

# Regional Youth Housing Strategy

## Action Plan 2016 – 2018

Youth Homeless NE (YHNE) is a regional hub working collaboratively with young people, strategists, commissioners and providers of youth homeless services. YHNE supports the development of preventative and responsive services through collaborative processes of shared practice and joint initiatives, directly informed by young people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness.

Our vision is that 'No young person should be homeless', and we aim to **'prevent, tackle and resolve homelessness experienced by young people aged 16 – 25 years old in the North East'** through;

- Influencing policy and strategy
- Providing a voice for young people
- Promoting innovation and best practice
- Campaigning to end youth homelessness

During 2008 Youth Homeless North East carried out a comprehensive consultation to identify key issues in youth homelessness and the solutions being delivered. The consultation event captured the views of over 40 service providers and a number of service users. In July 2008, the network collaborated with Government Office for the North East and the North East Housing Board to organise a summit bringing together housing associations, elected members, strategic partnership chairs and support providers. The summit findings and solutions were published in a Regional Position Statement (2008) endorsed by the North East Housing Board and were incorporated into the YHNE 'Regional Youth Housing Strategy'.

In June 2010, the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) published 'Filling in the picture: Homelessness in the North East and learning what can be done about it', a report on research that explored the scale, causes and solutions of homelessness in the region. The report recognised the potential a regional strategy could have in making homelessness an issue of the past and the role Youth Homeless North East could play in supporting a regional infrastructure to develop a Regional Youth Housing Strategy.

The Regional Youth Housing Strategy was published in 2012. Since then through 'Strategy for Change' events, we have consulted with sector partners to review and update the strategy priorities and to inform the actions. This document presents the priorities and associated actions revised at the 'Strategy for Change' event held in October 2015. The revised priority solutions are:

- 1. To increase early intervention and prevention work.**
- 2. To increase training and employment for young people affected by homelessness to enable them to secure a long-term future.**
- 3. To influence policy makers and support joint commissioning in order to prevent, tackle and resolve youth homelessness in the North East.**
- 4. To improve the quality and range of temporary and supported accommodation**

The strategy provides a regional focus for collective action across the sector involving local authorities, the Third Sector and Registered Social Landlords. The four priority solutions have been informed by the current context of welfare reform, changing housing and support provision, rising levels of youth homelessness and continued cuts to local authority spending impacting on statutory and provider resources.

The strategy acknowledges that relationship breakdown is still the major cause of homelessness and that young people are not adequately prepared to have the independent living skills needed to live independently. It therefore recognises the importance of intervening as early as possible to avoid the start of a route into homelessness. It also supports the need for a range of preventative measures to support young people and families but also to enable young people to develop the skills needed to have a greater chance of success when they do set out on their own.

It is significant that there is clear alignment between what young people told us they need and what sector professionals felt is needed to provide solutions to youth homelessness. The young people we spoke to also suggested that: *'All young people up to the age of 25 years old, regardless of their situation should have EQUAL ACCESS to homeless prevention and housing support.'*

YHNE can only effect change through collaboration and partnership, so we will work with local authorities and their partners to inform local responses to homelessness, and will seek to have the strategy priorities and Youth Housing Charter endorsed by and embedded in the action plan for the North East Regional Homelessness Group.

To achieve our priority solutions, we will continue to put young people at the centre of the development and delivery of policy and services that respond to their needs. We will do this by ensuring that politicians, commissioners and providers listen to, and are accountable to, young people.

## Priority 1: To Improve the quality and range of temporary and supported accommodation

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	WHO
<p><b>To influence the provision of housing and support.</b></p> <p><b>The Youth Housing Charter:</b> Housing offered to you will be <b>SECURE</b> with appropriate support and security with help on hand for any emergencies.</p> <p>A <b>PERMANENT HOME</b>, somewhere you can call your own.</p> <p>In an <b>AREA YOU KNOW</b>, close to shops, transport for work and training and other services you might need for help and advice.</p> <p>Somewhere you feel <b>SAFE</b> and <b>WELCOMED</b> as a member of the community with consideration given to your personal circumstances including sexuality.</p> <p>You can live close to <b>FAMILY, CARERS</b> and <b>FRIENDS</b> or other support networks.</p> <p><b>FLEXIBLE SUPPORT</b> for however long you need it and available when you are experiencing difficulties. You could be</p>	<p>Use intelligence to challenge commissioners of services to seek to ensure sufficiency, appropriateness and quality of housing and support as informed by young people and sector partners</p>	<p>YHNE NERHG Homeless RIG</p>

offered the chance to move somewhere with more support if that is what you want.		
<p><b>To influence the relationship between clients and services to achieve more positive outcomes.</b></p> <p><b>The Youth Housing Charter: ONE WORKER</b> when possible so you don't have to retell your story and so that you can build a positive relationship. A worker who is <b>TRAINED</b> to understand the issues young people affected by homelessness face, and the skills and knowledge to ensure your needs are met.</p>	Seek to ensure staff working with young people are well-trained and have current knowledge of homelessness issues.	YHNE working with sector partners, NERHG and VCS providers
<p><b>Work with the sector to ensure quality interventions to meet the diverse needs of young people affected by homelessness.</b></p>	Bring sector partners together to share intelligence to inform joined up responses.	YHNE
	Initiate conversations with commissioners and politicians to influence relevant policy, strategy and local provision.	YHNE/NEHTT

## Priority 2: To increase early intervention and prevention work.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHO
<p><b>To enable young people to raise awareness of the need to prevent youth homelessness</b></p> <p><b>The Youth Housing Charter: EDUCATION</b> about the realities of homelessness in schools and for families and carers.</p>	Mapping existing provision of awareness sessions within schools, youth provision and the Youth Offending Service	YHNE, RC's, YHNE partners/members
	Encourage the inclusion of awareness sessions within the school curriculum.	YHNE and partner organisations
	Communication through joint protocol with the Youth Offending Service and Children Services.	YHNE
	Host events, conduct research with young people, run media campaigns and regional activity to promote awareness. Linking in with national campaigns.	YHNE
<p><b>To advocate for the provision of mediation/ family support in all parts of the region</b></p> <p><b>The Youth Housing Charter: MEDIATION</b> to resolve problems early to rebuild positive relationships with family, carers and friends so you can remain at home if you want to.</p>	Map existing provision across the region.	YHNE
	Communication through joint protocol with the Youth Offending Service and Children Services.	NEHTT , NERHG
	Host events, showcase provision on YHNE website and through the newsletter.	YHNE
<p><b>To influence the networks that exist between different sectors to promote early interventions and prevent repeat homelessness</b></p> <p><b>The Youth Housing Charter:</b> The right <b>PREPARATION</b> to make sure you have the skills needed to move into and live successfully in your own home.</p> <p>The support you want from Children's Services, and the chance to stay in touch</p>	Inform awareness session professionals within education, youth sector, health and mental health services.	YHNE working in partnership where appropriate
	To encourage implementation of independent living skills within schools, care-homes, youth provision and Youth Offending Institutes.	YHNE working in partnership where appropriate
	Explore triggers of youth homelessness and broadcast these.	YHNE

with foster carers if you are **LEAVING CARE.**

At times of **CHANGE** you will get extra support.

**FLEXIBLE SUPPORT** for however long you need it and available when you are experiencing difficulties. You could be offered the chance to move somewhere with more support if that is what you want.

**Priority 3: To influence policy makers and support joint commissioning in order to prevent, tackle and resolve youth homelessness in the North East.**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
<b>Ensure commissioners and councillors are informed and knowledgeable regarding the issues and causes of youth homelessness</b>	Share practice models to all services and providers.	YHNE
	Share research and intelligence through events and workshops including youth led and themed events.	YHNE
	Produce a good practice guide/checklist for commissioners and policy makers.	YHNE
	Conduct an annual survey of youth homelessness in the North East to provide intelligence on the scale and nature of homelessness.	YHNE
<b>To ensure best outcomes challenge legislation and decisions made on the behalf of young people</b>	Enabling young people to challenge legislation.	YHNE
	Produce and contribute to briefings for councillors and politicians locally and nationally.	YHNE
	Produce, inform and identify models and pathways to respond to youth homelessness.	YHNE
<b>To maintain commitment from the regions local authorities (NERHG) to implement the Youth Housing Charter</b>	Include the Charter within the NERHG action plan.	NERHG
	To promote the Charter with commissioners and politicians to ensure responses to homelessness are informed by the views of young people.	YHNE/NERHG
	Support local authorities and wider partners to implement the Charter and monitor impact.	YHNE/NERHG
<b>To explore opportunities to secure funding and resources to prevent, tackle and resolve youth homelessness</b>	Work with the sector and beyond to identify sustainable funding sources.	YHNE
	Investigate innovative approaches and new partnerships to attract resources to the sector.	YHNE

**Priority 4: To increase training and employment for young people affected by homelessness to enable them to secure a long-term future.**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
<b>Promote the 'Home to Work' model to provide a solution to housing and unemployment</b>	Engage Northern Housing Federation and wider Housing Associations through Homelessness RIG	YHNE/NHF
<b>Through partnership, increase specialist training offers leading to employment which meets the needs of the young people affected by homelessness.</b>	Working with Youth Focus NE to reduce the skills gap	YHNE/Youth Focus NE
	Engage with YEI partners in south and north (Talent Match)	
	Promote on website/social media	
<b>Create opportunities to ensure 'work readiness' preparation for homeless young people</b>	Working with Youth Focus NE to reduce the skills gap	YHNE/Youth Focus NE
	Engage with YEI partners in North and South (Talent Match)	
	Promote on website/social media	
<b>Engage employers to increase the quota of homeless young people taken on to training, apprenticeships and employment.</b>	Enlist supportive employers through YHNE CEO event	YHNE/Advisory Group