

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

**Neath Port Talbot
Homelessness Strategy
2003-2008**

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Partners

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, together with its partners, is committed to delivering the aims of the Homelessness Strategy for the benefit of the people of Neath Port Talbot.

The review of homelessness was undertaken in consultation with the following:

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Homelessness Section
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Homelessness Section Support and Resettlement Team
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Housing Management
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Housing Strategy Team
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Supporting People Team
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council - Strategic Development Officer for Substance Misuse
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Social Services Learning Disabilities Team
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Social Inclusion Unit
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Housing Benefit Department
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Community Mental Health Team
Swansea Housing Association
Dewis
Family Housing Association
Caer Las Cymru (including Routes project)
Gofal Housing Trust
Gwalia Housing Association
Route 16 (Social Services 16+ looked after children and after care service)
Citizens Advice Bureaux (Neath and Port Talbot)
Shelter Cymru
Tai Trothwy - Clarewood Project
Youth Offending Team
Age Concern
Neath MIND
Neath, Port Talbot and Lliw Valley Women's Aid
West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
Neath Port Talbot Crime and Disorder Team
Local Action Team for Jobs
Cymdeithas Tai Hafan

Also in consultation with residents of:

Neath Women's Aid
Beaufort House

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Content	Page
Principles, aims and strategic objectives	4-5
What is homelessness?	6
Introduction	7
Strategic planning frameworks	8
Local Context	9-10
National Context	11-13
Implementation, evaluation and review	14
Action & Development Plan (Target dates, lead, etc. to be completed in conjunction with NPTCBC)	15-25
Appendix 1 Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Review	
Appendix 2 Draft Local Housing Strategy Objectives that relate to Homelessness	

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Principles, aims & strategic objectives

The homelessness strategy is based on the following principles, aims and strategic objectives:

Principles

The strategy is based on:

- The belief that there should be no need for anyone to become homeless or remain homeless due to a lack of accessible, appropriate and co-ordinated services.¹
- Greater choice over accommodation options and the empowerment of those who are homeless and in housing need through individual and collective consultation.

Aims

Through the integrated homelessness strategy and joint working a reduction in homelessness within Neath Port Talbot County Borough will be achieved by:

- Co-ordinating and developing provision and support services with the emphasis on preventing homelessness occurring;
- Ensuring that, where homelessness is unavoidable, suitable emergency accommodation is provided while households are provided with support and opportunities to identify suitable future options;
- Ensuring that, in the event of homelessness occurring, that long-term sustainable solutions that will contribute to the authority's strategies of promoting social inclusion and sustainable communities are available;
- Giving all those who are homeless or in housing need in Neath Port Talbot more choice and control over their options, where appropriate.

Strategic Objectives

The Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy aims to improve homelessness prevention and reduce homelessness by:

1. Improving homelessness procedures and training.
2. Promoting prevention and raising awareness of housing and homelessness services.
3. Developing corporate responsibility, joint working and cross-boundary co-operation.

¹ National Homelessness Strategy, (Welsh Assembly Government, March 2003), p.6.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

4. Developing and maintaining integrated information systems and consultation methods.
5. Continuing to develop Quality Mark independent housing advice and advocacy services.
6. Developing a comprehensive individual planning process to enable people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to manage causal problems and to access services.
7. Continuing to develop and support preventative education initiatives.
8. Ensuring that appropriate support is available to people that are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and that there are no barriers to the access of essential services.
 - Reduce repeat homelessness.
 - Reduce homelessness and repeat homelessness amongst offenders.
 - Reduce homelessness and the recurrence of homelessness amongst young people - through improved accommodation options, support and joint working.
 - Ensure access to support and resettlement services for those with challenging behaviour.
 - Ensure that vulnerable groups have access to specialist services, e.g. domestic violence, alcohol, drug and mental health services, and that integrated services are developed for people with multiple needs.
9. Where homelessness occurs, ensuring that there is sufficient provision of suitable emergency and temporary accommodation.
 - Minimise the use of bed and breakfast services, by developing other more suitable forms of temporary accommodation, and eliminate its use for young people and families in particular.
 - Minimise the need for people to spend time in temporary accommodation.
10. Continuing to reduce homelessness as a result of rent arrears.
11. Ensuring that the private sector offers a viable and sustainable option for people in housing need.
12. Ensuring the ongoing provision of suitable affordable housing in-line with identified needs.
13. Ensuring access to practical help such as bonds/deposits, furniture and other household items, access to health care in order to increase a sustainable housing outcome.
14. Ensuring that services are accessible to disadvantaged groups.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

What is homelessness?

Neath Port Talbot's Homelessness Strategy defines homelessness as: a lack of accommodation or a situation where the tenure is not secure.² The following are examples of people included under this definition:

Homeless people:

- sleeping rough;
- living in insecure/temporary housing (excluding assured/assured shorthold tenants);
- living in short term hostels, night shelters, direct access hostels;
- living in bed and breakfasts;
- moving frequently between relatives/friends squatting;
- unable to remain in, or return to, housing due to poor conditions, overcrowding, affordability problems, domestic violence, harassment, mental, physical and/or sexual abuse etc.

People threatened with homelessness:

- staying in hospitals, police custody or prisons and due for release with no accommodation;
- asked to leave by family/ friends;
- facing possession proceedings, end of short term/limited tenancy, or threat of illegal eviction;
- required to leave owner occupied housing due to possession proceedings;
- required to leave current accommodation due to relationship breakdown.

² Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (Welsh Assembly Government, March 2003).

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Introduction

During 2003 Shelter Cymru, on behalf of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, undertook a review into homelessness in order to develop a comprehensive homelessness strategy to meet the needs of all homeless people in the county borough. This strategy is based on the findings of that review and all partners are committed to delivering the aims of the strategy to the benefit of the people of Neath Port Talbot.³

The *Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Review* (Appendix 1) contains evidence of the audit of services, provision and information that is available to those who are homeless, potentially homeless and in housing need.

The Homelessness Strategy takes account of the views of individuals and organisations within the county borough. A broad range of both voluntary and statutory agencies were consulted, through personal interviews, discussions and correspondence. Consultation was also undertaken with people who had experienced and who were experiencing homelessness. The views of those who responded have been incorporated into the review and have influenced this strategy.

Neath Port Talbot's Homelessness Strategy emphasises the benefits of preventing homelessness and establishing preventative mechanisms at an earlier stage e.g. individual planning, education, independent advice services, information and promotion and an emphasis on the flexible support services necessary to sustain accommodation. This reflects the work of the Homelessness Commission and the vision of the National Homelessness Strategy.⁴

An implementation structure, including a named lead officer from the local authority and the Homelessness Strategy Group will lead the development of the strategy. The group includes a range of agencies with expertise in effectively dealing with homelessness and housing related issues. Regular attendance to relevant meetings will also be encouraged from the Health Service.⁵ The implementation structure will ensure that the strategy is linked into the Local Housing Strategy and other strategic plans.

To be effective, the Homelessness Strategy must be a working document and must remain constantly under review. The strategy sets out actions that will be taken by the Council and partners to achieve the stated aims and objectives. The strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible, and that it continues to prevent homelessness and meet the needs of people who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless.

³ Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Review, (NPTCBC, August 2003)

⁴ op.cit., The Homelessness Commission - Report to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, p.1. Statement by Peter Black AM. National Homelessness Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, March 2003)

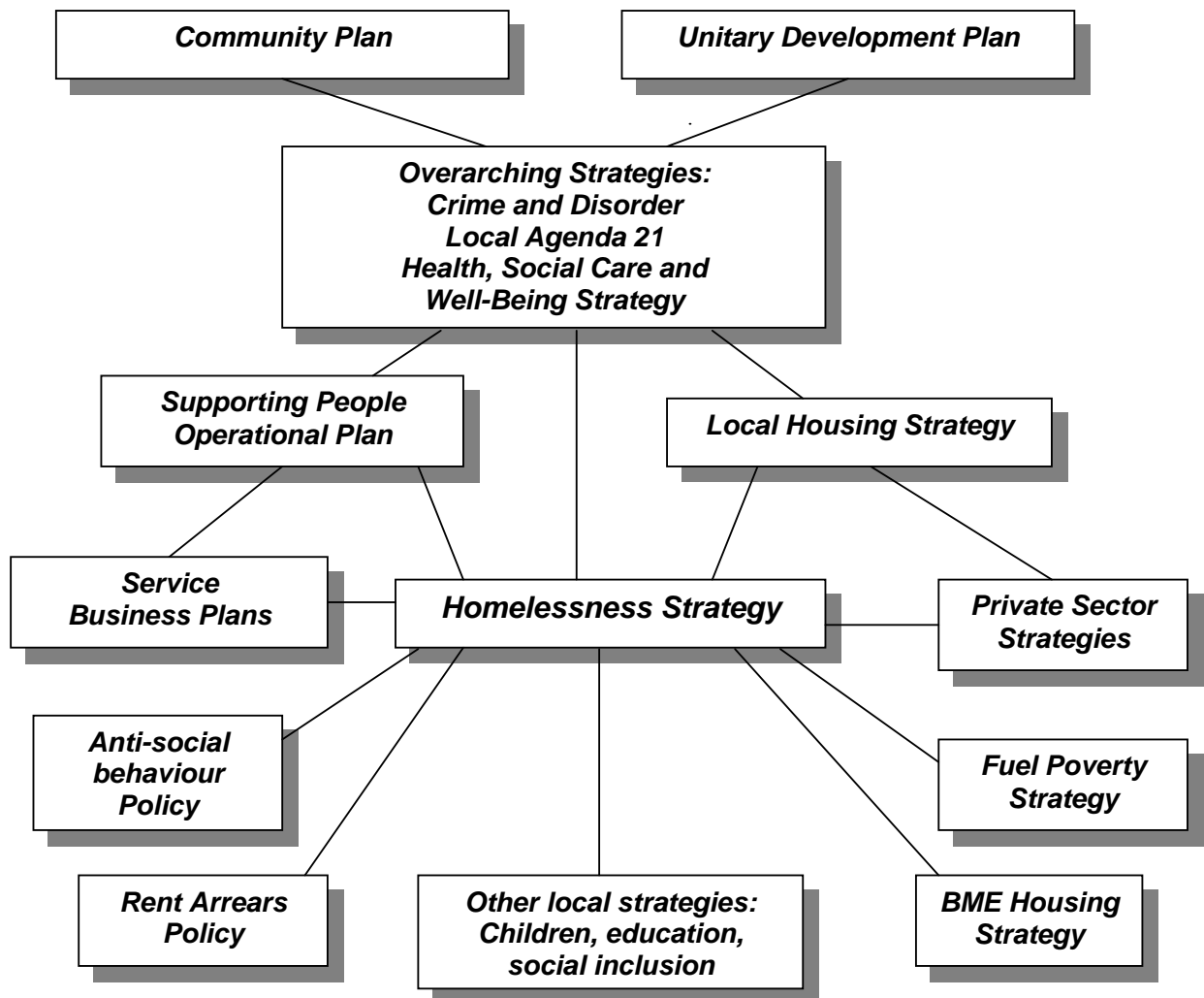
⁵ op.cit., Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness p.41. 8.15. and 8.26., (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003)

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Strategic Planning Framework

The Homelessness Strategy forms an integral part of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's overall vision and plans, and there are existing and developing strategic frameworks in which homelessness is an important concern.⁶

It is crucial that these strategies do not conflict, and effective joint working at a strategic level will ensure that the aims of the Homelessness Strategy are in line with other policies and strategies that have an impact on homelessness.



⁶ op.cit., Code of Guidance for Local Authorities in the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003)

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Local Context

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, as the Strategic Housing Authority for the area, has been charged with the responsibility of producing a Local Housing Strategy. A draft Local Housing Strategy has been produced. It contains many elements and aims to address a broad range of housing issues in a structured, evidence based and appropriately resourced way.

The Homelessness strategy is a sub-strategy of the Local Housing Strategy and is fundamental in achieving the Local Housing Strategy vision statement of: -

“We will endeavour to address housing need and recognise demand for accommodation across all tenures. As the strategic housing authority, we will aim to ensure flexible and sustainable housing provision that reflects the needs of all members of the community and promotes social inclusion. We will achieve this through the spirit of co-operation and partnership working with all organisations and individuals who have a role to play in the process.”

Achieving the Vision:

A total of twelve key aims were put together for the draft Local Housing Strategy. All of the aims are relevant to the homelessness strategy however the following aims are of particular significance

- We will broaden accessibility and choice of housing options for residents of the Borough with the aim of addressing both need and demand requirements.
- We will strive to promote sustainable home ownership and promote and protect investment in the private sector housing stock.
- We will strive to promote a safe, well managed and sustainable private rented sector that enhances choice, reflects local demand and which is effectively regulated to provide an equitable balance between the rights of tenants and the rights of landlords.
- We will assess, identify and source appropriate support for people who need assistance to sustain accommodation, live independently and engage fully with their local community.
- We will seek to address homelessness through providing quality advice and assistance to people who have issues with sustaining their current accommodation, or who have no home.

The Objectives:

The development of the Local Housing Strategy enabled local priorities to be framed in the context of the Community Plan and the National Housing Strategy. For completeness of the Homelessness Strategy, the most relevant objective from the Local Housing Strategy is: -

Through a strategic, targeted response to homelessness in the Borough we will eliminate the need for rough sleeping and reduce and prevent the incidence of homelessness. We will also seek to minimise the impact of homelessness on individuals through support provision.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

There are of course other objectives that are as relevant and are detailed in Appendix 2. It is important to recognise that some objectives are 'cross-cutting' and will link strategies together.

The Role of Social Housing Grant

The Authority has agreed that future SHG priorities will include the development of up to 4 extra care schemes for older people, commencing 2002/2003-2004/2005. Therefore the SHG available for projects arising out of this strategy is constrained. SHG spend will be guided by priorities identified and agreed in the Local Housing Strategy post April 2004.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

National Context

The complex and multi-faceted nature of homelessness means that a broad range of issues affect homeless people and those in housing need. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Homelessness Review identified the needs in the area and the strategy sets out the actions required to tackle those needs. The Homelessness Strategy links local issues within the county borough with the targets and vision established by the Welsh Assembly Government.⁷ National developments include:

Homelessness Act 2002. The act places a duty on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness and to produce a strategy based on the results.⁸ The first homelessness strategy must be implemented by 30 September 2003.

National Homelessness Strategy. This was published in March 2003 and provides an overall vision for homelessness services and the standards expected with regard to prevention, support, emergency accommodation, evictions, education and health, and establishes national targets on some issues.⁹ The local strategy endorses the Welsh Assembly Governments vision and will look to realise this vision on a practical level within Neath Port Talbot.

Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness. The code provides guidance to local authorities on how to discharge their functions and apply statutory criteria in practice. Because many activities regarding homelessness require joint planning and operational co-operation the code is relevant to agencies including registered social landlords, social services departments, health authorities and voluntary sector organisations.

Homeless Persons (Priority Need) (Wales) Order 2001. This Statutory Instrument, implemented from 1 March 2001, introduced new priority needs groups under Section 189(2) of the Housing Act 1996. The groups are:

- a care leaver or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation. 18 or over but under the age of 21.
- a 16 or 17 year old.
- a person fleeing domestic violence or threatened with domestic violence.
- a person homeless after leaving the armed forces.
- a former prisoner homeless after being released from custody.

Supporting People. This programme is central when considering support and prevention within the authority's homelessness strategy. Supporting People is a crucial element of the Government's preventative agenda and seeks to enhance the quality of the services provided to the most vulnerable people. It is anticipated that Supporting People will help vulnerable people to maintain tenancies and prevent homelessness by the provision of flexible support services to meet the identified needs of homeless people and those in housing need in the county borough.

⁷ Better Homes for People in Wales – The National Assembly for Wales' proposals for a National Housing Strategy, (National Assembly for Wales, December 2000), p.12.

⁸ Homelessness Act, clause 1 (1)

⁹ National Homelessness Strategy.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

National Assembly for Wales Homelessness Commission. The Commission formulated guidance on the development of local homelessness strategies. The Commission's definition of homelessness and its draft model strategy are part of the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness.

The Welsh Housing Advice Audit. This emphasised the importance of accessible and independent, specialist housing advice services. Quality marked, independent and accessible housing advice is central to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy.

Plan for Wales 2001. The Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy endorses the overall targets in the plan, in particular relating to sustainability, tackling rough sleeping and achieving reductions in the number of households spending time in temporary accommodation and the length of time spent in it.

Other issues include:

The Welsh Assembly Government plan to improve health. This recognises the importance of tackling health determinants and inequalities - including housing, homelessness and poverty - in order to improve health and well-being.^{10 11} As local authorities and health boards have to develop and implement strategies for Health and Well-being, links with the local homelessness strategy are important in ensuring that both contribute fully to the broader health agenda.

The NHS Wales Resource Allocation Review considered the re-structure of health spending and the allocation of funding to tackle key health determinants. The revised formula for resource allocation was introduced in April 2003.¹²

Key messages in the *'Health and Social Care for Adults: Creating a Unified and Fair System for Assessing and Managing Care - Guidance for Local Authorities and Health Services'* have a bearing on the co-operation and joint working required by health authorities, social services, housing departments and other agencies.¹³

All Wales Mental Health Strategy provides a background for the development of a National Service Framework for adult mental health services in Wales. The consultation document highlights housing and homelessness and the mechanisms for improving services between local authorities and health authorities as priority issues.

¹⁰ A Plan for the NHS with its partners - Improving Health in Wales: A Summary, (National Assembly for Wales, 2001).

¹¹ 'Improving Health in Wales - Structural Change in the NHS in Wales', (National Assembly for Wales 2001), p.9. This recognises the importance of bringing together 'a wide range of local government, public health, housing, social care and community services and voluntary and independent sector providers, working alongside the whole range of NHS services

¹² A Plan for the NHS with its partners - Improving Health in Wales, p.20. (National Assembly for Wales, 2001). In particular, the review is addressing the health needs associated with issues of socio-economic disadvantage and considering approaches to deal with inequalities in health.

¹³ 'Health and Social Care for Adults: Creating a Unified and Fair System for Assessing and Managing Care - Guidance for Local Authorities and Health Services' (Welsh Assembly Government, April 2002). Although principally aimed at older people, the guidance is relevant to all adult service user groups and relates to the range of issues and activities that make up a person's life, including housing, training and education

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and the Housing Act 1996 both introduced measures aimed at helping authorities deal with anti-social behaviour. The Anti-social Behaviour Bill currently being debated at Westminster will also introduce measures aimed at combating anti-social behaviour. These are positive measures to promote social inclusion and cohesive communities and will have a positive impact on housing and homelessness.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Implementation, Evaluation and Review

A named lead officer, leading the Homelessness Strategy Group (HSG), will ensure the progress and development of the Homelessness Strategy. Implementing the strategy will be undertaken within the structure developed for the Local Housing Strategy.

In-line with the 'Wales Programme for Improvement - Guidance for Local Authorities', the HSG will develop a monitoring and evaluation framework including key indicators.¹⁴ Recommendations in the action plan are measured by targets and timescales and an annual report on activities and progress against key indicators will be produced. The HSG will ensure that those responsible for the action plan are taking appropriate action on meeting activities and targets.

- Lead officers from the local authority and partner agencies are responsible for ensuring the implementing of specific targets in the action plan and reporting back to the HSG.
- The HSG and any working groups are responsible for activities and targets within the action plan and developing indicators to measure the impact of the work undertaken.
- Regular feedback from the Local Authority Lead Officer will provide an update of progress.
- An annual review of the strategy will be undertaken.

¹⁴ The National Assembly for Wales Circular 18/2002. Local Government Act 1999: Wales Programme for Improvement - Guidance for Local Authorities, (Welsh Assembly Government, June 2002), p.25.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Action & Development Plan

Over the next five years the following action and development plan is to be undertaken to ensure the realisation of the aims of the strategy. As the strategy evolves to account for changing need this action plan will also develop.

An overall indication of progress can be gained through key indicators that will be developed by the HSG. Further indicators and targets will be developed and introduced by the HSG as the strategy develops. The development of common recording and broad use of individual assessments will be invaluable in providing improved information on need and strategic information for the future development of the homelessness strategy.

The key indicators to be developed are not intended to provide a comprehensive report of progress. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and partners collect and analyse detailed information on housing and homelessness issues, the strategy includes actions to improve data collection, and the HSG will ensure that an annual review of the strategy is undertaken and a report on activities, developments and outcomes in respect of the targets is produced. The HSG provides an arena in which all relevant organisations can track performance.

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

Action & Development Plan

Objective	Target	Resources	Lead
1. Prevention			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop training programmes for all officers contributing to the delivery of homelessness services. ➤ Obtain commitment from other housing providers ➤ Professional training of health care staff 	Corporate training programme CHA Accreditation Scheme		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement the changes to the allocations procedures as required by the Homelessness Act. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a transparent suspension policy in partnership with RSL's to ensure that exclusions/suspensions are kept to a minimum. 	CHA to specify nominations agreement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote services to: - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residents in all tenures 2. Partners inc RSLs 3. Corporately 	Manual Website link One stop shop		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish early intervention by developing links with the youth 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop an independent mediation service. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure information is provided in a standardised and accessible format that meets the communication capabilities of the recipient. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Swift decisions on housing benefit claims. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop Tenancy Support schemes 	Increase no of		

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

	places Extend the working hours Private rented sector.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve access to independent housing advice and advocacy services ➤ Promote telephone housing advice lines. ➤ Explore options for delivering housing advice e.g. through ICT developments. ➤ Develop the provision of debt and welfare benefits advice. ➤ Provide support services that meet multiple needs at levels appropriate to need, from lower level 'mainstream' support to more specialist support for high level needs. 			
2. Provide choice and control over housing options			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop personal housing plans ➤ Ensure that housing services and other housing providers prioritise homeless applicants. ➤ Housing providers to offer suitable accommodation ➤ Formalise nominations agreements with Registered Social Landlords. ➤ Develop links with private sector landlords ➤ Develop partnerships with private sector developers 	PHP's Allocations Policy Choice based lettings scheme CHA		
3. Provide support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to enable them to access essential services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for more supported accommodation for 16/17 year olds. • Develop resettlement, support, advice, advocacy, training and education services for ex-offenders as part of Supporting People Planning Process. 			

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the resettlement protocol for offenders with short-term sentences. Issues such as the MARAC, Public Protection and Crime and Disorder will also be considered. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the Women's Aid resettlement and support initiatives Develop support projects for women fleeing domestic violence and who misuse drugs and/or alcohol. Consider the needs of older people/older children/BME individuals/families fleeing violence Monitor services and identify areas for service development 	Supporting People Planning Process.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the service needs of men fleeing domestic violence Develop semi-independent move-on accommodation as a step between temporary accommodation and permanent housing. Provide a single point of access into mental health services, with the aim of ensuring equitable access. 	Domestic Violence Forum		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and formalize procedures for the joint assessment of applicants by the housing service and social services teams. 	The Access Team		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop protocols for the management of services to people with dual diagnosis. These will address referral arrangements, assessments, confidentiality and hospital and prison discharge. Develop tenancy support in the private rented sector. Promotion of health care services in temporary accommodation Develop a joint protocol for the placement of children in need in temporary accommodation. 			
<p>4. Ensure that there is sufficient provision of suitable emergency and temporary accommodation</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconvene the Accommodation Providers' Forum. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more flexible housing options 	Domestic Violence		

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For people fleeing domestic violence. 2. To minimise the use of bed and breakfast for families 	Forum		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a regular review of rough sleeping, employing the combination survey method. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a centrally located wet/dry house for people with substance misuse problems and work in partnership with the Looked After Team, Supporting People Team. • Develop links with accredited landlords within the private rented sector • Attract funding by linking evidence of unmet need with the SPOP and local Housing Strategy 	SHG programme		
5. Ensure long-term sustainable solutions promoting social inclusion and sustainable communities.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links with accredited landlords within the private rented sector to ensure alternative housing options. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the provision of affordable housing through the Community Housing Agreement. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a common housing register and choice based lettings systems. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a Housing Market Analysis 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and evidence the need for a bond scheme that caters for people who are 25+. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot and monitor the development of a furnished tenancy scheme. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the DWP to develop clear guidance for agencies and individuals who are applying to the Social Fund in respect of procedures and the decision-making process. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCHO initiatives 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of section 106 Policy 			
6. Ensure that Homelessness services are of high quality and accessible to all.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the resourcing of the Homelessness Section in order to effectively incorporate the new duties in the Homelessness Act 2002 			

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve the structure, efficiency and accessibility of the out-of-hours service 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the availability of bilingual (Welsh/English) services and information. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider use of other languages, format, large print, Braille, audio, pictorial, plain language standards etc. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of services for asylum seekers and refugees. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the accommodation and service needs of gypsy and traveller households. • Contribute to the review of existing accommodation provision e.g. site design etc. to be undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government. (Recommendation 8 within the WAG report Review of Service Provision for Gypsies and Travellers, WAG April 2003.) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the housing and support needs of lesbians, gay men, bisexual people and trans-sexual people, and seek advice on the sensitive monitoring of enquiries/applications. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the delivery of services in outlying areas and identify opportunities for improvements e.g. outreach, telephone advice. • Develop a joint working protocol to clarify responsibilities and referral agreements across the statutory and voluntary sectors • Develop joint working agreements between the housing service and social services teams, and comply with existing protocols on housing and homelessness • Develop a protocol between the Housing Service, Probation Service and other organisations in respect of available and developing services for ex-offenders, risk assessment and responsibilities through the Supporting People planning process. • Consider the development of a Homelessness Referral Service that will enable individuals to access a range of services at one point of entry. 			
<p>7. Monitoring</p>			

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the effectiveness of procedures in respect of the taking of homelessness applications and the enhanced advice and assistance duties introduced in the Homelessness Act. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data gathered from the Supporting People NME in identifying support needs and gaps in the provision of support to inform the development of future services. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor the use of services by homeless households • Housing Services to develop an information system to monitor repeat homelessness presentation. <p>Work in partnership with the Supporting People Team to amend and update the needs mapping exercise form to include circumstances such as homelessness and repeat homelessness.</p> <p>Undertake monitoring of homeless services, from reception to advice and assistance, in order to ensure the effective transfer of calls and the advice and assistance provided.</p> <p>Consult with other providers to consider means of consolidating the recording of data and the implementation of common monitoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement systems for monitoring and evaluation for the effective review of the strategy. <p>Develop key indicators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the provision of tenancy support to residents in all tenures and feed identified need for further development into the Supporting People Planning process • Monitor the impact and outcomes of the existing Tenancy Support Scheme. • Monitor existing and developing temporary accommodation provision that is appropriate and suitable for individual needs and to monitor the ongoing needs in respect of this. • Monitor the existing supported lodgings scheme and look at routes of access and potential development opportunities. • Monitor data gathered through Supporting People • Monitor the voluntary accreditation scheme • Monitor affordability and pressures on the private sector housing stock. • Monitor the existing bond board scheme and its links to other services • Common monitoring will include provision for the collection of data on enquiries/applications by asylum seekers, refugees and other ethnic minority 			

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

<p>groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a benchmark for progress of the commitment to reduce action taken against tenants in rent arrears with the development of tenancy and other support services. 			
<p>8.Strategic Links</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the Homelessness Strategy Group as a platform for development ➤ Ensure that homelessness is addressed in other strategies and that these are linked with the Homelessness Strategy. ➤ Develop links with the Young People Partnership, Youth Strategy, the Youth Offending Team and other relevant partnerships and plans including, the Joint Mental Health Planning Group, BME Housing Strategy, and appropriate services relevant to older people and people with disabilities. ➤ Develop closer inter-agency working, with an emphasis on communication and information sharing. ➤ Develop a more corporate vision of homelessness and housing services. ➤ Through the Community Plan review process, highlight the direct and positive benefits that preventing homelessness and improving house conditions have on increasing social inclusion and sustainability, and that these are reflected within the messages in the Community Plan. ➤ Ensure the identified need for direct access accommodation and temporary accommodation suitable for people with high support needs is reflected in the SPOP to ensure future consideration for SHG funding ➤ Ensure private sector/public protection representation on the Homelessness Strategy Group ➤ Ensure that the housing needs of vulnerable groups are recognized and acted upon in the Local Housing Strategy. ➤ Develop links between the Local Health Board, NHS Trust and the Homelessness Strategy Group e.g. LHB representation at relevant meetings ➤ Assess the need for suitable housing for disabled people by way of housing need assessment and survey, and link with the Local Housing Strategy. ➤ Develop a move-on strategy ➤ Ensure housing benefit office representation on the Homelessness Strategy Group ➤ link the health needs of homeless people into the development of the Health, Social Care and 	<p>Homelessness Strategy Group</p>		

Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy

<p>Well-Being Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cross-boundary working e.g. to develop services for ex-offenders who originate from or have a local connection with Neath Port Talbot. ➤ Organise an annual Homelessness Strategy Day – discuss progress against targets, develop future policies/plans and ideas - raise awareness and corporate responsibility. ➤ Through the Supporting People Planning Process, research the need for accommodation for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. people with mental health problems; 2. people with learning disabilities; 3. people with drug and/or alcohol addictions. <p>Feed the findings of the above into the Supporting People and Social Housing Grant frameworks.</p>			