

Homelessness strategies: a good practice handbook

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This handbook was commissioned by DTLR from Research and Information Services and produced by Geoffrey Randall and Susan Brown.

Executive Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook was commissioned by DTLR to assist local housing authorities with meeting the provisions in the Homelessness Bill which require housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their areas and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy.

This handbook:

- provides advice on the process of formulating a homelessness strategy;
- gives an overview of the activities and services which might be contained within the strategy;
- identifies further good practice guidance on individual elements of the strategy.

The handbook will be helpful for local authority housing departments and the wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies providing services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

Statutory guidance on the implementation of the authorities new homelessness duties will be contained in a revision to the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness, and is not included in this handbook.

How to use this handbook:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read it straight through for an overview of homelessness strategies.• Consult chapters as necessary.• As a source of reference for more detailed guidance on specific topics.• As a guide to the new duties in the Homelessness Bill on homelessness reviews and strategies (requirements are highlighted in boxes).

2. DEVELOPING A HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The key stages in creating a strategy are (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.1):

- consultation;
- a needs assessment;
- an audit of services, including an assessment of resources;
- a programme for planning and implementing the strategy.

There is a range of other local authority strategies and programmes with which the homelessness strategy should be co-ordinated, such as housing strategies and local strategic partnerships (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.2). Best Value Reviews can make a major contribution to formulating a strategy (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.3 para. 2.3.15).

Services to homeless people are provided by many statutory and voluntary agencies and it is therefore important that they are involved from the beginning in the formulation of the strategy. There is a need for consultation with these agencies and with homeless people themselves (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.2).

The detailed planning and implementation of the strategy should be the responsibility of a small strategy group. The group will need to put in place monitoring procedures, including setting performance indicators focusing on outcome measures which should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timetabled (SMART) (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.3).

3. SUCCESSFUL JOINT WORKING ON HOMELESSNESS

Joint work can result in higher quality and more efficient and cost effective services. The mechanisms for successful joint work include (see Chapter 3 sub-section 3.3 para. 3.3.2):

- agreeing roles and responsibilities of all participating agencies from the outset;
- improved sharing of information between agencies;
- joint training and visits between agencies;
- an agreed individual officer or agency who will facilitate the process of joint work.

Joint working is not easy to achieve in practice. This handbook gives advice on how to overcome the barriers to successful joint work (see Chapter 3 sub-section 3.3 para. 3.3.1).

4. MAPPING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

The strategy should start with a review of homelessness and must include an assessment of needs (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.1). All homeless people and those at risk of homelessness should be included in the review, including intentionally homeless people and those who are not in priority need (see Chapter 4 sub-section 4.2).

The review of needs and audit of services should identify where needs are not being met and where there is unnecessary duplication of services (see Chapter 4 sub-section 4.4). The review of resources should cover staff, property and funding and include existing provision as well as plans for the future (see Chapter 4 sub-section 4.3 para. 4.3.24).

In assessing needs and resources, the challenge is to make the best use of existing data while identifying as part of strategy the means of improving the quality of the data (see Chapter 4

sub-section 4.3). A useful starting point for further needs and resources assessment will be the information gathered for the Supporting People programme (Chapter 4 sub-section 4.3 see para. 4.3.13).

It is worth considering putting in place a common recording system with other agencies, which is able to track individuals across different agencies as this is the only way of achieving a comprehensive picture of homelessness needs (see Chapter 4 sub-section 4.3 para. 4.3.20 4.3.21).

5. HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Preventive activities and services should form a central part of homelessness strategies and should include:

- identifying people at risk of homelessness (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.2);
- advice and information (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.3);
- resettlement and tenancy sustainment (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.4);
- multi-service agencies and day centres (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.5);
- community action to reduce the risk of homelessness (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.6).

There is a need for a range of specialist preventive and support services for particular groups including, single people, families, women, young people and people from minority ethnic groups (see Chapter 6).

Although housing authorities will take the lead in formulating homelessness strategies, many other statutory and voluntary agencies will need to be involved in developing and implementing the strategy and in the provision of services to homeless people (see Chapter 7).

6. ACCOMMODATION PROVISION

Temporary accommodation

The use of temporary accommodation should be kept to a minimum. Where homeless people have to spend extended periods in temporary accommodation, it is important that they have access to support and services (see Chapter 8 sub-section 8.1).

B&B hotels are almost always the worst option for temporary accommodation, offering the poorest conditions at the highest costs. In areas with a high use of B&B, plans to reduce or eliminate the use of B&B should be given a high priority in the strategy (see Chapter 8 sub-section 8.2).

Hostel provision will be an important part of the homelessness strategy in most areas. A range of accommodation is likely to be needed to provide for particular groups of homeless people such as families, women, young lone parents and those with support needs such as mental

health, alcohol and drug misuse and multiple needs (see Chapter 8 sub-section 8.3).

There are temporary accommodation schemes, such as Nightstops, which are especially suitable for young people (see Chapter 8 sub-section 8.5).

Permanent Social Housing

There is a need to ensure that changes to allocation policies and procedures, work with, not against, homelessness policies. There are a number of factors to consider in the homelessness strategy:

- the proportion of lettings to be made to homeless people (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.3);
- access to RSLs (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.16);
- the impact of flexible allocations policies (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.4);
- regeneration policies (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.6);
- the impact of choice based lettings schemes (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.7);
- the impact of policies to restrict access to local authority lettings (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.9);
- the use of low demand housing and ready access for homeless people (see para Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2.11);
- converting unpopular properties (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.13);
- the use of mobility schemes (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.14);
- the impact of stock transfer (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.18 9.2.20);
- the use of empty properties (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.22).

Supported housing

Local authorities will need to review the supply of accommodation and support services for a wide range of clients in preparation for the introduction of the Supporting People programme in April 2003 (see Chapter 10 sub-section 10.1).

There will be many overlaps and common features in local authorities strategies and the Supporting People programme. It will be essential for homelessness services and the homelessness strategy to be fully integrated with all aspects of Supporting People (see Chapter 10 sub-section 10.2 para. 10.2.7).

Where there is insufficient local demand for specialist accommodation and services, or those with continuing support needs are necessarily mobile, cross-authority arrangements will be more appropriate (see Chapter 10 sub-section 10.2 para. 10.2.6).

Some homeless people will have long term support needs, but for others it will be a stepping stone to independent living and all schemes for such people should include services for assessing residents readiness for independent living and arrangements for moving on to independent housing (see Chapter 10 sub-section 10.2 para. 10.2.7).

Private sector housing

The homelessness strategy should set out plans to make the best use of private housing to meet local needs, while maintaining standards. The strategy should cover a range

of measures and services including:

- advice and support for tenants and owners (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.3 para. 11.3.1 11.3.2).
- schemes which help homeless and other low income people to access private rented housing (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.2);
- advice and help for landlords (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.3 para. 11.3.3);
- improvement of standards in private rented housing (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.4);
- the prevention of harassment and illegal eviction (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.4 para. 11.4.3);
- adaptations and improvements to enable owners and tenants to stay in their homes (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.4 para. 11.4.5);
- the efficient administration of housing benefit (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.4 para. 11.4.6).

This handbook draws extensively on other detailed good practice guides* and on examples of services provided by individual authorities and other agencies. The detailed good practice guides and other sources of information are listed in *Appendix 3*. Contact details of services mentioned in this guide can be found in *Appendix 4*.

* Where this guidance is produced by non-government bodies, DTLR does not necessarily endorse all of their recommendations.

Chapter 1

Why is a homelessness strategy needed?

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Local authorities and other agencies helping homeless people need to do more than simply provide accommodation after people have become homeless. In many cases, early action can prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place. Even if people are rehoused, they may become homeless again if they are not helped to sustain their home. This is why the Government's proposals for homelessness reform, set out in the Housing Green Paper, included a policy of encouraging local authorities to take a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness. The Government believes that local housing authorities need to take a long term and strategic approach to tackling and managing homelessness, including rough sleeping, in their areas. Homelessness can only be tackled through the strategic planning of related services. This handbook is intended to help local authorities in the planning and coordination of all services which tackle and reduce homelessness in their areas.

1.1.2 For some people, the causes of homelessness can be clear cut, such as giving up an existing tenancy or a relationship breakdown. For others, the reasons will be more complex, and for these people, homelessness is not just a housing problem. Some homeless people have other difficulties and support needs, such as physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, unemployment, histories of offending and chaotic lifestyles. These needs can be exacerbated by the trauma of homelessness and difficulties in accessing services when homeless. If levels of homelessness are to be permanently reduced, there is a need for a wide range of support and other preventive services for homeless people. For these reasons many services, for example health, social and other community services, in addition to housing providers, must be involved in successful homelessness strategies.

1.1.3 There are many examples of highly effective services provided by local authorities, other public bodies and voluntary organisations which help to prevent homelessness and to provide suitable and secure homes, along with any necessary support. In some areas, these services have been coordinated through local strategies, which help to reduce the level of homelessness more effectively than uncoordinated action would have achieved. Some authorities with planned strategies have been able to move beyond crisis management and to help a wider range of homeless people, even where there are high levels of homelessness and demand for social housing.

1.1.4 Effective local homelessness strategies can:

- provide information on the scale and nature of homelessness in the area;
- identify the additional accommodation and support required to meet those needs;
- identify the services needed to prevent homelessness occurring or recurring;
- identify the resources currently available to meet these needs;
- identify additional resources required;
- involve other public, voluntary and private agencies in partnership work;

- spread best practice among agencies.

1.2 NEW DUTIES IN THE HOMELESSNESS BILL

Box 1.1 The provisions in the Homelessness Bill will require housing authorities to:

- carry out a review of homelessness in their areas;
- formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review;
- keep the strategy under review;
- consult other local or public authorities, or voluntary organisations before adopting or modifying the strategy.

1.2.1 The Homelessness Bill will require local authorities to publish the first homelessness strategy for their district within 12 months of the Act coming into force.

1.2.2 The social services authority for the district must give such assistance to the housing authority in carrying out the review and drawing up the strategy as the housing authority may reasonably require. Both housing and social services must take account of the strategy in formulating policy and providing services. Local authorities should refer to the forthcoming revised *Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness* for information on how to discharge their duties.

Box 1.2 Homelessness reviews must consider:

- the levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the district;
- the activities and services provided which help to prevent homelessness, help to find accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless people, or provide support for them, including support to prevent them from becoming homeless again;
- the resources available to the authority and to social services, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing these services.

Box 1.3 Homelessness strategies must include plans for:

- the prevention of homelessness;
- ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or who may become homeless;
- ensuring there is satisfactory support for people who are, or who may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

1.3.1 The strategy can include actions to be taken both by housing and social services and by other agencies. The strategy must consider the extent to which joint work by agencies might achieve the objectives set out in the strategy. Before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy, a local authority must consult other appropriate public or local authorities and voluntary organisations.

1.3.2 The strategy must cover all people who are homeless as defined in Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act, not only those for whom the authority would have a duty to secure accommodation (see Chapter 4 sub-section 4.2).

Box 1.4 The strategy must therefore also include:

- all homeless people, including those who would not be considered to be in priority need for accommodation;
- all people at risk of becoming homeless, whether within 28 days or a longer period;
- people who might have become homeless intentionally;
- homeless people in the area who might not have a local connection.

1.3.3 The level of service provided for these groups in the local housing authority area and the relative priority given to them should be an important part of the strategy.

1.3.4 A strategy should be consistent with, and integral to, an authority's broader housing strategy. Homelessness strategies should also be consistent with other local authority strategies and, in particular, with Supporting People strategies. Other relevant strategies include crime and disorder strategies, plans for the provision of community care services, and local community strategies (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.2).

1.3.5 Homelessness strategies should also take account of circumstances in neighbouring local authorities. Housing markets and homelessness problems may not fit neatly into local authority boundaries and successful strategies for dealing with homelessness will often require cross-boundary co-operation by neighbouring local authorities.

1.3.6 There are wide variations in different areas in the scale of homelessness problems, the levels of services provided and the best means of delivering these services. Large cities, small towns and rural areas all have their specific problems and appropriate strategies. Authorities are encouraged to select the most effective policy responses, in relation to local needs, from the range outlined in this handbook and obtain detailed advice on particular aspects from the publications and agencies recommended.

Chapter 2

Creating a homelessness strategy

2.1 WHAT SHOULD A STRATEGY CONTAIN?

2.1.1 This section outlines the key elements in homelessness strategies. The key stages in developing a strategy are outlined in *Chart 1*.

2.1.2 The strategy must be based on a needs assessment including:

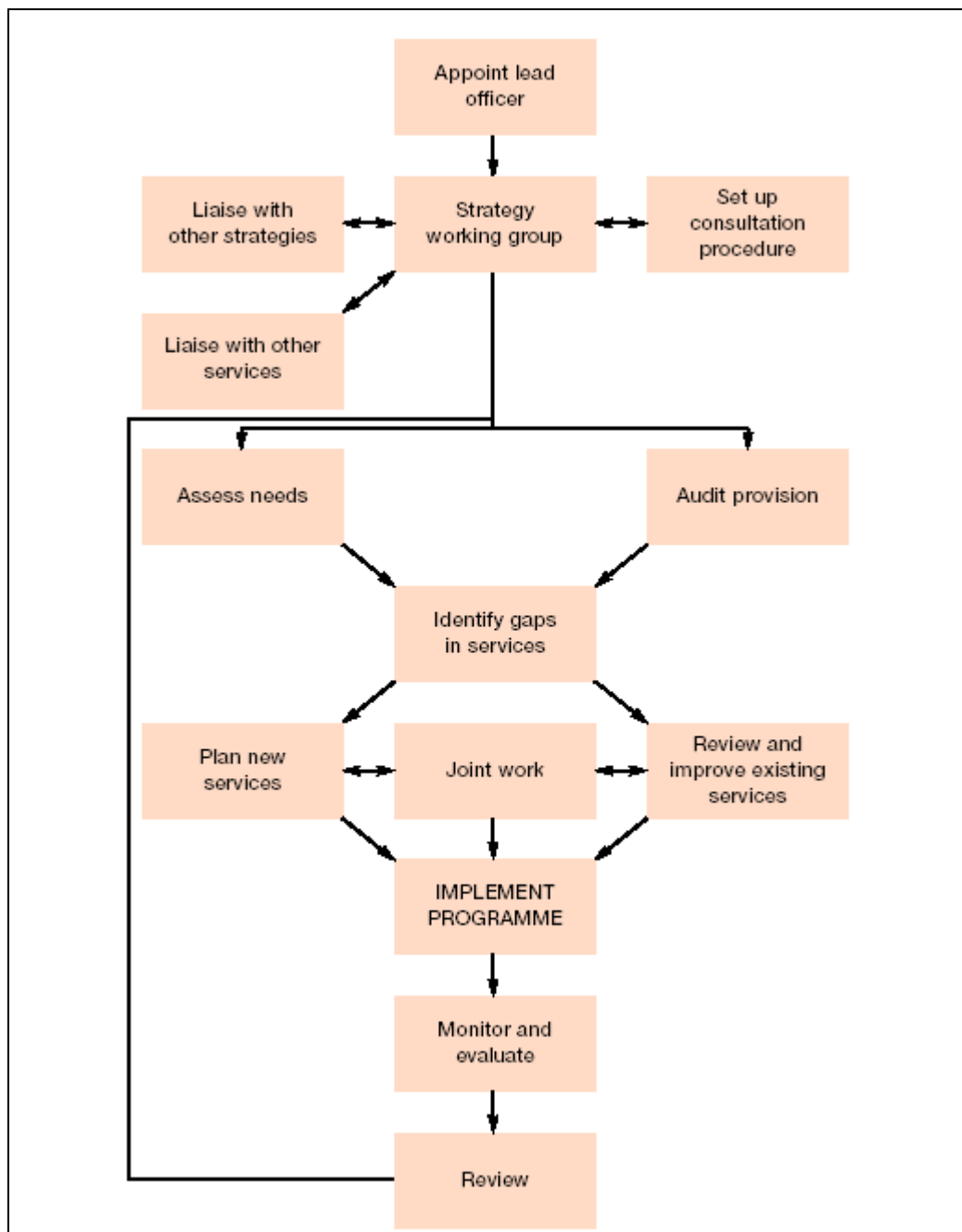
- an assessment of the current and likely future levels of homelessness;
- an analysis of the needs of different groups including, for example, families, young people and older people, with gender and ethnic breakdowns for each;
- an analysis of the most common routes into homelessness locally, for example family breakdown, evictions (and the reasons, such as rent arrears) and people leaving institutions such as local authority care, prisons and hospitals.

2.1.3 There should also be an *audit of services* including:

- an audit and evaluation of current provision for homeless people, including temporary and permanent accommodation, support and preventive services and services not directly targeted at homeless people, but whose clients will include homeless people, such as drug and alcohol services, or health visitors;
- an analysis of gaps in services, identified by comparing present and future needs with current provision;
- identification of resources which might be available for filling these gaps.

2.1.4 For further details, see Part 2, Chapter 4, *Mapping needs and resources*.

Chart 1: Key Stages in Developing a Strategy



2.1.5 Action on *planning and implementing the strategy* including:

- the involvement of partner agencies, public, voluntary and private in formulating and implementing the strategy;
- consultation with other agencies in contact with homeless people, even if not involved in service provision;
- consultation with service users and other homeless people;
- defining key aims and objectives of the strategy;
- agreeing priorities for action;
- a timetabled and costed programme;
- identification of which agencies will do what and when;
- mechanisms for joint and partnership work (see Chapter 3);

- mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and individual elements in the programme, including targets and performance indicators;
- mechanisms for regular review and amendment of the strategy in the light of the monitoring and evaluation.

2.1.6 Each of these elements should be proportionate to the scale of the local problem and the resources available to formulate and implement the strategy. The process of strategic planning should not delay action on urgent needs which have already been identified. A nearly step should be to make a realistic assessment of the resources which can be devoted to strategic planning and to the resulting strategy.

2.1.7 Each area will have its own set of problems and framework of services. This general guidance covers all types of area.

2.1.8 For additional guidance for rural areas see:

Streich, L and others (2002) *Preventing homelessness in the countryside: what works?* The Countryside Agency.

Brown, T and others (2000) *Developing housing strategies in rural areas: a good practice guide*, CIH.

2.2 CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

2.2.1 Local authorities and other bodies will have in place, or be working on, other strategies and programmes which have links with the homelessness strategy. Explicit links should be made between strategies and described in published strategic plans. Tensions and trade-offs between strategies should be identified and negotiated.

2.2.2 The homelessness strategy will need to be developed as an integral part of the local housing strategy. Authorities which have transferred their housing stock still retain responsibilities for housing and homelessness strategies and will need to ensure that homelessness needs will be adequately met in lettings and management policies (see Chapter 9 sub-section 9.2 para. 9.2.21).

2.2.3 Other strategies and programmes, which have links with homelessness strategies are outlined in *Appendix 2*.

2.2.4 As well as joint work on strategy formulation, effective implementation of the homelessness strategy will depend on joint work between local agencies. Mechanisms for achieving this are discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3 FORMULATING THE STRATEGY

Structures: A Strategy Working Group and Consultations With Providers and Users

2.3.1 Services to homeless people are provided by a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies and it is therefore important that they are involved in the formulation of the strategy. The major agencies might be involved through direct participation in a strategy working group and others through consultation. Some authorities already have a Homelessness Forum and this could form the basis for working and consultative groups, although it would be worth reviewing that membership covers the range of relevant stakeholders.

2.3.2 The duty to formulate the strategy is on the housing authority and they should take the lead. It is important that the strategy is given strong backing and leadership by leading members of the authority and chief officers. Other agencies which should be involved, either directly or through consultation, include the main statutory agencies such as health services, education services and social services as well as the probation service, police, prisons, the employment service, Drug Action Teams and Youth Offending Teams. The main voluntary agencies, RSLs, user groups and other local community and faith groups.

2.3.3 It is important to be clear about the role of different groups and forums. Some authorities have found problems with a proliferation of meetings on homelessness and related issues. Some of these groups have unclear remits and are attended by staff who range from senior management to front line workers, with varying delegated authority from their organisations. Large groups are unsuitable for the detailed work of strategy formulation and management. It is suggested that a wide group is established for consultation on proposals, either through meetings, or by post or email. Where there has been a proliferation of different forums, the homelessness strategy may offer an opportunity to rationalise these.

2.3.4 A smaller strategy group of not much more than a dozen people should have responsibility for recommending the strategy to the local authority and managing its implementation. There are strong advantages in involving some of the key staff from other agencies in detailed planning and not limiting the group to local authority officers. Elements of the strategy are very likely to involve joint work, funding and commissioning and in these cases partner agencies will need to be involved in the strategy group. While membership of this group will vary in different areas, they are likely to include, in addition to housing officers, staff from social services, health and voluntary organisations, along with any other agencies which will play a significant role in service delivery. Staff should generally be in senior policy making and management positions in their organisations. Member agencies should make a clear time commitment to the work of the group. Where necessary, authorities should consider additional funding to some voluntary agencies to ensure they can participate fully in the strategy.

2.3.5 As the lead agency, the housing authority should appoint a lead officer, which in areas of extensive homelessness may need to be a full time post. Other partner agencies should be encouraged to nominate an officer as the named contact in each agency. The resources each agency can devote to the homelessness strategy will be for them to decide. Some local authorities have seconded staff from the voluntary sector to work on homelessness strategies.

2.3.6 Separate arrangements may be necessary for day to day liaison between front line staff

and for them to exchange local information and ideas on good practice.

2.3.7 Consultation with service users and, if possible, homeless people who do not use services, should be a key part of strategic planning. There are a number of techniques for gathering user views which are likely to be more effective than formal committee or public meetings.

These include:

- feedback from established groups, for example residents meetings in hostels;
- surveys, including any that have already been carried out by local agencies, or specially commissioned;
- focus groups, although it can be difficult to ensure that those attending are representative;
- visits to projects for informal discussions with users;
- evaluations carried out by independent external agencies;
- Speakouts which are designed for homeless people to express their concerns directly to local policy makers and service providers.

2.3.8 Groups consulted should be representative of the community as a whole and should reflect the ethnic diversity of the area.

2.3.9 For further information on focus groups for homeless people see: Waller, S. *Closing the gap*, Shelter 2000.

2.3.10 For further information on Speakouts and other means of consulting homeless people contact Groundswell.

Aims and Objectives

2.3.11 The overall aims of the homelessness strategy as set out in the Homelessness Bill are:

- the prevention of homelessness;
- ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or who may become homeless;
- ensuring there is satisfactory support for people who are, or who may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

2.3.12 Detailed objectives will flow from the homelessness review and will differ in each area. The mapping of needs and auditing of provision and resources are covered in Chapter 4. Objectives could, for example, include:

- improving preventive services through better advice provision;
- providing more temporary accommodation;
- ensuring better move on opportunities from temporary accommodation;

- providing better access to permanent housing;
- preventing homelessness by expanding and improving tenancy support services.

2.3.13 Some of the needs identified will, at least partially, be met by existing services. For example, there will be some level of housing advice service provided to homeless people as this is a statutory requirement, but there may be scope for expanding and improving it. In these circumstances, existing services should be reviewed, rather than assuming they should simply be expanded. For example RB Kensington and Chelsea undertook a fundamental review of their local housing advice service and tendered for an improved service which is now provided by a consortium of voluntary agencies and solicitors. Ideally, such reviews should form part of a Best Value Review ([see below para. 2.3.15](#)).

2.3.14 Once these decisions have been made, the strategy should be translated into a detailed work programme which identifies a timetable, the resources necessary to implement it and which agency will be responsible for each element.

Best Value Reviews

2.3.15 Best Value reviews (BVRs) can make a major contribution to formulating the homelessness strategy. The process of undertaking a systematic evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of services under Best Value is closely related to the formulation of a work programme under a homelessness strategy. Where timetables permit, the two processes could usefully be combined and BVRs can cover much of the same ground as the homelessness strategy. For example, Manchester City Council carried out a BVR of their homelessness services which resulted in a comprehensive strategic review.

2.3.16 For further guidance see: DTLR, *Best Value in Housing Framework* www.local-regions.communities.gov.uk/bestvalue/housing

2.3.17 For reports on Best Value inspections see: www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk

Including the Needs of Particular Groups of Homeless People

2.3.18 Within the overall strategy it will be necessary to consider separately particular groups of homeless people such as single people, families, women, young people and those from minority ethnic groups (see Chapter 6).

2.3.19 For further information and guidance see:

Folkard, K. (1997) *Housing strategies for youth: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Blackaby, B and Chahal, K. (2000) *Black and minority ethnic housing strategies: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Crane, M. (2000) *Our forgotten elders: older people on the streets and in hostels*, St Mungos.

CIH (1999) *Housing and services for people with support needs*.

2.3.20 For a practical example of a strategy for young people see: Bellerby, N. (1999) *Young peoples housing and support needs in County Durham: a regional strategy*, Centrepoint.

2.4 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

2.4.1 Authorities will be required by the new legislation to keep their strategies under review. The strategy group will need to meet regularly to monitor progress and an appointed member of the group with sufficient seniority, usually the housing authority lead officer, should act as progress chaser.

2.4.2 The group will need to put in place monitoring procedures, including setting performance indicators for each element of the programme and for individual projects. These should be in place for each project from the beginning of the programme. Performance indicators should focus on outcome measures, for example:

- the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented;
- the number of homeless people housed;
- the number of homeless people successfully resettled;
- the number of unplanned moves from tenancies where support has been provided.

2.4.3 The measures should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timetabled (SMART).

2.4.4 For further guidance on performance measurement see:

Evans, A and others (2001) *Not just another form*, Crisis.

Audit Commission (1999) *A measure of success: measuring and monitoring local performance targets*.

2.4.5 Monitoring and evaluation should be a core part of the programme. There is a strong case for including an independent element in the evaluation, for example by contracting external agencies to carry out evaluations.

Chapter 3

Successful joint working on homelessness

3.1 WHY JOINT WORK?

3.1.1 A key objective of homelessness strategies is to bring local agencies together, so that their work can be better coordinated and more effective. At its best, joint work can result in higher quality and more efficient and cost effective services. Joint work can:

- expand the knowledge and expertise of partner agencies;
- help to provide higher quality integrated services to clients with multiple needs;
- help to ensure homeless people do not fall through the net because no one agency can meet all their needs;
- reduce wasteful referrals and duplicated work between agencies. For example, common procedures for assessing clients and exchanging information mean homeless people do not have to be repeatedly assessed by different agencies.

3.1.2 However, joint work also carries additional costs of its own in the staff time to set up and maintain liaison arrangements. Strategies will need to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs.

3.1.3 The process of formulating the strategy itself should be a joint exercise by key local agencies. Ensuring the mechanisms are in place for successful joint work should be one of the priority tasks to be tackled by the homelessness strategy group.

3.2 WHAT IS JOINT WORK?

3.2.1 Joint work can take many forms including:

- exchange of information between agencies about what services they provide, how they can be accessed and what an agency cannot do;
- joint training;
- improving liaison through contacts between staff at both management and front line delivery levels;
- agreeing common procedures for assessing clients, or carrying out joint assessments, including client confidentiality protocols;
- agreeing protocols for the referral of clients between services;
- joint case conferences on clients, resulting in plans for individuals which spell out what each agency will do;
- joint commissioning of services;
- sharing information and joint research on local needs;
- joint initiatives and development plans.

3.3 OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL JOINT WORK

3.3.1 While joint work is now widely recognised as essential for effective homelessness services, it is not easy to achieve in practice. Barriers to be overcome include:

- negative stereotypes of different professionals, for example between housing and social services staff, or between statutory and voluntary organisations. These barriers can be as difficult between different departments in the same authority as between different authorities or organisations;
- lack of knowledge of how other organisations work;
- lack of personal contact between staff in different agencies;
- real differences in priorities and working practices between agencies;
- a proliferation of meetings and forums often with unclear aims and poor attendance;
- fear of opening up an organisation to scrutiny by other agencies, including having to identify ways in which services could be improved;
- possible reduction of independence in jointly deciding priorities and work methods;
- competition for funding between agencies;
- a lack of capacity in some voluntary agencies to engage in joint work and strategy development.

3.3.2 Mechanisms for successful joint work include:

- agreed principles of joint working, including the roles and responsibilities of all partner agencies;
- improving information between agencies about their work and staffing. This can include producing an easily updated guide to the work of different agencies which covers the procedures in different agencies and departments and gives contact details of key staff with descriptions of their responsibilities;
- joint training and visits between agencies;
- clarity about the role of inter-agency bodies, their membership, roles and responsibilities;
- organisational and not just individual commitment to any joint projects;
- clear and timetabled work plans by joint bodies which specify who will do what;
- explicit acknowledgement that agencies might sometimes be in competition for funds and agreeing how to deal with such occurrences;
- keeping the size of joint groups appropriate to their purposes e.g. larger groups for consulting on the homelessness strategy, but small task-oriented groups for managing specific elements in the programme (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.3 para. 2.3.2-2.3.3);
- capacity building for voluntary agencies;
- an agreed individual officer or agency who will facilitate and drive the process of joint work.

3.4 PROCEDURES FOR JOINT WORK ON SERVICE DELIVERY

3.4.1 The delivery of services to individual clients can also be enhanced by joint work between

agencies. This can involve a number of techniques.

3.4.2 *Common and joint assessments.* These work by agreeing common client assessment procedures, including standard forms. Assessments might be administered by each individual agency, or jointly by two or more agencies. They result in agreements on what the clients needs are and who will provide which service to meet those needs. They can usefully include agreements on the definition of different levels of need, for example what counts as vulnerable under homelessness legislation and in need under the Children Act.

3.4.3 For an example of a standardised needs assessment package see Phoenix House (2001), *The multiple needs assessment and care management pack*, or contact Phoenix House for further details.

3.4.4 *Joint protocols.* Protocols set out in detail the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and departments and how they will work together. For example, LB Camden has a joint protocol for young people between the housing advice service, the homeless persons unit and the Under 25 Advice Service in the education department for referrals, assessments and possible family mediation.

3.4.5 However, joint protocols do not in themselves result in successful joint work. They can fail to achieve their purpose because of an absence of staff training; misunderstanding between agencies and departments; failure to allocate adequate resources to providing services under the protocol and failure to monitor its implementation. Agreement on meeting the costs of services provided under joint protocols is essential to their success. A monitoring system for tracking outcomes on all cases dealt with under the protocol should also be agreed.

3.4.6 *Joint commissioning.* This involves agencies coordinating their commissioning of services, which can lead to joint purchase or provision of services.

3.4.7 For further guidance on partnership work see: Means, R and others (1997) *Making partnerships work in community care: a guide for practitioners in housing, health and social services*, DH and DETR.

3.4.8 For further guidance on joint commissioning see: DH (1995) *Practical guidance on joint commissioning for project leaders*.

3.4.9 For further guidance on joint work on needs assessment for 16 and 17 year olds and homeless families see: DH (2000) *The framework for assessment of children in need and their families*.

3.4.10 For joint protocols for 16 and 17 year olds see: Bellerby, N. (2000) *Joint protocols between housing and social services departments: a good practice guide for the assessment and assistance of homeless young people aged 16 and 17 years*, Centrepont.

Chapter 4

Mapping needs and resources

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The Homelessness Bill sets out the factors which statutory homelessness reviews must consider (see Box 1.2 in Chapter 1) This section gives guidance on how to review these factors.

4.2 WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

4.2.1 The Homelessness Bill refers to people *who are or may become homeless*. Homeless has the same meaning as in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and includes all people who would be classified as homeless under that Act, including intentionally homeless people and those who are not in priority need (see Chapter 1 sub-section 1.3 para. 1.3.2).

4.2.1 The definition of people who *may become homeless* includes, but is not limited to, people who are at risk of homelessness within 28 days under the Housing Act 1996 (for further guidance on the statutory definitions see: DTLR *Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness*). Many people who may become homeless in the future are not at imminent risk within 28 days and authorities need to plan services, particular preventive services, for this wider group (see Chapter 5).

4.2.3 People who may become homeless include:

- young people leaving the parental home after a breakdown of family relationships;
- young people leaving care without adequate support;
- prisoners leaving custody;
- people being discharged from the armed forces with no stable home to go to;
- people experiencing marital or relationship breakdown;
- people experiencing harassment or violence;
- people in a financial crisis of mounting debts;
- people who lose a rented or owned home;
- people suffering a sharp deterioration in mental or physical health, or an increase in substance abuse;
- people leaving hospital after long stays;
- people sharing accommodation with other households.

4.3 ASSESSING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

4.3.1 The level of information needed for homelessness strategies will vary according to the scale and nature of local problems. Many authorities and other local agencies will already have, or will be in the process of collecting, a range of relevant information and there is no need to duplicate this. In many areas, however, data is likely to be patchy and inconsistent. The

challenge will be to make best use of existing data while identifying, as part of the strategy, means of improving the quality of data on homelessness needs. There are a number of potential sources of data available to authorities.

4.3.2 Homelessness applications and acceptances. Authorities will already have data on applications and acceptances of homeless people under the Housing Act 1996, although this information will not on its own be sufficient for the homelessness strategy. Many homeless people, particularly people without children, do not apply to the local authority or are not deemed to be in priority need. Other agencies may have helped these people and have records of them.

4.3.3 The housing register. Many homeless and potentially homeless applicants will be recorded on the general housing register and where possible, these should be separately identified.

4.3.4 Priority homeless households in temporary accommodation. All local authorities which use temporary accommodation should have records of these households and of changes over time.

4.3.5 Local Authority housing aid and advice clients. Records of housing advice offices should provide information on a range of homeless people, including many who are not in priority need and those at risk of homelessness.

4.3.6 Rough sleepers. Where there is a significant problem of rough sleeping, street counts can provide a snapshot of numbers on a particular night and progress in tackling the problem. Outreach workers and contact and assessment teams can also provide information on numbers and characteristics of rough sleepers.

4.3.7 For further guidance see: DOE (1997) *Guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping and developing a strategy*.

4.3.8 Housing benefit data. Housing Benefit offices should have information on people in temporary accommodation, such as hostels and B&B hotels.

4.3.9 Community Care plans. Social services and health authorities will have information on vulnerable people and on their housing status.

4.3.10 Young people leaving care. Social services will have data on young people leaving care and those due to leave care in future years.

4.3.11 RSLs. Information on applications from homeless people to RSLs may be available. Data on those who have been housed will be available through the CORE returns made by RSLs.

4.3.12 Probation service. The Probation Service will have information on the housing needs of its clients.

4.3.13 Supporting People. Under Supporting People local authorities are being asked to map supply within their localities, this includes provision for non-priority homeless people

and homeless families. While the Supporting People programme does not begin until April 2003, local authorities are being encouraged to prepare for the changes, including appointing a Supporting People lead officer who would be the first point of contact about the supply mapping. This will give information on where homeless people or those at risk of homelessness have been housed, if they are in supported accommodation. The Department has commissioned a mapping of needs for all Supporting People client groups, which is being piloted at present. Supporting People needs mapping should also provide useful information for the homelessness review (see Chapter 10).

4.3.14 For further information see: www.supportingpeople.org

4.3.15 *Housing needs assessments.* Homelessness data should also be set in the wider context of local housing needs, including future projections of housing demand and supply. DTLR has published guidance on assessing local housing needs, including projections over 3-5 years. Many authorities have carried out such surveys. Housing needs assessments take account of a wide range of factors including:

- the backlog of people currently in need;
- people in temporary accommodation;
- need arising from new household formation;
- in-migration;
- existing households falling into need;
- people leaving institutions, including local authority care.

4.3.16 Housing needs are measured against the supply of affordable housing. Where more detailed evidence is necessary on, for example, people living as concealed households (that is, adult individuals, or people with children, living with other households) techniques are available for boosting survey samples, to examine these subgroups and potentially homeless people.

4.3.17 For further guidance see: Bramley, G and others (2000) *Local housing needs assessment: a guide to good practice*, DTLR.

4.3.18 *Voluntary organisations.* Local voluntary organisations are likely to have information on homeless people, many of whom may not have been in touch with the local authority. For example, research in Dorset found that voluntary organisations were approached by twelve times as many non-priority homeless single people as was the local authority. However, the data held by different voluntary organisations is likely to be in different formats. In addition to case records, some voluntary organisations undertake their own research into local homelessness needs.

4.3.19 The needs of different groups of homeless people vary widely and it will be important to consider the different profile and needs of families, single people and couples, of different age groups, of men and women and of minority ethnic groups (see Chapter 6).

4.3.20 Unless a common recording system is in place which is able to identify individuals across different services, it will not be possible to aggregate all this data by adding together returns from different sources. Data will have been gathered over different time

periods and there will be substantial double counting of clients.

4.3.21 The only way of achieving a comprehensive and accurate picture of homelessness needs is by agreeing common monitoring systems for local agencies, with unique identifiers for individual clients. Such systems use common forms to record demographic data, housing histories and support needs. They eliminate multiple counting of clients in different agencies. This is particularly important for people who become homeless repeatedly and who are some of the most difficult to help. These systems can also be used for common outcome monitoring. For example, in County Durham, Centrepoint have established a multi-agency monitoring system for homelessness referrals. One hundred agencies are using a standard form to gather information on the housing and support needs of young people. These are analysed quarterly and reports distributed to local agencies and policy makers.

4.3.22 For detailed guidance on setting up such systems, as well as advice on other local information sources see: Evans, A and others (2001) *Not just another form: a guide to measuring single homelessness*, Crisis.

4.3.23 There might also be a requirement for more detailed information when planning specific services. For example, if services to prevent homelessness among young people are being considered, then it would be important to gather information from local agencies on the number of young people approaching them who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, why these problems have arisen and what services are currently available to prevent homelessness. This could involve examination of local agencies statistics and case records (subject to observing client confidentiality) and interviews with agency staff and users.

4.3.24 The review of resources should include an audit of existing provision and plans for the future. The audits should cover staff, property and funding including:

- current and planned future lettings of social housing stock to homeless people;
- plans for the provision of new social housing;
- accommodation and support provision, drawing on information collated by the supply mapping for the Supporting People programme;
- access to temporary accommodation including hostels, short term lettings, B&B and other private sector provision;
- access to private rented lettings for homeless people, including the use of rent guarantee schemes;
- local authority staff available for homelessness and related work;
- budget allocations to homeless services;
- policies and procedures of the homelessness services;
- voluntary agency services;
- funding of voluntary agencies;
- access to other sources of funding for voluntary agencies.

4.3.25 This audit could also usefully result in a directory of local services which could help to ensure the most effective use of current resources and as an information source for referrals between agencies. For example, Centrepoint have produced a comprehensive

directory for local agency staff detailing all social housing, emergency and supported housing, advice, information and support services available to homeless people in County Durham.

4.4 IDENTIFYING GAPS AND OVERLAPS IN SERVICES

4.4.1 The review of needs and audit of services should identify where needs are not being met and where there is any unnecessary duplication of services. Some examples of gaps that might be identified include:

- a shortage of emergency temporary accommodation. This might be identified by monitoring the number of homeless people turned away by local hostels and information from advice agencies and day centres;
- a shortage of social housing lettings available for homeless people. The analysis should look separately at homeless people without children and families of different sizes, since there may, for example, be more scope for modifying lettings policies for bedsits and one bedroom properties than for family-sized homes;
- a lack of support for tenants at risk of losing their homes, identified by monitoring the number of tenancies which break down;
- an absence of specialist services, for example serving homeless people with multiple needs with integrated services. This could be identified by monitoring the numbers and types of people turned away or excluded by hostels;
- the scope for preventing homelessness through expanded or more effective advice services.

4.4.2 Identifying resources and gaps and overlaps in services will also form an important part of Best Value Reviews (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.3 para. 2.3.15).

4.4.3 Gaps in services should be quantified wherever possible, for example the number of hostel beds needed or the number of tenants in need of support, even if resources to meet all needs are not immediately available.

4.5 FUTURE LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS

4.5.1 Assessing likely future levels of homelessness involves judgements based on a wide variety of factors. Trends over time in the needs data listed above (see sub-section 4.4) might indicate causes of homelessness which are increasing and those which are decreasing. However, simple projections of current trends are likely to be misleading and become more so the further forward they are projected.

4.5.2 The basic data will be a calculation of the backlog of existing housing need plus newly arising need, against the supply of affordable housing currently available and future planned provision. These calculations are made as part of a local housing needs assessment ([see Chapter 4 sub-section 4.3 para. 4.3.15](#)).

4.5.3 To these can be added qualitative information from local agencies on trends among their clients. They might, for example, provide early warning of problems such as increased drug use by young people which could lead to a need for new or revised services. They might also have early information on supply trends, for example whether private landlords are expanding or reducing their stock of lower rent accommodation, or their willingness to accept Housing Benefit claimants as tenants.

4.5.4 Predicting future trends is not simply a numerical exercise, it also requires professional judgement on the extent to which past trends are likely to continue in the future, based both on experience and on qualitative information on local circumstances. The impact of any proposed policy changes and new services should also be taken into account. Projections need to be updated at least annually to test them against actual outcomes.

Chapter 5

Preventing homelessness

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 This section outlines preventive activities and services which homelessness strategies should consider. Specialist services for particular groups of homeless people are outlined in Chapter 6.

5.2 IDENTIFYING PEOPLE AT RISK

5.2.1 Arrangements for common assessments of homeless people and joint protocols for interagency work should enable the better identification of people at risk. Research has identified a range of *risk factors* which are associated with homelessness including:

- disputes between young people and their parents or step-parents;
- experience of physical or sexual abuse;
- time in local authority care;
- learning disabilities;
- lack of qualifications and basic literacy skills;
- exclusion from school or persistent truanting;
- young parenthood;
- unemployment;
- alcohol and drug abuse;
- mental health problems;
- a combination of mental health, drug and alcohol problems;
- contact with the criminal justice system;
- previous service in the Armed Forces;
- marital or relationship breakdown;
- experience of violence from inside or outside the home, including racial and other harassment;
- previous experience of homelessness;
- lack of a social support network;
- failure to furnish or maintain a home: a warning sign that the tenancy may be failing;
- debts, especially rent or mortgage arrears;
- problems with neighbours: this can be a symptom of other problems, often linked to mental health and alcohol difficulties, as well as being a cause of eviction.

5.2.2 Research has also identified crisis points which can precipitate homelessness:

- leaving the parental home after arguments;
- leaving care without adequate support;

- leaving prison;
- discharge from the Armed Forces;
- marital or relationship breakdown;
- a financial crisis of mounting debts;
- eviction from a rented or owned home;
- a sharp deterioration in mental health or an increase in alcohol abuse.

5.2.3 While most research has focussed on identifying such support needs in homeless people without children, there is growing evidence from authorities that homeless families are also likely to have a range of such needs.

5.2.4 For further information on identifying people at risk and on schemes for preventing homelessness see:

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrow's rough sleepers: a good practice handbook*.

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Prevention is better than cure*, Crisis.

5.3 ADVICE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

5.3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that advice and information about homelessness is available to everyone in their areas. In practice, the quality of advice provided varies very widely. The scope for improving advice services is likely to be a key part of homelessness strategies in many areas.

5.3.2 As part of the audit of services, it will be necessary to identify those agencies which are providing housing and homelessness advice. In addition to specialist housing advice agencies, many other agencies may be offering advice including community and daycentres, accommodation agencies, health authorities, social services, probation officers, Connexions, solicitors and many others.

5.3.3 Ideally everyone at risk of homelessness certainly all those who approach the local authority as homeless should be offered a full advice interview with the aim of preventing homelessness. At present some advice services for homeless people are inadequate and can consist, for example, of simply providing a list of B&B addresses.

5.3.4 Housing advice services should be wide ranging and include:

- tenancy rights and responsibilities in both social and private housing;
- illegal eviction;
- disrepair;
- dealing with rent and mortgage arrears and other debt;
- welfare benefits;
- rehousing options in social and private housing;
- relationship breakdown;
- neighbour disputes, including racial and other harassment;

- family mediation;
- access to treatment and support for people with substance misuse or mental health problems, or referral to specialist services;
- tenancy sustainment services;
- access to County Court representation in housing cases.

5.3.5 Services often need to extend beyond simple advice and to include detailed casework support, where it is necessary to resolve the housing problem. Advice staff should at a minimum have a familiarity with all of the above and be able to provide initial advice, along with referral where necessary to specialist agencies. The good practice manual published by HomePoint (see below) gives detailed guidance on the standards of knowledge and performance necessary to provide good quality advice services at three levels:

- information, signposting and explanation;
- casework;
- advocacy, representation and mediation.

5.3.6 While it has been produced for Scotland, the great majority of its standards are also relevant to England.

5.3.7 While housing advice services will focus specifically on the housing aspects of a person's problems, they should also offer a referral route to other support services and provide details of these to clients.

5.3.8 A translation service and the employment of advisers speaking other languages will be necessary where there are local people who do not have English as a first language.

5.3.9 The homelessness strategy will also need to review how easy it is for people to access services, particularly in rural areas. Mobile and telephone services may be needed to supplement office based advice.

5.3.10 In addition to advice to people at risk of homelessness, separate advice services for private landlords and letting agents can help to secure access to private rented accommodation for homeless people (see Chapter 11 sub-section 11.3 para. 11.3.3).

5.3.11 As well as advice provided by the authority to homeless people who approach it for help, there is a strong case for local authorities to enable and possibly fund independent housing advice. This might complement the service provided by the authority, especially in areas where independence is essential, for example where decisions of the authority are being challenged. Some authorities have contracted out the provision of advice services to independent agencies.

5.3.12 For further information on housing advice see:

DOE (1996) *Models of practice in housing advice*.

5.3.13 For further guidance on housing advice strategies see:

HomePoint (1996) *Local housing information and advice strategies: a good practice guide*.

5.3.14 For further guidance on good practice in housing advice services see:

Grant, C (1996) *Housing advice services: a good practice guide*, CIH.

HomePoint (2000) *Scottish national standards and good practice guidance for housing information and advice services*.

5.3.15 For advice on quality audits of housing advice contact: Shelter Quality Department.

5.4 RESETTLEMENT AND TENANCY SUSTAINMENT: FLOATING SUPPORT

5.4.1 Many homeless people have had tenancies and have lost them. Agencies providing resettlement and tenancy support services have demonstrated that, in many cases, tenancies can be sustained even where people have high support needs, such as mental health and substance abuse problems. Not only does support prevent homelessness, it can also avert a range of other social problems and be extremely cost effective. For example, the Housing and Personal Support Service which operates in LB Westminster, over a three year period, provided support to 68 tenants, including 40 former rough sleepers. Of these, none had abandoned their tenancies and two had moved to more suitable accommodation. The Audit Commission has found that a tenancy failure followed by hospitalisation for someone with mental health problems can cost over £5000 in public expenditure, including over £2000 to the housing authority. Brighton and Hove council found that they saved money equal to the tenancy support workers annual salaries within six months of their scheme starting.

5.4.2 This section deals with floating support, which is provided to tenants living in ordinary independent tenancies. It is equally applicable to tenants of local authorities and of RSLs. Some schemes also support private tenants. Supported housing, where the support is provided permanently, as part of an accommodation and support package, is discussed in Chapter 10. Resettlement work refers to work with homeless people before, and usually for a limited period after, they are rehoused, to ensure their tenancy does not fail. Tenancy sustainment also covers longer term support work. Both types of work are referred to here as tenancy support.

5.4.3 The most common risk factors leading to homelessness have been identified above ([see sub-section 5.2 above](#)). Common assessments agreed by local agencies and protocols for joint action should help in the earlier identification of tenants at risk. Social landlords should consider undertaking or commissioning a support needs assessment for all new tenants who have been homeless and for others exhibiting any of the known risk factors. For example, LB Camden provides resettlement support and advice to all homeless people without children. It is also helpful to track high risk individuals as they move through different types of accommodation, so that needs assessments do not need to be repeated and the necessary support can be rapidly put in place.

5.4.4 For an example of a detailed assessment package which could form a common

assessmenttool see: Phoenix House (2001) *The multiple needs assessment and care management pack*.

5.4.5 The management policies of social landlords should also take account of tenants need for support. Early indications of rent arrears or nuisance to neighbours should trigger action to assess support needs well in advance of any danger of eviction. For example Westminster City Council has contracted with Thames Reach Bondway, a voluntary agency providing tenancy support to intervene where tenancies are at risk. Where nominations are made to RSLs, the authority should ensure that full information about any support needs, including information from social services or voluntary organisations, is passed to the RSL.

5.4.6 Tenancy support can include help with many problems including:

- choosing a new home which is suitable and at a time when the client is ready to manage their own home;
- ensuring the tenant understands their rights and responsibilities, particularly the payment of rent;
- moving in and furnishing the home;
- claiming welfare benefits;
- money management;
- basic help with personal and emotional problems;
- access to specialist support for mental health and substance abuse problems;
- resolving disputes with neighbours or the landlord;
- education, employment and training;
- helping the tenant to integrate with the local community;
- coordinating and acting as a broker for other services;
- emergency support if a tenant is at risk of abandoning their home.

5.4.7 Effective tenancy support can reduce tenancy breakdown to very low levels. Common features of successful schemes include:

- dealing with people with multiple needs and not excluding them because, for example, they have both mental health and substance abuse problems;
- providing detailed pre-tenancy support to ensure that the housing they are offered is suitable and people are aware of their rights and responsibilities;
- focusing on practical ways of sustaining the tenancy, rather than seeking to solve all the client's problems;
- providing multi-disciplinary services, without rigid professional boundaries between team members;
- assertive support work in seeking to engage tenants with the service. Simply offering the service is unlikely to be successful with many clients;
- a flexible style of work which is often better managed by independent agencies, funded by the landlord. It is also important to clients that support workers are seen as independent of the landlord and not part of a statutory system from which many of them are alienated;
- for tenants in need of long term supported housing, a planned move is arranged before the breakdown of the tenancy.

5.4.8 Tenancy support workers do not attempt to provide all support themselves, but where appropriate arrange for services from other specialist agencies in their areas such as mental health services, drug and alcohol agencies, debt management schemes, befriending and mentoring schemes, probation services and Youth Offending Teams.

5.4.9 There are also tenancy support teams which specialise in clients with particular needs. For example, the Alcohol Recovery Project provides floating support in four London boroughs for both local authority and housing association tenants who have alcohol problems. Turning Point provides tenancy sustainment through contracts with local authorities and RSLs for tenants with mental health and substance abuse problems.

5.4.10 Where necessary, support workers can broker case conferences to bring together different services when tenancies are at risk. On occasions, they have to negotiate with agencies to provide services for difficult clients with multiple needs and advocate on their behalf when they are in danger of exclusion for services, for example by being banned from hostels or day centres.

5.4.11 Although tenancy support has usually been confined to tenants of social housing, there is scope for extending it to private rented lettings (see Chapter 11) and even some owner occupiers.

5.4.12 Support is also needed for people in temporary accommodation, to help them keep that accommodation and to prepare them for a tenancy. Some particularly difficult service users, often with personality disorders and multiple needs, become banned from all local temporary accommodation. There is a need for inter-agency protocols to provide for such difficult cases.

5.4.13 Specialist tenancy support cannot be provided as a part of ordinary housing management and needs specialist staff and separate funding. From April 2003, funding of a wide range of support services to people in a variety of types of accommodation will be brought together into a single fund administered by local authorities under the Supporting People programme (see Chapter 10). This will cover not only supported housing, but also floating support and potentially many of the support activities outlined in this chapter. Homelessness strategies should play a major part in these programmes.

5.4.14 For further information see:

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Prevention is better than cure*, Crisis.

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrow's rough sleepers*.

5.4.15 For further guidance see: DTLR, forthcoming guidance on homelessness services for Supporting People.

Bevan, P (1998) *Resettlement handbook*, National Homeless Alliance.

5.4.16 Contact: Shelter Homeless to Home.

5.5 MULTI-SERVICE AGENCIES AND DAY CENTRES

5.5.1 Services to people at risk of homelessness and those with multiple needs can be very effectively delivered by agencies which provide a range of services in one location.

5.5.2 One model is for several agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to provide a one-stop shop to provide a single point of access to organisations which offer help and advice in a housing crisis. This enables speedier action to be taken by a range of agencies, where necessary acting jointly, and reduces the loss of clients through multiple referrals to different agencies. For example, The Hub in Bristol provides a single point of access to both statutory and voluntary sectors and provides a range of advice and support services which includes, tenancy support, money management and skills training.

5.5.3 There are around 250 day centres throughout the UK, many of whose users are homeless or at risk of homelessness. They can reach homeless people who may not use hostels and other services. Traditionally they have offered basic services such as day time shelter, food and clothing. But they also offer the opportunity of targeting services on people at risk of homelessness and some centres have developed a comprehensive range of services. For example the St Giles Trust in south London provides specialist services for particular groups e.g. women, people from black and minority ethnic groups, young people and rough sleepers as well as people with mental health, alcohol and drug problems. They also provide a range of general advice and support services to prevent homelessness occurring or reoccurring such as a prison outreach service, life skills and employment training, benefits advice, a rent deposit scheme and tenancy support.

5.5.4 Other centres specialise in particular client groups, for example the London Connection provides a wide range of services for young people.

5.5.5 However, some day centres providing only basic services have been criticised for possibly reinforcing street lifestyles. Where local day centres already operate, the homelessness strategy should review their operation to assess the extent to which they are able to provide positive preventive and rehousing services.

5.5.6 For further guidance see:

Llewellyn, S. and Murdoch, A. (1996) *Saving the day*, CHAR.

Cooper, A (1997) *All in a day's work*, CHAR.

5.6 COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES AND THE PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

5.6.1 Homelessness can be prevented not only by services for individuals at risk, but also by a range of community programmes. For example, some authorities report that violence from outside the home and crime in local neighbourhoods is an increasing cause of homelessness applications. This crime is often drug related. People may abandon tenancies because, for example, of repeated burglaries. Crime Prevention Strategies and the work of Youth Offending Teams and Drug Action Teams should be an important part

of homelessness strategies.

5.6.2 Racial harassment may also be alleviated by community programmes as well as action on individual cases. For example, Kensington & Chelsea have developed joint work with the Community Safety Team to reduce racial harassment. Schemes include, for example, work with residents associations.

5.6.3 Neighbour disputes can also cause homelessness and there is scope for neighbourhood mediation schemes to resolve these problems where the disputes are over relatively low level problems such as noise.

Chapter 6

Specialist services for particular groups

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This section outlines specialist preventive and support services for particular groups of homeless people.

6.2 HOMELESS FAMILIES

Support Needs of Homeless Families

6.2.1 While the support needs of homeless people without children have been increasingly recognised, those of homeless families have received much less attention. There has been a tendency in the past to regard homeless families as simply being in need of accommodation to resolve their problems. Where social services support has been available, it has tended to focus on the needs of the children, rather than the whole family. Most voluntary homelessness agencies work only with homeless people without children.

6.2.2 However, some authorities are now identifying the need for support for homeless families, as well as for single people. For example, the limited research that has been undertaken has found that a high proportion of homeless mothers have mental health and substance abuse problems. Some authorities have found that families are repeatedly presenting as homeless even where social housing is readily available. Their support needs are not being met and they are losing or abandoning their tenancies. Some authorities have set up support services for families, for example Eastbourne council provides a floating support service and training in parenting skills for young lone parents.

6.2.3 There is therefore a need within homelessness strategies to:

- identify at risk families, for example through monitoring absences and exclusions from schools and through liaison with social services;
- assess the support needs of families approaching the authority as homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- monitor tenancy breakdowns and re-presentations by homeless families.

6.2.4 DTLR will be commissioning further research on the support needs of households accepted as homeless as part of the Supporting People programme.

6.2.5 For further information see:

Gaubatz, K. T. (2000) *Behind closed doors: addressing the needs of homeless families in*

Britain, London Borough of Camden Housing Department.

Relationship Breakdown and Domestic Violence

6.2.6 Relationship breakdown is a major cause of homelessness and early intervention can help to prevent one or both partners becoming homeless. In some cases victims of domestic violence are housed as in priority need, in others it is possible to prevent homelessness.

6.2.7 Advice and assistance can help to ensure that:

- one partner, usually the one with any children living with them, can keep the family home, or move to a more suitable one if, for example, there is a continuing threat of violence;
- the other partner does not become homeless. A significant proportion of homeless single people are men who have had to leave a family home with no alternative accommodation;
- there is sufficient temporary accommodation, for example women's refuges, for emergencies caused by domestic violence. DTLR is making specific arrangements to provide advice on accommodation and support needs resulting from domestic violence and review the current supply to meet those needs on a cross-authority and regional, as well as a local authority basis, as a part of Supporting People.

6.2.8 The policies in the homelessness strategy to respond to victims of domestic violence should be an integral part of the authority's domestic violence strategy.

6.2.9 For further guidance see:

DETR (1999) Relationship breakdown: a guide for social landlords.

Home Office, *Multi-Agency Guidance for Addressing Domestic Violence*, 2000 available on www.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/mag.pdf

Home Office, *Circular 19/2000: Domestic Violence: Revised Circular to the Police* available on www.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/pubslist.htm

6.3 HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

The Need for a Specific Strategy

6.3.1 Within the homelessness strategy, there is a need to consider separately services for young people. Their needs and the most effective means of meeting them and preventing homelessness are often significantly different from older people. Some authorities already have separate youth homelessness strategies and it will be necessary to include these

in the wider homelessness strategy.

6.3.2 Most young people become homeless either because they have failed to settle after leaving care, or because they have left their parental home after disputes. There are often many other problems linked to their homelessness.

6.3.3 Many parents of homeless young people have multiple problems including, physical and sometimes sexual abuse of their children, alcohol and drug problems, mental health problems, poor parenting, new partners and step-parents leading to disputes with children and poverty.

6.3.4 Family problems are also related to the young people's behaviour including mental health, aggression and violence, problems at school, drug use, criminal activities and running away from home.

6.3.5 The remainder of this section outlines some of the services provided by agencies working to prevent homelessness among young people.

6.3.6 For further guidance see:

Folkard, K. (1998) *Housing strategies for youth*, CIH.

6.3.7 For a practical example of a strategy for young people see:

Bellerby, N. (1999) *Young people's housing and support needs in County Durham: a regional strategy*, Centrepoint.

6.3.8 For further information on initiatives contact: Centrepoint National Development Unit.

Support for Families With Young Children

6.3.9 Many of the problems homeless young people experience in their families begin at an early age, many years before they reach 16. The Social Exclusion Unit have found that running away is a strong predictor of later homelessness and that a main trigger for running away is family problems. There are a number of new opportunities to establish services to deal with these problems at an early stage. These are outlined below. Programmes for young people aged 16 or over are outlined in [paragraphs 6.3.17 6.3.21](#), below.

6.3.10 *Sure Start* programmes aim to improve children's life chances through better access to family support and other services for families with children up to the age of three (see para. A2.5 in Appendix 2).

6.3.11 For further information see: www.surestart.gov.uk

6.3.12 The *Children's Fund* is targeted primarily on preventive work with children aged 5-13 and their families, with an emphasis on local voluntary groups. This is a potential source, for example, of funding for projects which aim to prevent running away.

6.3.13 For further information see www.dfes.gov.uk/cypu

6.3.14 The new *Connexions* service will provide advice, guidance and support for young people aged 13-19 and has the potential to play a central role in identifying those at risk of homelessness and guiding them towards preventive services (see para. A2.6 in Appendix 2).

6.3.15 Other measures affecting young people leaving care are covered below ([para. 6.3.31 6.3.34](#)).

6.3.16 For further information see:

www.cabinet-office.government.uk/seu/index.htm

DH *Guidance on young runaways* (forthcoming), Green, A. E, Maguire, M. and Canny, A. (2001) *Keeping track: Mapping and tracking vulnerable young people*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Education in Schools on Homelessness and Leaving Home

6.3.17 Several areas have experimented with education in schools on the risks of homelessness. Education on practical problems of leaving home is more likely to help prevent homelessness than general social studies lessons. The main emphasis should be on sustaining young people in their homes, rather than encouraging too early independence. Lessons are best targeted on years 9-11 when the problems are more immediate for students.

6.3.18 Centrepoint has developed a national programme to prevent youth homelessness, including a peer-education programme, sending trained young people into schools and youth groups to help young people prepare for independence. Centrepoint's education team also works with teachers in schools and pupil referral units to develop resources to help young people prepare for independence.

6.3.19 For further information and guidance contact: Centrepoint.

6.3.20 Shelter Homework is a national project which is launching a comprehensive education programme aimed at all school aged children. It has set up a national young people's housing information service resource, which will be available to other agencies to develop their education work and will train teachers, social workers, foster parents and others on using Shelter resources to raise awareness of young people's housing needs.

6.3.21 For further information and guidance contact: Shelter Homework.

Specialist Advice and Support for Young People

6.3.22 It is essential that social services and housing departments agree joint protocols to ensure that effective procedures are in place to support young people. The Children Act 1989 places duties on social services to assess vulnerable children and families to

establish whether children are in need, requiring services to safeguard and promote their welfare. But the provision of accommodation alone for these groups will not usually be sufficient. Nearly all homeless young people are likely to need some level of support to sustain a tenancy or other accommodation.

6.3.23 All agencies providing accommodation and services for homeless young people should give priority to trying to prevent them from becoming homeless, rather than the automatic provision of accommodation. Housing young people before they are able to sustain independent living is likely to lead to the breakdown of the tenancy and can lead to long term homelessness. Where young people have a family home to which they could safely return, this should be the preferred option, as it is better for the long term stability of young people to leave home in a planned way than in a crisis.

6.3.24 Preventive services should:

- go through a reality check with young people to ensure they understand the difficulties of finding and keeping accommodation;
- discuss with them whether they would be better to stay at or return home until they are properly prepared for independent living, unless they are at risk of abuse or are unsafe at home;
- cover preparation for independent living, through information, advice and life skills training;
- refer them where necessary to specialist services.

6.3.25 Such advice services are often best provided by specialist agencies designed for young people, rather than generalist advice agencies. They will often need to offer services through assertive outreach to get to the young people who are most vulnerable. The Connexions service and schools can play a key part in identifying young people at risk.

6.3.26 Some areas have family mediation services which aim to negotiate for young people to return to their family home, or to stay there. These have proved successful in averting homelessness for a substantial minority of their clients and should be considered for all areas. For example, the Home and Away service in south London found that for 47 per cent of young people still at home but in a family crisis, the crisis was resolved and a further 18 per cent were now living in another safe place. For those who were already homeless, 15 per cent returned home and 49 per cent were now living in another safe place. These outcomes underline the effectiveness of intervention while young people are still at home, if those at risk can be identified. But they also show that even where the young person is already homeless, it is possible to achieve a reconciliation and return home in a significant minority of cases. Such services are normally best run by voluntary agencies rather than social services, because of the stigma often attached to contact with social services by both parents and children.

6.3.27 Where young people are rehoused, there will be a need for specialist resettlement and tenancy support for them, normally provided as a floating service which can gradually be withdrawn as they develop independent living skills.

6.3.28 Housing providers who specialise in housing and support for young people could also deliver a Connexions Personal Adviser service under contract to the local

ConnexionsPartnership (see para. A2.6).

6.3.29 For further information see:

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (2001) *Trouble at home: family conflict, young people and homelessness*, Crisis.

6.3.30 For further guidance see:

DH (2000) *The framework for assessment of children in need and their families*.

Young People Leaving Care

6.3.31 It is now well established that young people leaving care are at particularly high risk of homelessness. There are a number of new policy initiatives to tackle this problem.

6.3.32 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 imposes new and stronger duties on social services to support care leavers until they are at least 18 and then to stay in touch with them and provide some support until they are 21. Social Services are under a duty to assess the needs of care leavers and identify the advice, assistance and support required to meet those needs. A Pathway Plan will set out how the authority will support the young person and will be reviewed and updated at least every six months. The authority will also provide a Personal Adviser for the young person who will stay in touch with them until they are 21.

6.3.33 Housing plans and the prevention of homelessness will clearly be central to the Pathway Plans and the work of the Personal Adviser. All homelessness strategies should include detailed plans for including social services programmes under the new Act within the strategy. A Department of Health Circular recommends that joint protocols should set out how the housing authority and social services will each play their role in supporting care leavers. Other housing agencies should also contribute to these Pathway Plans.

6.3.34 For further guidance see:

DH (2000) *Getting it right: good practice in leaving care resource pack*.

DH, *Local Authority Circular LAC (2000) 15*.

Teenage Parents

6.3.35 The Social Exclusion Units 1999 Report on Teenage Pregnancy set out a strategy for halving the under 18s conception rate by 2010; and increasing teenage parents' participation in education, training and employment. This includes the target that by 2003, all lone parents under the age of 18 who cannot live with family or a partner should be placed in supervised semi-independent housing with support, rather than an independent tenancy. The revised *Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness* will reflect this policy.

6.3.36 For further guidance see:

TPU/DTLR (2001) *Guidelines for good practice in supported accommodation for young parents*.

Tenancies for Young People

6.3.37 Where tenancies are provided for young people, special legal arrangements can be made for 16 and 17 year olds. The law does not prevent young people from holding a range of occupancy agreements.

6.3.38 For further details on legal tenancy arrangements for young people see:

Folkard, K. (1997) *Housing strategies for youth: A good practice guide*, CIH.

6.3.39 In all cases, support for young people holding tenancies or in temporary accommodation will be essential.

6.4 OLDER PEOPLE

6.4.1 Homeless people aged over 50 often have particular needs for support. Some are reluctant to use generalist homelessness services and there may be a need to develop specialist services. Needs have been identified for:

- specialist outreach and day centre workers;
- specialist accommodation such as sheltered housing, for homeless people who might for example have a long term alcohol problem and chaotic behaviour which makes them unsuitable for ordinary sheltered housing. For example, Manchester City Council provides specialist residential care for older homeless people;
- some older homeless people might prefer shared housing;
- specialist mediation services for older people who have to leave a family home.

6.4.2 For further guidance see:

Crane, M and others (1997) *Coming home: a guide to good practice by projects helping older homeless people*, Help the Aged.

6.5 BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE

6.5.1 Homelessness strategies will need to consider the particular needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) people. Their needs can affect both the causes of homelessness and the services provided to respond to it.

6.5.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a new duty on local authorities actively to promote racial equality in their areas. The homelessness reviews might consider:

- reviewing the appropriateness of services for BME groups;
- improving the quality of services to homeless BME households with explicit recognition of cultural and social needs;
- reviewing the provision of translation and interpreting services;
- reviewing the extent to which the housing needs of different BME households are catered for. For example, for larger or extended households the provision of larger properties will be key to meeting housing needs.

6.5.3 Racial harassment can cause people to leave their homes and DTLR, along with the Housing Corporation and the National Assembly for Wales has published a good practice guide for social landlords on tackling racial harassment. The DTLR is also subsidising free access for landlords to the RaceActionNet website for its first year of operation, which provides detailed examples of good practice from local authorities, police forces, race equality councils and other voluntary organisations.

6.5.4 For further guidance see:

DTLR (2001) *Tackling racial harassment: code of practice for social landlords*, Housing research summary No. 148.

Lemos, G. (2000) *Racial harassment: action on the ground*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.housing.communities.gov.uk/hrs/hrs148/index.htm

www.raceactionnet.co.uk

6.5.5 There is great diversity among the different BME communities. Culturally appropriate advice services should be provided and account taken of any special needs in terms of types of accommodation and location. There may, for example, be a need for a specialist advice service for young black people, or for sheltered housing for Asian elders. It is important to involve all the different local community groups in the consultation on the homelessness strategy.

6.5.6 For further guidance see:

Blackaby, B. and Chahal, K. (2000) *Black and minority ethnic housing strategies: a good practice guide*, CIH.

6.6 ROUGH SLEEPERS

6.6.1 The Rough Sleepers Unit of the DTLR has put in place a national programme which has reduced the number of rough sleepers by two thirds by April 2002. All authorities with significant numbers of rough sleepers have been involved in this programme which aims

to:

- ensure sufficient accommodation of the right type is available for people sleeping rough;
- develop a focussed approach to street work with rough sleepers to ensure opportunities are provided for moving off the street and not reinforcing street lifestyles;
- provide services when rough sleepers need them most, including 24 hour services;
- help those in most need including people with mental health, drug and alcohol problems;
- ensure a continuum of care, so that there is a clear route from the streets to a settled way of life;
- provide opportunities for meaningful occupation;
- improve incentives to move off the street;
- develop services which prevent future rough sleeping.

6.6.2 For further guidance see:

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrow's rough sleepers*.

DOE (1997) *Guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping and developing a strategy*.

RSU (2001) *Coming in from the Cold*, Progress Report on the government strategy on Rough Sleeping.

6.7 REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

6.7.1 Responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers has now passed to the National Asylum Support Service which contracts locally with accommodation providers including local authorities, RSLs, voluntary organisations and private landlords. Local authorities are still responsible for people who claimed asylum before the new arrangements and for a range of other services for asylum seekers and those granted leave to remain.

6.7.2 The Housing Corporation has produced detailed guidance for RSLs on housing and support services for asylum seekers and much of it is also relevant to local authorities and other providers. The Audit Commission has produced good practice guidance for authorities in the management of support to asylum seekers, covering the identification of needs and strategic planning for a wide range of services for asylum seekers.

6.7.3 For further guidance see:

Zetter, R. and Pearl, M. (1999) *Guidelines for registered social landlords on the provision of housing and support services for asylum seekers within the framework of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum legislation and the transitional arrangements*, Housing Corporation.

Audit Commission (2000) *Another country: implementing dispersal under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*.

Audit Commission (2000) *A new city: supporting asylum seekers and refugees in London*.

Audit Commission (2001) *Halfway home: analysis of the variation in the cost of supporting asylum seekers*.

6.8 PEOPLE LEAVING HOSPITAL

6.8.1 Discharge plans for all people leaving hospital should ensure they have a safe and secure home to go to or, at the least, temporary accommodation where plans for such housing can be made. For example, Manchester City Council has set up a specific hospital discharge scheme for homeless people. Ensuring people leaving hospital do not become homeless involves joint work by health, social services and housing authorities, who should have joint protocols in place covering hospital discharge. Some housing authorities have made arrangements for advice staff to visit patients and for advice sessions to be run in hospitals. Assessments of potential vulnerability, under the homelessness legislation as a result of an institutionalised background, should be made before patients who are at risk of homelessness leave hospital.

6.8.2 For further guidance see:

DH and DETR (1998) *Housing and community care: establishing a strategic framework*.

DH (1996) *Hospital discharge workbook*.

Means, R. and others (1997) *Making partnerships work in community care: a guide for practitioners in housing, health and social services*, DH and DETR.

6.9 PRISONERS AND OTHER PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

6.9.1 Many homeless people have contact with the criminal justice system, often for a succession of relatively minor offences. They may also have substance misuse and mental health problems, which contribute both to their offending and to their homelessness. Research has found that prisoners who are homeless after their release are much more likely to re-offend than those with a secure home. Women who lose their children when they go into prison face additional problems. People who are vulnerable as a result of an institutionalised background are included in the new priority need categories under the homelessness legislation. Intervention can not only help to end this cycle of homelessness, prison and sporadic contact with crisis mental health services, it can also be cost effective by improving mental health and reducing offending behaviour. Many prisoners who are at risk of homelessness receive little assistance on release, except perhaps a list of bed and breakfast accommodation.

6.9.2 Means of intervention include:

- close joint work with the probation service to prevent homelessness among their clients;

- support to homeless people who are in custody in police stations and prisons;
- court diversion schemes, which work to steer mentally disordered offenders, many of whom are homeless or at risk of homelessness, towards treatment and support;
- advice and support services for ex-offender clients, along with resettlement and tenancy sustainment services;
- advice and casework sessions in prisons run by local authorities or voluntary agencies. At best these start at the beginning of a prisoner's sentence, so that there is maximum time to ensure they will not be homeless on release;
- action by advice workers in these schemes to ensure that, where possible, tenancies are kept on, or alternatives agreed with the landlord following release;
- related support to ensure that employment and training opportunities are available on release;
- help with tackling mental health and substance abuse problems that often contribute both to homelessness and to repeat offending;
- specialist prisoner support services for women and people from black and minority ethnic groups, for example Housing Advice for Black and Asian Prisoners (HABAP) works inside prisons in West Yorkshire to give advice and assistance to prisoners;
- a nominated local authority officer to liaise with the probation service and prisons on housing needs of released prisoners.

6.9.3 Revolving Doors operate a community based multi-disciplinary team which works with offenders referred by police, court and prison staff; helping them prepare for return to the community and providing long-term casework support to those with the most complex needs. They also have a Partnership Team, which can help other agencies develop their own schemes through training, project development and evaluation services.

6.9.4 For young people, the new Youth Offending Teams offer the opportunity to tackle housing problems as a part of comprehensive preventive support programmes for young offenders.

6.9.5 High risk ex-offenders will require a multi-agency approach, involving probation and possibly the police and accommodation should form part of the package. They should not simply be refused accommodation, but efforts must be made to arrange the appropriate mix of accommodation, support and supervision to prevent re-offending. For example, RB Kensington & Chelsea work in partnership with police and social services to resettle sex offenders.

6.9.6 For further information see:

Finn, W and others (2000) *Mental health, multiple needs and the police*, Revolving Doors Agency.

James, A. (1996) *Life on the edge: diversion and the mentally disordered offender*, The Mental Health Foundation.

RSU (2000) *Blocking the fast track from prison to rough sleeping*.

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrows rough sleepers*.

Youth Justice Board, *Advice note on accommodation for vulnerable young people*, 2001 www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

6.9.7 For further advice on support schemes for mentally disordered and homeless offenders contact: Revolving Doors Agency

6.10 PEOPLE LEAVING THE ARMED FORCES

6.10.1 Ex-service personnel are over-represented among rough sleepers and other homeless people. Homeless people who are vulnerable as a result of having been members of the Armed Forces are now included within the priority groups under the homelessness legislation. The Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) has been working with the Ministry of Defence, the Armed Forces and ex-services charities to ensure the best advice and support is given to service leavers at risk of homelessness and to rough sleepers who have been in the Services. For example, English Churches Housing group provides housing advice services (SPACES) within a barracks. Local authorities with a significant service presence in their areas should consider the needs of people leaving the services within their homelessness strategies.

6.10.2 For further information see:

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrows rough sleepers*.

6.10.3 For further information on the barracks advice service contact: SPACES

6.11 HOMELESS PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE NEEDS

6.11.1 A person with multiple needs has been defined by Homeless Link, a merger between the National Homeless Alliance and Homeless Network as a homeless or formerly homeless person who has two or more of the following problems and usually lacks effective contact with services:

- mental health;
- multiple substance misuse;
- personality disorders;
- offending behaviour;
- learning difficulties;
- physical health problems;
- challenging behaviour;
- vulnerability because of age.

6.11.2 If one of these needs were to be resolved, the others would still give cause for concern.

6.11.3 People with multiple needs can make frequent demands on a wide range of public services, but not have their needs effectively met by any of them. For example, homeless people with mental health problems have been found to make frequent use of crisis services and to see more of the police than they do of social services, psychiatric outpatient services or community health services. Support services can help to ensure they access statutory mental health services when they require them and so make a better and more cost effective use of services. For example, Kensington & Chelsea have a specialist post in the housing department to help find suitable accommodation for mental health service users. The officer works with care managers to assess the type of accommodation needed in each case.

6.11.4 Long term homeless people are the most likely to have multiple needs and to be the most difficult to help. Specialist services to help such people with multiple needs are being developed but are still limited in number. Voluntary agencies are usually in a better position to provide such services, because they are able to work in a flexible way and are not constrained by statutory priorities which may exclude such clients. For example, the Elmore Team in Oxford works persistently to engage clients with multiple needs and to help them access all potential treatment and support services. Their work involves assertive outreach to persuade the client to engage with services, coordination of services provided by specialist agencies, advocacy to ensure they are not excluded from services and brokerage to put together packages of care. All homelessness strategies should consider the need to develop services for those with multiple needs.

6.11.5 For further information on people with support needs and identifying risks of homelessness see:

Finn, W and others (2000) *Mental health, multiple needs and the police*, Revolving Doors Agency.

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Prevention is better than cure*, Crisis.

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrow's rough sleepers*.

6.11.6 For further good practice guidance see:

CIH (1999) *Housing and services for people with support need*.

NHS Health Advisory Service (1995) *A place in mind: commissioning and providing mental health services for people who are homeless*, HMSO.

Phoenix House (2001) *The multiple needs assessment and care management pack*.

Bevan, P. (1998) *Resettlement handbook*.

Dewhurst, L. and Bevan, P. (2001) *Inhabiting the margins: Elmore Team Oxford good practice report*, NHA.

6.11.7 For further information contact: Homeless Link (formerly National Homeless Alliance)

Chapter 7

Homelessness services provided by other agencies

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 Although housing authorities will take the lead in formulating homelessness strategies, many other agencies will need to be involved in developing and implementing the strategy and in the provision of services to homeless people. This section examines the roles of other statutory and voluntary agencies.

7.2 SOCIAL SERVICES

7.2.1 Many homeless people will be in contact with social services, or are potentially eligible for services. The involvement of social services should include:

- family and children's welfare, including family disputes which might lead to homelessness for young people (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.3 para. 6.3.22- 6.3.30);
- work with young runaways (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.3 para. 6.3.9);
- work with other children in need;
- services for young people leaving care (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.3 para. 6.3.31- 6.3.34);
- community care plans which should be integrated into homelessness strategies (see para. A2.3 in Appendix 2);
- Children's and Young People's Partnerships (see para. A2.4 in Appendix 2).

7.2.2 It is important that access routes to social services assessment are provided for homeless people, who often have difficulty in obtaining assessments and services for a number of reasons:

- some move between areas and are not regarded as local residents;
- they have difficulty accessing mainstream services and may not be registered with a GP;
- they may not have information on what services are available, or assume they are not entitled to them;
- they may have multiple needs which cut across the eligibility criteria of different agencies and budget holders.

7.2.3 Social services should have procedures for identifying clients who are at risk of losing their homes because of mental health, drug or alcohol problems. Social services will not normally provide general tenancy support, but can be involved with housing and health services in jointly commissioning and funding it. They should also have agreed

referral protocols to ensure specialist agencies meet these needs.

7.2.4 The homelessness strategy should include mechanisms for ensuring access to assessments by homeless people through joint protocols between housing, social services, health, probation, police and voluntary agencies.

7.2.5 For further guidance see:

Means, R. and others (1997) *Making partnerships work in community care: a guide for practitioners in housing, health and social services*, DH and DETR.

7.2.6 For the joint protocols for 16 and 17 year olds see:

Bellerby, N. (2000) *Joint protocols between housing and social services departments: a good practice guide for the assessment and assistance of homeless young people aged 16 and 17 years*, Centrepont.

7.3 HEALTH SERVICES

7.3.1 Homeless people often suffer from poor health, along with difficulties in accessing health services. There are a number of ways health services can help to prevent homelessness and improve access.

7.3.2 Health services can identify those at risk of homelessness and direct them to accommodation and support services. Primary health care services encounter many problems linked to housing. Better information and training can help them to make more effective referrals to homelessness services. For example, seminars have been run for GPs in Kensington and Chelsea. It is particularly important that hospital discharge arrangements ensure patients are not homeless when they leave (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.8 para. 6.8.1).

7.3.3 Local housing departments can help to ensure that homeless people, particularly those with children, have access to health services by putting in place systems for notifying local health services when families are placed in temporary accommodation.

7.3.4 The provision of specialist mental health, drug and alcohol services to homeless and formerly homeless people should be considered. Homeless people often find it difficult to access detoxification and drug and alcohol services, including rehabilitation services. Local mental health, and substance abuse agencies should be closely involved in the homelessness strategy and where necessary funded to provide specialist services for homeless people.

7.3.5 For further information see:

Thompson, K., Phelan, M., Strathdee, G. and Shiress, D. (1995) *Mental health care A guide for housing workers*, The Mental Health Foundation.

7.3.6 For further guidance see:

NHS Health Advisory Service (1995) *A place in mind: commissioning and providing mental health services for people who are homeless*, HMSO.

Means, R. and others (1997) *Making partnerships work in community care: a guide for practitioners in housing, health and social services*, DH and DETR.

7.4 EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES

7.4.1 Employment and training schemes have an important role in the prevention of homelessness and in the resettlement of homeless people, both by lifting people out of poverty and by re-integrating them into society. This can be particularly important for young people, to help them avoid being drawn into a homelessness lifestyle. The Careers and Employment services, Learning and Skills Councils, local training providers and businesses should all be engaged with the homelessness strategy. Schemes, some specifically targeted on homeless people, include:

- pre-vocational training;
- careers guidance;
- skills training;
- work experience and job placement;
- integrated accommodation and training projects, such as foyers.

7.4.2 For further information see:

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Ending exclusion: employment and training schemes for homeless young people*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

7.4.3 For further guidance see:

Macdonald, D. and Jackson, A. (1997) *Skills for life, a good practice guide to training homeless people for resettlement and employment*, Crisis.

7.4.4 For further information in London see:

www.homelesstraining.org.uk

7.5 EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

7.5.1 Education and youth services can contribute to the prevention of homelessness among young people by:

- education in leaving home in a planned manner and sustaining an independent home, including peer education (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.3 para. 6.3.17 6.3.21);
- identifying young people at risk of homelessness and referring them to support

- services such as family mediation (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.3 para. 6.3.22 6.3.30);
- contact with homeless young people on the street through detached youth work;
- information, advice, advocacy and counselling for homeless young people;
- support and mentoring, especially through the Connexions service (see para. A2.6 in Appendix 2).

7.6 CRIMINAL JUSTICE

7.6.1 The police, probation services, Youth Offending Teams, courts and prisons should all be engaged with the homelessness strategy and the provision of accommodation for ex-offenders (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.9 para. 6.9.1 -6.9.7).

7.7 VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

7.7.1 Voluntary organisations have a long history of providing services for homeless people which are often innovative and effective. They should play a central role in homelessness strategies, particularly in providing for some specific groups of homeless people including, for example, young people, minority ethnic groups and rough sleepers. They can often provide more flexible services, that are more acceptable to certain client groups, than can statutory services. However, these groups should also have access to mainstream services. Voluntary agencies can also help to attract additional funding from private and public sources.

7.7.2 However, the strategy should not assume that all current services run by voluntary organisations will continue in their present form, or at all, or that local authority funding should necessarily continue for them. The strategy should start from the review of homelessness and must be based on an analysis of needs (see Chapter 2 sub-section 2.1 para. 2.1.2). There is a risk of services being provider-driven and all local projects should be reviewed on Best Value principles. It might be decided that some services are counterproductive and reinforce homeless and street lifestyles. Others might be inefficient, ineffective or represent poor value for money. Where necessary, services should be open to competitive tendering, including some services previously provided by the local authority.

7.7.3 Local authorities should aim to invite all voluntary agencies which work with homeless people to participate in the strategy. Agencies which are funded by the local authority should be required to participate fully in the strategy and those which are not funded should be encouraged to do so. One of the strengths of voluntary agencies at their best is their capacity to experiment and innovate. A diversity of services should be encouraged which, where feasible, offer choices to users. Authorities will need to discuss with voluntary organisations the resources available to them and what can be achieved within these resources.

7.7.4 All contracts for services and funding agreements with voluntary agencies should specify clear outcomes which are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-tabled). The homelessness strategy should aim to develop common monitoring and evaluation systems which will be applied to all services and which should be integrated with

Supporting People monitoring.

Chapter 8

Temporary accommodation

8.1 THE ROLE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIES

8.1.1 The Homelessness Bill provides that ensuring sufficient accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless is an integral part of a homelessness strategy. While the aim should be to ensure stable and secure long term housing for homeless people, there is a role for temporary and emergency accommodation in all strategies. However, its use and the length of time which households spend in temporary accommodation should be kept to a minimum.

8.1.2 The main functions of temporary accommodation are to provide housing:

- in an emergency, for example where people are made homeless at short notice, or a woman is fleeing domestic violence;
- while applications for housing from homeless people are being considered. In these circumstances decisions should be reached as soon as possible;
- while homeless applicants are waiting for a permanent home. Temporary accommodation is costly and can disrupt individual and family lives. The need to use temporary accommodation for this purpose for extended periods indicates a need to consider expanding the supply of permanent affordable housing, or changing allocation policies to give higher priority to homeless people;
- where a period of support is needed before the homeless person is ready for independent living, or a move to long term supported housing;
- for people who have only a short term need, for example as respite accommodation for young people pending the resolution of a family dispute;
- for people leading a transient lifestyle, for example older travelling homeless people and some rough sleepers. In these circumstances, resettlement services should encourage people to a more settled way of life, wherever possible;
- for people leaving prison as a stepping stone to more stable accommodation.

8.1.3 When homeless people, including families, are staying in temporary accommodation, there is an important opportunity to assess any support needs they might have and to ensure that any necessary support is in place before they are permanently rehoused (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.4 and Chapter 8 sub-section 8.4).

8.1.4 Homelessness strategies should include a comprehensive strategy for the most effective use of temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation strategies should cover:

- an assessment of current and future supply and shortages, as part of the homelessness review;
- an evaluation of the costs and benefits of different types of temporary accommodation;
- the need for any new provision of temporary accommodation;

- plans for the effective management of all types of temporary accommodation;
- plans for support for people staying in temporary accommodation, including families and vulnerable people without children ([see sub-section 8.4 below](#));
- monitoring of standards and performance;
- plans for the rehousing and resettlement support for residents of temporary accommodation into permanent housing, whether fully independent or supported, according to their needs.

8.1.5 Wherever possible, temporary accommodation should be provided in the homeless person's own area, unless they have experienced violence and prefer to be housed at some distance, or need to be accommodated away from those previously victimised. This is especially important in rural areas with poor transport links. Where a move to another area cannot be avoided, authorities have a duty under the Housing Act 1996 to notify the receiving authority. There should be close liaison with agencies, for example social services, in that area to ensure that any necessary support will be available. Where there are significant numbers of placements in neighbouring authorities, there should be liaison with them over this aspect of homelessness strategies.

8.1.6 For further guidance see:

Manzi, T. and Smith-Bowers, B. (1998) *Temporary housing: a good practice guide*, CIH.

8.2 ALTERNATIVES TO BED AND BREAKFAST HOTELS

8.2.1 B&B hotels are almost always the worst option for temporary accommodation, offering the poorest conditions at the highest costs. They are particularly unsuitable for families. Wherever possible, more suitable temporary accommodation should be used, with linked support. Their use may, however, sometimes be unavoidable in short term emergencies, where for a limited period, alternatives are not available or not suitable.

8.2.2 In some areas there has been extensive use of B&B hotels because of a shortage of both permanent housing and alternative forms of temporary accommodation. In these areas, plans to reduce or eliminate the use of B&B should have high priority in the local homelessness and housing strategies. There are many better options than B&B, including hostels, use of local authority and RSL stock as temporary accommodation, private sector leasing and other use of private stock; which generally provide better conditions and better value for money.

8.2.3 Where the use of B&B is unavoidable, it is important to have mechanisms in place for ensuring reasonable standards and costs, for example through registration or accreditation schemes and through inspection of individual properties. It is essential to have the right support services in place. Where extensive use is made of the private sector, whether B&B hotels or other private lettings, the authority will need to ensure it manages the market so that it is not inflating local rents and will need to liaise with other agencies and neighbouring authorities to ensure they are not inadvertently bidding up prices.

8.2.4 In addition to homeless people placed in B&B accommodation by local authorities and other agencies, there are many people who have placed themselves in B&B and who have been homeless or are now at risk of homelessness. In 1997, Shelter estimated that around 76,000 people were living in B&B with their rent paid by housing benefit, while a further 4,000 families were placed by local authorities. Homelessness strategies should consider the extent of any such problem in their areas and responses to it.

8.2.5 For further guidance contact: Shelter Policy Unit

8.3 HOSTELS

8.3.1 Hostel provision will be an important part of the homelessness strategy in most areas. Current provision and gaps in it should be audited by local authorities as part of the Supporting People supply mapping. A wide range of hostel accommodation is likely to be needed including:

- direct access hostels where homeless people can be provided with immediate accommodation. Ideally, there should be a sufficient pool of beds to ensure quick access when the need arises; this will mean hostels carrying some vacancies;
- separate or targeted provision for particular groups such as young people, families (including play facilities for children), women, non-priority homeless couples and young lone parents;
- specialist provision for people with support needs such as mental health, alcohol and drug abuse and multiple needs;
- some hostels where alcohol is allowed and others where it is not;
- possible provision of winter shelters, where there is extra demand in cold weather;
- second stage move-on hostels, where people can stay for longer periods before a move to independent or supported housing;
- a variety of management regimes which range from those which aim to minimise evictions, to those which minimise the risk of disturbance to their residents.

8.3.2 In some areas, there will not be sufficient levels of need to justify separate provision. Where there is some, but low, demand for specialist provision, neighbouring authorities and the counties should consider some joint commissioning. This should be facilitated by the cross authority working to be implemented under Supporting People. There might also be scope for small scale provision. In areas where demand is very scattered, for example in some rural areas, alternatives such as supported lodgings and Nightstop schemes can be considered ([see sub-section 8.5 below](#)).

8.3.3 Where there are a large number of hostels in an area, central databases, such as the Hostels Online system operated in some cities by Resource Information Service, can help to ensure the most efficient and effective use is made of vacancies. It also saves costs by reducing the duplication of telephone calls by referral agencies to hostels.

8.3.4 For further information contact: Resource Information Service

8.3.5 Some homeless people cannot gain access to hostels because they lack the identification necessary to claim Housing Benefit. The Department for Work and Pensions has issued *Adjudication and Operations Circular A38/2000* to local authorities which allows benefit claims for up to 13 weeks while the resident obtains identification.

8.3.6 The homelessness strategy should review the support services in hostels with a view to ensuring that adequate support is available to:

- meet the needs of the hostels target client group;
- enable all homeless people to find suitable accommodation and not be excluded because of their level of needs;
- reduce to the minimum evictions and bannings from hostels;
- offer effective resettlement services into suitable permanent housing.

8.3.7 For further guidance see:

Van Doorn, A. and Williamson, D. (2001) *A good practice companion for emergency accommodation for homeless people*, Homeless Link.

8.4 SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

8.4.1 Where homeless people have to spend extended periods in temporary accommodation, it is important that they have access to support and services. Living in temporary accommodation can have serious consequences for children's schooling. It can also be difficult to register with GP services. It can affect people's ability to access other health and social services, such as mental health services and drug treatment programmes. Even where accommodation is provided within the local authority area where the application has been made, moving from one locality to another can affect access to all these types of services. There are a number of specialist projects that provide support to homeless families in temporary accommodation such as the Bayswater Project and the Field Lane Homeless Families Centre. These projects provide valuable models for the provision of a range of support services, such as laundry facilities, access to training, toys and play areas.

8.5 SPECIAL SCHEMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

8.5.1 There are additional temporary accommodation schemes which are especially suitable for

some young people. These include:

- Nightstop or crash pad schemes, where young people can stay in approved private homes in an emergency. These can provide a cooling off period after family disputes and should be combined with family mediation services (see Chapter 6 sub-section 6.3 para. 6.3.26).
- supported lodgings;

- staying on with foster parents after the age of 18;
- training flats, where young people can stay for a limited period to learn independent living skills. They have sometimes also been used for older long term homeless people such as former rough sleepers;
- foyers and other schemes which combine accommodation with employment and training opportunities. For information see: www.foyer.net

8.5.2 Nightstop and supported lodgings schemes can be particularly useful in rural areas, because they can enable young people to stay in their home areas and in touch with their social and family support networks, rather than moving to another area to stay in a hostel.

8.5.3 For further information see:

DH (2000) *Getting it right: good practice in leaving care resource pack*.

Cameron, K. (undated) *A foot in the door: a guide to good practice in developing and managing young people's direct access hostels*, Centrepoin.

Chapter 9

Permanent social housing

9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.1.1 Most homeless people have low incomes and access to social housing is likely to be their main option as a permanent home. There is also some scope for using the private sector for homeless people and this is discussed in Chapter 11.

9.1.2 Local authority and RSL allocation policies are in a period of change, with the move towards giving greater choice and a more active role for applicants. It will be important to consider within the homelessness strategy the impact of changes to allocation policies and procedures, and the need to ensure that they work with, not against, homelessness policies.

9.1.3 The pattern of demand and supply varies significantly in different parts of the country and decisions on priorities necessarily remain with local authorities and their partner RSLs.

9.2 ALLOCATIONS POLICIES AND HOMELESSNESS

9.2.1 There are a number of factors to consider in the homelessness strategy.

9.2.3 *The proportion of lettings to be made to homeless people.* In areas of high demand from homeless families, very high proportions of family-sized homes are sometimes let to them. This can be justified, particularly where the alternative is use of expensive and unsuitable temporary accommodation, especially B&B hotels. However, some authorities find that if all, or nearly all, lettings go to homeless families, this policy can become self-defeating, since homelessness becomes the only route into social housing. In considering the priority which could be given to households accepted as statutorily homeless, authorities will need to ensure that reasonable preference is also given to all other relevant categories of applicant as required by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

9.2.4 *Flexible allocations.* There is a move away from over complex points-based systems to more flexible allocations policies. These often result from a concern to build sustainable communities by avoiding concentration of tenants with high levels of needs. Flexible allocations policies allow greater discretion at a local level and may also include targets or quotas made on criteria other than housing need. However, these can lead to fewer homeless people being housed, because of their relatively higher level of needs. This could in turn lead to a growth in homelessness, if not carefully managed.

9.2.5 For further information see:

Cope, H. (2000) *Flexible allocations and local letting schemes*, National Housing Federation.

9.2.6 *Regeneration policies* can lead to a temporary or permanent loss of lettings in areas of

high demand and an expansion in the numbers of homeless people in temporary accommodation.

9.2.7 *Choice based lettings schemes.* DTLR is encouraging local authorities to give social tenants more choice over their housing. How homeless households are treated within choice based lettings schemes will be important. There is a duty included in the Homelessness Bill to ensure that any necessary help is given to people who are likely to have difficulty in making an application for housing. It will be essential to build in assistance for vulnerable homeless households as part of the design of choice based lettings schemes, so that such households are actively helped to apply for suitable lettings.

9.2.8 From April 2001, DTLR is funding choice based lettings schemes in 27 localities, and monitoring and evaluating the pilots. Reports on activity will appear on the DTLR web-site.

www.housing.communities.gov.uk/information/cbaselet/newsletter.htm

9.2.9 *Policies to restrict access to local authority lettings.* The Homelessness Bill sets out the circumstances in which an authority can treat an applicant as ineligible, defined as behaviour of the applicant or a member of his household which, if the household were secure tenants of the authority, would entitle the authority to a possession order under certain grounds in the Housing Act 1985. Many of those excluded might have been previously evicted from social housing tenancies. Local authorities should monitor the numbers of exclusions and rejections. The homelessness strategy should consider means of minimising evictions and exclusions, through support to vulnerable tenants and through preventive measures, including advice on debt management and injunctions to tackle nuisance.

9.2.10 For further guidance see:

DTLR, *Code of guidance for local authorities on the allocation of accommodation and homelessness* (forthcoming).

Housing Corporation (2000) *Managing nuisance, harassment and anti-social behaviour*.
Social Exclusion Unit (2001) Report of policy action team 8: *Anti-social behaviour*.

9.2.11 *Low demand housing and ready access for homeless people.* Authorities in some areas with low demand housing are able to offer homeless people ready access to homes. However, these authorities often find that the tenancies fail after a short while. This can reinforce the chaotic lifestyle of some homeless people and their sense of failure. It might also lead to them being considered ineligible for future offers. It is essential to ensure that the support needs of homeless people are assessed and met in order to help them retain their tenancies and prevent homelessness. There are also risks for sustainable communities in concentrating a large number of homeless people in unpopular areas. Allocating low demand housing to vulnerable people can place them at significant risk as these areas often have inherent problems, such as high incidences of substance misuse and crime. It is much better to integrate vulnerable people into balanced communities, where community support is more likely to be available.

9.2.12 For further guidance see:

DTLR (2000) *Responding to low demand housing and unpopular neighbourhoods: a guide to good practice*.

9.2.13 *Converting properties*. Some types of low demand housing may be suitable for conversion to other uses. For example, many local authorities report an oversupply of sheltered housing some of which, such as bedsits or single flats, are not now acceptable to older people. These properties could be suitable for some homeless people without children. It is, however, important not to concentrate large numbers of homeless people in particular schemes. For example, large unpopular blocks allocated to homeless young people can create serious management difficulties.

9.2.14 *Mobility schemes*. Mobility schemes can help to make better use of the housing stock. In areas of excess demand, arrangements can sometimes be made for homeless people and others to move to areas of lower demand. For example, the London boroughs, through the Association of London Government, operate a scheme for helping people to move to areas outside London which have vacant social housing. The scheme involves both local authorities and RSLs. The authorities involved are also concerned to ensure that there are employment opportunities in the areas to which people move. Local authorities need to consider the place of mobility schemes in their homelessness strategies. Encouraging transfers from underoccupied social housing can also help to release family sized homes in areas of high demand.

9.2.15 For further guidance see: DETR (2001) *Managing underoccupation: a guide to good practice in social housing*.

9.2.16 *RSLs*. Local authorities will need to work in close partnership with RSLs in formulating their strategies for meeting homelessness needs through the provision of social housing, taking account of the RSLs own policies and business strategies. It is essential to ensure full use is made of nominations and referrals to RSLs by the housing authority and other local agencies. Authorities should consider making arrangements for joint assessments of nominees to RSLs to ensure any necessary support is in place. The Housing Corporation will be issuing a new Regulatory Code and Regulatory Guidance, in early 2002, to ensure that RSLs can demonstrate their cooperation with local authorities in homelessness reviews and in the delivery of the authority's statutory homelessness duties.

9.2.17 For further guidance see:

Housing Corporation guidance, forthcoming 2002.

9.2.18 *Stock transfer*. Where authorities have transferred or are planning to transfer their housing stock, it is important that clear arrangements are in place for the housing of homeless people nominated by the authority and for the monitoring of refused nominations. Local authorities must consider their ability to discharge their duties towards the homeless when consulting on and preparing for transfer, and clear provisions need to be made in the transfer agreement. Where authorities are planning a stock transfer the homelessness strategy will help the authority to:

- identify the likely impact of transfer on homeless applicants access to both permanent and

temporary accommodation;

- make decisions on the delivery of homelessness services between the local authority and transfer landlord.

9.2.19 The local authority will need to review their homelessness strategy after the transfer, to take into account the role of the new transfer landlord and the fact that the local authority no longer has any housing stock.

9.2.20 For those authorities that have already transferred their housing stock, the transfer landlord, likely to be the largest social housing provider in the area, will have a particularly significant role in the development and delivery of the strategy. This will be particularly the case if the transfer landlord delivers homelessness services, or has been responsible for the housing register. Where local authorities believe that the agreements reached at the time of transfer are now inadequate, they should discuss these problems urgently with the recipient association.

9.2.21 For further guidance see:

DTLR (2001) *Housing transfer guidance 2002 programme*.

9.2.22 *Empty properties*. It is important that local authorities make effective use of empty properties. Local authorities have a key role to play in identifying empty properties in their areas and in developing strategies to bring them back into effective use. Some 200 authorities in England have local empty property strategies in place, and that number is growing. A homelessness strategy should take account of and inform any empty homes strategy.

9.2.23 For further guidance contact: The Empty Homes Agency

9.2.24 In all cases of permanent rehousing of homeless people an assessment of any support needs should be made and support put in place before the start of the tenancy (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.4).

Chapter 10

Supported housing

10.1 INTRODUCTION

10.1.1 Local authorities will need to review the supply of accommodation and support services for a wide range of clients in preparation for the introduction of the Supporting People programme in April 2003. This chapter outlines the aims of the Supporting People programme and overlaps with homelessness strategies.

10.2 INTEGRATING HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIES WITH SUPPORTING PEOPLE

10.2.1 The aims of the programme are to enable local authorities to develop a more flexible range of services, including floating support not tied to particular properties;

10.2.2 In order to achieve this local authorities have been encouraged to:

- undertake supply and needs mapping exercises of support services;
- develop a local Supporting People strategy closely linked to other local strategies, including the homelessness strategy;
- make arrangements to ensure that people moving from other areas will receive support, including women fleeing domestic violence or transient homeless people;
- apply new quality and monitoring arrangements;
- apply a simple and common monitoring system.

10.2.3 DTLR has issued a questionnaire and database, for the mapping of current provision which authorities should be using to prepare a full database of supported housing services.

10.2.4 The strategy to meet the support needs of vulnerable people will involve:

- better use of existing resources through Best Value and Supporting People scheme reviews;
- drawing additional funding into the programme from other sources, such as health and social services;
- regularly reviewing the resources available to Supporting People resources as part of the normal process of government financial planning.

10.2.5 There will be many overlaps and common features in local authorities homelessness strategies and the Supporting People strategies. It will be essential for homelessness services and the homelessness strategy to be well integrated with the Supporting People strategy. DTLR will introduce detailed common arrangements for monitoring

the Supporting People programme and the performance of local authorities.

10.2.6 Where there is insufficient local demand for specialist accommodation and services, or homeless people and those with continuing support needs are transient or necessarily mobile, cross-authority arrangements will be more appropriate.

10.2.7 People with long term support needs may need to make supported housing their permanent home. For others it will be a stepping stone to independent living and all schemes for such people should include services for assessing residents readiness for independent living and arrangements for moving on to independent housing, or for floating support to be withdrawn.

10.2.8 For further information see:

DETR (2001), *Supporting People: policy into practice*

www.supporting-people.communities.gov.uk

Chapter 11

Private sector housing

11.1 INTRODUCTION

11.1.1 Local authorities and voluntary sector partner agencies have a key role both in preventing homelessness among residents of private sector housing and in enabling access to private housing for homeless and potentially homeless people. The homelessness strategy should set out clear plans to make the best use of private housing to meet local needs, while maintaining and improving standards. The strategy should cover a range of measures and services, which are outlined in this chapter.

11.2 ACCESS SCHEMES

11.2.1 *Access schemes* which help homeless and other low income people to access private rented housing. These schemes include:

- *Registers of suitable private rented properties.* Some of these have lists of approved landlords, or check individual properties to ensure they meet minimum standards. Some simply give out details of vacancies, others actively help clients to look for properties and others actively match tenants with landlords.
- *Rent deposit and guarantee schemes* which help to overcome the lack of a deposit and rent in advance for homeless people. These fall into two main types: schemes which pay a cash deposit for the client which is reclaimed when they move out and those which provide a bond guaranteeing to pay any claims for damages or sometimes arrears, up to a maximum amount.
- *Rent in advance schemes.* These aim to overcome any problems caused by delays in the payment of housing benefit. They pay the rent for an agreed period, which is then reclaimed back once housing benefit has been received. They are often combined with deposit and guarantee schemes.
- *Help with claiming housing benefit.* This can cover help with completing the application form, making sure the payment is made to the landlord, liaising with the housing benefit office if the payment is delayed and setting up fast-track arrangements with the housing benefit office for clients of their scheme. This support can be offered to both tenants and landlords.
- *Basic tenancy support,* including help with moving in, help with budgeting and sometimes a limited number of visits to identify any continuing support needs. Schemes usually offer only basic support and try to link clients into specialist agencies for any continuing support needs.
- Some schemes *mediate* in landlord/tenant disputes to forestall possible loss of the tenancy.

11.2.2 Many schemes offer some or all of these services in combination.

11.2.3 For further information see:

Rugg, J. (1997) *Opening doors: helping people on low income secure private rented accommodation*, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

11.2.4 For further guidance see:

National Rent Deposit Forum (2001) *Starter pack for rent deposit guarantee schemes*.

11.3 ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

11.3.1 *Advice and support* to tenants and home owners at risk of losing their homes, including legal and money advice services. Advice services are discussed in Chapter 5 (see Chapter 5 sub-section 5.3).

11.3.2 *Tenancy support for private tenants*. At present the great majority of supported housing and tenancy sustainment work is provided in the social housing sector. The main exception is supported lodgings schemes, particularly for young people and others with support needs, where private landlords are funded to provide lodgings and basic support with help and supervision from agencies such as social services. The more flexible funding arrangements under Supporting People offer scope for extending tenancy support to the private sector, with support provided either by the landlord or in cooperation with the local authority or voluntary agencies. Such schemes would clearly need to develop robust mechanisms of supervision and quality control. For example, Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) runs a register of landlords willing to take tenants in need of support. BCHA provides the necessary extra support to both tenants and landlords.

11.3.3 *Advice and help for landlords*, particularly those willing to house low income tenants at risk of homelessness. This help can include:

- legal advice on tenancies, to ensure landlords understand their legal rights and responsibilities;
- help with delays in payment of housing benefit;
- targeted use of housing benefit and top-up payments where tenants are having difficulty paying the rent. For example Eastbourne Borough Council has introduced Discretionary Housing Payments as a top-up to either housing or council tax benefit. They are available where the claimant needs further help with their housing costs, subject to a number of safeguards and it is hoped will help some tenants at risk of losing their homes to stay in them;
- the targeting of renovation grants to encourage landlords to let to local authority nominations and to provide longer term tenancies;
- landlords forums which can provide collective training and advice for landlords on the good management of their properties and to ensure local authorities are aware of landlords concerns.

11.4 MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING STANDARDS

11.4.1 *Improvement of standards in private rented housing*, particularly in houses in multiple occupation. Poor conditions and bad management can cause some private tenants to become homeless. It is therefore essential to involve housing improvement and enforcement staff, who are in the environmental health department in some authorities, in the preparation of the homelessness strategy. There is a wide range of measures local authorities can take to improve standards in the private rented sector including:

- voluntary accreditation schemes to certify that landlords reach approved standards;
- compulsory registration schemes for houses in multiple occupation to ensure minimum standards;
- area improvement programmes;
- enforcement action against individual poor condition properties.

11.4.2 Environmental Health Officers can be the first to come in to contact with tenants at risk of homelessness and there should be arrangements for ensuring advice and support is available to these tenants. Enforcement work can also lead to tenants being evicted and it is important to assess the position of tenants before taking action and to advise tenants of their degree of protection from eviction. The authority should also provide for rehousing of those who do lose their homes as a result of action by the authority.

11.4.3 *The prevention of harassment and illegal eviction*. Authorities should consider the scope for reducing these causes of homelessness and tenancy relations officers should be involved in formulating and implementing the strategy.

11.4.4 For further guidance see: DETR (2000) *Harassment and illegal eviction of private rented sector tenants and park home residents*.

11.4.5 *Adaptations and improvements* can enable owners and tenants, particularly those who are elderly or disabled, to stay in their homes and Home Improvement Agencies and other such services should be included in the homelessness strategy.

11.4.6 *The efficient administration of housing benefit*. Delays in housing benefit payments can be a serious disincentive to landlords to accept tenants on benefit, including many homeless people and can also increase the risks of eviction. In some cases, special schemes have been set up to fast-track housing benefit claims from homeless people and other local authority nominees to private landlords. However, in the longer term the underlying causes of delay should be tackled, as tenants who are not nominated through special schemes will still be at risk and the general disincentive to landlords will remain. There are wide variations in the efficiency of different authorities in their administration of housing benefit.

11.4.7 For further guidance see:

Audit Commission (2001) *Housing benefit administration: Learning from inspection*.

Appendix 1

From strategy into programme: an outline example

A1.1 This appendix gives a summary hypothetical example of how one element of a homelessness strategy might be translated into a particular programme of individual projects. Costings are not included because they would vary widely depending on the nature and scale of the programmes. An actual programme would, of course, require much more detail.

A1.2 **The needs assessment** found that every year approximately 50 young people aged 16-17 are becoming homeless after leaving their parents home and a further 100 may be in danger of doing so. The evidence is drawn from the housing needs survey and local authority and voluntary agency records. There is also evidence that increasing numbers of these young people have drug problems. Demographic projections suggest there will be no increase in the number of young people in this age range over the next five years, but social developments such as increasing drug use and family breakdown might further increase the numbers at risk of homelessness.

A1.3 **The audit of provision** found that there is one specialist advice agency for homeless young people, but this has only one full time member of staff and is mainly dependent on volunteers. Some young people also approach the local authority advice service which can give general housing advice, but does not have any specialists in helping young people. Other homeless young people are in contact with social services, probation, Youth Offending Teams, the police, the youth service and Connexions. There is one hostel for young people with 15 beds which are usually full, as it is difficult to find move-on accommodation. The local authority has offered a small number of tenancies to young people in the past, but these have usually broken down after a few months. Because of the lack of local provision, many homeless young people go to the nearest city which is 20 miles away in a neighbouring authority, where there are hostel places available. However, some of these then become more seriously involved with drugs and enter the homelessness circuit.

A1.4 **The proposed programme** Tenders will be invited for a strengthened housing advice and support service for young people which will include:

- a professional specialist advice service;
- a family mediation service which will have annual targets of helping 20 per cent of the young people who are already homeless to return home and 60 per cent of those still at home to remain there;
- a tenancy support service for up to 30 new tenants a year, combined with improved access to social and private rented housing (see below).

Bids for jointly run services will be welcomed. Funding for the current low level service will be redirected to the new service, with possible additional funding from social services, the housing department and Supporting People.

Rehousing prospects will be improved by a quota of 20 local authority lettings a year and 10

RSL lettings, with referrals from the advice service and the young peoples hostels. Some of these lettings will be generated by converting an unpopular 15 bedsit sheltered housing scheme for use by young people. Where necessary, these lettings will be furnished. All applicants will have had a full needs assessment, using the new common assessment protocol. The assessment will include consideration of the possibility of family mediation. If rehoused, all tenants will receive a flexible floating support package, including where necessary high levels of support, from the new tenancy support service for young people.

An additional hostel of 15 beds will be developed by a local RSL which, along with the existing hostel, will have resettlement workers and access to the new social lettings.

A Nightstop scheme with 12 beds and a supported lodgings scheme with 20 beds will be developed in conjunction with social services.

An accommodation register and rent deposit scheme run by a voluntary agency will be setup, with a target of 50 lettings a year for young people with lower level support needs, which will be met by the tenancy support service.

Discussions will be held with the education authority and local schools with a view to:

- identifying young people at risk because of absences or exclusion from school and parental disputes;
- arranging classroom sessions on homelessness and setting up a first home.

Agreement is reached with the Drugs Action Team for some drug services to be specifically targeted on homeless young people.

A protocol is arranged with the local Connexions service, social services, probation, police and Youth Offending Teams for identifying young people at risk of homelessness and referring them to the advice and support service. Training will be offered to these agencies in identifying young people at risk and the services available to them.

The Careers Service will ensure advice and employment support are available to homeless young people in the hostels and other accommodation. Pre-vocational training will also be available.

Further consideration will be given to the possibility of a small local foyer to provide accommodation and employment training.

Local businesses will be invited to participate in the employment and training programmes.

Discussion will be held with the neighbouring city authority, who have been consulted over the homelessness strategy, regarding possible joint funding of some of these projects to relieve pressure on their facilities and to achieve economies of scale.

There will be joint consideration with voluntary agencies of other funding sources for services,

including central government, the EU, Charitable Trusts and the private sector.

A lead agency, in this case a national voluntary organisation, will be appointed to develop and coordinate the programme.

A1.5 Subject to the funding becoming available, the programme will be implemented over a three year period. After five years there will be targets that at least 50 per cent of young people at risk of leaving their parents homes and becoming homeless will continue to stay there until they can make a planned move out. All those who do become homeless will have access to temporary accommodation and eventually to tenancies with any necessary support. Employment and training support will be available to all those in touch with young people's homelessness services. Those with more serious support needs, such as drug use, will receive the support and treatment they need.

Appendix 2

Linking in with other strategies and programmes

A2.1 Local strategic partnerships and community strategies. Every local authority has a duty to prepare a community strategy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. Local strategic partnerships of local government, public bodies, businesses and voluntary organisations will tackle major local issues such as housing and social exclusion.

For further guidance see:

DETR (2001) *Local strategic partnerships Government guidance*, available from: www.local-regions.communities.gov.uk/lsp/guidance

A2.2 Supporting People. The Supporting People programme will promote flexible housing-related support services for vulnerable people in order to improve their quality of life and enable them to have greater independence and control over their lives. Local authorities are required to develop shadow Supporting People strategies for the year 2002/3 in preparation for the introduction of the programme in April 2003. Supporting People will cover a wide range of vulnerable people, including homeless people (see Chapter 4, Mapping needs and resources and Chapter 10, Supported housing).

For further information see:

DETR (2001) *Supporting People: policy into practice*.

A2.3 Community care plans. Guidance on community care and housing has recommended the inclusion of housing needs in Community Care Plans and a section on community care in the local authority housing strategy statement. Many homeless people have support needs and it is important that Community Care Plans and homelessness strategies are closely integrated.

For further information see:

DH/DETR (1998) *Housing and community care: establishing a strategic framework*.

A2.4 Children and Young Peoples Partnerships. These will produce local Childrens and Young Peoples Strategic Plans which will assess needs and services and identify means of filling gaps. They will be well placed to frame strategies for 16 and 17 year olds and for homeless families, in partnership with the homelessness strategy.

A2.5 Sure Start programmes aim to improve childrens life chances through better access to family support and other services. Most homeless young people come from families with additional problems and Sure Start programmes could help to prevent homelessness when children become young adults.

For further information see:

www.surestart.government.uk/home.cfm

A2.6 Connexions. Nationally, the new Connexions service for young people has the potential to play a central role in identifying those at risk of homelessness and guiding them towards preventive services. The aim of Connexions is to guide and support all young people through their teenage years. The new service will be delivered primarily through a network of Personal Advisers linking in with specialist support services. They will be drawn together from a range of existing public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations, and will build on best practice. Connexions began operating in April 2001 in a limited number of areas and will be implemented across England by 2003.

For further information see:

www.connexions.gov.uk

A2.7 Quality Protects programmes. These programmes, led by social services, work with children in need, including those leaving care. Department of Health (DH) guidance states that district and county councils should work together to ensure suitable accommodation is available for young people leaving care. Most young people leaving care will need support in their accommodation and a wide range of types of housing and support should be available. Housing and social services should have joint protocols in place for helping care leavers.

For further information see:

DH, *Local Authority Circular LAC (2000) 15*, www.doh.gov.uk

A2.8 NHS Joint Investment Plans (JIPs) and Health Improvement Programmes (HIMPs). JIPs are three year rolling programmes which deliver key aspects of the HIMPs. DH guidance on JIPs states that they provide potential mechanisms for joint approaches between the NHS and local authorities to funding support services, for example for people with mental health, drug or alcohol problems. Some support services for homeless people will come within these categories. Links have already been established between Supporting People and JIPs and homelessness strategies will need also to be a part of these plans.

For further information see:

www.doh.government.uk/jointunit/jipguidance1.htm

A2.9 Primary Care Group Trust commissioning plans. Primary Care Groups Trusts are groups of local healthcare and social care professionals who, together with patient and Health Authority representatives, take devolved responsibility for the healthcare needs of their local community. They bring GPs, nurses and other local stakeholders together and give them a lead role in the planning, provision and development of local health services. Primary care services may be the main or only helping agencies used by some homeless people. Other homeless people have difficulty in gaining access to health services.

A2.10 Drug Action Teams. These work locally to help young people resist drug use and to protect communities from drug-related anti-social and criminal behaviour. Some homeless young people have drug problems and the work of DATs overlaps with that of

homelessness agencies.

For further information see:

www.crimereduction.gov.uk/drugsalcohol4.htm, and

the Drugs Prevention Advisory Service website:

www.dpas.gov.uk

For further guidance see:

Home Office/DTLR, *Good practice guidance for social landlords on managing drug use*, (forthcoming).

A2.11 Crime and Disorder Strategies. Local authorities and the police have a duty to publish three yearly crime and disorder strategies. These are relevant to homelessness strategies because some homeless people are trapped in a cycle of prison (often for minor offences) and insecure accommodation such as hostels, or rough sleeping. Many also have mental health problems. Ex-prisoners who become homeless are much more likely to re-offend. Homelessness and Crime and Disorder strategies should jointly tackle these problems. Crime and Disorder strategies will often involve schemes designed to tackle anti-social behaviour. On the one hand, these can protect people from the risk of homelessness by ensuring they are safe and secure in their homes. On the other hand, these strategies may involve restricting access to housing for certain people and an increased use of evictions. It will be important that these schemes do not lead to increases in homelessness.

For further information see:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/cdact

A2.12 Anti-poverty strategies. Some local authorities have wide ranging anti-poverty strategies. Homelessness strategies will be concerned with many of the same problems and client groups.

For further information see:

Brown, T. and Passmore, J. (2000) *Housing and anti-poverty strategies: a good practice guide*, CIH.

A2.13 Learning and skills councils. Employment and training play a key role in preventing homelessness and helping homeless people to rejoin mainstream society. It will be important to include local training agencies in the homelessness strategy.

A2.14 Other local authorities and regional strategies. In some authorities there will be a need for a joint element in strategies to cover neighbouring areas, or a whole county or region. There are a number of reasons why this need might arise:

- some homeless people are very mobile and travel across authority boundaries;

- there might be insufficient need to justify provision of a specialist service in every authority;
- cities and towns often act as magnets for people from surrounding rural areas, sometimes because services are concentrated there.

A2.15 In these circumstances strategic plans are needed to decide whether to concentrate joint services in certain areas, or to set up smaller scale, scattered provision to allow people to stay in their home areas. DTLR will be designating groups of authorities who should work together for Supporting People as cross-authority groups (CAGs). Some Supporting People services will be commissioned through agreement with cross-authority and regional groups. CAGs might in some areas also form natural partners in homelessness strategies.

A2.16 *Town and village plans.* In rural areas parish councils, rural community councils and rural housing enablers will be involved in assessing local needs and planning to meet them.

Appendix 3

Good practice publications

Audit Commission (1999) *A measure of success: measuring and monitoring local performance targets*.

Audit Commission (2000) *Another country: implementing dispersal under the Immigration and asylum Act 1999*.

Audit Commission (2000) *A new city: supporting asylum seekers and refugees in London*.

Audit Commission (2001) *Halfway home: analysis of the variation in the cost of supporting asylum seekers*.

Audit Commission (2001) *Housing benefit administration: Learning from inspection*.

Bellerby, N. (1999) *Young peoples housing and support needs in County Durham: a regional strategy*, Centrepont.

Bellerby, N. (2000) *Joint protocols between housing and social services departments: a good practice guide for the assessment and assistance of homeless young people aged 16 and 17 years*, Centrepont.

Bevan, P. (1998) *Resettlement handbook*, National Homeless Alliance.

Blackaby, B. and Chahal, K. (2000) *Black and minority ethnic housing strategies: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Brown, T. and others (2000) *Developing housing strategies in rural areas: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Brown, T. and Passmore, J. (2000) *Housing and anti-poverty strategies: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Brown, T. (1997) *Housing and anti-poverty strategies: a good practice guide*, Chartered Institute of Housing.

Cameron, K. (undated) *A foot in the door a guide to good practice in developing and managing young peoples direct access hostels*, Centrepont.

CIH (1999) *Housing and services for people with support needs*.

Cooper, A (1997) *All in a days work*, CHAR.

Cope, H. (2000) *Flexible allocations and local letting schemes*, National Housing Federation.

Crane, M. and others (1997) *Coming home: a guide to good practice by projects helping older*

homelesspeople, Help the Aged.

Crane, M. (2000) *Our forgotten elders: older people on the streets and in hostels*, St Mungos.

DETR (2000) *Harassment and illegal eviction of private rented sector tenants and park home residents.*

DETR (2001) *Supporting People: policy into practice.*

Dewhurst, L. and Bevan, P (2001) *Inhabiting the margins: Elmore Team Oxford good practice report*, NHA.

DH (1995) *Practical guidance on joint commissioning for project leaders.*

DH (1996) *Hospital discharge workbook.*

DH (2000) *Getting it right: good practice in leaving care resource pack.*

DH *Local Authority Circular LAC (2000)15*.

DH (2000) *The framework for assessment of children in need and their families.*

DH/ DOE (1997) *Housing and community care: establishing a strategic framework.*

DOE (1997) *Guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping and developing a strategy.*

DOE (1997) *Models of practice in housing advice.*

DOE (1999) *Relationship breakdown: a guide for social landlords.*

DTLR (1996) *Code of Guidance for local authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness* (revised draft forthcoming).

DTLR (2001) *Local strategic partnerships Government guidance.*

DTLR (2000) *Responding to low demand housing and unpopular neighbourhoods: a guide to good practice.*

DTLR (2001) *Tackling racial harassment: code of practice for social landlords.*

DTLR, 2001 *Managing underoccupation*, a guide for social landlords.

Department for Work and Pensions, *Adjudication and Operations Circular A38/2000.*

Evans, A. and others (2001) *Not just another form*, Crisis.

Finn, W.; Hyslop, J. and Trueman, C. (2000) *Mental health, multiple needs and the police*, RevolvingDoors Agency.

Folkard, K. (1997) *Housing strategies for youth: A good practice guide*, Chartered Institute of Housing.

Gaubatz, K. T. (2000) *Behind closed doors: addressing the needs of homeless families in Britain*, London Borough of Camden Housing Department.

Grant, C. (1996) *Housing advice services: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Green, A. E., Maguire, M. and Canny, A. (2001) *Keeping track: Mapping and tracking vulnerable young people*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Health Advisory Service (1995) *A place in mind: commissioning and providing mental health services for people who are homeless*, HMSO.

Home Office (2001) *Advice note on accommodation for vulnerable young people*.

Home Office/DTLR (forthcoming) *Good practice guidance for social landlords on managing drug use*.

HomePoint (2000) *Scottish national standards and good practice guidance for housing information and advice services*.

HomePoint (1996) *Local housing information and advice strategies: a good practice guide*.

Housing Corporation (2000) *Managing nuisance, harassment and anti-social behaviour*.

James, A. (1996) *Life on the edge: diversion and the mentally disordered offender*, The Mental Health Foundation.

Lemos, G. (2000) *Racial harassment: action on the ground*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Llewellyn, S. and Murdoch, A. (1996) *Saving the day*, CHAR.

Macdonald, D. and Jackson, A. (1997) *Skills for life, a good practice guide to training homeless people for resettlement and employment*, Crisis.

Manzi, T. and Smith-Bowers, B. (1998) *Temporary housing: a good practice guide*, CIH.

Means, R. and others (1997) *Making partnerships work in community care: a guide for practitioners in housing, health and social services*, DH and DETR.

Moroney, L. and Harris, K. (1997) *Relationship breakdown and housing: a practical guide*, Shelter.

National Rent Deposit Forum (2001) *Starter pack for rent deposit guarantee schemes*.

NHS Health Advisory Service (1995) *A place in mind: commissioning and providing mental health services for people who are homeless*, HMSO.

Phoenix House (2001) *The multiple needs assessment and care management pack*.

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (2001) *Trouble at home: family conflict, young people and homelessness*, Crisis.

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Ending exclusion: employment and training schemes for homeless young people*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Prevention is better than cure*, Crisis.

RSU (2000) *Blocking the fast track from prison to rough sleeping*.

RSU (2001) *Preventing tomorrows rough sleepers*.

Rugg, J. (1997) *Opening doors: helping people on low income secure private rented accommodation*, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

Social Exclusion Unit (2001) Report of policy action team 8: Anti-social behaviour.

Streich, L. and others (2002) *Preventing Homelessness in the countryside: what works?* The Countryside Agency.

TPU/DTLR (2001) Guidelines for good practice in supported accommodation for young parents.

Thompson, K., Phelan, M. Strathdee, G. and Shiress, D. (1995) *Mental health care A guide for housing workers*, The Mental Health Foundation.

Van Doorn, A. and Williamson, (2001) *A good practice companion for emergency accommodation for homeless people*, Homeless Link.

Waller, S. (2000) *Closing the gap*, Shelter.

Youth Justice Board (2001) *Advice note on accommodation for vulnerable young people*.

Zetter, R. and Pearl, M. (1999) *Guidelines for registered social landlords on the provision of housing and support services for asylum seekers within the framework of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum legislation and the transitional arrangements*, Housing Corporation.

Appendix 4

Contact details

Association of London Government (ALG)
59 Southwark Street
London SE1 OAL

Tel: 020 7934 9999
www.alg.government.uk

Alcohol Recovery Project
68 Newington Causeway
London SE1 6DF

Tel: 020 7403 3369

Bayswater Project
Bayswater Centre
14 Newton Road
London W2 5LT

Tel: 020 7299 4338

Centrepont
Neil House
7 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1DU

Tel: 020 7426 5300
www.centrepont.org.uk

Empty Homes Agency
195-197 Victoria Street
London SW1 5NE

Tel: 020 7828 6288

Groundswell
5-15 Cromer Street
London WC1H 8LS

Tel: 020 7713 2880

Homeless Link (formerly National HomelessAlliance)
5-15 Cromer Street
London WC1H 8LS

Tel: 020 7713 2840

www.homeless.org.uk

National Rent Deposit Forum
Lonsdale House
Birmingham B1 1QU

Tel: 0121 616 5067
www.nrdf.org.uk

Revolving Doors
45-49 Leather Lane
London EC1N 7T3

Tel: 020 7242 9222
www.revolving-doors.co.uk

Phoenix House
3rd Floor
Asra House
1 Long Lane
London SE1 4PG

Tel: 020 7234 9740

Resource Information Service
Information manager
The Basement
38 Great Pulteney Street
London W1F 9NU

Tel: 020 7494 2408
www.ris.org.uk

Shelter
88 Old Street
London EC1V 9AX

Tel: 020 7505 2000
www.shelter.org.uk

SPACES
Regional Resettlement Centre
St. Aidans Road
Catterick Garrison
North Yorkshire
DL9 3AY

Tel: 01748 833 797

Turning Point
New Loom House
101 Backchurch Lane
London E1 1LU

Tel: 020 7702 1458

For a comprehensive guide to information on homelessness see:
www.homelesspages.org.uk

