
Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping

Action Plan 2024



Priority 1: Preventing and relieving homelessness through early and tailored intervention

Homelessness is not inevitable, and it can be prevented. We work to provide early help for those at risk of becoming homeless and we believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to a safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life.

Objective

Proactively minimise homelessness through a prevention approach

1. Complete restructure of housing service to provide greater resource into prevention to ensure an efficient, professional and appropriate customer journey through a customer-focused, person-centred service

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Assess implementation of new Allocations Scheme

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing needs

3. Manage expectations of individuals, partner organisations and stakeholders through raising awareness of the realities of homelessness and housing options across tenures and continued work with communications colleagues to develop clear messaging for customers and the community

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across council departments

4. Foster financial resilience in council tenants by providing financial advice and income maximisation referrals to help them maintain their rent accounts and targeted outreach to vulnerable council tenants and ensure staff awareness of safeguarding issues relating to coercive control and financial abuse

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing and by Q3 2024

Lead department(s): Income recovery / IMAX

Objective

Operate a Whole Housing approach through DAHA accredited services for individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse and work to eliminate domestic abuse in the borough

1. Implement DAHA sustainability plan to improve services for domestic abuse survivors, and perpetrators including seeking feedback from customers and their advocates and developing induction pack for new staff

Delivery timeframe: Commenced Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Housing Operations

2. Build on the Coordinated Community Response with collaborating agencies to eliminate domestic abuse across our borough

Delivery timeframe: Commenced Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Housing Operations

3. Operate safety-led case management and survivor led support to enable domestic abuse survivors to have autonomy over their customer journey and provide them with maximum choice and options

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing Operations

4. Train staff to embed understanding of the experiences of disadvantage and discrimination and to practice intersectional and anti-racist working

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing Operations

5. Work well within the Islington Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy and jointly work with Adult Social Care and Children's, "by and for" partners and Housing Associations

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): VAWG

Objective

Ensure residents experiencing multiple disadvantage receive appropriate support to stay safe and well in their homes

1. Use Complex Needs Navigators to support individuals in temporary accommodation who are struggling to sustain their tenancies

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and Community safety

2. Jointly work with Community Safety team and Police to support individuals at risk of cuckooing and hidden homeless and establish a consistent approach with rough sleepers

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and Community safety

3. Commence 'gender informed outreach approach' pilot meet the needs of vulnerable women experiencing homelessness

Delivery timeframe: Commenced in Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Community safety

4. Work in partnership with Adult Social Care, Community Safety, health partners and floating support with aim to resolving complex cases and prevent eviction where possible; Improve our approach to hoarding cases

Delivery timeframe: Commenced in Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Housing Operations

5. Develop understanding from the Islington Safeguarding Adults Board review exploring themes of complexity across mental health, social care and housing.

Delivery timeframe: Midway Strategy Review

Lead department(s): Islington Safeguarding Adults Board

Objective

Support care experienced young individuals at risk of homelessness and address youth homelessness

1. Purchase 20 x 1 bedroom Ex Right to Buy properties for young individuals leaving looked after care through expanded Housing Intensive Support Scheme

Delivery timeframe: Q1/2025

Lead department(s): Housing Strategic Business Planning and Investment

2. Continue mediation for family or friend exclusions, developing staff training and provision of a dedicated officer supporting applicants with their housing via the NGS scheme to negotiate or delay the applicant's threat of homelessness housing solutions case work

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

3. Support young individuals leaving care through our House Project and Shared Lives programme which provide supported for young individuals in a family environment, helping them to develop skills and meaningful friendships that enable them to live life to the full

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

4. Use the Care Experienced Panel to review referrals and consider preventative measures to ensure tenancy sustainment and to identifying any gaps or service failures and directing action to address these to ensure better outcomes for care experienced service users

Delivery timeframe: From Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Homes and Neighbourhoods, Independent Futures, Integrated Mental Health

Objective

Provide wrap around support for individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage and work to deliver parity of access to services

1. Provide Integrated Front Door screening function as a centralised point to assess individuals needs when leaving hospital

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Adult Social Care Equalities and Safeguarding

2. Complete Phase 1 implementation of Rapid Access Service involving district nurses, social workers and community therapists to make decisions about complex cases. Include housing in Phase 2

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2025

Lead department(s): Adult Social Care Equalities and Safeguarding

3. Work across the subregion through NHLP commissioned services including early prevention services and specialist immigration advice

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): North London Housing Partnership

4. Develop locality model that pulls together services within the local footprint (North, South, Central) further to co-design event

Delivery timeframe: Q2 2025

Lead department(s): Adult Social Care Equalities and Safeguarding

5. Provide outreach to identify individuals in greatest risk

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Objective

Promote learning across services to deliver a whole system approach for individuals with care and support needs

1. Develop learning from thematic review across equality and safeguarding service and from complex cases

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Adult Social Care Equalities and Safeguarding

2. Share learning plan to enhance the understanding of specialisms across housing and adult social care e.g. radical safeguarding

Delivery timeframe: Q2 2025

Lead department(s): Adult Social Care Equalities and Safeguarding / Housing Operations

Objective

Provide support to access skills and employment opportunities

1. Provide signposting to those at risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless to IMAX and make referrals to floating support

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and housing partnerships

2. Utilise available funding to provide support to residents

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and housing partnerships

3. Create positive relationships with the business community to promote understanding on how to access support for rough sleepers and work to develop connections with local businesses to explore opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness to develop their work skills

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and partnership / Local economies (Community Wealthbuilding)

Objective

Work jointly with our statutory and community partners and stakeholders to foster better accountability and prevent homelessness and improve outcomes for residents

1. Ensure referrals are received at an early stage from third sector providers and voluntary and community sector organisation through our portal and foster accountability from partner agencies and other specialisms

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Outreach officers work closely with internal and external counterparts such as Residential Environmental Health and private landlords

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and Residential Environmental Health

3. Ensure that council, police and housing providers are held to account in relation to crime and antisocial behaviour and jointly work across Community Safety, Neighbourhood Services and Tenancy Services to improve safety, sustain tenancies and provide support for council tenants

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across Homes and Neighbourhoods and with housing providers

4. Work with community partners to provide support eg. Islington Faith Forum, Streets Fest

Delivery timeframe: Events across each year

Lead department(s): Voluntary and Community sector

5. Work jointly across housing and adult social care to increase support and prevent operationally complex ASB cases from escalating and implement new process between council tenancy services and community safety to better manage complex ASB that affects our residents and our estates.

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing, from Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Across Homes and Neighbourhoods / Adult Social Care

Objective

Improve our data accuracy and evidence base to improve efficiency and ensure that our services meet housing need

1. Carry out cost-benefit analysis to better understand the social return on investment and to better track long-term outcomes

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and Public health

2. Develop improved understanding of why some BAME communities are disproportionately represented within our services

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2025

Lead department(s): Housing needs and Public health

3. Evaluate outcomes achieved by commissioned Housing First service to inform future commissioning of the service

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

4. Improve accuracy of case notes to ensure safety-led case management

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and housing partnerships

5. Carry out analysis on where applicants are located geographically as a way of targeting our service

Delivery timeframe: Annually and ongoing

Lead department(s): Public health

6. Produce and publish an Annual Lettings Plan to set annual targets for property types across Priority points and monitor Housing Allocations Scheme to ensure that our allocations reflect housing need

Delivery timeframe: Annually

Lead department(s): Public health / Housing needs

7. Conduct customer and partner surveys to measure service improvement

Delivery timeframe: Periodically

Lead department(s): Across Homes and Neighbourhoods

Objective

Improve service efficiency and reduce TA numbers

1. Align homelessness performance indicators around decision making with the timeframes within legislation.

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Analyse the effectiveness of the Rapid Response Team and other prevention methods.

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing needs

3. Increase positive preventions by 5% in 2024/25 to 850

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

4. Reduce the use of hotels so no families in hotels for longer than 6 weeks

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024/Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

5. Discharge duty into private rented sector or when offers of other types of settled housing are refused

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Priority 2: Eliminating rough sleeping by helping individuals into settled housing

We work side-by-side and holistically with our council colleagues and partners to eliminate rough sleeping: we work to the values set out in our **Homelessness Charter**.

Objective

Ensure services are in place to ensure no one leaves an institution and sleeps on the streets of Islington

1. Recruit a prison release coordinator based in the triage team to be a single point of contact

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Co-locate housing officers with probation colleagues to enable joint working to minimise long term offenders becoming homeless in the community

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

3. Attend meetings with London-wide offender homeless prevention group to develop best practice and innovative ways of tackling homelessness in this client group and attend MAPPA level 3 to prevent high risk offenders becoming homeless

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across Homes and Neighbourhoods

4. Update hospital discharge protocol between housing and all health partners

Delivery timeframe: Annually and ongoing

Lead department(s): Public health

5. Recruit a hospital discharge coordinator to be based in the housing triage team as a single point of contact

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs / Health partners

Objective

Improve health outcomes for rough sleepers

1. Meet immediate health needs of rough sleepers through commissioned physical health outreach nurse and provide in-reach clinics in supported accommodation and day centres and work with libraries and community centres to provide water and sunscreen during the Severe Weather Protocol

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs / Commissioning and Investment / health partners and Community Safety

2. Work with Commissioning and within the Drug and Alcohol Community of Practice to address the considerable impact of polydrug and alcohol use on the health and wellbeing of residents to enhance working relationships across agencies. Ensure housing's approach is aligned with new Commissioning Intentions

Delivery timeframe: From Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Across council departments and partner agencies

3. Ensure outreach officers and Park Guard contractors are aware of and well-connected to the substance misuse services available in Islington and are aware of the opportunity to offer joint outreach through patrol activities

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs / Commissioned and Investment / health partners and Community Safety

4. Identify where domestic abuse is a factor for rough sleepers and provide interventions

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across council departments and partner agencies

5. Fund health inequalities project for individuals experiencing homelessness including flexible GP provision through Islington's Integrated Care Board

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Integrated Care Board

Objective

Operate homeless outreach services in partnership with community groups and partners to provide proactive outreach and somewhere safe to go for rough sleepers

1. Deliver a multidisciplinary blended team approach that offers holistic support to rough sleepers and tackle multiple disadvantage

Delivery timeframe: Until Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Deliver outreach jointly with commissioned services and across council departments to ensure a route away from the street.

Delivery timeframe: Until Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing needs

3. Park Guard contractors carry out initial assessments and ensure that the Police are aware of available support

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs, Park Guard and the Police

4. Organise health and wellbeing events for rough sleepers in known hotspots to promote the range of support services that are available and continue to work collaboratively with Health Partners

Delivery timeframe: Periodically

Lead department(s): Housing needs

5. Promote the valuable support and resources provided by day centres including during SWEP

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Objective

Provide secure supported housing for rough sleepers or former rough sleepers with high support needs

1. Expand our Independent Housing, Intensive support (IHIS) scheme to offer a further 20 homes for individuals with a history of rough sleeping

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Continue with our in-house Housing First scheme for individuals facing multiple disadvantage using our 20 SHAP buy back properties and further acquisitions

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs and Housing business planning and investment

3. Move individuals into permanent or longer-term accommodation either from temporary accommodation or supported accommodation

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Objective

Maximise available funding available to the council and partners and across the subregion

1. Apply for funding as it becomes available to local authorities and continue to explore capital and revenue grant funding stream opportunities for rough sleepers to complement existing services

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing Strategic Business Planning and Investment

2. Support the Mayor of London's rough sleeping Plan of Action by contributing to the Call for Evidence in 2024

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Priority 3: Improving housing options available to meet the needs of our residents

We aim to provide every individual accessing our services with a realistic, sustainable good quality housing option where people can feel safe, maintain contact with their family and friends and which support their life choices.

Objective

Provide secure supported housing to house rough sleepers or former rough sleepers with high support needs

1. Complete purchase of 410 properties to house former rough sleepers, care experience young adults and settling Afghan and Ukrainian families and homeless households

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Housing business planning and investment

2. Complete renovation of St Johns Mansions to provide a further 19 homes for long-term rough sleepers

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Islington architects / new build / housing property services

3. Reduce the number of households in nightly paid temporary accommodation and work to eliminate the usage of shared B&Bs for homeless families and single individuals

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Objective

Resolve housing issues for tenants in temporary accommodation as quickly as possible and aim for a substantial reduction in the number of homeless households living in private sector accommodation

1. Roll out new temporary accommodation procurement framework to improve the service and reduce use of hotels

Delivery timeframe: Q2/3 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

2. Set up surgeries for individuals in temporary accommodation

Delivery timeframe: Q2/3 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

3. Use our Reception Centres and in-house temporary accommodation acquired through buy-back scheme alongside private sector solutions for homeless families in need of temporary accommodation

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Objective

Improve housing conditions and management for tenants living in private rented sector

1. Tackle rogue landlords in the borough through joint working with children's services, residential environmental health and private sector housing partnerships

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Residential Environmental Health

2. Take a proactive approach to tackling damp and mould in the private sector

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Residential Environmental Health

3. Invest in energy efficiency and renewable technologies, to support vulnerable households facing fuel poverty in conjunction with the council's SHINE network

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across council departments and with SHINE

4. Use Complex Needs Navigators to support customers across tenures to sustain tenancies

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across Homes and Neighbourhoods

5. Extend property licensing scheme for all privately rented properties in two further wards

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2024

Lead department(s): Residential Environmental Health

6. Use Disabled Facilities Grants to fund major works and adaptations to enable residents to stay in their homes

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Residential Environmental Health and Occupational Health

Objective

Promote opportunities for individuals under-occupying their homes and provide housing options for moves to make the best use of our housing and available housing in the borough

1. Recover 50 council properties subject to tenancy fraud and maximise recovery of unlawful profits

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing investigations

2. Develop tenancy fraud offer to our Housing Association partners

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing investigations

3. Identify empty properties and levy council tax premium on properties left empty for two years or longer

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Council Tax

4. Improve customer journey for downsizers to tackle overcrowding and increase the number of moves from larger properties

Delivery timeframe: Q4 2024

Lead department(s): Housing needs

5. Meet targets for 100 downsizing moves; 150 mutual exchanges and 100 severely overcrowding assists

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Housing needs

Objective

Empower our residents and provide the mechanisms for them to hold us to account

1. Launch our Resident Engagement Strategy and continue deliver a range of resident engagement activities and structures across the department to empower our residents and make sure that diverse voices are heard

Delivery timeframe: Q3 2024

Lead department(s): Across Homes and Neighbourhoods

2. Improve our partnership work with TRAs by rolling out TRA network Forum where there will be thematic meetings and networking with key council colleagues and launch training programme

Delivery timeframe: Q2 2024

Lead department(s): Community Development

3. Recruit panel members to decide on allocation for funding for community led projects as part of Islington Welcomes

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): Community Development

Priority 4: Providing accommodation and resettlement services to refugees and migrants

Islington Council became an accredited Borough of Sanctuary in 2023: We will work ambitiously with our partners to make Islington is a place of welcome, safety and success for all and to integrate new communities, build social cohesion and eradicate poverty.

Objective

Eliminate destitution and homelessness in Islington through both statutory and non-statutory targeted approaches

1. Establish a 3 year City of Sanctuary strategy and continue to remove barriers for refugees and migrants accessing services through development of a refugee and migrant strategy

Delivery timeframe: 2024–2027

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

2. Evidence the principles of welcome, sanctuary and solidarity in the delivery of specialist housing and casework responses for refugees and migrants, including through the delivery of services with council departments and community partners

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

3. Manage the council's statutory 'safety net' response to individuals with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and work proactively to resolve cases when we provide accommodation and subsistence support

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

Objective

Support resettled refugees to make the best start in their lives and reach their full potential

1. Manage buy-back properties, to successfully deliver the humanitarian housing response and to secure an affordable housing legacy

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

2. Monitor hosting arrangements in place for Ukrainian nationals and other refugees or migrants to ensure that basic housing standards are being met, that individuals being hosted are not exploited and that hosts receive the support they need

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

3. Deliver a web-based casework system to enable better oversight of our integration successes and outcomes

Delivery timeframe: Q1 2025

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

Objective

Deliver successful pathways towards independence and self-sufficiency, with the integration journey starting from arrival, for all groups supported by the council, and with learning shared between council teams

1. Ensuring ESOL provision and help people find employment opportunities or to develop skills in their areas of interest

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

2. Overcome barriers to integration by working to support wellbeing and overcoming past trauma

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

3. Provide housing advice and support to avoid people ending up homeless because they didn't understand options or were unable to reach a point of self-sufficiency whilst eligible for asylum or local authority support

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

4. Collaborate across council services to share learning to best support children who turn 18 in their transition to adulthood including care leavers, asylum seekers at the two asylum hotels, and refugees entering on resettlement routes

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Across departments

Objective

Be a model of good practice, to demonstrate that systems can work in support of all vulnerable individuals and challenge racism and inequality

1. Deliver events and social engagement and community-based activities to promote Islington values of welcome and solidarity

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

2. Use grant funding to mitigate additional burdens on existing services and to increase capacity of organisations to meet the needs of new and existing communities

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

3. Deliver NRPF Network services to improve local authority implementation of statutory 'safety net' responsibilities for NRPF families, children and adults to alleviate migrant destitution, including through the delivering of commissioned-based training and delivery of webinars in partnership with DHSC, LGA and the Home Office

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

4. Having evidenced a collective £77.6 million per annum spent on social care support across 82 local authorities using the NRPF Connect database, Work with local government associations to advocate for policy and funding changes necessary to reduce these pressures

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

5. Share knowledge and best practice across boroughs and the subregion to ensure that services are in place for individuals with NRPF, with particular attention to the availability of specialist immigration advice to address immigration matters with the Home Office

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): North London Housing Partnership

Objective

Ensure the safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers accommodated by the Home Office in Islington through an Islington-wide partnership response

1. Identify asylum seekers with newly granted refugee status who have high needs for priority housing and engage with the DWP to expedite Universal Credit claims

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

2. Run a weekly drop-in session for newly granted refugees, hosted by the Union Chapel with representatives from Housing, iMax and other VCS organisations to assist with urgent applications

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

3. Cast a wider geographical net for suitable and affordable properties for under 35s, including in Birmingham for groups to live in together

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

4. Engage with rough sleeper teams providing advice and signposting for refugees if they do become street homeless

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): NRPF, Refugee & Migrant Service

5. Carry out age assessments and take identified children into care

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Childrens Services

6. Provide support for victims of modern slavery and Care Act assessments for people with care needs

Delivery timeframe: Ongoing

Lead department(s): Adult Social Care

If you would like this information in another language or reading format, such as Braille, large print, audio or Easy Read, please contact 020 7527 2000.

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