



TORFAEN  
COUNTY  
BOROUGH



BWRDEISTREF  
SIROL  
TORFAEN

# Torfaen Homelessness Strategy 2003 - 2008

Tackling Homelessness



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# Section 1 Introduction

## The Purpose of the Strategy

This is Torfaen's first comprehensive Homelessness Strategy. It brings together in one single document our plans for meeting the needs of homeless people by:

- Identifying the key issues affecting homeless people.
- Bringing together the full range of policies and initiatives which tackle these issues.
- Identifying gaps in information, services and policies.
- Producing a clear set of detailed targets.
- Considering how progress will be evaluated and monitored.

During 2001, Torfaen County Borough Council commissioned an independent consultant to conduct a review of homelessness and homelessness services within Torfaen.

This work was funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and was commissioned in response to the anticipated introduction and adoption of

the Homelessness Act 2002. This act places new duties on all Local Authorities to review homelessness within their respective areas and to devise, develop and subsequently publish a local strategy to address homelessness within a more inclusive framework focusing upon preventing homelessness in the first instance and then subsequently ensuring that appropriate and suitable accommodation and support is available to meet local needs.

Torfaen County Borough Council has involved all partners and key agencies in the development of the Homelessness Strategy and has developed a strategic document that draws together information on homelessness and associated services to enable gaps to be identified and distinct actions to be undertaken over the next five years that will enable homelessness to be dealt with more collaboratively and strategically.

The Homelessness Strategy is an evolving document that is not just aimed at fulfilling legal duties but is also aimed at providing a more customer focused service, tailored to local needs, within a framework that embraces multi-agency working. As such, all agencies, both statutory and voluntary, have a clear and distinct role to play in the meeting the aims and objectives of the strategy.



## Section 2 Background and context

### Background

Torfaen County Borough Council and its partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors provide a range of services to meet the needs of homeless and potentially homeless people in the county borough. This includes advice, accommodation and support.

The development of this strategy was commissioned by Torfaen County Borough Council and funded by the National Assembly for Wales. It followed a review of homelessness services undertaken in 1999/2000, which made a range of recommendations on policy, practice and procedure, in addition to the need for the authority to develop a more strategic response to homelessness.

The development of the strategy has involved the following:

- A review of existing literature, research and good practice material on homelessness strategies
- A review of statistics on homelessness and associated issues
- An audit of services for homeless and potentially homeless people. This audit also asked for the views of

organisations on gaps in services and areas where existing services could/should be expanded

- A snap-shot survey of homelessness
- Interviews with council officers
- Interviews with key agencies, including registered social landlords working in the county borough

### Context

A number of recent policy developments has placed a greater emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. They are summarised below. Developments in strategic planning and the level of resources available for homelessness services are also briefly considered.

### Policy developments: England and Wales

The Homelessness Act 2002 became law in September 2002. It contains a wide range of changes that strengthen the safety net for homeless and potentially homeless people, as well as to prevent homelessness occurring. It has significant implications for all authorities.



# Section 2 Background and context

## New Powers

Authorities have a duty to carry out a homelessness review and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. The first strategy must be published within 12 months of the provision coming into force and a new strategy to be published every 5 years. The social services authority must assist the housing authority with this duty where requested and both authorities must take the strategy into account in exercising their statutory functions.

The Act also includes a number of amendments to Part VII of Housing Act 1996:

- The abolition of the duty where other suitable accommodation is available (section 197)
- The abolition of a minimum period for which an authority is subject to the main homelessness duty (i.e. the two-year limit - section 193 (2))
- Events which cause the main homelessness duty to cease – if a final offer of accommodation is accepted or refused. Offers can be of local authority, RSL or private sector accommodation (assured tenancies or 'qualifying offers' of assured shorthold tenancies i.e. those made by arrangement between the authority and a private landlord). Before the main homelessness duty can be ended due to refusal of an offer, the authority must make it clear in writing to the applicant that the offer is a final offer
- A requirement on authorities to include a statement of their policy on offering choice under their allocation scheme when notifying a decision that an applicant is owed a main homelessness duty
- Confirmation that applicants have a right to review of decisions in relation to suitability of accommodation
- Stronger duties to provide advice and assistance to those who do not have priority need, or have become homeless or are threatened with homelessness intentionally
- An extension of the duty in relation to persons claiming to be homeless due to risk of violence to include violence other than domestic violence
- A new power for the county court to look at decisions by the housing authority not to exercise its discretion to accommodate an applicant pending an appeal to the county court. The court can confirm or quash the decision of the local authority
- A new power for the county court to extend the period allowed for an applicant to lodge an appeal against a homelessness decision beyond 21 days where there is good reason
- Consolidation of authorities' powers to accommodate certain applicants pending a review by the authority and an appeal to the county court
- Removal of the restriction that limits housing authorities use of their own stock to discharge a homelessness duty to a period of 2 years in any 3
- Removal of the restrictions that prevent RSLs from allocating a full assured tenancy to homeless applicants unless the tenancy is a nomination allocated by the housing authority under its allocation scheme



## Section 2 Background and context

Some amendments have been made in response to concerns about whether social services departments have a power under the Children Act 1989 to accommodate children in need together with their parents. Housing departments must have arrangements in place to ensure that social services are aware of cases where housing are dealing with an applicant with a child under 18 and they have reason to believe that s/he may be homeless (or threatened with homelessness) intentionally or may be ineligible for housing assistance.

The housing authority will have to inform the social services department of the decision taken on the homeless application. In addition, there will be a new duty for the housing authority to provide advice and assistance to the social services authority where they are aware of a decision by the housing authority that a household that includes a child under 18 is intentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness) or ineligible for housing assistance and they ask for assistance in the exercise of their functions under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989.

In addition, the Act will provide the context for choice-based lettings systems to be put in place.

### Supporting People

Supporting People was implemented in April 2003. It involves a change to the funding regime for supported housing, including that provided for homeless, potentially homeless and vulnerable people. Previously, local authorities were mapping supply and demand of supported housing and implementing new supported housing services, in particular floating support.

Supporting People was introduced in an attempt to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community in order to expand and develop support provisions. The aim is therefore to provide sufficient and appropriate support to enable people to remain in their own homes, thereby reducing the likelihood of homelessness, hospital admission or offending behaviour. Services include floating support, community alarms, hostels, sheltered housing, group homes, refuges for people fleeing domestic abuse and other supported housing projects.



## Section 2 Background and context

### Policy developments: Wales

The National Housing Strategy Better Homes for People in Wales was published in November 2001, setting out the framework for housing policy at national and local levels.

On homelessness and housing advice, its proposals include:

- Monitoring the development of the use of personal housing plans
- Ensuring that levels of homelessness are measured in all local authority areas and addressed through local housing strategies
- Significantly reducing the numbers of long-term homeless households
- Eliminating the need for rough sleeping by April 2003 (the Homelessness Commission considered that this date is unachievable)
- Considering the findings of the housing advice audit and how its recommendations can be addressed to promote best practice and improve standards
- Ensuring that everyone has access to free high quality housing advice and promoting access to specialist housing advice where this is needed

Progress in implementing Better Homes is being monitored by the Local Government and Housing Committee.

In March 2001, the National Assembly introduced secondary legislation to extend the homelessness priority need groups to include care leavers, 16 and 17

year olds, people fleeing domestic violence, homeless former prisoners and people leaving the armed forces. Interim guidance was issued to authorities on the implementation of this legislation and a draft Code of Guidance on Homelessness and the Allocation of Local Authority Accommodation has been issued in October 2002, covering the above and the changes made in the Homelessness Act.

The Homelessness Commission established by the National Assembly made 91 recommendations on the following areas:

- Definitions of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Local homelessness strategies and a national homelessness strategy
- Monitoring and measuring homelessness, targets and outcomes
- Bond schemes and welfare benefits
- Exclusion policies
- Prevention
- Health, substance misuse and domestic violence
- Carers and children
- Education, training, employment and homelessness
- Support
- Social services and homelessness
- Rural homelessness
- Funding and research

The report of the Homelessness Commission has been debated in National Assembly plenary session and the Local Government and Housing Committee has been mandated to consider responses to the recommendations. A national homelessness strategy is currently being developed after consultation with all local authorities within Wales.



## Section 2 Background and context

### Strategic planning frameworks

There are a number of different strategic planning frameworks in which homelessness needs to feature. These include:

- The Community Plan provides the overarching strategic framework for all other plans and strategies in the local authority area. The needs of excluded groups such as homeless people should be addressed within the Community Plan
- The Housing Strategy (detailed guidance currently under review by the National Assembly). The Strategic Housing Group has the responsibility for co-ordination of the authority's Housing Strategy. It is for this reason that it is suggested that the Homelessness Strategy Group is a sub-group of the Strategic Housing Group. This should enable priorities for homeless and prevention services to feed through the Strategic Housing Group and Housing Strategy to the Community Plan
- Social Care Plan, Young People's Plan, Children and Young people's Framework Plan and Children's Services Plan produced by social services. For instance, the Children's Services Plan for 2000-03 identifies reducing the number of young people living in inadequate accommodation and increased numbers of 16 and 17 year olds able to obtain and maintain suitable accommodation as desired outcomes
- Local Health Action Plan produced by the Local Health Group
- Supporting People Plan/Strategy required by the National Assembly as

part of the preparations for the introduction of Supporting Operational People in April 2003

Mechanisms are needed to ensure that the needs of homeless and potentially homeless people are fed into these plans. The establishment of a Homelessness Strategy Group is a priority.

### Resources for homelessness services in Wales

As part of the implementation of Better Homes, there has been a significant increase in Section 180 funding for the development of local homelessness strategies, projects to help eliminate rough sleeping and projects to establish flexible support schemes. Funding for homelessness and rough sleeping has increased from £650,000 in 1999/2000 to £3.336 million in 2001/02 and is due to further increase to £4,836 million in 2002/03. It will be important to clearly identify priorities for new service developments within strategies in order to access funding.

The Supported Housing Revenue Grant budget is also due to increase to provide an additional 200 bedspaces for homeless and other vulnerable people. Priorities for SHRG will be identified in future through the Supporting People Operational Plan/Strategy.



## Section 2 Background and context

### Key points

The prevention and alleviation of homelessness is a Westminster and a National Assembly priority. Local authorities are required to take a more strategic approach to homelessness, including a greater focus on prevention.

Various pieces of guidance have been issued, including a revised Code of Guidance on Homelessness and the Allocation of Local Authority

Accommodation, guidance on local housing strategies and guidance on the preparation of local homelessness strategies.

Homelessness needs to be fed into a variety of strategic plans produced by Torfaen CBC, including the Community Plan.

There are increased resources available from the National Assembly for homelessness.



## Section 3 The aims, principles, objectives and implementation of the strategy

The overall aim of the strategy is to:

- Prevent people becoming homeless through the provision of appropriate intervention, information and support.
- Enable homeless people to access accommodation and support.

The principles that underpin the strategy are as follows:

- Strategic, because it looks forward
- Holistic, because it recognises that a pure bricks and mortar approach is not sufficient to address social exclusion and social isolation of homeless people
- Owned by partners and stakeholders
- A working tool for managers and practitioners in statutory and voluntary agencies

Specific objectives of the strategy are to:

- Prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance wherever possible

- Reduce repeat homelessness
- Co-ordinate the provision of appropriate housing and related services for homeless and potentially homeless people in Torfaen
- Increase the level of support provided to ensure that people can maintain tenancies once they have been allocated them
- Build on existing partnerships between statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies to maximise the resources available to meet identified need for homelessness and prevention services
- Demonstrate best value, eliminate duplication, and work towards best practice across services provided for homeless and potentially homeless people
- To implement the action plan and regularly review the strategy



## Section 3 The aims, principles, objectives and implementation of the strategy

The definition of homelessness adopted by this strategy is that set out by the National Assembly's Homelessness Commission: 'Any person who lacks accommodation or where the tenure is not secure'.

Homeless people are therefore people who are:

- Sleeping rough
- Living in insecure/temporary housing (excluding assured/assured shorthold tenants)
- Living in short-term hostels, night shelters, direct access hostels or bed and breakfast
- Moving frequently between relatives/friends
- Squatting

- Unable to remain in, or return to, housing due to poor conditions, overcrowding, affordability problems, domestic violence, harassment, mental, physical or sexual abuse

People threatened with homelessness are those who are:

- Staying in hospitals, police custody, prisons, armed forces accommodation, other institutions or supported schemes and are due for release with no accommodation
- Required to leave by family/friends
- Facing possession proceedings, within three months of the end of a short term/limiting tenancy or threat of illegal eviction
- Required to leave current accommodation due to relationship breakdown

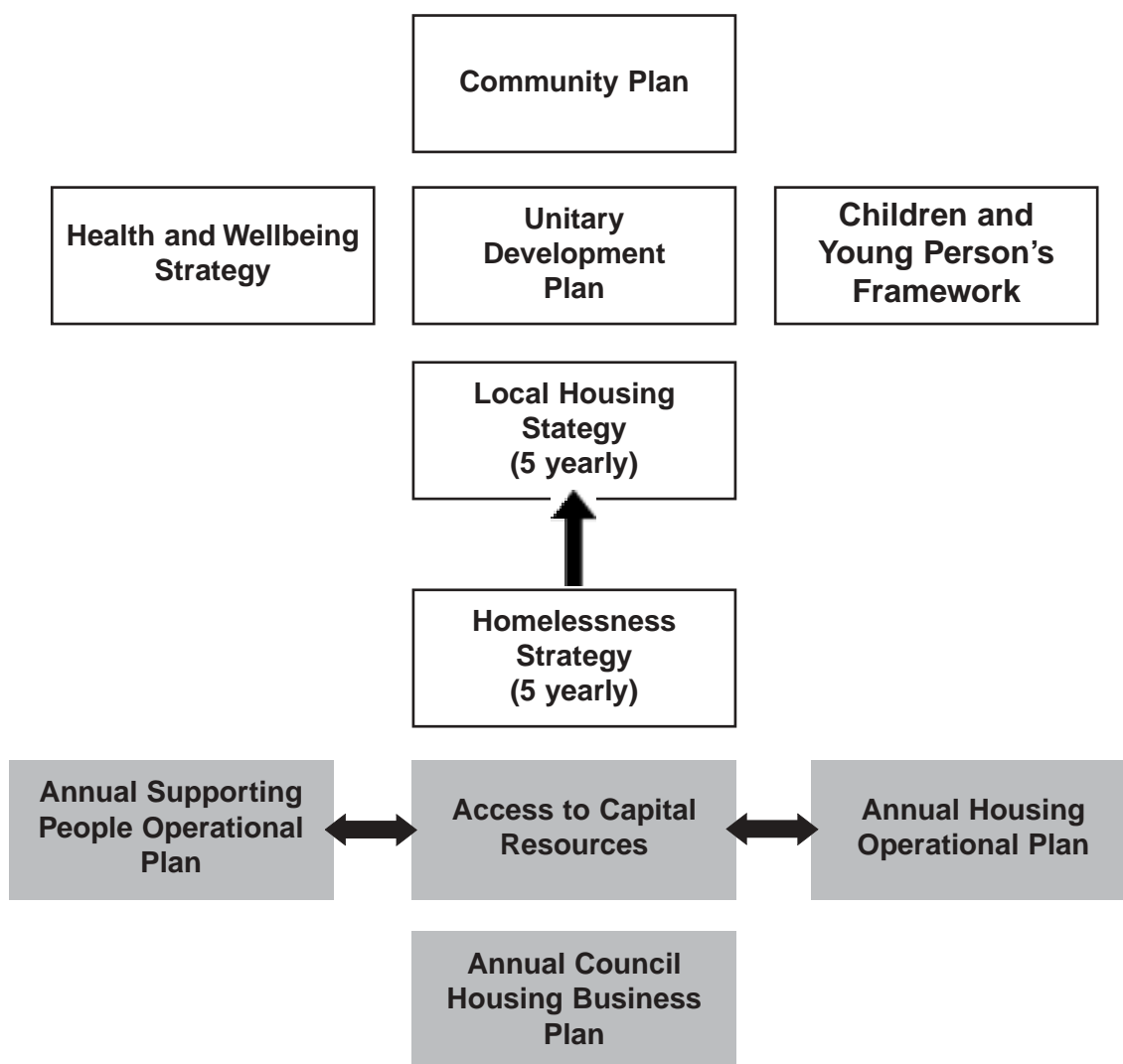


## Section 3 The aims, principles, objectives and implementation of the strategy

### Strategic Framework

The Homelessness Strategy is one of several key strategies that are either being developed or are already in existence. The role of the Homelessness Strategy clearly inter-links with many of the existing and planned strategies and

involves key organisations within the county borough. All the strategies outlined above seek to address specific areas of need and through this evolving framework, should develop effective service planning mechanisms, ensuring that services are delivered in a cost effective and joined up manner.



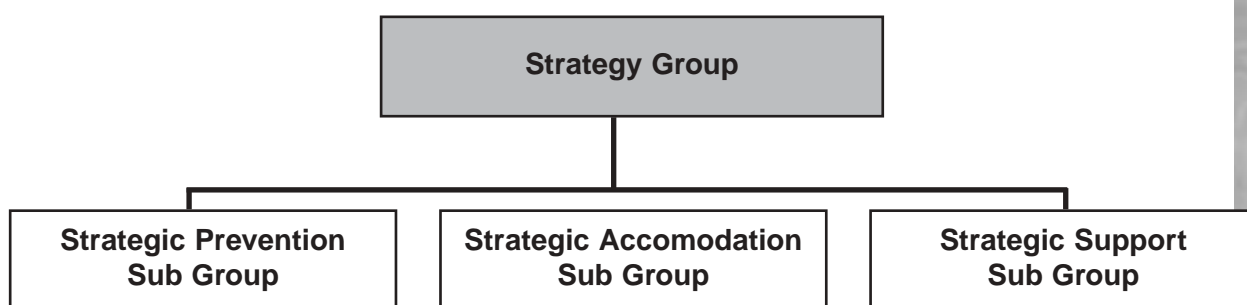
# Section 3 The aims, principles, objectives and implementation of the strategy

## Strategic Implementation

The framework to be adopted is based upon three key themes - prevention, support and accomodation. The work of these key groups will be closely monitored by an overacting Homeless Stategy Group. The Stategy Group will drive toward the action plan ensuring the objectives are met and tasks completed.

The movement towards this structure is intended to develop a greater sense of ownership of the issues relating to homelessness within the county borough

and to promote more pro-active joint working amongst agencies to the benefit of all stakeholders. The key agencies involved within the 3 sub groups will be tasked with co-ordinating information on work within their respective areas, utilising the skills, knowledge and experience of all members as well as involving other individuals and agencies where appropriate in order to make recommendations for the development of services. The Strategy Group will then monitor this work and be primarily responsible for driving toward the strategy.



# Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

Historically, homelessness has proved to be a difficult area to provide accurate and meaningful information upon and the production of information relating to homelessness has largely been left to individual Local Authorities. Torfaen County Borough Council is no different but additional information has been obtained from other sources in order to provide as much relevant information as possible to inform the strategy. A full list of information sources used to develop this strategy are contained within appendix 1. Information used includes:

- Statutory Homelessness Figures
- Management Performance Information
- Performance Reports
- Housing Needs Study
- Single Homelessness Research 2002/2003
- Snap Shot Survey 2001

The Local Authority provides homelessness services in Torfaen. There is a statutory requirement upon all Local Authorities to ensure that households requiring assistance owing to being either homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days are provided with the opportunity to submit a homelessness application, which the Local Authority must then assess in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

The assessment must focus upon whether the individual concerned is eligible for assistance, homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days, in priority need, intentionally homeless and locally connected. The Authority has a duty to investigate all claims for assistance and issue the applicant concerned with a written notification upon the completion of enquiries.

## Homelessness Information (Statutory Returns)

### Total Number of Decisions Issued

	2000 / 2001	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
<b>Homelessness Decisions Made</b>	757	932	1057
<b>Increase</b>	-	175	125
<b>Percentage Change</b>	-	23%	13%

The above information is taken from the Welsh Assembly Government Housing Statistics (WHO12) over the last three financial years and outlines the number of decisions taken each year by the Homelessness Section within Torfaen County Borough Council on the

applications made to the Authority. These figures do not represent the number of enquiries or applications made to the Authority but do clearly indicate a significant rise in the recorded level of homelessness.

## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

### Decisions Issued by Type

	Unintentionally homeless and in priority need	Intentionally homeless	Not in priority need	Not homeless or threatened with homelessness	Ineligible for assistance
2000 / 2001	415	37	179	111	15
2001 / 2002	279	23	256	370	4
2002 / 2003	396	27	261	372	0

The above table outlines the decisions issued to applicants over the last three years. It is perhaps significant to note that the proportion of applicants found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need has decreased from approximately 55% during 2000/2001 to 38% during 2002/2003 despite there being an increase in legislative responsibility.

However, this decrease is reflected in the number of not homeless decisions issued as additional advice services, such as Shelter Cymru, have been commissioned within the area and have had an impact upon preventing homelessness from occurring. Shelter Cymru has worked with the Homelessness Section in preventing homelessness where and when practicable.

A further change relates to the increase in the number of individuals being assessed as not being in priority need. This figure has risen from 179 to 261 between 2000/2001 and 2002/2003 but represents the same percentage of decisions when this is compared to the total number of decisions issued throughout the year. Individuals within this particular group would not be provided with accommodation, either on a temporary or permanent basis, and would therefore only be provided with advice and information on accessing accommodation from various sources in both the private and public sector..

## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

### Households found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need (reason for priority)

	2000 / 2001	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
1 Dependant child	130	54	113
2 Dependant children	38	20	40
3 + Dependant children	29	17	39
Pregnancy	32	18	33
Old age	11	7	13
Physical disability	18	18	33
Mental illness	23	16	20
Care leaver (18 – 21)	-	9	6
Young person (16/17)	39	42	38
Domestic violence	85	64	35
Armed forces	-	4	1
Former prisoner	-	9	20
Other	10	1	3
Emergency	0	0	2

From the above table, it can be seen that 48% of households owed a duty under homeless legislation had dependant children. This has remained constant over the last three years, although there was a decline in this ratio during 2001/2002 when this fell to 33%. The figures also show a significant increase in the number of former prisoners owed a statutory housing duty, which clearly indicates a growth in the awareness among

individuals and agencies to applicant's rights under amended legislation which was introduced during March 2001. The impact of these changes has provided challenges and difficulties to Torfaen County Borough Council in terms of responding to the needs of individuals. This needs to be examined in more detail in forthcoming years.

### Increase in Homelessness

	2000 / 2001	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
Homelessness Applications Made	757	932	1057
Increase	-	175	125
Percentage Change	-	23%	13%

# Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

## Homelessness Information (Recorded Applications – Performance Information)

A more accurate picture can be obtained from examining performance information held by the Homelessness Section. This again clearly indicates an increase in the recorded level of homelessness that is comparably higher than returns provided

to the Welsh Assembly Government, which, until recent years, have not focused on the number of enquiries and incidences of homelessness. However, it is clearly evident that homelessness has risen significantly and has clearly become a more prevalent feature within Torfaen and other local authority areas since the introduction of secondary legislation which extended the priority need groups in March 2001.

## Homelessness Applications (Household Type)

Household Type	2000 / 2001	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
Single person	372	535	650
Couple	49	58	42
Single person with children	277	299	324
Couple with children	49	60	76
Other	16	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>1099</b>

The above table outlines the increase in the number of homelessness applications made to the Authority over the last three years and provides a clear indication of the growth areas. From this, it is clearly evident that the number of single people presenting as homeless has risen from 372 households (approximately 48% of all applications) during 2000/2001 to 650 households (approximately 59% of all

applications) during 2002/2003. Other groups have shown a numerical increase but have either decreased or remained constant in terms of the proportion of applications made. The increase in single homelessness has been examined in more detail by Newport Action for the Single Homeless and the findings of the report are outlined later in this document.

## Homelessness Applications (Age Profile of Single Applicants)

	2002 / 2003
Single person aged 16/17 years	127
Single person aged 18 – 24	282
Single person aged 25 – 59	262
Single person over 60	24

The above table outlines the applications taken from single people and households where there were no dependant children. From this, it can be

seen that approximately 409 (59%) of all single people were under the age of 25 and that 127 (18%) were aged 16/17.



## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

### Homelessness Applications (Reasons for Homelessness)

Homelessness Reasons	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
Relationship breakdown (Non-violent)	114	152
Relationship breakdown (Violent)	110	118
Release from prison/hospital	26	30
Mortgage arrears	22	5
Dispute with parents	213	285
Dispute with friends/relatives	141	107
Other (emergency/sleeping rough)	29	20
Other reason for loss of rented accommodation	249	266
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	6	59
Rent arrears – Housing Association	1	8
Rent arrears – Local Authority	36	42
Rent arrears – Private sector	9	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>1099</b>

The table above details the main reasons for homelessness. Approximately 25% of households have either lost their rented accommodation or are on the verge of losing their accommodation. This could be in any either the private or public sector and relates to issues such as harassment, illegal eviction, overcrowding and unfitness for example.

There has been an increase in the number of households becoming homeless through disputes with parents and can be directly correlated to the increase in the level of single homelessness within the county borough.

The most indicative changes relates to the number of households becoming homeless through termination of assured shorthold tenancies which has risen to 59 reported cases which amounts to 5% of the total applications.

A further area to consider is relationship breakdown, which amounts to around 24% of all presentations made. Out of this, around 118 applications are made due to domestic abuse and amounts to approximately 43% of all relationship breakdowns between cohabiting couples.



# Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

## Homelessness Applications (Priority Need)

	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
1 Dependant child	159	205
2 Dependant children	75	98
3 + Dependant children	47	63
Pregnancy	40	54
Old age	18	18
Physical disability	47	47
Mental illness	27	42
Care leaver	14	11
Young person	107	120
Domestic violence	81	66
Armed forces	8	6
Former prisoner	14	23
Other	12	11
Emergency	4	4
Not Priority Need	<b>303</b>	<b>332</b>

The above table outlines all applications made to the Authority. It can be seen that whilst there has been an increase in the number of households found to be in priority need, proportionally this has remained the same when compared to the overall level of presentations each year. This currently amounts to approximately 70% (767) of all applications made. This would potentially mean that the Authority be subject to a duty to provide temporary accommodation had they all been

assessed as being homeless.

### Emergency Accommodation

The Authority presently utilises two forms of emergency accommodation, namely hostel accommodation and bed & breakfast accommodation. The table below outlines the number of households accommodated in each form of accommodation over the last 3 financial years.

	2000 / 2001	2001 / 2002	2002 / 2003
Hostel	73 (7 weeks)	64 (6 weeks)	68 (6 weeks)
Bed & Breakfast	4 (3 weeks)	77 (2 weeks)	136 (3 weeks)

The use of bed and breakfast accommodation has clearly increased significantly over this period and is linked to the growth in the level of homelessness within the county borough and also the increase in statutory duties. However, the average length of stay has remained fairly constant over this period. The use of the Authorities hostel has

remained constant over the years but has clearly not provided enough units to cope with the changing levels of demand and this is a particular problem for single people who are more often than not placed in bed and breakfast accommodation while families are placed in the hostel.

# Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

## Homelessness Section – Performance

The performance of homelessness services are difficult to assess fully but key areas are analysed and these focus upon the percentage of applicants issued with a written decision within 33 working days. During 2000/2001, 98% of all applicants were issued with a decision within 33 workings days. This can be compared to following years where this figure amounted to 96% during 2001/2002 and 92% during 2002/2003. This clearly shows that the increase in workload has had a detrimental effect upon the responsiveness and performance of the section.

Over the last two financial years covering 2001/2002 and 2002/2003, the average length of time taken to issue decisions has risen from 10.59 working days to 13.46 working days. This has clearly arisen due to the increase in work and the subsequent increase in the number of cases held by each respective officer conducting assessments.

## Housing Needs Study

During 2001, Opinion Research Services (Swansea) were commissioned by Torfaen County Borough Council to undertake a housing needs study. This involved desktop analysis of lettings/estate agent/associated data, qualitative interviews with housing professionals and face to face interviews with 2170 households on a random basis.

The study identified a surplus of social housing but clearly indicates that affordable housing is required. This requirement is concentrated in areas where people wish to live and is not representative of the borough as a whole. The study therefore highlights the entire housing market and assesses the net shortfall in examining the potential for the provision of other forms of subsidised housing in the borough. This is shown in the following table:

Type of Housing	No. of Units
<b>Housing requirement</b>	857
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	118
<b>Rented Without Subsidy</b>	997
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	
<b>TOTAL REQUIREMENT (A)</b>	<b>1972</b>
<b>Supply of Housing</b>	
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	709
<b>Shared Ownership</b>	-
<b>Rented from TCBC</b>	690
<b>Rented from RSL</b>	135
<b>Privately rented (HB)</b>	43
<b>Privately rented (without HB)</b>	43
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY (B)</b>	<b>1620</b>
<b>TOTAL SHORTFALL (SURPLUS) (A-B)</b>	<b>353</b>

# Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

Type of Housing	Net Shortfall	% of Shortfall
<b>Private Sector Housing:</b>		
Owner-Occupied	148	41%
PRS	76	21%
<b>Affordable Housing</b>		
Shared Equity		
75/25	32	9%
50/50	48	13%
<b>Home buy</b>		
70% owned/30% interest free	53	15%
<b>Rented</b>		
Social rent	(4)	-
<b>All Housing</b>	353	100%

This clearly indicates an overall net shortfall and highlights a significant opportunity to consider developing and subsequently proving alternative forms of affordable subsidised housing in the county borough.

From the study, the need for affordable, subsidised housing is concentrated in Pontypool and Cwmbran, which are the two localities with the most services available in terms of shops and leisure facilities. Cwmbran itself has the most pressing need for all types of housing investment to cater for this demand. The study goes on to outline a need for additional non-market housing, and this subsidised requirement is mainly for single bedroom accommodation and three bedroom family housing.

## Single Homelessness Research

During 2002, Newport Action for the Single Homeless conducted a survey of single homelessness within the county borough, which took place between 1st September 2002 and 31st November 2002. The research aimed to obtain a true picture of the level of single homelessness and to ascertain the views

of people on the delivery, accessibility and availability of services.

Over this period, 125 people responded to the survey and approximately 55% were male, with the majority of respondents (58%) being aged between 16 and 25. This directly correlates to information held by the Authority on homelessness applications made for assistance. The research also indicates that the main cause of homelessness was due to relationship breakdown and this amounted to 52%, while approximately 83% of people had lived in Torfaen for more than 6 months and that 60% of people were staying with relatives or friends.

A further finding related to the number of individuals that were excluded from social housing waiting lists. This amounted to 59 individuals and represented approximately 47% of the sample group. This coupled with the fact that only 19 individuals had held a private tenancy in the past, and that this sector is particularly difficult to gain access to, shows that a significant number of single people have very few options in terms of obtaining accommodation.

## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

The research further emphasises the issues outlined earlier relating to the nature and extent of homelessness and if the figures are extrapolated then the research would have uncovered approximately 500 single people which is less than the recorded number over the year and must therefore reflect the possibility that homelessness is potentially 'seasonal'.

The report itself reached a number of conclusions based on the surveys and analysis undertaken and fed back information obtain from customers faced with homelessness.

The recommendations are to:

- Determine and provide adequate resources and services for young homeless people
- Develop wider opportunities for single people who need support and accommodation in Torfaen

- Undertake research to highlight effective ways of reducing relationship breakdown amongst young people
- Monitor single homelessness
- Evaluate the exclusion from social housing in light of new legislation
- Improve and enhance private sector accommodation and complimentary services
- Ensure that advice and advocacy services are well promoted and are accessible
- Consider the development of non-statutory emergency housing



# Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

## Snap Shot Survey 2001

A snap shot survey of homelessness was carried out during the four-week period between 29th October and 23rd November 2001 using a one page monitoring form. A range of organisations were asked to participate in the survey, including registered social landlords, voluntary sector organisations and Probation, Mind and the Community Mental Health Team.

Responses were fairly limited with 60 returns received in total from Torfaen County Borough Council (homelessness

section 46, district offices 5 and social services 5) and Shelter Cymru (4). 59 households were identified by the returns, with one visiting both Torfaen County Borough Council and Shelter Cymru within the four-week period of the monitoring exercise. 3 returns did not include initials/date of birth identifiers so it was not possible to gain a complete picture of people seen by more than one agency/office.

Of the 59 households, 46 went on to present as homeless to Torfaen County Borough Council, 10 did not and for 3 households insufficient information was provided.

	Number of single person households		Number of families with children		Number of 2 and 3 adult households		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<b>Gender of head of household</b>							
<b>Age of head of household</b>							
<b>Under 16</b>		1					1
<b>16-17</b>	1	2		1			4
<b>18-24</b>	5	7	2	5			19
<b>25-59</b>	12	5	4	11	2	1	35
<b>60+</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>59</b>

The above table clearly shows that, of the 59 households recorded, 33 (56%) were single person households, 3 households comprising 2 or 3 adults, and 23 families with children. The total number of children in the 23 families was 39. The number of lone parents was 16 (27% of the total number of households), 4 of

these being men. 36% of the households were under 25.

Of the 10 households that did not go on to present as homeless, 4 were single people and 6 were families with a total of 11 children aged 16 and under. All 6 of the families were headed by lone parents 2 of these being men.



## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

Current housing	Number of households with children	Number of households without children	Total
Relatives/friends	12	17	29
Own home	4	4	8
LA property			
HA property	1	1	2
B&B/hostel	2	3	5
Private rented	4	4	8
Sleeping rough		6	6
Information not provided		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>59</b>

The above table shows the housing circumstances of the households at the time of the presentation. The high proportion of single rough sleepers is significant; this was also found to be the case for presentations to the homelessness section during April – June 2001.

The most common reasons for homelessness were relationship breakdown (48%), eviction from tenancy (14%) and repossession (10%). The reasons for homelessness of the 6 families that did not go on to present as homeless showed a different pattern, with eviction from tenancy being the most common at 50%, relationship breakdown 33%, and domestic violence 17%.

The reasons for homelessness of the 4 single person households that did not go on to present as homeless, were relationship breakdown (50%), domestic violence (25%) and leaving the army (25%). Given the priority need groups now in place, it is therefore likely that, had these 4 single person households presented as homeless, 2 of them would have been in priority need. In relation to the families with children however, given that 3 of the families had become homeless due to eviction from tenancies, they may well have been found intentionally homeless had they applied.



## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

Of the 59 households, 34 had previously had a local authority or RSL tenancy:

- 15 of the households had previously had a local authority or RSL tenancy
- 12 had had a local authority or RSL tenancy and a private sector tenancy
- 7 had had a local authority or RSL

tenancy and had been owner-occupiers.

15 of the 23 households with children (65%) had previously held a local authority or RSL tenancy, compared to 19 of the 36 households without children (53%).

Assistance looking for	Number of households with children	Number of households without children	Total
Advice and information to help you stay where you are	1	1	2
Advice and information about housing options			
Support to stay in current accommodation		1	1
Somewhere to live	13	16	29
Accommodation with support			
Advice and information about housing options and somewhere to live	9	13	22
Advice and information about housing options and accommodation with support		3	3
Other		1	1
Not known/information not provided		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>59</b>

The above table outlines the services that people were seeking when they approached agencies over the 4 week period. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the

largest proportion of households were seeking somewhere to live or advice on accommodation options.

## Section 4 The scale of homelessness in Torfaen

### Key points

- Torfaen has a high level of homelessness presentations
- A significant and increasing proportion of presentations are from households without children
- Approximately 60% of all single homeless people presenting to the Authority are under the age of 25
- Approximately a quarter of households presenting as homeless claimed to do so due to the loss or potential loss of rented accommodation owing to a number of issues
- Approximately 70% of all households who applied as homeless during 2002/2003 had a recognised priority need
- The majority of households presenting as homeless both with and without children had previously had a local authority or RSL tenancy
- The number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation has risen from 4 households during 2000/2001 to 136 households during 2002/2003
- There is a need to develop affordable permanent accommodation options
- People who considered themselves homeless were looking for various types of assistance



# Section 5 Services, gaps and implications for policy

## There are a number of service providers within Torfaen.

The audit of homelessness services resulted in the compilation of a homelessness resource directory, which is to be produced as a separate document. The main findings of the audit carried out in 2001/2002 are set out below and have been supplemented by additional information on services that have been introduced since the original audit was undertaken.

## Information and advice

Of 11 agencies stating that they provide advice, 6 noted that the advice is only provided to their own clients/tenants. Five agencies stated that there was broader access to their advice service:

- Shelter Cymru provide a specialist full-time housing advice service to all residents of Torfaen. The service is aimed at providing free independent advice on housing related issues. This operates on a surgery basis throughout Torfaen to provide as much access as possible to residents.
- Torfaen County Borough Council's Homelessness Section provides advice to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This service is conducted on a surgery basis and is available to all residents of Torfaen on an emergency basis throughout the year.
- Torfaen County Borough Council also offers general housing advice and information on accessing accommodation through numerous area housing offices located throughout the borough.
- Torfaen County Borough Council provides general advice and information on a variety of issues via two Customer Care Centres located in Cwmbran and Pontypool. This includes the provision of basic advice and information on housing related issues, including homelessness and accommodation.
- Torfaen Women's Aid provide advice to women and children suffering with outcomes of living with domestic abuse. An advice and information centre was opened during 2003 to further facilitate this service.
- CAB provides advice on a wide range of matters, including housing. CAB has also been successful in securing funding, in conjunction with Torfaen County Borough Council under S180, for a Debt Advice Worker.
- Torfaen MIND provides a drop in centre and advice and advocacy service for people.

## Section 5 Services, gaps and implications for policy

### Independent accommodation

Seven RSLs and the local authority provide general needs accommodation in the county borough, which can be accessed by any individual seeking accommodation through the respective housing registers operated by each organisation. Each organisation operate different qualification criteria which provides difficulties for customers in ensuring that they maximise their opportunities.

In total, the Authority has approximately 9,500 units of accommodation ranging from bedsits through to houses. The accommodation caters for single people, families and elderly members of the community. Access to Council accommodation is achieved through the Homefinder Team who administer the Authorities housing register.

There does not appear to be any absolute shortage of general needs accommodation when considering the findings of the housing needs study but there is a greater demand for accommodation in the south of the borough that far outstrips the supply of affordable accommodation. This is further exacerbating the homeless problem and making it increasingly difficult for households to access suitable, affordable permanent accommodation. Concerns were also raised by some agencies as to the quality of accommodation sometimes offered to homeless applicants.

### Accommodation with support

A number of agencies offer accommodation with support. Torfaen MIND operates 4 schemes for clients suffering with mental health problems and

has the capacity to accommodate 13 individuals. CMIG also operate one further scheme for this client group that caters for 6 individuals. Charter Housing Association operate 1 scheme that cater for people with mental health problems and/or learning difficulties which has 3 bed spaces. Cartrfi Cymru operates three schemes aimed at people with learning difficulties and has the capacity to accommodate 10 people at any given time. All the schemes offer a group home setting and offer a range of support to meet the needs of individuals.

Torfaen Women's Aid offers refuge accommodation and support to women and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse. This scheme has the capacity to accommodation 10 households but this is very much dependant upon the size of families as facilities are shared. The accommodation is split over two properties that are located in the same vicinity.

Torfaen County Borough Council provides emergency accommodation in Cwmbran for homeless households. This accommodation can accommodate 12 households and has the capacity to accommodate single people and families and comprises of a range of self contained units. Support is limited to the services delivered by the Hostel Warden and members of the Homelessness Team.

Social Services have access to supported lodgings for young people and care leavers. This resource is extremely limited and only has the capacity to cater for 8 individuals. Other provisions offered by Social Services include 4 group homes catering for people with learning difficulties.



# Section 5 Services, gaps and implications for policy

## Floating support

Floating support has been introduced into the county borough and currently offers support to a wide range of client groups including young people, care leavers, victims of domestic abuse, families, people with mental health problems, people with learning difficulties, people with physical disabilities, former prisoners and homeless households. Current provision is accessed through the Tenant Support Scheme (TeSS) and has the capacity to support 221 households and the providers include Tai-Trothwy (63 households), Age Concern (43 households), Mencap (9 households), Tai Hafan (35 households), Women's Aid (15 households), Gofal (28 households) and MIND (28 households).

Further floating support services for clients with mental health problems are provided directly by MIND, 24 spaces, and CMIG, 2 spaces, while there is also an additional scheme for young people and care leavers, currently being supported by Social Services operated by Tai Trothwy, which has the capacity to support 8 individuals. Charter Housing Association also offer 3 spaces on the Independent Living Scheme for people with learning difficulties.

## Other resources

This includes specialist provision such as that for people with alcohol problems and offending behaviour, some of which is provided by organisations, based outside the county borough area.

Torfaen County Borough Council has introduced a Part Furnished Tenancy Scheme which provides households with the essential items for furnishing accommodation. This scheme is now borough wide and provides an invaluable service for assisting people into accommodation quickly and effectively.

Eastern Valley Housing Association provide a Mortgage Rescue Scheme. This scheme is aimed at providing an option to homeowners in financial difficulties, whereby, upon a referral from the Homelessness Section within Torfaen County Borough Council, the association will make an offer for the property, based on a financial assessment, to the homeowners facing repossession proceedings and the threat of homelessness. This then enables the homeowners to become tenants of the association and subsequently remain in the property, preventing stress and hardship on the individuals concerned.

All the services provided are well used – evidenced by the numbers of people using individual services, occupancy levels in supported accommodation and waiting lists for both supported and general needs accommodation. However, some areas of general needs accommodation are unpopular.

As noted in Section 4, there is a high and increasing level of homeless presentations in Torfaen; over the past year, staffing resources within the authority have been increased to be able to respond appropriately.

## Section 5 Services, gaps and implications for policy

There is clearly a need to be much more pro-active in preventing homelessness and developing policies that foster this approach to:

- Make the role of housing management in preventing homelessness explicit by e.g.:
- Regularly reviewing exclusions / suspensions, making sure they are time limited and take into account the fact that a persons behaviour might change
- Making sure that basic repairs have been carried out before new tenants move in
- Carrying out visits in the early stages of a tenancy
- Questioning whether predominantly relying on possession as the sanction to deal with rent arrears is the best way to proceed
- Ensuring that tenants are not evicted because of technical arrears caused by delays in the administration of housing benefit claims
- Ensuring that increases in choice for rehousing applicants do not result in reducing choice for homeless households
- Providing mediation and other options to support people who are having problems with their neighbours
- Improve communication between agencies in relation to services provided, constraints under which various agencies operate and referring individuals between services as and when necessary

- Establish a mechanism for the ongoing monitoring of homelessness across all agencies in order to be able to track trends
- Develop clear service standards for homelessness, initially for the local authority, but in the medium-term for all agencies who are approached by homeless or potentially homeless people

### Gaps in provision

The following points outline the gaps in the provision of services within Torfaen and are reflected in the audit of services. They are also re-emphasised by quotes from individuals who took part in the Single Homelessness Survey conducted during 2002 and were interviewed as part of this survey.

- There is a clear gap in direct access emergency provision other than that for women and children fleeing domestic violence. As noted above, this can result in people seeking to access services outside the borough. This gap will be filled, at least in part, by a 12 bedspace emergency accommodation project for young single people who are homeless being developed during 2002/03 by Charter Housing Association and NASH but this will not be a direct access scheme and will be for individuals who have a priority need.

*"I would have liked to have seen a night shelter in Cwmbran, because that's where all my family was. There are loads of people on the streets in Cwmbran, and if there was a place like NASH, there wouldn't be as many. It would've been brilliant."*

## Section 5 Services, gaps and implications for policy

- There is a need for further temporary accommodation with support for some groups of people who have been accepted as homeless on the basis of vulnerability. There is potential to use the council's own housing stock or RSL stock for this purpose as long as appropriate levels of support can be made available. Stock used for this purpose should be located near to other services and facilities; it would not be appropriate to use stock considered unpopular by the majority of tenants/applicants for this purpose  
*"If I could change the system, I'd put in for funding for a hostel to be built."*
- Additional floating support services to meet the needs of the increasing proportion of vulnerable people being housed in general needs accommodation by the Local Authority and the RSLs. It could be targeted in a number of ways e.g. support provided to all households accepted as homeless that fall into the 'new' priority needs categories. Alternatively, floating support could be targeted at people who have previously had a council or RSL tenancy, but lost it due to arrears or anti-social behaviour, or who abandoned their tenancy  
*"I don't always get support for health problems. The rent office doesn't appreciate that I can't always get to them. When you ring and tell them I can't make it, they don't appreciate that I genuinely can't go out of my front door."*
- Additional floating support is also needed for groups with specific needs e.g. people with mental health problems and women who are rehoused from the refuge into council tenancies  
*"If I did get a flat, it would be nice to know where there was some backup – someone at the end of the phone."  
"My main need was being able to budget my money."*
- There is a need for longer term supported accommodation for people with mental health problems, young people, care leavers, people with learning difficulties, prison leavers and people with physical disabilities  
*"There isn't the right type of housing for the right type of people."*
- A bond scheme to enable people to access private sector accommodation of an appropriate standard, preferably linked to a voluntary accreditation scheme  
*"I had to go private to get my flat, and that meant finding someone that would take DSS, because half the time they don't."*
- Mediation services to provide help to people in situations of family or relationship conflict  
*"If I'd have stayed at home and worked things out with my mother, went to the council to go on the list, that could have prevented me from becoming homeless."*

### Key points

- A variety of services are available but access is clearly an issue
- Demand for services is in excess of the available supply
- There is a severe lack of emergency accommodation for a variety of groups
- Further floating support schemes need to be developed to prevent homelessness from recurring
- There is a need to develop more supported accommodation for a variety of groups
- There is a need to provide more housing options for people
- Access to private accommodation is difficult and there is a clear need to develop a bond scheme within the county borough
- Housing advice provision needs to be enhanced further and made more accessible and user friendly

## Section 6 Summary of review and key points

The review of homelessness and associated services outlines a substantive amount of information that has been collated over the last 18 months. This has further emphasised the need to develop a multi-agency approach to homelessness and its prevention as well as to expand and develop existing services to meet the needs of service users. The key findings of the review are as follows:

- Homelessness applications made to Torfaen County Borough Council has risen over the last two years from 779 to 1099 applications. This represents an increase of 41% over this period.
- During 2002/2003, 650 single people applied as homeless to the Local Authority which amounts to 59% of all applications. In 2000/2001, this figure was 372 and amounted to 48% of all applications. This clearly indicates a significant rise in the level of single homelessness.
- Furthermore, during 2002/2003, 409 single people were under the age of 25, which amounted to 59% of the total number of single people.
- Of those households who presented as homeless, 767 (70%) had a recognised priority need, leaving 332 (30%) as not having a priority need under the legislation.
- The Authority issued 1057 decisions to applicants during 2002/2003. This represents an increase of 125 on the previous year.
- Of the decisions issued, 396 (37%) households were found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need, 27 (3%) were found to have become homeless intentionally, 261 (25%) were found to be not in priority need and 372 (35%) were found to be not homeless or threatened with homelessness irrespective of their priority need status.
- The majority of households found to be unintentionally homeless were in priority need due to having dependant children. This amounted to 192 (48%) households. The remaining households were single people or childless couples.
- The reasons for homelessness are many and varied but around 266 (25%) households claimed homelessness due to the loss of or threatened loss of rented accommodation in either the public or private sector and 285 (26%) of households claimed homelessness due to disputes with parents. These figures are consistent with previous years.
- The Housing Needs Study carried out during 2001, indicated an overall net shortfall in the supply of affordable housing within the county borough.
- Use of bed and breakfast accommodation has increased from 4 households being placed during 2000/2001 to 136 households being placed during 2002/2003.



## Section 6 Summary of review and key points

- During 2002, research into single homelessness was undertaken by NASH and further emphasised the growth in single homelessness as over a three month period, 125 single people completed survey forms. Approximately 58% were between the age of 16 and 25. The report made several recommendations focusing upon the provision of effective services, the provision of suitable accommodation and the provision of more accessible and effective advice services.
- A further survey of homelessness was carried out between 29th October 2001 and 23rd November 2001 and a total of 59 households completed the survey. This again indicated that approximately 56% of households who completed the survey were single people. Furthermore, the research showed that people were seeking a variety of services but were primarily looking for accommodation or advice on accessing accommodation.
- There are a range of advice providers within the county borough from both the statutory, voluntary and private sectors but access arrangements are variable and do not meet the needs of the whole community.
- Independent accommodation is available within the public sector from the Local Authority and seven RSL's. Access to accommodation is through separate housing registers operated by each organisation and caters for single people, families and elderly members of the community.
- There are some supported housing schemes within the county borough catering for people with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems and women fleeing domestic abuse.
- Floating support is available and offers support to approximately 250 households covering young people, care leavers, victims of domestic abuse, families, people with mental health problems, people with learning difficulties, people with physical disabilities, former prisoners and homeless households.
- The Local Authority provides emergency accommodation at a hostel which has the capacity to accommodate 12 households. This is for households classed as or believed to be homeless and in priority need.
- There is no emergency direct access accommodation within the county borough for single people classed as not being in priority need.
- There is evidence to suggest that residents of Torfaen are frequently using services within other localities as they are not available within the county borough.
- Access to private sector accommodation is difficult for low income households as there is not a bond guarantee scheme in operation.

# Section 7 Action Plan

The following action plan outlines how the Authority and its partners will endeavour to tackle homelessness and the associated issues within the county borough. The overarching Strategy Group will ensure that the three key strands of the strategy relating to accommodation, prevention and support are dealt with and that clear and real meaningful links are

established with other Local Authority areas and strategies. Additional members with a proven link to homelessness and the key issues may, with the agreement of existing members of the Strategy Group, be allowed to join one of the sub groups relevant to their experience.

## Homelessness Strategy Group

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Establish the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invite relevant members</li> <li>● Hold the first meeting</li> <li>● Agree terms of reference</li> <li>● Establish aims, principles and objectives of strategy</li> </ul>	Torfaen CBC - Homelessness	Complete	Existing
Establish sub groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify lead officer for the three groups</li> <li>● Agree terms of reference</li> <li>● Hold first meetings</li> <li>● Establish method of monitoring work of each sub group</li> </ul>	Homelessness Strategy Group	October 2003	Existing
Establish arrangements and mechanisms for the development and adoption of a new Homelessness Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review progress</li> <li>● Review structure and effectiveness of groups</li> <li>● Undertake review of homelessness</li> <li>● Formulate new strategy</li> </ul>	Homelessness Strategy Group	August 2007	Existing



# Section 7 Action Plan

## Providing Emergency Accommodation

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Ensure that sufficient emergency accommodation is available for those people either homeless or potentially homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Undertake an analysis of gaps in current provision</li> <li>● Establish requirements based on gap analysis</li> <li>● Identify projects to be developed &amp; prioritise projects</li> <li>● Develop projects and identify funding available</li> </ul>	Strategic Accommodation Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group	October 2003 Sub September 2008	WAG Funding and Existing
Equalities and equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop BME Housing Strategy</li> <li>● Record and monitor ethnicity and disability of applicants seeking emergency /temporary accommodation</li> <li>● Collate and evaluate information, making recommendations where applicable</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy Manager  All emergency /temporary accommodation providers  Strategic Accommodation Sub Group	October 2003 – September 2005  April 2005 and ongoing  April 2006 & ongoing	Existing & to be identified  Existing  Existing

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Ensure that current emergency accommodation used for homeless households is of a high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse and assess quality of current provision</li> <li>Develop system for monitoring and maintaining standards in current provision</li> <li>Establish mechanisms for tackling poor standards</li> </ul>	Strategic Accommodation Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group  Senior Homelessness Officer & Environmental Management	October 2003 to April 2004  Ongoing monitoring	Existing
Eliminate the need for rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify number of individuals sleeping rough</li> <li>Establish mechanism/system for monitoring rough sleeping</li> <li>Identify &amp; develop schemes to prevent rough sleeping</li> </ul>	Strategic Accommodation Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group	October 2003 - September 2008	WAG Funding and Existing
Provide specialist/dedicated accommodation for homeless young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the Single Person Hostel</li> <li>Identification of other relevant schemes and projects to supplement/complement the Single Person Hostel</li> </ul>	Housing Regeneration Manager, Senior Homelessness Officer, NASH & Charter Housing Association  Strategic Accommodation Sub Group	October 2003 - March 2004  October 2003 - September 2004	WAG & SHG funding  Existing

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Reduce the use of B&B accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify current levels of use. Project future demands.</li> <li>● Establish methods of preventing/limiting use of B&amp;B</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Strategic Accommodation Sub Group</p>	<p>October 2003 &amp; ongoing</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2005 &amp; ongoing</p>	<p>Existing &amp; to be identified</p> <p>Existing &amp; to be identified</p>

# Section 7 Action Plan

## Providing Accommodation – Permanent Accommodation

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Ensure that sufficient permanent/move on accommodation is available for those people either homeless or potentially homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Undertake an analysis of gaps in current provision</li> <li>● Establish requirements based on gap analysis</li> <li>● Identify projects to be developed &amp; prioritise projects</li> <li>● Develop projects and identify funding available</li> </ul>	Strategic Accommodation Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group	October 2003 – September 2008	Existing Existing Resources to be identified
Equalities and equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop BME Housing Strategy</li> <li>● Record and monitor ethnicity and disability of applicants seeking permanent accommodation</li> <li>● Collate and evaluate information, making recommendations where applicable</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy Manager  All accommodation providers  Strategic Accommodation Sub Group	October 2003 - September 2005  April 2005 and ongoing  April 2006 & ongoing	Existing & to be identified  Existing Existing
Quantify housing need/supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commission housing needs survey</li> <li>● Development of Local Housing Strategy</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy Manager & Strategic Housing Forum  Housing Strategy Manager	April 2004	WAG/TCBC Existing

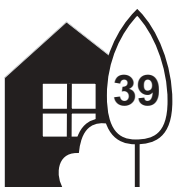


# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Improve access to private rented housing sector for individuals homeless or threatened with homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop links with private rented sector through the development of a Private Landlords Forum</li> <li>● Ensure that standards are acceptable and that arrangements for inspections are in place</li> <li>● Establish a bond scheme in line with WAG guidance</li> <li>● Develop projects and identify funding available.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic Accommodation Sub Group, Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Environmental Management</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Environmental Management</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2004</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2006</p> <p>October 2003 – January 2004</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>WAG Funding</p>
Improve quality of private rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Link to improving access to the private rented sector through registration schemes for private landlords</li> <li>● Strengthen the housing enforcement function and develop clear and real links between the Housing Department and Environmental Management</li> </ul>	Environmental Management Homelessness Section	October 2003 – September 2005	Existing

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Improve choice for individuals seeking accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ongoing monitoring of allocations made by all organisations</li> <li>● Monitor and feedback on Homefinder Scheme</li> <li>● Identification of key trends</li> <li>● Establishment of a lettings task group</li> <li>● Ensure that vulnerable individuals and families are catered for within lettings schemes</li> </ul>	Tenancy Services Manager, Homefinder Manager & Senior Homelessness Officer	October 2003 – March 2003	Existing
Provide a range of supported accommodation for a variety of client groups (i.e.: mental health, young people, learning difficulties, domestic abuse etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify client groups and estimate type and numbers of the accommodation required for each client group.</li> <li>● Develop proposals to meet the needs of clients.</li> </ul>	Strategic Accommodation Sub Group, Homelessness Strategy Group & Supporting People Manager	October 2003 – August 2004 August 2004 - September 2006	Existing Existing, SPG & SPRG



# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Diversification of housing options to encompass all tenures/types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop affordable housing policy</li> <li>● Development of initiatives to promote and establish affordable housing</li> <li>● Establishment of Empty Homes Initiative</li> <li>● Develop a social housing procurement policy with RSL's &amp; WAG</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Strategy Manager</p> <p>Housing Strategy Manager</p> <p>Environmental management &amp; Housing Strategy Manager</p> <p>Housing Strategy Manger</p>	<p>October 2003 – March 2004</p> <p>March 2004 – March 2006</p> <p>October 2004 – September 2006</p> <p>April 2004 – March 2005</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>
Review of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess and evaluate progress and achievements against set targets</li> <li>● Report to Homelessness Strategy Group</li> <li>● Propose modifications, where applicable, to the action plan and consult</li> <li>● Revise document</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic Accommodation Sub Group and Homelessness Strategy Group</p> <p>Strategic Accommodation Sub Group</p> <p>Strategic Accommodation Sub Group and Homelessness Strategy Group</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>October 2004 and annually thereafter</p>	<p>Existing</p>

# Section 7 Action Plan

## Providing Support

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Ensure that information on the support needs is of a high quality and that all groups are fully assessed and catered for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Devise, adopt and promote the NME to improve the quality and accuracy of information</li> <li>● Collate, analyse and report information</li> </ul>	<p>Supporting People Manager &amp; all relevant agencies</p> <p>Supporting People Team</p>	<p>April 2005 and ongoing</p> <p>April 2006 &amp; ongoing</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>
Equalities and equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Record and monitor ethnicity and disability of applicants seeking support</li> <li>● Collate and evaluate information, making recommendations where applicable</li> </ul>	<p>All support providers</p> <p>Strategic Support Sub Group</p>	<p>October 2003 - September 2005</p> <p>April 2005 and ongoing</p> <p>April 2006 &amp; ongoing</p>	<p>Existing &amp; to be identified</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>
Develop planning mechanisms to ensure that adequate and appropriate support is available for those individuals either homeless or threatened with homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify gaps in provision</li> <li>● Obtain service user requirements/aspirations</li> <li>● Identify recommended service developments and priorities</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic Support Sub Group, Homelessness Strategy Group &amp; Supporting People Management Group</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2008</p>	<p>Existing</p>



# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Increase use and availability of furnished tenancy scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued promotion and advertisement of scheme</li> <li>Development of links with all agencies</li> <li>Monitor the level of demand and report information</li> <li>Identify innovative ways to expand and develop service offered</li> </ul>	<p>Tenancy Services Manager</p> <p>Tenancy Services Manager</p> <p>Tenancy Services Manager</p> <p>Tenancy Services Manager</p> <p>Tenancy Services Manager</p>	<p>October 2003 &amp; ongoing</p> <p>October 2003 &amp; ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>
Multi-agency team project for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain further evidence of need for young people from individual agencies and collate this together</li> <li>Develop a preferred model for providing a holistic service for the needs of young people aged 16 – 21</li> </ul>	<p>Representatives from Social Services, Health, Housing, Leisure &amp; Education</p> <p>Representatives from Social Services, Health, Housing, Leisure &amp; Education</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2004</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2005</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>To be identified</p>
Provide a 'safety net' for homeless families with high support needs who have difficulties in managing and maintaining accommodation or who have become homeless intentionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide evidence of need</li> <li>Develop a preferred model for providing a service for families</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Housing Strategy Manager</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Housing Strategy Manager</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2004</p> <p>September 2004 – September 2006</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>To be identified</p>

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Continue to reduce and tackle the number of tenancy failures across all social housing tenures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish mechanisms for monitoring tenancy failures and recurring homelessness</li> <li>● Report performance to Strategic Support Sub group</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2004 &amp; ongoing</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2004 &amp; ongoing</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>
Develop dedicated support provision for homeless households in emergency accommodation and to assist households into independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide dedicated support worker for households in emergency accommodation</li> </ul>	Senior Homelessness Officer	September 2003	Existing
Provide support and resettlement services to homeless people not classed as vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify number of non-priority homeless households</li> <li>● Identify needs of this group through user consultation</li> <li>● Establish services based on consultation</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Strategic Support Sub Group</p> <p>Strategic Support Sub Group</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2004</p> <p>September 2004 – September 2006</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>To be identified</p>

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Review of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess and evaluate progress and achievements against set targets</li> <li>● Report to Homelessness Strategy Group</li> <li>● Propose modifications, where applicable, to the action plan and consult</li> <li>● Revise document</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic Support Sub Group &amp; Homelessness Strategy Group</p> <p>Strategic Support Sub Group</p> <p>Strategic Support Sub Group &amp; Homelessness Strategy Group</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>October 2004 and annually thereafter</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	Existing

# Section 7 Action Plan

## Preventing Homelessness

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Establish and maintain multi-agency partnerships & groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to progress the Homelessness Strategy Group</li> <li>● Develop and progress relevant sub groups focusing on prevention, accommodation and support</li> <li>● Contribute towards and attend relevant multi-agency partnerships focusing on homelessness and related issues</li> </ul>	Senior Homelessness Officer  Chairs of all Sub Groups & Senior Homelessness Officer  All partner agencies	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing	Existing
Equalities and equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Record and monitor ethnicity and disability of applicants seeking advice</li> <li>● Collate and evaluate information, making recommendations where applicable</li> </ul>	All support providers  Strategic Prevention Sub Group	April 2005 and ongoing  April 2006 & ongoing	Existing  Existing
Prevention of homelessness through strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify how current services are delivered, by whom and what they are in order to identify gaps in provision and develop relevant services</li> </ul>	Strategic Prevention Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group	Strategic Prevention Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group	Existing

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Maintain and develop advice services on homelessness and its prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that all advice services are accessible to all customers</li> </ul>	Strategic Prevention Sub Group	October 2003 & ongoing	Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that all advice provided is of a high standard through providers obtaining the CLS quality mark at an appropriate level</li> </ul>	All advice providers & Strategic Prevention Sub Group	October 2004 – September 2006	Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that relevant and timely advice is provided where homelessness can be practicably prevented</li> </ul>	All advice providers & Strategic Prevention Sub Group	October 2003 – September 2004 & ongoing	Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Publicise advice services to increase public and officer awareness</li> </ul>	All advice providers & Strategic Prevention Sub Group	Ongoing	Existing & to be identified
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop agreed mechanisms for monitoring outcomes of advice and provide ongoing reports to assess effectiveness of services</li> </ul>	All advice providers & Strategic Prevention Sub Group	October 2003 – September 2004 & ongoing	Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider additional and innovative methods of delivering advice</li> </ul>	All advice providers & Strategic Prevention Sub Group	October 2003 – September 2004 & ongoing	Existing
		Strategic Prevention Sub Group, Homelessness Strategy Group & Senior Homelessness Officer		

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Ensure that effective and accurate information is available on homelessness and its prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop, publish and circulate a resource directory</li> <li>● Develop, publish and distribute service user guides</li> <li>● Maintain the supply of relevant information and expand on information based on service user needs and requirements</li> <li>● Consider the utilisation of the Authorities website to develop the advice and information services provided</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Strategic Prevention Sub Group</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer &amp; Strategic Prevention Sub Group</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Strategic Prevention Sub Group &amp; Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2004 &amp; review annually</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2004 &amp; review annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 2004 – September 2006</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>
Continue to develop public, professional and political awareness of homelessness issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish and undertake an annual event focusing upon homelessness and related issues</li> <li>● Promote homelessness and related issues throughout local schools</li> <li>● Continue to undertake Member seminars and Executive Member briefings on homelessness and associated issues</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer, Homelessness Strategy Group &amp; Strategic Prevention Sub Group</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>October 2003 – September 2004 &amp; annually thereafter</p> <p>October 2003 – September 2004 &amp; annually thereafter</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Existing &amp; to be identified</p> <p>Existing</p> <p>Existing</p>

# Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Develop joint working practices between Homelessness Section and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies in order to prevent and respond effectively to homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop protocols and working practices</li> <li>● Establish review mechanisms</li> <li>● Promote work and monitor progress and benefits</li> </ul>	Senior Homelessness Officer & Homelessness Team	October 2003 – September 2004 & ongoing	Existing
Further development of the role of social landlords in the prevention of homelessness and the delivery of housing advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop links with housing management and identify and promote key practices and procedures</li> <li>● Extend these links to Customer Care Centres</li> </ul>	Senior Homelessness Officer/Homelessness Team	October 2003 – September 2008	Existing
Reduce the impact of debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor and evaluate social landlords debt policies and performance</li> <li>● Monitor and evaluate the Debt Advice Project provided by CAB</li> </ul>	Strategic Prevention Sub Group  Strategic Prevention Sub Group, Senior Homelessness Officer, Housing Income Manager & CAB	October 2003 – September 2004 & ongoing  Annually	Existing  Existing
Examine innovative ways of working with other Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop links and relations with other Authorities within Gwent to develop joint agreements, working practices and protocols</li> <li>● Seek to pursue links with other Local Authorities within South Wales</li> </ul>	Senior Homelessness Officer  Senior Homelessness officer	October 2003 – September 2005 & ongoing  October 2004 – September 2006	Existing & possible WAG funding  Existing & possible WAG funding

## Section 7 Action Plan

Objective	Tasks	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources
Review of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Assess progress and achievements against actions/tasks</li><li>● Amend action plan after consultation</li><li>● Publish amendments to action plan</li></ul>	Strategic Support Sub Group & Homelessness Strategy Group	October 2004 and annually thereafter	Existing

## Section 8 The Strategy in the Future

Once established, the Homelessness Strategy Group will have a key role in overseeing, evaluating and amending the strategy. It is suggested in the draft terms of reference that the group will meet on a quarterly basis to:

- Consider the results of monitoring of homelessness across all agencies carried out for a four week period using a common monitoring form
- Consider user views about services i.e. their experiences of finding and using services, there are any gaps, do changes need to be made?
- Consider stakeholder views about services i.e. how their services have developed, their perceptions about gaps in services and what works well, any planned expansion of services or development of new services, any changes that would be appropriate
- Receive reports from the three strategic sub groups focusing on accommodation, prevention and support
- Review progress against the homelessness strategy action plan
- Revise the action plan in the light of the results of monitoring, user views and reports from the three strategic sub groups
- Revise the strategy as and when necessary
- Inform the Strategic Housing Group of the implications of the revised action plan in terms of priorities for funding and other resources

Following a meeting held to review the strategy, it may be useful for the group to hold a workshop with all relevant agencies at which their proposals would be presented. This would provide an opportunity to seek the views of attendees and would also serve to strengthen relationships and therefore have a positive impact on joint working.

# Appendix 1 Information Sources

The following information sources have been used in the compilation of this review and strategy:

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - Homelessness Statistics 2001/2002 (2002)

HMSO – Homelessness Act 2002 (2002)

Opinion Research Services – A Study of Housing Needs in Torfaen County Borough (2003)

Tamsin Stirling – Audit of Homelessness Services in Torfaen (2002)

Tamsin Stirling – Snap Shot Survey of Homelessness in Torfaen (2002)

Torfaen County Borough Council Housing Department - Homelessness Presentations 2001/2002 (2002)

Torfaen County Borough Council Housing Department - Homelessness Presentations 2002/2003 (2003)

Welsh Assembly Government – Annual Performance Indicators 2001/2002 (2001/2002)

Welsh Assembly Government – Annual Performance Indicators 2002/2003 (2002/2003)

Welsh Assembly Government – Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (2003)

Welsh Assembly Government – Housing Statistics (Homelessness - WHO 12) (2000/2001)

Welsh Assembly Government – Housing Statistics (Homelessness - WHO 12) (2001/2002)

Welsh Assembly Government – Housing Statistics (Homelessness - WHO 12) (2002/2003)

Jim Wright (Newport Action for the Single Homeless) – A Survey of Single Homelessness in Torfaen County Borough (2003)



# Appendix 2 Homelessness Services Audit

## Section 1 Contact details

## Section 2 Services provided

Type of service	Nature of service provided, including where the service is provided and opening hours	Target client group(s), eligibility criteria and referral mechanism(s)	Any exclusion applied?	Contact person for the service and contact details	How service is funded	Any other comments
Housing advice						
Other advice e.g. debt advice						
Advice aimed at specific groups e.g. people with alcohol/drug/mental health problems						
Please state whether your organisation uses an appointment system or has an open door policy						

# Appendix 2 Homelessness Services Audit

Type of service	Number of bedspaces, type of housing and nature of support (if any). Include whether emergency, short-term or long-term	Target client group(s), eligibility criteria and referral mechanism(s)	Any exclusion applied?	Contact person for the service and contact details	Weekly charge for accommodation (rent and service charge)	How service is funded
General needs accommodation (please include details of tenancy types used)						
Specialist accommodation (please include details of tenancy types used)						
Hostels (please include details of tenancy types used)						

# Appendix 2 Homelessness Services Audit

Type of service	Nature of service provided, including where the service is provided and opening hours	Target client group(s), eligibility criteria and referral mechanism(s)	Any exclusion applied?	Contact person for the service	How service is funded	Any other comments
Support e.g. accommodation provided with support, floating support, outreach support						
Resettlement support						
Day centres/ drop-in centres						
Mediation						
Furniture services e.g. recycling schemes						

# Appendix 2 Homelessness Services Audit

## Section 2 (cont.)

Is there access to the services provided by your organisation for disabled people? Please describe.

Are the services provided by your organisation available in Welsh/other languages? If yes, please describe.

How does your organisation promote the service(s) it provides and to whom/which organisations? Please provide copies of publicity material that you use.

Please indicate what, in your opinion, are the main reasons for the housing/homelessness problems faced by your target group(s).

What is the level of demand for the service(s) that your organisation provides? E.g. are there more people wanting your service(s) than you can cater for?

Are there individuals/groups that your organisation would like to provide services to, but is unable to do so at the moment, or other services that you would like to be able to provide? If so, please describe, what are the barriers and what would enable you to provide these services?

## Advice services

What are the most common housing advice queries that your users have? E.g. rent arrears, housing benefit, disrepair, domestic violence, debt, exclusion from housing registers/waiting lists.

## Accommodation and support services

What is the usual occupancy rate in your accommodation?

If your organisation provides emergency or short-term accommodation:

- How many people moved on from your project in the last 12 months? What are the main reasons for people moving on?
- What is your source of move-on accommodation (e.g. houses, flats, bedsits). From which landlords?

If your organisation provides long-term accommodation:

- Does it provide move-on accommodation? If 'yes' please provide details of which organisations move-on is provided for, numbers of properties involved and referral arrangements.



# Appendix 2 Homelessness Services Audit

## Section 3 Relationship with other agencies

Are any other agencies involved in providing the service(s) that your organisation provides? E.g. in a management, ownership or supporting role.

Do you have regular contact or involvement with other agencies in the voluntary or statutory sector within Torfaen? E.g. referral agreements, joint-working meetings, protocols etc. Please provide details and copies of any relevant documents.

## Section 4 Service users

Please provide information on the number of people assisted during the period between 1/1/2000 and 31/12/2000 (this information can be attached if necessary). Please give information by age groups of service users, gender, and household type and for the different types of services e.g. advice, accommodation and support.

Does your organisation have you a process to find out user views or seek feedback from service users? Please describe and provide key results (if available).

## Section 5 Perceptions and views

What is your perception of the services provided for people who are homeless/in housing need in Torfaen (advice services, support, mediation, accommodation etc.)? In your opinion, what are the gaps in the services and which services are difficult to access within the county?

Which services for homeless and potentially homeless people in the county work well and which do not?

Are services co-ordinated and are joint working practices effective?

# Appendix 3 Terms of Reference for the Homelessness Strategy Group in Torfaen

The Homelessness Strategy Group will be a sub-group of the Strategic Housing Group.

The overall **aim** of the Group is to examine issues affecting homeless and potentially homeless people in Torfaen and to make recommendations to the Strategic Housing Group as to appropriate responses.

The **objectives** of the Group are to oversee the implementation and revision of the homelessness strategy with particular reference to:

- Oversee the collection of information about the level of homelessness in the Borough and services available to homeless and potentially homeless people and ensure this information is kept up to date and disseminated
- Raise awareness of housing options for homeless and potentially homeless people
- Raise awareness amongst homeless and potentially homeless people of the services that are available within the borough
- Identify and respond to changes in legislation and accepted good practice that affect homeless people
- Act as an information exchange between agencies
- Promote multi-agency awareness and working

- Develop mechanisms for seeking the views of service users in the further development of the strategy
- To influence local authority policy, housing strategy development and bids for relevant sources of funding by reporting directly to the Strategic Housing Group

**Membership** of the group will be drawn from:

- Torfaen County Borough Council – representatives from housing, social services, education and youth services plus central offices involved in provision of information and advice to service users
- Torfaen County Borough Council - representatives of relevant fora/groups e.g. mental health accommodation group, domestic violence group
- Relevant voluntary sector organisations – representatives from Age Concern, CAB, Pontypool Mind, Shelter Cymru, Torfaen Women's Aid
- Registered social landlords – representatives from Charter, Eastern Valley, Gwerin, Tai Trothwy
- Other agencies e.g. Probation, Community Mental Health Team, Police, private sector representatives (lenders, private rented sector)



# Appendix 3 Terms of Reference for the Homelessness Strategy Group in Torfaen

The Group will **meet** quarterly to:

- Consider the results of monitoring of homelessness across all agencies (an annual snap shot survey of homelessness using the standard form)
- Consider user views about services
- Consider stakeholder views about services
- Receive reports from the three sub groups focusing on prevention, accommodation and support
- Review progress against the homelessness strategy action plan
- Revise the action plan in the light of the results of monitoring, user views and reports from the three strategic sub groups
- Revise the strategy as and when necessary
- Inform the Strategic Housing Group of the implications of the revised action plan in terms of priorities for funding and other resources

# Appendix 5 Terms of Reference for the Strategic Sub Groups

There will be three Strategic Sub Groups focusing upon accommodation, support and prevention. These will drive forward the action points contained within the action plan under the guidance and direction of the Homelessness Strategy Group.

The **objectives** of the three groups are to:

- Agree a timetable of meetings and to elect a Chair and vice chair who will ensure that progress against the action plan is fed back to the Homelessness Strategy Group
- Ensure that agencies work in a collaborative manner
- Prevent duplication of work through linking in with other groups
- Share information on the needs of people who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Identify and monitor need
- Identify where there is a need for additional services
- Identify the need for service improvement/enhancement
- Promote good practice and the work of the group
- Identify and attempt to procure resources for new services

- Undertake the actions required to achieve the objectives
- Review the objectives at agreed intervals
- Consult on any amendments that are to be made to the action plan and ensure that these are fed into the Homelessness Strategy Group
- Aim to establish consultation with service users in order to enhance service improvement and customer satisfaction

The **membership** of the respective groups will be drawn from relevant agencies involved with homeless or potentially homeless households from both the statutory or voluntary sectors, specific to the roles of each group focusing upon either prevention, accommodation or support.

The monitoring form on the next page is a slightly amended version of the form used for the snapshot survey undertaken in 2001. It has taken into account the recommendations of the Homelessness Commission in relation to monitoring.

The idea is that this form is used by all agencies and departments for an agreed four-week period each year to create a regularly updated snapshot picture of homelessness in the borough. This will be in addition to any other monitoring that is presently in place and is intended to provide a further insight into homelessness and associated issues affecting homeless people.

# Appendix 5 Homelessness Monitoring Form

The information on this form will be used to build a more complete picture of homelessness in Torfaen than that which is available from statistics currently

collected by the local authority. No information will be published that will allow an individual to be identified.

Agency name	Initials of head of household/individual	Date of birth of head of household/individual	Date seen

## Household details

Age of head of household

Male  Female

Number of adults

Number of children 16 and under

## How long have you lived in Torfaen County Borough?

Less than 1 month  1-3 months

3-6 months  6+ months

## Ethnic origin

White  Black/Black British

Asian/Asian British  Mixed

Chinese/other Ethnic Group

## Current situation

### Stayed last night

Own/partners tenancy  Slept rough

Own/partners home  Relatives/friends

Supported housing  Hospital/prison

B&B/hostel/short term  Other

### Length of homelessness

within 28 days  0-3 months

At risk of homelessness  3-6 months

## Reason for homelessness

Relationship breakdown  Eviction from tenancy

Domestic violence  Repossession

Leaving temporary accommodation

Leaving care/prison/hospital/forces

## Previous housing

Ever had a LA/HA tenancy yes  no

Ever been an owner-occupier yes  no

Ever lived in private rented accommodation yes  no

Last settled accommodation was:

Less than 1 month ago  1-3 months ago

3-6 months ago  6-12 months ago

12+ months

## Advice, housing and support needs

### What assistance are you looking for?

Advice and information to help you stay where you are

Advice and information about your housing options

Support to stay in current accommodation

Somewhere temporary to live

Somewhere permanent to live

Accommodation with support

Any other comments:



# Appendix 6 Glossary of Terms

## Key Terms and Definitions

**Affordable Housing:** Is housing of an adequate standard which is cheaper than housing generally available in the local housing market. This can comprise a combination of subsidised rented housing, subsidised low-cost home ownership (LCHO) including shared ownership, and in some market situations, cheap housing for sale.

**Best Value:** A government framework within which local authorities have a duty (under Local Government Act) to demonstrate continuous improvement in both the cost and quality of services, in order to meet the needs, expectations and aspirations of local people.

**BME Population:** Black, Minority Ethnic. Refers to the number of households in a given local authority area from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.

**Community Strategy:** An overarching statement of the needs and priorities of local communities and provides a strategic basis through which local services and agencies can base and co-ordinate both existing and future activity.

**Floating Support:** Provision of tenancy related support to people in their own homes. The nature of the support is person rather than scheme specific. Usually covers low to medium levels of support.

**Hidden Households:** Includes anyone who lives as part of a household who are likely to leave to establish independent accommodation during the next two years.

**Hidden Homeless:** Those persons in need of housing who are currently accommodated with another household and have failed to register their need through an appropriate agency or organisation.

**Homelessness:** A legal definition set out in the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2003, referring to those individuals without/with a 'priority need' for accommodation; or is likely to lose accommodation within 28 days.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation:** A building in which a number of separate households are resident under separate tenancies or licences.

**Housing Needs Survey/Assessment:** An assessment of housing need for an area, explaining both the nature and extent of need. Covers all forms of tenure and usually considers the correlation between housing costs and income and thus, affordability levels.

**Housing Need:** The quantity of housing of the type and quality necessary to house those households currently lacking their own housing, or living in housing which is unsuitable or inadequate, and who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market. In essence, housing need covers those households without adequate housing who are unable to resolve their situation without assistance (subsidy).



# Appendix 6 Glossary of Terms

**Housing Market:** The way in which all housing tenures and sectors operate and interact within a geographically defined area ('the local housing system'). This refers specifically to the housing stock or supply as differentiated by tenure, location and property size; as well as demand, differentiated by household size, composition, incomes, preferences and a range of external drivers relating to local demography, economic and environmental trends.

**Joint or Common Housing Register:** All housing authorities are required to operate a housing register for those requiring access to social/affordable housing in the area. In some cases, in order to co-ordinate service provision and operate consistent and equitable systems of access, joint or common housing registers are operated by the local authority and locally based Registered Social Landlords.

**Local Plan:** A development plan which sets out detailed planning policies and proposals for specific sites. Local plans fit within the strategic framework of the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL):** An affordable housing provider registered with the WAG, under the provisions of the 1996 Housing Act.

**Rough Sleeping:** Refers to those individuals who find themselves without settled, secure accommodation and a roof over their heads who frequently sleep out of doors ('street homeless').

**Social Housing:** Housing of an adequate standard which is provided to rent at below market cost (subsidised) for those households in need, by LA's or RSL's operating on the basis of accepted and

regulated standards of good practice in relation to physical conditions, management, lettings and equality of opportunity.

**Social Housing Grant:** Capital grant allocated by the WAG via Local Authorities to subsidise the cost of providing affordable housing schemes in accordance with identified local need.

**Special Needs:** Individuals currently forming part of the household who suffer from any long-term illness, health problem, mental health problem or disability, including problems associated with old age, which limit daily activities or affect housing requirements.

**Strategic/Enabling Local Housing Authority:** Conveys the principal role of local housing activities in terms of directing, overseeing and co-ordinating all local housing activity. Local Housing Authorities are the only organisations equipped to take a comprehensive overview of the housing needs and priorities of their areas and to coordinate all actions required to meet them. The 'Enabling' role was first introduced by the Housing and Local Government Act 1988.

**Supporting People:** Supporting People is a new Government policy and funding framework which came into effect on 1 April 2003. It is now the only Government funding source available to help fund the revenue costs of providing housing related support services to vulnerable people aged 16 and over.

**Supported Housing Revenue Grant:** Revenue grant allocated via Registered Social Landlords for the provision of housing support.



If you have any comments on the contents of this strategy, please contact the Homelessness Section, Housing Department, Torfaen County Borough Council, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP44 2WN.

T: 01633 648663

For copies of this strategy in Welsh, large print, audio or Braille, please contact the above address

