

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2024 - 2029



Mansfield
District Council



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Foreword

Before I was elected as Mansfield's Executive Mayor, I volunteered at a local soup kitchen and witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of homelessness on people's lives. Homelessness can happen to anyone through domestic abuse, family break up, unemployment, mental health or drug and alcohol addiction problems.

Our housing teams have worked with domestic abuse services, supported housing providers, the Police, DWP, health and social care and substance misuse services, and community voluntary and faith groups, to develop a strategy that has not only reduced homelessness numbers but has started to tackle the root causes of homelessness.

National Government has recognised the progress we are making by awarding the council £1.8 million for our Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) project. This will enable us to continue projects that support with accommodation, provide intensive wraparound support, employment and specialist substance misuse support to rough sleepers.

We want to build on the projects we have already achieved with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), the Healthy Homes Hub, the Supporting Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) and Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM). These are just a few examples of what has been achieved and what we want to build upon to support people facing multiple disadvantages.

This strategy continues the impressive progress we have made to date by taking on a holistic view of the measures that are needed to end homelessness. This includes implementing policies that reduce the impact of poverty, partnership working to respond to the shortage of social housing and support customers in financial hardship.

In simple terms, we are helping the most vulnerable in our communities turn their lives around. The cost of allowing homelessness to continue puts excessive demands on our health services, benefits and criminal justice system. We are proud to be trail blazing a cost-effective best practice project that is life changing and saves lives. You can't really put a price on that.



**Executive Mayor of Mansfield,
Andy Abrahams**

Introduction

It is Mansfield District Council's vision to create an environment where people lead safe and healthy lifestyles, ensuring suitable housing for all.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that the causes of homelessness are identified at an earlier stage and prevented where possible, to break the cycle of homelessness.

Homelessness is often associated with people sleeping rough, however people experiencing homelessness can also include:

- staying with friends or family
- staying in a hostel, night shelter or B&B
- squatting (because you have no legal right to stay)
- at risk of domestic abuse
- experiencing violence in your home
- living in poor conditions that affect your health
- separated from your family because you do not have a place to live together
- being served a notice to quit by your landlord.

Section 1 of the Homeless Act 2002 requires Local Authorities to publish a Strategy based on a review of homelessness in their area. The review can be viewed in Appendix 1.



Priorities

This Strategy identifies a number of priority areas and actions that need to be taken to ensure this vision is achieved.

The priorities of this Strategy are to:

- Early intervention through effective partnership working.
- The provision of an accessible, agile and responsive homelessness service.
- Access to affordable, quality and sustainable accommodation across all sectors.
- Tackle rough sleeping by developing and improving pathways.
- Linking health, well-being and housing together to improve the life chances and aspirations of those affected.
- Delivering holistic support solutions to sustain long term tenancies and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Mansfield District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 builds on the progress and outcomes from the previous Strategy 2019-2024.

This strategy will continue to focus on early intervention, homeless prevention, recovery and strengthening partnerships. The council recognises that this is not a standalone strategy as homelessness is everyone's responsibility and can only be tackled through closer partnership working and communication.

Acknowledgements

Mansfield District Council would like to thank all the service users, providers and practitioners from across all sectors, who contributed to the Homelessness Review and the development of this strategy.



Vision

It is Mansfield District Council's vision that the population should be living in, or can access, homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that homelessness affects the smallest possible number of residents and where it does, there is help available to quickly resolve their situation so that it does not happen again. This Strategy identifies a number of priority areas and actions that need to be taken to ensure this vision is achieved.



Context

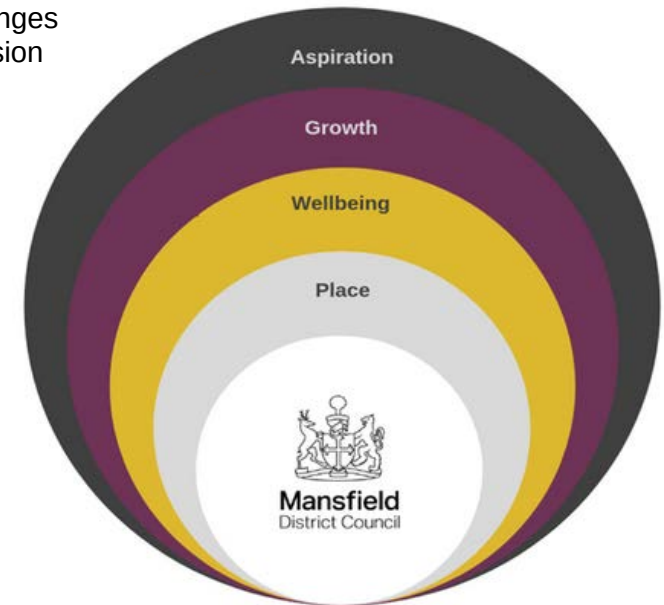
Preventing and reducing homelessness is a key priority to Mansfield, demonstrated by many of the aims and objectives set out in the council's Corporate Plan. Mansfield's vision for the district is to: "Grow an ambitious, vibrant and confident place" Our vision for Mansfield is ambitious. It is designed to underpin everything we do as a council over the next decade. It sets out our ambitions, the changes we want to deliver and the priorities we will focus on to achieve them. To ensure delivery of the vision we will focus on the following four cross cutting themes: Each of the four themes have a detailed delivery plan.

These include:

- Place - To create a place to be proud of, a place of choice.
- Wellbeing - A flourishing place where people are healthy and happy.
- Growth – A place for investment and opportunity.
- Aspiration – A place where people can achieve and succeed.

These priorities have informed the development of the council's Housing Service Plan.

The Corporate Plan is currently being reviewed and will be brought in line with this strategy under the 1 year review of the strategic action plan.



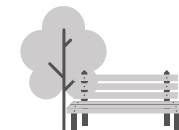
Growth



Aspiration



Wellbeing



Place

Context

Housing Service Plan 2023-24

The Housing Service Plan ensures that the council delivers quality customer focused housing services that are able to adapt to the diverse needs of our communities.

The five priorities are:

- To work with our partners to achieve the best outcomes for our customers and communities
- To safeguard and protect the most vulnerable in our communities
- To support and promote improved health and wellbeing in the home and communities
- To ensure safe and suitable housing for all
- To use customer insight and engagement to develop and improve services and drive forward performance.

Organisation Development Plan 2023-27

The Organisational Development Plan, sets out how the council will uphold our Principles and Values. It focuses on staff, with the three key themes being:

- Valuing our People
- Transforming our Organisation
- Developing our Staff

The Mansfield District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29 recognises the needs to continually develop its own staff in order to tackle the challenges of homelessness, and we will work in line with the Organisational Development Plan's principles to achieve this. They encourage us to provide value for money and good customer service, be open, honest, listening and responsive, be open minded and embrace change and work with partners and communities for mutual benefits. These principles are essential to creating a successful homelessness strategy and we will promote them alongside the values of integrity, teamwork, passion and pride, empowerment and involving, and excellence in work, to all services collaborating under the Mansfield District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29.



Progress since the 2019-2024 Strategy

Key themes from the Mansfield District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 were to:

- Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness
- Respond to the shortage of social housing
- Supported housing and housing related support
- Working with the private rented sector (PRS)
- Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
- Reducing the impact of homelessness on the community
- Improving customer services for people who are homeless or at risk of homeless
- Improving the data available to all relevant agencies.



Mansfield has been successful with various funding grants within the previous strategy and working with outside partners and agencies we have seen success in meeting these outcomes. We have:

- Successfully secured funding to implement a Housing First project to tackle the root cause of rough sleeping and significantly decreased the number of rough sleepers in the district
- Developed a supported housing winter accommodation model with partners to accommodate rough sleepers through the winter period
- Achieved the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation to support survivors of domestic abuse
- Secured funding for and increased flexibility to support customers in financial hardship and worked with partners to develop a Feeding Mansfield Network.
- Secured funding to pay off arrears across all tenures of properties to secure tenancies through the pandemic.
- Enhanced partnership working between a range of agencies, including woman's aid, police, probation, DWP, social care, health, substance misuse, community, voluntary and faith groups. Including co-located roles within the local authority for greater partnership working.
- Secured funding for and delivered a countywide Street Outreach Service for rough sleepers in partnership with the County districts and boroughs.
- Funded a youth homeless project to target homelessness myths and educate from an earlier stage
- Developed an out of hospital care model for people being discharged with no fixed abode.
- Secured funding to deliver a Healthy Homes Hub to prevent eviction for people who are struggling in their homes.
- Secured funding to deliver a Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to inspect supported housing providers who accommodate vulnerable residents.

These achievements provide a firm basis for our 2024-2029 strategy, which will be informed by the findings of the 2023 review.

Key Findings from the Homeless Review

Before writing the Mansfield District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29, we first reviewed the existing strategy from 2019-24. The review was conducted in partnership with the Mid-Nottinghamshire local authorities, Newark and Sherwood District Council and Ashfield District Council. The full review has been published alongside this strategy but several key findings are discussed in more detail below.

Domestic Abuse

Whilst the existing strategy from 2019-24 did not have a dedicated theme for domestic abuse, it became clear that Mansfield has a high number of survivors. In recognition of this, we became early adopters of the re-defined definitions of domestic abuse and began awarding single survivors of domestic abuse, made homeless because of this abuse with a priority need under homelessness, before the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 came in to force. We then went on to commission an independent co-ordinator with Nottinghamshire Woman's Aid in February 2022, to scrutinise and implement the standards of The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation across the whole of Mansfield District Council. We have now updated all of our policies and procedures, trained all employees across MDC and implemented a culture change to how we react to domestic abuse. The assessment process took place in March 2023 and we achieved the accreditation. We intend to work towards the enhanced accreditation in 2026.



Ending of Private Rented Tenancies

Data from our Housing Solutions team over the last five years has consistently shown that, out of the people who approach us for housing assistance, the end of assured shorthold tenancy is the main reason for homelessness. The review highlighted that the housing options for those on low income households are limited as the private sector is becoming increasingly unaffordable, and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is not keeping pace. In response to this, Mansfield District Council has enhanced its offer to applicants accessing the private rented sector and we now offer cash payments towards deposit and rent in advance, alongside our paper bond scheme. We cannot always cover the full amount required because of demand on this resource so we work alongside homeless prevention charities who can give financial support to customers.

We also have a comprehensive private rented advice package available to email or post to customers for their reference, and this includes things to look out for when applying for properties, how to check what benefits people may be able to access and what funding support may be available to them. The review has highlighted the ongoing need to focus on prevention with private rented tenancies and we train our Housing Solutions team to review all of the options to save a private rented tenancy, before considering rehousing. Examples of these interventions include MDC liaising with private rented sector (PRS) landlords and using their funding to clear arrears, as well as offering family mediation services and responding to the changing needs of residents by swiftly making adaptations to their homes before hospital discharge.



Key Findings from the Homeless Review

Increase in Homelessness and need for temporary accommodation

The final key finding from the review was the overall increase in homelessness, and the amount of these cases that required temporary accommodation. Key figures in the table below indicate that the amount of applicants approaching Mansfield District Council has been steadily increasing over the last five years. This has coincided with a reduction in the amount of social housing properties let each year, the COVID-19 pandemic and a cost of living crisis.

The review has highlighted a need for Mansfield District Council to adapt and change to the new demand of homelessness, and ensure it maximises staff efficiency and the support of partner agencies to deliver the service required by the current climate.

Regarding the need for temporary accommodation, as more applicants approach as homelessness, and less social housing properties become available for rent each year, the length of time applicants spend in temporary accommodation is increasing. Mansfield District Council have 32 units of self-contained temporary accommodation across the district and we employ a team to manage these licences and support the residents in them.

Our review included a focus group with current residents of temporary accommodation and whilst it found that residents were happy with the speed at which temporary accommodation was secured, and the support offered, it also found that the condition of the temporary accommodation needs to be reviewed to improve the wellness of people's mental health. It also highlighted that this impact becomes more significant the longer an applicant is in the temporary accommodation. What's more, as applicants are spending longer in temporary accommodation, there is a smaller turnover of available rooms and this has forced MDC to rely on short-term hotel placements, whilst our own temporary accommodation becomes available. This provides an additional financial burden for MDC and it uses money that could be spent on the prevention of homelessness. It also adds further distress to applicants going through the homelessness process.

The full Homelessness Strategy Review can be viewed on the Mansfield District Council website at www.mansfield.gov.uk/homeless

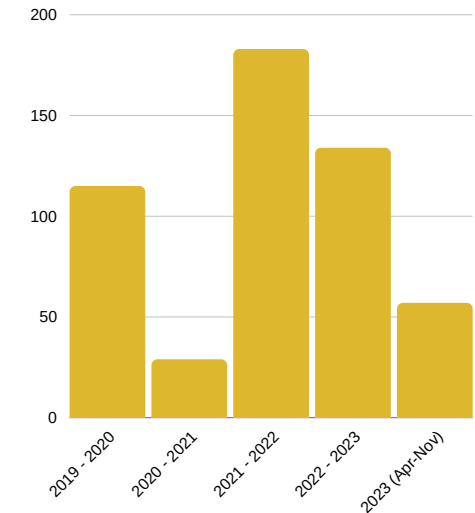


Key Findings from the Homeless Review

Prevention figures 2019 - 2023

These figures show the number of cases that we have prevented from becoming homeless.

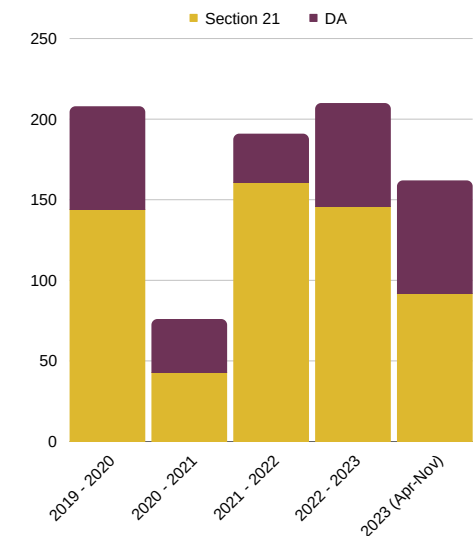
Year	Amount of applicants prevented from becoming homeless
2019 - 2020	115
2020 - 2021	29
2021 - 2022	183
2022 - 2023	134
2023 (April to November)	57



Domestic abuse and Section 21 (No Fault Evictions) figures 2019 - 2023

Currently our two main reasons for homelessness are cases facing domestic abuse or Section 21 (No Fault Eviction) notices.

Year	Section 21	Domestic abuse
2019 - 2020	144	64
2020 - 2021	43	33
2021 - 2022	161	30
2022 - 2023	146	64
2023 (April to November)	92	70



Priorities

Priority 1 - Early intervention through effective partnership working

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Intervene and communicate with partners at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness wherever possible	Host multi-disciplinary meetings with partners through the Rough Sleeper Action Group (RSAG)	MDC – Housing Needs, Rough Sleeping Initiative Services	Already in place but will strengthen through the 5 year strategy
	Deliver an enhanced Sanctuary Scheme offer	MDC – Housing Needs, Nottinghamshire Woman’s Aid, Nottinghamshire County Council	
	Challenge incorrect notices served by landlords and provide support to keep tenants in their homes	MDC – Housing Needs, Call Before You Serve	
Continue to bid for funding to develop specialist projects with partners for complex needs clients	Deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of the Hoarders Panel	MDC – Housing Needs, Jigsaw	Year 1 - 2024/25
	Deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of the Healthy Homes Hub	MDC – Housing Needs, Private Sector Housing	
Continue partnership working to embed the duty to refer process	Refresh with all statutory agencies the duty to refer process	MDC – Housing Needs, Probations, Health, DWP, Social Care	Throughout 5 year strategy
Continue the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and work towards enhanced accreditation for survivors of domestic abuse	Continue Operational and Strategic Steering Groups to ensure DAHA is continued throughout every department	MDC – Housing Needs, Nottinghamshire Woman’s Aid	Throughout 5 year strategy, enhanced accreditation by 2026
	Raise awareness of accreditation locally	MDC – Housing Needs	
	Case review internally to ensure compliance with the DAHA framework	MDC – Housing Needs	

Priorities

Priority 2 - The provision of an accessible, agile and responsive homelessness service

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Prioritise training and development of MDC employees in line with current legislation	Review training needs annually and participate in regular development sessions for ongoing training needs	MDC – Housing Needs	2024-25
Continue to develop inter-agency networking to share best practice and service updates	Facilitate training and networking sessions with partnership agencies to promote and strengthen relationships	MDC – Housing Needs	Throughout 5 year strategy
Promote and encourage digital access and use of online services to aid timelier responses to enquiries	Direct applicants to use the online homeless triage. Public computers accessible within the local authority building	MDC – Housing Needs	5 years
Provide robust and effective advice service for those facing homelessness, including out of hours emergency response	Continue to provide specialist homelessness advice and support including access to translation services and accessible information	MDC – Housing Needs	5 years
Provide homelessness advice at outreach services	Housing Solutions staff attend drop in weekly sessions	MDC – Housing Needs	Throughout 5 year strategy
Facilitation of colocated services within the local authority premise	Domestic Abuse services available to advise and assist those in crisis. Teams are able to work in partnership promoting faster resolution	MDC – Housing Needs, Equation, Notts Womens Aid	5 years
Ensure our Housing Solutions service is accessible for all	Housing Solutions staff ensure they are recording all accessibility needs for clients when having initial contact, and then recording it appropriately for all staff to be aware	MDC – Housing Needs	Review in 2024-25

Priorities

Priority 3 - Access to affordable, quality and sustainable accommodation across all sectors

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Inspect and assess supported housing providers that provide accommodation to vulnerable people	Deliver and evaluate providers through the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)	MDC – Housing Needs, Private Sector Housing, Housing Benefit, Registered Providers	Review and implementation in 2024-25 for 5 year strategy
Refurbishment of MDC temporary accommodation	Refurbishment will incorporate client feedback and trauma informed approach	MDC – Temporary Accommodation	2024-25
Ensure Homefinder provides an efficient service that is reflective of the current need in the local area	Review the Homefinder policy, procedures and processes and ensure regular review of applicant's banding. Ensure the service is accessible and fair for all	MDC – Housing Needs MDC – Housing Benefit	2024-25
Further develop the support available to help those who are facing homelessness to secure private rented accommodation	Financial assistance towards rent in advance using grants and funding Encourage use of Discretionary Housing Payments for those already in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to secure alternative affordable accommodation by way of rent in advance or deposit.	MDC – Housing Needs MDC – Housing Benefit	5 year strategy
Assist with tenant and landlord relationship difficulties	Refer on to specialist support to help with conflict and misunderstandings through advice and mediation	MDC – Housing Needs and Private Sector Housing, Call Before You Serve	5 years
Develop relationships with the Private Rented market	Develop joint-working relationships with local landlords and incentives available to secure offers of accommodation for our applicants	MDC – Housing Needs	5 years

Priorities

Priority 3 - Access to affordable, quality and sustainable accommodation across all sectors

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Help those who are facing potential homelessness caused by financial difficulty	Encourage use of Discretionary Housing Payments for those already in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to be used towards rent arrears or rent shortfall	MDC – Housing Benefit	5 years
	To continue the creative use of other grants, funding sources and budgeting advice to help manage arrears, prevent eviction proceedings or secure alternative affordable accommodation.	MDC - Housing Needs and Financial Inclusion Officers	
	Continue to chair and develop the Homeless Network and link in with the Mansfield Fuel Bank and Food Network	MDC – Housing Needs and Food Eligibility Team	
Continue to work with Registered Providers of social housing to prevent evictions wherever possible	Continue to provide tenant homeless prevention advice, using funding towards arrears and providing budgeting advice when required	MDC – Housing Needs	5 years
Provide advice and support to customers in debt and provide welfare benefit advice to maximise their accommodation options	Continue to deliver debt, budgeting and welfare benefits assessments	MDC – Housing Needs Financial Inclusion Officers	5 years
	Continue to include the DWP in all homelessness initiatives and services, and build on our relationship with their dedicated homelessness and safeguarding officer		

Priorities

Priority 4 - Tackle rough sleeping by developing and improving pathways

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Continue to explore funding for the Mansfield Housing First, First Steps Project for rough sleepers	Evaluate and bid for other avenues of funding to continue project	MDC – Housing Needs, Action Housing, Change Grow Live, Tuntum Housing Association	2024-25
Work with partners to break down barriers in pathways for complex needs clients	Work with the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) network	MDC – Housing Needs, Public Health, County Districts and Boroughs	5 years
	Ensure that members of the voluntary community are engaged with and included in pathway reviews	MDC – Housing Needs, Homeless Network	
Work with the County Districts and Boroughs to continue county-wide services under the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding	Evaluate and explore avenues of funding to continue the County Street Outreach team	MDC – Housing Needs, County Districts and Boroughs	2024-25
Increase understanding of homelessness process and homelessness legislation in services that support the same cohort of people	Hold formal and informal training sessions for partners such as soup kitchens, food banks, local DWP staff, health workers and substance misuse services	MDC- Housing Needs, Homeless Network, DWP, Health, Change Grow Live, Probation	5 years
Use 'System Flex' wherever appropriate to allow complex needs clients to access services	Consider the use of system flex, where appropriate, to get the best outcome for the client whilst still following legislation.	MDC- Housing Needs and RSI Coordinator	5 years
	Support the Housing Solutions team to record instances of system flex for wider reporting		

Priorities

Priority 5 - Linking health, well-being and housing together to improve the life chances and aspirations of those affected

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Engage with Health colleagues to strengthen the link between health and housing	Attendance at the place based partnership meetings	MDC – Housing Needs	2024-25
	Engage with hospital colleagues in regards to a hospital discharge service	MDC – Housing Needs, Health	
Continue to bid for funding to deliver the Healthy Homes Hub	Evaluate the project including the improvements in health to share with partners	MDC – Housing Needs, Private Sector Housing	2024-25
	Continue to improve the conditions of people living in private rented accommodation	MDC – Private Sector Housing	
Work internally with the Health and Wellbeing Team to improve the food and fuel support for customers	Attend and contribute to the Food Co-ordinator Network	MDC – Housing Needs, Health Wellbeing	5 years
Link with wellbeing services and develop projects for people staying in temporary accommodation	Deliver cook and eat sessions in temporary accommodation	MDC – Temporary Accommodation	5 years
	Link with children’s services in the area for children’s projects in temporary accommodation	MDC – Temporary Accommodation	
Work with current RSI and Health services to promote medical access for rough sleepers	Continue to integrate the Severed Multiple Disadvantaged (SMD) Coordinator into Mansfield RSI and wider homelessness services	MDC – Housing Needs, Health, RSI Services and RSI Coordinator	5 years

Priorities

Priority 6 - Delivering holistic support solutions to sustain long term tenancies and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

What we will do	How we will do it	Organisations and partners	Timescales
Continue to improve our Housing First offer for rough sleepers with complex needs	Regularly review our Housing First service to ensure it is fit for purpose and connect with Homeless Link to deliver a Housing First project which is based on up to date evidence and learning from the wider Housing First community	MDC – Housing Needs, Action Housing	2024-25
Promote the Trauma-Informed approach amongst MDC and RSI staff	Hold joint yearly training on the Trauma-Informed approach for all MDC housing staff and RSI staff to ensure continuity and standardisation of learning	MDC – Housing Needs, RSI Services	5 years
Promote an understanding of complex needs and SMD clients within our Tenancy Management team	Engage our Tenancy Management team in the same training the Housing Solutions team receive for SMD Clients and have an awareness of the services they can signpost tenants to, or lean on for support	MDC – Housing Needs, Tenancy Management	5 years
Strengthen links with Nottinghamshire Prevention and Resettlement (NPRS) team and connect them with our Tenancy Management team	Re-introduce ourselves to the NPRS service and hold a meeting with them and Tenancy Management to build better relationships and start joint working tenancies	MDC – Housing Needs, Tenancy Services, NPRS	2024-25
Work with Tenancy Services to identify opportunities for prevention and support with MDC tenants	Design a mutually beneficial early warning procedure for the tenancy management team to prevent evictions Review homeless prevention letters to improve the response from customers and advice	MDC – Housing Needs, Tenancy Services	2024-25

Further review

Mansfield District Council (in partnership with Ashfield District Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council) will monitor the progress through the Joint Homelessness and Prevention Steering Group.

Mansfield District Council will publish an annual review and action plan of this strategy through the five years.

Thank you to partners and organisations that have contributed to the review and the strategy.



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2024 - 2029

Preventing homelessness is everyone's business



Mansfield
District Council