



South Lanarkshire Council Homelessness Policy

Consultative Draft 2019/20

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: 0303 123 1015 or email equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

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Consultative Draft

This policy is currently being reviewed. This paper invites responses on the content of the policy which South Lanarkshire Council will take into account as part of the review.

Questions relating to each section of the policy have been highlighted throughout the paper. A full set of questions can be found on page 9 together with a copy of the response form. Alternatively, responses can be submitted online at <https://tinyurl.com/SLC-HPR19>

The consultation will close on 30 September 2019.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Lanarkshire Council (the council) has a statutory responsibility for people who are threatened with, or experiencing homelessness.

By law, the council must offer advice, assistance and temporary accommodation to all homeless households.

- 1.2 This policy sets out how the council will provide services to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

- 1.3 The extent and nature of homelessness and the range of services which currently exist in South Lanarkshire are outlined in the South Lanarkshire Local Housing Strategy and South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Both documents are available to download on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

2. Aims of the policy

- 2.1 The policy aims to assist the council to:

- provide housing advice and support to effectively prevent homelessness
- provide a high quality, efficient homelessness service that focuses on supporting people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- provide a service which takes account of the circumstances and meets the individual needs of those who approach the council for assistance
- provide consistency in the quality of service provided
- comply with all relevant legislation
- monitor and continuously improve the performance of council and commissioned services, taking into account customer feedback and involving those with lived experience of homelessness
- ensure ease and equality of access to the service.

- 2.2 The policy also aims to support the South Lanarkshire Council Housing Allocation Policy and associated supporting documents. These are available to download on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

Consultation Question 1

Are the aims of the policy clear and easy to understand?

3. Access to Service

- 3.1 The council is committed to making the homelessness service open and accessible to all customers.
- 3.2 There are a number of ways to contact the council if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness:
- telephone the local housing office or homelessness service
 - visit the local housing office or homelessness service
 - telephone the out of hours service
- 3.3 Addresses and telephone numbers of the contact methods identified above are promoted in a range of ways, including within relevant publications and publicised on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.
- 3.4 To help achieve appropriate access the council provides a range of clear information on the homelessness service, including:
- how to access the service
 - help and support services available
 - what advice, assistance and support the council can offer customers
- 3.5 The information provided on the homelessness service will be updated to reflect any changes in policy or practice as necessary.
- 3.6 Details of how to access the service is also available through a wide range of services and partner organisations such as Social Work Resources; Women's Aid Lanarkshire; Shelter; and the Citizen's Advice Bureau, and Registered Social Landlords.

Consultation Question 2

Are the methods listed to access the homeless service clear?

4. Approach to services

4.1 Preventing homelessness

Together with its partners, the council aims to maximise the range and quality of services available to assist in the prevention of homelessness. It will ensure that all housing and partner services place a strong emphasis on preventing homelessness where possible.

When the council is contacted by someone who is threatened with homelessness, it will:

- establish the households current circumstances
- provide information about the full range of options and services available. This may include referral to other statutory and voluntary agencies for support and/or advice, and to any other specifically relevant services.

- prevent homelessness through the provision of advice, assistance and support wherever possible and safe to do so
- continue to work with the household until the threat of homelessness is resolved

4.3 Further information on how the council and its partners can assist those who are threatened with homelessness can be found on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

4.4 **Where homelessness cannot be prevented**

When contacted by someone who is homeless, the council will:

- provide clear information about rights and how the council can assist them
- follow statutory requirements, including offering a homeless interview and, if required, temporary accommodation
- ensure all assessments and decisions are made fairly and consistently

4.5 Further information on this process and the services the council will provide to homeless households can be found on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

4.6 The council will continue to work closely with those with lived experience of homelessness in developing, reviewing and monitoring the approach to services.

Consultation Question 3

Does the approach to services for preventing homelessness seem appropriate?

Consultation Question 4

Does the approach to services where homelessness cannot be prevented seem appropriate?

4.7 **Providing support to vulnerable people**

The council will work as a partnership with a range of other services and agencies to ensure that vulnerable households receive appropriate support to:

- enable them to prevent homelessness;
- support them through a period of homelessness; or
- assist them to move to alternative accommodation and prevent homelessness reoccurring in the future.

To achieve this, the council will continue to improve upon our inter-departmental and inter-agency referral, assessment, support planning and monitoring procedures for vulnerable groups.

5. Comments, compliments and complaints

- 5.1 The council is committed to providing high quality services to customers, but it is accepted that sometimes it may get these wrong. When this happens, providing feedback will help in ensuring the same issue does not occur again.
- 5.2 There are a range of ways that customers can provide views on the service, including:
- online through the council's website
 - by telephoning, writing to or emailing the local housing office
 - by completing and returning a satisfaction questionnaire
 - through providing feedback to tenants/residents groups

Consultation Question 5

Are the range of ways that customers can provide views on the service clear and easy to understand?

5.3 Appealing/reviewing homelessness decisions and offers

The council has a statutory duty to undertake an appeal/review of a homelessness decision if requested to do so by an applicant. The council will notify applicants of their right to appeal, and will provide information about sources of independent legal or other advice to assist them. Further information on this process can be found on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

- 5.4 Applicants have the right to seek a Judicial Review if they believe the correct process was not followed by the council during the appeal/review.
- 5.5 Applicants also have the right to seek advice from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied about the way in which the council managed the appeal/review process following a complaint being made to the council.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

Consultation Question 6

Is the information relating to appealing/reviewing a homelessness decision clear?

6. Monitoring and review

- 6.1 To ensure that the policy aims set out in Section 2 are being met, it will be subject to regular monitoring and review.
- 6.2 Regular reports on performance will be provided to a range of audiences, including:
- Housing and Technical Resource Management Team
 - Local Housing Strategy Homelessness Sub-group
 - tenant and resident groups
 - all other relevant partnership groups
- 6.3 The council is committed to effective partnership on both a strategic and operational level, with other council services, external agencies and landlords.

The Local Housing Strategy Homelessness Sub-group, which includes internal and external statutory and voluntary partners, has a key role in planning, developing and monitoring the homelessness outcomes contained within South Lanarkshire's Local Housing Strategy and the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Consultation Question 7

Does the monitoring and review process seem appropriate?

6.4 Regulatory Requirements

In planning and delivering homelessness services, the council will observe the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator as set out in the 'Performance Standards for Social Landlords and Homelessness functions'.

The council's performance in meeting these standards will be assessed by the Scottish Housing Regulator through their regular inspection regime.

Further information of the role of the Scottish Housing Regulator can be found on its website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

The 'Performance Standards for Social Landlords and Homelessness functions' are fundamental to how homelessness services operate and are therefore used to inform all aspects of the service.

In addition to the Scottish Housing Regulator, the council must meet the standards set by the Care Inspectorate for its residential and serviced accommodation. Further information on the role of the Care Inspectorate can be found on its website at www.careinspectorate.com.

7. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

- 7.1 South Lanarkshire Council has an Equality and Diversity Policy which is committed to the principle that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In relation to the homelessness service, this policy is consistent with the requirements of the Equality and Diversity Policy and ensures that the council acts fairly and lawfully in all that it does.

The council will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or any other personal attribute.

- 7.2 To support this and as part of the development of the policy, an equality impact assessment has been carried out to ensure that the policy is inclusive and does not unfairly disadvantage any of the particular groups detailed above. A copy of the impact assessment is available on the council's website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.
- 7.3 The council recognise that the homelessness service will serve a diverse range of people including those who are vulnerable and in highly stressful personal circumstances. The council will therefore:
- ensure that it treats all individuals and families sympathetically and with courtesy and respect;
 - ensure it is sensitive and responds to the individual needs and circumstances of the people using its services; and
 - monitors its services and the outcomes for people using them, to ensure that they are fair and responsive to needs.
- 7.4 If information in another language or format is required, please contact the council to discuss how these needs can be best met by; phone 0303 123 1015 or email equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

Consultation Question 8

Do you think the information contained on Equal Opportunities and Diversity is adequate?

Consultation Question 9

Do you have any other comments on the policy?

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Consultative Draft 2019/20 Response Form



Are you responding as an organisation or individual?	Individual	
	Organisation	
Name		

Question 1 Are the aims of the policy clear and easy to understand?	Yes	
	No	

Question 2 Are the methods listed to access the homelessness service clear?	Yes	
	No	

Question 3 Does the approach to services for preventing homelessness seem appropriate?	Yes	
	No	

Question 4 Does the approach to services where homelessness cannot be prevented seem appropriate?	Yes	
	No	

Question 5 Are the range of ways that customers can provide views on the service clear and easy to understand?	Yes	
	No	

Question 6 Is the information relating to appealing and reviewing a homelessness decision clear?	Yes	
	No	

Question 7 Does the monitoring and review process seem appropriate?	Yes	
	No	

Question 8 Do you think the information contained on Equal Opportunities and Diversity is adequate?	Yes	
	No	

Question 9

Do you have any other comments on the policy?

Responses can be submitted via the online survey at <https://tinyurl.com/SLC-HPR19>.

Alternatively, please print and return completed forms to:

Homelessness Policy Review 2019/20
Strategy and Support
Housing and Technical Resources
Floor 10, Council Offices
Almada Street
Hamilton
ML3 0AA

Or email:

StratSupAdm@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

The consultation will close on 30 September 2019.