

SHROPSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Updated

Shropshire Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2010 – 2011

**SUMMARY DOCUMENT – Please refer to full updated 2008/09 Action Plan
for detail**

Produced by the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG)



Shropshire Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2010 – 2011

- Introduction -

Shropshire Housing Strategy acts as the over-arching document to the Homelessness Strategy.



- The first countywide Homelessness Strategy was in place from 2003-2008.
- In July 2008, the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG) published a review of the original Strategy and formulated an Action Plan for 2008/09.
- In order to re-align the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy with the Shropshire Housing Strategy an Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan has been developed (2010/11) which carries forward actions from the 2008/2009 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.
- From 2011 both Strategies will be reviewed to develop a Shropshire Housing Strategy and a Shropshire Homelessness Strategy, both to run in parallel from 2011-2014.

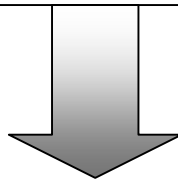
- Equality & Diversity -

The Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is committed to Equality and Diversity. Therefore service delivery and content of the Strategy will reflect this.

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed for the proposed Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2010-2011.

The Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is developed around the objectives for the Housing Options Service, which are outlined below:

- Focus on early intervention that prevents homelessness from occurring and allows for planned solutions to housing needs
- Provide appropriate support to vulnerable people to enable them to develop the skills needed to sustain their tenancies
- Ensure there is a joined up approach to tackling homelessness
- Promote a wider range of tenure options and choices to help meet housing needs



The more specific challenges that the Interim Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will work towards through the Housing Options Service **and** other associated services in Shropshire are as follows:

- ◆ A need to increase the range of housing options and prevention pathways available in all parts of the County
- ◆ A need to increase accommodation for single people or to make allowances for the under-occupation of stock
- ◆ A need to respond flexibly to the support and housing needs of older households
- ◆ A need to increase the provision of affordable housing
- ◆ A need to address the requirements of specific vulnerable groups who are likely to experience the broader problems associated with social exclusion. E.g. – rough sleepers; gypsies and travellers
- ◆ A need to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless families
- ◆ A need to facilitate ‘move-on’ from temporary accommodation and supported housing projects
- ◆ A need for Registered Providers to collectively formulate their own homelessness action plans which reflect the priorities contained within the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy

- National Context & Performance Indicators -

Shropshire continues to work towards the Government's national target to half the number of households living in temporary accommodation (TA).

For Shropshire this means reducing the use of temporary accommodation to no more than 158 at any one time.

By 2011 we will have achieved a transformation of Temporary Accommodation (TA) in;

- the numbers of people using it
- the way we use it

Targets for the reduction in the use of TA are as follows:

- 2010/11 households in temporary accommodation 80
- 2011/12 households in temporary accommodation 75
- 2012/13 households in temporary accommodation 70

Performance Indicators

This Interim Strategy Action Plan has been shaped by the need to meet national and local targets. National targets are reported directly to CLG, and there are a number of local targets set by Housing Options.

- Regional & Sub-Regional Partnerships -

Shropshire feeds into regional working as the County is represented at the West Midlands Regional Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (WMRHSIG), and this group is shaped by the West Midlands Regional Homelessness Strategy.

Shropshire forms the West Housing Market Area (HMA) along with Herefordshire.

- Review of the 2008/2009 Action Plan -

The following pages detail an update of the 2008/2009 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

Then you can find the 2008/2009 Action Plan, which has an added column for the updates of what each objective has achieved or completed in terms of the targets set.

The “pre-July” actions have updates and the “post-July” objectives will be carried forward if still appropriate.

To evaluate the achievements of the 2008/2009 Action Plan, each objective is presented below for the five groups:

- 1) Vulnerable Adults
- 2) Minority Groups
- 3) Young People
- 4) Establishing Need
- 5) Homelessness Prevention

Vulnerable Adults

A) HOUSEHOLDS LEAVING THE ARMED FORCES

What were the Objectives?

- 1.1 To engage with Armed Services welfare services to tackle/prevent the prevalence of homelessness with ex-armed forces personnel
- 1.2 Ensure that we are following legal and best practice guidance with regards allocations and local connection rules for former armed forces personnel
- 4.5 To gain an understanding of the number of ex-armed forces personnel that are returning to the County with housing issues

What has been achieved?

Since April 2007, households for whom leaving the HM Forces was the main reason for the loss of their last settled home and were found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need was as follows;

2007/2008	1 applicant household
2008/2009	2 applicant households
2009/2010	0 applicant households

Where are we now?

While those who leave the armed forces and get accepted through the homelessness route will continue to be recorded (as above), they will not have a dedicated target as the statistics show such a low number. Statistics will be difficult to record due to no information being recorded once someone is discharged from the services. Response will be made on a case by case basis.

TARGETS to carry forward

B) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

What were the objectives?

- 1.3 Ensure the provision of suitable accommodation and proactive support for people fleeing domestic violence
- 1.4 Provide proactive homelessness prevention service through timely legal advice for people suffering domestic violence
- 2.6 Cases of Domestic Violence and homelessness for people within a minority group are dealt with effectively and in tune with their individual needs

What has been achieved?

Domestic Violence is consistently one of the main reasons for loss of the last settled home for applicant households found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need in Shropshire. 'Target hardening' work has been developed and was gained through Safer Communities.

HSIG representation is made at every MARAC and County DV Forums.

The HSIG will take into consideration the Domestic Violence Strategy Action Plan 2008/2011

TARGETS to carry forward

Support for the Sanctuary scheme to be developed, set-up and implemented (HSIG & DV Officer)

Homelessness Action Plans implemented with Registered Providers and developed

MOPP Audit to investigate allocation of move-on accommodation to people fleeing domestic abuse.

Support update of Domestic Abuse Strategy and review of service

It has now been agreed that a representative of SSAFA will attend HSIG meetings and be involved in the consultation process.

provision in the County
Evaluation of the use of specific written guidance for housing options for specific groups.

C) MENTAL HEALTH	D) EX OFFENDERS / SUBSTANCE MISUSE
<p>What were the Objectives?</p> <p>1.5 Evaluate the need for the provision of suitable move-on / supported accommodation for people with mental health problems</p> <p>1.6 Increase cross-discipline training for awareness of mental health / housing issues</p> <p>1.7 Develop early identification and prevention protocol for those in tenancies suffering from mental health problems</p> <p>1.8 Assess the need for floating support for people that fall below the threshold and out of the mental health single referral process</p> <p>1.9 Provide a pro-active homelessness prevention service for people with mental health issues</p> <p>1.10 Review/ assess the existing mental health hospital discharge protocol</p> <p>What has been achieved?</p> <p>Mental health hospital discharge protocol reviewed and report published. Monitored through the HSIg Officer. Extension to general needs hospitals across the County. Protocol to be signed by General Needs Hospitals.</p> <p>Single referral meetings established and representation made at meetings from Housing Options. HSIg represented on Strategic Mental Health Board for strategic objectives.</p> <p>Mental health scheme co-ordinator in post, who works alongside Housing Options.</p> <p>TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p>Sign-up all general needs hospitals to common discharge protocol</p> <p>MOPP audit to investigate allocation of move-on accommodation to people with mental health issues.</p> <p>Further develop training to address any awareness issues</p> <p>Homelessness Action Protocol for Registered Providers</p>	<p>What were the Objectives?</p> <p>1.11 To ensure that the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy is aligned with other strategic documents relevant to offenders</p> <p>1.12 To increase the amount of accommodation and tenancy support available to RESIT project in Shropshire</p> <p>1.13 To share best practice and further develop the RESIT project in partnership with Herefordshire</p> <p>1.14 To extend the provision of appropriate accommodation in a suitable location and support for ex-offenders through increased cross-authority working with Telford</p> <p>1.15 To ensure the timely referral of eligible homeless prison-leavers to the RESIT project or other appropriate arrangements</p> <p>1.16 To ensure the delivery of a targeted 'homelessness prevention' education within prisons and the community</p> <p>1.17 To ensure that ex-offenders and substance misusers have access to appropriate accommodation options</p> <p>5.5 Continuation of the RESIT project in Shropshire</p> <p>What has been achieved?</p> <p>Accommodation units sourced from former district/borough councils. RESIT under review to consider its feasibility to continue or be re-launched in a different format.</p> <p>Ring-fenced money remains with SHA for rent in advance/deposits/bonds.</p> <p>TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p>To re-launch the provision for accommodation of ex-offenders in partnership with partner agencies</p> <p>Development of partnership working with offenders and ex-offenders in the context of Integrated Offender Management is at an early stage</p>

but will be progressed through 2010/11

F. OLDER PEOPLE

What were the Objectives?

1.18 To establish the accurate housing support needs of older people at risk of homelessness

1.20 Extend the provision of affordable and accessible housing for older people

What has been achieved?

Homeless applications from older people remain relatively low. There are however emerging trends relating to the suitability of accommodation for older people: under-occupation across all sectors contributing to fuel poverty and financial hardship; condition of property in the private sector; suitability of properties for adaptation; proximity to services and family support networks; the need for housing support services to remain independent

Age of applicant households accepted as homeless

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
16-24	160	116	94
25-44	188	106	93
24-59	39	25	19
60-64	4	2	5
65-74	3	2	2
75+	4	2	1
TOTAL	398	253	214

TARGETS to carry forward

Support the development of the Older People and Housing Strategy,

G. HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PROTOCOL

What were the Objectives?

1.19 Promote effective multi-agency working and joint understanding of roles and responsibilities between health and housing

What has been achieved?

The Hospital Discharge Protocol developed for mental health services has been extended to general needs hospitals within Shropshire.

TARGETS to carry forward

To ensure protocols are signed between the general needs hospitals and housing options and then monitored to allow further development.

and use this Strategy to inform the Homelessness Strategy.

G) STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT	H) PEOPLE AT RISK OF ROUGH SLEEPING
<p data-bbox="188 355 539 384"><u>What were the Objectives?</u></p> <p data-bbox="188 419 1043 483">1.21 To ensure that the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy is aligned with other relevant strategic documents</p> <p data-bbox="188 518 530 547"><u>What has been achieved?</u></p> <p data-bbox="188 587 1099 719">The renewed Homelessness Strategy will be aligned with other relevant documents. The draft document 2010-2011 will determine the renewed strategy from 2011-2014 will be re-aligned with the Housing Strategy.</p> <p data-bbox="188 791 562 820">TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p data-bbox="188 826 1059 890">Re-align Homelessness Strategy with Shropshire Housing Strategy 2011-2014</p>	<p data-bbox="1133 355 1485 384"><u>What were the Objectives?</u></p> <p data-bbox="1133 419 2018 483">1.22 To investigate the need for a replication of the Shrewsbury Ark project in other areas of the County</p> <p data-bbox="1133 518 1476 547"><u>What has been achieved?</u></p> <p data-bbox="1133 555 1973 619">The Ark feeds reports directly to the Rough Sleepers Task Force Group.</p> <p data-bbox="1133 627 1973 691">The Rough Sleepers Task Force Group has extended across the County through the transition to a Unitary authority.</p> <p data-bbox="1133 727 1805 756">Research about women rough sleeping undertaken.</p> <p data-bbox="1133 796 2002 860">The Ark has multi-agency involvement involving substance misuse, adult education and the Shropshire Housing Alliance.</p> <p data-bbox="1133 896 1995 992">Multi-agency provision of accommodation with support through the winter period 1009/10. Two people moved on to settled accommodation</p> <p data-bbox="1133 1064 1507 1093">TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p data-bbox="1133 1099 2018 1163">Investigate the need for an official CLG rough sleepers count, taking into account advice from CLG.</p> <p data-bbox="1133 1200 2029 1264">Complete investigations about rough sleeping across Shropshire and gather local intelligence.</p>

2) Minority Groups

CUSTOMER SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

What were the Objectives?

**2.1 Ensure that HSIG are involved in Customer Service Group
Work that provides accessible information for vulnerable groups**

What has been achieved?

A Service Level Agreement has been drawn up between Customer Services (CS) and the Housing Options Team (HOT)

TARGETS to carry forward

To develop work between HOT and CS by appointing a Housing Options Assistant to act as a dedicated member of staff for this target. Statistics reported to Housing Options (volume of calls, type of calls etc)

What were the Objectives?

2.2 Ensure that information is published throughout all mediums in languages relevant to the people living in Shropshire

2.3 Increase the awareness of different cultures with homelessness / housing service providers to allow effective service delivery and sign-posting

2.5 All agencies coming into contact with people from a minority community are able to effectively sign-post people to the correct service provider

What has been achieved?

Housing Options leaflet published Spring 2009 to supply information. Service delivery culturally aware and complimented by sign-posting to specialist agencies where relevant.

TARGETS to carry forward

To investigate the need to publish in different languages across Shropshire. Increase awareness through staff training.

B) HOUSING ALLOCATIONS	C) GYPSIES AND TRAVELLING PEOPLE
<p data-bbox="188 387 539 419"><u>What were the Objectives?</u></p> <p data-bbox="188 456 1025 520">2.4 To have housing allocations policies that are culturally sensitive so as to not exclude a minority service user group</p> <p data-bbox="188 557 533 588"><u>What has been achieved?</u></p> <p data-bbox="188 592 1075 687">The Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy & Scheme was effective from 1st June 2009 and is committed to “Equal Access To Affordable Housing For All”.</p> <p data-bbox="188 724 562 756">TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p data-bbox="188 759 1075 823">Support for the Task & Finish Group for the review of the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation & Scheme.</p>	<p data-bbox="1133 355 1485 387"><u>What were the Objectives?</u></p> <p data-bbox="1133 424 1998 520">2.7 Work in partnership with the Planning Department and co-ordinate the authority’s response to Gypsies & Travellers who are homeless</p> <p data-bbox="1133 523 1998 619">2.8 Encourage housing and planning strategies to include the provision of the required number of caravan pitches in the prevention of homelessness</p> <p data-bbox="1133 655 1476 687"><u>What has been achieved?</u></p> <p data-bbox="1133 691 2027 858">The recommendations contained within the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for site provision in Shropshire were considered as part of the development of the relating to the provision of new accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, which was produced in March 2010.</p> <p data-bbox="1133 895 1507 927">TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p data-bbox="1133 930 2036 994">The Regional Spatial Strategy Policy Statement has established clear targets for future provision in Shropshire as follows:</p> <ul data-bbox="1133 1031 2042 1238" style="list-style-type: none"> • 93 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by 2017, of which 63 should be provided by 2012. Of these, 12 have been provided to date. • 20 transit pitches should be provided by 2017 • 9 Showpeople plots should be provided within the area of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford by 2012 <p data-bbox="1133 1275 1933 1307">Shropshire Homelessness Strategy will support these targets.</p>

3. Young People

4. Establishing Need

INTEGRATED HOMELESSNESS AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	IMPROVE CONSISTENCY AND ACCURACY OF DATA
<p>What were the Objectives?</p> <p>3.1 Improve the consistency and accuracy of data collection to better inform future strategies</p> <p>3.2 Promote effective multi-agency working and joint understanding of roles and responsibilities</p> <p>3.3 Provide pro-active homelessness prevention services</p> <p>3.4 Extend the provision of accommodation available for young people</p> <p>3.5 Provide responsive housing support services</p> <p>What has been achieved?</p> <p>Continued effective working with the Children’s Trust and quarterly feedback on agreed targets for LPSA8.</p> <p>Established 16/17 year old co-ordinators countywide, exclusively for 16/17 year olds who are homeless, who are under threat of homelessness or who need housing advice.</p> <p>A full service review is being undertaken as current funding is from Housing Options, Supporting People and Children and Young People Services(CYPS).</p> <p>Mediation for 16-24 year olds has been operated through the Shropshire Housing Alliance.</p> <p>TARGETS carried forward</p> <p>Support service review of 16/17 year old co-ordinators.</p> <p>Review and evaluate the mediation project</p>	<p>What were the Objectives?</p> <p>4.1 Improve the consistency and accuracy of data collection to better inform future strategies</p> <p>4.2 Ensure that data collection for the under 25 age group is conducted inline with other agencies to produce an accurate account for the County</p> <p>4.3 Ensure the accurate collection of homelessness prevention statistics across Shropshire</p> <p>4.6 Establish a better understanding of the number of people who are admitted to hospital and who have potential housing problems</p> <p>4.7 Learn from regional best practice</p> <p>What has been achieved?</p> <p>Data collection for the under 25 age group is quarterly submissions of the LPSA8 target statistics.</p> <p>Analysis of data continues from the P1E</p> <p>HSIG representation at relevant armed forces meetings</p> <p>TARGETS to carry forward</p> <p>Analysis from the P1E to continue and be more in depth.</p> <p>Data collection to improve around Housing Options Service.</p> <p>Housing Options service to deliver monitoring through internal indicator of “Performance Plus”.</p>

Development of a Shropshire Young People's Housing Strategy in partnership with Children and Young People's Services

5. Homelessness Prevention

A) EXPLORE MORTGAGE RESCUE AND COURT DESK SCHEMES FOR SHROPSHIRE	B) IMPLEMENTATION HOMLESSNESS PREVENTION INITIATIVES
<p><u>What were the Objectives?</u></p> <p>5.1 Explore the relevance of a mortgage rescue scheme in Shropshire 5.2 Establish a Court Desk facility across the County as an early intervention scheme for people under threat due to arrears</p> <p><u>What has been achieved?</u></p> <p>Mortgage rescue scheme is operated in Shropshire. Mortgage enquiries are completed and monitored. All government schemes ("products") are utilised and all staff are fully aware. A 'court desk' facility is established across the county through Citizen's Advice Shropshire (CAS) in three of Shropshire's courts. Early notification from lenders for repossession.</p> <p>TARGETS to carry forward Identify 'mortgage worries' champion within housing Record and monitor all mortgage enquiries and early notifications from lenders Work with CAS to record and monitor Court Desk activity as part of homelessness prevention work. Investigate financial inclusion and financial advice to link in with homelessness and housing advice.</p>	<p><u>What were the Objectives?</u></p> <p>5.3 Where appropriate use existing mediation service as early intervention 5.4 Ensure that Ground 8 (mandatory ground) is only used in extreme cases in Shropshire and has Executive Director approval 5.6 To make better use of the information gained during the housing registration process 5.7 Tenancy training for all vulnerable service user groups in Shropshire 5.8 Recognise the importance of independent housing advice in the prevention of homelessness</p> <p><u>What has been achieved?</u></p> <p>From April 2009, there has been a contract with the Shropshire Housing Alliance for the delivery of mediation, independent housing advice and rent/deposit services within Shropshire. Ground 8 addressed through Homelessness Action Plan for Registered Providers. Housing register is now held across Shropshire by Shropshire HomePoint with one allocation policy and scheme for the entire county. Information gathered by Shropshire HomePoint can be used as early identification for Housing Options intervention.</p>

<p>Complete a Mortgage Rescue Action Plan.</p>	<p>TARGETS to carry forward Evaluate the mediation project. Implement Shropshire Homelessness Action Plan (Housing Providers) Develop homelessness prevention “triggers” : Shropshire HomePoint.</p>
<p>C) PROVISION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT</p>	<p>4) SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING</p>

What were the Objectives?

- 5.9 Extend the provision of accommodation options to prevent the need for emergency accommodation
- 5.10 Extend the provision of supported lodgings to prevent young people needing emergency accommodation
- 5.11 Dedicated homelessness prevention officers
- 5.12 To sustain and reduce further the use of temporary accommodation in Shropshire by 2010

What has been achieved?

An overarching aim for the County, is to significantly reduce the number of households who need to live in temporary accommodation. The government has set a national target for all Local Authorities to reduce their use of temporary accommodation by 50%. Due to the challenging nature of this target, a temporary accommodation plan is being formulated and will be adopted. Through a detailed service review, the provision of supported lodgings for young people will be investigated and evaluated. Homelessness Prevention Officers in place within Housing Options.

TARGETS to carry forward

To develop and implement a temporary accommodation plan within Shropshire
To continue to actively reduce the number of households using temporary accommodation through utilising options for other suitable accommodation
To only access B&B in emergency situations.
Reduce the use of B&B for families.

What were the Objectives?

- 5.13 Link housing and employment skills training provision to encourage people into work
- 5.14 Reduce fuel poverty and improve private sector housing conditions in Shropshire

What has been achieved?

Links to Private Sector Housing “Empty Properties to Homes” and the grants for empty properties to bring them back into use.

TARGETS to carry forward

Support development of the “Empty Homes Strategy”
Nominations secured for a period of time once property is back in use.
Protocol with Shropshire Housing Alliance to identify those who want to access private sector accommodation.
Liaise with Private Sector Housing re: fuel poverty and private sector housing conditions.

SUMMARY OF MAIN TARGETS

Re-align the Homelessness Strategy with the Housing Strategy for Shropshire

SSAFA Representation on HSIG

Sanctuary scheme

Homelessness Action Plans for Registered Providers

MOPP Audit

Review the Mediation project

Support update of Domestic Abuse Strategy and review of service provision in the County

Work in partnership to plan for people at risk of rough sleeping

Evaluation of the use of specific written guidance/information/leaflets for housing options for specific groups (i.e domestic abuse, mental health, 16/17 year olds)

To develop and implement a temporary accommodation plan within Shropshire.

To continue to actively reduce the number of households using temporary accommodation through utilising options for other suitable accommodation

To only access B&B in emergency situations

Reduce the use of B&B for families

Identify 'mortgage worries' champion within housing
Record and monitor all mortgage enquiries and early notifications from lenders and prepare a Mortgage Rescue Action Plan.
Work with CAS to record and monitor Court Desk activity

Prepare a directory of Homelessness, Housing Advice and related services
Develop work with customer services and communication.

Support and contribute to the service review of 16/17 year old co-ordinators.

Support the development of the Older People's Housing Strategy

Work with general needs hospitals for sign-up to a discharge protocol.

Re-launch the accommodation of ex-offenders in Shropshire

Support development of the "Empty Homes Strategy"