

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Ending Devon County Council's contribution to the 18+ Homelessness Prevention Fund and the DCC adult social care Homelessness Support Contract.

Service: Integrated Adult Social Care

Head of Service: Solveig Wright (Head of Integrated Adult Social Care Interim)

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Assessment carried out by (job title): Louise Rayment (Commissioning Development Officer)

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

This is an impact assessment of the proposal to end Devon County Council's Integrated Adult Social Care contribution to the overall 18+ Homelessness Prevention Fund across the Devon County Council boundary (excluding Torbay and Plymouth).

Devon County Councils' Adult Social Care contribution to the Fund is delivered through a contract with 5 providers; Alabare, Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA), Sanctuary Supported Living, Westward Housing and YMCA Exeter. The Providers target people aged 18 years and over whose homelessness is not just a 'housing' issue, but something that is inextricably linked with complex and chaotic life experiences,

that can lead to disproportionately poor health and wellbeing, high levels of health and social care need and cost and premature mortality. This will include people who:

- have complex needs because of trauma,
- exhibit challenging behaviour,
- have difficulty in accessing help with emotional, learning, or physical difficulties, employment, mental health, substance misuse and/or offending experiences, low self-esteem, poor social and practical skills; and
- have problematic relations with family and wider support networks.

The contract does not contribute towards buildings and accommodation, or any housing management activities and service charges. The funding is provided to enable flexible and generic support hours, accessible to homeless people across a range of settings and locations. The contract is delivered across the County to individuals who:

- are rough sleepers;
- live in managed multiple occupancy 'hostels' settings (Gabriel House, YMCA Exeter, Charris House, Alexandra House and The Maples); or
- live in ordinary housing.

The value of Devon County Councils Integrated Adult Social Care Contribution is £1,454,478.48 per year and sits within the Integrated Adult Social Care budget. The contracted contribution purchases support hours that are delivered in the following settings:

District/City Council	Managed multiple occupancy 'hostels' settings and Value per annum	'Floating' Support
East Devon District Council	Alexandra House £107,929.80	County wide service delivered by Sanctuary Supported Living: £711,377.00
Exeter City Council	Gabriel House £262,544.76 Exeter YMCA £157,166.88	
Torridge District Council	Charris House £103,460.04	
North Devon District Council	The Maples £112,000.00	
Mid Devon District Council	Contracted support hours are not delivered in a specific hostel building in Mid Devon, but this	

	area may benefit from support hours delivered in building-based service/s in other Districts.	
South Hams District Council	Contracted support hours are not delivered in a specific hostel building in South Hams District Council, but they may benefit support hours delivered in building-based service/s in other Districts.	
West Devon Borough Council	Contracted support hours are not delivered in a specific hostel building in West Devon Borough Council, but they may benefit from support hours delivered in building-based service/s in other Districts.	
Teignbridge District Council	Contracted support hours are not delivered in a specific hostel building in Teignbridge District Council, but they may benefit from support hours delivered in building-based service/s in other Districts.	

The contract is used to deliver a professional helping relationship to help bring about changes holistically across multiple areas of the individuals' life that are directly relevant to the prevention of and recovery from homelessness, and where appropriate, to engage with the relevant Health, Housing and Social Care practitioners to achieve a lasting recovery, and independence.

The contract forms part of the overall structure of homelessness support administered by Devon's Housing Authorities and other stakeholders. It is difficult to quantify the totality of homelessness funding in the Devon County Council area, in part due to the number of short-term grant-based funding, some of which rarely exceeds 3 years, and can be specified funding. While the statutory responsibility for housing rests with Districts Councils, Devon County Council holds responsibility for improving health and reducing inequalities and as such Integrated Adult Social Care, has contributed funding through a contract that ends on 31st March 2023.

2. Reason for change / review

The Devon County Council Adult Social Care, 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution funding has been in place since April 2014. It originated from the Supporting People Programme under which Devon County Council was in receipt of the Supporting People Grant. From 2011 Supporting People was subsumed into the overall Formula Grant paid to Local Authorities at a time that funding from central government was reducing as part of wider fiscal cuts. A decision was taken at the time by Devon County Council to maintain a contribution to 18+ homelessness prevention.

While homelessness prevention in relation to housing provision is not a Devon County Council statutory responsibility, improving health and reducing health inequalities is. The cohort of individuals supported by this contract have the poorest health and wellbeing within the County. This contract is part of a wider work to reduce inequalities for this group and improve their health and wellbeing. Over the past few year's conversations have taken place to consider alternative approaches to commissioning that can offer greater efficiency and effectiveness with Devon's Districts/ City Councils who are best placed to align funding to local strategic plans to improve the approach to preventing homelessness, reduce reliance on hostels, and better meet the local needs. This work was paused in July 2022. Since then, Devon County Council has faced financial challenge arising from the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. In order to balance its budget, Devon County Council is still facing huge financial challenge and difficult decisions, so is reviewing all funding commitments. Ceasing Devon County Council's Integrated Adult Social Care contribution to 18+ homelessness prevention is one of the proposals being considered.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

One of Devon County Council's broad objectives is to support the prevention of homelessness by appropriate work with its District/City Council partners and this funding was a way of doing that. Devon County Council is still committed to that objective but the financial challenge facing the authority leaves Devon County Council having to make difficult decisions to cease services, and this is one of those considerations.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

This profile is restricted to an analysis of the support that homeless adults in Devon may need, where their homelessness is not just a 'housing' issue, but something that is inextricably linked with complex and chaotic life experiences. The current contribution supports around 250 people at any one time; this is made up of around 113 bed spaces in managed multiple occupancy 'hostels' settings, and around 132 people receiving

floating support.

The very high turnover of people supported by this contract means the demographic profile is constantly changing, in order to benefit from the contract and while the contracted activity is by definition targeted at people with vulnerabilities, they are not subject to adult social care assessment, but we instead rely on District Council partners to determine which local people at risk of homelessness receive this support.

In terms of gender, Providers have consistently reported that more men are supported by this contract, than women. This local insight matches the national profiling of homelessness where Public Health England (2020) found that 84% of people who sleep rough identify as male, compared to 14% identifying as female.

On average life expectancy of a person experiencing homelessness (rough sleeping) is 44 years for men and 42 years for women (Public Health England, 2019), in Devon most people experiencing homelessness, supported by this contract, are adults of working age.

In terms of diversity, the following insight has been supplied to us by the Providers of the service.

Ethnic Origin	Percentage
White British	93%
Eastern European	4%
Asian/Asian British	2%
Black/ Black British	1%

In relation to disability, the target group for this contribution is individuals whose homelessness is inextricably linked with complex and chaotic life experiences. This includes people who:

- have complex needs because of trauma and may be sleeping rough
- behaviour challenges,
- have difficulty in accessing help with emotional, learning, or physical difficulties, employment, mental health, substance misuse and/or offending experiences, low self-esteem, poor social and practical skills; and
- problematic relations with family and wider support networks.

Some individuals supported by this contract do pose a risk to both themselves and to others because of complex needs, mental ill health, behaviour that challenges and other disabilities. Providers therefore manage a range of risk levels in supporting people to independence. Risk includes, but is not limited to: substance misuse, suicidal ideation, domestic violence (perpetrator) and sexual behaviour. Public Health England (2020) report 3 factors contributing to premature death: injury, poisoning and suicide. 35% of people die whilst sleeping rough due to alcohol or drugs, compared to 2% of the general population (Public Health England 2020).

The health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness is poorer than that of the general population and they often experience the most significant health inequalities, have poorer health outcomes with many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives; this is driven/ exacerbated by poor living conditions, difficulty maintaining personal hygiene, poor diet, high levels of stress and drug and alcohol dependence (Public Health, 2020).

The high turnover of people supported means information about sexuality if not routinely collected, however, McCarthy and Parr (2022) have compiled an evidence review into homelessness and LGBT, finding that there a gap in research and knowledge, but they concluded that LGBT people are overrepresented in the homelessness population

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The key stakeholders are Devon County Council, the 8 local District Councils with housing responsibility - East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Torridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council - and the current providers of the service - Alabare, Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA), Sanctuary Supported Living, Westward Housing and YMCA Exeter, NHS Devon, and Devon Partnership NHS Trust.

6. Additional research used to inform this assessment

- Devon County Council Contribution into Homelessness Prevention 18+ Needs Assessment 2014
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) [Ending Rough Sleeping for Good \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Director of Public Health, Devon (2022). The health and wellbeing of those who are homeless and reducing inequalities for all socially excluded groups of society – update [\(Public Pack\)Homelessness Update Agenda Supplement for Health and Wellbeing Board, 20/10/2022 14:15 \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk)

- House of Commons Library, (2012). The Supporting People Programme. Research Paper 12/40. Available at: [Research Paper \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/research-papers/1240)
- Lindsey McCarthy & Sadie Parr (2022) Is LGBT homelessness different? Reviewing the relationship between LGBT identity and homelessness, Housing Studies, DOI: [10.1080/02673037.2022.2104819](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2022.2104819)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (August 2018). Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018 [Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728287/rough-sleeping-strategy-august-2018.pdf)
- Public Health England (2019). [Homelessness: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814287/20190827-homelessness-applying-all-our-health.pdf)
- Public Health England (2020) [Health matters: rough sleeping - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/854287/20200827-health-matters-rough-sleeping.pdf)

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Devon County Council is maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the 8 District/City Councils and the best approach to homelessness across the County. This has included Exeter City Council Homelessness Task and Finish Scrutiny Working Group, while District Councils have engaged with local communities on their homelessness prevention strategies.

Formal public consultation on the proposal to end Devon County Council's contribution to the 18+ Homelessness Prevention Fund and the DCC adult social care Homelessness Support Contract will take place via Devon County Councils Have Your Say webpage. Stakeholders will be made aware of and signposted to the consultation. The consultation will invite people to share their views on this proposal.

Devon County Council is committed to listening to what people tell us. All the responses that we receive through the consultation will be carefully considered and help inform the final decision. This impact assessment will also be updated to reflect the outcomes of the consultation, ahead of decision making, to inform the final decision.

8. Equality analysis

Our assessment of the impact of the devolution for people with characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010 is as follows:

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group.	How will the project / service / policy / activity:
All residents (include generic equality provisions)	<p>This does not apply to all residents. The contribution supports people aged 18 years+ whose homelessness is inextricably linked with complex and chaotic life experiences.</p>	<p>While this funding does not apply to all residents, the decision to end this form of homelessness support will potentially have a negative impact on the wider housing support system. The lack of support hours is likely to result in more people unable to comply with their tenancy support requirements and could result in homelessness. The lack of floating support to individuals not in hostels may jeopardise their tenancies.</p> <p>This means there would be a potential negative impact for <i>anyone</i> who would be dependent on the support offered under this contract, including street homelessness, risk to life, increased safeguarding and exploitation, which could include people with all the protected characteristics listed below.</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <p>To extend the current contract by a further year, to end on 31st March 2024, and work with partners to put to place any mitigations of any negative impacts with sufficient time. This would impact on Devon County Council’s budget pressure in 2023/2024 and alternative savings would need to be found to mitigate the continuation of this contract for a further 1 year.</p> <p>In September 2022, the Government announced the cross-government Rough Sleeping Strategy, accompanied by key funding allocations. Devon County Council will continue to work in partnership with Devon’s District/ City Councils to apply/ bid for funding. However, a successful Bid for government funding may not coincide with the cessation of the Devon County Council contract and may not address the possible negative impacts of the cessation of the contract.</p>

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group.	How will the project / service / policy / activity:
		<p>The Government has released a new grant – the Voluntary and Community Frontline Sector Grant - to deliver a sustained reduction in homelessness and rough sleeping, by helping local rough sleeping services have the tools they need to end rough sleeping and develop prevention services. Providers could be signposted to the support available through this grant.</p> <p>The continuation of this contract will be considered alongside wider budget proposals as Devon County Council makes decisions about council tax rates.</p> <p>Devon County Councillors to continue to lobby government for additional funding for local government.</p> <p>Through consultation, alternative ways to signpost people to health and social care support, should the current offer be withdrawn, will be explored. This may identify mitigations not yet noted.</p>

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group.	How will the project / service / policy / activity:
Age	The contribution supports people aged over the age of 18, whose homelessness is inextricably linked with complex and chaotic life experiences. The life expectancy of people who are homeless is 32 years lower than the general population at 44 years for men and 42 years for women.	
Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people	The contribution supports people whose homelessness is inextricably linked to complex and chaotic life experiences. This could include people covered by the disability protected characteristic, as they may be affected by mental health issues, have a learning disability, long term ill health, neurodivergence, and/or be a carer of a disabled person. The health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness is poorer than that of the general population and they often experience the most significant health inequalities.	
Culture and ethnicity:	The contribution supports people	

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group.	How will the project / service / policy / activity:
nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief	requiring support for their homelessness need, where it is inextricably linked to complex or chaotic life experiences, regardless of culture or ethnicity, but does not contain any specialist activity based on that characteristic.	
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)	The contribution supports people requiring support for their homelessness need, where it is inextricably linked to complex or chaotic life experiences, regardless of sex, gender or gender identity. However, it does not contain any specialist activity based on that characteristic.	
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership	The contribution supports people whose homelessness is inextricably linked to complex or chaotic life experiences, regardless of their sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership but does not include any specialist activity based on that characteristic.	
Other relevant socio-economic factors such as	There is a clear correlation between socio-economic factors and	Devon County Councils Integrated Adult Social Care Service is committed to working with Childrens Services to support children with social care needs who

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group.	How will the project / service / policy / activity:
family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban	homelessness because of complex and chaotic life experiences. This can include young people aged 18 years + who are care experienced or who have previously been a Child in Need or under Child Protection, some of whom are accommodated in hostel provision as it is better equipped to support their complex behaviours than alternative provision.	have transitioned into adulthood.

9. Human rights considerations:

This funding is Devon County Councils contribution to the wider local authority system for prevention of homelessness and the cessation of this funding could constitute a negative impact in terms of Human Rights if no mitigations are found.

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

This contract supports individuals in being more independent and empowered by addressing homelessness issues for adults for whom their individual factors (complex and chaotic life experiences) were contributing to their accommodation problems. Cessation of this funding could contribute to a negative impact in terms of the promotion of independence, wellbeing, and resilience and increase risk of need and crisis and future demand on health and social care services.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

As there is a clear correlation between health, wellbeing, protection from harm and homelessness, this contract was contributing to individual safety, health and wellbeing and its cessation could contribute to a negative impact on that.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

Homelessness often results in people being disconnected from communities and this contract counteracted that so cessation could contribute to a negative impact on that.

11. Environmental analysis

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process		N/A
Planning Permission		N/A
Environmental Impact Assessment		N/A
Strategic Environmental Assessment		N/A
	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:	N/A	N/A
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	N/A	N/A
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	N/A	N/A

Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	N/A	N/A
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	N/A	N/A
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	N/A	N/A
Contribute to reducing water consumption:	N/A	N/A
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):	N/A	N/A
Other (please state below):	N/A	N/A

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:	If people employed to deliver this contract are made redundant then the knowledge and skills, they have may be lost with a resulting negative impact. This decision would rest with the provider/s.	
Impact on employment levels:	<p>There is a risk that the ending the contract may risk the closure of 5 hostel provisions. A potential mitigation is Districts funding the gap from their budgets, or for additional funding from government to be applied for, although</p> <p>People employed to deliver this contract by the 5 Providers may be at risk of redundancy, and potential have a negative impact on employment levels. A potential mitigation is redeployment by their employers.</p>	
Impact on local business:	Any increase in homelessness and visible street homelessness will potentially have a negative impact on local businesses such as the Retail sector.	

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

Housing and Homelessness sit at the core of the intersection between economic, social, and environmental considerations, which this contract was one way of addressing.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

Cessation of this contract will not improve the economic, social and environment well-being of the Devon area.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

There is a regular meeting where the parts of the system come together: Team Devon – Leaders and Chief Executive, this is Devon County Council Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, and the Leaders and Chief Executives of the Devon's 8 District/City Councils.

Integrated Adult Social Care Commissioners have recently established Local Housing Forums, this is a meeting where adult social care Commissioners meet with housing leads in each of Devon's 8 District/City Councils, and where the adult social care 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract can be discussed.

In addition Public Health part of Devon County Council will also have insight the impact of this proposal as part of the ongoing monitoring of factors which contribute to the health and wellbeing of the population.