



PRESTON CITY COUNCIL
HOMELESS PREVENTION STRATEGY
2008- 2012

“SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM”

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a duty upon local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness services within their areas and to publish a strategy to address the areas identified in the review as requiring attention.

Our first homelessness review and strategy was published in 2003 and resulted in the implementation of an action plan 2003 -06, which improved and developed homeless support and prevention services across Preston. This second review provides an update of the Housing Advisory Services work, compares how our activities match policy and best practices raised in national and regional homelessness policy and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Whilst this second strategy covers the period 2008 to 2012, building upon the solid achievements of the first strategy and reflecting the Housing Advice Services ability to develop and deliver services in a changing environment, the Action plan covers a two year period and will be refreshed in 2010 to take account of changes in the national housing agenda as prescribed in the Housing Green Paper, forthcoming Housing & Regeneration Bill and other good practice

Preston's vision for the strategy remains :

Whenever possible to prevent homelessness and where homelessness does occur, move people into settled homes as soon as possible.

Homelessness is reducing nationally and locally. However, we estimate that there are a significant number of households within Preston who are in acute housing need of which 83 are in temporary accommodation and the council has a duty to rehouse these households. The preventative agenda or intervening before situations reach a crisis and positively influencing the outcomes is at the heart of our approach and is evidenced by our ability to provide a wide range of solutions and options for our service users. However, we now need to reassess our priorities in the light of changing housing needs and the government's prevention agenda.

This strategy sets out how all stakeholders will now be focused on prevention and how we are going to meet the government target of ***reducing the numbers placed in temporary accommodation by half by 2010*** through direct and indirect action in six priority areas:

- 1 ensuring that **housing advice** is available to anyone who is in need of it
- 2 **prevent** homelessness whenever possible
- 3 ensure homelessness **assessments** are carried out in a timely and consistent way and with other agencies when required

- 4 provide **appropriate temporary accommodation**, with & without support
- 5 ensure there is and will be sufficient **permanent accommodation** for people who are homeless
- 6 **monitoring** the implementation of the strategy through outcome focused performance measures and ensure **communication** between all stakeholders is effective

A detailed action plan specifies the individual actions that we will undertake in the first two years of this strategy . The action plan will then be modified and developed in agreement with the approval of the Preston homelessness forum, the voluntary sector and service users.

2. PRESTON PROFILE

Preston, covering 14,239 hectares, was granted city status in 2002 as part of the Queen's golden jubilee celebrations. Its roots as an ancient market town date back to the 1179 Charter, when the right to have a Guild Merchant was granted by King Henry, influencing the commercial, political, social and cultural life of the town.

Preston is at the administrative heart of the county of Lancashire, is one of twelve local authorities within the county and is situated in an ideal central location one hour north of Manchester, an hour south of Cumbria and the Lake District, and even closer to Liverpool and Merseyside. The city has excellent transport links, and acts as a hub for rail and road networks. More than one million people are within 30 minutes' drive of Preston.

The city is the administrative, commercial, legal, cultural and educational centre of Lancashire. It is home to the University of Central Lancashire, the sixth largest university in the country with a student population of 25,000.

2.1 Local Statistics & Population Projections

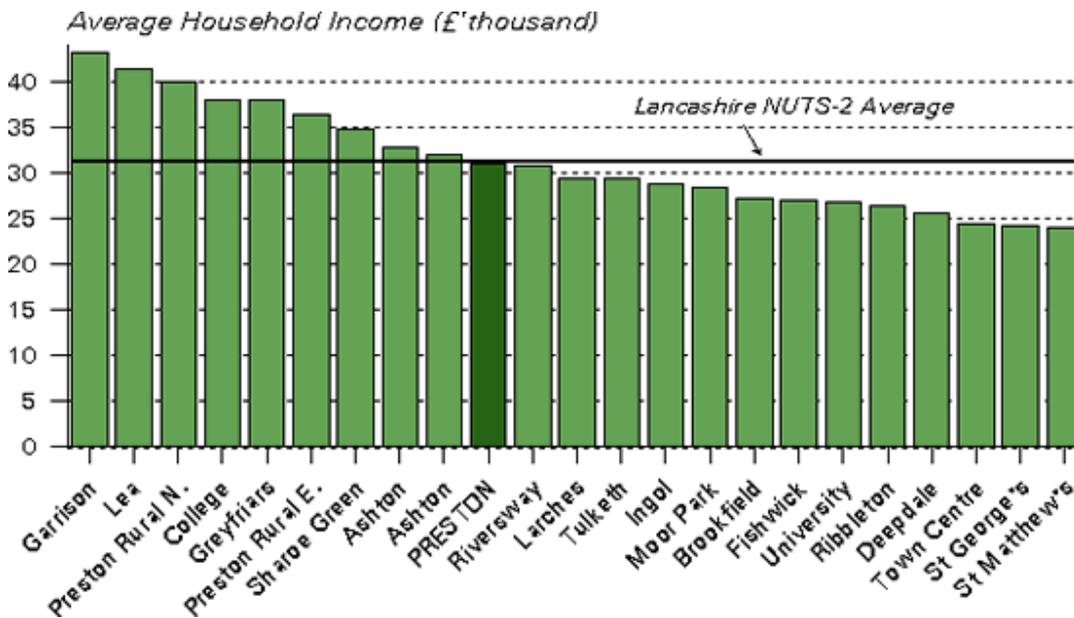
Preston has a population of 132,000 and of these approximately 17% are from ethnic minority communities. There are a total of 59,716 households and the unemployment rate is 6.1 % compared to a national average of 5.2%.

The average household income in Preston in 2007 was £31,000 which is close to the Lancashire average and ranking as seventh out of the fourteen Lancashire districts. However 13 of the 22 wards in Preston have an average household income below the Lancashire average with the lowest being in St. Matthew's ward (£24,100). At the other extreme, average household income was highest in Garrison ward (£43,200) which, with average house income nearly 80% higher than St. Matthew's, ranked as the 4th most prosperous out of the 301 Lancashire wards, with Lea ranking in 10th place.

The lowest ranking wards provide disproportionate numbers of homeless claimants compared to other wards .

In the 2007 DETR index of multiple deprivation Preston has significant levels of deprivation though, with 7 of the City's 22 wards ranking in the top 10 per cent most deprived wards in England.

Average Household Income by Wards, 2007



The following graphs outline the projection of population and household growth and these figures are useful in indicating the likely expected changes and implications on future service demand. The student population of 25,000 would seem to contribute towards the higher than average proportion of 15-24 year olds. Whilst the most marked increase in households is shown in the single person category it is balanced by a decrease in the average family household.

The information is sourced from Department for Communities and Local Government - New Projections of Households for England & the Regions to 2029

Table 1- Resident Population by Age Group

	Age Band					
	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	
Preston	18.0	17.2	28.0	22.3	14.4	132,000
Lancashire	18.0	13.6	26.1	25.5	16.7	1,449,600
North West	17.9	13.8	27.2	25.0	16.2	6,853,200
England and Wales	17.7	13.2	28.4	24.6	16.0	53,728,800

Table 2 - Household Projections for Lancashire and Districts, 2004-2029

								2004-2029	
								No.	%
<i>Central Lancashire</i>	186	190	199	208	219	227	231	45	+24.2
<i>Chorley</i>	43	44	47	50	53	56	57	14	+32.6
Preston	54	55	57	59	62	64	65	11	+20.4
<i>South Ribble</i>	44	45	48	50	53	55	56	12	+27.3
<i>West Lancashire</i>	45	46	47	49	51	52	53	8	+17.8
<i>Lancashire County</i>	485	496	525	554	581	604	616	131	+27.0
<i>North West</i>	2,889	2,940	3,074	3,215	3,345	3,453	3,506	617	+21.4
<i>England</i>	21,063	21,518	22,646	23,836	24,973	25,975	26,497	5,434	+25.8

Note Sub-totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

2.2 Tenure

Based on the 2008 Housing Strategy Statistical Analysis figures, the profile of housing tenure in Preston closely matched the national picture and is shown in the following table.

Composition of housing stock in Preston as at 01/04/2008

Ownership	Number	%
Registered Social Landlord	11,603	19.43%
Private Sector – owner occupied	41000	67.6%
Private Sector Rented	7,700	12.9%

Table 3 - Household Projections

Household Projections by Household Type, 2004-2029, North West Region									
								2004-2029	
								No.	%
<i>Married couple</i>	1,270,000	1,251,000	1,211,000	1,185,000	1,167,000	1,147,000	1,134,000	136,000	-10.7
<i>Cohabiting couple</i>	255,000	278,000	328,000	367,000	394,000	416,000	429,000	174,000	+68.2
<i>Lone parent</i>	257,000	266,000	280,000	288,000	294,000	297,000	298,000	41,000	+16.0
<i>Other multi-person</i>	187,000	190,000	199,000	210,000	219,000	226,000	232,000	45,000	+24.1
<i>One person</i>	920,000	956,000	1,056,000	1,165,000	1,271,000	1,365,000	1,414,000	494,000	+53.7
All households	2,889,000	2,940,000	3,074,000	3,215,000	3,345,000	3,453,000	3,506,000	617,000	+21.4
<i>Average household size</i>	2.32	2.30	2.23	2.16	2.11	2.07	2.05	—	—

Table 4 - Marital Status

Marital Status (All People aged 16 and over), 2001 (%)				
	Preston	Lancashire	North West	England and Wales
Single (never married)	33.6	27.6	30.1	30.1
Married	41.1	43.4	42.8	43.6
Re-married	6.6	8.5	7.0	7.4
Separated	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.4
Divorced	8.2	9.0	8.6	8.2
Widowed	8.1	9.1	9.0	8.4
All aged 16 & over	102,603	1,121,160	5,337,555	41,553,180

2.3 Unemployment

Monthly Unadjusted Claimant Count (Unemployment Related Benefits) Summary February 2008

	Males		Females		Total		Yearly Change		Monthly Change	
	No.	% of working age pop.	No.	% of working age pop.	No.	% of working age pop.	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Burnley</i>	1,050	3.8	363	1.4	1,413	2.6	-5	-0.4	16	1.1
<i>Chorley</i>	804	2.3	267	0.9	1,071	1.6	-50	-4.5	-8	-0.7
<i>Fylde</i>	351	1.5	118	0.6	469	1.1	-60	-11.3	-24	-4.9
<i>Hyndburn</i>	866	3.3	266	1.1	1,132	2.3	42	3.9	22	2.0
<i>Lancaster</i>	1,240	2.6	426	1.0	1,666	1.8	-438	-20.8	42	2.6
<i>Pendle</i>	754	2.6	249	1.0	1,003	1.8	-326	-24.5	-24	-2.3
Preston	1,682	3.8	517	1.3	2,199	2.6	-130	-5.6	93	4.4
<i>Ribble Valley</i>	184	1.0	72	0.4	256	0.7	11	4.5	12	4.9
<i>Rossendale</i>	564	2.6	199	1.0	763	1.8	21	2.8	39	5.4
<i>South Ribble</i>	701	2.1	193	0.6	894	1.4	-62	-6.5	-4	-0.4
<i>West Lancashire</i>	1,170	3.5	449	1.4	1,619	2.4	-204	-11.2	43	2.7
<i>Wyre</i>	621	1.9	226	0.8	847	1.4	-105	-11.0	-9	-1.1
LANCASHIRE COUNTY	9,987	2.7	3,345	1.0	13,332	1.9	1,306	-8.9	198	1.5

2.4 Housing Benefit Claimants

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, May 2007

	Housing Benefit Recipients			Council Tax Benefit Recipients		
	Total Number	As % of All Households	% Change May 2006 to May 2007	Total Number	As % of All Households	% Change May 2006 to May 2007
<i>Burnley</i>	7,600	20.5	2.7	10,300	27.8	3.0
<i>Chorley</i>	4,700	11.5	2.2	6,800	16.6	0.0
<i>Fylde</i>	3,300	10.3	3.1	4,800	15.0	4.3
<i>Hyndburn</i>	5,900	17.4	0.0	8,500	25.0	0.0
<i>Lancaster</i>	8,000	14.3	0.0	11,300	20.2	-0.9
<i>Pendle</i>	5,800	15.7	-1.7	9,100	24.6	0.0
<i>Preston</i>	9,300	17.2	2.2	12,300	22.8	1.7
<i>Ribble Valley</i>	1,500	7.1	0.0	2,300	11.0	0.0
<i>Rossendale</i>	4,200	15.6	0.0	5,800	21.5	-1.7
<i>South Ribble</i>	4,000	9.3	2.6	6,300	14.7	0.0
<i>West Lancashire</i>	6,600	14.7	0.0	9,700	21.6	0.0
<i>Wyre</i>	5,100	11.3	-1.9	8,700	19.3	1.2
<i>Blackburn with Darwen</i>	11,400	21.5	-0.9	16,100	30.4	-1.8
<i>Blackpool</i>	15,000	24.6	0.0	18,200	29.8	-1.6
<i>North West</i>	519,000	18.1	1.2	680,000	23.7	0.0
<i>Great Britain</i>	4,039,600	16.4	1.2	5,082,400	20.7	0.6

Source Department for Work and Pensions

3. THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.

3.1 The National Context:

In 2002 the government published "More than a Roof" (2002) detailing their new preventative approaches to tackling the personal and social causes of homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 required local authorities to develop and publish a homelessness strategy for the first time. Although this legislation also widened the priority need categories ensuring more vulnerable people could access help and support, the development of these strategies saw homelessness achieve a sustainable reduction across England since 2003.

Our strategy reflects the priorities of the government's more recent homelessness strategy "Sustainable Communities: settled homes: changing lives" (2005) which sets out plans to expand housing opportunities and support, reducing homelessness by offering a wide range of preventative measures and increasing access to settled homes, thus halving the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010.

In November 2006 the Housing Corporation published "Tackling Homelessness" which established how the Housing Corporation expects Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to assist local authorities in the prevention agenda. We are using the guidelines in this strategy to develop formal links with our RSL's in order to tackle homelessness effectively together.

3.2 The Regional Context:

A North West Regional Homelessness Strategy has been developed for the first time this year and emulates the government's aims to support local authorities in preventing and reducing homelessness.

3.3 The Sub regional Context:

A Lancashire Housing Strategy is currently being developed to reflect the commonality of issues amongst housing providers across the County and to assist in the attraction of a variety of funding streams to secure the provision of good quality affordable housing.

A Central Lancashire Housing Strategy addressing the particular needs of Preston, South Ribble Borough Council, Chorley Borough Council and West Lancashire Borough Council is also in development.

3.4 Lancashire Local Area Agreement

The Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement

between central government, Lancashire County Council, 12 Local Authorities, 2 Unitary authorities and key partners locally. The agreement sets out our priorities and targets to address the needs of the city and its residents. The Councils Communities Strategy will be refreshed in 2008/09 and the LAA will be integral in the delivery plan for this strategy.

The aim of the LAA is to enabling us to develop greater decision-making and flexibility at the local level to address local priorities and problem areas so that we can better deliver improvement in the quality of life of Prestons residents. It attempts to simplify the different government funding streams available to local government and how performance is monitored. The number of performance indicators that a local authority has to report on will reduce from over 3,000 to 198 with 35 improvement targets chosen from these.

There is a specific target which relates to homelessness, *reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation by half by 2010*. However, Government Office North West recommends that homelessness be considered under the following indicators:

- Young offenders access to suitable accommodation
- Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or license
- Adults with learning difficulties in settled accommodation
- Care leavers in suitable accommodation
- Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
- Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living

After 2011, the current homelessness grant we receive from the government will be included with all other funding which the Local Area Agreement will administer. It is therefore essential that we ensure our priorities are aligned to the priorities of the LAA.

4. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

The Preston Homelessness Strategy 2008-2012 is designed to follow on from the previous Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006. The new strategy will build on the significant achievements made in the last three years and will respond to the challenges that currently exist. There is no doubt that in relation to the strategic response to homelessness in the city the pace of fundamental change has been consistently achieved and exceeded.

Since the first Homelessness Strategy was published homeless prevention options have increasingly been promoted by housing advice services within Preston as an alternative to an otherwise national crisis driven approach. The result in this change in focus of service delivery has been a significant reduction in both homeless acceptances and in the number of households who are placed in temporary accommodation. These successes were achieved even when other factors such as rising house prices, contraction in the turnover of social housing stock etc have continued unabated in the last three years.

The challenge of the new Homelessness Strategy is to ensure that homeless prevention opportunities are maximised not only in terms of Council led Housing Advice services but also with housing support services provided by partner agencies.

However it is essential that a focus on homeless prevention does not lead to homeless households being less able to access services. The Council has legal obligations to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and these must be adhered to. For some households it will be not possible to prevent homelessness and in those instances a homeless application will be taken swiftly and appropriate temporary accommodation secured.

The Strategy recognises that it will be important to continue to monitor standards of service and legal duties are adhered to over the next four years. Clearly other agencies which provide services for households will have a key role in ensuring that the Council are held to account for the services that they provide and the objectives set out in this strategy.

A challenge for the new Homelessness Strategy will be to ensure that the widest range of housing options is available for all households to maximise their opportunities to be housed. It is also essential that all customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are given realistic housing advice not only in terms of the availability of social housing in the city but also on alternative housing options or what action can be taken to help them retain their existing home. All stakeholders have a role to play in offering realistic housing advice.

The new homeless strategy will be set within the context of other wider agendas

relating to homelessness and housing need. In terms of the first Homelessness Strategy, the first five objectives were all set by the Department For Communities And Local Government (DCLG) as priorities for housing authorities to tackle. The Department has developed other targets that the Council and the new Homelessness Strategy must address such as reducing the number of temporary accommodation placements by 50% by 2010. It is our intention to exceed this national target and we commit ourselves in the strategy to dispense with the use of bed & breakfast accommodation for all **non-intentionally** homeless households forthwith.

The time span of the new Homelessness Strategy has been deliberately set to reflect the deadlines for meeting this target and other wider housing related targets such as decency. The first Strategy was also developed at the time when the Council's core role in housing services was changing. The establishment of the stock transfer to Community Gateway Association in 2005 emphasised the need for the housing authority to focus on its strategic role rather than primarily being a provider of housing services.

4.1 Building on achievements to deliver the new strategy

Involvement with and support for the expansion of choice based lettings symbolizes the mechanics for assisting homeless and vulnerable clients to exercise maximum choice. This has developed out of the stock transfer impetus and in line with the Government time table. Homeless and vulnerable households are streamed as a priority group and receive appropriate levels of allocation.

The general agenda of focusing upon –

- 1 New provision for specific client groups
- 2 Streamlining cross agency processes.
- 3 Supporting choice has underpinned the approach.
- 4 Further development of outreach utilizing the breadth focus and reputation of the widest agency partnerships ensures all identified clients have the earliest input.

Maximizing the opportunities for financial and associated assistance funds within the authority and capital receipts, are earmarked for assistance to the homeless. Examples to date of this method are the Women's Refuge, Fox Street Community Night Shelter, Recycling lives and Emmaus UK.

The creation of Housing Passport to provide a unique tailored assessment of the needs and risks applying to rehousing households with needs has encouraged rehousing and the establishment of a co-ordinated support and social responsibility models and these will be expanded and developed further in the life of this strategy.

Engineered and assisted cross area working in respect of the intentionally homeless, the provision of housing advice and temporary placements augurs well for co-operation with the annual Preston, South Ribble and Chorley homeless conferences being a feature of this.

Protocol and Service Level Agreement mechanisms have increased the supply of accommodation and access for clients with complex needs. More work remains to be done.

Within a system which requires rationing because demand exceeds supply we ensure through the ongoing relationship with social landlords, within and external to the choice based lettings partnership harmonized notions of homelessness and housing need to effect greatest assistance.

An incremental development in furnished lettings instigated with the Community Gateway Association is operating and widening to widen the range of solutions with a further association interested in exploring the viability of the approach.

The profile of community cohesion and the source of social exclusion continued to exercise the direction of support and the plans to further develop a family intervention vehicle beyond the adhoc arrangements with the police and others that currently exist.

The Authority financially supports a range of homeless and prevention activities ranging from Barnardos young homeless advice service to substantial engagement with the private rented sector in offering training and assistance to new and small scale landlords around deposits, tenancies etc. In addition the Foxton Centre offers a befriending and mentoring service.

Exploration of a number of models of engagement and financial assistance from the housing needs and strategy stand point including shared ownership is ongoing.

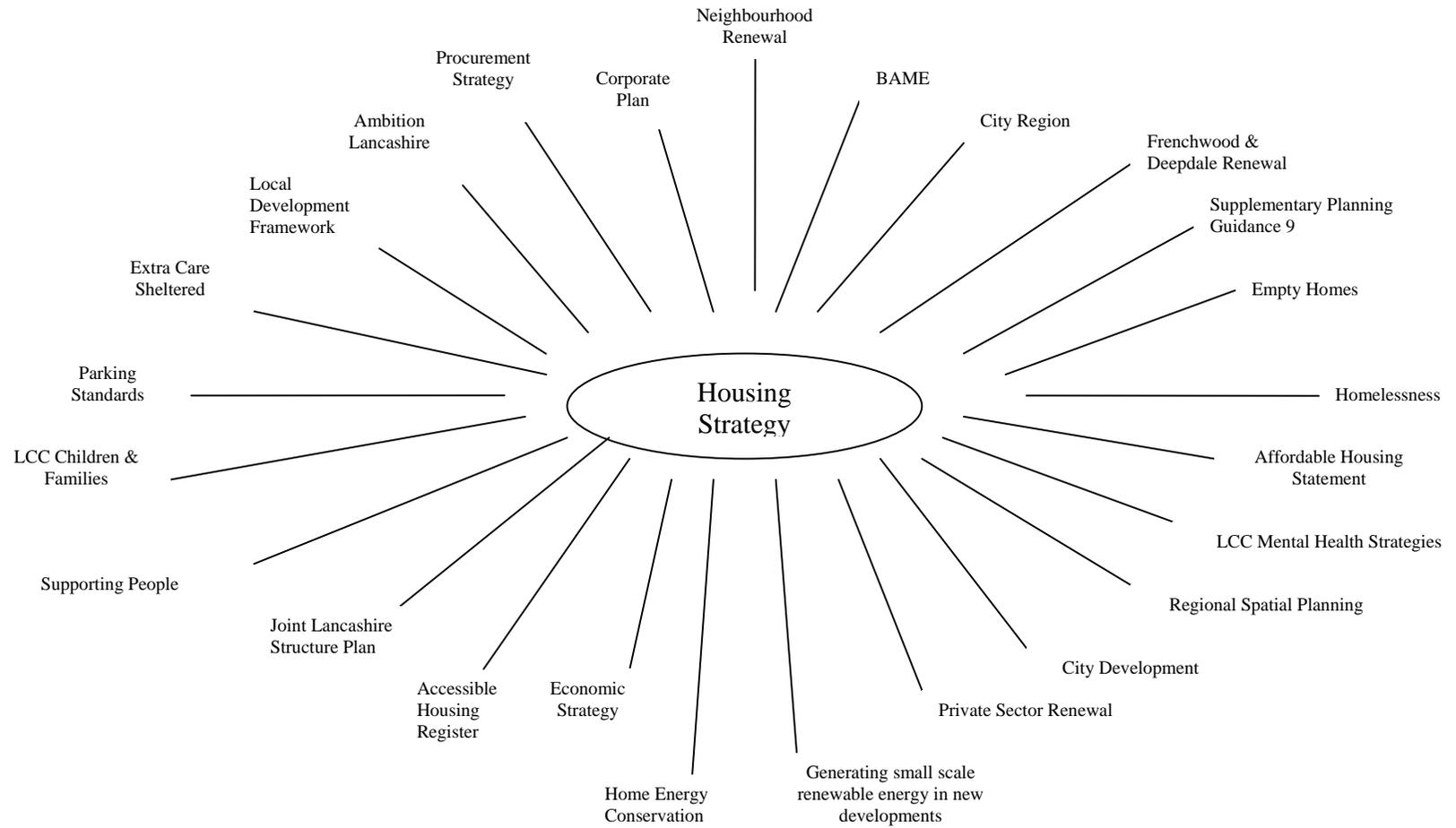
The discretionary housing benefit 'top up' opportunities are fully utilised to prevent homelessness and or encourage more sensible housing options – work closely with other advice agencies – especially Welfare Benefits and debt counselling to ensure clients achieve income maximization and debt management.

4.2 Strategic Links

The Homeless strategy is an integral part of the Preston City Council overall Housing Strategy which is, itself, in a process of review and is also reflected in the wider Community Strategy.

The homelessness strategy does not sit in isolation but impacts, relates and links to numerous other strategies. We recognise the importance of cross strategy working in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that other relevant strategies address homelessness issues. Effective partnership working at both a strategic and operational level is the only way progress will be achieved.

The diagram on the following page clearly demonstrates the links between the Homelessness Strategy, Housing Strategy and other City Council and County Council strategies.



4.3 Housing Market Influences

The social housing sector locally is continuing to experience a downturn in vacancies as tenants are reluctant to relinquish their tenancies and this allied to the loss of social rented properties through the albeit diminishing right to buy programmes has resulted in sales has prevented the speeding up housing families through the Choice based lettings initiative. Whilst the impact of this is felt locally the issues is one which affects not just the Lancashire Region but generally across England.

Since the original homelessness review of 2002, Affordability has risen as a major inhibitor to choice and the prevention agenda necessitates, as does the Housing Strategy of Central Lancashire, additional tenure flexibility and supply.

The current housing market dysfunction and sub prime mortgage market failings have not yet significantly impacted upon homeless presentations but are expected to do so directly through repossessions and indirectly through breakdown in lodging arrangements actioned through foreclosures. These issues had previously been exacerbated by the escalation of house prices partly fuelled in Preston by the University expansion and buy to let activity.

5. HOUSING ADVICE SERVICES

5.1 Role of Housing Advice Services

The overall objective within Housing Advice Services is to provide and to enable :

- 1 Comprehensive housing advice
- 2 Tailored floating support
- 3 Facilitated move on
- 4 Maximising choice.

In November 2005, the Council transferred its housing stock to the then newly formed Community Gateway Housing Association and incorporated the Housing Advisory Service into a new Strategic Housing Service based within the Environmental Services Directorate. These changes were achieved without any disturbance to clients and homeless households.

Housing Advice Services are open to innovation and are supportive of tailored models of provision that aim to supplement a menu of accommodation and related services which incorporate the community, as in Emmaus and Recycling Lives,

We provide a relatively seamless range of tailored and timely assistance in terms of floating and tenancy support in conjunction with the Supporting People partnership, the HAS Support Co-ordinator, RSL partners, the Amity Projective, Active Mediation, Barnardos and others. We continue to investigate and champion the real value of befriending, mentoring and the use of the arts to meaningfully encourage independence, self worth and volunteering opportunities.

The opening of the Foundations/ Inn2 complex in July 2005 greatly expanded the range of high quality self contained units which in conjunction with project work and care plans assist clients towards securing settled accommodation in the community.

5.2 How the Service Is Delivered

The Housing Advisory Services offices are located on the first floor of the Birley Street Offices in Preston City Centre. Lift access is available to the reception area and there are four private interview rooms, three of which are wheelchair accessible.

The offices opening hours are;-

Monday - Wednesday	8.45am- 5.00pm
Thursday	8.45am - 3.00pm.
Friday	8.45- 4.30pm
Saturday – Sunday	Closed

A range of posters and leaflets are displayed in the reception area covering not only housing information but details of other agencies. User feedback/satisfaction forms are also available.

Members of the public can call to the office to see a housing advisory officer without an appointment so any claims regarding homelessness that day are interviewed or provided with advice the same day.

Home visits are carried out where the client is unable to attend because of illness or disability, where the condition of a dwelling is in issue and as part of casework investigations. The duty officer system also allows the non duty staff to carry out home visits immediately after the initial homeless assessment.

The Ethnic Minorities Outreach Officer holds advice surgeries in at 5 locations across the City throughout the week, serving clients from ethnic minorities whose first language is not English. An officer from the Finance Department is also in attendance at these surgeries to give assistance with Council Tax and Housing Benefit enquiries.

The Homeless Co-ordinator offers advice and provides practical help to persons residing in temporary accommodation during their stay and through to when they are rehoused.

The emergence of new migrant worker communities in the region provide an appropriate opportunity to look at the effectiveness of the service in helping existing and new minority communities

Housing Advisory staff also provides weekly advice sessions in other locations e.g. Preston Women's Refuge, the Avondale Unit at Royal Preston Hospital, Fox Street Community. They also attend Preston County Court on a case by case basis to assist clients facing eviction proceedings and also carry out prison visits.

Early warning protocols with RSL's concerning vulnerable households facing action would increase the prospects of helping more clients with exiting limited resources.

Further outreach work will be facilitated by the mobile Citizenzone vehicle although staffing resources are stretched

In addition to the advice available to callers and by telephone, an online advice service is provided through the PCC website and kiosk network.

Out of hours enquiries are handled by New Progress Housing Associations Control Centre with referrals passed onto duty HAS management staff where required. Referrals are received from a range of services and agencies e.g.

Police, Shelterline, Social Services etc.

A number of other organisations namely the Racial Equality Council, Preston CAB, PCC Welfare Benefits Information Service and Debt Advice Service are based in the Birley Street Offices with separate offices and reception areas.

Access to the service is available through online forms on the Council website and the voluntary sector homeless website . The website also carries a range of information on services and links to numerous housing related websites.

Service information is also available on the Councils digital TV channel.

The Sub regional choice based lettings scheme, Select Move enables online applications, enquiry and bidding. Additional access channels include two way SMS texting and an automated freephone telephone service. A digital TV channel to carry property details and bidding facilities, which is compatible with the Councils existing channel is being considered by the Select Move partnership

6. PERFORMANCE

On an annual basis the Housing Advisory Service deals with more than 10,000 enquiries and complaints are received from less than 1% of these. That is not to say we always fulfil clients aspirations however surveys of clients and other agencies have indicated high satisfaction.

A number of National PI's are produced by the Housing Advisory Service relating to casework activity and to temporary accommodation. The figures are fed into the Councils performance monitoring processes and published in the annual Corporate Plan. The Council is also required to report to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with PI data on a quarterly basis as part of the monitoring process for receipt of the homelessness grant monies the Council receives.

Some context is provided by Best Value performance indicators and the Preston position is identified in the following table.

Description	Actual 2004/05	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Actual 07/08	Target 08/09	Target 09/10
BV183a Average length of stay (in weeks) in B&B accommodation of homeless households	2.0	3.0	3.3	Deleted as indicator from 01/04/2007		
BV183b Average length of stay (in weeks) in hostel accommodation of homeless households	20	21	0	0	0	0
BV202 Number of people sleeping rough on a single night	3	3	3.00	8	4	3
BV203 % Change in the average number of families placed in temp accommodation	15.3	32.7	-1.74	Deleted as indicator from 01/04/2007		
BV213.05 No of households per 1000 pop who consider themselves homeless, who approached LA and had situation resolved	New Indicator	0.90	2.00	2.00	2.5	5
BV214.05 Repeat homeless applications	New Indicator	2.6	1.50	Deleted as indicator from 01/04/2007		

within 2 years. % of actual cases	r					
BV225.05 Overall provision & effectiveness of domestic violence services as % score against best practice checklist	New Indicator	45	54.55	63	72	82

	Description	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Actual 07/08	Target 08/09	Target 09/10	Target 2010/11	Target 2010/12
SH01	Number of people sleeping rough on a single night (was BV202)	3	3.00	8	4	3	2	1
SH02 LAA LOCAL	No of households per 1000 pop who consider themselves homeless, who approached LA and had situation resolved (was BV213.05)	0.90	2.00		2.5	5	6	4
SH03	Overall provision & effectiveness of domestic violence services as % score against best practice checklist (was BV225.05)	45	54.55		72	82	85	86

The authorities housing review and scrutiny board evaluated the activities of the service in 2006. The brief looked at the operational activities, perceived best practice (as recommended by the O.D.P.M.) the views of clients and other agencies and the appropriateness of the homeless strategy objectives. Front line staff and external organizations such as Shelter and Barnardos gave expert testimony regarding operational practices and approach and commended the service. The board determined its satisfaction with the services performance and made a number of recommendations to enhance its role.

An internal audit of the service in early 2007 found only limited issues which revolved around recording and risks. A new computerized recording system has been introduced to address these issues and the increased use of bed and breakfast which was a feature of 2006 has been addressed by the advancement of further accommodation options ranging from pipelined units, and greater utilization of the private rented sector.

In 2008 The Audit Commission undertook an inspection of Homelessness and Housing Advice and have judged the service as “Good” (2 stars) which we see as a very positive endorsement. Only two authorities have achieved 3 star and these are metropolitan authorities with significantly higher resources. A wide range of strengths were commended including:

- A good understanding of the profile of the community and its needs
- The high quality of temporary accommodation provided
- A positive partnership response to help victims of domestic violence
- Pro-active approach to prevention of homelessness and increased impact through effective partnerships
- Strong provision of outreach help, including ethnic communities
- Effective arrangements to tackle rough sleeping
- A strong approach to identifying and meeting support needs of vulnerable people.

The Commission’s second judgement is that the service has “uncertain prospects of improvement”. In deciding that however it was felt there were capacity and resource issues and it was disappointing that operational and strategic movements were not recognised as exemplars of continuing improvement.

Nevertheless we have incorporated the Commissions concerns in our Service Improvement Plan which aims to drive “continuous improvement “forward. We have worked with our partners and the Department of Communities and Local Government on the development of a Service Improvement Plan which encompasses the recommendations in the Audit Commission's report.

The service has , in addition, taken advantage of two health checks from the CLG Regional Homeless Consultant and has been advised that we are recognised as

performing well to the governments homeless agenda and seen as the lead authority in Lancashire on advice and homelessness.

As an annual exercise we have sought to benchmark ourselves against comparative authorities identified by population, levels of homelessness and structures. Blackburn, Bury and Bolton are examples of this although we also compare costs and practices within the Lancashire area.

The service holds the Legal Services Quality Mark for advice giving and the Navaho Project Award (for gay and lesbian friendly policies).

Collaborative work with neighbouring authorities around common issues continuously illuminates working practices which we constantly strive to ensure we reflect good practice.

Attendance and involvement in information days for a, road shows and community events not only showcases the service but encourages feedback which we incorporate into our plans. We are self critical and continually look to improve our practices. The move to a duty officer approach which we have adopted is partly to ensure clients are seen more speedily and that they are not inconvenienced by staff being elsewhere.

7. RESOURCES

7.1 Cost of the Service

An exercise carried out by the Director of Finance in March 2008 as part of a Value for Money exercise found the costs of providing Homelessness and Housing Advice from 2003/04 -2006/07 was £5.02 and compared very favourably against a peer group of local authorities across the Country.

7.2 Communities And Local Government Funding

Preston receives the highest annual homeless grant of any Lancashire authority, currently £90,000, which reflects both the scale of the issues to be tackled and the effectiveness of the initiatives. Homeless performance monitoring reports to Communities And Local Government trigger awards.

The service is currently involved in a range of funding activities which demonstrate an innovative approach to service provision. Work will continue to monitor and support projects to ensure the continuance of existing grant levels and to enable us exploit the potential for future funding opportunities.

The Housing Advisory Service is involved in supporting and funding a range of projects across Preston. There are three main activities in this respect,

- (i) Below market rental of property used as temporary accommodation**
The Council owns the property used as Refuge 1 by Preston Women's Refuge and rents it to the organization at a preferred rate to enable the charity to remain financially viable in providing emergency accommodation for women and children fleeing violence.
- ii) Provision of management fees to subsidise temporary accommodation projects**
In conjunction with New Progress Housing we have a HALS scheme to place households in up to 27 privately owned properties managed by the association and there is the option to increase this if needs dictate. This enable the provision of a reasonable range of housing options to clients owed a statutory duty.
- iii) CLG Grant Funding**
The grant received from CLG is expended to assist a number of local initiatives including:-

Barnardos - Range of accommodation projects and advice for young persons. e.g. Preston Nightstop accommodation, Moving On- advocacy project on housing for young persons.

Preston Womens Refuge for the provision of a Sanctuary Scheme

Active Mediation - Family relationships mediation service.

Preston Street Guide - For a handbook of services for the (young) homeless.

Christmas drop in Service - Foxtan Centre – Provides food, shelter, support over the Christmas period.

We continue to apply sound financial principles to maximize capital and revenue streams, audit and scrutiny reports attest to the value of the service.

- Participation in the Supporting People partnership and the service design work around floating support and accommodation based services helps maintain maximum assistance to our clients. 15% of the partnerships budget is spent in Preston.
- Suitably trained and motivated staff remain the most productive and effective resource and investors in people accreditation and ongoing commitment to staff development assist this process
- The stock transfer legacy with Right to Buy funds previously enabled us to assist existing and new providers of supported accommodation further funds from this source and we are hopeful that this assistance will continue to be available over the life of the strategy to provide capital assistance, to alleviate on homelessness and expand supported and independent provision

We adopt an outward looking approach to partnership development and multi agency co-ordination as this brings economies of scale and cost benefits. Co-operation with Fox Street, Emmaus and Recycling Lives for instance has drawn more than £3,000,000 into the city for the refurbishment and new build projects which benefit the homeless and vulnerable in the city.

We adopt robust procurement models to obtain maximum accommodation and support provision for our clients.

8. OUR LINKS WITH PARTNERS

We believe that effective partnership working is essential and strive to embrace its challenges on every available occasion.

Officers interact with the statutory services around the shared social care agenda most pertinently health, education and social services. Active participation with the Supporting People Partnership for Lancashire is a prime example.

We have established and maintain two fora with multi agency support focusing upon operational good practice (Accommodation Providers Network) and addressing client needs (Support Network).

Recognizing “pinch points” we have hospital discharge protocols and service level agreements regarding those being discharged from prison and those requiring move on from the Women’s Refuge. All temporary accommodation utilized by the authority is provided via partnership arrangements and this has encouraged innovation, best practice and the healthy investigation of different in house approaches.

The Preston Homeless Forum with wide statutory and voluntary sector representation and regular attendance helps maintain both a high client needs profile, and constructive way to problem solving. Working groups investigate and report on issues and solutions.

It is a truism that we cannot deliver the housing option and statutory homeless outcomes without our registered social landlord colleagues. The strength of the links and their effectiveness can be conveyed by the fact that Places for People, New Progress and the Salvation Army have developed self contained supported housing complexes for us where we enjoy maximum nomination rights.

Community Gateway Housing Association (the stock transfer vehicle) are the major social stock holder and have a robust transfer commitment to assist vulnerable households.

Recognizing the key role that the private sector can offer we have used the Landlords Forum, links with the University and dialogue with property management companies and individual landlords to establish routes and options for clients.

The advent of the Tenancy Deposit Protection has enabled a specific dialogue with many landlords and has actually made more attractive the Bond Scheme we administer and the wrap around advice and support that accompanies it.

Partnership is not however merely about delivering our message and service but maximising our contribution to added value co-ordinated activities. Work with the voluntary sector in particular has helped sustain community activities and

enterprises.

Co-operation and partnership activity is historic in terms of homelessness within the Central Lancashire authorities and work with other adjacent authorities around training, assessments, housing advice and vulnerability has aided mutual understanding and seamless housing pathways. Clients do not always follow narrow geographical patterns we otherwise operate to.

Involvement with community safety and corporate plan objectives (authority and county wide allows both individual interventions and cross cutting initiatives (dealing with aggressive begging, proto family intervention project).

Close working with the Oxford Annexe Health Team (Health Care for the Homeless) is a model for health and homeless engagement and this rapid assessment and referral approach enables immediate responses where these are sought. The team are based in a purpose built annexe to a single homeless (with youth wing) complex and represent co-operation between the Housing Advice Service, Lancashire Care Trust and New Progress Housing Association.

A further client specific partnership with Barnardos ensures that young people receive detailed timely and appropriate advice and assistance on options.

Cross boundary working within Central Lancashire not only in the housing and homeless areas but across health and social care is an important component of resource maximization and appropriate housing pathways.

We value and applaud the contribution of the voluntary sector which ranges from offering an alternative when statutory responsibilities are limited to piloting and promoting new initiatives and co-ordination. Engagement with the multi faith community has been sustained and affords practical and pastoral help focus and volunteers. Decanting of the Fox Street Community Night Shelter to allow its upgrading is the most recent action but co-operation around Winter Watch, Homeless Sunday and the co-ordinated Christmas provision of aid is much welcome.

A major 'partner' in the provision of the service are clients and we utilize a range of methods directly and more usually through advice and accommodation providers to ascertain satisfaction levels with the service and its re-configuration. The range of outreach, the expansion of community presence dedicated homeless website and the Preston street guide all have been influenced by the clients.

We are alive to the opportunities for diversification and have involved other agencies where feasible and advantageous. Shelter currently holds surgeries within our premises which are a way of affording other advice. Additionally the Citizens Advice Bureau regularly use our facilities.

We work closely with other sections and departments within the authority, housing benefits and housing standards being prime examples before prioritizing cases is possible to avoid homelessness.

8.1 Sub Regional Working & Partnerships

In addition to the range of front line services HAS provides there is also significant input to a number of multi-agency forums and working groups operating at local and regional levels covering a range of housing and social welfare issues.

This activity seeks to:

- Identify gaps in service provision and new trends in casework activity across all sectors in order to develop joint action agendas to resolve such issues.
- Enable effective information exchange between agencies
- Make best use of funding opportunities e.g. securing Hostels Capital Improvement Programme money to help develop in 2007/08 Fox Street Shelter, Recycling Lives and Preston Emmaus.
- Enable partner agencies through support consultative input and funding to develop new services and best practice initiatives e.g. Preston Women's Refuge Sanctuary Scheme, Amity Homelessness Befriending Service, Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- Improve referral mechanisms between agencies and authorities e.g. Local Connection protocol between Preston, South Ribble and Chorley Councils and the 16/17 year old joint protocol between Preston and Lancashire County Council, production of Preston Homelessness Directory.
- Improving the range of housing options e.g. improving access to RSL nominations, and accessing private rented housing portfolios,

The Central Lancashire Authorities of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley are piloting a joint local authority protocol with the Housing Corporation and within the aims and objectives are;

- to best focus resources
- to align housing association practices
- looking to a housing needs survey with special needs component
- Conducting events, training and rough sleeping counts to better understand homelessness and its local drivers.

The threat of homelessness does not recognise the boundaries of Local Authority

areas and this is especially true within Central Lancashire where the homelessness, special needs and affordability issues are increasingly considered across the sub region and this has been extended to include co-operation with neighbouring authorities such as West Lancs, Wyre, Fylde and Lancaster.

The service also contributes towards a number of forums and working parties which work towards developing information exchange, formulation of policy and development and monitoring of new services. These include the following;-

Supporting People Locality Planning Team
Lancashire Teenage Pregnancy Network
Preston Homeless Network
Lancashire Youth Forum
Lancashire Domestic Violence Forum
Preston Private Landlords Forum
HMP Preston Resettlement Policy Committee
Special Needs Housing Forum
Preston South Ribble Chorley Intentionally Homeless Working Group
Preston Domestic Violence Strategy Working Group
Amity befriending management committee

9. CONCLUSIONS OF THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

At the heart of our prevention approach were the key themes of the Housing Advisory Service:

- Homeless Prevention
- Multi Agency Working
- Encouraging Innovation
- Maximizing Funding
- Removing Barriers
- Tailored Interventions
- Sustainable Solutions

Preston established its Housing Advisory Service in 1977 and in 1991 amalgamated it with its homeless service to best respond to local needs.

Prevention at its core is not merely interviewing earlier it is effecting the housing markets, options and behaviour of individuals and organization and the post transfer enhanced linkage with Housing Strategy is designed to help address affordability and aspiration in a truly strategic fashion.

Sensitising colleague agencies and interacting in devising shared social care agendas is at the fore of our efforts and this stretches to issue of common regarding systems, pooled efforts and integrated interventions.

Utilizing the discretionary housing panel opportunities with our Housing Benefit and Welfare Benefits colleagues is a prime example of a practical intervention. Arrangements with Housing Benefits also fast track new claims/changes where there is a threat of homelessness and this can be most productive and persuasive with landlords thereby avoiding possession.

We have commissioned voluntary sector agencies working with young people to develop school and college work which highlights the pitfalls of leaving home too early.

Outreach in the form of surgeries, information days and road shows all seek to interact with the difficult to reach or those who do not naturally attend offices.

Private landlords and property management companies offer opportunities for an increasingly diverse group of potential tenants and we intervene actively through the local Landlords Forum and elsewhere to promote good landlord and tenant practice.

We have in place arrangements with local social landlords (e.g. rent arrears protocol with Community Gateway) and utilize our own staff resources to deal with tenancy issues that might lead to homelessness eviction – fortunately from

the social housing sector is at a modest level (if increasing).

From school programmes to older person conferences, from Active Mediation to Community Information Days, from Bond Scheme assistance to outreach and out of hours assistance we aim to be available where and when needed.

In line with the E Government approach the public can access web information about housing options and homelessness and can apply on line. Currently this accounts for a minute part of the business of the service it is growing. Community kiosks are particularly well used by younger people.

Tenancy maintenance, community sustainability and combating social exclusion are corporate aim of the authority and combined resources are focused on encouraging and empowering (e.g. Amity, community safety). With each of the 3 main causes of homelessness (end of lodging; domestic abuse; end of private sector lease) we have early interactions , schools programmes; support for drop in services; advice to landlords on tenancies (as well as tenants) as well as response reactions (mediation, sanctuary scheme, tenancy enforcement).

Funding for Barnardos Moving On Project which operates from the Urban Exchange, a young person complex , is a significant example of the advantage for clients of a generalist range of provision. It exemplifies the approach of a advice friendly environment.

The co-location of Housing Advice, Welfare Benefits, the CAB and REC is itself an example of how clients, who may present one problem when they have many, can be assisted collaboratively.

11. MEETING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF SERVICE USERS

The Homeless and those vulnerable households assisted through Housing Options are not homogenous. Not all service users have high levels of needs, but those that do tend to have multi dimensional requirements, with many conflicting programmes and strategies (Respect V Social inclusion) and contrary outcomes.

The debilitating effects of insecure, unsuitable or no home are well established. National studies, including Shelters tracking of the incidence of repeat homelessness, identify cycles and the propensity for homelessness / complex needs / anti-social behaviour / etc., to continue through generations.

The homeless threat is however only one aspect of the multi dimensional needs manifested by some clients. That there is a coalescence of these is evident in the case load as is the extent to which illiteracy and undiagnosed Mental Health issues appear.

In developing Preston's multi dimensional Housing Passport (accommodation history, needs assessment and risk matrix) we believe we can re-assure providers of accommodation, of the need for and the availability of a support package. In house we provide a 'bridge' to the commencement of those using our own expertise.

Whilst some needs are recognised, others are hidden and some are only beginning to feature on the radar of organizations. Alcohol abuse amongst teenagers and young adults is a growing feature replacing illegal drug use as the main problem.

10.1 Homeless families

Whilst these traditionally have constituted the majority of cases, single parent households have featured significantly. Our in-house support co-ordinator has largely concentrated on families.

Collaboration with statutory partners and specialist voluntary organizations around child protection issues is well bedded. Equally, the extent of our involvement with Homeless prevention necessitates ongoing co-operation with the range of agencies that are active in assisting families.

The portfolio of temporary and settled accommodation utilized to assist clients, reflects the homeless profile and self contained accommodation of varying sizes is the provision.

Links with local charities in respect of grants and furniture and white goods provision is in place to ensure priority for our clients in receiving such assistance.

We are currently in discussions with Places for People concerning the upgrading of child friendly facilities in their supported housing complex, and anticipate the prospective replacement Women's Refuge facility will have appropriate play and recreation facilities.

We have supported the work of the Preston Pupil Mobility Project which has moved into Preston partly on the basis of demand demonstrated via our support network and the activities of the Support co-ordinator.

Work over a number of years via the Health Team for the Homeless and our Support co-ordinator has remained. Most issues with regard to access to Health care and education which can be major issues elsewhere have been resolved in Preston.

We are particularly concerned at the extent of chaotic families with multi-dimensional needs who are excluded from options on the basis of housing history. A prototype family intervention initiative between ourselves and the police and others has demonstrated the substantial input of support necessary. In conjunction with the stock transfer (Community Gateway) vehicle other RSL and other social care agencies we are evaluating the potential for a more structured scheme of support augmenting and enhancing floating support possibilities.

10.2 Homeless Young People

Government are rightly insistent that local Authorities demonstrate the:-

- End the use of B & B for homeless 16 / 17 year olds.
- Establish a network of supported lodgings.
- Ensure access to mediation services.

Preston was an instigator of the joint protocol for 16 and 17 year olds which orders the roles and responsibilities of the Housing and Social Service functions and directs the process.

We work closely with Barnardos in providing advice and assistance to young people utilizing a significant proportion of the D.C.L.G. (Department of Communities and Local Government) annual homeless grant to ensure independent advice is available.

Using the same organization we fund Supported Lodgings arrangements (Nightstop) as a means of offering alternatives and make available the opportunity of Mediation with in-laws etc., where this is appropriate and realistic.

As elsewhere, the single room rent ceiling for single people under 25 continues to inhibit opportunities for this client group and undermines the Bond scheme concept, and the wrap around landlord assistance package.

We recognize the national imperative to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for young people, however, they are more prone to emergency situations. 18% of admissions to temporary accommodation are accounted for by this client group.

A limited number of young people placed in supported accommodation have difficulty in adjusting to the discipline of rules and regimes and leave themselves open to eviction due to infractions and consequent exclusion from subsequent alternatives. We are sensitive to this and work closely with providers to avoid such cycles developing.

Officers participate in the Supporting People Programme for the County, and are involved in the reframing of Floating Support and Accommodation based services. Care leavers are a particular example of an area of work being undertaken.

With the Urban Exchange Young Persons Centre and have encouraged expertise amongst our Housing Advisors in the needs, aspirations and requirements of the client group.

We have commissioned voluntary sector partners Y M C A and Active Mediation to provide Schools programmes, including video, which seek to portray the costs and challengers of independent living.

10.3 Domestic Abuse

As an Authority we have co-operated with and assisted the Local Women's Refuge (most pertinently) with a leased property since the inception of the Homeless Legislation. The scale of that operation which has subsequently doubled in size with a second Lottery funded property, has unfortunately been unable to keep pace with demand, and a significant number of such individuals have been accommodated in Homeless Supported Accommodation and in leased properties.

Recognising the need for a purpose built facility with self contained accommodation to replace the split site Refuge, our number one priority for supported accommodation for the last 2 years has been a complex which is able to address the wider needs currently un-catered for e.g. BME requirements and households with male children over 12. Fortunately the Housing Corporation was able to provide funding and we are confident that the new Refuge will become available to users in 2009.

The proposed accommodation had the priority support of the County Supporting People Partnership, (as it will serve Central Lancs. and wider) and with site and Housing association identified is scheduled to contain 13 self contained units with community areas, crèche, staff offices etc.

Whilst this will be the supported accommodation solution, such an outcome is not sought by all Domestic abuse households, assisting them to remain in their present accommodation is a preference of many. A Multi Agency Partnership with the Police, Preston Women's Refuge and ourselves (with funding) has established a Sanctuary scheme which is receiving an average of 7 referrals per month, (since it's inception in September 2006) and 40 households have or are about to benefit from the physical work and support that the approach offers.

A Multi Agency Domestic Violence Strategy is in place to facilitate the necessary joint and timely co-ordinated action, with the recent integration of Multi Agency Risk Assessment conferences (MARACS) an important step forward in dealing with the most acute cases. This case conference approach will maximize appropriate interventions from the wide ranging participating organizations. The Police are an important player in this and the overlapping strategic priorities will ensure this is effective.

Housing Advisory Officers hold surgeries at the Women's Refuge Information and Support Centre, and arrangements for Refuge residents (visited there) ensures the earliest involvement for determining the most appropriate and desired solution.

Whilst the Supporting People Floating Support arrangements for Central Lancashire in terms of contract holders is changing, the expertise of Preston Women's Refuge is recognized and the new partnership will continue to utilize their expertise. Support after residing in the Refuge or other intermediate accommodation is a recognised factor to enable the sustainability of that outcome.

The outcomes we anticipate are .

- Development of new supported housing complex.
- Expansion of Sanctuary approach
- Development of MARACS approach.

Although male domestic abuse is a smaller issue in terms of its incidence we are aware and responsive to it and clients are able to select a male or female advisory officer when being interviewed by us.

In conjunction with Preston Women's Aid and the Police we have an approach which reacts promptly and sympathetically.

10.4 Ex Offenders

Difficulties in accessing Social Housing when the risk and support needs matrix indicator is substantial and or where previous rent arrears pose a difficulty in satisfying eligibility or offer criteria utilized by different Associations.

Our Housing Passport aims to reduce such reticence, however, the distribution of Social Housing vacancies and the concentration of the Private rented sector can mitigate against households seeking to escape offending environments.

We are involved in the Preston Prison Resettlement Panel, and have over a number of years participated with NACRO and others in ensuring discharge arrangements are in place for these without accommodation.

We are signatories to a County wide protocol with Probation relating to assistance to offenders.

Discussions are ongoing with Lancaster City Council concerning advice to residents of the Youth Offending Establishment located in their City, which houses Preston residents. Barnardos are currently operating a pilot scheme to establish demand and the value of the approach.

Ex offenders can face additional barriers in access to supported accommodation and we attempt to assist with this and routes into the private sector as necessary.

10.5 People with Mental Health Problems

In its casework outreach and hospital discharge work, the service seeks to identify and respond to client needs and seeks to tailor solutions to match these.

Participation in the Mental Health Forum and joint working (A practitioner is seconded to Housing Advice for part of each week) ensures sensitivity to confidentiality, and the need for joint up thinking is ensuring adequate support packages are in place to sustain tenancies. All staff receive training in this subject area to assist them.

The Partnership working with the Lancashire Care Trust commenced in 2001 and the co-ordinated and flexible approach has been instrumental in ensuring fair access to Housing and Support Services for clients who under present.

Additionally, work with the Health Team for the Homeless has assisted rapid assessment for clients currently outside the gamut of Health provision.

Such clients often encounter additional problems in relating to the regimes, in general need, Hostel and Supported Accommodation and diagnostic tools have been jointly developed to aid identification, support and feedback.

The discharge protocol from the Avondale Unit at Royal Preston Hospital has helped prevent bed blocking, inappropriate discharges and now resolution of Homeless and Housing issues. More than 60 clients each year, some of which would have been homeless, rough sleeping or emergency admissions to the community night shelter are assisted. Work with Community Mental Health Team and assertive Outreach Teams further enlarges the scope of interaction and assistance.

The support co-ordinator within our service further uncovers a significant proportion of her work load (in directing and assembling care packages) regarding failing tenancies (rent arrears, disrepair and anti-social behaviour. Clients with these problems diagnosed and un-reported over represent amongst Street homeless, Ex offenders and those in the most unsuitable accommodation.

10.6 Black and Minority Ethnic People

The Strategic Housing Service, of which the Homeless and Advisory Service is a part, is considering developing a BME Strategy which will provide the framework for future provision and service. A final decision on this will be made based on the statistical information from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment being undertaken in Autumn 2008.

Our commitment to client needs is demonstrated by the ethnic outreach service we provide, jointly with our finance colleagues operating since 1989. 75% of the Housing Advisory Officers time is spent in surgeries and home visits. More than 1000 client contracts are made each year viz.

Homelessness	19%
Seeking Social Housing	15%
Landlord / Tenant issues	14%
Relationship breakdown	11%
Welfare Rights	11%
Home improvement issues	11%
Disrepair	10%
Seeking other housing	8%
Other	1%
Total	100%

This proactive stance utilizing Community and Mosque Centres has achieved a wide coverage of the ethnic minority community , with the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Afro Caribbean Communities all utilizing the service.

The subject areas receiving most coverage reflect the tenure of the clients with the percentages of owner occupiers, private tenants and social tenants being broadly comparative, and 30% of all enquiries being from lodgers or potentially homeless clients. The housing options approach and the prevention of homelessness are very effective in this setting, where otherwise under-reporting would have been expected.

We work closely with the local Race Equality Council in developing approaches which tackle Racial harassment, Domestic Violence and Youth homelessness. The first is instanced by good practice work with the RSL movement, the second by the aspect of the prospective Preston Women's Refuge facility and the third by our Outreach activities and work with the voluntary sector.

Whilst the Outreach service has deepened our understanding of the prevailing issues within the more traditional and settled communities, newer communities have not to date fully engaged with the established service.

In Autumn 2008 we intend to refresh the outreach approach with regard to the wider minority ethnic communities, to tease out the means of engaging with the growing Polish, Eastern European and emerging communities who manifest new and sometimes only transitory housing related issues.

The extension of the Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme has involved investigation of any additional problems Black and Minority Ethnic communities might experience in bidding etc., and has been satisfied the scheme is operating well.

Monitoring of applicants and successful bids ensures that the scheme can be demonstrated to be participative and inclusive.

10.7 Substance Misuse

We work closely with the Community Drug Service to prioritize the assistance package to achieve our mutual aims.

A significant element of the work of the Support co-ordinator within the service is to both prevent homelessness and support our family intervention pilot, and other initiatives is directed towards sustaining clients motivation and encouragement with such provision.

A concomitant of the issue is income/ debt management with anti social behaviour, often from visiting associates, which masks it's incidence.

Through the Lancashire Supporting People Partnership, which has this subject amongst its target services, efforts are co-ordinated to ensure supported accommodation and floating support provision is available. Engagement with the Lancashire Drug Action Team strategically is made via this medium and more localised representation.

The Homeless team within the Lancashire Care Trust was established as the result of multi agency research and support, and has assisted many problematic drug users who are heavily represented amongst rough sleepers, and those excluded from social housing and supported accommodation facilities.

Additionally, we co-operate fully with the Drug Line and Alcohol and Drug Service in assisting clients who are in contact with the Criminal Justice System.

Alternative funding has been investigated, with Alcohol and Drug Service to provide a detox scheme for young people under 25, to replicate their alcohol scheme and whilst not concluded remains a live issue.

Substance misuse factors can inhibit the potential for placement in both the majority of emergency and supported accommodation. The infraction of rules during previous residencies or histories of engagement or non engagement with support services can often deter acceptance due to too high risk assessments.

As part of the prevention agenda we work with RSL's to identify strategies for interventions which ameliorate the need for eviction action.

The providers of new and refurbished single person accommodation for rough sleepers and the single homeless, are reinforcing their links with our support with Drug agencies and looking to harmonize and co-ordinate an admissions and management approach where possible whilst maintaining their separate identities. Excluding clients with a range of needs escalates the scale of their problems, although the wider needs within schemes and the expertise of staff dealing with these complex issues needs to be acknowledged.

There are indications that the cycle of drug of choice is moving with alcohol abuse, featuring both in the under 21 and over 30 age groups as a major influence, and this has implications for provision and style of management. Previous research in 1996 did not support the need for a wet facility but more tolerant regimes within schemes with trained staff.

10.8 Complex Needs

It is not only within the housing and homeless context that dual diagnosis and different triggers for intervention are influenced by the support intervention which is necessary. Through our work with the Health Team for the Homeless we have developed effective engagement with services, however in the case of

personality disorder factors the level of interventions are all too often crisis driven.

10.9 Older People

Older people are another group which whilst under-represented in homeless applications and admissions to temporary accommodation. Whilst only 10% of admissions to temporary accommodation arise from this client group, such interventions can be problematic.

The Trigger for our involvement can involve unsuitable accommodation/ support needs/financial difficulties.

We work closely with Age Concern – speaking at their Annual events and one off advice for a. We also co-operate with Health and Social Services about focus campaigns.

10.10 Gypsies And Travellers

Although there is a Lancashire County Council site, managed by the City Council we have intermittent contact with individual households, there is undoubtedly a housing need recently quantified in the recent research carried out by Salford University in 2007. The formal site which has operated since 1967 has the facility for transit and residential pitches.

Unauthorized sites occur infrequently and suggest that Preston is a staging post on a wider transit pattern, (Appleby horse fair being one example). There is however, little hard evidence, the twice yearly D C L G required count carried out by the Authority has found 1 unauthorized site in the most recent past – 2005 to date.

The new Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme which builds upon the present scheme invites a travelling self categorisation.

The recent research by Salford University points to the need for further action, monitoring and investigation, and Preston will continue to play it's part. The Central Lancashire authorities, in particular, continue to view homelessness prevention and Housing Options for this client group from a shared viewpoint.

10.11 Teenage Parents

The service engages locally with the County Council, Health and the voluntary sector in meeting the multi disciplinary needs of this client group and we actively participate on the local panel which co-ordinates case responses, over 60 were Referred to the panel in 2007/08.

Preston remains one of three hotspots in the County and we support initiatives to expand Floating Support provision and ancillary activities to minimize assistance in sustaining accommodation.

We work closely with the local RSL Supported Housing Scheme utilising vacancies and facilitating re-housing as necessary. Such households, as with Domestic Abuse feature significantly in admissions to the portfolio of temporary accommodation, rather than merely the specialist facility .

10.12 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Host Communities, the Faith sector and Preston City Council have a proven record of assisting displaced communities and individuals. This experience has placed us at the centre of certain County wide arrangements e.g. Kosovans and helped form the sensitive approach and delivery mechanics.

The Ethnic minority outreach service stretches into the communities utilising Faith and Community Centres and home visits to identify need and deliver appropriate responses. Bilingual staff ensure that this service is accessible.

As emerging communities and individual cases manifest themselves, we look to readjust the outreach service to respond. A refresh is to be undertaken in Autumn 2008 to re-evaluate the outreach points with the intention of expanding these.

10.13 Intentionally Homeless Households

Although there is an increase in the numbers of homeless applicants being found intentionally homeless these still account for no more than 10% of all formal applications.

Families feature heavily however in this category and we are working jointly with neighbouring authorities, social services and other involved social care agencies in producing common good practice.

This is already in place around child protection issues however we are committed to maximise interventions for those households which have the narrowest options. Such intentional households do however continue to be owed a duty in terms of the provision of Housing Advice and we attempt to assist in introductions to the private rented sector backed up with a bond where appropriate.

Our desire to develop a family intervention programme, accords with the Supporting People Partnership objectives and we are striving to promote and assist its development in Preston through a Multi Agency partnership.

11 EXTRACTS FROM THE HOMELESS REVIEW AND CURRENT TRENDS

The homeless review which underpins the homeless strategy was conducted in the period January to June 2007 and involved a comprehensive survey of information of information from stakeholders and providers and relevant agencies.

Its focus was the collection of data regarding homelessness in its widest forms as captured by a variety of means, the identification of pertinent activities and services to combat this (and their effectiveness) and most valuably the identification of gaps in provision and unmet needs.

The Housing Advisory Service has extended the housing advisory/options profile and this in turn has resulted in a reduction in homeless applications and, as a corollary, acceptances.

11.1 Homeless Acceptances in Preston

Priority need homeless acceptances	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-08
TOTAL	155	136	144

The latest figures providing a comparison across Lancashire authorities are for the period 2006/ 2007

Households Accepted as Homeless, April 2006 to March 2007				
		Households Accepted as Homeless		
		Number	As Percentage of Total Households on the Housing Register	Percentage Yearly Change 2002/03 to 2006/07
281	<i>Burnley</i>	47	1.3	-83.8
—	<i>Chorley⁽²⁾</i>	—	—	—
318	<i>Fylde</i>	21	0.6	+50.0
323	<i>Hyndburn</i>	17	0.5	-92.7
84	<i>Lancaster</i>	241	4.2	-33.8
309	<i>Pendle</i>	25	0.7	-63.2
145	<i>Preston</i>	136	2.5	-20.9
320	<i>Ribble Valley</i>	20	0.8	-60.8
284	<i>Rossendale</i>	45	1.6	-81.6
133	<i>South Ribble</i>	151	3.4	-34.9
162	<i>West Lancashire</i>	121	2.7	+39.1

—	<i>Wyre⁽²⁾</i>	—	—	—
167	<i>Blackburn with Darwen</i>	118	2.1	-64.5
188	<i>Blackpool</i>	102	1.6	-35.8
—				
—	<i>North West</i>	11380	3.9	-24.2
—	<i>England</i>	73360	3.5	-43.4

The regional figures on homelessness acceptances show marked contrasts in the rate of acceptances, between authorities. The rate for Preston is below the regional and national averages although much higher than other authorities.

In Preston, efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness include the following approaches and resources;-

- Provision of rent in advance and bond monies to secure private rented housing in advance of a homelessness event and in the absence of a RSL offer.
- The provision of timely housing options to assist clients to secure housing with RSLs mostly through the Select Move choice based letting scheme as green band applicants rather than seeking “homeless” red banding.
- Referrals to medium term supported accommodation e.g. Lawson Street.
- Increasing the number of home visits to ascertain a more accurate picture of the household situation which sometimes results in applicants being enabled to remain in the accommodation.
- Active consideration in casework of utilising Discretionary Housing Payments to assist private tenants to remain in their accommodation, where affordability issues might otherwise lead to arrears leading to eviction..
- Using mediation either by referral to Active Mediation or informally to resolve family disputes which might otherwise result in exclusion from accommodation.
- Making available one off payments to enable clients to bridge short term accommodation problems e.g. travel costs and lodging money.
- Outreach activity which can identify potentially homeless cases at an early stage to enable preventative action to take place. Work at the Avondale Unit and Women’s refuges proving the value of a proactive approach.

- Acting on referrals from RSL's concerning tenants facing eviction. The Family Support worker in particular works to assist tenants to claim e.g. housing benefit and backdates, attending Court, proposal of repayment plans etc.

However the number of enquiries recorded on all housing advice subjects shows an increase compared to the time of the last review as shown in the table below.

All Advice cases	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Cases Recorded	1122	922	1404

Overall against a backdrop of high demand for housing advice and falling availability of the traditional solution of LA now RSL housing, by using a mix of approaches a reduction in homelessness acceptances has been achieved.

11.2 Homeless acceptances by household type

This table gives a breakdown of the household groupings accepted as homeless to the Housing Advisory Service from the period 2002-2003 preceding the previous homeless strategy with comparison to date.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	2007-2008	0%	2006-2007	%	2005-2006	%
Couple with dependant children/pregnant couples	21	15	21	15	21	14
Male Single parent	5	3	6	4	6	4
Female Single parent /single pregnant	59	41	53	38	74	47.5
Vulnerable old age	1	1	1	.5	2	1.5
Vulnerable phys disability	6	4	8	6	2	1.5
Vulnerable mental health	12	8	7	5	22	14
Vulnerable other reason	2	1	1	.5	4	3
Emergency homeless	1	1	0	0	0	0
16/17 year old	18	13	21	15	8	5
18-20 year old,ex-in care	3	2	5	4	1	.5
Vulnerable ex-in care	0	0	1	.5	0	0
Vulnerable ex in HM forces	0	0	0	0	0	0

Vulnerable ex custody/remand	1	1	2	1	4	3
Fled home due to violence	15	10	10	6	9	6
Of which domestic violence	(13)	(9)	(7)	(5)	(9)	(6)
TOTALS	144	100	136	100%	155	100

The predominant household grouping across the years remains female single parents, reflecting family and relationship breakdown as significant causes of homelessness. The proportion of homeless activity from each group remains broadly similar across the years sampled

The categories of household types conform to format of the CLG statistical returns on homelessness that we are required to submit on a quarterly basis.

11.3 Homeless Acceptances by Cause

Cause	2007-2008	%	2006-2007	%	2005-2006	%
Parent won't accommodate	37	25	35	26	17	11
Relative/Friend Won't accommodate	23	16	28	20	45	29
Non-violent dispute with partner	10	7	9	6	15	10
Violent dispute with partner	20	14	20	14.5	24	16
Violent dispute inv Associated persons	7	5	11	8	2	1
Racially motivated violence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other violence	1	1	2	1.5	1	.5
Racially motivated harassment	0	0	0	0	1	.5
Other forms of harassment	4	3	4	3	2	1
Mortgage arrears default/repossession	3	2	1	1	4	3
Rent arrears public sector dwelling	0	0	1	1	0	0
Rent arrears RSL dwelling	1	1	1	1	2	1
Rent arrears private sector dwelling	1	1	2	1.5	2	1
End of assured shorthold tenancy	16	11	6	4	19	12

Other loss of private rented or tied accom	4	3	5	4	4	3
Required to leave NASS accom	0	0	0	0	0	0
In institution or care hosp/rest home/prison	12	8	7	5.5	14	9
Other (emergency hostel, rough sleeper)	5	3	4	3	3	2
TOTAL	144	100	136	100	155	100

One of the more significant movements in activity relates to the rise in claims where an assured shorthold tenancy has ended. When discussing with landlords involved in some of these cases why they were unwilling to extend or renew the tenancy, it was largely the desire to sell at a time which in hindsight was the peak of the housing market that was the main reason given. Despite efforts to increase access to the private rented sector by assisting with bond money and utilizing Discretionary Housing Payment to assist those facing rent affordability problems, this housing sector retains a degree of volatility which seems likely to present further homelessness problems.

11.4 Homelessness acceptances by ethnic origin

GROUP	2007-2008	%	2006-2007	%	2005-2006	%
White	126	87	125	92	132	85
African/Caribbean	4	3	3	2	5	3
Asian	9	7	7	5	16	10
Other	5	3	1	1	2	2
Total	144	100	136	100	155	100

The proportions of the clients presenting from each grouping remain fairly consistent and although do they not reflect whether a particular groups needs are being met by the service.

11.5 Homelessness by Ward

Based on the applicants last given address in Preston the origin of applicants accepted as homeless for 2007/2008 is provided below,

Ward	Percentage
Ashton	7

Brookfield	3
Cadley	0
College	0
Deepdale	10
Fishwick	7
Garrison	3
Greyfriars	1
Ingol	9
Larches	3.5
Lea	1
Moor Park	3.5
Preston Rural East	1
Preston Rural North	0
Ribbleton	22
Riversway	2
Sharoe Green	0
St Georges	4
St. Matthews	10
Town Centre	12
Tulketh	1
University	0

11.6 Statistics relating to temporary accommodation

Number of households in temporary accommodation as at 31st March each year

Hostel/ Temp Acc	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Warwick	0	0	demolished

Foundations	21	23	20
Millbank	35	34	35
HALS/other private rented	20	15	27
B&B	8	2	1
TOTALS	84	74	83

This table is included to represent the number of households placed in temporary accommodation by the authority pending enquiries into homelessness claims or whilst waiting for homelessness duties to be carried out e.g. rehousing.

The full review can be viewed at

<http://www.preston.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=524>

11.7 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROJECTS

The service has access to a number of accommodation schemes which are used to discharge the authorities housing duties.

11.7.1 FOUNDATIONS / INN2,

Foundations was built on the site of the Councils Warwick House hostel which was in use from 1991, until demolition in 2004. Warwick house was a converted sheltered scheme for the elderly and lack fully self contained facilities. A partnership scheme between PCC and New Progress resulted in the new development.

Foundations is owned and managed by the New Progress Housing Association and is staffed on a 24 hour basis .It provides 23 units of fully furnished and equipped accommodation for single people and the accommodation charges for 2008/09 are set at £162.37 per week.

The project is divided into 2 separate and distinct units eg Foundations comprises 17 rooms and is aimed at supporting persons aged over 18. The 6 rooms in the INN2 section of the building are designated for 16-18 year olds.

Support workers provide practical help to residents during their stay and also to assist in the process of moving into permanent accommodation where applicable.

Residents also receive visits from the Homeless Health Care Team who have recently relocated to offices within the Foundations complex but continue to assist where required in all hostels. Referrals for placements are received from the Housing Advisory Service during office hours

Occupancy

From April 1st 2006 to March 31st 2007 there were 51 residents in Foundations/Inn2.

The distribution of age amidst the Apr 06 – Mar 07 intake of residents is: -

AGE	No of Residents
16	3
17	10
18	5
19	2
21	2
22	2
25	2
26	1
27	2
28	1
32	1
34	1
36	4
37	3
38	2
40	2
41	3
42	1
49	1
50	1
55	1
80	1

Levels of disability

The distribution of disabilities amidst the Apr 06 – Mar 07 intake of residents was:

-

Disability	No of Residents
HIV+	1
ADHD	1
Asthmatic	1

Deaf	1
DVT	1
Heart Condition	1
Mental Health	6
MH - Depression	1
MH - Schizoaffective	1
MH - Schizophrenia	2
Renal Condition	1
Spondylitis	2

Reasons for leaving

The distribution of reasons for leaving amidst the Apr 06 – Mar 07 intake of residents are: -

Reason For Leaving	No of Residents
Abandoned	7
Ant Social Behaviour	3
Eviction Arrears	2
Eviction Violence	2
Live With Friends	3
Moved	1
New Flat internal	1
No duty of care	1
RSL	14
Returned Home	1

11.7.2 MILLBANK COURT

Millbank Court opened in 1991, and is owned and managed by New Leaf Places for People. The scheme comprises 36 units of accommodation, which consist of 1x 4 bed house and 35 1 and 2 bedroom flats. All the properties are self contained and fully furnished with bedding and household equipment provided where required. Accommodation charges for the period 2008/09 for 5 high dependency units are £194.38 per week and £170.11 per week for the remaining units. The lower age limit for households admitted is 16 and Preston City Council who donated the site has 100% nomination rights for vacancies at the hostel.

Occupancy

A total of 67 customers with children were booked in between April 06 and March 07

Gender	Age 16-25	Ages 25 and above	Totals
Female	37	19	56
Male	3	8	11
Children	34	35	69

Reasons for leaving

The distribution of reasons for leaving amidst the Apr 06 – Mar 07 intake of residents are: -

Reason For Leaving	No of Residents
Abandoned	4
Planned move	62
Other reason	1

11.7.3 HOUSING ASSOCIATION LEASING SCHEME)

New Progress Housing Association currently manage privately owned properties under the HALS scheme and the City Council pays a management fee for access for the 27 properties. The properties, which are either 2 or 3 bed houses, are located across Preston although most are in the Deepdale, Ribblesdale and Fishwick areas.. Referrals of homeless households are made by HAS and 6 month assured tenancies are provided. New Progress are responsible for lettings, rent collection, receiving repair requests and notifying HAS of tenancy termination and forwarding addresses of tenants.

The properties are generally only furnished with carpets, curtains and cookers, so this option of accommodation best suits persons who have their own furniture already, which otherwise would be placed into storage by HAS if the household was placed in a furnished hostel unit. The scheme is also useful in accommodating larger families which could otherwise prove difficult at Millbank Court.

The HALS option has been used on several occasions as part of a family intervention support approach in the case of households with multiple needs, where access to RSL accommodation is currently not available due to debt, offending history or anti social behaviour. Multi agency support is provided to tackle the issues and get the household to manage the tenancy in an acceptable manner with a longer term aim of accessing mainstream accommodation.

The rents of HALS properties are £121.63 per week for 2008/09 and although they are higher than typical RSL rents, they are a more affordable option to waged households than e.g. Millbank Court is £191 per week for a 1 bed flat.

To make best use of the properties lettings are largely to families with children and the lower age limit for households is 16.

11.7.4 PRESTON WOMEN'S REFUGE

Two refuges are operated in Preston by (PWR), a registered charity. A total of 8 places are available. The accommodation in the two refuges is furnished with shared bathroom, kitchen and living rooms.

Refuge1 is owned by Preston City Council and leased to the charity, Refuge 2 is owned by Preston Women's Refuge

Although the Housing Advice Services makes referrals to the refuge, but many referrals are self made by women victims of domestic violence accessing the telephone Helpline and from other refuges and agencies though the national network of refuges and women's aid organisations.

Residents have access to counselling, support and practical advice and help through the Preston Women's Refuge support workers. Support staff are available who speak Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu. External agencies have access to the refuges where appropriate including Housing Advice Services, where a member of staff attends one of the refuges on a weekly basis to meet new residents to discuss housing options. A specialist children's service offers support to the children in the Refuges.

Residents rehoused from the Refuge can also benefit from inclusion under the Butterfly Project. PWR operates this floating support scheme to assist female victims of domestic violence to establish a new permanent home, through practical assistance in setting up a new home and continuing support.

Preston Women's Refuge also offers a 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline an Outreach service (available in English, Gujarati and Urdu), domestic violence awareness training and a weekly support group.

Issues concerning domestic violence (services, training, policy, best practice, etc) are addressed through two multi agency forums. The Lancashire Domestic Violence Forum takes a regional perspective and the Preston Interagency Domestic Violence Forum carries out a similar role locally

The minimum age limit for women is 16. Women with male children 12 years and over are generally not offered accommodation by the refuge however this will change with the move to the new refuge. Women with high support needs

e.g. drug or alcohol problems, mental health needs are also generally not offered accommodation but referred to another provider.

Between April 2006 - April 2007 the two refuge houses have accommodated a total of 70 women, 41 at Audrey Wise House and 29 at Edith Rigby House. However a further 8 residents were in occupation at 1st April 2006 but had been previously accommodated.

The case outcomes and family composition were as follows

Reason For Leaving	No of Residents
Rehoused by CGA	10
Rehoused by other RSL	6
Returned home	16
Move to private rented	5
Live With Friends/family	13
Moved to another refuge	12
Asked to leave	5
Unknown	3

The Sanctuary Scheme

Providing security measures to assist victims of DV to stay put in their homes reports the following activity since its inception in October 2006.

Referrals	56
work completed	25
various stages of the sanctuary scheme	10
were not suitable and did not meet the criteria	4
declined the service/ did not require the service	17
Totals	56

11.7.5 MERRIWEATHER HOME,

Merriweather is a registered charity, although Eavesbrook Housing Association owns the property. The scheme which is staffed on a 24 hour basis accommodates single males and females aged between 16-25 years and has 11 places, 9 of which have en suite facilities, with shared kitchens and living areas. The accommodation charge for 2008/09 is £106.21 per week

Referrals to the scheme are made by Housing Advice Services, South- Ribble Borough Council, Social Services and voluntary agencies, with applicants being interviewed by Merriweather staff prior to a decision on acceptance. During the 6-8

month stay at Merriweather residents are expected to access training or employment.

Those moving to permanent accommodation can also benefit from assistance through the Merriweather resettlement worker to help in the early stages of their tenancy

11.7.6 LAWSON STREET PROJECT

The Salvation Army Housing Association owns and manages this facility which was built on land gifted by the Council and opened in 1996. The project is staffed on a 24 hour basis and provides 16 self contained furnished bedsits for single male and female persons aged between 16-25 years for a period ranging between 6-12 months. The accommodation charges for 2008/09 are £155.52 per week.

Referrals for the scheme are made via housing advice, with an interview process held prior to a decision of acceptance for a tenancy.

Reason For Leaving	No of Residents
Rehoused by RSL	5
Rehoused supported accommodation	1
Moved to B&B	1
Move to private rented	1
Live With Friends/family	9
Taken into custody	2
Total	19

11.7.7 PARKINSON HOUSE

Stonham Housing Association owns and manages this project which is staffed on a 24-hour basis, has 9 rooms with shared kitchen, bathroom and living rooms. The weekly accommodation charge for 2008/09 is £112.65. During their stay residents receive help where required with budgeting, cooking, parenting etc.

The home offers accommodation to single pregnant women and to single vulnerable women aged 16 or over on a 6 month basis and admission to the project is via a referral from a voluntary or statutory agency and an interview with project staff.

12. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2008 -2010

Strategic Objective 1: Ensure that appropriate housing advice is available, in a variety of formats, to people who are in housing need or threatened with homelessness						
Outcome/Output Measures:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of people who say they had access to useful advice and information about their housing needs (measured through using exit surveys) Measuring the number of times our web site has been accessed 						
Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
1.1	Ensure the council's Housing Advice Service provides good quality housing advice to anyone within the district and that the service is benchmarked with partner authorities	Kevin Mordue	Ongoing budgets, Homeless Grant	March 2009	Cross Authority discussions commenced June 08	
1.2	Improve support interventions and advice on rent arrears in social sector through review of CGA. SLA by Sept 2008 and roll out SLA with other RSL	L.A. Support co-ordinator	Time resource	Additional 12 Interventions per annum 2007 baseline -	discussions commenced July 08	
1.3	To Increase outreach activity by 5% each year, taking advice into the community to prevent homelessness and maintain tenancies and to extend to 1 new venue	L.A. Outreach worker and voluntary sector	half yearly monitoring		New venue of Recycling Lives and Emmaus agreed. June 2008	

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
1.4	Update on-line homelessness services directory and Homeless Forum Website twice a year	John Cameron	Within existing budgets	Nov 08 & May 09		
1.5	Adopt the National Homelessness Advice Services (NHAS) model for joint working between local authorities and independent advice agencies on the prevention of homelessness	Shelter	TBA	March 09		
1.6	Ensure information and advice is available regarding support for people with no recourse to public funds	John Cameron / Tim Keightley	Leaflet cost and in house training day /days	March 09		
1.7	Produce an on line and interactive self help housing advice pack	John Cameron / Tim Keightley	DCLG Funding Bid – Enhanced housing options trailblazer	TBA Year 2	Bid in year 1 unsuccessful will re submit year 2	

Strategic Objective 2: To prevent homelessness whenever possible through a variety of interventions and consideration of housing options

Outcome/Output Measures:

- we will measure the number of interventions resulting in a solution which is likely to prove durable for at least six months (BV PI 213)
- the number of cases in a random sample after six months where homelessness was prevented
- numbers of people who experience repeat homelessness (BV PI 214)
- the number of people in temporary accommodation (Local Area Agreement Performance Indicator)

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
2.1	Ensure the capacity of housing advice service to undertake home visits	Bev Lyon	Car Allowance Budget	May 08	All Housing Advisors now carry out home visits.	
2.2	Ensure that a requirement to participate in a housing options interview does not act as a barrier preventing or discouraging homeless people from seeking help	John Cameron	Monitor advice and acceptance trends	6 monthly snapshot report in November 2008		
2.3	Ensure that prevention interventions are available to all potentially homeless households	John Cameron	Monitor advice & acceptance trends	Monthly snapshot report due First month		

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
2.4	Develop protocol with court officers & Advice agencies to prevent homelessness as a result of possession orders for rent/mortgage arrears.	Bev Lyon	Within Housing Advice Service Budget	December 08	Advice to magistrates being prepared in conjunction with homeless Forum	
2.5	Establish RSL Homelessness Champions Group to implement the Housing Corporation's Homelessness Strategy	Kevin Mordue	none	Oct 08	Reviewing partner RSL homeless action plan and identifying champion	
2.6	Develop a training programme for external agencies on preventing homelessness	John Cameron	3 training days per year	Year 2	Initial meeting with Social Services & Vol Sector July 08	
2.7	Work with Registered Social Landlords to review policies in relation to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence (abuse) and to ensure briefings, support and awareness training to be made accessible to RSL's.	Bev Lyon Womens refuge	5 training days	Mar 09	Training Prog being drawn up with Preston Womens Refuge	

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
2.8	To review the success and investigate potential to extend the sanctuary scheme to enable more people to remain in their own homes, if it is safe to do so.	Bev Lyon Womens refuge	Additional Capital finance required	Mar 09	Additional costing being obtained	
2.9	Extend assistance to victims of domestic violence to develop links to support and other services with the aim of reducing repeat homelessness through DV	Police and Preston Women's Aid	DCLG Homeless Directorate Grant	Report to domestic violence Forum Jan 09		
2.10	Enhanced multi-agency working – including links into the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) in the city and use of relevant risk assessment tools.	Bev Lyon	Within resources	Mar 09		
2.11	To implement Emergency Family Exclusion pilot in one secondary school through family mediation on family dynamics & monitor reduction in family breakdown	Family Mediation	DCLG Homeless Directorate Grant	Use pilot to set baseline for roll out Dec 2008 ½ yearly report		

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
2.12	Identification of needs of BME & emerging Communities through mapping exercise	Bev Lyon	Existing posts and budgets	April 09		
2.13	Review the pathways for homeless people and street drinkers to access substance misuse treatment and support	Tim Keightley		September 08	Multi agency working group established July 208	
2.14	Cut rent arrears as cause of homelessness from private rented sector by 10 cases per annum through maximising use of DHP & LHA	Kevin Mordue & Helen Johnson	DHP & LHA	May 09		

Strategic Objective 3:

Our aim is to ensure homelessness assessments are carried out in a timely and consistent way and with other agencies when required

Outcome/Output Measures:

- All cases assessed in less than 33 days in 2008
- 50% of cases to be assessed within 20 days by 2010
- All cases fully investigated and paper files to meet quality standards

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
3.1	HAS Service standards to be put in place and published to improve the consistency in service delivery	Kevin Mordue		June 08	Adopting revised Corporate Customer Service standards 0708	
3.2	Carry out survey of random sample of BV 213 households to establish if their solution has lasted more than six months	John Cameron	Within Housing Advice Services	March 09		
3.3	Review current portfolio of temporary accommodation in term of government reduction strategy to ensure 50% reduction by 2010 and achieve targets	Kevin Mordue	RSL's and L.A.	55 for 08/09 and 34 for 09/10	Re classification being considered.	

Strategic Objective 4:

To provide appropriate temporary accommodation, with & without support, until such times as a qualifying offer or permanent offer is secured

Outcome/Output Measures:

- Length of stay in temporary accommodation for people who are statutorily homeless
- % of people saying they received a good service from Preston City Council
- Reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation by 2010 by half (using a baseline of December 04 - 68)

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
4.1	Review temporary accommodation exclusion policies and agree city wide protocol	Social Progress Umbrella Group	None required	Year 2	Model policy under discussion.	
4.2	Utilisation of supported lodgings to avoid placement of 7 young people in non supported accommodation	Barnardos	Supporting People, DCLG Homeless Directorate Grant	Year on year to end of strategy		
4.3	Creation of accommodation and training complex for single homeless households	Recycling Lives	£750,000 from DCLG in place	Open 2008	Build underway and on schedule for completion Dec 08	

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
4.4	Creation of 20 unit community night shelter	Fox St Community Shelter	DCLG and SRB Funding £1.35 million in place	Reopen July 2008	– Formal Launch August 08	
4.5	Set up a multi – agency panel pilot project to identify and get chaotic clients indoors	Foxton Centre	costs – approx. £4,000 from CLG grant	April 09	Initial discussions partner organisations July 08	
4.6	Meeting accommodation, support training and employment needs of single homeless clients through Creation of Emmaus Community 25 Residents	Emmaus with multi agency partnership	DCLG contribution of £350,000 in place Additional capital funding of £150,000 required.	Open Aug 2008	Building work on ground floor completed.	

Strategic Objective 5:

To ensure there is sufficient permanent accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

Outcome/Output Measures:

- Length of stay in temporary accommodation for people who are statutorily homeless (Local Area Agreement target Year 1- LCC, Year 2 - all hostels)
- Number of statutorily homeless people rehoused
- Number of non priority homeless people rehoused

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
5.1	Increase the number of allocations to homeless & HAS households through RSL forums	Kevin Mordue	None Required	April 09	RSL Working group established	
5.2	MOPP (Move On Plans Protocol) to be implemented as a joint initiative between the homeless service and the voluntary sector.	Bev Lyon	None Required	September 2008	Discussions ongoing with accommodation providers	
5.3	RSL's to nominate homeless champions and hold regular meetings	Kevin Mordue	None Required	Sept 2008		
5.4	CLG protocol on sharing information with RSL's to be adopted.	Kevin Mordue	None Required	March 09		

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
5.5	To provide better publicity and targeted information about the white goods & furniture schemes to homeless people thru product of single leaflet	John Cameron & Tim Keightley	Within existing budgets	Sept 09		
5.6	Improve access to private rented sector and expand rent deposit/ landlord help approach	L.A. Landlord Forum	Enhanced housing options bid			
5.7	Improve access to private rented sector through Protocols with property management companies and P.F.I	L.A.'s (Central Lancs Authority) RSL's forum Housing Market Partnership	Homeless/Area Improvement Capital Budget/ Private Finance	Pilot scheme aiming at 15 year 1 and if successful continue.	Current housing market dysfunction & implications on this being identified	
5.8	Review of Choice Based Lettings and further expansion	The Sub Regional CBL partnership	Mixed budgets	4 new partners by 2009 (Dec)	April 2008 – review waiting CLG guidance	
5.9	Review Sub Regional Allocations Policy. Ensure that needs of vulnerable people including the homeless are recognised appropriately within CBL	Kevin Mordue		March 09	National Guidance awaited on streaming	

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
5.10	Establish furnished letting scheme to assist those without furniture	All partner RSL`s & LA`s	RSL innovation fund	3 in 2008 and 20 in life of strategy	First tenancy established July 08	
5.11	To provide with Empty Homes Officer 10 properties for use of Homeless Households	Kevin Mordue & Alex Starritt	Funding thru Homeless Capital Prog	March 09	Discussions with RSLs ongoing	

Strategic Objective 6:

To monitor the implementation of the strategy through outcome focused performance measures and ensure communication between all stakeholders is effective

Outcome/Output Measures:

- Six weekly performance report for strategy steering group
- Six monthly performance report for stakeholders through forum and LCC website

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
6.1	Carry out a review of repeat homeless cases to identify solutions and Link to new Supporting People Floating Support Assessments 2008	John Cameron	SP Bid	Pilot Project with 2 RSL`s by 2009		
6.2	Data checks to be instigated to ensure the recording of ethnicity continues to be a priority of the homeless service	John Cameron	No resource	Ongoing		
6.3	Provide resources to ensure the strategy is effectively monitored and co-ordinated	Kevin Mordue Tim Keightley	CLG Homeless Grant	Annual report - 1st due August 09		

Reference	Action / Project	Lead Person Responsible	Resources Required / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (approved)	Completion Date	Progress to Date	Status
6.4	Review report from Mystery shopping exercise to inform customer care practices	John Cameron	Within existing budgets	1st report Nov 08 and 6 monthly thereafter		
6.5	Tackle cross boundary issues and develop Shared approach on intentional homelessness households thru Consistency of approach, services and standards.	Kevin Mordue John Cameron	Existing Budgets	New protocol Dec 2008	Cross area group established June 08	
6.6	Move to co-ordinated approach thru raising profile & promoting voluntary sector & Independent voice for the homeless through 2 events per year	Tim Keightley	2 events per annum DCLG Homeless Directorate Funding	Speak Out in Sept 2008 Report to Homeless Forum Nov t 08	Working group established	