

Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2020-25



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quality
housing



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Lincoln's ambitious future



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Executive summary

Under housing legislation, the Council has duties to provide interim (or temporary) accommodation to certain households who present as homeless.

In addition to households applying to the Council for accommodation under homelessness legislation, other households can require temporary accommodation. This includes people who are rough sleeping, people who require emergency accommodation due to (risk of) fire or flood etc., and Council tenants who are being decanted due to major repairs or remodelling works to their homes.

This strategy sets out the City of Lincoln Council's vision of **ensuring suitable, affordable and cost-effective temporary accommodation is available to all those entitled to it.**

This vision is delivered by four objectives:

Dispersed housing units to meet need

The provision of a portfolio of dispersed temporary housing accommodation, furnished to meet need with intensive housing management.

Supported housing to meet need

The provision of supported and specialist temporary housing to meet needs of vulnerable persons, including single homeless persons.

Emergency accommodation to meet need

Ensuring that bed and breakfast is only used in emergencies.

Provision of decant accommodation

All Council improvement, regeneration and redevelopment schemes to include a decant policy ensuring the provision of suitable temporary accommodation.

Introduction

Under the Housing Act 1996, the Council has duties to provide interim (or temporary) accommodation to certain households who present as homeless. In the majority of cases, this is when a household presenting as homeless states that they do not have access to housing and therefore they are placed in temporary accommodation whilst the Council investigates their application.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which amended the Housing Act 1996, widened the Council's duties and means that applicants under the Relief Duty may also be eligible for interim accommodation if required. Furthermore, an impact of the Act means that the Council is unable to end its Relief Duty before 56 days, even if the household is found to be intentionally homeless.

Often, but not always, homeless households are vulnerable and therefore require intensive management and other support when they are in temporary accommodation.

In addition to households applying to the Council for accommodation under homelessness legislation, other households can require temporary accommodation. This includes people who are rough sleeping, people who require emergency accommodation due to (risk of) fire or flood etc., and Council tenants who are being decanted due to major repairs or remodelling works to their homes.

Temporary accommodation is an umbrella term and includes housing (both social and private rented), hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation.

The use of bed and breakfast accommodation as temporary accommodation is not only expensive and

subject to public sector procurement rules, but is considered unsuitable as it is not designed for residential use.

It is unlawful for councils to allow homeless families with children or pregnant women to stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.

People often understand the concept of homelessness as when individuals or families are rough sleeping or roofless. The definition of homeless is far wider than this and also considers whether the Council owes a household a statutory duty, with the main or full duty being for the Council to ensure the household has suitable accommodation.

When comparing the incidence of homelessness in Lincoln to the England as a whole it is clear that on a household basis, Lincoln has above average numbers of applications for assistance. This is likely to relate to Lincoln being the county town for wider Lincolnshire. Figure 1 shows data for the first quarter of 2019-20.

Figure 1

	Number of households	Variance from England average
Total households assessed under Housing Act 1996	193	+52%
Threatened with homelessness - prevention duty owed	77	+22%
Homeless - relief duty owed	116	+105%
Single person owed relief duty	85	+119%

Source: MHCLG and ONS

This proportionally high number of applications under the Housing Act not only results in high levels of investigatory

work, but the need to often place households in temporary accommodation whilst this is undertaken.

With respect to rough sleepers, 2018 count estimated that the City had 26 rough sleepers on any one night. This equates to 6.3 per 10,000 households and is a variance of +215% from the England figure of 2.0 per 10,000 households. Again, this is likely to relate to Lincoln being the county town for wider Lincolnshire. The 2019 estimate for Lincoln increased to 27 rough sleepers.

This strategy sets out the City of Lincoln Council's vision of **ensuring suitable, affordable and cost-effective temporary**

accommodation is available to all those entitled to it.

This vision is delivered by four objectives:

- **Dispersed housing units to meet need**
- **Supported housing to meet need**
- **Emergency accommodation to meet need**
- **Provision of decant accommodation**

Each objective has priorities for action, which form an action plan contained at Appendix I.

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Objective 1: Dispersed housing units to meet need

- 1.1 For homeless households who require either floating or very little support to maintain their accommodation, for example, in terms of completing benefit forms, budgeting etc. then the best form of temporary accommodation is the form of a house or flat in the City.

additional support provided to meet needs. In addition, special requirements such as disability, pregnancy, age, etc. will be considered when providing this form of temporary accommodation. The properties are let on license and the rents are set using the Affordable Rent model.
- 1.2 This form of temporary accommodation is let on license. It can be provided furnished or unfurnished according to each household's needs, complete with the level of housing related support / intensive housing management.
- 1.3 Based on historical data, it is estimated that the Council requires a minimum of 20 units of dispersed temporary accommodation to house homeless households.
- 1.4 Therefore, the Council has established an in-house portfolio of 25 temporary properties across the city. The properties are furnished according to the individual household's needs and all households receive intensive housing management, with
- 1.5 Using an in-house portfolio of the stock allows for appropriately sized dwellings to be utilised dependant on household size. It also allows for the potential of homeless households owed the main duty of suitable accommodation to be able to remain in situ.
- 1.6 Moving forward the Council is seeking to work closer with the private rented sector in order for homeless households to be provided with temporary accommodation and then remain in the property on a twelve-month tenancy.

Priorities for action

- Establish a protocol with private landlords

Objective 2: Supported housing to meet need

- 2.1 For more vulnerable homeless households who require higher levels of support, including on-site support, there is a need to provide supported accommodation.
- 2.2 The Council works with partner housing associations to enable vulnerable homeless households, for example, households fleeing violence and people with mental ill health to access specialist supported accommodation on a temporary basis whilst their application is being investigated.
- 2.3 When the Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation to a single homeless person this is usually because they are considered vulnerable. This often means that the person requires more than just a roof over their head, but instead a form of specialist accommodation.
- 2.4 A key priority for the Council is to deliver its own single person temporary accommodation comprising around ten units of accommodation.
- 2.5 Recommended good practice is to provide supported housing comprising of single en suite rooms (as opposed to dormitories) with communal kitchen and living rooms and on-site management and support. In addition, special requirements such as disability, pregnancy, age, etc. will be considered when providing this form of temporary accommodation.
- 2.6 This form of accommodation provides supported temporary accommodation to homeless households – helping occupants to apply for benefits and training, budgeting, learning to cook rather than buying takeaways; socialising; and ensuring homeless persons become re-integrated into society and register with GPs and other services. The accommodation would have strict rules – no alcohol or illegal substances; no overnight visitors; restrictions upon when residents would need to return to their accommodation (subject to agreement and consideration of circumstances); and refusal for inebriated residents.
- 2.7 Although there may be emergency rooms, this form of accommodation would not be direct access. Occupants would be given a license and would follow a pathway for a number of weeks or months. It would not be anticipated that occupants would stay the accommodation for more than six months.

Priorities for action

- Establish formal nomination agreements with housing associations
- Develop a supported housing scheme for single homeless persons, including those at risk of rough sleeping

Objective 3: Emergency accommodation to meet need

- 3.1 There may be exceptional circumstances where homeless households and other households at risk may need to be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation as an emergency measure. household will be provided with temporary housing whilst their case is being investigated or their property is made safe / repaired.
- 3.2 Following emergency placement of no more than five nights, the

Priorities for action

- Ensure all bed and breakfasts used for emergency temporary accommodation are subject to twice-yearly inspections

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Objective 4: Provision of decant accommodation

4.1 The Council has an ambitious programme of ensuring all local authority housing, not only meets the Lincoln Homes Standard, but provides sustainable accommodation to meet housing need. Potentially this can involve the need to decant tenants and leaseholders whilst their

accommodation is being improved or remodelled.

4.2 In addition the redevelopment and extension of outmoded and unsustainable housing schemes may result in the need for decanting existing tenants who wish to return to the new development as opposed to being permanently rehoused.

Priorities for action

- Ensure all improvement, regeneration and redevelopment schemes contain a decant policy

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Action Plan 2020-25

	Priority	Year					Outcome	Responsible Officer
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		
1.1	Establish a protocol with private landlords	Protocol established					Discharge of main duty into private rented accommodation	Housing Solutions Manager
2.1	Establish formal nomination agreements with housing associations	Agreements agreed					Vulnerable homeless households placed in suitable supported accommodation	Housing Solutions Manager
2.2	Develop a supported housing scheme for single homeless persons, including those at risk of rough sleeping	Site / dwelling identified	Scheme opened				Vulnerable single person homeless households placed in suitable supported accommodation	Housing Strategy and Investment Manager
3.1	Ensure all bed and breakfasts used for emergency temporary accommodation are subject to twice-yearly inspections	Inspections undertaken	Inspections undertaken	Inspections undertaken	Inspections undertaken	Inspections undertaken	All bed and breakfast accommodation potentially used for temporary accommodation is free from disrepair and category 1 hazards.	Housing Solutions Manager
4.1	Ensure all improvement, regeneration and redevelopment schemes contain a decant policy						Tenants are provided with a managed transition whilst their home is being improved or remodelled.	Housing Strategy and Investment Manager