

# Plymouth's Strategy for Tackling Homelessness

2008 - 2011



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## Section 1: Context and environment:

### Introduction:

**Since 2003, Plymouth City Council has transformed the way in which homelessness is tackled in the City** and has made huge progress, with its partners, in preventing homelessness, assisting tenancy sustainment, reducing the council's use of temporary accommodation, minimising the incidence of rough sleeping, and removing barriers to the private rented sector.

With its emphasis on early intervention and partnership working, Plymouth's fresh approach to homelessness provides service users with positive outcomes and settled housing solutions, and it has benefited from increased innovation, continuous improvement and an appetite for success.

By introducing new job roles and staffing structures, facilitating the co-location of services and effecting rapid and widespread cultural change, the Council has encouraged its staff and partners to work more effectively and embrace new and more innovative ways of preventing homelessness and tackling the causes of homelessness.

The Council's Housing Management service is making progress towards becoming a tenancy sustainment service and has entered into a match-funding arrangement with Money Advice Plymouth, a voluntary sector partner that is now co-located with Housing Officers in the local Area Housing Offices.

As well as adopting the good practice of others (such as the Families Intervention Project, the Sanctuary Scheme and the Street Outreach Team), Plymouth has developed its own good practice, including the Sustainable Independence Project for homeless 16 & 17 year olds, the Gateway accommodation pilot for prison leavers, the EMIF-funded Devon Inclusive Housing Project for BME households, Homeless Link's pilot Move-on Project, and the way in which we are involving service users in reviewing, monitoring and re-modelling services.

Plymouth's voluntary sector has played a key role – and the Shekinah Mission is a national centre of excellence, providing homeless people with the skills, training, confidence and opportunities to get back into work, and is at the heart of the City's plans to increase the number of homeless people entering training and employment.

Our Supporting People programme has been assessed as one of the best in the country and has played a pivotal role in helping the Council and its partners to adopt new ways of working that are focused on effective needs assessment, support planning and resettlement.

With an emphasis on tenancy sustainment and the prevention of homelessness, Plymouth's Homelessness Strategy complements a wide range of other strategies such as:

- Plymouth Housing Strategy
- Healthy Plymouth
- Plymouth's Multi-disciplinary Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan
- All Our Futures – Plymouth's Strategy for the Over 50s
- Plymouth's Corporate Plan and LAA Performance Indicator set.
- Children's Plan
- Adult Social Care Plans

- Choice Based Lettings and social housing allocations.
- Social Inclusion Unit's Equality Scheme
- Supporting People 5 Year Strategy and re-procurement of service provision.

## DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY – THE NATIONAL CONTEXT:

**The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on Local Authorities** to review homelessness and causes locally, and to develop a strategy to address the findings of the review.

The Homelessness Strategy is required to address:

- The prevention of homelessness.
- Ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or may become homeless.
- Ensuring there is appropriate support for people who are or who may become homeless – or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.
- Promoting a cultural change so that homelessness is viewed in a wider context than just lack of accommodation.

The Government's '**Sustainable Communities, Settled Homes, Changing Lives**' Strategy further supported an innovative approach to tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness and set targets to reduce the use of insecure temporary accommodation by half by the year 2010.

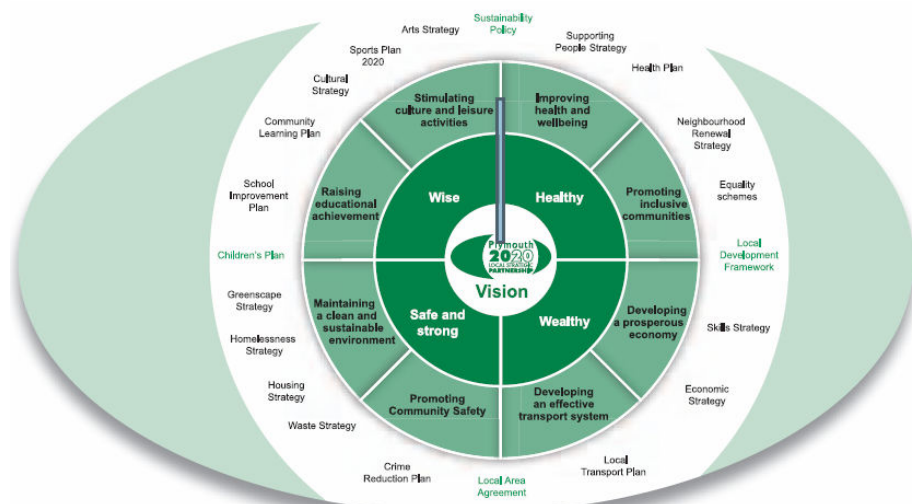
This is Plymouth's second Homelessness Strategy, and it re-affirms our commitment to responding to the challenges set by Central government by continuously improving in order to prevent and alleviate homelessness in all its forms.

## DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY – THE LOCAL CONTEXT:

### Plymouth has a Local Strategic Partnership called Plymouth 2020.

Based firmly on the principle that many issues facing the city and its community today can only be tackled and resolved if all parts of the community work together, the Plymouth 2020 Partnership brings together many organisations and groups that are involved in making decisions that affect the future well-being of the people of Plymouth. The voluntary, community, business and public sectors are all represented within Plymouth 2020 Partnership.

The Partnership's aims and objectives are contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out the key priorities for change, and actions to address them. The below diagram identifies Plymouth's vision which sets the context for actions that will influence activity in the city, and some of the individual strategies that will help to make this vision a reality.



The Plymouth 2020 vision places Homelessness and Housing within the 'Maintaining a Clean and Sustainable Environment'

priority area, towards building Safe and Strong communities. However, the impact of the Homelessness Strategy also links to, and underpins a number of other objectives within the Local Area Agreement (LAA), as highlighted below.

### Performance Indicators relevant to Homelessness within the LAA

Specific Homelessness Targets		
<b>NI 156 No. of Households living in temporary accommodation</b>		
Relevant to Homelessness		
<b>NI 141 Vulnerable people achieving independent living</b>	<b>NI142 Vulnerable people maintaining independent living</b>	
Resolution of homelessness plays a key role		
<b>NI143 Offenders living in settled accommodation</b>	<b>NI145 Learning disabled living in settled accommodation</b>	<b>NI149 Mental Health living in settled accommodation</b>
<b>NI147 Care leavers living in settled accommodation</b>	<b>NI18;30 Reduced re-offending</b>	<b>NI132 Reduced repeat domestic violence incidents</b>
<b>NI138 Reduced drug-related offending</b>		<b>NI139 Reduced hospital admission for alcohol related harm.</b>

Senior Housing Officers are represented within the LAA forum and are working to establish Homelessness within the LAA framework. These links with national and local requirements have led to this Strategy being targeted towards the following objectives:

### Responding to National and Local Priorities –

#### Our Objectives:

Plymouth's Homelessness Strategy will respond to the national and local agenda in a holistic way, that takes a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling the key causes of homelessness by:

1. Focusing on preventing homelessness from occurring.
2. Promoting access to a range of housing options to those in housing need.
3. Looking beyond housing needs to the multiple needs of homeless households including health, education and support needs.
4. Working with partners to develop a coherent approach to preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness.

### More about the city of Plymouth:

Plymouth is a unitary authority that accounts for 5% of the South West's population. It is the third largest of the region's 45 unitary and district councils (only Bristol and South Gloucestershire are larger).



In mid year 2005 Plymouth's population was estimated to be 246,100. The Office for National Statistics figures published in 2006 showed that the Mid Year Population Estimate for Plymouth is **248,100** - an increase of 2,000.

The latest figures are estimates but have been based on sources including patient registers and school rolls as well as the electoral register and the registrar office.

Some of the key trends include

- The total population is set to rise 15.5% by 2026
- 1,370 new residents will arrive in the city as a result of international migration.
- Unlike other cities whose population shows an older profile, short term population forecasts predict greater increases in the population of under 19 year olds, and those aged between 45-64.
- However, longer-term population forecasts (to 2026) predict largest growing groups will be the 15 to 29, and 65+ year olds.

Plymouth is a city of stark contrasts, and is characterised by high concentrations of social deprivations. In the Indices of Deprivation 2004, Plymouth was ranked at 76 out of 354 local authorities in England, where 1 was the most deprived area and 354 the least deprived.

However, there are pockets of high-level deprivation, with 3 of Plymouth wards (St. Peters, Ham and Budshead) among the 10% most deprived in the UK.

### **Ethnic Minority Population:**

3.47% of the population are not White British. Plymouth's BME population is approximately 3968 – 1.65% of the total population.

### **Migrant workers:**

Anecdotal reports from Housing workers suggest that more people who have migrated from European succession states are requesting housing advice. However at the same time there is clear increasing trend of both homelessness applications and acceptances of A8 nationals since June 2005.

National methods of recording are currently unsatisfactory, however, and currently there is no bespoke data available locally to calculate numbers. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) is encouraging Local Authorities to use a range of administrative datasets as proxies including National Insurance registrations, Flag 4 (registrations with GPs) and the electoral role to name but a few.

There are considerable problems in relying on proxy data in that it only indicates when migrants arrive and a common feature of new migration patterns is the 'churn effect' where significant inward migration is offset partly or totally by outward migration adding to the complexity of calculating numbers

**The Local Government Association (LGA) has identified pressures on housing services as well as health, children's services, and community safety, but a detailed examination of the impact in Plymouth is not available.**

*(Source: Talking sense about migration and localities: numbers and impacts on public services, LGA Conference, September 2006).*

### **Employment:**

Plymouth's unemployment rate is currently 6.4% - meaning that approximately 7,500 people of working age are unemployed in the city. This is higher than both the regional (4%) and National (5.5%) average levels of unemployment.

(Figures taken from Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Summary Statistics for the period 2006/07).

Unemployment figures alone highlight the contrasts between different areas of the city. Over half of the unemployed people in the city live in just a quarter of its wards.

## Income:

Income is a core factor in the assessment of the scale of housing need and in determining affordability of the local housing market.

67.2% of Plymouth's households earn below the national average household income of £27,500. In addition, as the following table illustrates, Plymouth has lower than average levels of economic activity, high unemployment, and higher levels of people claiming key benefits.

	<b>Plymouth %</b>	<b>South West %</b>	<b>England %</b>
<b>Economic activity rate</b>	78.5	80.9	78.6
<b>Employment rate</b>	72.2	77.7	74.3
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	6.4	4.0	5.5
<b>People of working age claiming a key benefit.</b>	17	12	14
<b>Job seekers</b>	2	1	2
<b>Incapacity Benefit</b>	9	6	7

Low average incomes and high reliance on benefits mean that there is a very real affordability issue when it comes to housing.



*Housing costs are unaffordable for many Plymouth residents.*



### The causes of homelessness in Plymouth:

P1E statistics have highlighted that the main causes of homelessness have consistently been:

1. Parents/relatives/friends no longer willing/able to accommodate.
2. Loss of assured short-hold tenancy.
3. Domestic abuse

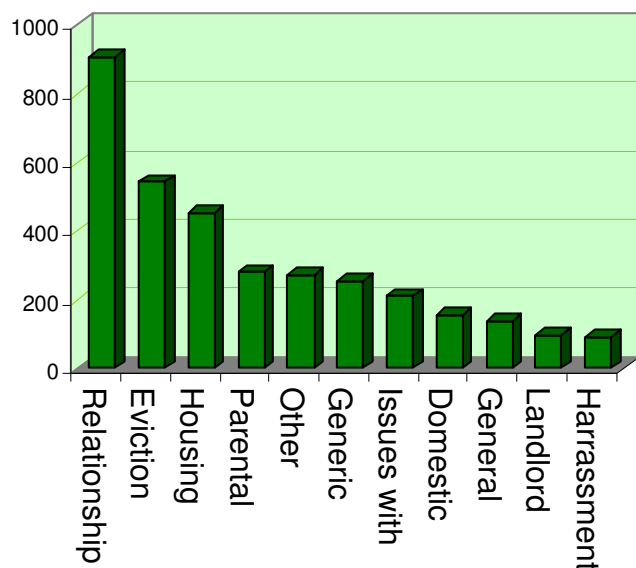
*NB The category 'relationship breakdown' combines totals for parents and others unwilling to continue to accommodate and relationship breakdown, which in Plymouth are often used to record similar sets of circumstances.*

Though these remain the main causes of homelessness, numbers have steadily fallen over the last three years (as shown in the following table). It should be noted that numbers presenting to Housing Advice with these issues remain high – with more effective homelessness prevention resulting in fewer homeless approaches being made.

Reason for homelessness	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Parents no longer willing/able to accommodate	170	164	94
Other relatives/friends not willing to accommodate	69	65	41
Non-violent relationship breakdown	39	42	30
Domestic abuse	83	86	36
Harassment	7	5	8
Mortgage arrears/repossession etc.	4	6	6
Rent arrears – local authority/other public sector	1	2	0
Rent arrears – RSL/HA	1	0	1
Rent arrears – private sector	8	6	6
Termination of assured short-hold tenancy	125	119	85
Required to leave NASS accommodation	12	5	3
In institution/care (incl. prison/hospital/LA care)	35	17	4
Other	82	52	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>347</b>

**Homelessness is successfully prevented for approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all those who approach the Local Authority for help:**

A total of 2229 people approached Local Authority Housing Advice services over the year 2006/07, and as the below chart illustrates, the key cause of housing issues was relationship breakdown – either between couples, or parents evicting their children.



Homelessness was prevented in 683 cases with homelessness prevention work most successful where:

- o There was a relationship breakdown or the person had been asked to leave.
- o Where proceedings to end a tenancy had been instigated.
- o Where there were affordability issues.

In by far the majority of cases, these people were supported to access the private rented sector – though there is still some difficulty in accessing appropriate private rented accommodation for families.

There is an array of preventative options existing in Plymouth:

Prevention Activity	In current operation?	Planned activity
Dedicated housing advice team with a housing options approach.	<b>Yes</b>	Introduce Customer Insight techniques to evaluate service.
Frontline homelessness prevention fund.	<b>Yes</b>	Staff training to achieve increased use.
Deposit guarantee/rent in advance schemes	<b>Yes</b>	Review uptake of schemes to ensure continued effectiveness.
Mediation scheme – friends and family exclusions.	<b>No</b>	Planned development for 2008.
Sanctuary type scheme for victims of domestic abuse.	<b>Yes</b>	Joint work to review uptake and use to ensure continued effectiveness.
Tenancy Support - sustainment	<b>Yes</b>	Need for increased capacity fed back to Supporting People team.
Tenancy support – resettlement/move on	<b>Yes</b>	“
Assisting ex-offenders	<b>Yes</b>	Supporting People re-procurement and review of Gateway proposed for 2008.

Money advice/benefit maximisation	<b>Yes</b>	Continue to monitor existing provision to maintain effectiveness.
Accredited landlords scheme.	<b>No</b>	No additional benefit would be gained in Plymouth at this time.
Facilitating access to private tenancies	<b>Yes</b>	Community Lettings Agency; Training to raise staff skills to facilitate this.
Using discretionary housing payments to prevent homelessness	<b>No</b>	Further exploration of use of DHP to prevent homelessness required.
Choice based lettings	<b>No</b>	CBL will be introduced in Plymouth in 2009.
Supported lodgings/'respite'/short term emergency accommodation.	<b>Some</b>	This will be reviewed and developed as part of the action plan.
Credit unions.	<b>Some</b>	Exploring loans for rent in advance.

In addition to Local Authority Housing Advice services, a range of other services in the city provide advice regarding housing options including:

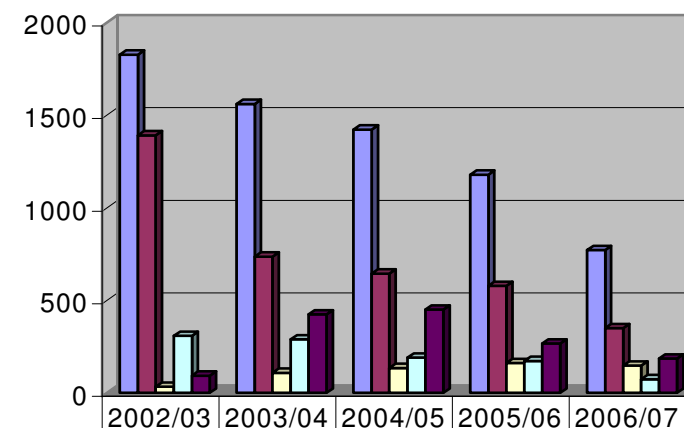
- Plymouth Offender Accommodation Gateway.
- Plymouth Access to Housing

As well as other rights based advice from organisations such as Shelter, CAB, Devon Law Centre and organisations representing black and ethnic minorities.

### As a result, levels of formal homelessness applications and acceptances have fallen:

Total formal homelessness approaches have steadily fallen since introduction of the preventative approaches required by the 2002 Act – with approaches falling by almost half since that time. As the below chart shows however, the proportion of approaches that are accepted has remained steady, with just under half of all approaches accepted on a year by year basis:

### Homelessness approaches and acceptances from 2002 – 2007



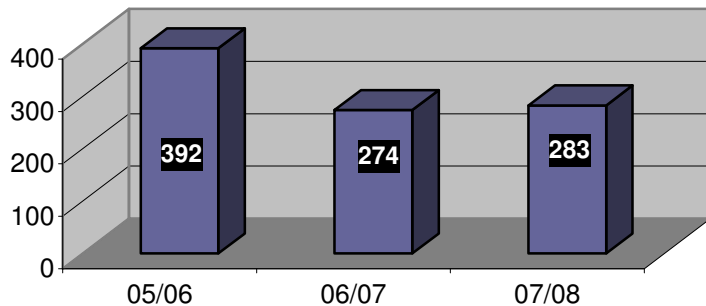
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Total Decisions	1827	1561	1422	1180	773
Accepted	1391	737	645	579	350
Intentional	34	109	135	161	148
Not Priority Need	309	290	191	173	74
Not Homeless	93	425	451	267	186

The fall in the rate of approaches reflects the success of Plymouth's homelessness prevention approach, with increased focus and resources directed towards helping people to maintain their current accommodation, or to explore a range of housing options.

The majority of decisions are reached on the basis of a person being 'not homeless' and this reflects the continuation of homelessness prevention work during the process of making a formal application – as many people are supported to explore appropriate housing options such as supported housing, or private rented accommodation. Negative decisions reached on a basis of intentionality are rising in Plymouth – and are above average both nationally, and with comparator authorities. Consultation with Stakeholders around this issue has highlighted some issues with developing a shared understanding of the basis of decision making by the Local Authority and a partnership approach to the Government's homelessness prevention agenda in an attempt to deal differently with people whose personal circumstances strongly suggest that an intentionally homeless finding is inevitable.

**A higher proportion of acceptances are based on priority need relating to households with children (or who are pregnant and expecting children).**

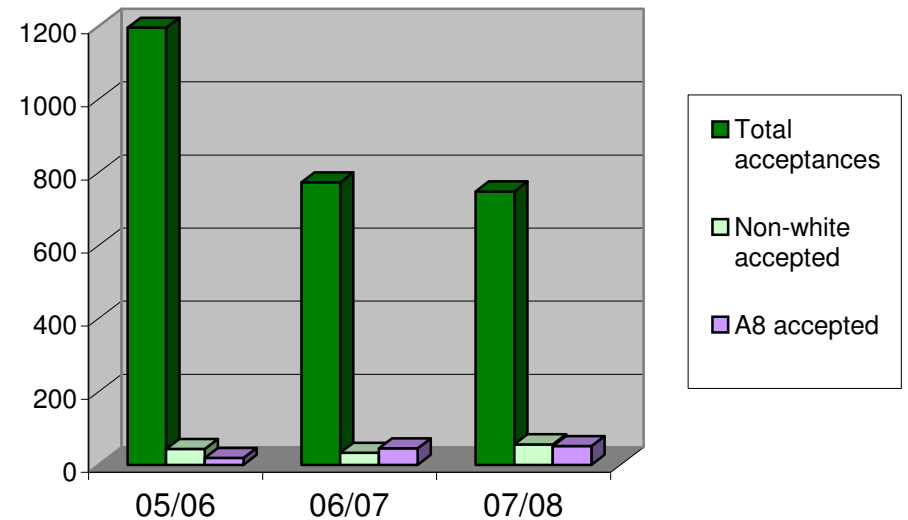
The number of people who have been accepted as Statutory Homeless since 2005 with a priority need based on having children, or expecting children is steadily rising after an initial fall, as illustrated in the chart below:



Though total acceptances are falling, homelessness acceptances based on families having a priority need due to having children, or expecting children are rising – from 33% in 2005/06 to 38% in 07/08.

**BME homelessness is higher than might be expected proportionally for the BME population of Plymouth.**

Only 1.2% of all those who approach housing advice were of BME background – below what might be expected proportionally from the BME population of 1.67% in Plymouth – but at the same time homelessness acceptances from non-white people in Plymouth have risen steadily since 2005, as the chart below shows:



Non-white homelessness acceptances as a proportion of applications has risen from 3.6% to 7.5% over the course of the last 3 years, and this is considerably above what might be expected as a proportion of the population.

Access issues in relation to housing advice and homelessness prevention issues are being addressed within the Devon Inclusive Housing Project, incorporated within this strategy's action planning.

### Accommodating those who are, or may become homeless

#### Meeting the government's target to reduce temporary accommodation use by 50% by 2010:

Plymouth City Council has been working to an action plan to meet the Government's temporary accommodation target by 2010 (with a baseline assessment from the end of December 2004, containing numerical targets for how temporary accommodation will be reduced as the result of each prevention activity).

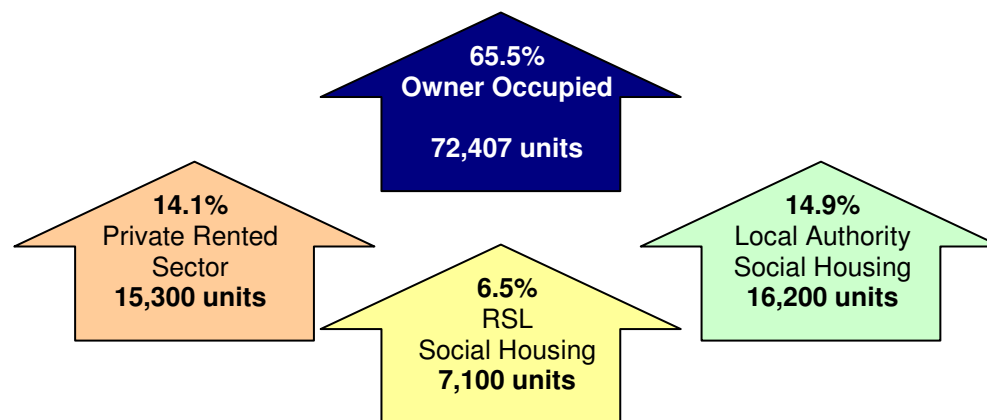
The City's action plan forms an integral part of this Homelessness Review and targets actions against:

- Homelessness prevention and housing options improvements.
- Maximising use of existing social housing supply.
- Creating clear pathways and protocols in relation to use and move on from B & B, hostels, and private sector leasing properties.
- Increasing use of Assured Short-hold Tenancies to bring to an end the homelessness duty.
- Use of 'Homeless at Home' towards a planned departure that does require use of temporary accommodation wherever appropriate.

Numerical targets are being reviewed in order to sustain reductions in use of temporary accommodation as illustrated in the following chart.

#### Settled housing of all tenures available in Plymouth:

Plymouth City Council allocations team data indicates that there are approximately 110,714 dwellings in the city – which can be broken down into the following categories of tenure:



As can be seen there is a high proportion of home ownership in Plymouth, however access to home ownership for Plymouth's citizens is increasingly difficult due to the gap between house prices and average incomes.

The Housing Market Needs Assessment Survey (2006) showed that average incomes of 67% of Plymouth households are far below the national average of £27,500 - and that access to home ownership and renting is particularly problematic with the lowest entry level price to buy a property requiring an income of £29,857.

Access to private rented accommodation is also beyond the means of many, with an averagely priced 2 bed roomed terraced house costing £551 per month in rent. With the average of income of working Plymouth households being only £17,000, this would mean that households would be spending 39% of their income on rent alone.

Inevitably, this has led to high proportions of ‘concealed households’ (i.e. households living with family) being priced out of the housing market altogether – with consequent pressure on social housing waiting lists, where rents are more affordable.



*New Housing Development on Plymouth Hoe*

The South West is also the region with the highest proportion (34%) of younger working households in the Intermediate Housing Market (i.e. able to pay more than a social sector rent, but still unable to buy even at the low end of the local housing market

This places considerable pressure on the private rented market where a highly competitive market pits people who are homeless or

at risk of homelessness alongside the rising student population for access. In addition the high rent levels proportional to average income in the city create considerable difficulties in accessing (and continuing to afford) private rented accommodation. When they do, this review has demonstrated a number of barriers to people with a history of vulnerability or homelessness accessing the private rented sector, and this strategy will specifically highlight actions to address these barriers.

Affordability and access issues (together with the growing potential for overcrowding it creates as more people are forced to live together) in turn place considerable (and increasing) pressure on the available social lets – and this is reflected in the rising demand for housing through the Plymouth Housing Register.

Plymouth City Council operates the Plymouth Housing Register for social rented housing in partnership with a number of registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations and Housing Trusts). Priority for housing is awarded according to circumstances, and the amount of time an applicant has been waiting for housing, with reasonable preference given to the following groups:

- People who are homeless – or who would be statutory homeless without intervention.
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship.
- Where other legal criteria apply to create a duty to house.

As Plymouth moves towards Choice Based Lettings, an analysis of the register indicates that (with the exception of the emergency categories) a large proportion of those who are seeking housing are

doing so because they are experiencing overcrowding by two bedrooms.

The number of applicants on the Plymouth Housing Register varies over time, but averages at about 7000, with approximately 150 new applications received every week. The housing register is administered by Plymouth City Council and includes lettings available through Housing Associations. Each year there are approximately 1700 new lettings.

There are five Special Needs Housing Panels that deal with a range of people who can be defined as having housing support needs. This includes applicants who are ready to 'move on' from supported housing projects. Relevant professionals make referrals to the individual panels in writing, and applicants will usually be visited, and their housing and support needs assessed.

Again, the number of people awaiting housing through the Special Needs Housing Panels varies but is usually approximately 140. In October 2007, 95 people had been assessed by Special Needs Housing panels and are awaiting housing, with a further 36 people with a physical disability who require allocation to appropriately adapted property as it becomes available.

### **Access to sheltered housing/extra care housing:**

People who apply for sheltered housing are assessed by the Older Persons Housing Panel to ensure that it is an appropriate housing option for them. Sheltered properties have an alarm package and support staff available to provide limited assistance for those with some needs but a fairly minimal need for supervision. In Plymouth, demand for sheltered housing far exceeds supply:

- Approximately 30-60 applications are received per month.
- There are approximately 30 people at any one time waiting for assessment.

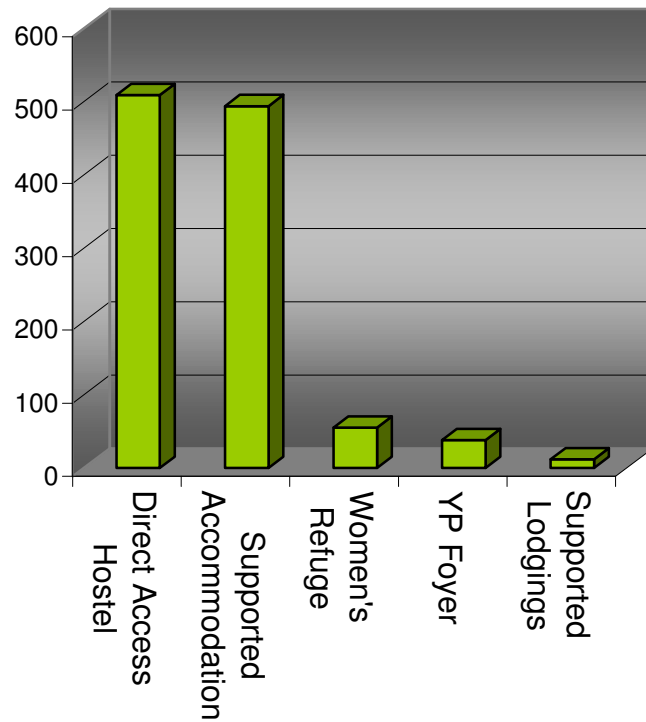
- There is a waiting list of anything between 6 months to 2 years for property – which is not allocated on a 'time waiting' basis, but is allocated according to whether the property is appropriate/adapted to meet an applicants individual needs as assessed.
- In order to access sheltered housing an individual must have a need for low level housing related support as defined by Supporting People.

There are currently four extra care housing schemes operating in Plymouth, with two more schemes in the pipeline. There are 140 units with integral assistive technology available to let, 8 of which are specialised units for people suffering dementia.

There is an uncertain procedure for people who are homeless, or who approach Housing Advice at risk of homelessness to access this accommodation as a homelessness prevention option, without either being accepted as being Statutory Homeless, or being accepted by a Special Needs Allocation Panel (whereby a further referral would have to be made by the Special Needs Housing Officer to the Older Persons Allocation Panel, and there is potential for a further assessment(s) both there, and if a person is referred for Housing Association sheltered accommodation. Discussions are ongoing to resolve these process issues.

### **Supported accommodation availability in Plymouth:**

1108 (58%) of the 1917 people who entered Supporting People funded services during the year April 2006 to March 2007, received accommodation based services (supported housing; supported lodgings; refuge; foyer; teenage parent accommodation; and direct access hostels for the homeless). As the chart below shows, the forms of accommodation dominantly used were supported accommodation, and direct access hostels for the homeless – and unsurprisingly were largely used by rough sleepers and single homeless people.



Use of these forms of accommodation constituted 91% of all accommodation use – with 46% of all service users using direct access hostels.

Analysis of utilisation levels illustrates that there is a lack of capacity in Supported Accommodation provision in Plymouth – especially in relation to young homeless people, and single homeless people.

### The impact of Choice Based Lettings on Homelessness

**Issues:** Current research (Choice, lettings and homelessness in the South West, Housing Corporation, April 2008) has highlighted the following issues in relation to the impact that adoption of Choice Based Lettings will have on homeless people:


- There is a need for adequate support for vulnerable households – both at the lettings stage, to enable households to engage positively with the scheme, and also at the post-tenancy stage, to support households in establishing and maintaining their tenancies.
- There is unequal access to housing across social landlords for priority homeless households – with RSL's in the South West less likely to let properties to priority homeless people.

However, it was also found that where RSL's were created to transfer stock from the local authority, lettings to homeless households were at similar levels to those made by local authorities – therefore the upcoming Stock Transfer vote could have an important impact on the availability of housing options to homeless households.

**The situation in Plymouth:** Following the move to a banding system for housing applications in early 2008, Plymouth City Council is moving towards adoption of a Choice Based Lettings approach in 2009. The scheme will band according to priority groupings and is currently undergoing an extensive consultation process, but currently intends the following to be the case in relation to homelessness:

**Homelessness prevention will be a priority category within Choice Based Lettings:** Where a full homelessness duty would exist, applicants to the housing register will be allocated to the highest possible band to enable them to secure appropriate accommodation without recourse to expensive emergency and temporary accommodation resources. People found to be statutorily homeless following application will still receive reasonable preference, but will be a lower priority in order to encourage preventative options. This policy will be the subject of ongoing review to ensure that the allocation of housing is both balanced and responsive enough to meet the need for housing of homeless people.

## Section 3: Predicting future Homelessness



### **Predicting demand for housing through homelessness:**

There are a number of factors that make any attempt to estimate future homelessness extremely complex.

It may be expected that the overall trend towards reducing applications/ homelessness acceptances as a result of our focus on homelessness prevention would continue. In fact, the introduction of further preventative services (family mediation, work in schools to prevent youth homelessness) should make a further contribution to this downward trend.

Research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (*Britain's Housing in 2022: More shortages and homelessness?*) highlights that predicted housing shortfall will have a significant effect on homelessness demand:

- o Underlying trends point to renewed housing shortages – with consequent impacts on house prices (including higher rents).
- o The consequences of housing shortages are felt by the least affluent families unable to buy, afford rents, or access social housing who feel the distress of enforced sharing and overcrowding
- o The eventual outcome will be that many people who would have taken other routes into housing will be obliged to make homelessness approaches in order to secure housing.

### **There is a significant and increasing housing shortfall in Plymouth:**

- Demand for social housing far outstrips supply – with over 7000 Common Housing Register applicants competing for the estimated 1700 lets available every year.
- Special needs housing panels have a backlog of approximately 140 people who have been prioritised for housing based on their special needs, but for whom none is available.
- Though homelessness acceptances have fallen over the last few years, use of temporary accommodation is increasing – a good indicator of housing shortfall as the Authority is required to find fewer permanent homes to fulfil their statutory duty, but still can't find enough (Plymouth City Council P1E data).
- The number of households, not people, determines how many homes are required – and the number of households in Plymouth is expected to increase by 4000 by 2011 (Housing Market Needs Assessment 2006).
- There is a predicted shortfall of 161 tenancies annually available in the private rented sector for those who express a specific requirement for private rented accommodation – and this number may be even higher. (Housing Market Needs Assessment 2006).

### **There is an increasing affordability gap for households to access the housing market:**

- Low average incomes in Plymouth mean that fewer people can afford to own their own homes, or even afford the entry-level cost of private rented property.
- An assessment of income levels of newly forming/concealed households (combined with the recent economic downturn) confirms that they would have difficulty in accessing the local housing market – meaning potential for increased sharing and overcrowding.

- Approximately half of Band 'B' priority households on the Plymouth Housing Register (second only in priority to those with an absolute emergency based on harassment, demolition, medical emergency or homelessness prevention issue) have priority based on their level of overcrowding.
- Evictions based on rent and mortgage arrears are rising due to debt and the impact of the national economic downturn.

**These factors make it extremely likely that there will be an increased homelessness demand over the next 3 years.**

**However, market factors make it unwise to attempt to predict the extent of the impact on homelessness, and therefore Plymouth intends to monitor and respond to trends arising within the:**

- Temporary Accommodation Reduction Action Plan review.
- Review of the implementation of Choice Based Lettings policy in Plymouth.
- Housing Strategy review 2008.
- Homelessness Strategy Annual Review.

This will enable the Authority to respond more accurately and flexibly to what is currently a very uncertain housing environment.



*Demand for Social Housing is likely to increase as affordability issues prevent Plymouth citizens from accessing other housing options.*

## Section 4

### Hearing from our service users about their experience of homelessness and their views about service provision:

Plymouth has carried out an extensive review of Homelessness, which has been ongoing since 2005. Service users views and feedback were a central feature of this review and their voices will be heard clearly throughout this strategy.

A number of service user consultation events and opportunities included:

- **‘Hidden Voices – The Experience of Homelessness in Plymouth’:** A focussed consultation carried out with people who were homeless for a variety of reasons over a number of months by Plymouth’s Tenant Participation team involving one-to-one interviews, service user ‘diaries’, and focus groups in a number of different services for homeless people.
- **‘Supporting People Supporting Independence’ DVD:** A film based on service user experiences of their journey through homelessness within Supporting People funded services.
- **‘Homelessness and Health’:** A survey of people’s experience of accessing primary and secondary health care services when roofless, and when residing in direct access hostels for the homeless.
- **‘Shaping the Future’ Event – The Future Housing Needs of Older People:** A visioning event involving over 90 older people from various backgrounds which included discussion around the

housing needs of people with additional vulnerabilities and a history of homelessness.

- **The HOPE Consultation – Homeless Older People’s Experience:** A targeted consultation focussing on older people who were rough sleeping by choice, due to ongoing mental health and substance abuse issues that resulted in difficulties maintaining hostel accommodation.

In addition, a number of other interviews and targeted focus group discussions have been carried out in relation to the following pieces of work:

- Development of Plymouth’s Multi-Disciplinary Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Supporting People 5 Year Plan.
- Development of leaflets and information provision.
- Development of Plymouth’s bid for ‘Places of Change’ capital funding to build a new direct access hostel.
- Our successful bid for funding through CLG’s Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund.
- PCT’s development of the Mental Health Accommodation Strategy.
- Work to address youth homelessness through the ‘Youth Homelessness Innovation Group’.
- Development of Plymouth’s ‘Move On Strategy’.
- Development of business plans in relation to Supporting People’s re-procurement of services for homeless people.

Service users and people at risk of homelessness will continue to be consulted around the development of plans and targeting of resources through this strategy.

Full details of the key themes arising from these consultations can be found in the Homelessness Review and appendices.



## Section 5: Summary of Achievements so Far

### 2003-2008 Strategy Action plan Update Summary:

Plymouth's first Homelessness Strategy (2003) was reviewed during a 'visioning event' attended by stakeholders, and during subsequent Homelessness Forums which were themed events designed to highlight issues in relation to specific areas.

Achievements in relation to the 2003's Strategy Aims included:

#### Ensuring appropriate provision of housing and support for young people:

- A dedicated Young Person's Housing Advisor post is now part of the Homelessness Team to offer specialist negotiation with families to return people home where this is appropriate and a co-ordinated approach to provision for 16/17 year olds.
- Senior Officers from Children's and Housing Services agreed a series of high level aims in order to facilitate closer joint working arrangements.
- Commissioning partners formed a 'Youth Homelessness Innovation Group' to agree protocols and a service model for 16/17 year olds.
- Supporting People have reviewed their services to offer greater access and support to young people who are homeless with multiple needs.

#### Dealing effectively with the causes and consequences of domestic abuse:

- A 'Sanctuary' scheme offering safe 'stay at home' options for victims of domestic abuse was developed, supported by partners within Devon and Cornwall Police.
- The causes and consequences of domestic abuse are better understood with a common assessment format that was adopted by the Domestic Abuse forum integrated into the Housing Needs/Homelessness Assessment.
- Recruitment to the newly developed Domestic Abuse Manager's post was successfully achieved and will be at the forefront of developments to deal effectively with the causes and consequences of domestic abuse.

#### Ensure appropriate provision of housing and support for chaotic, vulnerable people:

- The outreach Rough Sleepers Team has successfully linked rough sleepers with substance abuse and mental health services, and has priority access to night shelter and direct access hostel accommodation.
- However, the accommodation needs of people with multiple issues that cause repeat homelessness is still a problem in the city, and is currently under review.
- The Authority successfully applied for Home Office funding to develop a pilot Families Intervention Project – providing highly intensive structured supervision and support for chaotic, dysfunctional families who have disengaged from services, and whose anti-social behaviour is placing them at risk of homelessness.

#### Issues relating to leaving institutional care:

- Services for offenders with a housing need have been boosted with the Accommodation Gateway (funded by Regional Offender

Management) and Supporting People funded services specifically designed to help people access and sustain appropriate accommodation.

- Children's Services' Care Leavers Team have worked closely with Supporting People to review accommodation needs and floating support provision.

#### Homelessness prevention:

- The homelessness prevention approach has been emphasised with the development of a 'one stop shop' approach at Midland House, where Housing, Children's and Youth Offending Services and the Supporting People team are all located in the same building.



*Midland House 'One Stop Shop'*

- Homelessness prevention is a key priority of the Supporting People 5 year Plan and tenancy support services are co-located within the Authority's Housing Advice services to increase links and effective operation.
- Provision of money/debt advice has been boosted with the introduction of a Money Advice service into Housing Offices for Council tenants, and an initiative which is jointly funded with the John Paul Getty foundation through Devon Law Centre to prevent homelessness through repossession of homes due to mortgage arrears.
- The need for greater partnership working and co-ordination of homelessness prevention work is also still a key issue, and will be addressed within this strategy.
- Home visits have been introduced as a matter of course in relation to 16/17 year olds who approach the Authority with a housing need.
- However, the development of a targeted mediation service has still to be achieved, and will be developed as a priority within this Strategy.

#### Enhance diversity/equality issues:

- The needs of homeless older people have been the subject of specific consultation and planning to address within the City's 'All Our Futures' Strategy for People over 50 years.
- Diversity monitoring has been boosted through the revised Housing Needs assessment and this is monitored to ensure equality of access.
- Plymouth City Council successfully bid for funding from the CLG's Ethnic Minority Innovation Fund, and the resulting Devon Inclusive Housing Project is working on a cross-authority basis to address barriers to accessing housing advice for diverse groups, and to support their specific needs.

### Enhance service user involvement:

- Service user consultation and involvement in identifying need, developing plans to meet that need, and evaluating and monitoring service development has become an integral part of the City's Homelessness Service.
- However, there is always room for improvement, and this strategy will target innovative ways to increase opportunities for service user led development.

### Increase settled housing options:

- Plymouth Access To Housing (PATH) successfully bid for Big Lottery Funding to develop a Private Landlord Development Post, and the post-holder is co-located within the Housing Advice team and works closely to address barriers to accessing the private rented sector.
- Links have been established with Housing Strategic Development Workers with regard to increasing social housing availability.
- A highly successful private sector leasing scheme has been in operation through the Council's Empty Homes Team, with the new flexible 'House Let' scheme with packages of support tailored to meet individual requirements of house owners.
- A 'move on' project identified barriers to accessing settled housing for people in supported accommodation – and the action plan to address these barriers will form part of this strategy.
- Homelessness issues, and the means by which vulnerable people can be effectively empowered to participate in Choice Based Lettings have formed a key part of considerations within the CBL Development Project.



*David is a major success story – continuing to live independently with the help of housing related support.*


## Section 6:

# The Homelessness Review – Showing the Way forward

### Issues highlighted by the Homelessness Review:

The Homelessness Review forms an integral part of the needs assessment and action planning within this strategy (available separately). Having been carried out over the last 18 months, it comprises an in-depth consideration of the nature and extent of homelessness in Plymouth, together with gaps in supply.

**Plymouth City Council**  
Homelessness Review 2007



This review builds on the extensive work that has been undertaken to review Plymouth's Homelessness Strategy 2003-2007, and constitutes a comprehensive and wide-ranging review following extensive consultation to include:

- o A description of the nature and extent of homelessness in Plymouth including future trends.
- o A summary of how the need is being met at present and the resources available.
- o Details of planned service improvements.
- o Advice and legal services in Plymouth.
- o Identification of the gaps in service.

This information will provide a clearer understanding of homelessness in Plymouth and will form the basis of the new Homelessness Strategy to be produced by August 2008.

The Review identifies a number of issues that need to be addressed within this strategy's action plan, and these are summarised below:

### Building on Achievements So Far

During 2007/08, the Government's Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate acknowledged Plymouth's rapidly improving Homelessness Service by awarding them Regional Champions Status.



As the South West Regional Homelessness Champion, Plymouth was asked to share its experiences and successes in tackling homelessness after making real progress in reducing homelessness approaches through focussing on prevention.

However, neither the Local Authority nor our partners are complacent about this success – and understand that continued efforts are required to ensure that these improvements are sustained, and we continue to make progress against our key priorities.

The following section summarises the extensive collaborative work to understand the causes of homelessness and our customers' experience of accessing services (available in full within the Homelessness Review). This identifies the next steps we need to take to progress towards service excellence in Plymouth.

## Next steps towards continuous improvement – the needs highlighted by the Homelessness Review:

### Issues in relation to the prevention of homelessness:

- More could be done to prevent homelessness by targeted intervention by Housing Officers to those who are identified as being vulnerable at the time of allocation, and availability of support to prevent eviction.
- Opportunities exist to promote homelessness prevention through the development of the Choice Based Lettings Policy exist.
- Some people are unable or unwilling to access housing advice in Midland House, and capacity to outreach into community venues is required to reach people before they get into crisis.
- There is a need to develop the capacity to review the quality of service provision and to implement continuous improvement.

### Ensuring there's sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or who may become homeless:

- Stronger links with the new Housing Strategy would enable consideration of homelessness-linked targets around reducing temporary accommodation use, new social housing build and use of S106 monies.
- Development of criteria and raised awareness regarding who should receive priority access to social housing through special needs housing panels.
- Improved awareness of, and referrals into, low cost home ownership for people who are, or may become homeless.
- Closer partnership working with Housing Associations to develop a shared approach to homelessness prevention.
- Action to facilitate better access to the private rented sector is required – particularly with respect to homeless families.

### Employability, employment and training:

- Plymouth is fortunate to have existing best practice within the City through Shekinah Mission – and there is an opportunity to encourage broader access to their existing programme that offers different routes into education for those who won't access mainstream provision and work related training.



*Formerly homeless people developing building skills within Shekinah's 'Steady Work Scheme'*

- To address employment issues by working with local employers to identify 'skills gap' that can be met by developing 'bespoke' vocational training for homeless people.

- To progress job coaching and supported placements into local businesses as a means of developing work experience and providing supported pathways into employment.
- To enhance the effectiveness of work with homeless people by identifying and meeting staff development needs – raising the skills of staff in the sector to help people progress.
- To address barriers to employment in relation to people in temporary accommodation and hostels such as high rents, low skills base, lack of childcare, etc.
- A forum is required that draws together the different strands of work already taking place.

### Targeting people who are vulnerable to homelessness or repeat homelessness:

#### Youth Homelessness

- There is no targeted early prevention work and awareness raising in schools.
- No family support or mediation is available to 16/17 year olds who approach either Children’s Services or Housing Services – and for whom the best option is considered to be a return home.
- There is no emergency direct access accommodation for 16/17 year olds, leaving the Authority with B & B placement as the only option in many cases.
- Supported accommodation in the city is over-subscribed and there can be difficulties in accessing it for young people.
- Children’s Services and Housing Services have no protocol or agreement regarding their process for supporting 16/17 year olds, meaning that these young people can be sent from one service to another, and frequently fall through the gap between these services.
- There is no forum to enable organisations working with youth homelessness to communicate and co-ordinate their activity to raise effectiveness.

#### Homeless Families

- Families constitute a third of all homelessness acceptances, and more could be done to focus on early, pre-crisis interventions.
- There is limited access to private rented accommodation by homeless families.



#### Older People

- Older people report that they did not access housing advice at an early enough stage to prevent crisis due to lack of awareness about where to get advice and fear of losing their independence if they talk to people about their issues.
- Older adults who are rough sleeping or in direct access hostels due to their long-term, persistent substance abuse issues need access to appropriate supported accommodation to meet their needs.

- The City's older persons population is rising and this is likely to result in an increase in level of need that should be reflected in the City's Older Person's Strategy and Housing Strategy alongside this Homelessness Strategy.
- However, the Pathways flats that currently accommodate older people who have been hospitalised but have no home to return to, could be a useful homelessness prevention initiative and development of this resource could be explored.

### **Single homeless people who are rough sleeping or accessing hostels**

- The environment and support provided within the current direct access hostel challenges the achievement of positive outcomes for residents under the 'Places of Change' agenda, and as a protected building is not appropriate for re-development.
- The current night-shelter is located on a temporary site and new premises are needed.
- People who are rough sleeping, or accessing the night shelter/ direct access hostel are unable to access primary and secondary health care.
- Potential service users with more challenging needs (around risk, substance abuse, mental health issues) do not have reliable access to specialist support .
- There are barriers to accessing appropriate move on accommodation from the hostels.
- Close links are required with the Rough Sleepers Initiative to ensure that aims and objectives of the Rough Sleepers Strategy are fully facilitated.

### **People with very complex/multiple needs (substance abuse; mental health; offending; entrenched rough sleeping).**

- Anecdotal evidence points to the fact that many people are entrenched in rough sleeping due to the fact that current

accommodation provision does not meet their multiple needs effectively – however a full audit of need is required.

### **Diversity and risk of homelessness**

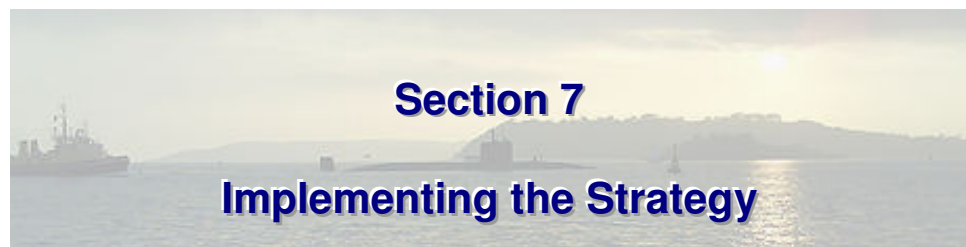
- The Gypsy and Travellers Housing Needs Assessment highlighted a lack of site provision.
- Minority groups currently access Housing Advice services at a lower level than would be expected proportionally for the City's population.
- Monitoring of diversity is poor within the authority, with much of this information not taken at contact despite efforts to monitor diversity as part of the new housing needs assessment.
- However, the Devon Inclusive Housing Project has been established to review access barriers, protocols and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive of the needs of minority groups.

### **Offenders/ex-offenders**

- Plymouth's Offender Gateway has highlighted an accommodation shortfall, particularly in relation to high risk offenders leaving prison.
- Information sharing protocols are not in place to enable generic services to fully risk assess potential placements in generic accommodation – and this can act as a barrier to access.
- There is a need to give specific consideration of the needs of female offenders in Plymouth.
- The upcoming Supporting People re-procurement of offender services is an opportunity to review the responsiveness of current services and to meet the needs of offenders more effectively.

## A holistic approach to homelessness through developing partnerships:

- There is no shared understanding of the homelessness prevention approach, or interpretation of legislation to determine Statutory homelessness.
- Information sharing between agencies is not standard, and therefore service users complain of being assessed and re-assessed, giving the same information each time.
- Housing Associations are not consistently developing their homelessness prevention work and partnerships with the Local Authority as required by the Housing Corporation 'Tackling Homelessness Strategy'.



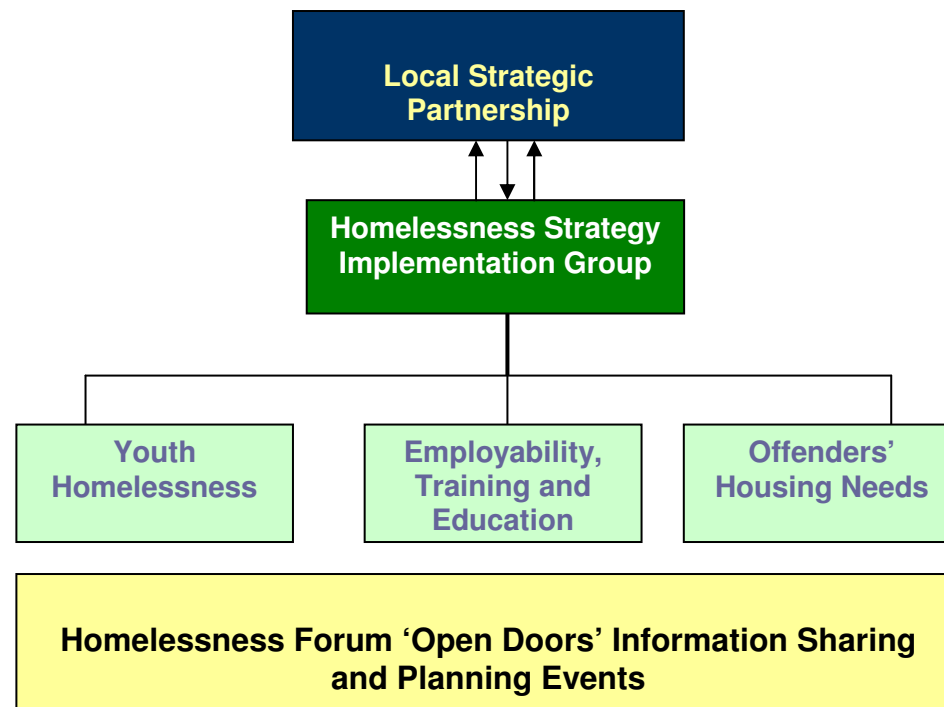
## Targeting the identified needs:

The needs identified through the Homelessness Review have been the subject of a number of themed consultations/workshops with targeted stakeholders, and in addition the Strategy Steering Group have reviewed and prioritised needs and action points arising from the review.

The result is the SMART action plan in Section 8, which identifies how Plymouth City Council and partners will progress work to tackle homelessness over the next 3 years.

## Making sure it happens:

A full review of the existing implementation structure has been carried out, and it is proposed that the following structure be adopted in order to develop actions identified, and monitor progress and achievement against our stated aims and objectives.



This structure will ensure that the Strategy is appropriately linked with broader partnership work to tackle homelessness, as well as being locked into the Local Area Agreement as it seeks to integrate funding to tackle local issues.



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<b>Employability, employment and training</b>	<b>33-34</b>
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**“Some people attach a stigma to the word homeless, that makes them prejudiced to anyone in that situation. You never forget that”.**

*Mrs. P.M. (Service User. Shekinah Mission)*

## Prevention of Homelessness

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<b>Improve information for customers about homelessness prevention and housing options.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set of leaflets designed for Housing Options, clearly setting out service.</li> <li>• Inclusion of appropriate advice about Homelessness Prevention within Choice Based Lettings information.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaflets produced for Homelessness, Housing Advice, and the SHIP.</li> <li>• Homelessness Prevention advice within CBL information.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitate access to the private rented sector.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development work to progress Community Lettings Agency.</li> <li>• Develop relationships with landlords and incentives for them to engage.</li> <li>• Develop nomination scheme for Houselet.</li> <li>• Review use of Bond Scheme to ensure effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<p>March 2009</p>	<p>Matt Garrett, Jane Cookson (Housing Options Team), Mike Taylor, Kate Medhurst (PATH)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Lettings Agency funding bids submitted.</li> <li>• Proportion of private rented sector placements for homeless people risen 10% from 06/07 baseline.</li> </ul>
<b>Access to floating support for single people and families.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Supporting People team during re-procurement of services to identify need.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Claire Hodgkins, Katy Shorten (Supporting People); Matt Garrett Housing Options Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floating support needs identified within Supporting People business planning process.</li> <li>• Supporting People contract for service provision established to meet needs identified.</li> </ul>
<b>Raise staff skills and capacity to carry out homelessness prevention work.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review capacity and skills of Housing Advice Team to improve access.</li> <li>• Facilitate access to appropriate training to meet needs identified.</li> </ul>	<p>March 2009</p>	<p>Jane Cookson (Housing Advice Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills audit carried out.</li> <li>• Training sessions x2 delivered to staff groups re. negotiating skills.</li> <li>• All staff to have received training on diversity issues.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Increase use of homelessness prevention fund.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss use of this fund to prevent homelessness with Housing Benefit colleagues.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Matt Garrett, Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team), Gary Edwards (Housing Benefit Manager)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocol and eligibility for access to have been established.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continued contribution towards multi-disciplinary work to prevent homelessness in relation to victims of domestic abuse within PLYMOUTH'S MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STRATEGY TO TACKLE DOMESTIC ABUSE.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support implementation of the City's Multi-agency Strategy to Tackle Domestic Abuse.</li> <li>• Provide appropriate information regarding housing options of people affected.</li> <li>• Develop action plan to address barriers to move on from Refuge/dispersed units.</li> <li>• Maintain support to Plymouth 'Sanctuary' Scheme and monitor contribution to homelessness prevention.</li> <li>• Review emergency accommodation options for victims of domestic abuse.</li> <li>• Implement Devon protocol in relation to Housing Advice for Domestic Abuse victims.</li> <li>• Support development of new build Women's Refuge.</li> <li>• Support development of dispersed units for victims of domestic abuse.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Morris Watts (Domestic Abuse Manager); Matt Garrett, Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 x focus groups with service users to produce accessible and informative leaflet.</li> <li>• Leaflet detailing housing options produced and broadly available.</li> <li>• Increased take up of Sanctuary Plus scheme by 10% on 07/08 baseline.</li> <li>• Move on protocol from dispersed units to be written.</li> <li>• All staff to have attended ADVA Level 1 training session re. domestic abuse by 2010.</li> <li>• Targets in relation to move on from Refuge and Dispersed units agreed and achieved.</li> <li>• Customer Insight technique used to ensure effective service provision to people affected by Domestic Abuse.</li> </ul>

**Ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or may become homeless:**

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
Development of allocation agreements between Local Authority and Housing Associations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss within Plymouth Housing Managers Group.</li> </ul>	April 2009	Kevin Neil, Tim Phillips (Housing Allocations Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of allocations raised by 10% based on 06/07 baselines.</li> </ul>
Develop links with Housing Strategy regarding new social housing build.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss Housing Strategy actions to meet identified needs around: new build super-hostel; Women's Refuge; Emergency accommodation for homeless young people; step-down accommodation for high risk offenders.</li> <li>Establish targets regarding new social housing build to make projections regarding future homelessness levels.</li> <li>Establish joint vision towards reducing use of temporary accommodation by 2010.</li> </ul>	August 2008	Matt Garrett, Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Nick Carter (Housing Strategy Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified accommodation needs reflected in new Housing Strategy.</li> <li>Mechanism to easily identify delivery of Affordable Housing through GIS mapping/ Plymouth Informed.</li> <li>Actions in place within Strategy to progress the sourcing of accommodation to meet these needs.</li> </ul>
Work with special need housing panels regarding criteria and access through Choice Based Lettings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with special needs housing officer to ensure criteria for panels meet needs of homeless people.</li> <li>Develop awareness regarding criteria.</li> </ul>	March 2009	Kevin Treweeks (Special Needs Housing Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive criteria developed.</li> <li>Information developed to raise awareness regarding criteria.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Reduce use of Temporary Accommodation by 50% by 2010</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a supply and demand model.</li> <li>• Review implementation of TA reduction plan.</li> <li>• Establish that aims and objectives are still relevant.</li> <li>• Implement reviewed plan.</li> </ul>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply and demand model written.</li> <li>• Reviewed temporary accommodation reduction action plan completed.</li> <li>• Numbers in temporary accommodation reduced to 75 by 2010.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prepare the Housing Options Service for the possibility of Stock Transfer.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out feasibility studies for retention of homelessness accommodation based services.</li> <li>• Feed findings into Stock Transfer team deliberations.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome of Stock Transfer consultation known.</li> <li>• Service reviewed in line with Stock Transfer outcome.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implement the City's Move On Strategy to increase flow through Supported Accommodation by making appropriate move on arrangements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase longer term or permanent housing options for people to move on to.</li> <li>• Raise standards of move on work within support planning process.</li> <li>• Enable people to access support to resettle successfully as well as accommodation.</li> <li>• Address affordability issues in relation to accessing move on.</li> </ul>	<p>August 2009</p>	<p>Claire Hodgkins (Supporting People); Move On Strategy Implementation Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Lettings Agency established.</li> <li>• Support and training offered through Landlords Forum.</li> <li>• Information provided regarding realistic housing options.</li> <li>• Supporting People contract monitoring records that provider support plans take account of move on issues.</li> <li>• SP re-procurement of services allocates a proportion of floating support to move on.</li> </ul>

## Employability, employment and training

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p>Develop different routes into education for those who won't access mainstream provision and work related training (create training academy; on-line learning)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on existing Shekinah model to broaden access.</li> <li>Implement of Plymouth's Sustainable Employment Project pilot.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>John Hamlin (Chief Executive, Shekinah Mission).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% of people undergoing pilot to have sustained employment for at least 1 year.</li> </ul>
<p>Identify 'skills gap' that can be met by developing 'bespoke' vocational training for homeless people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with local employers to establish relationships and their needs around recruitment and skills base.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>John Hamlin (Chief Executive, Shekinah Mission).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 x additional employers offering placements to homeless people.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop work experience and provide supported pathways into employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress job coaching and supported placements into local businesses as part of existing Shekinah model.</li> <li>Review capacity to adopt Thames Reach's GROW scheme regarding employment of service users in homeless services.</li> </ul>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>John Hamlin (Chief Executive, Shekinah Mission).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job coaching available to support placements during 08/09.</li> <li>Best practice reviewed and report produced for Employment sub-group.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Enhance effectiveness of work with homeless people by identifying and meeting staff development needs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing benchmarked qualifications for staff who support the development needs of vulnerable people (e.g. Worcester YMCA)</li> <li>• Review training activity in the city to enable access to appropriate training.</li> <li>• Carry out staff skills audit to establish existing and ideal skills sets.</li> </ul>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>John Hamlin (Chief Executive, Shekinah Mission); Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills audit carried out and report produced.</li> <li>• Best practice reviewed and reported.</li> <li>• Pilot sessions of in-house training programme undertaken.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Address barriers to accessing employment for those in temporary accommodation and hostels (including high rents, low skills base, lack of child care etc.) and to agree actions to address them.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out short-term research regarding employability and barriers to accessing employment of those who are temporarily accommodated.</li> <li>• Review findings as part of 'Employability' Sub Group.</li> </ul>	<p>March 2008</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research report produced.</li> <li>• Item considered within agenda of 'Employability' sub group.</li> <li>• Action plan created to meet need.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop and co-ordinate an 'Employability, employment and training' sub-group to provide a forum to progress these issues.</b></p>	<p>Arrange and facilitate sub-group of Housing Strategy Implementation Group to provide a communication forum to address these needs.</p>	<p>July 2008</p>	<p>John Hamlin (Director, Shekinah Mission); Diane Charlton (Plymouth City Council)</p>	<p>Appropriate membership identified.</p> <p>Inaugural meeting held.</p> <p>Aims and objectives agreed.</p>

**Targeting people who are vulnerable to homelessness or repeat homelessness:**

**Young people and families:**

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p><b>Increase understanding of realities of homelessness with young people and their families/Inclusion of awareness raising and 'real truth' homelessness issues within school curriculum.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce onto the agenda of the new Children's Trust.</li> <li>2. Review means of including education and awareness raising about homelessness within school curriculum.</li> <li>3. Development of educational package to be used in schools.</li> <li>4. Develop and co-ordinate means of establishing peer education between current homeless young people and pupils in schools.</li> <li>5. Establish means of raising parent awareness of the facts around youth homelessness.</li> </ol>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Hannah Haines/ Richenda Broad (Children's Services); Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda item monitored by Children's Trust.</li> <li>• Initial discussions regarding feasibility of awareness raising within schools completed.</li> <li>• Schools package/ information and awareness raising materials produced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide independent advice and information service in venue accessed regularly by young people.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commission service from local appropriate provider and monitor service provision/ outcomes.</li> <li>2. Review service specification to ensure service still appropriate.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2008  October 2008</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service established.</li> <li>• Monitoring framework implemented.</li> <li>• Review of service carried out in October 2008.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Develop of focussed mediation service for young people who leave home as a result of conflict in the family/ establish referral pathway to access Family Support Services</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish best practice regarding development of mediation service.</li> <li>2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to develop plan and specification.</li> </ol>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Stuart Brizzell-Hogg (Youth Offending Team); Hannah Haines (Children's Services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 x planning groups held.</li> <li>• Service specification agreed by all organisations.</li> <li>• Monitoring plan established.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop of emergency assessment centre as an alternative to B &amp; B/ensure move on pathways to ensure this centre doesn't become blocked.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and cost proposal for emergency access accommodation.</li> <li>2. Review Supporting People service provision to establish pathways from emergency accommodation.</li> </ol>	<p>October 2008</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Rachel Cruise (Supporting People); Hannah Haines (Children's Services).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Case produced regarding emergency access accommodation.</li> <li>• Emergency accommodation set up.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Joint assessments undertaken by Children's Services and Housing Services.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore feasibility of having a co-located team combining housing and children's services assessors with links to family support.</li> <li>2. Review availability of pre-crisis intervention support for families.</li> </ol>	<p>October 2008</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team); Joy Howick (Children's Services); Richard Porter (16+ Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility study completed.</li> <li>• Protocol established with regard to joint assessment.</li> <li>• Joint assessments taking place in all appropriate cases.</li> <li>• Report produced re. preventative options for potentially homeless families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a 'Youth Homelessness' sub-group where youth homelessness issues can be specifically discussed.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish sub-group of Housing Strategy implementation group to examine youth homelessness issues.</li> </ol>	<p>July 2008</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Hannah Haines (Children's Services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one sub-group held.</li> <li>• Aims and objectives of sub-group established.</li> <li>• At least 1 x review of achievement completed.</li> </ul>

## Older People:

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p>Ensure that older people can access advice and information at an early stage before they get into crisis and become homeless.</p>	<p>1. Explore means of offering housing advice to older people at venues they access as part of the Housing Options Extra approach.</p>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Jane Cookson, Matt Garrett, Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 x Pilot sessions held in outreach venues.</li> </ul>
<p>Review needs of long-term substance abusing older adults who are unable to move on from hostel accommodation because of the lack of appropriate supported accommodation.</p>	<p>1. Carry out research into the needs of this group, and the level of blockage to move on.</p>	<p>July 2010</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<p>Report identifying need and consequences produced.</p>
<p>Integrated working within City's older persons strategy and Housing Strategy to ensure that appropriate assessment/housing options are available to meet the needs of rising older person's population.</p>	<p>1. Feed identified needs into 'All Our Futures' Strategy for 50+s implementation group. 2. Have involvement in implementation of 'National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society' particularly with regard to strengthening housing information services; local plans to take proper account of needs of older homeless people, and the focus on preventative services.</p>	<p>March 2009</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); 'All Our Futures' implementation co-ordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'All Out Futures' Action plan identifies needs of older homeless people.</li> <li>Move on options developed for older people accessing hostels.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Review pathways into housing through PCC Allocations; sheltered housing allocations and Disability panel to ensure that risk of homelessness features in prioritisation.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review access to Sheltered Housing and Extra Care Housing for older people resident in hostels.</li> <li>2. Review housing allocations and potential blockages through housing allocations process.</li> </ol>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of pathways reported.</li> <li>• At least 6 x Customer Insight interviews carried out to identify issues and resolution.</li> <li>• Recommendations adopted within policies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review Pathways flats as a homelessness prevention initiative and explore avenues of funding if appropriate.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review contribution of Pathways flat to homelessness prevention.</li> <li>2. Explore potential for funding.</li> </ol>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Debbie Butcher (Commissioning Manager)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report identifying homelessness prevention activity within Pathways Flat produced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide information targeted at older people who may become homeless.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop accessible leaflet specifically focussing on the housing needs of older people.</li> <li>2. Include information about access to substance abuse services, sheltered housing, support services while at home.</li> </ol>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Debbie Butcher (Adult Social Services Commissioning Manager)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 x focus group held regarding accessible leaflet design.</li> <li>• Leaflet produced.</li> </ul>

**Single homeless people who are rough sleeping or accessing hostels:**

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p><b>Develop 'super hostel' to respond to the CLG's 'Places of Change' agenda – with service user views being central to design of building.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply for grant funding through 'Places of Change' agenda.</li> <li>2. Review additional funding sources through Housing Associations.</li> <li>3. Supporting People re-procurement of revenue funded services to be aligned with hostel build.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2010</p>	<p>Matt Garrett; Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Katy Shorten (Supporting People team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant funding achieved through 'Places of Change'.</li> <li>• Match funding sources established.</li> <li>• Supporting People business plan in relation to support provision within the super hostel produced.</li> <li>• Detailed hostel plan produced.</li> <li>• At least 3 x service user focus groups held to review hostel plans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhanced proactive support working.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support and training for hostel staff reviewed.</li> <li>2. Access to appropriate training to meet identified needs.</li> <li>3. Support continued work through Supporting People Independent Provider Forum's training sub-group.</li> </ol>	<p>September 2009</p>	<p>Kevin Ivey (Manager SHIP Hostel); John Hamblin (Chief Executive, Shekinah)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training needs identified within staff group.</li> <li>• Review of available accredited training programmes carried out.</li> <li>• Training issues discussed and agreed within Employment, Education and Training sub-group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review quality of service and implement continuous improvement.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuous improvement established within Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Katy Shorten (Supporting People)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality visits carried out in relation to contract monitoring plans for hostel provision.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Enable rough sleepers and hostel residents to have access to primary health care.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of specialist service to remove barriers to rough sleepers/people in direct access hostels from accessing primary health care.</li> <li>2. Review access to interim general medical service.</li> </ol>	<p>September 2008</p>	<p>Collette Wells (Primary Care Trust)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce service specification for enhanced care of homeless service (LES)</li> <li>• Service specification considered within agenda of PCT.</li> <li>• Hostel residents and rough sleepers accessing GP services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specialist service development to ensure access to specialist substance abuse/mental health support to address holistic needs of homeless.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide outreach drug and alcohol service provision within hostels.</li> <li>2. Link with Project Board responsible for implementing the Mental Health Accommodation Strategy regarding access to mental health support.</li> </ol>	<p>September 2008</p>	<p>Julie Wilson (Mental Health Trust); Wendy Hannon (DAT); Katy Shorten, Rachel Cruise (Supporting People)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly sessions of drug and alcohol misuse support delivered in hostels.</li> <li>• Representation established within MHAS Project Board.</li> <li>• Supporting People Outcome measures report that referrals for mental health and substance abuse support were successful.</li> </ul>

## Diversity and risk of homelessness

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p><b>Develop and support the Devon Inclusive Housing Project and consider implementation of recommendations.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete needs analysis re. causes of ethnic minority homelessness.</li> <li>2. Enable other workers to develop best practice in relation to dealing with BME homelessness.</li> <li>3. Develop private rented sector as a realistic housing option for BME.</li> <li>4. Ensure housing services are delivered in a way that meets the needs of the ethnic minority population of Devon.</li> <li>5. Improve referrals/signposting between voluntary and statutory agencies to enable better access to tenancy support services.</li> <li>6. Deliver education/training to promote awareness of BME needs.</li> </ol>	<p>April 09</p>	<p>Rupert Blomfield (DIHP Project Lead); Matt Garrett; Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed needs analysis re. BME and migrant worker homelessness produced.</li> <li>• 40 BME homelessness cases prevented.</li> <li>• 5 Repeat homelessness prevented.</li> <li>• 700 households given advice and information.</li> <li>• 40 referrals for housing related support.</li> <li>• 150 BME people sustain tenancies for at least 6 months.</li> <li>• 135 BME people resettled in the private rented sector.</li> <li>• 60 BME people reduced arrears.</li> <li>• At least 3 x staff training sessions held.</li> <li>• Best practice guide produced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that the development of the 'Super Hostel' takes diverse needs into account (ethnicity; sexuality; faith; gender; disability)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Service user input (including people who reflect diverse needs) to feed into planning of new hostel as it progresses.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2010</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Katy Shorten (Supporting People)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 x focus group session with people of diverse needs to consider detailed plans for hostel.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Improve quality of monitoring of access to services by people with diverse needs and implement 'customer insight' techniques to improve quality.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out journey mapping exercise with customers with diverse needs.</li> <li>2. Implement customer insight mechanism to understand customer experience of using services.</li> <li>3. Implement processes that facilitate service improvement based on customer insight.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journey mapping carried out with at least 10 x people with diverse needs.</li> <li>• Process for implementing customer insight incorporated through Housing Options team plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Link with Gypsy and Travellers Housing Needs Assessment – and potential for homelessness issues to be raised where there is lack of site provision.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to link with Steering Group that are implementing findings of G&amp;T Housing Needs Assessment.</li> <li>2. Monitor and address impacts on homelessness service provision.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Rupert Blomfield (DIHP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance of representative at Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs steering group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Complete and review equalities impact assessment in relation to this strategy.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to EIP recommendations within this strategy.</li> <li>2. Monitor and review equalities impact of this strategy.</li> </ol>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Matt Garrett; Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equalities impact Assessment completed.</li> <li>• Auditable response made to any concerns raised.</li> <li>• Annual review of EIA completed.</li> </ul>

## Targeting people who are vulnerable to homelessness or repeat homelessness – offenders.

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p><b>Establish need and recommendations in relation to additional accommodation units required in the City – particularly in relation to high-risk offenders.</b></p>	<p>Call together a 'task and finish' group to consider need and produce report.</p>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Dino Perros (Probation) Mike Taylor (PATH) Craig Ikerd (Gateway) Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team) Katy Shorten (Supporting People)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task and finish group to have met 3 times.</li> <li>• Needs analysis produced which identifies whether there is a need for additional accommodation units.</li> <li>• Recommendations regarding actions required identified and fed back to 'Offender Sub-Group'.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve successful move on from existing temporary accommodation for offenders.</b></p>	<p>Consider move on needs of offenders within current work regarding move on in the city.</p>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Mike Taylor (PATH) Dino Perros (Probation) Katy Shorten (SP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plymouth Move On Strategy will include consideration of offender resources.</li> <li>• Access to private rented sector will have increased by 5%</li> <li>• Clear guidelines established regarding offender access to social housing including appropriate referral of offenders through PCC vulnerable adult panel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improved information sharing between offender services and accommodation providers.</b></p>	<p>Development of information sharing protocol and full agreement by all parties to adopt it.</p>	<p>January 2009</p>	<p>Craig Ikerd (Gateway) Dino Perros (Probation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sharing protocol produced.</li> <li>• Review highlights protocol is effective.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Housing representation within Prolific Offender Strategic Management Group.</b></p>	<p>Housing/Homelessness representative to be identified to attend meetings and feedback.</p>	<p>July 2008</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Manager)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative identified and attending meetings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Offenders offered accredited living skills training.</b></p>	<p>Continue work within Living Skills Partnership.</p>	<p>September 2008</p>	<p>Craig Ikerd (Gateway)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All offenders offered the opportunity to participate in living skills training.</li> <li>• Increase uptake levels?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting People services responsive to needs of offenders.</b></p>	<p>Business planning and re-procurement of offender services to include consideration of needs of female offenders.</p>	<p>March 2009</p>	<p>Katy Shorten (Supporting People)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully consulted business plan produced and agreed by SP Commissioning Body.</li> <li>• Re-procurement of services according to business plan has taken place and new services in place.</li> <li>• Female offenders able to access appropriate services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a forum where offender issues can be discussed specifically.</b></p>	<p>Call together a meeting of stakeholders with an interest in offender housing issues.</p>	<p>September 2008</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team) Mike Taylor (PATH) Craig Ikerd (Gateway)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims and objectives of group established.</li> <li>• Meetings held.</li> </ul>

## A holistic approach to homelessness through developing partnerships:

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
Developing a shared understanding of the homelessness approach;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue meetings between Local Authority homelessness team and voluntary sector partners in Plymouth.</li> <li>2. Shared training and awareness raising events.</li> </ol>	July 2010	Matt Garrett, Julie Hahn; Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly meetings between Shelter and Homelessness Team to have taken place.</li> <li>• At least 3 x multi-disciplinary events to develop awareness of homelessness.</li> </ul>
Developing protocol and procedures whereby information and assessments are shared between agencies and organisations working with the same people;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review current procedures and barriers to sharing assessments.</li> <li>2. Develop protocol that addresses identified barriers.</li> <li>3. Monitor effectiveness of protocol at 6 and 12 months.</li> </ol>	July 2009	Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team); Katy Shorten (Supporting People)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report identifying needs and barriers to information sharing produced.</li> <li>• Protocol to address identified needs developed.</li> <li>• At least 1 x monitoring of protocol carried out.</li> </ul>
Develop partnership approach to homelessness prevention with housing associations.	Organise a workshop/ training session with Housing Associations with Housing Corporation attendance.	July 2009	Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 x workshop / event carried out.</li> </ul>
Develop area based approaches to homelessness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain representation within Devon Homelessness Manager's Group (DHMG).</li> <li>2. Influence development of action plan of DHMG</li> <li>3. Develop peer support and review approaches to service improvement.</li> </ol>	September 2009	Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at DHMG meetings.</li> <li>• Action plan developed.</li> <li>• Review of peer support techniques carried out within the agenda of DHMG.</li> </ul>

**Improving our customer service:**

Aim	Specific Action Required	Due Date	Who's involved	Measurable Output
<p><b>Improve communication and information sharing with customers.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement Customer Insight approach to evaluate service user experience across housing options service.</li> <li>2. Reinforce mechanism for implementation of findings of customer feedback.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Diane Charlton (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journey mapping carried out in relation to at least 10x service users.</li> <li>• Customer feedback survey carried out and findings disseminated through Housing Options Management Group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve access to services for all.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out equalities impact assessment in relation to service.</li> <li>2. Work closely with Devon Inclusive Housing Project around information feedback from diverse service users.</li> </ol>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Matt Garrett (Housing Options Team)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA completed.</li> <li>• Staff to have received training re. diversity issues.</li> <li>• Access to housing advice reviewed in relation to diverse groups and appropriate protocols and procedures put in place.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>