

Meeting our Homes for Cathy Commitments

As a Homes for Cathy member, Hightown strives to meet the nine Homes for Cathy commitments, nine pledges developed in consultation with the charity Crisis. We deliver an annual homelessness action plan and report to our board on progress.

In 2022/23 this included:



Participating in St Albans and Dacorum councils' Homelessness Forums and Buckinghamshire Council's Housing Management Forum, influencing strategic decision-making and promoting best practice at local level.



Reviewing our allocations and lettings policy to ensure flexibility around eligibility for applicants coming from a homeless situation, referring any homeless applicants who do not qualify on affordability grounds to our Head of Housing for reconsideration.



Updating our general needs direct lettings policy to increase 'qualifying points' in favour of applicants moving on from our supported homelessness services, with additional points awarded to individuals who do not satisfy the local authority's local connection criteria.



Reducing evictions to 14 - from 20 in 2019-20 - through a 'court as a last resort' approach and more person-centred income collection practices.



Reviewing and streamlining our tenant vulnerability matrix for new tenants, to identify individuals and households who require referral to our tenancy sustainment and financial inclusion teams, allowing for early intervention to prevent tenancies breaking down.



Securing £48,000 in welfare payments and grants and utilising our tenancy sustainment fund to pay for essential items such as flooring and furniture for tenants experiencing financial hardship, at the same time providing holistic welfare support for our most vulnerable tenants.



Producing an information and advice pack for new tenants on sourcing furniture, in order to provide homes that are ready to move into.



Supporting 93 victims of domestic abuse to remain in their home or move to an alternative property, depending on their needs.



Providing a range of housing options for people experiencing homelessness in the local community through our emergency, temporary, short-term and move-on supported housing services, ensuring services are psychologically informed and co-produced.



Contributing to ending migrant homelessness by providing a general needs property to an Afghan family under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and supporting 27 young people through our Separated Migrant Children service.



Championing the needs of homeless people and best practice to the housing sector and beyond through senior management contributing to key industry events.

More information about the Homes for Cathy group can be found [here](#).