

Theme Position Statement

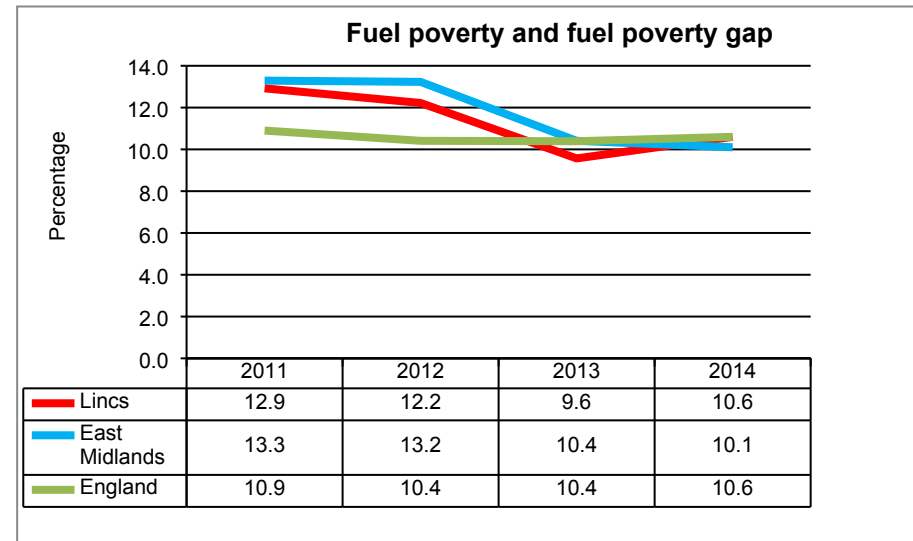
Housing – ensure that people have access to good quality, energy efficient housing that is both affordable and meets their need.

Housing is a main priority, largely measured by secondary indicators. There were 13,563 households on the housing waiting lists across Lincolnshire on 1 April 2014.

Overall, provision of new, affordable housing remains low in comparison to estimated demand but more are on site or in the planning process. Local housing authorities that hold housing stock continue to build some new council houses with several councils pursuing opportunities for new housing companies similar to Welland Homes Ltd in South Holland, including Lincoln and North Kesteven, (which is now incorporated and work is due to start on site in 2015/16). Others have affordable housing development programme partnerships with registered providers.

The Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy deals with homelessness prevention, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of people with complex and mental health needs and a refresh is in progress.

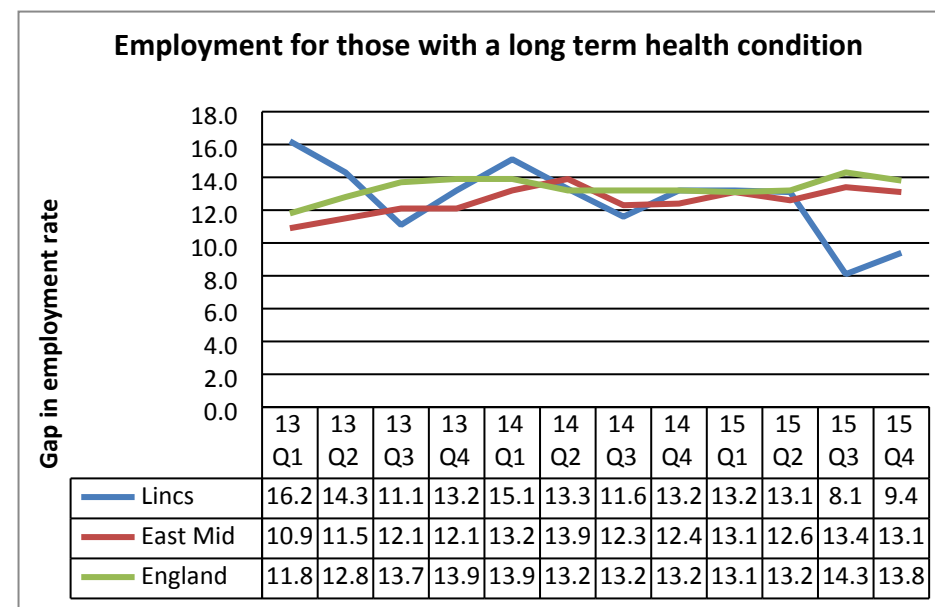
The number of households accepted as being homeless and in priority need saw a significant fall (528 in 2016/17 down 18% from 646 in 2015/16) after rising steadily. The largest numbers remained in South Kesteven (171) and Lincoln (142) but are considerably reduced between years from 202 (down 15%) and 251 (down 43%). This is against the national experience of rising levels of homelessness. Main reasons for homelessness were: ending of assured shorthold private rented tenancies; violence and domestic abuse; and families no longer being willing to accommodate relatives.



Following an apparent significant fall between 2012 and 2013, fuel poverty rates in Lincolnshire rose by 1.0% in 2014 to the same as the England average and a little higher than the East midlands average.

Work - support more vulnerable people into good quality work (such as young people, carers and people with learning disabilities, mental health and long term health conditions).

Overall employment rates have risen from 70.9% in 2013 to 74.2% in 2015, and the gap for those in employment with a health condition has fallen. Caution should be exercised over measures that involve 'gaps' as, if the denominator on unemployment increases, this could have the effect of narrowing the gap. Claimants on health related benefits represent over 60% of the entire claimant base and are strongly in focus with DWP at present. Of those figures over 40% cite mental health conditions as the primary reason for their claim; with that figure rising to 70% when secondary conditions are included.



Lincolnshire has not benefitted from widespread programmes aimed at supporting or keeping people in work with health problems in the past, but some good work is currently being done to support people. DWP has partnership links into Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT), particularly a service called Individual Placement and Support. The scheme revolves around employment teams LPFT has had to establish providing intensive employment advocacy to secondary care service users.

Other projects targeting disadvantaged adults and young people have been supported through the health and wellbeing fund, enabling skills and experience to be gained to enhance employment opportunities. These are in progress and delivering against this priority over the next couple of years but it is too soon to claim these have had an impact on the numbers:

- Assisting low income households in to work, led by City of Lincoln Council in conjunction with Lincoln College; and
- Step Forward, led by Adult Specialist Services through contracted providers.

Sickness absence rates suggest the need to improve the quality of employee wellbeing within Lincolnshire. Large public sector

employers are well placed to lead the way and share best practice. Opportunities to link into Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLEPP) workforce health and wellbeing work and national programmes such as One You need to be exploited.

General work around improving the social determinants of health and reducing poverty also relates strongly to supporting individuals and families into work, but there is a need to ensure that this includes adequate hours, with decent conditions and pay. The national living wage should help to achieve this.

Social impact - Ensure public sector policies on getting best value for money include clear reference and judgment criteria about local social impact with particular reference to protection and promotion of work opportunities and investment in workforce health and wellbeing.

The social impact priority is about a way of working, and an opportunity for public sector bodies to lead in good practice, maximising social value for the local population wherever possible. Secondary indicators are still being developed to monitor the number of social impact clauses in public sector contracts.

No actions were identified in the Strategy refresh for 2015/16; however, the opportunity of commissioning organisations to set a good example within the public sector and maximise benefits to local populations, balancing this with good management of public monies; needs to be exploited. For example, HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) have recently released a new [toolkit](#) for the housing sector to help housing providers and contractors better manage, increase and evaluate social value in procurement.

What's Working Well – examples of key achievements 2015/16

Use Planning and Housing policies to address current and future housing and support needs of residents, maximise positive health outcomes and protect against environmental hazards.

New Local Plans with ambitious but realistic housing growth targets are being prepared across Lincolnshire to set out local planning policies in light of the National Planning Policy Framework. Providing a coordinated response, two joint strategic planning committees are preparing joint Local Plans for Central Lincolnshire (Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey) and South East Lincolnshire (Boston and South Holland). The Central Lincolnshire Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate containing a health policy requiring health impact assessments on larger developments.

Boston Borough Council and City of Lincoln Council were successful in receiving Government funding to tackle rogue landlords in 2015/16. 580 inspections were carried out in Lincoln (11% of which had Category 1 hazards) and 97 in Boston – leading to Police led raids, emergency prohibitions, improvement notices and prosecutions.

Deliver the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy (focus on addressing the needs of people with complex and mental health needs).

The County Homelessness Strategy Working Group continues to be well attended by a wide range of partners and works well to coordinate joined up action. Relationships with housing related support and supported housing providers are working well to prevent homelessness. New arrangements with Children's Services to tackle youth homelessness have been put in place. Of particular note is the mainstreaming of a previously Government funded rough sleeping (street outreach) service into Public Health commissioned services. Despite figures starting to increase again rough sleeping reduced by 47%; this and the mainstreaming being recognised as best practice as the only example in the country.

Refresh and deliver the Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy to address fuel poverty and reduce the fuel poverty gap.

The refresh of the Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy is in hand, overseen by the Home Energy Lincs Partnership (HELP). Much of the focus of the strategy will be to capitalise on the new obligation on energy suppliers to fund affordable warmth measures from April 2017. Strategy actions will focus on the NICE guidelines for preventing excess winter deaths and illness from living in cold homes. Following a successful bid for the Government Central Heating Fund, a scheme providing first-time installation of central heating for fuel poor homes is being established. The Lincolnshire Energy Switch scheme continues under a new contract, to support people to switch to lower gas and electricity tariffs.

Develop an alliance between commissioners and deliverers of employment support and financial inclusion services to provide strategic direction.

The Financial Inclusion Partnership (FIP) is well established to fulfil the role of an alliance. Financial Inclusion is to become a new topic in the JSNA. Partnership working in the third sector takes advantage of the Big Lottery, Building Better Opportunities funded projects:

- Money and debt advice strand led by the Lincolnshire Community Foundation;
- Considering Employment Options project led by Voluntary Centre Services (Urban Challenge Ltd);
- Engagement into Learning Project led by Grantham College
- Support for the Economically Inactive.

Programmes that support mentoring and increased self efficacy for health related benefit claimants are in short supply, especially those focusing on stepped progression, like Steps 2 Health and Work. The parameters of this contract would need widening to anyone affected by mental health to address the issue in the scale required.

Early feedback from Step Forward project providers (and Jobcentre Plus) suggests that its strength is that it is not solely based on job outcomes and is flexible enough to allow individuals to take their time

through the programme and go at their own pace. This might include deviating from the programme temporarily to access other services that might complement Step Forward and help them on their way to employment, e.g. weight management, pre-entry learning. There is also good work done by a project called Wellbeing through Work.

Link employment support with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) and its economic growth agenda.

The GLLEP has had to focus its efforts on the broader Devolution for Lincolnshire bid around economic and housing growth and so the link with employment support has not been established.

Future Challenges

As always, the major issue partners identify is the availability of funding to be able to provide adequate housing and work related support projects. Cuts in public sector funding reduce service provision and increase demand on existing services. District councils are concerned as to whether the County will continue to fund housing related support services including floating support, accommodation based services and domestic abuse services.

Homelessness and worklessness support programmes and projects such as tackling rogue landlords and specialist advocacy support would benefit from any opportunity to jointly fund. The increasing complexity of homelessness cases with mental ill health and financial exclusion is of increasing concern. People with complex needs are finding it difficult to secure any form of accommodation, including County commissioned services.

There are a plethora of potential Government policy changes on the horizon making future planning difficult. There is a continued focus on home ownership with the extension of the Right to Buy scheme to registered social housing providers and withdrawal of government grant for new affordable housing will impact on the overall number of affordable homes available and new provision. In addition, local authorities are to be made to sell high value council homes that become void to fund the Right to Buy. Pay to Stay proposals intend to charge higher rents to social tenant households on high incomes.

Local authorities' ability to secure affordable housing (with the exception of starter homes) on many sites has been removed, alongside general viability issues around securing units through developer (section 106) contributions. The possible change in the affordable housing definition to starter homes may also reduce the amount of new affordable homes able to be provided. Funding new infrastructure needed to sustain housing growth will also give rise to a potential reduction in the proportion of new affordable housing able to be provided through the planning system.

The impact of welfare reform – including continued rollout of Universal Credit (UC) means support to the most vulnerable clients

will remain essential. Those on UC are more likely to be in rent areas and face eviction. Welfare reforms are making it more difficult for certain groups to find and sustain affordable accommodation (e.g. housing benefit restrictions for under 35s who risk being excluded from housing altogether). The overall benefit cap and caps on Local Housing Allowance present a challenge, especially around supported housing. Social Housing providers are becoming stricter on who they will accommodate due to their own financial pressures, exacerbated through rent reductions.

Future Opportunities

Strategic Housing Market Assessments carried out across Lincolnshire identify the need for more homes. Greater Lincolnshire local authorities have an aspiration to deliver 100,000 new homes.

Devolution is impacting on this agenda. There are a number of initiatives taking place to encourage acceleration in housing delivery towards targets agreed with Government. This partly focuses on the housing market itself but there are other more specific activities designed to make the case for additional affordable housing and other forms of specialist properties to meet certain needs, e.g. extra care. This work is also supported by the One Public Estate programme which will include a 'challenge' theme designed to establish whether the existing public sector estate can provide increased opportunities to realise priorities, including housing.

It has been recognised that there is a lack of a strategic approach to delivering housing that supports a person living independently in their own home or in extra care housing. County and district councils are working together to see how a holistic approach, including disabled facilities grants, could improve outcomes by redesigning services.

The refresh of the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy, Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy and district Housing Strategies present opportunities to address the plethora of emerging Government policies. New policy development including allocations policies will strengthen homelessness prevention. Increased joint working with other statutory and voluntary organisations and development of new initiatives and interventions will focus delivery where most needed.

Strengthening links with the GLLEP has resulted in a multi agency bid for a project that would offer a strong opportunity to address a range of issues related to health related worklessness due to impacting on the employability status of the Employment and Support Allowance claimants through a health and wellbeing focused approach, to contribute to a reduction in demand on public services.

There will also be some projects launched in the near future utilising the European Social Fund. These projects will have a specific focus on those out of work and people who are most at risk of social exclusion (e.g. people with health problems (including mental health) and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness).