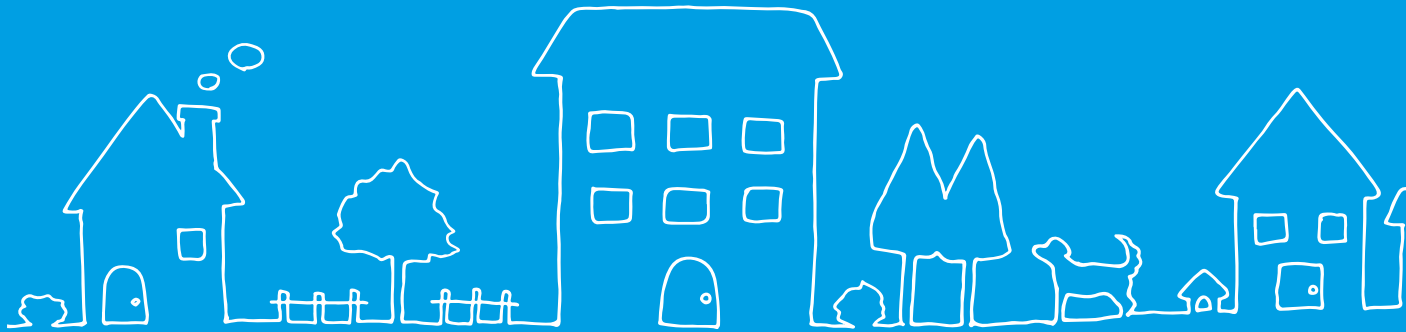


# Ending Homelessness Together

Homelessness Strategy **2022-27**



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## **HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2022-2027 - YEAR 3 ACTION PLAN**

April 2024 - March 2025

**Housing**  
Executive

# Year 3 Action Plan

The Housing Executive published the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 on the 23rd March 2022 alongside its Year 1 Action Plan. We subsequently published our Year 2 Action Plan which covered April 2023 to March 2024, and during the second year of the Homelessness Strategy some of our key achievements have been;

- We worked with key partners to carry out a Street Needs Audit in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Newry and published a report on our findings. The themes and outcomes of the report have provided a comprehensive understanding of the scale of street activity including rough sleeping in Northern Ireland and will be instrumental in guiding preventative work and informing policy and practice provisions.
- We continued to raise awareness of homelessness during Homelessness Awareness Week through a range of events and activities organised with a variety of our voluntary and statutory partners who sit on our Homelessness Local Area Groups. We continued to work in partnership with our Communications Team to promote events in Local Areas and raise awareness of homelessness.
- We engaged with partners across the sector in developing a Youth Homelessness Action Plan and a Domestic Abuse Action Plan, both of which will be published during 2024/25.
- We sought to continue to ensure those with lived experience of homelessness were provided with opportunities to shape the development and delivery of our services.

We have worked together with our partners across the sector through our various structures including the Central Homelessness Forum, and our Homelessness Local Area Groups throughout the first two years of the Homelessness Strategy with our vision of 'Ending Homelessness Together' at the forefront of all of our efforts.

As the Homelessness Strategy enters its third year, the development of the Year 3 Action Plan has been guided by the significant work undertaken in the first two years of the Strategy. It is important to reflect that several actions have been carried forward to our Year 3 Action Plan as the work is still ongoing and the actions have now either been directly carried forward or evolved slightly and have been reworded accordingly to ensure the action builds on progress delivered during Year 2.

The Housing Executive recognises the importance of listening to those who have lived experience of homelessness, and a specific focus of one of our Lived Experience Groups provided an opportunity to those with lived experience of homelessness, to have their voices heard in actions such as the Fundamental Review of Allocations, particularly Proposals 4 and 9.

Furthermore, engagement with individuals who have lived experience of homelessness in respect of the NICCY Report: *'A Place to Call Home'*<sup>1</sup> has directly contributed to the development of our Youth Homelessness Action Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People: A Place to Call Home, 2023  
<https://www.niccy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NICCY-Homelessness-A-Place-to-Call-Home-Main-Report.pdf>

It is important that we continue to work together and listen to those who have lived experience of homelessness and our key partners, which leads to the continuation of the following actions;

- Action 17 – ‘We will continue work on the further development of our Lived Experience Programme, building on the work carried out within our Year 1 and 2 Action Plans. We will seek to implement and begin delivery of our Lived Experience Programme in 2024/2025.’
- Action 18 – ‘As part of shaping the development of a Lived Experience Programme we will continue to host Lived Experience Group meetings over the course of 2024/2025 and the format of these groups will be considered as the Lived Experience Programme evolves.’

The Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 continues to be guided by the development of annual Action Plans that will support the Housing Executive and our partners in achieving our vision, aims and objectives.



## Vision and Aim

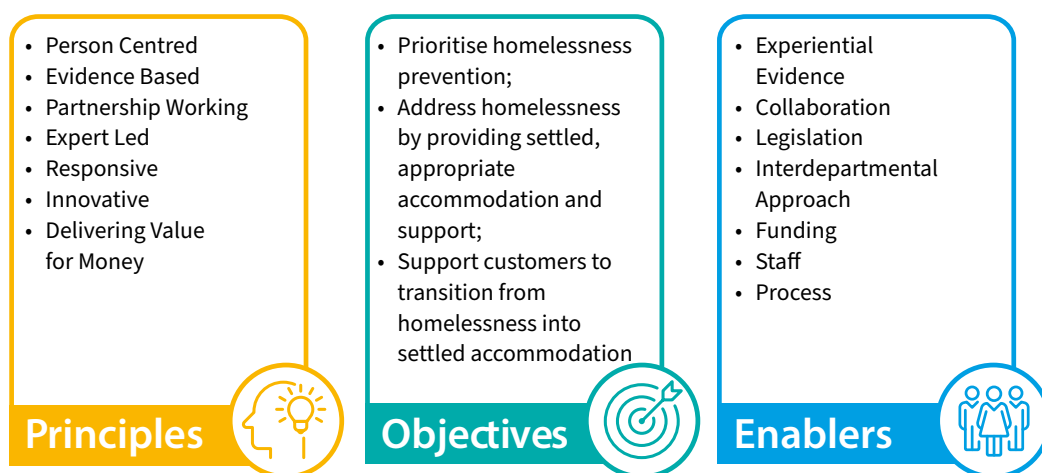
The vision of ‘Ending Homelessness Together’ and aim of ‘Wherever possible homelessness should be prevented, if homelessness cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurring’ is supported by three key objectives, each with priority actions that will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## Principles, Objectives and Enablers

At the core of this Strategy there are a number of guiding principles that will underpin our approach to both the development and delivery of homelessness services throughout its lifespan. These principles, which are outlined below, have been co-produced with the wider homelessness sector and will be incorporated across each theme to achieve our vision of 'Ending Homelessness Together'.

This Strategy has been developed around three key objectives:

- Prioritise homelessness prevention;
- Address homelessness by providing settled, appropriate accommodation and support;
- Support customers to transition from homelessness into settled accommodation



The Homelessness Strategy will continue to evolve based on experiential evidence, emerging pressures and priorities and it is our intention to work towards the defined success criteria outlined in this document by developing the 'enablers' and pulling all levers available to us. These enablers are as critical to the success of the Strategy as the delivery of the objectives themselves.

## Year 3 Action Plan

With the enablers being critical to the success of the Strategy, the Year 3 actions have once again been developed around the enablers and the three objectives. The table below outlines actions that the Housing Executive and our partners will seek to deliver over the course of 2024/25.

As part of the consultation on the draft Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 a number of stakeholders noted the need for an easy read version of the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 and this action plan seeks to provide a concise summary of what we, and our partners, will do to address homelessness in Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive recognises the funding challenges associated with delivering some of the actions outlined in the Action Plan below, and therefore to help our partners and those with lived experience of homelessness to understand the challenges that the Housing Executive has in delivering some of these actions. It is important that we highlight the actions that can be and will be delivered, but also the actions that we would like to deliver but are subject to funding. To reflect this each of the actions under the enablers and objectives have been broken into the two following sections;

- **Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan** - This section includes actions that can be completed without the need for additional funding and/or resources. It is therefore anticipated that delivery of these actions have minimal associated risks.
- **Actions subject to securing funding** – This section includes actions that we would like to deliver during 2024/25 however, they are reliant on securing funding and therefore there are associated delivery risks.

# Year 3 Action Plan

Action	Enablers
<b>Experiential Evidence</b>	
	<b>Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan</b>
Action 1	<p>We will publish independent research on the feasibility study for Housing First for Northern Ireland. Upon publication we will explore the development of further actions arising from the recommendations.</p> <p>We will continue to explore all available options to assist with development and implementation of Housing First for Northern Ireland.</p>
Action 2	We will continue to work with the Centre for Public Health (QUB) and Business Services Organisation as part of the ongoing investigation, 'Using administrative data to better understand the antecedents, needs and outcomes of people who are homeless in Northern Ireland'. We will explore potential options to carry out similar investigations for different client groups who may be adversely affected by homelessness. In addition, we will set up a Project Steering Group and where appropriate use this data to guide further research and delivery of our services.
Action 3	We will continue to work with the Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI) to develop 'The Ending Homelessness Framework for Northern Ireland'. We will critically analyse homelessness data held by the Housing Executive and others across the Homelessness Sector, to consider comparability with other UK jurisdictions.
Action 4	We will continue to work with the Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI) to develop a report regarding Value for Money in respect of temporary accommodation and we will explore ways to address the recommendations within the Report.
Action 5	We will update on progress as to the ongoing review of Housing Executive policies and procedures relevant to homelessness.
Action 6	We will publish our Domestic Abuse Action Plan and we will work with key partners to implement the actions outlined within.
Action 7	We will publish our Youth Homelessness Action Plan and we will work with key partners to implement the actions outlined within.
Action 8	We will explore ways in which we can address the themes outlined in the Street Needs Audit Report published as part of the Year 2 Action Plan.
Action 9	We will continue to review our internal data on Chronic Homelessness and explore the criteria to ensure ongoing recording of Chronic Homelessness across Northern Ireland.
	<b>Actions subject to securing funding</b>
Action 10	We will commission independent research that seeks to provide a comparison of homelessness funding between Northern Ireland and neighbouring jurisdictions.
Action 11	We will commission independent research on local efforts to address chronic homelessness.

Collaboration	
	Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan
Action 12	We will continue to work on the development of protocols and Data Sharing Agreements with partner agencies across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors including the Complex Lives initiative which will facilitate the development of interagency working and further embed the multidisciplinary approach to addressing the needs of those experiencing chronic homelessness.
Action 13	We will routinely communicate performance, budgetary and trend information to stakeholders in user friendly formats.
Action 14	We will continue to implement the Homelessness Local Area Action Plans and work closely with each Area Group to review the Action Plans and continue to promote collaborative engagement. A key focus of the Action Plans is to deliver the vision of 'Ending Homelessness Together' at a local level and we will have a particular focus on ensuring the Action Plans reflect the prevention work being delivered at a local level.
Action 15	We will build on work carried out as part of the Year 2 Action Plan and continue working with key partners to develop our programme for a Housing Advice Quality Standard for frontline staff offering housing advice in Northern Ireland.
Action 16	We will work with our Internal Communications Department to highlight and showcase ongoing collaborative work in the sector to raise awareness of Homelessness across a variety of media channels and this will also focus on Homelessness Prevention.
Action 17	We will support the delivery of Year 1 Programme of the Royal Foundation 'Homewards' Programme.
	Actions subject to securing funding
Action 18	We will continue work on the further development of our Lived Experience Programme, building on the work carried out within our Year 1 and 2 Action Plans. We will seek to implement and begin delivery of our Lived Experience Programme in 2024/2025.
Action 19	As part of shaping the development of a Lived Experience Programme we will continue to host Lived Experience Group meetings over the course of 2024/2025 and the format of these groups will be considered as the Lived Experience Programme evolves.
Legislation	
	Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan
Action 20	We will continue to liaise with the Department for Communities in identifying and advocating for potential legislative amendments, including considering the benefits of additional duties such as co-operation and prevention.
Action 21	We will continue to support the implementation of the Fundamental Review of Allocations, particularly any actions relevant to homelessness. Recommendations of note in respect of Homelessness include Proposals 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and Proposal 9.

Interdepartmental Approach	
	Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan
Action 22	We will continue to liaise with and support the Department for Communities in the development and delivery of the Inter-departmental Homelessness Action Plan.
Action 23	We will continue to work alongside Housing Rights and the Department of Justice to deliver:  'A protocol for the management of the accommodation and related support needs of people in custody in Northern Ireland (Prisons Protocol)'. This will include continued engagement with the Operation Group and Strategic Advisory Group to ensure appropriate delivery of the protocol.
Funding	
	Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan
Action 24	We will support others in accessing funding opportunities. This will involve supporting and publicising those schemes currently delivered by the Community Foundation Northern Ireland, along with relevant schemes that the homelessness sector may be able to access.
Action 25	We will support effective commissioning of services to prioritise funding via structures such as the Homelessness Scheme Assessment Committee. A particular priority in the coming year will be the procurement of increased provision.
Staff	
	Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan
Action 26	We will continue to develop upon actions completed throughout our Year 2 Action Plan and will continue to provide opportunities for staff to input into Homelessness research.
Action 27	Build upon the collaborative co-location of services and case management approach developed through projects such as the Belfast Complex Lives Project.
	Actions subject to securing funding
Action 28	We will continue to work with relevant internal departments to support the development and delivery of a rolling training programme for internal staff to equip staff to deliver psychologically informed responses.
Process	
	Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan
Action 29	We will continue to develop specification for digital solutions to support implementation of the Common Assessment Framework, provision of bed availability information, producing meaningful measures and data analysis.




Action	Objectives
<b>Objective 1 – Prioritise Homelessness Prevention</b>	
	<b>Actions subject to securing funding</b>
Action 30	We will seek to continue the Homelessness Prevention Fund.
	<b>Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan</b>
<i>Primary Prevention:</i>	
Action 31	We will target Homelessness Prevention via provision of awareness sessions to the Community Sector. We will continue to engage with the Community Sector to improve Homelessness awareness and support services available. We will work alongside Supporting Communities to promote engagement and a cohesive working approach.
Action 32	We will seek to deliver a public awareness campaign to shift mind-sets towards, and raise awareness of homelessness prevention. This will include support and promotion of Northern Ireland's Homelessness Awareness Week.
Action 33	We will utilise a team of Financial Inclusion Managers to assist with homelessness prevention.
	<b>Actions subject to securing funding</b>
Action 34	We will continue to explore methods and work alongside key partners to raise awareness of homelessness in the education sector. This will involve exploring how we can work with the Young Person's Peer Support Project on how we can raise awareness in schools.
<i>Secondary Prevention:</i>	
Action 35	We will seek to work with health partners to develop mental health and addiction support initiatives aimed at homelessness prevention. This will build on aspects delivered in Year 2 such as continuing to support the Complex Lives initiative, and engaging with the Strategic Leadership Group (SLG).
Action 36	Target homelessness prevention initiatives to those at most risk and prioritise funding to projects most strategically aligned.
	<b>Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan</b>
<i>Tertiary Prevention:</i>	
Action 37	We will continue to support homelessness prevention services and we continue to support the delivery of Tranche 2 of the Sustaining Tenancies Grant Funding Programme. We will continue to support the development and delivery of the Tenancy Sustainment team's 'Warm Handover Protocol' for Housing Advisors to identify clients in need of a managed case handover to their Patch Manager and possibly to the Patch Financial Inclusion Manager.
Action 38	Explore options for measurement and benchmarking in respect of homelessness prevention.

<b>Objective 2 – Address homelessness by providing settled, appropriate accommodation and support</b>	
<b>Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan</b>	
<i>Understanding Customer's Needs:</i>	
Action 39	We will continue to embed the Common Assessment Framework as the main tool to assess and record needs on an ongoing basis and work with the homelessness sector to further refine understanding and terminology in relation to customer support needs.
<i>Improving Access and Inclusion &amp; Flexible and Responsive:</i>	
Action 40	We will work with all relevant statutory and voluntary agencies in meeting the accommodation and support needs of refugee households or those offered humanitarian protection having been displaced from their home countries for reasons such as war.
<i>Implementing Strategic Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation:</i>	
Action 41	We will implement the Year 3 actions in the Strategic Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation.
<b>Objective 3 – Support customers to transition from homelessness into settled accommodation</b>	
<b>Actions that will be delivered as part of the Year 3 Action Plan</b>	
<i>Housing Supply:</i>	
Action 42	We will seek to expand Housing First provision, including supporting the delivery of the Housing First Task and Finish Group.
<i>Support:</i>	
Action 43	We will aim to further develop the Complex Lives Model and closely align it to the scaling up of the Housing First model, so as to ensure there are effective pathways to suitable accommodation solutions and also with the right wrap around support tailored to individual needs.
Action 44	We will support The Executive Office in implementing the Period Product (Free Provision) NI Act 2022 and we will seek to promote and raise awareness of the support available.
<i>Community Integration:</i>	
Action 45	We will work with the Housing Community Network, Race Relations Officer, and other key partners to promote community integration.
<i>Annual Progress Report:</i>	
Action 46	We will publish an Annual Progress Report, which outlines our actions in delivering Year 2 of the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27.

To discuss or comment on this document,  
or to request an alternative format,  
please contact:

Homelessness Strategy Team  
Housing Executive  
2 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8PB

 03448 920 900

 [homelessness.strategy@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:homelessness.strategy@nihe.gov.uk)

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**nihe.gov.uk**  
   