

**Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ**



17 March 2015

EXECUTIVE - Tuesday 31 March 2015

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached background papers for the following item:-

16. Central Bedfordshire Homelessness Strategy

The report introduces the draft Homelessness Strategy for Central Bedfordshire and proposes that it is adopted by Executive for implementation.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Sandra Hobbs, Committee Services Officer on Tel: 0300 300 5257.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hobbs
Committee Services Officer
email: sandra.hobbs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Duty requires public bodies to have **due regard** to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (elimination of discrimination only)
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Due Regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Duty as part of the process of decision-making. For example:

- How they act as employers
- How they develop, evaluate and review policy
- How they design, deliver and evaluate services
- How they commission and procure from others

Advancing equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed in discrimination law. This could mean making use of an exception or positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way that is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

Officers should:

Keep an adequate record showing that the equality duties and relevant questions have been actively considered.

Be rigorous in both inquiring and reporting to members the outcome of the assessment and the legal duties.

Final approval of a proposal, can only happen after the completion of an equality impact assessment. It is unlawful to adopt a proposal contingent on an equality impact assessment



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Title of the Assessment:	Central Bedfordshire Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020	Date of Assessment:	26 th November 2014
Responsible Officer	Name: Joanne Bellamy	Extension Number:	X75691
	Title: Policy and Performance Officer		
	Email: Joanne.bellamy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk		

Stage 1 - Setting out the nature of the proposal and potential outcomes.

Stage 1 – Aims and Objectives	
<p>1.1 What are the objectives of the proposal under consideration?</p> <p>The draft priorities of the Homelessness Strategy have been identified as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent homelessness 2. Meet the accommodation and support needs of homeless people 3. Develop partnership working opportunities to deliver a person-centred service <p>Our vision is to empower customers to prevent homelessness and commission person-centred support and accommodation for those who are homeless so that they have the skills and resilience to sustain their independence.</p>	<p>GU</p>
<p>1.2 Why is this being done?</p> <p>The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal duty on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in the local area. The Review provides a comprehensive understanding of current and future likely levels of homelessness, homelessness provision and support alongside the prevention of homelessness. The Review findings are used to formulate a Homelessness Strategy, which must be renewed every five years.</p>	
<p>1.3 What will be the impact on staff or customers?</p> <p>Those at risk of homelessness will receive the support and advice to prevent losing their accommodation. Those that are homeless will receive the accommodation and non-accommodation based support to enable them to regain their independence and prevent future homelessness.</p>	
<p>1.4 How does this proposal contribute or relate to other Council initiatives?</p> <p>The strategy relates to a number of the Council’s priorities and existing strategies. Central Bedfordshire Council’s medium term plan ‘Delivering Your Priorities 2012-16’ sets out the priority of ‘enhancing your local community – creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow’. One of the targets is to ensure the availability of high quality, appropriate housing including affordable housing, supported by suitable infrastructure.</p> <p>The Council’s priority to ‘enhance your local community’ is mirrored by the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2031 which has the priority of ‘maximising employment opportunities and delivering housing growth to meet the needs of our communities’.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy 2011-16 set out the Council’s priorities for providing a comprehensive housing service, which aims to improve quality of life for all residents through effective housing need solutions and the development of stable communities across Central Bedfordshire. The key priorities identified in the Housing Strategy included meeting the accommodation and support needs of older persons and vulnerable people and providing housing options for the whole</p>	



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community.

Other strategies and initiatives include:

The implementation of the Care Act 2014

Looked After Children Placement Strategy 2013

Tenancy Strategy 2013-18

Housing Support Services Market Position Statement

Housing Allocations Policy

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Mental Health Services for Adults and Older People in Central Bedfordshire.

1.5 In which ways does the proposal support Central Bedfordshire's legal duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Protecting vulnerable groups by providing appropriate, personalised services will help to eliminate the potential for harassment and victimisation of these individual groups.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Homelessness has a deep impact on health, employment opportunities, educational achievement, and is linked to offending and substance misuse. For most people who become homeless their lack of accommodation is a symptom rather than a cause of their social exclusion. Those at most risk of homelessness or who are disproportionately affected are:

- Families with children
- Single homeless
- Young people (16-17 year olds and 18-20 year old care leavers)

There are also characteristics that increase the likelihood of homelessness which are:

- a) People with mental health difficulties
- b) People with alcohol and substance misuse problems
- c) Offenders and ex-offenders
- d) People suffering from domestic violence.

The strategy will ensure that more residents are prevented from becoming homeless and those that do become homeless will receive more person-centred support to relieve their homelessness and retain their independence.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The focus of the strategy is to deliver person-centred services that meet the needs of individual and people that share protected characteristics. Rather than commission universal services, the Council is proposing to encourage the supported housing market to provide accommodation based support for individual vulnerable groups such as young people so that their specific needs can be better met by specialist services.

1.6 Is it possible that this proposal could damage relations amongst groups of people with different protected characteristics or contribute to inequality by treating some members of the community less favourably such as people of different ages, men or

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women, people from black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, carers, people with different religions or beliefs, new and expectant mothers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities?

The strategy's priorities, objectives and action plan have been developed following engagement with stakeholders and an evidence-based review of homelessness in Central Bedfordshire. Priority groups have been identified from this and resources redirected where necessary.

Stage 2 - Consideration of national and local research, data and consultation findings in order to understand the potential impacts of the proposal.

Stage 2 - Consideration of Relevant Data and Consultation

In completing this section it will be helpful to consider:

- **Publicity** – Do people know that the service exists?
- **Access** – Who is using the service? / Who should be using the service? Why aren't they?
- **Appropriateness** – Does the service meet people's needs and improve outcomes?
- **Service support needs** – Is further training and development required for employees?
- **Partnership working** – Are partners aware of and implementing equality requirements?
- **Contracts & monitoring** – Is equality built into the contract and are outcomes monitored?

2.1. Examples of relevant evidence sources are listed below. Please tick which evidence sources are being used in this assessment and provide a summary for each protected characteristic in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Internal desktop research

	Place survey / Customer satisfaction data	x	Demographic Profiles – Census & ONS
x	Local Needs Analysis	x	Service Monitoring / Performance Information
x	Other local research		

Third party guidance and examples

x	National / Regional Research	x	Analysis of service outcomes for different groups
x	Best Practice / Guidance	x	Benchmarking with other organisations
	Inspection Reports		

Public consultation related activities

	Consultation with Service Users	x	Consultation with Community / Voluntary Sector
x	Consultation with Staff		Customer Feedback / Complaints
x	Data about the physical environment e.g. housing market, employment, education and training provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces		

Consulting Members, stakeholders and specialists

	Elected Members	x	Expert views of stakeholders representing diverse groups
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x	Specialist staff / service expertise	

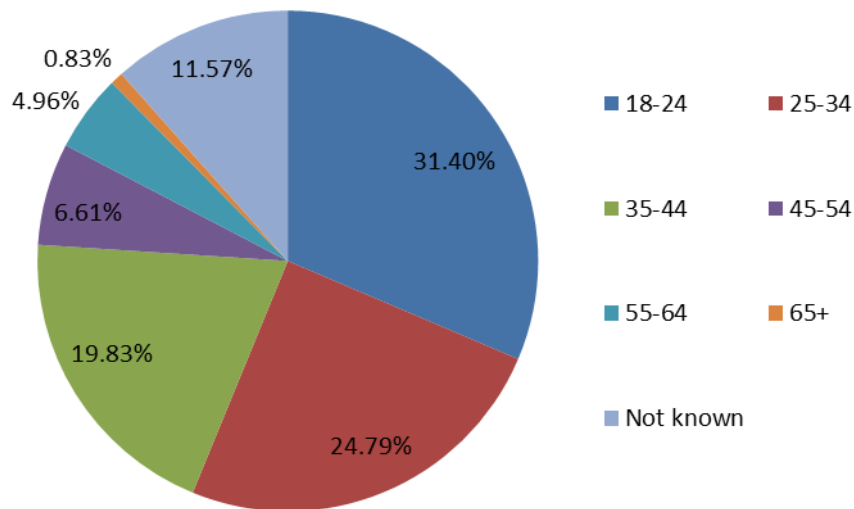
Please bear in mind that whilst sections of the community will have common interests and concerns, views and issues vary within groups. E.g. women have differing needs and concerns depending on age, ethnic origin, disability etc

Lack of local knowledge or data is not a justification for assuming there is not a negative impact on some groups of people. Further research may be required.

**2.2. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings: - Service Delivery
Considering the impact on Customers/Residents**

- Age: e.g. Under 16 yrs / 16-19 yrs / 20-29 yrs / 30-44 yrs / 45-59 yrs / 60-64 yrs / 65-74 yrs / 75+

Statutory homeless acceptance data shows that young people aged 18-24 represent 32% (38) of all statutory acceptances in 2013-14 with those aged 25-34 accounting for 30 cases (25%). These groups combined make up more than half of all acceptances (56%), indicating that people from young or relatively young age groups are disproportionately affected by homelessness.



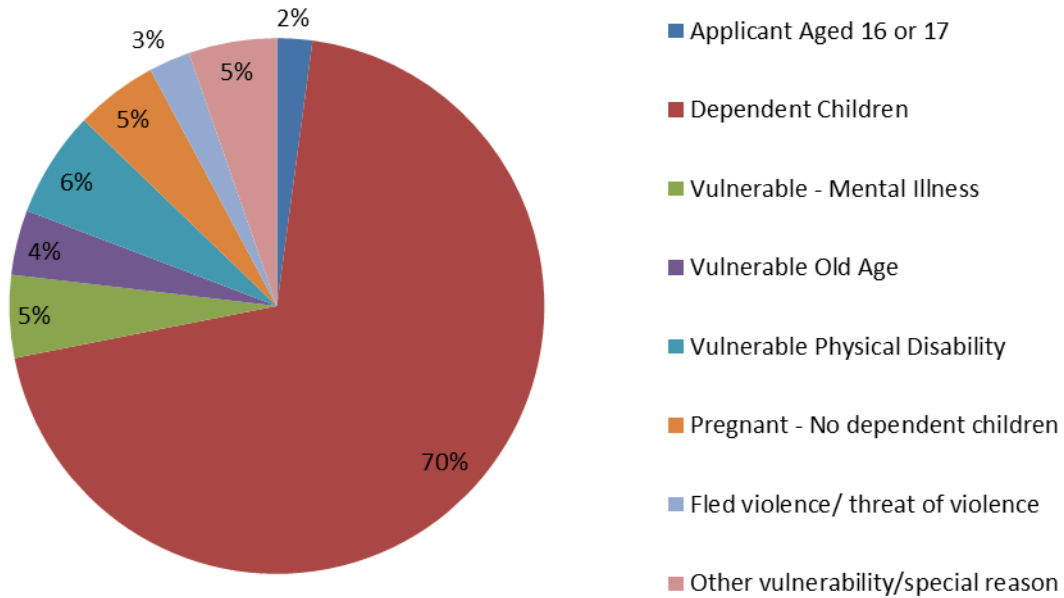
2013-14 homeless acceptances by age

The reasons for statutory homeless acceptances in 2013-14 show that the majority (26 cases, 21%) were caused because parents were no longer willing to accommodate their child.

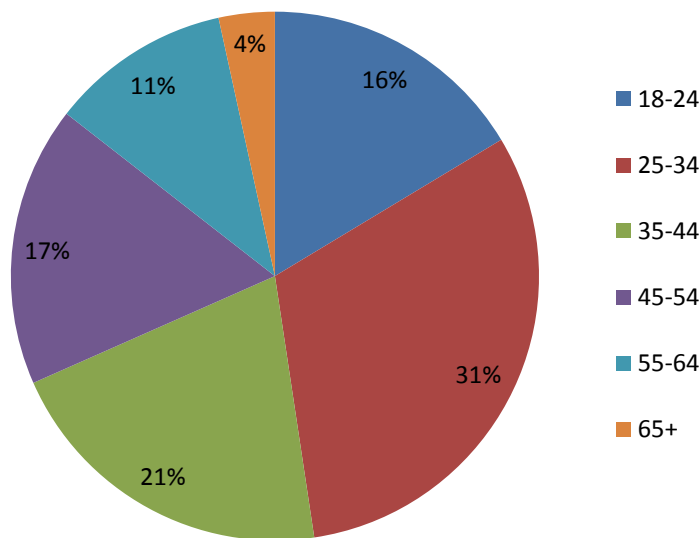
Housing Services' prevention data shows that out of the total 281 prevention cases 2% were given a priority need category of 'applicant aged 16 or 17', 70% dependent children and 4% were vulnerable due to old age.



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Priority need of homelessness prevention cases (base: 281)¹



Homelessness prevention by age 2013-14 (base 525)²

Compared with statutory acceptances the proportion of prevention and relief cases by age is broadly the same. The proportion by household type slightly differs with a larger number of single males being affected by homelessness but not meeting the criteria to be owed a statutory duty. This could suggest two things; that the provision of prevention support for single men is sufficient to meet demand in the local area or that while many single men do not have access to a secure home and are considered homeless their actions or situation contribute to them not being accepted as statutory homeless.

Families with children, single homeless and young people (16-17 year olds and 18-20 year old care

¹ QL, CBC Housing Services

² QL, CBC Housing Services



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leavers) were identified in the Homelessness Review as those at most risk of homelessness or who are disproportionately affected.

The majority of households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during 2013-14 in Central Bedfordshire were families with dependent children (77%, 96). As shown below this was made up of 76% lone female parent families, 17% couples with children and 7% lone male parent families.

Couple with dependent children*	Lone parent household with dependent children		One person household		All other household groups	Total
	Male Applicant	Female Applicant	Male Applicant	Female Applicant		
6	1	16	3	0	0	26
3	3	22	4	1	0	33
2	2	15	4	5	3	31
5	1	20	2	3	3	34
16	7	73	13	9	6	124

Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need 2013-14

At the end of 2013-14 there were 39 households in Temporary Accommodation of which 27 (69%) were households with dependent children or with a pregnancy. The average length of stay in bed and breakfast in 2013-14 was 14.4 weeks for pregnant/dependent households and 11.2 weeks for all other households.

Homelessness can have a negative impact on children that can have long-lasting effects. Children’s educational attainment can suffer as can their emotional well-being leading to behavioural problems. Shelter carried out a survey involving 417 households living in temporary accommodation in 2004³. The impact of living in TA was summarised as follows:

Frequent moving and disruption associated with living in temporary accommodation makes it difficult for children to keep school places, maintain their attendance and do well at school. Two fifths of parents (43 per cent) reported that their children had missed school due to their housing situation. On average, children had missed 55 days of school equivalent to quarter of the school year. One in ten parents (11 per cent) said that at least one of their children did not have a school place at all for the term. Parents also said their children had long journeys to school and had problems with transport.

The trauma of becoming homeless and stresses associated with living in temporary accommodation affect children’s mental and emotional well being. Over two fifths (42 per cent) of parents said that their child was ‘often unhappy or depressed’. Children also experienced a lot of problems at school including bullying and behavioural problems. One in ten parents (11 per cent) said that their child had been given a statement of Special Educational Needs and one in ten said their child had been suspended, excluded or expelled from school.

A health needs assessment of health and homelessness found that associated factors of children living in TA were higher Accident and Emergency attendance for infections, chronic illness and accident rates. Other factors are behavioural/mental health problems, physical health problems such as chest infections and malnourishment, development delay, immunisation delay and Children in Need/ of protection.⁴

In addition to families with children, young people were also identified as a priority homelessness group. The Review found that young people are often forced to leave the family home during a crisis and have few life skills to effectively deal with this. They are typically unaware of the support that is available to them and as a result they need to be signposted to appropriate services that have a specialist

³ Living in limbo: Survey of homeless households living in temporary accommodation, Shelter 2004.

⁴ Homelessness and Health in the Central Bedfordshire Council Area: A health needs assessment report, NHS Bedfordshire 2009. http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/Homelessness%20and%20health%203_tcm6-32217.pdf#False



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understanding of their needs.

Young people are more likely to move between hostels and are more likely to accrue rent arrears, increasing the probability of becoming institutionalised as they face barriers to achieving independent living. There is also an increasing financial cost of youth homelessness the longer they remain homeless, which can include extra policing and increased demand for health and social care services.

124 households were found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during 2013-14 of which two were given the need category of 'aged 16 or 17 years of age'. 48 (39%) were aged 16-24.

Looked After Children (LAC) are among the most vulnerable groups in society and are at an increased risk of poor outcomes. Evidence from studies shows that young people leaving care have to cope with the challenges and responsibilities of major changes in their lives – in leaving foster and residential care and setting up home, in leaving school and entering the world of work or, more likely, being unemployed and surviving on benefits, and in being parents – at a far younger age than other young people. In short, many have compressed and accelerated transitions to adulthood. During this journey to adulthood they are more likely than other young people to become young householders, be homeless, have poorer qualifications, lower levels of participation in post-16 education and higher levels of unemployment.

There is also evidence that looked-after young people, those leaving care and adults who had been in care were likely to experience mental health problems. Care leavers also have higher levels of drug use than other young people.⁵

44 (21%) of Looked After Children (LAC) in Central Bedfordshire in 2012 were aged 15-17.⁶ There were twice as many male LAC as female in this age group. Young people are supported to remain in foster care or in residential homes where this is consistent with their needs and wishes. A 'staying-put' policy is in place for young people who need to remain in a fostering household beyond 18. However for those young people who wish to move towards independence or for those who become looked after at age 16 or 17 a range of semi-independent and independent living provision is required.⁷

Research to develop the draft housing support services Market Position Statement (MPS) found that there are significant gaps in the availability of Accommodation Based Support and floating support for young people. Accommodation Based Support is available for homeless and other vulnerable young people in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area. However, there are waiting lists to access these services, and applicants have to be prioritised according to their degree of vulnerability. There are no Accommodation Based Services that are particularly aimed at Young People in 'north' Central Bedfordshire. The needs analysis found that there is no accommodation that is particularly suitable for Teenage Parents anywhere in Central Bedfordshire.

Floating support services are available across localities but the MPS research found that they are not particularly aimed at young people and they do not have capacity to meet all of the estimated needs.

The case for specialist accommodation based support for young people was strongly made at the stakeholder engagement event. There was a preference for smaller schemes to house 4 or 5 young people with intensive support and eviction policies that accept that young people are more likely to make mistakes as they develop their life skills. There was also concern about housing vulnerable young people in schemes with ex-offenders and adults with substance misuse issues. The increased risk of sexual exploitation of young homeless people was also highlighted but the evidence base to support this is limited, an issue that the Community Safety Partnership is seeking to address.

⁵ What works for young people leaving care?, Barnardo's, 2004.

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_works_for_young_people_leaving_care_2004_publications_tracked.pdf

⁶CBC Looked After Children Placement Strategy, 2013.

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⁷CBC Looked After Children Placement Strategy, 2013.

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/LACplacementstrategy_tcm6-40130.pdf#False



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- Disability: *e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement*

Housing Services' prevention data shows that out of the total 281 prevention cases 5% were given a priority need category of 'vulnerable – mental illness' and 6% 'vulnerable – physical disability'.

Ten of the 124 households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during 2013-14 were given the need category of 'mental illness or handicap'.

As at December 2013 SEPT, the mental health services provider for Central Bedfordshire, had a client list of 1,975. The Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Vulnerable People research estimated that the total population with mental health needs could be up to 2,758 when including those not in contact with secondary services.

A Central Bedfordshire health needs assessment of health and homelessness found that single homeless people were at particular risk of mental health problems:

- a) Homelessness is a trigger to mental health problems and exacerbates those that already exist.
- b) Mental health is the leading cause of homelessness - in a third of cases losing a home was associated with mental health problems and homeless people had more mental health problems than any other group in society.
- c) People who sleep rough are thirty five times more likely to commit suicide than the general population. In one study 43% of rough sleepers had attempted suicide and 25% had tried more than once.
- d) The prevalence of serious mental illness (including major depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) is reported as being present in at least 25-30% of street homeless and those in direct access hostels.
- e) In hostels and B&Bs the incidence of mental health problems is higher: eight times higher in hostels and 11 times higher in B&B accommodation compared to the general population.⁸

A national Homeless Health Audit in 2014 found that the proportion of homeless people with diagnosed mental health problems (45%) is nearly double that of the general population (around 25%). In addition, 12% of participants diagnosed with mental health issues also reported drug and alcohol issues. This 'dual diagnosis' often restricts homeless people from accessing support, as services are unable or unwilling to provide support around mental health while still using drugs or alcohol.⁹

Young people aged under 25 years of age present a particular challenge as they report high levels of mental ill health and substance misuse. There is an acknowledged high overlap with care leaving services and youth offending teams. On their part, accommodation providers report difficulties in obtaining appropriate health services for this group as they fall into the transition between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and adult services. Additional difficulties can arise because of the difference in transition points with social care, education and health. The situation is further complicated by the co-existence of mental health and substance misuse issues which falls outside the remit of generic services.¹⁰

⁸ Homelessness and Health in the Central Bedfordshire Council Area: A health needs assessment report, NHS Bedfordshire 2009.

⁹ The Unhealthy State of Homelessness: Health audit results 2014, Homeless Link 2014
<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/The%20unhealthy%20state%20of%20homelessness%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ Understanding Homelessness and Mental Health, Communities and Local Government and the CSIP Housing Learning and Improvement Network.
http://www.housinglin.org.uk/library/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Briefings/Briefing24_Homelessness.pdf



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- Carers: *A person of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help due to illness, disability, mental ill-health or a substance misuse problem*

Over 2 million people become carers every year (Carers UK). Every day, another six thousand people take on a caring responsibility and 3 in 5 people will become a carer at some point in their lives.

Over 1 million people experience ill health, poverty and discrimination at work and in society because they are carers (Carers UK). 18% of carers have left a job or been unable to take one due to caring responsibilities.

There is a strong socio-economic dimension to caring. People from lower socio-economic groups are more likely both to need care and to provide it, at any age.

The financial costs of caring can be significant. Research by Carers UK found that 72% of carers were worse off financially as a result of becoming carers. The main carer's benefit is £55.55 for a minimum of 35 hours, equivalent to £1.58 per hour – far short of the national minimum wage of £5.93 per hour (2011-2012 figures). Carers who are struggling financially are more likely to be: in poor health (34%); unqualified (21%); caring for 20+ hours per week (88%). Not only does this drive carers into poverty, it also underlines the discrimination that they feel and experience in society. Some carers have no choice to care because of the paucity of care services and the huge and complex levels of care that they provide. These carers feel very strongly that it is time to revalue carers' benefits in line with their contribution to society.

Over 3 million people juggle care with work, however the significant demands of caring mean that 1 in 5 carers are forced to give up work altogether.

- Gender Reassignment: *People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex*

1 in 10,000 people suffer from the recognised medical condition known as gender dysphoria, generally referred to as being transgender or transsexual. Recent research estimates that 7% of the trans population are aged 61 or over (Equalities Review).

Research undertaken in the areas of employment, health provision, social exclusion and hate crime indicates that Transgender people experience disproportionate levels of discrimination, harassment and violence. This includes bullying and discriminatory treatment in schools, harassment and physical/sexual assault and rejection from families, work colleagues and friends. Tackling transphobia must be a priority.

Research indicates that transgender people can face additional challenges and barriers to accessing services (Sexuality and Homelessness. Crisis (2005)) and can face homophobia and discrimination which increases their risk of homelessness. For example, a Stonewall report harassment in the home and neighbourhood faced by a significant minority of transgender people (Understanding the housing needs and homeless experiences of LGBT people in Scotland, Stonewall (2005)).

A study by the University of Brighton (Out on my own – University of Brighton, 2006) found that in most cases the initial homelessness was directly or indirectly linked to sexual or transgender identity.



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- Pregnancy and Maternity: *e.g. pregnant women / women who have given birth & women who are breastfeeding (26 week time limit then protected by sex discrimination provisions)*

Housing Services' prevention data shows that out of the total 281 prevention cases 5% were given a priority need category of 'pregnant – no dependent children'.

Teenage parents and their children are at increased risk of living in poverty.

- Race: *e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other*

People from black and minority ethnic communities can often experience multiple inequalities. 70% live in the 88 most deprived neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom and they are more likely to be poor, with lower incomes spread across larger household sizes. They can also experience discrimination, stereotyping and racism. These overall patterns also vary between and within different ethnic groups. Gypsies and Irish Travellers can face acute discrimination and awareness of the needs of these communities can be low.

Nationally, ethnic minority households are around three times more likely to become statutorily homeless than are the majority White population. In every region in England, ethnic minority households are over-represented amongst those accepted as homeless by local housing authorities. (Causes of Homelessness Amongst Ethnic Minority Populations, ODPM, 2005).

- Religion or Belief: *e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other*

Research has highlighted differences in the health and wellbeing of different religious communities – a finding that provides an opportunity to target services. The British Muslim community, for example, has the poorest reported health, followed by the Sikh population. For both groups, as well as for Hindus, females are more likely to report ill health, whereas for Christians and Jews there is only minimal gender difference. It should be borne in mind that this is not necessarily a case of cause and effect, but more likely is compounded with other factors such as housing and economic and social status.

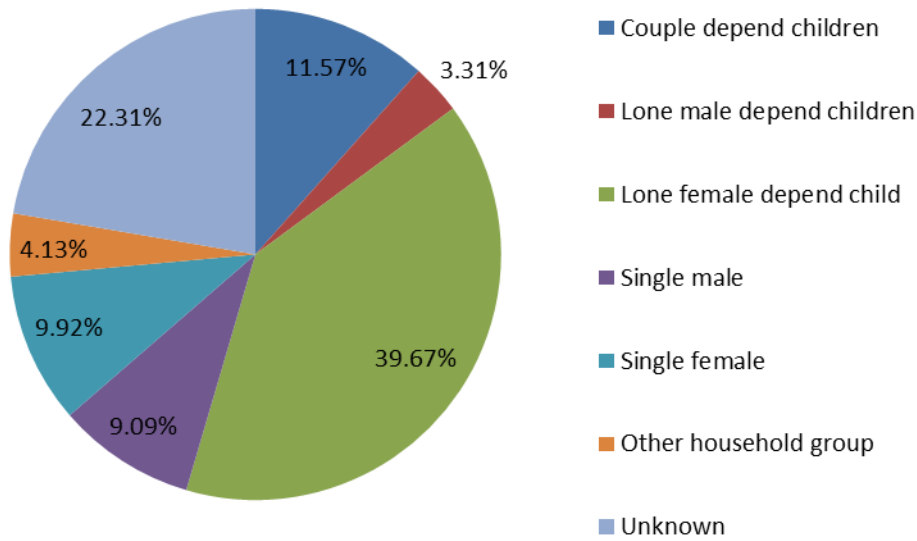
- Sex: *e.g. Women / Girls / Men / Boys*

18% (22) of households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during 2013-14 were one person households. 13 (59%) of applicants were male and 9 applicants were female

An examination of statutory homeless acceptances in 2013-14 shows that 48 (40%) of all acceptances were from lone females with dependent children, making them the largest priority group. Couples with dependent children accounted for 14 (12%) of cases with single females making up 12 (10%) of acceptances.



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2013-14 homeless acceptances by household type¹¹

Housing Services' prevention data shows that out of the total 281 prevention cases 3% were given a priority need category of 'fled violence or threat of violence'. Women at higher risk of domestic abuse.

People suffering from domestic violence was identified the Homelessness Review as being a characteristic that increases the likelihood of homelessness.

Men, women and children who experience domestic violence often face becoming homeless in order to keep themselves safe from their abuser. Research indicates that in up to 40% of cases, domestic violence is the main cause or a contributing factor towards women becoming homeless. 90% of young people leave home because of family conflict, including witnessing domestic violence or being a victim of physical or sexual abuse¹².

Women who have experienced domestic violence remain at risk of homelessness long after the relationship has ended, for example, due to having to move on if they are found or because the long-term impact of abuse on their emotional and psychological well-being means they find it difficult to maintain a tenancy¹³.

Three of the households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during 2013-14 in Central Bedfordshire were given the need category of 'domestic violence'. 14 (11%) households found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need gave the violent breakdown of a relationship as the main reason for loss of their last settled home in 2013-14. 12 applicants sited the violent relationship breakdown involving a partner and two sited the violent relationship breakdown involving associated persons.

In 2013-14 there were 2,699 reported domestic abuse incidents in Central Bedfordshire which represented 23% of all recorded crime. Between April 2012 and August 2013, 81% of all Central Bedfordshire domestic abuse incidents reported to the police, the victim was female, with the most prevalent age group between 21-25 years (18% of all victims), followed by 26-30 years (16%) and 36-40

¹¹ PIE return

¹² Domestic violence and housing, Against Violence and Abuse, 2011

<http://www.avaproject.org.uk/media/62315/idva%20policy%20briefing%20march.pdf>

¹³ Domestic violence and housing, Against Violence and Abuse, 2011



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years (15%). This age pattern is also repeated for male victims with 14% of all male victims falling in the 21-25 years bracket.¹⁴

Single homeless as a priority group is likely to be made up of single men with an underlying vulnerability, such as mental health, or drug and alcohol problem. People may spend extended periods 'sofa surfing' or seek crisis accommodation in a night shelter. The majority of people in this situation within Central Bedfordshire will not, however, meet the level of vulnerability which would lead to them being assessed as having a priority need.

Offenders and ex-offenders were identified the Homelessness Review as being a characteristic that increases the likelihood of homelessness. As at 31 March 2013, there were 79,900 male prisoners and 3,869 female prisoners, with females representing 4.6% of the prison population.

Offenders are typically vulnerable adults with health, social care and educational needs, and face many challenges in order to take care of themselves. For example, upon release, the offender may have no accommodation and/or, employment and is expected to return to civilian life and re-settle. There may be issues of being accepted back into the community.

Many offenders suffer from an excessive burden of health, and in particular this group have higher rates of mental health problems, suicide, drug and alcohol misuse and learning disabilities. Problems of social exclusion, family relationships, truancy, exclusion from school, unemployment, and poor or no housing are all facets of a complex picture of social determinants throughout the life course which contribute both to offender and offending behaviour.

Ex-offenders have difficulties finding housing once released from prison. 37% nationally have stated they needed help finding a place to live once released.

- Sexual Orientation: e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals

Research indicates that LGB people can face additional challenges and barriers to accessing services (Sexuality and Homelessness. Crisis (2005)) and can face homophobia and discrimination which increases their risk of homelessness. Research also indicates that as many as 1 in 3 homeless youth are from the LGB community (Roche, Brenda, Sexuality and Homelessness, Crisis (2005)) A study by the University of Brighton (Out on my own – University of Brighton, 2006) found that in most cases the initial homelessness was directly or indirectly linked to sexual or transgender identity. Reasons for homelessness included family rejection or intolerance; homophobic bullying and assaults at school or in the local community; and feelings of isolation. The report also found evidence that young LGB people were more vulnerable to abuse within the home.

- Other: e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership

2.3. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings – Employment Considering the impact on Employees

- Age: e.g. 16-19 / 20-29 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50-59 / 60+

¹⁴ Domestic Abuse, JSNA. http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/Domestic%20Abuse%20-%20JSNA_tcm6-32035.pdf#False



Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

- **Disability:** e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement

- **Carers:** e.g. parent / guardian / foster carer / person caring for an adult who is a spouse, partner, civil partner, relative or person who lives at the same address

- **Gender Reassignment:** People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex

- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** e.g. Pregnancy / Compulsory maternity leave / Ordinary maternity leave / Additional maternity leave

- **Race:** e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other

- **Religion or Belief:** e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other

- **Sex:** Women / Men

- **Sexual Orientation:** e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals

- **Other:** e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership

2.4. To what extent are vulnerable groups more affected by this proposal compared to the population or workforce as a whole?

Those at most risk of homelessness or who are disproportionately affected are:

- Families with children
- Single homeless
- Young people (16-17 year olds and 18-20 year old care leavers)

There are also characteristics that increase the likelihood of homelessness which are:

- a) People with mental health difficulties
- b) People with alcohol and substance misuse problems
- c) Offenders and ex-offenders
- d) People suffering from domestic violence

In addition to this are clients that due to their vulnerability may be disproportionately affected by homelessness and may struggle to access the support they are eligible for. This includes people with learning disabilities, people with physical and sensory disabilities, those with poor literacy skills, older people and Gypsies and Travellers.



Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

2.5. To what extent do current procedures and working practices address the above issues and help to promote equality of opportunity?

Central Bedfordshire places emphasis on early intervention and prevention initiatives to tackle homelessness in partnership with registered social landlords, the voluntary and community and private sector services. In addition to this the Council commissions a range of supported housing and floating support services for those that are homeless.

Key achievements of the Council's first Homelessness Strategy in 2010 include:

1. The successful harmonisation of the north and south housing needs services following the north service being brought back in house. This has ensured there is a consistent approach across Central Bedfordshire.
2. The Let's Rent scheme, which facilitates private sector tenancies, has been developed to increase the housing supply available.
3. Troubled families now have additional support through the implementation of the Supporting Families programme.
4. A Homelessness and Mediation Service for young people has been introduced.
5. Debt and budgeting information and advice provision has been improved.
6. A new policy has been implemented to enable the use of the power to discharge the homelessness duty to the private sector.
7. Emergency night shelter facilities have been provided through the No Second Night Out Initiative.

2.6. Are there any gaps in data or consultation findings

Engagement sessions were carried out with external and internal stakeholders in October 2014 to inform the development of the strategy. Further consultation is due on the draft strategy in December and January.

The strategy focusses on priority groups affected by homelessness rather than protected characteristics. The consultation asks for views on how well the strategy will meet the needs of the protected characteristics to check how well consultees feel these groups' needs are recognised in the strategy.

2.7. What action will be taken to obtain this information?

A consultation will be held, starting in December 2014.

Stage 3 - Providing an overview of impacts and potential discrimination.

Stage 3 – Assessing Positive & Negative Impacts

Analysis of Impacts	Impact?		Discrimination?		Summary of impacts and reasons
	(+ve)	(- ve)	YES	NO	
					The strategy focusses on providing services that are person-centred to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals which applies to all characteristics below.
3.1 Age	x			x	Families with children and young



Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

					people have been identified as priority groups.
3.2 Disability	x			x	Mental health problems and drug and alcohol misuse were identified as characteristic that increases the likelihood of homelessness in the strategy.
3.3 Carers	x			x	
3.4 Gender Reassignment	x			x	
3.5 Pregnancy & Maternity	x			x	
3.6 Race	x			x	
3.7 Religion / Belief	x			x	
3.8 Sex	x			x	Single homeless which are more likely to be men are identified as a priority group in the strategy and people fleeing domestic violence (of which women are most likely to be affected) is identified as a characteristic that increases the likelihood of homelessness.
3.9 Sexual Orientation	x			x	
3.10 Other e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion Marriage and Civil Partnership	x			x	Offenders and ex-offenders are identified as a characteristic that increases the likelihood of homelessness.



Stage 4 - Identifying mitigating actions that can be taken to address adverse impacts.

Stage 4 – Conclusions, Recommendations and Action Planning

4.1 What are the main conclusions and recommendations from the assessment?

The strategy identifies a number of priority groups affected by homelessness which links to a number of protected characteristics, chiefly age and sex. However as data is focussed around homelessness priority groups, rather than protected characteristics, there is a lack of data on the number of different groups accessing homelessness services e.g. recording of ethnicity, religion and sexuality. The diversity monitoring of these groups could be improved..

The focus on developing person-centred services will ensure that the needs of those with protected characteristics will be better understood and met.

4.2 What changes will be made to address or mitigate any adverse impacts that have been identified?

Research on the need for supported housing services has shown that universal services should be replaced by services for individual groups to better meet their needs with specialist services. As resources are likely to be redirected to priority groups, existing services that other groups receive may be reduced. The Council's priority is to make the best use of resources to enable better outcomes for priority groups most affected by homelessness.

4.3 Are there any budgetary implications?

Yes.

4.4 Actions to be taken to mitigate against any adverse impacts:

Action	Lead Officer	Date	Priority
Improve diversity monitoring of homelessness service users.			
Update this EIA following the consultation on the draft strategy.			

Stage 5 - Checking that all the relevant issues and mitigating actions have been identified



Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 5 – Quality Assurance & Scrutiny: Checking that all the relevant issues have been identified	
5.1 What methods have been used to gain feedback on the main issues raised in the assessment?	
Step 1:	
Has the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) reviewed this assessment and provided feedback? <i>Yes/No</i>	
Summary of CPA's comments:	
Step 2:	
5.2 Feedback from Central Bedfordshire Equality Forum	
	<i>The Por adv this nee</i>



Stage 6 - Ensuring that the actual impact of proposals are monitored over time.

Stage 6 – Monitoring Future Impact	
6.1	How will implementation of the actions be monitored?
6.2	What sort of data will be collected and how often will it be analysed?
6.3	How often will the proposal be reviewed?
6.4	Who will be responsible for this?
6.5	How have the actions from this assessment been incorporated into the proposal?

Stage 7 - Finalising the assessment.

Stage 7 – Accountability / Signing Off	
7.1	Has the lead Assistant Director/Head of Service been notified of the outcome of the assessment Name: _____ Date: _____
7.2	Has the Corporate Policy Adviser Equality & Diversity provided confirmation that the Assessment is complete? Date: _____

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Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2015-20

Priority one: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness

Objective 1. Undertake a comprehensive review of service delivery arrangements to ensure effective demand management and customer satisfaction.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
1.1	Review the Homelessness Strategy annually and be responsive to emerging needs.	Annual review of strategy. Annual update of action plan.	Meets a Gold Standard challenge. Up to date effective Homelessness Strategy.	Within existing resources.	March 2016	Head of Housing Solutions
1.2	Undertake a comprehensive review of service delivery arrangements to ensure effective demand management, including the use of advice lines and technology to effectively meet customer demand.	Research best practice. Understand customer demand and customer journey. Recommendations for improved customer pathway and demand management.	Deliver best practice service. Effectively manage customer demand.	Resources may be required to invest in ICT to manage demand, however this needs to be offset against B&B spend and staff sickness.	March 2016	Head of Housing Solutions

		Implement recommendations.				
1.3	Review the first point of contact for customers alongside mapping the customer journey.	Map customer journey. Understand access points into the service, including through partner agencies. Develop customer pathway.	Develop clear customer pathways to ensure effective service delivery and drive out waste and missed opportunities for prevention.	Within existing resources. Will provide more streamlined service delivering value for money, and increasing prevention opportunities.	December 2015	Locality Managers
1.4	Develop a service user action plan to ensure regular consultation with customers, including monitoring customer satisfaction.	Develop action plan. Develop service standards Develop customer satisfaction monitoring and reporting. Consult with service users.	Customers are listened to and service improvements made.	Within existing resources.	March 2015	Head of Housing Solutions

Objective 2. Ensure homelessness is prevented through an effective homelessness prevention toolkit

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
1.5	Review and improve current homelessness prevention tools,	Review prevention tools against main causes of	To effectively prevent homelessness and ensure	Within existing resources.	September 2015	Locality Manager - North

	especially those enabling households to remain in their current accommodation.	<p>homelessness.</p> <p>Identify where new prevention tools are required and implement.</p> <p>Train staff.</p> <p>Introduce targets on prevention into the performance reviews of service staff.</p>	that prevention tools are fit for purpose.	<p>Effective prevention is far more cost effective than homeless applications.</p> <p>Investment in prevention will lead to reduce TA costs.</p>		
1.6	Provide training to all staff involved with homelessness prevention on new and existing prevention tools available.	<p>Develop a standard cyclical training module for all service staff covering:</p> <p>knowledge-based training on homelessness legislation, landlord and tenant law including court advocacy procedures, housing benefit, income maximisation, debt advice, jobcentre plus services and recent case law; and</p> <p>Skills-based training on interview skills and statement taking, getting the message across and customer services.</p>	To ensure the Council is fully compliant with the law and statutory guidance in relation to administering homelessness duties and preventing homelessness.	Training budget.	September 2015	Head of Housing Solutions

1.7	Ensure effective tools are in place to prevent end of assured shorthold tenancies leading to homelessness, through effective landlord and tenant support and mediation. Where homelessness cannot be prevented notice periods will be used to source alternative accommodation.	Research best practice. Implement local solutions including mediation, tenant and landlord support. Review outcomes.	Prevent homelessness arising from the private rented sector.	Potential resource implications, but need to be set against the cost of homelessness and TA.	September 2015	Locality Manager North
1.8	Up skill communities and local services to ensure homelessness is prevented.	Ensure advice and information available via the website and leaflets. Provide training and workshops for partners and community groups so that they can effectively signpost.	Community commitment and involvement in preventing homelessness.	Within exiting resources.	December 2015	Head of Housing Solutions

Objective 3. Ensure a targeted approach to meeting the housing needs of young people and Care Leavers.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
1.9	Review mediation services for young people and families.	Review existing arrangements and outcomes. Research best practice.	Ensure youth homelessness is prevented. Prevent homelessness	Within existing resources.	September 2015	Locality Managers

		Work with children's services to develop effective mediation services.	due to parental/family excluding.			
1.10	Develop a strategic approach with Children's Services to meet the housing needs of Care Leavers.	Attend Care Leavers Accommodation working group. Research best practice. Develop a range of housing options to meet the needs of Care Leavers.	Prevent youth homelessness.	Resources may be required to develop new solutions, however, this needs to be set against the cost of a care leaver becoming homeless.	July 2015	Locality Managers Leaving Care Team
1.11	Ensure housing staff receive child protection training and training on the Leaving Care Protocol.	Undertake training audit. Arrange cyclical training for all staff. Ensure training included in induction for new staff.	Prevent youth homelessness. Safeguard children and young people.	Within existing resources.	July 2015	Locality Managers

Objective 4. Undertake a review of rough sleeping services to ensure that the 'No Second Night Out' vision is met.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
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1.12	Undertaken a review of rough sleeping services to ensure that no rough sleeper has to spend a second night sleeping rough.	Research best practice. Ensure effective outreach provision. Reconfigure emergency provision to ensure it meets demands and works to prevent rough sleeping.	No rough sleeper sleeps out for a second night.	Resources may be required.	December 2015	Head of Housing Solutions
1.13	Improve the availability of emergency accommodation and day services.	Map and review current emergency bed provision	Additional emergency accommodation resource to meet needs.	Resources may be required.	April 2016	Head of Housing Solutions
1.14	Ensure targeted response to working with entrenched rough sleepers.	Review current provision and the need for complex needs group. Research best practice. Reconfigure or commission services to meet need.	Reduction in the number of entrenched rough sleepers.	Resources may be required.	April 2016	Head of Housing Solutions

Objective 5. Achieve the Government's Gold Standard.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
1.15	Achieve the Government's Gold Standard by meeting the 10	Participate in a peer review to establish a	Improve frontline housing services for homeless	Within existing resources.	March 2018	Head of Housing Solutions

	pledges.	baseline position. Commit to achieving the Gold Standard and meeting the ten challenges. Develop an action plan to meet the ten challenges.	families and single people.			
1.16	Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness, which has a buy-in across all local authority services.	Report to SMT requesting corporate commitment to preventing homelessness. Appointment of an Elected Member Homelessness Champion.	Ensure commitment to preventing homelessness across all Local Authority Services. Meets a Gold Standard challenge.	Within existing resources. Joined up approach to preventing homelessness would save money across services.	March 2018	Head of Housing Solutions
1.17	Offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice.	Develop template letters. Update procedures. Train staff.	Meets a Gold Standard challenge. Delivery of best practice service.	Within existing resources.	March 2018	Head of Housing Solutions

Priority two: Increase housing supply to meet the accommodation and support needs of homeless people

Objective 1: Develop a coordinated approach to increase the supply of affordable private rented accommodation

Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for	Timescales	Lead Officer
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				Money/ Resource Implications		
2.1	Develop a co-ordinated approach to increase the supply of affordable private rented accommodation through the Let's Rent scheme, PRSOs and temporary accommodation.	<p>Develop an action plan to provide a strategic approach to the use of the private rented sector to meet a range of needs including both prevention and TA.</p> <p>Implement action plan.</p> <p>Create 40 new private rented tenancies per year.</p> <p>Review outcomes.</p>	<p>Increase the supply of affordable private rented homes.</p> <p>Improve the standard of private sector properties and responsible landlords.</p> <p>Increase the number of landlords committed to the scheme in the long term.</p>	Investment in landlord incentives may be required, however this needs to be off set against the cost of homelessness.	December 2015	Locality Managers
2.2	Develop and promote a shared tenancy model to meet the needs of single people.	<p>Research best practice.</p> <p>Develop a local model based on best practice and local need.</p>	<p>Clients sustain their tenancies.</p> <p>Improved availability of information.</p>	Investment in this model may be required.	March 2016	Housing Policy Advisor

Objective 2. Ensure the best use of the Council's Housing Stock to meet customer need, through the Allocations Policy, the Annual Lettings Plan, tenancy sustainment approaches and shared tenancies.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
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2.3	Develop and promote a menu of tenancy sustainment services.	<p>Research best practice.</p> <p>Develop a local range of tools to meet identified need.</p> <p>Review outcomes.</p>	<p>Tenancies are sustained.</p> <p>Homelessness is prevented.</p>	Within existing resources.	March 2016	Locality Managers
2.4	Implement the tenancy sustainment approach for CBC tenants.	<p>Roll out tenancy sustainment programme.</p> <p>Monitor outcomes.</p> <p>Review approach.</p> <p>Publicise good practice.</p>	<p>Reduced CBC tenancy failure.</p> <p>Increased awareness of CBC tenancy sustainment support by CBC tenants and support services.</p>	Within existing resources.		
2.5	Implement the Allocations Policy and new Housing Register.	<p>Roll out new allocations policy.</p> <p>Monitor outcomes.</p> <p>Review policy after 6 months.</p>	<p>Applicants in housing need are helped to find suitable housing.</p> <p>Applicants who are out of work are encouraged to seek employment.</p> <p>Efficient and best use of social housing stock in the area.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to take a measured and long term view on housing options and to take</p>	Within existing resources.	December 2014	Locality Managers

			<p>responsibility for planning their own housing provision.</p> <p>Those threatened with homelessness are assisted into private sector accommodation with the help of our private sector access scheme.</p>			
2.6	Monitor the impact of the Allocations Policy on homelessness and homelessness service.	<p>Develop monitoring arrangements to understand the impact the new policy has on customer demand.</p> <p>Ensure a range of options/leaflets are available for those not eligible to join the Register.</p> <p>Feed outcomes of monitoring into policy review.</p>	Enable pro-active approach to potential adverse impact of the policy.	Within existing resources.	August 2015	Locality Managers
2.7	Create shared tenancy arrangements within Council housing stock.	<p>Research best practice.</p> <p>Implement pilot.</p> <p>Roll out shared tenancies on identified housing</p>	<p>Create 10 shared tenancy arrangements.</p> <p>Increase the housing options available to single people.</p>	<p>Set up costs.</p> <p>Potential on-going support costs.</p>	March 2016	Housing Policy Advisor

stock.

Objective 3. Increase the provision of affordable housing, including both market and rented.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
2.8	Work with the Planning service to ensure the Housing Supplementary Planning Document meets specific Housing Needs for Central Bedfordshire.	Research best practice. Provide detailed evidence base. Regular meetings with planning.	Increase the number of appropriate and affordable properties available to prevent homelessness.	Within existing resources	December 2015	Head of Housing Solutions
2.9	Review the Improved information sharing and joint working between Housing Services and the Planning service.	Undertake review. Monitor outcomes.	Better understanding of the needs of residents at risk of homelessness.	Within existing resources.	December 2015	Head of Housing Solutions
2.10	Review the Empty Homes Strategy to continue to maximise the use of empty properties to address housing need.	Research best practice. Identify solutions and budgets to maximise the use of empty properties to meet the identified housing need. Ensure full nomination rights to the Housing Solutions team.	Empty homes brought back in to use to increase the availability of housing.	Empty property budget.	December 2015	Head of Housing Solutions

Objective 4. Develop a coordinated approach to increase the provision and through put of supported accommodation services to meet identified needs.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
2.11	Review the provision of floating support services.	Assess existing floating support services with stakeholders to consider the effectiveness of existing services and whether additional services could be useful and cost-effective. Agree action plan to improve use and take up in support. Or re-commission as necessary.	Floating support services meet the needs of clients. Clients sustain their tenancies.	Within existing resources.	May 2016	Housing Policy Advisor
2.12	Publish the Housing Support Services Market Position Statement.		Providers are guided as to the services required in the area.	Within existing resources.	May 2015	Housing policy Advisor
2.13	Commission housing support services that meet the needs of the homeless and raise their aspirations.	Develop a commissioning plan. Consult with providers and service users. Under take	Improve provision of homeless accommodation and support services. Improve the outcomes for homeless people.	TBC	May 2016	Housing policy Advisor

		commissioning.				
2.14	Ensure the most effective use of current supported provision by developing a single point of access and a common assessment form for support services, alongside the development of an allocations policy for supported accommodation, prioritising those in greatest housing need.	<p>Research best practice.</p> <p>Develop single point of access and pilot.</p> <p>Develop a common assessment/referral form to be used by all accommodation & support providers.</p> <p>Develop an allocations policy for supported housing.</p>	Ensure supported housing is used to meet the needs of those in the greatest need, and that homelessness is prevented.	Within existing, however the development of single access point may require both ICT and staff resource.	May 2016	Housing Policy Advisor
2.15	Ensure effective move on from supported accommodation through the implementation of Homeless Link's Move On Plan Protocol.	<p>Identify lead contacts and agree action plan to implement 6 stages of MOPP.</p> <p>1) Partnership work 2) Audit to capture numerical info. 3) Action plan based on the audit. 4) Delivery of action plan 5) Monitoring of the action plan. 6) Review.</p>	To ensure effective move on from supported accommodation.	Within existing resources.	May 2016	Housing Policy Advisor

Objective 5: Improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
2.16	Adopt a collaborative approach to meet the health needs of homeless people.	Develop key partnerships, and identify issues. Develop a project plan to address issues.	Improve access to health services for homeless people.	Within existing resources.	May 2016	Homelessness Forum
2.17	Ensure that the needs of vulnerable homeless households are reflected in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and advise the Health and Wellbeing Board on the links between homelessness, health care and housing.	Ensure robust evidence base to feed into health and wellbeing board. Ensure housing representation on board. Develop reports on key issues to take to board.	Improve strategic commitment to tackle homeless health issues.	Within existing resources.	May 2016	Homelessness Forum
2.18	Ensure that commissioned and in-house accommodation and support providers are knowledgeable about health care services.	Provide training for in-house staff and support providers. Provide regular updates on key issues.	Improve access to health care services for homeless people.	Within existing resources.	May 2016	Head of Housing Solutions
2.19	Work with our partners in health and the voluntary sector to ensure that there is a clear process in place so that homeless people discharged from hospital have their	Research best practice. Develop hospital discharge policy.	People are not discharged from hospital as homeless.	Within existing resources.	May 2016	Housing Policy Advisor

housing and on-going support needs planned for.	Implement policy and review.				
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Priority three: Reduce the use of temporary accommodation and bed & breakfast

Objective 1: Carry out a comprehensive review of the use of Temporary Accommodation.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
3.1	Carry out a comprehensive review of the use of Temporary Accommodation and develop a TA action plan to meet the current and anticipated need.	<p>Undertake a review of existing temporary accommodation provision.</p> <p>Research best practice nationally in relation to temporary accommodation provision.</p> <p>Identify current and future demand for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Reconfigure existing/procure new temporary accommodation to meet needs identified.</p>	<p>To ensure the Council is able to meet its statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Vulnerable people are housed in appropriate temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>Within existing resources, although additional investment may be required, but this needs to be offset against the cost of B&B placements.</p>	June 2015	Locality Managers

3.2	Develop a specialist role within the Housing Solutions team to focus on households in temporary accommodation, with a particular focus on effective and timely move on, and discharge into the private rented sector.	Identify resource. Identify roles and responsibilities of this post. Develop targets and procedures.	Reduced number of households in bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation. Reduced length of stay. Increased number of homeless households made a PRSO.	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Locality Managers
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Objective 2: Minimise the use of unsuitable and expensive B&B accommodation

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
3.3	Minimise the use of unsuitable and expensive B&B accommodation.	Implement recommendations from TA review. Ensure effective prevention measures are in place. Source alternative emergency accommodation provision.	Reduce the use of B&B, and the associated costs.	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Locality Managers
3.4	Ensure that appropriate	In partnership with	No 16 & 17 year olds are	Possible budget	June 2015	Locality

	accommodation is available for 16 and 17 year olds so that they are not placed in B&B.	children's services consider the development of Nightstop or supported lodgings to provide alternative emergency accommodation provision. Research best practice.	placed in B&B.	implications, although children's services may fund new services.		Managers
3.5	Ensure that appropriate accommodation is available for families so that they are not placed in B&B unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks.	Implement recommendations from TA review. Ensure appropriate TA provision or PRS provision available for families.	No families spend longer than 6 weeks in B&B.	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Locality Managers

Objective 3: Review temporary accommodation in light of the ongoing and forthcoming reforms made by the DWP

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
3.6	Review temporary accommodation in light of the ongoing, and forthcoming reforms made by the DWP and establish which properties will be affected.	Establish which dwellings will be affected by social housing size criteria. Agree actions to recover rental charges once Benefit Cap and Universal Credit has been rolled-out.	To provide for the significant reforms being made by the Department for Work and Pensions to the Temporary Accommodation Subsidy regime.	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Locality Managers

Priority four: Minimise the impact of welfare reform while assisting homeless people to access opportunities for employment, education, training and support them to raise and meet their aspirations.

Objective 1: Develop an approach to manage the impact of Universal Credit on social housing tenants.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
4.1	Develop an approach to manage the impact of Universal Credit on CBC tenants.	<p>Work with key partners to develop a project plan.</p> <p>Learn from pilot areas.</p> <p>Roll out plan, ensuring changes publicised, and effective support available for impacted households.</p>	<p>CBC tenants adjust well to the new benefit arrangements.</p> <p>Vulnerable tenants are assisted to manage their income.</p>	Within existing resources	March 2016	Homelessness Forum
4.2	Encourage Registered Providers to put mechanisms in place to ready tenants for the introduction of Universal Credit, through budgeting workshops and bespoke advice sessions.	<p>Work in partnership with RPs to provide targeted approach to introduction of UC.</p> <p>Ensure effective referral arrangements are in place when tenants are threatened with eviction.</p>		Within existing resources.	March 2016	Homelessness Forum

Objective 2: Deliver Housing Landlord's Tenants Incentive Scheme to free up under-occupied homes and create shared houses.						
	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
4.3	Deliver Housing Landlord's Tenants Incentive Scheme to free up under-occupied homes and create shared houses.	<p>Develop a range of incentives.</p> <p>Publicise incentives.</p> <p>Research best practice models of shared houses.</p> <p>Identify suitable model and roll out.</p>	<p>Assist those affected by the under occupancy penalty to downsize.</p> <p>Make best use of stock.</p> <p>Increase provision of accommodation for single people.</p>	Resource implications.	December 2015	Head of Housing Management
Objective 3: Work with DWP to raise awareness of the impact of Universal Credit with partners and customers and develop a range of mitigations						
	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
4.4	Monitor the impact of welfare reform through the Council's Welfare Reform Working Group to identify initiatives to alleviate hardship.	<p>Review and understand data held and collected by partner organisations.</p> <p>Agree performance measures and statistics to regularly be monitored by</p>	Alleviate hardship of those impacted by welfare reform.	Within existing resources.	March 2016	Homelessness Forum

		<p>the task group.</p> <p>Establish a reporting framework.</p> <p>Implement mitigating actions.</p>				
4.5	<p>Make the best use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) through delivery of the Council's DHP policy.</p>	<p>Implement policy.</p> <p>Review policy and outcomes against good practice.</p>	<p>Alleviate poverty.</p> <p>Encourage Central Bedfordshire residents to obtain and sustain employment.</p> <p>Prevent homelessness and promote tenancy sustainment.</p> <p>Safeguard Central Bedfordshire residents in their homes.</p> <p>Support domestic abuse victims who are trying to move to a place of safety.</p>	<p>Within existing resources.</p>	<p>March 2016</p>	<p>Housing Policy Advisor / Locality Managers</p>
4.6	<p>Work with DWP to provide debt advice to vulnerable clients and to identify those who need to have rent paid directly to their landlord.</p>	<p>Establish an effective partnership with DWP.</p> <p>Identify vulnerable clients.</p>	<p>Reduce the risk of homelessness as a result of welfare reform.</p>	<p>Within existing resources.</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Locality Managers</p>

		Ensure a procedure in place for direct payment requests.				
4.7	Improve partner's knowledge, particularly social care, of how welfare reform issues will affect vulnerable clients and where they can obtain help to resolve housing related benefit problems.	Hold training sessions for partner agencies and social care colleagues.	Reduce the risk of rent arrears and homelessness due to the introduction of Universal Credit.	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Homelessness Forum

Objective 4: Ensure that the Housing Solutions service actively works with customers to raise their aspirations and help them to access employment, education and training.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
4.8	Ensure that the Housing Solutions service actively works with customers to raise their aspirations and help them to access employment, education and training.	Commence Jobcentre Plus 'surgeries' at housing options service centres. Frontline staff to spend a day at a local Jobcentre Plus, Inspira and PEC. (iii) Provide through partners free internet access to search job vacancies. Consider the co-location of housing and Jobcentre Plus services.	Support Housing Solutions customers to access employment, education and training.	Within existing resources.	October 2015	Locality Managers

		<p>All housing options to include analysis of impact on worklessness and encouragement into training and employment.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for the Council's Housing Service to employ former service users.</p>				
4.9	In partnership with the Work Programme and the Job Centre identify how to overcome the barriers to employment faced by homeless people.	<p>Develop a partnership with Job Centre and Work Programme.</p> <p>Research good practice.</p> <p>Develop an action plan.</p>	Support Housing Solutions customers to access employment, education and training.	Within existing resources.	October 2015	Locality Managers
4.10	Employment Support Officer to facilitate access to education, employment and training opportunities through the delivery of a range of targeted initiatives.	<p>Ensure effective referral arrangements in place for Housing Solutions to refer to ES Officer.</p> <p>Raise awareness of initiatives with customers and partners.</p>	Increased awareness of education, employment and training opportunities available.	Within existing resources.	October 2015	Locality Managers
4.11	Commission European Social Fund projects to engage with unemployed and economically inactive residents.		Work clubs will increase access to employment and training, further learning or volunteering.	Resource implications?	December 2016	Head of Housing Solutions

			<p>Get in to Work schemes will improve skills of the local workforce in specific industries.</p> <p>Targeted enterprise workshops will increase self-employment.</p> <p>The Progress to Education Employment and Training programme will increase the number of residents with a mental health condition, learning disability and/or autism in work.</p>			
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Objective 5: In partnership explore the feasibility of developing a social enterprise to create employment opportunities for homeless customers.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
4.12	In partnership explore the feasibility of developing a social enterprise to create employment opportunities for homeless customers.	<p>Research best practice.</p> <p>Work with providers to explore opportunities for social enterprise.</p>	<p>Social enterprise operational.</p> <p>5 jobs created.</p>	Set up costs.		Head of Housing Solutions

4.13	Explore opportunities to create employment opportunities within Housing Services to employ tenants and former service users.	Research best practice. Identify potential job roles. Develop routes into employment.	5 service users/tenants employed by the Council	Within existing resources.	April 2017	Homelessness Forum
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Priority five: Develop an integrated partnership approach to tackling homelessness

Objective 1: Develop a clear vision for Homelessness across Central Bedfordshire.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
5.1	Develop a clear vision for Homelessness across Central Bedfordshire that all partners both statutory and voluntary sign up to.	Consult on draft vision with stakeholders and customers. Stakeholders to sign up to vision. Launch event to promote vision and gain required publicity.	Ensure a co-ordinated approach to tackling homelessness across CBC.	Within existing resources.	September 2015	Homelessness Forum

Objective 2: Establish a Multi-Agency Assurance Group (MAAG) to govern and lead the delivery of the vision and the Homelessness Strategy Implementation.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
5.2	Establish a Multi-Agency Governance Group to govern and lead the delivery of the vision and the Homelessness Strategy implementation.	<p>Agree membership of the Group.</p> <p>Develop Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Agree frequency of meetings and set meeting dates for the year.</p>	<p>To ensure robust governance arrangements are in place to achieve the vision and the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy through the established partnership arrangements.</p> <p>To ensure that the Homelessness Strategy is developed and owned by partners.</p> <p>To ensure a partnership approach to the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy actions.</p>	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Head of Housing Solutions
5.3	Establish a mechanism to set up task and finish delivery groups.	<p>Develop arrangements for the establishment of task and finish groups.</p> <p>Identify actions for these groups to deliver.</p>	To ensure a partnership approach to the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy actions	Within existing resources.	September 2015	Homelessness Forum

Objective 3: Establish a Homelessness Forum.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/	Timescales	Lead Officer
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				Resource Implications		
5.4	Establish a homelessness forum to meet quarterly.	<p>Agree membership of the Forum.</p> <p>Develop Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Set meeting dates for the year.</p>	To ensure a partnership approach to tackling homelessness, to share developments, consult on new arrangements and share and learn from best practice.	Within existing resources.	June 2015	Head of Housing Solutions
5.5	Develop a quarterly service newsletter to provide partners with information, updates on performance and share best practice	<p>Establish mailing list.</p> <p>Produce quarterly newsletters.</p> <p>Invite feedback.</p>	<p>Share best practice.</p> <p>Provide information updates.</p>	Within existing resources.	April 2016	Homelessness Forum

Objective 4: Improve access to information and review referral arrangements.

	Action	Milestones	Targets	Value for Money/ Resource Implications	Timescales	Lead Officer
5.6	Revise referral process to enable the recording and sharing of detailed information about the clients' circumstances.	<p>Review referral process.</p> <p>Roll out new process.</p> <p>Review new process.</p>	<p>Better information sharing.</p> <p>A reduction in time wasted due to inappropriate referrals.</p>	Within existing resources.	March 2017	Locality Managers
5.7	Develop a missed appointment	Develop protocol	Referrals lead to an	Within existing	March 2017	Locality

	protocol.	Implement protocol. Review protocol.	outcome for the client. Lack of engagement can be followed up.	resources.		Managers
5.8	Promote single access points for the north and the south of the area for partners to request from CBC information about housing options and homelessness services.		Partners have an efficient and effective information source. Better informed clients.	Within existing resources.	April 2016	Locality Managers
5.9	Review web and paper based information sources.	Develop range of leaflets and factsheets. Update Website.	Information available is up to date enabling accurate signposting.	Printing costs	April 2016	Homelessness Forum
5.10	Publish a directory of homelessness and housing options services for partners.	Gather key information. Agree content and layout. Distribute directory.	Improved awareness of services available. More appropriate referrals to services that meet the client's needs. Reduce pressure on over-subscribed services.	Within existing resources.	April 2016	Homelessness Forum

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