

**Nottingham City
Inter-agency**

**Homelessness
Prevention Strategy
2013 - 2018**

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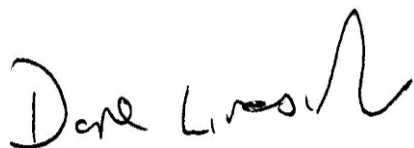
Foreword

Homelessness is a complex problem with multiple causes requiring flexible solutions. Over the course of the previous Homelessness Prevention Strategy, Nottingham City Council and our partners have worked to establish a range of homelessness prevention options which have achieved national recognition as effective interventions. Additionally, in the face of rising levels of street homelessness nationally, Nottingham is maintaining low levels of rough sleeping and has achieved No Second Night Out status.

Across a range of services Nottingham has recognised the importance of targeted early intervention approaches to meet the needs of our diverse range of citizens. To achieve the best possible results for our citizens and our city, it is essential that partners across different sectors and departments understand their important contribution. Likewise, it is crucial that these partners appreciate the cyclical benefits that our homelessness prevention services have on all of their service areas including health, the criminal justice system, children and families and education.

Our new homelessness prevention strategy for 2013 is set in a challenging climate of economic downturn and high levels of unemployment, government austerity measures including significant reform to the welfare system and difficult housing market conditions. We know that individually, these factors can disproportionately effect vulnerable people and increase the risk of homelessness. Collectively, these factors produce an environment that is bound to have a considerable impact nationally and locally.

It is a high priority for Nottingham to withstand the effects of the current environment and demonstrate resilience through mitigating impact. The challenge is significant; however, we do not want to produce a Homelessness Prevention Strategy that is merely reactive. We remain ambitious in our vision and know that we have experienced, skilled and innovative agencies within local partnerships that will rise to the challenge and continue to prevent homelessness effectively and achieve Gold Standard status for our city.



Councillor Dave Liversidge
Portfolio Holder for Housing, Adults and Community Sector

Sign up



The following collection of signatures pledge partnership support for the implementation of this Homelessness Prevention Strategy



 Portfolio Holder for Adults,
 Housing and the Community
 Sector





 Chief Executive




 Interim Chief Executive	 VHF Coordinator SIG Vice Chair
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 Regional Housing Manager
 (on behalf of Nottingham City
 Social Housing Forum)

NOTTINGHAM COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION
 More homes, great services, better lives


 Chief Executive




 AD Page




 Director




 Chief Executive




 Senior Practitioner




 Assistant Director of Adult

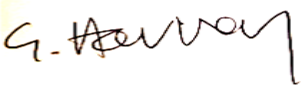




 Team Manager




 Treasurer




 SIG Chair


 On behalf of VHF


 Chief Executive
 Officer
 On behalf of VHF



Introduction

In Nottingham in 2013, our overarching goals are to prevent and reduce homelessness and repeat homelessness through early intervention partnerships and services which break cycles of deprivation.

This is consistent with the message from the current coalition government:

“The vision of this report is simple, but bold. There is no place for homelessness in the 21st Century. The key to delivering that vision is prevention - agencies working together to support those at risk of homelessness”¹

Preventing homeless in Nottingham continues to be a priority. Households experiencing homelessness or who are threatened with homelessness are trapped in cycles of deprivation that impact on their health, emotional wellbeing and life chances. The effects on children within households experiencing or threatening homelessness can be life long.

Nottingham City’s 20 year vision is that by 2030...we will break the intergenerational cycle of poverty that exists in too many communities by tackling causes not just symptoms through early intervention²

The Nottingham Plan aims to transform Nottingham’s neighbourhoods, ensure that all children and young people thrive and achieve, tackle poverty and deprivation by getting more local people into good jobs, reduce crime, the fear of crime, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour and improve health and wellbeing. Homeless prevention contributes to all of these aims.

In 2013, we have a well established and successful inter-agency homelessness prevention approach which is recognised nationally. This Homelessness Prevention Strategy outlines the early intervention work we are doing and the achievements we have made in preventing homelessness.

The 2013 – 2018 strategy is set in a challenging economic climate of post recession, government austerity measures and an overhaul to the welfare system. Where possible, we must retain commitment to levels of funding and service provision. We must however, also be innovative in the delivery of our services in order to reach the increasing number of people affected by the economic climate.

The 2013 Homelessness Prevention Strategy sets a positive vision for 2018 and identifies how we aim to achieve this by building on our existing successful partnerships and service provision, continuing to meet the needs of our citizens and eliminating the threat of homelessness from their lives.

¹Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), August 2012, Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness, Foreword, Grant Shapps, Minister for Housing

² The Nottingham Plan to 2020

Chapter 1 – The background

1.1 Why do we have a Homelessness Prevention Strategy?

2002 and the concept of social exclusion

In 2002, the Labour government identified homelessness as a form of social exclusion rather than simply a housing problem. This heralded a national change in direction in approaches to tackling homelessness.

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a requirement for local authorities to review homelessness in their area and develop a local strategy for homelessness prevention which provided options and solutions for people who were, or who may become homeless. The labour government established a strategic framework in the shape of the Homelessness Directorate to join up policy relating to homelessness at a national level. This directorate updated the code of guidance and introduced a Homelessness Prevention toolkit which included a range of options that had proven outcomes in preventing homelessness. The Labour government also committed financial investment, via homelessness grant funding, to assist local authorities in delivering their homelessness prevention activity.

Additionally, in 2003 the Supporting People funding stream was introduced to replace transitional housing benefit. This was central to the strategic refocusing of homelessness resettlement services to provide housing related support for a range of vulnerable people and ensure more targeted use of funding for this purpose. Also in 2003, the Labour government produced a report titled *More than a roof*. This report was based on the 2002 Homelessness Act and outlined the changes in approach required for challenging homelessness successfully. This report placed emphasis on the importance of a partnership approach:

“Any new approach will only work if action is taken by all key partners. Central government, local authorities, housing associations, mortgage providers, private landlords and the voluntary sector all have a vital role to play”³

Locally, Nottingham was well prepared. Our first Interagency Homelessness Prevention Strategy was introduced in October 2001. This strategy was generated through a partnership of representatives from Nottingham City Council Housing teams, Social care, Health and the Community and Voluntary sector. A significant informant for the production of this strategy was a major review of homelessness in the city carried out by Nottingham City Council. This review looked at current and predicted levels of homelessness, activities that contributed to homelessness prevention and the availability of accommodation and support for people who are threatened with homelessness or repeat homelessness.

1.2 Nottingham’s 2003 – 2008 Homelessness Prevention Strategy

The Nottingham 2003 – 2008 Homelessness Prevention Strategy was informed by the preliminary review and strategy of 2001 and it quickly completed the alignment with the new statutory requirements, completing the shift from reactive to preventative service provision.

The 2003 strategy identified priority groups at risk of homelessness including; families, survivors of domestic violence, drug users and refugees and asylum seekers. It also sought to look at the availability, throughput and move on from emergency accommodation and was a crucial document in benchmarking homelessness in Nottingham. Importantly, this strategy set

³ Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), March 2003, *More than a roof - a report into tackling homelessness*

the strategic direction for homelessness prevention in the city, in which all partners knew their respective and joined up roles.

The ensuing Supporting People Strategy 2005 - 2010 became closely aligned with the Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The Supporting People Strategy outlined the provision of homelessness related accommodation and support services to compliment provision delivered via Voluntary Sector Grant Funding and the Homeless Directorate.

1.4 Nottingham's 2008 – 2013 Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Five years later, the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2008 – 2013 continued a focus on prevention activities by introducing a range of housing and homelessness prevention options from the government department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) homelessness prevention toolkit.

This strategy continued to establish the direction of travel for the joined up provision of early intervention services to achieve the strategic priorities of preventing and reducing homelessness and repeat homelessness.

It also addressed a range of sub priorities including:

- Rough sleepers and complex needs
- Reshaping of provision in accordance with presenting needs and changing priorities
- Enhance opportunities for settled accommodation
- Improve involvement of service users in the planning and development of services
- Improve communication with service users
- Ensure that delivery of provision is appropriate to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities

The 2008 – 2013 strategy clearly explained and emphasized Homelessness Prevention and Early Intervention as fundamental approaches. New services such as the Homelessness Prevention Gateway, Sanctuary Scheme and Bond Scheme were reviewed via this strategy.

1.4 Nottingham's 2013 – 2018 Homelessness Prevention Strategy

What do we mean by 'Homelessness Prevention'?

The simple definition of Homelessness Prevention is; to stop homelessness from happening. However, the meaning is slightly more complex when exploring the range of services and interventions are covered by this approach.

Our ultimate aim is to be a city where homelessness is prevented from occurring in the first instance rather than reacting to resolve it once it has happened. However, we cannot yet claim to have eliminated homelessness entirely.

Therefore, whilst we aim to move away from the need for reactive and crisis services, we do understand that currently they play a crucial part in the system of homelessness prevention and in particular, preventing repeat homelessness through effective stabilisation and resettlement.

Regardless of their type of service delivery, all of the partners, agencies and groups involved in this Homelessness Prevention Strategy understand the principles of homelessness prevention and the role they have in assisting people move on from homelessness or away from the threat of it.

1.5 – Vision for 2018

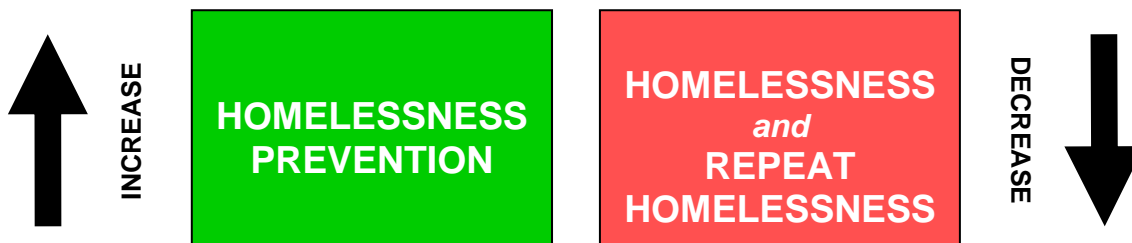
VISION FOR 2018

- That Nottingham is a city where our diverse range of citizens can access clear and appropriate pathways to a creative range of services and partnerships appropriate to their level of need.
- That our partnerships and services are equipped to help prevent our citizens from becoming homeless through identifying, assessing and meeting support needs in the most suitable way.
- That our innovative and flexible interventions result in effective resettlement and thereby reduce the incidence of repeat homelessness.

1.6 How will we meet our vision?

Overarching goals

Within this strategy, we are setting ourselves the overarching goals of increasing homelessness prevention activity to reduce homelessness and repeat homelessness. Meeting these goals will help us to achieve our vision for 2018.



Strategic Objectives

These objectives show in more detail the areas we are focussing on to assist us in meeting our goals. The objectives are explored thoroughly within the sections of the strategy and are embedded within the actions and measurements of the delivery plan.

A	Mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform through the early identification and provision of interventions for affected households
B	Provide clear and consistent <i>information</i> in a range of formats on housing options and the broad range of factors that contribute to homelessness
C	Offer consistent cross-sector <i>advice</i> on housing options and the broad range of factors that contribute to homelessness
D	Assist people to remain in suitable housing. Or, where this is not possible, help facilitate a smooth transition into alternative accommodation options with minimal disruption to the household
E	Deliver a range of Housing Options which achieve solutions suitable in meeting the needs of individual and diverse households
F	Provide a mixed economy of services delivering prevention activity which allow households to remain in accommodation <i>and</i> assist households into alternative forms of accommodation (including resettlement following crisis to prevent repeat homelessness)
G	Assist access to decent standard accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)
H	Fully understand the housing market needs of single people
I	Motivate and support more vulnerable or benefit dependent citizens achieve their Education, Training and Employment (ETE) ambitions
J	Enable further improvement in health and wellbeing outcomes for homeless people through further integration of assessment processes and referral pathways
K	Ensure the early identification of individuals vulnerable to exploitative activity (including sexual exploitation and gang related activity) through involving housing professionals in co-ordinated multi agency responses
L	Ensure the individual needs of survivors escaping different categories and risk levels of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are reflected in flexible provision of early intervention, prevention, crisis and protection services
M	Provide housing options for young people to enable more planned moves into accommodation independent of the family home and reduce incidents of relationship breakdown
N	End Rough Sleeping in Nottingham through our local approach to <i>No Second Night Out (NSNO)</i>
O	Ensure accommodation pathways for prison leavers and offenders complements the aims of rehabilitation and resettlement
P	Ensure a consistent approach to options and advice for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
Q	Improve the transition for new refugees from accommodation provided via Home Office support to accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) or social housing
R	Enable more people with multiple, chaotic and / or complex needs to sustain settled accommodation and reduce their incidences of repeat homelessness through delivery of the Fulfilling Lives approach
S	Maintain a flexible and relevant strategy of homelessness prevention through enhanced and well coordinated monitoring and review regimes

Target setting

To help us meet the objectives we will set relevant targets (or measurements) for the actions contained within our strategy delivery plan. These targets will be inexplicably linked to the monitoring regime for the strategy.

We want our targets to be ambitious, however they also have to be realistic and have consideration for the changeable environment in which they will be based over the next 5 years. It is important that the targets we set concern factors in which the partners involved in the strategy have control and will be able to work towards positively influencing and produce solutions.

We want to make sure our measurements are SMART. That they are focussed on outcomes rather than numbers and that they prove successful and sustainable homelessness prevention rather than throughput through pathways.

For this reason, we have decided to combine a statistical data analysis approach to our targets with one of a qualitative assessment of outcomes. Our targets will also be graded where appropriate, setting minimum and maximum levels of attainment to ensure that we maintain standards throughout the challenging times ahead which are predicted to impact significantly on levels of homelessness.

All partners have a responsibility to contribute to setting the targets and identifying their role in achieving and evidencing the outcomes.

In order to monitor the targets effectively, we will establish new baselines from April 2013.

Delivery Plan

The delivery plan for the Homelessness Prevention Strategy can be found by [clicking here](#).

The delivery plan sets the actions required to achieve the objectives of the strategy and ultimately make the vision for 2018 a reality. The responsible partners are identified for each action, as is how the outcomes of the actions will be measured.

Partnership approach

The production and delivery of a Homelessness Prevention Strategy is the statutory responsibility of the local authority. However, Nottingham City Council acknowledges that the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy is not possible in isolation and requires multi-agency input at all levels.

A partnership approach to devising and delivering a Homelessness Prevention Strategy is relevant now more than ever before. Challenges we face in 2013 include; high levels of deprivation and poverty, difficult housing market conditions, recession, economic downturn and increased unemployment, continued budget cuts and reform to welfare spending included within the government fiscal policy to manage the deficit.

Ultimately, this environment means that there is increasing demand for services and assistance but reduced resources and capacity to deliver. Effective delivery of a clear strategic direction is to be achieved through partnerships with commitment to working flexibly and creatively together to maintain and to further develop homelessness prevention solutions.

Nottingham has developed strong and established partnerships across the voluntary, community, faith and statutory sectors. The wealth of experience that exists within our operational services is of critical value to producing and delivering a Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Local agencies have a shared understanding of the important contributions they each make to support people through homelessness prevention and how by working collectively they can compliment each other to produce effective outcomes for our citizens. By

listening and reflecting the views of the front line, we have achieved the co-production of a meaningful strategy, and one which is firmly based in reality. The overall success of the strategy and its delivery is dependent upon the continuation of the inter-agency and cross-sector partnerships

The role of the Strategic Implementation Group (SIG)

This multi agency group is the main steering group broadly responsible for the overseeing the development of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and as the principle driver for the implementation of the delivery plan. The SIG is a partnership of members currently including strategic leads representing the following agencies, organisations and service areas:

Nottingham City Council – Housing Solutions, Strategic Commissioning, Housing Strategy, Youth Offending Team, Crime and Drugs Partnership, Nottinghamshire Probation Trust, HLG, Notts Housing Advice, Framework Housing Association, the Faith sector, the Social Housing Forum, Nottingham City Homes, Health and Public Health and the Voluntary Homelessness Forum (including services providing support and accommodation to survivors of domestic violence and abuse, young people and those with chaotic needs)

The SIG works within a Terms of Reference ([Appendix 1](#)) with agreed membership and an elected chair. The TOR and membership of the SIG were reviewed and refreshed in 2012. Decisions are made by the group through a culture of transparency between partners with equal weight and value of the contribution, expertise and opinion of all members.

A part of the function of the SIG is to identify, analyse and understand changes and trends as they occur. The SIG should then determine the resource implications and facilitate responses. To assist deliver this function, the SIG is able to access data and front line service performance management information from across the statutory and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations. The SIG has clearly defined involvement within the NCC Strategic Commissioning Reviews relating to homelessness.

Voluntary Housing and Homelessness Forum (VHF)

The VHF make a valuable contribution to the development of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and have an ongoing role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the delivery plan.

Coordinated, facilitated and led by the voluntary sector organisation HLG, the VHF brings together front line workers and managers from within VCFS agencies who work to support homeless and vulnerable people in Nottingham. The VHF is a critical link to emerging issues evident from day to day service delivery. Additionally, the VHF provides the opportunity for an effective and coherent channel of communication directly with services, service users and communities. The agenda for the SIG and the VHF interact together to incorporate strategic and operational front line insight to issues raised.

Methodology

During 2012 the SIG workplan has included a workshop review of the action plan of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2008 – 2013, review of the Terms of Reference, roles and membership of the group, development of the annual cold weather plan, review of winter support fund, evictions protocol, local provision against Gold Standard challenges, a focus on welfare reform, allocations policy review, local council tax support scheme, analysis of local statistics, annual rough sleeper headcount and No Second Night Out, Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) Drug Treatment System Review, Mental Health Accommodation Pathway Strategic Commissioning Review and various workstreams of the 2012 Social Exclusion Strategic Commissioning Review.

The Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy has also been informed by the research, analysis, consultation and option generation contained within the Nottingham City Council Social Exclusion Strategic Commissioning Review. This information was collated via individual meetings with providers, emailed questionnaires, feedback from forums (such as the VHF), specialised stakeholder focus groups and specifically focussed workshops (such as the frontline worker consultation event and service user engagement⁴).

The views of stakeholders have significantly contributed to the development of the strategy. Web based consultation on the draft was formally opened to the public and promoted via a range of web based communication channels across different organisations. During the consultation period, a number of service areas were visited to hold specifically focussed one-to-one and group feedback sessions with providers and service users.

During consultation we have delivered presentations and facilitated discussions at various local forums including the Public Health Forum, Voluntary Homelessness Forum, BME Housing and Homelessness Forum, Multi-Agency Forum on Refugees and Asylum Seekers and Domestic and Sexual Violence Voluntary Sector meeting. Additionally, we have held dedicated events for all partners and front line workers including a workshop facilitated by HLG and a One Nottingham lunchtime learning session.

Policy impact

The 2013 – 2018 Homelessness Prevention Strategy is directly related to the Housing Nottingham Plan (HNP) 2012 – 2015. There are overlapping areas of interest within the two documents, particularly regarding the Private Rented Sector and standards of accommodation. The Homelessness Prevention Strategy aims to provide further detail to the priorities pertaining to vulnerable people at risk of homelessness within 'Chapter three - Specialist housing and support' of the Housing Nottingham Plan.

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy evidences throughout its relevance in helping to deliver on the strategic priorities of the Nottingham Plan to 2020 and in doing so, achieving the 'aspirational' and 'fair' cross-cutting aims.

The 2012 government interdepartmental paper on homelessness: *Making Every Contact Count* set 10 challenges for Local Authorities to meet in order to be awarded a Gold Standard status in homelessness prevention. This Homelessness Prevention Strategy seeks to outline how Nottingham meets these local challenges to achieve Gold Standard status.

There are two major national policy changes that have had a considerable impact on the formation of this strategy and which have affected the drivers behind the strategy. These are the Localism Act 2011 and the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The changes, challenges and opportunities will be explored in detail as we continue to deliver an aspirational Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

There are many other important local and national policies, strategies, reviews, protocols and reports that have informed the directional development of this strategy. A full list of these can be found at [Appendix 2](#) and each is specifically referred to in the relevant sections of this document.

⁴ Much of the service user engagement for the Social Exclusion Strategic Commissioning Review was facilitated via an organisation called SEA (Services for Empowerment and Advocacy)...

Equality and Diversity

Nottingham City Council recognises that *our diverse community is a great asset to our City*.⁵

There are nearly 306,000 citizens living in Nottingham, of which 33.7% are not of a White British ethnicity. Half of all our households are formed from people of different and mixed ethnic backgrounds. Over a quarter of our households contain a person with a long term illness or disability. Nottingham has a young population with between a quarter to a third of our citizens aged between 18 and 29 years.

'Fair and Just Nottingham'; the Nottingham City Council equalities scheme for 2009 – 2012, set out aims for making services easier to access, to provide fair treatment to meet individual needs and to make Nottingham a place where everyone can achieve their potential. These objectives have now been integrated into the Nottingham Plan to 2020.

*We want Nottingham to have a renewed reputation for treating its citizens fairly – achieving equality of opportunity and valuing diversity*⁶

The 2013 – 2018 Homelessness Prevention Strategy echoes these aims. We seek to ensure that the development, access to and provision of services is inclusive for all of our citizens. We will be informed by organisations and forums that have front line contact with communities at risk of experiencing disadvantage and discrimination. We will identify groups that may be disproportionately affected by the threat of homelessness and target our responses appropriately.

This strategy has emerged through consultation with services working with, representing and advocating for citizens from a range of diverse backgrounds. An Equalities Impact Assessment ([Appendix 3](#)) has been developed for this Homelessness Prevention Strategy in order to ensure that it impacts positively on all groups, and amendments have been made to address specific issues raised.

1.7 Data analysis

Demographics

There are a number of factors that are widely recognised as increasing the risk of homelessness for a household. Nottingham is a city with pockets of high levels of deprivation and therefore the common risk indicators for homelessness are prominent within these areas of the city. A comprehensive breakdown of the city's demographics can be found at [Appendix 4](#). However, some of the key points are:

- The rate of people claiming all key out of work benefits in Nottingham (17.7%) is considerably higher than the regional (11.7%) and national (12.3%) averages. The Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claimant rate in Nottingham (6.3%) is higher than the regional (3.5%) and national (3.7%) averages
- The number of households containing a person with a long term illness or disability is slightly higher in Nottingham (27.1%) than the national average (25.6%). Similarly, the number of households containing a person claiming long term sickness or disability benefit is slightly higher in Nottingham (5.7%) than the national average (4%)
- Nottingham has a higher rate of people with common mental health problems than nationally. Local estimates suggest 46,000 adults in the city are experiencing a common mental health problem. This is a rate of 18.9 per thousand of the adult population
- In 2012, 1864 people were receiving treatment for substance misuse. This is a rate of 7.6 per thousand of the population. The national rate is 4.6

⁵ Nottingham City Council Equality and Diversity Policy

⁶ Nottingham Plan to 2020

- 69.6% of city children live in families who receive financial support from the government (43.4% national average)

It is clear from the profile of Nottingham as outlined above, that set against these factors, our citizens may be more susceptible to the threat of homelessness. Therefore, investing in homelessness prevention clearly needs to be a priority in our city.

Homelessness in Nottingham

For the snapshot of data used to inform this section, please refer to [Appendix 5](#).

For a number of years, Nottingham has experienced high levels of approaches for assistance to Housing Aid (lots of footfall). However, we take low numbers of homeless applications, especially in comparison to other core cities.

Of the homeless applications made, we accept three quarters and our homelessness prevention rates are higher than almost anywhere else in the country. This demonstrates that we are targeting our interventions appropriately. Maintaining low levels of homeless applications and achieving successes with homelessness preventions has been possible largely because Nottingham has developed the following coordinated approach:

- an effective system of assessment
- meaningful and productive partnerships
- the availability of a range of enhanced housing options
- Delivery of a more physically accessible housing options service than many of the other core cities

It is a concern however, that the number of people approaching Housing Aid for assistance has increased substantially in 2012. Additionally notable, is that Nottingham's rate of prevention activity is decreasing and positive action is becoming unsuccessful in preventing homelessness for a growing number of households. It is unsurprising that demand for services has increased in the aftermath of recession, cuts in the 'supporting people' element of the local authority formula grant and as the initial wave of welfare reforms begin to bite.

The challenge is that for the next few years, the economic environment is unlikely to be any different and could very well be worsening. In addition, the delayed impact of financial pressures on health and wellbeing and personal relationships could begin to show in many households.

Housing Aid seems to be reaching the limit of their capacity for the numbers of households they can physically see and assess in one day and in solutions they can offer. Therefore, there needs to be some serious consideration across the sector about the role of partners in providing earlier interventions and increased flexibility in preventative options.

Current provision

Nottingham offers a diverse range of services provided by partners and partnerships within the statutory, community, voluntary and faith sectors. In advance of the 2012 Strategic Commissioning Social Exclusion Review, the team developed a Market Map of services ([Appendix 6](#)). These services interact to form the system of Homelessness Prevention in Nottingham (including those crisis interventions that contribute to effective stabilisation and resettlement preventing repeat homelessness).

Nottingham City Council has a legislative requirement under the Housing Act 1996, Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) to provide accommodation to households who are homeless (or threatened with homelessness), who are considered to be in priority need, eligible for assistance, meet the local connection criteria for Nottingham and are unintentionally

homeless. This duty is fulfilled at Housing Aid following a thorough assessment of circumstance and need, and if one of the enhanced range of homelessness prevention housing options cannot be offered as a more suitable alternative option.

1.8 Reviewing the 2008 – 2013 Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Target	Commentary										
<p>Secure a reduction against the main causes of homelessness</p>	<p>Throughout the course of the 2008 – 2013 strategy, the main reason for homelessness has consistently been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents no longer willing or able to accommodate <p>No benchmark was set for this target but numbers have increased from 2008 rather than reduced as targeted. However, we must consider that this is one of the factors where it is difficult to identify measurable outcomes and the impact of interventions.</p> <p>The other main causes of homelessness over the course of the 2008 – 2013 strategy were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other relatives or friends no longer able or willing to accommodate • domestic violence • relationship breakdown • termination of assured shorthold tenancy • withdrawal of Home Office accommodation <p>There hasn't been a consistent trend amongst the prevalence of the featured main reasons for homelessness. However, it is noticeable that the termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy is more commonly becoming a cause of homelessness.</p>										
<p>Secure a year-on-year reduction in repeat homelessness</p>	<p>For monitoring purposes, Housing Aid collects data for occurrences of repeat statutory homelessness. These numbers have remained stable and consistently low over the course of the strategy. 10 households presented as repeat homeless in 2012/ 13. The criteria for this type of repeat homelessness is representation for a homeless application from settled accommodation within two years of rehousing following a homeless application.</p> <p>To achieve a reduction in repeat homelessness more widely, we have to understand more about repeat presentations. We know that monitoring repeat approaches is complex because of the reasons and frequency that households will attend a service (e.g. multiple approaches where there is no change in circumstance). Partners across the sectors need to establish exactly what they want to know, which agencies should be involved in supplying the data and for what purpose it will be used.</p>										
<p>Secure a year-on-year increase in homeless prevention outcomes</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="483 1711 810 1839"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Homeless prevention outcomes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2009 – 10</td> <td>4788</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010 – 11</td> <td>4620</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 – 12</td> <td>4215</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012 – 13</td> <td>4313</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We can see from the table (left⁷) that the number of homeless prevention outcomes achieved decreased between 2009 and 2012. This decline can be partly attributed to the Supporting People decommissioning of supported accommodation in 2010. Gateway placements make up a substantial proportion of homeless prevention outcomes and the reduction in bedspaces meant that less of these type of preventions were possible. We must also remember that</p>	Homeless prevention outcomes		2009 – 10	4788	2010 – 11	4620	2011 – 12	4215	2012 – 13	4313
Homeless prevention outcomes											
2009 – 10	4788										
2010 – 11	4620										
2011 – 12	4215										
2012 – 13	4313										

⁷ P1e data

	<p>seeking homeless prevention outcomes is demanding on time and resources within Housing Aid. In recent years this has been teamed with further demand from greatly increased numbers presenting for assistance.</p> <p>The data shows that the number of homeless preventions has increased in this last year of monitoring. This is likely to be the result of enhanced efforts to help maintain and secure accommodation in the Private Rented Sector and the earlier interventions of welfare rights and debt advice services. We have further measures in place (explored in more detail throughout this strategy) to try and maintain this annual increase in prevention activity.</p>
Secure a reduction in the number of regular rough sleepers in the City	<p>The number of rough sleepers (according to the official annual estimate) was 3 in 2008/ 09 and has risen to 7 in 2012/13. Clearly, there has been an increase in levels of rough sleeping in Nottingham since 2008, as there has been nationally. However, the rise in numbers in Nottingham is much less significant than that elsewhere nationally. This can be attributed to the coordinated combination of services that we deliver in response to people at risk of street homelessness. Without the early interventions of our partnership, we know that the numbers would be much higher (further information at page 59).</p>
Increase the number of people achieving independent living	<p>The national indicator for monitoring this has been abolished. Although this aim continued to underpin policy, commissioning and service delivery, partners have yet to agree upon and set measurable outcomes to monitor this target.</p>

The retraction of the Supporting People grant halfway through the course of the 2008 – 2013 Homelessness Prevention Strategy caused serious disruption to the implementation of the strategy. The funding landscape changed so drastically post 2010 that the focus of the SIG members and officers within Nottingham City Council had to shift to respond and deal with the impact of it.

Because of this, the city experienced challenges in the ownership, monitoring and governance of the targets set in the strategy. Internal restructures within Nottingham City Council saw the teams and groups responsible for monitoring dissolved. However, lessons have been learnt from this and the 2013 – 2018 Homelessness Strategy has put measures in place to ensure the continuation of target monitoring and to mitigate the possibility of slippage reoccurring. Additionally, despite the unexpected challenges, there have still been a number of successes achieved over the course of the 2008 – 2013 strategy, none the least maintaining our status as one of the countries leading local authorities for homelessness prevention and provision of enhanced housing options.

In 2012, the SIG members carried out a workshop event to review the progress of the 2008 – 2013 Homelessness Prevention Strategy delivery plan. The outcome of this was consensus that Nottingham was generally on course for achieving the actions set out in the strategy, where they were still relevant. For the summary of the action plan review, please refer to [Appendix 7](#).

Chapter 2 – Cross cutting Strategic Drivers

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 - 2018 is emerging in a challenging climate.

The economic downturn presents environmental factors that are likely to have a direct effect on levels of homelessness. Equally, the pressures placed on households by the recession will strain relationships and impact negatively on health and wellbeing. As a result, we can fully expect to see an increase in homelessness in the City.

This strategy will put in place measures to mitigate impact of these pressures as widely as possible. Key strategic drivers are identified which we will seek to understand as fully as possible in order to inform our strategic response and achieve our vision.

2.1 Mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform

This strategy has been developed in the midst of a government programme of austerity measures. These measures include a significant reform of policy relating to welfare provision. There doesn't seem to be any doubt across the sector of agencies supporting vulnerable people that these reforms will impact upon their service users.

This section explores some of the changes that have recently been made to the provision of benefits, primarily those enacted by the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act 2012. We seek to identify the predicted bearing on citizens in Nottingham and present Nottingham's strategy of managing the impact to prevent homelessness for those affected.

The scale of the reforms

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced the 2012 Welfare Reform Act as legislating for *"the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years"*⁸ yet the 'Homelessness Monitor' warns that *"any radical weakening in England's welfare protection is likely to have damaging consequences for homelessness"*⁹

The scale of the government's programme of austerity and welfare reform is likely to place such a notable pressure on household finances, that some will struggle to manage. One in five households in Nottingham are reliant or dependent on some form of benefit. For these citizens the reality is simple; if their income from benefits hasn't already reduced, it will do over the forthcoming years.

A diagram highlighting the timeline of implementation of the reforms, the impact on Nottingham and our planned response can be found at [Appendix 8](#).

Widespread impact and knock on effects

We recognise that reforms to welfare are going to impact widely, even on those households who previously may have never required additional support and advice to meet their housing needs. These households may seek out assistance, or they may be identified and offered advice. Either way, although this may only require a relatively low level of assistance, the numbers could be significant.

The knock-on effect of this is the application of further pressure on the capacity and resources of service providers.

It is essential however, that these households are provided with advice and assistance as an early intervention to prevent them from becoming the households further down the line who are in more complicated situations of housing need and threatened with homelessness.

Additional challenges

- The government's austerity programme may not yet be complete. Government has indicated their consideration of further reform, including cutting housing benefit in its entirety for anyone aged under 25 years of age and the introduction of residency criteria and restriction to benefits for migrants who haven't "paid in to the system" for the first year.
- The squeezes on household income will result in people having less spending power locally. This could have a knock on effect on the local economy which could lead to local businesses struggling, forcing redundancies and ultimately leading to further rises in unemployment

⁸ [Welfare Reform Act 2012 - DWP](#)

⁹ Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Hal Pawson, Glen Bramley and Steve Wilcox
Institute for Housing, Urban and Real Estate Research, Heriot-Watt University and Centre for Housing Policy, University of York,
December 2012, **The Homelessness Monitor: Great Britain 2012**

- In 2013 there is considerably less funding available for both accommodation based services for the homeless and non-accommodation based services for those at risk of homelessness. These were predominantly funded through the old Supporting People Grant regime. In 2011 Supporting People ceased to exist as a distinct funding stream with the 'Supporting People element' of the Formula Grant reduced by 45% (or £10m)
- Government has removed the ring fence for Homeless Directorate funding and it is to be rolled into business rates from 2013
- Government budget cuts are ongoing with a further £11.5bn saving to be made across departments in 2015 /16. Within the local authority there will continue to be an ongoing expectancy on all departments to make savings
- Funding mechanisms that have helped to fill the gaps left by budget cuts have a limited lifespan and are only guaranteed until midway through the course of this strategy

We must balance what is to come, in terms of reductions to real household incomes with what has already happened, in terms of reductions in funding for services. Ultimately, we have to find a way of maintaining a successful strategy of homelessness prevention in a time of reduced resources, decreased service provision yet substantial increases in demand and need for assistance from our citizens.

How do we prepare?

In Nottingham, there are four main principles behind the approach that is collectively being taken by partners to prepare for the general impact of cuts to household incomes and in doing so, preventing homelessness:

1. Predict and identify those likely to be effected
2. Ensure provision of advice, information and support services
3. Ensure access to these services for all citizens
4. Work in partnership to deliver messages and services in a consistent and effective way

It is crucial that partners in Nottingham are identifying the point in which their service has contact with a vulnerable person and which level of advice intervention is required to prevent the household from becoming homeless. There are three main stages of advice interventions:

- Early identification of groups or individuals that are likely to be affected
- Pre-crisis intervention when households are realising an impact
- Preventing repeat homelessness for individuals or families who have been rehoused

Familiarising ourselves with the work of our partners in the statutory, community, voluntary and faith sector is critical to be able to tap into each others expertise and capacity. We must also coordinate and maintain consistent messages to maximise service efficiencies, avoid duplication and provide assistance to the optimum number of service users.

Making every contact count

The principle behind much current national policy is the important role of the agency that is the first point of contact for a vulnerable person. Regardless of whom the agency is and whichever service area they may be in, it is their responsibility to provide a response. This agency has an obligation to make that contact count by ensuring that the correct assessment of circumstance is made and appropriate information and advice is provided (including management of referral to other services). To ensure this is possible for front line services, we must ensure that organisations within our partnerships are committed to this approach and workers are given the necessary tools and skills to intervene or refer effectively, including the information, access and understanding of pathways about other services.

What have we done so far?

We are delivering a focussed programme of work to prepare for specific elements of Welfare Reform:

- Delivered a communications campaign – “One Truth” message
- The design and introduction of Nottingham’s local Council Tax Support Scheme, Local Emergency Hardship Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments Policy

- Nottingham City Council has produced a 24 page guide to accessing help and support: [Changes to the welfare system : Nottingham City Council](#)
- Nottingham City Homes and other Registered Providers (RPs) in the City (including NCHA, TunTum and Places for People) have also produced booklets for their tenants as well as directly contacting those who they know will be affected
- Development of Advice Nottingham – a consortium of advice agencies providing a joined up approach to the delivery of advice: [Advice Nottingham | working together, achieving more](#)
- Launch of a petition to seek an amendment to the Welfare Reform Act 2012 to repeal the 'Bedroom Tax' changes to housing benefits and to lobby the Government to rethink its plans to cut housing benefit for thousands of citizens
- Nottingham City Council *Switch and Save Scheme* helping residents to save money on their fuel bills
- Set up a system for the coordination of quarterly data collection from all RPs to enable quarterly monitoring and analysis
- Work is underway with NCH and other RPs to prepare for the implementation of their rent recovery process and to scope the possible impact on homelessness and housing advice services
- Development of a draft Evictions Protocol between NCC and NCH and exploration of its adoption by all RPs to help deliver a consistent approach
- Reclassification of NCH stock – NCH have continued to review their housing stock in light of the revised allocations and lettings policy and changes to demand for property. This has resulted in some properties being reclassified in terms of size. This includes 1000 high rise flats and over 100 other properties where the additional bedroom is below a certain size
- Currently exploring a proposal to join up the housing advice and housing debt advice contracts into a single specialist service

Nottingham City Council commitments

Nottingham City Council commits to continuing a programme of:

- Working with partners to boost citizens financial capacity and access to affordable banking services. Including, promoting the use of Nottingham Credit Union – to develop products and accounts to help manage priority payments
- Helping to shape and coordinate communications with RPs the advice sector and faith groups and sharing contacts between departments to raise awareness of the changes
- Delivering awareness sessions across partners; front line colleagues and volunteers to create informed networks and sharing information to identify households that will be directly affected to offer support where we can
- Prepare early and write a local Delivery Partnership Agreement with Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), identifying who (across the sector) will deliver which specific support services to claimants requiring additional support with Universal Credit.
- Developing local policies to respond to the changes; influencing thinking through consultation responses; aligning all policy decisions on welfare reform; understanding impact and risk
- Continue to lobby government against some aspects of the Welfare Reform policy

Role of partners:

- Promote consistent messages
- Help people to understand and prepare by urging them to pay attention and respond to letters and information that they receive
- Tap into the support and advice that is available from Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes and other RPs, the advice sector (including advice Nottingham), Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesties Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Raise awareness of Nottingham Credit Union and the products that are available
- Utilise channels of communication with Nottingham City Council and partners to share information about what is happening on the ground

Welfare Reform Action Network

The SIG is supporting the development of a web based and virtual Welfare Reform Action Network as a shared information resource focussing on homelessness prevention and housing related issues. The network is being coordinated and administered by HLG but with key partners responsible for updating the site with information, knowledge and experience from their service area. The network will promote consistency in approach, monitor the impact and allow partners to respond quickly to emerging need. Reports and issues raised via the network will feed directly into the SIG agenda and allow for the implementation of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy delivery plan to be reviewed and amended in accordance with the changing environment.

Nottingham City Council's duty to provide advice and assistance

The homeless legislation places a duty on Nottingham City Council to provide up-to-date, robust and wide ranging advice and information to our citizens, not only about housing options but also the broad range of factors that can contribute to homelessness.

Reasons for housing need and homelessness can be such a complex combination of multiple environmental and personal circumstances. It would therefore, be impractical and ineffective for one service area to claim principal expertise and seek to provide all of this information. The Code of Guidance states that the duty to provide advice can be fulfilled by the local authority or through another agency on their behalf. Therefore, Nottingham City Council, promotes the effective referral to specialist services as well as providing advice and assistance via Housing Aid.

Notts Housing Advice

Nottingham City Council chooses to commission an independent housing and homelessness advisory service to help fulfil the duty to provide advice and assistance. The benefits of this are to help avoid conflicts of interest, ensure wider accessibility for citizens and maximise levels of expertise.

Over recent years Nottingham City Council has commissioned Notts Housing Advice to fulfil this function and the partnership has proven successful. Notts Housing Advice ensures their services are accessible through a 38 hour per week fully resourced drop in at a city centre location (and a weekly drop in session at Housing Aid), there is always a qualified advisor on duty, regular attendance at networking meetings and forums with cross sector organisations throughout the city. Notts Housing Advice distribute leaflets and posters and publicise the availability of the service through the local media.

Current advice provision

The provision of quality and consistent advice is now more essential than ever and all partners have a role to play in assisting Nottingham City Council meet this responsibility towards local citizens.

In addition to the services provided by Housing Aid and Notts Housing Advice, there is a range of additional advice services in Nottingham that extend far into many hard-to-reach communities.

Framework HA's crisis team provides urgent housing related support to people who are facing eviction, court proceedings or legal disputes, having problems with their landlord or struggling with debts and arrears. In addition to their own opening hours, they are also located at Housing Aid on a weekly basis.

The coordinated network of Faith-led community projects make an integral contribution to advice provision. Organisations such as Christians Against Poverty and Trent Debt Advice offer important front-line and outreach services and often can make contact with some of the most vulnerable local citizens who would not normally be proactive in accessing statutory or more 'mainstream' services. This Faith-led advice network are looking to work in closer partnership with Advice Nottingham. They are able to signpost and offer assistance with

budgeting, money management and less complex advice cases to help lessen the expected increase in demand to other services caused by welfare reform.

The role of social housing providers

Social Housing landlords are also well placed to offer key advice to their tenants. Nottingham City Homes provides comprehensive advice to their tenants via their financial inclusion service. Recently, the Nottingham City Improving Financial Confidence Partnership (led by Nottingham Community Housing Association) was awarded funding from the Big Lottery Fund. This funding has been used to introduce the *Sound as a Pound* financial inclusion initiative for social housing tenants aged 25 and under ([Home Page - Sound as a Pound](#)). The scheme includes completion of a personal financial health check to help become financially aware, more confident in money management and better able to access financial products and services such as a basic bank account. Additionally, there is the opportunity to access a 10 week training course in Money Matters. The initiative is demonstrating innovation through the use of information technology and social media to communicate with the target age group.

2.2 Utilising Nottingham’s housing market

Local housing market conditions have a direct effect on homelessness and a malfunctioning housing market can be a factor leading to homelessness. Therefore, the ability to access accommodation is clearly crucial to homelessness prevention.

This chapter explores:

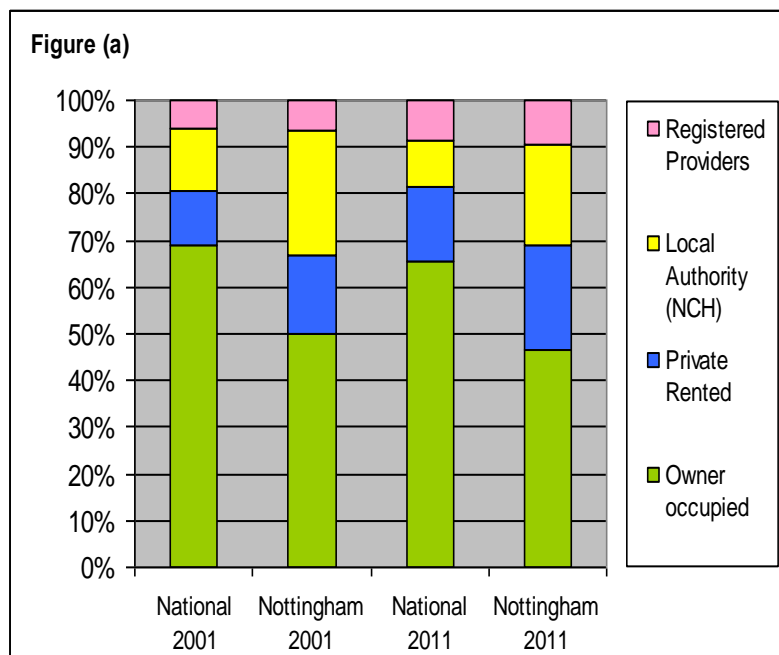
- the changed nature of Nottingham’s housing market
- the impact this has had on access to different tenures
- our strategy for addressing access to accommodation

Tenure analysis of the local housing market

Nottingham has a larger proportion of social housing, lower levels of owner occupation and a larger Private Rented Sector (PRS) than the national average. Figure (a) shows that the breakdown of tenure within the housing market in Nottingham is considerably different to that of the national average.

It is also apparent that the housing market in Nottingham has changed over the 10 years between the Census of 2001 and 2011:

- Home ownership for occupation has slightly declined
- Local Authority housing has reduced (although accommodation from Registered Providers has increased slightly)
- The Private Rented Sector has increased and in fact is now slightly larger than the Local Authority proportion of the market



Why has the market changed?

- Households aspiring to home ownership have been unable to get onto the property ladder due to difficulties in accessing mortgage finance. Since the credit crunch, mortgage interest rates have been low. However, banks have only been prepared to lend to households with a substantial deposit (up to 25% of the property value). The demographics of Nottingham's population show a large proportion of households with low incomes or who are reliant or dependent on benefits. Therefore, many households would not be able to meet the financial requirements for accessing a mortgage.
- A large proportion of Nottingham's housing market has historically consisted of council owned social housing. There has always been a demand for this tenure type and a local expectation amongst citizens that this is an available option to all households. The Right to Buy scheme has been a popular option for many tenants in Nottingham and by 2011 had reduced the council owned social housing stock by 5000 properties. Teamed with the lack of new supply of council owned social housing and the persistent high demand, this has considerably reduced availability. The decommissioning programme will reduce council owned social housing levels further with 1000 properties being demolished and the regeneration programme replacing only a proportion of these.
- The growth in the PRS has not necessarily happened because it is the tenure of choice. The inability for people to access home ownership and the lack of availability of social housing has left the PRS as the only option for many people either in housing need or simply moving on from the family home.

Access to accommodation

This section explores the issues facing access to different tenure types in Nottingham and how we seek to pose solutions to address them. However, as a point to remember at this stage, we must note that Nottingham encourages a mixed economy of housing options and solutions for our citizens. Flexibility and innovativeness in the approach taken to prevent homelessness are encouraged across our partnership and sectors providing that they align their outcomes with those required by this homelessness prevention strategy and complement and enhance the existing service provision.

Access issues - Supported accommodation

Demand seems to outweigh supply in both direct access and longer term specialist supported accommodation. There is quite a difference between the numbers of people referred to the gateway and the number of people who are placed. We know little of what happens to these people and therefore there is a danger that they have become 'hidden homeless'.

Number of people referred to the Gateway	1362
Number of people for whom overview assessments were completed	916
Number of people placed in direct access accommodation	366
Number of people placed in specialist supported accommodation	162

The reduction in the number of bedspaces available via the gateway since 2010 has consequently meant that the support need threshold for supported accommodation has risen. This has meant that the people being housed in the accommodation via the Homelessness Prevention Gateway are only those whom require the support it provides. However, there is a risk that people with some support needs have found the supported accommodation full but have also been considered as having too high support needs for other housing options available via Housing Aid (i.e. the Bond Scheme).

Residents of supported accommodation can face difficulties in accessing social housing or the PRS. Yet there remains a common perception from residents that they want to remain where

they are until social housing becomes available for them. This leads to bed blockages in supported accommodation by service users who are ready to move on but can't.

Addressing access issues – Supported accommodation

We must be clear that not all people threatened with homelessness or in housing need require direct access temporary accommodation or specialist supported accommodation.

However, when people are in crisis situations requiring an immediate accommodation solution and they have no other option, there is a crucial necessity for direct access supported accommodation. Equally, for those single people with support needs who are not ready to live independent of a supported environment, the provision of supported accommodation should be an integral part of the flexible system of housing solutions.

Homelessness Prevention Gateway

The introduction of the homelessness prevention gateway service at Housing Aid in 2007 was an important step in delivering a system that ensures only those citizens who require supported accommodation were placed. It meant that people with the highest levels of support need were prioritised and that once placed and assessed, proactive move on plans were established. The aim of this system was that people did not become 'trapped' in supported accommodation once they are ready to move on to more independent options, 'blocking' the bedspaces for those coming through the system.

A full evaluation of the Homelessness Prevention Gateway was conducted in 2009. This found that it was performing well in meeting most of its aims including; accessibility for service users, improved access for individuals with high need and with local connection to Nottingham, improved matching of clients to appropriate services, reduction in evictions from services, and an increase in positive move on from services. Recommendations were made for improving the capturing of data to make it more useful to inform commissioning and to help evidence outcomes. Progress is ongoing in the development of these action points.





The Homelessness Prevention Gateway is the access route into the majority of supported accommodation commissioned by Nottingham City Council. The Homelessness Prevention Gateway also retains service level agreements with providers such as YMCA who have been decommissioned as a result of budget reductions but who recognise the value of continued engagement with the service.

Remodelling of supported accommodation

The 2012 Strategic Commissioning Social Exclusion Review has remodelled supported accommodation provision within the city.

Non-statutory supported accommodation

Following consistency in feedback from stakeholder consultation, Nottingham City Council commissioning team alongside partners across the VCFS, have co-productively designed a new system of provision to better meet the needs of vulnerable single people in the city who are at risk of homelessness (but who do not meet priority need criteria under the homelessness legislation). The new model ([Appendix 9](#)) was developed with an emphasis on flexibility, throughput and empowerment and includes the following elements:

Change		Why?
A more clearly defined response to the needs of homeless citizens who are assessed as capable of maintaining independent accommodation directly as distinct from those who first require a period of stability and support		To avoid the need for entry into mixed need hostel accommodation for those assessed as capable of maintaining independent accommodation without prior support
		To enable those with support needs to access support to promote stabilisation and to overcome barriers to regaining and then maintaining independent accommodation
Discrete complex / high needs provision within emergency direct access provision		To provide greater supervision and more intensive support to those individuals with chaotic behaviour
		To reduce negative impact on individuals within the broader population of those using direct access provision, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeing up staff to work with users • Improving the experience of citizens accessing hostels
A reduction overall in the number of direct access units (85 down from 127 currently delivered) balanced by a substantial increase in specialist provision (133 up from 74)		To deliver an overall increase in capacity to respond to demand for temporary accommodation
Changes to specialist services in accordance with the profile of barriers to independence identified among citizens in need		To reduce the number of people living in mixed need accommodation and increase the number in services designed to address particular barriers to independent living
Increased use of cluster accommodation designed to better prepare citizens for independent living		To increase access to temporary living arrangements with greater similarity to (i.e. to prepare people to move on to) settled accommodation
Greater flexibility over accommodation utilised to deliver support		To offer opportunities to remain in accommodation following the withdrawal of support where appropriate (e.g. to avoid loss of stability caused by move to alternative accommodation)

The remodelling of supported accommodation provision has been designed to incorporate effective exit pathways into independent living (with or without Independent Living Support Services). This is a crucial part of the move on process and instrumental in preventing repeat homelessness and at the same time, increasing throughput. The new model therefore, has direct links with the enhancements made to Housing Aid's Private Rented Assistance Scheme (PRAS) (page 30).

The statutory and VCFS service providers who work with the people that are to be moving through this flexible system of accommodation provision, have a crucial role in providing clarity of options to service users and promoting consistent messages.

Where possible and when deemed most suitable, move on to social housing remains an option. Residents of supported accommodation are given a Band 3 status with HomeLink and further work is planned to review the extent to which former tenant arrears create a barrier to social housing.

However, the fact remains that there is not enough social housing for residents of supported accommodation to wait for when they are ready to move on. It is recognised that to alter perceptions and aspirations there must be a suitable alternative solution. The PRAS (page 30)

provides this solution and its benefits and access routes must be made available to people exiting supported accommodation wherever possible.

The accommodation services provided under the new model will be contracted from December 2013. It is anticipated that there will be a substantial period of transition from existing service delivery to that of the new model. Strategic commissioners are developing risk management and communication plans and will continue to consult effectively with service providers to minimise dislocation consequences during transition.

Key stakeholders across the sector who have been involved in the development of the model from the onset have an ongoing role on the steering group. They will oversee the implementation of the model and ensure that the strategic outcomes from the commissioning process carry through into the procurement process and on into the measurement frameworks of contract compliance.

Individual Support Fund

Information generated from assessments conducted by the Homelessness Prevention Gateway indicates that the majority of citizens assessed as in need of temporary accommodation are likely to be capable of progressing directly into settled accommodation. Therefore, for those assessed as having no or low support needs, they will be diverted down appropriate alternative pathways. Included within the new supported accommodation model is a pilot fund to be delivered flexibly to provide individual solutions to single homeless adults with low support needs. The fund will be administered by Housing Aid for the pilot year with continuation thereafter the subject of a review.

Access issues - Social housing

Historically, social housing has made up a large proportion of the housing market in Nottingham and levels of this tenure type have been well above the national average. As a result, it has been commonplace for households in Nottingham to view social housing as a preferred tenure of choice and this automatically raises demand for the properties.

Nottingham currently has underway a programme of decommissioning and regeneration in the city which will see a reduction in Nottingham City Homes (NCH) managed social housing and will mean all of the displaced tenants are prioritised for rehousing via HomeLink.

Preparations for the introduction of the under occupancy charge element of Welfare Reform, will also remove smaller sized properties from the stock through the facilitation of transfers for those existing tenants whom are affected and have chosen to move. Additionally, rising levels of statutory homeless acceptances are meaning more households in HomeLink's priority band (Band One) and council owned stock levels continue to decrease through the take up of the enhanced levels of discounts available via Right to Buy. The result of this is a waiting list that once past the first few categories of prioritisation, becomes stagnant and consists of households with no realistic chance of accessing social housing.

A risk here is that households may have been unsuccessful on the waiting list for such a long time that they exhaust their alternative options (such as lodging with friends and family). If they have been relying on social housing as their only option, the lack of turnover and supply can lead them falling into housing need and being threatened with homelessness. This could lead to an increase in homeless applications and demand for temporary or supported accommodation and increased length of stay for those in it.

Yet no matter how many more applicants there are within the higher bands, there will remain the same number of properties available for allocation which will mean people in more urgent housing need will be waiting longer for their allocation of social housing.

Addressing access issues – social housing

It is undeniable that demand substantially outweighs supply of social housing in Nottingham. The 'supply' chapter of the Housing Nottingham Plan (HNP) addresses the shortages of social housing through the new self-financing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) arrangements for the redevelopment of decommissioned and demolished sites.

Nottingham City Council remains committed to its Manifesto Pledge of "*using all our planning powers to encourage developers to build large family houses, keep family homes for families*". However, the HNP also acknowledges the increasing limitations there are in availability of social housing for single people. It therefore, sets an action to fully understand future housing market needs of single people via a task and finish study of single persons' housing needs and supply. The SIG will have an important role in contributing to this study.

Allocations policy review 2013

The Localism Act 2011, gives local authorities more powers and flexibilities to set their own allocations policies according to assessment of local need. The 2013 review of the allocations policy sought to utilise these new powers to make changes which meet the current needs of Nottingham people and help social landlords maximise use of their housing stock.

At the beginning of 2013, the HomeLink waiting list held nearly 12,000 applicants; yet in 2012 there were only 2006 allocations of accommodation. The Allocations Policy has been reviewed to produce a more efficient, customer focussed result. The changes will mean that more people have a realistic chance of accessing housing solutions by ensuring that those local households in most housing need are given access to the waiting list and by providing housing options advice for all other households. Amendments to the Policy include; introducing a housing need qualifying criteria, a 3 year residency criteria, restrictions for unacceptable behaviour and disqualifying home owners. The review also proposes sanctions for those applicants who are not bidding or bidding incorrectly and who refuse reasonable offers.

Crucially, partners working to support applicants should familiarise themselves with the terms of the new allocations policy to ensure that those people they are supporting on the waiting list are maximising their opportunities to secure social housing and those who would not be eligible to join the waiting list are provided with alternative housing options advice.

Addressing under-occupancy and over-crowding

Since January 2010, Nottingham has committed funding from the CLG towards NCH for the delivery of the Rightsize project. Based within the HomeLink team, the Rightsize project works to identify and assist people transferring into more suitably sized accommodation. This is achieved through intensive support, proactive housing advice and utilisation of Homeswapper to identify potential mutual exchange matches. The team also works closely with RPs to share ideas and good practice and ensure a consistent approach. In February 2013, the team held the HomeLink inclusion event which promoted the use of Homeswapper and hosted a 'speed dating' type session to help facilitate mutual exchanges. In 2011 / 12, the Rightsize team visited 293 underoccupied and overcrowded households and helped to facilitate 68 moves.

This service is considered essential in 2013 as a coordinator and facilitator of solutions for social housing tenants effected by the underoccupancy charge.

Tenancy Sustainment Strategy

Through the implementation of the 2012 – 2015 Tenancy Sustainment Strategy, NCH are helping to prevent evictions, abandonment and negative housing experiences which can lead to homelessness. The strategy outlines an approach of partnership working whereby vulnerabilities or trigger incidents are identified and the appropriate interventions are put in place to avoid tenancy failure.

The strategy highlights the work of financial inclusion officers, housing patch managers, rent account managers, independent living coordinators and partnerships with voluntary sector

agencies, Family Intervention Project (FIP), NCC Childrens Services, Advice Nottingham and MARAC. These roles and partnership offer a comprehensive package of support in the following areas:

- Pre tenancy support
- Vulnerable tenants
- Maximising income
- Proactive and sensitive housing management
- New tenancy support
- Sustainable communities
- Improving employability
- Income management
- Tackling fuel poverty
- Information and communication
- Improving financial capability – Money matters

Supporting vulnerable people to sustain tenancies protocol

In 2011, Housing Aid piloted a protocol with NCH titled *Supporting vulnerable people to sustain tenancies*. This protocol contained two elements:

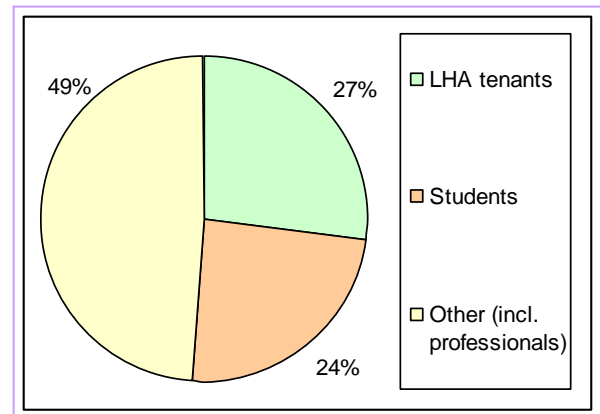
- identifying new tenants who are vulnerable and ensure the appropriate support is in place
- identifying vulnerable households that are at risk of eviction for rent arrears and ensure they are supported to address their arrears

The use of this protocol is now more important than ever. The protocol has been refreshed alongside the NCH Tenancy Sustainment Strategy and will be again in line with the new allocations policy towards the end of 2013.

Access issues - Private Rented Sector

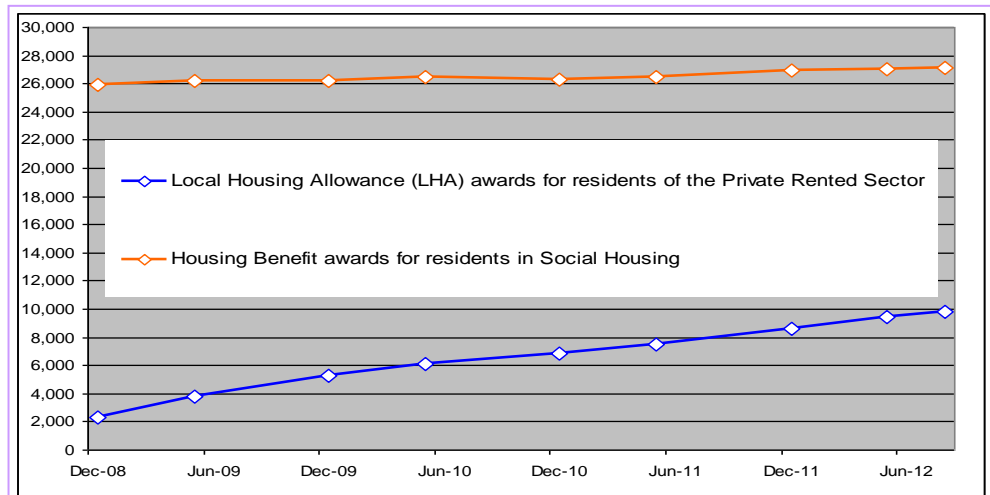
Households who are unable to access mortgage finance to get on the property ladder and households who are unable to access social housing are both seeking housing in the PRS. This means that low income / benefit dependent households may be in competition with working people for the same properties.

The chart (right) shows the approximate breakdown of the PRS. There is much speculation nationally about whether PRS landlords are becoming increasingly opposed to renting their properties to households in receipt of benefits and are able to make this stance because of the demand for the properties from working people and students. Additionally, recent reports have suggested that mortgage lenders are increasingly imposing restrictions that stop PRS landlords renting to people on benefits.



The introduction of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in April 2008 was the first point of concern for PRS landlords as this heralded the concept of direct payments to tenants and caps in allowance depending on household size.

However, the chart (right) shows continued growth in awards of LHA in Nottingham which indicates an increase in PRS landlords accepting tenants in receipt of benefits. Whether the number of local landlords accepting LHA is reflective of the level of demand for this tenure type, is harder to assess.



Ongoing concerns are around landlords not being willing to accept younger single people as tenants because of the increase of the shared room rate to aged 35. Also, that PRS landlords will be overly cautious in renting to people on benefits because of their uncertainty about the Welfare Reform agenda.

We hear from local landlords that generally money is the main motivating factor in agreeing to let their property to a tenant. This is in the form of a cash deposit and payment of rent in advance. We know that our landlords can be reluctant to let their property to a homeless person, or a person on benefits without some sort of intermediary service offering assurances and incentives. However, our more vulnerable and socially excluded citizens can have difficulties in obtaining a bond required for a deposit or rent in advance, identifying suitable and *decent* accommodation and negotiating tenancy details with landlords. Therefore, accessing the PRS can be a challenging, frustrating and intimidating process for many.

We are aware that the PRS is becoming the sector we are increasingly relying upon as a solution to meet the housing needs of our citizens and yet it is the sector we know least about, have least control to influence it and it is subject to fluctuations in the market where supply and demand influences price. However, it cannot be denied that this sector currently poses options and solutions where others have limitations and our citizens will be seeking accommodation here. Therefore, it is important that we do all within our power across our partnerships to try and regulate the sector where possible, improve standards and link in the necessary support for people housed in this accommodation.

PRS Assistance Schemes are fundamental in enabling better access to the PRS. However, the current service delivery does not have the capacity to meet demand. The numbers of citizens approaching Housing Aid for assistance as homeless or threatened with homelessness have rapidly increased over recent years but the increase in the number of people assisted through the PRS Assistance Schemes is not reflective of this scale.

Additionally, services users and front line workers have given feedback that indicates that the differences between the versions of the schemes available are unclear and the scheme exist with pre-prescribed acceptance criteria which struggles to allow for a flexible approach. As a result, the assistance schemes are viewed by external organisations and service users as over complicated and often inaccessible.

Addressing access issues – Private Rented Sector

Private Rented Sector Offers (PRSOs)

Nottingham City has adapted its allocations policy to make use of the powers introduced by the Localism Act 2011 to make offers of private rented accommodation as a way of discharging homelessness duty. Nottingham City Council has drafted a procedure for making Private Rented Sector Offers ([Appendix 10](#)). The procedure is very broadly reflective of the current arrangements for allocating social housing following a Housing Act 1996, Part VII acceptance. However, the new ability to rehouse people into the PRS also brings with it additional benefits for homeless applicants, including enhancing the opportunity to facilitate suitable accommodation for households into areas of their choice and provide them with a faster housing solution. This procedure has been approved by NCC Executive Board and is due to be implemented Summer 2013.

The Nottingham Standard (for landlord accreditation)

Agencies who work with vulnerable people are frequently voicing their concerns about the quality and standard of some of the PRS accommodation inhabited by their service users. Levels of decency in PRS homes have improved in Nottingham, but it is easy for them to slip out of decency and below standards defined within the Housing Act 2004. Difficulties emerge because the local authority has little power to intervene and regulate accommodation in the PRS (other than enforcement powers contained within the Housing Act 2004 to take legal action against the worst rogue landlords).

The Housing Nottingham Plan 2013 – 2015 has a chapter dedicated to raising standards in housing. *“Our approach to improving the PRS will be a mixture of pro-active engagement with the sector and, where necessary, enforcement”*

The Housing Nottingham Plan identifies the key tool in lifting standards to be landlord accreditation. Accreditation is a set of standards relating to the management and physical condition of accommodation. Properties are inspected to ensure that they are meeting this standard. There are currently two accreditation schemes operating in the city (DASH landlord accreditation and Unipol Student Homes). However, the overall coverage of accreditation is only approximately 10 -12%. Nottingham City Council is working to bring the existing schemes under an overall umbrella of a “Nottingham Standard”. The phased implementation of the Nottingham Standard began in February 2013. By the end of 2013, a register of accredited landlords will be made available so Nottingham citizens and partners can check if a rented property is offered by an accredited landlord.

Additional Licensing

Nottingham City Council is committed to ensuring safe and affordable PRS accommodation and believes that additional licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in designated areas will assist in achieving this goal. Therefore, Nottingham City Council is currently consulting on a proposal for the introduction of this.

PRS Assistance Schemes (PRAS)

For some time, Housing Aid has delivered two main PRAS: The Bond Scheme and Rent Guarantee Scheme. Between these schemes, a large number of households have received assistance to access accommodation in the PRS. Homelessness prevention via a PRAS is an indicator that each local authority must report back to central government and Nottingham is amongst the top performing local authorities in the country for preventing homelessness in this way. Nottingham’s rate of homelessness prevention via our PRAS is:

- Increasing *year to year* whilst the national average rate is decreasing
- Increasing despite the total rate of those *assisted to obtain alternative accommodation* decreasing
- Increasing despite the *total prevention and relief* rate decreasing
- Increasing despite the *number of cases where positive action was unsuccessful in preventing / relieving homelessness* also increasing

Demand for a PRAS is likely to continue to increase and we must ensure that there is the capacity to respond. As a result of the Social Exclusion Strategic Commissioning review and an internal review and reconfiguration of service provision at Housing Aid, from 2013 there is to be an expanded and enhanced PRAS delivered by a bolstered team operating from Housing Aid. There will be a full communication plan to launch the details of the scheme across our partnerships. The new scheme is to include the following elements:

- The merging together of the existing schemes to leave one clear access pathway to PRS accommodation (promoted effectively and thoroughly to stakeholders)
- Replacement of the set eligibility criteria with a scale/ range of tailor made approaches and processes according to individual assessments. To be achieved through applying a range of incentives and conditions to the tenancy/ landlord/ tenant and a gold, silver and bronze level of service provision
- Development of a process to assist and support the tenant to save their own bond over the duration of the tenancy (i.e. through links with Nottingham Credit Union). This will enable them to remain in the property once the Bond Guarantee period has expired or alternatively, to have funds for the bond in a new tenancy should that time arise
- Expansion of the landlord market involved with the scheme
- The linking of the scheme with the forthcoming landlord accreditation scheme – *The Nottingham Standard*, providing a range of incentives and advice to landlords and a minimum standard of accommodation decency for the tenant

- Joint working with existing services such as the NCH *RightSize* scheme to enable access to further housing options advice for local citizens registered on the HomeLink waiting list
- The provision of a service (similar to Framework's *Smartmove*) to facilitate single people, (particularly those aged under 35) forming and joining shared houses of a decent standard
- Incorporation of the use of peer support / befriending / (ILSS) / key support services where appropriate

The PRAS and supported accommodation

The enhanced PRAS has a pivotal role in the new supported accommodation model. It will provide one of the key exit routes for those able to move on from supported accommodation into independent living environments. The Housing Aid team will work closely with the gateway and accommodation providers to ensure the availability and suitability of properties can be accessed and appropriate support provision facilitated.

The properties secured via the PRAS where appropriate, will help to fulfil the provision of 'cluster' type support accommodation. This will enable an efficient transference of support provision from accommodation provider to ILSS provider, or to no support, without the household actually moving into an alternative property or area.

Nottingham City Homes PRS leasing project pilot

NCH is considering a range of options to diversify its business into the PRS. The reasons for doing so include:

- Many people cannot afford a mortgage or to pay the deposit for a mortgage
- There is a static or even shrinking supply of social rented housing
- Many applicants on HomeLink have little or no realistic prospect of getting social rented housing. Market rents are often too high and landlords can be reluctant to let to those on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits. An NCH offer within the PRS could be a suitable alternative

NCH aims initially to secure and manage a small number of properties during 2013, working with landlords to embed processes and develop a package that would be attractive to the sector and potential tenants, and work for NCH. There will be a full evaluation after six months. This will inform NCH of the issues involved in running a PRS lettings and management service including the potential demand, workload and resources required going forward.

NCH intends to charge landlords a fee / commission for the services it provides with the intention that the scheme will eventually become self financing.

Role of all partners

Providers of advice and support in the housing and homelessness sector have a substantial role to play in assisting access to and delivery of PRS accommodation.

We know that there are agencies within the VCFS that support citizens into accommodation in the PRS and the contribution of this is recognised and valuable. However, it is essential that there is consistency across all sectors in the advice given in regard to rights and responsibilities as tenants, acceptable standards of decency of accommodation and levels of expectation. We do not want any of our citizens (especially those who are most vulnerable) being assisted into PRS accommodation that is below standard. Therefore, this strategy recommends that the principles of the *Nottingham Standard* are extended to the use of PRS accommodation by NCC Adult and Children's Services in their placements of vulnerable people (including those with No Recourse to Public Funds where there is a duty to accommodate) and by G4S in the fulfilment of their contract with the Home Office for the provision of accommodation for Asylum Seekers.

Information about the PRS, the PRAS and the *Nottingham Standard* must be made widely available to assist partners in delivering advice to citizens. This will be facilitated partly through the implementation of an online information portal and development of a range of literature

aimed at both tenants and landlords. Options to increase information access for specific groups are to be considered, including the use of social media, translations and targeted promotion.

Partners also have a collective role to play in promoting the PRAS and the *Nottingham Standard* to landlords to recruit use of their properties (including to help bring empty properties back into use) and deliver increased options to our citizens.

The role of Independent Living Support Services (ILSS)

Independent Living Support Services (ILSS) are what were previously known as floating support. ILSS have two specific roles:

- To prevent the loss of accommodation
- To help people access and sustain accommodation

ILSS are support services which help vulnerable citizens improve their quality of life and wellbeing by enabling them to live as independently as possible in their community. It is typically 'upstream' support; provided to people in order to prevent them requiring a more intensive or institutional form of support or care.

ILSS are an intrinsic part of the system of housing options. These services provide both an intervention which prevents homelessness and a necessary stepping stone stage for households between supported accommodation and living independently of support. This is crucial for transition through the system and often integral to successful rehousing from supported accommodation.

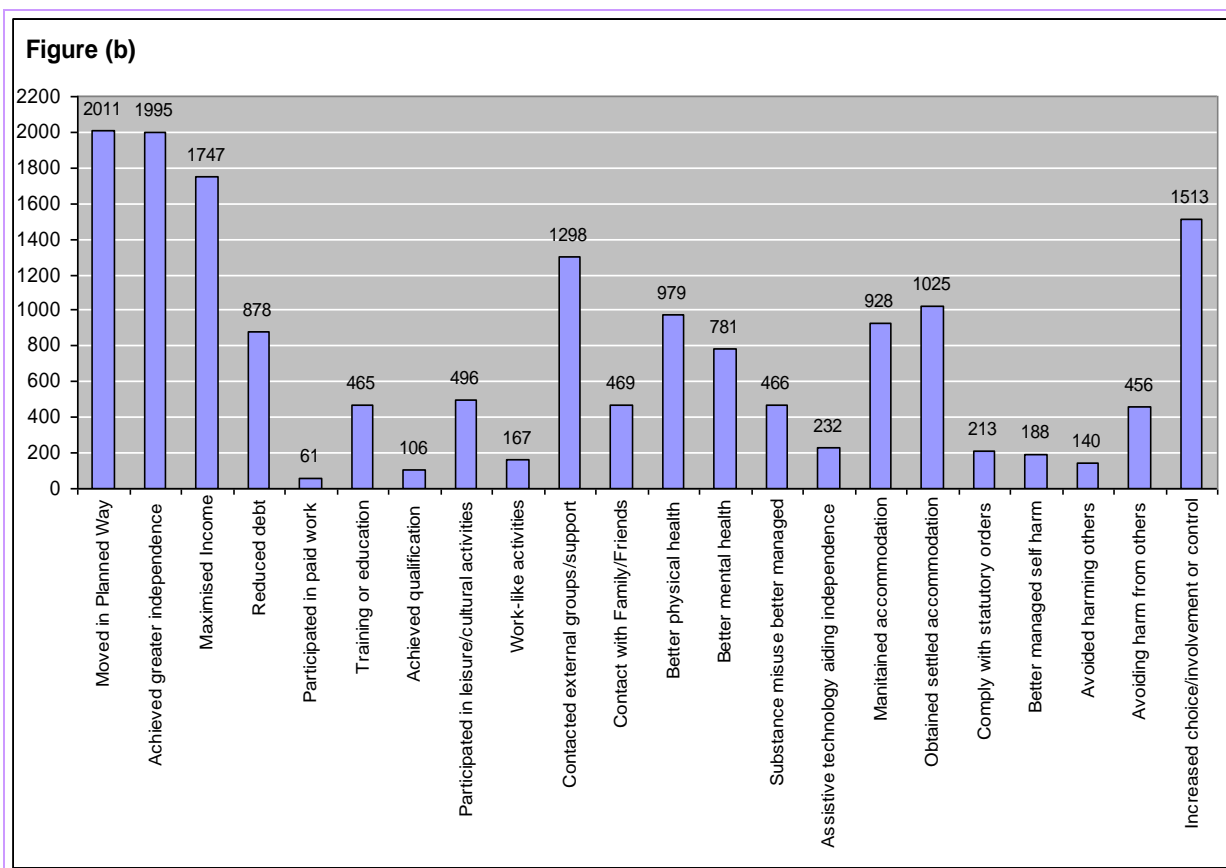
One of the cross-cutting aims of the Nottingham Plan is:

"We want to raise the aspirations of all across the city, particularly those who have felt excluded for too long. This is at the heart of our ambition to 'break the cycle' of inter-generational poverty in Nottingham...Nottingham will only fulfil its potential as a city when all of its people feel able to take responsibility for their own lives"¹⁰

ILSS are crucial in helping to achieving this aim and equally to a programme of homelessness prevention. If households are not provided with the appropriate level of support to help them maintain their housing or resettle into new housing, their tenancies are much more likely to fail. This can often result in episodes of repeat homelessness. In 2011 / 12, over 2500 households in Nottingham received support via ILSS. The profile of recipients of this provision is often those who are experiencing greatest disadvantage.

By focusing on addressing issues such as tenancy sustainment, financial inclusion and health and well-being, ILSS have a substantive role in addressing cumulative disadvantage, inter-generational poverty and deprivation and creating a wealthier, fairer Nottingham. Figure (b) shows the outcomes achieved by ILSS service users in 2011 / 12.

¹⁰ The Nottingham Plan to 2020



The provision of ILSS has changed considerably over the last five years. Levels of funding for social exclusion ILSS are now at around 45% of that of 2008 / 09.

In September 2008, Framework HA introduced the Central Access Point (CAP) in Nottingham to provide a single point of access for referrals to social exclusion focussed ILS services. The CAP has generally been well received and successful in achieving efficiencies in service delivery.¹¹

The CAP receives a considerable number of telephone enquiries (anything up to 200 per week) and approximately 40% of those enquiries turn into a referral for support. This does raise issues in the capacity of the service to deliver in the wake of this demand and some concerns have been raised from other service providers within the sector about the length of time households are waiting for contact and support to begin once referrals are made. Framework HA does insist though that where delays do occur, all clients are directed to the regular drop in sessions in order that no-one is left without an option of accessing support urgently.

Nottingham City Council is currently developing a new framework for the provision of ILSS. Providers on the framework will be able to partake in a tender process when actual services (contracts) are called for. The new ILS services are expected to be in place from around Summer 2013. The new framework will host providers of innovative services that are able to think beyond traditional provision and can meet the growing need in the city whilst delivering the required outcomes. The services will be flexible, choice based and preventative in focus where possible. They will put the citizen and their family at the heart of delivery.

The framework will support a mix of services that consist of:

- Crisis response / drop in / brief intervention

¹¹ Framework turnaround figures for 2012:

1. average time from CAP receiving application to referred to service = 0 days
2. average time for service receiving referral to interview / assessment = 4 days
3. average time from completed assessment to offer of 1st appointment 5 days

- Resettlement support
- Ongoing emotional and practical support
- Accommodation finding support
- Mentoring and befriending
- Identification of vulnerable people unlikely to otherwise access support

Mortgage Rescue Scheme

So far in this strategy we have looked at increasing access to available housing options. However, providing a homelessness prevention option which assists households to remain in the homes they own is a critical element of our local agenda. The disruptive effect of a repossession on a household (particularly one containing children) is immense and we must ensure we have a process of providing assistance to avoid these circumstances.

Since 2009, Nottingham has offered a homelessness prevention solution to struggling home owners in the shape of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. In addition, Housing Aid ensures all households whom have been issued with a mortgage possession claim are contacted and offered advice about their options.

Mortgage Rescue is a national government led scheme administered in the East Midlands by East Midlands Housing Association (EMHA) with grant funding via the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). One of the main elements of the scheme is mortgage to rent. This is where EMHA take referrals from Housing Aid for households who are in mortgage difficulty and are on a course to eventual repossession. EMHA work with a number of Registered Providers who can purchase the properties from these households (subject to a number of conditions), repair them and then rent them back to the occupier.

The main advantage of mortgage to rent is that households are able to stay in their own home at a lower cost, avoiding homelessness and debt and also the stress and disruption of moving. Since its inception, Nottingham has completed 51 Mortgage Rescues and is in the top five Local Authorities in the country for delivery of the scheme. An additional 232 households have been assisted with advice, signposting and referrals or payments via the repossession fund held by Housing Aid.

Housing Aid has hosted the existing national scheme successfully and proved the scheme's value for local citizens. Nottingham City Council has now been invited to consider creating a locally based scheme and is currently considering a model under which NCH would take on the management of the rescued property upon completion. If agreed, NCH would become a provider in 2013 / 14.

Nottingham views Mortgage Rescue as a worthwhile homelessness prevention option with minimal financial and operational risks and numerable benefits to the household (particularly children and families, helping to maintain stability and continuity of education). Although, at this time funding is only guaranteed for 2013 / 14, Nottingham intends to continue facilitating its provision as long as HCA grants continue to remain available.

2.3 Tackling unemployment

Links between unemployment and homelessness

It is widely recognised that unemployment can be both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. Many homeless people lack the skills and qualifications necessary for sustained employment. For those who have previously been successfully employed, the experience of homelessness can be so destructive and demotivating that their skills can quickly become defunct.

“Most homeless people have multiple labour market disadvantages and almost all have low employability”¹²

A prevalence of additional support needs such as physical or mental health problems and alcohol / substance misuse can also form barriers in preventing homeless people gain skills or employment. We know that a disproportionate number of offenders are unemployed. For these people with long term benefit dependency and also a history of offending, accessing employment can be increasingly challenging.

In *Making Every Contact Count*, the government recognises that employment can be the key to exiting homelessness:

“Wherever possible, the best route forward for homeless households is for them to gain confidence, skills and the means to support themselves through paid employment”¹³

Commitment four within *Making Every Contact Count* outlines the steps that the government intends to take to support vulnerable people into employment. This includes ensuring early access to the Work Programme for homeless people, utilising voluntary sector expertise to adapt the Work Capability Assessment for homeless people and creating a clear vocational route from education or unemployment to employment. Government also commits funding in the form of the Flexible Support Fund (for district managers of JobCentre Plus to commission additional support from local partners to overcoming barriers for the most disadvantaged claimants), the Community Learning Budget, and Investing in a World Class Skills System.

The Nottingham Plan clearly identifies the importance of tackling unemployment in strategic priority four – tackle poverty and deprivation by getting more local people into good jobs:

“The aim of this strategic priority is to help more adults into work to lift them out of poverty and low income...by doing so, we also lift children out of poverty and help to build a stronger culture of work and responsibility in a new generation”¹⁴

What have we been doing to tackling unemployment?

Independent Living Support Service (ILSS) outcomes

Accessing Education, Training and Employment (ETE) is a desired outcome within the support plans for service users of supported accommodation and ILSS in Nottingham. Within ILSS service specifications, Nottingham City Council funded providers are expected to encourage service users into education, training and employment opportunities. This is monitored via review of support plans during validation visits and through quarterly outcomes monitoring.

¹² [Work and Skills - Causes and consequences - Crisis](#)

¹³ Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), August 2012, **Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness**

¹⁴ The Nottingham Plan to 2020

In 2011 / 12, participating in paid work was identified as a support need for 239 service users of ILSS. This is 9% of the total number of ILSS service users. This outcome was only successfully achieved by 25% of the service users with the identified need. Outcomes for those identified with a support need of training / education and work-like activities (volunteering) were slightly more successful at 67% and 65% respectively.

Funding reductions to both ILSS and supported accommodation have consequently led to a rise in the level of support needs threshold of the vulnerable people accessing these services (i.e. service users have higher and more complex support needs). Contracts for a significant number of ILSS and supported accommodation providers expect a three month turnaround. To maintain throughput at this level it is difficult for providers to address a longer term issue such as securing work because the time must be spent on addressing the other more immediate support needs.

Feedback from service users has indicated that the higher rent and service charge cost of living in support accommodation is a disincentive for seeking employment. Often this is simply a perception because of the small amount of disposable income left after rent and service charges are paid compared to the effort put into the work. Where this is the case, further support must be provided in completion of financial health check comparisons and to motivate residents to understand the longer term benefits of sustaining employment. However, sometimes the additional costs of employment (for example travel or clothing) can tip the balance. We must put resources in place to ensure that where residents of supported accommodation want to work, that they are not financially better off on benefits.

Some accommodation based support workers report that they have actually discouraged residents from seeking work prior to moving into independent accommodation because working would exclude them from applying for a community care grant when they would clearly be in need of one. The new Localised Hardship Fund has overcome this barrier to work by ensuring that all supported accommodation leavers are given support in setting up their new home upon positive move on.

Trailblazer partnership pilot

In 2012, Nottingham City Council took part in a partnership pilot with local Jobcentre Plus to deliver *the support for very long term unemployed trailblazer*. The trailblazer was established for claimants who had reached the end of their mandatory two year participation on the Work Programme. It was anticipated that forming a partnership between Jobcentre Plus and key departments within the local authority would complement the delivery of more intensive support to people facing additional barriers to accessing employment. The outcome of the trailblazer was that homelessness was not a barrier for the long term unemployed in Nottingham with only a handful of claimants (out of a potential few hundred) identifying homelessness or housing as a support need. However, the concept of the Jobcentre Plus working in partnership with other key agencies to address support needs which are identified as a barrier to employment, if more effectively targeted, remains desirable.

Employment Broker service

Up until March 2012, Nottingham City Council, in partnership with Framework HA, commissioned the provision of an employment broker service based at Housing Aid. The service was designed to assess the employability of service users of the Homeless Prevention Gateway and engage them with 'ready for work' courses and eventually sustained employment options. The decision was taken not to extend the funding for this service past 2012.

Although the service reported "largely positive outcomes", the main issue impacting delivery of outcomes was that it was targeted at Homelessness Prevention Gateway service users (i.e. individuals who are likely to have other support needs). Once again, it was evident that for these service users, there were other more imminent support needs that needed addressing to achieve effective resettlement before ETE opportunities could be considered. However, the decommissioning of this service has left a notable gap in the procurement of services

specifically designed to address the ETE needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Nottingham City Council employability initiatives

Nottingham City Council as an employer are responsible for a range of employability initiatives, which sit under the umbrella of the Employability Career Pathway. The Employability Career Pathway is how the Council as the city's largest employer, supports entry level opportunities and vacancies at the Council. It currently encompasses employability initiatives such as work experience, volunteering, traineeships and apprenticeships. The Employability Career Pathway is targeted at those citizens who are furthest from the jobs market, under represented in our workforce and are starting their working life. The priority focus is to support the following groups:

- Children in care
- BME
- Disabled Citizens
- Young Offenders
- Ex Offenders
- Young Citizens (aged 16-24)

Business in the Community – Ready for Work programme

Born out of business aspirations to make a real difference, *Ready for Work* is a national Business in the Community programme that engages businesses to support disadvantaged groups, particularly those who have experienced homelessness, into employment.

Ready for Work supports people who face a range of challenges, from being in care, long term unemployment, criminal convictions and lack of qualifications amongst others. *Ready for work* participants are supported by trained business volunteers, helping them build the skills and confidence for future employment. Participants are offered work placements and an insight into the world of work to test and try new skills.

The *Ready for Work* programme was running in Nottingham from 2001 – 2012. During this time 260 work placements were offered with supporting companies and 83 gained employment. With achieving over 40% into work rates year on year, *Ready for Work* claims to often outperform government programmes helping similar disadvantaged groups.

Moving forward

More effective targeting of interventions

Lessons learnt from the low level ILSS outcomes relating to ETE, the trailblazer pilot and the review of the employment broker service indicate that identifying the most appropriate stage of intervention and then targeting services at that point, is crucial to tackling unemployment as a means of homelessness prevention.

This strategy recognises the need for a service specifically designed to address the ETE needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. However, intervention would be better aimed towards supporting the following:

- people with lower level support needs who are being rehoused through the PRAS
- people who have only recently been made unemployed and had an income shock in the household which could eventually lead to a loss of accommodation.
- people in low skilled employment who may struggle to be competitive with job applications
- people who have not applied for jobs for a long time

The aim here is that in these cases it may be that we can actively prevent homelessness by preventing the household from being reliant on benefits for more than a very short period.

For citizens supported via ILSS or resident in supported accommodation, in those circumstances where there is opportunity to look at addressing longer term support needs there should be a greater focus on helping them to obtain basic qualifications to gain the skills necessary to eventually meet the minimum requirements for available jobs.

Recognising additional barriers and improving partnerships

One of the main reasons for poor delivery ETE for homeless and vulnerable people is that many of the government led schemes and the Work Programme in place are not effective for this client group. This is because there is a layer of work that needs to be done before this stage just to get a citizen with complex support needs to the point where they are ready to engage with established schemes. Homeless Link are lobbying nationally for the creation of a pre work programme for citizens in these circumstances.

In the meantime and in preparation for further announcements, this Homelessness Prevention Strategy seeks to engage the holders of the districts Flexible Support Fund within Jobcentre Plus to understand the importance of ETE in homelessness prevention and resettlement. Considering the lessons learnt, we will share knowledge and experience with local Jobcentre Plus to assist with identifying the most suitable stages of intervention. We will seek to develop partnerships and procedures with local Jobcentre Plus to improve information sharing and communication between service areas. Our aims here are:

- To enable a smoother transition between claiming benefits and engaging in employment activity
- To motivate and support vulnerable people or those threatened with or exiting homelessness into employment activity
- To ensure that those people assisted with housing options and homelessness prevention services have opportunities for sustained employment to reduce the risk of repeat homelessness

Understanding businesses

Based on Business in the Community's experience of supporting people who have experienced homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, we know businesses want to support people with multiple and complex barriers into work. Businesses can do this when they are offered a simple and clear structure to work with, which gives them reassurance in terms of risk management and having a single point of contact to build trust and understanding of the many barriers people can face. Businesses know they cannot do it alone, and want to work in partnership with those with expertise in the area.

Utilising further education resources

In September 2012, a common purpose challenge day was held in Nottingham for people working within further education. One of the main observations that emerged was that the resources, experiences, contacts, links and opportunities that this sector could provide were not being effectively utilised. As a result, the following recommendations have been made:

- Establishing a link between Further Education sector and the SIG to see have ongoing conversations about how they can contribute to the local homelessness prevention agenda
- Tap into education / training expertise and resources through Further Education contacts
- Explore the potential of a staffing and information resource through the need for Further Education students to undertake work experience and research projects
- Create partnerships with Further Education focussing on exploring how to more creatively deliver ETE support to homeless / vulnerable people in a variety of accommodation settings

2.4 Improving health and addressing multiple and complex needs

Homelessness and Health

There is a direct correlation between homelessness and poor health. Research by Homeless Link (The Health and Wellbeing of People who are Homeless: Evidence from a National Audit, 2010) shows:

- Many homeless people demonstrate a tri-morbidity of physical illness, mental health problems and substance misuse
- 80% of homeless people have one or more physical health need
- 70% of homeless people have one or more mental health need
- Homeless people attend A&E six times more often than people with a home
- The cost of treating a homeless person in hospital is eight times higher than that of a person in the general population

A report by the Royal College of Physicians recognises that ill health could be both a cause and a consequence of homelessness and research shows 2 out of 3 serious chronic health problems amongst homeless people pre-exist before the person becomes homeless (and may be part of the transition to homelessness).

Figure (c) shows that homelessness sits within an overarching context of poor health.

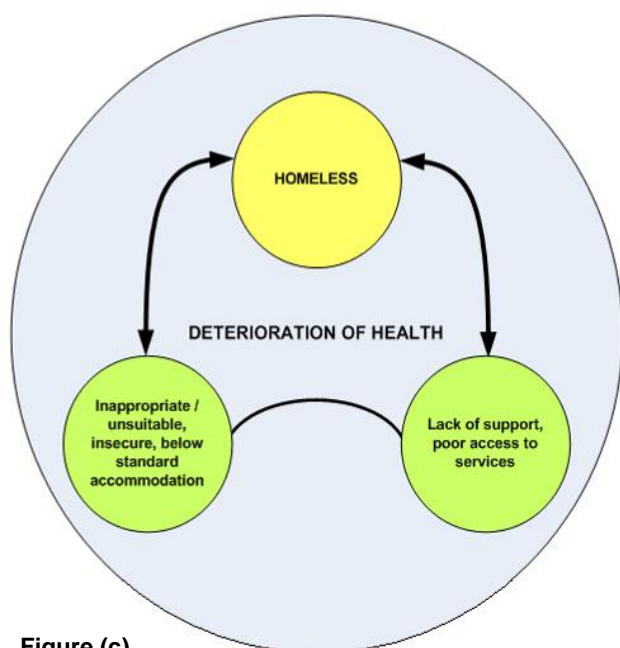


Figure (c)

Inappropriate / unsuitable, insecure and below standard accommodation and a lack of support and poor access to services also sit within this overarching context of poor / deteriorating health. They can be causes of homelessness and likewise, poor health itself can be the cause of homelessness. Any of these factors in isolation can mean a deterioration of health and wellbeing and an increase in housing need. Combined, they all support each other to create a cycle which traps an individual or family in an environment of poor and deteriorating health and wellbeing.

Therefore, as a strategy of homelessness prevention, Nottingham must not only provide services to meet the health needs of homeless people but ensure that the health needs of vulnerable people are met to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Supporting Citizens with Mental Health issues

The Department of Health's 2011 paper *No health without mental health* identifies addressing homelessness, and the mental health needs of this group, as a priority for action. The Mental Health Network NHS Confederation has also produced a briefing paper to assist providers and practitioners to plan and deliver mental health services for homeless people.

Nottingham has a higher rate of people with common mental health problems than nationally. Local estimates suggest 46,000 adults in the city are experiencing a common mental health problem and around 3,000 have a serious mental health illness. This is a rate of 18.9 per thousand of the adult population.

Addressing mental health is a priority for Nottingham and the Nottingham City Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy clearly identifies early intervention to improve mental health as one of the four key health and wellbeing issues.

We know that mental health support needs are prevalent amongst homeless populations. Mental health issues can be a direct cause of homelessness or contribute to reasons for homelessness (such as relationship breakdown, eviction) and they are exacerbated by homelessness.

In 2012, Nottingham City Council strategic commissioning team instigated the Mental Health Accommodation Pathway Review. The purpose was to ensure the system was as effective as possible in meeting the needs of citizens who have difficulty maintaining their independence due to issues associated with poor mental health. The review explored the different service types which collectively form the accommodation pathway. These included residential care, temporary / supported accommodation and ILSS within people's homes.

The review identified the need for changes to the services currently commissioned in order to provide a more effective response to meet the needs of Nottingham's citizens. In particular, a lack of movement through services intended to prepare individuals to return to settled living arrangements has resulted in a fall in capacity to respond to unmet need. This has created a dearth of move on options for people leaving acute and residential rehabilitation provision commissioned by NHS Nottingham City, as well as a lack of appropriate options for people with mental health difficulties identified within homelessness provision.

A new model or 'pathway' of services has been developed in partnership with stakeholders in response to the findings of the review in order to better respond to the individual needs of citizens and overall demand for support within the City. Changes (to be introduced in 2013/14) are to be made to deliver a more fluid pathway to promote progression back into independent living and preserve capacity within temporary services to respond to unmet need. This is to be achieved by providing greater clarity on the role of services, supporting citizens to access services appropriate to their needs and circumstances, and by facilitating transition through services intended as a temporary step towards greater independence. Arrangements are also to be made to provide longer term support and living arrangements for individuals with enduring needs, to be delivered in accordance with individual needs and preferences.

Arrangements have also been made within the new model of supported accommodation to respond to homelessness within the City (see p24) in order to create more appropriate accommodation based services to address barriers to returning to independent living. This includes the creation of a new service for vulnerable citizens (to include those with lower level mental health issues / mental distress) and an increase in the number of more home-like cluster units away from larger, mixed need provision.

Whilst every effort has been made to develop services that reach and support as many people as possible, we are aware that there is likely to remain some people who will not engage with this type of service provision. Therefore, agencies (particularly within the community, voluntary and faith sector) need to be vigilant in identification of homeless people exhibiting mental health

support needs and demonstrate flexibilities in encouraging service users to engage with support.

Supporting citizens with alcohol and substance misuse issues

*"It is a stark fact that drugs and alcohol are major causes of death amongst homeless people. The links between drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness are well established and drugs and alcohol are known to be both a cause and consequence of homelessness. Four out of five people start using at least one new drug since becoming homeless"*¹⁵

In Nottingham in 2012, 1864 people were receiving some form of treatment for substance misuse. This is a rate of 7.6 per thousand of the population (the national rate is 4.6). Only 19.6% of substance misuse service users successfully complete treatment. However, this is 4.8% ahead of national figures and when compared to the 'Core Cities' and 'Most Similar Families' (combined total of 14 cities), Nottingham is ranked number 2 overall for successfully completing clients treatments.

In 2012, the commissioning of local drug treatment services was reviewed and a renewed Nottingham City Drug Treatment System was introduced. The new system effectively means there is a single point of access for people to have their substance misuse support needs assessed and then met without having to be signposted and referred to lots of different places. The new system also introduced the role of recovery coordinators who are responsible for organising a holistic approach to meet all of the support needs of people within the drug treatment system.

It is essential that these coordinators work with accommodation and support providers to effectively meet the needs of the people in treatment and enable them to exit dependency on drugs and stabilise their housing. The benefits of this are evident within the following models of accommodation (Figure (d) and Figure (e)).

In Nottingham the rates of hospital admissions related to alcohol are significantly higher than the England average. We know that drinking too much alcohol is a major contributor to domestic violence, crime and anti-social behaviour and a cause and effect of homelessness

Addressing alcohol misuse is a priority for Nottingham and the Nottingham City Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy clearly identifies preventing alcohol misuse as one of the four key health and wellbeing issues. In addition the Nottingham Crime and Drugs partnership have developed the Nottingham Alcohol Strategy 2012 – 2015 which focuses on a long term partnership vision for reducing all alcohol related harm in the city (including street drinking).

Identifying multiple and complex needs

National research indicates that 0.2% of the adult population has complex needs. This equates to 476 people locally. An individual can be considered to have complex needs if they have a combination of any two of the following support needs:

- Homelessness
- Problematic substance misuse
- Mental health
- Reoffending

In 2012, the Nottingham Partnership (key statutory and voluntary sector agencies) undertook a Needs Audit of people presenting to local services to identify levels of complexity amongst service users. Analysis of findings identified 350 people with at least three of the four needs. 100 of these were identified as the most complex. Complexity was rated at levels 1-5. Some key findings were:

- All those rated complexity level five presented with all four support needs
- 75% of those with a complexity rating of five and 81% with a rating of four are homeless

¹⁵ Crisis, December 2011, **Homelessness: A silent killer**

- 75% of those with a complexity rating of five and 81% with a rating of four are homeless
- Six of the five rating group and sixteen of the four rating group are aged 60+
- 32.5% of the total group are women

Addressing multiple and complex needs

The Big Lottery Fund – Fulfilling Lives: Supporting People with Multiple and Complex Needs program is investing up to £100 million to bring real and sustainable change into the lives of people with multiple and complex needs. The Big Lottery Fund identifies that people with multiple and complex needs can also be defined by the fact that current services and systems do not meet their needs. In other words they are marginalised and disenfranchised and prone to bounce around the system. Therefore, the fund is available for new services that are better blended.

Nottingham has received an ‘in principle’ award of £9.8 million over 8 years subject to the submission of a robust Business Plan which must include how the new service will work alongside and enhance existing services and promote ‘system change.’

Key elements of the new service comprise dedicated accommodation, access to personalised budgets, bespoke packages of support, community outreach and service user involvement. The service will offer access to an ‘umbrella’ of 24 hour support. A ‘Core Service’ will provide long-term intensive support to the 100 most entrenched beneficiaries. A ‘Brief Intervention Service’ (average 12 months) will support 250 beneficiaries.

A multi-agency team of Assessors/Coordinators will be responsible for assessment, case management and coordination. Each Assessor/Coordinator will lead a Delivery Team of Caseworkers. Referrals will come through a single point of access.

The service will focus initially on those with the most complex needs. This population presents with all the specified support needs, has histories of repeat homelessness, periods of imprisonment and high usage of health services. Existing services are failing this group. They regularly appear at City forums including the Rough Sleepers Case Conference; Begging and Street Drinking Task Group; High Volume Service User Meeting (Drug and Alcohol); the ‘Top Testers’ of substance related offenders and Vulnerable Adults Panels.

Health Reform

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy is emerging in a climate of significant reform to the NHS. Some of these changes may provide opportunities for new and better partnerships between service areas. The reforms brought about by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, include giving Local Authorities the responsibility for improving the health of their local populations. The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) responsible for commissioning NHS services have been directed by the Government to work with local partners and obtain advice from people with a broad range of professional expertise.

We need to be aware of the new structures within Health and plan how to maximise partnership opportunities. We also need to identify our respective roles in coordinating the achievement of shared outcomes (as detailed in the Public Health, NHS and Adult Social Care Outcome Frameworks). The Department of Health has committed to these shared outcomes within *Making Every Contact Count*. The Public Health department is now positioned within Nottingham City Council with a newly appointed Director. This gives greater opportunities for partnership working as well as the linking of overlapping agendas. One of the specific indicators under the domain for improvements against wider factors that affect health and wellbeing, and health inequalities within the public health outcomes framework is statutory homelessness. This makes homelessness pertinent to the agenda of the local Health and Wellbeing Board.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

A simple but effective way of highlighting homelessness issues in relation to health will be through the redevelopment of a thorough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on homelessness. This will serve to inform the new Health and Wellbeing Board about the issues connecting homelessness and health needs. It will forge links with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to inform the CCG as they assess local needs and develop commissioning plans to meet them.

Cost benefits of homelessness prevention

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy must seek to recognise the potential costs and benefits of prevention mechanisms for all partners. There is currently insufficient analysis nationally, of the cost of homelessness to health services. *Making Every Contact Count* does acknowledge this and calls for an improved evidence base and monitoring. A cross county Health Needs Audit (piloted by Homeless Link in other areas) could help to bridge the gap in available information. We must assess the feasibility of this (using the Homeless Link toolkit - [Health needs audit | Homeless Link](#)) to see if it will contribute to better cost benefit analysis.

Hospital discharge protocol protocols

It is currently estimated that nationally, 70% of homeless people are discharged from hospital back onto the street without their health and housing problems being properly addressed. Public Health Minister Anna Soubry states:

“Homeless people are too often discharged back onto the street without their problems being properly addressed. This is damaging to their health and increases NHS costs through ‘revolving door’ admissions”

Partnership protocols are essential to addressing health needs and preventing homelessness. For a number of years, Nottingham has had a hospital discharge protocol in place. When used, this has had effective outcomes. Most obviously, the provision of suitable accommodation and support upon discharge to enable continued recovery and improved health. However, use is inconsistent. Particularly, when patients have short stays or are discharged directly from a ward and because of the high turnover of staff at the local hospitals.

To improve consistency in implementation of the hospital discharge protocol we need to ensure that key agencies are fully committed to a cultural shift of more integrated care and support coordination with more equal partnership working where the value of the professional opinion of people working in the housing and homelessness sector is understood.

In May 2013, the government announced a £10 million funding pot for the VCFS to bid into to help local authority and the NHS improve hospital discharge procedures for people who are homeless. Therefore, this strategy actions a refresh and relaunch of hospital discharge protocol, incorporating the provision of any new services available as a result of the funding and also in accordance with recommendations from the Homeless Link report, commissioned by the Department of Health titled *Improving Hospital Admissions and Discharge for People who are Homeless*.

Partnership delivery

Partnership delivery of services is critical to achieving the joint outcomes of improved health and homelessness prevention. In Nottingham, we currently have a successful range of partnership interventions combining homelessness and health services. Examples include; Nottingham’s approach to Rough Sleepers, the Winter Shelter and Cold Weather Plan, work of the Homeless Health Team / Specialist Midwife, comprehensive needs / risk assessments through the homelessness prevention gateway and services commissioned through the NHS Transferred Funding.

Models of prevention

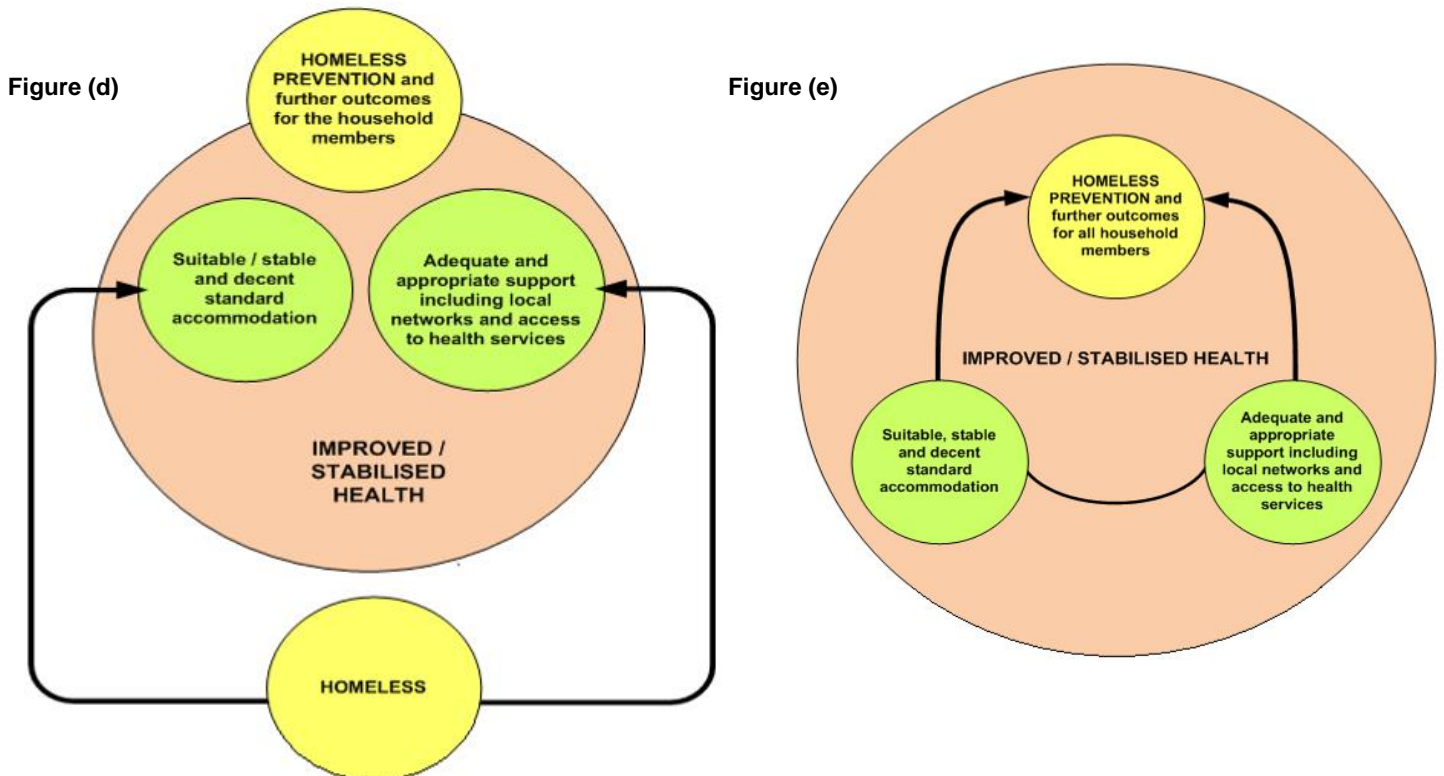


Figure (d) shows the model of our interventions which support people away from the threat of homelessness (or out of homelessness).

Homelessness (or the risk of it) is removed. Suitable, stable and decent standard accommodation is provided with appropriate and adequate support, including local networks and access to services. This equals an overall picture of improved and stabilised health.

Figure (e) shows our vision for all households in Nottingham. We can see here that homelessness is prevented from happening. This then can sit within the overarching context of good health but only if the other two factors are also present. We want all of our early intervention, partnership homelessness prevention activity to help maintain this model.

Crucially, getting our prevention agenda right for a household make up as it currently exists is not only supporting them in the here and now and near future. It is also laying the foundations for the homelessness prevention of all household members as they progress through their lives. It will contribute to breaking the cycles of intergenerational deprivation and the (often) associated negative impacts on children's development and as a result, their adult lives.

2.5 Safeguarding from harm

In April 2013, the government produced updated statutory guidance for local authorities, *Working together to safeguard children*. The guidance is intended to provide a national framework within which all local agencies that come into contact with children can develop and implement our own ways of working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of those children. The guidance emphasises the importance of partnership working with the clear message that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is a top priority in Nottingham City and we have clear policies highlighting the ways in which we prioritise the safeguarding of our vulnerable adults, young people and children:

Children and Young People’s Plan 2010 – 2015

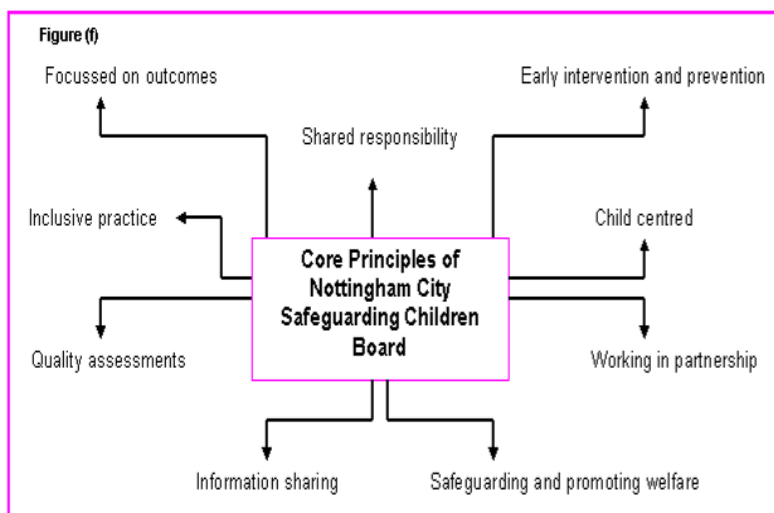
Highlights: ‘Safeguarding’ as a strategic objective
Partnership
Pledges to: “Keep children and young people safe from abuse, neglect and accidental injury”

Vulnerable Adults Plan for Nottingham City 2010 – 2015

Defines: “A vulnerable adult as a citizen aged 18 or over, being, socially excluded, abused, neglected or exploited”
Recognises: “There is an ongoing need to ensure that vulnerable adults are protected”
Commits to: “The expectation that safeguarding arrangements that we will continue to promote a culture of good practice and appropriate training”

Nottingham’s principles of Social Care

Identifies: ‘Protection’ as one of the principles of social care
Commits to: “ensuring that processes, procedures and practices identify and support adults and children at risk of abuse / or exploitation”



Safeguarding Boards

Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board

The Childrens Act 2004, section 11, introduced a statutory requirement for local authorities to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards in their areas.

Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board (NCSCB) is the multi agency forum for agreeing how services, agencies, organisations and the community safeguard children and improve their well being. Using statutory guidance (including *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010*) the NCSCB has introduced a set of procedures highlighting core principles (Figure (f)).

Nottingham City Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board

The Nottingham City Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (NCASPB) was established in March 2008. It is expected that Adult Safeguarding Boards will become a statutory body based on the recommendations of the Law Commission.

The NCASPB is a multi-agency partnership made up of senior representatives from lead agencies which advances the strategic development of Safeguarding Adults work. The NCASPB is committed to developing its strategic role with a clear message of effective partnership working, agreed joint policies and procedures and appropriate level of engagement of all agencies involved in working with vulnerable adults.

The role of housing and homelessness service providers

All local and national policy and guidance relating to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults emphasizes the importance and value of a multi agency approach. Agencies within the housing and homelessness sector in Nottingham have a crucial role to play alongside our partners in social care, education, health, police and the crime prosecution service to form the multi agency framework necessary for delivery of a person centred approach to safeguarding.

Front line workers within housing and homelessness services are often extremely well placed to be involved in the identification of safeguarding issues for children, young people and vulnerable adults. Additionally, these workers may be the ones who have the trusted relationships often necessary to achieve successful interventions. Despite this, out of the housing and homelessness sector, it is only Nottingham City Homes represented on both the NCSCB and the NCASPB. This strategy recommends a renewed relationship between the SIG and the NCSCB and NCASPB and the development of clear policy and operational procedures.

Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation

There is no universal definition of sexual exploitation of children and young people. However, there are some common characteristics that most definitions use:

- There are different manifestations of exploitation and it can occur with or without physical contact (e.g. online grooming)
- It often involves the children or young person receiving something (e.g. accommodation, drugs, money, gifts, affection) in exchange for sexual activity – grooming and control
- Those exploiting have some form of power over the children or young people (e.g. age, finance or physical strength)
- significantly characterised by the lack of choices for the child or young person, borne out of their social, emotional or economic vulnerability

Over the last couple of years there have been a number of high profile cases of what has become known as ‘internal trafficking’ or ‘localised / street grooming’. This form of child sexual exploitation invariably involves a large network of abusers and also a large number of victims (often vulnerable girls aged 12 – 16). The media interest and issues brought to light from the resulting independent review of statutory services involved has highlighted the importance of developing effective local procedures and activity to:

- intervene early to prevent exploitative activity from happening
- identify it if it is happening
- engage with and listen to affected and vulnerable children and young people
- disrupt any such activity
- help lead to the prosecution of the perpetrators

Homelessness is one of the key characteristics of children, young people and vulnerable adults who have been or, who are being sexually exploited. As earlier emphasized, housing and homelessness accommodation and support services are extremely likely to come into contact with the girls and young women who are (or who may be) vulnerable to this form of sexual exploitation. It is important that we promote our partnerships within the existing and emerging safeguarding structures within Nottingham and ensure that systems and processes to alert authorities to any concerns are fit for the use of housing and homelessness professionals.

Safeguarding of women involved in prostitution and offending

Guidance from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) infers that prostitution should be addressed as a form of sexual exploitation because of its gendered nature. Additionally, within the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) policy and strategy for policing, there is commitment to view prostitutes as victims of abuse and exploitation. We know that women who sex work may also be experiencing domestic violence. Further violence can occur from clients and pimps, with sex workers being targets for physical attacks, robbery or sexual assaults including rape. Both the CPS and ACPO promote local multi agency approaches involving statutory and voluntary sector organisations to enable those involved in prostitution to access the most appropriate support and develop exit routes out of prostitution.

The 2010 government paper: *Call to End Violence against Women and Girls* recognises the link between female offending and a history of violent and sexual abuse. It states:

“Alternatives to custody are one means of supporting women offenders. For example, Women’s Community Projects or ‘One-Stop-Shops are a central hub where women who are in the criminal justice system can access support at any point”.

The SIG will ensure that housing and homelessness services in Nottingham are represented within the development and delivery of any such initiative.

In March 2013, Nottingham City Council published its report from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Review into the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders. Recommendation number 3. from this final report relates specifically to female offenders:

“That the Portfolio Holder for Housing work with partners to assess need for further commissioning of provision of accommodation appropriate to women offenders in Nottingham for use by female offenders on release”

Further elements of this recommendation include:

- Assessing the need for supported accommodation for women released from prison who were at risk of domestic or sexual violence, exploitation, affected by gangs or engaging in prostitution
- Considering the accommodation needs of women released from prison who have children they are hoping to have placed back into their care in the future
- Recognising and addressing the challenges an out of area prison (Peterborough) brings in maintaining and establishing support networks and services in Nottingham

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy endorses the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Review and as far as possible has incorporated the elements of the recommendations into our delivery plan.

Chapter 3 – Vulnerable groups

Within this section of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy we focus on how we are providing a strategic response to meet the needs of vulnerable groups to achieve our overarching goals of preventing and reducing homelessness and repeat homelessness.

It must be recognised that by specifying the approach to distinct groups of service users we are not implying that these are the only people in Nottingham with support needs. However, we are acknowledging that there are some vulnerable groups who require targeted attention and a more explicit approach to addressing their needs.

3.1 Survivors of domestic violence and abuse

Definition of domestic violence and abuse

Nottingham City Council has adopted the cross government definition of domestic abuse:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional”

Domestic violence and abuse in Nottingham

Most domestic violence is perpetrated towards a female by a male ex or current partner. However, men also experience domestic abuse. 31% of perpetrators of domestic violence towards men are family members rather than partners. Based on the British Crime Survey it is estimated that in Nottingham in any given 12 month period there are:

- 12,900 female survivors
(4,300 of which will be suffering repeat victimisation)
- 3,200 male survivors
(300 of which will be suffering repeat victimisation)

In 2012, Nottinghamshire Police received around 12,000 domestic violence related calls from city residents. This represents 44% of all recorded violence in Nottingham. However, only around 5400 of these incidents were recorded as a crime.

We must be cautious in how we analyse this data. It can often be misleading and misinterpreted because high levels of reporting (to the police) in an area does not automatically indicate that there is prevalence of domestic violence and abuse within that area. Instead, it could be the result of services effectively reaching survivors and empowering them to report the abuse. Despite this, it is estimated that only 11% of rapes are reported to the Police and 60% of domestic violence cases are not reported at all.

Although domestic violence can happen to any person, the demographics of many of Nottingham’s citizens resonate with common risk indicators for domestic abuse. We have a growing young population and high levels of deprivation. We also have diversity in the ethnic backgrounds of our population which could mean higher levels of gender abuse more specific to the BME population (e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour based violence) and some survivors may face language and cultural barriers accessing mainstream services.

Additionally, as with other urban areas nationally, there are some issues of street gangs and gang culture in Nottingham. The recent Exiting Gang and Youth Violence needs assessment (February 2013) does not give any clear evidence to suggest links between gangs in Nottingham and domestic abuse. However, we are told from the experience of our front line services that the numbers of girls becoming homeless because of the risk of violence from gangs is increasing.

Despite the issues identified above, our aim is to improve screening and to enable organisations to reach those survivors who do not disclose. We want to particularly target

areas where we know there are additional barriers to reporting such as survivors whom are disabled or from certain cultural or religious communities.

Domestic violence and homelessness

We know that domestic violence and abuse can cause homelessness for all survivors within a household. Domestic violence and abuse consistently continues to factor highly in all local monitoring relating to homelessness:

- 14% of all service users of the Homelessness Prevention Gateway cited domestic abuse as a primary support need
- The percentage of homeless acceptances (of Part VII applications) where reason for homelessness is 'violent breakdown of a relationship involving partner', had risen from 6.5% at the end of 2009 to 16% by the end of 2011
- In 2012 / 13, Housing Aid referred 178 households into refuge accommodation
- The Sanctuary Scheme receives between 100 – 150 referrals every year
- In 2012 / 13, SHINE received 357 referrals for support
- In 2010 / 11, there were 11 Nottingham City Homes households awarded an urgent transfer because of domestic violence. In 2012 / 13 there were 20 households.
- Calls received to Womens Aid Integrated Services (WAIS) 24 hour helpline have been increasing over recent years and particularly there has been an increase in calls from survivors with complex needs and those with No Recourse to Public Funds

Required response

The need for flexible service provision

Survivors of domestic abuse are protected by the homeless legislation. However, when addressing the housing needs of survivors, it is essential that a range of flexible options are presented. The statutory homeless application alone would not allow for this but a housing options and homelessness prevention approach enables this to happen.

Accommodation in a suitable location is of paramount importance to maintain the safety of households escaping domestic violence and abuse. This can be a challenge if relying only upon social housing, because of limited availability of social housing stock. The increased use of the PRS (including PRSO's and the enhanced PRAS) in meeting the accommodation needs of survivors of domestic abuse is an opportunity to broaden options for all survivors (including male and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) survivors). This is also likely to reduce length of stay in temporary or refuge accommodation which may be particularly beneficial for those instances where the refuge is out of area and away from local support networks. Housing need assessments will continue to determine the most appropriate outcome for the survivor and the provision of clear and accessible information will help to inform advice and support providers.

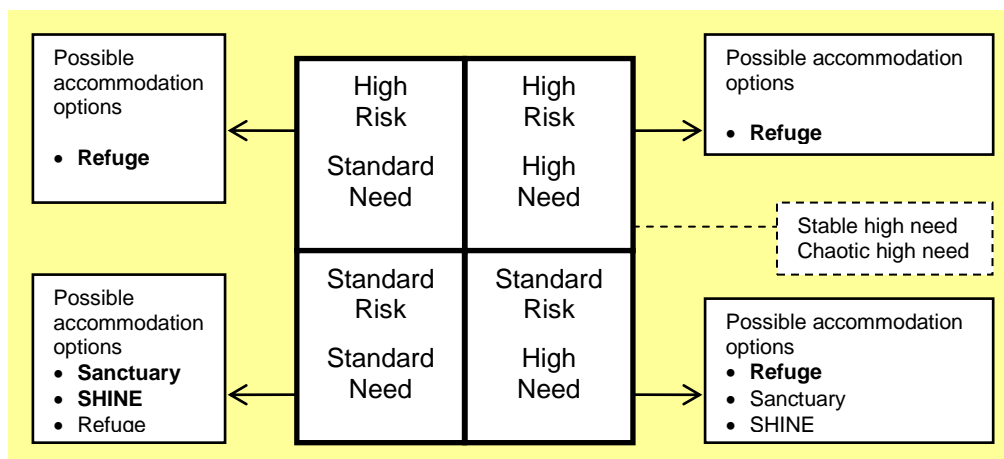
The increased use of the PRS may result in more demand being placed upon support services to ensure safety and support with resettlement and other issues. Feedback from refuge providers indicates favour for them being able to provide the resettlement support to the survivors rehoused from the refuge to ensure continuity and effectiveness of service. The ILSS function for this client group is under consideration within the Safe from Harm Strategic Commissioning Review.

Complexity of need

Preventing homelessness for survivors of domestic abuse is complex because it is not just about meeting the support needs that have led to the housing need (i.e. the effects of the abuse in addition to any other personal support needs individuals may have). It is also about protecting from the continuing risk of the perpetrator. The ongoing safety of the survivor and the household also needs to be considered in homelessness prevention options – quick fixes are not a solution if they will lead to the risk re-emerging in the future.

Therefore, to understand why we need a flexible range of housing options and how to propose solutions to facilitate this, we must understand the complex relationship and differences there can be between individual's levels of needs and risk. Figure (g) diagnoses four main categories that a survivor can crudely fit into and the most likely accommodation options available to them under current provision.

Figure (g)



We can see from Figure (g) that if a survivor is at 'High risk', refuge is the only alternative accommodation option regardless of the level of support need. This means that survivors with relatively low support needs will be sharing accommodation with survivors who may be 'chaotic high need' e.g. with issues such as drug dependency, history of prostitution or mental health problems, or those who are 'stable high need' e.g. escaping certain types of violence such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour based violence or gang related violence.

Service providers overall are reporting an increase in the number of survivors they are supporting who have 'high' or complex needs. The local refuges in particular, have adapted their service to become more flexible in supporting survivors who are the most at risk and with a higher level of support need.

For example, Amber House has a strong working relationship with the Honour Based Violence team in Nottinghamshire Police and are successfully working with women who are fleeing from these situations through clear identification of geographical risk and taking detailed referral and risk assessment information for each case. At Umuada, they have developed improved links with those agencies they know can provide additional support to survivors with alcohol, substance and mental health issues (for example, Last Orders and Wellbeing Plus). Key agencies attend Umuada regularly to give information in awareness raising sessions. Additionally, survivors that have drug and alcohol support needs work to a drink diary and harm minimisation approach as part of their individual support plan.

Current Provision

Accommodation based solutions are not the only type of provision in Nottingham. There are an effective range of partnership support services and solutions that combine to form a strategic service system which seeks to support the individual needs of survivors of domestic violence

and abuse, whilst also preventing homelessness. To view the list of services and partnerships please follow the link below to the Nottingham City JSNA for Domestic and Sexual Violence: [JSNA Chapter for Domestic Violence - Nottingham Insight](#)

Within the 2009 Map of Gaps report – *The postcode lottery of violence against women support services in Britain*, Nottingham City scores one of the few green ratings for domestic violence services in the nation. Additionally, our response is providing critical intervention for children growing up in households where there has been domestic abuse. This helps to minimise the possibility of these children developing issues as a result of their experiences in childhood, that could ultimately lead to them becoming homeless as young people or adults.

Early findings from the Safe from Harm Strategic Commissioning Review have assessed refuge provision in the city as sufficient in meeting need, according to the size of our population. Existing contracts have been extended for three years up until 2016.

When considering future commissioning decisions relating to the services and partnerships it is important to consider the individual roles they play forming the collective strategic system which supports a survivor through their journey. Different services assist in meeting needs in different ways and specialisms are required for effective interventions. For example WAIS helpline and outreach helps identify survivors and move them to places of safety whilst they consider their options. Sanctuary Plus helps survivors remain in their accommodation and SHINE helps them resettle and prevent repeat incidents of abuse and episodes of homelessness.

Without the support that these services can offer, all survivors within a household would be more susceptible to homelessness. They are more likely to feel that sustaining their current accommodation situation isn't possible and 'flee' from where they feel at risk. Or, survivors may experience difficulties in resettling somewhere new and consequently 'return' to situations of abuse. Additionally, the risk of young people running away or becoming homeless themselves is also increased.

Ongoing considerations

- Nottingham has limited refuge provision which is accessible to survivors with some disability / mobility issues. This is a concern as statistically, disabled people are twice as at risk of domestic violence and abuse. Feedback from consultation has also identified an issue with poor access to services, information and outreach for disabled communities
- There have recently been changes in legislation regarding the eligibility to services for survivors with spousal visas. This removes a barrier for survivors with this immigration status. WAIS helpline have been proactive in familiarising themselves with the changes to ensure that appropriate support is provided. However, the legislation is complicated and may not be widely known or understood amongst service providers
- Within many of the 'newer' recognised categories of domestic abuse (Honour Based Violence, FGM, females escaping gang violence and sex trafficking) survivors can be at risk from multiple perpetrators. Service providers are reporting that they are increasingly finding that the connections a survivor has are coupled with the connections a perpetrator has which can prevent them from being able to access refuge. Therefore, service provision needs to be adaptive and flexible to respond to the needs of survivors escaping these situations
- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 has cut access to legal aid. This has resulted in survivors facing a barrier in access to family law solicitors. Therefore, maintaining specialist advocacy services that have the knowledge and experience to support survivors is critical
- Consideration has to be given to the safety of the survivor when applying tenancy management or allocations policy restrictions to perpetrators in social housing. Eviction or restricting access to housing is not necessarily in the survivors interest as can lead to further risk with restricted monitoring and offender management. Likewise, a system needs

to be developed to assist Housing Aid in identifying perpetrators so they are able consider the location of the survivor when rehousing

- Elements of welfare reform may be of concern in exposing survivors to further abuse. The introduction of Universal Credit will see all of the household allowance paid directly to one family member. This causes concern about the risk of financial abuse. The introduction of under-occupancy charges could lead to reliance on an abusive family member or carer remaining in the property to avoid the financial pressure of the shortfall. Perpetrators who already have a propensity towards DV, may become of more risk under financial pressures or strain
- Welfare Reform also brings a particular issue for refuge service providers in meeting the criteria for exemptions in housing benefit charges. There is a current issue in Nottingham which needs to be resolved where the accommodation owner and service provider of the refuge are not the same organisation and therefore is not being considered as exempt accommodation
- Increasing numbers of survivors women who have No Recourse to Public Funds are presenting themselves to services. WAIS helpline is enabling more women and children to have initial assessments undertaken by Social Care to establish whether a child is in need or at significant risk of harm in these cases. Umuada accepts one woman that has no support from social care when their 12 commissioned bed spaces are full and through their own funds give her the weekly allowance. Yet there are still many survivors whom are not eligible for assistance and not receiving support
- Central Refuge is decommissioned but currently still operating, family type temporary accommodation hostels report that they are seeing more cases referred to them in priority need because of domestic violence and agencies often can only assist with referrals to refuge out of area when survivors present in an emergency. Therefore, levels of provision need to be carefully monitored
- The services, partnerships and approaches that form the strategic system are fragmented by different governance structures and funding streams. The Strategic Commissioning Safe from Harm Review will seek to unify the approach
- Although early intervention and prevention services are widely considered to be effective, they are difficult to assess, evidence and quantify. The Strategic Commissioning Safe from Harm Review will seek to refocus activity around early intervention and awareness raising

3.2 Young people

Definition of a 'young person'

The age bracket defining a young person can vary depending on service area. For example, Nottingham City Council Childrens Services and the Youth Offending Team (YOT) consider young people to be under the age of 18. However, Base 51 support young people aged up to 25. Many young person specialist accommodation providers have identified 25 years as their upper age limit and much of the coalition government's policy seems to infer a young person is aged up to 25. Reaching even further, for the purposes of the shared accommodation room rate in the Private Rented Sector, a young person is considered to be someone under the age of 35. Experience of working with vulnerable young people tells us that the support needs of a 16 year old can be very different to that of a 25 year old. However, the support needs of a 19 year old may be much closer to that of the 16 year old. Therefore, within this Homelessness Prevention Strategy, we intend to remain mindful of the nuances and where distinction is necessary we endeavour to make it clear.

Local authority responsibility towards 16 and 17 years olds

In April 2010 statutory guidance was issued on "provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and / or require accommodation". The guidance was issued in response to the 'Southwark Ruling'. The guidance is summarised as below:

Where a 16 or 17 year old appears to need accommodation, they must in the first instance, be referred to local authority Childrens Services who should assess whether they are a Child in Need and meet the criteria for assistance under the Children Act 1989, section 20. If the assessment determines that they do not require care and support alongside their accommodation, they can then be referred to the housing team who should assess whether they qualify for accommodation via the Housing Act, 1996 Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Young people and homelessness

Causes of homelessness

We know that homelessness often occurs through no single fault of an individual. When a young person becomes homeless it is even more unlikely that this has been a result of their own action or a choice they have made. Many homeless young people will have experienced a childhood in a family environment which has led to conflict resulting in a crisis situation and an unplanned move out.

*"Young people's chances of having to leave home are higher in areas of high deprivation and poor employment and education prospects."*¹⁶

*"Deprivation and underachievement have been deeply entrenched in many parts of the city for several generations. Many are passing on the same challenges to their own children, with patterns of dysfunction being repeated in each generation"*¹⁷

Examples of issues at home range from suffering abuse, witnessing domestic violence, parents or carers with substance or alcohol misuse issues, mental health support needs, offending

¹⁶ www.centrepoinpoint.org.uk

¹⁷ Nottingham Children's Partnership Family Support Strategy, 2010 – 2014, **Earlier support, stronger families**

histories, long term unemployment or debt / financial difficulties or overcrowding issues that have added pressures to a household. Difficult environments during childhood can also lead to young people developing support needs of their own that may lead to homelessness:

Effects of homelessness

Much of the welfare policy reform that is either being implemented or proposed, has a disproportionate effect on single young people. It is reducing the affordable housing options available for young people who are dependent on benefits or on a low income. Research and consultation with young people to inform this strategy has shown that many young people are becoming increasingly disillusioned by a society with a system that seems contradictory, is failing them and is not listening to them. For some, this is contributing to an increased susceptibility to substance misuse and dependency, offending lifestyles and involvement in gang culture.

“Research found that becoming homeless can lead to an escalation of drug use, in some cases. About 20 per cent of young people reported that they began to use drugs after they became homeless, predominantly because it was the first time they were exposed to them. Some young people who had previously used drugs reported that they have used a greater variety of drugs since becoming homeless”¹⁸

Young people with criminal convictions often find their housing options restricted even further as they struggle to access shared accommodation because of their offences.

“Homelessness can also lead to offending, and young people are more likely to offend if they have multiple problems and/or have been homeless for a prolonged period”¹⁹

The impact of homelessness on the health of a young person is concerning. An independent report launched in parliament in 2012 named *Making it Matter: Improving the Health of Young Homeless People* found that 27% of homeless young people have been diagnosed with a mental health condition by a doctor. This compared with 7% of non-homeless young people. Additionally, 17% consider themselves to have a disability compared to 4% of non-homeless young people and 64% smoke every day compared to only 5% of non-homeless young people

Young people and homelessness in Nottingham

One of the Strategic Priorities for the Nottingham Plan to 2020 is to *Ensure that all children and young people thrive and achieve*. The Nottingham Children’s Partnership, Children and Young People’s Plan 2010 – 2014, *It takes a city to raise a child* identifies homeless children and young people as one of 13 vulnerable groups.

Addressing the needs of young people and preventing them from becoming homeless is of critical importance to the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Our young people are the future of our city and we must invest in them to ensure that we are giving them all equally, the opportunities and motivation to develop into adult life achieving their aspirations to full potential.

- In 2012, 39% of all people presenting to Housing Aid for assistance were aged 16 – 24 years. This is a 19% increase compared to the previous year. However, during this time footfall in general had risen by 17% so this increase is not grossly disproportionate. Additionally, these footfall numbers count the amount of people actually attending the service (and therefore people can be counted multiple times if they present more than once) so this data does not reflect numbers of ‘new’ service users.
- In 2013, there was a 7% increase in the number of 16-25 year olds accessing the housing service at Base 51

¹⁸ Shelter...

¹⁹ Shelter...

- Levels of hidden homelessness (including sofa surfing) are likely to be high within this age group. We must also consider that in addition to the numbers presenting at Housing Aid, there is likely to be a significant number of people within this age group who are not in contact with services
- Service users within the 16-24 year age bracket currently account for 38% of all homelessness acceptances. This has remained relatively consistent over the past few years
- Street outreach team monitoring data 2011 – 2012 indicates that 13% of those rough sleeping in 2011 – 2012 were aged 18 – 24 years (less than 1% aged under 18 years). This is an under representation of people of this age group compared to population and general homelessness data. However, Base 51 reports a 40% increase in service users presenting as ‘sleeping rough’, including four young people aged 16-17. Additionally, street pastors report this is the age group they come into contact with in the city centre working in the night-time economy (NTE)
- The most prevalent reason for homelessness amongst 16 – 24 year olds in Nottingham is relationship breakdown with family.
“Many children in Nottingham are growing up to experience behavioural problems, mental illness, substance misuse, teenage parenthood, and low educational attainment as a result of impaired family life. These problems are often exacerbated by poverty”²⁰
- Nottingham is a multi-cultural city with over 1 in 3 citizens not of a White British ethnicity. 50% of our households are comprised of members of different ethnicities and almost 15% of citizens do not speak English as a main language. Feedback from young people has indicated that a source of family conflict can occur from cultural clashes within households when young people are more ‘westernised’ than their parents / carers and other family members.

Unemployment and educational attainment

Section 2.3 – Tackling Unemployment (page 35) has highlighted the links between homelessness and unemployment have been highlighted. Young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) can also be at heightened risk of homelessness because their employment status may lead to a more strained relationship with family home, added financial pressures and increased susceptibility to negative external environmental influences and factors.

Nottingham has a higher rate of residents with ‘no qualifications’ than regionally or nationally and a lower rate of residents with any level NVQ. Nottingham (49.6%) is below the national average (59.4%) for pupils achieving 5 good GCSE’s and is ranked 144 / 152 on the league tables.

However, according to NOMIS, in 2012 the percentage of Job Seekers Allowance claimants in Nottingham aged under 25 was 6.4%. This is 0.3% below the national and regional averages and had been this way consistently for previous years. Further breakdown shows that Nottingham’s rate of young people claiming JSA (for less than 6 months) is considerably lower than the national average but becomes higher when unemployment lasts longer than 6 months. The ratio of total jobs to population of Nottingham (0.95) is much higher than that of the regional (0.74) and national (0.77) averages.

Evidently, from these statistics we can see that there is a difference between the local and national picture regarding ETE and Young People. This shows the need for us to carefully understand and analyse local need. We should then ensure that appropriately targeted services are in place to support our young people in Nottingham into ETE activity and in turn prevent the risk of them becoming homelessness.

Required response

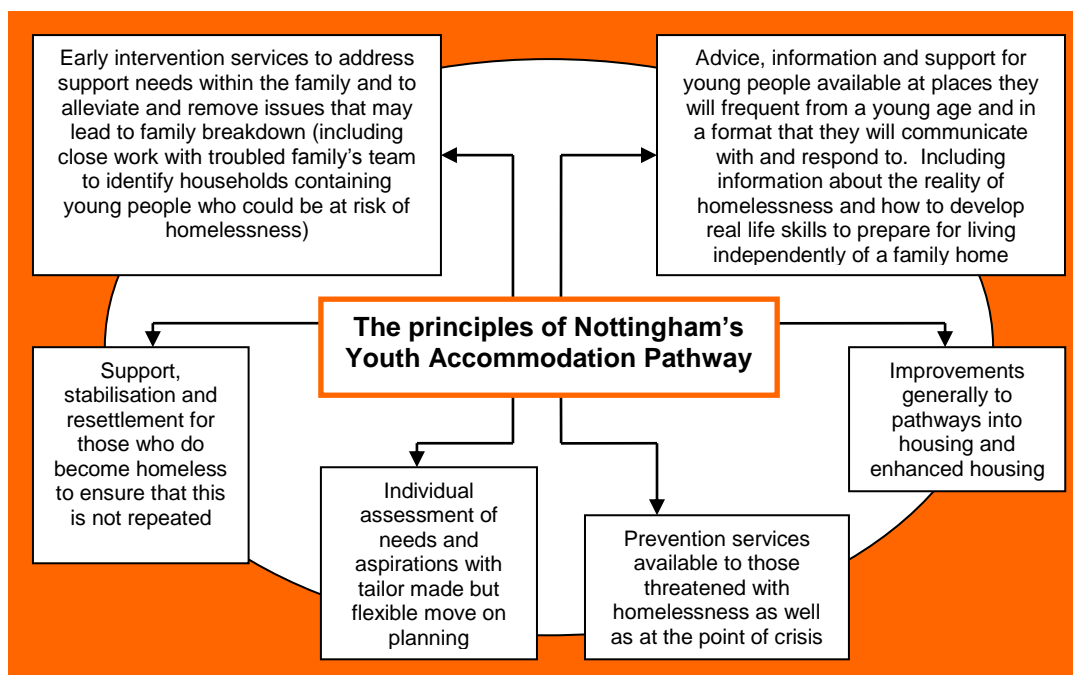
²⁰ Nottingham Children’s Partnership Family Support Strategy, 2010 – 2014, **Earlier support, stronger families**

Access to housing

Access to the housing market is difficult for many people currently. However, single young people face additional challenges as they are competing for the most in demand type of social housing (one bedroom flat) and are only able to access shared accommodation in the private rented sector. We must not find ourselves in a position where our young people see the homelessness route operating as the way into accommodation.

Whilst the Homelessness Act 2002 included 16 and 17 year olds as a priority group, it is widely acknowledged nationally that a homeless application is not necessarily the most appropriate route for a young person and that a range of prevention options should be available for this group. The coalition government's ministerial inter-departmental paper on homelessness *Making Every Contact Count* contains a dedicated priority to tackling troubled childhood and adolescence and outlines a youth accommodation pathway. Figure (h) shows the principles contained within Nottingham's Youth Accommodation Pathway.

Figure (h)



"It's about being honest with young people about what it's really like out there now – what types of housing there are, how much everything costs, and that what your family and friends tell you about getting a council house or finding a private tenancy just might not be true anymore"²¹

Current provision

- Implemented Care Leavers Protocol
- Effective supported accommodation provision specifically for young people aged 16 – 25 years
- No use of Bed & Breakfast / hotel as an emergency accommodation placement for any young person for over five years
- Provision of specialist services for young people including NGY Myplace – a state of the art facility provided by a partnership of organisations and led by Base 51 in delivery. The facility was designed by young people for young people (aged 13 to 19) and offers a wide range of activities from music and film production, to dance, fitness sessions, courses, health and wellbeing support and somewhere just to meet friends, relax and talk to youth workers. The centre also brings together a number of private, voluntary and statutory bodies

²¹ Kathleen Kelly, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2012

offering a one-stop-shop where young people can access support and advice on employment and training, health and housing issues.

- Intervention services such as those delivered by Vanguard Plus and YOT – holistic approaches to prevent reoffending include offering support with housing
- Suitable emergency accommodation options including Nottingham Night Stop and homelessness prevention mechanisms including home visits and prevention fund payments to enable remaining with friends and family where appropriate.
- The provision of life skills training programmes available to service users of ILSS and residents of supported accommodation

Under development

- A protocol between NCC Childrens Services and Housing Aid has been developed to incorporate Child In Need assessments into housing assessments. This will be implemented in 2013
- Feedback from young people who have experienced homelessness has told us that they wished that they had understood the realities of homelessness when they were younger. Nottingham City Council is therefore proposing funding for the delivery of *Home Street Home* – a programme of homelessness prevention delivered in selected educational establishments and youth centres in the city by Broxtowe Youth Homelessness (initially as a two year pilot).
- Feedback from young people who have experienced homelessness has told us that advice, training and support in understanding finances relating to housing, would have been of benefit to them to help them manage more effectively once they were living independently. Recently the Nottingham City BIG Improving Financial Confidence Partnership (led by Nottingham Community Housing Association) was awarded funding from the Big Lottery Fund. This initiative is to help young social housing residents become financially aware, more confident in money management and better able to access financial products and services such as a basic bank account.
- Young people have indicated how important it is to get support and advice from people they can relate to who have empathy for their situation. The new ILSS framework will seek to provide befriending and mentoring services
- Feedback from young people who have experienced homelessness has told us that there would be benefits in the provision of a service that bridges the gap between them and PRS landlords and helps them to understand what to look for, their rights and responsibilities as tenants. The enhanced PRAS will facilitate this through a strand dedicated to assisting young people into shared housing in the PRS

Ongoing considerations

- Research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that many young people find the homelessness assessment process intimidating and confusing and that they were commonly misunderstood or misinterpreted. We should therefore give future consideration to options such as the joint commissioning of a young persons accommodation coordinator who can facilitate the joint Housing / Childrens Services protocol and support young person through the accommodation pathway
- Parental exclusion remains the primary reason for homelessness. Through this strategy we have targeted a reduction against the main causes of homelessness. Identifying young people at risk of homelessness and linking in early intervention services to families will help to achieve this
- For those young people who do live away from home, we must ensure that processes are in place to enable them to achieve their educational aspirations and / or support themselves through employment

- Feedback from young people has suggested some would have liked the option of remaining at home if the relationship could have been repaired with the family. This is particularly important in instances where the family conflict has resulted from clashes in cultures within the home. We must give consideration to options such as specialist mediation, crash pads / time out beds to give the opportunity for some time and space in safe environments to explore the prevention options
- Feedback from young people who have experienced homelessness has suggested that many do not want to move immediately into their own flat but often want somewhere shared with independence but also the security of support from peers. Additionally, there is evidence of growing demand and need for improved housing options for young people and independent living is not always the most suitable solution. We must explore alternative housing options for young people such as supported lodgings schemes/ local letting agency / shared social housing. Use existing local and national examples to inform (such as Stonham Housing – Nottingham and SnugBug – St Vincents, Manchester)
- Feedback from young people has indicated that they often do not feel listened to or consulted with effectively. We acknowledge the importance of addressing the specific issues associated with youth homelessness and will consider the facilitation of wider service user representation more widely in our strategic and operational homelessness forums
- Young people aged 16 and 17 years receive an extra layer of protection via the homelessness legislation. However, once they are 18 they are considered an adult and are unlikely to be in priority need without additional support needs. Yet, some of these service users will still have ‘vulnerabilities’ associated with young people. We want to see the introduction of pathways (and joint working protocols) to include provision for those young people who are considered not to be in priority need to allow a flexible, effective and coordinated approach in Local Authority non statutory service provision to young people aged 18-24
- There are increased barriers to accommodation options for young people leaving prison. Yet, we know that ineffective resettlement increases reoffending risks and suitable accommodation provision provides opportunities of enhanced risk management for offender and any victims. We therefore, are adapting our prison leaver protocol and accommodation pathway to consider youth offenders
- We know that for some young women the threat of domestic violence is real and can present itself in a number of forms including honour based violence, gang violence and female genital mutilation (FGM). For these young survivors we know that they may be at risk from multiple offenders with additional complications when considering areas of safety and suitability of accommodation options. We therefore want to ensure that their specific support needs are recognised when assessing their accommodation options
- To maximise the opportunities for young people maintaining successful tenancies when living away from the family home we want to share good practice models of pre tenancy training (e.g. Base 51’s learning support programme) and include this training within supported accommodation and ILSS service specifications
- The housing market has changed considerably over recent years and there are inconsistent messages given to our young people about their options and expectations. We want to coordinate consistency in our advice and support provision to enable young people to make informed choices and prepare for shared housing situations
- The PRS is of increasing importance as a housing option for young people. We want to equip support providers to assist young people into decent, suitable and desirable PRS housing and ensure that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as tenants of this sector
- A recommendation from the 2009 BME Housing Inquiry was to consider incorporating the use of social media into services and information provision for young people. We know that this has become the main way that young people communicate and receive information and it is crucial that service catch up and include it within their provision. We will explore examples of good practice to inform us and enable us to risk assess and develop models of provision

3.3 Rough Sleepers

Definition of a Rough Sleeper

Nottingham uses the following definition of a rough sleeper (taken from Evaluating the Extent of Rough Sleeping. Communities and Local Government September 2010):

People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents (inappropriate use of tents), doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”)

Rough Sleeping

Rough Sleeping is often what comes to mind when people think of homelessness. This is because Rough Sleepers can be more visible and often will display concerning and complex issues including serious health problems.

Rough Sleeping is an extreme example of homelessness, often the last consequence caused by a combination of factors that have occurred over a period of months or years.

The numbers of people who are Rough Sleeping have been steadily increasing nationwide as the impact of the economic crises and welfare reforms take hold. However, in recent years the length of time a person is sleeping rough for has decreased.

Rough Sleeping in Nottingham

According to the official annual count and estimate, the number of Rough Sleepers in Nottingham was 3 in 2008/ 09 and has risen to 7 in 2012/13.

During the first quarter of 2013 / 2014, Framework HA Street Outreach Team report to have worked with 198 people who were (or at risk of) Rough Sleeping. Of these 198 people:

- 87% were male
- 42% were aged between 18- 34 years old and 40% were aged between 35- 50 years old
- 51% were White British, 30% White Other and 12% BME
- 57% were UK Nationals and 32% were A10 Nationals

Required response

Tackling Rough Sleeping has been on government agendas for decades although up until around 2002, many of the initiatives to reduce numbers of people sleeping rough were focussed primarily in London.

When the Labour government came to power in 1997, they created the Rough Sleepers unit which worked to achieve a target set by the Prime Minister of reducing rough sleeping by two thirds. This was achieved by 2002 when the Homelessness Act 2002 received Royal Assent and the Rough Sleepers Unit was replaced by the Homelessness Directorate.

The clear direction here in was for local authorities taking responsibility for homelessness prevention to stop people from becoming street homeless by providing services for existing rough sleepers that were 'places of change'. This meant that services should assist Rough Sleepers from exiting the streets and access and maintain accommodation options.

In 2010, the government set up the ministerial working group on preventing and tackling homelessness. The following year, they published their vision to end Rough Sleeping and the concept of No Second Night Out was rolled out nationwide.

Current provision

Throughout the course of the previous Homelessness Prevention strategy, partnerships in Nottingham have been established and services combined to form our own local model to end Rough Sleeping. This approach includes:

- Commissioning and maintaining services provided by Framework HA's Street Outreach Team to ensure that any Rough Sleeper in the city can be reached and offered a service. Including; the immediate assessment of risk, health and accommodation options and facilitating accommodation placements or reconnection
- Using the Homelessness Prevention Gateway assessment and referral methodology for all Rough Sleepers data so we have consistent quality in our data
- Delivering a Rough Sleepers case conference approach to creating innovative personalised opportunities for entrenched rough sleepers to leave street sleeping behind. (Rough Sleepers Task Group)
- Supporting one point of contact for reporting Rough Sleepers (one phone number for the whole of the City)
- Ensuring a coordinated approach to Rough Sleeper estimates and counts in the City, informed by local data from front line services and agreed through the SIG
- Co-ordinating Cold Weather provision; and revising our Cold Weather Plans annually with partners. This includes the provision of the Winter Shelter by the Faith Sector (led by Emmanuel House)
- Ensuring that the right support is given at the right time including a timely offer of reconnection for those Rough Sleepers who move into Nottingham and who's support and connections are from outside the City area
- Reception Service within the Street Outreach Team operating every evening and at night directly target those who are new to rough sleeping
- Supporting the provision of dedicated resettlement workers to assist with the transition of exiting a street life and moving into stable accommodation options
- Including within our services, specialist Polish speaking assessment and resettlement workers to offer support to Rough Sleepers of Eastern European nationalities in Nottingham into accommodation or repatriated back to their country of origin

Nottingham City Cold Weather Plan

Annually the SIG reviews and relaunches the city's Cold Weather Plan. This outlines the measures taken by partners in Nottingham to mitigate the effects of cold weather on Rough Sleepers during the winter months. Over recent years a Winter Support Fund has been established by NCC and provided to existing services working with Rough Sleepers to enhance

provision during this time. 2012 / 13 was the last year of the winter support fund. However, a requirement for delivery of enhanced provision during the cold weather period has been written into the contract of Framework HA's Street Outreach Team.

The contribution of faith-led community projects

In 2012, the provision of the Winter Shelter (managed by Emmanuel House and delivered via a network of local churches) was an integral part of the partnership response in minimising Rough Sleeping on Nottingham's streets. The faith-led community projects make a substantial contribution to providing assistance and support particularly to the populations of single adult A10 nationals, economic migrants and failed asylum seekers. Services provided by projects such as Emmanuel House and the Arimathea Trust have an important role in assisting those who are unable or unwilling to access other service areas (often because of no recourse to public funds). The proactive approach applied by these projects resolving immigration and benefit issues to enable accommodation or assisting with repatriation are encouraging and aligned with the 'place of change' homelessness prevention agenda of the city.

National benchmarking

The coordinated partnership working to end Rough Sleeping in Nottingham is recognised nationally as best practice and its effectiveness is evidenced by our maintaining low numbers of rough sleepers in the city. Our Rough Sleeper estimate in the last official count in November 2012 was seven. This compared to ten in the previous year and has decreased at a time when nationally there has been a 23% increase in Rough Sleeping.

Our approach to tackling rough sleeping in the city is established, recognised and most importantly, is working. We will continue to share learned good practice with local partners and in the region with other councils.

No Second Night Out in Nottingham

In December 2012, Homeless Link agreed that the effective approach established by the local partnerships including Nottingham City Council and the local voluntary and faith sector was inline with the principles of No Second Night Out and Nottingham was awarded the status of a No Second Night Out city.

The No Second Night Out local pledge to end Rough Sleeping in the City through the delivery of our approach was made by Portfolio Holder for Housing, Adults and Community Sector, Councillor Dave Liversidge, Andrew Redfern Chief Executive of Framework Housing Association and immediately supported by One Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Police, Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, Health Services, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and a range of voluntary organisations throughout the sector.

As national charities such as Crisis warn, homelessness is likely to worsen as the impacts of the recession intensify and the Government's radical welfare and housing reforms take effect. By committing to the No Second Night Out objectives, resources and intelligence across the city can be pooled to increase the opportunity to deliver improved, co-ordinated homelessness services, even in difficult economic circumstances.

Ongoing considerations

Nottingham's success in the approach to preventing rough sleepers, supporting entrenched Rough Sleepers into accommodation and ensuring any new Rough Sleepers have No Second Night Out is attributed to and reliant upon the model of partnerships and provision of services. Without these partnerships and services, levels of Rough Sleeping in Nottingham would undoubtedly be rising. The provision of a large part of this model has been possible because of successful bids for the award of Homelessness Transition Funding. This funding will cease in 2014. We therefore, must ensure that the level of commitment to achieving our results is maintained and manage the reduction of funding and associated risks in a planned way.

We will continue to support local VCFS organisations who bid for external funding sources for the provision of services that align with and complement our strategic approach, including the transformation of our day centre into a place offering assessment, resettlement and reconnection options in partnership with the Street Outreach Team and Housing Aid.

3.4 Prison leavers and offenders

The rates of offending in Nottingham in most categories recorded by Nottinghamshire Police are at their lowest levels since 2007, with many showing almost a 50% reduction in number of offences.

However, whilst the number of recorded offences has significantly reduced locally, there remains an issue with unacceptably high rates of *reoffending* throughout the country. Statistics released by the Ministry of Justice show that over 50% of adult offenders (serving prison sentences of less than 12 months) reoffend within 12 months after their release and that about 90% of those sentenced in England and Wales had offended before. The National Audit Office estimates the cost of this as somewhere between £9.5 billion and £13 billion (managing offenders on short custodial sentences, National Audit Office, March 2010)

Offending and homelessness

It is widely acknowledged that the risk of reoffending is heightened in the absence of stable accommodation and that there are links between offending being both a cause and effect of homelessness.

Offending and homelessness in Nottingham

Assessing levels of homelessness amongst offenders is challenging as those who present to services may not disclose convictions and the criminal justice systems use of No Fixed Abode (NFA) may have inconsistent meaning.

However, we do know from data collated via the Homelessness Prevention Gateway that offending or risk of offending is one of the three most prevalent support needs identified for homeless people who are placed into supported accommodation.

Required response

In December 2010, the Ministry of Justice published its consultation green paper: *Breaking the cycle: Effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders* which set out radical plans for reform to the criminal justice system in the punishment of offenders, protection for the public and reducing reoffending. The government response to this consultation identified “*Settled housing is critical to stabilising the chaotic lives of some offenders*”.

A Ministry of Justice study in March 2012 – surveying prisoner crime reduction, indicated:

“Targeted help with accommodation upon release, based on awareness of prisoners’ circumstances pre-custody, may impact positively on re-offending rates”

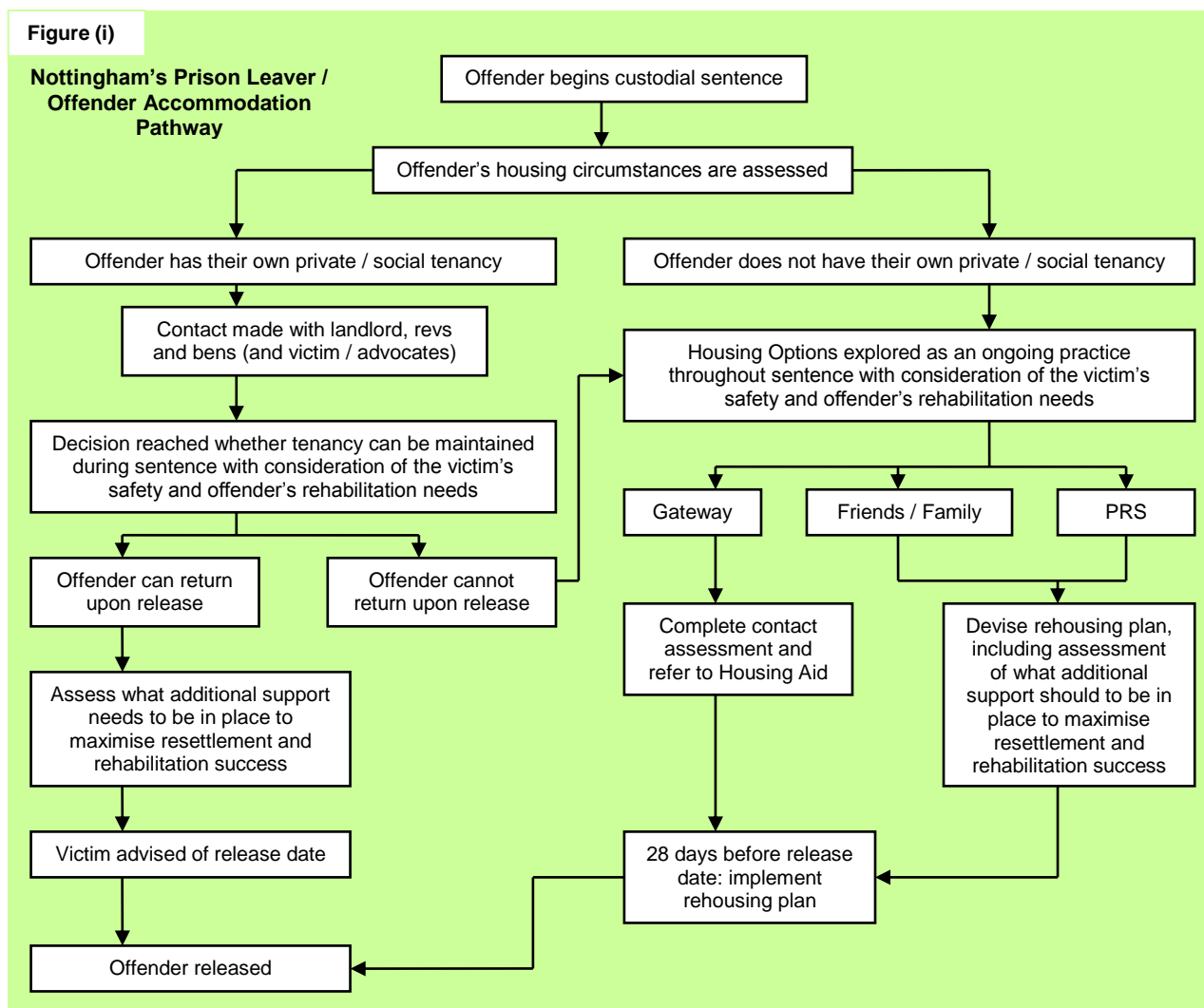
In January 2013, the government published a further consultation paper titled: *Transforming Rehabilitation: A revolution in the way we manage offenders*. The paper outlined the intended approach to drive down rates of reoffending. Partnership working is highlighted as a key principle within this paper with ‘collaboration with partners’ as an outcome and ‘providers who tackle the cause of reoffending’ as a proposal. This proposal is “a system where one provider has overall responsibility...coordinating a package of support to deliver better results”.

The government’s homelessness paper from August 2012 - *Making every contact count* states: “Government is promoting better offender housing support and joint working with local authority housing departments”

Current provision

- Housing workshops delivered by Nottingham City Homes within HMP Nottingham
- Regular involvement from Housing Aid in MAPPA and MARAC and flagging of survivors and perpetrators on housing IT systems
- Provision of specialist housing and resettlement workers within the criminal justice system (prison, probation, YOT)
- New Keys service provided by a partnership between Emmanuel House and HMP Nottingham which provides resettlement, mentoring, advocacy, advice for those offenders serving sentences of less than 12 months, before and after leaving prison
- Developed prison leavers protocol – including support needs assessment prior to release and the prioritisation for Homelessness Prevention Gateway bedspaces upon release
- Nottingham has developed a prison leaver / offender accommodation pathway (Figure (i)). This pathway will enhance the existing prison leaver protocol by ensuring that housing advice, options and pathways are clear and accessible. This pathway will also help to achieve one of the headline targets contained within the Nottingham Plan to 2020: *to Reduce adult re-offending rates for those under the supervision of probation to the average amongst our family of similar CDRPs*

Figure (i)



Initiatives under development

- As a result of the 2013 government paper, Nottingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders Review Panel to look at how effectively partner agencies worked together to resettle prison leavers to Nottingham and reduce risk of reoffending. The final report of the review was published in May 2013. Recommendations from the review included:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for a system of more effective offender risk assessments as soon as is practicable following imprisonment, and incorporating victim/community risk assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of strong formal communication and information sharing protocols to inform prisoner management, release and reintegration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Homelessness Prevention Gateway assessment of offender housing need prior to a definitive prison release date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delivery of regular housing workshops within HMP Nottingham
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the need for further commissioning of provision of accommodation appropriate to women offenders in Nottingham for use by female offenders on release
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of a cohort of suitable volunteer mentors for offenders

- The revised allocations policy will give consideration to individual circumstances with regard to rehousing offenders with the aim of determining the most appropriate course of action. This is important because the application of a blanket approach to restricting access to social housing because of behaviour may be detrimental to rehabilitation, offender management and victim safety and is a relatively pointless exercise if the offender secures themselves a PRS tenancy in the area of their offending / victims
- Nottingham's prison leaver / offender accommodation pathway (Figure i) which will complement the prison leavers protocol in providing clarity of options and processes and developing consistency of support and efficiency in systems
- Increased flexibility in eligibility for the new PRAS at Housing Aid. This will help open up this sector of the housing market to ex offenders. It will ensure that additional or relevant support is provided to ex offenders living in the PRS. Importantly, this will increase housing options and particularly facilitate access to accommodation for those who would previously have 'fallen between the gaps'
- Feedback given via consultation for the review of rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders and the Social Exclusion Strategic Commissioning Review has indicated that there is insufficient supported accommodation provision for females with support needs. Therefore, we are assessing the need for supported accommodation bedspaces for female offenders / prison leavers within the remodelling of provision under the Social Exclusion Strategic Commissioning Review
- The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Review Panel into the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders are being taken forward with leadership from the key partners involved

Ongoing considerations

The implementation of the prison leaver / offender pathway is crucial in meeting the recommendations of the rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders review. Partnership working, sharing knowledge, expertise and information from specific service is a key necessary arrangement to support the rehabilitation of offenders, protect the victims and risk manage resettlement and improve efficiencies in service delivery. Success of the pathway is dependent upon each service area clearly understanding and establishing their roles and responsibilities within the partnership process. To assist the implementation of the pathway, we will:

- Ensure partners agree their roles and responsibilities within the process (including HMP Nottingham and HMP Peterborough)
- Extend partnerships between agencies managing offenders (including probation, YOT, Community Cohesion within Community Protection, Prolific Offender Unit) and housing services
- Consider establishing named contacts or champions within service areas
- Improve processes of information sharing between accommodation providers (including social landlords) and agencies regarding evictions because of offending behaviour. Also, evictions of offenders subject to licenses or those who are considered prolific offenders

- Improve housing related information available for offenders and those agencies working with them
- Coordinate training / shadowing between service areas
- Support the further introduction of mentor programmes (utilising good practice and training material from existing models such as Emmanuel House New Keys service)

3.5 People with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPf)

Definition of No Recourse to Public Funds

*“No Recourse to Public Funds refers to people who are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits or public housing”.*²² People with NRPf include:

- Asylum seekers with an asylum claim in process who have been refused UK Border Agency (UKBA) Asylum Support (previously known as NASS support)
- Asylum seekers who have reached the end of the legal process and been refused
- Irregular or undocumented migrants: migrants who have entered the country without a visa or have stayed after the expiry of their visa or have other immigration irregularities
- Regular migrants with no income: migrants who are in the country legally with a visa but whose circumstances have changed so that they are no longer receiving an income from employment or other sources
- Migrants who do not have the right to reside, which includes migrants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and, in some circumstances, EEA nationals

²² Homeless Link, May 2012, **Supporting people with NRPf – a guide for homelessness services**

- Migrants (and, occasionally, returning UK citizens) who do not pass the habitual residence test

No Recourse to Public Funds and homelessness

If they become destitute, people with NRPF are unable to access the usual safety nets of the welfare system and instead are expected (by the government) to return to their country of origin. Where they refuse to return or lack the resources to return they must rely upon non-governmental support either in the form of charity or from the local authority (only allowed by law in certain circumstances).

Legally, if someone is of NRPF they will not be eligible for assistance under Part VI or Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. They will also not be able to access benefits, most commissioned support services or Nottingham City Council homelessness prevention options. However, some partners in Nottingham do seek to provide advice, assistance and support to people with NRPF in our city.

People who have NRPF will often rely on the good will of family, friends or people from within their nationality or religious communities for accommodation. However, these arrangements can often be unsuitable, of tenuous security and overcrowded and when they break down and options are exhausted, can lead to episodes of street homelessness.

No Recourse to Public Funds and homelessness in Nottingham

There are estimated to be around 600 destitute asylum seekers living in Nottingham although it is difficult to determine an exact figure when largely the issue is hidden:

“The destitute asylum seeker population is usually invisible. Statistically it does not exist” ([Nottingham Arimathea Trust](#))

Contact with statutory services is limited and inconsistent and they are largely supported by family members or people within their wider communities.

- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum regularly supports 70 NRPF people per month with small cash hand outs
- A growing population of Rough Sleepers in Nottingham have NRPF. In particular Eastern European Migrants. In the first quarter of 2013, Framework HA’s Street Outreach Team supported 59 Eastern European Migrants which was 30% of their total case load for that period

Required response

Many people who have NRPF are here against the wishes of the UKBA. Therefore, when cases are highlighted to the local authority there is a responsibility to work closely with the UK border agency to resolve them. This does include repatriation to their country of origin where barriers to return do not exist.

There are certain circumstances however, in which the local authority owes a duty towards people with NRPF. The [NRPF network](#) is an advisory network of local authorities and partner organisations focusing on the statutory duties to migrants with care needs who have no recourse to public funds. Here, practice guidance and up to date policy and research information can be found.

Current provision

For those people with NRPF who do become Rough Sleepers, support is available via the City

partnerships working to achieve No Second Night Out. The Street Outreach Team and Housing Aid's gateway team are able to assist with repatriation where appropriate. Additionally, the services offered by the Faith-led community projects can provide support and short term accommodation options via the Winter Shelter under the terms of the City's Cold Weather Plan. This approach also applies for European Union migrants and this year approximately 40% of residents of the Winter Shelter were of Eastern European nationality. Front line agencies continually highlight the increased prevalence of A10 nationals who are Rough Sleepers and often with alcohol support needs. Both Framework HA and Emmanuel House have available Polish speaking worker to assist in supporting this group.

The established network of faith-led community projects in Nottingham offer a significant level of assistance to people with NRPF. Nottingham Arimathea Trust, currently have 18 bed spaces for destitute asylum seekers in Nottingham and HOST Nottingham coordinates the provision of host families in Nottingham offering temporary accommodation to failed asylum seekers for a few days to a few months whilst they prepare a new case.

Additionally, projects such as the Arches, Emmanuel House, the Friary and Himmah make an appreciable contribution in providing generic and dedicated services that meet the immediate needs of people with NRPF whilst assessing housing need and eligibility for benefits and working proactively to address immigration and benefits status, claims and appeals and repatriation.

Nottingham City Council will continue to be supportive of bids from organisations for external funding sources for services that provide proactive assistance to NRPF households in determining / appealing status decisions, providing temporary accommodation and with reconnection.

Nottingham City No Recourse to Public Funds protocol

Following the hard hitting Citizens for Sanctuary report in 2012 – *Homelessness and Hope*, in June 2013, Nottingham City Council published its renewed Policy and Practice Guidance in relation to those with NRPF ([4.1.3 Policy and Practice Guidance in Respect of Those With No Recourse to Public Funds \(NRPF\)](#)). This policy document was produced through consultation with partners and sets out the local framework upon which assessments of eligibility and need take place.

The protocol outlines the responsibilities of Nottingham City Council Social Care in establishing the immigration status and assessing eligibility for assistance under the National Assistance Act 1948, the Children Act 1989 and the Human Rights Act 1998. It clarifies where, within Nottingham City Council, responsibility lies for the assessments and the support provided. Additionally, the policy promotes links and collaborative working with the VCFS agencies to ensure that those with NRPF are assessed and provided with appropriate support to have their cases resolved.

The role of the VCFS is critical in providing suitable support to people with NRPF. Nottingham City Council seeks to further and deepen the constructive relationship with these agencies over the coming months and years and it is anticipated that the new protocol will form a solid base from which to do this.

The protocol introduces a pathway to the remaining options available to people once they have been determined as not eligible for assistance by at Housing Aid. Additionally, effective use of the protocol by NCC and the VCFS should result reduced demand for services at Housing Aid from those people with NRPF.

Nottingham City Council currently have fairly ad-hoc arrangements for accommodating NRPF cases which sometimes leads to inappropriate placements being made. An action of this Homelessness Prevention Strategy will be to seek to put these arrangements on a more solid commissioned footing which will include exploring working with other Local Authorities to find

an East Midlands solution.

Ongoing considerations

Front line services consistently report annual increases in the numbers of people who have NRPF and present as destitute. This includes Rough Sleepers and survivors of domestic violence. The Housing and Migration Network, led by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced a 'destitution pack' providing guidance for social landlords and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations supporting destitute migrants. This should be used as a starting point alongside the NRPF protocol to assess how further support could be facilitated.

3.6 New Refugees

Refugees and homelessness

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy acknowledges that when a positive decision is reached on an asylum application, it can be a difficult period of transition for households (particularly single adults) who are unlikely to be prioritised for social housing or have the funds or capabilities of negotiating and securing accommodation in the PRS.

Barriers in transition

New refugees often face additional barriers to accommodation caused by the delay in receiving their immigration decision paperwork from UKBA and then the delay in receiving their National Insurance number from the DWP. These delays cause periods of limbo for many new refugees

when they are caught between their NASS support terminating and inability to access public funds and housing. The reality of these delays can cause actual incidences of homelessness and certainly the threat of homelessness as households scramble for friends, family or their communities to support and accommodate them until the information is provided.

In these circumstances legally, it is not possible for Nottingham City Council to provide housing solutions to people until their eligibility can be proven and there are obvious concerns (tied up with accessing benefits) around the provision of accommodation whilst national insurance numbers remain to be issued.

Refugees and homelessness in Nottingham

Experience of agencies working with refugees in Nottingham (such as Nottingham Refugee Futures and The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum) tells us that access to accommodation and sustainment of tenancies is a major issue for refugees. Mainly this is due to the complications arising from delays in their receiving the necessary documents from the Home Office (including Biometric Residency Permits and National Insurance Numbers) and manoeuvring around a complicated system of benefits.

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum identifies *“an increasing demand for housing related support for refugees to sustain and manage their tenancies”*

In 2012, Refugee Futures supported 139 refugee households to find and maintain accommodation. 40% of those households were families and 60% single person households.

Required response

Channels of communication, information sharing and relationships between statutory, community, voluntary and faith led agencies are intrinsic to providing the most suitable accommodation solution possible and a smooth and undisrupted transition from NASS support and to prevent homelessness in the longer term.

If a family or household has been provided with temporary accommodation pending investigation into their homelessness case, it is important that Housing Aid refer to the relevant support agency so the specific work required within this group of service users can begin. Likewise, it is important that the VCFS assists service user in preparing their information for the appropriate assessment of their housing options.

It is essential that the providers of support services within the VCFS are aware of the procedures and options available to assist access into accommodation at Housing Aid and more broadly, have understanding of the legislation relating to housing and the strategic direction of Nottingham in presenting a housing options approach. Likewise, it is important for experienced services and colleagues within the VCFS to share their knowledge and skills in working with this client group with Housing Aid.

Current provision

The Citizens for Sanctuary report: Homelessness and Hope recommends:

“All relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies should, as a matter of urgency, establish a pilot wrap around transition process for those receiving positive decisions”

A working group to facilitate this has been established and progress is monitored via the Multi Agency Forum (MAF) for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. This Homelessness Prevention Strategy is in support of this group and Nottingham City Council and its partners will provide

further support where necessary to engage the DWP and UKBA in this process.

Nottingham provides an accomplished housing support service to New Refugees in Nottingham through Refugee Futures. The service boasts considerable experience in working with New Refugees and having knowledge and understanding of the specific issues and barriers faced by this client group.

Ongoing considerations

Improving communication, information sharing and partnerships

To assist with the further sharing of information and building of partnerships between statutory agencies and those within the VCFS, this Homelessness Prevention Strategy recommends the consideration of the following options:

- Collocating drop in sessions from VCFS services within Housing Aid
- Further promotion and explanation of the *Nottingham Standard* and consideration of how to ensure this is delivered for refugees seeking private rented accommodation and they are aware of their rights and the standards they can expect
- Encourage and support G4s to use properties meeting the principles of the *Nottingham Standard* for landlord accreditation in their procurement of accommodation for asylum seekers so that new refugees have positive experiences of the PRS and are more inclined to seek this accommodation in the future
- All partners to commit to encourage and support G4s in the provision of accommodation which allows access to suitable support for asylum seekers so that Nottingham City Council and partners do not have to provide additional services to ensure households have access to key services such as health and education
- VCFS to coordinate clear information regarding the different services, referral pathways and the circumstances in which citizens should be referred to them. This information should be widely distributed to partners, including statutory services, to enable more effective signposting.
- Consider the role of VCFS in the process of gaining accommodation via the Housing Aid PRAS to ensure refugees are not bypassed in the handover between services
- Support the lobbying of UKBA to either make efficiencies in the process of issuing documents (biometric cards) to reduce delays or ensure the continuation of NASS support is provided until appropriate documentation has been issued
- Additionally, the work of [The Housing and Migration Network | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) should be considered collectively by the SIG and the MAF to further improve accommodation options for new refugees

Chapter 4 – Governance

Figure (j) demonstrates the governance structure for the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

The Nottingham Plan

This is the document which sets the overall strategic direction and long term vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Nottingham and its citizens.

One Nottingham

This is the Strategic Partnership for the City, bringing together public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations under different themes to champion the long term vision for Nottingham and tackle disadvantage. The partnership is responsible for the development and implementation of the Nottingham Plan to 2020.

<http://www.onenottingham.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4462>

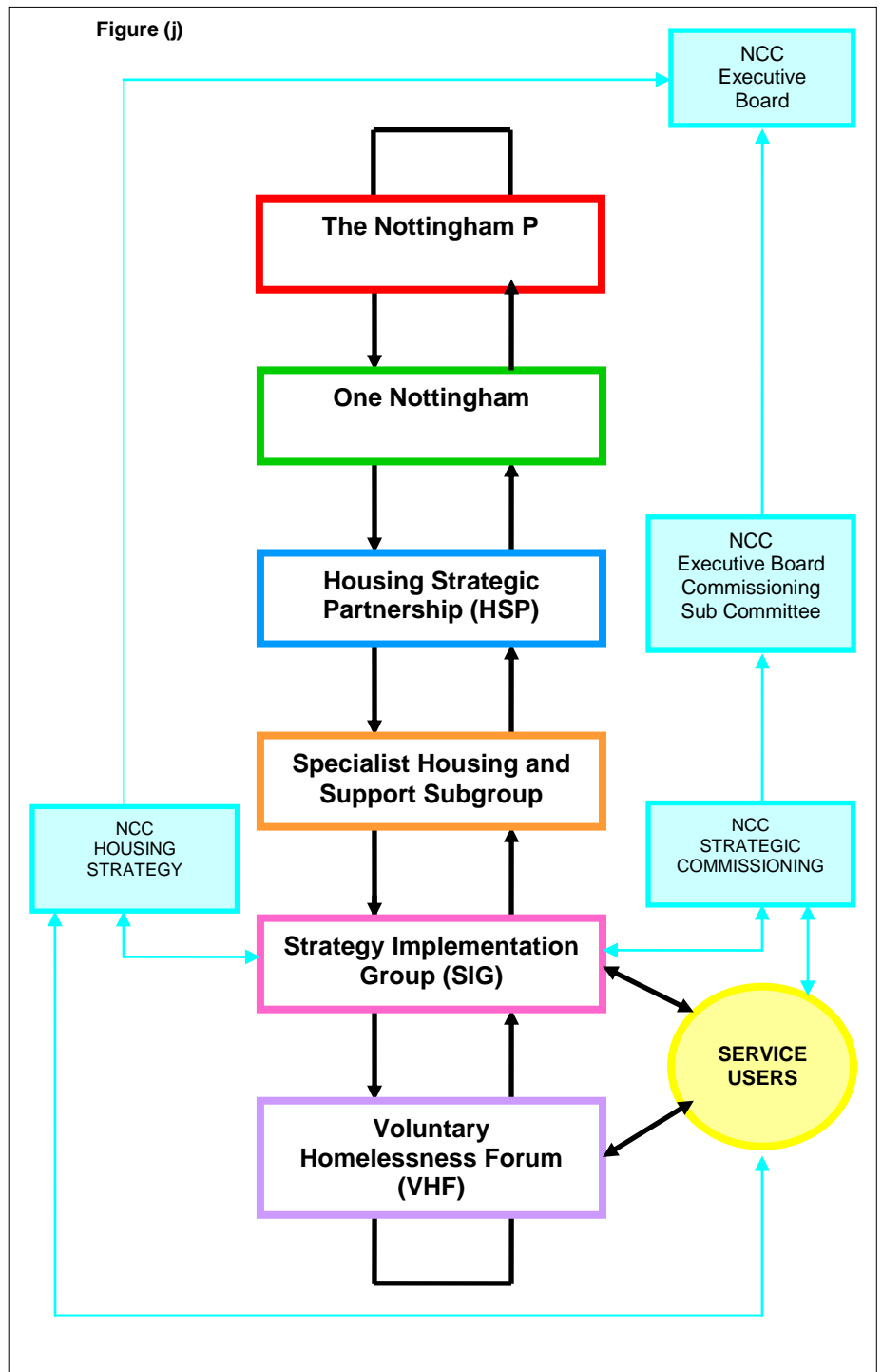
Housing Strategic Partnership (HSP)

Also referred to as the Housing Partnership for Nottingham (HPN), this group is one of One Nottingham’s ‘theme partnerships’ which lead on achieving the outcomes in The Nottingham Plan. The partnership is responsible for the monitoring and reporting of the housing related targets within the Neighbourhood Nottingham theme of The Nottingham Plan and is the author of the Housing Nottingham Plan. The chair of the partnership has a seat on the One Nottingham Board to ensure that the actions in the HNP and Homelessness Prevention Strategy both support and are supported by other initiatives being undertaken in the city, for example reducing crime and health inequalities and promoting wellbeing.

<http://www.onenottingham.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16878>

Specialist Housing and Support Subgroup

This multi agency group has been set up specifically to deliver the actions of the Specialist Housing and Support chapter of the Housing Nottingham Plan. On behalf of the HSP, the



group agrees the strategies and associated delivery plans relevant to the Specialist housing and support chapter.

Strategy Implementation Group (SIG)

This multi agency group is the main steering group responsible for the strategic direction of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The SIG develops the content, the annual work plan, the annual homelessness review and the general implementation of the delivery plan. The group informs and makes decisions on homeless related issues, supports policy and service developments concerning homeless people. It is the responsibility of the SIG to consider changes in strategy in light of emerging national, regional and local policy. The group shares good practice with regard to tackling homelessness & championing homelessness prevention. It advises and makes recommendations with regard to commissioning plans and decisions about services designed for or received by homeless people. It has the ability to establish time limited task and finish groups to undertake a more detailed analysis of a given issue should they feel that this is appropriate.

Strategic Commissioning

Nottingham City Council's Quality & Commissioning Directorate undertake a series of cyclical strategic commissioning reviews using the City's commissioning framework and working jointly with a wide range of partners, providers, citizens and communities. These reviews focus on improving outcomes for citizens and communities with a key element being to explore and recommend fundamentally different approaches and/or radical changes to existing delivery models, in particular, to identify early intervention and preventative options and opportunities for integration which will be effective in addressing rising costs in the future. The success of these reviews, and other change initiatives, in delivering real change rests significantly on how effectively we combine and join-up resources, activity and investment across the city.

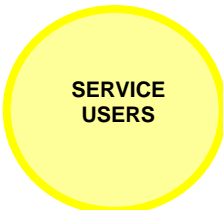
Recommendations arising from the 'analysis and plan phase' of strategic commissioning reviews result in commissioning and decommissioning plans in respect of service provision and actions relating to the restructuring and realignment of Council and partner service delivery models – the 'do phase'. Contract monitoring and service reviews undertaken by the Quality and Commissioning Directorate also form part of this phase of the strategic commissioning review cycle.

Voluntary Homelessness Forum (VHF)

The VHF brings together community and voluntary sector agencies working to support homeless and vulnerable people in Nottingham. The Forum aims to promote networking, share information, best practice and ideas in order to develop high quality solutions to housing related and homelessness issues, as well as contributing to the development of relevant strategies and policy in Nottingham.

The Forum discusses issues relevant to homelessness and as a result can set agenda items for the SIG. The forum provides the SIG with operational frontline insight for agenda items.

<http://www.hlg.org.uk/meeting-papers>



**SERVICE
USERS**

The SIG, VHF and Strategic Commissioning Reviews are responsible for feeding in the views of service users, front line providers and partners to the decision making process and for ensuring that decisions and information regarding the delivery of the strategy and commissioned service provision reach the groups that each member represents.

Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) Annual workplan

The SIG has devolved responsibility from the HSP for setting the annual workplan for the Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The implementation of this strategy begins in June 2013.

An annual workplan for the SIG will be developed for each of the 5 x 12 month periods from this point. The chair, vice chair and Nottingham City Council Housing Strategy team are to coordinate each new annual workplan and this will be achieved by the end of May in each year to ensure it is ready to be followed by the group from June every year.

The workplan will be set in accordance with:

- A set template of yearly agenda items ([Appendix 11](#))
- Actions from the delivery plan of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- Any known impacting factors (e.g. timetabled commissioning reviews)
- Any emerging issues (particularly relating to developments in national and local policy)

The workplan will include an annual cross sector analysis of data which will be used to inform the annual homelessness review. This data analysis will also utilise P1E data to benchmark Nottingham against other core cities and neighbouring authorities. If the SIG assesses the requirement for enhanced benchmarking relating to specific areas of service delivery, this will be completed on an adhoc basis according to the need.

Should the request be made for the provision of additional, focussed data, it will be the ultimate responsibility of the SIG representative from that area of service delivery to provide this information. Nottingham City Council's Housing Strategy will provide support with this.

Nottingham City Council will be responsible for completing a full review of service provision via the CLGs self diagnostic toolkit. As frequently as required, the SIG will be involved in the process of peer reviews as required for the attainment of the Gold Standard.

Annual Homelessness Review

The annual homelessness review will consists of two elements:

1. Information gathering and analysis
2. Revision (where necessary) to the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the delivery plan

The information gathering and analysis stage of the annual homelessness review will be initially coordinated by Nottingham City Council Housing Strategy team. It will be achieved through a desktop analysis of data provided through the SIG and further qualitative research as deemed required.

Within the annual workplan of the SIG will be a timetabled workshop to review progress against the overarching targets of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the actions within the detailed delivery plan. The outcome of this workshop combined with the data analysis will be reviewed by the SIG and amendments will be made to the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and delivery plan where necessary. This will be summarised in an Annual Homelessness Review Report produced by Nottingham City Council Housing Strategy team.

Monitoring arrangements

The SIG is collectively responsible for managing the monitoring required within the annual workplan and that which formulates the annual homelessness review. It is the responsibility of all SIG members to coordinate the collection of data from their area of service delivery and provide this to the SIG when required.

The mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the overarching targets will be set and governed by the SIG. Importantly, this will give the SIG the opportunity to scrutinise progress of the accomplishment of the targets on a quarterly basis in accordance with known and emerging issues.

Additionally, this approach will ensure continuation of responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the targets throughout any unexpected departmental restructures within Nottingham City Council and throughout the partnership.

Risk management

This strategy has been developed in a time of considerable uncertainty regarding changes in national policy, budget and commissioning decisions and service development and provision. Therefore, the annual homelessness review's will allow for any amendments to the strategy that the SIG determines as necessary over its five year course. The SIG holds the responsibility for identifying any emerging risks throughout the year and including within the annual workplan the risk management program for any known risks that will arise (e.g. exit strategy for the withdrawal of funding streams).

Quality assurance

The SIG will collectively develop and agree a service standards protocol based on the principles of this Homelessness Prevention Strategy. All services involved in the strategic response to homelessness prevention (whether Nottingham City Council funded or not) will be asked to sign up to this protocol. This will ensure consistency in delivery of services for our citizens and offer a level of accountability for those services not performing in accordance with the expected standards. The protocol will be supported by 'mystery shopper' type events coordinated by the SIG and the introduction of a regular event to review of operational issues raised across the sector.

Budgets

The CLG has traditionally provided two main streams of funding to enable local authorities to deliver their statutory homelessness function, local homelessness prevention activity and accommodation and housing related support services. These were:

- A share of the Homelessness Prevention Grant from the Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate
- The 'Supporting People' element of Formula Grant

These two grants have now been rolled into general NCC business rates. Nottingham City Council make use of these funds to best meet the needs of vulnerable people and to prevent and respond to homelessness. NCC ensure this through undertaking whole system and collaborative Strategic Commissioning Reviews and through smaller scale reviews (though still with stakeholder engagement) when funding reductions are announced with short notice.

Additionally, there are various but sporadic 'one off' funding sources that can be sought which also contribute to enabling us to deliver our Homelessness Prevention agenda. For example, government funding to support local councils to deliver a gold standard homelessness prevention service and county wide fund for homelessness prevention for single person households.

NCC are seeking to pilot a social exclusion pump priming/capacity building fund of £80,000 per annum from April 2014 which will be made available to VCS agencies to enable them to develop innovative approaches to meeting the needs of socially excluded people (with an emphasis on homelessness prevention).

The VCFS is also able to draw upon unique sources of funding to facilitate homelessness prevention activity. For example, the government's homelessness transition fund via Homeless Link, the Big Lottery Fund for Fulfilling Lives and recently funding opportunities via the Department of Health to make improvements to hospital discharge practices and procedures for homeless households.

Nottingham City Council is supportive of organisations seeking funding from external streams. To enable efficiencies within this process, a new procedure will be developed to provide organisations with ease of access to strategic advice and the coordination of support. Additionally, this strategy also encourages and supports innovations within the community and

voluntary sector in accessing external resources to help deliver the Homelessness Prevention agenda. The SIG will offer suggestions of how this can be achieved, for example, utilising university students research work, work experience placements and research projects undertaken by further education students and the social responsibility commitments from local businesses.

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy will sit across what is widely expected to be a period of sustained reduction in public sector expenditure. NCC will endeavour to work closely with partners, providers, stakeholders, service users and citizens in mitigating the impact of these cuts through both increasing the efficiency and efficacy of the funding that we do have to spend and through levering in additional funding from alternative sources. The strategy also acknowledges the existing financial difficulties and pressures that all partners across statutory, community, voluntary and faith sectors are under. We have praise and pride for the excellent standards of service delivery being maintained in a challenging environment and the innovative approaches taken to ensure the maximum number of service users are assisted through reduced resources.

Where funding restrictions are identified the SIG will seek to provide an exit strategy risk management plan to mitigate their termination.

Glossary of Terms

NCC	Nottingham City Council
CLG	Government department for Communities and Local Government
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
PRS	Private Rented Sector
ETE	Education, Training and Employment
NSNO	No Second Night Out
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
SIG	Strategic Implementation Group
VHF	Voluntary sector Housing and Homelessness Forum
CDP	Crime and Drugs Partnership
VCFS	Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
RP	Registered Providers
PRAS	Private Rented Assistance Scheme
NCH	Nottingham City Homes
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
PRSO	Private Rented Sector Offers
DASH	Decent And Safe Homes
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation
ILSS	Independent Living Support Services
CAP	Central Access Point
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Groups
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
NCSCB	Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board
NCASPB	Nottingham City Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board
WAIS	Womens Aid Integrated Services
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
YOT	Youth Offending Team
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
UKBA	UK Border Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
MAF	Multi Agency Forum for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
SP	Housing Strategic Partnership

