

Recommendations

Housing affordability and availability (supply) of housing is considered to be the biggest factor that could have an impact on those health issues related to housing by Surrey residents, staff who work in housing, staff who work in the health sector, businesses, public service providers and others in Surrey with an interest in housing. This will continue to pose significant local challenges for the foreseeable future and is significantly affected by regional, national, and international influences beyond local control.

There are opportunities for health, social care, land agents, developers, Local Authorities, housebuilders and housing professionals to work closer together to improve outcomes for local residents. Those working across the housing and planning professions are key players in protecting and improving the health of Surrey residents.

The recommendations below recognise opportunities which have been identified during the development of this chapter to address Surrey residents' health and wellbeing needs through housing.

Affordability and Availability

1. All those involved in or having an interest in housing in Surrey should work to influence the Government for policy changes, resources, and powers to enable partners in Surrey to tackle the housing crisis.
2. All available opportunities to increase affordable housing supply suitable for the needs of the community should be identified with a focus on increasing social rented supply e.g. by using public land and assets to provide new schemes.

Homelessness

3. Build on work in the Districts and Boroughs Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies by sharing best practice between teams regularly aiming to reduce homelessness and the use of emergency and temporary accommodation, including for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
4. Offer residents greater security in their accommodation, such as offering them assured shorthold tenancies where appropriate.
5. Ensure a continued focus on the housing situation, its implications for health and the actions needed to address it amongst all partners in Surrey.

Condition

6. Ensure a continued focus on improving housing standards in Surrey including energy efficiency to reduce levels of fuel poverty.

Meeting the needs of residents

7. Key Health and Wellbeing Board and related strategies should include measures to reduce homelessness and improve housing and social care related health outcomes. biggest issue posed to people's health related to housing.

8. Seek opportunities to promote/ better advertise and develop schemes already in place in Districts and Boroughs which reduce underoccupancy and empty homes in Surrey. This could include delivery of specialist housing schemes for older people including new extra-care schemes in order to have options to motivate those who may be willing to downsize and community led housing
9. Tenancy support officers and housing management should be trained to deliver a trauma-informed approach to residents to be able to better support resident groups such as those who've experienced multiple disadvantage, domestic abuse and the associated trauma
10. People who misused substances or require support with mental health issues should have access to housing which accepts them while they are in treatment and have a period of stabilisation before permanent support
11. Increase 'Housing First' units where housing is available for homeless people who have significant substance misuse and/or mental health issues, to give them an opportunity to seek treatment.
12. In collaboration with probation increase suitable accommodation for Prison Leavers, in particular women.
13. Review and develop pathway plans for different client groups (including those experiencing multiple disadvantages, prison leavers, care leavers, those who have experienced domestic abuse, those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs, those with substance misuse issues and the armed forces community) to help prevent homelessness, meet housing need and to identify and address potential 'barriers and constraints within the system including at hospital discharge.
14. Increase the availability and accessibility of new and appropriate specialist housing options for disabled people, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, people with mental health needs, people with drug and alcohol dependencies and older people with care and support needs across Surrey. This includes the provision of 'wet housing' accommodation options.
15. With regards to the Gypsy Roma Traveller community a common aligned approach between all public partners needs to be agreed if a sustainable improvement is to be made to efficiencies and outcomes across the residential sites.
16. Providing residents with specialist needs accessible housing information, advice, and guidance to support them to access appropriate housing and maintain their tenancies. This should include easy read tenancies that are easily accessible.
17. Ensure involvement from appropriately qualified specialists e.g. Occupational Therapists in the initial development and design of accommodation for people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, people with mental health needs, and older people with care and support
18. The wider workforce in Surrey including those who work in Housing and those working for housing associations should be trained to be able to identify and support the health and wellbeing of their clients through signposting and/or brief advice (for example Making Every Contact Count). This may include awareness training in relation to particular conditions such as autism and drug and alcohol dependences which will enable those professionals to interact with people more effectively.

19. Public Health and Adult and Children's Social Care should work more closely with housing teams and with housing associations, including those in districts and boroughs to identify opportunities to achieve joint goals in improving residents' health and wellbeing.

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