

A Place for All



ACTION PLAN

Wigan's Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013

Action Plan

What we need to do:	How do we will do it:	Desired Outcome:	Who will lead & when we wish to do it:	Update April 2009
<p>Promote a culture change across the borough to prevent rather than react to homelessness and deter the use of 'homelessness' as a fast-track route into social housing where people are in housing need rather than homeless.</p>	<p>Undertake joint training, embed in protocols between agencies and convey the message to customers, the need and ability to prevent homelessness through early intervention.</p> <p>Continue to shift role of housing Options Advice Team from 'homelessness investigation' to 'advice & prevention'.</p>	<p>Reduced numbers of homelessness acceptances per 1000 population in line with regional average.</p> <p>Increased number of homelessness preventions per 1000 population (former BVPI 213)</p>	<p>Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH) /Housing Strategy/ All: 2008-13</p> <p>WALH: 2008-13</p>	<p>WALH strengthened working relationships with agencies to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>WALH have separate teams for prevention and assessment to ensure cases dealt with effectively. Significant training exercise has been undertaken with staff to ensure that procedures are in place that are legal and emphasis is placed on prevention</p> <p>Additional quality control measures implemented as decisions taken on homelessness now made by Wigan Council Officer following WALH assessment to ensure procedures are followed accurately and homelessness prevention techniques are adopted whenever appropriate</p>

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				<p>Improved advice at initial point of contact with suite of tailored leaflets and information to suit each applicant.</p> <p>Surgeries set up at Probation, Street Based Services, Alcohol and Drugs Services, Railway Road hostel and Youth Offending Team to try to prevent homelessness for vulnerable people.</p>
<p>Ensure that the right advice is given to the right people at the right time.</p>	<p>Better co-ordination of existing advice networks through the development of borough-wide advice strategy linking with development of Joint Service Centre.</p> <p>Awareness raising amongst “problem noticers” working in the borough to target “at risk” groups and those who don’t yet recognise they have an issue – linked to promotion of services.</p> <p>Agencies to recognise their role and responsibilities in preventing homelessness through two way training.</p>	<p>Homelessness Forum (HF) involved in development of Advice Strategy</p> <p>Increased number accessing timely advice to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Seminars & training sessions delivered.</p>	<p>Advice agencies via Housing Advice Steering Group (HASG): Sep 09</p> <p>Advice agencies via HASG: Jul 10</p> <p>WALH/ Housing Strategy (HS): Dec 2009</p>	<p>Housing Strategy run housing advice steering group and have been closely involved in development of borough advice strategy, Wigan Life and JSC implementation</p> <p>Wigan Council part funded CAB money advice post for twelve months in order to carry out priority debt assessments for clients referred from housing to ensure early intervention and prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>CAB established a texting scheme with the County Court to aim to increase</p>

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				<p>the numbers facing possession proceedings that access advice prior to their hearing.</p> <p>WALH hosted joint training days with range of partners to enhance understanding of each others services.</p>
<p>Remove barriers to accessing homelessness advice.</p>	<p>Develop clearer mechanisms for accessing advice and support, through development of protocols and consider use of common referral forms</p> <p>Produce better information in various formats on advice, housing options and support services available & how to access.</p> <p>Produce better information in various formats that give advice to people at risk of homelessness</p>	<p>Increased number accessing timely & appropriate advice to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>Advice agencies via HASG: Develop plan by: Sep 09</p> <p>HS / All: Apr 09</p> <p>Advice agencies via HASG: Apr 09</p>	<p>WALH and CAB have signed up to the NHAS (Shelter & CAB initiative) protocol which seeks to improve housing advice to clients and prevent homelessness wherever possible.</p> <p>Matrix of homelessness services currently being developed to form directory and basis for leaflets. Linked to relaunch of homelessness website which is to focus on prevention and housing options.</p> <p>WALH developed new suite of leaflets tailored to various circumstances aimed at homelessness prevention.</p>
<p>Develop new initiatives that target the needs of individual client groups –</p>	<p>Develop mediation scheme to prevent more, younger people becoming homelessness.</p>	<p>Reduced number of parental / family evictions, more planned moves.</p>	<p>HS / CYPS / WALH via Young Persons</p>	<p>Catch 22 now offer a mediation scheme funded by Supporting People in</p>

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<p>young people, offenders, complex needs etc.</p>	<p>Review success of Sanctuary Scheme and seek to maximise potential.</p> <p>Continue and develop work in schools, prison etc and through surgeries with at risk groups.</p>	<p>Indicator: increased no. prevented from becoming homeless (BVPI 213)</p> <p>Sanctuaries created / numbers of target hardening / sustainability of accommodation.</p> <p>Outreach sessions/ surgeries delivered.</p>	<p>Accomm. Grp (YPAG): 2010</p> <p>HS / DV Co-ordinator: Dec 08</p> <p>HASG: 2008-13</p>	<p>the borough to prevent homelessness amongst young people.</p> <p>Work begun to review scheme – linked to review of current domestic violence contracts. Ongoing.</p> <p>Surgeries delivered by number of agencies in various locations to target those in need. Including WALH/ CAB/ HB/ Homelessness and Vulnerable Persons Team/ OARS.</p> <p>Partnership between Housing Strategy, WALH and CAB prevented 58 families becoming homeless through the pilot of delayed eviction. Saved £400,000 in B&B costs.</p>
	<p>Peer awareness raising: involve ex-homeless people as volunteers in giving advice, linking to prevention.</p> <p>Consider potential to create a DVD of those who have been homeless, how to prevent.</p>	<p>Volunteers recruited and trained.</p> <p>Increased number accessing timely advice.</p>	<p>All via HASG: 2010</p> <p>All via HASG: Mar 09</p>	<p>Ex-homeless now providing support and advice through The Bridge and WISER group at The Brick. (Homeless outreach base)</p> <p>Designated officers now been identified to source suitable agency to deliver</p>

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	Use the "Clean Break" toolkit developed by Homeless Link (Aimed at people with substance misuse & housing issues)	More integrated housing and care pathways for drug users engaging in treatment	Housing & Substance Misuse Group: Mar 09	project. Suitable examples of similar under evaluation to inform our approach. HS now also commissioned "Ask Vera" to create a local DVD aimed at housing options for those with Learning Disabilities.
Seek to minimise mortgage repossessions in the borough.	<p>Consider implementation of not-for profit mortgage rescue scheme and ensure advice provision promotes the risks of private mortgage rescue schemes in borough.</p> <p>Liaison with banks/ building societies and courts to prevent wherever possible.</p>	<p>Reduced homelessness acceptances due to mortgage repossessions.</p> <p>Reduced cases reaching County Court due to mortgage possessions.</p>	<p>HS / RSL's / Advice Agencies: Develop plan by: 2010</p> <p>WALH Prevention Team/CAB: 2008-13</p>	<p>Fast track Mortgage Rescue Scheme – Wigan responded to the pressure of the recession by becoming a fast track authority for the Gov't MRS, taking referrals from January 2009 for those in mortgage difficulties.</p> <p>Wigan Council were the first authority in the country to meet with Building Societies, in December 2008 to aim to minimise repossessions.</p> <p>HS Team/ Housing Advice Steering Group publicity campaign carried out to warn of the risks of sell to rent schemes.</p> <p>CAB established texting scheme with courts for those facing mortgage possession hearings to gain advice. CAB also</p>

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				applied to LSC for additional new matter starts – successful.
Seek to minimise loss of rented accommodation in the borough	<p>Work with landlords in the borough to ensure allocation / suspension / eviction policies not having negative effect on homelessness</p> <p>Promote use of Safeguard Policy within Local Housing Allowance arrangements</p> <p>Continue to maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments</p>	Reduced homelessness acceptances due to loss of rented accommodation	<p>WALH / HS: 2008-13</p> <p>Housing Benefits / All: 2008-13</p>	<p>Wigan Council are currently in the process of revising and relaunching their landlord's accreditation scheme to raise standards in the sector and increase the availability of good quality affordable housing within the borough. Housing Strategy are also relaunching their Landlords Forum in order to offer more training and assistance to private landlords, raising standards in the sector and looking to minimise unnecessary possession proceedings.</p> <p>Use of safeguarding policy within LHA taking place for cases who would be vulnerable.</p> <p>Wigan Council employed a Housing Advice Officer to liaise with local private landlords to ensure possession proceedings are minimised wherever</p>

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				<p>possible and also to raise standards in the sector to increase the availability of affordable housing in the borough.</p> <p>Specialist training arranged by HS across North West Authorities relating to protection from eviction and harassment.</p>
<p>Develop more affordable housing</p>	<p>Analyse results of 2008 Housing Needs Study to determine future needs of the borough.</p> <p>Use s.106 money in a way that creates mixed development and meets our accommodation requirements.</p> <p>Seek to develop more social rented housing / more affordable housing for sale via partners.</p>	<p>Better understanding of future requirements</p> <p>Increased number of homes built / made affordable</p>	<p>HS: Dec 08</p> <p>HS: 2008-13</p> <p>HS via Affordable Hsg Steering Grp: 2008-13</p>	<p>HS team utilising results to feed into our new Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Work underway with WALH and partners for new build affordable housing. 40 new affordable homes delivered in 2008/9.</p> <p>Wigan Council formed partnership with Wigan Housing Solutions, a social lettings agency, to continue to manage the bond scheme but also provide a housing management service available directly to private owners / landlords, and full housing management service to properties leased by the Council from private landlords / owners.</p>

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<p>Improve access to current accommodation to produce wider range of affordable housing options</p>	<p>Review of Council's Allocations policy</p> <p>Explore opportunities to make better use of the private rented sector in tackling homelessness.</p> <p>Seek to maximise use of RSL nominations</p> <p>Participate in Regional Choice Based Lettings Pilot: 'Pinpoint'</p> <p>Continue to expand Wigan Bond Scheme</p> <p>Consider how people requiring a room for a carer can access private rented accommodation given LHA restrictions</p>	<p>Improved access to accommodation</p> <p>Increased number of homes made affordable</p> <p>Increased number of Qualifying Offers accepted</p> <p>Available housing is targeted at those in greatest need / Increased number of RSL nominations</p> <p>Opportunities created to cross authority boundaries more easily</p> <p>Increased number of new bonds issues / minimal claims made</p> <p>Discriminatory policy tackled</p>	<p>HS/WALH: Begin Oct 2008</p> <p>HS: Develop plan by: Dec 08</p> <p>WALH: 2008-13</p> <p>WALH / RSL's / HS: 2008-13</p> <p>WALH / RSL's / HS: Sep 08</p> <p>CAB / HS: Dec 2008</p> <p>All via HASG: Apr 09</p>	<p>Allocations policy now almost complete with proposals aimed at better prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>Wigan Council secured funding as pathfinder authority from CLG to reduce overcrowding by incentivising moves to smaller accommodation for those under-occupying.</p> <p>RSL meetings now re-established and close monitoring underway through HS team to ensure nominations received. Wigan Council now receive 100% nominations from almost all RSL's in the borough, allocated through WALH CBL scheme.</p> <p>Bond scheme to be expanded through Wigan Housing Solutions.</p> <p>Learning Disability Housing Options Officer working on approach to tackle policy.</p>

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Ensure accommodation is of decent standard, suitable, sustainable and provides security (thereby minimising homelessness)	<p>Evaluate potential to roll out current Private Sector Leasing arrangements for wider use.</p> <p>Develop Accredited landlord scheme further (promoting good standards of accommodation and management)</p>	<p>Increased number of homes made available</p> <p>Increased number of accredited landlords recruited.</p>	<p>HS / RSLs / Vol Sector: Develop plan by: Apr 09</p> <p>HS: Develop plan by: Dec 08</p>	Housing Strategy relaunching accreditation scheme to raise standards and promote good management. Plan developed and contact currently being made with landlords to promote. To be linked to private sector leased properties.
Work toward the target set by government of halving the use of temporary accommodation by 2010 (Target 19 by end 2010) / B&B only to be used in exceptional circumstances	<p>Develop & implement TA reduction strategy ensuring it continues to meet individual / diverse needs.</p> <p>Develop & implement 'spend to save' policy</p>	<p>Reduced use of TA & Minimal use of B&B</p> <p>Number of cases prevented using Homelessness Prevention Fund budget.</p>	<p>HS / WALH: Aug 08</p> <p>HS / WALH: Aug 08</p>	<p>TA strategy now developed and close monitoring of TA use through NI 156 on LAA.</p> <p>Significant work undertaken to identify causes of blockages in TA and tools to tackle them via WALH.</p> <p>Spend to save policy well used to prevent need for temporary accommodation.(£13k in 2008/09)</p>
Ensure that where B&B is used, meets acceptable standards	Adopt BABIE system and produce an 'approved' list of B&B	Temporary Accommodation used meets minimum standards	HS / WALH / Aftercare / YOT: Sep 08 & update annually	B&B Inspections completed November 2008. List of approved B&B's including restrictions issued December 2008. Constantly reviewed and updated.

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Develop a holistic approach to tackling homelessness and promote greater independence by developing support projects linked to tackling worklessness through training and employment	<p>Consider opportunities to develop an accommodation / training project based on the 'Recycling Lives' model</p> <p>Consider opportunities to develop a 'self build' or refurbishment of existing / empty properties.</p>	Sustained reduction in rough sleeping	<p>HS / Recycling Lives (& Great Places): 2013</p> <p>HS / PPO manager: 2010</p>	Partnership now formed between Wigan Council, Great Places & Recycling Lives to aim to deliver the project. Sites appraisal currently underway.
Consider options for provision of emergency accommodation in borough that can also manage people with complex needs	Reconsider proposals to develop an emergency accommodation project and explore opportunity to link with 'Recycling Lives' Project.	<p>Sustained reduction in rough sleeping</p> <p>Reduction in those leaving SP services in unplanned way</p>	HS / Great Places (& Recycling Lives): 2013	See above.
Increase range of support options for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	<p>Develop a wider Supported Lodgings scheme for young people using good practice developed by Aftercare</p> <p>Consider opportunities to develop a supported accommodation based on the Nightstop model</p> <p>Develop an intensive floating support scheme for people with complex / high support needs</p>	<p>Reduced (repeat) homelessness</p> <p>Reduced number of failed tenancies</p> <p>Reduced number leaving SP services in unplanned way</p> <p>Sustained reduction in rough sleeping</p>	<p>Aftercare via YPAG: Apr 09</p> <p>YPAG: Apr 10</p> <p>Stepping Stone: Sep 08</p>	<p>Work underway to develop suitable scheme in borough through partnership approach.</p> <p>Stepping Stone service – intensive support fo those with complex needs - now operating at full capacity. Significant work undertaken to ensure receive referrals from agencies at earliest possible point.</p> <p>The Brick is now open and offering support, advice and assistance to current and ex-rough sleepers.</p>

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Complete review of short term accommodation / floating support services (inc. domestic violence & TA projects) & consider options for reconfiguration to best meet needs	<p>Complete work on needs analysis, develop models for reconfiguration & undertake further consultation on proposals</p> <p>Consider alternative uses for accommodation no longer required as temporary accommodation</p>	<p>More effective use of existing resources / means of tackling homelessness & preventing repeat homelessness</p> <p>Specialist support targeted at those in greatest need</p>	<p>SP/ HS / DV Co-ordinator / RSL's: Mar 09</p> <p>SP / HS / WALH / RSL's / YPAG: Apr 10</p>	Review of short term services complete and findings fed into new Supporting People commissioning framework.
Ensure that when people are ready to move on, they are able to do so in a planned & supported way, releasing resources to others in need.	Develop "Move On Plans Protocol" using the Homeless Link good practice model.	<p>More effective use of resources</p> <p>Increased number of people supported</p>	SP / HS via SP Providers Forum & Core Strategy Group: Nov 2008	MOPP exercise now complete and evaluation of results currently underway to translate into action plan to improve move-on across support services in the borough.
Review access to supported accommodation / floating support	Develop clearer mechanisms for accessing advice and support, through development of protocols and consider single point of application or use of common referral forms	Increased number accessing timely & appropriate advice to prevent homelessness.	SP via Providers Forum & Core Strategy Group: Apr 09	<p>Supporting People identified funding to review access to support services.</p> <p>ECHG carrying out pilot exercise to review access to services.</p>
Ensure referrals made to most appropriate providers	<p>Consider potential role of YPAG as allocation panel for young persons accommodation projects</p> <p>Undertake training and produce better information in various formats (on support services available & how to access.</p>	<p>Specialist support targeted at those in greatest need.</p> <p>Reduced failed referrals / clients leaving services in an unplanned way.</p>	<p>SP / HS / RSL's / YPAG: Apr 09</p> <p>SP / HS via Providers Forum: Apr 09</p>	Referrals training to be carried out through Homelessness Forum following on from Vulnerability Matrix assessment carried out. Supporting People Service Directory under review.

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<p>Improve strategic co-ordination of services</p>	<p>HF to meet quarterly with primary role of monitoring & delivery of Homelessness Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>Formalise role of sub-groups of HF by devolving tasks & feedback to HF.</p> <p>Regularly review membership of HF, ensuring all agencies represented and representatives are able to drive forward change within their organisation</p> <p>Include Homelessness Targets within LAA, raise profile of homelessness issues by regular progress reports to Members & Chief Officers.</p> <p>Continue to develop partnership links at local, sub-regional & regional level</p>	<p>Outputs within action plan delivered & aims of strategy are met</p> <p>Stronger & more influential Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Chair of Homelessness Forum / HS / All: 2008-13</p> <p>HS / All 2008-13</p> <p>HS: May 08 & 2008-13</p> <p>All 2008-13</p>	<p>Mini-review of membership carried out March 2009.</p> <p>Discussions taken place amongst Forum regarding suitable format for group and future meetings to ensure successful delivery of action plan.</p>
<p>Attract more funding to help deliver aims of strategy and more secure funding to improve stability of agencies & enable longer term planning</p>	<p>Develop bid proposals in preparation for announcement of appropriate funding sources "on the shelf" ready to submit when suitable funding is be identified to cater for local needs</p> <p>Pilot development of Bond Scheme & Key Project as Not-for-Profit / Charity / Social Enterprise & consider opportunity to expand / replicate with HF</p>	<p>Able to meet short bidding deadlines & improved prospects of attracting funding</p> <p>Alternative, more secure funding streams accessed</p>	<p>All via HF / HS: 2008-13</p> <p>C.A.B / Key Project / HS / All: Dec 08</p>	<p>Housing Strategy supported Wigan Housing Solutions in a successful bid to Spark challenge fund .</p> <p>Wigan Housing Solutions now established and registered with companies house.</p>

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	Continue to lobby for more equitable distribution of central government resources (including Homeless Grant, Supporting People)	Outputs within action plan delivered & aims of strategy are met	HS / SP / HF: 2008-13	
Improve quality and standards	Measurable targets monitored via Homelessness Forum.	Increased customer satisfaction.	HF: 2008-13	Further work required.
Develop protocols to deliver seamless service to clients.	<p>Sign up to National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) joint working agreement.</p> <p>Develop Young Persons protocol</p> <p>Develop a cross-authority Hospital Discharge Policy</p> <p>Develop & review protocols for other groups vulnerable to homelessness</p>	<p>Multi-agency approach to tackling & preventing homelessness</p>	<p>WALH / CAB / HS: Aug 08</p> <p>YPAG: Dec 08</p> <p>WALH: Apr 09</p> <p>HF: 2008-13</p>	<p>WALH/ CAB NHAS agreement now signed and underway.</p> <p>Protocol underway but new guidance issued from CLG which has delayed completion – Corporate Parenting Group established now which will help develop protocol.</p> <p>Wigan acting as a pathfinder for North West on a new hospital discharge policy – first draft now complete.</p>

<p>Ensure Homelessness Strategy continues to meet the needs of the borough</p>	<p>Use Homelessness Forum (HF) to monitor and deliver Homelessness Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>Undertake annual review of progress against aims of strategy, highlighting any new issues that arise.</p> <p>Review opportunities for better consultation with people who are / were homeless.</p>	<p>Homelessness Strategy continues to be relevant & effective in meeting aims</p>	<p>Chair of HF / HS/All: 2008-13</p>	<p>Work ongoing</p> <p>Annual review now drafted.</p>
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