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NEWS

Phone app to be used to prevent homelessness in Leicester as part of plans to tackle issue

The app is set to go live this month



By [Amy Orton](#) Local Democracy Reporter

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A mobile phone app to prevent people becoming homeless is one of nine proposals outlined by **Leicester City Council** in their latest five year homelessness strategy.

The app will offer tailored support and guidance to prevent people becoming homeless and will be live from May.

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It will be the first of its kind in the country and has been developed in partnership with all of **Leicestershire's district councils** and Rutland Council.

The 2018-2023 strategy, released this week, says the council will focus on issues including homelessness prevention, improving access to accommodation based homelessness services, and helping families find private or social accommodation rather than temporary housing.

It also aims to maintain the amount of accommodation on offer to offenders, working with other organisations to provide accommodation to young people, increasing the options available to homeless individuals and offering more settled solutions, providing a targeted consistent approach to reduce rough sleeping and repeat homelessness and reviewing floating support services and day centres.

A strong emphasis will be placed on helping people at risk of becoming homeless. The app will be one tool used by the authority.

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Anonymous person using a phone (Image: demaerre)

Housing options staff will also develop personalised housing plans with those at risk which will set out actions for individuals and council staff to take to help prevent homelessness.

Since 2014/15 there has been a year-on-year increase in the number of households approaching the council for assistance when they are homeless or at risk of homelessness. From 2015/16 to 2016/17 interactions increased by 30 per cent.

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The council was approached by 3,739 households for assistance when they were homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2016/17 - 89 per cent of the households were prevented from becoming homeless after seeking help.

Nearly half of all requests for assistance saw people placed in temporary accommodation. However, a third of people who wanted to be placed in temporary accommodation had to be turned down because there were no vacancies.

Councillor Andy Connelly, assistant city mayor for housing, said: "Homelessness in modern Britain is not acceptable. Leicester City Council is committed to preventing homelessness and helping people find suitable housing that meets their needs.

"This strategy reinforces our commitment to preventing homelessness rather than dealing with households at the point of crisis.

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Beggar warming himself by a hot tea

"The roles of our partners are critical and we recognise all their work in providing accommodation, supporting residents and sustaining tenancies; it is with our partners that we have managed to achieve the success we have.

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At the time the council wrote the strategy, it said it had invested approximately £5.6m a year in housing-related services for people who are homeless and threatened with homelessness.


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