

## NEEDS ANALYSIS RE. HOMELESS PEOPLE/ROUGH SLEEPERS

### SUMMARY OF NEEDS:

Commissioned research highlighted unmet need in relation to accommodation and floating support. Providers reported high demand for floating and accommodation based support which could not be met by current services. Dominant causes of homelessness in Plymouth were young people being excluded from home by their parents, loss of assured shorthold tenancy, and domestic violence – with these three factors together accounting for 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all cases of homelessness.

Difficulties in accurately gauging level of need were emphasised – with no systematic and consistent recording of housing support needs, and double counting an inevitability. More research is needed to accurately plan and quantify service need.

### 1. The scale of potential need in Plymouth

#### (a) Numbers of people making homeless applications in Plymouth:

	2002-2003	2003-2004
<b>Total number of homeless applications received</b>	2230	1927
<b>Numbers to whom the local authority had a duty to house.</b>	1335 (60%)	977 (51%)
<b>Numbers not accepted as being 'homeless' and who had to seek alternative accommodation.</b>	895 (40%)	950 (49%)

Plymouth's levels of homelessness applications, along with the proportion of those applications accepted onto the social housing register have fallen over this time period. Last year (2003-2004), of 599 lettings by PCC, 111 (about 20%) were to statutory or non statutory homeless applicants. The equivalent figures for housing associations in the city vary between associations but overall are likely to be much lower. All associations must have lettings agreements with the local authority to enable it to meet its strategic housing needs.

- (b) **Hidden homelessness:** The figures provided by the local authority only show the number of those presenting as homeless, and therefore do not include the hidden population of homeless people who do not make a homeless approach. Sofa surfing, staying with friends living with extended family members or rough sleeping are thought by most professional agencies working with the homeless to be treble the number of those presenting as homeless people, a figure based on access to other services as detailed below.

Crisis research indicates that there are 380,000 'hidden homeless' in the UK living in squats, hostels, B&B or staying with friends or family.

There are no official figures for people not living in settled accommodation.

## Appendix 'B'

### (c) Referrals/accommodation at The Ship Hostel

Time frame	Numbers accommodated	Numbers refused access	Reasons people were refused access
2002-2003	301 (290 male, 11 female)	1,220 (1,100 male, 120 female).	Hostel full, service users needs too high, applicants under 18 years old, Asylum Seekers who were NASS responsibility.
2003-2004	316 (281 male, 35 female)	1,153	Hostel full, service users needs too high, applicants under age of 18, Asylum seekers.

Ex-offenders, prison leavers, vulnerable adults discharged from hospital as homeless, rough sleepers and individuals without a local connection to Plymouth (and therefore unable to register through Homeless Unit) comprise most of those accessing this service.

### (d) Referrals/accommodation to Shekinah Mission

A total of 150 service users were accommodated in the Shekinah Mission during the year 2003 to 2004, and 139 were accommodated in the period 2002 to 2003.

Destination of the 150 service users for year 2003-2004:	Number of service users
Moved into long-term hostels	27
Moved out of the area	13
Moved to private accommodation	25
Moved into Bed and Breakfast	4
Moved into supported accommodation	5
Left the service with no information about where going	51
Moved into dry houses	12
Went to prison (remand) or received custodial sentences	13

Therefore, for the period 2002 to 2004, 289 rough sleepers and homeless people were in need of accommodation, most of whom will not have been counted as homeless by the local authority.

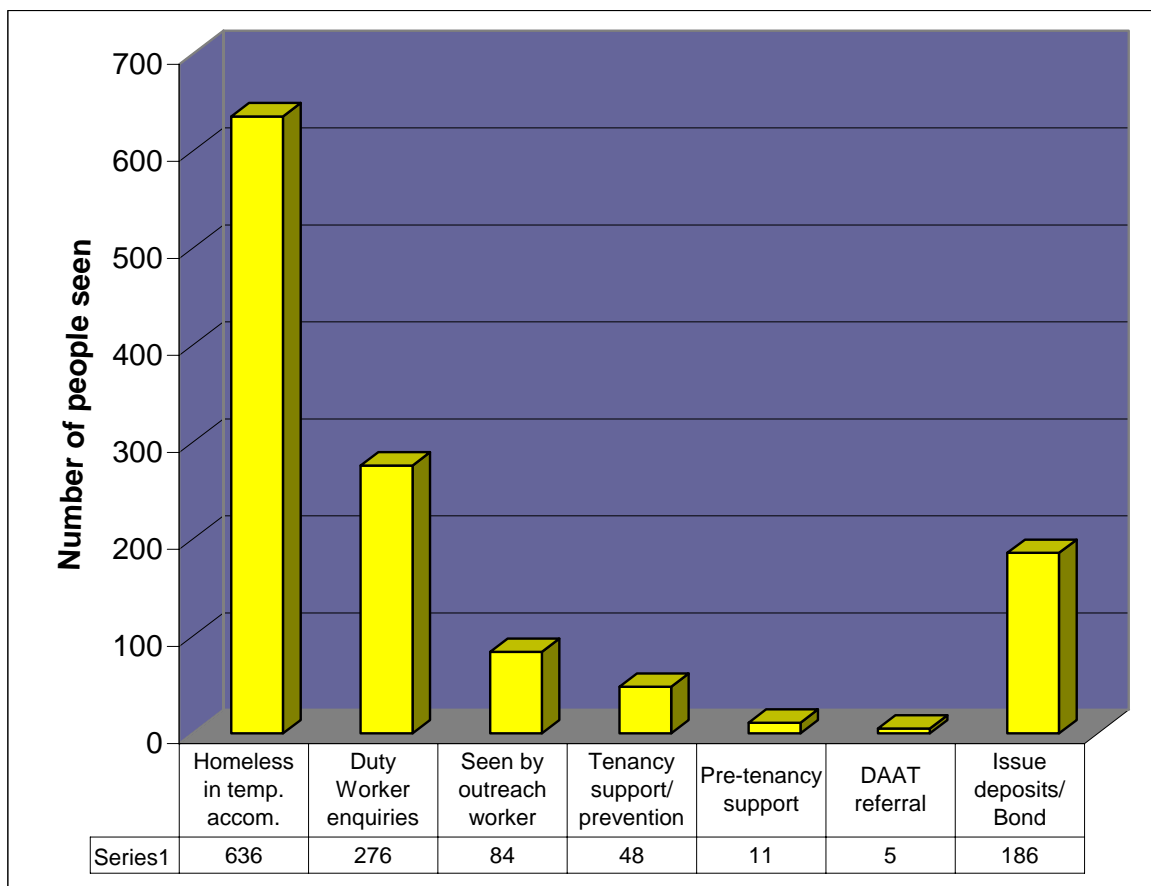
### (e) Referrals to Plymouth Access To Housing (PATH):

For the period 2003 to 2004 PATH had contact with 1,060 new clients (this figure does not include repeat visits or contacts from the same service user).

**Of this total 216 were Probation clients.**

The reasons for referral are charted below:

Appendix 'R'



PATH provide a single person's floating support service, homeless prevention, an advocacy and outreach service, a bond scheme and pre-tenancy support service to those in danger of losing their accommodation, homeless people and rough sleepers. They state that few of the 1,060 service users seen during this period will have had contact with the local authority and would therefore not be counted as homeless people. They state that their service users are almost exclusively single people.

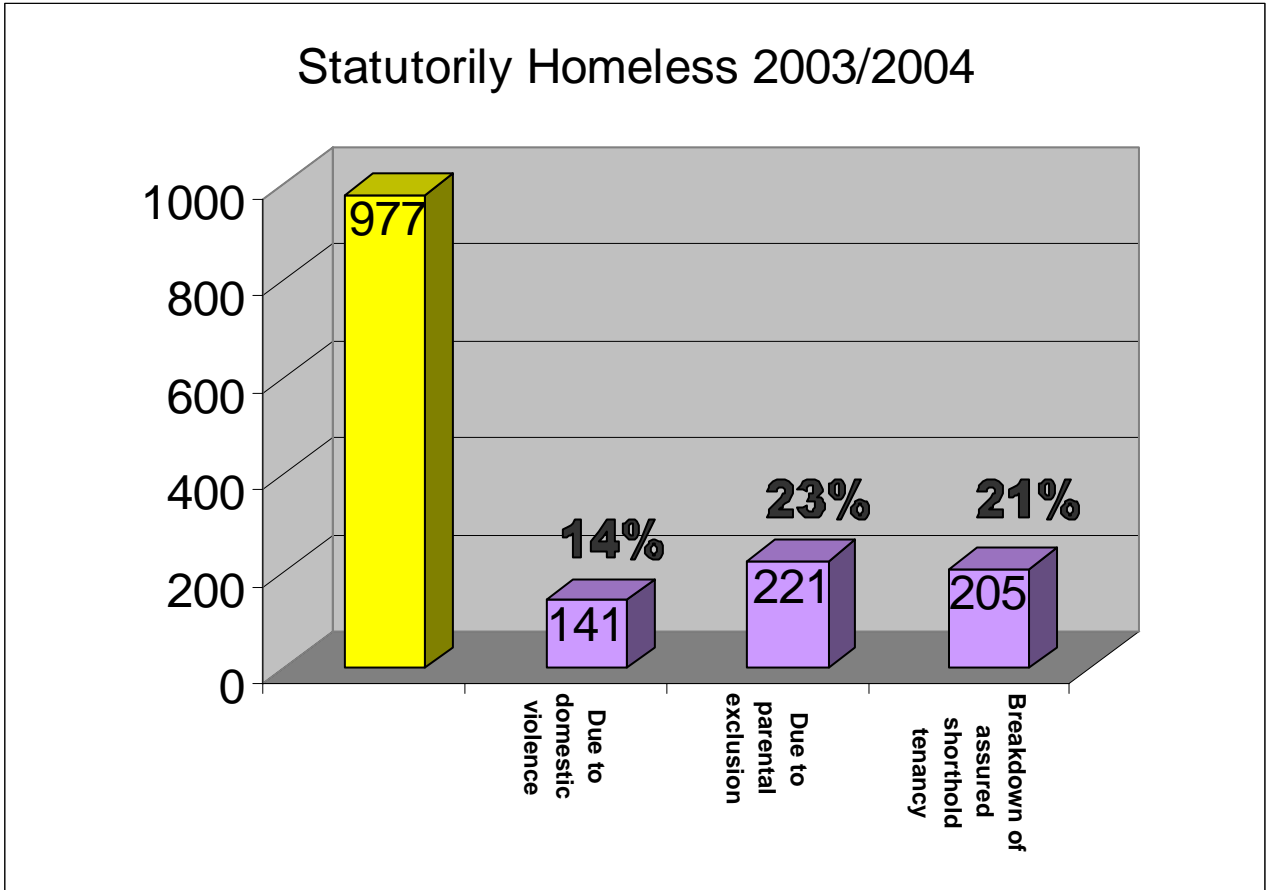
- (f) **Regional levels of homelessness rising:** Plymouth trends do not follow those on a regional basis, where levels of homelessness are increasing (an increase of 43% since 1997, according to the South West Observatory State of the South West report 2004).
- (g) **Levels of rough sleeping:** Rough Sleeping Estimates in England: June-July 2004 estimated that 504 people were sleeping rough in England in June 2004, of whom 44 were in the South West.

Local estimates from providers and fieldworkers vary, but are thought to be less than 10. However Services for Vulnerable Adults in the South West research, 2004 (Government Office South West) expressed concerns that the national figure has been underestimated.

Rough sleepers are known to have poor access to health care services. **Professor Sian Griffiths, op.cit., 2002 – due to factors such as opening times, appointment procedures, location and discrimination, and strong financial disincentives for GPs to register rough sleepers.**

**2. Causes of homelessness in Plymouth.**

**Why do people present to the Homeless Unit?** The three top reasons why people make homeless approaches are presented in the chart and further detailed in the table below.



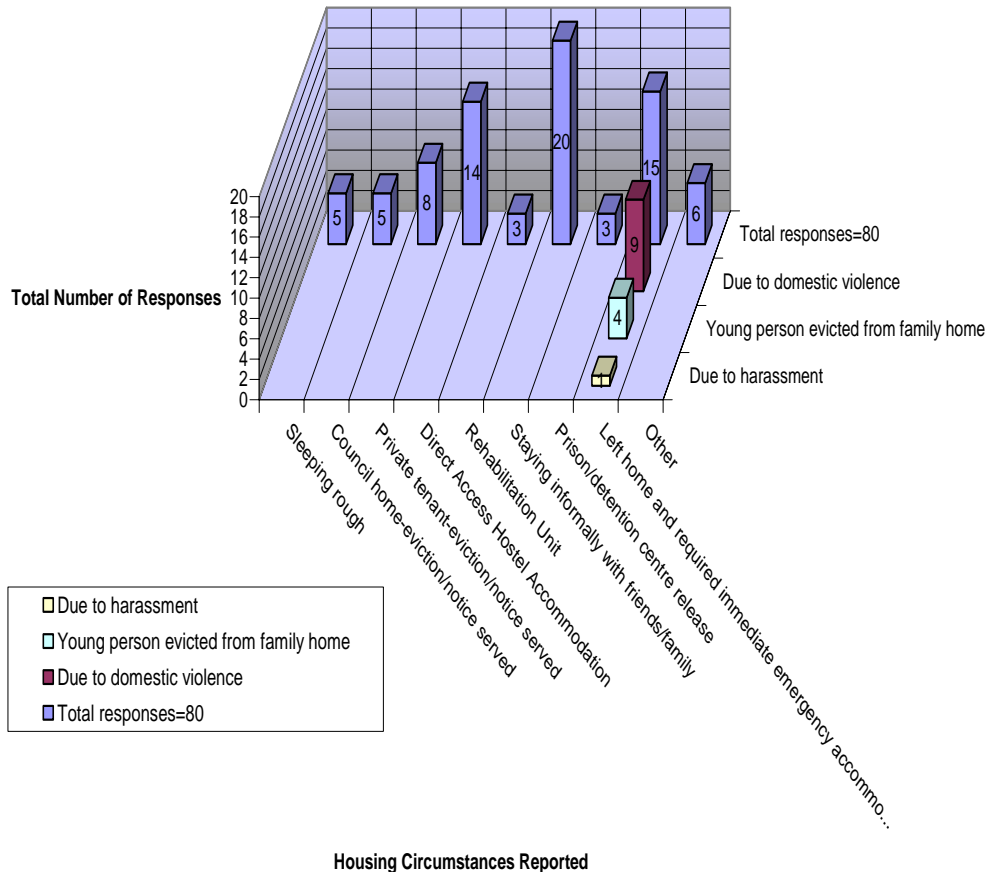
Reason cited for presenting to PCC as homeless	2002-2003	2003-2004
Young people excluded from home by their parents	302	221
Loss of assured shorthold tenancies	341	205
Domestic violence	165	141
<b>Total homeless approaches</b>	<b>2230</b>	<b>1927</b>

**Local research undertaken regarding circumstances of those who present to the homeless unit:** A sample of 80 service users who had approached the Homeless Unit were asked what their housing circumstances were at the time of their first approach. The bar chart below again reiterates the prevalence of domestic violence, parental

## Appendix 'B'

exclusion of young people, and private tenant evictions as dominant causes of homelessness. In addition, it highlights that, judging by the numbers of people who stayed informally with family or friends, slept rough, or in a direct access homeless hostel, a number of individuals who were in fact homeless, were 'hidden' from any formal recording prior to their approach. Activ8 2004 'Advice and Guidance Services re. homelessness'.

**Housing Situation at Time of First Contact with P.C.C. Homeless Services**



## More Than A Roof: A Report Into Tackling Homelessness:

Identified groups that were vulnerable to homelessness, and the prevalence of particular factors in causing homelessness.

- People moving in and out of 'institutions' are vulnerable to homelessness – people leaving prisons, hospitals, psychiatric placements, as well as young people leaving care, are vulnerable to social exclusion which can lead to homelessness.
- Local authorities and other agencies report an increasingly large group of families who are very difficult to help within existing structures. They constantly move in and out of homelessness, may be involved with social services, in violent domestic situations, be financially poor or in debt.

## Appendix 'B'

### Recorded 'triggers' for homelessness – nationwide figures 2000/1

- Parents no longer able to accommodate – 17%
- Friends no longer able to accommodate – 14%
- Violent relationship breakdown – 16%
- Non violent relationship breakdown – 7%
- Mortgage arrears – 3%
- Rent arrears – 3%
- End of assured short hold tenancy – 15%
- Loss of other rented/tied accommodation – 8%
- Other reasons – 17%

### Future trends of homelessness

- There has been an upward trend in the number of households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, with increases in each year since 1997/98.
- The number of people living in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under the homelessness legislation has also increased each year since the end of 1996.
- The upward trend in the number of single person or one parent family households will increase the pressure on housing supply and could lead to an increase in the number of households who apply for local authority assistance – although this could be counteracted by stable economic growth enabling people to afford their own home or rent privately.

### How many people are made homeless by evictions from Local Authority accommodation?

	2002-2003	2003-2004
Local Authority evictions	158	125

Local research (Services for Vulnerable Adults in the South West' GOSW 2004). highlighted a concern that Local Authority evictions are made without investigating reasons or support needs:

“A 73 year old man ran up two years of rent arrears when his mother died. He did not know that he had to claim housing benefit. He was invited into the Council’s housing office but didn’t go. No-one visited him at home”.

They also highlighted significant literacy issues that prevent people (through embarrassment) from seeking support to deal with welfare rights claims etc. that culminate in rent arrears and the potential of eviction.

The cost of Local Authority evictions is detailed at the end of this document.

## Appendix 'B'

### Types of enquiries made to Plymouth Housing Advice Service:

Enquiries regarding:	Apr-March 2002/03	Apr-March 2003/04	Total for period
Court proceedings	139	88	227
Valid notice of eviction by landlord	159	88	247
Illegal eviction	104	38	142
Threat of homelessness	29	272	301
Homelessness	325	147	472
Domestic violence	40	41	81
Relationship breakdown	50	115	165
Seeking accommodation	154	336	490
Seeking social housing	79	59	138
Rent arrears	57	91	148
No deposit for private rented sector	42	11	53
Other	187	99	286

Enquiries show that many of the enquiries made of the Housing Advice Service directly relate to some of the key causes of homelessness – and particularly high rates of enquiries are noted in relation to evictions/court proceedings being taken, unspecified ‘threat’ of homelessness, rent arrears, and domestic violence – which correlate closely with local authorities’ homeless statistics on why people present as homeless.

#### **Housing Association CORE data: re. lettings during period April 2003 to March 2004.**

CORE data supports to some extent the need for supported housing amongst those who have been rough sleeping, were asked to leave home, or who have been rehoused from short-stay hostels.

Amount of lets to homeless people: 14% (74) to statutorily homeless, and 5% (28) to non-statutorily homeless.

Reason for occupants requiring supported housing accommodation: Rough sleepers 4% (11); required/asked to leave home 8% (22); rehoused from short-stay hostel 5% (13).

Client groups requiring supported housing accommodation: Single/homeless in need of support 21% (57)

### 3. The link between crime, drugs and homelessness.

#### **(a) Drugs:**

The projected number of people accessing community drug treatment in Plymouth during 2004 to 2005 is estimated to be 810 – of this number 270 (33%) will have accommodation problems.

The projected numbers of people expected to access residential treatment from Plymouth between 2004 and 2005 is 100 – and of these 75 (75%) are projected to have accommodation problems.

## Appendix 'B'

### (b) Crime:

When it comes to crime everyone has a view on what motivates people to commit it, however there is a consensus that a small core of people commit 50% of all crime. Persistent offenders are defined as high drug users, intoxicated or have lifestyle problems. Motivation behind this offending is linked to the need to steal money to purchase illegal drugs or alcohol. It also relates to social deprivation, poor education, dysfunctional family and homelessness (Crime and Disorder Audit 2004: 24).

Plymouth's Crime and Disorder Audit (2004) show 30% of prison leavers are discharged without a home to which they can return. There is an assumption that this population had a home before they were convicted and imprisoned (Crime and Disorder Audit 2004: 24).

### 4. Commissioned research regarding needs:

#### EKOS PLYMOUTH VULNERABLE GROUPS HOUSING RESEARCH

A total of 185 different service addresses were contacted, across client groups, and results were statistically modified in order to represent Plymouth in totality – though where organisations not contacted offered unique service provision, the findings will not reflect their services.

(Caretime Services; PATH; Plymouth Homeside Society; Salvation Army; Scott Homes Ltd; Shekinah; The Ship provided information).

Organisations reported that 362 homeless/rough sleepers approached their services for support (7% of total clients).

Total number of addresses/points of service available to each vulnerable group = 12 (6%) for homeless/rough sleepers.

Client type	No. of clients	Support required	Type of support where stated
Homeless	362	No – Zero Low – 120 Medium – 212 High – 30 N/K - 0	Floating 116 Visiting 8 Warden 50 Perip. Warden 0 Alarm/on call system 26 D/t staff/emergency call out 56 24 hr. cover with sleeping staff 0 24 hr. cover waking night staff 143 Live in landlady/lord 34 Anything else 0 (including security, outreach, day care and occasional sleep-overs)

## Appendix 'B'

Reported shortfall in provision of accommodation for people who have been homeless or a rough sleeper = 7

Shortfall also reported in relation to the provision of housing related support for people who have been homeless or a rough sleeper: No client specific data is available, however 38% of addresses said there was insufficient quantity, 7% said there was insufficient quality, and 5% said it was a combination of this factor. 6% said housing support was not enough to meet needs for another reason, and 3% couldn't say why.

### ACTIV8 PROVIDER SURVEY – JANUARY 2004.

Service	Referrals bt. April-September '03	Take up in the time period	Unmet Need	Waiting list held?	Perception of Demand
The Ship	281	77	204	No	"Always high demand" – time period represents normal level of demand.
Alma Road	107	-	-	9	"Very high demand – need to increase floating support".
Anwyl Close	47	18	29	5	"High demand"
Plymouth House	104	19	85	No	"High demand".
PATH – floating	46	46	Nil	No	Scheme just reaching capacity at time of survey.
PATH – Refugee tenancy support	5	5	Nil	No	Demand variable according to dispersal policy and numbers of asylum seekers achieving refugee status.
Devonport House	265	22	243	5	Perception of very high demand with a lot of unmet need.
Devonport House floating support	Nil	Nil	11	Nil	Perception of high demand – supporting 15 clients but SP only pay for 4.
Shekinah Mission	75	75	-	4	Average waiting list is 14 – perception of high demand with need for another 4 male beds.
Clearsprings	98	91	7	No	Perception of high demand generally – but only those referred from homeless unit are eligible due to contracting arrangements.
Seaton Avenue	29	3	26	No	High demand – rarely have a vacancy.
Plymouth Housing (floating)	3	3	Nil	3	Perception of high demand.

THE SUPPORT NEEDS OF HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS, NOVEMBER 2003,  
ODPM RESEARCH.

1. **Complex/multiple needs of single homeless people:** Research confirmed that many of those who apply to local authorities also have a wide range of needs including mental ill health, substance abuse, physical illness, histories of family problems and abuse, educational problems, histories of institutional care and difficulties in sustaining accommodation.
2. **Homeless families:** Research indicated that 70 to 80% of homeless families had support needs – however proportions may be lower in areas of accommodation shortage (evidence from Plymouth) as more people without needs are likely to go through the homeless route in order to obtain housing rather than be housed from the waiting list.

3. **Wide ranging needs of homeless people:**

Vulnerable young parents with little or no social support networks.

Women made homeless by domestic violence with mental health and emotional problems and often experiencing repeat homelessness (ODPM 2002b – domestic violence is a major cause of repeat homelessness and can sometimes result from women returning to violent partners or entering a new abusive relationship – research indicated that at least 1 in 5 women who left refuges in 97/8 returned to their abusive partners).

Neighbour disputes and victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

Drug and alcohol problems.

Mental health problems.

Physical health problems.

Poverty and debt.

Unemployment.

Literacy and educational difficulties.

Childrens behavioural and educational difficulties.

Childhood histories of abuse and Local Authority care among parents in homeless families.

A history of unsettled accommodation and repeat homelessness (due to lack of understanding of rights and responsibilities of tenants, lack of practical skills

## Appendix 'B'

in setting up a home, rent and mortgage arrears and other financial problems, problems with neighbours (including anti-social behaviour), racial/other harassment.

Multiple needs combining 2 or more of the above.

### Teenage Pregnancy Unit (Research by Stanier, 2002):

30% of 15-16 year olds and about half of 17-18 year olds don't stay at home during/following their pregnancy.

## 5. Consultation with service users and other stakeholders about needs:

### a. SERVICE USER VIEWS:

#### Salvation Army – Consultation Exercise 11.11.04

#### ISSUES RAISED:

- **Lack of accommodation:** Broad agreement regarding the lack of availability of accommodation - "I'm not sure there is enough out there e.g. flats to go on to".
- **Need for flexible outreach support:** Group members felt that support when they moved out from the Salvation Army would be important, and needed to be flexible, dependent on individual circumstances "Some people will need support every day and some people will need hardly any".
- **Need for practical support:** With getting furniture, "help with learning how to do things", "help to get employment".
- **Need for information:** Group members requested a booklet that explains "all the things you don't know and where to get answers or help".
- **What support was important to the group:** Information about benefits, finding out about work.

#### Prioritisation Exercise

**Top priority (3 stickers)** = Help to get support from other agencies; the ability to call for help day or night.

**2 Stickers** = Help to find other accommodation.

**1 sticker** = Booklet to direct to main sources of support; emotional support and non specialist counselling; support in finding a job; help to claim benefits and manage personal finances; help to find appropriate health/treatment services; help/advice to feel safe or secure; befriender or peer support; advice/support on repair work or home improvement work; help to set up or maintain a home or tenancy.

## Appendix 'B'

### **b. SERVICE PROVIDER VIEWS:**

#### **Provider Conference 8.12.04**

1. Concerned regarding level of sampling within EKOS survey, which was felt to be poor leading to underestimation of level of need.
2. There is a shortage of housing where there is no added vulnerability, i.e. homelessness is the presenting problem.
3. Additionally there was a shortage of housing where there is a vulnerability.
4. More move on accommodation was felt to be needed – with good quality support attached, and this is particularly true of people with addictions (others agreed this was true of most vulnerable group).
5. Stated that there was a need for some sort of common assessment tool across the city, which doesn't just address accommodation need, but is more holistic. Build on the current model shared by Shekinah, PATH, SHIP etc. by increasing the number of services involved and involving other client groups. This could lead to better signposting, engaging around need and ultimately lead to more successful outcomes.
6. Move on accommodation should be of some basic standard, not very poor, with depressing environment and further reinforcement of failure.
7. Services need to work in a more collaborative and co-operative way – Supporting People could help with this.
8. Shared assessment information to prevent a service user who has been helped by other agencies having to provide all information again.
9. Liaison between housing and other agencies about potential evictions needs to be much more efficient. It is really difficult if a support agency is only asked to help 3 days before a crisis e.g. Tenancy rescue service. Prevention needs to be earlier. Housing should pay to save the tenancy and Supporting People should come along afterwards to work towards future prevention of this occurring again.
10. Work needs doing to further break down the statutory homeless statistics – especially around local connection.
11. Need identified for a support worker around addictions to be accessed by providers of homeless services – may not be Supporting People eligible but would lead to better quality services.
12. Private rented sector is not very accessible for homeless people – work needs to be done to improve this situation.
13. Need for supported housing for women (although female service users at Anwyl Close prefer not to be segregated).

### **(c) OTHER STAKEHOLDER VIEWS:**

#### **Homeless Prevention stakeholder group 17.12.04**

#### **Priority needs highlighted as:**

## Appendix 'B'

1. Hidden demand for accommodation & support for homeless women due to current poor data collection and lack of appropriate services. Perceived need for interim accommodation for women only.
2. More floating support needed. This should be used to follow on from more intensive support delivered in accommodation based services, allowing quicker move-on- part of a stepped approach to support for homeless people and those with drug and alcohol problems.
3. Floating support is vital as it links to the need for drug & alcohol service users' desire to be in general needs housing as soon as possible (social inclusion). People's needs change over time but this doesn't necessarily mean they need to move.
4. Need to look at how SP funded floating support links to other organisations to maximise the cost benefits- may include joint commissioning.
5. Floating support services need to be clear on the needs they are set up to meet with clarity around boundaries and desired outputs. There is a need to be clear on the necessary competencies to run each type of service. The particular service model will vary- e.g. intensive verses lower level/ longer-term. Need to raise the credibility of support workers within the statutory agencies.
6. Supporting People has a strategic role in helping to free up suitable accommodation. This includes some leadership and influencing- e.g: Impacting Housing's priorities around stock options & housing strategy  
Improvement of processes around homelessness.
7. There needs to be a multi-agency approach to dealing with the group of service users (estimated as a few hundred people) who revolve around the services but don't reach independence. This involves accurate holistic needs assessment & service delivery. Plans for a SP stakeholder group for homelessness, drug and alcohol & ex-offenders to influence delivery of SP services on a quarterly basis. Should also be a forum for service users.

### **Summary of development priorities**

- Interim accommodation for women only
- Floating support
- A range of stepped support leading to full independence

## Appendix 'B'

Appendix 'B'

Appendix 'A' – the cost of evictions from Local Authority accommodation.

**Evictions from local authority accommodation**  
**2002/2003 to 2004/2005**

	ARREARS ACCOUNT		CLEAR ACCOUNT		CREDIT ACCOUNT			
Year	No of Tenancies	Last Balance	No of Tenancies	Last Balance	No of Tenancies	Last Balance	Total No of Tenancy	Total Sum of Last Balance
2002-2003	91	£179,407.51	61	£0.00	1	-£2.83	153	£179,404.68
2003-2004	106	£192,048.87	15	£0.00			121	£192,048.87
2004-2005	27	£53,372.65					27	£53,372.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>£424,829.03</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-£2.83</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>£424,826.20</b>

Appendix 'B'

**Evictions from local authority accommodation & Court Costs**  
**2002/03 current**

**No of Evictions by Bedroom size (2002/03 onwards)**

Year	Beds					Grand Total
	0	1	2	3	4	
2002/03	16	70	40	29	3	158
2003/04	15	43	39	26	2	125
2004/05 (To date)	3	13	5	6		27
Grand Total	34	126	84	61	5	310

**Court Costs Raised By Value and tenancies (2002/03 onwards)**

Year	Value	No of Tenants
2002/03	-£109,001.33	679
2003/04	-£98,846.30	673
2004/05 (To Date)	-£28,282.50	175
Grand Total	-£236,130.13	1527