

LINCOLNSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Open Report on behalf of Councillor William Gray, Chair of the Housing, Health, and Care Delivery Group

Report to	Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	26 September 2023
Subject:	Homes for Independence

Summary:

The Health and Wellbeing Board received an update on how the Housing and Health priority theme had been delivered in 2022/23 as part of the JHWS annual assurance report. This paper updates Members on the refocused Homes for Independence priority theme in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire and how it is being delivered.

It focuses on five main collaborative workstreams where good progress has been made so far during 2023/24, and there will be significant further exploration and development, namely:

1. Improving housing intelligence (understanding needs and opportunities), including the housing stock modelling exercise and health impact assessment of poor condition homes.
2. Establishing a Good Home Hub and One Stop Shop for aids, equipment, and adaptations.
3. Considering the use of the Better Care Fund, Disabled Facilities Grant funding and People at the Heart of Care for Homes for Independence.
4. Providing local energy advice. and
5. Implementing the Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Actions Required:

That the good progress being made on the current main workstreams for the Housing Health and Care Delivery Group is noted.

1. Background

Considering the importance of a good home to the health inequalities agenda, the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) has agreed that Housing and Health remains a priority theme in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) for Lincolnshire, but that it is re-named Homes for Independence. Evidence shows that living in familiar, safe, accessible, warm accommodation that we call 'home' is more likely to promote mental and physical wellbeing, and to reduce hospital admissions, social isolation, and loneliness. Our vision is for people to live independently, stay connected and have greater choice in where and how they live. The refocused priority will not address all aspects of housing but identifies those who may need extra help to maintain their wellbeing and independence e.g., those with health and care needs, those moving from a hospital inpatient or other facilities, and care leavers amongst others. There are three main areas of focus:

1. Ensuring homes are safe, warm, and dry to reduce accidents such as falls and to prevent illnesses, especially respiratory conditions for people of all ages.
2. Maximising levels of independence for people with care and support needs (e.g., frail older people and people with mental health issues, dementia, learning disabilities, and autism). This includes providing appropriate small aids, equipment, and adaptations to meet people's needs through streamlined mechanisms and processes.
3. Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping by addressing the underlying causes leading to homelessness.

The Housing Health and Care Delivery Group (HHCDG) under the chairmanship of Councillor William Gray continues to oversee a Delivery Plan of actions to meet objectives for the Homes for Independence priority. Membership has been reviewed and updated following the district council elections, whilst representation from the NHS Trusts still requires further consideration.

The Lincolnshire Housing and Health Network (LHHN) is an officer group of senior housing leads that coordinates action to achieve the Delivery Plan for HHCDG with actions allocated to subgroups each with a named lead:

- Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network
- Lincolnshire Healthy and Accessible Homes Network
- Lincolnshire Homelessness Partnership
- Lincolnshire Housing Standards Group

These groups share some people (strategic leads) and financial resources that have accelerated implementation of the HHCDG Delivery Plan. It is recognised that additional resources may be needed to complete an ambitious programme of work.

Housing Intelligence (Understanding Needs and Opportunities)

The ambition to improve our understanding of several aspects of the housing and health agenda will be taken forward within the Public Health Intelligence Team (PHIT). More will be done to align Homes for Independence with Population Health Management with the aims of reducing health inequalities and prevention. Setting a two-year work programme will be considered at the LHHN meeting on 8 November 2023 and the HHCDG Delivery Plan will be updated to reflect this.

There is likely to be a particular focus on:

- Homelessness prevention - scoping a joint piece of research with the Lincolnshire Homelessness Partnership to detail interventions to prevent homelessness across the county.
- Housing standards, including cold, damp and mould.

- Reducing energy use.
- Demand for different levels of supported housing for both older people and working-age adults with mental health, dementia, learning disabilities and autism.

It is suggested that the work programme is also signed off by the Better Lives Lincolnshire Board.

Funding and a procurement route including district councils is being agreed to commission the Building Research Establishment housing insights service. This will provide the PHIT with access to the Housing Stock Condition Database (HSCD), with modelled address level housing stock condition information from the English Housing Survey and Experian covering all tenures. It will be sufficient to determine overall levels of disrepair and poor housing standards, and to target interventions at an aggregated level (e.g., ward or lower super output area). The PHIT would be able to refine the HSCD if known data about properties is fed into it (e.g., from Planning and Building Control records, and housing standards enforcement outcomes). The housing stock modelling will be followed by a health impact assessment of poor condition homes. Based on the findings from this, the HSCD could then be cross-referenced with patient health data, e.g., for direct targeting of support to people with respiratory conditions living in cold homes and make best use of resources to fund cost effective measures to improve homes.

Good Home Hub and One Stop Shop for Aids, Equipment, and Adaptations

Local authorities and partners with a role in creating the right home environment for people have been working with the Centre for Ageing Better (AB) to develop a model for a Good Home Hub, following the recommendation made in its Good Home Inquiry report. This is one of the three current main workstreams for the AB partnership that is being led by HHCDG. Organisations will be invited to become part of a Lincolnshire Good Home Alliance with the aim of it becoming easier for people to access their services as part of a system-wide approach. Residents, or someone on their behalf, will be able to contact a single point through a range of communication channels, or read information for themselves on the Connect to Support Lincolnshire website. Development of the website is underway. Wherever possible, residents will be directed to this information to enable them to resolve issues for themselves.

However, when it is identified that a resident requires additional support to access services they will need to be allocated to a caseworker. The caseworker will then connect the resident with the service(s) they need and follow their progress through to completion, potentially putting further service(s) in place where several issues need to be sorted out sequentially. For some people who are eligible, the caseworker may be a Generic Support Officer in the current Wellbeing Service commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). For others, the district councils are exploring a pilot Casework and Advice service. There has been a Healthy Home Assessment developed that is being trialled by front line workers, but its future use will be dependent on further website development and the progression of the pilot Casework and Advice service. Other themes to be further explored include trusted tradespeople and financial solutions.

Hoarding was identified as an issue where residents may need therapeutic support as well as practical support to overcome the behaviour. Appropriate service(s) to be able to roll this out across the county through a Good Home Hub are being approached and it will hopefully commence soon.

Better Care Fund, Disabled Facilities Grant Funding and People at the Heart of Care

Much has been done over recent years to streamline and improve the processes to assess for and administer Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) across two tiers of local government and the National Health Service (NHS). District councils all use a common Framework of contactors signed up to deliver adaptations on behalf of DFG applicants using a schedule of rates, that has recently been renewed by LCC. District councils have also used their powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)

Order to introduce discretionary housing assistance policies. Work has been ongoing to develop a common housing assistance policy across the county and this is expected to be adopted by district councils soon.

HHCDG held a Better Care Fund (BCF) and DFG funding workshop on 26 July 2023, supported by Foundations, an expert body on DFG and guidance. It is recognised that there is a need to consider the funding allocations and delivery mechanisms for aids, equipment, adaptations (both DFG and self-funded), and discretionary housing assistance as part of the One Stop Shop approach. Feedback from the workshop will be provided to HHCDG members to discuss and agree next steps and build that into their Delivery Plan.

It appears that the national formula for allocating the DFG budget and distributing it between districts is no longer fit for purpose. District councils are at different positions in their current ability to meet demand for mandatory DFG, to offer discretionary housing assistance, and to potentially pool funding for collaborative, wider social care capital projects. The Government previously committed to review the funding formula, but this is still awaited. PHIT will work with Foundations to explore other potential distribution formulas and to help establish levels of likely future demand for financial assistance. Some additional DFG funding is available in 2023-25 through People at the Heart of Care.

Local Energy Advice Demonstrator(s)

Two applications from Lincolnshire councils have been successful in securing almost £1million between them from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to establish home energy efficiency advice and improvement services across the county. The intention is to identify hard-to-reach households living in hard-to-modify homes and provide in person support in the home or at drop-in events. This is in part to tackle fuel poverty and target support to people who are at the greatest risk from living in cold homes, but also to ensure that low-income households are not left behind in the move to decarbonise homes, exacerbating inequalities. Eligible residents will be helped to access existing government schemes to pay for measures whilst those who are able-to-pay but need support to commission the work will also be helped. The Demonstrators will be part of the Lincolnshire Good Home Alliance with a view to achieving their long-term sustainability through a Good Home Hub.

Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

Implementation of the refreshed countywide strategy has begun led by the strategic leads for homelessness from the district councils and LCC. Whilst work has started on several of the actions against the priorities detailed in the strategy, the three areas of focus currently being worked on are:

1. Increasing accommodation available for the cohort. Consultants have been engaged to undertake a review of specialist accommodation to establish a robust evidence base and to further explore how to meet the shortfall in accommodation and support across the county.
2. Ensuring there is adequate and appropriate support for individuals to sustain their tenancies.
3. Improving relationships with mental health teams to access services to stop case becoming complex.

This in turn will result in a decrease in rough sleeper numbers and cases making repeat homeless presentations.

Current projects underway to support these priorities include:

- Reviewing the Duty to Refer process to assess the quality and timeliness of referrals and awareness amongst partners.

- Finalising a protocol for rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds to support and enable access to accommodation for care and support needs where eligible.
- Implementing the recommendations from the Lincolnshire Prison Release Protocol review.
- Improving multi agency working amongst partners through audits to identify recommendations through the Team Around the Adult (TAA) process and the Care Leavers and Young Person's Protocol.
- Expanding the Holistic Health for the Homeless (HHH) team to scope expanding the service across the county.

2. Conclusion

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the content of this report.

3. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy

The Council, NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board and the Lincolnshire Integrated Care Partnership must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS).

New factsheets on the housing and health agenda were drafted for the JSNA as part of the refresh, published in March 2023. They can be found here:

- [Housing Standards](#)
- [Homelessness](#)
- [Unsuitable Homes](#)

Evidence from these factsheets was used to decide that Housing and Health remains a priority theme in the JHWS. The Lincolnshire Homes for Independence blueprint has been in place for several years and sets objectives to achieve the renamed Homes for Independence priority area.

4. Consultation

This paper has been shared for noting at the Lincolnshire Housing and Health Network meeting on Friday 8 September 2023 and at the Housing Health and Care Delivery Group meeting on Monday 18 September 2023.

5. Appendices

None

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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