

Executive summary: understanding and tackling the broader issues of repeat homelessness in the Bradford district

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

NOVEMBER 2009

Contents

Section	Page number
1 The experience of repeat homelessness in Bradford.....	1
2 Key findings	2
3 Introduction – background to the research and how it was carried out	4
4 The research findings – answering the key questions	5
4.1 How is repeat homelessness addressed elsewhere?	5
4.2 What is the scale of repeat homelessness in Bradford?	6
4.3 What are the main causes of repeat homelessness and which groups of people are most affected by repeat homeless?.....	8
4.4 Which resources and services currently respond to and prevent repeat homelessness?.....	9
5 Effectiveness of Bradford’s services in preventing and responding to repeat homelessness.....	10
6 Recommendations.....	17
6.1 Housing options/advice/prevention services.....	17
6.2 Day services	17
6.3 Services needed to address rough sleeping.....	17
6.4 Supported housing and floating support – provision and access.....	17
6.5 Preventing the loss of supported housing.....	18
6.6 Increasing access to settled housing.....	18
6.7 Reducing loss of settled housing	18
6.8 Improving partnership working.....	18
6.9 Drug and alcohol users.....	19
6.10 Health and social care services	19
6.11 Criminal justice services	19
6.12 Reducing repeat homelessness through actions to addressing worklessness	19
6.13 Recording and tracking.....	19
7 Next steps.....	20

This summary reports the key findings and recommendations from research into repeat homelessness in Bradford, commissioned from HQN by the City of Bradford, working with Incommunities and voluntary sector partners, as part of the Bradford Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme.

1 The experience of repeat homelessness in Bradford

Summaries of service users' experiences of repeat homelessness:

'If only I'd found someone to guide me into the right services, my housing problems would have ended years ago, saving me years of trouble and saving the government thousands of pounds on expensive supported housing.' (Ex-drug user, aged 32, in 2nd stage supported housing)

'I don't like going to hostels – I only go there if I'm stuck. I've been homeless since I was 15, and since then I've been on the streets, or in hostels, or Nightstop, because of violence and my partner's anti-social behaviour. People with no family to fall back on deserve the beds more, but sometimes the wrong people are given the places.' (Young woman aged 26-40 from drug project, now in own house)

'I've been homeless since I was 13 because of my heroin use, and I've been homeless many times since, because my partner, also a drug user, was violent and kept finding me. When I tried to find somewhere to stay, there was nowhere in Keighley so I slept on the streets. I've had to stay with friends who were still using drugs even when I'd stopped. If I'd got the help I am getting now, I wouldn't have got into the worst positions. I thought the streets were going to be my life. But I've got my own place now.' (Woman, aged between 26 and 40)

'We need honesty from the authorities: I know of ten people sleeping in a single room, and two couples on the streets. I've been homeless for seven years, not had anywhere permanent since living with my wife.' (Man sleeping rough, aged over 40)

'I was moved to an area where there was anti-social behaviour, racism and drug or alcohol problems, but when I went back to the hostel, I was treated as having failed, though I didn't think I had enough support to help me in my tenancy. Tenancy support is crucial, it should be available everywhere.' (Woman staying in a women's refuge)

'I left home because of violence from my husband's parents. But because there were no signs of abuse, I was told to go back. I kept trying to patch it up but it didn't make any difference.' (Young Asian woman under 25 in a women's refuge)

'I would have found it useful to have a 'time-out place' to cool down overnight, perhaps two to three times a week. Mediation is very patronising, and puts parents under pressure which rebounded on me, made things worse, or delayed what would have happened anyway.' (Young person aged under 25 in a hostel)

'When I moved in, I could have done with more money for furniture and decoration. I left because I couldn't stand being in a place which didn't feel like a home. And there

were too many rules about how to behave, like not having a dog – I wanted a dog to make it feel safer and more like a home.’ (Young man aged 19, getting floating support).

2 Key findings

- In commissioning this study, Bradford Council set out to research a topic that had not previously been explored in England; there have been no studies of the causes, scale and solutions for repeat homelessness since a study published in Scotland in 2001
- In Glasgow, repeat homelessness has been greatly reduced through:
 - Services which keep in touch with people even if they move around
 - Providing smaller scale supported accommodation
 - Support services offering help beyond managing a tenancy
 - Getting agencies together to look at how to help people with multiple and complex problems.
- This study has shown that more could be done by the housing options service in Bradford by:
 - Tracking homeless applications and prevention/housing options visits to look at what has led to a person being homeless more than once
 - Working with repeat visitors to and with other agencies involved with them to find ways of preventing this pattern being repeated
 - Keeping in contact with people when their homelessness cannot be resolved immediately
 - Making sure that homelessness, housing options, and prevention services aim to provide long-lasting prevention solutions, for non-priority groups as well as for those in priority groups.
- The study found no evidence that any English council has so far adopted this approach, but found, however, examples of other councils putting in place services specifically intended to reduce repeat homelessness, including specialist housing support, psychological services, befriending, and single access points into supported housing, activities which are intended to prevent a second occurrence of homelessness, so that a pattern of repeat homelessness does not develop
- A number of key changes were being put in place at the time when the study was carried out; these changes are expected to make a big difference to the way that homelessness and other housing problems are resolved in Bradford, and to reduce repeat homelessness; there were also examples found in the city of good practice in activities and services which help to prevent and respond to homelessness.
- Repeat homelessness is known to be difficult to define and to measure, but it has proved possible to find out how many people in Bradford have become homeless more than once, or have asked for help on more than once occasion to prevent them losing their homes
- Only 11 households were accepted as homeless twice within the last two years, using the Communities and Local Government (CLG) definition of repeat

homelessness, but this significantly underplays the scale of the problem and the workload that comes from repeat incidents. In the last two years:

- 362 decisions were made in respect of 169 households making homeless applications in Bradford – more than two decisions per household
- 339 households made contact on 706 occasions seeking help to prevent homelessness.
- The picture is clouded by the fact that some people made more than one presentation within days of a case being closed, though their circumstances had not changed; more significantly, the study showed that many people come back for help more than once because their initial problem has not been resolved with a long-lasting solution, although others may become homeless more than once in unconnected incidents
- A snapshot survey carried out as part of this study found 400 people in Bradford who had been homeless more than once (but had not necessarily sought help from the housing advice service), of whom at least 300 had been homeless more than once in the last two years, and some had been affected by multiple experiences of losing either a temporary or settled home, up to as many as 20 times
- The Scottish study showed that repeat homelessness is most likely to be a problem for single people, who seek help on several occasions, separated by relatively short intervals, as part of a continued period of homelessness combined with stays in hostels and private rented accommodation
- The main groups affected by repeat homelessness in Bradford are:
 - Women who have been subject to domestic abuse/violence, and women escaping forced marriages
 - Single people with drug or alcohol problems
 - Young people who have been abused or who have been in care
 - Families with multiple problems
 - People with long-term mental health problems
 - People involved in the sex industry.
- Service users identified the main causes of people not being able to resolve their housing problems easily as:
 - Not being able to get into the right supported housing in the right part of the district, leading to people moving or losing that accommodation
 - Debt and other financial problems
 - Loss of tenancies, for people without the skills to manage their home
 - Losing private tenancies, often because the tenancy ended
 - Not being able to get the help needed from a housing advice service to resolve their housing problem fully.

3 Introduction – background to the research and how it was carried out

Repeat homelessness is defined by CLG as more than one case of homelessness for the same person or family within two years, where the council has a legal duty to find housing for them. Using this definition, Bradford has a relatively low level of repeat homelessness (11 cases in two years) but the number of people coming into its housing advice service on repeated occasions was noticed as being much higher than this. Repeated patterns of homelessness mean that staff can spend time helping to solve someone's problems, or preventing homelessness, only for them to come back again with the same or another problem.

The Council and its housing advice and homelessness agent, Incommunities, wanted to find out what could be done to reduce the number of people who experience homelessness or seek advice on this on repeated occasions. The research was commissioned as part of the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer work programme, a programme which is aimed at generally reducing homelessness, and providing more options to help people to get into and keep long-term housing.

The key questions which the Council and Incommunities wanted to answer were:

- What has already been learnt about repeat homelessness and how is repeat homelessness addressed elsewhere?
- What is the scale of repeat homelessness in Bradford?
- What are the main causes of repeat homelessness, and which groups of people are affected most and why?
- Which resources and services currently respond to and prevent repeat homelessness?
- How can services be improved or re-designed to reduce the chances of people becoming homeless more than once?
- How can agencies work together more effectively to reduce and prevent repeat homelessness?
- How can repeat homelessness be best recorded and tracked in future, so that we can see if our policies have worked?

There were seven parts to the research study:

- Analysing the figures about homelessness and prevention case work carried out by Incommunities' housing advice service, and figures showing how supported housing services are used
- Reading other research reports and looking for examples of good practice in tackling repeat homelessness
- Reading through Bradford documents to understand what is happening already
- Reading housing advice service case notes to understand the picture for some individuals in more depth

- Carrying out a snapshot survey: collecting numbers, mapping services, identifying issues – an electronic survey which attracted responses from 26 organisations
- Asking service users for their views and experiences: five people who had experience of homelessness were trained as peer researchers and, with two consultants, carried out 14 individual or group sessions, involving around 70 people in total
- Asking staff from a range of organisations for their views, through four workshops for staff, attended by 49 people, and interviews with individuals or groups from 25 key organisations.

The researchers would like to thank all those who took part in the study, and in particular the five peer researchers and the 70 people who agreed to share their experiences and views about how to improve the situation in Bradford.

The full report of this study can be downloaded from Bradford Council's website: www.bradford.gov.uk

4 The research findings – answering the key questions

4.1 How is repeat homelessness addressed elsewhere?

The main experience of bringing about a successful decrease in repeat homelessness comes from Glasgow, where this success, mainly in reducing single homelessness, has been attributed to actions to:

- Keep in contact with people when they first present as homeless, closing cases only when it is clear that some change has resulted from the input of homelessness services, and having specialist staff to deal with some groups such as young people
- Provide smaller and more specialist temporary and supported housing which sustains people until they can move on to more independent housing (*"It's like putting a person who has an eating problem into a bakery"* – a quote from a consultee about why the re-provision programme was needed)
- Provide floating support which stays with people regardless of where they move to
- Develop innovative solutions for those with the most complex needs through a case management and review system at a senior level.

The literature review also identified that the greatest danger points for new tenants come after six months and after 15 months, and that tenancy sustainment works best to prevent repeat homelessness when provided as an all-round service which can look at other problems as the tenant wishes, and not just housing-related issues.

A number of other authorities planned to take innovative actions in their 2008 homelessness strategies. They aim to reduce repeat homelessness by introducing services such as:

- Tenancy liaison officers

- Befriending and peer support
- Activities which help to engage homeless people in taking the steps towards employment, and to address their health and addiction problems.

Another local authority (LA) has developed a homeless psychology service and a website which accompanies training on addressing the emotional and psychological problems that can prevent people from resettling and become a cause of repeat homelessness.

The third pioneering approach being developed to help reduce repeat homelessness by a number of LAs is using recording systems which allow them to show where there are vacancies in supported housing, and to analyse who moves in and out of supported housing. Several of these gateway schemes are in place (for example, in Ealing, Nottingham, and Bristol), and it is thought to have been a successful approach, but in at least one of those places the scheme is being extended in order to track repeat homelessness more effectively.

Other important steps to reducing repeat homelessness identified by many LAs are:

- The provision of floating support, including specialist, generic, and tenure-neutral services
- Prevention protocols for specific groups including people leaving hospital, prison, and care
- Protocols around tenancy loss issues for preventing homelessness amongst vulnerable social housing tenants
- Activities aimed at reducing evictions from supported housing
- Move-on work which increases flows and pathways through supported housing, so increasing the availability of space for others
- Pre-tenancy training
- Training, advice and other initiatives to help to reduce the likelihood of debt occurring or of debts weakening the chances of tenancies being sustained.

4.2 What is the scale of repeat homelessness in Bradford?

Homeless and homelessness prevention work in Housing Advice Service:

- There is a comparatively high ratio of decisions to acceptances in Bradford, compared to most authorities with similar characteristics
- The previous structure of the advice teams with a split between advice and homelessness assessment functions meant that people were offered prevention advice were then passed on to another member of staff for a homeless assessment. The majority were viewed as not homeless, not in priority need, or were intentionally homeless, or contact was lost with the customer
- Bradford has relatively recently (compared to others across the country) changed its advice approach to focus on homelessness prevention or avoidance and this is still bedding in. This is likely to account for the downward trend in repeat prevention

contacts. However, this approach has not been fully accepted amongst other partner agencies, and there is evidence of some tension between agencies as a result, and as a result decision-makers in the Housing Advice Service have reported that they have often felt pushed by outside organisations to carry out a homeless assessment, rather than take actions aimed at preventing homelessness, and this may go some way to explain why more decisions were made in Bradford compared to acceptances than in similar authority areas

- It also appears that some of the work done with customers has been housing advice, rather than prevention activity that might have resulted in long-lasting homelessness prevention
- 169 individual households had more than one homelessness application during the two-year period 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2009, amounting to a total of 362 decisions, out of a grand total of 2,866 decisions
- Of those, 31 people were accepted as homeless at their first application, and 11 people were accepted as homeless twice within the two-year period
- The majority of first homeless assessments in respect of people who made a later homeless application resulted initially in a 'not homeless' decision. Records indicate that a significant number of individuals received 'not homeless' decisions more than once. In some cases, there appeared to be no change of circumstances to merit a second application or decision, and some customers waited only a few days between receiving a negative decision and re-applying for homelessness assistance. In other cases, a second decision was relevant because circumstances had changed, or new information had come to light, perhaps as a result of communication from an advocate
- 339 individuals had more than one preventative intervention recorded, accounting for 706 contacts altogether. During that period there is a gradual fall in the number of repeat prevention interventions, which implies that more people are having their issues resolved at their first contact.

Using supported housing – Client Record Form analysis:

- 138 people had more than one entry into supported housing over the two years. Other than those coming from care, the largest group were single homeless people including rough sleepers, and occupiers of bed and breakfast and direct hostels.

The snapshot survey of repeat homelessness:

- The snapshot survey identified 400 people currently in contact with agencies who have been homeless more than once and most recently within the last two years. Most of the 400 people in the survey had become homeless at least twice within the last two years, as opposed to longer intervals between homelessness occurrences
- Some individuals had been homeless far more than twice – 85 people had been homeless four times or more, and ten had been homeless ten times or more
- Of the 70 service users interviewed for the research, 13 people said they had been homeless on many occasions, and of these, three had been homeless more than 15 times, and three more than 20 times
- Not everyone sought help through the Housing Advice Service:

- A quarter of the 400 people had not made a homeless presentation within the last two years
- A quarter (135 people) were thought to have made more than one homeless application despite being homeless more than once.

4.3 *What are the main causes of repeat homelessness and which groups of people are most affected by repeat homeless?*

- The most common causes of the first instance of homelessness is being asked to leave by parents, violent relationship breakdown, and loss of a home with a friend
- Behaviour related to drug and alcohol problems is the most significant cause of a later loss of accommodation, as well as being the main barrier to getting or sustaining accommodation
- Other significant barriers to resolving the housing problem are:
 - Exclusion from social housing for rent arrears
 - Not being thought able to manage a tenancy
 - A criminal record
 - Being too young to hold a tenancy.
- Service users identified several factors which led to them not being able to resolve housing problems, such as:
 - Not being able to get into the right supported housing in the right part of the district, leading to people moving or losing that accommodation
 - Debt and other financial problems
 - Loss of tenancies, for people without the skills to manage their home
 - Losing private tenancies, often because the tenancy ended
 - Not being able to get the help needed from a housing advice /options/prevention service
 - Not having enough to do, to keep out of risky behaviour.
- In all parts of the study, the prime age range for experiencing repeat homeless is the 26-40 age band; there was a small group of young people who first became homeless when aged under 16, who were still homeless in their later teens or even in their 20s
- The largest group of people reported in the survey as being affected by repeated homelessness events is those with drug and alcohol problems, representing 61% of the total
- Other significant groups are young vulnerable people, particularly those involved with the care system, families including women experiencing domestic abuse, people with mental health needs, and people involved in sex work
- People from black and minority ethnic groups are over-represented amongst repeat presenters, compared to the general population in Bradford.

4.4 Which resources and services currently respond to and prevent repeat homelessness?

A large range of agencies, services and initiatives contribute to addressing and preventing repeat homelessness in Bradford, and a series of developments being progressed under the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme is expected to have a major impact on the problem of repeat homelessness.

Despite the existence of a recent and well-produced directory of homelessness services, there is still evidence of considerable confusion amongst outside agencies and service users about what is available and who does what. There is as yet no list of initiatives aimed at preventing homelessness which is available to agencies which might be referring customers who need these services.

5 Effectiveness of Bradford’s services in preventing and responding to repeat homelessness

The following table shows the criteria for an effective service preventing repeat homelessness. A traffic light rating system in place against these criteria highlights some of the priorities for action in Bradford.

Table 1

Criteria		How existing services/systems measure up
1 Housing options service		
1(a)	Works with clients from first enquiry to identify triggers for homelessness, and find solutions and support that prevent these problems from becoming a cause for repeated home loss, and provides prevention intervention designed to meet needs of all households – priority and non-priority	This would be a new approach
1(b)	Immediately identifies whether the person has been in previous contact with the service	Currently being done in some cases but not all
1(c)	Assesses whether the potential or actual homelessness is the result of a different factor to a prior occasion, and if this homelessness has the same root as the previous occasion, assesses whether the action taken or advice given has been ineffectual and why, to inform future actions	This would be a new approach
1(d)	Endeavours to involve other agencies for people who have been homeless two or more times, to seek ideas about interventions which might break the cycle	This would be a new approach

Criteria	How existing services/systems measure up
1(e) Works with all housing providers and lenders to build activities designed to prevent owners, tenants and licensees losing their homes where possible	Needs more work in relation to private tenants, building a protocol with all social landlords, and more work on preventing loss of homes for non-priority households in supported housing
1(f) Works with providers of institutions to aim for planned and seamless moves into other accommodation for all service users	More work needed in relation to hospital discharges, prison release, and finding sustainable accommodation for young people leaving care
1(g) Helps all homeless people to find accommodation, ideally before loss of home occurs but at the latest, on the day they become homeless	More work needed on identifying options earlier, and arranging for accommodation to be available on the day that it is needed
1(h) Helps find alternative solutions for those for whom there is no duty because they are considered intentionally homeless	This may be achieved, but is dependent on whether accommodation in a particular scheme is available
2 Housing advice or day service	
2(a) Endeavours to find out why any advice given or action taken previously has not led to the resolution of the housing problem	This would be part of a new approach
2(b) Seeks to involve other services, such as floating support, where the person does not appear to have the means to resolve their housing problem themselves	Approach needs to be broadened to include all those with complex needs and people who have experienced repeat homelessness
3 Supported housing	
3(a) Minimises voids through efficient and timely responses to referrals, including referrals for applicants about to leave an institution	More work done to ensure that beds are available when people leave institutions without having to wait for an assessment, or for a bed to become available, where there has been some notice given

Criteria		How existing services/systems measure up
3(b)	Prevents unplanned moves and evictions, through positive interventions with anyone at risk of losing their placement, and through joint work with commissioners and other providers to ensure the most appropriate placement	Work has started on this but needs to be progressed
3(c)	Ensures that service users who move to more independent housing are prepared and ready for the move, and able to sustain their tenancy	The Tenancy Ready Framework and pre-tenancy training initiative will meet this criterion
3(d)	Ensures that outreach support settles the client into their new home – or arranges this from another support provider	May be more work needed to ensure that resettlement and outreach services are available and arranged for all those in need
3(e)	Identifies people who re-enter their services and why this has occurred, and reviews the support plan in the light of this information and adjusts the work being done with the individual to try to break the cycle	This would form part of a new approach
3(f)	Systematically passes information about patterns of referrals which they cannot respond to, to commissioners of services	This would form part of a new approach
3(g)	Works with a range of specialist agencies to respond to identified needs and risks so that the client receives holistic support that addresses all of their needs, and is helped to move towards independence, and active involvement in their community, and in employment where appropriate	Risk assessment and management processes need to be reviewed and improved, and there is more to do to engage providers in the work to tackle poor health and worklessness.

Criteria		How existing services/systems measure up
4 Criminal justice services, drug treatment services, social care services, health services		
4(a)	Acts to resolve housing problems as soon as these occur or become apparent, through referral to internal or external expertise to resolve the problem, where necessary	Many agencies already do this but further work is needed to make sure it is a standard approach, and more input is required from housing services to resolve problems more quickly
4(b)	Works in concert with other agencies to resolve an individual's housing and related problems	More joint work could help to resolve problems more quickly
4(c)	Shares information across agencies, through use of informed consent and information-sharing agreements where necessary	Effective information sharing is not yet universal
5 Commissioning agencies		
5(a)	Commissions services in such a way as to ensure it is clear which service is appropriate for which clients and to meet which needs	A little more information about which group is catered for, and which are not, could help to reduce inappropriate referrals and loss of accommodation
5(b)	Ensures that there are services available to identify and work with people coming onto the streets	The needs for street outreach services has been identified but these services are not yet in place
5(c)	Builds systems to ensure that emergency and other supported accommodation is available at the point when it is needed	Linked with 1 (g). This would ensure that systems for accessing accommodation to be in place

Criteria		How existing services/systems measure up
5(d)	Ensures that exclusions and evictions from all types of housing provision services are minimised, by monitoring data and scrutinising individual examples and by encouraging services to work together to enhance access and prevent homelessness, and to assess risks appropriately	This work has started but needs to be progressed
5(e)	Builds systems which allow gaps in service to be identified (by referrers, providers of services, or by service users or their advocates/representatives) and acted upon in a timely manner	(Not clear whether this is in hand or not)
5(f)	Identifies how gaps can be filled through amending existing services or procuring new services	Supporting People are currently carrying out reviews of all provision by sector
5(g)	Ensures that all agencies have appropriate recording systems which help to show trends and effects of new policies and systems	This would form part of a new approach, and would entail further work
6 The whole system		
6(a)	Brings agencies together so as to capitalise on the experience, energies, ideas, and resources of all agencies working to address and prevent homelessness in the area, and makes best use of the time people have available to resolve housing problems	More work is needed to make the best use of the resources of all agencies and to work in a more joined-up way

Criteria		How existing services/systems measure up
6(b)	Allows agencies to freely identify problems and gaps, to volunteer to work with others to address problems, and to feel that their voice, experience, and contribution is listened to and respected	The tensions between the voluntary and statutory sectors, and between agencies within the sectors, need to be addressed
6(c)	Respects the experience and contribution of service users, and responds to issues raised by them, particularly where these contribute to repeat homelessness	The infrastructure for involving service users is well-developed in Bradford. A further small step will enable service users to see what difference their contribution has made to the homelessness system and provision, particularly in relation to reducing rough sleeping, addressing the needs of sex workers and homeless families who are repeatedly homeless, and young people
6(d)	Enables real-time problems to be discussed and real-time solutions found to prevent and address repeat homelessness	Systems need to be developed to allow agencies to bring current unresolved cases to be discussed in a forum that can help to find the most appropriate solutions
6(e)	Builds strategies which aim to prevent homelessness for all, including ways of addressing the health, care, and employment needs of people who might be at risk of homelessness	There is a robust and widely available homelessness strategy, together with an active and broadly-based group overseeing and leading its implementation
6(f)	Identifies realistic programmes of action for resolving issues in the short, medium and long term, and identifies appropriate agencies to work towards completing the actions needed	As above
6(g)	Considers what can be learnt from research carried out locally or elsewhere	The City Council and its partners have sought to learn about the best ways of tackling and preventing repeat homelessness from other research

Criteria		How existing services/systems measure up
6(h)	Develops a programme of training and ensures that staff from all relevant agencies have access to appropriate training to help them to resolve and prevent homelessness	There is training available on housing and homelessness issues but there is a need for a more systematic approach to ensuring that agencies whose clients may become homeless are aware of services which can help to prevent homelessness, and how best to access them and to work alongside them

6 Recommendations: how can services be improved or re-designed to reduce the incidence of repeat homelessness? In what way does partnership working need to be improved, if repeat homelessness is to be reduced and prevented? How can repeat homelessness be best recorded and tracked in future?

6.1 Housing options/advice/prevention services

- 1 Develop an out-of-hours service for homeless households not in priority need.
- 2 Provide a greater degree of help for households found to be intentionally homeless.
- 3 Support staff to provide a service which responds to and looks for ways to help all customers to resolve their housing problems in a way that is sensitive to their needs, and helps them to aspire to and obtain long-lasting solutions.
- 4 Develop a system for ensuring that contact is kept with enquirers, wherever possible, until the housing problem has been resolved.
- 5 Ensure there is more help for offenders and drug/alcohol users to resolve their housing problems in good time.
- 6 Develop prevention work and information for private tenants threatened with harassment or illegal eviction.

6.2 Day services

- 7 Build links with churches and others offering services to homeless people.
- 8 Address potential overlaps in services.

6.3 Services needed to address rough sleeping

- 9 Develop a street outreach team to make contact with rough sleepers across all the main towns in Bradford City's area.
- 10 Make contact with rough sleepers to identify where people are sleeping rough.
- 11 Develop a case management system for problem-solving for all individuals identified as sleeping rough across the city.
- 12 Develop a pool of a small number of emergency beds shared between several agencies.

6.4 Supported housing and floating support – provision and access

- 13 Create a single point of contact into supported housing for homeless groups, to ensure that those in most need are able to access the most appropriate supported housing provision, and reduce the time spent by other agencies in trying to find accommodation.
- 14 Publicise in one single document the services which aim to help people to get access to supported housing and floating support, and develop a virtual team.

- 15 Review risk assessment policies of supported housing providers, to ensure that people are not refused places in supported housing because of long-past behaviour or minimal risk of problems from their current behaviour.
- 16 Develop a support service which maintains contact with the most chaotic group of homeless people.
- 17 Develop additional supported housing schemes for chaotic households.

6.5 Preventing the loss of supported housing

- 18 Develop a gate scheme to meet people leaving local prisons and escort them to temporary accommodation.
- 19 Consider the key messages coming from national research and examples of good practice in reducing the loss of supported housing.

6.6 Increasing access to settled housing

- 20 Talk to social landlords about their allocation policies and practices, and develop a system for monitoring outcomes of their policies and practices.
- 21 Develop lists of approved/accredited landlords, alongside provision of floating support.
- 22 Provide furniture packs with cookers and other essential items.
- 23 Further publicise the vulnerability definition for Local Housing Allowance and how it should be used.

6.7 Reducing loss of settled housing

- 24 Develop an early warning system and a protocol for all social landlords which identifies in good time people at risk of losing their tenancy and prevents evictions.
- 25 Identify need for and develop additional floating support.
- 26 Renew efforts to work with landlords to establish a private landlord forum and accreditation scheme, to improve standards of management and reduce the loss of private tenancies.

6.8 Improving partnership working

- 27 Widen the use of the Common Assessment Framework to help with better information sharing and joint problem solving.
- 28 Address tensions between the statutory and voluntary sector, and develop training programmes aimed at ensuring that there is better joint understanding of each agency's aims and way of working.

6.9 Drug and alcohol users

- 29 Review the operational protocol for drugs and housing.
- 30 Promote expectation that all drug and alcohol treatment providers actively help to address housing difficulties.

6.10 Health and social care services

- 31 Develop better connections and interfaces between mental health and other social care providers, and the housing and homelessness sector, and revive the multi-agency panel for resolving complex cases.
- 32 Improve dialogue between Probation and mental health services.

6.11 Criminal justice services

- 33 Develop a way of helping people who have been in prison (and others) to recover identification papers.
- 34 Ensure that information flows effectively between partnership/strategic level staff and frontline staff.
- 35 Make use of the Total Place development to engage prison service in earlier identification of housing problems and work to retain tenancies at start of sentences.

6.12 Reducing repeat homelessness through actions to addressing worklessness

- 36 Develop a programme of meaningful activities which all supported housing providers and treatment agencies can refer into.

6.13 Recording and tracking

6.13.1 Housing advice/option service

- 37 Exploring the use of the same case recording database for both prevention and homelessness cases.
- 38 Provide further training to ensure that they look up each customer by date of birth before recording or dealing with any enquiry.

6.13.2 Other services

- 39 Consider adopting a system which allows all agencies working with homeless people to record their involvement and to see who else is working with the person and what is being done to help them, and where they are accommodated.

7 Next steps

This report will influence the work of the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer, the Supporting People Commissioning Body, the Drug Systems Change pilot and Total Place planning work. The Trailblazer Project Management Board will agree an action plan, based on the priorities drawn from the recommendations set out above. The findings are to be widely circulated amongst partner agencies including key strategic public sector and third sector agencies, and relevant service user groups. It is also suggested that the findings be presented to a national audience through conference workshops and articles in national journals.

HQN is the largest independent housing training and consultancy company in the UK. Over 750 housing organisations nationwide subscribe to The Housing Quality Network which provides high quality briefings and workshops on a wide range of issues affecting the sector. We also run a number of specialist networks, provide bespoke consultancy and research, in-house training, interim management (The Pool) and executive recruitment (The Source) services and host a comprehensive programme of conferences and seminars.

For further information, please contact:

The Housing Quality Network: Claire Turner – claire@hqnetwork.co.uk

Specialist networks: networks@hqnetwork.co.uk

Consultancy: consultancy@hqnetwork.co.uk

Events: events@hqnetwork.co.uk

Training and Development Services: Steve Palmer – steve.palmer@hqnetwork.co.uk

The Pool: Ruth Leap – ruth@hqnetwork.co.uk

The Source: David Ganz – dave@hqnetwork.co.uk

Or call us on 0845 47 47 004 or visit: www.hqnetwork.co.uk