

Highland's Homeless Strategy – Implementation Plan 2008/09 – 2011/12

Actions to achieve:

Outcome 1 - A higher proportion of those at risk of homelessness will be assisted through early, effective intervention to prevent the crisis of homelessness or repeated homelessness

Households will receive a high quality advice first service which aims to prevent actual homelessness occurring

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
1	Implement a housing options / advice first approach for housing and homeless applicants with a view to preventing homelessness and supporting access to housing solutions.	<p>1. Housing options / advice first approach to be developed and established in line with good practice and experience elsewhere.</p> <p>Suggested principles for 'new' service: Advice will be wide-ranging and comprehensive and will respond to the individual's needs. All housing options, wider than those associated with the homeless route, will be considered. Everyone indicating potentially homeless circumstances on their Highland Housing Register (HHR) application will receive pro-active advice. Where applicants are not considered to be homeless, clear explanations and advice will be given to them focusing on how they can resolve their housing issues. Verbal and written information will be provided to give homeless applicants a clear understanding of likely timescales / what they should expect. THC officers will be aware of how and when to refer to other services such as CABx etc. The role of HHR partners in providing advice on all housing options and advice to prevent homelessness will be agreed (via HHR MG).</p>	Yr 1/2	HRA Existing	HPH / HoH / AHPM / HSG

2	Review the homeless management service to improve the way that applications are managed, assessed and people are taken through the homeless system. This will aim to provide a consistent high quality service across Highland.	<p>This will involve</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewing the role and working practices of THC accommodation officers to ensure that an advice first / preventative case work approach is provided throughout. The value of establishing homeless case officer posts will be assessed. 2. Strengthening staff support and supervision; using case monitoring and review processes, using user feedback. 3. Review of THC homeless management staff structures in Inverness (recognising the complexity and extent of homelessness there). Opportunities for officers to develop specialist expertise, whilst providing a generic service will be considered. 4. Updating homeless procedures to clarify how, in their day to day work, officers should help achieve expectations e.g. focusing on prevention, assistance to find housing; assessing and accessing housing support services; etc. Staff consultation will be carried out on updated procedures. Training notes will be accessible and aimed at new staff / those refreshing knowledge. 5. Clarifying the remit of resettlement officers including agreeing a definition of resettlement and services. 6. Establishing a comprehensive crisis response service (<i>links with support assessment actions</i>) 	Yr 1/2 Yr 1 Yr 2 Yr 1/2 Yr 1 Yr 2/3	HRA Existing	HoH / AHPM (<i>all actions</i>)
3	Establish a performance management framework to monitor and review the effectiveness of working practices, performance and training needs.	<p>This will include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviews of quarterly reports on homeless application assessment patterns, housing & support outcomes, tenancy sustainment and performance reviewed by area officers and HSW Committee. 2. Setting area performance targets (based on SOA targets). 3. Monitoring consistency in assessments and quality of advice provided. 4. Evidencing service improvements arising via monitoring 	Yr1	HRA Existing	HoH / BSM/ AHPM /

		<p>activities.</p> <p>5. Exploring and developing ways to assess and quantify the value of prevention (and tenancy sustainment) activities e.g. change produced for client, ability to engage with clients needs; quality of services; outcomes; cost. This will link with monitoring of housing support outcomes for individuals / services - Action 47. It may lead to increased spending on prevention ('spend to save') activities.</p> <p>6. Use HL1 information to develop and monitor services including via annual analysis / dissemination.</p>			
4	Establish a joint training programme for all housing and housing support agencies focussing on prevention, ensuring a quality and consistent homeless service and tenancy sustainability, and provide training	<p>The training programme will aim to establish a learning culture. 'Training' will include time at courses and learning on the job (e.g. structured opportunities to refresh knowledge through reading). Courses will be accessible to a wide range of partner organisations including CABx etc. The programme will include issues highlighted during CS Inspection.</p>	Yr 1/2	HRA Existing	HPH / AHPM / HSG
5	Re-provision Inverness Day Centre with a view to increasing the range of multi-agency services and activities available from / via there	<p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing a business plan which will explore scope for an enhanced one stop service and provision of emergency access accommodation. 2. Identifying site for new build or premises. 	YR 2/3	HRA & to be identified	AHPM (INBS)
6	Gather and use user feedback to influence service improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This will include a range of activities such as Speakout; consultation for Highland's Housing Support Strategy; surveying homeless applicants etc. Priorities include gathering users' views on temporary accommodation and housing support outcomes. 2. Involvement of service users in the development of outcomes matrix (action 47) which picks up on their improving or declining situation and other performance management activities. 	Yr 1 and on-going	Depends on activity	HOH / HPH / SWS / HAI / partners

7	<p>Improve the provision of advice and assistance so that THC officers fulfil their duties under the Homeless Persons Advice and Assistance (Scotland) Regulations and actively assist applicants to find (or retain) accommodation with security of tenure.</p>	<p>This will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing clear guidance and procedures. 2. Training so that THC officers have the skills / competencies required to meet national standards. <p>Practices will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client receiving an action plan based on advice given. Standardised recording of advice and assistance. Exploration of impact on outcomes e.g. as part of application monitoring. Using Housing Options Manual, briefing notes and SHAS as key resources. <p>Priorities for training and guidance notes will be improving skills and knowledge in complex advice areas such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. preventing homelessness amongst home owners; 2. relationship / marital breakdown / Matrimonial Homes Act; 3. private sector tenancies; 4. advising in-migrants. <p>SHAS advice service feedback will help to identify needs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Explore benefits of providing housing advice surgeries in supported accommodation in parts of Highland. 4. Review all documents / letters to make sure they give effective information and are in plain English. 5. Update information given to households living in temporary / supported accommodation so that they know how to access assistance; understand expectations etc. 	Yr 2	HRA Existing	HPH / AHPM / HoH/
8	<p>Provide Highland –wide advice and signposting concerning, complex needs and other challenging issues including rough sleeping</p>	<p>Develop ways for a wide range of services and housing officers to access and build on the knowledge and experience of Inverness Day Centre Officers.</p>	Yr 1/2	HRA existing	HPH / IBS/PHO DCM
9	<p>Through local CABx in each area, provide access to consistent, impartial, accurate</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SLAs in place. These will be annually monitored (including quality of advice) by THC H&P. 	Yr1 and on-		HoH / CABx /

	and quality housing and homelessness information, advice and assistance to Type 1, 2 or 3 levels (i.e. 1 signposting; 2 casework; 3 advocacy etc).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Type of advice available in each area to be clarified and explore ways to ensure a comprehensive service to everyone regardless of where they live in Highland. 3. CABx to recruit, train and support an appropriate number of volunteers to deliver housing advice. 4. CABx to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of changes in housing and homelessness legislation and policy. 5. CABx to ensure systems are in place to identify the skills and knowledge required to meet service users' needs in relation to housing and homeless issues, and ensure that there are ways in which these requirements can be met i.e. training. 6. CABx and THC H&P to maintain links with other relevant housing and homelessness information and advice providers and participate in regular meetings as necessary. 7. Explore ways to improve access to legal advice. 	going		HPH
10	THC and CABx to work towards meeting advice standards so that people can access high quality, consistent housing advice no matter whether they live	This includes the Scottish National Standards and Good Practice for Housing Information and Advice Services.	Yr 2	Existing	HoH / CABx / HPH

Refocus activities to increase the number of people prevented from becoming homeless

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
11	Review the role of housing management officers to identify ways in which they can pro-actively prevent homelessness, help to sustain tenancies and work more effectively with those dealing with homeless issues.	<p>This will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of procedures including preventing homeless flowchart aimed at housing management officers setting out triggers for preventative services. 2. Exploring ways e.g. via tenancy sign-up procedures and pre-tenancy contact – to help vulnerable households build up positive 	Yr 2/3	HRA existing	HoH / AHPM / HSG

	This recognises that an increasing proportion of tenants are vulnerable.	<p>relationships with housing management officers.</p> <p>3. Prevention proofing housing management polices and practices e.g. arrears; anti-social behaviour; general housing management</p> <p>4. Working with RSLs to support and encourage them to take a preventative approach.</p> <p><i>Links to training action 3</i></p>			RSLs/ HSG
12	Establish protocol with SWS to enable support / joint working around prevention activities	This will include expected responses / responsibilities. This links to eviction practices arising from all tenures; SSA; Children's Act and will be aligned with GIRFEC procedures where possible.	Yr 2	Existing	HoH / SWS
13	Explore ways to provide mediation type services so that people are supported to make informed choices.	Aims of previous skills training project to be revisited and opportunities to provide mediation type services to be explored. Mediation may also help households to re-form support links / networks with their families.	Yr 2/3	To be identified	HSG
14	Improve and develop services by learning from 3 rd Sector organisations, local partnerships and housing support organisations	This will involve Encouraging them to share good practice and ideas through networks, information sharing etc. Involving 3rd sector organisations in forward planning Homeless Strategy budget to support / match fund projects focusing on prevention (in line with THC concordant arrangements for voluntary groups).	Yr 1 and on-going	THC Homeless Budget / Organisations' resources	HSG

Prevent homelessness arising from high risk circumstances

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
15	Reduce homelessness arising from private renting by increasing awareness of legal requirements and developing ways to support households retain their tenancies or find alternative housing	<p>1. Increase tenant & landlord awareness of legal requirements and rights (including when leases are not in place) via written information; advice and training / briefings.</p> <p>2. Housing officers to check all landlords are registered and pass on information to Licensing Officers.</p> <p>3. Raise police awareness of tenancy law.</p>	Yr 1 & on-going	Existing	HPH / SLA / AHPM

		<p>4. Develop ways to encourage a planned approach to leaving winter- only lets.</p> <p>5. Increase landlords' awareness of how to access money advice.</p> <p><i>Links to actions 1& 7 and improving working with landlords etc.</i></p>			
16	Reduce homelessness arising from owner-occupation	<p>1. Support increased use of the range of mortgage rescue schemes</p> <p>2. Provide information, briefings to and ensure officers / advisers etc are aware of operation of schemes</p> <p>3. Liaise with lending bodies to improve advice links / support</p> <p>4. Continue to encourage early contact from householders</p>	Yr 2	Existing	HPH
17	Establish ways to use notification of eviction duties to prevent homelessness (Section 11 duties).	<p>1. Development of procedures and guidance for organisations and information for householders.</p> <p>2. Briefings etc for landlords, mortgage providers, advice agencies and services.</p> <p><i>Links to action 17 and 18</i></p>	Yr 1	Existing	HPH
18	Make sure that the income of homeless or vulnerable people is maximised by improving access to benefits and money advice services	<p>This will involve:</p> <p>1. Improving understanding of benefits claim process;</p> <p>2. Improve communication between finance and housing officers;</p> <p>3. Enabling housing officers to monitor benefit claims</p> <p>4. Working to reduce claim processing times;</p> <p>5. Providing guidance to housing and supported housing organisations about benefits for people going into employment.</p> <p>6. Exploring ways to increase the number of homeless or vulnerable households who get benefit checks including via improving links with Income Maximisation Officers</p> <p>7. Establishing ways to improve information sharing about client's vulnerability that may affect their ability to deal with benefit claims</p> <p>8. Highlighting to support providers the importance of enabling clients to apply for benefits etc. promptly.</p>	Yr 1/2	Existing	HPO Finance / THC Finance Services

		<p>9. Providing money / debt advice providers with training and resources to ensure other services can be triggered if the clients has other needs causing money problems.</p> <p>10. Establishing a THC corporate referral and appointment system to the range of money advice services (THC Money Advice and CABx) including guidance on triggers, tracking of outcomes;.</p> <p>11. Encourage and support RSLs to adopt above service developments.</p>			
19	Explore ways to increase people's skills to manage money / budgeting.	Actions will be developed via the Highland Financial Inclusion Working Group.			CE Policy Manager
20	Prevent and manage homelessness arising from domestic abuse by ensure women have 24/7 access to safe housing in emergency situations	<p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with Women's Aid groups to look at the issues involved in 24/7 operation 2. Joint protocol between the Council and domestic abuse support agencies with accommodation to ensure women who have experienced forms of Violence Against Women other than domestic abuse can access emergency accommodation and are not excluded from appropriate accommodation. 3. Drawing up a list of appropriate safe and supported temporary homeless accommodation providers in partnership with service users and with Violence Against Women support providers with accompanying protocols. 4. Providing guidance to ensure potentially homeless points or special allocation status is applied to HHR applications whenever appropriate. <p><i>These actions are part of a wider Violence Against Women Strategy which will also promote awareness and understanding.</i></p>	Yr 1/2	Existing	HPO (Allocations)
21	Prevent homelessness as a result of Violence Against Women by making their existing housing safe and secure and providing support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. THC and Northern Constabulary to develop a joint policy and protocol to make properties secure (including lock changes, window reinforcement, etc) and enhance safety. Effectiveness of measures to be assessed. 	Yr 1/2	Existing	HPO (Allocations)

		<p>2. Good practice guidelines on supporting women still living with abusive partners developed for support services and for statutory agencies.</p> <p><i>Links to actions re training / advice on Matrimonial Homes Act</i></p>			
22	<p>Improve access to services to prevent in-migrants becoming homeless or experiencing homeless crises</p>	<p>1. Ensure that there is information or access to information / advice in a suitable language across Highland and that there is awareness of this amongst the public; organisations and private landlords. Resource list and list of access points to be drawn up.</p> <p>2. Provide updated guidance on managing applications from refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers including advice provision if household has no recourse to public assistance.</p> <p><i>Links to other actions on in-migrants and private renting.</i></p>	Yr 2	Existing	HSG
23	<p>All households under 25 leaving home and applying as / indicating homelessness (where appropriate) to get a home visit to inform them and their parents / family about the realities of homelessness, housing options and support them to leave home in a planned way.</p>	<p>To support this:</p> <p>1. Guidance to be developed</p> <p>2. Information to be provided to young people and parents on homelessness / leaving home.</p> <p>3. Staff to be trained and supported in mediation type skills.</p>	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / AHPM / For Highland' s Children
24	<p>Support pre-tenancy 'education' and training to encourage and support young people to leave home in a planned way; raise awareness of the realities of homelessness; support attitude changes; increase their independent living skills and through early intervention prevent vulnerable people becoming homeless.</p>	<p>1. This will involve development of strategic recognition of leaving home and housing education involving THC Housing, Education, Culture & Sport and Social Work Services.</p> <p>2. A Highland delivery model will be developed which will co-ordinate the wide range of agencies e.g. developing opportunities through PSE, youth development officers, Calman activities etc. Associated funding will be identified. The priority areas are those where there is limited access to housing support services.</p>	Yr 1 and on-going	To be identified	HOH / SWS / ECS / For Highland' s Children HSG

25	Ensure a planned approach to leaving care through corporate parenting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear approach to providing information, support and accommodation will be agreed. 2. It will aim to ensure that all young people leaving care are housed without being labelled homeless and, whilst under LA care, are equipped with the skills to live independently and sustain tenancies. 3. Risk management arrangements will be in place to manage hitches. 4. Throughcare / aftercare protocol will be reviewed, implementation monitored and on-going training / learning opportunities provided. 5. Support development of a range of accommodation solutions including Supported Lodgings 	Yr 1	Existing Supported Lodgings - Throughcare & Aftercare budget	HPH / HOCS SWS / Banardos / THC Throughcare & Aftercare Group
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Prevent repeat homelessness

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
26	Improve practices to reduce levels of homeless applicant 'lost contacts' – particularly with people placed in temporary accommodation	<p>This will involve</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding why lost contacts happen. 2. Develop guidance, solutions and ways of working to ensure regular contact and information exchange. <p><i>Links with action 2</i></p>	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / AHPM
27	Explore and develop how households – who do not reach need thresholds; require low levels of support or don't fit into categories - can access early support to help them manage their issues before crises occur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore and develop solutions. Young people will be prioritised. This will include exploring befriending schemes 	Yr2	To be identified	HSG /SWS
28	Increase use of transitional accommodation (i.e. 'short' tenancies tied to support) with a view to encouraging households to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide guidance 2. Explore and develop ways to provide support (particularly where support services do not exist) 	Yr2	To be identified	HPH / SWS / AHPM

	engage with support.	3. Monitor effectiveness			
29	Ensure everyone, regardless of tenure, who needs it, has access to furniture at the start of their tenancy by continuing to provide at least 130 furniture packages each year and access to low / no cost furniture schemes.	This will involve 1. Prioritising and monitoring provision of furniture packages (who, where etc.) and agreeing improvements. If necessary, young people to be prioritised. 2. Reviewing local provision of furniture to households. 3. Producing guidance on accessing community care grants. 4. Developing links to furniture and white goods recycling in all areas.	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / PHOs
30	Support decoration / furniture projects which provide opportunities to develop the skills of people who have experienced homelessness	Learn from projects in Highland and elsewhere	Yr 2/3	<i>To be identified</i>	HSG
31	Increase number of fire safety checks for those taking up new tenancies	Agree arrangements with HFRS. This includes the free fitting of smoke alarms in private rented properties.	Yr 2	HFRS	HFRS / HPH

Prove access to meaningful activities, training and employment

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
32	Make sure Highland's Employability Strategy provides access to meaningful activities, training, employment etc to improve skills and raise self-esteem / confidence.	1. Organisations involved in homelessness and service users feed into development of the strategy. 2. Appropriate actions taken forward	Yr 1/2	<i>To be identified</i>	THC CEx / HOH/ HSG
33	Make sure that housing and specialist support providers are aware of the wide range of 'employability' and adult learning organisations / opportunities	This will include: 1. Encouraging and supporting links and formal arrangements between projects and providers(including employers). 2. Encouraging providers to incorporate activities into support / care plans. 3. Finding out how organisations such as Voluntary Highland help.	Yr 1/2	<i>To be identified</i>	THC CEx / HOH/ HSG

34	Break down the barriers that prevent people taking advantage of 'employability' opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore provision of a nominated address for people moving between accommodation 2. Enhance opportunities through discretionary HB and other benefit aspects 3. Incorporate activities into support / care plans. An agreed standard / expectations will be incorporated into the Housing Support Strategy to inform commissioning. 4. Establish incentives to support engagement 	Yr 1/2	Existing	HPH HPO / Finance SWS / HPH JobCentre Plus
35	Encourage and support social enterprise activities which encourage people to access to meaningful activities, training etc..	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify what organisations need to do to get involved. 2. Learn from projects in Highland and elsewhere 3. Range of projects in place across Highland. 	Yr 2	Existing	HSG

Actions to achieve:

Outcome 2 - Those households who experience homelessness will receive a quality consistent service; spend a shorter period of time in appropriate temporary accommodation and be helped to access a wider range of housing

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
36	Increase number of properties suitable for use as temporary housing via private sector leasing; use of social rented housing. This will also reduce use of B&B accommodation.	Will include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting area targets based on Highland's Temporary Accommodation Model. 2. Updating Temporary Accommodation Model. 3. Increasing private leasing (pl) particularly in (the short term) Inverness; Mid & West Ross; Lochaber and Skye & Lochalsh. 4. Improving promotion of private leasing (adverts and targeting). 5. Reviewing private leasing charging and management. 6. Encouraging use of lead tenancies via the RSLs for owners who require funding to improve their properties. 	Yr1 Yr2 Yr1 Yr1 Yr1 Yr1	Non-HRA Non-HRA Non-HRA Existing resources "	AHPM / HoH " " HPH " HoH

		<p>7. Increasing number of Council and RSL properties used for temp furnished and unfurnished housing (priority is Inverness). This will include exploring use of voids in general needs stock.</p> <p>8. Increasing accommodation leased from non-profit organisations (such as HHA) including via new build or off the shelf provision.</p> <p>9. Exploring use of land opportunities and preferred house types to provide 'pre-fabricated' temporary housing in areas where alternative opportunities are limited.</p> <p>10. Agreeing long term strategy for providing temporary and interim supported accommodation in Inverness.</p> <p>11. Providing emergency access temporary accommodation linked to re-provisioning of Inverness Day Centre</p>	<p>Yr1</p> <p>Yr1 & on-going</p> <p>Yr 1</p> <p>Yr 2</p> <p>Yr 2</p>	<p>AHIP</p> <p>"</p> <p>To be identified</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p>	<p>AHPM / HoH</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p>
37	Explore options for providing core and cluster temporary housing for young people	<p>This will include exploring new build options in priority areas of East and Mid Ross and Inverness.</p> <p><i>This may link with shared housing action 66.</i></p>	Yr 1/2	AHIP	HoH / AHPM
38	Reduce cost to the Council from use of B&B and temporary accommodation by improving income collection and using less expensive alternatives	<p>This will involve</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreeing an approach which improves the benefit claim process and ensures all benefits and income is claimed. 2. Reducing levels of lost contacts (link to action 26). <p><i>Decreasing use of B&B and preventing homelessness will also help.</i></p>	Yr 1	Existing	AHPM / HOH
39	Increase standard of temporary accommodation by setting and enforcing management and maintenance standards for all tenures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear guidance and processes to be developed including checklist, for housing officers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable them to take action; ensure all landlords and HMOs are registered; undertake spot checks; use customer feedback and complaints mechanism; use standard letters for enforcement; ensure private rented standards are met; 	?	Existing	HPH / AHPM

		<p>apply penalties (e.g. withholding B&B payments) when standards are not being met and informing owners why.</p> <p>2. Review arrangements for management of THC owned / leased temporary accommodation. Will include clarifying definitions of and expectations re: housing management, housing support and activities to assist with resettlement. <i>Links to lease action 36.</i></p>			
40	Ensure that there are no breaches of Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) Order 2004	<p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. establishing and carrying out standardised case audits for all breaches which will be reviewed by AHPM & Head of Housing quarterly (along with other performance information) 2. Improving joint working (e.g. between areas) so that a wide range of opportunities are considered. 3. Improving practices based on review of cases and best practice solutions 	Yr 1 on	Existing	HPH/ AHPM
41	Households in temporary accommodation or with homeless at home points to continue to receive advice and assistance to help them move onto settled housing in a planned way	<p><i>Links with advice / assistance actions (e.g. 7) and housing support actions in particular:</i></p> <p>People to be given effective, good quality advice on private rented housing as part of their housing options interview(s) and have regular contact with officers. This is likely to result in additional referrals to rent deposit guarantee scheme</p>	Yr1	Existing	HPH/AP HM
42	Use information collected in application and assessment to place people in suitable temporary accommodation. Where there is potential risk, ensure that this is managed including via information exchange.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a consistent risk assessment process and guidance as part of the assessment process. <i>This will be included as part of updating homeless procedures and moving to housing options approach.</i> <p>Ideally by increasing the supply of temporary accommodation and improving housing and support assessments, vulnerable people will not be housed alongside those who may increase risks including of substance abuse or challenging behaviour.</p>	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / AHPM
43	Reduce average time spent in	Will include:		Existing	HPH /

	temporary accommodation to reduce pressures and bottlenecks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular review of cases by housing officers including establishing review 'triggers' for priority and non-priority households. 2. Reviewing and setting out clearly what are considered to be reasonable opportunities for people to find alternative accommodation – including guidance on 'changed circumstances' around re-applicants. Expectations to be provided to clients as part of housing options interview(s). 3. Increasing 'stepping stone' options for those who are not yet able to manage an independent tenancy (<i>links with action 37 & 28</i>) <p><i>Action 61 covers move-on from supported accommodation.</i></p>	Yr 1		<p>AHPM</p> <p>HPH</p> <p>HoH / HSG</p>
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Outcome 3 - More effective support will be provided to those who need it so that they can live independently successfully and not lose their home

Provide access to housing support across Highland and make sure that people receive the housing support and specialist services that they need, and which enable them to live independently and avoid becoming homeless again

	Action	Description	When	How / Resources	Officer Leads
44	Develop services so that there is access to homeless and related housing support in areas where there is no or limited access to any services despite needs.	<p>This applies to West Ross, Sutherland, Skye & Lochalsh; Badenoch & Strathspey, Nairn, East and Mid Ross. Helping young people and those with higher level needs will be the priority.</p> <p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the capacity of existing services to provide support and prevent homelessness e.g. locally based organisations / projects developing and piloting solutions. 2. Exploring how established organisation's services can be built on. <p><i>Actions link to Highland Housing Support Strategy which will also identify funding.</i></p>	Yr 2	Commissioning Strategy	SWSP0 / AHPM

45	Explore ways to meet the needs identified for homeless and related housing support / support services, where there are significant gaps in services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify gaps and develop solutions. This work will feed into Highland's Housing Support Strategy in terms of the type and location of services to be commissioned. 2. Explore ways (including the range of existing organisations, peer support groups, and what works elsewhere) to remodel services so that out of hours support is accessible to people with chaotic lives to avoid crisis. 	Yr 2	Commissioning Strategy	SWSPO / HOH / AHPM
46	Develop and implement a strategy for commissioning homeless and related housing support and homeless services. This will aim to ensure that services contribute to the agreed Highland Homeless Strategy outcomes i.e. people are prevented from homelessness; and people who have experienced homelessness are enabled to live, and sustain their tenancies, independently.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Housing Support Strategy which will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs and address gaps in homeless related support provision. Identify the range of accommodation options. Set out the range of homeless related services to be commissioned, services objectives and expected outcomes for individuals. Enable services to be commissioned to meet identified needs. Be based on (at least) current resource planning assumptions for homeless related support services. 2. Strategy development will explore current practices with service providers (floating and supported accommodation services) and will aim to agree: shared definitions of services; expectations around outcomes for individuals and what is best practice. 	Yr 2	Commissioning Strategy	SWSPO / HoH
47	Develop ways to improve outcome monitoring to inform: how well the strategy and commissioned services are performing; the effectiveness of services for individuals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop outcome monitoring framework. This will involve exploring how models such as the Edinburgh Common Customer Outcomes (ECCO) Monitoring System can be replicated in Highland or models such as Richter Scale used consistently. It will also involve service users in its development. 2. Identify ways that this approach can support joint working through information sharing. 	Yr 2	To be identified	SWSPO / HoH

48	Develop and establish multi-agency care and support 'pathways' which reflect homeless households needs and processes to access services and will also ensure that co-ordinated responses can be delivered.	<p>This will include:</p> <p>A structured framework for delivery of services which clarify the roles and responsibilities of services to clients and referring agencies.</p> <p>Agreed definitions of households requiring assistance from services.</p> <p>Agreed outcomes.</p> <p>Contingency actions for households who can't access community care or additional specialist services because e.g. their needs are not urgent or severe (links to Fair Access).</p> <p>Enhancing joint working and finding ways to share success and failure and learn from this.</p> <p>Training - including case studies to raise Health, Housing and SWS understanding of links.</p> <p>Early actions will focus on pathways for households with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. mental health needs 2. complex needs (dual diagnosis) 3. substance abuse issues 4. criminal justice needs <p>Links to Health & Homeless Action Plan</p>	Yr 1 - 3	Existing	HSG
49	Develop and implement an assessment tool and process focused on housing support needs which complements the Single Shared Assessment process (SSA).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. THC Housing Officers will be able to assess and record housing support needs and make arrangements for housing support services as part of the homeless application process, homeless prevention or housing management. <p>This will also:</p> <p>Include an initial risk assessment to influence accommodation options.</p> <p>Influence development of clients' housing support plans.</p> <p>Ensure that individuals do not receive duplicated services and receive the service most appropriate for their individual needs.</p> <p>Monitoring of needs/unmet needs for service planning.</p> <p>PHOs will lead in community care and housing support activities such as developing local joint working links with</p>	Yr 2	Existing	HOH / SWS / AHPM

		Social Work and Health representatives.		Existing	AHPM
		2. Provide everyone who has been re-housed with a housing support assessment to identify if they have any needs or whether their needs have been met. To take place up to a maximum of 6 months after rehousing.			
50	Improve the Single Shared Assessment process (SSA) for households with community care needs experiencing or vulnerable to homelessness and ensure that it is used.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the process so that a seamless referral process, building on information already gathered, will be available for people with more complex needs that may benefit from community care services. This will involve strategic working between THC SWS, NHS Highland and THC Housing & Property. 2. Establish fast track assessments for roofless households seeking entry to accommodation with support. 	Yr 1/2	To be identified	HoH / to be discussed with Joint Futures Team
51	Improve the skills of those triggering or carrying out housing support assessments and Single Shared Assessment (SSAs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce / improve procedures and provide regular training opportunities (links with action 4). 2. Housing officers will be able to identify triggers that would indicate households may benefit support; understand assessment and referral processes; and local services. 3. Briefing note for partners on priority homelessness and likely needs for services, to be circulated. 	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / SWSP0
52	Increase housing officers / organisations understanding and awareness of: housing support services and links to accommodation; specialist care and support services (to improve prevention, and signposting and build capacity of housing / support providers to manage the needs of clients with specialist needs).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training on housing support, local service provision and pathways (as part of training programme – action 4). 2. Joint training with SWS and NHS specialist services e.g. around mental health, substance misuse, criminal justice, disability, substance misuse (as part of training programme – action 4). 3. Briefing note on services provided by different providers and accessing these 4. Mapping of services in Inverness including non-housing, targeted at the range of clients groups in Inverness (HAI action) 5. Information exchange including weekly email reporting to be 	Yr 2	Existing	HSG/HPH HSG/HPH HSG/HPH HAI

		established to ensure housing staff are aware of availability - led by THC Area Contracts Officers			SWS
		6. Networking activities (links to action 53 & 72)			
53	Regular meetings to be established in each area to discuss homeless and support issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings involving all local partners and be led by the Council. Split agenda - strategic issues e.g. progress with local actions; and operational issues e.g. individual cases to support move-on for clients in supported accommodation. Suggested remit, agenda structure etc. to be produced. Annual local 'networking' supported e.g. ensuring opportunities for staff at different levels in different organisations to meet. <p><i>Links with action 73 - networking</i></p>	Yr 1	Existing	AHPM / HPH / SWS
54	Explore ways to increase provision of pre-tenancy / early support to prepare people and give them the tenancy skills to live independently	As well as linking to prevention activities, this will feed into Highland's Housing Support Strategy e.g. expected outcomes from commissioned housing support services. <i>Links with young person action 24 & 27</i>	Yr 2	To be identified	HSG / SWS/ ECS
55	All households identified as vulnerable will receive a settling in visit.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance and procedures to be developed. This visit will focus on homeless prevention - exploring whether there are any issues; re-emphasis advice and support routes; highlight community activities etc. For young people this will also provide another opportunity to review the information in the young tenants pack. <p><i>Links to action 11.</i></p>	Yr 1	Existing	AHPM / HPH
56	Improve working with mental health related services so that people can receive the support they need as part of a joined up plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>detail to be agreed</i> Explore whether an approach based on 'care programming' action plans which the assessed services agree to so that a holistic service is provided. This should include contingency approaches e.g. is services unavailable or withdrawn. 	?	?	NHS Highland / SWS / H&P
57	Provide roofless / rough sleepers with a high quality service which enables them to access services and move out of homelessness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review the benefits and outcomes of Inverness's Streetworks outreach service. 	Yr 2	Existing	PHO / HPH

58	Develop clear remits and procedures for the delivery of homeless support services by THC Officers.	<p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarification of roles and remits for those involved in providing support and resettlement (including core competencies). With a clear distinction between housing management and support. 2. Procedures written - including relevant forms, flowcharts, description of services and staff roles & responsibilities. 3. Development of THC housing support plan & review tool to ensure consistency. 4. Developing an approach which ensures that the appropriate level / type of support is provided based on an individual's needs e.g. support / assistance packages labelled as 'low' or 'high': Low – short term (4wk) to deal with the immediate practical issues (intensive housing management) relating to their homeless situation. High – for the most vulnerable clients and may be delivered in conjunction with other professionals, with the Housing Support Plan forming part of a wider Care Plan. 	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / HPO (Community Care) / AHPM / SWSP0
59	Agree practices and protocols to encourage engagement and manage non-engagement and set-backs.	<p>This will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing guidance, policy and protocols on managing persistently challenging clients including those in temporary accommodation. 2. Agreeing relapse and respite management policies and protocols with support providers and specialist services. The aim is to provide flexible services which recognise individuals' needs. Expectations will be included in the Housing Support Strategy. 	Yr 1 Yr 2	Existing	HPH / AHPM
60	Provide accommodation and support to those found as intentionally homeless which aims help them address the actions that led to the intentionality decision being made.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree policy and approach including access to accommodation and housing support. This will include ways to provide housing support will be provided where specific services do not exist. 	Yr 3	Existing	HOH/ HPH
61	Improve the ways that move-on from	Review existing arrangements and agree approach to improve			

	<p>supported accommodation happens. The aim is that supported accommodation services will avoid institutionalising clients through better use of support plans, 'exit strategies' and linking into other services. Actions will also aim to reduce repeat homelessness.</p>	<p>move-on from (transitional) supported accommodation and temporary accommodation with floating support. A multi-organisational action plan will be developed.</p> <p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. improving support plan assessments, case review processes and 'exit strategies' carried out by all providers of housing support in interim and temporary accommodation. 2. Identifying issues and what works and establishing agreed approaches for all providers. 3. Providing guidance on ways to meet the housing and support needs of homeless clients in supported housing who, after 24 months, may be unable to live independently. This should help manage the needs of clients with long term community care or complex needs. <p>Links with review of support plans; joint planning through networking; support provision geared towards ensuring independent living; improved opportunities for 'stepping-stone' accommodation.</p>	Yr 1/2	To be identified	SWS / HSG / HAI
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Actions to achieve:

Outcome 4 - All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Officer Leads
62	Increase access to social rented housing including via new supply and downsizing incentives	<p>This will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lobbying for additional resources to meet current needs and those arising from meeting the 2012 target. 2. Increasing new build supply by achieving area targets amounting to 500 approvals per annum of which, at present, around 300 of these are social rented housing and would help to meet homelessness duties. 3. Increasing proportion of social rented houses (compared to 	Yr 1 and on-going	AHIP	HHDE / HoH

		<p>LCHO) built in Inverness and setting new targets.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Continuing to increase the supply of housing for single people and couples in appropriate locations / developments 5. Establishing incentives to support THC and RSL down-sizing in areas, and types of housing, under pressure. This will involve provision of hands-on support and help with costs; advertising campaign and linking with allocation of new build housing for older people. 	Yr 2	To be identified	HPH / AHPM
63	Review operation of Highland Housing Register policy to ensure that the duration of homelessness is reduced; the 2012 target is met whilst ensuring the development of balanced and sustainable communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1st review in January 2009 followed by 6 monthly reviews of homeless aspects and regular monitoring. This will involve assessing whether policy amendments required. 2. As part of HHR guidance and monitoring, make sure single person applicants are getting fair opportunities to access social rented housing in all areas. 	Yr 1	Existing	HPO (Allocs) / HHR MG
64	Re-assess Highland's capacity to meet 2012 at area level	Update model once Scottish Government Guidance available so that use of private rented housing is factored in.	Yr 2	Existing	HSO
65	Build on the rent deposit guarantee scheme to provide more settled accommodation opportunities	<p>This will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessing current scheme, good practice from elsewhere and identifying opportunities to build on its strengths. 2. Advertising its strengths / benefits. 3. Moving towards aim of ensuring 12 months settled accommodation. 	Yr 1	To be identified	Albyn HS / HPH
66	Develop– particularly for young people - who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness - opportunities for house-sharing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore opportunities to build on rent deposit guarantee scheme. 2. Identify and support options such as joint HHR applications. 3. Explore opportunities / models to provide as temporary accommodation with support (<i>links to action 37</i>) 4. Set up basic house-mate information service based on those used within further education. 	Yr 2	Existing	HSG

		5. Will also involve increasing awareness of house-mate web advertising as part of housing options interview.			
67	If legislation introduced, discharge duty into suitable private rented housing when this best meets needs and suitable housing and support is available.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidance, procedures, training and review mechanisms are required to implement any changes. 2. Ways to meet advocacy and other requirements to be identified. 3. Effect on repeat homelessness, affordability and managing homelessness to be reviewed at least 6 monthly in the early stages so that lessons can be learnt. 4. Encourage private landlords to provide 12 month minimum accommodation by exploring what is needed to and put in place new practices. <p><i>Awaiting Scottish Government Guidance.</i></p>	Yr 3	Existing	HOH / HPH
68	Improve joint working and liaison with private landlords	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Highland newsletter and information for landlords through a range of media. 2. Hold landlord information days across highland in conjunction with Finance. 3. Use information for landlord registration and other sources to make links with landlords. 4. Ensure landlords know how to access support and assistance to help them and their tenants with issues 5. Encourage and support people to rent a room through promotion and raising awareness activities etc. 	Yr 2 / 3	Existing	HPH / HoH
69	Make sure the benefits system does not discourage landlords or tenants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing landlords understanding of it to encourage them to rent to those who receive it. 2. Improving the process of Local Housing Allowance claims so that landlords are not discouraged 3. Improving use of discretionary housing benefit so that it helps homeless applicants access / sustain housing 	Yr 2	Existing	HPH / Finance / HSG
70	Make sure tenants housed in private	This will involve	Yr 2/3	Existing	HPH/

	rented housing can access help (e.g. with benefit applications etc) and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identifying local organisations who can provide it 2. Making sure that tenants are aware of how to access help <i>Links with actions to provide vulnerable tenants a settling in visit and a 6 month support assessment visit.</i> 			AHPM/ SWS
71	Explore potential for tenant referencing scheme so that people have references to help them access private renting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Longer-term action (possibly via 3rd sector organisation) 2. Short-term – encourage homeless applicants, e.g. with notice to quit, to get a reference by providing them with a standard template. 	Yr 3		HSG

Specific actions to achieve:

Outcome 5 - Effective joint working with external and internal partners and corporate responsibility helps achieve the other outcomes.

	Action	Description	When	How / resources	Who responsible
72	<p>Improve and establish local information sharing and networking covering housing and homeless strategic, operational and service development issues.</p> <p>Networking will aim to support early intervention, prevention and signposting to services as well as improving working relationships and managing local operational issues.</p>	<p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing regular meetings between organisations with staff at a range of levels in areas (where arrangements don't currently exist). 2. Agreeing local area priorities re. clients; activities and joint working with the wide range of services. It is hoped that this will focus prevention and related activities on locally agreed priorities. Priorities will also feed into Highland's Housing Support Strategy; and monitored annually. 3. Supporting a range of networking activities relevant to the area. 4. Motivating improvements to networking etc. 5. Making sure housing officers are aware whether individuals have care / support assessments or plans in place (access to SSA knowledge). 6. Providing local directories of key contacts (current Health & Homeless Action) 7. Supporting the continued development of networks such as 	Yr 1 & on-going	Existing	<p>AHPM/ HPH</p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p> <p>HHG</p> <p>AHPM/</p>

Glossary

AHPM	Area Housing & Property Managers
BSM	Business Support Manager
DCM	Day Centre Manager
CABx	Citizen's Advice Bureau
HAI	Homeless Action Inverness
HHDE	Head of Housing Development & Estates
HHR MG	Highland Housing Register Management Group
HHG	Health & Homeless Group
HOH	Head of Housing
HSG	Homeless Strategy Group
HPH	Housing Policy Officer Homelessness
HPO	Housing Policy Officer
NC	Northern Constabulary
PHOs	The Highland Council's Principal Housing Officers
SSA	Single Shared Assessment
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
SWS	Social Work Services
SWS PO	Social Work Services Policy Officer
SWS CJ	Social Work Services Criminal Justice