

Housing Support and Social Inclusion Strategy 2010 – 2015

Strategy Summary

What is Housing Support & Social Inclusion?

Housing Support and Social Inclusion services are those which support people to be independent and stay independent through housing related support.

Housing Support and Social Inclusion services aim to prevent people from becoming homeless or vulnerable.

The kind of support provided through these services includes helping people to;

- maintain their tenancy
- deal with money and bills
- keep their home safe and secure
- get a suitable home
- make links within their community and access its facilities

Housing support and social inclusion services help enable people to do things for themselves.

What is the Housing Support & Social Inclusion Strategy?

This is the plan that describes the priorities for housing support and social inclusion services over the next five years (2010 – 2015). The strategy describes what the priorities are and the action we need to take.

How was the Housing Support & Social Inclusion Strategy developed?

We gathered information about people's housing support and social inclusion needs from:

- Existing plans and strategies
- Service users
- General public
- Local organisations
- Support providers

We used the information we gathered to work out what our priorities need to be for the next five years. We put these ideas into a draft strategy which we are now asking for people to comment on.

What does the Housing Support and Social Inclusion Strategy say?

There are **three principles** that we must ensure are a part of everything we do, these are:

Compact Principles – This is about making sure that we work well with voluntary and community services.

Safeguarding our Customers – This is about making sure that our customers are safe in our services

Supporting Diversity – This is about making sure that our services are accessible to everyone who needs them

There are **two cross cutting themes** that will have an effect on everything we do, these are:

Resources are managed effectively – this is about making sure that we are making the best use of the money we get

Joint Working – this is about making sure that we work jointly with others wherever possible. This could mean working jointly with other local authorities or local organisations

There are **four key outcomes** that we aim to achieve through this strategy, they are:

Outcome 1: Customers are supported early so that homelessness, social exclusion and increased vulnerability is prevented

This outcome is about trying to stop people becoming homeless, socially excluded or needing to access social care and health services. If we can support people before their need becomes too great, we can help to stop their needs increasing further.

What action do we need to take?

- Raise awareness of housing support and social inclusion services with community and voluntary organisations, residents, schools, statutory services (hospitals, doctors, social care services etc) and universal services (leisure centres, libraries etc)
- Pro-actively seek people who would benefit from support
- Ensure there is plenty of low level floating support across the city that can address a broad range of needs

Outcome 2: Customers have choice and control over the services they receive

This outcome aims to ensure that when people need to access our services they have a range of services that could meet their needs and they can choose the one that suits them best. People accessing our services will have control in relation to which service provider delivers their support and the way the support is delivered. Support workers and other professionals will need to work with the people accessing our services, so that they can make safe choices about the support they receive.

What action do we need to take?

- Find out what our customers and potential customers preferences are in terms of service delivery
- Make changes to the services available and the way in which services are delivered in line with the preferences of our customers and potential customers
- Develop systems so that customers have safe control over who delivers their support, including the use of personal budgets
- Develop customer choice standards, so that customers can understand the level of choice available in different services
- Ensure all services, as a minimum, enable service users to make safe choices about how their support is delivered.

Outcome 3: Customers can move in and out of services easily according to their needs

We need to ensure that as soon as someone has a support need, they can access the right service for them. Our customers need to be able to move to different services at the right time if their needs change. We need to make sure that if people have been living out of their community, such as in prison or hospital, that they are supported to move back into the community and continue to receive support until they are settled. We also need to make sure that people can move out of our services into independent living as soon as they are ready.

What action do we need to take?

- Develop an improved access, referral and move on process that includes requirements for partnership working
- Monitor the success of the access, referral and move on process and take action to reduce any barriers

Outcome 4: Customers who have experienced a crisis receive a timely and effective service so that further vulnerability is minimised

We will try to ensure that we have services in place that help to prevent people experiencing a crisis, such as becoming homeless or needing a long stay in hospital. However, we will not be able to do this in all cases. This means that we need to make sure we can react quickly to support people who have experienced a crisis, so that their situation improves as soon as possible.

The organisations and services we will need to work most closely with are:

- Hospitals
- Prisons, Youth Offending Institutions and Offender Services
- Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services
- Homeless Services
- Citizens Advice Bureaux

What action do we need to take?

- Make sure that people going into prison, youth offending institutions and hospitals get advice about their current housing situation as soon as possible after they arrive
- Make sure that all relevant services and organisations know how to get advice about a persons housing situation so that homelessness can be prevented
- Make sure that people leaving other services do not have a gap in the support they receive

This diagram shows how all the elements of the strategy fit together.

