

**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON  
HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-2025  
YEAR 1 ACTION PLAN 2020-2021**

Set out below is the Action Plan for this strategy for Year 1 only (2020-21), as it is not practicable to agree actions for subsequent years, given that most actions are reliant on government-funded resources with annual allocations. The Action Plan below for 2020-21 will be reviewed 6 monthly to monitor progress and outcomes. A new Action Plan for 2021-22 will be produced by March 2021.

| <b>PRIORITY 1 – PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS</b> |  |  |                   |                |                 |  |   |
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|   | <b>Aim</b>   | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Timescales</b> | <b>Lead</b>    | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Success Measure</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>                                      |
| 1.1   | Fulfilling the new 'Prevention' & 'Relief' Duty      | Take a proactive approach in minimising homelessness episodes through outcome focused preventing work                        | Ongoing           | Housing Needs  | High            | Reduce number of accepted homeless cases   | Reduced level of homeless in Merton                 |
| 1.2   | Tenancy Renewals through Rent Deposit Scheme         | Assist homeless households in sourcing and accessing private sector rented accommodation through the Rent Deposit Scheme     | Ongoing           | Housing Supply | High            | Maximise the number of households placed into the private rented sector  | Long-term housing solutions for homeless households |
| 1.3   | Reduce repeat homelessness amongst homeless families | Provide tenancy sustainment support for homeless families and help households renew or extend their private rented tenancies | Ongoing           | Housing Supply | High            | Increase the number of renewed / extended private rented tenancies for households assisted through the Rent Deposit Scheme | Long-term housing solutions for homeless households |

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| 1.4 | Improved partnership working through Homelessness Forum | Set up Homelessness Forum to involve key stakeholders   | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy                 | High   | Hold Homelessness Forum meetings twice a year                                    | Improved joint working resulting in improved outcomes for clients                 |
| 1.5 | Introduce joint cross-sector training                   | Identify training needs of partner agencies and organise appropriate training sessions locally                            | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy                 | Medium | Number of cross-sector training held   | Improved knowledge & skills of partner agencies by increasing take-up of training |
| 1.6 | Better Links with Health Services                       | Ensure synergy between the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Health & Well-Being Strategy                    | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy & Public Health | High   | Number of successful joint initiatives / actions undertaken                      | Improved health outcomes for homeless households                                  |
| 1.7 | Improve information for households facing homelessness  | Produce a guide on the reality of homelessness, where to get help and what to do when faced with homelessness / evictions | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy / Housing Need  | High   | Guidance produced and disseminated widely through partner agencies               | Households facing homelessness more informed about what to do                     |
| 1.8 | Deliver Tenancy Strategy Objectives                     | Monitor registered providers adherence to objectives set out in Merton's Tenancy Strategy                                 | Ongoing | Housing Strategy                 | Medium | Monitoring report produced based on information supplied by registered providers | Reduced homelessness as a result of fixed-term tenancies                          |

| <b>PRIORITY 2 – ACCESS TO SUITABLE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS</b> |  |  |                   |  |                 |  |   |
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|  | <b>Aim</b>   | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Timescales</b> | <b>Lead</b>  | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Success Measure</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>  |
| 2.1  | Maximise new supply of affordable housing              | Increase new supply of affordable rented housing and shared-ownership homes through targets set in Merton Council's Core Strategy and Housing Strategy | Ongoing           | Future Merton  | High            | Number of affordable rented homes and shared-ownership homes built annually                          | More affordable housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households                               |
| 2.2  | Review Interim Housing Placement Policy                | Develop and adopt a permanent Housing Placement Policy by reviewing the 2016-17 Interim policy   | 2020-21           | Housing Need   | Medium          | Review of Interim Policy completed and new permanent Housing Placement Policy produced               | A Housing Placement Policy that better meets the needs of homeless households                         |
| 2.3  | Ensure high standard of temporary accommodation        | Undertake periodic inspection of all temporary accommodation to ensure they meet health & safety standard and free of hazards                          | Ongoing           | Temporary Accommodation / Environmental Health Housing | High            | Monitoring report showing schedules of inspections and results                                       | Ensure safety of households placed in temporary accommodation   |
| 2.4  | Prioritise rent deposit cases through a Casework Panel | Ensure homeless households in the greatest need are prioritised through reviews undertaken by the Rent Deposit Casework Panel                          | Ongoing           | Housing Need / Housing Supply                          | Medium          | The length of time taken for homeless households suitable for the private rented sector to be placed | Households in the greatest needs are given priority in accessing housing in the private rented sector |
| 2.5  | Better engagement with private landlords               | Provide private landlords with latest legal updates through Forum meetings   | Ongoing           | Housing Strategy                                       | High            | Annual Private Landlords Forum & training sessions   | Improved standard of private rented   |

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|   |  | and training sessions and maximise supply through closer engagement   |                   |  |                 | held and the number of private landlords attended  | housing and more supply of private rented homes for homeless households                          |
| <b>PRIORITY 3 – PATHWAY FOR YOUNG SINGLE HOMELESS</b> |  |   |                   |  |                 |  |  |
|   | <b>Aim</b>   | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Timescales</b> | <b>Lead</b>                              | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Success Measure</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>   |
| 3.1   | Ensure quality and value for money of supported housing for young people               | Regular monitoring of supported housing contract performance of the 169 units of accommodation for young people   | Ongoing           | Housing Need                             | High            | Regular contract monitoring meetings and performance monitoring reports produced                   | Better quality accommodation and better housing management and support services for young people |
| 3.2   | Improve outcomes for occupants of the Merton Action for Single Homeless (MASH) Project | Review all policies and procedures to ensure they are 'fit-for-purpose' for the extended hostel with its increased capacity, and to undertake regular fire safety inspections | Ongoing           | Housing Strategy / Spear                 | High            | Report on the review of policy & procedures produced and records of fire safety inspection results | Occupants are kept safe and are provided with an appropriate level of support                    |
| 3.3   | Create a 'Pathway' model for young single homeless                                     | Work in partnership to increase take-up of training & employment opportunities and move-on accommodation options for young single homeless                                    | 2020-21           | Housing Strategy / Spear / Evolve / YMCA | High            | Number of training of employment initiatives linked into and number of young people taking part    | More young single homeless to gain skills to live independently and reduce repeat homelessness   |

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| 3.4 | Extend the network of agencies working with young single homeless  | Extend membership of Young Persons Nomination Panel strategy meetings beyond housing providers to engage youth & social care agencies, as well as educational institutes, community youth organisations, health groups and criminal justice services | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy / Spear / Evolve / YMCA | Medium | Number of agencies getting involved with the strategic meetings of the Young Persons Nominations Panel                  | Improved outcomes for young single homeless by involving a wider network of agencies                                       |
| 3.5 | Improve monitoring of 'Pathway' outcomes for young single homeless | Improve recording of housing as well as training & employment outcomes of young single homeless persons who have moved on  | Ongoing | Housing Strategy / Spear / Evolve / YMCA | High   | Outcomes report produced for young single homeless persons, including housing as well as training & employment outcomes | Better understanding of effectiveness of interventions for young single homeless persons, to help further improve services |
| 3.6 | Provide floating support for young single homeless                 | Identify young single homeless persons needing support to sustain their move-on accommodation, by referring them to the new Floating Support service commissioned by the council   | 2020-21 | Housing Need                             | High   | Number of young single homeless persons referred to the Floating Support service.                                       | More young single homeless persons received help in sustaining the move-on accommodation                                   |

**PRIORITY 4 – SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS**

|     | <b>Aim</b>                        | <b>Action</b>                                      | <b>Timescales</b> | <b>Lead</b>      | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Success Measure</b>       | <b>Outcome</b>        |
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| 4.1 | Deliver Rough Sleeping Initiative | Deliver all MHCLG funded initiatives and regularly | Ongoing           | Housing Strategy | High            | Reduction in number of rough | Contribute to meeting |

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|     | (RSI) objectives and targets                       | discuss progress and performance with MHCLG Housing Advisors  |         |                        |      | sleepers by supporting more into long-term accommodation solutions  | government target of reducing & eradicating rough sleeping   |
| 4.2 | Navigation & Tenancy Sustainment Support           | Develop the new Navigator and Tenancy Sustainment roles to provide intensive support for rough sleepers to access housing & services and to sustain accommodation | Ongoing | Housing Strategy       | High | Number of clients placed into accommodation and number maintaining tenancies for at least 6 months        | More rough sleepers are able to get off the streets resulting in a reduction in Merton's rough sleeping population |
| 4.3 | Outreach & Mental Health Support                   | Set up new service to provide outreach support to rough sleepers, with specialist support for those with mental health problems                                   | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy       | High | Number of clients engaged with the outreach service and with the Specialist Mental Health Outreach worker | More rough sleepers are able to get off the streets resulting in a reduction in Merton's rough sleeping population |
| 4.4 | Improve access to second-stage accommodation       | Identify more suitable accommodation for rough sleepers, particularly supported accommodation, where possible within Merton or London                             | Ongoing | Housing Strategy       | High | Number of units, either short-stay or longer-term accommodation, made available for rough sleepers        | More rough sleepers are able to get off the streets and  |
| 4.5 | Improve access to services for rough sleepers with | Improve links with substance misuse and mental health   | 2020-21 | Housing Strategy / WDP | High | Number of referrals made to substance   | More rough sleepers receive help with their  |

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|   | substance misuse and mental health problems                  | services to help improve access for rough sleepers  |                   |  |                 | misuse and mental health services   | substance misuse & mental health problems                                    |
| 4.6   | 'In for Good' principle for SWEP                             | Keep rough sleepers in emergency accommodation arranged through SWEP beyond the SWEP periods to enable better engagement with support services  | Ongoing           | Housing Need                           | High            | Reduction in number of rough sleepers by supporting more into long-term accommodation solutions | More rough sleepers are able to get off the streets                          |
| 4.7   | Winter Day-time provisions                                   | Seek funding through the MHCLG's Cold Weather funding and other funding sources to continue the day-time provision where rough sleepers are given hot meals and can access various services | 2020-21           | Housing Strategy / New Horizons Centre | High            | Funding bid submitted   | A safe place for rough sleepers to stay out of the cold during winter months |
| 4.8   | 'Housing First' Model  | Explore the feasibility of setting up a Housing First project in Merton and seek funding opportunities  | 2020-21           | Housing Strategy / Homelessness Forum  | Medium          | Housing First proposal developed and funding source identified                                  | More rough sleepers are able to get off the streets                          |
| <b>PRIORITY 5 – ASSISTANCE OTHER VULNERABLE CLIENTS</b> |  |   |                   |  |                 |   |  |
|   | <b>Aim</b>   | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Timescales</b> | <b>Lead</b>                            | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Success Measure</b>  | <b>Outcome</b>   |
| 5.1   | Improve joint work with the Safeguarding First Response Team | Identify possible cases of rough sleepers needing safeguarding and refer them on to ASC First Response Team   | Ongoing           | Adults Social Care / Housing Need      | High            | Number of rough sleeping adults referred to Adult Social Care first response Team               | Improved outcomes for adults that require safeguarding                       |

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| 5.2 | Discretionary Housing Benefit          | Make best use of Discretionary Housing Benefit payments to assist homeless households affected by the benefits cap  | Ongoing | Housing Benefit / Housing Need  | High   | Number of households with the shortfall between their housing benefit and rent payments covered by DHB                | More households are able to maintain their private rented accommodation with financial support from DHB |
| 5.3 | Priority through Allocations Strategy  | Develop annual Allocations Strategy to agree a proportion of all available social homes for let to be made available to vulnerable homeless households            | Ongoing | Housing Strategy / Housing Need | Medium | Number of actual lets to vulnerable people measured against the targets set in the annual Allocations Strategy        | Vulnerable people in housing needs are given fair access to social housing                              |
| 5.4 | Provide a quality Shared Lives service | Continue to work with carers of the scheme to provide a quality service that meets the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Standard                                     | Ongoing | Shared Lives                    | High   | Number of frail older people, people with mental health problems or learning disability assisted through Shared Lives | Quality accommodation and support options for vulnerable people   |
| 5.5 | Seek to expand the Shared Lives scheme | To recruit more carers to the scheme to increase the current capacity of 45 places and explore the feasibility of extending the scheme to vulnerable young people | 2020-21 | Shared Lives                    | High   | Increase in the number of carers and monitor the number of different client groups covered                            | An increase in the number of vulnerable people being supported by the scheme                            |