

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2008 – 2011

Contents

	Page
Vision and Mission Statement	3
Chapter 1 Introduction	3
Chapter 2 The County Context	6
Chapter 3 Homelessness in Gloucester	10
Chapter 4 Prevention of Homelessness in Gloucester	12
Chapter 5 Accommodation in the City	14
Chapter 6 Services to Single People Including 16/17 yr olds	16
Chapter 7 Services to Young People Leaving Care	17
Chapter 8 Services to Families and Pregnant Women	18
Chapter 9 Services to Victims of Violence	18
Chapter 10 Services to Those Leaving Institutions	19
Chapter 11 Services to Those who Misuse Drugs & Alcohol	20
Chapter 12 Services to People with Disabilities and or Mental Health Issues	20
Chapter 13 Services to BME Communities.	21
Chapter 14 Services to Asylum Seekers and Refugees	21
Appendices	
A Homeless Action Plan	
B Equality Impact Assessment (screening)	
C Service user & service provider consultation	

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

To help people find & keep their homes in the city.

Our aim is to provide a cross tenure service, for all citizens who face housing need, or are under threat of losing their home. To provide a service that looks at an individual's needs, and arrange support if appropriate, as well as accommodation.

Homelessness is often a symptom of other complex social needs, not simply the cause. It is our aim to provide support to those who are homeless in the city. This means providing effective and timely advice, to prevent, wherever possible the loss of a home. We offer a range of housing options and solutions, based on real choice.

Introduction

1.

The National Context.

The Government has set targets to reduce homelessness acceptances and repeat homelessness, increase prevention, halve the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010, reduce rough sleeping by two thirds, end the use of bed & breakfast accommodation for young persons aged 16 to 17 years and families. Each Local Authority currently reports on all these issues quarterly and results are forwarded to the Communities and Local Government office. The performance on all these issues are monitored every three months. Gloucester City Council has secured three year funding from the homeless grants programme to support its homelessness strategy and prevention activities, the award runs from 2008 – 2011.

See Appendix 1 for the breakdown of the Homelessness Grant.

The Legal Context

Under the *Homelessness Act 2002* all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy, based on a review of all forms of homelessness, within their district. The first strategy was required by July 2003, and must be renewed at least every 5 years.

The strategy sets out Gloucester City's plans for the prevention of homelessness. It also contains plans to ensure that sufficient accommodation and support, will be available for people who become homeless, or who are at risk of becoming so.

The homelessness legislation places a general duty on housing authorities to ensure that advice and information about homelessness, and preventing homelessness, is available to everyone in their district free of charge. The legislation also requires authorities to assist individuals and families who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, and apply for help.

In 2002, the Government amended the homelessness legislation through *the Homelessness Act 2002* and the *Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002* to:

- Strengthen the assistance available to people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, by extending the priority need categories to include, homeless 16 & 17 year olds, care leavers aged 18, 19 and 20, people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, the armed forces, prison or custody, and people who are vulnerable and have fled their home because of violence.

Strategy Review Process

The last Homelessness Strategy covered the period of 2003 – 2008, since this time the approach to homelessness in the city has changed, and the new strategy reflects this. Consultation and documents that have informed this strategy, comprise of information collected from;

- Service user homelessness review questionnaire.
- Service provider homelessness review questionnaire.
- Reducing homelessness project, undertaken by Gloucester City Council over two years.

- Preventing Homelessness: A strategy health check provided by Communities and Local Government.
- Meeting the Housing Challenge: Seminar with service users and service providers present.
- Service user consultation: Homelessness focus interviews.
- Meeting with Communities and Local Government Youth Homelessness Specialist.
- 2 Day seminar at Gloucester City Council with service users and partnership agencies.

Results of service user & service provider consultation see Appendix C.

Key Strategic Aims

The review of homelessness in Gloucester has identified five key strategic aims to be addressed over the lifetime of this strategy:

- Maintain and develop prevention activities to reduce homelessness.
- Ensure support services are available for homeless households.
- Promote, facilitate and encourage, effective partnership working, whilst ensuring good service monitoring and value for money.
- Make best use of existing housing, and enhance the amount of effective housing solutions being offered.
- Reduce rough sleeping.

2.

The County Context

The County Context

Gloucestershire is a non-unitary county. This means that it has six District Councils with housing responsibilities, and a County Council with responsibility for social **services** and education.

District Councils in Gloucestershire have a long tradition of working together to find innovative service responses to major issues. The six districts and the County Council have developed major contracts covering Supporting People, Youth Housing Advice Services, Leaving Care Services, Teenage Pregnancy, Children & Young Peoples Directorate, Services to those affected by Domestic Abuse and the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.

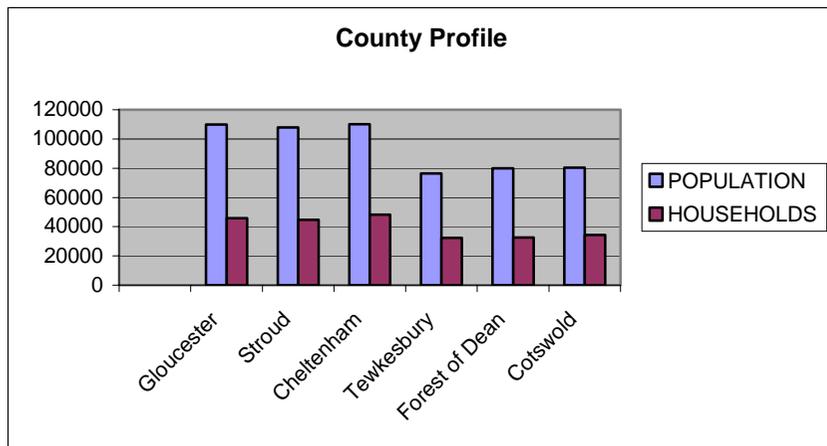
Gloucestershire Homeseeker – Choice Based Lettings Scheme

The concept of choice has been widely recognised in housing policy as a positive way in which to manage and allocate social housing. Housing is a fundamental part of people's lives and they should be involved in housing decisions, which affect their future. Choice Based Lettings encompass a more customer-focussed method of letting properties, and empower all households seeking affordable housing to have a choice in where they wish to live. The six local authorities in Gloucestershire, have formed a partnership known as 'Gloucestershire Homeseeker' to launch a Choice Based Lettings Scheme in April 2009. This will not create any more homes, but there will be one register across the county instead of 6, and the same rules will apply across the county. The aims of the partnership are to assist in building more sustainable communities, enable informed choice of housing options, and improve levels of customer satisfaction, whilst demonstrating fairness and transparency in the letting of homes.

Enhanced Options Services

Presenting alternative solutions alongside Choice Based Lettings is a good way of raising people's awareness of a wider range of solutions. The Choice Based Lettings website would become the focus for a variety of housing options available, and enable multi agency partnership working, providing an holistic approach to the provision of advice.

Following a successful outcome of Gloucestershire Homeseeker in April 2009, the local authority partnership have submitted an expression of interest to the Communities and Local Government Office for funding to develop a wider range of enhanced option services, which respond to local priorities and targets, in the local area agreement. If successful, work will commence in 2009 for an estimated two year period.



Source: Census 2001

The Communities and Local Government Office indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 show that Gloucester is the most deprived of all the local authority districts in Gloucestershire. At a national level, Gloucester has five super output areas within the top 10% of deprived areas, and 15 within the top 25% of most deprived areas. The city ranks as 139th out of 354 local authority areas in the indices of deprivation. The countywide Housing Needs Assessment (2004) shows that 22% of Gloucester city residents were in receipt of state provided financial support, compared to a county average of 18.9%. The Gloucester City level was the highest in the county.

The sale of local authority stock under the Right to Buy policy combined with relatively low levels of new build has meant that the supply of social housing has been steadily declining since 1980. Between 2003/04 (when records are available) and 2005/06, the number of social lettings declined from 2,486 to 2,274.

Source: South West HSSA 2005/06

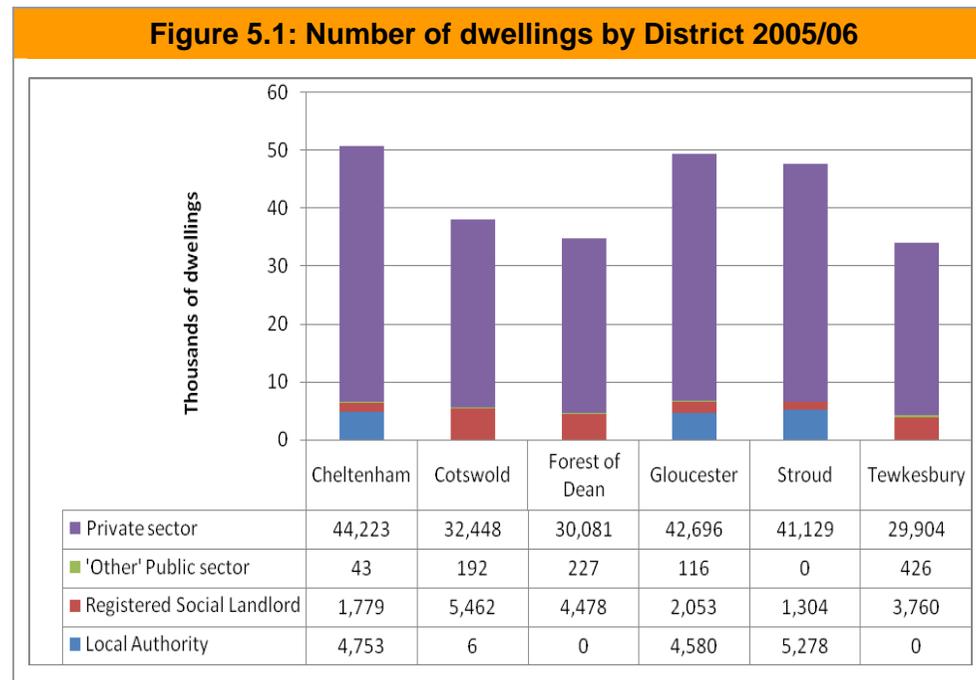
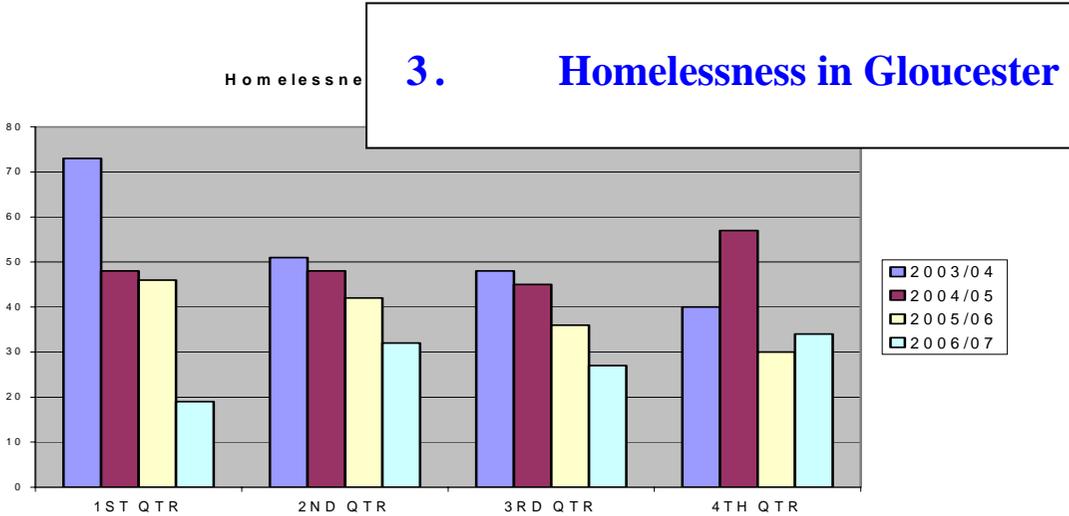
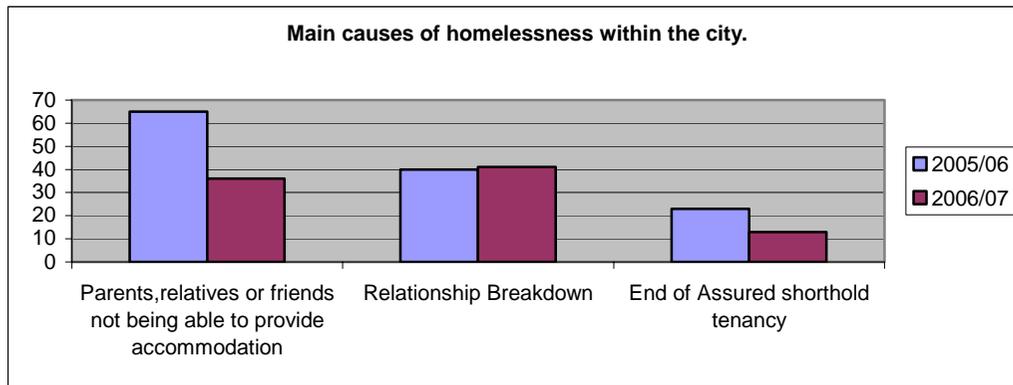


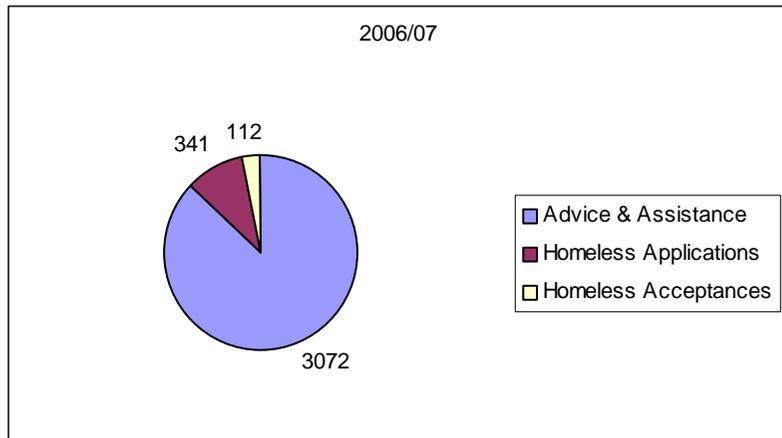
Table 6.7: Social lettings (excluding transfers)						
	2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	HA	LA/ALMO	HA	LA/ALMO	HA	LA/ALMO
Cheltenham	165	547	160	532	88	491
Cotswold	315	0	317	0	260	0
Forest of Dean	263	0	255	0	246	0
Gloucester	115	359	158	357	136	360
Stroud	73	374	86	388	55	323
Tewkesbury	275	0	311	0	315	0

Source: Local authority lettings – HSSA; Housing Association lettings - CORE





- Approximately 4923 people approached the Council’s Housing Options team in 2007/08 for advice and assistance on housing and homelessness issues.
- The preventative approach taken by the Housing Options service has seen a clear reduction in homelessness acceptances, for those who present due to the end of an Assured Shorthold tenancy.
- The main Causes of homelessness in the city are shown in the table above, this is inline with the national profile of homelessness acceptances.
- The street counts carried out during 05/06 and 06/07 reported no more than 4 people rough sleeping on any one night in the city. Due to the reduced numbers we have suspended our official night counts but will continue to liaise with our partner agencies that provide emergency shelter to monitor the situation. Partner agencies have expressed concerns over the amount of people recorded, as sleeping rough and this will be taken forward into the working groups for discussion on effective monitoring.
- Due to the various prevention activities on offer (chapter 4) many people avoid the crisis point of actual homelessness. Out of those who approach the council for advice and assistance only a small amount go on to make a homeless application.



As a result of our consultation with service users and providers, it has been identified that we need to continue to offer and develop our prevention activities in line with our customers needs.

4. Prevention of Homelessness in Gloucester

Gloucester City has embraced the ethos of prevention, which is evident in many of our schemes. In Gloucester City we feel that by carrying out the initial 'Housing Options' interview, people are being given good homelessness assistance, as well as having their legal rights met. The 'Housing Options interview' offers a wider range of options to the customer, as well as those who are not in priority need, helping many more households avoid homelessness or potential homelessness.

The restructure of staff within the Housing department saw a shift in approach to Homelessness, with more staff being trained in ‘Housing Options’, turning the service from reactive to pro-active. The quality of the housing advice given, as well as the result of the expanded prevention activities Gloucester City, has seen a reduction in the amount of households being accepted as homeless, due to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy, which is one of the top three causes of homelessness within the city.

Homelessness Preventions

2006/07	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr
The number of homelessness preventions as a direct result of BVPI 213 advice	17	48	43	101

Repeat Homelessness

The number of people reapproaching within a two year period, saw a dramatic increase in 05/06 to 26. Further success by the Housing Options service is evident in the reduction of repeat homelessness in 06/07 to just 7, and in 2008/09 to 1.

Prevention Activities in the City

- Rent in advance and deposits available to all households.
- Tenancy rescue scheme.
- Protocol with Gloucester City Homes and Registered Social Landlord’s to prevent homelessness and procedures to prevent repeat homelessness and evictions.

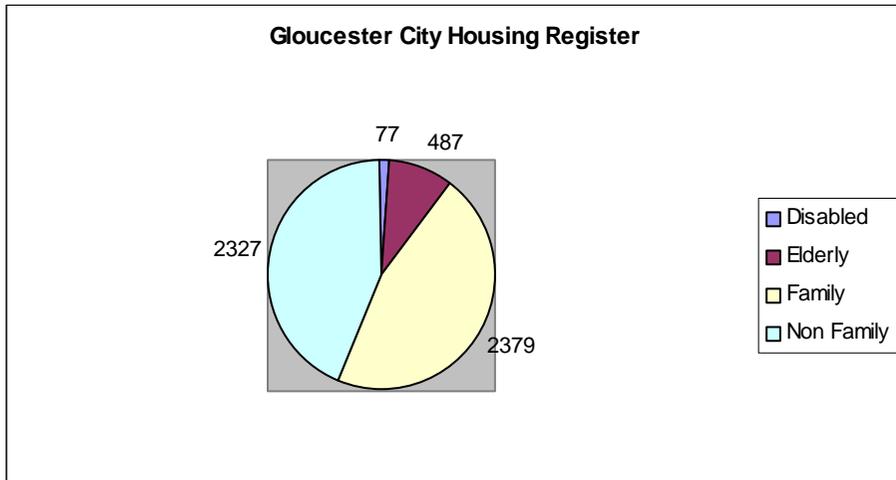
- Mediation services for young people estranged from the family home.
- Full time Private Sector Leasing officer working in partnership with private landlords with properties to let in the city.
- Lodger payments – small payments to keep a young person with extended family while appropriate accommodation or placement into supported housing can be made or a return to the family home.
- Prison visiting officer protocol to either prevent loss of a home or ensure suitable accommodation is available on release from custody.
- Hospital Outreach Service – to reduce the number of rough sleepers by engaging with the homeless patient by getting them into the Gloucester Allocation Provision Service referral system.
- Funding Nightstop for those aged under 25, where a young person can stay with a host family for a short period while alternative accommodation can be sourced.
- Sanctuary scheme to enable those experiencing domestic abuse the choice to remain in their own home through the installation of enhanced security measures.
- Funding Gloucestershire Youth Housing Association to assist with providing deposits to those aged under 25 to help secure privately rented accommodation.
- Access to an Illegal Evictions officer to negotiate with landlords to prevent homelessness.

Shelter's peer education service aims to prevent young people becoming homeless by dispelling myths and challenging stereotypes and encouraging the uptake of early intervention services such as counselling and mediation. Local young volunteers (16-25) who have experienced homelessness are trained to BTEC level 2 and supported to share their experiences, facilitate awareness raising activities and show films that they have made, in a range of schools, colleges and youth and community groups. These sessions increase awareness about homelessness and housing issues and promote specialist support services to encourage early problem solving of issues that could threaten housing security in the future. Peer support is also offered to young people as a follow-up to discuss particular concerns or problems. The project is currently funded until 2010.

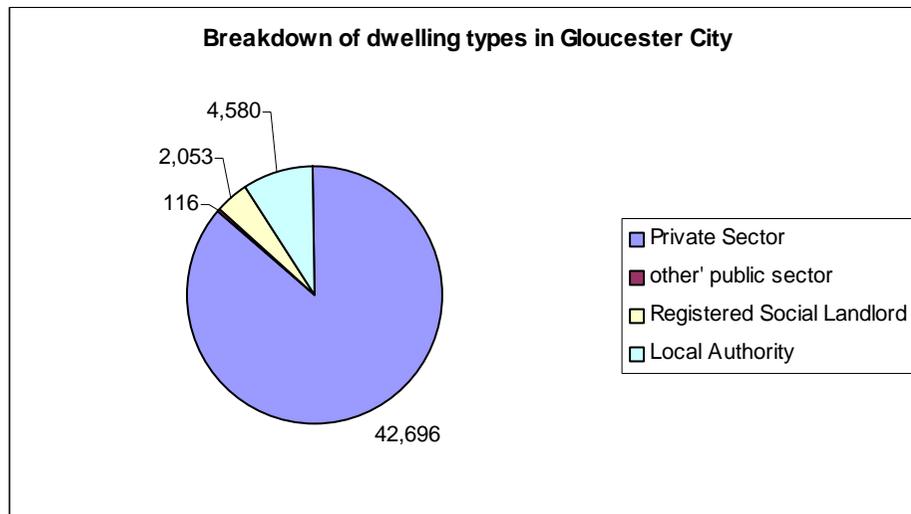
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Accommodation in the City

Households currently seeking affordable homes through the Housing Register in April 2008 stands at 5270.



Source: Housing IT System 2008



Source: HSSA 2007

Affordability has been calculated for Gloucester, based on the cost of a local entry dwelling of £101,241, and an affordability ratio of 30% (i.e. that households will allocate no more than 30% of their net household income towards their housing costs). This results in a total monthly housing cost of £559.46, and a required monthly net household income of £1,865, and savings/equity required of £5,062.

A household would need to be earning around £2,000 net per month to afford a home in Gloucester. Even if a District were to be able to provide discounted market housing up to 25% or other forms of intermediate housing, an income of almost £1,500 would still be needed, and this clearly is beyond the majority of households in need.

Average House Prices 2003 - 2006				
Year	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced Houses	Flat/Maisonettes
2003	194,188	120,764	100,716	82,670
2004	206,862	137,793	116,351	103,267
2005	237,253	142,696	122,738	118,129
2006	234,973	151,033	127,505	113,020

Source: Land Registry, 2006

To calculate the number of affordable homes required per annum across the City, involves three stages.

- Calculate the backlog of housing need to be addressed, and identify the rate at which the backlog should be reduced.
- Identify the newly arising need that is being created per annum.
- Calculate the known supply available to meet that need per annum.

The backlog need is added to the newly arising need, and the supply is subtracted to get the overall shortfall, or surplus housing need. For Gloucester the backlog of need is 220, the newly arising need is 1,393 and the total of affordable supply is 379. The total net shortfall of affordable housing 1,234.

Source: HSSA 2007.

6. Services to Single People Including 16/17 year olds

As at 1st April 2007 there were 2645 households on the waiting list for 1 bedroom accommodation in the city. We do have supported housing provisions for under 25 yr olds and again for the over 25yr group. (See appendix....&....)

The Homelessness Act 2002 defined 16 and 17 year olds as a 'priority need' category which councils have a duty to provide settled accommodation for if unintentionally homeless. Wherever possible a return to the family home is negotiated if it is safe for the client to do so. The initial housing advice given to the 16 – 19 year olds is provided by the connexions office and 19 years and above at the City Council offices.

- The council funds a mediation scheme where a young person can engage with trained counsellors to help maintain good relations with the family or a return home.
- The Local Authority also funds a countywide Nightstop scheme where emergency accommodation is offered for up to three nights, while suitable alternative accommodation can be sought. We also secured extra funding towards a Crash pad scheme for the city, which may be rolled out countywide waiting results of discussion at the County Homelessness Implementation Group. Crash pad provides emergency accommodation for up to three weeks in a host's home.
- For those clients who are able to stay with extended family members while other Housing Options are explored, a weekly payment of £20 can be made to the host to help pay towards the cost of keeping them.
- A tenancy rescue scheme is also available to those who are in danger of losing their accommodation.
- All client groups have access to the illegal evictions officer who will negotiate and advise landlords, funded by Gloucester City Council.
- Gloucester City has a night shelter and a day centre (Vaughan centre) with a GP led health clinic.
- All ages can access Housing Advice and help with Rent In Advance.

- All those who are placed into emergency accommodation are referred to the local Floating Support service, Knightstone Housing Association.
- We work in partnership with Gloucestershire Youth Housing Association to fund a deposit scheme for clients aged under 25.
- Two full time posts are funded through the CLG grant to co-ordinate the access and move on of clients through the under and over 25's supported housing schemes.
- Shelter's peer education sessions and peer support options are available to young people over 16 as well as school leaving age and deliver information, referrals and support in a particularly accessible peer-to-peer format.

7.

Services to Young People Leaving Care

Gloucester City Council in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council operates a Care Leavers Protocol. We also have a special needs officer (job share) based at Gloucester City Council who deals specifically with those who are leaving care and disabilities (elderly). Planning for Care Leavers in Gloucester City starts very early on with connections made between the leaving care team and the Special Needs Housing Officer and the Youth Network Co-ordinator so that an appropriate placement of accommodation can be made to coincide with the end of care placement. The offer of accommodation may be in the form of supported housing with an offer of permanent accommodation at the end of an agreed period or an immediate offer of permanent accommodation at the end of the care placement. This is an effective protocol and forms part of the contribution to The Children's National Service Framework and the Every Child Matters Agenda.

As a result of the homelessness review it has been identified that the Care Leavers Protocol needs to be reviewed in light of the new structure of the Youth Housing Advice service provided by the county for those aged 16 – 19 years.

8.

Services to Families and Pregnant Women

During 2006/07 Gloucester City assessed **82** households with children as being statutorily homeless, **64** of those were from lone female parent households. Gloucester also accepted a Legal duty towards **19** women who were pregnant and homeless. Where we have no alternative but to place a family in emergency accommodation we have contracted Bed & Breakfast accommodation so that we can risk assess all households going into the property and avoid any inappropriate placements. For those who are placed into interim accommodation which can be used as an alternative to Bed & Breakfast, Gloucester City has worked in partnership with Gloucester City Homes and Riverside Housing Association to provide 14 self contained furnished units split between two sites.

The number of families with children in Temporary Accommodation is 10.5% less than the baseline figure at 31st December 2004, although it has crept up slightly this year due to the flooding in Gloucestershire.

We have a Private Sector Leasing Officer that works very closely with private landlords in the city, by offering them incentives for us to use their properties as well as advising them on the standards expected. This scheme has helped with the reduction of homelessness acceptances due to the end of assured shorthold tenancies by 43% compared to 05/06.

For young parents who need support Gloucester City has a provision of 13 self contained units with on site support with a rehousing agreement in partnership with Bromford Housing Group.

9.

Services to Victims of Violence

Best Value Performance Indicator 225 required a new partnership structure to deliver on a range of actions around Domestic Violence.

Homelessness due to relationship breakdown, including breakdown due to violence continues to be one of the three main causes of homelessness nationally and locally.

Working in partnership with Gloucestershire's Crime Reduction Unit and Domestic Violence Unit within the Gloucestershire Police, Gloucestershire Domestic Violence Service and Advocacy Project, Victim Support and Gloucester City Homes we have implemented a Sanctuary Scheme through the Domestic Violence Forum.

The Sanctuary Scheme is designed to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing extra security measures inside and or outside the home.

10.

Services to Those Leaving Institutions

Ex- Offenders

We have a prison visiting protocol with partner agencies to ensure that those leaving Gloucester Prison have been given sound housing advice before their release date. This gives the opportunity for the client to engage with the relevant supporting agencies, which results in nobody leaving prison no fixed abode. The review of this service indicates that more time could be spent visiting ex-offenders, presently this service is offered one day a week and on occasions more. The service was originally for over 25's but a gap in the services offered to those under 25 in the prison system has been identified and will be in our action plan for next year.

A 'Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements' protocol is in place, for agencies to work together in order to minimise the risks some people may present to public protection. Housing issues are often part of these considerations.

Armed Forces

Where someone has left the armed forces or is planning to leave they can contact the Housing Options team who will discuss their application for housing as they may be entitled to have their application backdated to the time they joined the armed forces if they originated from Gloucester City. They would also be able to access to assistance into the private rented sector.

Leaving Hospital

The Outreach Worker will attend the hospital one morning and one afternoon per week for pre booked appointments. When a patient is admitted to hospital with no fixed abode, the hospital staff should contact the outreach service, which is situated at the Day Centre, any member of

hospital staff can do this. The Outreach worker will fill in a Gloucestershire Adult Placement Scheme referral form so that the process of finding suitable, supported accommodation, can be done at the earliest opportunity. The client may also be able to access domiciliary care, by liaising with the hospital social worker and the Outreach worker.

11.

Services to those who misuse Drug and Alcohol

Many homelessness applicants have multiple needs that cannot be met simply by the provision of general needs housing stock. Many social and private landlords are reluctant to consider allocations to this client group because of the possible impact upon the community and that the tenancy may well not be sustainable. It is important that support packages are designed around each individual and that the individual engages with the support provided in order to keep their home. Most of the services to this client group are countywide such as CSSMS (countywide specialist substance misuse service) where clients can access one to one support with housing related issues, The young people's substance misuse service for clients under the age of 19, and GDAS (Gloucestershire drug and alcohol service) who can offer the services of Housing support workers. Gloucester City provides some funding to GEAR projects, which include the following: The night shelter, The day centre and a dry house all in the City. Those who use drug and alcohol are particularly disadvantaged when trying to register for GP services due to their chaotic lifestyles. The Day centre runs a health clinic where this client group can have access to a GP or nurse. Also based at the day centre are the Prison visitor, hospital discharge visitor and the GAPS co-ordinator who manages the referrals to the over 25's supported housing network. The supported accommodation networks for the under and over 25's will also take referrals for this client group. (see appendix for housing available to this client group).

12.

Services to people with Disabilities and or Mental Health issues

There are two full time Special Needs Housing Options officers who deal with all applications for housing, from those who have learning, physical disabilities or mental health. This ensures that disabled people have the same opportunities as the able in accessing a range of housing

options. Interviews are arranged at the City Council offices, which are wheelchair accessible as well as being able to offer home visits for those who are unable to attend our offices. The Special Needs officer may be able to arrange specialist supported accommodation or adaptations to a customer's home through the Disability Fund Grant. Gloucester City council works very closely with the Occupational Therapists from social services when helping to meet the customer's housing need.

Services to BME Communities

13.

The BME community in Gloucester City is by far the largest in the county and about average for urban areas in England and Wales. The size of the community is small compared to metropolitan areas and slightly smaller than similar areas. It is concentrated in a couple of wards such as Barton and Tredworth, where 29% of the residents identify themselves as Asian/ Asian British, Black/ Black British and Mixed Race. A Race Equality Forum (REF) is facilitated by the City Council and run by the BME community. The forum has an advisory role to the City Council on matters relating to good race relations practice in delivery of Council services to those sections of the community who are disadvantaged as a result of race, ethnicity or language and recommend actions which the Council could take.

Services to Asylum Seekers and Refugees

14.

Asylum seekers and single persons have been dispersed to the city by the Asylum Support Team. As asylum seekers, they do not have recourse to public funds and are housed in asylum supported accommodation independently of the City Council. If the families are given leave to remain in the United Kingdom or receive refugee status, they are entitled to assistance under homelessness legislation here, because the local

connection is considered to be the area they have been dispersed to. Gloucester City Council has sought to meet the needs of these households by working with neighbouring authorities and with Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS), who have received funding from Supporting People to assist families as they become independent of the high support by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) contractors.

Appendix A

Homelessness Strategy – Action Plan

The following action plan is structured to address each of the Key Strategic Aims set out in Gloucester City Councils Homelessness Strategy. The Council is committed throughout this action plan in improving its services, consulting and engaging with service users, the community and partners with the aim of achieving the delivery of effective services that deliver value for money.

Strategic Aim Maintain and Develop Prevention Activities

1	Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Timescale	Funding / Resources	Outcomes
1.	Review and update all protocols and procedures for all existing Prevention Activities	Private Sector Leasing Schemes Prison Visiting Hospital Outreach Mediation Service Deposits Scheme Rent in Advance Scheme Tenancy Rescue Lodger Payment Scheme Sanctuary Scheme Use of Experience Homelessness prevention protocol	Homeless Co-ordinator	English Churches Housing Group Glos Family Mediation Service GDVSAP Crime Reduction Unit Gloucester City Homes RSL's	April 09	Homelessness Directorate Funding	Increased number of preventions achieved Reduction in Homeless presentations Increased service user satisfaction
2.	Develop New Prevention Activities	Explore a Countywide mortgage rescue scheme	GCC Enabling Team	Mortgage Lenders	April 2010	Not yet identified	Less homeless presentations due to repossessions
3.	Improve Information and marketing of activities	Produce and distribute literature on all services	Working groups	Service users and providers	April 09	CLG Funding	Effective useful, accessible

	and schemes	being offered by involving service users and providers through working groups.	Under 25's Over 25's Families				information in user friendly format
4.	Undertake satisfaction surveys in relation to services provided	Collate up to date information on satisfaction of services being provided	GCC	Grant funded partnerships	ongoing	No extra costs	Be able to provide up to date information on current services
5.	Involve service users in development and monitoring of services	When reviewing existing services or developing new ones include service user involvement from working groups	Working Groups Under 25's Over 25's Families	All partner agencies that have service user involvement groups.	Ongoing	CLG Funding	To provide a service that reflects the needs of the service user.

Strategic Aim Ensure Support Services are available for Homeless Households

2	Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Timescale	Funding / Resources	Outcomes
1	Improve regularity of contact with service users to check quality of service	Work with partner agencies to gather regular in depth information on satisfaction of services		Knightstone Housing Association Glos youth Housing Association GEAR Nightstop ECHG	Sept 08	No extra costs	To ensure services being provided are of good standard, accessible and relevant.
2.	Review Rehousing agreements with RSLs	Meet with supported housing providers to review existing Rehousing Agreements.	GCC	Supported Housing Providers	April 09	Officer Time	Rehousing Agreements to assist with smoother move on from supported accommodation
	Improve speed and	Review existing systems	GCC	Supported			Improved service user

3.	quality of referral processes	for referrals		Housing Providers & Partner Agencies	April 09	Officer Time	satisfaction
4.	Improve "move on plans" to free up existing accommodation	Meet with supported housing providers to identify problems with existing move on	GCC	All supported housing providers & service users	April 09	Working groups under 25's & Over 25's	Better throughput of clients through supported housing provision
5.	Improve Information and marketing of activities and schemes	Produce up to date relevant user friendly information on all prevention activities	GCC	Working groups Under 25's & over 25's and families	Dec 09	CLG funding	Increase take up of prevention schemes and reduction in the amount of homeless applications
6.	Review levels of support provided to service users by Housing option Officers in light of introduction of CBL scheme	Developed improved intervention based on risk assessment/vulnerability of service users.	GCC	All housing & support officers in the city	April 09	Officer Time	Improved access to Housing options Service Higher level of customer satisfaction
7	Identify barriers to providing accommodation for homeless couples within supported housing	Revisit existing policies with supported housing providers within the city	Working groups over & under 25's	Supported housing providers	Dec 09	Officer Time	To be able to meet needs for homeless households. Higher level of customer satisfaction

Strategic Aim

Promote, facilitate and encourage effective partnership working while ensuring good service monitoring and value for money

3	Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Timescale	Funding / Resources	Outcomes
1.	Improve integration of services and provision and reduce un-necessary duplication	Provide clearly written protocols between services and agencies. Raise awareness of roles and responsibilities of partner agencies to help avoid duplication of services	Working Groups Under 25's Over 25's Families	Voluntary & statutory agencies Supported housing providers	Dec 09	Officer Time	Improve Service user satisfaction Improve value for money
2.	Develop consistent and effective performance and satisfaction measures across services and provision to assess quality and outcomes	Work with partner agencies particularly those who we fund and those who may apply to us for funding.	GCC	Working Groups Voluntary and statutory agencies	April 2010	Officer Time	We will be providing effective services that produce results and high customer satisfaction.
3.	Work with partners to ensure their policies and strategies support the City Council's prevention approach	Review Policies in relation to Tenancy Support Rent arrears/income management ASB Visitors policies	Homeless Co-ordinator	ECHG GYHA GEAR Nightstop	Ongoing	Officer Time	Raise the profile of homeless prevention among partner agencies.
4.	Set up framework to implement and monitor the Homeless Strategy & Action Plan	Set up thematic groups relating to provision: Under 25s Over 25s Families	GCC	Service Users, supported housing providers,	September 08	Officer Time	Regular updating & monitoring of Homeless Strategy & Action Plan, to achieve set targets

				voluntary & statutory agencies			and identify gaps in provision.
5.	Improve networking & information flows between organisations	Annual Conference to review Homeless Strategy with all stakeholders	GCC	All	May 09	CLG Funding Officer Time	Identified achievements made throughout the year & highlight any gaps in service.
6.	Work to improve the processing of housing Benefit and access to Discretionary Housing Benefit	Set up Service Level Agreement with housing benefit department and review use of Discretionary Housing Payments	GCC	Housing Benefit team	April 09	Officer Time	B&B payments currently out of homeless budget and if not processed quickly reclaim is lost. SLA should work to resolve these issues and to make DHP more available.
7	Work to maximise take up of HB and maintenance of tenancies	Employ a tenancy liaison assistant to work alongside the private sector leasing officer in tenancy sustainment	GCC	Registered Social Landlord's Private Landlords Glos City Homes	Sept 08	CLG Funding	Reduction in homeless presentations Better uptake of Housing Benefit & Discretionary Housing Payments

Strategic Aim

Make best use of existing housing and enhance the amount of effective housing Solutions being offered

4	Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Timescale	Funding / Resources	Outcomes
1.	To provide choice for Homeless Households Enable service users to make informed choices	Gloucestershire Homeseeker Choice Based Lettings Scheme	GCC	All Registered Social Landlord's	April 09	CLG funded and contributions from all districts	More choice for homeless households and transparency of availability
2.	Improve access to private rented sector	Review rent in advance scheme. Improve advice and information to private landlords.	GCC	Private Landlords	Dec 08	CLG funded	Increased confidence and take up from private landlords regarding schemes available with Glos City Council
3.	Review access to accommodation for those with Dual diagnosis Personality Disorder Criminal convictions	Review Rehousing agreements Review process for allocation of housing to relevant groups and existing policies with housing providers within the city.	Working groups Over 25's Under 25's Families	Registered Social Landlord's	Dec 09	Officer Time	Less exclusions from supported network for those with high support needs.
4.	Maximise the number of affordable homes through new development within the City	Negotiate with planners & developers over section 106 agreements	Enabling GCC	House planners and developers	Ongoing	GHMP Registered Social Landlord's Developers	More affordable homes available through shared ownership, homebuy and social lets.

5.	Provide appropriate emergency out of hours accommodation to those fleeing domestic abuse	Meet with partner agencies to put forward proposals for reconfigured services.	Supporting People	Stonham HA Supporting People Emergency Duty Team Police	July 09	Supporting People GCC Emergency Duty Team	Safe appropriate accommodation linked to support at first stage.
6.	Carry out review of City Councils Housing Stock and develop plan to adapt to meet future needs and aspirations	Part of 'Managing Change' project	GCC Glos City Homes		April 2010	Glos City Homes	To make best use of existing stock and respond to housing needs of those waiting for social housing
7.	Provide good quality emergency accommodation	Transform building from ex women's refuge to a short stay shared facilities hostel for homeless families, care leavers and 16/17 yr old	Glos City Homes	GCC	Sept 08	CLG Funding	Reduction in use of B&B for all client groups involved. Improved customer satisfaction.
8.	Improve sustainability with first time tenancies in particular for the very young and care leavers	Work with Registered Social Landlord's and Glos City Homes in introducing starter tenancies	Glos City Homes	Registered Social Landlord's Housing Options Service	April 10	None identified at present	Higher success rate of care leavers and young people with first tenancies.

Strategic Aim Reduce Rough Sleeping

5	Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Timescale	Funding / Resources	Outcomes
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1.	Ensure services are reviewed and integrated to meet the changing demand for services from rough sleepers	Work with accommodation providers and support agencies to identify needs amongst today's rough sleepers	Working groups over and under 25's	Accommodation providers Health care professionals Social; services Supporting People	Dec 09		Less exclusions from existing supported housing provisions. Better connectivity and usage of existing services.
2.	Provision of a foyer scheme for the under 25's	Work with partner agencies to deliver accommodation, support, education, training & recreational facilities for 60+ young people including students, backpackers, homeless young people with low-high support needs and young parents.	GCC (enabling)	YMCA Glos Housing Association		Possibility of using commuted sums from future owners of St.Oswald site.	More appropriate accommodation, which can be accessed easily. Reduce numbers of those rough sleeping under 25.
3.	Collect information to support development of services for high support women's only project for those with high support needs	Work with partner agencies in collating information to inform bid for new services.	Working groups under & over 25's	Night Shelter Day Centre Supported accommodation providers	Dec 09	Reconfiguration of existing services or bids to Supporting People and Housing Associations	Reduce the amount of women sleeping rough in the city. Be able to offer support to those who are not suitable for the existing supported accommodation

4.	To offer deposits to those seeking housing in the private rented sector	To enable choice to those who may not wish to go into or are not suitable for the supported housing network.	Day Centre Homeless Co-ordinator GYHA	Private Landlords	Sept 08	CLG funding	To offer choice to homeless households and to reduce rough sleeping. Increase in homeless prevention cases. To offer alternatives when supported accom is not suitable or required.
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Appendix B

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

INITIAL SCREENING FORM

Name of Policy, Service, Project, Strategy, Plan HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008

Portfolio/Service Housing Options Service

Lead Officer for Assessment Sadie Neal

New	Existing
	Existing

1. Is this an assessment of a new or existing Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan?

2. What is the main purpose and aims of the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan?

To deliver effective preventative services aimed to reduce homelessness.

3. List the main activities and outcomes of the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan? (E.g. community engagement – could be consultation, communication, capacity building.)

Strategic Objective 1: Maintain and develop prevention activities to reduce homelessness.

Strategic Objective 2: Ensure support services are available for homeless households.

Strategic Objective 3: Promote, facilitate and encourage effective partnership working while ensuring good service monitoring and value for money.

Strategic Objective 4: Make best use of existing housing and enhance the amount of effective housing solutions being offered.

Strategic Objective 5: Reduce rough sleeping.

4. Who will be the main beneficiaries of the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan?

Homeless Service Users

5. Do you have monitoring data available on the number of people who are using the service and/or will be affected by your Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan?

See Next Page:

Homelessness Strategy

Gloucester City Councils Homelessness strategy aims to expand housing opportunities for all members of the community, such as those who may have support needs and generally those who are disadvantaged. This is achieved by providing assistance and access to services, which offer prevention activities, and/or access to settled homes.

The Homeless service is placed under a general duty to provide advice and information on preventing homelessness and housing options. Homelessness legislation also requires authorities to assist individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and to seek assistance and apply for access to housing.

The Homelessness Act 2002 (an amendment of the Housing Act 1996) extends the definition of priority need to include 16 and 17 year olds and those leaving care under the age of 21.

The key function of the service is to conduct homelessness assessments and to reach a decision on eligibility, homelessness, priority need, intentional homelessness and local connection and to inform the applicant in writing of the decision giving full reasons where a negative decision is reached.

When looking at the data, please note that the first column uses Census data as comparative data for a profile of Gloucester City as a percentage. The second column shows the number of applications received for homeless assessments for decision making as a percentage. The final column shows the number of cases where a positive decision was made and a full housing duty was accepted as a percentage of the number of applications.

Gender (note: the figures used relate to single applicants and lone parent families)

	Census	Applications	Acceptances
Female	49.15%	64.10%	83.81%
Male	50.85%	35.90%	16.19%

Most presentations by lone parents are females and most presentations by singles are by males. Historically, men have always been more likely to become homeless than women have. Research indicates that the factors put forward include a greater inclination to use drugs and alcohol and therefore be more prone to addiction/dependency. One of the key factors of homelessness is release from prison, exit from the armed forces and family exclusions. All of these lead to a greater chance of becoming homeless.

Such matters are taken into account when determining vulnerability under homeless legislation, only those people who are deemed to be vulnerable will be owed the full housing duty.

Race

Race	Census	Applications	Acceptances
Black	1.9%	7.37%	12.38%
White	92.5%	86.53%	80.00%
Mixed	1.2%	5.12%	4.76%
Asian	1.9%	0.64%	0.95%

As stated in the Housing Needs survey (2005) the Asian/Asian British population is the largest black and minority ethnic community in the district and has the largest mean household sizes, with 50.5% of households containing 5 members or more.

Disability

Census	Applications	Acceptances
16.9%	12.95%	1.11%

The census indicates 16.9% have a limiting long-term illness, the question asked by H&HAS is whether people regard themselves as having a disability.

Age

This includes all household groups (couples - main applicants age is used)

Age	Census	Applications	Acceptances
16-24	32.08%	55.82%	56.76%
25-44	30.70%	33.43%	32.43%
45-59	17.85%	8.36%	9.90%
60-64	4.41%	1.19%	0.90%
65-74	7.86%	1.19%	0
75+	7.09%	0	0

Sexual Orientation

There has been no provision for collection of this information 2008/09 but will be in place for 2009/10.

Religion

There has been no provision for collection of this information 2008/09 but will be in place for 2009/10.

6. Does the information on your service users reflect the proportions from the 2001 census or other local population statistics?

YES		NO	X
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7. If disproportionate can you explain why?

- **Men & Women** – The ratio of men & women in the 2001 census data is fairly equal (50.85% men vs 49.15% women) whereas the ratio of homeless services users is heavily skewed towards women (35.90% men vs 64.10% women). This is due to the high number of presentations from lone female parents.
- **Disability** – The percentage of people presenting as homeless is fairly equal with that of the census information. However the acceptances are relatively low for this group, this could be down to the fact that the definition of disability is from the service users perspective and when being assessed under homelessness the priority need criteria is determined by health care professionals.

8. If no information or patchy information is available, specify the arrangements that will make this available.

No information is available on the following:

- Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender
- Religious / Belief groups

This data is not currently collected by GCC, this will be collected from 2009/10.

Using the information above - Fill in the grid below:

9. How will the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan affect men and women in different ways?

Gender	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't Know
Women			X	Homelessness Strategy does not differentiate between men and women.	
Men			X	Homelessness Strategy does not differentiate between men and women.	

10. How will the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan affect black and minority ethnic people?

Race (list specific groups)	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't Know
			X	No reason to believe anything other than neutral impact for any race group.	

11. How will the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan affect disabled people?

Disabled people	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't Know
			X	No reason to believe anything other than neutral impact for disabled people.	

12. How will the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan affect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people?

LGBT (list specific groups)	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't Know
			X	No reason to believe anything other than neutral impact for any LGBT groups.	

13. How will the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan affect religious/belief groups?

Religion	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't Know
			X	Homelessness Strategy does not differentiate between any religious groups.	

14. How will the Policy/Service/Project/**Strategy**/Plan affect people of different ages?

Age group	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't Know
			X	Homelessness Strategy does not differentiate between any age groups.	

If you have said **don't know**, then go to the [Full Assessment](#).

If you have said that there is **neutral impact** then record your evidence and your screening is complete.

If you have said that there is **negative impact** then go to the [Full Assessment](#).

If you have said that there is a **positive impact**, is it **Legal**?

YES		NO		DON'T KNOW	
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If YES, record your evidence and your screening is complete.

If NO, STOP and re-examine your Policy, Procedure, etc.

If DON'T KNOW, go to the [Full Assessment](#).

Completed by

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

END OF INITIAL SCREENING

Appendix C

Homelessness Review of Services 2008

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Service User Consultation

	Means of Engagement	Key Issues	Plans for Improvement (these items will be taken forward and included where possible into our homelessness action plan)
Families	<p>All families in 2nd stage accommodation (STL's), sent homelessness review questionnaires.</p> <p>2 day homelessness seminar @ GCC for service users and providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for good quality emergency accommodation. • Satisfied with service received. • Average awareness regarding services available for homeless households. • Be able to provide more affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular inspections of emergency accommodation used. • Have regular contact with service users to check on quality of service. • Produce good quality relevant information available for all service users. Make sure partner agencies are updated on services being provided with details of how to access.
Under 25's	<p>Support worker from partner agencies assisted with distribution of homelessness review forms among clients in supported housing.</p> <p>2 day homelessness seminar @ GCC for service users and providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that support is readily available for those in emergency and interim accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that referral process is quick and efficient. Keep updated with partner agencies providing support. Promote good working relations with support workers and homeless/housing options officers.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have somewhere to go for advice, which isn't intimidating. • Work with RSL's and Glos City Homes in creating better sustainability with first tenancies. • Need for a 24 hour foyer scheme in the City. • Trained worker to deliver Housing Options and CBL training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on joint ventures when offering housing advice and offer alternative locations for initial housing needs assessments. • Explore idea of starter tenancies. • Feed information into Glos City Council enabling team to continue researching possibilities. • Service users would like a dedicated officer for their age group to deliver advice on Housing Options and CBL – choice based lettings.
<p>Over 25's</p>	<p>Face to face consultation with service users & homelessness review questionnaires.</p> <p>2 day homelessness seminar @ GCC for service users and providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to provide a range of alternatives for housing when supported accommodation cannot be found for client. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at what barriers there are to accessing supported or permanent housing. Work on better move on plans to free up existing accommodation. Review existing rehousing agreements with Registered

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflets and fact sheets produced detailing where to go and what to do to seek assistance with a housing problem, need to be more appealing to read and not lengthy and wordy. • Realise that not all will be seeking supported accommodation and to have alternatives in place to suit those who are not suitable. • Wanted clear information about rehousing process and waiting times involved as well as being told what type of properties we have access to. To be updated when sending in correspondence to the LA. • High support accommodation for single females not age specific. 	<p>Social Landlord's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to develop this literature with a contribution from the service user involvement group. • Work with partner agencies to enable all groups' access to p/rented and or RIA. • This will become more evident with the introduction of CBL and the road shows around the city. • Take to the under and Over 25's working groups to collect evidence of need and requirements.
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Homelessness Review of Services 2008 - Service Provider Consultation

	<p align="center">Means of Engagement</p>	<p align="center">Key Issues</p>	<p align="center">Plans for Improvement (these items will be taken forward and included where possible into our homelessness action plan)</p>
	<p>Homelessness Review Questionnaires.</p> <p>Multi Agency Homelessness Forum.</p> <p>DV Forum.</p> <p>County Homelessness Implementation Group.</p> <p>Meeting with CLG Youth Homelessness Adviser.</p> <p>Reducing Homelessness Project.</p> <p>Regional Champions Action Planning Visit.</p> <p>Preventing Homelessness: A strategy health check. – (document from CLG – communities and Local Government)</p> <p>2 day homelessness seminar @ Glos City Council for service users and providers.</p>	<p align="center">Under 25's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and further develop accommodation based pathways for young people. • Enhance role/provision of dedicated prevention staff for young people. • Clear advice pathways for non priority need clients. • Closer working with CAMHS and CYPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More joint working with supporting people & providers in areas of current provision & being able to meet the need of young people. • Funding agreement with GYHA to assist in p/rented activities and Youth Network Co-ordinator based at GCC working with all under 25's. • Review current literature and make it more user friendly for customers. Service user involvement in developing information. • Create working protocols with both agencies regarding eligibility criteria and route of referrals. Adopt the Children's common assessment framework as

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Staff to be placed in approachable, accessible locations. Particularly for those aged 20 – 25. • Make links to the importance of preventing and tackling youth homelessness to other LAA targets. • From April 2008 Children’s services are expected to have established Targeted Youth Support services (TYS). <p>Over 25’s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of high support accommodation for females within the city. • Difficulty placing those with: 	<p>Part of the assessment Process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liase with partner agencies to use a range of interview locations suitable for young people or offer drop in sessions at other locations. • There are a significant number of targets linked to young people’s attainment, the every child matters agenda and sustainable communities. • Make contact with those responsible for delivering TYS and develop joint action plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further review of the services available for this group is needed as well as monitoring of need.
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		<p>Dual Diagnosis Personality Disorder Previous criminal convictions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing policies with accommodation providers are creating barriers for service users in areas of: Access Tenancy sustainment Arrears management. Visitors policies • Nowhere to discuss the chaotic clients and ways of improving engagement with them. • Deakin House viewed by partner agencies as an example of a project that works very well with good results. • Lack of accommodation for homeless couples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with accommodation providers in the city to see how this can be done or to identify barriers to providing such accommodation within existing supported services. • Review of the Re-housing agreement with all housing and support providers. • Contact all supported housing providers and support workers to investigate the possibility of starting a forum. • Look at why and how it works so well and share the information with others who wish to see it. • Revisit existing policies with supported housing providers within the City.
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		<p>Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the amount of affordable housing in the City. • Provide more separate unit housing for those families experiencing domestic abuse with more than one child, instead of shared accommodation. Such as a refuge. • Ensure that there is support for those in interim/emergency accommodation and waiting to go into something more permanent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there are high levels of affordable housing as part of any new developments. Make best use of commuted sums. • Provision of new refuge with self contained units. Can accommodate higher Needs and older children. Work with supporting people Core strategy group. • Maintain close working links with all floating support services and update on referral and eligibility criteria.

		<p>Issues for all groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More efficient working with Housing Benefit Dept and easier access to Discretionary Housing Pot. • Understanding of CBL – choice based lettings scheme and trained officers available to demonstrate and instruct support workers for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups • Directory of services for homelessness and support. • Planning of services with Supporting People. • Access to Private Rented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison with Housing Benefit Dept and regular updates. More transparency with use of Discretionary Housing Pot. • Draft strategy available for those potentially disadvantaged by CBL. Frequently asked question sheet. Demonstrations and workshops available dates to be advertised. • To be taken forward to the working groups for under 25's, over 25's and families. • Better communication with Supporting People when commissioning new services and more involvement in the review process when matching services to existing needs within the City. • Work with partner agencies when exploring use of private rented sector and ways of expanding to all groups of the community.
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