

Neighbourhood and Housing Services

BRISTOL PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008–2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Preventing Homelessness Review

The Preventing Homelessness Review, conducted throughout 2007, revealed little by way of surprises or new data - a testament to the city's capacity to share targets and deliver homelessness prevention outcomes. The data strongly suggests that there should be a major re-focus of the homelessness system's ways of working. Analysis of the Review's key findings provides the following areas for focus and change:

- Homelessness prevention could be further improved by ending most reactive and crisis management approaches within the homelessness system
- Homelessness prevention requires early interventions, which can be delivered more effectively if shared trigger systems are in place
- Planned homelessness pathways can better achieve a range of targets and planned outcomes
- Support services, including drug treatment, mentoring, training and employment, can lead to permanent housing outcomes
- Shared case management arrangements can ensure that people are far better matched to the services they need, without receiving inappropriate services
- Improvements in homelessness prevention and value for money outcomes will be achieved via new commissioning plans which ensure flexible and structured multi-disciplinary working and holistic approaches
- Prevention is best achieved by meeting individuals' needs rather than by expecting individuals to fit neatly into existing service criteria
- Homelessness services across the piece should be reviewed, to ensure that value for money (VFM) is being achieved within the scope of the objectives and priorities set out in this strategy.



BCC's Streetwise Team: Tackling begging and helping the homeless.

Five Priorities – Ringing the Changes

The Preventing Homelessness Review findings can be categorised under five priority headings that highlight and will steer Bristol’s direction in homelessness prevention for the next 5 years. These priorities mark a significant departure from the Key Issues described in the Homelessness Strategy 2003.

Key Issues from Homelessness Strategy 2003	Preventing Homelessness Review Findings 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Accessing services for people with multiple needs is difficult ★ There is a lack of housing provision for the changing client group ★ Current advice and assistance services fail to adequately prevent homelessness by offering real alternatives to those that present ★ Current monitoring and performance management systems need to anticipate homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Homelessness Prevention ★ Early Interventions ★ Multi-Disciplinary Approaches ★ Individual Solutions ★ Value for Money

Although work to address the key issues continues and is still relevant, there have been significant improvements in performance management, positive engagement with people with complex needs and homelessness prevention. The issue of independent housing (private rented or social) remains one that will be addressed through the Homelessness Pathways and Housing Support Register projects but will not be able to produce adequate social housing to meet current and future demands.

Main Strategic Outputs

To meet the 5 priority headings, it is useful to identify main expected outputs. These are headline areas of activity, under which will sit a number of specific projects (please see Preventing Homelessness Strategy Action Plan):

- ★ Create a Future Commissioning Model
- ★ Implement New Case Management Systems
- ★ Create Sustainable Housing Routes
- ★ Increasing Access to Information and Support
- ★ Focus on Equalities
- ★ Focus on Other Emerging Priorities

These outputs create a framework for the Preventing Homelessness Action Plan. The specific projects detailed in the Action Plan will ensure service developments and changes that will deliver the Five Priorities.

What's the Difference?

The Main Strategic Outputs will address the 5 Priorities identified by the Preventing Homelessness Review, within a framework of local and national targets. In so doing, they will deliver key differences to Bristol's homelessness system:

- The use of B&B for 16/17 year olds will be ended by 2010.
- Continued sustainment of rough sleeping in single figures, by delivering early interventions, holistic approaches and planned pathways.
- Planned Pathways from emergency accommodation to sustainable housing and support options will be in place and will reduce statutory homelessness presentations and the use of temporary accommodation.



St George's House (Priority Youth Housing): Alternative to B&B for Young People

- Joint working, especially between partner agencies and council departments (Adult Community Care, Children and Young Peoples Services and Neighbourhood and Housing Services) will achieve a more holistic approach with planned packages of care and support services, improved case management and the role of a lead professional taking responsibility for each homelessness case.
- Good quality information and advice about homelessness prevention and housing options will be easily accessible through a dedicated web site, including self-help options, leading to a better customer experience of housing and homelessness services.
- The use of temporary accommodation will have been halved by March 2010 and continue to reduce through the use of planned, alternative and sustainable housing options.
- The introduction of a case management information technology system will enable improved equalities monitoring and reporting about access to and take-up of service provision and gaps. This will lead to better analysis and consequent improvements in service delivery.
- A further shift away from crisis responses to homelessness in favour of early intervention and planned housing routes. This will produce further reductions in statutory homelessness acceptances.



Toll House Court (Second Step): Alternative to B&B

Summary of Key Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

1. Future Commissioning



Business Action on Homelessness

A model of integrated homelessness, housing and support services will be developed to review services and to re-commission where necessary. An essential element of this work will be to develop a clear understanding and framework to achieve value for money, within outcomes based commissioning arrangements that involve commissioners taking an influential role over service delivery. The aspiration is to ensure that all relevant services commissioned by the Council, the Primary Care Trust and potentially other organisations include homelessness prevention outputs.

2. Case Management

We will make changes to the way we case manage homelessness in the future. This will include exploring the development of Lead Professional systems, and implementing new IT software, earlier assessment of all support needs, regular reviews, and staff training.

These actions will enable us to create homelessness services that are focussed on eliminating housing crisis, that are more proactive in managing and preventing homelessness, and that are more able to assist people with sustaining their housing long-term.

3. Sustainable Housing Routes

Work involving BCC's Supporting People team will lead to the implementation of Homelessness Pathways and a commissioning process that will provide clear access routes into supported housing and move-on accommodation relevant to that household's needs.

We will increase access to private rented sector accommodation by exploring the options for developing a private rented sector housing team, bringing together the resources that can provide better access to private rented accommodation; providing better access to support and advice to private



The Hub (BCC): Advises and assists service users into appropriate housing and services.

tenants, landlords and those looking for private rented accommodation; and expand on the success of existing routes into private rented accommodation.

We will examine the future use of different types of emergency accommodation, including the use of Bed and Breakfast, in order to ensure that we have the best short-term housing solutions for specific households. This includes further work on the current Temporary Accommodation Reduction Action Plan to meet the target of reducing TA by 50% by 2010.

4. Access to Information and Advice

We will increase the availability of homelessness information and support provision in Bristol by holding an annual Bristol Homelessness conference; creating a Bristol Homelessness-specific website with sections for people at risk of homelessness, tenants, landlords, professionals working with homelessness, and anyone else looking for up to date information; creating a regular newsletter for professionals working within homelessness in Bristol; and a young people's integrated prevention programme with other agencies, potentially based within the Healthy Schools programme.

5. Equalities and Accessibility

Services will be reviewed within the context of the council's Integrated Equalities Policy.

- Equalities monitoring systems (information technology) will be improved to enable better analysis and service responsiveness.
- The Bristol Housing Race Equality Group's Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Delivery Plan 2007's relevant key targets will be addressed.
- The Preventing Homelessness Review and Strategy 2008-2013 will be accessible in a range of accessible formats.
- Services' accessibility will be reviewed and altered if necessary and the equalities impacts of future changes to services will be assessed.



The Compass Centre: The new Homelessness Assessment Centre will improve partnership working and increase access to services.

6. Other Priorities

The Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2008 will work to support the achievement of other key priorities as specified within Bristol City Council strategies and other key strategies, through the development of new working

practices and services, and by the support of existing services. There is also a responsibility to ensure that responsiveness and early interventions - through service flexibility and good analysis – are in place within homelessness and related systems, to tackle possible future needs e.g. those generated by demographic change, Asylum Seekers and Refugees, offenders and prisoners returning to Bristol, young people and people at risk of homelessness through mortgage reposessions.

Strategy Action Plan

Bristol can confidently create and sign up to a Strategy Action Plan which records the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) activities that will address the 5 priorities through the outputs described above and the projects and activities driven by these outputs.

To provide additional context and to inform both the framework and the planned outcomes for the Action Plan, it will make specific reference to Bristol's homelessness targets, prescribed by Communities and Local Government (CLG). Currently, the foremost are:

- To halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010*
- Ongoing increases in homelessness prevention, as recorded as Best Value Performance Indicator 213 (NH213)
- Ongoing management and reduction of rough sleeping, to maintain numbers at 9 or below.
- To end the use of bed and breakfast as an emergency housing solution for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010.
- Complete and update the council's Homelessness Strategy Self Assessment document and tackle any gaps identified from this exercise.

The Action Plan will capture main actions, relevant projects and their general descriptions, timescales and targets. Specific detail such as project management documentation will be generated by each individual project.

Monitoring, Measurement and Management

To ensure that the Strategy Action Plan is relevant, up-to-date and SMART, it will be produced on a year-by-year basis and will be subject to performance monitoring and measurement by the council's Strategic Housing Business Development Unit.

The overall management of the Strategy, and particularly its Action Plan, will be conducted by a multi-agency senior level group based on the Preventing Homelessness Review and Strategy Project Board.