



# Halton Homelessness Strategy

2013-2018



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# 1. Foreword

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Halton Borough Council is pleased to present its Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018 which sets out the key challenges, objectives and priorities for tackling homelessness in Halton over the coming years.

The Strategy highlights and reinforces our commitment to reducing and preventing homelessness. It identifies and examines the current homelessness issues faced by Halton and sets out how we plan to address the housing needs and aspirations of those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Although there have been many achievements in delivering effective homelessness services in Halton, the council recognises that some significant challenges lie ahead. The Localism Act has introduced the greatest changes to homelessness and allocation legislation since 1977 and we believe that many households, both new and existing ones, will be adversely affected by not only the housing and welfare reforms, but other new legislation. To respond to this and its impact on homelessness, joint working between the council and its key partners will be central in ensuring local housing need is met.

Demand for private rented accommodation greatly outstrips supply and rents are rising. Levels of homelessness fell during 2006–2011, but there are worrying signs now as the effects of the recession and overall economic environment begin to become apparent, that it is once again on the rise. In addition, vulnerable households will have specific needs. Among these is specialist housing with appropriate support. This can enable the person to remain at home for longer.

The Homelessness Strategy is based upon the findings and recommendations of two other documents – a comprehensive review of current homelessness services over a nine month period during 2012-2013 and the Homelessness Strategy 2008–2012 which involved active engagement with service users, service providers and members. This Strategy continues to build on current good practice and strives to meet the gaps in existing service provision to ensure the needs of those individuals who are at risk of homelessness are met.

Halton is fully committed and focused on the health care and service provision for homeless people. The integration of the Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and Homelessness will enable the council to develop a new holistic approach. The aim would be to improve health care for extremely vulnerable people whenever they need help, within primary and community care and hospitals.

Halton aims to put the person/patient back at the heart of healthcare with the focus on what the individual wants and needs. With cross professional and organisation boundaries to shape care around the person and ensure services are more flexible and accessible. Experienced health and homeless professionals will be included at every level of the future shaping of services.

The Strategy is supported by a five year Action Plan which clearly sets out the short, medium and long term solutions along with specific actions to deliver long lasting change to those at risk.

To ensure the Strategy remains relevant it will be monitored by the Halton Homelessness Forum and reviewed annually in order that it can be responsive to emerging change.

Yours sincerely,

**Councillor Ron Hignett**

Executive

Board

Member

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Physical

Environment

## 2. Introduction

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The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to carry out a Strategic Review of Homelessness in their area and then formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the findings from the review.

### **Strategic Review of Homelessness**

The review was conducted over a period of nine months and involved active engagement with service users, service providers and all partner agencies and members. Draft findings were discussed and agreed with key stakeholders before the report was finalised.

The review provides clear direction for preventing and addressing homelessness in Halton and reflects on the factors known to affect future homelessness. Its findings and recommendations are the basis for the development of this new Homelessness Strategy for Halton over the next five years.

This strategy will build upon the success of its precursor (2009–2013) which focused upon four important issues:

1. Understanding the Problem
2. Prevention
3. Increasing Access to Housing Choice
4. Providing Support

### **Understanding the problem (homelessness and housing need)**

Significant progress has been made in determining the levels of homelessness, the reasons why people become homeless and which household group it affects most. This progress has been achieved through a range of measures including: analysis of the move from short term supported accommodation and research into households requiring resettlement services.

### **Prevention**

The introduction of a preventative approach among statutory homeless households has proved successful. This change from reactive assessment to proactive prevention, coupled with a housing options service, proved to be a significant factor in improvement.

### **Increasing access to housing choice**

Progress has been made in allowing customers choice and enabling them to access properties owned by accredited private sector landlords. This progress is likely to continue now that 'Property Pool Plus' has been introduced.

## Providing support

Floating support services have been re-tendered. This has resulted in more streamlined and better support for households which are vulnerable to homelessness. With all of this successful work already undertaken and acting on the findings of the review, this new strategy will continue to strive to respond to evolving pressure on existing service provision. This will ensure that Halton is best placed to meet the needs of individuals at risk of being or who already are currently homeless.

Homelessness is increasing across the country and it is anticipated that this trend will continue. This will place additional pressure on services. To address this national problem, the Government has published 'Making Every Contact Count.' This recognises that early intervention to prevent homelessness is the key. It does this through 'social justice' by supporting the most disadvantaged individuals and families. It tackles many of the underlying problems that, if left unchecked, can increase the likelihood of the individual or family becoming homeless.

**The ultimate goal, nationally and locally for Halton, is to ensure that people have settled homes. This stability will then enable individuals to build settled lives.**

## 3. Homelessness in Halton

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Halton is experiencing a gradual increase in homelessness presentations and of those being accepted as statutory homeless. The main causes are loss of home due to family exclusions, relationship breakdown or the loss of a private sector tenancy.

There are many groups of people who are not deemed statutory homeless, but still have pressing housing needs and no settled home. The Housing Solutions team work extensively with these groups and offer temporary accommodation for a limited period, to allow the crisis to be averted and suitable options explored and implemented.

People on low incomes without regular work, lack of proven track record, previous failed tenancies, mental health or substance misuse are unlikely to meet letting agents/landlords vetting procedures and so cannot obtain a private tenancy.

Poor discharge planning for ex-offenders and those with mental health needs have been cited as additional factors contributing to homelessness. Those with complex needs, addiction, negative behaviour, and poor parenting and life skills face particular problems in attaining settled homes and can often fall through the net of services and accommodation provided.

Welfare benefit reforms, especially limiting Housing Benefit for younger people and the effect of the 'Benefit Cap' on larger families, will increase the risk of homelessness for these groups in the future.

Rough Sleeping in Halton is not identified as a major problem; however, the majority of people identified as sleeping on the streets of Halton are aged between 26 and 50. The council developed a sub-regional prevention service to tackle rough sleepers and the outreach service will ensure that all clients have access to services and if necessary are relocated back to their local connection area.

### **Homelessness issues**

Key issues influencing the Strategy are examined in detail within the Homelessness Review Consultation Report (2013). They are summarised in the following table under three themes (People, Health and Wellbeing and Communities). Each underpins the overarching aims and the six strategic objectives and accompanying priorities.

People	Health & Wellbeing	Communities
<p>National evidence of impact on health and wellbeing due to homelessness</p> <p>National evidence indicates additional costs due to children entering the care system</p> <p>Impact on young people and families experiencing/ threatened with homelessness</p> <p>Lack of settled accommodation and support can prove detrimental and lead to repeat homelessness</p> <p>Domestic violence within Halton is evident and analysis confirms 11% of acceptances compared to 3% in England</p>	<p>National evidence of poor health or neglect of physical needs related to homelessness</p> <p>Mental Health and substance misuse problems are contributable factors towards homelessness</p> <p>Impact on health and social care services due to homelessness and rough sleeping</p> <p>National evidence that homeless people have significantly higher levels of premature mortality, mental and physical health needs than the settled population</p>	<p>Impact of anti-social and offending behaviour due to increased homelessness</p> <p>National evidence indicates dependency on drugs and alcohol amongst rough sleepers</p> <p>Criminal activity can be both the cause of and a consequence of homelessness</p> <p>High incidence and turnover of temporary accommodation within an area can lead to neighbourhood decline</p>

### Homelessness characteristics

- Families or friends unwilling to accommodate.
- Domestic violence
- Relationship breakdown
- Health – addictions, drug/alcohol misuse
- Offending, anti-social behaviour
- Issues with private rented property (disrepair, loss of assured shorthold tenancies)
- Debt, money problems, rent arrears, often due to benefit issues

### Prevention and relief

- Housing Solutions community focused service
- Partnership working with registered providers and private landlords
- Joint working between various agencies.
- Benefit and legal advice
- Floating support
- Supported temporary accommodation
- Effective and accelerated Move On approach to secure accommodation



## 4. Achievements from Previous Strategy

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There have been many successes in the last five years in spite of the high housing demand in Halton. Nationally, the number of individual cases accepted as homeless increased by 16% and there has been a 44% increase in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in the year ending March 2012. However, in Halton over the same period, there were no households in bed and breakfast accommodation and the borough has managed to maintain an annual decrease in its use of temporary accommodation.

This is an outstanding achievement given the intense housing pressures in Halton. It has been achieved through the high priority placed on homelessness prevention in the borough and the continuing work in delivering practical homelessness solutions. As a consequence, a strong network of partnerships and services has been developed to support those who are either threatened with or experiencing homelessness.

Since the previous strategy there have been significant changes in legislation such as the Welfare Reform and Localism Act 2011. This combined with the considerable cuts to local authority budgets have led to significant challenges for the borough. Yet despite this, there have been a number of major achievements, as described in the following sections.

### Statutory homelessness

Achievements	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13
Statutory homelessness presentations	241	216	78	154	168
Statutory homelessness acceptances	166	158	37	64	86
Use of temporary Accommodation.	54	41	35	23	39
Use of Bed & Breakfast	7	1	0	0	1
Homelessness Prevention	Not recorded	625	550	492	431
Advice and assistance	803	1800	2228	2488	2051

The following key points can be observed from the data displayed in the table above:

- Over the past five years, there has been a reduction in the number of households presenting as statutory homeless.

- Significant reductions in the use of temporary accommodation which meet and go beyond the March 2010 target set by CLG.
- A decrease in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. This has improved the quality of life for homeless households and reduced the cost to the public purse.
- An increase in homelessness prevention (advice and assistance) and developed initiatives. The priority is on preventing homelessness occurring by helping people resolve their housing problems. In addition people are helped to tackling barriers which would prevent them from either obtaining or retaining sustainable accommodation.

## Youth homelessness

- The Southwark Protocol was developed and implemented in 2010/11 and is currently being reviewed. The aim is to provide a co-ordinated response to the prevention of homelessness amongst 16-17 year-olds. It ensures they receive the right level of support and are able to access appropriate and suitable accommodation where necessary. The protocol was a response to judgements by the House of Lords which reaffirmed and clarified that the duty under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 takes precedence over the duties within Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 in providing for children in need who require accommodation.
- Made use of extra funding to create a dedicated Youth Officer post. This role involves joint working with Children’s Services in connection with the Southwark Protocol. It will focus on homeless prevention and mediation among 16-17 year-olds.
- 85% of young people presenting as homeless were facilitated successfully back home.

The age-groups 16-24 and 25-44 contain the highest numbers of statutory homeless individuals. This national pattern is also reflected in data for Halton. The table below shows the percentage statutory homeless (national and local) for the year 2011-2012 by age-groups:

Age group	% accepted as statutory homeless	
	Halton	England
16-24 years	34%	35%
25-44 years	52%	51%
45-59 years	13%	11%
60-64 years	2%	1%
65-74 years	0%	1%
75+ years	0%	1%

- A ‘Home Essentials Fund’ was launched to help young people between the ages of 18 – 35 to move on from hostel accommodation and sustain their tenancy by providing help towards the cost of setting up a home. The scheme provides assistance to purchase household items such as microwaves, bedding, crockery and cookery items up to the value of £300, which is not repayable.
- 55 Gift applications were received in 2011/12
- 38 applications were approved and received assistance under the scheme
- 75% of clients have successfully sustained their tenancies since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012

## Case study: youth homelessness



Melissa is a 17 year old female who approached the Housing Solutions Service to present as homeless.

Melissa claimed that due to constant arguments with her mum, she was ordered to leave the family home and not able to return.

Melissa was referred to the Housing Solutions Youth Adviser and a full homeless assessment was completed, although, Melissa stressed that she wished to be accommodated within the hostel where her friends had been placed.

The Youth Officer conducted a home visit to discuss the situation with Melissa's mum and negotiate for Melissa to return home, but mum refused.

Melissa was referred to the Nightstop service and reluctantly took up the temporary accommodation.

Mediation was put in place and after a number of home visits and telephone discussions; both Mum and Melissa agreed to work with the officers to resolve their issues.

Unfortunately, Melissa failed to engage with training/education programmes, which jeopardised her placement.

The officer dedicated, considerable time to work with Melissa and mum to address their issues, and encouraged them to discuss how they could work together to resolve them.

**OUTCOME: After regular contact with Melissa and her mum, an intense support package was agreed and implemented. Melissa was allowed to return home and is actively engaging in training and there has been improvement in her relationship with her mum.**

## Mortgage rescue

- Development of a Repossessions Action Plan. This was in response to Halton being identified as a national 'hotspot' for mortgage repossessions. To achieve this, the council introduced a 'task and finish' working group. This brought together the work of various agencies in the borough to prevent repossessions.
- In addition, the Housing Solutions Team established a dedicated Mortgage Rescue Advisor. This post provides tailored advice to those at risk of repossession and can negotiate with lenders and at court hearings.

## Case study: mortgage rescue



Mrs L approached the Housing Solutions Team as she had suffered a relationship breakdown and could not afford her mortgage on her income alone.

Mrs L stressed that her son had recently been offered a placement on a speech and learning therapy course that was located within the vicinity and to move from her present home would affect his health and be detrimental to his progress.

The Housing Solutions Adviser completed a Mortgage Rescue application which was submitted to Riverside for review in September 2013.

In October 2013, Mrs L received confirmation that her application had been successful and she would be allowed to remain within the family home.

**OUTCOME: The acting agent completed the buyback process, allowing Mrs L to remain in her property as the tenant at an affordable rent and close to all the support networks for her son's needs.**

## Service improvement

- Progress made with the development and implementation of the Housing and Support Gateway. This will provide a single point of access into support services for individuals with housing support needs.
- Improved information for local people through the development of a pack of leaflets on such topics as homelessness, housing options, the 'Bond Guarantee Scheme' and a guide for private tenants.
- Developed and promoted a customer satisfaction survey. This gathers feedback on the quality of the service and identifies areas for improvement.
- Towards the end of 2009, a mystery shopping exercise was carried out. This led to improvements being made to the way customers were dealt with via the contact centre and one-stop-shops.
- Designated Housing Solutions Officers located at local one-stop-shops to provide immediate advice for those facing homelessness. This saves time by reducing the need for an appointment among homeless or those threatened with homelessness. This initiative stemmed from an internal review of the Housing Solutions Team was taken late in 2011.

## Sub-regional approach

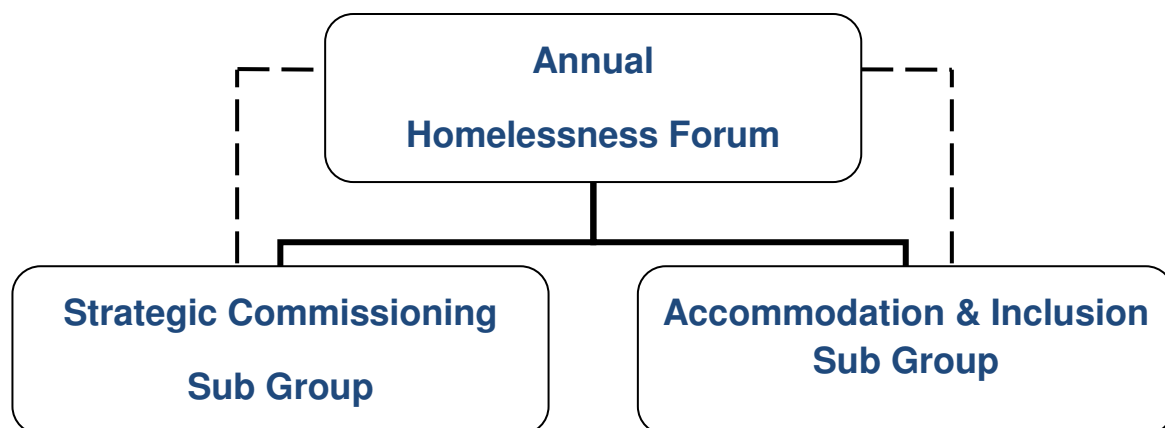
- Partnership working with Merseyside authorities led to the development of the 'No second night out' initiative. In its strategy – 'Vision to end rough sleeping: no second night out', the

government called on local authorities to implement this initiative (previously successfully piloted in London). This provides a quick and effective response from relevant services to help individuals off the streets.

- In Merseyside, local authorities have collaborated to deliver the vision that by the end of 2012 no-one will live on the streets of the Liverpool City Region and no individual arriving on the streets for the first time will sleep out for more than one night. The scheme involves widespread promotion of the one telephone number to call to report someone sleeping rough in the sub-region.

### Homelessness Forum structure

- A re-structured homelessness forum from one large meeting into an annual meeting plus two sub groups to focus on Strategic Commissioning and Accommodation & Service Inclusion.



### Homelessness Scrutiny Group

- A set of recommendations arising from a scrutiny review led by Elected Members (2011-12). This resulted in efficiencies being achieved through a new contract with Halton YMCA for the YMCA hostel and ‘Nightstop’, the de-commissioning of the ‘Y’s Up’ advice and guidance service, a new contract with Plus Dane for floating support services. Efficiencies have also been achieved through the reconfiguration of hostel provision for single homeless people. Access to services has been prioritised to those who are owed a statutory duty. There is also an increased focus on prevention to help people to resolve their housing issues.

**However, despite these achievements, Halton is not complacent and acknowledges that the challenges ahead will be considerable. Halton will continue to review and adapt its service provision to prevent future homelessness in the most effective way.**

**We are witnessing fundamental changes in the housing market and in social and welfare reform. The successes of the past five years will be even more difficult to replicate in the years ahead.**

# 5. Context

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Halton’s Homelessness Strategy has been developed in the context of a wide range of national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans. These are summarised in the diagram below. Further details of how this influences the Strategy can be found in the evidence paper Strategic Review of Homelessness in Halton 2012/13.



Homelessness services are essential in meeting Halton's priorities set out in the 'Sustainable Community Strategy', as demonstrated below:

### A Healthy Halton

- Homeless people have significantly higher levels of premature mortality, mental and physical ill health than among the settled population and are more likely to have a drug or alcohol addiction.
- Net cost estimated to be £64m per year over and above health costs for same number of general population.

### Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

- The lack of a settled home can be a significant barrier for those seeking permanent employment and training opportunities.
- Additional costs of providing support to homeless people to enable them to find a job and live independently.

### A Safer Halton

- Criminal activity can be both a cause of and a consequence of homelessness.
- Research shows that homeless prisoners are more likely to re-offend within the first year of release than those who had settled accommodation before custody.

### Children and Young People in Halton

- Research shows that frequent adverse residential mobility (e.g. due to homelessness) can have a detrimental effect on educational attainment.
- Additional costs resulting from children entering the care system due to the lack of a settled home.

### Environment and Regeneration in Halton

- Environmental impact of rough sleeping and its potential impact on economic investment in an area.
- High incidence and turnover of temporary accommodation in an area can lead to neighbourhood decline.

## **Making Every Contact Count: a joint approach towards homelessness prevention**

In August 2012, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) published this report produced by the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness. It states clearly that 'there is no place for homelessness in the 21st century'.

The report sets out the Government's approach to homelessness prevention by focusing on the contribution that a commitment around troubled families, health, crime prevention and employment

and skills can make. The report calls for central Government, local authorities, government agencies and the voluntary sector to work together to support those at risk of homelessness.

It also gives an indication of the Government's direction and expectations for homelessness prevention. This emphasises a number of important factors, including; greater integration of local authority services (Housing, Social Services, Welfare Rights etc.); increased focus on a payment by results approach to funding; increased reliance on the private rented sector; and a focus on wrap-around services to tackle youth homelessness (such as those provided by Youth Hubs).

The report also set ten local challenges, which the government has recommended local authorities should take forward. This strategy recognises the importance of these challenges and acknowledges existing work already undertaken or underway in response to them. Halton will ensure that the ten **'Gold Standard Pledges'** remain key to its targeted approach in addressing homelessness prevention and homelessness. The Strategy identifies key themes, with emphasis placed upon reducing homelessness and increasing future prevention initiatives. The Gold Standard ten-point challenges will be to maximise opportunities arising from the Government commitments and will be **reflected within the six strategy objectives and their accompanying priorities and the strategy action plan.**



## Link between Strategy Objectives and Gold Standard

Strategy objective	Gold standard
1. Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs</li> <li>• Adopt a 'no second night out' approach or an effective local alternative</li> <li>• Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the mortgage rescue scheme</li> </ul>
2. Health and homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a housing options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients</li> </ul>
3. Minimise the impact of welfare reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a housing options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients</li> </ul>
4. Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to reduce homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords</li> </ul>
5. Increase and improve communication and partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs</li> <li>• Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support</li> </ul>
6. Minimise the use of temporary accommodation by facilitating the supply of secure move-on accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed &amp; Breakfast accommodation</li> <li>• Not place any families in Bed &amp; Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks</li> </ul>

### Health

Local authorities complete a quarterly statistical report (P1E) which identifies levels of homelessness and prevention outcomes achieved. The report is submitted to Communities and Local Government (CLG) in relation to their activities to ensure compliance with the relevant homelessness legislation. The new Public Health Framework sets out the desired outcomes and how they will be measured, which includes two homelessness indicators – statutory homeless acceptances and households in temporary accommodation.

There is an encouraged focus on the health of the local homeless population and a real commitment within Halton to ensure health services assist in identifying those at risk and prevent homelessness by making every contact count.

The health of people who are homeless is generally much poorer than that of the general population. There is limited data available at a local level and it is not routinely collected and analysed, consequently, it is not possible to determine the exact health issues facing people who are homeless. The National Audit found that homeless people have a higher usage of healthcare services than the general population and established;

- 41% had gone to A&E at least once;
- 31% had been admitted to hospital at least once (compared to 7% of the general population in a typical year);
- 28% had used an ambulance at least once;
- 82% had been to a GP at least once;
- Only quarter of homeless people admitted to hospital had help with housing;
- Average length of stay of 6.2 days for homeless people (compared to 2.1 days for the general population);
- Most common reasons for admission include toxicity, alcohol or drugs and mental health problems.

To allow further understanding of the public health needs and pressures placed on services, the Liverpool Public Health Observatory has been commissioned to complete a Health Needs assessment. The commissioned piece of work will look at qualitative methods of gathering intelligence to determine health experience, access to services and homelessness status.

## **Health & Well Being**

The 'Health and Well Being' needs of the homeless in Halton can vary significantly between individuals, and is frequently related to their particular status. This ranges from households fleeing domestic abuse and identified as a priority need for accommodation, to the hidden homeless, single non-priority persons who are rough sleepers, 'sofa surfers' and night shelter residents.

Priority groups for housing include young families, who usually retain access to primary care services and GP to ensure their physical and mental health needs can be met. However, the hidden homeless are particularly vulnerable, with complex physical and mental needs leading to an extremely high level of mortality and an average life expectancy of 40. They can often prove extremely hard to reach through mainstream provision.

Information taken from National Audit carried out by Homeless Link during 2010/11 gave a proxy analysis of the health needs of homeless people in Halton found:

- 8 out of 10 clients have one or more physical health needs and 1 in 5 confirmed they found it difficult to cope and required support;
- The most common conditions mentioned were chest/breathing, pain, joint and muscular problems, dental and eye sight problems. The proportion of homeless people citing these conditions was much higher than prevalence of general population;

- 56% reported long term health conditions compared to 29% in general population;
- 72% have mental health needs compared to 30% of the general population;
- 1 in 3 regularly eat less than 2 meals a day and only 7% consume the recommended 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day compared to 21% of the general population;
- 77% were smokers and had been offered smoking cessation advice;
- 52% indicated they used one or more type of illegal drugs.

Whilst it is essential that the strategic focus remains on preventing homelessness, there is now a new council responsibility under the Health & Social Care Act 2012. This is to reduce premature mortality and tackle health inequalities. Hence the council is strongly committed to supporting a system where vulnerable single homeless persons have equal access to its health and social care services.

The welfare reform and wider economic pressures are likely to increase the numbers of hidden homeless in Halton, further increasing demand on existing health and support services. Following the NHS reform, Public Health now sits within Halton Borough Council. This provides a unique opportunity to review and reposition all disparate homeless health provision investments through Section 75 agreements with Public Health Services. Joint commissioning of a new integrated homeless service could then be more easily achieved. This would meet the spectrum of health needs of the hidden homeless along with those identified for priority accommodation.

Halton intends to build upon the partnership links made with other agencies, including health and mental health services and will remain vigilant in its search for joint working opportunities that improve outcomes for service users.

## 6. The Journey Ahead

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The magnitude and complexity of the issues that face us in the next 5 years must not be underestimated. However, Halton will continue to plan ahead and will work in partnership with others who can assist in delivering solutions. We have prioritised issues and proposed actions to build on our past success, mitigate the impacts of changing housing markets, social and welfare reform but, above all, prevent homelessness.

### Halton's future goals

- Early intervention to prevent homelessness before a crisis point is reached.
- Provision of appropriate advice, accommodation and support if crisis occurs.
- Prevention of repeated homelessness to ensure people have settled and sustainable homes.
- Improve clear links between Health, Homelessness, Housing and Social Care.

### Key challenges

The outcome of the consultation held for reviewing and developing the new strategy with stakeholders highlighted the key challenges Halton is facing. Key issues and priorities identified were:

- Adverse impact of welfare reform;
- Funding;
- Affordable housing need;
- Increasing pressures on household incomes in the current and future economic climate;
- Single non priority and intentionally homeless households;
- Young people;
- People at risk of domestic abuse;
- Difficulty in meeting the needs of households with more complex needs;
- Service integration to develop and improve health care for homeless people;
- Increasing problems accessing private rented accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless households;
- Developing solutions to meet gaps in future funding including accommodation based services for rough sleepers.

### Factors that may affect future homelessness levels

- Lack of affordable housing;
- Housing and Welfare Reforms;
- Increase in Landlord and Mortgage repossession claims.

How Halton will deliver its objectives in response to these pressures is contained within the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. This sets out clear tasks and targets within identified areas of

work.

## 7. Our vision, objectives and priorities

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**The vision is to assist and prevent people who are threatened with homelessness in Halton. To provide a community focused and accessible service to ensure people know where and how they can seek help and assistance to prevent them becoming homeless and receive a quality and confidential housing options service.**

**The Strategy aims to:**

- **Reduce Homelessness presentations and acceptances; and**
- **Increase and improve Homelessness prevention and access to housing services.**

**Further emphasis is placed upon prevention, support and partnership working to deliver an efficient and coordinated approach towards reducing the levels of statutory homelessness within Halton.**

To help achieve these aims, we have adopted the following six strategic objectives. Each contains a set of priorities detailed below, which are linked to the Gold Standard pledges. The Strategy explains why each priority has been selected, what we hope to achieve and how we plan to achieve it.

### **Strategic objective 1:**

#### **Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

- Priority 1A: Develop and co-ordinate services to deliver a comprehensive approach towards homelessness and prevention
- Priority 1B: Develop a marketing plan with partners to raise awareness of the Housing Solutions service to ensure that the homelessness services strive to meet the National Gold Standard
- Priority 1C: Promote a range of prevention options, including the GIFT initiative, prevention fund, and mortgage rescue scheme to enable clients to remain within their homes
- Priority 1D: Respond to and prevent rough sleeping

### **Strategic objective 2:**

#### **Health and homelessness**

- Priority 2A: Ensure that homelessness is recognised as a priority for action within the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Priority 2B: Develop a business case to formalise a single practice approach to address the housing and health care needs of vulnerable homeless people

### **Strategic objective 3:**

#### **Minimise the impact of welfare reform**

- Priority 3A: Agree a joint approach with the Housing Benefits service for the future use of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure they are used effectively to prevent homelessness and to determine future areas of action
- Priority 3B: Develop under-occupation schemes with housing providers to free up family homes and encourage shared housing

### **Strategic objective 4:**

#### **Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to reduce homelessness**

- Priority 4A: Improve access to housing using the private rented sector and shared housing options
- Priority 4B: Improve working with private sector landlords and promote the Bond Guarantee Scheme

### **Strategic objective 5:**

#### **Increase and improve communication and partnership working**

- **Priority 5A:** Develop an effective multi-agency approach to support vulnerable and complex needs households to sustain and secure affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness
- **Priority 5B:** Support young people and facilitate the delivery of integrated housing, care and support for young people at risk, care leavers, young offenders and teenage parents
- **Priority 5C:** Improve partnership working and communication with key agencies, police, probation and housing providers to address the growing housing need for offenders
- **Priority 5D:** Joint partnership working with agencies, police and housing providers to offer options and solutions to victims of domestic abuse to support them to remain within their home

### **Strategic objective 6:**

#### **Minimise the use of temporary accommodation by facilitating the supply of secure move-on accommodation**

- **Priority 6A:** Reduce the use of temporary accommodation (including B&B) to maximise the use of prevention options available to reduce homelessness



The following tables report the findings of the Strategic Review of Homelessness within Halton. These findings have been incorporated within the strategy document and comply with the government’s approach to homelessness prevention while focusing upon partnership working to support those at risk of homelessness.

Why this is a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p><b>The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that every five years, local authorities must carry out a strategic review of homelessness, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on its findings.</b></p>	<p>Determine the future levels, trends and demands of homelessness within Halton.</p> <p>Prevent homelessness within the Halton district and raise awareness of the wide range of services available.</p>	<p>Adopt a corporate commitment to reduce and prevent homelessness, which has a buy in across all local authority services.</p> <p>Early intervention in the homelessness risk assessment process to prevent homelessness and deliver a range of housing options.</p> <p>Develop a Housing and Support Gateway service that will offer an accelerated process and improve access to the homeless and support services within the district.</p>

**Strategic objective 1: Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

**GOLD STANDARD:**

- Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
- Adopt a 'no second night out' approach or an effective local alternative
- Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the mortgage rescue scheme

**Priority 1A: Develop and co-ordinate services to deliver a comprehensive approach towards homelessness and prevention**

<b>Why is this a priority?</b>	<b>What do we want to achieve?</b>	<b>How do we plan to achieve it?</b>
Develop a homeless strategy that sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to ensure it is responsive to emerging trends.	Put a robust framework for measuring the effectiveness of interventions in place and implement the review recommendations by April 2014.  Actively encourage partnership working with statutory and voluntary partners, including other Local Authorities to improve service delivery and address support, education, training and employment.	Conduct a review of the current homeless prevention using the Communities and Local Government (CLG) toolkit.  Develop housing pathways with key partners and client groups that include appropriate accommodation and support. Continue to work with Supported Housing providers to strengthen the outcomes on prevention and long term tenancy sustainment.

**Priority 1B: Develop a marketing plan with partners to raise awareness of the Housing Solutions service to ensure that the homelessness services strive to meet the National Gold Standard**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>To ensure key agencies and partners have an understanding of the homelessness assessment process, applied legislation and prevention agenda to reduce the levels of homelessness.</p> <p>To increase access to prevention services and resources across the district.</p>	<p>Conduct review of current homeless prevention using CLG toolkit.</p> <p>Improve awareness of the Housing Solutions Team and promote the range of housing options and resources available to clients.</p> <p>Reduce the level of homelessness and increase positive prevention outcomes.</p>	<p>Develop a robust framework for measuring the effectiveness of interventions in place to determine trends and review recommendations annually.</p> <p>Commission a range of learning, development and role shadowing opportunities for staff and partners to improve knowledge and understanding around the issues of homelessness and prevention.</p> <p>Increase the number of 'Housing Solutions' drop in advice sessions across the district to further develop a community focused and accessible service.</p> <p>Increase/ develop prevention initiatives to promote client choice and access to services.</p>

**Priority 1C: Promote a range of prevention options, including the GIFT initiative, prevention fund, and mortgage rescue scheme to enable clients to remain within their homes**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Work in accordance with the Prevention agenda to develop and improve homelessness prevention initiatives.</p> <p>Reduce the levels of future homelessness presentations and acceptances.</p>	<p>Continuous improvement and delivery of prevention services with the priority on helping people to resolve their housing problems and tackle barriers to obtaining accommodation.</p> <p>Continue the delivery of the Mortgage/ Repossession role and ensure the MRS fund is fully utilised.</p> <p>Review and promote the GIFT scheme for young people to ensure it is made available to clients in crisis / homeless.</p> <p>Deliver a programme of training to promote homelessness prevention and the impact of the Localism Act, Welfare Reform and other initiatives with partners.</p>	<p>Ensure the service is accessible and transparent and people facing crisis are fully aware of the options and services available to them.</p> <p>Increase the number of those accessing the Mortgage Rescue Service by 20%. Further improve joint working with all housing partners to offer an accelerated process for clients facing repossession due to rent arrears.</p> <p>Further develop county court service and attend court action group to be aware of changes within the legal setting.</p> <p>Review information leaflets and circulate across the district. Update council website to illustrate the level of services and assistance available to clients.</p> <p>Develop as part of move on process to ensure service is fully utilised and clients have access to the relevant funding to take up a tenancy.</p> <p>Deliver joint staff training between partners and agencies every quarter commencing December 2013. Co-ordinate sub regional training programme to share resources and reduce costs.</p>

Priority 1D: Respond to and prevent rough sleeping		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
Ensure that no client spends more than one night rough sleeping.	<p>Implement a sub-regional approach to tackling the problem of rough sleeping across Merseyside and Cheshire.</p> <p>Develop and improve a co-ordinated approach that is consistent across all Local Authorities when assisting clients sleeping rough.</p>	<p>Review the no second night out service to determine current trends and future funding to retain service provision</p> <p>Ensure sufficient specialist accommodation and support is available to meet the needs of single homeless clients in the borough.</p> <p>Ensure that the reconnection policy for 'out-of-borough' clients is fully supported when they return to their local connection district.</p>

## Strategic objective 2: Health and homelessness

### GOLD STANDARD:

- Offer a housing options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients

### Priority 2A: Ensure that homelessness is recognised as a priority for action within the Health and Wellbeing Board

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Make every contact count and ensure individuals and/ or families affected by homelessness can access appropriate advice, support and accommodation.</p>	<p>Ensure that homelessness services are appropriately linked into Health Care services and fully informed of the options available to maximise resources, prevent homelessness and improve Health and wellbeing.</p> <p>To promote and encourage integration between homelessness and public health care services to allow a broader understanding of the priorities and challenges faced by each service</p> <p>Review the Hospital discharge policy to incorporate procedural practice changes to the service.</p>	<p>Present Homelessness Strategy to Health &amp; Well Being Board to raise awareness of the Housing Solutions Service. To ensure Homelessness is identified as a Priority and to build upon joint Strategic Needs Assessments to determine future service delivery.</p> <p>To forge close working relationships with Health Care services and outline future trends and challenges of homelessness and the impact and cost it will have on future health care.</p> <p>Joint partnership approach to review and develop a Hospital Discharge Policy which will enable vulnerable clients to be discharged from hospital more quickly. This would put their home less at risk.</p>

**Priority 2B: Develop a business case to formalise a single practice approach to address the housing and health care needs of vulnerable homeless people**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Homelessness people are at the bottom of any graph of health inequalities, putting the average age of death of homeless people some 30 years below that of the general population. Homelessness is therefore a Healthcare issues</p>	<p>Integrated service approach to develop a National Practice for homelessness people that is flexible and easily accessible.</p> <p>Reduce homelessness and repeat hospital admissions by taking a holistic approach to reach the clients and address all their needs to improve the quality and experience of these groups</p> <p>Collect and record data to support local commissioners and health care partners to shape services around the health needs of the most vulnerable and marginal groups, that are often invisible.</p>	<p>To transform health outcomes for homeless people and other multiply excluded groups.</p> <p>Develop Healthcare pathway with integrated care co-ordination team that will include homelessness, to improve outcomes for homeless people.</p> <p>Conduct needs assessment and collect data on levels of hidden local health need and health inequalities within the defined population.</p>



**Strategic objective 3: Minimise the impact of welfare reform**

**GOLD STANDARD:**

- Offer a housing options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients

**Priority 3A: Agree a joint approach with the Housing Benefits service for the future use of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure they are used effectively to prevent homelessness and to determine future areas of action**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>To ensure that the council is fully compliant with changing legislation and responsible for the administration of public funds.</p>	<p>Develop a co-ordinated approach to providing advice on housing and welfare benefit, debt and money advice by working with and fully supporting partner agencies.</p> <p>Agree a joint approach to the future use of Discretionary Housing Payments</p>	<p>Review current services to ensure that the level of advice offered on benefits, debt and money advice is accessible and efficient and to determine gaps in service delivery.</p> <p>Develop evening / weekend advice services and consider on-line advice services.</p> <p>Review and monitor future allocation of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to determine future areas of action.</p> <p>Request for Housing Solutions Officer to attend DHP application panel assessments.</p>

**Priority 3B: Develop under-occupation schemes with housing providers to free up family homes and encourage shared housing**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>To prevent and reduce future homelessness for clients affected by the Welfare Reform Act.</p>	<p>A joint approach to administering the allocated DHP funding to reduce the impact of the Welfare Reform Act and minimise penalties in order to prevent and reduce homelessness.</p> <p>Target social tenants likely to be affected by the under-occupation penalties enforced through the welfare reform.</p>	<p>Develop a coordinated approach to offering advice and support for housing welfare benefit, debt and money management. This will increase early access to advice services and further promote financial inclusion.</p> <p>Targeted support to those likely to become homeless as a result of the under-occupation penalties and social rent conversions.</p> <p>Consult with all housing partners to develop a move on/ transfer scheme for clients affected by under –occupation penalties.</p> <p>Joint partnership approach to develop and promote shared housing scheme.</p> <p>Advertise and promote shared housing on the PPP housing register.</p>

**Strategic objective 4: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to reduce homelessness**

**GOLD STANDARD:**

- Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords

**Priority 4A: Improve access to housing using the private rented sector and shared housing options**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Enable Halton Borough Council to take advantage of powers available to them under sections 148 and 149 (Chapter 20, Part 7 of Localism Act 2011). The powers allow the local authority to make an offer of suitable private rented accommodation to persons who have a priority need and are not intentionally homeless.</p> <p>Review the Allocations Policy to cover new powers introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act.</p>	<p>Agree approaches to using the new homelessness discharge duty in accordance with PRSO policy and Improve access to housing via Property Pool Plus to increase private rented sector and shared housing options.</p> <p>Develop and review initiatives to make better use of social housing stock.</p>	<p>Encourage private sector landlords to advertise their accommodation on Property Pool Plus and work with the LA to secure accommodation for homeless households.</p> <p>Increase supply of homes to homelessness and vulnerable households by bringing empty homes back into use Promote and facilitate mutual exchanges to clients.</p> <p>Work with housing providers to develop incentives to free up stock and meet housing demands.</p> <p>Continue to work with floating support services to strengthen prevention outcomes and tenancy sustainment.</p>

**Priority 4B: Improve working with private sector landlords and promote the Bond Guarantee Scheme**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Reduce and prevent homelessness and enable the local authority to discharge its statutory housing duty using the private rented sector.</p>	<p>Increase housing options and choice to meet increasing housing demand to prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Improve partnership working with letting agents to improve the service available.</p> <p>Improve advice and support offered to landlords and clients.</p>	<p>Increase sustainable move on options and support from temporary accommodation to make full use of the bond guarantee scheme and promote independent living.</p> <p>Improve overall approach to working with private landlords to promote the 'Bond Guarantee Scheme' and increase number of lets with rental bond by 10% by April 2014.</p> <p>Make full use of DHP for rent in advance required for private renting. Encourage letting agents to work with the council to fully utilise the accommodation available.</p> <p>Undertake awareness and publicity campaign to inform landlords and tenants of services available.</p> <p>Encourage and support people to let out their property or rooms.</p>

## Strategic objective 5: Increase and improve communication and partnership working

### GOLD STANDARD:

- Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
- Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support

### Priority 5A: Develop an effective multi-agency approach to support vulnerable and complex needs households to sustain and secure affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>People experiencing homelessness are generally in contact with a range of other public services. Providing access to advice, information and support will ensure that the right help at the right time is provided.</p>	<p>Integrated approach to addressing the housing and social needs of vulnerable and complex households to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Deliver a planned approach involving key agencies. Respond to the needs of vulnerable and complex care households experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Develop an effective multi agency approach to support vulnerable and complex needs households to sustain and secure affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>Review intelligence which will identify arising needs for vulnerable and complex needs households</p> <p>Agree and develop a joint working protocol between Housing Solutions service and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; Social Care</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Local Hospitals</li> <li>• Probation</li> <li>• Job Centre Plus.</li> </ul> <p>Provide emergency temporary housing provision and tailored support for vulnerable client groups experiencing homelessness.</p>

**Priority 5B: Support young people and facilitate the delivery of integrated housing, care and support for young people at risk, care leavers, young offenders and teenage parents**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Ensure that all young people in Halton have support, life skills and opportunities to thrive physically and emotionally to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>Scope and identify opportunities to improve access to education, training and housing options for young people.</p> <p>Ensure that staff working with young people affected by homelessness, have the appropriate skills, knowledge and safeguarding training.</p> <p>Collaborate with the skills and work programme providers.</p> <p>Review the joint protocol with Children’s services and youth offending team to ensure the council complies with legal judgements and case law.</p> <p>Explore the development of emergency respite accommodation for 16 – 21 year olds.</p>	<p>Continue to develop joint working between the Housing Solutions Team, Children’s services and the team around the family.</p> <p>Ensure that the housing solutions team access children’s and adults safeguarding training to raise awareness of key issues and reporting process,</p> <p>Provide learning and development opportunities on Homelessness legislation and applied criteria to all key services that work with young people.</p> <p>Increase the number of referrals to training, employment and education providers by 15% annually.</p> <p>Support housing providers to develop a coordinated approach to delivering life skills sessions to young people.</p> <p>Further review and develop the joint working protocol for 16/17 year olds, enabling transition towards independent living with tailored support.</p> <p>Develop crisis intervention centre for young people threatened with homelessness. Offer a holistic approach to working with young people and their</p>

		households as a means of them returning back to the family home.
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**Priority 5C: Improve partnership working and communication with key agencies, police, probation and housing providers to address the growing housing need for offenders**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>Ensure the current housing accommodation and support for all offenders is appropriate and that pathways to specialist services are available to reduce the level of re-offending and enable Housing Solutions advisers to work with offenders as part of a wider package of support.</p>	<p>Review current housing policies to identify gaps in provision and agree the information required by Registered Providers to enable them to rehouse offenders.</p> <p>Reduce the number of prisoners being released from prison without a resettlement plan to prevent homelessness and re-offending.</p>	<p>Investigate Registered Providers reluctance to house Schedule 1 offenders and those subject to MAPPA.</p> <p>Work with shelter to develop joint protocol to maximise notice periods for prisoners requiring accommodation on release. To ensure offenders are registered with Housing Solutions and Property Pool Plus at earliest opportunity.</p>

**Priority 5D: Joint partnership working with agencies, police and housing providers to offer options and solutions to victims of domestic abuse to support them to remain within their home**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>To ensure the council works in compliance with Homelessness Act 2002 and provides temporary /secure accommodation for victims of violence and abuse.</p> <p>To ensure that service provision is sufficient to meet with and tackle the issues of domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with National Domestic Abuse Organisations, Police, registered Housing providers and key agencies to offer a range of rehousing options and solutions to victims of domestic abuse</p> <p>Improve partnership working with Sanctuary scheme providers to promote safety housing options and solutions to victims of abuse.</p> <p>Improve referral and data sharing processes across organisations to ensure consistency and accuracy and better service delivery</p>	<p>Multi-agency approach to deliver a holistic prevention service. This will ensure that the right support and services are made available to the household.</p> <p>Develop a range of housing accommodation provisions to meet the needs of victims of abuse. Ensure that families with dependent male children and male victims can be accommodated within the district.</p> <p>Support Sanctuary scheme to reduce the number of men and women becoming homeless because of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Agree a pathway action plan with Key agencies to deal with the crisis and empower the individual to achieve positive outcomes and sustain long term tenancy.</p>



**Strategic objective 6: Minimise the use of temporary accommodation by facilitating the supply of secure move-on accommodation**

**GOLD STANDARD:**

- Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed & Breakfast accommodation
- Not place any families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks

**Priority 6A: Reduce the use of temporary accommodation (including B&B) to maximise the use of prevention options available to reduce homelessness**

Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<p>In accordance with homelessness legislation the council cannot place families into B&amp;B accommodation for more than 6 weeks.</p>	<p>Continue to reduce the use of B&amp;B and temporary accommodation and make better use of housing stock within the district.</p> <p>Continued achievement to reduce the use of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Review the level of temporary accommodation within the district to ensure it meets current and future housing demands</p> <p>Temporary accommodation provision made available for non-statutory homeless households in crisis.</p>	<p>Early intervention and promoting a community focused service, made more accessible to households threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 20% by April 2014.</p> <p>Support temporary accommodation providers Promote housing services available and facilitate move on options.</p> <p>Evaluate and develop temporary accommodation provision within the district to ensure it meets the needs of statutory homeless households and reduce the level of voids and rent loss.</p> <p>Improve access to appropriate temporary hostel accommodation for short periods to allow housing solutions and key agencies to address the issues and facilitate move on to alternative suitable accommodation.</p>

## 8. National & Local Policy

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Local authorities have statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). This includes a duty to provide advice and assistance to all people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Following the Homelessness Act 2002, preventing homelessness has become a central component of national and local policy direction. The Act imposes a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a homelessness strategy for addressing prevention and recurrence of homelessness. This includes a requirement to assist 16 and 17 year olds and other vulnerable groups. In carrying out these functions the council must consider both the objectives of central government and local priorities, as determined by the corporate housing strategy and other key council policy documents.

- **Localism Act** - The Localism Act 2011 introduced a range of measures to give more powers to individuals, communities and local authorities enabling them to make decisions, and influence policies in their own local areas with a diminishing central government role. The main implications for homelessness are changes to the local authority duty to accommodate households assessed as 'statutory homeless' and to allow the discharging of homelessness duty to the private rented sector.

The new legal powers will have implications for the Housing Solutions Team. For example, reliance upon private rented accommodation would form an important part of the service, alongside the existing focus on homeless prevention. This would increase pressure on the council to ensure there was better private sector stock provision by increasing enforcement activities, extending bond schemes, licencing and prioritising referrals to accredited landlords.

- **Welfare Reform** – The introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 has major implications for Halton residents and there are concerns that it could lead to an increase in homelessness. The reforms proposed are intended to protect the most vulnerable, create the right incentives to get more people into work resulting in a fairer benefit and tax credit system. However, our initial analysis indicates that welfare reform will have a detrimental effect on many of the vulnerable and high risk client groups.

A number of changes to housing benefit have already been implemented and will continue until 2014/15. Universal Credit will replace the current system of means tested working age benefits and tax credits and came into effect in October 2013 (in piloted areas). The measures to reduce Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates would ultimately result in people's inability to find suitable affordable housing in the private sector and may threaten the ability of some households to continue to afford their current home. To help households manage the transition, the Government has awarded increases in the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) fund. The council will use the increase in DHP to target vulnerable households with the most need and to address the 'bedroom tax'; however, there is a risk that the allocation may not be sufficient.

- **No Second Night Out (NSNO)** – The ministerial working group on homelessness published its first report in 2011. This addresses the complex causes of homelessness more effectively and tackles the problem of rough sleeping out on the streets. NSNO was a Merseyside sub-regional approach that has been operating successfully since 2011

## 9. Delivery of the Strategy

To achieve the strategic priorities and objectives an Action Plan has been developed in partnership with partners and stakeholders to outline key objectives and tasks to be delivered over the 2013 - 2018 period. The action plan is reviewed annually and targets set are evaluated to incorporate legislation and policy changes.

### Governance and monitoring

Progress and delivery of the strategy and action plan will be monitored and updated quarterly by the *Strategic Commissioning Group* and annually by the *Halton Homelessness Forum* to celebrate the achievements and remove any barriers, address new challenges and ensure efficient service delivery. It is considered important to have the involvement of stakeholders and partners in the delivery of the targets set in the strategy action plan. The monitoring of the homelessness strategy targets is shown in the table below:

### Monitoring Homeless Strategy Targets

Stakeholders and Partners	Homeless Strategy Targets
Halton Homelessness Forum	Annual conference to inform stakeholders and partners of the progress made towards delivering the set targets identified within the Strategy Action Plan.
Strategic Commissioning Group	Through quarterly meetings the strategy action plan will be updated and progress recorded for each action. Any new developments at local and regional level will be considered and the implications will be evaluated.
Halton Housing Partnership	Progress on the homelessness strategy action plan to be reported to HHP on an annual basis, however, exceptions could be reported to its monthly meetings.
National Performance Indicators:	<p>The new CLG single data list require the following data for homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mortgage Rescue</b> quarterly return - monitors the number of households at risk of homelessness who are assisted by the Housing Solutions Team</li> <li>• <b>Rough Sleeper</b> annual return - records the number of people reported to be sleeping rough in the Local Authority on a given night between October and November each year</li> <li>• <b>P1E quarterly return</b> - covers all areas of Local Authority activity under the homelessness provisions of Housing Act 1996.</li> </ul>

Stakeholders and Partners	Homeless Strategy Targets
Local Performance Indicators:	<p>Halton will continue to monitor performance against certain local performance indicators relating to housing and homelessness. These are:</p> <p><b>LPI</b> – relates to the <i>number of households who are considered homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days, who approached the Local Authority Housing Solutions Service, and for whom housing advice casework and intervention has resolved their situation.</i> This data is recorded on the ‘Housing Advice’ database and reported through section E10 of the P1E</p> <p><b>LPI</b> – Shows the <i>average length of stay in B&amp;B accommodation for households with dependent children or expectant mothers that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.</i></p> <p><b>LPI</b> – This indicator measures the <i>number of households living in temporary accommodation provided under the homelessness legislation.</i> This indicator is no longer reported to Government but is monitored locally.</p>

### Risk elements to delivery of Homelessness Strategy

The key risks to the delivery of the homelessness strategy have been analysed to ensure there are mechanisms in place to mitigate or manage their impact.

### Access to resources

The CLG Homelessness Grant funding makes an important contribution to the delivery of a range of homeless services in Halton. This fund is currently frozen and arrangements for distribution of the grant for the financial years 2014/2015 are unclear. If the homelessness grant funding were to be reduced or ceased completely, it would adversely affect the ability of the Housing Solutions team to offer a range of housing options and would impact upon performance and service delivery.

# 10. Action Plan

## Homelessness Strategy for Halton (2013 – 2018) – Action Plan

Strategic objective 1: Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness					
Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<b>1A: Develop and co-ordinate services to deliver a comprehensive approach towards homelessness and prevention</b>	Review/ improve current homelessness prevention using CLG toolkit.	2014	PHO, Health & Social Care Commissioner	Officer time, P1E, CLG Homelessness Grant	Robust framework measuring effectiveness of interventions. Develop and implement the Action Plan recommendations.
	Adopt a corporate commitment to reduce and prevent homelessness in which all Local Authority services are involved.	2015 Over strategy period	Merseyside and Cheshire sub-regional groups, Health & Social Care	CLG sub-regional Prevention Fund. P1E	Joint approach to develop and implement quality and cost-effective services across neighbouring authorities.
	Review mechanisms to introduce meaningful and cost-effective satisfaction and customer experience feedback – including independent facilitation.	Annually Over strategy period	PHO, Policy Officer (Communities)	Officer and staff time, CLG Homelessness Grant	Improve listening and learning from homelessness people to further develop; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community focused service</li> <li>• Procedural practice</li> <li>• Service provision</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Integrated partnership approach to improve service delivery.</li> </ul>
	Increase awareness of realistic housing options for agencies working with homeless clients.	Quarterly via regular partnership meetings	PHO Housing Solutions team	Officer and staff time. P1E	Identify gaps and actions from trends and changes, promoting wider public awareness of homelessness and supply and

**Strategic objective 1: Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	Continue to work with Supported Accommodation providers to strengthen prevention outcomes and 'move on' processes.	Over the strategy period	PHO, SDO, Accommodation Providers	Officer time, CLG Prevention Fund, P1E	demand for social housing. Improved partnership working with accommodation providers to improve prevention outcomes and comply with contract requirements.  Develop housing pathways with key partners and client groups that include appropriate accommodation and support to promote independent living.
<b>1B: Develop a marketing plan with partners to raise awareness of the Housing Solutions service to ensure that the homelessness services strive to meet the National Gold Standard</b>	<p>Revise procedures, staff awareness and training to incorporate any policy and legislative changes.</p> <p>Review best practice and performance to strive towards continual improvement to meet the Gold Standard.</p> <p>Deliver a programme of training to promote homelessness prevention and the impact of Localism and Welfare Reform with partners.</p> <p>Develop Gateway for homeless accommodation and support services.</p>	<p>Over the strategy period</p> <p>2014/15</p> <p>Quarterly Over Strategy Period</p> <p>May 2014</p>	<p>PHO, Policy Officer, HST</p> <p>DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO, Policy Officer</p> <p>PHO, Homelessness Forum, Partners</p> <p>DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO, Capita</p>	<p>Officer time, training fund, P1E</p> <p>Officer time, sub-regional groups</p> <p>Regular strategic partnership meetings, NHAS</p> <p>CLG Sub Regional Funding</p>	<p>Maximise homelessness prevention by 10%.</p> <p>Fully utilise all resources and develop new initiatives to offer choice and prevent future homelessness.</p> <p>Participate in national benchmarking to improve service planning and ensure cost effectiveness of homelessness services.</p> <p>Increase the number of key agencies accessing homelessness training. Gaining better understanding of the service, the applied processes and priorities.</p>

**Strategic objective 1: Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	Develop and implement information recording and evidence base for homelessness.	2014	PHO, SDO, Capita	SP Budget, P1E	<p>Improved data recording and access to develop accelerated process to accommodation and support services.</p> <p>Maximised efficiency of recording systems to collect homeless data to monitor trends that will inform future policy and service development.</p>
<p><b>1C: Promote a range of prevention options, including the GIFT initiative, prevention fund, and mortgage rescue scheme to enable clients to remain within their homes</b></p>	<p>Review and promote GIFT scheme initiative and make available to clients aged 18-35.</p> <p>Continue the delivery of Mortgage Repossession Prevention Scheme.</p>	<p>2013/14</p> <p>Over the strategy period</p>	<p>PHO HST.</p> <p>DM Commissioning, PHO, MRS Officer</p>	<p>CLG Home Grant. P1E</p> <p>Officer time, SP Budget CLG Homelessness Grant</p>	<p>Increase access to funding to enable single homeless clients to take up and sustain new tenancies. 55 applications 2011/12 to increase annually by 5%</p> <p>Undertake advertising campaign to raise awareness of MRS and prevention options.</p> <p>Annual increase in number of households accessing mortgage rescue and advice by 10% to prevent and reduce homelessness.</p>
<p><b>1D: Respond to and prevent rough sleeping</b></p>	<p>Review impact of the 'No Second Night out' outreach service.</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>PHO, Merseyside sub-regional group Whitechapel</p>	<p>CLG sub-regional, budget, P1E</p>	<p>Reduction in number of new rough sleepers spending 2<sup>nd</sup> night on the streets.</p>



**Strategic objective 1: Collaborative and integrated approach to commissioning improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	<p>Review operational procedures to ensure they are consistent and clear to all sub-regional authorities.</p> <p>Develop and implement services to tackle issues of habitual rough sleepers.</p> <p>Improve pathways through supported accommodation for former rough sleepers.</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>2014</p> <p>Over the strategy period</p>	<p>PHO, Merseyside sub-regional group Whitechapel</p> <p>PHO, Health &amp; Social Care, sub-regional partners</p> <p>PHO, SDO, Whitechapel</p>	<p>Officer time, Merseyside sub-regional budget</p> <p>Staff time, CLG sub-regional budget</p> <p>Officer time</p>	<p>Rough sleepers with no local connection are reconnected to services in their local area.</p> <p>An assertive, personalised approach to target habitual rough sleepers and empower them to access alternative accommodation options.</p> <p>Improved move on options from supported hostel accommodation, with a constant review to deliver and achieve positive outcomes.</p>

## Strategic objective 2: Health and homelessness

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<b>2A: Ensure that homelessness is recognised as a priority for action within the Health and Wellbeing Board</b>	Present Homelessness Strategy to Health & Wellbeing Board to raise as priority for future action.	2014	DM Commissioning, PHO, CCG	Officer time	To ensure that Homelessness is identified as a priority and the board have an understanding of future challenges and funding requirements.
	Attend and contribute to meetings, events and regular performance reports.	Quarterly Performance reports	DM Commissioning Health & Social Care, PHO, Policy Officer	Officer time within existing resources	Maximise opportunities for joint commissioning to include health, DAAT, probation and key professionals.
	Review and develop sub-regional hospital discharge policy.	2013/14	PHO, sub-regional partners, Health & Social Care, Policy Officer, Accommodation Providers	Partnership working, Crisis Bid Fund, Merseyside sub-regional budget	Policy offering accelerated process for vulnerable clients discharged from hospital. A cost-effective, timely and proactive approach to reducing crisis-led homelessness and repeat admissions.
	Review and revise protocols and working arrangements with key partners.	2014–2015	PHO, Health, Policy Officer, Key partners	Officer time	More efficient and timely interventions from using a multi-agency approach to achieve positive sustainable outcomes.
	Develop housing options for substance misuse clients to move on after rehabilitation and ensure they can sustain a tenancy.	2014-2015	PHO Commissioning Managers, HSO, substance misuse services	CLG Homelessness Grant, Health Budget	Effective move on and outreach support process for substance misuse clients to address social issues and reduce repeat homelessness.

## Strategic objective 2: Health and homelessness

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	Review housing options for clients with low to moderate learning difficulties to inform future commissioning of support and appropriate housing.	2015/ 2016	Adult Comm. DM Commissioning, PHO	Officer time, SP & Health budgets	Develop model to provide accommodation and support provision to address the needs of clients with a learning disability and/ or Autism, to empower them to live independently.
<b>2B: Develop a business case to formalise a single practice approach to address the housing and health care needs of vulnerable homeless people</b>	Develop a Healthcare pathway that offers an integrated multi - disciplinary approach and is fully inclusive and builds relationships around individuals, between the statutory and non-statutory services engaged in their care	2014/2015	CCG Commissioners, Health & Social Care, PHO, HST	Budget TBC Officer time	A developed model to transform and improve health care and homelessness service outcomes. A pathway that integrates health, and other services around vulnerable people. A process used to review all elements of an individual's care, across housing, social care, mental health, drug & alcohol services and personally, thus allowing the individual to reflect and choose a pathway that is right for them.
	Improve health care for patients who cross the boundaries of traditional GP practice areas.	2014/2015	CCG Commissioners, GPs, Health & Social Care, PHO	TBC, officer time, Multi-agency partners	Ensure that patients who are not registered with a GP and those with extensive and complex needs are identified and addressed through a multi-agency response.
	Improve arrangements for health care delivery for vulnerable homeless people.	2014/2015	Health & Homelessness services, key partner	Training budget, officer time	Empower front line staff and homeless officers to work with Public Health and service colleagues to develop a

## Strategic objective 2: Health and homelessness

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	Participate in the Housing Needs Assessment commissioned from Liverpool Public Health Observatory	April 2014	agencies  CCG Commissioners, DM Commissioning, PHO, S.R. Partners	Health care budget, officer time	comprehensive and integrated health response to homelessness, configured around a community of need and shared set of standards.  The HNA will identify the health needs of the homeless population and assess whether their needs are being met, with recommendations to improve service provision.
	Collect and record data to support local commissioners and health care partners to shape services around the health needs of the most vulnerable and marginal groups, that are often invisible.	2014/2015	CCG Commissioners, Officers	Budget TBC, officer time	Determine qualitative methods of gathering intelligence on the subject of health experience, homelessness and access to services.

### Strategic objective 3: Minimise the impact of welfare reform

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<b>3A: Agree a joint approach with the Housing Benefits service for the future use of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure they are used effectively to prevent homelessness and to determine future areas of action</b>	Joint approach to review and monitor future Discretionary Housing Payments with Housing Solutions representative at panel assessments.	April 2014 Over strategy period	PHO, HB Manager	Officer time, DWP budget	Increase the number of approved DHP applications to assist homeless clients into suitable accommodation.
	Develop financial inclusion strategy, with integrated financial management, budgetary skills and benefit advice.	2014	DM Commissioning, PHO, HB/DWP, key agencies	Officer staff and partner agency time	Improved referral process and access for debt advice and money management to promote financial inclusion.
<b>3B: Develop under-occupation schemes with housing providers to free up family homes and encourage shared housing</b>	Review & monitor social tenants affected by the under occupation penalties enforced through the welfare reform.	2014 Reviewed quarterly.	PHO, SDO, RPs and partner agencies	Officer and partner agency time. DHP budget	Early intervention and targeted support for households affected by the under-occupation penalties and social rent conversions to prevent homelessness and promote tenancy sustainment.
	Consult with housing providers to develop a transfer/ shared housing scheme for clients affected by under-occupation penalties.	April 2014	DM Commissioning , PHO, HHT & housing partners	Officer time, housing budget	Increasing housing provision available to meet future housing needs and encouraged shared housing to reduce homelessness within the district.

## Strategic objective 4: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to reduce homelessness

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<b>4A: Improve access to housing using the private rented sector and shared housing options</b>	Develop and implement Private Rented Sector Offer policy which relates to new powers within the Localism Act 2011. This will allow the council to discharge full homeless duty into the private rented sector.	April 2014 Reviewed over strategy period	DM Commissioning, PHO, Landlord Accreditation Officer	Within existing resources	Increase supply and choice of housing available to homeless households.
	Develop a housing pathway toolkit to direct homeless clients into the private rented sector and revise procedures and training to incorporate policy change.	April 2014	PHO, HST	Within existing resources	Devise assessment process and measures to encourage and support private landlords to accept homeless households.
	Produce a report and options analysis to consider the outcomes of landlord surveys and views of PPP to undertake a gaps and options analysis to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of creating a social lettings agency.</li> <li>• Review incentives offered to landlord.</li> <li>• Effectiveness of Bond Guarantee.</li> <li>• Out of area moves where appropriate.</li> </ul>	2014/2015 Over the strategy period	PHO, Landlord, Accreditation Officer, Environmental Health, RPs	Within existing resources  DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO	Offer staff/ agency awareness training of PRSO policy and impact on homelessness services. Review analysis of current activity and performance to determine future trends and demand within the private rented sector.  Develop social letting agency to facilitate and manage PRS accommodation and reduce future homelessness.  Improve advice and support services available to landlords and clients.
<b>4B: Improve working with</b>	Liaise with and support agencies and supported housing providers to identify private sector housing	2013/14 Reviewed over strategy period	PHO, Landlord Accreditation Officer,	CLG Homelessness Grant, DHP, BGS	Increase accelerated move on process to empower individuals to secure suitable accommodation

**Strategic objective 4: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to reduce homelessness**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<p><b>private sector landlords and promote the Bond Guarantee Scheme</b></p>	<p>options for vulnerable people.</p>		<p>Accommodation providers</p>		<p>and reduce dependency upon hostel accommodation provision.</p>
	<p>Develop sustainment and prevention roles with private landlords.</p>	<p>Over the strategy period</p>	<p>Landlord Accreditation Officer, Landlord Forum</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Encourage and increase involvement with private landlords to work with the council to address and resolve housing/homelessness.</p>
	<p>Develop a multi- agency approach for bringing empty properties back into use. Exploring the potential through initiatives and as funding becomes available with voluntary and community Sector agencies.</p>	<p>Reviewed throughout period of strategy</p>	<p>DM Commissioning, PHO Manager, Environmental Health, HHT, private rented sector</p>	<p>Empty Homes Fund, CLG Homelessness Grant, housing budget</p>	<p>Encourage key partners and agencies to develop financial and option incentives. This will free up housing stock to reduce and prevent future homelessness.</p>
	<p>Undertake publicity campaign to raise awareness and inform landlords, letting agents and tenants of services available.</p>	<p>April 2014</p>	<p>Landlord Accreditation Officer, Environmental Health</p>	<p>CLG Homelessness Grant, Cheshire sub-regional prevention fund</p>	<p>Improved advice and support offered to landlords, letting agents and tenants to improve service delivery.</p>
<p>Maintain register of reputable accredited private sector landlords with affordable good quality properties. To publicise using Property Pool Plus as a mechanism for moving within the existing social sector.</p>	<p>Review over strategy period.</p>	<p>Landlord Accreditation Officer, Environmental Health, Landlord Forum</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Encourage and support people to let out their property or rooms.</p> <p>Private rented sector properties advertised on Property Pool Plus scheme to increase housing provision available and prevent</p>	

**Strategic objective 4: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to reduce homelessness**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
					homelessness.

**Strategic objective 5: Increase and improve communication and partnership working**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<b>5A: Develop an effective multi-agency approach to support vulnerable and complex needs households to sustain and secure affordable accommodation to prevent homelessness</b>	Review intelligence which will identify arising needs for vulnerable and complex needs households.	Over the strategy period	DM Commissioning, Adult Comm., PHO, SDO	Within existing resources	Maximise efficiency to deliver a planned approach to respond to the needs of vulnerable clients. Ensure adequate housing and support is made available to address future demands.
	Work in partnership to develop supported accommodation project for single adults with complex needs and due to be discharged from hospital.	April 2014 Review	PHO, DM Commissioning, Health & Social Care, Whitechapel, YMCA	Budget TBC, officer and agency time	Efficient and timely approach to provide suitable self-contained accommodation and outreach support to address the needs of vulnerable clients.
	Develop complex needs /hospital discharge pathway plan and devise multi agency priority panel to review and monitor complex needs client group.	January 2014	PHO, DM Commissioning, Health & Social Care, Whitechapel	Officer time	Multi agency approach to identify key responsibilities to increase access to suitable accommodation and support for complex needs groups to achieve successful outcomes and prevent repeat homelessness.
	Amend Allocations policy to ensure that Armed Forces are identified as priority client group.	Over the strategy period	Cheshire sub-regional group, Commissioning, PHO, RP	Within existing resources	Provide integrated and accessible services to ensure priority is given to Armed Forces personnel due to be discharged from service.



## Strategic objective 5: Increase and improve communication and partnership working

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
			Partners		
<b>5B: Support young people and facilitate the delivery of integrated housing, care and support for young people at risk, care leavers, young offenders and teenage parents</b>	Develop social enterprise opportunities in education, training and employment to meet the needs of single homeless people in Halton.	Over the strategy period	PHO, YPT, HST, training providers	Officer time	Improved partnership working to improve access to training, education and housing services for young people.
	Identify lead agencies to seek funding and improve services available for young people.	Over the strategy period	DM Commissioning, PHO, YPT, regional partners/ agencies	Officer time, SP budget	To develop and sustain opportunities for young people to increase skills and prevent future homelessness.
	Develop specialised mediation service to work with young people and families.	2014 Over the strategy period	PHO, YPT, partner agencies	Budget TBC, officer time	Improve services for young people and families to work through housing and social issues and promote positive outcomes.
	To ensure that all staff working with young people affected by homelessness have the appropriate skills, knowledge and safeguarding training.	2014 Over the strategy period	PHO, homelessness forum members, regional partner agencies	Training budget, officer time	Increase learning and development training opportunities to raise awareness of key safeguarding issues and reporting process.
	Review joint (Southwark) protocol with Children's Service and YOT to ensure the council is fully compliant with legal case law judgements and legislation.	2014/15	PHO, YPT, YOT	SP budget, officer time	To improve joint working between services for 16/17 year olds, enabling transition towards independent living with tailored support to reduce repeat homelessness.
Promote young person involvement to fully participate in the delivery of	2014/ 2015	PHO, YPT, forum members,			

## Strategic objective 5: Increase and improve communication and partnership working

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	<p>youth service.</p> <p>Develop emergency respite accommodation for 16 – 21 year olds to provide multi agency approach to prevent homelessness.</p>		<p>accommodation providers</p> <p>DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO, YPT Policy Officer</p>	<p>S/ P Budget.</p> <p>Budget TBC</p>	<p>To be actively involved with Homeless Forum and identify and deliver effective services for young people.</p> <p>A crisis intervention centre made available for young people threatened with homelessness, offering a holistic approach to facilitate them returning back home and preventing homelessness.</p>
<b>5C: Improve partnership working and communication with key agencies, police, probation and housing providers to address the growing housing need for offender</b>	Review current housing policy and procedures to identify gaps in provision and information required from providers to increase housing accommodation for offenders.	2014/ 2015.	PHO, Probation, PPO, Policy, RPs	Within existing resources	Identify and address barriers to increase the availability of housing provision for offenders.
	Investigate Registered Providers' reluctance to house Schedule 1 offenders	April 2014.	PHO, SDO, Probation, RPs	Within existing resources	Increase involvement with MAPPA to gain a better understanding of the housing issues faced by offenders.
	To continue the integrated approach to offender management between criminal justice agencies and Homelessness services.	Over the strategy period	PHO Probation, Cheshire Police RPs	Staff time	To reduce the risks to the community posed by those individuals who are homeless and have a pattern of prolific, drug related offending.
<b>5D: Joint partnership working with agencies, police and housing</b>	Increase partnership working with domestic abuse services, Police and registered providers to offer a range of rehousing options and solutions to homeless victims of abuse.	Over the strategy period	PHO, SDO DV Co-ordinator Policy officer, DA service providers	Within existing resources	Improve access to suitable accommodation options and improve service delivery to support victims of abuse to prevent homelessness.

## Strategic objective 5: Increase and improve communication and partnership working

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<b>providers to offer options and solutions to victims of domestic abuse to support them to remain within their home</b>	Develop temporary dispersed housing provision to accommodate families with dependent male children and male victims fleeing domestic abuse.	Over the strategy period	DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO, DV Co-ordinator, RPs	Budget to be identified.	Increased housing provision for victims of abuse to provide safe accommodation with tailored support.
	Work in partnership with Sanctuary Scheme to develop safe security options to facilitate victims of abuse to remain in or return to their homes.	Over the strategy period	DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO, Sanctuary Scheme providers	SP Funding	Reduce the number of male/females becoming homeless due to domestic abuse.
	Improve the substance misuse service response to drug and/or alcohol related domestic abuse.	2014/ 2015	Substance Misuse Service, Domestic Abuse Service, PHO	Budget TBC	The improvement of identification of victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse provided by substance misuse service staff and detailed within homeless assessment.
	Agree a referral criteria and pathway plan between the substance misuse, domestic abuse and Housing Solutions Services.	April 2014	PHO Commissioner, Substance Misuse Service, Domestic Abuse Service	Within existing resources	To reduce the impact of parental substance misuse and domestic abuse on children and young people.

**Strategic objective 6: Minimise the use of temporary accommodation by facilitating the supply of secure move-on accommodation**

Priority	Action	By when	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
<p><b>6A: Reduce the use of temporary accommodation (including B&amp;B) to maximise the use of prevention options available to reduce homelessness</b></p>	<p>Continued achievement of performance -indicator to reduce the use of temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>P1E – over strategy period</p>	<p>PHO HST</p>	<p>Within existing resource.</p>	<p>Reduce homeless levels and dependency upon temporary accommodation services.</p>
	<p>Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 10% annually.</p>	<p>P1E – over strategy period</p>	<p>PHO HST</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Reduced level of homeless households placed in temporary accommodation by fully utilising prevention service options available to reduce homelessness.</p>
	<p>Evaluate and develop temporary accommodation provision within the district to ensure it meets the needs of statutory homeless households.</p>	<p>2015 Reviewed quarterly</p>	<p>DM Commissioning, PHO, SDO, Policy Officer</p>	<p>Budget TBC</p>	<p>Reduced /remodelled supported housing provision to address future housing trends and meet the needs of statutory homeless households. Reduce level of voids and rent loss.</p>
	<p>Deliver sufficient, appropriate temporary accommodation suitable for homeless prevention at crisis point.</p>	<p>2013/2014</p>	<p>PHO, Supported Housing Providers</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Improved prevention assessment process to tackle homeless crisis and developed change in service/accommodation provision to promote prevention solutions, including private rented sector.</p>

# 11. Glossary

Benefit cap	There's a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can receive. This is called the benefit cap. It is £500 for couples with or without children living with them; £500 for single parents with children living with them; and £350 for single adults who don't have children or whose children don't live with them.
BGS	Bond Guarantee Scheme This scheme is aimed to help those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and can provide a landlord with a bond guarantee certificate, which confirms the deposit amount will be paid should it be reasonably required at the end of the tenancy.
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group CCGs are responsible for implementing the commissioning roles as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012. They are groups of GP practices that are responsible for commissioning health and care services for patients.
CLG	Communities and Local Government
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment These can be made by the council if a person's housing benefit or council tax benefit is less than the full amount of their rent or council tax.
DM	Divisional Manager Refers to the Divisional Manager of the Commissioning section of the council, where the Housing Solutions Team sits.
DV	Domestic Violence
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
GIFT Initiative	Halton Borough Council operates a 'gift' initiative for 18 – 25 year olds, which provides some essential items to assist in furnishing their home.
Gold standard	In its report 'Making every contact count: a joint approach to preventing homelessness' CLG set local authorities ten local challenges, which will lead to homelessness teams delivering a 'gold standard' service. The council pledges, through implementation of this strategy, to meet this gold standard.
HHT	Halton Housing Trust The council transferred its housing stock to HHT in 2005.
HSO	Housing Solutions Officer
HST	Housing Solutions Team The team carry out assessments under statutory homelessness legislation and carry out homelessness prevention work.

Local connection	Halton Borough Council will only have a duty to assist someone under homelessness legislation if that person has a local connection to the borough. If their normal place of residence is in another authority area then Halton will refer them to that authority.
Localism Act (2012)	This provides new freedoms and flexibility for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals; a much more democratic planning system and decisions about housing are taken locally.
MAPPAs	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements The principal multi-agencies are the Probation Service, Prison Service, Police and Local Authorities and collectively they are known as 'Responsible Authorities.' The arrangements are a set of procedures for dealing with registered sex offenders and other violent individuals who pose a threat of serious harm to the public.
Mortgage Rescue	The Housing Solutions Team has a dedicated Mortgage Rescue Adviser to help those who are facing repossession. It provides advice on the help available, negotiating with mortgage lenders and attending court hearings.
NHAS	National Homelessness Advisory Service
Nightstop	A supported lodgings scheme which enables young people to stay with a volunteer host family for an emergency period, whilst more suitable short-term housing is found or until mediation leads to the young person returning to their family home.
NSNO	No Second Night Out A campaign to ensure no-one spends more than one night on the streets in the Liverpool City Region. Halton participates in this scheme along with six other councils in the city region. As part of the scheme, people are urged to call a helpline if they see someone sleeping rough. The relevant agencies are then alerted in order to find somewhere for the person to sleep.
PHO	Principal Housing Solutions Officer
PPO	Persistent and Prolific Offenders
PPP	Property Pool Plus This is the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme used by Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral councils and over 20 housing associations to advertise and let their vacant properties. Housing Associations advertise their available vacancies every week through Property Pool Plus. The scheme offers increased choice allowing applicants who are looking for affordable housing to see what vacant properties are available, and express an interest in selecting a suitable new home. PPP informs applicants what priority banding they have, based on the urgency of their need to move from their current property. Properties are advertised and applicants are invited to place a bid (express an interest). The system then puts people into priority order for the property they have bid for, based on their priority band and application date.
PPP Housing Register	The register has been developed by Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral Councils in partnership with over 20 Housing Associations across Halton and Merseyside. A single application to join the Housing Register allows individuals to be considered for properties advertised by all the participating housing associations.

PRSO Policy	<p>Private Rented Sector Offer Policy</p> <p>Since November 2012 local housing authorities have been able to discharge their duty to secure settled accommodation to homeless households by using privately rented accommodation, as well as homes owned or managed by social landlords. This creates a greater range of options for local families, however the local housing authority must ensure that decisions of suitability are made objectively and take into account both the circumstances of the family and the availability of homes in the area.</p>
RP	<p>Registered Provider (of social housing)</p> <p>RPs are more commonly known as housing associations and have previously been referred to as Registered Social Landlords (or RSLs). They are independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis.</p>
Sanctuary Scheme	<p>This is a multi-agency initiative that is focused on victims of domestic violence. Its aim is to enable households where the person is at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing sanctuary measures.</p>
SDO	<p>Service Development Officer</p>
Southwark Protocol	<p>The protocol aims to provide a co-ordinated response to the prevention of homelessness amongst 16-17 year-olds, ensuring they receive the right level of support and can access appropriate and suitable accommodation where necessary. The protocol was a response to judgements by the House of Lords which reaffirmed and clarified that the duty under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 takes precedence over the duties within Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 in providing for children in need who require accommodation.</p>
SP	<p>Supporting People</p> <p>Originally ring-fenced to fund housing related support services for vulnerable adults, including homeless people. In 2009 local authorities were no longer required to spend this funding on housing related support. In 2011 decisions about where to allocate funds became entirely at the discretion of the local authorities. Thus, SP no longer exists in a defined way and is managed in different ways by different local authorities.</p>
Statutory homelessness	<p>This is where a household is deemed to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless under the relevant legislation and in this case the council has a duty to find accommodation for the household.</p>
Youth Hubs	<p>These are venues for young people (aged 13-19) youth groups, voluntary organisations and partners, where young people can have a say in activities in their local area.</p>
YOT	<p>Youth Offending Team</p> <p>This is a multi-agency team that is co-ordinated by a local authority with the intention of reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend. YOT engages young offenders in a wide range of tasks designed to put something positive back into the local community through unpaid activities.</p>