

Council's Housing team helps prevent homelessness

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COPELAND Council's Housing team prevented 143 households from becoming homeless in the last year, new figures reveal.

More than 500 people sought the council's advice on housing matters in 2018/19, and the team also helped secure alternative accommodation for 184 individuals or families who had to leave their homes.

The Housing team works every day with individuals, families, support agencies and landlords to prevent people from having to leave their homes, and helps to find alternative accommodation for those that do have to leave.

Copeland Council goes over and above the statutory homeless service it is required to provide under housing legislation, offering additional discretionary services and specialist support, such as for those experiencing domestic abuse.

One of the main reasons for under-24s becoming homeless is being asked to leave the family home by parents when their relationship has broken down. The council mediates with the parents and other family members, offering specialist support and linking them in with other agencies to provide back-up and help the family work on the relationship breakdown.

Another reason for potential homelessness is threat of eviction due to breaches of tenancy. The council works with landlords to negotiate tenancy breaches, such as high levels of rent arrears, and to put payment plans in place. It also works with voluntary sector partners to help people access the practical help and support they need to manage their tenancies better, for example, benefits advice and debt management.

If the council cannot prevent someone having to leave their home, it helps people with choice-based lettings for social housing and matches people in need of accommodation with private sector landlords and helps them with rent deposits.

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, said: "We pride ourselves on our homeless prevention work, putting measures in place wherever we can to prevent people becoming homeless.

"The most common causes of people facing the loss of a home include relationship breakdown, eviction for tenancy breaches and being asked to leave by family and friends.

"We focus on trying to help people resolve the causes of homelessness so that they do not find themselves in the same situation again.

"But because the causes of homelessness are so wide ranging, with a large number experiencing mental health issues, we work with external agencies and specialist providers to get people the right advice and support.

"If you are concerned and need help, please contact us on 01946 598300."

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