

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	29 June 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Preventing Homelessness – Memorandum of understanding between Aberdeen City Council and the Department of Work and Pensions
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/22/144
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Derek McGowan
REPORT AUTHOR	Derek McGowan
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Introduction 6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out work that has been undertaken jointly between Aberdeen City Council and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at preventing homelessness and improving outcomes and seeks the approval of the MoU attached at Appendix 1, the identification of a co-signatory on behalf of the Council, and agreement that monitoring of the MoU will be on a six monthly basis to a relevant committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:-

- 2.1 approve the MoU;
- 2.2 agree that a co-leader of the council countersign the MoU on behalf of the Council; and
- 2.3 agree that update reports for the MoU be submitted on a six-monthly basis to the relevant committee.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The complex impact of the pandemic on households in Aberdeen is still being felt. Community Planning Aberdeen has created an Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group to ensure a focussed partnership response to mitigating poverty, and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan has been refined to ensure an overall continued focus on eradicating poverty in all its forms.
- 3.2 As a Council we have a number of service areas that rely on close working with the DWP to be truly effective. These include services such as Financial Inclusion, Revenues and Benefits, Homelessness and Housing.

- 3.3 It is clear however that wider Council and DWP services have an impact in more diverse areas of life, and that the quality of these services, and the extent to which they are delivered collaboratively, can have a significant impact on the quality of the recipient's life.
- 3.4 Officers have worked with the DWP to develop this MoU, which is aimed at improving outcomes and preventing homelessness. The MoU is a stated intention to focus not only on obvious areas for collaboration, but on areas where a collaborative approach will achieve benefits across a wider range of households.
- 3.5 The MoU has a focus on the sharing of data and intelligence across a number of areas, strengthening and accelerating our existing approach to decision making around homelessness, those with No Recourse to Public Funds, and Universal Credit.
- 3.6 The MoU identifies areas where we will work closely on supporting those with substance use issues, in the criminal justice system, and with regard to safeguarding, drugs deaths and suicide. This signifies our intent to ensure our work goes beyond existing practices and into the drivers and outcomes of societal issues and provide better outcomes for individuals.
- 3.7 The MoU provides assurance on our focus to eradicate poverty in all its forms, supported by the DWP where possible, and identifies key poverty profiles including in work poverty, which echoes the Council Partnership Agreement, and also Care Experienced Young People.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk		No significant risk identified		Yes
Compliance		No significant risk identified		Yes
Operational		No significant risk identified		Yes
Financial		No significant risk identified		Yes
Reputational		No significant risk identified		Yes
Environment / Climate		No significant risk identified		Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Impact of Report
<p>HOMES FOR THE FUTURE</p> <p>Work with partners to produce a ten-year plan to increase the stock and variety of Council and social housing to meet the needs of Aberdeen's citizens and continue to deliver Council and social housing projects, including at Greenferns and Granitehill, to tackle the Council house waiting lists and do everything in our power to end homelessness.</p> <p>A PROSPEROUS CITY</p> <p>Develop our economy in a genuine partnership with the private sector, third sector and residents.</p>	<p>The Memorandum of Understanding will help ensure the Council delivers on its stated vision.</p>

<p>A CARING CITY</p> <p>Work with partners to identify and agree specific integrated solutions for tackling the health and social problems caused by misuse of alcohol and drugs.</p>	
<p><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></p>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposal to provide additional monies to help with energy costs supports the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes:</p> <p>1 - No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026</p> <p>2 - 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026</p> <p>3 - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p> <p>10 - 25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction and 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026</p> <p>11 - Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026</p> <p>12 - Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<p>Integrated Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Stage 1 completed</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Each proposal for data sharing will be subject to DPIA at the appropriate time.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>N/A</p>

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Memorandum of Understanding

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Derek McGowan
Title	Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment
Email Address	demcgowan@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	01224 522226



Department
for Work &
Pensions

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN ABERDEEN

Memorandum of Understanding

between

Aberdeen City Council

and

Department of Work and Pensions

June 2022 – April 2027

Our collective vision for Aberdeen is “A place where all people can prosper”. Regardless of their background or circumstance, everyone in this city should enjoy the same opportunities to flourish as an individual. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) sets out the means for achieving this. This 10-year plan is led by Community Planning Aberdeen in partnership with local people, communities and other organisations.

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic just over a two years ago impacted the wellbeing of our people and place as never before. At a local level, our response brought into sharp focus the value of partnership working and reaffirmed the essential rightness of the LOIP and its tenets. A huge amount of work had already been done across the partnership to take forward LOIP projects, and this positioned us well for the pandemic and we are now focussed on ensuring Aberdeen’s continued economic, health and social recovery.

The pandemic is expected to push more people into immediate poverty and a stretch outcome of the LOIP states - ‘No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026’. This signals our determination to tackle poverty through the city’s LOIP to provide access to food, fuel, shelter, employment, and finance. Preventing homelessness is a key aim that wraps around these aims.

Between March and November 2020, there was a significant increase in unemployment and a similar increase in the number of people on Universal Credit. That's why we are working with employers to teach skills and map out career paths, so those most vulnerable to redundancy and unemployment, both young and old, can find and sustain work. Over a quarter of all Scottish PACE redundancy levels through the pandemic have been in Aberdeen, the majority coming from Oil and Gas, and retail sectors.

This MoU underpins this broad vision, by supporting our understanding of the depth and breadth of population needs across Aberdeen. By coordinating our efforts, improving the gathering and use of intelligence, we can ultimately improve the services we offer to both residents and employers. Through this partnership we can also maximise current resources, identify gaps and ensure relevant strategies and programmes are cognisant of this.

The objective of this MoU is therefore to inform a comprehensive, agreed programme of work that will allow the Department of Work and Pensions to support Aberdeen City Council in its aim to prevent homelessness and increase opportunities and support for Aberdeen residents. This MoU takes effect with regard to extant legislation and existing protocols, and will cover the period 1st June 2022 – 30th April 2027. The MoU will be reviewed annually to ensure attainment of goals, for the addition of any emerging issues, and to ensure new legislation is reflected in the agreed terms. Quarterly progress review meetings will be convened, with partnership leadership identified accordingly.

SIGNED ACC

SIGNED DWP



**Margarita Morrison
Work & Health Services
Area Director- Scotland**

Our joint offer to prevent homelessness and improve outcomes in Aberdeen

ACC and DWP's commitment to work together is guided by a number of principles:

- I. ACC and DWP will work together to support homeless citizens by:
 - a) Working towards a data sharing agreement to allow the sharing and analysis of customer data so changes in benefit status for homeless households can be identified
 - b) Share information within data protocols on new tenancies created through the homeless process to ensure support is provided when starting a new home
 - c) Co-locate where appropriate to enhance the support available to those experiencing homelessness
 - d) Replicate the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 "Duty to Refer" arrangement, ensuring that where work coaches are aware of a homeless person, they refer to ACC
 - e) Create a Single Point of Contact Model (SPOC) for homelessness and work together to support homeless applicants with no income, reducing the timescale for support where possible
 - f) Collaborate where possible to determine status of No Recourse to Public Funds groups as quickly as possible.
- II. ACC and DWP will continue to work collaboratively, sharing intelligence as per current protocols and seek to further develop these, including supporting Universal Credit 'mass migration' when this is planned.
- III. DWP will continue to be an active partner in Community Planning Aberdeen, continuing our work through the Aberdeen Prospers Group, and actively participating in the Anti-Poverty Group and Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. This will include:
 - a) DWP advisors co-locating with ADP services to support stabilisation and recovery
 - b) ADP support to DWP to identify alcohol/drug risks and pathways
- IV. DWP will continue to be an active partner in the Criminal Justice system, building on work already being provided at HMP Grampian through:
 - a) Collaborating with ACC's Prison Liaison Officer to ensure planned support is in place prior to liberation
 - b) DWP joining the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Strategic Oversight Group as required.
- V. ACC and DWP will continue work together to support families in the current Home Office Afghan Resettlement Scheme, with DWP
 - a) Actively engaging in Afghan Resettlement Scheme Tactical meetings
 - b) Assigning a work coach to all families or individuals where eligible
 - c) Participating in quarterly reviews of the resettlement scheme, identifying lessons learned and ensuring these are translated into practice
 - d) Participating in any future resettlement schemes.
- VI. ACC and DWP will work together and in collaboration with other National and Local partners to support employability across Aberdeen. This will include –
 - a) supporting young people to overcome multiple barriers to employment, including:
 - i. The establishment of a Youth Hub, as well as introducing Youth Employability Coaches, specifically to work with 18 to

- 24-year-old unemployed people, in order to increase both skills attainment and employment outcomes
 - ii. Continuing to develop the established Local Employability Partnership
 - iii. Sharing relevant and appropriate information, to enhance young people's employability and ensure a positive destination is reached.
 - b) Supporting adults to overcome barriers to employment, including:
 - i. ACC and DWP will collaborate to link local employment opportunities with Community Benefit clauses included in procurement contracts
 - ii. ACC and DWP will work with key stakeholders to co-ordinate an effective offer for individuals and employers at risk of redundancy
 - iii. ACC and DWP will collaborate to maximise the employability of people with long term health conditions
 - iv. Reviewing these arrangements on an ongoing basis.

- VII. ACC and DWP will work together to strengthen the support available to lone parent families. This will include:
 - a) An agreed contact point for escalation between both organisations where a lone parent family requires additional support
 - b) Joint access to relevant systems and common data platforms allowing quantitative analysis and prediction. This will include ACC Housing and Council systems, and Stat Xplore.
 - c) Agreement of referral pathways where there are mental health issues being experienced by the lone parent
 - d) Exploring the creation of a Parent Hub to provide wraparound support
 - e) DWP as a stakeholder in the development of the Family Support Model in Aberdeen.

- VIII. ACC and DWP will collaborate to ensure the new Housing and Support delivery model provides support to tenants:
 - a) At risk of becoming homeless to resolve any housing element issues timeously
 - b) An agreed contact for escalation between both organisations
 - c) Commitment to sharing feedback on the development of the landlord portal, influencing where possible.

- IX. ACC and DWP will work together to tackle safeguarding, suicide and drugs deaths. This will include:
 - a) Enhancing and define existing escalation and referral routes where safeguarding concerns are identified, including through the Risk and Concern Hub
 - b) DWP becoming an active partner in the City's Alcohol and Drugs Partnership in its attempts to reduce drugs deaths in the City task force
 - c) Sharing of information regarding financial harm

- X. DWP will support ACC wherever possible in its vision to eradicate poverty in all its forms. This will be based on whole and targeted population data, including at locality level, and include the sharing of data through a data sharing agreement on:
 - a) Child poverty
 - b) Fuel poverty
 - c) Food poverty
 - d) In work poverty
 - e) Poverty and employment issues affecting minority ethnic communities
 - f) Care experienced young people.