

**Haringey's
Homelessness
Strategy 2008-11**

**A multi agency approach
to tackling homelessness**

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1. Foreword

We live in one of the wealthiest cities in the world and yet, for thousands of Haringey residents, it is a struggle to find and keep a settled home.

In Haringey, five thousand homeless households (including almost 8,000 young people under the age of sixteen) are living in temporary accommodation. Many others live in overcrowded conditions or struggle to pay their mortgage or rent.

Since the publication of Haringey's first Homelessness Strategy in 2003, members of the Haringey Strategic Partnership have worked hard to tackle the causes of homelessness, increase the supply of affordable homes, bring empty homes back into use and remove barriers to the private rented sector.

As the Leader of Haringey Council, however, I am constantly reminded of the huge impact that homelessness is having on the health, educational attainment, life chances and well-being of some of the borough's most vulnerable citizens.

Along with my colleagues on the Haringey Strategic Partnership, I also recognise the inter-relationship between homelessness, community safety, child poverty, worklessness, anti social behaviour, substance misuse and crime.

This new, three year Homelessness Strategy is ambitious. Its implementation demands the transformation of services, an unprecedented level of collaboration and partnership and the halving, by March 2010, of the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation.

Preventing people from becoming homeless and helping others to move successfully into settled homes is complex and time-consuming. Although the Council has a vital role to play in this, I know we cannot do this on our own. Instead, we must all work together to find solutions to common problems.

Hundreds of people and organisations have contributed to the development of this Homelessness Strategy, and I am grateful to everyone for their input.

I commend this Strategy to you and I hope that, like me, you will be inspired by it.

Councillor George Meehan
Chair of the Haringey Strategic Partnership

2. Executive summary

This Strategy marks a fresh approach to tackling homelessness in Haringey. It provides the necessary framework and impetus for effective partnership working and the delivery of efficiently managed and co-ordinated advice, housing and support services for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Haringey's Homelessness Strategy has been developed in consultation with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including service users and service providers.

Part 3 sets out the commitment the Homelessness Champions (appointed from housing, health, children's services, adult social care, offender management, the voluntary sector and the employment and skills sector) have given to improve services and implement the Strategy.

Part 4 sets out the nine key priorities for Haringey, expressed in the form of commitments: support and promote a partnership approach; invest in early intervention and prevention; increase the supply of affordable homes; provide choice and encourage independence; halve the use of temporary accommodation; improve the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation; safeguard children and vulnerable adults; improve customer service, involvement and satisfaction; ensure that policies and procedures are fair and understood.

Parts 5 and 6 describe the nature, extent and impact of homelessness, both nationally and in Haringey.

Part 7 describes the area based action planning, piloted in Haringey by the Council and registered social landlords, to tackle homelessness.

Part 8 summarises the Government's strategic priorities for homelessness and related issues.

Part 9 provides the local and regional strategic context, and lists the key performance indicators and targets affecting the development and delivery of Haringey's homelessness services.

Part 10 describes the inclusive way in which Haringey's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan have been developed through a review of homelessness and meaningful engagement with service users and stakeholders.

Part 11 describes the way in which Haringey's Homelessness Strategy will be implemented.

Part 12 describes the role that the Homelessness Strategy will play in transforming the way in which everyone tackles homelessness in Haringey.

Part 13 acknowledges the large number of people and organisations that have had an input into the development of this Strategy.

Part 14 sets out Haringey's three year action plan for tackling homelessness.

3. Homelessness champions

The successful implementation of Haringey's Homelessness Strategy is dependent upon everyone working together to intervene early, prevent homelessness, encourage independence and provide innovative, settled housing solutions.

As homelessness champions for the organisations we represent, we are committed to working together to improve services, achieve the objectives of the Strategy, and provide a co-ordinated and effective multi agency approach to tackling homelessness in Haringey.

It is proposed that the names, job titles, logos and signatures of the following people will be displayed below:

- *Cabinet Member for Housing*
- *Assistant Director for Strategic & Community Housing Services*
- *Supporting People Commissioning Manager*
- *A representative from the Voluntary & Community Sector*
- *A representative from the Primary Care Trust*
- *A representative from the Mental Health Trust*
- *A representative from Children's Services*
- *A representative from Adult Social Care*
- *A representative from Social Housing (RSL or Homes for Haringey)*
- *A representative from the National Offender Management Service*
- *A representative from Skills & Training (CONEL / Jobcentre Plus)*

4. Our key objectives

The key objectives of this Strategy have been agreed following an analysis of local needs, extensive consultation with stakeholders about the priorities for service delivery and improvement, and consideration of how services can best meet local and national strategic priorities.

Expressed as a set of stakeholder commitments, the nine key objectives describe our aspirations for Haringey and how we will achieve them.

With its emphasis on partnership working and early intervention, the Homelessness Strategy is seeking to reduce people's reliance on the homelessness legislation and social housing to meet their housing need.

We are committed to working more closely with private landlords, developing and promoting a range of affordable housing options, and providing people with the advice, encouragement and opportunity to access training, education and employment, and to have more of a say in the services they receive.

As well as reducing the use of temporary accommodation, we want to improve the quality and suitability of what remains. We also want to mitigate the effects of homelessness on children and vulnerable adults.

- 1. We will actively support and promote a partnership approach to preventing homelessness**
- 2. We will invest in early intervention and effective homelessness prevention**
- 3. We will increase the supply of affordable homes**
- 4. We will provide choice and encourage independence**
- 5. We will halve, by March 2010, the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation**
- 6. We will improve the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation**
- 7. We will work proactively to safeguard children and vulnerable adults**
- 8. We will improve customer service, involvement and satisfaction**
- 9. We will ensure that our policies and procedures are fair, transparent and widely understood**

5. Understanding the issues

Homelessness is a complex problem that can have a long-term negative impact on those affected by it.

It is both the cause and consequence of many other problems, such as family and relationship breakdown, domestic violence, mental ill-health, substance misuse, the loss of employment, and debt.

Drawing on national data and the evidence base built up during Haringey's review of homelessness, we know that:

Homeless people suffer health inequalities compared to the general population

- Increased risk of infection, poor diet and nutrition, stress, anxiety and depression, as well as difficulty in accessing primary health care.
- Children experience behavioural problems and their development can be delayed.
- Rough sleepers may also suffer from respiratory conditions, arthritis, poor circulation, foot disorders and physical injuries caused by assault.

People living in temporary accommodation (TA) are less likely to be in employment

- Research undertaken by Shelter established that, of the households living in temporary accommodation, 77% of them included no-one who was in paid employment.
- Barriers to employment include high rents, poor health, low self-esteem, and worries about benefit changes.

Children are disadvantaged by living in temporary accommodation

- Approximately 70% of households accepted as being unintentionally homeless and in priority need have a dependent child living with them.
- Education will be disrupted if children have to change schools or if they remain at the same school but are persistently late because the journey takes too long.
- Homework will be difficult to complete if there is nowhere quiet that the children can study.
- Children can become detached from everything that is familiar to them and isolated from all of their friends and support networks.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) households are more likely to become homeless or overcrowded

- BME households account for 8% of the country's population but 25% of all homelessness acceptances.
- In 2004, BME households in London were four times more likely than other households to be living in overcrowded accommodation.

Family and parental exclusion are the main cause of homelessness

- More than a third of the households accepted for rehousing under the homelessness legislation are homeless because their parents, relatives or friends will no longer accommodate them.

Domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness

- Domestic violence accounts for about 12% of homelessness acceptances and is one of the main reasons for repeat homelessness
- 30% of domestic violence starts during pregnancy
- Living with, or experiencing, violence in the home is one of the main causes of teenagers becoming homeless

Problematic drug use can lead to the loss of a home

- Problematic drug use and/or a chaotic lifestyle may lead to rent or mortgage arrears, disengagement from services, a failure to complete benefit claim forms and relationship breakdown
- Homelessness, itself, can be the cause of problematic drug use

Generations of learned anti social behaviour is putting tenants' homes at risk

- In many areas, most of the serious anti social and offending behaviour is perpetrated by a relatively small number of people
- The most chaotic, dysfunctional families are each costing local taxpayers up to £500,000 a year for bad outcomes
- By challenging generations of learned behaviour, intensive family support can address the causes of anti social behaviour and remove the risk of eviction

There are many barriers to the private rented sector

- The rent paid for private rented accommodation is much higher than what is paid for a council or housing association home
- Most low income households find it very difficult to raise the equivalent of two months' rent to cover the damage deposit and first month's rent-in-advance
- Many landlords are reluctant to let their homes to tenants who are reliant on Housing Benefit
- 49% of private rented homes are non-decent and many of them are not well-maintained
- Most private rented homes are let as 6 or 12 months assured shorthold tenancies, even when it is the landlord's intention to let the property long-term

There is not enough social housing for everyone who wants it

- In 2006, there were 1,634,000 households on local authority housing registers
- In the same year, there were only 322,200 social housing lettings

Of the homeless households accepted for rehousing, a quarter have been assessed as being 'vulnerable'

- 7% are young people
- 6% have a mental health problem
- 5% have a physical disability

6. The situation in Haringey

Our response to homelessness in Haringey has been developed using data and information on local needs and by learning from the experience of service users, frontline service providers and other stakeholders.

Despite the progress made since the last Homelessness Strategy in 2003, Haringey is only just getting to grips with homelessness and achieving a sustained reduction in the Council's use of temporary accommodation.

It is for this reason that Haringey's new Homelessness Strategy, with its emphasis on multi agency working, needs to focus on early intervention, homelessness prevention, the delivery of a range of housing options and the encouragement of independence.

Our Homelessness Review of 2008 contains the evidence base we have used during the development of the new Homelessness Strategy.

Progress made since Haringey's last homelessness strategy (2003)

- 1,625 affordable rented homes and 1,264 shared ownership homes have been built
- Most of Haringey's social housing is now being let through choice based lettings (Home Connections)
- Substantial Supporting People funding has been invested in the provision of floating support to enable families and single people to live independently and sustain their accommodation.

- The Hearthstone service and Sanctuary scheme have been established to assist and support victims of domestic violence

Housing demand and supply

Haringey suffers from a severe shortage of affordable homes.

Since 2000, average house prices in the borough have risen by 113% and even the least expensive homes are beyond the reach of many people.

Haringey's Housing Needs Survey of 2007 concluded that the borough requires an extra 52 homes for every 1,000 residents living in the borough. This shortfall is 3 times higher than the national average (16 per 1000) and almost double the average for Inner London (32 per 1,000).

The borough's population is forecast to increase by between 6% and 10% during the next two decades, adding further to local housing demand.

Overcrowding

One of the consequences of the shortage of affordable housing is the number of people living in homes that are too small for them.

According to the Housing Needs Survey, an estimated 8% of households are living in unsuitable, overcrowded homes, and a third of lone parent families are living in overcrowded accommodation.

The situation in Haringey

Temporary accommodation

With five thousand households (more than 5% of the borough's residents) living in temporary accommodation, Haringey faces a huge challenge in seeking to halve the number by 2010.

Most households spend a very long time in temporary accommodation (TA) and it is not uncommon for families to wait for 6 or 7 years before they are offered somewhere settled to live. Of the homeless households living in temporary accommodation, 20% have been living in TA for at least five years.

Large family homes (especially those with 4 or more bedrooms) are in very short supply.

As less than a third of households in temporary accommodation are bidding for homes through Home Connections, there is an urgent need to engage with those households that have sufficient points to make a successful bid.

It is important to challenge applicants' perception that their best option is to await the offer of a council or housing association home rather than consider other housing options (such as private rented or low cost home ownership) that may be more readily available.

Rough sleeping

Historically, the number of rough sleepers in Haringey has been very low. However, there is evidence that numbers are increasing.

This is an aspect of homelessness that requires our urgent attention, starting with a rough sleepers count to establish the nature and extent of rough sleeping.

Worklessness

Although there is little authoritative, regularly updated data about the employment levels of homeless households, we recognise that homelessness and worklessness are interdependent in their nature.

The homelessness charity, Crisis, estimates that only 10% of homeless people of working age are in employment and that where a person also has a mental health problem, this reduces to just 2.5%.

In Haringey, 83% of the households in emergency accommodation (bed and breakfast and annexes) are reliant on benefits; for leased accommodation, the figure is 93%.

Research has shown that workless families are more likely to become homeless and to remain homeless, and child poverty is concentrated in households that are workless or working poor.

One of the priorities of the new Homelessness Strategy will be to ensure that homelessness services and initiatives are more closely aligned to the Haringey Guarantee, the flagship scheme for engaging with residents who are furthest away from the labour market.

It is acknowledged that more needs to be done to ensure that homeless people are able to access volunteering opportunities and work placements as a means of helping them into employment.

The situation in Haringey

Children, young people and families

The Council is committed to helping every learner in school to fulfil their potential and to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Children in homeless households are more likely to have special educational needs, to have English as an additional language, to need higher levels of support in learning English and to be absent from school.

Mobile pupils are more likely, at the age of 7, to be 15-20% behind the expected levels of their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.

Improved processes, better support packages and more suitable accommodation are also needed to ensure that care leavers and homeless 16 & 17 year olds are able to move into, and sustain, settled accommodation.

Young people, aged 16 – 24, account for about one third of the 1,100 single homeless people living in temporary accommodation.

All the evidence shows that the best way of tackling homelessness is by joint working at a strategic level and delivering integrated and personalised services on the ground.

It is also important to have shared protocols, a shared ethos of prevention, shared aims and good arrangements for sharing information.

Race and ethnicity

Haringey is a very diverse borough and continues to attract new migrants. BME households are especially at risk of homelessness, overcrowding and disadvantage.

There are marked differences in homelessness acceptance rates, between the various ethnic groups, with people of Black African and Black Caribbean origins being twice as likely to be accepted as homeless as people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds. The reasons behind these differences are not well understood and merit further research.

In Haringey, BME households are over represented (compared to overall numbers in the borough) in temporary accommodation (TA) and on the Haringey's housing register.

BME households account for 89% of the total number of households (and 93% of the residents) in TA. Black African people make up less than 10 per cent of borough residents, but more than 20% of the people in TA.

Although the shortage of suitable sites for caravans and mobile homes put gypsy and travelling communities at risk of becoming homeless, they are often very reluctant to approach local authorities as homeless, so the true extent of homelessness tends to go unnoticed and unreported.

Our aim must be to develop high quality, culturally competent services.

Domestic violence

For a long time, Haringey has made it a priority to reduce domestic violence and its Hearthstone service (which brings together housing, victim support, health, legal services and the police) is often cited as a centre of good practice.

Even though reported incidents of domestic violence fell by a quarter in 2006-07, domestic violence still accounts for a quarter of all reported violent crime in London.

Despite all of the good work, too many domestic violence victims and their children are required to spend years in TA when they could have **chosen** to remain where they are (with enhanced home security measures installed under the Sanctuary scheme) or pursue an emergency transfer to alternative social housing as a way of avoiding homelessness and TA.

To this end, we will actively promote the take-up of the Sanctuary scheme as a housing option and amend the Lettings Policy to enable council tenants and housing association tenants to obtain emergency transfers rather than be placed in temporary accommodation and wait years until they are offered somewhere settled.

We will work proactively with RSLs and local authorities to develop reciprocal arrangements for helping housing association and council tenants to move into social housing in other boroughs when it is unsafe for them to continue living in Haringey.

Disability

It is estimated that, in Haringey, approximately 20% of households include someone with an identified support need.

Furthermore, some 43% of homeless people who have a disability (and some 40% of homeless people who have a mental illness) have been unemployed for more than 3 years.

The Homelessness Strategy will seek to increase the effectiveness of joint working and ensure that homeless people are able to access the support and healthcare they require and to work with the agencies responsible for reducing the number of Incapacity Benefit claimants in Haringey.

Use of the private rented sector

In Haringey, 20% of residents live in private rented accommodation.

For most tenants, the experience is a positive one, with the accommodation being well managed, kept in a good state of repair and located in an area of their choice.

Sometimes, however, repairs are not done on time and the landlord's failure to manage the property causes a serious nuisance to local residents.

As the private rented sector has such an important role to play in meeting Haringey's need for temporary and settled homes, the Homelessness Strategy must seek not only to make it easier for people to find and keep accommodation but also to improve the management and condition of privately rented homes.

7. Area based action planning

Haringey has been chosen, by the Housing Corporation and the CLG, as one of just three areas in the country to pilot area based action planning.

Launched at an event in June 2008, the Haringey pilot scheme will involve the Council and local registered social landlords (RSLs) working together to tackle and prevent homelessness, and support Haringey's efforts to halve its use of temporary accommodation.

Joint Homelessness Action Plan

Although a series of meetings and workshops will be required before the contents of the Joint Action Plan are agreed, it was evident from the launch that there is huge potential and support for more collaborative working between the Council and the RSLs.

The Joint Action Plan will include a series of commitments and actions that are designed to improve tenancy support and resettlement, assist tenancy sustainment and ensure early intervention to prevent homelessness.

It will also serve to improve homeless households' access to settled homes through planned move-on, better use of the nominations process, and the development of joint protocols for information sharing and other matters

Links to Homelessness Strategy

The Joint Homelessness Action Plan will complement, and contribute to, Haringey's Homelessness Strategy.

As well as increasing the supply of affordable homes, it will reduce homelessness and the use of TA.

Making a difference

The Homelessness Strategy and Joint Homelessness Action Plan afford the opportunity to make a huge difference.

At the Haringey launch of the pilot scheme in June 2008, a whole raft of initiatives were proposed.

The following are just some of them:

- A borough-wide scheme to tackle under occupation amongst council and housing association tenants.
- An information sharing protocol requiring the full disclosure of any serious breaches of tenancy, mental ill-health or ongoing support needs, in order to assist the landlord's efforts to sustain the new tenancy.
- A common register of overcrowded and under occupied properties that enables households to be 'matched' for mutual exchanges.
- A multi agency rent arrears forum (attended by local RSLs, Homes for Haringey, the DWP, the Housing Benefit Service and local advisers) to improve liaison, encourage the exchange of ideas and information, and share and disseminate good practice.
- A system for alerting advice and support providers, at an early stage, when tenancies are at risk.
- Reciprocal arrangements to enable tenants of social housing to transfer more quickly and easily to accommodation outside Haringey.

8. The national strategic context

In 2005, the Government published **Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Settled Homes**, its strategy for tackling homelessness and halving the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010:

- Preventing homelessness
- Providing support for vulnerable people
- Tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness
- Helping more people move away from rough sleeping
- Providing more settled homes

The Strategy was produced following the Government's success in reducing levels of rough sleeping by two thirds and minimising the use of bed and breakfast for households that include a child or someone who is pregnant.

Youth homelessness

In November 2006, the Government announced a package of measures to tackle youth homelessness:

- Ending local authorities' use of bed and breakfast, for homeless 16 & 17 year olds, except in an emergency, by 2010.
- Improving young people's access to family mediation
- Establishing a national supported lodgings scheme providing accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home.

Temporary accommodation

The number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation has fallen sharply since the Government's decision to set local authorities a target of reducing their use of TA, by 50%, by the year 2010.

With the majority of local authorities on course to achieve the 2010 target, the Government is now turning its attention to the frequency with which homeless households are placed out-of-borough and, where this happens in London, what use is being made of the NOTIFY system to track families' movements between boroughs.

Welfare reform

As part of its welfare reform agenda, the Government is seeking to help 300,000 lone parents into work and to reduce, by one million, the number of people receiving Invalidity Benefit.

Professor John Hills' review of social housing concluded, in 2007, that employment rates of people living in social housing are substantially lower than those who are living in other tenures but experiencing similar levels of deprivation and disadvantage. It recommended that much more be done to bring together support for housing and employment.

Other priorities

The Government's other priorities are reflected in the National Indicators in the Local Area Agreement, but also include tackling overcrowding and preventing BME households from becoming homeless.

9. The local and regional strategic context

Sustainable Community Strategy

The strategic importance of tackling homelessness and worklessness is reflected in Haringey's Sustainable Community Strategy, produced by the Haringey Strategic Partnership:

- **People at the heart of change**

'We will continue to increase the availability of affordable housing through the optimum use of existing dwellings and by building more affordable homes.'

- **Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all**

'We want to extend opportunities for life-long learning, work, training and education for everyone, including older people and those with disabilities. All our children should be able to develop their full potential whatever their background or family circumstances'.

- **Healthier people with a better quality of life**

'We need more high quality, safe, settled and affordable housing'.

Links with other strategies

Many of Haringey's key strategies have a bearing on homelessness.

These include the Children and Young People's Strategy (*Changing Lives*), Income Maximisation Strategy, Child Poverty Strategy, Community Safety Strategy, Regeneration Strategy, and the new Housing Strategy and Domestic Violence Strategy.

Local Area Agreement

Haringey's commitment to tackling and preventing homelessness is reflected in many of the Local Area Agreement targets, but particularly:

NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered.

NI 156: Number of households in temporary accommodation

Tackling homelessness will also contribute to the achievement of other targets, including those relating to the provision of appropriate settled accommodation for vulnerable people, the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET), educational attainment, domestic violence and school absence.

Homes for Haringey

Since publication of Haringey's last Homelessness Strategy in 2003, the Council has established Homes for Haringey as an ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) for the purpose of managing and maintaining the Council's housing stock.

Haringey has been awarded an extra £198 million capital funding to enable all of its council homes to be brought up to the decent homes standard.

It is essential that safeguards are put in place to help tenants sustain their tenancies, and that positive action is taken to ensure that local residents benefit from the additional training and employment opportunities created by the investment in Haringey's decent homes programme.

The local and regional strategic context

The Mayor of London

Since Haringey's last Homelessness Strategy in 2003, the Mayor of London has been given new powers:

- To publish a statutory Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan for London
- To decide the broad distribution of the affordable housing element of the Regional Housing Pot, in line with the Housing Strategy.

In September 2007, the Mayor published a draft Housing Strategy, proposing a substantial increase in the number of affordable homes to meet the targets set out in the London Plan.

The election of a new Mayor in May 2008 meant that the draft Housing Strategy was not adopted. A new draft Housing Strategy is likely to be published towards the end of 2008.

Since his election, the new Mayor of London has acknowledged the need to increase the supply of affordable homes and is committed to ensuring that 50,000 more affordable homes are built in London during 2008-11.

It is possible, however, that there may be a shift in funding away from the social rented sector and towards shared ownership.

Capital Moves

Work is ongoing to develop Capital Moves, a choice based lettings and mobility scheme for London.

If approved, the scheme will provide council and housing association tenants in London with the opportunity to bid for properties in other boroughs.

North London Housing Sub Region

Haringey Council is an active member of the North London Strategic Alliance, and the North London Housing Sub Region (NLHSR), and works proactively with them to tackle homelessness.

During the past few years, Haringey has worked with other local authorities to maximise the sub-region's share of government housing grants, commission a number of joint housing needs assessments, joined Home Connections (a sub-regional choice based lettings service) and participated in the piloting of a sub-regional floating support service for released offenders.

The North London Housing Sub Region is currently seeking to appoint a Homelessness Co-ordinator to oversee the Sub Region's joint action on a range of matters, including: homelessness prevention; a review of inter-borough placements and rent deposit schemes; the development of a sub-regional out-of-hours service and a new service for private lettings.

10. How we produced this strategy

In drawing up this Strategy, we have sought to be as inclusive as possible, and to learn from the experiences and feedback of service users.

Haringey's Homelessness Review and Strategy are founded upon our extensive consultation with service users, service providers, housing staff and other stakeholders.

We achieved a balance of partner and service user input by:

- Using a postal survey and focus groups to consult with residents of temporary accommodation
- Holding a focus group with Hearthstone service users whose homes had been made more secure through the Sanctuary domestic violence scheme.
- Attending Homes for Haringey forums to consult with young people, older people and people with disabilities.
- Conducting a telephone survey of households that had moved into the private rented sector, using one of the Council's rent deposit schemes.
- Working with service users and LiveWork (which specialises in using customer insights as a basis for the redesign of services) to improve homelessness services.
- Hosting a stakeholder conference, attended by advice, support and accommodation providers, to identify unmet needs and consider options for service improvement.
- Using a postal survey and the landlords forum to consult with private landlords
- Consulting with registered social landlords through the Haringey Housing Group and at the launch of the Area Based Action Planning (tackling homelessness) event in June 2008.
- Holding a series of focus groups with housing staff, to capture their views on the services currently provided and their ideas on new ways of working.
- Consulting with the Council's Cabinet Members and Chief Officers, to obtain their input into the drafting of the Strategy.

After reflecting on the findings of the Homelessness Review and the results of the consultation, a multi agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group approved nine key strategic priorities and a set of 'actions' that will support their achievement.

Stakeholders were then invited to comment on the strategic priorities and draft Action Plan to ensure that the Homelessness Strategy continues to enjoy widespread support.

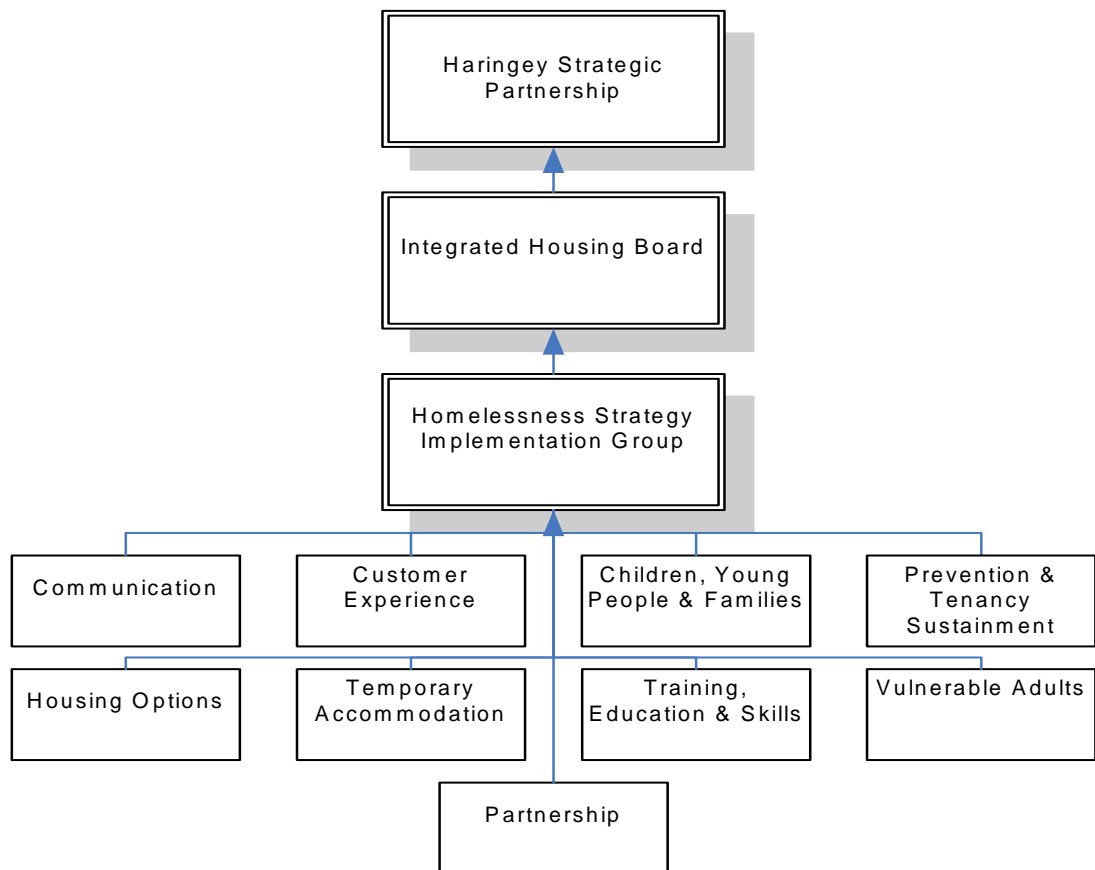
11. Implementing the strategy

Responsibility for ensuring the successful and timely implementation of Haringey's Homelessness Strategy will rest with the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group.

The Implementation Group will comprise key stakeholders, including service users, and will report directly to the Integrated Housing Board.

The primary mechanism for delivering the actions in the Action Plan will be the nine themed delivery groups.

Each delivery group will have its own terms of reference and will be accountable for ensuring that those parts of the Action Plan that are allocated to them are implemented successfully and on time.



Implementing the strategy

Membership of the delivery groups will reflect Haringey's multi agency approach to tackling homelessness.

As well as meeting regularly, each of the delivery groups will set up 'task and finish' groups to concentrate on particular actions within the Strategy.

Complementing the work of the Council's own Service Improvement Groups, the delivery groups will produce a short delivery plan for each of the actions in the Strategy.

A **Communications** Delivery Group will assist joint working by improving everyone's knowledge of services, helping services to communicate better with one another, and producing joint publications, including a directory of homelessness services and a health and housing advice pack.

The **Partnership** Delivery Group will champion partnership working and the development of a shared strategic approach to tackling homelessness. It will do this by reviewing service delivery, developing shared protocols for referrals, joint working and information sharing, and contributing to area based action planning.

A **Customer Experience** Delivery Group will assist the improvement of customer care, maximise service user involvement, increase the amount of consultation undertaken, and ensure the delivery of joined-up, responsive, customer-centred services.

The **Children, Young People and Families** Delivery Group will develop initiatives that improve joint working, prevent homelessness and contribute to the achievement of the 5 outcomes in 'Every Child Matters' (stay safe; be healthy; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing)

A **Vulnerable Adults** Delivery Group will focus on the needs of rough sleepers, make best use of supported housing, improve move-on from hospital and prison, and enable vulnerable people to access support.

The **Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment** Delivery Group will oversee changes to the Council's housing advice service, develop a specialist multi agency advice service for BME households, and encourage early intervention.

A **Housing Options** Delivery Group will encourage greater independence by promoting a range of affordable alternatives to social housing.

The **Temporary Accommodation** Delivery Group will focus on improving the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation, cutting overcrowding and ensuring homeless households are able to plan for, and achieve, a successful move into a settled home.

A **Training, Education and Skills** Delivery Group will link homelessness services to employment advisers and establish a series of employment and skills surgeries for homeless people.

12. A fresh approach and a new direction

The development of Haringey's Homelessness Strategy has helped shape the Council's plans to transform the way in which it delivers housing services.

Acknowledging that Haringey does not have enough social housing to meet demand, and that people's life chances and independence are being compromised by the amount of time they spend in temporary accommodation, the Council and its partners are committed to improving services, providing people with the encouragement and opportunity to become more independent, and delivering better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

With an emphasis on housing options, homelessness prevention, early intervention and effective joint working, the Housing Service is being reorganised to create separate Housing Advice and Housing Options teams, and a new Private Sector Lettings Team:

The Housing Advice Team will provide comprehensive advice on all aspects of housing (including landlord and tenant law, harassment and unlawful eviction, disrepair, rent and mortgage arrears, the housing implications of domestic violence and/or relationship breakdown, defending possession proceedings, and the assessment of welfare benefit and tax credit entitlement) in order to improve housing conditions and prevent homelessness.

- The Housing Options Team will provide comprehensive advice on the full range of options (including affordable home ownership, private rented accommodation, mutual exchanges, sheltered housing, moving from under occupied social housing, and moving out of Haringey), together with the eligibility criteria. They will also help service users to make an informed decision on which options would best meet their needs.
- The Private Sector Lettings Team will work proactively with private landlords to make it easier for people to find and keep good quality, affordable, well managed private rented accommodation.

These changes will provide a firm foundation upon which to build Haringey's new network of advice and support providers, ensuring that service delivery is co-ordinated and resources are deployed effectively to prevent homelessness and provide settled housing solutions.

This fresh, multi agency approach will also support the development of new, improved services for rough sleepers and other homeless people who have been assessed as not being in 'priority need' within the meaning of the homelessness legislation.

An assertive outreach service is proposed for rough sleepers, together with a new rent deposit scheme for the exclusive use of homeless people deemed not to be in 'priority need'.

The new Homelessness Strategy demands a fresh approach to the way in which everyone in Haringey tackles and prevents homelessness.

Improved planning and delivery of services, together with extensive multi agency support for the achievement of Haringey's strategic priorities, affords an unprecedented opportunity for us all to make a huge impact on homelessness and its consequences.

With its emphasis on multi agency delivery groups, implementation of the Homelessness Strategy will ensure that all of the key issues are discussed and addressed.

Our multi agency approach to the development and implementation of the Homelessness Strategy affords all stakeholders the opportunity to work with others to improve processes and outcomes for the benefit of Haringey and their particular client group.

To make a meaningful impact on the number of homeless people who are not in education, employment or training, homelessness services must be aligned with Jobcentre Plus, the employment advisers and the Haringey Guarantee.

The appointment of Homelessness Champions will raise the profile of homelessness and increase the likelihood of homelessness featuring in other strategies and action plans.

It is hoped that Haringey will be able to establish a homeless households support service; a network of people whose work involves regular contact with homeless households living in temporary accommodation.

The purpose of the homeless households support service is to ensure that residents of temporary accommodation are provided with consistent messages and are kept fully informed about services, initiatives and their move-on options.

It also complements the way in which all agencies will be working together to encourage homeless households to bid for accommodation through Home Connections and to prepare them for moving on in a planned way.

The successful implementation of the new Homelessness Strategy requires the active support and involvement of hundreds of stakeholders.

More than ever before, service users will be actively consulted and involved in designing, monitoring and improving the services provided for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Over the next three years, Haringey's housing and homelessness services will be completely transformed, and new ways of working will deliver better outcomes for homeless people and a dramatic reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation.

13. Acknowledgements

It is proposed that the names of the organisations that contributed to the development of the Homelessness Strategy be displayed below: