



Strategic Housing & Health and Wellbeing News

Produced by the Somerset Strategic Housing Group

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SPOTLIGHT ON SSHG

The Covid-19 crisis emergency has placed an immense strain on public services across Somerset. The need to respond to the emergency, whilst maintaining core services, during a period of lockdown has necessitated a rapid change to both priorities and the way we deliver work. And there has been some remarkable achievements.

The MHCLG imperative to provide safe and secure accommodation for rough sleepers and chaotic homeless has seen a magnificent response from district councils and statutory / voluntary sector partners. As of 7 May 2020, across Somerset a total of 125 rough sleepers were placed in to accommodation (some displaced from existing accommodation), leaving just 20 rough sleepers on the streets, with work ongoing to bring them in. Within the new accommodation settings, support services are rallying to provide effective interventions, in an effort to keep these vulnerable people safe, secure, and to provide them with opportunities to stabilise chaotic lives. We are hearing positive feedback from many clients – both on the quality of new accommodation and the support that is being offered. All partners agree that we must not revert back to the previous way of providing support to this group, once the Covid threat disappears.

Alongside this there are some particular emerging challenges:

- The knowledge that the need for supported accommodation will increase significantly once the lockdown is lifted
- The need for move-on accommodation – which has become scarce since the restrictions on movement were introduced

Bringing these factors together is a challenge for the housing system. Certainly, at a strategic level, there are many opportunities to improve the system, but these all need coordination to ensure that we have the leadership, steer, and improved partnership arrangements to ensure that all parts of the housing system are aligned. SSHG are currently delivering or helping with the following:

- Health, Care and Housing Memorandum of Understanding (homelessness, independent living and health impact assessments)
- LGA Housing Advisors Programme – working with ARK to deliver Better Futures for Vulnerable People in Somerset
- Positive Lives recommission
- P21 recommission
- Homefinder review
- Gypsy and Traveller community – provision of temporary transit provision (Covid-19 arrangements)

Please contact us (email address below) if you require details of any of the above

LGA Useful information for councils on novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

On these pages, you will find guidance and resources from the LGA and our key partners, as well as the latest official Government information relevant to local government.

Of particular use are the following links:

Housing, Planning and Homelessness**Public Health**

FAQs - covering topics such as homelessness, housing, domestic abuse and public health.

COVID-19: testing for council workers

Letter thanking councils in England for their support during the pandemic and outlining how staff can get tested.

GOVERNMENT POLICY & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Housing**Housing Secretary sets out plan to re-start housing market**

From today (13 May) anyone in England can move home if they follow new guidance published by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick.

Robert Jenrick plans for the future to get Britain building

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP sets out proposals to bring Britain's planning system into the 21st century.

New-build homes to come gigabit-speed ready

New-build homes to come with gigabit-speed broadband fit for the future.

New Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Jeremy Pocklington appointed the new Permanent Secretary.

New guidance for social landlords on essential moves

Councils and housing associations should continue to support vulnerable people to move home.

Health and Wellbeing**LGA responds to Government announcement on funding for child victims of domestic abuse**

"This funding is good news and will help councils and partner organisations further support child victims of domestic abuse, which can have a long-term and devastating impact on families."

Further support for children affected by domestic abuse

Multimillion pound funding to support children impacted by domestic abuse.

Emergency funding to support most vulnerable in society during pandemic

Communities Secretary announces £76 million extra funding to support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and vulnerable children and their families and victims of modern slavery.

DATA

Children living with parents in emotional distress: March 2020 update

The proportion of children living with at least one parent reporting symptoms of emotional distress, by family type and work status.

CONSULTATIONS

Open consultation**House building statistics: proposed changes**

We are seeking views on making changes to the content and focus of the long running House building; new build dwellings statistics series.

This consultation closes at

11:45pm on 26 May 2020

Consultation outcome**Building a safer future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system**

OTHER NEWS

We don't normally include wider contextual media reporting, but the following news items point to pressures that are building within the system, as well as opportunities that are being created. They are included here to prompt debate around the challenges that lie ahead.

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Guidance to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

District councils warn 500,000 at risk of homelessness

Almost 500,000 households are at high risk of becoming homeless as a result of the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis, new analysis for the District Councils' Network (DCN) has revealed.

Coronavirus: Private renters need more help to 'ride out crisis'

Thousands of private renters who have lost their jobs could be facing eviction when the coronavirus lockdown ends, the government has been warned.

Around 300,000 quit smoking due to coronavirus

Council leaders have welcomed figures that show around 300,000 people have quit smoking due to an increased risk from coronavirus.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE

A single phone number is now available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support from their councils

The number, 0300 7906275 is now live and will make it easier for people access any local authority help they may need, including emotional support, in the current crisis.

Domestic Abuse

Somerset County Council Domestic Abuse information, including other organisations helplines.