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Gloucester Council Launches Early Help on Homelessness

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Gloucester City Council has launched a new early intervention programme aimed at preventing homelessness before it becomes a crisis, shifting away from reactive

In a unanimous cabinet decision on 9 July 2025, Gloucester City Council approved a new framework called the Gloucester Offer to focus on preventing homelessness. The program focuses on stopping housing issues before they spiral into emergencies. Instead of waiting for residents to reach a breaking point, the council plans to expand on current efforts such

as financial assistance, landlord negotiation, and crisis prevention by offering tenancy mediation, home visits, and mental health referrals.

The city's plan includes a dedicated tenancy relations service that will provide advice and intervention for private renters and landlords facing conflict. This builds on existing efforts by the council to assist residents at risk of eviction by negotiating rent arrears and providing deposits or rent in advance. The new initiative introduces a proactive mediation service to help repair breakdowns between landlords and tenants, particularly single tenants and families vulnerable to housing instability.

Gloucester City Councillor Luke Shervey, a Liberal Democrat representing Longlevens and with a background in housing, described the move as a "win-win" that benefits both the public and the city's finances. He emphasised that addressing the root causes of homelessness can reduce long-term costs and alleviate pressure on public services. "If we can catch people much sooner, we have a much better outcome for the resident," Shervey said. "It is also a cost-saving at the end of the day, but actually, we will be tackling the root cause."

Shervey added that people experiencing homelessness often face compounded issues such as mental health challenges, family breakdown, or financial hardship. The Gloucester Offer will take a holistic approach by connecting individuals with trauma counselling, cost-of-living assistance, and medical or social care services.

The programme is supported by a one-time funding boost of £550,000 from the central government, which Shervey said he intends to use wisely to make long-term improvements. "We're no longer a closed door," he said. "We want to be open. We want people to come to us when they need help and know that they won't be turned away."

Shervey acknowledged recent criticism over limited access to housing support and confirmed plans are underway to make the reception at The Gateway building more accessible to the public. The closure of the reception at The Gateway building in recent years created barriers for those seeking help, which the council now aims to remove.

The shift from crisis response to early intervention marks a significant change in tone and policy. In contrast to the bureaucratic approach that has frustrated many residents, the Gloucester Offer focuses on practical solutions before families end up on the street. At a time when other councils are slow to adapt, Gloucester's strategy could serve as a model

for other local authorities seeking a more proactive and compassionate way to address homelessness without relying solely on costly crisis responses.

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