

**City of Westminster**

**2004/05 Homelessness Strategy Update**

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## Foreword

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**From Councillor Angela Harvey,  
Cabinet Member for Housing**

### Introduction

Last year we set out our strategy for tackling homelessness in Westminster. Homelessness is a massive problem here in central London, and there is no simple solution. That is why our strategy aims to tackle homelessness on a number of fronts simultaneously – preventing people from becoming homeless; supporting those who are homeless; and increasing the supply of affordable accommodation. We have begun to see some results from our efforts over the past year and homelessness remains an issue that is a very high priority for the City Council and our partners.

### Achievements

We met the Government's deadline for moving families with children out of bed & breakfast hotels and into more suitable accommodation. Even with the support of funding from the Homelessness Directorate, this was no mean feat in Westminster, where market pressures have meant that we have been reliant on bed & breakfast accommodation to meet rapidly rising homelessness demand for many years.

As the borough with the highest number of rough sleepers in the country, another very significant achievement last year was that we were able to move over 650 rough sleepers off the streets and into accommodation. Despite this, the number of people sleeping on the streets of Westminster remains high. This year we will be continuing our drive to reduce this number and maintain it below 100.

Last year's strategy focussed our attention on homelessness prevention and as a result we established a dedicated prevention team at the Assessment & Advice Service. In its first year, the team was successful in preventing or delaying homelessness in over 130 cases through home visits, mediation, fast-tracking Housing Benefit claims and intervention in private sector tenancy issues. Such results are very encouraging.

We will be introducing further changes at the Assessment & Advice Service this year, as we transform it into a 'Housing Options' service where people will be assisted to explore the various housing options that may be available to them both in Westminster and elsewhere. A significant change will be the relocation of this service to purpose-built office accommodation in Lisson Grove, adjacent to our Social Services "Care First" building. We hope that the co-location of homelessness and social care services will be of benefit to both service users and staff.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing in an area like Westminster is a difficult task, but one at which we have had some success. 213 new units of permanent accommodation were developed last year and 98 empty homes brought back into use.

Our supply of good quality, self-contained temporary accommodation has also been increased over the past year, making the lives of its residents much more stable and greatly improving quality of life. In Westminster people live in temporary accommodation for many years before a permanent homes becomes available, so the quality and stability of our temporary accommodation supply is very important.

During the year we also opened a new 24-hour supported temporary accommodation scheme for clients with severe and enduring mental illness. This service, managed by Look Ahead Housing and Care, supports 12 people to manage their mental illness and prepare a move to more secure accommodation.

We have undertaken a major review of the hostel sector in Westminster, and are very pleased that our hostels are about to receive a much needed funding boost. We have been able to secure a substantial sum of money from the Government for capital investment to improve hostel accommodation and make them more suitable for 21<sup>st</sup> century living.

Access to health services for homeless people is another area in which we have focused attention in the past year. Westminster primary care trusts have been successfully running two pilot schemes to increase access to GP services in the City's homeless day centres and at Great Chapel Street Medical Centre, primarily for hostel residents and rough sleepers. The Health Support Team has continued to provide valuable outreach services to homeless families in temporary accommodation, linking them into mainstream health and support services.

### **The Way Forward**

This update to the Homelessness Strategy sets out the achievements over the past year and the key outcomes to be delivered to tackle the challenges in homeless prevention, provision of accommodation and support for the homeless.

Our strategy is based on the strong partnerships that exist in Westminster and it is through working together that we continue to tackle homelessness on a number of fronts.

We continue to lobby Government to recognise the very high demands placed on homelessness services in central London and that the focus on these issues in recent years needs to be sustained in the years to come.

We have had a very positive first year in delivering our strategy and in Westminster – in the City Council and in our partner agencies – we look forward to further progress.

**Cllr Angela Harvey**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing**

## Introduction

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The five year Homelessness Strategy was a major undertaking, developed by a multi-agency partnership group and it received positive feedback from stakeholders and ODPM. Whilst the full strategy is a five year document, it was agreed during the development process that an annual update would be completed for the following reasons:

- The pace of change (the demographics of homelessness, new policy initiatives, new service developments) within a complex environment
- To review the achievements over the past year
- Review targets previously set for 2004/05
- Identify new future goals
- High corporate and financial priority

The five year strategy was structured around seven key themes and this update follows that format. Within each theme there is a summary highlighting the key issues and a review of the achievements during the past year. Key actions and developments in 2004/05 which will be central to the delivery of quality homelessness services in Westminster are included in an action plan for each theme.

### Strategy Development and Consultation

Three workshops have been held in temporary accommodation hotels and hostels, attended by over seventy residents. These focused on the key issues of

homelessness prevention, support and tenancy sustainment and successfully identified the key priorities highlighted in this update.

The steering group that oversaw the development of the strategy has continued to meet to drive forward its implementation, and to ensure that new issues are addressed and opportunities seized. The group includes representation from:

- Westminster Primary Care Trust
- Voluntary sector
- The Assessment and Advice Service
- Social and Community Services
- Education
- Housing Partnerships

The update itself has also been taken to a variety of fora across the City including: the Rough Sleepers Steering Group; Homelessness Health Partnership Group; Assessment & Advice Service Users' Group; Supported Housing Provider Forum; Children and Families Management Team in Social and Community Services; and the cross departmental Mobile Pupils Strategy Group.

### Health and Homelessness

This strategy update has been produced in close partnership with the Westminster Primary Care Trust and this is reflected in the expanded health and homelessness section of the update.

## Theme 1: Homelessness Prevention

### Summary

The prevention of homelessness continues to be the central focus for the City of Westminster's Homelessness Strategy. As can be seen from our achievements and the key actions, the lead for this work is with the Assessment and Advice Centre (A&A) and the range of prevention services provided there.

2004/05 will see this work further developed and a key action is the move of A&A to new offices in Frampton Street and co-location with Social Services teams, and the re-launch of A&A as a Housing Options service. Prevention services continue to be provided by a range of other agencies across the City and the development of systems to measure the outcome of such work will be important in 2004/05.

### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- Homelessness Prevention Team established at A&A to develop a culture of homeless prevention.
- 197 home visits were undertaken for homelessness that resulted from exclusion by parents, relatives or friends. Homelessness was prevented in 40 cases.
- Overall, 134 cases of homelessness were delayed or prevented through the work of the prevention team.
- Introduced a HB fast-tracking and Discretionary HB payments protocol that was successful in preventing loss of private sector tenancies in 15 cases.
- Less than 3% of homeless presentations were of repeat homelessness

### Key Actions 2004/05

Action	Responsibility
1. Successfully relocate the Assessment and Advice service to new offices in Lisson Grove, re-launching the Assessment and Advice service as 'Housing Options' service	Housing Partnerships/ A&A
2. Identify how co-location of A&A and Social Services can bring practical benefits to service management	A&A/ Social Services
3. Build on and develop the work of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prevention team and home visits</li> <li>▪ Probation housing advice</li> <li>▪ Mediation service</li> <li>▪ Connexions advisor</li> <li>▪ Education liaison officer</li> </ul>	A&A/ Inner London Probation Service/ Connexions/ Education
4. Develop responses to identified causes of repeat homelessness	Housing Partnerships/ A&A

5.	Further strengthen links between A&A and Housing Benefit service to develop a protocol to prevent homelessness due to HB arrears, and revise and improve the DHP fast-track process	A&A/ HB Policy
6.	Link with rough sleepers strategy to secure access to hostel accommodation for rough sleepers who present at A&A	Housing Partnerships/ A&A/ Hostels Thamesreach Bondway
7.	Strengthen links between Tenancy Relations Officers and Environmental Health to address issues relating to standards of accommodation in private sector housing and improve accommodation over licensed premises	A&A/ Environmental Health
8.	Through the development of the 'Housing Options' service implement Choice Based Lettings, to empower homeless clients to make decisions based on an understanding of the options for rehousing and their likely length of stay in temporary accommodation	A&A
9.	Encourage other homelessness agencies to develop comprehensive systems for measuring the outcomes of preventative work	Housing Partnerships
10.	Assess the homelessness impact of the proposed introduction of rent sanctions for unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and develop a plan to address this.	Environmental Health/ Housing Partnerships
11.	Run education/information campaign on the realities of homelessness to discourage potentially homeless people from coming to Westminster	Housing Partnerships/ A&A

## Theme 2: Provision, Access and Allocation of Accommodation

### Summary

The provision of good quality accommodation for homeless households and specialist services for particular groups and vulnerable people is a key priority and much has been achieved in 2003/04. Proposed changes to the Housing Benefit subsidy regime and how benefit payments are made from April 2006 could have great impact on provision of accommodation for homeless households in Westminster and this is a priority of our lobbying strategy.

The implementation of Choice Based lettings in 2004/05 will also have a significant influence on our strategy and presents a major opportunity to increase choice and mobility in social housing in Westminster. Completion of an Equality Impact Assessment will ensure all people are able to utilise the new system.

### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- Meeting the Bed and Breakfast Unit target that no family is placed in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks.
- Opening of a 24 hour supported housing service, managed by Look Ahead Housing and Care and funded by Supporting People, to cater for single homeless people with severe and enduring mental illness.
- Procurement of an additional 442 self-contained units of TA and private sector leased accommodation against a target of 275, contributing to net savings of £3.2m against the original temporary accommodation budget.
- 213 new units of permanent affordable housing procured, and 98 empty homes brought back into use.
- Choice Based lettings successfully piloted in sheltered and supported housing and preparations well underway for a full launch in Autumn 2004.

### Key Actions 2004/05

Action	Responsibility
1. Implement the Choice Based lettings scheme City-wide	Housing Partnerships/ A&A
2. Maximise supply of affordable housing and effectively lobby for positive delivery of sub-regional agenda	Housing Partnerships/ Housing Strategy
3. Deliver 190 units of new affordable housing in 2004/05	Housing Partnerships
4. Develop the range of suitable housing options for teenage parents	Housing Partnerships/ Social Services

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5.	Consider ALMO 'Plus' opportunities to increase permanent rehousing opportunities	Housing Strategy/ CityWest Homes
6.	Examine Social & Community Services land holdings/other development opportunities and use of disposals receipts for new affordable housing provision	Housing Partnerships/ Corporate Property
7.	Maximise opportunities to develop new affordable housing through review of WCC sheltered/supported housing	Housing Partnerships/ CityWest Homes

### Theme 3: Support for the Homeless

#### Summary

The development of the 2004/05 Supporting People Strategy demonstrates how the commissioning of supported housing services is becoming an increasing part of the mainstream of service delivery to vulnerable people.

A large number of new initiatives are taking place and key developments include the completion and implementation of a review of hostel services and the Supporting People reviews of single homeless services. The development of the 2005-10 Supporting People Strategy will consolidate this work.

Domestic Violence will be a focus for our work this year - a detailed action plan has been drawn up to improve the range and quality of domestic violence services.

#### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- Identification of funding from the City Council, Westminster PCT and Homelessness Directorate for a floating support service for vulnerable people in bed and breakfast.
- Inter-agency training provided on new Child Protection Guidance and All London Child Protection Procedures.
- Outreach worker appointed to undertake review of training needs of B&B residents and training packages tailored accordingly.
- The Severe and Enduring mental Illness (SEMI) scheme enables joint working to access accommodation and community services for homeless people with severe and enduring mental illness.
- The St Mungo's Tenancy Sustainment Team continues to achieve tenancy retention rates of over 97% for former rough sleepers resettled through the clearing house system.

#### Key Actions 2004/05

Action	Responsibility
1. Review the quality and range of domestic violence services	Housing Partnerships/ A&A/ WDVF
2. Complete the Supporting People reviews of single homeless and young persons' services, implementing the findings of the hostels review and improving service delivery	Housing Partnerships
3. Successful implementation of NOTIFY the web-based information and notification system which notifies relevant services of the placement or movement of statutorily homeless households living in temporary accommodation in London.	A&A/ Social Services/ PCT

4. Develop the 2005-10 Supporting People Strategy, in particular focusing on the provision of support for homeless people	Housing Partnerships
5. Commission a research project into worklessness among our statutory homeless population; implement links with employment services for homeless people, in particular through developing the use of foyers and Business in Action; encouraging employers to offer training and work experience to homeless clients where appropriate and working with Jobcentre Plus on the Progress2work scheme and their initiative to encourage lone parents to return to re-join the labour market	Housing Partnerships/ Housing Strategy/ A&A/ Economic Development
6. Extend the range and location of HB Verification Officers to simplify processing	HB Policy
7. Extend coverage of multi-agency advice sessions to south of the City	A&A/ PCT/ Voluntary sector
8. Investigate the concept of support "dowries" for clients placed out of borough and how they might be introduced	Housing Partnerships/ Housing Strategy

## Theme 4: Homelessness and Health

### Summary

Health inequalities were made a key priority for the NHS in the Department of Health's "Priorities and Planning Framework 2003-06". Homeless populations are identified within this document as being among the vulnerable groups for whom targeted interventions may be needed to address specific needs and poor health outcomes.

In March 2004 the ODPM and DoH launched 'Achieving positive shared outcomes in health and homelessness', guidance for local authorities, PCTs and other partners. The outcomes suggested by the guidance are consistent with those of the DoH planning framework outlined above. The five key positive outcomes that health and homelessness partnerships might work towards are:

- Improving access to primary health care for homeless people
- Improving health care for homeless families in temporary accommodation
- Improving substance misuse treatment for homeless people.
- Improving mental health treatment for homeless people
- Prevent homelessness through appropriate, targeted health support

In this chapter we have expanded on our health and homelessness theme from last year, to reflect the new guidance and to highlight the priority these issues are given by the City Council, the Primary Care Trust and other partners.

### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- Introduction of a strategic lead within the PCT Directorate of Public Health to focus on health among homeless populations.
- The PCT-led Personal Medical Services Pilot that provides targeted health care to homeless populations entered its second year in October 2003, and is now achieving greater coverage and providing services of improved quality and greater range.
- Five out of the six targeted primary care facilities are now linked to a shared IT server to aid continuity of care.
- The Health Support Team (HST) achieved a success rate of 90% in ensuring that clients without a GP have secured permanent registration when discharged by the Team.
- A health visitor with a mental health nursing qualification was successfully recruited to the HST and is developing links with mental health services to address the needs of B&B residents.
- The PCT is working in conjunction with the Discharge Planning Team at St Mary's Hospital to improve continuity of care following discharge.
- A Lunchtime Learning Programme targets all people working with homeless people, refugees and asylum seekers. Advice sessions for staff have been provided in local hostels (such as St. Mungo's and WWA) in order to provide specific health needs training.
- The establishment of GP clinics in A&E departments out of hours, and NHS walk-in centres at Soho and South Westminster.
- The establishment of front line workers forum for health professionals working with homeless people, to facilitate effective partnership working; identify solutions to existing problematical issues; and facilitate the involvement of front line professionals in setting the strategic agenda.

**Key Actions 2004/05**

Action	Responsibility
1. Review the operations of the Health Support Team to ensure that services are focused on those most in need, regardless of their geographical location within Westminster.	WPCT
2. Introduce and establish the National Enhanced Scheme, encouraging mainstream GP practices to register those in hostels, hotels and B&Bs on a permanent basis, allowing continuity of care.	WPCT
3. Upgrade the IT at the sixth and final site of the PCT led PMS Pilot, to enable linkage to the other five sites, to improve continuity of care.	WPCT
4. Recruit a Clinical Manager to oversee and develop the PCT led PMS+ Pilot.	WPCT
5. To review and develop the work of the outreach service within the Health Support Team.	WPCT
6. To establish a minimum standard for health checks when vulnerable persons first attend a GP practice.	WPCT
7. To explore opportunities for GP and/or nursing outreach in hostels for homeless women, through the PCT-led PMS Pilot.	WPCT
8. To ensure that existing out of hours provision is appropriate and effective in the provision of health care for homeless people.	WPCT
9. Develop a specialist rehabilitation function prior to discharge for rough sleepers admitted to acute mental health provision	CNWL
10. To develop existing learning opportunities for health professionals regarding the needs of the broad homeless population.	WPCT
11. Review the evidence base for the impact that leisure and cultural interventions can have for improving health outcomes for homeless populations.	WPCT
12. Nominate lead health homelessness professionals, e.g. for dentistry, physiotherapy, opticians, diabetes.	WPCT
13. To tender and establish the temporary accommodation floating support service and develop and establish the Harrow Road single vulnerable support services	Housing Partnerships/ Social Services/ WPCT/ Mental Health Trust
14. To develop Risk Assessment tools for the HST Outreach Team and increase liaison with mental health teams.	WPCT
14. Assess the health needs of all notifications in Westminster made through NOTIFY	WPCT

## Theme 5: Youth Homelessness

### Summary

An important current development is the agreement with Centrepont that homeless 16/17 year olds will be referred to Berwick Street hostel which provides 24-hour supported accommodation. This will prevent immediate use of B&B hotels for these vulnerable young people, will ensure best use is made of this valuable resource and will enable family reconciliation services to be delivered in partnership between Centrepont and A&A. This positive development underlines the importance in 2004/05 of developing further the use of initiatives such as foyers, Safestop and supported lodgings to improve the range and quality of services provided to young offenders, teenage parents, care leavers and families with children.

In February 2004 Safe in the City (SITC) announced that it would cease to trade from April 2004. Whilst disappointing, this has afforded the opportunity to commission youth homeless prevention services directly in partnership with the City Council's Education Directorate, Youth Service and the voluntary sector, taking forward the model and research developed by SITC.

### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- Partnership with Centrepont for homeless 16/17 year olds
- Through effective partnership working, the Education Liaison Officer at A&A, ensured access to education for pupils in temporary accommodation via the Pupils without School Places panel.
- Young homeless people presenting at A&A are referred to a dedicated caseworker who provides support in TA and works closely with our Connexions Personal Advisor to assess housing and support needs. Approximately 120 young people were assisted in 2003/04.

### Key Actions 2004/05

Action	Responsibility
1. Implement the partnership with Centrepont to make best use of their hostel, supported housing and floating support services for young people	Housing Partnerships/ A&A/ Social Services/ Centrepont
2. Analyse the case histories of 16/17 year old homeless applicants to identify trends in housing histories and previous contact with services and develop a strategy for prevention of homelessness	Housing Partnerships/ Social Services

3. Identify the means to progress the youth homeless prevention strategy, making use of SITC knowledge and model	Housing Partnerships/ Social Services
4. Through the development of the Education Liaison Officer annual work plan and the Pupils without a School Place Panel, ensure access to education for children in homeless families	A&A/ Education
5. Through the Mobile Pupil's Working Group monitor and minimise the numbers of children in temporary accommodation without a school place	Housing Partnerships/ Education
6. Commission Cardinal Hume Centre to provide a full range of homeless family support services in the South of the Borough	Housing Partnerships/ Cardinal Hume Centre
7. Evaluate outcomes and benefits of the following projects and consider funding their expansion/extension to allow greater numbers of young people to benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Stop</li> <li>• Trainee flat</li> <li>• Supported lodging services for young people</li> </ul>	Housing Partnerships/ Social Services
8. Further develop citizenship and peer mentoring programmes in schools	A&A/ Education

## Theme 6: Rough Sleeping

### Summary

Rough sleeping continues to have a very high profile within Westminster and whilst there have been significant achievements in 2003/04, the most recent official count in April 2004 identified 175 rough sleepers in the City.

It is envisaged that as the street service contract becomes more established, the move to building based service provision will contribute towards the delivery of the target of reducing the number of rough sleepers to less than one hundred.

A positive financial development during the year was a successful bid to Government for capital funds to improve the quality and contribution of hostel services in Westminster. This is a four year programme and the funding will be used to tackle physical deficiencies that have a detrimental effect on the quality of the support service, and to reshape hostel services as a whole in line with the Council's strategic objectives on single homelessness.

### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- 654 rough sleepers have moved into accommodation in 2003/04, including 190 permanently housed via the clearing house
- 50 rough sleepers supported at Hopkinson House street drinking service
- The Joint Homeless Team received 237 referrals in 2003 of which 91% were rough sleepers.
- Over 500 service users (rough sleepers and those vulnerably housed) attend day centres each day (where resettlement services are provided)
- 24 people with 'no fixed address' rehoused through Assessment and Advice
- With St Mungo's, established a wet day centre that has worked with 39 homeless people affected by the controlled drinking zone
- Homeless Arrest and Reachout Team offer a range of alternative options to the Judicial System for rough sleepers.
- TRB commissioned to provide a new street services and hot spot targeting contract
- A partnership with St Mungo's to provide a rolling shelter for entrenched rough sleepers which housed 256 people in the first nine months of operation
- Launch of a 24-hour helpline, following extensive piloting early in 2004, for rough sleeping and street activity issues. From 6 Jan to 6 April 04 the Rough Sleepers Helpline received 188 calls
- Successful partnership working between a wide range of local authority, voluntary sector, police, probation, and healthcare services to deliver the above achievements
- Over 100 newly arrived rough sleepers reconnected with appropriate services in their place of origin.

**Key Actions 2004/05**

Action	Responsibility
1. Plan a move to a building-based provision of services for rough sleepers away from street service provision	Housing Partnerships
2. Reduce and sustain the numbers of people sleeping rough to less than 100	Housing Partnerships/ Thamesreach Bondway
3. Enforce the application of the city-wide controlled drinking zone.	Housing Partnerships/ Community Protection/ Metropolitan Police
4. Increase the number of Supporting People beds for substance misusers	Housing Partnerships/ Social Services
5. Implement the outcome of the review of hostel services	Housing Partnerships
6. Seek to establish short term assessment units within existing hostel provision	Housing Partnerships/ Voluntary sector
7. Seek to develop a specialist mental health project to accommodate rough sleepers with a dual diagnosis or complex needs who are currently excluded from existing services	Housing Partnerships/ Mental Health Trust
8. Make best use of capital monies available from ODPM to develop hostel provision to deliver improved front line service delivery	Housing Partnerships
9. Identify blocks to move-on from hostel services and identify solutions to address this	Housing Partnerships/ Voluntary sector
10. Work with neighbouring boroughs and ODPM to address cross authority rough sleeping issues	Housing Partnerships/ ODPM/ Partner boroughs

## Theme 7: Homelessness, Crime and Offending

### Summary

The focus of our work on homelessness and crime has been to provide intensive housing casework services to ex-offenders to prevent them becoming homeless. An A&A advice officer has been seconded to the Inner London Probation service and has achieved very positive results. This service will be reviewed in 2004/05 to ensure it continues to meet our strategic objectives.

The outcome of the hostels review and the Supporting People reviews of single homeless services will assess the current numbers of offenders accessing supported housing bedspaces, the potential for increasing this and formalising referral and access arrangements.

### Key Achievements in 2003/04

- 268 clients were referred to our Housing Advice caseworker based at the Probation service, two-thirds with a local connection to Westminster. 136 clients were successfully referred to hostel accommodation, while 17 clients were assessed as homeless and referred to A&A for further assistance.
- SP review of Nacro service for offenders identified that the service was of good quality and provided value for money with the opportunity to provide additional floating support services. The Probation advice worker has also been able to enhance the access available to Nacro accommodation for our clients.
- In a partnership between the Police, Community Safety, Social and Community Services and Housing Partnerships, the Crack house protocol was successfully introduced. This has a clear focus on both community concerns and the vulnerability of the occupier.
- Launch of anti-begging and anti-social street activity campaigns

### Key Actions 2004/05

Action	Responsibility
1. Review and develop the range of options for people at risk of offending	Housing Partnerships/ A&A/ Inner London Probation
2. Review the Probation Housing Advice Service	A&A/ Inner London Probation
3. Investigate a protocol for targeting housing advice to offenders entering prison who are at risk of losing accommodation	A&A/ Inner London Probation

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4. Through hostels review, explore opportunities for increasing bedspaces available to ex-offenders	Housing Partnerships Voluntary Sector
5. Enhance links between A&A and estate teams to target early intervention on anti-social behaviour that has the potential to lead to eviction and subsequent homelessness	A&A/ CityWest Homes
6. Develop further the partnership working within the Crack House Protocol	Crack House Protocol Partners
7. Following the SP review develop the referral and access arrangements into the Nacro services, meeting the priorities of the Probation service	Housing Partnerships/ Inner London Probation

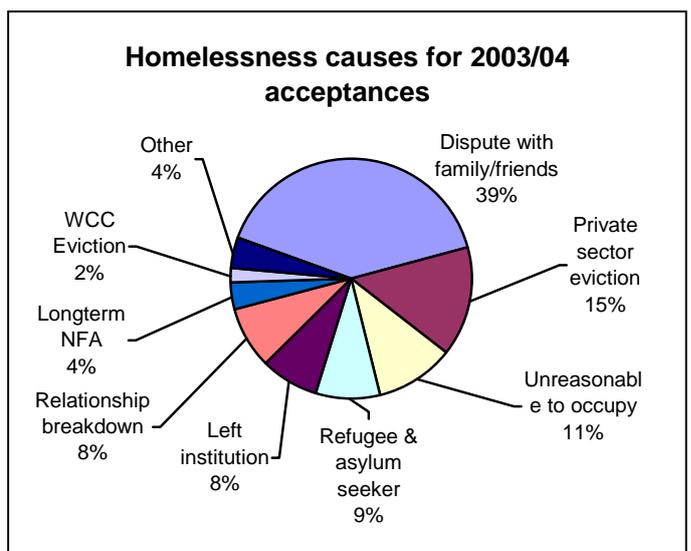
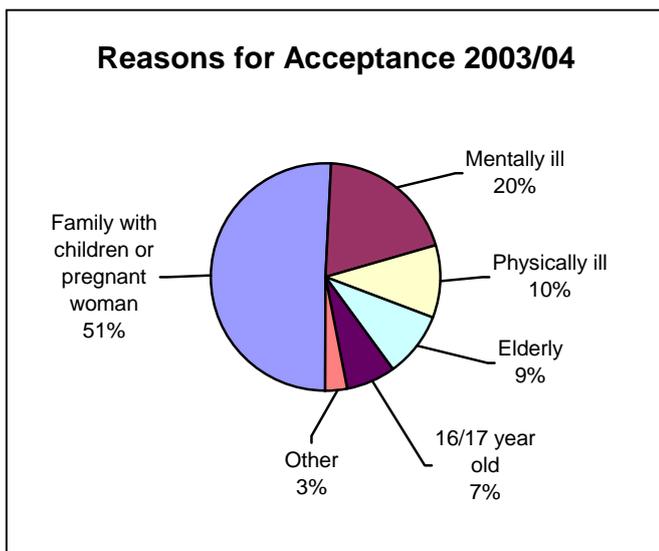
**Statistical Analysis**

**Statutory homelessness**

The following table and graphs present some of the key statistics demonstrating homelessness and housing demand in Westminster. In summary, while homeless applications have fallen slightly since 2002/03, acceptances have risen slightly. The number of households in temporary accommodation has also risen, however the number in bed and breakfast hotels has fallen significantly in response to the

government target and the slightly more favourable housing market and benefit subsidy regime. Our stock of good quality, self-contained temporary accommodation has increased, while we have also been able to increase the number of lettings to permanent accommodation to both transferring tenants and homeless households. This is despite a reduction in the number of new affordable homes we have been able to procure.

	2002/03	2003/04
Homeless applications	5529	5436
Homeless acceptances	1012	1053
Households in TA	2707	2944
incl. households in B&B	824	556
Lettings to permanent accommodation	1115	1156
incl. tenant transfers and new lettings	265	278
	850	878
New affordable housing units procured	344	213
Private sector units returned to use	93	98
Self-contained TA procured	389	442



**Hostels and Rough Sleeping**

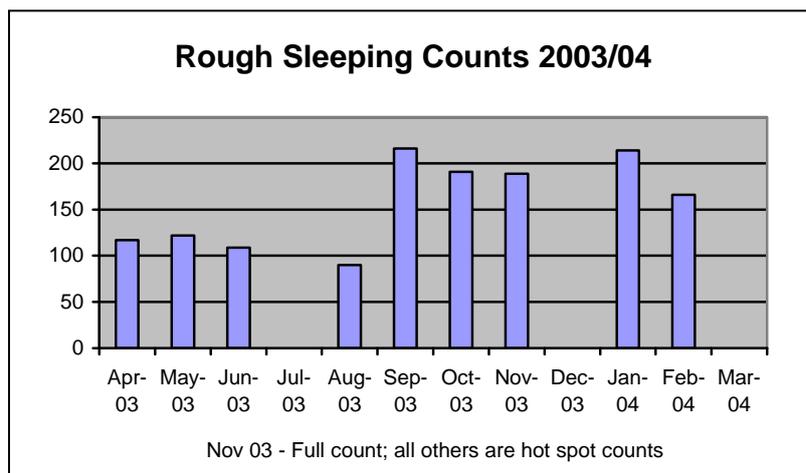
During 2003/04 we carried out a major review of our hostel sector. These are some of the statistics we gathered:

- There are 1,140 bed spaces in Westminster’s hostels. 195 are in shared rooms, 340 spaces are specifically for women, and 296 specifically for young people.
- About 2000 people move through Westminster’s hostels in any one year, although a third of these are through Centrepoint’s two short stay hostels for young people.
- The average stay was 7.5 months, excluding the short-term hostels. The average wait for structured move on to ordinary housing (with or without support) was 7.8 months, although this covers a range of between a few days to two years or so. It is estimated that c.40% of hostel residents require a move into independent accommodation.
- 51% of hostel residents had some degree of vulnerability, and 19% had

multiple vulnerabilities, principally mental health (31%), alcohol (19%), drugs (14%). 11% of hostel beds are specialist.

- In terms of “last settled address” for clients accepted into hostels:
  - Westminster 8%
  - London 63%
  - UK 16%
  - Abroad 13%
- 50% were rough sleeping immediately prior to the hostel, and a further 22% came from another hostel. The rest were with mainly friends or family.
- 57% of the positive move on (structured or own arrangements) was to another hostel, although much of this was from Centrepoint’s short term hostels. Excluding those, 31% was to other hostels. 17% was to housing with some form of support, and 22% to wholly independent housing.

The number of Rough Sleepers on Westminster streets has fluctuated throughout the year (see chart below), but are still the highest in London.



**Performance against 2003/04 targets**

Of the targets we set for 2003/04 in our Homelessness Strategy, all bar two were achieved. Through the year we saw an increase in the rough sleeping population, while we slightly missed our target of reducing homelessness against the main causes that prevail in Westminster.

The Rapid Intervention Street Services contract to assist rough sleepers move off the street was let in October 2003 and has

now bedded down with outreach teams up to strength. Information and intelligence gathering has improved considerably and we are still aiming to achieve and sustain a reduction in the number of rough sleepers to under 100. Work with private sector tenants and landlords has proved successful in reducing loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies, however the introduction of mediation services has not produced the desired benefits and we are reviewing the approach taken.

Target	Result	
100 cases of homelessness to be prevented or delayed through home visits and mediation	134 cases prevented or delayed through the work of the Homelessness Prevention Team	✓
Reduce the number of homelessness acceptances by 10% that result from the principle causes - Relatives/friends no longer able to accommodate; Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies; Accommodation being unreasonable to occupy	Acceptances due to these main causes were reduced by 9.2% (64 against a target of 69 cases.).	✗
By 31/3/04, no family to be in B&B for longer than 6 weeks	Statutory deadline met, no families in B&B for longer than 6 weeks by end of March	✓
Reduce the proportion of homeless households in B&B, expressed as a % of the numbers in TA, to 26.6% by 31/3/04 and to 17% by 2004/05	B&B units made up 18.9% of TA supply at 31/3/04	✓
Procure a minimum of 200 new units of permanent affordable housing per annum	213 new units procured in 2003/04	✓
For 90 empty homes to be brought back into use per annum	98 empty homes brought back into use	✓
Complete a review of hostel provision in 2003/04 and identify ways of making the sector, the City Council and the Homelessness Directorate work more effectively together in addressing single homelessness	Stage 2 of the review was completed at the end of March. Information will feed into the SP review of single homeless services	✓
40 homeless households in TA to access ICT and ESOL training in 2003/04	47 households accessed the training provided by WAES	✓
To reduce to under 100 the number of people sleeping rough on Westminster streets	The February 2004 count was 166, down from 214 in January.	✗

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**Targets for 2004/05**

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1. Ensure the level of repeat homelessness is maintained below 3% in 2004/05
2. Reduce homelessness acceptances resulting from relatives/friends no longer able to accommodate, loss of AST and unreasonable to occupy, by 10% in 2004/05
3. Prevent or delay 100 cases of homelessness through home visits and mediation
4. 10 cases of homelessness prevented through fast-track discretionary housing payments
5. Establish baseline on outcomes for ex-offenders assisted to access appropriate services and accommodation
6. Access an additional 300 self-contained temporary accommodation units
7. Reduce the proportion of homeless households in B&B, expressed as a percentage of the numbers in TA to 17% by 31/3/05
8. For 65% of households in block booked hotels to have training needs assessment and 30% of households to take up training provision
9. Establish a work experience placements scheme with local employers for homeless clients
10. Increase supported accommodation options for young people
11. Work with CWH and HA's to measure success of tenancy sustainment activity
12. Undertake a Supporting People review of single homeless services (building on 2003/04 hostels review)
13. Achieve and sustain a reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in Westminster to under 100 and launch a dedicated 24hr rough sleeping helpline
14. Agree a process for transition to building based services for rough sleepers
15. Review options for a youth homelessness prevention project in the City

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## Resource Analysis

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The range of resources funding the services referred to within this update is very broad, reflecting the work undertaken by the Assessment and Advice Service, supported housing services, health, probation, education, community protection and social and community services. The principal sources of funding in addition to the General Fund are considered below:

### Supporting People Grant

Supporting People (SP) funds a range of services and this includes significant investment in services referred to in this update:

- single homeless and rough sleeper services (£9m)
- mental health services (£3.5m)
- young persons services (£2.1m).

SP is under significant pressure nationally with ODPM announcing a national SP Grant allocation of £1.72bn for 2005/06 and £1.7bn for 2006/07 and 2007/08. Whilst not as severe as had been feared this does represent an actual reduction of 4.5%. Announcement of Westminster's allocation is expected in the autumn.

The 2004/05 grant allocation contained no inflationary increase, a 2.5% savings reduction and no monies for new development. This is particularly significant given the new developments at Harrow Road, Gosfield Street, Cardinal Hume Centre and Mozart Street which, following the service review programme, will have to be met from within existing resources.

### ODPM Homelessness Allocations

A wide range of services are funded via grants from the ODPM at a total of over £7m and include the Rough Sleeper Rapid Intervention Team, Temporary Accommodation Support team, Probation Housing Advice Worker, Joint Homeless Team and Substance Misuse Team, day and night centre services across the City, and the Homeless Arrest and Reachout Team (HART.) A key initiative is to develop detailed service specifications and quality and performance management systems for those services Westminster has taken over the commissioning from the Homelessness Directorate.

Funding from the ODPM supports many of our Homelessness Strategy objectives, including our efforts to restrict the use of B&B for families with children. Should this funding be reduced, the impact on delivery of our objectives would be significant.

### Hostels Capital

A positive financial development is the availability of capital monies to improve the quality of hostel services in Westminster. Several have been submitted (and initial indications are they have been accepted) and a key priority is to ensure that the capital investment is reflected in an improvement in the quality of front-line service delivery. In particular, a key outcome of this strategy is assessing the potential through the hostels review for the provision of more specialised services targeted at those most in need.

## Glossary

A&A	Assessment & Advice
A&E	Accident & Emergency
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation
AST	Assured Shorthold Tenancy
B&B	Bed & Breakfast
CWH	CityWest Homes
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments
DoH	Department of Health
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
GP	General Practitioner
HAs	Housing Associations
HB	Housing Benefit
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
HST	Health Support Team
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
NFA	No Fixed Address
NHS	National Health Service
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PMS	Personal Medical Services
SEMI	Severe and Enduring Mental Illness
SITC	Safe in the City
SP	Supporting People
TA	Temporary Accommodation
TRB	Thamesreach Bondway
WAES	Westminster Adult Education Service
WCC	Westminster City Council
WDVF	Westminster Domestic Violence Forum
WPCT	Westminster Primary Care Trust
WWA	Westminster Women's Aid