



## **NO ONE LEFT OUT**

Communities ending rough sleeping





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Responsibility for preventing and tackling homelessness is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This strategy sets out the Government's plan for England.



## Forewords

My vision is of a fair Britain.

So I am proud of what we as a country have achieved in reducing rough sleeping over the past decade. Ten years ago our first rough sleeping strategy set out a clear ambition to reduce rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible.

With our partners, through reform and with investment in services, we achieved our immediate target of reducing the number of people sleeping rough by two thirds. Thousands of vulnerable people have come in from the cold and received support to find a home and rebuild their lives. Countless others who were at risk of homelessness have been supported to keep their home. This success is something we should celebrate.

Of course, seeing someone sleeping on the streets reminds us how, when things go wrong, lives can spiral out of control. In today's challenging economic circumstances I have pledged to do whatever is necessary to ensure people get the help they need and get through the downturn fairly.

What inspires us is less visible to the public – the stories of lives turned around. These show how people facing even the most difficult problems can be supported to realise their potential, live fulfilling lives and make a contribution to their communities. That is why we are setting out new plans to prevent people ending up on the streets and renewing our determination to end rough sleeping once and for all.

I thank everyone – staff in day centres, hostels and outreach teams, volunteers in community and faith-based organisations, businesses, health workers and local authority staff – who work each and every day to prevent homelessness and to reach out to those on the streets.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Brown".

**Gordon Brown MP**  
*Prime Minister*



Ten years ago, we set out an ambitious plan to cut rough sleeping by two thirds. Critics said that it couldn't be done. But thanks to the shared determination of all our partners, we achieved that goal several years ago. There have been significant and sustained cuts in the numbers of people who are living rough on the streets.

But behind the numbers and the target are thousands of inspiring stories of lives transformed. People who've not just been helped off the streets; but who have gone on to live successful independent lives, with stable families and rewarding careers, particularly thanks to our Places of Change programme.

It's no exaggeration to say that we are leading the world in tackling rough sleeping. We can be justifiably proud of what has already been achieved. But we can't be complacent: we believe we can go further still.

In our prosperous society, no one should suffer the indignity of having to sleep on the streets. The sight of a sleeping bag in a bus shelter or subway, while thankfully less common today, should be seen as morally outrageous in the 21st century.

We want to be bold and ambitious: we want to provide the support needed so that we eliminate rough sleeping on the streets of England once and for all, and to achieve this by 2012. This action plan sets out how we will achieve this, based on the lessons of the past ten years and some new approaches. It recognises the changes in who is at risk of sleeping rough, emphasises prevention to stop people reaching crisis point, and highlights the importance of helping people to address their long-term problems to get their lives back on track.

The Government is investing £200m to prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping; but more important than funding will be a renewed commitment and shared resolve to end rough sleeping. The tougher economic climate may bring new pressures and challenges, but I am confident this action plan prepares us well for the future.

Ten years ago, the then Prime Minister wrote "This is a problem that has been with us too long, and has ruined too many lives. It is time to solve it." This new strategy will help us make that final push, ending rough sleeping once and for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Iain Wright".

**Iain Wright MP**

*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government*

# Executive summary

## Building on success

- 1 No one should have to sleep rough in twenty-first century Britain. Our vision is to bring an end to rough sleeping once and for all. Ten years ago we launched our first rough sleeping strategy, setting out our plan to reduce numbers on the streets by two thirds and then to as close to zero as possible. That two-thirds reduction was achieved by 2002 and has been sustained since.

**This new strategy signals our intent to work with our partners to end rough sleeping by 2012.**

- 2 This success has been driven by focused action and new ways of working across the country, backed by substantial investment through local government and the third sector. Thousands of people have been helped off the streets including many who had been sleeping rough for a number of years. Through programmes such as Supporting People we have prevented thousands more vulnerable people slipping into homelessness in the first place.
- 3 Many will remember the much publicised London rough sleeper encampments of the 1980s and 1990s – the Bull Ring at Waterloo and Lincoln’s Inn Fields. These are gone. We have had real success and there have been substantial and real reductions in the number of people sleeping rough in all areas. This is a testament to the hard work and determination of local authorities, voluntary sector agencies and individuals who have worked tirelessly to tackle rough sleeping.
- 4 People coming off the streets now have real opportunities to rebuild their lives in hostels transformed by our Places of Change programme. These inspirational buildings and transformed services are changing the lives of people across the country.
- 5 But evidence from London and across the country shows that while services are effective at helping people off the streets, there is a constant flow of new people into rough sleeping. Most do not stay long on the streets. In some areas new groups including people from East Europe are sleeping rough presenting new challenges. Turbulence in the global economy could lead to further upward pressure on numbers.



## Our vision

- 6 Our success so far is something of which Britain can be proud, but we are not complacent. Ten years on from our first strategy, we are determined to make further progress. And we know that many of our partners share this determination. We welcome the campaign to end rough sleeping in London by 2012. We support this call to action and are adopting the same goal nationally. We want to see real and sustainable reductions in rough sleeping year on year, so that no one in England has to sleep rough by 2012. Our vision is to end rough sleeping once and for all.
- 7 To achieve our vision will be tough, especially in a turbulent global financial climate. But we will work closely with all partners in a positive, pro-active and co-ordinated way. We want people to get the help they need, so no one has to sleep rough. Services will act to prevent rough sleeping, or to bring people in as quickly as possible. People who have slept rough will be supported to improve their health, consider employment options and rebuild their lives.
- 8 The causes of rough sleeping are complex, spanning families and community networks, individual skills and behaviours, economic and support systems. But the effects are clear: rough sleeping is bad for those on the streets, bad for their neighbourhoods and bad for society as a whole.
- 9 Achieving positive outcomes for people at risk of sleeping rough is a litmus test of whether government strategies are reaching the most excluded in society. We have a strong platform to build on over the next four years, with significant expertise and commitment across the country and record investment in housing supply and homelessness services. This strategy sets out a new fifteen-point action plan working with partners and across government to secure our vision.

## The right help in the right place at the right time

- 10 People who end up on the streets have very different needs, and there are different challenges in different parts of the country. Most adults who experience sleeping rough simply need a place to live or some help to reconcile with family or friends or get into employment. Others have much deeper problems: people with multiple needs living chaotic lives. Often linked to substance misuse, many also have serious mental and physical health problems. This group need intensive, targeted and multi-disciplinary services. Young people who sleep rough are extremely vulnerable and also have very acute problems for example, resulting from a family breakdown, abuse or a forced marriage. But we have seen over the past ten years that with the right help people can get their lives on track and make a real contribution to their communities.

11 It is right that local areas take the lead. Government at the centre cannot have the local knowledge required to find local solutions. But there is more we can do to encourage and support areas. So we will:

- take further measures to prevent rough sleeping in all areas through effective housing options and a strengthened homelessness safety net, building on the success of our homelessness prevention programme
- share best practice in commissioning the cross-cutting services that prevent and tackle rough sleeping, and set up a new private sector leasing scheme to improve move-on from hostels in London
- extend positive activities that motivate people to take greater control in their lives and develop skills, building on the success of the Places of Change programme
- tackle worklessness through closer working with Jobcentre Plus, a new round of the Spark social enterprise initiative, testing of Working Hostels and promoting opportunities for employment in the homelessness sector
- improve access to health and social care services for people with multiple needs
- help local authorities address the causes and consequences of running away by young people and stop a cycle that can lead to rough sleeping later in life; and
- step up our efforts across Government and with local partners to tackle rough sleeping among new migrants.

## Empowering people and communities

12 Homeless people who sleep rough must have a greater voice and choice in services. We want to empower them and the communities they live in so they can make the most of the help and goodwill that is available. So we will:

- promote knowledge of local services and resources that can address rough sleeping and social isolation
- develop a community training programme to build capacity and skills so that local people can support isolated people to avoid sleeping rough
- promote more personalised services including testing individual budgets to increase the control people have over the services they need; and
- drive forward user involvement in services and active citizenship among people with experience of rough sleeping, including supporting peer advocacy to reduce evictions from hostels.

## Understanding the problem, finding solutions

- 13 While we will keep the local counts as a useful measure, we know that they provide a limited snapshot. They should be the start of the process not the end. We want to use the counts and other sources of data to bring together a fuller picture of the different needs of people sleeping rough, the services offered and the outcomes achieved. We want to make sure that people are getting the help that they need. This information needs to drive further action to tackle rough sleeping. So we will:
- launch a new approach to help local authorities monitor progress and track people sleeping rough, ensuring that counts are not just an opportunity to identify levels of need but more importantly to do something about it
  - launch “Street Needs Audits” to give us a much better understanding of the needs of people on the streets; and
  - develop new ways of using data to understand and monitor outcomes for people who have slept rough.

## Making it happen

- 14 Implementation of this strategy over the next three years will be funded through our £200m homelessness grant for local authorities and voluntary organisations – the biggest ever cash injection in homelessness services. We will reinforce delivery over the period of the strategy through a stronger cross-departmental focus at the centre of government and greater support at regional and local level. So we will:
- launch a new Champions programme, bringing together experts from across the country to support local areas and services, a £1m small grants programme over the next two years and invest £2.5m in a new Spark social enterprise initiative
  - encourage and support councils and regions to work strategically to end rough sleeping and work with the Mayor of London to develop new approaches in the capital; and
  - renew our focus on co-ordinating, driving and monitoring progress through our homelessness specialist advisers, regional resource teams and by working more closely across government departments.

# Chapter 1

## building on success

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Together we have reduced rough sleeping by two thirds since 1998. Britain is leading the world in tackling rough sleeping and we should be proud of our achievements. Today, there are far fewer young people sleeping rough than a decade ago. We have learned a lot about how services can help prevent homelessness and rough sleeping or help people move off the streets through assertive outreach. Our investment through the Places of Change programme has transformed many hostels and is changing lives across the country. The efforts of the last decade have not yet succeeded in stemming the flow of new people on to the streets, many of whom do not have significant support needs. A new focus on preventing rough sleeping and personalising services to meet individual needs will be necessary to make further progress.

- 1.1 Ten years ago the Social Exclusion Unit report on rough sleeping set out the case for change:

*“There are good reasons for aiming to end rough sleeping. It is bad for those who do it, as they are intensely vulnerable to crime, drugs and alcohol, and at high risk of serious illness, and premature death. And rough sleeping is bad for the rest of society. The presence of some rough sleepers on the streets will attract others – often young and vulnerable – to join them. Many people feel intimidated by rough sleepers, beggars and street drinkers, and rough sleeping can blight areas and damage business and tourism.*

*The longer people spend on the streets, the harder it is to return to anything like normal life. Many have severe problems with drugs and drink, or untreated mental illness. Others despair of finding a way back to family or friends – or no longer want to. But these are not reasons for doing nothing. Instead, they are reasons for launching a much more concerted drive to tackle this problem once and for all.”*

- 1.2 Since then we have made enormous progress. *Coming in from the cold* (1999) set out plans to deliver an interim target of reducing rough sleeping by two thirds. Britain is leading the world in tackling rough sleeping. Our target was achieved ahead of time and has been sustained since. Now, across the country, local authorities and their partners in the statutory and third sectors are working well together to prevent rough sleeping and to help people get off the streets. Investment and innovation are making high quality services the norm not the exception. *More than a roof* (2003) recognised the importance of tackling relationship, economic and health issues to prevent homelessness.

- 1.3 But we are not complacent, and neither are our partners. We believe that rough sleeping is so unacceptable that we must continue to find ways to reduce and eventually end the problem altogether. Rough sleeping is not an issue which can be solved through one-off initiatives and challenges and risks remain.

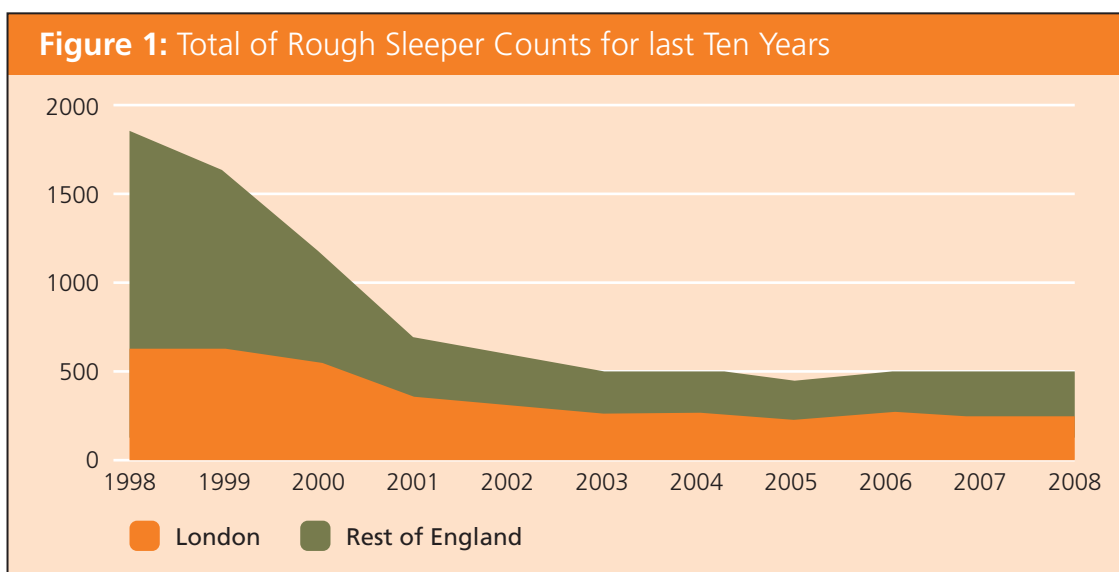
## Responses to our discussion paper

- 1.4 In April we published a discussion paper *Rough sleeping ten years on: From the streets to independent living and opportunity*. This sought views on what more we can do to reduce the number of people sleeping rough, what the current problems are and what solutions have been found. We received an excellent response from the public, voluntary organisations and local authorities. A summary of the responses is available on our website.
- 1.5 Analysis of the responses showed that gaps in services in some areas were matched by examples of successful models elsewhere. It seems that every type of service needed to prevent and tackle rough sleeping can be found – just not everywhere that people need them.
- 1.6 The responses also emphasised the need to strengthen local approaches across the country to stop people having to move into the larger cities to find somewhere to live. Where this does happen people can end up sleeping rough before accessing accommodation.
- 1.7 Finally many respondents said that a new push towards our goal of “close to zero” would help drive delivery. People recognised the value of the trend data provided by the current count methodology but there remains some confusion and concern about the purpose and methodology of the counts.

## The scale of the problem: how many people sleep rough?

- 1.8 In 1996 a methodology for assessing levels of rough sleeping was established based on a one-night count of people found “bedded down”. This methodology has been used to track progress against the total of 1,850 found on counts in 1998. In 2005 the National Audit Office progress report on homelessness said: “Counts might not capture all of those sleeping rough, but because the methodology has been applied consistently area-to-area and year-on-year, it is the most accurate measure of the relative scale of the problem and change over time.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *More than a roof: Progress in tackling homelessness*, NAO, (2005)



- 1.9 The most recent total, which includes counts carried out from January 2007 to June 2008, was 483, compared to 498 the previous period. These counts took place in 74 local authority areas. In 66 of these areas – nearly 90 per cent – the count found ten or fewer people on the night, all of which are included in the total. In contrast, Westminster with 111 people accounts for nearly a quarter of the total.
- 1.10 These counts provide an effective way of tracking progress over time and maintaining focus on the issue. But snapshot counts cannot tell the whole story. From the CHAIN<sup>2</sup> database in London and other sources we know that there is a constant flow of people on and off the streets. In London outreach teams see around 3,000 individuals sleeping rough over the course of a year.
- 1.11 Again from the CHAIN database we know that in London approximately 60 per cent of individuals met on the streets in the course of a year by outreach workers are seen only once and approximately 80 per cent three times or less. This is mirrored by admissions to hostels: 80 per cent of people moving into hostels from the streets have been seen three times or less on the street. So there is a constant flow of people coming to the streets but most do not stay there long. The proportion of people who are seen bedded down more than ten times in the course of a year is less than one per cent. These proportions have remained consistent, year on year, for the last three years.
- 1.12 There are a few people that have remained on the streets for long periods. In London we know that there are around 150 people who have been seen over many years on and off on the streets but have never come into accommodation. That entrenched group needs different approaches from the vast majority and we are pleased that third sector providers continue to try out new ways to engage and support them to move in.

<sup>2</sup> The Combined Homeless Action and Information Network (CHAIN) is a database to record all interactions between homeless services and people sleeping rough in the capital

## Who sleeps rough in 2008?

- 1.13 Through the work of outreach teams, the CHAIN database and research we have a good deal of information about who is still on the streets. The range of reasons people sleep rough are diverse and people from any background can end up on the streets. However, in London at least, where we have the best data, people who sleep rough do not reflect the overall population: some groups are more at risk than others.
- 1.14 CHAIN tells us that roughly 87 per cent of people contacted by outreach teams are male and many have problems relating to drugs (41 per cent), alcohol (49 per cent) and mental health (35 per cent) with around a quarter having a combination of these problems. People who have been in prison or the care system are overrepresented.
- 1.15 In recent years the proportion of people sleeping rough in London who are of British nationality has declined. The proportion from Central and Eastern Europe has increased and evidence from street counts suggests that up to 20 per cent of rough sleepers in the capital are A10<sup>3</sup> nationals. People of British origin are more likely to have more combined problems associated with mental health and substance misuse.
- 1.16 Former members of the Armed Forces have previously been identified as a distinct group among rough sleepers but recent research tends to suggest that the proportion of ex-Service personnel among the homeless and rough sleeping population has fallen. There is no authoritative data for 1997 but studies at the time suggested between one quarter and one fifth of rough sleepers had been in the Armed Forces at some stage. CHAIN now shows that in London in 2007-08, seven per cent of people contacted by outreach teams had spent some time in the Armed Forces in the past, including people who had served in Armed Forces of other countries. Better accommodation advice for those leaving the British Armed Forces and closer working between Government and the charitable sector including on the provision of supported housing ventures are thought to have contributed to this improvement. Learning from the success in helping former members of the Armed Forces at risk of rough sleeping can be used to help other groups in the future.
- 1.17 Rough sleeping by children and young people has also reduced, but not ended. In the last full year CHAIN records only three people aged under 18 years old who were contacted by outreach workers in London. However, this may under-represent the prevalence of young rough sleepers if, as some surveys suggest, young runaways often sleep rough for a single night, perhaps in out-of-the-way places (such as garden sheds) close to the place they have run from. The Young Runaways Action Plan, published in June 2008, set out our plans for improving services for those who run away, or who are at risk of running, and in particular our plans to support local authorities ensure that there are safe places for young people to go when they run away.

<sup>3</sup> People from the ten accession countries that recently joined the European Union

- 1.18 Some respondents to our discussion paper argued that some groups, particularly people from black and minority ethnic communities and women, may be more likely to seek out of the way places to sleep rough and therefore the figures may not reflect the full diversity of people who experience rough sleeping.
- 1.19 Analysis of the people going into hostels in London shows that the majority have had only one contact on the streets before they go in. While getting people off the streets can be seen as a success, this might also suggest that a number of people that are using the hostel system probably have lower support needs. They should have alternative routes available to them.
- 1.20 This evidence provides a strong case for a renewed focus on prevention in this strategy. It also underlines our need to move away from assumptions that everyone who sleeps rough needs the same level of support.

## Why do people sleep rough?

- 1.21 People can end up at risk of sleeping rough for a wide range of reasons. We can identify some key factors that increase the risk.
- 1.22 Poverty, debt and unemployment can bring stress and cause family breakdown. For individuals, health issues are known to be the root cause of many episodes of homelessness, whether physical or mental health or addictions or a combination of them all. As well as these individual factors, wider structural issues can increase the risk of homelessness and rough sleeping such as local shortages of affordable housing and patterns of migration.
- 1.23 Leaving care, prison and hospital can be trigger points. For some individuals a difficult childhood leaves them unable to sustain relationships and can lead to them losing their accommodation. Often people are subject to a combination of events that can mean they have nowhere to live. Migration is a significant factor in some areas, particularly London, where migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and other places account for almost a fifth of people sleeping rough.
- 1.24 Some young people under the age of 18 have similar reasons to adults for sleeping rough; some have different reasons. Some run away following arguments with family, often for relatively short periods. Others may have experienced long-term bullying, abuse or sexual exploitation, or serious conflict. Whilst local authorities have a duty to ensure that these young people have somewhere safe to go, a scared and vulnerable young person may not know how to get support.
- 1.25 One of the most important factors that determine how well an individual copes is the strength of the support network around them. Supportive and capable friends and family make all the difference. Without these, people may turn for help to professional or voluntary support in the community. If these are absent individuals can end up with nowhere to live. Once an individual has no stable place to live it becomes



increasingly difficult to build up the relationships and resources that could offer a buffer against future challenges. People can quickly end up on the fringes of society.

- 1.26 A significant majority of people who sleep on the streets do so for a short period of time and often find their own way off the streets. Those who are on the streets for longer often need an extensive range of support to help them off. Rough sleeping can have an additional detrimental effect on health, setting in train a downward spiral with the potential for severe consequences in terms of morbidity and mortality.
- 1.27 The best way to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets is to make the right resources available to stop people going onto the streets in the first place.

## Future trends and risks

- 1.28 Over the past decade we have enjoyed economic stability and growth in this country. Yet even in that favourable environment some people ended up on the streets.
- 1.29 As we launch this strategy we are facing more challenging times with upheaval in the global financial markets and challenges in our own economy and housing markets. An economic downturn and continuing pressures in the housing market will place increased strain on families and individuals. Most people will find a way through but in the short-term at least, more people may be at risk of homelessness.
- 1.30 The Government has taken action to secure our banks and financial system, and is co-ordinating a range of measures to help people and communities cope with the impact of the economic downturn. A major cross-government package of measures to meet current challenges in the housing market was announced on 2 September. This £1bn housing package will help first time buyers struggling to get onto the housing ladder, support vulnerable homeowners at risk of repossession through a national Mortgage Rescue Scheme and support the house-building industry. The Department for Work and Pensions has also announced new support measures to help vulnerable home owners meet their mortgage interest payments through extension of Support for Mortgage Interest.
- 1.31 In the longer term there are other challenges. We are facing a growing population with the number of households predicted to continue to grow and an ageing population with inevitable increased demands on housing, health and care services. We want to ensure that in responding to these large-scale pressures the relatively small number of people who are at risk of sleeping rough are not forgotten and receive the help they need.

## What are we doing already?

- 1.32 We have come a long way in the last decade towards creating a system that successfully tackles rough sleeping. Across the country there are services that engage and work with people sleeping rough: outreach teams, day centres, hostels, resettlement services, medical teams and floating support. There are also services that focus on preventing homelessness among those at risk of sleeping rough such as integrated services for people leaving prison, young people's accommodation projects, housing advice and housing options services. And in many places there is better joint working with drug, mental health and employment services. We have devolved more decision making to a local level through Local Area Agreements. Effective partnership working between statutory and voluntary sector agencies has resulted in many areas reducing rough sleeping numbers to close to zero.

### **Increasing housing supply**

- 1.33 For a generation, new demand for housing has outstripped supply. Increasing supply is central to tackling homelessness and our approach was set out in last year's Housing Green Paper *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable*.

### **Targeted action to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping**

- 1.34 Over the next three years, Communities and Local Government is investing £200m through local authorities and voluntary organisations to tackle homelessness. This includes a range of specialist provision for people sleeping rough. Through Supporting People, we are investing £4.9bn over the next three years to provide housing-related support to more than a million vulnerable people each year, including tens of thousands of people at risk of homelessness or who have slept rough.

### **Places of Change**

- 1.35 Our Places of Change programme has begun to radically transform services for people sleeping rough across the country. Since 2005 we have invested £90m in 178 projects in 62 local authority areas, and over the next three years we will invest a further £80m in 80 projects in 54 local authority areas. The programme is supporting real innovation in hostels, day centres and other projects that provide training and work experience for people moving away from the streets. New ideas in design and the use of buildings are being explored to help deliver better services. These buildings are now providing inspirational spaces that raise expectations and hope for staff and service users in the buildings.

1.36 The programme is not just about new buildings; changes in services and developing the staff that deliver them are even more important. We have worked to further transform the service offered by investing in:

- Leading Places of Change – a training programme for hostel managers and staff
- Activating Places of Change – a small grants programme (with additional funding from the Home Office in 2008) aimed at developing meaningful activity, social enterprise and education and training schemes in homelessness projects; and
- Spark – a programme to build and inspire social enterprises among homelessness organisations: [www.sparkchallenge.org](http://www.sparkchallenge.org).

*A manager at one of the transformed services recently said that when one of her clients walked into the new building she said: "This makes me feel special".*

### **Tackling social exclusion**

- 1.37 We prioritised social exclusion among adults in the current spending review period through Public Service Agreement 16. This aims to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training. We have also invested £6m in 12 Adults facing Chronic Exclusion (ACE) pilots, four of which help people who have been sleeping rough.
- 1.38 For young people, sleeping rough leads to real concerns about their safety and well being. Our National Youth Homelessness scheme, established in 2006, continues to work with local authorities to ensure that the right services are in place to prevent and tackle homelessness for young people aged 16 and over. A new indicator will be included in the National Indicator Set – NI 71 *Missing from Home and Care*. This will drive improvements in services for young runaways at the local level. Including ensuring local authorities understand better the demand for emergency accommodation, so that young people have safe places to go.
- 1.39 With ten years of success and learning, and a range of effective programmes in place, we have strong foundations from which to drive further progress.

## Chapter 2

# renewed drive towards zero

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No one should have to sleep rough. In this strategy we now signal our intent to work with our partners to end rough sleeping by 2012. To make that happen we want to make sure that in every part of the country people get the help they need, so no one has to sleep rough. Services will act to prevent rough sleeping, or to bring people in as quickly as possible. People who have slept rough will be supported to improve their health, consider employment options and rebuild their lives. After a decade of progress we are more confident and determined than ever that we can make progress towards this goal building on the commitment, innovation and energy of our partners across government, in local authorities, the third sector and all our communities.

This strategy sets out a new fifteen-point action plan working with partners and across government to secure our vision.

### A new drive towards zero

- 2.1 **Through this new strategy we now signal our intent to work with our partners to end rough sleeping by 2012.** We are clear: no one should have to sleep rough in twenty-first century Britain. Ten years ago we launched our first rough sleeping strategy, setting out our plan to reduce numbers on the streets by two thirds and then to as close to zero as possible. Together we achieved and sustained the two thirds reduction since 1998. But now we want to go even further.
- 2.2 We in government can and will do more. We set out below how we will strengthen our co-ordination and cross-government efforts to find new solutions. But there is a limit to what can be achieved through central government. Ending rough sleeping depends on communities rising to the challenge.
- 2.3 We know that many of our partners share our determination to make further progress. We welcome the campaign to end rough sleeping in London by 2012. We will work with the Mayor, the London boroughs and all partners to pursue this goal. Reducing rough sleeping further will also require a new concerted effort across the country.

- 2.4 Our original strategy concentrated on helping people off the streets. This new strategy has a different focus – ensuring that housing and other support services are available across the country so no one need sleep rough. This strategy sets out how we will support areas to achieve this, and the steps we would like our partners to take.
- 2.5 There will need to be long-term and sustainable change to secure our vision. More immediately, we want to ensure that help is available quickly for anyone on the streets now. Over the longer term we will be able to shift the focus from monitoring numbers on the streets to monitoring the speed of response when people face a housing crisis.
- 2.6 Achieving further progress will depend crucially on how quickly we and our partners in local government and the third sector are able to implement this action plan. We can deliver change together if all stakeholders are able to align themselves with the national and local effort.
- 2.7 Progress will also depend on close working and co-ordination across a variety of public services, local authorities and the third sector so that no one falls through the cracks. We will need to tap into the inspiring commitment, innovation and energy of front line staff and services across the country.
- 2.8 As important as reducing the national total is that we achieve further reductions in every region including London and that action is taken even where the number of people sleeping rough is low. We will also monitor closely progress on helping the people who have been on the streets the longest. No one should be left out.
- 2.9 It will also be our priority to improve opportunities and outcomes for people who have slept rough, helping them to move permanently from the streets, with a particular focus on employment, skills and health.

## Focus of this strategy

- 2.10 This strategy focuses on solutions for people who are either at risk of sleeping rough, actually sleeping rough, or in hostels or more settled homes but still need support to reintegrate in the community following a period sleeping rough.
- 2.11 The term ‘rough sleeper’ is not always helpful and can lead to stereotyping. People who sleep rough have a wide range of needs and come from diverse communities and experiences.
- 2.12 The majority of people who experience rough sleeping do so for a short time and have lower support needs. They need access to low threshold and low resource solutions to get their lives back on track. This includes some new migrants who, while they may have low support needs at first, will become entrenched if they remain on the streets.

- 2.13 There are others on the streets and in hostels who have chaotic lives and multiple needs. People in this group have often faced homelessness numerous times, may have suffered trauma in childhood or later in life. They may have poor mental and physical health, often combined with substance misuse or personality disorder.
- 2.14 The focus of this strategy is on adults, although where children and young people who sleep rough have particular needs, we have tried to reflect these. Issues relating to children who are at risk of sleeping rough after running away from home or care are addressed in more detail in the Young Runaways Action Plan published in June 2008 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, in partnership with the Home Office and Communities and Local Government<sup>4</sup>.

## A new action plan

- 2.15 The next chapters of this strategy set out a fifteen point action plan for the next four years. It sets out the specific actions we will take across government and how we will work with and support our partners nationally, regionally and locally. It builds on the progress made and taps into the energy, innovation and commitment of people working in the field.

<sup>4</sup> [www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/runaways/downloads/YoungRunawaysActionPlan.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/runaways/downloads/YoungRunawaysActionPlan.pdf)

# Chapter 3

## the right help in the right place at the right time

This chapter commits to new action to:

- prevent rough sleeping in all areas through effective housing options and a strengthened safety net, building on the success of our homelessness prevention programme
- share best practice in commissioning the cross-cutting services that prevent and tackle rough sleeping, and set up a new private sector leasing scheme to improve move-on from hostels in London
- extend positive activities that motivate people to take greater control in their lives and develop skills, building on the success of the Places of Change programme
- tackle worklessness through closer working with Jobcentre Plus, a new round of the Spark social enterprise initiative, testing of Working Hostels and promoting opportunities for employment in the homelessness sector
- improve access to health and social care services for people with multiple needs; and
- step up our efforts across Government and with local partners to tackle rough sleeping among new migrants.

### We know

- 3.1 Timing is crucial. The earlier a person gets help the less help they need. Help to prevent homelessness works best when it is offered before someone faces a crisis. And we know how an emphasis on prevention has helped thousands to remain in their home. Targeted and joined up help for young vulnerable people helps them avoid ending up on the streets. Focusing on transitions can help such as the advice given to people leaving the Armed Forces. We also know that people desperately seek ways to avoid ending up on the streets and we must reinforce their efforts to find effective help.

- 3.2 Everyone facing sleeping rough has almost certainly somehow found himself or herself temporarily at least unable to get help from family, friends or community. The majority do not have high needs and are seeking easily accessible accommodation that they can afford, although they may have other issues in their lives that need resolving. In this situation people may turn to their local council or advice centre but if they are not in “priority need” the help they are offered is often limited.
- 3.3 The approach should be to reconnect people to family, friends and community wherever possible and to enable access to housing for those who need it. This approach will save money in the long run, so that people are not left to sleep rough before they get effective help and do not have to move to other areas, further away from any social network, to try to find somewhere to stay.
- 3.4 People with higher support needs who are at risk of sleeping rough should get an assessment of their needs, personalised interventions and planned housing pathways. This might include ensuring engagement with suitable local primary care services, supported housing such as hostels or in some cases registered care. They may be on the point of leaving an institution such as prison or hospital and this offers a real opportunity to prevent rough sleeping. Where people need access to hostel services, it is essential that these are readily available without the application of local connection criteria which are prohibited by current Supporting People grant conditions.
- 3.5 We also know that some people who sleep rough lead chaotic lives and have multiple needs such as substance misuse, poor mental or physical health or low skills. They are people facing chronic exclusion. This group draw on a lot of resources but often fail to get effective help. Finding lasting solutions requires intensive and often long-term support from a wide range of partners.

## Future outcomes

- 3.6 We want:
- people to get the right help at the right time wherever they are
  - clear routes that prevent people sleeping rough in every area
  - an effective safety net for everyone
  - real joined up and effective services for the most excluded; and
  - more sharing of the knowledge, experience and skills that can make a difference.



## Local leadership, local services

- 3.7 The real work in preventing and tackling rough sleeping takes place in every village, town and city across the country. So making further progress will need a continued focus by local leaders, the energy, innovation and expertise of service providers and a commitment to work together with a wider group of partners. People with experience of sleeping rough must be included in developing solutions.
- 3.8 Our aim is that every area has the range of appropriate housing and support services, for both adults and young people, in place so that no one need sleep rough. This will mean having effective housing advice, prevention and options for all. For people with higher support needs, especially young people, or people with chaotic lives and multiple needs, this may mean commissioning a range of specialist services.
- 3.9 We are committed to devolving more decision-making and power to local communities. We have reduced centrally imposed targets and removed restrictions on a wide range of funding streams to allow local areas more scope to determine their own priorities. This means greater opportunity for local areas to deliver more integrated services for vulnerable and excluded people.
- 3.10 In many areas homelessness partnerships or forums bring the local authority and other statutory stakeholders together with service providers from the voluntary sector to develop the homelessness strategy and co-ordinate action. These often link into the Local Strategic Partnership and can therefore influence local commissioning decisions. Through our work with other government departments we will encourage local commissioners to learn from examples of cross-cutting commissioning and service provision that can make the difference for people with multiple needs.

### **ACTION 1**

**We will promote prevention of rough sleeping in all areas through effective housing options and a strengthened safety net.**

- 3.11 Many people who experience sleeping rough need little more than help to find suitable accommodation and perhaps help to rebuild relationships in their new community. People facing a housing crisis who are not in priority need should receive effective help so that they do not end up on the streets. A local approach that enables access to accommodation for people who would otherwise need to sleep rough and look for a hostel will stem the flow of people on to the streets.
- 3.12 We want to encourage all local authorities to strengthen interventions that prevent rough sleeping building on the success of work to prevent statutory homelessness. Our Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme provides an opportunity to test approaches that strengthen housing options services.

- 3.13 When people are at risk of losing their home through repossession they need fast and effective help. We will continue to support our partners in the third sector such as Shelter and Citizens Advice Bureaux to ensure good quality advice and support is available to help people who get into financial difficulties. We are also working with the Legal Services Commission to ensure that everyone is able to access free legal advice on housing issues through Court Desks at county courts.
- 3.14 We will promote access to the private rented sector for people with low or no support needs, for example by encouraging local authorities to expand access to rent bond schemes to single homeless people. We will look further at ways to achieve this in light of Julie Rugg’s review of the private rented sector. We will also facilitate links with projects set up under the Cabinet Office funded Mentoring and Befriending scheme to support people in independent accommodation.
- 3.15 Expectations around obtaining self-contained accommodation can be unrealistic especially in areas where housing is expensive and can significantly reduce the number of accommodation options available to the individual. We will therefore explore ways to encourage and support people to use other options such as finding a flat or house share through local classified advertising. We will test replicating the supported lodgings programme, which has delivered to good effect in tackling youth homelessness, to see if it would work for older age groups at risk of sleeping rough.

**Case Study: Hope Worldwide – Two Step Programme**

This programme, run by a faith-based group in East London, aims to link single people with low support needs into private rented accommodation. After a referral and interview process the project places the prospective tenant with a volunteer host for short period whilst an appropriate accommodation option is identified. A volunteer mentoring scheme runs alongside so individuals are offered some support in their new tenancy.

- 3.16 Even with all these other opportunities in place, some people will inevitably find themselves in a crisis and needing immediate help. In twenty-first century Britain it is simply not good enough that people are left to sleep rough: there must be an effective safety net in every area so people can avoid sleeping rough. The best local authorities have already put in place effective routes into private sector accommodation for people who are not in priority need with interim solutions for those immediately at risk. Where such arrangements are not in place people can be left to sleep rough or face the need to move to another area to try to access emergency hostel accommodation. This places additional strain on those local authorities that do have hostels.

- 3.17 Where at all possible we want people to remain in their home area so they can draw on their existing networks to help resolve their problems. When people have to move to access emergency housing their networks can be severed and they are more likely to face isolation.
- 3.18 As we develop our future housing policy we will consider proposals to reform the homelessness legislation, including a stronger safety net for people at risk of sleeping rough.

*“An organisation delivering an excellent service ... has well publicised and highly effective out of hours advice and emergency accommodation arrangements in place to ensure the risk of people needing to sleep rough is minimal”*

**Audit Commission – Housing Inspectorate Key Lines of Enquiry (2008)**

## **ACTION 2**

**We will support best practice in commissioning of services that prevent and tackle rough sleeping.**

- 3.19 There is now more scope than ever for cross-cutting commissioning of integrated services that prevent rough sleeping and achieve better outcomes for people with complex multiple needs. In areas where the numbers of people requiring these services are low, commissioners will need to work together at a sub-regional level for example, through Multi Area Agreements. This approach will be necessary where the few people that do sleep rough have high support needs. Local areas should seek to draw on the expertise of neighbouring areas or work in partnership with specialist providers. They should also keep the range of services in the area under review and consider if unmet need might be met through redesigning or enhancing existing provision.
- 3.20 The new Local Area Agreements empower local authorities and partners to deliver the best solutions for their areas and to innovate and respond to local needs. Rough sleeping is linked to many of the priorities in the new national set of 198 indicators on which the LAAs are focused.
- 3.21 There are already a range of tools and resources to support commissioning of services for vulnerable groups.

### Existing commissioning and procurement tools and resources

Needs Analysis, Commissioning and Procurement for Housing-Related Support: a resource for housing-related support, social care and health commissioners  
[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingrelatedsupport](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingrelatedsupport)

The Department of Health's World Class Commissioning website  
[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Commissioning/Worldclasscommissioning](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Commissioning/Worldclasscommissioning)

Improving Practice in Housing for Drug Users – A Partnership Project  
[www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/dip/improving-practice-housing/](http://www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/dip/improving-practice-housing/)

The National Treatment Agency produce a range of good practice guidance on commissioning of services for treatment of drug misuse treatment, which includes links to guidance on accommodation issues  
[www.nta.nhs.uk/areas/treatment\\_planning/treatment\\_plans\\_2009\\_10/adult\\_drug\\_treatment\\_planning\\_and\\_needs\\_templates\\_and\\_guide.aspx](http://www.nta.nhs.uk/areas/treatment_planning/treatment_plans_2009_10/adult_drug_treatment_planning_and_needs_templates_and_guide.aspx)

Alcohol commissioning  
[www.hubcapp.org.uk/home.htm](http://www.hubcapp.org.uk/home.htm)

Improvement and development agency  
[www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=6583598](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=6583598)

Housing Associations Charitable Trust have developed a resource kit to help small providers rise to compete for Supporting People (SP) contracts  
[www.hact.org.uk/downloads.asp?Pagelid=175](http://www.hact.org.uk/downloads.asp?Pagelid=175)

SITRA have a range of resources for supported housing agencies  
[www.sitra.org.uk](http://www.sitra.org.uk)

Homeless Link's website includes Clean Break, MOPP, Older Homeless Persons Needs Analysis and other material on commissioning homelessness services  
[www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)

A number of Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) have programmes focused on supporting local authority commissioning and procurement  
[www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8595264](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8595264)

National Offender Management Service provide a range of support and resources relating to commissioning services for prison leavers  
[www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

- 3.22 Tackling the flow on to the streets is a priority in this strategy. We will develop a new Prevention Mapping Toolkit that will help local areas clearly identify their local routes into rough sleeping. It will highlight specific groups at risk and identify opportunities to design and target interventions through joint commissioning or sub-regional services in particular where people are leaving their home area because of lack of services, or where other agencies could assist further upstream. It will also help local areas learn from successful approaches in other areas.
- 3.23 The Prevention Mapping Toolkit will promote an approach that involves people who have direct experience of sleeping rough as experts in identifying pathways into rough sleeping and the points in the journey where more effective interventions would have helped.
- 3.24 One of the Adults facing Chronic Exclusion (ACE) pilots run by the South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust has developed a New Directions Index. This uses a multi-agency approach to identify people with chaotic lives and multiple needs so they can be referred into a new team. We will learn from the ACE pilot evaluation and look at how we can test this approach across a number of new areas, linking to integrated commissioning decisions.

#### Case Study: New Directions Index

The aim of the New Directions Team is to provide an early intervention for residents from the London Borough of Merton who are not engaging with frontline services, resulting in multiple exclusion, chaotic lifestyles and negative social outcomes for themselves, families and communities. A high proportion tend to have mental health problems, often in combination with substance use or personality disorder. The New Directions Index, used to identify people to be referred to the team, focuses on behaviours rather than diagnoses.

### Understanding and meeting housing need

- 3.25 We have been reviewing emergency accommodation, providing young runaways with somewhere safe to stay. We will support the development of local, regional and sub-regional commissioning and provision of emergency accommodation following consultation with local authorities, service providers and young people themselves.
- 3.26 Our approach to increasing housing supply was set out in last year's Housing Green Paper *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable*. To help deliver this we have instigated a raft of reforms including the creation of the new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) which will bring together housing and regeneration into one national agency.

- 3.27 The Move-on Plans Protocol (MOPP) was developed by Homeless Link funded by our Homelessness Innovation Fund. Since it was launched last year local authorities all over the country have started to use it in partnership with local hostel providers and housing associations. MOPP clarifies the need for private rented, general needs and specialist accommodation for people living in hostels and other supported housing. We will ask Homeless Link to review how the MOPP is being used in different areas with a specific focus on how the data produced can link to local housing market assessment, housing strategies and investment decisions. We will also consider what further action is needed to secure move-on accommodation for hostel residents with medium and high support needs.
- 3.28 The Government's investment in social housing through the new Homes and Communities Agency will continue to support development of new supported and specialist housing, based on an assessment of need at local and regional level. We know that personalised support services can help people to address long-term problems and move towards independent living.

### **Move-on in London**

- 3.29 There are particular problems with access to move-on accommodation in London. In order to tackle this approximately 3,800 housing association tenancies were provided during the early 1990s for people who had slept rough. Following the establishment of the Rough Sleepers Unit, further funding was provided to develop a pan-London tenancy support service (TST) linked to the units, with referrals going through the central Clearing House managed by Broadway.
- 3.30 Over the period of this strategy we will increase move-on options by developing a new scheme to make available up to 300 additional units of leased accommodation. These will be for people who have slept rough and are assessed as needing the stability and support they can offer in order to move on from a hostel. Referrals will be managed through the Clearing House and supported by the TSTs. Both the leased and the housing association properties will be offered on two year fixed term Assured Shorthold Tenancies, as part of an accommodation pathway for former rough sleepers with support needs. Move-on into the private rented sector will be facilitated by the tenancy support workers.

### **Professional training for homelessness services**

- 3.31 Improving the quality of services for homeless people remains a high priority. That is why we launched Leading Places of Change – the leadership programme for the homelessness sector. In June 2008 the first 120 graduates celebrated their success in gaining a new postgraduate level qualification focused on running homelessness services. We will continue to support this programme, and will scope with our partners enhanced training and qualifications for frontline homelessness workers.

## ACTION 3

We will extend positive activities that motivate and empower people to take greater control in their lives.

- 3.32 For many people getting off the streets into a hostel, or even getting their own flat, will not necessarily deal with their underlying problems. Anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, self-harm or challenging behaviour, often exacerbated by misuse of alcohol and drugs, means that people can feel stuck in a life that is damaging to themselves and others. They may have lost contact with family and the social networks they do have are with others with similar problems. Feeling they have no control over their lives, people can stop believing that anything they do will make things better. In this situation people begin to identify themselves as living outside society, finding companionship only among others who feel rejected by the community.
- 3.33 Many organisations working with homeless people recognise that the opposite is also true. Improving the environment, trusting and including people in decisions and supporting them to do activities that they value can raise expectations of what can be achieved and begin to reverse this process. Involvement begins to increase a person's belief in their own capacity to take effective action in their lives.
- 3.34 Getting people engaged and involved means starting with informal activities that they enjoy and value. We want to increase opportunities for people moving away from rough sleeping to take part in activities that give hope, build skills, increase confidence and self-esteem and above all strengthen positive relationships. For some people this will be needed before they are able to take more formal steps towards employment.
- 3.35 The new Places of Change buildings should be a resource for their local community. We will work with our Places of Change partners to increase access to their facilities to others in their area which could in turn bring in a wider range of activities for homeless people. Homeless Link's regional managers support Places of Change agencies and will continue to support agencies to find and link up with opportunities in the local area.
- 3.36 Day centres should be places of engagement, inspiration and involvement. Increasingly they can also be places that draw in the local neighbourhood and link people back into opportunities in the surrounding community. Partnerships with others in the area such as local learning providers or employment services could help day centres provide a wider range of services. We are also working with the direct access shelters that we fund in London to ensure that a range of activities are available.
- 3.37 Over the past ten years Arts Council England and Sport England, with funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Learning & Skills Council and the National Lottery have supported a range of innovative projects for homeless people.

### Case Studies

**Street League** transforms the lives of homeless people through a structured football and education programme that helps build confidence, improve health, extend social networks and develop skills towards long-term education, employment and independence. [www.streetleague.co.uk](http://www.streetleague.co.uk)

**Streetwise Opera** gives homeless people opportunities to further their personal development through participation in music making of the highest professional quality and to promote more positive attitudes towards homeless people. [www.streetwiseopera.org](http://www.streetwiseopera.org)

**Cardboard Citizens** uses Forum Theatre and performing arts to give homeless people a voice – enabling them to reach and recognise their potential. Their work seeks to personally inspire and motivate people, build skills and confidence, and support individuals to raise and face the issues necessary for them to make positive changes in their lives. [www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk](http://www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk)

**Opening the Doors** is a London Libraries Development Group project on improving access to reading, learning and information services for and with vulnerably housed people in public libraries, and ensuring that library services are available for homeless people in a way that is appropriate and meets the needs of service users.  
[www.lda.org.uk/uploads/OtD%20simple%20summary%202021107.pdf](http://www.lda.org.uk/uploads/OtD%20simple%20summary%202021107.pdf)

3.38 Government departments will continue to support and extend positive activities for homeless people.

## Raising skills

3.39 Raising people's skills can be the key to them moving permanently off the streets. This might be the practical skills needed to look after a tenancy, the "soft skills" such as managing time or working in teams or the skills that people need to find and keep a job. Involvement in activity that builds people's skills can also build their confidence, motivation and aspiration for the future. Our Places of Change programme means that many more people who move off the streets into hostels will be able to benefit from top quality facilities and support to build their skills and motivation.

3.40 We will work across government departments to develop a new strategy and major policy paper on informal adult learning, led by Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. Together we will promote understanding of the crucial role that participation in activity such as sports, the arts, learning activities or volunteering can have in linking excluded people with communities and starting the longer journey towards formal employment. To achieve this we will draw together research into the impact of this kind of activity.



- 3.41 As well as these informal opportunities we want to help people develop their skills through more formal training and education. We will help our next step service and the Careers Advice Service, and from 2010 our new *adult advancement and careers service*, to reach out to and work with people in hostels and day centres, linking people into the wide range of opportunities in their area.
- 3.42 We will build on the progress already made in some areas working with the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) to ensure that local learning institutions such as Further Education colleges are reaching out to people who have slept rough. And we will promote examples of partnership working and approaches that demonstrate what is possible. One example is the Learning Links scheme run by the Brighton Housing Trust with funding from the LSC. This scheme developed a directory of local learning opportunities and offers structured routes into learning for homeless people in Brighton.

## ACTION 4

**We will promote and enable opportunities for homeless people to break out of worklessness.**

- 3.43 Over the past decade we have encouraged an increased focus among frontline homelessness agencies on helping people into work. A range of innovations and new partnerships have given us a much better understanding of the barriers that people can face in the jobs market as they move away from rough sleeping. Some of these barriers are personal such as health, confidence or skills. Others are connected to factors in the person's situation such as high rents, the expectations in some hostels and lack of information about the financial help people can get once they are in work.
- 3.44 We are already taking steps to push this agenda forward. We have supported Business in the Community's *Business Action on Homelessness* project which helps people make the journey to work. Since 2007 we have also been supporting the Transitional Spaces Project "invest to save" pilot in London and Newcastle. This project aims to help people in hostels find work and move into the private rented sector by offering intensive job coaching.
- 3.45 Across the country there are numerous examples of joint working between Jobcentre Plus teams and organisations supporting homeless people. For example, in London a specialist team of Jobcentre Plus advisers run sessions in hostels and day centres to provide personal advice on benefits and looking for a job.

## Raising expectations

- 3.46 Evidence shows that work is good for wellbeing, health and life chances. That is why our ongoing welfare reform programme aims to achieve 80 per cent employment rate among the working population. But this should not mean that those furthest away from the job market are left to a life on benefits. So in our proposals on the next phase of reform set out in *no one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility* we are consulting on how we can extend help and raise expectations.

## Support to get a job

- 3.47 Homeless people give a clear message: the vast majority want to get into work as soon as they can<sup>5</sup>. We share their ambition. So now we will raise expectations and refocus efforts centrally and across the country. Our goal is for the majority of adults who have slept rough to move into work within a year of them coming off the streets. For those for whom the journey will inevitably be longer, we will want clear plans that set out how any barriers will be addressed and how opportunities will be offered to build their confidence, skills and hope. We recognise that there will be some people for whom work is unlikely to be an option because of the severity of their needs.

### Case Study

Jimmy, now in his mid 40s, spent 15 years on the streets and was a heavy user of solvents, which made him hallucinate, behave bizarrely and smell of glue. After many months of patient engagement from outreach teams he agreed to move in to a high support hostel. At first he rejected all attempts to address his problem and a series of social workers left believing progress was impossible. But six years on things have changed. Jimmy has been off the glue for a year, is back in regular contract with his family and has moved into a supported flat next to the hostel. Every day now Jimmy goes out to work.

- 3.48 So through this strategy the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus, Communities and Local Government, and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills will work together to ensure that people moving away from the streets get the targeted and sustained help they need to get the right skills to find and keep a job. We will also work with colleagues across government to link this to ongoing work with criminal justice services.
- 3.49 Together we will identify and promote ways to integrate support and share expertise through new partnerships including homelessness agencies, programmes run through Jobcentre Plus and through our new prime contractors. We will highlight the expertise built up among some homeless agencies such as the

<sup>5</sup> *No home, no job*, Off the Streets and into Work, (2005)

Shekinah Mission in Plymouth or Thames Reach's new work academy in London and Jobcentre Plus' partnership work with homelessness services in London. As DWP rolls out its new contracts we expect more engagement between our prime contractors and specialist providers on the ground. We will monitor how this works and share examples of good practice. And we will see how our new "right to bid" process might encourage new approaches and ideas that could make a contribution.

- 3.50 Clearly helping people into work means having jobs available for them to move into. That is why we are working more closely with employers in our Local Employment Partnerships. These aim to link people often overlooked in the labour market to real jobs with local employers with extra support and training for those who need it. The range of support includes for example, work trials and access to pre-employment training geared to employers' recruitment needs.
- 3.51 We will ask our regional managers in Jobcentre Plus and our regional resource teams to work together to link more homeless organisations into this and other local programmes.

### **Better, targeted information**

- 3.52 Among the barriers that can deter people from taking up opportunities to move towards work can be a lack of understanding about a range of issues. We have seen the impact of exchange visits between Places of Change hostels and Jobcentre Plus offices. We will work together to disseminate targeted information covering issues such as:
- identification and claiming benefits
  - in-work benefits
  - participation in volunteering as a step towards work
  - rules about participating in training and education
  - programmes and support available such as work trials
  - volunteering or undertaking training for more than 16 hours per week.
- 3.53 We will ensure that there is information specifically tailored for people who have experienced sleeping rough and promoted through the organisations that work with them. We will promote this information through our Directgov site and through good practice sites aimed at key workers in hostels and other practitioners including in health services.

## Promoting social enterprise

- 3.54 Social enterprises offer a growing and important opportunity that can increase involvement of people in work. Indeed the homelessness sector has pioneered this approach – The Big Issue being one of the best known examples. We will continue to promote social enterprise and involvement of the business community in supporting people into work.
- 3.55 Last year Communities and Local Government launched the £500,000 Spark Challenge initiative working in partnership with the TREES Group, Eastside Consulting, and Big Issue Invest. This aims to help homeless organisations to become self-sustaining businesses rather than relying on charitable donations. The 15 winners went through an extensive tendering process where their ideas were evaluated by business experts in a ‘Dragon’s Den’ style event where they pitched their business ideas to a panel of business and social enterprise experts. See: [www.sparkchallenge.org/](http://www.sparkchallenge.org/)

### Case Study

Spark Challenge social enterprise winners – Acumen’s social enterprise, Possibility Place, is the regional centre for “self-belief and employability”. Through the enterprise, people are supported to develop skills for life and to move into employment or self-employment.

- 3.56 We will continue to support social enterprise and will invest £2.5m in a second round of the Spark programme including a business development fund.

## Jobs in homelessness services

- 3.57 We want more employers to be prepared to take on people who have slept rough as employees. But if we are going to expect this we should also expect those organisations helping homeless people to do what they can to employ people coming through their services. This not only benefits the individual who gets a job but provides positive role models for others coming through the same service.
- 3.58 That is why we will support Thames Reach to help other organisations to learn from their successful Giving Real Opportunities for Work (GROW) programme.
- 3.59 Finally we will continue to seek to maximise the impact of our ongoing investment in Places of Change, including raising the aspirations for people using these services. We will continue to ensure that our investment in this programme helps people move forward on their journey towards employment.

## Working Hostels pilot

- 3.60 Unemployment in hostels is high<sup>6</sup>. While we recognise that for some the journey towards work will take time, we also know that many people in hostels want help to get into work as quickly as possible. A number of barriers to work exist and these have been well described by organisations such as OSW (Off the Streets and into Work) and others. They include relatively high rents and an approach more geared towards people with high support. However, many hostels residents are unaware of in-work support. It will be important that hostel staff and the Jobcentre Plus promote in-work support to residents in order to better tackle high levels of worklessness.
- 3.61 We want to test new approaches and pathways including development of a new style of hostel geared towards supporting and stabilising people in employment. These hostels should be a stepping-stone enabling residents to move on from rough sleeping into work or into alternative housing pathways. They will also offer an alternative and quicker route into independent accommodation ensuring that people in less specialised hostels who are nearer to working can benefit from an atmosphere where work is the expectation.
- 3.62 Together Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions will develop proposals and consult further on how to take this forward working with partner providers. We envisage that support will be of a different nature than that offered in mainstream hostel provision. Lower intensity but better targeted support would be available, supplemented by specialist help from Jobcentre Plus. We will work with the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills to co-ordinate this initiative with their programmes to increase skills among the working population.

## ACTION 5

**We will further improve access to health and social care services for people with multiple needs who are sleeping rough or in hostels.**

- 3.63 Among people who sleep rough or who have moved into hostels is a group of individuals with severe, complex and multiple health and social care needs. The nature of these needs and the competing priorities of survival on the streets can mean that, without specialist or targeted help, they often do not access health and social care services at all. When they do present it is often in crisis, making a co-ordinated and effective response difficult to achieve. In some areas, such as Bristol, promising approaches have been developed such as joint outreach between outreach workers and drugs worker/nurses/mental health workers and the piloting of 'wet' drop in sessions. These are staffed by several agencies who engage with clients who may be excluded from other drop-ins and services due to consistent alcohol use.

<sup>6</sup> 95 per cent – St Mungo's, 2006

- 3.64 Doing more to support people to access effective health and care is a key priority in this strategy. Addressing physical and mental health needs is a vital step in helping people move towards greater stability and independence, achieving their potential and reducing the risk of returning to the street.
- 3.65 As well as sustained increases in spending on the NHS, the Government's health policy emphasises reducing health inequalities and reaching out to excluded groups including adults facing chronic exclusion. The health white paper *Our health, our care, our say*<sup>7</sup>, the green paper *Putting People First*<sup>8</sup> and the more recent concordat, *Health Inequalities – Progress and Next Steps*<sup>9</sup> all underlined this commitment. Lord Darzi's review of the NHS recommended more integrated and personalised services especially for the most vulnerable and those in greatest need. The Vital Signs indicators and the statutory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment approach will help local areas identify need and determine priorities in each area.

*Ensuring the engagement of particularly vulnerable and hard to reach groups, those with complex medical and social care needs and those experiencing exclusion will be one of the significant challenges of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Their involvement is important, since they are more likely to suffer from poor health and wellbeing and from inequalities, and their engagement with JSNA will best shape services to meet their needs. Third sector and local user-led organisations often have considerable experience in identifying need within these groups.*

**Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

- 3.66 Despite this strong policy context and a decade of progress in the provision of targeted primary and mental health services, some homelessness agencies tell us that it can still be difficult for people with multiple needs to access services including registration with local primary care services or treatment for alcohol dependency or mental health problems. Assessment of needs and commissioning and delivery of services will continue to be driven at the local level but we need to ensure that focused integrated health and social care services are accessible to everyone on the streets and in hostels. We will achieve this by supportive actions with national, regional and local partners including better co-ordination of existing statutory and non-statutory services.
- 3.67 We will work with the Department of Health to gather data that can strengthen the case for commissioning better-planned and integrated services.

<sup>7</sup> *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services*, Department of Health, January 2006 – <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/74/59/04127459.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndguidance/DH\\_081118](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndguidance/DH_081118)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Healthequalities/index.htm>

3.68 We will also engage with the ongoing development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process. It is important that this is flexible enough to identify and focus on relatively small groups who experience severe health needs. The collection of local information through engagement of local organisations working with homeless people will be essential, as will drawing on the experience and voice of homeless people themselves.

3.69 Other key areas of work will include:

- linking in with the drive towards greater integration of health, housing and social care approaches, working with the Department of Health Primary Care Directorate, the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP), the Integrated Care Pilots and targeted Youth Support arrangements where the rough sleeper is a young person
- further promotion and evaluation of the roll out of our Hospital Discharge Protocol – we will reinvigorate implementation in London and across the country
- joint work with the Department of Health, Home Office and criminal justice services (Police, NOMS, Prison Probation and Court Services) to promote better integration between health, drug treatment, criminal justice services and housing, building on Improving Practice in Housing for Drug Users – A Partnership Project<sup>10</sup>
- building on the commitments in the Drug Strategy<sup>11</sup>, join the Department of Health, Department for Work and Pensions, the Home Office and National Treatment Agency in encouraging all local partners to develop joined-up solutions to help drug misusing clients to access treatment and the wider health, housing and other support they need to re-establish their lives;
- improving links between alcohol and homelessness services working with CSIP's Alcohol network.

#### **Case Study: Primary Health Care Centre, Dawn Centre, Leicester**

The Dawn Centre is an integrated purpose built centre for homeless people in the city of Leicester. It comprises a 42 bed hostel, a day centre and a primary health care centre. This provides access to doctors and nurses, a full time drugs worker, community psychiatric nurses, psychiatrist, psychologists and counsellors, podiatrist and midwife.

<sup>10</sup> <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/dip/improving-practice-housing/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drug-strategy/>

### **Healthy lifestyles, raising wellbeing**

3.70 Finally we want hostels and other services to promote healthier lifestyles. CSIP have published a useful guide: *Healthy hostels; health lifestyles for hostel residents*.<sup>12</sup> This can help providers to consider how they can improve the health and wellbeing of service users. The Department of Health's health trainers programme supports excluded people to improve their health. We will consult with local services and providers to see if this programme could contribute to improving health of people who have slept rough.

### **Joining up regionally**

3.71 We will undertake a range of actions at regional level. The Department of Health will involve their regional Locality Managers working alongside the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, strategic health authorities and others in targeted areas. The aim will be to identify the health and social care needs of this group and improve targeting of services.

3.72 The greatest concentration of people sleeping rough and living in hostels is in London. Through the Department of Health's regional team we will work with NHS London and London's PCTs and boroughs to ensure the appropriate health services are commissioned to meet the needs of rough sleepers.

### **New tools to support needs assessment and promote good practice**

3.73 We want to ensure that the health needs of this group are picked up in local needs assessments and that all areas benefit from innovation and good practice across the country. Our regional health observatories will work together with voluntary sector organisations to develop new tools to support assessment and good practice in commissioning. This will complement the existing guidance such as *Needs Analysis, Commissioning and Procurement for Housing-Related Support: a resource for housing-related support, social care and health commissioners*. We will want to involve people who have direct experience of sleeping rough and who have complex health needs to better understand the barriers and approaches that may work.

3.74 We will work with CSIP and others to bring these tools and a range of good practice examples together in a comprehensive health and homelessness website. This will become an interactive resource for people involved with the provision of or the commissioning of services. We will also support frontline homelessness agencies to understand and work in partnership with their local health services.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/Homelessness/?parent=980&child=2423>



## Research into impact of childhood trauma

- 3.75 In developing this strategy frontline workers told us that they believe that the root cause of the difficult and chaotic lives led by some of their clients is a history of childhood trauma or neglect. A survey of homeless people (aged under 25) at CentrepoinT lends this some support: a third ran away as 16 or 17 years old. This implies that for many rough sleeping may be a manifestation in adult life of a deep-rooted or historic problem. This seems to be particularly the case among drug users with chaotic lives. While some may be formally diagnosed as having a personality disorder or other mental health issue most do not have a formal diagnosis<sup>13</sup> because of difficulties in making a diagnosis when there is co-existing drug or alcohol use.
- 3.76 We want to gain a better understanding of the extent to which childhood trauma is a factor in the lives of people with the most chaotic lives and complex needs. The Department of Health and Communities and Local Government will jointly explore this issue and will seek to identify evidence of effective interventions from the UK and internationally to ensure that people receive the help they need to start their journey of recovery. We will also consider how we can provide more training and support for workers in hostels around this issue and join up with other voluntary and self help groups.

## ACTION 6

**We will step up our efforts across Government and with local partners to tackle rough sleeping among new migrant populations, in particular through rollout of the new Local Immigration Teams.**

- 3.77 Throughout our history the movement of people into and around our country has placed some people at risk of homelessness. Without family or community support, and often working in unstable, seasonal jobs with tied accommodation, health problems or unemployment can more easily tip them into homelessness.
- 3.78 Since the expansion of the European Union to include the central and eastern European countries, we have seen increases in levels of immigration from those states. The vast majority has successfully found work and accommodation and is making a valuable contribution to our economy.
- 3.79 Some have not done so well. In some areas, especially London, people from central and east Europe can, on any given night, make up to 20 per cent of people sleeping rough. They are also a significant proportion of users of day centres and the free night shelters often set up by church groups. The vast majority who arrive with nowhere to go are able to move away from the streets after a short time.

<sup>13</sup> The Government is committed to improving responses to personality disorder as set out in *Personality Disorder – no longer a diagnosis of exclusion*. NICE will shortly publish new guidance for the treatment of some forms of this condition

3.80 But for a small number things have not gone well and they have found themselves in a rapid downward spiral leading to destitution and life on the streets. Because most of these individuals are unable to claim benefits the help that can be given to them is limited. We need to get the balance right between offering resources to those that really need it and lowering the threshold so that an abundance of resources becomes available to those that don't require it. A big part of getting this balance right is ensuring that appropriate and realistic options are available.

3.81 Communities and Local Government and the UK Border Agency (UKBA) are committed to close joint working to minimise the risk that migrants end up sleeping on the streets. This work will focus in particular on:

- strengthening joint working at national and regional level
- improving communications and disseminating information on potential sources of help, such as the provisions of Schedule 3 of the 2002 Immigration Act which enable local authorities to reconnect migrants with their home country and UKBA resettlement schemes for non-EEA migrants
- liaison on roll-out of UKBA's Local Immigration Teams which will be operational in every part of the country from January 2009 with complete coverage by 2011 (comprising approximately 7,500 UKBA staff), focusing on local immigration issues, community concerns, prevention and early intervention
- action to tackle anti-social behaviour among migrants, and further work with the East European embassies
- mitigating the risk that the case resolution programme will increase homelessness
- closer working with stakeholders such as the National Network that supports local authorities in addressing the challenges they face in managing the support needs of migrants with no recourse to public funds<sup>14</sup>; and
- sharing information, guidance and best practice to help co-ordinate responses.

3.82 We have already provided funding to support local authorities in helping East European nationals find work or, in some instances, pay for travel back to their own countries. We will continue to work with Homeless Link and other partners in London to deliver against our joint action plan, and to support a range of realistic opportunities for economic migrants from East Europe to minimise the risk of them sleeping on the streets. We will work with partners in the private and voluntary sector, including looking at social enterprise, to develop effective solutions for this group.

<sup>14</sup> [www.islington.gov.uk/Health/ServicesForAdults/nrpf\\_network/default.asp](http://www.islington.gov.uk/Health/ServicesForAdults/nrpf_network/default.asp)

# Chapter 4

## empowering people and communities

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This chapter commits to new action to:

- promote knowledge of local services and resources that can address rough sleeping and social isolation
- develop a community training programme to build capacity and skills so that local people can support isolated people to avoid sleeping rough
- promote more personalised services including testing individual budgets to increase the control people have over the services they need; and
- drive forward user involvement in services and active citizenship among people with experience of rough sleeping, including supporting peer advocacy to reduce evictions from hostels.

### We know

- 4.1 Most third sector agencies working to tackle homelessness originated from community responses to local need. Many people want to help but do not know how to best focus their resources. If community and faith-based groups have the right tools and support they can be effective in preventing isolated people from ending up on the streets and can complement the efforts of more formal services.
- 4.2 People want to make choices that lead to more independence. They want to move from support provided by professionals towards greater interdependence with family, friends and their community.
- 4.3 From the experience of the past decade we know that people expect to have a greater say and more control over the services they use. We have seen how people who get involved in designing and evaluating their services not only improve things for others but discover new skills, develop motivation and a new capacity to move on with their lives. So we know that people make better progress if they have choice and a voice.

## Future outcomes

### 4.4 We want:

- people and groups in communities who want to help to be supported to do so
- communities to be actively involved in planning and provision for vulnerable people
- community and faith based groups to be equipped to support isolated people
- people at risk of sleeping rough or on the streets to have more say and control in how their needs are met
- people's own efforts to avoid sleeping rough and improve their lives to be reinforced
- people who have slept rough to move on and enjoy a fulfilling life in the community.

## ACTION 7

**We will use the web to promote knowledge of local services and resources that can address rough sleeping and social isolation.**

- 4.5 We will commission a new web resource for people who want to help tackle rough sleeping, and people who are at risk of or already sleeping rough. We are investigating the feasibility of this being hosted by DirectGov.
- 4.6 The web resource will draw on existing databases and allow people to locate relevant local services. If a member of the public is concerned about someone sleeping rough in their area, they can enter the postcode and get customised information about services, such as local housing options advice or day centre. Concerned citizens could also see how they could contribute through volunteering by linking to [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) or making a donation. There would be scope to link to local authority and outreach service contact points.

### Case Studies

**Westminster** have a dedicated helpline for members of the public who are concerned about people sleeping rough in their area. The number is available 24 hours a day to members of the public who notice new people sleeping rough or are concerned about the deteriorating health and wellbeing of people sleeping rough. Information given to the helpline is passed on to services so help can be directed accordingly.

**Street Rescue Service** run by Thames Reach provides a rapid response outreach service for people sleeping rough in the 21 London boroughs that do not have their own dedicated local outreach service. The service has a 24 hour free helpline and responds to referrals from the public, local agencies, businesses, the police and London Ambulance Service with outreach staff out in vehicles across the capital 365 nights of the year. The number is 0870 383 3333.

## ACTION 8

**We will develop a community training programme to build capacity and skills so that local people can support isolated people to avoid sleeping rough.**

- 4.7 Across the country, particularly in areas where levels of rough sleeping have tended to be low, community and faith-based groups have often established volunteer-led initiatives to respond to the need of individuals. Many of these groups already reach out to people sleeping rough or help people reintegrate into communities. But sometimes they are not sure how they can make best use of their limited resources and the goodwill of their members. We value the efforts of these groups, and want to support them starting by strengthening the skills and knowledge they need.
- 4.8 We will commission a new training package that can be delivered locally by a wide range of community bodies. This will build on existing training resources already being delivered through the faith based, community or statutory sector. We expect this to include background information on homelessness and social exclusion and modules covering the key skills necessary to engage and support change in people such as: active listening, motivational interviewing and basic cognitive behavioural methods, engaging people in the process of change and partnership working across services and sectors. It will promote core principles such as equality, transparency, empowerment and protecting vulnerable people.
- 4.9 This programme will be developed alongside the work of the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and others to enhance the effectiveness of communities to engage and support isolated individuals.

## ACTION 9

**We will promote more personalised services including testing individual budgets to increase the control people have over the services they need.**

- 4.10 We want this strategy to drive a more personalised approach to tackling rough sleeping. This is because we recognise that people at risk of sleeping rough or on the streets have diverse needs and different solutions will work. It also reflects the government's wider agenda across social care where people in receipt of services are expecting, and being given, much greater choice and control over the services they use<sup>15</sup>.
- 4.11 We believe that this approach could be effective for some marginalised groups including the small numbers of people who have slept rough for many years and have, up to now, been unwilling to accept the help on offer.
- 4.12 We want to see how approaches such as self-directed support might make a difference. We will draw on expertise from organisations such as In Control<sup>16</sup> and lessons from the Individual Budget pilots under our Supporting People programme which is due to be published later this year. We will link this with the Care Services Improvement Partnership's Personalisation Programme.
- 4.13 We will also work with partners that are starting to explore this approach with people sleeping rough such as the City of London to help draw out and share lessons from their experience.
- 4.14 We will encourage the development of innovative services that meet currently unmet needs. For example, through the Places of Change programme we are developing an accommodation model in London designed for older drinkers who are not well suited to standard hostel provision.

## ACTION 10

**We will drive forward user involvement in services and active citizenship among people with experience of rough sleeping.**

- 4.15 People who face sleeping rough can feel they have lost control of their lives. Poor services may reinforce this sense of powerlessness and dependency through a culture of low expectations and by excluding people from decisions about their lives. Over the past decade we have seen the best services putting involvement of users of their services at the absolute heart of what they do. They know that this not only leads to improved services for all users, but that the experience of participation can be transformative for the individual involved.

<sup>15</sup> [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndguidance/DH\\_081118](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndguidance/DH_081118)

<sup>16</sup> [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

### Case Study: St Mungo's Outside In

*Outside In* is a group of St Mungo's clients who meet with directors and board members every six weeks to represent clients – putting forward their concerns and ideas and helping to set the agenda for future developments. Members of the group have trained as 'peer facilitators' so that they can support other residents to run their own meetings. They have also run presentations and workshops at staff inductions, and helped to recruit new staff.

- 4.16 We want to go further in promoting this ethos and approach across all services for homeless people. We will support capacity building among organisations to enable them to involve service users more actively. This could include bringing user-led groups together to share experiences, developing support networks or promoting consultation in strategies and commissioning.
- 4.17 We also want to maximise the involvement of people with experience of sleeping rough as citizens in their local community. One way of doing this is to ensure that people can exercise their democratic right to vote in elections. Homeless people, including those rough sleeping, are entitled to register to vote but often they do not know how to do this.
- 4.18 Other groups of vulnerable people have developed peer advocacy services through which people with similar experiences support and encourage others to speak out and challenge their situation. We want to test the potential of a peer advocacy service for people using hostels and other services. We will seek advice from experts such as Action For Advocacy to take this forward.

### Taking action to reduce evictions

- 4.19 Evidence of Supporting People outcomes monitoring shows that people who have slept rough are more likely to leave supported accommodation such as hostels with nowhere to move on to. Indeed, the "rough sleeper" primary client group is the only one in which a larger proportion have an unplanned move than a "planned" one. Outreach workers and day centres often see people they have referred into hostels ending up back on the streets.
- 4.20 This issue is probably related both to the different tenure offered to people in short term hostels where people have a licence rather than an assured shorthold tenancy, and to the needs of people using the services.
- 4.21 We want to go as far as possible in reducing these repeated incidents of rough sleeping. We believe that improvements can be made because there is considerable variation in eviction rates between services and some agencies have carried out specific programmes that have successfully reduced evictions. We will work with partners to learn more about the causes of evictions and abandonment from hostels. We will identify and promote approaches that are successful in reducing the rates of evictions and abandonment.

### **Case Study: Newcastle**

The Newcastle Homelessness Forum has agreed a Prevention from Eviction Protocol to drive the reduction in evictions for substance misuse within the city's homelessness and supported accommodation providers. This Protocol underpins the policy that housing providers will work with substance misusers and try to ensure that they receive the right level of support in the right type of accommodation, thereby matching needs to support and help prevent evictions<sup>17</sup>.

- 4.22 A key element in this will be assessing organisations' policies and procedures around evictions. We will develop a toolkit for accommodation providers which will include a self-audit tool for managers of services to compare their approach to best practice and make improvements.
- 4.23 The Government funds a wide range of housing advice services and including the provision of Court Desks to offer legal advice in most County Courts. We will work with advice providers such as Shelter and Citizens Advice to make housing advice more accessible to people in supported housing.

<sup>17</sup> <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/dip/improving-practice-housing/> – Section 3



# Chapter 5

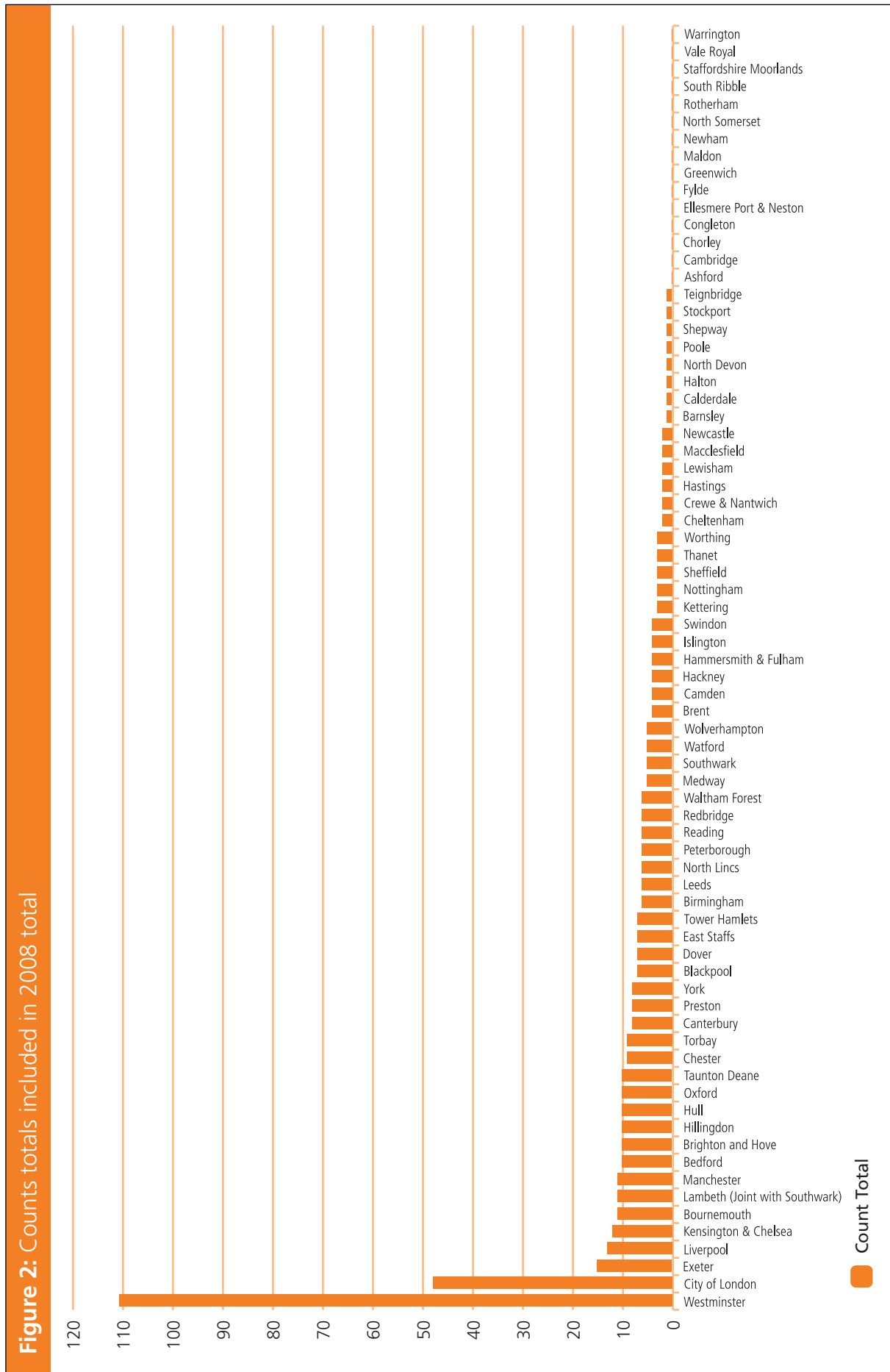
## understanding the problem, finding solutions

This chapter commits to new action to:

- launch a new approach to help local authorities monitor progress and track people sleeping rough, ensuring that counts are the start of a process, not just an opportunity to identify levels of need but more importantly to do something about it; and
- develop new ways of using data to understand and monitor outcomes for people who have slept rough.

### We know

- 5.1 Over the past decade the rough sleeping counts have helped to focus attention and measure progress. They have provided a consistent approach to tracking progress between areas and over time.
- 5.2 While there are still concentrations of rough sleeping in central London, overall the problem is spread across the country. So last year in 66 out of the 74 count areas no more than ten people were found sleeping rough; in 15 counts no one was found bedded down on the night. It is important to be clear that all these count results are included in the annual total.
- 5.3 Some areas such as Blackpool, Oxford and London have excellent knowledge about who is sleeping rough; others have very little information. And we do not have good information on the extent to which people move around the country.
- 5.4 Through research, innovations and projects over the past decade we have learned more about the issues that can lead to rough sleeping, the barriers to getting off the streets and moving on, and many new solutions. Most of the people who had been out on the street for years have now been helped to come in. But a few remain and we need to keep finding new ways to help.



- 5.5 Some information on the support needs of people sleeping rough is already collected, but more specific information for example on the nature of mental health problems or details of offending history would help to plan services.

## Future outcomes

- 5.6 We want:
- a better understanding of who is at risk of rough sleeping and why
  - to ensure that no one is left out, even in areas with low numbers on the streets
  - to understand gaps in provision of services that can prevent and tackle the problem.

## ACTION 11

We will launch a new approach to help local authorities monitor progress and track people sleeping rough, ensuring that counts are not just an opportunity to identify need but more importantly to do something about it.

### Rough sleeping counts

- 5.7 The rough sleeping counts provide an effective tool by which we can monitor and demonstrate progress in reducing rough sleeping levels. They give us an indicator of the relative extent of the problem between areas and over time. In 2007 we consulted on and strengthened the guidance<sup>18</sup> by, for example, introducing independent verifiers.
- 5.8 We now intend to clarify some issues around the count, and bring in changes that will enable more in-depth reporting of the level and nature of need in different areas. The counts will be as much focussed on planning action for individuals as counting people.
- 5.9 It is important that we are clear that the headline figure is the total of the counts undertaken during the year. We will no longer ask local authorities that do not count to provide an annual estimate in their annual housing statistics return. We will make it clear that the annual figures published each September are not an estimate of all the number of people sleeping rough in the country and that the counts provide a snapshot. We will provide support and guidance to areas undertaking counts, which will continue to provide a means of tracking trends over time.

<sup>18</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/roughsleeping/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/roughsleeping/)

5.10 In areas that do not have a known or suspected rough sleeping problem, we do not ask local authorities to conduct a count. Nevertheless, we want to be sure that people who might find themselves sleeping rough in those areas can get the help they need. So we will encourage authorities and local agencies to keep in touch with us so we can work together to find effective solutions. We do not want anyone to be left out. Depending on the need, our new Regional Champions, Homeless Link's regional managers or our regional resource teams will support local areas. Communities and Local Government will continue to provide support and guidance to areas undertaking counts.

### **Street Needs Audit**

5.11 Rough sleeping counts, if seen as the beginning of a process rather than the end, offer an opportunity not only to identify levels of need but, more importantly, to do something about it. We want to ensure that anyone sleeping rough is getting help wherever they are and that people's needs are being met.

5.12 To promote this idea we will develop a new approach called 'Street Needs Audit' (SNA) that will be introduced to supplement the approach currently taken in the counts. The Street Needs Audit will gather more information about people found in the counts. As well as information to identify individuals, their profile and time spent sleeping rough, we will ask counters to record whether there is an active action plan in place for the person and the lead agency that is taking responsibility. In most cases this is already known in areas that have regular outreach on the streets.

5.13 In addition we will develop a new approach to the identification and recording of client need for people found on the counts. This will enhance our ability to monitor changing levels of need across the country and contribute to local and sub-regional commissioning processes.

5.14 Across the country support needs of people sleeping rough are recorded in different ways by different agencies. We will develop a template to help agencies record support needs more consistently, building on work already underway. This will reduce duplication of efforts and produce more coherent and comparable data.

5.15 As part of the Street Needs Audit we will also encourage local authorities to draw on evidence of need identified by stakeholders such as local councillors, community or faith based groups, statutory and third sector providers such as the police or charities. Some local authorities already supplement street counts in this way as part of the development of local homelessness reviews and strategies.

5.16 We will consult on these changes and incorporate them in our revised count guidance.

## Movement around the country

- 5.17 There are similar databases to the CHAIN system in operation across the UK. We will investigate the feasibility of linking these databases to give us a better understanding of the movement of people around the country. A better understanding of how people move between different areas would help target more effective interventions.

## Community safety

- 5.18 Members of the public often assume that everyone involved in street activity such as begging or street drinking are sleeping rough. While some may be sleeping rough it is important to ensure that each of these problems is correctly identified in order to ensure an appropriate response.

### Case Study: Camden 'Community Auditors'

Camden council has a scheme called 'StreetSafe', which enables local citizens and businesses to report concerns about street activities. This helps target responses by the outreach team and other street services. Outcomes are fed back to callers and they are encouraged to continue monitoring the problem and report any change.

- 5.19 We will encourage relevant local authorities to make a phone number available for the public and businesses to report street activity. By encouraging individuals to report this activity and responding appropriately this misconception can be addressed.

## ACTION 12

**We will bring together existing data in new ways to understand and monitor outcomes for people who have slept rough.**

- 5.20 Our primary goal is that people do not face sleeping rough at all. But anyone who does end up sleeping rough must get the help they need as quickly as possible to get their lives back on track. To support this aim we want to gather better data on what happens to people, the journey they take and the outcomes they achieve.
- 5.21 The new Street Needs Audits alongside the counts will contribute to our understanding of the flows onto the streets and confirm that action is being taken locally to provide help. We want to go further. So we will explore how the CHAIN database and systems in other cities can be used more effectively to track and report on housing, training, employment and health outcomes for people moving off the streets in London. We will also consider the value and practicality of cross-referencing this data to other sources such as the Supporting People outcomes records and other databases. Cross referencing data will depend on service users giving their consent.
- 5.22 One of the blockages to achieving more joined up services is the fact that different services gather information on their users in different ways. Service users themselves are often more willing than is thought to allow sharing of data where this might help them. We will identify and promote good practice approaches where partners have created protocols to share information using “informed consent” to overcome these obstacles.
- 5.23 Over recent years homelessness services have been pioneering techniques such as the Outcomes Star originally developed by St Mungo’s. These help services to measure and report on the progress that service users are making on “soft outcomes”. This was necessary to demonstrate the value of work with people who may be on a longer journey from the streets for whom achieving “harder” outcomes such as a moving into a flat or getting a job would take longer. We will work with partners to draw on the lessons from these approaches and how they can contribute to improving services (see: [www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk](http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk)).

# Chapter 6

## making it happen

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This chapter commits to new action to:

- launch a new Champions programme, bringing together experts from across the country to support local areas and services
- encourage and support councils and regions to work strategically to end rough sleeping and work with the Mayor of London to develop new approaches in the capital; and
- renew our focus on co-ordinating, driving and monitoring progress through our specialist advisers, regional resource teams and by working more closely across government departments.

### We know

- 6.1 We are building on the success of the last ten years, and there are already many models of good practice. But some gaps remain in different areas.
- 6.2 Focussed partnership working has driven significant reductions in rough sleeping, but progress has slowed and we now need to refocus our efforts.
- 6.3 Joined up working at national, regional and local level will be key to future success. This is challenging and we need to put in place robust arrangements to promote this.

### Future outcomes

- 6.4 We want:
  - a consistent community-led response
  - the solutions that we know work to be available across the country
  - a joined-up and comprehensive approach across government to address the most severe forms of social exclusion
  - a new shared sense of urgency and commitment to ending rough sleeping.

## ACTION 13

We will launch a new Champions programme, bringing together experts from across the country to support local areas and other services.

- 6.5 Across the homelessness sector there are experienced, capable individuals who have a wealth of knowledge and experience. The delivery of this strategy will benefit from expert support to local areas.
- 6.6 We will launch a new rough sleeping Champions programme. This programme will draw on many of the most capable individuals in the sector to support local leadership, partnership and strategies. Over the past ten years valuable learning and expertise has been built up. Through this programme we will make those lessons available across the country.
- 6.7 Regional Champions will work alongside Communities and Local Government's regional resource teams and Homeless Link's regional managers.

## ACTION 14

We will encourage and support councils and regions to work strategically to end rough sleeping and will work with the Mayor of London to develop new approaches in the capital.

- 6.8 Since the 2002 Homelessness Act all unitary and district authorities have been required to produce a local homelessness review and strategy. This year they have been reviewed and updated. In supporting local areas to tackle rough sleeping, we will identify and highlight local strategies that include strong action on rough sleeping.
- 6.9 Communities and Local Government's regional resource teams will work with authorities that want support in implementing their strategy. Where it will help they will be able to draw on support from Homeless Link's Regional Managers and our new Champions teams.
- 6.10 In our recent white paper *Communities in control: real people, real power* we said that we will introduce a new duty on local councils to respond to all petitions relating to local authority functions or other public services where the council shares delivery responsibility. This offers a new opportunity at local level to drive action where there are concerns about rough sleeping.

### London

- 6.11 Around half of people sleeping rough do so in central London and we provide significant funding to local authorities to support their efforts to address the problem. However, it is clear that the capital, with its 33 boroughs and complex structures, requires a more strategic approach than the rest of the country.



- 6.12 This will be achieved through the creation of a new London Delivery Board – led by the Mayor of London and with representatives from the key strategic bodies. A key policy in the 2008 Draft London Housing Strategy is the eradication of rough sleeping in the capital by 2012 and the Mayor is committed to working with government, the London boroughs, London Councils and the voluntary sector to accelerate progress and make this happen.
- 6.13 The new board will draw up and oversee the implementation of an action plan for delivery in London, and its pan-London priorities will include:
- improving commissioning mechanisms
  - enhancing joint working, in particular by ensuring greater involvement of pan-London strategic bodies such as NHS London and the prison service
  - maximising move on options for people in hostels, including more effective use of the private rented sector, increased provision of supported housing and better opportunities for work and training
  - developing better mechanisms to prevent people being drawn to the centre of the city.
- 6.14 Outside London we will continue to support efforts to create regional homelessness strategies that foster better co-operation between local authorities and enable pooling of resources and joint action.

## **ACTION 15**

**We will renew our focus on driving, co-ordinating and monitoring progress through our specialist advisers and regional resource teams and by working more closely across government.**

- 6.15 Communities and Local Government will continue to provide the departmental lead in government on ending rough sleeping. To help drive implementation, we will bring together a Delivery Board comprising of senior officials from all the relevant government departments with a focus on implementing specific commitments, reporting on progress to Ministers.
- 6.16 Our regional resource teams provide support to local authorities on a range of issues including PSA16, Supporting People and temporary accommodation. Now they will also focus on areas struggling to tackle rough sleeping. They will be able to draw on expertise from the Champions Teams and Homeless Link's regional managers to support local authorities or their other partners. A key focus will be drawing on and sharing successful approaches from around the country. We will have a small budget to be used in the regions for additional targeted support where this is necessary.

6.17 We will implement our plan through:

- work with partners receiving funding to align their objectives with the strategy
- £1.5m direct funding over three years to develop specific actions in the plan
- £1m new small grants programme which will invite partners to bring forward ideas that can help us make further progress
- £2.5m over two years for the Spark social enterprise programme
- an annual summary of progress on actions and outcomes, to be published alongside the annual statistics each September.

6.18 The next spending review will provide an opportunity to look again at mechanisms to ensure that public funding is delivering public services that are effective in tackling and preventing chronic social exclusion including rough sleeping.

## Summary of actions

**ACTION 1 – We will promote prevention of rough sleeping in all areas through effective housing options and a strengthened safety net by:**

- promoting access to the private rented sector, for example by encouraging local authorities to expand access to rent bond schemes
- improving support to people in independent housing through the Home Office Mentoring and Befriending scheme
- testing a supported lodgings programme
- establishing best practice through our Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme
- considering proposals to reform the homelessness legislation, including a stronger safety net for people at risk of sleeping rough.

**[Communities and Local Government, from December 2008]**

**ACTION 2 – We will support best practice in commissioning of services that prevent and tackle rough sleeping by:**

- developing a new Prevention Mapping Toolkit
- promoting learning from the ACE pilots evaluation including the New Directions Index

**[Communities and Local Government in consultation with other departments, 2009]**

- reviewing the use of the Move On Plans Protocol to influence regional housing planning and disseminating good practice

**[Homeless Link, 2009]**

- working with the Homes and Communities Agency to identify need for new specialist accommodation

**[Communities and Local Government and HCA, from 2009]**

- setting up a new private sector leasing scheme to provide up to an additional 300 units of move-on accommodation in London

**[Communities and Local Government, 2009]**

- continuing to support Leading Places of Change and scoping with partners enhanced training and qualifications for front-line homelessness workers.

**[Communities and Local Government, 2009]**

**ACTION 3 – We will extend positive activities that motivate and empower people to take greater control in their lives by:**

- working with the Places of Change providers to increase access to others in their area in order to open up a wider range of activities

[Communities and Local Government, 2009]

- taking account of the needs of homeless people in the new Informal Learning Strategy, and helping the enhanced nextstep, national Careers Advice services and the proposed new adult advancement and careers service to work with people in hostels and day centres
- test approaches to joint work with homeless projects in the prototypes of the new *Adult Advancement and Careers service*

[DIUS, from 2009]

- working with the Learning & Skills Council to ensure that local learning institutions such as Further Education colleges are reaching out to people who have slept rough and promoting good practice.

[LSC/Communities and Local Government, 2009]

**ACTION 4 – We will tackle worklessness by:**

- strengthening joint working between Jobcentre Plus and the homelessness sector as its new contracts are rolled out, disseminating targeted information on benefits and work issues, and promoting Local Employment Partnership in the homelessness sector

[Jobcentre Plus/Communities and Local Government, 2009]

- investing £2.5m in a second round of the Spark social enterprise initiative

[Communities and Local Government, 2009-11]

- supporting the homelessness sector to employ people with experience of sleeping rough through the GROW programme

[Communities and Local Government/Jobcentre Plus, 2008-10]

- developing a 'Working Hostels' model.

[Communities and Local Government/Jobcentre Plus/DIUS, 2009-10]

**ACTION 5 – We will further improve access to health and social care services for people with multiple needs by:**

- working with the Department of Health to strengthen the economic case for commissioning better integrated services, and developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process

[DH/Communities and Local Government, from 2008]

- promoting and evaluating roll out of the Hospital Discharge Protocol

[DH/Communities and Local Government, from 2008]

- involving our regional Locality Managers working alongside the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, strategic health authorities and others in targeted areas to improve targeting of services

[DH, 2009]

- working with the regional health observatories and the Care Services Improvement Partnership to develop and disseminate tools to support needs assessment and promote good practice through a health and homelessness website

[DH/Communities and Local Government, from 2009]

- developing effective responses to people with the most chaotic lives and complex needs who have experienced childhood trauma

- considering how the health trainers programme could improve the health of people who have slept rough.

[DH/Communities and Local Government, 2010]

**ACTION 6 – We will step up our efforts across Government and with local partners to tackle rough sleeping among new migrant populations by:**

- strengthening joint working between Communities and Local Government and UKBA at national and regional level, with a focus on improved communications, roll-out of UKBA's new Local Immigration Teams, action to tackle anti-social behaviour among migrants and mitigating the risks of the case resolution programme

- working with Homeless Link and other partners in London to deliver against our joint action plan.

[Home Office/Communities and Local Government, 2009]

**ACTION 7 – We will use the web to promote knowledge of local services and resources that can address rough sleeping and social isolation**

**[Communities and Local Government with partners, from 2009]**

**ACTION 8 – We will develop a community training programme to build capacity and skills that can support isolated people to avoid sleeping rough**

**[Communities and Local Government with partners, from 2009]**

**ACTION 9 – We will promote personalisation including testing individual budgets to increase the control people have over the services they need by:**

- working with Supporting People teams, CSIP, In Control, the City of London and other partners to promote learning and successful approaches.

**[Communities and Local Government with partners, from 2009]**

**ACTION 10 – We will drive forward user involvement in services and active citizenship among people with experience of rough sleeping by:**

- supporting capacity building among organisations to enable them to involve service users more actively
- testing the potential of a peer advocacy service for people using hostels and other services
- working with partners to learn more about the causes of evictions and abandonment from hostels, and promote approaches to tackle this problem.

**[Communities and Local Government, from 2009]**

**ACTION 11 – We will launch a new approach to help local authorities monitor progress and track people sleeping rough, ensuring that counts are not just an opportunity to identify levels of need but more importantly to do something about it by:**

- working with authorities and local agencies in areas where there are low number sleeping rough through the regional Champions, Homeless Link's regional managers or our regional resource teams

**[Communities and Local Government and Homeless Link, from 2009]**

- clarifying some issues around the counts and providing support and guidance to areas undertaking them
- consulting on the development of a Street Needs Audit.

**[Communities and Local Government, from 2009]**

**ACTION 12** – We will bring together existing data in new ways to understand and monitor outcomes for people who have slept rough

[Communities and Local Government, from 2009]

**ACTION 13** – We will launch a new Champions programme, bringing together experts from across the country to support local areas and other services

[Communities and Local Government, from 2009]

**ACTION 14** – We will encourage and support councils and regions to work strategically to end rough sleeping by:

- supporting local authorities to implement their homelessness strategies and promoting strategies that aim to end rough sleeping
- working with the Mayor of London's new London Delivery Board to develop new approaches in the capital.

[Communities and Local Government, from 2009]

**ACTION 15** – We will renew our focus on driving, co-ordinating and monitoring progress through our specialist advisers and regional resource teams and by working more closely across government by:

- bringing together a Delivery Board comprising of senior officials from all the relevant government departments

[Communities and Local Government,  
DWP, DIUS, MOJ, DH, HO, HCA, DCSF from 2009]

- launching a small grants programme to support implementation of the strategy

[Communities and Local Government, from December 2009]

- publishing an annual summary of progress and outcomes on actions each September.

[Communities and Local Government, from September 2009]

## Photo Credits

### Front cover



#### **Trevor Brooks – Thames Reach TRaVEL Scheme**

Trevor experienced regular spells of homelessness in the capital before moving into a house in Southwark managed by Thames Reach.

He regularly meets up with his support worker, Beverly, who has helped him settle into his new home, develop his self-confidence and make plans for the future. Trevor has now taken up a place with Thames Reach's 'TRaVEL' scheme, which provides training and volunteering opportunities to formerly homeless people taking their first steps on the journey back into work. He works three days a week as a kitchen assistant at the charity's Graham House hostel in Vauxhall.



#### **The Booth Centre's allotment gardening team**

The Booth Centre allotment project gives homeless people the opportunity to grow healthy food for themselves and for our day centre, to learn new skills and get lots of exercise and fresh air. It is part of the Booth Centre's programme which provides a full range of activities to help people to build skills, confidence, self esteem, to gain qualifications and to positively contribute to the community.



#### **Maz (Organic farm project)**

A unique link-up between the charity and the Boathouse Organic Farm in Sussex has helped hundreds of former rough sleepers over the past decade.

Every summer, participants travel out for the day to this rural retreat to plant seeds, harvest crops and escape from the relentless pace and loneliness of city life.

Those with alcohol problems commit themselves to staying sober during their visits and all benefit from the opportunity to be part of a group pulling together, developing their self-esteem and gaining a sense of achievement from their labour.

Photo: Len Cross





### The Dawn Centre

The Dawn Centre in Leicester provides integrated services to homeless people from a variety of partners including training provided by the voluntary sector, medical support from the Primary Care Trust and temporary accommodation provided by the housing department. The centre has 42 en-suite bedrooms. CLG provided £2m Hostels Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP) funding.

### Back cover



### Shift

Shift gives homeless and vulnerable people the chance to undertake paid work in the field of painting and decorating.

A supported employment scheme launched by Thames Reach in 2006, the project provides a stepping stone towards financial independence for those who are most excluded from the job market.

Thames Reach often needs to call on external contractors to do renovations and repairs of our accommodation and office buildings. Through Shift, this work can now be given to the people who use our services.

This will allow them to increase their employability by gaining real work experience and developing a portfolio of completed jobs, as well as improving their sense of self-worth.

Employees of the scheme are given appropriate training and the emotional and practical support needed for them to deliver a high-quality, professional service.

Many Shift employees are graduates of our six-month painting and decoration course, MIMO, and the two schemes share a base at our Tower Workshops.



### Shekinah Mission

In Plymouth, the Shekinah Mission run a drop-in centre for people who are homeless. This provides training, employment and volunteering opportunities for clients throughout their services. It has been very successful in getting people into work.



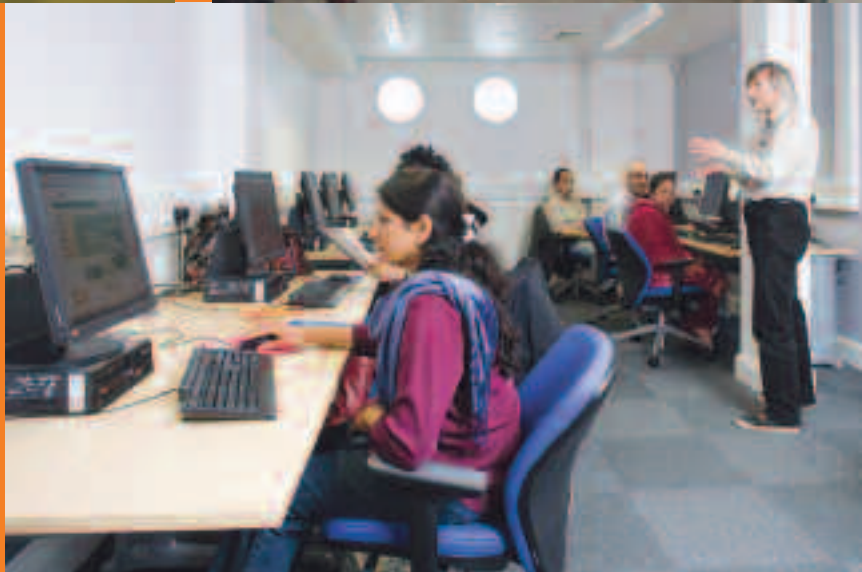
### **Cricklewood Homeless Concern**

The state of the art new building was opened in 2008 with Communities and Local Government contributing £1.425m Hotels Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP) funding. This is a purpose built day centre for the homeless which provides integrated specialist support and is a real community facility.



### **IT training in action in Cricklewood Homeless Concern**





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