

# Economy and Housing policy cttee

## Homelessness and LGR considerations

1<sup>st</sup> July 2026



Winchester  
City Council

# Interactive session to explore homelessness services in Winchester and LGR considerations

- Legislation
- Services offered in Winchester District
- Case studies
- Local government reorganisation considerations

# Legislation

- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is the main legislation governing how councils must respond to homelessness in England.
- It significantly changed the system by focusing on early intervention and prevention and extending duties to all eligible households, not only those in priority need.
- Requiring councils to take proactive, personalised action to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Prevention Duty (Up to 56 Days) - Household is at risk of homelessness within 56 days. We must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness.
- Relief Duty (Up to 56 Days) - Household is already homeless. We must take reasonable steps to help them secure accommodation.
- Main Housing Duty – If the household is homeless and eligible, has priority need (e.g. families with children, pregnancy, vulnerability) is not intentionally homeless the council must secure suitable settled accommodation.

# What we do in Winchester DC

- Open and accessible duty service
- Always able to see an officer face-to-face
- Early intervention and prevention options
- Homelessness pathways
- Support available
- Manage own temporary accommodation stock

# Case studies

- Interactive session in groups to make decisions on homeless approaches

# Case Study 1

- A family of four (two children under 10) are evicted from a private rented tenancy in Winchester following a rent increase they cannot afford.
- They have lived in Winchester for 2 years
- One parent working locally (low income)
- No extended family support locally
- They approach the council as homeless

# To consider

- Do they qualify as homeless and in priority need? (Housing Act 1996, Part 7)
- Are they intentionally homeless?
- Do the council owe a duty to provide temporary accommodation?
- If so, should the council place the family in Winchester or out of area (due to affordability pressures)
- Whether to prioritise the household on the Housing Register (Banding)

# Case Study 2

- A mother with two children flees domestic abuse from another Hampshire district and presents in Winchester.
- No local connection to Winchester
- Immediate safety risk
- Requires confidential location

# To consider

- Should the council refer the family back to their 'home' council?
- If the council offer accommodation what is suitable?
- Long term should the council keep the duty in Winchester or coordinate with another authority (if safe)
- Can the family join the housing register if they have no local connection?

# Case Study 3

- Single female
- History of rough sleeping and unstable accommodation
- Substance misuse and mental health needs
- Previously evicted from temporary accommodation 3 months ago due to assault on another resident

# To consider

- Is the applicant intentionally homeless?
- What duties still apply (relief vs main duty)?
- Should the council use its' discretion to provide accommodation?
- How does the council meet support needs alongside housing duty?

# Case Study 4

- A family of 3 were made homeless from a family address one year ago.
- They have lived in WCC temporary accommodation ever since and were owed a main housing duty from the council.
- They have been awarded band 2 to move on through Hampshire Home Choice but are not bidding because they are waiting for a specific property in the road they previously lived in to become available.

# To consider

- How long should officers allow the family to wait?
- Should the council apply for properties on their behalf?
- If the council bids on their behalf and the family refuses the property because they still wish to wait, what should the council do?
- Should the council evict them from temporary accommodation or give them another chance?

# LGR considerations

- Where to discharge statutory duty
- Future of local voluntary services
- Benefits of LGR in terms of joined up services
- Should priority on the housing register be based on historic district boundaries (local need) or a wider unitary need-based system?
- Does LGR improve outcomes for complex households, or risk them being “lost” in a bigger system?
- Will pathways become more economically viable and joined up?
- Will partnerships become diluted?
- Will funding pressures be spread better amongst a wider area?

# Thank you

Questions?



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