



Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25

Progress Report 2022

Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was adopted in April 2020.

The strategy was produced in line with the Council's legal duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, which required all local authorities to carry out a homelessness review, develop a Homelessness Strategy for their area to prevent homelessness, and provide accommodation and/or support for people who are or may become homeless, including rough sleepers.

Background and Legislation Change Since the Last Strategy.

<u>The Homelessness Code of Guidance published in February 2018</u> stated that local authorities with rough sleepers ought to consider provision for rough sleepers within their homelessness strategy. In line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy and to satisfy the requirements for the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, it was agreed that rough sleeping would form part of Colchester's strategy with an Action Plan set out to specifically reduce rough sleeping.

<u>The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</u> fundamentally changed the way local authorities work to support homeless people in their areas, giving them new duties to prevent homelessness for more people. Colchester City Council (formerly Colchester Borough Council) worked collaboratively with its partners to build on this approach to produce the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Colchester.

Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25

The overarching vision for the Strategy is:

To build collaborative partnerships to increase early intervention and prevention of homelessness in Colchester.

To achieve this vision 4 key aims were agreed:

- Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.
- Helping people to sustain their accommodation.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people that experience homelessness.
- Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness.

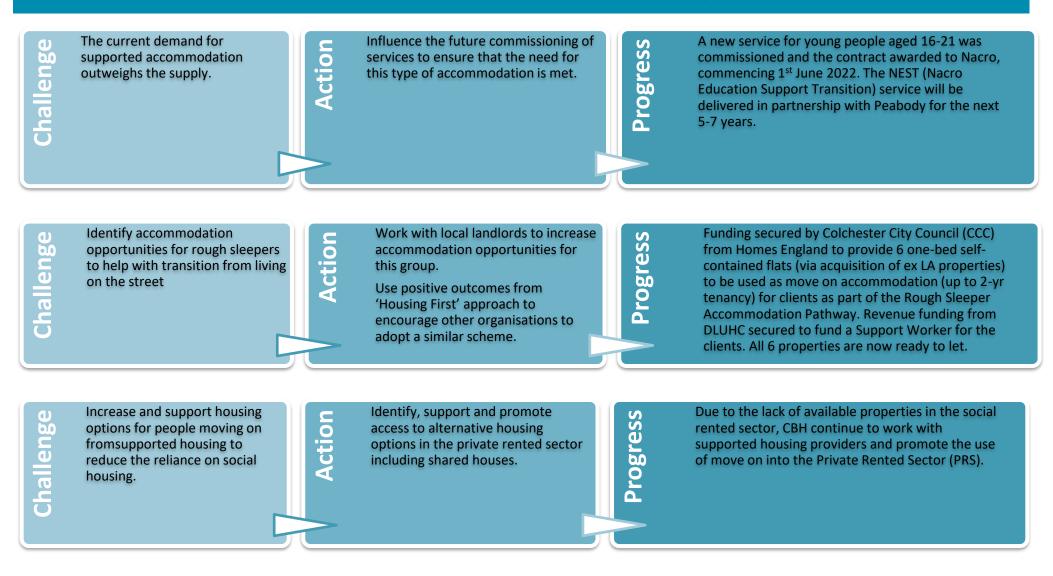
In addition, a Rough Sleeping Action Plan was agreed.

The Strategy will achieve its aims and objectives through the implementation of a 5-year Delivery Plan that will tackle homelessness in the city, by working closely with partner organisations and focusing on early interventions that prevent homelessness.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Progress Report 2022 contains some highlights of the actions in the Strategy that have been achieved or progressed during 2022.

The Delivery Plan which sets out the actions to deliver the aims of the Strategy has also been updated.

Aim 1: Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.



Aim 2: Helping people to sustain their accommodation.

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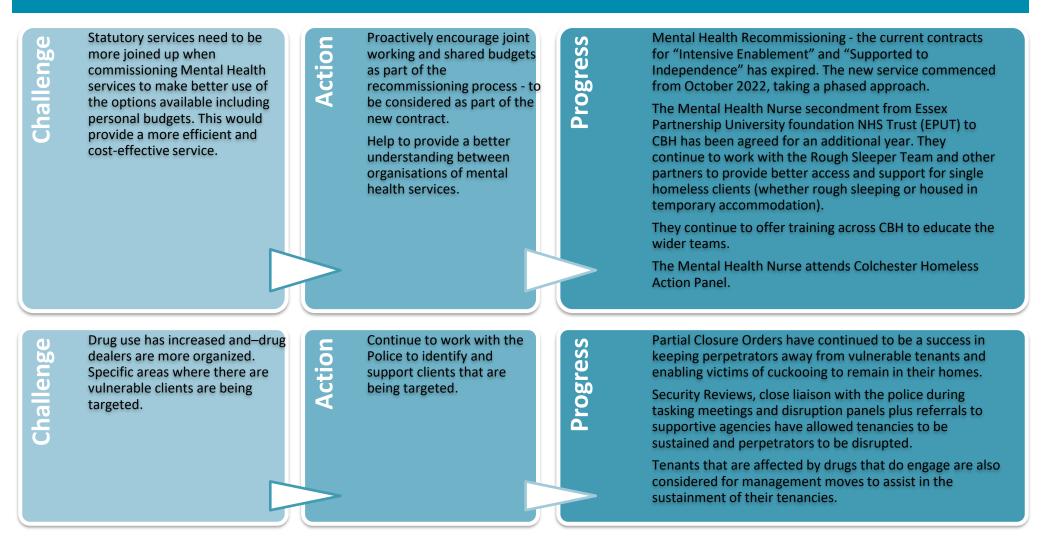
Encourage the take up of During 2021/2022: Ensure tenants in the social Progress Action tenancy support including rented sector at risk of 5 tenants evicted for rent arrears and 4 for ASB. floating support to vulnerable homelessness are provided with •Inequalities funding has paid for additional hours for the tenants moving into more intensive tenancy support tenancy sustainment team supporting vulnerable tenants including that provided by accommodation including at risk of eviction. floating support. temporary accommodation •Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) have continued to use partial closure orders to enable tenants to remain in their home and address breaches of tenancy. •CCC/CBH have continued to fund Catch22 & Open Road to fasttrack CBH tenants for support to sustain tenancies. •Continued partnership working with Citizens Advice, Christians Against Poverty and Colchester Credit Union to offer support to tenants to sustain their tenancies. •Officers continued to make referrals to Peabody for floating support. •CBH working with Community Mental Health to support a Community Psychiatric Nurse working alongside the teams to help tenants with mental health issues access services to enable them to sustain tenancies. Ensure the provision of debt and Provide support & advice to During 2021/2022 CBH's Financial Inclusion Team (FIT): Progress Action welfare rights advice is targeted Challeng tenants on managing debt •Supported 12 CCC tenants to open bank accounts. at those at risk of losing their and welfare benefits •Reduced benefit cap cases to 8. including organisations accommodation. •Supported 163 tenants to receive Discretionary Housing working with single homeless payments (DHP) totalling £115,032. Increase the take up of debt •Reduced Under Occupation cases to 185 (a record low). advice in the City and •Made 1,298 person contacts. promote existing services. •Managed 1,793 Universal Credit (UC) cases. Work with private rented •Managed 79 Welfare Rights cases. sector and social landlords to

establish new approaches t

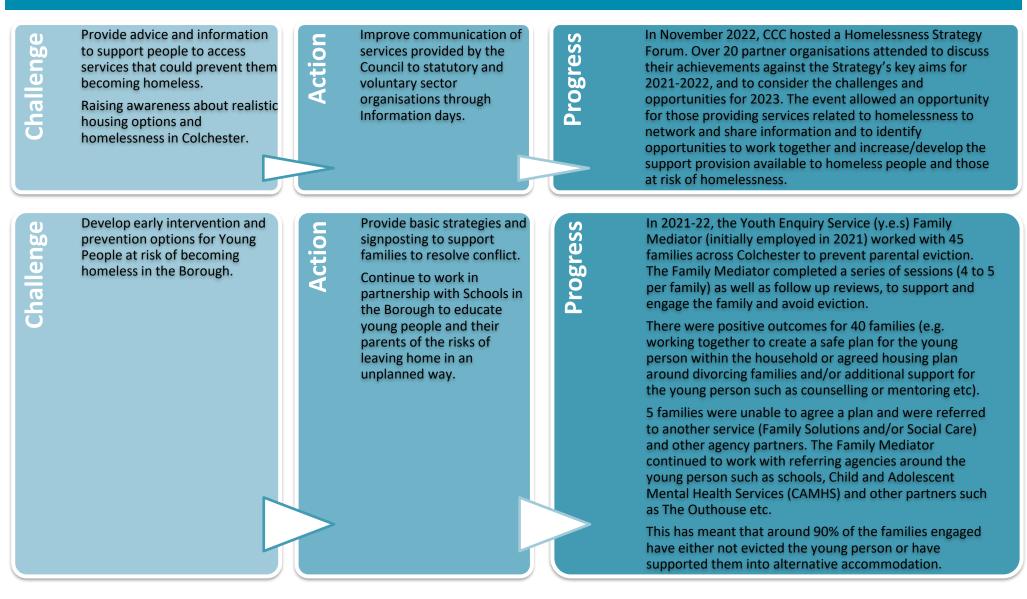
reduce evictions.

- •Assessed 2039 Housing Benefit cases.
- Processed £32,239 Housing Benefit overlaps
- •631 tenants have their rent paid directly to CBH.

Aim 3: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of people that experience homelessness.



Aim 4: Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness.



Rough Sleeping Action Plan

Funding awarded by MHCLG Accommodation with During 2021-2022, there were 7 referrals to the Housing **D** Progress Action Challeng Rough sleeper initiative Led scheme (provided by Sanctuary Housing) via the wraparound support needed for entrenched rough sleepers to funding to provide an Rough Sleeper Team. help them move from the streets opportunity to pilot a 1 client was successfully moved to the sister scheme, in a 'Housing First' Registered into settled accommodation. one bedroom self-contained flat where they receive a Provider that provides lower level of support and have settled in well. supported housing. No clients have returned to rough sleeping in this period. Sanctuary have developed different strategies for clients to enable them to access support, such as walk-and-talk style meetings to develop rapport and build trust. Sanctuary have continued to work with Peabody around both the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Pathway (RSAP) and Next Steps Accommodation Pathway (NSAP) properties, to provide a joined up approach and move-on pathway with support for their clients. Sanctuary have been supporting referrals who are waiting to move in, completing regular meetings with them to ensure they are accustomed to engaging in support offered, and to build positive working relationships. Alongside this, Sanctuary have had drop-in sessions from an NHS Nurse for clients to discuss their mental health and have supported a client to engage in employment. Enable more robust sharing of Research the viability of The In-Form computer system is in place and being Action Progress information about rough using a system i.e. In-Form utilised by CBH and the Rough Sleeper team – this allows Challeng sleepers by setting up a system to identify and provide

information on rough

sleepers in Colchester

between the Rough Sleeper

sector organisations.

Team (CBH) and the voluntary

accurate recording and sharing of information across services. CBH are working with Partners to fund wider usage of In-Form to allow better information sharing across different organisations.