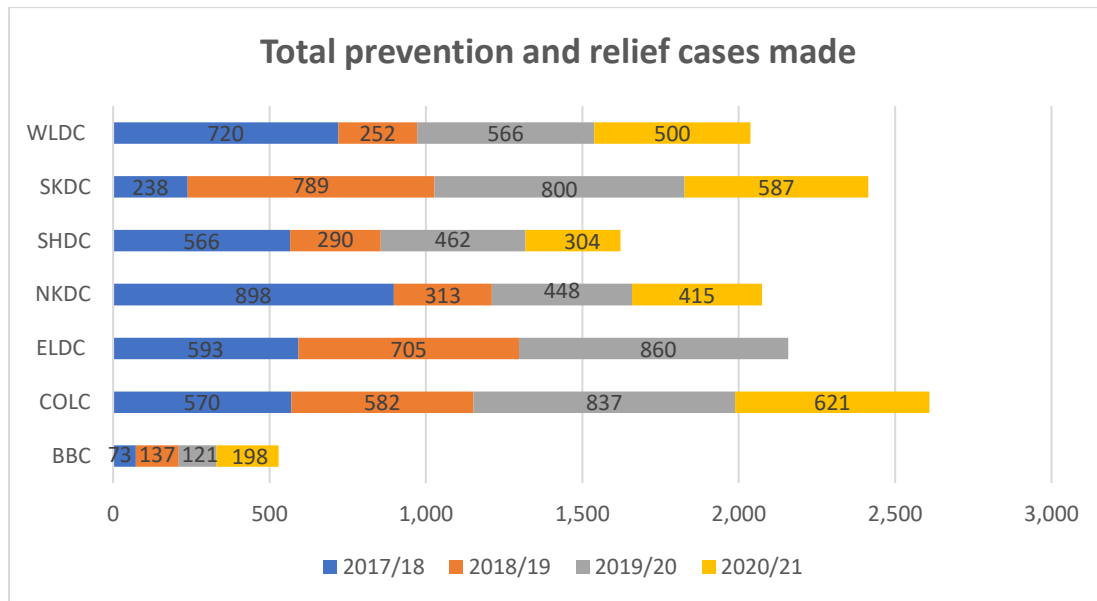
Using the last 5 years reported Rough Sleeper Autumn Count figures a projection could be made on the estimated levels of Rough Sleeping across the County as an average of 58, the highest number recorded in 2017/18 was 78 and the lowest in 2020/21 and 2021/22 was 34. The reduction in number can be attributed to the success of the RSI work across the County and an estimate needs to take account of this trend. Based on recent reported figures around 35-40 individuals are expected to be rough sleeping at any one time.



Due to successful preventions the number of homelessness decisions have decreased by over one third since 2017.



Similarly, to the number of homeless decisions made the number of those accepted as homeless and in priority need has decreased by over a third since 2017.



Across the County nearly 10,000 preventions and relief cases have been made demonstrating the difference our Housing Teams are making to prevent homelessness.

Strategy Priorities

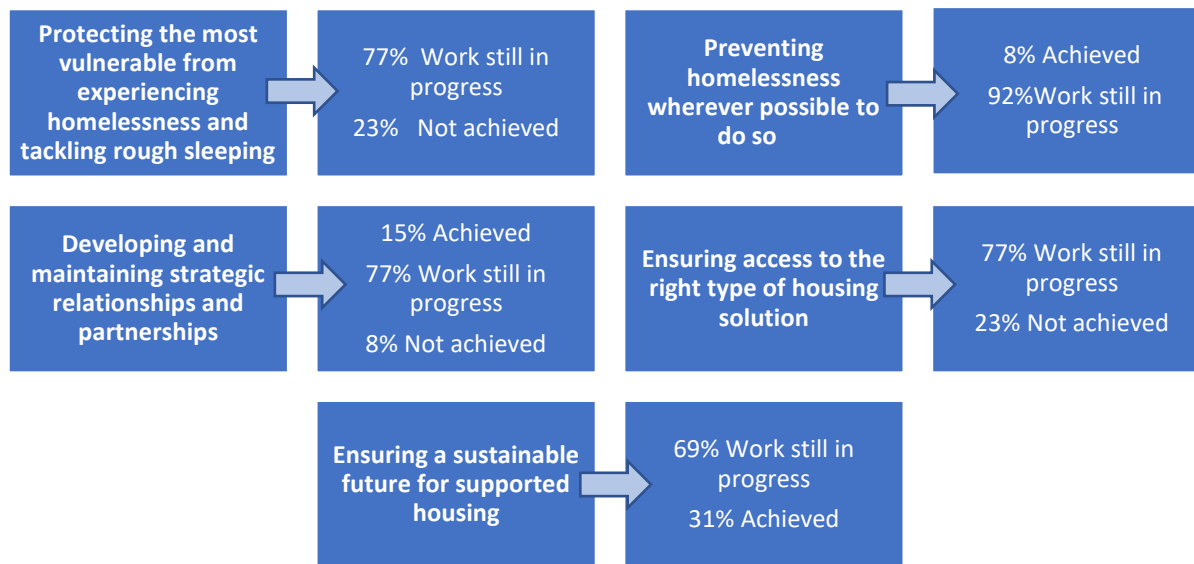
The strategy had five main priorities to focus on:

Priority One: Protect	Protecting the most vulnerable from experiencing homelessness including tackling rough sleeping.
Priority Two: Prevent	Preventing homelessness wherever possible to do so.
Priority Three: Partnership	Developing and maintaining strategic relationships and partnerships.
Priority Four: Place	Ensuring access to the right type of housing solution.
Priority Five: Possibility	Ensuring a sustainable future for supported housing.

Achievements over the last 5 years on the priorities

We asked stakeholders to rate the progress on the five priorities:

Due to the nature of homelessness and rough sleeping the priorities above will never be 100% achieved. However, it is useful to gauge the progress that has been made and highlight areas to focus on going forward.



The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 came into effect on 3rd April 2018 changing the way services are provided to homeless people by imposing a duty to prevent and relieve homelessness. This is reflected by the feedback as being the priority that has been rated as having the most progress on.

Developing partnerships is another factor rated highly but the pandemic halted some groups meeting which could account for the not achieved responses. Protecting the most vulnerable and ensuring access to housing received the same ratings showing that there is still work to be completed. Increasing the provision and longevity of supported housing remains a challenge across the county so it is expected that this priority has been rated as having the most progress still to achieve.

In terms of projects and actions that have been achieved over the last 5 years under each of the priorities there have been many successes including:

Protect

- ✓ A decrease in Rough Sleeping by over 50% over the last 2 years
- ✓ Successful bid for Government funding for 3 Rough Sleeper Initiative Projects that are working well across the County.
- ✓ Introduced a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol to provide emergency assistance in the winter for Rough Sleepers.
- ✓ Increased the provision of single persons accommodation to reduce Rough Sleeping.
- ✓ Facilitated all Rough Sleepers to have a postcode so that they can access post and the ability to setup a bank account to enable access to services.

Prevent

- ✓ Implemented the Housing Reduction Act preventing over 10,000 households becoming homeless over the last 5 years across the County.
- ✓ Published a countywide Rough Sleeper guide to demonstrate how accessible information contributes to homelessness prevention.
- ✓ Implemented the Controlling Migration Fund to allow EEA nationals access to work to those that have no recourse to public funds and employed a resettlement worker to ensure access across the county.
- ✓ Worked with private sector landlords to prevent households become homeless through a range of initiatives.
- ✓ Implemented Team Around the Adult to facilitate a partnership approach to ensure adults can access the support they need to prevent evictions.

Partnership

- ✓ In partnership with LCC and Framework implemented the Housing Related Support Service to provide accommodation and floating support for those that need support.
- ✓ Formed the Housing Strategy Partnership to work with housing providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, health professionals and Lincolnshire County Council to deliver together the actions of the strategy and emerging issues.
- ✓ Setup a Homelessness Cell working group to respond together to Covid-19 Everyone In and Protect and Vaccinate Government initiatives. A total of 215 individuals were accommodated and 78 facilitated to receive vaccinations. This ensured Rough Sleepers were protected across the County.
- ✓ The SIB steering group was successful in ensuring continuous development of the service and raising awareness of the needs of people who are entrenched in rough sleeping and how traditional service provision does not always work for them

Place

- ✓ Implemented Countywide processes and protocols to meet Duty to Refer requirements so that specified public authorities can report those threatened with homelessness, allowing intervention to happen at an earlier stage and prevent them becoming homeless.
- ✓ Provided accommodation through Government funding schemes - Housing First, Next Steps Accommodation Programme and the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Project increasing provision for Rough Sleepers that includes support to enable them to move on to sustain a tenancy.
- ✓ Engaged with Rough Sleepers whilst being temporarily accommodated throughout the pandemic supporting them into service provision and more permanent housing.

Possibility

- ✓ Submitted a countywide bid for Rough Sleepers Accommodation Project funding to provide accommodation for those with complex needs with dedicated support.
- ✓ Delivered the ACTion Lincs project to provide long term life changing support for an identified group of vulnerable and complex need rough sleepers, across the county using Housing First principles.

Looking ahead our challenges

The pandemic took services approach from proactive to reactive focussing on accommodating and protecting Rough Sleepers and has highlighted the ambition all partners have across the County to work together on the emerging challenges which include:

- The need to accommodate all Rough Sleepers across the County has highlighted the shortage of accommodation for single people and those with high support needs who struggle in a hostel environment.
- In offering everyone accommodation the Rough Sleeper teams have engaged with more individuals and been able to offer support and understand their needs better.
- An increase in both homelessness and rough sleeping as the cost of living continues to increase and people are not able to afford their rent or mortgage.
- Homes for Ukraine scheme may lead to increases in homelessness at the end of the scheme or if relationship with host breaks down.
- Tackling rogue landlords and conditions in the Private Rented Sector
- More support and provision for prison leavers on release

- Improve pathways for sofa surfers
- Ensuring consistency across the Councils and open access to those all that present as homelessness especially those with language barriers
- Getting the right support for people and for the long term not time bound.
- Gaining access to affordable Private Sector Housing
- Enough provision for those not in priority need
- Increased access to mental health and substance misuse services.
- Supported accommodation will have little throughput as service users are unable to move to suitable and affordable accommodation.
- Identifying the extent of hidden homelessness to enable access to accommodation and support

The County is committed to working together on the next joint strategy 2022-2026 which will include the Rough Sleeping Strategy as a separate chapter to ensure workstreams are co-ordinated. Together with other agencies as part of the Lincs Homelessness Strategic Partnership we will implement a new delivery plan to further reduce Rough Sleeping, prevent homelessness and provide accommodation and support to meet the needs across the County. The latest version of the delivery plan can be found on the next page.

Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan 2020 - 2021

Priority Number	Title Activity	Activity Summary	Outcome
P1	Implement a county wide process to meet the new requirements of the Duty to Refer under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	Develop an action plan that includes communication, information and training needs, protocols, and processes for a county wide approach.	Completed - through Housing Strategic Partnership (HSP) and Lincs Prison Release Protocol in place
P2	Develop online information on how to get help or give help for Homelessness in Lincolnshire	Explore online platform options and implement, providing clear and accessible information on websites.	Completed - information on individual websites
P2	Reduce evictions in social housing/private rented sector.	Collate data, identify issues, and current challenges. Identify existing good practice and make recommendations to the HSP.	Superseded- Embargo on evictions implemented in 2020/21
P3	Reduce rough sleeping	Develop a clear action plan and review pathways to ensure adequate provision and support is available, across the county.	Completed - 3 Rough Sleepers Initiatives have been implemented covering the County.

P3	Deliver the Social Impact Bond project ACTION Lincs	To deliver long term life changing support for an identified group of vulnerable and complex need rough sleepers across the county using Housing First principles.	Completed - project concluded and evaluation report received by University of Lincoln.
P3	Review and improve SWEP provision across the county	Complete a review of existing provision and implement agreed recommendations to improve the co-ordination and provision of severe weather accommodation.	Completed - SWEP protocol published and agreed by all local authorities.
P3	Improve access to health and substance misuse treatment to prevent evictions.	Identify appropriate representation from LPFT for the HSP, liaise with Safeguarding Adult Board to discuss their prevention and early intervention strategy.	Completed - implemented Team Around the Adult (TAA)
P3	Identify opportunities to work with EEA Nationals with no recourse to public funds	Submit a bid to the Controlling Migration Fund for a 'Safe routes to reconnection' service	Completed - bid was successful and project has now concluded
P4	Improved access to private rented accommodation for those on benefits or low incomes	Consider and implement new initiatives that would secure engagement from private sector landlords.	A range of assistance is already in place, but no new initiatives have been implemented.
P4	Understand the need for supported accommodation in the county	Develop a clear evidence base that demonstrates the need for numbers and type of supported housing across the county.	In progress - evidence base to be provided by Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Chapter on Homelessness to be included.