

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Report of
“Specialist Housing Provision”**

**Select Committee 1
Cllr S. Loudon
(Chair)**

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Acknowledgement

The Select Committee would like to acknowledge the support and co-operation of the following people whose help enabled the review to be carried out.

- ◆ ***Community Protection Department***
- ◆ ***Wigan and Leigh Housing***
- ◆ ***Social Services***
- ◆ ***HMP Forest Bank Prison***
- ◆ ***Probation Service***
- ◆ ***Salvation Army***
- ◆ ***English Churches***
- ◆ ***Arena Housing***
- ◆ ***Members of the Community***

A particular thanks is extended to Joe Gavaghan, who works with people who live rough on the streets of Wigan, for his support, co-operation and dedication to those people who are in need.

Preface

And don't forget the cat

Let's play a game. Close your eyes and begin to remove everything that gives you comfort and identity. Start with your family, your children, parents, brothers, sisters: imagine that you either have no family, or have lost touch with them. Now make your house and garden disappear, your car, your furniture and possessions, all the things that remind you of good times: photographs, mementos, old letters, diaries, address books. Next take away your job, your school, your closest friends, your church community. And don't forget the cat. Now you are like many of the people you see wandering the streets, under the arches, at the day centres, in the train stations. Can *you* cope?

1. Executive Summary

This report details the findings from the Select Committee's review of specialist housing provision in Wigan Borough.

Our main aim for the review was to identify and map the current provision of specialist housing and to compare this provision against the need for specialist housing in the borough. There are many different groups of people who require the support of specialist housing. The Select Committee decided to pay particular attention to the provision of specialist housing for offenders and those at risk of offending. This added focus to the review and allowed the Select Committee to gather detailed evidence on the issues surrounding this group of people and also the level of need for specialist housing among them.

In order to address our aim the Select Committee used a variety of methods:

- Formal interviews with key stakeholders and organisations
- Informal consultation and discussions with a number of rough sleepers
- Site visits
- Questionnaires
- Telephone interviews with other authorities and housing providers

Our findings:

- 1. There are an Increasing numbers of homeless**
- 2. Significant number of offenders returning back into Wigan**
- 3. The problem of 13 week rule working against resettlement.**
- 4. Lack of accommodation for homeless people and families**
- 5. Significant use of B&B accommodation**

Proposed Key Outcomes

- ◆ **Rough sleepers to be supported and have access to shelter, warmth, food and drink.**
- ◆ **Ex-offenders will have equality of access to temporary/permanent accommodation.**
- ◆ **Advice and support for homeless people will increase.**
- ◆ **Reduce the number of tenancies terminated as a result of the 13-week rule.**

2. Introduction

Specialist housing is the provision of support and accommodation for members of the community who are unable to live independently in their own home. The term 'specialist housing' refers to the support offered to individuals through accommodation based projects such as hostels and sheltered accommodation. Floating support is another means of support available to members of our community that is not accommodation based. Floating support is provided for people who wish to continue living in their own home but need help with certain aspects of their life; in this case support isn't linked to a project but travels to the individual concerned. **This review only examines the provision of the accommodation based housing support in Wigan.**

Many different groups of people such as the homeless, people with drug and alcohol problems, ex-offenders and care leavers require the support of specialist housing during their lives. Within this report we will focus on the current provision of specialist housing in Wigan and identify the extent of need. Although the review covers a wide range of social groups, the research and findings has a particular emphasis on ex-offenders and those at risk of offending. We have focused on this particular group because of the difficulties often faced when trying to house ex-offenders in the community. It also came to our attention at an early stage that many of the people within the other groups, such as those with drug and alcohol problems and those sleeping on the streets, were also ex-offenders and at risk of further offending.

Background

When homelessness first re-emerged as a political issue in the 1960s and early 1970s it was associated mainly with poor families and older single men (Smith and Gilford, 1998). However, as homelessness escalated in the 1980s the profile of homeless people began to change. There was a sharp increase in the numbers of young people and women from ethnic minority groups amongst those seeking assistance from homelessness agencies¹. One of the contributing factors for the increasing levels of homelessness has been the significant number of people who have been unable to secure long term accommodation on release from prison.

Accommodation has long been recognised as a factor that influences the rate of re-offending. National research into the link between re-offending and accommodation has established a significant relationship. However, it is difficult to quantify the exact impact that being without a stable home has on re-offending rates. Research has stated that 'having stable accommodation reduces the risk of re-offending by a fifth' ('Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, Social Exclusion Unit, July 2002). Research conducted by Her Majesty's Prison Service and National Probation Service concluded that 'homeless ex-offenders are twice as likely to be reconvicted than those with stable accommodation'

National research has shown that 42% of offenders have no fixed abode on release from prison. This is more than an individual problem and has a significant effect on communities and society in general.

Homeless ex-offenders are twice as likely to be reconvicted than those who have stable accommodation upon release. Of the prisoners released in 1997, **58 per cent** were convicted of another crime within two years. **36 per cent** were given a further prison sentence. The statistics for re-offending are worse for young offenders. The reconviction rate for 18-20-year-old male prisoners was **72 per cent** over the same period, **47 per cent** received another prison sentence.

An ex-offender's path back to prison is costly for the criminal justice system. On average a re-offending ex-prisoner would cost the criminal justice system £65,000, an estimated £11 billion per year in total (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). There are also significant impacts of re-offending that cannot be given a financial cost such as the damaging impact on victims, communities (usually the most disadvantaged) and the offender and their families. It is clear from the research that there is a significant and positive impact on re-offending rates by providing ex-prisoners with stable accommodation.

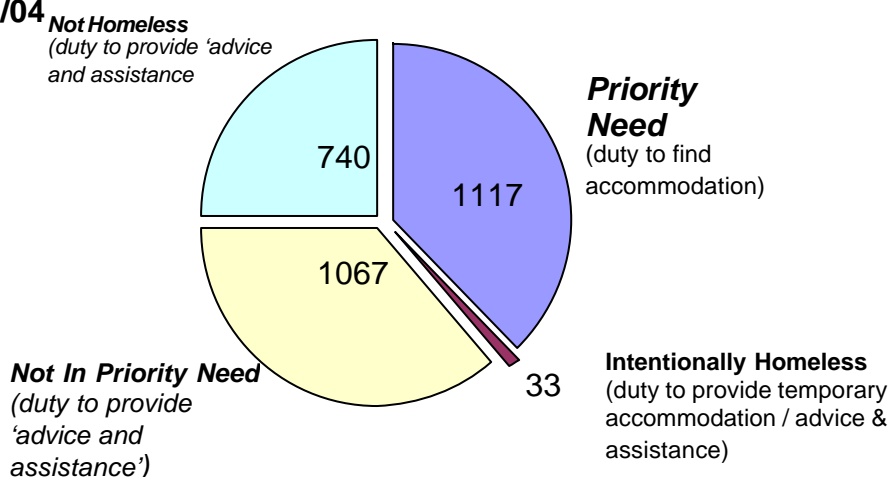
Local Picture

The main measure of homelessness in the Borough is the number of homelessness presentations.

In 2003/04 there were 2,957 people presenting as homeless in Wigan. Eight people were found sleeping rough as at April 2004 count. On completion of inquiries into each application, Wigan and Leigh Housing must decide what duty (if any) the Council owes the applicant. The outcome of this determines where the people presenting as homeless go to.

Figure 1 outlines the breakdown of the decisions made during 2003/04 for the 2,957 applicants.

Figure 1: The breakdown of decisions on homelessness applications in 2003/04



Source: Community Protection Department

Applicants that are deemed 'not homeless' (740) are those who were concerned about becoming homeless due to problems with landlords and parents for example. These issues are then addressed allowing the applicant to remain in their accommodation.

Those in the priority need group (1117) are provided with accommodation such as hotels and temporary accommodation through to permanent accommodation.

The applicants in the 'not in priority need' group (1067) are given advice and assistance and rely on the local availability of housing. This is where the gap is in terms of available accommodation.

The 33 classified as intentionally homeless were provided with temporary accommodation or advice and assistance in gaining accommodation locally. Again there are problems here due to the lack of available housing.

Ex-offenders

Some of these people have criminal convictions that in many cases have affected their chances of securing permanent accommodation. 205 offenders were released into the Wigan area between July 2002 and June 2003. The gap between provision and need of specialist housing for ex-offenders has been identified in section 4 (page 10) of this report. This is not the only consideration when aiming for improved availability of housing for offenders on release from prison. A significant number of offenders who enter prison may have tenancies with the Council or other Registered Social Landlords; nationally a third lose their house whilst in prison.

What about young people?

The number of young people aged 10 –18 years who are in the criminal justice system in Wigan to date is **262**. This figure has seen a marked decrease in June 04 from **446** at as 01/01/04. Of the 262 young people receiving intervention from the Youth Offending Team, **50** young people have received a pre-court decision made by the police. **16** young people are on a Reprimand and **34** have received a Final Warning.

Source: Youth Offending Team

The focus of this review is to address, reduce and potentially eliminate the numbers of people who are homeless, in particular those who have offended and those who are at risk of offending.

3. Objectives and Research Methodology

This section outlines the aims and objectives of the review. At first the review seemed quite daunting, however the Select Committee felt that there would be potential benefits of this work and would focus mainly on housing provision for ex-offenders and those at risk of offending.

The objectives of this review have been:-

Aims and Objectives

- To map the location of specialist housing provision within the borough.
- To identify the need for specialist housing in the borough.
- To examine access to accommodation and on-going support for homeless members of communities.
- To identify the categories of a “priority need” group.
- To identify practise for obtaining priority status for rehousing.
- To investigate the impact on communities of housing the following categories:

- Older people with support needs
- People with learning disabilities
- People with HIV/AIDS
- People with drug problems
- Young people at risk or leaving care
- Single homeless people
- People with mental health problems
- People with physical disabilities
- People with alcohol problems
- Ex-offenders or people at risk of offending
- People at risk of domestic violence
- Homeless families
- People from ethnic minority groups
- People with anti-social behaviour
- People who are travellers and showpeople

With a particular emphasis on ex-offenders and people at risk of offending.

- To identify the issues of securing long-term accommodation for households which were homeless “ unintentionally” provided they belonged to a “priority need” group.
- To identify the issues about long-term re-housing once they are no longer in a priority need group and the effects on people who are waiting to be re-housed.

One of the aims was to map provision of all specialists housing provision within the Borough and to match provision against need.

The result of this proved difficult at times, however the Select Committee felt that highlighting the need of housing provision would allow the Council and its partners to set out how we intend to tackle these issues. In particular to reduce the levels of homelessness in Wigan and the impact this can have on people and communities.

The methodology used during this review reflected the experience gained from carrying out Best Value reviews. The 5 C's of Best Value were considered during the review and informed the planning process:

- **Challenge** - why is specialist housing important? What is the impact? Is it being provided in the right way?
- **Compare** performance and provision with others
- **Compete** - to look at competition as a way of securing efficient and effective services
- **Consult** with people affected by the provision of specialist housing and the professionals involved in providing services and acting on the outcomes
- **Collaborate** with partners and other organisations in order to deliver the best possible service.

The following sections of the report will demonstrate how we have used the challenge, compare, compete and consult elements to identify the key recommendations required to improve the service.

4. Research Findings

We aimed to identify the specialist housing that is currently provided by the Council and external housing providers and to obtain information on the range of housing that is available.

The baseline study began by mapping all provision using a Geographical Information System (GIS) By undertaking this initial task, the Select Committee were able to graphically see what and where provision is available.

Once we had identified the current level of specialist housing and its location within the Borough, it was essential that we conducted research into the need for specialist housing by some of the different groups we identified in our aims and objectives (page 8) By doing this the Select Committee were able to compare the need to current provision and identify where (if any) gaps are in the provision of specialist housing. Appendix A-D (GIS map) illustrates the provision of specialist housing available within the borough by type and number.

Appendices listed below:

- Appendix A outlines the entire specialist housing provided with the Borough.
- Appendix B illustrates the units available for offenders and those at risk of offending.
- Appendix C outlines the numbers and location of units for homeless families and homeless single people.
- Lastly, Appendix D outlines housing for older people with support needs and the frail elderly.

The review then attempted to match need against provision as outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1 summarises the provision of specialist housing accommodation in Wigan by primary client group, plus the accommodation needed within the Borough were available.

Table 1: Specialist Housing by Client Group

Primary Client Group	Units Available	Additional Units Required
Older people with support needs	2,243	Review ongoing
People with learning disabilities	316	Estimate 50-60
Older people - frail elderly	100	Review ongoing
People with mental health problems	55	Review ongoing
Homeless single people	49	15
Homeless families	33	15
Offenders or people at risk of offending	25	Emergency accommodation required
Young people at risk	24	Emergency accommodation required
People with a physical or sensory disability	16	Emergency accommodation required
Young People - teenage parents	10	Review ongoing
Young people leaving care	2	Lack of suitable places

Provision is detailed in terms of the number of units available within an accommodation service rather than the potential number of beds, even though there is often more than one bed per unit.

This is because the number of people living in one unit can change, as it is not always suitable to house more than one person in a single unit. In some circumstances a whole family may be housed in one unit.

Due to the focus of the review the Select Committee initially mapped the dedicated provision for ex-offenders within the Borough. Appendix B shows that 2 separate accommodation units are provided. These units are located in the Atherton Township (a 7-unit hostel) and the Leigh Township (an 18-unit hostel).

We then looked to establish whether or not the 25 units of provision were adequate for the need.

During the period July 2002 - June 2003, 205 people were released from prison into the Wigan area, please see page 13 of this document. Of those released, 117 people secured permanent accommodation. The remaining 88 were potentially in need of specialist housing to support them on release, significantly more than the 25 units of provision available which may be vacant more than once during a 12 month period. Further information from one local prison, as shown on page 13, supports this argument. From this prison, 34 people were released back into Wigan in 2003 and 34 in 2004 also. Only one of these people gained accommodation in one of the hostels in the borough, the rest sought help from family and friends.

ACTION

Need greater than provision - investigate options for increase in provision for this client group.

5. Ex-Offenders

Focusing mainly on provision for ex-offenders and people at risk of offending, consultation took place with the probation service.

Whilst the Probation Service was actively involved in the preparation of the first Supporting People Strategy for Wigan, it was always recognised that the data provided to all S.P. teams at that stage was limited. Research into the support needs of various vulnerable groups, including offenders, has been identified as a priority.

Accommodation has long been recognised as a factor influencing reoffending, and not only for those who offenders leaving prison; although, equally, a significant number of offenders lose their accommodation as a result of their imprisonment.

There is also a need to respond to the accommodation and support needs of those offenders identified through Multi-Agency Public Arrangements, the Targeted Offenders Project, Mentally Disordered Offenders, Drug Treatment and Testing Orders as well as those on general community orders.

The last complete set of data over a 12-month period, data is outlined below:

There were 593 pre-sentence reports in Wigan for 2003 16% of these (95) had concerns relating to their accommodation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

For the year up to December 2003, the following information was available

- 78% in permanent accommodation.
 - 2% in hostels.
 - 14% other temporary.
 - 2% no fixed abode.
 - 4% other.
- i.e. 22% were not in permanent accommodation.

There are other indicators that show there was likely to be issues linked to accommodation problems, of the pre-sentence reports written the assessment data profile indicates:

11% lived with parents
16% lives with parents and family
4% other family
11% with a partner
23% a partner and family
2% with other adults
4% with self and children
19% on own.

Source: Wigan Probation Team

In 35% of these cases, there were offending related problems in family and personal relationships. This may mean that there will be demand at some point for short-term solutions to moving out, which may lead to longer-term solutions.

Other factors influencing the drive to access accommodation include: the nature of the offence; drug and alcohol misuse and the individual case history – for example; rent arrears; domestic violence; general instability; anti-social behaviour; and peer associations of concern.

KEY ISSUES

In response to questions posed to Wigan Probation staff, the following issues emerged:

- Length of time for emergency and longer-term accommodation.
- Wigan Targeted Offenders Project identified accommodation as a critical area for development.
- Service provision for short-term prisoners is problematic yet crucial to breaking the offending cycle.
- Many offenders live 'rough' or with friends – and often lack motivation to move away from Wigan.
- Rented accommodation in Wigan is seen to be expensive and thereby representing another barrier for offenders.
- Probation staff attempts to access accommodation via other means e.g. Mental Health assertive outreach for non-offender specific provision.
- Issues emerge re 'accommodation' versus 'support' availability.
- Move on arrangements/mechanisms requires consideration e.g. from supported housing to independent living.
- Recognise concerns that residents of Probation Approved Premises in Wigan often move into local private rented accommodation.
- Probation Service work with offenders e.g. on Drug Treatment and Testing Orders or Accredited Programmes is severely hampered where there is no suitable supported accommodation.

THE FUTURE

Whilst not an exhaustive list, the above provides a sense of how issues are currently perceived and questions and issues raised should enable the Probation Service and Supporting People Team in Wigan to consider what will need to be featured in the next Supporting People Strategy.

Increasingly, theme initiatives, both regionally and nationally, require heightened awareness and strategic thinking at a local level. From the Probation Service point of view, current opportunities to address accommodation and related support needs emerge from:

- **Regional Prisoner Resettlement Strategy**
- **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements**
- **Criminal Justice Interventions Programme funding focus**
- **Narrowing the Justice Gap – amongst others.**

Whilst marked improvements are being made there still remains the problem of the 13 week rule i.e. if someone is convicted or on remand for a crime and has been in rented accommodation, no-one informs the appropriate departments (see page 16) This results in rent arrears occurring, and their access to rented accommodation upon release has lower priority.

It is clearly recognised the difficulties that people face who have been convicted of crime. Particularly when exiting prison and securing long term accommodation.

The number of people released from a local prison in 2003/04 back into Wigan are shown in the table below:-

Releases from Forest Bank in 2003/04

2003	Outcome
Wigan - 18	C/o Family and friends address
Leigh – 16	C/o Family and friends address
2004	Outcome
Wigan – 21	C/o Family and friends address
Leigh – 13	C/o Family and friends address

Source: Local Prison

The outcome of their release will be to live with a relative or friend with the exception of one person who upon release in February 2004 is staying at a local hostel. The following table indicates the number of releases into the district from July 2002 - June 2003. However, there is no evidence to substantiate whether the above outcomes are due to homelessness.

Number of Releases into District in July 2002 – June 2003

Accommodation Status	Quarter of release				Total
	July – Sept 02	Oct – Dec 02	Jan – March 03	Apr – June 03	
Missing Data	12	12	7	6	37
Permanent	21	37	24	35	117
Bail/Prob/Other hostel	3	1	2	2	2
Other temporary	7	8	6	4	25
No fixed address	1	4	2	2	9
Other	5	2	2	0	9
Total	49	64	43	49	205

Source: Wigan Probation Team

ACTION

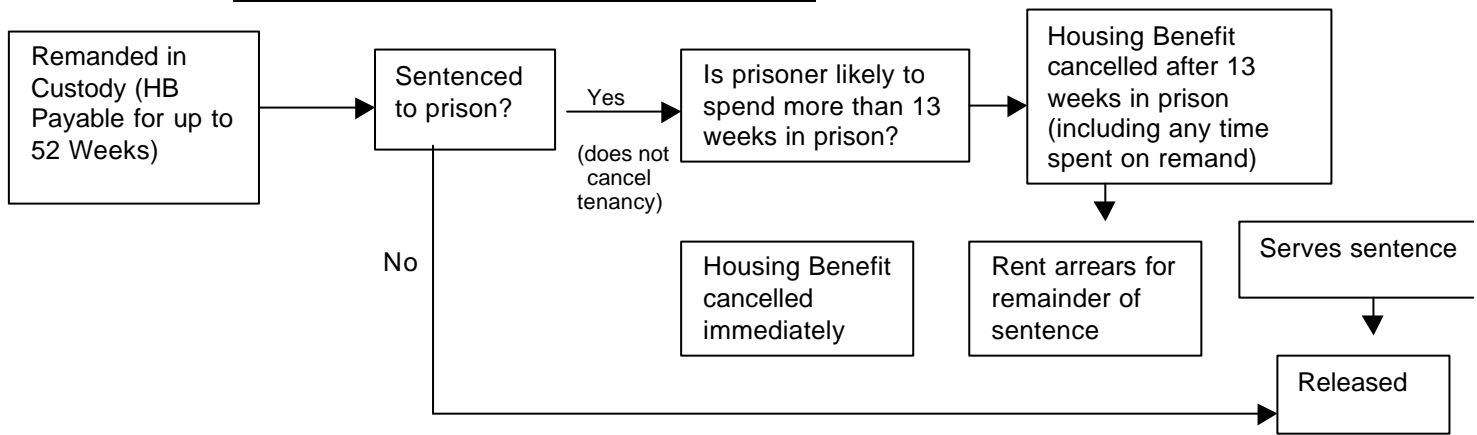
- To further develop a link service between the Council and Prisons about securing long-term accommodation.

Due to the problems of ex-offenders securing long term accommodation, there are times when the cycle of event ends up with them going back to the life of crime.

This issue of housing is one of the contributing factors of this recurrence.

The flowchart shows the problems and one of the reasons of why this happens.

Offenders with rented accommodation



The flowchart above highlights the importance of awareness and the availability of advice for offenders on entry to prison regarding their tenancies. For example: - if someone is entitled to housing benefit and they receive a prison sentence which means that they are likely to be in prison for more than 13 weeks, housing benefit is cancelled immediately which means the rent account goes into arrears from the date they were sentenced. Even though the housing benefit is automatically cancelled, no information is passed to the landlord (e.g. Wigan and Leigh Housing) to inform them that the individual has entered prison.

In certain cases an offender may be informed of this on entering prison and will therefore cancel their tenancy and not accrue arrears. However, evidence gathered during this review from housing providers and ex-offenders shows that there is a significant lack of advice provided on entry to prison.

NB. By securing a tenancy the chances of re-offending are reduced by 1/5th.

It is extremely difficult to predict when prisoners will be discharged; yet their success in not re-offending is seriously influenced by availability of accommodation on discharge.

The Select Committee has been tracking a case study of a local person who has been in prison and released during Spring 2004, outlined below is case:

Mr X was convicted and sentenced to prison. He had outstanding arrears on his previous tenancy.

Mr X began paying off his arrears whilst in prison albeit a small sum each month.

During his sentence a local company from Wigan visited the prison and began to provide Mr X with training.

The local company offered him a permanent job upon his release from prison provided he could secure permanent accommodation.

The outcome resulted in a meeting being arranged with an officer of the Council visiting Mr X prior to his release from prison.

Mr X was offered temporary accommodation with an opportunity to secure long-term accommodation.

Unfortunately, he lost the opportunity for a permanent position with the local company because he did not have permanent accommodation upon his release. He then went on to find alternative employment, however this opportunity failed when his employer found out about his previous conviction.

ACTION

- To increase job prospects with local companies for ex-offenders.
- Review and promote the role of housing advice services.
- Increase availability of housing.

Accommodation for ex-offenders in hostels

English Churches provide some accommodation within the Borough for people who exit prison. The locations are outlined in Appendix B.

Table 2 illustrates the accommodation provided by English Churches.

Table 2

Accommodation	Who is it for?	Level of provision	Other information
Bond Street, Leigh	Males, over 18 years	9 self contained flats	
Prestwich House, Atherton	Over 18's		Move on accommodation
Railway Road, Leigh	16-65 year olds	22 beds	Available for homeless people who need support.
-Floating support available	Males, over 18 years	3 houses	Used for initial assessment before a tenancy is offered at Bond Street

What are the issues?

- There are a number of barriers experienced when trying to re-house ex-offenders i.e.: 13-week rule resulting in arrears of rent.
- When someone is offered rented accommodation they may have little belongings i.e. (all they have will fit into a bin bag) and it takes four weeks for community care grant as some accommodation may be unfurnished.
- Difficult to re-house high risk offenders especially those with arson offences.
- Obtaining specialist housing due to objections from local community.

ACTION

- Joint assessment of clients to identify needs by internal/external organisations.

Solutions

- English Churches operate a Prison Link Service with Manchester Prison.
- Prison Link service to be extended to Forest Bank prison in Swinton.

The consultation process involved a wide range of stakeholders, through a variety of evidence-gathering approaches. The consultation matrix details whom we consulted with and the main outcomes of this consultation. The consultation matrix is in Appendix F of this report.

It came to light during consultation for this review that there is a major issue with the advice offered to offenders from the Wigan area when they enter prison

regarding their tenancies (this is not unique to Wigan and appears to be a national issue). When someone who receives Housing Benefit enters prison, benefits are paid for thirteen weeks. After this 13 weeks Housing Benefit is stopped and prisoners who have not terminated their tenancy will begin to go into arrears. A significant number of offenders will then have their tenancy terminated and have significant rent arrears that affect their chances of being re-housed on release.

Throughout the scrutiny review process the select committee held witness hearings with a number of professionals in order to gain their views and gather evidence of the area. Witness hearings involved representatives from Wigan Council, Wigan and Leigh Housing Company, the Probation service and Arena Housing.

A number of themes emerged throughout these hearings, particularly the need for improved communication and data sharing between the different agencies such as the prison service, probation, the council and Wigan and Leigh Housing Company.

Other Issues

There are now considerable evidence of the factors that influence re-offending. Some of these factors are:

- **Education;**
- **Employment;**
- **Drug and alcohol misuse;**
- **Mental and physical health;**
- **Attitudes and self control;**
- **Institutionalisation and life skills;**
- **Housing;**
- **Financial support and debt; and**
- **Family and friends**

Many prisoners have experienced a lifetime of social exclusion. Being employed reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half, having stable accommodation reduces the risk by a fifth.

Compared with the general population, prisoners are **thirteen** more times as likely to have been in care as a child, **thirteen** times likely to be unemployed, **ten** times as likely to have been a regular truant, **two and a half** times as likely to have had a family member convicted of a criminal offence, **six** times as likely to have been a young father, and **fifteen** times as likely to be HIV positive (Social Exclusion Unit 2002).

In addition to the witness hearings, members of the select committee visited a local prison. The aim of the visit was to gather data on the number of prisoners from the Wigan borough currently serving sentences, the numbers who have been released into the area recently including trends over time and to discuss the issues of sharing data and communicating effectively with other agencies.

Appendix F provides the detailed evidence provided during the witness hearings and the visit to prison. Table 3 summarises the main points from these hearings with links to the recommendations made by this select committee.

Table 3 Summary

Challenge	Comment/Recommendation
Provision of more rented accommodation.	Specialist worker to engage with private landlords.
Support services for people who are convicted to prison.	Mentoring/support to be available.
Resolve the 13-week rule.	Integrated services between all agencies to overcome this issue.
Provision for rough sleepers across the Borough.	Emergency accommodation needed.
Managing supporting people with a reduction in budgets.	Impact upon current provision.
Homelessness is an escalating problem in Wigan.	A need for affordable housing.
Effective co-ordination between the Council and prisons.	Staff training requirement for prisons staff around the provisions of the homeless legislation and the need to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
Increase employment opportunities for those exiting prison.	Actively engage with employers to provide opportunities for employment within the Borough.

6. Homelessness

There were 2957 homelessness presentations during 2003/04. This is a smaller increase both in percentage terms and real terms than the previous year, however trends are still increasing. The number of homeless presentations last peaked in 1991/2 with, 3,037 presentations. It should be noted however that the Housing Department at that time managed around 35,000 properties compared to 25,000 today.

Source; Community Protection Department

- 1117 households will be accepted by the Council as having a priority need, compared to 900 in 2002/03 and 688 in 2001/02.
- 479 one parent (single income) families were accepted as homeless in priority need, representing almost a three-fold increase over 2 years.
- 1051 homelessness presentations will be made from single males. Whilst this represents a 2% decrease on the previous year, homeless presentations from single males accounts for over 35% of all presentations, but only 13% of all homeless acceptances.
- The rough sleepers count in April 2004 found 8 rough sleepers with a further 2 who had not bedded down. This represents a one third reduction in the six months since the last count took place and only one of those found on the April count was included in the previous count. Wigan has the 13th highest number of any Borough in the country.

NB all figures quoted for 2003/04 are estimates, actual figures will be reported later in the year.

The following table shows a breakdown of application, number of days to accept a person as homeless and the average length of stay in temporary accommodation.

Performance Indicators 2003/04

	Actual 2003/04	Performance (April – March 2003/04)
Proportion of homelessness applications on which decisions/written notification goes to applicant within 33 days.	93%	96%
Average time taken to decide whether to accept a person as homeless.	11.2 days	8.2 days
% of tenancies successful within Housing Link (6 months after support ends)	N/A	96%
Average length of stay in temporary accommodation.	39 days	35 days

Whilst these figures indicate improving performance against a background of increased pressures, it should be noted that the use of bed and breakfast has significantly increased during the year. The Government targets regarding the use of bed and breakfast for households with children are being complied with as this form of temporary accommodation is only being used as a last resort for families and even then only for short periods.

However, the Government has announced its intention to make a new order under the homelessness legislation. The Order will make it unlawful for a local authority to discharge a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for any homeless household with family commitments (i.e. dependant children or a pregnant woman) by placing them in a B & B for more than six weeks from 1st April 2004.

Quite simply, this means that homeless families with children will be able to challenge their local authority through the courts if they have been placed in B & B for longer than six weeks.

In Wigan a number of families with dependent children have been placed in B & B accommodation.

The following tables show the number of families in B & B accommodation within the Borough.

Table 4: A number of families with dependant children in Bed and Breakfasts are:

Period – December 03 to April 04	Average length of stay
12	7 nights

The longest stay in B & Bs is 15 days.

ACTION

- To provide further assistance to dependant children living with their families in hostels and B&Bs.
- Eradicate the use of B & B accommodation for all homeless households, except in an emergency by 2010.

An example of a young person aged 16 years was experienced by the Salvation Army earlier this year.

Case Study

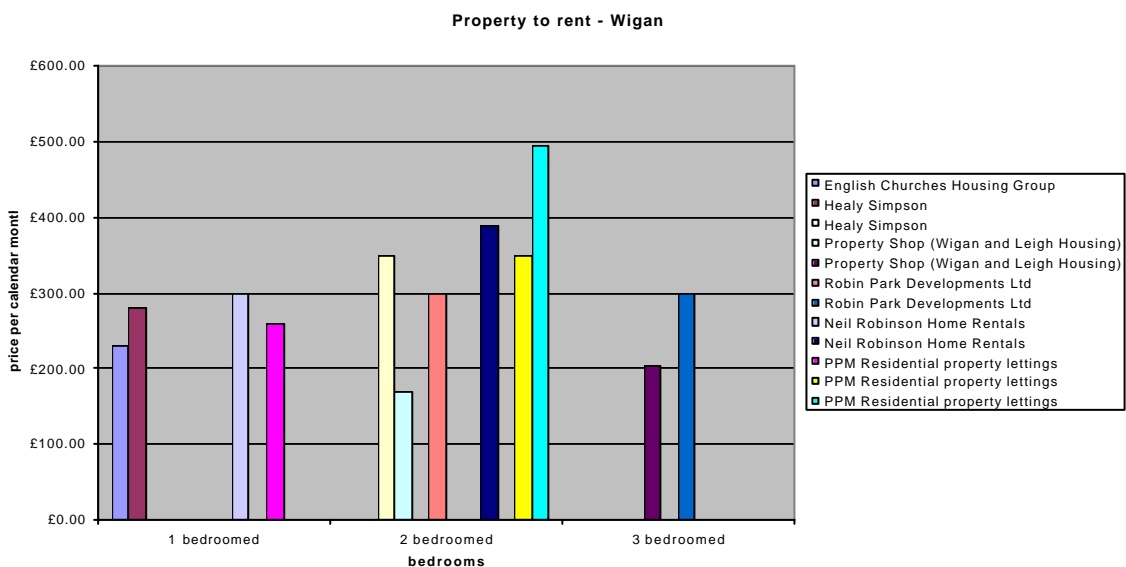
A 16-year-old male had nowhere to sleep. The best that was offered to him was a sleeping bag. So that the young man had access to food and drink, the Salvation Army volunteers opened their doors for him at the weekends.

ACTION

- Consider the provision of emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Provision to support the continuation of key project.
- To work more closely with other statutory agencies about availability of accommodation.
- Joint work between different departments within Health, Social Services and Probation to provide more efficient services for homeless people.

Affordability of Housing

Whilst undertaking this review a number of agencies raised the issue of affordability of housing within the Borough. The following table indicates costs of various types of properties available in the Wigan area.



Accommodation available via Wigan and Leigh Housing

Provision for vulnerable groups include:

- 49 sheltered and group schemes for older people
- A 9 unit homeless persons hostel covering all client groups
- 22 dispersed tenancies for homeless applicants
- A housing link floating support service
- A homeless floating support for individuals and families seeking temporary accommodation (hostels, dispersed tenancies and bed and breakfast)
- Asylum seeker support service

Source; Wigan and Leigh Housing

Services for offenders can access any of the above services. However, there is no service specifically for offenders, although there is a Housing Aid Officer who does specialise in dealing with offenders presenting as homeless and high-risk offenders.

However, anecdotal evidence does seem to indicate that problems still remain, particularly when people exit prison and particularly about the 13-week rule, and the levels of arrears accrued.

The number of tenancies terminated in the Borough due to people going to prison from April 2002 to March 2004 is 30.

Mystery shopper Exercise

In April 2004, a telephone mystery shopping exercise was carried out about Housing Advice Provision in Wigan.

The purpose of this exercise was to:-

- Provide some baseline information on the quality of current telephone housing advice services.
- Access the accuracy of information provided.
- Access knowledge of current statutory legislation.
- Access the level of customer care provided.

The mystery shopping exercise consisted of a random sample of housing offices throughout Wigan and Leigh being telephoned by a Housing Best Practice Officer. A sample of some 13 offices were contacted, including both Wigan and Leigh Housing Aid and offices from each side of the borough - some operating the 'filtering' system and some not involved. Calls were also made to other advice providers within the Borough. Responses were then evaluated against a checklist drawn up by the Best Practice Unit.

A number of scenarios were used, depending on which was the most appropriate for the agency contacted. The most common scenario used was that the mystery shopper was a single parent threatened with homelessness from a private rented tenancy. The tenancy agreement ended in the next two weeks and the landlord had said he was thinking of not renewing it. The caller was under the impression that she would be homeless at the end of the month. This was the scenario put to all the Wigan & Leigh Housing Offices contacted.

A number of agencies specialised in dealing with Domestic Violence and in those instances the scenario employed was that the caller had left a joint tenancy due to a fear of domestic violence from a partner, either of the same or opposite sex.

The other two scenarios were used for agencies specialising in rough sleepers/ex offenders - a rough sleeper who had been sleeping on Hindley Precinct wanted help and an ex offender from Forrest Bank 'C' Block wanted housing advice.

Results

The 13 calls made to **Wigan & Leigh Housing offices** were checked against a list of 10 basic questions and then scored either a Yes or No depending on whether they met the basic requirement.

A summary of the 10 key questions asked, and the percentage of calls where these questions were answered 'Yes', now follows:

Q1)	Was the phone answered within 6 rings?	85%
Q2)	Did they give their name/service?	100%
Q3)	Were you transferred to another number?	54%
Q4)	Was any advice offered?	46%
Q5)	Was the advice accurate?	57%
Q6)	Was the homelessness legislation referred to?	15%
Q7)	Was there an attempt to prevent homelessness?	15%
Q8)	Were other housing options discussed?	15%
Q9)	Was a personal interview offered?	85%
Q10)	Were you satisfied with the quality of advice?	15%

It should be noted that, although percentages are given to allow for ease of comparison and analysis, the original sample is either 13 or less, depending on the relevance of the question answered. Therefore a figure of 85%, for example, would relate to only 2 out of 13 not meeting the requirement.

It should also be emphasised that the low figures of 15% are partly a result of some officers not being prepared to enter into a discussion with the mystery shopper - preferring to refer for an interview instead.

None of the mystery shopping calls required the use of an interpreter and so no comment can be made on this aspect of the service. It is; however, recommended that further attention should be paid to whether the service is accessible to those for whom English is not their first language.

A number of calls were made to other housing advice providers in the Borough. These providers varied from professional to voluntary agencies and therefore direct comparisons will not be as valid as between different housing offices.

To summarise the exercise it was clear that the telephone housing advice is of variable quality and accuracy.

On a positive note, the majority of calls were answered promptly, within six rings (**85% or 11 out of 13**).

7 out of the 13 offices contacted transferred the call to another office, on 4 occasions this was simply to the area office nearer to the caller's address. There did not appear to be any reason for this, other than the officer being unwilling to deal with the call.

Two of the offices contacted took time to provide comprehensive and clear advice. Unfortunately, other officers often appeared either reluctant to provide telephone advice, or inexperienced.

The review highlights the need for a pro-active service for people who are homeless. The weakness of the telephone survey indicates a need for staff training and raise awareness of the Property Shops located within the north and south of the Borough.

ACTION

- Raise awareness of the property shops in the North and South of the Borough.
- Promote the role of housing advice.

Homeless Young People

We may assume that people who are homeless are adults but what about children, particularly those aged under 16 years of age?

- **Case study**

Jane was 14 when she ran away from home. She lived on the streets for two years until she was 16 when she was referred to homeless organisation. Centrepont.

"It gave her the most safety she had had for two years. It's just a shame she had to wait that long"

Source; National newspaper

Other than family and friends, accommodation options for runaways younger than 16 are limited to those provided by local authorities, for example emergency foster care, or those run by voluntary organisations, such as overnight accommodation with the consent of parents or carers, or a refuge. At 16 they become eligible for emergency hostels, shelters and short-term accommodation.

Plight of the runaways

Runaways are:

- Five times more likely than their peers to have drug problems.
- Three times more likely to be in trouble with the police.
- Three times more likely to play truant.
- Seven more likely times to have been physically abused.

And:

- One quarter will sleep unsafe in places.
- About 5,000 a year survive through stealing, begging, drug dealing and prostitution.

“ It is useful to think of runaways as an index of the fact that services for children aren’t working”²

Clearly these issues pose important questions about the adequacy of arrangements to allocation of provision not at least to the homeless but other vulnerable groups.

National Data

Under the Housing Acts of 1985 and 1986 homeless households accepted by local authorities in the 2002/03 financial year in England are listed in the following table:

Table 5: The number of homeless households accepted by local authorities in 2002/03

Area	Couple with dependent children	Lone parent with dependent children	One person household	Other household groups	Total
London	6420	10660	11790	2560	31430
North West	1620	6740	5790	1030	15180
Yorkshire & the Humber	1340	4440	6540	2670	14990
West Midlands	2010	6760	4990	1170	14930
South East	2520	5420	5070	1600	14610
South West	1940	4580	5030	1200	12750
Eastern	2120	3790	3920	1300	11130
East Midlands	1100	3940	2650	580	8270
North East	570	3140	2900	310	6920
England	19640	49470	48680	12420	130210

Overall the North West is ranked as **second** place with 15,180 households dealt with under the homeless provisions. The area is ranked in **sixth** place for the number of

couples with dependant children, **third** place for lone parents with dependant children, **third** for one person household, **seventh** of other households. Wigan is ranked **second** place within the Northwest with the number of people homeless. First place goes to Manchester, Wigan has more homeless people than Liverpool.

ACTION

- Joint working with agencies and partners at national, regional, county and local level.

In light of the difficulties some people face in getting secure long-term accommodation, there is an issue of the escalating costs that some agencies charge for rented accommodation.

There a number of companies who provide rented accommodation within the borough. They are as follows:

- Arena Housing
- County Palatine
- English Churches

Effective homelessness prevention and support involves a wide range of agencies and partners. One of the priorities is to reduce the numbers of people presenting as homeless in a priority need.

By gaining the co-operation of good landlords in trying to maintain tenancies rather than resort to eviction or termination of tenancies leading to homelessness is one of a number of proposed actions.

An example of this is an opportunity to work closely with landlords from Southport.

He currently has 4 properties in Wigan. He represents a church organisation. His plan is to have 100 properties within Wigan over the next 5 years. He will be working closely with the Council to ensure that the properties are in the right location and he aims to rent the accommodation.

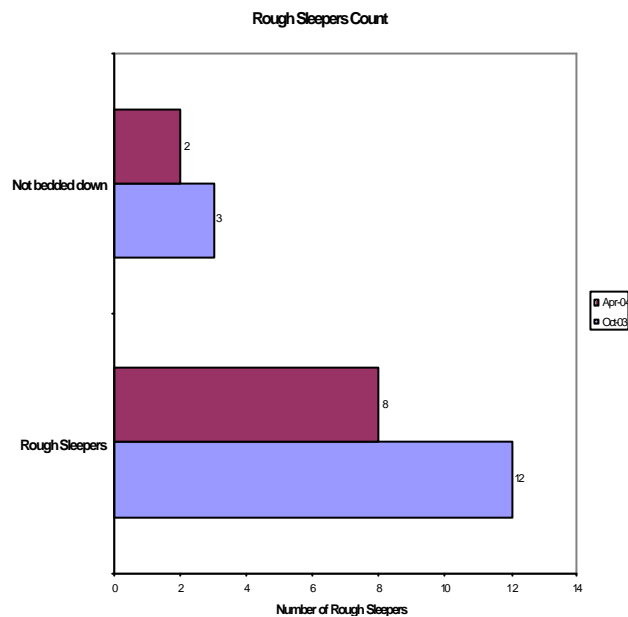
ACTION

- To investigate rent deposit schemes for people trying to access private sector accommodation but who do not have necessary finance available. As some landlords request substantial deposits against theft/breakages within the property.

7. Rough Sleepers

A rough sleepers count was undertaken in Wigan on the 14th October 2003 and again on the 21st April 2004. The information obtained from the counts has been illustrated in the graph below. Under strict Government guidelines, only rough sleepers who have "bedded down" can be counted - those still wandering the streets are excluded from the count.

As shown in the graph, the number of official rough sleepers has dropped in 2004 by a third. One rough sleeper who had been included in the 2003 count. This person was re-housed but then rejected support offered and returned to the streets and has been included in the 2004 count.



In conclusion the growth in the number of homeless has continued during the year due largely to the changing local housing market. The effect of this increase has undoubtedly been managed in a better fashion due to the existence of the Strategy, although the intended gains from measures within it have been reduced due to these trends.

Consultation

Select Committee 1 met with a group of people living on the streets in Wigan. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the problems these people have had in accessing accommodation and their general experiences of life on the streets. The qualitative data from these discussions is expressed by the case studies included in this report.

In addition to the discussions a more structured approach was used through the completion of questionnaires. Eight of the rough sleepers agreed to being asked a series of questions, members of the Select Committee completed the questionnaires.

Table 6 illustrates the breakdown of age and gender of those who participated.

Table 6: Participant profile

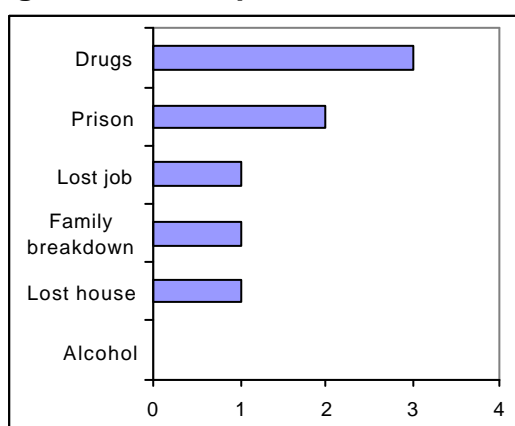
Gender	Age range	Area originated from		Length of time living on streets
		Wigan	Outside Wigan	
Female	35-44	✓		1 years
Male	25-34	✓		5 years
Male	25-34	✓		4 years
Male	25-34	✓		8 years
Male	25-34	✓		3 weeks
Male	35-44	✓		8 years
Male	35-44		✓	9 months
Male	45-54		✓	3 weeks

Source: Select Committee consultation

Only one of the participants was female, the only female who attended. The majority of the rough sleepers were from the Wigan area originally; two of them were from other areas. The majorities were aged between 25 and 34 years old. There was a range for the length of the time the 8 respondents had been living on the streets. The majority had spent at least one year sleeping rough with half of the respondents sleeping on the streets for 4 years or more.

We asked the participants to indicate the main reason for them living on the streets. Graph A illustrates the responses.

Graph A: Drugs and Prison provided as main reason for homelessness



Three of the respondents indicated that a problem with drugs had been the underlying cause of them being homeless and unable to access accommodation. Two gave the fact that they had spent time in prison as the main reason.

In total, six of the 8 respondents had been to prison. Of these, three felt that having been in prison has effected their chances of getting accommodation. Two of these respondents went into prison with a key to their property, went into rent arrears during their sentence and left prison with a cancelled tenancy.

**So what is it like for those less fortunate than us to be living on the streets?
Here is their story:**

Case Studies

(A)

John has lived on the streets since 2000. He lived in a council property as a tenant before going into prison. John didn't receive any advise regarding his home during his prison sentence. On release from prison he discovered that during his sentence he had gone into rent arrears because his housing benefit had stopped. His tenancy had been terminated and he couldn't gain access to his house. He had no means to pay off the arrears that had built up and has been living on the streets ever since.

(B)

Geoffrey is 31 years old and has recently been released from prison. How did he get there?

Geoffrey married young and began a family. Unfortunately the marriage broke down and he divorced. He went back to live with his parents but Geoffrey was a nuisance (his own words). He began to take heroin and needed £ 30 per day to feed his habit. He did this by going out and shoplifting. His parents were unable to cope with his behaviour so he left. Geoffrey was living on the streets of Wigan with nowhere else to go. His shoplifting got him into trouble and he was convicted and sent to prison. Geoffrey's life was to live on the streets and to go in and out of prison. In the 5 years he lived on the streets he was sent to prison on 17 separate occasions.

He's just recently been released from prison and was offered a place in a hostel in the Leigh area.

During this time Geoffrey was accused of smoking cannabis which he categorically denies but he was asked to leave. The Council provided him with bed and breakfast accommodation, which he says "it's like being on your holidays, you get a full English breakfast - know what I mean". He has been in bed and breakfast accommodation for the past four weeks while he awaits news of a council tenancy in Wigan.

(C)

Donald is upset. There had been a problem and someone's sleeping bag had been stolen. (This was like an invasion of someone's home). After he had calmed down, Donald began to tell his story.

When he was young his father used to beat his mother - he was a terrible person according to Donald. Donald met someone and had a relationship; they had two lovely children. Unfortunately, the marriage broke down and they divorced. Donald met someone else (his ex-wife's best friend) and they married. They were together for quite a while and had one child.

Again, this marriage broke down and Donald got himself a flat in Wigan and lived by himself. After a night out Donald returned home tired and hungry and began to cook himself some food. He switched on the fryer but fell asleep. The property caught fire and unfortunately Donald was not insured. The Council told him he had to pay for the damages. Donald struggled and couldn't afford to pay. He also got behind with his rent.

With monies owing for damages and increasing costs for rent he turned to the streets. Donald took heroin and had problems with his drug habit. Living on the streets is difficult, but after years of this type of living Donald knew where the best places in Wigan to sleep. From time to time Donald goes to Bolton particularly when it is really cold. Bolton provides a winter-watch scheme from 10pm till midnight. He gets a hot drink, biscuits and for those who use needles for drugs, they are provided with new needles.

Donald always comes back to Wigan; he was born in Wigan and prefers the area. He is now off drugs but can sometimes be a little chaotic. He goes to church, he believes in God and likes it there. He knows a lot of people who live on the streets of Wigan and he encourages them to go to church. They get comfort from attending.

Donald is annoyed with Wigan Council at the moment and wants to know why others get places in hostels or bed and breakfast accommodation. He has been on the streets for eight years now. He is going to the Council tomorrow to ask them for accommodation.

Source; Real life case studies

Through the discussions we had with people who sleep rough on the streets of Wigan, it was clear that they have benefited from the support provided by the Salvation Army and members of the Key Project. However, this support is strictly limited to Wigan town centre and the surrounding area.

It is known that there are some people sleeping rough in the south of the borough. Although advice is available via a number of agencies there is no emergency access to direct accommodation within the borough. Anecdotal evidence provided to the select committee suggested that a priest from a Catholic Church in the south of the borough is providing food for those sleeping rough.

Key issues arising from consultation

- There is a problem with the advice offered to offenders regarding their tenancies, in particular the 13 week benefit rule
- Limited provision for people who live on the streets of Wigan
- People who live on the streets want to remain in Wigan
- Some people travel to neighbouring authorities to try and secure a bed for the night
- People have lost faith in society
- If they need to visit local hospital difficulties are experienced
- Some take drugs to block out the day
- A feeling of embarrassment and feeling ashamed is experience by most
- No real understanding of the extent of the rough sleeping problem in the south of the borough

ACTION

- Further investigation of the extent of people sleeping rough in the south of the borough
- Investigate the potential / need for the Key Project to be extended to include areas in the south of the borough including Leigh town centre.

Compare

Comparative data was gathered from a range of sources. These included neighbouring authorities.

The focus concentrated mainly on rough sleepers and looked at what facilities were available and how many rough sleepers they had.

For example, the number of rough sleepers in one Council was 1 in the last count 5 years ago; a new count will be carried out in autumn and winter.

Comparative data of the numbers of people sleeping rough in neighbouring authorities as at June/July 2003 is shown in the following table. Two are Wigan's statistical neighbours.

Table 7

	Number
LA 1	19
LA 2	9
LA 3	3
LA 4	3
LA 5	2
LA 6	1
Wigan	12

Data is drawn from Local Authority statistical Appendix (HIP returns) made in July 2003 and recent street counts that have been undertaken.

The following table shows availability for homeless people within neighbouring authorities:

Table 8

Wigan	Council A	Council B
	YMCA Hostel 62 units	Methodist Housing Group (For Single Males) Short stay (up to 2 months) Long stay (up to 2 years) This is a joint scheme between Wigan and Council B
	Arena Housing 18 units	Irwell Valley Housing Association
Railway Road Leigh (6 units)	Salvation Army 62 units	Salvation Army

In light of the difficulties some people face in getting secure long-term accommodation, there is an issue of the escalating costs that some agencies charge for rented accommodation.

There are a number of companies who provide rented accommodation within the borough. They are as follows:

- Arena Housing
- County Palatine
- English Churches

Effective homelessness prevention and support involves a wide range of agencies and partners. One of the priorities is to reduce the numbers of people presenting as homeless in a priority need.

By gaining the co-operation of good landlords in trying to maintain tenancies rather than resort to eviction or termination of tenancies leading to homelessness is one of a number of proposed actions.

An example of this is an opportunity to work closely with landlord from Southport.

He currently has 4 properties in Wigan. He represents a church organisation. His plan is to have 100 properties within Wigan over the next 5 years. He will be working closely with the Council to ensure that the properties are in the right location and he aims to rent the accommodation.

ACTION

- To investigate rent deposit schemes for people trying to access private sector accommodation but who do not have necessary finance available. Some landlords request substantial deposits against theft/breakages to the property.

8. Conclusion

This review has focused upon ex-offenders and those at risk of offending. In general, it must be concluded that people who serve a prison sentence are more likely to re-offend without support and the security of permanent accommodation.

Although this is only one contributing factor that causes people to re-offend, nevertheless the Select Committee feels that this issue must be addressed in order to reduce the number of people homeless.

There is some development of private housing provision, and potential for further development of housing in relation to the private sector.

One of the key relationships in homelessness is between supporting people, the Council and housing providers.

We will require creative joint working and targeted resources with both internal and external organisations to combat homelessness in the near future.

9. Recommendations

Key Actions	Recommendations
<p>◆ Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Further investigation of the extent of the rough sleeping problem in the south of the Borough. ◆ Investigate the potential/need for the key project to be extended to include areas in the south of the borough including Leigh Town Centre 	<p>R1 Extend key project to south of borough (rough sleepers)</p>
<p>◆ Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identified need greater than current provision - investigate options for increase in provision for this client group. ◆ To further develop a link service between the Council and Prisons about securing long-term accommodation. ◆ To increase job prospects with local companies for ex-offenders ◆ To evaluate rent deposit schemes for people trying to access private sector accommodation but who do not have necessary finance available 	<p>R2 Develop emergency accommodation/services for homeless people.</p>
<p>◆ Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review and promote the role of housing advice services. ◆ To provide further assistance to dependant children living with their families in hostels and B&Bs. ◆ Work to eradicate the use of B & B accommodation for all homeless households, except in an emergency by 2010. ◆ Joint assessment of clients to identify needs. ◆ Raise awareness of the property shops in the North and South of the Borough. ◆ Promote the role of housing advice. 	<p>R3 Review and promote housing service advice and extend link with external agencies.</p>

◆ **Partnership**

- ◆ To work more closely with other statutory agencies.
- ◆ Joint work between different departments within Health, Social Services and Probation to provide more efficient services for homeless people
- ◆ Joint working with agencies and partners at national, regional, county and local level.

R4

Specialist worker to engage with agencies including private landlords.

10. Summary

To sum up:

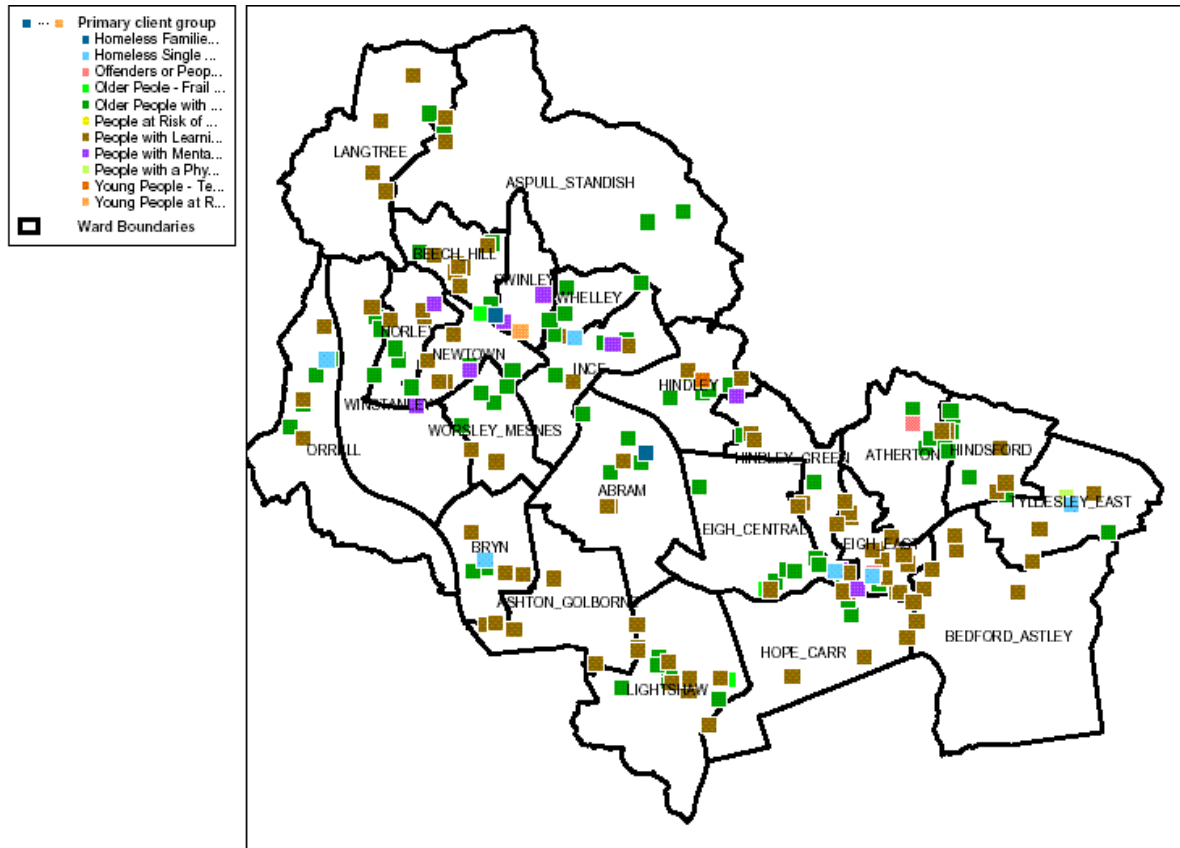
The services to homeless people can be improved and extended to ensure that gaps in service provision are met.

The recurrent issues throughout the review have been:

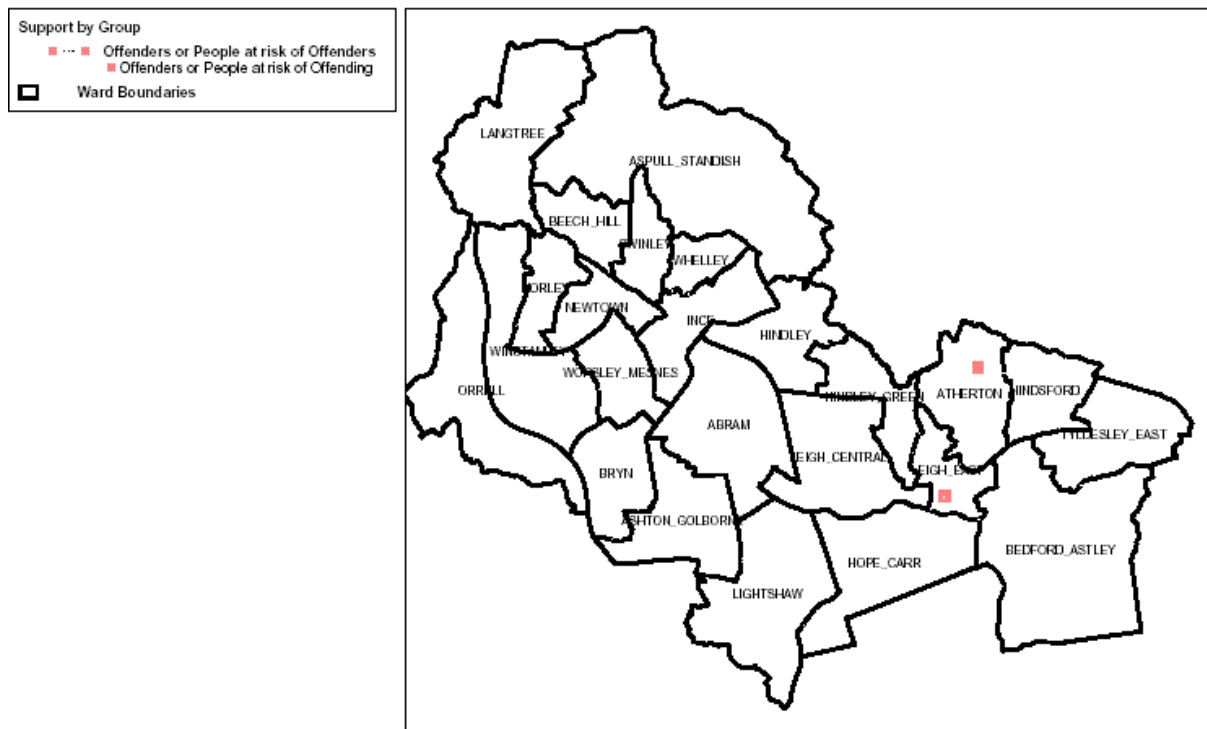
- The 13 week rule and the problems associated with the rent arrears etc,
- The number of people living rough on the streets of Wigan and Leigh.

We recommend that work needs to be done to further streamline agencies that provide housing advice and to ensure appropriate links are made as early as possible to prevent homelessness.

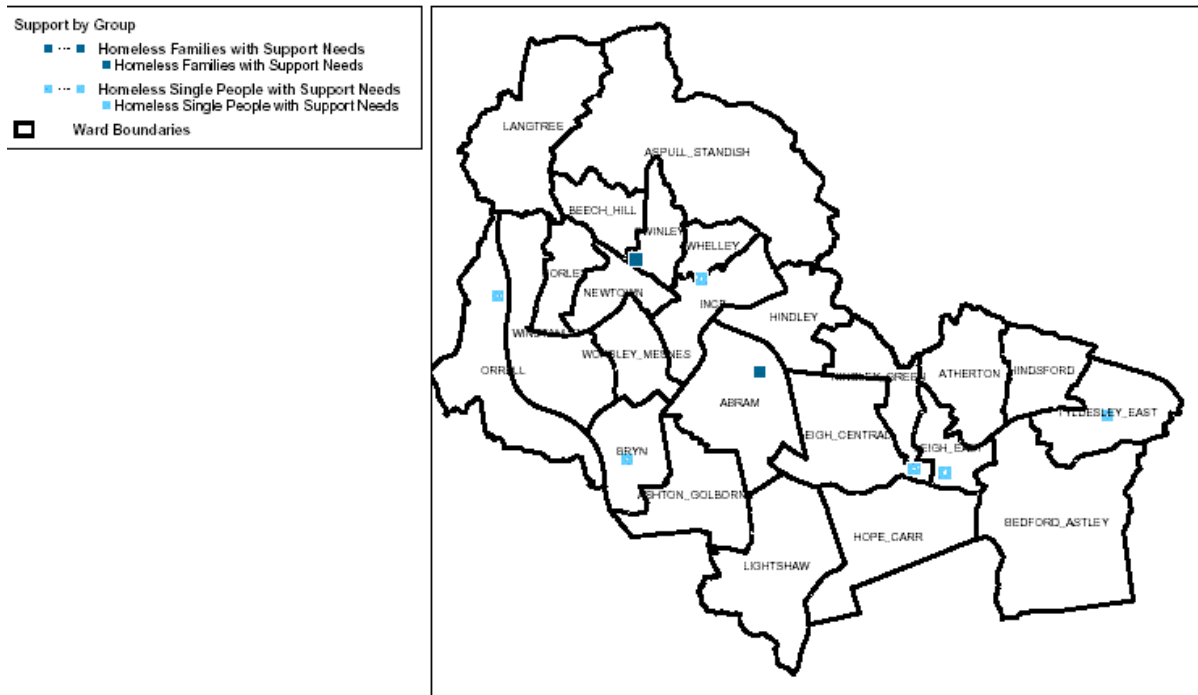
All accommodation based specialist housing by client group



Accommodation based specialist housing for offenders and those at risk of offending



Accommodation based specialist housing for homeless families and homeless single people



Appendix E

Specialist Housing Provision Improvement Plan

Recommendations	Actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Responsibility	Target Date
Extend key project to south of borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Investigate the extent of the rough-sleeping problem in south of borough. ◆ Provide resources to extend project. 	Rough sleepers to be supported and have access to shelter, warmth, food and drink.	Community Protection Department	March 05
Develop emergency accommodation/ Services for homeless people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Investigate option for shared accommodation with neighbouring Councils. ◆ Provide hostel for homeless. ◆ Access private landlords options. 	Ex-offenders will have equality of access to temporary/permanent accommodation.	Community Protection Department	July 05
Review and promote housing service advice and extend link with external agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Raise awareness of property shops. ◆ To provide further assistance to dependant children living with their families in hostels and B & Bs. ◆ Joint assessment of clients to identify needs. 	Advise and support for homeless will increase.	Housing Advise Steering Group	March 05
Specialist work to engage with agencies including private landlords.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Agree protocol with agencies. ◆ Liaise with prison service to ensure their 13-week rule is eliminated. 	Reduce the number of tenancies terminated as a result of the 13-week rule.	Wigan and Leigh Housing	September 05

**STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION MATRIX
SPECIALIST HOUSING PROVISION**

APPENDIX F

<p><u>Stakeholders</u> List the key stakeholders for the service to ensure all viewpoints are covered (eg users, non-users, partners, parents, staff, etc)</p>	<p><u>Reason</u> What information are you trying to get? (eg satisfaction levels, user priorities, areas for improvement, etc)</p>	<p><u>Method(s)</u> What method is likely to give us the best response? (eg surveys, focus group, interviews, etc)</p>	<p>What they said Summarise key messages (including bad news)</p>	<p>Action to be taken Summarise what is to be done to address the points raised. If no action is going to be taken, you need to say why</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WALH 	<p>Identify the number of schemes within the borough and their location.</p>	<p>Interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided breakdown of specialist housing provided by WALH. WALH now has 2 supported Housing Managers who are driving improvements in homelessness and looking at needs of particular groups such as offenders. There is a need for more co-ordination with prisons and probation. 	<p>Recognition of the 13 week rule.</p> <p>Co-ordination of services required i.e.: probation / prison service</p>	

Stakeholders List the key stakeholders for the service to ensure all viewpoints are covered (eg users, non-users, partners, parents, staff, etc)	Reason What information are you trying to get? (eg satisfaction levels, user priorities, areas for improvement, etc)	Method(s) What method is likely to give us the best response? (eg surveys, focus group, interviews, etc)	What they said Summarise key messages (including bad news)	Action to be taken Summarise what is to be done to address the points raised. If no action is going to be taken, you need to say why	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arena Housing 	" "	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided overview of services provided by Arena and data to be added to GIS map of provision No plans to extend provision for offenders Provided details of the successes of Retirement Village in Warrington 	They have no provision in Wigan for ex-offenders. Provision is provided for other clients groups.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Churches 	" "	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties occur when English Churches and then goes onto permanent accommodation i.e. have housed someone: lack of furnishings etc, and they feel vulnerable. 	Problems in re-housing ex-offenders particularly high risk e.g.: people convicted of arson etc.	Problems occur when applying for planning permission.

<u>Stakeholders</u> List the key stakeholders for the service to ensure all viewpoints are covered (eg users, non-users, partners, parents, staff, etc)	<u>Reason</u> What information are you trying to get? (eg satisfaction levels, user priorities, areas for improvement, etc)	<u>Method(s)</u> What method is likely to give us the best response? (eg surveys, focus group, interviews, etc)	What they said Summarise key messages (including bad news)	Action to be taken Summarise what is to be done to address the points raised. If no action is going to be taken, you need to say why	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Health & Consumer Protection 	Identify issues of need and provision of specialist housing	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major changes occurring within specialist housing - a move towards a more strategic way of planning, funding and regulating specialist housing and providers. 	Future developments are hostel for homeless / emergency accommodation.	

<u>Stakeholders</u> List the key stakeholders for the service to ensure all viewpoints are covered (eg users, non-users, partners, parents, staff, etc)	<u>Reason</u> What information are you trying to get? (eg satisfaction levels, user priorities, areas for improvement, etc)	<u>Method(s)</u> What method is likely to give us the best response? (eg surveys, focus group, interviews, etc)	What they said Summarise key messages (including bad news)	Action to be taken Summarise what is to be done to address the points raised. If no action is going to be taken, you need to say why	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety 	Identify the number of people who require specialist housing. Identify future needs.	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues tend to be with short sentences rather than long. Offenders distributed to various prisons rather than local. Need to work closer with prisons so that they provide regular information to us to aid our planning. Long term summary to allow us to plan for future need, short term to enable visits to prisoners to discuss support needs etc. Problem with rent arrears - the 'vicious circle' 	Difficulties occur providing support / mentoring for ex-offenders. Issues about securing long-term accommodation.	

<u>Stakeholders</u> List the key stakeholders for the service to ensure all viewpoints are covered (eg users, non-users, partners, parents, staff, etc)	<u>Reason</u> What information are you trying to get? (eg satisfaction levels, user priorities, areas for improvement, etc)	<u>Method(s)</u> What method is likely to give us the best response? (eg surveys, focus group, interviews, etc)	What they said Summarise key messages (including bad news)	Action to be taken Summarise what is to be done to address the points raised. If no action is going to be taken, you need to say why	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Services 	To identify the number of people who require specialist housing. Identify future needs.	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting People framework has had a major impact - funding implications, ability to review providers, service PI collation. Data provided to map existing specialist housing provision 	Reduction in funding will have a major impact upon supporting people.	

Stakeholders List the key stakeholders for the service to ensure all viewpoints are covered (eg users, non-users, partners, parents, staff, etc)	Reason What information are you trying to get? (eg satisfaction levels, user priorities, areas for improvement, etc)	Method(s) What method is likely to give us the best response? (eg surveys, focus group, interviews, etc)	What they said Summarise key messages (including bad news)	Action to be taken Summarise what is to be done to address the points raised. If no action is going to be taken, you need to say why	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Probation Service 	To identify any issues including housing of ex-offenders.	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided an overview of the role of probation and the importance of housing in offender rehabilitation A package of support for employment, accommodation, lifestyle, substance misuse and thinking skills are provided to clients Highlighted the importance of Carter Review and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) There are 8 probation hostels in Greater Manchester (none in Wigan) 	Accommodation has long been recognised as a factor that influences the rate of re-offending.	By having stable accommodation when existing prison the chances of re-offending is reduced by a fifth.

