

Cumulative Impact Assessment Active Inclusion Service 2023

The cost-of-living crisis, combined with the Government's estimated £105 million of annual welfare reform cuts to working-age benefits in Newcastle by 2027-28, means that many Newcastle residents are being pushed into poverty. The cost-of-living crisis disproportionately impacts on disadvantaged people and places.

The Active Inclusion Service provides directly delivered accommodation, advice and support services in addition to sector leadership, coordination and policy development to respond to residents at risk of homelessness and destitution. The Service also leads on the council's City of Sanctuary responses to welcome and support migrant, asylum seekers and refugees. Our partnership approach works to make it everyone's business to prevent homelessness and financial exclusion by supporting residents to have a stable LIFE: somewhere to live, an income, financial inclusion and employment opportunities.

We continue to respond to growing demand for financial inclusion and homelessness prevention support in a time of limited resources. In 2022-23 the partnership:

- Prevented **4,315** cases of homelessness
- Ensured low levels of households in temporary accommodation (in Dec 2022, Government published data showed there were **8,893** children in temporary accommodation in Birmingham, **3,962** in Manchester and **30** in Newcastle)
- Maintained **zero** bed and breakfast use to meet statutory homeless duties since 2006
- Supported **22,569** households to gain **£22,805,610** in unclaimed benefits including: **1,450** families with disabled children **£3,570,430**, **1,946** state age pensioners **£3,241,664** and **447** residents at Ward Councillor funded drop-ins **£1,266,431**
- Supported **4,039** residents to write off **£1,422,600** in problematic debt
- Supported **479** households through the Supporting Independence Scheme, plus **164** awards of targeted support for people leaving homeless accommodation or the asylum system
- Provided free training to help make financial inclusion and homelessness prevention everyone's business, completed by **803** staff and volunteers
- Supported **215** households through our Sustaining Tenancies at Risk (STaR) panels. There has been one YHN eviction into homelessness since the STaR panels began
- Supported **375** refugee and asylum-seeking households
- We also facilitated the following infrastructure support: **84,557** website visits, **3,631** information subscribers, engaged **142** partner agencies

We continue to work closely with partners to create policy and partnership framework to reduce the risks of homelessness and financial exclusion faced by residents. Some examples of this work are below:

- No evictions into homelessness – following YHN adopting this policy aim, we are extending Sustaining Tenancies Guidance to housing associations and private landlords in the city. Home Group have adopted the policy aim of having no evictions into homelessness. This work, promoted as good practice by the [National Housing Federation](#), and [World Habitat 2022](#), helps to avoid using B&B to meet our homelessness duties by supporting rather than punishing residents at risk of

homelessness due to poverty. 215 YHN households were supported through this process in 2022-23. There has been only one eviction from YHN into homelessness since the STaR process began compared to the 50 evictions in 2019-2020.

- Support for rough sleepers – a relatively small number of people still sleep rough in Newcastle (278 individuals last year, an average of 14 per night). Over the last year no one slept rough due to a simple lack of accommodation; rough sleeping related generally to compound challenges of trauma, mental health and addictions. We have funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to build on initiatives such as bringing back into use 40 YHN long term voids, which has worked well for the residents and attracted around £200,000 of rental income. For people with more complexity in their lives, we have secured funding for multidisciplinary services including clinical support, tenancy sustainment and flexible support for accommodation services to manage risk to address these issues.
- Our Partnerships for People and Place project – working with the West End Foodbank and the Safeguarding Adults Unit to develop training programme and clear referral routes to connect people who use the foodbank with a range of services, including Money Matters, Welfare Rights and Adult Social Care. The project has led to a heightened understanding of the relationship between poverty and safeguarding adults. The project has been independently evaluated by Northumbria University, which provides more understanding of the impact of the project and what further opportunities there to find pathways out of food insecurity for people who have been pushed into poverty.
- Targeting support for residents at due to the cost-of-living crisis – through our Newcastle Advice Compact, which brings together 31 agencies to deliver the Household Support Fund, which has so far provided payments of £200 to 904 residents, and over 100 professionals attended out training
- North of Tyne Combined Authority’s Child Poverty Prevention Project – from June 2022, providing welfare rights advice to parents of children in 14 schools to improve financial inclusion
- Expanding our Supporting Independence Scheme to provide low-cost cooking appliances to 172 households between July 2022 and March 2023, as well as targeted financial support to 164 households starting their first tenancy after a stay in homeless accommodation, or after a positive asylum decision
- Preparing residents for the managed migration to Universal Credit (UC) including a dedicated [webpage](#) and advisor toolkit, plus clarifying the advice and support in the city that can help residents on legacy benefits with a ‘better off calculation’, as well as help to make and manage a claim for UC
- Developing a citywide campaign to encourage those eligible to claim Pension Credit via social media and other communication channels and by writing to 775 residents our records tell us may be entitled to this support – 211 of these are now in receipt of Pension Credit
- 346 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Newcastle under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. As many sponsors have now met their commitment to provide accommodation for six months, there are risks of homelessness if sponsors can’t continue. We are working to create a ‘pool’ of available hosts that we could look to rematch households with and running information sessions about housing options – 50 Ukrainians have secured permanent housing in Newcastle

We are internationally recognised for our upstream prevention and stabilisation work – in 2020 our Active Inclusion Newcastle partnership approach was recognised as part of Newcastle being awarded the [World Habitat 2020 Gold Award](#). In 2022 we were asked to present on our [Homelessness Prevention](#) work at the United Nations.

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