



Jersey Homelessness Strategy

Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board
November 2020

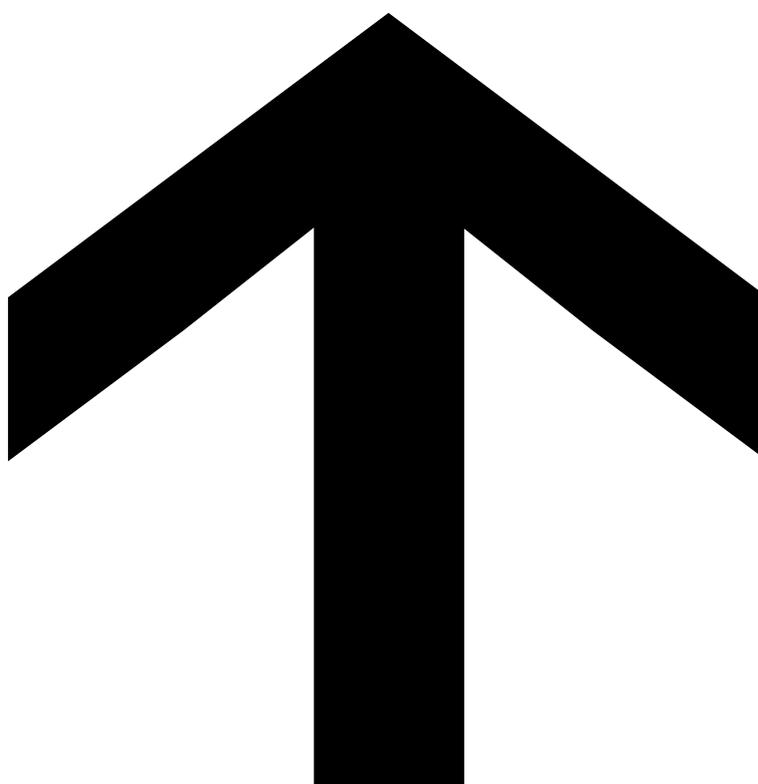


**Homelessness
can perhaps be
the most visible
and most severe
symptom of the
lack of respect
for the right to
adequate
housing.**

United Nations



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**It's amazing
what doors can
open if you reach
out to people
with a smile,
friendly attitude
and a desire to
make a positive
impact.**

Richard Branson

Introduction

Homelessness is a term meaning different things to different people. This report explains Jersey's first strategy for tackling the issue of homelessness in our island, whether in the visible form of rough sleeping or less obvious challenges around access to housing, unsuitable or unsafe accommodation and threat of eviction.

The Strategy has been developed in partnership between the Government of Jersey, social housing providers, the third sector and private sector organisations, and aims to strengthen the housing safety net to prevent homelessness and provide for those who need support. We want to provide hope for everyone that they can resolve their particular housing situation.

To understand the current position regarding homelessness in Jersey, a comprehensive independent review of current homeless services was undertaken by independent housing consultant, arc4, on behalf of Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board during 2019 and 2020. This Homelessness Strategy has been informed by recommendations of the review and consultations undertaken with our partners and stakeholders.

In the later months of conducting the review, the impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic was beginning to be felt across the world. The nature of coronavirus and the need for social distancing and self-isolation have caused particular issues for the most vulnerably housed to protect their health and welfare during the pandemic. An unprecedented partnership response was, therefore, required to ensure that everyone had a safe home to stay in. Key activities included: the immediate creation of an emergency housing team to provide advice or emergency accommodation to 200 people; temporary changes to tenancy law to freeze rent increases; preventing evictions for rent arrears connected to financial hardship caused by the coronavirus pandemic; and providing the option for tenancies to be extended.

We have learnt a lot during the pandemic, particularly about the multiple needs of the vulnerably housed and what can be achieved to end homelessness in Jersey through proactive partnerships working together. This strategy seeks to build upon the excellent work that has taken place and to ensure that we continue to move forward in providing support and accommodation for those who need it.

To ensure this strategy remains relevant and flexible to change, it will be monitored by the Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board and reviewed annually so that it can be responsive to the evolving needs of the island. We would like to thank everyone who has helped develop the Strategy, in particular, those stakeholders and partners who will help deliver the priorities contained within it to provide for homeless households and, where possible, to prevent them from being in that situation in the first place.

Simon Burgess
Independent Chair
Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board

Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board

An independent, cross-sector Strategic Board was established at the time of commencing the homelessness review. It aims to provide strategic direction and leadership and to develop a collaborative approach to resolving the issues of homelessness in Jersey. The Board has acted as a steering group for the Homelessness Review and Strategy project. It will now take responsibility for driving and monitoring progress in the implementation of this strategy.

Board members include representatives from the following sectors:



Project Sponsors
Ocorian Trustees



Government of Jersey
Health and Community Services,
Customer & Local Services,
Strategic Policy, Planning
& Performance and
Jersey Police



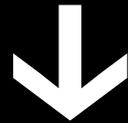
Social Housing
Andium Homes



Support Providers
The Shelter Trust



Private Sector Housing
Voisin Hunter Ltd



Charitable Sector
Caritas Jersey

Executive summary

Homelessness in Jersey

- Homelessness impacts different people in different ways, from rough sleeping, through inadequate accommodation, to being threatened with eviction. Its causes are many, often complex, and may be caused by a combination of compounding factors.
- Homelessness needs tackling to prevent its potentially devastating impact on individuals and families. Doing so also means Government will spend less on the wider impact of homelessness and positive wider economic benefits result as those individuals affected are more able and likely to become more productive members of society.
- Despite best efforts, homelessness remains an issue in the island. The Jersey Homelessness Strategy aims for a future where this is no longer the case.

Vision and strategy

The vision is ending homelessness in Jersey. This will be achieved through focus on eight key priorities:

1. Understand and define homelessness by providing a statutory definition and clear messages to promote a shared understanding of the issue.
2. Evidence the scale and nature of the issue so that we can plan how to prevent and address it.
3. Create a housing advice hub so that everyone knows where to go to get help.
4. Establish a complex needs team to take responsibility for resolving the housing issues of the most vulnerable.
5. Provide a housing safety net for all, which is appropriate, flexible and able to meet the needs of everyone.
6. Implement commissioning and regulation to ensure that housing-related support services are consistent and sustainable.
7. Strengthen the role and supply of social housing to ensure that it is better able to meet housing need.
8. Support private sector tenants and landlords to promote positive relationships.

Monitoring progress and measuring success

The Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board will take responsibility for monitoring and reporting on progress in the delivery of the eight key priorities.

Links to wider government policies

The Jersey Homelessness Strategy recognises and relates to other key Government policies and bodies including migration, housing and other policy areas.

I don't see
many homeless
people in
Jersey.

Response to an awareness raising event
on 2019 World Homelessness Day.





Homelessness in Jersey

What is homelessness and its causes?

Homelessness comes in many forms. Its most visible and concerning is rough sleeping. But the term also covers anyone having to stay with friends and family, or “sofa surfing”, or living in a hostel because they are unable to access suitable accommodation. Homelessness may also extend to those threatened with eviction or living somewhere unsafe.

A wide variety of reasons may lead to homelessness. Not being able to access or afford appropriate housing for example. Or an individual’s past and present personal circumstances, their health, life experiences or income may contribute. Often, the cause is a combination of factors leading to someone needing support.

Why should we tackle homelessness?

Homelessness can have a devastating impact. Those affected may lose access to privacy, health services and employment. They are more likely to suffer poor physical and mental health, have drug and alcohol issues, and/or to re-offend. Children experiencing homelessness with their families face extreme emotional trauma and serious disruption to their education.

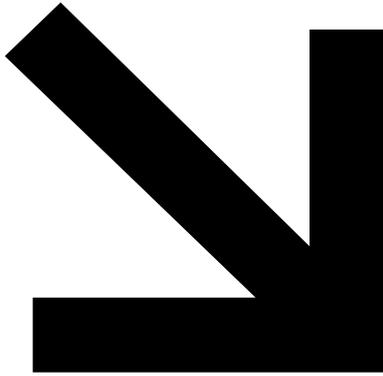
The wider effect of homelessness is economic. Addressing its impact requires additional Government spending on health care, the criminal justice system and social security.

Why does Jersey need this strategy?

While homelessness is not a new issue for Jersey, it remains a persistent one. Despite dedicated efforts, individuals can still slip through the island’s housing safety net. Research shows that homelessness exists here in all its forms, with potentially devastating consequences for those affected. This strategy aims for a future where this is no longer the case.

I want to feel
respected and
to have some
hope that
I can resolve
my housing
situation.

Someone who has experienced
homelessness in Jersey.



Vision and strategy

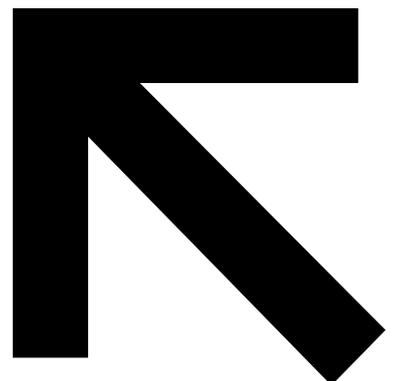
Vision

The vision is ending homelessness in Jersey. This means that:

- No one is sleeping rough.
- No one is forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation such as tents and squats.
- No one is living in emergency accommodation, such as shelters and hostels, without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation.
- No one is homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as prison or the care system.
- Everyone at immediate risk of homelessness gets the help required to prevent it happening.

Strategy

The vision will be achieved through focus on the eight key priorities set out in this report.



Developing this strategy

Discussion regarding a strategic response to homelessness in Jersey began with a sector-wide workshop in December 2018. For the first time, everyone was in the same room to discuss the issue and it was clear that there was a willingness to work in partnership. Since then, our consultants, arc4 have conducted an in-depth review of the current situation to provide an evidence base for this strategy.

The review is based upon the principles of similar research required by the UK's homelessness legislation. The analysis focuses on:

- The wider policy context of Jersey including migration and access to housing;
- Definitions of homelessness;
- Levels of homelessness in Jersey;
- Services available for homeless households in the island;
- Access to settled accommodation; and
- The resources made available for service provision.

Our consultants have provided a series of recommendations and examples of good practice which have been used to inform the priorities of this strategy.

Research methods

The review is the result of a combination of assessing existing Government data as well as collecting new information through a series of surveys. The consultants also had discussions with a wide range of Government departments and service providers as well as holding discussion groups with residents of emergency and supported accommodation.

Plans to tackle homelessness

Everyone needs a home

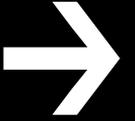
- 1**
Understand and define homelessness by providing a statutory definition and clear messages to promote a shared understanding of the issue.
- 2**
Evidence the scale and nature of the issue so that we can plan how to prevent and address it.
- 3**
Create a housing advice hub so that everyone knows where to go to get help.
- 4**
Establish a complex needs team to take responsibility for resolving the housing issues of the most vulnerable.



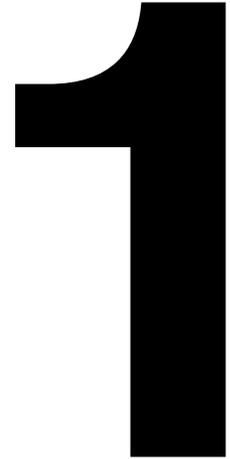
- 5**
Provide a housing safety net for all which is appropriate, flexible and able to meet the needs of everyone.
- 6**
Commissioning and regulation to ensure that housing-related support services are consistent and sustainable.
- 7**
Strengthen the role and supply of social housing to ensure that it is better able to meet housing need.
- 8**
Support private sector tenants and landlords to promote positive relationships.



Strategic Priority



Understand and define homelessness by providing a statutory definition and clear messages to promote a shared understanding of the issue.



Why is this important?

The review revealed that:

- There are a number of approaches to defining homelessness which have historically evolved.
- Definitions which take a collective non-judgmental view of homelessness lead to a more comprehensive service provision.
- The definitions of developing countries commonly make the connection between social exclusion and homelessness.
- Poor communication around the issue can compound the challenges of misconceptions.
- There is a general lack of discussion and awareness of the homelessness issue in Jersey and wide-ranging views on who Jersey's homeless are.
- A Jersey definition is needed to increase understanding of the issues and provide a criterion for any future service provision.
- A four-tiered definition of homelessness was supported by stakeholders, encompassing rooflessness, houselessness, insecure and inadequate housing.

What is required?

Although the issue of homelessness is not referenced within the Government Plan, there is clear recognition in the document that poor housing can have a negative impact on health and education outcomes, and an ambition for a society where everyone has opportunities and can participate. A statutory definition contained within Jersey law would support this ambition and form a foundation for future service provision and commissioning.

We will formally consult on a Jersey definition of homelessness which captures the four elements of rooflessness, houselessness, living in insecure housing and living in inadequate housing. The Government will propose that this is placed in statute within Jersey Law to be used as eligibility criteria for any future service provision. Further consideration should be given as to when a tenancy is deemed to be insecure, linked to a review of tenancy rights in the private sector [see priority 8].



Priority action plans



Immediate Term

Jersey Homelessness Strategy to clearly state the agreed definition of homelessness for consultation and approval by the Government of Jersey and Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board.



Medium Term

The launch of the strategy to be accompanied by an awareness-raising campaign which takes into account the good practice which we have highlighted.



Long Term

Place the approved definition in statute alongside the eligibility for future homelessness service provision.



Evidence the scale and nature of the issue so that we can plan how to prevent and address it.

2

Why is this important?

The review revealed that:

General homelessness levels

- There were 121 responses to the survey of homeless individuals. The largest group represented was single households. A greater proportion of 16-24 year-olds responded than are represented in the population.
- The majority of survey respondents had full entitled status to reside in Jersey [93.4%], with 66.1% of these stating that Jersey was their nationality.

Roofless households

- Fairly significant numbers of individuals are rough sleeping regularly.
- 7 individuals who were currently homeless indicated that they had slept rough or in a vehicle on the night before completing our survey.
- 12 individuals who had previously been homeless had slept rough.

Houseless households

- During the recording period of our survey, an average of 104 residents per night were living in temporary or supported accommodation provided by The Shelter Trust and Sanctuary Trust.
- 38% were homeless due to relatives or friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate them. Other main reasons include the breakdown of relationships, leaving prison, and loss of rented or tied accommodation.

Households living in insecure accommodation

- 22% of respondents to our survey who regarded their accommodation as insecure cited rent affordability as the reason.
- 30% of Jersey adults who responded found it difficult to cope financially. A third reported that their household's financial situation was worse than a year previously.
- The Jersey Women's Refuge [JWR] reported that domestic abuse cases are increasing. In 2018, JWR had 63 admissions [not including children]; 48 of these were new to the service and 15 had used their service before.

Inadequately housed households

- Nearly 18% of survey respondents who were currently homeless cited a parent or family member being unwilling to accommodate as the reason for their situation.
- 1 in 20 occupied properties are classed as overcrowded.
- 242 current applicants were registered with Jersey's Housing Gateway due to overcrowding and poor housing standards.

Households leaving institutions or care

- 30 ex-offenders were assessed by Jersey Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements [JMAPP] as having unsuitable accommodation in 2018.
- A new support package is estimated to be relevant to 90 young people in care and 100 young people aged between 18 and 25 who would be described as a care leaver.
- The number of patients that are admitted to the psychiatric ward per year is increasing. During the summer of 2019, 6 cases were bed blocking in the psychiatric ward due to a lack of appropriate accommodation.

What is required?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has commented:

“Limited data about the scale of this [homelessness] phenomenon... impedes the development of coherent strategies and policies to prevent and address it.”

Data collection is key to fully understanding the extent of homelessness in Jersey; as per the saying: “knowledge is power”. Here, better awareness of the nature of the problem will help understand the causes and find opportunities for it to be prevented. It can also provide evidence to justify any policy change. We have conducted some data collection for the purpose of this review; however, we believe that this is just a starting point. A regular data collection exercise is needed to allow trends to be identified and strategically addressed.

Opportunities to create a robust evidence base of housing and homelessness needs will arise with the creation of a central service hub and structured referral mechanisms [recommendation 3]. There may also be opportunities to review the question set and used for the next Jersey Census and annual Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.



Priority action plans



Immediate Term

The Government's Department for Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance to work with Statistics Jersey to identify opportunities to capture homelessness data, including the next Jersey Census and annual Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.



Medium Term

Existing services and providers to be required to report on a standardised data set.



Long Term

A robust data collection framework to be integral to a new housing advice hub and housing-related support commissioning.



Create a housing advice hub so that everyone knows where to go to get help.

3

Why is this important?

Which services do homeless households approach?

22% of respondents to our survey first contacted The Shelter Trust.

The majority of respondents approached multiple organisations, including other charitable organisations and housing providers.

Service provision

A wide range of Government services provide advice and support related to housing or are likely to be working with vulnerable households.

There are also a wide variety of both charitable and commercial services who offer support and advice services in the island.

Customer views

- Customers believe that they receive better quality services from non-Government based services and have more trust in charities.
- The customer journey is determined by local knowledge and support networks.

Our consultant's observations

- Current advice and support services are unstructured and uncoordinated with only informal referral mechanisms.
- Government officers and support workers are generally dealing with a housing situation at a time of crisis when there is little opportunity for preventative activity.

What is required?

It was a recommendation of the earlier report in July 2018 by consultants, HQN, that a housing advice service be set up, focusing on access to social housing. A Government working group has been reviewing this proposal and how it could work in practice. This advice service could provide more universal assistance to residents and would have the potential to intervene at an early stage and prevent someone from becoming homeless.

There is a delicate balance to be struck between drawing on the expertise in the third sector on one hand, yet embedding the service in the mechanisms of Government. A partnership approach would take advantage of the strong guidance and advocacy role that many third sector organisations have with groups who may be harder to engage.

The hub would logically be best sited in the centre of St Helier, but potentially away from existing Government buildings. We also believe there is potential to link the service into the emerging “closer to home” model, which seeks to use community buildings across the island for drop-in sessions. Front line staff working in the hub need to be able to give authoritative and practical advice on a wide range of subjects, including repossession action, homelessness, suitability of accommodation, tenancy rights, disrepair and allocations policies.

They should also have knowledge of the Government’s social security and social care systems as well as being able to build strong partnerships with the island’s private rented sector, including landlords and letting agents.

As well as a physical presence, consideration also needs to be given to the creation of a virtual online equivalent of the hub for people to access themselves. Any such service also needs to consider how it can meet emergency needs 24 hours a day.

Structured referral mechanisms

A single initial point of contact allows people to be given consistent and clear advice; it also means they can be referred to appropriate agencies to meet their specific needs. We would like all the agencies involved to reach agreement on sharing data so that people only have to give personal information about their circumstances once. Referral mechanisms could also be incorporated into a future service commissioning framework.

Personal housing plans

Anyone who approaches the advice hub needs to know how their case will be followed up, and also any action they need to take. It is also important that staff know who is doing what, and that people don’t get “lost in the system”. The creation of personal housing plans will assist in managing customer expectations about what the advice service can do to assist them.



Priority action plans



Immediate Term

The [already formed] Government working group to consider our proposal for a partnership-based housing advice model and recognised good practice.



Medium Term

If a partnership is to be formed, consultation to take place with the key partner agencies to agree on governance, structures and funding arrangements.



Long Term

Practical matters such as a location and embedding the service within the “closer to home” model to be resolved with the aim of the service being operational during 2021.

Structured pathways and personal housing plans to be included in the service specification.



Establish a complex needs team to take responsibility for resolving the housing issues of the most vulnerable.



Why is this important?

Stakeholders/provider views

- A lot of effort has been made to address “entrenched rough sleeping” over recent years. There are a lot of passionate professionals and a strong belief that something can be done to help.
- There is a lack of structure and accountability where appropriate links are often due to individual officers and goodwill between teams and organisations.

Our consultant’s observations

- Numerous services/departments do what they can within their policy framework and resources, however officers are frustrated that they can’t do more.
- The establishment of an emergency housing team in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated what can be achieved by a multi-agency approach.

What is required?

Individuals with multiple support needs require a personalised and coordinated response from a range of different agencies, according to their specialisms. Our review saw that different organisations have begun working together to make progress in addressing entrenched rough sleeping.

However, there is still no one service to take responsibility for finding a sustainable solution to their housing needs. Many will go round the system on a regular basis.

The emergency housing team, set up in response to the coronavirus outbreak, has already demonstrated how effective this multi-agency approach can be. It will provide many useful Jersey-based experiences when working out how such a team could function in the longer term to assist the most chaotic. The Government should consider the merits of establishing a permanent emergency housing service, including how this could be merged with the existing outreach service provided by The Shelter Trust.

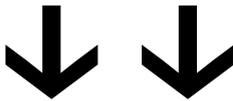
Longer-term, it would be sensible for such a team to be based at the proposed housing advice hub. Referral mechanisms also need to be in place for supported accommodation options such as an expanded Housing First service.

Priority action plans



Immediate Term

Explore how an Emergency Housing service, similar to the service established during the coronavirus outbreak, could be established on a permanent basis and as a multi-agency team responsible for the housing needs of complex cases.



Medium Term

Review the staffing roles within the team to ensure that all appropriate specialisms are available, including the existing Outreach team.



Long Term

Establish referral mechanisms into supported accommodation options such as an expanded Housing First service.

Provide a housing safety net for all, which is appropriate, flexible and able to meet the needs of everyone.



Why is this important?

Emergency accommodation

- Direct access accommodation in Jersey is provided by The Shelter Trust at Aztec House and the Jersey Women's Refuge Safe House.
- 50 to 60 individuals stay at Aztec House per month. The average stay is two to three months although it is not uncommon for people to stay there for more than a year.
- The Jersey Women's Refuge had 63 admissions in 2018, with occupants staying an average of 30 nights.

Customer views

- "Aztec House is the place where everyone goes" – survey respondents recognised the value of Shelter's provision but also commented on issues this caused due to the wide variety of support needs concentrated in one location.
- Respondents said that privacy could be an issue at Aztec House, particularly at times of high demand.
- Concern was expressed about "impartiality". The nature of living in a small island can make it difficult to move on from one's past.
- Service users were acutely aware of the difficulties they face in moving on and accessing more settled accommodation.

Stakeholder/provider views:

- The main issue is the sheer demand for services and that provision at Aztec House is "being strained" under the pressure and the island needs more capacity and resources for emergency housing.
- The need to occasionally exclude residents from Aztec House in order to protect staff and other residents can leave them with nowhere else to go.
- Sector staff and volunteers in Jersey were particularly worried that there is no emergency provision for homeless families, unless it's as a result of domestic abuse. There are no direct access properties suitable for families in the island.
- Many staff and volunteers working in the sector were keen to highlight the gaps in current supported accommodation. These included mental health specific accommodation and longer-term support to sustain settled accommodation.

Our consultant's observations

- Income Support eligibility can be a barrier to accommodation – most emergency and supported housing relies upon Income Support to pay for a resident's stay. Recent recommendations made by the Migration Policy Development Board to give Income Support to anyone who has lived in the island for six months would greatly improve this situation if they were to be adopted by Government.
- The island's relatively small population creates problems in providing dedicated accommodation for all. However, gaps in provision specifically for men, those experiencing domestic abuse, transgender people and 16-18 year olds would be financially difficult to make provision for.
- There are difficulties in accommodating different groups of people in shared living environments.

What is required?

The review heard from many people who aspired for a system in the island where homeless people could be given hope and respect: hope for a resolution of their situation and a feeling of being respected by the system. There are some parallels with the Jersey Care Inquiry report, which highlights the historic lack of a welfare safety net in Jersey. For children, this is being addressed through a strengthened children's service and corporate parenting responsibilities for those in care. It is time to take an equivalent approach and establish a housing safety net for those who become homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Appropriateness of current emergency provision

We are grateful to the staff at The Shelter Trust for the open and frank discussions we were able to have with them to inform this strategy. In particular, they highlighted the limitations in the services which they are able to offer at Aztec House with the resources they have available. There is definite merit in further research into the funding requirements of Aztec House and the potential for future remodeling.

As a minimum, we think that there should be no shared bedrooms at Aztec House and accommodation should strive to be self-contained. We would intend that referrals were made to Aztec House from the Housing Advice Hub, so allowing staff to focus on the key areas of accommodation and support.

Funding for the Jersey Women's Refuge would also merit review; we are concerned that the current level of service could be put at risk because the funding model is not sufficiently robust.

Gaps in provision

The review identified gaps in homelessness provision in Jersey, particularly around emergency provision for families, vulnerable young people and women who have not suffered domestic abuse. Current accommodation does not have the physical flexibility to help different household groups, or it would be inappropriate for different groups to share a living environment. Commissioning of new services and remodelling of existing ones should take the needs of these groups into account.



We would like to see a “pick and mix” approach to provision as much as practically possible. What will be the housing solution for one person may not work for another. A person-centred, bespoke approach will always have the most success, but we recognise it can be more resource-intensive.

Policy framework

The review also identified gaps in the current policy framework which exacerbate gaps in provision for some households and leave holes in the housing safety net. Proposed changes to migration policy seek to address some of these, i.e. Income Support after 6 months and equal status for the partners and children of entitled or licensed workers. Consultants, HQN, also call for access to social housing to be less restrictive.

We are, however, concerned about current restrictions in the availability of Income Support and social housing eligibility for some under 25s and also misunderstandings as to eligibility. Income Support is available for under 25s if they can't live in the parental home, but this is not clearly understood by this group and this misunderstanding may discourage them from seeking support. We call on Government to give further consideration of the safety net made available to young people in Jersey and to ensure the eligibility criteria are widely and openly shared.

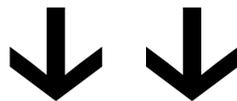
We would also aspire to provide a wholly inclusive safety net with a minimum level of provision available for all. This would include recent arrivals to the island with limited residential status.

Priority action plans



Immediate Term

Commission a review of funding requirements for current emergency provision and the suitability of accommodation such as at Aztec House.



Medium Term

Consider how gaps in emergency accommodation could be best filled through more flexible accommodation arrangements and commissioned services.

Explore opportunities to utilise existing buildings or pod structures to provide self-contained accommodation.



Long Term

Conduct a wider review of the existing migration and Income Support framework to identify and debate the extent to which there is any friction with the spirit of providing a housing safety net for all and, in particular, the under 25 age group.



Implement commissioning and regulation to ensure that housing-related support services are consistent and sustainable.

6

Why is this important?

The review revealed that:

Stakeholder/provider views:

- The issue of homeless prevention was raised by many staff and volunteers in the sector. Staff and volunteers were keen to see a way of managing demand levels through more preventative action, identifying people at risk of becoming homeless, and developing accommodation and support pathways.
- Some respondents also flagged the inconsistency between providers; a smaller number of people also commented that a lack of overall regulation leads to varying standards.
- People in the sector reported that providers had problems achieving and maintaining appropriate staffing. There is a level of recruitment competition between providers and staff shortages can lead to problems meeting minimum staff levels on duty.

- Support staff themselves felt that they needed to be better trained, and have more time available for residents.

Our consultant's observations

- The support network available in Jersey has grown historically through the work of several unconnected charities. There is little central regulation or co-ordination to deal with gaps and inconsistencies.



What is required?

The third sector has historically taken the lead in providing services for homeless people in Jersey, and the review has identified some excellent examples of best practice in the island. However, no one organisation has responsibility for seeing the bigger picture of what is needed, nor for monitoring standards. We believe that both these functions are needed and that they can only practically be taken on by Government.

More active Government involvement in the sector would undoubtedly lead to the professionalisation of the housing support sector in Jersey. It would also provide more assurance in terms of standards and make funding arrangements more sustainable. It is important that all parties are aware of the implications of any change as they move forward: the commissioning model may, for example, require more organisations to register with the Jersey Care Commission.

A commissioning framework

We propose the establishment of a commissioning framework where Government undertakes the strategic planning of what services are needed, ensures the procurement of those services and then monitors their delivery. Such a framework would also need a longer-term Government funding programme to be established as well as providing opportunities to make better use of resources including enhancing collaboration between providers.

Regulation of housing support services

Hand in hand with commissioning is the need to ensure that adequate and consistent standards are achieved across housing support provision. Since the appointment of a charity commissioner in 2017, all charitable providers have been required to register, however, this registration is more about governance arrangements than the standard of service provided.

Some of the larger providers such as The Shelter Trust and Sanctuary Trust have opted to also be registered with the Jersey Care Commission. However, registration seems to be dependent upon the individual organisation's own interpretation of "personal support", which, according to the Regulation of Care (Jersey) Law 2014 includes "supervision, guidance and other support in daily living that is provided as part of a support programme". This has led to an inconsistent picture of regulated and non-regulated providers. It would be sensible for the commissioning of services to be dependent upon registration with the care commission.

Preventative pathways

Strategic commissioning also has the potential to consider how services best fit together to provide preventative pathways for key groups vulnerable to homelessness. We are aware that this is currently being explored in Jersey in terms of young people and that there are aspirations to improve the resettlement journey for ex-offenders.

Outcome focused funding

Longer-term funding commitments by Government are required and a recognition that homelessness does not attract significant sums of charitable donations in the way that other popular charities in Jersey are able.

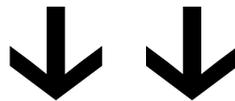
Any call for additional funding to be made available at a time of public sector budget pressures is going to be difficult to achieve, but we believe that there are opportunities for the Government to work more closely with larger charitable trusts.

Priority action plans



Immediate Term

Identify existing commissioning frameworks within the Government's structure and consider if there are existing mechanisms which could take responsibility for commissioning housing-related support.



Medium Term

Review the Supporting People framework operating in Wales (as a working example) and make recommendations on how this could be adapted to work in Jersey.

Revise Care Commission guidance to include registration of housing-related support providers.

Aim to adopt a Jersey commissioning framework for housing-related support during 2021.



Long Term

Explore options for Social Impact Bond funding with charitable investors and trust funds. Also, explore the availability of private capital funding.

Prioritise the commissioning of existing gaps in housing-related support services and emergency provision focused on flexible self-contained accommodation to meet the needs of a wide range of groups, including families.

Examine current pathways which lead to homelessness for key groups, starting with young people and offenders, and use the commissioning framework to fill identified gaps.



7

Strengthen the role and supply of social housing to ensure that it is better able to meet housing need.

Why is this important?

The review revealed that:

Jersey's social housing stock

- There are just over 5,500 social rented properties in Jersey, owned by social housing providers, Andium Homes and housing trusts.

Accessibility

- Homeless households receive band one status on the waiting list but would need to have a disability, medical or support need (and successful referral through the Supported Housing Group) in order to access the housing register.

Affordability

- Social renters pay on average 40% of their income on housing costs (although many will receive Income Support to provide assistance to eligible households).
- The policy of charging 90% of market rent is arbitrary and does not link to levels of affordability, but in part reflects the financial realities of refurbishment and new development.
- This rent policy potentially discourages long-standing tenants, used to paying lower rent levels, from downsizing and enabling best use of the housing stock.

Future supply and demand

- Predictions of future requirements need to take into account a higher demand for social housing if the waiting list is opened up.
- The new Island Plan suggests a policy that requires private developers to provide affordable homes as a small proportion of housing development. The effectiveness of such a policy should be carefully reviewed before being implemented and alternative and more effective policies considered. It was noted that such a policy was introduced in previous Island Plans but failed to have the desired impact by reducing the number of homes being developed privately which in turn increased housing costs through restricting supply.



What is required?

Jersey has a good record in providing social housing, and in ensuring that the supply continues to develop. However, it is clear that social housing organisations could play an even bigger role in providing for those in housing need.

Greater access to social housing

The findings of the HQN 2018 review of the social housing allocation system and their recommendations to ensure that the existing household eligibility criteria are less restrictive address the objectives of housing need and would directly improve access for vulnerable and lower-income households. These recommendations should be acted upon in the immediate term. Consideration should also be given to accessibility for under 25-year-olds.

Regulation of the sector

There is a need for greater monitoring of social housing providers to provide assurance that appropriate standards are observed in the delivery of social housing with particular obligations in relation to the Housing Gateway. In a pressurised housing market such as Jersey's, there is a need to maximize the role of every letting in meeting housing need demand. The current framework also allows for allocation outside of the Housing Gateway which undermines its purpose. Whether through regulation or legislation, this needs to be addressed.

A review of rent policy and the funding models it supports

Issues around the affordability of social housing have been highlighted by the review, in particular, the indications that discounting rent levels may be preventing best use of the social housing stock and ultimately the opportunities available for rehousing. We understand that this area is currently being considered by the Housing Policy Development Board and we would also like to see a funding model which enables affordable rent via appropriate income support, and which recognises the need to ensure a sustainable long-term funding model for the delivery of social housing.

Planning mechanisms to play their part

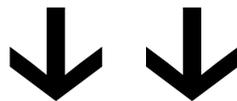
Planning policies in the draft Island Plan that encourage the development and availability of affordable housing must be introduced to increase supply. Great care should be taken in implementing a policy that requires property developers to include a proportion of affordable homes in a particular development. There are prior examples of such a policy not having the desired result with a reduction of supply which in turn is inflationary.

Priority action plans



Immediate Term

Implement the recommendations of the HQN 2018 review to increase access to the social housing register.



Medium Term

Approve a regulatory system to provide assurance that social housing providers are adopting appropriate standards in the delivery of social housing and particular obligations in relation to the Housing Gateway.



Long Term

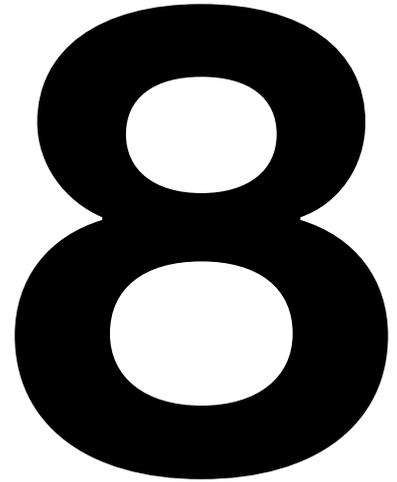
Examine options for alternative funding models for social housing delivery such as capital grants and private capital.

Consider the adoption of a policy which enables more affordable rents to be charged in the social housing sector without preventing best use of accommodation available.

Include an affordable housing policy in the emerging Island Plan which encourages further provision.



Support private sector tenants and landlords to promote positive relationships.



Why is this important?

The review revealed that:

Jersey's private rented sector

- Jersey has a considerably larger private rented sector than most areas of England and Wales.
- There are two main categories of private sector landlord in the island:
 - **Institutional landlords** – larger business concerns, mostly owning property as an investment. Tend to own newer apartment blocks in St Helier.
 - **Non-professional landlords** – people who may have inherited a property and/or have bought it as an investment to supplement their income, pension or cover other costs such as care.

Accessibility

- Prospective private sector tenants face issues accessing tenancies because of their previous record as a tenant or life events (e.g. criminal record).

Security of tenure

- Fixed-term tenancies, unless renewed, only provide security for the term of the lease. Tenants potentially need to secure new accommodation regularly.
- Lodging houses and shared accommodation (including occupying “second generation accommodation”) have no security of tenure. This may be the only option available to individuals with support needs or a poor tenancy history with the most vulnerable households being the most vulnerably housed.
- Temporary measures to protect tenants from eviction during the coronavirus pandemic have raised concerns of landlords losing control over their property.



What is required?

The private rented sector is an important part of Jersey's housing market both for long-standing and recently arrived households. Without private sector landlords, many households unable to afford to buy a home but unable to access social housing would be without a home. However, we have also acknowledged that the nature of some areas of the sector can lead to vulnerable housing situations.

Tenant accreditation

As we have identified in this review, many prospective tenants can face difficulty accessing rented accommodation due to a poor tenancy record, support needs or issues in their past. One way to overcome this is to provide a means of proving a positive track record or showing specific training has been undertaken. This is a growing area of good practice in the UK and there are a number of examples which we could provide here.

Security of tenure

The security of tenancies in Jersey is a topic of much debate as policymakers identify the need to protect tenants' rights at the same time as landlords fear a loss of control of their property assets. There is an important balance to be struck to provide a win-win situation for both sides. A review of protection from eviction, giving a tenant a reasonable length of time to find a new home (similar to UK), should be considered.

Landlord support

Increasing regulation and legislation can leave private sector landlords feeling targeted and frustrated and we would like to see any strengthening of rights for tenants balanced with greater landlord support.

Partnerships to address housing need

Changes to homeless legislation in England and Wales in recent years have allowed authorities to discharge their duties to homeless households through a tenancy. There are a number of examples from outside Jersey of innovative partnership arrangements with private sector landlords which could also be explored in Jersey to increase supply to emergency or settled accommodation.

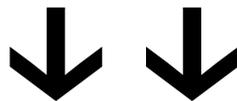
During the COVID-19 coronavirus crisis, a number of property owners have been working with Government to provide self-contained accommodation for vulnerable households and those who needed to self-isolate. This demonstrates a level of social consciousness which should be explored further in the future by providing attractive partnerships with the private rented sector.

Priority action plans



Immediate Term

Explore the models of tenant accreditation/training identified in this review and consider how this could be implemented in Jersey.



Medium Term

Increase support for private sector landlords through financial assistance and partnerships such as social lettings agencies and leasing schemes.



Long Term

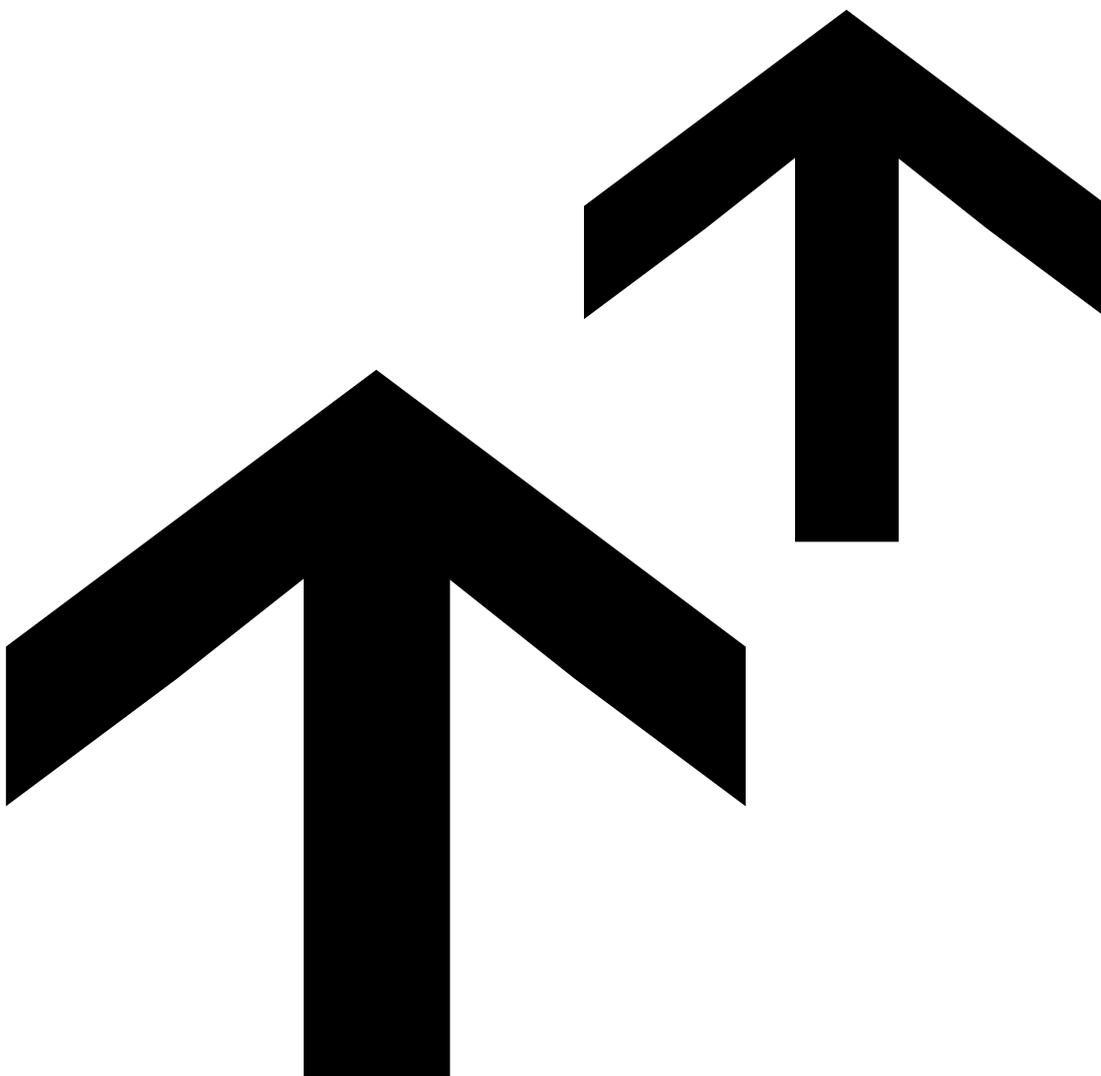
Review the provisions of Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law 2011 to determine whether there is a need to provide greater security of tenure for tenants or at least protection from eviction for any residential occupier [whether a tenant or licensee].

Monitoring progress and measuring success

Realising our homelessness vision through delivering this ambitious and innovative strategy requires not just the Board's efforts and commitment. A joined-up partnership approach contributing the skills, services and resources will be needed along with a detailed, reality-checked and agreed delivery plan setting out actions and projects being undertaken over the next five years.

- A detailed delivery plan will be formulated following the consultation on the strategy to reality check key priorities and actions. This will set out what actions and projects we will be undertaking over the next five years. It will show what we will work on first and how will take the lead on ensuring that the work we have identified takes place.
- The Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board will be responsible for the monitoring of this strategy and its delivery plan.
- The plan will be monitored quarterly and reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs, policy and legislative changes and achieves the priorities contained within it.

Progress against the delivery plan will be reported to the Government of Jersey and wider partners through an annual Homelessness event.







Links to wider government policies

The Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board recognises and relates to other key Government of Jersey policies and bodies including:

Migration Policy

The current Control of Housing and Work Regulations aim to “enable Jersey to preserve and maximise the benefits of its resources. The Law aims to control the overall population density of Jersey and the availability of work and housing for people with strong connections or associations.... in such a way that is in the best interests of the community.”

The Government’s population policies limit the kind of housing that new arrivals to the island can access. There are also restrictions on access to Income Support and discounted health care. In January 2020, the Government’s Migration Policy Development Board published its recommendations for the Chief Minister, including:

- Greater access to the housing market;
- Income support after 6-months residency (currently 5 years);
- Immediate access to healthcare for new migrants for some groups.

Housing Policy

A Housing Policy Development Board was established in April 2019 to examine the housing market in Jersey and to develop comprehensive proposals that improve the supply, affordability, access to, and standard of housing. The Board’s final report is due to be published by the end of 2020.

A new Island Plan for 2021 to 2030 will set out and plan for the island’s positive growth over the next ten years.

A Bridging Island Plan is proposed to cover the years 2022 to 2024 owing to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It aims to deliver sustainable development and balance the future economic, environmental and social needs of the island, including the need for new homes.

Other key policy areas

Relevant policy areas currently under development in Jersey include:

- Improving standards of care - The Independent Jersey Care Inquiry was set up to investigate historic abuse in the island’s care system. Recommendations led to the creation of a new care commission.
- The rights of the child - An independent children’s commissioner promotes and protects the rights of all children and vulnerable young people.
- Reforming health care - A new model for healthcare proposes to improve access to specific primary care services for specific groups; improve mental health services; and develop a transparent commissioning framework.
- Regulating the charitable sector – the appointment of a charity commissioner has seen regulation of the sector to raise public confidence and ensure legal compliance.



Everyone needs a home
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