



Homelessness Prevention Service

CONTENT VALID ON 26th June 2024

What is homelessness?

A person does not need to be sleeping rough to be legally homeless.

The Housing Act 1996 defines a person as homeless if they are either:

- ▶ have no accommodation available to occupy
- ▶ are at risk of violence or domestic abuse
- ▶ have accommodation, but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy it
- ▶ have accommodation, but cannot secure entry to it
- ▶ have no legal right to occupy their accommodation
- ▶ live in a mobile home or houseboat, but have no place to put it or live in it

Homelessness Prevention Service details

We have always carried out homelessness prevention, but due to the current housing situation we have revised our service and now have a designated team focusing on early intervention.

- ▶ To help clients who are threatened with possible homelessness in advance of our statutory duty, which is owed 56 days prior to becoming homeless
- ▶ Working with both landlords and tenants to resolve any issues before a notice is even served, or in the early stages of an eviction notice with the aim being to sustain the tenancy where possible, and if required, assistance in finding alternative accommodation. We will also look to work in conjunction with partnership agencies to provide additional support where needed
- ▶ We recognise the importance of early intervention working with both the landlord and tenant to prevent homelessness and any subsequent potential eviction using all options available
- ▶ We also recognise for landlords that eviction is often the last resort and is a costly process, as well as a stressful time for both the landlord and tenant. We are committed to preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity and we urge you to get in touch so that we can help with any tenancy related issues where possible. **We do need tenant engagement and consent**
- ▶ Multiple agents and support agency visits by the team to explain our service

How we can help

The prevention team works alongside our Housing Solutions Team (Homelessness Team) and could include the following but not exhaustive list of options:

- ▶ Support for landlords and tenants in what can be a very stressful period
- ▶ Options given on the way forward and potential solutions for both parties
- ▶ Rent arrears assistance through housing benefit services, Universal Credit, prevention funds and support agencies
- ▶ Financial assessment of tenant's income/expenditure to maximise income and check affordability
- ▶ Referrals and signposting to specialist services for more long-term support should the need be required
- ▶ A mediation service between landlords and tenants

Why is focussing on the prevention of homelessness so important?

We want to prevent evictions and keep people in their current properties and explore all options before crisis point.

There are less private rented options for our client groups in the current market, and huge demands on social housing. For example:

- ▶ There are currently nearly 4000 applicants on the social housing waiting list, a 21% increase on this time last year
- ▶ In 2023/24, social housing properties let were a total of 578 (average of 11 per week), so not even 15% of the waiting list
- ▶ Recently, there were 134 households in temporary accommodation, the highest number since during the pandemic. There were 71 households with children, and 159 children in total in costly temporary accommodation
- ▶ There are also multiple Government Refugee Schemes and organisations securing properties in an already high demand and shrinking market reducing housing stock further

Current homelessness caseload examples with our Housing Solutions (Homelessness Team):

- ▶ 454 open homelessness cases (case workers have roughly double the caseload, if not more than what is ideal)
- ▶ On average 15 homelessness enquiries received daily
- ▶ 25% of households blocking temporary accommodation due to lack of affordable housing and move on options
- ▶ Recently we had zero social housing void properties to advertise

Main reasons for homelessness:

- ▶ End of private rented - 29.6%
- ▶ Asked to leave by family / friends – 23.9%
- ▶ Domestic Abuse – 16.4% *We have a designated Domestic Abuse Coordinator role
- ▶ Relationship breakdown – 12.75%
- ▶ Other reasons – below 5%

Who is in the team?

- ▶ **Graeme Aitken – Landlord Solutions Team Leader**
- ▶ **Homelessness Prevention Officers (Lisa Bindley, Katie Senior and a vacant post on advert):**

This role is split doing prevention case work /support, and supporting myself with landlord/agent engagement to get more rental property options for our clients and to assist with advice and support

- ▶ **Accommodation Officers (Daniel Baxter and Paul Carruthers):**

These officers look after our stock of around 30 self contained temporary accommodation properties for our homeless clients. Dealing with check ins and outs, inventories, repairs and on-going support for the clients as a main contact point during their stay

New prevention service statistics - February 2024 to present

- ▶ Currently have circa 43 open cases with regular referrals from various sources
- ▶ Funding case applications – 25 in total, 5 successful, 8 given positive advice on situation, some not eligible, and some still on going
- ▶ Closed cases to date – 80: Positive advice (31), Early intervention (Prevention) (16), Other no engagement (16), Joint work with other team/agencies (7), Closed referred to Homeless Team (Housing Solutions) (10)
- ▶ Landlord cases – 6 (1 prevention, 5 positive advice)
- ▶ Landlord advice – 21 cases of general advice given
- ▶ Property enquires – 20 (half of these around temporary accommodation options)
- ▶ Landlord selling still seems to be most common reason for notices at present along with unaffordable rent increases

What do we need?

- ▶ We always need rental property options for clients we are working with for move on options
- ▶ We can often provide a bond and the first months rent in advance, and support during the tenancy for all parties
- ▶ However, we cannot take over the management of the tenancy or guarantee rents
- ▶ We also have a guide we give out to advise clients on where to look for properties via websites and Letting Agents, along with some tips, and when we are notified of properties to rent, we add those to the guide also, **do let us know if you ever have any properties to rent!**
- ▶ We thank you for your continued support in what is the toughest period we have seen working in housing and homelessness

Current Local Housing Allowance rates

Room Rate	Weekly	Monthly
Shared House Rate*	£99.50	£432.35
1 bedroom	£132.33	£575.00
2 bedroom	£155.34	£674.99
3 bedroom	£178.36	£775.02
4 bedroom	£230.14	£1,000.01

Any questions?



Contact details

- ▶ To contact the project to see if we can assist, please email prevention@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk or call 02476 376406
- ▶ Website - www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/prevention
- ▶ Follow us on Twitter - @NBBCouncil @NBLandlordforum