

# Preventing Homelessness in Oldham

## 2010-2013



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### **A Sustainable Strategy**

We aim to make this a sustainable strategy in more ways than one. This Strategy is only being produced electronically, significantly reducing the amount of paper we use and costs to produce it. Please think before you print out this Strategy.

## Section 1: Strategic Housing Challenges

### 1. Foreword by Councillor John McCann – Cabinet Member for Community Services and Housing

I am very pleased to introduce Oldham's third homelessness strategy '**Preventing Homelessness in Oldham 2010-2013**', which has been developed in partnership with a wide range of service users, stakeholders and local agencies.

Since Oldham's first homelessness strategy was published in 2003, huge progress has been made in the way that homelessness is tackled in the borough. The number of people that have been rehoused as homeless has fallen by 89% since 2003. This is a significant achievement brought about by placing stronger emphasis on homelessness prevention and housing options, enabling people to meet their changing housing needs in a planned way.

The council is committed to sustaining the improvements already made and this strategy sets out the framework for tackling homelessness and its causes in Oldham. This strategy also incorporates our plans for achieving the challenging national agenda on homelessness prevention.

Since our first strategy was produced, the approach to dealing with homelessness has developed significantly. This has partly been in response to targets set by Central Government in terms of reducing bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation use. It is also a result of an improved understanding of the causes of homelessness and a greater emphasis placed on homelessness prevention. Tackling homelessness and its causes remains a key challenge for all agencies and partners in Oldham, particularly within the current economic climate and the adverse impact this is having on both home owners and the private rented sector. Success in addressing issues together is making a real difference to people's lives in Oldham and will ensure that services continue to improve in line with the council's vision for Oldham being 'An address of choice' and 'a healthy and active place, with suitable housing for all'.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the progress already made, and I look forward to addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Regards,

#### **Councillor John McCann**

Chair of Oldham Housing Partnership and  
Cabinet Member for Community Services and Housing



"As Chair of Oldham Housing Investment Partnership, the representative body for social housing providers in Oldham, I am delighted to support Councillor McCann's statement and to continue to working alongside the Borough and partner agencies in improving the homelessness position in the Borough"

#### **John Cockerham**

Vice Chair of Oldham Housing Partnership  
and Chair of Oldham Housing Investment Partnership



## 1.1 Oldham's Vision and Priorities

### Oldham Partnership's Vision

By 2020 the borough of Oldham will have undergone an ambitious process of transformational change both in terms of the services delivered to residents and the physical improvement of the borough. These changes will redefine Oldham as a high quality place in which to live, work and play. (Oldham's Sustainable Community Strategy)

### Oldham Housing Partnership (One Home, Oldham Housing Strategy 2009-2012)

In June 2009, the Oldham Partnership adopted its new three year Housing Strategy for the Borough in which we confirmed our focus on housing will be on:

- Achieving the right quantity of housing
- Continuing to raise the quality of our existing housing stock and
- Connecting Oldham's residents to an improved housing offer

In order to deliver our objectives, we set out how we will work with partners to deliver actions to improve the quality of lives for Oldham's residents.

Whilst delivering our actions, Oldham Housing Partnership will forge strong relationships with the new regulatory authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency and Tenants Services Authority, to make best use of resources and best practice from across the country.

Oldham Housing Partnership will continue to work with regional and local agencies to help complement and improve the housing offer across the local area.

Local residents will play a crucial role in delivering our priorities. Oldham Housing Partnership will keep residents informed of our achievements through the life of this strategy and engage residents in developing specific actions and projects to improve all aspects of housing in the Borough.

### Oldham's Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out Oldham's targets and aspirations over the period 2009-2013 around four corporate objectives. Our new homelessness strategy has a direct influence on Corporate Objective 3:

- **Corporate Objective 1: a confident place**  
With safe neighbourhoods and clean, green spaces for all to enjoy
- **Corporate Objective 2: a university town**  
With good education, learning and training to improve the skills and choices of our citizens
- **Corporate Objective 3: an address of choice**  
A healthy and active place, with suitable housing for all
- **Corporate Objective 4: services of choice**  
Quality services that provide value for our citizens

## 2. What will this strategy do?

This strategy sets out Oldham Housing Partnership's policy in relation to tackling homelessness. It sets out the priorities and actions for improving work on preventing homelessness and the areas where we are going to focus over the coming years. To meet our aims and the challenging national agenda on homeless prevention we require positive action, partnership working, and innovative solutions.

This strategy will provide a framework for the continued improvement to the homeless prevention, housing and support services delivered by the Council, stakeholders and local agencies over the next three years.

### 2.1 Legislative Background

The duties owed to households who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, are prescribed within legislation. The key legislation which covers this area is the Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).

The Homelessness Act 2002 required all housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness within their borough and use the information collected to publish a homelessness strategy by 31 July 2003. Local housing authorities also have a statutory duty to provide assistance to all households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, regardless of whether there is a duty to accommodate. The Homelessness Act 2002 extended the groups to be considered as 'priority need' under the Housing Act 1985.

One of the drivers for this strategy is the need to meet national targets. The following are the national indicators (NI) and the best value indicators (BVPI) that have helped shape our performance since 2003 and this strategy:

NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

NI 156: Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation

BV183a: Average length of time spent in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation

BV183b: Average length of time spent in hotel accommodation

BV202: Number of people sleeping rough

BV213: Homelessness prevented through housing advice casework / 1,000 households

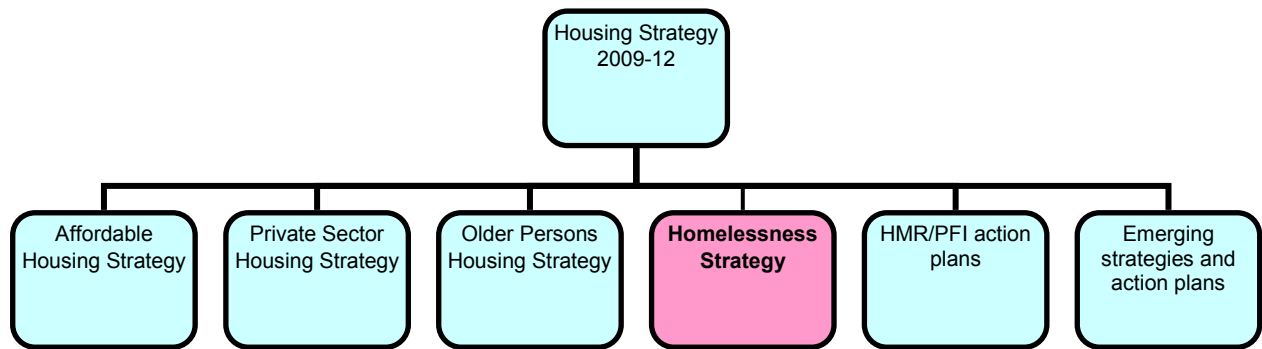
BV214: Repeat homelessness

BV225: Overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence.

### 2.2 Strategy Format

Our new 2010-2013 Homelessness Strategy feeds into the over-arching Oldham Housing Strategy and outlines the proposals for continued improvement in preventing homelessness, sustaining and maintaining the reduction in use of bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation. Oldham Housing Strategy focuses delivery around three broad themes:

- **Quantity:** Achieving the right quantity of housing
- **Quality:** Continuing to raise the quality of the existing and future housing stock
- **People:** Connecting people to an improved housing offer



Due to the current economic climate and the impact this is having on the housing sector, a related one year action plan, covering the period from 2010-11 has been developed. This will be reviewed quarterly and will be refreshed annually to ensure it reflects changing needs, legislation and guidance from central Government.

### 3. Strategic context and partnerships

#### 3.1 Local Context

Whilst being a sub strategy of the Oldham Housing Strategy, this strategy is linked into a number of other documents and forms part of the wider Oldham vision:

**Oldham Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020 ([Community Strategy](#))** sets out Oldham's long-term vision. The strategy sets out some of the key actions that each of the Thematic Partnerships represented on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), will undertake over the next three to five years, to improve the quality of life of people living and working in the Borough

**Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 (LAA) ([Local Area Agreement](#)):** The delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy. It highlights what Oldham Partnership aims to do between 2008-2011 and is a combination of Central Government's and Oldham's local priorities.

**Oldham Beyond ([Oldham Beyond](#))** is a fifteen year vision which demonstrates how physical regeneration supports the improvement of quality of life and services in the borough.

There are also a wide range of partnerships and more client specific objectives relating to vulnerable groups and accommodation that are linked to this strategy:

**Oldham's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Health and Well Being 2008**  
**Oldham's Supporting People 5 Year Strategy**  
**Children and Young People Plan 2008-2011, Oldham Children's Trust**

#### 3.2 Regional Context

##### North West Regional Homelessness Strategy 2008

Local authorities and their partners in the North West have been working together to reduce homelessness in the region and have agreed a set of regional targets to highlight what they want to achieve. These include:

- Reducing the number of people who become homeless after being asked to leave by parents

- Reducing the numbers of people losing any type of tenancy
- Reducing the number of people losing their home because of violence
- Reducing the number of people housed in bed and breakfast, or sleeping rough
- Helping more people to keep their homes once they are housed after being homeless
- Increasing the number of homeless households housed by housing associations.

### **A Regional Strategic Framework for Housing Support 2009 - 2020**

The Strategic Framework for Housing Support guides the provision of housing support and ensures that everyone in the region has an opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from, the development of local sustainable communities and regional prosperity. The **North West Needs Assessment Model** has been developed to provide a regional "common currency" that will inform future housing capital allocations and other financial decisions at a local level and support the development of a Regional Strategic Framework. The framework aims to:

- Enable social inclusion through demonstrating that housing support to vulnerable and socially excluded households has a considerable contribution to make to regional and local ambitions for economic prosperity, sustainable communities, health and wellbeing.
- Provide the framework for regional and local action that will make the most of the housing support contribution.
- Reflect a joint commitment – and expectation – from regional partners in health, social care, housing and criminal justice and housing providers.

### **3.3 National Context**

“More than a Roof” (2002) set out the Governments’ preventative approaches to tackling the personal and social causes of homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 required local authorities to develop and publish a homelessness strategy for the first time and widened the priority need categories ensuring more vulnerable people could access help and support.

Our strategy reflects the priorities of the Government’s more recent homelessness strategy, “Sustainable Communities: settled homes: changing lives” (2005). This sets out plans to expand housing opportunities and support, reduce homelessness by offering a wide range of preventative measures, and increase access to settled homes, aiming to halve the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010. The strategy focuses on:

- encouraging homelessness prevention
- supporting vulnerable people
- tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness
- helping more people to move away from rough sleeping
- providing more settled homes

To support the work being undertaken by local authorities, the Housing Corporation (now the Tenant Services Authority) published ‘Tackling Homelessness’ (November 2006). This guide set out how Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are expected to assist local authorities in the homeless prevention agenda. We are using the guidelines in this strategy to develop formal links with our RSLs in order to tackle homelessness effectively together.

## 4 Oldham Overview

### 4.1 Oldham: Facts and Figures

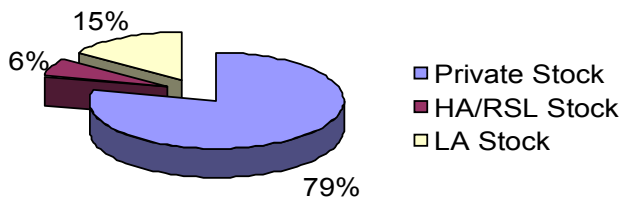
The following information shows some of the key facts and figures about Oldham and provides the context for this Homelessness Strategy. The strategy has been developed using a robust evidence base including; the Oldham Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008, Oldham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Health and Wellbeing in Oldham 2008, Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2008 and a number of other sources of housing based research and evidence including statutory government returns.

<b>Population</b>	219,600
<b>Households</b>	90,000
<b>Area</b>	142.5 km <sup>2</sup>

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Oldham</b>	<b>North West</b>	<b>England</b>
<b>0-15</b>	22.2%	19.1%	18.9%
<b>16-29</b>	18.1%	18.7%	18.6%
<b>30-44</b>	21%	20.7%	21.7%
<b>45-64 (Males), 45-59 (Females)</b>	21.3%	22.3%	21.9%
<b>65+ (Males), 60+ (Females)</b>	17.3%	19.2%	18.9%
<b>White</b>	83.9%	92.5%	88.7%
<b>BME</b>	16.1%	7.5%	11.3%

(ONS 2006/7)

Oldham Housing Tenure 2007/08



<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Stock 2005/06 (%)</b>	<b>Stock 2006/07 (%)</b>	<b>Stock 2007/08 (%)</b>
<b>Private Stock</b>	71,998 (77)	71,773 (77)	73,721 (79)
<b>HA/RSL Stock</b>	6,382 (7)	6,434 (7)	5,762 (6)
<b>LA Stock</b>	14,755(6)	14,504 (16)	14,231 (15)
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,135</b>	<b>92,711</b>	<b>93,714</b>

(Housing provision in Oldham by provider 2005-8: Source: Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix)

#### Council Allocations and Housing Register information

Households on the Housing Register as at December 2009 = 6,696

Number of property bids placed during 2009 = 65,000

Number of households actively bidding = 2,400

Number of properties available for letting in 2009 = 1,358

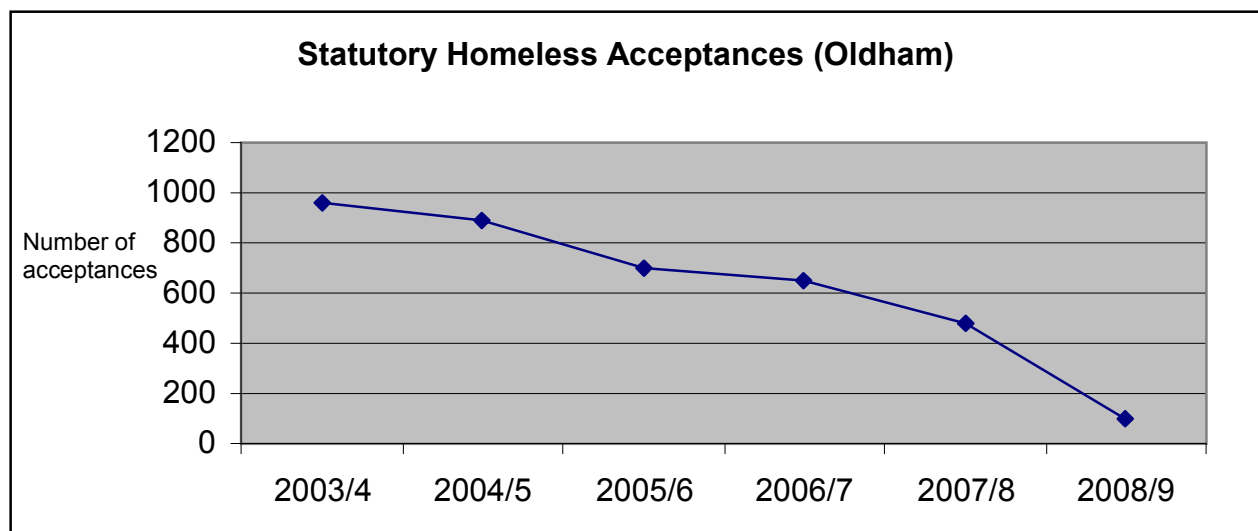
<b>Property type</b>	<b>No. available within 2009</b>	<b>Av. bids per property</b>
1 bed flat	434	43
2 bed house	269	48
3 bed house	187	49
4+ bed house	5	44

(Allocations and Housing Register information 2009: Source: FCHO)

## 4.2 Evidence Base

### 4.2.1 Homelessness in Oldham

In Oldham, the number of homelessness acceptances (households accepted by local authorities as owed the main homelessness duty) peaked in 2003/4. During this year 961 households were accepted as homeless and owed the main homelessness duty. This has reduced to 104 households during the year 2008/9, a reduction of 89%.



(Source: P1E statutory government return, Oldham)

Oldham, historically, had a higher level of acceptances than some of our neighbouring authorities. During 2003/4, the authority had one of the highest levels of acceptances within Greater Manchester (10.7 per 1000 households). This situation continued until 2008/9 when Oldham had the second lowest level of acceptances in Greater Manchester. There have been further reductions to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2009/10.

On a national level, the numbers of homelessness acceptances also peaked in 2003/04 (135,430). Since then acceptances have dropped by over 60 per cent, with year on year reductions up to 2008/9 (54,430).

### 4.2.2 Main Causes of Homelessness within Oldham

The main causes of homelessness within Oldham broadly reflect national trends & have remained consistent over a number of years. These include:

- 1 Parents, or friends, no longer willing or able to accommodate
- 2 Termination of assured short-hold tenancy
- 3 Domestic Violence
- 4 Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as NASS support
- 5 Left an institution or local authority care

### 4.2.3 Priority Reasons for Homelessness

The Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002, identifies certain groups that should have a 'priority need' for accommodation. Within Oldham the most common priority need reasons for being accepted as homeless, and owed the full statutory duty are as follows:

- 1 Applicant whose household includes dependant children

- 2 Applicant whose household includes someone who is vulnerable as a result of mental or physical disability
- 3 Care leaver

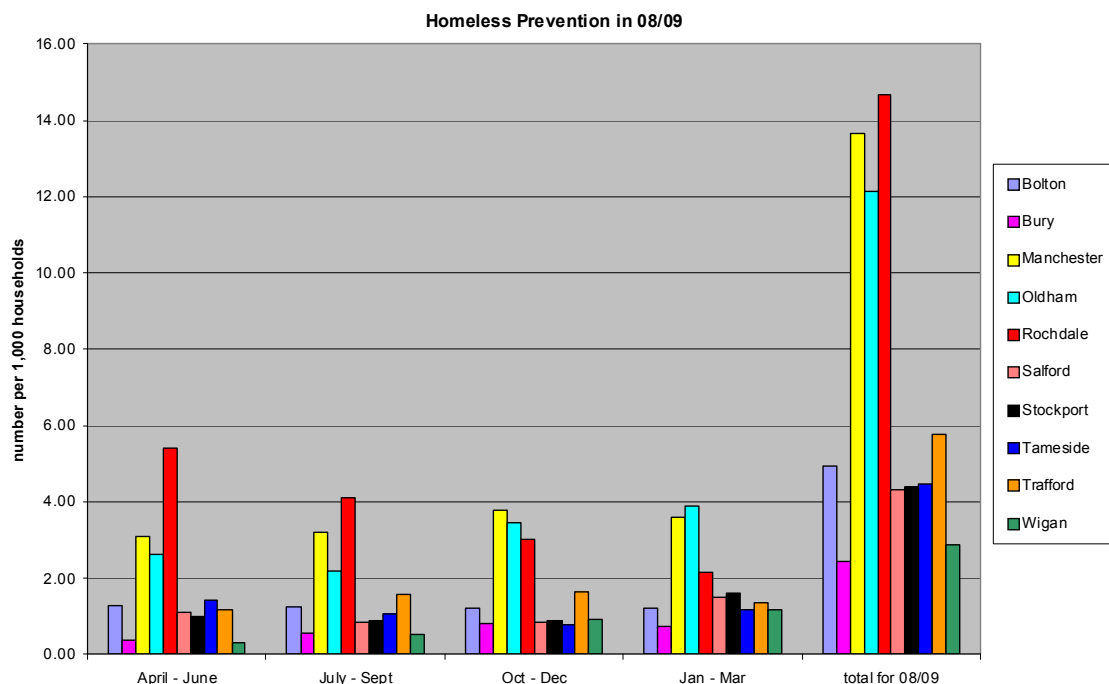
### 4.3 Homelessness Prevention

The prevention of homelessness, where it is reasonable to do so, is a priority for Oldham. It was identified as a Tier 1 target within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) in 2006. As such £150,000 of Area Based Grant funding has been targeted towards services which meet this priority.

Independent research undertaken in 2006 by Heriot-Watt University on behalf of the CLG, estimated that the minimum costs to a local authority of a single parent with 2 children becoming homeless was £2,600. Using this information and comparing a 3 month period in 2007, to the same period in 2009 a total of £249,600 was saved by preventing the homelessness of 96 families.

There are also significant social costs to any household in becoming homeless in terms of access to local services, health care, isolation from family or support networks. Focussing spend on the prevention of homelessness is resulting in real cash savings to the authority along with reducing social costs to both partner organisations and households who are at risk of homelessness

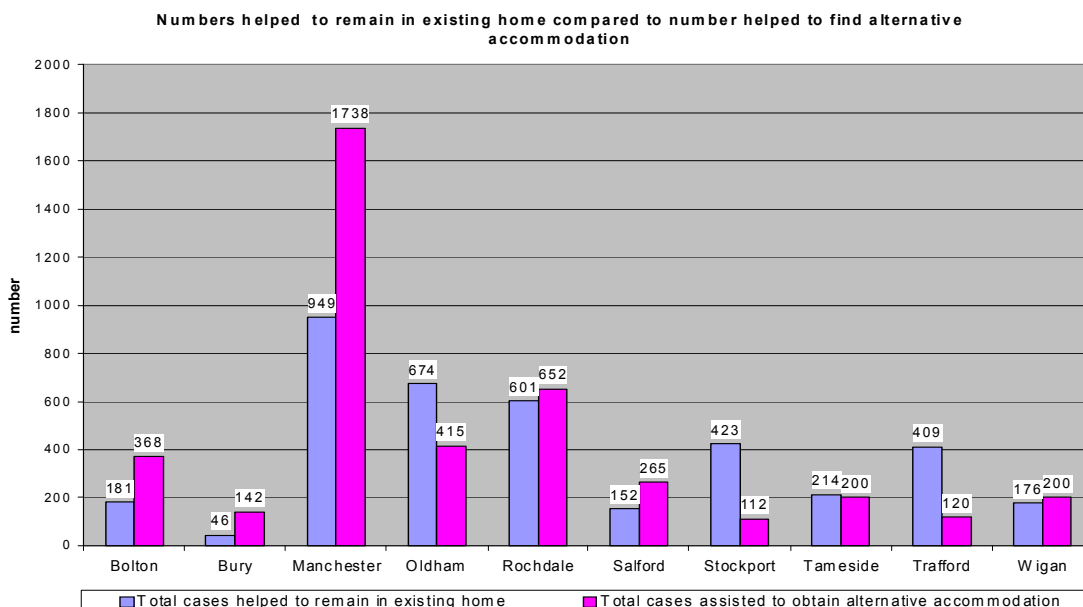
Prevention services have been focussed towards the main causes of homelessness in Oldham. Cases where homelessness has been prevented has increased from 879 households in 2006/7 to 1089 in 2008/9.



(Source: CLG data)

During 2008/9 prevention initiatives supported 674 (62% of 1089) households to remain within their existing home. This was achieved through:

- 1 Resolving housing benefit problems
- 2 Negotiation/legal advocacy with private landlords
- 3 Financial support through a homelessness prevention fund



Over the same period, Oldham assisted 415 (38%) households to obtain alternative accommodation before they became homeless. This was primarily achieved through:

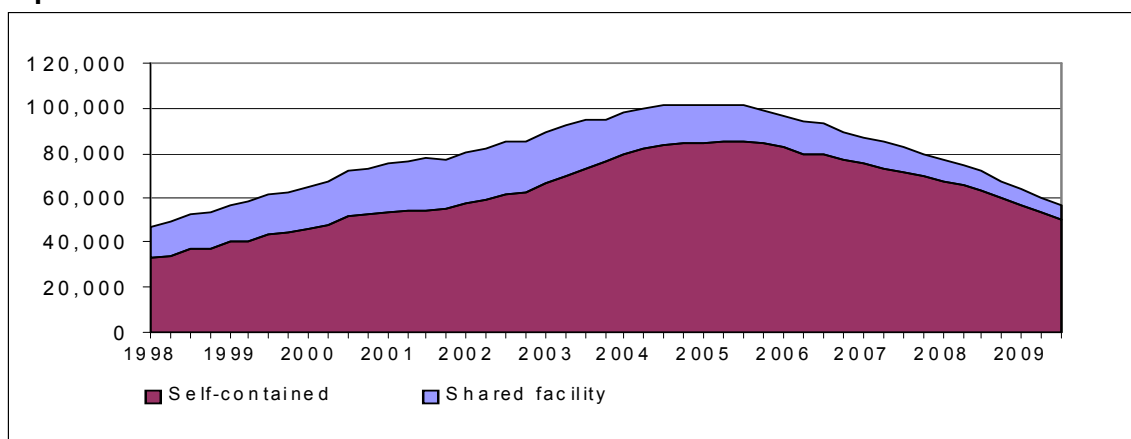
- 1 Support to access the private rented sector
- 2 Nominations to RSLs (including FCHO)

#### 4.4 Use of Temporary Accommodation (TA)

Oldham historically has been very efficient in its use of TA and B&B for homeless households. In 2005, the government set local authorities a number of targets focussed towards reducing the use of TA and B&B. The main target was to 'Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by half by 2010 (National Indicator 156)'.

Nationally, the number of households in temporary accommodation peaked at 101,000 in December 2004.

#### Households in temporary accommodation in England by type, January 1998 to 30 September 2009



(Source: CLG)

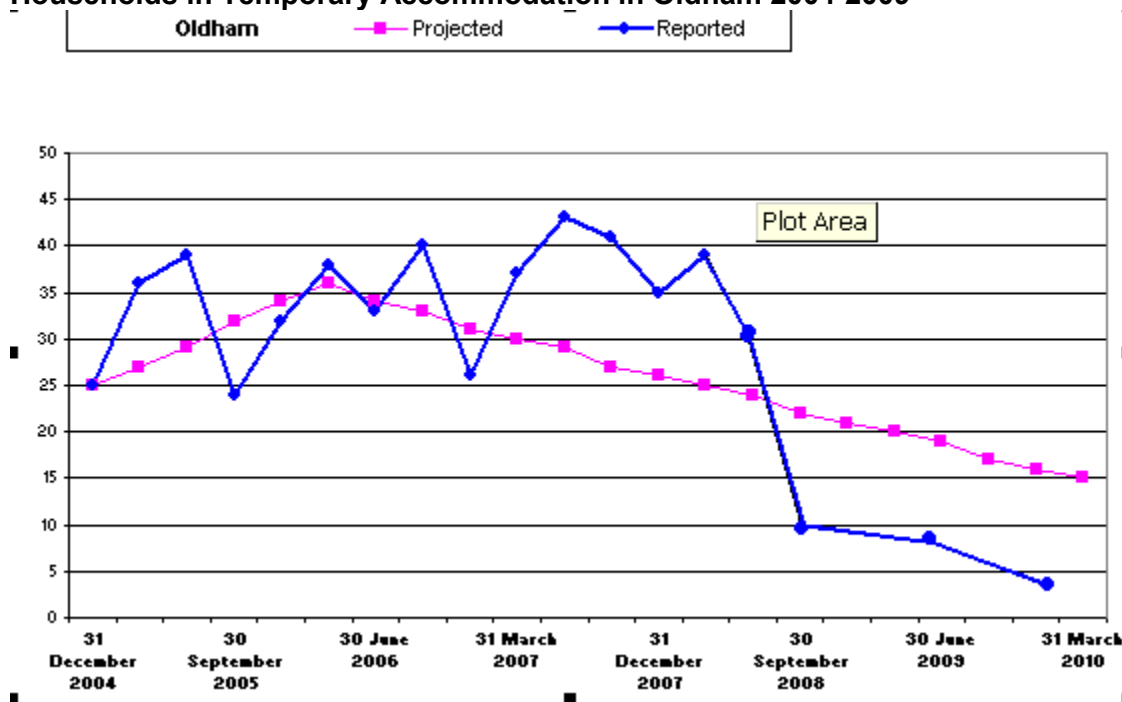
On 31 December 2004, the date that the target was set, 25 households were in TA in Oldham. This is in stark contrast to other neighbouring and similar sized authorities.

## Households in Temporary Accommodation, Greater Manchester authorities, as at 31 December 2004

Local Authority	Number of households (2006 mid year estimates-CLG) 000's	Number of households in Temporary Accommodation as at 31.12.2004	2010 Target figure
Manchester	197,000	663	331
Wigan	130,000	39	19
Stockport	122,000	55	27
Bolton	111,000	57	28
Salford	97,000	48	24
Tameside	93,000	64	32
Trafford	92,000	93	46
Oldham	90,000	25	12
Rochdale	85,000	57	28
Bury	77,000	10	5

The Government has been clear that, despite such diverse baseline figures, this is a target that must be achieved both locally and nationally. Given such a low baseline, this has been a target that Oldham has found challenging to achieve and maintain.

### Households in Temporary Accommodation in Oldham 2004-2009



(Source: CLG)

The focus on prevention and the reduction in homelessness acceptances has resulted in a corresponding reduction in the number of households in TA/B&B. An individual case management approach has also ensured that households placed in TA move on to permanent accommodation more quickly.

#### We will...

**Continue to reduce the length of time that homeless households in Oldham spend in temporary accommodation awaiting settled accommodation.**

#### 4.4.1 Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

In comparison with some of our neighbouring authorities Oldham has been a very low user of B&B accommodation for homeless households. B&B use peaked in 2007/8 when there were 231 placements to B&B throughout the year. The cost to the council of this was £87,000. At the time of writing this strategy (Jan 10), B&B has not been used by Oldham for homeless households since June 2008. The financial and social cost of using B&B makes it a continuing priority for Oldham to avoid the use of B&B.

#### 4.4.2 Temporary Accommodation Provision within Oldham

There is one hostel used for homeless households within the borough. This provision has 20 units and is managed by FCHO, on behalf of the council. This is supplemented by an additional 8 units which are dispersed throughout the borough.

The reduction in the number of households placed in TA, and increased throughput, has meant that the current provision has recently been under utilised. During 2008/9 average occupancy of TA in Oldham was 81% and during the first half of 2009/10 this had reduced to 60%.

The current hostel, whilst primarily designed for homeless families, accommodates all homeless households for whom the authority may have a duty to provide accommodation. The council recognises that this situation is not ideal and that different households have diverse needs for types, levels of support and service provision. The North West Supported Housing Strategy has identified a regional shortage in supported accommodation for socially excluded groups. This strategy and action plan aims to make best use of available temporary and supported accommodation provision within the borough.

#### 4.5 Supported Accommodation within Oldham

There is a range of supported accommodation within the borough managed by a variety of service providers. Services provide varying levels of support to vulnerable households and some of these supplement the council's temporary accommodation provision.

Work has been underway since 2008 in implementing the Move On Planned Protocol (MOPP) within the borough in order to create common prioritisation criteria for access to supported accommodation and also improve pathways between services. The MOPP was officially launched in November 2009. The development of the MOPP has already led to a slight increase in the number of households moving on from temporary to supported accommodation in a planned way.

Year and quarter	2007/08 Q1%	2007/8 Q2%		2008/09 Q1%	2008/09 Q2%		2009/10 Q1%	2009/10 Q2%
<b>Homelessness Persons Unit</b>								
<b>Households moved onto other Supported Housing</b>	10	10		4	6		12	7
<b>% Planned Move to Supported Housing</b>	23%	21%		12.50%	21.42%		33.33%	23.33%

**Table: Households from the Local Authority Homelessness Persons Unit undertaking planned moves into other supported housing (Source: Supporting People returns, Oldham Council)**

Further work is now required to build on the foundations laid and ensure that vulnerable households are able to access accommodation and support at the correct level to meet their needs.

**We will...**

**Continue to work with supported housing providers to ensure that we maximise the housing and support options available to the residents of Oldham.**

## **5 What Are We Doing Already?**

Reducing homelessness acceptances is identified as a strategic priority in the Local Area Agreement and is a Tier 1 target. This is supported by Tier 2 and 3 indicators in relation to prevention of homelessness and reducing the use of TA/B&B. A number of funding streams have been used to deliver the outcomes achieved since the last Strategy.

### **5.1 Initiatives Funded by the Local Strategic Partnership**

£150,000 was allocated to the Housing Block of the Local Strategic Partnership. This has been wholly directed towards homelessness prevention activities. During 2008/9 these enabled us to deliver:

**Oldham Reconnect (Depaul UK)** - This service aims to resolve some of the issues which result in young people becoming homeless. A trained mediator works with young people and their families to negotiate a return home or a planned move into alternative accommodation. 203 young people have received some support to resolve difficulties with their families.

**Oldham Nightstop (Depaul UK)** - This scheme works alongside Oldham Reconnect (mediation). Young people are provided with emergency overnight accommodation in the homes of approved volunteers. This accommodation can provide families with a 'breathing space' in which to work on their difficulties. Since April 2008, 42 bed nights have been provided by the Nightstop service for young people aged 16-25 since April 2007. This has proved to be a more suitable and appropriate alternative to the use of B&B/TA for young people.

**Oldham Bond Scheme (FCHO)** - This service increases access to the private rented sector for households on the Housing Register, who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or who have a limited income. A 'paper bond' is issued to landlords in lieu of a cash bond. 281 households have been supported to access accommodation in the private rented sector through this route since November 2006.

**Sanctuary Scheme - (Oldham Council Community Safety Unit)** - This scheme enables victims of domestic violence to remain within their current accommodation through 'target hardening' of the property. It has enabled 71 households to remain within their home since its launch in 2006.

**Young People's Homelessness Awareness Project – (Oldham Theatre Workshop (OTW))** - OTW have developed an interactive DVD and resource pack for use within local secondary schools. This project aims to raise awareness of homelessness issues amongst young people in Year 10. Prior to the production of the DVD, theatre performances were delivered to 17 schools reaching approximately 900 teenagers aged 15-19.

**Emerging Communities Co-ordinator (FCHO)** - This post provides support to people from emerging communities to enable them to access services and prevent homelessness, including refugees who have been granted a positive decision to remain. Since the launch of the scheme in October 2008, 87 households from 20 different communities have been

supported to access accommodation and other services.

## **5.2 Initiatives Funded through the Communities and Local Government Homelessness Grant**

For the last two years Oldham has been allocated £51,000 per year in Homelessness Grant from CLG. This has been used to increase homelessness prevention within the borough and to raise awareness regarding homelessness prevention initiatives. This has funded:

**Homelessness Prevention Fund/Spend to Save** – Homelessness has been prevented for 126 households through the innovative use of this fund since its introduction in 2006. Furniture packages, key deposits and transport costs have been some of the examples of what the fund has been used for.

**Free Phone 24 Hour Homelessness Advice Line** – An emergency ‘out of hours’ free telephone number is now available for households who are homeless or need emergency assistance outside of office hours.

**Publicity Campaigns** – A number of homelessness prevention initiatives have been heavily publicised throughout the year, such as the Court Desk Service and Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

**Multi Agency Training and Working in Partnership Event** – A number of multi agency training courses have been delivered throughout the year for partner agencies, for example, Deb Advice. This has been supplemented by an annual multi agency event focussed on the prevention of homelessness.

## **5.3 Partnership Working**

The council recognises the importance of partnership working in preventing homelessness and providing effective support to households who may be at risk of homelessness. There are a number of multi agency groups which meet regularly to focus on homelessness prevention. These include:

- Homelessness Strategy Group
- Homelessness Forum
- Young Persons Homelessness Prevention Group
- Multi Agency Housing Meeting
- Housing Benefit Liaison Group

For the last two years partnership working has been strengthened by an annual ‘Working in Partnership’ event. In 2009, this was attended by 113 people from 31 different agencies.

## **5.4 Responding to the Recession**

Oldham has been proactive in working with partners to develop initiatives to support households at increased risk of homelessness due to the recession. The prevention of homelessness through mortgage repossession has been a priority for Oldham. Oldham court (which hears cases from both Oldham and Rochdale) has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of repossession actions across the North West, behind only Manchester and Liverpool. In 2008, 1219 households were repossessed due to mortgage arrears at Oldham County Court, a 10% increase on the previous year.

Initiatives specifically focussed on homelessness prevention against the effects of the recession have included:

**Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme** - Oldham volunteered to be a 'fast track' authority for this scheme and Oldham Council, Oldham Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) have been working in partnership to deliver the scheme. A free phone number was established within FCHO which enables households who are at risk of repossession to fast track debt and housing advice. If the debt cannot be resolved through negotiation with lenders, households will be referred into the mortgage rescue scheme if they are eligible. In July 2009, Oldham became the first authority in the North West to complete a 'mortgage to rent' rescue and in September 2009, the first authority in England to complete a 'shared equity' rescue. In the first 12 months of operation a total of 32 applications have been received, 7 mortgage rescues have been completed and 20 households are still being considered for this scheme

**Court Desk Service – (Oldham CAB/Law Centre)** - The Court Desk Service is jointly delivered by CAB and Oldham Law Centre. This service has been in place since August 2008 and has to date been funded in part by Communities and Local Government (CLG) and part local Area Based Grant (ABG). The service ensures that all households, regardless of their circumstances, have access to free representation and advice at the court at the time when repossession hearings take place. Between August 2008 and December 2009, 199 households at risk of repossession have sought advice and support from the court desk service. Repossession has been stopped, or postponed, in 89% of cases rendering the scheme a huge success.

**Oldham Repossession Prevention Fund** – Funded through a 'one off' allocation from CLG, this fund has so far prevented 3 households from losing their homes. It is anticipated that the number of households assisted by this fund will increase significantly during the next year.

**Discretionary Housing Payment** – This fund has made a significant and increasing contribution to the prevention of homelessness for low income households, especially those living in the private rented sector, on marginal incomes. The council top up to the Government allocation in 2009/10 has ensured that an increased number of households have had their risk of homelessness removed through the use of this fund. This has resulted in an increased allocation from Central Government for 2010/11. In the nine months to December 2009, 141 households had their risk of homelessness removed.

**Sale and Rent Back** - Oldham Council has been very active in raising public awareness about the negative aspects of private 'Sale and Rent Back' companies with both the Government and local residents. This has since resulted in an Office of Fair Trading investigation and a number of such companies are now being scrutinized. The Government agreed that these companies need to be financially regulated and interim regulations were introduced in July 2009.

**Lender Notification of Repossession Action** - As at 1st October 2009, all lenders are required to notify local authorities where they are commencing possession proceedings in respect of a residential property. The council now provides all households who are facing repossession action with information regarding the advice and support options available. This enables households to obtain advice and support at an early stage and reduces the requirement for crisis intervention later. Anecdotally, it is reported that Oldham has a high level of 'sub-prime' lending. Evidence from the mortgage rescue scheme indicates that households who are accessing the scheme in Oldham have a high level of second and

further lending. It is often the level of secured charges, rather than primary mortgages, which are causing households to fall into difficulties.

## 5.5 Other Achievements

**Downsizing Project** - The council received £90,000 from CLG in 2008 to develop initiatives to tackle overcrowding within the borough. The council, through FCHO and RSL partners, have been working together to make best use of the housing stock available. This has included:

- Identifying levels of overcrowding within the borough
- Providing incentives to households, who are currently under occupying larger family accommodation, to downsize.

Since the launch of the project in December 2008, 66 large family homes have been freed up to meet the needs of severely overcrowded households.

*"This is an excellent scheme. It enabled us to move straight away to an area of our choice instead of waiting 5 years for a transfer."*

Quote from a household who have downsized to smaller accommodation

**Enhanced Housing Options** – The Homelessness Grant and additional funding from CLG has also been focussed on developing an Enhanced Housing Options Service for the borough. A multi agency project group is in place and they have regular meetings to identify priorities for the future of the housing options service in Oldham. This new service is due to be launched in September 2010.

**We will...**

**Work with all our partners to prevent homelessness and maximise the resources available to the borough for the benefit of all Oldham residents.**

**Sponsored Events** - The council, and partner agencies, have supported and become involved in a range of events throughout the year which have benefitted homeless households within the Borough. This has included a 'Sponsored Fast' which raised over £2,000 for agencies who work with homeless and vulnerable people and also a 'Christmas Toy Appeal'.

**Rough Sleepers Count** – The Council and partner agencies conducted a Rough Sleepers Count in October 2009. 32 staff from the council and a range of agencies, including Citizens Advice Bureau, First Choice Homes Oldham, Salvation Army, Connexions and Action for Children volunteered to take part in the count and walked the streets of Oldham looking for any body sleeping rough. No rough sleepers were found and a 'nil' return was submitted to Government.

## 6 What Have People Said To Us?

### 6.1 How have we consulted people?

We have consulted a wide number of individuals through a variety of methods during the preparation of this strategy including:

- Working in Partnership Event July 2009

- Consultation Event January 2010
- Partner and stakeholder consultation
- Consultation with elected members

We have been as careful as possible to ensure that as many people as possible have had the opportunity to have input into this strategy and shape our action plan. Consultation and input has been ongoing through the range of multi agency groups that our partners are involved in.

## **6.2 Service Users**

Service users of homelessness, advice and support services were invited to provide their views in a number of ways:

- Homelessness Services Customer Questionnaire
- Focus groups of homelessness service users
- Online consultation

Consultation with service users took place at a number of venues. These included:

- Five supported accommodation projects in Oldham
- Homeless Person's Unit, Oldham
- Salvation Army Drop-in service
- Christchurch Drop-in service
- Oldham's Youth Forum

Speaking to service users we have identified a number of homeless issues and challenges and we will use the responses from customers as valuable feedback. This information will help us to make further improvements to Oldham's homelessness service provision.

## **Section 2: Our Priorities**

### **7 Oldham's Themes**

This strategy highlights a number of key challenges in relation to continuing the prevention of homelessness in Oldham. All of these challenges require a co-ordinated multi agency response. The central focus in moving this forward is the development of the Enhanced Housing Options Service in Oldham. This will increase the role that partner agencies have in delivering joined up services that meet the housing needs of all residents within the Borough, not just those experiencing crisis. This new service encompasses all the priorities contained within this Strategy.

We have devised an action plan which will be reviewed annually to take into account changing needs and priorities and legislation and guidance from Central Government. Our action plan has been developed along the following priorities:

#### **7.1 Maintaining reduced levels of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in Oldham.**

Our long term vision is to maintain reduced levels of homelessness within the borough by continuing to focus on the prevention of homelessness. We recognise that there are social and financial costs to households becoming homeless. Shelter report that households who Preventing Homelessness in Oldham, 2010-2013

are homeless or who are residing in temporary accommodation are more likely to experience health problems and report increased use of health services since they lost settled accommodation.

We will continue to provide support and assistance to households who are at increased risk of homelessness due to the effects of the recession. This will include increasing the role of RSLs within the borough in preventing homelessness and raising awareness regarding the homelessness prevention initiatives in place. We will improve the standards of temporary accommodation available within the borough and develop a range of options of temporary and supported accommodation for households who do become homeless.

*'We went to a hostel a few months ago and my impression was that it was going to be a big room with loads of beds and dirty, but the accommodation is quite good. They had a communal kitchen where you could learn to cook and that'.*

Quote from a homeless service user at one of the drop in services within the borough

## **7.2 Working in partnership with customers and service providers**

Improving the services that we provide to customers is at the forefront of everything we do. We want to increase the role of service users in the development and delivery of services. We also want to increase the role that partner agencies have in delivering joined up services that meet the needs of all residents within the borough; this particularly includes our colleagues in the voluntary and faith sectors. A central part of this will be the development of the Enhanced Housing Options Service which is due to be launched in September 2010.

*'Stuart was very helpful and made it all easy for me to understand. Thank you Stuart for all your help'.*

Comments made on a Homelessness and Advice Service customer questionnaire

## **7.3 Providing support for vulnerable and low income groups**

We recognise that some groups are at increased risk of becoming homeless. We will work in partnership with agencies that support them to develop co-ordinated responses to their housing and support needs. We recognise that we need to work with partner agencies to tackle the root causes of homelessness. We will develop positive interventions to deal with issues which may lead to an increase in homelessness.

*'They should work with the parents more so that they prevent people from becoming homeless. Go into the home and come to an agreement'.*

Quote from resident of a supported housing scheme in Oldham

*'I think everyone should be more aware (about homelessness), even in schools so younger people know about it more. I didn't know what to do or who to talk to'.*

Quote from resident of a supported housing scheme in Oldham

## **7.4 Maximising choice and access to settled homes**

There are many challenges affecting Oldham's housing market today. These are detailed in our overarching Housing Strategy 'One Home'. We aim to make the best use of the social housing stock, including supported accommodation, available within the Borough. Our priorities include increasing access to the private rented sector and working with supported accommodation providers to move households on quickly to independent accommodation when they no longer have a need for support.

We will continue to provide support to households who want to move to smaller accommodation, in order to free up larger family homes for those who require them.

*"I have been through 25 custodial sentences and every time I have been released I have never had my own place to go to. That's all I have ever asked for and I know for a fact that would have given me a good start".*

Quote from supported ex-offender

*"We now have a new home and a new start thanks to you"*

Quote from homeless applicant

## **8. Monitoring and Performance**

### **8.1 How will we monitor performance?**

Oldham has an active Homelessness Strategy Group which meets quarterly. This includes representatives from a wide range of partner agencies. The Homelessness Strategy Group will lead on monitoring this strategy and action plan. This is an evolving strategy and the action plan will be reviewed annually to take into account changing needs, priorities, and legislation or guidance from Central Government.

Bi-annual updates will be provided to the Housing Executive Group, Strategic Housing Board and LSP board.

Performance reporting and monitoring takes place on a quarterly basis in respect of the various indicators and targets that relate to this area. Some of these are reported locally to the LSP, others are reported quarterly to Central Government in the form of a statutory return. The Council recognises the importance of providing an excellent service to all communities.

Information regarding the customers who are accessing statutory homelessness services is collated for statutory returns. It is recognised that this may no longer give an adequate picture of all the households who are accessing services and that more information needs to be gathered in terms of households whose homelessness is prevented. This is an action within this strategy. The Council will also ensure that equality impacts are considered in the development of projects and specific strategies as appropriate.

### **8.2 How will we share our achievements with Oldham residents?**

It is very important that we share our successes with staff, customers, partners, residents and members where appropriate. Progress on the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will be provided through a variety of different methods including:

- Updates at multi agency meetings such as the Homelessness Strategy Group, Homelessness Forum and Young Persons Homelessness Strategy Group
- Staff briefing sessions
- Partnership events

Oldham residents will be informed of our achievements through articles and announcements in the local press and also the council's One magazine which is delivered to every house within the borough or articles and announcements in the local press.

### 8.3 Resourcing the Strategy

The primary source of funding for resourcing the work outlined within this strategy is Area Based Grant. A further source of funding is the Homelessness Grant from CLG. Supporting People funded services support many of the actions and objectives outlined within the Strategy. None of this funding is confirmed for any of the services over the long term. In fact the Homelessness Repossession Prevention Fund and Overcrowding Pathfinder monies have been specified as one off allocations.

Changes in Government priorities or public sector expenditure cuts in this area could impact on the delivery of some of the actions outlined in this strategy. We will endeavour to seek additional and alternative sources of funding where available. As with the current Strategy, the main resource in delivering the objectives within the Action Plan will be staff time and the continued support and involvement of all agencies within the borough.

Source	Funding	Allocated in 2009/10
Area Based Grant	£150,000	April 2009 - March 2010
Homelessness Grant	£51,000	April 2009 - March 2010
Overcrowding Pathfinder	£90,000	April 2009 - March 2010
Homelessness Repossession Prevention Fund	£66,500	April 2009 - March 2010

Table: Funding Sources 2009/10

## 9. Contacts

If you require any further information regarding this strategy or its related documents, please contact the Housing Strategy Team on the following:

### 9.1 Housing Strategy Team

#### Oldham Council

E: [housingstrategy@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategy@oldham.gov.uk)

T: 0161-770-2045

If you require more specific information you may also want to contact some of the organisations or agencies detailed below:

### 9.2 Partners and Agency Websites

4NW [www.4nw.org.uk](http://www.4nw.org.uk)

Action for Children [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

Citizens Advice Bureau [www.oldhamcab.co.uk](http://www.oldhamcab.co.uk)

Communities and Local Government [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Crisis [www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk)

Depaul UK [www.depaul.uk.org](http://www.depaul.uk.org)

FCHO [www.oldham.gov.uk/fcho\\_home](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/fcho_home)

Homes and Communities Agency [www.homesandcommunities.co.uk](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk)

Oldham Council [www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk)

Oldham Housing Investment Partnership [www.ohip.org.uk](http://www.ohip.org.uk)

Oldham Partnership [www.oldhampartnership.org.uk](http://www.oldhampartnership.org.uk)

Oldham Theatre Workshop [www.friendsofoldhamtheatreworkshop.co.uk](http://www.friendsofoldhamtheatreworkshop.co.uk)

Shelter [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

Tenant Services Authority [www.tenantservicesauthority.org](http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org)

Threshold [www.thp.org.uk](http://www.thp.org.uk)

## 10 Glossary

ABG – Area Based Grant

B&B – Bed and Breakfast accommodation

BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator

CAB – Citizens Advice Bureau

CLG – Communities and Local Government

DHP – Discretionary Housing Payment

FCHO – First Choice Homes Oldham

HCA – Homes and Communities Agency

LAA – Local Area Agreement

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

MOPP – Move On Planned Protocol

NI – National Indicator

RSL – Registered Social Landlord

TA – Temporary Accommodation

TSA – Tenant Services Authority

## 11 Appendices

**Oldham Housing Needs and Demand Survey 2008** [Housing Needs and Demands 2008](#)

Available to view at Housing Team, Level 2, Oldham Business Centre

**Oldham's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Health and Well Being 2008**

Available to view at Housing Team, Level 2, Oldham Business Centre

# Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

## Theme One: Quantity

### Maintaining reduced levels of homelessness & use of temporary accommodation

	Action	Lead Organisation	Quarter 1 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 2 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 3 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 4 2010/11 milestones	Milestones 2011/12	Outputs 2010/13	Outcome 2010/13
1	Maintain reduced use of Temporary Accommodation and avoid use of B&B	PHSO, OMBC Housing Strategy FCHO	1.1 Develop further Temporary Accommodation action plan (inc MOPP) 1.2 Report to Strategic Housing Board re future of TA provision	1.3 Identify data collection information in respect of households in TA 1.4 Work with FCHO to develop new joint working processes for households in TA	1.5 New working processes in place	1.6 Increase use of dispersed temporary accommodation	Review new working processes in line with EHO	Increased use of dispersed accommodation	Improved standards of TA and range of support/facilities for all groups  Resources maximised and support provided to households that require it
2	Provide a joined-up response to the recession	OMBC Housing Strategy	2.1 Secure continuation funding for the Court Desk Service	2.2 Increase borough-wide publicity & training around the range of initiatives available (including debt advice, mortgage rescue, & court desks)	2.3 Contribute towards the Corporate Debt Policy	2.4 Review existing range of initiatives available to identify gaps & make improvements	Continued provision of debt advice, mortgage rescue, & court desk services	Increased number of completed Mortgage Rescues  Increased use of Repossessions Prevention Fund  Increased take-up of Court Desk Scheme	Number of repossessions due to rent & mortgage arrears reduced  Borough & tenure wide access to a range of financial support initiatives  Households facing repossession able to stay within their own homes
3	Reduce evictions from social rented and supported accommodation	HSD, OMBC Housing Strategy FCHO	3.1 Develop local pre eviction protocol for use by all RSLs and supported accommodation providers in borough. 3.2 Devise local procedure for use by all RSLs and supported accommodation providers	3.3 Consult all RSLs and supported accommodation providers on protocol		3.4 Launch protocol and procedure	Review protocol and procedure  Explore options for rolling out to the private sector	Increased no of households at risk of eviction receive advice and support  All RSLs and supported accommodation providers signed up to the pre eviction protocol	Reduced number of households becoming homeless through eviction  Increased number of households at risk of eviction receive advice and support
4	Improve data collection and analysis of homelessness data to inform future strategy	HHN, OMBC Housing Strategy	4.1 Agree information required from partner agencies linked to collection of BVPI213. 4.2 Draft framework of data information related to the allocations of social housing including CBL and nominations to RSL's.	4.3 Assess RSL contribution to data requests, with a focus on information for homeless prevention and best use of stock i.e. overcrowding 4.4 Produce quarterly monitoring report to the Housing Partnership Board on data information and contribution by partners	4.5 Agree action plans with those partners who require support to provide relevant information on homeless priorities.	4.6 Provide report to Homeless Strategy Group on data collection and feed into 2011/12 actions and performance frameworks for services	Review framework of information and data required	Quarterly monitoring report in place to Housing Partnership Board  Action plans in place for partner agencies who require support to provide information in respect of homelessness priorities	Broader strategy and policy development will be based on increased information from all sectors.  Commissioning decisions on homelessness initiatives based on sound information base.  Increased contribution from all partners in the homelessness prevention agenda.
5	Increase the role of RSLs in preventing homelessness	HSD, OMBC Housing Strategy RSLs	5.1 Review the use of the pre- eviction arrangements amongst partner RSLs	5.2 Increase the contribution of RSLs to BVPI213 through multi-agency training & support	5.3 Deliver a multi-agency 'Housing Options' training course in partnership with RSLs	5.4 Review RSL shared homelessness priorities & the homelessness targets contained within RSL Partnership Plans	All RSLs signed up to BVPI213 contribution & the use of the pre- eviction protocol	All RSLs submitting BVPI213 returns & making pre- eviction referrals	Increased contribution to the homelessness prevention agenda
6	Increase publicity & education on homelessness prevention	PHSO, OMBC Housing Strategy	6.1 Review range of homelessness prevention services available over last three years	6.2 Roll out the 'Sheltered' homelessness prevention DVD across secondary schools	6.3 Increase awareness regarding options available to households at risk of domestic abuse	6.4 Make use of local media & partner agency websites to publicise homelessness prevention services  6.5 Investigate use of social networking sites to promote homelessness prevention initiatives	Identify and increase awareness & access to of homelessness prevention initiatives  Further promotion of homelessness prevention services	Increased number of homelessness preventions (BVPI213)	Culture shift in public perception about the role of social housing & homelessness services  Increased awareness of, and access to, homelessness prevention initiatives

# Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

## Theme Two: Quality

### Working in partnership with customers & service providers

Action	Lead Organisation	Quarter 1 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 2 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 3 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 4 2010/11 milestones	Milestones 2011/12	Outputs 2010/13	Outcome 2010/13	
1	Develop Enhanced Housing Options Approach for Oldham	EHPO, OMBC Housing Strategy	<p>1.1 EHO project group to support development of framework for service delivery</p> <p>1.2 Undertake scoping of information for customers including those in the private rented and owner-occupied sectors.</p> <p>1.3 Identify alternative mediums to inform customers e.g. Facebook/MySpace/Twitter</p>	<p>1.4 Work with FCHO and CAB to devise local referral procedures in respect of homeless households.</p> <p>1.5 Work with service providers to develop EHO SLAs with appropriate performance indicators</p> <p>1.6 Develop publicity and marketing information for new EHO service</p>	1.7 Launch EHO service	1.8 Sign up to National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) agreement	<p>Review NHAS agreement based on local needs and best practice</p> <p>SLAs regularly monitored through Governance arrangements</p>	<p>NHAS agreement in place</p> <p>EHO service in place</p>	<p>Joint working arrangements in place for range of customer groups.</p> <p>Residents receive more joined up service regarding homelessness and housing advice.</p> <p>Wider range of housing options and advice available to EHO staff, partners and customers</p>
2	Increase the role of service users in the development & delivery of services	OMBC Housing Strategy Service Providers	2.1 Gather information on current methods of service user consultation across partner agencies		2.2 Meet with service providers to review current consultation methods & identify key actions for improvement		Action plan in place for an improved customer consultation framework	Multi-agency consultation framework established	<p>Service users feel that they are able to shape homelessness services</p> <p>Standardised &amp; more streamlined methods of consultation in place</p>
3	Provide and facilitate ongoing training opportunities for partner agencies	OMBC Housing Strategy Service Providers	3.1 Agree an annual multi-agency training plan	3.2 Hold second 'Working in Partnership' event for partner agencies	3.3 Review feedback from the 'Working in Partnership' event to identify future training needs	3.4 Consult with partners to identify training priorities for 2011/12	Annual multi-agency training plan & 'Working in Partnership' event carried out	Rolling programme of multi-agency training & information sessions in place	<p>Partner agencies are kept well-informed about the borough's homelessness priorities &amp; the range of support services available</p> <p>Increased number of agencies engaged in the homelessness prevention agenda</p>
4	Expand the role of the voluntary & faith sector	OMBC Housing Strategy	4.1 Gather information on current homelessness support services, and volunteering opportunities, provided by local voluntary & faith organisations	<p>4.2 Expand the Homelessness Forum to include more voluntary &amp; faith agencies</p> <p>4.3 Commissioning of services to include opportunities for volunteering</p>	<p>4.4 Encourage partner agencies to link in more with the voluntary &amp; faith sector to provide a more holistic service to customers</p> <p>4.5 Work with OMBC community capacity building team to identify volunteering opportunities for customers</p>	<p>4.6 Increase awareness &amp; include the role of the voluntary &amp; faith sector in tackling homelessness in multi-agency training</p> <p>4.7 Develop the role of volunteers to support customers (e.g. befriending scheme)</p>	<p>Up-to-date information about voluntary &amp; faith services made widely available</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities promoted with customers, staff and service providers</p>	<p>Increased volunteering opportunities for households who use homelessness and support services in Oldham</p> <p>Increased partnership working and volunteering opportunities across all sectors</p> <p>Increased awareness and recognition of the vital part that voluntary and faith groups play in supporting homeless households</p>	
5	Continue to develop excellent services	PHSO, EHPO OMBC Housing Strategy	5.1 Devise action plan based on KLOE best practice in respect of homelessness service and feed into EHO service development	<p>5.2 EHO project group to support the working Neighbourhood Team to develop referral software and service directory</p> <p>5.3 Launch web based housing advice directory for housing professionals</p>		5.4 Launch EHO interactive software for customers to access at the Housing Options Centre	<p>Annual review of strategy action plan</p> <p>Web based advice directory reviewed and updated</p>	<p>Annual strategy action plan in place</p> <p>Information sharing protocols in place across all EHO services</p> <p>Majority of services and advice agencies are registered with the Advice Directory across Oldham</p>	<p>Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is flexible to meet the changing needs of the borough and central government.</p> <p>Customers receive more joined up service as staff have access to increased information</p>

# Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

## Theme Three: People

### A) Providing support for vulnerable and low income groups

Action	Lead Organisation	Quarter 1 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 2 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 3 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 4 2010/11 milestones	Milestones 2011/12	Outputs 2010/13	Outcome 2010/13
1 Enable the transition to independent living for young people	HSO, OMBC Housing Strategy Young Person's Homelessness Prevention Group	1.1 Depending on success of current funding bid, develop application process & referral criteria for the New Tenancy Starter Packs project 1.2 Source alternative source of funding if current bid unsuccessful	1.3 Provide training to partner agencies & launch the New Tenancy Starter Packs project	1.4 Scope requirements for a new Tenancy Skills training programme	1.5 Evaluate the first six months of the New Tenancy Starter Packs project & make necessary revisions	Funding to set up New Tenancy Starter Packs project secured	Action plan in place to develop New Tenancy Skills Training Programme	Tenancy breakdown amongst young people reduced Reduce delays moving on from temporary accommodation
2 Improve access to furniture provision	HSO, OMBC Housing Strategy Homelessness Forum	2.1 Obtain information about current sources of furniture provision and transport	2.2 Review best practice from other boroughs to inform our approach	2.3 Engage Homelessness Forum & furniture providers to identify & address gaps in provision	2.4 Support local voluntary organisations to develop their own furniture resources and transport	Action plan in place to improve access to furniture for homeless households	Better links & referral routes with local furniture providers established	Reduce delays moving on from temporary accommodation Tenancy sustainment amongst low income & formerly homeless households
3 Support residents to maximise their income	OMBC Housing Strategy Unity Partnership	3.1 Set up joint working group to review current HB / LHA / DHP arrangements 3.2 Seek an increased DHP allocation for the borough	3.3 Devise action plan to improve joint working between the Housing Benefits Service & Housing Providers	3.4 Work with Benefits Services to promote the Welfare Benefit Take-Up campaign in conjunction with Housing Providers along with dangers of doorstep lending (promote alternative borrowing options such as Credit Union).	3.5 Develop income maximisation training for key staff & partner agencies	Benefit Take Up campaigns actively promoted Annual joint action plan in place	Continued contribution to homelessness prevention through DHP Increased number of safeguarded tenants to prevent eviction due to rent arrears	Reduced risk of low income & vulnerable households losing their homes due to financial problems Improved access to HB services for customers & partner agencies
4 Improve financial literacy amongst vulnerable groups	OMBC Housing Strategy Debt Advice/Money Skills organisations	4.1 Provide Homelessness Strategy representation at the Oldham & Rochdale Financial Inclusion Forum	4.2 Promote the range of money advice & affordable credit options available locally, linked to the delivery of the EHO	4.3 Equip partner agencies with the resources to run their own 'Money Skills' financial literacy sessions		Money Skills Training provided for partner agencies	Partner agencies delivering their own financial literacy sessions & actively promoting local financial inclusion initiatives	Reduced risk of low income & vulnerable households losing their homes due to financial problems
5 Adopt a joined-up approach to dealing with homeless young people	OMBC Housing Strategy Homelessness & Housing Advice Team CYPF	5.1 Map out current housing pathways available to young people 5.2 Provide information to YJMB about accommodation and support for young people in the borough	5.3 Review the joint assessment pilot currently carried out between Housing & Children's Social Care	5.4 Agree a protocol for the assessment of homeless 16/17 year olds, linked to the delivery of the EHO	5.5 Launch the protocol & provide training for partner agencies	Protocol for the assessment of homeless 16/17 year olds in place Commissioning arrangements for young people's homelessness prevention & accommodation services reviewed	New Young People's Services commission in place	A streamlined pathway of advice, support, & accommodation in place for young people
6 Working together to adopt a joined up approach for vulnerable groups	PHSO, OMBC Housing Strategy	6.1 Work with DAAT to identify accommodation and support options available for people within SM services using Clean Break toolkit if appropriate 6.2 Rockcliffe Villa opens 6.3 Use review of PSA16 diagnostic visit to identify actions with partners on accommodation for young people leaving care, adults with mental health problems, adults with learning disabilities and ex-offenders.	6.4 Work with SP and DV Co ordinator to develop tender specification for comprehensive DV commission 6.5 Undertake joint work with DAAT to introduce relevant recommendations from Alcohol Strategy Group 6.6 Agree action plan in respect of PSA 16 and provide support to partners to implement.	6.7 Agree actions with Probation on the implementation of the ~Integrated Offender Management Programme	6.8 Develop pathway between services for households with complex/multiple needs	One year review of service provided at Rockcliffe Villa	New Domestic Violence commission in place Reduced number of offenders classed as not in suitable accommodation Reduced number of households not in suitable accommodation	Improved pathways and linkages between services for households experiencing domestic abuse Improved pathways and linkages between services for households who use substance misuse services Improved pathways and linkages between services for ex offenders

## Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

### Theme Three: People

#### A) Providing support for vulnerable and low income groups

7	Provide support to enable emerging communities to settle within the Borough	HHN, OMBC Housing Strategy FCHO	7.1 Agree and implement SLA for the provision of Asylum services for 2010/11.	7.2 Develop use of private rented sector for those households receiving decisions to remain and agree targets  7.3 Implement protocol with Children's Social Care regarding households with No Recourse to Public Funds	7.4 Implement reviewed SLA for provision of emerging communities post funded by ABG and linked to the development of the EHO for Oldham.  7.5 Report on progress of contract negotiations with UKBA on the provision of asylum services from July 2011 onwards  7.6 Develop joint protocol with Adult Social Care regarding households with No Recourse to Public Funds	7.6 Put preparations in place for ending of contract for services with UKBA and make any changes necessary if new contract awarded from Jul 2011	Review joint working protocols in place	SLA in place in respect of delivery of the asylum contract  SLA in place in respect of Emerging Communities Co-ordinator post  Joint working protocols in place in respect of households with No Recourse to Public Funds	Specialist support provided to those households who have been given leave to remain in Oldham.  Increased use of the private rented sector for those households remaining in Oldham.  Co-ordinated approach in responding to the needs of households with No Recourse to Public Funds
8	Provide support for families at risk of breakdown & homelessness	OMBC Housing Strategy	8.1 Provide multi-agency training on the role of family support in preventing families from being evicted due to anti-social behaviour		8.2 Promote the use of parenting support & mediation to rebuild family links & prevent homelessness		Increased awareness of the role of family support initiatives	Further development of existing services	Reduced number of households becoming homeless through family breakdown & ant-social behaviour

#### B) Maximising choice and access to settled homes

Action	Lead Organisation	Quarter 1 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 2 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 3 2010/11 milestones	Quarter 4 2010/11 milestones	Milestones 2011/12	Outputs 2010/13	Outcome 2010/13
9	HHN, OMBC Housing Strategy RSLs	9.1 Undertake public consultation on the proposals for a reviewed allocations policy.  9.2 Use outcome from TSA pilot to inform standards on allocations, particularly for BME customers  9.3 Support implementation of agreed standards on allocations as identified by the TSA pilot in Oldham.  9.4 Agree long term action plan for the provision of private sector lettings agency linked with the Oldham Bond Scheme.	9.5 Increase number of private rented sector properties advertised and allocated through the CBL.  9.6 Approval for reviewed allocations policy.	9.7 Agree with RSL partners use of shared allocations policy for Oldham and identify actions required to meet this objective.		Work with Enforcement Team on Accredited Lettings Agent scheme.	Boroughwide shared allocations policy in place	Increased partner involvement in shared allocations and use of CBL in Oldham.  Improved use of allocations processes to tackle worklessness in Oldham.  Increased access to the private rented sector by all sections of the community.
10	PHSO, Oldham MBC Housing Strategy MOPP working group	10.1 Review MOPP pilot  10.2 Devise annual work plan for MOPP working group	10.3 Devise multi agency training and development plan in respect of staff in supported housing/Housing Options	10.4 Identify lead within Enhanced Housing Options to lead MOPP approach with providers.	10.5 Undertake MOPP audit  10.6 Share good practice from the MOPP with other supported accommodation providers within the borough	Undertake annual MOPP audit	Increase in the number of households who are moving between accommodation and support services.  Increase the number of households who are able to access supported accommodation services.	Ensure that when people are ready to move on, they are able to do so in a planned and supported way, releasing resources for others in need
11	HHN, Oldham MBC Housing Strategy	11.1 Assess RSL contribution to tackling overcrowding and under occupation pathfinder.	11.2 Launch web based mutual exchange initiative for all social housing in Oldham.  11.3 Put in place action plans to support RSL partners to meet actions required on best use of stock.	11.4 Work with Supporting People to review use of supported accommodation within the borough		Scope initiative/pilot on 'sharing for singles' in private and social sectors.	Achieve pathfinder status on tackling overcrowding for 2010/11.  Increase in the number of residents who downsize. Increase number of residents supported who are severely overcrowded.	Reduced number of households living in unsuitable accommodation.  Resources maximised in terms of social rented stock

## Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

### Theme Three: People

#### A) Providing support for vulnerable and low income groups

<b>Key to Abbreviations:</b>									
<b>ABG</b>	Area Based Grant	<b>DAAT</b>	Drug and Alcohol Action Team	<b>FCHO</b>	First Choice Homes Oldham	<b>NHAS</b>	National Homelessness Advice Service	<b>SP</b>	Supporting People
<b>BME</b>	Black & Minority Ethnic	<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence	<b>HHN</b>	Head of Housing Needs	<b>PSA 16</b>	Public Service Agreement 16	<b>SLA</b>	Service Level Agreement
<b>CAB</b>	Citizens Advice Bureau	<b>EHO</b>	Enhanced Housing Options	<b>HSO</b>	Homelessness Strategy Officer	<b>PHSO</b>	Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer	<b>TSA</b>	Tenant Services Authority
<b>CBL</b>	Choice Based Lettings	<b>EHPO</b>	Enhanced Housing Options Principal Officer	<b>MOPP</b>	Move On Planned Protocol	<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord	<b>UKBA</b>	United Kingdom Border Agency