

Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016
**(Incorporating a review of the 2002 Homelessness
Strategy)**

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INTRODUCTION

The Housing Executive welcomes comments on the appropriateness of the proposals contained within its "draft" Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016 (Incorporating a review of the 2002 Homelessness Strategy).

The strategy focuses first on progress made in homelessness services since publication of the 2002 strategy and highlights the steps necessary to continue this improvement.

The consultation will run for a period of 12 weeks from 25th May to 17th August 2011. Responses can be made in writing, by post, fax or email before 5pm on 17th August 2011 and should be forwarded to:

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The draft strategy has been sent to a variety of consultees and further copies of the document can be downloaded from the Housing Executive's website at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Unless respondents indicate otherwise all responses will be published, however, you should note that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we will have to consider any request made to us under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If this document is not in a format that suits your needs, please contact us and we can discuss alternative arrangements.

At the end of the consultation period the Housing Executive will fully consider the views of respondents before finalising the strategy. All views and proposals will be subject to an equality impact assessment.

When a decision has been reached, the Housing Executive will publish its Homelessness Strategy.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

The Housing Executive has had statutory responsibility for responding to homelessness since the introduction of the Housing (NI) Order 1988.

The Homelessness Strategy – “Making a Difference to People’s Lives” – was published in 2002. The strategy contained 25 recommendations aimed at improving services to homeless households. Since then, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the recommendations resulting in improvements in temporary accommodation, homelessness services and preventative initiatives. Success has been due, in no small measure, to the many examples of joint working involving our statutory and voluntary sector partners.

The introduction of Supporting People services in 2002 has also had a considerable impact, particularly in the delivery of support services in temporary accommodation projects, but also through the establishment of a network of Floating Support services aimed at sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness.

Homelessness continues to be a challenge in Northern Ireland and a problem that afflicts the lives of many of our citizens. There are numerous reasons for homelessness; family dispute, breakdown in living arrangements, addiction, mental ill health, debt and tenancy breakdown and so on. The effect of homelessness impacts on individual lives for years and this influence goes beyond the immediate lack of accommodation. It impedes an individuals’ health, financial and social well being. For this reason, no one organisation or agency can address the issue in isolation. There is now a greater need than ever to respond to homelessness in a coordinated multi agency approach, each partner contributing their expertise and resources to promote social inclusion.

This review examines the progress made with the implementation of the recommendations contained within the 2002 strategy. It highlights the context within which the new strategic direction will be developed and provides the basis for the production of a robust implementation plan to deliver on key objectives over the next years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Homelessness Strategy 2011-16 reviews the progress made since the publication of “The Homelessness Strategy – Making a Difference to People’s Lives” published in 2002 and sets out the strategic direction for tackling homelessness over the next five years.

Vision

The Housing Executive believes that that long term homelessness and rough sleeping can be eliminated across Northern Ireland.

The strategy aims to ensure

- the risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised through effective preventative measures and
- Through enhanced inter agency co-operation, services to the most vulnerable homeless households will be improved.

Strategic objectives

The strategy has four strategic objectives;

1. To place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery
2. To reduce the length of time households experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing
3. To remove the need to sleep rough
4. To improve services to vulnerable homeless households

Delivery

The Housing Executive in its current form has responsibility for the assessment of homelessness and the delivery of homelessness services. It is anticipated that this will continue to be the case notwithstanding the fundamental review of the Housing Executive’s functions, roles and responsibilities currently being undertaken.

Each strategic objective will have a number of actions at local level to ensure these aims are achieved. For both assessment and delivery, success will be dependent upon the extent to which collaboration can be achieved between statutory and voluntary sector partners.

We will also support opportunities for meaningful consultation with homeless people themselves in the development of policy or services which seek to address their needs.

A list of performance indicators will be used to monitor progress of the implementation of the strategy. These will be detailed in an implementation plan to be developed following publication of the strategy. An inter-agency regional forum will be formed to monitor progress and local homelessness action plans will be developed to ensure uniform delivery across Northern Ireland.

CONTEXT

The extent of homelessness in Northern Ireland

The number of households presenting as homeless increased significantly from 16,426 in 2002/03 to 20,121 in 2005/06. Since then the numbers presenting has levelled off although it is likely that the current economic situation will have an adverse effect in the years to come. The percentage of households accepted as full duty applicants (FDA) has remained constant at around 50% (this compares to 64% for Scotland, 45% for England and 44% for Wales).

The percentage of households accepted as homeless in Northern Ireland in 2009/10 was 1.47% of all households which is similar to Scotland (1.56%) but significantly greater than England and Wales (0.19% and 0.45% respectively). This may reflect differences in the interpretation of statutory responsibilities in England and Wales (GB statistics obtained from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly web sites).

The nature of homelessness

In keeping with other jurisdictions within the UK, family and relationship breakdown continues to be the main reason for being accepted as homeless, accounting for 32% of the total in 2003/04 and 33% in 2009/10. Significantly, the numbers accepted as homeless due to current accommodation being unreasonable increased from 1,438 (17%) in 2003/04 to 2,490 (25%) in 2009/10. This is due principally to the ageing population and difficulties in continuing to maintain properties which may have been the family home for a considerable number of years. Questions arise as to whether these households should be assisted through the Common Selection Scheme as opposed to homelessness legislation, particularly since many do not wish to avail of temporary accommodation. This issue will be considered as part of a wider review of the Common Selection Scheme due for completion in 2001.

Whereas the loss of rented accommodation (including private sector) accounted for 17% of total acceptances in 2007/08, this reduced to 10% in 2009/10. Conversely, the number of households who lost their homes due to difficulties with mortgage payments increased from 87 in 2003/04 to 204 in 2009/10. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of households who are homeless following release from institutions, including prisons. This is almost certainly due to the introduction of the housing and homelessness advice service in prisons, which now captures those who, hitherto, would have been homeless on release. There has been a significant reduction in homelessness due to intimidation, which is a reflection on the progress which has been made at political level in Northern Ireland. Almost 700 households were homeless due to sectarian or paramilitary intimidation in 2003/04 and this has reduced by over 40% to approximately 400 in 2009/10.

(Detailed statistical information is contained in [Appendix 1](#))

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIES

EUROPEAN CONTEXT

In March 2010 the European Union Council of Ministers issued a directive to member states to develop Integrated Homelessness Strategies. Following this, the jury of the international Conference on Homelessness held in December 2010 issued guidelines to assist in the development of strategies. In essence, it directed that national strategies should concentrate on the following areas;

- the prevention of homelessness
- a reduction in its duration
- a reduction in the most severe forms of homelessness
- improvement in the quality of services for homeless people
- access to affordable housing

In the Republic of Ireland, the national strategy “The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland” published in 2008 also uses the above aims and objectives to underpin strategic direction.

The development of this strategy is predicated on these directives.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The development of this strategy is also set in the context of Central Government’s commitment to tackle homelessness by working in partnership with the voluntary sector, Government departments and other housing providers. This approach was developed following the publication of legislation in 2002 which signalled a more proactive approach to homelessness prevention.

The Housing Executive also closely monitors the national homelessness agenda and has set performance targets in line with those developed by the Department for

Communities and Local Government. While it has developed some homelessness services following consideration of examples from Local Authorities in Great Britain, in many areas Northern Ireland is a continuing example of UK best practice.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Legislation

The Housing Executive's statutory duty to homeless people is contained within the Housing (NI) Order 1988, as amended. This legislation requires the Housing Executive to assess the duty owed to homelessness presenters in relation to eligibility for such services as temporary accommodation and permanent housing. The Order also makes provision for the Housing Executive to financially assist voluntary sector organisations to provide a range of services to assist the Housing Executive in fulfilling its statutory duties. The Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 placed a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to develop and publish a 5 year homelessness strategy and to provide advice and assistance on homelessness to the broader public free of charge.

Corporate Plan

Objective 2 of the Housing Executive's Corporate Plan contains a range of objectives aimed at promoting independent living. Critical to this is the delivery of housing support services to vulnerable people (including homeless people), through the Supporting People Programme. Given that approximately one third of the Supporting People budget is used to provide accommodation and support services to homeless households, it is critical that the Housing Executive's Supporting People and Homelessness Strategies are fully complementary. This strategy has been, therefore, been developed in full consultation with Supporting People colleagues.

Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI)

An inter-departmental, cross-sectoral working group was established by the Department for Social Development in 2004 to promote the social inclusion of

homeless people. The introduction of this initiative was not intended to replace the Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy but to add emphasis to the need for structured inter-agency co-operation in the development and delivery of homelessness services.

The PSI working group published its strategy "A strategy to promote the social inclusion of homeless people, and those at risk of becoming homeless in Northern Ireland" in July 2007. Following this, inter agency sub-groups were formed to promote the improvement of services and access to existing services in a number of areas: - specifically Health, Employability, Leaving Institutions, Young People and staff training.

The DSD has a continuing commitment to encourage inter-agency co-operation in relation to homelessness. It will therefore provide a vehicle where joint working can be promoted and the relevant duties contained within the Housing (Amendment) Act 2010 can be discharged.

PSI Homelessness now has two 'summits' a year, while the sub-groups continue to operate, with explicit action plans. It is anticipated that these, by promoting an inter-agency approach, will help achieve the objectives contained within this strategy.

FINANCIAL CONTEXT

The Housing Executive invests almost £38m per annum in homelessness services in Northern Ireland. This includes Supporting People investment, housing benefit, payment for homelessness services and administrative costs.

Given the current economic situation it is likely that serious pressure will be brought to bear on the ability to maintain this level of investment. In addition, impending benefit cuts and difficulties in the employment market are likely to place more households at the risk of homelessness. The successful delivery of this strategy, therefore, will be dependent on the ability to achieve maximum effectiveness in the delivery of key services.

In conjunction with Supporting People, therefore, a critical review of supported temporary accommodation services will be completed with a view to achieving maximum value for money whilst retaining sufficient emergency services for the most vulnerable. In addition, efforts will be made to reduce costs in the provision of self contained private rented sector temporary accommodation by negotiation with existing landlords and by advertising for new providers.

It is also imperative that the provision of other services is kept under continual review. In doing so, emphasis will be placed on those services which enable the Housing Executive to fulfil its statutory duty in responding to homelessness. This strategy is therefore predicated on the principle that priority will be given to advice and preventative services and services which provide a safety net for the most vulnerable members of society (a summary of financial investment in homelessness is provided at Appendix 2)

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2002

The 2002 strategy contained 25 recommendations designed to improve homelessness services in Northern Ireland. The following is a summary of the main achievements since the previous strategy (a summary of which is at Appendix 4).

Accommodation

Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation provision in 2002 was over reliant on bed and breakfast (B&B) and other forms of shared accommodation. As such it was determined to fundamentally review the portfolio and to increase the supply of appropriate and higher quality accommodation across all areas. This was achieved through the rollout of Area Homeless Action Plans which analysed demand and supply locally and set out specific plans for improvement. As a result, the nature of the portfolio fundamentally changed particularly in relation to self contained and supported provision. The main achievements were;

- private sector self contained provision increased from 82 units in 2002 to over 800 in 2010
- supported temporary accommodation units increased by almost 1,000
- Northern Ireland's only current "wet" hostel was opened in Belfast in 2005
- a leasing arrangement with a private supplier provided over 70 units of accommodation for homeless individuals with complex and challenging needs.

Growth in temporary accommodation 2002 – 2010

Year	NIHE hostels	Voluntary Sector Hostels	Private self contained Accommodation	Leased
2001/02	21	68	82	
2002/03	23	69	184	
2003/04	24	70	426	
2004/05	23	70	542	
2005/06	23	70	572	
2006/07	22	70	552	
2007/08	22	69	593	
2008/09	22	70	702	70
2009/10	21	70	817	70

The increase in private sector provision enabled the Housing Executive to meet Government's target of using B&B establishments in emergencies only. Expenditure on this type of accommodation decreased from £1.3m in 2003/04 to £226k in 2009/10.

Permanent accommodation

- Almost 10,000 units of social rented sector accommodation have been provided since 2003/2004.
- Rent deposit guarantee schemes have been introduced in Belfast and Londonderry.
- Over 48,000 homeless households have been permanently re-housed in the social rented sector since 2003/4.

When the Homelessness Strategy was published in 2002, the main emphasis was on the provision of appropriate forms of temporary accommodation and the development of services to meet the needs of vulnerable households. The provision of permanent accommodation to meet statutory needs depended on the social new build programme and re lets. This was because the Housing Executive took a policy decision to discharge its homelessness duties in line with the provisions of the Housing (NI) Order 1988, through an allocation of permanent accommodation in its own stock (or housing association stock). Since 2002, however, the ability to meet statutory requirements by this means alone has diminished considerably.

Table Waiting List and Allocations 2005/2010

Year	Total waiting list	Waiting list- Applicants in housing stress*	Total allocations by NIHE & housing associations	Allocations by NIHE & housing associations to applicants in housing stress	Full Duty Applicants awarded
2005	29,608	15,527	7,929	6,673	8,470
2006	31,908	17,223	8,335	7,242	9,749
2007	36,182	19,703	7,772	6,896	9,744
2008	39,675	21,361	7,289	6,618	9,234
2009	38,923	20,481	8,132	7,287	8,934
2010	38,120	19,716	9,192	8,181	9,914

The impact of the above is clearly demonstrated in the increased lengths of time spent in temporary accommodation by homeless households (see Appendix 3).

Recent changes in the housing market in Northern Ireland have led to the acquisition of private sector properties becoming an increasingly viable option in assisting to meet social rented sector new build targets. To date, however, the use of the private rented sector has been largely confined to locally based rent deposit guarantee schemes and acquisition for temporary accommodation purposes. Given the current state of the private rented market and the increasing difficulty in meeting the statutory housing duty through allocations in the social rented sector, it is now appropriate to consider its use in alleviating long term homelessness.

Assessment

The Homelessness Strategy and Belfast's Homelessness Action Plan identified the need for an inter-agency and multi disciplinary approach to tackling homelessness. In this context and based on research carried out into the increasing complex needs of homeless people, the Multi-Disciplinary Homeless Support Team was established in 2005. It comprises a team of social workers covering addictions, mental health and young people and is managed by Extern, a voluntary sector organisation with much experience in supporting vulnerable homeless households. The service is governed and

funded by an inter-agency consortium comprising representatives from Health and Social Services, Probation Board and the Housing Executive.

This initiative recognises that the holistic assessment of a vulnerable homeless person's needs invariably leads to more targeted interventions. In turn, these have a much better chance of leading to permanent solutions, thereby ending the cycle of homelessness. The team provides the service by operating a rota based assessment service in the Housing Executive's Homelessness Service Unit and by accepting referrals from hostel managers. Following assessment, the most appropriate accommodation solution is sought. This is complemented by the provision of professional health services should they be required. It also provides a floating support service. The team has referral rights to the De Paul Trust "wet" hostel.

This unique partnership has supported over 4,000 homeless people since it was established. In the year 2009/10 there were 785 new referrals to the service, a slight increase over 2008/09 when the number of new referrals was 775. In addition to the 785 new referrals, 349 on-going cases were carried over from 2008/09. The referrals in 2009/10 came from 47 different agencies with the Housing Executive continuing to make the highest number of referrals. The team works closely with hostel staff in both the Housing Executive and voluntary sector hostels.

Rough Sleeping

Belfast

An inter-agency forum established in 2004 examined the existing response to rough sleeping and street drinking and subsequently developed Belfast's first Rough Sleeper's Strategy.

Since the publication of this strategy, the forum has overseen a number of notable achievements which have led to a comprehensive continuum of services including:

- An enhanced street outreach service provided by the voluntary sector Welcome Organisation which links to:

- daytime services providing food and washing facilities
- additional emergency accommodation facilities provided by the Salvation Army and a private sector provider
- “wet hostel” facility managed by DePaul Ireland
- primary health care services provided by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Londonderry

In keeping with the approach adopted by the Housing Executive in Belfast and other local authorities in England, a Rough Sleepers and Street Drinkers Strategy was developed for Londonderry in 2009. The main aim of the strategy is to review existing service provision and to realign and improve existing services based on need.

Research into the extent of the problem and service responses indicated that, whereas the numbers sleeping rough were small, significant problems existed in service provision for homeless individuals with alcohol dependency. Deficiencies included:

- over use of generic facilities for those needing specialist interventions
- underutilisation of a number of services
- a significant degree of ‘silting up’ of some temporary accommodation facilities
- difficulties in delivering effective interventions and specialist services to this population
- lack of effective pathways between services

The research informed the key recommendation of the strategy which is to realign current services along the service continuum. This will ensure that there is an appropriate range of preventative and responsive housing support and care services in place across the city for those who are sleeping rough and those at risk of homelessness due to alcohol addiction.

Targeted Services

The development of a sex offenders' accommodation strategy

The Housing Executive currently contributes to the management of the risk of such offenders through its involvement in the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI) which were introduced on 6th October 2008. It is represented on the PPANI inter-agency Strategic Management Board (SMB) and on risk assessment panels at both pre and post prison release stage. This enables issues around the provision of temporary and permanent accommodation to be addressed in a timely and structured manner. Previous to October 2008 this business was overseen by the Northern Ireland Sex Offender Strategic Management Committee (NISOSMC).

As part of its involvement in NISOSMC, the Housing Executive chaired an inter agency sub group charged with the development of an accommodation strategy for sex offenders. The sub group comprised representatives from Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), Voluntary Sector Organisations, (Simon Community, Extern, Northern Ireland Association for The Care and Resettlement of Offenders), Council for the Homeless and the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations.

The strategy, which contains recommendation aimed at addressing both the temporary and permanent needs of sex offenders, was published in December 2008.

The development of a protocol for responding to the needs of vulnerable young people aged 16-21

In recognition of their shared responsibilities to young people who are vulnerable due to homelessness and the challenges associated with responding effectively to their housing needs, the Housing Executive and Health and Social Services developed joint working arrangements which set out the roles and responsibilities of both agencies and demonstrates how each will respond in both planned and emergency situations.

'The Regional Good Practice Guidance on Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16 -21 year olds who are vulnerable due to Homelessness', was published in December 2009 and guides agency staff on working collaboratively and effectively to respond to this group of young people, irrespective of which agency is initially approached for help.

The delivery of joint training for front line staff from both agencies was aimed at developing appropriate lines of communication and the necessary skills to provide a seamless service for young homeless people. These joint working arrangements, which were introduced in 2010, are underpinned by the requirements of the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) 2002 and the wider legislative responsibilities detailed in both the Children (NI) Order 1995 and the Housing (NI) Order 1988.

This work was further reinforced by the publication in May 2008 of the paper "Strategy in Practice – Joint Working with Housing and Children's Services published by the Department for Communities and local Government. The paper centres on the principle that services work best where there are good joint working arrangements at a strategic level within local authorities and with their partners in the Children's Trust.

The provision of a range of services to assist victims of domestic violence

The "Tackling Violence at Home" strategy and associated action plan which was published in October 2005 by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety is an inter-agency approach to tackling domestic violence. The ultimate aim of the strategy is to put in place all practicable measures towards the elimination of domestic violence and abuse. The Housing Executive is represented on the Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence and its contribution to the strategy is as follows:-

24 hour domestic violence helpline

The helpline, which is co-funded by the Housing Executive, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Office, is managed by

Women's Aid Federation (NI). It is open to anyone affected by domestic violence and offers support, information, crisis intervention, assistance with temporary accommodation options and signposting. The service, in conjunction with the floating support service, provides assistance to domestic violence victims who wish to remain in their own homes. The helpline received approximately 25,000 calls per year and although the majority of calls are from women, it does receive calls from men who are usually signposted to the Men's Advisory Project.

The funding organisations meet regularly with Women's Aid to monitor outcomes for those assessing the service. Enhanced technology has helped to improve the percentage of calls successfully answered first time – this improved by 17% to 75% from 2008/09 to 2009/10.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC)

The MARAC initiative was introduced as a pilot on 1st April 2006 in the Antrim/Ballymena area under the auspices of the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI). Representatives from PSNI, the Housing Executive, Probation Board, Social Services and Women's Aid met on a fortnightly basis to assess the risks to victims of domestic violence and to develop individual action plans for the delivery of services aimed at reducing the risk. Central to the concept is for the victim to be a willing participant in the process. Whereas this was not an immediate emergency response, it provided the basis for determining longer term housing and support needs of the victim. In the first year of operation the MARAC process dealt with some 75 cases. An evaluation of the pilot scheme which was carried out by the PSNI in April 2007, found it to be a progressive step towards tackling domestic violence in Northern Ireland. MARAC has now been rolled out across all 7 PSNI command areas within Northern Ireland at a rate of 2 per area, 14 in total. The Housing Executive staff sit on each of the MARAC and the meetings are normally held on a fortnightly basis and deal with approximately 20 cases per session.

The objectives of the MARAC process are consistent with the Housing Executive's response to tackling domestic violence as it aims to deliver a high quality, co-ordinated, multi-agency response to domestic violence and improve the level of support for the victims of domestic violence.

Sanctuary Scheme

The Sanctuary Scheme is a victim-centred Housing Executive led initiative, designed to assist victims of domestic violence and prevent homelessness. It involves the creation of a sanctuary room – a safe room within the home where the victim can call and wait for the arrival of the police. Additional work can include increased door and window security and where necessary, the provision of fire safety equipment.

The Sanctuary Scheme is an example of effective prevention which enables people to remain in their homes and provides the MARAC process with an additional option for a limited number of victims of domestic violence. It also results in savings which can be either financial or non-financial in nature.

The cost of the work is approximately £2,000 per dwelling whereas the cost of providing temporary accommodation for a mother and child for one year is approximately £7,500. The scheme also delivers non-financial benefits to the client in terms of family support, social networks, self esteem and mental well-being.

The Sanctuary Scheme was introduced in pilot form for Housing Executive tenants as an option under MARAC in the Antrim and Ballymena for a period of one year. Two schemes were processed in the pilot period and they proved to very successful and provided the families with the necessary security to enable them to remain in their own homes and maintain their social contacts and support networks.

The introduction of improved services for foreign nationals

With the accession of 10 new member states (including 8 Central and Eastern European states) to the European Union in 2004 and a further 2 Eastern European states in 2007, the number of migrant workers in Northern Ireland has increased significantly.

Northern Ireland's Minister for Employment accentuated the positive nature of this recent development.

The majority of migrant workers have tended to live in the private rented sector either in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and recently with more families arriving, in self contained units of accommodation. Affordability issues and loss of employment have resulted in homelessness and a greater demand for social housing. The Housing Executive's Equality Unit noted approximately 1,000 housing applications were received from migrant worker households in the previous 12 months, of which 350 households stated they were homeless. During the same period approximately 140 allocations were made to migrant worker households. This has prompted the Housing Executive to undertake a comprehensive training programme on the complex issue of eligibility for housing assistance. In addition, links have been developed with a range of voluntary sector organisations including Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities to assist in situations where homeless households have no recourse to public funds.

Prevention

The development of localised advice services for homelessness presenters

Currently such advice is provided internally by:

- the availability of a range of leaflets providing information on housing and homelessness issues
- the Housing Executive website which provides information on a range of housing and homelessness related issues and has links to other relevant websites
- the ongoing updating of localised information packs providing advice to homeless rural households
- the provision of personalised advice on housing problems including problems with private sector renting

- the development of Personal Housing Plans (PHP) for both homeless and non homeless applicants providing advice on the availability of both social and private rented options

And externally through:

- **The provision of online advice at <http://www.housingadviceNI.org> (HANI)** - In partnership with Shelter UK, Housing Rights Service (HRS) developed an easy to understand website covering a wide range of housing and homelessness related issues. Of particular importance is the fact that the site focuses on the needs of a range of client groups including young people, foreign nationals and prisoners and their families. Since its inception in 2004, the use of the site has continued to grow and from April 2010 to January 2011 the site recorded over 180,000 visits, representing an impressive 221% increase on the same period the previous year. A recent satisfaction survey indicated that over 80% of respondents found a complete or partial answer to their housing query on the site.
- **The Community Housing Advice Project (CHAP)** - Developed in 2004, the principal aim of the CHAP project is to provide front line voluntary sector advice agencies with the capacity to provide uniform and consistent advice in terms of content and quality, across a range of housing and homelessness issues. A comprehensive training programme undertaken by Housing Rights Service has provided agencies with the skills to tackle issues locally. During 2010/11 the number of partner agencies was increased from 18 to 22, including 4 partners representing section 75 client groups.
- **The production of localised information for rural households -** Approximately 12% of those accepted as homeless each year in Northern Ireland are seeking re- housing in rural areas. The Housing Executive acknowledges that factors such as greater geographic isolation, population dispersal, smaller-scale housing provision and hidden need can have a particular impact when addressing housing issues in rural areas. The 'Rural Homes and People' policy has been

developed by the Rural Housing Unit with this in mind. From a homelessness perspective, the Housing Executive acknowledges the particular importance of ensuring that those in rural areas are aware of, and can avail of, relevant advice and associated services. An information booklet – [“No Place of Your Own”](#) - has been produced specifically to help those faced with homelessness in rural areas. It provides both general advice and information on local services available in each district. In addition, each of the Area Homelessness Action Plans includes a section on rural homelessness to help ensure that rural issues are considered at local level.

Furthermore, in an effort to create awareness and help prevent homelessness, the Housing Executive’s Rural Housing Unit has commenced working recently with the Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster to help inform and educate rural young people on their housing options. A schools programme is also in place (undertaken by the Simon Community); this is rolled out largely through secondary schools, including those with rural catchment areas and facilitates discussion on homelessness and housing issues affecting young people:

- the introduction of a network of floating support services
- the development of a Community Safety Strategy to tackle anti social behaviour
- the introduction of education advice services

The provision of a housing and homelessness advice service in prisons

The Housing Executive, in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Prison Service, agreed in 2005 to provide funding to a Housing Rights Service proposal to provide housing and homelessness advice to prisoners. Principally the advice centres around sustaining existing tenancies, providing advice on Housing Benefit and debt and assisting in accessing suitable accommodation on release.

Prison Service staff were trained to provide low level advice and to refer more complex matters to Housing Rights Service staff. It is anticipated that with additional training Prison Service staff could eventually provide higher level advice. The delivery of the service is underpinned by a protocol developed and overseen by a forum comprising relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

During 2010/11, 129 advice surgeries across Northern Ireland's three prisons dealt with 610 individuals posing 2,400 housing issues. One of the impacts of the service has been a marked reduction in the number of released prisoners presenting as homeless in a crisis situation.

In 2008 a peer advice service was developed in Maghaberry prison where 4 long term prisoners were trained in the provision of low level advice. This initiative has proved difficult to sustain for a variety of internal operational issues and has still to be replicated in the other institutions.

Many of the above achievements could not have been realised without the cooperation of our statutory and voluntary sector partners. The principal lesson learned in the roll out of the 2002 strategy is the multi -faceted nature of homelessness, which can only properly be addressed through maximum inter -agency cooperation. Whereas many good examples of such cooperation exist, the success of the new strategy will largely depend on strengthening these relationships.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 - TO PLACE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AT THE FOREFRONT OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Opinion at European, national and local level advocates the need for preventative services to be at the heart of homelessness strategies. Many homelessness services developed since the publication of the 2002 strategy have significant elements of prevention attached to them. For the purposes of this strategy, however, primary preventative services will be confined to:

- the assessment process
- the provision of advice and assistance
- tenancy sustainment

ASSESSMENT

The service provided by the Multi-Disciplinary Homelessness Support Team (MDHST) does not exist outside Belfast. In part, the same economies of scale do not exist outside the capital to support the introduction of a dedicated team. Nevertheless, the Health and Homelessness sub-group of the PSI working group on homelessness will consider options and develop the mechanisms whereby a form of the Belfast model is developed across the rest of Northern Ireland.

Next steps

- **In conjunction with Belfast Trust, develop a method of tracking individual homeless households to determine the effectiveness of the MDHST service in preventing repeat homelessness.**
- **Provide support to the PSI Health sub group to develop holistic assessment services outside of Belfast.**

ADVICE & ASSISTANCE

Internal

The 2010 (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 places a statutory responsibility on the Housing Executive to provide appropriate advice and assistance on homelessness and homelessness prevention to, inter alia, non-statutory homeless households, free of charge.

Whereas local staff are trained to provide advice to those experiencing problems in landlord / tenant relationships and to signpost to specialist agencies where complex problems exist, no formal agreements have been developed with these agencies to accept referrals. In addition, it is recognised that Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) are of limited value if they are not linked to schemes which assist access to private sector housing.

Next steps

- **Develop formal referral mechanisms to ensure specialist advice is made available for complex problems.**
- **Increase opportunities in the private rented sector by linking PHPs to rent deposit guarantee schemes.**

External

Evaluation has highlighted the efficacy of voluntary and community sector housing advice services as outlined in the 2002 Strategy Review.

Next steps

- **The Housing Executive will continue to support the continuous development of online housing advice.**
- **The Housing Executive will continue to support a service which ensures local advice agencies are kept up to date with legislative and policy developments.**

Advice in prisons

The success of this project, as highlighted in the 2002 Strategy Review supports the further development of advice provision within prisons.

Next steps

- **Provide specialist training and support services to enable prison staff to deliver an enhanced level of advice.**
- **Monitor and review the agreed protocol in conjunction with relevant agencies.**
- **Develop proposals for the expansion of the peer model beyond Maghaberry.**

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

Research carried out by Hal Pawson in 2007 (Heriott Watt University) described tenancy sustainment as the “longest and most effective means of homelessness prevention “.

In light of this, the Housing Executive is currently developing tenancy sustainment processes “to provide the basics upon which failing tenancies can be identified and necessary information, advice and support can be provided to enable tenancies to be sustained”.

Whereas a wide range of generic and specialist floating support services are available the links between existing tenants and these services are tenuous.

The strategy will bring together existing initiatives and will focus on:

- **Provision of money advice** – aimed at preventing evictions, this initiative will concentrate on the provision of basic and intermediate advice internally with planned referrals to Citizens Advice Bureaux for more complex advice.
- **Measures to address anti social behaviour (ASB)** – the links between ASB and homelessness are well documented. The Housing Executive will continue to develop its two fold approach of the provision of mainstream housing management services and the development of partnership working to address aspects of service delivery which require an inter agency approach.
- **Floating support** – aimed at sustaining failing tenancies, the Housing Executive will develop mechanisms to enable failing tenancies to be identified and to ensure that floating support services are made available.

The Sustaining Tenancies Matrix will be available on the Housing Executive’s web site at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Homelessness prevention in the community

The Housing Executive recognises the value of supporting communities to find solutions to local problems. This is equally true in the area of homelessness, where community awareness and training of local networks can have a positive impact on homelessness presentations and repeat homelessness, but to date has not been fully explored in Northern Ireland.

Next steps

- **To work alongside identified voluntary sector providers to set performance targets and to monitor the impact of homelessness prevention programmes.**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 - TO REDUCE THE LENGTH OF TIME HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS BY IMPROVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The current portfolio of temporary accommodation in response to homelessness has been developed taking account of local homelessness trends, special needs and the need to provide self contained accommodation where possible. In spite of the success in terms of standards and geographical spread, however, difficulties remain in relation to long term homelessness and the lack of options for permanent housing.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

While there have been noteworthy advances in terms of the number, type and quality of temporary solutions to homelessness, there are continued concerns over the amount of time individuals remain in temporary housing situations.

The length of stay in temporary accommodation is largely dependent on the length of time it takes to access permanent housing. The average length of stay steadily increased between 2003/04 and 2007/08 before levelling off. In order to address long term homelessness, therefore, it is essential that move on processes are improved and options for accessing affordable permanent accommodation are increased.

Average length of stay in temporary accommodation from 2003/04 to 2009/10 (weeks)

Accommodation type	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
NIHE hostel	24	34	21	40	43	47	37
Voluntary hostel	27	37	34	50	62	52	40
Private single let	28	38	40	42	40	40	42

Future of temporary accommodation

Significant improvements have been made in temporary accommodation since 2002. In future years, a number of issues must be addressed:

- **Ensuring the correct balance between supported and self contained private sector accommodation.** Evidence suggests some homeless households who could live independently with lower level floating support are inappropriately placed in higher cost supported accommodation.
- **Ensuring private sector temporary accommodation is a cost-effective solution.** The present portfolio was acquired when the private sector market was difficult to access. Evidence now suggests that increased efficiencies may be achieved by re advertising in the open market.

This strategy provides the opportunity to engage with Supporting People colleagues and temporary accommodation providers to complete a fundamental review of the portfolio and to develop plans for the delivery of a cost effective response which balances the need for supported and unsupported accommodation.

Next steps

- **Complete a fundamental review of the temporary accommodation portfolio following publication of commissioned research into its strategic relevance and financial viability.**
- **Develop localised temporary accommodation and support plans in conjunction with Supporting People as part of the Area Homelessness Action Planning process.**
- **Examine options for the development of a structured “move on” strategy to reduce lengths of stay in temporary accommodation.**
- **Complete a new procurement process for self contained private rented sector accommodation.**

PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

The Department for Social Development developed its “Building Strong Foundations: A Strategy for the Private Rented Sector” in May 2009. The strategy emphasises the need for a more professional approach to tenancy management and advocates the development of a Northern Ireland wide rent deposit guarantee scheme.

Rent deposit guarantee schemes do exist, albeit in limited locations. Existing providers emphasise that their success is largely due to the support provided to the landlords and tenants in the management of tenancies. This support provides landlords with the incentive of making properties available at or around Local Housing Allowance levels. In relation to the provision of tenancy support, discussions are underway with Supporting People colleagues in relation to use of existing floating support services to meet this requirement. For the global scheme to be successful links will be required with move on processes from temporary accommodation and the Personal Housing Plan initiative mentioned earlier.

- The proposed changes to Housing Benefit under the Welfare Reform Agenda, coupled with the economic downturn, may have a significant impact on the ability of a number of key groups to access affordable and appropriate housing.
- There is already evidence of increased competition in the private rented sector from those in employment who cannot access a mortgage. This comes on top of the aforementioned shortage in the social housing supply.
- Problems with Housing Benefit shortfalls may result in increased repossessions across all rented tenures, and thus increased homelessness presentations.
- The extension of the Single Room Rent to those under 35 years of age will place strain on the existing range of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and additional assessment services to ensure appropriate sharing arrangements.

Next Steps

- **Develop a specification for the procurement of a global rent deposit guarantee scheme.**
- **Develop a mechanism in conjunction with Supporting People for the delivery of a tenancy support service.**
- **Closely monitor the impact of Housing Benefit reform on homelessness presentations.**
- **Engage with PRS and relevant internal mechanisms to match supply and quality of HMOs to need.**
- **Develop assessment tools to assist in appropriate HMO tenancies.**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 - REMOVE THE NEED TO SLEEP ROUGH

Arguably, rough sleeping represents the most severe form of homelessness. In Northern Ireland the propensity to rough sleep is confined largely to Belfast and to a much lesser extent Londonderry. Using the Department for Local Government's guidance on counting rough sleepers, fewer than 10 individuals rough sleep in Belfast on a given night, not including a number of foreign nationals who sleep rough on a regular basis. There are, however, up to 100 individuals who could sleep rough regularly if appropriate services were not provided. In Londonderry the problem is largely confirmed to street drinking although, again, without appropriate services, there is the capacity for this to become a rough sleeping problem.

ROUGH SLEEPERS

Belfast

Whereas the number of individuals sleeping rough in Belfast on a given night is small (normally under 10) there are many more who have the propensity to do so. An extended survey over a three month period in 2005 revealed there were up to 100 individuals who had slept rough during that period, virtually all of whom exhibited complex needs.

Whereas this continuum of services has enhanced the response to rough sleeping and street drinking in Belfast, improvements are still required to track individuals through the continuum and to identify those who repeatedly access accommodation through the street outreach services. In addition, whereas links exist with health services particularly in relation to nursing care both in the day centre and in temporary accommodation establishments, improved access to the recently formed drugs and alcohol co-ordinating team in Belfast would enhance the chances of successful rehabilitation. Furthermore, given that the street outreach and daytime services have

now been in operation for a number of years, the effectiveness and strategic relevance of these services require evaluation.

Next steps

- **Commission an independent evaluation into daytime and night-time street outreach services and their links to accommodation and health services.**
- **Review and redraft the Rough Sleepers' Strategy in light of the above and the need to:**
 - **identify and track those who are repeat service users.**
 - **develop improved referral mechanisms to professional health services.**
 - **improve access and referral pathways between key services including temporary accommodation.**

Derry / Londonderry

The strategy was approved by the Board of the Housing Executive in April 2009 and a project implementation plan was developed. Implementation is being progressed over 4 key stages comprising:

- Stage 1 Project Initiation and Provider Engagement**
- Stage 2 Service Design and Specification**
- Stage 3 Service Realignment**
- Stage 4 Analyses of Outcomes and Evaluation Report**

Stage 1 of implementation has been completed. This included the establishment of interim crisis arrangements to accommodate those who were identified as sleeping rough. Additionally, a Night Support Service was developed to provide targeted

interventions to the street drinking population and to collate statistical information on an ongoing basis on the incidence of rough sleeping.

Stage 2 is being progressed through a Good Practice Focus Group comprising representatives from key providers and the Housing Executive. The remit of the group is make recommendations across a number of themes including:

- a review of current practice;
- the development of high level service principles in meeting the accommodation; and support needs of those with an alcohol addiction;
- agreeing effective methods of information sharing; and
- improving access and referral pathways between key services.

Stage 2 of implementation is the key preparation stage for achieving service realignment in stage 3 which will apply the agreed service changes at an operational level. This will ensure that every service working with the street population is operating within a clearly defined role within the service continuum and is delivering effective interventions for service users.

Throughout the implementation of the strategy the key objectives of the implementation plan will continue to be delivered within the context of collaborative working with key providers and local stakeholders through the work of the Good Practice Focus Group and through the Multi-agency Project Steering Group. This structure provides overall direction and management of implementation and ensures inclusivity and active input into the implementation of the strategy at a local level.

A critical analysis of the outcomes of implementation against the recommendations of the original Rough Sleepers/Street Drinkers Strategy will form the end stage of implementation in the form of a project evaluation report.

Next steps

- **Carry out a full evaluation of existing services and information sharing arrangements in relation to the needs of those with alcohol addictions.**
- **Deliver agreed service changes to ensure effective interventions.**
- **Carry out a project evaluation to measure outcomes against recommendations contained within the strategy.**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 - TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO VULNERABLE HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

A range of particularly vulnerable households are at risk of becoming more socially excluded as a result of their circumstances. In extreme situations this can lead to rough sleeping. It is essential, therefore, that services for these households are continually reviewed.

Domestic violence

The Housing Executive is committed to assist all relevant agencies in the aim of eliminating domestic violence and abuse.

Next steps

- **Continue to support the helpline service in conjunctions with its funding partners.**
- **Continue to support the MARAC process through the provision of accommodation and advice services.**
- **Roll out the Sanctuary Scheme as a MARAC option across Northern Ireland.**
- **Examine options for the expansion of the Sanctuary Scheme across all tenures.**

Sexual and violent offenders

Extensive research and reviews by experts have clearly shown that stable housing arrangements and effective monitoring are key to minimising the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders. Stable accommodation contributes both to the successful

rehabilitation of the offender (and thus to minimising the risk of homelessness) and to the protection of the community in which that person lives.

The Housing Executive is already committed to assisting in the risk management process associated with this challenging client group. The Sex Offenders' Accommodation Strategy, however, highlights a number of weaknesses in current systems leading to difficulties in accessing both temporary and permanent accommodation. The recommendations and action plan accompanying the strategy reflect these weaknesses and identify those agencies responsible for the delivery of solutions. The Housing Executive is committed to assisting in this process.

Next steps

- **Contribute to the pre and post release risk management process.**
- **Develop a case management approach to move-on from temporary to permanent accommodation.**
- **Assist in the development of appropriate temporary accommodation for high risk offenders with personality disorders.**
- **Develop mechanisms for providing permanent housing solutions through the private rented sector.**

Women offenders

The small number of homeless women ex-offenders are accommodated in generic temporary provision on release. Whereas this satisfies accommodation requirements, it does not address holistic needs thus increasing the risk of re-offending and repeat homelessness.

In October 2010 the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland published its strategy for the provision of appropriate services for women offenders entitled "Women's Offending Behaviour in Northern Ireland: A Strategy to Manage Women Offenders And Those Vulnerable to Offending Behaviour 2010 – 2013".

In relation to accommodation, the strategy highlights that whereas limited post release accommodation options are available, there may be a need for a dedicated hostel for women approaching the end of custodial sentences, or where appropriate, as an alternative to custody. There are also issues in regard to access to children in temporary accommodation which will need thoughtful consideration

In relation to the advantages in providing such accommodation the strategy states; "the advantage of providing such hostel accommodation is that it could provide a real alternative to sending women offenders to prison and facilitate the earlier, controlled release of women from custody".

The strategy further states, however; "against this, the number of women who might require, or would elect to use such hostel accommodation is likely to be very small while the hostel would have to operate and be staffed on a 24/7 basis. A hostel would also have a fixed location which would inevitably limit its capacity to build or sustain its residents' links to their local communities".

It is clear, therefore, that further analysis is required in Northern Ireland to test the need for, and viability of, such a facility. The Housing Executive will assist in the analysis of the need for a bespoke accommodation facility for women offenders

Next steps

- **The Housing Executive will assist in the analysis of the need for a bespoke accommodation facility for women offenders.**
- **The Housing Executive will assist PBNI in the development of its Accommodation Strategy for Ex-offenders.**

Migrant workers / persons from abroad

Good relations

The promotion of good relations is a key Housing Executive objective which is set out in its Good Relations Strategy and is delivered through the Cohesion Unit.

On 27th July 2010 the Government published its new Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) and will be conducting a 3 month public consultation. The main focus of the policy is to tackle sectarianism, racism and hate and promote cohesion, sharing and integration for all sections of society

Race relations

The aim of the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy is to ensure that all Black and Minority Ethnic people in Northern Ireland can enjoy full and fair access to housing and homelessness services and to support the promotion of good relations between and within ethnic groups and communities. The Race Relations Action Plan covers work under 5 themes.

- **Mainstreaming**
- **Racial harassment and intimidation**
- **Promoting Black and Minority Ethnic social inclusion**
- **Community participation and development**
- **Migrant worker issues**

Further and enhanced detail on this topic can be accessed in the [Housing Executive's Race Relations Strategy](#) (February 2006).

Next steps

- **Deliver "ending hate in our communities" training in collaboration with other relevant agencies.**

- **Identify the specific housing needs of BME groups and consider options for improvements to existing services.**
- **Encourage BME participation in the general housing network.**
- **Continue to contribute to the Department of Employment and Learning's Migrant Worker Thematic Group.**

Rural homelessness

The Housing Executive is dedicated to ensuring equality of service provision across Northern Ireland. The strategy acknowledges the particular problems associated with rural homelessness and accessing both temporary and permanent accommodation.

Next steps

- **Develop a process to enable the measurement of the extent of rural homelessness.**
- **Continue to liaise with the Rural Residents Forum on housing issues which affect rural communities.**
- **Evaluate the possibility of enabling Young Farmers Clubs to act as a conduit for user feedback.**

Youth homelessness

The PSI Youth Homelessness Sub Group was established in 2008 and was tasked with, inter alia, coordinating a detailed regional analysis of the nature and scale of youth homelessness. The analysis, carried out by the Council for the Homeless (NI), focussed on the routes into homelessness, presenting needs and experiences in accessing front line services and support. Dissemination of the study's findings reinforced the need for collaborative working and also identified weaknesses in the provision of appropriate supported and move on accommodation, information gathering systems, intervention practices and access to work, education and training.

In 2010, building upon current joint working developments, the Strategic Regional Reference Group on Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of Young People Aged 16 and 17, who are Leaving Care or Homeless was formed. This group, which is co-chaired by the Regional Health and Social Care Board and the Housing Executive, comprises representatives from health, housing (including Supporting People) and the voluntary sector. The group aims to drive and inform integrated service planning to meet the accommodation and support needs of these young people and has established a clear work plan which includes:

- monitoring the implementation of the Good Practice Guidance and associated local protocols;
- the development of service models of accommodation and support which will address compliance with best practice standards and regulations; and
- the development of a common system for information gathering across the Housing Executive and Health & Social Care Trusts which aims to track needs and provide the relevant data required for future planning.

Whereas significant progress has clearly been made in the development of an inter agency approach to the planning, commissioning and delivery of appropriate services for those young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, the findings from the Council for the Homeless research demonstrates that much more needs to be done to ensure that holistic needs of young people are more effectively met.

Next steps

- **In partnership with relevant agencies, contribute to the development of preventative programmes that aim to reduce homelessness.**
- **Review investment in current prevention programmes and initiatives and ensure resources are targeted at those young people most at risk and demonstrate improved outcomes.**

- **In partnership with relevant statutory sector agencies, monitor and review existing joint working arrangements, with particular reference to the delivery of information, assessment and support.**
- **Contribute to the development of a continuum of suitable supported accommodation services, which support clear and flexible pathways to independence.**
- **Ensure access regional floating support services.**
- **With relevant partner agencies agree and put in place joint working arrangements in respect of young people leaving prison.**
- **Work in partnership with relevant statutory agencies to maximise access to employment, education and training opportunities.**
- **Work alongside relevant partner agencies to develop clear “Move On” pathways that assist young people to make the transition from temporary accommodation and sustain suitable permanent living arrangements.**

Appendix 1 - STATISTICS

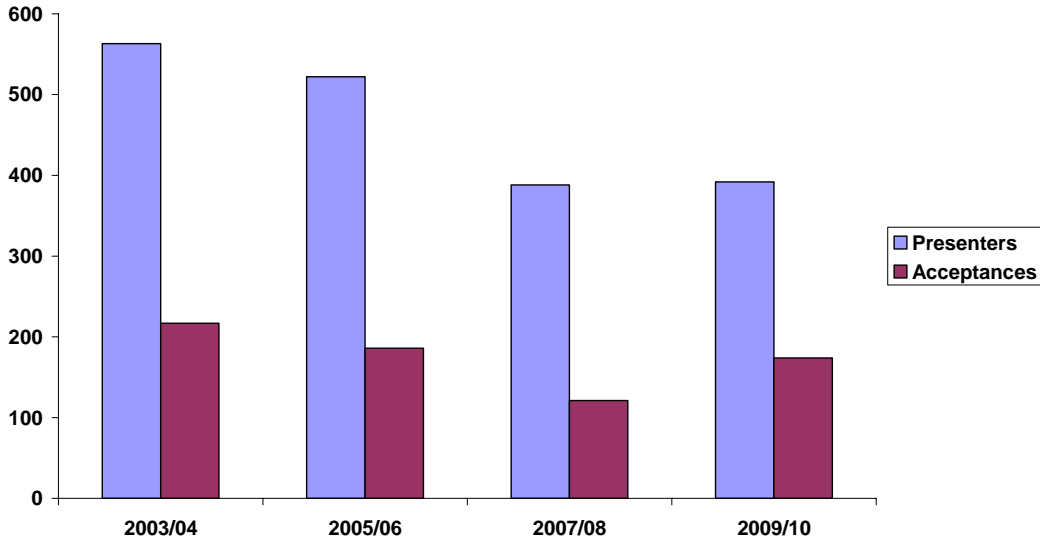
Statistical data tables of homeless presenters and acceptances by household type

Year	Presenters	Acceptances	%
ALL PRESENTERS & ACCEPTANCES			
2003/04	17,150	8,594	50
2005/06	20,121	9,749	48
2007/08	19,030	9,234	49
2009/10	18,664	9,914	53
SINGLE 16-17 YR OLD PRESENTERS & ACCEPTANCES			
2003/04	563	217	39
2005/06	522	186	36
2007/08	388	121	31
2009/10	392	174	44
SINGLE 18-25 YR OLD PRESENTERS & ACCEPTANCES			
2003/04	3,134	953	30
2005/06	3,603	1,009	28
2007/08	3,239	941	29
2009/10	3,669	1,171	32
SINGLE 26-59 YR OLD PRESENTERS & ACCEPTANCES			
2003/04	5,211	2,018	39
2005/06	5,989	2,134	36
2007/08	5,632	2,022	36
2009/10	5,643	2,252	40
ALL FAMILY PRESENTERS & ACCEPTANCES			
2003/04	6,739	4,207	62
2005/06	7,869	4,731	60
2007/08	7,618	4,482	59
2009/10	6,904	4,583	66
ELDERLY PRESENTERS & ACCEPTANCES			
2003/04	1,503	1,199	80
2005/06	2,138	1,689	79
2007/08	2,153	1,668	77
2009/10	2,056	1,734	84

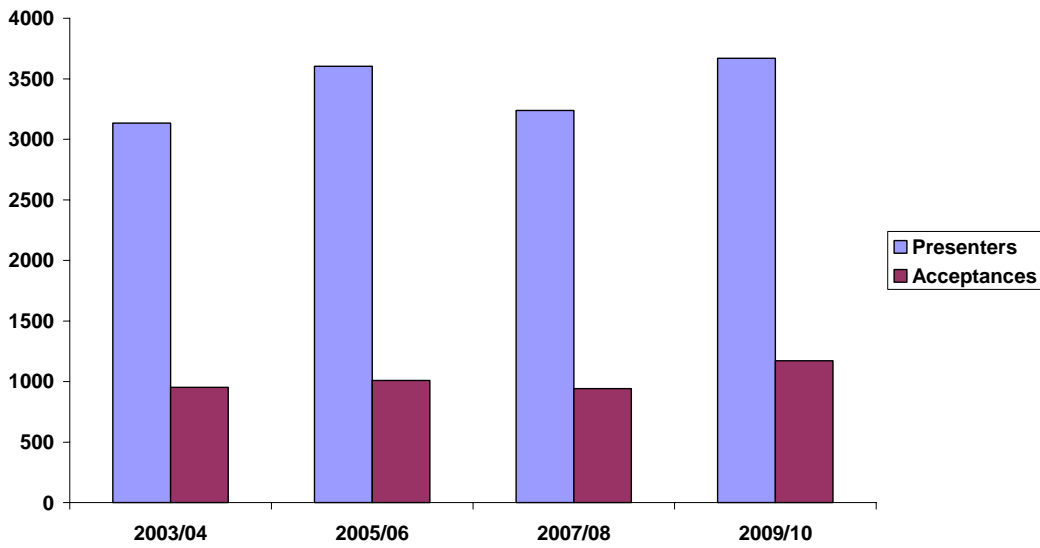
Homelessness acceptances by reason 2003/04 to 2009/10

REASONS	2003/04	2005/06	2007/08	2009/10
Sharing breakdown / family breakdown	1,781	2,010	2,024	2,041
Marital / relationship breakdown	986	931	878	919
Domestic violence	606	688	635	800
Loss of rented accommodation	897	1,230	1,528	991
No accommodation in NI	700	658	611	557
Intimidation	685	494	278	406
Accommodation not reasonable	1,438	2,334	2,112	2,490
Release from hospital / prison / other institution	168	158	241	237
Fire / flood / other	104	73	54	100
Mortgage default	87	111	65	204
Bomb / fire / civil unrest	33	45	29	45
Neighbourhood harassment	885	705	508	729
Other	224	312	271	395
TOTAL	8,594	9,749	9,234	9,914

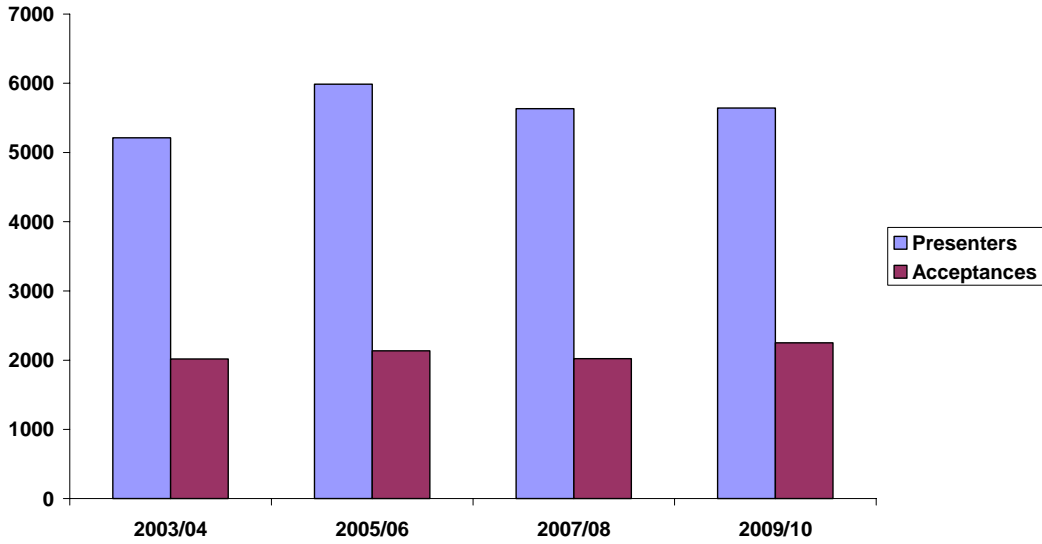
Single 16-17 Yr Old Presenters & Acceptances



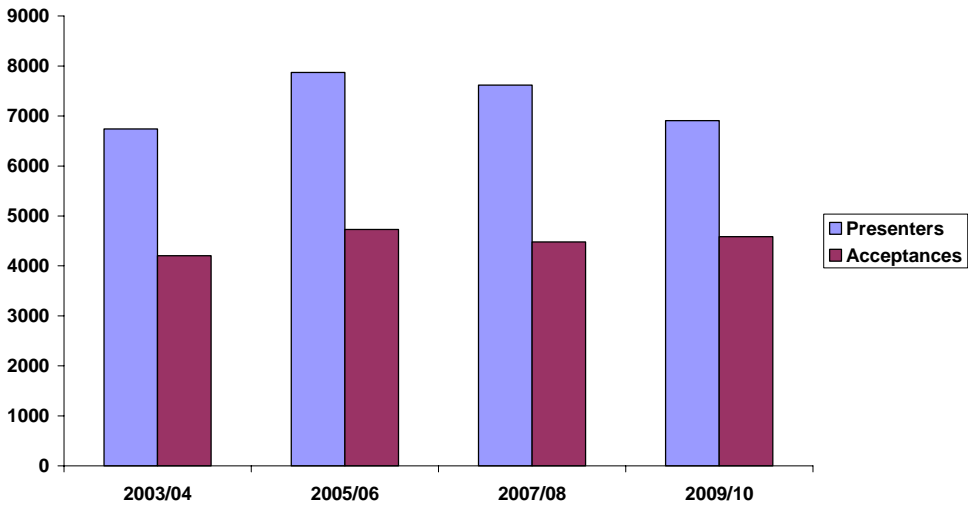
Single 18-25 Yr Old Presenters & Acceptances



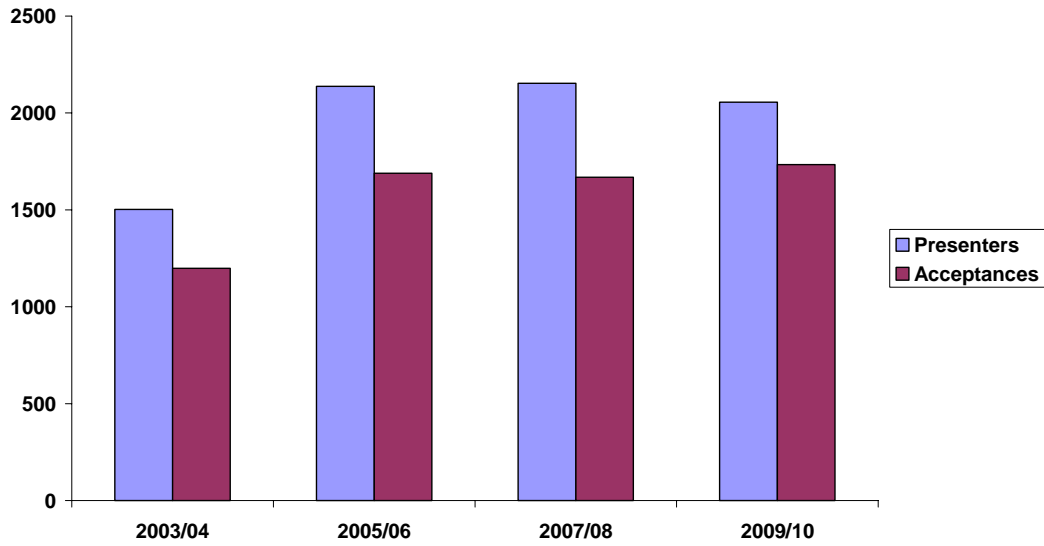
Single 26-59 Yr Olds Presenters & Acceptances



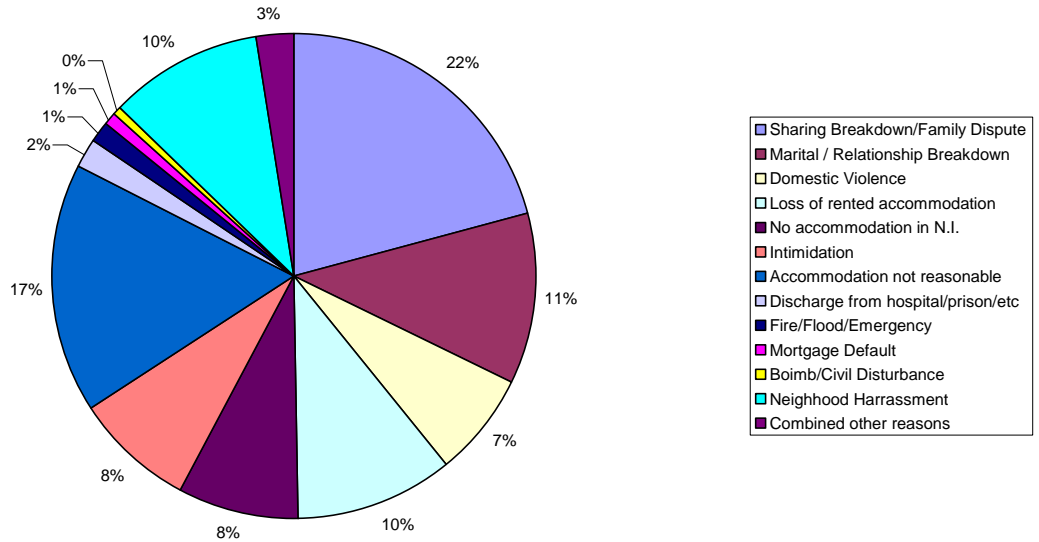
All Family Households Presenters & Acceptances



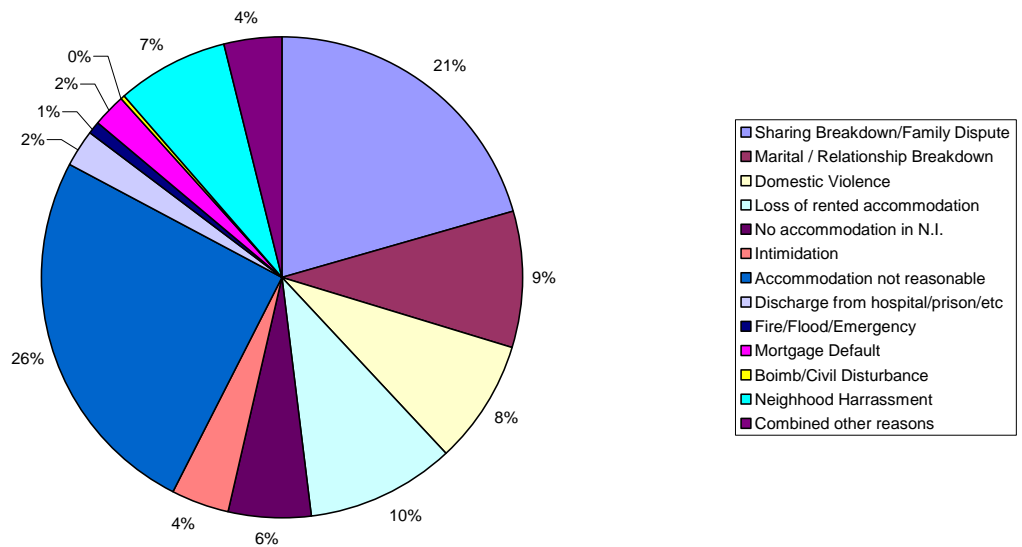
Elderly Households Presenters & Acceptances



Homelessness acceptances by reason 2003/2004



Homelessness acceptances by reason 2009/2010



Appendix 2 - FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

From 2003 in excess of £200m has been spent in the provision of homelessness temporary accommodation services, additional homelessness assistance for applicants and for specific funding to the Voluntary Sector to response to our homelessness duties under the Housing (Northern Ireland) 1988 Order. This amount also includes the funding provided through Supporting People from 2003 but does include the amount of housing benefit paid in respect of applicants who self refer to temporary accommodation.

Financial investment in homelessness services (revenue) from 2003

	Temporary Accommodation Provision	Homeless-ness Services	Voluntary Sector Funding	Supporting People	Leased Properties	Totals
	Housing Benefit, Top Up and Supporting People costs	Furniture Storage, Taxi, exceptional homelessness costs	Homelessness Services	Floating Support for homelessness projects & schemes	Private Sector emergency accommodation	
2003/2004	19m	800k	1.1m	-		20.9m
2004/2005	21.5m	807k	1.3m	308K		23.9m
2005/2006	24.4m	890k	1.6m	543K		27.4m
2006/2007	24.6m	1.03m	2.0m	587K		28.2m
2007/2008	26.6m	1.1m	2.2m	1.1m		31m
2008/2009	28.6m	1.04m	2.3m	1.3m	790k	34m
2009/2010	30.6m	870k	2.3m	1.32m	815k	35.9m

**Appendix 3 – AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN
TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FROM 2003/04
TO 2009/10 (IN WEEKS)**

Accommodation type	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010
NIHE hostel	24	34	21	40	43	47	37
Voluntary hostel	27	37	34	50	62	52	40
Private single let	28	38	40	42	40	40	42

Appendix 4 - MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2002

The 2002 strategy contained 25 recommendations designed to improve homelessness services in Northern Ireland. The following is a summary of the main achievements since the previous strategy.

Accommodation

- Over 1,000 additional units of supported accommodation have been provided.
- An additional 700 units of self contained private sector accommodation have been provided.
- The target of ceasing the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation except in emergencies has been achieved.
- Almost 10,000 units of social rented sector accommodation have been provided since 2003/2004.
- Rent deposit guarantee schemes have been introduced in Belfast and Londonderry.
- Over 48,000 homeless households have been permanently re housed in the social rented sector since 2003/4.

Assessment

- A Multi-Disciplinary Homeless Support Team has been developed in Belfast.

Rough sleeping

- Belfast and Londonderry Rough Sleepers' Strategies has been developed leading to:
 - enhanced street outreach services
 - the provision of additional emergency bed facilities

- the provision of a “wet hostel” facility (Belfast)
- improved links to health services

Targeted services

- The development of a sex offenders’ accommodation strategy.
- The development of a protocol for dealing with vulnerable young people.
- The provision of a range of services to assist victims of domestic violence.
- The introduction of improved services for foreign nationals.

Prevention

- The development of localised advice services for homelessness presenters.
- The production of localised information for rural households.
- The provision of on-line housing and homelessness advice facilities.
- The introduction of a network of floating support services.
- The development of a Community Safety Strategy to tackle anti social behaviour.
- The introduction of education advice services.
- The provision of a housing and homelessness advice service in prisons.

Many of the above achievements could not have been realised without the cooperation of our statutory and voluntary sector partners. The principal lesson learned in the roll out of the 2002 strategy is the fact that homelessness is a multi faceted phenomenon which can only properly be addressed through maximum inter agency cooperation. Whereas many good examples of such cooperation exist, the success of the new strategy will largely depend on strengthening these relationships.