

Lambeth Homelessness Strategy 2012-17

Version 4 - October 2012

Part 1: Introduction

Overview of Lambeth

At least 283,000 people live in Lambeth. Largely residential, Lambeth is one of the most densely populated places in the country, with over 100 persons per hectare, more than twice the London population density. It has a high turnover of population - about 10% of residents leaving or arriving each year.

Lambeth has the largest geographic area of any inner London borough. It has several neighbourhoods and very distinctive town centres such as Brixton, Streatham, Norwood, Clapham and Vauxhall.

Many of Lambeth's neighbourhoods are known and valued for their mixed communities that include a variety of income levels and the full range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The borough has a complex social and ethnic mix, with large African and Portuguese populations.

The borough is the 5th most deprived in London, the 14th most deprived district in England (a relative worsening of position since 2008 when it was considered the 19th most deprived), but, in common with other inner London boroughs, Lambeth has a mixed profile, with areas of affluence and deprivation often side by side. The borough has the 15th highest proportion of children in poverty in the UK and the 10th highest in London.

A cooperative council and co-production

The cooperative council is Lambeth's programme for transforming public services in the borough so that they better meet the different needs of our citizens and communities. It aims to alter radically the way in which services are designed and delivered by giving more power to service users and changing the relationship between the council and citizens. Rather than having services provided to them in a top-down manner, the cooperative council is about citizens and the council working jointly together to commission and co-produce services.

The Homelessness Strategy is developed out of the Lambeth Housing Strategy 2012-16 and therefore makes use of the extensive co-production exercise to develop the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy was developed in partnership with residents and housing partners (Registered Providers and managing agencies) and also involved representatives from third sector

organisations and the NHS. Over 500 people responded through various methods of engagement. Events were held at Lambeth Town Hall during the daytime (for partnership organisations) and evenings (for residents). Activities were carried out from November 2011 (starting at the Lambeth Residents Conference) through to June 2012.

These sessions constituted a series of interactive workshops in an informal setting with small groups letting us know their views on which housing priorities should be included in the final strategy. Alongside the workshops, surveys and questionnaires have also been used to gather resident and partner organisation views on housing in the borough. This level of involvement has shaped the key priorities and aspirations of the document; in that respect it has been truly 'co-produced' with residents. The Homelessness Strategy was then further consulted on, both internally and externally.

Both the housing and homelessness strategies are supported by an updated Housing Needs and Homelessness Review and the strategy makes relevant links to the Council's Core Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Older Persons Housing Strategy, Young Persons Strategy and Rough Sleeper Strategy. Overarching is the Lambeth Corporate Plan 2011-14, which through cooperative endeavours aims to create a fair and socially just borough which is a caring borough, an aspirational borough and a safe and secure borough.

National and London homelessness strategies

Tackling homelessness is a key priority of the Government's Housing Strategy, *Laying the Foundations, A Housing Strategy for England* (DCLG, 2011).¹ This outlines the Government's commitment to homelessness prevention, meeting the needs of vulnerable people and managing the consequences of homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Mayor of London Housing Strategy (2010) outlines a number of targets with regard to homelessness. These include eliminating rough sleeping by the end of 2012 ensuring that no one lives on the streets, providing a rapid response to rough sleepers entering the streets, and ensuring that people in temporary accommodation have full access to education and health services. The London Housing Strategy also has an objective that good quality housing advice including housing options should be available to all Londoners who require it.

The Localism Act 2011 is intended to allow local authorities more flexibility when managing or allocating accommodation. The impact on homelessness will be to enable local authorities to discharge their full homelessness duty by providing suitable private rented accommodation, regardless of whether the homeless person agrees.

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on housing authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and develop a homelessness strategy based on the findings of that review. The strategy is required to address how the local authority

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/2033676.pdf>

prevents homelessness and supports people threatened with homelessness and how sufficient accommodation is secured which is affordable and sustainable.

Lambeth's homelessness strategic priorities

The Lambeth Homelessness Strategy sets out the homelessness prevention priorities delivered by an action plan attached in annex 1. The overarching aim is to prevent homelessness by keeping people in their homes or moving them to affordable and sustainable accommodation, including homes in the private sector. Delivery of the homelessness strategy action plan will be monitored by the Housing Divisional Management Team and the Housing Welfare Reform Working Group.

The three strategic priorities are:

1. To prevent homelessness by supporting all households in their home or to help them find alternative accommodation
2. To develop tenancy sustainment and support services in the private rented sector to ensure affordable supply and choice of accommodation
3. To manage the impact of welfare reforms and develop policies to mitigate risks of increased homelessness and temporary accommodation

Welfare reform

Welfare reforms run through the Homelessness Strategy and are the single biggest influence on service delivery and policies over the next five years. The reforms will have significant implications for all homelessness services in Lambeth and carry financial and social risks, including:

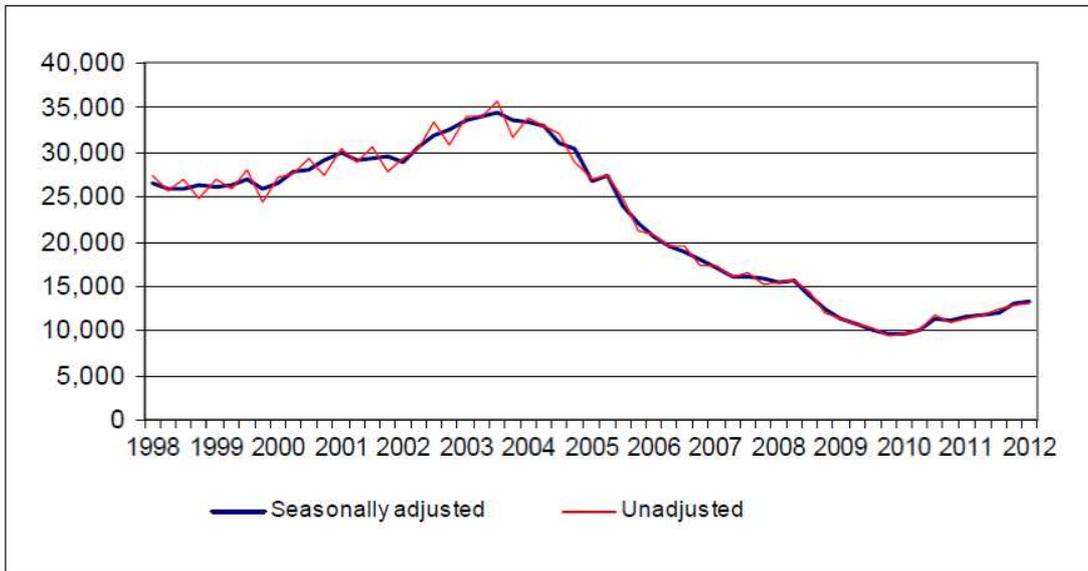
- § Additional costs incurred including temporary accommodation costs, housing management, children's services etc
- § Families having to move homes either within local area or out of local area
- § Larger families forced to move to smaller accommodation which may increase overcrowding
- § Increased debt and rent arrears leading to increased risk of eviction and housing management risks in terms of poor rent collection
- § Tracking and safeguarding children at risk of abuse will be increasingly difficult as more vulnerable families move between local authorities

Part 2: Homelessness overview

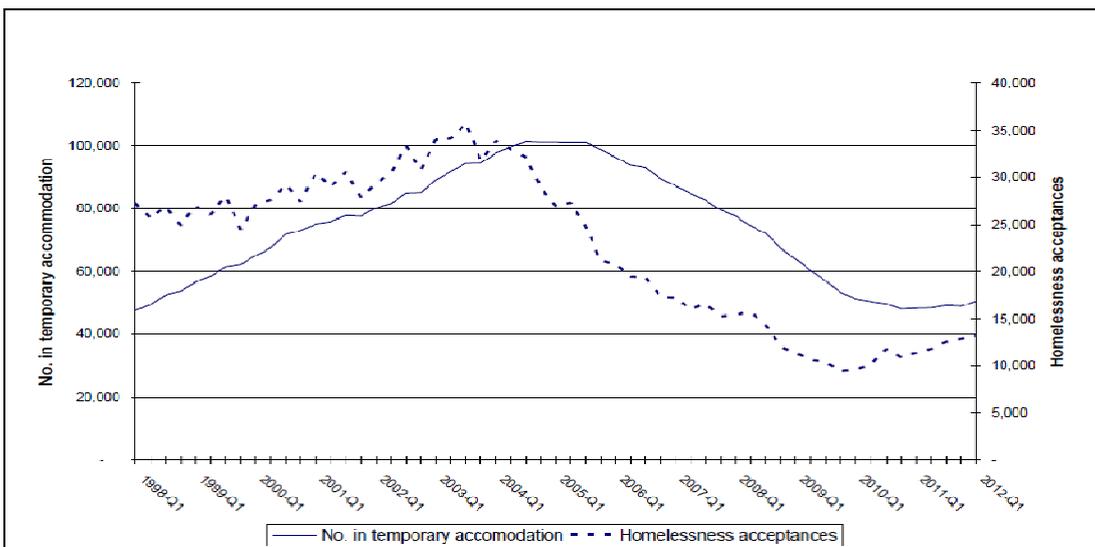
National Homelessness Trends

Nationally, homelessness reduced from 2003/4 onwards, largely due to local authorities developing homelessness prevention strategies. But since 2010 homelessness has started to increase again due to the impact of the recession, austerity measures and welfare reforms. Homeless acceptances in 2011/12 increased by 14% compared to the previous year and the number of households in temporary accommodation increased 5% between March 2011 and March 2012.

Households accepted as homeless nationally (source: DCLG statutory homeless statistical release, 14 June 2012)



Households accepted nationally as homeless and households in temporary accommodation



Homelessness in Lambeth

Homelessness in Lambeth is increasing at a rate similar to the national picture. There are increasing pressures on front line services and temporary accommodation which are going to increase further leading up to, and after implementation of the welfare reforms. The overall benefit cap and Universal Credit will put the greatest pressure on homelessness in Lambeth from 2012 and for the duration of the homelessness strategy. These changes, combined with a reduced number of social lettings, mean it is predicted the numbers in temporary accommodation will rise significantly without interventions.

There are three main areas where service delivery and policy can have an effect on homelessness in Lambeth:

1. How the organisation prevents homelessness
2. The number of households that are accepted as homeless
3. The number of people moving into and out of temporary accommodation

1. Homelessness prevention

- § an 85% increase in the number of tenants losing private rented sector housing between 2007/8 – 2011/12
- § Between 2008 and 2012 the number of statutorily homeless 16 and 17 year olds fell from 144 to 40

The number of cases where services have prevented homelessness is decreasing. Overall prevention outcome in 2011/12 was down by 26% when compared to 2010/11. This may be for a variety of reasons including structural organisation of services, cultural attitudes of staff and customers, welfare reforms and general economic conditions.

Successful homelessness prevention is measured by looking at the number of households who are:

- § assisted to remain in their own home where there is a threat of homelessness
- § helped to move to alternative suitable and sustainable accommodation

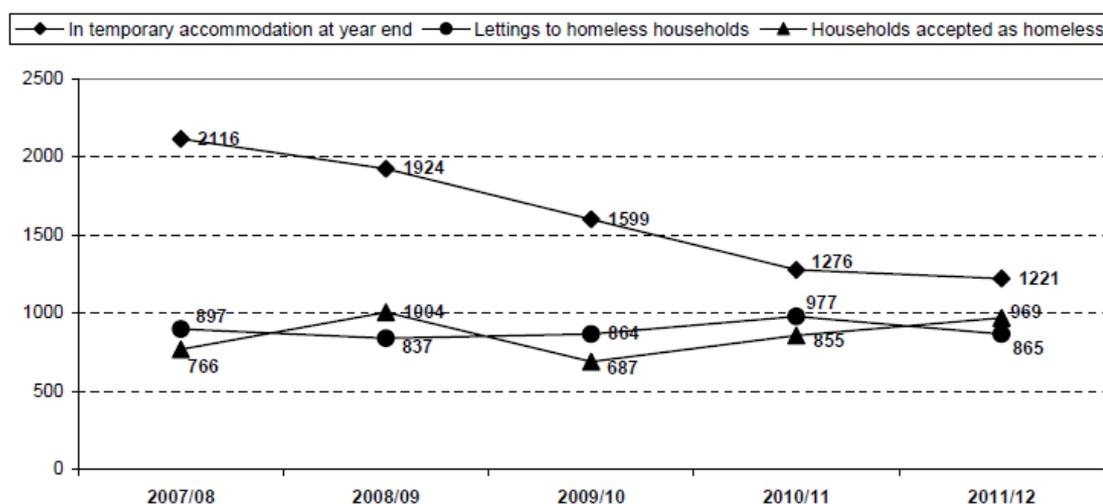
A failure to prevent homelessness can be judged in a number of ways including the need to provide temporary accommodation. Currently Lambeth's homelessness and housing advice services are dominated by two customer groups - people being asked to leave accommodation by friends or family, and private sector tenants losing their rented accommodation. These two groups combined make up three out of four of all homelessness applications and moves into temporary accommodation.

2. Households accepted as homeless

- § a 27% increase in homelessness acceptances between 2008 and 2012
- § a 13% increase in homelessness acceptances in 2011/12
- § double the number of households accepted as homeless due to domestic violence between 2007/8 – 2011/12

§ over 50% of all homelessness was due to families being asked to leave by parents, family or friends annually in the period 2007/8 – 2011/12

Homeless acceptances, numbers in temporary accommodation and permanent lettings in Lambeth 2008-2012



3. Temporary accommodation

The number of households moving into temporary accommodation increased by 5% in the year 2011/12.

Between 2008 and 2012 the number of households living in temporary accommodation in Lambeth reduced by 42% compared to the national reduction of 35% over the same period.² The rate of reduction has slowed and in the year 2011/12 there was only a 4% reduction in the number of households in TA.

The use of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) hotels reduced significantly between 2008 and 2011, but has increased in 2012 due to difficulties sourcing longer-term temporary accommodation. In March 2008 there were 83 households in B&B hotels, of which 9 were families. By March 2011 this had reduced to only 5 households in B&B hotels, of which 3 were families. In March 2012, there were 40 households living in shared B&B, 33 of which were families.

Whilst the numbers in TA have reduced there has been a significant increase in the number of homelessness acceptances, up 27% since 2008. 768 households were accepted as homeless in 2007/8, increasing to 968 in 2011/12.

Over this period the number of households moving out of temporary accommodation into permanent social housing has averaged 921 a year.

² National figures: 77510 in March 2008, 50430 in March 2012 (Source: DCLG)

Temporary accommodation strategy

Lambeth will continue to develop and maintain a sustainable balanced portfolio of affordable, quality temporary accommodation that meets the current and projected homelessness needs. Quality, location, support to residents and value for money will remain key factors during procurement and in the operation of any schemes. The relationship with and monitoring of our provider partners is critical and will be carefully managed through robust agreements and regular auditing. We will ensure that the financial cost of provision of temporary accommodation is balanced against the need to procure properties of a suitable quality.

Over 75% of temporary accommodation used by Lambeth is leased from the private rented sector. The remainder of the supply consists of a large portfolio of over 290 council-owned hostel units of varying sizes and nightly paid Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

The strategy is to continue to provide a range of temporary accommodation options to fulfill the statutory duty. This will include further development of schemes with private sector partners and registered providers. Although self-contained accommodation is often considered the better option recent changes to government policy, significant reductions in subsidies, welfare reforms and a downturn in the economic market have resulted in reduced supply of affordable properties used for temporary accommodation. This combined with welfare reforms will require more accommodation to be sourced out of Lambeth, and in some cases out of London, as a temporary or permanent move.

The diminishing supply of private sector units is impacting on the availability of local sourced accommodation which is resulting in an increase in out of borough placements. Lambeth will make all attempts to minimise this by exploring the options of working more closely with neighbouring boroughs with a view to developing joint borough procurement of local temporary accommodation. We will also develop more flexible approaches to acquiring new properties by undertaking periodic advertising so that the net can be cast as wide as possible and more service providers can be invited to participate in our schemes as and when demand requires. We hope this will promote healthy competition between providers in the interests of maintaining high standards and value for money.

The council will continue to work with existing providers to maximise supply of property available, which could include incentivising providers to secure local properties for Lambeth as the cost of a long lease is far lower than the same number of nights in B&B.

Whilst we will be committed to keeping households as local as possible the stark reality is that the introduction of household benefit caps in April 2013 will mean housing costs in Lambeth will far exceed the total amount in benefits given to many non-working families with children. We will therefore have to look far further afield to provide affordable accommodation which in some cases may be outside of London.

Whilst self-contained rented properties are the preferred choice, over the past 12 months the council has had to rely on Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation to bridge the growing gap in supply without which it would be in breach of its statutory duty. Inappropriate use of temporary accommodation will be reduced to ensure that no families occupy shared B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks. Families will be moved on to more suitable alternative accommodation with minimum disruption.

Lambeth will continue to support the Pan-London agreement on the use of temporary accommodation and minimise out of borough placements of vulnerable households. We will also work closely with long-stay households in temporary accommodation to improve their housing chances and encourage take up of other options.

Part 3: Lambeth's Homelessness priorities

Lambeth's homelessness priorities can be summarised as providing customers solutions by:

1. Ensuring services are put in place to help residents stay in their home
2. If this fails, to assist the family to move to a new home which is suitable and affordable
3. Then to support customers by providing sustainment services to help households to stay in their new homes

Homelessness priority 1

To prevent homelessness by supporting all households in their home or help them to find alternative accommodation

Keeping families in their homes brings financial and social benefits. If Lambeth prevents more homelessness in this way there is a saving from not having to use temporary accommodation. The council is having to use more temporary accommodation outside the borough, so not having to rehouse families in temporary accommodation out of borough means children will not have to move to a new school, or suffer long journeys to get to their school. The family will not be uprooted from their support and community groups. Altogether a homelessness strategy that focuses on preventing homelessness is beneficial for individuals and the community.

Objective 1a

Targeted advice services are provided to families within families providing options and alternatives to encourage them to remain where they are

The biggest cause of homelessness in Lambeth is loss of accommodation provided by friends or family.

In 2011/12:

- § 50% of all households accepted as homeless were households asked by family or friends to leave accommodation
- § In one year this amounts to 480 families with children/pregnant women who took with them into temporary accommodation nearly 1,000 children
- § At any one time around 30% of all households in temporary accommodation are accommodated out of borough

Consider Leona and her two children.

Leona is a single mum and her children are 4 and 1. She has been living at her mother's council flat all her life. It's a two bed flat and so space is getting tight and Leona's mother feels she has no option but to ask Leona and the grandchildren to leave. It may seem the best thing for Leona and her children to move into temporary accommodation - after all she is overcrowded. But if she stays in her home she benefits from family support and not having the disruption of moving. Lambeth's allocation policy gives additional priority to families who work with the council to prevent their homelessness. At the moment this translates into an additional 50 points which will place most families into a priority bidding position. Any review of allocations is likely to feature a similar level of priority.

There are a number of reasons why families are asked to leave. The applicant may have outgrown the accommodation, the host family may think it's time for their children to move on, it may be seen as the easy route to social housing, the applicant may have asked for the host to leave and families may see no alternatives. Focusing services on this group will potentially have the biggest impact on homelessness in Lambeth. Strong verification and realistic housing options for families will be developed.

Objective 1b

Services deliver support and advice to private sector tenants and mortgagors to remain in their home

The second biggest cause of homelessness and placements into temporary accommodation is the loss of private rented accommodation.

In 2011/12:

- § 17% of all homelessness acceptances related to households losing their private rented accommodation - in total 161 households and a total of 274 dependent children
- § The average stay in temporary accommodation is 2 years and much longer for large households
- § There was an 85% increase in homelessness due to loss of private rented accommodation between 2008-12

Providing advice to private tenants will become more of a priority for Lambeth. There has been a national trend in housing advice in recent years with a shift in resources from private sector advice to generic housing options. Lambeth's Homelessness Strategy recognises that to meet the challenges over the next five years this trend has to be reversed.

There are significant challenges to reduce the number of families losing their private rented accommodation. The economic downturn combined with welfare reforms is putting considerable pressure on the private rented sector. The local housing benefit market may shift quickly to rent to workers, or landlords may leave the market altogether.

Consider John and Mya Simpson who have two children both at school in Lambeth. Their landlord is worried about the changes to housing benefit and so has decided to move his tenants out and get renters who are working and will pay an extra £20 per week. How will a homelessness strategy help John and Mya?

Early intervention from a specialist private sector housing advice team will in many cases prevent homelessness. Negotiation with the landlord and the offer of dedicated support and advice for both parties is essential. And crucially this support needs to be on going - regular check ups with both the tenant and the landlord will be part of the prevention package. Rent direct and housing benefit support will go a long way to reassure the landlord that he should keep on renting as he is. Finally in some cases the use of the homelessness prevention fund can be authorised to make sure a new longer tenancy is signed up to - a small cost compared to rehousing and uprooting John and Mya.

Objective 1c

Provide advice, support and move on options to people in general housing need including rough sleepers

Each year Lambeth's Housing Options and Advice service provides general advice and support to over 3,000 customers who are in general housing need. They are mostly single people looking for accommodation.

People with support needs are assisted to move into supported housing and once they are ready are assisted with move on options. This is likely to be suitable private rented accommodation which is increasingly likely to be out of borough. A range of service providers work together to help people with accommodation needs. This includes third sector agencies that manage hostels and provide support.

People living on the streets are assisted to find accommodation either directly in the private sector or via supported accommodation. Lambeth is committed delivering the priorities set by the London Mayor's No Second Night Out policy.

Consider Terry who is 24 years old. He has a history of living in squats and on a couple of occasions he has slept in a park. He has been diagnosed with severe depression. He has nowhere to stay and he comes to Lambeth for help. He is referred into the Assessment Centre and then moves into supported housing. Eighteen months later he is assessed as being ready for move on from the hostel into his own flat. The Housing Options and Advice Service find him a flat so he doesn't have to pay a deposit or rent in advance. Floating support is commissioned from the voluntary sector to monitor and support his progress in his new home. There is regular contact from the Housing Options and Advice Service over the next two years ensuring that Terry's accommodation is sustained.

Homelessness priority 2

Develop relationships with landlords and agents to ensure a supply of suitable accommodation to rent to people in housing need

The private sector even in challenging times offers significant opportunities to provide affordable and sustainable accommodation. More than 25% of all Lambeth households live in the private sector. There is insufficient social rented housing to meet demand, and most people faced with homelessness are unable to afford to buy a home. The private rented sector therefore is an important source of housing. Welfare reforms will increasingly change Lambeth's procurement strategies and will result in more private rented accommodation being sourced out of the borough or out of London.

Tenancy sustainment and supporting the private rented sector is key to preventing homelessness. Housing services will focus on supporting both landlords and tenants and through positive interventions shape the market. Placements into the private rented sector must not be allowed to breakdown due to lack of continued support. This will involve support and advice services for private sector landlords.

Objective 2a:

To ensure a supply of suitable accommodation to rent to people in housing need and prevent homelessness and where possible exert downward pressures on rents

Successful homelessness prevention relies heavily on a good supply of private rented accommodation. The homelessness strategy requires suitable accommodation which means acquiring properties that are affordable and meet certain standards.

The level rent in the private sector will become one of the most significant challenges over the term of the strategy. Welfare reform will exert pressures on the amount of rent that families can afford, particularly for three bed rooms properties and above. Supply will inevitably be sourced increasingly from outside Lambeth and over time outside London.

Developing a strong relationship with local landlords and agents is a key priority for Lambeth and through the homelessness strategy Lambeth can better:

- § Understand which families can afford which properties
- § Develop a procurement strategy to make sure we source the best properties in the right locations
- § When placing tenants in the private sector make sure the accommodation is affordable
- § Make sure properties meet minimum standards

Objective 2b:

To develop tenancy sustainment services to ensure we have the right tenant placed into the right property with the right landlord

It is important that Lambeth develops its offer to both tenants and landlords. The tenant will receive on going help after they have moved in. Where appropriate the tenant will be provided with floating support. They will be in regular contact with the Housing Options and Advice Service who will continue to provide advice. The landlord will also be given advice and support. If anything goes wrong with the tenancy then the landlord will be assisted through the process.

The right tenant is someone who:

1. Understands their letting responsibilities
2. Is working with us to prevent their homelessness and so eligible for greater priority through the allocations scheme
3. Engages with services so Lambeth knows where there are problems with the tenancy

The right landlord is someone who:

1. Is accredited
2. Works with us to keep rents low in return for a range of services offered by Lambeth
3. Understands their letting responsibilities

Homelessness priority 3

To manage the impact of welfare reforms and develop policies to mitigate risks of increased homelessness and temporary accommodation

Welfare reform will have a significant and continuing impact on a range of customers and services. The risk of increased homelessness and demand for temporary accommodation is significant. The third strategic objective is to deliver services that mitigate and manage the challenges presented by welfare reforms.

The financial risk to the local authority is potentially significant requiring services and priorities to be shaped to mitigate impacts. The Housing Options and Advice Service and Broadway successfully managed the implementation of the changes to the local housing allowance in 2011 which provides a platform to construct services for future welfare reforms.

The Homelessness Strategy reflects the opportunities to mitigate impacts including families moving to smaller accommodation, moving away from Lambeth to more affordable accommodation and developing employment opportunities.

Welfare reforms and the underlying economic situation will potentially lead to increased numbers of people threatened with homelessness approaching the council for assistance. Having the option to discharge duty by the provision of private sector accommodation if necessary is an important part of the overall package of measures to prevent homelessness.

**Objective 3a:
Develop services to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms**

From 2012 onwards Lambeth will be developing and delivering a range of services to help tenants manage the impact of welfare reforms. The overall benefit caps will be managed through the Housing Options and Advice Welfare Reform Team. The aim of the team is to provide advice and support to affected tenants. They will receive welfare rights advice and be signposted to employment services to help tenants back into work.

Mr and Mrs Patel live in private rented accommodation with their three children. They are on benefit and will be affected by the overall cap and will lose £75 per week from their benefits. The Welfare Reform Team contacts the Patels and offers some options. The family can remain in their home but they will need to pay more towards their housing costs. They have an older child who still lives at home and is in work. He will need to increase his contributions to the household budget. Alternatively he could move out to his own accommodation, and then the rest of the family downsize to smaller more affordable accommodation. If the family want to stay together and higher contributions are not available then the family can be helped to move to a cheaper, more affordable area.

At the same time Mr Patel works with the employment services as he is keen to get back into work. Once he secures a job the overall cap will no longer apply and the family will improve their financial circumstances.

**Objective 3b:
To develop policies to mitigate welfare reforms**

The reforms present the biggest and most challenging issues for Lambeth. Over the life of the Homelessness Strategy there will be continuing financial risks to Lambeth if services fail to prevent homelessness. Policies will need to be considered that assist services to perform and prevent homelessness.

1. **Homelessness discharge policy.** The government has allowed local authorities to discharge their homelessness duties by offering suitable accommodation in the private rented sector. It will be for Lambeth to decide whether to introduce a discharge policy which will be considered during the term of the Strategy.
2. **Intentionally homelessness policy.** The policy around when and how families are intentionally homeless will need to be reviewed in light of the welfare reforms and in particular what sanctions the local authority may impose on families who do not engage with services.
3. **Out of Lambeth moves.** A clear policy and strategy will need to be developed to help services have a clear understanding about families having to move out of the borough or out of London to find affordable accommodation.

Part 4: Cooperative and partnership working

The Homelessness Strategy draws heavily on a range of partners and strategies which support and advise vulnerable and non-vulnerable residents who are threatened with homelessness. Lambeth is quickly moving towards being a cooperative council and to be a success in preventing homelessness requires a cooperative partnership approach.

People with support needs

Lambeth's Hostel Pathway is a key multi agency service that supports single people who have support needs. Access into the Pathway is jointly coordinated by Housing Options, Street Outreach Team and Broadway via the Lambeth Assessment Centre. Move on from supported accommodation is managed by the Housing Options and Advice Service. Floating support for vulnerable people in Lambeth is currently delivered through a single contract managed by the Single Homeless Project (SHP). Through partnership and cooperatively commissioned services Lambeth will ensure that the support needs of vulnerable single people are delivered to a high standard.

Rough Sleepers

Lambeth has a separate Rough Sleeping and Street Population Strategy, developed by Adult Community Services. The 2009-12 strategy is currently being reviewed and updated with partners agencies and will have an action plan focused on the specific issues facing this client group.

The total number of rough sleepers reduced from 323 in 2008/09 to 226 in 2009/10, and then increased in 2010/11 to 257 and to 309 in 2011/12.

The Mayor of London has set a target that no one should have to spend a second night on the street, and that no one lives on the street. Living on the streets is defined as having been on the streets for over three weeks and five or more contacts with the street outreach team. During May-June 2012 Lambeth had 14 people in this category and 85% of new rough sleepers did not have a second night on the street.

Lambeth Assessment Centre (LAC) is responsible for assessing rough sleepers and vulnerable single adults who may require access to Lambeth's Vulnerable Adult Accommodation Pathway. This includes people with complex and multiple needs, vulnerable offenders, victims of domestic violence, those who suffer mental health problems and those dependent on substances. Lambeth's Housing Division will continue to work closely with ACS to prevent rough sleeping.

People with disabilities

Vulnerable people, including older people and people with disabilities, will be supported to remain in their homes through an effective Home Improvement Agency and integrated support. The Home Improvement Agency is a “one stop shop” for private tenants and landlords that provide advice to enable households to improve their homes. This includes the provision of financial and welfare benefits advice and targeted grant aid to vulnerable households.

Young People

Following the establishment of the Family Support Service, homelessness amongst 16-17 year olds has reduced from 144 acceptances in 2007/8 to only 40 acceptances in 2011/12. The Housing Options and Advice Service will continue to ensure that housing services and children’s services work together to reduce homelessness amongst 16-17 year olds by implementing the 16/17 year old protocol, supporting care leavers in the transition to independence by the provision of appropriate accommodation and continue to provide mediation and support to the families of young people being asked to leave home. We will also support work to reduce teenage pregnancy.

CYPS and Housing signed a joint protocol for working with 16 and 17 year olds in 2011. This protocol is jointly managed and monitored to ensure the council fulfills its statutory duties and manages the welfare of young people.

People suffering domestic violence

An average of 4% of households seeking advice from the Housing Options and Advice Service each year is homeless or threatened with homelessness due to domestic violence. A sanctuary scheme to help keep people safe in their homes was established in 2008 as a standalone service, and in 2012 was incorporated within a new jointly commissioned “one stop shop” service under the Safer Lambeth’s Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2011-14.

Lambeth will continue to support victims of domestic violence and will signpost victims of domestic violence to the appropriate specialist VAWG Support Services, maintain an emergency transfer protocol for council tenants who need to move due to serious threat of violence and maintain a referral system to provide housing for refuge residents

Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

About 35% of Lambeth’s population is from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. 76% of households accepted as homeless in 2011/12 were from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. The over-representation of BME groups may be due to a number of social-economic factors, including lower incomes, higher unemployment and poor health, which increase dependence on social housing. High levels of homelessness amongst BME groups are reflected nationally and across London.

Older People

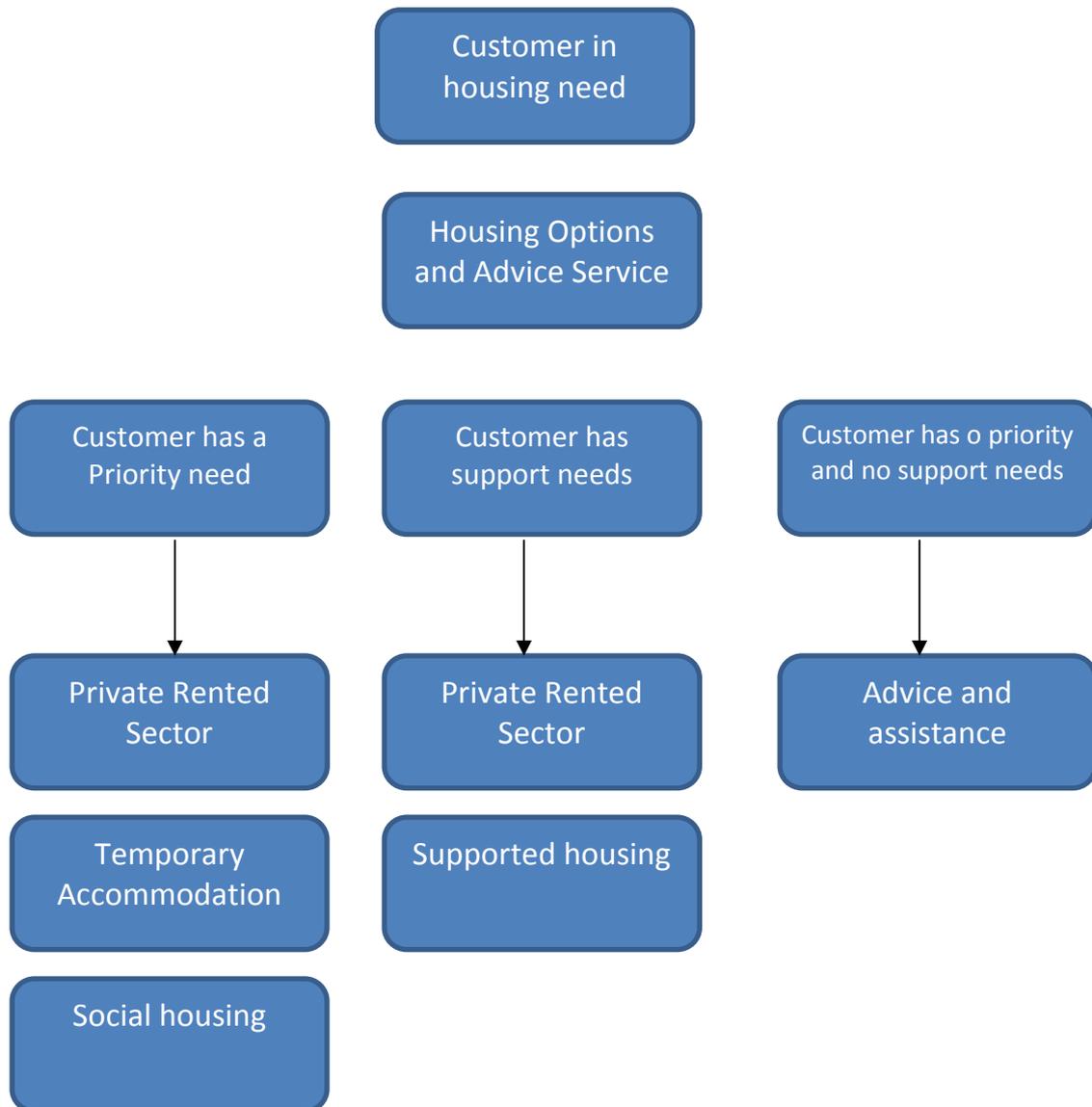
Between 2008 and 2012 allocations of sheltered housing have increased by 40% and the number of homeless people aged over 65 has reduced by 41%. This is largely due to sheltered housing being targeted at this group through the provision of bidding support. Lambeth will continue to provide bidding support to high priority households who are less able to participate in choice based lettings (CBL).

Safeguarding children and adults

The council is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Staff dealing with homelessness may also identify possible safeguarding concerns and need to know how to deal with this. Housing Services will ensure that all staff are trained in safeguarding to a level appropriate to their role and participate at the boards for children and adult safeguarding.

Customer Journey

Customers may obtain different types of housing through different routes (see diagram below). For instance, someone may simply apply online for Council housing and bid for properties through Choice Based Lettings (CBL), while someone else may contact our Housing Options and Advice Service and be assisted to find private rented accommodation.



Action Plan 2012 - 14

The action plan for year 1 and 2 of the Homelessness Strategy. Progress against the action plan will be monitored by the Housing Working Group and Divisional Management Team

To prevent homelessness by supporting all households in their home or help them to find alternative accommodation

Objective	Area	Activity / Target
Objective 1a: Targeted advice services are provided to families within families providing options and alternatives to encourage them to remain where they are	Develop expertise and specialist advice for private tenants	Develop training and skills for housing advisers to provide expert and specialist services for private tenants
		Develop tenancy relations advice and support to protect tenants from rogue landlords
		Develop mortgage resources and specialism to ensure all referred mortgagors get expert and timely advice
Objective 1b: Services deliver support and advice to private sector tenants and mortgagors to remain in their home	Reduce reliance on private renting and keep families in their accommodation	Reposition private renting as a second tier option only open to clients who are unable to remain with family or friends and place a greater emphasis on prevention points and priority for rehousing through the allocations scheme
		Develop targeted services to assist families within families from becoming homeless
		Develop support and assistance to families who move to private rented accommodation

Objective 1c: Provide advice, support and move on options to people in general housing need including rough sleepers	Deliver services to meet housing need	Work in partnership with ACS to support hostel diversion scheme targeting rough sleepers and single people in housing need
		Deliver move on advice and support to a range of customers including people leaving supported housing
		Support and advise families in temporary accommodation to move on into settled permanent accommodation in the private or social sector

Develop relationships with landlords and agents to ensure a supply of suitable accommodation to rent to people in housing need

Objective	Area	Activity / Target
Objective 2a: To ensure a supply of suitable accommodation to rent to people in housing need and prevent homelessness and where possible exert downward pressures on rents	Accommodation is affordable	Affordability advice is provided to all customers choosing private rented sector accommodation
		Full welfare rights assessment HB check for all customers moving into PRS
	Manage the supply of private rented sector accommodation	Focus on specific demand and become more targeted in procurement
		Develop skills to be more proactive and use advanced negotiation skills with the landlord

Objective 2b: To develop tenancy sustainment services to ensure we have the right tenant placed into the right property with the right landlord	Ensure we get the right tenant	Focus on readiness for move-on and ability to sustain a tenancy and develop a programme of residents talks for all Pathway providers
		Regular tenancy checks to be completed
		Develop floating support and advice for private sector placements
		Develop a tenancy training programme for single people and families
	Ensure we get the right landlord	Provide a programme of landlord support
		Run landlord forums and produce landlord briefings
		Landlords we work with are accredited or agree to become accredited within 6 months

To manage the impact of welfare reforms and develop policies to mitigate risks of increased homelessness and temporary accommodation

Objective	Area	Activity / Target
Objective 3a: Develop services to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms	Provide advice and support to affected households	Welfare Reform Team established to advise affected private tenants and triage all other tenures
		Housing Working Group to work with other housing providers to coordinate service delivery
		Develop adviser skills to advise on welfare benefit

		Link housing advice to employment opportunities
	Develop an employment / getting ready for work offer for all welfare reform affected households	Work with Broadway to establish a new team to actively work with all households.
		Establish referral and sign posting links with employment services
	Work with CYPS to jointly manage the impacts of welfare reform on children	CYPS to attend the Housing working group to ensure actions are jointly coordinated between CYPS and Housing
Objective 3b: To develop policies to mitigate welfare reforms	Intentionality policy developed	Understand the council's legal position on intentionality where families are homeless but have not engaged in services provided
	Develop a policy to address discharge of homelessness duties	Understand the councils position to discharge of duties