Homelessness

A Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 Evidence Paper

NORTH AYRSHIRE
Local Housing Strategy
2017-2022

Comments or questions about this Strategy, including requests for supporting information or documentation, should be made to:

CONTENTS

Abbreviations

AISS	Ayrshire Intensive Support Service
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
SCS	Simon Community Scotland
HAT	Homelessness Advice Team
HB	Housing Benefit
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
ICSP	Integrated Children's Service Plan
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
NHS	National Health Service
RDS	Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
PRS	Private Rented Sector
SHN	Scotland's Housing Network
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement
SSST	Short Secure Scottish Tenancy
VAW	Violence Against Woman

1. Introduction

Role and Purpose of the Local Housing Strategy: Homelessness

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the strategic framework for housing across Scotland, and includes a requirement for local authorities to produce and regularly update Local Housing Strategies (LHS). North Ayrshire's first LHS was introduced in 2005 and has set out the strategic objectives that have informed housing related activities across all sectors since.

The North Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy establishes the priorities and outcomes that will guide housing related activity and investment over the period 2017 - 2022 across all housing sectors in North Ayrshire.

Scottish Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility for homelessness as detailed within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended. These duties in the main include the prevention and alleviation of homelessness and provision of temporary and permanent accommodation for unintentionally homeless households.

It is recognised that preventing and tackling homelessness is a key part of fighting poverty and inequality in Scotland. The Government has therefore implemented a range of policies and legislation to prevent and alleviate homelessness and to ensure that homeless households get support and assistance according to their individual needs.

Scottish Government Local Housing Strategy Guidance (August 2014) requires local authorities to consider how they can contribute to preventing and tackling homelessness as well as ensuring that there is sufficient suitable and appropriate temporary accommodation and housing support services available.
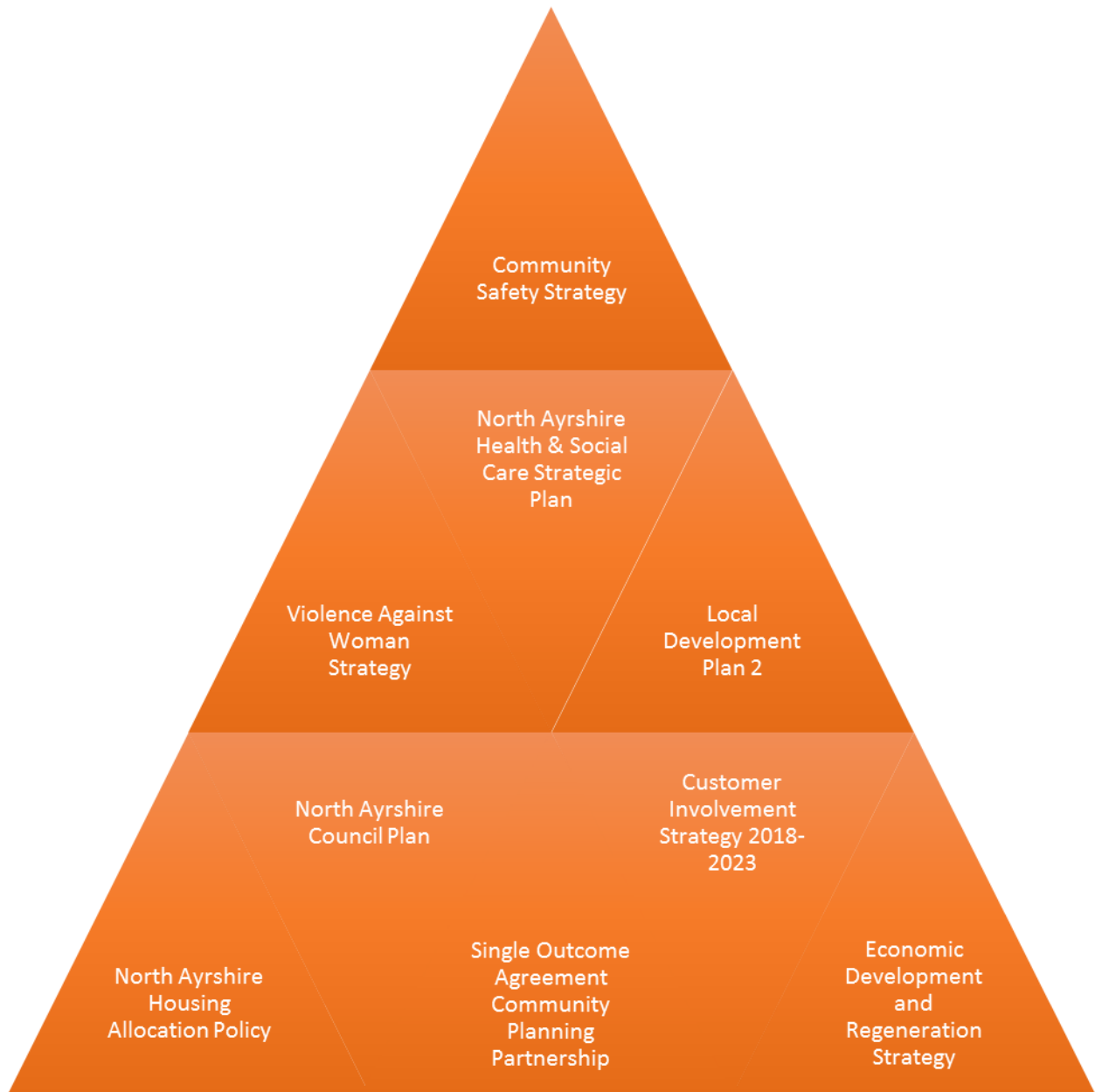
The North Ayrshire Homelessness Evidence Paper contributes to the delivery of the 2015-20 Council Plan priority of "Supporting all of our people to stay safe, healthy and active". By delivering the outcomes detailed within the LHS, we will prevent homelessness, provide access to permanent housing, and deliver appropriate support to maximise tenancy sustainment, whilst improving health and wellbeing.

The Homelessness Evidence Paper details the nature and extent of homelessness across North Ayrshire, benchmarked against national priorities and trends. It also evidences the work undertaken to prevent and alleviate homelessness and the impact this is having.

Following consultation and in response to government policy and guidance, the Homelessness Evidence Paper identifies the key priorities for Community Planning Partners in relation to homelessness and the strategic outcomes to be achieved over the next five years.

There is significant overlap and linkages between the homelessness agenda and other strands of the LHS, and some of the specific homelessness actions will support outcomes identified across other housing policy areas. However, the Council has sought to maintain some distinction between the different strands of the LHS. For example, whilst there are homelessness outcomes and actions relating to access to the private rented sector, the outcomes and actions identified do not directly address issues with regard to private sector property condition. These are set out in the private sector strand of the LHS.

Figure 1 – Strategic Linkage Chart

Community Safety Strategy

North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Strategic Plan

Violence Against Woman Strategy

Local Development Plan 2

North Ayrshire Council Plan

Customer Involvement Strategy 2018-2023

North Ayrshire Housing Allocation Policy

Single Outcome Agreement Community Planning Partnership

Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy

Source: Local Housing Strategy

2. Developing the Strategy

The LHS Homelessness Evidence Paper has been developed through a collaborative process involving officers from across Council departments, key stakeholder agencies and service users; building on the effective partnership working approach which has been developed over the last ten years. The work detailed below was undertaken to inform the local priorities:

- **A review of policy and guidance** to ensure that the Homelessness Evidence Paper is informed by national and local policy priorities, and that legislative requirements are met. This was a crucial stage in shaping identified outcomes and actions to support relevant priorities, both nationally and within North Ayrshire.

- **Analysis of available published and unpublished evidence** on the nature and extent of homelessness in North Ayrshire, to identify emerging priorities.

- **Consultation (stakeholders)** A consultation event was organised to provide an opportunity for key partner agencies to identify:

  - the risk factors and homelessness triggers for priority groups.

  - the support, service response and types of temporary accommodation required to meet the needs of vulnerable households.

- **Consultation (service users)** Service users were active participants in the stakeholder consultation event (see above) and a sample of clients in temporary accommodation were asked to complete a short survey. This feedback supplemented views of service users collated from a number of sources over the last three years and informed the review of outcomes for the new strategy.

- **A review of recent homelessness research** was undertaken which presented evidence at a national level which mirrored many of the risk factors and priorities determined at a local level through consultation and local analysis.

- **Benchmarking/Good Practice** North Ayrshire Council is a member of the Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) and benchmarks performance against other Scottish Local authorities. Benchmarking reports are collated and disseminated on an annual basis. The annual benchmarking information was used in development of the strategy to measure homelessness trends and determine targets when developing outcomes for homeless people.

- **Scottish Housing Charter** data was analysed and local performance measured against national averaged were scrutinised to inform priorities.

3. National Policy and Legislative context (enacted)

The current policy agenda for homelessness is both ambitious and challenging and the legislative framework governing homelessness prevention and delivery is extensive. Below is a summary of the key legislation which underpins homelessness provision in North Ayrshire.

Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 is the primary legislation which governs how Scottish Local Authorities should respond to homelessness and lays out the statutory responsibilities for assessment and provision of both temporary and permanent accommodation provision.

In February 2010, section 32a of this Act was amended to give local authorities the ability to discharge duty to homeless people into private sector housing.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The above legislation prescribes that local authorities are required to:

- Carry out an assessment of homelessness in their area

- Prepare and submit a Homelessness Strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness (now included within the Local Housing Strategy)

- Ensure that advice and information about housing and other services is available free of charge to anyone considered to be at risk of homelessness

Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003

Section 2 Abolished the Priority Need test in Scotland by 2012.

Section 11 of the Act came into force on 1 April 2009. It gives local authorities early notice of households at risk of homelessness due to eviction. Section 11 places a duty on landlords (except local authority landlords) and creditors to notify the relevant local authority when they raise proceedings for possession or serve certain other notices.

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004

The above Order sets out temporary accommodation standards for homeless households. This aimed to eliminate unsuitable accommodation for families, specifically the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) was introduced from 1 April 2012 and aims to improve the quality and value of services provided by social landlords and support the Scottish Government's aim to create a safer and stronger Scotland.

The SSHC includes a range of outcomes across key themes:

- The customer/landlord Relationship

- Housing quality and maintenance

- Neighbourhood and community

- Access to housing and support

The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that homeless people can expect from social landlords in terms of access to help and advice, the quality of temporary accommodation, and continuing support to help homeless people attain and keep a home. North Ayrshire's performance against the Charter is detailed within Section 2 of this paper 'The extent and nature of homelessness within North Ayrshire'.

Housing Support Duty 2013

The statutory housing support duty commenced on 1 June 2013 which prescribe that local authorities must assess and provide housing support for homeless or potentially homeless applicants to whom they have a duty to secure settled accommodation.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 was implemented from 1 April 2015 and expands the corporate parenting role to Housing Services as well as wider agencies. The Act amended the definition of care leaver and extended corporate parenting responsibilities to these young people until they are 26 years old. This means that there are additional factors to be considered when working with young care leavers and will require a multi-agency approach to supporting this vulnerable group.

Health and Social Care Partnership

The Health and Social Care partnership will deliver change in the way services are delivered. The Homelessness Service has excellent links with the partnership, with health posts integrated into the housing team and an Ayrshire wide Health and Homelessness Implementation Group identifying priorities and responding to the needs of vulnerable people in line with the National Standards 2005.

Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR are an independent regulator of RSLs and local authority housing services in Scotland.

Established on 1 April 2011, the SHR have the statutory objective to:

"Safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities".

The SHR has a role in monitoring the Scottish Government Scottish Housing Charter.

In 2014, the SHR published its report; A Thematic Inquiry into the Delivery of Housing Options in Scotland's Local Authorities. It made a number of key recommendations, one of which was that:

"The Scottish Government should provide enhanced guidance for local authorities on the delivery of Housing Options".

Housing Options

The Scottish Housing Options Guidance was published in March 2016 and whilst not issued as statutory guidance, is has been produced as a tool for local authorities when developing their approach to Housing Options.

Care Commission

North Ayrshire Council Housing Support Service comprises of the Housing Support Team and Ardrossan Hostel.   Both these services are registered with the Care Inspectorate.

These services have been registered since 2004 and the most recent assessment took place in March 2015 where both services were awarded the following grades:

- Quality of Care & Support - Grade 6 Excellent

- Quality of Staffing - Grade 6 Excellent

- Quality of Leadership & Management - Grade 6 Excellent

4. Local Policy Context

The prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness and the provision of Housing Support services contribute to a number of Scottish Government Outcomes including; people live longer, healthier lives.

The prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness also contributes to the Council's priority 'supporting all of our people to stay safe, healthy and active'.

The range of welfare reform changes introduced by Westminster continues to have a significant impact on North Ayrshire residents. The changes that have been introduced have included:

- New benefit cap reductions for households

- Universal Credit for single claimants

- Under occupation of Social Rented Sector housing

Changes that are still in progress are the full digital roll out of Universal Credit, which is planned for November 2017 for North Ayrshire and implementation of Local Housing Allowance Caps for the Social Rented Sector.

The impact of under occupation is currently being mitigated by the Scottish Government through the top up of the Discretionary Housing Benefit fund, however this may not be sustainable in the longer term.

The Scottish Government recently announced that it plans to use its new Social Security powers to increase the frequency of Universal Credit payments, replacing monthly with a fortnightly option. It has also been announced that housing payments will be made directly to social rented landlords.

5. Extent and Nature of Homelessness in North Ayrshire - Summary

Background

Levels of homelessness in North Ayrshire have reduced by more than 50% over the last ten years. This is due largely to the development of a whole person partnership approach to preventing homelessness through early intervention and crisis aversion, including the provision of housing options advice.

Figure 2: Homeless presentations in North Ayrshire
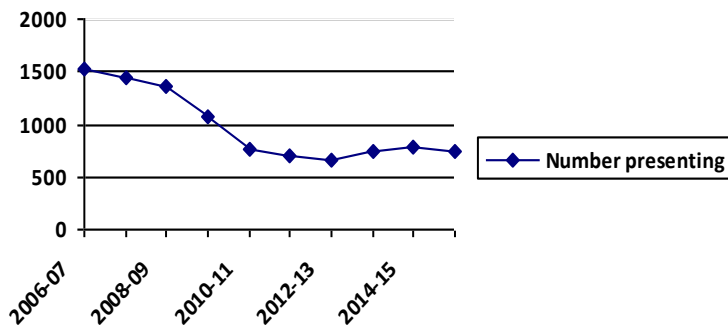
The greatest reduction in homelessness was over the first half of the last decade. Since then, levels of homelessness across North Ayrshire have remained relatively static.

Data source Scottish Government statistical bulletin 2015-16

The Scottish Government have determined that the introduction of the housing options approach was a key factor in reducing homelessness across the country and that: "in its current form, the impact of housing options work is unlikely to lead to further large reductions in applications beyond those already seen" (Homelessness in Scotland: 2015-16)

The focus of this strategy is therefore on early intervention and prevention and the development of different pathways to supporting people identified as being most at risk of homelessness and repeat homelessness.

6. Statistical Analysis of Homelessness in North Ayrshire

This section looks at the available data pertaining to homelessness in North Ayrshire, placing it, where possible, in a national context. Analysis of this data enables the Council to identify emerging priorities and where resources should be targeted.

It should be noted that in order to improve efficacy of case management, the Council introduced a new web-based case management system during 2013-14. To ensure accuracy, the tables below record the data published by the Scottish Government for North Ayrshire. It should however be noted that on extracting data from Council systems, there are at times a variance from the nationally recorded statistics. Where this is significant, the Council data source has been highlighted. The Council has reported the inconsistency to the Scottish Government.

Homelessness Applications

Table 1: Levels of Homelessness 2005-06 – 2015-16

Year	2005/06	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Number Presenting	1637	661	735	783	744
Assessed as homeless/potentially homeless		579	633	680	698
% assessed as homeless/potentially homeless (North Ayrshire)		87.6	86	87	94
% assessed as homeless/potentially homeless (Scotland)		80	81	83	82

Data source: Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Publication 2015-16

The % of applications assessed as homeless/potentially homeless in North Ayrshire is currently 94%, compared to the 82% national average,

Repeat Homelessness

Levels of repeat homelessness in North Ayrshire are above the national average. The data presented below has been extracted from the Scottish Government publication 2015/16. It should be noted that the Council utilise a wider definition of repeat homelessness in order to tackle prevention activities to vulnerable people. Therefore, the levels analysed on page 12, are higher than those being recorded by the Scottish Government.

Table 2: Number and % of Applicants assessed as potentially or actually homeless who re-apply within 12 months.

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Number presenting	661	735	783	744
Number of households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless	579	633	680	698
Number cases reassessed as homeless within 12 months of previous case being completed	45	15	35	65
% of total homeless assessments	7.7	2.4	5.1	9.3
% of total homeless assessments **Scotland**	5.6	6.2	7.1	6.6

Data source: Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Publication 2015-16

Figure 3 - Repeat Homelessness as per % of cases presenting

Figure 4 – Repeat Homelessness by Age 2015/16
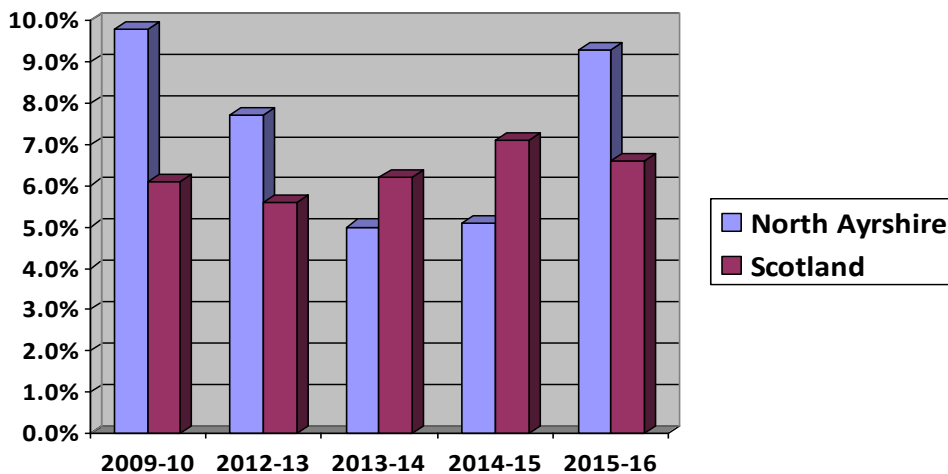
On scrutiny, the Council have determined that 84 households had presented as homeless more than once in the 12 month period during 2015/16. See breakdown below.

- 85% were single people
- 63% were male
- 30% were under 25
- 39% aged 25-34

33% of repeat homeless cases, were households who had been resettled into permanent accommodation following a period of homelessness.

88% of households experiencing repeat homelessness had support needs, many had a range of multiple and complex needs.

Below is a summary of the support needs identified:

- 38% had support needs relating to offending behaviour
- 33% as a result of mental health issues and
- 20% as a result of issues relating to addictions

Priority

Tackling Repeat Homelessness through improving effectiveness of early intervention and preventative measures for people with complex needs, with a particular focus on single men and young people.

Age of Homeless Applicants

The success of the early intervention and prevention activities over the period of the last strategy is reflected in the figures below. Presentations from young people under the age of 25 have reduced from 52% to 25% of all applicants, a figure which is now below the Scottish average of 29%. Applications from young people (16-17 year olds) which were 14% of all applicants, are now only 2%, against a national average of 4.5%.
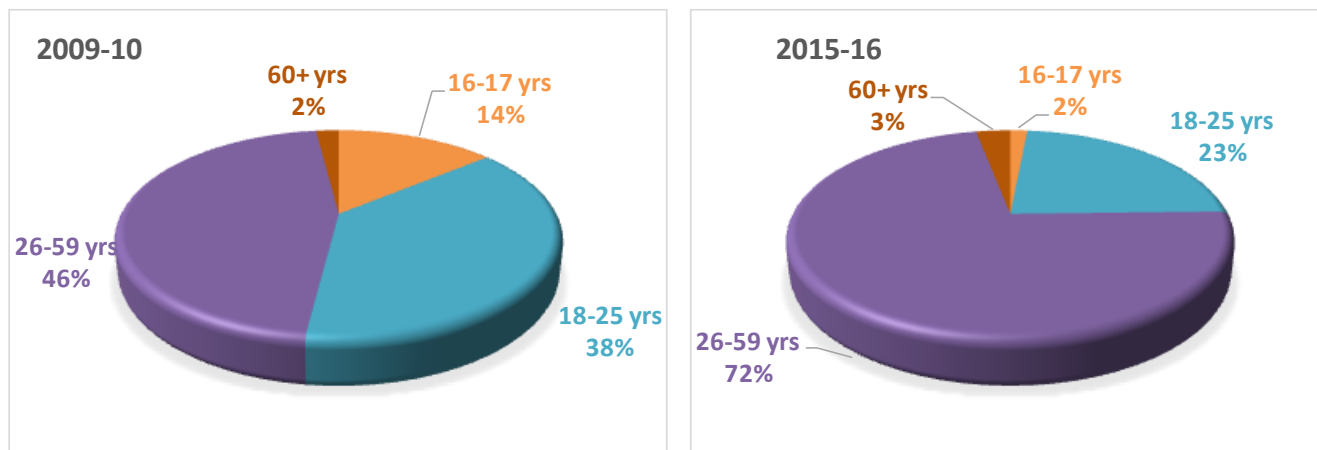
Figure 5 – Change in Homeless Applications by Age from 2009-10 to 2015-16

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

Table 3: Applications by Age of Main Applicant as % of Homeless Applicants, North Ayrshire, 2012-13 to 2015-16

Year/Age	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2015-16 %	2015-16 Scotland %	Age bands
16/17	37	0	4	11	1.5	4.5	16-17
18-24	188	150	184	169	23	24.5	18-24
25-40	298	365	373	359	48	59.5	25-49
41-50	86	125	112	129	17		
51-60	40	59	75	54	7.5	8	50-59
61-70	10	21	22	15	2	3.5	60+
70+	2	10	10	7	1		
TOTAL	661	730	780	744			

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

Household Composition of Homeless Applicants

The majority of homeless presentations in North Ayrshire over the last 5 years has been from single male applicants. There has been a further 13% increase in presentations from this group in the last four years. This group represent 58% of all applications, a significantly higher proportion than the Scottish average of 46%.

However, the number of homeless families is significantly less than the national average, which may, at least in part, explain the higher proportion of single males.

Table 4: *Household Composition as a Percent of Homeless Applicants, North Ayrshire, 2015-16*

Household composition	Gender	Number	%	Scotland %
Single Person	Male	435	58	46
	Female	171	23	21
	All	**606**	**82**	**67**
Single Parent	Male	5	1	4
	Female	69	9	16
	All	**74**	**10**	**20**
Couple	Male	15	2	N/A
	Female	10	1	N/A
	All	**25**	**3**	**4**
Couple with Children	Male	9	1	N/A
	Female	8	1	N/A
	All	**17**	**2**	**4**
Other	Male	3	1	N/A
	Female	19	2	N/A
	All	**22**	**3**	**2**
Other with Children	**All**	0	0	2

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

Figure 6 – Household Composition of Homeless Applicants 2015-16
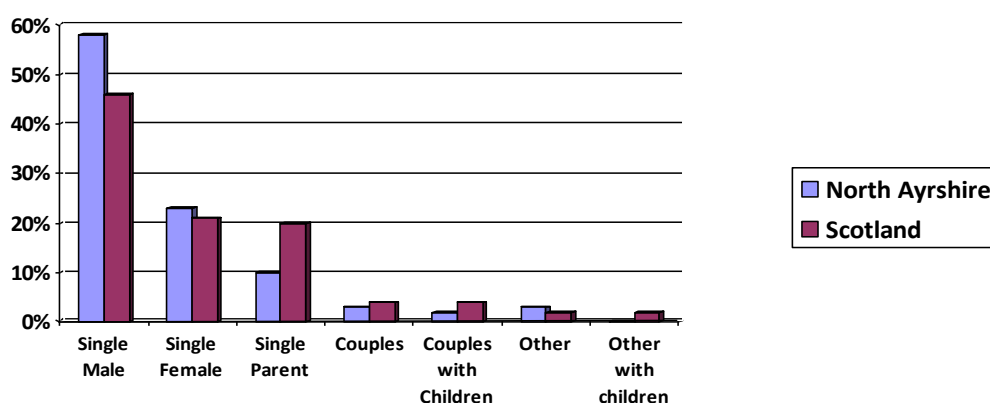
Homeless Children and Families

As at 31 March 2016, across Scotland 27% of all households in temporary accommodation were households with children. In North Ayrshire, the figure is significantly lower at 11%.

Table 5: Households with Children in Temporary Accommodation

Year/Category	At 31 March 2013	At 31 March 2014	At 31 March 2015	At 31 March 2016
Households in Temp Accom	190	196	186	218
Households with Children in Temp Accom	27	34	26	25
No of children in Temp Accom	28	32	42	37
% of total households in Temp Accom who had children in North Ayrshire	13	17	14	11
% of total households in Temp Accom who had children across Scotland	28	24	25	27

Data source: Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Publication 2015-16

Of the 174 children who were homeless in North Ayrshire last year, from local data sources:

- 41 were as a result of domestic abuse
- 29 were as the result of a dispute within the household/relationship breakdown
- 16 children were as a result of fleeing external harassment or violence
- 18 children were homeless as the family had been asked to leave by other family members
- 39 were as a result of action taken by landlord/mortgage provider (arrears or termination)
- 31 were for a variety of reasons

PRIORITY – Responding to the needs of homeless children and families
Tackling domestic abuse.

Reasons for Homelessness

The most common reason for loss of previous accommodation were households who had been 'asked to leave' the home of friends and family, which is consistent with the Scottish average. The second and third most common reasons are 'dispute within household: violent or abusive' and 'dispute within household/relationship breakdown: non-violent'.

The numbers of households who present as homeless following a "dispute within the home: violent or abusive' is higher than the national average. It should however be noted that since 2008-09, the number of people presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse has reduced by 46%.

Homeless presentations as the result of prison discharge is almost double the national average. It should however be noted that this is a reduction of 40% since 2008/09.

The above reflects the high levels of poverty, unemployment, domestic abuse and repeat offending in North Ayrshire.

Further analysis of the figures below shows that of the 77 homeless applicants who had been 'discharged from 'institutions', 73 were from prison (2015/16).

Table 6: Reasons for Homelessness 2012 -2016

Reason for homelessness	2012-13 No	%	2013-14 No	%	2014-15 No	%	2015-16 No	%	Scot avg
Termination of tenancy / mortgage due to rent arrears / default on payments	18	3	19	3	20	3	3 2	4	5
Other action by landlord resulting in the termination of the tenancy	39	6	36	5	38	5	39	5	10
Applicant terminated secure accommodation	24	4	6	1	16	2	15	2	2
Loss of service / tied accommodation	1	<1	4	<1	4	<1	6	1	1
Discharge from prison / hospital / care / other institution	79	12	76	10	93	12	77	10	6
Emergency	2	<1	2	<1	6	1	4	<1	1
Forced division and sale of matrimonial home	0	0	4	<1	4	<1	2	<1	1
Other reason for loss of accommodation	9	1	5	<1	23	3	19	2	7
Dispute within household: violent or abusive	82	12	107	15	109	14	108	14	12
Dispute within household / relationship breakdown: non-violent	98	15	110	15	118	15	121	16	17
Fleeing non-domestic violence	23	3	25	3	45	6	32	4	3
Harassment	9	1	6	1	11	1	10	1	2
Overcrowding	6	1	15	2	8	1	6	1	1
Asked to leave	219	33	240	33	213	27	210	28	26
Other reason for leaving accommodation	52	8	80	11	75	10	63	8	8
All	661		735		783		744		

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

PRIORITY –

Tackling homelessness amongst people discharged from prison.

Support Needs

Homeless households do not initially recognise the range of support needs they have and the impact that these needs have had on their homelessness.

The data presented at Table 7 below records the support needs of homeless people captured during the assessment of homelessness. The evidence demonstrates that homeless people in North Ayrshire have a range of complex and multiple needs. The key support issues identified were, mental and physical health, addictions and needs resulting in offending behaviour.

An analysis of tenancy sustainment during 2015/16 demonstrated the correlation between multiple and complex needs and tenancy failure.

Table 7: Support needs identified following assessment as homeless or potentially homeless (multiple answers possible).

	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2015 Scottish average
Support need	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**%**
Mental Health	110	18	165	24	186	25	17
Learning disability	6	1	8	1	4	0.5	2.6
Physical disability	29	5	40	5	38	5	4.1
Medical issues	49	8	118	17	125	17	7.5
Drug/alcohol dependency	115	19	152	22	154	22	11
Independent living skills	58	10	52	7	37	5	22

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

Figure 7 – Support Needs 2015-16

19
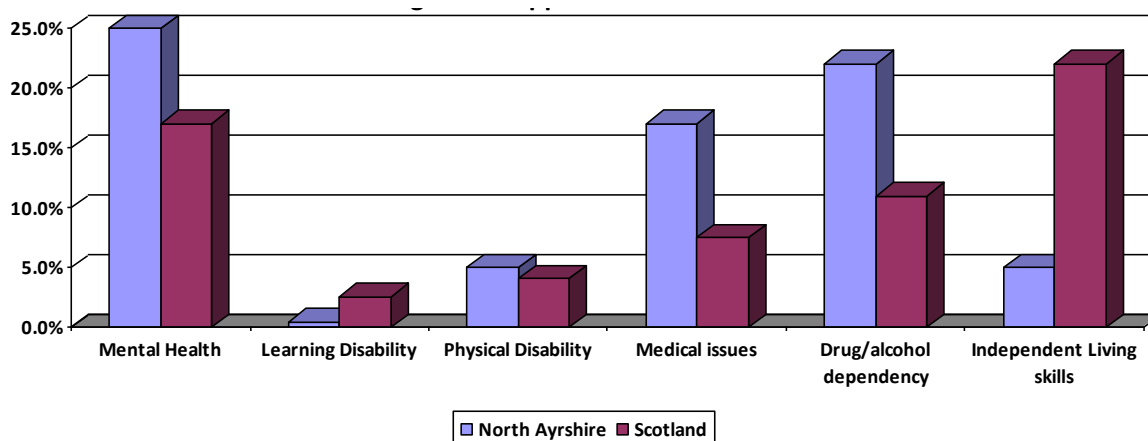
Ethnic Minority Communities

The profile of homeless applicants from minority ethnic groups in North Ayrshire has been consistent over the last ten years. During 2015-16, 98% of all applicants reported their ethnicity as 'White Scottish' or 'White Other British' including 'White Irish'. Presentations from other ethnic groups have ranged from 0.7% in 2012-13 to 1.8% in 2014-15. In 2015-16 the figure was 1% which is proportionate to the wider demographic of the North Ayrshire population.

Over the last two years, a small but increasing number of Gypsy Travellers have presented as homeless. However, all cases relate to a specific dispute within one local site.

The council and stakeholders ensure that the needs of minority groups are being met by utilising a range of services to ensure information is available in community languages. In addition, translation services are made available when communicating with any household where English is not the first language.

Table 8: Ethnicity of Homeless Applicants, North Ayrshire, (Nos.) 2012-13 to 2015-16

Year/Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
White Scottish	633	703	734	707
White Other British	14	18	24	24
Irish	3	0	7	3
Polish	0	0	1	0
Other White Ethnic Group	6	6	4	3
Gypsy Traveller	0	0	7	6
Caribbean	1	1	0	0
African	0	1	1	1
Asian	1	2	2	0
Arab	0	0	1	0
Mixed Group	1	2	2	0
Other ethnic group	1	3	0	0
Not known	1	0	0	0

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System – No national data available therefore variation in totals

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most extreme form of social and economic marginalisation that exists in Scottish society.

The Council's proactive approach to service promotion, coupled with the policy of providing temporary accommodation to any household who requires it, has had a significant impact in the prevention of rough sleeping. 1.4% of homeless households in North Ayrshire had experienced rough sleeping, compared to the Scottish average of 7%.

Table 9: Applicants where rough sleeping occurred prior to application 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Year/Category	2013-14 number	2014-15 number	2015-16 number	North Ayrshire 2015-16 %	Scotland 2015-16 %
Slept rough in 3 months preceding application	14	20	10	1.4	7
Slept rough on night preceding application	10	15	10	1.4	6

Data source: Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Publication 2015-16

Outcomes for people experiencing Homelessness

The main housing outcome during 2015/16 for households assessed as homeless in North Ayrshire was the provision of a "Scottish Secure Tenancy" (61%).

A further 8% of households secured a private rented tenancy. The level of households accessing private sector accommodation has halved since 2012-13. This is partly due to the impact of the Shared Accommodation rate for single people aged under 35 who are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of applicants moving into residential care/supported accommodation, from 6% in 2009-10 to less than 1% over the last 12 months. This is as the result of the Council's changing approach to the provision of interim accommodation for young people.

The Council has demonstrated a strong performance in retaining contact with households throughout their homeless journey. Nationally, contact is lost with approximately 18% of all applicants compared to a North Ayrshire level of 1.4%.
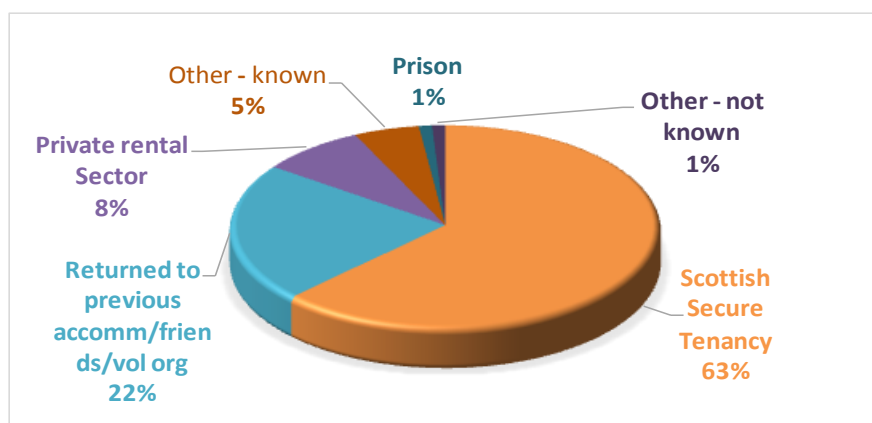
Figure 8 – Outcomes 2015-16

Table 10: Outcomes for Applicants assessed as homeless/potentially homeless in North Ayrshire, 2012-13 to 2015-16

Year/Outcome	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2015-16 %	Scotland 2015-16 average
Scottish Secure Tenancy	351	235	461	383	56	59%
Returned to previous/friends/vol org	160	136	195	184	27	9%
Private Rented Tenancy	25	26	59	61	9	6%
Other - Known	45	19	22	35	5	N/A
Hostel	0	1	1	2	0	N/A
Other – Not Known	1	5	11	7	1	18%
Residential Care/Nursing Home etc	15	6	1	2	0.5	N/A
Bed and Breakfast	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Women's Refuge	0	0	3	1	0.5	N/A
Prison	0	1	10	9	1	N/A
TOTALS	597	429	763	684	100	

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

Tenancy Sustainment

The Scottish Government Housing Charter is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator, below is a summary of the North Ayrshire's performance benchmarked against the national average.

Table 11: Tenancy Sustainment Performance

	Indicator Reference	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Scottish Average 15/16
% of homeless people who sustained a tenancy for at least 12 months	ARC 20	79.86	74.32	81.57	87

Data Source: Scottish Housing Charter Published Reports

Whilst the above demonstrates an improving performance, there are still concerns in regard to the levels of homeless people failing to sustain their tenancy 12 months beyond resettlement.

56 homeless people did not sustain their Council tenancy during 2015/16.

The gender and age breakdown of those tenancies which failed, showed that 68% of the tenants were single male households and 64% were under the age of 35. (**Data Source: Scottish Housing Charter Published Reports**)
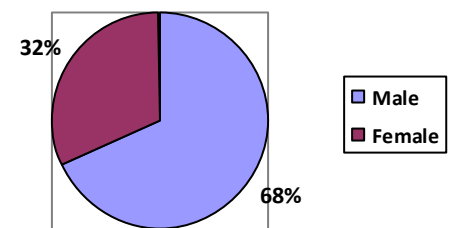

Figure 9 – Gender breakdown of tenancy failure

Utilising Council data sets, a detailed analysis was undertaken to determine reasons for tenancy failure. It revealed that imprisonment, households fleeing violence and people choosing to 'move in with friends/family' were the key reasons for tenancy failure, highlighting the vulnerability of these groups of people.

Figure 10 – Main reasons for tenancy failure by age group
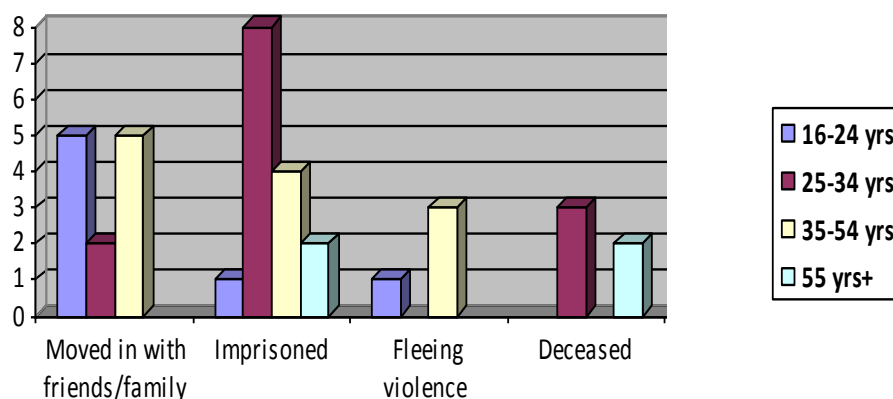
Data Source: Various North Ayrshire Council Data Sets

Table 12: Reasons for tenancy failure by age group

16 – 24 years (13 cases)		
Reason	No:	%
Moved in with F & F	5	39
Imprisoned	2	15
Fleeing Violence	1	7.5
Fire in tenancy	1	7.5
Health/Physical	1	7.5
No avail info	3	23.5

25-34 years (23 cases)		
Reason	No:	%
Moved in with F & F	2	9
Imprisoned	8	35
ASB – targeted by youths	1	4
Rehab	2	9
Deceased	3	13
WA	1	4
Moved out the area	2	9
Lack of support re addictions	1	4
Moved for employment	1	4
No info avail	2	9

35 – 54 years (16 cases)		
Reason	No:	%
Moved in with F & F	5	31
Imprisoned	4	25
Fleeing Violence	3	19
Women's Aid	1	6
Rent arrears	2	13
Private let	1	6

55 years +		
Reason	No:	%
Imprisoned	2	50
Deceased	2	50

Data Source: Various North Ayrshire Council Data Sets

A further analysis of support needs, utilising housing support assessments at the point of homelessness and then again at resettlement, revealed that the majority of tenants had a range of support needs as detailed below:

Table 13: Support needs relating to homeless households failing to sustain accommodation

Support Issue:	Addictions	Mental Health	Domestic Violence	Offending behaviour	Physical Health
No of households	29	17	6	33	11
%	52%	30%	11%	59%	19%

Data Source: Various North Ayrshire Council Data Sets

The above analysis demonstrates that the greatest challenge to sustaining a tenancy is offending behaviour, repeated periods of imprisonment and addiction issues. On cross referencing the tenant names against referrals for housing support, only 21% (12 tenants) had been referred for ongoing support beyond homelessness.

Priority
Improve tenancy sustainment by reviewing the resettlement process and support provision for homeless households.

Development of Housing first provision.

Summary of emerging issues

The statistical analysis above assisted in determining the strategic focus for the next five years. The overarching aims are early intervention and prevention of homelessness and to reduce levels of repeat homelessness, with a focus on five key priority groups:

- Increasing level of repeat homelessness especially amongst **25-50 year old age group**

- Increasing levels of homelessness amongst **single men.** Consistently higher than the national average

- Higher than average number of **families** becoming homeless due to **domestic abuse**.

- Higher than average number of people who become homeless due to **discharge from prison**

- **Multiple and complex support needs** amongst a significant number of homeless households

Summary of priority groups from analysis

Table 3: Applications by Age of Main Applicant as % of Homeless Applicants, North Ayrshire, 2012-13 to 2015-16

Year/Age	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2015-16 %	2015-16 Scotland %	Age bands
16/17	37	0	4	11	1.5	4.5	16-17
18-24	188	150	184	169	23	24.5	18-24
25-40	298	365	373	359	48	59.5	25-49
41-50	86	125	112	129	17		
51-60	40	59	75	54	7.5	8	50-59
61-70	10	21	22	15	2	3.5	60+
70+	2	10	10	7	1		
TOTAL	661	730	780	744			

Data Source: NAC Arbitras Case Management System

Young People

Over the period of the last strategy, homeless presentations from people under the age of 25 accounted for almost 52% of all applications in North Ayrshire. In response, North Ayrshire developed a youth prevention initiative and the success of this intervention is reflected in the figures for the last three years, which now show that 24.5% of presentations are from young people, below the Scottish average of 29%. The intervention has been particularly successful for 16-17 year olds who now account for only 1.5% of presentations, against the national average of 4.5%.

However, analysis of the statistics relating to people who experienced repeat homelessness shows that 30% were under 25 years of age.

Single Men

The majority (58%) of homeless presentations in North Ayrshire were from single male households this is significantly higher than the Scottish average of 46%. In addition, 63% of repeat homelessness cases were single males.

This may be a reflection of the impact that early intervention activities is having on the reduced level of families becoming homeless.

Children and Families

The Council's approach to prevention and early intervention, which has had a particular focus on young people and families, has resulted in significantly less applications than the national average.

Only 12% of applications (the majority of which are single parent households) are from families with children, this is well below the Scottish average of 26%.

However, although there are proportionately less homeless families in Ayrshire, the number remains a cause for concern. 174 children were homeless in the area last year including:

- 41 children who were homeless as a result of domestic abuse; and
- 29 children who were homeless because of a family dispute or relationship breakdown.

- 16 children were as a result of fleeing external harassment or violence
- 18 children were homeless as the family had been asked to leave by other family members
- 39 were as a result of action taken by landlord/mortgage provider (arrears or termination)
- 31 children were homeless for a range of other reasons

People discharged from Prison

People discharged from prison accounted for 10% of all homeless presentations in 2015-16, this has been constantly higher than the Scottish average in recent years.

Of those re-assessed as homeless within 12 months, 38% had support needs related to addressing offending behaviour.

A detailed analysis of repeat homelessness demonstrated that the greatest challenge to sustaining a tenancy is offending behaviour, repeated periods of imprisonment and addiction issues.

People with multiple and complex needs

The complex needs of the priority groups are reflected in the statistics for support needs identified. 25% of households were identified as having mental health support needs, up from18% in 2013-14, 17% had medical issues (up from 8% in 2013-14) and 22% had drug/alcohol dependency. 88% of those experiencing repeat homelessness had support needs.

7. Consultation

The Strategic response to homelessness within North Ayrshire is kept current and appropriate through the facilitation of consultation and stakeholder involvement (including service user events and group work, consultation surveys and questionnaires). This is underpinned by research and independent review. Where appropriate, services work on a Pan Ayrshire basis in the development and delivery of service provision.

Consultation – Service Users

The Council participate in a range of service user consultation on an annual basis to inform service development and delivery and has an active 'service user focus group' which meets on a quarterly basis.

The homeless 'service user focus group' were active participants in a stakeholder consultation event (see below) which informed the strategic priorities and outcomes.

In addition, clients residing within temporary accommodation were asked to complete a short survey, the purpose of which was to determine the effectiveness of support provision.

Survey of Temporary Accommodation service users October 2016

The Temporary accommodation survey evidenced high levels of satisfaction with support provision.

"Any [support] that I needed I got. I always get asked if I'm ok and help would be there if needed"

"Help with my life. Everything really"

64% of respondents had previous experience of homelessness. The reasons for not sustaining previous tenancies were wide ranging including; eviction (12%), moved in with friends/family/partner (12%), relationship/family relationship breakdown (18%) and individual cases of abandonment, fleeing violence, being taken into hospital, and taken into police custody.

94% of respondents said that the support they received met their needs (6% did not provide a response to this question). The support provided included:

- Emotional Support – 31%
- Addictions – 19%
- Benefits– 25%
- Independent advocacy referral 6%

- Independent Living Skills – 25%
- Supported cooking sessions – 25%
- Medical Assistance 6%
- Mental Health Referral – 6%

In response to the question "What other Supports would have helped you?" 18% stated 'none' or did not respond. 12% advised that help with bereavement counselling and more information regarding their homeless application would have been of assistance.

The feedback from the consultation, together with the above tenant satisfaction performance indicators, suggest that the temporary accommodation and support services offered, meet the needs of the client group.

Consultation – Key Stakeholders

A consultation event was organised to provide an opportunity for key partner agencies to discuss risk factors and homelessness triggers for the priority groups identified through the statistical analysis. Also discussed were supports, service provision and the types of temporary accommodation which most effectively meet the needs of service users.

A range of key stakeholders attended the event from across the Community Planning partnership, in addition to service users and a range of voluntary organisations.

The event was organised in a 'world café' style, to allow all present to have an opportunity to contribute.

The emerging key risk factors broken down by priority group were identified as:

Young People

- A lack of life skills including budgeting and 'door-keeping'

- Low aspirations in terms of employment and limited job opportunities

- Ease of access to credit - it can be very easy to get into debt

- Addictive substances are too accessible

- Lack of peer and parental support and a lack of guidance

- Loneliness and isolation

- Stigma

Single Men

- Debt and a lack of financial capability skills.

- Men are less likely to ask for help and to discuss feelings with friends/family, which further raises the risk of depression and other forms of mental ill health.

- Single men without children can be a low priority for many services and there was a view that society assumes men are less vulnerable than women, and more likely to be able to manage.

- Mental ill-health and addiction issues can lead to chaotic lifestyles which may involve 'night turning into day', 'door-keeping' issues, inability to keep appointments, higher re-offending rates and neighbour disputes. All of which are contributory factors to failure to sustain tenancies and repeat homelessness.

- Impact of traditional gender roles - Those present suggested that traditional gender roles may be having a negative impact on the independent living skills of single men and in turn, their ability to sustain tenancies. However this has not been reflected in data captured, nor found in the research undertaken. The reasons given at the event included:

  - Daughters are better prepared to run a home

  - Mum keeps home and does not pass on skills

  - Men are less likely to 'create a home'. They are less likely to decorate, or keep the garden tidy

  - There was a lack of independent living skills and men are less likely to undertake 'common responsibilities such as cleaning the close'

Children and Families

- Financial difficulties - insufficient accessible information, support and advice relating to benefits and welfare reforms as well as financial capability and debt advice and support.

- The impact of domestic abuse on ability to manage finances, which is not fully understood by service providers.

- A lack of awareness about the support services which are available.

- There was discussion at one table regarding the importance of appropriate housing on resettlement to minimise the impact of social isolation, mental health problems and financial strain.

- Family relationships can be fractured as a result of abuse which can add to the stress, anxiety and other mental health issues already being experienced.

- Mental health issues, low confidence and self-esteem, as well as addictions and the 'fear factor', impact on ability to engage with support services and integrate into communities.

People Discharged from Prison

As part of the consultation with Stakeholders, the "Positive Prisons: Positive Futures" project provided an interactive workshop to raise awareness of some of the issues for people discharged from prison in relation to homelessness and accessing services. The key issues raised were:

- Mental health and addictions.

- The need for more support with benefits, housing options etc whilst in prison, in preparation for leaving.

- Losing a tenancy whilst in prison and therefore not having a home to return to, has a significant impact on mental health.

- Hostels are generally not ideal temporary accommodation for a number of reasons.

- Stigma.

- Low confidence and self-esteem.

- Lack of independent living skills.

- In many cases, low literacy and numeracy skills.

- Fractured family relationships.

- Specific issues for women discharged from prison.

- Lack of understanding across services of the needs of people discharged from prison.

People with complex and multiple support needs

Complex lifestyles and multiple support needs cut across all priority groups. It was recognised that households with complex needs face multiple exclusion as a result of the stigma and an inability to utilise existing pathways.

Summary of recommendations from the consultation

The consultation with stakeholders found that as well as needs specific to the priority groups above, there were a number of common threads in terms of the supports and service responses which most effectively meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in terms of minimising risk of homelessness and improving chances of sustaining tenancies.

The suggested best practice models for early intervention and prevention services which were common to all groups were:

- Consideration of alternative models of accommodation such as Housing First.

- A 'whole person' and 'person-centred'/partnership approach to service delivery with a Key Worker.

- More training for service providers on dealing with challenging behaviour and communicating with people who have complex needs.

- Tenancy Sustainment training workshops for service users and people at risk of homelessness living within the community, which tackles issues such as financial capability and improving people's ability to manage money well.

- Peer Support/Mentoring programmes for each 'at risk' group.

- Advocacy services – transport and support to engage with agencies, attend appointments and have their voices heard.

- Improving access to information through provision in different formats and locations appropriate to the target group, such as social media for young people.

- Ensure financial capability (financial needs assessment) forms part of housing support assessment and delivery.

Proposed developments specific to the priority groups included:

Young People and Single Men

- More provision of one bedroom flats in the areas where people want to stay.

- As a response to limited availability of single person accommodation, shared tenancies should be considered.

Single Men

- Support from services to resettle into communities, including meeting neighbours.

- Develop a communications plan and training programme to address issues relating to gender equality and traditional gender roles.

Children and Families

- The Violence against Women Strategy and Action Plan includes actions which will address issues relating to financial inclusion and tackling poverty, as well as the development of domestic abuse/violence against women awareness training.
  http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateServices/ChiefExecutive/PolicyandPerformance/ViolenceAgainstWomenStrat201013.pdf

- Review promotion and referral pathways into support services to ensure vulnerable households have access.

People Discharged from Prison

- In partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, develop early intervention/planned discharge models, incorporating housing support and accommodation pathways and benefits advice services, to address the needs of prisoners.

- Consider expansion of options to widen scope for sustaining tenancies while tenants are in prison, such as sub-letting.

People with Complex Support Needs

- Explore options to maximise use of technology for information sharing, to avoid the need for clients to tell their story repeatedly.

- Mental health and addictions support should be more integrated into support provision.

- Investigate options to replace 9-5 'appointments system' for support services. Open access, which is not time limited would be the preferred model, alongside 'wraparound' services, including out of hours.

- Integrate homelessness within Health and Social Care Partnership.

- Development of services to support clients to become "tenancy ready", which allow time to develop skills and knowledge of tenants/landlords rights/responsibilities, and financial capability. (Whilst accepting that some service users may never be 'tenancy ready').

8. Research

A review of recent homelessness research found evidence which reinforced many of the risk factors raised at the consultation. There is also evidence that a number of the recommendations by key stakeholders had potential to be effective approaches to prevention of homelessness.

"Sharing in Scotland: Supporting young people who are homeless on the Shared Accommodation Rate" (Crisis Feb 15)

This study looked at the challenges of setting up shared tenancy schemes, and sharing support, as well as evidence of what is currently being done to support single homeless people under 35, into shared accommodation in the private rented sector. They found only one established scheme which offered specific support for young people claiming the Shared Accommodation Rate across the seven study areas. The most common approach of helping young people was to place them in temporary accommodation to wait for a social tenancy.

"Youth Homelessness in Scotland 2015: An overview of youth homelessness and homelessness services in Scotland"

This report is the findings from a survey of those partners on the Homeless Action Scotland distribution list and was compiled from over 140 responses.

The recommendations from this research included:

- Develop and support specific prevention interventions targeted at discrete groups within the youth homeless population e.g. LGBTQI

- Improved provision of joined-up support for young people experiencing poor mental health

- Homelessness prevention services to build stronger links with community and family services

- Support and develop leaving home and housing education in schools

Single Homelessness in Scotland (Crisis July 2015)

The conclusions from this research reinforce the findings from the consultation that single people face different experiences of homelessness and accessing assistance when compared with two household families. It also found that inconsistencies exist in the assistance offered by local authorities to single homeless people.

The recommendations included:

- Housing Options hubs, should identify effective early interventions through provision of advice and information in response to the specific needs of single person households.

- Local authorities accommodating high proportions of single homeless people in hostels should seek to reduce use of this form of temporary accommodation.

 "The Links between Violence against Women and Homelessness" (July 2015)

FEANSTA (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless)

The links between earlier trauma and homelessness are highlighted in this paper, together with evidence to reinforce the findings of the consultation including the benefits of women-only and informed, tailored, coordinated services and the need to challenge stigma.

Change, Justice, Fairness: "Why should we have to move everywhere and everything because of him?" (Women's Health Improvement Research Project, Scotland April 2016)

This research, which was carried out in Fife, looked at the availability of information about housing options. It found that the main housing option available to women was through the homelessness route, often involving a series of moves, and ultimately having limited choice when it came to securing a tenancy, in terms of size, location or the condition of the property.

The research also found that removing women from their homes did not, in fact, result in women feeling safer or free from further abuse and harassment.

The recommendations contained within the report reinforced the value of additional security measures to support a woman and her family to stay in their own home, as provided in North Ayrshire by the Home Security Project. It also proposed that homelessness policy should be reviewed to reduce the impact of homelessness on women and children who have experienced abuse including:

- Amending the one-offer of housing rule to ensure women are housed safely and appropriately.

- Providing removal and storage facilities to enable women and children to retain their possessions.

- Providing assistance to enable children to be able to remain at the same school (travel pass).

- Provide financial assistance and advice to ensure women are not further indebted by the homelessness process.

- Remove the rental charge on two homes when women are moving from temporary to permanent accommodation.

- Develop specialist domestic abuse housing officers within local area offices with responsibility for the delivery of policy, provision of advice and support for staff, and authority to make decisions in relation to transfer, allocations and tenancy support.

- Implement mandatory training on domestic abuse and other forms of VAW, delivered by experienced trainers in this field.

- Develop collaborative working arrangements with a range of organisations to provide advice and support that meets the needs of women and children who have experienced male violence.

Preventing Homelessness and Reducing Reoffending – Insights from service users of the Supporting Prisoners; Advice Network Scotland (Shelter Scotland Sept 2015)

This report provides an evaluation of the SPAN programme, launched June 2013 which provides housing and financial support and advice to offenders before and after release from prison. The research took place in Grampian, Perth and Inverness prisons.

The report found that the general assumption amongst prisoners was that they would become homeless on discharge. Many had received letters from their landlords suggesting they give up their tenancy and some had been threatened with eviction, not always with due reason. The importance of having a home was found to be of paramount importance for people in custody and the interviewees believed having a home would reduce the chances of reoffending.

The programme succeeded in saving many tenancies by using a wide range of tools and skills which "...*went well beyond traditional housing advice, with proactive practical help offered both in prison and post-liberation. This included intensive negotiation with landlords, linking with family members or getting involved with finances and putting together payment plans.*"

The report contains a range of strategic recommendations for the prevention of homelessness for prisoners including:

- Housing given a central place in the community justice agenda – providing a foundation for successful re-integration.

- Housing Advice and support in prison which is intensive, pro-active and creative including working with families of offenders.

- Exploring options for safe keeping of prisoners' belongings if they have to lose their tenancy e.g. with a trusted person.

- Flexible housing allocation policy which enables prisoners to be involved in decisions around where they are best placed to live, including in areas where they have no local connections.

- Wherever possible, homelessness teams should avoid placing prison leavers in hostels as temporary accommodation.

Out of Jail but still Not Free – Experiences of temporary accommodation on leaving prison
(The Poverty Alliance 2011)

The key findings from this research were similar to those above:

- Obtaining good housing is a cornerstone for individual wellbeing and it must be appropriate for the individual's needs and circumstances.

- Hostel accommodation is rarely suitable for ex-offenders, especially for those with drug and alcohol problems.

- Those whose housing circumstances had been unstable before incarceration were the most apprehensive about housing after release.

- Advocacy services for ex-offenders are crucial, especially in the period immediately after release.

Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK: Briefing Paper No 1 (Fitzpatrick, Bramley and Johnsen)

The key findings in this paper are that there is a strong correlation between the more extreme forms of homelessness and other aspects of exclusion with men in their 30s being most likely to experience the most complex forms of MEH. Most MEH service users have had troubled childhoods – family and/or school – and many also experienced trauma such as sexual or physical abuse, homelessness or neglect. The level of self-harm and suicide attempts were significant.

The policy and practice implications highlighted in the study included:

- The need for coordinated 'whole-person' responses, rather than *"viewing them through a series of professional lenses"*.

- Schools, addictions services and criminal justice should be central to prevention activities.

- The development of 'psychologically-informed' service environments should be a priority, to raise awareness of the probable history of childhood trauma, self-harm and suicide attempts.

Financial Capability

The need for financial capability support for vulnerable groups is recognised in the Scottish Financial Capability Strategy. http://www.fincap.org.uk/scotland_strategy

Recent Money Advice Scotland research found that around 20% of Scottish adults are not confident managing their money, particularly 18-24 year olds, recipients of benefits and tenants in social housing. The Scottish 2015-18 strategy recognises the need for money advice to be part of managing day-to-day and not only for financial crisis situations, that the needs of vulnerable groups are met and not further marginalized and that existing touchpoints with local authorities, as well as employers and the NHS are maximised. In addition, the strategy aims to ensure that young people, parents and families have better support around accessing affordable credit.

In November 2014, Money advice Scotland established a Financial Capability Team with members from across the private, public and voluntary sectors. This team was established as a result of their Strategic Plan for 2015-18, within which their key goal is to radically improve the financial health and wellbeing of people in Scotland

9.   Prevention of Homelessness

The prevention of homelessness has been a strategic priority for the Council and key stakeholders since 2003, resulting in the development of a range of proactive prevention focussed services working to target vulnerable households within our communities.

This section details the current service provision and emerging priorities in response to risk as the result of Welfare Reform.

Welfare Reform

The Council commissioned research to determine the cumulative impact of welfare reform in practice within North Ayrshire. The purpose of this analysis is to allow the Council and key stakeholders to effectively target resources to alleviate the impact of reforms where possible, therefore minimising the risk of homelessness.

The dataset used in the analysis includes all households in North Ayrshire that are in receipt of either Housing Benefit or local council tax support. There are 18,393 households in the dataset, representing 29.4% of all households in North Ayrshire. 60.4% of households in the dataset are designated as working-age homes and subject to the entire range of welfare reforms.

The analysis is complete and an initial draft report has been presented to the Council for consideration and comment.

There is an inter-agency welfare reform working group in place with responsibility for planning and implementing the North Ayrshire response to welfare reform. It will be the responsibility of this group to take forward the recommendations detailed within the above report.

In order to mitigate the impact of welfare reform on council tenants, a Housing Welfare Reform Advice Team was appointed within Housing Services during 2012. The remit of the team is to provide intensive support and advice to tenants affected by welfare reform. There are debt advice and welfare rights officers based within the team, who provide drop in sessions for tenants and advice sessions for other organisations /services.

The Registered Social Landlords within North Ayrshire have dedicated Welfare Reform Officers who undertake mitigation work with tenants.

Key pieces of mitigation activity have been undertaken by the Council's Housing Advice Team with households living in the Private Rented Sector as detailed within the Housing Options section below.

Housing Options

The Scottish Government introduced Housing Options guidance during March 2016 to assist Local authorities in the delivery of their statutory duty to prevent homelessness through early intervention.

Housing Options is the advice and assistance presented to a person who approaches the Local Authority in housing need. The process is two-fold. Where a person is in housing need but not threatened with homelessness, it is a prevention and early intervention tool which reduces the risk of crisis by working with the client to access the resources needed. Where a person is homeless, housing options advice is used to ensure the customer can access the most sustainable housing outcome to meet their needs.

The North Ayrshire Housing Advice Team deliver housing options advice to approximately 1800 households on an annual basis.

In addition to providing advice and information, the team undertake a range of proactive prevention activities such has accessing support services or sign posting to specialist provision. The team has undertaken targeted work with households residing in the private rented sector who are affected by welfare reform, in an effort to prevent homelessness.

The team will have an ongoing role in the mitigation of welfare reform, specifically targeting housing options advice to households under the age of 35, residing within the private rented sector.

Island Communities

Homelessness on the North Ayrshire islands of Arran and Cumbrie, accounts for less than 0.5% of presentations to the council. Whilst there outstanding housing need on the islands, this does not correlate to homelessness, as many households would prefer to stay in insecure tenures on the island as opposed to provision of accommodation on the mainland.

The Council has undertaken a number of initiatives on both Arran and Cumbrae, including provision of weekly advice services, displaying a range of advice and information to promote resources available and hosting stakeholder events to ascertain the needs of island dwellers in accessing services. The impact of this work has been minimal.

The Housing Needs and Demand survey undertaken during 2016, did not identify homelessness as a priority in our island communities and there is no evidence to suggest that there is a hidden homelessness problem. The LHS: strand details the strategic outcomes with regards to this sector.

During the lifetime of this strategy the homelessness & community safety division will engage with the locality planning partnerships. This will be done in a bid to maximise the knowledge and experience of local people and to improve and develop the delivery of services in the response to the needs of island residents.

Housing Options HUB

North Ayrshire are the lead authority for the South West of Scotland Housing Options HUB, set up by Scottish Government to develop the prevention of homelessness agenda.

The HUB which incorporates, North, South and East Ayrshire Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Inverclyde Council work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to respond to emerging priorities in regards to homelessness prevention across the south west of the country.

The HUB is committed to the implementation of the Scottish wide training toolkit. This targeted suite of Housing Options training will be utilised by key stakeholders to enhance early intervention. The training will equip cross sector staff with the necessary skills and resources to provide housing advice and sign post appropriately to specialist organisations as required.

Leaving Care

North Ayrshire Council places the health, welfare and development of children and young people at the centre of the planning and delivery of services. Research indicates that care leavers are particularly vulnerable when making the transition to adulthood and are frequently over-represented in statistics relating to homelessness.

A care leaver protocol has been developed between housing and the H&SCP within North Ayrshire.

The protocol is an agreement between Housing and H&SCP detailing the joint response to the support and accommodation needs of care leavers and young people who have been looked after and accommodated.

North Ayrshire Council offer an integrated and co-ordinated service that aims to ensure that no care leaver will become homeless on leaving residential care and will provide the necessary support to ensure a care leaver can achieve independence and stability within the community. Where a care leaver has been looked after by the Local Authority but not accommodated they will be linked in with the support framework identified within the protocol.

The Protocol promotes the principle that care leavers will be provided with the securest form of tenancy available to them dependant on support needs and independent living skills.

Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDS)

The Council has an in house RDS which assists approximately 120 households to access the Private Rented sector on an annual basis. It is important to note that the numbers of household's resettling through the scheme have reduced by in excess of 50% as a consequence of Welfare reform. It is becoming increasingly difficult to identify affordable accommodation in the private rented sector for households under the age of 35 since the implementation of the single room rate.

Support

The LHS: Housing Support strand details the wider support analysis and provision of services across North Ayrshire. This section identifies the housing support provision procured by housing services whose main focus is the prevention and alleviation of homelessness.

The Housing Support duty came into force in June 2013, ensuring that unintentionally homeless households and those threatened with homelessness have a right to a housing support assessment and the provision of support if there is an identified need.

Given the North Ayrshire prevention focus, a range of support services have been commissioned in an effort to intervene at the earliest opportunity when households get into housing difficulty in order to avert the risk of crisis.

During 2015, a review of housing support provision in North Ayrshire was undertaken which informed the contracting of external support services and the approach to in house housing support delivery.

Housing Support and Children's Integration

Barnardo's provide a Housing Support Service that is delivered to households across North Ayrshire irrespective of tenure, in order to prevent homelessness. Barnardo's also provide dedicated support provision for children experiencing homelessness, in order to minimise the damaging effects of living within temporary accommodation or being separated from social networks.

The specific focus is to support families at risk of homelessness, and repeat homelessness, with a focus on the emotional wellbeing of children. This means that alongside addressing the factors which threaten homelessness, Barnardo's work with families to improve parenting skills and maximise the outcomes for children by working closely with partners within education and health.

During 2015-16, the Barnardo's family support service provided support to 176 vulnerable families in danger of losing their tenancy.

Advocacy and Early Intervention Education

The local Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) provides an independent advice and advocacy provision for households at risk of homelessness. The service also advocate on behalf of homeless people throughout the homelessness process, assisting them to enforce their statutory rights.

CHAP also provides education through early intervention and prevention. This is crucial in reducing levels of youth homelessness. CHAP has youth intervention workers who deliver a suite of advice and education across all 9 secondary schools within North Ayrshire.

In 2015/16 the Project provided an 'awareness raising session' to 701 fourth year pupils through their Personal and Social Education class. An extended programme of learning was provided to 73 pupils following an 'Alternative Curriculum' and 294 sixth year pupils received Student Accommodation workshops. This project also delivered an Advanced Housing Workshop to 549 senior pupils.

Housing Support to Women Experiencing or at Risk of Violence/Domestic Abuse

Women's Aid provide support for women residing within temporary accommodation, refuge and dispersed accommodation. The service works with women to determine housing options and to address emotional, practical and other emerging needs.

In addition to the above, there are a number of women living within homes across North Ayrshire who are experiencing or at risk of violence or domestic abuse on a regular basis. Women's Aid provides Outreach and Counselling Support services for women.

Women's Aid has close working links with mainstream services to facilitate access for clients, and to assist people to manage conditions and minimise the impact on tenancy sustainment.

North Ayrshire Council Support Provision

The North Ayrshire Council Housing Support service has been restructured to ensure a seamless transition for homeless people between permanent and mainstream accommodation. The homeless customer is supported by the same officer throughout their homelessness journey. This consistent service delivery, responds to individual customer needs throughout key transitional stages, therefore maximising engagement and achievement of support objectives which will ensure that tenancy sustainment is achieved.

The support team works with anyone with housing support needs, who reside within a Council tenancy. The objective of the team is to maximise tenancy sustainment and prevent homelessness.

On an annual basis the Council work with approximately 1200 households.

Health and Homelessness

Homelessness and Complex needs

Approximately 60% of homeless people within North Ayrshire have a range of complex and multiple needs, which range from Physical and Mental Health issues, through to addictions and criminal behaviour. 88% of households experiencing repeat homelessness have multiple support needs.

North Ayrshire Council, along with East and South Ayrshire Council are key partners in the Health and Homelessness Action Plan Implementation Group (HAHAPIG), chaired by the NHS.

The HAHAPIG has been responsible to date for delivering the Health and Homelessness Standards. It has achieved this by working collaboratively through its meetings and stakeholder events to develop and implement health and homelessness action plans.

With the implementation of the Health and Social Care partnerships, the HAHAPIG no longer has a clear governance route and does not currently report through health and social care or community planning governance structures.

The HAHAPIG are working alongside the Health and Social care partnerships to determine the strategic direction of Health and Homelessness in Ayrshire moving forward.

In addition to the work undertaken as part of the HAHAPIG, the Council have undertaken a range of initiatives in response to the health and wellbeing of homeless people within North Ayrshire.

Physical health and wellbeing

The Council is committed to ensuring every homeless person is registered with primary health care, has access to dental care and is included in national health screening programmes. This is in addition to the delivery of a range of Public Health initiatives undertaken to improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people.

The Council has procured resources to ensure that every homeless child is supported through the homeless process. There is a commitment that every child is registered with a GP, has access to dental care and has been appropriately immunised. This is in addition to joint working with partners to ensure that homeless children have a seamless transition through education and can retain and develop social networks to minimise the impact of homelessness.

Mental Health

The Council in partnership with the Health and Social Care partnership, funds two nursing posts who have the remit to assess, plan, implement and evaluate a range of health interventions for people experiencing homelessness.

Working across temporary accommodation, the Health and Homelessness nurses facilitate access to health services, whilst working in partnership with key stakeholders to support and empower individuals and families experiencing homelessness to access health services and engage in healthy lifestyles.

Prison discharge

Working alongside partners within East and South Ayrshire, a prison discharge outreach service has been established within HMP Prison Kilmarnock to offer assistance to those threatened with homelessness on liberation. There are two main elements to this service – the provision of information and advice, and the provision of a homeless interview.

Despite this, homelessness as the result of prison discharge in North Ayrshire is double the national average. In response the Council are currently reviewing service provision to try and break the link between criminal behavior and homelessness, there is more on this within the temporary accommodation section under Housing First.

Tenants who are victims of domestic violence, anti-social behavior and harassment

The North Ayrshire Council home security project supports vulnerable people experiencing domestic violence or serious external anti-social behaviour to remain in their home, where they wish to do so. This project, which assists approximately 281 households on an annual basis, provides a range of practical support and advice, including the provision of improved security measures such as door chains, locks and panic alarms, and referrals to other agencies such as Victim Support where appropriate.

Temporary Accommodation

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to anyone who is homeless who requires it. Access to and provision of temporary accommodation is essential in ensuring vulnerable people do not sleep rough.

The Council undertook a review of temporary accommodation during 2014/15 in order to determine the level and type of provision required.

The existing models of temporary and support provision are the product of this review.

Table 14 demonstrates the range of temporary accommodation available across the local authority.

Table 14: Existing Temporary accommodation

Type of Accommodation	Units	Totals
Emergency & Supported Accommodation		
North Ayrshire Council (Ardrossan Hostel)	19	
Cunninghame Housing Association	27	
Simon Community Hostel	23	
Women's Aid (refuge)	17	
Dispersed Lets		**172**
North Ayrshire Council	165	
Women's Aid	7	
Total	**258**	

Data source: Local Data

Table 15 demonstrates the Councils performance on temporary accommodation measured against the national average and highlights that 97% of homeless people are satisfied with accommodation. In addition, the refusal rate for temporary accommodation is lower than the national average.

Table 15 Temporary Accommodation Scottish Housing Charter data

	Indicator Ref	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Scottish Average 15/16
Average length of time in temporary accommodation all types (days)	ARC 25	65.10%	63.35	60.70	112
Number of offers of temporary/emergency accommodation the LA was required to make	ARC 26	764	1005	992	1364
Number of offers of temporary/emergency accommodation the LA made	ARC 26	764	1005	992	1398
% of temporary/emergency accommodation made as a % of offers required	ARC 26	235.34%	156.82%	159.98%	104%
% of offers of temporary/emergency accommodation refused - all types	ARC 27	6.23%	4.63%	4.85%	8%
% of households homeless in the past 12 months satisfied with quality of temporary/emergency accommodation	ARC 28	98.68%	98.84%	97.37%	85%
Number of household satisfied with the quality of temporary/emergency accommodation.	ARC 28	825	684	556	151
Number of satisfaction surveys completed	ARC 28	836	692	571	179

Data Source: Local Data

Temporary Accommodation and Welfare Reform

The Council is consistently reviewing the cost implications of temporary accommodation in light of welfare reforms in order to mitigate the impact where possible and review accommodation models where necessary.

Support Provision within temporary accommodation

Housing Support is provided within all of North Ayrshire temporary accommodation. Despite this, the Council has a lower than average tenancy sustainment level and higher than average levels of repeat homelessness. In response to this, the Council undertook a range of consultation and research to determine emerging models of provision which would demonstrate positive outcomes for homeless people with complex needs. Housing first emerged as the most sustainable option.

Housing First

The consultation phase of this strategy highlighted the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless people with complex and multiple needs as an area of concern.

Households with complex needs find it difficult to move out of the cycle of homelessness, many presenting to the Council for assistance repeatedly. The review of reasons for homelessness and repeat homelessness demonstrated prison discharge as a driver, with North Ayrshire evidencing double the national average homelessness as a result of incarceration.

The Council is in the process of piloting a Housing First model. The concept of Housing First is to change the pathway through services for homeless people with complex needs.

At present, when a person is homeless on discharge from prison, they will be placed within hostel accommodation, before moving into a temporary dispersed furnished flat within the community, prior to a final transition into permanent housing.

Utilising the Housing First model, the Council in partnership with key stakeholders will work with the customer prior to prison discharge, moving them directly into what will become their permanent tenancy at the point of discharge. A range of support services, tailored to the needs of the individual, will be in place to support the integration process. The development and implementation of Housing First will be a key focus through the duration of this strategy.

10. HOMELESSNESS OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS

The LHS-Homelessness Evidence Paper is the product of an in-depth analysis and consultation process where the views of customers and service providers have been drawn upon. One overarching priority has emerged – 'The prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness'.

The Strategy has evidenced the priority groups for which the Council and stakeholders must target prevention activities in addition to identifying the emerging priorities. A summary of these are detailed below.

- Increasing level of repeat homelessness especially amongst **25-50 year old age group.**

- Increasing levels of homelessness amongst **single men.** Consistently higher than the national average.

- Higher than average number of **families** becoming homeless due to **domestic abuse**.

- Higher than average number of people who become homeless due to **discharge from prison.**

- **Multiple and complex support needs** amongst a significant number of homeless households.

The Outcomes framework at section 12 below demonstrates how the Council and stakeholders will respond to these priorities over the next 5 years.

11. MONITORING THE STRATEGY

The Homelessness Strategy will be monitored in line with the LHS framework. To allow us to monitor and evaluate the LHS we are putting in place a consultative and participative framework to oversee the process. This builds on the successful involvement of local stakeholders throughout the production and implementation of the LHS.

12. Outcome Plan

Prevention, early intervention & support measures reduce homelessness

Ref	What will we do	Why are we doing it	What is our target	Risk Score	Base line	Time-scale	Who?
1.	Develop and implement a Housing Options monitoring framework to ensure sustainable housing outcomes that has been assessed by internal audit.	People are resettled into permanent accommodation	Quality assurance framework in place	2	-	2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
2.	Implement the Housing Options training toolkit	To ensure consistency across all Local Authorities in the delivery of housing options.	Training is completed.	2	-	2018 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
3.	Implement Housing First pilot from 2017 to 2018, and subject to review.	To permanently resettle people with complex needs	Review undertaken	6	-	2018 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
4.	Rollout Housing First pilot	To permanently resettle people with complex needs	Full roll out of model	6	-	2018	North Ayrshire Council
5.	Review and revise support provision for single homeless males in order to establish a resettlement framework	To reduce the level of homelessness amongst single male households under the age of 40.	Resettlement framework in place	3		2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
6.	Develop prison discharge pathways at the point of incarceration and discharge.	Reduce homelessness and repeat homelessness as result of prison discharge	Surgeries are being undertaken in Prison	6		2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
7.	Monitor and respond to impact of Welfare Reform on temporary and supported accommodation	Temporary and supported accommodation is sustainable for households requiring it	Homeless households can afford accommodation	1	n/a	2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council

Ref	What will we do	Why are we doing it	What is our target	Risk Score	Base line	Time-scale	Who?
8.	Monitor and respond to impact of Welfare reform on level of homelessness	The risk of homelessness is minimised	Response approved	8	n/a	2017 onwards	HAT & Housing Support Manager
9.	Work with homeless people to determine and respond to reasons for repeat homelessness	Reduction in repeat homeless	Consultation and analysis completed	8		2017 onwards	HAT/ Housing Support Manager
10.	Review resettlement provision for people with complex needs specifically single males under 40	Reduction in repeat homeless	Support assessments captures range of needs	4	n/a	2017 onwards	Housing Support Manager
11.	Establish a working group to review and amend the method of recording and collating reasons for failing to maintain accommodation within area Housing Offices.	Improved tenancy sustainment	Updated approach in place.	2		2017 onwards	Void & Allocation working group
12.	Link the Violence Against Women outcomes with Homelessness outcomes	To reduce the number of women experiencing domestic violence and homelessness	Reduction in No of presentations for domestic violence	4	108	2017 onwards	Violence against Women Partnership
13.	Develop Peer Support pilot project linked to Housing First.	To improve tenancy sustainment.	Analyse outcome of pilot.	4		2017 onwards	Health & Social Care Partnership
14.	Develop models of shared accommodation within temporary accommodation	To increase affordability options for homeless households.	Homeless households can afford accommodation	6	-	2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
15.	Establish a working group to monitor and improve how the initial support needs of people approaching the service are recorded	To ensure the level of need is accurately represented within national statistics	Recommendations on improvement are made	3	-	2018 onwards	North Ayrshire Council

Ref	What will we do	Why are we doing it	What is our target	Risk Score	Base line	Time-scale	Who?
16.	Improve links with employability agencies	To support homeless people sustain their tenancy	No of homeless households who gain employment/training	1		2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council
17.	Review pathways through homelessness.	To reduce repeat homelessness.	Reduction in number of repeat homeless	4	12%	2017 onwards	North Ayrshire Council

13. GLOSSARY

Ayrshire Intensive Support Service (AISS)

An Ayrshire-wide peripatetic support service for vulnerable people who have either been sleeping rough or are in danger of sleeping rough.

Barnardo's

Support provider for children and other family members where there is a risk of homelessness.

HM Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE)

HM Inspectorate of Education in Scotland is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Ministers. HMIE has responsibilities to evaluate the quality of pre-school education, all schools, teacher education, community learning and development, further education and local authorities.

Homelessness Assessment Team (HAT)

North Ayrshire Council's HAT Service undertake statutory homeless assessments for people who become homeless, it also provides housing advice and information and advice on housing options.

Hospital Discharge Protocol

North Ayrshire Council is a member of the Ayrshire wide Health and Homeless Action Group. With specific reference to homelessness, the Protocol addresses the needs of older people threatened with homelessness at point of discharge from hospital.

North Ayrshire Womens' Aid

North Ayrshire Womens' Aid provide a range of support services to women and children in North Ayrshire who are in danger of or have suffered domestic abuse.

Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDS)

This service helps those in need of housing to gain access to the Private Rented Sector. North Ayrshire Council's Homeless Assessment and Prevention Advice staff work in close partnership with tenants and landlords who participate in the scheme, which provides a financial rent guarantee and other support mechanisms.

Rough Sleeping

Sleeping in a place not specifically designed for human habitation.

Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN)

Membership of the Scottish Housing Best Value Network is open to all local authorities in Scotland. The organisation aims to contribute to the development of standards and good practice in housing by facilitating co-operation between Network members through benchmarking and sharing of good practice

Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator registers and regulates independent social landlords and they inspect housing and homeless services provided by local authorities to protect the interests of current and future tenants, and other service users

Simon Community Scotland

Providers of intensive housing support across Ayrshire to those at risk of sleeping rough.

Housing Support Services

A service provided by North Ayrshire Council to support services to tenants who are most at risk of homelessness due to breaches in their tenancy agreement. A Youth Prevention Initiative to assist young people to return to the family home is also part of their work.

13. Feedback Form
(Homelessness)

Consultation is a key part of delivering our Local Housing Strategy and we are committed to continually improving the quality of our communications and events.

We would appreciate your feedback and welcome any views you have on how we can improve.

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Organisation:……………………………………………………………………………

Address: …………………………………………………………………………………

Telephone: …………………………….. E-mail:……………………………………..

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found the document easy to understand	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt more informed after reading the document	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think the document addresses the main issues for North Ayrshire	☐	☐	☐	☐

I would like to receive further information / updates in relation to the Local Housing Strategy ☐

I would be interested in receiving invitations to stakeholder events ☐

Additional comments:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Please return all completed forms to:
Development & Strategy Team, North Ayrshire Council,
Community Care & Housing, FREEPOST SCO2742, Irvine, KA12 8BR

Telephone: 01294 324031 **Fax:** 01294 324624
Email: developmentandstrategy@north-ayrshire.gov.uk