

Contents

	Section	Page
1.0	Foreword	
2.0	Introduction	2
3.0	Section one	
	3.1 National homeless picture	3
	3.2 Regional homeless picture	4
	3.3 Wiltshire context	5
4.0	Section two	
	4.1 Understanding the local causes of homelessness	7
	4.2 Temporary accommodation	9
	4.3 Reasons for priority acceptances in Wiltshire	11
5.0	Section three	
	5.1 Homelessness as it affects specific client groups	14
	5.2 Black and minority ethnic households	14
	5.3 Military	14
	5.4 Rough sleepers	15
	5.5 Single people in housing difficulties	16
	5.6 16 / 17 year olds	17
	5.7 Teenage parents	17
	5.8 People with drug and alcohol problems	18
	5.9 Ex-offenders	19
	5.10 Physical disabilities and learning difficulties	21
	5.11 Households with mental health problems	21
	5.12 Specialist mental health housing	22
	5.13 Mental health recovery house	22
	5.14 Gypsies and Travellers	23
6.0	Section four	
	6.1 Current picture	24
	6.2 Housing register	24
	6.3 Affordable housing	25
	6.4 Private rented stock in Wiltshire	26
	6.5 Temporary accommodation	26
	6.6 Supported accommodation	28
7.0	Section five	
	7.1 Gaps in provision	29
8.0	Section six	
	8.1 Future trends	31
	8.2 Temporary accommodation	31
	8.3 Prevention of homelessness	31
	8.4 Acceptances of homelessness	32
Appendix one	Stakeholders who took part in the review	33
Appendix two	Consultation method	34
Appendix three	Delivering our Priorities and Monitoring	35

2.0 Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 made local housing authorities responsible for preparing a strategy to address any needs and gaps in the provision of help for homeless people. To understand these needs and to develop the first homelessness strategy for Wiltshire, we carried out a full review of homelessness in Wiltshire through information gathering days and consultations with service users, stakeholders and local agencies. This strategy builds on the achievements of all four previous district council strategies and sets a framework for the continued improvement of homelessness services.

The review was carried out between April and August 2009 and considered the nature and extent of homelessness within the county. In particular it focused upon:

- Exploring current and previous trends in levels of homelessness
- Identifying the causes of homelessness within Wiltshire
- Gauging current service provision for homeless households
- Identifying gaps in the provision of current services

Much has been achieved since the first homelessness strategies were produced; the key has been the shift of emphasis to the prevention of homelessness and continued multi-agency working. The approach has led to a fall in levels of homelessness across the county over the last five years and many improvements in homelessness services.

This strategy is based on a review of homelessness, which is summarised in the strategy, along with consultation with stakeholders and consideration of the new context and identified challenges. A total of five strategic priorities have been set, which identify the main expected outputs of the homelessness strategy.

The strategic priorities of this homelessness strategy are:

1. Improve information about the accessing of accommodation for both customers and agencies.
2. Improve access and support for all clients with a particular focus on renting privately
3. Continue to improve the prevention of homelessness through a comprehensive advice service and having an effective range of housing options for customers.
4. Increase the supply of affordable housing and promote choice
5. Provide effective partnerships and improve communications and publicity

This strategy is important to ensure that we can sustain and improve upon the work already undertaken and meet new national indicators, Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and other government initiatives. The action plan will drive continued improvements to the homeless services delivered both by the Council and by a range of partner agencies.

3.0 Section one

3.1 National homeless picture

The government is committed to reducing homelessness and has set a number of targets / measures to reduce homelessness and to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation. Wiltshire has either met or is on track to meet these targets. These include:-

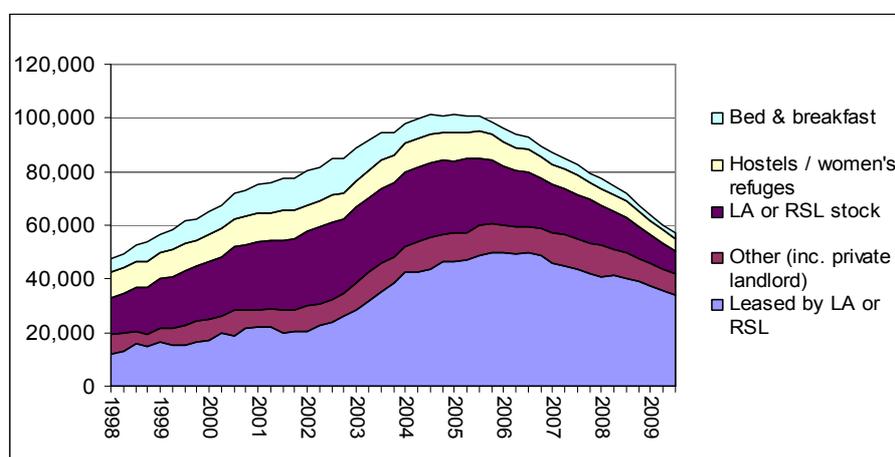
- Reduce, or sustain the reduction of, the levels of rough sleeping by two thirds from the level recorded in 1998
- Avoid the long term use of bed & breakfast accommodation for homeless families with children and for households with a pregnant woman
- By 2010 to have 16 and 17 year olds accommodated in bed & breakfast accommodation only in exceptional circumstances
- Halve (from the level recorded in December 2005) the number of households placed in temporary accommodation by December 2010.
- Each year reduce the level of homelessness acceptances against the three main causes of homelessness in the area, from the level of the previous year.

Nationally, homelessness has been steadily improving with a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation, the elimination of bed and breakfast and a reduction in the total number of rough sleepers.

The number of households nationally accepted as homeless in 2008/09 was 53,430, compared to 135,430 in 2003/04.

In addition the number of households living in temporary accommodation in England in 2003/04 was 97,680, which was reduced to 64,000 households in 2008/09. The government has set a challenging target to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation to 50,500 by 2010. At the end of March 2009, 88% of households in temporary accommodation were in self-contained accommodation and 4% were in bed and breakfast hotels.

Households in temporary accommodation, by type, at the end of each quarter, from 1998 to 30 September 2009



The national rough sleeping estimate for 2008 shows a 78 per cent reduction in rough sleeping in England since 1998. Annual research has confirmed we have low levels of rough sleeping recorded each year in Wiltshire and initiatives in reducing this further are considered in section 5.4 below.

3.2 Regional homelessness picture

Wiltshire is situated within the South West Region and adjoins eight other local authority areas. Of these eight, Swindon, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset are also unitary authorities. The chart below shows the neighbouring local authorities and the numbers of homeless acceptances for the year 2008/09.

Local Authority	Total no. of households in area	Acceptances	per 1000 households
Swindon	80,000	171	2.1
South Gloucestershire	105,000	229	2.2
BANES	74,000	127	1.7
South Somerset	68,000	179	2.6
Mendip	46,000	102	2.2
Cotswold	36,000	23	0.6
Wiltshire	186,000	409	2.2

Interestingly, the total number of acceptances for Wiltshire is far higher than for any of our neighbouring local authorities; this may be due to Wiltshire having the highest number of households, 44% higher than South Gloucestershire which is the second highest and 75% higher than North Dorset which is the lowest. It is therefore important to show homeless acceptances together with the numbers of households within each area, in order to gain a true picture of the comparative levels of homelessness.

South West regional housing strategy 2005 - 2016

It is intended that the actions of the Wiltshire homelessness strategy will help support the implementation of the regional work detailed in the South West regional housing strategy 2005-2016. The following strategic aims and themes are outlined in the regional housing strategy.

Strategic aim	Theme
Improving the balance of housing markets – <i>“to develop housing markets with a range of tenures, which improve the balance between supply and demand, and offer everyone the opportunity to access a home at a price they can afford”</i>	Increasing housing delivery
	Reducing homelessness and use of temporary accommodation
	Access and more efficient use of housing Stock
Achieving good quality homes – <i>“to ensure that existing and new homes improve over minimum standards of quality, management & design by 2016”</i>	Promoting sustainable development and good design
	Meeting the Decent Homes target
Supporting sustainable and mixed communities – <i>“to ensure that housing makes a full contribution to the achievement of sustainable and inclusive communities”</i>	Sustainable and mixed communities
	Support for homeless households and vulnerable groups

3.3 Wiltshire context

This homelessness strategy creates a shared vision for homelessness in Wiltshire with an emphasis on partnership working to deliver the identified priorities.

Wiltshire Council held information gathering days in the North, South, East and West of the county in April 2009. The high level of interest in the event shown by our partners working within this sector was demonstrated by the attendance on the days of over 50 organisations. The lively debate and valuable contributions made by these organisations reflect the importance stakeholders attach to the issues being discussed.

Many of the stakeholders realised that if Wiltshire was to achieve its vision of preventing all homelessness then this would need to be done in partnership, as it cannot be tackled by one organisation alone. This homelessness strategy therefore is a strategy written, owned and delivered by Wiltshire Council in partnership with the housing community of Wiltshire.

The strategy is a working document, setting challenging targets to deliver innovative solutions to tackling homelessness, and building on existing successes to prevent homelessness in Wiltshire.

Since April 2009 when we became Wiltshire Council, a number of new partnerships have been formed and the existing ones strengthened. In July 2009 Wiltshire Council held its first multi-agency homelessness forums to assist in developing this strategy and to monitor the action plan.

As well as having good partnerships, there are identified below some of the other strategies and plans that impact on homelessness, and to which this strategy will have links:-

Local area agreement for Wiltshire (LAA)

The local area agreement (LAA) is an agreement signed with central government, which agrees targets for the next three years. It has been introduced as part of the local agreement for Wiltshire, which improves the way the council and its partners work together. The current LAA (2008 – 11) contains a number of key housing related strategic objectives -

- Net additional homes provided
- Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- Reduction in the use of temporary accommodation

However, there are many other targets not directly relating to housing but which we play a part in meeting, including helping to build resilient communities, supporting people to live independently, and helping to make homes more energy efficient.

A sustainable community strategy for Wiltshire 2007 – 2016

The sustainable community strategy has been developed to create a common vision for a more sustainable future for Wiltshire, by taking a more cross-disciplinary and integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues. It also provides

the evidence for the local area agreement. Below are some of the housing outcomes intended to help achieve the housing issues identified within the strategy:-

- Increased access to affordable homes
- Choice and transparency in the allocation of social housing
- Reduction in households in temporary accommodation
- Increased uptake of energy efficiency

Wiltshire Council's first year plan – 2009 - 2010

Wiltshire Council's first year plan was developed to identify the vision, goals and ambitions for the first year as Wiltshire Council. The vision for the new council is to:



Create stronger and more resilient communities

and the goals are to:

- 1 Deliver high quality, low cost, customer focused services,
- 2 Ensure local, open, honest decision making,
- 3 Work together to support Wiltshire's communities.

It sets out the actions that will be delivered in the first year of the council and for housing this includes:-

- Delivering a total of 554 new affordable homes
- Reducing the total number of households currently living in temporary accommodation to below 242
- Helping young people who find themselves in need of housing
- Starting to build 350 new affordable Private Finance Initiative homes in the West Wiltshire area
- Investing in supported housing for elderly and vulnerable adults

A revised corporate plan is currently being developed and one of the agreed priorities is meeting housing need. The finer detail, objectives and targets have not yet been developed, but will be finalised in January 2010.

Other strategies and plans include:-

Alcohol strategy
Domestic abuse strategy
Mental health strategy
Parenting strategy
Teenage pregnancy strategy
Wiltshire community safety plan

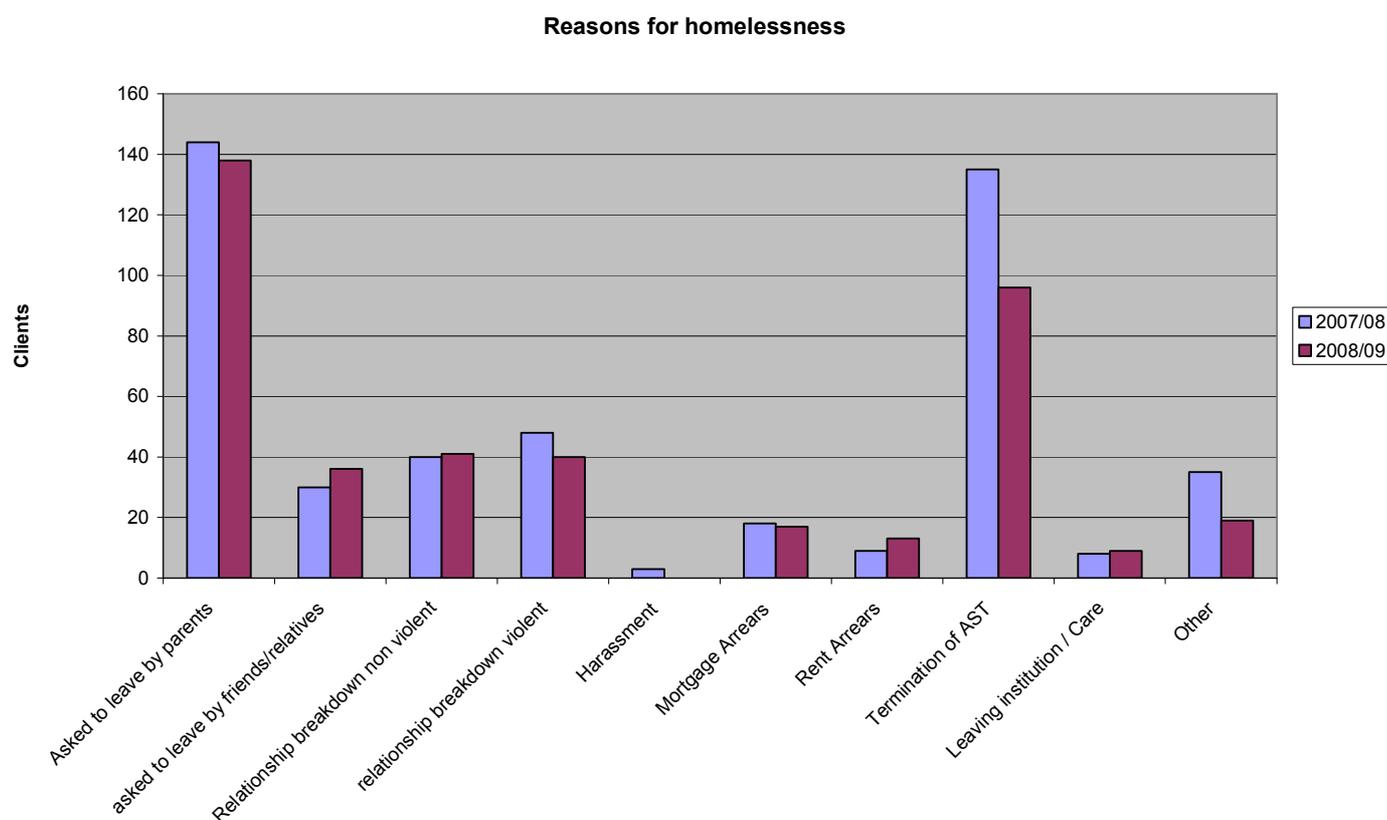
4.0 Section two

4.1 Understanding the local causes of homelessness

In Wiltshire from 2007/08 to 2008/09 the three main causes of homelessness were and still are today:-

- Being asked to leave by parents
- Termination of assured shorthold tenancies
- Relationship breakdown

Below shows a breakdown of the reasons for homelessness in 2007/08 and 2008/09.



The three main causes of homelessness are consistent with the national and South West homeless figures. See table below:-

	Nationally	South-West	Wiltshire Council
Parental evictions	23%	24%	34%
Termination of AST	14%	21%	23%
Friends/other relatives eviction	14%	10%	9%
Violent relationship breakdown	13%	10%	10%
Non violent relationship breakdown	7%	7%	10%
Other	29%	28%	14%

By far the main cause of homelessness in Wiltshire is parental evictions. In 2008/09, 138 households were accepted as homeless because they were asked to leave home by parents. This accounted for 34% of all homeless acceptances in 2008/09. To try and reduce the amount of parental evictions we intend:-

‘E1 - To explore ways in which we can raise greater awareness of the consequences of homelessness among school and college leavers.’

‘E2 - To create a secondary school / college resource pack.’

‘E4 & E5 - To become trained in and pilot the use of the Common Assessment Framework to help with prevention and early intervention as well as safeguarding young people.’

‘E6 - To work with the extended services teams that work with vulnerable families in schools to identify early signs of families who are experiencing difficulties.’

‘C8 - To home visit all 16-24 year olds threatened with homelessness to discuss alternative housing options to prevent homelessness.’

The second main cause of homelessness is around the termination of a privately rented property. During 2008/09 23% of total acceptances were for this reason, which is a decrease of 6% on acceptances from 2007/08. Further work needs to be done to better understand the reasons why landlords are serving notices but basic research has indicated that the reasons for termination include:-

- the landlord’s circumstances have changed and they either require the property back for themselves or they want to sell the property.
- assertion of a legal right by the tenant i.e. repairs
- anti-social behaviour by the tenant

In April 2009 Wiltshire Council launched its Wilts Let scheme, which is a scheme to assist households who are threatened with homelessness to secure suitable, affordable private rented accommodation by funding the rent in advance and holding the deposit as an alternative to applying as homeless. To date this scheme has prevented a total of 239 households from becoming homeless and needing to go into temporary accommodation.

We have also recently recruited accommodation option officers in each of the area hubs to encourage greater use of the private rented sector, by advertising the benefits of the Wilts Let scheme as well as with the extra support that they are able to offer tenants and landlords.

We hope that through the work of these officers we will be able to encourage private landlords and agents to rent properties to households on housing benefit. Historically, private landlords in Wiltshire have been reluctant to rent to homeless households on housing benefit, so we hope that through this work we will be able to change this.

To try and prevent landlords from serving notice on tenants we intend:-

‘B1 - To develop and advertise a Wiltshire landlords accreditation scheme.’

‘B2 - To develop initiatives to encourage private landlords to accept households who are threatened with homelessness and who are on benefits.’

‘B1 - To set up a landlords forum that meets twice a year and links into the Wiltshire housing partnership (WHP).’

‘B4 – To fast track housing benefit for households threatened with evictions.’

Finally, the third main cause of homelessness in Wiltshire is due to relationship breakdown (both violent and non violent). In 2008/09, 81 households were accepted as homeless due to a relationship breakdown, which is a reduction on previous years.

In 2007/08 Wiltshire police confirmed that 3,618 domestic abuse incidents were reported to them. Given the consensual view that only 1 in 5 incidents are actually reported to the police, it is therefore estimated that the level of domestic abuse in Wiltshire is in the region of 18,000 incidents per annum.

We can also confirm that in 2007/08 Wiltshire refuges and safe houses accommodated 147 women and 154 children, and that in the same year 50% of cases referred to Wiltshire Council children and families service were attributed to domestic abuse.

As identified in the domestic abuse strategy for Wiltshire, domestic abuse cannot be tackled in isolation and a co-ordinated partnership approach is essential. All partners should work together to prevent, intervene and reduce the impact of domestic abuse.

The safety of victims and their families has been identified as an important issue in our consultation, and as such we are looking at developing a county wide sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic abuse to help them to stay safe in their own homes.

To try and reduce relationship breakdown levels in Wiltshire we will:-

‘C6 - Identify through research the reasons for relationship breakdowns in Wiltshire and develop a relationship breakdown policy to assist with prevention work in this area of homelessness’

‘C3 - Develop a county wide sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic abuse.’

‘C11 - Identify high risk victims through the engagement of the Wiltshire multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) and recognise and support the role of the domestic abuse reduction support officer.’

4.2 Temporary Accommodation

In line with the national data on the reduction of homelessness, Wiltshire Council is reducing the total number of accepted homeless cases and the number of households who currently reside in temporary accommodation.

Below confirms the total number of households in temporary accommodation from the end of March from 2004/05 to 2008/09 and the latest temporary accommodation figure for Wiltshire:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Dec 09
Number of households in temporary accommodation	383	330	272	204	142

The chart below confirms the total number of households in some form of temporary accommodation in our neighbouring authorities as well as our 2010 target for households in temporary accommodation. Those highlighted in blue have already met the 2010 government target.

	NOs in T/A Sept 2009	2010 Target
Wiltshire Council	149	219
BANES	26	37
Swindon	354	435
South Gloucestershire	88	132
South Somerset	171	122
Mendip	53	45
Cotswold	11	11

The standard of temporary accommodation in Wiltshire is good. 50% of the households who were consulted as part of our research confirmed that their experiences of temporary accommodation were either good or very good; however, 17% stated that their experiences were bad or very bad.

On looking into this further it was noted that 85% of the bad or very bad experiences came from households who had stayed at Hillside Hostel, which is due to be demolished during 2010 and the site used for the development of affordable housing.

Temporary accommodation in Wiltshire is provided in a variety of ways which are detailed below:-

Type of accommodation	Households March 09	Households December 09
Hostel	60	34
Bed and breakfast	2	0
Private sector leasing scheme	85	86
Supported lodgings	0	0
RSL temporary accommodation	33	21
Homeless at home	0	0
Other	24	1
Total	204	142

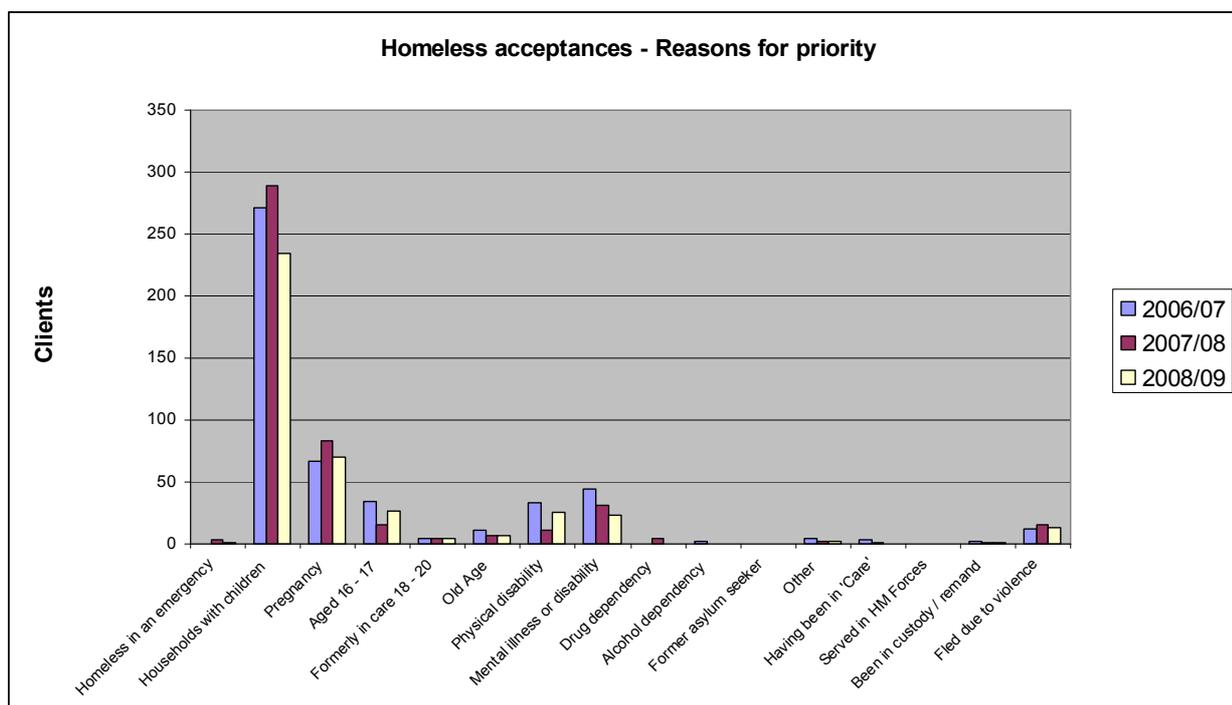
Even though we have already met the government target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010, it is still important to keep under review the availability and suitability of emergency and temporary accommodation, as well as the support needs of all households in temporary accommodation.

Again ahead of target we eliminated the use of bed and breakfast for all households, except in an emergency, and will now only use this form of accommodation as a last resort.

4.3 Reasons for Priority acceptances in Wiltshire

In Wiltshire, households with dependent children/pregnancy have accounted for the majority of statutory homelessness acceptances. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of 16 and 17 year olds presenting as homeless during the last few years and this is likely to be due to the change in legislation in 2002 that requires local authorities to find this group in priority.

Below is a chart showing the reasons that households have been accepted as homeless over the past three years



Section three will look at a variety of individual client groups in more detail. As well as looking at the reasons for homelessness in Wiltshire it is important to understand the age profile and the household make up of those accepted as homeless. You will notice below that in 2008/09 over 50% of households accepted as homeless by the council were aged between 16 and 24. This is consistent with the main cause of homelessness in Wiltshire which is parental evictions; therefore you would expect a high proportion of young households being accepted as homeless.

Age	06/07	07/08	08/09
16-24	205	192	194
25-44	227	241	179
45-59	44	32	29
60-64	8	3	5
65-74	4	2	2
75 + over	1	0	0
Total	489	470	409

It is also important to review the family make up of those accepted as homeless. It is interesting to note that the largest group of households who were accepted as homeless are female lone parents, therefore a further understanding of the reasons for parental evictions is required, as, although likely to be due to overcrowding, we have to consider that the economic climate may be having an effect in this area.

Family Make up	06/07	07/08	08/09
Couple with children	104	120	108
Male lone parent	19	10	22
Female lone parent	217	242	174
Single male	85	47	50
Single female	52	40	41
All other households	12	11	14
Total	489	470	409

‘C14 - To research into the reasons for parental evictions due to such incidences being well above the national average and to make recommendations on how these can be prevented.’

‘C15 – To research into the reasons for homelessness among 16 – 24 years and to make recommendations on preventative options.’

When considering the main causes of homelessness it is also important to look at prevention work that stops families from needing to apply as homeless. Prevention work is one of the main tools used to help reduce homelessness in the County and below gives a breakdown of the preventions carried out in 2008 / 09.

Breakdown of homeless preventions 2008 / 2009:

Prevention	Number of cases
Prevented homelessness - Advice & assistance	431
Prevented homelessness - Court work	11
Prevented homelessness - Rent deposit scheme	293
Prevented homelessness – Mortgage	7
Prevented homelessness - Sanctuary scheme	0
Prevented homelessness - Home visit	54
Prevented homelessness - Perm housing	88
Prevented homelessness - Supported accommodation	21
Other	0

The main ways of preventing homeless in 2008/2009 were achieved by:-

- Helping households to remain in their current accommodation by negotiating with private and registered social landlords, mortgage lenders etc., and finding practical solutions to housing difficulties through advice and assistance.
- Helping households to rent privately through various rent deposit schemes previously operated by the district councils.

Concerns were raised that these figures do not give a true picture of the number of preventions that the options team actually enable. A new system has since been

introduced and within the first 9 months we have recorded a total of 1251 preventions which is within top quartile performance for prevention work.

This can be shown in the end of year prevention figures as below, which also highlight future forecasted numbers:-

	2007/08	2008/09	Dec 09	2010/11	2011/12
Number of households prevented from becoming homeless	721	997	1251	1610	1750

To ensure that we are able to continue to prevent homelessness through providing advice and assistance, we have set up the following actions:

‘C1 - To achieve charter mark accreditation for our housing advice service.’

‘C4 – All housing options advisors to have a generic role but to develop specialism in specific areas, e.g. domestic abuse, mental health.’

‘C7 – To continue to focus on front line prevention with the ambition of achieving top quartile on prevention work each year.’

‘C9 – To offer debt counselling, income maximisation and budgeting advice to prevent homelessness and as part of pre-tenancy work to sustain tenancies. To promote financial inclusion initiatives such as credit unions and affordable credit.’

‘C16 – To create an enhanced housing options service.’

5.0 Section three

5.1 Homelessness as it affects specific client groups

5.2 Black and minority ethnic households

Wiltshire has a relatively small proportion of people from black and minority ethnic groups (2.7% of the population) compared to the rest of the country (11.3% for England). Information for Wiltshire indicates that the black and minority households are not disadvantaged when it comes to being accepted as homeless as over the past two years the homeless service has accepted over 5% of applications from black and minority groups which is consistent with the proportion of black and minority groups in Wiltshire.

Although numbers are relatively small, this can in itself lead to problems for communities isolated from sources of cultural community support. It is therefore essential that the housing needs of this group are better understood in order to ensure equitable access to appropriate housing or advice service. Below gives a clear breakdown for the past three years.

Total Homeless Acceptances by ethnicity in Wiltshire	06/07	07/08	08/09
Total white	481	449	384
Total black	1	6	4
Total Asian	0	2	5
Total mixed	1	2	7
Total other	1	4	0
Not stated	5	7	9
Total	489	470	409

We therefore intend:-

‘A3 - To develop and implement equality impact assessments as a tool to understand the impact of services on individuals and communities and inform service development.’

5.3 Military

Military personnel constitute around 3% of Wiltshire’s total population, with around 15,000 personnel stationed at sites across the county. At former district level, the proportion of military personnel ranges from 1% of the population in the west to 7% of the total population in the east area. We need to be aware of changes planned for both the army and RAF presence in Wiltshire over the next three to four years. One of these changes is to be the stepped build up in the numbers of army personnel and their families based in the Salisbury Plain area, as this is developed into one of the country’s first Super Garrisons. The increases began in 2007 and should be completed by 2012.

Due to this gradual increase in military personnel in Wiltshire, along with the recent changes in housing legislation making it more accessible for military personnel to apply for social housing in the areas where they are/were stationed, it is important that we understand the potential future impact of this on the homelessness service.

Since 2006, Wiltshire has not accepted any client as homeless for the primary reason of 'having served in HM forces', however this does not mean that we have not assisted families who have gone through relationship breakdowns and in turn left army accommodation as the primary reason for priority could have been 'household with dependent children'. It is for this reason that further research is required into the needs of those who have served in HM forces.

We therefore intend:-

'B3 - To research the needs of ex-serviceman across Wiltshire and produce housing guides for all forces leavers to help find alternative accommodation and prevent homelessness.'

5.4 Rough sleepers

In November 2008 the government launched a strategy on rough sleepers and set an ambitious target of ending rough sleeping 'once and for all' by 2012. Rough sleeping is the most extreme form of homelessness. People who sleep rough are vulnerable to physical or sexual abuse, crime, drug and alcohol misuse and health problems.

Fortunately, there are few instances of people sleeping rough in Wiltshire. There are however occasional reports of people being seen sleeping in cars, parks, derelict buildings and in some rural locations of the County. Therefore, although we are not required to do so, it was agreed that we would conduct an informal rough sleeper street count which was completed on 16 December 2009 across the County. Only one rough sleeper was found in the Salisbury area; however there was evidence of rough sleeping in Trowbridge.



Below confirms the results of Wiltshire's rough sleeper counts from 2006 to 2010 based on the government's definition of people sleeping rough, which is:-

“People sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or “bashes”)”

Results of rough sleeper counts from 2005 - 2009

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
WWDC	0	2	5	0	0
NWDC	7	8	12	0	0
Salisbury	5	5	4	3	1
Kennet	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	15	21	3	1

As with all street counts, the actual estimates provided cannot be assumed to be comprehensive, because of the hidden nature of much rough sleeping, but as they have been conducted on a reasonably consistent basis, it seems nationally and locally there is a downward trend in rough sleeping. There has been much criticism of aspects of the methodology used in the street counts (e.g. the definition of a rough sleeper and the ‘rounding down’ of estimates of less than ten to zero). However this has proven to be a national concern and not just local to Wiltshire.

There are no night shelters in Wiltshire, with the nearest being Bath and Swindon. As a result, it is likely that people who sleep rough migrate to these locations where there are facilities. We do however recognise that there may be a number of households ‘sofa surfing’ or residing with friends and family on a very temporary basis and the full extent of this is unknown.

Wiltshire Council will operate severe weather provisions for rough sleepers. The trigger for this is when the weather forecast predicts three consecutive nights with a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower. In these cases the council will work very closely with voluntary agencies and housing providers so that rough sleepers can be brought in from the streets and be provided with emergency accommodation for the duration of the cold weather.

‘E7 - To create a multi agency rough sleepers panel that meet regularly to discuss rough sleeper issues including cold weather provision.’

5.5 Single people in housing difficulty

We have limited information about people who are single homeless and who do not fall under the priority need category of the homelessness legislation. At our multi-agency homelessness forum, concerns have been expressed that very little assistance is available in Wiltshire for single homeless people, and there is also acknowledgement that this is often a vulnerable group due to the particular difficulties they experience.

Currently, some supported housing schemes in Salisbury are being used for single homeless people, however, following a review of the residents within all supported housing schemes in Wiltshire, it was found that many of these individuals would not have been eligible for placement had a referral been made by the Council. This is currently being addressed as we have made limited funds available to assist this

client group to secure private rented accommodation, but concerns exist that this could still lead to an increase in rough sleeping.

The council with its partners will carry out a full assessment of housing options for single people in order to determine the gaps and demand in service provision for this client group.

5.6 16 / 17 year olds

The vulnerability of 16 and 17 year olds in housing need is the reason for the special status given to them under both the homelessness and children legislation. The relationship between the obligations placed on the housing department and those on children services was the subject of a further House of Lords judgement in May 2009.

We recognise that there is considerable scope for better working between housing and children's services on this matter, so that more is done to ensure that each young person in housing difficulty is provided with support and accommodation appropriate to their circumstances. We do have some suitable supported schemes for 16 and 17 years olds in the County but as the need increases we are likely to need more. In 2007/08 we accepted a total of sixteen 16 and 17 year olds and this increased to twenty seven in 2008/09

'C10 – Reduce the use of temporary accommodation by housing and children services through better homeless prevention and early identification of children and families at risk.'

'C12 – Create service level agreements with all social housing providers to help reduce the number of B&B placements made by DCE and to ensure that all young people who are owed a duty are accommodated in suitable accommodation.'

'E3 – To have a shared commitment from children's services and housing regarding planning for the accommodation and support needs of care leavers.'

5.7 Teenage parents

Teenage pregnancy rates in Wiltshire are lower than for the South West and England, but have been rising in recent years. The rate of teenage pregnancies in this area has increased from 28.7 (aged <17) per 1000 young women in 2002, to 31.5 per 1000 in 2007. In actual terms there are now approximately 300 teenage pregnancies per year in Wiltshire, leading to around 140 - 150 births a year.

In order for Wiltshire to meet its national teenage pregnancy strategy targets there needs to be a reduction in teenage pregnancies from the current 1 in 32 young women becoming pregnant down to 1 in 62, which will be a very difficult target to meet, as eleven of Wiltshire's wards are teenage pregnancy hotspots and have rates amongst the 20% highest in England.

There are also national targets to get 60% of young mothers into education, employment and/or training (EET); and at present in Wiltshire 67% of young mothers are *not* in any kind of education, employment or training (NEET). This indicates that there is a need for further targeted floating support to enable these young mothers to

attain the skills not only to be able to successfully manage their lives and parenting but also to be able to access training to get work.

Significant gaps in the provisions for homeless teenage parents were identified in the 2003 financial assessment of the council's grant allocation: most notably, that there were no accommodation based supporting people services for teenage parents. Since then, 21 units of supported 'mother and baby' housing have been made available, and the teenage partnership board has incorporated other partners and partnership boards in order to bring about a joint approach to addressing the needs of this group.

However, due to recent changes in the provision requirements for homeless teenage parents, and most particularly the shift from a 'mother-and-baby' prioritisation to a family-based focus more inclusive of the child's father, the Council is currently undergoing a full review of its provisions for homeless teenage parents.

5.8 People with drug and alcohol problems

The statutory figures for homeless acceptances due to the vulnerability of the applicant or family member to alcohol or drug dependency are, in Wiltshire as across other English rural authorities, very low: 1.02% of total acceptances in 2006/7; 0% in 2007/8; and 0.49% in 2008/9. These figures, however, are likely to reflect the definition and categorisation of statutory homeless dependency need groups, within which homeless households without dependent children are much less likely to be owed a full statutory duty than those with children, and also in which those households with dependent children are accepted as a priority as such, without requiring the further recording of drug or alcohol issues among applicants.

The Strategic Assessment of Alcohol Harm in Wiltshire describes the impact of alcohol misuse across the County, detailing current services as well as identifying gaps in provision. The Strategic Assessment informed the identification of priorities for action by partner agencies in Wiltshire and led to the Wiltshire Alcohol Strategy and Implementation Plan 2009-11. This plan sets out provisions for the prevention of alcohol harm and for early intervention in order to prevent homelessness among those who have problems with alcohol and drug misuse. These are separated into 'prevention' and 'intervention' initiatives, including in the former case educational awareness programmes and, in the latter, staff training and the provision of early support for those identified as at risk from substance harm.

The directory of drug and alcohol services (6th edition) provides details of advisory, counselling, housing and drop-in services available across the county, catering for both individuals and families affected by drug and alcohol issues and at risk of homelessness.

Following the recommendations of the Bannan Report, the facilities for drug and alcohol supported accommodation in Wiltshire have improved, with the provision of seven rooms at Damascus House designated as 28-day direct access accommodation.

Ruth House accepts housing referrals for people on a script, but the absence of any wet treatment accommodation in the County remains a subject of criticism. This would be a supported hostel for short term homeless individuals in the process and committed to combating their addiction to alcohol. Both the Wiltshire supporting

people partnership and the drug and alcohol action team (DAAT) have described a lack of support available for homeless individuals who are not yet engaged in dry treatment programmes. Past attempts to introduce a wet house in the County have encountered resistance, and there remains no provision for this kind of support in Wiltshire.

As identified by the former Wiltshire supporting people partnership, and still relevant today, there are several areas of improvement required in the provision of support to people with drug and alcohol problems who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. These are:

1. The needs of people who misuse alcohol should be considered separately to those of drug misuse as their needs are often very different.
2. The provision of wet treatment accommodation should be re-examined.
3. Specialist services should be available to those with multiple needs ('dual/multiple diagnoses').
4. There is a need for improved links between housing and treatment providers in order to help people moving on from residential rehabilitation to maintain a treatment programme and access support.

Rates for alcohol-related admissions to hospital were estimated to be 1,121 per 100,000 of the population in 2007/08. These admission rates are increasing in all areas of the county and are predicted to continue to do so. They are strongly correlated with deprivation levels. Compared to the national average, women in Wiltshire have higher levels of overall mortality attributed to alcohol. Estimates suggest that there is a lower proportion of drug users in Wiltshire compared with the South West and England populations. The greatest proportion of drug misuse-related admissions is for intentional self-poisoning by a range of drugs (including over the counter medications).

5.9 Ex-offenders

The statutory figures for homelessness amongst ex-offenders often appear very low. Mental health issues, substance misuse and relationship breakdown are more likely to be recorded as the priority reason for acceptance as homeless, rather than having left custody.

To get a realistic view of homelessness amongst offenders, figures for housing status on entering custody have been used, as these enable a more accurate picture of housing need.

By recording the housing status on reception into custody, the prison service is able to assist offenders with housing issues, such as housing benefit claims, the termination of tenancies, unattended animals etc..

The existing national accommodation target for placing ex-offenders into settled accommodation at the end of sentence, order or licence is 79%.

2008 - 09	YTD	YTD % (total)	NFA	NFA %	TEMP	TEMP %
East	15	7.39%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
North	22	10.84%	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
South	53	26.11%	4	7.55%	2	3.77%
West	113	55.67%	17	15.04%	6	5.31%
TOTAL	203	100.00%	25	12.32%	11	5.42%

The above table shows figures for offenders (adults 18yrs+) who declared themselves to be of no fixed abode (NFA), or living in temporary accommodation (TEMP), on entering custody within the South West and Wales (2008 – 2009).

The implications of offenders entering custody for short sentences (6 months or less) is that realistically there is little or no time to deal in-custody with any housing needs, other than attempting to secure the continuation of an existing tenancy, or terminating tenancies.

2009 - 10	YTD	YTD %	NFA	NFA %	TEMP	TEMP %
East	6	5.13%	1	16.67%	0	0.00%
North	50	42.74%	11	22.00%	2	4.00%
South	12	10.26%	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
West	49	41.88%	10	20.41%	3	6.12%
TOTAL	117	100.00%	24	20.51%	6	5.13%

The table above shows the figures (year to date October 2009) for the current reporting period. If the monthly average remains the same for the rest of the year, the numbers coming into custody would be similar to last year, but the NFAs would increase by over 40%. The north area is already showing a marked increase in the numbers declaring themselves without a permanent address.

The South West Accommodation Gateway (SWAG) was a pilot project, the delivery of which was a Government commitment through the action and delivery plans to reduce re-offending. The South West was selected to run this national pilot due to the particular challenges it faces in relation to affordable housing and the opportunities that the well developed partnerships in the South West presented. The Dorset and Plymouth Gateways began operation in September 2006 and Bristol in February 2007.

There is a possibility of the project being extended to the whole of the South West, but with the current financial constraints, there have been no announcements regarding this to date.

There has been a great deal of research into the links between accommodation and the reduction of re-offending. The social exclusion unit report on which the original Gateway project was based suggested that being in employment reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half and having stable accommodation reduces

the risk by a fifth. Similarly, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1996 found in research covering four prisons that two thirds of ex-prisoners who had no satisfactory accommodation on release went on to re-offend within 12 months, whereas only a quarter of those in suitable accommodation did so.

It should also be noted that the literature suggests that accommodation is part of a complex mix of offender needs in this area; and this itself points to a requirement for gateway and multi-agency projects to ensure that appropriate support is available, either through the gateway or from other services.

‘C5 - To develop and implement an intervention procedure for leavers from Erlestoke Prison and to review the procedures for Guys Marsh’

5.10 Physical disabilities and learning difficulties

From the Census 2001, the percentage of people with learning difficulties is 2.34% of the total population; therefore the number of people in Wiltshire aged 18 and over with learning disabilities is now approx 8,270. By 2012, it is predicted that this will increase to 10,418.

It has proved difficult to obtain information about the levels of demand for adapted housing. The Homes4Wiltshire register identifies households who have requested a need for an adapted property. We currently have 645 households on the register who have identified a need for some sort of adapted property, but not all of these will require wheelchair housing (housing which is intended for occupation by somebody who uses a wheelchair inside the house for most of the time).

As a working hypothesis it has been assumed that those households containing a family member with a disability that have stated the need for a fully adapted property, which is 99 households, are likely to be households that have a member of the family who needs to use a wheelchair.

To ensure we are able to meet the needs of households with disabilities we have agreed the following objectives:-

‘A2 – For Housing to become part of the transition steering group for young disabled people to better understand current and future needs.’

5.11 Households with mental health problems

In 2008/09 a total of 23 people with mental health problems were accepted as homeless, a reduction from 31 in 2006/07. During the strategy consultation, stakeholders identified difficulties in accessing statutory services for dual-diagnosis clients. We therefore need to look at and improve our working procedures with key agencies that cover mental health clients presenting as homeless.

Where people live has an impact on their mental health needs. The social exclusion unit report “Mental Health and Social Exclusion” states:

“Stable, appropriate housing is critical for people to work and take part in community life. A lack of stability or unsatisfactory housing can lead to worsening mental health.”

People with mental health problems are particularly likely to have vulnerable housing:"

People with mental health problems are:

- One and a half times more likely to live in rented housing.
- Twice as likely to be dissatisfied with their accommodation.
- Four times more likely to say that their health has been affected by their housing.

A lack of suitable housing not only impacts people's mental health but may also result in them being delayed in hospital, if that is where they have been treated, leading to a greater reliance on services and staff, and less independence. Through Homes4Wiltshire, clients, with a priority need because of mental health problems and who have been in supported accommodation and are ready to move, will be allocated the highest priority banding to ensure that they are able to access permanent independent housing quickly.

5.12 Specialist mental health housing team

The specialist mental health housing team has been created in order to improve communication between health, adult care and housing. The aim of the service is to ensure that people in receipt of mental health services receive the appropriate support in order to either access supported or permanent accommodation, or to maintain their existing accommodation. The main responsibilities of the team are to provide support to individuals with accommodation issues, improve and develop systems for referral and signposting, identify shortfalls and improve access to supported accommodation by increasing capacity and by aiding the move-on process. The team currently focuses on the north and east of the county, but plans are being developed to roll the service out to the rest of the county.

5.13 Mental health recovery house

In line with best practice guidance and our local mental health and supporting people strategy, Wiltshire Council department of community services are planning on extending our current provision by commissioning a new 24 hour short term accommodation based care and support service for approximately 10 adults with mental health issues.

This new service will hopefully become operational from April 2011 and it will provide recovery orientated specialist mental health care and support in a supported living setting for adults with functional mental health problems and it will facilitate the transition to community living for people who would otherwise enter or remain in long term residential care placements or have repeated admissions to hospital.

'E9 - In order to promote effective discharge from hospital for people with mental health problems we will develop and agree a hospital discharge protocol to ensure that their accommodation needs are addressed at an early stage.'

5.14 Gypsies and Travellers

Wiltshire Council operates 1 transit and 6 permanent sites. The current level of provision accommodates 169 semi-permanent residents and a further 48 residents – assuming full occupancy – at the transit site; a total of 217 gypsies and travellers overall. The last caravan count in Wiltshire was completed in August 2009 and counted a total of 314 of which 35 were on unauthorised encampments without planning permission on land.

It is estimated that there are fewer than 16,000 gypsy and traveller households living in caravans in England, of these around 4,000 are still on unauthorised sites. The government is keen to address the serious shortfall of gypsy and traveller accommodation through the housing and planning system.

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to carry out assessments of gypsy and traveller accommodation needs and to address these in housing strategies. Due to the lack of specific needs information about gypsies and travellers the Council is currently developing a gypsy and traveller strategy encompassing all its services to gypsies and travellers, which will be published in April 2010.

6.0 Section four

6.1 Current picture

6.2 Housing register

March 2009 saw the launch of Wiltshire Council's new choice based lettings system called Homes4Wiltshire. Demand for affordable housing in the County is high. In December 2009 there were 9678 households on the housing register, of which 179 were in the highest priority band for re-housing.



Housing register split by band

Band	Households
Platinum	179
Gold plus	138
Gold	1780
Silver	2840
Bronze	4741
Total	9678

The ethnic origin of the households on the waiting list in December 2009 can be broken down as follows:-

Ethnic Origin			
Asian – Other	34	Mixed White and Black Caribbean	31
Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi	13	Not available	62
Asian/Asian British Indian	17	Not given	1067
Asian/Asian British Pakistani	4	Other	28
Black\Black British African	38	White	154
Black\Black British Caribbean	23	White British	7889
Black\Black British Other	15	White Irish	36
Chinese	11	White Other	227
Mixed Other	9		
Mixed White and Asian	9		
Mixed White and Black African	11		
Total	9678		

The table below breaks down the 9678 households on the housing register by the size of the property needed. It clearly identifies that the highest need in Wiltshire is for one bedroom accommodation:

Bedroom need	Households	%
One	5346	55.2%
Two	2873	29.7%
Three	1261	13%
Four	198	2.1%
Total	9678	100%

Wiltshire has not yet seen the increases, either in the number of applications for affordable housing or in the number of homeless households, anticipated as a result of the economic downturn.

In 2008/09 2,048 homes were let to households on the housing register, this was a reduction on the previous year of 113. From 1st April to the end of December, 1617 have been let. An increase in overall lets by the end of this year is therefore anticipated.

There is a huge gap between the total numbers of lets compared to the total numbers of households on the register, therefore there is a long wait for households to be housed from the register, as demand far outstrips supply. To assist homeless households any household accepted as homeless will be given the highest priority band for re-housing.

Homeless households waiting to be housed from the housing register were allocated 23% of void properties in 2008/09 and 16.7% so far in 2009/10.

Total lets compared to homeless lets:

	2008/09	April 09 – Sept 09
Total lets	2048	1127
Council to homeless households	131	50
Housing association lets to homeless households	336	138
Total lets to homeless households	467	188

6.3 Affordable housing

There is a shortage of suitable, affordable accommodation for those in housing need. Owner occupation and renting in the private sector is beyond the means of a great number of households. Homelessness can only be prevented if suitable affordable accommodation is made available.

Social housing in Wiltshire is provided by 30 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), three of which are local stock transfer RSLs: Sarsen, Selwood and Westlea. Wiltshire Council still holds social housing stock in the south of the county, which is managed by the housing management team. They manage around 5,400 tenanted properties and 400 leasehold properties. In November 2006 tenants voted for management of their homes to be retained by the Council in a stock transfer ballot.

During 2008/09 Wiltshire delivered 583 new affordable homes (against a target of 479) and in the first nine months of 2009/10 has delivered 398 against an annual target for 2009 /10 of 554.

	2007/08	2008/09	Dec 09	Forecast 2010/11	Forecast 2011/12
Number of affordable homes delivered	636	583	398	590	610
Net additional homes provided	2670	1881	Unknown at this stage	2565	No future forecast
% of affordable housing	24%	31%			
Total number of affordable housing lets	2161	2048	1617	2100	2200

It would be impossible for us to meet all the need for housing through building new affordable homes, therefore in response to this high demand we are required to look at alternatives, and because of the high percentage of private rented accommodation in Wiltshire this was considered a priority.

6.4 Private rented stock in Wiltshire

The percentage of homes in the private rented sector (including MOD properties) varies across Wiltshire but overall is higher than the UK average.

Area	Number of private rented	Percentage	Total
North	5,236	9.8%	53,500
South	6,649	14.08%	47,408
West	4,550	9.3%	49,407
East	3,778	12.7%	29,565
Total	20,213	11.24%	179,880

Wiltshire has set up initiatives to make better use of the private sector. The aim is to make it more accessible to tenants by:-

- Launching the Wilts Let policy to assist households into the private rented sector.
- Improving liaison with private landlords.
- Working more closely with housing benefit to ensure benefit is paid promptly.

6.5 Temporary accommodation

Wiltshire Council has a total of 210 units of accommodation which are provided in a variety of ways. We currently have a total of 101 private sector lease properties, 93 of which are in the south; 53 units provided by our registered social landlords; and 56 which are owned and managed by Wiltshire Council.

Below shows the breakdown of the types of temporary accommodation that are available for the housing options team to use for households who have been accepted as homeless.

Although we have 210 units of accommodation some households take up more than

Provider	Accommodation Type									Disabled Bungalows			Totals
	1 Bed H	2Bed H	3Bed H	4Bed H	1Bed F	2 Bed F	3Bed F	Hostel Rm	C-Pad	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	
South													
PSL	1	33	16	3	11	12	1	14			1	1	93
East													
Wiltshire		1											1
RSL								23					23
West													
PSL	1	3	3		1								8
Wiltshire								51	1		2	1	55
RSL					5	5							10
North													
RSL						20							20
TOTALS	2	37	19	3	17	37	1	88	1	0	3	2	210

one unit as it depends on the size of the family and which units are available at the time the household is made homeless.

The standard of temporary accommodation is generally good, however following our satisfaction survey of clients who have stayed in temporary accommodation we had some negative remarks made about Hillside Hostel in Warminster. This hostel has fallen into disrepair and only repairs that are needed due to health and safety are being carried out as the hostel is being decommissioned in January 2010.

When this hostel has been closed it will reduce our temporary accommodation units by 25 which will include the loss of 2 bungalows. Due to the low demand for temporary accommodation in the Devizes area we have agreed with Ridgeway Housing that they will dispose of the 6 units of temporary accommodation at 28A St Margarets Mead, Marlborough and that this will be replaced with 6 units of resettlement support to be provided by Ridgeway using the support funds from St Margarets Mead. This is anticipated to take place in April 2010.

From April 2010 we will have a total of 179 units of temporary accommodation.

The availability and suitability of emergency and temporary accommodation will be kept under review to ensure standards are maintained and appropriate support is being provided. An action plan detailing the number of temporary accommodation units required in future years will be developed.

6.6 Supported accommodation

Supported accommodation is available for a range of client groups and should be used to develop or maintain households' independence; it is intended to allow more people to live independently in the community and to minimise tenancy breakdown and homelessness once re-housed on a permanent basis.

All supported schemes should be for a temporary period and ideally for no more than two years.

Below is a breakdown of the temporary supported accommodation placements available in the County.

Client Group	Total Capacity	RSL	Voluntary Sector
Homelessness	321	189	132
Domestic Violence	34	23	11
Drugs and Alcohol	10	0	10
Offenders	19	19	0
Teenage mothers	21	15	6
Total	405	246	159

Homelessness

There are a large number of supported housing units available in Wiltshire, covering a range of client groups including individuals with mental health issues, learning difficulties, and complex needs; and 16/17 and 18/24 year olds who have support needs. It is important that a more in depth review is completed to understand what is required in this area in order to meet current and future needs. We are aware that the schemes currently in place are not being used to their full potential as some high level support schemes have clients with low level needs and some have clients who have been resident for many years without moving on.

There is also the additional concern that we do not have a fair distribution of supported housing schemes across the county, as the majority are located in Salisbury, and often clients with support needs from other areas in the county do not want to move from their local support networks.

Domestic Abuse

There are four women's refuges in Wiltshire that between them provide a total of 34 bed spaces. The demand for this type of supported accommodation is high, and the refuges have limited vacancies throughout the year. The refuge service provides safe, emergency, temporary accommodation to women and their children experiencing domestic abuse. They provide emotional support for women and their children, assistance and advice on benefits, legal and housing issues as well as assistance with re-settlement from refuge accommodation.

Drugs and Alcohol

We have 10 placements for homeless households who have experienced problems with substance misuse and who are abstinent from drugs or alcohol and who will benefit from support to remain abstinent. There are two schemes in Wiltshire, one called KASH in Salisbury that has 4 bed spaces and a further 6 are provided by

Acorn House in Trowbridge. These schemes provide advice and support as well as advising clients on how to manage and maintain their accommodation by offering information and advice on benefits, budgeting and debt management.

Ex-Offenders

We have one scheme in Wiltshire that is used for medium/high risk offenders and this is based in Trowbridge. This is not a scheme that we refer into but we are involved with assisting with move on accommodation when residents of the scheme are ready to be moved to permanent accommodation. Due to the high level support offered there are often difficulties with finding suitable accommodation for ex-offenders who have lower support needs.

Teenage mothers

As previously mentioned we have 21 placements for young mothers, located in Salisbury, Trowbridge and Calne. All schemes offer personal and practical support to young mothers to help cope with the first time experiences of motherhood. They also encourage preparation for independent living to help clients manage their move into permanent accommodation, ensuring they are able to sustain their tenancy and prevent homelessness. One of the gaps identified in this area is the need for young parent accommodation to help keep young families together when made homeless rather than splitting them up and only supporting the mother and child.

7.0 Section five

7.1 Gaps in provision

During the consultation process and the development of the homelessness strategy the following gaps in provision were identified:-

- Direct access accommodation in Wiltshire
- Provision for a wet house – during recovery
- Housing accommodation and support for 16 – 17 year olds
- Provision for homeless teenage parents
- A central database that hosts all agencies that assist homeless, or threatened with homelessness, households
- Improved links with the prisons to ensure a co-ordinated approach and planned moves into suitable accommodation
- Support in private rented accommodation
- Common referral system into supported housing
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of resources for non priority households
- More move on accommodation and support
- Improved multi-agency working
- Link officers for all client groups
- School/education programme
- Host families
- Enhanced housing options

8.0 Section six

8.1 Future trends

8.2 Temporary accommodation

We currently have 210 units of temporary accommodation but with the decommissioning of Hillside Hostel and the removal of the 6 units in Marlborough we will have a total of 179 units from April 2010. Based on the current number of households in temporary accommodation we have more units than we are able to fill. Due to the high number of costly private sector leased properties (PSLs) in Salisbury, it has been recognised as a priority to reduce the number of PSLs in Salisbury by at least 30. A full review of temporary accommodation will then take place to ensure we have the right temporary accommodation in the right place and at a suitable standard.

Below is a table confirming the current picture as well as a forecast for future provision. With the increase in prevention, we anticipate a reduction in homeless acceptances and in turn a reduction in the use of temporary accommodation. However it is unlikely that we will totally eliminate homelessness and we anticipate a continued need for around 100 units of temporary accommodation.

	07/08	08/09	Dec 09	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Number of households in some form of temporary accommodation	265	179	142	136	120	100	100

April 2009 saw the total elimination of the use of bed and breakfast for homeless families in Wiltshire which was a huge success. Due to our increase in prevention work we have managed to prevent any household from being placed in bed and breakfast and anticipate that in the future we will not require the use of this type of temporary accommodation.

8.3 Prevention of Homelessness

During the last couple of years the housing options staff have embraced the homelessness prevention agenda which led to a substantial change in the traditional culture of homelessness work and a structure change that was implemented from April 2009.

All households are interviewed by a housing options advisor and practical steps are discussed to help prevent homelessness. Following recent consultation and focus groups, further preventive actions have been identified and, once implemented, we hope to see a continued increase in prevention.

Below shows our anticipated trend for the numbers of households we hope to prevent from becoming homeless in the coming years.

	07/08	08/09	Dec 09	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Number of households prevented from becoming as homeless	721	997	1251	1610	1750	1820	1935

8.4 Acceptance of homelessness

With the increases in prevention work, we hope to see a continued decline in households being accepted as homeless, due to early intervention and alternative options being found. This should not be seen as gate keeping by the authority as we would always want to ensure that homelessness is the last option for any household and will strive to assist households to remain in their own homes or to find alternative, suitable accommodation.

There is a concern that we have not yet felt the impact of the economic downturn and we also need to be aware that homelessness could potentially increase when there is an economic upturn. The main form of prevention work involves using the private rented sector, and the housing options team has 'benefited' from the economic downturn, due to the fact that landlords who have been unable to sell their properties have approached the council to find assistance in letting those properties. When there is an upturn in the economy, private landlords may choose to sell their properties or to increase the rents above the local housing allowance rate. This will have a severe impact on homeless households who will not be able to afford to rent in the private sector, and on the service as the demand for temporary accommodation will increase.

Without considering any potential downturn or upturn in the private sector we have predicted a steady decline in applications being received and accepted, which also mirrors the reduction in temporary accommodation.

	07/08	08/09	Dec 09	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Number of households accepted as homeless	470	409	209	272	240	200	200

Appendix one

Stakeholders who took part in the review

Age concern
Alabare
Amber
Bournemouth Churches Housing Association
Breakthrough
Bromford Housing
Citizen Advice Bureau
Community 4
Community team for people with learning disabilities
Community mental health team
Connexions
Defence Estate Housing
Drug and Homelessness Initiative
Department of adult services
Department of children services
Government Office of the South West
Housing staff
Jephson Housing
Job centre plus
Knightstone Housing
National Health Service
Probation
Ridgeway Community Housing
Salisbury Trust for the Homeless
Sanctuary Housing
Sarsen Housing
Selwood Housing
Service users
Shape Housing
Shelter
Sovereign Housing
Stonham Housing
Specialist drug & alcohol service
Splitz
Supporting people
Vine for Pat
Westlea Housing Association
Wiltshire accommodation support services for young people
Wiltshire advice partnership
Wiltshire police
Wilts Racial Equality Council
Wiltshire Rural Housing Association

Appendix two

Consultation process

In drawing up this strategy, we have sought to be as inclusive as possible, and to learn from the experiences and feedback of stakeholders and service users.

Wiltshire Council's first homelessness strategy has been produced following extensive consultation with service users, service providers, housing staff and other stakeholders.

We achieved a balance of partner and service user input by:

- Using a postal survey and focus groups to consult with residents of temporary accommodation
- Holding a focus group with young people who are being accommodated by supported housing providers
- Using a postal survey to consult with households who have been permanently re-housed through the new Homes4Wiltshire system; with households who were prevented from becoming homeless through our advice and prevention service; and with households who used the new Wilts Let scheme
- Hosting four stakeholders' conferences across Wiltshire attended by supported housing providers, voluntary sector workers, housing staff, registered social landlords, and other staff at Wiltshire Council with links to housing, in order to identify unmet needs and to consider options for service improvement.
- Providing regular updates and opportunities to engage at each stage of the strategy at all homelessness forums held quarterly across the County
- Holding team meetings with housing staff, to capture their views on the service currently provided and their ideas on new ways of working

After reflecting on the findings of the consultation, a multi agency Homelessness Strategy group was set up. This group agreed five key strategic priorities and the set of actions that will support their achievement.

Stakeholders were then invited to comment on the strategic priorities and draft action plan to ensure the homelessness strategy continues to have widespread support.

Appendix three

Delivering our Priorities and Monitoring

Our priorities have been used as a structure for the action plan which is included in this strategy. The implementation of this strategy will be the responsibility of the Wiltshire Housing Liaison Group. This is a multi agency group that meets quarterly across the County and is linked into the Wiltshire family of partnerships. They will ensure the delivery of the priorities set out in the action plan and this will include monitoring the progress of new and existing working groups that will be working on new projects.

The homelessness strategy group will continue to meet bi-annually to review and monitor the action plan which will be updated annually.