

## Summary of public consultation comment responses received with Strategic Housing response

General comments about the priorities set out in the strategy	
Medway Council do not currently provide enough information about what help is available to people when they are homeless, and there should be more readily available information about housing rights in a way that is inclusive for everyone	Medway Council Housing services agrees that a broader span of availability of information will assist Medway residents in getting advice and seeking help to prevent homelessness earlier, and that information needs to be inclusive to all. The new strategy was written with this issue in mind and specifically sets out to increase scope and reach of information to Medway residents. A number of the priorities within the strategy aims to address this issue.
There is not enough partnership working from Medway Council	Medway Council Housing services understands that residents of Medway and partner agencies may not have seen enough evidence of partnership working, which led to this feedback. The new strategy has includes a One Medway Approach to partnership working as a priority, with a number of commitments included to enhance this.
Support is not always delivered quickly enough.	Medway Council Housing services understands that resources can sometimes be stretched and this being the case generates feedback around that lack. The new strategy commits to a partnership approach to maximise the available resources and avoid duplication of effort to achieve the best level of provision within the resources in Medway. The new strategy includes Solution Focused Support as a priority with a number of commitments to improve this.
There should be better provision for those with Mental Health and Substance Misuse issues that are available 24 hours.	This strategy focuses on the provision directly available through Medway Council Housing Services and also a high level of partnership work with statutory, voluntary and commissioned services across Medway. Whilst the commissioning of services for those with mental health issues and substance use support needs does not sit within our department, we work closely with commissioners across Medway and sub-regionally and those agencies who directly deliver services to vulnerable Medway residents. Part of our partnership approach will be to see where resources can be combined to improve access and to highlight where there are gaps in current availability, with a view to supporting reviews of service delivery and inputting to applications for funding.

	<p>The priority The Right Accommodation includes commitments to consider what residents need, and how Medway Housing Services can work to deliver, or work in partnership to develop, these services.</p>
<p>Additional priorities that we should consider including in the strategy</p>	
<p>Support that is provided should be holistic, meet the needs of the individual, quickly accessible and inclusive.</p>	<p>Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and has included Solution Focused Support as a priority with a number of commitments to improve this.</p>
<p>There should be more specific mention about rough sleepers throughout the strategy.</p>	<p>This strategy covers a broad spectrum of types of homelessness. During our pre-draft consultation period we took into account the views of a number of services who work with rough sleepers, as well as the voices of those with lived experience of sleeping rough. The priorities and commitments outlined within the strategy aim to positively address the needs of those who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.</p>
<p>Medway Council should work closer with Landlords in the private rented sector to prevent homelessness and maintain supply.</p>	<p>Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and the strategy includes a number of commitments to work with Landlords in the Private sector to ensure better joint working.</p>
<p>Focusing on the root cause and prevention of homelessness.</p>	<p>Focusing on the root cause of homelessness is covered within the proposed strategy within the priority Using Information to Prevent Homelessness.</p> <p>The strategy aims to increase the focus on the prevention of homelessness, although not as a separate priority as it is interwoven through the majority of the priorities. Medway council housing services believe that the use of information we already hold, accessing input from other services and national evidence, working together to address issues as early as possible, coupled with increasing the knowledge of housing and homelessness across both professionals, residents and landlords in Medway, will support this goal.</p>
<p>Encouraging people to seek help sooner, before they reach crisis point.</p>	<p>Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and the strategy was written with this issue in mind.</p> <p>A number of the priorities within this strategy aim to address this issue. In particular</p>

	Solution Focused Support” and Informing Everyone about Homelessness and Housing Rights
General comments about the commitments set out in the strategy	
Joint working should be considered across the broad spectrum of people who work with those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (for example: private landlords and the criminal justice sector)	Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and the strategy was written with this issue in mind. A number of the priorities within this strategy aim to address this issue. In particular the One Medway Approach has a number of commitments to improve joint working across many different services and people.
Information should be shared in the right format to the right people, to make sure that those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness get the right type of help and can understand the advice they are given.	The priorities in this strategy focus on information being shared appropriately and in an accessible way.
Services and the information they give out should be accessible for everyone who needs help.	Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and the strategy was written with this issue in mind. A number of the priorities within this strategy aim to address this issue. In particular Solution Focused Support and Informing Everyone about Homelessness and Housing Rights
Medway Council should spend more time speaking to people who access their services to get feedback, to understand if we are doing things right.	A number of commitments throughout the strategy require Medway Council Housing Services to improve in how they gather and use feedback on the services they provide.
Provide accessible training and education resources for everyone who may know someone, work with someone or be someone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness (including schools/ landlords for example)	Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and the strategy was written with this issue in mind.  The priority Informing Everyone about Homelessness and Housing Rights includes commitments to develop and provide educational resources for any service or person who may wish to know more about homelessness or housing.

<p>There should be more accommodation available across the board (temporary, social housing, supported housing, retirement housing and housing for single people)</p>	<p>Further information about how Medway Council plans to deal with issues such as these can be found in both the Housing Strategy 2030  <a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200134/housing/1899/housing_strategy_to_2030">https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200134/housing/1899/housing_strategy_to_2030</a></p> <p>and within the Local Plan 2041  <a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200542/medway_local_plan_2041">https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200542/medway_local_plan_2041</a></p> <p>Additionally, the strategy commits Medway Council Housing Services to improve and increase the types of housing available in Medway.</p>
<p>Additional commitments that we should considered including in the strategy</p>	
<p>A commitment to increasing the provision of good quality housing stock, temporary accommodation and supported housing – this could be via the use of empty homes, empty retail or commercial buildings, or building more council housing stock.</p>	<p>Many of the comments within the consultation were concerned with issues such as this.</p> <p>Further information about how Medway Council plans to deal with issues such as these can be found in both the Housing Strategy 2030  <a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200134/housing/1899/housing_strategy_to_2030">https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200134/housing/1899/housing_strategy_to_2030</a></p> <p>And within the Local Plan 2041  <a href="https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200542/medway_local_plan_2041">https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200542/medway_local_plan_2041</a></p> <p>However, the strategy partially addresses this within the priority “the right accommodation”</p>
<p>A commitment to preventing other local authorities from placing out of area residents in Medway</p>	<p>Medway Council Housing Services understand the frustration that this issue causes on housing availability and pressure on services and has been clear with central government that whilst there are no legislative barriers to placing across local authority boundaries, on a financial or capacity basis, areas such as Medway will continue to be unequally impacted by this practice.</p>

<p>Ensuring those working in the homeless sector have received appropriate training to enable a compassionate service.</p>	<p>The priority Solution Focused Support commits Medway Council Housing Services to reviewing the training of our frontline staff and identify gaps in training. Following comments within this consultation, this has been amended to include all staff within the housing and homeless sector across Medway Council.</p>
<p>There should be a commitment to working with other partner agencies</p>	<p>Medway Council Housing services agrees with this feedback, and the strategy was written with this issue in mind. A number of the priorities within this strategy aim to address this issue. In particular One Medway Approach has a number of commitments to improve joint working across many different services and people.</p>