

Aberdeenshire Council
Homelessness Strategy
2003 - 2006

Foreword

I am delighted to present Aberdeenshire Council's first Homelessness Strategy covering the period 2003 to 2006. The document was prepared in consultation with a wide range of partners many of whom were represented on the Homelessness Strategy Group established to jointly produce this Strategy.

Homelessness and the problems associated with it are a major concern for the Council. In recent years our housing offices throughout Aberdeenshire deal with around 1200 homeless or potentially homeless cases annually. But homelessness is not just a housing problem. Homeless persons will often have support needs, health needs and employment, training and educational needs which can only be addressed by partnership working.



Our Strategy highlights the need for the Council to tackle homelessness corporately not just through our Housing & Social Work Service. The Council cannot work alone however and we therefore look forward to continuing our work with other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations if we are to take forward the Homelessness Task Forces recommendations and the key changes to be brought about by the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. Together we can continue to develop this Strategy.

A lot of work has already been done to improve services. In the last 12 months we have opened a purpose built supported accommodation scheme in Inverurie. In Peterhead we now have a facility providing supported accommodation for young homeless persons. More temporary accommodation is planned as we seek to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation especially for families.

Providing support is critical and I am particularly pleased to see the projects we have developed with Barnardos and Aberdeen Foyer for young persons and the Rent Guarantee Scheme provided through Aberdeen Cyrenians. We are exploring projects specifically where accommodation is linked to support for those homeless persons who also have drug and alcohol or other significant issue in their lives. Working with the Salvation Army and Turning Point suitable projects could be developed.

More needs to be done especially in developing support and improving preventative measures to stop homelessness occurring in the first place. I thank the members of the Homelessness Strategy Group for their work to date and look forward to the new Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network putting into action and developing this demanding agenda.

Chief Executive
Aberdeenshire Council

Endorsement

The under-noted organisations have been pleased to participate in the development of this strategy and endorse its recommendations and look forward to working jointly with partner organisations in its implementation.

In addition to the above general endorsement each organisation was invited to provide a statement as to how it saw its role in relation to the implementation and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy. The statements that were received are show below.

Organisation

Aberdeen Cyrenians - *Aberdeen Cyrenians is a voluntary organisation that opens doors for homeless people by alleviating homelessness through the provision of accommodation and support services and by raising awareness of the issues, which lead to and perpetuate homelessness. The organisation has contributed towards and gives full support to Aberdeenshire Homelessness Strategy. We will continue to commit ourselves to work in partnership to achieve the strategy's aims.*

Aberdeen Foyer - *All young people need a home, support and a springboard to independent living, learning and work. Some don't have it. Aberdeen Foyer helps fill the gap.*

Department Of Works and Pensions

Family Mediation Grampian - *Mediation can assist in preventing homelessness. When difficulties between young adults and parents threaten to lead to homelessness, mediation can offer an independent alternative.*

Grampian Womens Aid - *Grampian Women's Aid is an independent charity founded in 1977. Our aims are to provide advice, support and refuge to women and children who have suffered domestic abuse, whether physical, sexual or emotional. There is a worker based in the refuges on a daily basis to provide support to the clients. We will continue to work in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council to achieve the strategy's aims.*

Langstane Housing Association - *Langstane Housing Association is committed to tackling homelessness, particularly among single people. We shall proactively seek agreements with the local authority over allocations to the homeless, and make available accommodation to the local authority for temporary accommodation.*

NHS Grampian - *NHS Grampian is committed to addressing the health needs of the homeless within its evolving partnership working around social inclusion. NHSG officers have collaborated with officers of Aberdeenshire Council and partners to develop a coherent strategy and action plan which we believe will contribute to improving the needs of the homeless. Similarly, we have received consistent commitment from Aberdeenshire officers to the development of the NHSG Action Plan and believe that we now have a more robust planning framework to implement and monitor our joint activity. We look forward to continuing to progress the health and homelessness agenda in partnership, and in particular to developing a stronger local intelligence around health needs assessment.*

Salvation Army - *The Salvation Army is an integral part of the universal Christian Church. By putting faith into action it is engaged in a world-wide programme of practical concern for the needs of humanity. It is at the forefront of tackling social problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, homelessness, domestic violence and loneliness, and its ministry is offered to all regardless of race, colour or creed. The Salvation Army in North Scotland looks forward to working with Aberdeenshire Council as part of its homelessness strategy.*

Shelter - *Everyone should be able to live in a decent and secure home that they can afford, within a socially mixed neighbourhood where people feel safe, can work and fulfil their potential. Shelter aims to provide practical support and innovative solutions for anyone who is*

homeless or who has a housing problem. Therefore Shelter fully supports Aberdeenshire Council's Homelessness Strategy in fulfilling those aims.

Tenants First Housing Co-operative - *Tenants First Housing Cooperative is committed to working in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council to eradicate homelessness. The Coop will pursue this through a variety of means. Firstly by the allocation of houses to homeless people; secondly through acquiring suitable homelessness accommodation (Tenants First has already purchased, adapted and leased a building to the Council for this purpose); and thirdly by developing support services to assist tenants to maintain their tenancies. Tenants First is particularly interested in developing a response in the more rural areas of Aberdeenshire.*

Victim Support - *Victim Support Aberdeenshire will provide support to people, who through no fault of their own, find themselves victims of crime. We provide practical and emotional support as well as practical advice to people who are trying to come to terms with the situation they find themselves in. Although we cannot provide accommodation or financial assistance, we can, through instilling a sense of well-being and self reliance, help people who require our service. We are fully supportive of this strategy.*

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Executive Summary

Background

Under the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 local authorities are required to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

In developing Homelessness Strategies local authorities are required to follow guidelines issued by the Scottish Executive and an "Assessment Framework" produced by Communities Scotland. Furthermore, authorities have also been advised to produce strategies, which take account of the Homelessness Task Forces Final Report. This is the basis of new homelessness legislation in the form of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. The Aberdeenshire Strategy has been written taking due account of these requirements.

A draft of the strategy was submitted to the Scottish Executive (Homelessness Team) and Communities Scotland (Director of Regulation and Inspection) for comment and observation. The feedback received has been incorporated in the final version of the strategy.

Work on implementing and delivering the Strategy commenced on 1 April 2003. Communities Scotland Regulation and Inspection Division will assess the implementation of the strategy in due course.

Homelessness in Aberdeenshire

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires each local authority to carry out an assessment of homelessness in its area. The research carried out by Dr Love of the Robert Gordon University involved a study of service providers and a detailed analysis of the statistical returns to the Scottish Executive on homelessness applications, the HL1 data, for the years 1997 to 2002. In addition a survey of homeless people funded from the Rough Sleepers' Initiative was also carried out in 2001.

The scale and nature of homelessness has changed little over the last five years and the key features are: -

- ◆ between 1,200 and 1,300 households present as homeless each year;
- ◆ single parents and young persons 16-24 are the largest categories representing approximately 33% and 25% of all presentations respectively;
- ◆ single persons households make up 50% of presentations;
- ◆ the commonest reasons for becoming homeless were parents, friends or relatives no longer offering accommodation and dispute with partner at 33% of all applications in each case.

Area Implications

This Strategy is an Aberdeenshire document, which relates to all areas. Although it is acknowledged that homelessness takes different forms in different parts of the (six political areas of the) local authority and 'solutions' to homelessness will reflect area differences.

Policy Implications

This is Aberdeenshire's first full Homelessness Strategy and as such brings the Council's homelessness policies together in one document. It is very much a corporate strategy and integrates with other relevant council strategies and plans. Also, it is a strategy developed with the interest and support of the local authority's strategic partners in the wider community.

Staffing Implications

A Policy Officer has been employed to assist in preparing the Strategy and will be fully involved in its implementation and progress monitoring. Additional officers (3 FTE) will be employed within local housing teams to manage temporary accommodation provision and seek new housing opportunities amongst other duties. The costs of the above posts are being met from the funding granted by the Scottish Executive as detailed in the following section. Increased workloads are forecast as an outcome of the new duties and further additional staffing may be required as a result.

Financial Implications

To deliver the strategy and meet the homelessness provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the requirements of Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 will have significant financial implications. Without additional funding it is anticipated that certain proposals may not be achievable.

The additional financial burden on local authorities has been recognised by the Scottish Executive and the Council has been allocated funding to assist meet the requirements of the legislation as follows: -

- ◆ 2002 / 03 - £445,500
- ◆ 2003 / 04 - £569,500
- ◆ 2004 / 05 - £596,600
- ◆ 2005 / 06 - £596,600

The funding received to date has been used for a variety of projects including development of the Strategy, additional temporary accommodation provision and necessary staffing. Particular emphasis is being placed upon the use of this finance for the prevention of homelessness.

Key Aims and Objectives

The key aims of this strategy are: -

- ◆ To maximise the prevention of homelessness in Aberdeenshire;
- ◆ To ensure that those households and individuals who do become homeless are given the help they need to obtain and sustain a home of their own.

Objectives

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|-------------|--|
| Objective 1 | To work with partner organisations to develop and continuously improve the quality of homelessness services available in Aberdeenshire. |
| Objective 2 | To ensure an integrated Housing Information and Advice service is developed for everyone including homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness. |
| Objective 3 | To develop awareness of homelessness issues through schools and further education establishments. |
| Objective 4 | To seek to provide training programmes to maximise the employment opportunities of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. |
| Objective 5 | To ensure that information, advice and services are available that specifically provides for the needs of vulnerable groups and that good lines of communication exist with the relevant establishments and agencies involved with these groups. |

- Objective 6 To work towards reducing the number of evictions throughout all sectors.
- Objective 7 To seek to ensure that housing management in the social rented sector is geared towards preventing homelessness and making maximum use of the existing stock.
- Objective 8 To seek through the Local Housing Strategy provision of a range of good quality affordable housing for rent, which aims to meet a variety of identified needs.
- Objective 9 To work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations so that no one has to sleep rough in Aberdeenshire by the end of 2003.
- Objective 10 To provide a range of suitable, high quality temporary accommodation throughout Aberdeenshire.
- Objective 11 To seek to provide support for those homeless people with multiple needs who are not ready for independent living or where a strong risk of becoming homeless exists.
- Objective 12 To work towards a full assessment being made of each homeless person's housing and support needs.
- Objective 13 To provide sufficient refuge and other accommodation and support for those individuals and families surviving domestic abuse.
- Objective 14 To work in partnership with NHS Grampian in the development and implementation of the Health and Homelessness Action Plan 2002 -2005 for Aberdeenshire.
- Objective 15 To work with relevant organisations and agencies to assist homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in obtaining adequate furnishings.
- Objective 16 To maximise the support provided through the Supporting People Strategy and available financial resources to the benefit of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.
- Objective 17 To develop and implement a monitoring framework in order to evaluate the Strategy.

1.0 Introduction

Aberdeenshire 's Homelessness Strategy aims to ensure

- ◆ that people are prevented from becoming homeless
- ◆ but, those who do find themselves homeless are given the help they need to obtain and sustain a home of their own.

Homelessness has a significant and adverse affect on people's lives and for society in general. Aberdeenshire Council therefore welcomes and fully endorses the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force's final report¹ and intends to address the issues identified in that report working towards meeting its recommendations.

Aberdeenshire Council's Community Plan² has as its vision "Working together for the best quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire". There is no more devastating an effect on quality of life than homelessness. Sadly over the last few years, more than 1,200 households have presented as homeless to the Council every year. If homelessness is not effectively addressed in Aberdeenshire the Community Plan will have failed.

The Community Plan's principles of inclusion, accountability, participation, communication, evidence-based action and partnership are embedded in the Homelessness Strategy.

The causes of homelessness are more complex than a lack of housing and without appropriate prevention and support services, especially for the more vulnerable, simply providing more housing will not solve the problem. Many homeless households and individuals need support to maintain a tenancy and the offer of accommodation without this support may result in repeated homelessness. An increased provision of a range of quality and affordable accommodation and the associated support services is required if homelessness is to be tackled effectively.

Homeless persons are also likely to have a range of issues relating to health; employment and training which need to be addressed and these are highlighted in this Strategy.

Aberdeenshire Council in recognition that homelessness is not just a housing issue will corporately work in partnership with other organisations to effectively address homelessness in its area. In recognition of this and giving due regard to the Scottish Executive's Guidance on Homelessness Strategies the Chief Executive of Aberdeenshire Council will be the lead officer responsible for delivery of this strategy.

Although recognising various issues exist for homelessness persons the lack of accessible affordable quality accommodation in the right place remains a critical factor. Research³ done to assist in the preparation of the Council's Local Housing Strategy revealed over 6,300 households as being in housing need in 1998, and although not all of these households require to move there are far more households needing housing than there are new housing opportunities arising. Without an increased supply of affordable housing, housing shortages and therefore homelessness in Aberdeenshire will persist. The Council's Local Housing Strategy, of which this Homelessness Strategy forms a part, addresses the issue of the supply of affordable housing. It also tackles making more effective use of the existing stock.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 represent major developments in how homelessness is addressed and sets out a challenging agenda for Local Authorities, their partners and the Scottish Executive. This Strategy outlines how the Council intends to meet these challenges in partnership with other agencies and the community as a whole.

¹ Helping Homeless People: An Action Plan for Prevention and Effective Response

² Aberdeenshire Council, "Community Planning in Aberdeenshire"

³ Fordham Research Ltd (1999) Housing Needs Survey

The new duties introduced by the legislation require some new ways of working and have considerable resource implications in terms of additional temporary accommodation requirements and personnel/staffing. These will be covered in this document.

In many cases homelessness could be prevented with early intervention. Prevention reduces the distress caused by homelessness and can reduce resource needs limiting pressures on accommodation and homelessness services. This Strategy therefore places great importance on preventative measures.

This Strategy describes how homelessness will be addressed in Aberdeenshire. It is a Strategy, which has been developed by the Council acting corporately involving all the relevant Departments and by working jointly with other agencies in the public and voluntary sectors.

1.1 Profile of Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire is a predominantly rural area in the North East of Scotland. Traditionally, it has been economically dependent upon the primary sector (agriculture, fishing, and forestry) and related processing industries. Within the last 30 years, the emergence of the oil and gas industry and the development of the service sector have broadened Aberdeenshire's economic base, leading to population growth.

The traditional industries of agriculture and fishing in particular are experiencing significant problems. The introduction of quotas on the fishing industry is having a devastating impact on the industry and related processing businesses.

The downturn in certain sectors of the local economy is likely to be reflected in increased pressure on social housing and an increase in homelessness in Aberdeenshire. The decline in Aberdeenshire's economy will be localised and it is not possible to determine the scale of its impact at this time. An increase in repossessions due to mortgage default or rent arrears is anticipated with homeless presentations and increased demand for social housing the result.

Aberdeenshire's Areas

Aberdeenshire is a large and very diverse area. In recognition of the diverse characteristics, problems and opportunities of Aberdeenshire the Council provides an increasing range of its services on the basis of six decentralised areas. The areas are Banff and Buchan (pop. 35,914), Buchan (pop. 39,237), Formartine (pop. 36,706), Garioch (pop. 42,377), Marr (pop. 34,002) and Kincardine and Mearns (pop. 38,964). Decentralisation of services provides both value and a challenge and recognizes that the communities and people of Aberdeenshire want their public services provided locally and to be responsive to local needs.

Housing

Aberdeenshire has a total housing stock of approximately 92,000 dwellings, of which 68% are owner occupied, 20% rented from the local authority or housing associations, 7% rented privately and 5% are in other tenures.

Population

Aberdeenshire has a population of 227,200, representing 4.4% of Scotland's total, which shows a 20% increase since 1981. Only 70,000 people reside within the six major towns of Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, Stonehaven, Ellon and Westhill. A further 92,000 live in 54 towns and villages throughout Aberdeenshire which range in size from under 1000 people up to 8500 people and the remaining 65,000 live dispersed throughout the area⁴. The composition of the Aberdeenshire's population is; 6% are pre school age, 15% school age, 63% working age and

⁴ Aberdeenshire Council: Small Area Population Estimates and Forecasts 2002 Update

16% retired. The population has a higher proportion of younger age groups than the rest of Scotland, reflecting recent employment-driven in-migration.

Detailed information on minority ethnic populations within Aberdeenshire is contained in the Council's Race Equality Scheme. This information will be used to inform the provision and development of services to homeless and potentially homeless persons.

The geographical size of Aberdeenshire and the dispersed nature of the majority of its population impacts on the cost of service provision. The Council must take account of these factors in providing a homelessness service that meets the needs of homeless households and those threatened with homelessness.

1.2 Definition of Homelessness

In developing this strategy the definition of Homelessness used is that recommended by the Homelessness Task Force⁵ and contained in the Scottish Executive guidance⁶, which includes:

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- ◆ those persons defined in the current legislation as homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness – i.e. those: -
 - ◆ without any accommodation in which they can live with their families;
 - ◆ who can't gain access to their accommodation or would risk domestic violence by living there;
 - ◆ whose accommodation is "unreasonable"; or is overcrowded and a danger to health
 - ◆ whose accommodation is a caravan or boat and they have nowhere to park it;
- ◆ persons without shelter of any kind;
- ◆ persons living in emergency and temporary accommodation provided for homeless people;
- ◆ persons residing in accommodation which is unsuitable for long-stay accommodation because they have no where else to stay;
- ◆ persons staying in institutions only because they have nowhere else to stay;
- ◆ persons living in insecure accommodation;
- ◆ persons involuntary sharing housing in unreasonable circumstances.

1.3 Consultation

Consultation in the production of the Strategy has taken place with a variety of organisations operating in, or providing a range of services to homeless and potentially homeless persons in Aberdeenshire. This was achieved through a variety of Focus Groups; One to One interviews and surveys.

Unfortunately when it came to listening to the views of homeless people not as much consultation took place as was first intended.

Attempts in the past were made to establish Focus Groups involving persons who were or had been homeless. Despite a Group being formed a very poor turn out was experienced. It is intended however as this Strategy is implemented to try again for greater client involvement.

Work relating to research into Rough Sleeping⁷ did involve direct contact with a number of individuals and past research into rural homelessness where Aberdeenshire was a study area also involved gathering views in this case more of families. Both have been taken account of in this Strategy.

⁵ Helping Homeless People: An Action Plan for Prevention and Effective Response

⁶ Scottish Executive Guidance on Homelessness Strategies March 2002

⁷ Love, J. (2001) *Homelessness in Aberdeenshire* Report prepared for Aberdeenshire Council

As this Strategy is about developing services to address homelessness, on-going comments are always welcome and should be addressed to: -

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Aberdeenshire Council
Housing and Social Work
Gordon House
Blackhall Road
Inverurie
AB51 3WA.

(E-mail: brian.cumming@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

2.0 Strategy Development

The Scottish Executive has issued guidance⁸ on the preparation of Homelessness Strategies, which has been followed in the development of Aberdeenshire's Strategy. This guidance requires the Strategy to take into account: -

- ◆ information gathered as part of the homelessness assessment;
- ◆ current Code of Guidance on Homelessness;
- ◆ changes to legislation which were effected by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- ◆ the second and final report of the Homelessness Task Force (February 2002);
- ◆ the statutory requirement under the 2001 Act that the strategy should state how a local authority is to comply with its equal opportunities duty under section 106;
- ◆ the Health and Homelessness Action Plan prepared by NHS Grampian in consultation with partners;
- ◆ the Scottish Executive target to remove the need for anyone to have to sleep rough by 2003.

The Strategy also takes into account the Homelessness Strategies Assessment Framework set out by Communities Scotland⁹.

2.1 Legislation

Local authorities have significantly enhanced responsibilities with respect to homelessness as a consequence of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. More specifically: -

- ◆ an assessment of Homelessness in its area must be carried out;
- ◆ a strategy for preventing homelessness in its area must be prepared and submitted to the Scottish Executive;
- ◆ an independent homelessness advice and information service should be provided free to anyone who needs it;
- ◆ those who are homeless but not in priority need should be provided with temporary accommodation while their needs are assessed;
- ◆ the period, which defines whether someone is threatened with homelessness, has been extended to 56 days.

Furthermore, the Scottish Executive has accepted the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force's Final Report and legislation to implement these has been enacted in the form of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. The major features of this legislation are as follows: -

- ◆ the elimination of the priority need distinction by stages to 2012;
- ◆ the duty placed on local authorities to investigate intentionality will be replaced by a power to do so;
- ◆ instead of only being under a duty to provide temporary accommodation and advice and assistance to an intentionally homeless household in priority need, the local authority will be placed under a duty to ensure that such a household is offered a short Scottish secure tenancy with appropriate support;
- ◆ the provisions in the 1987 Act which enable one local authority to refer a homeless applicant to another authority (known as "Local Connection") will be suspended (although they may be re-activated in case demand pressures prove intolerable).

⁸ SEDD (2002) Guidance on Homelessness Strategies

⁹ Communities Scotland (2002) Homelessness Strategies Assessment Framework

The implications for Aberdeenshire of these proposals are as follows.

In 2002 there were 299 households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness and not in priority need in Aberdeenshire. These must now be provided with temporary accommodation and represents 23 per cent of the total of homeless presentations during 2002 and as such it will have a substantial impact on the demand for temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire.

With respect to the extension of priority need to all those under 18, Aberdeenshire Council is already meeting this extension of priority need.

The second stage extension of priority need to those under 25 and over 55 by 2007/08 is at present uncertain but would have more significant implications. For those under 25, in 2002 of the 230 assessed as homeless in Aberdeenshire, 168 were assessed as in non-priority need. The figure of 168 represents 13 per cent of the total homeless presentations for 2001/2002. The extension of priority need to the age group 18 to 24 will increase the demand for temporary accommodation and significantly increase the pressure on demand for permanent accommodation within Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Council has assessed only four or five applicants per year as intentionally homeless and is currently interpreting the legislation sensitively. The impact of the proposals on intentionality is thus likely to be minimal.

With respect to the suspension of the local connection there were 114 homeless presentations from out-with Aberdeenshire during 2001/2002 representing 8.8 per cent of the total homeless presentations for the year.

In recognition of the new duties placed upon local authorities through the 2001 Act and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 the Scottish Executive will/has provide/d the Council with grant assistance. The funding awarded from 2002/03 onwards is as follows: -

- 2002/03 - £ 445,500
- 2003/04 - £ 569,500
- 2004/05 - £ 596,600
- 2005/06 - £ 596,600

How that money will be used / has been used is outlined in the relevant sections throughout the document and the appended action plan.

2.2 Corporate Responsibility and Partnership Working

The assessment of homelessness research¹⁰ by Dr. Love found that there was evidence of inter-agency working on a large scale amongst the agencies taking part in the survey. Such links were often extensive and for the most involved working alongside five or more different partners. The nature of the links was a combination of 'formal' and 'informal' arrangements, the former often involving the council (housing) nominations scheme while the latter included information sharing among front-line staff. Please see appendix 1.

The agencies surveyed were asked to identify areas of inter-agency working in need of improvement. The responses called for improvements in three key areas: *strategic planning* (e.g. more regular planning meetings between key players), *common service provision* (e.g. nomination scheme, common assessments, mediation services) *provision of information* (e.g. to homeless applicants, sharing information between agencies, staff training). In addition to these areas a number of agencies identified a need for joint training for staff in order to improve inter-

¹⁰ Love, J. (2003) *Understanding Homelessness in Aberdeenshire: A study of the experience and views of service providers*

agency working. The issues raised by these responses will be addressed through the homelessness strategy objectives and activities identified in the action plan.

Although the extent of inter-agency working is considerable, the need to improve the areas identified and the continuing development of a partnership approach via the Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network is seen as essential to the implementation and ongoing evaluation and review of the strategy.

Aberdeenshire Council's Community Plan stresses partnership working in all the Council's activities. The Council's Corporate Management Plan also stresses partnership to achieve its strategic objectives. These include minimising social exclusion and the creation of a caring community, which supports its more vulnerable members. The Homelessness Strategy incorporates these principles and objectives.

The Homelessness Strategy has been developed corporately and jointly in partnership with a range of agencies concerned with housing provision, services to homeless people and the prevention of homelessness from the statutory, private and voluntary sectors. A Homelessness Strategy Group was established in January 2002 to guide strategy development. This group met on 15 occasions to review strategy development and members of the group contributed to the development and writing of the strategy.

The group considered successive drafts of the strategy and members of the group were also advised that the draft strategy could be accessed on Aberdeenshire Council's website. In addition the final draft of the strategy was circulated to members of the group. At each stage feedback comments were sought from the group.

Membership of the Homelessness Strategy Group included the Council's Housing and Social Work Service, and Planning and Environmental Health Service, Grampian Health Board, the Department for Work and Pensions, Registered Social Landlords, Aberdeen Foyer, Shelter, Aberdeen Cyrenians, Victim Support Aberdeenshire, Grampian Woman Aid and Family Mediation. The Education Service has been consulted on the proposals. In addition a seminar to discuss the Homelessness Strategy was held in December 2002. A full list of those participating in the Strategy Group and the seminar is given in appendix 2.

Homeless people have not been directly consulted in the development of the Strategy, but organisations who provide services for and actively represent the interests and views of homeless people are members of the Strategy Group, notably Aberdeen Foyer, Aberdeen Cyrenians and Shelter. Ways of involving homeless people more directly in the further development of the Strategy will be explored as the Strategy evolves.

Also serving as a member of the Group has been Dr John Love of the Robert Gordon University. Dr Love was commissioned by the Council to assess the scale, nature and causes of homelessness in Aberdeenshire.

In producing the strategy there was consultation with all of the Council's services and with elected members. In addition to the Council's services represented on the Homelessness Strategy Group the draft strategy was circulated to the Corporate Management Team ensuring that all of the Council's services had the opportunity for comment and input. Consultation with elected members involved presenting and discussing the strategy with all political groups and through presentations to each of the Council's six Area Committees. The strategy was also considered and approved by the Social Work and Housing Committee.

Corporate responsibility within the Council for delivery and monitoring of the strategy is reflected in the representatives from relevant Council services on Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network group. Also in recognition that delivering sustainable solutions to homelessness involves providing not only a house but may involve a range of support services from relevant service providers the Chief Executive of Aberdeenshire Council will be the lead officer responsible for delivery of the strategy.

Political involvement and support is essential to the successful implementation of the strategy. In order to engage elected members in strategy implementation and review a detailed annual

report relevant to each area will be presented to respective Area Committees and a full Aberdeenshire wide report will be presented annually to the Social Work and Housing Committee.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of the strategy will be through the Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network group, which will meet on a quarterly basis, and is comprised of partner organisations and agencies from the statutory, private and voluntary sectors. A full list of membership is detailed in appendix 3. Monitoring of the strategy is also dealt with in paragraph 4.10.

In addition there will be a consultation group comprised of representatives from a number of organisations that have indicated that they do not wish to be full members of Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network group at this time but wish be kept informed of progress and are willing to be co-opted onto the network group to discuss and input to services and developments directly related to their specialisms.

Partnership Working and Provision of Support

As acknowledged previously the strategy recognises that provision of appropriate support is essential to many homeless people to enable them to sustain a home of their own. The research (Love, 2003) looked at the types of services provided by agencies in Aberdeenshire. Most reported services provided by agencies were those covered by the following headings: - support and care, strategy, accommodation, advice and information and referral. Please refer to appendix 4.

In assessing homelessness applicants the Council will identify the range of support services required to assist homeless applicants sustain a home of their own and will work with partner agencies in delivering appropriate support provision.

The provision of support services to homelessness applicants is addressed in paragraph 4.8 and throughout the strategy.

2.3 Integration with Other Strategies

The Council has prepared or is in the process of preparing other strategies, which are linked to and will affect the success of the Homelessness Strategy. These are described below and the specific links with the Homelessness Strategy are identified.

Community Plan

The vision within the Community Plan is one of “working together for the best quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire.” It seeks to achieve this through 4 main themes: -

- ◆ Community Well Being;
- ◆ Jobs and the Economy;
- ◆ Learning;
- ◆ A Sustainable Environment.

The Homelessness Strategy has a significant contribution to make in the achievement of all four of these main themes through feeding into the joint planning process which provides the overarching strategic focus for future service delivery.

Local Housing Strategy

The overarching housing planning for Aberdeenshire is provided by the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The basic aim of the LHS is "To work in partnership to provide the best quality of housing services for everyone in Aberdeenshire". The Homelessness Strategy fits within this basic aim.

The LHS has specific objectives related to homelessness: -

"To clearly identify the extent and nature of housing need and prioritize/enable new affordable housing provision accordingly over the next 5 years"

"To demonstrably reduce the extent of housing need by 2007 by making more effective use of the housing stock in Aberdeenshire"

"To develop a package of high quality information by April 2004 to assist households seeking any tenure or type of housing".

These objectives assist in addressing homelessness by increasing the stock of affordable housing, making more effective use of the existing stock, and providing information and advice. They do not address issues of housing support, which are addressed in the Homelessness Strategy itself and in the Supporting People Strategy.

Supporting People

The Council is currently preparing its Supporting People Strategy and preparation of the single budget is well advanced. The implementation of Supporting People will result in a more integrated framework for planning the future needs of people requiring housing support, whilst streamlining how supported housing services are financed.

The vision of the Supporting People Strategy is "Working in partnership to provide the best quality housing support for all client groups throughout Aberdeenshire". The Homelessness Strategy aims and objectives are linked to the Supporting People initiative and what can be achieved will be within the framework and constraints of the Supporting People budget.

Aberdeenshire Council Rough Sleeping Initiative Local Outcome Agreement (LOA)

The LOA reflects the aim of the Scottish Executive that by 2003 no one should have to sleep rough. Research commissioned by the Council has revealed no real change in the extent and nature of rough sleeping in Aberdeenshire since the Council's original bid for RSI funding in January 2000. Whilst sleeping rough is infrequent and short term, there continues to be a small number of people who are at risk of sleeping rough or have no permanent accommodation. Aberdeenshire Council will continue to support and develop the projects currently supported by RSI funding.

The Council will seek to improve its communication and information links with Grampian Police regarding rough sleepers and to develop a protocol for referring rough sleepers to the Council in order that their housing and support needs can be addressed.

Domestic Abuse Strategy

Aberdeenshire's Domestic Abuse Strategy encompasses the housing and support needs of those surviving domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is one of the primary causes of homelessness of women and children and their needs are an important consideration in the Homelessness Strategy. The Domestic Abuse Strategy includes the following aims and objectives: -

- ◆ to monitor the provision of temporary accommodation and provide appropriate housing including settled accommodation to those made homeless because of abuse or the threat of domestic abuse;
- ◆ to undertake a review of refuge places including the need for refuge services in south Aberdeenshire;
- ◆ to review the current situation re the provision of refuge and other services to meet the needs of women who may not currently have access to provision e.g. drug users etc.

These have been taken into account in the Homelessness Strategy.

NHS Grampian Health and Homelessness Action Plan

Aberdeenshire homelessness health issues reflect the national picture with high levels of ill health of a limiting nature being experienced such as asthma, heart disease and back problems and with respect to mental health problems such conditions as alcoholism, drug problems and depression. The links between health and homelessness are complex and two way; homelessness can lead to ill health and ill health can itself be a contributory factor in homelessness. Homeless people also have more difficulties in accessing and maintaining contact with health services, especially GPs and preventative health care.

The Council will explore, with NHS Grampian, the opportunities for further research to build on the research into health and homelessness¹¹ commissioned by the Council as part of the Rough Sleepers Initiative in order to develop a more detailed picture of the health needs of homelessness people in Aberdeenshire

NHS Grampian is preparing a draft Health and Homeless Action Plan, which will integrate with the three constituent Councils' Homelessness Strategies. This is not only at the simple level of the Homelessness Strategy offering guidance to the Action Plan on the extent and nature of homelessness in Aberdeenshire, but also at the more challenging level of service integration and a recognition of the interconnections between health, well being and housing conditions. Aberdeenshire Council supports this objective and will work closely with NHS Grampian in the development and implementation of the Health and Homelessness Action Plan. A key component of the work of the Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network group will be to explore further the health needs of homeless persons and provision of appropriate services.

The evolving planning framework (appendix 6) illustrates how these connections are being strengthened. This process has also strengthened the joint links between the Council, NHS Grampian and the Senior Clinical Medical Officer who assesses housing need on medical grounds of homeless applications referred by Aberdeenshire Council. The Senior Clinical Medical Officer will allocate medical points based on guidelines and may also make recommendations if there are specific housing and / or support needs. Together, we are now developing a simple database, which will capture key characteristics of this group and provide helpful data to add to our joint intelligence around this population.

Also NHS Grampian has integrated Aberdeenshire's Homelessness Strategy with the Joint Health Improvement Plan 2003 –2005. The plan addresses Community Health within the Community Planning framework.

Joint Community Care Plan

The Joint Community Care Plan identifies what the agencies providing community care plan to do over a three-year period. The aim of community care services is to provide services to people who need care and support to enable them to live in the community.

The plan identifies a number of local community care policy objectives for Homelessness and Supporting People that have been linked to the Homelessness Strategy.

¹¹ Love, J. (2001) *Homelessness in Aberdeenshire* Report prepared for Aberdeenshire Council

The Scottish Executive Joint Futures Agenda provides the potential to strengthen joint working between Housing, Social Work and Health Services. In developing this integrated approach consideration will be given to services which link to and could assist homeless persons.

Children Services Plan

Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan 2002-2004 emphasises the role of partnership working in order to better integrate Children's Services. The Plan acknowledges homelessness, as a factor in addressing the support and service needs of children and the need to provide and develop the range of supported accommodation for young people moving towards independence.

Aberdeenshire Council's Throughcare and Aftercare Strategy, which is an integral part of Aberdeenshire Council's Children's Services plan is currently being developed, as a result of the new statutory duties placed on local authorities for supporting and assisting young people leaving care in Scotland. The draft regulations from the Scottish Executive are currently being consulted on and will be put before parliament in 2004.

These developments are occurring, in an attempt to improve the outcomes for young people, who have previously been 'looked after' by local authorities and to assist in more successful transitions to adult living and independence for this vulnerable group. Particular emphasis has been placed on the following areas as the main factors, which can affect this transition: -

- ◆ improving access to suitable and sustainable housing and support to reduce the risk of homelessness for this group of young people;
- ◆ improving opportunities in education, employment and training to increase the life chances of these young people;
- ◆ improving access to health services to improve the general health of young people, who have previously been 'looked after' by local authorities over the long term;
- ◆ and to provide appropriate income support through the transfer of DWP monies to local authorities to support certain categories of young people represented within this group.

The new duties are due to be implemented on the 1st of April 2004.

The Homelessness Strategy takes account of the actions identified in the Children's Services Plan and the Throughcare and Aftercare developments that relate to homelessness and support.

Community Safety Strategy Partnership

The Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership is dedicated to working together to make Aberdeenshire a safer place for all those living, working in or visiting the area.

The Homelessness Strategy will link to the key priorities of personal safety and safety in the neighbourhood and environment.

Annual Community Safety Audits carried out in Aberdeenshire will provide data that could identify areas of concern, which will feed into the homelessness strategy work and vice-versa.

Youth Strategy

The Council is to produce a Youth Strategy covering the age group 12-25 years.

The draft Youth Strategy aims to: -

- ◆ ensure learning opportunities are relevant and accessible to all young people;
- ◆ work in partnership to deliver a range of opportunities to address young people's needs;
- ◆ consult with young people on service delivery;
- ◆ ensure young people are key players in the decision making process.

The Homelessness Strategy recognises young people as a vulnerable group. It is therefore intended to work closely with those developing the Youth Strategy to ensure housing and homelessness issues are addressed as part of a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of young people.

Race Equality Scheme

The Council's Race Equality Scheme identifies the measures by which the Council will work to: -

- ◆ eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- ◆ promote equality of opportunity;
- ◆ promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The Race Equality Scheme forms part of a Corporate Equalities Plan that will be completed in 2003 and that addresses the integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into every day work of the Council. The Homelessness Strategy fully embraces the principle of equal opportunities and the values and aims of the Race Equality Scheme.

Criminal Justice Social Work Services

The Strategic Plan for the North of Scotland Joint Committee for Criminal Justice Social Work Services 2002 – 2005 has as one of its strategic aims and supporting objectives: -

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Aim - | Contributing towards the social inclusion of offenders |
| Objectives - | To develop partnership working in the area of education, employment, housing and training; |
| | To develop Throughcare services. |

The Homelessness Strategy has a vital role to play in helping to deliver this aim and its supporting objectives.

3.0 Homelessness in Aberdeenshire

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires each local authority to carry out an assessment of homelessness in its area. The research carried out by Dr Love involved a study of service providers and a detailed analysis of the statistical returns to the Scottish Executive on homelessness applications, the HL1 data, for the years 1997 to 2002¹². In addition a survey of homeless people funded from the Rough Sleepers' Initiative¹³ was carried out in 2001.

The HL1 data is the most instructive in that it indicates trends over time and provides detailed information on the type of household presenting as homeless. The scale and nature of homelessness has changed little over the last five years and the key features are: -

- ◆ between 1,200 and 1,300 households present as homeless each year;
- ◆ single parents and young persons 16-24 are the largest categories representing approximately 33% and 25% of all presentations respectively;
- ◆ older persons make up only 3% of presentations;
- ◆ single persons make up 50% of presentations;
- ◆ the number of presentations assessed as in priority need has fallen between 1997 and 2002 from 73% to 65%;
- ◆ over half of those households assessed as in priority need have dependent children;
- ◆ the commonest reasons for becoming homeless were parents, friends or relatives no longer offering accommodation and dispute with partner at 33% of all applications in each case;
- ◆ the proportion of applications assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, but non priority, has remained relatively stable at 20-25%, 250-300 per year.

The data also provides information on how the Council has responded to homeless applications: -

- ◆ over the last three years the Council has secured permanent accommodation for about 60 per cent of all applicants (560 households in 2001/2002). The percentage of households that secured Council accommodation has declined from 58 per cent in 1999/2000 to 38 per cent in 2001/2002. No data is available as to how many of these tenancies have been sustained;
- ◆ 30-33% of households presenting as homeless were found temporary accommodation. About half of these households i.e. around 180 per annum were placed in Bed and Breakfast;
- ◆ about 90% of all applications are resolved within 7 months but the proportion of applications processed within one month has fallen from 44% to 33% in the period 1997 to 2002.

The analysis of the HL1 data by Dr Love is a good representation of the data on the extent of homelessness in Aberdeenshire but it does not identify 'Hidden Homelessness'. Additional research is required to identify the extent of 'Hidden Homelessness' (i.e. those that fall within the definition of homelessness but who do not present) so that an appropriate strategy and action plan can be developed. The Council will continue to assess homelessness in Aberdeenshire through the monitoring framework to be developed to evaluate and review the strategy.

As a result of his research Dr Love has identified what he considers to be a number of policy implications for the Council and these have been incorporated into the strategy.

To complement the research done by Dr. Love, Paul Hannan, Chief Executive of Aberdeen Cyrenians produced a series of discussion papers on the following issues: Supported Accommodation, Direct Access, Temporary Accommodation and Advice and Information that were considered by the Homelessness Strategy Group in the development of the strategy.

¹² Love, J. (2003) *Understanding Homelessness in Aberdeenshire: A study of the experience and views of service providers*

¹³ Love, J. (2001) *Homelessness in Aberdeenshire* Report prepared for Aberdeenshire Council

3.1 Rough Sleepers

The research into rough sleepers by Dr John Love showed that on the whole rough sleeping is not a major problem in Aberdeenshire. Of those that do sleep rough men are more likely to do so than women; that the period of rough sleeping is short in general, with an episode of rough sleeping lasting between two to four nights.

To address the issue the Council have introduced measures that seek to support those likely to sleep rough. Through a partnership with Aberdeen Cyrenians a Rent Guarantee Scheme has been introduced. Also, the Council employ an Outreach Worker to support anyone at risk of losing their tenancy irrespective of who their landlord is.

A recent survey in May 2003 conducted across Scotland by George Street Research on behalf of the Scottish Executive seeking to establish the extent of rough sleeping discovered that no one was sleeping rough in Aberdeenshire at the time.

For the future, the Council and the Salvation Army have each been granted a significant sum from the local Gerrie Trust to assist in providing services for the homeless. By pooling resources a project is being developed jointly by the two organisations for introduction in 2004 that seeks to provide outreach or floating support to those most likely to be at risk of losing their homes and those most vulnerable homeless persons.

3.2 Area Profiles

The detailed analysis when broken down into the six political areas highlighted various differences in terms of the circumstances of homeless applicants. This is important to future service delivery and the aim is over time to further analyse these statistics breaking them down to at least main settlement level.

Key findings were: -

- ◆ In Buchan and Banff & Buchan between 35% and 40% of all applications came from young single persons;
- ◆ The highest proportion of retired households presenting are in Marr (7% of all applicants), a small but significant figure;
- ◆ A third or more of all applications in Formartine, Garioch, Kincardine & Mearns and Marr are single parent households;
- ◆ Single person homelessness occurs more frequently in Banff & Buchan (between 57% and 69% of all applications) and Buchan (60%-71%);
- ◆ Of all applicants presenting most priority need cases occurred in Kincardine & Mearns (79%-89%) with the least in Buchan (61%-67%);
- ◆ In Banff & Buchan the main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness (45%-54%) is due to family or friends no longer willing or able to provide them with accommodation;
- ◆ Relationship breakdown, both violent and non-violent between partners was highest in Formartine and Garioch where up to 40% of presentations were on such grounds;
- ◆ Marr is the area where most applicants are likely to present due to a Notice to Quit (20%-25% of all applications) being issued by their current landlord (non-Local Authority);
- ◆ Up to 40% of those deemed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in Buchan will be non-priority cases. As the highest, this is the area where the greatest percentage increase in temporary accommodation provision will be experienced following legislative changes introduced on 30 September 2002;
- ◆ Most applicants deemed not to be homeless or threatened with homelessness (up to 42%) occur in Garioch or Kincardine and Mearns;
- ◆ Applicants in Buchan and to a lesser extent Marr are most likely to be placed in temporary accommodation. Nearly half (48%) of all applicants in Buchan in 2001 were allocated such accommodation. This reflects the higher number considered homeless or threatened with homelessness;

- ◆ In Banff and Buchan due to the greater ready availability of permanent housing (especially in and around Fraserburgh) the need for temporary accommodation is less. As a result, in Banff and Buchan up to 82% of all cases for which the Council has a duty to secure accommodation will be permanently housed within 28 days of applying;
- ◆ By contrast applicants in Garioch will have the longest period to wait for permanent housing. During the five years studied, between 5%-12% of cases only were housed permanently within 28 days. Lengthy stays in temporary accommodation can be expected reflecting the high demand and low turnover of permanent accommodation.

4.0 Service Provision

4.1 Review of Council Services

In 2000 the Council completed its first full Best Value Review of the Homelessness Service. A detailed study looked at four key areas: -

- ◆ Delivery of Service;
- ◆ Prevention of Homelessness;
- ◆ Access to Accommodation;
- ◆ Inter Agency Working.

It was concluded at the time of the review that the service being provided bearing in mind the then legislation and Code of Guidance was a good one but with some room for improvement. Together with a recognition of the forthcoming changes to be introduced under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, a number of action points were recommended. Short-term actions have been addressed on the whole but there remain a number of longer-term actions being addressed, which are now incorporated into this document. These are: -

- ◆ Aberdeenshire Council needs to produce an all-encompassing homelessness policy document to meet legislative requirements – in affect this document;
- ◆ Service delivery needs to be harmonised and consistent across all areas of Aberdeenshire in terms of staffing resources and structures – the Housing & Social Work Service will complete a full restructuring during 2003/4. New “Options” teams within Housing Operations will be created which are to deliver the Homelessness, Allocations and Advice services. With new teams; new roles for staff and new posts together with associated training services are expected to improve;
- ◆ Improved information services including leaflets and other literature needs to be introduced – some work is complete but better information and systems are still required. The Advice and Information study will identify gaps for action;
- ◆ Members involved in Appeal Hearings need more knowledge and training. There also needs to be a consistent approach in managing such hearings – this will now be explored with training requirements related to the wider aspects of new duties under forthcoming legislation;
- ◆ A full revision of the staff manual is necessary – to be done following completion of the Strategy. Full staff training will then be undertaken;
- ◆ A multi-agency approach in developing an Advice and Information Strategy should be adopted;
- ◆ An Aberdeenshire Standard for temporary accommodation should be produced – all such accommodation is already checked but this relates to the production of a written standard which providers will be expected to meet;
- ◆ Additional sources of Temporary Accommodation need to be located – increased provision has been or is being provided but increasing demands mean more is required;
- ◆ Financial management of homelessness budgets and the maximisation of income must be monitored and actions taken as required – further work required in partnership with the Finance Service.

Once the new structure has been operational for six months a review of its effectiveness will be undertaken. This mini review will relate to any identified new legislative requirements.

4.2 Best Value Review of Allocations Policy

A Best Value Review of the Council’s Allocations Policy and Practice was completed in April 2002. As a result of that work and developments since three key recommendations have been established which relate to this Strategy.

Firstly it is felt the Council needs to work towards the Personal Housing Plan concept where applicants through a detailed interview will have their housing situation fully assessed and a range of options identified. This would include an assessment of care or housing support needs.

Such interviews would aim to identify potential homeless cases enabling early action.

Secondly the Council's policy of allocating homeless persons accommodation up to 30 miles from where they became homeless was considered potentially unreasonable. As a result the Council will not state a distance and take into greater account a homeless household's needs based on issues such as employment, education and family support and local connections.

Finally the Council's policy is that presently homeless persons only get one reasonable offer of permanent accommodation. In order to give homeless persons the same choice and opportunity as other housing applicants Council Policy has been revised to ensure all applicants are entitled to the same number of offers.

4.3 Best Value Review of Arrears Policy

A review of the Council's Arrears Policy is about to be undertaken. As a result the Group responsible have been asked to look at ways in which practices can be introduced to minimise the risk of and reduce the number of evictions.

RSLs will also be asked to review their practices in this respect.

4.4 Current Service Provision

The homelessness service is provided from six area-housing offices located in Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Banff, Turriff, Inverurie and Stonehaven. The present staffing resources providing this service are: -

Peterhead

Assistant Local Housing Manager
Senior Housing Officer (Homelessness)
Housing Officer (Homelessness)

Fraserburgh

Senior Housing Officer (1FTE.)

Banff

Assistant Local Housing Manager*
Housing Officer (1 FTE.)

Turriff

Housing Officer (0.5 FTE.)

Inverurie

Assistant Local Area Manager
Homeless Person Officer
Homeless Person Assistant (2 posts)

Stonehaven

Senior Housing Officer (0.5 post)
Lettings Assistant (0.5 FTE.)

Note: approximately 20 per cent of the time of the Assistant Local Area Manager posts is spent on homelessness.

* The Assistant Local Area Manager post at the Banff Office also covers the Turriff and Fraserburgh Offices.

The Housing Operations Service is going through the final stages of an internal restructuring process. This will provide consistency in terms of numbers of posts and job descriptions which in turn will lead to consistency in service provision in the Council's housing offices for homeless persons.

Besides a small increase in numbers, staff will also take on a more generic role resulting in a greater number experienced in dealing with homelessness. To help these staff, a new comprehensive staffing manual is being developed which thoroughly covers every aspect of the homelessness service. Training will follow for these staff, with those from other organisations being invited to participate.

Four new posts (3 FTE) of Accommodation Officer will be added to the structure. The aim being to find new sources of temporary accommodation; better manage and evaluate appropriateness of temporary provision and provide better links to those in temporary accommodation. Further posts offering enhanced support are also being sought (see paragraph 4.8)

The impact of the changes to service delivery will be subject to on-going review. Better performance management information on the service will be developed and standards and performance widely publicised.

4.5 Crisis Response System

The Council operates through the Social Work Service an Out of Hours Service. Those persons who are homeless at evenings and weekends are referred to the service by various agencies. The service will arrange accommodation and/or contact a homelessness officer if required. The Best Value Review looked at the service and concluded given the limited referrals that it should continue as the most effective option. It was felt that the service adequately addressed the need for a crisis response system with no need for direct access accommodation. The position will be reviewed over the period of the strategy.

4.6 Temporary Accommodation

Aberdeenshire Council (in partnership with other providers) currently has the following temporary accommodation available to meet its homelessness duties: -

- ◆ 1 Hostel (10 double and 2 single rooms) in Peterhead;
- ◆ 23 Furnished Accommodation Units;
- ◆ 30 Part Furnished Accommodation Units;
- ◆ 10 Unfurnished Accommodation Units;
- ◆ 23 Lead Tenancy Units (RSL provided and managed);
- ◆ 1 facility (5 units) for those seeking refuge due to domestic abuse;
- ◆ 22 units of supported accommodation provided by Aberdeen Foyer.

The units are provided throughout Aberdeenshire consisting of a variety of dwelling types and sizes. A small number are leased from RSLs.

Bed & Breakfast accommodation is also used in emergency cases when no other suitable accommodation is available. Statistics show that by 2001 the level of this form of accommodation declined. An increase is predicted however in the medium term to meet new duties related to non-priority cases.

The Council would prefer not to use Bed & Breakfast accommodation but realistically accepts that for the foreseeable future this is unlikely to occur especially in those pressurised housing areas where demand is high and turnover is low.

First priority will be to stop using Bed & Breakfast for families with children and the Council will endeavour to do this by utilising Scottish Executive funding to increase the supply of alternative

sources of temporary accommodation. The Council aims to do this by April 2006 but recognises the difficulty of securing suitable alternatives especially in a large predominantly rural area.

Completed or in development and scheduled to be available during 2003 to add to the foregoing are: -

- ◆ 1 Hostel (12 units – 8 Single units and 4 x 2 bedroomed) in Inverurie;
- ◆ 1 Supported Accommodation Project for young homeless persons (6 units) in Peterhead;
- ◆ 9 (6 furnished and 3 part furnished) units in Macduff;
- ◆ 1 unit at Ellon, 1 unit at Banchory and 2 units at Huntly, all part furnished.

Under investigation are: -

- ◆ A scheme in partnership with a care provider to provide temporary accommodation with intensive support for those with a drug and/or alcohol dependency in Fraserburgh;
- ◆ A second facility for those seeking refuge due to domestic violence;
- ◆ A 4 unit furnished accommodation project;
- ◆ An increase in furnished lets using existing tenancies throughout Aberdeenshire through the Council and RSLs;
- ◆ Temporary accommodation through acquisition of premises in Mintlaw and Stonehaven.

Other accommodation is needed especially in more rural locations. Opportunities are being sought to meet this need.

Recognising the need to develop better contact with occupants of, to improve links with landlords and other providers of and, to better manage temporary accommodation the Council, as mentioned previously is to employ four new posts (3 FTE) of Accommodation Officer.

4.7 Multi-Agency Approach

A fundamental aspect of this strategy is working together with our partner organisations in order to effectively address the varying needs of homeless people generally and the needs of specific groups that have been identified as vulnerable i.e. young people, older people, children and families, people leaving hospital, people leaving prison, people leaving the armed forces and asylum seekers and refugees.

The close proximity to Aberdeen City and the movement of homeless cases between the two authorities presents an opportunity to develop joint projects and to work in partnership in providing certain services where this would be advantageous in meeting the needs of homeless persons from both local authorities.

The potential for joint projects and working in partnership will be explored with Aberdeen City Council and also with other agencies in the public and voluntary sectors in delivering current services and future service development.

For example Aberdeenshire Council will work closely with education and training providers and agencies in the voluntary sector in planning and providing for the training requirements of homelessness people in order to maximise their employment opportunities. With regard to this, one of the Council's partners Aberdeen Foyer is already taking forward a number of initiatives that are of interest to the Council in terms of how they may be tailored to provide for the training needs of homeless people. Of particular interest is the establishment of the Princess Trust Volunteers programme by the Foyer in Peterhead and how this may be expanded to other areas of Aberdeenshire. The Foyer has developed a Lifeshapers programme also in Peterhead jointly funded by Aberdeenshire Council, the Foyer and Aberdeen College. The programme is currently provided on a pilot basis but if it is successful it could be an ongoing resource for former homeless young people who have had substance use issues. Another training programme of interest is New Deal where Aberdeen Foyer is a major service provider together with Apex and Arkle Training from Fraserburgh.

The work of Scottish Enterprise in respect of the New Futures Fund is relevant and currently funds the Foyers Lifeshapers programme in Aberdeen and also funded some of the development work for the Lifeshapers programme in Peterhead. Aberdeen Foyer is also involved in a national New Future Fund policy group which is looking at issues regarding mainstreaming this type of provision for homelessness people. In addition the Foyer is currently the focus of research commissioned by Communities Scotland entitled 'Routes into Employment for Homeless People'. This research will help inform national guidance in relation to this aspect of homelessness strategies.

In addition to addressing the training needs of homeless people the opportunities for delivering joint training programmes for staff of all partner organisations will be maximised to foster closer co-operation and an ethos of support that is common to all organisations involved in delivering homelessness services in Aberdeenshire.

As part of the programme of joint training the Council will run an annual conference on homelessness in Aberdeenshire inviting elected members of the Council and officers of all participating organisations.

The conference, which will form part of the joint training programme, will be participative and will be structured around invited guest speakers and workshop options. The aims of the annual conference will be to raise the public profile of homelessness and associated issues, to provide further opportunity for networking and to identify projects for joint working.

The Council will also explore the opportunity for a biannual conference, which looks at homelessness issues on a regional basis.

The multi-agency approach is reflected in the strategy objectives, which highlight particular areas where through corporate working within the Council and joint working with partner organisations the Council will seek to maximise the potential benefit for homeless people of the services and facilities of the various agencies and organisations involved.

4.8 Support Provision

It is recognised by the Council that providing support to those in temporary and permanent accommodation is crucial to ensure successful resettlement and to prevent repeat homelessness. Good support can also ensure homelessness is prevented and tenancies sustained especially for vulnerable people.

It is going to be necessary to further develop support services in Aberdeenshire based on assessed need and any future assessment of need. An analysis of the impact of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 suggests additional support will be necessary to meet the new duties. Over the period of the strategy a clearer picture of support needs is likely to emerge.

Support already exists for those who could become rough sleepers, for young homeless persons and those who have suffered domestic abuse as indicated elsewhere in the strategy. Proposals, which support homeless or potentially homeless persons who have dependency issues relating to drugs and / or alcohol, are being developed.

In keeping with the Supporting People Strategy a comprehensive assessment of support will be necessary that covers not only the period of this strategy but also for the ten-year agenda set by the Homelessness Task Force. Projects that are already operational have demonstrated significant running costs to maintain the high levels of support required. The Council is concerned about the future availability of Supporting People funding to ensure the provision of appropriate support for all can be attained. Indications at the time of writing this strategy are that sufficient funding may not be available to deliver the proposals outlined below.

The existing provision and pipeline projects that help meet the objectives of the strategy and the additional responsibilities now placed on the Council are:

Existing provision

Supported temporary accommodation provided by Aberdeenshire Council in partnership with other providers has been detailed in section 4.6 Temporary Accommodation.

Pipeline projects

Supported Accommodation

A number of pipeline projects have been submitted for Supporting People Grant. One is to provide a supported tenancy service of 4 units for offenders / ex-prisoners. Two are specifically aimed at people with substance misuse problems providing 10 units in the Garioch area and 10 units in the Banff and Buchan area. One is for a refuge located in the Marr area providing 13 units for individuals surviving domestic abuse. Another is for 16 units located in the Garioch area for homeless families with support needs.

Also Aberdeen Foyer has put forward three Supporting People pipeline projects linked to capital that are aimed at young people. These will provide 9 units in the Kincardine and Mearns area, 16 units in the Garioch area and 6 units in the Marr area.

The supported accommodation pipeline projects identified above are essential to the Council's ability to provide a range of service options that meet the varying needs of homelessness people.

Floating Support Services

To address the growing recognition of the need to provide support in connection with homelessness a number of floating support proposals have been submitted as pipeline projects for supporting people funding. One proposal seeks to increase the number of outreach worker posts based in Peterhead from one to four. The aim is to provide support services to any person irrespective of their tenure or landlord to prevent homelessness occurring. A further proposal is to support up to 20 cases where substance misuse is a problem. Another two are for 60 and 80 places respectively for homeless families with support needs and one is for 35 places for people with mental health problems.

In addition Aberdeen Foyer has a 10-place floating support service as a pipeline project, which is planned as a supported move-on provision.

The provision of floating support services will be vital to addressing some of the issues that may impact on or cause homelessness and repeat homelessness. Some of the projects will specifically target homeless individuals and families with support needs.

Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSST)

In addition to proposals for floating support services the Council is considering the use of housing let temporarily on a SSST basis for those priority need cases whose homes have been repossessed due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. By providing housing with appropriate support the aim will be to prevent repeat homelessness and in time the offer of a permanent tenancy. The use of SSST will be considered only after additional support has been put into households in their existing home to assist tenants maintain their tenancy and to minimise the need to repossess tenancies.

4.9 Vulnerable Groups

The table below shows the type of household presenting as homeless to Aberdeenshire Council has remained fairly constant over the last five years in some respects but has shown signs of change elsewhere.

Table 1 Household Type

Household Type	Year				
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
	%	%	%	%	%
Married (with /without) children	19	18	18	16	15
Young Person (16-24 years)	27	26	24	25	25
Adult (25 years, retirement)	19	19	22	23	23
Retired	4	3	3	3	3
Lone Parent	29	32	32	31	33
N =	1214	1281	1332	1277	1287

Source: *Understanding Homelessness in Aberdeenshire* (Love, 2003)

In terms of consistency, lone parent households and young person households have been the most likely types of household to present as homeless in Aberdeenshire over the five years. Lone parents and young people have respectively represented approximately a third and a quarter of all homeless applicants to the local authority between 1997/98 and 2001/02. Also, the percentage of homeless households that are retired has remained fairly constant (and low) at around 3% of all homeless applicants. By contrast an increase in the proportion of homeless adult households has been evidenced since 1999, moving from around a fifth of all applicants in 1998/99 to around a quarter by 2001/02.

In terms of vulnerable groupings identified in the Scottish Executive Guidance¹⁴ the largest groups in Aberdeenshire fall in to the categories of young people and children and families. Older people represent a small percentage of the total homeless applications. There are very few homeless applicants from the other vulnerable categories leaving institutions (prison, hospital, and armed forces) and asylum seekers and refugees.

The needs of vulnerable categories of homeless applicants are actively addressed through the homelessness strategy and other relevant Council strategies previously referred to in section 2.3 of this strategy.

Summary of the strategy's main activities to address the needs of vulnerable groups identified in the Scottish Executive Guidance.

Young People

The actions to try to prevent and address homelessness in this group is evidenced in all of the objectives of this strategy and specifically through the objectives of raising awareness of homelessness issues in schools and further education and seeking to provide training programmes to maximise employment opportunities for homeless people.

Information, advice and services that specifically address the needs of young people who are homeless or threaten with homelessness will be provided and good lines of communication will be developed with relevant partner agencies in order to ensure that an effective network of support is established.

¹⁴ Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Guidance on Homelessness Strategies March 2002

Many young homeless people have multiple needs and are not ready for independent living or are at strong risk of becoming homeless. Their needs are being addressed in various ways and include; supported accommodation, providing support and assistance to maintain a tenancy of their own, assistance in obtaining furnishings and by developing projects utilising Supporting People funding to develop services.

Through the Local Housing Strategy the Council seeks to provide good quality affordable housing in order to address housing need. This will involve taking into account the homelessness assessment in planning future housing provision and also reviewing the Council's stock so that it reflects changing need primarily in relation to single person applicants.

Children and Families

This group encompasses the households shown in table 1 of 'lone parents' and 'married with children' and represents the largest proportion of vulnerable homeless applicants in Aberdeenshire. The housing and support needs of these households are provided for in all of the objectives of this strategy and specifically through the objective of seeking to address the information, advice and service needs of all vulnerable groups and to establish good communication links with the relevant establishments and agencies involved with these groups.

To plan through the Local Housing Strategy the provision of a range of good quality and affordable housing for rent. As stated previously this objective will involve taking the homelessness assessment into account in planning future housing provision and reviewing existing stock so that changes in housing need are provided for. This will also include the provision of a range of suitable, high quality temporary accommodation throughout Aberdeenshire. This objective incorporates as a specific action the target to eliminate the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for families with children by April 2006.

Although domestic abuse may affect individuals other than women and may not involve children the strategy's objective in relation to domestic abuse is mentioned here because of its relevance to children and families. The Council will seek to provide sufficient refuge and other accommodation and support for those individuals surviving domestic abuse. This objective incorporates the following action points a) to seek funding for the domestic abuse outreach service, and b) to review the needs of children and women surviving domestic abuse.

Finally the Council will seek to maximise support provided through the Supporting People Strategy.

Older People, People Leaving Institutions and Asylum seekers and Refugees

These groups constitute a small but non-the-less important proportion of homeless applicants and their needs are provided for by the objectives of this strategy.

The needs of asylum seekers and refugees and homeless applicants from ethnic minority groups are also addressed in the Council Equal Opportunity Policy and Race Equality Scheme. Also, the Council has commissioned research in conjunction with Communities Scotland and Moray Council into 'Improving Understanding of the Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities in Aberdeenshire and Moray', which will help inform future planning.

With regard to asylum seekers and refugees, older people and people leaving institutions (prison, hospital and the armed forces) objective 5 specifically address the information, advice and service needs of these groups and the need to improve the communication links with agencies involved with these groups. The action points relating to this objective address the need to develop services that meet their particular needs, to work with partner organisations to develop a common definition of vulnerability and to develop joint protocols for sharing information and co-operation in order to improve services to vulnerable groups.

4.10 Monitoring

The strategy sets out a range of actions to be taken by the Council and its partners to achieve its objectives. A regular review and continued development of the strategy is also necessary if it is to be effective. In order to achieve this and building on the work of the existing Homelessness Strategy Group a new group (Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network) will be formed involving existing and new partners.

The Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network group will consist of representatives of: -

- ◆ Aberdeenshire Council (officers from Housing & Social Work Services, Education and Recreation Services, Planning and Environmental Services);
- ◆ NHS Grampian;
- ◆ Aberdeen Cyrenians;
- ◆ Aberdeen Foyer;
- ◆ Barnardos;
- ◆ Registered Social Landlord;
- ◆ Shelter Aberdeen;
- ◆ Voluntary Organisations;
- ◆ Others to be confirmed.

Consideration will also be given to homeless person representation on the Group. Even if that is not achievable the Council will introduce ways in which homeless persons can provide feedback on service delivery and future service requirements. Please refer to paragraph 2.2 and appendix 3 for further details.

Work is currently on going to design an “exit survey” for those persons who are placed in temporary accommodation to obtain their views on the accommodation provided.

Homeless persons will also be given the opportunity and encouraged to comment on other services received as well including interview experiences; advice given etc. A questionnaire is being designed to facilitate this.

5.0 Aims and Objectives

5.1 Key Aims

The key aims of this strategy are: -

- ◆ To maximise the prevention of homelessness in Aberdeenshire;
- ◆ To ensure that those households and individuals who do become homeless are given the help they need to obtain and sustain a home of their own.

The primary emphasis is on prevention. Much homelessness can be prevented and the suffering it causes can be avoided. Prevention is also cost effective; an important consideration given the extra responsibilities that Aberdeenshire Council now has with respect to homelessness and the additional duties introduced by the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

There are various pathways into homelessness (for example youth, domestic abuse, mental health, offending) and prevention should attempt to cover all these different routes. It should also recognise the responsibilities and potentialities that different agencies, including the Council, have for preventing homelessness.

Increasing the Housing Opportunities for Homeless People

Not all homelessness can be prevented however. The Strategy aims to ensure that when people do become homeless, both accommodation and support are readily available. This must be appropriate to their needs and the accommodation and support must reflect the diversity of circumstances associated with homelessness and the different pathways that lead to it. The needs of vulnerable groups in particular (such as young people, older people, children and families, people leaving institutions, asylum seekers and refugees) must be met.

The Strategy recognises the importance of a sufficient supply of affordable quality housing but is based on an understanding of the complex nature of homelessness. It is more than a bricks and mortar issue and is connected with a range of other social and economic problems. It affects in particular the more vulnerable and exacerbates the difficulties that they already have. This necessitates a multi-agency approach involving corporate working within the Council and effective partnership working with other agencies in the public, voluntary and private sectors.

This Strategy

- ◆ addresses the range of quality temporary and move-on accommodation needed in Aberdeenshire;
- ◆ reviews gaps in support provision, including the services and joint work required to meet the particular needs of homeless young people and other vulnerable groups, including families with children and people with complex or multiple needs;
- ◆ recognises that the need for accommodation and support varies locally;
- ◆ recommends joint procedures for needs assessment for people with complex or multiple needs;
- ◆ recommends development of a monitoring framework to evaluate tenancy outcomes and sustainability.

5.2 Equal Opportunities

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to equal opportunities in all of its activities. This commitment involves responding without discrimination to the different needs and service requirements of people regardless of gender, race, disability, age, creed, marital status, sexual

orientation or gender re-assignment. This commitment applies in full to the services offered to homeless people in Aberdeenshire and the Council expects a similar commitment from its partner agencies.

Ethnic Monitoring

With the introduction of 'Electronic Data Capture' the Council has been able to monitor applications made by homeless persons linked to ethnic origin. For the twelve months ending 31 March 2003 only four applications from 1051 presenting cases were from either Black or Asian ethnic origins. For the same period the statistics revealed no one presented as homeless claiming 'racial harassment' as the reason.

At this time projects dedicated to linking homelessness with ethnic origin are considered unnecessary. However, the values and principles of the Homelessness Strategy reflect the Council's Equal Opportunity policy and Race Equality Scheme. As previously stated Aberdeenshire Council has recently commissioned research in conjunction with Communities Scotland and Moray Council into 'Improving Understanding of the Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities in Aberdeenshire and Moray'. This will be completed in March 2003 and will be used to inform future planning and policy including the Homelessness Strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy will be made available on request in other languages including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese and Urdu and interpreting services will be used when necessary in order to address the language needs of individuals whose first language is not English. This service and any related service developments will be informed by the ethnic-monitoring statistic maintained by the Council. Also producing the strategy in other formats such as braille, audiotape and large print will be investigated.

Access to Services

The establishment of decentralised housing offices in Aberdeenshire helps to facilitate local access to services. In addition the Council provides information on homelessness services on its website and through the distribution of leaflets. The Council is currently finalising a Housing Information and Advice Strategy. The strategy aims to provide information and advice to assist homeless people and assist in preventing homelessness.

The Council currently has information on homelessness on its website and this will be developed further. Also Grampian Care Data website which currently provides information on a range of housing issues such as homelessness, supported housing and information that is directed at various vulnerable groups will be reviewed in order to maximise the provision of information through this channel.

In addition to decentralised housing offices and the use of Information Technology the Council will evaluate various other methods of making the service more accessible e.g. information kiosks / points in libraries, free local press, shopping centres, GP surgeries and home visits.

The strategy objectives and action plan detail the activities that will help to ensure equality of access to services and support throughout Aberdeenshire.

The large geographical area of Aberdeenshire and the dispersed nature of a large proportion of its population present particular difficulties in ensuring equality of access. A particular difficulty is the number of locations in Aberdeenshire where people can present as homeless.

Much has been achieved to improve the accessibility of services across the local authority's area and the Council will continue to seek ways to enhance the provision of local services to the communities and people of Aberdeenshire.

5.3 Objectives

Objective 1 **To work with partner organisations to develop and continuously improve the quality of homelessness services available in Aberdeenshire.**

The Council through working with partner organisations to implement the Homelessness Strategy and the other linked strategies referred to earlier will seek to develop and to continuously improve the quality its homeless services. An important aspect of this programme will be the process of working towards achieving the Homepoint Scottish National Standards and Good Practice Guide for Housing Information and Advice. The information gathered in the assessment of homelessness¹⁵ will be used to inform the development of services that address the area differences in Aberdeenshire.

Objective 2 **To ensure an integrated Housing Information and Advice service is developed for everyone including homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness.**

Information and advice is currently provided by a range of statutory and voluntary organisations, however as yet no assessment of these services has been made to quantify the range and quality of the provision. This process is now in hand.

The provision of an integrated Information and Advice service presents particular difficulties in a large rural authority such as Aberdeenshire where distances to the main settlements are large. There are deficiencies in the existing service, which have become more acute since the expanded duties placed on the Council by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The enhanced service will be multi-agency and the information and advice given will be consistent and integrated across agencies. The provision will meet the requirements of Communities Scotland HomePoint "Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Services", The Homeless Persons Advice and Assistance (Scotland) Regulations 2002 and the Scottish Executive's Guidance on the form and content of Advice and Information to be provided under Section 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The Information and Advice service will be monitored to assess its impact on preventing and alleviating homelessness and to inform future developments.

Objective 3 **To develop awareness of homelessness issues through schools and further education establishments.**

A quarter of all those presenting as homeless in Aberdeenshire are under 25 and almost a tenth are under 18. Many young people are unaware of and unprepared for the difficulties of independent living and the provision of appropriate information will enable them to make more informed decisions and in many cases less likely to leave the parental home before they are ready. At present Aberdeen Cyrenians provide an information service to some schools in Aberdeenshire. It is proposed that information on housing and homelessness is provided in all secondary schools as a part of the secondary curriculum on a consistent basis at an agreed level. This will be replicated in children's homes and while these children will receive the information in schools, it also needs to be a part of the programme of structured activities within the homes.

¹⁵ Love, J. (2003) *Understanding Homelessness in Aberdeenshire: A study of the experience and views of service providers*

Objective 4 **To seek to provide training programmes to maximise the employment opportunities of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.**

Employment is a key factor in helping people to sustain a tenancy and arranging the availability of appropriate training and skills development programmes in order to maximise employment opportunities will be an important aspect of the support programme for homeless people. There are a number of training initiatives detailed earlier in paragraph 4.7 of the strategy that are currently being taken forward by Aberdeen Foyer that will be explored to see how they may be adapted to the needs of homeless people.

Objective 5 **To ensure that information, advice and services are available that specifically provides for the needs of vulnerable groups and that good lines of communication exist with the relevant establishments and agencies involved with these groups.**

The provision of information, advice and services that are easily accessible and specifically provides for the needs of groups that are identified as vulnerable i.e. young people, older people, children and families, people leaving hospital, people leaving prison, people leaving the armed forces, asylum seekers and refugees will be developed in order to help ensure that these individuals and families receive the assistance they need to secure and maintain a home of their own.

This will involve working with other Council services and partner organisations to agree a common understanding and definition of vulnerability and also developing joint protocols for sharing information and working in order to improve services to vulnerable groups.

Objective 6 **To work towards reducing the number of evictions throughout all sectors.**

The provision of advice to tenants including those in tied accommodation at risk of eviction, and negotiation with private landlords, will aim to reduce the number of evictions and where a move is inevitable aim to ensure that this is controlled and alternative accommodation is available. In parallel consideration will be given to establishing a landlords' forum or something similar. Housing Benefit issues will also be addressed to improve efficiency and speed of payments. The Council and the Registered Social Landlords already have policies that are geared to minimising the risk of evictions. These policies will be reviewed in light of the new legislation and to ensure that they are effective especially with respect to rent arrears by offering tenants in difficulties the maximum advice in dealing with debt.

As part of the Information and Advice strategy appropriate financial advice will be made available to persons who are having difficulty meeting their mortgage repayments. The Council will also explore other actions considered suitable to help prevent homelessness in the owner-occupier sector.

Objective 7 **To seek to ensure that housing management in the social rented sector is geared towards preventing homelessness and making maximum use of the existing stock.**

The Council and Registered Social Landlords in Aberdeenshire operate a range of policies with regards to housing management that aim to sustain tenancies whenever possible. Efficient housing management will also aim to reduce vacancies and re-let times and thereby increase housing opportunities within the existing stock. The Council will also seek to maximise the potential of the private rented sector for homeless people where relevant.

Objective 8 To seek through the Local Housing Strategy provision of a range of good quality affordable housing for rent, which aims to meet a variety of identified needs.

The Council will work with Communities Scotland and Registered Social Landlords to increase the stock of good quality housing in Aberdeenshire provided at an affordable rent to meet assessed need and any additional accommodation that may be required as a consequence of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. In particular the Council will work with housing providers in Aberdeenshire to plan through the Local Housing Strategy to provide an adequate supply of permanent housing so that by the time that the priority needs test is abolished in 2012 a permanent home can be secured for all households that are unintentionally homeless in Aberdeenshire.

In addition the Council will continue to work with its Registered Social Landlords partners to provide housing in pressurised areas of need. Also the Council will review its own stock so that through opportunity conversions it can provide suitable housing that reflects changing need primarily in relation to single person applicants and in order to work towards meeting the 2012 requirements. The Council will also explore opportunities for providing flexible housing options particularly to meet increased demand for housing in pressurised areas and will look to use its planning gain powers in order to help meet the need for permanent accommodation for homeless persons.

This objective will involve further analysis to establish the range and location of supported housing required in order to meet assessed need. In addition a review of the operation of Supporting People funding will take place and an assessment will be made of unmet need.

Objective 9 To work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations so that no one has to sleep rough in Aberdeenshire by the end of 2003.

Whilst sleeping rough is infrequent and short term in Aberdeenshire, there continues to be a small number of people who are at risk of sleeping rough or have no permanent accommodation.

The Council accepts the Executive's objective that no one should have to sleep rough by the end of 2003. Aberdeenshire Council will continue to support and develop the projects currently supported by RSI funding and will explore the opportunities for working in partnership with other local authorities and RSLs in order to address this issue. However it is not believed that the simple provision of direct access accommodation is either the most effective or practical means of achieving this. This is in part because of the problem of where such accommodation would be located in a large, sparsely populated area and also because we believe that supported accommodation appropriate to the needs of those most at risk of sleeping rough (males with alcohol or drug dependency issues) is more likely to lead to sustainable re-settlement in a permanent home.

Objective 10 To provide a range of suitable, high quality temporary accommodation throughout Aberdeenshire.

An assessment will need to be made of the likely level of continuing need for temporary accommodation in terms of size, type and location based on current presentations and the requirements of the Housing Act (Scotland) 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. The Council will try to ensure that the time spent in such accommodation is minimised but recognises that this is related to an adequate stock of affordable accommodation. Every effort will be made to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, especially for families with children, but in the current situation given increases in demand for temporary accommodation it is sometimes the only option available. Because of the geographical spread of the population in Aberdeenshire and the pressure on housing in certain areas there is always likely to be some need in exceptional circumstances when B&B might have to be used e.g. in

keeping a family together or to be able to remain in the home area, for instance, to receive schooling or continue existing support

The Council will seek to increase the supply of alternative sources of temporary accommodation and stock used for temporary accommodation will be available throughout Aberdeenshire so that homeless households do not lose contact with social and family networks or have to make long journeys to work or school.

Objective 11 To seek to provide support for those homeless people with multiple needs who are not ready for independent living or where a strong risk of becoming homeless exists.

An assessment will be made of how much supported accommodation is needed, for which groups and the length of time required. This assessment will be used for Supporting People pipeline projects. Current provision of supported accommodation is nearly always full and much is only available for young people less than 25 years of age and particularly those under 21. Very few services exist for those of 25 and over.

There is a need for a range of supported accommodation provision. Amongst the likely gaps in service provision are the need for more closely supervised supported accommodation for those not ready to move on including specialist provision for those with learning difficulties, mental health problems and challenging behaviour; and an increased range and volume of semi-supported accommodation/furnished short tenancies some of which should be focused on special needs e.g. drug abuse and challenging behaviour.

It is essential that choice be offered. A minority of people who require supported accommodation benefit from living in shared accommodation. However, for many, this is not an acceptable style of provision and can lead to a range of situations where unnecessary conflicts arise between residents. Future accommodation developments will ensure that a suitable mix of provision is available so that there is sufficient supply of individual self-contained units although this might be part of a grouping of such units.

A full assessment of on-going housing and support needs will be made at the outset of the supported accommodation arrangement and people will not be expected to move on until they are ready to do so and support will continue to be provided as long as there is a requirement.

Permanent housing solutions will be planned as part of the initial assessment and every effort will be made to ensure that housing is available when the person is ready to move on. Supported accommodation provision will not have set periods of residence, as length of stay should be determined by need. When a homeless person is moving from supported to permanent accommodation, they will be offered the same degree of choice as those housed through non-homeless pathways.

Objective 12 To work towards a full assessment being made of each homeless person's housing and support needs.

There is considerable potential for more collaboration between agencies in relation to this particularly in the use of shared assessments. The concept of a one-stop process in relation to homelessness will be explored to include an individual shared assessment of the different service requirements of each person and an appropriate placement. It will be important to check the local arrangements to ensure that the policy and practices developed are in line with the Supporting People policies. This is in keeping with the Personal Housing Plan concept mentioned earlier in section four of the strategy.

Aberdeenshire Council will have to secure the services of additional staffing in order to deliver this objective and ensure that the diverse needs of homeless people are provided for.

Objective 13 To provide sufficient refuge and other accommodation and support for those individuals and families surviving domestic abuse.

The scale of domestic abuse and its significance in generating homelessness justifies a specific objective of its own. Domestic abuse crime figures in Aberdeenshire for 1999/2000 were 1,515 (Grampian Police). In the year ending March 1999 170 cases of those presenting as homeless in Aberdeenshire claimed that they were losing or leaving accommodation due to a violent dispute with their spouse. This figure fell to 155 for the year-ended 2001/02 and may reflect the impact of the authority's Domestic Violence policies helping women to remain in their home. However the fact remains that the one refuge currently operating has been full since it reopened in February 2002 and has a waiting list underlining the need for further refuge provision.

The Aberdeenshire Domestic Abuse Strategy¹⁶ identified a need for a comprehensive range of services throughout Aberdeenshire. These should include accommodation and support, including accommodation for families with boys over the age of 13, 14 or 16 and for those who have alcohol or drug dependencies. Refuge accommodation is inadequate with no provision being available within the authority to the south of Aberdeen.

It is essential that the services provided to those surviving domestic abuse are flexible and can be tailored to suit the needs of individual cases. In this respect it is important to provide sufficient refuge places for individuals and their dependants where this is the most appropriate action for that case. Alternatively it is also essential to offer support to adults and their children within their existing tenancies thus helping to prevent homelessness and to reduce the numbers of those who feel compelled to leave their family home. Aberdeenshire provides a Domestic Abuse Outreach Service that is currently funded up to 31 March 2004 by the Scottish Executive Domestic Abuse Development Fund. It is important that this service is maintained after March 2004 and ideally it would be beneficial if the service was extended in order to cope with the demand, which has led to the present caseworkers having unmanageable caseloads.

In addition a review of the links between domestic abuse and health will be carried out, through the NHS Grampian Health and Homelessness Action Plan.

Objective 14 To work in partnership with NHS Grampian in the development and implementation of the Health and Homelessness Action Plan 2002- 2005 for Aberdeenshire.

NHS Grampian is revising its Health and Homelessness Action Plan 2002-2005. To facilitate the process a steering group has been established comprised of representatives from the health authority, the three respective local authorities and the voluntary sector. A draft of the revised plan has been produced and this will be used as the basis for further review and redrafting of the plan at a working seminar that is organised to take place in October. Participants at the seminar will come from the sectors mentioned above and it is intended that the revised plan will be finalise and adopted by December 2003.

Also it is important to recognise the role of the Senior Clinical Medical Officer in assessing the housing need of homeless cases based on medical conditions and the contribution made to developing the base of knowledge of common medical conditions associated with homelessness.

Objective 15 To work with relevant organisations and agencies to assist homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in obtaining adequate furnishings.

A lack of basic furnishings can contribute to the breakdown of a new tenancy. To help address this the Council will explore various options to address this problem. This will include the

¹⁶ Providing Quality Services for People who are Abused or who are the Victims of Violence: A Multi Agency Strategy for Aberdeenshire

provision of a number of furnished tenancies by utilising the new grant from Communities Scotland, by liasing with various organisations that provide basic furnishings and by advising of relevant financial assistance that is available from government agencies.

Objective 16 To maximise the support provided through the Supporting People Strategy and available financial resources to the benefit of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

The new policy and funding framework for providing housing support will be utilised to ensure that the support required by homeless people is provided in order to help them establish and maintain a tenancy and also to prevent homelessness occurring.

An assessment will be made of homelessness support services and proposals will be brought forward for Supporting People funding to assist in meeting the cost of pipeline projects in order to enable the Council to deliver a range of support service that meets the assessed needs of homeless people and those threatened with homelessness.

A number of proposals are currently awaiting confirmation of Supporting People funding being available. Without it there is a concern about the ability to provide increased levels of support necessary to meet growing needs.

Objective 17 To develop and implement a monitoring framework in order to evaluate the Strategy.

Monitoring the Strategy

An information system will be established that incorporates the Council's current statutory data collection and any other data necessary to effectively monitor the strategy on an on-going basis. The monitoring system will look to involve the relevant activities of other areas of the Council and organisations.

Evaluating the Strategy

It is vital that the measures implemented in this Strategy are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. In particular, the effectiveness of the service offered in taking people out of repeat homelessness must be regularly assessed. Evaluation will be done annually and involve publication of an Annual Report in which the degree to which targets have been met is assessed. Although the strategy will be evaluated in its entirety annually the evaluation process will be flexible so that reviews of particular areas of the strategy can take place as considered necessary. The outcome of the monitoring and evaluation will be used to inform future planning and service development.

The review process will include regular surveys of the views of service users so that they can be incorporated into the evaluation of the strategy. It will also be important to establish protocol with partners in the development and delivery of the strategy for monitoring and sharing information as part of the evaluation process.

The process of monitoring and evaluation the strategy will be overseen through the establishment of Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network comprised of appropriate officers from within the Council and from its partner organisations. The implementation and monitoring of the strategy will be co-ordinated by the Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy).

Full Scale Review of the Strategy

The period of the Homelessness Strategy is 2003 to 2006. Thereafter a complete review of the strategy will take place at the end of the three-year period i.e. March 2006.

6.1 Resources

Aberdeenshire Council has over the past number of years made significant financial contributions to providing both permanent and temporary housing solutions to accommodate homeless persons.

From the Housing Capital Programme in 2002/3 a sum of £971,000 was committed to projects particularly a second hostel facility and a supported accommodation unit for young homeless persons. In 2003/4, £334,000 has been identified to date for homelessness related projects with future proposals subject to Committee approval.

Recognising the extent of homelessness in Aberdeenshire the Scottish Executive has made an allocation of £356,000 in 2002/3 and £330,000 in 2003/4 to assist in meeting the costs of the 2001 Act requirements.

To this and for the same years, the Scottish Executive has allocated £89,500 and £239,500 respectively towards meeting the implications of introducing the Homelessness Task Force's Final Report recommendations. In addition the Scottish Executive have announced the allocation of funding of £596,600 for each of the years 2004/05 and 2005/06 to assist meet the requirements of the legislation.

Aberdeenshire Council welcomes this and has or will use the monies towards additional temporary accommodation provision, additional staffing, certain preventative measures and costs associated with producing this Strategy.

Concerns have been raised that significantly more financial investment in services will be necessary especially to meet supported accommodation requirements and to develop Information and Advice services. The need in these areas is still subject to ongoing investigation and therefore no estimate of cost exists at this time.

The Council currently incurs net costs of £359,000 p.a. on homelessness (gross expenditure of £779,000 less income of £420,000) from the General Fund. In addition the costs of running the homelessness hostels are charged to the HRA. Two of hostels have opened in the current financial year and therefore actual operating costs are not yet available and net costs of £7,140 for financial year 2002/2003 were incurred in operating the hostel in Peterhead.

Action Plan

Where resources are not show it indicates that there are either no resource implications or they have not yet been determined.

Objective 1: To work with partner organisations to develop and continuously improve the quality of homelessness services available in Aberdeenshire.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
1.1 New Housing Options Teams to be created within the Council's Housing service to deliver homeless allocation and enhanced advice services	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service	Met from existing HRA and Scottish Executive funding (four new posts (3 FTE))	December 2003	The establishment of new housing options teams
1.2 To use the homelessness assessment research (Love, 2003) to help inform multi-agency service development	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network (AHN)		Ongoing	Service development that is evidenced by reference to the homelessness assessment research
1.3 To use the homelessness assessment research (Love, 2003) to help inform service developments that address the area differences in Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network (AHN)		Ongoing	Service development that is evidenced by reference to the homelessness assessment research
1.4 To address along with partner agencies the areas of inter-agency working identified in the homelessness assessment research (Love, 2003) for improvement	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network (AHN)		Ongoing	Development and Implementation of proposals that address areas of inter-agency working identified for improvement
1.5 To seek to ensure that all partner organisations continually improve the quality of service provision	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, RSLs, Voluntary Sector Providers		March 2004	To agree and implement with partner organisations a framework for service review and development
1.6 Improved Housing Information and Advice service will be developed	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN)	Scottish Executive funding	December 2003	The development and implementation of an information and advice strategy
1.7 Internal staffing procedure manuals will be developed for Council staff and joint practice and protocols with other agencies will be developed	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN, Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)	Existing Council resources Resources of partners	December 2003	The development and utilisation of procedure manuals along with the provision of related training. Development of joint practice and protocols

Objective 1contd: To work with partner organisations to develop and continuously improve the quality of homelessness services available in Aberdeenshire.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
1.8 A comprehensive internal staff training programme will be implemented linked to staffing manuals that will also address the need to change our culture	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service	Scottish Executive funding, Existing Council resources	March 2004 onwards	The development and delivery of staff training programme. Culture change from 'gatekeeping' to 'empowerment'
1.9 Joint training will be established for staff of all organisations in the Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network that will also address the need for culture change	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN	Scottish Executive funding estimated at £5000 p.a.	Ongoing	The development and delivery of joint training programmes for staff of relevant organisations Culture change from 'gatekeeping' to 'empowerment'
1.10 To organise an annual conference on homelessness to strengthen the multi-agency approach and to provide further opportunity for joint training	AHN	As 1.9 above	Ongoing	An annual conference on homelessness and development of joint training
1.11 Financial Management of the homelessness budget will be reviewed	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service	Existing Council resources	October 2003	Close monitoring of the homelessness budget
1.12 Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network will be established as a key forum for planning and decisions with regard to service developments	AHN		Ongoing	Improved planning and co-ordination of service developments

Objective 2: To ensure an integrated Housing Information and Advice service is developed for everyone including homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
2.1 A thorough audit will be carried out of all current information and advice services for homeless people in Aberdeenshire	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)	Scottish Executive funding	December 2003	Completion of mapping exercise to identify the range of services available in Aberdeenshire
2.2 Negotiate with other advice providers to establish a network of information and advice services to ensure the availability of independent and integrated information and advice that meets agreed interim service levels	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN		December 2003	The establishment of an Aberdeenshire information and advice network that meets agreed levels and quality
2.3 To work with the network of those giving information and advice to homeless persons so that providers work towards and ultimately meet the HomePoint Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN		March 2005	The agreement with partner organisations to work towards achieving HomePoint standards within a set timeframe
2.4 To arrange appropriate training for all those giving information and advice to homeless persons	AHN	As for action point 1.9	March 2004 onwards	The provision of joint staff training for homelessness services
2.5 Develop a selection of information leaflets for homeless persons	AHN	Scottish Executive funding, Existing Council resources	March 2004	The development and distribution of a range of information and advice leaflets
2.6 Co-ordinate distribution of and monitor the use of the leaflets and regularly update	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)	Existing Council resources	June 2004 Monitor quarterly Update annually	The establishment of mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the use of leaflets
2.7 Investigation of potential uses of IT in information availability e.g. in public libraries including development of the Council's web site	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)	Investigation – Scottish Executive funding Implementation – funding to be determined	March 2004	Completion of assessment of the potential of I.T. for providing information and advice service in Aberdeenshire
2.8 Develop monitoring systems that include feedback from service users to assess the quality of information and advice and to inform service development	AHN, Aberdeenshire Council Housing Services		December 2003 ongoing	The establishment of mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the use of leaflets that include obtaining feedback for users

Objective 3: To develop awareness of homelessness issues through schools and further education establishments.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
3.1 Negotiate with the Education Services on introduction of housing education modules in all secondary schools	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Education Services.	Scottish Executive funding £3000 for the development of tailored lesson plans	March 2004	Housing lesson plans tailored for Aberdeenshire to be available in all secondary schools in the Shire
3.2 To work with Aberdeen Cyrenians to ensure the continuation of their Cygnet programme to seek to provide housing education to young people via schools	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Aberdeen Cyrenians		August 2003	The agreement with Cyrenians on the continuation of the Cygnet programme and the provision of relevant assistance to this programme
3.3 To make full use of SCSH 'Streets Ahead' information pack to make sure it is available through appropriate outlets	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Education Services	Scottish Executive funding £5,000	August 2003	The distribution of SCSH 'Streets Ahead' packs to secondary schools and to other relevant outlets and organisations in Aberdeenshire
3.4 To provide all care leavers with an individual 'Streets Ahead' information pack	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Education Services	As 3.3 above	June 2003 onwards	The distribution of 'Streets Ahead' packs through social work to care leavers

Objective 4: To seek to provide training programmes to maximise the employment opportunities of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
4.1 To explore, in order to better understand, the potential skill and training needs of homeless people	AHN		March 2004	The completion of a fact gathering exercise on the potential skills and training needs of homeless people
4.2 To identify relevant training currently available. (For example to discuss with Aberdeen Foyer/Aberdeen Cyrenians the training initiative that they are taking forward and how these initiatives may be adapted to the training needs of homeless people)	AHN, Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)		December 2003	The identification of training programmes currently available that may be relevant to address the skills and training needs of homeless people
4.3 To consult with training providers regarding current provision and the development of skill and training programmes that are specifically designed to meet the needs of homeless people	AHN, Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)		March 2004	The provision by training providers of relevant courses that help to address the skills and training needs of homeless people
4.4 To monitor and evaluate the impact of training programmes on the employment of homeless people	AHN		April 2004 onwards	The establishment of a system to monitor and evaluate the impact of training programmes on the employment of homeless people
4.5 To consider ways in which homeless people can gain employment in AHN agencies	AHN		Ongoing	Increased employment of homeless people in AHN agencies

Objective 5: To ensure that information, advice and services are available that specifically provides for the needs of vulnerable groups and that good lines of communication exist with the relevant establishments and agencies involved with these groups.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
5.1 To seek information from homeless persons that fall within the different vulnerable groups in order to better develop services that meet their particular needs	AHN		December 2003 onwards	The completion of an information gathering exercise from homeless people from vulnerable groups to better understand their information and advice needs
5.2 To assess the information and advice needs of the different vulnerable groups and the most appropriate channels to ensure effective communication with homeless persons within these groups	AHN		December 2003 onwards	The identification of the most appropriate and effective means of communicating with homeless people from vulnerable groups
5.3 To establish good communication links and protocols with the various institutions connected to vulnerable groups (e.g. hospitals, prisons, armed forces etc.) to ensure homeless people within these groups are directed to the most appropriate sources of information, advice and services	AHN		December 2003	The establishment of good and effective communication links and protocols with organisations linked to or providing services to vulnerable groups in order to maximise services to these groups
5.4 To develop and distribute a range of literature that provides for the specific information and advice needs of the different vulnerable groups	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)	Scottish Executive funding	March 2004 onwards	The development and distribution of leaflets aimed at vulnerable groups.
5.5 To identify ways to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of services to vulnerable homeless persons	AHN		April 2004 onwards	The establishment of a system to monitor and evaluate services to vulnerable groups
5.6 To work with other Council services and partner organisations to develop a common definition of vulnerability	AHN		April 2004	The development of a common definition of vulnerability
5.7 To work with partner organisations to develop joint protocols for sharing information and co-operating in order to improve services to vulnerable groups	AHN		April 2004	The development of joint protocols for sharing information and co-operating to improve services to vulnerable groups
5.8 To continue to provide and develop the range of supported accommodation for young people moving towards independence	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN		Ongoing	Development of the range of supported accommodation available in Aberdeenshire

Objective 6: To work towards reducing the number of evictions throughout all sectors.				
Action	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
6.1 To review the Council's rent arrears policy and procedure to seek to reduce evictions	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		September 2003	Completion of review of rent arrears policy and procedure
6.2 Review management of anti-social tenants with aim of reducing evictions, especially where children are involved	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		September 2003	Completion of review of management of anti-social tenants
6.3 To work with RSLs to establish protocols to review assistance that can be provided to prevent or delay action to repossess a tenancy	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, RSLs		March 2004	The establishment of protocols with RSLs that address the provision of assistance in order to delay or prevent repossession of a tenancy
6.4 To work with the Housing Benefit service to ensure appropriate practices are in place to maximise financial support for homeless persons	AHN, Finance Services Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)		Commencing September 2003	The establishment of practices with the Housing benefit service that maximise financial support to homeless people
6.5 To investigate the potential for a private sector landlords' forum and to seek to reduce the number of evictions in the private sector	AHN		June 2004	Establishment of private sector landlords forum
6.6 Establish protocols with private landlords where eviction is threatened with the aim of preventing or delaying such action	Private Sector Landlords' Forum		September 2004 onwards	The establishment of protocols with private landlords
6.7 To develop information and advice which is to be available to tenants and landlords in all housing sectors with the aim of reducing the number of evictions	AHN		March 2004 onwards	The provision of advice and information to tenants and landlords in all housing sectors with the aim of reducing eviction
6.8 Review and develop the Rent Guarantee Scheme under the RSI, especially with reference to 16-24 year olds	RSI Advisory group	RSI funding	September 2003	Completion of review and development of the Rent Guarantee Scheme and to regularly monitor the operation and impact of the scheme
6.9 The Council will explore the opportunities for supporting the establishment of Credit Unions in Aberdeenshire to assist homeless and other socially excluded people	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		July 2004	Completion of feasibility study with recommendations
6.10 To monitor the effectiveness of these activities in reducing the number of evictions	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)		September 2004 onwards	Establishment of a system to monitor the effectiveness of the various actions in reducing evictions

Objective 7: To seek to ensure that housing management in the social rented sector is geared towards preventing homelessness and making maximum use of the existing stock.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
7.1 To review housing management policies and procedure within the Council to ensure that they are effective in preventing homelessness	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		September 2003	Completion of review of housing management policies and procedures in relation to their effectiveness in preventing homelessness
7.2 To work with RSLs to ensure that their policies and procedures are effective in preventing homelessness	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, RSLs		June 2004	The initiation of ongoing review by RSLs of the effectiveness of their policies and procedure in preventing homelessness
7.3 Draft and agree joint protocol with RSLs on housing homeless persons	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, RSLs		June 2004	The agreement with RSLs of a joint protocol on housing homeless persons
7.4 To implement changes to the Council's scheme of allocation that ensure homeless persons are offered suitable accommodation for their needs and that they are treated equally in terms the number of offers made under the scheme of allocation	Aberdeenshire Council Housing service		April 2003	The implementation of changes to the Council's scheme of allocation
7.5 Develop a policy for the Use of Short Scottish Secure Tenancies in temporary accommodation	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service	Supporting People funding HRA (implementation)	November 2003	The development of a Council policy on the use of Short Scottish Secure Tenancies in temporary accommodation including the recruitment of appropriate support staff
7.6 Linked to action 6.5 to investigate the potential for a private landlord forum and to seek to maximise the use of the private rented sector where relevant	AHN		June 2004	Establishment of private sector landlords forum

Objective 8: To seek through the Local Housing Strategy provision of a range of good quality affordable housing for rent which aims to meet a variety of identified needs.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
8.1 To use the information from the homelessness assessment to inform the Local Housing Strategy	Aberdeenshire Council		September 2003	The inclusion in the Local Housing Strategy of the housing needs of homeless people referenced to the homelessness assessment
8.2 To ensure the Local Housing Strategy takes account of the housing needs of homeless people	AHN		September 2003	The inclusion in the Local Housing Strategy of the housing needs of homeless people
8.3 To continually assess the housing needs of homeless people and potentially homeless people in order to inform future Local Housing Strategies	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		Annually	The establishment of a process to regularly update the assessment of housing need of homeless and potentially homeless people in Aberdeenshire
8.4 To carry out further analysis to establish the range and location of supported housing required in order to meet assessed need	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		December 2003	Report of findings to be used in future planning of provision
8.5 To work with those responsible for Development Funding in Aberdeenshire to ensure it is directed to areas of high demand increasing affordable housing availability and reducing time spent in temporary accommodation for homeless persons	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Communities Scotland.	Aberdeenshire Council Capital Programme, Communities Scotland Development Fund	Annually	An increase in affordable housing in Aberdeenshire especially in areas of high demand and a reduction in time homeless people spend in temporary accommodation as a consequence
8.6 To work with RSL partners to provide housing in areas of need	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, RSLs	Communities Scotland Development Fund, Private funding	Annually	The provision of housing in areas of need
8.7 To review the Councils housing stock so that through conversions it can provide housing that reflects changing need primarily in relation to single person applicants and to work towards meeting the 2012 requirements	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service	Aberdeenshire Housing Capital Programme	Annually	Conversion of Council stock where appropriate so that it reflects changes in housing need
8.8 To explore the opportunities for flexible housing options and the use of planning gain powers in order to help meet the need for permanent housing for homeless households	Aberdeenshire Council	Planning Gain	Annually	To bring forward proposals on flexible housing options and the use of planning gain powers

Objective 9: To work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations so that no one has to sleep rough in Aberdeenshire by the end of 2003.

Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
9.1 To establish the need for specialist and supported accommodation to ensure that no one has to sleep rough	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, RSLs, Voluntary Sector providers		December 2003	Completion of information gathering exercise in relation to identifying need for specialist and supported accommodation in order to prevent rough sleeping
9.2 To explore the opportunities for working in partnership with others to address rough sleeping	AHN, RSL Advisory Group		December 2003	The establishment of partnership working through Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network to address rough sleeping
9.3 To seek to appointment additional specialist outreach workers to provide support to those at risk of losing their home	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Voluntary Sector providers	Scottish Executive funding, Aberdeenshire General Fund, Supporting People funding	August 2003	Appointment of additional specialist outreach workers to provide support service to those at risk of homelessness
9.4 Improve communication and information links with Grampian Police regarding rough sleepers and establish a protocol for referring rough sleepers to the Council	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Grampian Police		December 2003	Establishment of communication and referral protocol with Grampian Police

Objective 10: To provide a range of suitable, high quality temporary accommodation throughout Aberdeenshire.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
10.1 Assess the need for and arrange provision of a range of temporary accommodation throughout Aberdeenshire particularly in pressurised areas	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, Accommodation Officers, Voluntary Sector providers	Capital Programme and Scottish Executive funding Aberdeenshire contributions: Refuge (Banchory) - £80,000 Moray Road (Fraserburgh) - £32,000	Ongoing	Provision of a range of temporary accommodation throughout Aberdeenshire that is based on assessment of need
10.2 Monitor and address the quality of existing temporary accommodation provision	Accommodation Officers, AHN		Ongoing	The implementation of an ongoing programme of improvement in the quality of temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire
10.3 Seek to develop an Aberdeenshire Standard for temporary accommodation of all types	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN		Ongoing	The development of an Aberdeenshire standard for temporary accommodation
10.4 To increase the supply of alternative sources of temporary accommodation	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service	Scottish Executive funding	Ongoing	Increase in supply of temporary accommodation
10.5 To eliminate the use of Bed & breakfast accommodation for families with children	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, RSLs	Scottish Executive funding Aberdeenshire Capital Programme	April 2006	No homeless families with children placed in Bed & Breakfast

Objective 11: To seek to provide support for those homeless people with multiple needs who are not ready for independent living or where a strong risk of becoming homeless exists.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
11.1 Ensure effective links with after-care strategies and assess the extent of need for each client group in terms of accommodation and support requirements	AHN		June 2004	Establishment of links to after-care strategies and the assessment of housing and support needs for each client group
11.2 To review the range and level of supported accommodation available for different client groups and determine any gap in provision arising from the assessment of need	AHN		June 2004	Completion of review of supported accommodation available for different client groups and identification of any gaps in provision based on assessment
11.3 Following on the two actions above seek to develop projects using Supporting People funding to meet unmet needs	AHN	Supporting People funding	2004 / 2005	Development of projects using Supporting People funding
11.4 To maintain links to other strategies in particular the Supporting People Strategy, the Health and Homelessness Action Plan, the Domestic Abuse Strategy, the Joint Community Care Plan and the Children Services Plan	AHN, Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy)		Ongoing as and when strategies are reviewed	Maintenance of links to other relevant strategies
11.5 To liaise closely with the Aberdeenshire Alcohol & Drugs Action Team and agree joint objectives in relation to homelessness	Aberdeenshire Council, Voluntary Sector		Ongoing	Development of services for homeless people and those threatened with homelessness who have substance misuse issues
11.6 To consider the development of services for homeless people with difficult behaviours	AHN		Ongoing	The development of services to address the needs of this client group

Objective 12: To work towards a full assessment being made of each homeless person's housing and support needs.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
12.1 Investigate the potential for a single assessment of housing, health and support needs for homeless people	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN, NHS Grampian		January 2004	The review of the potential for single shared assessment
12.2 Linked to the above develop a joint training programme for all agencies involved in dealing with homelessness	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN, NHS Grampian	As before	July 2004	Provision of joint training programme for staff of relevant agencies
12.3 To review and come forward with proposals on the staffing levels necessary to deliver this objective of the strategy	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN, NHS Grampian		January 2004	Report base on review of staffing levels required to carry out single shared assessment
12.4 To work with partner agencies in providing the support required by individual homelessness applicants to assist them maintain a home of their own	AHN	Aberdeenshire Council funding, Supporting People funding, Partners resources	Ongoing	Provision of support services to homelessness applicants

Objective 13: To provide sufficient refuge and other accommodation and support for those individuals and families surviving domestic abuse.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
13.1 Undertake a review of the need for refuge and other accommodation and services to meet the needs of those suffering from, or the threat of, domestic abuse throughout Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, Domestic Abuse Strategy Team	Cost of Children Support Workers - Scottish Executive funding homelessness grant contribution £9,200 - Scottish Executive funding social work grant contribution £17,200 Scottish Executive funding £6,000 contribution for home security adaptations	September 2003	Completion of review of the need for refuge and other accommodation and services to meet the needs of those suffering from, or the threat of domestic abuse in Aberdeenshire. Including employment of 2 Children Support Workers, plus provision of home security measures
13.2 To seek to obtain additional funding for the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service post March 2004	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, Domestic Abuse Strategy Team		March 2004	The continuation of the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service beyond March 2004
13.3 Review the needs of children of women surviving domestic abuse	Domestic Abuse Strategy Team	Part funding from General Fund/Social Work Budget, Scottish Executive funding (£9,200)	December 2003	Completion of review of the needs of children of women surviving domestic abuse
13.4 Develop proposals for additional refuge places in South Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, Domestic Abuse Strategy Team, RSL partner	Communities Scotland funding, Scottish Executive funding £80,000	March 2004	Presentation of proposals for additional refuge places in South Aberdeenshire
13.5 To liaise with NHS Grampian regarding a review, through the NHS Grampian Health and Homelessness Action Plan, of the links between domestic abuse and health	AHN, NHS Grampian		December 2005	Completion of and report of review

Objective 14: To work in partnership with NHS Grampian in the development and implementation of the Health and Homelessness Action Plan 2002 - 2005 (HHAP) for Aberdeenshire				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
14.1 To participate in the steering group overseeing the redrafting of the HHAP	NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire Council, Voluntary Sector		December 2003	Active participation in the steering group
14.2 To participate in the working seminar to revise the HHAP	NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire Council, Voluntary Sector		October 2003	Participation in the working seminar
14.3 To work in partnership with NHS Grampian in the implementation of the plan	NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire Council, Voluntary Sector		Ongoing	Partnership working with NHS Grampian in the implementation of the plan
14.4 To explore with NHS Grampian the opportunities for dedicated research into health issues and health needs of homeless people in Aberdeenshire and to link to the HHAP	Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian		2003/2004	Working with NHS Grampian to explore the opportunities for dedicated research into the health needs of homeless people in Aberdeenshire

Objective 15: To work with relevant organisations and agencies to assist homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in obtaining adequate furnishings.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
15.1 To assess the need for furnished tenancies and to work towards this provision through utilising the new grant from Communities Scotland	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN	Scottish Executive funding £90,000 over period 2003/04 to 2005/06, plus bid to Communities Scotland for £16,000 grant	December 2003	Complete review of the need for furnished tenancies and implement an ongoing programme of provision utilising the grant from Communities Scotland
15.2 To establish a links with organisations that could assist homeless people obtain basic furnishings	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, AHN		December 2003	Establishment of links with organisations that can assist homeless people obtain furnishing
15.3 To explore with the DWP how homeless persons can get financial assistance to obtain furnishings	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service, DWP, AHN		December 2003	Clear guidelines on what help is available and how it can be obtained
15.4 Explore the opportunities for arranging collection, storage and distribution of second hand furniture to homeless people in Aberdeenshire	AHN		March 2004	The establishment of a scheme for collection, storage and distribution of second hand furniture to homelessness people in Aberdeenshire
15.5 Linked to action point 6.9 to explore the opportunities for supporting the establishment of Credit Unions in Aberdeenshire to assist homeless and other socially excluded people	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service		July 2004	Completion of feasibility study with recommendations

Objective 16: To maximise the support provided through the Supporting People Strategy and available financial resources for the benefit of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
16.1 To work with the Supporting People Team in developing new services which meet the support needs of homeless people	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, AHN		March 2004	The formation of close working links with the Supporting People Team in order to establish new services to meet the support needs of homeless people
16.2 To bring forward existing pipeline proposals for financial support through the Supporting People Grant that are aimed at providing for the support needs of homeless people	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, AHN	Supporting People funding	September 2003	Outcome are dependant on the availability of funding
16.3 To work with the Supporting People Team to review the operation of Supporting People funding in order to identify unmet needs	Aberdeenshire Council Housing & Social Work, AHN		March 2004	Identification of unmet needs and proposals on how these will be addressed

Objective 17: To develop and implement a monitoring framework in order to evaluate the Strategy				
Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timescale	Outcomes
17.1 Implement annual review of strategy and action plan	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy), AHN		March 2004 and annually	Completion of annual review of strategy and action plan
17.2 Develop various systems to gather feedback from service users on the various aspects of the Homelessness Strategy and service	Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy), AHN		September 2003	Establishment of mechanisms to gather feedback from service users on the Homelessness Strategy and service
17.3 To continue to monitor homelessness applications and carry out periodic updates of the homelessness assessment in Aberdeenshire	AHN. Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy), AHN		Ongoing	Establishment of system to monitor homelessness applications and periodic updates of the homelessness assessment in Aberdeenshire
17.4 To monitor the impact of the strategy on an area basis, so that area differences are addressed, as well as Aberdeenshire wide	AHN. Policy Officer (Homelessness Strategy), AHN		Ongoing	Establishment of a system to monitor the impact of the strategy on an area basis

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all members of the Homelessness Strategy Group and other people who were consulted in the development of the Homelessness Strategy. Particular thanks for their major contribution to the strategy go to:

Alan Grant	Langstane Housing Association
Paul Hannan	Aberdeen Cyrenians
Dr John Love	Robert Gordon University
Ken Milroy	Aberdeen Foyer
Sandy Murray	Tenants First Housing Co-operative
Nick Williams	Consultant.

Appendix 1

Inter-Agency Working¹⁷

Agency	Significant Providers of Services/Collaborators *
LA Housing	RSLs; advisory agencies (e.g. CAB, Shelter), Vol. sector (e.g. Barnardos, Foyer), Specialist organisations (e.g. Save Children), Health Services; other LA Departments (e.g. Social Work, Environmental Health, Education); Private Sector
LA Social Work (domestic abuse)	Women's Aid; LA Housing; Hanover HA; Langstane HA; Police; CPN (health)
LA Social Work (children & families)	LA Housing; Barnardos; Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
LA Education	LA Social Work; LA Housing; Health
Langstane HA	LA Housing; Barnardos; Cyrenians; Penumbra; Partnership Housing; Richmond Fellowship; Shelter
Grampian HA	LA Housing; 'other' HAs; Foyer; Cyrenians; Barnardos
Castlehill HA	Grampian Community Care Charitable Trust; LA Housing; LA Social Work; RSLs (e.g. Hanover, Langstane, Tenants First, Care, Ark)
Tenants First Housing Co-op	Shelter; CAB; LA Housing; GREC; Barnardos
Public Health	LA Housing; Voluntary Sector
Department of Work and Pensions	LA Housing; LA Social Work; Shelter; Salvation Army; the Church
Police	LA Social Work; LA Housing
Cyrenians	LA Housing; Langstane HA; Grampian HA; Foyer; CAB; Shelter; Barnardos; GRAN (Gordon Rural Advice Network); Private landlords
Barnardos	LA Social Work; LA Housing; CAB; Department of Work and Pensions (DWP); Job Centres; Salvation Army; Police; Shelter
Shelter	LA Housing; Langstane HA; Grampian HA; Tenants First Co-op; Cyrenians; CAB; Gordon Rural Action; Scottish Prison Service; LA Social Work (Prison); Cranston; CPN (health); Criminal Justice Services
Foyer	LA Housing; LA Social Work; Barnardos; Grampian HA; APEX; Save Children; Aberdeen College
Mediation	Cyrenians; Shelter; Foyer

* *With the exception of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), all of the agencies claimed to collaborate in providing services with the (other) agencies they identified as significant providers of services to homeless people in Aberdeenshire.*

¹⁷ Love, J. (2003) *Understanding Homelessness in Aberdeenshire: A study of the experience and views of service providers*

Appendix 2

Membership of Homelessness Strategy Group

Tim Bowditch	Aberdeenshire Council
Kate Rigby	Aberdeenshire Council
Gaye Morrison	Aberdeenshire Council
David Cooper	Aberdeenshire Council
Brian Cumming	Aberdeenshire Council
Paul Hannan	Aberdeen Cyrenians
Ken Milroy	Aberdeen Foyer
Sandy Murray	Tenants First Housing Co-operative
John Love	The Robert Gordon University
Douglas Bain	Shelter
Alan Grant	Langstane Housing Association
Elizabeth Cowan	Salvation Army
James Stephen	Department of Works and Pensions
Mark McEwan	Health Promotions
Val Tweedie	Health Promotions
Elizabeth Wallace	Family Mediation
George Edward	Victim Support
Janette McGarrity	Grampian Womens Aid

Appendix 3

Membership of Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network Group

Douglas Newlands	Aberdeenshire Council - Housing and Social Work Service
Brian Cumming	Aberdeenshire Council - Housing and Social Work Service
Janelle Clark	Aberdeenshire Council - Housing and Social Work Service
Elaine Dickson	Aberdeenshire Council - Housing and Social Work Service
David Cooper	Aberdeenshire Council - Planning and Environmental Service
Annette Johnston	Aberdeenshire Council - Education and Recreation Service
Paul Hannan	Aberdeen Cyrenians
Ken Milroy	Aberdeen Foyer
Sandy Murray	Tenants First Housing Co-operative
Dr John Love	The Robert Gordon University
Director	Shelter Aberdeen
Alan Grant	Langstane Housing Association
James Stephen	Department of Works and Pensions
Dr Linda Leighton-Beck	NHS Grampian
Mark McEwan	NHS Grampian
Dr Leela Gautum	Senior Clinical Medical Officer
Representative	Barnardos

Organisations Participating in Consultation Group

Victim Support
Family Mediation
Other RSLs

NOTE: The composition of both groups will be regularly reviewed to ensure representation from other relevant organisations and services and in particular to encourage representation on the Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network group from homeless people.

Appendix 4

Types of services provided offered by the different agencies taking part in the study¹⁸

As the table below shows, collectively, ten major types of provision were made available by agencies; accommodation, support & care, health, advice & information, referral, advocacy, education & training, mediation, counselling and strategy. In so categorising agency provision, however, it is important to note that there were wide variations in the 'content' of service offered under each of these headings with respect to different agencies.

Types of Service

Service	N*	Agency
1. Accommodation	9	LA Housing; LA Social Work (child); Langstane HA; Tenants First; Grampian HA; Castlehill HA; Cyrenians; Barnardos; Foyer
2. Support & Care	12	LA Housing; LA Social Work (abuse); LA Social Work (child); Langstane HA**; Police; Tenants First; Grampian HA**; Castlehill HA; Department of Work and Pensions; Cyrenians; Barnardos; Foyer
3. Health	3	Barnardos; Cyrenians; Public Health
4. Advice & Information	9	LA Housing; LA Social Work (abuse); LA Social Work (child); Department of Work and Pensions; Cyrenians; Barnardos; Shelter; Foyer; Family Mediation
5. Referral	9	LA Housing; LA Social Work (abuse); LA Social Work (child); Langstane HA; Grampian HA; Castlehill HA; LA Education; Shelter; Police
6. Advocacy	2	Shelter; Cyrenians
7. Education & Training	5	LA Education; Police; Cyrenians; Foyer; Shelter
8. Mediation	2	Police; Family Mediation
9. Counselling	5	LA Social Work (abuse); Langstane HA; Barnardos; Shelter; Family Mediation
10. Strategy	11	LA Housing; LA Social Work (child); LA Education; Langstane HA; Tenants First; Department of Work and Pensions; Public Health; Cyrenians; Shelter; Foyer; Family Mediation

*N = number of agencies highlighting provision of the service. In general, agencies did not highlight the full range of their services.

** = Services organised by the relevant Housing Associations but provided by other recognised (specialist) agencies.

Key: LA Housing = Local Authority Housing Department; LA Social Work (child) = Local Authority Child & Family Social Work; LA Social Work (abuse) = Local Authority Domestic Abuse Social Work; LA Education = Local Authority Education Department; Langstane, Grampian, Castlehill HAs = Housing Associations; Tenants First = Tenants First Housing Co-operation.

The most reported type of service offered by agencies was 'support & care', followed by 'strategy', 'accommodation', 'advice & information' and 'referral'. The majority of agencies taking part in the study provided such services. The remaining services, 'education & training', 'counselling', 'health', 'advocacy' and 'mediation' were provided by fewer than half of the agencies involved. All of the agencies were multi-service providers, with most (N=9) highlighting two or four services, while seven agencies highlighted between five and seven services.

¹⁸ Love, J. (2003) *Understanding Homelessness in Aberdeenshire: A study of the experience and views of service providers*

Appendix 5

Homelessness in Aberdeenshire Report prepared for Aberdeenshire Council Love, J. (2001)

Summary of Survey Findings - Health Enquiries

In terms of health, the survey sought information on respondents' general health, experience of long term illness or disability, registration with a GP, use of hospital based Accident & Emergency facilities and in-patient stays in hospital. A third of respondents regarded their general health as 'good', while the remainder assessed their general health as either 'fairly good' (33%) or 'poor' (29%). A third or more of respondents reported suffering from a long term illness (38%). Such illnesses were generally limiting in some way. Overall, 90% had registered with a GP, with women (97%) more likely than men (75%) to have done so. A quarter had used Accident & Emergency facilities in the last 3 months (27%) and a quarter had been hospitalised as a patient in the past year (25%).

Summary of Responses to Enquiries into: -

General Health

With respect to self-assessed general health a good indicator of personal well-being, the study found that over a third of respondents defined their own general health as 'good' (N=23, 38%), a third regarded their health as 'fairly good' (N=18, 29%) while more than a quarter assessed their health as 'not good' (N=18, 29%)¹⁹. Differences within the study group suggest that older people (i.e. those aged 25 years +) were more likely to report their general health as 'not good' than younger people, with 41% (N=14) and 12% (N=3) respectively of each group doing so. No other differences were found.

Next, respondents were asked whether they suffered from any long-standing illness or disability.

Long-Standing Illness or Disability

More than a third of respondents reported suffering from some kind of long-term illness or disability (N=23, 38%). The types of illness or disability reported varied widely but included physical and mental illness as well as learning disability. As such respondents reported suffering from conditions such as asthma, osteo-arthritis, heart disease and back problems with respect to physical conditions and alcoholism, drug problems, depression, aggression and anger with respect to mental health conditions. Some people suffered from both physical and mental health problems. In general respondents experienced such illnesses and disabilities as limiting, with 86% (N=19) reporting that their lives were affected in some way. For those with physical illnesses, their ability to walk, manage stairs or do basic household chores was seriously impaired, while for those with mental health problems a reluctance to 'leave the house' and social relationships in general proved difficult. Differences within the study group suggest that older people (i.e. those aged 25 years +) were more likely than younger people to experience such long-term and limiting illnesses or disabilities, with half of older people reporting such conditions (N=17, 50%) while less than a quarter of young people were similarly afflicted (N=6, 23%). Alcohol problems were particularly marked among older people with 17% (N=6) reporting such a difficulty and no young people. No other differences were found.

¹⁹ According to the latest national figures, 77% of people regard their health as 'good'; 18% as 'fair' and 5% as 'not good' (i.e. bad/very bad) (Scottish Health Survey, 2000). Also, 40% of the Scottish population has a long-standing illness, which is limiting for 56% of those affected.

Appendix 6

Planning Framework - Health & Homelessness

