

## Newcastle City Council Strategic Housing Service

# Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Protocol

May 2007

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Who is signed up to the Protocol</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Why this Protocol is needed in Newcastle</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The principles underpinning the Protocol</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Format of the Protocol</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Monitoring and reviewing the Protocol, and liaison arrangements</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sharing information</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Protocol:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Preventing homelessness - the process on admission to hospital</b>	
a) <b>General wards</b>	<b>11</b>
b) <b>Accident &amp; Emergency</b>	<b>14</b>
c) <b>People with mental health needs</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2. Preventing homelessness amongst specific groups of people</b>	
a) <b>Patients aged under 18</b>	<b>17</b>
b) <b>Asylum seekers and refugees</b>	<b>18</b>
c) <b>Rough sleepers</b>	<b>18</b>
d) <b>People with drug or alcohol problems</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3. Other action to help prevent homelessness</b>	<b>19</b>
a) <b>Resolving problems for patients who cannot return home             because their accommodation is thought to be unsuitable</b>	
b) <b>Helping people to obtain settled housing</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Flowchart – the Protocol pathway</b>	
<b>Poster for staff</b>	
<b>Poster for patients</b>	
<b>Sample letter to Housing Benefits</b>	

**A Housing Resource Pack for staff implementing this Protocol is also available from the Newcastle Homelessness Forum website:**

[http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf\\_policies](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf_policies)

## Introduction

Homelessness prevention is a major plank of the Government's new approach to homelessness, signalled by the Homelessness Act 2002 and policy report, *More Than a Roof*<sup>1</sup>.

The Department of Health issued guidance in 2003 which was explicit about the role of hospital trusts in ensuring that homelessness is prevented for patients leaving hospital:

"It is vital all hospitals consider the housing situation of patients to ensure that people are not discharged to inappropriate places, homeless or become homeless as a result of their stay in hospital."<sup>2</sup>

"All acute hospitals should have formal admission and discharge policies which will ensure that homeless people are identified on admission and their pending discharge notified to relevant primary care services and to homeless services providers. In addition, for patients in psychiatric hospitals/units a post-discharge care plan will be drawn up well in advance of discharge and procedures put in place to ensure that appropriate accommodation and continuity of care is in place for each person discharged."

Guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005 echoed this approach:

"It is essential that local authorities and health services work together to provide accessible and appropriate services if health inequalities and homelessness are to be tackled."<sup>3</sup>

A policy brief issued in 2004 had established the importance of the contribution that health agencies can make to tackling homelessness<sup>4</sup>:

"By working together to achieve shared outcomes, and taking a public health approach to addressing the health needs of homeless and vulnerable people, local housing authorities and health providers can deliver:

- marked improvements in the health of homeless people
- reductions in homelessness caused by poor health
- reductions in poor health caused by homelessness
- reduced public expenditure on health and homelessness
- reduced repeat homelessness and increased sustainability of tenure through relevant support"

To help local authorities and their partners in developing protocols aiming to prevent homelessness for people leaving hospital, further guidance has recently been issued on behalf of Communities and Local Government department and the

---

<sup>1</sup> *More Than a Roof: a report into tackling homelessness*, DTLR, 2002

<sup>2</sup> *Discharge from hospital: pathway, process and practice*, Department of Health, 2003

<sup>3</sup> *Homelessness and Health Information Sheet: Number 4 Hospital Discharge*, ODPM, 2005

<sup>4</sup> *Achieving positive shared outcomes in health and homelessness*, ODPM, 2004

Department of Health with Homeless Link<sup>5</sup>. This recommends a set of nine steps for developing a protocol for hospital discharge. The protocol will be fit for purpose if it:

- establishes a patient's housing status on admission
- includes procedures for obtaining patients' consent to share information
- includes procedures for ensuring that existing accommodation is not lost
- identifies key external agencies to notify about a homeless person's admission
- develops the resources and training needed
- involves voluntary sector agencies, primary care providers and local authorities throughout the discharge process

This protocol has been developed in accordance with those principles.

## Who is signed up to the Protocol

This Protocol has been developed between key agencies in Newcastle working with people who may be homeless and have had a stay in hospital. Newcastle's Homelessness Review and Strategy (2003) noted that homelessness may arise following a stay in hospital, and the Strategy identified the development of a protocol as an action required to prevent homelessness in the city.

The Protocol has been signed up to by all relevant agencies:

- Newcastle City Council Strategic Housing Service
- Newcastle City Council Social Services
- The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland, Tyne & Wear Mental Health NHS Trust
- Newcastle Primary Care Trust
- Your Homes Newcastle

---

<sup>5</sup> **Hospital admission and discharge: People who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation**, Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, and Homeless Link (2006)

## Why this Protocol is needed in Newcastle

Most people admitted to hospital are not homeless and can return home to the address they came in from. A few people have nowhere to go on discharge, or have their stay in hospital extended, for one of the following reasons:

- They were homeless before admission to hospital - they had nowhere at all to stay, and may have been sleeping rough
- They were in an institution such as prison
- They had a temporary arrangement – a hostel or staying with friends or family – and either cannot go back, or there is no bed reserved for them on their return
- They have just arrived in Newcastle and have nowhere to stay here
  
- They had accommodation before they came into hospital but are refusing to go back there
- They had accommodation before they came into hospital but cannot go back there because the person who lives there will not take them back
- They have accommodation but it needs to be adapted following their treatment in hospital

A further group had accommodation but it is not considered safe for them to go back there because of poor conditions or the house being too dirty or unhygienic. This Protocol does not cover that group, but a separate agreement is being developed to resolve the needs of people whose home is considered too unhygienic for them to return to from hospital, including the process for seeking the views of the Environmental Health section.

The Government expects local authorities to prevent homelessness wherever possible, but it is also in the interest of the patient – saving stress and anxiety – and of both hospital and housing staff, to try to resolve the patient's problem well before they have to leave. It is not comfortable for either hospital or housing staff to know that a patient may leave a hospital with no accommodation to go to.

Without this Protocol, it is clear that some health and social care staff may spend a considerable period of time trying to identify a solution for a hospital patient. It is also more difficult and time-consuming for housing staff to find the most appropriate solution at very short notice and without access to all the information needed to resolve the problem. Hospital staff are not always familiar with housing organisations and how they work, or with the best way to resolve a housing problem, or with which housing organisation the patient should be approaching.

Any delay in discharging a patient is costly to the health and social care system in the city, can put back the care of another patient who needs a bed, and can exhaust staff and build up bad feeling between organisations. This Protocol aims to remove those constraints and pressures wherever possible, by setting up clear procedures, providing information on who does what, and by establishing clear roles and routes of communication.

## The principles underpinning the Protocol

Agencies signing up to this protocol will work towards the following aspirations:

- People leaving hospital in Newcastle will have had their housing and support needs assessed in time to make appropriate referrals in advance of a discharge date
- People should not be discharged from hospital unless they have accommodation to go to: people leaving hospital in Newcastle will have accommodation appropriate to their housing and support needs, no patient should become homeless during their hospital stay, and no patient should leave without appropriate and stable housing options being identified; and no agency will rely on a hospital bed being available in place of suitable housing
- Discharge from hospital should not be delayed because of a lack of suitable accommodation. but where this is unavoidable and all steps in the Protocol have been followed, hospitals should consider not levying a charge on Social Services
- Staff working in hospitals in Newcastle will have sufficient information and training to be able to make appropriate and timely referrals to housing and support agencies
- Staff working in all agencies will know who to contact to help to resolve any problems which arise in the process
- Agencies will work together effectively to jointly resolve housing problems, preferably without a homeless application having to be made
- Shortfalls in resources will be identified through regular meetings of the Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Working Group and this information will be passed to the Strategic Housing Service for action

## Format of the Protocol

The Protocol sets out a number of steps for all agencies to take which will help to prevent homelessness:

- **Action to take to prevent a patient being homeless on discharge from hospital, including the process to be followed on admission**
- **Seeking help from other agencies in finding accommodation and arranging support**
- **Information for display in hospital wards, for patients and staff**

The Protocol includes a note on how agencies are to share information, and how the Protocol is to be monitored and reviewed.

**A Housing Resource Pack accompanies the Protocol. This Pack contains a note of the role that each agency involved in working with homeless people in Newcastle will take in relation to preventing homelessness for people leaving hospital. The Pack also contains information about the homelessness legislation and system, and contact details for other local authorities in the North East, and for agencies signed up to the Protocol.**

## **Monitoring and reviewing the Protocol, and liaison arrangements**

The Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Working Group which has developed this Protocol will meet initially after 3 months, and then twice a year, to monitor the implementation of the Protocol, and to review the document to see if any changes are needed. Any changes needed will be recommended to the Housing Strategy Review Group Commissioners' Group which is overseeing the Pathways and other Protocols.

Meetings of the Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Working Group will also be useful for reviewing any changes to staffing, systems and structures, and provision, and keeping all agencies up to date, as well as for general liaison.

Membership of the Working Group will be open to anyone with an interest in preventing homelessness for people in hospital.

In between those meetings, a smaller Hospital Discharge Liaison Group will meet about every two months, to discuss progress on individual cases and any problems occurring. This meeting will be attended by the staff working directly on hospital discharge and homelessness prevention issues.

Outputs and outcomes from the Protocol will be monitored through use of the following:

- Numbers of people leaving hospital who are seeking help as homeless (Housing Advice Centre data, Newcastle Homeless Liaison Project data, numbers of people approaching the Advice and Support Team for help, and numbers of people attending A&E who have no fixed address)
- Cases raised at regular meetings of the Working Group and the Liaison Group
- Monitoring information (received on a weekly basis) about delayed transfer of care, which identifies reasons for delay and is validated by the Trusts and Social Services

**The Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Protocol will be reviewed in October 2009.**

Training will be provided on a regular basis for agencies involved in the implementation of the Protocol.

## Sharing information

An important feature of good working arrangements between agencies working with people leaving hospital who may be homeless is that information is shared so that the person's problem can be resolved as quickly as possible.

Information should always be shared with the twin aims of helping the service user to obtain the most appropriate services to meet their needs, whilst preserving their dignity and privacy.

Information can best be shared by:

- **All agencies ensuring that the patient has filled in a consent form** - making sure that the service user has given written consent to information about them being shared in order to help them secure the right services to meet their needs
- **Sharing information in a positive way** - that informs people about the needs of the service user and supports good decision-making, rather than trying to "sell" their case
- **Ensuring that any information about known risks is shared** – including to other service users, or to staff, are not hidden, even if this may lead to another agency making a decision that their services are not appropriate for the person at this point
- **Ensuring that information which is passed on to other agencies is based on known facts, professional judgements, and close involvement with the service user**
- **Basing good decision-making on documented information** - this can be informal information which is constructive and supports other evidence, but can be verified

### Agencies to share information with

This should include any agency which can help the service user to obtain or keep appropriate housing and support services. Such agencies should abide by the Data Protection legislation, and should have guidelines for staff about how and what information to share, how to store information, and what will happen if data protection rules are breached. The principles of good data protection state that data must be:

1. fairly and lawfully processed
2. processed for limited purposes
3. adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. accurate
5. not kept for longer than is necessary
6. processed in line with your rights
7. secure
8. not transferred to countries without adequate protection

These principles apply to information held on computer and some paper records.

**Confidentiality**

All parties to the Protocol will agree to ensure that information is not disclosed without the consent of the service user, and that it is not disclosed to people who are not entitled to have such information or do not intend to use it in the best interests of the service user. All parties will also agree to deal with any breaches of confidentiality by their staff or organisation.

Agencies following this Protocol will also be made aware of the Northumberland, and Tyne & Wear Strategic Health Authority Information Sharing Protocol Strategic Agreement, which health and social care agencies in Newcastle are asked to sign up to.

## **1. Preventing homelessness – the process on admission to hospital**

**The most important step to preventing homelessness is to identify what accommodation they have *on admission*. This will enable action to prevent or tackle homelessness to be started straightaway.**

Patients are usually asked for their address on admission to a ward in hospital. The exception is where the person has been admitted previously, or has been admitted after being in Accident and Emergency, when the address might already be on the notes but not have been checked on admission to the ward.

Under this Protocol, as part of the admissions process, hospital staff will check the address for all patients, regardless of how they came to be admitted to the ward.

Some patients become homeless whilst staying in hospital, either because they decide not to go back to the home they were in before, or because the person they were staying with decides not to allow them to return there. In a few cases, patients do not reveal that they have nowhere to go until discharge is imminent.

### **Preventing homelessness – key actions**

- **A poster is to be displayed in all wards** reminding patients that they can ask for help at any time if they are worried about possible homelessness (see Appendix A)
- **On longer stay wards, hospital staff will check that the patient can return to suitable accommodation - as soon as possible after admission** (and no less than a week before discharge)
- **On short stay wards, hospital staff will check that the patient can return to suitable accommodation** - ideally at least a day before discharge (but preferably 2 days - a longer period of notice for housing agencies allows enough time to arrange supported temporary accommodation)
- **If there is no accommodation identified for them to return to, either the hospital staff or a social worker will contact the Homelessness Prevention Officer (Hospital Discharge) at the Housing Advice Centre, at least a day before the discharge is due**
- **Patients may need to be advised that their welfare benefits (including Housing Benefit) may be reduced after 4 or 6 weeks in hospital. It is very important that action is taken to make sure that the patient is aware of this reduction so that rent arrears do not build up**

**Each ward has been supplied with leaflets about homelessness in Newcastle to give to people who may be homeless. Further copies of these can be obtained from the Housing Advice Centre: Tel: 0191 277 1711.**

**A standard letter for telling Housing Benefit teams about a stay in hospital is attached in Appendix G, along with information about where to get welfare benefits advice.**

## a) General wards

### Step 1 Check the patient's housing situation

**On admission to the ward, ask every patient for their address, and whether this is the address they expect to return to**

Ward staff are asked to be particularly careful to ask this question where:

- The patient was noted by A&E as being **homeless** (No Fixed Abode - NFA) (the Bed Bureau notes this information and passes it on to the Hospital Discharge Liaison Nurse)
- The patient is known to be staying at a **hostel or other temporary accommodation** (see the *Housing Resource Pack* for further information about temporary accommodation provision in Newcastle), or
- The patient has been admitted following an **overdose** and referral from the Psychiatric Liaison Team

### Step 2 Check if the patient comes from Newcastle and why they may be homeless

If the patient has no accommodation, or is not confident that they can return to that address, ask the following questions before deciding what to do next:

- ***Does the patient come from Newcastle or wish to be in Newcastle?***
- ***If they had a home before coming into hospital, why are they not able to go back there?***

#### **People from outside Newcastle**

For people who do not come from Newcastle, and do not wish to stay in the city, contact the homelessness office for the relevant council area.

You will find a list of all the local authority contacts for homelessness in the Resource Pack, or you can ring the Housing Advice Centre for this information (Tel: 277 1711)

**Step 3a During office hours (8.30-12, 1- 4.30pm)**

If the patient is homeless and needs help to find somewhere in Newcastle,  
**contact the Housing Advice Centre (HAC):**

**0191 277 1711**

**Ask for the Homelessness Prevention Officer (hospital discharge)**

The **Housing Advice Centre (HAC)** provides Newcastle's homelessness prevention service, makes decisions about where the Council has a legal duty to accommodate someone, and provides housing advice. This includes advice to private tenants and landlords through the **Tenancy Relations Service** Tel: 277 1720 or 277 1724 (opening hours 10am-4pm, closed 12-1 and Wednesday morning)

***You will find more information about the role of HAC in the Resource Pack.***

Referrals to HAC may be made by nursing or medical staff, or social workers. There is no need to contact hostels directly. HAC has information each day about where there are beds available in temporary accommodation in Newcastle. **Priority is given to placing people for whom the council has responsibility, and people leaving hospital,** as well as those who are sleeping on the streets, or leaving prison, and others who cannot live independently.

The Homelessness Prevention Officer will either take a homeless application over the phone, or arrange to visit if there are complex needs, and a longer interview is needed. This will take place within 48 hours on working days (or sooner if this is possible), and particularly if it is known that the person was admitted for a stay of less than 24 hours).

**Information which will be needed by the Homelessness Prevention Officer (HPO):**

- Full name and date of birth
- Previous address, and type of housing (e.g. council tenancy, or hostel)
- Names and ages of any dependants
- How long the person has been in Newcastle
- Any other agencies involved with the patient
- Details of any risks posed by the patient or linked to their health
- Any particular needs which should be taken into account

**The Housing Advice Centre will have time to make their decisions, and to help to find accommodation for the patient, if they receive clear information well before the patient is going to be discharged.**

If the decision to discharge is made late on a working day, it is unlikely that accommodation will be found that night. In that case, hospital staff will try to ensure that a bed remains available for the patient until the next day.

**Step 3b Out of office hours**

If the patient is homeless and needs help to find somewhere in Newcastle,  
**contact the Emergency Homeless Service**  
**5.30pm-8.00am**

**0191 232 8520**

The **Emergency Homeless Service** is provided by Housing Advice Centre staff who are on call outside office hours. They use information provided to them at the end of each working day about where there are beds available in temporary accommodation in Newcastle.

**Advice and Support Workers (ASWs)**

A team of four ASWs\* works with the Homelessness Prevention Officers at the Housing Advice Centre. They will help homeless people through the process of applying for housing, finding temporary accommodation, dealing with any debts, and getting benefits and furniture sorted out. They will also assess whether the person will need support to manage their home, or needs supported housing.

**You can find more information about the role of ASWs in the Resource Pack.**

*\* Please note that any reference to ASWs in this pack are to Advice and Support Workers, and not Approved Social Workers.*

## b) Accident & Emergency

### Step 1 Check the patient's housing situation

Ask every patient for their address

### Step 2 Check if the patient comes from Newcastle and why they may be homeless

If the patient has no accommodation, or it is not clear that they can return to the address they gave, ask the following questions before deciding what to do next:

- *Does the patient come from Newcastle or wish to be in Newcastle?*
- *If they had a home before coming into hospital, why are they not able to go back there?*

Nursing staff should take every opportunity to check whether the person can go back to the address they have given.

If the patient is homeless, the next step is for A&E staff to:

### Step 3a During office hours (9am – 4pm)

If the patient is homeless and needs help to find somewhere in Newcastle, **contact the Housing Advice Centre (HAC):**

**0191 277 1711**

**Ask for the Homelessness Prevention Officer (hospital discharge)**

### Step 3b Out of office hours

If the patient is homeless and needs help to find somewhere in Newcastle, **contact the Emergency Homeless Service:**  
**(or advise the patient to contact them)**

**0191 232 8520**

### People sleeping rough

- If the person wants help to find somewhere to live, phone HAC (277 1711)
- If the person does not want help at this point, please pass their details on to the **Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator** on **07855 825639**  
**Fax no: 0191 277 1722** (a fax template for this purpose is held by A&E)

### c) People with mental health needs

There are regular advice sessions held at the Collingwood Ward at St Nicholas', and the Hadrian Clinic at Newcastle General Hospital. The Mental Health Adviser (Your Choice Homes) holds weekly sessions at these places. One of the two mental health workers based within the homelessness service (the Psychiatric Nurse for Homelessness and the Mental Health Social Worker (Homelessness)) also visits these wards when people are likely to be discharged.

Checks of discharge plans for all new admissions are done on a weekly basis, through these regular advice sessions, ward visits, and discussion at the Capacity Monitoring Group. Case discussions will always be held for any patients staying longer than 90 days.

**If a patient is likely to be discharged with nowhere to go**, and none of these visits are due within a short period of time (i.e. within the next day for a short stay, or within the next week for a longer stay), ward staff should:

- contact the Psychiatric Nurse or the Social Worker for Homelessness to arrange for them to visit the patient, and give advice on the best options for them
- All details will be noted and this will be passed to the Homelessness Prevention Officer (hospital discharge)
- The Homelessness Prevention Officer will take a homeless application and arrange temporary accommodation, and may also visit the patient if necessary
- The Psychiatric Nurse or Social Worker will then discuss the next move, into supported or other accommodation with support

Every patient with a mental health problem should have a Care Co-ordinator. Care Co-ordinators are closely involved throughout the process in assessing housing and support needs and identifying the most appropriate accommodation and support. The Care Co-ordinator will work with the YCH Mental Health Adviser, Psychiatric Nurse or Social Worker to do a risk assessment and risk management plan, and work out a housing and support package, with the aim of securing the best option without the patient having to go into temporary accommodation.

The patient may have made an Advance Statement about how they want to be treated, and what arrangements should be made about their home and other personal matters, if they need to go into hospital. If they have written this down, the Statement will be held by the person's care co-ordinator.

**Actions for hospital staff, working alongside housing advisers,  
for people with mental health problems:**

**Step 1 Check the patient's housing situation**

**On admission to the ward, ask every patient for their address,  
*and whether this is the address they expect to return to***

**Step 2 Check if the patient comes from Newcastle  
and why they may be homeless**

**If the patient has no accommodation,  
or it is not clear that they can return to the address they gave,  
ask the following questions before deciding what to do next:**

- ***Does the patient come from Newcastle or wish to be in Newcastle?***
- ***If they had a home before coming into hospital, why are they not able to go back there?***

**Step 3a During office hours (9am – 4pm)**

**If the patient is homeless and needs help to find somewhere in Newcastle, and a  
ward session is not due**

**contact the Housing Advice Centre (HAC):**

**0191 277 1711**

**Ask for the Homelessness Prevention Officer (hospital discharge)**

**Step 3b Out of office hours**

**If the patient is homeless and needs help to find somewhere in Newcastle,  
contact the Emergency Homeless Service**

**0191 232 8520**

## 2. Preventing homelessness amongst specific groups of people

### *a) Patients aged under 18*

Anyone under 16 should be referred to a Social Services Children and Families team (see below for contact details).

Homeless people aged 16 or 17 are in a priority group and will usually be helped to find appropriate housing by the Housing Advice Centre. Specialist staff who work for YHN Young People's Service are contracted by the Council to work with under 18s. They can be contacted through the Housing Advice Centre. They will

- assess the current housing situation of the young person, and any care or other needs
- talk to parents or whoever else they are staying with to see if a solution can be negotiated which will not leave the young person without accommodation
- work with the young person to identify what skills they need to build up in order to manage their own home
- help them to find appropriate temporary supported accommodation or settled housing with support
- help them to apply for settled housing through a different route (a "welfare priority") if they are not actually homeless

### *b) Asylum seekers and refugees*

Asylum seekers who have not yet got their refugee status sorted out are accommodated by a range of providers. The best contact point is the National Asylum Support Service (NASS): Tel: 0191 376 2841 (get a NASS reference number for the person before ringing if you can).

Asylum seekers whose application for asylum has failed cannot be housed through council or other public sector housing. Families are supported by NASS, but single people may have no accommodation. Contact either North of England Refugee Service or Social Services for advice:

Asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors are looked after by the Social Services Unaccompanied Minors Team Tel: 278 8500

Refugees are entitled to apply for housing in the same way as any other households. They may be supported through the North of England Refugee Service (NERS): Tel: 245 7311, or by Your Homes Newcastle Move-On team (once given refugee status), Tel: 278 8620

Customer Services Adult teams		Customer Services Children's teams	
Gosforth office	Tel: 277 2077	Walker office	Tel: 295 5535
Newburn office	Tel: 277 2555	Sheriff Leas office	Tel: 286 3311
		Cruddas Park office	Tel: 277 2477

### ***c) Rough sleepers***

If the person was sleeping rough before they came into hospital, hospital staff are asked to:

- 1. If the person wants help to find somewhere to live, phone HAC (277 1711),** tell them about the person, and ask them to let you know if there is any accommodation available. You can make an appointment for the person to go into HAC, or for the HPO to call to see them in hospital, or for the person to get help at Ron Eager House, Joseph Cowen Health Centre, or the People's Kitchen. (***For contact details, see leaflets about free or cheap food and other services for homeless people***)
- 2. If the person does not want help at this point,** please pass their details (initials and date of birth) to the Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator – **07855 825639** or [hpp@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:hpp@newcastle.gov.uk) (Fax no: **0191 277 1722** ), so that their details can be logged and help can be offered to them at a later date if they are still sleeping rough.

Anyone sleeping rough should be given copies of the leaflets about finding help with housing problems, and services for homeless people (see Housing Resource Pack). Further copies of these leaflets can be obtained from the Housing Advice Centre 277 1711 or Homelessness Prevention Project 277 1733/1731.

### **People discharging themselves to the street**

People who have no accommodation may be more inclined to discharge themselves, or to leave A&E, before accommodation is found for them. This makes it very difficult to engage them in drug or alcohol treatment, or treatment for mental health problems, as well as engaging them in a programme of help to get back into settled housing.

Hospital and social work staff are asked to try to encourage people not to leave before they have been helped by housing staff.

### ***d) People with drug and/or alcohol problems***

People with drug and/or alcohol services may not yet be in contact with treatment agencies. Social Services teams in hospitals will assess care needs if the patient has possible needs for personal care. Nursing staff will make a referral to drug or alcohol treatment agencies, if the patient wants to be in treatment. Advice and Support Workers will help the patient to look for appropriate housing where they will be able to get support with engaging with treatment provision.

### 3. Other action to prevent homelessness

#### a) Resolving problems for patients who cannot return home because their accommodation is thought to be unsuitable

There are several possible reasons for a patient's home being considered to be not available or unsuitable for them to return to. These fall into three groups:

**i. The home is not in a fit state to live in**

- Home is too dirty, unhygienic, or too full of rubbish to live in healthily
- House is unfit or unsafe to live in
- Home is not suitable as area is unsafe

A separate policy has been developed between Strategic Housing, Social Services, Environmental Health, Your Homes Newcastle, Supporting People, and Newcastle Primary Care Trust, to deal with cases where people cannot return home or are at risk of losing their home because it is not in a fit state to live in. This policy sets out how cases will be dealt with, and how costs of tackling the state of the house will be recovered. For further information, contact the Supporting People team in Social Services Tel: 277 7457 or look on the Newcastle Homelessness Forum website <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/nhf>.

**ii. The home is unsuitable to meet the person's current needs**

- Patient has drug or alcohol problems, or other problems, which lead to the view that they cannot manage their home at the moment
- The patient is no longer able to look after themselves and requires residential or nursing care
- Sheltered housing could be more suitable for them
- Home is no longer suitable as patient needs aids and adaptations to be in place before they can return
- House needs physical adaptations but this is not possible or cannot be done at reasonable cost

Where the home needs some physical adaptation, the hospital social worker will contact either the Housing Occupational Therapist or the hospital Occupational Therapist. The Housing OT will assess whether people would be eligible for medical priority on the grounds of physical health, or help the patient to plan a move to a more suitable home, and organise adaptations to that home. Where there are adaptations needed to an existing home, this will be organised by the hospital OT.

Where a temporary move might be needed before a patient could return home, or community safety measures need to be installed, or the patient needs housing-related support or home care to be able to remain in their home, or they need help to apply for and move to more suitable housing (for example, supported or sheltered housing), a referral should be made to the Pathways Advice and Support Workers. They will make referrals to other agencies if needed, and

possibly may refer the person ultimately to one of the Advice and Support Workers based at housing offices.

**iii. The person (or the people they were living with) has decided that this is not where they should live in future**

- Patient does not want to return as it is not where they want to live
- Partner or family refuse to allow person to come back

If a patient is likely to become homeless because the person they previously lived with does not want them to come back, contact the Housing Advice Centre as described in the earlier parts of this Protocol.

### ***b) Helping people to obtain settled housing***

Patients in hospital may be able to obtain settled housing without having to go into temporary accommodation first, and without having to make a homeless application first.

There are three routes into settled housing:

- applying to join Your Choice Homes (people can bid through YCH for housing from Your Homes Newcastle, and some Housing Association and private rented homes)
- applying directly to Housing Associations
- applying directly to private landlords or their agents

The Housing Resource Pack contains information about these routes into settled housing. It also explains how social workers, hospital staff, and others can help patients to obtain settled housing.

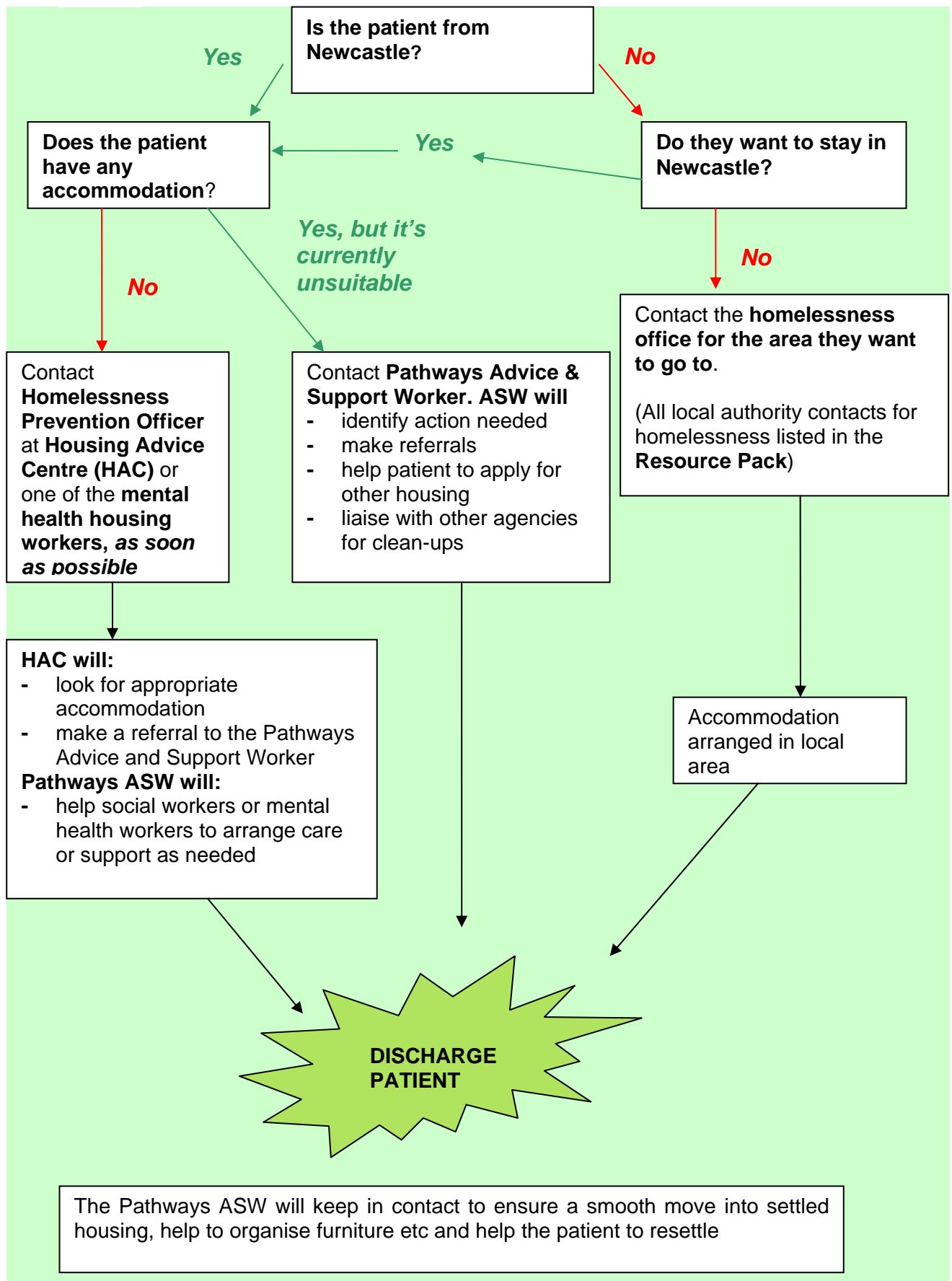
Both the Housing Advice Centre and the Advice and Support Worker can give people advice on how to apply for housing through any of these routes.

## Appendices

1. Flowchart – the hospital discharge protocol pathway
2. Information poster for staff
3. Information poster for patients
4. Sample letter about Housing Benefit claims

# Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Pathway

See Resource Pack for all contact details



**Helping patients who are homeless  
or who cannot go back to their former home**

***To prevent homelessness:***

**All patients must be asked, as soon as possible after admission, if the address we have for them is current, and is somewhere they can go back to.**

**If they have nowhere to go back to, please ask these 2 questions:**

- 1. Do you come from Newcastle, or wish to be here?***
- 2. If you had a home before coming into hospital, can you tell us why you are not able to go back there?***

**People who are homeless and come from Newcastle**

Contact the Homelessness Prevention Officer (Hospital Discharge) at the Housing Advice Centre (HAC)  
or the Emergency Homelessness Service (outside office hours):

<b>Homelessness Prevention Officer HAC</b>	<b>0191 277 1711</b>
<b>8.30-4.30, closed 12-1 and Weds mornings</b>	
<b>Emergency Homelessness Service</b>	<b>0191 232 8520</b>
<b>5.30pm to 8am</b>	

**People from outside Newcastle**

Contact the homelessness office for the relevant council area.  
See Housing Resource Pack for list of homelessness officers.

**People who have a home to go to but it's unsuitable at the moment**

Contact the Pathways Advice and Support Worker on **07866 761946**

**For people with mental health needs**

Contact Psychiatric Nurse for Homelessness or the Mental Health Social Worker (Homelessness) on 277 1737, or the YHN Mental Health Adviser on 277 2023, or Community Psychiatric Nurse at Joseph Cowen Health Centre for Homeless People on 276 6662

**Do you need help to find somewhere to live  
when you leave here?**

If you may have nowhere to live when you leave here, please tell us as soon as you can.

The sooner we know, the sooner we can help.

*Hospital staff can:*

- Give you advice about where to make a homeless application
- Tell you who else could give you help to find somewhere to live
- Arrange for a Homelessness Prevention Officer to talk to you

**Housing Advice Centre** **0191 277 1711**  
112-114 Pilgrim Street

Opening hours: **8.30-4.30, closed 12-1 and Weds mornings**

**Emergency Homelessness Service** **0191 232 8520**

Outside office hours: **5.30pm to 8am**

***Sample letter about Housing Benefit claims***

Housing Benefit Section  
Newcastle City Council  
Civic Centre  
Barras Bridge  
Newcastle upon Tyne

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my National Insurance number is \_\_\_\_\_  
My home address is \_\_\_\_\_

I was admitted into the \_\_\_\_\_ hospital as an inpatient on \_\_\_\_\_

It is unlikely my stay in hospital will be longer than 52 weeks.

This letter is to confirm my intention to return home and to request the Housing Benefits continue to be paid for the period I am in hospital.

I will inform you of any income changes as and when they occur and when I return home.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**Newcastle City Council Strategic Housing Service**

**Hospital Discharge and  
Homelessness Prevention Protocol**

***Housing Resource Pack***

**May 2007**

## **Contents**

- A) The homelessness legislation and how it works in Newcastle**
- B) Helping people to obtain a home through Your Choice Homes**
- C) The Prevention Network: Pathways to Independent living and Prevention of Repeat Homelessness and Evictions Protocol**
- D) The role of each organisation in Newcastle**
- E) Contacts at each level within each organisation**
- F) Homelessness contacts in the North East region**
- G) Where to get benefits advice**

# A The homelessness legislation and how it works in Newcastle

## 1. Making a homeless application

**Housing Advice Centre: 277 1711**

The homeless legislation (Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002) gives local housing authorities the duty to help people who are homeless. The main duties they have are:

- To prevent homelessness – for anyone who asks for help
- To deal with homeless applications, and make enquiries to help them decide if they have a duty
- To secure accommodation for people who are homeless or likely to become homeless within 28 days, in a priority group, and not intentionally homeless
- To give people advice and help, even if they are not yet homeless, are not in a priority group, or are intentionally homeless

Homeless Prevention Officers should help to try to prevent homelessness at this point, by helping to find suitable permanent housing, but *may* say they cannot take a homeless application until there is less than 28 days before the person may become homeless.

### **Priority homeless groups (for whom there may be a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation and to secure settled housing)**

These groups are usually expected to be in priority need (but the legislation allows some discretion):

- Families with dependent children (under 16s or still at school/college)
- Households including pregnant women
- People who are vulnerable because of mental health problems, physical ill health, learning disability, old age, or another reason
- Anyone who is homeless because of a fire or flood
- Under 18s (unless in the Looked After system - “relevant children”)
- People aged between 18 and 21 who have been in care for at least 13 weeks (“relevant children”)
- People who are vulnerable as a result of leaving prison, forces, or care
- People who are vulnerable as a result of violence or threats of violence

Homeless Prevention Officers at the Housing Advice Centre take homeless applications if the homelessness cannot be prevented in any other way.

For people in a priority group, they will arrange temporary accommodation. They then decide whether there is legal duty to secure accommodation, and if so, will

work with the applicant to find the right sort of settled housing (through Your Homes Newcastle, Housing Associations, or private landlords).

For people not in a priority group, HPOs will try to find the best temporary accommodation and will advise people about how to find settled housing. They will work with the applicant and with Pathways Advice and Support Workers to arrange for the right help so the best solution is found for that person. Each morning, HAC staff discuss at their daily briefing the need for accommodation for anyone sleeping rough. A monthly meeting also prioritises rough sleepers and people leaving hospital or prison for taking up vacancies in temporary and supported housing, and discusses any problems helping people to move into settled housing with the right support. Contact the Newcastle Homeless Liaison Project for more information on this monthly meeting (see below).

## 2. Temporary accommodation in Newcastle

### Newcastle Homeless Liaison Project: 277 1730

NHLP keeps information on vacancies in all temporary accommodation in Newcastle.

#### **“Direct access” accommodation**

Direct access accommodation is accommodation where an interview process does not have to take place before the person can be housed. They may still ask questions, and may still refuse someone who is not suitable to share accommodation with others. A place can be arranged whilst the person is in prison, but unless the bed is paid for, it cannot usually be kept vacant until the release date.

#### **Direct access accommodation in Newcastle:**

- Salvation Army Men’s hostel (City Road)
- Salvation Army women’s hostel (Cedar House)
- Byker Bridge House
- Elliott House, Tyneside Cyrenians
- Women’s Aid
- Panah (for black and Asian women fleeing violence)

For more information, see leaflets about finding a home in Newcastle, or the Newcastle Homelessness Forum website:

[http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf\\_accommodation\\_directory](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf_accommodation_directory)

#### **Other temporary / supported accommodation**

Other temporary or supported accommodation can be accessed after an interview. This may be able to be carried out whilst the person is in hospital.

### **Non-direct access accommodation in Newcastle:**

- Byker Bridge Housing Association flats
- Tyneside Cyrenians: Abbott House, Virginia House, Francis House, & Roycroft House
- Haven, Tyneside
- Simonside House, De Paul Trust (young people)
- Cumberland House, Norcare
- Wavelength, Norcare
- Outpost (gay and lesbian young people)
- Praxis (people with mental health problems and substance misusers, women with children, and asylum seekers)
- St Cuthbert's Care and Link Project (women and children)
- St Vincent de Paul
- Stepping Stones (for young people)
- Tyneside Foyer (young people)
- Semi-Independent Living Scheme (SILS) project (NECA supported housing for people recovering from drug or alcohol problems)

Also

- YWCA
- North East Nightstop

There are other schemes for people with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

All details of temporary accommodation, and phone numbers and addresses, can be found on the Newcastle Homelessness Forum website:

[http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf\\_accommodation\\_directory](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf_accommodation_directory)

## ***B Helping people to obtain a settled home through Your Choice Homes (YCH)***

### **Applying to join YCH**

Newcastle has a Choice-Based Lettings scheme, called *Your Choice Homes*. It is run by Your Homes Newcastle (YHN - the Arm's Length Management Organisation) which manages the Council's housing stock).

#### **How Your Choice Homes works**

- You apply to join the scheme
- You can only be refused access to the scheme if you are ineligible by law (people from abroad who may not have access to public funds) or because you are considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant because of your past behaviour.
- You may have to provide 2 references at this stage
- Your application is checked, and your references may be contacted

Then:

- You look out for vacant properties that are advertised weekly on a Tuesday (through housing offices, the Property Shop in New Bridge Street, and in the Evening Chronicle)
- You "express an interest" by saying that you would like to be housed in a specific property (no later than noon on the Monday following the Tuesday advert)
- You can express an interest in up to 3 properties a week
- You are offered a property if it fits your size of household, you meet the conditions set for that house, and you have been in your current property the longest of all the households who can bid for that house and have bid for it at the same time as you
- If you have a homeless or welfare priority, you can use this to bid for a property for up to 3 months.

People who have been in hospital may need help with the following steps:

- Getting 2 references
- Getting the application verified (checked)
- Becoming eligible for YCH
- Finding out how to make a bid for a property
- Asking for help from one of the health team at YCH

### **What to do if the applicant is ineligible for YCH**

There is an appeals procedure against a decision that the applicant is ineligible. The applicant must appeal in writing within 21 days of the decision, and a review of the decision is carried out within 21 days of YHN receiving the letter. It will

usually help if their request for a review is supported by someone like a social worker or other adviser.

A leaflet has been produced to help people advising applicants who have been told they are ineligible. It is important to provide evidence to support the view that the person should be considered as eligible, for example by showing that:

- they are no longer involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- that they have been a good tenant in supported housing or mainstream housing elsewhere
- they have paid the rent regularly, or
- they have repaid a good proportion of any rent they owed

### **Your Homes Newcastle (YHN)**

YHN manages Newcastle's council housing, on behalf of the City Council. Decisions about letting houses and flats are made by housing officers in one of the 20 housing offices. You can find out more on the YHN website:

[http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/yhn\\_home](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/yhn_home)

### **Housing Associations**

Housing Associations are generally not-for-profit housing providers, regulated by the Housing Corporation, and partly funded by the Government.

You can apply directly to most Housing Associations as well as being nominated by the Council (usually reserved for homeless applicants) or applying through the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme, Your Choice Homes.

To find a list of Housing Associations working in Newcastle, go to either:

<http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk> (look in Finding a Home, List of Housing Associations)

or

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/> (look in Housing, then Housing Associations and Co-ops, then Joining a Housing Association)

## **C The Prevention Network**

The Strategic Housing Service and Supporting People Team have worked with its partners to develop a range of new initiatives to prevent homelessness. These are:

- **Pathways to independence for over 18s**
- **Pathways to independence for under 18s**
- **Preventing Repeat Homelessness and Evictions Protocol**

and also

- **A process for access into supported homeless accommodation**
- **A common process for reducing rough sleeping**
- **A common referral form and minimum requirements for a support plan**
- **Improved support for applicants to Your Choice Homes (YCH), including guidance on helping applicants to be eligible for the YCH scheme**

A guidance note on each of the Pathways to Independence and the Preventing Repeat Homelessness and Evictions Protocol is in the Housing Resource Pack.

All documents can be found on the Newcastle Homelessness Forum website:

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/nhf>

and the Supporting People website:

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/supportingpeople>

## **Preventing Repeat Homelessness and Evictions Protocol**

### **What is it?**

The Protocol came into place on July 1st 2006, and is the product of an agreement between Strategic Housing, Social Services, and Your Homes Newcastle (YHN). It sets out a series of good practice principles for staff to help to identify when someone moving into one of a YHN property is vulnerable, and what should be put in place to give them the best chance of sustaining their tenancy and preventing homelessness.

### **Who does it help?**

The Protocol identifies which groups of people might be most at risk of homelessness in the future. This includes anyone who has been homeless and lost a tenancy on a previous occasion (repeat homelessness cases), people leaving institutions (children who have been in care, people leaving prison or hospital, or the forces), offenders, and people who have additional problems: drug and/or alcohol problems; mental health problems; or a learning or physical disability. It also includes older people and refugees. The guidance gives advice about how to recognise that someone may be vulnerable, for example because they already have a support worker supporting them, and explains how best to find out which agencies are involved with the tenant.

### **What does it ask agencies to do?**

Having identified any possible risk to the tenancy, YHN staff are asked to put a flag on the computerised tenancy record so that anyone who works with the tenant can see that support might already be in place or might be needed. YHN staff are also advised about developing good links with other agencies, and the guidance sets out what each type of agency is able to do when supporting a vulnerable tenant, and suggests ways of working together, including setting up good communication channels, if problems do arise.

Any agency working with a new YHN tenant is asked to ensure that the local housing office knows that the agency is involved, who the contact person is for this tenant, and how to get in touch with them. It is important that all agencies share information which might help to ensure that the tenancy is not put at risk; for example, if one agency has been unable to get in touch with the person, it is useful to let others know about this and ask the housing management staff to keep an eye out or make particular efforts to see the tenant.

Agencies are also asked to share housing support plans and key elements of risk assessments, so that everyone working with the tenant can be aware of what to look out for as signs that the person is not coping with independent living.

The Protocol sets out what should happen if a tenancy is seriously at risk. This includes checking with other agencies in case they may be able to do more with a client they are already working with, or may not know about someone who is vulnerable. Finally, the Protocol guides all agencies about what should happen if the tenancy is to be brought to an end.

**Any problems with the Protocol should be relayed to YHN, Social Services, or the Strategic Housing Service. The Protocol can be viewed on the Newcastle Homeless Forum, Supporting People, and YHN websites.** For further information, or information about training, or to discuss any problems putting these new polices and practices into place, please contact the Homelessness Prevention Project on **277 1731** or **277 1733**.

## **Pathway to Independence for Over 18s**

### **What is it?**

This new pathway is aimed at helping people 18 or over who are staying in supported housing to gain settled housing (with support as necessary) without having to make a homeless application. It is part of a set of documents agreed between the Council's Strategic Housing Service, Supporting People, Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) and Social Services. It also involves the part of YHN which looks after applications for council and other social housing, Your Choice Homes (YCH).

### **Who does it help?**

This Pathway will help people to move on from supported accommodation, and address the reasons why people are excluded from mainstream housing and secure housing through Your Choice Homes.

### **What does it ask agencies to do?**

Agencies working with people who have been homeless or who are staying in temporary or other supported accommodation are asked to support their service users to apply to join the YCH scheme at the earliest possible date. In particular, where the applicant is told they are ineligible to join the scheme (because of rent arrears or past anti-social behaviour), agencies are expected to help the person to address these issues. This can be done either by providing evidence that there has been a commitment to pay off rent arrears regularly over a period of time, or that the person's behaviour has improved, or by helping the person to tackle these issues so that they can reapply.

The guidance on ineligibility is designed to help agencies working with vulnerable people needing settled housing to address problems that lead to them being seen as not eligible for Your Choice Homes. It explains the way that these decisions are arrived at, and what can be done to achieve either a review, or a reversal because the applicant can demonstrate that the circumstances no longer merit that decision.

Once the applicant becomes eligible, agencies working with them (Pathways Assessment Agencies) are also asked to assess the person's skills for independence, help them to prepare for independence, and help the person to bid for tenancies through YCH. If they are still unsuccessful after two months, a referral may be made to YCH through the Welfare Priority Referral Form, which asks for a summary of any support needs and a note of these support needs are to be met in future.

Once the person is allocated a tenancy, agencies providing support will need to liaise with housing officers, including YHN Advice and Support Workers, and to ensure that any problems with the tenancy are shared between the various people involved with the tenant. This will help to prevent future homelessness (as described in the Protocol for Preventing Repeat Homelessness and Evictions).

**Any problems with the Protocol should be relayed to YHN, Social Services, or the Strategic Housing Service. The Pathway, guidance on addressing ineligibility, and the Welfare Priority Referral Form can all be viewed on the Newcastle Homeless Forum, Supporting People, and YHN websites.** For further information, or information about training, or to discuss any problems putting these new policies and practices into place, please contact the Homelessness Prevention Project on **277 1731** or **277 1733**.

## **Pathway to Independence for Under 18s**

### **What is it?**

This pathway is aimed at helping young people aged 16 or 17 to gain settled housing (with support as necessary) without having to make a homeless application. It is part of a set of documents agreed between the Council's Housing Service, Supporting People, Adult and Children's Services, and Your Homes Newcastle (YHN). It also involves the part of YHN which looks after applications for council and other social housing, Your Choice Homes (YCH). Under the Pathway, young people who are homeless will still be able to apply for help, but the Pathway makes better use of supported accommodation and other resources.

### **Who does it help?**

It helps people under 18 who are homeless or who are in urgent housing need.

### **What does it ask agencies to do?**

The first step towards helping this group is taken by YHN Young People's Service, whose staff see all under 18s who come into the Housing Advice Centre in Pilgrim Street for help with housing problems. They offer advice and help aimed at preventing homelessness, and mediation between the young person and the people they are staying with, and will assess the housing, support and other needs of each person. If a homeless application needs to be made because there is no other option for resolving the housing problem, Homelessness Prevention Officers will do that and will arrange temporary accommodation if needed, in conjunction with YPS workers.

For young people under 18 who are not homeless but have an urgent need for housing, YPS will offer mediation, support and may direct the young person towards supported housing, or offer help to access YCH through a management let. Anyone who applies for housing directly to YCH will have their application and needs assessed by YPS.

To help with the assessment, agencies working with under 18s (Pathways Assessment Agencies) are asked to assess the person's current skills for independence, and identify what is needed to help them get ready for managing a tenancy successfully. The Pathway will mean that these assessments will be made on a consistent basis across all agencies. Agencies are asked to identify what they are doing in practical terms to help the young person gain these skills, and this may include others who do not provide housing support but who help young people in other ways.

Agencies are asked to share key elements of Support Plans and to use the Welfare Priority Referral Form where an under 18 is not homeless but is in urgent housing need.

**Any problems with the Protocol should be relayed to YHN, Children's Services, or the Housing Service. The Pathway and the Welfare**

**Priority Referral Form can be viewed on the Newcastle Homeless Forum, Supporting People, and YHN websites.** For further information, or information about training, or to discuss any problems putting these new policies and practices into place, please contact the Homelessness Prevention Project on **277 1731** or **277 1733**.

**D The role of each organisation in Newcastle - what does each organisation do to help homeless people?**

## **Newcastle City Council Housing Service – Adult Services**

### **Housing Advice Centre**

**Homelessness Prevention Officer (Hospital Discharge)**

**277 1711**

**Office hours only (open 8.30-4.30, closed 12-1, and Wednesday mornings)**

The Housing Advice Centre is the Council's homelessness and housing advice service. Homelessness Prevention Officers (HPOs) aim to prevent homelessness for anyone from Newcastle who has a housing problem, and to deal with all homeless applications by helping people to gain access to suitable independent housing. They take homeless applications and must make a decision about whether the Council has a legal duty to help the applicant, but they try to help everyone to avoid homelessness, and give help to everyone to find temporary accommodation.

Homelessness Prevention Officers will also tell people where they can get independent advice, and how to appeal against a homelessness decision. **You can find more information about the law on homelessness in Appendix D.**

Within the team of HPOs, the senior HPO and an assistant are the designated contacts for hospital discharge. There should be one of these two people available at most times.

### **For people leaving hospital, the Homelessness Prevention Officer (hospital discharge) at HAC will:**

- ◆ assess the patient's need for housing
- ◆ identify whether there is anywhere for them to return to (and negotiate for them to return if possible)
- ◆ discuss options for housing, and work with the person to prevent their homelessness if at all possible
- ◆ assess whether the person is likely to need help with living independently
- ◆ if temporary accommodation is needed, identify the most appropriate place, and look for a vacancy there, or in the next most appropriate accommodation available
- ◆ if the person is in a priority homeless group where there is a statutory duty (see below), book or reserve a bed
- ◆ if the person is not in a priority homeless group, reserve or identify a bed for someone leaving hospital, if the discharge is planned at least a day in advance, provided there are beds available
- ◆ if there is no accommodation available in Newcastle, the HPO will identify where there are beds outside Newcastle, using information from the Newcastle Homeless Liaison Project (see below), or look for the next vacancy
- ◆ work out a pathway and what needs to happen next, for the person to get into settled housing, and work with the Advice and Support Worker to help the person to make the move into independent accommodation

- ◆ engage the Psychiatric Nurse or Social Worker for homelessness, if the person has mental health problems

**Emergency Homelessness Service**  
**Out of hours homeless service**  
**5.30pm-8.00am**  
**Contacted through the Civic Centre**  
**0191 232 8520**

**For people leaving hospital, the Emergency Homelessness Service will:**

- ◆ assess the patient's need for housing and whether the patient is in a priority group (see below)
- ◆ identify the most appropriate temporary accommodation and take responsibility for booking it if the person is in a priority homeless group
- ◆ if the person is not in a priority homeless group, identify the most appropriate temporary accommodation available and
- ◆ if there is any doubt over whether the person is in a priority group, the Emergency team will put the person in temporary accommodation
- ◆ HAC will then take over the case the following working day, and make a further assessment

**Newcastle Homeless Liaison Project**  
**A clearing house for accommodation vacancies**  
**Based at HAC**  
**0191 277 1707**

Information is collated daily from accommodation providers across the North East. A telephone enquiry service operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 10am-4pm. The service does not accept referrals from members of the public directly.

**For people leaving hospital, NHLP will:**

- ◆ Keep a record of any vacancies in temporary accommodation for homeless people in Newcastle, and in other areas of the North East
- ◆ Provide information on what is available and suitable for any agency looking for accommodation for a homeless client

NHLP also keeps a record of who is referred and admitted to, and discharged from, all temporary accommodation in Newcastle (this helps to compile statistical reports and is used for strategic decisions).

**Newcastle Homelessness Prevention Project**  
**Develops policies and new ways of working to prevent homelessness**  
**Based at HAC**  
**0191 277 1731 or 1733**

NHPP is a short-term project (2006-2008) which is developing policies and working with other agencies to prevent homelessness in the city.

**For people leaving hospital, NHPP will:**

- ◆ Give advice to a team of staff who want to know how they can help to prevent homelessness for people leaving hospital
- ◆ Carry out training on any aspect of homelessness in Newcastle, with staff from HAC
- ◆ Help agencies to make use of pathways into independence for homeless people in Newcastle
- ◆ Work with any agency which comes into contact with rough sleepers in the city
- ◆ Collect details about any rough sleepers and take up their case, in order to try to find a way out of rough sleeping and into suitable housing (with support if needed) for anyone who wants to do so

**Specialist Health Visitor for homeless people**  
**Assesses health needs of homeless households, and liaises and makes links with other services**  
**Hill Court and New Bridge Street hostel**  
**0191 277 1746**

**For people leaving hospital, the Specialist Health Visitor will:**

- ◆ Liaise with the person's GP or other health or social care workers
- ◆ Ensure they can access mainstream health and social care services and have appropriate support to do this
- ◆ Work within the multi-agency homeless team at Hill Court and New Bridge Street

## ***Your Homes Newcastle***

**Pathways Advice and Support Workers, Your Homes Newcastle  
Contact through HAC or  
0191 277 1110 or 07866 761946**

Advice and Support Workers (ASWs) are part of the Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) Advice and Support Service. YHN now manages all council housing in Newcastle on behalf of the council. The Advice and Support Service helps people to sustain their tenancies by giving benefits, housing, and debt advice, offering support, and helping people to sort out practical things such as getting electricity and gas supplies, or furniture.

A team of 4 Pathways ASWs works with the Homelessness Prevention Officers at HAC (from November 2006).

### **For people leaving hospital, ASWs (homeless team) will:**

- ◆ Working alongside the HPO and the YHN mental health adviser and CPN for homelessness, go to visit the patient in hospital to assess their support needs and what would be the most suitable accommodation for them
- ◆ Carry out housing surgeries in particular hospital wards if needed
- ◆ Develop a housing support package and work with a housing support agency to get this set up
- ◆ Make referrals to other services, for example to specialist floating support providers (such as those for people with drug and alcohol problems or mental health problems)
- ◆ Help patients to apply for permanent housing through Your Choice Homes, and to start paying off rent arrears or collect evidence of improved behaviour if they have been deemed ineligible for social housing
- ◆ Work with social work, health, and housing staff to assess what needs to be done to improve the condition or facilities for a patient whose home is thought to be unsuitable for them to return to, to help plan a move to another house, or to bring in other services or resources which would help the person to be able to remain in that home
- ◆ Help patients leaving hospital by:
  - Monitoring support packages to make sure they are working well
  - Liaising with other support providers and with social housing providers
  - Making links into daytime activities such as leisure and education
  - Providing benefits and debt advice
  - Working collaboratively with health and social care staff

**Your Choice Homes**  
**New Bridge Street**  
**0191 277 2020**

Your Choice Homes (YCH) is the name of the Choice-Based Lettings scheme introduced by Newcastle City Council. It is a partnership between Your Homes Newcastle, Newcastle City Council, and Housing Associations, and private landlords from the Approved Register who have homes to rent in Newcastle. People who want to rent a home from one of these landlords apply to join the YCH scheme, and then bid for the home they want to live in.

People who have health problems which could be improved by a move into other housing, or who have particular health needs, can get extra priority through a health assessment.

Within the Health and Welfare Team in New Bridge Street, there are 3 health advisers - Mental Health Adviser, Housing Occupational Therapist, and Specialist Practitioner (Health and Housing).

**For people leaving hospital, the Mental Health Adviser for Housing will:**

- ◆ Hold a weekly surgery session to identify accommodation needs, at the Hadrian Clinic and Collingwood Court, and other wards at St Nicholas' Hospital as needed
- ◆ Assess whether people would be eligible for medical priority on the grounds of mental health, by liaising with ward staff and other professionals such as social workers
- ◆ Liaise with in-patient staff in order to identify people needing help with housing
- ◆ Discuss housing and support options at meetings with ward staff

**For people leaving hospital, the Housing Occupational Therapist will:**

- ◆ Assess whether people would be eligible for medical priority on the grounds of physical health, by liaising with ward staff and other professionals such as social workers
- ◆ Help to plan moves for people with physical health needs
- ◆ Organise adaptations to new homes to meet the specific needs of the patient

**For people leaving hospital, the Specialist Practitioner (Health and Housing) will:**

- ◆ Assess whether people would be eligible for medical priority on the grounds of physical health, by liaising with ward staff and other professionals such as social workers
- ◆ Help to plan moves for older people with physical health needs, and families

**Newcastle Hospitals NHS Trust and Northumberland, Tyne & Wear Mental Health NHS Trust**

**Hospital Discharge Liaison Facilitator for Newcastle Hospitals Trust  
0191 244 8900**

**For people leaving hospital, the Hospital Discharge Liaison Facilitator will:**

- ◆ Act as resource and support for hospital staff in relation to the Hospital Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Protocol
- ◆ Be the contact person if there are concerns that the Protocol has not been followed
- ◆ Represent the Newcastle Hospitals Trust at review meetings regarding this Protocol

**Nursing staff in all hospitals**

**For people leaving hospital, nursing staff will:**

- ◆ Find out at admission whether the address given is the address the patient intends (and can) return to
- ◆ Refer the patient to their own local authority if they do not come from Newcastle
- ◆ Refer the patient to the Homelessness Prevention Officer (hospital discharge) at the Housing Advice Centre, if they do not have an address they can return to - as soon as possible after admission and no later than a week before discharge in most cases, 2 days before discharge in short stay wards, or that day for A&E
- ◆ Contact either the social work duty officer or the mental health social worker if the person states at some point during their hospital stay that they cannot return to the address from which they were admitted
- ◆ Inform the social work team if the patient is under 18 and may be homeless
- ◆ Contact the Housing Advice Centre if the patient is sleeping rough and wishes to get help to find somewhere to stay (and contact the Homelessness Prevention Project to fax them the patient's details if they do not wish to have help at this point)
- ◆ Refer patients to drug and alcohol treatment services if they wish to seek treatment

## ***Newcastle Adult Services Department***

**Hospital Social Work Team - all hospitals**

**Tel: 233 6161 / 223 2507**

### **For people leaving hospital, the Hospital Social Workers will:**

- ◆ Provide help to ward staff where a patient is not able to return home or has no home to return to
- ◆ Where people are unable to make a housing application without help, or have no family to help them, support patients in making housing applications, and make contact with housing services including Your Choice Homes, and other social or private landlords, and with Advice & Support Workers
- ◆ Contact Homelessness Prevention Officers at the Housing Advice Centre or the Emergency Homelessness Service to alert them to a potentially homeless patient, if they do not have an address they can return to - as soon as possible after admission, and no later than a week before discharge in most cases, 2 days before discharge in short stay wards, or that day for A&E
- ◆ Contact the Housing Advice Centre where someone is sleeping rough
- ◆ For under 18 year olds, make a referral to the Children and Families Team
- ◆ Liaise with landlords, health workers, and Advice and Support Workers where it is thought that a patient cannot return home because of the condition or facilities in their home
- ◆ Arrange for cleaning of the home where this is needed, in liaison with housing staff, environmental health officers, and ASWs
- ◆ Carry out community care assessments and arrange social care packages
- ◆ Refer patients to other services such as mental health services, and supported housing services, as needed

**Psychiatric Nurse for Homelessness and Mental Health Social Worker (Homelessness)**  
**Hill Court, Pitt Street**  
**Tel: 277 1737**

**Community Psychiatric Nurse**  
**Joseph Cowen Health Centre for Homeless People**  
**8 Wilfred Street, Byker**  
**Tel: 07900 223465**

Opening hours for Joseph Cowen Centre

Monday - Friday 8.00am – 2.30pm  
(Needle Exchange: 9.30am – 2.30pm, from 10.30am Tues)  
No appointments are needed

**For people leaving hospital, the Hill Court Psychiatric Nurse and Social Worker (Homelessness) will:**

- ◆ Visits patients at Hadrian Clinic and Collingwood Court, and identify any difficulties with discharge plans
- ◆ Gather information about people who are homeless, and liaise with HAC to help them to respond to homeless applications
- ◆ Work with Advice and Support Workers and HAC to identify suitable temporary or permanent accommodation
- ◆ Identify where Care Co-ordinators are already involved with the patient, and contribute to risk assessments, advise on risk management plans, and devise care and support packages
- ◆ Work with ASWs (in the new team which will help people leaving hospital) to identify suitable options for independent housing, with support if necessary
- ◆ Work with ASWs (in the new team which will help people leaving hospital) to assess housing and support needs, and advice on support packages

**For people leaving hospital, the Joseph Cowen CPN will:**

- ◆ Meet with homeless people with mental health needs living in independent or supported accommodation, or who are street homeless (either at Joseph Cowen Health Centre or elsewhere), and continue to work with them if they are admitted to hospital, until a Care Co-ordinator is involved
- ◆ Work with Advice and Support Workers and HAC to identify suitable temporary or permanent accommodation
- ◆ Help ASWs to identify suitable options for independent housing, with support if necessary

- ◆ Help ASWs to assess housing and support needs and arrange support packages
- ◆ Refer people into mainstream mental health services
- ◆ Contribute to risk assessments, advise on risk management plans, and devise care and support packages
- ◆ Monitor the support provided to people who have been homeless, until a Care Co-ordinator is involved

## E Homelessness contacts in the North East region

*(Names of senior officers, numbers for homelessness service in general)*

### Tyne & Wear

<p><b><u>Gateshead</u></b></p> <p>Erica Cummings Gateshead Council Civic Centre Regent Street Gateshead NE8 1HH</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0191 433 2636</b></p>	<p><b><u>North Tyneside</u></b></p> <p>Dave Bell North Tyneside Homes Block C Harvey Combe Killingworth NE12 6UB</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0191 643 7740</b></p>
<p><b><u>South Tyneside</u></b></p> <p>Steven Hamilton Library Building Prince Georg Square South Shields Tyne and Wear NE33 2PE</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0191 424 6456</b></p>	<p><b><u>Sunderland</u></b></p> <p>Claire Foster City Housing Advice Team PO Box 102 Civic Centre Sunderland SR2 7DN</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0800 731 2963</b></p>

### Northumberland (please note that these may change after April 09)

<p><b><u>Alnwick</u></b></p> <p>Barry Gibson Old Post Office 1 Clayport Street Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1LA</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01665 510505</b></p>	<p><b><u>Berwick</u></b></p> <p>Simon Lord Homeless Department Council Office Wallace Green Berwick on Tees TD15 1ED</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01289 330044</b></p>
<p><b><u>Blyth Valley</u></b></p> <p>Paul Worth Dinsdale House 75 Marine Terrace Blyth Northumberland NE24 2LN</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01670 542095</b></p>	<p><b><u>Castle Morpeth</u></b></p> <p>Kath Glen Castle Morpeth Borough Council Longhirst Hall Longhirst Morpeth NE61 3LR</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0845 117 0020</b></p>

<p><b><u>Tynedale</u></b></p> <p>Marilyn Rowe Homeless Services Prospect House Hexham NE46 3NH</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01434 652121</b></p>	<p><b><u>Wansbeck</u></b></p> <p>Ms L Kelly Housing Options Officer Wansbeck Homes Front Street West Bedlington Northumberland NE22 5TU</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01670 532223 or 532399</b></p>
--	---

## Teesside

<p><b><u>Hartlepool</u></b></p> <p>Lynda Igoe Housing Advice Section Civic Centre Victoria Road Hartlepool TS24 8AY</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01429 266522</b></p>	<p><b><u>Redcar &amp; Cleveland</u></b></p> <p>Stella Forrest Belmont House Rectory Lane Guisborough TS14 7FD</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01287 612444</b></p>
<p><b><u>Middlesbrough</u></b></p> <p>Julie McNaughton Erimus Housing Home Choice 73-75 Corporation Road Middlesbrough TS1 1LY</p> <p><b>Telephone: 08000 461 600</b></p>	<p><b><u>Stockton</u></b></p> <p>Caroline Wood Homeless Options Services 16 Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1TX</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01642 528389</b></p>

**County Durham (please note that these may change after April 09)**

<p><b><u>Chester-le-Street</u></b></p> <p>Laura Fisher Strategic Housing Team Newcastle Road Co Durham DH3 3UT</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0191 387 2043 or 2111</b></p>	<p><b><u>Derwentside</u></b></p> <p>Mary Foster Civic Centre Front Street Stanley DH3 3UT</p> <p><b>Telephone 01207 693693</b></p>
<p><b><u>Darlington</u></b></p> <p>Christopher Burke Homeless Division Town Hall Darlington Co Durham DL5 5QT</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01325 388542</b></p>	<p><b><u>Durham City</u></b></p> <p>Lynn Boyd or Kim Corfield Durham City Homeless Unit 17 Claypath Durham City DH1 1RH</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0191 301 8740</b></p>
<p><b><u>Easington</u></b></p> <p>Rebecca Sedgewick or Andrew Burnip District of Easington Seaside Lane Easington Village, Peterlee Co Durham SR8 3TN</p> <p><b>Telephone: 0191 527 0501</b></p>	<p><b><u>Sedgefield</u></b></p> <p>Housing Advice and Homelessness Section Neighbourhood Services Department Sedgefield Borough Council Spennymoor DL16 6JQ</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01388 816166</b></p>
<p><b><u>Teesdale</u></b></p> <p>Denise Fessey Teesdale Housing Association 14a Redwell Court Harmire Road Barnard Castle Co Durham DL12 8BN</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01833 694400</b></p>	<p><b><u>Wear Valley</u></b></p> <p>Craig Douglas Dellside House Low Willington Crook DL15 0DH</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01388 765555</b></p>

## F Contact details

Contact details for points of contact for all agencies involved in Preventing Homelessness from Hospital Discharge Protocol

Organisation	Operational	Managerial	Strategic
<b>Housing:</b> Strategic Housing Service  Your Homes Newcastle	Gill Simm <b>0191 277 1717</b> <a href="mailto:gill.simm@newcastle.gov.uk">gill.simm@newcastle.gov.uk</a>	Neil Munslow <b>0191 211 5856</b> <a href="mailto:neil.munslow@newcastle.gov.uk">neil.munslow@newcastle.gov.uk</a>	Christine Cunningham <b>0191 211 5891</b> <a href="mailto:christine.cunningham@newcastle.gov.uk">christine.cunningham@newcastle.gov.uk</a>  John Lee <b>0191 278 8700</b> <a href="mailto:john.lee@yhn.org.uk">john.lee@yhn.org.uk</a>
<b>Social Services:</b> Mental health  Adult Services	Debbie Walker <b>0191 277 1748</b>  Team leader Freeman Hospital social work team Claire Bourne <b>0191 223 1025</b> <a href="mailto:Claire.bourne@newcastle.gov.uk">Claire.bourne@newcastle.gov.uk</a>	Sheila Winter <b>0191 223 2507</b> <a href="mailto:sheila.winter@newcastle.gov.uk">sheila.winter@newcastle.gov.uk</a>  Stuart Pattinson <b>0191 211 6348</b> <a href="mailto:Stuart.pattinson@newcastle.gov.uk">Stuart.pattinson@newcastle.gov.uk</a>	Catherine Fitt <b>0191 277 7011</b> <a href="mailto:catherine.fitt@newcastle.gov.uk">catherine.fitt@newcastle.gov.uk</a>  Cathy Bull <b>0191 211 6317</b> <a href="mailto:cathy.bull@newcastle.gov.uk">cathy.bull@newcastle.gov.uk</a>
<b>NHS:</b> Acute Trust	Dorothy Kyle <b>0191 233 6161</b> <a href="mailto:Dot.kyle@nuth.nhs.uk">Dot.kyle@nuth.nhs.uk</a>	Martin Hagland <b>0191 233 6161</b> <a href="mailto:martin.hagland@nuth.nhs.uk">martin.hagland@nuth.nhs.uk</a>	Len Fenwick <b>0191 233 6161</b> <a href="mailto:Len.fenwick@nuth.nhs.uk">Len.fenwick@nuth.nhs.uk</a>



## G Where to get help with welfare benefits in Newcastle

Newcastle has a number of agencies that give advice on welfare rights and welfare benefits. There is a paper directory called “**Where to get advice in Newcastle**”, or you can find information about where to get advice on the Council’s website at:

[http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/wr\\_nav2\\_advicenewcastle](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/wr_nav2_advicenewcastle)

or by looking at the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Services website:

<http://www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/publications/directory/directory.htm>

or by using the Community Legal Services website:

<http://www.clsdirect.org.uk/index.jsp>

You can also find information on benefits on the national Citizens Advice website:

<http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/>

The Council’s website also contains limited information about benefits:

[http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/wr\\_otherhelp](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/wr_otherhelp)

## **Newcastle City Council**

### **Proposals for Cold Weather Provision 2008/09**

This document outlines the measures that Newcastle City Council and its partners will put into place in order to mitigate the effects of cold weather on rough sleepers. It is a CLG requirement for local authorities to have a plan to accommodate rough sleepers during periods of cold weather. The plan for the cold weather period will compliment the ongoing work which aims to work systematically to accommodate people by the early identification of those at risk and where possible avoiding crisis responses that exacerbate demand.

#### **Client group – who does the cold weather plan apply to?**

The CLG require that the cold weather plan should deal with any rough sleepers on the streets in the extreme cold. This includes those without recourse to public funds such as A8/2 nationals from the EU accession states. To date nobody from the accession states has been raised at the rough sleeping case management meetings. However this is not to say that Newcastle doesn't have any persons sleeping rough who are originally from the EU accession states. The Rough Sleeper Coordinator is working with all homeless providers & specialist services to get a greater understanding of the extent of rough sleeping in Newcastle for this particular client group.

For the purpose of this plan a rough sleeper will be taken to mean an individual who has been identified and verified as sleeping rough (bedded down) by either the ACE project, Housing Advice Centre, Northumbria Police or the Rough Sleeper Coordinator.

#### **Cold Weather – what is exceptionally cold weather?**

The trigger for severe cold weather provision will be a weather forecast predicting three consecutive nights, or more, of a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower. The temperature prediction will be taken from the temperature data provided on a daily basis by the Met office. The data will be monitored by the Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator who will also take responsibility for informing the Housing Advice Centre (HAC), Emergency Homeless Officer (EHO), ACE project and emergency access accommodation providers as to when a period of exceptionally cold weather is in force.

The cold weather plan will cover the months of December 2008 to March 2009 inclusive.

#### **Case managing the prevention of rough sleeping**

Newcastle City Council currently operates a 'case management' approach to supporting rough sleepers. The case management process is proving to be effective in identifying those who are rough sleeping and planning how individuals will be supported to get off the streets and into accommodation. The Rough Sleeper

Coordinator works closely with the ACE project, Northumbria Police and other organisations to ensure that there is regular contact with rough sleepers and to identify those who are new to rough sleeping. During the cold weather period it will be important to ensure that those who are sleeping rough have contact with the ACE project in order to be supported and encouraged to access suitable accommodation.

The ACE team along with the Rough Sleeper Coordinator will work at a street level to identify individuals who can then be prioritised for accommodation. When the Met Office indicates that there will be three consecutive nights of severe weather conditions the ACE project along with the Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator will visit identified hot-spots to make contact with anyone who is still on the streets. The Rough Sleeper Coordinator will work in partnership with Supporting People contracted services to secure accommodation for any potential rough sleepers.

### **Access to priority need bedspaces**

At present all emergency access bed spaces are made available to the people identified by the Council as being in the greatest need. The case management process identifies those individuals who are rough sleeping who can then be prioritised according to levels of need through the 'gateway' into the emergency access bed spaces. If there is no emergency access accommodation available the city council will offer accommodation at Hill Ct, New Bridge Street or B&B on an emergency basis. The Council may also ask accommodation providers to hold beds empty to accommodate high priority clients who cannot be contacted at the time a vacancy appears. In these cases the Council will guarantee the loss of any rental income.

During office hours all efforts will be made to accommodate individuals into emergency access accommodation. The Housing Advice Centre & Emergency Homeless Officer will have a list of the cases that are still awaiting accommodation and will make the final decision on whether or not to offer accommodation at Hill Court. Access to these bed spaces will be subject to a risk assessment and priority will be given to those individuals agreed to be in the greatest need either by the Rough Sleepers Case Management Group or through a HAC assessment. When an individual is placed into Hill Court they will be interviewed the following day by a Homeless Prevention Officer who will look to secure a placement in an emergency access hostel.

If a situation arises where there is absolutely no emergency access accommodation available including bed spaces at Hill Court B&B accommodation will be secured. However, this is not a preferred option or a positive solution and should be avoided at all costs by ensuring that existing provision is used effectively.

### **Reduce exclusions from direct access accommodation during the cold weather period**

It is acknowledged that supported housing providers need to ensure the health & safety of other residents and staff at all times however during the cold weather period it is important that supported housing providers avoid evictions from provision and exclusions from accessing projects for non serious matters (rent arrears, low

level rule breaking). All Supporting People services should work positively to encourage service users to engage with support and turn their lives around and it is essential that this good work continues over the cold weather period. All efforts should be made with service users who are at risk of losing their accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless during this period. Supporting People providers should be working proactively with the police in order to ensure safety for staff and residents and we recognise that sometimes evictions are necessary. Where it has not been possible to avoid an eviction all accommodation providers should notify the HAC or the Rough Sleeper Coordinator to advise of individual cases that are at risk of losing their accommodation or those who have been evicted. Where possible it will be imperative to **prevent** people from becoming homeless from emergency access or supported accommodation and a greater partnership approach needs to be adopted between Supporting People providers and housing services to manage this process. The Council and the Police do not want to see any summary evictions that are not necessitated by a high level of risk that will require a police intervention. The weekly rough sleepers' case management meeting will act as an evictions panel. The meeting will review all evictions and options for those facing eviction.

### **Ensuring that service users are moved on in a timely manner to create capacity in temporary accommodation**

During the cold weather period it is essential that capacity is created within the supported housing sector and that there is a focus on moving service users who are ready for independence on from the provision in a planned way. Supported accommodation providers should focus support planning on move on (where appropriate) during this period, ensuring that the resettlement plans are effective and timely. For Service Users who are eligible for Your Choice Homes and have been for more than 2 months but who are struggling to obtain accommodation a referral should be made to the 'Pathways' team for additional support and consideration for a welfare priority. Housing support workers should also consider other housing options such as access to the private rented sector through the Rent Deposit Scheme.

### **How other people can help**

It is important that concerns about people sleeping rough are passed on to either, the Housing Advice Centre, ACE project or the Rough Sleeper Coordinator as soon as possible. When the information is received all efforts will be made to contact the individual(s) in order to offer support and to be considered for suitable accommodation.

### **Contact details**

Housing Advice Centre – 0191 2771711  
Out of hours service – 0191 2328520

ACE project (Outreach service) – 0191 2325699 (Gary Bryson)

Rough Sleeper Coordinator (Gemma Shiel) – 0191 277 1739 / 07855 825639  
**[Gemma Shiel 17/11/08](#)**