**Checklist for planning and managing your housing options services differently over a period of disruption due to Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

Please note this document was drafted on 10/3/2020. Check Government advice and Public Health England updates continually as elements of this document may not be relevant in the near future.

**Introduction**

As the UK moves closer towards the ‘delay’ phase of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, each local authority will be busy developing an Emergency Plan response to manage its services, based on guidance from the Government and Public Health England. How essential services, including homelessness services, will continue to be delivered will form part of the Emergency Plan response.

Within local authorities Managers for Housing Options Services are likely to have already been asked to prepare a detailed action plan setting out how statutory homelessness services will be delivered over the time of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, in terms of 3 of the 4 of the phases (containment, delay and mitigate) , set out by the Government in its plan to manage this.

This is a checklist of actions a Local Authority Housing Options Service may need to consider. It is intended to be an additional tool for you to use at your discretion, alongside any Government advice/guidance on homelessness services to vulnerable people, which MHCLG has said will be published shortly, as well as locally determined ways to manage services to the public. It is not based on any guidance issued by the Government as a whole, MHCLG, or Public Heath England (PHE).

The checklist is intended to help Housing Options Managers and Senior Managers responsible for Emergency Planning, to work through and develop their own emergency action plan to continue to deliver a statutory homelessness service in changing circumstances and scaled down if necessary. I hope this will help you to minimise the impact on people who are already vulnerable due to homelessness and assist you and your teams with maintaining trust and confidence in your services.

The checklist is based on the assumption that the Government is likely to shortly move from the ‘containment’ to the ‘delay’ phase of its response. From what we know to date, it can be assumed that the Government’s official advice may be for essential public services such as homelessness to be delivered for a period of time which could be several weeks or more, through measures that minimise exposure to the risk of contracting the virus.

It is important that as a local authority you have and can deliver a ‘Housing Options Emergency Plan’ that has been carefully thought through - that is realistic and contains actions that are evidenced and achievable. This checklist/action plan has been developed to incorporate some of the key actions you may need to take at the level of detail that your authority will need to consider in developing your own plan.

This checklist/action plan has taken account of a number of announced or likely measures. This includes:

* The likely introduction of "social distancing" advice
* The closure of some or all schools in an area
* More limited use of public transport
* Advice or instruction for people to work from home

There is a possibility that we may see, over time, measures similar to Italy, with the Government possibly introducing quarantine measures whereby there will be restricted movement within designated areas, meaning that people are unable to move around other than for work-related emergency tasks.

A Council will take its own decision on planning for essential services based on on-going Government and PHE advice /instruction and local circumstances. A plan over the next weeks and months for continuing to deliver your local authority statutory homelessness service to your customers is essential. It’s likely that any plan will need to be reviewed and adapted continually to deal with changes that occur over the period.

How long the plan needs to remain in place will depend on the advice issued by Government. The Government’s Chief Scientific Advisor has stated (March 8th) that a coronavirus outbreak in the UK “was likely to take 12 weeks to reach a peak and maybe "another 12 weeks to go away again".

***This checklist is not Government advice or official advice to local authorities. It aims to support Government and PHE advice and activity as well as your own local responses.***

***Housing Options Services should work through their local authority Emergency Planning Teams to develop a response which is bespoke to the local circumstances, to plan for a pandemic, should one occur. Be prepared to amend the plan in the light of on-going advice issued by the Government, MHCLG and Public Health England. Do keep in touch with your HAST adviser in MHCLG if you want specific Government advice. You can contact them on the general HAST email:*** [***HAST@communities.gov.uk***](mailto:HAST@communities.gov.uk)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Where should the Housing Options plan for the period of service disruption sit within the Corporate Emergency Planning process?** | | | | |
| **Note for this section:**  I am assuming that Councils will be planning service changes as a result of the outbreak of Corona virus ( Covid-19) through their emergency planning processes.  This section is a ‘one-off’ and seeks to ensure Housing Options Services are an integral part of your Council’s emergency planning activity. District Councils within two tier local authority areas will be part of the County Council emergency planning processes as well as their own District processes. | | | | |
| **Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
| * 1. Decide as a Council whether the emergency response to homelessness should be delivered within an overarching Emergency Plan for all essential services through a ‘One Emergency Team Approach’, or should be delivered as part of the Council’s Emergency Response but specifically through a separate ‘Housing Options Service Emergency Contingency Plan’, approved by the Council’s Emergency Planning Control and Decision Making Group | |  | |  |
| * 1. Does the Housing Options Lead Manager need to be a full member of the Emergency Planning Control and Decision making Group? | |  | |  |
| * 1. Is there a need for a specific Emergency Planning and Control Sub Group just for homelessness during the period of the health emergency? If so should this include the Police, Public Health England and Social Services (Children and Adult Services) or any other key agencies? | |  | |  |
| **1.4 Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Plan for the staff resources needed to deliver all emergency tasks required** | | | | |
| **Note for this section:**  Local authorities will be using the Government and Public Health live information on the current infection rates for their area. Based on other countries, it is likely that there will be some school closures, resulting in some staff being unable to work, some staff self-isolating and some who have contracted the Coronavirus (Covid-19) and not able to work.  Planning ahead for your workforce will assist you to allocate the tasks on an emergency duty rota basis.  People would be expected (and would no doubt understand and agree) that they might need to work outside of their set JD roles and responsibilities.  Members of the Housing Options Team may be asked to do different tasks and will need simple explanations/briefings of the tasks and undertake quickly any basic training on those tasks. For example, a Housing Options Officer may have to undertake in an emergency tasks related to temporary accommodation.  Where you identify that you have insufficient staff to deliver all emergency tasks feed into the Central Emergency Planning team with a request for staff to be deployed from other authority services where the closure of all public access services may have freed up resources. | | | | |
| **Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
| Analyse and estimate the minimum number of staff that will be required on an ongoing basis to deliver Housing Options services during the period of service disruption. To help you to plan your requirement consider the following possible actions:   1. Use Government live data to predict the % of front line staff that are likely to be sick at any time, or who will need to self-isolate and amend this each week with real time information. 2. Work on the assumption that the number of staff available to work centrally could be significantly reduced because of:   Full or partial school closures leaving many staff unable to come into a central location due to child care problems.  This may further be exacerbated by a reduction in public transport. | |  | |  |
| 2.2  On an ongoing basis identify which staff would be able to undertake work outside of home and which staff could only work from home due to self-isolation, childcare issues, or other restrictions. For example, identify any staff that cannot work outside of their home due to an existing health condition and allocate those staff to duty tasks such as providing a telephone access for new cases presenting and existing cases with an emergency problem | |  | |  |
| 2.3  If, or when, the decision is taken that Council and Housing Options staff should work from home, there is still likely to be a need for a minimum office presence. Some of the tasks that may still require a small central team if there is no IT available remotely to support this:   1. Managers attending daily Corporate Emergency Planning Meetings 2. Accessing IT to deal with queries where there is no remote access 3. Coordinating information to Government 4. Collating daily/weekly core information for example - the number of new approaches, number of new TA placements, Number of TA units available, issues log 5. Emergencies such as giving out of keys to vacant temporary accommodation | |  | |  |
| Decide what the minimum office presence should be and designate workstations in the office for staff that may be required to work from the central Housing Options Office.  Remember: Current advice on social isolation is for people to sit at least 1m (3ft) apart. It should be possible to increase this distance and deliver the number of workstations you estimate you will require. | |  | |  |
| 2.5  Prepare a staff resource plan. This will need to be updated on a weekly/daily basis. Here is an example:  Total Potential Team 10 people:   * 1 x Officer – Already on long-term sickness and no immediate prospect of return to work * 2 x Officers with an existing medical condition identified as a greater risk – to be allocated telephone only tasks * 2 x Officers with no childcare option if schools close - to be allocated telephone only tasks if a decision is taken to close schools * 5 x Officers with no childcare issues who do not have childcare restrictions - can be allocated a full range of tasks including attending central office core emergency team and any emergency outreach work | |  | |  |
| **2.6 Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Access to the service during any disruption over the period of the Coronavirus Covid-19 outbreak** | | | | |
| **Note for this Section:**  It is possible that in line with Council and Government advice, the face-to-face Reception Service for Housing Options could be suspended or significantly reduced and replaced with a telephone access service for first contact and emergencies.  This section covers the various operational aspects to be considered if and when this happens. | | | | |
| **Checklist and action(s)** | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** | |
| 3.1  Is there a need for the early suspension or reduction of your reception services, in order to free up staff to undertake the preparation tasks that will be required to manage the Service during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak?  This will be a decision for each local authority to consider based on the preparation tasks required. | |  | |  |
| Although services for new and existing Housing Options customers can largely be delivered without face to face contact you may need to identify how any new or existing customers could be seen in person if necessary.  The action therefore is to identify a room or rooms where people can be seen and decide what precautions need to be taken such as cleaning of rooms, safe distancing in interviews, any Government advice or Council decision on use of, for example, additional protective measures | |  | |  |
| Prepare the wording for the Council’s website on how homelessness services will be provided on the assumption that Reception access will be suspended and the service will switch to an emergency only service. Include all emergency contact numbers and email details. | |  | |  |
| 3.4  When the decision is taken to change the way the service is delivered, disseminate this to all relevant public bodies and stakeholders | |  | |  |
| 3.5  Where possible collate the mobile and email contact details for all existing customers so you are able to contact them by text and email with details of the emergency arrangements and to provide updates quickly during the period of the disruption to the service | |  | |  |
| 3.6  Where you currently have remote access to the homelessness casework system check this is working and that every member of the team is trained on how to access the system from home. | |  | |  |
| 3.7  Check that there are a sufficient number of working laptops to enable every Housing Options officer to work remotely. Where there are not, make the case now through the emergency planning team, for priority to be given for laptops to be allocated to everyone in the Options team due to the service being designated an essential service. | |  | |  |
| 3.8  Where remote access is not currently available but can be made available quickly estimate the timescale to make it active and the steps required to achieve this | |  | |  |
| 3.9  Where remote access IT is not in place and cannot be activated quickly, take action to ensure that officers have a pack of core forms and emergency procedures to enable them to work from home without access to the system (anecdotally, based on my work with Councils I estimate that remote access to the Homelessness IT system is only routinely available in 50% of Councils).  *Note: where there is no remote access, it may require someone being available in the central office with access to the IT system so that information can be obtained by officers working from home* | |  | |  |
| 3.10  A basic paper application form and emergency query form should be produced. Whilst it’s important to get all details on the casework management system as soon as possible, there is no business critical reason why new applications and updates need to be entered onto the IT system in real time. This could be a task that is coordinated from the centre and collated say on a weekly basis. | |  | |  |
| 3.11  Are there sufficient office mobiles for every member of the team? If not purchase sufficient mobiles with credit loaded. | |  | |  |
| 3.12  Ensure Skype or the equivalent facility used by the Council is set up on all work laptops and officers know how to use it. As part of this issue a simple ‘how to use’ procedure so ever officer understands how to access conference call facilities from home | |  | |  |
| 3.13  Whether or not are not used to delivering your Service remotely, do you need a simple manual ‘*Delivering the Service During the Coronavirus (Covid-19)* *Outbreak’?* It could beissued to all team members and copied into the Corporate Emergency Planning Group. This is regardless of whether remote access IT is or is not available. This manual could contain:   1. Contact details for all officers re their office and home mobile phone number and email contact details (including for officers without remote access their personal email address with their consent) 2. All emergency procedures including taking telephone applications, dealing with emergencies from existing cases, accessing temporary accommodation. 3. All forms to be used where officers working at home have no access to remote access. | |  | |  |
| 3.14  Based on the Government and Council’s Emergency Planning Team requirements, the following actions to be agreed:   1. How Housing Options Staff will be able to access any recommended protective clothing and equipment if they need it, in the event they need to travel to provide face to face help 2. How the Housing Options service will be able to quickly access deep cleaning services where this is required, for example cleaning a TA unit where someone who had the virus has left. | |  | |  |
| 3.15  Liaise with the Council’s Health and Safety Officer or Team to develop risk assessments for all the emergency tasks likely to be required. | |  | |  |
| **3.16** **Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Maintaining on-going management and communication with staff and customers during the period of the Housing Options Emergency Contingency Plan** | | | | |
| Notes for this action:  The objective is to keep the service to vulnerable people going - albeit in a different way - and staff will be committed to achieving this.  Most people are understandably feeling worried about the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) on family, friends and the wider community including work colleagues and customers.  When the service is operating in a different way at very short notice, with, for example, more remote working, less staff and reduced customer access, it is even more critical to continually keep in touch with staff working remotely or in different roles and provide support, reassurance and guidance to them. | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** | |
| * 1. Populate and distribute the ‘weekly rota for essential actions’ based on the assessed staffing resource available for that week. | |  | |  |
| Keep under review whether a core team required in the office?  This decision will be based on Government advice and Council decisions, but generally the aim would be to minimise travel and number of officers that need to come into the Council | |  | |  |
| 4.3  If a core team is needed, allocate tasks. Suggested tasks are:   1. Being able to access and update the casework management system in circumstances where information may need to be emailed in from officers working from home 2. Deal with any general public and other agencies’ queries related to the emergency response (especially where there is no remote working access to IT) 3. Picking up and responding to the Duty to Refer referrals and any other referrals 4. To attend and liaise with the Corporate Emergency Planning Response Team as and when required 5. To triage initial calls from new applicants and existing applicants with an emergency and to then allocate these cases out to officers working from home to respond. 6. Establish on a day to day basis what services remain open and produce a daily service update for staff and emergency planners. This would need to be done in accordance with the Council’s Emergency Planning Team communications 7. Pro-active communication day to day with other public agencies – DWP, hospitals, Probation/CRCs, Housing Associations, homeless charities, day centres, mental health services. 8. Liaison with Public Health regarding any changes in access to local GP/primary care services | |  | |  |
| 4.3  Consider implementing a daily early morning conference call to update the team and to plan the tasks for that day.  Decide on structure and method for conference calls with staff  Is ‘once a day’ for all staff conference calls enough - with, for example, twice a day manager /team leader catch up conference calls? | |  | |  |
| 4.5  Provide up-dates internally on staff availability and welfare of staff as needed | |  | |  |
| 4.6  Allocate tasks to some officers outside of their direct role (such as TA related tasks) and ensure they are briefed and the ability to get short training if needed | |  | |  |
| 4.7  Keep reviewing /updating the cascade list of telephone numbers and emails for all of the team and other key council contacts in emergency planning team | |  | |  |
| 4.8  Keep in regular communication with other agencies - other public sector agencies, Housing Associations and homeless charities | |  | |  |
| 4.9  Ensure you or a designated office has the capacity to attend regular (e.g. daily/weekly) Council emergency planning meetings if needed – in person or through conference call ringing in | |  | |  |
| 4.10  Continue to check on customer’s access through the short term operating model (i.e. the assumption is that new homelessness approaches and existing customers with an emergency problem will access the service through a telephone service). | |  | |  |
| **4.11 Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Managing demand and planning staffing levels- monitoring of new approaches from customers** | | | | |
| **Note for this action:**  If and when the picture changes nationally and/or locally, it will be important to monitor the demand on the Service and plan your staffing/workforce accordingly. For example, if there is a Government decision to move to the ‘delay’ phase, or there are specific measures to delay or mitigate for your area.  The assumption I am basing this section is that the number of families and singles presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness from a parental or family home may reduce during the period of Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. This is only an assumption and based reported trends over many years re: lower rates of new applications during any Christmas period and where there is an emergency such as a fire or flood.  However, this is unlikely to be the case for single people who are sofa surfing and of course people who are already sleeping rough.  It is unclear whether or not more cases under possession action are likely to remain in their home longer due to a restricted service in the Courts to hear possession action cases.  Presentation rates will have to be carefully monitored and might not follow the pattern expected. In addition even if the overall rate falls there will be continue to be presentations including, for example, applicants who are homeless in an emergency due to domestic violence and people leaving prison or hospital.  Where family exclusion cases present and there is no safety issue at home it may not be unreasonable to ask for the period of reasonable notice to be the period of the health emergency with the reasons explained. This will of course be dependent on the facts relevant to the specific case being considered. | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** | |
| Check weekly the presentation rate for new cases generally and broken down by each presenting cause, to better understand who is seeking assistance and why. This would then inform the way in which you deploy staff. | |  | |  |
| **5.2** **Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Planning temporary accommodation to meet new demand and to transfer any existing households that need to move for exceptional circumstances** | | | | |
| **Note for this action:**  You may have already begun to plan for a ‘worst-case scenario’ regarding availability and access to temporary accommodation. If you haven’t the suggestion is you start to do so, with the hope this situation does not arise.  Every Council has different levels of demand for TA and different types of TA within their portfolio.  The assumptions in the ‘worst case’ model would vary from Council to Council but could include:   1. Lettings into permanent Council or Housing Association stock may be reduced or suspended 2. Given this unprecedented situation you are unlikely to remove people from TA as a result of a negative decision during the period of the disruption to services 3. Where social distancing or other measures are in place to delay or mitigate against the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), use of shared facilities may not be an option unless there are no other options at all 4. There may be no access or limited access to commercial hotels where a decision could be taken to close down throughout the period of the national or local measures being taken to manage the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) 5. Even if there is initially access to commercial hotels you cannot assume this will remain the position throughout the period of measures to ‘delay’ or ‘mitigate’ against the outbreak   It may be the case that for some Councils, all TA will have to be provided through the Council’s own resources and from accommodation it controls.  Please do note that every Council is different and the suggestions below may not apply to your context. | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
| 6.1  Plan now for the minimum number of vacant TA units that you predict you will need and amend this each week*.*  6.1.1 What is your existing TA portfolio?   1. Council owned dispersed/shared 2. Partner RP or 3rd sector dispersed/shared 3. Commercial B and B or nightly let   6.1.2 List what options are available if a commercial hotel, or another TA provider informed you that they are to close and all Council placements need to be relocated?  6.1.3 Do you need to take actions to free up units for TA over and above your current portfolio, based on an assumption that fewer households would be leaving TA due to the possible suspension of all or some social housing lettings and more limited access to new PRS lettings?  6.1.4 Do you need to make an early decision to temporarily fully or in part suspend any CBL scheme, or alternatively set aside a sufficient number of properties to be allocated as direct lets of social housing targeted at households in TA in order to ‘free up’ access to a portfolio of emergency accommodation you can use during the emergency period  6.1.5 If your analysis identifies the need for additional TA outside of what you project is needed, you will need to decide how this will be provided for example:  You may need to identify Council stock (for stock holding councils) or discuss with RPs about identifying a number of units that can be kept on standby as TA.  6.16 If this action is taken decide how you would provide beds, some form of cooking facility/microwave, table, chairs, and how the gas and electric be turned on at short notice, or that you arrange for it to remain on and costs covered.  6.17 Look at the possibility of converting any communal rooms in hostels into additional TA and implement the actions to do this.  6.18 Do you need to consider having back up TA accommodation in the form of a Community Centre, Council building? Or sharing in some self- contained or dispersed TA? This would be a last resort in a ‘worst case’ situation for some Councils and would involve similar measures to provide basic accommodation after a fire or flood incident but with some additional planning elements around reducing risks of the virus spreading between customers who are sharing  6.19 If actions in 6.18 have to be considered for a community centre/Council building, rapid set up and management will require a number of issues to be addressed. It is suggested you plan within a small team to generate the issues and solutions needed. These could include, for example:   * Which could be best configured to provide separated spaces able to accommodate families or individuals and best protect people from contracting the virus through being configured in a way that distances households from each other. * How you would configuring sleeping space to maximize the distance between people? * How would you establish a family facility separate from a single person facility? * How would such a facility be staffed? Where would you access essential items - mattresses, and bedding? * What staffing do you need to provide to enable people to have meals, cleaning of kitchen, washing/bathroom areas, and other communal areas * Can you access security – there may be the possibility of reallocating security from any existing Council security contract for civic offices given that security staff may be freed up due to reception points being closed. * If not take steps through the Council’s procurement team to urgently procure additional security staff that can be deployed to shared TA accommodation or the period of the health emergency | |  | |  |
| **6.20 Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Decide on the system for letting TA over any period of disruption to usual service delivery** | | | | |
| **Note on the actions:**  This section is very practical, in terms of the physical letting of TA, in terms of:   * Keys * Sign – ups * Housing benefit applications * Paperwork * Introduction for the household to the accommodation | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
| How will people access keys? Ideally keys would still be given out in person from a central point such as the Housing Options Office or a central TA unit such as a hostel with a staff presence.  However, if this isn’t possible or is not the agreed process for your Council during any measures which lead to disruption to usual systems, then consider purchasing and installing a number of key safes where people can access keys through a code texted to them. | |  | |  |
| Is it a priority or possible to do accompanied viewings for TA dispersed lettings? If not, you will need to ensure that for dispersed Council owned, TA/PSL there are clear written instructions for turning on and operating gas and electric and that these are secured to the wall in each TA property. | |  | |  |
| 7.3  Consider how the paperwork for any sign ups to TA will be administered if no face-to-face sign up process is available. This could be through emailing applicants the paperwork and requesting an email back confirming that they accept the terms of the licence granted. | |  | |  |
| 7.4  Liaise with Housing Benefit colleagues to ensure that there is understanding between the services of how any changes will be managed for people to claim HB whilst in TA | |  | |  |
| Minimise the risk of information not being placed immediately on the IT system through a procedure for how casework and any paperwork will be kept recorded during the period.  Where sign-ups are by email, check this would be sufficient for HB payment purposes | |  | |  |
| Check on plans made by Housing Management (Council stock) and Housing Associations re their emergency plan for viewing and letting vacant properties and move in arrangements. They may be impacted for example, through having limited access to repairs contractors to turn voids round. | |  | |  |
| * 1. **Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Managing the existing residents in TA during the period of the health emergency** | | | | |
| **Notes for this section:**  This section looks at how will you deal with the health and safety of residents and staff in TA. | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
| Hostel staff should be prioritised as a staff group within the Emergency Plan for any protective clothing/equipment and cleaning equipment/hand sanitisers | |  | |  |
| 8.2  How will applicants in communal TA such as hostels who contract the virus be able to self-isolate? | |  | |  |
| Where more than one person is infected in shared TA, is it possible to establish a ‘safe zone’ within the accommodation for those with the virus where they can use any communal facilities separately from hostel residents who are not infected?  What would a safe zone look like a separate floor? How realistic is it to be able to establish safe zones? If not what is the alternative plan? | |  | |  |
| Is there a risk to people in TA who have contracted the virus from other residents in terms of any possible threats of violence? If so how would you mitigate this? | |  | |  |
| How will TA be deep cleaned where a case is diagnosed from TA? (Note - this should be tied in to access to deep cleaning contractors as part of the Council’s Corporate Emergency Plan). | |  | |  |
| 8.5  For households in commercial B&B’s and hotels decide what you will do to find alternative accommodation if a hotel asks an existing TA applicant to leave because they have contracted the virus? | |  | |  |
| **8.6** **Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **Prevention and Relief routine casework during the period of disruption to services** | | | | |
| **Note on this section:**  This section has a few suggestions for managers to consider should officers have available time whilst working from home | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
|  | |  | |  |
| 9.1  Officers working from home who are not on duty could be asked to use the time to work on their caseloads and catch up on administration. | |  | |  |
| 9.2  If these tasks are completed then use the time for self-development, self-training ( training exercises and packs for staff will be made available to Councils and can be accessed free via [andygalehousing@outlook.com)](mailto:andygalehousing@outlook.com)) | |  | |  |
| 9.3  For any open cases, where it is possible within the legislation to extend the prevention and relief duties, this could be a useful action, as applicants may be less able to undertake any reasonable steps in their PHP e.g. look for accommodation given that access to accommodation will be more limited during this period | |  | |  |
| 9.4  What would happen over the period of disruption to any negative decisions that would result a single person or family losing their TA - such as an individual is not in priority need, or a decision that an applicant is intentionally homeless? I would suggest that no one is asked to leave on that basis over this period but that is a matter for local Councils to determine. | |  | |  |
| **9.5** **Add in any of your local check list or actions here** | |  | |  |
| 1. **The emergency response for people who are rough sleeping and sofa surfing - awaiting Government guidance** | | | | |
| Note on this section:  This section is deliberately not detailed. The Government has stated (6th March) that they will issue guidance on delivery of services for people rough sleeping and any actions adopted locally should follow the guidance once issued. In almost every local authority area of England a detailed response will build on the work to date through local rough sleeping services and the Government funded RSI and RRP work.  People who are rough sleeping will be at a higher risk of contracting the virus as self-isolating is not possible and due to underlying health issues, many will be at risk of serious health issues if they do contract the virus.  There will therefore need to be bespoke response to people who are rough sleeping, and/or staying in night shelters and other local emergency provision. This group includes people who are not eligible, with no recourse to public funds.  Once the Government advice has been issued, through the Corporate Emergency Planning Team, I suggest you call a meeting as early as possible of relevant bodies to plan.  There is already some information from some leading agencies - you might find these links useful:   * Homeless Link: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2020/mar/05/covid-19-coronavirus-outbreak> * Pathway - Healthcare for Homeless People: <https://www.pathway.org.uk/news/press-releases/>   People not classed as rough sleeping but who are homeless and sofa surfing or otherwise insecurely housed may be asked to leave if there is a concern they may have contracted the Coronavirus (Covid-19). Monitoring any increase in approaches and reasons why people have been asked to leave would assist you in understanding this more and planning to meet any need for more accommodation (see Point 5.1in Section 5 above)  The question of whether a person would have a priority need and be owed a TA duty is one which is not useful to consider at this point. Someone may have a priority need for a health issue which is subsequently resolved but this legal decision should not get in the way of assisting people. Councils may use their discretion to offer people who are homeless accommodation on a temporary basis and I would suggest you consider this as the most appropriate response to people. | | | | |
| **Issue Checklist and action(s)** | | **Officer Responsible for the Action** | | **Progress updates**    **Where action is finished and no further on-going action needed highlight in green** |
| 10.1  Read the Government guidance once issued and send to other key partners.  Call a multi-agency planning meeting.  Government guidance may suggest who would contribute to such as plan but I would suggest the following are likely to be on the list:   * Housing Options Service including the lead officer for rough sleeping * Adult Social Care - including commissioners of supported housing * Public Heath England * Police * Primary care (if/as available) * Hospital (if/as available) * Relevant voluntary sector bodies * Probation and CRC * RPs   Urgent decisions will be needed for how accommodation can be provided that will keep single people who are street homeless safe, allow them to self-isolate and ensure that no one need to live on the streets with the virus. | |  | |  |
| **10.2** **Add in your local planning check list and actions for people who are rough sleeping here** | |  | |  |