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# Homelessness Strategy

## 2010 - 2015



# Housing need context

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First homelessness strategy as Central Bedfordshire.

High house prices compared to local wage market – issues of affordability.

Areas of multiple deprivation – Houghton Regis estates, parts of Dunstable, Flitwick, Sandy and Leighton Buzzard.

Unmet need for support services – social exclusion.

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# Demand for housing options services

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High demand for housing advice – 2364 approaches in 2009.

High demand for money advice services – 1182 new approaches to CAB services between August 2008 and September 2009.

2781 people registered on Choice Based Lettings.



# Effect of the recession

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Lower house prices – but affordability issue remains.

Increased unemployment – 138% increase in Job Seekers Allowance claimants Jan 07 to August 09.

Homeless demand decreasing. Acceptances down 70% between 2005 and 2009.

Low use of temporary accommodation – 28 families at December 09.



# Why have acceptances decreased?

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Strong gate-keeping, linked to housing options approach.

Strong work on homelessness prevention – 330 homelessness preventions across Central Bedfordshire in 2008 and 2009.

A bigger private rented sector, more landlords willing to consider benefit claimants and availability of rent deposit schemes.



# Key issues from homelessness review

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Agencies want closer collaboration in responding to vulnerable people.

Need better intelligence about some types of homelessness – complex needs, repeat homelessness, rough sleeping.

More housing options for people under 25 needed.

Not enough hostel accommodation.

Increased proportion of homelessness due to mortgage arrears.

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# Main causes of priority need homelessness

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Parental eviction or relationship breakdown.

Loss of an Assured Short-hold Tenancy.

Household is fleeing violence or harassment.

Mortgage arrears.

Most homeless acceptances are families with children.

Low acceptances for care leavers and 16-17 year olds.

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# Homelessness strategic priorities

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Harmonise services across Central Bedfordshire.

Respond effectively to the recession.

Work with young people aged 16-24 to meet their needs more effectively.

Embed the Think Family approach in homelessness prevention activity.



# Homelessness strategic priorities

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Strengthen safeguarding practice for vulnerable adults and children.

Investigate problems and pathways for people with complex needs.

Strengthen equalities practice across all aspects of the service.

# Homelessness strategic priorities

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Make best use of private sector accommodation.

Working in partnership with the community and with partner agencies.

Tenancy sustainment.