

Local Authority

Housing Support Programme  
Strategy

April 2022- March 2026

Template

## Content Page

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### Foreword (Optional)

Foreword from the Chief Executive of the local authority, Cabinet Leader, Cabinet Member, etc.

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## 1. Introduction

Local authorities should develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy (“the Strategy”) every four years, with a mid-point review every two years, which will outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing related support services. This should provide a single strategic view of the local authority’s approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services. As such, it would include both statutory homelessness functions funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the Housing Support Grant (HSG).

Local authorities must ensure the Strategy, as the single strategic document on housing support and homelessness prevention, also satisfies the existing statutory requirements for a homelessness strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. There is no requirement to produce a separate strategy.

The Strategy should take into account how it can support delivery of the Welsh Government’s vision and aims for the prevention of homelessness and the transformational shift required to move to a rapid re-housing approach as outlined in the specific guidance to be provided to local authorities in respect of this.

This section should set out the overall purpose and scope of the Strategy, including the legislative and policy context.

### 1a Purpose of the Strategy

Set out the purpose and scope of the Strategy, e.g.

- *Confirm that it sets out the single strategic direction of the local authority for homelessness prevention and housing related support services for the next four years (2022 – 2026).*
- *It identifies and sets out the key priorities for the local authority and its partners – based on findings from a comprehensive needs assessment and stakeholder engagement.*
- *Confirm that the Strategy satisfies the existing statutory requirements for a homelessness strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. State whether the local authority’s Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022, published in 2018, has been reviewed, updated and incorporated into this single Housing Support Programme Strategy.*

## **1b Legislative and policy context**

### National context

Provide a high level overview of relevant law and/or national policy relevant to the Strategy, e.g. Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Housing Support Grant Practice Guidance, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Evidence of how relevant provisions of legislation or policy has been applied or considered should be referenced in the relevant section within the Strategy. For example, consideration of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) should run throughout all stages of developing your Strategy, and in the planning and delivery of your services (there is a [framework tool](#) to help people working in public services apply the Well-being of Future Generations Act ways of working to service design).

### Local/Regional context

Set out a high level overview of the local and regional policy context and relevant plans applicable in developing the Strategy, e.g. Local/Regional Housing Strategy, Corporate Plans, Well-Being Plans, Rough Sleeper Action Plan, etc.

Explain how the Local Housing Strategy has informed this Strategy and how the Strategy sits within the local authority's overall housing strategic approach.

Explain how each of the policies/plans have been applied or considered within the relevant section of the Strategy e.g. well-being plans informing the needs assessment.

## **1c Vision and principles**

Set out the local authority's overall four year vision for homelessness prevention and housing related support services (what the local authority would like the future to look like/the position they would like to achieve in the future)

### Vision

For example, the Welsh Government's vision for housing (as set out in the current *Prosperity for All: the national strategy 2017-2021*)

*"We want everyone to live in a home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life".*

What key principles will be employed to deliver your vision?

How do these key principles align with your well-being objectives?

### Example principles

- *We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, and where it cannot be prevented ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeated.*

- *We will work to ensure that every person has fair and equal access to good quality housing, and housing related support and advice at the earliest possible opportunity in order to prevent homelessness and/ or maintain independent living*

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## 2. Needs assessment

As set out in the HSG Guidance, local authorities are required to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment every four years, with a light touch review every two years. The assessment should:

- provide a statement of what the local authority knows about the needs and future demand for homelessness prevention and housing support services;
- inform the strategic priorities;
- encompass the statutory requirement for a homelessness review as well as the full assessment for the HSG, and
- be informed by, but not limited to, the following data:
  - Population needs assessment
  - Local authority well-being assessment
  - Homelessness statistics and other housing data such as waiting lists.
  - Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
  - Feedback from service users
  - Regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence needs assessments
  - Any relevant research/national publication
  - Outcomes data
  - Needs data from providers, gateway panels
  - Unmet needs data over the last 12 months from providers, homelessness reviews

Some of the above will be undertaken as part of the Local Housing Market Assessment and as such these exercises can and should complement each other.

See section 51 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) and [Chapter 5 of the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness](#), for details of the requirement for a Homelessness Review and what it should cover.

The needs assessment will also inform the HSG Annual Delivery Plan. The service response to be set out by the authority in its commissioning plan (which is part of the HSG Delivery Plan) should demonstrably respond to the needs identified in this assessment.

Local authorities should produce a 'Statement of Need' based on findings from the needs assessment. It should:

- set out the current and future demands,
- include regional needs where the needs are met by the local authority, and

- state how statutory needs identified will be met through the discharge of statutory duties.

The format of this statement is for the authority to decide and can be produced collaboratively.

The full needs assessment undertaken should be recorded and saved as a separate document and titled 'Statement of Need'. It does not need to be included within the Strategy document, but must be available on request and published alongside the Strategy.

This section should summarise the Statement of Need as follows:

**2a Needs Assessment process**

Briefly explain that a needs assessment has been undertaken and the process employed. Provide a link to the 'Statement of Need' document.

**2b Key findings**

List the sources of evidence/information used for the needs assessment (see above).

Summarise the key findings/issues identified from the needs assessment.

**2c Conclusion**

Provide an overall conclusion of the statement of need

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**3. Strategic priorities**

Set out the local authority's agreed strategic priorities for the delivery of HSG (housing related support) and homelessness prevention services. The priorities should be informed by the needs assessment and stakeholder engagement undertaken, and any Welsh Government or local authority wider policy requirements (e.g. move to rapid rehousing).

This should also include any agreed regional housing related support strategic objectives agreed with partners and the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group.

This section should include:

- A description of the priorities, e.g. to increase access to private rented sector housing.
- Why it is a priority (e.g. gap in provision identified). How you are going to deliver the priorities. What are the key actions required to deliver the priorities. To note that the action plan at Annex 1 will need to include the specific details of the actions (what, when, who, etc.).

- The priorities should be numbered for ease of cross referencing.
- To include the local authority's local level priorities and any agreed regional priorities.
- One of the priorities must be around your approach to targeted prevention as set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- One of the priorities must be around the local authority's shift to rapid rehousing.

Example priorities:

**Strategic priority 1 – Move to adopt a Rapid Rehousing approach**

In line with Welsh Government policy direction, we will implement our Rapid Rehousing transition plan as included at Annex 2.

**Strategic priority 2 – Strengthen and expand access to mental health support provision to meet increase in demand**

The needs assessment identified an increase in the number of people with complex needs requiring access to mental health support provision. To meet this increase in demand, the authority will undertake a comprehensive review of current provision and work with key partners to ensure effective services are delivered to meet future need.

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**4. Stakeholder engagement**

As well as consulting with their Housing Strategy Team in the process of developing their Strategy, local authorities must consult and engage with the following stakeholders (as a minimum). This engagement must be undertaken in line with the duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the 5 Ways of Working.

- Health services
- Social services
- Probation services
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Boards
- Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards
- Children and Communities Grant
- Providers
- Landlords
- Service Users
- Carers and families of people who use the services

How this is to be achieved and what mechanisms are used is the decision of the local authority. Evidence of how the local authority has engaged with stakeholders to develop the Strategy should be included within the Strategy (e.g. How have you engaged and collaborated with stakeholders? How have stakeholders been involved

in the decision affecting them? How does the strategy integrate with the vision/aims/priorities/principles of stakeholders?)

This section should include:

#### **4a Stakeholders engaged with**

List the group of stakeholders engaged with and the mechanisms used for doing this, e.g. surveys, engagement events, etc.

#### **4b. Stakeholder feedback**

Summarise the feedback received from the stakeholder engagement. What were the key issues/findings?

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### **5. Impact assessments**

As part of the strategic planning process, authorities are required to undertake appropriate impact assessments of the strategy, particularly the strategic priorities identified at section 3.

As a minimum this should include:

- Equality Impact Assessment - Summarise the impact of the strategic priorities identified on people with protected characteristics
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment - Identify the impacts and actions required to ensure delivery of the range and level of services needed in line with the Welsh Language Standards requirements placed on the local authority.
- Children’s Rights Impact Assessment – Whilst the HSG does not directly support children, many of the households supported will include children and therefore it is appropriate to conduct this assessment and consider the impact of the Strategy on children’s rights.
- Any additional impact assessments required by the local authority

The full impact assessments undertaken should be recorded and saved as a separate document titled ‘Housing Support Programme Strategy Impact Assessment’, and be available on request. They do not need to be included within this Strategy document.

This section should list the impact assessments undertaken, and a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts identified for each assessment and any action to be taken to address any negative impacts.

#### **5a Impact assessment process**

Briefly explain that a comprehensive impact assessment exercise has been undertaken of the strategic priorities and the process employed. Provide a link to the ‘HSP Impact Assessment’ document.

**5b Key findings**

List the impact assessments undertaken (see above).

Summarise the positive and/or negative impacts identified for each assessment and any action to be taken to address any negative impacts.

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**6. Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Strategy**

**6a Working with partners**

Set out how the authority will work with key partners such as health, care and criminal justice in order to deliver and optimise the impact of the strategy.

**6b Funding sources**

Set out what different funding sources will be accessed to deliver the Strategy.

**6c Monitoring, reviewing and evaluation arrangements**

The HSG guidance sets out local authorities should develop a HSP Strategy every four years, with a mid-point review every two years.

This section should set how the authority will locally monitor, review and evaluate the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan (at Annex A).

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## Annex A

Each local authority must have an action plan setting out the actions required to deliver the strategic priorities at section 2. This should also include regional priorities where action is delivered by the local authority.

### ACTION PLAN

<b>Priority (from Section 2)</b>	<b>Action required to deliver the priority</b>	<b>Timescales/ By When</b>	<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Outcome/Outputs</b>

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## Annex B

**Insert Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan**